

Dr. Suleyman Kiziltoprak SUDAN QUESTION AND OTTOMAN POLICIES AGAINST THE COLONIAL POWERS IN EASTERN AFRICA

A. Colonization Rivalry In Africa

European States attended a new kind of competition with the Columbus, Vasco de Gama, Magellan and Drake's exploration voyages. This competition was among the European powers but the competition area was out of Europe, on the lands of India, Africa and America. The sides were trying to save the lands under their dominance by both diplomacy and wars. After the European powers' discoveries of marine lines in 15th and 16th centuries, the war in Europe gradually spread out of Europe¹.

Europeans' interest towards Africa first arose thanks to explorers. In fact, these explorations were aimed to find a new way to India rather than explore Africa. At the beginning of these exploration voyages, the role of Africa was not more than being a resting-place. By following the Portuguese till the end of 18th century, Spaniards, French, Dutch and English people were contended with constructing influential trade harbors on the coasts of African continent. But soon, it was realized that African ports / harbors should not remain as a resort and there were some other opportunities. Gold mines and rich slave potential attracted these powers. Especially black slaves were indispensable opportunity for the need for many employees of Europeans in Europe and America. Thus, the effort, which was spend for the exploration of new ways to India and exploration of this continent, was soon directed towards the invasion of these lands.

Some of the attempts towards the invasion of African continent, such as the invasion of the Northern Africa, were about the control of The Mediterranean Sea rather than the control of Africa². The anxieties and ambitions of other European powers against the French desire to take the control over The Mediterranean Sea and the struggle against pirates were reasons lead to invasion of Northern Africa by European powers. European invader powers used two different methods in order to settle in Africa. The first method was to settle in a friendly country that was under protection of this country with a friendly approach aiming modernization. The second method was an actual invasion by directly using army power. While France used the first method, Britain generally preferred the second method.

When we look into 19th century, we see that Britain, which was started the colony competition later than the others, was on the ahead of Spain and Portugal. In the 19th century on the one hand Britain was trying to save its national benefits in the new world, American continent, on the other hand it was trying to handle the control over the old world, the Far East and Africa.

The main factor, which directed European states to colonization after 1850s, was economic benefits³. With the development of industrial activity in Europe, some problems came out. Because industrialization provided much more production than old production capacities, the population of European states became unable to consume these products. So, every industrialized European state faced with a production extra. And they faced with the problem to find new markets. Therefore, raw material was a problem of industry. The limited raw material sources of Europe were under the production capacity of developing industry. Because of this, countries, competing on industrialization, were competing on controlling lands that were rich about raw material sources.

European forces invaded African continent by starting from coasts and gone towards inland. Every state was invading lands behind their trade harbors and spreading towards its surrounding. So, there occurred a few encounters among colonist powers. But the Germany's completion of national unity and entrance to colony competition caused inevitable fights. Germany did not have strategic ports as the other powers had. Because of this, it directly tried to establish a colony in the Middle Africa. But these lands were less rich and harder to communicate than other regions were. Germany's appearance on the scene speeded colony competition up⁴. Every colonist powers wanted to establish a sovereignty that would at least provide a communication from one end to the other instead of total communication. Portuguese were trying to establish "Angola – Mozambique" line, whereas French were trying to establish "Dakar – Cibuti" line and English were trying to establish "Cairo – Capetown" line. In fact these lines were making each other impossible, as it is easy to be understood on the map.

Egypt, which was the northern part of English dream Cairo – Capetown line, had a special importance because of this. On the other words, in the 19th century for Britain losing Egypt meant that it would not provide control over Africa and lose prestige among the other big powers. As a result of its politics, Britain invaded Egypt in 1882 and invaded Sudan as well and added to Egypt. Thus, they dreamed to establish an African Empire tied to Britain in addition to its Southern African colonies⁵. The most important item of Britain's colonization politics was preventing India away from the fight and the security of roads to India. The road of Britain's Egypt and Middle East politics in 19th century continued as connected with this indispensable condition.

The obvious domination of France in Europe and out of Europe in 18th century started to leave its place to the

¹ Robert COLLINS, *Historical Problems of Imperial Africa*, Londra, 1993, p.7.

² Frank GERVASI, *Thunder Over the Mediterranean*, New York, 1975, p.147.

³ Robert COLLINS, *ibid.*, p. 8.

⁴ Raymond James SONTAG, *Germany And England Background of Conflict 1848-1894*, New York-Londra; D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938, p. 202-205. For German Imperialism in Africa see; A.J.P. TAYLOR, *Germany's First Bid for African Colonies*, Hamden, CT; Archon Books, 1967, p.1-7.

⁵ A. G. HOPKINS, "Africa and the Victorians: A Reconsideration of the Occupation of Egypt, 1882", *The Journal of African History*, issue 27, no. 2, 1986, p. 360-363.

