1
The Ottoman Attitude toward Diplomacy

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This chapter discusses the Ottoman attitude toward diplomacy as an institution of the modern international system as it emerged from its European basis via the formation of the European states system. The distinctive nature of diplomacy as an institution of the modern international system is said to be the establishment of resident embassies first in the Italian city-states and then at other European courts. The Ottoman attitude toward resident diplomacy has been described as at best exclusive and repudiatory, at worst dismissive and derisory. In this chapter, those orthodox views have been critically examined and it has been suggested that it is more meaningful and historically correct to describe the Ottoman attitude toward diplomacy as favourable and not formally but practically reciprocating.

In what follows, I shall first present the prevalent view that the Ottoman Empire, which sent her first resident ambassador to London in 1793, had a negative attitude toward diplomacy due to the 'Islamic' character of the Empire. I shall examine in detail why that attitude has been considered negative, and argue that this view is based upon some misunderstandings with regard to both the Ottoman Empire and diplomacy. When dealing with the Ottoman attitude, I shall suggest, besides the so-called 'Islamic' character of the Empire, that one should take into consideration the nature and development of the modern European states system in general and its institution of diplomacy in particular, the 'imperial' feature of the Ottoman Empire and its position vis-à-vis the modern European states system, and the mutual perceptions of the Europeans and Ottomans vis-à-vis each other. Finally, in order to be able to better evaluate the Ottoman attitude towards resident embassies, I shall stress that one needs to consider the matter from a comparative perspective.

The 'Islamic' Ottoman distancing himself from the 'Infidel' European

According to the prevalent view the Ottomans, being faithful to Islamic precepts, distanced themselves from the infidel Europeans and, adopting a negative attitude toward (European) diplomacy, refused to send resident missions to the European capitals until the late eighteenth century. At this point the Empire had lost its strength in comparison to the European powers and had to establish resident embassies as part of its reform attempts. On the other hand, the major European states sent their resident ambassadors to Istanbul from the sixteenth century onwards as soon as resident embassies became common Europe-wide. As the European ambassadors were received by the Sublime Porte, but not reciprocated, the Ottoman Empire followed a unilateral diplomacy towards European states. As an Islamic empire, so it is argued, she carried out her relations with the Europeans on the basis of the conception of a permanent (actual or potential) state of war.

The view that the Ottoman Empire had a negative attitude toward the modern European (residential) diplomacy runs on the following logic. First, the Ottoman Empire was an Islamic polity. Secondly, the Ottomans had a sense of the absolute superiority of Islam and consequently a contempt for Christian Europe. Thirdly, Islam required the Empire to conduct its external relations within the framework of the dichotomy of *Dâr al-Islam* (where Islamic law obtains and the Muslims live under the law of Islam) versus *Dâr al-Harb* (where the infidels live outside the law of Islam and with which the Muslims are at war). This dichotomy thus envisaged a permanent state of war between the two ends. Fourthly, the Sublime Porte therefore repudiated resident diplomacy of Europe, which involved some sort of equality and secular relations, *raison d'état*, among the relevant parties.

These interpretations are based upon the assumption that the Ottomans adopted an orthodox version of Islam. In this version, not only are the relations between Muslims and non-Muslims described to be in a state of continuous conflict, but also a Muslim is, by definition, considered to have an absolute superiority over a non-Muslim person. Therefore one cannot expect normal peaceful (diplomatic) relations and reciprocal exchange of resident representatives between Muslims and non-Muslims.

One can see such evaluations in the writings of many eminent scholars. According to Hurewitz, for example, unilateralism between the Ottoman Empire and Europe furnished the Sultans of the day with 'a means of expressing

contempt for the emerging nation-states of Europe'. The European unilateralism was, he goes on, perceived by the Ottoman Empire as an 'acknowledgement of its superiority' by the European states. Then he grounds such notions on the basis of the prevalent orthodoxy: 'as a universal religion [Islam, and thus the Ottoman Empire] remained theoretically at war with the infidel world.'[1] With a belief in permanent war with, the inferiority of and contempt for the emerging European nation-states, the Ottomans cannot of course have been expected to have a positive attitude toward diplomacy, described as the principal institution of those very nation-states of Europe.

It was the combination of Ottoman military might and traditional Islamic learning that, argued Lewis forcefully, led the Ottomans to have a sense of the 'immeasurable and immutable superiority of their own way of life', and caused them 'to despise the barbarous Western infidel from an attitude of correct doctrine'. The concept of the *jihad* (holy war) divided the world into 'two great zones, the house of Islam and the house of war, with a perpetual state of war, or at best truce, between them'.[2] When there is a perpetual state of war, of course, there is no room for the conduct of regular diplomacy.

Years later, Anderson repeated the same argument. The reason why the Ottoman Empire did not feel any need for organized diplomatic relations with Europe was, to him, not only because it controlled a huge territory and the greatest military resources, but also because of its 'unshakable sense of superiority to the entire Christian world'. The lack of interest in any active Turkish diplomatic relations with Europe resulted from a deep-seated view of the world which drew

> a clear dividing-line, one impossible to cross, between the 'abode of Islam' and the outside non-Muslim world, the 'abode of war'. Between these different worlds relations must always be those of actual or at least potential hostility. It was the duty of the ruling Sultan, at least in principle, to extend so far as he could the area controlled by true believers at the expense of that ruled by Christian infidels. An attitude of this kind, backed by all the great weight of Islamic religious conservatism, made diplomatic relations of what was now the normal European kind impossible. By sending permanent representatives to the courts of Europe the Ottomans would have been accepting a kind of regular and established contact with the west which denied their most deeply held assumptions, which implied an at least partial renunciation of the inherent superiority to the Christian world . . .[3]

Anderson thus presents us with a picture of the Ottoman Empire as having no interest in diplomatic relations with Europe, with a deep-seated vision of the world in terms of the *Dâr al-Islam* versus *Dâr al-Harb* dichotomy, devoid of regular contacts and besieged by the great weight of Islamic religious conservatism. In his analysis, one does not find any discussion of those terms in Islamic law, what is meant by Islamic religious conservatism and what the historical record could tell us about the existence or absence of 'diplomatic' relations and regular contacts between the Ottoman Empire and Europe. It is simply suggested that the Porte was detached from the European courts and rejected diplomacy.

We find similar interpretations in Naff's account, though he in many ways provides us with a more comprehensive and balanced view. Naff too begins with the argument that the Ottoman Empire was an Islamic polity and the Ottomans had a sense of superiority to the Europeans. The source of Ottoman unilateralism was their 'conviction of the superiority and self-sufficiency of True Believers'.[4] They continued to harbour the Muslim feelings of superiority well into the eighteenth century and conducted their relations with Europe under the guiding principle of 'the inadmissibility of equality between *Dâr al-Islam* (the abode of Islam) and *Dâr al-Harb* (the abode of war, i.e. the Christian West)'.[5] In their external relations, the Ottomans assumed the Islamic world-view according to which 'any Muslim community/state is, theoretically, morally superior to all other societies' and the Muslims were under the obligation of *jihad*, to wage holy war against the abode of war until the ideal of a single universal Muslim community under a single law was realized.[6] It was because of their Muslim prejudices that they 'refused to employ the infidel lingua franca of European diplomacy'[7] and because of their view of the inferiority of Christian Europe that the Capitulations were unilaterally granted and European rulers were not accorded equality of sovereignty with the Sultans.[8]

The Ottoman Empire thus, unequivocally states Naff, implemented the rules and precepts of Islam or *Shari'a* in all governmental and administrative affairs, both internally and externally. It is worth while to quote his words:

> Ottoman thinking in diplomacy, as in all matters of government, derived from the Muslim concept of the state, which was rooted in the *Shari'a* (Holy Law); traditionally, the *Shari'a* provided for all the exigencies of life and government, thus making the Muslim state, in theory, self-sufficient. In this sense, the Ottoman Empire was pre-eminently a *Shari'a* state. The Ottomans clung stubbornly to the

illusion of Islam's innate moral and cultural superiority over Christian Europe. They expressed this belief in their ideas of self-sufficiency and in their practice of non-reciprocal diplomacy. The Muslim prejudice that whatever was western was tainted prevented the Ottomans from wholly accepting or imitating western ways.[9]

Though Naff joins those who depict the conduct of Ottoman diplomacy in terms of a *Dâr al-Islam* versus *Dâr al-Harb* duality, as pointed out earlier, he is more comprehensive and balanced. He acknowledges that the boundaries between the so-called Ottoman *Dâr al-Islam* and the European *Dâr al-Harb* were not altogether impenetrable.[10] He notes that this picture begins to change from the beginning of the eighteenth century. Although Ottoman statesmen still maintained feelings of superiority to Europe even in the eighteenth century, they began to move towards integration with the European states system. This meant a more positive attitude for diplomacy as seen in the acceptance of the equality of sovereignty and reciprocity of relations, the adoption of European diplomatic communications and usages, and recognition of some aspects of the European law of nations, including extraterritoriality.[11]

