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Estandart Reyau d'a Cheneralísma, prencipal bandera carlista d'a primera guerra bordada por María Francisca de Braganza em 1833 Royal Standard of the General in Chief, main Carlist flag of the First War embroidered by Maria Francisca de Braganza in 1833). Wikimedia Commons

Technology, operations, and strategy in the Crimean War, 1853–1856.

by VLADIMIR SHIROGOROV

ABSTRACT. The Crimean War was an exemplary conflict of large scale and high intensity, looking inconclusive. Despite heavy efforts and losses and contrary to triumphal declarations, none of the belligerents gained its objectives. The modest operational results of the armies and fleets brought down their soaring political expectations. The current paper examines the strategy of the sides to overcome the fighting constraints and answers why they failed. It explores the Crimean War's structure of the operational theatres and their interplay in the course of the war and for its outcome.

KEYWORDS: STRATEGY, MILITARY OPERATIONS, INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION, EMPIRES, TECHNOLOGY OF WAR

The Crimean War was the first major military conflict of the industrial epoch,¹ the course and outcome of which were directed by the industrial capabilities of the belligerent nations. The armies and fleets became in some way a projection of the industry's power, while the political-military decision-making was strongly influenced by industrial interests. It was the first war in which military operations were determined by technical capabilities.

The Industrial Revolution and the formation of the European nation-states in the first half of the nineteenth century resulted in a dramatic escalation of war. The expanding mobilization of the military resources and growing efficiency of the army and navy produced "new militarism," a call to assert the national agenda by military means. The horizons of war widened, and strategy turned global. It was a true "second military revolution"² in which the industrial capabilities en-

1 BLACK, *A military history of Britain*, 81

2 FISSEL, "From the Gunpowder Age Military Revolution to a Revolution in Military Affairs," 342–44

tered into the foundation of strategy.

At the same time, the industrial technologies of war interacted with the geopolitical factors shaping the operational theatres, where the character of war varied. The overland, amphibious, and naval domains of war became more pronounced. The Crimean War was a complex conflict spread over a few particular operational theatres. However, unlike the studies on grand strategy, diplomacy, and tactics, its dedicated operational history is in deficit in national and comparative perspectives alike. The structure of the operational theatres is not established, and their comparative impact on the course and outcome of the war is not provided. The shortage distorts interpretations of the Crimean War and misguides its strategic assessment.

Russia and the Ottomans. Conquest and structure of the empires.

Since their first military encounter in the late sixteenth century, neither Muscovy nor the Ottomans conceived of destroying each other. They were rivals over the East European geopolitical Ukraine, a distinctive southern part of Eastern Europe extending from the “Ural-Caspian Gates” in the east to the “Trajan Wall” at the Danube’s delta in the west, and from the Black Sea, Azov Sea, Caucasus Mountains, and the Caspian Sea in the south to the Carpathian Mountains, woodland and swampland of Polesia, and the rivers Sula, Oka, and Kama in the north.

In the Early Modern Period, it was claimed by three contenders—Muscovy-Russia, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and the Ottoman Empire. By the end of the 18th century, Russia assembled it piece by piece and slice after slice, adding to “old Muscovy,” a heartland that was consolidated in the late fifteenth century north of the river Oka. The Muscovite Ukraine south of it was added in the sixteenth century. In the late seventeenth century, Russia annexed the Ukrainian Cossack Hetmanate, revolting against Poland, and the Ottoman Azov province at the Don mouth. Russia was committed to deranging Poland, ousting the Ottomans from Eastern Europe, and destroying the Crimean Khanate. The Russian wars against the Ottoman Empire in the eighteenth century were guided by this clear-cut strategic concept.

Russia gained the Right-Bank Ukraine and Polish Rus in the Partitions of Poland in the last third of the eighteenth century. Russia annexed the Ottoman

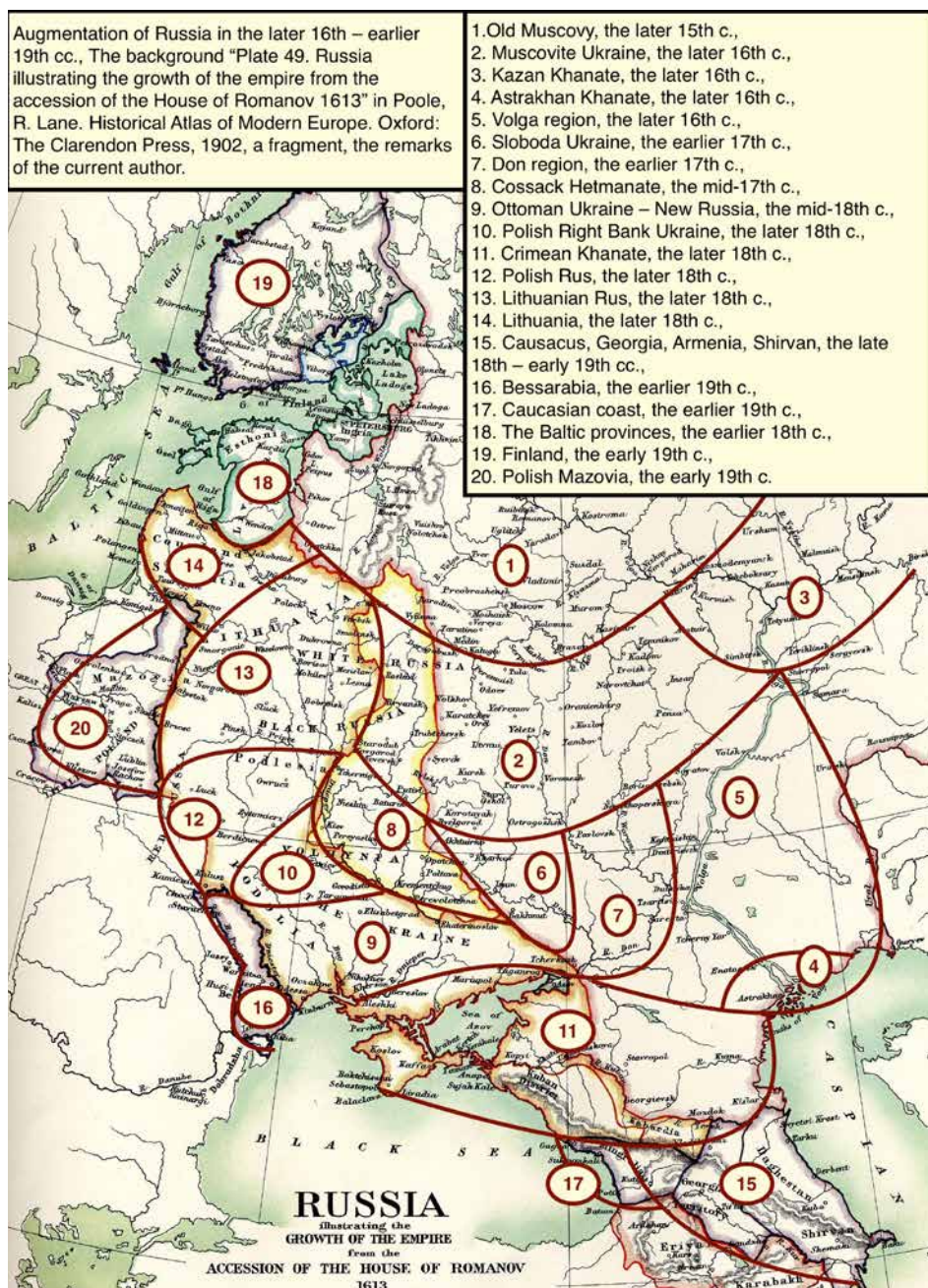


Fig. 1. Augmentation of Russia in the 17th and 18th centuries.

possessions on the Northern Black Sea shore in two wars against the Ottoman Empire, from 1735 to 1739 and 1768 to 1774. The treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, concluded on finishing the latter war, had seminal importance. In 1783 Russia cancelled the Crimean Khanate and took over the Crimean Peninsula, the Taman Peninsula over the Kerch Strait from it, and the North Caucasian Kuban Steppe. In its wars against the Ottomans in 1806 to 1812 and 1828 to 1829, Russia overran Bessarabia (now Moldova) between the rivers Dniester and Prut, the Danube delta, and the Caucasian coast. By controlling them and dominating the Black Sea, Russia sealed airtight security of its south. In the early nineteenth century, Russia's objectives in Eastern Europe were achieved completely.

The Petrine reforms and spread of the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century created the cohesive Russian nobility that incorporated multiple elite groups of the heartland and periphery and developed its particular self-consciousness based on imperial ideals and service structure. It possessed most of the national wealth and governed the empire.

From the 1770s to 1790s, the administrative and social constitution of the Russian Empire, including its southern provinces, was reformed to a uniform pattern. From the formal point of view, the Russian imperial body became monolithic and homogenous. The factors of administrative, judicial, and economic development; the growth of colonisation, commerce, manufacturing, communications, and urbanism; and the spread of education and culture worked for further consolidation of the empire. However, it required a longer time and was not totally achievable.³

In the first half of the nineteenth century, the territories that were merged into the Russian Empire during three centuries, one layer after another, preserved a big deal of difference and held some intrinsic features that worked not for their integration but for their separation. The ethnic, social, and religious factors, and historical traditions, were among them. The south of the Russian Empire was firmly cohesive. But it held its layered structure, similar to an onion bulb. Recognition of this distinct structure of the Russian Empire in Eastern Europe is a key to analysing the strategies of belligerents and neutrals involved in the Crimean War.

The Russian wresting of the East-European geopolitical Ukraine from the Ottomans was spectacular, but nothing terrible for the Ottoman Empire resulted.

3 SHIROGOROV, *Strategies of Ukrainian War*, Ch. 13

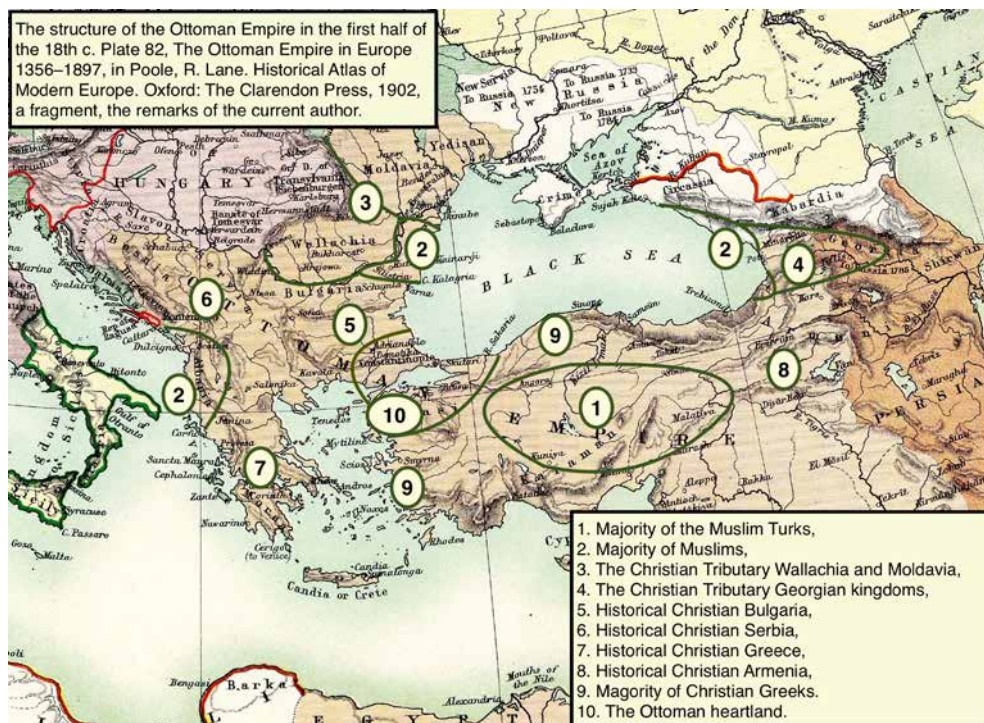


Fig. 2. The structure of the Ottoman Empire in the first half of the 18th c

The grand total for the Ottoman Empire was a return to its territorial limits in the late fifteenth century when its push into Eastern Europe was started by Sultans Mehmed II and Bayezid II. Ottoman might and prestige were broken to debris, but it was an external conflict, a duel of conquest that did not violate the imperial heartland. In the early nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire, at last formally, was almost intact. The Ottoman decline that contemporaries witnessed and historians like to discuss was expressed not in the geopolitical reduction of the Ottoman Empire but in its internal turmoil.

During the period of its growth, the Ottoman Empire conquered many peoples of different religions, political traditions, and ways of life. A part of the conquered territories was settled with the Muslim Turks, the ethnic and religious foundation of the Ottoman Empire. However, the Ottomans did not establish the core of the empire where the Muslim Turks prevailed. The geographical heartland of the Ottoman Empire in Anatolia remained heterogenous with strong positions of Orthodox Greek and Armenian communities.

At the same time, the Ottomans built the political structure of the empire and its ruling elite, alienating the Muslim Turks and creating the Ottoman officialdom and military composed of the non-Turkic and non-Muslim slaves, and the learnt religious and judicial class brought up in the Arabian and Persian traditions. The seventeenth century witnessed tremendous confrontation of the Ottoman class with the commoner Turkic-Muslim class that was empowered by the diffusion of firearms. Unlike many civil wars of similar intensity, the Ottoman upheaval neither destroyed one of the rivals nor converged them. Arrangement of the non-Muslim population into the close ethnic-religious communities, *millets*, for judicial and tribute purposes added to the shredding of the Ottoman society.

The imperial cohesion fell apart; its administrative and military institutions turned defunct. While the Ottomans kept the central government and military, Istanbul and the large cities, the provinces fell at the hands of the local strongmen. The actually self-ruling regimes took over North Africa and the Balkans. The collapse of the Ottoman Empire in war against the European armies reflected its dysfunction in comparison with the European fiscal-military states.⁴

The body of the Ottoman Empire had the structure of an onion bulb, similar to the structure of the Russian Empire, but without the cohesive imperial elite and rigid administrative frame. Unlike the Russian monolith core of old Muscovy, the Ottoman Anatolian heartland consisted of a mixed pulp of ethnic, religious, and social groups.

In 1897, four decades after the Crimean War, a young German officer, Colmar von der Goltz, later known as Goltz Pasha, an adviser to the Ottoman army, published an article in the *Deutsche Rundschau* pointing out the weakness of the Turkic core of the Ottoman Empire as a menace to its future. Goltz proposed strengthening it as the principal strategy for the new Westernised Turkish elite that must have been created.⁵ An absence of the monolith core of statehood invoked the risk of extinction of the Ottoman Empire under a combination of external thrust and internal disturbance. In the case of the Russian Empire, it was almost impossible.

4 SHIROGOROV, *Strategies of Ukrainian War*, Ch. 12

5 LIEVEN, "Dilemmas of Empire 1850–1918," 192–93

The Concert of Europe and the Russian strategy on the Ottoman Empire.

A motive of protection over the Orthodox Slavic peoples “suffering” under the Muslim Turkish “yoke” emerged in the Russo-Ottoman Chyhyryn War from 1673 to 1681 and has never vanished since. In the Russo-Ottoman War from 1768 to 1774, the Russian troops overran the Danube delta and occupied the Ottoman province of Dobruja and the tributaries Wallachia and Moldavia (now together Romania). From Dobruja they raided through the Balkan passes into historical Orthodox Bulgaria. At the same time, the Russians advanced into the Crimean-held Taman Peninsula and Kuban Steppe and along the Ottoman-held Caucasian coast. They marched through the Caucasian passes to Georgia, where the Orthodox kingdom of Imereti was a tributary of the Ottomans, who also rivalled the kingdoms of Kartli and Kakheti with Iran. The Russians also raided into historical Christian Armenia further inland.

The patterns of the Ottoman domination in the Balkan and Caucasian regions occurred similarly. Both of them were arranged as a combination of the Turkic Muslim seashore strips, Dobruja and the Caucasian coast, respectively; the tributary Christian statelets further inland, Wallachia, Moldavia, and the Georgian kingdoms, respectively; and the mainland territory settled with the majority of Christians, Bulgaria and Armenia, respectively. The similarity of the Balkan and Caucasian patterns presented them as the fundamental geopolitical organisation of the Ottoman Empire. The Russians pulped the disintegrated character of the Ottoman imperial body and started exploiting it.

In the Russo-Ottoman War from 1806 to 1812, the Ottoman Empire fought as a French auxiliary, while the key Russian ally against both of them, the Austrian Empire, was tragically smashed by the French revolutionary mobilisation and Bonaparte’s military genius. Facing France’s onslaught, Russia could not afford to wage a war of conquest against the Ottomans in the fashion of the eighteenth century.

Searching for a new strategy, the Russians found a revealing opportunity with the Serbian insurgents that appealed for protection by the Russian tsar due to the ethnic and religious affinity of the Russians and Serbs. The Greeks with their revolution and war of independence in the 1820s and then the Bulgarians seeking for autonomy in the 1840s followed the pattern. The Georgian kingdoms and Armenian territories in the Transcaucasia were explored in the same way. A com-

pletely new strategic concept emerged in the Russian minds. Instead of smashing head-on into the Ottoman Empire, it envisaged its dismantling by loosening and peeling off its body like a steam-cooked onion bulb.

The Russian “onion strategy” against the Ottoman Empire was engineered by Emperor Alexander I and his foreign minister, Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski (Adam Chartoryjsky). Czartoryski was born in the “Familia,” an aristocratic faction that dominated Poland during the Partitions. Czartoryski was an excellently educated and topmost-connected grand magnate. Being Alexander I’s personal friend, a member of his Secret Committee since 1801, the Russian foreign minister from 1804 to 1806, and adviser to the emperor until 1810, Czartoryski envisaged partitioning of the Ottoman Empire in the similar way as Poland had been partitioned in the last third of the 18th century. Separating the statelets of the non-Turkic and non-Muslim peoples under Russian patronage was his pivotal idea, repeating the separation of the non-Polish and non-Catholic “dissidents” from Poland, which started the Polish Partitions. Similar to the Polish Partition, he proposed to run it by a concert of the European great powers that would get their allotments for compliance.⁶

However, in the early 1800s, Czartoryski advised Alexander I to preserve the Ottoman Empire. Russia avoided pushing it to chaotic crumbling fearing intervention of other European great powers. Their capture of the Black Sea Straits would be especially harmful. “Turkey” was a useful spoil to share with Britain, making up an alliance against Napoleon.⁷ In 1802 the Secret Committee declared that preservation of the Ottoman Empire was more useful than its collapse.

At the same time, Alexander I, whom Napoleon cursed as “a Byzantine with two faces,” promoted John (Ioannis) Capodistrias (Ivan Kapodistriya), a petty Venetian official whom the Russian fleet fished out in the Ionian Islands in 1799. Capodistrias was appointed the foreign minister of the local “republic” that the Russians created in 1803 and in 1807 he emigrated to Russia, making a splendid career in the foreign ministry. Czartoryski patronaged him and his idea of the Greek emancipation, and Capodistrias searched for a strategy to combine maintaining of the Ottoman Empire and its dismantling.

⁶ CZARTORYSKI, *Memoirs and correspondence*, 55

⁷ CZARTORYSKI, *Memoirs and correspondence*, II, 49–50; KUKIEL, *Czartoryski and European Unity*, 33



Fig. 3. The Russian emperor Alexander I (left) and his foreign minister, Prince Adam Czartoryski (right), engineered the Russian strategy of dismantling the Ottoman Empire. Portraits by an unknown painter, the early 19th c., and Józef Oleszkiewicz, 1810, respectively. Public domain (Wikicommons).

Czartoryski was the principal adviser to Alexander I at the Vienna Congress in 1815⁸ at which the Vienna system of international relations was established as an expression of the “concert” of the European great powers, and the Holy Alliance of Russia, Prussia, and Austria was concluded to maintain it. Conservation of the current European system of states, their domestic regimes, and their borders was a cornerstone of the Vienna system, and “no changes” was its slogan. Although the Ottoman Empire was not a participant of the European concert, it became its subject. The Vienna principles covered the dealing of the European great powers with the Ottomans, called the Eastern Question.

After the Greek War of Independence started in 1821, Capodistrias became an international promoter of the insurgents at the rank of the Russian foreign co-minister while his co-minister German-born Karl von Nesselrode professed a rigid stance against any appearance of revolution and disorder. In the aftermath of Alexander I’s death in 1825, Capodistrias secured the common position of the

8 KUKIEL, *Czartoryski and European Unity*, Ch. 9

European Concert on the Greek Revolution that resulted in the joint Russian, French, and British destruction of the Ottoman fleet in the battle of Navarino in October 1827. He became the first president of the Greek Republic, declared under the patronage of the European great powers. The Greek experiment demonstrated that the “onion strategy” in relation to the Ottoman Empire was an effective solution of the Eastern Question.

Nicholas I ascended to the Russian throne in December of 1825. He was a practical absolutist who managed the empire directly in person. Two figures influenced his vision substantially: Ivan Paskevich and Mikhail Vorontsov, who were close personal friends and comrades-in-arms. Paskevich was born into the ennobled Cossacks of the former Hetmanate (the Ukrainians in today’s narrative) that entered the imperial officialdom in the early eighteenth century. Vorontsov belonged to a clan of the Muscovite Ukraine nobility that joined the Romanov entourage by the matrimonial connections in the late seventeenth century. Throughout the eighteenth century, the Russian government was dominated by these two particular social groups that merged into the joint “south Russian” political faction.

From 1828 to 1829, Vorontsov led the army that took over the Ottoman port fortress of Varna in historical Bulgaria and opened the Balkan passes toward Edirne and Istanbul. At the same time, Paskevich crushed the Ottoman army in the Transcaucasia and took over the fortresses of Kars and Erzurum in historical Armenia, breaking into northeastern Anatolia. Vorontsov governed the New Russia province from 1823 to 1844, while Paskevich governed the Caucasus and Transcaucasia. Vorontsov was the figure behind New Russia’s economic and demographic boom and the flourishing of its Black Sea commercial capital, Odessa. After 1844 he governed the Caucasus and Transcaucasia while Paskevich moved to govern Poland and New Russia.

