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İndirilmesi (1909)*

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Karşı Devrime Yönelik ABD Diplomasisi ve Sultan II. Abdülhamid'in Tahttan İndirilmesi
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Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yousef OMAR

Öz

Amerika Birleşik Devletleri - Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ilişkileri, çalışmaları çoğunlukla Osmanlı'nın Avrupalı güçlerle ilişkileri üzerine odaklanan araştırmacıların nezdinde büyük ilgi görmemiştir. Bu araştırma, ABD - Osmanlı ilişkileri tarihinin önemli bir dönemini ağırlıklı olarak Amerikan ve İngiliz belgelerine dayanarak tartışmaktadır. Araştırma giriş mahiyetinde İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti'nin 1908'de gerçekleştirdiği devrimi ve Osmanlı İmparatorluğu idaresini ele geçişini, İTC'nin kanunların yürürlüğe konulması ve yeni bir Osmanlı hükümetinin teşkili çabaları bağlamında Amerikan diplomasisini ve ABD büyükelçisi John Leishman'ın devrim sonrası Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun geleceğine dair iyimserliğine değinmektedir. Parlamento seçimlerinin yapılması ve toplanmasından karşı devrim emârelerinin belirmesine, Adana katliamı ve karşı devrim girişimi nedeniyle Amerikan gemisi Scorpion'un gönderilmesine uzanan olaylar ve Amerikan gemilerinin gönderilmesi etrafındaki tartışmalara da yine bu çalışmada yer verilmektedir. Karşı devrimi önleyerek İTC'nin kontrolü yeniden ele almasını sağlayan Mehmet Şevket Paşa kuvvetlerinin İstanbul'a doğru ilerlemesi meselesine ilaveten ABD'nin Nisan 1909'da II. Abdülhamit'in tahttan indirilişi karşısında tavrı, iki ülke arasındaki karşılıklı ilişkiler ve silahsızlanmada araştırmanın ele aldığı konulardır. Araştırma ulaştığı en önemli neticeleri sunduğu bir sonuç bölümünü ihtiva etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Amerika Birleşik Devletleri, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, Sultan Abdülhamid, 1908 devrimi, 1909 karşı devrimi

Abstract

Relations between the USA and the Ottoman Empire have not received much attention from scholars as most studies have focused on Ottoman relations with European powers instead. This paper discusses an important stage in the history of Ottoman relations with the USA by relying mainly on American and British documents. This research deals with an introduction to the 1908 revolution carried out by the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) and their control over the Ottoman Empire, the diplomacy of the USA towards what the CUP did to enforce the law, the formation of the new Ottoman government and the optimism of the USA ambassador, John Leishman, about the future of the Ottoman Empire after the revolution. The discussion also deals with USA diplomacy ranging from holding parliamentary elections and convening until the harbingers of the counter-revolution began, what happened to the sending of the American ship Scorpion due to the counter-revolution and the Adana massacre, and the controversy surrounding the sending of American ships. The issue of the advance of Mahmud Shevket Pasha's army towards Istanbul, which was able to eliminate the counter-revolution and restore the control of the CUP again, has also been touched upon in addition to the position on the ouster of Sultan Abdul Hamid II in April 1909 and the bilateral relations between the two countries, including the problem of disarmament. The study also contains a conclusion dealt with important results.

Keywords: United States of America, Ottoman Empire, Sultan Abdul Hamid II, 1908 Revolution, Counter-revolution 1909

Introduction

Sultan Abdul Hamid II (August 31, 1876 - April 27, 1909) was accused by his opponents of tyranny, dictatorship and the suppression of freedoms, especially when he closed parliament and suspended the constitution (Kanun-i Esasi'nin) in 1878. It was then that opposition to his policy began to actually take shape.¹

Ideas of openness towards the West had penetrated greatly within the Ottoman Empire during the reign of Sultan Abdul Hamid II so on June 2, 1889, a group of students of the Military Medical School established a secret organization in Istanbul called the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) or (Young Turk).² Some of its leaders had opposed the Sultan, so they were chased. They sought refuge in safe places in Europe and Africa, and from these areas they settled in London, Paris and Cairo.³

Despite this pursuit, the CUP was able to work in secrecy within the military and medical schools and colleges, and it was able to build a large-scale organization that had a presence in Istanbul and other Ottoman cities, and throughout Europe.⁴ It included in its ranks people of many different races, religions and backgrounds who were united by a common goal which was changing the absolute Ottoman monarchy of Sultan Abdul Hamid II, reopening parliament and restoring the constitution.⁵

Despite all of the attempts of Sultan Abdul Hamid to eliminate the CUP through arrest, deportation and the banning of newspapers and other measures, the CUP became strong enough to carry out a revolution against the Sultan. It was believed that the CUP was intending to carry out this revolution on August 31, 1908 after completing preparations. The date coincides with the anniversary of the accession of Sultan Abdul Hamid II to the throne. However, circumstances forced them to take the initiative to work before the scheduled date and one of the reasons for this was the holding of the Reval Conference in the Russian port of Estonia on the Baltic Sea between 9 – 10 June 1908. This was when the King of Britain, Edward VII, met (January 22, 1901 – May 6, 1910) with the Russian Emperor Nicholas II (November 1, 1894 – March 15, 1917). It was believed at that time that Britain intended to concede its traditional opposition to Russia's ambitions in the East, especially regarding to its access to the warm waters of the Mediterranean. This meant the end of the rule of the Ottoman Empire in Macedonia. These fears were exacerbated by the Russian fleet's naval maneuvers along the coast of the Black Sea a few days after the conference.⁶

Defending the shrinking Ottoman Empire became a matter of pride within the Ottoman army. There was an overwhelming desire to preserve the empire and many officers of the Third Corps Army stationed in Thessaloniki feared that this meeting would be a prelude to the division of Macedonia. Many officers, led by Major Ahmed Niyazi, fled from inside the Third Corps Army

¹ Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA), Yıldız Esas Evrakı (YEE), 71/38, 24 Aralık 1876 (December 24, 1876); Youssef M. Choueiri (ed), *A Companion to the History of the Middle East* (Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 240; Meliha Benli Altunışık and Özlem Tür, *Turkey: Challenges of Continuity and Change* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2005), 5-6.

² Ahmed Bedevi Kuran, *Inkilâp Hareketleri ve Milli Mücadele* (Istanbul: Baha Matbassı, 1956), 120-60.

³ G. L. Lewis, *Turkey* (London: Ernest Benn, 1955), 40.

⁴ William Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military* (London: Routledge, 2006), 30; Gábor Ágoston and Bruce Masters, *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2009), 139.

⁵ Taner Akçam, *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility* (London: Macmillan, 2007), 50-65.

⁶ Feroz Ahmed, *The Young Turk, The Committee of Union and Progress in the Turkish Politics 1908-1914* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1969), 2; A. D. Alderson, *The Structure of the Ottoman Dynasty* (Oxford: At The Clarendon Press, 1956), 71; Reader Bullard, *Britain and the Middle East From the Earliest Times to 1950* (London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1951), 52.

to the mountains. They joined the CUP and organized gangs of volunteers, deserters from the army and others who were united by the desire to preserve the empire, to reopen parliament and to restore the constitution.⁷

The desire to preserve the Ottoman Empire was not the main engine of the CUP as most of the leaders of the CUP had studied and resided in many European capitals. They were influenced by modern Western values in all of their details and at least some of them wanted the Ottoman Empire to be, in terms of rank, like European countries in both system and administration.

There was a delay in the date of the revolution which actually began on July 3, 1908 in the town of Resna.⁸ As the CUP's forces advanced to Istanbul, Sultan Abdul Hamid II tried to resist them but he failed. In the third week of July 1908, the forces advanced and more joined them until what they were doing became a real revolution.⁹ The result was that the CUP imposed on the Sultan to submit to the revolution and its conditions such as the declaration of a new constitution for the country and the reopening of parliament, which the CUP take control of and promoted to most of the seats in it after the first election.¹⁰

The CUP controlled affairs in the Ottoman Empire and kept Sultan Abdul Hamid II in his position. This is because the CUP did not feel strong enough to depose him and the Sultan had calmed the commotion of the CUP and its supporters to some extent by conceding to their demands to restore the constitution and open parliament. As Sultan, he was still - in spite of everything - surrounded by the reverence of the great majority of the Ottoman people.¹¹ In addition to this, the CUP did not wish to expose the gains that it had made to loss by raising the issue of dethroning the Sultan.¹²

In addition, Sultan Abdul Hamid II was considered to be a very important religious and worldly necessity for the population in the Ottoman Empire for many centuries. It was therefore difficult for the CUP – which had hardly pressed its control – to proceed with a matter that could have brought it a lot of problems.

1. The CUP's Promotion, Law Enforcement and the Crystallization of the USA's Position.

The USA, up until 1908, was still following with interest the missionary activities that followed it in the Ottoman Empire.¹³ President Theodore Roosevelt (September 14, 1901 – March 4, 1909) demanded that the Ottoman government treat American citizens and institutions the same way as they treat Europeans and other European institutions.¹⁴

Nevertheless, there was nothing to disturb the atmosphere of bilateral relations between the two countries as Roosevelt emphasized the traditional position of the USA towards the Ottoman Empire by stating the following: "The USA will not interfere in internal Ottoman affairs, nor will it threaten to use force unless it intends to use it." The USA would not interfere in internal Turkish

⁷ E. F. Knight, *The Awakening of Turkey: A History of the Turkish Revolution* (London: John Milne, 1909), 148-156.

⁸ Joseph Heller, *British Policy Towards the Ottoman Empire 1908-1914* (London: Frank Cass, 1983), 9.

⁹ Ahmet Turan Alkan, *II Meşrutiyet Devrinde Ordu ve Siyaset* (İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat, 2001), 28.