In any case, for Naff as well, we see that the argument of being an Islamic polity and conducting its internal and external governmental affairs according to the doctrine of *Shari'a* is valid with regard to the Ottoman Empire, at least, until the eighteenth century. This conventional argument has not been advanced only by 'western' scholars. It is prevalent among Turkish scholars, too. Kuran may be taken as a typical example. He argued that the Ottoman Empire did not establish resident embassies in the European capitals because Europe was, for the Ottomans, part of *Dâr al-Harb*. Following the law of Islam according to which the Christian and Muslim states are not considered equal and it is not right to sign peace treaties with the infidels, it was only natural for the Ottoman Empire not to exchange resident ambassadors. They even considered, so he argues, that it was not right for a Muslim to stay in infidel lands for long periods.[12]

So it seems obvious. The Ottoman Empire was not only a polity that happened to be established by Muslims, it was also an empire of *devoted* Muslims. These Muslims were devoted in the sense that for them Islam encompassed every corner of life and they organized their polity strictly under the guidance of Islamic precepts. Both their internal and external governmental or administrative affairs were determined in the light of the law of Islam, namely the *Shari'a*. In support of this conventional view, it is frequently asserted that Islam, unlike Christianity which mainly deals

with private and other-worldly affairs, has rules for both public and private affairs; in other words state and religion are not separated in Islam and thus not in the Ottoman Empire.[13] Since the state, polity, is defined by religion, it was not, so it is argued, easy for the Ottomans to transcend Islamic exclusivism and consequently establish diplomatic relations with non-Muslims. This attitude and policy lasted until the eighteenth century or even well into the nineteenth century. To sum up, then, the Ottoman Empire had a negative attitude toward the diplomacy of the European states system, at least until the eighteenth century.

A corollary of this view is that the Ottoman Empire had a negative attitude toward diplomacy because she was outside the European states system of which diplomacy is conventionally considered to be one of the principal institutions. The Ottoman Empire as an Islamic state was not a member of the European states system. Having a world-view that prescribed a permanent state of war and being outside the European system, then, it was considered to be normal for the Ottoman Empire to have a negative attitude toward diplomacy. We must here briefly recapture the development of diplomacy and the European states system that formed the basis of the modern world-wide international system.

Diplomacy and the European states system

A comprehensive definition of diplomacy may be given as 'the conduct of relations between states and other entities with standing in world politics by official agents and by peaceful means'. It includes both the formulation and execution of foreign policy. It is the system and art of communication between sovereign states and its chief function is negotiation.[14] Diplomacy, then, relates to peaceful relations; war is not diplomacy. It involves mutual dependence, permanent relations, living together, the need for the other, some idea of equality and mutual recognition. Diplomacy as such is considered to be one of the principal institutions of the modern European states system as it emerged and developed together with sovereign territorial states in Europe from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries onwards.

The historical development of diplomacy has conventionally been traced as the emergence of resident embassies in the Renaissance Italy of the fifteenth century, its spread northward and adoption by the major European states in the sixteenth century, recognition of the principle of extraterritoriality in the seventeenth century, the eighteenth-century development of the diplomatic corps and the nineteenth-century settlement of the issue of ranking and precedence according to the conception

of legal equality with the Congress of Vienna in 1815.[15] Diplomacy was thus invented in the city-states of Renaissance Italy and it developed together with the beginning and growth of the sovereign territorial states that came to assume the notion of *raison d'état* rather than existing for Christendom.[16]

Modern European diplomacy came to be distinctively defined with resident embassies. The mutual exchange of resident missions and rules regarding their ranking and precedence were gradually adopted by, and began to constitute a significant institution of, the modern European states system, which later spread to the whole world with the expansion of the European system. In its broad sense as a communication and negotiation mechanism, diplomacy cannot, as already suggested, be confined to the modern European states. Yet, the modern European states have been characterized by the establishment and exchange of resident embassies. Wight, for example, takes the emergence of resident missions in fifteenth-century Italy and then their spread in sixteenth-century Europe as one of the ways of marking the development of the modern European states system from medieval Christendom.[17] Similarly, Mattingly, in his authoritative book on the emergence of diplomacy, considers resident ambassadors as the most characteristic officers of western diplomacy since the late fifteenth century and makes the point that 'they differentiate our system strikingly from any other we know about elsewhere'.[18]

Indeed, the emergence of resident embassies and sovereign territorial states that came to form the European states system are said to be parallel and concomitant processes. In all the accounts of the development and growth of the sovereign territorial states system in Europe, diplomacy is considered as not only the principal, but also the earliest institution of that system. Bull stated that diplomacy presupposes an international system or, in his terms, an international society.[19] From the end of the fifteenth century onwards, we have been informed by Anderson, the idea that only sovereigns could play the great game of diplomacy was slowly crystallizing and gaining acceptance. It had begun to be recognized that the sending and receiving of diplomatic representatives was an attribute of sovereignty.[20] Both the sovereign territorial state with the logic of *raison d'état* and especially diplomacy with reciprocally exchanged residential missions began to emerge in fifteenth-century Italy.

Why was it the Italian city-states that invented resident representatives? Mattingly tells us that by about 1400, in contrast to other parts of Europe, the city-states of Italy had become more interdependent. Space was limited and completely organized, margins were narrow and

the city-states of Italy had to be continuously alert to each other. It became a system of mutually balanced parts in an unstable equilibrium. The condition for such a system to work was a state of relative isolation and this was enjoyed by the Italian peninsula for more than a century from about 1378 to 1492, despite occasional intrusions. '[T]he immediate result of the absence of severe outside pressures was to set the states of Italy free for their competitive struggle with one another, and so to intensify their awareness of the structure and tensions of their peninsular system.' Diplomacy came into being against such a background. 'Mainly it was', concluded Mattingly, 'these tensions that produced the new style of diplomacy. Primarily it developed as one functional adaptation of the new type of self-conscious, uninhibited, power-seeking competitive organism.' The nature of warfare in Italy, which was mainly conducted by mercenary armies, also contributed to the development of diplomacy. When war was professionalized, success required vigilant and agile politics. 'The diplomat was needed to supplement the soldier.' Besides the new war, Mattingly adds upper-class Italian culture as another, secondary, factor.[21] Of all the states of Italy, according to Mattingly, Venice played the central role in the invention of modern diplomacy. 'Above the welfare of Italy or Christendom, above any considerations of religion or morality, the rulers of Venice preferred...the self-preservation and aggrandizement of their own republic.'[22]

Other scholars have explained the development of modern resident diplomacy in Renaissance Italy in more or less the same way. The invention of the resident mission was seen as the result of the intensification of diplomatic activity in the fifteenth century, especially among the Italian city-states. 'It was discovered to be more practical and more economical to appoint an ambassador to remain at a much frequented court.'[23] In an environment of increasing competition and interdependence and finding themselves in a system of unstable equilibrium, to meet the constant need of visiting and overseeing each other the city-states of Italy invented resident missions for reasons of convenience and economy. Later it was adopted by other European states and became an institution of the European system.

Besides diplomacy, the European states system is characterized by some other distinctive rules and institutions. The rules of the system may take the form of international law, moral rules, custom or established practice, operational rules or 'rules of the game'. Such rules include those constitutional ones that identify the members of the system as states. They also include the rules of coexistence such as that requiring respect for sovereignty, those restricting the use of force governing the conduct

of war and confining its legitimate employment to states, the rule that agreements made should be kept and the rules of cooperation.[24] The institutions of the European system comprise first the states themselves and then the balance of power, international law, the diplomatic mechanism, the managerial system of the great powers and war.[25]

Although Bull is perhaps the most prominent advocate of this account of the development of the European states system from the sixteenth century onwards, it has been shared by many. Basically, it is held that the principal institutions of the European states system began to emerge in fifteenth-century Italy. They were then adopted by the monarchies north of the Alps in the sixteenth century and by the mid-seventeenth century they were more or less Europe-wide. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries they became more institutionalized and gradually expanded into the non-European parts of the world. The Ottomans did not take part in this system in the beginning and it officially became a member only with the Treaty of Paris of 1856.[26] It is therefore concluded that the Ottoman Empire, which was not part of the European states system, did not share its rules and institutions. That is why it had, or is supposed to have had, a negative attitude toward diplomacy, the principal institution of the system.