Their strategic vision focused on the pivotal Russian concept of the 18th century. It was possession of the East-European geopolitical Ukraine as a whole from the Danube delta in the Black Sea through the Crimean Peninsula and Caucasus to the Ural delta in the Caspian Sea. In this concept, the Crimea had the dominant strategic position over the Black Sea region. The “fortress Crimea” sheltered southern Russia from seaborne thrusts and was its stronghold in case of overland invasion. At the same time, it controlled and integrated the operational theatres west of the Black Sea in the Balkans and east of it in the Transcaucasia while endangering the Ottoman heartland in Istanbul, Thrace, and Bithynia. In the grand

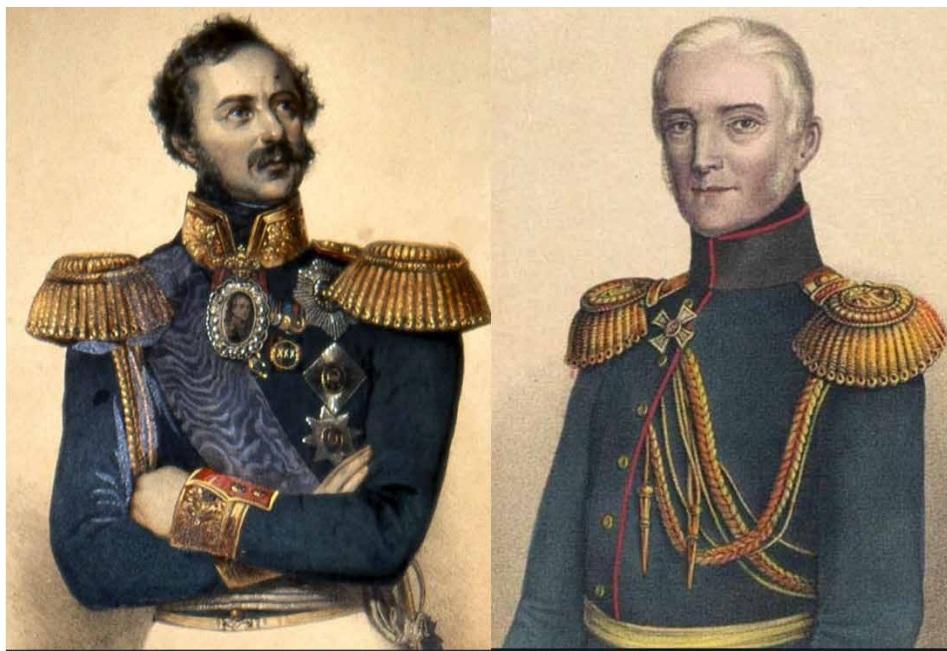


Fig. 4. Ivan Paskevich (left) and Mikhail Vorontsov (right) were the key strategists of the Russian emperor Nicholas I's reign. Lithographs by Eduard Kaiser, 1850, and in *Encyclopädie der Gegenwart in Wort und Bild*, respectively. (Wikicommons).

strategy of the Black Sea region, keeping the Crimea decided (and still decides) almost everything.

The "south Russian" faction was interested neither in "liberating" the Balkan and Transcaucasian Christian peoples nor in conquering the Ottoman Empire's Anatolian heartland for the "resurrection" of the Byzantine Empire. They had a lot to do in the East-European geopolitical Ukraine that they colonised. It was a giant bulk of wealth, much bigger than the poor mountain Balkans and Anatolia.

Emphasis on the domestic development and commitment to the conservative Vienna system prevented Nicholas I from destroying the Ottoman Empire in the war from 1828 to 1829. In the Balkans, the Russian army took Edirne but abstained from entering Istanbul. Russia did not annex or declare independence of the Danube principalities, Serbia and Bulgaria, and vacated them after the conclusion of the war. Russia limited its gains to vesting its protection on Wallachia and Moldavia, confirming the autonomy of Serbia, and fixing it for Greece, all of them remaining under the Ottoman sovereignty. In the Transcaucasia, the Rus-

sians captured Kars and Erzurum, two key fortresses in historical Armenia, but withdrew, gaining only Ottoman recognition of Russian sovereignty over Georgia and former Iranian Armenia. The Russian State Council confirmed the decision of 1802 for maintaining the Ottoman Empire.⁹ The conservative approach prevailed.

However, Russia did not abandon its “onion strategy” on the Ottoman Empire. Nicholas I preserved its feebleness with the same purpose as his predecessors had preserved the feebleness of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the eighteenth century: to dismantle it in consent with other European great powers. It was the Russian reason to intervene in the Ottoman conflict with the rebellious governor of Egypt, Muhammad Ali, the First Syrian War from 1831 to 1833. The Russians landed at Istanbul and scared off the Egyptians. Takeover of the Ottoman Empire by Muhammad Ali, a ruthless reforming dictator, would be dangerous for Russian interests. In August 1833, Russia imposed on the Ottomans the treaty of mutual military assistance in Hünkâr İskelesi. It permitted Russia to occupy any point of the Ottoman Empire at will. The free commercial shipping via the Straits was introduced, favouring New Russia’s economic boom. At the same time, restrictions on the naval shipping of the external powers into the Black Sea transformed it into a “Russian lake.” In fact, the Ottoman Empire became a Russian dependency.

In September 1833 the Russian emperor introduced his *bon mot*, defining the Ottoman Empire as “*un homme malade*,” a “sick man,” who needed protection in conversation with the Austrian chancellor Klemens von Metternich. Metternich, a co-architect of the European Concert and an activist of the Eastern Question, was not a fool to be deceived. He declared that the Russian strategy was a “mine system to crumble the edifice of the Ottoman Empire by subterfuge, grabbing most of its rubble.”¹⁰ He did not believe Nicholas I when he declared an intention to arrange the territories of the Ottoman Christian peoples into “independent” statelets since possessing them would be an unnecessary burden for the Russian Empire. In the rubble of the Ottoman Empire, Russia needed only the Straits. It was the political plan and not the military strategy, and it is the important status of this vision.

9 FULLER, *Strategy and Power in Russia*, P. 6

10 ТАРАЛЕ, *Крымская война*, VIII, 230, 232

Vorontsov and Paskevich were thorough Anglophiles. While accepting the Holy Alliance with Austria as the geopolitical necessity, the Russian elite was thrilled with Britain. Nicholas I looked for consensus about dismantling the Ottoman Empire with both Austria and Britain. The tsar was a “collective beast” that hunted its prey in a pack, sharing spoils with other predators.

In the Treaty of Munchengratz, concluded in 1833, Russia and Austria agreed to preserve the Ottoman Empire or divide it amiably in case it collapsed. In the Second Syrian War against Muhammad Ali from 1839 to 1840, Britain and Austria assisted the Ottomans to fight off the Egyptian invasion of Syria and Palestine. Russia was so eager to intervene that the allies were scared.¹¹ Britain, Russia, and Austria cooperated to restrain France from giving military assistance to Muhammad Ali. France did not dare challenge the European Concert and stepped down.

In the London conventions of 1840 and 1841, orchestrated by the British foreign secretary Henry John Temple, Viscount Palmerston, Britain and Russia agreed and gained confirmation from other European great powers to keep the Black Sea Straits closed for the military shipping in peacetime. The conventions declared their collective protection to the Ottoman Empire, and Russia withdrew from its exclusive position. During Nicholas I’s visit to Britain in 1844, he discussed an amiable partition of the Ottoman Empire “in case” it collapsed with Prime Minister Robert Peel and Palmerston, believed to be succeeding him. They claimed Egypt “in case,” and the tsar confirmed.¹²

In the 1840s, the Russians thoroughly prepared the “case” of the Ottoman Empire’s “natural” disintegration. All available tools, diplomatic, ideological, economic, and military, were used to carry out the “onion strategy.” The development was envisaged of the separate power structures, military capabilities, and national identities of the ethnic-religious and socio-political scales of the Ottoman imperial bulb to stimulate their fallout. The network of the local Russian consulates was implanted over the Ottoman Empire to patronise, organise, subsidise, and inspire the dissidents. The emigree dissident communities were set up in Russia that developed the ethnic, religious, and social identities of the separatist Ottoman territories and groups. They sent their agents in the targeted districts, built up the underground organisations, and prepared the armed rebellion.

11 KUKIEL, *Czartoryski and European Unity*, 244

12 КИНЯПИНА, *Восточный вопрос*, 111–12

The decisive moment was looming. In January of 1853, Nicholas I discussed the perspective on the Ottoman Christians' secession with the British ambassador in Saint Petersburg, Hamilton Seymour. The Russian emperor forewarned him about the rebellions in Wallachia and Moldavia, Serbia, Montenegro, Bulgaria, and Armenia that split the Ottoman Empire and sank it soon.¹³ Russia looked for the European concert's support for its demand of the Russian protection over the Christian subjects of the sultan. It would turn them into his double subjects with the Russian tsar, providing Russia with the unlimited interference into the Ottoman domestic and international affairs. Only peeling the incohesive bulb of the Ottoman Empire would remain to dismantle it with minor trouble and major effect. Distributing the Ottoman wreckage would be a final affair of the Eastern Question. The emperor took in the ambassador's posture for "yes."

From March to May of 1853, the Russian special envoy to the Ottoman Empire, Prince Aleksander Menshikov, passed to the *Sublime Porte* a series of ultimatums demanding to confirm the Orthodox privileges with the holy shrines and Russian protection over the Ottoman Christians declared by the treaty of Küçük Kaynarca.¹⁴ Menshikov was an arrogant and short-tempered figure, and his choice as the ambassador to the Ottomans instead of some cute diplomat was manifesting. It demonstrated that following decades of self-deterrence in relations to the Ottoman Empire, Nicholas I suddenly turned to decisive action. The Russian emperor either concluded that the preparatory phase of his "onion strategy" on the Ottoman Empire was completed and its bulb was cooked enough to be peeled off, or there were some other considerations and circumstances that suddenly and forcefully pushed him into motion.

The grand voyage of Czartoryski and the "entente cordiale."

Czartoryski took part in the Polish rebellion, or secession of the Polish Tsardom from the Russian Empire, from 1830 to 1831, and was elected as the head of its provisional government. Following suppression of the rebellion, he moved to Paris and became a leader of the Polish emigration until his death in 1861. Being an emigree, Czartoryski was nevertheless a member of the uppermost European

¹³ КИНЯПИНА, *Восточный вопрос*, 123–28

¹⁴ ВАДЕМ, *The Ottoman Crimean War*, 73–76

establishment; he communicated with the top figures in British and French governments and intellectual circles. In 1831 he established the Society of Poland's Friends in London, and in 1832 he resettled in Paris, where he bought out Hôtel Lambert for the "Polish government in exile."

Czartoryski educated the European rulers in the true sense of the Russian policy toward the Ottoman Empire and explained to them the "onion strategy." It was a variation of the strategy that Russia used to destroy the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to take over its place as the East-European power hegemon from the late 17th to the late 18th centuries. The Russians instigated the ethnic, religious, and social dissidents in the Polish Ukraine, Polish Rus, and Lithuanian Western Rus (now Belarus) until the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth burst from within and the outer onion scales of its statehood fell apart. Then Russia, Prussia, and Austria smashed the Polish national core. Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, Russia applied the same pattern to the Ottoman Empire, and Czartoryski was a co-author of this strategy. The "onion strategy" was an open manual to him.

Czartoryski was full of ideas for the Polish national revival. He promoted the view that, looking monolithic, in fact the Russian Empire was layered and incohesive. Czartoryski advanced the concept of the *Intermarium*, a multinational East-Central Europe from the Baltic to the Black Sea that must be established against the Russian Empire. The *Intermarium* strategy was pioneered by the Swedish king Karl XII in his famous and unfortunate venture against Russia. Karl XII was destroyed by the Russian emperor Peter I at Poltava in 1709 but schemed for the *Intermarium* until he was shot dead by the Norwegians in 1718. Karl XII looked to unite Sweden, Poland, Lithuania, the Ukrainian Cossack Hetmanate, the Danube principalities, the Don Cossack Host, the Crimean Khanate, and the Ottoman Empire against Russia; stir the upheaval of the Russian social classes opposing Peter I's reforms; hound the Russian factions against each other; and impose on Russia the constitution that weakened it irretrievably.¹⁵ Karl XII failed, but the ideal of *Intermarium* survived in the Polish minds.

Czartoryski was an outstanding proponent of this strategic tradition. In February and March 1839, he had an audience with Palmerston, then the foreign secretary, and educated him in the *Intermarium* concept. He proposed to transform the western and southwestern provinces of the Russian Empire into the damper

15 SHIROGOROV, *Strategies of Ukrainian War*, Ch. 11

by reversing the “onion strategy” that Russia carried out on the Ottomans against the Russian Empire itself. At the moment, his main focus was on the “Turkey” and “Circassia,” a bunch of the Caucasian mountaineer tribes revolting against Russia. Czartoryski scared Palmerston with the Russian conquering the Straits and “Constantinople” and threatening India if Britain let Circassia sink.¹⁶ It was a stunning reverse of the “onion strategy” against Russia but Palmerston remained unmoved.

Unlike Czartoryski’s rather abstract vision, the Russian “onion strategy” on the Ottoman Empire was rooted in harsh reality. The Russian military dominance over the Ottomans was its ground. Military superiority was leverage to enact all other factors of the “onion strategy,” such as social stratification, ethnic segregation, religious zeal, interests of the elites, and ambitions of the leaders. By the end of the 18th century, Russia ascended over the Ottomans in all three kinds of warfare—land, amphibious, and naval. While the Ottoman weapons and equipment were not backward, their organisation, morale, and leadership were much inferior to the European-modelled armies. The Russians achieved indisputable tactical, operational, and strategic superiority over the Ottomans.

Following the destruction of Napoleonic France, the Russian fighting reputation was amazing. The Russian military dominance was decisive in suppressing the revolutions in Central Europe in 1848 to 1849. The Russian armed intervention prevented destruction of the Austrian Empire by the Hungarian revolt. The Russian pressure saved Prussian conservatism and returned Germany to its pre-revolutionary arrangement. The threat of the Russian intervention prevented France from interfering against the Hapsburgs on the side of Sardinia-Piedmont and the Italian insurgents.

Czartoryski’s ideas hooked nobody in Europe until the Russian military might seemed insurmountable and the European rulers relied on it as the conservative mainstay of the European *anciens régimes*. However, by the beginning of the 1850s, the Russian monstrous image suddenly vanished. Russia still had the largest army in Europe, but some experts grasped that it was lagging in introducing the recent advanced weapons, equipment, and materials that were produced by the racing industrial revolution. At the same time, the social classes, political factions, and leaders in Europe that professed the conservative agenda gave way

16 CZARTORYSKI, *Memoirs and correspondence*, 339–44

to the intruders that strove to make changes. They looked to liberate Europe from conservative Russian power hegemony. These two factors worked together. The comparative decline of the Russian military might and the sunset of its socio-political allies in European countries opened Europe to new strategies, between which harming or wrecking the Russian Empire found its place.

During the “spring of nations,” Czartoryski resided in Berlin, scheming for an alliance of the revolutionary Europe against Russia. He also petitioned the new figures in the Prussian and Austrian governments. However, in Prussia and Austria his ideas were tolerated only while the revolution was ascending. When it turned downward, Czartoryski was chased out because it endangered not only the Russian Empire but also Prussia with its Greater Polish possessions and especially the Austrian Empire with its Lesser Polish and Galician-Ruthenian holdings. Czartoryski returned to Paris and became a powerful influencer with the government of the French Second Republic established in the revolution of 1848.

In the three decades since Napoleon’s collapse in 1815, France changed from an agricultural country of peasant smallholders into the transitional society with the “growth poles” characterised by the large-scale industrialisation based on coal and steam power and railways.¹⁷ The influence of the “growth poles” was overwhelming because they empowered the social and economic dynamics. The Second Republic became the first European nation-state established by the capitalist class produced by the industrial society. It overturned the French constitution, enlarging the volume of voters to ten million of them. The new politicised mass called up to political power the *grands notables*, the faction of industrialists and financiers.¹⁸

The elected prince-president Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte became their leader. Relying on them, he committed a *coup d’état*, declaring France the empire and himself Emperor Napoleon III in December of 1852. The *grands notables* turned the French foreign policy from searching for status and “glory” to profiteering. France switched from its traditional European commitment to expansion overseas. The French colonial empire was under construction since the conquest of Algiers in the 1830s. The Ottomans, with their potential of the raw material supply and demand for the French industrial goods, ascended at the focus. At the same time,

17 PRICE, *The French Second Empire*, 9–10

18 GOUJON, *Histoire de la France contemporaine*, II, Ch.5

the *grands notables* looked for the French hegemony over Western and Central Europe to satisfy their nationalistic egotism and greed for the rich markets.

However, Central and Western Europe were in the conservative frame of the European Concert, guarded by the Holy Alliance, of which Russia was a pillar. Breaking the Holy Alliance and defeating Russia was an imperative to impose French hegemony over Europe. The nationalistic upheavals were an attractive leverage against the Russian and Austrian empires. Czartoryski, with his ideas of the “onion strategy” on Russia and the Russophobic *Intermarium* in Central and Eastern Europe, was attentively heard in Paris. He became a strong influencer on Napoleon III.¹⁹

From the 1830s to 1840s, France gained priority in the development of new weapon systems such as a rifle musket with conic bullets, rifled long-range artillery, steamer ships, shell munitions, and high explosives. They provided confidence in French fighting capability, changing the misery of Napoleon’s *finale* with flamboyant militarism. Discounting the forlorn and isolationist USA, the French warfare transformation was rivalled only by that of Britain. In some spheres the British pioneered the new weapons while adopting the French inventions in others.

Historians stress the dramatic transformation of Britain from the Georgian to Victorian epochs, divided by the death of King George IV in 1830 and the ascension of Queen Victoria in 1837. This dynastic act manifested tremendous economic and social changes. In the 1830s and 1840s, Britain abandoned its proverbial mercantilism for the *laissez-faire* professed by Adam Smith. The tariffs were sacrificed to free trade, and the industry boomed. Britain outpaced the French industrial surge. The capitalist class of entrepreneurs and the middle class of experts prospered, and the landowning class mutated, investing in railways, banking, and commerce²⁰ They entered the Parliament, government, army, and municipal authorities. Public opinion, free press, and party politics obscured the post-feudal structures of the Georgian era.

Despite heavy investments, the British military became much cheaper in relation to the gross domestic product as it soared. The new structure of British

19 CZARTORYSKI, *Memoirs and correspondence*, 350–51

20 EVANS, *The Forging of the Modern State*, 223–24, 355–56; HOBBSBAWM, *The Age of Revolution*, 108



Fig. 5. Adam Czarotorski (left) became the key strategic adviser to the French emperor Napoleon III (right) on the Russian issue. A photo by Gaspard-Félix Tournachon, around 1861, and Maison Ad. Braun & Cie, around 1860, respectively. The public domain, Wikicommons.

society and new factions in politics required new international policy and military strategy, while the more powerful and cheaper forces called for employment. The 1830s and 1840s were the periods of reshaping the British power projection to suit the industrial growth. Latin America was reduced to being a British export monopoly, the slave states of the USA supplied the raw material for the British cotton industry, and India was deprived of its craftsmanship to be turned into a market for the British cloth. It also produced opium that was imposed on China, “opened” for addiction by the military force. The opium sales generated the capital for investing in the British heavy industry, arms production, and military ventures. It was a social and economic flywheel with tremendous momentum of aggression and expansion toward the global hegemony.

Similar achievements in the arms race and rush for colonial profiteering turned France and Britain into fierce contenders. Their rivalry over sales of industrial goods and purchase of the raw materials in the Ottoman Empire was especially

wild. They extorted from the Ottomans the best conditions for their export and import, signing the same trade conventions with the Ottomans almost simultaneously, Britain in August and France in November 1838. At the same time, their rulers found that both countries could severely “injure” each other.²¹ Avoiding it, they gradually abandoned their traditional hostility and shifted to cooperation.

Britain and France shared the privileged position of the industrial leaders that no other nation claimed yet. They turned to keep it together. The British prime minister George Hamilton-Gordon, Earl of Aberdeen, dropped “a cordial understanding” to describe their rapprochement, and the French King Louis-Philippe, the last of the Bourbons, echoed him with an “*entente cordiale*.” The definition was of pleasure, but it must not deceive. The *entente cordiale* was grounded in the new technologies of war of the industrial epoch and the aggressive strategy of hegemonistic expansion.

Austria, Prussia, the Ottomans, and chaos in British minds.

Despite the “cordial understanding,” Aberdeen did not grasp at once the French goals in the diplomatic crisis around the Christian holy shrines of 1853. An issue of the first-hand access to them for either Russian-supported Orthodox priests or French-supported Catholic priests looked ridiculous for turning to arms. Aberdeen opposed the French pushes against the Vienna system that was the pillar of the international order favouring the English industrial dominance over Europe. He did not understand what kind of arrangement the French promoted instead of the European Concert, disguising it in their claptrap of the Ottoman sovereignty and dignity and European liberties and solidarity. Aberdeen could not believe that Napoleon III rushed to destroy the balanced European security in favour of international “Bonapartism” that was surfing on the turf of nationalism and militarism.

The French stance in the Black Sea crisis was dictated by the *parvenus* like Jean-Gilbert Fialin, called Duke de Persigny, a journalist and schemer who had been the interior minister from January 1852 to June 1854 and then was the ambassador to London, and Napoleon III’s half-brother Charles Auguste de Morny, a railway and real estate magnate who had been the president of the *Corps Légis-*

²¹ STANMORE, *Sidney Herbert*, II, 19

latif since 1854. They required an aggressive stance toward Russia and called on the British capitalist class to revert the posture of the British cabinet accordingly. Napoleon III supported them vigorously. They looked to use the war against Russia to ground the Bonapartist regime and considered France's situation to wreck the Vienna system better than ever.

The Holy Alliance supervising the European stability was in crisis. Russia requested of Austria to support it or hold friendly neutrality. However, now it was another Austria that Russia addressed. The new Hapsburg epoch was manifested by the exile of Metternich in March of 1848 and the enthronement of Emperor Franz Joseph I in December. The Russian intervention saved "Fortress Austria" in the turmoil of the Italian, Hungarian, and German revolutions in 1848 to 1849. But its mainstay of the Austrian and Bohemian aristocracy was fractured. Austria was not able to play a *primo violino* in the European Concert anymore. The imperial minister-president Count Karl Ferdinand von Buol turned the social area of the Austrian Empire into the fertile ground for capitalist elements and its former rigid absolutism into the ragged "Central European" political and military concept.²²

In 1853 the Austrian affairs in the Ottoman Empire were run by Karl Ludwig von Bruck, an exemplary figure of the new generation of the Austrian politicians.²³ Conservation of the decrepit old regimes of the Holy Alliance was out of their wishes as they looked for the international order favourable for export and investments. Bruck founded the Austrian Lloyd, the largest Austrian shipping company, became a member of the German revolutionary Frankfurt Parliament in 1848, and then he was the Austrian minister of commerce, industry, and railroads and the minister of finances. Northern Italy and the Balkans, two Habsburg stakes in the Black Sea crisis, were a dreamland for capitalist profiteering. With the people like him, the Russian request of comradeship was doomed.

