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Muslims, Non-Muslims and Foreign Relations: Ottoman Diplomacy

Nihat Celik¹

Abstract: With the emergence of Medina as the capital of the first Muslim state following the Hijra at the time of Prophet Mohammad, Muslims started to develop a sense and tradition of diplomacy which was later improved when the Muslim state became an empire and its borders stretched from Basra to Andalusia. The emergence of Muslim states in the Near East in the following centuries and the increasing levels of confrontation and diplomatic relations with non-Muslims especially, necessitated a more comprehensive and flexible approach to foreign relations. In Anatolia, the Seljuk Empire had intense relations with the Byzantines. The nature of those relations was mostly hostile, a fact that did not pose an obstacle for cooperation against the Latin invaders of the Fourth Crusade. Following the demise of the Seljuk Empire, the Ottomans became the main power centre in Anatolia.

The Ottoman Empire, as the only Muslim Empire that had penetrated well into Europe, had to develop intense relations with non-Muslims. The nature of these relations was not always hostile. There was enough room for manoeuvring, even for an alliance with Christian powers. The concerns for interests and material benefits forced all actors to behave in a more accommodative way. Thus the concept of "Holy War", which is always employed to explain the nature of Ottoman diplomacy vis-à-vis Christian actors, does not always provide a satisfactory explanation because the Ottomans also faced hostilities from and waged war against its Muslim neighbours. The aim of this article is firstly to summarize Islamic principles and implementations regarding foreign relations.

The second purpose is to analyze the Ottoman view of foreign relations and diplomacy with both Muslim and non-Muslim actors in the light of Islamic Law and Ottoman historiography. Contrary to the generally-held and biased views about the nature and structure of Ottoman diplomacy, I will try to show the rationality, flexibility and the capability of manoeuvring it had. Thirdly it will highlight the transition from *ad hoc* to permanent diplomacy and the reasons which necessitated it, and also compare the Classical Era (1299-1789) to the Modern Era (1789-1856) in which Ottoman diplomacy reached its apogee by becoming a part of the The Concert of Europe with the Treaty of Paris.

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Introduction

The 7th century witnessed the rise of Islam as a new monotheistic religion and in parallel, the rise of an Islamic polity centred at Medina. Undoubtedly, Prophet Mohammad brought revolutionary ideas to the society in Hejaz/Hejaz region. Islamic principles regarding relations with non-Muslim actors and also with the non-Muslim residents in the Islamic state and the implementation of these principles were important sources and guides for the following Muslim states: Under the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties, the Muslim Empire was one of the most important actors in the Near East, in addition to the Byzantine Empire. This expansion necessitated further institutionalization of Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) and especially its subfield, siyar, which deals with matters of government administration, the conduct of military campaigns and diplomacy.

Religion has always played a role in the foreign relations of historical entities in varying degrees, depending on the society, period and political structure. Like Christianity and Judaism, Islam also had designs and perceptions of the world outside its sphere of influence. The peoples outside the orbit of the Roman administration were "barbars" in the eyes of Roman citizens. The oecumene which was shaped by the political loyalty and bonds of citizenship to the Roman Empire was replaced with the Christian oecumene when Christianity was promulgated to the status of official religion of the empire. This time, being a Christian and recognizing the superior authority of the successors of St. Peter was the main determinant which demarcated the world. With the Great Schism of 1054, the Christian oecumene was divided into two main parts (it was to be followed by other divisions such as the Protestant movement) which was led by the pope in Rome and the other led by the patriarch in Constantinople. It was the principles of Christianity that shaped the structure and practice of foreign relations vis-à-vis both Christian and non-Christian actors, which later, beginning from the 15th century, became European-wide and followed gradual patterns of secularization that have largely become world-wide today.

Christianity was one of the motives beyond the endless Crusades in the Levant, the Hungarian Kingdom's military campaigns against the 'heretic' Bogomils of Bosnia and the Fourth Crusade, which was originally planned with the idea of saving the Holy Land from the "infidel Muslims" and, which ended up with the invasion and partition of the "schismatic" Byzantine Empire by the Catholic powers with the consecration of the Holy See.

However, Christianity was just one of the propelling forces. In spite of the seemingly strong religious principles, *realpolitik* always existed as a strong determinant in foreign relations. It was the *realpolitik* approaches supported

by the principle of universalism and of course by worldly concerns which led to long wars between two devoted Catholic monarchs: François I (the king of France) and Charles V (Charles-Quint, the Holy Roman Emperor). It was the weakness of the Byzantine Empire and the wealth that the trade routes under its control generated that attracted the Crusaders in 1204, ending the schism by bringing the Eastern (Orthodox) Church under the control of Catholic Church, and this was only a legitimizing excuse for fighting their fellow coreligionists.

For sure the republic of Venice would never have lent its navy and provided financial support for such a 'holy' purpose without the promise of material benefit. Regarding relations with Muslims, the material benefits of trade with the Muslim powers of the Levant were strong enough to dampen their religious zeal. Following the conquests of Salah al-Din, when much of Syria and Palestine were added to Ayyubid Egypt, Venice for the first time obtained commercial privileges. After Salah al-Din, his successors in the Ayyubid dynasty also granted privileges to the maritime states of Italy. With Mamluk rule, they received new privileges as well. Following the fall of Acre in 1291, which was Venice's last permanent commercial settlement in the area, subsequent popes prohibited trade with the Mamluks. However, both the Venetians and the Genoese tried to oppose the implementation of this ban or only complied with it partially. In 1302 Venice obtained new privileges from the Mamluks (Theunissen, 1991). As Hans Theunissen (1991) points out, "commercial interests were paramount; this is most clearly illustrated by the readiness of the Italian republics to enter into political and commercial relations with what they generally called 'the enemy of Christianity".