When the idea that the Ottoman Empire was an Islamic polity is added to the argument that it was not part of the European states system until the nineteenth century, it would seem impossible to avoid the conclusion that the Empire was not only outside the *diplomatic* system of Europe but ill-disposed towards it. The Ottomans were alien, if not hostile, to European rules, customs, mechanisms, institutions, styles and ways of doing things. In the following section I shall take issue with the argument that the Ottoman Empire was an Islamic polity and thus outside the European system.

The Ottoman Empire: an Islamic state?

In Ottoman historiography, there have been four different theses regarding the origins and the nature of the Empire, each of them propounded by scholars whose names are associated with that thesis. The first argues that the Ottoman Empire was a direct/indirect continuation of the Byzantine Empire and the Ottoman system was derived from the Byzantine institutions.[27] The second argument was put forward by Köprülü in his lectures given at the University of Sorbonne in 1934. In response to Gibbons, he argued that the origins of the Ottoman Empire and its character could be considered as part of the movements of migrating

Turkish tribes and thus within the Turkic tradition.[28] Thirdly, the Ottoman Empire was a *ghazi* state and based upon Islam and the idea of *jihad*. It was established by the *ghazis* who strived for *jihad* and conquest.[29] Finally, it is also common to treat the Ottoman Empire as an example of nomadic empires springing from tribal institutions.[30]

Of all of these theses, the *ghazi* thesis has been the most widely supported. Ever since Wittek, many scholars have argued that the Ottoman Empire was an Islamic empire, founded by warriors devoted to the spread of Islam in infidel lands; accordingly, the Empire was organized upon the principles of Islam and its law, government and external affairs were directed under the *Shari'a*. As an Islamic state based upon the policy of *ghaza*, 'perpetual warfare carried on against unbelievers', the Ottoman Empire from its very beginning was 'geared for conquest. It constantly had to expand, gain new territory, provide new outlets for the energies of the ghazis.'[31] According to İnalcık, the policy of *ghaza* was the foundation stone of the Empire.[32] Yet he is cautious. The reason why the Ottomans attached so much importance to *ghaza* was because of its prestige. It was indeed a significant source of power and prestige in the Muslim world. The Ottoman Sultans regularly sent *fethnâmes*, the account of their conquests in the Balkans and Europe, to the Muslim rulers. In other words, to gain prestige among Muslims was a primary motive in the *ghazas*.

But, to repeat an earlier question, how Islamic was the Ottoman Empire? Was it an empire established and governed by Muslims, or was it strictly based upon the Islamic law, *Shari'a*? Officially speaking, the Ottoman Empire was claimed to be an Islamic system. Ottoman rulers always championed themselves for defending the cause of Islam. In theory, they always tried to observe Islamic rules via *fetva*, the declaration that whatever was done was compatible with the rules of Islam, issued by the Grand Mufti, Sheik ul-Islam. Ottoman rulers repeatedly made it known that they could go to war when they were attacked and Islam was insulted. They considered themselves to be the servants and protectors of Islam. The principal Ottoman institutions were referred to as being 'of Islam'. Ottoman territories were referred to as 'the land of Islam', its sovereign as 'the Padishah of Islam', its army as 'the soldiers of Islam', and the head of its religious bureaucracy as 'the Sheik of Islam'. Furthermore, the state itself was described as 'Devlet-i Aliyye'yi Muhammediyye' (the Sublime State of Muhammad) when it was referred to in its official texts. This was how the Ottoman Empire appeared in theory and official texts. But to what extent did the practice match the theory?

In fact, when the actual historical record is taken into account, it is clear that the Ottoman Empire was not an orthodox Islamic state.

Its governmental and administrative affairs were not only directed under the strict observance of Islamic law or *Shari'a*. It is widely agreed that the Ottoman Empire was heavily influenced by the customary law and was respectful of local customs. According to İnalcık, in line with the Turkish state tradition which entrusted the ruler with the right and authority to promulgate rules for the regulation of state affairs and policies, the Ottoman sultans themselves issued the *qanun-nâmes* or 'books of law', most famous of them initiated by Mehmed II.[33] In other words, the administration was based not only upon the Muslim law, but also upon the state law or law of the ruler.

Furthermore, both in terms of texts and in terms of actual historical practice, it is hardly possible to argue for a monolithic theory based upon the duality of *Dâr al-Islam* versus *Dâr al-Harb*. In the history of Islamic societies we see various practices. In terms of theory, again, it is not always possible to justify a perpetual war between Muslims and non-Muslims. It is expressly stated in the Koran that if the non-Muslims incline for peace, then the Muslims are advised to make peace (*Sura Anfal*, 61). Of course, one may find textual support for the contrary view. Yet, it is debatable if *jihad* means the obligation to make constant war against non-Muslims.[34]

Besides the concepts of *Dâr al-Islam* and *Dâr al-Harb*, there is another concept, *Dâr al-Sulh* (where the Muslims and non-Muslims live in peace). The reason for the view that Islam prescribes an impenetrable duality in terms of *Dâr al-Islam* and *Dâr al-Harb* is indeed the analogy between the medieval Christian conceptualization of *Christendom* versus *non-Christendom* and that of Islam. Though we could find many different practices in history, Christianity comprised an exclusive universalism. In Christianity, there is no equivalent of the *Dâr al-Sulh*. With the conception of *Dâr al-Sulh*, then, Islam cannot be considered as exclusively universalistic as Christianity.[35] Whatever is preached in the texts and however it is interpreted, what is significant is the actual historical record. Both in Muslim and Christian societies, texts were historically understood and applied in various ways.

Ottoman practice was rather pragmatic. They pragmatically interpreted the precepts of Islam especially with regard to external affairs. They not only made use of the *amân* system or the system of *ahdnâme*, granting safe conduct and freedom to live by themselves in respect of subject populations who were non-Muslims, but also in their external relations. They did not actually follow a policy of permanent war and had been observing the 'existing customs' and 'agreements'. When Mehmed II granted Capitulations to the Venetians in 1454, it was stated that the decision was taken according to the existing custom, by which was meant

the previous capitulatory agreement between the Byzantine Empire and the Venetians.[36] Respect for existing customs (that agreements made should be honoured) can be seen in the practice and implementation of the *amân* system.[37] After the fall of Istanbul, Mehmed II granted the Greeks, Genoese and Latins *amân* and when Selim I later wanted to get rid of some Byzantine notables in Istanbul due to their suspected efforts to re-establish the Byzantine Empire, the Sultan was reminded of the *amân* given by Mehmed II and he retreated from his compulsory conversion or expulsion policy. Similarly, Suleiman the Magnificent, in his *firman* to the *beys* of Bosnia and Buda, stressed that the *beys* must observe the *Ahd-u Amân* of the Sultan.

Islam did not prevent the Ottomans from reaching or making agreements with non-Muslims. It is true that such agreements were considered to be unilateral truces rather than bilateral treaties. Yet they signed truces for long periods and these were more or less automatically renewed, so that, in practice, there was a permanent state of peace with a considerable number of states. As İnalcık shows us in Chapter 3, as early as the time of Beyazid II, an agreement was made between the Sultan and Pope Innocent VIII. In this Beyazid II promised to deliver the City of Jerusalem to the French King after it was captured from the Mamluks, in return for the King keeping his brother Jem in custody in France instead of sending him to the enemies of the Ottomans. This is most striking. Beyazid II, known to be one of the most religious sultans, was to deliver the City of Jerusalem, sacred for Muslims, to the King of France, king of the infidels, after he captured it from the Mamluks, a Muslim state! What could show better than this that the Ottomans were behaving according to self-interest rather than the strict requirements of religion?

In the second half of the eighteenth century, it was heavily debated within Ottoman circles whether the alliance with Prussia was compatible with Islam. In the end, the *fetva* affirmed that it was. Similarly, Ottoman policy-makers did not have any difficulty in securing a *fetva* for the alliance between the Ottomans and the Austrians against the Russians. On the other hand, Frederick the Great had a hard time in his efforts to explain the alliance with the Ottomans.[38] There are many other examples demonstrating that the Ottomans did not strictly abide by a policy which the *ghaza* or *jihad* thesis would have us believe that they did. But there is no need to rehearse them. What we know historically is that the Ottomans were quite pragmatic and observed the rules of expediency or, to use the present-day terminology of the students of international relations, the requirements of Realpolitik. The Ottoman Empire was not then an orthodox Islamic state.

