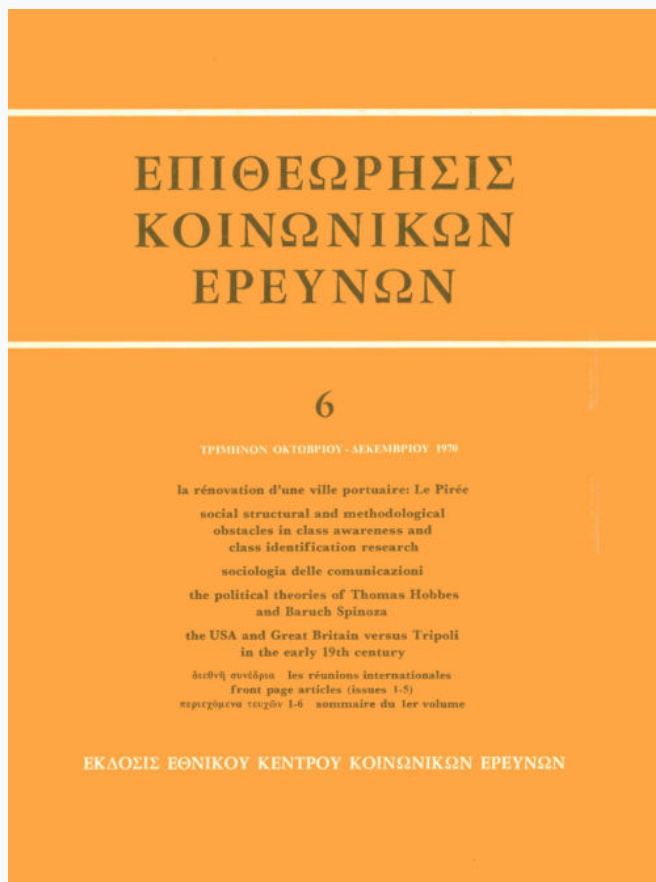


The Greek Review of Social Research

Vol 6 (1970)

6



The USA and great Britain versus Tripoli in the early 19th century

S.E. Tsitsonis

doi: [10.12681/grsr.364](https://doi.org/10.12681/grsr.364)

Copyright © 1970, S.E. Tsitsonis



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).

To cite this article:

Tsitsonis, S. (1970). The USA and great Britain versus Tripoli in the early 19th century. *The Greek Review of Social Research*, 6, 320–324. <https://doi.org/10.12681/grsr.364>

the USA and
Great Britain versus
Tripoli
in the early 19th
century

by
S. E. Tsitsonis
Ph.D.

