

DIPLOMATIC TURMOIL IN THE MODERN HISTORY OF GREECE

The Treaties that transformed the Greek nation enslaved by the Ottoman Empire into a temporarily autonomous Greek state as a result of the military training and victories achieved by the Greek armed forces

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ABSTRACT

The national uprising of 1821 was a revolution of an entire nation against a conqueror that had occupied Greek soil for over four centuries. The Ottoman Empire had been steadily and methodically driving the Greek nation toward complete annihilation. In response, the Greek people revolted, rebelled, and, after many bloody struggles, ultimately won their freedom.

This revolution led to the creation of the first nation-state in modern Europe and marked Greece as the first nation-state founded in the 19th century. The driving force behind the Greek uprising was the necessity of freedom. The motto of their patriotic revolutionary struggle was: "Freedom or Death."

The military training of the Greeks, gained through educational institutions or honed through personal experiences on the battlefields and at sea, culminated in the victorious campaigns of the Greek army and navy. However, military victories alone were not sufficient for Greece to secure its independence. The country also had to engage in a different kind of "war"—a continuous struggle on the diplomatic front.

Keywords: Treaty, convention, protocol, diplomacy, military training, armed forces, peace, autonomy

1. INTRODUCTION

The fall of Constantinople in 1453 to the Ottoman Empire marked the end of the Byzantine Empire, which included the territory of modern Greece—a region that had largely fallen under Ottoman control even earlier. Parts of northern Greece, such as the prefectures of Evros and Rodopi, were among the first territories to be conquered, coming under Ottoman rule as early as 1362. These regions remained under Ottoman domination for 557 years, achieving liberation only in 1919.

Throughout these centuries of occupation, the Greek people fought to preserve their culture, customs, and language. Motivated by an enduring desire for freedom, they meticulously planned their revolution. After enduring bloody conflicts under extremely harsh conditions, the Greeks ultimately secured their independence through relentless effort and determination. The struggle was waged between two diametrically opposed factions: the Greeks and the Ottomans.

During this era, several key figures, including scholars and politicians, emerged to play pivotal roles not only on the battlefield but also in diplomatic efforts to secure Greece's autonomy. The establishment of the modern Greek state was significantly shaped by several important international

treaties in the 19th century, which were instrumental in gaining recognition of Greece's independence from the Ottoman Empire.

Each treaty reflected, on one hand, the victorious efforts of the Greek army and navy, whose advanced military training for the era was enhanced by the strategic brilliance of Greek military and political leaders. Above all, these treaties stood as a testament to the Greek people's unrelenting thirst for freedom and their determination to overthrow the Ottoman yoke and all forms of tyrannical rule.

On the other hand, these treaties also exposed the complexities of international diplomacy: the alliances forged between opposing nations, the shifting priorities and interests of allies, the impact of financial solvency, and the unexpected outcomes of both secret and overt agreements.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical framework

The Greek pre-revolutionary period leading up to the Treaty of London (1827) was marked by a convergence of ideological, diplomatic, military, and educational developments that culminated in Greece's autonomy.

The European Enlightenment profoundly influenced Greek intellectuals, fostering ideas of freedom, democracy, and self-determination. Prominent Greek thinkers such as Adamantios Korais and Rigas Feraios combined classical Greek ideals with modern Enlightenment philosophy, envisioning a free and enlightened Greece. At the same time, Philhellenism—the admiration of Greek culture—flourished in Europe. Figures like Lord Byron championed Greek independence, inspiring international support and mobilizing resources for the cause.

During this period, the Greek diaspora played a vital role in funding schools and academies that disseminated Enlightenment ideas and cultivated a strong sense of Greek identity. Educational hubs in cities like Ioannina and Constantinople became centers of intellectual activity. Korais, in particular, emphasized the revival of classical Greek ideals and language as key to the nation's cultural renaissance.

Under Ottoman rule, Greeks endured ethnic annihilation, violence, heavy taxation, and severe social restrictions. Despite this, some degree of autonomy was preserved through local self-governance structures, exemplified by the Phanariotes, as well as by the Kleftes (bandits) and Armatoloi (militiamen). The Orthodox Church also played a dual role: while helping to preserve Greek identity, it cooperated with the Ottomans to maintain its privileges.

Meanwhile, the “Filiki Etaireia”, founded in 1814 in Odessa, emerged as a pivotal revolutionary force, spreading ideas of nationalism and independence. This secret organization laid the groundwork for the Greek War of Independence. Members took oaths of secrecy under dim candlelight, using elaborate rituals involving religious icons and sacred texts to symbolize their commitment. Stories of young merchants, scholars, and soldiers joining this brotherhood illustrate the grassroots efforts of ordinary Greeks who risked everything for freedom.

The Greek War of Independence (1821–1829) erupted in 1821. At its outset, the Greek military primarily consisted of irregular forces like the Kleftes and Armatoloi, experienced in guerrilla warfare. The examples of self-sacrifice and heroism displayed by the Greeks before and during the revolution are legendary. A notable case is that of Athanasios Diakos, who served as an armorer for two years, earning the respect of the Ottomans. When asked to convert, he defiantly replied, "I

was born a Greek; I will die a Greek." As a result, he was brutally tortured and executed by impalement (Filimon, 1859).

Leaders like Theodoros Kolokotronis employed asymmetric tactics against the larger Ottoman forces, demonstrating the effectiveness of unconventional warfare. The war underscored the need for modern military training, which was later shaped by European advisers. Key philhellenes, such as Lord Byron and French officers like Charles Nicolas Fabvier, actively supported the Greek struggle by providing technical expertise and drawing international attention to the cause. Fabvier trained Greek fighters in modern military tactics and, despite cultural and linguistic barriers, deeply integrated into Greek society, even adopting Greek customs. His relationship with his troops exemplifies the solidarity that transcended national borders during the fight for independence.

Recognizing the importance of international support, Greek revolutionaries pursued diplomacy to secure backing from the Great Powers (Britain, France, and Russia). Figures like Ioannis Kapodistrias skillfully leveraged the competing interests of these powers to benefit Greece. By framing the revolution as a struggle for Christian liberation against Islamic rule, they resonated with European political and religious sentiments, garnering widespread sympathy for the Greek cause.

Despite early victories, such as the capture of Tripolitsa, internal divisions among regional Greek leaders weakened the revolutionary effort. The Ottomans, reinforced by Egyptian forces under Ibrahim Pasha, launched devastating campaigns, destroying Greek strongholds and cities such as Messolonghi.

The brutalities of the war, including the massacres in Chios and Psara, galvanized international sympathy for Greece. The self-sacrifice of the Greek people, combined with the growing European philhellenism and shifting Great Power interests, ultimately led to a series of peace treaties, including the pivotal Treaty of London (1827).

