AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY AND
THE OTTOMAN STATE, 1774-1837,
AS REVEALED IN UNITED STATES DOCUMENTS

Thomas James Adams
B.A., Kent State University, 1952
B.F.T., Thunderbird, The Garvin School of International Management, 1953
M.S., San Francisco State University, 1961
Ph.D., University of California, Berkeley, 1972

THESIS

Submitted in partial satisfaction of
The requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

Liberal Arts

at

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO

SPRING
2007
AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY AND
THE OTTOMAN STATE, 1774-1837,
AS REVEALED IN UNITED STATES DOCUMENTS

A Thesis

by

Thomas James Adams

Approved by:

Katernia Lagos, Committee Chair

Speros Vryonis, Jr., Second Reader

Date: 15 April 2007
Student: Thomas James Adams

I certify that this student has met the requirements for format contained in the University format manual, and that this thesis is suitable for shelving in the Library and credit is to be awarded for the thesis.

Jeffrey Brodd, Coordinator

Liberal Arts Master's Program

17 April 2007
Abstract

of

AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY AND
THE OTTOMAN STATE, 1774-1837,
AS REVEALED IN UNITED STATES DOCUMENTS

by

Thomas James Adams

Research Question and Statement of Problem

What was the effect of American diplomacy on the Ottoman State, 1774-1837?

Sources of Data

Where ever possible American primary documents including those of the State Department, Annals of Congress, Memoirs of John Quincy Adams, Papers of James Madison, Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, Documents on American Foreign Relations, et al, are cited.

Conclusions Reached

American foreign policy slowly evolved to become more systematic and structured during and after the Revolutionary War. Following the War, Congress approved the French Alliance but in a few years overturned it and approved a British Alliance. The change was expressed by the John Jay Treaty that included attacks on President George Washington who supported it. In Washington’s Farewell Address, he warned against European diplomatic entanglements while simultaneously recognizing that they may be needed from time to time. American foreign intervention grew apace during the wars...
with the Barbary Pirates which saw the development of the American Navy and the consulate corps as instruments of foreign policy. These all came to a head with the Greek War of Independence of 1821-1827. While American public opinion was heavily pro Greek, including demands by members of Congress to give direct aid to the Greek provisional government, President James Monroe opposed it. A resolution by Daniel Webster of Boston favoring the Greek cause was defeated in the House of Representatives despite the knowledge of the members that major supporters of noninvolvement were New Englanders in the slave trade and in the Smyrna-Canton opium trade. While some voted against Webster because of Washington’s admonition, others used it as an excuse. The non-involvement policy later coalesced in the creation of the Monroe Doctrine.

In 1774, prior to the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, the United States sought formal diplomatic relations with the Ottoman State. From the initial contact with the Ottoman Empire by the United States Navy in 1800, these feeling were also expressed by Ottoman officials including the Sultan. Despite efforts by both parties, it was not until 1830 that a Treaty of Commerce and Navigation was finally signed by the Sultan and ratified by the United States.

Katerina Lagos

18 April 2007

Date

Committee Chair
Dedicated to the Memory of Two Ottoman Greeks,

My Parents,

Adamandios Adamandithis, of Aretsou, Asia Minor

and

Eleni Katsourou Adamandithou, of Smyrna, Asia Minor

Αἰώνεια Ἀντων η Μνήμη
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following for helping me with this work. To:

Professor Katerina Lagos, the head of my committee, for guidance, helpful and cheerful suggestions, and insightful comments.

Professor Speros Vryonis, Jr., for his friendship, his scholarship, and his inspiring spirit of scholarly zeal. The Tsakopoulos Hellenic Collection at the University, which he personally assembled, aided my research enormously. Professor Vryonis is the embodiment of that most mysterious of Greek virtues, φιλότιμο.

Professor Jeffrey Brodd, Coordinator of the Liberal Arts Master’s Program, for skillfully guiding me, even now, through the labyrinth of University requirements.

The late Professor James Reid for his helpful suggestions and quietly encouraging support. That Jim passed away in the flower of his most productive years is a great tragedy.

George Paganelis, Curator, Tsakopoulos Hellenic Collection, for his virtually instantaneous response to my questions and for steering me to the best sources available.

Stavros Stavridis, M.A., Research Scholar at the National Centre for Hellenic Studies and Research at La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia, who time and again provided new leads that helped my research. That we “met” on the Internet, established a friendship there, and were finally able to meet in person, was a delight.

Jack Smith of the Library’s Interlibrary Loan Department for the timely handling of my many requests for material.

Angelo Tsakopoulos and his family, for the gift of his Hellenic Collection to the University.

Theodora Adams Highum, my sister, for an emergency job of copy editing.

Shirle, my wife, for her usual first-rate job of copy editing and for only grumbling quietly through yet another writing project.

And finally to the people of California for the 60+ Program that enabled me to again experience the thrill of systematically learning something new and to halt in some measure the process of mental aging (at least I hope so).
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication ........................................................................................ vi

Acknowledgments ............................................................................... vii

Prologue ........................................................................................................... 1

A. French Designs in the New World ................................................ 4
B. The *American National Style* .................................................... 5
C. Early America and the Ottoman State .............................................. 8

Chapter

1 The Beginnings of American Diplomacy ........................................ 15

A. America’s Interest in Free Trade .............................................. 16
B. The Withering of the French Alliance and the John Jay Treaty .... 17
C. Washington’s Farewell Address ................................................... 19

2 America’s Response to the Barbary States ..................................... 24

A. The First Barbary War ................................................................. 27
B. The Second Barbary War ............................................................. 46

3 The Greek War of Independence, the Monroe Doctrine, and the Beginning of America’s Policy toward the Ottoman State ...... 51

A. The American Philhellenic Movement ........................................ 55
B. First Diplomatic Feelers from the Greeks .................................... 58
C. The Genesis of the Monroe Doctrine .......................................... 61
D. Daniel Webster’s Resolution on Greece ..................................... 66
E. Yankee Opium Trade: Smyrna to Canton, China ....................... 69
F. The Marquis de LaFayette and the Greek Cause ......................... 82
G. Failed Attempts at Greek Aid ...................................................... 84
H. America’s Treaty with the Ottoman State .................................. 89

Conclusion ............................................................................................... 97

Bibliography ............................................................................................. 102
Early colonists of the United States believed that the country being forged was different from all others. Indeed, in 1630 John Winthrop, first Governor of Massachusetts, in his *Model of Christian Charity*, wrote "for wee must consider that wee shall be as a city upon a hill. The eies of all people are uppon us [sic]."\(^1\) The phrase, "a city upon a hill," is filled with hopes, dreams, and also an admonition that Americans must conduct themselves in such a way as to continue to be the hope of mankind. This phrase has been used repeatedly by American leaders, from the founding of the Massachusetts Bay Colony to President Ronald Reagan 350 years later.

The earliest New England settlements in the New World were theocracies formed to subjugate worldly activities. As John Winthrop put it, "We have entered into a Covenant with [God] for this work. . . . If we should neglect the observation of these articles which are the ends we have propounded, and, dissembling with our God, shall fail to embrace this present world and prosecute our carnall intentions, seeking great things for ourselves and our posterity, the Lord will surely breake out in wrath against us; be revenged of such a [sinful] people and make us know the price of the breache of such a covenant [sic]."\(^2\)

As new generations appeared, the spiritual message began to wane. "From the middle of the seventeenth century, the inhabitants of New England were frequently reminded by their ministers that 'New England is originally a plantation of religion, not a

---


\(^2\) Ibid.
As the new merchant class began to flourish, their tithes grew apace and cries warning of vanity and the sinfulness of luxury became more muted to the point where it “came to be admitted that wealth and prosperity might be a sign of God’s special regard for the people of New England who lived under the covenant.” This merchant class, now growing with far-flung commercial interests, began to play a leading role in the social and economic life of New England. They, along with new immigrants, were motivated with a prayer for utopian hopes but for material advantages as well. In merchants not only countenanced dealing in slaves and opium, they defended and rationalized their behavior as well.

Speculative London-based merchants planted tobacco in Virginia and urged politically well-connected British aristocrats to establish the Carolina colonies do the same. The Crown was interested in developing the colonies as a cohesive whole to supply the mother country with raw materials – hides, timber, cotton, pitch, minerals, pig iron – that could be turned into higher-value goods through manufacturing and sold back to the colonies. Manufacturing in the colonies was discouraged and often forbidden by royal decree. This system, called mercantilism by economists, favored the producer in England over the consumer in British America. “In the mercantile system, the interest of the consumer [in America] is almost constantly sacrificed to that of the producer; and it seems to consider production, and not consumption, as the ultimate end and object of all industry and commerce. . . . It cannot be very difficult to determine who have been the

---

4 Ibid.
contrivers of this whole mercantile system; not the consumers, we may believe, whose interest has been entirely neglected; but the producers, whose interest has been so carefully attended to; and among this latter class our merchants and manufacturers [Adam Smith, “the Father of Economics,” was a Scot living in London at the time] have been by far the principal architects."

During the late seventeenth century coastal settlers slowly began moving west into a seemingly infinite wilderness to establish villages and towns. The Crown supplied no cohesive plan as to how this was to be done: each colony proceeded on its own, using its own resources and pursuing its own policies. Although the colonies might derive their legal existence from the Crown and owe allegiance to it, their westward expansion took scant notice of existing French claims to the land.

In 1776, when the colonies became the United States of America and entered the field of foreign policy as an independent power, they had suddenly to assume a function which, previously, England had carried out for them. Yet they were still in the process of accomplishing the necessary preliminary step of developing a consciousness of the community of interest which would set them off as a unit within the state system.

Although the Crown regarded the American colonies as an entirety, there was never a cohesive general plan of action and administration but ad hoc commissions and special committees formed from time to time to deal with specific issues. However, two economic policies prevailed throughout the colonies: the regulation of colonial trade

---


6 Gilbert, 8.
through British mercantilist policies and the Crown’s determination to keep foreigners out.

A. French Designs in the New World

Beginning in the 1720s, new immigrants from England, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, and France poured into the New World and settled in the regions beyond the coastal areas. The new arrivals were particularly interested in the rich lands up to the Allegheny Mountains of Pennsylvania, Western Maryland and Virginia, and the Ohio Valley up to the Great Lakes. The French in Canada, eyeing these same lands, dreamed of colonizing them and joining them with their lands in Louisiana. Once having settled that territory, the French could then pivot to the east and attack the backside of the British colonies. A number of skirmishes between American settlers and the French, aided by their Indian allies, resulted in the Seven Years’ War (also called the French and Indian Wars) 1756-1763, in which Lieutenant Colonel George Washington participated. The issue of who was to control Canada and the lands of the Ohio Valley came to a head in the Battle of the Plains of Abraham outside Quebec in which British Major General James Wolfe crushed the French army of the Marquis de Montcalm on September 13, 1759. On September 8, 1760, British forces took Montreal and forever ended French dreams of uniting Canada, the Ohio Valley, and Louisiana. With the English conquest of Canada, no further progress was achieved towards a unified attitude in foreign affairs in the period between the Seven Years’ War and the American Revolution. The colonies had not become conscious of themselves as a political unit distinct from other political units; they had no practical experience with a unified policy in foreign affairs; and they had not given any systematic thought to the issues
involved in the management of diplomacy when they entered the field of foreign policy.\textsuperscript{7}

B. The \textit{American National Style}  

While the American Revolution was directed against a tyrannical monarch, it was not a revolt against English political ideas. Indeed, the revolutionaries thought they were defending the true rights of Englishmen handed down from the days of the Magna Carta. One of the principal features of those rights was a parliamentary system where foreign policy was a subject of open political discussion. The English system contrasted markedly with what prevailed on the Continent: monaracies, absolutism, and the stifling of public discussion. If anything, Parliament returned again and again to the fundamental question of whether "England had to take an active part in the struggles for maintaining a European balance of power or whether she could remain a disinterested spectator."\textsuperscript{8}  

These issues later were mirrored in America's foreign policy struggle between isolationism and internationalism.

Pre-revolutionary Americans became acquainted with British foreign affairs in three ways: (1) by American travelers, hearing the arguments first hand in business and family visits to the home country; (2) from recent English visitors and immigrants; and (3) from books and tracts brought over from England. In 1774, a 37-year-old failed student, failed apprentice, failed seaman, and failed English excise tax officer, Thomas Paine, immigrated to Philadelphia under the protective arm of his sponsor, Benjamin

\textsuperscript{7} Gilbert, 15.  
\textsuperscript{8} Gilbert, 24.
Franklin, and two years later published his famous tract, *Common Sense*. He deplored the idea that “America, without the right of asking why, must be brought into all the wars of another [the Seven Years’ War], whether the measure be right or wrong, or whether she will or not.”

Paine asserted that this led to desires for nonentanglement and isolationism on the part of the colonists. “It is the true interest of America to steer clear of European contentions, which she can never do, while, by her dependence on Britain, she is made the make-weight in the scale of British politics.”

Paine had concerns for freedom — another way of expressing yearnings for material advantages and utopian hopes. “The New World had become ‘the asylum for the persecuted lovers of civil and religious liberty,’ while in England ‘a corrupt and faithless court’ abused liberty, and elsewhere in the Old World liberty was simply denied. Americans were thus marked out as the keepers of the flickering flame of liberty.”

It was just prior to and during the Revolutionary War that America began to develop what Glenn P. Hastedt calls the *American National Style*. An oft-discussed issue of American foreign policy is the tension between isolationism and internationalism. Following the prescription offered by George Washington in his Farewell Address, American interests were thought to be best served by “turning our backs on the world” or at the least maintaining a healthy aloofness from events.
elsewhere. Some time later the Monroe Doctrine validated this approach to foreign policy.

When foreign policy switched from isolationism to internationalism it followed an underlying logic in its oscillation from one approach to the other. Hastedt identifies three theories accounting for the oscillation. In the first theory, Frank Klingberg identifies five periods of American foreign policy, each of about 25 to 30 years’ duration.14 Each period (see Table 1) involved an introvert (isolationist) and extrovert (internationalist) phase. The first two periods are of interest here.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Introvert</th>
<th>Extrovert</th>
<th>Major Foreign Policy Issue of the Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1776-1798</td>
<td>1798-1824</td>
<td>Independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1824-1844</td>
<td>1844-1871</td>
<td>Manifest Destiny</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What triggers the shift from introvert to extrovert and vice versa? Klingberg offered some possibilities: failure of a long-term policy; the arrival of new policy makers; the onset of a new dominant problem needing a solution incompatible with the status quo; and the corruption or distortion of an ongoing line of action.15

In the second theory, Dexter Perkins suggests instead that foreign policy orientations were tied to business cycles.16 He found that in periods of recovery after a period of stagnation and economic decline, American foreign policy was more shrill and belligerent. The more stable the economy, the more moderate American foreign policy.

15 Ibid.
The third theorist, Robert Dallek, postulated that there were periodic outward thrusts of American foreign policy because of domestic frustrations and disappointments.\(^{17}\) Victories in the sphere of foreign policy validated to the American public that the American dream was still alive. The validation linked the glorious past with the present and solidified America's international reputation that it is a great and good country that deserves to be emulated.

After analyzing the three hypotheses, Hastedt concludes:

Whatever the specific trigger, the movement from isolationism to internationalism and back again is made possible because both general foreign policy orientations are very much a part of the American national style. . . . The approaches differ on how best to provide for their continued growth and development. Isolationism seeks to accomplish this end by insulating the American experience from corrupting foreign influences. Internationalism seeks to protect them by creating a more hospitable global environment. For both, world affairs gain meaning and importance (or irrelevance) primarily in terms of how they affect the American historical experience and American ideals.\(^{18}\)

**C. Early America and the Ottoman State**

The history of the Ottoman State during the eighteenth century can be divided into two parts. The first sixty years or so saw the beginnings of the utilization of new technologies in glass, soap, sugar, gunpowder, and paper. After the 1760s, these efforts began to waver and even decline.\(^{19}\) This was partly due to the crushing defeats Russian arms achieved in the first Russo-Turkish War (1768-1774) wherein the government of Catherine the Great obtained unfettered access to the Black Sea and to thousands of

---


\(^{18}\) Hastedt, 33.

square miles of new territory in southeastern Europe. The Ottomans started the second Russo-Turkish War (1787-1792). To their dismay, this too proved catastrophic for the outcome legitimized the Russian claims to Crimea. The two losses forced unrecoverable military expenditures from the Ottoman treasury. Besides gaining additional territories at the expense of the Ottoman Empire, in the 1792 Treaty of Jassy, the Russians declared their right to intervene in support of Greek Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman State, a stimulation "that was to be a thorn in the Ottoman side for another century." These wars began the gradual shrinking of the Ottoman State for the next 125 years that later earned for the Turks the epithet, "sick man of Europe."

It would seem that, for the American revolutionaries about to fight what was arguably the most powerful nation on the globe, the last thing that would have concerned them were future diplomatic relations with potential trading partners such as China and the Ottoman Empire. This was not the case. In 1774, two years before the Declaration of Independence, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson were appointed Treaty Commissioners of the First Continental Congress. They included the Ottoman State in a list of nations with which they might negotiate in the future.21

Over the centuries the Ottoman Empire was well known on the Continent, particularly through the conquests of Süleyman I. His rapid expansion into southeastern Europe was finally stopped in his failed siege of Vienna in 1529. To say that the Ottoman State was well known is not to say that it was well understood. Western images

of Ottoman rule were often more myth than fact: brutal sultans who killed on a whim; great and ruthless warriors who ravaged villages that dared to question the Sultan’s authority and forced the inhabitants into slavery; eunuchs ritually decapitating officials who had fallen into disfavor; and a hopelessly corrupt and inefficient state with little skill at statecraft. “There was some truth to all of these images, and to others, of the Ottomans. The sultans were indeed great warriors who caused Christian Europe to tremble, but they were also able administrators who held their conquests for five hundred years through competent rule.”22

Ottoman society was divided into two classes: a tiny group of rulers who did not produce wealth nor pay taxes. Instead they, in lieu of the Sultan and his family, collected the taxes for his and their benefit. The primary purpose of the second group, the huge mass of subject peoples was to produce wealth by engaging in industry, agriculture and trade. The principal purpose of the state was to

(1) organize the exploitation of the wealth belonging to the ruler, (2) provide for the expansion of the wealth belonging to the ruler, (3) keep order, and (4) promote Islam while permitting the practice of other religions within the ruler’s dominions. Government was created and administration organized to carry out these functions, and the army was entrusted with the defense and expansion of sources of wealth as well as the protection of the ruler and the state. To guide rulers, administrators, and soldiers, as well as subjects in carrying out their roles in society, the religion of Islam had to be maintained, protected, and promoted.23

The ruling class, Osmanlılar (Ottomans), was so named because it was in the service of the ruling dynasty. In order to be a member of this class, an individual had to: “(1) accept and practice the religion of Islam and the entire thought and action that was an integral

---

22 McCarthy, 103.
23 Ibid.
part of it; (2) be loyal to the Sultan and to the state established to carry out his sovereign duties and exploit his revenues; and (3) know and practice the complicated system of customs, behavior, and language forming the Ottoman way.\textsuperscript{24} For non-ruling-class Muslims, it was possible after a long apprenticeship in various schools maintained by the ruling class -- and with pluck, ability, and ambition -- to rise to the level of ruling class. It was also possible for members of the ruling class or their sons to be dismissed from the ranks of the ruling class for alcoholism. Thus, there was a system of social mobility in the Ottoman Empire based upon the possession of definable and attainable characteristics and the zeal with which they were pursued.