Κατά τās ἀρχάς τοῦ 19ου αἰῶνος νέαι πολιτικάι καὶ οἰκονομικάι συνθήκαι ἐπεκράτησαν ἀνά τὴν Μεσόγειον. Ἡ κυριαρχοῦσα μέχρι τότε εἰς αὐτὴν Ἑνετία κατελύθη ὡς κράτος ὑπὸ τοῦ Ναπολεόντος (1797). Ἡ Ὄθωμανικὴ αὐτοκρατορία παρέβαιεν ὑπὸ τὴν πίεσιν τῆς Ρωσίας καὶ τῆς Αὐστρίας καὶ ἐπαράσσετο ὑπὸ ἐπαναστάσεων καὶ ταραχῶν. Οὗτοι, αἰ μεγάλαι ναυτικάι Δυνάμεις (Ἀγγλία, Γαλλία, Ἰσπανία, Ὀλλανδία) προσεπάθουν νὰ ἐπωφεληθοῦν τῆς καταστάσεως, ὑπογράφουσαι μεταξύ τῶν νέας συνθήκας ἐν σχέσει μὲ τὸ ἀνά τὴν Μεσόγειον διεξαζόμενον ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἐμπορίον. Συγχρόνως, νέαι ναυτικὴ Δύναμις, αἱ Ἠνωμέναι Πολιτεῖαι, εἰσέρχεται εἰς τὴν Μεσόγειον διὰ τῶν ἐμπορικῶν τῆς πλοίων. Τὰ πλοῖα τῆς ὁμοῦς οφίστανται συνεχεῖς ἐπιθέσεις ἐκ μέρους τῶν πειρατῶν τῶν τεσσάρων βερβερικῶν κρατῶν τῆς Βορείου Ἀφρικῆς: Ἀλγερίας, Μαρόκου, Τριπολιτίδος καὶ Τυνησίας. Κατόπιν τούτου, ἡ ἀμερικανικὴ κυβέρνησις ἐφρόντισε νὰ ὑπογράψῃ συνθήκας μετὰ τῶν ἡγεμόνων τῶν βερβερικῶν κρατῶν. Ὅτε ὁμοῦ ὁ πᾶσις τῆς Τριπολιτίδος κατεπάτησε τὴν μετὰ τῶν ΗΠΑ συνθήκην του καὶ ἐστράφη ἐκ νέου κατὰ τῶν ἀνά τὴν Μεσόγειον πλεόντων ἀμερικανικῶν ἐμπορικῶν, ἡ κυβέρνησις τῶν ΗΠΑ ἀπέστειλε πολεμικὴν μοῖραν, ἣ ὁποῖα ἀπέκλεισε τὴν Τρίπολιν, συγχρόνως δὲ ὄργανώθη ὑπὸ τῶν Ἀμερικανῶν ἐκστρατεία κατὰ τῆς πόλεως Δάρνης, λιμένος ἀνεφοδιασμοῦ τῶν Τριπολιτῶν. Τὰς ἐνεργεῖας αὐτάς τῶν Ἀμερικανῶν διηκούλωνεν ἡ ἀγγλικὴ κυβέρνησις, δώσασα ἐντολάς εἰς τοὺς ἀνά τὴν Μεσόγειον διοικητὰς τῶν ἀγγλικῶν βάσεων, κυριώτερα τῶν ὁπίου ἦτο ἡ τῆς Μάλτας, ὡς καὶ εἰς τοὺς ἐκεῖ προξένους καὶ ναυτικούς πράκτορας τῆς, ὅπως παράσχουν πᾶσαν βοήθειαν εἰς τοὺς Ἀμερικανούς κατὰ τὸν ἀγῶνα τῶν ἐναντίον τῆς Τριπολιτίδος. Τελικῶς, ἐπετεύχθη ἡ σύναξις νέας συνθήκης μεταξύ τῆς ἀμερικανικῆς κυβερνήσεως καὶ τοῦ ἡγεμόνος τῆς Τριπολιτίδος.

At the turn of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries new politico-economic conditions prevailed in the countries bordering the Mediterranean. The Republic of Venice, which up to that time was the principal commercial Power throughout this region, was conquered by Napoleon I Bonaparte, and ceded to Austria, by the treaty of Campo Formio in 1797. Besides, the Ottoman Empire had for a long time been tottering under the pressure of Russia and Austria, and had to face the revolts of the Janissaries and the mutinous governors of several of its provinces.

Under these circumstances the principal maritime Powers of the time, chief among which were England, Spain, France and Holland, tried to take advantage of the new conditions throughout the Mediterranean by signing treaties of commerce and navigation among themselves, and with the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire as regards their trade in this area.¹

At the time when the Napoleonic wars were raging in Europe the Mediterranean became the centre of international commercial competition, as the block-

1. These treaties are included in the works by G. Noradoughian, *Recueil d'Actes Internationaux de l'Empire Ottoman*, tomes 4 (Paris 1897, 1902), t. 2, and Ch. de Mautens, *Recueil de Principaux Traités d'Alliance, de Paix, de Commerce etc., conclus par les Puissances de l'Europe depuis 1761 jusqu'à present*, tomes VI, VII, VIII (Goettingen 1829). Compare also: Γ. Κόλιας, *Αἱ Ἠνωμέναι Πολιτεῖαι τῆς Ἀμερικῆς εἰς τὴν Μεσόγειον*, Ἀθήναι 1959, σσ. 1-4. (G. Koliass, *The United States of America in the Mediterranean*, Athens 1959, pp. 1-4.

ades of Mediterranean ports by the fleets of the belligerent Powers created excellent opportunities for profitable trade to European and American merchants, whose ships, evading the vigilant eye of the blockader, carried food-stuffs and other provisions to the blockaded. Thus it was quite natural that the competition among the above mentioned maritime Powers in the Mediterranean should become one of the causes of friction between them.