France played the Italian card. From 1848 to 1849 the Austrian dominance in northern Italy was shattered in the war against the coalition of the Italian states led by Piedmont-Sardinia, republican insurgents in Lombard-Venetian Kingdom, and volunteers under Giuseppe Garibaldi. In 1853 Napoleon III threatened Austria to ally with Piedmont and reignite the popular revolt in case Austria supported

22 EVANS, *Austria, Hungary, and the Habsburgs*, 293–97; WESS, *The Grand Strategy of the Habsburg Empire*, 240, 245–47, 279–80

23 ТАРЛЕ, *Крымская война*, VIII, 231, 293

Russia in the Black Sea crisis.²⁴ It was a bitter but effective blackmail. Britain added to it a spoonful of honey, proposing the Austrians occupy Wallachia and Moldavia.²⁵

Austria succumbed to the French and British incentives and abandoned the Holy Alliance. It became a French agent. In the fall of 1853, Austria presented to Saint Petersburg its warnings, “don’t cross the Danube, don’t encourage the Balkan peoples to revolt, and don’t take any Turk territory.”²⁶ In January 1854 Russia turned it down. However, it is not correct to consider Austria as a blackmail and cheating victim. Despite being framed, Austria worked for its objectives. It looked to establish a new European hegemonic alliance together with France and thus prevent its periphery from being ravaged by the nationalistic revolutions. Probably, considering the opportunistic nature of the Bonapartist regime in France, the idea was not unfounded.

While dealing with Austria, France loomed over the Rhein, menacing Prussia by inspiring the revolutionary groups in Germany, of which France was a traditional protector. The German public opinion saw the Russian lid being the principal obstacle for the German unification and constitutional liberties. France required Prussia to turn against Russia. However, Prussia was not so vulnerable to blackmail. The change from King Frederick William III, a hardened veteran of the Napoleonic Wars and the Vienna system, to his son Frederick William IV in 1840 did not change the Prussian regime. In 1849, the new king presided over the counter-revolutionary military push in Berlin and suppressed the local revolutions in the lesser German states. Russia emboldened his stance.²⁷

Frederick William IV took over German nationalism from the revolutionary elements and made it the common ground of the new capitalist classes and conservatives who controlled the officialdom and army. The Prussian army became a cult of them both. It embodied the industrialism and nationalism as in no other European great power. Prussia did not give in to the French blackmail and played its long-term game under a cover of neutrality.²⁸

24 ТАРЛЕ, *Крымская война*, VIII, 226, 396, 399–400

25 WESS, *The Grand Strategy of the Habsburg Empire*, 269–71

26 ТАРЛЕ, *Крымская война*, VIII, 400–409

27 CRAIG, *The Politics of the Prussian Army*, 83, 118–21, 130–32

28 CLARK, *Iron Kingdom* Ch.15; Koch, *A History of Prussia*. Ch.11

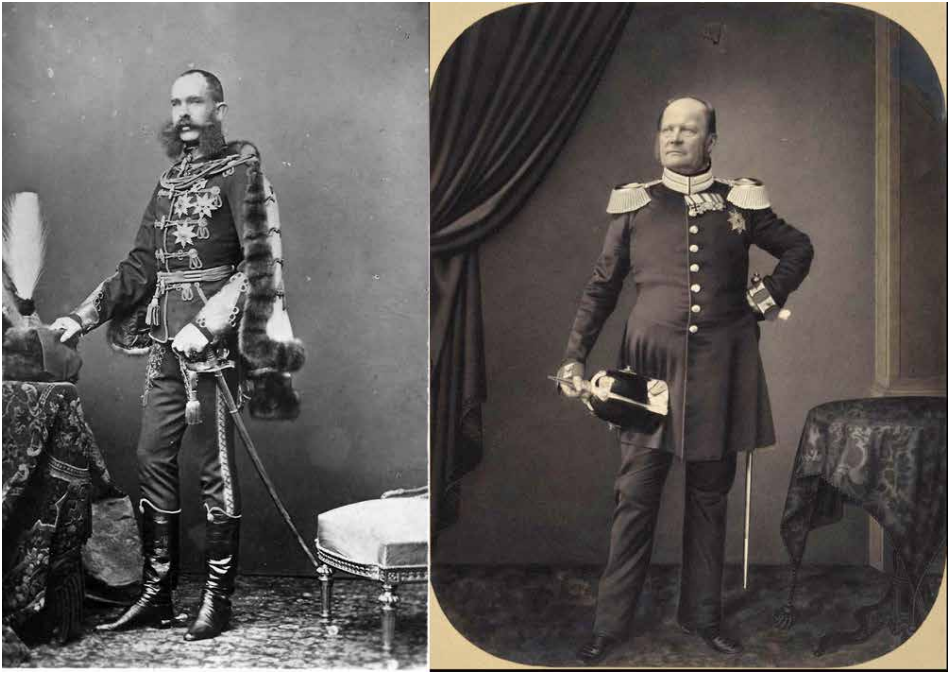


Fig. 6. The Austrian emperor Franz-Joseph (left) and the Prussian king Frederick William IV (right). Photos by Rabending, Wien, 1875, and an unknown artist, around 1860, respectively. Public domain, Wikicommons.

Aberdeen and his colleagues were not the “bastards” of revolution like Napoleon III and his entourage. They were the product of the long pedigree, and the new epoch did not allure them like it allured the French *parvenu* rulers. Russia was a tried and reliable partner, and France was an *enfant terrible*. Aberdeen advised the French to cool down. But they pressed ahead, playing the diplomatic crisis to start war. While Aberdeen worked on the diplomatic solution at once comforting Russia and France and respecting Austria and Prussia, field management of the crisis fell into the hands of the Ottomans.²⁹ The Russians galloped to war, and suddenly, the Ottomans raced head-to-head at them.

In two decades following its previous big encounters with Russia in the turn from the 1820s to the 1830s, the Ottoman Empire changed dramatically due to authoritarian reforms of Sultan Mahmud II, growth of the capitalist economy, and infusion of the European people, ideas, and goods. The formation of the new so-

²⁹ STANMORE, *The Earl of Aberdeen*, 228

cial elite was underway. It was characterised by “bifurcation” into the new Turkic Muslim officialdom and military class on the one hand and the commercial class of mostly non-Muslim dissidents on the other hand.

The new officialdom did not consider themselves an administrative utensil of the sultan’s household but the self-running state service class. It differed from their predecessors by uniform, outlook, office furniture, and lifestyle. The *Sublime Porte* emerged, which was not an Ottoman Empire, as this notion is often used, but a cluster of topmost offices of the grand vizier, foreign and internal ministries, and supreme judicial council that presided over the officialdom. They were packed in one large building constructed after the great fire in 1839. The *Sublime Porte* was the power centre dominating over the sultans and their palace and actually running the empire. Formation of the new Ottoman regular army following destruction of the Janissary corps in 1826 created the social-military pressure of its own. The army expanded on the new recruiting basis³⁰ and required war to assert itself as an ascending group close to the Muslim officialdom.

The Ottoman commercial class consisted mostly of the Greeks, Armenians, and Jews. They benefited disproportionately from the fast growth of the Ottoman trade with the West. Adoption of the Western style of life and education, links with the relative diasporas in the West, closeness with the European consulates and merchants in the Ottoman Empire, and an image of oppressed people needing to be patronised favoured them.³¹ The Muslim officialdom and military looked at the Christian commercial class with jealousy. They suspected the new elites of the Christian communities of subversive nationalism and formation of the subtle proto-states to take over the territories of their ethnic dominance.

The Ottoman military and officials clashed with the Christian saboteurs in the Balkans and Transcaucasia. They felt the Russian “onion strategy” on their skin. The dominant position of the Muslims and Turks in the Ottoman Empire was under attack. They had nowhere to retreat because the empire’s heartland was at stake. The Ottoman sovereignty over the empire’s various subjects was their last stand. The Russian demand of the “double citizenship” for the Christians was unacceptable to them. The Ottoman’s long road of defeats and concessions suddenly came to a halt.

30 ŞİMŞEK, “The Grand Strategy of the Ottoman Empire,” 171–74.

31 GOÇEK, *Rise of the Bourgeoisie, Demise of Empire*, 80–82, 89, 93–97, 138–39.



Fig. 7. Mustafa Reshid Pasha (left) was an author of strategic brinkmanship by the Ottoman sultan Abdülmecid I (right). A photo by an anonymous artist, and a print by Carel Christiaan Anthony Last, the 1850s, respectively. Wikicommons.

Sultan Abdülmecid I was surrounded by the novel generation of statesmen that combined the old and new ways of the Ottoman life in a most bizarre fashion. The outstanding *Tanzimât Fermânı*, Imperial Edict of Reorganisation, proclaimed by Abdülmecid I on his enthronization in 1839, was authored by the foreign minister Mustafa Reshid (Reşid) Pasha, a career bureaucrat in the *Sublime Porte* and former ambassador to Paris and London. He was an exemplary progressive figure, a *Tanzimatçı*, promoting the Westernising reforms and alliance with the West. At the same time, his family business consisted of cheaply purchasing young slave girls to train them for obeying and entertaining and reselling them at a high price to the high harems.³² Reshid Pasha ran the Ottoman foreign affairs, keeping in mind to favour the Black Sea slave trade.

Reshid Pasha smartly detected the Russian “onion strategy” and designed the *Tanzimat* declaration to resist it. A key measure was to transform the Ottoman social constitution, which did not change fundamentally from the 17th century, into the citizenship of the Westernised kind for all different peoples of

32 DAVISON, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire*, 36–37

the Ottoman Empire. Its principles were universal guarantees of life, justice, and property instead of state marauding; the clear tax system instead of tax farming; universal conscription instead of Muslim militancy; a penal code instead of multiple religious rules; and a decent officialdom instead of a corrupted swarm of clerks. It was a move against both the separation of the Muslim Turks into the privileged *askeri* and tributed *reaya* classes, the central officialdom and provincial strongmen, and the segregation of the non-Muslim population into closed communities, *millets*. If accomplished, the reform could make cohesive the social and political body of the Ottoman Empire and deny the conditions for the Russian “onion strategy.”

Reshid Pasha was a sharp-witted player behind the Ottoman side of the strategic chessboard in 1853 and 1854. He advised Abdülmecid I to accept the first point of Menshikov’s ultimatum, confirming the privileges of the Orthodox Church in the Christian holy shrines, but ignoring its second point of the Russian protection over the Ottoman Christian subjects. Russia revoked the diplomatic relations with the Ottomans and occupied the Danube principalities in June to July 1853. Britain and France responded by advancing their navies, respectively from Malta and Toulon, to Besika Bay, just outside the Dardanelles. It was not an act of war against Russia yet; it was a warning to both Russians and Ottomans to respect the European Concert.

In August 1853, Britain, France, Austria, and Prussia consented to the note of de-escalation to comfort both Russia and the Ottomans. Russia succumbed to its clauses. Suddenly, the Ottomans refused to respect some of them. They moved to avoid being a spoil of the great powers. Reshid Pasha advised the sultan to grab the strategic initiative and use it for bringing Britain and France into war against Russia. In September, the Ottomans presented an ultimatum to Russia and declared war in October 1853.

The British cabinet lost their minds. The Russian victory seemed imminent, and it promised to be catastrophic for the reckless Ottomans. Preventing Russia from stealing Ottoman sovereignty was an imperative. The French proposal of placing the navies at Istanbul to scare the Russians off was a solution, but it violated the London conventions, aggravating and not alleviating the crisis.³³ Aberdeen was frustrated since the crisis was increasing despite its cause being

33 HERKLESS, “Stratford, the Cabinet,” 502–503

removed and the European Concert providing a fair solution.³⁴ It must have been imposed. By what means?

Industrial warfare and the Russian operational strategy.

While the British cabinet stumbled, the strategy fell into the hands of the field officials, the British ambassador to the Ottoman Empire Stratford Canning, Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe, and the commander of the British Mediterranean fleet, Admiral James Dundas. Stratford was a highly experienced diplomat, serving as the head of missions in the Ottoman Empire, Switzerland, the USA, and Russia. He was a participant in the Greek War of Independence from 1821 to 1829, a connoisseur of the Eastern Question, and an influencer in Istanbul. However, he was not a military figure, and his ability to direct the actions of the fleet in support of a diplomatic position was in doubt. In his turn, James Dundas made an ordinary naval career, ascending from commanding lesser ships to bigger ones, and was propelled to the top position by his political career in the Parliament and Admiralty. Nothing visionary might have been expected of him. His decisions were reactive.

Stratford had the French counterparts in Istanbul, Marquis Charles Jean de La Valette since 1851, Edmond de Lacour in 1853, and Louis-Achille d'Hilliers in 1854 and 1855. Lacour and d'Hilliers did not have much knowledge of the Ottomans, and the French stance on-site was determined by the *chargé d'affaires* Vincent Benedetti, La Valette's client. Benedetti was a Corsican of Greek origin, an underestimated diplomatic actor in major European crises in the second third of the 19th century, the Second Syrian War, the First and Second Italian Wars of Independence, the Austro-Prussian War, and the Franco-Prussian War, where he was a major French diplomat afield.³⁵ He may be treated as an intentional or accidental instigator of these conflicts as well as the Crimean War. It was Benedetti's *dépêches* that shaped Napoleon III's warmongering stance in Paris. Stratford and Benedetti expected the Russian landing at Istanbul. They persuaded their governments to advance the British and French fleets at the Straits. In November 1853 the allied fleets entered the Dardanelles and took the station in the Marmara

34 SCHMITT, "The Diplomatic Preliminaries," 51

35 HEADLAM, "Benedetti, Vincent," 717–18

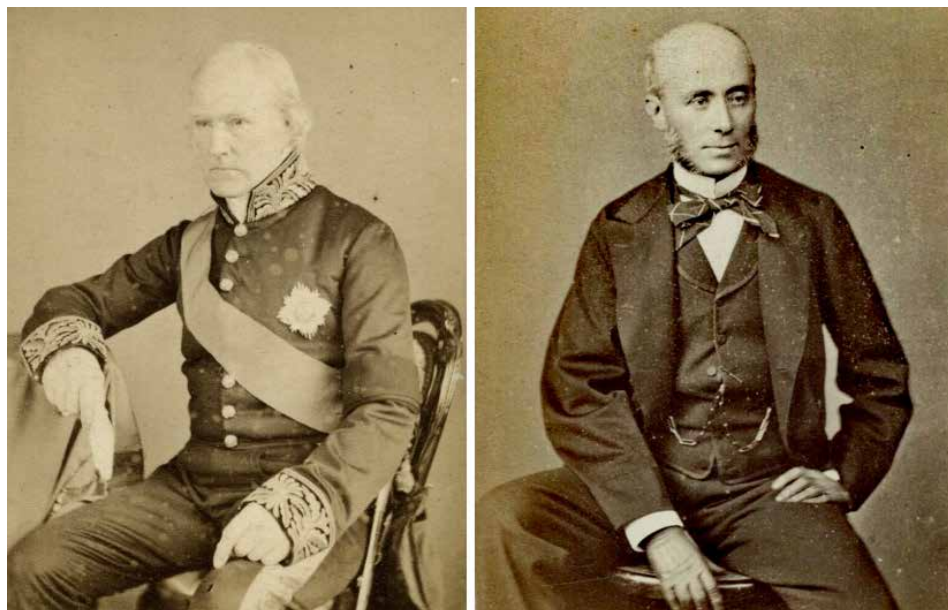


Fig. 8. Stratford Canning (1786-1880) and Vincent Benedetti (1817-1900)
Public Domain (Wikicommons)

Sea to react to the Russian attack immediately.

When its tension with the Ottomans came to the brink of war by the summer of 1853, Russia had in hand the operational plans well-tried in the war of 1828 to 1829 and the First Syrian War. They were offensive and amphibious. The first plan envisaged the landing at the Bosphorus and occupation of Istanbul with simultaneous two-prong pincer movements around the Black Sea, through the Balkans and Transcaucasia. The second plan was more cautious, proposing the landing at Varna and the Gulf of Burgas nearby to assist the march of the land army over the Balkans. Nicholas I put them on the table. He hesitated. The emperor did not break with the Vienna system at once and remained adherent to the Holy Alliance. He considered the posture of Prussia friendly, and he was sure of Austria's alliance and British and French readiness to make a deal with Russia. Nicholas I looked to extort the Ottoman concessions together with the mates in the European Concert.

Paskevich and Vorontsov added their considerations of the military kind to the emperor's hesitations. They foresaw the unfolding of the crisis into a war not with the Ottoman Empire alone but in alliance with Britain and France, and probably



Fig. 9. Aleksey Orlov (left) and Pavel Kiselyov (right) advised Emperor Nicholas II on the Russian domestic social and industrial readiness to take on Britain and France.

Photos by Mayer & Pierson, the 1860s. Wikicommons.

Austria.³⁶ Russia must have stepped down to a defensive strategy, especially in the initial stage of war, until the structure of the enemy alliance, the interests and capabilities of its participants, and their plans became clear. The internal troubles and military misery of the Ottoman Empire, which two pre-war plans exploited, lost their priority. Entering into the war of the great powers shifted the balance of force decisively.

As military thinkers, Paskevich and Vorontsov followed the dominant Russian ideological trend of the epoch, pan-Slavism, which pronounced an impending “civilisational” clash of Russia, as the leader of the Slavic world, with the alliance of the “Roman-Teutonic” powers of Western and Central Europe. Invasion by Prussia and Austria, supported by France, was expected. The military reform in the 1830s and following build-up focused on this challenge. The volume of forces was the principal issue, and Russia maintained the largest peacetime land army to counter Austrian and Prussian faster mobilisation. The chokepoint fortresses of Novogeorgievsk, Ivangorod, and Brest in Poland were refortified to secure a few

³⁶ ТАРИЕ, *Крымская война*, VIII, 384–85

extra months for build-up.³⁷ Russia deployed most of its land army at the western border. It was able to take on Austria and Prussia separately or together.

However, the balance of capabilities of Russia and “maritime powers” in the Black Sea and its littorals was not in favour of Russia. Two close advisers to Nicholas I provided the expertise to assess the Russian industrial and technological capabilities in a large-scale and long-term war against Britain and France. They were Aleksey Orlov and Pavel Kiselyov. Both started their careers in the military but continued them in diplomacy and domestic affairs. Orlov represented Russia in concluding the Adrianople treaty with the Ottomans in 1829 and the Hünkâr İskelesi treaty in 1833, and he also accomplished the diplomatic work in negotiating with Muhammed Ali. Kiselev was the chief of staff of the Russian army operating against the Ottomans in the Balkans in 1828 to 1829. They both carried out an investigation of the utopian revolutionary underground of the “Decembrists” that flourished in Russia following the Napoleonic Wars and achieved its destruction.

Kiselyov was appointed the minister of the state properties in 1837, presiding over the first reforms to cancel serfdom. However, not only state landholdings and peasantry were in Kiselyov’s competence but also a bulk of the Russian manufacturing and armament facilities. Orlov’s most influential office was the chief of the imperial secret police since 1844. He analysed the stance of different social groups and political factions on the war and the efficiency of the governmental institutions for mobilisation and stability. They assessed the true scale and military consequences of the Russian lagging in industry and technology after Britain and France.

Albeit not of first rate, the Russian weaponry wasn’t bad. For example, the Russian infantry, due to its enormous peacetime size, was equipped mostly with smoothbore muskets with round ball, but many of them were of the latest 1845 Model. The Russian backwardness was located in a few narrow areas such as large battleship steamers, rifled heavy guns and large mortars, shell munitions, and rifled muskets with conic bullets. Russia did not produce steam machines for the ships, but it purchased them hurriedly wherever possible and operated with flotillas of steamers in the Black Sea and Baltic, although undergunned. Russia had limited capacity to produce rifled muskets and artillery, and shell ammuni-

37 FULLER, *Strategy and Power in Russia*, P. 6

tions. It was not clear how these areas of backwardness would play in war as a whole. However, they substantially changed the fighting technique and tactics in some particular theatres.

The steamer ships provided superior weather endurance for the fleets and their agility in combat. Heavy rifled artillery and large mortars provided longer range, stronger impact, and higher accuracy of the fire. In sea combat they granted superiority of hitting the enemy, remaining out of its striking distance, and sinking the enemy's ship instead of only harming it. They provided the destruction of the onshore stone fortifications for amphibious assault. High explosives and shell munition increased the devastating effect of the projectile's blast. Rifle muskets with the conic bullets brought accurate aiming and long shooting range to break the enemy's bayonet columns before collision. All of them were the important innovations; however, they required the special conditions of fighting.

The steamer ships belonged to the navy, as did heavy rifled artillery and large mortars that needed extra-robust platforms. The infantry rifles were better used for skirmishing in the broken landscape like the littoral. As always when the new technologies arrived, their effect was not dispersed over the wide expanse of application but concentrated in a small area where it was overwhelming. In the middle of the 19th century, it was the area of naval and amphibious warfare and joint operations.³⁸ The effect of the new technologies on the combat on traditional plain fields inland was not so pronounced. The disciplined and well-trained Russian bayonet columns still prevailed over skirmishers. It was a fundamental conclusion for the operational strategy that Nicholas I's advisers proposed to him. Keeping afar from the terrain where the allies were going to deploy their technical superiority became its pivot.

The pre-war design of amphibious landing at Bosphorus or the Gulf of Burgas was abandoned. The invasion of the inland Balkans through Moldavia and Wallachia required many more troops than had to be spared from guarding the western and northwestern borders. The Austrian opposition to the Russian advance in the Balkans aggravated the situation since it required precaution against the Austrian flanking of the Russian forces. After occupying Moldavia and Wallachia, Russia reduced its operations to intimidating the Ottomans and stirring upheaval of the Slavic peoples in the Balkans.

38 BLACK, *Military Strategy*, 18

Dobruja was opened to seaborne intervention, and operating there required being extra attentive to the overextended seaward flank. The Russians targeted the fortress of Silistra, a hundred kilometres from the seashore, over the hilly steppe, where the allies could not maintain the logistical route against the Russian raiding cavalry in case they landed and marched to relieve Silistra. The silted streams of the Danube delta were passable only for flat-bottom rowing boats, which the allies lacked. In March 1854, the Russians pushed the Ottomans from their forts in the vicinity of the Danube delta, destroyed the Ottoman fortress of Nicopole, the lowest on the Danube, and burnt the Ottoman Danube flotilla. The waterways were cut off completely between Silistra and the Black Sea, where the allies could steam upstream. The allied interference at Silistra was obstructed.