The Treaty of London, signed by Britain, France, and Russia, marked a turning point in the struggle for Greek independence. It called for a ceasefire between Greece and the Ottoman Empire and proposed autonomy for Greece under Ottoman suzerainty. When the Ottomans rejected these terms, the Allied fleets intervened militarily, leading to the decisive Battle of Navarino.

Each of the Great Powers had distinct motivations. Britain sought to curtail Russian influence while maintaining stability in the Mediterranean. Russia, with cultural and religious ties to Greece, positioned itself as the protector of Orthodox Christians. France balanced its geopolitical ambitions with support for liberal movements.

The Treaty of London and subsequent interventions ultimately paved the way for Greece's independence. The transition from Ottoman rule to autonomy marked the birth of the modern Greek state, though it faced significant challenges in governance, economic stability, and social cohesion.

This period represents a convergence of Enlightenment-inspired nationalism, strategic diplomacy, and military struggle, each playing a crucial role in the creation of an autonomous Greek state.

2.2 Research studies on the period under investigation towards the autonomy of Greece

The issue of treaties influencing Greece's path to autonomy, from the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1774) to the Treaty of London (1827), represents a rich field of historical inquiry. While many of these treaties are well-documented individually, comprehensive studies linking them to Greece's diplomatic and military trajectory remain limited.

For example, the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1774) granted Russia significant privileges, including the right to protect Orthodox Christians within the Ottoman Empire. These provisions indirectly influenced Greek aspirations for autonomy, as Russia's involvement in Greek affairs expanded in the following decades. Scholars such as Roderic H. Davison have examined the treaty's implications for the Ottoman Empire and Orthodox Christians in the Balkans, including Greece, but not in relation to other treaties or Greece's broader trajectory (Davison, 1976).

The St. Petersburg Protocol (1826), an agreement between Britain and Russia, marked a turning point in the European powers' approach to Greek independence. It established the basis for external intervention in Greece and underscored the Great Powers' commitment to Greek autonomy under Ottoman suzerainty. This protocol set the stage for the Treaty of London (1827), signed by Britain, France, and Russia, which called for a ceasefire in the Greek War of Independence. However, the treaty's violation led to the Battle of Navarino, a decisive moment in the Great Powers' intervention that significantly advanced Greece's journey toward temporary autonomy.

Despite the historical importance of these treaties, there is limited scholarly research addressing their collective impact on Greece's diplomatic and military strategies. Works like Clogg (1992) analyze Greece's struggle for independence, while articles in the *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* (JMGS, 1983) explore the intersection of international politics and Greek ambitions during this period. However, no comprehensive analysis links the international conditions leading to Greece's autonomy with both its military training and diplomatic efforts.

Similarly, other studies, such as those by Heraclides and Dialla (2015), often examine these treaties and conditions in isolation rather than as interconnected factors. This gap highlights the need for original research on how these agreements collectively shaped Greece's strategies. Online repositories like JSTOR, Springer, and Cambridge University Press provide detailed articles on individual treaties, while journals such as *The International History Review* place Greek diplomacy within broader historical trends. Historical collections such as *Britannica* follow a similar approach. Published works by authors like Riasanovsky (1969) and Jarrett (2021) address aspects of Greek diplomacy but rarely explore the interrelated role of treaties in combining military training with Greece's temporary autonomy.

Building on this foundation, the present research paper seeks to address this historiographical gap by analyzing the collective impact of treaties on Greece's diplomatic and military strategies during its journey toward autonomy.

2.3 Purpose of the Task

The purpose of this research is to examine the international treaties signed between the warring powers and their allies shortly before and after the Greek Revolution of 1821, which collectively contributed to the establishment of a modern Greek state—the first nation-state founded in the 19th century in Europe.

This study aims to analyze the pre-revolutionary climate that precipitated the outbreak of the Greek Revolution, exploring the attitudes of the Great Powers of the time, their responses to the Greek revolt, and the sequence of events that ultimately led to their mediation. These interventions culminated in the international treaties that secured the creation of a modern Greek state.

Additionally, the research seeks to highlight the volatile nature of the Great Powers' attitudes, reflecting their shifting national interests and priorities. This variability, along with their diplomatic stances and intentions, is evident in the terms of the international treaties.

3. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research methodology

The research methodology for this study is based on the nature and scope of the material and objectives of the study. The central approach is historical-pedagogical combined with qualitative historical analysis, which is essential for examining Greece's transition from Ottoman rule to a temporarily autonomous state due to military training and victories.

This research spans multiple domains, including:

- History of Greek military education, focusing on educational systems, institutions, and the administration of military training units.
- Diplomatic and political education, analyzing levels of education in these areas.
- Political issues and challenges, such as military conflicts, shifts in the policies of major powers influencing Greek history, diplomatic turmoil, and conflicting interests.
- Political intuition and ambiguity, examining purposeful ambiguities in treaties and risks associated with interpretations.

The study examines educational policies across different periods, reflecting the interaction between politics and education (Borg & Gall, 1989). The research falls under qualitative historical research, systematically exploring diplomatic developments in modern Greek history, specifically treaties leading to Greece's temporary autonomy. These achievements stemmed from both military training and victories.

By utilizing archival primary sources, this study explores the concerns, risks, and uncertainties of a time when shifting national interests of the Great Powers endangered Greece's future. Primary sources, as Mavroskoufis (2005) defines them, are "those contemporaneous with the events being studied," while secondary sources provide later interpretations.

This research is both theoretically and practically challenging, relying on incomplete data, materials used to construct knowledge, and conditions that have changed or disappeared (Verdi, 2015). Athanasiou (2003) emphasizes that the more distant the events, the greater the difficulties encountered. This study seeks answers by placing events in their historical context, which may or may not be found.

As Karl Jaspers (1950) notes, modern science is an ongoing process that perpetually opens new questions, moving toward infinity. The primary method is historical analysis, which establishes facts, critically examines evidence, and determines sequences (Tosh, 2015). Mialaret (1999) emphasizes that this method helps us understand past events, causes, and outcomes, while Athanasiou (2003) and Cohen & Manion (1977) describe it as the systematic identification and evaluation of evidence to establish facts and draw conclusions.

Historical research has significant social utility by allowing scholars to interpret the past and predict the future based on past findings (Nova-Kaltsouni, 2006). This study relies on primary sources, which provide originality and a direct connection to the events studied, while secondary sources complement and contextualize these materials (Cohen & Manion, 1977).

According to Hill & Kerber (1967), historical research benefits us by:

1. Applying past solutions to contemporary problems.
2. Highlighting current and future trends.
3. Emphasizing cultural interactions.

