

From Party Spirit to Imperial Thinking: The Gladstone Government and the Execution of the Berlin Treaty, 1880-1881

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Abstract

This research expounds the Liberal Party's attitude and policy towards the Treaty of Berlin, thereby revealing the conflict and reconciliation between classical liberalism and modern imperialism. In a broad sense, this thesis deals with the Liberal Party's criticisms of the Disraeli Government's Eastern policy since the Berlin Congress of 1878 and the Liberals' standpoints towards the Turkish question from the end of the Russo-Turkish War (1878) till the fulfillment of the Berlin Treaty by 1882. Specifically, it treats of the Liberal Government's policy in executing the Treaty of Berlin from the start of Gladstone's second ministry to the end of 1881, when the territorial arrangements of the Treaty had mostly been disposed of. The paper is divided into five sections: 1. Introduction: The Eastern Question and the Liberal Party by 1880; 2. The Proposition of a Liberal Solution to the Turkish Question: the Gladstone Government's Policy towards the Execution of the Berlin Treaty; 3. Legality, Justice and Power: the Montenegrin and Greek Questions; 4. Moral Influence or Imperial Command: the Liberal Policy on Turkish Reforms and the Cyprus Question; 5. Conclusion: Ideas and Practices in the Liberals' Eastern Policy. In general, they explain the way the Liberals contributed – however differently from the Conservatives – to the expansion of the British Empire, and, paradoxically, to the overthrow of classical liberalism in the meantime.

Keywords: Liberal Party, Treaty of Berlin, Gladstone, Granville, Turkey, Eastern Question.

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I. Introduction: The Eastern Question and the Liberal Party by 1880

The word "imperialism" was invented by certain liberal-minded observers in England to stamp Disraeli's foreign policy with popular reprobation.¹ But this invention turned to be a two-edged sword, and the weapon wounded the hand that wielded it. When the Liberal Party saw its way clear to winning the general election of 1880, a suspicion was engendered, which seriously injured the Liberal cause, that liberalism was in some way an antithesis to imperialism, and, therefore, prejudiced against the "Greater" Britain. It cost the Liberal leaders, particularly Lord Hartington (the Liberal leader in the House of Commons) and his associates, great pains to eradicate this popular belief, as imperial enterprises and competitions had become keenly active since the Berlin Congress in 1878. While Gladstone (opinion leader of the Liberals) proposed admirably his liberal programme on foreign affairs, Hartington pledged himself, in the name of the party he headed, "to uphold the power of the Empire, secure the safety of our own country, and maintain its

1 *The Times*, 11 March 1880, "The Opposition and the General Election," 11b.

possessions.”² Although he declared at the same time that the Liberal Party would engage in no policy of disturbance or uncalled-for annexation, but the Conservatives would also give the same assurance with as much sincerity. Indeed, there was no material difference between Hartington’s description of the future policy of the Liberal Government in foreign affairs and Northcote’s vindication of Conservative policy in the past.³

The foreign policy of the Liberal Party around 1880 was actually that of Gladstone, at first in theory and then in practice. The Liberal Party’s foreign policy had been taking shape in their attacks on Disraelian imperialism and against the background of an intensifying scramble for the Ottoman Empire since 1876. As an opposition to conservatism, the Liberals followed Gladstonianism. In respect of foreign affairs, Lord Granville’s defence was generally not concise and direct, but it was quite as uncompromising as Gladstone’s. In the Liberal election campaign in March 1880 Granville (the Liberal leader in the House of Lords) declared assertively that the Liberal Party would in the future pursue a vigorous and firm policy in foreign affairs, and secure all the ends which the Disraeli Government had attempted to achieve overseas – by more appropriate measures and with greater practical success. W. E. Forster, one of the Liberal spokesmen, urged the same arguments in the meantime, and professed what some of his colleagues would have denounced not long ago as “imperialism.” This was the gist of nearly all the Liberal speeches of the day, which indicated that a new Liberal cabinet would be most resolute in carrying out the Berlin Treaty. It is interesting to compare them with the party discourse during 1877-1878, when non-intervention principle was

2 *Ibid.* Hartington said to his audience on 25 March 1880: “if the Liberal Party were in power.....[they] would not stake the interests or the honour of England upon the maintenance of the integrity and independence of an unreformed Turkish government. They would not treat the condition of those people and the relations of the Turkish Government to its Christian subjects as a matter which was only of interest to Russia and to Turkey, and in which we had no call to *interfere* except so far as certain definite interests of our own were concerned.” Quoted in *The Annual Register: A Review of Public Events at Home and Abroad, 1880* (London: Longmans & Co., 1881), 53.

3 Lord Northcote was the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Disraeli Government and the Conservative leader in the House of Commons.

affirmed impregvably.

After the Liberals' victory in the election, much speculation arose as to who would be the new Prime Minister. On the resignation (21 April 1880) of Disraeli, Hartington and Granville were sent for by the Queen. Although Victoria wished to charge Hartington with forming a government,⁴ he advised her to summon Gladstone, knowing that Gladstone would not accept any post in the government except premiership, and that no strong Liberal government could be formed without the support of Gladstone.⁵ The Queen then asked, with great reluctance, Gladstone to form a government, and warned him that he would have to bear the consequences of his previous sayings, to which he entirely assented.⁶ Granville, who was mostly in accordance with Gladstone on foreign affairs, became Foreign Secretary. The 1880 election, which was fought almost entirely on issues of foreign and colonial policy, proved to be a plebiscite in favour of Gladstone's imperial thinking.

The great victory of the Liberal Party made many, at home and abroad, believe a drastic change in British foreign policy would soon ensue. Germany was particularly troubled as she feared that the Berlin settlement would be undone,⁷ and that, by a tolerance of Slav Propaganda in the Balkans, fresh outbreaks might be excited with Russia unfailingly making further attempts on the Straits. And the Germans' fear was intensified under the apprehension that Britain was jealous of Austria in the Balkans.⁸ The general opinion of the new British Government was that a liberal policy was being pursued in foreign affairs, not independently of the

4 Victoria Journal, 22 April 1880, in G. E. Buckle, ed., *The Letters of Queen Victoria*, 2nd Series, vol. III (London: John Murray, 1928), 80.

5 Granville, after a vain attempt to form a cabinet, declined the task as well.

6 British Library (BL), Add. MSS. 44764, f. 50, "Audience with the Queen," 23 April 1880.

7 BL, Add. MSS. 44466, f. 242, Tenterden to Gladstone, 30 Oct. 1880. It was widely believed overseas, however, that Gladstone would soon resign office as a result of his stand on foreign affairs, and then scope would be given for the policy pursued at the Berlin Congress.

8 D. W. R. Bahlman, ed., *The Diary of Sir Edward Walter Hamilton 1880-1885* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1972), vol. I, 15.

English public, however.⁹ Before long, there was some confusion about whether this was really a new start for Britain in European politics.

Writing to Granville in September 1878, Gladstone said, "Diplomacy is essentially irresponsible and I hold it to be the worst possible training for responsible, and *a fortiori* for despotic government."¹⁰ However, he tried to show that the moral duty of promoting "justice, humanity and freedom" was not incompatible with national interests in dealing with the Turkish question.¹¹ In less than two years, Gladstone returned to power to redress Disraeli's jingoism in the East. While Gladstone's second ministry was marked by a series of reversals of the Conservatives' foreign policy, the execution of the unfulfilled provisions of the Berlin Treaty by means of the Concert of Europe was recognized by some historians as his only achievement in diplomacy.¹² However, sensible of the expediency of maintaining the continuity of foreign policy, the Liberals were quick to seek for a ground of action common to both of the British political parties in dealing with the Berlin Treaty. As such, the Liberal Party had built up a reputation for itself in the power politics of Europe, but by so doing it tragically debased itself as an effective critic of imperialism.

9 Stephen Gwynn and G. M. Tuckwell, eds., *The Life of the Rt. Hon. Sir Charles W. Dilke* (London: John Murray, 1917), vol. I, 320.

10 Public Record Office (PRO), PRO30/29/29A, Gladstone to Granville, 17 Sept. 1878.

11 *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates (Hansard)*, 3rd Series, vol. 237, "The Supplementary Estimate," 4 Feb. 1878, Gladstone, 959. More than three years later, Gladstone still held to this ideal solution to the Eastern Question. He told his Midlothian constituents: "Beyond sea, in Europe, Asia and Africa, we have carefully and constantly striven to fulfil the expectations I may have led you to entertain. And although all the clouds have not yet disappeared, I am thankful to say that the horizon has been greatly cleared and a progress made in the sense of *liberty, justice and humanity*, at least as great as in a time so limited it would have been reasonable to expect." Gladstone to J. Cowan, 30 May 1881 (read to the annual general meeting of the Midlothian Liberal Association), in H. C. G. Matthew, ed., *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. X (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1990), 73.

12 Harold Temperley and L. M. Penson, *Foundations of British Foreign Policy from Pitt (1792) to Salisbury (1902)* (London: Frank Cass, 1966), 390.

II. *The Proposition of a Liberal Solution to the Turkish Question: the Gladstone Government's Policy towards the Execution of the Berlin Treaty*

The Liberals generally approved the spirit of the Berlin Treaty when it was being under consideration, while at the same time they understood that it would be difficult for anyone in power to carry out an agreement that would transform the policy of maintaining the independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire. Particularly, the indecisive and purposeless Anglo-Turkish Convention, a by-product of the Berlin Treaty,¹³ was condemned by the Opposition to be nothing more than an embarrassment to the future ministry. But overall, the Liberal Party had no doubt that Britain was bound to observe and promote the Berlin Treaty at the sacrifice of the Paris Treaty of 1856. Although the Liberal leaders – with the exception of Hartington – vehemently denounced the Berlin Treaty as impracticable when they were in opposition, the impression was not correct that the Liberals would not insist upon the performance of its stipulations if they came into power. As a matter of fact, the problem of the Berlin Treaty was the first region in which the new government gave evidence of a distinctive policy.¹⁴ The nomination itself of Granville as Foreign Secretary was rightly seen by experienced English diplomats as a guarantee for the order of things established by the Berlin Treaty.¹⁵ And before long, Granville wrote to assure Victoria and the Powers that the Gladstone government, instead of destroying the Berlin Treaty, was determined to do their best to carry its provisions.¹⁶ Gladstone agreed with Granville in treating it as an

13 The Anglo-Turkish convention was signed on 4 June 1878. By this treaty Britain engaged for the future to defend the Asiatic dominion of the Ottoman Empire “by force of arms,” in return for a promise by the Sultan to introduce all necessary reforms in Turkey, and for the assignment of Cyprus to be occupied by Britain.

14 *The Annual Register: A Review of Public Events at Home and Abroad*, 1880, 62.

15 See Layard to White, 27 April 1880, quoted in H. S. Edwards, *Sir William White, For Six Years Ambassador at Constantinople: His Life and Correspondence* (London: John Murray, 1902), 199-200.

16 See Granville to the Queen, 1 May 1880, in G. E. Buckle, ed., *The Letters of Queen Victoria*,

instrument of international law.¹⁷

In reference to things that were not contemplated by the Berlin Treaty—such as the proposal for the joint occupation of Eastern Roumelia—the Liberals, certainly, felt free to form their own opinion and to canvass and dispute the propriety of such a course of proceeding.¹⁸ And they meant to keep the freedom of diplomacy when they announced just before they came to power that they would not stake the interests or the honor of Britain upon the maintenance of the independence and integrity of an “unreformed” Turkish government. In fact, the Liberals claimed the right of interference in “the relations of the Turkish government to its Christian subjects.”¹⁹ Obviously, the Eastern Question would soon of necessity be reopened and the Liberal Party would try for a solution following the 1880 election, which they were about to win.

However, soon after the Liberal government was formed, the Liberals found themselves trapped in political practicalities. Hartington, now the Secretary for India, spoke much of the difficulty and embarrassment confronting the British Government in Europe, Asia and Africa. Leading Liberals started to warn the electors not to expect too much from the new government. Joseph Chamberlain, the President of the Board of Trade, for instance, cautioned his Radical followers against expecting that a government representing all shades of liberalism would move as far as the most advanced section desired. It was curious, as contemporary commentators observed, that the first duty of the Gladstone government

2nd Series, vol. III, 93; PRO, PRO30/29/37, Granville to the Queen, 19 Sept. 1880; and FO424/97/364, Granville to Layard, 30 April 1880 (an identic circular to all the Powers concerned). Also cf. PRO30/29/22A/7, Granville's Draft Speech Urging the Fulfilment of the Treaty of Berlin, March 1880 (?).

