

**GÁBOR DEMETER**

**Diplomatic Struggle for Supremacy  
over the Balkan Peninsula (1878–1914)**

Collected studies

**PUBLICATIONS OF THE BULGARIAN-HUNGARIAN  
HISTORY COMMISSION**

**1.**

A MAGYAR-BOLGÁR TÖRTÉNÉSZ VEGYES BIZOTTSÁG  
KIADVÁNYAI

ИЗДАНИЯ НА БЪЛГАРО-УНГАРСКАТА ИСТОРИЧЕСКА  
КОМИСИЯ



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Institute for Historical Studies, BAS  
Institute of History, RCH, HAS

Sofia  
2017

**The research has been supported by the Bolyai János Research  
Scholarship of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences**

This volume was realised within the framework of the  
Bulgarian–Hungarian joint academic project entitled  
“Connected Histories: Sources for Building History in Central and  
Southeast Europe, 17<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries”

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Responsible Editor: Penka Peykovska

Published by the Institute for Historical Studies, BAS

ISBN 978-954-2903-29-1 (Institute for Historical Studies, BAS)

ISBN 978-963-416-069-4 (Institute of History, RCH, HAS)

ISSN 2535-0757

Cover: excerpts from the diary of Lajos Thallóczy (National Széchenyi Library, Budapest),  
The Map of European Turkey, 1832. by J. Arrowsmith.

*Dedicated to  
Erzsébet Bodnár, researcher of the Eastern Question*

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## Preface

*The Publications of the Bulgarian-Hungarian History Commission* is the joint initiative of Bulgarian and Hungarian historians – members of the mentioned Commission that was established in 2006 and since then have been successfully functioning as a link between them in academic research and scholarship. Its aim is to present the colleagues' scientific results in studying the common historical past of Hungary and Bulgaria against the backdrop of the historical processes taking place in the regions of Central and Southeastern Europe.

In its ten-year existence the Commission has realized several joint academic research projects and has issued several separate books, summarizing their results, among them we can mention “Political, Social, Economic and Cultural Elites in the Central- and East-European States in Modernity and Post-Modernity” (Sofia–Budapest, 2010), *Bulgaria and Hungary at War (1912–1918)* (Sofia–Budapest, 2013), *Regions, Borders, Societies, Identities in Central and Southeast Europe, 17<sup>th</sup>–21<sup>st</sup> Centuries* (Sofia–Budapest, 2013), *Shared Pasts in Central and Southeast Europe, 17<sup>th</sup>–21<sup>st</sup> Centuries* (Budapest–Sofia, 2015), *(Re)Discovering the Sources of Bulgarian and Hungarian History* (Sofia–Budapest, 2015).

The first volume of our newly established series contains the collected studies of the Hungarian historian-geographer Gábor Demeter who examines the diplomacy of Austria-Hungary towards the Balkans and the role of key personalities in it using a geopolitical and economic approach to explain the events – an approach which is rather different from historians' view, but was quite popular during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the contemporary political thinking. The author analyzes and for the first time incorporates into research writing some primary sources (such as the diaries of István/Stephan Burián and Lajos/Ludwig Thallóczy) that offer new input into historical questions, draw a much diverse (and not always favourable) picture for Austria-Hungary. The chapters trace such historical 'myths' and problems like the “Drang nach Salonika”, the reality of an Austro-Hungarian alliance with

Bulgaria (including the promise of Austro-Hungarian military aid to Bulgaria in 1913), the internal debates between the different pressure groups of Austro-Hungarian foreign policy, the “unanimous” support of politicians to wage war against Serbia in 1914, the “unconditional” German support, and the role of economic interests vs. military aspects, the missing economic backgrounds of an active Austro-Hungarian Balkan policy, etc.

*Assoc. Prof. D.Sc Penka Peykovska*

Sofia

April 2017

## Introduction

This volume contains essays dealing with different aspects of diplomatic history each using a different point of view or method. What is common in each chapter is the involvement of Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria – either being passive observers or active participants of events. The first chapter is a historiographical comparison of views regarding Count Andrassy's policy towards Russia and the Balkans, thus it is not a critical analysis of events, but rather of thoughts.

The second chapter analyses the aspirations and ambitions of Powers in the Balkans from geopolitical aspects. This approach was getting more and more popular after the turn of the century in scientific circles, but it is questionable to what extent did it appear in high politics. Journalists, capitalists tended to emphasize its importance (among the Hungarian proponents one may mention the scholar Adolf Strausz or the industrial entrepreneur Rezső Havass). This chapter evaluates the political events from geopolitical perspective, while analyzing the combinations of alliances using sketch maps, diagrams – instruments of political geography.

The third chapter investigates two questions – was there a cooperation between Austria-Hungary in 1908 and to whom was it favourable; and was the relationship between the two states asymmetrical or was it interdependency (compared to the cases of Russia and Serbia; Russia and Romania; Austria-Hungary and Romania, etc.)? Though diplomats thought that a small and revengeful Bulgaria would be better than a Greater Bulgaria realized, as the space for manoeuvring decreased, so did the value of Bulgaria in the eyes of politicians.

The next chapter also differs from traditional diplomatic works, as – based on archival sources – it focuses on the 'contrafactual' question "what if...", when it enumerates the chances and solutions for Bulgaria to reach an agreement with her former allies in 1913, that would have given a more favourable outcome to the events by avoiding the outbreak of the second Balkan War.

The fifth chapter deals with the different 'topoi' in connection with the political ambitions of Austria-Hungary. First we prove that the 'Drang nach Salonika' was not hoax as often claimed, but several plans did exist to realize this goal (although both the favourable political constellation and the necessary capital was missing). Then, using contemporary sources, we prove that Austria-Hungary did have colonial plans on the Balkans. Finally, we examine the relation of Hungarians towards a war against Serbia, and we prove that the annexation of the state, or a long war was against Hungary's interest, which was represented by Prime Minister Tisza's unwillingness to declare war in 1914. On the other hand Hungary wished to mutilate or dismember Serbia among her small neighbors, thus to divert their attention from Transylvania and Macedonia. Finally the slogan 'the Balkan for the Balkan peoples' (Tisza) was not an acceptance of the principle of nationality, but an instrument to exclude Russia's interference.

The last chapter re-evaluates the long-debated question of Austrian help promised to Bulgaria, if it attacks Serbia in 1913, at the same time highlighting the events (the internal political situation in Austria-Hungary and the perception of the Balkan Wars) through the eyes of a leader diplomat-eyewitness (Ludwig von Thallóczy), thus drawing the attention to one of the most important, though still unpublished source.

# Count Andrassy and the Attitude of Austria-Hungary during the Great Eastern Crisis (1875–78)

## *A Historiographical Overview*

The present study<sup>1</sup> deals with the foreign policy of Count Andrassy, Foreign Minister of Austria-Hungary during the Great Eastern Crisis and also with the Austro-Hungarian interpretation of the events based on Hungarian sources and contemporary literature. The problem of the Great Eastern Crisis and the policy of Andrassy has already been analyzed in the Hungarian historiography prior to World War I by György Balanyi, Ede Wertheimer and many other participants of the events,<sup>2</sup> although they could not remain impartial and wrote in a very anti-Russian tone, while at the same time they overestimated Andrassy's personality and role. Balanyi even blamed the English for the failure of the conservative reform movement initiated by Andrassy in 1875-76,<sup>3</sup> while accused Gorchakov of deepening the differences between rebels and the Ottoman state.<sup>4</sup> Russians were also accused of encouraging Slavs to resist and refuse moderate reforms, and they were depicted as deceitful violators of agreements, that would have brought peace. These authors failed to admit that the reform plans merely served the interests of Powers and not of local inhabitants, and that Austria-Hungary was not interested in executing real reforms. From Metternich to Bismarck and Disraeli many thought that carrying out reforms in

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1 Published originally Demeter, G.: *Graf Andrási i pozicija Avstro-Vengrii po voprosu Vostochnogo Krizisa (1875–1879 gg): Istoriograficheskiy obzor*. In: Akulshin, P.–Grebentkin, A. (eds.): *General M. D. Skobelev i yego vremya: (k 170-letiyu so dnya rozhdeniya)*. Ryazan, 2014. 182–202.

2 Many of them served as official diplomats close to Andrassy, or were journalists responsible for the image of leader politicians. See: Kállay, B.: *Emlékek*. Budapest, 1898; Sosnosky, Th. von: *Die Balkanpolitik Österreich-Ungarns seit 1866*. Bd. 1–2. Stuttgart-Berlin, 1913–1914; Halász, I.: *Bismarck és Andrássy*. Budapest, 1913; Falk, M.: *Kor- és jellemrajzok*. Budapest, 1903; Hegedűs, L.: *Két Andrássy és két Tisza*. Budapest, 1941; Balanyi, Gy.: *A Balkán-probléma fejlődése: a Párisi kongresszustól a világháború kitöréséig, 1856–1914*. Budapest, 1920; Balanyi, Gy.: *Gr. Andrássy Gyula szerepe a Monarchia történetében*. Budapest, 1924; Wertheimer, E.: *Andrássy Gróf élete és kora, I–II*. Budapest, 1934.

3 Balanyi, Gy.: *A Balkán-probléma fejlődése...* 95.

4 Ibid. 81.

Turkey might create a precedent for the Slavs in Austria-Hungary, thus these are dangerous.<sup>5</sup>

Their one-sided standpoint and conclusions were revised by István Diószegi and Emil Palotás in the 1960–70s,<sup>6</sup> but owing to the political background of that era Austria-Hungary's policy was depicted very negatively, as it was opposed to the "immanent way of history", and tried to hinder the "natural development" of events (national awakening, the formation of nation states). This negative adjudication had also been adopted by the history-writing of the neighboring states (like Bulgaria) that still prevails sometimes.<sup>7</sup> Diószegi summarized his views once again from another aspect in his work „Bismarck and Andrassy" in the 1990s,<sup>8</sup> which seems to be the most balanced (and detailed) work on this topic in Hungary, but he focuses only Power policy and lacks an outlook on the pretensions of Slavic nations of the peninsula. Compared to his previous writings it is very analytic, obscure and even contains some contradictions, while analyses the western historiography as well, in a polemic style.<sup>9</sup> Prior to this historiographic turn his former works were logically structured (as an effect of the dialectic materialism), but one-sided, lacking historiographical context. Since then no further progress has been made at synthesis-level (studies on partial questions still recur), and it seems that the investigation of the question has been concluded. Therefore the

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5 Taylor, A. J. P.: *Struggle for Mastery in Europe*. (I used the Hungarian edition: Taylor, A. J. P.: *Harc a hatalomért. Európa 1848–1918*. Budapest, 2000). 291.

6 Diószegi, I.: *Ausztria-Magyarország és Bulgária a San Stefanó-i béke után (1878–1879)*. Budapest, 1961; Palotás, E.: *Az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchia balkáni politikája a Berliini Kongresszus után (1878–1881)*. Budapest, 1982.

7 A former student of Diószegi, Petar Kamenov uses the same reasoning and tone of criticism in the 1990's as Diószegi did 30 years ago. Kamenov, P.: *Graf Andrasi i Balkanite, 1867–1890*. Sofia, 2001.

8 Diószegi, I.: *Bismarck és Andrassy. Magyarország a német hatalmi politikában a XIX. század második felében*. Budapest, 1998. The work repeats the title of Hegedüs' monography, but its tone is toally different.

9 Schmidt, R. F.: *Die gescheierte Allianz. Österreich-Ungarn, England und das Deutsche Reich in der Ära Andrassy (1867 bis 1878/79)*. Frankfurt am Main, 1992; Schmidt, R. F.: *Graf Julius Andrassy. Vom Revolutionär bis Aussenminister*. Göttingen-Zürich, 1995; Rupp, G. H.: *A Wavering Friendship. Russia and Austria 1876–1878*. Cambridge (Mass.). 1941; Rupp, G. H.: *The Reichstadt Agreement*. *American Historical Review*, 30. 1925.

literature used here is quite old, but not obsolete. Nevertheless, an exclusively Hungarian interpretation of the events distorts reality, but our goal is not the reconstruction and evaluation of events, but the interpretation of contemporary and recent Hungarian political thinking regarding that chapter of Eastern Question, as it determined the policy and political instruments for Austria-Hungary over the next 30 years. This may contribute to the better understanding of Austro-Hungarian-Russian relations after 1878.

All Hungarian historians agree that the main goal of Austria-Hungary was to prevent the establishment of a Greater Slavic state, because it was supposed to be the greatest threat on the existence of the Habsburg Monarchy according to contemporary politicians and decision-makers. Austria-Hungary was built up of a conglomerate, mosaic of territories with different ethnic character. Along its borders nation states were evolving throughout the 19th century, that attracted their brothers incorporated within the limits of Austria-Hungary, exerting a continuous pressure on the multiethnic dualist state. Along the western borders this process had more or less been over by 1871 after the unification of Italy and Germany, and Austria-Hungary was expelled from its Central European positions. Therefore the security of her eastern border became more precious, as it also became the only scene of possible territorial aggrandisement. But soon – side by side with the weakening of the Ottoman Empire – new problems arose. The Slavic subjects of the Empire managed to form autonomous principalities, and politicians were aware of the fact that Austria-Hungary could only preserve its influence over the region if succeeded in hindering the unification of Slavs with each other. Otherwise, the same scenario could take place as in Italy or Germany, where Habsburg influence remained unchallenged only until many small weak Italian and German states existed without tendencies for unification. Therefore a declining, but at least intact Turkey was more favourable for Austria-Hungary than a dismembered one. Everybody remembered Gentz's famous prediction in 1815, stating that Austria would not survive the

collapse of the Ottoman Empire,<sup>10</sup> because originally Turkey's penetration was the challenge that created the Habsburg Monarchy as a counterweight. Unfortunately, Austria-Hungary had another neighboring Power, Russia, which was an attractive factor not only to the Slavs of Ottoman Turkey, but to those of living in Austria-Hungary, constituting almost 50% of the population. Thus, Russia meant a dual threat: she could not only encircle Austria-Hungary by gaining the benevolence of southern Slavs and blocking Austria's political or economic penetration into the peninsula, but furthermore, as these southern Slavic states had brothers incorporated within the boundaries of Austria-Hungary, their aspirations meant a threat to the dualistic structure and even to the existence of Austria-Hungary.<sup>11</sup>

The above mentioned fears are key elements to understand the foreign policy pursued by Austria-Hungary after 1871,<sup>12</sup> as these reflected not only the stance of the public opinion, but the official opinion of politicians as well. That's why the prohibition on the establishment of any Greater Slavic state appears in the Reichstadt agreement in 1876 (in words) and in the Budapest agreement in 1877 (on paper). These greatest Austro-Hungarian fears were realized, when the Russians created Bulgaria of San Stefano – as the latter not only could hinder any Austrian expansion towards the south, but also could have exerted a centrifugal force on the minorities of the Dualist State.<sup>13</sup>

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10 *Taylor, A. J. P.: Harc a hatalomért... 288.*

11 Similarly to the thesis of Gentz, one may assume that Austria-Hungary would not survive the collapse of Tsarist Russia, as Austria was valuable for the other Powers only as a counterweight of Russia.

12 *Diószei, I. Ausztria-Magyarország és Bulgária... 5.*

13 Later, when Serbia became inimical to the Dual Monarchy, the creation of a Greater Bulgaria was not totally excluded from the instruments – especially in 1912 – to maintain the influence of Austria-Hungary on the Balkans. A Greater Bulgaria could counterweight a Russian and Serbian and probably Romanian cooperation. As Austria had lost its buffer / satellite states – Romania and Serbia – by 1912, its boundaries became vulnerable, therefore it definitely needed the volens-nolens help of Bulgaria. Nonetheless, for Austrian politicians it was enough to exacerbate Serbian-Bulgarian antagonism without the realization of Greater Bulgaria, therefore they offered Macedonia in 1881 for the Serbs as a recompensation for the occupation of Bosnia, which was earlier – in 1870 – promised to Serbia. This offer was repeated in 1913 as well, as a recompensation for the loss of the Adriatic. Since the control of the Vardar-Morava axis, thus economic supremacy after the

Although the aspirations of Russia on the Balkans can be interpreted as a part of an imperial and dynastic foreign policy, which means that the promotion of Slavic nationalistic movements for independence was not necessary (Russian diplomacy was against revolutions between 1815–1848 in cooperation with Austria), but experience showed that in practice the achievement of imperial goals could be effectively fuelled by the support of nationalistic movements. Therefore panslavism appeared in the milieu of official policy. For Andrassy the main aim in the 1870s remained to hinder the meeting of official Russian foreign political goals and the Slavic national aspirations.<sup>14</sup> This intention can be seen clearly, when he offered an anti-Russian alliance early in 1870 for Serbia promising her Bosnia-Herzegovina. „If everybody is convinced that the Turkish rule is not followed by a Russian one, then neither Austria-Hungary, nor other Powers feel themselves to interfere into or hinder the natural development of events on the Balkans” – he stressed his view to Benjamin Kállay, his trustee, who was sent to Belgrade to promote the Serbian-Austrian rapprochement.<sup>15</sup> This pretension can be seen behind his consent to the „Three Emperors’ Accord” in 1873, although it was not optimal for his goals, as he was quite Russophobe (he was sentenced to death owing to his revolutionary activity in 1848). This agreement froze the Eastern Question by maintaining the status quo, thus meant a renouncement of supporting southern Slavic aspirations from both sides.<sup>16</sup>

His policy during the Great Eastern Crisis can also be driven back to the prevention of a Russian and Slavic cooperation. First he tried to convince the rebellious Bosnians with concessions, thus hindering the increase of Russian influence, then after the failure of his note on 31 December, 1875, he engaged into negotiations with Russia in order to convince her to refrain from the supporting Slavic aspirations. The realization of this policy was the Budapest agreement that pointed out

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political turn in Serbia became impossible, the creation of Albania (and the withdrawal of Serbia from the coast) became a key element to secure Austrian economic outlet to the seas.

14 Diószegi, I.: *Ausztria-Magyarország és Bulgária... 7.*

15 *Országos Széchényi Könyvtár (National Széchényi Library), Kézirattár (Manuscripts)*. Fol. Hung. 1733. Andrassy to Kállay, October 24, 1870.

16 Diószegi, I.: *Ausztria-Magyarország és Bulgária... 8.*

prohibitions on establishing a greater Slavic state. When the Russian intervention became more and more unavoidable due to the Serbian defeat and the pogrom in Bulgaria, he managed to lay down the Austrian demand on territorial concessions in a written agreement, also accepted by other Powers, like Germany. This logically established policy collapsed on 3 March, 1878 by the Treaty of San Stefano.

In this study I'm going to explain and reason (1) the details of foreign policy pursued by Austria-Hungary (sometimes motivated simply by internal fears of Andrassy) between 1872–77 prior to the Russian declaration of War. (2) I also aim at analyzing the different interpretation of key events like the Budapest and Reichstadt agreements, (3) and finally I show how Andrassy found a way out from the situation that threatened Austria-Hungary with a Russian predominance over the peninsula, thus postponing the collapse of Austria-Hungary for 30 years.

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The opinion of a prominent personality and the official policy of the state are two different things, that may not coincide. Although Andrassy became Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1871, it never meant that his opinion was not challenged by other pressure groups (like Prince Albrecht or generals Mollinary and Rodich), nor that his views were constant or coherent (or that all instructions were executed in accordance with his ideas). His views were in permanent transformation according to the changes of the external and internal political situation including many alternating scenarios, like the sustainability or uselessness of Turkey or the repeatedly recurring Bosnian question. This could be evaluated either as flexibility or also as indecision. Owing to the above mentioned he was labelled a „dilettant“, who pursued a fruitful policy.

Austria-Hungary's foreign policy over the Balkan peninsula prior to Andrassy was strictly based on *status quo* and *non-intervention* elaborated early by Metternich.<sup>17</sup> Andrassy originally even denied the traditional concept that Austria-Hungary had to fill the vacuum in case

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17 Diószegi, I.: *Bismarck és Andrassy...* 202.

of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. It is true that before 1871 Andrassy wanted to gain the benevolence of Serbia in case of a Russian-Austrian war by offering the occupation of Ottoman areas (Bosnia), if the latter did not prove to be viable, but that time, prior to the increase of Russian influence, Austria-Hungary itself had no territorial aspirations on the Balkans. Andrassy even withdrew this idea concerning Bosnia, when the Austrian-Russian clash remained unrealized in 1871 due to the quick collapse of France under German attacks. Even a Russian-Austrian cooperation began to develop on the Balkans, after panslavism had become discredited for a decade because of crushing of the Polish revolt in 1863, and Russia had temporarily turned towards Middle Asia and to the revision of the Paris Treaty (London, 1871). Thus, the meeting between Gorchakov and Andrassy in Berlin (1872) was based on mutual non-intervention into the affairs of the peninsula.<sup>18</sup> Therefore Russia first supported the note of Andrassy (16 October, 1875) in which he promised reforms for Bosnia, which was accepted by the Porte as well (13 February, 1876). But unfortunately neither Serbia, nor Montenegro and the Bosnian rebels could be held back by this agreement. The Serb ruling circles had a constant fear that if they did not support the rebels, while Montenegro did, the Njegoš dynasty could take over power in Serbia. And there was another reason: the 2 wings of the rebels were ready to unite the controlled territories with Serbia (Lubratić) and Montenegro (Pavlović), if the latter supported their movement.<sup>19</sup> But this was considered a threat now by Austria-Hungary: *“For Austria-Hungary the existence of Ottoman Turkey is needful, as it not only draws the attention of small states (diverting it from Austria), but at the same time hinders their nationalistic aspirations ... If Ottoman Turkey ceased to exist, we would become the next targets. If Bosnia united with Serbia or Montenegro or a new state was established, the game would be over for us, and we would become the next sick man of Europe”*—wrote Andrassy just before the outbreak of the Herzegovinian revolt (29 January, 1875).<sup>20</sup> Compared to his earlier opinion things seem to have

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18 Diószegi, I.: *Bismarck és Andrassy*... 204.

19 Balanyi Gy.: *A Balkán-probléma fejlődése*... 79.

20 Rupp, G. H.: *A Wavering Friendship*... 39; Taylor, A. J. P.: *Harc a hatalomért* ... 288.

changed regarding both Turkey's integrity and the fate of Bosnia, although it still did not mean an Austrian occupation of the latter.

Bismarck – who considered the escalation of the Eastern conflict as a good instrument to ameliorate the position of Germany –,<sup>21</sup> gave firm support to Andrassy, because he thought Andrassy represented Hungarian interests in foreign policy contrary to the revisionism of Catholic Austrians, who could have been more dangerous for Germany. Bismarck was even against the reforms in Ottoman Turkey, because he thought that any concession given to the Slavs in the Balkans would increase the activity of Slavs in Hungary, and this would aggravate and the Hungarians' position and thus would encourage Cisleithanian revanchism.<sup>22</sup> Bismarck even decided to act as a mediator between England and Austria and to support Andrassy against the pressure coming from the circles around General Rodich, governor of Dalmatia, who wanted to occupy Bosnia. The unfortunate idea of the visit of Francis Joseph in Dalmatia in 1875, where he was introduced as a defender of western Slavs came from these Austrian military circles,<sup>23</sup> and therefore they were quite responsible for pushing the events in Herzegovina to the escalation of the conflict. Their opponents, like *Dezső Szilágyi* from the party of Kálmán Tisza and Andrassy even hinted the rumour that these military circles smuggled weapons to Herzegovina.<sup>24</sup>

Bismarck had three plans: on 3 January, 1876 he advised Austria-Hungary to pacify the rebellious provinces, in this way satisfying Rodich, then Russia can to get back southern Bessarabia, while England might get Egypt. In April 1876, he realized that all the mentioned powers were so involved in the question and so distrustful toward each other, that an unilateral Austrian intervention would make Russia oppose, an unilateral Russian intervention would raise Austrian objection, while any joint measures would be questioned by England, that did not want Austrian-Russian appeasement over the Balkans at all. Up to that very days of 1878, when Russia almost reached the Straits,

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21 Explained later.

22 *Diószegi, I.: Bismarck és Andrassy... 207.*

23 *Taylor, A. J. P.: Harc a hatalomért ... 290.*

24 *Szilágyi Dezső beszédei.* Budapest, 1906. 137–38.

England did not calculate with Austria-Hungary as a factor of continental balance or as a counterweight of Russia on the peninsula, that is why, the English refused Andrassy's early plans of cooperation in 1872 (pushing him towards accepting the accord of the Three Emperors).