¹⁰ Angus Hamilton, *Problems of the Middle East* (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1909), 59; Mete Tunçay, "Siyasal Tarihi 1908-1923", in Akşin, Sina (ed). *Türkiye Tarihi, Çağdaş Türkiye 1908-1980* (İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1989), 4: 27-30.

¹¹ Ernest Edmondson Ramsaur, *The Young Turks Prelude to the Revolution of 1908* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1970), 137; Süleyman Kocabaş, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid Şahsiyeti ve Politikası* (İstanbul: Vatan Yayınları, 1995), 402.

¹² Ramsaur, *The Young*, 139.

¹³ *Letter from Theodore Roosevelt to Elihu Root, April 29, 1908*, Theodore Roosevelt Papers (TRP), Library of Congress Manuscript Division (LCMD), Theodore Roosevelt Digital Library (TRDL), Dickinson State University (DSU); *Letter from Theodore Roosevelt to John S. Kennedy, November 22, 1901*, (TRP), (LCMD), (TRDL), (DSU).

¹⁴ *Letter from Theodore Roosevelt to Morris K. Jesup, August 18, 1904*, (TRP), (LCMD), (TRDL), (DSU).

matters and would not threaten force unless it intends to use it.¹⁵ The bilateral relations strengthened between the two parties and gifts were exchanged between Roosevelt and Sultan Abdul Hamid II.¹⁶

It was clear that the USA was maintaining the principle that was formulated by the former President of the USA, James Monroe (March 4, 1817 – March 4, 1825) in 1823 which was the Monroe Doctrine principle. This is based on "isolationism" which calls for non-European intervention in the affairs of the American continent and the non-interference of the USA in European affairs in turn¹⁷.

Meanwhile, the Ambassador of the USA to Istanbul, John G. A. Leishman (March 29, 1901 – June 10, 1909) to the USA Secretary of State, Elihu Root (July 19, 1905 – January 27, 1909) on July 24, 1908, stated that Sultan Abdul Hamid II surrendered to the demands of the CUP to implement reforms and restore the constitution. He was suspended for 30 years and sent orders to all rulers throughout the empire with the aim of moving forward with the election of the Ottoman Parliament. Leishman noted that everyone was concerned about the final outcome of the elections.¹⁸

Leishman mentioned that as a result of the 1908 revolution and the effective rule of the CUP, a general amnesty was announced for all political prisoners in addition to ordinary prisoners. The dissatisfaction with the old regime (the regime of Sultan Abdul Hamid II) was general to the point that the change took place with relatively little bloodshed. Leishman expected that there would be serious problems as the constitution granted at the beginning of the new era was very limited, and left ample room for conflicts of power and interests between the constitutional government and the Sultan. Leishman emphasized that the pressure was increasing on the Sultan to dismiss the palace clique who bore responsibility for the unfortunate situation that ultimately led to the revolution. Failure to comply with the demands may lead to new problems.¹⁹

The USA Assistant Secretary of State, Robert Bacon (September 5, 1905 – January 27, 1909) told Leishman on August 3, 1908 that after Sultan Abdul Hamid II announced his new constitutional policy for the diplomatic corps in Istanbul, Roosevelt in turn declared his hope that this important step would help to promote lasting peace and prosperity in the "great Ottoman nation".²⁰

It seemed that the USA had taken a position that implicitly recognized the results of the 1908 revolution in the Ottoman Empire and that it had decided to treat its outcomes as a de facto matter that does not contradict the policy of the USA. Rather, it seemed to strengthen the values of cooperation between the two countries.

2. The Formation of the New Government and the Increase in Tension

The Grand Vizier, Mehmed Said Pasha (July 22, 1908 – August 6, 1908) was referred to retirement and Mehmed Kâmil Pasha (August 5, 1908 – February 14, 1909) was appointed as the

¹⁵ *Letter from Theodore Roosevelt to Albert Bushnell Hart. April 24, 1908, (TRP), (LCMD), (TRDL),(DSU).*

¹⁶ *Letter from Theodore Roosevelt to the State Department. April 27, 1908, (TRP), (LCMD), (TRDL),(DSU).*

¹⁷ Şuhnaz Yılmaz, *Turkish-American Relations, 1800-1952: Between the Stars, Stripes and the Crescent* (London: Routledge, 2015), 10.

¹⁸ File No 10044/26, Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State, American Embassy, Constantinople, July 24, 1908, Telegram. In, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), With the Annual Message of the President Transmitted to Congress December 8, 1908.*

¹⁹ File No. 10044/74, Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State, American Embassy, Constantinople, July 28, 1908, Telegram, Paraphrase.

²⁰ File No. 10044/26, The Acting Secretary of State to Ambassador Leishman, Department of State, Washington, August 3, 1908, Telegram, Paraphrase.

Grand Vizier, because Kâmil Pasha was a statesman that was more liberal in his ideas, thus he was acceptable to the reformists.²¹

Leishman mentioned that despite the formation of the new government, there were only a few changes in it, as all of its members were responsible for the old system. Although some of the ministers had integrity, most of them were not sufficiently different from those who had preceded them. He asserted that the situation prevailing in the empire was best described as "simmering," and that any trivial event could cause violence and daily demonstrations. One of the organized masses began to revive and deal badly with their dislikes. A follower of Izzet Pasha was killed on August 2, 1908 by a number of mobs who were angered by the attempt of that person to escape on board a British ship, as did the others in the entourage of the palace camarilla.²²

Leishman confirmed that the leaders of the CUP had refrained until now from coming to Istanbul as it would be staying in an insecure place. They preferred to remain in Manastir (Bitola), Thessaloniki and Adrianople. They maintained their control over the army there while the Istanbul garrison - estimated to be between ten and twenty thousand men. This was the future of the reform movement and the palace guards, in addition to there being the presence of a large number of mobs in the city who sympathized with the Sultan²³.

Despite this, Leishman emphasized that the strength of the CUP received tremendous momentum, especially after the arrival of its delegates from Thessaloniki in Istanbul. It seemed that they had successfully negotiated with the Sultan, who together with his supporters swore an oath of loyalty to the constitution. The Sultan was forced to dismiss his direct advisors, some of whom he had found in prison with other prominent officials. Some of the ministers from the late regime were forced to provide more guarantees to the CUP of the permanent implementation of the constitution.²⁴

Leishman added that after the formation of the new government headed by Kâmil Pasha, it was expected to work on holding an election so then Parliament could convene. It was also hoped that this government would be able to impose an authority that had not existed during the two weeks prior to the formation of the government. Demonstrations were the prevailing system and many former officials were on their way to prison. The Armenian Patriarch was treated shamefully in the streets by a crowd and one of the notorious personalities, Fehim Pasha, the police chief, was killed by angry peasants near the Bursa stock exchange while trying to escape. Leishman emphasized that acts of violence were not absent from Istanbul, especially given the lack of a strong authority in place. On the other hand, the most prominent feature of the situation was Macedonia. The Bulgarian, Greek, Serbian and Vlach (Romania and Moldova) gangs that for years disturbed had the quiet of European diplomacy suddenly stopped after the revolution. Their superiors declared their readiness to abide by the constitution, something that all previous efforts had failed to achieve²⁵.

Leishman was sent to the USA Secretary of State, Elihu Root on August 20, 1908 to tell him that ten days had passed of calm and that the demonstrations had almost stopped. The new constitutional government headed by Kâmil Pasha was actively engaged in getting rid of unwanted employees from the previous regime, especially given the accumulation of useless jobs.

²¹ File No. 10044/42, Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State, American Embassy, Constantinople, August 8, 1908. No. 738.

²² File No. 10044/38, Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State, American Embassy, Constantinople, August 3, 1908. No. 733, Extract.

²³ Loc. Cit.

²⁴ File No. 10044/42, Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State, American Embassy, Constantinople, August 8, 1908, No. 738.

²⁵ File No. 10044/42, Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State, American Embassy, Constantinople, August 8, 1908. No. 738.

The employees were paid irregularly, barely receiving their salaries six or seven months a year. The government's recent sweeping reforms resulted in the dismissal of nearly 90 per cent of officials in some government departments. The council-of state was also reduced to only about a fifth. Leishman emphasized that these changes and reforms were necessary and that if they were not implemented gradually and gracefully, he feared that they will cause future embarrassment for the new constitutional government.²⁶

Leishman asserted that recently, there have been a number of strikes in Istanbul and Smyrna (present-day Izmir), which are new events in the empire. The same had never been allowed under the old regime. However, the CUP succeeded in stopping the strikes and forced everyone to abide by the law in a timely manner.²⁷

Leishman described the developments in the Ottoman Empire for his Secretary of State in a manner that was positive and optimistic, despite all of the events that the country had gone through.