4. Reassessing past theories.

This study examines international treaties, protocols, and conventions signed by the Great Powers in the 19th and early 20th centuries, securing Greece's autonomy and eventual independence after four centuries of Ottoman rule. It highlights the patriotic ideals of the Greek people and armed forces, who, through numerous battles, reclaimed Greece's freedom. These efforts led to diplomatic successes, as key Greek politicians and diplomats advanced national interests at the negotiating table. The research aims to understand human experiences and symbolic interactions in Greek society during this transformative period (Verdi, 2015).

From an educational and training perspective, historical research is essential for understanding the interplay between politics, education, and society (Nova-Kaltsouni, 2006). By reevaluating past theories, this study offers new insights into military training, diplomatic strategies, and national identity formation.

The study emphasizes the historical-pedagogical method to explore how Greece's military education influenced diplomatic strategies and national identity. The military education and training systems helped shape Greek armed forces and their victories, directly affecting diplomatic negotiations. Greek leaders framed their cause in terms of military prowess and cultural heritage, impacting treaties and diplomatic agreements.

Using primary and secondary sources, the study examines treaties like the Treaty of London (1827) and the Protocol of Saint Petersburg (1826) as key documents that governed Greece's autonomy and eventual independence. These treaties, negotiated under the Great Powers' influence, were pivotal in shaping Greece's political future. Secondary sources contextualize these treaties and explain their significance on Greece's national development.

The principal method of historical analysis allows for a systematic examination of Greece's transition from Ottoman province to autonomous state. By focusing on key events and figures, this method identifies causality, examines decisions made by the Great Powers, and analyzes the consequences. Events like the Battle of Navarino (1827) demonstrate how military success directly influenced diplomatic outcomes, ultimately recognizing Greek autonomy. This method addresses how changing alliances and interests among the Great Powers led to diplomatic turmoil, affecting Greece's independence.

This methodology effectively examines the complex political landscape of the period, with territorial disputes, military conflicts, and foreign intervention. It addresses political dynamics, such as the shifting allegiances between Russia, Britain, and France, and how these influenced Greece's diplomatic efforts. By studying diplomatic tools—treaties, conventions, and military interventions—the methodology assesses how Greece navigated its relations with these powers to secure independence.

The integration of educational policies into the methodology is key for understanding military training's role in Greece's success. By investigating how Greek leaders and military figures were educated in European military practices, the study highlights the role of military expertise in shaping Greece's strategic decisions during conflicts. The educational aspect also underscores the link between military training, national identity, and diplomacy.

The qualitative nature of the research is suitable for exploring the complex motivations and human experiences behind diplomatic decisions and military actions. Given the challenges of interpreting incomplete data, qualitative analysis ensures a nuanced understanding of how diplomacy and military factors shaped Greece's modern history.

This interdisciplinary approach, combining military history, diplomatic history, and educational studies, enriches the understanding of how military victories and educational advancements contributed to Greece's diplomatic success. The research methodology fosters an understanding of the symbolic interactions between Greece and the Great Powers, shaped by ideals of freedom, culture, and religion.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 The pre-revolutionary period

Until the 18th century, the populations of the Ottoman Empire lacked a clear ethnic identity, as they were primarily identified by their religion. However, from the 18th century onward, nationalism began to emerge, and religious identification was no longer sufficient. A distinct national identity became essential. Among the enslaved nations of the Ottoman Empire, the Greeks were the first to establish such an identity.

One key reason for this was the widespread use of the Greek language. Spoken by all Greeks, it also served as the lingua franca throughout the Orthodox "Room Millet," as it was then known. Greek, as the language of sacred ecclesiastical texts, held a privileged status. It was taught in schools and dominated trade, both within and beyond the Ottoman Empire, where Greek merchants played a leading role.

While the historical accuracy of the "secret schools" is debated, the idea remains deeply entrenched in Greek folklore. According to tradition, under Ottoman rule, Greeks clandestinely preserved their language, culture, and Orthodox faith through secret schools operated in remote churches or monasteries. Whether literal or symbolic, this story reflects the struggle of the Greek people to maintain their identity. These schools, often led by priests or educated laypeople, symbolize the resilience of the Greek spirit in the face of oppression.

For over four centuries, despite living under Ottoman rule on their own territory, the Greeks maintained dominance in Mediterranean trade, demonstrating remarkable business acumen and cultural resilience. Their exceptional seamanship enabled them to thrive, capturing global markets through maritime trade.

A comparison of the archetype of the Greek during the pre-revolutionary period with that of the post-revolutionary Greek, after 1821, reveals a profound anthropological transformation.

In 1699, the Ottoman Empire ceased its expansion, marking the beginning of its gradual decline. Several factors contributed to this downturn, including the failure to modernize, severe economic problems, systemic corruption, and administrative inefficiencies that weakened the empire's society and infrastructure.

The Russian Empire sought to exploit this decline through a series of wars aimed at weakening the Ottoman state and reducing its territorial control. This geopolitical context set the stage for the eventual Greek Revolution.

Before the Greek Revolution of 1821, a long period of genocide, torture, murder, and violence was inflicted by the Ottomans upon Greek fighters, their women, and their children. One of the most poignant tales of resistance comes from the women of Souli, a mountainous region in Epirus. In 1803, during clashes with the forces of Ali Pasha, many Souliot women chose death over capture. Holding their children, they danced to their deaths by leaping off the cliffs of Zalongo (Dimantis, 2001). This act of collective defiance became a symbol of ultimate sacrifice for freedom and dignity, immortalized in folk songs and art.

A precursor to the Greek Revolution was the Orlov Revolt of 1770 (Paparigopoulos, 1870), instigated by Russian officials, the Orlov brothers, during the Russo-Turkish War. Acting in Russia's national interests, they encouraged Greek uprisings in the Peloponnese, the Aegean islands, and the western coast of Asia Minor. However, the revolt, known as the "Orlovian," did not achieve its desired outcome for Greece. Nevertheless, it led to the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1774), which restored peace in the Aegean (Tertecel, 2005).

One of the most significant figures of the pre-revolutionary period was Rigas Velestinlis (1757), also known as Rigas Feraios, who became a symbol of Greek resistance through his writings and activism. A writer, politician, thinker, and revolutionary, Rigas became a martyr for the Greek cause, envisioning a free Greek state within a broader Balkan federation.

Rigas was a multifaceted personality, often described as a political and military strategist, Enlightenment thinker, revolutionary leader, and national visionary. His unique combination of political theory and revolutionary action defined his legacy (Woodhouse, 1995). He sought to inspire revolutionary activity among the Greeks, recognizing the failures of previous uprisings and the enduring longing for freedom.

To advance his revolutionary agenda, Rigas employed two key means of communication:

1. **Visual Symbolism:** He printed the Charter of Alexander the Great, combined with his own charter for Greece, to evoke a sense of Greek patriotic spirit (Karaberopoulos, 1998).
2. **Patriotic Anthem:** He composed *Thourios*, a patriotic hymn that became a rallying cry for Greek freedom, emphasizing liberty and fraternity across ethnic lines (Karaberopoulos, 2009).

