

Refuge of the Ottoman Grand Viziers to Britain: M. Said Paşa's at the British Embassy (1895) & Kâmil Paşa's at the Consulate General in İzmir (1907)

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ABSTRACT

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The reign of Abdul Hamid II was a period in which both internal events and foreign states, especially Britain, intervened frequently on certain issues. The Armenian issue was one of these issues. In particular, Britain constantly pressured the Ottoman State to implement reforms in favor of the Armenians and to improve their status in order to prevent the Armenians' inclination towards the Russians. The period when these pressures were most intense was in the 1890s, when Armenians rebelled almost everywhere in Anatolia. Armenians rebelled, the Ottoman government suppressed them, and the British government applied political pressure on the Ottoman palace and government for suppressing the rebellions by force. In such an environment, Mehmet Said Pasha, the Prime Minister of the Ottoman Government, who was squeezed between the Ottoman Palace and the British Embassy, was fed up with the situation and took refuge in the British Embassy in 1895. Similarly, another Prime Minister of Abdul Hamid II had to take refuge in the British Consulate in Izmir in 1907 due to the pressure from the palace while he was governor of Izmir. In addition to the original sources in the British and Ottoman Archives, second-hand sources on the subject have also been seen.

Keywords: Grand Vizier, Mehmet Said Pasha, Kâmil Pasha, British Embassy, Abdul Hamid II, Refuge, British Consulate-General in Smyrna.

ÖZ

ÇELİK, Aysel; DOSSYMOVA, Mugazima, **Osmanlı Sadrazamları, M. Said Paşa'nın 1895'te İngiliz Elçiliğine ve Kâmil Paşa'nın 1907'de İzmir Konsolosluğuna Sığınması**, CTAD, Yıl 21, Sayı 42 (Bahar 2025), s. 369-390.

İkinci Abdülhamit Dönemi gerek iç olaylar ve gerekse dış devletlerin özellikle İngiltere'nin belli konularda çok müdahale ettiği bir dönemdir. Ermeni meselesi de bu sorunlardan biridir. Özellikle İngiltere Ermenilerin Ruslara meylini önlemek için Osmanlı devletine Ermeniler lehine reformları uygulamak ve onların durumunu düzeltmek için sık sık baskı yaptığı görülmektedir. Bu baskıların en yoğun olduğu dönem de 1890'lı yıllarda Ermenilerin Anadolu'da hemen her yerde isyan çıkardıkları dönemdir. Ermeniler isyan çıkardıklarında Osmanlı hükûmetinin bunları bastırmasına

İngiliz Hükûmeti tepki göstermiş; Saray ve Hükûmete güç kullanarak isyanları bastırmaması için baskı yapmıştır. Böyle bir ortamda Osmanlı Sarayı ile İngiliz Büyükelçiliği arasında kalan Osmanlı Hükûmeti Başbakanı Mehmet Said Paşa'nın artık durumdan bıkararak 1895 yılında İngiliz Elçiliği'ne sığınması ile ilgili ayrıntıları ortaya koymaktadır. Benzer şekilde II. Abdülhamid'in diğer bir sadrazamı da İzmir'de valilik yaparken saraydan gelen baskılar nedeniyle 1907 yılında İzmir'deki İngiliz Konsolosluğu'na sığınmak zorunda kalmıştır. İngiliz ve Osmanlı Arşivleri kaynaklarında yer alan orijinal bilgiler haricinde konuyla ilgili ikinci el kaynaklar da gözden geçirilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sadrazam, Mehmet Said Paşa, Kâmil Paşa, İngiliz Büyükelçiliği, Abdulhamit II, Sığınma, İzmir Konsolosluğu.

Introduction

The reign of Abdülhamid II played a very significant role in late Ottoman history. In the years following Abdülhamid's accession to the throne especially after the Treaty of Berlin (1878) the Ottomans were exposed to a series of foreign interventions in their internal affairs under the pretext of helping the Sultan's minority subjects. Abdülhamid's reign coincided with the Austrian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1878, the British occupation of Cyprus in 1878 and of Egypt in 1882, the French occupation of Tunisia in 1881, the Cretan question, the Ottoman-Greek war, the struggle for Macedonia, and with the Armenian question.¹ Among those, the Armenian issue was one of the most important matters on which Abdülhamid from the beginning of his reign to its end had diplomatically fought against the European governments, particularly against Britain. The 1890's marked the beginning of the creation of the fundamental events and uprisings by the Armenians which led the European Powers to increase their pressure on the Ottoman government for the application of the reforms mentioned in Article 61 of the Berlin Treaty. Especially in 1894 when an Armenian revolt broke out in Sasun province and was bloodily suppressed by the Ottoman forces, it was propagandized in Europe by the incitement of the British government that the Armenians were subjected to the massacre at the hands of the Muslims in Anatolia. This propaganda soon found its echo in the European press leading their governments to back the British proposals for the execution of the Armenian reforms.

¹ Musa Şaşmaz, "The Legitimacy of the Emergence of the Armenian Question", *OTAM*, No 8, 1997, p.319-347.

Discussions held between the Sublime Porte and the British Embassy in particular to give a final shape to the British proposals of the reform Project on the whole summer. However, generally speaking, the British policy of that time encouraged the Armenians to begin to revolt against the Ottoman supremacy in almost all districts in Anatolia where they felt themselves powerful. It is observed that there were sources of inspiration and courage, as far as the Armenian uprisings were concerned, of them the first was the obvious British support for the Armenian struggle and the second one was the weakness of the Ottoman government under the presidency of M. Said being unable to take decisive actions against the notorious Armenians.

M. Said was one of the most famous and leading statesmen during the reign of Abdülhamid II covering the period of over thirty years. He was given power as grand vizier nine times of which seven were at his reign, and of which two were following the dethronement of the Sultan in question. It should be noted that his appointments to such an important post as that of grand vizier several times were undoubtedly important signs of the role which he undertook in late Ottoman history.