All of the Sultan's subjects not part of the ruling class were considered to be reaya (his "protected flock"). Reaya were divided by residence: city dweller, cultivators, nomads,\textsuperscript{25} by occupation: cultivators, craftsmen, merchants, women,\textsuperscript{26} and by religion, the most important division.\textsuperscript{27} As regards religion, the reaya were organized around the millet system of religious identity instead of ethnicity or nationality. There was the Muslim millet, the largest; the Greek Orthodox millet, the next largest; the Armenian Gregorians; the Jews; and others such as Roman Catholics, Protestants, Nestorians, and Maronites.\textsuperscript{28} "The Ottoman Turks called the Orthodox the millet-i Rum, or 'Greek' millet

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 113.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 150.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 155-159.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 151-155.
\textsuperscript{28} McCarthy, 127-131.
... a misnomer, for besides the Greeks, it embraced all the Orthodox Christians of the Empire, whether they were Bulgarian, Romanian, Serbian, ... Albanian, or Arab."^29

The rum were under the ostensible control of the Ecumenical Patriarch of the Orthodox Church of Constantinople (invariably a Greek). He was given some degree of autonomy over the affairs of his flock no matter what their ethnicity or national feelings, privileges that could be taken away at any time by the Sultan. In time, this arrangement had two effects: the resentment of Serbs, Bulgars, and other non-Greek Orthodox who never had the hope of leading the faithful, and the ultimate detestation of Asia Minor Hellenes toward their own church for uniformly supporting the Turks in order to maintain their privileged status at the cost of the interests of the laity. The quid pro quo was the guarantee that the Patriarch, his hierarchy, and the faithful he led would remain loyal to the Ottoman State. Millets preserved and even emphasized the religious distinctions of the Sultan's subject peoples. Thus, religion -- not language, residence, or occupation -- was the primary source of identity in the Ottoman State.

Within this empire the several Christian communities and the Jewish community enjoyed a partial autonomy, whereby the ecclesiastical hierarchy which administered the millet supervised not only the religious, educational, and charitable affairs of its flock; it controlled also such matters of personal status as marriage, divorce, and inheritance, and it collected some taxes. This mosaic pattern, in which a Christian and Muslim living side by side in the same state under the same sovereign were subject to different laws and different officials, had served the Ottoman Empire well for four centuries. In the Near East law was still, as it had formerly been in the West also, personal rather than territorial.\(^\text{30}\)


The end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth saw the relative international position and territorial possessions of the Ottoman State steadily decline. "The Turks were not influenced by Western Europe's renaissance, the rise of science and technology or the ideals of the American and French revolutions. They had no universities, and their cultural interests were primarily in the fields of poetry, history, and, above all, religion."\(^3\) Regardless, there were exceptional changes in Ottoman social, economic, and political life. "The Ottoman state structure, however, not only survived but flourished, thanks to a mutual accommodation between European political-economic interests and the needs and concerns of the Ottoman bureaucracy."\(^2\) The Ottoman Empire's European neighbors, especially Russia, had clear military and political advantages over the Muslims and did not hesitate to aid Ottoman-subject uprisings in Greece, Serbia, Moldavia, and Wallachia. While Europe risked losing Ottoman markets with this strategy, overall Western access to these markets remained secure. The Ottoman State did not retaliate with protectionist measures. European powers had few reasons to seek the destruction of the Ottoman State. Indeed, they had cause to strengthen it.

It was easier and more profitable to dominate the empire's market through privileges and concessions from a single centralized Ottoman administration. . . . And so, the Powers allowed the Ottoman central state to continue and they encouraged the emerging bureaucracy to expand its scope of activity and spheres of responsibility. During the nineteenth century the central Ottoman state structure became more powerful, more rational, more specialized and more capable of imposing its will on society, in part because this was a shared goal of


\(^{32}\) David Quataert, "Part IV, The Age of Reforms, 1812-1814," in Halil Inalcik and Donald Quataert, eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1914* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 761.
the bureaucrats and the Great Powers. And in part, this greater strength may have derived from the reduced territory that the bureaucrats now managed. However terrible the financial blow suffered from the loss of wealthy provinces, once these rebellious units were gone, the bureaucracy more readily could focus on problems of state building to survive.  

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire was a much more populous nation than the United States, and before the acquisition of Louisiana, much larger.\(^{34}\) Constantinople was its capital and the government was an absolute monarchy, with supreme power vested in the Sultan. He was aided in legislation by a privy council, the Divan, or Porte, or Sublime Porte. The one member of the Porte who dealt with foreign governments was the Reis Effendi, a sort of Secretary of State. He did not have absolute dealings with foreign affairs, for occasionally, the Capudan Pasha (or minister of marine, grand admiral, and commander-in-chief of the Turkish fleet) dealt with foreign officials, especially when dealing with maritime treaties. It was not until 1856 that the Ottoman Empire was adopted into the family of nations.\(^{35}\)

In summary, this work is fundamentally a diplomatic case study regarding American relations with the Ottoman Empire for the period 1774-1837 from the American point of view using, as much as possible, American primary documents and other American sources to illuminate national purpose, ideals, and national economic and political goals of the United States. In the context of American foreign policy toward the Ottoman State, the study will sort itself into three major sections. The first section focuses on the efforts of the United States’ nascent democracy to establish the major

\(^{33}\) Ibid., 762.
\(^{35}\) Ibid., 123.
principles of foreign policy, especially those dealing with isolationism versus internationalism. The second section explores the establishment of the American navy as an instrument of national diplomatic policy. The action was taken when confronted with the pillaging of the Barbary Pirates, resident in client nations Algiers, Morocco, and Tunis, under the control of the Ottoman State. This period also saw the beginning of the American consulate corps and the introduction of gathering international economic statistics to track the nation's rapid economic growth overseas. The third section centers on whether or not the United States would recognize diplomatically European provisional states such as Greece which was revolting against the Ottoman State and to support its people, provide them with arms, and fighting ships -- actions supported by the American people -- or to stay aloof from the fray and not get involved in European wars. The Monroe Doctrine played a major role in the resolution of this dilemma.36

CHAPTER 1

The Beginnings of American Diplomacy

The roots of the diplomatic policies toward the Ottoman State are rooted in the days of the formation of the United States and beyond to the creation of the Monroe Doctrine of 1823. These roots include George Washington’s “Farewell Address,” Jefferson’s support of the “French Alliance”, the battles with the Barbary Pirates at the turn of the eighteenth century, John Quincy Adams’ Independence Day Speech of 1821, and the Greek War of Independence of 1821-1827. For an economically, politically, and militarily weak fledgling nation, four important episodes verify the beginnings of American foreign policy: (1) America’s interest in national and international free trade, (2) American relations with Great Britain and France during George Washington’s administration and the withering of the French Alliance, (3) the consequences of the John Jay Treaty of 1794, and (4) and George Washington’s Farewell Address.

A. America's Interest in Free Trade

Early on, Americans discovered that international free trade could create a profitable and mutually beneficial outcome for all participants. Under the Articles of Confederacy 1781-1789, Congress had the power to regulate foreign affairs and declare war, create a postal service, raise taxes, and print and borrow money. Although some solid accomplishments were achieved by 1787, when the Constitutional Convention first met, 

effective government was nearly at a standstill because of major problems with the Articles of Confederation.

The motivation of framers of the Articles of Confederation was to limit the power of a central government. After its ratification, two great issues became quickly apparent: the government’s inability to levy taxes and to regulate trade between the states. Sometimes the states refused, after suitable legislation was passed, to give the government the money it needed. Meanwhile, the states engaged in tariff wars with one another, paralyzing interstate commerce. Under Article I, Section 8, of the Constitution delineating the duties of Congress, the “Commerce Clause” stated that federal law would control interstate commerce, that is, commerce between the states. Intrastate commerce, commerce within each state, would be governed by state or local law. Americans directly experienced the rapid growth of the open economy after the Constitution was ratified. It was felt that lowering or eliminating tariffs between nations altogether would, by analogy, bring international growth and prosperity experienced when the Constitution was ratified. This idea holds true to this day: “If there is one thing that Americans on the right or left claim to agree on, it is that freer trade [internationally] promotes economic development and political cooperation.”2 This was one of the major motivations for seeking trade relations with the Ottoman Empire after the Barbary Wars ended.

B. The Withering of the French Alliance and the John Jay Treaty

France had been America’s stalwart ally throughout the Revolutionary War. Once the colonies went to war against Britain, France provided Americans with soldiers and

---

sailors, military experts, ships, and treasure. Indeed, in 1789, the year of the French Revolution, when George Washington became the nation’s first president, the “French alliance was the cornerstone of American foreign policy.” Yet by the end of Washington’s second term, eight short years later -- and to the puzzlement and consternation of the French -- the alliance was for all practical purposes dead.

The reasons for this are many and multifarious, well beyond the reach of this study. However, an important ingredient in the change in policy was the John Jay Treaty of November 19, 1794. The major provisions included the withdrawal of British soldiers from posts in the Western Great Lakes (areas that now comprise the states of Wisconsin and Minnesota), a provision Britain had agreed to previously; a commission to settle border issues between Canada and the United States; and a commission to resolve American losses in British ship seizures and loyalists during the War of Independence. The Treaty was mute in regards to the British practice of seizing American ships and confiscating their French cargo as well as impressing American seamen into British maritime service.

When the public was made aware of the John Jay Treaty provisions most citizens were outraged. Chief Justice of the United States John Jay, the person who negotiated the treaty in London, was burned in effigy, the most hated man in the country. The

---


4 Officially known as “The Treaty of Amity Commerce and Navigation, between His Britannick Majesty; and The United States of America, by Their President, with the advice and consent of Their Senate, November 19, 1794.” Hunter Miller, ed., *Treaties and Other International Acts of the United States of America*, vol. II (Washington: United States Department of State, 1931-1948), 245-274.

French did not stand by meekly doing nothing. On the contrary, the young French Ambassador of the French Directory, Pierre Auguste Adet, sent to the United States in June 1795 after the treaty was signed, began a well financed and shameless effort to prevent its ratification. He was hoping for a change in administrations in the upcoming elections by supporting a pro-French Republican administration headed by long-time Francophile and presidential candidate, Thomas Jefferson. For supporting the John Jay Treaty, George Washington himself was openly scorned and denounced in many state and local assemblies but the criticism did not faze him. According to the United States State Department, “President Washington courageously implemented the treaty in the face of popular disapproval, realizing that it was the price of peace with Great Britain and that it gave the United States valuable time to consolidate and rearm in the event of future conflict.”

C. Washington’s Farewell Address

In the light of these controversies, Washington’s Farewell Address of September 19, 1796, is anything but a wise, sentimental, timeless, and unbiased valedictory serving as a warning to his fellow citizens. It is a wholehearted political, indeed partisan, manifesto, defending the Federalist Party and its candidate for President, John Adams, and the John Jay Treaty. Its immediate purpose was to strike a powerful blow against French

---

6 As one observer noted: “French influence never appeared so open and unmasked as at this city [Philadelphia] election,’ cried William Loughton Smith, Hamilton’s congressional mouthpiece. ‘French flags, French cockades were displayed by the Jefferson party and there is no doubt that French money was not spared... In short there never was so barefaced and disgraceful an interference of a foreign power in any free country.’ ” DeCorde, 653.

7 “John Jay’s Treaty,” U.S. Department of State, ibid.
intermeddling in American political affairs. Washington was careful to delineate between European political alliances and America’s commercial interests. On the one hand he asserted “the Great rule of conduct for us, in regard to foreign Nations is in extending our commercial [sic] relations to have with them as little political [his emphasis] connection as possible. ... ‘Tis our true policy to steer clear of permanent Alliances, with any portion of the foreign World.” It should be noted here that Washington never uttered the exact words “avoid foreign entanglements,” although the previous sentence gives isolationists their strongest weapon.

Washington’s logic is puzzling. In his mind, was not the John Jay Treaty itself a “permanent alliance” with a European power or was it merely a temporary convenience?

Having made these assertions, he equivocated:

Harmony, liberal intercourse with all Nations, are recommended by policy, humanity and interest. But even our Commercial policy should hold an equal and impartial hand: neither seeking nor granting exclusive favours or preferences; consulting the natural course of things; diffusing & diversifying [sic] by gentle means the streams of Commerce, but forcing nothing ... and to enable the Government to support them – conventional rules of intercourse the best that present circumstances and mutual opinion will permit, but temporary, & liable to be from time to time abandoned or varied, as experience and circumstances shall dictate [my emphasis]; constantly keeping in view, that ‘tis folly in one Nation to look for disinterested favors from another that it must pay with a portion of its Independence for whatever it may accept under that character. ... There can be no greater error than to expect, or calculate upon real

---

10 Ibid., 27.
11 Jefferson echoed this policy in his first inaugural address of March 4, 1801. He listed what he believed to be the most essential principles of his administration: “Equal and exact justice to all men. of whatever state or persuasion, religious or political; peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none.” See _Jefferson, Thomas, First Inaugural Address, March 4, 1801_ http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/presiden/inaug/jefinaul.htm (accessed October 18, 2006).
favours from Nation to Nation. Tis an illusion which experience must cure; which a just pride ought to discard.¹²

Thus, the “father of our country” argued for a stern policy of noninvolvement in European affairs except when circumstances dictated otherwise, such as supporting and defending the John Jay Treaty.

On March 23, 1793, in a private letter written after news of the British declaration of war on France, Washington abrogated the 1778 treaty with France since he believed the United States was too weak to fight with France against the combined forces of Britain, Spain, and Holland.¹³ His action was ratified in the John Jay Treaty of the following year. Thus, despite the wholehearted support of the French government during the Revolution -- support that nearly bankrupted France -- and with the nation’s natural sympathy for the revolutionaries fighting the ancien régime, the United States fashioned a policy of strict neutrality following the French Revolution of 1789. Largely owing to the meddling of Adet in the 1796 elections, Washington drew even closer to the British. Because of their political machinations, the tide of public opinion began to run against the French. In February 1797 the election results were finally made public: John Adams, Federalist, President; Thomas Jefferson, Republican, Vice President. “With the Federalist victory, narrow though it was, the Farewell Address had done its work. The French alliance which had been drawn to last ‘forever’ and which had been the core of

¹² Ibid., 27-28.
American foreign policy when Washington launched the federal government was practically dead as he prepared to leave office."\(^{14}\)

The most important diplomatic issues of the day were to establish working relations with Britain and France, but this could not be done without considering treaties with the Barbary States, nations that held the key to Mediterranean markets. Two major issues were involved. Of primary importance was the damage these powers could do to the commerce of the United States since the country no longer had the protection of Britain in those waters. From 1793 until 1805, the war between Britain and France promised fruitful commercial benefits for neutral nations such as the United States. The full benefits of trade were denied for lack of treaties with the North African nations, as well as by the non-recognition of the United States’ neutrality by both Britain and France. The other issue, of great emotional import, was the fact that captured American seamen were imprisoned and held for ransom by the Barbary Pirates, later to be sold as slaves. To claim to have an independent nation, public opinion demanded that America’s leaders had to face up to this explosive situation and solve it.\(^{15}\) Having black slaves at home was

\(^{14}\) DeConde, 658.

one thing but having largely white crews, including officers, sold into slavery was another.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{16} This was especially problematic for major Virginian planters such as Thomas Jefferson, who not only owned black slaves, cohabited with them, but fathered children with them. Jan Ellen Lewis and Peter S. Onuf, eds., \textit{Sally Hemings & Thomas Jefferson: History, Memory, and Civic Culture} (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1999).
CHAPTER 2
America's Response to the Barbary States

At the latter part of the eighteenth century the Western Mediterranean and its commerce was controlled by four Barbary states: Morocco, Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli. All were client states of the Ottoman Empire, spreading across northern Africa for over two thousand miles, from modern-era Libya to Morocco on the Atlantic Coast. As Ottoman satrapies they not only owed allegiance to the Sultan in Constantinople but the lion's share of any tribute or ransom collected from captured ships and their personnel.

Before the Revolutionary War, American ships could carry cargo and trade internationally wherever British law prevailed. They "enjoyed the protection of the ever-present Royal Navy and the most energetic diplomatic service in the world."1 "During the Revolution, the ships of the United States were protected by the 1778 alliance with France, which required the French nation to protect 'American vessels and effect against all violence, insults, attacks, or depredations, on the part of the said Princes and States of Barbary or their subjects'."2 Those benefits ended with the successful conclusion of the war and the Treaty of Paris of 1783.3

The initial official diplomatic relations with the Ottoman state were mixed. In 1786, three years before the ratification of the Constitution, Morocco became the first country to recognize the United States when the two nations signed a Treaty of Peace and

---

1 Holloway H. Frost, We Build a Navy (Annapolis, MD: United States Naval Institute, 1940), 111.
3 The outline for the rest of the chapter owes much to Thomas A. Bryson, American Diplomatic Relations with the Middle East, 1784-1975 (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1977), Ch.1.
Friendship on June 23. This is ironic, for nearly exactly one year prior to that Algiers was the first Barbary nation to attack and capture two American ships flying the nation’s new flag.

On July 25, 1785, Captain Isaak Stevens and his crew of five men were quietly sailing eastwards towards Cadiz, Spain, a few miles south of the Algarve coast of Portugal. The schooner Maria was six weeks out of Boston, two days from Cadiz, and was proudly flying the new American flag. The crew’s curiosity was aroused when a much smaller and faster ship without a flag began to give chase. She was a three-masted vessel common to that part of the world, distinguished by lateen sails on all three of her masts, projecting bows, and an overhanging poop deck. Locals called them xebecs. The Americans were puzzled and suspicious, for no one was on deck save for a single sailor at the tiller dressed in European clothing. The xebec nearly touched Maria’s port side when the man at the tiller shouted in Spanish to heave to. Captain Stevens obediently lowered his sails and turned into the wind. This action was greeted with great shouts as dozens of pirates rose up from behind the gunwales and boarded Maria. In a similar fashion, “five days later, the ship Dauphin [Captain Richard O’Brien, commanding], was taken by another Algerine corsair fifty leagues west of Lisbon” bringing the total of

---


6 Eugene Schuyler, American Diplomacy and the Furtherance of Commerce (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1901), 196.
American seamen seized and held for ransom to twenty-one.⁷ Thus began the capture of two American ships by Algerine corsairs by the Turkish Dey of Algiers, the first of many American seizures to follow. The fate of captured Christian seamen was notorious. Eugene Schuyler, quoting John Adams, made this clear: “If any considerable number of vessels and prisoners should be taken, it would be hard to persuade the Turks, especially the Algerines, to desist. A war between Christian and Christian was mild, and prisoners, on either side were treated with humanity; but a war between Turk and Christian was horrible, and prisoners were sold into slavery.”⁸

Great Britain considered the entire Mediterranean, particularly commerce with the Ottoman State and its client states, to be theirs. When the American colonies were under their control, they were allowed to trade freely with the Barbary states but they kept Constantinople and the Mideast for themselves. This was pure and simply international mercantilism. What the budding nation wanted was a system that has remained historic American diplomatic policy ever since -- free trade. This was especially bitter, for mercantilism was a system of crown-granted privileges for British-based citizens and businesses that prevented colonists from competing with them in the New World. This became one of the causes of the revolution. The loss of markets after the victorious revolution was keenly felt, as expressed in a July 7, 1785, letter from James Madison to Richard Henry Lee: “We have lost by the revolution our trade with the West Indies, the only one which yielded us a favorable balance, without having gained new channels to

⁸ Schuyler, 199.
compensate for it." Madison was speaking of, among other things, America’s notorious triangular trade in rum and black slaves. And it was not just the West Indies. International “commerce was thus not only the key to the advancement of civilization: in more immediate terms it was essential to the survival of the American experiment. Since the cause of humanity and the national future were both at stake, the propagation of commerce was doubly the duty of Americans.”