17 Gladstone to Granville, 19 Sept. 1880, quoted in Agatha Ramm, *William Ewart Gladstone* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1989), 82. Also cf. *Hansard*, 3rd Series, vol. 252, “Address in Answer to Her Majesty's Most Gracious Speech,” 20 May 1880, Gladstone, 137.

18 See *Hansard*, 3rd Series, vol. 243, “Business of Parliament – Ministerial Statement,” 13 Feb. 1879, Hartington, 1109.

19 Hartington's speech on 25 March 1880, quoted in *The Annual Register: A Review of Public Events at Home and Abroad*, 1880, 53.

should be to allay the immense excitement and enthusiasm that the Liberals had raised to bring them into power. The prudent determination of the new government did not surprise the country, though it disappointed many enthusiastic supporters of the Liberal cause who believed a new impulse would suddenly be given to the course of affairs. In respect of the Berlin Treaty, the Liberal government allowed itself to drift for a while as it realized that what the Conservative government had left behind were the portions most difficult of execution or in principle more open to question. Hesitant to reopen the Eastern Question, the Foreign Secretary warned Lord Odo Russell, the British Ambassador to Berlin, in early May 1880 that Turkey, if pushed too hard by the Powers, "might crumble in our hands."²⁰ The idea of a liberal policy on foreign affairs was still in doubt.

Until 1882 foreign affairs drew little attention of the country, and the Liberals had reason to congratulate themselves on being able to carry out almost unchecked the programme they had laid down for themselves. The discussion on foreign affairs occupied a very small portion of time in Parliament during the first sessions after the Liberals' assumption of office, though the development of Gladstone's policy in the East was closely watched. Parliamentary challenges to the ministers were sporadic and unauthoritative. Seeing that in the effort to fulfil the Berlin Treaty the government should enlist a universal support of the British public, the Opposition leaders on the whole adopted a becoming attitude in this respect. In reviewing the government's position in early 1881, Disraeli touched but lightly on its foreign policy, contenting himself with the observation that the Berlin Treaty, however unsettled, secured the peace of Europe. Even Queen Victoria and the press spoke in defence of the government in the undetermined state of affairs.²¹ Thanks to ordinary patriotic feeling the

20 Edmond Fitzmaurice, *The Life of Granville George Leveson Gower, Second Earl Granville* (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1905), vol. II, 199.

21 In the Queen's Speech to the Houses in 1880 she said: "Unfortunate delays had taken place in the settlement of the Eastern Question, but for the attainment of the objects in view the government continued to place reliance on the fact that the Concert of Europe had been steadily maintained in regard to the Eastern Question." Quoted in *The Annual Register: A Review of Public Events at Home and Abroad, 1880*, 105. *The Times* on 12 May 1880 also

Liberal government was free from fierce challenges in the subject, but in practice it could not take actions individually or independently since the main point of its methodology in regard of the Eastern Question was the maintenance of the concerted action of Europe.

After the Berlin Congress of 1878 some progress had been made by international arrangements on the execution of its resolutions (esp. those affecting Austria and Russia), but many of the most important of the agreements still remained unfulfilled. During the two years after the signature of the Berlin Treaty nearly all the points had been settled which did not materially rely on Turkish co-operation for their fulfilment; but where the settlement of affairs depended chiefly on the action of the Porte only a few things had been done.²² The rectification of the frontiers of Turkey, Montenegro and Roumelia had to a great extent been accomplished, but hardly any progress in the settlement of the relations between Turkey and Greece had been achieved. After Granville's accession to office the questions of Greek territory (Art. 24) and Armenian reforms (Art. 61) – their solution had already been strongly urged on the Porte by the former Foreign Secretary Lord Salisbury – were taken up with increased vigour.²³ The Liberals were without doubt desirous of realizing the Berlin resolutions, but the difficulties facing them accumulated with time. Protests from British holders of Turkish bonds affected by the execution of certain stipulations of the treaty were a testament to their dedication and the difficulties.²⁴

showed much consideration for the government's position: "We were only just beginning in earnest the most difficult and complicated of all the problems for which the Berlin Treaty provided a temporary solution. The task will need great patience, and too much must not be expected at the outset from our own Government." (p. 11c)

22 For the articles (23 in number) which remained to be executed in whole or in part at the time when the Gladstone government came into office, see PRO, FO881/4126, Lord Tenterden's Memorandum on the Present State of the Questions Arising under the Treaty of Berlin, 28 April 1880.

23 In Armenia, which Britain by the Anglo-Turkish convention had taken under her protection, anarchy and famine produced a condition of chronic revolt, causing much concern among the Radicals.

24 See *British Parliamentary Papers 1880*, vol. LXXXII, Turkey no. 20 (1880), [C.2709], Mr.

Like many treaties, the Berlin Treaty and the Anglo-Turkish Convention were couched in terms so vague that differences arose on the interpretation of the clauses. In this case the complication was even more delicate because the articles were understood differently by the several European Powers and Turkey, and because no statement had been made herein that the Treaty of San Stefano between Russia and Turkey, which the Berlin Treaty was supposed to replace, was abrogated. Failure to execute the Berlin Treaty would possibly induce Russia to revive the previous pact – hence a danger to Europe and especially to Turkey.²⁵ Thus, as Granville pointed out, as regarded Russia and Turkey there was “no advantage in *prematurely* declaring it to have failed.”²⁶

Soon after the Liberals took office an announcement was made that caused quite a stir in London. It was stated that Sir Austen Henry Layard, the British Ambassador to Turkey, had received leave of absence from his post at Constantinople – not recalled – and that his place was to be taken by Mr. George Joachim Goschen (First Viscount Goschen, 1831-1907) as Special Ambassador.²⁷ The meaning of this change was widely discussed, because it was not usual to remove an ambassador on the change of the home government, and because the difference between a “special ambassador” and an ordinary one was subtle.²⁸ The Powers had already

Guedalla to Granville, 15 July 1880, Inclosure: “Memorial from Turkish Bondholders,” 306-308.

25 Indeed, it was believed that another definitive treaty between Russia and Turkey on the basis of that of San Stefano had since been proposed by Russia, which would confirm some of the previous provisions most objectionable to Britain. See “England in the Levant,” *The Edinburgh Review*, vol. 148, no.304 (Oct. 1878), 591.

26 Granville to Dufferin, 5 May 1880 (private), quoted in Harold Temperley and L. M. Penson, *Foundations of British Foreign Policy from Pitt (1792) to Salisbury (1902)*, 397.

27 In fact, the first candidate considered was Lord Carlingford. See BL, Add. MSS. 44172, f.29, Granville to Gladstone, 29 April 1880; and PRO, PRO30/29/29A, Gladstone to Granville, 2 May 1880.

28 Gladstone told the House of Commons, which was very restive as to the “two ambassadors,” that “a special ambassador carries with him no powers other than those which attach to an ordinary ambassador.” But he was mindful of the distinction between them when he reminded his Foreign Secretary that the “extraordinary” might finally carry the ordinary in

been startled by the change of English administration, and the recall of Layard seemed to confirm their fear that the Gladstone government would not be faithful to the international engagements entered into by its predecessor.²⁹ More so because Goschen, a financial specialist, was understood to fully share the views of the Liberal Party on foreign affairs, although he differed from them on domestic matters. Anyway, the appointment was gratifying evidence that the Liberal government intended to deal energetically with Turkish affairs: it was, as a matter of fact, decreed “in order to mark the sense which Her Majesty’s Government [entertained] of the gravity of the situation,” indicating that the time for mere warnings had passed.³⁰ Indeed, Layard was replaced because his influence at Constantinople, after a train of unsuccessful remonstrations, had already worn out. On the other hand, Layard was recalled because the Liberals saw that he, and Disraeli, had made the Concert of Europe more difficult.³¹ Controversy and suspicion over the change of ambassadorship was partly allayed by an announcement in the *Daily News* of 7 May 1880 that Granville was about to issue a circular note to the Powers inviting their co-operation in securing the execution of the unfulfilled conditions of the Berlin Treaty.

The first action the Liberal government took to enforce the Berlin

its train without leaving any liberty of choice. See *Hansard*, 3rd Series, vol. 252, “Address in Answer to Her Majesty’s Most Gracious Speech,” 20 May 1880, Gladstone, 138; and PRO, PRO30/29/29A, Gladstone to Granville, 2 May 1880. Goschen’s expenses at Constantinople came to a very large sum within a few months (almost twice as much as usual), causing great concern. See BL, Add. MSS. 44149, f.14, Dilke to Gladstone, 20 Sept. 1880.

29 Such was Victoria’s worry. She said to Granville: “It would be most unwise to change Sir Austen Layard immediately. It should be postponed, at any rate, till Europe is reassured that the new government does not intend to upset the foreign policy of the late government, and to act in accordance with Russia’s views.” Queen Victoria to Granville, 1 May 1880, in G. E. Buckle, ed., *The Letters of Queen Victoria*, 2nd Series, vol. III, 94.

30 PRO, FO78/3074, Granville to Goschen, 18 May 1880; and PRO30/29/143, Opinions of the Cabinet on the Last Paragraph of Instructions to Mr. Goschen, 14 May 1880.

31 Forster to Dr. Washburn, 1 May 1880, in T. W. Reid, *Life of the Right Honourable William Edward Forster* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1888), vol. II, 232.

Treaty was to invite the other Powers to concert measures for obtaining its fulfilment. It was, however, doubted whether this action was in agreement with the Liberal pre-election pledges. Some considered it to be a new departure; some worried about the consequences of reopening the Eastern Question in this way. The Liberals were criticized by the Opposition for inconsistencies in their argument over the Berlin Treaty and their haste to press for its execution. But the Opposition attacks were neither vigorous nor damaging, and the government was able to methodically proceed with its leaders' programme as planned. On 14 May Gladstone informed Musurus Pasha, the Turkish Ambassador in London, of his position on Turkish affairs. He repudiated the view that the maintenance of the Ottoman Empire was a British interest and the basis of British policy in the East: the suzerainty of the Sultan was to be supported as long as it was useful and conducive to the peace of Europe. Also repudiated was the idea that Britain, after the take-over of Cyprus, coveted another territorial acquisition in Asia Minor or beyond. What the British government wished to see, Gladstone emphasized, were the reestablishment of a Turkish parliament, autonomous constitutions for the provinces, and financial reforms of the Porte.³²

In general, the Concert of Europe was the Liberal approach and solution to the Eastern Question. It was the keynote of Gladstone's Midlothian campaign speeches concerning foreign affairs, and of his accusation of impotence against the Conservatives in dealing with the Ottoman Empire. Gladstone introduced the idea of a moral coercion of Turkey by the European Concert in his Edinburgh speech on 25 November 1879,³³ and his constant contention in active opposition during the Disraeli ministry was that this unanimous diplomatic action was to be secured by

32 BL, Add. MSS. 56445, f.95, Gladstone to Granville, 13 May 1880; and *ibid.*, Gladstone's memorandum, 14 May 1880. Granville concurred with the Prime Minister in this matter, but he doubted whether the Turkish Ambassador would report it. See Add. MSS. 44172, f.57, Granville to Gladstone, 13 May 1880.

33 See Gladstone's Edinburgh speech on 25 Nov. 1879, in A. T. Bassett, ed., *Gladstone's Speeches* (London: Methuen, 1916), 577; and W. N. Medlicott, *Bismarck, Gladstone, and the Concert of Europe* (London: The Athlone Press, 1956), 29, 35.

any English government that determined to engage in the task. As he knew well, mutual trust was lacking among the Powers, but he was confident that a “common accord” could (only) be “achieved under the guidance and fostering care of England.”³⁴ The task was thus boldly undertaken by Gladstone after he won the 1880 election. In his eyes it was the working of the European Concert for the purpose of justice, peace and liberty that was the greatest matter at issue. “That has always been the ideal of my life in foreign policy,” he said.³⁵ In effect, the promotion of concerted pressure on the Turks was probably the best way of performing Britain’s duty in the Eastern Question (esp. in Asia Minor) without involving herself in dangerous and costly complications.³⁶ While on the other hand, the European Powers also seemed inclined “to put on a show of concert” in order to strengthen their representations to Turkey. That, however, did not necessarily make it easier for the Liberal government to make a stand for its principles. “The question is,” as Granville pointed out, “if their representations fail, what is to be the next step. We do not shrink from doing what may be judicious, with the other Powers, but we are not inclined for isolated and dual action.”³⁷ Although Granville was not much more optimistic than his predecessor Lord Salisbury about the establishment and maintenance of the Concert of Europe, he held to it in order that all attempts at Turkish reforms should not prove abortive. The European Concert in this way served well the Liberal cause.

