

CHAPTER 12

THE EFFECT OF RUSSO-TURKISH WARS ON THE MARTIAL ARRANGEMENT OF RUSSIA (1696-1878)

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to reflect the historical growth of the army and the effect of the wars between Russia and the Ottoman Empire on the martial arrangement of Russia between 1696 and 1878. The role of Peter the Great in army reforms and the main changes in the sphere of defensive strategy was significant, even compared with the most recent periods. According to the sources that are used for this paper, we may observe the crucial points of Russo-Turkish relations since 1696. The main steps for military development were made by Peter the Great to provide control of Russia by the Government Senate even in case of his absence. This underlines the importance of leader figures for the Russian Army in those critical moments. The analysis of the Catherine the Great period shows significant advantages gained after the Russo-Turkish Wars in the eighteenth century. This paper addresses a wide group of readers interested in Russian-Turkish relations and their co-integration during this regional coexistence for both states.

Keywords: Russo-Turkish Wars, Martial Arrangement, Peter the Great, Russian Military Academy, Crimean War

The aim of this study is to address the effect of Russo-Turkish Wars on martial arrangements made in the Russian Empire in the contemporary age. The length of the process, and the technical and martial details of the subject necessitate a general assessment. In this sense, martial reforms in Russia are not completely being addressed in this paper; and martial arrangements made during and after the Russo - Turkish Wars are examined. The process began in the period of Petro I. However, the Turkish influence in Russia's military reforms is known to have started earlier. In particular, it is possible to observe this effect in the period of Ivan III and Ivan IV. (Nefedov, 2002) Ivan Semyonovich Peresvetov, one of the prominent Russian thinkers of the sixteenth century, describes Fatih Sultan Mehmed as a virtuous and absolute power in his own work "The Conqueror of Sultan Mehmet" "Skazanie o Magmet-saltane". (Öksüz, 2013) Peresvetov considered Mehmed's empire as a model that must be imitated by Ivan III in Russia. (Agoston, 2012)

1. Effect of Turks on Martial Arrangements in the Period of Peter the Great

The armed forces of the Russian Army before Peter the Great consisted of Drujins of the Grand Duchy, volunteers and foreign mercenaries. In this sense, its formation was far from a regular army (Danilov, 1902, стр. 1-2). The Russian military system was mainly based on defence until the end of the seventeenth century (Golitsyn, 1878). This structure faced a radical change during the period of Peter the Great. The reforms being shaped and developed by wars in that period contributed to strengthening of the Russian Army. The desire of Peter the Great to establish dominance in the Black Sea, and his awareness that this could only be achieved by a victory over the Turks led him to consider Turkey in military reforms.

Russia was aware that the only way of attaining the objective was making Turkey ineffective in the region. Peter the Great, who read well this reality, attempted to conquer Azov in order to keep the Crimean Khanate under control. In that period, in addition to weakening effects of the wars which were made with Sweden in the north, and with Turkey in the south, they also ensured Peter the Great to focus on its objectives and to make reforms in the light of the experiences obtained from these wars. The period of Peter the Great witnessed transition to regular army, and ship building process at Voronezh with the purpose of forming the fleet of Black Sea, and steps taken for breaking the effect of Turkey. Consequently, all of this played a great role in the conquest of Azov in 1696. It was also the first significant triumph of the Russian Fleet. After this event, Turkey and Russia came across for many times. This condition caused both countries to inevitably consider each other especially in martial reforms.

A. N. Petrov, being in charge at General Staff of Russia, in his work named “*Vliyaniye Turetskih Voyn s Polovim Proşlago Stoletiya na Razvitiye Russkago Voennago İskusstva (Effect of Wars Made with Turks as from the Second Half of the Past Century in the Development of Russian Martial Art)*” speaks of the role played by Turkey in the historical fate of Russia from the period of Peter the Great until the war with France in 1812 (Petrov, 1893). In this sense, we can see that the structure of the Turkish army was followed by Russians in a vital way (Petrov, 1893).