This manuscript aims to reflect the refuge he was to take in the British Embassy on 4 December 1895 after his leave of the office of the Grand Vizierate of the fifth is to be fully discussed. To find out the reasons for his refuge, it is necessary to go back to the period of his last *sadaret* from 8 June to 1 October 1895. It is more likely that the reasons resulting in his removal from the post of *sadaret* might have also played a great deal of role in his taking refuge in the Embassy. We are, therefore, inclined to do research in the British archival sources as to what he conversed with the staffs of the Embassy and what he said to them about the Sultan during his *Sadaret*, which led to his fall. We also did research on the demands made by the Embassy staffs and met by M Said while in office. After all these, one might conclude that M Said played the role of a mediator between the Sultan and the Embassy. Apparently, this role of M Said was not favoured by the Sultan who at the end had but to have him removed from the post. The most important issue during his fifth *sadaret* which the Sultan and the Sublime Porte was trying to solve was the application of the reforms in the article 61 of the Berlin Treaty for the Armenians. On this matter, the British government had prepared a project of reforms and submitted to the Sublime Porte on 11 may 1895 for the fulfilment of the article

61 of the Berlin Treaty.² The British government had been pressuring the Ottoman government for their immediate application for some time.

The Sultan was of the opinion that these reforms, if applied as they were, would lead the Armenians to establish autonomy and part the provinces concerned from the rule of the Sultan. He, therefore, did all he could to omit the points from the project which would infringe the rights of the Sultan and which would detach the so-called Armenian provinces from the Ottoman Empire. However, he was aware that he did need a person in *sadaret* having favor especially in the British Embassy. For this reason, M Said was again brought to the post of grand vizier for the fifth time in June 1895.³ The Sultan had big expectations from M. Said to bring the reform-matter to an end. Its solution was highly important, and not only the Sultan but also all the Muslims were eager to close this matter as soon as possible. In such a state, M. Said became a new grand vizier. However, the British government in his time did not tend to extract from the scheme the points deemed as highly damaging the rights of the Sultan and the unity of the Empire. Furthermore, M. Said, contrary to the Sultan, justified the British demands and considered the Sultan as the only obstacle in the way of the execution of the reforms. M. Said however portrayed himself to be the only person in Ottoman administration wishing to act on the British demands⁴. The lack of harmony between the Sultan and M. Said finally led to the latter's removal from the post of *sadaret*.

Similarly, M. Kâmil Pasha, another Grand Vizier of the Sultan was obliged to take refuge in the British Consulate in Izmir in 1907 due to the pressure from the Palace during his governorship in Izmir.

Said Pasha's Refuge to the British Embassy and its Aftermath

Philip Currie, the British Ambassador at Istanbul, and the new Grand Vizier Mehmed Said had a long conversation about the Armenian reforms on 10 June 1895. In this conversation M Said opened his conversation by asking that he

² For the discussions about the reform-matter, see Musa Şaşmaz, *British Policy and the Application of Reforms for the Armenians in Eastern Anatolia 1877-1897*, Ankara, 2000 also Ali Karaca, *Anadolu İslahatı ve Ahmed Şakir Paşa 1838- 1899*, İstanbul, 1993, pp. 47-49.

³ For M Said's *sadaret* (grand vizierate) of the fifth, see Zekeriya Kurşun, *Küçük Mehmed Said Paşa 1838-1914, Siyasi Hayatı, İcraatı ve Fikirleri*, *op. cit.* PhD Diss., Marmara University, İstanbul, 1991, pp. 78-86 and also I. Hami Danışmend, *İzablı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi*, Volume 4, pp. 331-335, Volume 5, pp. 92-100 and also Emel Demir Görür, "Sadrazam Mehmed Said Paşa'nın (Küçük) İngiliz Büyükelçiliğine Sığınması (1895)", *Gazi Akademik Bakış*, Volume 15, No. 29, 2021, pp. 69-88.

⁴ Osman Nuri, *Abdülhamid-i Sani ve Devr-i Saltanatı, Hayat-ı Hususîye ve Siyaseti*, 3 Vols, Vol/3, İstanbul, 1327, pp. 821-822.

should obtain some delay from the British government in communicating their decision on the answer returned by the Sultan to the British scheme of reforms given earlier to the Sublime Porte. Currie replied that unless the principles of the plan of reforms for their execution should be accepted and Currie could give his government an assurance that the delay would lead to a modification of the answer in a sense that would be satisfactory, he found no use in attempting to comply with Said's request. Said then replied that while agreeing with Currie about the necessity of the reforms and recognizing the gravity of the situation, he required time to reconcile with the susceptibilities of the Sultan about the difficult measures to be adopted such as the admission of the dragomans to the Commission of Control and the veto by the ambassadors on the appointments of the *Valis*. M Said listened to Currie who replied that without the guarantees proposed and the support given by the Powers it would be impossible to carry out the scheme in face of the difficulties which the Palace would throw in their way. M Said finally made his remark that he would do his best to obtain a satisfactory solution⁵. It is apparent from above that M Said in his conversation with Currie acted as a mediator between the Sultan and Currie rather than an Ottoman representative to defend the position of the Ottomans as regards the question of reforms. He found it easier to throw all the blame to the Sultan. Not only did he blame the Sultan but also weakened the position of the Ottomans against the British government on reforms by making such a conversation as in this manner. M Said acquainted the Sultan with the substance of this conversation. M Said, however, felt that he had no chance of being able to overcome the susceptibilities of the Sultan unless the wording of the three points in the reform-scheme was somehow modified. While he was quoting the stand of the Sultan in the reform matter to the British Embassy he portrayed himself as someone who was eager to apply to what the British government proposed. This meant in a sense that it was due to the obstinacy of the Sultan refusing to come to the terms with the Embassy, which put M Said into an extremely difficult position in the eyes of the British Embassy⁶.