Rigas's vision operated on three main axes:

- **The Revolutionary Axis:** Advocating for an uprising to overthrow Ottoman autocracy.
- **The Enlightenment Axis:** Promoting education to empower the Greek people.
- **The Constitutional Axis:** Proposing a democratic state governed by laws.

The *Thourios*, derived from a term in ancient Greek literature meaning "impetuous" or "raging," served as both a patriotic hymn and a rallying cry (Velestinlis, 2005). It inspired Greeks to take up arms and embodied the ideals of freedom, courage, and resistance.

Rigas was betrayed and executed in 1798, but his arrest is marked by an anecdote: when captured, he reportedly swallowed a key to prevent access to his secret writings. His death inspired countless revolutionaries, illustrating how one man's sacrifice can ignite a national movement.

Rigas's vision extended beyond Greece, encompassing all oppressed peoples of the Balkans under Ottoman rule. He envisioned a broader Hellenic polity governed by democratic principles, with Greek as the official language. At the time, Greek was not only the language of diplomacy and education but also served as a "linguistic passport," facilitating communication from Asia Minor to southern Italy and from Egypt to the Danube.

As Konstantinos Paparigopoulos, regarded as the father of modern Greek historiography, observed: "A Greek nation is the name given to all people who speak the Greek language as their own" (Paparigopoulos, 1870).

Notably, Rigas did not appeal to foreign powers for assistance in his writings, including the *Thourios* and the Constitution he later drafted. Aware of the conflicting interests of the Great Powers, he believed that Greeks must achieve their freedom independently. His choice to use

Alexander the Great as a symbolic figure in his charter emphasized bravery, heroism, and self-sacrifice. For Rigas, Alexander embodied the ideals of leadership and unity that the Greek people needed to emulate in their struggle for liberation.

4.2 Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1774)

After the victorious Russian military operations on the Danube and in Bulgaria against the Ottomans, the latter were forced to capitulate. The treaty was concluded on 10/21 July 1774 in a Russian camp near the village of Kuchuk Kainarji (Davison, 1996) in Silistria, from which it takes its name.

The terms of this treaty were deliberately worded vaguely as part of Russia's diplomatic strategy. The Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca allowed Russia to interfere in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire in various ways, gradually weakening the Porte. The terms reflected Russian diplomatic doctrine of the time, which prioritized fewer territorial annexations, increased autonomy for Ottoman territories, and opportunities for Russian involvement in the Empire's internal affairs.

This strategy was particularly evident in the treaty's vague phrasing regarding the "protection of the Sultan's Christian subjects," mentioned in Articles 7 and 14. The treaty consisted of 28 numbered articles plus two separate articles. The deliberate ambiguity in these articles concerning Russian demands and Ottoman obligations had significant geopolitical consequences, altering the balance of power in the Black Sea.

Russia, with its sudden rise, consistently sought access to the Mediterranean Sea. The Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, signed on 21 July 1774 between the Russian Empire and the Ottoman Empire, marked the end of the Russo-Turkish War (1768–1774) and formally recognized Russia's growing military power. The treaty granted Russia territories, access to the Black Sea, and the right to establish consulates in Ottoman territories. It ensured free navigation in Ottoman waters, provided commercial privileges, allowed Russia to protect the Sultan's Christian subjects (a right later referred to as the "Eastern Question"), and imposed war reparations on the Ottoman Empire.

The Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca had significant geopolitical implications, reshaping the balance of power between the Russian and Ottoman Empires and affecting the wider region, including Greece, which remained under Ottoman rule. This treaty fundamentally redefined the relationship between the two empires (Aksan, 2007). The key articles and their implications are summarized below (Hurewitz, 1975):

- Article 3: Independence of the Crimean Khanate:

The Crimean Khanate, previously a vassal state of the Ottoman Empire, was declared independent under nominal Ottoman suzerainty. However, the Ottomans relinquished political and military control over Crimea. In practice, this opened the door for Russian influence, culminating in Russia's annexation of Crimea in 1783.

- Article 11: Free Navigation Rights for Russian Ships:

Russia was granted the right to freely navigate its merchant ships through the Dardanelles and Bosphorus straits and in the Black Sea. This was particularly significant, as the Black Sea had previously been under Ottoman control. These provisions bolstered Russia's commercial presence in the Mediterranean and laid the groundwork for its naval activities in the region.

- Article 7: Religious Rights for Orthodox Christians

This article allowed Russia to represent and protect Orthodox Christians living under Ottoman rule. It also permitted the construction of a Greek Orthodox church in Constantinople, giving Russia official influence over the empire's Orthodox Christian population, including those in Greece. This provision established Russia's claim as the protector of Orthodox Christians, a role with far-reaching implications for future Russian interventions in the Balkans.

- Articles 18, 19, 20, and 21: Territorial Gains for Russia

Russia acquired key territories in the Black Sea region, including the ports of Kerch and Genichesk in Crimea, as well as the fortress of Azov. These strategic locations strengthened Russia's presence along the Black Sea coast and increased pressure on the Ottoman Empire.

- Article 16: Autonomy for Wallachia and Moldavia

The treaty granted Russia limited influence over the Danubian principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia (modern-day Romania), which remained under Ottoman suzerainty. Russia's influence was exercised through its protection of Orthodox Christians and the right to intervene in the affairs of these territories.

These articles reflected Russia's strategic approach to diplomacy at the time: reducing Ottoman influence without extensive territorial annexation while expanding its own reach in the Black Sea and beyond. The treaty's deliberate ambiguity, particularly in its provisions regarding the protection of Christian subjects, provided Russia with opportunities for future interference, significantly altering the power dynamics in the region.

The Second Separate Article of the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca addressed war reparations. The Ottoman Empire agreed to pay a substantial indemnity to Russia, amounting to 4.5 million rubles, to be paid within three years (1775–1777) in three equal installments of 1.5 million rubles each. This highlighted the significant financial burden the treaty imposed on the Ottomans.

When assessed in its terms, the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca had a profoundly positive impact on Greece, even though it did not explicitly reference the country. Its provisions indirectly but significantly benefited the Greek people and the future of Greece. For example, Articles 7 and 14, which dealt with the religious protection of Orthodox Christians, allowed Russia to act as the protector of Orthodox Christians within the Ottoman Empire. Since Greece was predominantly Orthodox, this arrangement encouraged Greek Orthodox Christians to view Russia as a potential ally and protector against Ottoman oppression. Over time, this helped strengthen the growing Greek nationalist movement, as the Orthodox religion was central to maintaining Greek identity under Ottoman rule.