The triumph that Russians gained by the Treaty of Constantinople of 1700 did not last long. In 1711, Azov was taken back by Turks. This war provided significant data about how the reform period that Russia initiated under the leadership of Peter the Great should reflect its effects in the battlefield. Accordingly, in 1711 when the war was continuing, remarkable changes occurred in Russia. In March 1711, Peter the Great established the Government Senate which would manage the government in the case of his absence. His active participation to the battlefield was effective in this decision. The senate would also administer the armed force of the country. Right after the war, that was ended by the Treaty of the Pruth on July 23, a commissariat was established in Moscow. The commissariat would operate for relieving the army and its financial management. The authority of commissariat was increased by regulations made until December, 1711. Moreover, in 1714, artillery chancellery was formed (Danilov, 1902), and thus three significant institutions were organized under the effect of the Russo - Turkish War, and they played significant roles in the reform process of the army.

Russia, which measured the quality of its own power by considering the army structure of the enemy learned new things from the Swedes as well as Turks. In terms of the skill of weapon use, the Russians were far behind the Swedes. For the Russians, reaching the triumph could only be possible by the presence of troops superior in number compared to the enemy or by good infantry and artillery troops. In the by-law signed by Peter the Great in 1716, there was the provision of “*We have to form our army as per the power and intent of the enemy in order to forestall the enemy in each field. And we have to make all kinds of effort in order to defeat it.*” (Petrov, 1893). These statements indicate that mainly the troops of the enemy were followed-up, and the reform was applied in the formation of the new army from the viewpoint of Peter the Great. The empires that Russia fought in this period were Turkey and Sweden. Undoubtedly, Peter the Great considered the army structures of these two countries.

2. Russo - Turkish Wars in the Period of Catherine the Great, and Their Effects on Russian Army

The geographical location of Russia, climate characteristics and terrain structure of Russia had increased its desire to tend towards the south in the eighteenth century. At that time, reaching the Black Sea over Azov was the most important purpose. The importance of reaching the Caspian Sea was not comparable to the facilities that the Black Sea would provide to Russia. Likewise, reaching the Baltic Sea as one of the significant successes of Peter the Great's period failed to fully meet the expectations of Russia. The Black Sea had a great importance to Russia in terms of the defense of its territory and the expansion strategy as well as the economic contribution it would provide. In addition, the dream of being close to the Slavic society in the Balkans, and being heir to the Byzantine Empire were the other factors that motivated Russia to dominate the Black Sea (Petrov 1893).

The Great Northern War and Seven Years' War increased the experiences of Russian soldiers on the battlefield. However, as a result of the war with the Turks between 1769 and 1774 they gained real combat experience (Petrov, 1893, 38). Russia faced no state that made it deeply feel the deficiency in its army structure. The wars that had been fought until that time were not long-term battles against a great power. This required a strong and durable army. In the reign of Peter the Great, during the wars fought with the Turks, Russia realized the deficiency in their fleet and an attempt to close this gap was made by the establishment of a dockyard. In fact, there was a degree of success. As it was mentioned before, the encounter with the Turkish Army, which was one of the prominent land armies of the world, helped Russia to see their deficiencies. In addition, the Russians read the situation well and then made progress.

Catherine the Great intended for Russia to take part among the great empires and she knew that it could be accomplished with a strong Russian army. By this purpose, she gave importance to the land and sea troops. In this regard, the Russo - Turkish Wars, that took place consecutively and each lasting for about four years, had a significant effect on the arrangements. John A. Lynn stated that for this period it would not be right to describe the Russian army as an example of a Western model, rather it had its own transformation. (Lynn, 1996, 528). This transformation would continue throughout the Russo-Turkish war of 1769-1774.

The high number of soldiers of the enemy led the Russian army to follow a tactical route, and an improvement in this sense. At the beginning of the Russo - Turkish War of 1769-

1774, the land troops of the Turkish Army were expected to reach 300,000 and the Crimean Khanate would also provide support from the south with 60,000 individuals. Moreover, a third army was formed for the military operation at Caucasians (Russkaya Voennaya Sila-Ocherk Razvitiya Vıdayushihsya Voennih Sobitiy Ot Nachala Rusi Do Nashih Dney, 1890, 48). There were 250 ships in the Black Sea and nine of them were large. On the other hand, the land force of Russia was as follows: the first army was under the command of Knez Golitsin and it had 71,530 individuals in total: 47,280 infantry, 14,250 cavalry and 10,000 Cossack soldiers at Kiev; and another one under the command of General Rumyantsev had 43,728 individuals in total: 27,724 infantry, 13,000 cavalry and 9,000 Cossack soldiers around Samara and Bakhmut; and the artillery unit had 100 artilleries. The number reached a total of 115,000 : 69,000 infantry, 27,000 cavalry, and 19,000 Cossack soldiers (Petrov, 1893).