This careful analysis of the situation brought about the third German plan: the strengthening of the „accord of the Three Emperors“ led to the meeting of the leading diplomats in Berlin (10 May, 1876), where Andrassy and Bismarck together refused the idea of Gorchakov who intended to give autonomy for the revolting Bosnia. The question is why? As we have seen, Andrassy originally wanted to give Bosnia to his ally, Serbia in order to hinder any cooperation between Serbia and Russia. But the outbreak of the Great Eastern Crisis put an end to these plans because of the Russian involvement, as any modification of the status quo as a result of a direct or indirect Russian interference would have weakened the position of Austria-Hungary on the Balkans. A possible Russian intervention with a favourable outcome to the small states automatically meant that the Austrian policy turned more positively to the maintenance of the integrity of Turkey (until it remained possible), while in case of a passive Russia Andrassy was willing to accept the mutilation of Turkey. But any unilateral increase in the Russian sphere of interest had to be balanced in Budapest somehow (if hindering it remained unsuccessful), that is the reason of the modification of the original plans regarding Bosnia.<sup>25</sup> From that time on Andrassy was not opposed to the annexation so ardently. The autonomy of Bosnia (similar to that of Bulgaria) as an intermediate solution was refused by Andrassy, because he thought that it would serve as an 'apple of discord' among small Balkan nations and Ottomans. Autonomy would mean an evergrowing unrest in the peripheries. *“The next step of the Eastern Question would be the cooperation of Serbia, Bulgaria against the Ottoman Empire based on the unsettled Bosnian question.”*<sup>26</sup> This prediction of Andrassy was realized later, although it

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<sup>25</sup> Taylor, A. J. P.: *Harc a hatalomért* ... 289.

<sup>26</sup> HHStA, Wien, PA VIII. England, Fasc. 170. April 21, 1878.

was the Macedonian question that finally brought about changes (in 1912).

Finally, the Berlin Memorandum contained an armistice of two months for the fighting parties and urged the internal reform of the Empire. The effectiveness of the note was decreased by the British denial on handing it jointly to the Porte. In 1875 the foreign policy of the Disraeli government was very controversial: Disraeli-Beaconsfield himself wanted a direct British appearance and influence (i.e. Suez question), he wanted the maintenance of Turkey and at the same time the increase of British political and economic influence over the state. But Salisbury wanted an English-Russian agreement, while distrusting the Three Emperors' Alliance, therefore he did not accept any initiatives coming from these Powers. Lord Darby was distrustful towards the Powers and was the supporter of the 'splendid isolation'.

Andrássy quickly realized that British hesitation and the internal political changes in the Ottoman Empire (the dethronization of the Sultan) made the former efforts futile. Russia and Austria-Hungary once again had to initiate negotiations on the solution of the Balkan question. This led to the verbal agreement in Reichstadt. In this agreement (detailed later) in case of a Turkish victory status quo ante was laid down as a principle. In case of victory of the small states the two parties agreed in the annexation of certain territories. Unfortunately the two variants of the agreement published in the first volume of Krasny Arhiv (1922) and Austrian documents differed regarding the extent of areas to be occupied. The Russian version mentions only a part of Bosnia-Herzegovina, while the Austrian document mentions the whole area – later Andrássy had to fight for the realization of Austrian version.

These events did not necessarily mean that Andrássy's policy was aggressive and from the early beginnings he aimed at acquiring Bosnia (and Macedonia). When claiming this, *Kamenov* refers to the work of Falk and Hegedüs, who were not historians, rather publicists and politicians, furthermore their work is retrospective and often lack references to exact dates. Nonetheless, they tended to describe Andrássy as a resolute politician who always knew what to do (and created an

idealistic anti-Russian national hero), but this is an over-exaggerated picture. Kamenov fits the events into his concept by the arbitrary selection of sources. It was rather Beck, chief-of-staff who saw it important to acquire Macedonia (see *figure 4, next chapter*), for Andrassy an autonomy within the Ottoman Empire was also realistic, such as giving minor territorial compensation for Serbia from Macedonian territories. This means that Andrassy was not definitely against the autonomy as an instrument, he even elaborated a – although not radical – proposal for Bulgarian autonomy just to hinder the further escalation of the conflict and the increase of Russian influence (but definitely not for the satisfaction and sake of local inhabitants). However, the events of April, 1876 made his efforts futile, and the plan had to be thrown away. Referring to Falk's biography on Andrassy, Kamenov claims that Andrassy gave up the maintenance of Ottoman integrity – it is true, but it was only a reaction to the events, and not a proactive policy. As the speeches of Dezső Szilágyi evidenced, even Falk, spoke about the maintenance of Ottoman integrity as a delegate and the note of 31, December, 1875 was based on this. And while the literature usually claims that these reform plans were ineffective from the beginning, one should not forget that even the Müzzsteg plan of 1903 was not more than this with the very exception of the international controlling committee.

In May 1876, after the Berlin meeting Andrassy still denied the reality of the annexation of Bosnia.<sup>27</sup> We saw that there were cases and years, when Andrassy could get along with the European presence of Turkey well. Based on Hegedüs, Kamenov claims that Andrassy wanted to acquire the Vardar-axis (which really became a key element of Austrian foreign policy later), but it was not a directive or necessity, jut a possibility, and prior to 1876 (the Russian interference into the affairs of the peninsula), he did not have such plans. When Kállay mentioned that the acquisition of Macedonia was impossible, due to the demand of the Serb compensation, Andrassy warned that it *was not the territorial consequences that were the most important achievements for*

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27 Szilágyi Dezső beszédei... 138–39. Abolition of tax-farming, local usage of tax incomes instead of central redistribution, freedom of religion.

*Austria-Hungary, but the main goal: to keep Russia off the Balkans, and any solution that could serve this, could be acceptable.* If this was impossible, he wanted recompensation for the increase of Russian presence.<sup>28</sup>

The fear that Austria may pacify the region led to the emergence of the Ristić government in Serbia that pursued a more active policy, knowing that the 'unofficial Russia' of Fadeev, Katkov and Danilevski would support the war against the Ottomans even with loans. This exacerbated the difference between the stance of the conservative Shuvalov, Gorchakov and the radical Ignatiev. The quick Ottoman military successes over Serbia surprised the Powers. Gorchakov accepted the status quo laid down in Reichstadt, but once again he offered autonomy to Bosnia, which angered Andrásy. Finally the two Powers agreed in maintaining the status quo, and an armistice of some weeks came into life, while Abdülhamid – who refrained from giving concessions – became the new emperor of Ottoman Turkey with the secret support of the English diplomacy. Therefore the Austrian-Russian cooperation once again proved to be fruitless.

This led to the mission of Sumarokov-Elston on 27, September 1876, offering a joint military action in Bulgaria and Bosnia. Andrásy replied that Russia had to step forth alone, but offered the benevolent neutrality of Austria-Hungary, for which the prize was the occupation of Bosnia. This bargain was very advantageous for Austria-Hungary that could avoid the declaration of a war or entering into a joint action with the Russians, which might cause international calamities, and at the same time could avoid internal debates as well (the Hungarian public opinion was against any cooperation with Russia).<sup>29</sup> The agreement even meant that Russia was not allowed to annex the occupied territories and thus the military presence of the Russians remained limited, while concerning Bosnia this was not the case. *Lajos Dóczi*, section-chief of the Foreign Ministry even thought that Andrásy managed to secure Austrian interest regardless of whether Russia keeps its word regarding Bulgaria or not. But a contemporary historian, *Ede Wertheimer* thought that Andrásy was simply waiting for the outcome of the events

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<sup>28</sup> *Kamenov, P.: Graf Andrassi... 109. and 114.*

<sup>29</sup> *Diószegei, I.: Bismarck és Andrásy... 223.*

without deep resolution what to do because of the intricate situation. *Aehrenthal* (later Foreign Minister) claimed that Andrassy committed a mistake when he bargained with the Russians. In a recent work *Schmidt* (1992) pointed out that Andrassy checkmated the Russians, just as Dóczy thought. *Diószeqi* thought (1998) that it was a classical deal with no traps in it analysing the agreement. He pointed out that a joint action was simply against the interests of the Monarchy, because in that case – even if Austria-Hungary gained Bosnia – Russia could occupy Romania (in order to reach Bulgaria) which was limitroph with Austria-Hungary, and Andrassy wanted to avoid such combinations. An Austro-Hungarian war against Turkey was impossible owing to the sentiments of the public opinion. A war against Russia (while she deploys her army against the Ottomans) taking sides with Turkey was also against Andrassy's present plans, because he was thinking of Turkey as a cadaver, and feared that the intervention of small states would force Austria-Hungary to fight at two fronts at the same time, for which it was not ready. According to *Hoover Rupp* Andrassy hoped that Russia could not win an overwhelming victory and became exhausted and would not be in the position to fight a war against Austria-Hungary in the next decades. But Viennese documents did not confirm this assumption,<sup>30</sup> indeed they spoke about Austrian fears, that the war would turn into a revolutionary war of the Slavs, classical diplomacy would be swept away and the agreement of Reichstadt would be violated due to the pressure of the Russian public opinion and of Ignatiev's circles. This would mean a war against Russia – without any benefit.

These visions encouraged Andrassy once again to bargain with Russia (Budapest agreement in January, 1877). On the other side Bismarck also refused the Russian inquiry whether Germany tolerated a Russian-Austrian war or not, when Russia handed in the bill for his friendly behavior in 1866 and 1870. Bismarck had a fear that a war ending with an overwhelming Russian victory would annihilate Austria-Hungary: nonetheless the Austrian parts could be incorporated

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30 *Diószeqi, I.: Bismarck és Andrassy... 231.*

into the Reich, but Hungary alone would never be able to hinder further Russian penetration towards the Straits. After all Bismarck did not want a new combination of Powers because of the Balkans, which was of secondary importance for Germany. Thus the alliance of the three Emperors finally failed to prevail for the great pleasure of the English.

During these debates, the conference in Constantinople (from December 1876) resulted in a perfect cooperation between Salisbury and Ignatiev.<sup>31</sup> Based on their accord two Bulgarian autonomous states were to be established with centers of Tirnovo and Sofia, regarding Serbia status quo ante was accepted, Montenegro was offered some minor territorial concessions, while the autonomy of Bosnia was swept away. Andrassy happily wrote that it was the first time since December, 1875 that the Powers were unified as regard to the Eastern Question. But he remained sceptic, whether Turks accepted the note, and he was right: referring to the newly established constitution the Ottoman government refused to obey. And finally the protocol of 31 March, 1877 was inadequate, because the British wanted bilateral demobilisation of Russian and Ottoman forces, while the Russians decided to demobilize their troops only after the Turks had begun this – but the Ottomans refused to do so.

Since Shuvalov in London promised that Russian troops would not cross the Balkan Mountains if war became unavoidable, Austria still hesitated to step forth to oppose Russian war-plans without the English, who were anxious of the Straits question. Without active English support (the fleet in the Besika bay was not a real support for Austria-Hungary) the Habsburg Monarchy refused to operate in Serbian and Romanian territories in parallel with the beginning of Russian actions. The English calculated that Andrassy encouraged the Russians to step forth and then he wanted to use the English to hinder Russian intervention, while Austria was astonished by the behaviour of England, because Shuvalov was informed about English-Austrian negotiations through the indiscretion of Lady Darby, the wife of the

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31 *Diószegi, I.: Bismarck és Andrassy... 242.*

Foreign Minister. Thus a cooperation aimed at hindering Russian intervention failed and the Russian-Ottoman war finally broke out.

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It is worth examining the concepts of the two major Austrian-Russian agreements and the Russian plans before the outbreak of the war. According to *Risto Poplazarov*,<sup>32</sup> the Russian plan of Greater Bulgaria was only a fiction, a trick of the Russian foreign policy that knew well, that Powers would not promote the creation of such a state, but wanted to turn the feelings of Bulgarians against the Powers, thus promoting the development of pro-Russian sentiments. Russia only wanted to preserve its authority in the eyes of Slavic nations by coming up with the plan of Greater Bulgaria according to Dimitar Blagoev. (In his opinion it was a pity that the realization of these plans remained the main goal of the Bulgarian political elite for the next 70 years). Even Gorchakov thought that the Treaty of San Stefano was a premature action, and was of the opinion that Count Ignatiev, ambassador to Constantinople, who fought for the conclusion of the Treaty of San Stefano, should fight for its realization too. The actions of Ignatiev caused a great problem for the official Russian diplomacy indeed. Shuvalov in London also denied these radical plans of panslavists, which were considered unrealistic and against the agreements concluded in Budapest and Reichstadt. Nonetheless it is very interesting – and somehow characteristic too – that the latter agreement had two versions: the Russian and Austro-Hungarian translations differed (such was the case in 1912 regarding the Serbo-Bulgarian agreement). According to the Russian variant of the Reichstadt agreement (July, 1876), if the Balkan nations won a decisive victory in a war against Ottoman Turkey, Serbia would acquire Bosnia and Kosovo, while Montenegro would get the Adriatic ports and Herzegovina. In case of an overwhelming Christian victory Bulgaria and Romania would become independent principalities based on their natural borders, while Greece could acquire Thessaly and Epiros. But the Austrian version was different regarding this last sentence: Bosnia, Rumelia and Albania would become

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32 *Poplazarov, R.: A San Stefano-i fikció. Létünk 8, 1978/3. 157.*

independent states, Thessaly and Crete would belong to Greece, Constantinople would be a neutral city. The term Bulgaria and Rumelia were different according to the interpretation of Austria-Hungary, while the Russians thought these substituted each other.<sup>33</sup> The 'borders of Bulgaria' in Austrian terminology were more or less equal with the Danube vilayet of Turkey (north of Balkan Mts. with Sofia and Niš), and the term Rumelia probably included Macedonia (as Western Rumelia) beyond Eastern Rumelia. The documents evidenced that Andrassy accepted the idea of an autonomous Macedonia, but not its unification with Bulgaria (as it was also laid down in the conference of Constantinople too).

The Budapest agreement in January, 1877 pointed out the Austrian occupation of Bosnia and the Russian occupation of Bulgaria (paragraph 7), but paragraph 3 of the secret annex mentioned that in case of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire the establishment of a greater Slavic state should be avoided, while Rumelia, Bulgaria and Albania may become independent. What is more, *Petar Stojanov* regards the Reichstadt agreement in 1876 as a delimitation of spheres of influence between the two Powers:<sup>34</sup> Serbia, Macedonia with Thessaloniki was incorporated into the Austro-Hungarian zone, Bulgaria and Thrace into the Russian. That's why Andrassy counted on the independence of Macedonia and was astonished of the borders delimited in San Stefano. Gorchakov even agreed in the secret annex that Russia refrained from initiating military operations in Macedonia in case of an Ottoman-Russian war (and he kept this promise).

These agreements were quite similar to the plans outlined by Catherine the Great and Joseph II in 1772 or to the plan of the Frenchman Volney in 1780. The expansion of the Austro-Hungarian sphere of influence over Macedonia recur not only in Beck's concept (in 1897), but in 1895 and 1896 in the plans of Hohenlohe and Calice (ambassador to Constantinople) (*figure 1*). Unfortunately from Russian

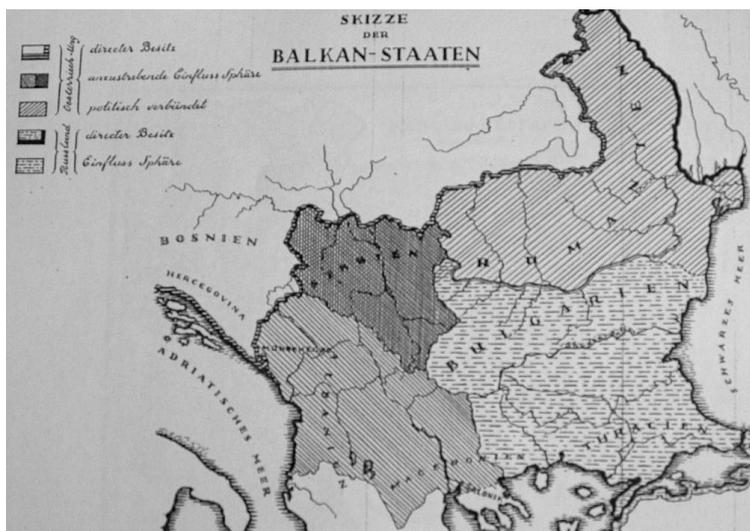
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33 Ibid.

34 *Stojanov, P.: Macedónia helye az osztrák-magyar, orosz és szerb kormány – a Balkán érdekszférákra való felosztásával és meghódításával kapcsolatos – terveiben 1876–1878 között. Létünk 8, 1978/3. 161.*

point of view, these agreements did not exclude the possibility of an English-Austrian cooperation, and Austria-Hungary did not promise to support Russia in case of an English intervention. The latter seemed to be probable, if the Russians reached the Straits. And with a mutilated zone of influence Russia's positions would be jeopardized, especially compared to the improvement of the Habsburg positions. Therefore it was evident that the creation of Greater Bulgaria had to be given a chance, since the agreements did not mention sanctions against Russians, if they tried to penetrate into the Austrian zone. In that case Austria would be forced to cooperate with England, and as their interests only partly coincided, the Russian foreign policy would still have a chance to reach a separate agreement with the English, thus leaving Austria alone. It seems that the Russian policy was very precarious and shrewd. But Andrassy's skills were eminent as we will see later, and he managed to achieve the support of both London and Berlin – although their interests coincided only in one point: not to allow any state to obtain exclusive power over the Balkans.

Figure 1. The plan of Calice from 1896



The situation was even complicated further by the pretensions of small states contradicting to Power interests. Serbs had already signed an agreement in 1868 with the Greeks, in which they claimed Macedonia north of Ohrid-Gornja Džumaja (Blagoevgrad) line. They wanted to realize their plans in 1876, when they declared war on Turkey under the aegis of an independence war. At first sight, this was not against the ideas laid down in the Reichstadt agreement, as Serbia was more or less friendly towards Austria-Hungary at that time. But such a territorial aggrandisement warned Andrásy, who was afraid of creating a large Slavic state.<sup>35</sup> The Russians also neglected the Serbian demands. Miloslav Protić demanded Saloniki, Katardžiev wanted Vidin and River Drin as borders. The proposed plan of Greater Serbia even included Lompalanka, Sofia and the Struma-line down to the Aegean Sea.<sup>36</sup> Nonetheless, both Powers disliked this idea since Andrásy wanted an autonomous Macedonia, while Ignatiev a Greater Bulgaria.

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The circumstances worsened further for Austria-Hungary after San Stefano. Up to then she had to fight against the meeting of Slavic and Russian interests, but since the aspirations seemed to be realized the new job was to disrupt the accord between southern Slavs and Russia, which meant a much more difficult task compared to the earlier policy of prevention. This required new tactical instruments as well.<sup>37</sup> In his letter to Beust, then ambassador to London, dated from 14 April 1878 Andrásy pointed out that two aims had to be achieved: (1) *the elimination of Russian occupation of Bulgaria as soon as possible* and (2) *the dismemberment of Greater Bulgaria*. The first goal was reasoned by the fear that the prolongation of Russian presence in Bulgaria – no matter how great or small the latter is – may create such circumstances within two years that the Russian influence would be stabilized in the region and Bulgaria would become a Russian vassal state indeed. In that case –

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35 After the Serbian defeats in 1876 the intervention of Russia became more and more probable and nobody was so naive to believe that a Russian intervention would not have territorial consequences. This was another argument against giving Bosnia to the Serbs.

36 *Stojanov, P.: Macedónia helye... 161–64.*

37 *Diószegi, I.: Ausztria-Magyarország és Bulgária... 9.*

continued Andrassy – Romania would be lost for us too, as Russian troops have already nested themselves in Romania and Russia would do anything to secure the way to Bulgaria. Austria cannot allow the establishment of pro-Russian governments along its borders, that may not only block her penetration into the peninsula, but such a complete encirclement equals with a geopolitical suicide.<sup>38</sup> After gaining the sympathy of Bulgarian people Russia won't withdraw its troops after two years even if this is based on international agreement. Therefore it is Austria-Hungary's and England's common vital interest (owing to the closeness of the Bulgarian state to the Straits) to achieve the withdrawal of Russian troops after concluding peace as soon as possible – argued Andrassy when trying to convince the English to cooperate.<sup>39</sup> It seemed that finally Austrian and English interests at least partly coincided. The second goal – dismemberment of Greater Bulgaria – would serve the interest of Greeks and Turks as well as of Romanians, and would create a 'balance of power' on the peninsula, that could prevent the evolution of further events. In his communication Andrassy veiled the original interests of Austria-Hungary, and claimed that the realization of these two points were England's and Powers' common interest. Therefore in his offer to England, he reasoned the mutilation of the newborn Bulgaria in order to give Constantinople a solid hinterland.

But how could these goals be realized? This was a crucial question as Count Ignatiev's mission in Vienna in March 1878 revealed that the Russian offer was unacceptable for Andrassy,<sup>40</sup> and the southern Slavs were ignorant of entering into negotiations about this question. The only Power that jealously looked at the Russian advance was England. Therefore Andrassy decided to gain the benevolence of the latter. In this respect, his idea offered such a safe outcome of events, that later all the foreign ministers of Austria-Hungary wanted to secure – unsuccessfully – the cooperation of England, any time they wanted to achieve something on the Balkans. In his letter Andrassy saw three instruments

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38 This situation had evolved by 1913 – by then Austria-Hungary had lost both Serbia and Romania as an ally.

39 *HHStA, Wien*. PA VIII. England Fasc. 170. (MOL, microfilm, W 38.).

40 *Wertheimer, E.: Gróf Andrassy Gyula élete és kora*. III. Budapest, 1913. 111–13.

for the realization of his goals: (1) war, (2) international congress or (3) applying several modifications on the Treaty of San Stefano, that would make it useless (*Versumpfung*). A congress was the most appropriate instrument to secure the interests of Austria-Hungary and annihilate the results of the cooperation of Russia and the southern Slavs, as a congress was also in the interest of England, but not of Russia. Furthermore, an unsuccessful congress would not exclude war as a solution, but declaring a war first would exclude the possibility of a congress.

Beyond external challenges that the arrangement of a congress and the winning of England to his ideas meant, Andrassy also had to face with the incomprehension of Hungarian and Austrian parties towards his policy. Not only the leftist (Independence Party) and rightist opposition parties, but even the supporters of the dualistic system, the liberals led by Kálmán Tisza did not understand the deeds of the foreign minister.<sup>41</sup> Count Albert Apponyi, member of the opposition even tried to convince the English to change their policy.<sup>42</sup> Many of the Hungarians wanted a more offensive policy against Russia as a revenge for 1849, and they feared that the annexation of Bosnia would merely strengthen the Slavic element in the Monarchy. Even Austrian parties criticized Andrassy's activity. The Aulic Party wanted territorial aggrandisement to restore the respect towards the empire, military circles argued the necessity of the annexation of Bosnia as the hinterland of the defenseless Dalmatia. (This party, which was focusing exclusively on Germany as a main threat before 1870, quickly became anti-Russian). While the contemporary Hungarian public opinion and history-writing considered the Budapest agreement as an evidence of Andrassy's pro-Russian sentiments (which was a Russophobia indeed), the Bulgarian *Panayotov* in the 1960s' takes it as the manifestation of the imperialism of Austria-Hungary.<sup>43</sup> *Diószegi* claims that the possibility of the occupation

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41 *Diószegi, I. Ausztria-Magyarország és Bulgária... 13.*

42 This tradition of the opposition was persistent.

43 *Panayotov, I.: Kam diplomaticheskata istoriya na carigradskata konferenciya* (Dekemvri 1876-Januari 1877 g.). *Izvestiya na Instituta na Balgarska Istoriya* 6. Sofia, 1956. 47–113.

of Bosnia appeared only because no other deal could be arranged with the Russians, that would exclude the increase of Russian influence.<sup>44</sup>

Economic interests were also behind the reasoning of the intervention: the high aristocracy and bourgeoisie feared that Russian goods would substitute Turkish wares after the collapse of Ottoman Empire instead of Austrian goods: the industry of Austria-Hungary was searching for new markets. The Constitution Party (*Verfassungspartei*) simply saw the Russian 'tsarist despotism' too dangerous for and liberalism (in this sense it is really interesting that Russia adopted really liberal constitutions in the Balkans in order to secure her influence). In 1877 the most popular policy would have been a war against Russia. The question is: why did Andr ssy try to give a peaceful outcome of the events?

One argument has already been mentioned above – a war excluded any other solutions, why other solutions did not exclude a war later. Andr ssy himself was not always against war. In his writings from the emigration (he was condemned to death *in absentia* for his activity in 1848) he calculated with a showdown between Russia and Austria-Hungary. In 1870 only the quick collapse of France saved Austria-Hungary from a war against Russia. His first deed as a Foreign Minister was to invite England into a military alliance against Russia. The reasoning is evident: the dualist state was unable to stop Russia alone. But England with his "splendid isolation" refused the deal. Neither Germany wanted to fight against Russia. That was the reason why Andr ssy finally accepted the idea of the alliance of the Three Emperors in 1873.