3. Leishman's Optimism about the Future of the Ottoman Empire

Leishman was aware of the difficulties facing the new constitutional government, stressing that it was difficult to say whether the government had been fully established. He expressed his complete conviction that "the new constitutional régime has come to stay, and that the reign of the absolute monarchy in Turkey is a thing of the past".²⁸

With this statement, Leishman emphasized that he was not oblivious to the fact that the Ottoman Empire was exposed to many problems that other countries have been through before the throes of revolution. He was fully aware that it was exposed to many dangers due to its heterogeneous population and the jealousy and aspirations of its neighbors. He expressed his strong support of the view that the Ottoman Empire would overcome all difficulties that can be expected and that it will come out of all its problems. He emphasized this by saying that it would be "perhaps somewhat battered and scarred, but thoroughly purified and ready to take her place among the progressive nations".²⁹

Leishman was apparently very optimistic about the future of the Ottoman Empire after the 1908 revolution as he assured the Secretary of State, Root, on September 28, 1908 that it had become quite clear that the collapse of the Ottoman Empire had been stopped. If one can judge the future by the reforms that have already been made, it will be only a few years before the Ottoman Empire becomes a highly civilized and progressive state. Thanks to its great natural resources, it will be one of the richest countries and that current conditions call for him to support the view that "the march of progress will be even more rapid than it has been in Japan".³⁰

Leishman emphasized that what European diplomacy had failed to achieve had been done by the Ottoman Empire to itself as if it were "magic" and that the reforms that Europe sought to impose on the empire for many years were accomplished overnight. They were as wonderful as they seem and the gangs, the revolutionaries and the thieves had suddenly disappeared. Leishman said: "Let us hope for good, and leave the country for the time being in the most peaceful state it has enjoyed for centuries." He emphasized that the Ottoman Empire was controlled by an absolute

²⁶ File No. 10044/52, Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State, American Embassy, Constantinople, August 20, 1908, No. 751.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ File No. 10044/75, Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State, American Embassy, Constantinople, September 28, 1908, No. 775, Extract.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid; Renée Worringer, "Sick Man of Europe or Japan of the Near East?: Constructing Ottoman Modernity in the Hamidian and Young Turk Eras", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 36 (2004), 207–230.

moral force contrary to the many regions are still led by governments, especially after the old officials fled or were expelled by the population who have not yet been replaced.³¹

Leishman stated that there is still a lot to be done in the Ottoman Empire as it is not easy to replace the old government machinery that was suddenly destroyed. New men had to be found with modern ideas to replace the neglected officials who were disposed of from the old regime. The reality was that inexperienced men would be installed. Thus there would need to be a "miracle" if problems of a more or less serious nature did not explode from time to time, since the large number of employees dismissed from the government along with their followers constituted a large army of disaffected people ready for a "reactionary movement." Sectarian and ethnic differences, especially between the Christian races, have always been a subject of trouble. He expressed his full belief that the Ottoman Empire had taken on a new opportunity for life and will continue its progressive march despite all of the difficulties that it may face both inside and out.³²

Leishman was confident that the establishment of a constitutional government in the Ottoman Empire meant a lot to his continental neighbors while removing the greatest threat to peace in Europe. The matter was not without a special and material interest for the USA because it effectively removed the main causes of most of its problems with the Ottoman Empire related to missionaries and citizens, namely those with naturalized American citizenship of Ottoman origin. It also enhanced the opportunities available for expanding the scope of USA trade as the development of the countries that were previously backward and nearly suffocated by the old methods of the regime were to be encouraged to the maximum extent possible by the new Ottoman government. This was surely to lead to a large wave of prosperity that would be in the USA's favor. As for the Ottoman citizens who had naturalized American citizenship and who were prevented from returning to their country, they will now be welcomed. There is no doubt that a large percentage of the hundreds of thousands of immigrants who had found safe haven on the coasts of the USA during the past twenty or thirty years would now return to their motherland. They will work to strengthen the bonds of friendship that bind the two countries.³³

Nevertheless, Leishman considered that it would be difficult to correctly predict the near future regarding the Ottoman Empire as much depended on the composition of the new parliament which, according to the constitution, could not be held before November 1, 1908. While the leaders of the CUP showed great moderation, unprecedented emancipation and self-denial, the opposition elements were not willing to do so and their ideas led to the belief that a certain percentage of the representatives who will be elected have ideas that are impractical, socialist and not at all appropriate to the existing conditions. He expressed his sincere hope that constitutional men who are not fanatical concerning ethnic and religious aspirations will form the majority of the next Ottoman parliament, otherwise the peace and prosperity of the empire will be at great risk in the future.³⁴

Leishman was apparently overly optimistic about what would happen in the Ottoman Empire after the 1908 revolution. There was never any indication that Leishman expressed his solidarity with Sultan Abdul Hamid II or his previous policies. The truth of Leishman's position is not really known. It seems that his position was a recognition of the de facto policy and dealing with it in proportion to the policies of the United States, and perhaps admiration for the achievements of the CUP, which - from an American point of view - was worked for a constitutional government, the establishment of a parliament and reforms, which corresponds to the vision of the United

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

States of things. It may also be that he believes that this change could benefit the political and economic interests of the United States, although this has not been clear - until then-

4. Holding Elections and Holding Parliament and its Implications

Leishman told his Secretary of State on October 9, 1908 that although rumors of war continued to spread and there was a great deal of uncertainty and anxiety in the Ottoman Empire, he still hoped to avoid resorting to the use of weapons, as the leaders of the CUP continued to act in the same manner. Apparently they were doing everything they could to pacify the fighting spirit of the Ottoman army, confusing the "reactionaries".³⁵

Meanwhile, the Ottoman Parliament elections took place and the CUP won most of the seats which were distributed as follows: Turks 147, Arabs 60, Albanians 27, Greeks 26, Armenians 14, Slavs 10 and Jews 4.³⁶

Leishman sent a telegram informing his government that on the occasion of the opening of the Ottoman Parliament on December 17, 1908, telegrams of congratulations arrived from European parliaments to congratulate the parliament. Fifty-three members of the English Parliament sent congratulations which they sent through the Foreign Ministry and their ambassador to Istanbul. The president of the Austrian Chamber, on behalf of the Austrian representatives, also sent similar congratulations which were sent directly to the president of the Ottoman Parliament. Leishman emphasized that it would definitely be nice and appreciated if the USA government could take a similar action.³⁷

The next day, Leishman sent a telegram informing his government of the official opening of the Turkish Parliament on December 17, 1908 by the Sultan personally in the presence of the diplomatic staff and with no accidental incidents occurring be it again himself or in the crowded streets that he passed on his way to Parliament. All deputies in Parliament swore an oath of allegiance to the constitution and to the Sultan so long as he respected the constitution.³⁸

Accordingly, The USA Assistant Secretary of State, Robert Bacon sent a telegram to Leishman informing him that the Senate on December 17, 1908 had decided to request that the Department of State inform the newly convened Ottoman Parliament of the Senate's congratulations and best wishes. A similar decision was also issued by the House of Representatives, meaning that Leishman must inform the president of the Ottoman Parliament of the congratulations through the appropriate official channels.³⁹

Leishman received the telegrams stating the two decisions taken by the USA Senate and Representatives on December 17, 1908. He conveyed their congratulations to the new Ottoman Parliament and its president through well-known diplomatic channels. He emphasized that such congratulations were natural actions being taken by almost all parliaments in Europe. He was sure that the congratulations of the USA Congress will be greatly appreciated by the Ottoman government.⁴⁰

³⁵ File No. 10044/74. Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State, American Embassy, Constantinople, October 9, 1908, Telegram, Paraphrase.

³⁶ Ahmet T. Kuru, *Secularism and State Policies Toward Religion: The United States, France, and Turkey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 212.

³⁷ File No. 10044/105. Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State, American Embassy, Constantinople, December 16, 1908, Telegram.

³⁸ File No. 10044/117. Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State, American Embassy, Constantinople, December 17, 1908, No. 846.

³⁹ File No. 10044/105. The Acting Secretary of State to Ambassador Leishman, Department of State, Washington, December 17, 1908, Telegram.

⁴⁰ *Theodore Roosevelt to the Senate, The White House, Washington, February 24, 1909; Robert Bacon to Theodore Roosevelt, Department of State, Washington, February 23, 1909, Document No. 738, 60th Congress, December 7, 1908*

Leishman's description of the supporters of the former regime as reactionaries and his demand to congratulate the Ottoman Empire on the opening and convening of parliament shows a clear bias towards the new era that began with the revolution of the CUP in 1908.

5. Signs of a Counter-revolution and the Sending of the Scorpion

Leishman, despite his previous optimism, seemed worried about the poor development of conditions in the Ottoman Empire after the 1908 revolution. He asked his government to send an American ship to Istanbul as a precaution.⁴¹ The USA Assistant Secretary of State, Bacon, had been sent to Leishman on September 28, 1908 on the sailing ship the USS Scorpion which had been converted into a steamboat ready to leave immediately to enter the Dardanelles Strait and to dock in Istanbul as soon as it was able to obtain permission to do so.⁴²

The USA Secretary of State Root sent to the USA Secretary of the Navy, Victor H. Metcalf (December 17, 1906 – November 30, 1908), on October 20, 1908 a message saying that on the recommendation of Leishman, the USA government asked the Ottoman government for permission for the ship Scorpion to cross the Dardanelles and to dock at the port of Istanbul at the disposal of Leishman. Root confirmed that Leishman was in the process of obtaining an imperial decree allowing the entry of the Scorpion into the Dardanelles. Therefore the captain of the Scorpion, Lieutenant Commander George W. Logan, was to sail as soon as possible to Istanbul. He had to transmit to Leishman a telegraphy upon his arrival in Malta or any suitable port on the Mediterranean in order to settle the formal procedures for the passage of Scorpion into the Dardanelles. Upon his arrival in Istanbul, Logan and his staff must perform the usual salute to the Ottoman flag. Root mentioned that it was expected to extend the stay of the Scorpion in Istanbul under the supervision of Leishman.⁴³

Meanwhile, Leishman mentioned that there was a disagreement between Grand Vizier Kâmil Pasha and Parliament along with the persistent rumors of plots to overthrow Sultan Abdul Hamid II. This caused a great deal of anxiety and fear of unrest in Istanbul and the general security situation was not what it should be. Leishman emphasized that the unrest had already occurred at home and could extend at any time to the capital, which was potentially dangerous due to the lack of authority with which to suppress it. He expressed his hope that any events of a dangerous nature would be avoided. He considered it advisable for the Scorpion to return to Istanbul as soon as possible.⁴⁴

Bacon informed Leishman on October 21, 1908 that the "courteous permission" to be issued by the Ottoman government regarding the passage of the Scorpion to the Dardanelles would be greatly appreciated. Bacon asked Leishman to transfer the request to Sultan Abdul Hamid II regarding Roosevelt the Great for additional evidence of the friendship between the USA and the Ottoman Empire. Bacon confirmed that the Scorpion would sail to the Dardanelles on October 22, 1908 and that its captain, Logan, would send a telegram from Malta or elsewhere when

- March 4, 1909, Senate Documents, (Washington: Government Printing Office 1909), Vol. 22; File No. 10044/118. Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State, American Embassy, Constantinople, December 18, 1908, No. 848.