Since the early 1830s, when Britain and France took a hostile stance toward the Russian operations in the Ottoman Empire, Russia worried about their attack on Sebastopol, the main Russian Black Sea naval base and stronghold in the Crimea. The Crimean southern shore, where it is located, looked well suitable for amphibious and joint operations with excellent accessibility from the deep sea for naval bombardment and landing, short distances of march from the seashore to the objectives, and the landscape favouring loose infantry actions with long-range fire. It was a terrain where the superiority of the allies in steamers, heavy rifled artillery, shell munition, and rifles would work perfectly. This kind of the tactical condition also existed on the Caucasian Black Sea coast. It has the terrain similar to the Crimean southern coast. The Russians evacuated from there all of their small onshore forts despite a few that could propose resistance to the seaborne assault. The allies were deprived of the worthwhile objectives for amphibious and joint operations besides Sebastopol. The Russian headquarters expected the main allied attack there.

Menshikov is portrayed in historiography as an awkward diplomat and general and a sharp, sarcastic intellectual at once. The portrait is not fair. During his military career, Menshikov recommended himself as an effective tactician, participating in many actions of the Napoleonic Wars, from the Battle of Borodino at Moscow in 1812 to the storm of Paris in 1814. He also had a good general staff experience, carried out a diplomatic mission to Persia, and captured Anapa from the Ottomans by the amphibious assault in 1828. In his mission to Istanbul in 1853, Menshikov turned smart enough to collect the information about the allied forces. His conclusions coincided with considerations of Paskevich and

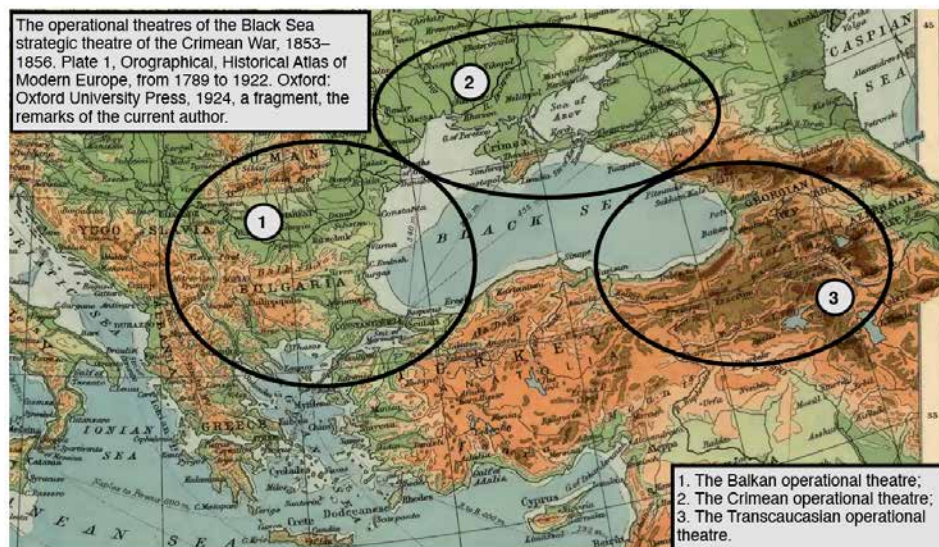


Fig. 10, The operational theatres of the Black Sea strategic theatre of the Crimean War, 1853–1856.

Vorontsov. On return, he took part in the making of the operational doctrine of the Russian army for the oncoming war.

Paskevich, Vorontsov, and Menshikov recommended exploring the Transcaucasian theatre, where the geographical position of the Caucasus Ridge running in close parallel with the Black Sea coast protected the inland operations from seaborne interference. In the Transcaucasia, the Russians could deploy their superiority in well-trained, disciplined infantry fighting in cohesive columns. The prospects of the Armenian rebellions in northeast Anatolia against the Ottomans, where the Armenians composed the majority of the population, were thrilling. The Armenians entered the moment of their national awakening and strove to split from the Ottoman Empire and establish their statelet under the Russian protection. Following the formation of the Russian Armenian province in 1830, the Ottoman Armenians defected en masse, either migrating to it or forming a “fifth column” in the Ottoman territory. It was an explosive material that could blast Ottoman Anatolia from within and result in the crumbling of the Ottoman political and military system.

Nicholas I followed the doctrine of his advisers. The Russian army imitated the Balkan offensive, stayed defensive in the Crimea, and amassed decisively in the Transcaucasia. It was the operational strategy that differed dramatically from

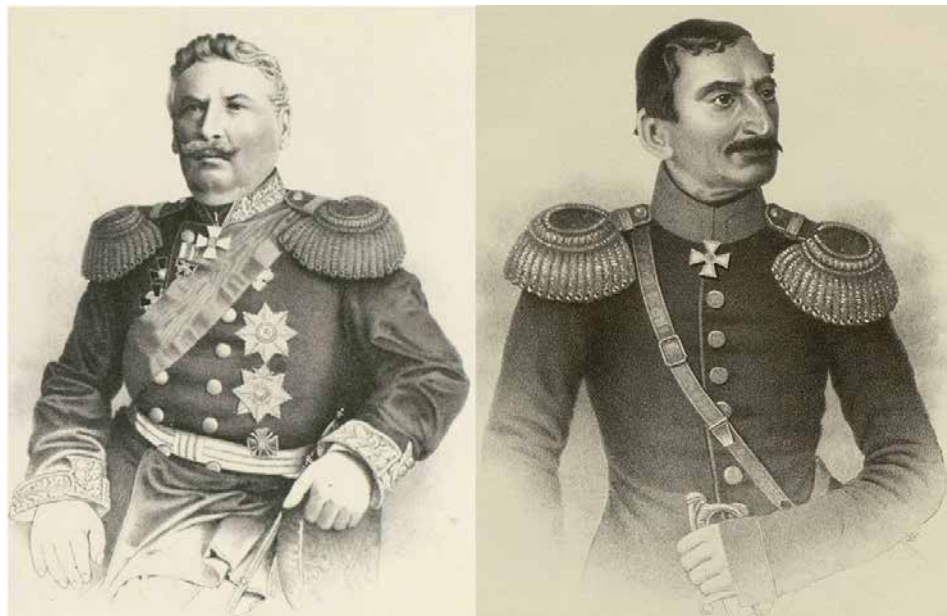


Fig. 11. Ivan Andronikov and Vasily Bebutov. Prints in: *Кавказский календарь на 1875 год*, Тифлис, 1874. Public domain, Wikicommons.

the operational strategy that Russia professed since the Prut expedition of Emperor Peter I in 1711, focusing on the lower Danube and Balkans. The historiography on the Crimean War loses it, being captured by the war period's propaganda clichés. Nicholas I appointed Paskevich, Vorontsov, and Menshikov to be the commanders-in-chief in the Danube, Caucasian, and Crimean theatres, respectively.

Timing of the war and the allied operational strategy.

The Russian army in the Transcaucasia was led by Princes Ivan Andronikov (Andronikashvili) and Vasily Bebutov (Beybutyan) of the Georgian and Armenian origin, respectively. They belonged to the second generation of the local aristocracy, thoroughly emancipated to the Russian imperial elite. Their parents were incorporated into the Russian nobility, and the children received the high-class imperial education combining the Russian messianism and European rationalism. They made their career in the imperial service; however, remaining adherent to the agenda of their peoples, for whom the territorial separation from the Ottoman Empire turned into an issue of survival. Both Andronikov and Bebutov

distinguished themselves in the Russo-Ottoman War from 1828 to 1829. Bebutov was appointed the first governor of the Armenian province, and Andronikov became the governor of the Georgian province in 1849.

On 14 November 1853, despite the enemy's triple numerical edge, Andronikov soundly defeated the 30,000-strong Ottoman corps at Akhaltsikhe in Ottoman Georgia, and Bebutov destroyed the 55,000-strong Ottoman army at Başgedikler in Ottoman Armenia on 19 November. One day earlier, the commander of the Russian Black Sea fleet, Pavel Nakhimov, annihilated the Ottoman frigate squadron at Sinope. It was wiped out besides one steamer under the British adviser to the Ottoman navy, Adolphus Slade, or Mushaver Pasha, who slipped away while the Ottomans proposed stubborn resistance. The Ottoman logistic route along the Anatolian coast from the Balkans and Istanbul to the Transcaucasia was cut off. The Russians removed the Ottoman naval threat to their coastal forts on the Caucasian coast and opened the Ottoman seashore for the amphibious assault. The threat of the Russian landing at Istanbul loomed.

The French and British press and public opinion were vehement. In January 1854, Napoleon III sent a warning letter to Nicholas I referring to the "Sinope massacre" in the presence of "three thousand guns" of the allied fleets at the Bosphorus as a Russian affront to Britain and France and a large provocation that must have been paid off. He was guided by Czartoryski.³⁹ Nicholas I answered him, describing the "Sinope affair" as a consequence of the allied support of the Ottoman shipping of the troops to the Georgian coast. The chain of events, which Aberdeen regretted as accidental and uncontrollable, dragged the allies to war.

It stressed the issue of the operational strategy for the English and French fleets that moved onto the Black Sea through the Bosphorus in December 1853. The fleets cruised between Istanbul and Varna without clear objectives besides chasing away the Russian sea patrols that hindered slave trafficking from the Caucasus to Istanbul. The British sailors provided a gentlemanly lift for Reshid Pasha's Circassian girls, and his supply for the high harems flourished.⁴⁰ It was a situation of "not peace and not war" that could not last long. Despite a year of aggravating crisis, neither British nor French rulers and commanders accomplished the homework to be turned into the operational strategy in the Black Sea region

39 CZARTORYSKI, *Memoirs and correspondence*, 350

40 ТАРЛЕ, *Крымская война*, VIII 375–76



Fig. 12 Adolf Slade as Mushaver Pasha (1804-1877)
and Pavel Stepanovich Nakimov (1802-1855)

and other areas of confrontation. The strategy of war as a whole was a blank list.

Stratford insisted on securing the Ottoman Black Sea coast by cruising the line from Varna to Batum (now Batumi, Georgia). However, the French naval commander, Ferdinand-Alphonse Hamelin, did not have a sufficient number of serviceable steamers to participate in the mission. Hamelin was a career ship captain like James Dundas and was promoted to the fleet commander by favouritism at Napoleon III's court. He needed somebody superior to guide his operations. James Dundas proposed to keep the allied navies in the Bosphorus until the opportunity would appear to engage the Russians for the decisive naval battle, some "Nelson touch" that never occurred. While they hesitated, Slade managed the Ottoman strengthening of the Bosphorus' and Istanbul's defences and the deploy-

ment of the Ottoman ships, artillery, and troops to scare away the Russian amphibious assault and repel it in case it came.⁴¹ The British squadron approached the Danube delta in March 1854; however, it did not bring sufficient landing troops to interfere with the Russian cracking of the local Ottoman forts.

Looking at war prospects, Stratford and Slade engineered a short-tempered plan to attack and destroy Sevastopol with its battleships, docks, and arsenal. Slade was a gifted naval spy and analyst who reconnoitred the Russian Black Sea fleet and its Sebastopol base in 1829. Slade did not have experience in amphibious operations, but he had an eye allowing him to advise the Ottomans and Stratford. Benedetti transferred the Sebastopol plan to Paris, where Napoleon III clung to it like a magic solution delivering victory.⁴² France immediately launched a program of building the metal-plated naval batteries to use them as the platforms of firepower against the Sebastopol bastions.⁴³ Unlike Britain, France had the compulsory military service, providing abundant manpower. In January 1854, Napoleon III declared the partial mobilisation to build up an army of 50,000 men. The orders for weapons, munitions, and equipment for the reserve of 300,000 men were placed. He imagined a grandiose venture.⁴⁴

In London, Stratford' and Slade' Sebastopol plan was considered a working idea since no other gleamed. It was attended by Sidney Herbert, the secretary at war, and James Graham, the first lord of the Admiralty, two top military officials of the cabinet. The Sebastopol plan became a starting point for the rearward making of the British operational strategy from the tactical capabilities of the troops and fleet. Confusion of the politicians turned the strategic pyramid topsy-turvy. Appearance of the Sebastopol plan was that accident⁴⁵ that produced the British operational strategy in the Crimean War.

In 1852, Graham began his second mandate as the first lord of the Admiralty. He served the first one in the early 1830s and was the home secretary in the late 1840s. Graham's functions in both offices interacted because he headed the navy in the period of the adoption of the steamer ships, which were built by the

41 LAMBERT, *The Crimean War*, 76

42 SCHMITT, "The Diplomatic Preliminaries," 50–51

43 RATH, *The Crimean War in Imperial Context*, 168

44 ТАПЛЕ, *Крымская война*, VIII, 409

45 BLACK, *A military history of Britain*, 82

industry that innovated under supervision of the home department. He worked for the British technological superiority in both navy and industry. In both offices Graham associated himself with the advanced technologies and capitalist class, promoting the navy of the steamer ships with screw propulsion and free trade instead of mercantilist restrictions.

In the Admiralty, Graham closely cooperated with Baldwin Walker who was the main adviser and actual commander of the Ottoman navy from 1838 to 1845 and became the surveyor of the navy in 1848. Walker was responsible for the design of the British military ships. Combining his field experience and technical prowess, Walker advanced the complete switch of the British navy from sailing ships to steamers and building them with the iron hulls. Graham was also advised by Charles Napier, an admiral of aberrant behaviour who propelled such innovations as screw propulsion, long-range rifled artillery, and shell munition. He was one of a few British naval commanders who had experience with large-scale naval warfare and amphibious operations in the period following the Napoleonic Wars. Napier commanded a naval squadron and amphibious task force in the Second Syrian War. He executed some successful combats, bombardments, and landings, destroying the Egyptian troops in Palestine and Lebanon and forcing Muhammad Ali to give up his ambitions.

Walker and Napier found the best application of the new technical tools of war not in sea combat, which was the British navy's obsession, but amphibious and joint operations. Being the commander of the Channel Fleet in the late 1840s, Napier focused on training it for the bombardment of the coastal targets, landing of the marines, and transportation of the large volume of troops and equipment. Walker and Napier paid attention to development of the tactical doctrine for the new capabilities, especially the long-range artillery. It compensated for the relative vulnerability of the wooden sailing ships before the coastal stone fortification. Recently impregnable bastions of Cherbourg, Sebastopol, and Kronstadt looked like a prey of the new weapon and tactic of the navy.

The French were a half-step ahead of the British in introducing the large steamers with the artillery firepower equal to the sailing battleships. However, they were a step behind in foreseeing their employment. They did not grasp that it was not naval warfare but the amphibious and joint operations. Advanced operational thinking embracing the technical and tactical innovations determined the British lead in the alliance with France in the Crimean War. It also shaped An-



Fig. 13. James Graham and Sidney Herbert converted the plan of a raid on Sebastopol into the British operational strategy in the Black Sea theatre. An engraving after John Doyle, 1863, and an albumen print by André Disdéri, the 1860s, respectively. Public domain, Wikicommons.

glo-French operations against Russia in an amphibious way instead of the initial French strategy focused on a “decisive” battle inland.

Keeping the technical innovations and their tactical use in mind, Graham, Walker, and Napier processed Stratford’ and Slade’s Sebastopol plan into the operational strategy. Graham realised that Sebastopol was sufficiently strong to withstand the naval bombardment, and the large amphibious operation was in need of destroy it. Nevertheless, he believed that by combining the new destructive tools of the fleet and the capabilities of landing troops, it was possible to deal with Sebastopol by a short raid without a prolonged siege.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ LAMBERT, *The Crimean War*, 113–14

He was also aware of the broader issues of the confrontation with Russia. Graham understood the central position of the Crimea and the unity of the operational sectors in the Black Sea strategic theatre, embracing the Lower Danube, the Balkans, the Black Sea Straits, the Azov Sea, northern Asia Minor, the Caucasian coast, and the Transcaucasia. He thought to establish superiority over Black Sea strategic theatre by means of naval domination, amphibious assaults, and joint operations by the army and navy.

Graham believed that the taking of Sebastopol turned the whole Russian position over the Black Sea strategic theatre to collapse. He considered terminating Sebastopol in the spring-summer of 1854 and then transferring the strategic focus to the Baltic, where the nerve centre of Russia in Saint Petersburg would be put under attack to finalise the conflict.⁴⁷

While the technically advanced navy was an agent of Graham's plan in the seas and littorals, the equally effective army was needed for the amphibious and joint operations. Graham was lucky that his ideas were shared by Sydney Herbert, the secretary at war since 1845. Like Graham, Herbert was attentive to technologies and people who invented and introduced them. He cooperated with the inspector-general of fortifications, John Fox Burgoyne; the master-general of the ordnance, FitzRoy Somerset, Baron Raglan; and Henry Hardinge, the commander-in-chief of the British army since 1852. They were trainees and protégés of the great Duke of Wellington. Hardinge led the British forces in the Anglo-Sikh War in India from 1845 to 1846. Raglan fought under Wellington in the battle of Waterloo, where his arm was amputated. Burgoyne was an engineer under Wellington in the Peninsular War in Portugal. They were the first-class experts pushing for the introduction in the land forces of the latest technical innovations, such as rifles with conical bullets, rifled artillery, and shell munitions.

Herbert founded a training camp where the employment of the new weapons was explored. He was also responsible for military recruiting, education, and appointments, and exercised control over the military finances, focusing them on the military reforms and technical innovations.⁴⁸ In fact, Herbert was building up the army, different from the legacy of the Napoleonic Wars that he inherited.

However, for strategy-making, Herbert was especially interesting not only for

47 LAMBERT, *The Crimean War*, 96, 98–99, 140

48 STANMORE, *Sidney Herbert*, I, 176–77, 225

his smart management of the war office but also for his origin and relatives. Through his mother, Yekaterina (Catherine) Vorontsova, he was a nephew of Mikhail Vorontsov, a top military commander, administrator, and adviser to Nicholas II, presented above. He was also a grandson of Yekaterina Senyavina, belonging to one of the prime clans of the Russian navy. Herbert was never shy about and, vice versa, stressed his Russian connections that provided him a better understanding of the Russian external and internal situation than most of the British politicians had.⁴⁹ Probably, it was Herbert who assessed the far-reaching consequences of the Russian industrial weakness in producing the military equipment. It seemed that, belonging by his birth to the Russian elite, he collected, analysed, and shared with Graham the same information as his Russian uncle Vorontsov discussed and shared with Nicholas I.

Russia had vast military potential consisting of the large land army and decent navy. The army consisted of the peasant serfs recruited for twenty-five-year service. It was professional and well-trained with an efficient structure of endurance and strong morale and good military education of officers. Lack of the trained reserve for a long-term, large-scale, and intensive conflict was its principal shortcoming. In case the manpower was spent, it might have been rebuilt only with raw conscripts.

The Russian army and navy stockpiled massive reserves of the weapons, equipment, and munitions to sustain a long, large-scale war. However, they were manufactured in the first half of the 19th century and belonged to technologies of the pre-industrial epoch. By the beginning of the 1850s, they were going to turn outdated in a few years. They must have been either used or become waste. It was the Russian strategic logic behind the sharp turn to war in the early 1850s from the previous slow steam-cooking of the Ottoman imperial bulb provoking its “natural” fission. Switching to war of the international hegemon losing ground to the aggressive rising powers is a well-known phenomenon.⁵⁰ One of its triggers is the hegemon’s urge to use its outdated military potential before the technological revolution ruins it. In the early 1850s Russia had well-grounded reasons to attack the Ottoman Empire as soon as possible.

Graham and Herbert displayed the military-industrial situation in the early

49 STANMORE, *Sidney Herbert*, II 19, 35

50 WEISIGER, *Logics of War*, 19

1850s as a window of technological vulnerability of Russia that might be used. They proposed an astute analysis of the comparative military capabilities in dynamics. The Russian industrial facilities were unable to manufacture sufficient quantities of weapons and munitions to meet the demand of the army in large-scale war. It meant that the Russians would have to supply from their outdated stock. At the same time, the industrial facilities of Britain and France outpaced the Russian ones and were able to supply the fighting army, changing the spent materials for advanced kinds.⁵¹ With the outburst of the intensive fighting, the technological gap between the Russian and allied militaries tended to widen to a situation where the Russians were comparatively dysfunctional. In the military-industrial situation of the early 1850s, the Russian prospects to fight large-scale and intensive warfare in its technologically advanced zones were negative.

On realising it, Britain turned to war. Graham and Herbert sponsored visits of the key British army and navy experts to France in January and February of 1854 to convince the French to seize the moment. The same military-industrial logic of the sides of the Crimean War determined its timing. Both sides had plenty of knowledge of each other and came to similar conclusions about the character of the oncoming fighting. It shaped the operational strategy of the sides, including their focus of efforts, choice of targets, and scale of operations. It dictated to the Western allies to focus on naval and amphibious warfare and joint operations with their pronounced technical superiority and intensive turnover of the military equipment.

In his speeches to the Parliament, Herbert depicted the operational strategy exercised by the British navy and army in the Black Sea theatre as the circles narrowing on the Russian seaside periphery and grinding it. Herbert knew the British operational strategy by heart as only its co-author could know. He advocated occupying “Constantinople” before the Russians did it at the end of 1853⁵² since it was at once a point of destruction of the Ottoman Empire by a Russian forceful action, *coup de main*, and a point from which the abrasive circular operations against Russia might have been launched.

Graham and Herbert integrated the best naval and army expertise by communicating with Napier, Walker, Hardinge, Raglan, and Burgoyne. They collected

51 БЕСТУЖЕВ, *Крымская война*, 12, 36–37, 39, 160

52 STANMORE, *Sidney Herbert*, I, 221, 235–43

the information from Slade, James Dundas, and the sources in Russia. Graham and Herbert dominated the political superiors like Aberdeen because nobody had more abundant and detailed information, and nobody proposed such a complex vision as they did. Graham and Herbert laid out the ready solutions, pushing their cabinet colleagues to premeditated decisions. They processed the operational strategy to the minor details, like the timeline of the expedition to Sebastopol, the location of the landing in the Crimea, and the route of the march. The cabinet rubber-stamped it.⁵³

Graham and Herbert's example demonstrated how important for strategy is the procedure of its making. Their lead had its positive results. But it had the negative side effects as well, and the gap between the military technique and political vision was the most apparent of them. The successful execution of the Sebastopol plan would bring to the allies the dominance on the Black Sea and in its littoral. But it would not bring the victory in the strategic theatre as a whole because the Russians were executing their Transcaucasian and Anatolian operation outside of the Black Sea littoral. The victory in the war was totally out of the Sebastopol plan's effect.

