

# What were the short-term significances



What were the short-term significances of the Crimean War of 1854-1856 in terms of foreign policy? The Crimean War was a momentous event in the amendment of foreign policy. Several short-term significances stemmed from the war shaping Britain's global position, alongside initiating a new aggressive policy led by Palmerston[1] and creating the 'world power' ideology. Faults in the military mismanagement, and the failure of Aberdeen's government led to the realization of the need for reform.

Depicted as having caused the army to "change more in those two years than in the previous two hundred,"[2] it is clear that the Crimea influenced a series of short-term significances in the successive twenty years. The change from Aberdeen's[3] diplomatic government to Palmerston's aggressive ministry resulted from growing patriotism in the Crimea. Aberdeen's cautious attitude towards war was highlighting and became increasingly unpopular as it "lacked Palmerston's 'manly vigour'". [4] Aberdeen distaste for war was emphasised when he wrote to Peel[5] "war in order to preserve peace is entirely inapplicable to... the Great Powers". [6] His involvement in the Napoleonic Wars[7] influenced this attitude as he was less naive to war conditions than others. Sourced from a letter between Aberdeen and Peel, he was defending his anti-war stance. His belief that peace was not achieved in this way was supported by the Congress System which had held peace without war for 30 years. Peel's attitude differed, believing in "Bellum para, pacem habebis", [8] - that peace was obtained through war preparation. Peel compared how equipped France[9] was making Aberdeen seem unprepared.

Moreover, Aberdeen was blamed for issues raised in Russell's[10] war reports such as the military mismanagement and unsanitary conditions[11].

This negative publicity influenced John Roebuck[12] to enquire into the management of war. Public opinion contrasted Aberdeen's approach which John Lowe described as a "conciliatory disposition to the point of whimpishness." [13] Instead, they supported Palmerston's "zealous defence of British interests." Palmerston, unlike Aberdeen did not have the support Queen Victoria[14], and therefore gained support through co-operation with the public.

Stuart confirmed his popularity saying, "Wherever I go... one opinion has been pronounced in a single word –Palmerston." [15] Said in the throes of war, it was a current, credible description and being a politician, Stuart was able to gauge public opinion on Palmerston so was competent to make judgements. However reliability is affected as Stuart was likely to show support towards the popular government at that time, in this case, Palmerston. The Crimean had highlighted flaws in Aberdeen's hesitant diplomacy and brought the significance of a new confrontational approach.

Under Palmerston's governance, Britain was presented with a stronger image than it ever had been under Aberdeen. 'Gunboat diplomacy'[16] allowed him to create the illusion that Britain was the world power. Evidence of his aggressive 'gunboat diplomacy' was the Indian Mutiny [17] in which he forcefully suppressed mutinies to insure British power was not threatened. Palmerston's illusion was further supported when the diplomatic situation in Europe was shaken by the collapse of the Congress of Vienna; [18] a consequence of the Crimean war.

For British foreign policy, this was vastly significant because the suppression of Russian influence[19] in the region due to the Treaty of Paris[20] allowed

Britain to temporarily become the dominant power on the continent, projecting their power and reinforcing Palmerston's illusion. Media became a new phenomenon in the Crimea and Russell's reporting effectively caused many alterations to foreign policy. As the first on-the-spot reporter, he exposed the true conditions of war to a naive country[21].

Although, many aspects of foreign policy were in need of much change, the war reporting brought them to light, pushing them to happen quicker. A sketch from the unique perception of 'Punch magazine' highlights the lack of supplies the British military faced. Dialogue between two soldiers says; "Well Jack! Good news from home, we're to have a medal", "That's very kind. Maybe one of these days we'll have a coat to stick it on". [22] Being a national magazine, Punch wanted to capture the attention of readers and does so by sarcastically highlighting the problems in the Crimea.

The fact that it calls the soldiers, "patient heroes" suggests they are not placing blame on military officers for the lack of supplies but they are rather mocking the Government instead. The limitation however is that the motive was to sell as many copies of 'Punch' as possible, therefore dramatisation on elements occurred. The Times Newspaper exploited the poor conditions in order to shock the public gaining publicity. Russell reported, "there is not the least attention paid to decency or cleanliness. [23] On one hand, Russell had a first-hand account of the war and gained excess to information that was unavailable to others and written at the time of war it viable and current. But there is debate as to how truthful these reports were. Prince Albert, who took an interest in foreign policy, said that "the pen and ink of one miserable scribbler is despoiling the country." Proof of this 'despoil' was

the collapse of Aberdeen's government who were exposed as weak through the media. By reporting such in-depth details about the military, Russell took the risk of revealing information about the military that could be useful to the enemy.