It seems that in interreligious relations even in the Middle Ages, realpolitik concerns, material benefits and interests brought peaceful relations, and trade necessitated some form of accommodation and cooperation. Sources of hostility were always present but it is hard to talk about a perpetual war between Christianity and Islam. Rulers of both religious persuasions had to behave flexibly if conditions favoured peace and cooperation. They sometimes did not refrain from forming alliances with the 'infidel' against their coreligionists. However, for a long time, and still today, Islam has been seen from a very negative perspective. By misinterpreting the concept of jihad, which is according to Majid Khadduri "the Islamic bellum justum" (Khadduri, 1956), many Westerners regard Islam as a source of terrorism, intolerance, instability, war and destruction.

From their point of view, Muslims are set on demolishing the believers of other faiths. That kind of demonization has a lot in common with the propaganda that was used in the period of Crusades. This discourse has served and still serves to legitimize the use of force when dealing with the Muslims in the Levant or in the modern "Middle East". Regarding this bellicosity, there is

enough historical evidence to support the claim that Christianity was by no means different from Islam. However, it would certainly be unfair to charge the believers of both religions with that. As Amin Saikal argues, those times of peaceful coexistence and cooperation have been ignored:

Since the advent of Islam in the early seventh century, relations between its domain and the largely Christian West have been marked by long periods of peaceful coexistence, but also by many instances of tension, hostility and mutual recrimination. Peaceful coexistence produced examples of majestic cooperation, tolerance and fruitful results in all fields of human endeavour, but the periods of tension were created or exploited by those elements from both sides that found deterioration of relations advantageous to their causes above and beyond religion. In today's world, it is not the peaceful coexistence and cooperation which is celebrated and built upon; rather, the tense and, at times, conflictual dimensions have come to determine the two sides' attitudes towards one another. (Saikal, 2003)

Thus it is necessary to focus on the Islamic principles that shaped external relations and diplomacy. These principles would gain more meaning if their implementation in a historical context is given. The Ottoman Empire, which was ruled by a Sunni-Muslim dynasty and had a diverse population in terms of religion, developed both hostile and cordial relations with non-Muslim actors. The Ottoman conquests of the former Byzantine territories and Ottoman penetration into Central Europe in the following centuries made the empire an important actor in European affairs.

Additionally, the principles of Islamic Law should be elaborated in light of their application throughout history. Taking these approaches, the aim of this paper is to show that as a Muslim power, the Ottoman Empire had geopolitical concerns; it generally followed a rational and flexible foreign policy which was not always commanded by religious concerns. However, that is not to argue that religion did not play a role at all; rather, the argument is that religion was not the only determinant. As John F. Guilmartin, Jr. (1988) argued "religion was a causal factor in the wars of the Ottomans, but we cannot be certain to what degree it acted on its own right rather than simply as a means of legitimizing pre-existing conflicts." The Ottoman practice regarding diplomacy and the transition from ad hoc to permanent diplomacy will also be touched upon, which will help in understanding the transformation of Ottoman views of the outside world and system of states at the beginning of the 19th century.

Islamic Law and Foreign Relations: The Main Principles

Prophet Mohammad faced serious hostilities from the residents of Mecca, who tried to suppress his teachings. The level of hostilities and maltreatment of Muslims increased in parallel with the increase in the number of Muslims. At this point, Muslims were urged not to reciprocate because they were in a disadvantageous position. The Prophet Mohammad's uncle Abou Taleeb mobilized the members of his clan to protect him. Members of the Qoraysh tribe united against the groups that supported Prophet Mohammad and blockaded their access to markets and banned trade with them. At the same time, Prophet Mohammad started diplomatic negotiations with other tribes and cities. His purpose was to achieve protection (himaya) to facilitate inviting people to God's religion. Those people were, as expected, polytheists (mushriq) who had not embraced Islam yet. It is certain that in order to reach an agreement of protection, the religion of the other party is not important for Muslims (Gadban, 1993).

Mecca was not safe anymore for Muslims. In order to find a secure place for Muslims, Prophet Mohammad started negotiations with other tribes. The Agaba Bee'ad, the agreement with the residents of Medina and their embracing of Islam, was a turning point in the history of Islam. Medina was to be the first centre of the Muslim state. In 622, Muslims led by Prophet Mohammad migrated to Medina. A treaty or as generally known "'Ahd-I Nebevi" or "the Medina Constitution" was accepted by all the parties, the newcomers (the muhajir), the residents of Medina (the ansar) and the Jewish population of Medina. Relations between those groups and their external relations were regulated by it. Different Muslim tribes were urged to have a united response to all matters regarding their relations with others. Jews were under the protection of Muslims (the status of dhimmi); however, they were forbidden to cooperate with the enemies of Muslims (for the full text see: Hamidullah, 1997).The Muslims of Medina faced serious attacks from the tribes of Mecca which were successfully dealt with. In 628, the Truce of Hudaybeya was signed for a period of 10 years. It provided security and safe-conduct for merchants and pilgrims (Hamidullah, 1997).