The difference in the numbers of the armies was effective in terms of Russian commanders' tactical steps. The commanders directed the army to move in square formations from the beginning of war. There were some examples of tactics being changed after the defeats in the battles such as on July 2, 1769, the decision for the usage of bayonets against the Turks bycatapult using soldiers who were attacked twice by the Turks. (Petrov, 1893).

The strategies of the two armies commanded by Golitsin and Rumyantsev were determined at the beginning of the war. According to that, the main duty of the army commanded by Golitsin was to conquer Kamianets and Khotyn. And the army of Rumyantsev would defend the southern borders and conquer Azov. For this, a blockade unit consisting of 75 ships of different sizes, 12,000 crews and soldiers, and 1,035 artilleries were ready. In addition, a special battalion under the command of Berg was formed to invade the Crimea. The most important strategy of the Russian army was to succeed in sending a small fleet (Russkaya Voennaya Sila- Ocherk Razvitiya Vıdayushihsya Voennih Sobitiy Ot Nachala Rusi Do Nashih Dney, 1890, 47-48) under the command of Aleksey Orlov to the Mediterranean Sea via the Baltic.

However, the strategy of Russians changed because of the delays in the implementation of plans before the war, and also because of the recognition of deficiencies. The army of Golitsin passed Dniester twice and reached Khotyn. However, he did not attempt to conquer the fortress due to the lack of blockade artilleries. This gave an opportunity to the Turks to strengthen the garrison at Khotyn. The Turk's troops under the command of Moldovancı Ali Pasha, after strengthening their position, mobilized against the army of Golitsin after August 29, 1769 but this situation became beneficial for Golitsin, and the Turks were defeated and they were forced to surrender the fortress. Meanwhile, Golitsin decided to retreat rather than

start a movement against the Turks. In response to the fallacy of this decision, Rumyantsev was assigned instead of Golitsin and Panin was appointed to the commandership of the second army which had been commanded by Rumyantsev. Despite the Turkish army's insufficient provision of ammunition, Golitsin's decision about not operating forward was seen as incompetent. (*Russkaya Voennaya Sila- Ocherk Razvitiya Vıdayushihsya Voennih Sobıtiy Ot Nachala Rusi Do Nashih Dney*, 1890). In this regard, as mentioned before, while the Russian war strategy concentrated on defense, significant progress was made on offense especially during the Russo - Turkish War of 1769-1774. Thus, the process of conquering the Georgian Kingdoms and the significant fortresses such as Bender and Izmail were initiated (Petrov, 1866; Stone, 2006). So, it can be said that after the war of 1769-1774 Russia went beyond its borders and took the next steps for progress.

Since the deficiencies of the Russian cavalry were observed against the fast-moving Turkish cavalry, it was not possible to organize an offensive operation. After the defeat, the Russian army could not return quickly. General Petrov noted that the most important reason for this was the lack of a military convoy method (Petrov, 1893).

Following the realization of the weak side of Russian infantry during the war, General Rumyantsev resorted to a rapid improvement in this field. For this purpose, 300 shotguns were ordered from Tula, and they were brought to Khotyn in order to increase gun powder. In addition, it was decided that 60 shotguns would be provided for each regiment (Petrov, 1893).

The situation of the Russian cavalry was worse compared to the infantry units and they were also very slow, so, General Rumyantsev, carried out an arrangement quickly in the outer appearance of the cavalry. Accordingly, the accessories previously used as ornaments were prohibited. Besides, the cavalry's use of swords and bayonets was improved. The most important reason for this effort was that the cavalry could be subjected to a close attack of the enemy after using the firearm, and the Russian cavalry was defeated because it was not moving much from its current position. The most significant superiority of the Turkish cavalry was in this area. Therefore, it was necessary to learn the use of bayonets well to be able to stand against them. In this regard, Rumyantsev showed great effort in increasing the warfare skills of the cavalry.

Another significant activity of Rumyantsev was conducting intelligent operations to learn the structure of the Turkish Army well. These operations were carried out by the spies recruited from Wallachia and Moldavia for a good salary. The spies were chosen among reliable people

who knew how to keep secret. Doctor Nikolo was among the spies who provided significant benefits. Moreover, Squadron Leader Bastevin was appointed to communicate with Tatar beys, and got them onto the Russian side (Petrov, 1893).