Russell's agenda was to sell newspapers and make himself as well-known as possible, and reporting the negative conditions of war was much more likely to cause a public uproar than any positive news, therefore it is not unlikely that he emphasised his reports in order to gain more publicity. The high impact of war reporting is discussed by Chamberlain; "there was no censorship (no country made this mistake in any future)," [24] thus proving the high impact and influence the media had back home and in the government. The role of women had huge significances in the Crimea, socially, medically and in foreign policy.

Florence Nightingale [25] imprinted her name throughout history through her determination to reform the British military health-care. When Nightingale along with 38 other nurses [26] arrived at Scutari [27] they were met by "patients grimed with dirt, [and] infested with vermin." [28] The account of her personal experience validates the atrocious conditions. However, written towards the end of war Nightingale may have over-emphasised the severity of these conditions so that people saw her as the saviour and driving force behind the improvements.

Nightingale made a considerable difference to the military conditions, producing 'Coxcombes' [29] as a way of displaying her improvements. Statistically they showed that in the first 4 months of fighting 1,619 soldiers died of wounds against 16,273 whom died of disease, but under her service,

the death rate reduced from 42% to 2%. Her work at Scutari became highly recognised and medical reports from the time described it as “ extremely valuable. ” [30] However, there is a limit as to how truthful her coxcombs were as it has been suggested that she dramatised the improvements in order to promote herself.

Being a female of the Victoria era meant that people thought she would not be capable of making a significant difference in war as it was not the job of a woman. Therefore Nightingale would have felt the need to put emphasis on her work to get noticed. Part of the reason in which Nightingale became so well-known was due to her connection with war correspondent - Russell. The two worked together to benefit their own agendas; Nightingale gained publicity for her work and Russell benefitted from selling Nightingale's stories in newspapers across the country.

Mary Seacole was another influential woman of the Crimea, who perhaps had a more modest agenda. Seacole stepped forward determined to offer her services after Russell made his passionate plea [31] asking for “ devoted women... willing to go forth to minister to the sick and suffering soldiers of the East in the hospitals of Scutari? ” Yet Nightingale refused to work alongside Seacole due to her ethnicity, as her “ blood flowed beneath a somewhat duskier skin than theirs. [32] Taken from Seacole's biography published the year after the Crimea, it showed the bitterness towards Nightingale and was written to illustrate to people the prejudice she faced. Seacole funded her own trip to the Crimea, setting up a shop on the front line to cover the expenses. [33] Iveson argued that Seacole played a more significant role in the Crimea than Nightingale; “ In many ways she stands

head and shoulders above Nightingale, for whereas Florence performed only an administrative role, Seacole was in the thick of things and did not hesitate to go to the battlefield itself. [34] This weighs up the work of both nurses and concludes that Seacole was in fact the more important of the two, despite Nightingale being more recognised. He praises her self-funding and determination to put herself on the battlefield. Overall, both Seacole's and Nightingale's role in the Crimea resulted in significant improvements to the nursing profession, which from that point on began to gain respect and importance. In terms of foreign policy, it brought a new era of nursing into the military. More medical care was developed including the first hospital train.

It was realised that strong medical supply corps would result in a stronger, more effective army so British foreign policy learned from this mistake in future events. Military reforms also developed as a significance of the Crimea. Army organisation had become outdated and remained much the same since the Napoleonic wars. Soldiers were untrained and inexperienced. The incompetence of the military was highlighted at its peak in the 'Charge of the Light Brigade'. [35] Lucan [36] said they were given the command, "there is your enemy and there are your guns," showing there was little preparation or strategic plans.

However, Lucan said this in the House of Lords whilst he was defending himself in the enquiry and therefore the reliability of his statement must be questioned. He may have exaggerated the command in order to take blame off of himself. Nevertheless, the chaos of the event was reinforced by Lord Cardigan who described the true extent of the chaos; "we were encircled by

a blaze of fire...artillery poured upon our rear, so that we had a strong fire upon our front, our flank, and our rear. "[37] The Charge of Light Brigade showed the extent at which the army had become outdated and the desperate need for reform.