The Ottoman Empire: an imperial system

The Ottoman Empire was first and foremost an empire, an imperial system deriving from many sources. Islam was one of them, if without doubt the dominant one. As already stated there were others drawn from the Byzantine Empire and the Turkic and nomadic traditions. The Empire had what one may call an 'Inner Asian heritage'[39] and in time borrowed from Europe. No doubt, it incorporated elements of the local Anatolian environment as well. The Capitulations developed, on the one hand, as part of the *amân* system of Islam, and as a continuation of the Byzantine tradition on the other. Similarly the relations of the *Ulama* and the Grand Mufti to the Sultan reflected both the Sunni path and practice of Islam and the position of the Patriarchate in the Byzantine Empire. The Ottoman sultans were not only referred to as the *Padishah of Islam*, but also as *Sultan-ı İklim-i Rum* (Emperor of the Realm of Rome).[40] The infiltration into the frontier zones and subsequently their administration and the entrusting of the young princes with the government of some provinces derived from the nomadic and Turkic heritage. The interrelationships of these different sources and influences allowed the Empire to have a rich culture and diversity in its composition and administration. As it grew from a small frontier *beylik* (principality) to a world-wide empire, the diversity increased and it came to comprise multiple peoples, ethnic groups, religions and vast territories. Logically speaking, it could have been possible to confine a small *beylik* to a single tradition, say the nomadic; but it is not possible to confine and reduce a large and diverse empire within the limits of a single tradition or religion such as Islam. In other words, by definition, it is hard to define the Ottoman Empire as an 'Islamic' or *Shari'a* state.

In the proper sense of the word as we use it now, the Ottoman Empire was not even a state. It was a kind of polity different from the one to which we are accustomed today, namely the nation-state. A nation-state is a territorially defined and consolidated polity. It is defined by a clearly and horizontally demarcated territory. The principle of territoriality constitutes the basis of the principle of sovereignty and nationality. A nation-state has sovereignty over a definite territory; anything or anybody that happens to be in that territory is bound by the sovereignty and authority of the state. The people living in that territory are entitled to some common rights and obligations without regard to their ethnic or religious character, or personal wishes. A nation-state thus imposes some degree of uniformity upon the people; hence the principle of nationality. Sovereignty is in practice exercised by the central political

institutions and the state as the totality of public bodies is the final arbiter and authority: here comes the principle of centrality. In sum, then, a *nation-state* is a polity defined by *territoriality*, *sovereignty*, *nationality* and *centrality*. Imperial systems such as the Chinese Empire, the Roman Empire and the Ottoman Empire were not like this.

An imperial system or an empire is, to borrow Tilly's definition, 'a large composite polity linked to a central power by indirect rule'. The relationship between the central or imperial ruler and the linked units of the system is based upon the principle of allegiance. The imperial ruler

> exercises some military and fiscal control in each major segment of its imperial domain, but tolerates two major elements of indirect rule: 1) retention or establishment of particular, distinct compacts for the government of each segment; and 2) exercise of power through intermediaries who enjoy considerable autonomy within their own domains in return for the delivery of compliance, tribute, and military collaboration with the center.[41]

Imperial systems, then, are composite polities, not consolidated polities.

They are not territorially consolidated because they were never territorially demarcated. In the imperial systems, territory was not the defining element; this was allegiance. It is thus not surprising that the Ottoman sultans, for example Suleiman the Magnificent, were unlikely to have been able to identify the exact boundaries of their empire, though the fact that they were constantly changing was a subsidiary reason for this. Suleiman knew that his Empire comprised the lands of the Crimean Khanate, the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, the lands of the Emirs of Hijaz and Yemen, and the Beyliks of Tunis and Algiers. But if he had wanted to know their exact boundaries, it would have been necessary to ask the Khanates, Princes, Emirs and Beys. What was important for the imperial centre was the continuing allegiance of those local rulers.

The Ottoman Empire, just like previous empires, was not territorially defined, demarcated and consolidated. Imperial systems are not territorially demarcated because they claim to rule the whole world, in other words, for them, the whole Earth potentially constitutes their territory. If some parts of the world are not under their rule and do not offer allegiance, it is a temporary situation. One day or another, they are bound to fall under their imperial domain. There was then no need for territorial demarcation or boundary delimitation. The meaning and tone of the letters of the Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent to King Francis I in the early sixteenth century and of the Chinese Emperor Qianlong to King

George III in the late eighteenth century indicate clearly the claim of imperial systems to rule the whole Earth and thus universalism and self-sufficiency. Imperial systems are potentially universal and self-sufficient polities. Let us read it first in the Sultan's letter:

> I, who am Sultan of the Sultans of East and West, fortunate lord of the domains of the Romans, Persians and Arabs, Hero of creation, Champion of the earth and time, Padishah and Sultan of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, of the extolled Kaaba and Medina the illustrious and Jerusalem the noble, of the throne of Egypt and the province of Yemen, Aden and Sana'a, of Baghdad and Basra and Lahsa and Ctesiphon, of the lands of Algiers and Azerbaijan, of the regions of the Kipchaks and the lands of the Tartars, of Kurdistan and Luristan and all Rumelia, Anatolia and Karaman, of Wallachia and Moldavia and Hungary and many kingdoms and lands besides; Sultan Suleiman Khan, son of Sultan Selim Khan.[42]

In the letter of the Sultan, the French king is merely addressed thus: 'You, who are Francis, king of the land of France.' For himself, however, the Sultan lists the territories and lands that are linked to him and then gives it up. This is partly because they are countless and partly because it is just a matter of time before he rules the whole Earth. Similarly, the Chinese Emperor speaks of his Empire as 'the Celestial Empire . . . ruling all within the four seas' and 'vast territories', while Britain is just described as a country that 'lies in the far oceans' and inclines 'towards civilization'. The emperor expressly names the King, together with all other kings and rulers, as his vassal.[43] The wording, tone and meaning of both letters makes it obvious that they thought of their imperial rule as universal and self-sufficient. In both China and the Ottoman Empire, the rulers, like the Roman emperors, were conceived to be rulers of the Universe. The Chinese emperor was the only legitimate ruler and the single 'Son of the Heaven'. The Ottoman Sultans were *Halife-i Ru'i Zemin* (the successor to the Prophet Muhammad in the Earth) and *Zillulahi fi-l Arz* (the Shadow of God on Earth). That the Ottomans thought of themselves as presiding over a universal empire may also be seen in their chronicles. In the seventeenth century, when Koçi Bey discussed the emerging signs of deterioration in the Ottoman system, he spoke of the 'deterioration of the order of the World'.[44] The order of the Ottoman Empire, for Koçi Bey, meant the order of the world.

The Ottoman Empire, just like most imperial systems, was not a centralized polity. A nation-state is a centralized polity in the sense that all

individuals are directly linked to the central political body. In imperial systems, there are intermediary rulers who are autonomous in their own domains. Though we see a strong political centre in the Ottoman Empire, it is widely acknowledged that the local and regional units enjoyed great autonomy so that it would not be wrong to characterize the Ottoman Empire as granting more autonomy than many of the empires known to us. This autonomy was not only granted to those non-Muslim subjects or principalities under the *amân* system or the *millet* system, but also to the Muslim provinces as well. The Crimean Khanates, Emirs in the Middle East and Beys in North Africa enjoyed governmental autonomy, even to the point of independently engaging in external affairs. The Bey of Algiers did not, for example, recognize the privileges of the French merchants for commerce and fishery in Algerian territorial waters, granted by the Sublime Porte under the agreement between the Ottoman Empire and France in 1604. The French had to get those privileges directly from the Bey of Algiers, which they did via an agreement in 1628.[45]

In the Ottoman Empire, until the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, governmental tasks such as administration, taxation and preservation of order and stability were carried out by the central government in Istanbul and the local notables together. Indeed, the reform attempts aimed at centralizing these governmental functions. In other words, reform policies were gradually making the Ottoman Empire a nation-state proper. That is why it is meaningful to speak of the 'westernization of the Ottoman diplomacy in the nineteenth century'.[46] By the nineteenth century, the Empire came to adopt the governmental, military and diplomatic techniques common in European nation-states. However, the roles of the local notables were not altogether eliminated even in the last century of the Empire.[47]

In the Ottoman Empire as in other imperial systems, we do not see a uniform collective identity such as that of nationality as seen in the nation-states of today. As a diverse system, it encompassed a variety of identity units. We certainly see a supreme identity, a loose universal identification which brought some degree of uniformity as expressed in the allegiance to the Sultan and Sublime Porte. These allegiances, together with identification with the Dynasty, formed a universal identity for all Ottoman subjects. On the other hand, we see multiple identities in terms of religion and ethnicity. Thus people still identified themselves with the family, locality, city, *tariqats* (religious sects), tribes and villages. I fully agree with the formulation that the Ottoman imperial system was a cosmopolitan system combining both universality and locality.[48]

To summarize thus far, the Ottoman Empire was not a consolidated polity like those that began to emerge first in Renaissance Italy and later in Europe. The modern European colonial empires were not really imperial systems. They were just colonial empires, having territorially consolidated states in their metropolitan area in Europe and colonies overseas. As an imperial system, the Ottoman Empire had all the notions and, perhaps, pretensions of universalism and self-sufficiency. When one examines the Ottoman attitude towards the emerging European states and diplomacy, the imperial character of the Ottomans must not be forgotten. The source of the Ottoman sense of superiority was partly Islam but more its imperial nature. Modern European diplomacy required mutual dependence, living together and the need for the other. The Ottoman Empire did not feel like this until the eighteenth century. Yet the Ottoman Empire was born and grew alongside Europe when the European states were beginning to emerge. To understand adequately the Ottoman attitude toward diplomacy, we need to examine the respective positions of the Ottoman imperial system and the European states system.