⁴¹ File No. 10044/87, The Secretary of State to the Secretary of the Navy, Department of State, Washington, October 20, 1908, Inclosure.

⁴² File No. 10044/68, The Acting Secretary of State to Ambassador Leishman, Department of State, Washington, September 28, 1908, Telegram, Paraphrase.

⁴³ File No. 10044/87. The Secretary of State to the Secretary of the Navy, Department of State, Washington, October 20, 1908, Inclosure

⁴⁴ File No. 10044/87. Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State, American Embassy, Constantinople, October 21, 1908, Telegram.

possible to Leishman in order for him to take the necessary measures for its passage into the Dardanelles.⁴⁵

Leishman replied on the same day, (October 21, 1908), that he had just received a letter from the Ottoman government in which it agreed to the Scorpion's entry into the Dardanelles. The letter read: "The ministry for foreign affairs has the honor of informing the Embassy of the USA that an imperial iradé (decree) authorizes the passage through the Dardanelles of the yacht Scorpion, which will arrive at the port of Constantinople to serve it as stationnaire".⁴⁶

Bacon asked Leishman to maintain contact with the Scorpion's Captain and that Leishman should advise him regarding formalities, salutes and so forth as he travelled into the Dardanelles.⁴⁷ The entry of the Scorpion into the Dardanelles and its docking in Istanbul was delayed as Leishman sent a telegram to Root on December 4, 1908, telling him that the ship the Scorpion had arrived today in Istanbul".⁴⁸

The summoning of the Scorpion was considered to be an important matter due to the fear of attacks that might affect the citizens of the USA in light of the tense conditions in the Ottoman Empire. Therefore it was necessary and natural for the USA and other European countries to send ships in order to protect their citizens and their property.

6. The Counter-revolution has Taken Shape

Leishman had spoken more than once - since August 1908 - about the existence of a violent reactionary movement aimed at overthrowing the constitutional Ottoman government, and that intense excitement was prevalent as Istanbul had since then been practically in the hands of the armed mob. Forces had also revolted in Istanbul and joined the reactionaries. It was difficult to estimate the number of dead and wounded which may have reached several hundred. He emphasized that these events were tolerated by the Sultan. Although there was relative calm later, there was great concern about the final outcome in the event of a renewal of such events. Leishman stressed that he did not consider that foreigners were exposed to any serious danger at the time except for stray bullets that limited the comfort of foreigners as indiscriminate shooting continued even in the area where the foreign embassies were located.⁴⁹

Leishman's concerns seemed to corroborate with what was going on on the ground when he sent a letter to the new USA Secretary of US, Philander C. Knox (March 6, 1909 – March 5, 1913) dated April 15, 1909 about the recent political events in Istanbul. He stated that the success of the revolution that was carried out by the CUP last July was very surprising and had met little resistance to the extent that the transition from the old system to the new was carried out almost without bloodshed. The CUP was the one running the government and it had seemed that the Ottoman Empire had entered a new era of freedom and progress.⁵⁰

Leishman added that the CUP knew that its strength, as well as the salvation of the Ottoman Empire, lay in the army. They worked to increase the efficiency of the Ottoman forces and put

⁴⁵ File No. 10044/88. The Acting Secretary of State to Ambassador Leishman, Department of State, Washington, October 21, 1908, Telegram, Paraphrase.

⁴⁶ Loc. Cit.

⁴⁷ File No. 10044/87. The Acting Secretary of State to Ambassador Leishman, Department of State, Washington, October 26, 1908, No. 440.

⁴⁸ File No. 10044/101. Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State, American Embassy, Constantinople, December 4, 1908, Telegram.

⁴⁹ File No. 10044/26. The Acting Secretary of State to Ambassador Leishman, Department of State, Washington, August 3, 1908, Telegram, paraphrase.

⁵⁰ File No. 10044/179. Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State. American Embassy, Constantinople, April 15, 1909. No. 941, Extract. In, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), With the Annual Message of the President Transmitted to Congress December 7, 1909.

the leadership of these forces under the control of officers supporting the new regime to suppress the reaction quickly and effectively. The Sultan's bodyguard consisted of mostly Albanians and Arabs and it had a privileged position. The CUP worked to cancel its previous powers and privileges and its officers were gradually changed to new officers in support of the CUP. Several battalions assigned to guard the Sultan's palace were also sent to distant provinces. Later the last Albanian forces were driven out after they were disarmed and it was generally clear that the old Sultan's guard had become a thing of the past and with it, the last remaining strength of the Sultan. It seemed that the control of the CUP was now controlling the government, parliament and the army absolutely and more than ever before. The supporters of the CUP won the previous parliamentary elections and that this constitutional victory was surprising and universal. Thus the authority of the Sultan was destroyed and he was forced to bend wisely in the face of the storm. He became constitutionally obligated to govern.⁵¹

Meanwhile, religious school students (theological students) known as "Softas" began to worry about the expansion of Western ideas carried out by the leaders and followers of the CUP, which they considered hostile to Islamic law despite the fact that Sheik-ul-Islam declared that the constitution is fully compatible with Islamic law. However, the affiliation with Freemasonry and the free-thinking tendencies of many of the leaders of the CUP and some of the members of Parliament and their disregard for religious ceremonies were well known. The fanatical element was beyond doubt.⁵²

Leishman stated that the Softas had held a major meeting in Istanbul and that a political program was announced aimed at imposing Islamic law throughout the Ottoman Empire. They allied with the liberals to overthrow the CUP. During these events, a journalist famous for attacking the CUP was killed at midnight on April 14, 1909 on the Galata Bridge which was considered by the liberals to be a political assassination. It raised many questions, especially after the police failed to discover the killer which left a tremendous impression on the minds of the people that the crime was committed by order of the CUP.⁵³

Leishman also confirmed that the soldiers, led by their sergeants, restrained their senior officers and killed them at midnight on Monday April 12, 1909 in several barracks. A large number of them and the Softas marched together to seize the square in front of the Ottoman Parliament. Once there, they all demanded the application of Islamic law and the resignation of the existing government, to reinstate the dismissed officers and the issuing of a general amnesty for detainees.⁵⁴

It is true that the counter-revolution appeared clearly in April 1909 and that everyone was touched by its impact on the Ottoman streets, especially in Istanbul. Leishman's letters to the USA State Department confirmed that the beginnings of tension and current events had begun, in practice, from the moment of the success of the 1908 revolution and the control of the CUP over state affairs.

Meanwhile, one of the officers of the CUP who leads the First Army Corps, Mahmud Moukhtar Pasha - an officer with energy and ability - managed to collect four battalions loyal to the CUP with some cavalry and artillery in the Ministry of War. He put them all on alert waiting for the orders of the leaders of the CUP and the Council of Ministers to take action against the

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

counter-revolution.⁵⁵ Grand Vizier Kâmil Pasha called for an extraordinary cabinet meeting to discuss the recent events. They decided to postpone Mahmud Moukhtar Pasha's move and then they all submitted their resignations.⁵⁶

Leishman stated that when the victory of the counter-revolution was evident, all of the soldiers in Istanbul joined them. Given the chaos that prevailed, the only surprising feature that was clearly visible was that there were no excesses. In the late afternoon of April 14, 1909, a new government was formed headed by Ahmet Tevfik Pasha (April 14, 1909 – May 5, 1909) who was a respected and worthy figure of the old regime while Istanbul was still in the hands of the counter-revolution that brutally chased away the officers of the CUP and anyone else belonging to them. They also killed, with "utmost brutality", the Minister of Justice and a prominent Syrian deputy in parliament. Each time, the mobs mistook and killed innocent people, instead of the leaders and members of the CUP.⁵⁷

Since then there has been a "reign of terror", with the murders continuing during the counter-revolution and chaos continued from the night of Tuesday, 13 April to Wednesday, 14 April 1909. All of the headquarters, offices and papers of the CUP were looted and the streets were filled with soldiers belonging to the counter-revolution, many of whom were drunk, firing their rifles in the air. Of course, there were many accidents. The pursuit and killing by the soldiers against the officers belonging to the CUP was the most dangerous feature of the counter-revolution. The chaos caused by the counter-revolution went unchecked and murders took place on the streets. As for the official statements, they still emphasized the continuation of parliament and constitutional life but with the president of the chamber, his deputy and many prominent deputies fleeing assassination, it became doubtful that any member of parliament would dare to demonstrate the slightest degree of independence.⁵⁸

The best indication of the frame of mind of parliament can be seen in the declaration it issued on April 14, 1908 in which it praised the counter-revolutionary soldiers for their "constitutional" work and their demand of the reinstatement of the dismissed officers as the rebels desired. Leishman stressed that it was possible that the chaos will spread from Istanbul to other regions as there had recently been a great deal of emotion and turmoil. It was possible that things will develop and so the number of guards surrounding the foreign embassies was increased in the anticipation of chaos being directed against foreigners.⁵⁹

The counter-revolution was not - as it appears - a revolution that was organized or prepared in advance. There was no sign of certain parties working for its success or external parties that support it. In addition, there was no clear leadership that took upon itself to drop the ruling of the CUP. All that was clear was that all of the events of the counter-revolution were random and carried out without prior planning by the Softas and the soldiers angry at the European appearances that were influencing the leaders of the CUP and their behavior more than anything else.

7. The killing of two USA citizens in the events of Adana and its repercussions

It was clear that what Leishman feared had happened when he sent a telegram to Knox on April 16, 1909 stating that the counter-revolution in Istanbul had begun to spread to other regions.

⁵⁵ These events are called the March 31 Incident (March 31 on the Rumi calendar = April 13, 1909). This incident is called in Turkish by several names, the most important of which is: 31 Mart Vakası, 31 Mart Olayı, 31 Mart Hadisesi, or 31 Mart İsyanı).