A. The First Barbary War

The capture of the Maria and Dauphine and the imprisonment of their sailors created an immediate foreign policy crisis for the United States. The American response was influenced by two pressing factors, one military and the other financial. The United States had no navy, having disbanded it in 1784, and it was not reestablished until the Naval Armament Act of 1794. While the disbandment of the navy was mainly financial, there were nonfinancial reasons for and against a navy. Some Americans who called for closer ties to “the mother country” preferred developing an army, for fear that the presence of an American navy might provoke England into future confrontations. Others preferred spending money on a navy instead of an army owing to their bitter experiences with the British occupation during the latter part of the revolution. By the creation of an

---

army and navy, some members of Congress had a strong desire to avoid a "new Monarchy" in America.\textsuperscript{11}

Presidents Adams and Jefferson differed on paying the pirates tribute versus fighting them.

"Mr. Adams believed that war would be greatly more expensive than tribute: An when you leave off fighting, you must pay as much money as it would cost you now for peace. We ought not to fight them at all, unless we determine to fight them forever. The thought, I fear, is too rugged for our people to bear. To fight them at the expense of millions, and make peace, after all, by giving more money and larger presents than would now procure perpetual peace seems not to be economical."\textsuperscript{12}

President Thomas Jefferson favored a strong navy as the best defense against foreign threats.

"He wrote to Mr. Adams: 1. Justice is in favor of this opinion. 2. Honor favors it. 3. It will procure us respect in Europe; and respect is a safeguard to interest. 4. It will arm the federal head with the safest of all the instruments of coercion over its delinquent members. 5. I think it least expensive. 6. Equally effectual."\textsuperscript{13}

Financial factors dictated that any effective response to the Barbary States would require a significant outlay relative to the government's available funds. When operating under the Articles of Confederation, the central government did not have the power to tax its citizens, levy tariffs, or regulate commerce between the states. Some income was generated by post office receipts and from the sales of public lands. Hat in hand, the government asked for funds from the states, only to be ignored, leading to the last-resort schemes used by "Banana Republics" -- printing money. Thus, inflation began. The

\textsuperscript{11} Ray W. Irwin, \textit{The Diplomatic Relations of the United States with the Barbary Powers, 1776-1816} (New York: Russell & Russell, 1931), 54.
\textsuperscript{12} Adams to Jefferson, June 6 and July 3, 1786 in Schuyler, 201.
\textsuperscript{13} Jeffersoni to Adams, July 11, 1786. Ibid.
government was forced to borrow money from foreign sources just to pay the interest on existing foreign debts. The financial problems were assuaged when the Constitution was created on September 17, 1787 (and became law when ratified by the states on March 4, 1789). The new Congress was now able to levy and collect duties and taxes, and to control interstate commerce according to Article I, Section 8, of the Constitution.  

The United States of 1789 was a maritime nation with all the original thirteen states facing the Atlantic save one, Pennsylvania, and that state had easy access via the Delaware River. The new nation was facing insolvency and sinking into an economic depression because of the loss of markets formerly guaranteed by the British. This created a sense of urgency to create new international commercial opportunities. It did not take long for the merchant-shipping lobby to apply pressure to Congress to guarantee freedom of the seas for American merchantmen. The lobby was strongest in the eastern ports. “During the Revolution various factions struggled inconclusively for dominance and for control of domestic and foreign policies. In the 1780’s . . . the shipping-commercial group (in alliance with large southern planters) gradually gained the upper hand. One result was the drafting and adoption of the present Constitution of the United States in 1789.”

Barnby expanded on these points:

Early in 1794 detailed accounts of the new losses sustained by the United States at the hands of the Algerians reached America. The east coast ports were still the major centres of population . . . and the merchants and ship owners resident there represented a powerful political lobby. This lobby now demanded that the administration should take effective steps to render the sea approaches to southern Europe safe. Even the members of Congress were deeply angered by

---

the humiliation inflicted on their nation by Algerian sea captains. It no longer seemed the natural concern for state delegates to keep the Federal Government [under the Articles of Confederation] as poor and as weak as possible.\textsuperscript{16}

Shortly after the Revolutionary War’s successful conclusion, ships set sail for China and northern European ports. Traders also cast covetous eyes on the rich potential of Mediterranean trade. “Jefferson estimated that one-sixth of the wheat and flour exported from the 13 colonies, one-fourth in value of the dried and pickled fish, and some rice found markets in the Mediterranean countries. The export commerce employed annually from 80 to 100 ships, of 20,000 tons, navigated by 1,200 seamen.”\textsuperscript{17} “The total value of articles shipped to these regions as American produce was officially evaluated for the year 1770 at about £707,000.”\textsuperscript{18} “Other American exports to southern Europe and Africa were rum; [a staple of the triangular trade in slaves] rice; pine, oak, and cedar lumber; beeswax and onions.”\textsuperscript{19}

Standing in the way of the trade were the Barbary pirates. Algiers was the most powerful and aggressive of these gangster enclaves, while corsairs had plied Mediterranean waters for centuries and piracy was pursued by Muslims and Christians alike. At the time of the seizure of the Maria and Dauphine,

the European states, in order to protect their commerce, had the choice either of paying certain sums per head for each captive, which in reality was a premium on capture, or of buying entire freedom for their commerce by the expenditure of large sums yearly. [For example,] the treaty renewed by France, in 1788, with Algiers, was for 50 years, and it was agreed to pay $200,000 annually, besides large presents distributed [to the rulers] according to custom every ten years . . . . There is reason to believe that at the same time England was paying an annual tribute of about $280,000. England was the only power sufficiently

\textsuperscript{16} Bamby, 109.
\textsuperscript{17} Luella J. Hall, The United States and Morocco 1776-1956 (Methuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1971), 44.
\textsuperscript{18} Irwin, 18.
\textsuperscript{19} Hall, 44.
strong enough to put down these pirates; but in order to keep her own position as mistress of the seas, she preferred to leave them in existence in order to be a scourge to the commerce of other European powers, and even to support them by paying a sum so great that other states might find it difficult to make peace with them.\textsuperscript{20}

That the British were cynical and overly self-serving is illustrated by a saying their merchants adopted during this period. "Lord Sheffield was certain that because of trade considerations the leading maritime countries would not aid the United States in making peace with Barbary; and it was said to be a maxim among English merchants that ‘if there were no Algiers, it should be worth England’s while to build one.’\textsuperscript{21}

America’s first foray into diplomatic waters began in May 1784 when a congressional committee made up of Benjamin Franklin, Adams, and Jefferson was created to negotiate treaties of amity and commerce with the four Barbary States. In the following year, $80,000 was appropriated, partly to establish consulates but mostly to appease the pirates with presents and bribes. After Franklin returned from Paris in July 1785, the three appointed Thomas Barclay to negotiate with Morocco and John Lamb to negotiate with Algiers. Preliminary feelers found the demands of the Barbary States exorbitant and far above the monies authorized. Adams was strongly opposed to war because of the expense involved and preferred the payment of tribute payments. Jefferson preferred war. Being goaded by New England commercial interests he enlisted

\textsuperscript{20} Schuyler, 194-195.
\textsuperscript{21} Irwin, 17. While one popular historian claimed that “the encouragement of piracy against the Americans [by the British] did not exist after the treaty of peace and ratification of American independence in 1783,” there were countless British actions to the contrary. See Glenn Tucker, \textit{Dawn Like Thunder: The Barbary Wars and the Birth of the U.S. Navy} (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1963), 18.
the support of a number of Christian Mediterranean powers. When these preliminary efforts failed, Barclay proceeded to Morocco and Lamb went to Algiers.\footnote{Schuyler., 197-199, 203.}

Barclay’s efforts in Morocco were successful. On June 23, 1786, he concluded a treaty with the Emperor of Morocco, Sidi Mohammed III, on June 23, 1786.\footnote{Hunter Miller, ed., Treaties and Other International Acts of the United States of America, II (Washington: United States Department of State, 1931-1948), 185-227.} The treaty, concluded for 50 years, contained some very liberal principles, especially as to neutral rights and the exchange of prisoners. It granted American commerce the same rights as the most favored nation, “the effect of which is to give to each party the same treatment and the same privileges which have been or may be granted to the most favored nation without further specification or agreement.”\footnote{Schuyler, 421.} It had no provision for extraterritoriality, which meant that American diplomats in Morocco were subject to local law and not the law of the United States – thus, no diplomatic immunity. “American diplomats were fortunate that the Emperor had a poor opinion of the British and was intrigued that the United States had won its independence from this nation. He felt that the British did not follow their treaties or keep their promises.”\footnote{Ann M. Kohl, “A Million for Tribute Policy for a New Nation,” MA thesis, California State University, Sacramento, 1976, 40} And in signing this treaty, his was the first state to recognize diplomatically the United States.\footnote{Frost, 116.}

Of course, there was no American navy to back the treaty’s provisions against historically fickle and perfidious partners. Soon afterward, the Emperor passed away and it was necessary to have the treaty recognized by his successor. The expense was less than expected, being under $20,000 in presents to the new Emperor for its ratification in
1795. No tribute was paid. This last feature caught the immediate attention of the Europeans — the Americans had refused to pay tribute and got away with it.27 The ratification of the treaty turned out to be the only success of the commission, since negotiations with Algiers and Tripoli were failures.

Of the two negotiators sent, John Lamb was less successful. He was inexperienced as to the ways of the court, knew nothing of court dress, and spoke English but neither Spanish nor French, the language of diplomacy.28 As a result, the Dey felt insulted by Lamb’s mien. This caused the local diplomats, especially the British, to hold him in contempt.

While the Dey stated he admired George Washington for his wartime exploits, and wished to place Washington’s portrait in his palace (paid for by others, of course), he still demanded tribute. He demanded $2,800 per captive, while Lamb was authorized to offer $200. “The last captives redeemed by the French had cost $300 a man, which, with the expenses had amounted to about $500.”29 Eugene Schuyler later commented that: “When afterward, under the pretext of ill health, Lamb declined to return either to Congress, to Mr. Adams, or to Mr. Jefferson, they [Adams and Jefferson] feared some malversation [my emphasis]. ‘I am persuaded’ . . . ‘says Mr. Jefferson, that Lamb is not a proper agent’.”30 Meanwhile, the captives began dying.

Adams favored buying peace by giving in to the pirates’ demands for tribute while Jefferson wanted a strong navy. It turned out that in time each got what he wanted.

28 Schuyler, 203.
29 Ibid., 207.
30 Ibid., 205.
In 1790, Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson recommended to Congress a plan to establish a navy to face up to the predations of the Barbary States. “On January 6, 1791, the Senate committee on Mediterranean trade reported ‘that the trade of the United States to the Mediterranean cannot be protected but by a naval force; and that it will be proper to resort to the same as soon as the state of the public finances will admit’.”

In February 1792, the President of the Senate, John Adams, convinced his colleagues to vote for an expenditure of up to $100,000 annually for peace, i.e., tribute money for Algiers, Tripoli, and Tunis, and $40,000 for ransom of the captives.

Jefferson appointed Admiral John Paul Jones to deal with Algiers but unfortunately Jones died before he could make contact. Thomas Barclay succeeded him but he too suddenly died, whereupon Colonel David Humphreys, the American Ambassador in Lisbon, was appointed plenipotentiary.

Eight hundred thousand dollars were placed at his disposal. Humphreys never went directly to Algiers; but while in the south of Spain, endeavoring to get across to the Barbary coast, received the unwelcome, but not entirely unlooked for, news that the Portuguese had made a twelvemonth’s truce with Algiers. The Portuguese squadron, which had guarded the Straits of Gibraltar, was withdrawn, and that allowed the Algerine fleet to get out into the Atlantic. The immediate result of this was that in a single cruise ten of our vessels were captured, and in November 1793, the number of prisoners at Algiers amounted to one hundred and fifteen men, among whom there remained only ten of the original captives of 1785.

After the news of the Algerine naval successes reached the United States in January 1794, outraged American public opinion demanded military action against the Barbary States with the cry “millions for defense but not one cent for tribute.” There was

31 Allen, 43-44.
32 Schuyler, 209.
more trouble. War had broken out between the French and British in February 1793 following the French Revolution. In June, the British government directed the Royal Navy to bring in all neutral ships, including American vessels carrying provisions to French ports. By early 1794, the British had captured over 250 American ships in the Caribbean. “Insurance rates were raised to the point where it was unprofitable to ship in American-owned vessels, and thereby resulted in great losses to American trade.”

The American diplomatic response was classic: negotiate with the strong, i.e., the nearly total capitulation to British demands -- the detested John Jay Treaty that led to a truce with Britain, and use force with the weak -- a navy to take on the Barbary pirates and enforce a policy of freedom of the seas. It was fairly obvious to the Americans that the British schemes were an over-arching British strategy designed to destroy American commercial competition.

With the ratification of the Constitution in 1789, the federal government now had the tools -- the power of taxation and the control of interstate commerce -- to achieve national solvency. Alexander Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury, initiated taxation policies that allowed revenues to grow rapidly. Accordingly, in January 1794 Congress took up the issue of building a navy generally to serve America’s commercial interests and provide freedom of the seas, and specifically to attack the Barbary States and free American prisoners there. The American Navy was founded by legislation completed on March 27, 1794. Four ships carrying 44 cannon each were to be built in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Portsmouth, Virginia, while two ships carrying 36 cannon each

---

33 Kohl, 12.
34 Field, 36-37.
were to be built in Baltimore and Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Thus with the exception of Virginia, no southern state got contracts owing perhaps to their almost unanimous votes against the legislation. The law read: "An Act to Provide a Naval Armament: Whereas the depredations committed by the Algerine corsairs on the commerce of the United States render it necessary that a naval force should be provided for its protection."  

In addition, Jefferson's replacement as Secretary of State, Edmund Randolph, set up a fund for $800,000 for tribute and for ransoming captives from the Algerines. In April 1795, plenipotentiaries David Humphreys and Joseph Donaldson were sent to Paris. Humphreys stayed in Paris while Donaldson proceeded to Algiers where a treaty was successfully negotiated on September 5, 1795. However, the Algerian Dey threatened to abrogate what he had just signed because the money was not forthcoming due to a technical glitch. The new Secretary of State, Timothy Pickering, part of the commercial aristocracy of New England, demanded immediate action from Humphreys who sent Joel Barlow to collaborate with Donaldson in dealing with the Dey. Donaldson and Barlow successfully concluded their negotiations in January 1797, but owing to the Dey's additional demands, the final cost ballooned to nearly $1,000,000, about $100,000 for

---

each of the *Maria* and *Dauphine* survivors held for nearly 12 years in Algerine slave pens.38 So much for “not one cent for tribute.”

The treaty freed the seamen of the *Maria* and *Dauphine*. What happened to them in the intervening years? Of the twenty-one Americans seized, ten survived. There is no record of how they died but many may have succumbed to their brutal treatment, to disease, especially plague, or to accidents. Three who survived were Captain Isaak Stevens of the *Maria*, and Captain Richard O’Brien and seaman James Cathcart of the *Dauphine*. Richard O’Brien was a skilled sail maker who attracted the attention of Hassan Bashaw, High Admiral of Algiers who admired him greatly. “When Hassan became Dey he tried to persuade O’Brien to take Algerian nationality. The Turk promised that if he did this, and if he agreed to become a Muslim, he would marry him to his daughter and give him command of the Algerian fleet, two great honors which the captain managed to decline.”39 After being freed, O’Brien became United States Consul General at Algiers.

When captured, Irish-American seaman James Cathcart of the *Maria* had just turned eighteen. Having no formal education, Cathcart made up for it with his spirit of *carpe diem*, robust health, and a talent for entrepreneurship. Step by step he moved from palace gardener to expert carpenter; chief coffee-bearer to the Vekil Khradj, the High Admiral; the High Admiral’s chief clerk in which he kept records on all Christian slaves; tavern owner employing salaried Christian hostages; Chief Clerk of the Marine; a major importer of wine and spirits; and a speculator in seized cargoes. He was brutally frank

38 Irwin, Ch.5.
39 Bamby, 135.
with those around him, including the Dey who would occasionally send him to the sewers to repent but because of his talents and loss of competition to the occasional redemption of Christian crews and the frequent plagues that swept through the area, he rose steadily. When, on July 13, 1791, Vekil Khradj was acclaimed Dey of Algiers, Cathcart was named Chief Christian Secretary to the Regency, the highest position any Christian could hold. After the American crews were bartered to freedom, he was appointed American Consul to Algiers.  

John Barlow, newly appointed Consul General at Algiers, negotiated his second Barbary treaty, a combination treaty with Tripoli on November 4, 1796, and Algiers on January 3, 1797. Its major features included a guaranteed peace, no tribute, a most favored nation section, and a bribe of $56,000.  

Again there was no provision for extraterritoriality.

The 1797 treaty with Tripoli was one of many treaties in which each nation officially recognized the religion of the other in an attempt to prevent further escalation of a holy war (jihad) between Muslims and Christians. The first of these, Article XI of that treaty stated:

As the government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion, -- as it has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religion or tranquility of Musselmen, -- and as said States never have entered into any war or act of hostility against any Mehomitan nation, it is declared by the parties that no pretext arising from religious opinions shall ever produce an interruption of the harmony existing between the two countries.  