In 1878 Andr ssy was convinced, that England was still not ready to fight against Russia contrary to the radicalism of Disraeli, who anyway soon became substituted by the anti-Turkish Gladstone in power. Of course England was shocked by the fact that Austria-Hungary was ready to enter into deal with Russia securing her interests, thus leaving England alone. In this sense the Budapest agreement also served the idea to draw England's attention – Andr ssy's goal to achieve England's

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44 D szegi, I.: *Ausztria-Magyarország  s Bulg ria...* 18.

cooperation thus became easier. Getting known the results of the Austrian-Russian negotiations, Disraeli immediately turned both to Austria-Hungary and Russia separately trying to reach a separate agreement and to disrupt the accord. Thus Andrassy was thrown with a chance to secure his country's interests from the other side as well. He replied to the English note of 20 May 1878 in seven points. In his memorandum Andrassy pointed out the prohibition of Russian protectorate over any part of the Balkans, the needful withdrawal of Russian troops from the right side of the Danube, prohibition of the establishment of Russian and Austrian secundogenitures, prohibition of the establishment of a great Slavic state, the Russian occupation of Constantinople and closing down the Straits. The two governments agreed to respect each others' interests. Andrassy's goal was to secure the interests of Austria-Hungary without weapons and without becoming the instrument of the English Balkan policy. He wanted to avoid the outbreak of hostilities, and feared that England would make Austria declare a war and finally would leave him alone.<sup>45</sup> Although Andrassy urged a congress, the shrewd Salisbury also negotiated with Shuvalov setting up a trap for Austria-Hungary. The danger was real and double: a Russian-English separate agreement could satisfy English demands without the realization of the Austrian claims, because the English and Austrian interests only partly coincided. Furthermore, the Russians acquired almost each English demand with the one exception of the Bulgarian borders, that's why England wanted to use Austria-Hungary as a „battering ram” in this question.<sup>46</sup> For the English inquiry whether Austria insisted on the mutilation of Bulgaria Andrassy replied with a question whether England was ready to create a *casus belli* from the question. Andrassy still hoped for a joint Austrian-English-Turkish war against Russia and wanted to avoid the initiation of a war alone, isolated. But soon the English and the Russians made a bargain: England acquired the Russian territorial aggrandisement in the Caucasus in return Russia refrained from the creation of Greater Bulgaria. But soon the British recognised that the main problem was

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45 Diószegi, I.: *Ausztria-Magyarország és Bulgária...* 20–21.

46 *HHSIA, Wien*. PA VIII. England. Fasc. 170. April 23, 1878. Andrassy to Beust.

that the Russian troops had already been *de facto* in Bulgaria and could not be compelled to abandon the region without pressure. So, England definitely needed the support of Austria.

From moral aspects, the Austrian positions were good (but in foreign policy moral does not count too much). The Treaty of San Stefano definitely violated the above examined agreements, and finally the Russians had to pay a huge price for Ignatiev's initiative. The outcome of the events was that they had to abandon Bulgaria within nine months after the revision of the San Stefano Treaty in Berlin, while the duration of Austria's occupation on Bosnia was not limited. Had the Russians been more lenient towards the Austrian point of view, they would have kept Bulgaria as Austria kept Bosnia, thus they would have acquired a stable base for their future political operations. In this respect the diplomatic efforts of Andrassy gave 35 more years for the dualistic structure, as it postponed the unification of southern Slavs, and limited the Russian influence over the peninsula.

Austria could also count on Germany's support, although it was not driven by unselfish motives. The German foreign policy also underwent significant changes between 1876–77. Bismarck pointed out in the Kissingen-memorandum (1877) that Germany had to mediate between Austria-Hungary and Russia, but not in order to appease them, rather to increase discord. Like in his earlier concept (outlined in the Varzin-memorandum from 1876), he advised the dismemberment of the European parts of the Ottoman Empire again. Had England got Egypt, Russia the Black Sea, they would maintain the status quo and would enter into such a rivalry that would cause a stalemate, therefore they could not afford to cooperate in a coalition against Germany– pointed out Bismarck. He wanted to use the Eastern Question as to divert attention from Germany and Central Europe and his activity in the Berlin Congress to promote the conclusion of an agreement as soon as possible, and the promotion of Austrian and English interests should be evaluated in this way.<sup>47</sup>

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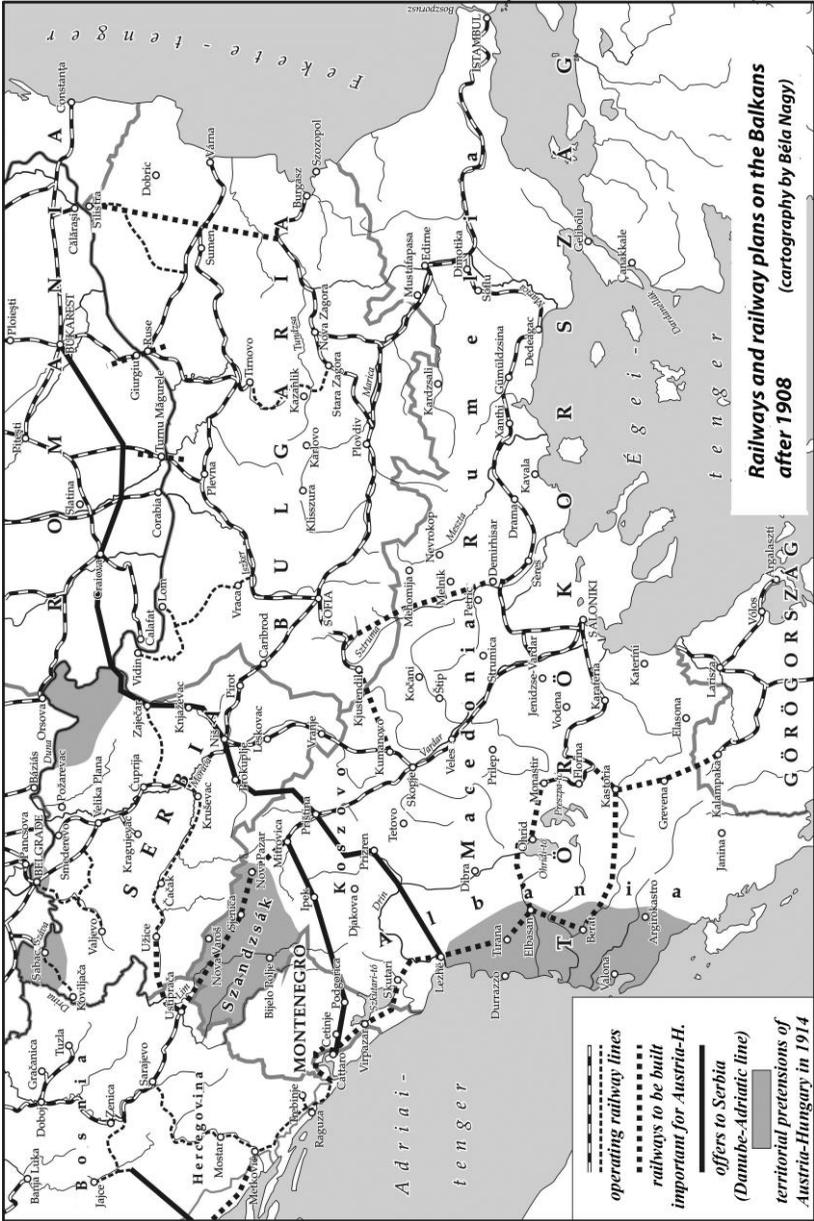
47 Riga, Cs.: *A balkáni államok és a Berliini Kongresszus a bismarcki politikában*. In: Bodnár E.–Demeter G. (eds.): *Állam és nemzet a XIX–XX. században*. Debrecen, 2006. 24–25.

During the Berlin Congress Andrassy was consequently against the autonomy of Eastern Rumelia (as in the case of Bosnia). He thought that an autonomy like that of Libanon or Crete would just postpone the unification with Bulgaria, thus it would be a prelude to the birth of a greater Slavic state.<sup>48</sup> Another key element of his program was that the organisation of Eastern Rumelia had to be auspiced by an international commission and not exclusively by a Russian one. His goal was to give an organisational statute *as soon as possible*, no matter what it cost, whether it would be liberal or serving the interest of Ottoman Turkey, whether the local population would be satisfied with that or not. The reason of this hurry was that Andrassy wished the retreat of Russian troops before they stabilize their positions in the region. In this respect an opposition between Benjámín Kállay, Austrian delegate in Eastern Rumelia former ambassador to Belgrade, and Andrassy was about to develop. Kállay wanted a constitution, that served the satisfaction of local people and the English ally as well, because he thought that the only way to hinder the recurrence of Russian influence was a deal that satisfied both local inhabitants and the English (in a hope of a long-term cooperation with the latter). England also wanted a more liberal organisation, because she thought that it could prevent both Ottoman abuses and unification tendencies towards Bulgaria. But Andrassy thought this was a waste of time, and his cooperation with England was limited regarding its duration – until the presence of Russian influence on the peninsula made it useful – as he did not want to substitute an old rival with a new one. Andrassy indeed wished the restoration of the rights of the Sultan in order to hinder unification. Unfortunately, there was a contradiction not only between the concept of Russians, English and Austria-Hungary, but also Andrassy's two principles – the restoration of Ottoman power in Eastern Rumelia, and quick decision in all questions in order to limit Russian presence – were contradictory. If Andrassy wanted to achieve result quickly, he should have given significant concessions to the Russians, who were trying to emphasize the Bulgarian character of the province in the organic statutes, and were

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48 HHStA, Wien. PA VIII. England. Fasc. 170. April 29, 1878. Andrassy to Beust.





**Railways and railway plans on the Balkans after 1908**  
(cartography by Béla Nagy)

## Geopolitical Aspects of Alliance Politics in the Balkans 1878–1913

This study<sup>50</sup> analyzes the diplomatic affairs on the Balkan Peninsula from geopolitical aspects between 1878–1913 focusing on their strategic and economic importance. Within this 35 years political alliances changed many times, but the situation always remained unconsolidated. This instability is worth further examination. Applying Mackinder's and Spykman's theory to a smaller territory,<sup>51</sup> the two representatives of the Heartland, Russia and Austria-Hungary were competing with each other and later with the small states either to secure their predominance or their economic interests by reaching the Rimland. From this aspect the Balkan peninsula can be regarded as a collision (or buffer) zone between Heartland and Rimland. Both Powers tried to create barriers to the opponents and buffers zones for themselves for safety reasons. This often meant that the spheres of influence overlapped complicating the situation further. Sometimes the aspirations of small states coincided with the pretensions of Powers resulting in short-term cooperations, but this multi-player situation finally ended in creating almost every possible combinations (see *figure 5*). As the aspirations of small states were also overlapping, and they also had their very own geopolitical goals not always coinciding with the Powers' concepts, this did not promote the stabilization of situation.

This overlap of zones is indicated by the competition for key points of the peninsula. Among the major hot-spots (collision zones) was the line between the Otranto Strait (Vlora), Saloniki and the Dardanelles,

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50 Originally published in: Demeter, G.: *Geopolitical Aspects of Alliance Politics of Powers in the Balkans 1878–1913*. *Mezhdunarodna politika* 9, No. 1–2, 2013. 187–212.

51 Mackinder, H. J.: *The Geographical Pivot of History*. *The Geographical Journal* 23, 1904. 421–37. Available online as Mackinder, H.J.: *The Geographical Pivot of History*. In: *Democratic Ideals and Reality*, Washington DC, 1996, 175–94. Spykman, N.: *The Geography of the Peace*, New York, 1944; Spykman, N.: *Geography and Foreign Policy* I. *The American Political Science Review*, 1938/1.

corresponding to the ancient Via Egnatia (*figure 1*).<sup>52</sup> (Other conflict zones, like Dobruja were of local importance lacking the pretensions of any Power). The maritime states of the Rimland: England, Italy, Greece and Turkey holding these positions (enabling them to control the main trading routes of the Mediterranean) tried to prevent the two landlocked powers of the Heartland from changing irreversibly the current situation. Beside the rivalry among these maritime states, the interference of Rimland Powers into Balkan affairs further complicated the situation.

Ther buffer states of the Balkans had many geopolitical advantages and disadvantages that could either promote or hinder the presence of Powers on the peninsula. These features are enumerated on *figure 1*. The pretensions of Powers can be best described and were limited by the geographical conditions, like main natural routes of trade and transport. For example Austria-Hungary had two 'natural' ways to reach the Rimland. One led along the seashore passing the Strait of Otranto,<sup>53</sup> and the other ran along the Morava-Vardar rivers to Saloniki. The first version needed the creation of Albania (from 1913), the second needed balanced and harmonised relations with Serbia (1878–1903). Two artificial routes were added to these owing to the changes of diplomatic situation, but these often included geographical barriers: one was the stripe of Novi Pazar up to 1908,<sup>54</sup> the other was through a Romanian-Bulgarian alliance to Kavala (1913),<sup>55</sup> both lacking railway connections. By the time the railway in the Vardar had been constructed, Austria lost the benevolence of Serbia, and Novi Pazar was given back to Turkey in

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52 Controlling Via Egnatia was another reason for Greek aspirations beyond the orthodox religion of inhabitants in Southern Albania, Ohrid, Bitola.

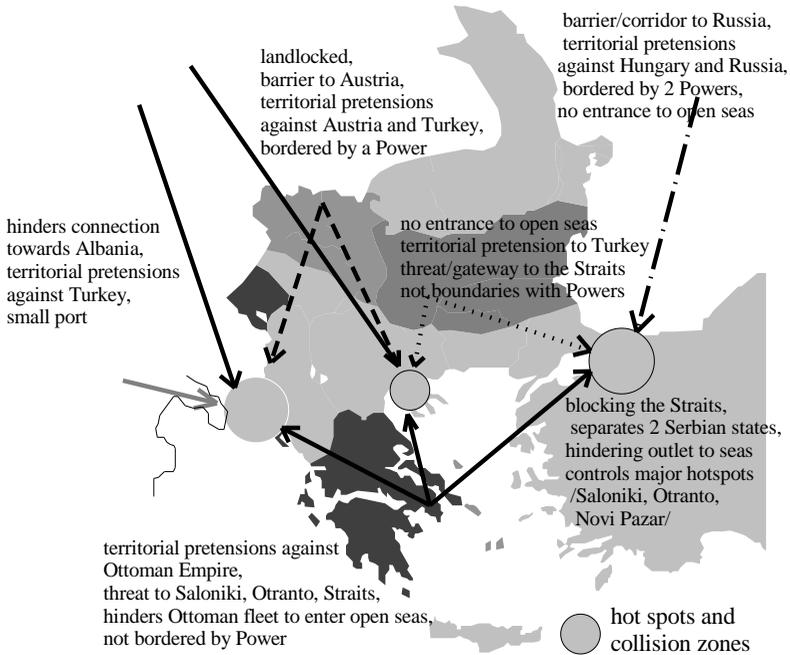
53 *HHStA PA I. Kt. 493. Balkankonflagration, Liasse XLV/4. Nr. 14. fol. 152–163. Politische und wirtschaftliche Erwägungen zur Balkankrise. Handelspolitisches Aktionsprogramm; and HHStA PA I. 493. Balkankonflagration, Liasse XLV/4. fol. 182–188. Übersicht der bei den Verhandlungen mit Serbien und Montenegro vom Standpunkte der politischen und wirtschaftlichen Interessen.*

54 For the Novi Pazar project see: *May, A. J.: The Novibazar Railway Project. Journal of Modern History 10, 1938/4. 496–527.*

55 See the plan of Teodor Teodorov, Minister of Finance, preparing Bulgaria for a war to acquire an outlet to the Aegean Sea in 1911–12: *Hermeneqild, W.: With the victorious Bulgarians. London, 1913. 25–26. and 95–96.*

order to promote the realization of the seashore project. The fourth version was hindered by the Bulgarian-Romanian dispute over territorial compensations in 1913.

Figure 1. The aspirations of Powers, major collision zones and hot-spots on the peninsula.



Only those zones are marked where the interests of Heartland and Rimland Powers and local states collided. The Balkan between River Danube and Via Egnatia is considered a multi-player buffer zone between maritime and landlocked Powers. Geographical advantages and disadvantages are also indicated for each buffer state.

This geopolitical concept, including the Austrian *'Drang nach Salonika'* or the Russian and German *'Drang nach warmen Meeren'* has been contested by many authors. Their main argument was that Heartland Powers lacked efficient capital to benefit from such outcomes of the events. It may be true, as when Serbia acquired the desired outlet to the Adriatic, it failed to construct a railway line that connects the

shore with the central areas.<sup>56</sup> But on the other hand Serbia also used economic argumentation (economic independence from Austria-Hungary, accession to western markets) to reach its aim, and the outlet to the sea was considered a main political goal even if capital was missing. (Serbs even manipulated ethnic statistics and maps to underline their standpoint). Political geographers of *that era* (prior to World War I) usually advertised the idea of political expansion reasoned by the economic needs *of the future*.<sup>57</sup>

Another argument against expansionism fuelled by economic needs was that many ideas of different cliques were competing each other, and the realization of these plans in foreign policy was influenced by the position fight in internal policy. Due to this rivalry the consequent realisation of foreign political ideas were often hindered, making foreign policy sometimes unpredictable for contemplators. This enhanced distrust.

Beside economic reasons two more theories can be mentioned that determined the behavior of the two Heartland Powers: (1) the externalization of internal problems. This may enhance cohesion, but could ruin as well (i.e. in a war, see both Austria-Hungary and Russia). The second reason is the mutual threat or distrust, that forced both Russia and Austria-Hungary to respond with a counterstep to every step of the other Power.<sup>58</sup> These are the main factors that determined the overall picture: the routes, railroads created up to 1913 in the Balkans rather show the geopolitical concept of the Powers and not of the small states'. A comparison of the two maps (*figure 1 and 2*) clearly reveals the similarities. Therefore we appreciate the views of those, who consider economic factors as key driving forces in the competition over the Balkan Peninsula.<sup>59</sup>

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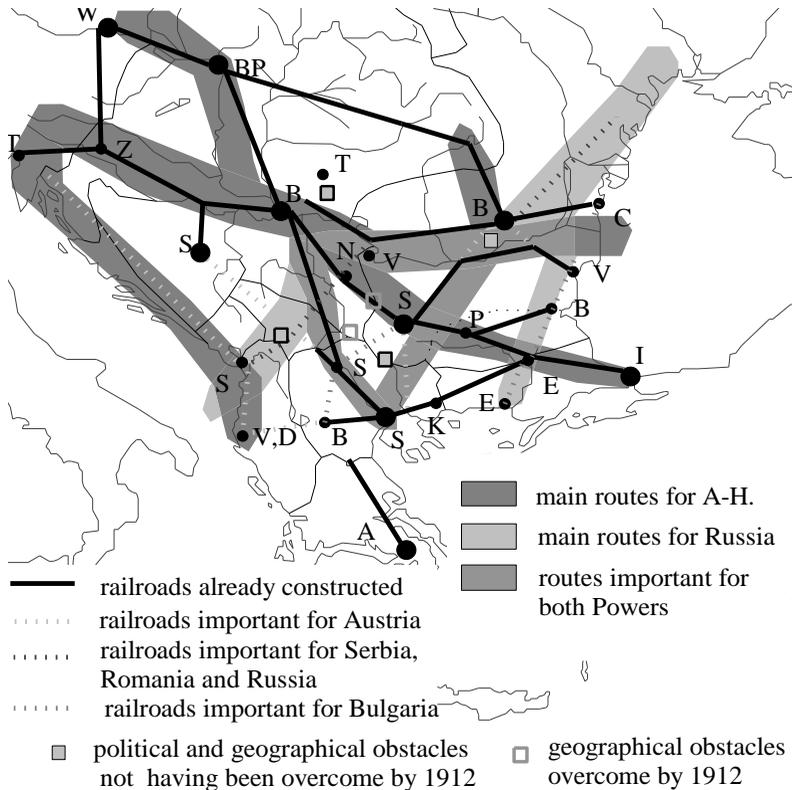
56 For this, see maps in: *Bíró, L.: A jugoszláv állam 1918–1939.* Budapest, 2010.

57 See the Mitteleuropa Plan of *Naumann, Fr.: Mitteleuropa.* Berlin, 1915.

58 This concept appears in *Demeter, G.: The aspirations of Small States and the interests of Powers during the Balkan Wars 1912–1913.* Budapest, 2007 (in Hungarian).

59 *Löding, D.: Deutschlands und Österreich–Ungarns Balkanpolitik von 1912–14. unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Ihrer Wirtschaftsinteresse.* Hamburg, 1969. (Phil. Diss.)

Figure 2. Existing and planned (dots) main transportation lines (rivers, railroads)

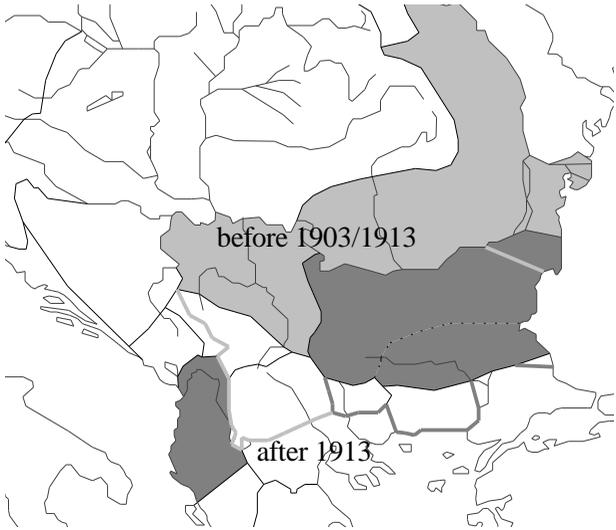


The penetration of the two Heartland Powers had many natural ways which were exploited by railroads resulting in an overlapping comb-shaped interference zone with capital cities in major nodes. The existence of the intersections and routes important for both Powers also explain the oscillating foreign policy of small states.

From the point of view of Austria-Hungary these 35 years ended with failure. While between 1878–1903 Austria-Hungary was surrounded by friendly buffer states along its southern borders, acting as a barrier for the Russian influence and blocking the way to the Straits, by 1913, this buffer zone had drifted southwards forming an uncontinuous zone disrupted by the Serb advance towards Macedonia (figure 3). Nonetheless, Serbia still could be checked by the recently created Albania through hindering its outlet to the sea, and Bulgaria

was able to counterweight both Serbia and Romania. After 1913 a smaller Bulgaria with dreams unrealised, which made her hostile towards a Serb-Russian cooperation, was much more useful for Austria than a strong Greater Bulgaria, that did not need Austrian help and could turn towards Russia whenever it wanted to.<sup>60</sup>

Figure 3. The worsening of the geopolitical situation of Austria-Hungary till 1913: friendly buffer zone located along its border drifted southwards, neighboring countries became hostile and were under Russian influence.



But the situation was not so favourable as it seemed at first sight. First, the Greek-Serbian cooperation was a serious blow to the interests of the Dual State, as it created a leakage in the buffer zone (through the Serb-Greek agreement on the free usage of Saloniki). No wonder that Germany wanted to convince Greece so much to join the Triple Alliance, since Greece's geopolitical significance remarkably increased

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60 *Österreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik von der Bosnischen Krise bis zum Kriegsausbruch 1914. Diplomatische Aktenstücke des österreichisch-ungarischen Ministeriums des Äußern. Ausgewählt von Ludwig Bittner, Alfred Francis Pribram, Heinrich Srbik und Hans Übersberger. Wien-Leipzig, 1930. (Ö-U.A.) VI. Nr. 7133. See also Löding, D.: Deutschlands und Österreich-Ungarns Balkanpolitik... 83.*

after 1913. Second, although the buffer zone was still able to hinder Russian penetration into the peninsula towards the Straits, but was unable to secure the borders of Austria-Hungary any more: using Serbia and Romania, the former Austrian allies, Russia could also check the Austro-Hungarian activity in the peninsula whenever it wanted. On the following pages the short history of these alliance combinations resulting the above mentioned situation are analyzed focusing on geopolitical and economic considerations.