The Cardwell reforms[38] were influenced as a result of the Crimea. This was significant because thanks to both the military and medical reforms it created a stronger British army. Overall, the Crimea War was of huge significance on British foreign policy, mainly due to the creation of an attitude of a 'world power' and a policy of isolation. The role of the media played the most significant role by highlighting flaws in all aspects of foreign policy and creating a sense of patriotism within the public who then pushed for changes.

By highlighting Aberdeen's diplomatic policy and anti-war attitude, the media brought the collapse of his government. This led to the most significant change - the appointment of Palmerston, who brought the new aggressive 'gunboat diplomacy'. This changed British mind-set by making Britain seem more dominant on the continent. Additional turning points added to the feeling of a 'world power'. Without the media, the nation would not have been made aware of the problematic military system and poor medical supply.

This exposure therefore awakened military reforms and the realisation of the need for a strong medical supply corps. This then subsequently allowed Britain a stronger army giving them a greater control and standing in the European diplomatic situation. In conclusion, the media explosion was the main significance of the Crimea War and helped secure Britain's superior



position in Europe. Word Count 1920 ----- Word count 431 [1] Henry John Temple, 3rd Viscount Palmerston, British prime minister between 1855-1858 and 1859-1865. [2] See appendix 1 [3] George Hamilton-Gordon, Earl of Aberdeen, Prime Minister 1852-1855. He favored a foreign policy of diplomacy. [4] Quote from historian John Lowe ' Britain and Foreign Affairs 1815-1885' [5] Sir Robert Peel, British Prime Minister 1841-1846. [6] See Appendix 2 [7] Napoleonic wars – 1799 - 1815 [8] The belief that you must prepare for war to maintain peace. See Appendix 13 [9] France had spent 20 million on fortifying Paris and introduced 350, 000 troops. [10] William Howard Russell - the war correspondent for The Times newspaper during the Crimea. [11] Extreme conditions of war were revealed to the public for the first time during the Crimea. Since Aberdeen was Prime Minister at the time he was associated with these poor conditions. [12] John Roebeck was an MP – In Jan 1855 he enquired into situation in Crimea resulting in resignation of Aberdeen. It gained 305 votes in favour against only 148 votes in opposition. Aberdeen saw this as a vote of no confidence [13] See appendix 3 [14] Queen Victoria supported Aberdeen. She asked numerous other politicians to take Aberdeen's place after his resignation before she finally succumbed to Palmerston. [15] See Appendix 4 Word Count 980 [16] Palmerston had the policy of ' gunboat diplomacy' in which he dealt with foreign affairs in an aggressive and confrontational manner. [17] Indian mutiny of 1857 [18] The Congress of Vienna in 1815 between Britain, Russia, Austria Prussia and later France, had maintained peace for nearly 30 years. [19] The suppression of Russian power and influence happened after they lost in the war. Significant because the balance of power had previously been tipped in Russia's favour. [20] The Treaty of Paris, signed on March 30th 1856, largely stopped Russia's

influence in the region as the Black Sea was made neutral territory. Russia also lost some of the territory it had held in the west and its influence in the Ottoman Empire. [21] Thanks to improving communications, Russell's reports could be published across the whole country quicker than before. The use of telegram got information to Britain within 3 weeks. (with newly built railways and mechanized steam pressers for printing). [22] See appendix 5 [23] See appendix 6 [24] See appendix 7 [25] A nurse who came to be well known due to her work in the Crimean War. [26] Arrived 4th November 1854 Word Count 1614 [27] Scutari – a hospital in Turkey in which Nightingale nursed British soldiers. [28] Nightingale wrote this on April 17th 1856. [29] Coxcombs were like pie charts. See appendix 8 [30] See appendix 9 [31] See Appendix 10 - His passionate plea to get women to help [32] Quote from Mary Seacole. See appendix 11 [33] Seacole set up a shop on the front line to sell food and cigarettes to soldiers.

The money she gained from the shop she then spent on medical treatment for the soldiers. [34] See appendix 12 [35] At the Battle of Balaclava October 1854. Huge miscommunication between Lord Raglan and the soldiers which resulted in chaos. [36] Lucan, Lieutenant General, involved in the Charge of the Light Brigade. [37] Speech from Lord Cardigan later at the Mansion House in London See appendix 13 [38] Cardwell reforms: Edward Cardwell – Secretary of State for War – introduced reforms to improve army.