The Ottoman imperial system and the European states system

With the conquest of Istanbul in the mid-fifteenth century, the Ottoman Empire can conveniently be considered as an imperial system. From its emergence as a power in the beginning of the fourteenth century, the Ottoman Empire expanded at the expense of Europe. It occupied, controlled and administered one-quarter to one-third of the European continent from the fourteenth century to the late nineteenth century. As already shown, the modern European states system is conventionally said to have emerged from the late fifteenth century onwards and consequently the Ottoman Empire was in Europe when the European system began to come into being. From its emergence as a formidable power, the Ottoman Empire had been a continuous consideration for the Europeans. So, the modern European states system and the Ottoman imperial system were never isolated from each other. The Ottomans actively and intensively engaged in European affairs. It can rightly be asserted that the Empire played a major part in the formation and working of the European states system and this shows that a process of mutual dependence operated between the two systems, despite the historical prejudices of the Europeans towards the Turks and the pretensions of self-sufficiency on the part of the Ottomans.

As early as the first stage of the Italian Wars from 1494 onwards, the Ottoman Empire was an important actor in the Italian system, traditionally considered as the forerunner of the modern European system. The Italian courts maintained diplomatic relations with the Porte. In 1494, faced by the first French triumphs in Italy, Naples and the Papacy itself negotiated with the Sultan for help against Charles VIII. In order to keep France out of Italy, when the Second Holy League was signed in 1495 with an almost Europe-wide participation, not just by the Italian states, Mattingly tells us, the Ambassador of Sultan Beyazid II was present, in a sense, as an observer to the signing ceremony. The New League is said to have transformed the Italian system into a European one. In 1500, a Turkish ambassador offered Pope Alexander VI Ottoman military support in return for the port of Toronto, while in the same year Emperor Maximilian sent an ambassador to Istanbul.[49] The Ottomans engaged, as an active party, in the second stage of the Italian Wars. It was suggested that the struggle between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs throughout the sixteenth century linked the two European systems, the Southern system centred in Italy and the Northern system that comprised Sweden, Poland-Lithuania and Muscovy.[50]

The historical record shows that the Ottoman Empire became an active participant in the emerging European balance system. The Sultans pursued a conscious policy of balance vis-à-vis the European powers so that the rise of the nation-states was to a certain degree facilitated. Similarly, the European sovereigns took into account the Sublime Porte in their calculations regarding the balance of power in Europe and did not hesitate, from time to time, to align with the Sultan against each other. According to Dehio, the Ottoman Empire became a counterweight to the unifying tendency represented by Charles V. The introduction or intervention of the Empire into the European balance-of-power system and European diplomacy played a most significant part in preserving the freedom of the system of states.[51] In 1532, Francis I admitted to the Venetian Ambassador that he saw in the Ottoman Empire the only force guaranteeing the continued existence of the states of Europe against Charles V. Indeed, in 1535/36 we see that this guarantee was in some sense given with the bid for a Franco-Turkish Treaty, which is said to have provided the Europeans with a model in their relations with the Asian empires later in terms of unequal treaties. The Ottoman Empire had a significant role in the emergence of the nation-states and then in the preservation of the balance among those states.

The role of the Ottoman Empire in preserving the European balance and thus the nation-states can be seen in the sixteenth and seventeenth

centuries. The Ottomans encouraged and supported the English and Dutch in the period after 1580 when these nations proved to be the champions of European resistance to the Habsburgs' attempts at hegemony. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, support for the Protestants and Calvinists was one of the fundamental principles of Ottoman policy in Europe. The Ottoman pressure on the Habsburgs was an important factor in the spread of Protestantism in Europe. The Westphalian settlement of 1648, the coexistence of multiple sovereign states, became possible through this pressure on the Habsburgs as observed by Watson: 'The Habsburg bid to establish a hegemonial system in Christian Europe was defeated, and decisive Westphalian formulation of the anti-hegemonial nature of the European international society was made possible by the Ottoman pressure on the Habsburgs co-ordinated by the Franco-Turkish alliance which brought the other anti-hegemonial powers into friendly relations with the Ottomans.'[52]

In terms of trade relations, we can observe that both the Europeans and the Ottomans took the other into account. The Ottoman Empire pursued the balance policy in its trade relations with the Europeans, notably in terms of the Capitulations. In order to prevent the dominance of one state in the Levant trade they always favoured the rival nations. Against Venetian dominance, they supported first the Genoese, then the Ragusans and then the Florentines in the fifteenth century. In the sixteenth century the French took the lead and in the seventeenth century came the English and the Dutch.[53] In short, the Ottoman Empire was a significant force in the European balance-of-power system from the fifteenth century to well into the seventeenth century, the formative centuries of the system.

The contemporaries indeed recognized that the Ottoman Empire was in and essential to the European balance system and there was a mutual dependence between them. As already noted, in the early sixteenth century Francis I admitted that the Ottoman Empire was the only force to prevent the emerging states of Europe from being transformed into a Europe-wide empire by Charles V. In the late sixteenth century, Queen Elizabeth I opened relations with the Ottoman Empire. One of the motives of the Queen was certainly the expansion of trade and a further motive was the idea that the Sultan could balance the Habsburgs in the East and consequently relieve Spanish pressure upon England. Elizabeth I even stressed that Protestantism and Islam were equally hostile to 'idolatry' (Catholicism). In granting Capitulations to the English and the Dutch, the Sultan, too, considered that these nations were the champions of the struggle against the idolaters.[54] In the late eighteenth

century, the place of the Ottomans in the European balance system was acknowledged in the British Parliament. Similarly it has been reported that Catherine the Great of Russia explicitly recognized it.[55] Writing in 1566, the Venetian Ottoviano Maggi thought that a good ambassador should be able to speak Turkish.[56] This clearly indicates the degree and extent of the Ottoman engagement with Europe. It seems obvious that the Ottoman Empire was within the European balance system from very early on. While Vaughan speaks of a 'pattern of alliance' between the Turk and Europe, Goffman makes the point that the Ottomans were an indispensable part of, and fully integrated into, the European diplomatic system.[57]

What one can draw from the foregoing analysis of the mutual positions of the emerging European international system and the Ottoman imperial system is that the two systems were closely interwoven and were in constant interaction. This analysis of the mutual dependence between the Ottoman Empire and the European international system in its formative (and, of course, later) centuries unequivocally leads us to conclude that the two systems were not isolated. They had frequent relations with each other and the nature of these relations was not always warlike. The Europeans and the Ottomans did not always aim at plundering each other, they were not in a permanent state of war as the orthodox understanding of the *Christendom* versus *non-Christendom* or *Dâr-al-Harb* versus *Dâr-al-Islam* dichotomies would have us believe. The Ottoman imperial system and the European states system do not seem to constitute two antagonistic systems, but parts of a greater system, that is the Afro-Eurasian system, together with the other societies and civilizations of the Afro-Eurasian zone.[58]

In light of all those contacts, wars, conflicts, alliances, agreements and commercial exchanges between the Ottoman Empire and Europe, and given the actual control, administration and government of one-quarter to one-third of the European continent for half a millennium, 'the logical conclusion ought to be', Naff puts it, 'that the Ottoman Empire was, empirically, a European state. The paradox is that it was not. Even though a significant portion of the Empire was based *in* Europe, it cannot be said to have been *of* Europe.'[59] Despite the existence of extensive relations so as to form 'a pattern of alliance' between Europe and the Turk, the fact that the Empire was considered in Europe but not of Europe shows not only the differences between the two systems, but also the cultural rift. Nevertheless, as I have already said, there were permanent and extensive interactions between the European states and the Ottoman imperial system so that their attitudes were not always antagonistic. They even, in Bull's sense,

shared and worked in some common rules and institutions such as conferences, treaties, the Capitulations and diplomacy. Indeed, the Ottomans did not have a dismissive attitude towards European diplomacy at all.

