Summarise principals upon which Palmerston based his foreign policy.

Palmerston's principals appear to be centred around a rather egocentric view of Britain's place in the world, for example in 1948 he threateningly said 'We have no eternal allies, and we have no perpetual allies', this implies that Britain may at any time change sides to best suit their needs. Palmerston continues with this allusion to Britain being an independent, self-sufficient empire in a letter to Queen Victoria in which he claims 'England should keep herself as free as possible from unnecessary engagements and entanglements'. We can deduce that the then Prime Minister felt that Britain should not concern itself with the concerns of other countries, unless of course those concerns may be a danger to the status of England, in which case England may do whatever it feels is necessary.

Which was most important?

I believe that one of the most notable views that Palmerston had was that he saw Britain as an 'advanced state of civilisation'. To me, this stands out as it shows an arrogance in the government feeling that it had superiority over other countries to interfere as they pleased.

Are there any contradictions between his policies and principals?

There are clear contradictions between what Palmerston said in parliament and his actions. In March of 1948 in the House of Commons, Palmerston had claimed that his aim is to 'preserve peace'. Nevertheless, ten years previously he had ordered a fleet to Alexandria and asked the French army to become involved also, as well as beginning to see Russia in particular as a threat and constantly competing with other successful countries to have the most influence.

In addition, he said '...the real policy of England- apart from questions which involve her own particular beliefs, political or commercial- is to be the champion of justice and right', many people, even now, would argue that this statement is highly ironic because capitalist countries tend to hold commercial matters above all others. After all, the aim of such a government is to encourage people to make as much money as possible!

Why was Palmerston so keen to preserve Turkey as an independent power?

Palmerston wanted Turkey to remain an independent power because conflict in Turkey would disrupt trade routes between Britain and India- a huge source of wealth for England at the time. He also felt that, in the event of war, Turkey would be defeated and Russian troops would be put in control of the area around Constantinople and the Dardanelles, he believed that 'the Russians would never quit them'. Therefore it was concluded that it would be more worthwhile