34 BL, Add. MSS. 44667, f.18, Gladstone’s note on the Concert of Europe, undated (March 1880?).

35 Gladstone to his wife, 10 Oct. 1880, in A. T. Bassett, ed., *Gladstone to His Wife* (London: Methuen, 1936), 232-233.

36 It was actually in order to resist more effectively Russia’s claim to the right of interference between the Sultan and his Christian subjects that Britain first sought, since the Crimean War, to organize the Concert of Europe on the basis of the necessity for a collective intervention of all the Powers. And so Granville took the European Concert to be the only instrument that well saved Turkey. See Valentine Chirol, “The Attitude of the Powers,” in Luigi Villari, ed., *The Balkan Question: The Present Condition of the Balkans and of the European Responsibilities* (London: John Murray, 1905), 233.

37 Granville to Dufferin, 5 May 1880, quoted in Harold Temperley and L. M. Penson, *Foundations of British Foreign Policy from Pitt (1792) to Salisbury (1902)*, 397.

In his circular of 4 May 1880 to the British ambassadors in Europe,³⁸ Granville invited the co-operation of the Powers for preventing any further delay in the execution of the Berlin Treaty, and he proposed that an identic and simultaneous note should be addressed by their representatives at Constantinople to ask the Porte to fulfil “forthwith” its obligations particularly in regard to Greece, Montenegro and Armenia. In order to secure cordiality of action among the Powers, Gladstone tendered a public apology for the language he had used about Austria in the course of his election campaign;³⁹ and by so doing he provoked a great deal of bitter comment. Gladstone’s letter to Count Karolyi, the Austrian ambassador in London, was published on 10 May,⁴⁰ but the diplomatic circumstances that led to this apology were not made known. It was very probable that Gladstone repeatedly denounced Austria on public occasions in the hope that without an Austrian ally Britain would not make war on Russia freely. Yet, the majority of the Liberal leaders did not have sympathy with that point of view.⁴¹ It appeared from Granville’s subsequent explanation in Parliament that Gladstone, seeing that his hostile observations were still resented in Austria, had expressed himself anxious to withdraw them so as

38 See PRO, FO65/1076; also cf. Cab37/1/15, Draft of Despatch from Lord Granville to Her Majesty’s Representatives at Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Rome and St. Petersburg, 4 May 1880.

39 See “Speech in the Waverley Market, Edinburgh,” 29 Nov. 1879, in W. E. Gladstone, *Midlothian Speeches, 1879* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1971, originally published 1879), 162; for Gladstone’s denunciation of Austria at Edinburgh on 17 March 1880, see *The Times*, 18 March 1880, 11b; and *The Times*, 13 April 1880, 9f, Gladstone’s answer to the special correspondent of the Vienna *Allgemeine Zeitung*.

40 See H. C. G. Matthew, ed., *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. IX, 514-515. For exchange of notes between Gladstone and Karolyi, see BL, Add. MSS. 44544, f.2; and G. P. Gooch and Harold Temperley, eds., *British Documents on the Origins of the War 1899-1914*, vol. IX: *The Balkan Wars* (London: HMSO, 1933), 773-774.

41 See Richard Millman, *Britain and the Eastern Question, 1875-1878* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1979), 392. Also cf. Cranbrook’s diary on 9 Feb. 1878, in A. E. Gathorne-Hardy, ed., *Gathorne Hardy, First Earl of Cranbrook: A Memoir* (London: Longman, Green & Co., 1910), vol. II, 51. Granville, for example, complained to Hartington: “Gladstone was quite wrong in his attacks upon Austria; it was in opposition to what we agreed ought to be our line with respect to Austria.” See Granville to Hartington, 5 April 1880, quoted in Edmond Fitzmaurice, *The Life of Granville George Leveson Gower, Second Earl Granville*, 203.

to clear the way for co-operations on Turkish affairs.⁴² Thereupon, much to Gladstone's relief, the Austrian ambassador assured him that the policy of Austria was not to go beyond the Berlin Treaty. In the explicit public assurances from Austria on her policy in the Balkans, Gladstone had received in advance an equivalent for his apology.⁴³ It now appeared that Austria could no longer rely on British support to resist Russia, and that, with Anglo-Russian tension eased, the construction of a European Concert became promising for the first time since 1856.⁴⁴

In the Queen's speech read to Parliament on 20 May, the fulfilment of the Berlin Treaty was spoken of as a national object to be attained in concert with the other Powers. In the debate on the Queen's address the Liberal government optimistically expressed their Turkish policy in the light of the European Concert. It was recognized to be a new start in the Eastern Question and the only chance of preserving the position of Turkey, which, both parties agreed, was convenient for the time being.⁴⁵ The Liberal government announced after the declaration of the Goschen mission that Britain had so profound and vital an interest of her own – separate from the other Powers – in the maintenance of the Ottoman Empire that it might always rely in the last resort on her support. On 1 June Granville informed Goschen that the Powers had accepted the British proposal of an identic and simultaneous note, and that a conference was to be held at Berlin to consider and determine by a majority on the proper line of frontier to be adopted between Turkey and Greece. The identic note of 11 June stated that the union of the signatory Powers' efforts would be the

42 *Hansard*, 3rd Series, vol. 252, "Austria – Mr. Gladstone's Speech – The Correspondence," 171-172. Some believed that this was actually an instance of Granville's steering Victoria away from rejecting Gladstone as government conductor. See Andrew Lang, *Life, Letters, and Diaries of Sir Stafford Northcote First Earl of Iddesleigh* (London: William Blackwood, 1891), 249.

43 *The Annual Register: A Review of Public Events at Home and Abroad*, 1880, 64.

44 For the change in Anglo-Russian relations after Gladstone's accession to power and its impact upon the Dreikaiserbund, see M. S. Anderson, *The Eastern Question 1774-1923* (London: Macmillan, 1966), 219.

45 BL, Add. MSS. 43570, f.25, Northbrook to Ripon, 21 May 1880.

best means of securing the objects of the Berlin Treaty. This message produced great consternation in Constantinople and its immediate consequence was a change of Turkish ministry.

But the plausibility or effect of the European Concert was seriously doubted by all the non-Gladstonians. The Opposition press continuously denounced the Concert of Europe as a "hollow sham, and derided the attempt to fully execute the Berlin Treaty by such an instrument as a 'pretentious farce.'" Disraeli had in reality made concert more difficult by the Anglo-Turkish Convention; and Lord Salisbury, the former Foreign Secretary, insisted on the uselessness of the Concert of Europe for diplomatic pressure. Indeed, the Berlin Treaty, unlike the Paris Treaty of 1856, did not ask for the joint action of the Powers in dealing with the Porte: every one of the Powers had a right to act separately upon the Treaty of Berlin.⁴⁶ Lord Argyll, the Privy Seal and one of the leading Liberals, admitted that the European Concert in Turkey was useless for its professed purpose since what was every body's business was nobody's business.⁴⁷ And Joseph Chamberlain, the President of the Board of Trade, was frankly opposed to the idea of concert. They and Selborne (Lord Chancellor), Kimberley (Colonial Secretary), Northbrook (First Lord of the Admiralty), Hartington (Secretary for India), and John Bright (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster) were all worried by the shaky state of the Concert of Europe.⁴⁸ Even the Prime Minister's confidence was not unhesitating. He said to Granville in June 1880: "Four years ago, before the example of *sham concert* had been set at Constantinople, I think Turkey would have yielded in every case to a united voice. Now that it has imbibed the idea that union is not real, I do not feel so confident."⁴⁹ Gladstone obviously

46 Russia proposed in July 1879 that a clause should be added to the Berlin Treaty binding the Powers to see to its fulfilment. That proposition in a modified form was finally supported by Germany and Austria, but it was opposed by the British government, who deprecated and doubted the possibility of united action.

47 Duchess of Argyll, ed., *The Duke of Argyll: Autobiography and Memoirs* (London: John Murray, 1906), vol. II, 329.

48 BL, Add. MSS. 44172, f.114, Granville to Gladstone, 19 Aug. 1880.

49 PRO, PRO30/29/123, Gladstone to Granville, 29 June 1880. A month later Gladstone wrote:

preferred a concert of coercive action to that of moral persuasion, while Granville was well prepared to attend to British special interests in case the concert broke up. Together, they were careful to avoid individual arguments and action so long as the concert continued, and they defined the Concert of Europe as a “joint yet not collective” movement.⁵⁰

Since there was much fear of precipitating the dissolution of the Turkish Empire, it was hoped that the Powers would continue to act together. The Concert of Europe on the Montenegrin question was fine, but it actually broke down on the Greek frontier question. In October Gladstone and Granville began to differ on the policy in the East. The Prime Minister wanted to go on as the mandatory of Europe, while his Foreign Secretary wanted to take “the logical and defensible course of washing our hands of the whole thing.”⁵¹ At that time Gladstone and Granville’s speech on the concert became lukewarm, but they denied that the European Concert had broken up and they continued to urge its use in the complete execution of the Berlin Treaty.⁵² Considered as a principle of “orderly succession,”⁵³ the Concert of Europe remained the first precept of Gladstonianism on foreign affairs.

As Sir Charles W. Dilke, the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, saw it, the European Concert was the first real attempt in modern times to arrive at an understanding among the Powers as “a basis for political disarmament and for the adoption of a policy which would cease to ruin nations in time of peace by perpetual preparations for war.”⁵⁴ Nevertheless, the principle of the European Concert was not necessarily incompatible with use of force.

“I am not one of those who build with strong confidence on the surrender of the Turk.” PRO, PRO30/29/123, Gladstone to Granville, 29 July 1880.

50 PRO, PRO30/29/123, Gladstone to Granville, 26 July 1880.

51 Granville to his Wife, 9 Oct. 1880, quoted in Edmond Fitzmaurice, *The Life of Granville George Leveson Gower, Second Earl Granville*, 223.

52 See PRO, Cab37/4/88, Granville to Sir H. Elliot, 23 Nov. 1880; and FO45/401, Granville to Paget, 11 Nov. 1880.

53 *Hansard*, 3rd Series, vol. 262, “The Anglo-Turkish Convention,” 24 June 1881, Gladstone, 1321.

54 Winifred Taffs, *Lord Odo Russell* (London: Frederick Muller, 1938), 278.

When Parliament reopened in May 1880 the movers of the Queen's Address in both Houses seemed to use words of coercion freely in respect of the Turkish question; and the government pointedly expressed its willingness to take "active measures" for the fulfilment of the Berlin Treaty. Even the pacifist-minded Gladstone did not declare that the government would in no circumstances have resort to force. Before the election Gladstone apparently did not contemplate using force: he was of the opinion that a threat of force would be sufficient.⁵⁵ But now he was prepared to pledge the honour of the country to military menaces – with every intention to carry them into execution. Among the Liberals, Goschen in particular was keen to use pressure and force against Turkey,⁵⁶ making himself very unwelcome at Constantinople. The government's intention of using force to solve the Eastern Question was doubtless fueled by the Liberals' anti-Turkish sentiments. Granville's despatch to Goschen of 10 June 1880 was skillfully omitted in the second Blue Book issued by the Gladstone government on Asiatic reforms (Turkey no. 23 (1880) [C.2712]) after its words of bitter hostility to the Porte had caused much disturbance to the Queen.⁵⁷ During the Montenegrin confrontation Gladstone was ready to use force. And in as early as August the government was considering the possibility of occupying a base on the Turkish coast in preparation for subduing Turkish revolts.⁵⁸ Although the Liberals did not desire to create war, they manifestly wanted to force Turkey to accept their conditions while keeping the Concert of Europe in view.

55 See Gladstone's speech at Edinburgh on 25 Nov. 1879, in A. T. Bassett, ed., *Gladstone's Speeches*, 575-577.

56 A. D. Elliot, *The Life of George Joachim Goschen, First Viscount Goschen 1831-1907* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1911), vol. I, 198.

57 See PRO, FO78/3074, Granville to Goschen, 10 June 1880; and Victoria to Granville, 10 June 1880, in G. E. Buckle, ed., *The Letters of Queen Victoria*, 2nd Series, vol. III, 112-113. The former document was important in that it expressed the Gladstone government's attitude to the Cyprus Convention and Britain's new policy on Armenian reforms. For further discussion, see Harold Temperley and L. M. Penson, *A Century of Diplomatic Blue Books, 1814-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938), 294-295.