domination of Britain at the very beginning of 19th century. The beginning of Britain's taking the domination in the world and the Middle East was started with its defeating France in 1801 in Egypt, which had been invaded by Napoleon in 1798, and making this eternal rival country go away from the region. Nevertheless, Britain eliminated its another rival country, Russia, in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea with the Canakkale agreement of 1809 that entailed the Straits to be closed. So, against the Russian national aim to go down to reach warm seas, Britain used the Ottoman land as a tampon region in its benefit struggle with the Russia in 19th century. As this politics required, Britain accepted the Afghan Mountains in front of its rich eastern colony, India, Caucasian Mountains in the Middle East, the Balkans in the west, and the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles -to prevent its coming down to the Aegean Sea and The Mediterranean Sea- as a barrier against Russia. On the other hand, parallel to the change in power balance in the world, Ottoman Empire, which thought that it was inevitable to take support of a big power to save its unity and power, left its old friend in 17th and 18th century, France, and provided friendly and close relations with Britain in 19th century. But the friendly relations between Ottoman Empire and Britain continued until the last quarter of 19th century. Ottoman – English relations started to change after the Berlin Agreement in 1878. Although Britain's taking over Cyprus Island from Ottoman Empire in 1878 seemed to aim saving lands of Ottoman State, it was nothing more than the desire to grasp portion. After that, Britain's politics against Ottoman Empire was shaped with the hypothesis about the inevitability of collapse and demolish of this state. Therefore, Britain would either itself invade and govern this strategic Ottoman lands or provide the establishment of some satellite states on these lands and take the control indirectly⁶.

On the other hand, we see that Germany was come on the scene at the end of 19th century adding to France and Russia as a rival to Britain in this region. At the first glance, while the Middle East meant to Britain important for the security of roads towards India, the aim of France and Russia was taking portion from the lands of the demolishing Ottoman Empire and become dominant at the Eastern Mediterranean⁷. The Middle East was important for Germany because it was a part of Germany's politics about establishing a barrier on the line of Britain and India. Germany's politics was about becoming influential on this line which connects Britain to the Far East or reaching India by railway on the ground and benefit from the affluence⁸.

B. Colonist powers in the Eastern Africa

The European powers' interest towards the southern and western coasts of Arabian Peninsula and Eastern Africa started in the early eras. While this interest was trade centered at the beginning, later it turned into strengthening trade benefits with politics. Merchants and sailors of Arabian Peninsula and Arabian Bay had been carrying on their seasonal trade with the Far East for 3000 years by putting out to The Indian Ocean. Arabs that trade with especially Indian Peninsula and China settled the eastern coasts of Africa in 8th century. After that, in 10th and 11th centuries, some small Arabian colonies appeared at the eastern coasts of Africa. The most important of them were Kilifi, settled from Mogadisu at the north to Delgado Cape at the south, Malindi and Mombassa.

Sultans were governing "city states", which were established in Africa until the end of 15th century and until the appearance of Portuguese in the Red Sea and the southern and eastern coast of Africa at the beginning of 16th century, and they were living a comfortable life with their income from sea trade. The merchants under protection of these sultans were trading products such as ivory, carnation and black pepper. In addition to this, they were exporting gold and black slaves to Arabia, Persia and India. At the same time, in Arabian and African markets, they sold textile products that they bought from Persia and India. Arabian writers and travelers of this era, who gave this information, such as Mesudi, İdrisi, Yakuti and İbn Batuta praised the high civilization level and commercial development fulfilled by Southern African Coasts.

Also Vasco da Gama witnessed the Arabian dominance in the cities settled along the coast when he visited Mozambique, Mombassa and Malindi during his first travel towards India (1497 - 1499).

The dominance of Arabs finished in The Indian Ocean after the first decade of Portuguese arrival to this region at the very beginning of 16th century. The new masters of the region started to destroy the economic and social incomes of cities on the coast by carrying out a merciless monopolist trade politics. After living under pressure of Portuguese dominance nearly two centuries, coast cities in the Southern Africa were rid of this situation only after the expanding politics started by Mehmet Ali Pasha and carried on by Khediv Ismail Pasha on the West Coast of the Red Sea. The Sultan of Oman's support on the East Coast of the Red Sea was also another factor to prevent expansion of Western powers towards Eastern and Middle Africa and their entrance to the Red Sea.

On the other hand, Oman established a strong authority on the right opposite of Indian Peninsula by expanding its central authority in southeast Arabia. This sultan authority stood out as a nautical state, which was bordered with Rubal Hali Desert on the land and The Indian Ocean in the sea. They gained new authority areas in the Eastern Africa. But after the arrival of colonist powers to this region, Oman sultans' influence in Eastern Africa was diminished and ceased. Britain speeded up their colonization politics in Zenzibar, Kenya (East Africa of Britain) and Uganda and then established Protectorate administration on Mombassa in 1895. After this date, Eastern and Middle Africa become under the administration of Britain's Protectorate administration. But there were some other old rivals from Europe to disturb Britain. Britain was one step ahead of the others in "Africa

⁶ L. Carl BROWN, *International Politics and the Middle East, Old Rules, Dangerous Game*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1984, p. 117.

⁷ L. Carl BROWN, *ibid.*, p. 103-104.

⁸ Raymond James SONTAG, *ibid.*, p. 247-248.

competition” of European colonists, which gained speed especially after second half of 19th century.

C. The Strategic Value Of The Region

After the opening of Suez Canal in 1869, the importance of Egypt, the Middle East and the Red Sea increased. After that, the region became a strategic key point. European super powers began a new competition to invade or gain benefit from port cities, islands, islets and even rockies on the Red Sea coasts, near Suez Canal and near Bab el-Mendeb Strait. That was because, the ships that had been going the way around the Cape of Good Hope got rid of going 4000 miles on the way to east after the opening of the canal. This advantage once again revealed the importance of the Mediterranean – Suez – the Red Sea line and made Britain closely interested in The Mediterranean and the Middle East related with the trade in the region⁹.