The truce was not respected by the Qoraysh later and it led to war and finally to the conquest of Mecca by Muslims. Islam brought many regulations, both hostile and friendly, to external relations, diplomacy, and the conduct of war, which are the matters of the siyar. From the viewpoint of jurists, the world is divided into two main parts. Some jurists suggest division into three distinct parts. The Dar'al-Harb consists of the areas where Muslims suffer and the preaching of Islam is forbidden and the independence and security of Muslims are under serious threat (Ebu Süleyman 1985). For a country to become a part of Dar'al-Harb, the religion of its population (whether Muslim or not) does not matter; even countries with a Muslim majority can be a part of it. Dar'al-Islam consists of the areas where the principles of Islam are in force. The majority

of its population does not have to be Muslim. In those areas, Muslims are safe and they can preach Islam freely (Ekinci, 2008). The third zone, which is accepted by some schools of fiqh, is named Dar'al-Sulh or Dar'al-'Ahd and consists of countries which enter into a treaty with the Muslims and accept to pay a yearly tax (the haraj or jizya). Those areas are protected as a territory under the Muslim state's control from external threats (MacDonald, 1979).

Like many areas, there is disagreement between Islamic jurists regarding the nature of relations with non-Muslim actors. One group argues that periods of peace are exceptions and relations are hostile. The other group argues that periods of war are exceptions to the rule and peace should be the dominant principle in foreign relations. These contradicting views are the results of different interpretations of the Holy Quran (Abu Kazleh, 2006). The duration of peace treaties is another point of disagreement.

It is argued that an eternal peace treaty is not considered legitimate. Some argue that because the duration of the Hudaybeya Truce was limited to 10 years, the maximum duration should be 10 years. According to Ebu'l-Hasan Habib el Mâverdi (1994), the maximum duration can be 10 years. However, treaties that do not stipulate a certain amount of time can be signed too (Karaman, 2007; Hamidullah, 2007a). According to Abu-Hanifa, at the end of a 10-year period it can be renewed because peace is more beneficial to Muslims. The stipulation of a duration of 10 years shows that it can be signed for a longer period. Ibn Kudame, Ibn Rushd, Imam Maleek and Ibn Hanbel supported the idea that a peace treaty for an unlimited period can be signed and it would be legal (Ebu Süleyman, 1985).

Another disagreement emerges with the practice of political and military alliances with non-Muslims. There are different hadiths and testimonies. One view asserts that it is legal to get material support and knowledge from non-Muslims during war. However, participation in war or alliances with non-Muslims is a point of disagreement. There are testimonies which suggest that the Jews fought alongside with Muslims during the time of Prophet Mohammad and they received their share from the booty. One group accepts their participation in war but denies that they received a share from the spoils of war. Imam Shafi stated that "if the infidels have goodwill and they are trusted by the Muslims and their help is needed, then it would be legal, otherwise it is illegal". Abu Hanifa and his disciples suggested that requesting help from non-Muslims is completely legal.

Abu Muhammad tried to solve the problem with the principle of an extraordinary situation in which certain prohibitions are restricted. If Muslims are in grave danger, they can request help. Others argued that in no case can help be requested from non-Muslims (Gadban, 1993). One view states that if the head of the state or the supreme commander sees it right, receiving help from or

forming an alliance with non-Muslims would be legal because the Prophet Mohammad had requested help from non-Muslims during his campaigns in Haybar and Hunayn (Ekinci, 2008).

Islamic law emphasizes the principle of pacta sunt servanda. It is forbidden to start a war without declaring that a peace treaty is no more valid. After that declaration, a duration of four months has to pass before starting a war. The immunities of diplomats are recognized and protected (Karaman, 2007). The Prophet Mohammad sent several ambassadors and letters to the neighbouring monarchs like the King of Abyssinia and Byzantine Emperor (Hamidullah, 2007b). In addition, the principle of reciprocity is recognized and applied. Merchants of other countries received commercial privileges (imtiyâzât) from the Muslim state, which regulated and aimed to foster trade.

A non-resident non-Muslim can travel freely in the Muslim state if he has received an aman and as a result becomes musta'min. This is:

...a safe conduct or pledge of security by which a harbi or enemy alien, i.e. a non-Muslim belonging to the dar-al-harb, becomes protected by the sanctions of the law in his life and property for a limited period. Every free Muslim, man or woman, who is of age, and according to most doctrines even a slave, is qualified to give a valid aman, either to an individual or to a restricted number of harbis. The imam alone is qualified to give an aman to undetermined groups, such as the population of a whole city or territory, or to all traders. (Schacht, 1986)

As I tried to show above, as regards the establishment of peaceful political and economic relations with non-Muslims, Islamic law has some rules and regulations. However, it would be hard to argue that it completely limited such relations. This approach did not envisage a permanent war with non-Muslims and peace is not the exception but the rule.

The Ottoman Perception of Foreign Relations

As an empire ruled by a Muslim dynasty, the Ottoman Empire developed hostile and peaceful relations with non-Muslims in different ways. Ottoman statesmen's perceptions of Europe gradually changed, shifting from a sense of superiority in the 16th and 17th centuries. This understanding was also reflected to the area of diplomacy. Ottoman diplomacy was unilateral, the title of the Holy Roman Emperor was not recognized, and in fact he was referred to as "Beç Kralu" (King of Vienna). In their eyes, the Ottomans were the successors to the Roman emperors (çesar or kayzer in Turkish) and the title of "padishah" was reserved only for them. These views started to change especially after the military superiority of Christian powers became noticeable. The Ottomans were not isolated from the outside world; they had developed

intense relations with other powers and they sent many ambassadors on an ad hoc basis. The empire was an important element of the European balance of power (Adanır, 2005). Until the year of 1835, when permanent Ottoman embassies were opened again after the failures of the 1790s, it is possible to glean from historical sources that the Ottomans sent at least 194 Ottoman delegations to other countries for different purposes (Unat, 2008).