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The Treaty of Berlin in 1878 implicitly divided the Balkans into spheres of influence between Austria-Hungary and Russia, both representing the Heartland, while the Rimland (England and France) was compensated in the Mediterranean (Cyprus, Egypt). As Russia was unable to defend Serbia from the defeat in 1876–77 (due to the reluctance of Austrian diplomacy), Bulgaria began to substitute Serbia as Russia's ally, while Serbia, that reached its territorial aggrandisement with the aid of Count Andrassy in Berlin (Niš, Pirot) was attached politically and economically to the sphere of interest of Austria. Serbia had to construct railways serving Austrian interests at her own costs (the state was resourceless, therefore needed loans, and became indebted, later economically totally subjected to the Austrian trade policy). In 1881 Austria promised not to oppose to the aggrandisement of Serbia towards the Vardar valley, to compensate the state loosing its economic independence (and this movement towards the Vardar could also serve Austrian economic interests).<sup>61</sup> The Romanians, who were promoting Russian interests when declaring war on the Ottoman Empire remained unsatisfied with the territorial enlargement, and turned towards Austria, thus blocking Russia's way to Bulgaria and to the Straits. In this respect Romania had a crucial role before 1914. 1878

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61 See: Palotás, E.: *Az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchia balkáni politikája a berlini kongresszus után 1878–1881*. Budapest, 1982. and Palotás, E.: *A Balkán-kérdés az osztrák-magyar és az orosz diplomáciában a XIX. század végén (1895–1897)*. Budapest, 1972; Wertheimer, E.: *Békekongresszusok és békeszerződések a XIX. és XX. században*. Budapest, 1918; *Balkanski ugovorni odnosi 1876–1996*. Tom. I. Priredio: Momir Stojković. Beograd, 1998.

was a decisive geopolitical victory of Austria-Hungary especially compared to 1856. (The deepest point was the unification of the Romanian principalities and the coronation of Cuza in 1866 in the year of the Austrian defeat at Sadowa-Königgrätz. It is worth mentioning that European power policy usually influenced the situation in the Balkans).

The small states along the southern borders of Austria-Hungary became friendly satellite states compared to the previous years when they were under Russian influence. Andrassy even hoped for acquiring Macedonia. His political goals became the etalon of Austro-Hungarian foreign policy for thirty years, up to 1908/1912. Andrassy's main goal was to avoid the creation of a greater Slavic state (whether it be Serbia or Bulgaria) as these may easily turn towards Russia, while at the same time they could block the routes to the sea.<sup>62</sup> Enhancing rivalry between Serbia and Bulgaria over Macedonia seemed to be a good instrument (it re-appeared in 1913). Contrary to Kállay, who was originally sent to Belgrade (before 1876) to offer Bosnia to Serbia, Andrassy was of the opinion that the incompetence of Ottomans and the agitation of Russians against Turkey made it necessary to occupy Bosnia.<sup>63</sup> But it was not the original goal, therefore he hesitated as the maintenance of Turkey, thus the *status quo* was another priority.<sup>64</sup> The second goal – keeping Serbia off the Adriatic – came from the first – avoiding the aggrandisement of Serbia. A Serbian outlet to the sea was hindered not only because it would have created an economically viable state, but rather because it could have hindered the direct outlet to Saloniki via Macedonia and it could have hindered Austria-Hungary to reach the Strait of Otranto through the Albanian seashore. Andrassy urged for an alliance with England, but what was evident in 1878, happened never again.

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62 Diószegi, I.: *Ausztria-Magyarország és Bulgária a San Stefanó-i béke után (1878–1879)*. Értekezések a történeti tudományok köréből. Új sorozat. 23. Budapest, 1961.

63 As Austria-Hungary occupied Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia was recompensated by Niš.

64 Diószegi, I.: *Ausztria-Magyarország és Bulgária...* and Diószegi, I.: *Klasszikus diplomácia, modern hatalmi politika*. Budapest, 1967.

The situation on the Balkans remained fragile and alliances were unstable (*figure 5*) contrary to Austrian hopes. First the pendulum swing to favour Austria-Hungary, when Russian-Bulgarian tensions started to grow. After the unification of the two Bulgarian principalities (1885), Russians committed serious diplomatic mistakes, that pushed the small states into the hands of Austria-Hungary. Serbia, being a natural ally of the Habsburg Monarchy that time was saved from humiliation in the Serbo-Bulgarian war of 1885 by Austro-Hungarian intervention, therefore its relations with the Dual State were tighter than ever. The Russian revenge policy against Bulgaria after the invitation of Ferdinand to the Bulgarian throne and the rise of Stambolov, who pursued a peaceful and moderate policy towards the Ottoman Empire, created a barrier for Russian aspirations and divided the peninsula into two parts along the Budapest-Belgrade-Sofia-Istanbul axis (*figure 2*). This time Romania was also attached to this conglomerate through the Triple Alliance. Nonetheless, this cooperation was not a stable alliance system, as it was composed of separate bilateral agreements serving the interests of Austria-Hungary, linking the satellite states to the dual state. The relation between Serbia and Bulgaria or between Serbia and Turkey was not the best, therefore this cooperation lacked real cohesive force on the long run. The assassination of the Russian Tsar, Alexander, then the visit of Emperor Wilhelm in the Ottoman Empire, marked a high-tide in the influence of the Triple Alliance. The idea of the Bagdadbahn has come up under these circumstances. Even the Italian Prime Minister recognised the favourable situation of the Triplice: in 1889 Crispi advised Kálnoky to promote a Romanian-Serbian-Bulgarian military alliance against Russia, but this was refused, as Austria wanted to maintain the status quo, and divert Russia from the peninsula, not to strengthen small states.

After the fall of Stambolov, the Bulgarian political elite was ready to appease with Russia. Although the Goluchowski-Muraviev pact (1897) brought relief in the sharpening Austrian-Russian diplomatic relations, that were deteriorating since 1878 and 1885, the year 1897 also created unrest due to the question of Crete and the Greek-Turkish war. The small states also wanted to benefit from the weakening of Turkey

through the utilization of the Russian support, therefore an agreement between Serbia and Bulgaria, and another between Bulgaria and Greece was articulated. This alliance was partly directed to block Austro-Hungarian influence in the peninsula, partly to exert pressure on Ottoman Turkey, partly to improve the positions of the small states in Macedonia. But the intervention was hindered, because Russia did not support an armed conflict, and because Turkey was able to give compensations in return of their neutrality (Serbia was allowed to establish new bishoprics in order to weaken Bulgaria's influence). Serbia's links with Austria-Hungary were still strong, and for the latter the status quo and the maintenance of Turkey was of vital importance. Serbia was also worrying that in a war against Turkey, Austria-Hungary might occupy Macedonia (through the Sanjak of Novi Pazar), and thus Serbia would become surrounded completely. Bulgaria did not want a war with Austria-Hungary, therefore the alliance of 1897 collapsed – Greece lost the war alone.

The Serbian fears were not without any reasons: the so-called Hohenlohe-plan on the dismemberment of Turkey (1895) also contained the possible Austrian incorporation of Macedonia. The secret plan of Calice (ambassador to Istanbul) from 1896 was more sophisticated:<sup>65</sup> it created an Austrian zone of influence from Macedonia, Albania and Serbia, while Bulgaria together with Thrace was considered Russian. This plan on the encirclement of Serbia by an united Albanian-Macedonian buffer state, which would secure economic outlet to Saloniki and to Otranto for the Dual State was repeated by Beck, chief-of-staff, in 1897.<sup>66</sup> But the cautiousness of Austro-Hungarian decision-makers hindered the realisation of the plan (*figure 4*). Not to mention the disapproval of Goluchowski, who, as Minister of Foreign Affairs, supported the creation of a Greater Bulgaria, targeting the unification of

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65 Palotás, E.: *A Balkán-kérdés...* See also: Walters, E.: *Unpublished documents. Austrian–Russian Relations under Goluchowski 1895–1906. I.* The Slavonic and East European Review 31. No. 76, 1952. 212–32. and Walters, E.: *Unpublished documents. Austrian–Russian Relations under Goluchowski 1895–1906. II.* The Slavonic and East European Review 31. No. 77, 1953. 503–28.

66 Demeter, G.: *A Balkán felosztására vonatkozó elképzelések a XIX. század második felétől 1913-ig.* In: Árvay, V.–Bodnár, E.–Demeter, G. (eds.): *A Balkán és a keleti kérdés a nagyhatalmi politikában.* Budapest, 2005. 111–44.

Sofia with Central-Macedonia.<sup>67</sup> This means that the “Drang nach Salonika” was a possibility (a desirable one), but not a necessity for Austria-Hungary, as this was supposed by the entente (side by side with the German “Drang nach Osten”). While Aehrenthal (Foreign Minister from 1906) wanted to reach the Aegean Sea, his predecessor, Goluchowski rather focused on creating a viable Albania (which came up once again after the death Aehrenthal in 1911).<sup>68</sup> The economic goals of Austria-Hungary could have been realized by a Greater Serbia acquiring Macedonia (but not Bosnia) within Austrian alliance (this was a forlorn hope); or could have been secured by the creation of Albania (see 1912), or through a Romanian-Bulgarian alliance after a Bulgarian victory over Turkey. In that case, as the Bulgarian Minister, Teodor Teodorov pointed out later on the eve of the Balkan War (in 1911), a railway connection between Romania and Bulgaria through the Danube to the port of Kavala could secure Austrian interests, as well as Bulgarian goals (see *figure 2*).

Austria-Hungary was still able to maintain its buffer zone along the southern border, but after the customs war with Romania in the 1890's, the Dual State was unable to restore peaceful relations with the neighboring state, although they remained allies within the frame of the Triplice. The conservative Romanian politicians remained loyal to Austria-Hungary due to their fears of Russia – but when liberals came into power the situation changed. The marriage between Elena of Montenegro and Victor Emmanuel heir apparent (later III) in 1896 also brought closer Italy (Rimland) to the Balkan peninsula.

One year later, in 1898 the Serbian-Bulgarian debate on Macedonia resulted an alienation between the two states. The plans of the Njegoš-dynasty to acquire the throne of Serbia backed by Russia caused an indignation against Montenegro in Serbia. Serbia – being isolated – tried to improve its relations with the Ottoman Empire. By the end of the

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67 Southern Macedonia with Saloniki was promised to Greece, Southern Dobruja to Romania, Kosovo, the Sanjak of Novi Pazar and Skopje to Serbia, Skutari to Montenegro. It was very similar to the situation created by the events of 1911–13.

68 Document cited by Walters, E.: *Unpublished documents. Austrian–Russian Relations under Goluchowski 1895–1906. III. The Slavonic and East European Review* 32. No. 78, 1953. 188. and 208–11. Original: *W.S.A. Geheim XXXII. /481.(f) March 2, 1899.*

year the Russian influence over the peninsula had gained space: Romania became disappointed from the policy of Austria-Hungary (such as Serbia, but the Obrenović-dynasty insisted on this asymmetric alliance as to maintain its power) (*figure 5*). Bulgaria was an ally of Greece between 1895–1901, and the Montenegrin-Bulgarian alliance of 1898 created an anti-Serb League.

Russia tried to gain more space, therefore a military convention was signed between Bulgaria and Russia in 1902. Bulgaria wanted to secure its back from a Romanian attack in case of an eventual war with Turkey, while Russia wanted an ally that could check Romania and support Russia in case of a war with Austria. (Romania had territorial aspirations towards Bessarabia, and remained officially the ally of the Triple Alliance).

But the power of the Triple Alliance had overwhelmingly increased once again by 1901: the so-called 'Abbasian Entente' unified Greece, Romania (led by the conservative Sturdza, while the liberals of Bratianu were against Austria-Hungary) and Turkey in an alliance with Austria-Hungary. That was the second peak of Austrian influence. Serbia remained more or less neutral up to 1903, Russia could only count on Bulgaria on the peninsula.

But the year of 1903 brought significant changes. The removal of the Obrenović-dynasty resulted in an anti-Austrian turn in Serbia bringing soon the radicals of Pašić into power, while the Ilinden revolt in Macedonia devaluated the Austro-Hungarian alliance with Ottoman Turkey. The Müzzsteg convention (1903) meant a consolidation between Russia and Austria-Hungary and initiated a forceless reform movement in Turkey. Serbia soon (in 1904) signed a treaty with Bulgaria, which repeated the clauses of the treaty of 1897. The treaty was targeted against the Ottoman rule in Macedonia. This was mainly the interest of Bulgaria, while Serbia thought it was better to take part in the dismemberment of Macedonia than to skip – and proposed a customs union among the two states to get rid of the Austrian tutelage. Serbian dreams regarding Bosnia also witnessed a revival. This political and economic turn of Serbia alerted Austria-Hungary. As Russia was waging war against the Japanese in the Far East and was seriously

defeated in 1904–05, and therefore small states could not count on Russian support, Austria-Hungary managed to crush the Serbian-Bulgarian customs union, by threatening the Serbs with excluding Serbian livestock from the Austrian markets. By 1905 not only the Abbazian entente, but the Russian-Bulgarian-Serbian triangle had also been annihilated. But Serbia never returned to follow the political and economic interests of Austria-Hungary. One of the buffer states changed side.

Another alerting event was the intervention of other Powers in Macedonia. Due to the growing rivalry among Russia and Austria-Hungary and the incompetence of Turkey to tackle with the Macedonian question all the Powers became involved in the reform movement. This excited diplomats of Austria-Hungary, though not because they did not wish to solve the humanitarian problem in Macedonia, but because they considered the Balkans as their own sphere of influence. For one thing Austria-Hungary greeted the escalation of intervention: England was also among the intervening Powers, and since the era of Andrásy all politicians thought that those measures, that were carried out by the approval of England could not be challenged by any of the Powers later (including Russia). An Austro-Hungarian–English cooperation should be enough to deter Russia from active Balkan policy. The Russian-Japanese War, and the Mürzsteg convention still made it possible for Austria-Hungary to pursue an active foreign policy even despite the loss of political control over Serbia after the assassination of the king in 1903.

Two reasons forced Austria-Hungary to change its relatively peaceful policy after 1906. First, the behaviour of Serbia and Romania became more and more hostile towards Austria. None of the Powers could allow hostile buffer states along its border, it would be a geopolitical nonsense. Up to 1903 the southern borders of Austria-Hungary were protected by friendly states. By 1913 this buffer zone had drifted southwards, composed of Bulgaria and the recently created Albania. But this Albanian-Bulgarian-Turkish bloc was isolated: the Romanian-Serbian-Greek block cut it through by reaching the sea. Nonetheless, this bloc was still able to hinder Russian penetration deep

into the peninsula towards the Straits, but Russia could also check Austro-Hungarian activity in the peninsula. The situation was even worse than in the proposal of Beck depicting an East-West division of the peninsula, and was even worse than Goluchowski ever imagined, when he wanted to give Skopje to Serbia.

Realizing the geopolitical threat, Austria wanted to turn back time, and blackmailed Serbia, so that Austria would not import Serbian products unless Serbia returned to the old fashion. Serbia quit the customs union with Bulgaria, but refused to buy Austrian war material as demanded by Austria-Hungary. This was the beginning of the so-called 'pig war' in 1906. That time 80% of the Serbian exports were consumed in Austria-Hungary, therefore a boycott could have been a serious blow on Serbian incomes. But Serbia was able to find new economic partners – even the Germans raised their consumption of Serbian products – and French, Belgians also appeared at the markets of the Balkan peninsula. The Austrian concept failed: Serbia became independent not only politically, but economically as well, and the Austrian step attracted new Powers into the Peninsula, which was a nightmare came true. From that time on the Serbs insisted on reaching the sea, which was considered as the '*sine qua non*' of economic independence.

The second reason was the failure of the international gendarmerie in maintaining peace and reorganising Christian provinces. It only resulted the involvement of all powers in the Macedonian calamities, which Austria-Hungary wanted to avoid so much. The Young Turk revolution finally alerted Austria-Hungary: frustrated by the violation of its economic interest, it tried to settle the question and improve its economic and geopolitical positions through the construction of railway lines. After the inner political turn in Serbia, Austria had no hope for using the Belgrade-Saloniki line, thus had to come up with another plan. This plan proposed a railway line along the Sanjak of Novi Pazar, and the construction of this railroad necessitated the annexation of Bosnia. Neither the Powers nor the Balkan states welcomed these railway projects. Not only Russia, but Italy was also opposed to Austria-Hungary in this question, as the railway constructions offered Austria a

way to bypass the Otranto Strait. Since the Sanjak of Novi Pazar or Kosovo was located in a collision zone of Serbian (Russian) and Austrian interests, Austria-Hungary initiated a third plan to avoid these territories: a railway along the seashore, from Dalmatia to Albania. But this required an agreement between Austria-Hungary and Italy, and the creation of Albania. Beyond counterbalancing the loss of Serbia, this was the main reason of supporting the creation of the Albanian nation. While the creation of a multi-religious Albania was successful, the other attempt – to create the Bosnian nation regardless of religious differences in order to hinder the unification of the Serbian provinces – ended with a failure. Without going deeper into the question, why the result was different, when the circumstances were nearly the same (one language, three different religions), I would emphasize the fact that in case of Bosnia entities outside the province borders with well-developed historical traditions and statehood also did exist, and could exert influence on the inhabitants of Bosnia. In the case of Albanian provinces no such circumstances prevailed.

The Sanjak railway project initiated a counterplan:<sup>69</sup> the Danube-Adriatic railroad through Romania and Serbia. This could improve the positions of Russia and Serbia, offering an economic outlet to the sea. Italy accepted this plan, because it was afraid of the economic dominance of Austria-Hungary, worsening Italy's positions. This concept would mutilate Albania and created a collision zone in Novi Pazar or in Kosovo, where the proposed tracks were crossing each other. Austria-Hungary recognised that either the Sanjak-railway project, or the seashore project was to be realized, a safe hinterland was needed, that was *de iure* the part of Austria-Hungary (not only a *de facto* property). This brought up the idea of the annexation of Bosnia (and later the compensation of Italy by Tripoli). The activity of the Young Turks urged Austria-Hungary to step forth as it feared the strengthening of the Ottoman Empire. Therefore a rapprochement between Bulgaria and Hungary began, as both states wanted to benefit from the internal changes of the Empire. Austria needed somebody to

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69 See: Carlgren, W. M.: *Iswojsky und Aehrenthal vor der bosnischen Annexionskrise*. Uppsala, 1955.

cover its back against Serbia supported by Russia, Bulgaria needed a Power that immediately recognised its declaration of independence. Renouncing from the Sanjak of Novi Pazar was then not surprising, first, as it could separate Montenegro and Serbia in the future even if given back to Turkey, secondly, the seashore railway project made its possession unnecessary. Serbia and Russia on the one side, Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria on the other – this could have been a stalemate, but the activity of Turkey and Italy made the situation more complicated. Iswolsky, being disillusioned by the behavior of Austria-Hungary, that refrained from supporting Russia in the Straits Question, from that moment on tried to create an anti-Austrian alliance on the Balkans.

The calamities between 1906–09 resulted in the following outcome. A Serbian-Turkish and Serbian-Russian bloc was formed (while the relations between Turkey and Russia remained cold), supported by Italy. Romania was hesitating, for a short period Bulgaria supported Austria-Hungary against Turkey, but when the former refused to promise Macedonian territories, Bulgaria was easily alienated and in 1910 turned again towards Russia initiating negotiations regarding the renewal of the old military alliance against Romania. Russia hoped for Bulgarian support if Russia was attacked by either Austria-Hungary or Romania, but Bulgaria could not count on Russian support in case of a war against Turkey, only if two opponents declared war against Bulgaria. While these fruitless negotiations were going on, Romania drifted towards Turkey encouraged by Austria-Hungary. The Bulgarian-Russian negotiation created once again an appeasement between Austria-Hungary and Romania.

Finally a Balkan League composed of bilateral agreements between Serbia and Bulgaria, Greece and Bulgaria, Montenegro and Bulgaria was created in 1912. For Russia it served an instrument to prevent Austro-Hungarian penetration into the peninsula, for Serbia it provided security in case of an Austrian attack through the Bulgarian military obligations, for Bulgaria it was an instrument, that finally recognised its demands on Macedonia and supported her war against Turkey. When Italy (also a member of the Triple Alliance) attacked Tripoli in 1911, to

compensate Habsburg aggrandisement after the annexation of Bosnia, Austria had to remain silent. Small states also grabbed this opportunity (the unpunished violation of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire) and attacked Turkey, for which they had been preparing for years by increasing their budget, initiating military reforms, acquiring foreign loans, etc.

The security that Austria enjoyed after 1878 had slowly vanished by 1908. Either a new policy on the Balkans had to be formulated – abandoning the principles of Andrassy and formally accepting the principle of nationality –, or new methods had to be chosen to secure Andrassy's goals. And this was the dilemma for the diplomats in 1912. At first Austria-Hungary was expecting the victory of Ottoman weapons, not only because the Hungarian public opinion influenced by the press was pro-Turkish (or anti-Russian), but also because an Ottoman victory would have been more convenient – in this case the policy of Austria-Hungary should not have been modified. (Of course, the *status quo* also implied that in case of defeat, Balkan states were not allowed to be mutilated or humiliated by Turkey).

This concept was far away from the policy of *desinteressement*, urged by western powers in favour of Russia (and her allies). Austria-Hungary was indeed interested in the outcome of events. Turkey was such a stable point in the Austrian diplomacy, that even the plans of Tsar Ferdinand on creating a viable Albania to keep Serbia off the Adriatic were rejected several times prior to 1913 (see the negotiations after the 1909 Bulgarian declaration of independence in the next chapter),<sup>70</sup> although later the creation of an independent Albanian state became inevitable to secure the interest of the Dual State. Bulgaria in turn wanted to get Macedonia, and was searching for allies against Turkey at that time. But Turkey (better to say: peace) was so important to Austria-Hungary that it did not accept the plan, however, this triggered a Bulgarian-Serbia rapprochement once again after 1904 – which Austria-Hungary wanted to avoid.

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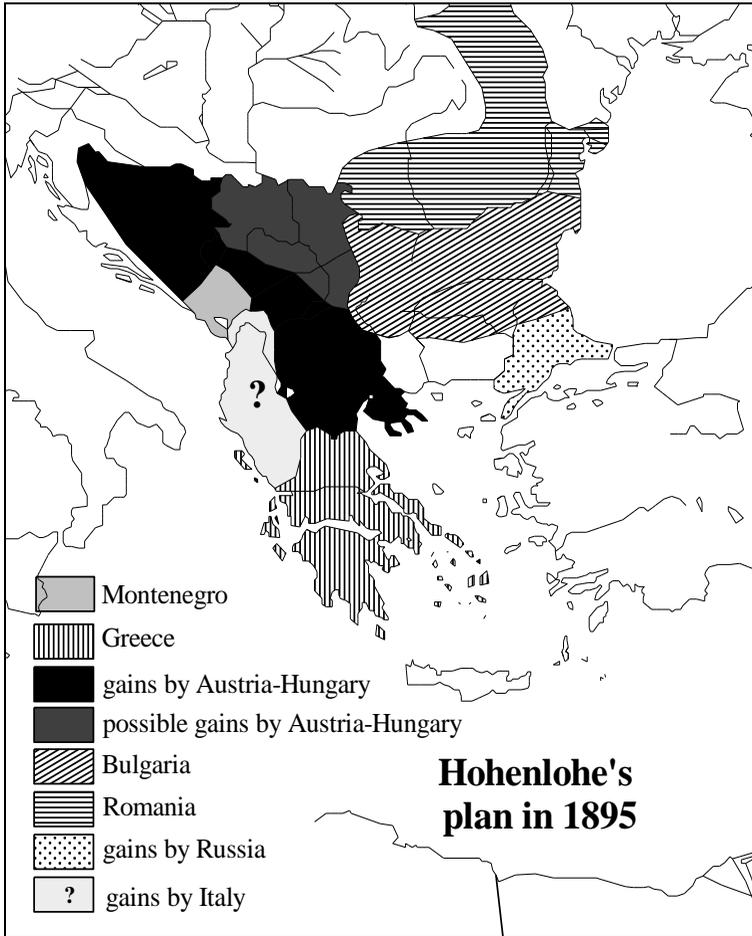
70 Ö-U.A. Bd. I. Nr. 893 and Nr. 895.

After the Turkish defeat in the first Balkan War the creation of an independent Albanian state became of vital importance – and this geopolitical demand of Austria-Hungary (hindering Serbian outlet to the Adriatic) could be veiled easily with the term “the Balkans for the Balkan peoples” (*principle of nationality*). Being unable to hold back or influence either Bulgaria or Serbia, Austria-Hungary then wanted to benefit from the idea of creating nation states. That was the pure reason behind the sudden change of her foreign policy (from supporting the *satus quo* to the acceptance of the principle of nationality) – no one should think that Austria-Hungary was so generous to accept the territorial aggrandisement of Balkan states in 1912 without recompensation, or act willingly as the artisan of nationalism.