At the beginning, Britain was opposed the construction of Suez Canal according to its “Eastern politics”, trade benefits and control over seas politics. Because they failed in these politics, they searched for the way for gaining control over the Canal. So, they took the value of the Canal in favor of itself by buying Khediv of Egypt Ismail Pasha’s shares¹⁰. Here, it will useful to remind that more than half of the world industrial production was produced by Britain during this era and how Britain needed control over one of the maritime trade lines, Suez as well as Gibraltar and Malta.

On the other hand, Britain considered Russia as the main treat against its eastern politics and realized the vital importance of The Mediterranean – Suez – the Red Sea line after the opening of Suez Canal. So it focused on politics about how to hold Russia away from this region. Therefore, to settle and become influential in the region before the arrival of Russia became one of the essentials of Britain’s eastern politics.

Britain’s attempts to secure roads to the Far East increased after the beginning of 19th century. There were four ways to reach India and China for Britain or any other European state;

- 1) The Mediterranean Sea– Suez – the Red Sea line
- 2) The Mediterranean Sea– Syria – Iraq- Iran- India
- 3) The Mediterranean Sea– Syria- Iraq- Basra Bay
- 4) The Atlantic Ocean- the Cape of Good Hope- the Indian Ocean

As it can be understood at first glance, the most direct and the easier of these ways is the Mediterranean Sea– Suez – the Red Sea line. “Security of this line” had a vital importance for Britain. Until Berlin Agreement in 1878, by supporting Ottoman’s land unity, Britain carried on its politics on using Ottoman State as a guard of the ways going around The Mediterranean towards India. But after Berlin Agreement in 1878, Britain changed its politics and carried out politics about speeding up the collapse of Ottoman State and gaining strategic portions at the end of this. The need for securing “roads to the eastern” on his own resulted in the invasion of Egypt. Because it was vitally important for Britain to settle in a strategic base in order to defend roads to India after the decline of Ottoman State. Egypt was containing the strategic value, which Britain wanted, with its political, military, trade and control over sea features. Britain had invaded some important places of Indian roads before. The invasion of Britain in Egypt in 1882 was not a surprise because of its invasions towards Gibraltar in 1704, Malta in 1800, Aden port city in 1839 and Cyprus in 1878.

All of the big powers, which wanted to establish hegemony in Asia, Europe and Africa by carrying out expansion politics, wanted to take the control of the Mediterranean according to their global strategies¹¹. Otherwise it was impossible for them to carry out their expansionist strategies without meeting an obstacle. Britain required a station on the way to east for its overseas trade and a store for its industrial products. On the other hand, streamers took the place of sailboats that were sent to India after the opening of Suez Canal by Britain. Streamers required secure harbors to load coal. When these requirements were considered, the invasion of places near Suez Canal and strategic places in the Red Sea was very important for Britain.

For the countries interested in trade in this region, the opening of Suez Canal brought the increase of the importance of The Mediterranean Sea, The Red Sea and some strategic islands in the Oman Sea. Britain had captured Malta (1800) and Cyprus (1878) in the Mediterranean Sea, Perim Island in the Red Sea (1857), Socotra and Couri islands in the Oman Sea. On the other hand, some port cities on the coast of Arabian Peninsula and on the western coast of Africa continent had already been under control of Britain because of security of maritime trade lines towards East. Thus, there remained just a point for Britain’s complete control over the Mediterranean Sea– Suez – the Red Sea line. It was naturally Egypt that was overlooking the Suez Canal and the Red Sea. This strategic importance was on the background of British invasion in Egypt¹². When we look at the invasion politics followed by Britain, we see that it carried out the politics about taking complete control over The Mediterranean Sea– Suez – the Red Sea line. As this politics required, it invaded Barbera at the opposite of Aden in 1884 and Sudan in 1898¹³. Therefore, it secured the south coasts of Arabian Peninsula between 1886 and 1904. It also expanded its influence area by taking control of south el-Ahza State and Neced which had been under control of Ottoman Empire. Thus, all these expansions were steps about Britain’s politics to found a total control over The

⁹ Frank GERVASI, *Thunder Over the Mediterranean*, New York, 1975, p.147.

¹⁰ John MARLOWE, *ibid.*, p. 77.

¹¹ Frank GERVASI, *ibid.*, p. 7.

¹² John MARLOWE, *ibid.*, p. 251.

¹³ John MARLOWE, *ibid.*, p. 138.

Mediterranean Sea– Suez – the Red Sea line¹⁴.

D. Ottoman Sovereignty In The Region

Ottoman State's adding Egypt and Syria in 1517 changed the balances in The East Mediterranean and in The Red Sea. As a dominant power in the region, Ottoman State secured its southern borders till the end of 18th century. Portuguese, who entered the Red Sea with the decline of Mameluke State, no longer could not acted as ease as before and they left soon¹⁵. After Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem came into Ottoman authority, all related land roads to Hajj (Damascus- Mecca, Cairo- Mecca) came under control of Ottoman Padishahs, in Istanbul. This provided Ottoman Padishahs to claim to have a spiritual superiority, which the other countries had not, and to be an administration center with the sovereignty of the Holly Cities and being provider of the Hajj traffic¹⁶.