Another cause of friction between the Great European Powers of the time, namely Russia, England, Austria and France sprang from the miserable political and economic situation of the Ottoman Empire, as each of these Powers, being certain that the Ottoman Empire would soon collapse, looked forward to securing the lion's share of its territorial possessions.¹

However, notwithstanding the miserable situation of the Ottoman Empire, the Porte still felt itself powerful enough to sign treaties of commerce and navigation, highly advantageous for its interests, with maritime Powers concerned with the trade in the Eastern Mediterranean.²

Nevertheless the influence of the Porte, in the Eastern Mediterranean as well as along the coast of North Africa was constantly declining, mainly due to the power acquired by the sovereigns of the four Barbary States, namely Algeria, Morocco, Tripoli and Tunisia.³ These States were only nominally subject to the Porte. In practice they were independent and sovereign Powers, the rulers of which had succeeded in securing, even with the most powerful European Powers of the time, treaties of commerce and navigation extremely advantageous for them, and at the same time quite humiliating to the prestige and national honour of the above mentioned Powers.

It was during this time, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, that a new maritime Power, the United States of America, appeared as a serious

competitor to the maritime nations of Europe, as regards their Mediterranean trade.⁴

After the successful outcome of the American Revolution, the United States needed new markets that could absorb the surplus of its products, and these markets were found in the West Indies. But later on, and around 1790, England, realizing that the United States had become a very serious competitor, tried in every way to impede the progress of United States commerce. Thus the American merchants, being hindered in their commercial relations with the West Indies, turned to the Mediterranean, where they soon found themselves subject to the predatory attacks of the Barbary pirates.

To face the situation the United States government was obliged to sign treaties of peace, quite humiliating to its national honour, with the four Barbary States.⁵ But, while Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia abided by the treaties they had signed with the United States, the Bashaw of Tripoli found pretexts to declare the treaty between Tripoli and the United States null and void, and to send his pirates once more against United States merchant ships in the Mediterranean.

It was quite natural, therefore, that Congress, at Jefferson's suggestion, decided to desist from negotiating with those of the Barbary sovereigns, who would not abide by the treaties they had signed with the United States, and to encounter every attempt by any of the Barbary States at molesting American ships in the Mediterranean by resorting to force.

To prove its resolution, Congress dispatched a squadron under commodore Richard Dale to the Mediterranean in the summer of 1801, with explicit orders to blockade the port of Tripoli as the Bashaw of this State had declared war against the United States in May 1801.⁶

This decisive action on the part of the United States was bound to draw the attention of the two belligerents: England and France. France having undertaken by the treaty of Amiens (1802) to recall its troops from Egypt, and endeavouring to extend its influence in the Eastern Mediterranean, might consider the measures taken by the United States against Tripoli as indirect cooperation of the United States with England, aiming at joint domination over North Africa, though Napoleon declared that France would observe absolute

4. Since 1799 almost 100 U.S. ships had sailed into the Mediterranean, trading at Spanish and Italian ports (D.W. Knox, *A History of the United States Navy* (N. York, 1948), p. 61.

5. In 1787 the United States signed a treaty with the Sultan of Morocco, in 1795 with the Dey of Algeria, in 1796 with the Bashaw of Tripoli and in 1797 with the Bey of Tunisia. (W.M. Malloy, *Treaties, Conventions, International Acts, Protocols and Agreements between the United States of America and other Powers, 1776-1909*, vols. 2 (Washington, 1910), vol. I, pp. 1206-1211. 1-7, 1785-1787, 1794-1799).

6. C.C. Felton, *Life of William Eaton* (Boston, 1838), pp. 256-257.

1. Concerning the competition between the Great European Powers of the time due to the so called Eastern Question, see M. Λάσκαρι, *Τὸ Ἀνατολικὸν Ζήτημα, 1800-1923*, Θεσσαλονίκη, 1948, σσ. 11-32. (M. Laskaris, *The Eastern Question, 1800-1923*, Salonica 1948, pp. 11-32) and J.A.R. Marriot, *The Eastern Question*, fourth edition (Oxford 1940), pp. 164-184.