The imagined smoothness of the Sebastopol plan created an illusion of fast victory without the aching crisis for years ahead. Aberdeen's cabinet rushed to war, although the Sebastopol plan was only a central point of the operational strategy and did not answer the question of the strategy of war. The Sebastopol plan dominated the British and French thinking in the critical winter months following the "Sinope massacre."

Graham designed the aggressive strategy on the Baltic and promoted his favourite admiral, Napier, to command the Baltic task fleet. Napier planned to attack the Russian squadron and fortifications in Reval (now Tallinn, Estonia) in the early spring when the British steamers could navigate the rough Baltic and the Russian sailing ships could not. At the same time, it was a moment when the Black Sea turned navigable for the sailing battleships of the British Mediterranean fleet to bring the allies' firepower at Sebastopol. This climatic timeline provoked the ultimatum that the allies dispatched in February 1854. It arrived in Saint Petersburg in early March of 1854.

53 LAMBERT, *The Crimean War*, 119, 122

Menshikov and “first Sebastopol.”

In March 1854, Britain and France concluded the military alliance with the Ottoman Empire and declared war on Russia. In July 1854, France and Austria made up the “four points” plan to resolve the Black Sea crisis in “all-European” interests by pressing Russia. Britain and Prussia agreed on it. The European Concert, co-authored by Russia, worked without Russia and against it. The war was not fought yet, and the demands of “united Europe” were relatively soft.

The points replaced the Russian guarantees to the Danube principalities with the European guarantees, rearranged the Danube as a free river for international navigation, lifted the ban for passage of the international military fleets through the Black Sea Straits, and changed the Russian protection over the Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire with the European protection. None of the points was fundamentally unacceptable for Russia. However, the war was not fought yet, and Russia could not accept the “four points” plan, being neither intimidated nor defeated.

Austria demanded that Russia withdraw from the Danube principalities and moved to occupy them for the period of the war. Russia retreated. Austria occupied Moldavia and Wallachia not for robbing their poverty. It strove to become a third force dividing the belligerents and thus blocking equally the Russian thrust into the Ottoman heartland through the Balkans and the allied thrust into the Ukraine through Bessarabia. Austria made itself indispensable for both sides of the war. Nicholas I apprehended and exploited this unexpectedly favourable Austrian damper, removing his forces to New Russia and Crimea.⁵⁴ The allies realised it only in 1856 when Austria obstructed their plan to campaign in Bessarabia and the Ukraine. It was the strategic factor explaining Austria’s heavy influence on the outcome of the war that Austria did not wage.

The allies did not secure the Austrian participation in the joint expeditionary forces, not to mention all-out war against Russia in Bessarabia or Poland. Austrian neutrality was hostile to Russia; however, it was balanced by the “sovereign,” meaning selfish, neutrality of Prussia. It was asserted by Otto von Bismarck, a rising nationalistic and pro-capitalist figure who co-presided over the Diet of the German Confederation together with an Austrian envoy. In June 1854 Bismarck

⁵⁴ ТАРИЕ, *Крымская война*, IX, 292

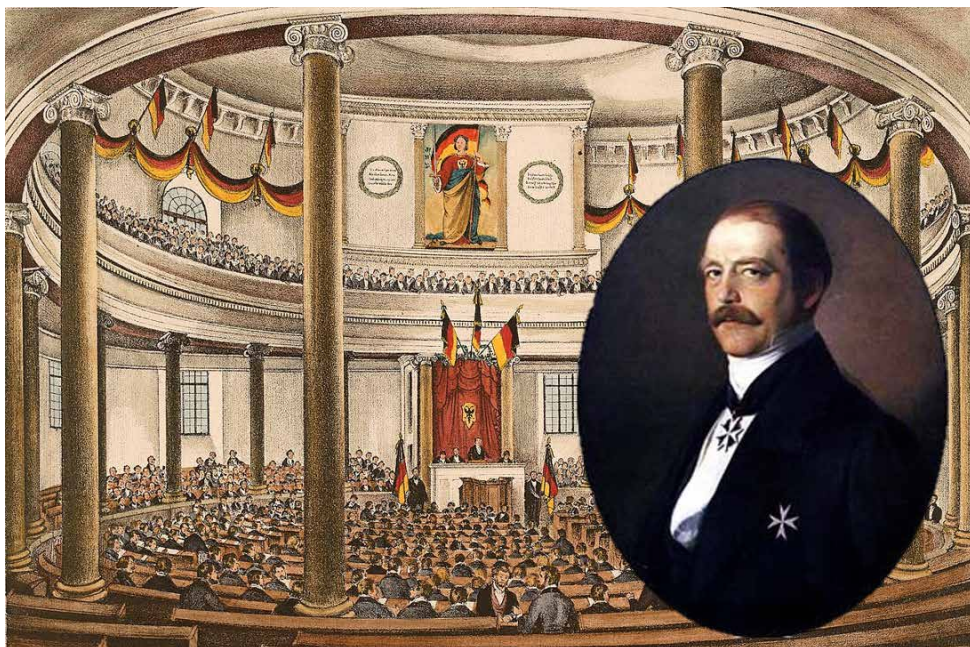


Fig. 14. Bismarck at the Frankfurt Diet

gained a joint declaration of the German Confederation to stay neutral irrelevantly to the Russian position on the English, French, and Austrian ultimatums.⁵⁵ The Prussian strategists believed that their passive support of Russia would pay back when the imminent clash with Austria and France over superiority in Germany would come.⁵⁶

In fact, Prussia paralysed the Austrian belligerence. Austria could not go to war with Russia without deadly risk to its position in Germany. Britain and France were deprived of the fighting support of the two largest land powers in Europe that might have challenged the Russian land war preponderance. It was a setback that had a strong influence on the strategies, course, and outcome of the Crimean War. Nothing remained to the allies besides naval and amphibious warfare.

Raglan was appointed to command the British expeditionary troops. He was the best choice for the kind of warfare that was expected in the Black Sea littoral, combining brave expectations from the technical and tactical innovations

⁵⁵ ТАРЛЕ, *Крымская война*, VIII, 443–44, IX, 272

⁵⁶ КОЧ, *A History of Prussia*, Ch. 11

and much obscurity of their real effect. His French colleague, Armand-Jacques de Saint-Arnaud (shortened to St Arnaud), rose in the conquest of Algeria and did not have an experience of the large-scale war against an equally capable enemy. Nevertheless, initiative in the allied forces went to him, as Raglan was an armament expert lacking experience in commanding the forces in a vast operational theatre.

The first allied action on the Black Sea littoral was not an amphibious assault on the enemy's shore. It was a joint operation of the fleet and army with disembarkation in the friendly port of Ottoman Varna. The allies arrived in Varna, targeting to relieve Silistra in June 1854, amassing 50,000 of the French and 20,000 of the British troopers.⁵⁷ Paskevich, who commanded the Russian army, did not siege Silistra but imitated the siege. He prudently withdrew. The laborious allied landing lost its purpose. Cholera and malaria devastated the allied ranks, especially the French despite their Algerian training, and they needed to run elsewhere urgently from a putrid port town heaped with the dead and dying soldiers. In August, Varna burnt down, and the allied powder magazines were just narrowly saved. St Arnaud, normally insensitive to losses and deprivation, saw the Lord's hand in this misery.⁵⁸

Nothing remained for the allies besides complying with the Sebastopol plan asap. The bombardment of Odessa by the English squadron in April 1854 was a limited action of naval warfare. It did not mean that the allies were probing alternative Russian chokepoints, searching for a softer target for amphibious assault instead of Sebastopol. The naval raiding over the Caucasus coast was an imitation of war. The Russians evacuated the smaller forts, and the allies did not dare attack the four largest that they kept. Nothing could be done to harm Russia on the Caucasian coast despite contacting the local bandits. Sebastopol remained a fixed, non-alternative target.

High risk is one of the features of amphibious warfare, and nothing could be done to avoid it. Many of the factors that influence the amphibious operations, such as weather, coordination of the fleet and army, performance of the equipment, morale of the troops, and conduct of the enemy, might interact in an unpredictable manner.⁵⁹ The risk might be reduced by the detailed preparations,

57 Киняпина, *Восточный вопрос*, 139

58 ТАРЛЕ, *Крымская война*, IX, 25–27

59 TRIM and FISSEL, "Conclusion," 434–35

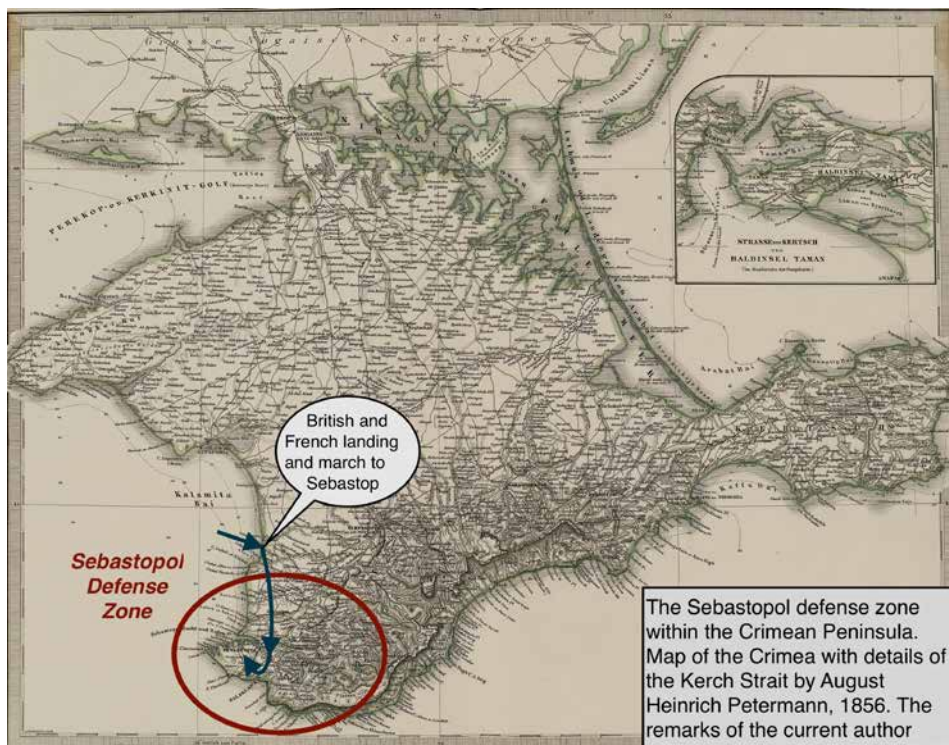


Fig. 15. The Sebastopol defence zone within the Crimean Peninsula.

and British and French operational leaders did their best to accomplish them. Reglan considered the Sebastopol plan to be extremely risky.⁶⁰ James Dundas felt an operational trap.⁶¹

An allied attack on Sebastopol was not a strategic surprise to the Russians. It was foreseen in the treaty between Russia and the Ottomans concluded in Hünkâr İskelesi in 1833. It was not an operational surprise in September 1854, although the Russians foresaw it to be more probable in the spring campaign of 1855. It also did not become a tactical surprise due to the British and French reconnaissance for the landing beaches and their long drifting about the seashore at the mouth of the Western Bulganak that was chosen. The Russians did not deploy ships or troops to harass the landing. They had two times fewer soldiers than the allies, and the allied march to Sebastopol suited the Russian operational

⁶⁰ LAMBERT, *The Crimean War*, 140

⁶¹ ТАПЛЕ, *Крымская война*, IX 30,32

stratagem as nothing else. According to Paskevich' and Vorontsov's doctrine, the Russian forces kept well afar from the sea littoral where the allies could deploy their technical superiority. Alluring the allies into the location where it would be wasted without a strategic prospect was the Russian purpose. Sebastopol was this kind of location.

Raglan's operational order and tactical moves were totally subordinated to Graham' and Herbert's operational strategy of amphibious and joint operations. After sweeping aside the Russians at the river Alma on 8 September 1854, the allies marched to Sebastopol while Menshikov withdrew the bulk of the army from Sebastopol. Menshikov skilfully played the battle of the Alma against a twice-superior enemy, about 35,000 men against 57,000 men covered by the naval long-range barrage, while he had only light field guns. He targeted to divert the allied advance from the inland Crimea to Sebastopol. On gaining it, he marched out of the town. The Russian withdrawal route from Sebastopol crossed the British route of advance to Sebastopol at the village of Inkerman, west of the harbour. St Arnaud and Raglan had an opportunity to flank the Russian march while Menshikov could block theirs. However, both sides abstained from clashing. They let each other go intact. St Arnaud and Raglan marched south to Balaklava, and Menshikov marched north to Belbek. The enemies turned about for one hundred and eighty degrees as if in a well-drilled exercise.

Historians treat their mutual compliance as a tactical blunder of the allied commanders and Menshikov's lucky flight. It is a misinterpretation and underestimation of the decisive event in the allied and Russian operations at Sebastopol. Each of the commanders followed their operational doctrine. Engaging in the battle north of the Sebastopol harbour could have deprived the allied army of the seaborne support of their fleet. The Russian fortifications on the high, steep hills of the northern side of Sebastopol were unreachable for the allied naval artillery. The hills shielded the depth inland from its fire. Success of amphibious warfare and joint operations depends on a close tactical and logistical link of the troops to the fleet.⁶² Unlike the northern side, the town of Sebastopol and its arsenal south of the harbour corresponded to this requirement.

St Arnaud and Raglan abstained from attacking the northern side or engaging Menshikov and marched, bypassing the Russian fortifications and troops, to the

62 SHIROGOROV, "A True Beast of Land and Water," 284–85

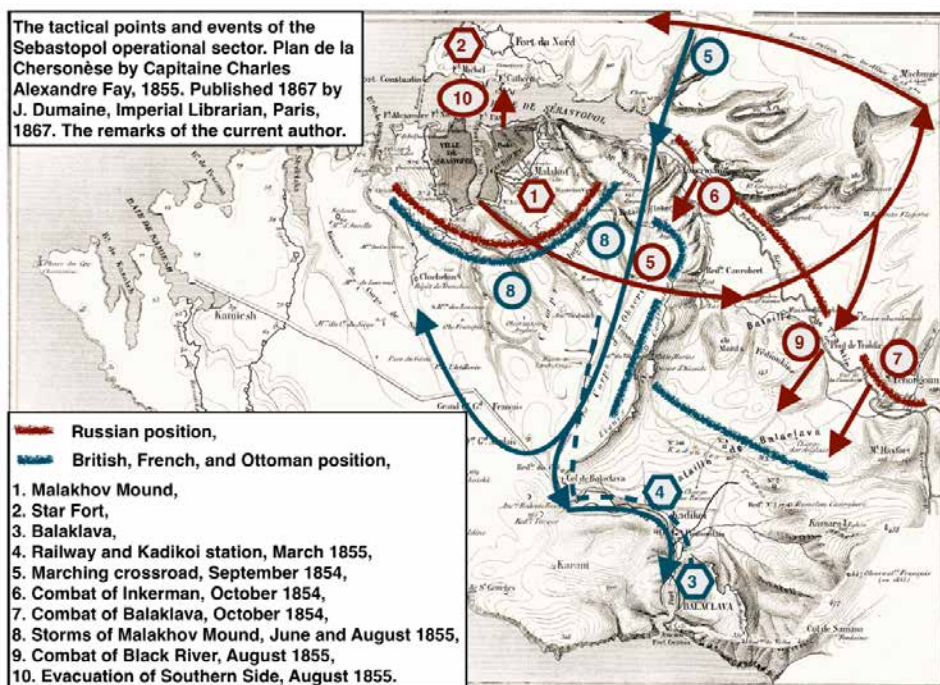


Fig. 16. The tactical points and events of the Sebastopol operational sector.

southern side. As soon as the allied army passed, Menshikov consolidated the position linking the Crimean interior with the northern side fortifications. He remained the master of the inland Crimea, occupying the mountain slopes dividing it from the Heracles Peninsula, which is a triangle between the Sebastopol harbour, the port of Balaklava, and the Black Sea, where the allies were stationed. In a few days St Arnaud was killed by either cholera or ruthless afterthought about his misjudgment that guided the allied army into an operational *cul-de-sac*. Raglan lived another half-year to face it.

Menshikov withdrew the bulk of the Russian army deep inland from being exposed to the British and French modernised naval firepower. On departing from Sebastopol, Menshikov executed two crucial decisions. First, he ordered to sink the Russian sailing ships across the entrance of the harbour. They blocked an access into it for the allied fleet. It is the motive that historians stress, but it was not his main one. The main Menshikov's consideration was to transfer the ships' artillery, crews, and commanders to the land positions. It was the sole available solution to counter the allied firepower with the matching Russian guns and ex-



Fig. 17. The transfer of the naval guns and personnel to the Russian Sebastopol bastions turned around the local firepower ratio in favour of defence. A photo by Ivan Dyagovchenko of I. M. Prianishnikov's painting "Admiral Nakhimov at Sevastopol Fortress", 1875. The public domain, Wikicommons.

pertise that the fleet had and the land troops had not. Menshikov appointed the fleet leader, Nakhimov, to command the defence. He managed to overcome the Russian naval particularism and use the available resources of the fleet in the most efficient way.

Second, Menshikov ordered a military engineer, Eduard Totleben, to construct the new outer belt of the Sebastopol defences on the surrounding heights with its central point on the Malakhov Mound. The new position was located out of the range of the allied naval artillery. It was too elevated over the allied logistical port in Balaklava for the allies to lift the heavy guns by their available means of transportation. The allies were not able to bring onsite heavy artillery to match the Russian firepower and turned overgunned. The Russian steamers in the harbour provided fire support for the Russian troops. Menshikov turned amphibious warfare against the allies. His decisions were smart and effective. They provided to the Russian troops in the Sebastopol fortifications a local firepower superiority

over the allied troops despite the opposite ratio in general.

The infantry fighting at Sebastopol demonstrated another side of Menshikov's superior tactical thinking. He managed to design the battlefield in a way to employ the strongest features of the Russian infantry, its technique of the disciplined and trained bayonet columns. The fighting gravitated to a few tactical points where the Russian bayonet columns wiped out the allied infantry, trained for skirmishing and assembled by the allied commanders into the cumbersome crowds. Any advance required of the allies to deploy the large numerical edge and suffer drastic casualties. The Russian artillery redoubts and steamers in the harbour responded fiercely to the allied bombardment on 5 October 1854, wrecking the allied ships and breaking the land batteries.

The Russian position at Sebastopol must be assessed not as the southern side's defences but as a complex including the northern side. The Russians kept it firmly, providing logistics for the troops defending the southern side. In fact, the allies attacked not Sebastopol fortress but only its urban settlement and arsenal on the southern side, while its main firepower on the northern side, centred in the Star Fort, remained unbroken. The Star Fort was a mighty artillery bastion of characteristic octagonal shape that had firepower control over the entrance to the harbour. Its uphill location prevented the allied fleets from bombarding it since they were unable to sufficiently elevate the barrels of their onboard guns, while their mortar boats, if approaching, fell under its devastating fire. Landing and storming the Star Fort was suicidal. The Star Fort effectively protected the sea flank of the Russian position from the allied naval and amphibious attempts.

At the same time, the southern side of Sebastopol was transformed into an outpost position of the Russian army deployed along the thirty-kilometre front on the mountain slopes from the Mekenzi Heights and Inkerman along the Chyornaya (Black) River and to Balaklava. The Russian frontline cut off the Heracles Peninsula completely. A few passes from it to the inland Crimea were fortified and garrisoned, and the mountain trails were patrolled. When the allied commanders realised the Russian deployment, it became a grievous revelation.⁶³

The Siege of Sebastopol became the general engagement that the allies urged but of a kind that they did not predict. It became clear on 13 October at Balaklava

63 LAMBERT, *The Crimean War*, 162–64; ТАПЛЕ, *Крымская война*, IX, 150–51, 289

and 24 October 1854 at Inkerman. Obstructing the allied deployment against Sebastopol, Menshikov launched a series of attacks on the flanks of the allied outer siege line. He won the first combat and lost the second one. They were fought as joint fleet and army combat in the broken landscape of the littoral. The Russians manoeuvred fast with their bayonet columns and field guns, throwing away any allied dense formation they met. The scattered allied infantry decimated the Russian bayonet columns by distant rifle fire. In the combat at Balaklava, the long-range barrage of the British artillery steamers saved the allies from collapse, and the similar barrage of the Russian steamers saved the Russians in the combat at Inkerman.

Menshikov did not finish the allies at Balaklava and lost the favourable moment for a decisive attack at Inkerman. He was criticised fiercely. Historiography emphasises the allied prowess in the combats, depicting them as “battles.” However, their operational dimension was much more significant than the tactical one. The combats at Balaklava and Inkerman were launched on the Russian initiative and were tactical episodes of the operational battle of Sebastopol. In sum of them, Menshikov prevented the allies from launching the general storm of the city, derailed their logistics, and dragged the siege into the “dead” winter season.

He shaped the operational theatre faster and stronger than the allied generals. Menshikov jammed the allies in their tiny foothold. The southern side of Sebastopol might have been lost, but the Crimea was secured by his position on the northern side and mountain slopes running from the harbour to the south. In fact, Menshikov gets the upper hand in the operational confrontation in the Crimea in the fall of 1854. Losing in some tactical events and gaining in others, he immobilised the allied forces, disabled their technical and numerical edge, and imposed on them the worst kind of fighting, which was storming the fortified positions with the heavy artillery by bare infantry and field guns without the naval firepower support.

This result is a good ground to abandon the traditional negative evaluation of Menshikov’s generalship in historiography that follows the British, French, and Russian rhetoric of the Crimean War period. Menshikov turned out a better operational leader than Raglan and St Arnaud, prized in Britain and France, and a sharper tactical leader than Nakhimov, idolised in Russia. Menshikov designed the Crimean operational theatre and Sebastopol battlefield to gain the fighting advantage, imposed his will and vision on the enemy, and paralysed its forces.



Fig. 18. Leroy de Saint-Arnaud (left) and Prince Aleksander Menshikov (right). Photos by Pierson and an unknown artist, respectively, the 1850s.
The public domain, Wikicommons.

