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THE PLAN FOR THE END OF THE ETERNAL WAR WITH THE TURKS BY ALEXANDER SUVOROV

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Anotation: The plan for the end of the eternal war with the Turks by Generalissimus Alexander Suvorov, which is part of the foreign policy program under the Greek project of the Russian Empress Catherine II, has been submitted for consideration. It aims to actively advance Russia into the Balkans and establish full control of the seas (Azov and Black) with the prospect of domination on the world's major maritime and land trade routes.

Keywords: Russian Empire, Ottoman Empire, VIII-th century, Tsar Peter I, Empress Catherine II, "Window to Europe", "Greek Project", Generalissimus Alexander Suvorov, Greek Orthodox Empire, Balkans, Greeks, Albanians, Bulgarians, Serbs, Montenegrins, Serbs, Tatars, Turks, Cossacks.

The world history of the 18th century was marked by a period of revolutions, a new redistribution of territories and world markets, the formation of major colonial powers, significant political, socio-economic and cultural changes in the lives of the peoples of Europe and America. The Russian Empire, a colonial state that emerged on the basis of the lands of the former Moscow kingdom and was renamed in the course of the reforms of Peter I (1708-1721), known as the "breaking down of a window into Europe," did not stay away from these civilizational processes. In order to modernize the country to the European model and turn it into a powerful world empire, Peter I first sought to get rid of international isolation and gain access to the seas – the Black and the Baltic. The Russian expansion to the south (the Azov campaigns of 1695 and 1696) against the strong Ottoman Empire did not produce the desired results. Peter I changed the vector of foreign policy to the West and set a goal to reach the Baltic Sea. During the Northern War (1700-1721) the Swedish Empire was completely defeated, and Estonia, Lifland, Ingermanland, the city of Vyborg and Keksholm were retreated to Russia. After the signing of the Treaty of Nishtadt (30.08.1721), the Russian Empire has solved the main foreign policy task – to enter Europe through the Baltic sea.

Drawn at the beginning of the 18th century by Peter I, the dream "to cut a window into Europe" became so attractive that it was supported by his successors on the Russian throne. However, with renewed vigor, it was reborn under the rule of the ambitious and power-loving Catherine II (1762-1796). Only this time the aspirations of the ruling top of the Russian Empire went much wider. They sought not only to "cut a window" on the Western European countries through the seizure of the Azov and Black Sea coasts and the opening of straits, but also to spread influence to the Balkans and the Middle East. To fulfill its intentions, Russia offered the world to expel the Turks from Europe and restore the Greek Orthodox Empire. The monarch of the newly created state was to become the grandson of the Russian Empress, Prince Constantine. Thus, the Greek project gradually crystallized, based on the traditions of the Russian foreign policy. And regardless of the possibility of the existence of the Greek Project, the complex historiographical fate, when the very existence of such foreign policy program was rejected, it became the most important political and strategic course of the Russian state from the late 1760s to 1796.

The fact that the most important strategic tasks of the Russian Empire – the expulsion of Turkey from the Northern Black Sea and the Crimea, the seizure of the Azov and Black seas coasts – was undoubtedly undisputed by Catherine II.

Plans for the full distribution of the European possessions of Turkey are traced not only in documents, materials, letters written by Catherine II (*the Russian Archive*, 1880), but also in so-called "notes" and reports of her closest associates, first of all G. Potemkin and O. Bezborodko (*the Russian Archive*, 1880; Eliseeva, O.I., 1997).

One of the most talented Russian commanders, Alexander Suvorov (1730-1800), did not remain indifferent to the ideas of the Greek project. Evidence of this is the record of the Secretary of State Empress A.V. Khrapovitskyi. In his diary on November 22, 1792, he recorded the words of the former chief of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Novorossiysk Region V. Popov, who claimed that Suvorov and Mordvinov were eager to enter the Navy in the Tsar-grad. The Turks will immediately flee, and there will remain up to 300,000 Greeks – that's the legacy of Grand Duke Konstantin Pavlovich (A.V. Khrapovitsky's Diary, 1901).

About the vision of his participation in military campaigns in case of another war with the Ottoman Empire O.V. Suvorov repeatedly reported to the Empress and O. Bezborodko, wrote in semi-official and private letters to friends – officials of different ranks (Suvorov, A.V., 1952). Appointment by imperial rescript on November 10, 1792 O.V. Suvorov the commander of troops in the Katerynoslav province, the Crimea and the Yas peace-annexed lands, his active activity in bringing the ground forces into combat readiness, strengthening and completing the Black Sea Fleet and the Rowing Fleet give reason to speak about the active preparation and active training for the war with Turkey.