By the first quarter of the 15th century, the diplomatic institutions of the Latin West were already highly developed. It was in Italy where modern diplomacy accompanied with permanent embassies took root. However, when the practice of permanent embassies emerged, the Ottomans did not prefer this approach and they did not reciprocate as regards embassies. But this was not a unique attitude. European states did not always reciprocate and in the 15th century, the Pope only received ambassadors but sent none. The Italian city-states sent ambassadors to England, France, Spain and the Emperor but they were not reciprocated by these European monarchies (Yurdusev, 2004).

In 1793 the first resident Ottoman ambassador Yusuf Agâh Efendi was appointed to London and other embassies were opened in other capitals like Paris, Vienna and Berlin. However, the first experience was unsuccessful and all the embassies were shut down until their reopening in 1830s with the establishment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Umur-I Hariciye Nezareti). This part of the paper will focus on the Ottoman diplomacy before and after the French Revolution. In parallel to the developments in the area of diplomacy, the necessities of a declining empire forced the Ottomans to rely on diplomacy more in the second period. Both periods have their different characteristics, which is why such an analysis would also help in understanding the change in the Ottoman view of foreign relations.

The Classical Period - Ad Hoc Diplomacy (1299-1789)

The Ottoman Empire was one of the emirates which emerged in Anatolia following the demise of the Seljuk Empire. Its neighbour was the Byzantine Empire and the continuous clashes between the Ottoman and Byzantine border troops attracted many Muslims warriors to the Ottoman banner. According to Halil İnalcık, the ideal of gazâ contributed much to the Ottoman expansion:

The ideal of gazâ, Holy War, was an important factor in the foundation and development of the Ottoman state. Society in the frontier principalities conformed to a particular cultural pattern, imbued with the idea of continuous Holy War and continuous expansion of the Dâr ül İslâm – the realms of Islam – until they covered the whole world. Gazâ was a religious duty, inspiring every kind of enterprise and sacrifice. [...] Frontier society was both tolerant and complex. A common background brought the Byzantine frontier troops, the akritai, into close contact

with the Muslim gâzis. Mihal Gâzi, a Greek frontier lord who accepted Islam and cooperated with Osman's warriors, is a famous example of the process of assimilation (İnalcık, 2000).

The Ottomans were eager to take part in the civil wars of the Byzantine Empire as a balancing power against the Bulgars and Serbs. Their good treatment of former Byzantine populations in the areas they conquered prevented the disruption of economic life as a result of migration which was witnessed following the Mongol conquest in the Near East. Donald M. Nicol points out the attractive nature of Ottoman rule:

The Osmanlis did not therefore slaughter every Christian 'miscreant' in their path. Rather they encouraged the Christian inhabitants of the countryside and the towns to join them. Islamic law and tradition declared that enemies who surrendered on demand should be treated with tolerance. The Christians of Bithynia were obliged to pay the haradj or capitation tax for the privilege of being tolerated, but this was no more burdensome than the taxes they paid to the Byzantine government which had neglected their interests. Once they had made the decision to surrender or defect the Byzantine population did not find the change of masters too distressing. The inducements were often strong for the Osmanlis wanted to increase their numbers. A band of Catalans even went over to them in 1304. Some Christians went all the way with the conquerors and were converted to Islam. (Nicol, 1996)

Gyula Kaldy-Nagy emphasizes that the purpose of Ottoman campaigns was not to force people to convert:

The goal of the Turkic military campaigns - whether jihads or ghazâs - was not everyone's conversion to Islam. If this had really happened in the occupied countries, no one would have been eligible for the jizyatax, which could be levied only on non-Muslims and which amounted to nearly one-fifth of the total income of the empire in 1525. (Kaldy-Nagy, 1979)¹

The Ottomans were surrounded by other Muslim-Turkish emirates and they were relatively weak. It was harder to wage war against Muslims because Islamic law prohibited it. However, the Ottoman victories against the Byzantines increased their fame and paved the way for absorption of those emirates into the Ottoman realm.

Amân formed the basis of the Ottoman Empire's foreign relations from its emergence to the end of the 18th century when bilateral diplomacy was adopted (İpşirli, 1999). Before the Ottomans, the Seljuk Empire had established diplomatic relations with the maritime states of Italy which had the monopoly of trade in the Levant (Heyd, 2000). Known largely as "capitulations" in

Europe, amân were the most used tool in Ottoman diplomacy. In the granting of concessions to the harbis, the Ottomans always endeavoured to conform to the prescriptions of fiqh of the Hanafi madhhab. The Shaykh al-Islam was consulted when new capitulations were proposed. The precondition for granting to a harbi the guarantee of amân was that he should apply for it with a promise of friendship and peace — a point which is stated in the first-lines of every 'ahdnâme; and it is in return for this undertaking that the imam binds himself to guarantee an amân, with an amân being confirmed by an 'ahd, or "coveneant", and the document is called 'ahdnâme, and the items in it 'uhud or shurut.

The 'ahdnâme is a unilateral and freely-made grant or concession. The Sultan retains authority to decide unilaterally when the musta'min has broken the pledge of "friendship and sincere goodwill (ikhlas)" and when in consequence the 'ahdnâme is rendered void. It is for this reason that in firmans sent to Ottoman officials there always appears the phrase indicating that the musta'min has undertaken to behave "in friendly and faithful fashion" (dostluk ve sadakat üzere). Like all berâts, 'ahdnâmes granted by the individual Sultan personally had to be confirmed by his successor (İnalcık, 1986).