In the Russo - Turkish War of 1769-1774, the presence of commanders such as Rumyantsev, Suvorov, Potemkin provided a great advantage in ensuring renewal in the Russian army. The dismissal of commanders acting with old methods, and the transfer of authority to elderly commanders such as Knez Golitsin may be considered as a pointed decision of Catherine the Great. It is observed that the plans and the efforts made on how to achieve success against the power of Turkish army increased the mobility of the Russian Army. In addition, it is also seen that this balance of power gradually turned in favor of Russia, and it significantly eliminated its deficiency in terms of the number of soldiers during the Russo - Turkish War of 1787-1791.

During the reign of Catherine the Great, the most important contribution of the Russo - Turkish Wars is the dominant position that Russia got in the Black Sea. The Black Sea fleet, which was intended to be established by Peter the Great, was formed at Sevastopol, the southwest of Crimea, about three quarter centuries later in 1783. The port was called as «*Kadi Liman*» during the Khanate period. The port was chosen as command center for the fleet after its annexation by Russia. Since its establishment, the fleet focused on dominating the Black Sea. With the establishment of Odesa Port in 1794, Russia became a prominent power at the Black Sea (Köremezli, 2017).

3. The Nineteenth Century Russo – Turkish Wars

During the nineteenth century the effect of the Russo - Turkish Wars, (there were four wars and they lasted about fifteen years) on the reform movement continued. Russia had to fight against significant powers such as the Ottoman Empire, France and Iran from the beginning of the nineteenth century. The triumph against Napoleon was a great source of self-confidence for Russia. In addition, the nineteenth century was a period when Russia was at war with the Turks. Naturally it had repercussions in many ways.

The Russian Army was much better than the Turkish Army regarding the use of experiences gained during the wars. The Russian commanders had opportunity to learn the Ottoman geography. The prepared fortress plans and maps were used in the following wars. Mihail Kutuzov and Protr Bagration, who were among the leading commanders of the Russo - Turkish War of 1806-1812, had previously fought against the Turks alongside Suvorov during the Russo - Turkish War of 1787-1792 (Köremezli, 2017). Moreover, Kutuzov was at Istanbul as the ambassador of Russia between 1793-1794, and during his service he carried

out intelligence activities in accordance with the instructions of Catherine the Great, and had gathered much information about the Turkish Army, fortresses and road plans, and transmitted the data to Catherine the Great and to the leading commanders with annotations (M. I. Kutuzov, Dokumenti, 1950). It can be understood that all these provided many contributions during the war.

When the Russo - Turkish War of 1828-1829 began, the Russian Army was aware that this was their first major and crucial war after Napoleon. In addition, the triumphs obtained under the leadership of commanders such as Suvorov and Rumyantsev in the wars against the Turks by the end of the eighteenth century increased the belief that similar results could be achieved. This belief began to lose its strength due to the ineffectiveness of the Russian military operation of 1828. Military historian Nikolay Epançin wrote in his book named “*Oçherk Pohoda 1829 g. v Yevropeyskoy Turtsii* (Expeditionary Report of Year 1829 in the Turkey of Europe)” which was published on 1905 that the Russians couldn’t gain a result despite their great effort. Epançin explained this situation by referring to Moltke’s words (Epanchin’, 1905). “*Russians or Turks, it is hard to tell who won and who lost.*”

The Russo - Turkish War of 1828–1829 showed its results in military reforms in a short time. The method of recruitment was changed by a decision made in 1831. The Russian Empire was handled as two parts; East and West, and the army started to recruit from one region every year. The capital city was St.Petersburg, and there was Kiev and Novgorod in the West, and Moscow, Kazan and Voronezh and Caucasia were in the East (Tanrıverdi, 2019).

Russia’s structure of military entered a new process with the beginning of the Crimean War. Even though there were attempts to eliminate some of the past failures of the Russian Army through some decisions made during the war, they could not bring victory. After the fall of Sevastopol, in the autumn of 1855, “The Commission for the Improvement of Military Troops” was formed and it was headed by General Graf Ridiger. General Ridiger, the first man of Nicholas I of Russia who was experienced because of his age, quickly evaluated the situation, and emphasized the harms of centralization in the military system. He made some recommendations that would minimize this damage. Accordingly, he underlined the importance of increasing the responsibilities and authorities of commanders of army corps and divisions, and he also highlighted the importance of their capacity of decision making. However in 1856 Ridiger died soon after and these suggestions could not be implemented (Kersnovskiy,1993).