⁵⁶ File No. 10044/179. Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State. American Embassy, Constantinople, April 15, 1909. No. 941, Extract

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

It seemed that there were other problems on the way. Leishman also reported a massacre in Adana against the Christians there, as there was an American missionary institution present.⁶⁰ On April 18, 1909, he confirmed the killing of two American citizens, one named Maury and the other Rodgers.⁶¹ The Acting Secretary of State Huntington Wilson (March 5, 1909 – March 19, 1913) sent to Leishman that the State Department not anxious about the presence of many American teachers and missionaries in the Ottoman Empire.⁶²

Nevertheless, Knox's last telegram to Leishman on April 21, 1909 stated that the American warships the Montana and North Carolina would move immediately from Guantanamo in Cuba to the Mediterranean Sea. They would remain in Gibraltar pending any further orders in anticipation of the development of events in the Ottoman Empire.⁶³

The British ambassador to Washington, James Bryce (1907 - 1913), informed his foreign minister, Edward Gray (December 10, 1905 – December 10, 1916), on April 20, 1909 that the reason for the sending of USA ships was not a belief in the need for American protection. Rather, it was to satisfy the popular sentiment that was worried about the safety of the American missionaries in Asia Minor, that British and foreign ships should be ready to do their best to protect the American citizens there and that the US would never think of interfering with any business of the empire except to protect its citizens.⁶⁴

The ambassadors of the USA, Britain, Russia and Austria submitted claims for compensation for the losses that they incurred in Adana but the Ottoman government considered that the issue could not be considered in such a manner. If it was to be considered, it should only be done so through the courts.⁶⁵

The Adana massacres did not appear to result in a strong reaction in the USA. In 1909, the USA exported \$84,574 worth of firearms and \$38,466 of ammunition to the Ottoman Empire. In the following year, 1910, the figure for the USA ammunition exports rose to \$105,950.⁶⁶

There was - seemingly - nothing that could affect the relations of the USA with the Ottoman Empire as the supreme interests that the USA hoped to achieve were greater than taking a hostile stance against the Ottoman Empire, similar to what European countries did and their lack of interest in the Adana massacre in light of its traditional policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries.

8. Mahmud Shevket Pasha's Forces Advance Towards Istanbul

It was clear that matters were developing on the ground in the Ottoman Empire as Leishman sent a telegram to Knox on April 19, 1909, telling him that there were about 20,000 soldiers from the Third Corps Army that had followed the CUP had were 20 miles (32.1 km) from Istanbul.

⁶⁰ File No. 10044/141. Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State, American Embassy, Pera, April 16, 1909, Telegram, Paraphrase.

⁶¹ File No. 10044/144. Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State, American Embassy, Pera, April 18, 1909, Telegram, Paraphrase; Thomas A. Bryson, *American Diplomatic Relations With the Middle East, 1784-1975: A Survey* (New Jersey: The Scarecrow Press, 1977), 49.

⁶² File No. 10044/144. The Acting Secretary of State to Ambassador Leishman, Department of State, Washington, April 18, 1909, Telegram, Paraphrase.

⁶³ File No. 10044/151A. The Secretary of State to Ambassador Leishman, Department of State, Washington, April 21, 1909, Telegram, Paraphrase; File No. 10044/165. Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State, American Embassy, Pera, April 27, 1909, Telegram, Paraphrase; Simon Payaslian, *United States Policy toward the Armenian Question and the Armenian Genocide* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 20; Thomas A. Bryson, *American Diplomatic Relations With the Middle East, 1784-1975: A Survey* (New Jersey: The Scarecrow Press, 1977), 49.

⁶⁴ F. O. 424-219. Mr. Bryce to Sir Edward Grey, Washington, April 20, 1909, No. 72, Telegraphic.

⁶⁵ F. O. 424-219. Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey, Therapia, June 21, 1909, No. 462.

⁶⁶ Payaslian, *United*, 20.

Their number was increasing every hour and the rebel forces of the counter-revolution in Istanbul were very worried and feared the consequences of their actions.⁶⁷

Leishman emphasized that the population was still suffering from the "terrorism" brought about by the counter-revolution - as he claimed - despite the fact that the excesses of the army and its officers affiliated with the counter-revolution in Istanbul had greatly diminished. It is possible that the CUP would seek to regain the control that was wrested from it, in which case very serious problems could be expected, although much depended on the work of the Third Army Corps. This included both the First and Third Army Corps and all of the soldiers collectively became the Union Commission. They were promoted under the leadership of Mahmud Shevket Pasha and their army was called the "Army of Action." This was the main tool in the success of the 1908 revolution and the restoration of the constitutional government and parliament. He added (Leishman) that despite the conflicting reports, the Third Corps was still loyal to the CUP and joined the others under the leadership of Mahmud Shevket Pasha. He was preparing to march to Istanbul and the developments in the next few days would clarify the reality of the situation greatly.⁶⁸

The counter-revolution - despite its randomness - almost broke the thorn of the CUP and wiped out all of the gains that they had achieved after the 1908 revolution⁶⁹ had it not been for the leadership of the CUP seeking to rectify the matter. Leishman sent a telegram to Knox on April 23, 1909, telling him that Mahmud Shevket Pasha marched his army until it surrounded the capital of Istanbul.⁷⁰ The goal at that time was to rescue the American and British missionaries whose situation was precarious in the region.⁷¹ Although there was no unrest there, the place was threatened. He emphasized that the unrest did not appear to be directed against foreigners.⁷²

After announcing the advance of the Third Corps led by Mahmud Shevket Pasha towards Istanbul, the distant garrisons began to surrender to him quickly and it seemed that the occupation of all military points would be completed on the evening of April 25, 1909, including the control of the headquarters of Sultan Abdul Hamid II in Yıldız Palace. Leishman indicated that no prior decision had been taken regarding the Sultan and his fate or regarding the Ottoman government. When the Third Corps approached the capital, the siege of Istanbul and the surrounding areas was officially declared. Leishman emphasized that the "able manner" in which the military movement of the Third Corps under the command of Mahmud Shevket Pasha took place provided good grounds for believing that order in Istanbul would be preserved as soon as possible.⁷³

Meanwhile, the Ottoman Foreign Minister Mehmed Rifat Pasha (1909-1911) told Leishman on 25 April 1909 that under the prevailing circumstances, a state of siege (closure) was declared on Istanbul and many of the neighborhoods, starting the same "day".⁷⁴

⁶⁷ File No. 10044/145. Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State, American Embassy, Pera, April 19, 1909, Telegram, Paraphrase.

⁶⁸ File No. 1144/143. Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State, American Embassy, Pera, April 17, 1909, Telegram, Paraphrase.

⁶⁹ William Yale, *The Near East, A Modern History* (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1958), p. 170.

⁷⁰ File No. 10044/152. Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State, American Embassy, Pera, April 23, 1909, Telegram, Paraphrase.

⁷¹ F. O. 424-219. Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey, Constantinople, April 24, 1909, No. 159, Telegraphic.

⁷² File No. 10044/152. Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State, American Embassy, Pera, April 23, 1909, Telegram, Paraphrase.

⁷³ File No. 10044/162. Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State, American Embassy, Pera, April 25, 1909; Telegram, Paraphrase.

⁷⁴ File No. 10044/277-280. The Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps. Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Constantinople, April 25, 1909, Inclosure 1, Translation.

It was clear that things were going in favor of the CUP again. Leishman sent a telegram to Knox on April 27, 1909 telling him that the Senate and the Ottoman Chamber of Deputies had sided with the CUP and formed themselves into the National Assembly in San Stefano, about 10 miles (16.09 km) from Istanbul. The Ottoman fleet and the Ottoman navy had also placed themselves under the orders of Mahmud Shevket Pasha.⁷⁵

Leishman indicated that there was great concern about the intentions of the Third Corps led by Mahmud Shevket Pasha, so many rumors circulated about the alleged differences in their ranks or false reports that they had reached a solution with the Sultan. Leishman emphasized that the reason for the heap of rumors was due to the presence of the Third Corps for a whole week at the gates of Istanbul and because of their desire to gather sufficient force to make all resistance impossible once inside Istanbul.⁷⁶

Leishman was well aware that the problem was not only to punish those responsible for the counterrevolution on April 13, 1909 but also to restore order in a city (Istanbul) of more than a million people, almost all of them armed, who had been in chaos for a long time when the forces of chaos were at work long before the counter-revolution. Therefore many different motives, some military and the others political, contributed to the start of negotiations between Sultan Abdul Hamid II and the forces of the Third Corps. These forces insisted on some basic points that could not be waived such as:

- a. Punishing those who instigated the revolution.
- b. Removing out the entire military garrison that supported the Sultan from Istanbul.