40 Ibid., passim, 133-154  
42 Ibid., 365.
A minor incident occurred that illuminates the relations between the Barbary satrapies and their masters in the Sublime Porte. In September 1800, the United States frigate *George Washington* reached Algiers to make another payment of tribute. This was the first Mediterranean port of call paid by a American warship. The Dey had displeased the Sultan by signing a treaty with France while the Turks were fighting Napoleon in Egypt and Syria. Although Algiers was the supreme Barbary nation, it was nothing compared to the Porte.43 “The Dey . . . demanded that Captain William Bainbridge employ the vessel to carry his ambassador to the Porte and certain presents [among which was $800,000 in specie] to the Sultan.”44 Dumbfounded, Bainbridge refused on the basis that his orders prevented him from doing so, but under the menacing stare of the shore batteries of the Dey, Bainbridge decided to cooperate. On November 9, 1800, the frigate crossed the Sea of Marmora and dropped her anchor inside the Golden Horn, eluding all the shore batteries on the way. After a few days of confusion Bainbridge was finally recognized by the Sultan. As evidence of his appreciation and to the delight of the Sultan, he fired the recognized international salute of twenty-one guns as he sailed past the Seraglio.

Thus for the first time in history, by chance rather than by orders, without diplomatic exchanges or prearrangement, without the assent of either of the governments involved, an American warship visited the capital city of the Ottoman Empire, and gave visible notice to the Mohammedan world of the birth of the Western republic. . . . Probably the Sultan’s decision to accept the uninvited Americans and welcome them cordially was based not so much on prescience as on the caprice of the moment. He liked Bainbridge’s flag. As he scanned the ship from his palace when it came up the bay, he had noticed the

44 Irwin, 94.
stars in the blue field and had commented that the flag of the United States, like that of Turkey, was decorated with heavenly bodies, a coincidence that might be a harbinger of cordial relations between the two nations in future times.\(^{45}\)

In addition to having an audience with the Sultan, Bainbridge was given his firman, an imperial decree issued by Ottoman sovereigns giving the bearer the Sultan’s protection throughout the Empire.

The Dey’s ambassador to the Sublime Porte did not fare as well. Under the Sultan’s orders, he was taken for an audience with the Capudan Pasha, the top Turkish Admiral aboard his flagship. Upon the Admiral’s reading of the Dey’s letter, he spat on it, stomped on it, and remonstrated against the pompous Dey of Algiers. The ambassador was ordered to send back by return voyage 2,400,000 manbois (about $3,240,000), a sum large enough to impoverish not only the Dey, but his subjects as well.\(^{46}\)

Bainbridge returned to Algiers and anchored his ship well beyond the reach of the Dey’s cannons. At the same time, the ambassador gave the Dey the bad news of the Capudan Pasha’s fine, whereupon the Dey threatened to have the ambassador killed. The Dey then began raging at Bainbridge, who presented him with the Sultan’s firman. It was obvious Bainbridge was under the protection of the Sultan himself. He was asked politely to shuttle the additional tribute back to Constantinople, but refused. The Dey relented, for he had no means of forcing the issue.\(^{47}\)

The American-Barbary States imbroglio ended with mixed results. On one hand, there was peace but it was bought at a great price. On the other, American-

\(^{45}\) Tucker, 14-15.
\(^{46}\) Ibid., Ch. 2.
\(^{47}\) Wheelan, 98.
Mediterranean trade saw eighty United States vessels pass the Straits of Gibraltar. Meanwhile the pirates cast longing eyes at American ships passing through, itching for the day when they could resume their plunder.

They did not have to wait long, for on May 10, 1801, Pasha Yussif Karamanli repudiated the American-Tripolitan treaty of 1897. He demanded the payment of $250,000 and an annual tribute of $20,000 -- and when it was refused, did not declare war on the United States by sending a communiqué but simply cut down the flag-staff in front of the American consulate. He was acting on the "policy of the Barbary States always to be at war with someone, so as to give employment to the corsairs; as soon as peace was made with one nation it was necessary to pick a quarrel with another." Anticipating military action, Jefferson sent four fighting ships to the Mediterranean. Commodore Richard Dale took command of the squadron, America's first in the Mediterranean. "He and the sailor-diplomats who succeeded him were to write some of the brightest pages of American diplomatic history with the Middle East. Combining force with persuasion, these naval officers obtained agreements favorable to the American national interest. They not only protected American commerce, but extended American power to the Mediterranean world and opened the door to the East." Although he visited the enemy, Dale did not have the authority to negotiate and left for America in March 1802. His replacement, Commodore Richard Morris, arrived with the relieving squadron on May 1802, but he proved dilatory and unsuccessful, and in

48 Allen, 90.
49 Bryson, 5.
September 1802 he too departed. On Morris' return, a board of inquiry was convened. He was censured and dismissed from the Navy.

Morris' successor, Commodore Edward Preble, while aggressive, was as unsuccessful as his predecessor. At the outset, he blockaded Tripoli and showed the United States flag before Tangier in order to keep peace with Morocco by intimidating its more powerful neighbor. Working with French diplomats, he negotiated with the enemy using the carrot-and-stick technique. First he would negotiate, then he would leave to attack the pirate vessels, then came back to negotiations, and so forth, but to no avail. The pirates were not cowed. Preble turned his command over to Commodore Samuel Barron on September 10th.

During Preble's tour, an incident restored the Navy's sense of honor. While Captain William Bainbridge was sailing in pursuit of two Tripolitan ships in high winds, he inadvertently ran his ship, Philadelphia, aground on Kaliusa Reef near Tripoli and could not dislodge her. The reef did not appear on Bainbridge's sea charts. Preble and his crew were captured and Philadelphia was refloated when a gale raised the sea level, whereupon the pirates sailed the ship to the port. Tripolitan divers recovered the ship's guns from the sea bottom and "the Bashaw now possessed a fully equipped 44-gun frigate." While imprisoned, the crew was fed short rations and disciplined with the

---


52 Paullin, 68-82.

53 Wheelan, 156.
Bainbridge maintained a correspondence with Preble and suggested that he should try to put a crew aboard Philadelphia and burn her, thereby denying the use of an effective American raider by their enemies. Preble agreed and the assignment was given to Lieutenant Stephen Decatur in February 1804. He fitted out a captured Tripolitan ship as a merchant ship and renamed her Intrepid. They sailed from Syracuse and on February 16 quietly approached Tripoli in the middle of the night. When challenged, Decatur responded with the news that Intrepid had lost her anchor and asked to tie up alongside Philadelphia.

Since Intrepid’s rig aroused no alarm and the Americans on deck were dressed as Maltese sailors, the American ship made fast to the target ship. However, in so doing, the Americans were recognized. Cries of ‘Americanos’ were heard from every hand. Decatur gave the order to ‘board.’ The boarders killed about twenty of the pirates and forced a large number to leap over the side. Swiftly moving to their work, Decatur’s men laid combustible material at strategic locations below decks. Once the fires started, Decatur and his men were in danger of being caught. The last to leave Philadelphia, Decatur ordered Intrepid to get underway immediately for the open sea. Decatur had thus vindicated the honor of the U.S. Navy. On Preble’s recommendation, Decatur was promoted and Congress presented him with a commemorative sword.

The news of the destruction of the Philadelphia electrified Europe and America.

“Admiral Horatio Nelson called it ‘the most bold and daring act of the age.’ Pope Pius VI was moved to extol the actions of Decatur and his men: ‘The American commander, with a small force, and in a short space of time, has done more for the cause of Christianity than the most powerful nations of Christendom have done in ages.’”

---

54 Allen, 146-155.
55 Bryson, Tars, Turks, and Tankers, 9.
56 Wheelan, 194-195.
Commodore Samuel Barron, who took command of the Mediterranean fleet from Preble, had William Eaton, formally a captain in the United States Army and later a consul at Tunis, with him. He was under Jefferson's orders to undertake a remarkably daring overland expedition of 500 miles from Alexandria, Egypt, to Derna, Tripoli. Once at Derna, Barron was to place on the throne there Hamet Karamanli, an older brother of the reigning pasha and rightful heir to Tripoli. It was believed he would most certainly give the United States more favorable terms than obtained previously. Forty miles west of Alexandria, Eaton assembled a force of four hundred men. There were ten Americans including Lieutenant of Marines Presley O'Bannon and six noncommissioned marines. Also among the motley group were thirty-eight Greek mercenaries with three officers; Hamet and his suite of some ninety men; and a party of Arabian cavalry, as well as assorted Arab and Egyptian mercenaries who came and went as their fortunes ebbed and flowed. On March 8, 1805, this discordant and often mutinous aggregation began moving west, a journey that no Christian had accomplished in all the centuries since the Muslim conquest. With the shelling of the city by American ships of the line, and a frontal assault by the troops, Eaton captured Derna, the second largest city in Tripoli on April 27. Lieutenant O'Bannon and his fellow marines, together with the Greek force, stormed the pirates' harbor fortress stronghold of Derna.

57 Field, 52.
59 Paullin, 84.
60 The Marines were the first United States forces to hoist the American flag over territory in the Old World. O'Bannon is remembered for heroism in the battle and was in 1805 rewarded with the "Mameluke
"The American losses were relatively heavy, considering the small number of men involved. 'Of the few Christians who fought on shore,' Eaton says in his official report to Jefferson, 'I lost 14 killed and wounded, three of them were Marines, one dead and another dying; the rest chiefly Greeks, who, in this little affair, well supported their ancient character'. "61 Yussif Karamanli, was threatened by Eaton's force at his rear and his formal demand for surrender. Simultaneously facing the American Navy, he decided to negotiate with Commodore Barron. Commodore Barron's continued ill health made it impossible for him to manage the affairs of the squadron. Accordingly, on May 22, he turned the command over to Commodore John Rodgers who initiated negotiations aboard his flagship Constitution.62 "Humiliated, the Pasha agreed to make a treaty that was satisfactory to the United States. . . . It provided for the restoration of peace, ransom, and release for the prisoners, the right to exchange consuls, and a most favored nation clause."63 The American government generally agreed that the treaty served American interests, but reluctantly paid ransom, albeit a small one ($60,000 for over 100 seamen). Eaton was enraged that any ransom had been paid.64

Sword" by an act of Congress. "Officers had traditionally carried a sword of the Mameluke pattern, worn by marines since 1805. Opting for uniformity [the Commandant of the Marines, Archibald] Henderson made it official and ordered that the Mameluke sword be the standard; it has been worn by marine officers since Henderson authorized it [in 1826]." Joseph D. Dawson III, "With Fidelity and Effectiveness: Archibald Henderson's Lasting Legacy in the U.S. Marine Corps," Journal of Military History 62, No. 4 (October 1998), 737.

61 Wright and Macleod, 174-175.
62 Allen, 223.
64 Frost, 197.
It will be remembered that while Congress had passed legislation creating the consular corps, at this point its personnel, many of whom were naval officers, were untrained in diplomacy. In addition, America’s diplomatic representatives were being challenged in the Dey’s court by sophisticated European diplomats. Accordingly, Jefferson insisted that the negotiations be concluded in Washington. Suliman Melli Melli, “a distinguished Tunisian soldier and statesman,” arrived and began wrangling over the provisions of the treaty. He presented four Arabian horses to the President as a gift. As the first Muslim emissary to the United States, he caused a sensation whenever he appeared on the street with his turban, flowing robes, equally colorful retinue, and daggers in his belt. The government rented a sumptuous hotel room for him and even paid for female companionship, expenses that were defrayed by selling the gift horses.65 “While negotiations continued and the Ambassador proceeded on a grand tour, his retinue, freed from the pressures and austerity of Tunisian life, got drunk, quarreled, and deserted to the land of freedom and plenty.”66

B. The Second Barbary War

With the Senate’s final approval the following year, the treaty effectively ended the First Barbary War. “It has always been a question whether in the long run the interests of the United States would have not been better served by continuing the war until Tripoli was reduced. Such a course however might have cost, the lives of the American prisoners in Tripoli.”67 Eaton bitterly opposed payment of any kind, arguing

---

65 Wheelan, 319.
66 Field, 54-55.
67 Paullin, 88.
that when the American Navy had them under the gun they could have made a bargain
that involved no money changing hands at all.68

The military power of post-revolutionary America was tested during the First
Barbary War and proved that American military power was not to be underestimated.
America could pursue a war across a vast ocean to fight as a cohesive force and not as
Rhode Islanders and Virginians. Marine Corps was firmly established as well as was the
prowess of the United States Navy and its greatest post-Revolutionary war hero, Stephen
Decatur.

The winds of war were beginning to blow as the strained relations between
Britain and the United States were coming to a head. American naval squadrons that
would ordinarily have cycled to the Mediterranean were kept in home waters. From 1807
until 1815, American commercial vessels passed the Straits of Gibraltar at their own risk
and many were seized by the rulers of Barbary, with the most aggressive being Algiers
and Tunis.69 The War of 1812 terminated with the signing of the Treaty of Ghent,70 and
thereby American men-of-war had one less adversary to dodge as they entered the
Mediterranean.

In March, 1815, the United States declared war on Algiers for the protection of
American economic interests in the Middle East. Two squadrons, one under
Commodore Stephen Decatur, and the other under Commodore William
Bainbridge, were fitted out with orders to proceed to the Mediterranean, with
William Shaler, consul general to the Barbary states. . . Decatur sailed first and
on reaching the Mediterranean, his force promptly captured two Algerine ships.
Decatur began talks and offered the Dey peace or war. The Algerines rejected

68 Wright and Macleod, 191-193.
69 Field, 57.
70 "Treaty of Peace and Amity Between His Britannic Majesty and the United States of America," Ghent,
Flanders, December 24, 1814, Hunter Miller, ed., Treaties and Other International Acts of the United
the draft treaty. Aware of the approach of an Algerine squadron, Decatur insisted on acceptance, else he would destroy the ships.71

The treaty, signed in mid 1815, provided for peace, the end of tributes, the end of ransoms, assured extraterritoriality, a most favored nation clause, and indemnification for destruction of American property -- in short, a total diplomatic victory of the United States that became the envy of Europe.72

After consulting with his captains as to next steps, Commodore Decatur left Algiers and on July 28 anchored off Tunis. He demanded the immediate payment of $46,000 to correct Tunisian treaty violations of handing over to the British two prize war ships taken by an American warship earlier. In a funk, the Dey assumed indifference, suggested the payment be postponed for a year, finally relented, and paid up.73

Decatur left Tunis and on August 5 anchored before Tripoli. Using the same tactic he used in Tunis, he demanded an instant payment of $30,000 for the loss of prizes taken but settled for $25,000, providing Pasha Yusif release ten Christian prisoners. The Pasha yielded on these terms which he found irksome, causing an observer to note: "The Algerines are extremely restive under the treaty made with Decatur, considering it disgraceful to the Faithful to humble themselves before Christian dogs. These feelings are encouraged and their passions are fomented by the consuls of other powers, who consider the peace we have made a reflection upon them."74 Now that the United States had the upper hand, Consul General Shaler delivered a letter from President James

73 Allen, 289-290.
74 Ibid., 295.
Madison that stated that the United States would fight before it would pay Algiers again:

“It is a principle incorporated into the settled policy of America that, as peace is better than war, war is better than tribute.”75 Their work finished, the Decatur and Bainbridge squadrons headed for home in October 1816, leaving four capital ships in the Mediterranean to further American commercial interests, thus ending the Second Barbary War. The successful conclusion of the First and Second Barbary Wars that had plagued the United States since the founding of the republic underlined the importance of a viable navy to defend the nation’s commercial interests.

American successes in the Mediterranean had a salutary effect on American public opinion with its surge of domestic and international republicanism. It firmly established that the American Navy was to play a leading role in the future of American diplomacy. It also saw the beginning of the consulate corps. The 1820s witnessed the dawning of the American industrial revolution. Its portent was that as the nation’s economy expanded, as Manifest Destiny rolled westward, and as the American passion for commerce and entrepreneurship grew both nationally and internationally, the nation was at the threshold of becoming a major international player. Indeed, by 1830, the United States was the second largest carrying nation, after Britain.76

The final victory of naval forces over the Barbary States enabled American merchantmen to sail past them and enter the waters of the entire Mediterranean where they could begin their trade with the Spanish and French littoral, with Italy and Egypt, and with the Ottoman Empire out of Smyrna in Asia Minor. An important part of the

75 Ibid., 339.
76 Field, 149-150.
Smyrna trade from 1809 until 1880 involved Smyrna-based New England businesses exporting Turkish opium to Canton, China. A detailed description of this trade appears in the next chapter.

As will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3, the next diplomatic test for the United States was in 1821 with the beginning of the Greek revolution against the Ottoman Empire. Strong feelings among average Americans sympathetic to the Greek insurgents threatened to involve the United States in a European war. Opposed to popular sentiment were most in the House of Representatives despite the support of such famous Representatives as Daniel Webster, Henry Clay, and John Calhoun. Also lobbyists for the New England opium trade fought to keep the American government from recognizing the provisional Greek government. Finally, the formulation of the Monroe Doctrine, which proposed that America keep out of European affairs while the Europeans kept out of Western Hemisphere affairs, acted as a brake against domestic impulses favoring the recognition of Greek independence and instead established a new major principle of American foreign policy.
CHAPTER 3

The Greek War of Independence, the Monroe Doctrine, and the Beginning of America’s Policy toward the Ottoman State

The Congress of Vienna, September 1814 to June 1815, led by Prince Fürst von Metternich, was one of the most important international conferences in European history. It was called in an effort to solidify the status quo, settle political boundaries after the collapse of the Napoleonic Empire, and preserve a conservative social order. The French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars destroyed what political structure was left in Europe. The Congress established a new balance of power among Europe’s major states. The major result was the creation of the Holy Alliance, a vague agreement that the sovereigns of Austria, Prussia, and Russia would conduct their nations in a manner consonant with “Christian principles.” The Alliance ostensibly was created to bring the virtues of peace and charity to the political life of the Continent, while in actuality it was created to make revolution against existing states difficult if not impossible.

Between receptions and fêtes the members dawdled, but this ceased as the delegates concentrated on the news that Napoleon had left Elba and was gathering his army for a new offensive. Compromises were quickly made and the conference ended on June 13, 1815, exactly five days before Arthur Wellesley, the first Duke of Wellington, defeated Bonaparte with his only face-to-face battlefield encounter with him. Napoleon was sent into exile to lonely St. Helena Island in the Pacific. Six short years after the end
of the conference, the Greek War of Independence challenged the principles of the Holy
Alliance.¹

The Greek War of Independence was the first time that the developing American
government was forced to conceive a policy regarding whether or not to recognize the
provisional government of a European nation revolting against its oppressor. There was
also the issue of giving it military assistance and provisions in direct contradiction of the
wishes of the Holy Alliance. This situation was especially difficult since the name
“Greece” evoked many images in the contemporary American mind – Sparta and Athens,
Pericles and Homer, Salamis, the Parthenon, and Socrates. The Greeks were seeking
freedom from an oppressor the same as Americans had two generations before, and the
Greeks too were yearning to establish democracy. Greece was also a Christian nation
struggling against four centuries of a Muslim state’s harsh rule, surely a fact to arouse the
sympathies of all Christendom.²

Much of this was true also of the uprising of the Serbians against the Turks
between 1805 and 1817.³ They too were Orthodox Christians struggling against the same
brutal Ottomans to be free and to determine their destiny. However, few Americans took
any interest in or even knew the plight of the Serbians, and if they did, “it was viewed as

¹ C. W. Crawley, The Question of Greek Independence: A Study of British Policy in the Near East, 1821-
² “As Christians, the Greeks had a high claim to sympathy and support. The Greek church was entitled to
veneration as the most ancient in the world and the only one in which the scriptures of the New Testament
continued to be read in the language in which they were originally written.” Myrtle A. Cline, American
Attitude Toward the Greek War of Independence 1821-1828 (Atlanta: Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia
University, privately published by Higgins-McArthur, Atlanta, 1930), 47. Cline’s lengthy book is the most
complete source of the American public’s feelings toward the Greek War of Independence. She cites
newspapers from Albany, New York; Baltimore (2); Boston (3); Cheraw, South Carolina; Charleston (2);
Cincinnati (2); Frankfort, Kentucky; Hartford; Lexington, Kentucky; New York (4); Philadelphia (5);
Providence (2); Richmond; Savannah, Georgia; Troy, New York; and Washington D.C. (2).
an uprising of a semi-barbarous Balkan peasantry.\textsuperscript{4} But unlike the Serbs, the Greeks had a great name; that is, Americans knew about ancient Greece but virtually nothing about Serbia. Its greatest strength was the evocation of Classical Greece, whose language was taught from the earliest days of the founding of Harvard, 1636; College of William and Mary, 1693; Yale, 1701; and Kings College (Princeton), 1746. Many of the signers of the Declaration of Independence and America’s earliest presidents knew classical Greek.