2. These treaties are included in the work by Noradoughian op. cit., vol. 2.

3. These States, being a nest of pirates, who at this time had become the scourge of the Mediterranean, had obtained such power, taking advantage of the rivalry of the great and small maritime Powers, and the weakness of the Porte that managed to control the trade carried on by ships of such powerful maritime Powers as England and France during the 17th, 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries. Concerning these States and their depredations on the Mediterranean trade, see the works by Lane-Poole, *The Barbary Corsairs* (London, 1890). P. Hubac, *Les Barbaresques* (Paris, 1949). G. Fisher, *Barbary Legend* (Oxford, 1957). A.C. Julien, *Histoire de l'Afrique du Nord*, tomes II (Paris, 1964). S. Bono, *I Corsari Barbareschi* (Torino, 1964).

neutrality in the contest between the United States and Tripoli.¹

France had every reason to become even more suspicious of the intentions of the United States, when the American consul in Tunis, William Eaton, conceived a plan aiming at an attack by land against Tripoli of a corps of American marines, and mercenaries who would land on its shores and cut off the town from its sources of supply. To this effect Eaton began recruiting a number of men in the city of Alexandria.² It was then that France decided to take action.

Accordingly the French consul in Alexandria tried by every means at his disposal to prevent Eaton from carrying out his project,³ as France aimed at the perpetuation of hostilities between the United States and Tripoli, as well as the involvement of the American naval force in the Mediterranean in a war against Tunis. In such a war the American squadron would blockade the ports of both these Barbary States, thus cutting off Malta, being under British occupation, even if involuntarily, from its sources of supply in Tunis and Tripoli.⁴

It was natural, therefore, for the government of Great Britain to consider that under the circumstances Great Britain should offer every possible assistance to the United States in the Mediterranean, as by so doing it would simply promote its own interests to the detriment of France.⁵ Thus, the governor of Malta, Sir Alexander Ball, acting in accordance with his government's instructions⁶ had given the United States ships free access

to the port of Valetta since the summer of 1801, where American captains could find a safe mooring, carry out repairs and supply their ships with provisions and ammunition.⁷

Further proof of the cooperation between the British and the Americans during this time is the fact that Ball kept up a particularly frequent and cordial correspondence with Eaton as well as with the commander, and other officers of the United States squadron in the Mediterranean.⁸

Among the most important of the letters exchanged between Ball and the American officers and navy agents is one sent by Ball on September 20th, 1804, to commodore Edward Preble, commander of the United States squadron in the Mediterranean, congratulating him on his successes against the Tripolitan pirates,⁹ and openly approving of Preble's explicit refusal to negotiate a treaty of peace with the Bashaw of Tripoli, who demanded of the United States the immediate payment of tribute to that purpose.¹⁰

It is also certain that Ball had been informed by Eaton of the latter's intention to repair to Alexandria and Cairo, as is proved by a letter sent by the governor of Malta to Eaton late in the autumn of 1804.¹¹ In this letter Ball thanked Eaton for his eagerness to carry out any orders with which Ball might entrust him as soon as Eaton repaired to Alexandria. At the same time Ball was enclosing for Eaton letters of introduction to the British pro-consul in Alexandria, Samuel Briggs, and the British minister resident in Cairo, major E. Misset. By these letters Ball requested Briggs and Misset to offer Eaton every possible assistance.¹² Moreover, it is apparent that Ball had sent instructions to Briggs and Misset before Eaton arrived at Alexandria, for, as soon as the latter reached the banks of the Nile, near the city of Rosetta, on his way to Cairo, he was received by major Misset who entertained him on his boat and offered him every service in his power.¹³ Misset, in fact, played a very important role in the cooperation between the British and the Americans during this time. He served as a liaison officer not only between Ball and the American officers, consuls and navy agents in the Mediterranean, but also between Eaton and the of-

7. Knox, op. cit., vols. II, III, IV, V.

8. Ibid.

9. To Captain Edward Preble, U.S. Navy, from Sir Alexander John Ball, Governor of Malta, Malta 20th September, 1804 (Knox, op. cit., vol. V, p. 43).