The Ottomans were quick to realize the importance of maritime states for political, military and economic reasons. As early as 1352 an Ottoman-Genoese treaty was concluded. The original text of the treaty has not survived but it was mentioned in the Ottoman-Genoese treaty of 1387, in which the rate of customs duties was to be determined as in the former treaty. It was an alliance treaty because after it, Sultan Orhan sent forces to assist the Genoese in their fight against the Venetian forces (Turan, 1990; Fleet, 2006). Aware of the competition between the maritime states of Italy, Ottoman rulers were able to play them off each other many times. They were also the main customers for some Ottoman exports (like alum, grain, and wine). Their relations were based on mutual interest:

Relations between the Turks and the Genoese were thus highly developed with a constant exchange of embassies and conclusion of treaties and agreements of one sort or another. The main motivating force behind these relations was money, generated by an active and lucrative commerce (Fleet, 2006).

Palmira Brummet (1995) labelled the Ottoman Empire as "a merchant state endowed with economic intentionality". Foreign economic relations, regulations over trade, and control over the trade routes were important concerns for Ottoman statesmen. Thus we should take into account the structure of economic relations when analyzing Ottoman diplomacy. Halil İnalcık also emphasizes the rational character of Ottoman diplomacy. According to İnalcık (1986), the Ottoman authorities kept in view the following factors when conceding an 'ahdnâme: The principles of fiqh; the political advantages

to be expected from the applicant state; the economic and financial interests of the Empire.

The Ottomans' main rival was the Hungarian Kingdom in the Balkans. When the Byzantine Empire became an Ottoman vassal that had been confined to Constantinople, the real threat came from Hungary. In 1396, a crusade led by Hungary and supported by Britain, France, German states, Italian states and Spain was organized but at the Battle of Nicopolis (Niğbolu) the crusading army was destroyed by the Ottomans (Emecen, 2010). It was the last crusade in the classical sense and its failure had proved that the Ottoman settlement in the Balkans was not temporary. Even Pope Innocent VIII, who pretended to be organizing a new crusade against the Ottomans and negotiated with Christian monarchs on the matter, was at the same time secretly negotiating with Sultan Bayezid II's ambassador when his brother, Djem Sultan, was under arrest in Rome. The pope was ready to keep Djem Sultan in custody for a sum of 40,000 gold ducats yearly. Hence the idea of a crusade, in which Djem was to be used as a tool, fell away. The Pope needed the money for mercenary troops in the Italian Wars (İnalcık, 2004).

The Empire also faced Muslim challengers. In addition to the other Muslim-Turkish emirates, the Emirate of Karaman challenged Ottoman claims to Anatolia as the successor of the Seljuk Empire. Rapid Ottoman expansion caused fear, and the Ottomans used the arguments of Islamic Law for their conquests of Muslim emirates. According to Islamic Law, in a Muslim country, which is originally a part of Dar al-Islam, where Muslims are oppressed, it is the duty of neighbouring Muslims to help the oppressed. The Ottoman chronicler of Ashiqpashazade portrayed in his book the conquests of Menteshe and Saruhan emirates by Bayezid I as rightful because the overthrown rulers of those countries oppressed the people. The Ottomans always tried to legitimize their conquests at the expense of other Muslim powers by demanding a legal opinion (fetva) from the ulema. When warring against Muslim states they occasionally needed more help from the Islamic community in influencing the masses of their subjects than when warring against Christian states (Kaldy-Nagy, 1979).

The Emirate of Karaman many times forced the Ottomans to a two-front war as a result of its alliance with Christian powers. When the Ottomans were busy with gazâ against the infidels, the attacks by the Karamanid forces distracted their attention and divided their forces. Thus, the fight against those who weaken the efforts of gâzis became compulsory. This view was repeated in Ottoman sources and especially the anti-Ottoman alliance (which is well-documented and indeed real) was portrayed as a betrayal of Muslims. These arguments were the reasons for obtaining fetvas in order to legitimize war. Murad II applied to the independent ulema in Egypt for a fetva before his campaign in 1444 against the Emirate of Karaman (İnalcık, 2009). The letter

in Arabic sent to five jurists included charges of cooperation with the 'Frenks' (a term used to denote European Christians generally) against Muslims and attacking the Muslims from behind during their war against the infidel. At the end of the letter it was asked whether killing (katl) the emir of Karaman would be legal or not. The five jurists stated in their fetvas that it would be legal, and the Ottoman campaign began (Boyacıoğlu, 2001).

Fetvas were seen as necessary when fighting against Muslim enemies because Islamic law limited the aspects of wars between Muslim powers. When Selim I wanted to launch his first military campaign against Iran, which was ruled by the Turkish Safavid Dynasty, he demanded a fetva from the Sheykhulislam and the ulema. They did not dare actually to set it down in writing. In the end the Sultan had the fetva written by a member of the ulema named Hamza, who declared that the qizilbashes—i.e., Shi'ite Muslims—were infidels (kâfirler) who could be killed without sin. When Selim I turned against Egypt, this time he obtained a fetva from Zenbilli Ali Jemal because the caliph Mutawakkil had his seat at the court of the Mameluke Sultan in Cairo (Kaldy-Nagy, 1979).

Gradually the Christian powers of Europe had to accept the Ottoman reality and by sometimes suppressing religious zeal behaved according to their interests. In addition, Europe was going through structural changes at this time and the Commonwealth of Christendom started to break up in the 16th century (Mattingly, 1998). These changes created a disunited state system and the Ottomans became a part of it:

Medieval Europe was supposed to make up one unified Respublica Christiana under the Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor. This unity began to dissolve with the rise of national monarchies in the fifteenth century. Then, the crucial issue in the realignment of the rising powers in Europe was, on the one hand, how to keep the balance of power among the rival national monarchies and, on the other hand, how to keep the balance of power between the national monarchies and the Holy Roman Empire under the Habsburgs. In the sixteenth century the Ottoman Empire, rising as a superpower in the east, in rivalry with the Habsburgs played a crucial role in the struggle (Mattingly, 1998).