While in Paris, Thomas Jefferson developed a close friendship with Adamantios Koraës, a scholar and Greek patriot,\textsuperscript{5} to whom he was later to write that any service America might render to his nation’s struggle had to be a tribute to “the splendid constellation of sages and heroes, whose blood is still flowing in your veins, and whose merits are still resting, as a heavy debt, on the shoulders of the living, and the future races of men.”\textsuperscript{6} In contrast to the Serbian uprising, when hostilities broke out in Greece, a contagious philhellenism began slowly in New York and soon swept the United States from Boston to New Orleans like wildfire. Opponents to the cause were branded

\textsuperscript{4} Edward Mead Earle, “American Interest in the Greek Cause, 1821-1827,” \textit{American Historical Review} 33, No. 1 (October 1927): 44-45. The Greeks of the time were also accused of being ignorant. “It was most unjust to say that the present day Greeks were an ignorant people. Concerning their commercial spirit, their skill in navigation, their talents for maritime enterprise, their great activity and industry – all these were too well known to require mention.” Cline. Ibid.

\textsuperscript{5} “To the peasant of the Morea, as to the townsman of Athens, the Greek of literacy masterpieces of antiquity was an unknown tongue; and, if this is no longer the case, the change is due to the conscious linguistic revolution which is forever associated with the name of Adamantios Korais. . . . What Luther’s Bible did for Germany, the English Bible for England, . . . that Korais did for modern Greece by his translations of the Classics into a language which was, as it were, a compromise between the \textit{patois} still used in ordinary conversation and the stately language of the originals.” A. W. Ward, et al, eds., \textit{The Cambridge Modern History, vol. X, The Restoration} (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1907), 174.

Turkophiles, "a designation no more coveted then than now." The Greeks' great name was what set the Greek struggle apart from the Serbs and made it special to Americans.

On March 25, 1821, Germanos, Bishop of Patras, raised the blue and white Greek flag at the Monastery of Aghia Lavra signaling the beginning of the Greek War of Independence. Exactly two months later, the Messinian Senate of Kalamata published a lengthy appeal signed by Commander-in-Chief Petros Mavromichalis, directed to "the fellow-citizens of Penn, of Washington and of Franklin." The appeal was sent to Adamantios Koraës in Paris who sent it to his friend, Edward Elliott, America's leading Greek scholar and a professor of Greek Literature at Harvard. Elliot was arguably the most ardent philhellene in the United States and a devoted and knowledgeable sympathizer of the Greek cause, having visited Greece in 1809 while a student at Harvard. Elliott was the perfect disseminator, for he not only had contacts in the press (he had the Kalamata appeal printed in the Boston Commercial Advertiser of October 15, 1821) but was also publisher of the North American Review, a scholarly journal read by America's elite which solidly supported the Greek cause. While the document was widely distributed throughout America, it was pointedly ignored by the government in Washington.

---

7 These words by Cline, 77, were published in 1930.
8 Harris J. Booras, Hellenic Independence and America's Contribution to the Cause (Rutland, VT: Tuttle, 1934), 160-161. Any author writing of the Greek War of Independence who dresses himself in a revolutionary evzone costume, fully armed, must be read closely and suspiciously for any sign of distortion and prejudice. See Preface, p. 4.
10 Edward Meade Earle, "Early American Policy Concerning Ottoman Minorities," Political Science Quarterly 42, No. 3 (September 1927): 345.
A. The American Philhellenic Movement

The American philhellenic movement began slowly. According to Myrtle Cline, it began in Albany, New York, when the local newspaper, the *Albany Argus*, in its New Year's issue of 1822, published a column of verse exalting the heroic Greeks.\(^{11}\) This was followed by Fourth of July speeches, mass public meetings, numerous editorials in local newspapers, and pleas for monetary support. Unfortunately for the Greeks enthusiasm began to fade as quickly as it began, for philhellenism had not spread to cities beyond New York. Then two things happened that changed everything: (1) on January 5, 1824, the great and notorious English poet and philhellene, Lord Byron, arrived at Missolonghi, Greece, and (2) the Greeks began to mount successive military successes against the Ottoman forces, renewing enthusiasm for philhellenism.

Having taken root, the dissemination of pro-Greek propaganda was most effectively carried out in public meetings in the cities and towns and in the meetings of special groups and organizations. The American public passion intensified as news of Turkish barbarities became known. On Easter Sunday, April 22, 1821, the holiest day of Orthodox Greeks, and less than a month after the raising of the flag at the Monastery of *Aghia Lavra*, Gregorious, the Patriarch of Constantinople, was publicly hanged in his sacred robes by the Turks and his body was given to the Jews to be dragged through the streets.\(^{12}\) Christian churches were destroyed, while bishops and archbishops were murdered as soon as they were located. In Adrianople and Smyrna, thousands died in the

---

\(^{11}\) Cline, 21.

\(^{12}\) The death of the Patriarch, a native of the Mores is described in William Miller, *The Ottoman Empire and Its Successors, 1801-1922* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1923), 74-75.
Turkish massacres of Greeks. Many thousands of Greek women and children were forced into slavery. The island of Cyprus, with a population of nearly one million, was virtually depopulated.\textsuperscript{13}

As news of the atrocities spread, philhellenism surged. Naturally, the plight of the oppressed Greeks appealed strongly to idealistic college youth. Colleges and universities including Yale,\textsuperscript{14} Columbia, Hamilton College, Transylvania University, the United States Military Academy,\textsuperscript{15} Brown, Andover Theological Seminary, University of Georgia, and others asked for donations.\textsuperscript{16} Fund drives flourished. Besides efforts by college students,

special benefit performances were given at theatres; special sermons were preached and special collections taken up in churches; prominent men debated public questions and charged an admission fee to be donated to the local Greek committees; merchants were persuaded to assign to Greek relief a percentage of their profits; objects of value were offered at public auction and sold at inflated prices; school children handed up their pennies; laborers gave up a day’s wages; ship owners donated space on their ships for supplies destined for Greece; and innumerable balls and fairs were held.\textsuperscript{17}

The story of the atrocities caused philhellenistic fervor to infect the White House itself.

On December 3, 1822, President James Monroe in the “Sixth Annual Message to Congress” articulated the reasons for America’s interest in the Greek cause:

The mention of Greece fills the mind with the most exalted sentiments and arouses in our bosoms the best feelings of which our nation is susceptible.

\textsuperscript{13} Booras, 47-48.
\textsuperscript{14} “The Yale students appointed two members of each class to solicit subscriptions, with the result that a sum of five hundred dollars was contributed – the largest amount from any college to the Greek fund.” Cline, 105.
\textsuperscript{15} “While there is no record of Philhellenic speeches and resolutions at the military academy at West Point, nevertheless that community of officers, cadets and citizens demonstrated their sympathy for Greece by subscriptions amounting to nearly seven hundred dollars.” Ibid., 107.
\textsuperscript{17} Earle, ibid., 51.
Superior skill and refinement in the arts, heroic gallantry in action, disinterested patriotism, enthusiastic zeal and devotion in favor of public and personal liberty are associated with our recollections of ancient Greece. That such a country should have been overwhelmed and so long hidden, as it were, from the world under a gloomy despotism has been a cause of unceasing and deep regret to generous minds for ages past. ... A strong hope is entertained that these people will recover their independence and resume their equal station among the nations of the earth.\textsuperscript{18}

There was also an attempt in Congress to raise money for the Greek fighters. On December 24, 1822, Henry W. Dwight of Massachusetts presented to the House of Representatives a memorial from the people of Washington and Georgetown on behalf of the Greek revolutionaries. It read: “The memorial which Mr. D[wight] here presented is signed by one hundred and thirty-eight citizens of Washington and Georgetown, praying of Congress to ‘appropriate two or three millions, in provisions, and whatever may be necessary to the Greeks, as an easy and honorable mode of acknowledging the aid, bounty, and obligation received from France in like circumstances’.” Bowing to colleague pressure in the House, Dwight agreed to forward his proposal to the Committee of Foreign Relations where it met certain death as it “was ordered to lie on the table.”\textsuperscript{19}

Public opinion was overwhelmingly in favor of the Greek cause and was manifested in hatred for the Turks and even the Holy Alliance. The question became: to what extent, if any, should the executive and legislative branches of the American government pay heed to the wishes of its citizens when this involved its foreign policy relations with another country? The President, Congress, and ordinary citizens could

\textsuperscript{18} James D. Richardson, \textit{A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents}, vol. II (New York: Bureau of National Literature, 1897), 762.
voice sentiments of concern. Citizens could raise and send money to Greece. Citizens could even volunteer to fight alongside the Greeks, as some did.\textsuperscript{20} The Turk (Muslim) versus the Greek (Christian) was played to great effect from state legislative chambers, Congress, and pulpits but this could hardly be considered the formulation of a diplomatic policy with a constitutional amendment guaranteeing freedom of religion. In addition, Article XI of the 1797 treaty with Tripoli specifically stated: “As the government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion -- as it has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religion or tranquility of Musselmen . . . it is declared by the parties that no pretext arising from religious opinions shall even produce an interruption of the harmony existing between the two countries.”\textsuperscript{21} This provision of the treaty with Algiers pointed to America’s commercial interests in the area, especially with a possible treaty of amity and commerce with the Porte.

\textbf{B. First Diplomatic Feelers from the Greeks}

The Holy Alliance’s strong antipathy toward all insurrectionary movements prompted the provisional government of Greece to seek out neutral America for its political and military support. On February 20, 1823, the first official contact by Greece with the United States was initiated by Andreas Luriottis, a London-based Envoy of the Provisional Government of the Greeks, to Richard Bush, the American Ambassador to

\textsuperscript{20} The most famous of these was Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe, a graduate of Brown University and Harvard College’s Medical School. According to Booras, 206, “He served as a doctor, he organized medical service, he founded hospitals and organized ambulance corps, he served as Surgeon-General of the Greek Navy, he fought in many battles, he fed and clothed and healed the wounds of thousands of unfortunates, he implanted life and enthusiasm where there was misery, suffering, and despair, in short, he was the real spiritual father and protector of the poor people of struggling Greece.”

the Court of St. James. Luriottis, "recommending the cause of the Greeks, solicited of the United States recognition, alliance, and assistance." The letter was addressed to John Quincy Adams, Secretary of State, and stated in part:

That diplomatic relations may be established between us, communicating the most earnest desire of my Government that we may be allowed to call you allies as well as friends and stating that we shall rejoice to enter upon discussions which may lead to immediate and advantageous treaties, and to receive us as well as expedite diplomatic agents without delay.

Apparently, in the same diplomatic pouch Rush reported to Adams:

I received him [Luriottis] in a manner due to the interesting character which he bears. I assured him that the fortunes of his country were dear to the people of the United States, who, cherishing the freedom which they themselves inherited and enjoyed, looked with the warmest sympathy upon the struggles of the Greeks for their national liberties, and the government of the United States participated in this feeling. Of the latter, I considered the late mention of the subject by the President in his message to Congress at the opening of the session, as the authentic proof.

Rush refused to give Luriottis any encouragement as to how America’s Secretary of State might regard his request.

On June 22, 1823, Alexander Mavrocordatos, the Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs, followed up on Luriottis’ note with a proposal to Adams for secret negotiations:

I am directed by my Government to bring to your attention the feelings of gratitude towards the ministers of your nation accredited in London, Paris, Lisbon, and Madrid. The interest they have taken in the success of our cause and the sentiments of benevolence inspiring them in our favor, assure them as well as all your generous citizens the incontestable rights to our thankfulness.

---

23 Booras, 163.
24 Earle, “Ottoman Minorities,” 347-348. Earle noted that “Rush himself seems then, as subsequently, to have been of the opinion that American recognition of Greece might do the cause of the revolutionaries more harm than good.”
A mission which is about to be sent to London for the negotiation of a loan is, at
the same time, directed to enter into secret negotiations with you.25

On August 15, 1823, as the fighting continued in Greece, President Monroe’s cabinet
finally met to discuss the questions of the recognition of the Greek provisional
government and of direct aid to the Greek people. Secretary of the Treasury William H.
Crawford and Secretary of War John C. Calhoun favored both recognition and assistance.
Calhoun, a rabid philhellene and an outspoken Turkophobe, following up on
Mavrocordatos’ note, proposed sending a secret agent to Greece. Adams, however,
objected to the United States having any secret agents. Calhoun, echoing the concerns of
most Americans, especially the clergy, argued his full support for the Greeks as
Christians and counseled that America ignore Turkish interests totally.

Adams was not as sanguine as Calhoun and Crawford.

Mr. Gallatin [the American Ambassador to France] had proposed in one of his
last dispatches, as if he was serious [my emphasis], that we should assist the
Greeks with our naval force in the Mediterranean – one frigate, one corvette,
and one schooner. Mr. Crawford and Mr. Calhoun inclined to countenance this
project. . . . Their enthusiasm for the Greeks is all sentiment, and the standard of
this is the prevailing popular feeling. As for action, they are seldom agreed; and
after two hours of discussion this day the subject was dismissed. . . . I have not
much esteem for the enthusiasm that evaporates in words; and I told the
President I thought not quite so lightly of a war with Turkey.26

Monroe directed Adams to craft a response to Luriottis for his signature.

On August 18, 1823, a response was sent to Luriottis. It was the views of Adams
and not those of Crawford, Calhoun, and Gallatin that prevailed.

While cheering with their best wishes the cause of the Greeks, the United States
is forbidden by the duties of the situation from taking part in the war, to which

25 Booras, 164.
26 Nevins, ibid.
their relation is that of neutrality . . . If, in the progress of events, the Greeks should be enabled to establish and organize themselves as an independent nation, the United States will be among the first to welcome them in that capacity into the general family, to establish diplomatic and commercial relations with them suited to the mutual interests of the two countries, and to recognize with special satisfaction their constituted state in the character of a sister Republic.  

Although this was the final official word of the United States government on the Greek provisional government's request for recognition, alliance, and assistance, former president James Madison had a different idea. In his letter of October 30, 1823, addressed to President Monroe, he stated that the administration should “join in some declaratory Act in behalf of the Greeks.” Two weeks later Madison wrote to Richard Bush suggesting that a joint Anglo-American declaration on behalf of the Greeks be fashioned, declaring “the good which would result to the world from such an invitation, if accepted, and the honor to our country even if declined, outweigh the sacrifices that would be required, or the risks that would be incurred.” The joint declaration was never made.

C. The Genesis of the Monroe Doctrine

While the Monroe Doctrine is generally known, few Americans know of the connection of the Monroe Doctrine and the Greek War of Independence. Most understand that it was a prohibition on the part of the United States against the extension of European influence and power in the New World. As one expert noted:

It does not necessarily imply . . . that the United States must abstain from all diplomatic activity or all interference in the affairs of other continents. But there

---

28 Ibid., 350.
can be no denial of the fact that it is, in many minds, connected with a more general principle, the principle of the separation of the New World from the Old, and that it is regarded as a complement to the principle of no entangling alliances and no binding political connection with any European power.  

President James Monroe’s momentous Doctrine of December 2, 1823 -- the capstone in the arch of America’s foreign policy for years to come -- “was not a treaty, not an executive agreement, not an act of Congress, not a multilateral inter-American policy, and not international law. . . . It was simply a statement of policy included in the President’s [Seventh Annual Message] to Congress.” It had three main premises. First, it warned the Quadruple Alliance (Great Britain, France, Spain, and Russia) against extending European political designs to the Western Hemisphere:

The political system of the allied powers is essentially different . . . from that of America. . . . [w]e should consider any attempt of their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety. With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European power we have not interfered and shall not interfere. But with the Governments who have declared their independence and maintained it, and whose dependence we have, on great consideration and on just principles, acknowledged, we could not view any imposition for the purpose of oppressing them, or controlling in any other manner their destiny, by any European power in any other light than as a manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States.  

Second, Monroe advanced the noncolonization principle:

The American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers.  

And third, Monroe endorsed the American policy of nonintervention in Europe:

---

32 Richardson, 787.  
33 Ibid., 778.
Our policy in regard to Europe . . . remains the same, which is, not to interfere in the internal concerns of any of its powers; to consider the government de facto as the legitimate government for us; to cultivate friendly relations with it, and to preserve those relations by a frank, firm, and manly policy, meeting in all instances the just claims of every power, submitting to injuries to none.34

The most important immediate thrust of Monroe’s policy was to put any initiatives of interference with western hemisphere nations off limits, especially to Russia’s designs on Alaska and the American Pacific Northwest as far south as Fort Ross, California, and to Spain’s continued interest in South America to reestablish governments there subservient to the Spanish crown. In actuality, for the next 26 years, the United States did little, save make token protests to European expansion in the Western Hemisphere.35

In the same message to Congress, Monroe also made plain that the United States would not deviate from its policy of non-interference in Greek affairs. He offered his admiration and sympathies to the Greek people and predicted they would win their fight with the Ottoman Turks, but little else.

A strong hope has been long entertained, founded on the heroic struggle of the Greeks; that they would succeed in their contest and resume their equal station among the nations of the earth. It is believed that the whole civilized world takes a deep interest in their welfare . . . From the facts which have come to my knowledge there is good cause to believe that their enemy has lost forever all dominion over them; that Greece will become again an independent nation. That she may obtain that rank is the object of our most ardent wishes.36

The Monroe Doctrine did little to deter the increasingly vocal and potent philhellenic movement. Aid to the Greeks continued to grow under the leadership of such luminaries

34 Ibid., 787-788.
35 “Britain seized the Falkland Island off the Argentine coast in 1833. In 1838 France blockaded Mexico at Vera Cruz and invaded and blockaded Argentina. Britain extended the boundaries of British Honduras and seized one of the Bay Islands off Honduras in 1838. From 1845 to 1849 Britain and France jointly intervened in Argentina.” Cole, 138.
36 Richardson, 786.
as Philadelphia financier and President of the Bank of the United States, Nicholas Biddle; Philadelphia publisher, Mathew Carey; New York Governor DeWitt Clinton; and Edward Everett. Cincinnati was the main philhellenic center west of the mountains and General William Henry Harrison headed its committee. All these men established committees in their respective cities for Greek relief. By and large, despite occasionally citing fears of foreign entanglements, the Eastern press was solidly pro-Greek.