As a commander of the troops in Katerynoslav Province, the Crimea, and the newly annexed Yas peace treaty, Suvorov was tasked with the turning the southern region of the country into a strong and reliable military-strategic foothold for the further struggle against the Ottoman Empire. One of the priority areas of his activity he saw the construction and strengthening of defense structures in the Crimea and the Dniester, the organization of a reliable defense of the Kerch Strait and the establishment of safe routes of communication between the Northern Black Sea, Crimea and Kuban.

The importance of protecting the Kerch Strait for the Russian state is evidenced by O.V. Suvorov visit in the winter of 1793 to Taman. He arrived to select a place to build the fortress and the harbor on the shores of the Taman Peninsula. The commander personally identified the site for the construction of the defense fortification and approved the construction plan. The fortress was to be built near the ruins of ancient Phanagoria – the settlement of the period of the Bosphorus kingdom. From the land, the fortress was supposed to resemble a half-barrel with four earthen bastions, and from the sea it was planned to fill the shaft and build the comfortable harbor for the Black Sea Cossack army flotilla. Since the Black Sea Cossacks played an important role both in protecting the fortress itself and in securing the sea and land routes of the communication between Taman and Crimea, O.V. Suvorov examined the rowing flotilla of the Black Sea, whose military qualities he highly appreciated. Inspecting the Cossack flotilla, the commander was satisfied and confident in her ability to perform the most difficult tasks set by the military administration.

Throughout 1793 O.V. Suvorov conducted the active and intense correspondence with the Russian representatives in Turkey O. Khvostov, I. Severin, later M. Golenishchiv-Kutuzov, during which he received information on the status of the Turkish fortresses, the number and preparation of the naval linear and the rowing fleet, activity, about the unrest in the Christian provinces of the Ottoman Empire, the mood at the Sultan's court, etc. (*the Russian Archive*, 1878). The commander was interested in practically everything that could be used to understand the real state of affairs in Turkey, to identify the weaknesses of the enemy.

O.V. Suvorov paid special attention to the territory that was to become the theater of the future military campaigns. He was regularly informed of the presence on the first defensive frontier of the Ottoman Empire by former Russian patriots – Zaporozhye and Nekrasov Cossacks. In his letters, notes, the commander repeatedly stated that it would be good to have such a population in his allies. This would help to obtain and clarify the important intelligence regarding the territory and defense structures of Turkey; the population loyal to Russia could be successfully used in separate combat operations and also be able to demonstrate a massive transition to the Russian army of the population under Turkish rule.

However, the commander considered the possibility of the population resistance to the advancement of the Russian army deep into the Turkish regions. In the unfolding of such a scenario of events O.V. Suvorov insisted on the destruction of settlements with compact living of the Zaporozhye and Nekrasov-Lipovian population and on the physical extermination of their inhabitants (*the Russian Archive*, 1878).

The information received by O.V. Suvorov during the correspondence did not cause doubts. The Turkish sultan Selim III sought revenge in connection with the rapid pace of reorganization of its army units with the assistance of the French inspectors and augmentation of new navy galleys. It was necessary to act ahead of schedule. Excellent knowledge of the topographic features of the area, which should become a theater of future hostilities; experience of the previous Russian-Turkish military campaigns; his own experience of participating in hostilities against the Turks; obtained in various ways from the Turkish regions, clear information about the status of the Turkish army and navy helped the commander in drawing up a master plan for the implementation of the ideas of the Greek project. It was prepared by O.V. Suvorov his stay in Kherson and dictated by French engineer Colonel F.P. de Volan. In 1795, at the request of the Empress, the plan of the commander was sent to St. Petersburg (*the Russian Archive*, 1914).

O.V. Suvorov's plan was deposited in the archival collection of the Russian State Military-Historical Archive (Moscow) in two copies (RSMHA, the Foundation MSA (the Military Scientific Archive), case 17785, part I, pages 1, 4-18; part II, pages 1-16).

We pay attention to the copy with the date and place of writing of the document (RDVIA, Military-Academic Archive Foundation, case 17785, part II, pages 1-16). O.V. Suvorov's plan is a fairly voluminous 32-page document that clearly states: the purpose of the war; the tasks of individual military campaigns with the planning of the interaction of naval and land forces; ways to engage local people in active action; calculated needs for forces and resources at each stage of the war and as a whole throughout the military campaign. It vividly demonstrates not only the commander's views on the strategy and tactics of conducting a military campaign against the powerful Ottoman Empire at the time, but also the political preferences of the commander, his attitude towards the realization of geopolitical interests in the southern borders of the Russian state.

It is worth noting that the prepared by O.V. Suvorov stern documents did not include the name "Greek project" anywhere, but it was the plan of the "end of the eternal war with the Turks" (*the Russian Archive*, 1914). At the same time, a detailed examination of the plan of the offensive war with the Ottoman Empire prepared in 1793 gives reason to say that it was a part of the foreign policy program under Catherine II's "Greek project".