As a result of this structural change, the Ottomans sometimes played the arbiter of the balance in Europe. According to Pal Fodor and Geza David (1994), the idea and discourse of the Crusades were still alive but it had lost its power and internal disputes between the European powers led some of them (Venice) to think of getting Ottoman military support. Worse, the Ottomans were aware of the divisions between the Christian monarchs. The situation in Europe is well described below:

On the surface, European politics abounded in anti-Ottoman slogans and plans, but the forces already at work in the depths were the ones that were called national interest or raison d'état in the centuries to follow. In the decades around the turn of the century, most leading European powers were occupied by expanding into Italy and sharing out her territory, and with this aim in mind they took turns in striking up seemingly anti-Ottoman alliances, which were actually designed for each other's ousting. One of the major alliances was forged by the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I, Louis XII of France (1498-1515) and Ferdinand of Spain (1479-1516) on December 10, 1508 and joined by Pope Julius II next March. Naturally referring to the Ottoman threat, these allies regarded the breaking of Venice's "desire to dominate" (dominandi libido) as the best way of forming deterrence. Soon, however, the alliance began to crumble and on October 4, 1511 the pontiff called a Holy League with Venice, England, and Spain against the former allies, Louis and Maximilian. In November 1512 the Pope was on Maximilian's side again and most naturally the next spring Venice entered into an alliance with her archenemy, France, although previously she had had a truce with Maximilian for a year. In this incalculable rotation, an anti-Ottoman move was never seriously considered possibility, even when Pope Julius issued the threat of a new crusade in his bull of December 3, 1511. (Fodor and David, 1994)

The scenario of requesting help from the Ottomans materialized in the rule of François I, King of France. Following the death of Louis XII in 1515, François I became the King of France. Pope Leon X had made various overtures to Louis XII for a crusade against the Ottomans but his death made the plan void. François I was in stiff competition for the throne of the Holy Roman Emperor with Charles V (Charles-Quint) of the Habsburg dynasty. François used the argument of a crusade against the Ottomans for domestic consumption before the imperial election. He stated that if he were to be elected emperor, he would lead a crusade in three years and conquer Constantinople. However, in 1519 Charles V was elected emperor and this was a great disappointment for François. Worse, in a battle near Pavia he was taken prisoner by Charles.

His mother Louise of Savois sent letters to the monarchs of Europe and also to the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent for help. In 1525, while still kept as a prisoner by Charles, François secretly sent his ambassador Comte de Jean Frangipani to the Ottoman court. In his letter he requested help from the Ottoman Sultan and suggested a campaign against Hungary. Suleiman the Magnificent replied on February 15, 1526 and stated that he would do what he had orally told to the ambassador (Soysal, 1999).

A contemporary Ottoman chronicle states that the request of the French King who was in the paws of the Spanish King was the main reason of the military campaign against Hungary in 1526. It then mentions the struggle between the two monarchs for the title of "cesar" and gives information about its attractiveness to the monarchs. The outcome of François' request was the Ottoman military campaign in Hungary which resulted with the Ottoman victory at Mohacz.

The Ottoman-French Treaty of 1535 "provided innovations in the relations between Christian Powers and Islam in early modern times." (Khadduri, 1956) For the first time, a Christian monarch was recognized as the equal of Ottoman Sultan. It may have aimed at establishing the law of nations between the Christian and Muslim powers. Another result was an offensive alliance. (Soysal, 1999) The Ottomans then formed an alliance with France and in the Mediterranean fought against the Habsburg powers. Sultan Suleiman sent the Ottoman navy under the command of Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha to help the French and the joint campaign of 1543-1544 began. The navy wintered in the French port of Toulon.

The joint attacks against Italian cities were unsuccessful because the French did not have enough soldiers and materials to support the campaign. Also, François was charged with betraying Christianity and he was in a difficult situation (Isom-Verhaaren, 2007; Jensen, 1985). The importance of the 1535 treaty lies beyond the fact that it was concluded at a time when modern law of nations was beginning to develop, which then provided an excellent opportunity to reconcile Christian and Muslim law. But as Khadduri (1956) underlines, this idea was still unacceptable to many Christians:

[...]the European jurists and publicists, who advocated a new law of nations based on the principles of territorial sovereignty and equality among nations, prepared to regard the Ottoman Empire as part of the European community. The traditional viewpoint of Christendom seemed to take it granted that Islam lay outside the pale of the newly developing law of nations. Albericus Gentilis (1552-1608), who was not in favor of religious wars and criticized Spain for making war on the Indians, attacked Francis I for making an alliance with the Turks. Even Grotius, who emphasized the law of nature as the basis of the modern law of nations, advocated discriminatory treatment against the non-Christian states. He argued that it was permissible by the law of nature to make treaties with the enemies of the Christian religion, but advocated that all Christian princes should combine against the advances of the enemies of the faith.

Franklin L. Baumer (1944) in his detailed study argued that the idea of Christian solidarity was still the dominating principle in the British foreign affairs in the 16^{th} and early 17^{th} centuries despite the gradual secularization:

The majority of European statesmen, though not unwilling to cut corners for the economic and political advantage of their respective countries, continued to measure the Turk by conventional standards. For them as for their predecessors the Turk was a species different in kind from Christian states whether Catholic or Protestant, a political pariah excluded by his very nature from membership in the family of European states. [...] In short, despite the growing secularization of European politics and the religious schism, the idea of 'the common corps of Christendom' continued to hold its ground to an astonishing degree in official as in other circles. The peace treaties, diplomatic correspondence, treatises on international law (such as there were), and pronouncements official or otherwise of ecclesiastical and lay dignitaries, all testify to this conclusion.