Several committees, in an effort to educate the public, spread blood-curdling tales of Turkish atrocities, glossing over similar actions by the Greek fighters. In addition, resolutions favorable to Greek interests were presented to Congress by the state legislatures of Maryland, South Carolina, and Kentucky; the governors of New York and Massachusetts sent messages of Greek support; denunciations of the infidel Ottomans rang from pulpits everywhere; and poems echoing Lord Byron’s support of the Greek cause were penned by such writers as William Cullen Bryant and Fitz-Green Halleck.

While commercial interests called for cooler heads than those of the philhellenes, this was also true of those fearful that the Greek excitement might force Congress to

---

37 "It is significant that the press and other organs of American public opinion during the Greek War of Independence, although eloquent and verbose on the subject of Turkish atrocities, were silent concerning the brutalities of Greek armed forces. The massacres of defenseless Moslems at Galatz, at Jassy, at Monemvasia, at Navarino, at Tripolitza, and elsewhere went unreported, with the exception that occasionally a journal justified the slaughter of Turks (men, women, and children) on the ground that ‘if they had not been killed, they most certainly would have massacred the Greeks.’... The truth is that by both Greeks and Turks the war was waged as a war of extermination, accompanied by the most obscene and barbarous cruelty." Earle, "Greek Cause," 62. "Lacking competent and experienced leaders, the insurrectionists in general were uncontrolled and displayed the characteristics of an infuriated rabble. Ruthless massacres of Moslems took place wherever the Greeks gained control. At Tripolitza, the capital of the Morea, the most horrible atrocities — nothing short of savage butchery — were committed, and twelve thousand Turks were reported slain. Doubtless, it was such warfare as this that led Koraës to urge his countrymen that, although they were fighting Turks, they should not follow Turkish practices in dealing with the enemy." Cline, 11.

change America’s traditional policy of strict neutrality, and that this might jeopardize an eventual commercial treaty with the Porte. 39 In the press, letters to the editor criticized British naval officers for passing the “blazing islands” of Greece with “frigid neutrality,” when in fact, “British ships protected individual Greeks and had aided refugees, while [it was] the American vessels in the Mediterranean [that] had not maintained any other than a frigid neutrality.”40

American and European philhellenes adored Greece as did their missionaries. And while commercial interests were counting-house centered, they did not actively pursue an anti-Greek policy. However, it was soon plain to most that America’s national interest lay in fostering its commercial interests above all others. This was the beginning of the rivalry between commercial and missionary interests as regards the Ottoman State that lasted at least through the sacking of Smyrna in 1922.

The American Navy was an altogether different matter. The Navy was held in great regard by the Sultan and by Europeans because of its exploits against the Barbary States, by its reputation for technologically superior vessels, and by its prowess in seamanship and skill in battle. It was keenly watched by the Greeks for any sign of a break with the nation’s neutrality policy. If anything, Commodore Rodgers, commander of the Mediterranean fleet, and his officers were openly pro-Turk “principally because of the outrages committed by Greek pirates upon American ships and because of the open slave trade in Turkish women and children maintained by the Greeks. . . . John Quincy Adams in 1828, when President of the United States, recorded in his diary that ‘Rodgers

39 Curti, 27.
40 Cline, 79.
himself, and all the commanders of our armed vessels in the Mediterranean, have great abhorrence and contempt for the Greeks.”

D. Daniel Webster’s Resolution on Greece

Daniel Webster, a member of the House from Massachusetts and a devoted philhellene, knew that with philhellenic sentiment running so high he had to move quickly to propose that an American agent or commissioner be appointed to Greece. He was so confident in his assessment of the situation that he felt the House would pass his resolution, and by a large margin. Prior to his speech, in late November 1823, Webster confided to Edward Everett that although he ardently supported the Greek cause, “my real difficulty is ignorance” and asked the professor to suggest books for him to read as his “name has been mentioned to him as the fittest person for such a service.” A quick study, Webster’s intent was to go well beyond proposing a simple appointment to a larger goal of official recognition of the provisional government and even military and humanitarian assistance to the revolutionists.

The debate on Webster’s resolution began on January 19, 1824. It was entitled “A Discussion of the Greek Question.” In his opening speech,

Mr. Webster of Massachusetts, submitted for consideration, the following: 
Resolved, That provision to be made, by law, for defraying the expense incident to the appointment of an agent, or commission to Greece, whenever the President shall deem it expedient to make such an appointment. ... He really did hope that we should show to the world, that there is, at least one Government which does entertain a proper view of the barbarous despotism which, under the eyes of Europe, has been permitted, by a system of the foulest atrocity, to attempt to crush an interesting Christian nation. He did not desire

---

42 Larrabee, 70-71.
43 *Eighteenth Congress, House of Representatives, Discussion of the Greek Question* [a 48-page pamphlet printed in Boston, MA by Howard Gazette, G. A. Gamage, Publisher, 1824] (Washington: January 1824).
that the resolution should be at present acted upon, but that it lie on the table for the consideration and deliberate reflection of this House [author’s emphasis].

Although Webster’s resolution showed where his heart lay, he knew he had to fight an uphill battle in the face of House support for New England commercial interests, the placation of New England missionary interests, and the tacit recognition that the House had little authority under the Constitution to have any substantive say, foreign affairs being in the province of the executive branch. He mentioned but did not dwell on Western Civilization’s debt to ancient Greece. Instead he concentrated his argument on the Greek revolution, the Greeks’ fight for self determination, and their religion, Christianity. While he did not ask that the United States should be more directly involved, his argument centered on the moral imperative of doing something substantive, something the legions of philhellenes demanded.

With great eloquence, he described the destruction of the island of Chios.

It was in April of this year [1821] that the destruction of Scio [Chios] took place. That island, a sort of appanage [sic] of the Sultana mother, enjoyed many privileges peculiar to itself. In a population of 130,000 or 140,000, it had no more than 2,000 or 3,000 Turks; indeed, by some accounts, not near as many. The absence of these ruffian masters had in some degree allowed opportunity for the promotion of knowledge, the accumulation of wealth, and the general cultivation of society. Here was the seat of modern Greek literature; here were libraries, printing-presses, and other establishments, which indicate some advancement in refinement and knowledge. The Turkish fleet . . . landed a force on the island of fifteen thousand men. There was nothing to resist such an army. These troops immediately entered the city and began an indiscriminate massacre. The city was fired; and in four days the fire and the sword of the Turk rendered the beautiful Scio a clotted mass of blood and ashes. The details are

45 Daniel Webster, The Writings and Speeches of Daniel Webster, vol. V (Boston: Little, Brown, 1903), 87-88.
too shocking to be recited. Forty thousand women and children, unhappily saved from the general destruction, were afterwards sold in the market of Smyrna, and sent to distant lands and hopeless servitude.47

Speaker of the House Henry Clay of Kentucky also spoke eloquently in support of Webster’s resolution. He said that everywhere the interest in the Greek cause is felt with the deepest intensity, expressed in every form, and increases with every new day and passing hour. And are the representatives of the people alone to be insulated from the common moral atmosphere of the whole land? Shall we shut ourselves up in apathy, and separate ourselves from our country, from our constituents, from our chief magistrate, from our principles?48... The Allied Powers are not going to be thrown into a state of alarm by a resolution appropriating two or three thousand dollars to send an agent to Greece.

Despite the eloquence of Webster and Clay, the resolution failed. Throughout the debate those opposing made it clear that government policy should be divorced from popular sentiment. While the members may have had pity in their hearts for the Greek cause, they thought that despite many of the concerns of their constituents, they were there to serve the interests of the nation, not those of another country. There were many other reasons for defeating the resolution as well.

The principal arguments advanced ... were that it would mark a dangerous departure from our traditional policy of non-interference in European affairs; that it offered the possibility of trouble with the Ottoman Empire (in the internal politics of which we proposed to meddle) or with the Holy Alliance, ... that it savored of a crusade on behalf of republican principles, steering a dangerous precedent and exposing our own institutions to attack from Europe; that it pursued the questionable course of encouraging the Greeks to count upon


48 “Greek Question,” 36.
American aid, when no such aid would be forthcoming; [and] that it involved encroachment by the House upon the prerogatives of the Executive in the conduct of foreign affairs.\textsuperscript{49}

The opposition, led by John Randolph of Virginia, in an effort to cool his colleagues’ emotions, argued that they were in the House to guard the interests of the “People of the United States, not to guard the rights of other people. . . . We all know the connexion [sic] that subsists between the Barbary States and what we may denominate the mother power. Are we prepared for a war with these Pirates? . . . That strange and peculiar people, [the Turks are governed by] the Koran, . . . [and] their policy has been not tortuous, like other States of Europe, but straightforward: they had invariably appealed to the sword, and they held by the sword.”\textsuperscript{50}

The United States had been through two Barbary Pirate wars and had emerged in command of the Mediterranean thereafter. As a Virginian, Randolph reminded his colleagues that during the debate, the Yankee Daniel Webster repeatedly mentioned that the Greeks were slaves of the Turks. Rising to the defense of slavery in his state, he said: “But I would ask the gentlemen in this House, who have the misfortune to reside on the wrong side of a mysterious parallel of latitude [the Mason-Dixon Line], to take this question seriously into consideration – whether the Government of the U. S. is prepared to say, that the act of holding human beings as property, is sufficient to place the party so offending under the ban of its high and mighty displeasure.”\textsuperscript{51}

\textsuperscript{49} Hunt, 350.
\textsuperscript{50} “Greek Question,” 19, 20, 41.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 43.
After hearing the views of his colleagues, John Randolph had some more points to add against the Webster proposal. Arguing that the Ottoman State was more peaceful than "Christian" nations, he overlooked two Russo-Turkish Wars some 35 years before, which to a great extent, had been fomented by the Turks. Comparing the fight for American freedom to what the Greeks were going through was ludicrous, Randolph argued,

[Turkey] at least, forms no part of [the Holy Alliance]; and I venture to say, that, for the last century, her conduct, in reference to her neighbors, has been much more Christian [his emphasis] than that of all the 'Most Christian,' 'Most Catholic,' or 'Most Faithful' majesties of Europe — for she has not interfered, as we propose to do, in the internal affairs of other nations. . . . Let us say to these seven millions of Greeks, 'We defended ourselves, when we were but three millions, against a power, in comparison to which the Turk is but a lamb. Go and do so likewise'."52

George Cary of Georgia was suspicious of the motives of Andreas Luriottis arguing that what Luriottis wanted was not token assistance from the United States, but "substantial assistance."

What is the language of Mr. Luriottis? He tells you that he looks to this country for friendship and assistance. Surely he means substantial assistance. He does, indeed, with the politeness of a cultivated man, intimate with even one word of encouragement will be received with gratitude; but, if I understand him, he does not seem to understand our principles of neutral policy.53

Silas Wood of New York was not particularly impressed with the Greeks of the day and questioned their motives. He did, however, make a relatively prescient prediction that came true.

Do the Greeks possess the elementary principles of freedom? This is very doubtful. . . . They will probably succeed in rendering themselves independent.

52 Ibid., 45-46.
53 Ibid., 23.
of the Porte, and will most probably, transfer their allegiance to a Russian prince, and erect a new Grecian monarchy. They may lighten their chains, but will not, at present, establish a free state.\textsuperscript{54}

He also warned that involvement in nascent Greek affairs risked problems with not only the Ottoman Empire but the Holy Alliance as well -- problems that could lead to war. He noted that it was inadvisable to recognize the Greek provisional government because it violated the American principle of recognition, since it was as yet not the \textit{de facto} government of Greece.

Joel Poinsett of South Carolina, a member of the House Committee on Foreign Relations, feared two things: that Ottoman troops would slaughter American merchants and their families in Smyrna if America supported the Greek cause and that the United States might have to fight a two-continent war, one in the Mediterranean and the other against Spanish and Russian interests in the Western Hemisphere.

What is much more probably, that on the rumour of our having taken any measure in favor of Greece, the barbarous and infuriated Janissaries at Smyrna were to assassinate the Consul and fellow citizens residing there; might not a war grow out of such acts? . . . At this portentous crisis [designs by Spain and Russia on Western Hemisphere territory], when we may be compelled to take up arms to defend our rights and liberties on this side of the Atlantic, shall we extend our operations to the remotest corner of Europe? When, to preserve our political existence, we ought to concentrate our strength, shall we diffuse and weaken it by engaging in a distant war?\textsuperscript{55}

The final nail in the Resolution's coffin was driven by Representative Samuel Breck of Pennsylvania who requested that the Secretary of the Treasury provide the House with a report spelling out the value of American trade in the Near East, which was among the very first international trade statistics produced. The report (detailed in Table 1) showed

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 28.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 14-15, 18.
that the trade in and out of Smyrna was substantial.\textsuperscript{56} It clearly brought into question whether it was prudent for America to wholeheartedly support the Greek cause out of a sense of philhellenism and philanthropy when so much lucrative trade could be lost to the British. The trade was growing as “the Treasury Department reports for 1823 showed that the value of the exports from the United States to Turkey, Levant, Egypt, Mocha [in Yemen], and Aden [also in Yemen] amounted to $559,783, and imports to $703,761.”\textsuperscript{57}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Imports</th>
<th>Exports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>Dutiable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>31,369</td>
<td>661,817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1821</td>
<td>99,302</td>
<td>296,378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1822</td>
<td>22,024</td>
<td>342,653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>$121,326</td>
<td>$639,031</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, the commercial interests of the merchants and traders north of the Mason-Dixon Line together with the support of the large planters of the South and their lobbyists won over what was seen as the soft sentimentalism of some of the legislators albeit some of its most famous. Webster saw it differently.

Of some value is Webster’s private opinion expressed to his friend [George] Mason, in a letter of February 15, 1824. He wrote: ‘The motion ought to have been adopted, and would have been by a general vote, but for certain reasons

\textsuperscript{56} Henry Dwight of Boston was not of this opinion. “The whole amount of our trade to the possessions of Turkey in Asia, Africa, and Europe will be seen by the last returns not to exceed the value of a single cargo in the India trade. And this pitiful advantage is purchased by the humiliating concession of suffering an American citizen to reside at Smyrna, three hundred miles from the capital of Turkey, without having the acknowledgment or protection of the government for whom he seeks this little advantage in his country’s commerce.” He believed that Greece, because of her geographical position and her capable seamen, would necessarily become an important naval and commercial power, and, therefore, it was the duty of the American government to encourage and protect trade with the Greeks. Cline, 191.

\textsuperscript{57} Cline, 178. This statistical study was among the first gathered by Congressional request regarding America’s international trade.

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.
which the public will never know, and which I will not trouble you with now... Mr. Adams’ opposition to it was the most formidable obstacle.’ Whatever may have been the reasons which Webster did not expect the curious public to know, there would seem to be no doubt that he revealed much when he fastened upon John Quincy Adams the chief responsibility for the failure of the Greek resolution.59

“Adams was an isolationist in regard to America and European problems. His views concerning the Greek situation prevailed as the policy of the administration, in spite of the friendly attitude of the President and other officials on the subject... Plainly Philhellenism played no part in the determining of American foreign policy during the period of the Greek revolution.”60

E. Yankee Opium Trade: Smyrna to Canton, China

The figures in the above table include those of the opium trade carried on by Yankee businessmen, especially merchant-princes Colonel Thomas Handasyd Perkins of Perkins & Company of Boston and Samuel Russell of Samuel Russell & Company of Providence. Some important families dealing in opium through these and other middlemen were the Cabot, Peabody, and Forbes families of Boston; the Girards of Philadelphia; and John Astor of New York.61 On December 18, 1823, in a letter to the Boston Daily Advertiser, a writer argued that no one would be opposed to the Greeks working out their own salvation. [He] desired to call attention to the hazard put on the liberty of some American citizens because of measures advocated in aid of the Greeks. [The American trade to Smyrna – the only port in Turkey where foreigners traded – was greater than any country’s except England]. ‘It would not be surprising, declared this influential merchant, ‘if some competing European trader should take the trouble to lay before the Turkish government a report of American projects in behalf of the Greeks’.”62

---

59 Ibid., 198.
60 Ibid., 213.
62 Cline, 83.
Then the unnamed writer got specific. The opium trade had amounted to "nearly a million dollars in each of the last three years and at least half of the last crop will have been exported from Turkey for American account." Thomas Perkins, who signed the letter "A Merchant," failed to mention that the main "American account" was Perkins & Company.\textsuperscript{63} He also failed to mention that he had relatives in Smyrna who were helping him run the business there. Perkins leveled substantial charges at fellow Bostonian Daniel Webster for his pro-revolutionary impulses, and made public his refusal to support the Boston Committee on Greek Relief.\textsuperscript{64} Perkins’ position on the Greek question brought forth in the \textit{Aurora}, December 24, 1825, the following comment:

A correspondent in one of the Boston newspapers who signs himself a merchant objects to any efforts in aid of the Greeks, lest it might induce the Turkish government to prohibit our trade with Smyrna. Truly a patriotic gentleman! It is related by Ben Jonson that toward the close of his life while living in an obscure and necessitous condition, he became ill and the King \ldots sent him £10, and that Jonson when he received it, returned the following answer: 'His Majesty hath sent me £10 because I am old and poor and live in an alley. Go and tell him that his soul lives in an alley.' The same reply with reason might be made to the remarks of the merchant.\textsuperscript{65}

"Before the [American] Revolution, Boston was the principal distributing point in North America for Smyrna figs and drugs."\textsuperscript{66} Smyrna was the major \textit{entrepôt} for Turkish goods. It was more important than Constantinople because of its location, its splendid harbor, and its proximity to a vast hinterland. "The American trade to Smyrna – the only

\textsuperscript{64} S. E. Morison, "Forcing the Dardanelles in 1810: With Some Account of the Early Levant Trade of Massachusetts," \textit{New England Quarterly} I (1928): 224.
\textsuperscript{65} Cline, 88.
\textsuperscript{66} Morison, 209.
port where foreigners traded – was greater than that of any country except England."67

Designated "the first commercial city of the Near East," it had about 130,000 inhabitants, with the majority being Greek, a smaller number being Turkish, and the remainder made up of Armenians, Jews, Europeans, and Americans.68 When the American ships returned from Smyrna, "cargoes were composed largely of figs, carpets, and drugs such as gamboge [actually not a drug but a rather transparent dark mustard yellow pigment], scammony [a gum resin used as a purgative], and opium."69

There were two kinds of opium produced in the Ottoman state. Opium produced for smoking was cultivated in the Ankara and Sivas regions, both on the Anatolian Plateau. Opium produced for medical use was especially rich in morphine and therefore much prized. The centers of production were in Bursa, Aydin, Konya, and Afyon Karahisar.70 Thus, Perkins shipped opium not only to China but to the United States as well.