The Crimean War, which ended with the Treaty of Paris on March 16, 1856, prevented Russia from having a fleet at the Black Sea. In addition, the lands conquered at South Bessarabia and Caucasia were returned to Turkey. Russia had to share its role with European states as the protector of Christians in Turkey. This defeat initiated a new process in Russia's governance. Military historian who studied the Crimean War, A. A. Kersnovskiy's words are noteworthy in terms of highlighting the importance of the Black Sea and Turkey in the history of Russia. "*The Russian flag fell for the first time and unfortunately not for the last time at the place it rose*" (Kersnovskiy, 1993).

Towards the end of the war, in January 1856, the Russian land force consisted of about 37,000 commissioned officers, and 2,266,000 soldiers. Among them, 32,500 commissioned officers and 1,742,000 soldiers were members of regular army troops. During the war, it was planned to recruit 866,000 soldiers from 1853 to 1855. 215,000 soldiers, who had previously disbanded for an indefinite period, were called to the army. In addition to 31 desert infantry batteries, 11 reserve infantry division and 2 army corps were established. (Kersnovskiy, 1993).

Following the defeat of the Crimean War, a period of great reform started for Russia. After the accession of Alexander II of Russia, he published a manifesto in 1856, and postponed the recruitment for 3 years and he decreased the duration of military duty from 19 years to 15 years. In this context, 69,000 soldiers were disbanded, and another 421,000 ones were disbanded for an indefinite period of time. 4 out of the 11 reserve divisions were dispelled, and the remaining 7 were included in the regular troops. Additionally, a significant part of the voluntary military forces and Cossack troops, who were seen as unsuccessful during the Crimean War, were dispelled. Apart from their lack of usefulness, the main reason for the elimination of voluntary troops was when 300,000 people who were engaged in agriculture were recruited for war, the production decreased. This situation placed a great burden on the army and the government (Kersnovskiy, 1993).

After the war, the number of soldiers continued to decrease. By a new decision in 1859, recruitments were postponed for another three years and also the duration of military service was decreased from 15 years to 12 years. After all these steps, in 1862 the number of the soldiers in the army was decreased to 800,000 during the time of peace. In other words, the number of soldiers decreased threefold compared to 1856. As recruitment was not carried out for about six years, the average age of the army was about 35. There was no one under the age of 27 (Kersnovskiy, 1993).

The defeat in the Crimean War also necessitated a renewal in terms of equipment for the army. In 1856, hunter companies were formed in each infantry battalion. The companies of safeguard and gunfighter companies were eliminated. Each hunter company had its own number. A hunter brigade was formed in each division. Hunter battalions of the divisions and hunter companies of the battalions carried rifles (Kersnovskiy, 1993).

Between 1857 and 1859, rifles were distributed to each infantry and cavalry. And, artillery units started to use rifles. In 1861, with the appointment of Professor General Dmitriy Alekseyevich Milutin, a faculty member of the Military Academy, as the Minister of War. Milutin was the architect of the great reform period in terms of his ideas about military. The reforms of that era came to the forefront of the political, economic and martial fields. And the most sustainable and effective ones were the martial reforms.

Milutin had gained war experience during the Caucasian War. He had served as chief of the Caucasian Army with Caucasian Regent Baryatinskiy and his success in bureaucracy and academy had directed the innovations he made. It was observed that the reforms of Milutin, which could not be implemented before, were carried out with a broader and deeper perspective than the ideas of Ridiger. In this sense, it is understood that Milutin prepared himself well by reading Ridiger who had realized that the army had to change during the Crimean War.

Milutin had submitted his detailed report to Alexander II on January 15 1862, and then took the office of the ministry of war two months later. He said the military system of Russia had to have a radical change. According to Milutin, the most important problem was the extraordinary effect of centralization in the management of the army (Kersnovskiy, 1993). Ridiger had also thought that the centralization during the Crimean War was harmful (Kersnovskiy, 1993).