On 13 June 1895, M Said sent to Currie a private message through Adam Block, the Embassy dragoman, in which he pleaded insufficiency of time and begged for further delay. In his message he accused the Sultan of putting the fate of the Ottoman Empire at stake, and professed that he had great difficulties to contend with, as the Sultan was still undecided. Said considered

⁵ *The National Archives, Foreign Office (FO) 78/4628*, Currie to the Earl of Kimberley, no: 239 tel, 10 June 1895,

⁶ Currie to the Earl of Kimberley, no: 240 conf. tel, 11 June 1895, FO 78/4628.

the content of his message as extremely confidential and did ask Currie not to communicate it to Rüstem Pasha, the Ottoman Ambassador to London.⁷

A new Cabinet of the Conservative Party had been formed in England in June 1895 and it was of importance that a definite answer should be sent to the new government. Block, therefore, went to see M. Said to inquire whether the latter would give him in any shape a definite and intelligible answer to the reform-proposals. M. Said fully understood the necessity of giving a quick and acceptable reply to the British proposals for the sake of the conciliation between the Sultan and the Conservative government, but failed to do so because of the Sultan. There is no doubt that the conciliation between them was highly significant, however not more significant than giving away a large part of the country under the guise of the so-called reforms. M Said Pasha was at the head of the government and was supposed to defend the rights of the country he represented. What M Said was telling the Embassy should have been considered as confidential and kept totally secret. M Said was informing the Embassy about whatever was going on in the Sublime Porte and at the Ottoman Palace. He was acting as a British agent and whispered Block that there was an impression prevailing at the Palace that the Conservative Cabinet would drop the Armenian question. In order not to lose any credit at the Embassy, he added that he had done what he could to eradicate this false impression and, in a way, he guided the British Embassy by saying that in the present condition of affairs the Conservative government would continue the policy of their predecessors, and would be firmer in insisting on a settlement of the question. He also reported to Adam Block what had passed between the Sultan and himself, and that he had told the Sultan that it was absolutely necessary to settle the Armenian question now before others cropped up. He implied that he was probably the only person willing to accept and implement the British reform scheme. To justify his criticism, he mentioned the situation in Macedonia and on the Bulgarian frontier which showed the lamentable weakness of the administration. The burden of the blame for such a kind of administration was imposed only on the Sultan as M Said stated that he saw no sign of awareness in the Sultan that he had understood the gravity of the question, and the necessity of giving a favourable reply. Said further said that “*Il y a des états psychologiques que je ne comprend pas (There are psychological states that I don't understand.)*”. Despite his willingness to conclude this question, he met with the greatest opposition in his efforts to bring the matter to an end. Surely to conclude the question was not the first priority as far as the benefits of the Ottoman Empire were concerned. What was really crucial was to bring the

⁷ Currie to the Earl of Kimberley, no: 242 tel, 13 June 1895, FO 78/4628.

question to an end without infringing the rights of the Sultan and disallowing the detachment of any part of the country from the Ottoman Empire.

Block mentioned to M Said about Currie's hope that whoever he (the president of the Commission of Control) might be he would at any rate be Said's nominee. Said replied this with a question, "*Do you think that my nominee would be accepted by the Palace, and not that I shall have to accept the nominee of the palace?*"⁸

Relying on this information one can assume that there was a disagreement between M. Said and the Sultan as to how to solve the question of reforms. M. Said tended to accept the reform proposals without much delay, but the Sultan considered these proposals as quite harmful, and feared that they would most likely lead to the disintegration of the country if they were accepted and put into execution as they were. The Sultan therefore did what he could to omit or modify the points in the proposals so that his fear about the future of the country would be evaded. Said's view was supported and backed by the British Embassy, because it was in line with the British benefits. M Said being aware of this journaled to the Embassy what the Sultan thought about the reforms. By doing this Said increased his credit at the Embassy, while the Sultan continued to lose his support if any left. For this purpose, M Said told Block that he had lately asked for full powers to carry out what he had in his mind. This was refused by the Sultan, and on this account M. Said threatened to resign.⁹

Block in his memorandum prepared on 27 June pointed out that without support he was unable to stand against the Sultan and it would inevitably lead to his downfall. With reference to the support M Said sent an indirect message to the Embassy, asking how far the Embassy was prepared to afford him material assistance in case of need as Lord Stratford offered to do to Reşid Pasha when Stratford anchored a *stationnaire* before the house of Reşid Pasha. To this question no clear answer was given by both Currie and the Earl of Kimberley. Nevertheless, here it is noteworthy that M Said at least had planned his refuge to the Embassy at least seven months earlier than it actually took place.

One year before the Armenian uprising took place in Van, groundless rumours were circulated in order to pacify the local administrators and local Muslims, and to agitate the Armenian militias. The rumours were circulated by the Armenian bishop and the Americans there claiming that the present *Vali* of

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Currie to the Earl of Kimberley, no: 421, 27 June 1895, FO 78/4613 enclosing a memorandum by Block.

Van was threatening the administrative councillors of Armenian origin with massacre in case of any attempt to introduce reforms. It appears less likely that these rumours reflected the reality on the ground, since it is remembered that a year later the Armenians would have the courage and the power to challenge the presence of the Ottoman government in Van which supports the supposition that the Armenians were not as much weak and innocent as claimed to be.¹⁰

The *Vali* of Van, Bahri Pasha, had captured about fourteen Armenian revolutionaries including an Englishman near Saray in May 1895, and sent them off to Istanbul for trial.¹¹ At about the same time on 9 June another British consul in Erzurum, Graves was reporting an affray with a band of armed Armenians crossing Russia into the frontier districts of Anatolia. Of them four were killed, two taken prisoners and at least one succeeded in escaping. Amongst the killed was a revolutionary agent known as Avedis “the European” who had lately been very active in smuggling arms etc, to the Armenians in the eastern provinces of Anatolia. The consul Graves admitted that there had been a considerable increase of delay in the introduction of arms and ammunition into Eleşirgird, Pasin and Hınıs districts and that the Armenian revolutionary organizations in Russian territory had apparently lost their patience and resumed their suspended activity.¹² The *Vali* of Van, Bahri Pasha, was left between the evil-triangle of the bishop, the American residents, and the British vice-consul, all of whom were Turcophobic but active Armenian supporters. In such a situation, the vice-consul applied to his ambassador, Currie to make representation on the Grand Vizier M. Said to cause the removal of the *vali* of Van so that those mentioned Armenian advocates could make things ready for the uprising in the next spring and act freely as they wished. The vice-consul Hallward telegraphed to Currie to cooperate with the Patriarch and the United

¹⁰ For the Armenian challenges and uprisings during 1890's and earlier, namely the Case of Musa Bey, Erzurum Revolt, Kumkapı Event, Sason Uprising, see, Musa Şaşmaz, *Kürt Musa Bey Olayı*, İstanbul, 2004 and Musa Şaşmaz, *İngiliz Konsolosları ve Ermenilerin Katliamı İddiaları (1878-1914)*, Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, Ankara, 2013, pp.393-558. For the details about the incident at Kumkapı in 1890, see also Musa Şaşmaz, “Kumkapı Ermeni Olayı 1890”, *Tarih İncelemeleri Dergisi*, Number 19, 2004, s. 101-118.