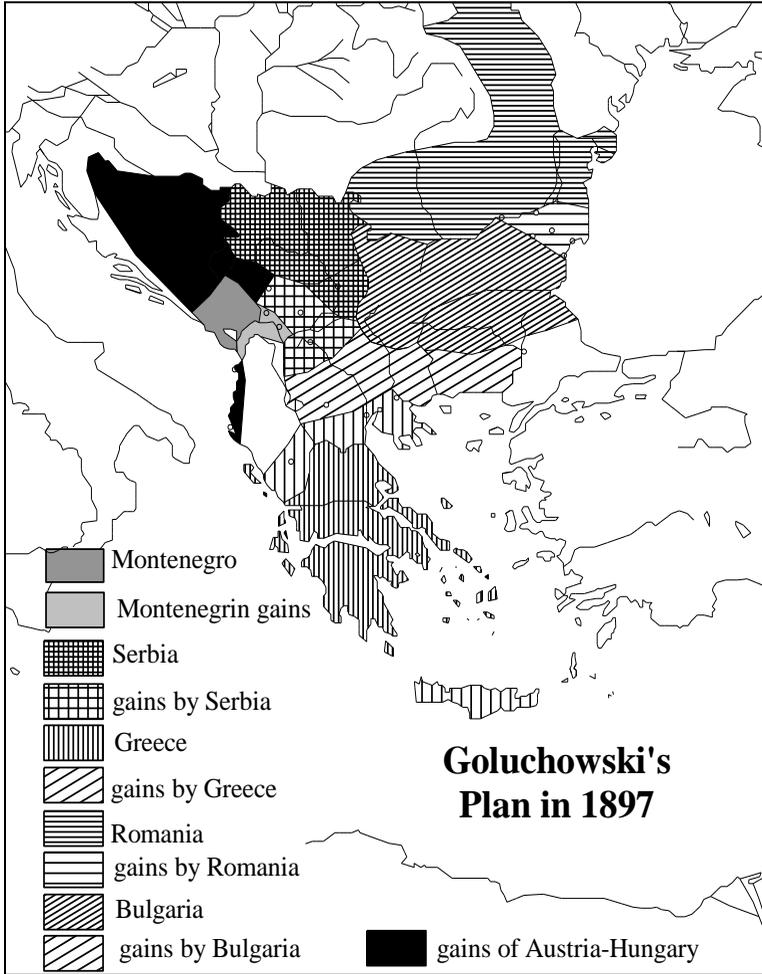
But Berchtold, the new Foreign Minister was unable to appease Bulgaria and Romania, thus the outlet of Austria-Hungary to the Aegean (Kavala) could not be realised, Albania fell into anarchy and Germany could not be convinced to support Austrian Balkan-policy. This had reduced the peaceful instruments of Austria-Hungary by 1914 to maintain its influence in the peninsula.

One may wonder whether it would have been wiser to offer Bosnia to Serbia in 1878, and let the Bulgarians realize Greater Bulgaria under the aegis of Russia, or not. In this case – though violating one of Andrásy’s main principle (the prohibition of establishing a greater Slavic state) – the multi-player game on the Balkans could have been reduced to less participants, and any of the states could have been checkmated by Austria-Hungary supporting the other. It would not have resulted in a worse outcome than the events in 1914. If the dismemberment of the Ottoman heritage had taken place that way, Serbia probably would have been more loyal to Austria-Hungary, but if not, Bulgaria still could have been used to regulate it. It seemed quite improbable that the Russians managed to get the support of both Slavic states at the same time, but if it had happened so, Austria-Hungary could have generated jealousy between them (using the Albanian question or playing out the Romanian card).

Figure 4. Austria-Hungary's plans for the division of the Balkans







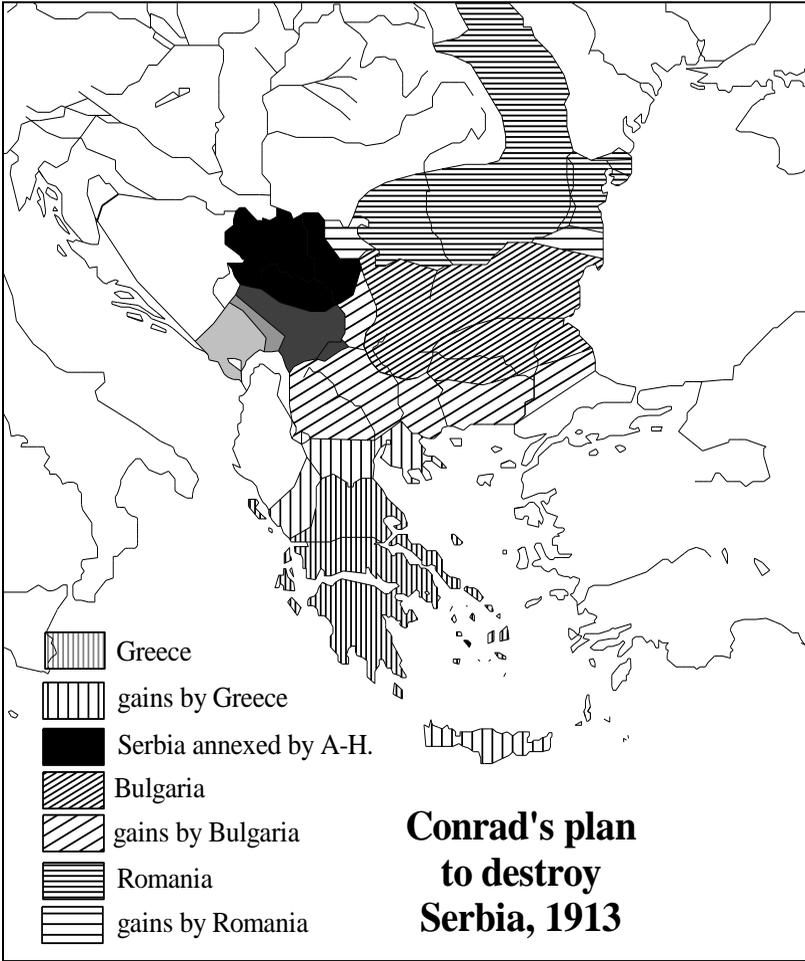
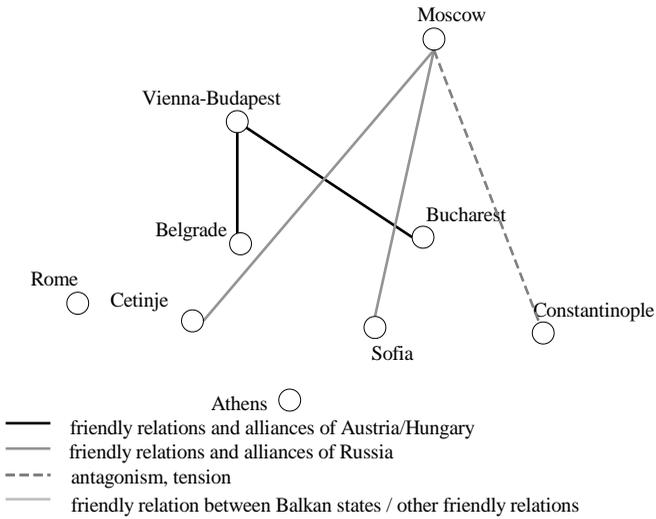
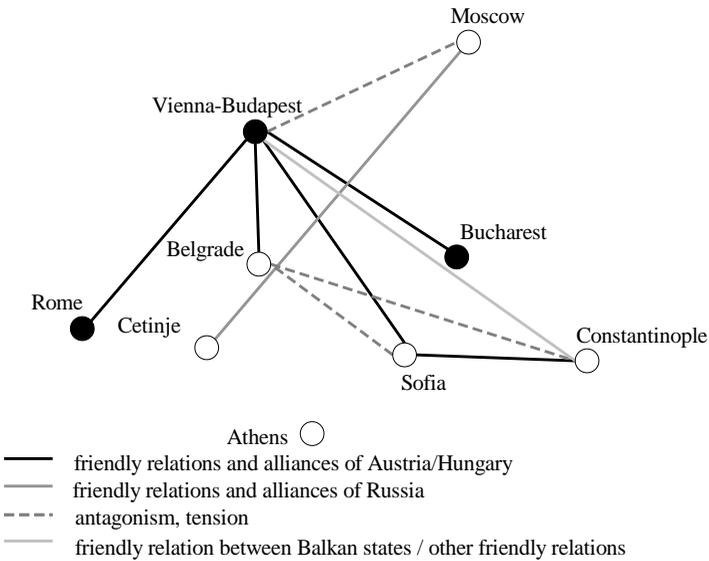


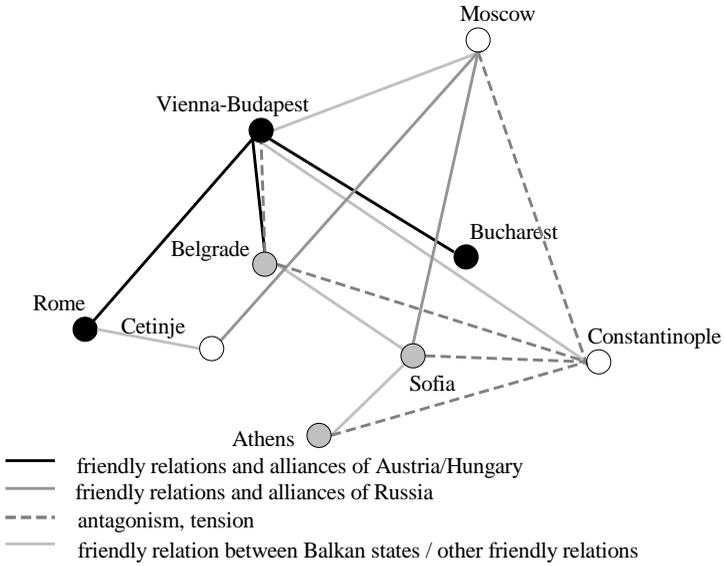
Figure 5. Sketch of diplomatic relations on the Balkan peninsula from 1881 to 1913



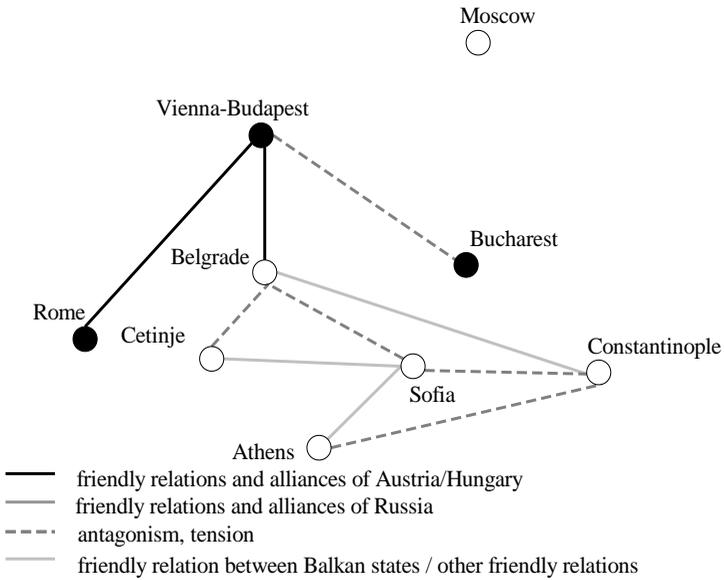
1881



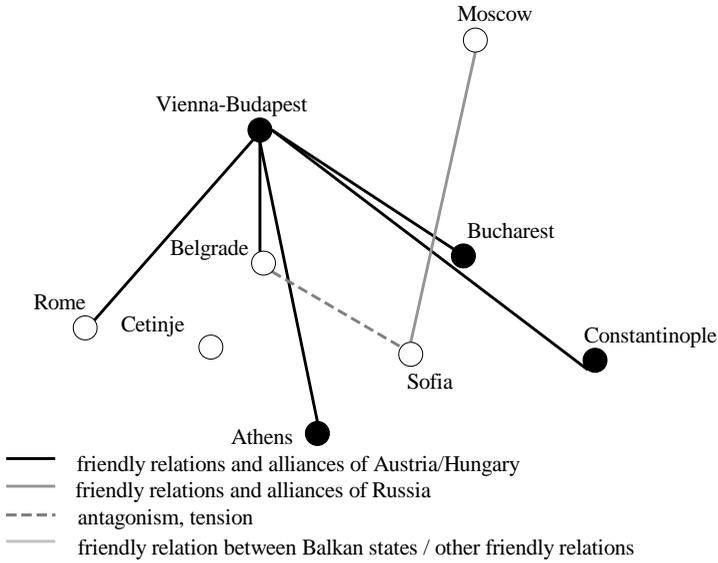
1889



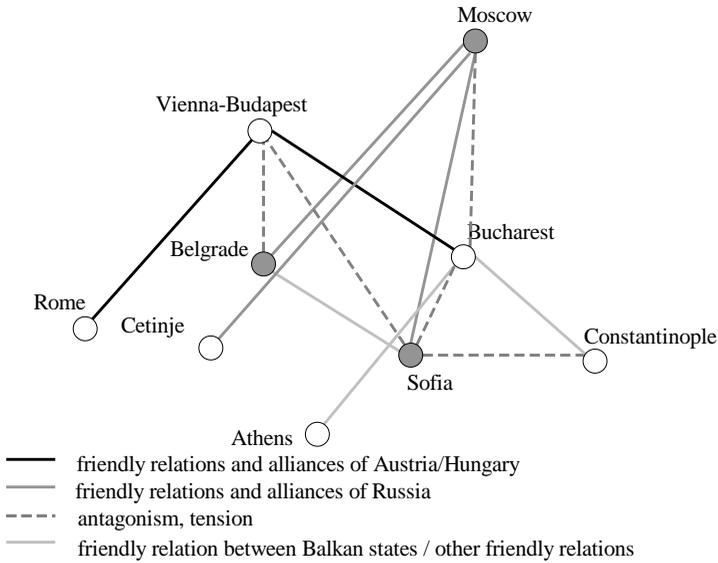
1877



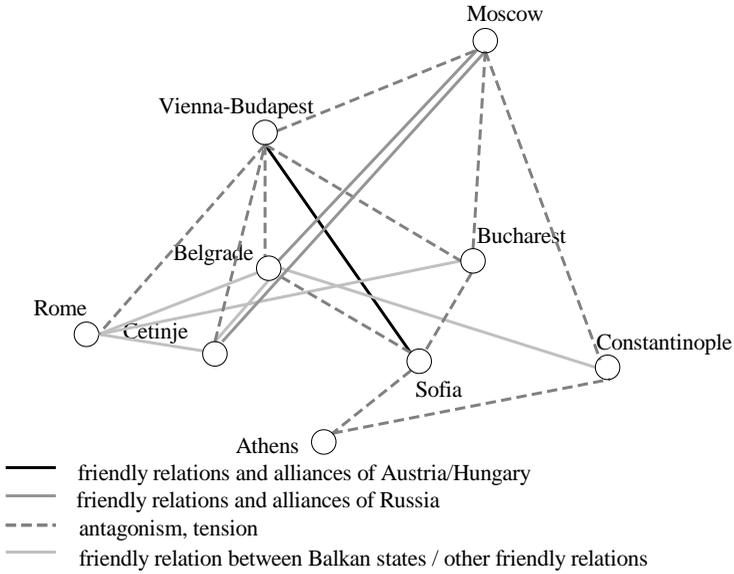
1898



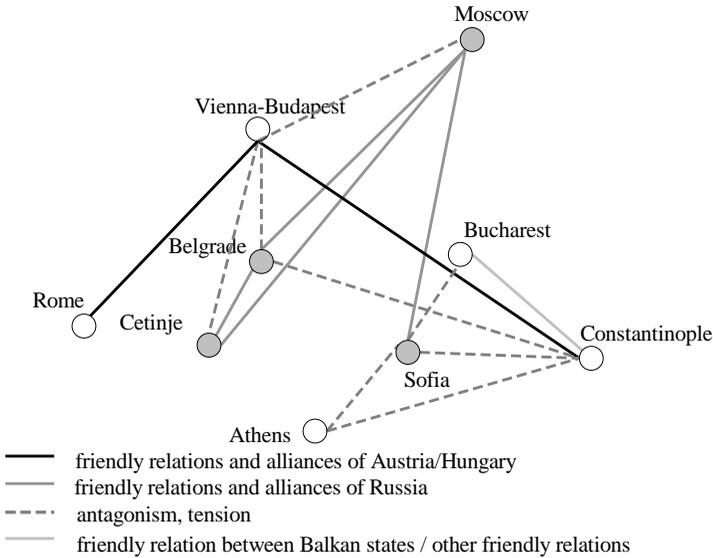
1902



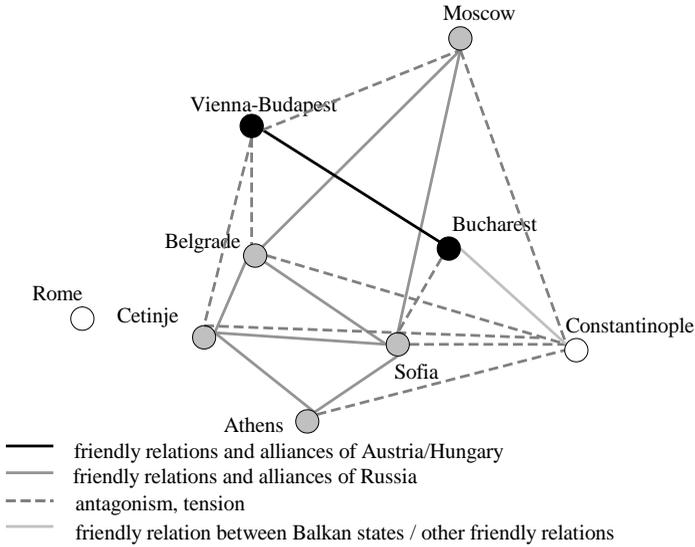
1905



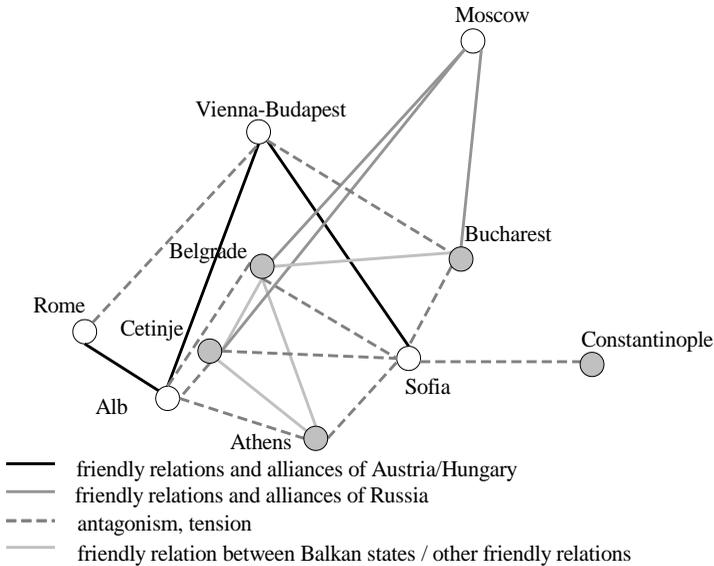
**1909**



**1911**



**1912**



**1913**



## Conspiracy or Coincidence? The Parallelism Between the Annexation Crisis and the Bulgarian Declaration of Independence in 1908

It is not questionable that the occasion for the declaration of the Bulgarian independence arose as a consequence of a series of diplomatic conflicts in 1908 – beginning from the failure of the Macedonian reform movement under the auspice of Powers through the Austrian-Russian dispute on the Sanjak and Danube–Adriatic railways to the Young Turk’s revolution and the Reval and Buchlau meetings, and the strike at the Oriental Railway Company. But there is still the question, whether the Bulgarian declaration of independence was accidental, exploiting merely the favourable political conditions – thus can be regarded as a parallel action, – or it was a result of thorough planning and cooperation.<sup>71</sup> If the latter, then to what extent was it an own initiative of the Bulgarian diplomacy and the result of Austrian/Russian benevolence?<sup>72</sup>

Many historians – like Albertini – were of the opinion that a direct agreement existed between Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria, thus the parallelism could not be coincidental: cooperation was suspected behind the curtains.<sup>73</sup> Contemporary diplomats and statesmen, like the French Fallières, or the Serbian Chedomil Mijatovich and Marschall, German ambassador to Constantinople were also sharing the same

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71 An article with a similar title has recently been published by Peter Mentzel in the *East European Quarterly*, (Vol. 37, 2003), that focuses on the railway strike analysing whether “it could serve as a pretext for Bulgarian independence or was merely a coincident. Bulgarian nationalists were in fact convinced that the Ottoman government had engineered the strike in order to provide a pretext for meddling in Bulgarian internal affairs. The Ottomans, conversely, believed that it was in fact the Bulgarians who had fomented the strike in order to provide a justification for their declaration of independence.” Our contribution bearing the same title focuses on the development of relations between Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria in 1908.

72 The article was written together with Imre Röss. *Conspiracy or coincidence? The parallelism between the annexation and the Bulgarian declaration of independence in 1908 – and its aftermath: cooperation between 1909–1913*. In: *Nezavisimostta na Balgariya, 1908 – pogled ot XXI v.* Sofia, 2010. 162–78.

73 Albertini, L.: *The Origins of the War*. London, 1952. 218–19. and *Neue Freie Presse*, Sept. 23, 1908.

opinion expressed also in Russian newspapers (even before the annexation took place, on 23 September newspapers wrote about the action).<sup>74</sup> According to these authors and diplomats, Prince Ferdinand would not have risked such a step without bearing the approval and even the support of the Dual Monarchy. But the question is more complicated.

Analysing the question of Bulgarian independence in the context of Power policy, we used the sources of the Austro-Hungarian diplomacy, the diaries of István Burián (Minister of Finance, later in 1915 Minister of Foreign Affairs) and Lajos Thallóczy (civil governor of the occupied Serbia in 1915, then secret counsellor) Hungarian statesmen as well as recently published sources from the private archives of King Ferdinand.

The possibility of the annexation of Bosnia arose seriously first on 13, May 1907, when István Burián, that time Minister of Finance and governor of Bosnia-Herzegovina in his memorandum advised the annexation of the two provinces.<sup>75</sup> This idea had already emerged several times, but in 1908 the context was quite different from the former plans: Burián (former consul in Sofia) visioned a long-term cooperation with Bulgaria, in order to weaken Serbian and Romanian pretensions. He wanted to ruin (but not incorporate) Serbia, if the state decided to oppose Austria-Hungary, by creating a Greater Bulgaria with pro-Austrian sentiments.<sup>76</sup> His advice was accepted by Franz Joseph (17, May) in connection with the annexation.<sup>77</sup>

A serious problem of the relations between Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria rooted here: Burián (influencing also Aehrenthal, then Minister

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74 Mijatovich, Ch.: *Memoirs of a Balkan diplomatist*. London, 1917. 244. and 248.; *Die Grosse Politik der Europäischen Kabinette*. Bände: XXII-XXXVI. Eds.: Thimme, F.–Lepsius, I.–Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, A. Berlin, 1927. (G.P.) . XXVI. 87–88; *Ö-U.A.* Bd. I. Nr. 118. Tel. aus Paris, Khevenhüller, 3. Oct., 1908.; Nr. 149. Tel. aus Konstantinopel, 6. Oct. 1908. and *Neue Freie Presse*, Sept. 23, 1908.

75 Diószegi, I.: *A Ballhausplatzi palota utolsó gazdája*. In: *Hazánk és Európa*. Budapest, 1970. 204.

76 *Ibid.* 205.

77 Tömöry, M.: *Bosznia-Hercegovina annektálásának történetéből. (Részletek Thallóczy Lajos naplójából)*. Századok, 1966/4–5. 890; See also Tömöry, M.: *Thallóczy Lajos és a Balkán-kérdés*. Dissertation. Budapest, 1978. For the early period of Thallóczy's activity see also: *Peykovska, P.: Balgariya i vanshnata politika na Avstro-Ungariya v dnevnika na d-r Lajos Thalloczy (1887–13. 01. 1909)*. In: *Izvestiya na darzhavnite arhivi* 103–104, 2012. 367–417.

of Foreign Affairs) wanted Bulgaria to be awarded with Serbian territories, instead of Macedonian, since Aehrenthal wanted to keep Turkey intact after the annexation (if possible). As later in 1913 Burián admitted to Count István Tisza, then Prime Minister of Hungary, he also wanted to use Greater Bulgaria as a barrier against Romanian pretensions on Transylvania. Unlike Tisza or Aehrenthal, who thought that Romania, was an ally fearing of Russian penetration, Burián was convinced that Romania can be easily diverted against Austria if Russia supports the Romanian acquisition of Transylvania.<sup>78</sup> Although a prominent personalty, Burián was not in power in 1911–13 to promote his plans, therefore only elements of them were applied quite inconsequently. This resulted many half-measures with long-term consequences.