Ottoman State was carrying on its authority on the Red Sea and Northeastern Africa by means of its Egypt province. Egypt was an important place to control Hajj traffic. A strong and free of inner problems Egypt administration was providing both Egypt's security and security of the region that went over to the Indian Ocean, and was holding the authority in the name of Ottoman Padishahs. During the eras in which it was capable to prevent interference of outer forces, Ottoman State was successful in controlling the problems in Egypt. When Ottoman State got weak especially after 1774, it had some problems in controlling events in Egypt. Since then, there occurred a change in both the number of actors who interfere the problems of Egypt and actors' aims¹⁷. When France invaded Egypt on 1st July 1798, Ottoman State needed to take support of Britain and Russia¹⁸. As a result, French, who were defeated in the wars against Ottoman- Russian- English alliance, left Egypt on 1st August 1801. Ottoman Padishah assigned Mehmet Ali Pasha as the governor of Egypt in May – Jun 1805¹⁹.

Mehmet Ali Pasha governed very successfully after his appointment. At first, he tried to provide geographic and administrative unity of Egypt. He performed both his military talents and political talents successfully²⁰. Pasha proved his power once again by suppressing the Wahabi revolt that was threatening psychologically the legality of Ottoman State and the governor of Baghdad and Damascus could not cope with²¹. After 1815, Pasha speeded up expansion operation towards both Syria and South Africa with challenging his neighborhoods²². He increased the number of soldiers in his army by enlisting native Egyptians during 1820s. Because developments resulted in fertility in agriculture and the expansion of borders with conquests, the population of Egypt increased in great amounts²³. Mehmet Ali Pasha, who used this for his benefit, made the Egyptian army such an armed force containing a hundred thousand soldiers²⁴.

Also Ottoman State was supporting Mehmet Ali's conquests in the south, because the concentration of this rebellious governor to south relieved the Ottoman Padishahs. Egyptian armies rebelled and defeated Ottoman armies twice in 1831 and 1839. Ottoman State could only get rid of this hard situation with the help of the big foreign states²⁵. According to London Conference gathered in 1840, autonomy of Egypt to Ottoman State was declared. ²⁶. With the Padishah Abdulmecit's firman in 1841, governor status became special to Mehmet Ali's dynasty. A governor dynasty tied to Ottoman State founded in Egypt²⁷. In fact, those privileges of Egypt put Ottoman State on a road without returning. When Ottoman State wanted to take a decision about Egypt, it had to consider the foreign states thoughts. Thus, Mehmet Ali Pasha stroke the stabilized atmosphere constituted by Ottoman State in the region. Foreign powers gradually leaked into to the region after 1830s²⁸.

There were two main principles in Mehmet Ali Pasha's successful politics in Egypt. The first one was his

¹⁴ Ronald ROBINSON- John GALLAGHER- Denny ALICE, *ibid.*, p. 274.

¹⁵ Salih Özbaran, "Kızıldeniz'de Osmanlı Hakimiyeti'nin Yerleşmesi", *İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Tarih Dergisi*, İstanbul 1997, sayı 31, p. 84.

¹⁶ Abdülkadir Özcan, "Hacc", *DİA*, XIV/403; Zekeriyeye Kurşun, "Hijaz", *DİA*, XVII/347-349.

¹⁷ Enis, Muhammed, "El-Neşât el-Avrubî bi-Mısır ve Cîrânihâ Evahiru el-Karn el-Sâmin Aşera el-Milâdî, Mesâdira ve Vesâikahu", *Mecelle el-Tarihîyye el-Mısriyye*, v. II, sayı;1, 1949, p.113-134.

¹⁸ Shafik Ghorbal, *The Beginnings Of The Egyptian Question And The Rise Of Mehemet Ali*, Londra; George Routledge And Sons, Ltd., 1928, p. 7-32. Ayrıca Fransız işgalinin seyri için bkz, *Mufassal Osmanlı Tarihi*, V/2778-2782. D. A. Cameron, *Egypt in The Nineteenth Century Mehemet Ali And His Successors Until The British Occupation in 1882*, p. 24-36.

¹⁹ *Mısır Mühimme Defteri*, no. 12, p. 2.

²⁰ Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *ibid.*, XI/20-21. Ayrıca bkz; J. Morton A. M. Howell, *Egypt's Past, Present And Future*, Ohio; Otterbein Press, 1929, p. 101.

²¹ Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *ibid.*, X/112-113.

²² Edward Dacey, *The Story of Khedivate*, Londra; Rivingtons, 1902, p. 15-16.

²³ Jack A. Goldstone, *Revolution And Rebellion In The Early Modern World*, Berkeley-Los Angeles-Londra; University Of California Press, 1992, p. 400-401.

²⁴ Roger Owen, "Egypt And Europe: From French Expedition To British Occupation", *Modern Middle East*, Hourani, Albert, (ed.) Londra, J.B. Tourie And Company Ltd., 1993, p. 114.

²⁵ Enver Ziya Karal, *Osmanlı Tarihi*, Ankara; Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1983, V/128.

²⁶ Osmanlı Devleti, İngiltere, Fransa, Prusya, Avusturya ve Rusya'nın imzaladığı Mısır Andlaşması için bkz; *Mecmu-i Muahedat*, İstanbul; Ceride-i Askeriye Matbaası, 1298, IV/209.

²⁷ Evelyn Baring, (Earl of Cromer), *Modern Egypt*, Londra; McMillan and Co. Ltd., 1908, I/ 16.