Dragging of the siege into the dead winter season of 1854 to 1855 stressed the amphibious nature of the Sebastopol operation. The logistics of the allied siege camp were totally seaborne; the naval artillery sheltered it, and the allies could not imagine advancing into the Crimean mainland. Continuing the siege required the allies to drop all other offensive projects in southern Russia because wintering of the army at Sebastopol claimed all their logistical resources and manpower. The winter of 1854 to 1855 was rarely severe for the southern Crimean sub-tropical climate with frost, snow, and hurricane-force northern winds. While the British managed to supply their troops abundantly with tents, wood, food, and winter clothing, the French soldiers ransacked the “fields of glory” to pull off the winter boots from the Russian corpse.⁶⁴ Frost and cholera killed hundreds of

⁶⁴ ТАРАЛЕ, *Крымская война*, IX, 22

men daily without mercy to generals and nobles. The allied siege camp turned into a bivouac on top of a hecatomb. Other graveyards grew fast at their Istanbul hospitals and camps.

Overstressing Sebastopol as the decisive point of war, Aberdeen's cabinet hustled with the strategic planning to proceed following its destruction. Graham and Herbert were sure that the combined assault on Sebastopol brought it to an end in September 1854. What must have been done to convert the destruction of Sebastopol into the victory in the war? The cabinet's ideas focused on spreading globally the Sebastopol operational pattern that has not succeeded yet. Attacking Odessa and Nikolayev (Mykolaiv) up the Southern Bug, Kherson up the Dnieper, the total conquest of the Crimean Peninsula, breaking onto the Azov Sea, and taking Azov and Rostov up the Don were assumed.⁶⁵ When Sebastopol withstood the assault, this grandiose operational strategy crumbled.

The allies were unable to exploit their naval domination on the Baltic Sea with the forces they had there. The blockade of the Russian shipping turned inefficient due to the Prussian obstruction of it. Prussia fortified its ports and strengthened its navy, insisting on its right of free navigation and commerce as a neutral. It launched the caravans of transports supplying Russia with advanced weapons and technologies and bringing back forbidden goods of the Russian export, distributing them over Europe.

The allies managed to overrun a local fort of Bomarsund in the Aland Islands in August 1854. However, its operational importance was negligible. The Russians turned to the Caucasian receipt, evacuating small garrisons on the coast, like on the Hanko Peninsula, depriving the allies of their targets. The larger forts were held and strengthened, scaring away the attempts on them, like Abo in Finland. The principal targets like Sveaborg, Kronstadt, and Reval looked unthinkable. The allies did not drag Sweden into the war against Russia and did not ignite the separatist revolt in Finland. They were surprised that the Finnish, Estonian, and Latvian militia on the Russian coast fought them off with enthusiasm. The British marines turned to terrorising the local villages. The Baltic operation was a total failure.

The allied assault on the Russian Pacific outpost Petropavlovsk on the Kam-

65 LAMBERT, *The Crimean War*, 166

chatka Peninsula in August 1854 resulted in sound defeat. The combat was comparatively minor, with about a thousand men, a few ships, and some dozens of guns on each of the sides, but it manifested the accent of the war. It was a remarkable amphibious affair fought under the barrage of naval gunfire by the small agile parties in the broken landscapes of the littoral. There were no well-shaped positions, linear clashes, bayonet columns, cavalry charges, Napoleonic postures, and other things that the old school military liked. The combat was scattered and brisk. It required the initiative of lower officers and a soldier's individual skill. The losses amounted to a third of the forces. A new army must have been built up and trained to wage this kind of war. What kind of an army?

The rapture gaped between achievable objectives of the amphibious and joint operations and strategic purposes of war. The general engagement that the allies strove to impose on the Russians surprisingly occurred at Sebastopol. It turned out to be not a well-known tactical event but an unsought operational battle. It was a sum of multiple combats, trench standstills, bombardments, and seaborne actions with technological and logistical accents. Neither the generals on-site nor the home-based strategists apprehended it, not to mention the press and public. Might it have been won? What is a victory in the operational battle? Might the victory have been converted into winning the war? The situation required not only an analytical but also a visionary solution.

The allies' lack of land warfare superiority over the Russians was emphasised by their reluctance and inability to save the Ottoman campaign in the Transcaucasia that unfolded from bad to worse in 1854. In June 1854, Andronikov destroyed a 30,000-strong Ottoman corps at the river Cholok in Georgia. In July 1854, Bebutov destroyed the 60,000-strong main Ottoman army under Zarif Mustafa Pasha and his British adviser Comte Richard de Guyon, under the title Kurshid Pasha, at Kürekdere in Armenia. Guyon was accompanied by the British newspaper correspondents and adventurers who presented a picturesque description of the disaster to the British public. A part of the Ottoman army consisted of the Armenian recruits who fled, avoiding fighting against the Russians led by an Armenian general, while the numerous Armenians in the Russian army were valiant and disciplined.

The Russians approached the fortress of Kars that dominated the passes into northeastern Anatolia. While the Austrian damper in Wallachia and Moldavia

prevented the Ottoman Empire from being destroyed in the west, through the Balkans, the Russians marched to destroy it in the east, through the Transcaucasia. Nothing could be done with it considering the current strategic situation.

Being deprived of a prospect for crushing the Russian army keeping inland out of reach of the allied technical superiority in the littoral, the allies had to give up the idea of winning the war by the military means. Could this war be won? The old questions returned. By what means?

Palmerston and "second Sebastopol."

From January to February of 1855, Aberdeen's cabinet crashed into the gap between the amphibious operational strategy and political objectives of war. The results of the British operations in the Black Sea region and on the Baltic in 1854 were far below the public's expectations, while their cost, losses, misery of the army and navy, and fall of the British international and military prestige were bigger than the public might have tolerated. *The Times* and other press discharged severe criticism of Aberdeen's handling of the war. In late January of 1855, the 1,500-strong crowd pelted with snowballs the pedestrians, cabs, and police at St Martin-in-the-Fields on Trafalgar Square, demanding a detailed account of the Balaklava losses.⁶⁶ It was the first battle of the Crimean War won by Palmerston. At the following parliamentary discussion, the cabinet collapsed. He became the new prime minister.

Palmerston was not only the home secretary in Aberdeen's government but also its alternative lodestone. He presided over a body of influence, the Committee on National Defence, that he formed in 1853, allegedly preparing to defend the homeland from a French invasion. It comprised Graham, Herbert, Hardinge, Raglan, and Burgoyne.⁶⁷ Stratford, the British ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, had been Palmerston's client since his time as the foreign secretary. Palmerston patronaged Czartoryski and recruited Reshid Pasha when he was the ambassador to London from 1836 to 1838. In December 1853 Palmerston provoked an outrage of the public opinion and press against Russia after its "Sinope mas-

⁶⁶ Karl Marx, "The Aims of The Negotiations.—Polemic Against Prussia.—A Snowball Riot," *Neue Oder-Zeitung*, No. 43, January 26, 1855 Published in English for the first time in *MECW*.

⁶⁷ LAMBERT, *The Crimean War*, 59

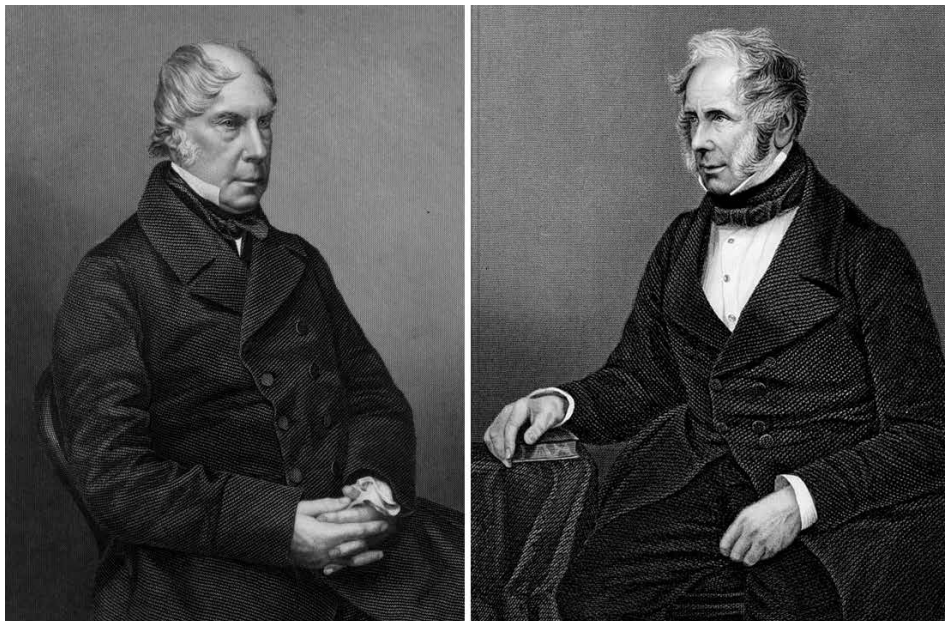


Fig. 19. The change from the Earl of Aberdeen (left) to Lord Palmerston (right) switched the British war efforts from operational to strategic commitment. A print by Daniel Pound and W. Holl, respectively, after photos by John Mayall, the 1860s. The public domain, Wikicommons.

sacre.” Queen Victoria ousted him from the cabinet, being instigated by her consort, Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg, who was called a “Russian turncoat” and was notoriously hostile to Palmerston. However, the angry crowds threatened the monarchs with overthrowal and arrest if they would not restore Palmerston.⁶⁸ The monarchs yielded. He returned with the status of the alternative prime minister.

Palmerston supported the Sebastopol plan from its first glimpse. Probably, his Committee on National Defence housed its development in an informal way. However, unlike for Graham and Herbert, the Sebastopol plan was for Palmerston only a starting point of something much bigger. Palmerston was seized with the struggle of Russia over Eurasia and boiled with Czartoryski’s ideas. He envisaged a dramatic weakening of Russia and overturning of the European international system.

In his note to the cabinet, he foresaw five territorial results: return of Finland

⁶⁸ ТАРЛЕ, *Крымская война*, VIII, 372–73

and the Åland Islands to Sweden; restoration of Poland in its “old limits,” meaning before the Partitions; return of the Danube delta to the Ottomans; destruction of Sebastopol and return of the Crimea to the Ottomans; transfer of the Russian Baltic provinces to Prussia; and secession of Georgia and Circassia, the federation of the Caucasian tribes, from the Russian Empire as independent states.⁶⁹ These goals might have been achieved only by major war with Russia. Austria, Prussia, and Sweden must have been allured or coerced to wage it together with Britain, France, and the Ottomans. The imagined coalition was a fantasy to fill the gap between the achievable results of the Sebastopol plan and the envisaged objectives of the war.

On the fall of Aberdeen’s government, Palmerston’s reputation was safe and high. Graham was removed and turned into a scapegoat for *The Times* and other press. Herbert was tolerated and moved to the colonial office aside from the criticism of the public opinion. While Graham was expendable, Herbert was indispensable because he understood as no one else how to use the cracks of Russia’s political, social, and military structure to sabotage its will, stability, and war resilience.

Palmerston was a long-serving secretary at war from 1809 to 1828. It was the period when the coalitional wars against Napoleonic France were fought and the European Concert was established. Then Britain withdrew from direct participation in the continental affairs to become a balancer for European equilibrium between the ambitions of the great powers, and revolutionary versus conservative trends. Palmerston knew firsthand all major British military figures and issues of the military, such as recruitment, organisation, armament, and supply. He understood the interaction of the military with wider society, mobilisation of resources for war, propaganda of the military efforts, and military ordering to the industry. The office of secretary at war was a chokepoint between the military buildup and operations within military strategy. Palmerston learnt them both.

From 1830 to 1841 Palmerston was the foreign secretary. He grasped the critical importance of the Ottoman Empire in the European power equation. Palmerston supported the case of Greek independence represented by Capodistrias, and he did not panic when the Russian army marched to Istanbul suburbs in 1829. However, the treaty of Hünkâr İskelesi that Russia imposed on the Ottomans in

69 LAMBERT, *The Crimean War*, 116

1833 troubled him. He believed that Russia, in fact, turned the Ottoman Empire into its dominion, preparing its dismantling. Palmerston managed to achieve the great powers' equality in the settlement of the Second Syrian War. Handling it to break the Russian dominance over the Ottoman Empire was Palmerston's diplomatic and military masterpiece. Palmerston worked to remake the sovereignty and strength of the Ottoman government and army. The massive British assistance to the Ottomans followed, consisting of weapons, military and administrative advisors, and diplomatic encouragement.⁷⁰

Palmerston was committed to the "European concert" and supported the conservative position of the Holy Alliance as it responded to the British interests. However, in his second term as the foreign secretary from 1846 to 1852, Palmerston turned around. Probably, similar to other European rulers, he was shocked by the sudden violent eruption of the new social forces in Europe in the "spring of nations" of 1848 and 1849. However, unlike most of his colleagues, he sided not with the forces of reaction but revolution. Palmerston associated himself not with the old semi-feudal aristocracy but with the new capitalist class that was the revolutions' engine.

Palmerston supported aspirations of national independence and constitutionalism in Italy, Hungary, Poland, and Germany. The interests of the capitalist classes moved him to the new vision of Russia. He considered that Russia's preponderance in the Holy Alliance after it had saved the regimes of Prussia and Austria in the "spring of nations" disbalanced the European Concert.⁷¹ Similar to Karl Marx, Palmerston looked on Russia as an epochal foe of "new Europe." Russophobia spread over Britain and Palmerston added to it an image of the "Great Game," the rivalry of Britain and Russia in the inner Eurasian belt from the Balkans to the Himalayas. Wrestling Eurasia from Russia was his goal.

The British capitalist class admired Louis-Napoleon and his *clique* that broke the "July monarchy" and established the Second Republic in France. After France had been declared the empire and Louis-Napoleon turned into Emperor Napoleon III, the British delegation headed by the Lord Mayor of London submitted to him an address of unconditional support signed by four thousand leading British businessmen, industrialists, bankers, and merchants. Palmerston prized Napoleon III

70 BAILEY, *British Policy and the Turkish Reform Movement*, 133–34, 145–56

71 RICH, *Why the Crimean War?* 9

for his *coup d'état* personally. It appeared too much for the conservative majority of the cabinet and Queen Victoria. Palmerston was forced to resign despite his grand popularity at the Parliament and with the public.⁷²

In 1852 Palmerston returned to the government as the home secretary and became immediately involved with the expanding industry and its fermenting social classes, the capitalists and proletariat. He authored some legislation to settle their antagonism and at the same time get familiar with the new industrial technologies. His experiences converged. Palmerston was ready to make the foreign strategy in the interests of the British industry represented by the new capitalist class and carry it out with the new military capabilities that the industry created. Providing them, the British industrial capitalist class transformed into the social-military group of which Palmerston became an outstanding visionary and leader.

Due to his secretive nature, Palmerston made up his strategy alone and exercised it piece by piece. He was criticised by his associates and opponents for never presenting it as a whole to the Parliament, cabinet, queen, and public in a report or on a map.⁷³ Palmerston disclosed it in tiny portions, presenting only those elements that came to the actual political and military agenda and when he needed to push them through. However, his colleagues did not doubt that he had the strategy in full with its objectives, capabilities, and targets; ways and means of action; allies and enemies; etc. They are his strategy's tabs and blanks to reconstruct it like a puzzle.

Obsession with the Sebastopol plan in the summer and winter of 1854 turned a deadlock of its siege into the burning issue of the operational strategy. The siege must have been either abandoned or finished by taking the fortress. The allies worked for the latter with the determination of the industrial nations, unfolding their almost unlimited resources to mobilise, equip, supply, and deploy the troops. Their output shocked the Russians. The allied transfer of two hundred twenty thousand men was remarkable, and the French declaration to bring in a half-million was awesome. The allies delivered infantry and munition to the siege camp in large volumes, connecting it by freight steamer line to the depots at the Straits. The Russians enlarged their forces in the area much slower and marched the troops to Sebastopol only to replace the losses.

⁷² ТАРАЛЕ, *Крымская война*, VIII 137, 408

⁷³ STANMORE, *Sidney Herbert*, II, 10

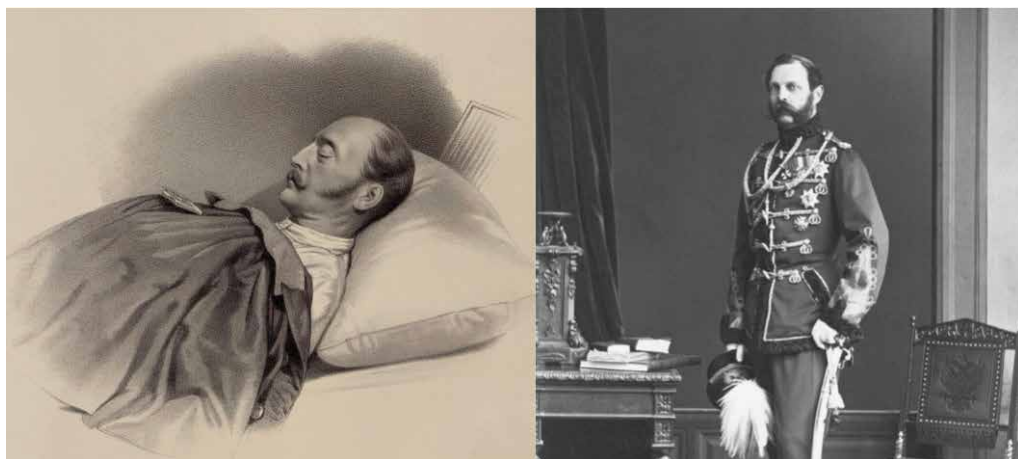


Fig. 20. The death of Nicholas I (left) and ascension of Alexander II (right) turned Russia vulnerable to exhaustion. Lithographs by Karl Piratsky, the 1850s, and Sergey Levitsky, the 1860s, respectively.

In the dead winter season, warfare at Sebastopol degraded to sporadic shelling, patrolling, and sharpshooting. The fireworks of the British fresh-invented rockets and occasional duelling of the steamers turned the scene spectacular. But the fighting was exhaustive. Menshikov continued exercising his operational plan, attacking Evpatoria on 17 February. He targeted to destroy the sole allied foothold outside of the Sebastopol pocket that the Allies could use to break into the inland Crimea. The assault failed due to the firepower support of the French naval artillery to the Ottoman troops keeping the town. The heavy storm wrecked the allied ships in February of 1855. The Russians used the opportunity for construction of the new redoubts at the Malakhov Mound under the barrage of their steamers in the harbour. Both sides learnt the war in the littoral well.

Nicholas I ordered the making of a secret wooden model of Sebastopol and its area in detail, on which he planned the actions meticulously for a soldier and gun. The commandant of the Engineers Castle in Saint Petersburg narrowly escaped execution when he let some people look at it without the emperor's authorisation. Nicholas I devoted the weeks before his death in February of 1855 to composing his strategic will. The emperor often left the capital for days and weeks alone to his countryside residence of Gatchina. He hid his illness, realising that the steadiness of the empire depended on his posture.

The will turned out detailed and clear as he liked. Nicholas I discussed it with

Paskevich and asserted the priority of southern Russia over Paskevich's priority of Poland in the defensive deployment. However, he prioritised the core of the empire, old Muscovy, over everything else. The tsar ordered to rise and train the peasant militia in the central provinces, the step to which the Russian rulers turned in the moments of desperate menace. It was the strategy to take on the "united Europe" of Britain, France, Austria, Prussia, and the German Confederation if it moves to destroy Russia.

The emperor insisted on a staunch defence of Sebastopol because until it withstood the assault, neither British and French attacks on other points of the Black Sea theatre nor Austrian and Prussian intervention were probable. In February 1855 Nicholas I changed Menshikov to Prince Mikhail Gorchakov, who was Paskevich's pupil and chief of staff for thirty years. He understood Paskevich's concept of the war like nobody else and adhered to it diligently. Gorchakov could execute its critical moves better than self-minded Menshikov. At the same time, Nicholas II stressed the Transcaucasian theatre looking to break the negative trend of the war. He called to advance aggressively in Anatolia, where the allies were unable to support the Ottomans. The emperor perished on a simple bed under an officer's overcoat, instructing his grandson to "learn making dying,"⁷⁴ remaining a strategist to the end.

In May 1855 the allies amassed in the Sebastopol area 224,000 troops, including 120,000 French, 32,000 British, 17,000 Sardinian, and 55,000 Ottoman men.⁷⁵ The Sebastopol area was not adequate to deploy all of them. The force was excessive and created on itself a pressure to widen the zone of operations. The French turned eager for the general storm of Sebastopol regardless of impending losses. Napoleon III promoted a plan to invade southern Russia with an army of a million men through Odessa and seek a "decisive" battle. He volunteered to lead the force. The French emperor also proposed multiple landings in the Crimea with the pincer advance on the Russian administrative centre, Simferopol, for complete occupation of the peninsula.⁷⁶

St Arnaud died in September 1854, and the new French commander-in-chief in the Crimea, François Canrobert, was behind the latter plan. He was twice wound-

⁷⁴ ТАРАЛЕ, *Крымская война*, IX, 316, 321

⁷⁵ LAMBERT, *The Crimean War*, 244

⁷⁶ ТАРАЛЕ, *Крымская война*, IX, 347, 349



Fig. 21. The arrival of the heavy mortars and Lancaster rifled guns in the British positions at Sebastopol returned firepower superiority to the allies. A photo by Roger Fenton and a lithograph after William Simpson, respectively, 1855. Wikicommons.

ed skirmishing with the Russians and was removed for needlessly packing his troops under Russian fire in May 1855. Aimable Pélissier, who replaced him, was a purposeful leader; he rejected any move besides smashing Sebastopol. Pélissier fiercely bombarded and outright attacked the Russian outpost fortifications, disregarding the losses to shape the position for the general storm.

At the end of May, Pélissier managed to take over the advanced redoubts on the Malakhov Mound at a cost of 6,000 men and opened a prospect to take the Malakhov Mound, expecting much bigger losses. But it was some prospect to break the deadlock anyway. The allied skirmishing and storming of the Russian positions in the spring of 1855 demonstrated that the Russians learnt the skill of the joint operations not worse than the allies. The Russian steamers in the Sebastopol harbour, while being out of the striking range of the allied fleet, scourged the attacking allied infantry by long-range artillery fire. It was impossible to launch the general storm until they operated unrestrictedly.

Raglan was fiercely against both French-authored undertakings, the storm of the Malakhov Mound and the offensive into the Crimean mainland.⁷⁷ He insisted on adhering to kinds of fighting in which the allies could deploy their superior technical capabilities. Palmerston asserted his vision forcefully. It meant abstaining from storming the Sebastopol fortifications until they were sufficiently destroyed and their defenders mauled by long-range artillery bombardment with high-explosive shell projectiles. From February to March 1855, Palmerston patronised the British volunteer industrialists who constructed the horse-driven seven-mile-long railway from Balaklava to Raglan's headquarters at the siege lines. On the steep surge from the port to the village of Kadikoi, the waggons were pulled uphill by the stationary steam engines by chains.⁷⁸

It was Raglan's first masterstroke. The extra heavy guns were shipped to Balaklava, unloaded, and transported via the railway to the allied position at Sebastopol. The delivery of the heavy mortars was especially important since they dealt with the Russian bastion's elevated position. The supply of the munition expanded, and the allies gained long-sought firepower superiority over the Russian bastion artillery and steamers in the harbour. The railway became the logistical solution of operational meaning. The allied technical superiority was at last deployed against the Russian stout resistance.