Samuel Breck’s House resolution produced the data in Table 2 that showed the value of exports and imports entering and leaving Smyrna on American ships for the period 1820-1822, including the duties paid for the imports. "The report submitted showed that the export trade amounted to slightly over one and a half million dollars, the

67 Cline, 83.
70 Leland James Gordon, American Relations with Turkey, 1830-1930: An Economic Interpretation (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1932), 93-94.
import trade to three quarters of a million, while the total duty paid on imports was
$172,770, which were substantial sums in those days.

The real money in the Smyrna trade was opium. With Turkey being the main supplier of the European trade, usually to be used as laudanum, an inexpensive tincture of opium popular with the working class since it was cheaper than gin, and with romantic poets such as Lord Byron and Percy Shelley. "The American trade in [Turkish] opium began as early as 1805, perhaps earlier, when three American brigs, two from Philadelphia and one from Baltimore, cleared from Smyrna with the drug." Yankee merchants quickly seized on the profit possibilities of shipping opium to China and began sending agents to Smyrna. Turkish opium was harsher than that of British Bengal, but "since the Turkish product was consumed almost entirely in the northern provinces of China where they became addicted to its harsher taste," they sold it at a premium.

Perkins, having established a warehouse in Canton, sold Turkish opium to dealers and even to addicts right from his ships’ decks. When the price was too low, the opium was simply stored it in his warehouse until the price rose. He made a serious attempt to control the entire Turkish supply moving from Smyrna to the Far East, but bad health stopped him. "From about the War of 1812 to the mid-1830s, the Americans were by far the most important purchasers of Turkish opium. Indeed, judging from casual

---

71 Cline, 178.
73 Seaburg and Patterson, 298. "Opium that Perkins & Co. could buy for about $2.50 a pound in Turkey, they could sell from $7 to $10 a pound in Canton, depending on the market," a markup of 280 to 400 percent. Ibid.
74 Ibid., 296-301.
remarks in the correspondence of Perkins & Company, the Boston concern alone often took one-half to three-quarters of the entire yearly crop [of Turkey].”75

Henry Clay voiced contempt for the opium trade in the debate over the Webster resolution in January 1824 and for those who argued for nonintervention for the Greeks. He harshly stated, “A wretched invoice of figs and opium has been spread before us to repress our sensibilities and eradicate our humanity. Ah! Sir, ‘what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?’ or shall it profit a nation to save the whole of a wretched commerce, and lose its liberties?”76 Author Myrtle Cline marginalized her objectivity when she noted sarcastically that “such a praiseworthy business should not, of course, be disturbed, even if Greek freedom were at stake!”77

Also present when Henry Clay made his speech was Timothy Fuller of Massachusetts, the home state of Webster and Perkins. When it came his turn to speak he defended the opium trade openly and vigorously.

Suppose the Turk should let loose upon our commerce the Barbary Powers, over which he exercises his control — suppose they should make an immediate attack upon that trade, which the honorable member from Kentucky has called “a miserable invoice of figs and opium.” If this trade is really so inconsiderable, why have we now a squadron engaged in the protection of it? Sir, that trade is highly important. And if the Barbary Powers should threaten its destruction, shall we not find it necessary to repress such an attempt, whatever expense may be incurred?78

To what extent did America’s opium trade lead to a policy that led to the American government’s forsaking the Greeks during their fight for survival? Did New England commercial interests militate against any public denouncement from the pulpits

---

75 Downs, 432.
76 “Greek Question,” 39.
77 Cline, 85.
78 “Greek Question,” 48.
since they were being supported by those very interests? It is a thin reed upon which to
lean to suggest that the public did not know of the trade when top Congressional leaders
such as Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, and others in Congress spoke of it either with
contempt or even admiration, and while Treasury Department studies citing detailed data
of the trade were published in Executive Reports to the 18th Congress.\footnote{79}

It must be remembered that according to the law of the United States at the time,
the unfettered importation of opium into the United States, the opium trade run by
Americans between Smyrna and China, and the trafficking in slaves were all perfectly
legal. To what extent did ordinary Americans know and approve of these three issues? It
is impossible to answer these questions. Sociology and scientific polling methods had as
yet not been invented. It is pure speculation that the traders felt a bit guilty that they
fought so strongly against the Greek cause knowing the Turkish slaughters that were
taking place, but their purses trumped their guilt. It is most likely that Smyrna’s opium
trade and its connection with Perkins and others was well known and tolerated. But
Americans too were consumers of opiate products – opium, heroin, laudanum -- and
Perkins was involved in that trade as well, small as it was, carrying mostly Chinese
luxury goods from Canton to Boston on the return trip. “During the nineteenth century
the typical opiate addict [in America] was a middle-aged white woman of the middle or
upper class.”\footnote{80} “Amongst the well-off, morphinism spread with the introduction of the
hypodermic syringe, many of the addicts being society ladies. Indeed, addiction was far

\footnote{79} Ibid., 178.
\footnote{80} David T. Courtwright, Dark Paradise: A History of Opiate Addiction in America (Cambridge, MA:
Harvard University Press, 1982), 1.
more prevalent amongst Caucasians than coloured or native American groups, no doubt because these latter lacked the financial resources to buy medicines or hire doctors. Their poverty protected them.”

One wag noted that “from Smyrna, throughout these years, there continued to flow a supply of nuts and fruits for the tables of American cities and a sufficiency of opium to make tolerable, through home remedies and patent medicines, the existence of the American housewife.”

“Prior to 1842, opiate addiction was no more than 0.72 addicts per 1,000 persons,” a quite low level of use. Undoubtedly, Americans knew of opiates but may not have been aware of the lurking danger of addiction or that some of the nostrums peddlers sold, or that quacks prescribed, contained opiates. Even the first Coca-Cola fountain drinks introduced in Atlanta by a local pharmacist in 1886 were made with a syrup containing cocaine. “Until 1903, Coca-Cola contained cocaine: it was indeed the ‘Real Thing’ in those days. John Pemberton, the pharmacist co-inventor, was a morphine addict.”

Another important factor that may have produced indifference to the opium trade was the infamous triangular trade in slaves that helped to bring prosperity to hypocritical New Englanders who were among the first to establish anti-slavery leagues. Sugar was the most sought-after commodity of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. It was the largest single English import and the most valuable item in the French overseas trade. It came to be a necessity in Europe and dominate the economies in New World

---

83 Ibid., 9.
84 Ibid.
Caribbean colonies of England, France, and Spain. Sugar was the critical link in the triangular trade chain for it was soon found that the indigenous enslaved Caribbean Indians were unable to work sugar cane. West African slaves were then brought in to do the work. Americans shipped molasses to New England where it was distilled into rum; Americans then sent rum and trade goods to Europe aboard American ships. Americans and Europeans sent pots, pans, guns, rum, and horses to Africa. Then Americans and Europeans sent black slaves to the Caribbean (the so called “middle passage”) where the cycle began again. When the United States won the Revolutionary War, it was the loss of this trade that had such negative economic consequences for the new nation.

Why did Clay denounce the opium trade in Congress while Webster, Perkins’s fellow Bostonian, did not? Clay was from Kentucky, the fifteenth state to join the Union, an area then considered frontier country filled with unlettered yeomen far from the folderol of snooty drawing rooms of proper upper-class inhabitants of the “Athens of America.” Clay had the freedom to call things by their right name while social and political bonds tied Webster’s hands. Webster knew without question of Perkins’ opium interests but could hardly call such a pillar of the community to task for it. Two of Perkins’ philanthropic works show the magnitude of his local power and esteem.

In 1826, Perkins was made chairman of a committee for the Athenaeum, the Boston art gallery. He donated $8,000 for the gallery, an amount equaled by his nephew, James Perkins Jr., provided the rest of the committee could match their donations: It was

---

done. The gallery expanded in size and also in its holdings and reopened to much acclaim a year later. It was later renamed the prestigious Boston Museum of Fine Arts.\footnote{Seaburg and Patterson, 398-399.}

Thomas Perkins’ younger brother, Samuel G. Perkins, was blind. Having heard of advances in aid for the blind by French medical doctors in developing a system of reading called Braille, he established in 1833 the Perkins Institution for the Blind,\footnote{Freeman Hunt, \textit{Lives of American Merchants}, vol. I (New York: Office of Hunt’s Merchants’ Magazine, 1856), 80.} which remains one of the premier institutions in the world for the blind. Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe, having overstayed his welcome in Greece, returned to Boston an acclaimed Hellenic hero. He was the perfect candidate for the job of the first director, and ideally, he was out of work. After being hired, he spent time in England and France learning the latest in scientific knowledge of aid to the blind, and with an active mind and impeccable connections, he made the school world renowned.\footnote{Seaburg and Patterson, 425-426.}

Webster’s esteem toward Thomas Perkins is revealed in a note he wrote with his own hand on the blank leaf of a copy of one of his books on April 19, 1852, eight months before Perkins died:

I have long cherished ... a profound, warm, affectionate, and may I say a filial regard for your person and character. I have looked upon you as one born to do good, and who has fulfilled his mission; known and honored over the whole world; a most liberal supporter and promoter of science and the arts; always kind to scholars and literary men, and greatly beloved by them all; friendly to all the institutions of religion, morality, and education; and an unwavering and determined supporter of the constitution of the country, and of those great principles of civil liberty, which is so well calculated to uphold and advance.\footnote{Hunt, “American Merchants,” 100-101. Hunt’s essay is a hagiography of 69 pages in which the words “opium,” “Smyrna,” “Turk,” and “Ottoman” are never mentioned. “Canton” is mentioned six times but never in the context of opium. Thomas Perkins’ older brother James died in 1822. The published obituary}
Either Webster forgot how Perkins came to become wealthy, did not care, or by that time, wanted to help him wash Greek blood from his hands.

**F. The Marquis de LaFayette and the Greek Cause**

Webster’s key opponent was the Secretary of State, John Quincy Adams, who personally supplied arguments against Webster’s resolution to members of the House. He suspected Webster’s allies, especially Calhoun, Crawford, and Clay, of simply appealing to popular sentiments without considering the larger implications of foreign policy. If the United States chose to challenge the Holy Alliance directly in their sphere of influence, what was to prevent these countries from interfering in the Western Hemisphere? As Adams put it, “the ground that I wish to take is that of earnest remonstrance against the interference of the European powers by force with South America, but to disclaim all interference on our part with Europe; to make an American cause and adhere inflexibly to that.”

There was also the issue of a much-needed treaty with the Sublime Porte, a treaty the Ottomans wanted, and of which Congress knew nothing. If Congress unwittingly damaged the prospects of that treaty, Adams felt that the Representatives would be interfering with the prerogatives of the executive branch in the conduct of foreign affairs.

As an important example of where Adams stood, he recounted his conversation with the head of the Greek Committee of Washington, Dr. Thornton:

---

of this opium shipper read in part: “In enterprises extending over the habitable globe, employing thousands of agents, constantly involving fortunes in their result, and requiring, on many occasions necessarily incident to business of this extent, no secondary degree of firmness and courage, not a shadow of suspicion of any thing derogatory to the highest and purest sense of honor and conscience ever attached to his conduct. The character of such a man ought to be held up for imitation.” Ibid., 74.

Dr. Thornton called upon me this morning. . . . His project was that every individual would subscribe one day's pay [for the Greeks]. . . . The English Chancellor had subscribed a hundred pounds sterling, and even the Quakers in England had subscribed upwards to seven thousand pounds. . . . I told him I would not subscribe for the Greeks, nor advise the president to subscribe. We had objects of distress to relieve at home more than sufficient to absorb all my capacities of contribution; and a subscription for the Greeks would, in my view of things, be a breach of neutrality, and therefore improper. 91

While he opposed Webster behind the scenes during the “Greek Cause” debate, this is not to say that John Quincy Adams was obdurately opposed to the Greek revolutionaries – he was not. Later when he gained the White House and when European policy began to soften against the Greeks, he followed precisely the policy that Webster championed in 1824 – to send a secret agent to Greece. Perhaps the most important reason for the administration’s change of heart was that the Marquis de LaFayette, the famous French general and Revolutionary War hero, was visiting the United States. He was adored by the country. “Henry Clay delivered a welcoming address in Congress, and that body expressed its gratitude by voting the French hero $200,000 and an estate in territorial lands.” 92 LaFayette was a fiery philhellene and whenever interviewed by the press, he tried to advance their cause. His enthusiasm extended to directly arguing that the administration should help the Greeks gain their freedom; he wrote his old friend, Thomas Jefferson, to ask that he contact Webster on the subject of sending agents to Greece. 93

91 Nevins, 323.
93 Ibid., 89.
In September 1825, Secretary of State Henry Clay dispatched William C. Somerville, LaFayette’s close friend, to the seat of the Greek revolutionary government. Unfortunately, at the writing of Somerville’s orders, they did not know where the seat was. The full text of Somerville’s instructions are limiting and detailed, with the major points being that: 1) he had been sent because of the American public’s great interest in Greece’s fight for freedom; 2) that America insisted on remaining neutral; 3) that he would not engage in offering military advice but would gather information on the progress of the war, the state of the economy, the condition of the people, and the state and condition of their land and sea forces; 4) that he was to aid American vessels and seamen calling on Greek ports; and 5) that if any American citizen should “dishonor their country,” he would be denied assistance. Somerville sailed on the United States frigate *Brandywine* with General LaFayette returning to France. Upon arriving in Paris, Somerville fell ill and died there in January 1826, where he, according to his wishes, was buried at LaFayette’s estate. Perhaps feeling that enough had been done for LaFayette, no successor to Somerville was appointed and the matter of a secret agent died with him.

**G. Failed Attempts at Greek Aid**

In 1824-1826, an unfortunate business transaction that former president James Madison called “another morifying topic” occurred that placed into question American support of the Greek cause with American philanthropy. On December 7, 1824, Greek deputies were given an estimate of $247,500 for the building of a fifty-gun live oak frigate armed and equipped to United States Admiralty specifications for government

---

94 Earle, “Ottoman Minorities.” For the full text of the instructions, see 362-364.
frigates” by William Bayard, Sr. He was not only head of the ship-building firm of Le Roy, Bayard and Company, he was also chairman of the New York Greek Committee. The quoted price was so attractive that the Greek deputies floated a London loan and ordered two first-class ships to be built by Le Roy, Bayard and Company and its partner, Gardiner G. & Samuel S. Howland, who gave assurances that they would do all they could to promote Greek interests. “We shall neglect nothing,” they wrote, “to procure ships which may do honor to our country and to the service for which they are destined.”

Construction foundered and the builders not only missed their deadline, they had expended $750,000, $255,000 more than Bayard’s estimate for the two ships. “In spite of the very large sums drawn on the London commercial houses, the vessels were far from being completed, and in addition there were claims of unpaid bills.” An investigating Greek deputy in New York concluded that in order for Greece to obtain one of the frigates, it became necessary to sell the other. The deputy appealed to sympathetic philhellenes who arranged in having the United States Navy Department take one of the ships albeit at a price less than half charged for building it in the first place. After interminable delays the second ship was finished and fecklessly christened “Hope.” Taking possession in New York, the Greeks more properly renamed her “Hellas” and happily cruised eastward under full sail.

95 Pappas, 96.
96 Cline, 210-211.
97 Earle, “Greek Cause,” 57.
98 Cline, 211.
The episode elicited severe criticism of the companies involved. The financiers and ship builders were accused of shady business practices and deception on the unsophisticated Greeks who were merely fighting for their very survival. Concerning the whole affair, Madison wrote LaFayette in November 1826, “Another mortifying topic is the Greek equipment in N[ew York]. It appears the ample fund for two Frigates at an early day has procured but one which has but recently sailed. The indignation of the public is highly excited; and a regular investigation of the lamentable abuse is going on. In the meantime Greece is bleeding in consequence of it, as is every heart that sympathizes with her noble cause.” As the public slowly lost interest, the investigation died; the Greeks as the injured party received no compensation, and the incident passed from public notice.

By 1824, the wave of philhellenism began to subside quietly and for about two years nothing much was heard of the Greek cause. It was widely believed that the Greek revolt was a lost cause. However, by 1826 the situation among the Greeks in their homeland was so tragic that many felt something had to be done immediately. “Accordingly there was inaugurated in the United States in the closing weeks of 1826 a campaign for raising of a relief fund for the Greek people.” In this way philhellenism was succeeded by humanitarianism.

Shortly thereafter, next attempt for direct aid to Greece was made on January 2, 1827, by Edward Livingston of Louisiana who proposed a resolution that would appropriate $50,000 “to clothe the naked, to feed the hungry, to comfort the despairing—

100 Cline, 124
to do that which a civilized enemy would himself do.” He argued that such aid could not be considered a violation of neutrality considering that a similar appropriation was made for Venezuelan earthquake relief in 1812, ignoring the fact that Venezuela is not in Europe. The resolution failed, thereby throwing the full responsibility for raising funds for the relief of distressed Greeks to volunteer givers.  

Although the revolution was beginning to end, the plight of the starving Greeks still had an effect on the American public. Major philanthropic committees centered in Boston, Philadelphia, and New York took up the cause, the latter supported by the leading businessmen of the city serving as the major coordinating body and clearing house for contributions. In 1827, six ships left New York harbor for Greece laden with provisions, especially corn meal and flour and valued at $77,000. The year 1827 was particularly critical, for the end of the war was approaching and food, clothing and other essentials were necessary to sustain the fight. In the first half of 1827, three additional New York ships, with cargoes valued at $46,000, left New York for Greece.  

One sticking point was who was to be authorized to distribute the supplies. When cash had been sent in the earlier days of the revolt, the money was turned over to the Greek government without reservations as to its use. In the case of supplies, the situation was fundamentally changed. The American philhellenic committees followed the lead of the New York Committee and insisted that the provisions and clothing be distributed by American agents. There were two reasons for this. The Greek revolutionaries were so

\[102\] Curti, 27.
\[103\] Booras, 215. For a detailed breakdown of one of the ship’s cargoes, see Cline, 140-141.
\[104\] Curti, 33.
hard pressed for supplies that they might have used them for military purposes thereby 
shattering America’s strict neutrality, rather than as intended, for women, children, and 
old men. There were also charges, true or false, that some of the monies advanced by 
British bankers had been siphoned off for personal use. “In any case the precedents 
established in 1827 have been uniformly adhered to in all subsequent American 
philanthropic activities in the Near East — funds have been devoted exclusively to relief 
of civilians, and the distribution of supplies have been under American, not native, 
supervision.”