²⁸ Kemal H. Karpat, "Türk Arap İlişkilerine Toplu Bir Bakış", *Türk Arap İlişkileri Geçmişte, Bugün ve Gelecekte, I. Uluslararası Konferansı Bildirileri, 18-22 Haziran, 1979*, Ankara, p. 8.

guarding the lands without needed Ottoman State's help, and thus, he proved his worth by gaining autonomy from Babiali's orders²⁹. The second one was the politics that regarded security against European powers as a matter of primary importance³⁰. When the expansion of Egypt towards Syria was prevented by the big powers, Mehmet Ali turned his expansion strategy towards the south³¹. With the addition of Sudan into Egypt with an army operation, Mehmet Ali Pasha captured Hajj and trade roads from the Northern Africa to Mecca³². He established Hartum as a center in order to make people work in irrigation of Egypt's agricultural areas and provide manpower for the army³³. Through the end of 1830s, English intervened Mehmet Ali Pasha's conquer activities in Ethiopia. In spite of this, he captured Take (Taha) lands whose capital was Kassala in 1840. Sudan contained its province Nubia, Dafur, Cordovan, and Bahr el-Gazel. Among them Cordovan and Bahr el-Gazel had been known as Ottoman lands. These lands were left to Mehmet Ali Pasha administration with the firman dated 1841³⁴. After Mehmet Ali Pasha's death in 1849, Suakin and Massawa were left to the administration of Hijaz governor. At this time, the dominance of Egypt was expanded to Fasoda and Beja region at the north part of Nil, to Kassala and to Take on the Ethiopian border.

When Ismail Pasha became the governor, he tried to strengthen the sovereignty of Egypt on the coasts of the Red Sea in the name of Ottoman State. Also the king of Ethiopia, Tevodros (1855- 1868) wanted to take Massawa, an important a port city of the Red Sea. For this reason, he followed the politics about provoking European powers, such as Britain and France, against Ottoman State. But he failed in what he wanted. During this era, Ottoman State pretended to have rights on the lands from Ethiopian province to Bab el-Mendeb. Khedive Ismail Pasha's era in Egypt (1862- 1879) started a new expansion operation in the region. The administration of Suakin and Massawa were added to Egyptian administration in 1865³⁵. Although Ottoman State looked suspiciously, it supported Khedive Ismail's military expeditions in the coasts of the Red Sea and in Sudan and in the Northeastern Africa consists of Ethiopia and Somali. Because the re-conquer of the lands, which were lost due to various reasons, or conquer of some lands for the first time pleased the Ottoman bureaucrats.

After the opening of Suez Canal in 1869, Britain did not wanted the rival states to have the right to comment on the Red Sea and Aden Bay. In this respect, they took pains not to produce a problem and they accepted the expansion of Egypt for their benefit. Because they thought that it would be easier to take these places from Egypt. Khedive Ismail Pasha continued to capture the coasts of the Red Sea. He managed to capture Barbera in 1867 and Zeila in 1875. Massawa was used as a base in Egyptian expansion in the Red Sea. Swiss Munzinger, who was the governor of this place in 1871, carried on this expansion politics very successfully in the name of Ismail Pasha. Munzinger organized two military expeditions towards Ethiopia under the command of Danish Abrendrup Pasha and Mehmet Ratip Pasha. But he failed. With these attempts, Ismail Pasha tried to expand Egypt towards lakes district whose center was in Africa and Uganda³⁶.

Ismail Pasha preferred to use European officers in his military expeditions in the region. In 1877, he appointed English Gordon to the governor of Sudan. In the same year, English accepted the Ottoman sovereignty in Ras Hafun in Egypt according to the agreement between Britain and Egypt³⁷.

E. Sudan Question And Ottoman Response

After England's recognition and appreciation of the importance of Egypt's geographical position and its effect on trade with India, she tried to acquire a certain influence in Egypt. England's policy towards Egypt was realized through flooding her with debts which led to the foreign intervention represented in the financial control and the participation of foreign ministers in the Egyptian Cabinet, towards the end of Khediv Ismail (1863-1879)'s reign. Foreign influence and intervention ended with the British occupation of Egypt in 1882. The British occupation led to some measures which had their most dangerous effect on the situation in both Egypt and the Sudan.

The Sudan revolution started as a religious movement in the south of Vadi Halfa in Apa Island in White Nile in July 1881. The event that eventually led to the rebellion was a row between the Faşoda director, tax-farmer in the name of Egypt, and Muhammed Ahmed, son of a caique master. Soon after this case, Muhammed Ahmed announced in Ramadan (August 1881), the holy month of Muslims, that he was Mahdi³⁸.

Al Mahdi was calling for the eradication of injustice and the unfair taxation. He threw the responsibility of these injustices on the shoulder of the Egyptian government for employing foreign servicemen who mistreated the Sudanese people. The Mahdi movement enjoyed a strong popular support in Sudan. Those supporting the Mahdi can be divided into three groups: a) Dervishes well knowing about Muhammed Ahmed, believing that he was

²⁹ Gabriel R. Warburg, *Egypt and the Sudan; Studies in History and Politics*, Londra; Frank Cass, 1985, p.162.

³⁰ George Young, *Egypt*, Londra, 1927, p. 63.

³¹ Gabriel R. Warburg, *ibid.*, p. 162; Pierre Crabités, *Gordon, the Sudan and Slavery*, Londra; George Routledge and Sons, 1993, p.2.

³² Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, *ibid.*, XI/89-90.

³³ Richard L. Hill, *Egypt in the Sudan*, Londra; Oxford University Press, 1959, p.7.

³⁴ Cengiz Orhonlu, *Habeş Eyaleti*, İstanbul, 1974, p. 146.