¹¹ Hallward to Graves, no: 45, 4 June 1895, FO 195/1892.

¹² Graves to Currie, no: 108, 13 June 1895, FO 195/1892 and also Currie to the Earl of Kimberley, no: 404, 24 June 1895, FO 78/4613.

States' Minister respectively to press for the immediate removal of Bahri Pasha.¹³

In consequence of Salisbury's instruction, Currie on 2 July called the Grand Vizier and urged the dismissal of Bahri Pasha. M Said at once promised to make inquiry¹⁴ and then he applied to the Sultan for his removal from the post of *vali*¹⁵ Currie reminded M Said Pasha of his promise on 17 July and pressed upon him the necessity of his removal. Said informed that no reply had as yet been received from the Sultan, but promised that he would renew his application.¹⁶ M Said again went to the Sultan for the *vali*'s removal. The Sultan at last had but to dismiss Bahri Pasha. The latter was succeeded by Nazim Pasha, the *mutasarrıf* of Prusend.¹⁷ The vice-consul Hallward was satisfied with the announcement of the dismissal of Bahri Pasha from the post on 29 July.¹⁸

As a result of the British representation on M Said Pasha, Hallward reached his goal by having the *Vali* Bahri Pasha dismissed through the assistance provided by the Grand Vizier, M. Said Pasha. It was not only Bahri Pasha who got his share of the British interference with the affairs of local administration in certain parts of Anatolia, but also the *Kaymakam* of Sasun, the *vali* of Bitlis, head of the police, tax-collector, prison officer and so on.¹⁹ They were subdued by the threats of the members of the British Embassy with one or another reason so that the Armenians would threaten and accelerate their acts of violence against the Muslims with impunity. Said also persuaded the Sultan to release the Armenian ecclesiastics in prison so as to calm the irritation prevailing amongst the Armenians²⁰. Thanks to the efforts of M. Said Pasha, a general amnesty was issued for all the Armenians condemned or detained for "political offenses" except for those accused of bomb-throwing, murder or

¹³ Hallward to Currie, tel, 1 July 1895, FO 195/1887 and also Currie to Salisbury, no: 273 tel, 2 July 1895, FO 78/4628.

¹⁴ Hallward to Currie, tel, 1 July 1895, FO 195/1887 and also Currie to Salisbury, no: 273 tel, 2 July 1895, FO 78/4628.

¹⁵ Currie to Salisbury, no:279 tel, 4 July 1895, FO 78/4628.

¹⁶ Currie to Salisbury, no:298 tel, 17 July 1895, FO 78/4628.

¹⁷ Currie to Salisbury, no:298 tel, 17 July 1895, FO 78/4628 and also Currie to Salisbury, no:342 tel, 29 July 1895, FO 78/4628.

¹⁸ Hallward to Graves, no: 63, 29 July 1895, FO 195/1892.

¹⁹ Currie to Salisbury, no: 550, 28 August 1895, FO 78/4616 and also Currie to Salisbury, no: 626, 25 September 1895, FO 78/4617.

²⁰ Currie to Salisbury, no: 465, 14 July 1895, FO 78/4614.

such grave crimes to be released after taking the oath of fidelity in July 1895²¹. Accordingly, all the so-called Armenian political prisoners were set free before the end of July 1895.²²

Furthermore, a document at the Ottoman archive manifestly criticized M Said on the ground that he was brought to the office as a result of his promises to conclude the reform-issue.²³ The Sultan, therefore, with a view to pleasing Britain assigned the relevant post to him. M Said, contrary to his promises made before his appointment, procrastinated in taking up action to settle the reform-issue and ineptly got entangled with insurmountable problems. Armenian committees, being indirectly encouraged by his way of actions against the insurgents and believing in the stratagems, attempted insurgent and seditious operations both in Istanbul and in the provinces. M Said failed or did not wish to take necessary measures against all the eventualities although he was given information by the Ministry of Security beforehand about the location of the insurgent activities.²⁴ M Said not only paid insufficient attention to the issues at stake, but also had the arrested seditious released through the mediation of the British Embassy. It was claimed that he went as far as giving orders to the Ministry of Security to turn a blind eye to potential revolutionaries whose ill-intentions were quite manifest.²⁵ M Said not only paid insufficient attention to the issues at stake, but also had the arrested seditious released through the mediation of the British Embassy. It was claimed that he went as far as giving orders to the Ministry of Security to turn a blind eye to potential revolutionaries whose ill-intentions were quite manifest.²⁶ This particular stance adopted by M Said encouraged the Armenians to attempt even attacking the Sublime Porte. His imprudence during the incident in Istanbul in late September 1895 and insistence on undue tolerance were coupled with several instances of cowardice displaced as if to relieve himself of any liability. Although the grounds for his dismissal were such treacherous

²¹ Currie to Salisbury, no: 319 tel, 23 July 1895, FO 78/4628.

²² Currie to Salisbury, no: 321 tel, 25 July 1895, FO 78/4628.

²³ Prime Minister's Archive (Istanbul) YEE, k:9, e:1065, z:72, kr:4.

²⁴ For details, see YEE, k:31, e:2023, z:45, kr:83.

²⁵ T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi – Republic of Türkiye Presidential Archives the Ottoman Archive (BOA) Yıldız Esas Evrakı, (Y.EE), k:9, e:1065, z:72, kr:4; and M. Zeki Pakalın, *Son Sadrazamlar ve Başvekilleri*, Volume 5, Istanbul, 1948, pp. 101-103 also *Ottoman Archives, Yıldız Collection, the Armenian Question*, Volume 2, 1989, pp. 303-309.