The favourable Ottoman attitude toward diplomacy

When examining the Ottoman attitude toward diplomacy one should, as already noted, take into consideration two major points. First, strictly speaking, the Ottoman Empire was not, as widely supposed, a *Shari'a* state; nor was it a nation-state proper. Instead, it was an imperial system with claims to universal rule and self-sufficiency. Secondly, this imperial system developed side by side with the European states system and actively engaged with and in this system. It was not like the Chinese imperial system, which was isolated and apart from the European system. On their part, the emerging European states, *pace* the continuous crusading spirit, did not hesitate to establish a variety of connections with the Sublime Porte. The Empire was highly influential in the making of the European states system and its institutions. Diplomacy and the resident missions form one of them.

We should also consider the context in which modern European diplomacy originally developed. The development of modern diplomacy among the Italian city-states and later in the wider European system occurred in interaction with the Ottomans. In the fifteenth century, the Italian city-states, Venice above all of them, was more connected to the Eastern Mediterranean and thus the Ottoman world than to the rest of Europe. The experiences of the Italian states with the Ottoman Empire have significant input to the development of resident missions. While the Italian states had an understanding of the Ottoman system, the Ottoman Empire itself had the ability to accommodate the Christian populations. 'Indeed', concludes Goffman, 'the formulating of some of the most essential elements of the modern world's diplomatic system – permanent missions, extraterritoriality, and reciprocity – drew upon the experiences of the directors of Florentine, Genoese, and Venetian settlements in the Ottoman domain.'[60] Indeed so. Having implemented the *amân* system through the granting of *ahdnâmes* to the non-Muslim communities within its own world, by which the Christian and Jewish subjects of the Empire lived under their own laws and traditions, it was just one step further for the Ottomans to grant the same rights and privileges to those Christian states or communities which lay outside the Ottoman world. Goffman, again rightly, notes that the extent of the extraterritorial rights the European resident missions enjoyed in Istanbul

from the very beginning was achieved among the European states only after the end of religious wars in the seventeenth century.[61] This was not something that might have been expected from an empire which derided and dismissed diplomacy and the diplomatic representatives.

Another point that needs to be taken into account in the evaluation of the Ottoman attitude is the process of the development of the European states system. Although the beginning of the European states system may be traced back to the fifteenth-century Italian city-states, it does not mean that the system with its rules and institutions, which now seem so obvious to us, became mature in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries or even in the seventeenth. The balance of power as a check mechanism against any great power with ambitions to impose its hegemony upon the system came to be accepted by the major members of the system only in the eighteenth century. The privileges and obligations of the great powers were not finally recognized until the Congress of Vienna in 1815. Jurists and statesmen began to speak of international law only in the late sixteenth century. The mutual recognition of sovereignty and legal equality of states are usually thought to have come into effect only with the Treaty of Westphalia of 1648. And even this conventional date is questioned now.[62]

Though diplomacy is widely viewed as the earliest institution of the European states system, its development was not smooth and it, too, came to be accepted only in time. It was frequently disrupted by wars, especially by religious wars of the second half of the sixteenth century and the early seventeenth century, and the professionalization of diplomacy did not seriously emerge until the nineteenth century.[63] The mutual exchange of resident ambassadors, common in Italy by the end of the fifteenth century and which began to be adopted by the rest of Europe in the sixteenth century, did not become universally prevalent within the system; examples of unilateralism persisted. 'Not all resident embassies were reciprocal' before 1648, as the authoritative text informs us.[64] In other words, receiving but not sending resident ambassadors was not exclusively an Ottoman practice in the early centuries of its development. Until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, perhaps not even then, great powers were not enthusiastic about sending resident representatives to the courts of the lesser powers. In the fifteenth century, the Pope received ambassadors but sent none.[65] Even Venice did not always reciprocate with the small Italian courts. Again, in the fifteenth century, when the Italian city-states sent permanent ambassadors to England, France, Spain and the Emperor, they were not reciprocated by these European monarchies. Even, Louis XI of France refused to allow the

Venetian ambassador to stay in 1463 and a renewed attempt in 1470 was also turned down.[66] To a present-day student of diplomacy with conceptions of the Ottoman Empire as an Islamic state, it may look awkward that the Venetian ambassadors were allowed by the Ottoman Sultans to reside in Istanbul from 1453 onwards, while they were still refused by the French at the end of the fifteenth century. Yet, history always presents us with such awkward situations, just as those European monarchies not reciprocating the Italian city-states in the fifteenth century were in turn not reciprocated by the Ottoman Sultans later.

That the Sublime Porte did not reciprocate the European resident embassies until 1793, when the first resident embassy was opened in London, has frequently been given as an example of the Porte's rejection of diplomacy. But this cannot be taken as evidence of a negative Ottoman attitude. As will be explained later, there were various reasons why the Ottomans refrained from sending permanent ambassadors until the late eighteenth century, but religion was not one of them, since the Sublime Porte did not send permanent ambassadors to Muslim powers either. As already said, reciprocity in this matter required the existence of powers among which there was a condition of rough equality, or at least a nominal recognition of it. The Ottoman Empire, as an imperial system, did not recognize the notion of equality until the eighteenth century. However, among the contemporary non-European states or empires, the Ottoman case was unique. After all, it accepted that ambassadors might come to stay in Istanbul from the very beginning. The first English ambassador, Sir William Harbourne, was received by the Sultan in 1583 in spite of fierce protest from the French. By contrast, more than two hundred years later, Lord Macartney's request to establish a permanent mission was refused by the Chinese emperor. Until the nineteenth century, the Europeans had no permanent embassies or missions in the non-European world except Istanbul. Furthermore, the Ottoman Empire frequently sent temporary envoys to the European courts. From 1384 to 1600, according to Mansell, 145 temporary envoys were sent by the Sultan to Venice alone.[67] The mission of most temporary envoys lasted for years. Therefore it would not be wrong if we said that diplomacy between the Sublime Porte and the European courts was in fact permanent.

The Ottoman practice of diplomacy and the conduct of its external affairs did indeed observe the principle of reciprocity in some way. Modern students very often confuse reciprocity with equality. However, these principles are not identical. While the concept of legal equality necessitates reciprocity, the reciprocal interactions are not always equal. The principle of legal equality and sovereignty is a modern concept.

The principle of reciprocity was known and probably practised in inter-societal relations from time immemorial. According to McNeill, long before the modern period, the imperial rulers of the Eurasian civilizations developed a reciprocal code of conduct for inter-societal relations. 'Even the arcanum of religion', he rightly maintains, 'made room for outsiders and unbelievers, since the principal religions of the Eurasian world – Christianity, Confucianism, Buddhism and Islam – all agreed in exhorting the devout *to treat strangers as they would wish to be treated themselves*.'[68] The principle of reciprocity was keenly observed by the Sublime Porte. In granting each *ahdnâme* (Capitulation), the Ottomans insisted upon the inclusion of reciprocal rights for their merchants. For example, Article XV of the non-ratified first French Capitulations of 1535 reads as follows: 'In the dominions of the King reciprocal rights shall be granted to the subjects of the Grand Signior.'[69] Similar clauses were entered into all subsequent Capitulations.

The favourable stance of the Ottomans towards European diplomacy may be seen in their attitude towards foreign envoys in Istanbul, whether they were temporary or permanent ambassadors. The Sublime Porte, indeed, took up a receptive and very favourable attitude towards foreign representatives. All of their expenses were paid by the Ottoman government from the moment they entered into the Ottoman territory until they left. This had been 'the common practice of Christendom',[70] later renounced by the modern European states. Surprisingly, the Sublime Porte preserved this 'practice of Christendom' until 1794.[71] Besides being a way of showing off the magnificence of the Ottoman Empire, this was a gesture of hospitality to the envoys and ambassadors. The ambassadors were in theory the Sultan's guest. The ceremonial governing the reception of the ambassadors not only exalted the Sultan, but also honoured the ambassador. 'If in other capitals ambassadors lived like princes,' said Mansell, 'in Constantinople they lived like kings.'[72]

It is true that the practice of putting ambassadors in the prison of the Seven Towers constitutes an example – usually regarded as the prime example – of the maltreatment of ambassadors in Istanbul. And there is no doubt that this was not the right way to treat ambassadors. Having said this, we must note that it was not exclusively an Ottoman practice and had some justification. Permanent representatives were regarded with deep suspicion in almost all countries. Imprisonment of diplomats was practised in Moscow in 1660 and in Peking much later.[73] The Ottomans practised it during times of war. The justification for it was to ensure the safe return home of any Ottoman subjects and merchants who happened to be in the warring state.[74]

Finally, the Ottoman practice of sending ambassadors, even though they were temporary ambassadors, to European and indeed other courts is clear evidence of a positive attitude toward diplomacy. This can be seen from the Ottoman practice of sending ambassadors in order to inform the European rulers about the enthronement of a new Sultan, as this could easily have been learned by the Europeans from their own ambassadors in Istanbul. Similarly, the Sublime Porte sent ambassadors to attend European coronations.[75] Of course, the Ottomans sent ambassadors for reasons of protocol and display as well as for reasons of necessity. This cannot be expected of a power without any regard for diplomacy. Likewise, the fact that the Ottoman Empire took into consideration and gave importance to the 'rules of protocol in the countries to which they sent ambassadors'[76] can be taken as evidence of the importance they attached to diplomacy.