Nevertheless, it was clear that these obstacles could not be overcome, so Mahmud Shevket Pasha's army occupied some of the barracks in the plain outside Istanbul on the evening of Friday April 23, 1909. At dawn the next day on April 24, 1909, his forces took control of four different points and nothing was done. There was resistance against them and Istanbul was supposed to be occupied without a single shot being fired. Although the rebels in the counter-revolution did not devise any coordinated defense plan, they concentrated their efforts on resisting the attacking forces by staying in their barracks and guarding the stores. The total garrison in Istanbul consisted of about 25,000 soldiers deployed in many large barracks located in different parts of the city. Each barracks became a center of attack by Mahmud Shevket Pasha's army. Hardly a site was seized without losses.⁷⁷

Leishman indicated that the heaviest fighting was that which occurred in the early hours of the morning on Saturday April 24, 1909 in Pera - a suburb of Istanbul - near the USA embassy where the rebels from the counter-revolution raised the white flag. When the forces that approached Mahmud Shevket Pasha did not expect any resistance, they were shot from behind the walls of the barracks and killed. The artillery had to be brought in as heavy fighting took place for several hours in the center of the neighborhood, injuring the New York Sun correspondent, Mr. Moore. Moore was badly injured in the neck and was transported via the firing lines to the nearest hospital. The USA Embassy driver, Mr. Gargiulo, was also injured in the forearm.⁷⁸

Leishman confirmed that in the early hours of Tuesday morning of April 27, 1909, Mahmud Shevket Pasha's army sent a patrol of three men to guard the USA Embassy. Twelve other soldiers joined them an hour later led by an officer holding the rank of Sergeant. Similar measures were also taken by all other foreign missions and institutions. As for Mahmud Shevket Pasha's army,

⁷⁵ File No. 10044/186. Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State. American Embassy, Constantinople, April 27, 1909, No. 949.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

they cut off communications between the different neighborhoods of Istanbul. It guarded the bridges after halting traffic on them. "Fortunately," Leishman noted, about 100 American tourists had departed from Istanbul on two steamships.⁷⁹

Leishman indicated that during the actual fighting between Mahmud Shevket Pasha's forces and the counter-revolution soldiers, Mahmud Shevket Pasha's army closed the streets in order to keep spectators away from the firing lines and to reduce the dangerous consequences of these clashes in the crowded streets of Istanbul. Leishman emphasized that while most of the barracks surrendered without much bloodshed, the seizure of the barracks known as Tash-Kishla on April 24, 1909, turned into a scene of violent fighting between the two sides. Fighting around the barracks continued throughout the day with the largest loss of life on both sides. Many mosques were also the scene of fights.⁸⁰

The Softas were effective tools in the counter-revolution and they were a major cause of the angering of the people against the CUP and its army. The anger of Mahmud Shevket Pasha's army was directed to a large extent against their "machinations" which had dangerous results. When the Softas tried to entrench and resist at the Conqueror's Mosque (Fatih Camii) with their pistols, many of them were eliminated and many of the Softas were arrested in the streets. All suspicious figures were searched and their weapons confiscated.⁸¹

It is clear from Leishman's letters to his government that the counter-revolution was total chaos led by the Softas and many angry soldiers who got rid of their officers because they belonged to the CUP. This was in exchange for the presence of a strong, qualified and well-armed army led by senior officers like Mahmud Shevket Pasha.

9. Take Control of Istanbul Again

Leishman confirmed that after controlling many of the barracks of the soldiers of the counter-revolution, Mahmud Shevket Pasha's army surrounded the Sultan's headquarters in Yıldız Palace where there was a garrison of 4,000 men was still standing. The defeat of their comrades convinced them of the futility of the resistance while 1,500 of their colleagues had already died in other areas. There was a desire to avoid further loss of life. Within 24 hours, the garrison of Yıldız Palace surrendered unconditionally to Mahmud Shevket Pasha's army and the Sultan remained almost alone in his palace awaiting a decision on his final fate, which was being considered at that time.⁸²

Leishman stated that the military operations completely ended with the surrender of the garrison in Scutari on Sunday April 25, 1909. After that, the victors (Mahmud Shevket Pasha) were busy tracking down the fleeing militants. To facilitate this task, they were allowed to search people's homes one by one. To ensure that order was maintained, martial law was declared whereby people were not permitted to take to the streets after dark without special permission or a military escort.⁸³

The USA Embassy in Istanbul announced that it was honored to receive the decision to impose martial law in Istanbul and the surrounding areas. The embassy expressed its confidence that the Ottoman government will take care to observe all of the rights guaranteed by all treaties to American citizens.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ File No. 10044/277-280. American Embassy, Constantinople, April 27, 1909, note verbale. Inclosure 2.

After the clashes ended, Leishman praised the exemplary and commendable order and discipline even though Mahmud Shevket Pasha's army contained volunteers such as Greeks, Bulgarians, Albanians and many notorious gang leaders. They had sworn an oath to restore the constitution and to refrain from committing any acts detrimental to the supreme national motives that motivated Mahmud Shevket Pasha's army.⁸⁵

Leishman asserted that the CUP had regained control, that stability had prevailed, that the ideal order was preserved and the city was saved, which was viewed favorably in the USA.⁸⁶

10. Sultan Abdul Hamid II Dethroned

Leishman mentioned that since the revolution of 1908, there was a strong desire in favor of deposing Sultan Abdul Hamid II from the throne but the latter's compliance with all of the demands presented to him by the CUP led many to believe that the Sultan had openly accepted his new role as the holder of constitutional sovereignty. The presence of Sultan Abdul Hamid II was required despite everything because of his religious and political character, especially since he had come to power even while he no longer actually governed. When the counter-revolution erupted on April 13, 1909, the Sultan was able to regain his authority in the capital, which surprised everyone. When the Third Corps and the constitutional forces of the CUP, led by Mahmud Shevket Pasha, marched to Istanbul, it was generally understood that the ousting of Sultan Abdul Hamid II was part of their demands. The ousting of the Sultan became an inevitable consequence of the resistance carried out by the forces supporting him (the counter-revolution) in Istanbul in the battle of the Tash-Kishla barracks on April 24, 1909. Once the barracks were taken over, the Sultan's fate was no longer in doubt. Instead of storming the palace compound, Mahmud Shevket Pasha's army reduced the last stronghold of the Sultan by causing famine for all those inside the palace. They cut off all water, gas and electric light supplies. All foodstuffs sent to the palace were intercepted. Resistance became impossible. Shortly after dawn on Tuesday, April 27, 1909, the Sultan unconditionally surrendered to Mahmud Shevket Pasha's army.⁸⁷

It seemed that the CUP had already made its decision regarding Sultan Abdul Hamid II as Leishman sent a telegram to Knox on April 27, 1909 stating that the Sultan had been overthrown and that his brother Reshad would take over power under the name of Sultan Mehmed V (April 27, 1909 – July 3, 1918).⁸⁸

Leishman clarified the details of what happened the next day on April 28, 1909 as he confirmed that the parliament, which was meeting as a national committee, was informed of the Sultan's surrender to the fait accompli. Therefore in light of the previous events, all members agreed to depose the Sultan. The Sheikh-ul-Islam, in his capacity as the highest representative of Islamic law, was asked to issue the fetva fatwa which permitted him to be deposed or forced to abdicate his throne. The Sheikh of Islam issued the following fatwa:

"When the commander of the faithful suppresses certain important provisions of the "sharia" in the sacred books; when he forbids, tears, or burns such books; when he spends or impairs the public treasure or seizes it contrary to sharia law; when, after having without legitimate cause killed, imprisoned or exiled his subjects and acquired the habit of committing other kinds of tyrannical acts, he has sworn to return to the path of righteousness, but has violated his oath and persists in creating great sedition capable of completely disturbing the situation and the affairs of Islam, and

⁸⁵ File No. 10044/186. Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State, American Embassy, Constantinople, April 27, 1909. No. 949.

⁸⁶ Ibid; Payaslian, *United*, 20.

⁸⁷ File No. 10044/188. Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State, American Embassy, Constantinople, April 28, 1909, No. 953, Extract.

⁸⁸ File No. 10044/167. Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State, American Embassy, Pera, April 27, 1909, Telegram, Paraphrase.

causes massacres. If the Moslem community reduces him to a state of helplessness; if from all, parts of the Moslem world there continually come reports that he is considered as dethroned; if there is grave danger in maintaining him on the throne; and if to remove him would be for the public welfare. Then is the decision binding of those who are competent to solve affairs of state, in the event of their deciding his abdication or deposition? The reply is: Yes.

Signed: Ziaeddine, Sheikh-ul-Islam".⁸⁹

Leishman confirmed that based on this, a decision was issued to depose Sultan Abdul Hamid II from the throne, stating the following:

"In compliance with the national will and in accordance with the Fetva rendered by the Sheikh-ul-Islam, the National Assembly, consisting of the Senate and Chamber of Deputies, in the presence of the members of the cabinet, to-day unanimously proclaimed the fall of the Sultan Abdul Hamid and the accession to the imperial throne of the lawful heir under the name of his Imperial Majesty the Sultan Mohammed V."⁹⁰

Leishman mentioned that this decision had been communicated to the national assembly with the latter rejecting the proposition for his abdication, unanimously and amid a scene of great enthusiasm that had decided for his deposition. The motion dethroning him read as follows:

"The 7th Rébi-ul-Akhir, 1327, that is to say Tuesday the Nissan, 14, 1325, at half past 6 o'clock (i. e., April 27, 1909, at about 1.30 p.m.), in a session of the Ottoman National Assembly composed of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, upon a proposition to choose between the dethronement and the voluntary abdication, two solutions indicated in the 'fetva', bearing the signature of the Sheikh-ul-Islam Mehmed Ziaeddin Effendi and read in the session, it was decided to dethrone Sultan Abdul Hamid II, and call to the Sultanate and Khalifate (Caliphate), the prince heir to the throne, Mehmed Reshad Effendi, under the name of Mehmed V".⁹¹

Leishman confirmed that two delegations were appointed at once, one to notify Sultan Abdul Hamid II of the decision to depose him and the other to accompany the new Sultan to his inauguration. When Sultan Abdul Hamid II learned of the news of his ousting, he asked for respect of his life and that of his family. The delegation assured him that this would be done and the Sultan also requested that he be allowed to spend his remaining days in Çırağan Palace on the Bosphorus where he was born and where his brother Murad had been imprisoned for a long time. This desire was met with rejection. Early in the morning of April 28, 1909, he was sent by a special train to Thessaloniki⁹² where he was placed under heavy security at Allatini Palace.⁹³

Leishman also mentioned that Sultan Mehmed V received the news of his ascension to the throne quietly. He accompanied a delegation from Parliament to the Ministry of War where the first official reception was held there. He met with representatives of the Ottoman nation and 101 artillery shells were launched in different parts of the city to celebrate the announcement of his

⁸⁹ File No. 10044/188. Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State, American Embassy, Constantinople, April 28, 1909. No. 953, Extract.

⁹⁰ File No. 10044/174. The Turkish Ambassador to the Secretary of State, Turkish Embassy, Washington, April 27, 1909, Translation; File No. 10044/169A. The Acting Secretary of State to the Turkish Ambassador, Department of State, Washington, April 28, 1909.