³⁵ BOA, İrade Mısır, 791.

³⁶ Cengiz Orhonlu, *ibid.*, p. 151

³⁷ Cengiz Orhonlu, *ibid.*, p. 151-152.

³⁸ In the Ottoman Documents, Muhammed Ahmed was called as *Mutemehdi*, *Derviş* and *Mahdi*. See; *BOA, YEE*, 143/81.

Mahdi, and being committed to him unconditionally; b) the tribes living along the banks of Nil, and subsisting on slave trade; c) the tribes opposing all kinds of state authority, such as "Baggara" and "Bija". The latter were of the conviction that their interests had been exterminated by regulations of a high authority, like tax collecting³⁹.

The Mahdi realized structuring of his organization by imitating the Prophet and the first ages of Islam, as his rebellion movement bore a religious character. He called his armed forces "Ensar", while tribal chiefs near to him were being titled with "Khalifa"⁴⁰.

It is not yet known well whether there was a connection between this Mahdi rebellion and the Urabî Pasha movement, which rose in Egypt and led to British invasion of the country in 1882. But the both rebellious movements occurred in a very near time interval and in neighboring regions. One can mention about, at least, their psychological interaction of each other. Urabî Pasha started a protest movement against keeping of Circassian and Turkish officers high ranks in the army and against economical and political press of Europeans in Egypt, by relying on masses that were uncomfortable with this situation. Mahdi did the same exploiting reactions against Egyptian administration in Sudan and colonialist policies of Europeans⁴¹. In this respect, given that Urabî Pasha developed a discourse against hegemony rights of the Ottoman Empire, the both movements prove to have a common point of view. The Mahdi movement in Sudan can be qualified as an uprising against the immediate owners of hegemony and interference of Europeans, as does Egyptian Urabi movement. What calls for attention at this point is that Sudan was under Ottoman rule as part of the Khedive administration of Egypt. The uprising in Sudan was a worry directed to the Egyptian Khedivate rather than being a struggle to escape the Ottoman rule. However, he claimed that his rebellion was not against the Ottoman Empire.

Abdülhamid the Second, then Ottoman sultan, also considered the Sudan case in such a way. In his opinion, the Sudan problem arose due to that Britain had put out of the running order in Egypt. This case would not happen if there had not been an administrative vacuum in Egypt⁴². Compared to the Wahhabi movement, although Mahdi directly targeted Pan-Islamist policies of Abdülhamid the Second, by his claims of being "savior of Muslims", he did not pose an ideological threat as did the former from the Ottoman point of view. On the other hand, authority of the Egyptian Khedivate which had extended to all of Sudan under Ismail Pasha, weakened after the financial crisis in Egypt. Particularly after Tefvik Pasha became khedive, there appeared an administrative vacuum in Sudan, since the Egyptian government paid all attention to the Urabî Pasha movement⁴³. It should be kept in mind that this vacuum had great effect on the Mahdi rebellion. Mahdi did many assaults between the years 1881-1883, during which many Egyptian soldiers died⁴⁴. British troops, which had been stationed in Tel al-Kabîr by the beginning of 1883, then gradually started to base along the lower ranks of the Nile Valley.

British representatives faced to some problems in Egypt, as they could not set up a strict administrative mechanism⁴⁵. They could not take the developments in Sudan because of their business with solution of these problems in Egypt. But after the rebellion well spread out, they accepted the policy that this question should be handed within the frame of the Egyptian question. The khedive, the Sultan and the British government did not have a consensus on who was in the source of the turmoil in Sudan. While the Ottoman government and the khedive were blaming Britain, the latter claimed that the Ottomans and the Egyptian administration were responsible for these events. Britain, in this context, suggested that the Ottoman State should have controlled the developments by sending its troops to the region⁴⁶.

From the Ottoman point of view, the solution to end the Sudan rebellion was not sending Ottoman troops there, but evacuation of British forces from Egypt. Abdülhamid the Second tried for adoption of a pluralist policy, by bringing the army sending issue to the meeting of "Majlîs-i Vukelâ Heyeti" (Council of Assembly of Deputies). Members of the Assembly decided that the British offer that Sudan should have separated from Egypt and governed directly by the Porte was not acceptable, though it was under authorization of the Ottoman Empire, since the Egyptian Khedive had not demanded such a practice. In addition, members of the Deputies Assembly agreed on that sending Ottoman army to Sudan would harm interests of the state in every condition⁴⁷. By the way, Britain was keeping its position in claiming that task of the British soldiers in Egypt was not up yet, by the pretext that the turmoil in Sudan was posing a continuous threat to the security of Egypt. Britain made use of this case not to evacuate its troops in Egypt⁴⁸.

Britain, on the other hand, responded negatively to military aid demands of the Egyptian Khedive to solve the Sudan question. It is possible to consider this British policy both as that London did not know what to do after invading Egypt and had no determined policies, which was result of its unplanned acts, and as exploiting the

³⁹Charles Chenevix Trench, *The Road to Khartoum, A Life of General Charles Gordon*, USA; W.W. Norton and Company, 1978, p.189.

⁴⁰ Ibid, p.189-190.

⁴¹ Ramazan Yıldız - Atilla Çetin, *Sultan II. Abdülhamid Han, Devlet ve Memleket Görüşlerim*, İstanbul; Çığır Yayınları, 1976, p. 179.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ P.M. Holt, *A Modern History of The Sudan*, Londra; Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1961, p. 77-78; Talhami, H. Ghada, *Egypt's Civilizing Mission: Khedive Ismail's Red Sea Province, 1865-1885*, (Unpublished Ph.D Thesis), University of Illinois, 1975.