Conclusion

When those students of diplomacy and diplomatic history portray the Ottomans as having an inclination to refusal – a dismissive attitude toward the institution of diplomacy, it is impossible to see the influences of the conception of the nation-state as the right polity and the prejudices of Europe of the Enlightenment. In this understanding, the Ottoman Empire as an imperial system was an outmoded polity and Islam, which constituted the basis of this imperial system, necessitated a polity of strong conservatism and prescribed a policy of constant war, *jihad*, with the non-Muslim world. In addition to these latter-day prejudices, the evaluation of the Ottoman Empire in general and the way it conducted its external affairs – its diplomacy in particular – has been under the impact of the prejudices of the early modern Europeans, expressed in such concepts as 'the Terrible Turk' or 'the Unspeakable Turk'. The result is then to see the Ottoman policy in terms of a sharp dichotomy of *Dâr al-Islam* versus *Dâr al-Harb* as presented here. However, as I have already shown, the historical record does not support such a picture of permanent war between the Ottomans and Europeans.

Having said this, we cannot deny the cultural differences, mostly derived from religion, between the European states and the Ottoman Empire, and the impact of those differences upon their mutual interactions. The general public perceptions of the Europeans and Ottomans vis-à-vis each other were based upon, to use again a present-day expression, the process of 'otherization', describing your opponent in negative

terms so as to affirm your own identity. Many learned men and statesmen in Europe for years saw the Ottoman Empire as the 'other' of the common identity of the states of Europe. The Turk then constituted the 'perfect barbarian' for the Europeans in order for them to readily affirm the 'civilized' Europe.[77] *Pace* Anderson, it was not just 'all the great weight of Islamic religious conservatism' that hindered 'normal' diplomatic relations between the Sublime Porte and the courts of Europe. If there was a religious conservatism, one should speak of the 'European Christian conservatism' as well, which endured in spite of the Renaissance, Humanism, the Enlightenment and the conception of *raison d'état*. We should here remind ourselves of the fact that the European states abandoned the principle of *cuius regio eius religio* – the idea that the ruler's religion should be the people's religion – only in the mid-seventeenth century. We do not see the principle of *cuius regio eius religio* in Islamic history, certainly not in the Ottoman Empire.

The Ottoman Empire did not formally exchange resident ambassadors until the late eighteenth century. Those scholars who take this as an indication of the Ottoman contempt for European diplomacy do not ask the question: 'Had the Sublime Porte attempted to send a permanent resident ambassador to the European capitals earlier than it did, what would have been the attitude of the European courts?' The European courts sending their ambassadors to reside in Istanbul did not display much enthusiasm for having Ottoman ambassadors residing in their own capitals. As Berridge shows us in Chapter 5, 'Diplomatic Integration with Europe before Selim III', unilateralism suited both sides, and an Ottoman attempt to send a permanent ambassador to London prior to Yusuf Agah Efendi had been rebuffed by the Foreign Office. If there is to be blame for the lack of formal exchange of resident ambassadors, it would fall on both the Europeans and the Ottomans.

Nevertheless, despite the great weight of conservatism of whatever kind expressed in theory and enjoyed by the general public, there have been extensive interactions between the Ottoman imperial system and the European states system in practice, as I have shown. Beyazid II, the most pious of the Ottoman sultans, did not hesitate to make an agreement with the Pope. Similarly, Francis I, the Most Christian King, did indeed ask for the help and alliance of the 'Terrible Turk'. Despite the contrary arguments we find in the literature and mutual pejorative perceptions among the general public, the historical record enables us to argue for the existence of extensive and intensive diplomatic activities between the modern European states and the Ottoman Empire and a favourable attitude on the part of the Ottomans.

Notes

1. J. C. Hurewitz, 'Ottoman Diplomacy and the European States System', *The Middle East Journal*, vol. 15 (Spring 1961), 145–6.
2. Bernard Lewis, *The Middle East and the West* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1964), 30, 32.
3. M. S. Anderson, *The Rise of Modern Diplomacy 1450–1919* (London: Longman, 1993), 9, 71.
4. Thomas Naff, 'Reform and the Conduct of Ottoman Diplomacy in the Reign of Selim III, 1789–1809', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. LXXXIII (1963), 314.
5. Thomas Naff, 'Ottoman Diplomatic Relations with Europe in the Eighteenth Century: Patterns and Trends', in T. Naff and R. Owen (eds), *Studies in Eighteenth Century Islamic History* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1977), 93, 97.
6. Thomas Naff, 'The Ottoman Empire and the European States System', in H. Bull and A. Watson (eds), *The Expansion of International Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 144.
7. Naff, 'Reform and the Conduct of Ottoman Diplomacy . . .', 299.
8. Naff, 'The Ottoman Empire and the European States System', 148.
9. Naff, 'Reform and the Conduct of Ottoman Diplomacy . . .', 296. He expressed these ideas in more or less the same terms in his 'Ottoman Diplomatic Relations . . .', 97, and 'The Ottoman Empire and the European States System', 152.
10. Naff, 'The Ottoman Empire and the European States System', 144.
11. Naff, 'Ottoman Diplomatic Relations . . .', 93.
12. Ercüment Kuran, *Avrupa'da Osmanlı İkamet Elçiliklerinin Kuruluşu ve İlk Elçilerin Siyasi Faaliyetleri, 1793–1821 (The Establishment of the Ottoman Resident Embassies in Europe and the Political Activities of the First Ambassadors, 1793–1821)* (Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü Yayınları, 1988), 10–11.
13. We, of course, nowadays know very well that it is neither logically nor practically possible to make a clear-cut distinction between the so-called 'private' and 'public' realms. Furthermore, the students of history are well aware of the fact that the separation of the church and the state in Christian societies is a result of historical process rather than the precepts of the Bible. On the other hand, the students of society are not so naive as to assume that Christianity, or any religion for that matter, can be confined to the individual or private domain. Finally, the view that state and religion are united in Islam and Muslim societies is not borne out by the historical record. For an analysis of this, see I. M. Lapidus, 'State and Religion in Islamic Societies', *Past and Present*, no. 151 (May 1996), 4–27.
14. Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (London: Macmillan, 1977), 162, 164–5. See also Martin Wight, *Power Politics* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1979); and G. R. Berridge, *Diplomacy: Theory and Practice*, 2nd edn (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).
15. Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 166.
16. Of course, the origins of diplomacy in its broad sense of the communication and negotiation between separate entities can be taken back to the beginning of inter-societal relations. See Ragnar Numelin, *The Beginnings of Diplomacy:*

A Sociological Study of Inter-Tribal and International Relations (London: Oxford University Press, 1950); and Harold Nicolson, *The Evolution of Diplomatic Method* (London: Constable, 1954). Watson even tells us that we can trace the early examples of multilateral diplomacy to Ancient India and Greece. Adam Watson, *Diplomacy: The Dialogue between States* (London: Methuen, 1982), 85–8, 91.

17. Wight, *Power Politics*, 113.
18. Garret Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1955), 60.
19. Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 167.
20. Anderson, *The Rise of Modern Diplomacy*, 5–4.
21. Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy*, 56–8.
22. Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy*, 89.
23. D. E. Queller, *The Office of Ambassador in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967), 82. See also Berridge, *Diplomacy*, 105–6.
24. Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 13, 67–71.
25. Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 13, 71, 74.
26. The literature on the historical development and expansion of the European states system is vast. In addition to Bull's *Anarchical Society*, for notable examples, see Hedley Bull and Adam Watson (eds), *The Expansion of International Society* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984); Gerrit W. Gong, *The Standard of 'Civilization' in International Society* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984); F. S. Northedge, *The International Political System* (London: Faber & Faber, 1976); Adam Watson, *The Evolution of International Society: A Comparative Historical Analysis* (London: Routledge, 1992); and Martin Wight, *Systems of States* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1977). The view that the Ottoman Empire became a full member of the European system with the Treaty of Paris is argued by Bull, Gong, Northedge and Wight.
27. This thesis is associated with Herbert A. Gibbons, *The Foundation of the Ottoman Empire: A History of the Osmanlis, 1300–1403* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1916).
28. Mehmed Fuat Köprülü, *The Origins of the Ottoman Empire*, trans. and ed. Gary Leiser (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992).
29. In the Ottoman historiography, the *ghazi* thesis was propounded by Paul Wittek, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire* (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1938).
30. One of the best works on this is Rudi P. Lindner, *Nomads and Ottomans in Medieval Anatolia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983).
31. Norman Itzkowitz, *Ottoman Empire and Islamic Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 6, 11.
32. Halil İnalcık, 'The Rise of the Ottoman Empire', in M. A. Cook (ed.), *A History of the Ottoman Empire to 1730* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 31.
33. İnalcık, 'The Rise of the Ottoman Empire', 47–8.
34. For a good summary of these debates, see Abdul Hamid A. Abu Sulayman, *The Islamic Theory of International Relations: New Directions for Islamic Methodology and Thought* (Herndon: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1987).
35. For a similar view, see F. Parkinson, *The Philosophy of International Relations: A Study in the History of Thought* (London: Sage Publications, 1977).
36. See Nasim Sousa, *The Capitulatory Régime of Turkey: Its History, Origin, and Nature* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1933), 16. Article XVI of the Agreement

read as follows: 'that his lordship of Venice may, if he desires, send to Constantinople a governor (consul), with his suit, *according to existing custom*, which governor (consul) shall have the privilege of ruling over, governing, and administering justice to the Venetians of every class and condition.' Emphasis added.