⁹¹ File No. 10044/188. Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State, American Embassy, Constantinople, April 28, 1909, No. 953, Extract; File No. 10044/174. The Turkish Ambassador to the Secretary of State, Turkish Embassy, Washington, April 27, 1909, Translation; File No. 10044/169A. The Acting Secretary of State to the Turkish Ambassador, Department of State, Washington, April 28, 1909.

⁹² File No. 10044/188. Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State, American Embassy, Constantinople, April 28, 1909, No. 953, Extract; Serkan Yazıcı. "Sultan II. Abdülhamid Örneğinde Tarihsel Algılamamın Değişimi", *History Studies: International Journal of History*, 6/5, (September 2014), s. 239.

⁹³ Cevat Rifat Atilhan, *İslâmi Saran tahlike ve Siyonizm ve Protokolar* (İstanbul: Gün Matbaası, 1955), 191; Stefan Lozan, "Abdülhamid'in Selanikten Getirilisi", *Resimli Tarih Mecmuası*, Sayı. 1, (Ocak 1950), 1-3; Ziya Şaker, *Sultan Hamid'in Son Günleri* (İstanbul: Ankara Türk Kitap Deposu, 1943), 9; Feroz Ahmad, *Demokrasi Sürecinde Türkiye 1945 -1980* (İstanbul: Hil Yayınları, 1992), 74-77.

accession to the throne. Istanbul prepared immediately to celebrate the ascension of the new Sultan to power and to get rid of what Leishman called the "former tyranny." The new Sultan passed through the streets of Istanbul amid enthusiastic cheers from Mahmud Shevket Pasha's army and the masses supporting the CUP.⁹⁴

After the ousting of Sultan Abdul Hamid II, the relations with the USA entered a new period as the USA government hoped that the many changes that had occurred and ended with Sultan Mehmed V assuming power would be a good and fruitful start, especially since this coincided with the end of President Theodore Roosevelt's term.

11. USA-Ottoman Relations after the Ousting of Sultan Abdul Hamid II

The new President of the USA, William Howard Taft (March 4, 1909 – March 4, 1913) presented a message of congratulations to Sultan Mehmed V in which he said:

*"I offer to Your Imperial Majesty my congratulations of your accession to the throne with such universal acclaim, voiced by the people's representatives, and at a time so propitious to the highest aspirations of the great nation over which you rule as the august head of a constitutional Government. I assure you of the friendship of the Government and people of the USA, who earnestly wish for Your Majesty's happiness and for that of the people within your dominions, and I add my own wishes for Your Majesty's health and welfare."*⁹⁵

Sultan Mehmed V responded to this message, thanking President Taft and the American government for congratulating him on his assumption of the throne and stating: "I received with real pleasure the telegram of congratulation which Your Excellency was pleased to send me on the occasion of my accession to the throne. I thank you cordially for the sentiments contained therein, as well as for the assurances of friendship which you give me in the name of the Government and the great Nation of the USA, and to which I attach the highest value. I beg of Your Excellency to believe in the cordial wishes which I cherish both for your happiness and prosperity and for those of the great, noble American people."⁹⁶

A few days later, Leishman sent a telegram informing his government that the ceremony of the official coronation of Sultan Mehmed V had taken place amid great enthusiasm and great calm on May 10, 1909.⁹⁷

Leishman also sent a telegram to Knox on April 29, 1909, informing him that order had been restored in Istanbul, that the dispatching of troops to the still troubled provinces had been speeded up and the overall manner in which the constitutional government - reconstituted by the CUP - was being handled was good. It was the belief that the problems in the regions of Adana and Alexandretta would soon disappear. Leishman emphasized that martial law was likely continue for another week or two as a necessary measure, that the prosecution of the perpetrators was advancing rapidly and that the resumption of normal life was becoming noticeable everywhere.⁹⁸

US Rep. Irving P. Wanger of Pennsylvania led a joint resolution in the USA House of Representatives praising the return to a constitutional government by the Ottoman Empire, congratulating Sultan Mehmed V on his accession to the throne. The resolution expressed the

⁹⁴ File No. 10044/188. Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State, American Embassy, Constantinople, April 28, 1909. No. 953, Extract.

⁹⁵ File No. 10044/168A. The President of the United States to the Sultan of Turkey, The White House, Washington, April 28, 1909, Telegram.

⁹⁶ File No. 10044/173. The Sultan of Turkey to the President of the United States, Pera, April 30, 1909, Translation.

⁹⁷ File No. 10044/187. Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State, American Embassy, Pera, May 10, 1909, Telegram.

⁹⁸ File No. 10044/169. Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State, American Embassy, Pera, April 29, 1909, Telegram, Paraphrase.

hope that the new government under his leadership would end the "horrific atrocities against Christian missionaries and other non-Muslims, which have caused terror in the civilized world".⁹⁹

Referring to the above, Leishman emphasized that the reports received indicate that the unrest in the provinces had almost stopped and that the change of government in Istanbul and the arrival of force to these areas had a very beneficial effect. He expressed the opinion that good order will be fully restored soon.¹⁰⁰

As for Wilson, Acting Secretary of State, he expressed on May 1, 1909 that the USA Department of State thanked the British government for the friendly action taken by the government by directing the British naval ships in Ottoman waters to provide the same protection for American and British citizens alike in the appropriate territories.¹⁰¹

Leishman reiterated that the conditions in the troubled regions had improved significantly. Since the Ottoman government was taking very active measures to suppress further attempts at chaos and to punish the perpetrators of the recent disturbances, he suggested keeping the North Carolina and Montana ships in Gibraltar or one of the other ports in the Mediterranean until further orders are sent to it instead of sending them into Ottoman waters where the need for them no longer existed. If the conditions continued to improve as expected, their visit (the two ships) may be considered unnecessarily offensive to the new Ottoman government which appeared to be able to restore peace and tranquility.¹⁰²

As for Wilson, he mentioned that the American ships the North Carolina and Montana had already sailed to the Ottoman Empire and that it was practically difficult at this late stage to summon them to return. Wilson expressed his belief that the USA Embassy in Istanbul would not find it difficult to dispel any misunderstanding of the Ottoman authorities regarding the purpose of the two ships as their presence in Ottoman waters would be a mere friendly American courtesy to the new Ottoman government after restoring order and an attempt to protect the resident citizens of the USA.¹⁰³

It was clear that the USA did not want to escalate the situation with the new Ottoman government under any justification so long as its interests were secured, its citizens were well and its missionaries were not affected by any losses of real value.

12. The Problem of Disarmament

Mahmud Shevket Pasha issued an official notice to all residents in Istanbul who carried with them or had in their homes prohibited weapons of any kind and for them to deliver them to the nearest police station within five days of its date or to hand them over to the army commanders at their locations in exchange for a receipt. Upon the expiration of this period, any person found to be in possession or to have in his home weapons or ammunition will be deemed to be in breach of public order and punished by the military court¹⁰⁴.

Leishman emphasized that the recent order issued by Mahmud Shevket Pasha regarding the confiscation of firearms is considered to be a general matter and it may not require that Leishman

⁹⁹ Payaslian, *United*, 20.

¹⁰⁰ File No. 10044/170. Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of States, American Embassy, Pera, April 30, 1909, Telegram, Paraphrase.

¹⁰¹ File No. 10044/157. The Acting Secretary of State to Chargé Carter. Department of State, Washington, May 1, 1909, No. 984.

¹⁰² File No. 10044/172. Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State, American Embassy, Pera, May 1, 1909, Telegram, Paraphrase.

¹⁰³ File No. 10044/172. The Acting Secretary of State to Ambassador Leishman, Department of State, Washington, May 4, 1909, Telegram, Paraphrase.

¹⁰⁴ File No. 10044/225–229. Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State, American Embassy, Constantinople, May 12, 1909, No. 965, Inclosure 2, Translation, Official Notice, May 5, 1909.

make any effort regarding solving the problem of the guards working in the American College of Girls or other similar institutions carrying pistols. Leishman noted that in the event that these guards are required to register themselves and their weapons or obtain a permit to carry the weapons, it will be difficult for the USA consulates in the Ottoman Empire to express any objection to this in light of the fact that the aforementioned guards are not USA citizens. He stated that courtesy should be exercised and all necessary precautions taken in order to avoid quarrels with the Ottoman military authorities. Nevertheless, he stressed that the declared martial law must not change or affect in any way the rights guaranteed to USA citizens under the existing treaties and that if there are any difficulties regarding these matters, he will contact the Ottoman government in order to overcome them.¹⁰⁵

Leishman reiterated his position in his letter to Knox dated May 12, 1909 whereby he considered that Mahmud Shevket Pasha's decision regarding disarming the population should be viewed as a very appropriate measure since the general arming of the masses had greatly contributed to the recent unrest (counter-revolution). Leishman emphasized that applying this to American citizens would set a very dangerous precedent towards the rights guaranteed to American citizens under the signed treaties and that if the Ottoman army insisted on disarming American citizens, this should be done by consuls only. In the event that any registration of weapons must take place in the consulates as well, the USA Embassy in Istanbul cannot recognize any Ottoman jurisdiction over American citizens.¹⁰⁶

The USA Secretary of State Knox responded to Leishman on May 12, 1909 to inform him of the necessity to inform Mahmud Shevket Pasha of the necessity not to use force against Americans and foreigners present for the sake of disarming so then they will be allowed to return the prohibited weapons in their possession to their country of origin after notifying the police first. Moreover, they will be allowed to keep all pistols no more than 15 cm tall along with all kinds of hunting rifles. Foreigners wishing to keep the above-mentioned weapons in their possession must present a certificate of good conduct. In this case, the police will hand them certificates explaining the description of the weapons and their numbers,¹⁰⁷ which was confirmed by Wilson. He stated that if the Americans were to disarm, it must be done by USA consular officials and that if the registration of weapons was required, it must be done in the USA Consulate General.¹⁰⁸

Leishman thought it wise not to engage in any further disarmament debate and that he did not expect a problem in this regard. He expressed his belief that the state of siege and the imposition of martial law in Istanbul will continue for some time – particularly as the events spread to Adana and a number of other regions - in order to maintain order.¹⁰⁹

Despite the positive position of the USA regarding the control of the CUP over the reins of affairs and the ousting of Sultan Abdul Hamid II, they adhered well to their rights that granted them foreign privileges. The USA could have waived this law, as could many European countries, which considered the issue of disarmament and registration of weapons as having no value. The USA did something different and adhered to what it considered to be its rights that were guaranteed under the privileges granted to them for decades.