10. Ibid.

11. To William Eaton, U.S. Navy Agent for the Barbary Regencies, from Sir Alexander John Ball, British Civil Commissioner and Governor of Malta, Palace La Valette, 16 Nov. 1804 (Knox, op. cit., vol. V, p. 144).

12. See letters from Sir Alexander Ball to Samuel Briggs, British Pro-Consul at Alexandria and to Major E. Misset, British Minister Resident in Cairo, Malta 16th Nov. 1804 (Knox, op. cit., vol. V, pp. 144-145).

13. Eaton to Isaac Hull, Commander of the U.S. vessel «Argus», Rosetta Dec. 2nd 1804 (Knox, op. cit., vol. V, p. 171).

1. See letter of instructions from the French Minister of Foreign Affairs Talleyrand to Citizen Beaussier, French Chargé d'Affaires and Commissary General, Tripoli 15 Jan. 1804 (D.W. Knox, *Documents related to the United States wars with the Barbary Powers*, vol. VI (Washington 1939-1945), vol. III, p. 332).

2. See letter to Richard Farquhar from William Eaton, U.S. Navy agent for the Barbary Regencies, Dec. 31, 1804 (Knox, op. cit., vol. V, p. 229).

3. Knox, op. cit., vol. V, pp. 313, 314, 349, 350, 366, 388.

4. See letter from Captain Edward Preble, U.S. Navy, to Robert Livingston, U.S. Minister to Paris, France, Dec. 15, 1804. (Knox, op. cit., vol. V, p. 193).

5. During this period the newly created United States could not be considered as a powerful naval Power which could help effectively either of the belligerents, but its resources were vast and its merchant marine carried on most of the neutral trade.

6. Late in May 1801 the British Secretary of Foreign Affairs Lord Hawkesbury informed Rufus King, the United States Minister Plenipotentiary in London, that the King of Great Britain had given orders that the ports of Gibraltar, Minorca and Malta should be open to the United States ships of war, and that they should moreover be supplied from His Majesty's magazines in those ports with whatever their necessities might, from time to time, require, since the President of the United States had decided to send a small squadron into the Mediterranean for the protection of the American trade against the Barbary Powers (See Lowrie, W. and Clarke, M.C. (ed.), «American State Papers, Class B», Foreign Relations, vols. VI, (Washington 1832), vol. II, p. 496.

officers of the United States squadron.¹ In particular Misset maintained a very frequent correspondence with the commander of the United States vessel the «Argus» Isaac Hull.

Misset had also been informed of Eaton's intentions to come in contact with the exiled Bashaw of Tripoli, Hamet Karamanli, who, according to information obtained by Eaton, was in Egypt. Eaton would propose to Hamet that he cooperates with him in organising a campaign against the ruling Bashaw, Hamet's brother, who had usurped the throne of Tripoli.²

Briggs had lent Eaton the sum of 1,000 dollars, so that the latter could recruit a number of men in Alexandria who would participate in the campaign against the Bashaw of Tripoli.³ But, while late in 1805, the relations between the British and the Americans in the Mediterranean were constantly improving, officers of the American squadron in the Mediterranean had been recruiting British sailors to serve on their ships,⁴ as British sailors would rather serve on American than on British ships, should they evade forced recruitment by the British naval authorities. On board American ships they had to face fewer dangers as the United States was not a belligerent, and they would certainly not suffer the rigours of the iron discipline of the British Navy, but would receive at the same time better rations and wages.