58 PRO, PRO30/29/123, Gladstone to Granville, 20 Aug. 1880.

III. Legality, Justice and Power: the Montenegrin and Greek Questions

The most urgent questions that the Liberal government found unsettled under the Berlin Treaty were the disputes on Montenegrin and Greek territories. These were the first things Gladstone tackled according to his premeditation on the Eastern Question.

Gladstone had strong sympathy for Montenegro. "Myself a man of peace, I know of no wars which have been more truly glorious than the wars of Montenegro," Gladstone once said.⁵⁹ In 1877, when the Balkan issue burned again, Gladstone published an article entitled "Montenegro," in which he told the history of Montenegro and argued for its nation-building.⁶⁰ During the Congress of Berlin he fervently supported the territorial claim of Montenegro.⁶¹ After Gladstone came to power his government acted together with Austria on the Montenegrin question "in the most cordial and straightforward manner."⁶² At the end of June 1880 Britain and the Powers proposed to Turkey to draw the Albanian-Montenegrin frontier so as to give Montenegro the port of Dulcigno. After the Porte rejected it, an interview took place between Gladstone, Granville, Northbrook, and H. C. E. Childers (Secretary for War) at the Foreign Office as to the means of coercing Turkey. The Prime Minister insisted that the Montenegrin question should be dealt with in advance of the Greek question. Hence the naval demonstration at Dulcigno on the Albanian coast.⁶³

59 BL, Add. MSS. 44544, f.101, Gladstone to Spicidion Gopcevic, 29, Nov. 1880. In 1879 Gladstone made arrangements for one of his sons (i.e. Herbert) to visit Montenegro in 1880. The journey had never been undertaken. But, "in any case, I have a desire to send to Montenegro some small memorial of the real interest I have felt in its welfare," he said. BL, Add. MSS. 44544, f.101, Gladstone to Spicidion Gopcevic, 19 April 1881.

60 *The Nineteenth Century*, vol. I, no. 3, W. E. Gladstone, "Montenegro: A Sketch," May 1877, 360-379.

61 *The Nineteenth Century*, vol. III, no. 14, W. E. Gladstone, "Liberty in the East and West," June 1878, 1174.

62 PRO, FO7/986, Granville to Elliot, 27 Sept. 1880.

63 BL, Add. MSS. 43924, f.13, Dilke's diary on 30 June 1880. In the meeting the War Office

The Gladstone government believed that a military demonstration would dash the Turks' hope that they could rely upon Europe abstaining from using force to carry out the treaty demands, and that it would greatly assist the negotiations for a peaceful solution of the Greek difficulty.⁶⁴ With the resources of diplomacy exhausted, the settlement of the Montenegrin question was now considered by the Liberals to be the best stepping-stone to enforcing the decisions of the Berlin Congress. At the invitation of Britain the Powers began to enter upon a policy of "moral coercion." On 3 July Granville proposed to Austria to send ships and marines to enable Montenegro to seize Dulcigno, currently occupied by the Albanians. The proposal was accepted by Austria and was then communicated to and supported by the other Powers. Therefore, a collective note drawn up by the ambassadors at Constantinople in the sense of Granville's communication to Karolyi was presented to the Porte on 3 August.⁶⁵ Arrangements were soon after made for organizing a joint naval demonstration off the Albanian coast – each Power represented by some ironclads from its fleet – on the understanding that no troops were to be landed. It was so because technically Britain was strongly opposed to any operations on shore unless she had to take the Dardanelles. In order still further to guard against the danger of drifting into war, a protocol was signed by each of the Powers at the instance of Britain, in which everyone pledged itself not to seek any territorial acquisitions, exclusive influence or commercial advantages for its subjects as a consequence of the

proposed to place an army corps in Greece, and Dilke suggested the cheaper plan of a naval occupation of Smyrna and the control of customs and dues. The latter's ideas were taken up by Gladstone, only to be put into practice after the cession of territory to Montenegro.

64 PRO, FO27/2422, Granville to Lyons, 12 July 1880.

65 See Kenneth Bourne and D. C. Watt, eds., *British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print*, Part I, Series B, vol. V: *The Ottoman Empire in the Aftermath of the Berlin Settlement, 1878-1883* (Maryland: University Publications of America, 1984), 52, "Collective Note respecting the Montenegrin Frontier," 3 Aug. 1880; and PRO, FO421/36/290, Inclosure: "Collective Note addressed to the Porte," 3 Aug. 1880.

demonstration.⁶⁶ The fleet finally assembled at Gravosa in mid-September under the command of the English Admiral Sir Beauchamp Seymour. It was now revealed that the naval demonstration aimed not only to effect the surrender of Dulcigno, but also to settle the questions of the Greek borders, Armenian reforms, the interests of the Turkish bondholders, and the Russian indemnity.

The Liberals had some difficulty in defending their action of sending in arms. One of the objects of the naval demonstration was to show the union of the Powers, another was undoubtedly coercion of the Porte. The movements of the Mediterranean fleet had been so deliberately arranged by the War Office as well as Foreign Office as to avoid giving an impression that Britain intended to act alone.⁶⁷ But, just how far coercion was to be carried was an important question the government could not answer precisely. The failure of the naval demonstration to extort any concession from Turkey, as had been expected, soon became apparent, and public curiosity was excited to discover what would be the next act on the part of the Powers. The Concert of Europe became what Gladstone called a farce, as Germany, Austria and France showed that they would not resort to violence. This defection only made the Gladstone government more determined to overcome the obduracy of the Turks by force. It was carefully considered in what way coercion could be applied effectually with the smallest risk to peace, and for a week nothing was known for certain. Rumour had it that the British government was proposing to the other Powers to make another demonstration before Constantinople itself.

66 See PRO, FO78/3103, Draft of Self-Denying Protocol, 11 Sept. 1880; and Edward Hertslet, ed., *The Map of Europe by Treaty, vol. IV: 1875-1891* (London: HMSO, 1891), 2994, "Self-Denying Protocol respecting the Montenegrin and Greek Boundary Questions," signed 21 Sept. 1880. Granville himself did not believe in the self-denying agreement, but he supported it as an expression to the right-mindedness of his government. See PRO, FO7/986, Granville's note, 29 July 1880.

67 See PRO, PRO30/29/137, Northbrook to Granville, 8 July 1880, Inclosure: "Memorandum on the Naval Demonstration." Northbrook's letter expressed surprise at Lord Tenterdan's (Under Secretary at FO) memorandum of 7 July contemplating a separate action. See also PRO, Cab37/3/53, Draft of Instructions to the Admiral in Command of the Mediterranean Sea, 8 Sept. 1880.

Indeed, the idea of staging a demonstration at Turkey's capital appealed much to the Cabinet as the most efficacious means, who relinquished it for fear of the likely "grave consequences."⁶⁸ The answer that finally came out was a threat to occupy Smyrna. The Liberals satisfied themselves that the occupation of Smyrna – a port that received regularly a great amount of customs duty for the Porte – was "entirely and even easily practicable and no new provisions of force were required."⁶⁹

Gladstone was very stern about Montenegro: he showed remarkable firmness in the pursuit of this policy. During the half year before the end of 1880 Gladstone was the motivating force in foreign policy, and "it fell to Granville to restrain the impetuosity of the Prime Minister at some point."⁷⁰ At the end of September 1880 Gladstone actually gave orders for using force to bring down the Turks. He wrote to Granville on 27 September: "The Montenegrins are the mandatories of Europe. Should not the Porte be told that we so regard them and warn it in grave terms demanding an immediate reply. Unless the reply be favourable the two Turkish ships of war ought to be sunk or seized... As the concert abroad takes so much time the home concert should take as little as possible."⁷¹ In another letter of the same day Gladstone said to Granville: "If a Turkish soldier [crosses] the Montenegrin frontier, it is a *casus belli*." In Granville's view, only when Turkey effectively opposed the execution of the Berlin Treaty by force could Britain claim it a *casus belli*.⁷² To subjugate the Turks, the Prime Minister was prepared to summon all British subjects to quit the service of the Porte, to offer Albania its independence, to reinforce the Mediterranean fleet, to occupy the Dulcigno district, and to hold regiments at Malta in

68 PRO, FO424/103/26, Granville to Russell, 1 Oct. 1880; and BL, Add. MSS. 44104, f.213, Argyll to Gladstone, 3 Oct. 1880.

69 See BL, Add. MSS. 44776, f.145, Gladstone's memorandum of proceedings in 1880 with relation to the unfulfilled covenants of the Treaty of Berlin, 8 April 1895. Also cf. John Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone* (London: Macmillan, 1903), vol. III, 8-9.

70 W. N. Medlicott, *Bismarck, Gladstone, and the Concert of Europe*, 138.

71 PRO, PRO30/29/123, Gladstone to Granville, 27 Sept. 1880.

72 PRO, FO424/103/26, Granville to Russell, 1 Oct. 1880.

readiness for the same purpose.⁷³ While holding back these measures, Gladstone tried to impose the whole responsibility on the Sultan, as distinct from the Porte, to “bring him to reason.” This method worked.

On 28 September Goschen reported to Granville an offer from the Sultan of an unconditional settlement of the Montenegrin question by 3 October.⁷⁴ After accepting that, Gladstone proposed to his cabinet that “material means” should be applied to obtain from Turkey the immediate settlement of the question of the Montenegrin frontier, if moral means fell short. In order to prevent reopening the Eastern Question generally, Gladstone contemplated a local action at Dulcigno for it would not inflict a sweeping shock on the Ottoman Empire. Yet, without the concurrence of Austria a successful operation on the Albanian coast was not possible. The cabinet was not disposed to go beyond the European Concert and strongly repudiated the idea of the sole action of England;⁷⁵ it then decided instead to collect the fleet at Malta for the seizure of Smyrna. Although there was still no sign of practical divergence in the government, Gladstone at this point was apparently not in agreement with his colleagues on the concert principle. He said: “If we can arrange for an active concert of at least three of the Powers, together with the approval or acquiescence of the rest, we ought to prepare for proceeding, either locally or otherwise, with the limited object at present of fulfilling the Treaty of Berlin on the Montenegrin frontier.”⁷⁶ The idea of power politics was here indicated,

73 BL, Add. MSS. 44764, f.103, Gladstone’s memorandum, 27 Sept. 1880.

74 PRO, FO78/3095, Goschen to Granville, 28 Sept. 1880; also cf. Cab41/14/24, Gladstone to Victoria, 30 Sept. 1880.

75 The cabinet did not think that Britain should undertake action in concert with Russia or with any single power in the case of the Montenegrin frontier the Liberals desired especially the cooperation of Austria. See PRO, Cab41/14/24, Gladstone to Victoria, 30 Sept. 1880; Hamilton diary on 30 Sept. 1880, in D. W. R. Bahlman, ed., *The Diary of Sir Edward Walter Hamilton 1880-1885*, vol. I, 60; and John Bright, *The Diaries of John Bright* (London: Cassell, 1930), 449.

76 PRO, PRO30/29/123, Gladstone’s memorandum (after cabinet meeting), 30 Sept. 1880. The Prime Minister continued, “Should there be further contumacy it might be right to consider how far the settlement of the Greek frontier should be combined in the same arrangement.” During the Montenegrin “crisis” Gladstone received little assistance from the front bench;

though not meant. It was really the first sign of the failure of classical liberalism in international affairs.

At this juncture Granville was with Gladstone in his fight to secure Turkey's surrender. On 1 October Granville proposed to Austria that, if the naval demonstration failed, the Powers should go beyond local action.⁷⁷ At the same time, the ironclads of the Mediterranean fleet, other than those in the naval demonstration, were ordered to Malta. The British force was now capable of forcing the Dardanelles and reaching Constantinople within a few days. But the fear of precipitating the dissolution of the Turkish Empire was so great that the Powers still tried to act together. The Concert of Europe for the time being became an obstacle to the Gladstonians' mission.