⁴⁴ E.F. Knight, *Letters From The Sudan*, Londra-New York; Mcmillan And Co. Ltd., 1897, p. 40.

⁴⁵ BOA, YEE, 42/12.

⁴⁶ BOA, YEE, 124/64.

⁴⁷ BOA, YEE, 124/62.

⁴⁸ BOA, YEE, 125/16; MVM, 2/33.

Sudan case to remain in Egypt. Given the earlier British promises to abandon Egypt, it is obvious that the London governments used the Sudan events as a pretext not to carry out its commitments. Khedive Tevfik Pasha called and employed a British veteran to command Egyptian troops to suppress the Sudan rebellion. William Hicks went to Sudan in command of 10.000 Egyptian soldiers to fight the Mahdi forces. The latter had the Egyptian forces tasted a heavy defeat in the battle in al-Ubeyd region, November, 5, 1883, which was a dramatic surprise for the British side⁴⁹. In the battle, in which William Hicks lost his life, very few Egyptian soldiers managed to survive⁵⁰. They withdrew to fortresses that were under direct Khedive administration. After this victory, supporters of Mahdi started to threaten Khartoum, by enjoying support of the tribes around Sevâkîn⁵¹.

Though the Egyptian army, which faced a massacre in real sense, continued to dominate some fortresses in the country, Mahdi seized de facto control of Sudan after his victory. After this failure, the British government headed by Gladstone decided to withdraw its forces from Vadi Halfa. Sir Evelyn Wood suggested to Tevfik Pasha and the British government to fix borders of the Egyptian Khedivate on the condition of not being far from South Asvan⁵². The British side, positively approaching to this offer, divided Egypt and Sudan with a line through Vadi Halfa. As early as January 1884, the British authorities to provide security for Egypt closed this border. But official statement regarding this practice was made on May 11, 1885. In spite of the fact that turmoil in Sudan caused by the Mahdi advanced too much, Gladstone did not want any risk for British soldiers to control the developments. Instead, the London government steadily pressed on the Ottoman Empire to send troops there, as legal owner of hegemony⁵³.

The Ottoman government discussed the issue of sending army to Sudan, its right according to international rules, in commissions established by Abdülhamid the Second. After many debates on possible consequences of this policy, Abdülhamid rejected sending military forces, regarding it harmful to the interests of the state⁵⁴. Lives of soldiers of the Egyptian army, who were pinched in fortresses in Sudan, were under threat of the Mahdi forces. Rescuing them remained as a serious problem. Egyptian people, first of all, families of these soldiers, were in great anxiety about lives of these soldiers before the supporters of Mahdi, who had massacred thousands of Egyptian soldiers. London was in dilemma; it did not want to take any risk by joining this rescue operation, in order not to experience a new W. Hicks case. But the British government, eventually being helpless, decided to send General George Gordon for this task⁵⁵. Gordon had had a good military career. He had proved himself firstly in the Balaclava battle with the Chinese in 1860. When Khedive Ismail Pasha prohibited slave trade, he charged Gordon in 1874, to prevent human smuggling in Sudan⁵⁶.

From then on the year 1879, Gordon, as governor general, had left a good impression on local forces and especially tribal chiefs by establishing good relations with them⁵⁷. It was well known how General Gordon's task dangerous was. Just as, nobody volunteered for this operation, except him. Thus, British officers appreciated him⁵⁸. Gordon arrived at Cairo on January 24, 1884. He went to Khartoum via the river and by caravans on February 22. He announced here in his first statement that he returned to govern Sudan, with an authority above tribal chiefs, by the decree of the Khedive. However, when Gordon transmitted his plan to the higher ranks to go to the south and establish a garrison in Bahr al-Gazal, together with troops of the Khedive, the Gladstone government started to evaluate this new situation in a different way. Gladstone doubted that he would agree with the Belgian King, with the pretext of providing security in the borders of Belgian Congo, within the frame of this plan. In addition, he was anxious of Gordon's probable passion of leadership in the region in the name of the Belgian King. Acting by this supposition, Gladstone decreed him to return to Egypt and leave the Sudan people to get their liberty themselves⁵⁹. Gordon could not receive this order at that time, because supporters of Mahdi had destroyed all telegraph lines even before he arrived at Khartoum. After these developments, the Mahdi forces seized Khartoum and besieged the quarter around the government building, in which was Gordon, British commandant of the Egyptian army. Gladstone ordered Sir Wolseley on August 22, 1884, to go to Sudan to rescue

⁴⁹ *BOA, YEE*, 143/81.

⁵⁰ Henry S. L. Alford - W. Denniston Sword, *The Egyptian Sudan: Its Loss and Recovery*, Londra, MacMillan and Co. 1898, p. 10.

⁵¹ James Howard Thornton, *Memories Of Seven Campaigns*, Westminster; Archibald Constable And Co., 1895, s. 216; Robert Rhodes James, *The British Revolution 1880-1939*, New York; Alfred A. Knopf, 1977, p. 69.

⁵² George Earle Buckle (ed.) *The Letters of Queen Victoria*, New York; Longmans, Green and Co., III/ 455-458.

⁵³ *BOA, YEE*, 125/16.