Thus, as soon as the British consul general in Lisbon, James Gambier, was informed of the recruitment of British sailors by officers of the United States Navy, he complained to the United States consul in Lisbon, William Jarvis. Gambier was writing to Jarvis that captain John Rodgers of the United States Navy was receiving British sailors in the Tagus in Spain, while Britain required the services of all her sailors, engaged as it was in a life and death contest against Napoleon. Thus every Englishman, serving on board any foreign ship, was considered by the British Admiralty a deserter from the Navy of his own country.⁵

Moreover Gambier pointed out to Jarvis that the United States had proclaimed that it would observe perfect neutrality during the contest between Great Britain and France. Therefore Jarvis should require captain Rodgers to discharge such British sailors as they had entered on board his ship.⁶

The above mentioned incident did not seem to influence the amicable relations and cordial coopera-

tion between the British and the Americans in the Mediterranean, as a few days after Gambier had complained to Jarvis, Samuel Briggs the British pro-consul in Alexandria wrote a cordial letter to the commander of the U.S. vessel the «Argus», Isaac Hull.⁷ By this letter he informed Hull that the governor of Alexandria had sent instructions to the commander of the Egyptian forces in the town of Damanhur, in upper Egypt, to furnish an escort to Eaton, who was to repair there from Cairo, in order to meet Hamet Bashaw, as soon as the latter approached Damanhur.⁸

At the same time the British resident in Cairo, major Misset, hastened to inform Eaton through a letter, that one of his couriers had met Hamet Bashaw, and that Hamet had given him a letter directed to Eaton. Misset had this letter translated and enclosed the translation. Moreover, Misset wrote that he was ready to dispatch an express to Hamet, informing him that Eaton had repaired to the province of Beheira in Egypt in search of him, and to invite the Bashaw to meet Eaton.⁹

Furthermore, the British not only facilitated, in every possible way, Eaton's movements, but they also did everything in their power to offer assistance to the American officers and agents in the Mediterranean in the knowledge that British interests in this area concurred with those of the United States, and that it was most important for the two nations to be agreed against a common enemy that might prove fatal directly to Britain and most injurious to the United States in the long run. Thus, on March 19th 1805, Ball sent a letter to commodore Samuel Barron, commander of the United States squadron in the Mediterranean, in which he enclosed a copy of a note, forwarded to him by the Ottoman minister in Malta, with a list of persons on board a Turkish vessel captured by the United States squadron. The Ottoman minister asserted that he sent this note to Ball after he had made remonstrances to the United States consul general in Algiers, colonel Tobias Lear, in relation to a number of Turkish ships captured by the United States squadron, and had received no answer. He did so in the hope that Ball would forward this note to the proper United States authorities in the Mediterranean.¹⁰ Finally Ball offered to convey Barron's answer to the Turkish authorities in Constantinople, as he was sending official correspondence to the British minister in Constantinople by a British vessel.¹¹

1. Hull to Eaton, Dec. 24th, 1804 (Knox, op. cit., vol. V, pp. 214-215).

2. Misset to Hull, Dec. 31st 1804 (Knox, op. cit., vol. V, p. 229).

3. Hull to Eaton, Dec. 24th 1804 (Knox, op. cit., vol. V, pp. 214-215).

4. See letter from James Gambier, British Consul General in Lisbon, to William Jarvis, U.S. Consul in Lisbon, January 15th 1805 (Knox, op. cit., vol. V, p. 281).

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Ibid.*

7. See letter to Master Commandant Isaac Hull, U.S. Navy, from Samuel Briggs, British Pro-Consul, Alexandria, Egypt (Knox, op. cit., vol. V, pp. 306-307).

8. *Ibid.*

9. See letter to William Eaton from Major E. Misset, Rosetta, 26th January 1805 (Knox, op. cit., vol. V, pp. 307-308).

10. See letter to Captain Samuel Barron, U.S. Navy, from Sir Alexander John Ball, Governor of Malta, 19th March 1805 (Knox, op. cit., vol. V, p. 427).

11. *Ibid.*

On their part the American consuls, navy agents and officers in the Mediterranean gave Ball valuable information concerning matters directly connected with British interests along the coast of North Africa. Thus, on November 22nd 1804, colonel Tobias Lear, consul general of the United States in the Mediterranean, informed Ball that a revolution had broken out in Constantine, Algeria, against the Dey of that Barbary State, and that the revolutionists had mustered a force of 30,000 men. What was of interest to Ball was the fact that Lear had been informed, that the revolutionists in Constantine were assisted by French officers and engineers, and that their leader was in the interest of France.¹