Raglan's second masterstroke promoted by Palmerston was the British return to "the combination of strategic mobility and advanced weapons that gave the allies a decisive edge over the Russians—an edge they had abandoned by laying

⁷⁷ ТАРАЛЕ, *Крымская война*, IX, 372

⁷⁸ See in detail: DAWSON, *The Railway that Helped Win the Crimean War*.

siege to Sevastopol.”⁷⁹ This edge existed in the littoral. The British increased their fleet of steamer ships and their onboard artillery faster than the French amassed their infantry at Sebastopol. Before his scapegoating by the press, Graham managed to transform the British Mediterranean fleet totally by decommissioning almost all of its ships and replacing them with the latest editions. By June 1855, the new commander of the British Mediterranean fleet, Edmund Lyons, had six steam battleships and four cruisers, as well as fourteen gunvessels and four mortar vessels suitable to navigate on the shallow Azov Sea.

Raglan called for striking the targets that influenced the Sebastopol standoff in the indirect way. Herbert’s operational strategy of the circles grinding the Russian periphery was resumed with its hub not at the Bosphorus now but at the Sebastopol siege camp. The fortress of Kerch, guarding the narrow strait between the Crimean and Taman Peninsulas, became its first objective. The British detected the principal importance for the Russian army in the Crimea of the supply via the Azov Sea from the region of the river Don. For the ongoing battle of attrition, the control over the Azov Sea looked to be decisive. Raglan and Lyons proposed breaking into the Azov Sea and destroying the Russian logistics. They managed to talk the French in. The landing at Kerch was executed in mid-May 1855 on a beach five miles off the fortress and port. It went smoothly under the barrage of the steamers’ artillery, but while the allies marched to Kerch, the Russians blasted the fort, sank the ships, and destroyed the stockpiled materials.

The British flotilla followed along the Azov coast, destroying the Russian shipping and depots; however, they were not able to achieve the key logistical facilities in the towns of Azov and Rostov up the Don. Nevertheless, they brought havoc on the logistics of the Russian army in the Crimea right on the eve of the decisive battle over Sebastopol. Raiding the Azov coastline was an exemplary pattern of the spatial operational thinking and application of the British amphibious superiority for dislocation of the land-based enemy. Following Kerch’s disaster, the Russians evacuated their last forts on the Caucasian coast, Anapa and Novorossiysk. The allies occupied them with the Ottoman troops. However, the Ottomans were unable to cross the Caucasus Ridge and harass the Russian operations in the Transcaucasia. Their occupation of the Caucasian coast led to nothing.

79 LAMBERT, *The Crimean War*, 276



Fig. 22. Lord Raglan, Omar Pasha and Aimable Pélissier (left) exchanged their memorial photos with Prince Mikhail Gorchakov (right) at Sebastopol. The photos are by Roger Fenton, 1855. Wikicommons.

In June 1855, Raglan paid back Pélissier for his Kerch compliance. They launched a failed storm of the Malakhov Mound, a central bastion of the Russian position, that cost 5,400 French and British casualties. Failure of the storm confirmed Raglan's view of the costly and dangerous prospects for confronting the Russians without properly deploying the allied technical superiority. Heaps of the allied corps in front of the Russian bastions killed Raglan in a few days. The next British commander-in-chief, James Simpson, was tactically dominated by Pélissier completely. But he remained Raglan's successor operationally. Utilising the railway, the allies amassed the heavy artillery and intensified the bombardment of the Russian positions and city, preparing the next assault.

Gorchakov understood the key operational importance of the Balaklava port and railway for the struggle over Sebastopol. The allies made increasingly more numerous and mightier shots than the Russians. They chased off the Russian steamers that ravaged their trenches from the harbour. It was a deadly trend that must have been broken; otherwise, Sebastopol was doomed. Besides, Gorchakov needed to press the allies at Sebastopol, diverting their attention from exploring other options like capturing the Perekop Isthmus and cutting off the Russian army in the Crimea from the mainland.

In August, Gorchakov received some reinforcements and attacked the right wing of the allied line across the Chyornaya, targeting the Kadikoi railway station in August. This target of Gorchakov's thrust evaded historiography that presents it as a needless and costly demonstration of Russian fighting valour. It was not. He thrust at the key point of the operational struggle, and, characteristically for the industrial epoch, it was not some military position but a railway station.

Replacing their manpower losses, the British brought in the Sardinian corps on the British payroll in May 1855. It took the position on the extreme right of the allied line facing Sebastopol and garrisoned Balaklava. The Sardinian position shielded the Kadikoi railway station. If Gorchakov had succeeded, the British scheme for firepower superiority would have been ruined. The Russians achieved some minor tactical gains, but the Sardinians resisted longer than expected, and the British troops managed to arrive and hold the Russian advance. Without the station, Gorchakov's gains were worth nothing, and he withdrew. The railway and British scheme for artillery superiority continued to work.

Soon, the allies' firepower domination became irresistible. On 26 August 1855 the allies fired 52,000 rounds and the Russians only 20,000. The earthworks on the Malakhov Mound were smashed, and the French took them on the next day, while five other allied attacks on different points were repulsed. The French kept the Malakhov Mound against the powerful Russian counterattacks. The allies suffered around 10,000 casualties. Sebastopol held on. Nevertheless, the allied storm activated Gorchakov's instructions that he received from Paskevich on his appointment and confirmed by Nicholas I. Tremendous Russian losses in Sebastopol defences, exceeding two thousand men per day, pressed Gorchakov to the decision to abandon Sebastopol, blowing the city, defences, and magazines up. He artfully marched the army over the harbour on the floating bridge to its northern side. The remaining ships of the Russian Black Sea fleet were burnt by their crews. The allies were surprised and did not mount a pursuit. The Russians withdrew unhindered and unhit.

By evacuating Sebastopol, Gorchakov deprived the allies of the concentric point where they could apply their superior artillery. The Russians returned their deployment to the initial operational concept, and the allies lost the point where they could employ theirs. Holding on to the Star Fort and the northern side of the harbour, the Russians denied the allies the use of the harbour. The allies were unable to bring their ships into the harbour to bombard the Russian position and ferry

their troops to the northern side. In fact, the triumph of Sebastopol was invented by the British and French propaganda press since the allies took over only a symbolic half of Sebastopol while its strategic half remained impregnable for them.

Although the Russian public opinion and historiography unanimously consider the retreat from the southern side of Sebastopol as being the Russian defeat and Gorchakov's failure, actually Gorchakov won the operational struggle against the allied forces by abandoning it. Despite taking the southern side, the allies were unable to defeat the Russian army without taking the northern side. The topography of the Heracles Peninsula, or Sebastopol-Balaklava area, that the allies captured, denied them from advancing into the inland Crimea. It is separated from the Crimean interior by the rocky mountain slopes, a few passes through which the Russians heavily fortified. Sebastopol's northern side, with its Star Fort, secured the sea flank of this impregnable position.

In his front-page column for *the New-York Daily Tribune* on 1 October 1855 ("Crimean Prospects"), Friedrich Engels assessed that in the same way as the Malakhov Mound was the key to Sebastopol, the northern side was the key to the Crimea.⁸⁰ It was an operational standstill following a costly tactical victory, a trap for the Allied forces and war efforts. Any hopes for the breakthrough were ruined. Giant forces and stock amassed in the Sebastopol foothold were of no avail. The allies were paralysed.

Aleksander II insisted on defending the Crimea and confirmed Gorchakov's plan to keep his position. Being impregnable, it allowed Gorchakov to keep most of his forces, inferior to the allies by their numbers and arms, as a mobile reserve to beat off the probable allied landings on the Crimean coast. The emperor travelled over southern Russia, visited Odessa and Nikolayev, and looked in the Crimea, inspiring the authorities, public, and army with his resolution. Following the failure of the conference on the peace terms of the Russian ambassador with the ambassadors of Britain, France, and Austria in Vienna in February and March 1855, Aleksander II prepared the army for the outbreak of hostilities with Austria.

The Russians recognised the Allied assaults on their chokepoints on the Black Sea and Azov Sea coast as the principal operational threat to them. They prepared to repel them in the Sebastopol manner by combining the stout defence of the

80 ENGELS, "Crimean Prospects,"

fortifications and manoeuvrable war over the surrounding areas. In general, the Russians did not consider the allied amphibious breaks a few kilometres inland to be an existential menace to their regime and military potential. They had the resources to persist.

Post-Sebastopol actions of the allies demonstrated that they were still unable to close the apparent gap between the amphibious operational strategy and objectives of war by military means. At the same time, it demonstrated Palmerston's vector of strategic thinking. The allied assault on the Kinburn Spit on 17 October 1855 confirmed the superiority of the high concentration of the naval rifled artillery over the coastal earthen fortifications supplied with some old smoothbore guns. The new tactic of bombardment was successfully employed by the consecutive use of the naval firepower elements—gunboats with the mortars, floating batteries, and battleships. It was an exemplary amphibious feat that, nevertheless, had nothing to do with the strategy of war.

The Kilburn fort was destroyed and surrendered. The Sardinians were placed to rebuild and garrison it. They barely survived the deprivation of the oncoming winter. The following allied attempt on Nikolayev, the important shipbuilding centre up the Southern Bug, failed on the minefields and under the Russian coastal gunfire at the river's mouth. The channels in the Dnieper mouth to Kherson looked impassable. Both operations required clearing the riverbanks with the large land forces, but the allies were unable to mount this kind of operation at the end of the fighting season. Maybe at the moment, they were not worth the efforts since their effect could be harassing Russia but not defeating it. Nevertheless, they looked extremely important from the strategic perspective.

The Sebastopol-fashion assaults on southern Russia's coastal chokepoints were a part of Palmerston's new vision of war against Russia that he shaped fast following the Sebastopol deadlock triumph. It was inspired by the memorandum that Czartoryski submitted to the allies in March 1854. At the start of hostilities, Czartoryski acted as a shuttle agent between Napoleon III and Palmerston.⁸¹ For Palmerston, his strategic ideas were not new. Czartoryski proposed four points for the allied attacks—the Crimea, the lower Danube and "Polish Ukraine," and the Baltic coast of Lithuania, where the allies could use the advantage of the population "which wishes to throw off the Russian yoke." The taking of Sebastopol

81 KUKIEL, *Czartoryski and European Unity*, 277–80

and the Caucasian coast were the first steps of this plan.⁸² In September of 1855, although delayed, both of them had been accomplished, and the time came to move further on.

The assaults on the south Russian chokepoints were envisaged not for conquest but for disbalancing the Russian south. The conquest of it must have come from the other side. Austria's pact of the alliance with Britain and France in December 1854 made it a toy of the "maritime powers." The Sardinian declaration of war on Russia in January 1855 turned the Austrian attack on Russia almost inevitable since now Austria contended with Sardinia over the French protection for possessing northern Italy.

The Austrian switch from hostile neutrality to actual fighting with Russia would activate the large plan of the joint Austrian and French advance into southern Russia through Bessarabia to the Ukraine, its soft underbelly, to Kiev. Austria could provide a million-strong army for it, and France could provide another million. Russia did not have resources to counterpose the thrust. Collapse of the Russian Ukraine through the Austro-French overland thrust and New Russia through the British amphibious assault would instigate the Polish insurrection, which in its turn would drag Prussia and the German Confederation into the war against Russia. Fragmentation of its imperial periphery would expose the Russian heartland of old Muscovy to the combined thrust of the "united Europe" and throw Russia on its knees.

Probably some of these threats were products of the Russian intelligence's excessive warnings, leaks from Czartoryski's entourage, and worst-case scenario planning at the imperial headquarters. Palmerston kept his vision with himself and never put it on a map or presented it to the cabinet, as Herbert, Aberdeen, and Chancellor of the Exchequer William Gladstone complained.⁸³ However, they suspected that his vision was radical and guided by a tremendous escalation of war.

Palmerston created his vision on the ground of Czartoryski's ideas while Czartoryski himself intrigued for the same plan at Napoleon III's court in Paris. However, Palmerston's strategic creature was dramatically different from Czartoryski's ancient concept. It was based not on the heroic valiance of the Polish nobility and malicious scheming against Russia over the Baltic-Black Sea *Inter-*

82 CZARTORYSKI, *Memoirs and correspondence*, 351–52

83 STANMORE, *Sidney Herbert*, I, 253, 260

marium but on the foundation of the West European industrial superiority over Russia in the military capabilities determined by the new technologies of warfare. It also counted on the organisational superiority of the West European societies and political systems that their new master, the capitalist industrial class, provided. It was the strategy of the oncoming future.

Muravyov and the Anatolian earthquake.

The events that had not lesser but maybe bigger importance than the siege of Sebastopol unfolded in the Transcaucasian theatre, isolated from the Black Sea by the Caucasus Ridge. Soon following the Russian victories in November 1854, commented on above, Nicholas I changed the commander-in-chief in the region, octogenarian Vorontsov, to Nikolay Muravyov, who commanded a corps under Paskevich before the appointment. Muravyov belonged to another generation of the Russian nobility that followed the generation of the Napoleonic Wars. One of his brothers was a leader of the constitutionalist officers revolting in December 1825 in Saint Petersburg, and another one “disciplined” Lithuania during the Polish revolt in 1863 to 1864, obtaining the nickname “hangman.”

Muravyov’s generation was nationalistic, bureaucratic, and capitalist, aligned with the pronounced European trends of the period. Muravyov was an outstanding orientalist. From 1819 to 1820 he headed the Russian embassy to Khiva, a mysterious Uzbek khanate in Central Asia. He commanded a regiment in the Russo-Persian War from 1826 to 1828 and distinguished himself in the taking of the Ottoman fortress of Kars in 1828. He also obtained the knowledge and connections to manage the Armenian anti-Ottoman insurgency. In 1832 Muravyov had a special experience negotiating with the Egyptian leader Muhammed Ali in Alexandria and commanded the Russian landing troops at Istanbul that saved the Ottomans in 1833. Muravyov understood the “onion strategy” as no one else did, and his reputation in the Transcaucasia and with the Ottomans was one of its tools. In May 1855 he advanced to Kars for his second time.

The Ottomans and their allies realised the key position of Kars to block the Russian advance into Anatolia. A fall of Kars would trigger disintegration of the Ottoman Empire into ethnic-religious fragments. Kars was refortified under British supervision, taking into account former Russian attempts on it, and the surrounding operational theatre was rearranged accordingly. A British artillery



Fig. 23. Nikolay Muravyov and William Williams. Photos by K.A. Bergner and William Notman, respectively, the 1860s. Wikicommons.

colonel, William Williams, of Canadian origin, was promoted to the Pasha rank to command the garrison, which was strengthened with a group of the British officers. Muravyov blockaded the fortress completely in July and deep-raided to Erzurum, breaking its communications with Anatolia completely. Denying the local supply to the garrison, he bought out food from the local population, paying with gold instead of the Ottoman paper money. In August 1855 Muravyov destroyed the Ottoman relief corps. The deficit of powder and ammunition and hunger in the fortress turned unbearable, and Williams hanged troubling elements just daily.

The situation of Kars was critical, and in early September the allies transferred to the Transcaucasian theatre from the Crimea to the corps under Omer Pasha. It was disembarked in Batumi on the southern Georgian coast. However, the landscape of the coast denied him access to the inland theatre. According to Czartoryski's strategy, the allies moved to distract Muravyov from Kars by pressing to Tiflis, the Russian regional centre,⁸⁴ and reshipped Omer Pasha's army to Sukhum (now Sukhumi, Abkhazia), from where it marched to Kutais (now Kutaisi, Georgia) in the Colchis Lowland. However, at the Inguri River, Omer Pasha had an engagement with the local Russian forces and Georgian militia that he claimed to be his victory. Despite the claiming, Omer Pasha returned to Abkhazia. He reported that the venture required more troops than the 25,000 men at his disposal.

⁸⁴ CZARTORYSKI, *Memoirs and correspondence*, 352

Omer Pasha roamed on the Georgian coast under cover of the British and French naval artillery. He captured Zugdid (now Zugdidi, Georgia) and was reinforced to 50,000 men. However, he demanded the French and British infantry and artillery counter the Russian superiority in discipline and tactics. The route to Tiflis was blocked by Bebutov with his awesome reputation. Omer Pasha did not dare to move out of the firepower and logistical cover of the allied fleet. He fell in the same operational trap as the British and French troops did at Sebastopol. He was locked in the littoral. No exit from it existed. The Russian operational strategy worked perfectly. Kars was doomed.

Muravyov assessed these details properly. He also understood that the fall of the southern side of Sebastopol required an urgent strategic countermove. Muravyov responded to the Ottoman landing not by lifting the siege of Kars but by storming it immediately. He overran the outer fortifications but did not have sufficient reserves to maintain the push and finish the citadel. His double numerical edge was not sufficient to overcome the Ottomans, who were traditionally tenacious in defending their fortifications. The Russian losses were huge, up to 7,000 men, but Kars was reduced to a stump and doomed. It was the same offensive technique against the strong fortress that Pélissier used at Sebastopol, storming the Malachov Mound head-on, disregarding the losses.

Williams surrendered Kars in late November 1855. Karl Marx, observing the Crimean War for the American public, prized it correctly as a “turning point of the war.”⁸⁵ Fighting over Sebastopol determined the course of the Crimean War since the allied efforts were focused on it. Fighting over Kars became decisive for its outcome and peace-making. While the allied victory at Sebastopol blocked the operational prospects of the allied forces in the Crimea and southern Russia, the Russian victory at Kars opened them the passage into northeastern Anatolia. Omer Pasha foresaw catastrophe. He immediately abandoned the Georgian coast and returned to Batum. He urged a lift from Batum to Trabzon, the Ottoman port that is nearest to the northern Anatolian theatre. Although the transfer was presented as the move to return Kars, in fact it was a desperate attempt to block the Russian penetration into Anatolia.

The Russian breakthrough into northeastern Anatolia changed the situation not only in the Transcaucasian-Anatolian operational theatre but also in the Black

85 MARX, “The fall of Kars.”

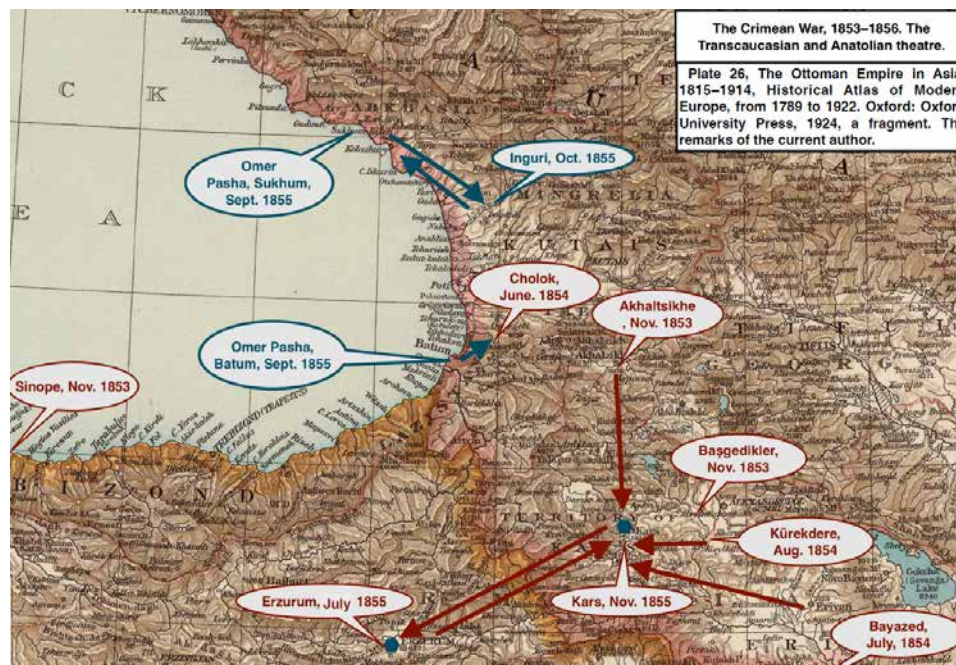


Fig. 24. The Transcaucasian and Anatolian operational theatre of the Crimean War, 1853–1856.

Sea strategic theatre as a whole. The Russian “onion strategy” to crumble and dismantle the Ottoman Empire, which lost its momentum after the British and French landing at Sebastopol, resurrected in force. The Russian march to Erzurum stirred the Armenian insurrection. The Greek rebellion in Northern and Western Anatolia along the Black Sea and Mediterranean coast from Trabzon to Smyrna (now Izmir, Turkey) was fermenting, and the rebellion of the Balkan peoples was believed to be following it. Neither Omer Pasha and his British and French sponsors nor Austrian policing of the Balkans could deter them. Gorchakov’s withdrawal to the Sebastopol northern side and Muravyov’s taking of Kars turned the Black Sea strategic theatre topsy-turvy. The allies lost, and the Russians returned the strategic prospects and initiative.

The Baltic situation of the allies was equally disappointing. In 1854 Britain did not have the craft necessary to operate in the shallow Baltic waters to run both kinds of amphibious warfare, seaborn bombardment of the onshore targets and landing operations. In the winter of 1854 to 1855, Graham amended the British naval capabilities dramatically. He planned to destroy the principal Russian

naval hubs, Kronstadt and Sveaborg. Many mortar gunboats, floating batteries, and large battleships were built during the winter. Napier was scapegoated and changed for Richard Dundas, who distinguished himself in the First Opium War with China under Palmerston's patronage. France followed the lead and launched a similar shipbuilding program but lagged behind and delivered for the season of 1855 just a fifth of the British naval capabilities under Charles-Eugène Pénaud.

The joint fleet was impressive, and the allies were constrained not by low capabilities but by lack of determination. Napoleon III was pessimistic about this theatre, considering it irrelevant to the purpose of war and corresponding only to the British interests in the North Atlantic. The allies looked for a target that could be destroyed with minor losses and great effect and did not find it. While reconnoitering Kronstadt, the British ships were surprised by the Russian innovative floating mines with electrical fusion, engineered by Academician Boris Yakobi, and chemical fusion, by Immanuel Nobel, and long-range artillery on the Russian gunboats. The discovery discarded the British plan of attack by breaking through Kronstadt's seaside defences of the stone-filled wooden pillars stretching to the Finnish coast.