To trace back the roots of tighter relations between Vienna and Sofia, it is useful to take a closer look on the meeting between Prince Ferdinand and Aehrenthal on 13 March, 1908. Prince Ferdinand then mentioned that he could not count on Russia's benevolent support in his foreign policy. In case of an Ottoman-Bulgarian war<sup>79</sup> it is fairly probable that Romania and Serbia would exploit the opportunity to interfere into the events, and Russia would not hold them back. Aehrenthal was asked to exert pressure on Romania, which was thought to be eager to seize the Ruse-Shumen-Varna line. As a deal, he offered the Dual Monarchy to incorporate Serbia, reversing Burián's concept.<sup>80</sup>

Here some remarks must be added. First, the term, "war" reveals that the Bulgarian policy showed strong determination to act, quite before the declaration of independence. Second, the Dual Monarchy had knowledge on the pretensions of Bulgaria. Third, the Bulgarian request for the Romanian neutrality was finally granted in October, 1908. Although the Monarchy never promised to hold back Romania, in 1908

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78 *Díószegi, I.: A Ballhausplatzi palota utolsó gazdája...* 205–12. Unfortunately Burián's plan sharpened the Bulgarian-Romanian controversy by promising Southern Dobrudja to Romania, if Bulgaria acquired Turkish territories. This concept recurred in 1913.

79 Whether it is a result of a Bulgarian attack on Macedonia or the result of the declaration of independence.

80 *Ö-U.A. I. Nr. 1. March 13–14, 1908. Aufzeichnung von Aehrenthal.*

the Austrian-Romanian cooperation worked (while it failed in 1913).<sup>81</sup> Fourth, the offer of incorporating or dismembering Serbia was repeated several times as a key element of the Bulgarian foreign policy towards Austria-Hungary (even in 1913): it would have offered an opportunity for Bulgaria to get rid of a rival with the same pretensions on Macedonia, but also would have brought closer another one – the Habsburg Monarchy.

Just before the *coup d'état* of the Committee of Union and Progress, on 6 July, Russia – in order to alienate Bulgaria from Vienna and to hinder its interference into the course of events – hinted to Prince Ferdinand that a secret agreement was concluded between Ottoman Turkey and the Dual Monarchy, in which the Sultan authorized Austria-Hungary to occupy some areas in case of unrest, on condition that the dual state guarantees the *status quo* for three more years. After these years elapsed, Austria-Hungary would be the only Great Power to auspice the reforms implemented by the Sultan in the mentioned territories, and would be given special rights in Kosovo and Monastir for her services,<sup>82</sup> excluding other Powers from the Macedonian reform movement. Evidently, this imposed a threat on the Bulgarian plans. But Aehrenthal denied the existence of such an agreement – that could have been a revival of the “Drang nach Salonika” – in his private letter to Prince Ferdinand.

This rumour about the Austrian–Ottoman agreement was not the only one, which refers to the increasing activity of Russian foreign policy: on 5 July – according to Thallóczy’s diary – Forgách, then ambassador to Belgrade warned Aehrenthal that the Serbs count on acquiring Bosnia with the help of Russia, while in this case Bulgaria gets Macedonia. This plan was denied by the official Russia.<sup>83</sup> Iswolsky’s plans in connection with the Straits had already been known in Vienna by the end of 1907.<sup>84</sup> Furthermore, in the very first months of 1908 a

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81 We should not forget that in 1908 a conservative cabinet ruled, while in 1913 a liberal-nationalist one, which also had effect on the behavior.

82 *Ö-U.A. I. Nr. 27. Privatschreiben an den Fürsten Ferdinand. August 5, 1908.*

83 *Tömöry, M.: Bosznia-Hercegovina annektálásának történetéből... 892.*

84 *Ibid.*

constitutional crisis developed in Bosnia, prior to the revolution of the Young Turks: these events all hastened the decision on the annexation, well before the meeting of Buchlau, as Thallóczy's diary confirms.<sup>85</sup>

In order to calm down the feelings Aehrenthal offered concessions to the Ottomans: he decided to renounce from the Sanjak of Novipazar, because in this case it still could fulfill its geopolitical task, separating the two Serb states, while the Monarchy gets rid of this 'apple of discord' and the negative sentiments associated with it (turning the hatred of Serbs against Turkey). At the same time the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina was also decided.<sup>86</sup> These factors led to the Semmering Denkschrift, a re-evaluation of Austria-Hungary's foreign policy, in which – beside a tighter cooperation with Bulgaria – the annexation of Serbia was also mentioned (as it was offered by Prince Ferdinand).<sup>87</sup>

These were the circumstances, when the meeting in Buchlau took place. When early on 19 August Russia announced that she would not oppose the annexation, if Austria-Hungary supported Iswolsky's aspirations to change the status of the Straits, Russia did not mention the independence of Bulgaria.<sup>88</sup> Later in Buchlau (16 September) Austria-Hungary accepted the Russian plans regarding the Straits, and that Serbia may extend its boundaries into southern direction, in order to satisfy Russian wishes – and to deepen Serbian and Bulgarian rivalization for Macedonia. Both Powers agreed that no other disturbance of the status quo could be approved. Iswolsky and Aehrenthal had the opinion that Turkey should only keep those territories, that it *de facto* possessed, thus as a compensation, and to divert the attention from the deal of the two Heartland Powers, the autonomous Crete was offered to Greece and the possibility of Bulgarian independence *together with* Eastern Rumelia was also

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85 Ibid. 890.

86 Ö-U.A. I. Nr. 29. Privatschreiben an den österr. Ministerpräsidenten, Freiherrn von Beck. August 7, 1908.

87 Ö-U.A. I. Nr. 32. Semmering-denkschrift. August 9, 1908.

88 Ö-U.A. I. Nr. 40, Protokoll des zu Wien am 19. Aug. abgehaltenen Ministerrathes... Nr. 75, Protokoll des zu Budapest am 10 Sept. abgehaltenen Ministerrathes... 79.

mentioned.<sup>89</sup> Putting the annexation and the Straits Question into a wider Balkan context, Russia and Austria-Hungary thought that the proposed changes would also satisfy England and the other small states.

Meanwhile in Bulgaria on 24 August, Dobrovich, a trustee of Ferdinand, warned the prince to pursue a precarious, precautionary policy regarding the independence, but on 29 August Prime Minister A. Malinov urged the prince to enhance activity.<sup>90</sup> Russia warned Bulgaria on 6 September, not to step forth alone, because Russia needed a strong Turkey, and advised to let the first step be made by others.<sup>91</sup> Ferdinand, staying in the Castle of Murány (Coburgs had many estates in Hungary because of the family ties with the noble Koháry family) evaluated the Russian warning as the unfriendly “old song”, but accepted the advice and immediately turned towards Budapest.<sup>92</sup> Early on 7 September Malinov informed Prince Ferdinand that Budapest supported the idea of the Bulgarian independence,<sup>93</sup> and soon after the outbreak of the Gueshoff-incident (a diplomatic affair regarding the rank of Bulgarian diplomats), on 11 September, the Bulgarian Ministers agreed to announce Bulgaria’s independence without much hesitation.<sup>94</sup>

Summing up the events, the Bulgarian leaders even tended to declare the independence even before the Gueshoff-affair reached its peak, thus the incident was a pretext, an excellent opportunity to exploit the situation. In accordance with the arrival of Burián, Beck, (the Austrian Prime Minister), and Aehrenthal to Budapest, Prince Ferdinand also visited the town on 23 September (which was not

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89 *Ö-U.A. I. Nr. 79. Aufzeichnung über eine am 16. Sept. 1908. im Buchlau geführte Unterredung...* The recognition of the Bulgarian independence first arose in a letter written to Bülow on 26 September, after the visit of Prince Ferdinand in Budapest. See: *Ö-U.A. I. Nr. 89. Privatschreiben an Fürsten Bülow. 26 Sept. 1908, Aehrenthal.*

90 *Central State Archives, Sofia (CSA). Fond [further F.] 3k, Inventory [further Inv.] 18, archival unit [further a.u.] 25/2. l. 68–70. and a.u. 24/7. l. 9–12. Documents published in Paskova, I.: *Documents for Bulgarian Independence in the Private Archive of Tsar Ferdinand I.* 123–27. Nr. 2, 4. *Izvestiya na Darzhavnite Arhivi* 95–96, 2008. (100 godini ot obyavyavaneeto na nezavisimostta na Balgariya).*

91 *Paskova, I.: Documents for Bulgarian Independence...* 131. Nr. 5.

92 *Ibid.* 135. Nr. 10.

93 *Ibid.* 133. Nr. 6.

94 *Ibid.* 139. Nr. 15.

accidental), where he was immediately told about the details of the Buchlau agreement.<sup>95</sup> Tömöry goes further, and – based on Thallóczy's diary – claims that Burián also admitted to Prince Ferdinand that the preparations for the annexation had already been arranged.<sup>96</sup> However, the promises regarding Macedonia towards the Serbian state and the proposed date of the annexation were not mentioned, but the necessity of the maintainance of Ottoman Turkey within its *de facto* possessed properties was emphasized instead. The representatives of Austria-Hungary denied any assistance if the Bulgarian declaration of independence provoked a war, nor she supported adventures, but confessed that 'legitimate demands' would be approved. Since East-Rumelia was *de facto* Bulgarian, it meant the opportunity to declare Bulgarian independence including Eastern Rumelia.<sup>97</sup>

So, Prince Ferdinand did have certain knowledge on Austria-Hungary's intentions, and he also knew that the annexation would rather stir up the European diplomacy than the Bulgarian declaration of independence – even if it was announced together with Eastern Rumelia. He did not tell a word about the timing of his plan to the leaders of Austrian diplomacy.

Those, who deny the tighter cooperation between Bulgaria and Austria-Hungary, or just thought that it would be better if Austria acted first, quote Thallóczy and Burián, who both were surprised, and they evaluated the forthcoming events as „*Sofia spits in the soup of Austria*”,<sup>98</sup> accusing Ferdinand of exploiting Austria-Hungary's deteriorating situation and declaring the independence prematurely. Their account was confirmed by documents of the private archives of Ferdinand: the Russians advised Bulgaria that the declaration of independence should not precede the annexation of Bosnia and the same was advised by

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95 Ö-U.A. I. Nr. 87. Aufzeichnung über die Unterredungen mit Fürst Ferdinand.... 23–24. Sept. 1908.

96 Tömöry, M.: *Bosznia-Hercegovina annectálásának történetéből...* 894.

97 The plan of the annexation was so well-known that time, that even the *Neue Freie Presse* wrote about it on 24. Sept. 1908, under the pretext of the urgent removal of the soldiers' wives and their children from the Sanjak. *Neue Freie Presse*, 24. Sept. 1908; Ö-U.A. I. Nr. 87. Aufzeichnung über die Unterredungen mit Fürst Ferdinand.... September 23–24, 1908.

98 Tömöry, M.: *Bosznia-Hercegovina annectálásának történetéből...* 898.

Baron Fejérváry, former Prime Minister of Hungary, the trustee of Francis Joseph.<sup>99</sup> The problem was not the act, but the timing, since both Thallóczy and Burián were aware of the fact that Bulgaria decided to declare its independence after the meeting in Budapest.<sup>100</sup>

Others claim that for the Dual Monarchy it was important to find someone who would act, violating the Treaty of Berlin first – that’s why Prince Ferdinand seemed to be a perfect partner within certain limits.

It is worth examining both possibilities. A strange event seems to verify the latter statement. When Khevenhüller, Austrian ambassador to Paris informed Fallières in Paris about date of the annexation – unfortunately too early, thus ruining the plans of Austria-Hungary –, the French president warned him that this step would persuade Bulgaria to declare its independence. Khevenhüller replied: “*No, Bulgaria will not follow us. She’ll precede us by one day*”. This account confirms Austria-Hungary’s willingness to cooperate.<sup>101</sup> Even if Prince Ferdinand had not known anything about the proposed timing, the French newspapers, spreading the rumour of the annexation, had offered him a splendid opportunity to step forth.

But the question still remains, which was the best solution: (1) whether the Bulgarian declaration of independence precedes the annexation, or (2) it emerges as a consequence? For Bulgaria, the latter would have been more convenient, and Burián had the same opinion. Austria-Hungary planned the annexation on the 6th of October, the Russians asked it to happen in mid-October. However, the original timing became inconvenient for Austria, because the Czech-German antagonism and the Slovene-German debate exacerbated the situation in Austria early in October. But Burián wrote to Francis Joseph that the longer the annexation was postponed, the harder it would be made later. Unfortunately, the “premature” Bulgarian step made it impossible to postpone the declaration of the annexation. “*Ferdinand’s step forced*

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99 CSA, F. 3k. Inv. 18. a.u. 23/7. l. 107–8. and 153. In: Paskova, I.: *Documents for Bulgarian Independence...* 144–45. Nr. 24, 26.

100 See Tömöry, M.: *Bosznia-Hercegovina annektálásának történetéből...* 892–98.

101 G.P. XXVI. Nr. 8787; *British Documents on the Origins of War.* (BD) Vol. V. Eds.: Gooch, G. P.–Temperley, H. London, 1928. Nr. 294; Albertini, L.: *The Origins of the War...* 218–19.

*Austria to act immediately*” – wrote Thallóczy. As it is written in his diary, the Austrian diplomats were excited not only because of the internal debates, and not only because of Khevenhüller’s mistake, but also a serious debate started between Austrian and Hungarian parts of the empire regarding the incorporation of the 2 provinces. Indeed, according to Thallóczy, the annexation was ill-prepared on 6 October and the date was not favoured by Hungarians.<sup>102</sup> Their behaviour supports the opinion of those, who – contrary to Khevenhüller’s statement – denied that the Bulgarian declaration should have preceded the Austrian one. Even if there had been any agreement in the timing, due to the problems of Austria-Hungary, 5 October, as the date of the declaration of independence became definitely unfavourable for the Dual Monarchy.

A third possibility was emphasized by Cemal Tugin, who was of the opinion that Ferdinand considered the meeting in Budapest as an encouragement. Certainly, it did not mean that the cooperation rooted here, and that the evolution of the Gueshoff-incident was a result of this agreement. After the proclamation of the incorporation of the railway, Austria-Hungary immediately warned Bulgaria to keep her hands off the lines, and according to Tugin, it is fairly possible that the price for the Austrian renouncement from the railway concessions was doing a favour for the Dual Monarchy, like declaring the independence before the annexation. Thus Bulgaria attracted Turkey’s attention and violated the Berlin Treaty first, but gained a supporter.

This might be true as well, but it did not explain the surprise of Burián and Thallóczy. According to Tugin, Ferdinand on the 4th of October wanted to postpone the declaration, but finally his government convinced him not to do this, because if Bulgaria was able to act independently, no one could interfere into the incorporation process of the railways. So, Ferdinand decided to declare the independence

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102 Tömöry, M.: *Bosznia-Hercegovina anektálásának történetéből...* 894–96. Because of the 13 martyrs of Arad, who were executed on Oct. 6, 1849.

immediately, however, he admitted that originally he wanted to announce it weeks later.<sup>103</sup>

While the Bulgarian intentions on declaring the independence were well-known among the Austrian diplomats after the Gueshoff-affair (except the date, of course), even Otto Czernin, ambassador to Sofia did not have any knowledge on the annexation itself: he was informed by the French on 4, October, only after having read Khevenhüller's letter.

Pallavicini, the ambassador to Constantinople was informed about the annexation only on 30, September,<sup>104</sup> and he feared that the Bulgarian declaration of independence would be connected to the annexation of Bosnia, and Powers would consider this a joint, cooperative step.<sup>105</sup> This reveals that even Pallavicini did not know anything about an intentional cooperation in timing. His opinion was that a parallel (whether intentional or accidental) movement would only bring drawbacks for Austria-Hungary, since Turkey would never accept the declaration of independence *including Eastern Rumelia*, while he thought that Ottoman Turkey was willing to accept the annexation, if it did not coincide with the Bulgarian declaration.<sup>106</sup> Pallavicini was convinced that Turkey would recover within few years and solve the problem of Eastern Rumelia in her favour.

But for Prince Ferdinand, the declaration of independence without Eastern Rumelia was not a deal, he would have never entered into such a critical diplomatic situation i.e. to assist the Dual Monarchy, without a prize. From the Bulgarian point of view, if the Habsburg Monarchy wanted the Bulgarian declaration of independence to happen in accordance with the annexation, Vienna had to offer something for Bulgaria to make the first step.

As Kiamil Pasha warned Pallavicini (30 Sept.) that the independence of Eastern Rumelia would mean war, and that Turkey could count on the support of Romania, Greece and Serbia, for Bulgaria the timing also

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103 Tugin, C.: *Die politischen Beziehungen zwischen Österreich-Ungarn und Bulgarien von 1908 bis zum Bukarester Frieden*. Hamburg, 1936. 33–34.

104 Ö-U.A. I. Nr. 99. September 30, 1908.

105 Ö-U.A. I. Nr. 100. Bericht aus Konstantinopel. September 30, 1908. Pallavicini.

106 Ibid. and Ö-U.A. I. Nr. 149. Tel. aus Konstantinopel. October 6, 1908. Pallavicini.

became a splendid occasion to avoid war with Turkey by securing the support of Austria-Hungary.<sup>107</sup> For the Romanians the Bulgarian declaration of independence (together with Eastern Rumelia) produced a dangerous precedent, since it violated the Berlin Treaty, the same treaty that gave Dobruja to Romania.<sup>108</sup> But as Dimitrie Sturdza agreed not to interfere into the case without the approval of Austria-Hungary on 2, October, the number of opponents was reduced.<sup>109</sup> After Belgrade had communicated that Serbia would mobilize its troops in the case of annexation (5 Oct.),<sup>110</sup> the interdependency of Bulgaria and Austria-Hungary seemed to be beneficial for both states.<sup>111</sup>

After the declaration of independence and the annexation, the main problem for the Dual Monarchy remained, that both the English and the Turks shared the opinion that Bulgaria and the Dual Monarchy cooperated,<sup>112</sup> while the Monarchy accused Bulgaria of being ignorant. The peculiarity of the situation was that the Turks would have tended to accept the annexation, if it had not taken place together with the independence of Eastern Rumelia.<sup>113</sup> Pallavicini was right: England did not intend to recognise the annexation, until the Ottomans did so, and the Ottomans did not recognise the annexation because it happened in parallel with the Bulgarian independence. So, the sophisticated plan of Austria-Hungary – if such ever existed – collapsed, as Thallóczy foresaw: the cooperation with Bulgaria seemed to be advantageous at first sight, but in fact it produced only problems.<sup>114</sup> As Pallavicini

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107 *Ö-U.A.* I. Nr. 101. Bericht aus Konstantinopel. September 30, 1908. Pallavicini.

108 *Ö-U.A.* I. Nr. 139. Tel. des Grafen Szápáry aus Bukarest. October 5, 1908.

109 *Ö-U.A.* I. Nr. 108. Tel. des Grafen Szápáry aus Bukarest, Oct. 2, 1908; Nr. 109. Szápáry aus Bukarest. Oct. 2, 1908. Had Romania intervened, it would have implicitly meant that Bucharest did not support the annexation as well. The Romanian neutrality was only set in case of peace. If war broke out between Turkey and Bulgaria, Romania would step forth, because her interest was to acquire territories, if any of the states did the same in the Balkans.

110 *Ö-U.A.* I. Nr. 135. Belgrade, October 5, 1908.

111 Serbia would have probably opposed to the Bulgarian declaration of independence as well, if Austria had not stepped forth with the annexation.

112 *Ö-U.A.* I. Nr. 118. Tel. aus Paris, Khevenhüller, October 3, 1908; Nr. 149. Tel. aus Konstantinopel. October 6, 1908.

113 *Ö-U.A.* I. Nr. 149. Tel. aus Konstantinopel. October 6 1908. Pallavicini.

114 *Ö-U.A.* I. Nr. 153. Ludwig Széchényi aus London. October 6, 1908.

interpreted, while for the Ottomans the annexation meant a smaller problem, for the Powers the independence of Bulgaria together with Eastern Rumelia was of lesser importance. This constellation luckily caused that the joint action of the Powers and Turkey to undo the events failed, which meant a diplomatic success for Bulgaria and Austria-Hungary. (In practise this meant that Austria-Hungary had to arrange a deal with the Ottomans first, and convince them to accept the declaration of independence with Rumelia, the main reason they remained reluctant to accept the annexation. And if the Ottomans accept the annexation as a fact, England will not challenge it any more).

The diplomatic duel was lost by Russia, which was unable to reach England's and France's consent – both opposing the annexation as well! – to the proposed changes in the status of the Straits.<sup>115</sup> Russia originally wanted to secure Austria-Hungary's support in a conference of Powers, while Austria-Hungary interpreted the Buchlau agreement as a bilateral agreement (like the Goluchowski-Muravieff pact in 1897) which the Powers had nothing to do with.<sup>116</sup> This (mis)interpretation resulted in the displeasure of England and Iswolsky, and that the latter changed his mind on 5 October opposing the idea of the annexation.<sup>117</sup> But since Bulgaria engaged into action, Austria-Hungary could not let the opportunity slip away.

Russia warned Bulgaria twice that she could not support Bulgaria's independence, if it caused critical situation in the diplomacy, and also let the Italians, French and English know about this warning.<sup>118</sup> For Russia it was evident that Bulgaria cooperated with Austria-Hungary, as it enjoyed some diplomatic support – and it did not come from

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115 The western Powers feared that the loss of Bosnia, Crete and East-Rumelia (and the Straits) would be too much and would hasten the collapse of the CUP, and for this reason both Germany and England refused the unification of Greece and Crete. *Ö-U.A.* I. Nr. 104. Tel. aus Konstantinopel, Oct. 1, 1908. Pallavicini; *Ö-U.A.* I. Nr. 120. Somssich aus Rom. October 3, 1908; Nr. 142. Tel. aus Paris, Khevenhüller, October 5, 1908.

116 That's the reason why the Dual Monarchy referred to the Reichstadt agreement in 1876, and the contract between the Monarchy and Turkey in 1879. *Ö-U.A.* I. Nr. 154. Tel. aus Paris, Oct. 6, 1908. Khevenhüller.

117 *Ö-U.A.* I. Nr. 142. Tel. aus Paris, Oct. 5, 1908. Khevenhüller

118 CSA, F. 3k. Inv. 18. a.u. 26/4. I. 1–22. In: *Paskova, I.: Documents for Bulgarian Independence...* 131. Nr. 5; and *Ö-U.A.* I. Nr. 160. Tel. aus St. Petersburg, Oct. 6, 1908.

Russia. However, the Bulgarians replied that it was Russia's change in mind, that caused the real tensions. The Monarchy also warned Bulgaria not to act without Russian consent, but it seems that Prince Ferdinand tricked the Austrians as well, leaving them in an inconvenient situation.<sup>119</sup> A serious consequence of the events was that while in 1908 the possibility for a cooperation between Russia, Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria still existed, after the annexation Russia's cooperativeness vanished. This also affected the cooperation of the Dual Monarchy and Bulgaria in the future.

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In the following part of our contribution we aimed to examine and reveal some myths still prevailing concerning the relations between the Dual Monarchy and Bulgaria, like the Austrian plans to reach the Aegean Sea by occupying Salonika or the promised Austrian support for Bulgaria on the eve of the second Balkan War. Our hypothesis is that the political behavior of Berchtold, Foreign Minister of Austria-Hungary in 1913 deeply rooted in the attempts of Aehrenthal, who tried to create a pro-Austrian alliance system on the Balkans between 1908-11 – in order to avoid the alteration of status quo which was favourable for Austria-Hungary.

After the occupation of the Sanjak of Novipazar in 1878 the Dual Monarchy had two possibilities – (1) whether to continue the march towards Saloniki and thus compelling the Balkan States to build an alliance against her, or (2) to create an alliance system in the Balkans, that helps realize the interests of the Monarchy, but in this case the direct control of Vardar valley had to be given up.

Since the first choice was not a prosperous perspective, the Habsburg Monarchy renounced from occupying further territories by giving back the Sanjak to Turkey in 1908. The creation and the failure of the Abbasian Entente can be regarded as an experiment for the latter concept, but this alliance did not prove to be viable. Without including or controlling Serbia, the Entente of Abbasia (1901–04) failed to stop

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119 Ö-U.A. I. Nr. 87. Aufzeichnung über die Unterredungen mit Fürst Ferdinand.... September 23–24, 1908.