The treaty also marked the beginning of increased Russian influence in the Balkans, where Greece was located. With Russia's growing political and military involvement in Ottoman affairs—particularly as the protector of Orthodox Christians—the Greek population began to see the possibility of external support for their struggles for autonomy and independence. This influence would later become evident during the Greek War of Independence (1821–1830), when Russia, along with other European powers, supported the Greek cause against the Ottomans.

Additionally, the treaty's opening of the Black Sea and the Aegean to Russian shipping fostered increased trade and commerce in the region. Greek seafarers, who were active in trade throughout the Mediterranean and Black Sea, benefited directly from the free navigation rights secured by Russia under the treaty. This created significant economic opportunities for Greek merchants,

contributing to the emergence of a stronger and wealthier Greek merchant class. This class later played a vital role in financing the Greek Revolution.

By weakening the Ottoman Empire and amplifying Russian influence, the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca inspired the Greeks with the belief that the Ottoman regime was vulnerable. This perception emboldened the Greeks, leading to several failed rebellions in the late 18th century, such as the Orlofika (1770). Although these early uprisings were unsuccessful, they set the stage for the Greek Revolution and eventual independence.

In terms of Russia's role in future Greek independence, the treaty served as a stepping stone for Russia's long-term goal of exerting influence over the Ottoman Empire, with Greece becoming a focal point of these efforts. Russia's interest in Orthodox Christians continued to shape its policy throughout the 19th century, culminating in its involvement in supporting Greek independence during the Treaty of London (1827) and the Treaty of Adrianople (1829).

4.3 The revolutionary period in Greece (1774-1821)

After the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca in 1774, several other treaties between the Russian Empire and the Ottoman Empire were signed, indirectly influencing Greece and its progress toward the war of independence. The Treaty of Jassy, signed in 1792, ended the Russo-Turkish War (1787–1792), a conflict arising from tensions linked to the provisions of Küçük Kaynarca. The Treaty of Jassy (Ragsdale & Ponomarev, 1993) confirmed and extended many of Küçük Kaynarca's provisions, particularly those related to Russian territorial gains and influence in the Black Sea region. It further weakened the Ottoman Empire, benefiting Greek aspirations for liberation.

Russia's growing presence in the Balkans continued to inspire Greek nationalist movements. Greeks increasingly viewed Russia as a potential liberator, given their shared Orthodox faith and mutual hostility toward the Ottomans. The Treaty of Jassy also set a precedent for future Russo-Ottoman conflicts and Russian interventions, culminating in Russia's active support for Greece during its struggle for independence in the 1820s. While the treaty did not directly impact Greece, it further eroded Ottoman power and laid the groundwork for Greek independence, gradually shifting the balance of power in the region.

During the Napoleonic Wars, another conflict broke out between the Russian Empire and the Ottoman Empire in 1806. This war lasted six years and led to the signing of the Treaty of Bucharest (1812) (King, 2004). Although the treaty's terms primarily concerned the broader Balkans, it had indirect but significant consequences for Greece. One of its notable outcomes was the autonomy granted to Serbia, which strengthened Greek nationalism by serving as a model for their own aspirations. Additionally, Russia's continued role as the protector of Orthodox Christians reinforced Greek hopes of Russian support for their cause. This sentiment was later validated when Russia, along with Britain and France, intervened to assist Greece during its war for independence in the late 1820s.

The Treaty of Bucharest further weakened Ottoman control in Europe and the Balkans, fostering conditions that contributed to the outbreak of the Greek Revolution. Two years after the treaty, the Filiki Etaireia was founded in Odessa, Ukraine, on 26 September 1814 (Diamantopoulos, 1977).

At this point, it is fitting to recall Rigas Feraios, whose final words before his execution in 1798 at the Nebojsa Tower in Belgrade—a notorious Balkan prison—were: "I have sown enough seed. My nation will soon reap the sweet fruit" (Kordatos, 1997). Indeed, the seed was sown, and by 1814, the Filiki Etaireia began preaching that Greece would be saved by its own efforts, echoing Rigas's earlier proclamations.

Interestingly, despite the Russian Revolution, cities in the former Soviet Union retained traces of Hellenism. In Odessa, for example, the main avenue remained named "Avenue of Greece," serving as a lasting testament to the city's historical ties to Greece.

The Filiki Etaireia was a secret, conspiratorial organization dedicated to preparing the Greek people for an uprising to overthrow the Ottoman yoke and "build and liberate the Greek Nation and our Fatherland" (Vournas, 1959). Many prominent leaders of the Greek Revolution, such as Archimandrite Gregorios Dikaios (Papaflessas), Theodoros Kolokotronis, Ioannis Farmakis, and Georgakis Olympios, were among its members. A notable leader of the society was Alexander Ypsilantis, a general and adjutant to the Tsar. According to primary sources, the Filiki Etaireia's membership reached 541 (Historical Archive, No. 1).

The famed revolutionary leader Theodoros Kolokotronis came from a family of klephts who had long resisted Ottoman rule. Oral tradition recounts how, as a boy, Kolokotronis witnessed the execution of his father by Ottoman forces. This traumatic event fueled his lifelong hatred of the Ottomans and his unwavering commitment to liberating Greece (Finley, 2008; Kokkinos, 1956).

By 1821, seven years after the founding of the Filiki Etaireia, the Greek Revolution broke out. The growing mobilization of Greek communities within the Ottoman Empire had already begun long before the revolution. This mobilization led to an unsuccessful early uprising in the Danubian lands, where Greeks living outside traditional Greek territories attempted a seven-month revolt. Although this effort failed, it was followed by the main revolution in 1821—a nationwide uprising against Ottoman rule. This revolution gradually led to Greece's independence.

4.4 The Protocol of Petropol 1826 (Protocol of St. Petersburg)

The St. Petersburg Protocol, also known as the Petersburg Protocol, was a significant diplomatic agreement signed on 4 April 1826 between Britain and Russia. It marked the first major international recognition of Greece's political existence and laid the groundwork for European intervention in the Greek War of Independence (1821–1830), which aimed to free the Greeks from 400 years of Ottoman rule.

Signed amidst escalating tensions—including the threat of a Russo-Turkish war—the protocol effectively dissolved the Holy Alliance, a pact formed in 1815 between Russia, Austria, Prussia, Britain, and France. This shift in diplomacy signified the start of official European support for Greek independence and influenced subsequent treaties that eventually led to the establishment of an independent Greek state.

By the mid-1820s, the Greek War of Independence had reached a critical juncture. The Ottomans, supported by Egyptian forces, had largely suppressed the Greek revolutionary forces, raising fears of widespread massacres and renewed oppression. Nevertheless, the Greek struggle continued to gain sympathy across Europe, driven by the British public and Russia's geopolitical ambitions in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Both Britain and Russia shared concerns about the balance of power in Europe and the Ottoman Empire's decline. While their motivations were rooted in protecting their strategic interests, they were also driven by the unfolding humanitarian crisis in Greece.