On 4 October a note from the Porte was presented to the European Powers embodying the final resolutions of Turkey on the unfulfilled conditions of the Berlin Treaty. It produced a strong sense of revulsion at the Porte's continued procrastination. Thoroughly dissatisfied, the Gladstone government instantly despatched a circular telegramme to the Powers proposing use of force and the occupation of Smyrna. Although Britain resolved to coerce in concert with the other Powers, full concert was now out of the question. At this moment, the Liberal leaders decided that England should discharge herself of the responsibility and take independent action if the Powers declined her proposal.⁷⁸ "And so we may bid good-bye to the Turk if not with glory at least without dishonour," said

even Granville was a little startled at his proceedings, requesting him to leave out his "bag and baggage" theory. See BL, Add. MSS. 44790, f.111, Gladstone's memorandum entitled "1879-94," 11 July 1894.

77 PRO, FO7/987, Granville to Elliot, 1 Oct. 1880. On the same day, Granville became very gloomy because he thought Gladstone was inclined to give in to Turkey rather than resort to coercion. See Dilke's memoir on 1 Oct. 1880, in Stephen Gwynn and G. M. Tuckwell, eds., *The Life of the Rt. Hon. Sir Charles W. Dilke*, vol. I, 339. A week later, Granville wrote to the Prime Minister: "Bismarck asks why we do not go to Constantinople and settle the matter at once..... I am rather inclined to the rash or timid extreme." See BL, Add. MSS. 44172, f.203, Granville to Gladstone, 9 Oct. 1880.

78 PRO, PRO30/29/130, Harcourt to Granville, 5 Oct. 1880; and *ibid.*, Granville to Harcourt, 6 Oct. 1880.

William Harcourt, the Home Secretary.⁷⁹ The Turkish note of 6 October declared that Turkey would not yield to any of European demands unless the naval operation was abandoned. Rumours then grew that the European Powers were inclined to accede to the British suggestions, including a partial blockade of the Turkish coast in the Aegean. And *The Standard* (wrongly) reported on 8 October that all the Powers had agreed to the British proposal to seize the Aegean ports.⁸⁰ It now became well known that the Liberal government held a very strong position in regard to the Eastern Question. Actually, it was prepared to ask the Austrian government to acknowledge that those Powers who were willing to execute the Berlin Treaty should be the mandatory of Europe, hoping that in this way the moral concert would be maintained.⁸¹ The Gladstone government obviously did not see its way to back down.

While it was doubted whether a Turkish war was imminent, the Porte suddenly gave signs of yielding. The change of Turkey's position was due not to a threat of coercion from Europe, but to the knowledge that Britain had asked Europe to coerce. Apparently the Porte had heard of Britain's proposal to the Powers, but not of their refusals. The Porte's note of 11 October promised that the Sultan would issue immediate orders for the cession of Dulcigno, giving an immense relief to the tension of the public mind concerning Eastern affairs.⁸² On 26 November 1880 a Turco-

79 Quoted in A. G. Gardiner, *The Life of Sir William Harcourt* (London: Constable, 1923), vol. I, 378.

80 *The Standard*, 8 Oct. 1880, 5c; also cf. Agatha Ramm, ed., *The Political Correspondence of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville, 1876-1886* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1962), vol. I, 195n.

81 BL, Add. MSS. 44544, f.71, Gladstone to Argyll, 9 Oct. 1880. The question for the cabinet to decide was whether under the circumstances England should act in conjunction with Russia (and Italy) as mandatories of Europe, or whether all action should be dropped. See Edward W. Hamilton's diary on 11 Oct. 1880, in D. W. R. Bahlman, ed., *The Diary of Sir Edward Walter Hamilton 1880-1885*, vol. I, 64.

82 On the next day, Turkey issued another note to the Powers stating that in order to give a new proof of its loyalty and good will, and with the object of averting the naval demonstration, it would at once give directions to the local authorities for the cession of the Dulcigno district to Montenegro "by pacific means."

Montenegrin convention was signed,⁸³ and the European fleet which had been assembled in the Adriatic dispersed on 5 December. Another phase of the Turkish difficulty was at an end, and the great crisis postponed.

The stipulations of the Berlin Treaty were positive in the case of Montenegro; as to Greece the conditions were less definite, but still they implied more or less a cession of territory by Turkey.⁸⁴ Although the cession of Dulcigno was not actually contained in the Berlin Treaty, it evolved directly from that instrument. The demands on the Porte made by the Powers in behalf of Greece, however, were rather imperfectly recorded in the treaty.⁸⁵ These demands formed the basis of Salisbury's correspondence in dealing with the Greek question, but his arguments and representations were not very effective. On the Greek question England alone was detached from any influence that would militate against her position in the East. Gladstone wrote in June 1879: "The entire nation is free to regard, and does regard, the Hellenic factor in the Eastern Question altogether apart from the idea that it can either derange the 'balance of power,' or menace the Empire of the Queen."⁸⁶ On this issue the Gladstone government looked for moderation on the part of Greece as well as for a corresponding spirit of concession on the part of Turkey. While urging the completion of this rectification of frontier upon the Sultan "in the interests both of Turkey and Greece," the British government did not desire that there should be any forcible annexation to Greece of so large a Muslim

83 See "Convention between the Porte and Montenegro, relative to the Cession of Dulcigno," 25 Nov. 1880, in Edward Hertslet, ed., *The Map of Europe by Treaty*, vol. IV: 1875-1891, 3010-3014.

84 The 24th Article of the Berlin Treaty states that if Turkey and Greece should fail to agree on the rectification of frontier indicated in the 13th Protocol, the signatory Powers reserve it to themselves to offer their mediation to the two parties, in order to facilitate the negotiations.

85 Northbrook once said: "If I am a Turkish statesman I should take my chance – I should give way upon the rubbishy Montenegrin frontier in which the Porte is clearly in the wrong, and resist the cessions to Greece upon which there is something to be said on the side of the Turk." See BL, Add. MSS. 43570, f.113, Northbrook to Ripon, 27 Aug. 1880.

86 *The Nineteenth Century*, vol. V, no. 28, W. E. Gladstone, "Greece and the Treaty of Berlin," June 1879, 1124.

population as to be a source of danger and conflict.⁸⁷ Thus, in the dispute over Thessaly, even Gladstone “felt that justice required us to take the Turkish side.”⁸⁸ Obviously, in the case of the Greek frontier the Liberal government was not disposed to employ material pressure on the Porte.

On 8 June 1880 the German government issued invitations for a conference on the Greek frontier question, to be held at Berlin on 16 June. The so-called second conference of Berlin, which in Disraeli’s belief was instigated by the Gladstone government with the object of modifying the resolutions of the original congress, assembled duly, with all the Powers (Turkey and Greece excluded) represented.⁸⁹ Granville clarified in the House of Lords that the conference was a proposal by France, not a device of the British government;⁹⁰ but he meanwhile admitted of a departure from the policy of the Berlin Congress. The Liberal government had actually suggested that an alternative proposal with regard to the Greek frontier should be presented to the Porte in an identic note, and that, if by the end of June no satisfactory reply came from Turkey, a conference should be assembled, either in Paris or in Berlin, to decide by a majority on the proper line of rectification. Clearly, Britain did not desire to take charge of the Greek question as a whole; she held that the initiative in this question should remain with the French government. A revised Greco-Turkish frontier that had been agreed upon by Britain and France was submitted in June for agreement to the conference of Berlin. The line of frontier proposed by the two Powers was more favourable to Greece than that suggested by the Congress of Berlin, and more in accordance with

87 PRO, FO78/3074, Granville to Goschen, 18 May 1880.

88 BL, Add. MSS. 44776, f.145, Gladstone’s memorandum of proceedings in 1880 with relation to the unfulfilled covenants of the Treaty of Berlin, 8 April 1895.

89 Lord Odo Russell, the British Ambassador at Berlin, was appointed as Britain’s representative. Russell’s instructions were in line with Goschen’s. See PRO, FO421/35/3, Granville to Russell, 9 June 1880. Russell stated British views in the first meeting of the conference. See FO78/3183, Russell to Granville, 16 June 1880.

90 In fact, the British government only suggested that Paris or Berlin would be a suitable place of meeting, and that there should be in the first instance a conference of the representatives of the mediating Powers. See PRO, FO27/2421, Granville to Lyons, 11 May 1880; and FO45/400, Granville to Paget (and all ambassadors), 11 May 1880.

the natural frontier of Greece, too. It was supported by Russia because “if the Berlin arrangements were disregarded in this instance it would become more easy to relax or alter the other stipulations made by the Congress.”⁹¹ The conference terminated on 1 July after the Anglo-French proposition was adopted.⁹² And the offer soon after the conference of the Porte for an exclusive Anglo-Turkish negotiation on the Greek frontier was turned down by the British government. On 15 July the collective note was communicated to Turkey.⁹³

The Greek question was really far more difficult than the Montenegrin question. Since the frontier decided upon at the Berlin conference was no part of the Berlin Treaty itself, the demand for it should be pressed on grounds that certainly went beyond that treaty. The Porte had legitimately announced, in advance, its rejection of the proposals of the Berlin conference on the Greek frontier. In consideration of the necessity of maintaining the Ottoman Empire as a security against disorder in the East, Britain could not choose to proceed with Greece infinitely. Immediately after the first meeting of the Berlin conference took place, Gladstone reminded Granville to “[introduce] at the proper time the question of a liberal price to be paid to Turkey” if the interpretation of the Berlin Treaty should be in favour of Greece in material terms.⁹⁴ That price, however, was never precisely asked or set. Of all the Powers Britain was the most loyal to the decision of the Berlin conference.⁹⁵ Granville was inclined to

91 PRO, FO424/99/403, Granville to Dufferin, 19 June 1880.

92 The result of the Berlin conference was to award to Greece a much larger proportion of territory than had been originally proposed by Lord Salisbury. See PRO, FO78/3183, Map Showing the New Frontier Proposed for Greece and Turkey, June 1880. For details of the negotiation, see FO88/4271, Memorandum by Mr. Currie on the Greek Frontier Question, 4 Aug. 1880.

93 For the seven protocols of the Berlin Conference for the rectification of the Greek frontier, see *British Parliamentary Papers 1880*, vol. LXXVIII, Greece no. 3 (1880), [C. 2633], 540-551, 568-571, 586-598.

94 PRO, PRO30/29/123, Memorandum by Gladstone for Granville, 18 June 1880.

95 Goschen said: “It proved impossible to secure for Greece all that she desired, but the struggle to uphold the decision of the Berlin Conference as far as possible in face of the more than lukewarmness of the remaining powers, was in the main to be conducted by the

resort to force to bring Turkey to reason, but the Prime Minister was not so sure. To dissipate the doubt entertained by most of the politicians who compared Thessaly with Dulcigno that a naval demonstration would never be made in support of the Greek claims, Granville and Dilke suggested that the concert might reasonably be expected to be called together for this purpose as well. Indeed, it was proposed, by Northbrook (the First Lord of the Admiralty) in particular, that the demonstration off the Albanian coast should be revived and extended to a campaign in regard of the Greek frontier question.⁹⁶ But, as Granville realized it, it was dangerous to announce a further demonstration till Dulcigno was actually handed over. After all, with all the other Powers just lukewarm, this idea was never realized.

After the Montenegrin question was solved in mid-October 1880, the Greek question became more grave. For Britain, to take sole action now was Quixotic, and would require a new start. But it seemed to be the only option left. Indecisive, the Liberal government concealed from all the Powers and Turkey what policy Britain was to adopt, expecting that fear would soon make the Turks succumb.⁹⁷ It was so because Britain's moral grounds as to the Greek question were not so strong as in the case of the Montenegrin frontier. "Is the Berlin interpretation of the Treaty line so indisputably just that we are to aim or to feel free to aim at pressing it as we pressed the case of Montenegro?" Gladstone wrote.⁹⁸ Granville made no definite proposal about Greece: he shared the Prime Minister's doubt, in a different way though. "I was quite prepared to join others in advising

British government, and I was to be its instrument." Quoted in A. D. Elliot, *The Life of George Joachim Goschen, First Viscount Goschen 1831-1907*, vol. I, 207-208.

96 PRO, FO65/1077, Draft of Letter to the Admiral in Command of the Mediterranean Station, 12 Aug. 1880; BL, Add. MSS. 44642, f.54, Gladstone's Cabinet Note, 17 July 1880; and Add. MSS. 44172, f.114, Granville to Gladstone, 19 Aug. 1880.

97 Granville continued to tell the European governments that Britain desired to maintain the Concert of Europe because it was still so strongly the interest of all. Yet, the Powers' view was that Britain had used up the European Concert for the Montenegrin matter. See BL, Add. MSS. 43878, f.176, Dilke to Granville, 17 Oct. 1880.