On July 6, 1827, the Great Powers (England, France, and Russia) serving as self-
appointed mediators declared an armistice, called the Treaty of London. “This treaty 
called for a ceasefire in Greece as a preliminary to peace negotiations and the 
establishment of Greece as an autonomous but tributary state under the Sultan’s 
suzerainty.” The Greeks accepted it while the Turks did not. Subsequently, the three 
powers sent an armada to the southwestern coast of the Peloponnesus where, on October 
20, 1827, they met and nearly totally destroyed the combined Turkish and Egyptian fleet, 
thereby winning freedom for the Greeks.

The sovereignty of Greece was guaranteed by the Great Powers. The initiative for 
recognition was begun by their ambassadors in Washington, not by any American 
functionary. On April 30, 1833, they wrote a joint proposal to Secretary of State Edward

---

105 Earle, “Greek Cause,” 60-61.
106 Pappas, 23.
107 Richard Clogg, A Concise History of Greece, 2d ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 44.
Livingston inviting the United States to recognize the Greek Kingdom. Cautious as ever, the United States State Department waited until December 22, 1837, nearly a decade after the hostilities ended, to negotiate a treaty of commerce and navigation with Greece.

**H. America's Treaty with the Ottoman State**

The road to a treaty of amity and commerce between the United States and the Porte was long and troubled. While there were occasional contacts of American ships with Turkish ports in the Levant from 1783 until 1800, it was a trifling. As mentioned earlier, the Dey of Algiers forced Captain William Bainbridge of the *George Washington* to sail to Constantinople making that voyage the first direct connection with the seat of the Ottoman Empire by an official agency of the United States government. Bainbridge anchored off the Golden Horn on November 9, 1800.

While there, Bainbridge met Husrev, the Capudan Pasha, and during the interview the subject of a treaty between the Ottoman Empire and the United States was discussed. Bainbridge wrote:

> He expressed a very great desire that a minister should be sent from the United States to effect it. I informed him, that there was one already named, who, at present, was in Lisbon, and probably would be here in six months. He said he would write to the ambassador, which letter would be a protection for him while in the Turkish empire, and give me liberty to recommend any merchant vessel to

---

108 Cline, 203-204.
his protection, which might wish to come here previously to the arrival of the
ambassador. I thanked him in the name of the United States for the protection
he had been pleased to give the frigate under my command, and for his friendly
attentions to myself and officers. I conceive it to be a very fortunate moment to
negotiate an advantageous treaty with this government.\footnote{Ibid., 130.}

Before leaving Constantinople, Bainbridge received the promised letter for the Lisbon
Ambassador, who, having been recalled to Washington, was never able to make use of it.

From time to time several Turkish offices encouraged the formal establishment of
an American embassy in Constantinople. These inquiries were ignored perhaps because
of lack of interest or because Washington knew that any presentments would require
lavish presents for not only the Sultan but to the Porte as well, monies that had better uses
elsewhere.

From 1800 until 1812 the Levant trade slowly increased but was interrupted by
the War of 1812, after which it quickly revived. \textquoteleft{}From August 1811, to November 1820
\ldots{} thirteen American vessels, on the average, arrived annually at the port of Smyrna.
The value of their cargoes for each year was upwards of a million dollars. The trade was
almost exclusively with Smyrna, and never with Constantinople.\footnote{Ibid., 124.} By treaty with the
Porte, the British government controlled trade in the Eastern Mediterranean with the
British Levant Company to which American traders in the area were obliged to pay a
consulate duty of one and a quarter percent \textit{ad valorem} which made American goods
more costly than similar goods of the British, to the glee of the British traders.\footnote{Ibid., 125.}
David Offley, a member of the Pennsylvania firm Woodmas and Offley, established an office in Smyrna in 1811. He went to Constantinople to protest the higher duties his firm would have to pay for moving his goods in and out of Smyrna. After innumerable delays caused in large part by the British minister, Stratford Canning, working behind the scenes to discredit him at the behest of British traders, Offley was ultimately successful. In recognition of his many services to the nation, he was appointed United States Consul and Commercial Agent at Smyrna in 1824.114

When the news of the Battle of Navarino reached Smyrna on September 27, 1827, there was terror and apprehension among both the American and European traders there. Fearing for their lives and for their inventories, the Europeans quickly moved bag and baggage to nearby European ships and waited. “Captain Patterson of the Constitution ostentatiously made no move, not wishing it thought that he anticipated danger to American citizens and property, and ‘his course was immediately remarked by the government, to whom it gave much satisfaction’.”115

The event was undoubtedly reported to officials in Constantinople who looked upon it with favor. On November 11, David Offley received an express communication from Husrev, no longer the Capudan Pasha but the Scraskier (secretary of war). He invited Offley to come immediately to Constantinople, for he deemed it the right time to begin negotiations. In February 1828, Offley received a note from the Reis Effendi, the Turkish foreign minister:

---
114 Ibid., 125-126.
115 Field, 145-146.
The friendship and desire which the United States of America have manifested towards the Sublime Porte, that a treaty should be concluded between the two governments, are known to be sincere. The delay, until now, must be attributable to destiny! But the present period is favorable for such a convention. If the United States, without delay, adopts the necessary measures and dispositions for proceeding to the conclusion of a treaty of commerce suitable to the dignity of the Sublime Porte, they will find the latter well disposed in this respect.\textsuperscript{116}

Careful reading of the note reveals friendliness but little else of Turkish desires.

On July 21, 1828, Consul David Offley and Commodore William M. Crane were appointed joint commissioners to negotiate a treaty with Turkey. After three months of efforts the negotiations collapsed. The major sticking point was that the Turks wanted more than a treaty of amity and commerce but also a formal alliance. The Reis Effendi specifically wanted quickly to rebuild their navy which was almost totally destroyed at Navarino. He once said to an English merchant that “however you may act towards us the Americans will be our good friends; and an American ship, you very well know, is worth two of yours of the same size.”\textsuperscript{117} He wanted either American ships built in the United States or American materials and workmen necessary to build the ships in Turkey. There was also the desire on the part of the United States to have the right to sail the Black Sea.

The Andrew Jackson administration was highly critical of the work of Crane and Offley. In spite of that, on September 12, 1829, Offley, Commodore James Biddle, and Charles Rhind (a wealthy New York City merchant with commercial interests in the Levant) were appointed commissioners to negotiate a new treaty jointly or severally.

\textsuperscript{116} Paullin, 140-141.
\textsuperscript{117} Field, 146-147.
Their secret instructions were to compromise temporarily, if necessary, on the most-favored-nation tariff provision. There was to be no compromise regarding the “neutral obligations of the United States,” thereby throwing into question not only any consideration of an alliance but the building of the naval vessels as well.\textsuperscript{118}

When Rhind reached Smyrna, he was chagrined to discover that everyone, including the British, knew about his “secret” mission. He left for Constantinople without his fellow negotiators on February 8, 1830. The initial sticking point was the issue of tariffs on American goods. Negotiations lasted for three months. Rhind was helped substantially by Russian Ambassador Stroganoff and his agents, while “the British legation actively intrigued against him. Rhind had to contend against plots and counterplots, stratagems and wiles, the jealousies of the Turkish officials, the secret play of their self-interests and the retarding influence of Turkish customs.”\textsuperscript{119}

Rhind, on the recommendation of the Reis Effendi, managed to get the Sultan’s approval on the critical most-favored-nation section. The British diplomats in their effort to keep United States commerce out of the Ottoman Empire, convinced the Sultan that his own Turkish negotiators were incompetent. The Sultan reopened negotiations, putting pressure on the Americans for a better deal. Tariffs were again the major sticking point. After both parties discussed the issue thoroughly, on April 7 it was resubmitted to the Sultan in the exact same language as before. Rhind, fearful of more intrigues and without waiting for his fellow commissioners, signed the treaty. On May 7, 1831, the

\textsuperscript{118} Ibid., 149.
\textsuperscript{119} Paullin, 145.
first treaty between the Ottoman Empire and the United States was signed by the Reis Effendi. Important features included:

- Article I placed the merchants of the two contracting parties as respects tariffs on the footing of most-favored nation.
- Article 2 gave the United States the right to appoint consuls to Turkish ports.
- Article 4 recognized the principle of extraterritoriality.
- Article 7 granted American vessels the right to negotiate the Black Sea on the terms granted the most-favored nation.
- A secret article concerned the Sultan’s wishes regarding the building of ships either in the United States or Turkey.

When the secret article was revealed to Rhind’s fellow commissioners in Smyrna, they were apprehensive and angry. They also quarreled with Rhind for giving the Sultan and the top Turkish officials presents that were too lavish. When the treaty reached Washington, Congressional opponents aroused fears that it would: 1) embroil the nation in European entanglements, 2) that America could ill afford the scarce shipbuilding materials, 3) that it violated the nation’s policy of strict neutrality, 4) that a secret article was against the principle of open government, and 5) that in dealing with foreign nations

---

120 “Treaty of Commerce and Navigation [between the United States of America, and His Majesty The Sultan of Turkey] (signed in Constantinople May 7, 1830; Ratified by the United States February 2, 1831; Ratified by Turkey October 5, 1831; Proclaimed February 4, 1832),” Hunter Miller, ed., Treaties and Other International Acts of the United States of America, IV (Washington: United States Department of State, 1931-1948), 541-598.
America should neither ask or grant any boon that looked like a bribe. The secret article was defeated while the treaty’s public articles were approved.  

It was at this point that the industrialization of the United States began as a trickle. Most economic-development experts count the beginning of America’s Industrial Revolution at the time of the completion of the Erie Canal on October 26, 1825.  

The establishment of the canal linking the Hudson River to the Great Lakes turned New York into one of the greatest entrepôts in the world serving a vast hinterland covering eight future states that would in time rival the ports of Rotterdam and Shanghai. While Americans continued to seek markets around the world, an equally important task was the development of a continental empire. The growing industrial base required an aggressive international presence in the four corners of the earth in search of new markets for American goods. The economy gained speed as it gained mass.

In summary, there was a paired response to the Greek War of Independence by the United States: an official response -- diplomatic and legislative -- and a human response. The diplomatic response followed the course of noninvolvement in the problems of the emerging Greek State. Although requested at the highest levels of government and supported by legendary legislators, the United States government never gave any material aid to Greek fighters for independence. All efforts were made by

---

121 Paullin, 149-150.  
123 The great expert on economic development, W. W. Rostow, counted this as the beginning of America’s “take off” stage where industrialization increases, with workers beginning to switch from the agricultural sector to the manufacturing sector and with the evolution of new political and social institutions that support the industrialization. See W. W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth, A Non-Communist Manifesto* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1960).
American civilian and naval officials to avoid giving armaments, lending naval vessels, and even giving military advice to the Greeks. The fashioning of the Monroe Doctrine validated these efforts.

The effect of American diplomacy on the Ottoman State resulted in practical gains of national interest. America, wanting access to eastern Mediterranean markets, first established a consulate corps to pay tribute for the release of American seamen. Then national pride coupled with the financial wherewithal made it possible to build a navy that crushed the Barbary Pirates, ending the humiliation of paying ransom and giving American merchantmen access to the entire Mediterranean. In time American merchants had access to the Black Sea and the markets of the Balkans and Russia.

The human response involved the efforts of storied legislators, churches, missionaries, and men of letters, wealth, and education to support the Greek cause on the grounds of sympathy, morality, Christian love, and the values that the ancient Greeks had taught the West. Citizens sent money, food, and clothing, and helped the Greeks establish hospitals and schools. But government-to-government philhellenic sentiments were overwhelmed by the economic and political interests of the nation.
CONCLUSION

Early in the history of the nation, American religious leaders spoke of the “city upon a hill.” They dreamed that by starting a new life in a virtually empty land they had been given a gift and a mandate by God to build a new hope for mankind. These utopian hopes were quickly changed to include a search for material advantages for themselves. Nevertheless, since that time, while American foreign policy featured practical matters such as beneficial trade and strategic alliances, it continued to feature impulses that bespoke of a good and generous people who felt themselves to be the hope of the world.

American foreign policy was eclectic during the period addressed in this study. The colonists revolted against a tyrannical monarch but they treasured British political traditions such as an elected parliament and open discussion of political issues. Slowly the leaders of the new nation began to develop a national foreign policy style, the main feature of which was moving between the major alternatives of isolationism and internationalism.

American isolationists have long basked in President George Washington’s admonition to “avoid foreign entanglements.” At the successful conclusion of the War of Independence, America was nearly bankrupt. It had gone through the failed experiment of the Articles of Confederation that stalled economic development. The nation had no army to speak of and no navy at all and had faced the challenge of taming a virtually empty continent. Finally, it found itself without the protection of a strong and influential mother country.
However, in spite of these challenges, President George Washington noted that when circumstances dictated — for example, casting aside France, America’s firmest supporter and truest friend in the late war, and meekly supporting its former enemy — humiliation was a price he was prepared to pay by supporting and defending the John Jay Treaty. In his actions, President Washington moved toward a policy of isolationism. Although the principal of noninvolvement lies on a bedrock of historic experience and precedence, when national interests changed, diplomacy also changed to the international mode that included involvement in foreign affairs. This is what happened when America’s commercial interests in the Mediterranean were thwarted.

Early America was a seafaring nation since its original thirteen colonies had access to the sea. American seamen were talented and experienced and their ships first rate with many technological improvements and were good enough to fight the “mistress of the seas” to a standstill during the War of Independence. American vessels were also coveted as prize ships by both England and the Barbary States. Coupled with entrepreneurial spirits and a widely felt desire for free trade by both the government and the traders, this led to the seeking out of foreign markets. The Barbary States stood in the way of Mediterranean markets.

It was not enough that the Barbary State-supported pirates seized American ships, the seized captured American able seamen and officers and held them for ransom. If the ransom was not paid, the seamen were sold as slaves. President John Adams chose to pay the humiliating ransoms in spite of the demands of politically well-connected merchants, traders, and large Southern planters whose maritime insurance policies rose
sharply. They wanted a navy. He had little choice and had to risk shaking the foundations of his administration since the country was nearly bankrupt.

When Thomas Jefferson, a man on record for counseling a policy of “avoiding foreign entanglements,” gained the White House, he was eager to build a navy and go to war against the four Ottoman client states for the sake of commercial gains in the Mediterranean but also to eliminate the humiliation of paying tribute to them. This was not hypocrisy on Jefferson’s part, but a legitimate change in national interest: a switch to a policy of internationalism. John Adams with his empty treasury had to pay bribes to brigands. Jefferson, with a viable treasury, had other options.

The successes of the two Barbary Wars 1785-1816, allowed American naval vessels to sail throughout the Mediterranean enabling them to protect American merchantmen hauling goods, including opium, from the Turkish port of Smyrna. The effect of these victories on the Ottoman State was the sober realization that the United States was a force to be reckoned. Despite Turkey’s military losses, the economic potential that the new nation represented for supplying advanced weaponry and naval vessels to them as well as consumer goods was large. The Porte openly signaled that it was willing to enter into commercial treaty negotiations with the United States and its newly established consular corps.

With the start of hostilities between Greek revolutionaries and Turkish troops on March 25, 1821, a wave of sympathetic philhellenism slowly began in the United States. A mere nine months after hostilities began, President James Monroe in his “Sixth Annual
Message to Congress," articulated in detail the reasons for America's interest in the Greek cause. The American people wanted the government to help the Greeks directly while most members of Congress were against it. The public was at loggerheads with the national government.

In the face of flourishing philhellenism, the government had to make its position crystal clear. The American Navy, now operating in Greek waters, had to maintain a policy of strict neutrality vis-à-vis the Greeks. The Navy's job in the eastern Mediterranean was twofold: to protect American shipping in the region and to deal with nascent Greek piracy. Striking while the issue was still hot, President Monroe on December 2, 1823, announced a key American diplomatic policy that was later to be called the "Monroe Doctrine." Briefly stated, the Doctrine prohibited potential Russian, Spanish, and other nations' designs on Western Hemisphere territories while the United States promised to stay out of European affairs. Thus on the issue of directly aiding European revolutionaries, the government adopted again a policy of isolationism – noninvolvement.

The Greek War of Independence ended with the naval battle of Navarino on October 20, 1827, with the Great Powers (Great Britain, France, and Russia) as guarantors. The Great Powers desired that the United States recognize the new nation and they worked toward that end for a number of years. Greece had to wait until December 22, 1837, to be recognized finally by the American government. It was also true that the Porte desired that the United States enter into a treaty of amity and commerce beginning when Captain William Bainbridge first talked with the Capudan
Pasha in Constantinople in November 1800. After many trials and setbacks, the treaty was finally signed on May 7, 1830.

The United States went to war for the right to sail the entire Mediterranean freely and vanquishing the Barbary Pirates gave them that prize. An even greater prize was the right to sail the Black Sea, an area the Divine Porte considered off limits to Great Britain, France, and other Western nations. Following the signing of the treaty of the United States and the Ottoman State in 1830, the Black Sea was open to American merchant vessels that gained access to markets in Bulgaria, Rumania, Ukraine, and the Caucuses. No longer was it necessary to seek Russian trade through the port of St. Petersburg on the same 60° north parallel as Anchorage, Alaska.

The core of the diplomacy of the period covered was national interest – ever changing national interest. As new situations arose, practical solutions had to be found within the historical context of national pride, national security, and national consciousness. New practical solutions were not hypocritical for hypocrisy is an abstraction. New solutions are real.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources


____, 18 Cong., 1 Sess., 805-806, 1084-1099.  


Eighteenth Congress, House of Representatives, Discussion of the Greek Question [a 48-page pamphlet printed in Boston, MA by Howard Gazette, G. A. Gamage, Publisher, 1824]. Washington: January 1824.

Executive Report No. 32, 18 Congress, 1 sess.

Gawalt, Gerard W. “America and the Barbary Pirates: An International Battle Against an Unconventional Foe.”  


Jefferson, Thomas. First Inaugural Address, March 4, 1801.  


Miller, Hunter, ed. Treaties and Other International Acts of the United States of America, II  


*Register of Debates, House of Representative, 21 Cong., 2 Sess. Turkish Mission.*
Washington: Gales & Seaton’s Register, 1831, 831-838.

*Register of Debates, House of Representative, 22 Cong., 1 Sess Turkish Mission.*
Washington: Gales & Seaton’s Register, 1832, 2185-2196.


United States State Department. *Despatches from U. S. Consuls in Smyrna, Turkey*. Roll 1, October 28, 1802-July 1, 1838.

*Washington, George. The Papers of “The Farewell Address.”*


Primary Sources – Treaties


“Treaty of Peace and Amity, Concluded between the United States of America and the Dey and Regency of Algiers, December 22 and 23, 1816.” Hunter Miller, ed. Treaties and


Secondary Sources


Booras, Harris J. Hellenic Independence and America’s Contribution to the Cause. Rutland, VT: Tuttle, 1934.


____. “Early American Policy Concerning Ottoman Minorities.” *Political Science Quarterly* 42, No. 3 (September 1927): 337-367.


Frost, Holloway H. *We Build a Navy*. Annapolis, MD: United States Naval Institute, 1940.


Newspapers


Unpublished Secondary Sources


Other Sources – The Bible

The Revelation of Saint John the Devine, 1:11 And what thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea [the seven cities of the Apocalypse].