According to Suvorov's plan, the acquisition of Constantinople and the restoration of the Greek Empire were to be implemented in two stages, during two military campaigns. The first campaign was planned to take a rapid, lightning strike to gain the fortresses of Ackerman, Kiel, Ismail, Brailov, Hotin, Rushchuk and others, to conquer Wallachia, to establish control over the Danube river to its very mouth, to take Varna and winter in Bulgaria. Among 20 fortresses intended for the seizure, Suvorov planned to leave only two, and the last to destroy, so as not to spray the striking forces necessary for a decisive attack against the enemy troops. To implement the first phase of the military campaign, three Army Corps, the Combat Fleet, and, above all, the Cossack Fleet of the Black Sea and the boats with Greek and Albanian crews had to be involved. For the storming of the Turkish fortresses O.V. Suvorov planned to employ five to six thousand Black Sea men and the same number of Cossacks of the Don regiments.

The purpose of the second campaign was to cross the Balkans and take Constantinople at night landing five thousand Black Sea men and from five to six thousand regular army soldiers. In the course of the second campaign, it was planned to use the Christian population of the Balkans in a certain way, namely: to involve the Greeks for the Corsair and private service, and the Bulgarians – for "committing significant sabotage to the Turks." According to O. Suvorov, the more active use of Balkan Christians should be in the final stages of the war, provided that they create selective corps. The involvement of the Christian peoples of the Balkans in the war, and especially in its final stages, should have created the image of the struggle and victory for the Christian world over the Muslim enslavement of Turkey. The irregular formation of the Russian Empire from the Greeks, Albanians, Serbs, Bulgarians and even Tatars had a leading role in the creation of military units. O.V. Suvorov's plan stands out from other projects prepared by other high-ranking officials (M. Mordvinov, O. Ribas, O. Samoilov, etc.), because it was prepared by a brilliant strategist, tactician and diplomat.

In his plan, O. Suvorov was able to successfully combine not only purely military plans and perspectives, but also political (external and internal), as well as take into account the social consequences of military campaigns, the economic potential of regions and the country as a whole. The plan is offensive and provides the prospects for political change in the Balkans, namely: the creation of a Greek empire that will consist of Greece and Fr. Euboea in the Aegean; independence of scooter pasture; the possibility of granting territorial compensation to other states: England will receive Candia, Venice – part of Dalmatia and some islands of the archipelago, part of the counties of Bosnia and Serbia will depart to Austria.

Detailed developed by O. Suvorov plan of the "end of the eternal war with the Turks" was sent to the capital and from there soon O.V. Suvorov began to receive the orders from the President of the Military College M. Saltykov, the commander of the troops in the southern and western sections of the Russian border, which explicitly spoke about the preparation for the offensive war against Turkey (Suvorov A.V., 1952). It is possible that the military campaign against the Brilliant Port could have started as late as the end of the eighteenth century, if only the Ottoman Empire had given the slightest cause for war. However, the events in the "Polish regions" in 1794 delayed the beginning of the war against Russia against Turkey, and it began only in November 1806 on land beyond the Dniester border.

Thus, the plan of the "end of the eternal war with the Turks" worked out by O.V. Suvorov is a part of the foreign policy course of the Russian Empire during the reign of Catherine II, aimed at actively moving Russia to the Balkans and establishing full control over the seas (the Azov and the Black) with the prospect of domination of the main maritime and land trade routes between the West and the East, the new and the Old Worlds. The plan is thought out in detail, developed on the received and rechecked intelligence. A. Suvorov clearly formulated the strategic objectives of the war and its individual campaigns, identified the needs for forces and resources, considered the possible negative international resonance, and offered, if necessary, territorial compensation to other states.

Outlining the plan of the two military campaigns, the commander urged the Russian government to double preparations for them, because, he said, the problem with Constantinople should be resolved in the near future. Such Generalissimus' words confirm his intentions to start a war with Turkey and bring it to a victorious end soon. And the next Catherine II orders to the President of the Military Collegium M. Saltykov, the commander of troops on the southern and western borders of the state Y. Dolgorukov, O. Suvorov, O. Igelstrom, I. Gudovich persuade the Russian empress to support the plan to launch O. Suvorov against the Ottoman Empire. All that remains is to find an excuse to start hostilities against Turkey.

Link:

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- [2] Correspondence A.V. Suvorov 1793 partially published: From the papers of Field Marshal Prince Suvorov. (1878). *Russian Archive, book I. Moscow.*
- [3] Diary of A.V. Khrapovitsky's From 18 January 1782 to 17 September 1793, p. 243. *Moscow.*
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