A few days later, on December 13th, Eaton informed Ball of the political and social situation in the cities of Alexandria, Rosetta and Cairo, as well as of the extremely favourable dispositions of the inhabitants of these cities towards the British. According to Eaton the inhabitants of Alexandria and Rosetta were impatiently expecting the arrival of the British, in the hope that they would relieve them of their misery.² During this time Egypt was infested by bands of wild Arabs of the desert, and anarchy prevailed all over the country, whilst war was raging between the Mamelukes, who disputed the right of domination over the country, and the Turkish troops, under the command of Choursed Bashaw, Governor of Egypt. Concluding his letter, Eaton wrote that the inhabitants of Egypt preferred being under English to being under French domination.³

In the spring of 1805 the cooperation between the British and the Americans in the Mediterranean continued in harmony. On April 19th, the United States Secretary of Navy wrote to commodore Preble, who had been assigned to the command of the United States squadron in the Mediterranean in replacement of captain Rodgers, that the United States government considered the cooperation with the British in the Mediterranean most important for United States interests there, and gave him instructions to offer every service in his power to the British. Furthermore, the Secretary acknowledged the services offered by Ball to the United States squadron, of which he had been informed by Preble, who

had repeatedly in his reports pointed out the fact that Ball had in every way and in every instance facilitated effectively the movements of the United States squadron, and had assisted the American officers in their operations against the enemies of the United States.⁴

In a report of his, dated April 10th 1805, Preble wrote to the Secretary of Navy that Ball had expressed to him his desire to obtain two smacks. In answer to this report the Secretary of Navy wrote to Preble that he would be very glad to satisfy Ball's desire as soon as possible, in return for his various services offered to the United States squadron in the Mediterranean. Moreover the Secretary of Navy sent instructions to Preble, concerning the purchase and the best way to man the smacks, so that they could be delivered to Ball in perfect condition.⁵

Seventeen days after the American Secretary of Navy had sent these instructions to Preble, a motley troop composed of about 400 Arabs, 34 American marines and soldiers belonging to the Artillery Corps of the U.S. Army, and 38 Greeks, recruited by Eaton in Egypt, and under the joint command of Eaton and Hamet, attacked and took by storm the town of Derna, one of the most important ports of Tripoli, from which the usurper Bashaw of Tripoli obtained most of his supplies.⁶

After the capture of Derna the Bashaw of Tripoli had no other alternative than to sign a new treaty of peace and navigation with the United States on June 4th, 1805.⁷

Thus, we may come to the conclusion, that the British offered a most effective assistance to the Americans when the latter needed it most. But for the services offered by Ball, the British pro-consul in Alexandria, and the British minister resident in Cairo to Eaton, the latter might have never achieved his goal of finding the exiled Bashaw of Tripoli, of organising his campaign against Derna, and finally of capturing that most important port.

Undoubtedly the British cherished the hope, that by offering every possible assistance to the Americans in the Mediterranean, they might obtain in return the services of the United States, through a possible alliance against Napoleon, who was deeply concerned to annihilate Britain's influence in the Mediterranean, and thereby to deal a terrible blow on the trade of «the nation of shopkeepers».

However, the United States Government observed a policy of relative neutrality, till the outbreak of the Anglo-American war in 1812.

1. See letter to His Excellency Sir Alexander John Ball, Governor of Malta, from Tobias Lear, U.S. Consul General, Algiers. Valetta, Nov. 22nd 1804 (Knox, op. cit., vol. V, p. 157).

2. See letter to Sir Alexander John Ball, British Civil Commissioner and Governor of Malta, from William Eaton, U.S. Navy Agent for the Barbary Regencies, Grand Cairo, Dec. 13th 1804 (Knox, op. cit., vol. V, p. 190).

3. Napoleon very diplomatically proclaimed, that the French troops had invaded Egypt to free the Egyptians from the tyranny of the Mamelukes; but the French soldiers proved him to be mendacious, as they indulged in plundering and pillaging in those parts of Egypt which came under their domination.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. See H.B. Dawson, *Battles of the United States*, vol. II (N. York 1858), vol. II, pp. 59-60.

7. Malloy, op. cit., vol. II, p. 1788.