The protocol was signed against a backdrop of increasing instability within the Ottoman Empire, with the Greek War of Independence emerging as a pivotal issue. Shared cultural and religious ties between Greece and Europe, along with opposition to Ottoman rule, attracted widespread international attention. Russia, a historical rival of the Ottoman Empire, had long-standing

geopolitical interests in the Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean. Greece's Orthodox Christian faith further motivated Russia to support its cause. However, Russia was cautious about unilateral intervention and sought European cooperation in addressing the Greek question.

The St. Petersburg Protocol, forged through diplomatic negotiations between Russia and Britain, sought to mediate a solution to the Greek conflict while avoiding a broader confrontation with the Ottoman Empire. The protocol proposed the creation of an autonomous Greek state under Ottoman suzerainty, aiming to balance the interests of the great powers and the Ottomans.

For Britain, maintaining the European balance of power was paramount. Supporting Greek autonomy was seen as a strategy to limit Russian influence in the region. While Russia backed the Greeks due to shared religious ties and strategic ambitions, Britain remained wary of Russia's potential expansion into Ottoman territories. A Russo-Turkish war at this stage could have incited revolts among the Ottoman Empire's European subjects, further destabilizing the region.

At the same time, an autonomous or independent Greece offered Britain an opportunity to exert influence in the Eastern Mediterranean, a strategically critical region for trade routes and naval supremacy. A pro-British Greece could act as a counterweight to Ottoman influence and Russian ambitions, thereby enhancing Britain's control over the Mediterranean and securing its access to vital sea lanes leading to India and the Middle East. Moreover, Britain was concerned about French ambitions in the Mediterranean. Following the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, Britain aimed to counter potential French expansionism. By engaging in Greek affairs, Britain sought to prevent France from gaining influence in the region.

Although Britain's primary motivations were strategic and economic, cultural and humanitarian factors also played a role. The plight of the Greeks attracted widespread public sympathy in Britain, fueled by philhellenism—a deep admiration for Greek culture and heritage. Supporting the Greek struggle against the Ottomans was framed as a fight for freedom and civilization against tyranny, reinforcing Britain's image as a protector of liberty and Christianity. The strategic location of Greece in the Eastern Mediterranean made it a valuable pawn in the broader geopolitical game among the Great Powers (Kitromilides, 2021).

Under these circumstances, the Protocol of St. Petersburg, signed on April 4, 1826 (Brewer, 2011), comprised six articles. Article 1 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, 1895) stated that the goal of Britain and Russia was to establish Greece as an autonomous region under Ottoman suzerainty, paying an annual tribute to the Sublime Porte (Frary, 2015). This arrangement meant that Greece would remain part of the Ottoman Empire but govern itself with substantial independence. This significant diplomatic shift marked the first official recognition by the European powers of Greece's right to self-rule. While full independence was not granted, autonomy was seen as a stepping stone toward eventual independence. The agreement also sought to appease European powers by keeping the Ottomans engaged and preventing the destabilization of the Ottoman Empire.

Under the terms of the protocol, the Greeks would select their own government, but the Sultan would retain a role in appointing their leaders. Greece was to be granted full freedom of conscience, trade, and internal administration. In the same article, it was vaguely stated that, as a consequence of the prolonged war between the Greeks and Ottomans, Greeks would gain ownership of Turkish estates on the mainland and islands through redemption. However, the implementation of this clause was unclear. In practice, this provision was nearly impossible to enforce, as more than half of the land was owned by the Ottomans. Greece lacked the financial resources to pay even the interest on the redemption capital, let alone the principal.

Article 2 emphasized the importance of a joint mediation by Britain and Russia if the terms were accepted by both the Ottoman Empire and Greece. This provision was critical to managing the situation without triggering a wider war, particularly with Austria and other European nations that were wary of Russian expansionism. This article laid the groundwork for future agreements, such as the Treaty of London (1827), which formalized European intervention.

In contrast, Article 3 addressed the contingency of the Ottoman Empire rejecting the protocol's terms or hostilities persisting. It stated that Britain and Russia would regard the terms of Article 1 as the basis for any future settlement, either jointly or separately. This clause carried significant risks, as noted by Canning (Clayton, 1971), because it effectively allowed Russia the right to act unilaterally against the Ottoman Empire—something Britain was keen to avoid. Although the protocol did not prevent the Russo-Turkish conflict, it managed to delay it temporarily.

Article 4 stipulated that the borders of the new autonomous Greek region would be determined later through negotiations involving British and Russian diplomats, as well as the Greeks and Ottomans. The mainland and islands would be called "Greece." This provision marked the beginning of direct European diplomatic intervention in the Greek-Ottoman dispute.

Article 5 clarified that neither Russia nor Britain would seek territorial gains or "exclusive" political and economic influence in Greece.

Article 6 emphasized that the present protocol, which outlined guidelines for halting hostilities between the Greeks and Ottomans, called on Austria, Prussia, and France to confidentially guarantee any settlement achieved through Anglo-Russian mediation in Greece, which Britain could not guarantee itself.

The protocol's focus on protecting Greek civilians, amid numerous reports of widespread atrocities by Ottoman forces, highlighted Britain's humanitarian stance, which garnered support from European citizens and aligned with the growing trend of humanitarian intervention. This indicated that European powers were becoming increasingly willing to intervene in foreign conflicts for humanitarian reasons, setting a precedent for future interventions.

The cessation of hostilities was necessary for preparing diplomatic negotiations, allowing European powers to intervene as mediators. For Greece, this provided a respite from violent suppression by Ottoman forces.

The Great Powers pressured the Ottoman Empire to accept the protocol, threatening military intervention if it did not. The European powers were ready to escalate the situation if diplomacy failed, signaling to the Ottomans that the Greek issue had reached an international level they could not ignore. For Greece, this meant further support from Europe in case negotiations collapsed.

The St. Petersburg Protocol of 1826, although described by the British George Canning as "not very artistically drafted" and despite its vagueness, is considered extremely significant because it ultimately paved the way for broader international intervention in the Greek issue. Although Britain tried to prevent a Russo-Turkish war, it failed, as Russia's signing of the protocol gave it the opportunity to declare war on the Ottoman Empire unilaterally, without violating the protocol's terms. In this way, Russia, even by threatening war, gained significant influence in the future negotiation framework for Greece, playing a double game with both Turkey and Britain. Later events, such as the refusal of the Sublime Porte to cooperate in the London Treaty of 1827, escalated European involvement in the aim of bringing peace to Greece, culminating in the Battle of Navarino, where a combined British, French, and Russian fleet destroyed the Ottoman-Egyptian fleet. This crucial event laid the foundations for Greek independence.