¹⁰⁵ File No. 10044/225–229. Ambassador Leishman to Consul General Ozmun. American Embassy, Constantinople, May 10, 1909, Inclosure 1.

¹⁰⁶ File No. 10044/225–229. Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State. American Embassy, Constantinople, May 12, 1909, No. 965.

¹⁰⁷ File No. 10044/277–280. The Minister for Foreign Affairs to Ambassador Leishman, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Constantinople, May 12, 1909.

¹⁰⁸ File No. 10044/225–229. The Acting Secretary of State to Ambassador Leishman, Department of State, Washington, June 3, 1909.

¹⁰⁹ File No. 10044/277–280. Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of States, American Embassy, Constantinople, June 1, 1909, No. 997.

13. The End of Events and Stability

Leishman sent a telegram to Knox informing him of the arrival of the American ship the North Carolina in Mersin on May 13, 1909. The ship the Montana was expected to arrive in Alexandretta on May 16, 1909, although he did not have accurate news about the date of its actual arrival.¹¹⁰

In his letter to Knox on May 20, 1909, Leishman confirmed that he was still awaiting the outcome of the investigation into the death of Mr. Rogers and Mr. Maurer. He also indicated that there was great credit given to the British consul in Mersin, Major Charles Doughty-Wylie, who hastened to go to Adana at the beginning of the events. Despite his arm being broken by a bullet early in the events, he continued to take care of many. He earned the praiseworthy protection of American citizens and thanks to his courage and activism, things got better. Leishman confirmed that the bullet that hit Doughty-Wylie was fired from the home of an Armenian citizen who mistakenly assumed that he was a Turkish officer. Leishman stated that the USA government owed Doughty-Wylie a great debt and was grateful for what he had done. Leishman suggested that the USA government send a letter of thanks to the British Foreign Office in recognition of the valuable assistance that Major Doughty-Wylie provided to the Americans in Adana.¹¹¹

Knox responded to Leishman's request by extending his thanks and appreciation to Doughty-Wylie for the assistance provided to the American citizens in the Adana and Aleppo regions.¹¹²

Leishman noted that with the exception Rogers and Maurer, no American had been injured and that the only damages that were reported were in the American School building in Kessab where the Armenians had taken refuge there as refugees. Aside from that, there were no casualties in terms of lives or possessions.¹¹³

Leishman sent a telegram to Knox on June 8, 1909 telling him that although there were no matters of concern, the natural conditions were still prevalent in the Ottoman Empire and there was no likelihood that the dangerous events that had occurred in the past few months would be repeated. Progress was being made real in Istanbul regarding the issue of public security. Leishman expected that the state of siege and the imposition of martial law on Istanbul would last for a longer period, meaning that the city would remain under strong control. He also expected that the Ottoman Empire, led by the CUP, would eventually overcome the existing problems and occupy its appropriate place among the states, although this may require a decade or two.¹¹⁴

Whatever the case, it was clear that the USA had decided to preserve its political alliance with the CUP. On August 24, 1909, the two parties agreed to cooperate in efforts to strengthen the constitution and political institutions in place for the future of the Ottoman Empire.¹¹⁵

Roosevelt - who was previously suspicious of the Ottoman Empire - also expressed sympathy for the new Ottoman government, stating that "this important step would aid in enhancing the permanent peace and prosperity of the great Ottoman nation."¹¹⁶

¹¹⁰ File No. 10044/250. Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State, American Embassy, Constantinople, May 20, 1909, No. 973, Extract.

¹¹¹ File No. 10044/250. Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State, American Embassy, Constantinople, May 20, 1909, No. 973, Extract.

¹¹² File No. 10044/250. The Secretary of State to Ambassador Reid, Department of State, Washington, June 9, 1909, No. 1020.

¹¹³ File No. 10044/250. Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State, American Embassy, Constantinople, May 20, 1909, No. 973, Extract.

¹¹⁴ File No. 10044/288. Ambassador Leishman to the Secretary of State, American Embassy, Constantinople, June 8, 1909, No. 1008, Extract.

¹¹⁵ Payaslian, *United*, 20.

¹¹⁶ Murat İplikçi, *Taft's Open Door Policy to the Near East: Dollar Diplomacy Practices in the Ottoman Empire*, Master of Arts, Department of History, Bilkent University, (September 2015), 7.

Meanwhile, Oscar S. Straus's term as Minister of Trade and Labor ended in 1909. While Straus planned to return to his legal work in New York, the USA President Taft and Knox, the Secretary of State, offered him the position of USA ambassador to Istanbul¹¹⁷ because the events after the ousting of Sultan Abdul Hamid II. It had imposed new challenges and opened up new opportunities in the Ottoman Empire which had made the position of ambassador gain more importance more than in the past, especially since Taft needed Strauss' expertise and deep knowledge.¹¹⁸ The latter was the man most qualified for the job.¹¹⁹

As for Straus himself, he was not interested in the position because he had already served twice there as the USA ambassador to Istanbul. Given the choice, he would have preferred to go to Japan.¹²⁰ When Taft told him that it was his patriotic duty to accept his new position as his country's ambassador to Istanbul, Strauss felt that he could not turn down the offer from the President of the USA.¹²¹

After matters stabilized within the empire, the new Ottoman constitution was drafted. The new USA ambassador to Istanbul, Oscar S. Straus (October 4, 1909 – September 3, 1910), was sent a copy of it translated into French and English, and it was also sent to the USA State Department.¹²²

In his annual letter on December 7, 1909, Taft commented on the rapid transition of the Ottoman Emperor's government from a reactionary tendency to a constitutional government with a parliament and modern and progressive policies of reform. Taft considered this to be one of the important features of the era, in addition to closer relations with the USA.¹²³

On the other hand, despite the excessive optimism shown by Taft, Knox and Leishman, the efforts of the CUP faltered when reforming the situation in the Ottoman Empire. Their promises were soon dispelled after the great wave of optimism that swept through the Americans after the fall of the old regime. A few Americans familiar with the conditions of the Ottoman Empire expressed reservations about what was happening, including Dr. Clarence Ussher of the mission in the Ottoman city of Van Mission who told the public in Brooklyn while on vacation that the motto of the CUP was Turkey to the Turks. Declaring their friendship with Christians was a beneficial friendship, and that within five years, there would be a reaction followed by the worst massacre that the country has ever known of Christians.¹²⁴

Whatever the case, the power that the CUP felt in the friendship shown by the USA meant that "there never was a time when such strong hostility to England was so openly expressed in Constantinopolitan (Istanbul) society as the middle of April, 1909."¹²⁵ Perhaps this was due to what was connected in the Ottoman mind to Britain's colonial policy and ambitions in the Ottoman Empire.

It wasn't only Britain. The fact of the matter was that all of Europe had gains and interests that they wished to realize in the Ottoman Empire. There were some countries whose goal it had always been to keep the empire in turmoil and there was no one in Europe who felt love or showed

¹¹⁷ Aykut Kilinc, "Oil, honor and religion: United States foreign policy towards Turkey 1923-1927", Master of Arts in History, University of New Hampshire, September, (2007), 19.

¹¹⁸ Oscar S. Straus, *Under Four Administrations: From Cleveland to Taft* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1922), 273-4; Kilinc, "Oil", 19.

¹¹⁹ Kilinc, "Oil", 19.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 19-20.

¹²¹ Straus, Under, 273; Kilinc, "Oil", 20.

¹²² File No. 10044/376. Ambassador Straus to the Secretary of State. American Embassy, Constantinople, November 19, 1909, No. 41.

¹²³ John A. DeNovo, *American Interests and Policies in the Middle East 1900-1939* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1968), 48.

¹²⁴ DeNovo, *American*, 48.

¹²⁵ W. M. Ramsay, *The Revolution in Constantinople and Turkey: A Diary* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1909), 19.

favor towards the Ottoman Empire as it had long threatened to destroy Western civilization. It had twice surrounded Vienna and trampled over every region from Vienna to Greece and the Crimea.¹²⁶ It seemed that the USA might be a suggested and welcome friend given its non-colonial policy toward the Ottoman Empire.

Conclusion

It is evident from this study that the USA diplomacy towards the Ottoman Empire did not deviate from the context of the historical relations that fully adhere to the Monroe principle. It is evidenced that the USA interest was mainly focused on protecting the USA missionaries and citizens and developing trade relations. It is also evident that the USA was very pleased with the revolution of the CUP in 1908 against Sultan Abdul Hamid II, and that it welcomed the new constitutional treaty, hoping that this would be in favor of developing bilateral relations between the two countries. The USA also took a hostile stand against the counter-revolution in April 1909 and expressed its clear concern over the development of events. When the CUP regained control of the empire again, the USA welcomed this and implicitly expressed its welcome of the ouster of Sultan Abdul Hamid II when it congratulated Sultan Mehmed V on his assumption of the throne. The United States was pursuing a very pragmatic policy that ensured that its citizens and interests were respected without explicit or blatant interference in the affairs of others. It was clear that the USA was relying a lot on the many changes that had occurred in the empire in less than a year for better relations between the two countries, especially after Howard Taft assumed the post of President of the USA and adopted the policy of "dollar diplomacy" in its foreign relations, especially with the Ottoman Empire.

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¹²⁶ Ibid, 146.

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