Russia, that was increasing its sphere of influence towards Bulgaria with the military alliance of 1902. Serbia also turned against the Dual Monarchy in 1903, that led to the Serbo-Bulgarian treaty of 1904. So, the Abbasian Entente proved to be useless both to hinder Russian penetration and to mitigate the rivalry of interests between the small states. (After the Russia turn to the East ending in the defeat at Mukden, the unripen alliance of Serbia and Bulgaria also failed).

A similar alliance without Turkey, but containing Serbia, would have been a rival for the Monarchy in the Balkans and an enemy of the 'protected' Turkey, so the creation of such an alliance system was not the best solution. But without controlling Serbia it seemed to be impossible to control the Vardar Valley – and also seemed to be futile to control an alliance not containing Serbia, because of the lack of physical contact. The way to Saloniki led through Serbian and Turkish territories – the Sanjak lacked railway connections, – but the Monarchy was unable to unite these two states in one alliance on her side. After the annexation in 1908 a Serbo-Turkish alliance seemed to be temporarily realistic, but it definitely considered the Monarchy as the arch-enemy. So the Habsburg Monarchy had to build up another alliance to counterbalance the Serbo-Turkish threat and to secure the way to the Sea. Therefore, Austria-Hungary tried to establish a Bulgarian-Austrian, or a Romanian-Bulgarian alliance early in 1909, and only after the failure of this decided Vienna to establish a Turkish-Romanian alliance in 1910-1911 counterbalancing the formation of the second Balkan League, which also ended with a failure.

The establishment of a Bulgarian-Austrian cooperation in 1909 failed mainly because the Monarchy refused to allow Bulgaria to seize Macedonian territories. Sofia was promised Serbian lands instead, and the Monarchy insisted on Bulgaria giving a compensation to Romania. In 1912 the Habsburg Monarchy tried to adopt her previous plan once more with a smaller modification. But winning Bulgaria to the Austrian cause was not so contradictory in 1909 as it had become by 1913. Previously Bulgaria had territorial claims only against Turkey, which was not supported by Russia (or any of the Powers). But in 1914, Macedonia, the 'Promiseland' was in the hands of the Serbs supported

by the Russians. The Monarchy did not risk to win Bulgaria's benevolence by offering Ottoman areas in 1909, while offering the same territories four years later (occupied by the Serbs), would definitely threaten with a world war.

Thus, between 1909–12 the policy toward Bulgaria was ambivalent, dual: Bulgaria had to be hindered to make steps alone and seize territories without the help and approval of the Monarchy, while other Powers had to be deterred from gaining influence in Bulgaria by offering territorial compensations. Therefore a friendly relation characterised the behavior of the Habsburg Monarchy towards Bulgaria, but an alliance with Bulgaria was thought to be unnecessary, because – as Tarnowski, the Austrian ambassador to Sofia wrote – it was Bulgaria's '*Lebensinteresse*' to do the job – preventing Serbia to occupy Macedonia – even without Austrian support. But, if Austria fails to support the Bulgarian claims, the country will turn to Russia. So, Austria was about to support Bulgarian territorial growth verbally and unofficially between 1909–13.<sup>120</sup> In his letter to Tarnowski, Berchtold pointed out that the main policy of the Monarchy was to reach an agreement between Romania and Bulgaria and to alienate them from Serbia.<sup>121</sup>

Nonetheless, the Monarchy never gave up her intentions to reach Saloniki, not even in 1913, but after refraining from the incorporation of the Sanjak of Novi Pazar, Aerenthal re-evaluated his policy. The resignation from the Sanjak meant losing the control above Serbia and Montenegro and losing also the opportunity to prevent an intervention of Serbia against Turkey. The new plan, the Romanian-Bulgarian alliance could have equalized this disadvantage, and also could have secured the way to the Aegean sea, as Teodor Teodorov, Bulgarian Minister of Finance pointed it out (in case Bulgaria reached the Aegean). Bulgaria could have been used also to counterbalance the Romanian

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120 Ö-U.A. IV. Nr. 3747. Tarnowski: "*A parallelism can be seen between the interest of the Monarchy and Bulgaria. Bulgaria can do nothing without or against us on the peninsula.*" "... es ohne, oder gegen uns nichts unternehmen könne." In 1912 this policy failed.

121 Ö-U.A. VI. Nr. 6989. May 10, 1913

pretensions on Transylvania.<sup>122</sup> The creation of such an alliance was not successfully realized until 1912, the outbreak of the Balkan Wars. Then, Berchtold hoped that a Romanian-Bulgarian alliance would enable the Monarchy to reach the Aegean Sea, if Bulgaria gained Saloniki, or – in case Romania opposed a Greater Bulgaria, which was expected to happen – through Kavala. If this also became impossible, the Monarchy could reach the warm seas through Albania. So, numerous parallel alternatives existed: instead of occupying the Sanjak of Novi Pazar and cutting Serbia from Montenegro, which would have created an anger against the Monarchy, the birth of a Greater Bulgaria was considered better – while the Serb relations with the Ottomans would deteriorate because of the Serb territorial pretensions on the Sanjak.

Without being aware of these aforementioned concerns, one might think that a real cooperation based on mutual interests of the Monarchy and Bulgaria did exist. But this is not true. Bulgaria refused to join the bloc built by Austria-Hungary, and to offer territorial compensations to Romania, and Austria-Hungary also refused to interfere into the course of the events in 1913 with weapons.

When underlining the willingness of Austria-Hungary to intervene in the second Balkan War on the side of Bulgaria, historians claimed, that King Ferdinand gave order to launch an attack on Serbian forces hoping that after the first shots, the troops of the Monarchy would cross the Danube and smash Serbia or settle a peace.<sup>123</sup> Some French historians believed that Romanian troops after occupying Dobrudja would join the Bulgarian forces against Serbia.<sup>124</sup> Indeed, Berchtold promised to give financial aid to Bulgaria – he spoke about 50 million francs.<sup>125</sup> It is also true that Berchtold told Tschirschky, German

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122 Carlgren, W. M.: *Iswoolsky und Aehrenthal*... 115.

123 Mach, R. von: *Aus bewegter Balkanzeit, 1879–1918*. Berlin, 1928. 235.

124 Bourgeois, E–Pagès, G.: *Die Ursachen und Verantwortlichkeiten des Großen Krieges*. Hrsg. u. Übersetzung: Schwertfeger, B. Berlin, 1926. 356.

125 HHStA, Ad. Reg. F23. Kt. 64. May 17, 1913. Berchtold to Tarnowski and Popper to Fanta, citation by Löding, D.: *Deutschlands und Österreich–Ungarns Balkanpolitik von 1912–14. unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Ihrer Wirtschaftsinteresse*. Hamburg, 1969. (Phil. Diss.), 81. “Erkundigt Euch sehr vorsichtig, wieviel Geld Bulgarien brauchen würde, um gegen Serbien kräftig aufzutreten und wenn nötig auch den Krieg zu führen.”

ambassador to Vienna on 9 May, that if the Serbs won a decisive victory against the Bulgarians, the Habsburg Monarchy would interfere, though not with a purpose of annexing Serbia.<sup>126</sup> Bulgarians hoped that an intervention of the Monarchy would urge the involvement of other Powers who would finally settle the order. Tsar Ferdinand himself also claimed that the Monarchy promised support.<sup>127</sup> (For new evidence on this, see the last chapters of this book). After having destroyed Turkey, Ferdinand wanted to annihilate Serbia and share the territories between Romania and the Monarchy, and his plans were earlier known by Vienna.<sup>128</sup>

Were there any reasons that confirm Bulgarian hopes, the Dual Monarchy's intention to intervene? In our opinion, the signs show that Berchtold's policy was getting more and more aggressive,<sup>129</sup> because he wanted to join Bulgaria in her fight against Serbia – he let the dirty work be done by others –, but he rather wanted to divert Romania away from attacking Bulgaria – thinking that the latter would be able to handle Serbia and Greece. But Romania did not decrease her pretensions, and since the Monarchy was not able to satisfy Romania's territorial claims on Southern Dobrudja by peaceful means (by increasing the pressure on Bulgaria), Berchtold simply could not intervene to help Bulgaria against Serbia, because this would have absolutely alienated Romania from the discredited Austria-Hungary. Bulgaria thought that Romania could be satisfied with Serbian territories. Salabashev, the Bulgarian ambassador

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126 Conrad von Hötzendorf: *Aus meiner Dienstzeit*. III. Leipzig, München, 1922. 353.

127 HHSStA, Nachlass Baernreithers, Kt. 8. Tagebücher, November 23, 1913. Wien. Quoted by Löding, D.: *Deutschlands und Österreich–Ungarns Balkanpolitik...* 81. "Österreich habe Bulgarien darin bestärkt Serbien anzugreifen, und Bulgarien habe Gründe gehabt auf österreichische Hilfe zu rechnen..."

128 HHSStA, PA XII. Türkei, Kt. 436. Liasse XLV/14. Balkankrieg. July 27, 1913. Nr. 5183. Tarnowski, Szófia and Albertini, L.: *The Origins of the War...* 460; further: Ö-U.A. Nr. 7838; Ö-U. A. VI. Nr. 8074.: "Es sei niemand anderer als Kaiser Wilhelm am Unglück Bulgariens schuld, da er es sei, der uns hinderte Serbien anzugreifen, um es auf Krieg mit Russland nicht ankommen zu lassen. Es sei ausgezeichnete Gelegenheit verpasst worden, Serbien von Landkarte verschwinden zu machen. Krieg zwischen Monarchie und Russland sei unvermeidlich und wede in einige Jahren zu demselben unter viel ungünstigeren Chancen für uns kommen... Zweck seines Lebens sei vernichtung Serbiens, welches zwischen Bulgarien, Österreich-Ungarn und Rumänien geteilt werden müsse, was bereits geschehen hätte können, wenn wir rechtzeitig angegriffen hätten."

129 Albertini, L.: *The Origins of the War...* 469.

to Vienna asked, whether Austria-Hungary would agree if Bulgaria promised Serbian territories as a compensation to Romania, in case of a war between Serbia and Bulgaria (and if Bulgarians won) – and Austria didn't object.<sup>130</sup> Of course not – it would have been a dream come true. This attitude of the Dual Monarchy suggested that she would not oppose a war – but it neither meant encouragement, nor Austrian intervention.

A war between the members of the Balkan League would certainly have some advantage for Austria-Hungary, while settling a peaceful agreement would have been disastrous according to Burián's opinion: *"Berchtold is in a constant fear of promoting a Serbo-Bulgarian agreement under the aegis of Russia. If Russia – as an arbiter – decides to support Bulgaria (in the debate between the allies), later she has to give a full support to Serbia against the territories of the Monarchy... (The same fears, that Forgách mentioned in 1908). Bulgaria can expect from Russia now nothing – claimed Burián few days later to convince Berchtold – but she can expect Serbian (and still not Macedonian!) land from us".*<sup>131</sup> Burián wanted to avoid the first aforementioned possibility by forcing the second one! Bulgarians might have come to the same conclusion, that's why they thought of Austrian intervention, but Berchtold adapted a different plan.

So, a peaceful outcome of the events that may conserve the Balkan League intact, was not the interest of the Monarchy. Tarnowski in May 1913, when analysing the future policy of the Monarchy, claimed that in case of a war *"... Bulgaria winning a victory only by self-effort is not a desired solution, because as a consequence she reaches an overwhelming position in the peninsula forcing Serbia into her arms and into an alliance led by Bulgaria, both freeing themselves from the Austrian influence. The best solution would be a Bulgarian victory, but only if it was realised with the support of the Habsburg Monarchy. The making of Greater Bulgaria by self-effort might be*

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128 CSA, F. 176 k. Inv. 2. a.u. 1369. l. 219.

131 *Báró Burián István naplói 1907–1922. Báró Burián István távirati könyvei 1913–1915.* A Magyarországi Református Egyházi Zsinati Levéltárban. Eds.: Horváth, E.–Tenke, S. Budapest, 1999. 61–70. The letter of Burián to Count István Tisza, 22 June, 1913. (The diaries of Baron István Burián). *MREZSLT* 44. b. fond, Tisza-Balogh iratok 2. 30–32.

*dangerous, if the state decides to join Russia's side. It is much better, if Bulgaria's desires won't be fulfilled now, and due to the circumstances she becomes an enemy of the Serbo-Russian coalition, that forces her on the Monarchy's side*"<sup>132</sup> – without any official contract. Owing to the fear of diverting Romania from the Triple Alliance, Austria-Hungary did not risk a military intervention (not to speak of provoking a world war). The very last lines of the evaluation above also reduced the possibility of a military intervention by Austria-Hungary, but it increased the probability that the Dual Monarchy would give verbal support (and nothing beyond this) to Bulgaria. According to Löding, Tarnowski's dual policy aimed at forcing Bulgaria into a war with the promise of the Austrian support, a promise which would not be realised. In that case, the defeated Bulgaria would have no other choice than to join the Dual Monarchy.<sup>133</sup> On the other hand, although a Bulgarian victory would humiliate the Serbs, but would make Austrian support useless in the future, excluding Austria-Hungary from the Balkans forever.

After the rupture of the Balkan League – which was a political success for the Monarchy – the Hungarian press immediately tried to win Bulgaria for the political concept of Austria-Hungary. *"Our vital interest is to hinder the creation of an alliance between Romania, Greece and Serbia (which the Germans desired so much) against Bulgaria"* – claimed Tisza, leader of the Hungarian pressure group within the Habsburg Monarchy.<sup>134</sup> Thus the end of 1913 resulted in a very complicated situation for the Habsburg Monarchy with its shrinking opportunities for diplomatic manoeuvring, with its goals contradicting to the German interests, and with the growing rivalry between the several pressure groups. *"We mustn't bind our forces and ourselves to Bulgaria – warned Burián after the Peace Treaty of Bucharest – They'll complete their 'duty' against the Serbs even without our help – because it is their condition of existence and it is their destiny."*<sup>135</sup> But the situation was not so easy as Burián claimed, since Berchtold feared that if Serbia gave back

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132 Ö-U.A. VI. Nr. 7133.

133 Löding, D.: *Deutschlands und Österreich-Ungarns Balkanpolitik...* 83.

134 Ö-U.A. VII. Nr. 8474.

135 *Báró Burián István naplói 1907-1922...* 71. August 24, 1913.

territories she could count on Bulgaria again, thus creating a new Balkan League.<sup>136</sup> The fear of the resurrection of a new Balkan League did not necessarily mean the need of an alliance with Bulgaria, as the only viable choice to avoid the former combination. After the failure to hinder an anti-Bulgarian Balkan Coalition ('third Balkan League') in 1913, Austria-Hungary also tried to build a new Turkish-Bulgarian-Romanian alliance once again after 1909.<sup>137</sup> The evidence of the proposed anti-Serbian contract from the end of 1913 can also be found among the manuscripts of the Haus- Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Vienna.<sup>138</sup>

This meant a return to the policy of 1909, when Austria-Hungary offered Serbian territories to Bulgaria in case of a Serbo-Turkish war against Bulgaria and the Monarchy – indicating that the possibilities of the Monarchy were basically reduced after the second Balkan War. The alliance proposal pointed out that the Monarchy was willing to help Bulgaria, if it was attacked by two states – from among them at least one should have common borders with the two contracting parties (excluding Romania). This meant Russia and Serbia, or Serbia and Turkey. Bulgaria was supposed to give help, if the Monarchy was attacked by a Great Power and a state, having common borders with the two contracting parties. It is fairly probable that a Russian and Serbian attack was meant by this scheme. The treaty had been realised only by 1915 with the same conditions.

From 1913 on, the Habsburg Monarchy was getting more and more isolated and needed the alliance of Bulgaria, which was not evident and

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136 Pölöskei F.: Az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchia Balkán-politikája az I. világháború előtti években. In: A Balkán-háborúk és a nagyhatalmak. Rigómezőtől Koszovóig. Politikátörténeti Füzetek XIII. Ed.: Krausz, T. Budapest, 1999. 51.

137 Ö-U.A. VII. Nr. 8574. September 9, 1913. Berchtold

138 HHSStA, PA I. Kt. 494. Liasse XLV /17. Die Balkankonflagration. Hauptsächliche Bestimmungen eines Geheimvertrages zwischen Österreich-Ungarn und Bulgarien. Fol. 326–27. "Falls die Monarchie von einer Grossmacht in Bunde mit einer zweiten Staat angegriffen wird, verpflichtet sich Bulgarien zur militärischen Cooperationen vorausgesetzt, dass betreffende Staat mit Bulgarien limitroph ist. Falls Bulgarien von zwei Staaten angegriffen wird, verpflichtet sich die Monarchie zur militärischen Cooperationen vorausgesetzt, dass wenigstens einer jeder beiden Staaten mit der Monarchie limitroph ist." The next points stated that if the attacking state was Romania, the contract would not be valid, and that the Monarchy would support Bulgarian claims on Macedonia in case of revising the Treaty of Bucharest.

inevitable three or four years ago. But Bulgaria now could not be won by offering Turkish territories any more (because now Serbia owned them), and could have been converted only against Romania or Serbia. Gaining the friendship of Bulgaria would mean an anti-Serbian step, that may lead to the escalation of the conflict (as Serbia was supported by Russia), which was not so obvious four years ago. This meant that the integration of Bulgaria into the Triple Alliance would consequently strengthen the political party in the Monarchy, that wanted to destroy Serbia – though the original intention of integrating Bulgaria into the alliance system was not to serve this scenario in the eyes of the Hungarian lobby, but to compensate the loss of Romania as an ally.

Russians were in more advantageous position in this battle for supporters as Moscow could offer both Austrian and Ottoman territories for his potential ally in order to avoid the overlapping of the territorial claims, while Austria-Hungary hardly could do this. First, Vienna refrained from dismembering Ottoman Turkey (owing to the fear of a greater Slavic state), second, any Serbian aggrandisement in Macedonia would result in loss of Bulgaria and *vice versa*.



## **Bulgarian Attempts to Avoid Isolation on the Eve of the Second Balkan War – the Rupture of the Second Balkan League**

On the following pages<sup>139</sup> I do not want to analyse why Bulgaria chose the way of ‘everything or nothing’, and who was responsible for the forecoming events in 1913 (leaving it to the Bulgarian historians); I want to focus on the possible solutions that might have promised a different outcome of the events – including more favourable territorial consequences for Bulgaria.

Our topic gains relevance from three aspects: (1) the behavior, the tactics of the small states in the past is instructive for the present (1991-1999) and future problems; (2) the overestimated trust in international treaties and jurisdiction compared to crude force was also a lesson that the whole world learnt in the next decades; and from historical point of view (3) the diplomatic battle has serious consequences on the balance of Powers, especially for Austria-Hungary.

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The Treaty of Bucharest (10 August, 1913) was crucial not only for Bulgaria – which reckoned the failure of creating Greater Bulgaria as the nadir of its modern history, and thus this peace settlement had a decisive role in Bulgaria’s behavior during World War I –, but it also put an end to the optimistic Russian ideas, who counted on a long-term agreement and alliance between Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbs and Romanians. The conflict also had deep impact on the balance of Powers, resulting in a dangerous situation for the Dual Monarchy. After the Balkan Wars Austria-Hungary’s former ally, Romania orientated towards Russia, and although Bulgaria’s support seemed to be secured for Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria’s failure in realising its territorial aspirations determined that Sofia could only be used up for the

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139 Originally published in Bulgarian: *Demeter, G.: Opitite na Balgariya da izbegne izolacijata v navecherieto na mezhdusayuznicheskata vojna. Istoricheski Pregled, 2012/5–6.*

annihilation of Serbia, and could be gained for the Austrian cause only by promising territories of Serbian Macedonia. Earlier, between 1908–11, when Bulgaria also tried to gain the benevolence of Austria-Hungary, the perspective was less complicated. Before 1913 Bulgaria had territorial aspirations against the Ottoman Empire, which was not backed by Russia or – as the Tripolitanian War proved – any of the Powers. After 1913 Bulgaria had territorial demands against Serbia, backed by Russia. Therefore a conflict between Serbia and Bulgaria might enhance the threat of a world war, which was not evident between 1908–11 in case of a conflict between Bulgaria and Turkey. So, the value and usefulness of a Bulgarian alliance in the eye of the Austro-Hungarian politicians gradually decreased. Thus, the Balkan Wars influenced the alliance systems and the outcome of the events in 1914–18.

The examination of the diplomatic instruments of small states, beside the experience on tactics, strategies, methods and aims is still relevant due to the events of 1991–99 on the peninsula. The following pages focus on the understanding and interpretation of the situation prior to the second Balkan War in order to assess the political reality of the emerging solutions discussed by Bulgarian diplomatists. Since the rupture of the Balkan League had already been analysed by many authors, our attempt is mainly based on still unpublished and uncited reports of ambassadors found in the archives of Sofia and Vienna.

After having defeated the Turks, it became clear that – contrary to the terms of the Serb-Bulgarian agreement in March, 1912 – there was an antagonistic opposition between the allies regarding territorial claims. The Serbs had asked for the modification of the agreement (demanding the right side of the Vardar River) several times (first early in November, 1912).<sup>140</sup> Furthermore, the Greek-Bulgarian agreement in 1912 did not mention any territorial distribution at all, but the aim of Venizelos became quite clear in his letter written to the archbishop of Pelagony, in which he promised to extend the borders of Greece as

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140 The agreement in March promised the greater part of Macedonia to Bulgaria, but as Bulgarian troops were fighting against Turks in Thrace, Macedonia was mainly occupied and liberated by Serbian soldiers.

north as possible.<sup>141</sup> It was evident that Serbia cannot remain so small after a decisive victory – Powers needed a Greater Serbia to counterbalance Austria-Hungary –, and after the Dual Monarchy had managed to divert Serbian pretensions from the Adriatic, it was inevitable that Serbia would search for remedy in Macedonia after this failure. Until mid-1913 no one knew that Austria-Hungary also encouraged these aspirations.

On his way home from the London peace conference, Venizelos stopped in Sofia. Here, he renounced from southeastern-Macedonia including the cities of Drama, Kavala and Seres, but he insisted on keeping Saloniki for Greece. This offer caused a debate in Bulgarian diplomatic and military circles, but the government finally refused the deal.<sup>142</sup>

The Serbian Prime Minister, Nikola Pašić insisted on his statement expressed in St. Petersburg in April 1913, that he could not allow Bulgaria to extend its borders towards Albania between Greece and Serbia,<sup>143</sup> and claimed that Serbia was willing to go into war, if Powers were unable to guarantee the common Greek-Serbian border (which meant that the Bulgarians would lose the greater part of Macedonia). This was an open denial of the 1912 Serb-Bulgarian agreement.<sup>144</sup>

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141 *HHStA*, PA I, Balkankonflagration, Kt. 493. Liasse XLV/11. February 11, 1913; and *Fremdenblatt* 67, Nr. 41.

142 The Bulgarian government was not unanimous in connection with the border question. Some thought that if Greeks were able to occupy Asia Minor, then they would resign from Macedonia; therefore they forced the attack on the Chataldja-line, and the contribution of the Greek fleet to this campaign against the Dardanelles. See: *Markov, G.: Balgariya v balkanskiya sayuz sreshtu Osmanskata imperiya 1912–1913*. Sofia, 1989. 39–40. According to Milyukov's report in Bulgaria certain tendencies did exist to give Saloniki and its hinterland to Greece in case Bulgaria gained Florina and Kastoria as a compensation, but Greece refused to do so. *Bogitschewitsch, M.: Die Auswärtige Politik Serbiens, 1903–1914*. Vol. I–III. Berlin, 1928–1931. I. Nr. 264. Balugdzitsch aus Saloniki an Paschitsch, January 21, 1913. and *Ivan Evstratiev Geshov: Lichna korespondenciya*. Eds.: *Popov, R.–Tankova, V.* Sofia, 1994. 248. Nr. 108. February 11, 1913.

143 *Skoko, S.: Rukovođenje operacijama Srpske vojske u ratu s Bolgarskom 1913 godine*. Vojnoistorijski glasnik 33, 1982/1-2. 244.

144 The first Balkan War did not start, when the Serbs had already expressed their intentions to acquire the towns of Prilep, Kičevo, Kruševo and Ohrida on the right side of the Vardar River (thus to revise the agreement) in a confidential telegram dated to 15 Sept. 1912. This was an incorrect step, as Serbs did not know then that Austria-Hungary was opposed to the

When the Bulgarians had asked for Russian arbitration on 25 April 1913 based on the terms of the agreement in 1912, S. D. Sazonov, Russian minister of Foreign Affairs (and the Serbs also) insisted on inviting the Greeks (with whom the Serbs signed a preliminary agreement on cooperation against Bulgaria early in 1913). This was not surprisingly refused by the Bulgarian government, as the agreement of 1912, in which the parties laid down the principle of compulsory Russian arbitration in case of debates, did not mention a word about Greece. Danev, the president of the *Sabranie* refused any negotiations under such circumstances.