37. See Mehmet İpşirli, 'Osmanlı Devletinde "Eman" Sistemi' ('The *Aman* System in the Ottoman Empire') in İsmail Soysal (ed.), *Çağdaş Türk Diplomasisi: 200 Yıllık Süreç* (*Contemporary Turkish Diplomacy: The Course of Two Hundred Years*) (Ankara: TTK Basımevi, 1999), 4–5.

38. For these alliances, see Kemal Beydilli, *Osmanlı-Prusya İttifakı: Meydana Gelişi-Tahlili-Tatbiki* (*Alliance between the Ottomans and Prussia: Its Development, Analysis and Implementation*) (Istanbul: Günyay, 1984); and *Büyük Frederik ve Osmanlılar: XVIII. Yüxyılda Osmanlı–Prusya Münasebetleri* (*Frederick the Great and the Ottomans: Ottoman–Prussian Relations in the Eighteenth Century*) (Istanbul: Istabul Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1985).

39. The argument for the Inner Asian heritage has been suggested by Isenbike Togan, 'Ottoman History by Inner Asian Norms', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, vol. 18, no. 3–4 (1991), 185–210.

40. It was not only the Ottoman Sultans who considered themselves as *Sultan-ı İklim-i Rum*, but also they were called the 'Emperor of Rome' by some contemporary Byzantine historians. G. Trapezuntios said to Mehmed II: 'No doubts that you are the emperor of the Romans. Whoever is legally master of the capital of the Empire is the Emperor and Constantinople is the capital of the Roman Empire.' Quoted in İnalcık, 'The Rise of the Ottoman Empire', 41.

41. Charles Tilly, 'How Empires End', in K. Barkey and M. von Hagen (eds), *After Empire: Multiethnic Societies and Nation-Building, The Soviet Union and the Russian, Ottoman, and Habsburg Empires* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), 3.

42. Quoted in Geoffrey Lewis, *Turkey*, 3rd edn (London: Ernest Benn, 1965), 24.

43. The full and complete translation of Emperor Qianlong's letter to King George III is supplied in Alain Peyrefitte, *The Collision of Two Civilizations: The British Expedition to China in 1792–4*, trans. Jon Rothschild (London: Harvill, 1993), 288–92.

44. Koçi Bey, *Koçi Bey Risalesi* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1985).

45. For the agreements, see J. C. Hurewitz (ed.), *The Middle East and North Africa in World Politics: A Documentary Record*, 2nd edn (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1975), 19–22.

46. Roderic H. Davison, 'The Westernization of the Ottoman Diplomacy in the Nineteenth Century', in Edward Ingram (ed.), *National and International Politics in the Middle East* (London: Frank Cass, 1986).

47. In the view of one student, the Ottoman Empire became a nation-state only with the government of the Committee for Union and Progress in the early twentieth century. See Caglar Keyder, 'The Ottoman Empire', in Barkey and von Hagen, *After Empire*.

48. Şaban H. Çalış, *Hayalet Bilimi ve Hayali Kimlikler: Neo-Osmanlılık, Özal ve Balkanlar* (*Hauntology and Imagined Identities: Neo-Ottomanism, Ozal and the Balkans*) (Konya: Çizgi Kitabevi, 2001), 40.

49. Anderson, *The Rise of Modern Diplomacy*, 30; and Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy*, 136–7.

50. See H. İnalcık, 'The Turkish Impact on the Development of Modern Europe', in K. H. Karpat (ed.), *The Ottoman State and Its Place in World History* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974), 51–2; Naff, 'The Ottoman Empire and the European States System', 145–6; and Adam Watson, 'European International Society and Its Expansion', in Bull and Watson (eds), *The Expansion of International Society*, 16–17.

51. Dehio, *The Precarious Balance: Four Centuries of the European Power Struggle* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), 40–1.

52. İnalcık, 'The Turkish Impact on the Development of Modern Europe', 52–3; Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy*, 169–70; Naff, 'The Ottoman Empire and the European States System', 216; and Watson, *The Evolution of International Society*, 177–8, 216.

53. İnalcık, 'The Turkish Impact on the Development of Modern Europe', 56–7; H. İnalcık, *The Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 188, 366; H. İnalcık, 'Imtiyazat', *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd edn (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971), 1179; and Sousa, *The Capitulatory Regime of Turkey*, 16.

54. Maxime Rodinson, *Europe and the Mystique of Islam* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1987), 34–5.

55. H. Butterfield, 'The Balance of Power', in H. Butterfield and M. Wight (eds), *Diplomatic Investigations: Essays in the Theory of International Politics* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1966), 143; and R. H. Davidson, 'Ottoman Diplomacy and Its Legacy', in L. Carl Brown (ed.), *Imperial Legacy: The Ottoman Imprint on the Balkans and the Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 175.

56. Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy*, 206. According to Maggi, in addition to Turkish, an ambassador should speak Latin, Greek, Italian, French, Spanish and German. English was not required.

57. Dorothy M. Vaughan, *Europe and the Turk: A Pattern of Alliances, 1350–1700* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1954); and Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 18, 20, 224.

58. I have discussed the Afro-Eurasian international system elsewhere. See my *International Relations and the Philosophy of History: A Civilizational Approach* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

59. Naff, 'The Ottoman Empire and the European States System', 143. Emphases added.

60. Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire . . .* , 186.

61. Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire . . .* , 187.

62. See Andreas Osiander, 'Sovereignty, International Relations, and the Westphalian Myth', *International Organization*, vol. 55, no. 2 (Spring 2001), 251–87.

63. Anderson, *The Rise of Modern Diplomacy*, 11, 80–96, 119–28.

64. Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy*, 60.

65. Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy*, 99.

66. Anderson, *The Rise of Modern Diplomacy*, 9; and Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy*, 91.

67. Philip Mansell, *Constantinople: City of the World's Desire, 1453–1924* (London: John Murray, 1995), 193.

68. W. H. McNeill, 'The Changing Shape of World History', *History and Theory*, Theme Issue 34, *World Historians and Their Critics*, vol. 34, no. 2 (1995), 17. Emphases added.

69. For the text, see Hurewitz, *The Middle East and North Africa in World Politics*, 1–5.

70. Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy*, 33.

71. Faik Reşit Unat, *Osmanlı Sefirleri ve Sefaretnameleri* (*Ottoman Ambassadors and Their Sefaretnames*), ed. Bekir Sıtkı Baykal, 3rd edn (Ankara: TTK Basimevi, 1992), 14–16.

72. Mansell, *Constantinople*, 190–1, 194.

73. Harold Nicolson, *The Evolution of Diplomatic Method*, 34–5.

74. I. H. Danişmend, *İzahlı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi* (*Annotated Chronology of Ottoman History*) (Istanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1971), VI, 43. On the imprisonment of the ambassadors in the Seven Towers, see also Berridge, Chapter 5, this volume.

75. Unat, *Osmanlı Sefirleri ve Sefaretnameleri*, 17–19.

76. Unat, *Osmanlı Sefirleri ve Sefaretnameleri*, 24.

77. I have extensively discussed the question of identity and perceptions between Europe and the Turk in my 'Turkey and Europe: The Other in Identity Formation', *Zeitschrift für Türkeistudien*, 13. Jahrgang, Heft 1 (2000), 85–94; and 'Perceptions and Images in Turkish (Ottoman)–European Relations', in Tareq Ismael and Mustafa Aydin (eds), *Turkey's Foreign Policy in the 21st Century: A Changing Role in World Politics* (New York: Ashgate, 2003).