This victory was decisive in forcing the Ottoman Empire to negotiate with Greece, leading to the Treaty of Adrianople (1829) and eventually to the establishment of the modern Greek state in 1830. The Ottomans refused to comply with the terms of the treaty, and the Great Powers proceeded with a new London Convention the following year.

4.5 The Treaty of London (1827)

The years of the Revolution were difficult for the Greeks. From 1821, when the liberation struggle began, until 1827, much blood had been shed. There were glorious victories, but also significant defeats on Greek soil. The financial reserves of the revolutionaries had dwindled, morale was low, and former heroes and fighters of the struggle now vied for positions and power. The constant military conflicts had worn down the Greek people, who continued to fight with self-sacrifice and devotion for the long-awaited freedom.

The Great Powers of the time had been spectators of the bloodshed and the near annihilation of the Greek nation for seven years. Russia, which under the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca had been the protector of Christian populations, had positioned itself against the Greek Revolution, primarily concerned with Britain's strategic moves. This shift in Russian policy encouraged the Ottomans and their Turkish-Egyptian vassals, such as Ibrahim Pasha, to commit atrocities, mass killings, destruction, and pillaging against the Greek nation. Ibrahim Pasha, with the Turkish-Egyptian army and navy, sought to eradicate the last strongholds of Greek resistance.

On April 10, 1826, Mesolonghi fell (Gennadius Library Archive, 1826).

The defenders faced unimaginable hardships, starving and surrounded, resorting to eating grass and boiling animal hides. Despite the dire circumstances, they refused to surrender. One moving account describes families sharing a single piece of bread before attempting a desperate exodus. Their heroism captured the imagination of the world, inspiring philhellenes like Lord Byron, who died in Missolonghi supporting their cause. In the end, the people of Mesolonghi attempted a desperate sortie, which remains one of the most heroic acts of sacrifice and refusal to submit to violence or tyranny in world history. And while the Greek Revolution was "dying," the self-sacrifice of the people of Mesolonghi moved not only Europeans but also Americans and distant Indians, sparking a revival of Philhellenism and leading to the Treaty of London.

The Treaty of London in 1827, also known as the London Protocol (Diplomatic & Historical Archives, 1827), was a crucial diplomatic agreement that directly impacted the outcome of the Greek War of Independence (1821-1829). Signed on July 6, 1827, between Britain, France, and Russia, the treaty aimed to mediate a peaceful resolution to the conflict between the Ottoman Empire and the Greek revolutionaries. It provided for the autonomy of Greece, with the obligation to pay tribute to the Sultan. While the land borders were not determined, they would be settled through negotiations between the parties involved.

A secret protocol gave the Ottomans a deadline of one month to accept the terms of the treaty. If they did not, the signatory Great Powers would enforce its implementation by force.

Article 1 declared the intention of the Great Powers to mediate and reconcile the warring parties—the Porte and the Greeks. Achieving a ceasefire was set as a necessary preliminary condition for any further negotiations.

Article 2 stated the treaty's main goal: to establish Greece as an autonomous state under Ottoman suzerainty. Greece was to pay an annual tribute to the Sultan, the amount of which would be determined by mutual agreement. Additionally, the Greeks were to take possession of all Turkish

properties in mainland Greece and the Greek islands, with compensation to be paid to the former owners, either through an annual fee added to the tribute or by similar arrangements.

Article 3 specified that the details of the settlement, including the boundaries of the mainland and the designation of the islands in the Archipelago, would be settled through future negotiations between the Great Powers and the two warring parties.

In Article 4, the Great Powers pledged to promote peace in Greece and provide all necessary instructions for the treaty's implementation by the warring parties. They sought to halt hostilities to facilitate negotiations and ensure the safety of the civilian population. If either side refused to accept mediation, the Powers reserved the right to take measures, including military intervention, to enforce peace.

Article 5 stated that the Great Powers guaranteed they would not seek any territorial expansion, exclusive influence, or commercial advantage for their citizens that could not be equally granted to other nations.

Article 6 stipulated that the details of the reconciliation and peace agreements would be guaranteed by the signatory Great Powers, with future arrangements made to ensure the treaty's implementation. Article 7 noted that the treaty had to be ratified within two months by the signatories.

The treaty also included a secret article, known as the Additional Article or "secret protocol," outlining specific actions the signatory powers (Britain, France, and Russia) would take if their initial diplomatic mediation failed. The secret protocol stated that if the Ottoman Porte did not accept mediation within a month, the Great Powers would proceed with trade relations with Greece and possibly military intervention to enforce the treaty's terms.

This secret clause was decisive in escalating diplomatic pressure, leading to military intervention in support of Greek independence (Mazower, 2021), particularly through the famous Battle of Navarino (October 20, 1827). The Battle of Navarino was decisive for the Greek Revolution. The combined fleets of Britain, France, and Russia, with Greek support, destroyed the Ottoman-Egyptian fleet in the Bay of Navarino, in southwestern Peloponnese, sinking or incapacitating most of their ships. This victory significantly weakened the Ottoman naval power, leaving them unable to resupply their forces in Greece and diminishing their strategic strength in the region.

With the neutralization of the Ottoman naval forces, the Greek forces gained significant ground. Additionally, the success of the naval intervention demonstrated the commitment of the Great Powers (Britain, France, and Russia) to the Greek cause and signaled that Greece's autonomy—and ultimately its independence—was inevitable. Notably, after the battle, the international community, especially the Great Powers, became more actively involved in the negotiations to determine Greece's future. The Treaty of London marked the beginning of official diplomatic support for the Greek cause, which culminated in the recognition of Greece as an independent state in the London Protocol of 1830.

It should be emphasized that the Treaty of London (1827) and the Battle of Navarino sealed the Greeks' freedom and directly led to the Treaty of Adrianople (1829), where the Ottoman Empire officially recognized Greek autonomy, paving the way for Greece's full independence. The Treaty of London in 1827 laid the groundwork for the more detailed Treaty of London in 1830, which formally recognized Greece as an independent state and defined its borders.

The Treaty of London and the Battle of Navarino were key factors in the Greek Revolution, determining the path toward independence.

4.6 Potential counterarguments and alternative interpretations of historical events

Historians and analysts often interpret historical events and their outcomes from different perspectives, which can lead to conflicting views. For instance, the role of the Great Powers in supporting Greek autonomy was primarily driven by self-interest rather than altruism. While this research emphasizes the role of the Great Powers (Britain, France, and Russia) in aiding Greek autonomy, some historians argue that their intervention was motivated more by geopolitical and strategic interests than by a genuine desire to help the Greeks. Britain, for example, may have been motivated by a desire to prevent Russian expansion in the Balkans, while France pursued its own ambitions in the Mediterranean. Similarly, Russia's intervention might have been driven by its goal of protecting Orthodox Christians within the Ottoman Empire, alongside its long-term aim of weakening the Ottoman Empire to expand its influence.