²⁶ Y.EE, k:9, e:1065, z:72, kr:4; and M. Zeki Pakalın, *ibid*, Volume 5, (Istanbul 1948), pp. 101-103 also *Ottoman Archives, Yıldız Collection, the Armenian Question*, vol. 2, pp. 303-309.

activities, he did not behave himself even after he was relieved from office. He seemed to give professing support for the pro-Armenian policies.²⁷

Although the Sultan dismissed M. Said in October 1895 the former was aware of M. Said's influence both at the British Embassy and on the Ottoman subjects, which led the Sultan to require M. Said' advice and assistance to get rid of the British pressure and the Armenian question. While M. Said was in office he tended to give concessions both to the Armenians and the British Embassy. After his removal the Sultan feared that M. Said could have behaved so capriciously that he could cooperate with the opposition against the Sultan, so the latter tried to keep M. Said under his control by giving him unfounded promises and hopes so that M. Said would not be distant from the Sultan.

For this purpose, two weeks after M. Said's removal the Sultan sent various officials at the Palace to M. Said's house to inform him that he was soon to be reappointed to the post of the Grand Vizier. The main aim was to force M. Said to cooperate with the Sultan to repel the reform question. The information sent to M. Said about his reappointment never stopped coming in, however, he did not receive a decree of the Sultan certifying his reappointment. The offers were repeated several times between 18 October and 3 November. The Sultan made a new offer on 3 November saying that M. Said should take up his abode in the Palace and act as his adviser. M. Said was informed that the authority given to him was superior to that of the Grand Vizier, and that he would be authorized to decide by a simple note all questions except those relating to politics, upon which he would be expected to consult with the Sultan. M. Said pointed out that such an office would be contrary to the laws and institutions of the Ottoman Empire, and consequently declined to assume the responsibility of it.

The Sultan then sent Izzet Bey, the First Imperial Secretary, to M Said's house to inform him that an apartment had been prepared for him in a kiosk in the Çit Palace, and that he was to reside there and be ready at all times, to give advice to the Sultan. M. Said replied that his advice would always be at the Sultan's service, but that he must decline to leave his house. On 4 December Izzet Bey visited him in his house again, insisting upon his taking up his abode in the kiosk and suggesting that if he could not move there permanently, he should at any rate do so for five or six days.²⁸

²⁷ *Said Pasha'nın Hatıratı*, Volume 1, Istanbul 1328, pp, 325-330.

²⁸ Currie to Salisbury, no: 918, 10 December 1895, FO 78/4623.

The offer of an office superior to that of Grand Vizier and the insistence on his stay in the kiosk aroused his fears that his life was threatened.²⁹ They coupled with rumours which reached him from private sources, such as from Artin Pasha, an Armenian who came to M. Said's house shortly before his refuge, told him that he was soon to be subjected to the Sultan's persecution.³⁰ In such a state of mind³¹ he determined, in order to preserve his personal liberty, to take refuge at the British Embassy on the afternoon of the 4th of December.³²

Shortly after his arrival, M. Said addressed a letter to the British Embassy, informing him of the step he had taken, and of the motives which had prompted it. M. Said in his letter emphasized that he had accepted the post of the Grand Vizier five times just to serve the country in its troubled times. While in office, he loyally dealt with the affairs assigned to him. So, he got exhausted and weak. For the last twenty days he had been asked by Izzet to accept the offers of firstly the post of the Grand Vizier then the post superior to that the Grand Vizier to inspect all government affairs. He declined to accede to it. However, on December, Izzet renewed his offer leading M. Said to take refuge. His final wish was to go to Europe to live there without being involved in Ottoman politics.³³

During M. Said's refuge at the Embassy³⁴ the British Ambassador, Currie reported the developments about the of M. Said's refuge to his own Foreign Minister, the Marquiss of Salisbury, and determined his policy towards the Palace according to the directives received.³⁵ In the first day of the refuge, Currie sent Salisbury a telegraphic despatch to inform him of M. Said's refuge

²⁹ Osman Nuri, *Abdülhamid-i Sani ve Devr-i Saltanatı, Hayat-ı Hususiye ve Siyaseti*, Volume 2, p. 610.

³⁰ *Said Pasha'nın Hatıratı*, p. 355.

³¹ Edwin Pears quoting from Lady Currie after M Said's leave of the Embassy noted that "the poor man (M Said) was evidently in a terrible state of alarm, and not only begged that his son might sleep in the same room with him, but that, although two beds were made up in one room, it was found that only one had been slept in." Sir Edwin Pears, *Forty Years in Constantinople, the Recollections of Sir Edwin Pears 1873-1915*, London, 1916, p. 174.

³² Currie to Salisbury, no: 766 tel, 4 December 1895, FO 78/4629; MSP, C. 1, P. 353 and also M. Loze, the French Ambassador to Vienne to M Berthelot, the French Foreign Minister, no: 172 d, 12 December 1895, *Documents Diplomatiques Français (1871-1914)* the first series (1871-1900), vol/12, pp. 344-345.

³³ Y.EE, K;31, E; 1972, Z; 45, Kr; 83 and also Ibnülemin M. Kemal Inal, *Osmanlı devrinde Son sadrazamlar*, vol. 7, (Istanbul 1965), pp. 1032-33. (Hereafter quoted as *Son Sadrazamlar*)

³⁴ Sir Edwin Pears, *Life of Abdul Hamid*, London, 1917, p. 236-37.

³⁵ Salisbury to Currie, no 251 tel, 5 December 1895, FO 881/6820.

and explained that the Sultan had for several days past been urging him to come and live in a kiosk in Yıldız. Once there, Currie alleged that he would be deprived of all sure means of communicating with his friends outside.³⁶ The same day not only Salisbury but also the ambassadors in Istanbul were informed of the refuge. They all expressed concurrence in the course Currie had taken. They decided to convey a meeting the following day, on the 5th of December.³⁷

Meanwhile, M. Said's letter had reached the Sultan, and the latter at a late hour of the first night sent firstly his Foreign Minister, Tevfik Pasha alone, but then Tevfik Pasha and his ex-Foreign Minister (presently the acting President of the Council) Said Pasha together to M. Said at the Embassy to persuade him to leave the Embassy.³⁸ They strongly urged him to return to his home, pointing out the disastrous effects to himself and his family if he persisted.³⁹ They delivered a message from the Sultan in a very formal language stating that he was surprised and annoyed, and that he could not understand the conduct from one to whom he had shown so many favors. He also emphasized that he was deeply pained at the accusation against himself which that conduct seemed to imply, and also regretted the impression which it would inevitably produce amongst the Muslims, an impression which ought to be unfavorable to M. Said Pasha. He begged the latter, both as a favor to himself and for his own honor to return at once before his visit to the Embassy was known. The message further revealed that the Sultan had an urgent need of his advice, and requested him to assist his Sovereign in the present difficult crisis by becoming a Grand Vizier.