In the report of Milutin, it was specified that a centralist structure was the most significant obstacle in taking initiative when needed during war. For this reason, he suggested the elimination of the officers, who were at the center, in the management of war. According to him, the incidences that occurred during the war in between 1853-1856, and the experiences obtained from the previous wars indicated that the old system did not work anymore. Therefore, firstly Milutin decreased the authority of the ministry where he was serving and intended to minimize its central effect for his planned reforms. According to this, the ministry of war would transfer the authority to the local military administrators at the war zone, and this would provide a general administration and control. In this sense, the local military

administration would be the key point in establishing a connection between the center and the military troops (Kersnovskiy, 1993).

The most remarkable reform of Milutin was the general military obligation regulation which was issued on January 1, 1874. According to this regulation, the liability of soldiering was bound to new provisions. Pursuant to the first article, every citizen of Russia was responsible for the protection of throne and defense of the country. The second article was relevant to the fact that the military service could not be fulfilled against remuneration. According to the same regulation, the duration of military service was 15 years; 6 years were active and 9 years were reserve (Sobranie Postanovleniy o Voinsky Povinnosti, 1874).

The reform made in the Russian Army before the Russo - Turkish War of 1877-1878 was extensive, long and costly. Milutin, despite all the reforms that he made as the minister of war for 15 years, was thinking that Russia was not sufficiently ready and in a case of war the empire would be defeated. Before the war,, he admitted the situation with this note written in his diary on July 27, 1876 (Ayrapetov, 2015): *“Our troops and equipment are ready, but the commanders of general corps and army corps are not completely ready.”*

While the Russians were planning to pass Danube with the probability of war, the inability to show a sufficient improvement at commanding was making it impossible. Moreover, the deficiency was not just at the commanding level as specified by Milutin, weapons were also insufficient. On April 8, 1877, just before the beginning of the war, Colonel D. A. Skalon emphasized the deficiency of military equipment by the words of *“We have many deficiencies, and the most important one among these is poor armament”*. And then Colonel E. İ. Martinov also said that *“Considering the preparedness of the troops for the war, the infantry had “Krnka” rifles which were not good. Hunter batteries, along with having the “Berdan” rifle, they did not have the most recent technology.”*

As the result of all these discussions, it was understood that the improvements in the Turkish Army concerning weapons by the effect of Germany and Britain were surpassing the improvements completed by the Russian Army in 1867. To this respect, in 1877, a new armament was pursued promptly considering the developments in the field of steel as required by the time. However, a significant progress could not be made in terms of ammunition in such a short time. The most prominent reflection of this can be seen during the Siege of Plevna. Soil bastions were unable to be demolished, and it was observed that the destruction was able to be repaired or reconstructed by the Turks even during the siege. It caused a major disappointment in the Russian troops. During the siege which started on August 25 and

continued until November 28, more than 110,000 bullets were spent at Plevna, but they could not be successful against the defense of the Turks (Ayrapetov, 2015).

The Russo - Turkish War of 1877-1878 was the last war of the nineteenth century in between Russia and Turkey and it was ended by the triumph of Russia. There are ones who claimed that this war was the beginning of the end of it. The war affected the economy in a bad manner. Valeriy Stepanov, in his article of "*Tsena Pobedi: Russko-Turetskaya Voyna 1877-1878 gg. i Ekonomika Rossii (Price of Triumph: 1877-1878 Russo - Turkish War, and Economy of Russia)*", explains in detail how the war damaged the Russian economy. In addition, Stepanov speaks of the fact that M. H. Reytern –the minister of finance of Russia– had explained to Emperor Alexander II and to the warlike ministers and bureaucrats how the war would harm Russia and had tried to convince them for not to fight (Stepanov, 2015).

Consequently, after the Russo - Turkish War of 1877-1878, Russia again gave importance to military reforms. Alexander III of Russia, who acceded to the throne on March 1, 1881, managed the last military reforms of the century. The assassination of his father Alexander II of Russia, and social and political developments arising in the country had directed Alexander III to follow-up an inward-oriented policy. In this context, Russia entered into a period in which a new war was not desired. In addition, this period would be very difficult in economic aspects. Due to the expenses of reforms in the years between 1860-70, and due to the effects of the Russo - Turkish War of 1877-1878, the economy of the country was in a bad situation. Agriculture was in a bad situation and the villagers were always expressing their dissatisfaction by showing their poverty, so violence increased in the society. On the other hand, government officers were assassinated (Shul'ga, 2007).