In response, it can be argued that the conditions facilitating Greek autonomy and independence were shaped more by the competing and often contradictory interests of the Great Powers than by a collective desire to support Greek national aspirations.

It could also be argued that Greek military victories, such as the Battle of Navarino, played a less significant role in securing Greek autonomy than is often claimed. Greek forces were frequently outnumbered and lacked resources, and their strategic successes were sometimes more a result of external interventions—such as the naval forces of Britain, France, and Russia—than of their own military capabilities. However, Greek military victories, while not decisive on their own, can be seen as symbols of Greek resolve, providing the Great Powers with an important incentive to intervene, rather than being the primary factor in achieving autonomy. On the other hand, the diplomatic achievements were partly a response to the persistence and resilience of the Greek people, whose determination to resist Ottoman rule through both military and civilian uprisings ensured that Greece gained a place in international negotiations. The recognition of Greek sovereignty can thus be viewed as the culmination of both military efforts and diplomatic negotiations, with Greek resistance creating the conditions for foreign intervention.

Another widely acknowledged issue is the significant divisions within the Greek revolutionary movement. Political factions, regional rivalries, and competing interests among Greek leaders—such as the conflict between the Greeks of Moria (the Peloponnese) and mainland Greece, or the friction between political and military leadership—often undermined the effectiveness and unity of the revolutionaries.

A response to this issue is that the diplomatic and military support Greece received from the Great Powers was crucial in overcoming internal divisions and presenting a cohesive front in negotiations. The Great Powers may have viewed Greece's internal fragmentation as a reason for direct intervention, fearing that a prolonged civil war could further destabilize the region.

Another counterargument is that the treaties granting Greece autonomy, such as the Treaty of London (1827), may be criticized for being temporary and insufficient, as Greece remained under the nominal suzerainty of the Ottoman Empire. Critics argue that, while these treaties marked an important step toward independence, they were primarily aimed at managing the decline of the Ottoman Empire rather than fully endorsing Greek independence.

It can be interpreted that the autonomy granted to Greece was seen by the Great Powers as a means of maintaining regional stability. The limitations placed on Greece in these treaties—such as

continued tribute to the Sultan and uncertain territorial borders—highlight that the Great Powers were not yet fully committed to the idea of an independent Greek state. Greek independence was achieved only incrementally, with subsequent diplomatic efforts, such as the Treaty of London (1830), ultimately solidifying Greece's status as a fully independent state.

5. CONCLUSION

By examining key aspects of Greek history, diplomacy, and military training, alongside the active involvement of the Great Powers (Britain, France, and Russia) from the pre-revolutionary period to the Treaty of London in 1827, it is clear that significant events took place, including the development of Greek revolutionary sentiment, the emergence of nationalist ideas, and the direct involvement of the Great Powers in shaping Greece's path to independence.

The Greek national identity that emerged during the pre-revolutionary period was consciously militarized by its leaders—not just as a response to Ottoman oppression, but as a deliberate strategy to align with European military values. This alignment positioned Greek independence within the strategic framework of the Great Powers, who viewed the fighting Greeks as rightful heirs to a cultural heritage and as an emerging political and military entity.

Rigas Feraios and, later, the Filiki Eteria (Friendly Society), a revolutionary organization, actively cultivated a narrative of martial heroism rooted in the values of Classical Greece. This promoted a patriotic ideal aimed at liberating Greece from tyranny. This approach gradually resonated with the Great Powers, especially when combined with the atrocities committed by the Ottomans against the Greeks, whose aim was to annihilate them as a nation, a culture, and a Christian doctrine. In European diplomatic circles, the Greek liberation struggle gained moral and cultural weight.

Key historical milestones, such as the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1774), the pre-revolutionary Greek period (1774-1821), the Protocol of Saint Petersburg (1826), the Battle of Navarino (1827), and the Treaty of London (1827), highlight a dynamic convergence of military, diplomatic, and cultural developments.

The Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1774) introduced a framework in which religion and the protection of minorities became diplomatic tools, directly influencing Greek revolutionary ideologies and the involvement of the Great Powers. By granting Russia the right to protect Orthodox Christians within the Ottoman Empire, the treaty set a precedent for external interventions under the guise of religious solidarity.

The Greeks exploited this situation, seeking Russian patronage and blending religious and nationalist rhetoric. This diplomatic strategy linked religion with military plans for liberation. Revolutionary Greek leaders, inspired by Enlightenment ideals and European military training, envisioned a free and independent state with centralized governance. Through self-sacrifice and dedication, they demonstrated to the Great Powers that Greece should not be seen merely as a rebellious province but as a potential modern nation-state.

The Protocol of Saint Petersburg formalized the concept of collective intervention by the Great Powers, paving the way for modern multilateral diplomacy based on humanitarian and strategic interests. For the first time, the Great Powers explicitly agreed to intervene to resolve a national liberation struggle, signaling a shift in international norms. The protocol underscored Greece's innovative use of diplomacy, appealing to shared European values—freedom, Christianity, and culture—while linking these ideals to tangible geopolitical benefits for the intervening powers.

The Battle of Navarino was a crucial demonstration of the Great Powers' ability to project power through naval superiority, marking one of the first coordinated naval interventions for humanitarian purposes. It emphasized the interaction between military force and diplomatic negotiation and highlighted the technological and tactical evolution of naval warfare. With Greek support, the outcome of the battle demonstrated power and coordination in alignment with Greece's aspirations for statehood.

The Treaty of London (1827), which formalized the intervention of the Great Powers in the Greek War of Independence, can be seen as the culmination of a century-long interaction between Greek military self-formation and European strategic interests. It served as an early example of settlement through negotiations that balanced national sovereignty with international oversight, creating a template for future independence movements. Unlike previous treaties, which focused solely on territorial or power balances, this treaty incorporated the principle of self-determination within a structured framework of external guarantees.

Through diplomacy, Greek leaders presented their nation as a bridge between European interests and Ottoman stability, ensuring that the Great Powers would view Greece's independence as a stabilizing factor rather than a threat. By appealing to Russian Orthodoxy, British strategic interests in the Mediterranean, and French cultural Romanticism, the Greeks created a coalition of support despite the competing agendas of the Great Powers. This diplomatic balancing act highlighted the role of small states in innovating multilateral systems, using both soft power (cultural and religious ideals) and hard power (military alliances).

The complexity of the diplomatic turmoil can be seen as a result of the Great Powers' competing geopolitical interests. Greek leaders often had to navigate the whims of foreign powers, and their diplomatic efforts were shaped as much by external pressures and alliances as by internal strategic goals.

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