M. Said then said he could best reply to the Imperial message by reading a letter which he had written to the acting Grand Vizier as soon as he had arrived. In this letter he had made profuse professions of loyalty, and acknowledged the Sultan's invariable kindness but said he could no longer support the conduct of the Sultan's entourage, and especially of Izzet Bey. He then reiterated his demand of permission to go abroad with his family and reside in whatever country might seem suitable to the Sultan. Both the President of the Council and the Foreign Minister tried to convince him that

³⁶ Currie to Salisbury, no 768 tel, 4 December 1895, F0 78/4629.

³⁷ Currie to Salisbury, no 769 tel, 4 December 1895, F0 78/4629.

³⁸ Currie to Salisbury, no 774 tel, 5 December 1895, F0 78/4629.

³⁹ Currie to Salisbury, no 918, 10 December 1895, F0 78/4623.

there was no need to have any fears of his personal safety, and that they were ready to take an oath that he would enjoy complete security.⁴⁰

For a moment M. Said nearly seemed to be convinced and expressed his thanks for the Imperial message and his unalterable loyalty to the Sultan. However, a few minutes later, M. Said began again his speech recapitulating the events of the last few weeks and described how the Sultan was continually asking for his advice without ever accepting it; how he was kept waiting for hours at Yıldız; how he was obliged to receive messages through İzzet Bey; how he had been sent around to the Embassies with messages about the *stationnaires*; and how the Sultan had refused to entertain the suggestions he had ventured to make. For these reasons, he said, he could bear it no longer and not accept the Sultan's gracious offers. After all these remarks the two Ministers threatened him with the consequences for his family if he persisted in staying in the Embassy.⁴¹ Tefvik Pasha and Said Pasha visited the ambassadors in the morning on 5 December, and asked them to endeavour to persuade M. Said Pasha to return home, offering on the part of the Sultan to guarantee his safety. In the afternoon the ambassadors met and decided that the Austrian Ambassador should see M. Said in Currie's presence and should inform him of the communication made to the ambassadors and should ask him whether he considered the proposed guarantees satisfactory and would be willing to return home. They also decided to use no pressure on him and if he refused to accept the proposed guarantees they would endeavour to obtain permission for him to go abroad.⁴²

After Tefvik and Said left the Embassy at about noon on 5 December Tahsin Bey, the First Secretary of the Sultan called on M. Said, bringing another message from the Sultan. In the conversation which ensued, M. Said used much the same arguments in the previous interview with the two Ministers. At a later stage of the conversation, Ragıp Bey, one of the Chamberlains, joined in. M.

⁴⁰ Tefvik and Said on 6 December wrote a letter about the conversation they held with M. Said. They promised that if he renounced his wish to go abroad he would not be assigned to any job neither in the country nor in abroad unless wished, would enjoy complete freedom and security together with his family and would receive his pension, YEE, K;31, E; 1977, Z; 45, Kr; 83 and also *Son Sadrazamlar*, pp. 1034-1035. When they asked M. Said before the refuge whether İzzet in his conversation with him before the refuge said anything that led him to fear, M. Said replied that İzzet said nothing of that sort, but that the strange persistence on the part of the Sultan in his taking up his abode in the kiosk aroused his fears, Y.EE, K; 31, E; 1979, Z; 45, Kr; 83 and *Son Sadrazamlar*, p. 1035.

⁴¹ Currie to Salisbury, no: 919, 11 December 1895, FO 78/4623 enclosing a memorandum by Eliot.

⁴² Currie to Salisbury, no 774 tel, 5 December 1895, FO 78/4629.

Said again reiterated his complaints about the Sultan's entourage and suspicion on him aspiring to share in the supreme power although Tahsin deprecated the idea of the Sultan having any such suspicions. M. Said finally told them that he was fatigued and could receive no more visits that day. Tahsin and Ragıp grumbled at this message but eventually left him alone.⁴³ On the 6th of December the Austrian Ambassadors communicated the messages taken by the ambassadors in the previous day to M. Said Pasha. He also mentioned to M. Said about the Sultan's assurances. However, M. Said still wished to go abroad. The ambassadors, having received a guarantee from M Said not to meddle with politics, wrote a letter addressed to the Sublime Porte in which they pointed out that M. Said had no desire to stay any longer at the Embassy, but to go to any country which might seem suitable to the Sultan.⁴⁴

In late evening on the 6th of December Ismet Bey, the foster brother and stuntman of the Sultan, Şeyh Ahmed Essad, the representative of the Tomb of the Prophet Mohamed and later Ragıp saw M. Said at the Embassy. It is doubtless that the presence of Şeyh at the Embassy meant that the Sultan now evidently wished to appeal to the religious side of the question which appeared to have a very serious effect on M. Said who therefore decided to render Şeyh's intervention unnecessary by seeing Ragıp alone. After much repetition of the Sultan's goodwill and confidence with respect to M. Said, Ragıp strongly urged him on behalf of the Sultan to return to his house. Ragıp stated that the Sultan, in order to give M. Said complete confidence in the Sultan's assurances, had called şeyh and sworn before him that the Sultan was not vexed at M. Said's having come to the Embassy, that he had full confidence in him and believed in his fidelity and loyalty. Ragıp in vain tried to persuade M. Said, and finally the latter said that although he desired to go abroad he would make a proposal that the First Secretary of the Sultan should write a letter to the British Embassy communicating an Imperial decree (*irade*) that M. Said would be allowed to remain in his own house with his family, that he should not be worried into taking office against his wish, that he should have complete tranquillity and personal liberty, and that his pension should be paid M. Said said that he would be prepared to consider his return to his home on receipt of such a letter.⁴⁵ The acting Grand Vizier Halil Rifat, the President of the Council, Said, and the Foreign Minister Tevfik wrote quite a long letter and brought it to the Embassy

⁴³ Currie to Salisbury, no: 919, 11 December 1895, FO 78/4623 enclosing a memorandum by Eliot.