98 PRO, PRO30/29/123, Gladstone to Granville, 13 Oct. 1880.

prudence and moderation [to Greece],” the Foreign Secretary said, “but then I desired to know on what basis that advice was to be given. Was it that Europe abandoned, or maintained, the decisions of Berlin? If the latter, what grounds of encouragement could I with truth offer that, by remaining quiet, Greece would obtain her object?”⁹⁹ To some Liberals who wanted their government to take up a more neutral non-intervening position, the Sultan’s obstinacy afforded Britain a not discreditable means of escape.¹⁰⁰ Anyway, the Liberal government now had the least idea of acting in Greece as the mandatory of Europe. And Goschen became very anxious to return home after he had noticed a decided change of tone in Granville’s attitude, which allowed no further application of material pressure on the Porte.

The Greek question became a burning issue towards the end of 1880. In early December a large meeting, presided over by the Scottish Liberal leader Lord Rosebery, was held to urge upon the government the duty of supporting the Greek claims. Meanwhile Goschen wrote at length his views on the Greek situation, arguing that, from a European point of view, the union of Greece and Albania would be greatly advantageous as a counterbalance to pan-Slavism. The Prime Minister was so impressed that he considered whether, by way of solving the Greek question, Crete and even Cyprus might not be handed over to Greece in lieu of Thessaly. But, since he and his cabinet did not wish to violate the Berlin settlement and go to war with Greece against Turkey, the British government still asserted in moderate language its liberty of action so as to “retain power of doing good.”¹⁰¹ When the French government proposed on 18 December that the mediation of the Powers should be converted into arbitration, Gladstone immediately approved. Granville consented later. He said to Gladstone: “I am glad that the French should have made this move about arbitration. We

99 PRO, Cab37/4/88, Granville to Sir H. Elliot, 23 Nov. 1880. Cf. the draft by Granville in FO7/987.

100 See Hamilton diary on 11 Oct. 1880, in D. W. R. Bahlman, ed., *The Diary of Sir Edward Walter Hamilton 1880-1885*, vol. I, 65; and BL, Add. MSS. 43570, f.192, Northbrook to Ripon, 13 Nov. 1880.

101 PRO, PRO30/29/37, Granville to Victoria, 9 Dec. 1880.

shall have more influence as no. 2, than as no. 1.”¹⁰² But in doing so, the Foreign Secretary did not want to lead Greece to suppose that her refusal of the proposal would entail the abandonment of her interests. “Her Majesty’s Government must retain their liberty of action as arbitrator,” he explained to Lord Lyons, the British ambassador to Paris.¹⁰³ It was then agreed among the Powers that Turkey’s attitude towards arbitration should be made clear before putting greater pressure on Greece.

By early 1881 the impatience of Greece and the dilatory tactics of Turkey had made a conflict seemingly inevitable, and the question arose simultaneously whether a display of force on the part of the European Powers should be resorted to again. But the negotiations failed in this object, and the Concert of Europe was paralyzed. Hereupon the French government put forth a compromise that involved the withdrawal of the promises to Greece held out by the Berlin Congress and endorsed by the Berlin Conference. The reversal of the French policy in Eastern Europe made Granville’s position very difficult and delicate: the burden of executing the Berlin Treaty was laid on Britain alone.

After considerable discussion all the Powers agreed to accept Turkey’s proposal to negotiate, but nothing was done until Goschen arrived at Constantinople. The negotiations then opened on 21 February. A month later, the Gladstone government instructed Goschen to join the other ambassadors in accepting the Turkish line and stop contemplating single-handed material action on behalf of Greece. In late March Britain accepted the Turkish proposal to give Greece all Thessaly without Crete, and justified the departure from the Berlin award as the only one interpretation of the 13th Protocol of the Berlin Congress (incorporated in the 24th Article of the Berlin Treaty). Indeed, the change of circumstances had made it impossible to carry out that arrangement except by a successful war on the part of Greece against Turkey. While the attitude of the other Powers had either manifestly changed or was originally insincere, Britain’s position had remained the same since the Berlin conference until the

102 BL, Add. MSS. 44172, f.343, Granville to Gladstone, 26 Dec. 1880.

103 PRO, FO27/2483, Granville to Lyons, 1 Jan. 1881.

solution to the Greek question finally presented itself.

On 7 April the representatives of the Powers drew up a draft agreement, by which the whole of Thessaly was ceded to Greece, while more than half Epirus, including the coveted fortresses of Janina and Metzovo, was left to Turkey. Greece was forced to agree to the new frontier line that deprived her of nearly a third of the territory promised to her at the Berlin conference. The Greco-Turkish convention was signed on 24 May.¹⁰⁴ And at the end of July the Turks had evacuated all the territory assigned to Greece, which nearly doubled in area as a result. It was admitted that the assent of Turkey to these terms was obtained – without bloodshed or cost of money – chiefly through the insistence of Goschen, countenanced by Granville.¹⁰⁵ Even the verdict of the Opposition was unanimous in acknowledging, within party lines, the success of the foreign policy of the Liberal government. But, in response to the request by the Radical wing of the Liberal Party that Britain should offer to supervise the future of the Epirotes, the Gladstone government found it difficult to make a promise to do so alone. Admittedly, there was no golden mean for the Liberals between the necessities of justice and of political order.

IV. Moral Influence or Imperial Command: the Liberal Policy on Turkish Reforms and the Cyprus Question

The return of Goschen in early June marked the close of the acute stage of the Eastern Question: there remained no more frontier questions to be settled hence. But Turkey was pregnant with other questions, which it would need no forcing from outside to exacerbate. On the other hand, the

104 See *British and Foreign State Papers, 1880-1881*, vol. 72 (London: HMSO, 1888), 382-389; T. E. Holland, ed., *The European Concert in the Eastern Question: A Collection of Treaties and Other Public Acts* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1885), 60-69.

105 Goschen said: "Peace or war will practically rest with England. But Lord Granville leaves all 'to my judgement and discretion.' Therefore everything depends on me." Quoted in A. D. Elliot, *The Life of George Joachim Goschen, First Viscount Goschen 1831-1907*, vol. I, 225.

brilliant accomplishment of Goschen as special ambassador appeared to many to have thrown upon Lord Dufferin, appointed as ordinary ambassador, the burden of reforming Turkey in general after the same quick and direct fashion.¹⁰⁶ Thus, the long-pending question of Turkish reforms was brought into prominence following the settlement of the Montenegrin and Greek frontiers.

According to Sir H. Elliot, the British Ambassador at Vienna, the profound difference between British and Austrian policy towards Turkey was that the Gladstone government's object was Turkish reforms, while Austria's was European peace.¹⁰⁷ Gladstone had indeed asserted publicly that the introduction of reforms in Turkey ought to be Britain's primary object in that country, but the Austrian government did not necessarily hold the negative of this proposition. Anyway, in enforcing the conditions of the Berlin Treaty and Turkey's concession of liberal reforms, the Gladstone government insisted that only in this way should the Ottoman Empire be saved. The problem was that it was very difficult to make a detailed demand upon the Porte for individual reforms. Even though there were certain recommendations approved by all the Powers in favour of local self-government in European Turkey, the necessities of the provinces varied materially. In Gladstone's opinion, these particular reforms were all illusory unless the administrative link with the Porte was broken by the appointment of governors that were irremovable at least for a term of years.¹⁰⁸ As to the reforms in Asiatic Turkey, the Anglo-Turkish Convention was likely to be a failure, as there was more objection felt by the Turks to employ Englishmen than before, as a result of the extraordinary powers which the treaty professed to give Britain.

While continuing to recommend reforms for Turkey, the Liberal government made a change of tone. It emphasized that the tolerable discharge of the Porte's duties towards its subjects was the prerequisite for

106 *The Times*, 10 Aug. 1881, 9d.

107 PRO, FO7/994, Elliot to Granville, 11 Sept. 1880.

108 BL, Add. MSS. 44544, f.13, Gladstone to Granville, 28 May 1880; also cf. PRO, PRO30/29/143, Gladstone to Granville, 27 May 1880; and FO78/3077, Granville to Goschen, 6 Oct. 1880.

Britain's lending countenance to the integrity and independence of the Ottoman Empire. Ironically, seeing that, without English supervision, all attempts at reform would prove abortive, Britain could not simply stand idle until she was satisfied by the results. But the difficulty of applying such supervision, and the jealousy, misconception, and complications which it would entail, made the British government hesitate to take more vigorous action. So it still trusted to British consulship for influence. Many Liberals – Goschen included – did not think Britain could effect a change by her interference in Turkish politics, and the Gladstone government found no alternative to its predecessor's system of reforms by means of firm but friendly pressure on the Turkish authorities.¹⁰⁹ In fact, the policy of coercion was never applied to the matter of Turkish reforms during Gladstone's ministry. And, unfortunately, the radical change in the attitude of his government towards the Porte hastened the development of reactionary tendencies in Turkey.¹¹⁰

With respect to the question of the rule of Turkey-in-Europe, the Organic Statute for Crete, which had been brought into operation under a Christian governor, afforded a good example of an administrative system for the other provinces. It had been once successfully introduced elsewhere; and it was mentioned in the Berlin Treaty as the model on which the laws for Turkish provinces should be drawn up, except as regarded taxation. The Gladstone government was very desirous that the organic laws should be so framed as to render equal justice to all classes of the community, with a measure of local autonomy as large as possible. Such were Granville's instructions to Lord E. Fitzmaurice, appointed the British Commissioner on Eastern Roumelia.¹¹¹ In mid-1880 Granville, with a particularly mild attitude, instructed Goschen to investigate allegations of ill-treatment of

109 See Victoria Buxton, "A History of Turkish Reforms Since the Treaty of Berlin," in Luigi Villari, ed., *The Balkan Question: The Present Condition of the Balkans and of the European Responsibilities* (London: John Murray, 1905), 98.

110 See Valentine Chirol, "The Attitude of the Powers," in Luigi Villari, ed., *The Balkan Question*, 247.

111 *British Parliamentary Papers 1880*, vol. LXXXI, Turkey no. 15, Granville to Fitzmaurice, 10 May 1880, 481.

Moslems in Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia.¹¹² To spare the reputation of the two young and feeble governments in face of their subjects, the Liberal government did not want to press for joint action of the Powers, and the Prime Minister's words in Parliament did not in any way indicate a collective inquiry. "But," Gladstone emphasized, "I think that as our friendship to the Sultan is conditional upon the relief of his subjects from misgovernment, so we ought to make known to the rulers of the emancipated provinces that our friendship and sympathy with them is contingent upon their making effective arrangements for defending the rights of the minorities."¹¹³ This was Gladstonian righteousness: justice for all, or for none. For the same reason, Gladstone urged at the end of June his Foreign Secretary to send a stout letter to call Turkey's attention to the ferocious campaigns for Albanian self-rule, and then withheld the message.¹¹⁴ From 25 May to 23 August 1880, an international committee sat for preparing a scheme of administrative reform for the European provinces of Turkey; and an organic statute was proposed finally. It was duly accepted by the Porte, but no serious attempt was made to carry it into effect. Apparently, although there were provisions for the introduction of reforms into the Turkish provinces, these were matters of internal administration, with respect to which it was difficult to enforce any specific demands, especially when the Porte had claimed the fulfilment of the treaty obligations concerned.

With regard to reforms in Asia Minor, Turkey, by the 61st Article of the Berlin Treaty, undertook to carry out the improvements demanded by local requirements in the provinces inhabited by the Armenians; and the treaty obliged Turkey to make known the steps taken to the Powers, who would superintend their application. Yet, nothing had been done until mid-1880 in either of these respects; and none of the Powers, except Britain, had claimed to exercise their rights of superintendence. In fact, the

112 PRO, FO78/3102, Granville to Goschen, 5 June 1880.

113 PRO, PRO30/29/123, Gladstone to Granville, 10 June 1880. Gladstone continued: "The want of such arrangements may form an insurmountable bar to the extension of liberal institutions in Turkey."