⁵⁴ Members of the Assembly of Deputies sometimes supported the idea of Sending Ottoman troops to the region to take Sudan and the shores of the Red Sea under control. But Abdülhamid opposed to sending army, whatever the reason was. See 28.11. 1885 dated, *BOA, MVM*, 1/3.

⁵⁵ William M. Welch, Jr., *No Country For A Gentleman; British Rule In Egypt, 1883-1907*, New York- Londra; Greenwood Press, 1988, p. 12.

⁵⁶ For Ismail Pasha's charging Gordon, and the latter's activities around the White Nile, see, Abdul'Alim Halaf, *Kuşûfû Mısır el-İfrikîyye, fî Ahdi'l-Hıdiv İsmâil (1863-1879)*, Kahire; El-Hey'et el-Misriyye el-Amme li'l-Kütüb, 1999, p. 63-108.

⁵⁷ Pierre Crabités, *Gordon The Sudan And Slavery*, New York; Negro Universities Press, 1969, p. 62.

⁵⁸ Sir Frederick Charles Arthur Stephenson, *At Home And On The Battlefield, Letters From The Crimea, China And Egypt, 1854-1888*, Londra; John Murray, 1915,

⁵⁹ Bernard M. Allen, *Gordon and the Sudan*, London, MacMillan and Co., 1931, p.204.

Gordon. General Sir Wolseley reached Khartoum on January 28, 1885, after a long and onerous journey together with a force of 10.000 soldiers. But he was too late. Men of Mahdi had killed Gordon two days ago. Moreover, they challenged to the Britain by cutting off the general's head⁶⁰. The rescue force under Wolseley did some military activities in Sevâkin and Sudan, within the context of its duty⁶¹. But they had to return to Egypt, being not able to do anything for the essential task. This situation that posed a serious threat to British presence in Egypt forced London to develop new policies.

By the way, new policies of the Ottomans to suppress the Sudan rebellion by referring to the Khalifate authority gained actuality. In other words, Britain needed political and military support of the Ottoman State to provide security in Egypt. That Britain expressed this necessity was very important in showing that the Ottoman State was still a determinant factor in the Egypt issue. Gazi Ahmed Muhtar Pasha, high commissary of the Ottoman State for Egypt, proposed some solutions. But Britain did not tend to accept them. The pasha, on the other hand, was continuously sending reports to Istanbul on the British effort of dropping the issue of evacuation of Egypt, by organizing the events in Sudan⁶².

Another conviction of Gazi Ahmed Muhtar Pasha was that Sudan was as important as Egypt in term of its Indian and Red Sea politics from the British view. Thus, they were trying to separate Sudan from Egypt and take under their suzerainty. They wanted to invade Sudan referring the same justifications as they used in their invasion of Egypt⁶³. These different approaches between the sides were again actualized, as before-mentioned, due to the last developments in Khartoum. The Mahdi forces had to withdraw from Khartoum, after Wolseley's forces arrived there. That the Sudan rebellion, continuously complained about as a threat, started to loose its dynamism let the Ottoman side to launch a new political attack. After the withdrawal, the Mahdi forces started to gather in the town Omdurman, opposite to Khartoum, on the White Nile. They started also to turn the town into their capital city, but did not live much to see its completion; he died in June 1885 due to an unexpected disease⁶⁴.

After his demise, activities of the Sudan rebels continued without any interruption. Abdullah, taking the title "Khalifa" replaced Mahdi as leader⁶⁵. But after this date, the Sudan crisis lost its actuality in terms of the Egypt question. The British government was convicted that it could not set up an order in Sudan as in Egypt⁶⁶. Meanwhile, it tried to develop new policies, with the anxiety that the loss of prestige that it faced in Sudan and the legality issue would affect Egypt, too. The forces of Mahdi and the Khedive fought in the Vadi Halfa region, where Britain had drew the border, for 11 years, with some interruptions. Britain learned in 1896 that France attempted to enter the Upper Nile region from the west. There were gossips that Leopold, Belgian King, also would act in the same manner.

Another country racing to get some share was Italy. Italians determined Ethiopia to be their new target, after they invaded Musawwa in 1885. Italy, moving in this direction, did not give up its imperialist passions, in spite of the unexpected defeat of its forces in Adova. Lord Salisbury, wanting to reinforce British presence in Egypt and Vadi Nil in the light of these developments, decided to invade Sudan on March 17, 1896. British forces realized this aim by completing invasion of Sudan.

The Ottoman State failed in its diplomatic struggle against Britain, France and Italy along the shores of the Red Sea to prevent invasions of these colonialist powers. But it prevented their easily swallowing of these regions. Diplomatically, it continuously tried to keep its right of hegemony in these regions, which belonged to it according to international laws. In this respect, it delayed, at least, colonization of the region by European powers.

⁶⁰ Kamil Paşa, *Kamil Paşa'nın Anıları*, (ed. Gül Çağalı-Güven), İstanbul; Arba Yayınları, 1991, p.40-43.

⁶¹ The Ottoman State was closely observing acts of Wolseley in Sudan and Sevakin. See, *BOA, YEE Defterleri*, 1090, p.67, 78.

⁶² For views of Gazi Ahmed Muhtar Pasha, see, *BOA, YEE*, 118/17.

⁶³ *BOA, YEE*, 118/20.

⁶⁴ P. M. Holt, *The Mahdist State In The Sudan, 1881-1898*, Oxford; 1951, s.96.

⁶⁵ *BOA, YEE*, 143/81.

⁶⁶ *BOA, YEE Defterleri*, 1018, p.79.