⁴⁴ Y.EE, K;31, E; 1973, Z; 45, Kr; 83 and *Son Sadrazamlar*, p. 1034.

⁴⁵ Currie to Salisbury, no: 919, 11 December 1895, FO 78/4623 enclosing a memorandum by Block.

on 7 December. This letter was thought to be very effective and believed that M. Said having read it would be persuaded and return to his home. If not, this letter would be sent for publication.⁴⁶

This very long letter of the 7th of December⁴⁷ which was full of the description and criticism of the events of the last few weeks, was presented to M. Said at the Embassy. This was considered as an accusation against M. Said. The First Secretary therefore withdrew this letter and brought another short one and long messages from the Sultan on 8 December. This letter was found more satisfactory by M. Said though it contained a phrase that he had taken refuge in the Embassy without cause.

M. Said then stated that as the Sultan, in spite of all that he had repeatedly said, had not yet understood what had happened during the last three weeks justifying his coming to the Embassy he decided to write his story and sent it to the Sultan through the First Secretary. This was agreed.⁴⁸ M. Said accordingly wrote a long reply to the letter justifying his conduct, but stating his readiness to return. In reply to his letter he received the assurances in writing signed by the First Secretary. As a result of this letter M. Said remained the whole of the 9th of December in a painful state of doubt and hesitation as to the course he was to pursue. His mind was not finally made up until the evening of the same day. He then wrote to Currie a letter thanking him for the hospitality shown and the support given while at the Embassy. What played a significant role in M. Said's return was the Sultan's appeal to give the matter a religious character which led M. Said to fear that he might be cited before a court of *şeria*, and from that moment he showed an evident tendency and determination to accept such terms and return home. Having received the assurances M. Said returned to his house on 9 December, 1895. The news of M. Said's refuge was circulated in some of the current newspapers without any comment. For instance, the *Tercüman-ı Hakikat* noted that “although M. Said Pasha took refuge at the British Embassy at Beyoğlu Wednesday the last (the 4th of December, 1895) with the aim of going to Europe, he returned to his house because of the rejection by the Sultan of his demand to leave for Europe”.⁴⁹ Sometime later some rumours about M. Said reached the British Embassy that he was to be taken to the religious court to be tried for his conduct of having taken refuge in a foreign embassy, but it came to be untrue.

⁴⁶ Y.EE, K;31, E; 1975, Z; 45, Kr; 83 and *Son Sadramlar*, p.1034.

⁴⁷ Currie to Salisbury, no: 919, 11 December 1895, FO 78/4623 enclosing a memorandum by Block.

⁴⁸ Y.EE, K;31, E; 1975, Z; 45, Kr; 83.

⁴⁹ For it, see *Tercüman-ı Hakikat*, 11 December 1895.

Kâmil Pasha's Refuge at the British Consulate-General in Izmir

While Mehmet Said Pasha was in fear and did not know what to do apart from taking refuge at the British Embassy in Istanbul as explained in detail above. Mehmet Kâmil Pasha, was recently appointed on 3 October 1895 to be Grand Vizier but very short time later he was then dismissed on 7 November 1895 from the *Sadaret* because of the disagreement as how to solve the Armenian Question which was the main source of the Western pressure at that time at the Ottoman Palace and Sublime Porte. The Sultan from time to time called the Grand Viziers and had a conversation about the way they should follow both verbally and in writing as report. At the last report, Mehmet Kâmil presented to the Sultan, claimed that the reforms promised at the Berlin Congress should be fully executed and the advises of the British and French Embassies to conclude the so-called Armenian Question be kept. These views shared by Mehmet Kâmil led the Sultan very cautious about his stance as he might be the agent of the Western. The following day he was decided to exile into Aleppo as the Vali. However, Mehmet Kâmil refused to accept this post. Then Western representatives mediated between the Sultan and the Mehmet Kâmil. Finally, the Sultan gave him three option as the *Vali* of Aydın, Aleppo and Konya. Mehmet Kâmil accepted the governorship of Aydın as it is closer to Istanbul than the others. A few days later he left Istanbul for Izmir. He started his job in Izmir but many complaints such as corruption, misgovernment, abuse in administration, very soft and not carefull policy about the bandits and the supporters of the Union and Progress began to be talked. He at last heard that he was then to be dismissed and forced to compulsory residence in the island of Rodos. Because of the fear of the Sultan's anger, he had but to take refuge at the nearest safe place, that was the British Consulate-General at Izmir. He stayed there sometime until the assurances to be taken by the British and French Ambassadors at Istanbul.

After the allegations and rumours going on in Izmir about his dismissal from the Governorship of Aydın and exile to Island of Rodos, he applied to the British Consulate at Izmir for refuge due to fear for arrest on 12 January 1907. Consulate Cumberbatch sent a telegram to the British Embassy about the blow of the refuge of Kâmil Pasha, ex-Grand Vizier in addition to the Secretary of State Edward Grey on the same day. Following morning Consul General H. A Cumberbatch called on him to the Konak and found him greatly affected by the dismissal. Kâmil Pasha especially feared the safety of his sons and himself. Meanwhile he telegraphed to the Sultan resigning and begged his permission to reside at Izmir where there was a house of his own or at Beyrut where the climate was his delicate state of health. To his telegraph he received no reply from the Palace at all and this increased his anxiety. At his pressing request

Cumberbatch had but to telegraph soliciting the Acting Ambassador G. Barclay's intervention with a view of obtaining the revocation of the order of exile to Rodos.⁵⁰

After Cumberbatch left the Konak, the newly appointed Acting Governor General Tevfik Pasha who had a personal animosity towards Kâmil Pasha and sent soldiers to surrender the Konak. Cumberbatch believed that Tevfik Pasha was behind the intrigues directed to Kâmil Pasha since his arrival at Izmir and the latter therefore became the target of the Palace. Kâmil Pasha having in mind the case of Mithat Pasha demanded a friendly protection of England. The Consul-General Cumberbatch⁵¹ soon accorded to him the hospitality and safety. This action was subsequently approved by the Ambassador N. O'Connor and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Sir Edward Grey.