Alexander III had served with the rank of colonel during the Russo - Turkish War of 1877-1878, and he started his military reforms with the experiences he gained in this war. Firstly, he discharged the minister of war D. A. Milutin, and appointed General P. S. Vanovskiy on May 22, 1881. The priority of Alexander III in the military field was the development of a defense strategy. For this, a big-budget was needed and despite the objections of the ones managing the economy, it was decided at the Government Council to make additional payments for the army. Between the years of 1880-1886, about 210-220 million ruble was spent on military requirements annually (Shul'ga, 2007).

Thanks to the military reforms of Alexander III, it was understood that the fleet had an important place in the army. Accordingly, in 1883 a short while after the emergence of timber, the construction of three identical armored ships started at Mykolaiv and Sevastopol.

These ships were named *Catherine the Great*, *Çeşme* and *Sinop*. They were the first large scaled warships to be built at the Black Sea after the Treaty of Paris. In addition to these three warships, the building of *Georgiy* –having the same features- started in 1891. The most significant feature of these armored ships was their long-ranged artillery. *Catherine the Great* joined the fleet in 1888, *Sinop* and *Çeşme* in 1889, and *Georgiy* in 1893 (Shirokorod, 2007).

Following the building of these armored ships, the operations in order to strengthen the Fleet of the Black Sea also continued until the end of the nineteenth century. In 1889, the building of the *Twelve Apostles* –having a different structure than the aforementioned armored ships- started, and it joined the fleet in 1892. From 1890 to 1900, armored ships named *Three Saints* (1895), *Rostislav* (1899), *Potemkin* (1905), *Ioann Zlatoust* (1911), *Evstafiy* (1911) joined the Fleet of the Black Sea. In addition, small-scale warships, cruisers and torpedos took part in the fleet (Ширококорд, 2007, стр. 14-17). Considering the names of the armored ships, it was understood that they had religious characters, and they were reminiscent of the triumphs against the Turks. In this regard, it can be said that the effects of symbolic acts such as Catherine the Great’s triumphs against the Turks processed on medals as the triumph of cross against the crescent had also continued in the nineteenth century.

The teaching of military arrangements to members of the army was only possible through education. For this reason, attempts were made in this field. The importance of effective defense and camouflage during the war were underlined. A special committee was established for relaying information and for the teaching of the subject to army troops. In addition, a document was prepared to use in education. “*Ustav Polevoy Sluzbi*” (*Statute Regarding Field Service*) was published in 1879, “*Nastavleniye dlya Obuçeniya Sapernih Komand v Pehote*” (*Regulation for Teaching the Engineer Commanders in Infantry*) had been published in 1881, and in addition to these regulations, several documents were published in 1883, 1887, 1889, 1890 and 1891. New statute studies were also made for the regular cavalry troops. According to this, military order of cavalry, and internal service statute of cavalry were addressed in the statutes of 1890 and 1891 (Dzilina, 1982).

As the Russian infantry was poor in the Russo - Turkish War of 1877-1878, a reconstruction of it was required. In the meanwhile, there was a conservative section opposing the progress. Decisiveness became effective, and thanks to a good analysis of the war made with the Turks, attempts were made to eliminate the deficiency of the army in many aspects (Shul’ga, 2007).

The importance given to the defense strategy by Alexander III also affected the administrative structure at the borders. “*Oblast*” administrations were established in Kars

and in Batum which were left to Russia with the Treaty of Berlin after the Russo - Turkish War of 1877-1878. Oblasts were different from “gubernia” because they were managed by military administration. and military administrator was assigned as the administrator of oblasts (Tanrıverdi, 2019).

Conclusion

As a conclusion, it is observed that Russo - Turkish Wars, the wars from the period of Peter the Great, had played a significant role in the military reforms of Russia. The assessments made prior to and after the war had been evaluated for the reforms by taking into account the strengths and weaknesses of the Turkish Army. The process of transition to a regular army in land force, and the information learned from the struggle with infantry of the Turks indicated the deficiencies of the Russian Army. The administrators of Russia read this situation well and focused on such deficiencies in their reforms. The Russian Army, that had obtained its most important experience in the wars of 1769-1774 and 1787-1791, increased its confidence and effective position against the Turkish Army in the nineteenth century. In addition, Russia having faced the Turkish army on the battlefield for four times in the nineteenth century once again showed that the Russian Army did not have the military system required for the century and this situation was the basis of the reforms.

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