This threatened Turkish independence.

Opinion was divided in the Cabinet, with Russell and Aberdeen wanting to favour the traditional policy of supporting Turkey, but with Gladstone and Aberdeen unhappy about supporting a Muslim power which had a tradition of mistreating its subjects.

When Ambassador Canning summoned the fleet to the Dardanelles (the usual means of demonstrating support for the Turks) he was for once overruled.

The fleet was then eventually sent in after much indecision, but this only provoked the Tsar into invading Moldavia and Wallachia (Turkish provinces)

Meanwhile French had taken up an anti-Russian stance

The Turks rejected the compromise made between great powers called at Vienna, and attacked the Russians.

The Russians then annihilated their fleet at Sinope

The government (eventually, because they were concerned about the electoral reform debate) demanded that Russia leave the principalities

Russia refused.

Aberdeen’s government’s indecisiveness had encouraged the Russians into a position from which they could not back down.

Canning’s encouragement of an aggressive stance from the Sultan had led him to believe that he could count of British support

Napoleon too was also war-mongering, increasing tension

The absence of Palmerston’s firm handling meant that the situation deteriorated into war.

Some Historians (e.g. A.J.B.Taylor) believe the war was about maintaining the balance of power, and came about due to a weak Aberdeen and Palmerston having been removed from office.

Others that Canning had given the impression that Britain would come to the defence of Turkey, if against Russia.

Some argued was Napoleon’s War mongering

Muriel Chamberlain said that they needed to stop Russian expansion otherwise they might threaten their trade route to India and the press also misleading public opinion.

What were the results of the Crimean War?

- The British and French decided to capture the Russian naval base Sebastopol, on the black sea in September 1854. The Russians had had plenty of time to fortify the city.
- Britain were then forced to besiege the city through the Russian winter, but battles at Balaklava and Inkerman showed the bravery of British troops
- The Times correspondent William Howard Russell wrote damning newspaper articles about living conditions and bad organisation, which helped defeat Aberdeen’s government in 1855.
- Aberdeen was replaced by Palmerston and military organisation was improved, with Austria, Sweden and Piedmont-Sardinia joining in on the British side.
- In 1855 Sebastopol fell and in Paris, the following year, the peace treaty between the Russians and the French was signed.