As soon as the British Ambassador received the news of Kâmil Pasha, he telegraphed the Sultan informing him the steps taken and explained the chief reason for placing himself under the protection of the British flag due to the obstacles put in the way of his communication with the Sultan. He also added that this circumstance increased his fears for his own life. He finally beg the Sultan to allow him retire to Cyprus, his native land.

On Sunday morning 13th of January, Kâmil Pasha left his Konak and settled in the official residence of the Consulate-General with a view to the rescinding of the order for his exile to Rodos. From to Thursday a flow of telegrams took place between the British Embassy and the Palace. The earlier

⁵⁰ For the details of Kâmil's refuge at Smyrna Consulate-General, see for the daily telegrams and the original report, Cumberbatch to Barclay Esquire, no 3, Confidential, 18 January 1907, FO 195/2266. For the printed version of the report, see N. O'Connor to Edward Grey, 26 January 1907 no 62 enclosing the report of 18 January 1907 written by Cumberbatch and addressed to H. Barclay, no 21, pp. 28-31, FO 881/9050.

⁵¹ Henry Alfred Cumberbatch, borne June 27, 1858. He was appointed student dragoman in the Embassy at Istanbul on August 1, 1876. He was employed at Belgrade from August 12, 1876, and was in charge of the Consulate-General there from November 27, 1876 till January 25, 1877. He was afterwards employed at Bucharest under Mr (afterwards Sir W) White and was in charge of the Legation there from May 9 to July 18 1879 and was appointed Her Majesty's Vice Consul at Bucharest, where he was also Clerk to the Legation July 26, 1879. He was then appointed Her Majesty's Vice Consul at Souline, March 22, 1881. He acted as Turkish Consul at Souline in 1886. He was promoted to be consul at Adrianople (Edirne) on March 20 1888. He was Acting Consul General at Philippopolis in 1888 and 1890. Acting Consul General at Salonica in 1891 and Acting Consul General at Smyrna (Izmir) in 1892. He was transferred to Ankara on July 22 1893. He was then in charge of the Erzurum Consulate from October 1, 1895 to April 22 1896. He was made C.M.G on May 20 1896, then transferred to Izmir on November 18 1896. He was promoted to Consul-General on April 1, 1900. *The Foreign Office List and Diplomatic and Consular Yearbook for 1912*, London, 1912, p. 225.

telegrams indicated annoyance at the step taken by Kâmil and contained somewhat peremptory instructions for him to leave İzmir without delay. Gradually however the messages assumed a more conciliatory tone. Later Kâmil was assured of the Sultan's forgiveness for taking refuge at the British Consulate and of the promises of perfect freedom at İstanbul. Emissaries came to persuade him to leave the Consulate for his own residence pending his departure. The Acting Vali received instructions that no difficulties were to be placed in his way, nor were the members of his household to be molested. The rigorous blockade of the Consulate established half-an-hour after Kâmil's arrival in the Consulate was gradually reduced to the surveillance of its approaches by police spies and then it looked that he was not anymore kept subject to arrest.

Several telegrams on the 15th, 16th and 17th of January, 1907, exchanged between the Palace and the Embassy. The British representatives insisted on a formal guarantee for Kâmil's future safety before he left the protection of the British flag. In the event of anything happening to Kâmil after quitting İzmir, it could be a big blow to the honour and prestige of Great Britain. On the 17th of January the Palace asked Kâmil to leave İzmir for İstanbul with a mail-boat, but Kâmil rejected it because the Sultan's assurances had not yet been confirmed by the Embassy. Kâmil somehow agreed to embark on board the German steamship "İstanbul" on the next day on Friday with secrecy upon the receipt of the guarantee provided by the British Embassy. His journey started at 8:30 P.M. on Friday 18th of January. The public was not aware of his departure until he got the action.

Before the departure Kâmil Pasha expressed his feeling of profound gratitude and conveyed to the British Ambassador the sincerest gratitude for his energetic intervention on his behalf. When Kâmil was finally on board, he handed the British Consul Cumberbatch a letter in which he thanked to the British government, Embassy in İstanbul and the Consulate in İzmir.

During Kâmil's stay at the Consulate residence Cumberbatch had an opportunity to have long and detailed conversation with him. In one of them Kâmil discussed the probable causes of his disgrace. He could only think of two reasons as being likely to have induced the Sultan not only to deprive him of office, but also to exile him. The first was connected with the succession to the throne which the Sultan anxiously secured for one of the younger princes to the exclusion of Prince Reşad, the rightful heir. The Sultan was doubtful about Kâmil's adherence to his Project, so The Sultan wanted Kâmil to send to a distant place where he could have no effect in carrying out his plan. The other and most likely reason for his disgrace was that the Grand Vizier Ferid Pasha, who, owing to the Sultan's occasional appeals to Kâmil for advice on political

matters, always regarded him as a political rival. After returning at Istanbul, he stayed there sometime and the Sultan reappointed him as the Grand Vizier a month before the incident of 31 March.

Conclusion

The reign of Abdulhamid II witnessed several developments connected with the external and internal factors. During his reign two prominent figures played a significant role in government. They were both appointed at and dismissed from the *Sadaret* by the Sultan himself. It can of course be regarded as a shame and disgrace for a Sultan that his two Grand Viziers had to seek refuge to save their lives and secure their future. When a sultan did not feel strong enough to govern the country properly, he had to fear about everything running around him. They ran the government with the advice and suggestion of the Sultan. The fear of the Sultan was no doubt immense amongst his subjects both in the Palace and the Sublime Porte as well as in the countryside. Spies were everywhere working for the continuation of his system and the government. He was obliged to use such methods in an atmosphere where his country was externally and internally surrounded by tough enemies and severe problems he had to deal with.

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