Instead of Kronstadt, the allies turned to Sveaborg, a plan of bombardment of which was developed by Bartholomew Sullivan, a hydrographic officer who became an effective chief of staff of the allied fleet. Sullivan was a master of the new bombardment tactic, and he pressed its strategic impact if the central target, like Kronstadt, would be attacked. The successful assault on Kronstadt could destroy the seaward protection of Saint Petersburg and eliminate the Russian Baltic fleet. Considering the importance of Saint Petersburg for the Russian Empire as a political, social, and ideological centre, the warfare system of Russia might have been shaken, pressing its rulers to concessions. The Kronstadt battle would have imposed the allied will on Russia for the aspired conclusion of the war.

However, the British fighting reconnaissance at Kronstadt revealed that Russia assembled there its best naval ships and artillery. The best Russian troops were placed nearby to repel the allied landing and the officers with the Sebastopol experience were assigned to retrain them.⁸⁶ The superior strategists shelved Sullivan's revelations and directed the fleet against Sveaborg. The bombardment of Sveaborg, however spectacular, could assert nothing. The result of the four-

86 RATH, *The Crimean War in Imperial Context*, 168–73

day bombardment in August 1855 turned out worse than nothing. The allies shot 25,000, remaining mostly out of the Russian range of fire. They inflicted some minor harm on the Russian arsenal and town, but the coastal batteries remained undamaged. Landing was out of options. At the same time, the performance of the British mortar artillery was so poor that the allied fleet turned numb for the last months of the seasons in 1855.

The Black Sea and Baltic campaigns not only emphasised the British achievements in the amphibious warfare, but they also unmasked the British deficiencies in mobilisation and organisation of the army and navy that were more fundamental than the bright tactical use of the steamers and rifled artillery. Although being the same hawk as Palmerston, Foreign Secretary George Villiers, Earl of Clarendon, lectured Ambassador Stratford that the British chances to be defeated were as high as the chances for success or higher.⁸⁷

Reshid Pasha vacated the grand vizier office in May 1855 and was succeeded by Mehmed Emin Âli Pasha, his pupil in the foreign ministry turned bureaucratic rival. Both were close to the same Stratford with whom they discussed the deadliest consequences of the Russian landslide at Kars. Stratford communicated their discussion to Palmerston. It looked like not the battle at Sebastopol but the battle of Kars was the decisive fighting engagement of 1855. The oncoming allied campaign of 1856 would not be capitalising on the Sebastopol victory but facing the Kars disaster.

Palmerston's war to the knife.

Palmerston demonstrated commitment to war to the knife,⁸⁸ but by the end of 1855, he realised that the current strategy against Russia was running out of vigour and time. Its military-industrial factors were still workable; however, the factors of the political situation turned against it. The scenario of the overall war of "united Europe" against Russia failed. Simultaneous attacks on Russia in different theatres did not come. Austria did not dare start hostilities against Russia. Prussia hardened in its pro-Russian neutrality. Sweden froze, being terrified. The domestic upheaval in the Russian Empire did not come. Finland and the Baltic

⁸⁷ RICH, *Why the Crimean War?* 182–83

⁸⁸ STANMORE, *Sidney Herbert*, II, 10

provinces showed a pro-Russian stance.

In 1853 the Polish emigrants rushed to war against Russia with any available means. A lot of the Poles renegaded to Islam to fight Russia, like Michał Czajkowski of the mixed Polish and Ukrainian Cossack origin. He was Czartoryski's mole who turned Sadık Pasha and penetrated deep into the top Ottoman elite. Czajkowski commanded the large units of the Polish emigrants and led the Ottoman vanguard at Silistra. Some of his proposals were smart, but the allied leaders distrusted and despised the Polish renegades. Czajkowski was suspected of turning Muslim to get rich, enjoy a variety of wives, and feed his adventurous nature.⁸⁹ However, Poland remained silent through the war, and the Poles declared that they did not want to “be massacred *pour les beaux yeux* of England and France” without the allied arms supply and intervention.⁹⁰ Poland was a prospective but unpredictable ally.

The overall war of “united Europe” against Russia had good prospects, but there was a gap between the current fighting results of the French and British armies and navies and its trigger point. Russia must have been battered much harder than it was in the fall of 1855 to provoke the joint European action.

Palmerston turned to the prospect of the crashing military victory over Russia by the existing coalition of Britain and France. None of Palmerston's colleagues in the cabinet believed that it was achievable. The decisive military defeat of Russia required the “Sebastopol pattern” of a grim land confrontation with a large army for a long period of time. It also required creating the tactical situation when the Russians would expose themselves in some static position to the superior firepower of the allied extra-heavy artillery. The Russian moves at the end of the Sebastopol epopee demonstrated that they were not stupid enough to repeat it. In the overland manoeuvre warfare, the allies' superiority over Russia was not evident despite some edge that the allied infantry with rifles demonstrated in shooting contests against the Russians with smoothbore muskets.

Britain could not build up a sufficiently large army because it did not use conscription, while the volunteer recruitment dropped to almost nothing on notice about the losses at Sebastopol. It did not produce sufficient manpower. Palmerston tried to revive and enlist the communal militias of the local defence, but they

89 ТАРАЛЕ, *Крымская война*, VIII, 286, 329, IX, 17–21

90 CZARTORYSKI, *Memoirs and correspondence*, 354

produced awkwardly inept personnel. Britain had neither a compulsory manpower reserve nor volunteers to bear the burden of intensive land warfare.

France had conscription and a massive reserve of the ready manpower. However, the conscripted army had its negative side of projecting the fighting losses on the wider society. France mobilised much bigger numbers for fighting at Sebastopol than Britain did and bore most of the fighting casualties. The conscripted forces looked more expendable to the generals than the professional soldiers, and the French generals sacrificed their troops with less care than their British colleagues did. The French supply and camp conditions were also worse than the British ones, and non-combat losses by cholera and other pandemics were much higher. On the notice of the Sebastopol misery and losses, the French public switched from warmongering to urging peace.

A grim prospect of continuing manpower mobilisation and tax extortion depressed the French financial markets, troubled the middle class, and ravaged industry and trade. The French political constitution of the Second Empire required the regime to have the popular support; otherwise, it was in deadly trouble. France straggled. Prolonged land warfare against Russia was out of the question. Britain needed another strategy.

Looking for extra leverage against Russia, Palmerston researched deeper into the “onion strategy” on Russia that Czartoryski advanced and his spectacular *Intermarium*. It targeted Russia’s national identity, political structures, and social cohesion. However, Palmerston’s “onion strategy” on Russia was much more utilitarian than Czartoryski’s vision and the Russian strategy on the Ottoman Empire. Czartoryski advanced resurrection of Poland as the absolute goal of the strategy. The Russians proposed rearranging the Ottoman geopolitical expanse to create a bunch of statelets instead of the Ottoman Empire. Their “onion strategies” were the political concepts.

Palmerston’s goal was to compromise Russia’s military capability and will to fight and wrestle from Russia a settlement to remove it as a British rival in Eurasia. It was the military strategy. Palmerston recognised that the British advantage in the naval and amphibious warfare was currently so strong that the “onion strategy” of destruction of the Russian bulb might have been accomplished by the peripheral military operations in Graham’s and Herbert’s fashion without the massive overland invasion of the Napoleonic pattern. If Herbert and Graham consid-

ered the peripheral operations against Russian military assets to be a self-asserting strategy, Palmerston envisaged them as the tools to loosen the scales of the Russian imperial bulb to tear them off. His “onion strategy” was the strategy of war.

In the office of the first lord of the Admiralty, Graham was changed by Charles Wood, Viscount Halifax, the former high official over the Indian affairs. Earlier in the war, Wood inspired the plan to burst the Russian Caucasian and Transcaucasian provinces using the Indian experience of managing the aborigines. Wood looked on Russia’s multinational periphery and social diversity as its instrumental vulnerability.⁹¹ Wood became Palmerston’s principal accomplice in turning the “onion strategy” against Russia.

Their “onion strategy” was not some abstract picture of disintegrating Russia that could be ravaged and subjugated. It was a set of the military and political moves to close the gap between the British objectives of the war and achievable results of the operational strategy. Palmerston abstained to politicise it when he refused the Polish banner for the “Polish Legion” formed by Czartoryski’s emigrants as a unit of the Ottoman army.⁹² Palmerston’s concept of the “onion strategy” became a pattern that was adopted by different political-military actors and used as leverage against the empires in the twenty and twenty first centuries. The German strategy on Russia in 1917 to 1918 and the *Entente* strategy on Germany, Austria, and the Ottoman Empire in 1918 are the examples of following Palmerston’s concept in the epoch of industrial warfare opened with the Crimean War.

First, Palmerston envisaged tearing off from the Russian imperial bulb the scales loosened by the fighting in 1855, such as the Crimean Peninsula, Circassia in the Caucasus, and Georgia in the Transcaucasia, where he planned to advance two British corps, and Bessarabia, which he laid out for the French action. For prospective peeling, Palmerston explored the fragments of East-European geopolitical Ukraine in the Russian south, like the former Ukrainian Cossack Hetmanate up the Dnieper and the Cossack Don Host up the Don with their recent fierce separatist tradition. These two grand rivers, the ready avenues for amphibious and joint operations in the depth of the Russian mainland, were the axes of Palmerston’s planning. The amphibious attacks on Nikolayev, Odessa, Kherson, Azov, Rostov, and the Danube delta to get access to it were scheduled for 1856.

91 LAMBERT, *The Crimean War*, 124–25, 226

92 CZARTORYSKI, *Memoirs and correspondence*, 353–54

Poland was in the focus of Palmerston's attention. Czartoryski's vision of a pincer marches through the "Polish Ukraine" and Lithuania, recruiting the local armies of the Cossacks and insurgents, to Poland which would revolt to a man as soon as they would be given the arms was fascinating.⁹³ Linking the Polish issue with the Ukrainian Cossack riot against the Russian authorities was an awesome idea of Czartoryski, but it was too raw to be operational in 1855. The Ukrainians, Cossacks, and other local ethnic and social elements were not sufficiently explored yet. Their urge to revolt or sabotage the Russian political system was in doubt. The prospects of the thrust into the south Russian mainland were not clear. A deadlock was possible after its littoral objectives were achieved, as happened at Sebastopol and the Caucasian coast.

Palmerston redirected the British capabilities to strike at the Russian nerve centre in the Baltic, where Poland, Finland, and the Baltic provinces might have been torn off and the Russian core of old Muscovy might have been endangered. He moved decisively the British strategic gravity from the Black Sea to the Baltic. First, Palmerston explored the two-theatres commitment and soon switched to the Baltic completely. Evacuation of the Crimea was put under discussion. The Ottomans were abandoned to their sad demise.

The joint operation against Saint Petersburg following the naval destruction of Kronstadt and the amphibious landing in Finland was prioritised. Palmerston and Wood presided over the committee looking for a technical and organisational response to the challenge of the task. Much of the British industrial potential was committed to it. The Great Armament boomed in the interseason from the fall of 1855 to the spring of 1856, with its lead time in March of 1856. The preparation focused on the long-range artillery and heavy mortars to wreck the fortress defences while remaining out of the effective range of its guns and the screw-propelled gunboats that could penetrate the sea barrier around Kronstadt for close attack. The iron-hulled battleships and floating batteries were constructed to support the attack, sustaining the enemy shooting.

It was the vision reflecting a dramatic, although never finished, shift in the British thinking on the strategic function of the navy. It looked not as a centrepiece of naval warfare for gaining the sea dominance by destroying the enemy's navy in sea combats but as an auxiliary to hit the enemy's strategic assets

93 CZARTORYSKI, *Memoirs and correspondence*, 352–53

by the amphibious and joint operations. Palmerston subordinated the navy to the “onion strategy” against Russia. It was a threat of the unlimited war that Britain could wage with its naval and amphibious forces while Russia could neither defend itself properly nor retaliate.

Feeling the threat, Alexander II invested in the Kronstadt capabilities massively and hurriedly. Prussia collected over Germany and Belgium and shipped to the Russian ports the brand-new weaponry and munitions and equipment like steam machines for the gunboats, ignoring the allied naval blockade. The deliveries were allocated to Kronstadt. The Russian factories copied the rifled guns, and the guard regiments retrained with rifles. Menshikov was appointed the commandant of Kronstadt in December 1855. Nobody knew the British amphibious capabilities and tactics better than him. Menshikov was the best expert to ruin them.

La bouffonnerie parisienne.

By the end of the 1855, Russia looked like the winner in operational warfare. It blocked the Austrians in the Balkan–lower Danube theatre, deadlocked the French and British forces in the Crimean–south Russian theatre, and gained initiative in the Transcaucasian–north Anatolian theatre. The Ottomans were severely beaten on the battlefields, and their statehood was on the eve of collapse as the massive upheaval of the Ottoman Christian peoples was underway. The Russian unshaken grip on the coastal chokepoints like Sveaborg, Kronstadt, and Reval determined the situation in the Baltic theatre. Prussia ignored the allied blockade. Why did the allies declare that they won the Crimean War and Russia took it in?

The Clausewitzian theory of war proposes a worthwhile guesswork. The Russian fighting system culminated at the moment of Kars in November of 1855, executing its best performance. Then it might be expected to only deteriorate. The British and French fighting systems did not culminate at Sebastopol in September of 1855. The increasing mobilisation of their manpower, French conscription and the British call-up of the reserve militia, and particularly the allied booming manufacturing of the ships, weapons, and munitions, predicted much stronger allied performance in the campaign of 1856.

This situation was clearly predicted in the sides’ strategic analysis on the eve of the war. Both groups, Graham and Herbert with the experts of the British army and navy, and Paskevich and Vorontsov with the Russian social and industrial ex-

perts, forecasted exactly that balance of resources and capabilities. It became the common ground for the settlement. Assessment of the war's prospects prevailed over the outcome of fighting.

Palmerston's "onion strategy" on Russia could refresh the situation, but Britain was not admitted to the behind-the-curtain bargaining run by France. The "four points" of the allies that were declared at the beginning of the war became the basis for the peace plan that Austria advanced to Russia in the form of an ultimatum in December of 1855 with the deadline in January 1856. Austria acted as a French agent. Palmerston rushed against peacemaking and the ultimatum with its ceasefire option. He rejected the initiative outright. However, Napoleon III dragged into debates Queen Victoria, who pressed the cabinet to overvote Palmerston for joining the ultimatum, although with a harsh addendum. Palmerston made up a "fifth point." Discussing it, Herbert asked Palmerston, "What kind of peace is it in the interest of England to get or to give?" and was answered (maybe for some Russian ears?) "Whatever is worst for Russia must be best for England."⁹⁴

The "fifth point" required "neutralisation" of the Black Sea, meaning a rigid restriction on both Russia and the Ottomans to have a military fleet, coastal fortifications, and shipbuilding facilities. Mentioning the Ottomans, it was directed against Russia. Palmerston's shaping of the Black Sea for "neutralisation" included the Azov Sea and larger rivers of the Black Sea basin, the Southern Bug and Dnieper. Palmerston's demands were not a warmonger's delirium. He calculated to compromise the Russian control over its south—the Ukraine, New Russia, the Don basin, and the North Caucasus.

The Black Sea and Azov Sea, with the large rivers of their basin, functioned as the administrative, military, and transport mainstay of this giant territory. Deprived of the military force on these communication lines, Russia could not keep together the heterogeneous population of the region. Palmerston required implanting the British consulates in the important towns over it allegedly to control the neutrality of the waterways and really for political diversion preparing the fragmentation of southern Russia. It was a peacemaking substitution for the British plan of amphibious and joint operations in the Black Sea theatre for 1856.

94 STANMORE, *Sidney Herbert*, II, 12

Palmerston also demanded the “referendums” for secession of Georgia and Circassia as independent states and self-rule for Poland, Finland, and the Baltic provinces under the allied supervision. He was short of demanding the transfer of the Crimean Peninsula, Taman Peninsula, Kuban Steppe, and the Caucasus coast to the Ottomans, and maybe Armenia with Erivan, and Shirvan with Baku (now Azerbaijan) to Iran. In fact, Palmerston’s “fifth point” reshaped Eastern Europe in Czartoryski’s fashion, resurrecting the anti-Russian *Intermarium* between the Baltic and Black Seas and extending it to the Caspian Sea through the Caucasus and Transcaucasia. It was the *Trimarium* vision, a variation of the “onion strategy” that came into use in the collapse of the Russian Empire in 1917 and was instrumental in the crumbling of its successor, the USSR, in 1991.

Palmerston expected that Russia would reject the Austrian ultimatum with his corrections and the war would continue with Austria entering it on the allied side. The Austrian intervention would change the mood of the French public, and the war of “united Europe” against Russia would materialise. However, the amendments did not find consent with either the French or the Austrians since they looked presumably unacceptable for Russia. France was eager to finish the war, while Austria considered the current situation as the best possible for securing its interests in the Danube principalities, the Balkans, and northern Italy. The British issues with Russia in Eurasia did not concern them. The Ottomans betrayed the British plan because their disastrous military situation in Anatolia demanded an immediate ceasefire.

Both the Austrians and French subtly communicated to the Russians that they would not insist on including the “fifth point” in the final settlement. Britain was fooled. Palmerston felt the scheme but could do nothing to break it. Travelling for the peace congress to Paris, Clarendon met *en route* the hilarious French crowds celebrating not the victories over Russia but the restoration of peace. Napoleon III was pressed hard. The war with Russia was out of his agenda. Besides, Napoleon III’s *clique* achieved its principal objective of breaking the Holy Alliance and steering Austria and hurried to capitalise on it.

Britain could not expect the French support for the “fifth point” and resumption of hostilities for imposing on Russia the “onion strategy” terms. Austria subserved the French opinion. Prussia, the main traditional ally of Britain against French hegemonism in Europe, was openly hostile to the British initiative and

declared its armed support to Russia in case the allies provoke the Polish rebellion. The dominating trend of the international situation was out of Palmerston's grip. Nothing left to him besides a bluff, and he pushed ahead with the Great Armament, demonstrating the British persistence to fight on alone if France and Austria reneged.

Starting in January of 1856, Alexander II assembled his strategic team to discuss the war and peace. They were the figures that his father granted him together with his will, Vorontsov, Orlov, and Kiselev, while Paskevich lay deadly ill in his estate at Poltava. They discussed different scenarios, from the spread of the Sebastopol-style amphibious campaigns of the British and French forces over the Russian Black Sea and Azov Sea coast to the Austrians, Prussians, and the Swedes entering the war. Despite the fact that the fall of Sebastopol's southern side in no way damaged the Russian military potential and structure of society and power, their prognosis for continuing the conflict was negative. Not herding "united Europe" against Russia by Britain and France was the focus of their worries. Lack of a ready manpower reserve for the Russian army and default of the Russian industry supplying it with due amounts of modern weapons and munition was the main concern.

Attrition worked against the Russian war prospects. The army stretched thin guarding a giant frontline from Finland to the Caucasus. Russia could not spare troops to exploit decisively its strategic superiority in the Black Sea theatre. A chance to crash the Ottoman Empire was going to be lost. At the same time, Sveaborg, Kronstadt, and Saint Petersburg were expected to not withstand the allied seaborne assault. The shockwave of the disaster would endanger the political system of Russia and its integrity and sovereignty.

The Russian public opinion read the combat outcome in 1855 in a negative way, focusing on the tactical blunders and missing the operational superiority that was achieved. The tactical focus of the Russian public produced a depressive mood that worked for exhaustion, decreasing the will of the rulers and commanders to continue the fighting. Russia accepted the Austrian ultimatum.

The "four points" were a slap at the Russian international prestige; however, they did not question the Russian political system, military strength, and the Russian territorial acquisitions from Sweden, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and the Ottoman Empire in the 18th century. In fact, they did not compromise the Russian protection over the Ottoman Christians because Russia was included in



Fig. 24. The plenipotentiaries at the Congress of Paris, A photo by Mayer Pierson, 1856. The Hungarian National Museum, Budapest. Wikicommons.

the new concert of the European protectors. The “four points” did not hamper the economic development of the Russian Black Sea provinces. As it was expected, the “fifth point” degraded at the Paris Peace Congress in February to March of 1856. The Azov Sea and big rivers of the Black Sea basin were excluded from the rules of “neutralisation,” disaffecting it. The western consulates in the Black Sea ports were deprived of inland inspection, cutting down their subversion.

The Russian delegation refused to discuss the secession of Georgia and Circassia and the self-rule for Poland, Finland, and the Baltic provinces. Any territorial concessions to the Ottomans were rebuffed, while the return of Kars to them was conditioned on the allied evacuation of Sebastopol, Kerch, and Kinburn. Clarendon could not press these points without the French support. Palmerston was not able to push through his war to the knife.

Napoleon III played a “tsar of Europe,” treating Austria as his court dwarf, humiliating and ridiculing it. The congress obliged Austria to withdraw its troops and restore the Ottoman sovereignty over the Danube principalities. The Sardinian delegation was invited to read a manifesto against the Austrian regime in northern Italy. The Austrian intrigue to chain France to a bloc for dominating Europe together failed, and the Austrian subservience to France backfired. In four

years, France took over Austrian Northern Italy, granting it to the united Italian state. The Crimean War became a strategic cradle of the modern Italian statehood.⁹⁵

The Paris congress made neither France nor Britain a winner of the Crimean War. Their inconclusive settlement gains corresponded accurately to their fighting results and manifested the Crimean War as a lost war for them. Britain did not gain the dominance in inner Eurasia, but Russia occupied Central Asia and got control in northern China. France did not impose its hegemony on Central Europe and was destroyed by Prussia in the fifteen years perspective.

The Russian and Ottoman outcomes were more complex and long-term. Russia kept its status as a great European and global power. Despite of it, the Crimean War pushed Russia to the political and social “Great Reform” that undermined the social, political, and ideological foundation of the Russian statehood. It compromised the cohesion of the Russian Empire, derailed its power and military structures, and corroded the identity of its subjects, and thus caused its collapse in 1917. Was it a remote consequence of the Crimean War, a vengeance of its misinterpreted strategic lessons? It is one of the plausible explanations.

The Ottoman Empire remained a “sick man” of Europe. In the Crimean War’s aftermath, it fell into the hands of the British and French curators. Its disintegration intensified. However, a couple of decades later, the Ottomans turned to creating the cohesive Turkic Muslim core in their Anatolian heartland, exterminating, exiling, and forcibly assimilating its Christian population, thus firmly grounding modern Turkey. Did they learn the strategic lesson of the Crimean War? It seems they did.

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