The Ottoman Sultan faced no hardships regarding religion when compared with François as regards the making of an alliance between a Muslim and Christian state. In 1760 when secret negotiations were going on between the Ottoman Empire and Prussia against Austria, the Ottoman religious authorities stated unanimously that an alliance from the Islamic view was legal and also logical. However, Friedrich II was very anxious about the possible charges of betrayal against Christianity if he concluded an alliance with the Ottomans. The alliance with Prussia did not materialize in 1760s but it was later achieved in 1790. Queen Elizabeth of Britain also faced charges of betrayal against Christianity when she tried to make an alliance with the Ottomans against Spain in the 1580s. (Pears, 1893)

The role of the Ottoman Empire in the European system of balance is still an area where extensive research is necessary. Ottomans "were trying to make use of every kind of separatist power or movement emerging in Europe in their competition for supremacy against the Habsburgs." (İnalcık, 2006) The support given to the Protestants and threat posed to the Habsburg domains made it easier for the Protestants getting concessions. (Kann, 1980) The support given to Hungarian Protestants and nationalists was aimed at weakening the Habsburg power. Ottoman Transylvania/Erdel became a safe haven for the Protestants. In 1542 one pastor wrote "The Good Lord has protected us miraculously through the Sultan and the Turkish nobles!" (Almond, 2009) Ottomans followed the developments in their 'near abroad' carefully.

The policy of preserving the territorial integrity of Poland and avoiding any Habsburg candidate's rise to the Polish-Lithuanian throne during the succession crisis were aimed at preserving Poland-Lithuania, which was

essential for the balance of power in the Eastern Europe. The Ottoman response to events and later partition of Poland and its alliance with the Sweden should be seen in this light. In addition to other factors, the Ottoman pressure on Polish notables, the fear caused by the possibility of a punitive Ottoman and Crimean attack and military threat to Habsburg and Russian Empire enabled the election of Henry of Valois (Henryk Walezy in Polish) to the throne of Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1573. (Stone, 2001) When Henry of Valois fled the country after the news of his brother's death reached him (Charles IX, the King of France), Ottoman diplomatic efforts aimed at the election of Stephan Bathory, the Palatine of Transylvania and an Ottoman vassal prince, and succeeded in that in 1576. (Kolodziejczyk, 2000) As can be seen, Ottomans tried to prevent the Habsburgs from establishing a sphere of influence by installing a puppet king in Poland. The Ottomans waged war against Russia for Poland in 1768 but not as the result of religious zeal: rather, it was the understanding of the importance of Poland as an actor which could balance Russia and Austria (Adanır, 2005). The Ottoman intervention intended to save it from destruction but in the end failed.

The Ottomans in this period (up to 1792) relied on ad hoc diplomacy. This was not a source of weakness as a whole, a fact also underlined by J.C. Hurewitz: As long as the Ottoman state remained vigorous and its territorial integrity and sovereignty could not be, or simply were not, challenged by Europe, diplomatic non-reciprocity constituted a source not of weakness but of strength. European diplomats in this period were permitted to remain at Istanbul on sufference, for the capitulations – the instruments that provided for the missions—were temporary, lasting only for the duration of sultan's reign. What is more, negotiations could be conducted only on Ottoman terms. The Padiṣah's plenipotentiaries could take immediate decisions, while the Europeans were forced at times to await instructions from their sovereigns. Ottoman diplomatic exchanges with European governments thus almost invariably took place on familiar ground, close to the throne, and in the Turkish language. (Hurewitz, 1961)

As shown above, Islamic law does not strictly limit the manoeuvring capability of states in foreign relations. It is possible to form alliances with non-Muslims, conduct joint military operations and so on. This flexible structure leaves open an important area for interpretation of religious and political authorities, enabling decision-makers to act according to the specific needs of time.

The Modern Period - Permanent Diplomacy (1789-1856)

The Ottomans lost many wars in the period between the 17th and 19th centuries. When the French Revolution occurred in 1789, the Ottomans had been at war with Austria and Russia since 1787. The Russian-Austrian Alliance, with its stance toward the partition of Poland and invasion of some parts of the Empire after successful campaigns, showed that the Ottoman Empire was not strong enough to cope with these two enemies. In 1789, Sultan Selim III started his reign. The wars with Austria and Russia ended because both powers were nervous about the developments in France (including the Treaty of Zistovi with Austria in 1791 and the Treaty of Yassi with Russia in 1792). Sultan Selim was aware of the need to reform the empire, which is evident from the Ottoman demands for experts in diplomatic correspondence with French authorities (Soysal, 1999). He regarded embassies as centres where all information about knowledge and technology would be collected and transferred to the empire. He was also aware that the empire could not depend only on its military power, which was very weak at the time. It is not a coincidence that his most prioritized area of reform was the army, and his intention was to form a new army. But he also knew that diplomacy should be used to find allies against the empire's enemies. It is certain that the empire had to resort to more diplomacy than in its earlier days of power. In the past, even isolation could be an option but at that time diplomacy was necessary for the empire's very survival. However, at that time the Ottoman corps diplomatique was underdeveloped. There was no foreign ministry and ambassadors were elected from such offices as the Treasury. Another problem was that there were not many Muslims fluent in European languages. The empire for a long time depended on non-Muslim translators mostly of Greek origin and converts to Islam. Muslim Ottoman bureaucrats generally lacked knowledge about European affairs.