114 BL, Add. MSS. 44172, f.80, Gladstone to Granville, 30 June 1880.

Continental Powers did not take any interest in the administration of the Asiatic provinces: they were inclined to consider that it had devolved upon Britain, under the terms of the Anglo-Turkish Convention for the occupation of Cyprus, to attend to this matter. Thus, Gladstone was just in reporting (complaining) to the House of Commons in July 1880 that “the consequence of the [Anglo-Turkish] Convention has been, so far as reforms in Asia Minor are concerned, absolute barrenness and futility.”¹¹⁵ And it became a question of policy how far it might be expedient to insist on the execution of the above-mentioned article of the Berlin Treaty. It was well understood that if a beginning could be successfully made in Armenia, the reform of the other provinces of Asia Minor would follow easily.¹¹⁶ Granville thought that a good Christian governor irremovable except by the consent of the Powers would be the best mode of beginning improvement of administration, while Gladstone suggested making some able and trustworthy Turkish functionary governor of Armenia. But again, it was the system of centralization at Constantinople that held back the Gladstone government, who believed the lasting benefit of the peoples subjected to Turkish rule lay in a thorough reform at the Sultan’s palace. Though referable to the Treaty of Paris of 1856, Britain’s right to interfere between the Sultan and his Asiatic subjects was only nominal. So the Liberals were actually very inactive on the question of Asiatic Turkey. In July 1880, when proposing to send a note to the Porte on the deplorable state of Asia Minor, Goschen intended to add an observation that this amounted to a breach of the Anglo-Turkish Convention. This part of the communication,

115 *Hansard*, 3rd Series, vol. 254, “Armenia, Asia Minor and Syria,” 23 July 1880, Gladstone, 1289. Gladstone had observed in as early as 1878 that the Anglo-Turkish Convention was totally ineffective for reforms in Asiatic Turkey. See BL, Add. MSS. 44668, f.147, Gladstone’s note, 24 June 1878.

116 See PRO, FO881/4130, Lord Tenterdon, “Notes on Possible Joint Action of the Powers for Reforms in Turkey,” 1 May 1880. Britain was particularly concerned about Armenia because the failure to remedy the grievances of the Armenians was driving them into the arms of Russia. For British documents the Armenian question see B. N. Simsir, ed., *British Documents on Ottoman Armenians* (Ankara: Turk Tarih Kurumu Printing Office, 1989), vol. II, 1-382.

however, was made orally at the request of the cabinet.

Britain seized Cyprus in 1878 by the Anglo-Turkish Convention, a by-product of the Berlin Congress. Referred to as a “worthless bribe” and “valueless encumbrance” in Gladstone’s Midlothian speeches, the possession and administration of Cyprus should, he seemed to promise, be repudiated because it was “obtained by means dishonorable to the character of the country.”¹¹⁷ However, after the 1880 election no such strong language was ever applied to the occupation of Cyprus or to the manner in which it was administered. Gladstone now recognized that the British position in the island should be accepted, and that Britain’s business there was the good government of the people. “Never has office produced so rapid a transformation in tone and temper,” *The Times* commented.¹¹⁸ In a parliamentary debate on Cyprus, the Prime Minister made a speech in a very moderate tone, specifying the kind of reforms that his government hoped to introduce into the island. But, he declared, “it was far from his wish to insinuate that they would do anything the late government would not have done, or more than they would have done.” “I trust what will be done will be in the same direction and with the same end,” he added.¹¹⁹ Of course, the Liberal government would not do anything to transform Cyprus into an English colony.

Under the Gladstone government, the control of Cyprus was soon transferred from the Foreign Office to the Colonial Office, but no change in its status took place. This step was commended even by the Conservative leaders. The suggestion about reorganizing the administration of Cyprus was made by Dilke within a few days of his taking office,¹²⁰ and approved immediately by Granville and most of the cabinet. As they saw it, Britain’s “anomalous occupation” of Cyprus had made it necessary to concentrate in the Foreign Office at first duties that mainly belonged to another office, but the continuance of this system was not defensible in the parliamentary or

117 John Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone*, vol. III, 27-28.

118 *The Times*, 2 June 1880, 11b.

119 *Hansard*, 3rd Series, vol. 252, “Cyprus (Orders in Council),” 1 June 1880, Gladstone, 925.

120 See BL, Add. MSS. 43878, f.60, Dilke’s note, 13 May 1880. Dilke thought it indefensible

liberal sense.¹²¹ Yet, for the very same reason, some of the cabinet (e.g., Selborne and Argyll) advocated keeping Cyprus under the Foreign Office as they saw that the tenure of the island would be of an anomalous kind so long as the Anglo-Turkish Convention stood good. Thereupon, the middle way, as represented by Childers, appeared to propose that the transfer of Cyprus to the Colonial Office should take place before the government decided on the tenure of the island, and that, if the British intended to get rid of the Sultan's sovereignty there, it would be wise to do so first. Indeed, Dilke plainly spoke of Cyprus in the House of Commons as a British dependency, and in this way he was persuasive in arguing for a departmental change in dealing with the Cyprus question.¹²² Although the Liberals contended that transferring the administration of Cyprus from the Foreign Office to the Colonial Office would provide a better chance of ruling the Cypriots in accordance with their feelings and wishes, it was feared that the measure might also compromise the strict respect for the Public Law, which British policy now was trying to revive by agitating for a concert of the signatory Powers of the Berlin Treaty.¹²³

As said above, one of the reasons given by the Liberal government for letting the Colonial Office take charge of Cyprus was the good government of its people. By this Gladstone meant not only a benevolent despotism there but also the introduction of autonomous institutions into the island. Indeed, soon after the transfer had been completed in mid-April 1880, he instructed Lord Kimberley, the Colonial Secretary, to consider the possibility of "giving something in the nature of free institutions to Cyprus." And the reply was quick and positive.¹²⁴ By the end of 1880, Dilke was able to tell his constituents proudly that, "acting under the

that the Foreign Office should have a regiment of soldiers in the civil estimates.

121 PRO, PRO30/29/143, Granville's memorandum, 6 May 1880.

122 *Hansard*, 3rd Series, vol. 252, "Cyprus (Orders in Council)," 1 June 1880, Dilke, 909, 915.

123 Andrew Lang, *Life, Letters, and Diaries of Sir Stafford Northcote First Earl of Iddesleigh*, 255.

124 BL, Add. MSS. 44544, f.155, Gladstone to Kimberley, 14 April 1880; and Add. MSS. 44226, f.93, Kimberley to Gladstone, 16 April 1880. Kimberley replied that it was already in hand.

instructions of Lord Granville, he had secured a greatly improved administration for this island.”¹²⁵ When a constitution was introduced into Cyprus in 1882, it was, by the standards of the time, much more liberal and democratic than was usual for British colonies.¹²⁶ Unlike the Disraeli government, the Liberals cherished the least idea of making Cyprus another Malta. Instead, by proving the capacity of a Turkish province to thrive under wise government, they hoped to offer an example to the world and an encouragement to the Porte in respect of political reforms along the liberal line.¹²⁷

Anyway, the tenure of the British in Cyprus was ambiguous: there was always in the background the question whether they did well to hold it at all. Technically the British were mere tenants there, and yet they exercised full administrative control. After the hope of making the island a serviceable foothold for British authority in the East had faded into the past, the future of Cyprus became a thorny matter, worsened by financial difficulties. Calling Cyprus “an overwhelming burden,” Kimberley regarded the future of the island with much misgiving; he seriously doubted whether, for a considerable time to come, Cyprus could be expected to provide from its own resources for the cost of administration. “We have unquestionably put ourselves in a relation towards [the Cypriots] from which we can only recede very cautiously,” *The Times* warned in 1881.¹²⁸ It was, certainly, impossible to give the island back to the Turks, who did not seem to wish to have it back, either. The nominal suzerainty of the Sultan under which the British held Cyprus, and the condition of an annual payment due to the Porte in consequence of the British occupation, also ruled out any consideration of transferring the island to the Greeks. While the occupation of Cyprus might be thought to give Britain full

125 Stephen Gwynn and G. M. Tuckwell, eds., *The Life of the Rt. Hon. Sir Charles W. Dilke*, vol. I, 325.

126 John Reddaway, *Burdened with Cyprus: The British Connection* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1986), 19.

127 In this regard, however, the Liberal government was not very successful owing particularly to financial difficulties.

128 See *The Times*, 12 Aug. 1881, 8a.

discretion to oppose any hostile designs as regarded the island, it incurred losses which the advantages to be gained would not justify. So the Liberals were anxious, as evidenced by Granville's despatches to Goschen on Cyprus, to release Britain from the obligation to defend Turkey under the Anglo-Turkish Convention; Gladstone and Goschen even suggested negotiating at once to give up Cyprus to Greece.¹²⁹ From late 1880, reports of Britain's intention to surrender Cyprus began to circulate, forcing Victoria to announce, unconstitutionally, in mid-1881 that she would not consent to a cession of Cyprus. After all, the Liberal government had not advised the surrender of Cyprus (all the talk about giving up Cyprus was done in private and not confided to the cabinet),¹³⁰ but it was implicitly understood that, if the British continued to hold Cyprus on its present tenure, the island would some day in the rupture of the Ottoman Empire join Greece. After all, then, the Liberals' ideas would still prevail.

V. Conclusion: Ideas and Practices in the Liberals' Eastern Policy

It has been pointed out that Gladstone's theory of foreign policy was always a sharp contrast to Disraeli's, but the difference in practice was by no means material.¹³¹ After taking office in 1880, the Liberals adopted in substance the policy of their predecessors in the Eastern Question. Such a result was not surprising to all deep thinkers, and it was in a sense

129 PRO, PRO30/29/123, Gladstone to Granville, 17 Dec. 1880. In consideration of English public opinion, Granville's reply was exactly in the negative. See BL, Add. MSS. 44172, f.325, Granville to Gladstone, 19 Dec. 1880.

130 The communications on the surrender of Cyprus were exchanged between Gladstone, Granville and Goschen only, and not revealed to the cabinet or even Dilke, the Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office. See BL, Add. MSS. 43924, f.55, Dilke's diary on 15 June 1881.

131 C. J. Lowe, *The Reluctant Imperialists: British Foreign Policy 1878-1902* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967), vol. I, 21.

satisfactory. Preserving the “perfect consistency” between the Liberals’ and Conservatives’ policies in carrying out the Berlin Treaty,¹³² the questions of the Greek and Montenegrin frontiers, and of Armenian reforms – the necessity for its settlement had been repeatedly urged by Lord Salisbury – were taken up with increased vigour by the Gladstone government. Taunted with “servilely following the policy of the late government,” Granville *only* replied that, as the 1880 general election had condemned the Conservatives’ policy by an enormous majority, the Liberal ministry was not supposed to feebly follow the example of its predecessor. The efforts of the Liberal government to secure the fulfilment of the Berlin Treaty were, therefore, very remarkable indeed; and although they took much time to consider their stance under the Anglo-Turkish Convention, they strove to avoid any declarations that would further embarrass the British position.

Even though the difference between the two political parties in regard of foreign policy was primarily a matter of degree, the Eastern Question had undergone substantial changes owing to the Liberals’ handling. The relations between Britain and Turkey deteriorated even more rapidly during Gladstone’s second ministry. Since 1880 the tendency grew in London to retreat from the Balkans, until the occupation of Egypt in 1882 drastically twisted Anglo-Turkish relations and greatly aggravated their hostilities.¹³³

At first, the Liberals’ attitude towards the Ottoman Empire was ambivalent. Soon after coming to power, Gladstone warned Musurus Pasha, the Turkish Ambassador to London, that Turkey should not expect British aid in the last resort.¹³⁴ By this, the Prime Minister tried to repudiate the popular notion that Britain recognized a separate and vital interest in the maintenance of the independence and integrity of the Turkish Empire, but

132 PRO, PRO30/29/37, Granville to Victoria, 8 Nov. 1880.

133 See Azmi Ozcan, *Pan-Islamism: Indian Muslims, the Ottomans and Britain, 1877-1924* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 45, 94.

134 PRO, PRO30/29/123, Gladstone’s memorandum, 13 May 1880; also cf. BL, Add. MSS. 44544, f.7, Gladstone to Granville, 12 May 1880. Gladstone’s conversation with Musurus took place on 14 May. On 20 May the aforesaid stance was expounded to the Houses by Gladstone and Granville respectively. See *Hansard*, 3rd Series, vol. 252, “Address in Answer to Her Majesty’s Most Gracious Speech,” 20 May 1880, 101, 141.

he did not at once “put an end to imposture in [Britain’s] dealing with Turkey and...let the facts stand out in the light of day.”¹³⁵ “The Treaty of Berlin was the legal and natural base of our policy,” Gladstone said to Musurus, emphasizing that his government did not want to see any of the Powers exercise separate and special influence in Turkey.¹³⁶ Though a representative of extreme opinions about Turkey, Gladstone never proposed the abolition of the Sultan’s authority. In September 1876 Gladstone said publicly that he did not intend that the Turks should be driven from the whole Balkans except Bulgaria. (*The Times*, 9 Sept. 1876) And in May 1880 he said in Parliament: “I proposed, undoubtedly, that Turkish administration should cease in certain provinces, and it has ceased there.”¹³⁷ On examination, his “bag and baggage” theory was really misleading.¹³⁸ Instead of it, he later argued that, if an agreeable relationship could be established between the Sultan and his subjects, then his supremacy might come to play a useful part in excluding foreign influence. And the best means of achieving such a relationship was, Gladstone stressed, administrative – not political – autonomy for the provinces. He then declared that, unless Turkey tolerably discharged its duties, its independence and integrity had to be left to shift for themselves. But this statement did not actually change the essential conditions of the Eastern Question. Preserving the position of the Turkish Empire was for the time being convenient.