The French Revolution and the wars following it created great diplomatic and military activity throughout Europe. France had traditionally been an ally of the Ottomans, but the execution of the king after the revolution horrified European monarchs and Russia, Prussia and Austria, as well as Spain and Britain, allied against France. Seeing that many developments were taking place in Europe, Selim III decided to establish permanent embassies in the European capitals. The first embassy was opened in London in 1793 and Yusuf Agah Efendi was appointed ambassador (Yalçınkaya, 2010). Following defeat, Prussia and Spain left the coalition in 1795. The Ottomans for a long time resisted French demands for recognition. Ottoman authorities declared that only when France received recognition from another European power would the Sublime Porte also recognize the Republic of France. Following its defeat, Prussia signed a peace treaty with France and recognized it. Following Prussia, the Ottomans also recognized France.

In 1797 Austria exited the war with the treaty of Campo Formio. After Italy, where Austria was defeated, Napoleon was looking for a new target which would have the greatest impact on France's strongest enemy, England. Egypt, it was thought, which was a part of the Ottoman Empire, could serve as a bridgehead for the French presence in the Levant and from Egypt it would be easier to attack India. There were huge preparations for a military operation and it was portrayed as being carried out against Britain. At that time the Ottoman ambassador to Paris was Es-Seyid Moralı Ali Efendi. The only foreign language he knew was Greek, and he was not able to learn French during his stay in France. He was a clever man but not used to diplomatic life.

He was mostly criticized for his inability to foresee the French campaign against Egypt. He informed the Sublime Porte about French naval preparations and their gathering of people who spoke Arabic and Turkish (they were to be used in the campaign in Egypt). The importance of Egypt for France was discussed in the public and media. He warned about such possible targets as Egypt, Albania, Mersin and Greece; however the French Minister of Foreign Affairs Talleyrand ensured him that France was the empire's friend and no attack would occur on Ottoman territory. But, in fact, the target was Egypt. The French Government had assumed that the Ottomans were not able wage a war against France for Egypt. However, the Ottomans declared war on France and allied with Britain. Britain for the first time realized the importance of the Ottoman Empire.

The results of the activities carried out at Ottoman permanent embassies were not satisfactory. There were many problems, and the appointments of ambassadors to posts were cancelled. For a long time the empire was represented at the level of chargé d'affaires mostly by Greeks. During the Greek Revolt of 1821 it was realized that some Greeks in the Ottoman embassies abroad had misinformed the empire and as a result Mahmud II closed down the embassies.

It was only in 1835 when the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was established that the permanent embassies were reopened. This time implementation promised greater success because after ousting Greeks from the posts related with foreign affairs, Sultan Mahmud had ordered the establishment of the Office of Translators (Tercüme Odası) on 23 April, 1821 (Bilim, 1990). It was designed to teach foreign languages, especially French, to Muslim officials. The Tercüme Odası served as a school for the empire, and the most prominent statesmen of the future like Mustafa Reshid Pasha, Âli Pasha and Fuad Pasha served there and later became diplomats and even Sadr'azam.

These were the men who filled posts abroad and represented the empire. They first managed to reform the empire and successfully averted the danger that Russia posed as a military threat by making the problem a European one. For the first time a European coalition was established against Russia. At the end of the Crimean War, the Black Sea was demilitarized (which was very advantageous for the Ottomans) and the Ottoman Empire was accepted as a member of the Concert of Europe with the Paris Treaty in 1856.

The success of Ottoman diplomacy in this period lengthened the life of the 'sick man'. Ottoman diplomats became as experienced as European diplomats of the time. During the Paris Congress, Count Cavour, the first prime minister of Italy, admitted that "There is no greater diplomat than Âli Pasha here". (Andıç and Andıç, 2002) As a result of the Paris Treaty, Ottoman Empire was integrated into the European system. J.C. Hurewitz (1961) emphasizes its importance:

The Ottoman Empire was the first non-Christian country to participate in the European state system and the first unconditionally to accept its form of diplomacy. The Ottoman realization of full diplomatic reciprocity with Europe thus constituted a major step in the transformation of the European state system into a world system.

Conclusion

As I tried to show throughout my paper, Islam has not been an obstacle for the development of a rational foreign policy and it does not accept war as a permanent phenomenon between Muslims and non-Muslims. As shown with regards to the Ottoman Empire, Islam does not excessively limit the foreign policy options of a state because it leaves open a wide area for interpretation and enables religious and political authorities to follow a flexible foreign policy. The limits of Christianity on foreign policy, however, as I showed with historical examples, to some degree have limited states' behaviour. Monarch like François I, Stephan Bathory and Queen Elizabeth faced the charges of betrayal against Christianity from other Christian monarchs.

Another important point I tried to show is the existence of cooperation between Christian and Muslim states in the pre-modern period. It would be a fatal mistake to explain all the developments in history from a religious point of view. This view ignores the states' worldly concerns which also as an important factor shaped foreign policies. I argue that geopolitics and system analysis can be very helpful in elaborating diplomatic events.

Notes

Also for a discussion of different views on the issue see: (Darling, 2000).

"Firencse beğinin ki asitane-i sa 'adet aşiyanına 'arz-ı intisab idüb bab-ı 'izzet-meaba ızhar-ı ihtisas itmişdi, İspanya beğinin pençe-i istılasından istihlas hususunda buyrulan va'd-i kerim mezkûr sefer-i 'azimin cümle-i esbabından idi." (Kemal Paşazâde, 1996).

"" "şer'an ve aklen hiçbir hicnet ve mahzur" bulunmadığı. Archives of the Prime Ministry of Turkey: BA. HH.nr.128. This document is quoted in (Beydilli, 1985).

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