It was in the main due to the persistence and determination of the Gladstone Government that the Treaty of Berlin had been carried out. And in so doing, the Prime Minister believed that his government could “always be found on the side of legality and liberty.”¹³⁹ Indeed, the Liberals prided

135 Gladstone to Sir A. Gordon (Governor of New Zealand), 8 Sept. 1880, quoted in D. W. R. Bahlman, ed., *The Diary of Sir Edward Walter Hamilton 1880-1885*, vol. I, 47.

136 BL, Add. MSS. 56445, f.95, Gladstone’s note, 14 May 1880.

137 *Hansard*, 3rd Series, vol. 252, “Address in Answer to Her Majesty’s Most Gracious Speech,” 20 May 1880, Gladstone, 142.

138 For further argument see Allan Cunningham (edited by Edward Ingram), *Eastern Questions in the Nineteenth Century: Collected Essays* (London: Frank Cass, 1993), 232.

139 BL, Add. MSS. 44544, f.172, Gladstone to D. K. Zankof (Prime Minister of Bulgaria), 26

themselves on the fact that no stipulations favourable to Turkey in the treaty remained unfulfilled. "Beyond sea, in Europe, Asia and Africa," Gladstone said in 1881 with comfortable satisfaction, "the horizon has been greatly cleared and a progress made in the sense of liberty, justice, and humanity."¹⁴⁰ With the same view, the Liberal government did not give more sanction than necessary to the validity of the Anglo-Turkish Convention, although it did not revise or abandon the agreement, either.¹⁴¹ According to Granville's circular despatch of 4 May 1880, it was the Berlin Treaty rather than the Cyprus Convention upon which the reformed administration in Asiatic Turkey was to be based.¹⁴² On this subject the Liberals felt a little awkward, while most of them were strongly disposed to abrogate the convention.¹⁴³ In their view, the acquisition of Cyprus was of no advantage

May 1881.

140 Gladstone to J. Cowan, 30 May 1881, quoted in H. C. G. Matthew, ed., *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. X, 73.

141 In fact, the validity of the Anglo-Turkish Convention was not formally acknowledged by the British Government, since it had never been ratified by the Sultan, except in a mode which Salisbury declined to acknowledge. The majority of the Gladstone cabinet were bitterly opposed to the Anglo-Turkish Convention. And Selborne, the Lord Chancellor, thought that, in a legal sense, Britain was able to terminate the convention. See PRO, PRO30/29/141, Selborne to Granville, 16 May 1880.

142 As Sir Edward W. Hamilton put it: "Considering how little is likely to come out of our separate engagements in Asia Minor by reason of the Anglo-Turkish Convention, we may as well fall back on the general article in the Berlin Treaty affecting our interests in it, retaining of course complete liberty of action in certain eventualities." Hamilton's diary on 7 June 1880, in D. W. R. Bahlman, ed., *The Diary of Sir Edward Walter Hamilton 1880-1885*, vol. I, 19.

143 Gladstone was reported to have stated that the Cyprus Convention was an instrument from which Britain could not withdraw. To correct this report, he emphasized that he had not said anything about withdrawing from the convention, but that he regarded it as a serious abridgement of the freedom of British action in the East. See *Hansard*, 3rd Series, vol. 252, "Cyprus (Orders in Council)," 1 June 1880, Gladstone, 922. It was no wonder that the Liberal government was not enthusiastic about colonizing Cyprus as the second Malta. The acquisition of Cyprus was repugnant to the Liberals because, among other things, it seriously weakened Britain's position for resisting the French intrigues in Tunis. This in turn trapped the British deep in the island. "If it had not been for Tunis," Kimberley complained to the Foreign Secretary, "we might perhaps have been able to relieve ourselves of one of the many clogs which fetter our administration of [Cyprus]." See PRO, PRO30/29/135,

to Britain whether in a military or political sense; and, what was worse, the mode of acquiring it destroyed the opinion that Britain had no wish for territorial aggrandisement at the sacrifice of Turkey. Consequently, the special powers of the British Consuls in Asia Minor as well as Britain's claims of single-handed interference on the ground of the Anglo-Turkish Convention were all withdrawn ere long. That the necessity for reforms should be pressed by all the Powers in concert, and not by Britain alone, became a principle in British foreign policy ever since. The brief period of the privileged position of Britain in Turkey was over from this time.¹⁴⁴ Yet, although many Radicals intended to abandon the convention by reason that Turkey had failed to carry out its promise of reform; they withheld their intention because to abandon it altogether would seem to invite Russia to advance. Thus, it was Granville, rather than Gladstone, who resisted the pressure for a denunciation of the Anglo-Turkish Convention.

Gladstone's policy in the East was, at first at least, a sincere offer of help to world peace. All progress in the Montenegrin question, for instance, was delayed until the Liberal government gave in 1880 a fresh impetus to the treaty negotiations and organized united pressure by the Powers at Constantinople.¹⁴⁵ Gladstone was particularly stern about Montenegro, always prepared to use onward measures. But, as he was also anxious to prevent reopening the Eastern Question generally, what he had proposed was little more than local action. The Liberals' position on the Greek question was less determined than in the case of Montenegro, mainly because they thought the stipulations of the Berlin Treaty regarding the Greco-Turkish line not "indisputably just."¹⁴⁶ "There seems to me to be room for introducing at the proper time the question of a liberal price to be paid to Turkey if – as is probable and perhaps desirable – the interpretation

Kimberley to Granville, 20 June 1881.

144 Harold Temperley and L. M. Penson, *Foundations of British Foreign Policy from Pitt (1792) to Salisbury (1902)*, 399, 405.

145 Under the Disraeli government, no forcible measures were applied to the Porte to settle the Eastern Question. For more discussion, see "Six Months of Liberal Government," *The Quarterly Review*, vol. 105, no. 300 (Oct. 1880), 607.

146 PRO, PRO30/29/123, Gladstone to Granville, 13 Oct. 1880.

of the Treaty...should be in favour...of Greece,” Gladstone wrote in a memorandum for Granville.¹⁴⁷ While admitting of a departure from the policy of the Berlin Congress, Gladstone did not allow justice to be compromised by the strong feeling of philhellenism (or anti-Islamism) existing both in his party and his country. This mattered materially in world politics, where Britain dominated as a superpower; more so after the reversal of the French policy in the Balkans had paralyzed the European Concert and thrown upon English statesmen the burden of carrying out the Berlin Treaty. In keeping with legality and justice, the Gladstone government markedly deprecated the nationalist movement for uniting Bulgaria with Eastern Roumelia, which overrode the Berlin settlement.

Assuredly, it did not require any special initiative on the part of the Gladstone government to call the attention of the Powers to the Eastern Question: it forced itself upon the attention of Europe in an urgent manner.¹⁴⁸ Indeed, the Liberal government did not claim special credit in fulfilling the Berlin Treaty, being content to leave the initiative to Austria in the Montenegrin question, and to France in the Greek question. Still, much was due to the action of Britain, who was in a position to do more than any other Power to promote the European Concert towards Turkey. Although some of the provisions of the Berlin Treaty remained unrealized, the Liberal government was very successful as the champion of the public (international) law since these were chiefly matters of internal administration, with respect to which it was difficult to enforce a specific demand. (The only important question still unsettled under the Berlin Treaty was that of the freedom of navigation on the Danube.) In spite of many unsolved problems, Gladstone contented himself with the result of his government's efforts that the “most legitimate aspirations and claims [had] been effectually satisfied.”¹⁴⁹

147 PRO, PRO30/29/123, memorandum by Gladstone for Granville, 18 June 1880.

148 *The Times*, 12 May 1880, 11b.

149 Gladstone's speech in Edinburgh on 1 Sept. 1884, in W. E. Gladstone, *Third Midlothian Campaign: Political Speeches* (Edinburgh: Andrew Elliot, undated), 40. At the end of 1881 Gladstone told a close friend: “Almost the whole of the work, which confronted us in April 1880 as of immediate urgency, has been accomplished. I, who only came back to office with

It was almost impossible for the Liberal Party to come into power and follow strictly, or throw over, all the principles in foreign affairs that they had advocated in opposition. To quote his words again, "Diplomacy is essentially irresponsible and I hold it to be the worst possible training for responsible, and *a fortiori* for despotic government," Gladstone said in 1878.¹⁵⁰ Nearly in a way of making confessions, he put in a memorandum two years later:

Those of us who sit in the House of Commons were certainly not returned to Parliament to carry forward the foreign policy of the last government. And this was known throughout the country, and beyond it. Nevertheless, sensible of the expediency of maintaining as far as might be a continuity in foreign policy, we sought for a ground of action which might be common to both political parties. We found this ground in the unfulfilled clauses of the Treaty of Berlin which for all reasons it was urgent to press forward.¹⁵¹

In Montenegro and Greece Gladstone's policy was in clear contrast to Salisbury's for the special countenance Gladstone gave to nationalist aspirations, but his Bulgarian policy was not different from his predecessor's because of treaty requirements. The need to act through the agency of Europe (i. e., the Concert of Europe) necessarily held in check Gladstone's liberal schemes, but he was well disposed to keep to it because it was the most effectual means of checking selfish ambitions. He happily testified to the Kantian view of morality by saying: "[It is] almost a moral impossibility that all the united Powers of Europe ever can consciously act together for the pursuit of an object that is unjust."¹⁵² It was certainly not easy or even possible to settle in the interest of civilization the Eastern

what I thought a special mission, ought on this showing to be packing up my portmanteaus and preparing for a final retirement." See BL, Add. MSS. 43515, f.5, Gladstone to Ripon, 24 Nov. 1881.

150 See footnote no. 10.

151 BL, Add. MSS. 44764, f.101, Gladstone's memorandum, 23 Sept. 1880.

152 Quoted in *The Times*, 30 Sept. 1880, 9b. The principal moral law Kant put forward was: "Act as if the maxim from which you act were to become through your will a universal law."

Question, which the Berlin Treaty had peacefully shelved, but not solved. Yet, the European Concert Gladstone's second premiership had established compelled the Powers to behave well and constituted a satisfactory guarantee against surprises in the East. In this sense and not for philanthropic reasons, the Liberals' policy overseas was really a triumph for humanity.

（責任編輯：楊宗霖 校對：周如怡）

自由主義外交政策的試驗 ——英國對柏林條約的推行，1880-1881

王世宗^{*}

提 要

本文探討英國格蘭斯敦政府對於一八七八年歐洲列強所訂柏林條約的態度及推行政策，由此闡明自由主義與帝國主義理念之調和與衝突。其討論重點為一八八〇年四月自由黨主政後，至一八八一年末柏林條約中領土安排與主權問題大致解決為止，格蘭斯敦政府推展其倡議已久的東方政策時，所表現的政治理念及現實謀略。文分五節：首節導論，呈現柏林會議之前自由黨對東方問題的理念，及對柏林條約的批判；次節說明格蘭斯敦執政之初，所提解決東方問題的政策藍圖；第三節處理蒙迪內哥羅與希臘二國（掙脫土耳其控制）的疆界問題中，英國對鄂圖曼帝國的交涉立場，以及由此所反映的自由主義外交原則與困境；第四節討論賽普勒斯佔領與土耳其改革問題所展現的英國帝國主義概念，以及自由黨東方政策中的理想與實務之整合；結論以前述各節論述為依據，批判英國自由主義首度落實為外交政策的成敗得失，及其在文明史中的意義。大致言之，格蘭斯敦推動柏林條約的行動成效顯著，然正因此，自由主義的理想卻在成功應和強權政治的要求下逐漸幻滅。

關鍵詞：自由黨 柏林條約 格蘭斯敦 格蘭凡爾 土耳其 東方問題

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