Therefore it was mainly in the interest of Bulgaria to settle peace with the Ottomans as soon as possible, in the beginning of 1913, before Serbian and Greek territorial claims grew further. *"The Serbs and Greeks, analysed the situation Danev, would be pleased, if we turned to the weapons again, because they hope to re-negotiate the agreements between the allies (as the price of their help), and therefore Bulgaria would be forced to accept the Greek point of view (on borders), and the agreement with the Serbs could be modified... One solution is to avoid the war, or in case of the renewal of hostilities, we have to face the fact that we can only rely on ourselves."*<sup>145</sup> Danev saw the situation correctly, unfortunately he strictly tied himself to the second solution, which led to the isolation of Bulgaria.

Sofia had several possibilities to avoid the second war, and keep at least some parts of Macedonia. (1) Bulgaria could have come to terms with his allies excluding any interference of Powers. Certainly this would have forced Bulgaria to give compensations for Serbia and Greece, but the Enos-Midia line may have remained stable in Thrace, as well as the left side of the Vardar, and there would not have arisen any reason to compensate Romania.

(2) In the second case – as the compensation of Romania became more and more needful after May, 1913 due to the hostile alliance between Serbia and Greece, and owing to the behavior of Austria-

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Serbian presence at the Adriatic, and later they reasoned their demand for compensation in Macedonia with this.

145 CSA, F. 568k, Inv. 1, a.u. 756, l. 17. Of course, the allies neither wanted Bulgaria to conclude a separate or a quick agreement with the Turks, as it was against the agreement of 1912.

Hungary – Bulgaria might have reached an agreement with Romania and Austria-Hungary, as it was wished by Berchtold, Joint Foreign Minister of the Dual Monarchy. A Romanian-Bulgarian alliance might have counterbalanced a Serbian-Greek agreement even in case of an armed conflict between the former league members. This agreement could have secured the left side of the Vardar and the Enos-Midia line, though it might have meant the cessation of some territories in Dobruja. A Romanian-Bulgarian agreement would have been useful, as there were rumours about Serb-Romanian negotiations and such an agreement could have totally encircled the isolated Bulgaria. However, the Serbian offer of February 1913 was not directed offensively against Bulgaria, but it was rather a defensive proposal in order to hinder an aggression against Serbia from Austria-Hungary.<sup>146</sup>

(3) In the third case Bulgaria might have accepted the arbitration of Russia or other Powers. It is important to emphasize that each version had political reality, and offered a more favourable outcome than the peace agreement in Bucharest finally did. Our task is to describe how and why the Bulgarian elite decided to choose the worst solution, and what circumstances led to the total isolation of Bulgaria.

During the Bulgarian-Romanian negotiations on compensation for Romania, Bulgaria came to the false conclusion that the compensation is not a bilateral affair, but indeed the joint case of the Balkan League. Their assumption was based on the earlier events. The Romanians first offered to pay 10 million francs in return for the town of Silistra, and if it was not enough, Bulgaria might get compensation from Serbia, the town of Pirot. According to the Romanian interpretation they negotiated not with Bulgaria, but with the Balkan League, and loads on the allies should be shared.<sup>147</sup>

Although the Bulgarians remained silent for a long time in connection with the above mentioned offer, later they did not refuse a similar solution, i.e. purchasing the benevolence of Romania by offering Serbian territories. On 6 June 1913, three weeks before the outbreak of

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146 *Sosnosky, Th. von: Die Balkanpolitik Österreich-Ungarns seit 1866.* Bd. 2., Berlin, 1914. 352.

147 CSA, F. 568k, Inv. 1, a.u. 796, l. 4. Later Romania promised to offer 100 million francs and soldiers as well.

the second war, Salabashev, Bulgarian ambassador to Vienna negotiated with Macchio, a representative of the Dual Monarchy in connection with the compensation given for the neutrality of Romania. "I asked him, how Austria-Hungary would see such an act, if Bulgaria promised Serbian territories to Romania, instead of parts of Bulgaria – certainly in case of a war won by Bulgaria. He (Macchio) answered that the Dual Monarchy would not oppose such a deal, and Bulgaria should negotiate with Romania on this basis."<sup>148</sup>

This telegram has revealed many secret ambitions: Austria-Hungary wanted a weak, dismembered Serbia, as the Bulgarians did so, but did not want to intervene through a direct action against Serbia. Second, Bulgaria was not willing to give a preliminary compensation for Romania prior a conflict. Romania was offered territories only after a war. Bulgarians refrained from a pre-arranged compensation, because they thought Romania – after having gained the desired compensation – would not support them. This offer was unacceptable for the Romanians, as they shared the same fears: if they supported Bulgaria, and she won, Bulgaria would give nothing to Romania.<sup>149</sup> They felt it well – certain Bulgarian circles tried to forget about compensation... Third, Bulgaria was not the artisan of peace at all.

At the end of April 1913 the peace negotiations between the allies and the Ottomans restarted, but the *coup d'état* in Ottoman Turkey was a final blow for Bulgarians hoping for concluding peace quickly. In order to put pressure on her former allies, who also delayed the conclusion of a joint peace settlement – in order to regroup their forces into Macedonia, while the Bulgarian armies were still in Thrace – Danev declared that Bulgaria would conclude peace with the Turks separately,<sup>150</sup> which was against the terms of the agreement in 1912. This

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148 CSA, F. 176k, Inv. 2, a.u. 1369. l. 219. (6 June or 24 May in old style).

149 Romanians had other ideas to solve the problems. In Paris Mr. Lahovary, Romanian ambassador visioned an alliance or confederation of Bulgaria and Romania referring to the fact that in 1886 (when the Bulgarian-Russian relation was quite hostile) they planned the same (it would have been a state with 10 million inhabitants, blocking the way to the Straits), which was then hindered by Russian objection. *Bogitschewitsch, M.: Die Auswärtige Politik Serbiens* I. Nr. 316; Nr. 355; II. Nr. 832.

150 CSA, F. 176k, Inv. 2, a.u. 1369. l. 7. May 20, 1913.

gave an excellent chance for Serbia to depict Bulgaria as the enemy of the peace. The Bulgarian general, Savov thought that Powers did not appreciate Bulgaria's potential enough in modifying the balance between the two alliance systems. *"Therefore it is needful to notify France and Russia that we have decided to go to the end in order to validate our interests."*<sup>151</sup> Savov overestimated the value of Bulgaria for the „entente cordiale“ versus Serbia and Greece, and this fallacy became accepted as policy. Contrary to the above mentioned misinterpretation of Bulgaria's military and geopolitical potential Savov saw it right that the Balkan Alliance, as an entity, could not be attached to the Entente, as the Russian Sazonov hoped. His second vision was also correct: neither of the two alliance systems had reached superiority on the Balkans by 1914.<sup>152</sup>

The Bulgarian ambassador to London, Madzharov also advised Bulgaria to conclude a separate agreement with the Turks, even if her allies were opposed to this, because in that case they would be forced to do the same, after the Bulgarian weapons became relieved in Thrace and regrouped in Macedonia.<sup>153</sup>

The Bulgarian Army Headquarters did not wait further. It had elaborated an offensive plan against Serbia and Greece on 31 May 1913, on the very day when preliminary peace in London was signed, and on the same day when Greece and Serbia concluded a separate alliance agreement with each other.<sup>154</sup> The Bulgarian Prime Minister, Geshov feared an offensive action, since he thought, in this case Romania would ask for compensation. Many were aware of the threat that if Romania's wishes were refused, the country would immediately turn towards Bulgaria's enemies – but no measures were taken to hinder this. *"These moments are extremely important concerning our relations with Romania. It is up to us whether we exploit their willingness to reach an agreement or push*

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151 Ibid. I. 8. May 27, 1913 (13 May in old style). Serbs blamed Bulgarians for their pro-Austrian sentiments.

152 Ibid.

153 Ibid. I. 12.

154 *Istoriya na balgarite 1878–1944 v dokumenti. T. 2. 1912–1918. Periodat na voynite*. Eds.: Trifonov, St.-Georgiev, V. Sofia, 1996. 187. (18 May in old style). In these documents attacks on Serbian territories were also drawn up beside attacks against the contested territories of Macedonia.

them into the hands of our allies ... who won't ignore such an opportunity, after we did so...”, wrote Kalinkov, ambassador of Bulgaria to Bucharest, who was informed by Maiorescu: “Tell us friendly: is Bulgaria willing to give us, what was promised by Danev in London (compensation)? In that case you can ask whatever you want from us.”<sup>155</sup> This means that on 29 May 1913 while the Greeks accepted the offer for demobilisation, and asked for the arbitration of the „entente cordiale” in the Greek-Bulgarian dispute,<sup>156</sup> and just before the signature of the Serbian-Greek military convention, there was a chance to gain the alliance of Romania for the Bulgarian cause!

It was not only the ambassador to Bucharest who sent urging telegrams, but his colleague in Vienna too. “Berchtold thinks – wrote Salabashev – that we have to conclude an agreement with Romania quickly, thus securing her support or at least her benevolent neutrality in a possible war against Serbia... First Bulgaria and Romania have to settle an agreement on benevolent neutrality, and simultaneously they have to sign an agreement on Romania’s compensation, and in turn Romania will help Bulgaria in case of war. But, in order to reach that goal, Bulgaria has to offer unforced territorial concessions to Romania at the seashore around Mangalia ... Berchtold is of the opinion, if Romania turns against Serbia, the latter can not count on Russia’s support, since Bulgaria is a Slavic state as well.”<sup>157</sup> Although the latter statement did not stand critics, because Russia followed her own policy in 1912–13, sometimes supporting Greece or Romania, which were not Slavic states, Bulgaria still had the chance to get Romania’s alliance – beyond its neutrality.<sup>158</sup>

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155 CSA, F. 176k, Inv. 2, a.u. 1369. l. 22. May 29, 1913.

156 Ibid. l. 23.

157 Ibid. l. 38. In case of such a Bulgarian-Romanian agreement Romania’s interest would be maintaining peace rather than a war on the side of Bulgaria.

158 Berchtold probably was right, when he claimed that in case of Bulgarian-Romanian alliance and war against Serbia (without the intervention of Austria-Hungary) Russia might have remained neutral, since Russia wanted to win the benevolence or alliance of Romania and tear it away from the Triplice. But the new Bulgarian-Romanian Balkan League necessarily should have committed itself on either Austria-Hungary’s or Russia’s side. As the potential prey – Serbia – was inimical to Austria-Hungary, Russia might have supported the small state, in order to hinder further Austrian penetration into the peninsula, even if Russia originally sympatized with Bulgaria or Romania, or the Bulgarian-Romanian alliance would

*“The Greeks now want Seres and Kavala, although earlier promised these towns to Bulgaria, warned Salabashev at the end of his telegram. Italy and Austria-Hungary have promised these towns to Bulgaria, it is the Germans, who refuse this promising the towns to Greece... England has not expressed her opinion in this question, but it is fearful that she would give the towns to Greece, just to push her towards France and Russia. If Bulgarians sign a separate agreement with Turkey in London, the Serbs will accuse them of violating their earlier agreement.”*<sup>159</sup> Although the Bulgarian ambassador hoped for Austrian military aid, Berchtold only promised benevolent neutrality, did not even promise to regroup or mobilise troops, stating that already too many soldiers had been directed to the southern frontiers up to that moment and it cost too much.

But the situation was not so evident. According to R. von Mach, King Ferdinand gave orders to General Savov to attack, because he believed that after the first shots Austrian troops would cross the Danube and force peace upon Serbia.<sup>160</sup> Quite early, on 9 May Berchtold said to Tschirschky, German ambassador to Vienna, that in case of overwhelming Serbian victory over Bulgaria, the Dual Monarchy would

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have been created under the auspice of Russia. So, an alliance between Romania and Bulgaria concluded under Russian aegis could not be turned against Serbia – and Bulgarians would rather be interested in Macedonia than in a new, but passive and Russophile alliance. This means that the Romanian and Bulgarian aspirations could only be realized, if they turned to Austria-Hungary, which would strengthen the positions of the Dual Monarchy.

Therefore it was not Russia’s interest to vitalize a Romanian-Bulgarian alliance. And since such an alliance under the aegis of Austria-Hungary could not be stopped by simple diplomatic means, but only by Russian weapons – threatening with a world war – Russia had to hinder the creation of such an alliance. Therefore it was not Russia’s interest to support the peaceful compensation of Romania, unlike earlier, before signing the Protocol of St. Petersburg, when Bulgarians were too close to the Straits.

For Berchtold it was inevitable to hinder a Romanian-Bulgarian alliance under the aegis of Russia, because it would mean a deterioration in the geostrategic positions of Austria-Hungary losing at least one potential ally, while a new Balkan Alliance close to the Straits would be formed – while Berchtold was fighting for the dissolution of its predecessor.

Such an alliance under Russian auspice would not have been acceptable for Austria-Hungary even if Russia had sacrificed Serbia (which seemed to be quite improbable), and thus the Dual Monarchy could have reached Saloniki (through Greater Bulgaria). CSA, F. 176k, Inv. 2, a.u. 1369. l. 38. May 29, 1913 (16 May in old style).

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> Mach, R. von: *Aus bewegter Balkanzeit, 1879–1918*. Berlin, 1928. 235.

intervene by using military force – though did not plan the annexation of Serbia.<sup>161</sup> This was told to Salabashev by the German ambassador, and this may reason why the Bulgarians did not cease fighting after the first reports on the failure of their military movements had arrived. Austrian documents also verified that Austria-Hungary was not opposed to a Bulgarian attack on Serbia, and Bulgaria reasonably hoped for Austria's aid.<sup>162</sup> Berchtold did not refuse financial support for Bulgaria, if a war with Serbia became reality – he went up to promising 50 million francs<sup>163</sup> – and Thallóczy's diary also mentions the Austro-Hungarian promises in connection with the intervention and even the possible dismemberment of Serbia (see next chapters). The French later expressed unrealistic ideas, that it was Austria who set up for provoking a war, in order to dismember Serbia.<sup>164</sup>

Tarnowski, Austrian ambassador to Sofia on 23 May 1913 gave a thorough analysis on Austria-Hungary's possible policy towards Bulgaria. His point of view seems to be a refutation of the above mentioned. Tarnowski stated that Bulgarian victory without external help was not desirable for Austria-Hungary, as this would give Bulgaria such superiority in power and self-esteem, that she could force Serbia easily into his alliance. It was better if Bulgaria's dreams could be fulfilled only with the help of Austria-Hungary – or not at all. A Greater Bulgaria as a potential ally of Russia, or a state following her own foreign policy, blocking the way to Saloniki was not desirable, while a smaller Bulgaria as a potential ally of Austria, with dreams unrealised, which made her hostile to any Serbian-Russian cooperation, was much more useful.<sup>165</sup> As we have stressed it earlier, this interpretation of the usefulness of Bulgaria had been questioned by 1913.

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161 Hötendorf, *Conrad von: Aus meiner Dienstzeit, 1906–1918*. III. Wien, 1922. 353.

162 *HHStA*, Nachlass Baernreithers, Kt. 8. Tagebücher, November 23, 1913, Wien.

163 *HHStA*, Ad. Reg. F23. Kt. 64. May 17, 1913. Berchtold an Tarnowski and Popper an Fanta.

164 *Bourgeois, E.–Pagés, G.: Die Ursachen und Verantwortlichkeiten...* 356.

165 *Ö-U.A.* VI. Nr. 7133. Based on this source the policy of the Dual Monarchy was to push Bulgaria into a war. After a defeat – which was quite possible, if the promised Austrian aid never arrives – Sofia would be tied to Austria-Hungary. This policy had certain dangers in the future explained in the first paragraphs of the article. See also Löding, *D., Deutschlands und Österreich–Ungarns Balkanpolitik...* 83.

From the end of May 1913, Bulgarians more or less accepted the armed conflict as a possible outcome of the dispute – and they openly threatened the Powers with such steps. The Serbs stressed their demands in every newspaper, suggesting their point of view for everyone. Stanchov, Bulgarian ambassador to Paris warned his government not to do so, as these Bulgarian demands would create displeasure in the diplomatic circles.<sup>166</sup>

The viability of Albania also influenced the extent of planned compensation given to Romania. Danev on 29 May 1913 declared that: *“Up to now Serbia’s behavior was in the centre of our interest first, and secondly the fate of Albania, if it is not viable. In the first case, if Serbia violates the agreement and attacks us, Bulgaria will get more favourable borders as a consequence of this, or in the second case, if Bulgaria reaches the Adriatic, in my opinion, we may promise the compensation for Romania (the Tutrakan-Balchik line), but in the first case Romania may acquire only Serbian territories”*.<sup>167</sup>

On 9 June, 1913 a Turkish delegate confidentially hinted that Greece wanted to sign a military pact with Turkey against Bulgaria, but the Ottomans refused to do so. *“Bulgaria may count on Turkey’s sympathy and friendly neutrality in case of a war between Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece”* – pointed out Hilmi pasha.<sup>168</sup> The Bulgarian government believed the content of the telegram, although it was not true. It was especially convincing, that in this letter Ottomans promised 50 thousand Albanians to revolt against the Serbs. This telegram was crucial in

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166 Thus, the Bulgarian diplomats admitted confidentially, that their claims were exaggerated. Another problem arose, when somebody put the Bulgarian concepts on the future borders into light. As it did produce a great displeasure in diplomatic circles as Stanchov foretold, the idea to publish the map could not come from Bulgaria. On this map Greater Bulgaria included whole Macedonia and Thrace to the Marmora Sea. The rest of the liberated territories – including the Sanjak of Novibazar and Epirus – was named Albania. Bulgarian dreams even went further: *“The Montenegrin delegates – as they were not brave enough to complain openly about Serbs – advised to dismember Albania together, so we might get Berat and Valona”*, wrote Danev from London, where the peace negotiations took place. The acquisition of Berat could only be possible if the right side of the Vardar remained Bulgarian! CSA, F. 176k, Inv. 2, a.u. 1369. l. 147; Cassavetti, D. J., *Hellas and the Balkan Wars.* -, 1914. 314–16, and CSA, F. 176k, Inv. 2, a.u. 1369. l. 140. June 2, 1913.

167 CSA, F. 176k, Inv. 2, a.u. 1369. l. 53. May 29 (May 16 in old style), 1913.

168 CSA, F. 176k, Inv. 2, a.u. 1369. l. 275. June 9 (May 27 in old style), 1913.

influencing the forecoming events, since only three days earlier, 6 June (Hadji)Mishev, the Bulgarian ambassador to Athens warned his government that Greeks inquired the Turks, whether they could count on an Ottoman attack against Edirne (Adrianople) in case of an interallied war. The Ottomans demanded compensation in case of a Serb-Greek-Bulgarian war for their neutrality, which the Greeks refused,<sup>169</sup> but offered to attack Bulgaria.

Thus Madzharov tried to enter into an alliance with the Turks – unsuccessfully. Again from Greece bad news arrived on 9 May from Mishev. While negotiating about the demarcation line between Greek and Bulgarian troops, the Greek king gave audience for the Bulgarian ambassador. *“During the audience His Majesty took a red pen and sketched up the territories, which Bulgaria may get in the future after the distributon. This line started at Leftera, passed next to Seres, but both settlements remained in Greek hands according to the plan. The king declared that he would not sign a convention, that gives further territories for the Bulgarians. It was just enough to resign from Kavala and Drama”*.<sup>170</sup> So, beside Saloniki, the Greeks now demanded Seres – but Kavala and Drama still could have been spared for the Bulgarians.

General Hesapchiev, the commander of Bulgarian troops in Saloniki also had bad news on 3 June: the Greek government demanded common borders with Serbia (beside the Bulgarian renouncement from Saloniki and Seres). Hesapchiev drew the attention to the ever increasing Greek claims, which aimed at forcing Bulgaria to commit a mistake and attack the contested territories. Therefore Hesapchiev advised the arbitration of “friendly Powers”.<sup>171</sup>

The Greeks, since Bulgaria refused the arbitration of either Russia or the Entente, offered a new solution to restore peace.<sup>172</sup> According to this

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169 Ibid. I. 223. June 06 (May 24 in old style), 1913.

170 Ibid. I. 84.

171 Ibid. I. 150. June 3 (May 21 in old style), 1913.

172 Lorey, A.: *Frankreichs Politik während der Balkankriege 1912–1913*. Diss. Frankfurt, Dresden, 1941. 108. The Russian proposal, that the Powers of the Entente should decide in the question of the Greek-Bulgarian border, was refused by the French Pichon, as he feared that both parties would be unsatisfied with the result, and thus turn away from the Entente, furthermore, the Triple Alliance would not accept a decision made without the presence of their

plan two arbiters would be selected – one, Russia, representing the Entente, the other, Germany would represent the Triple Alliance.<sup>173</sup> Venizelos tried to gain advantage from the fact that his government was characterised by pro-entente sentiments, while King Constantine was favoured by the German Kaiser Wilhelm. Mishev saw it right that Greece was hesitating between the two alliance systems such as Bulgaria did, but while Greece was important for both alliance systems, thus both supported its territorial claims (similarly to Romania), Bulgaria was not favoured by any of the Powers. The Bulgarian government also knew that Germans would not support Bulgarian claims, but still hoped that the second arbiter, Russia, which – said Mishev – might give the right side of the Vardar to the Serbs in the Serb-Bulgarian debate, would support Bulgaria in the Greek-Bulgarian dispute, thus compensating Bulgaria. But this might happen only if Russia wanted to counterbalance Germany and not to raise the bid over the German offers to Greece. In the latter case Bulgaria will suffer a diplomatic defeat at this scene too. While the strategic importance of the Greek seashore was too great, Bulgaria's presence on the Aegean was not desired, as it would be too close to the Straits. Therefore Mishev proposed to refuse the German-Russian joint arbitration because of the unpredictable result.

Instead of this, the Bulgarian ambassador proposed the joint arbitration of all Powers (earlier, on 30 May Serbia also turned to the Entente, asking for the joint arbitration of the six Powers), but these refused to accept it (remembering the futile efforts of the negotiations in St. Petersburg<sup>174</sup> and of the conferences in London) – with the exception of Germany, represented by Zimmermann. Thus Bulgaria lost another opportunity to isolate Serbs from Greeks.

In the beginning of June Kalinkov sent a telegram from Bucharest in which he informed his government that if war broke out, Romania

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representatives. Therefore Pichon thought that parties should turn to all Powers or to the Triple Alliance. Sazonov refused this version, as he wanted to exclude Austria-Hungary from the decision-making. See: *Documents diplomatiques français* [further DDF]. 1929-, 3. VI. Nr. 611; Nr. 631.

173 CSA, F. 176k, Inv. 2, a.u. 1369. l. 272. May 27/ June 9, 1913.

174 Ending in an useless protocol regarding the territorial compensation of Romania.

would mobilize her troops, and would not stay neutral.<sup>175</sup> Later, on 26 June Russia also advised to do this. Shebeko, the Russian ambassador to Bucharest (just like the French) urged mobilization for Romania in order to prevent a Serb-Bulgarian conflict, maintaining the Balkan League intact. Beyond these, he advised the immediate occupation of the Tutrakan-Balchik line, also to prevent the outbreak of fights.<sup>176</sup> It is possible that Shebeko thought that after satisfying Romanian demands, Serbia could not rely on Romania's help in a war against Bulgaria. But his advice was favourable for the Serbian and Romanian cause indeed. (1) In this case, contrary to the Russian hopes, the Serbian-Bulgarian conflict would sharpen further, since the Serbs were reluctant to give territorial concession to the Bulgarians, if the latter remained without Romanian support (and Romania would not be obliged to support Bulgaria, if accepted the Russian solution). (2) A Romanian occupation of the territories *prior to* a Serbian-Bulgarian war would rather provoke a Romanian-Bulgarian war, which would have been exploited easily by the Serbs and Greeks.

Shebeko probably thought that if Romania gained Southern Dobruja with the support of Russia, it could drift more easily to the Russian sphere of interest, and the Balkan League may survive exchanging Bulgaria to Romania in the alliance system. (By that time Russia had considered Bulgaria as an ally of Austria-Hungary).<sup>177</sup> Furthermore, Romania could be diverted against Austria-Hungary by promising Transylvania. The combination went further: if the Dual Monarchy collapsed, the Serbs might get Albania, and in that case, Macedonia could be given back to Bulgaria, thus – on a long run – Bulgaria might return to the League.<sup>178</sup>

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175 Ibid. I. 285. June 10 (May 28 in old style), 1913.

176 Sosnosky, *Th. von: Die Balkanpolitik Österreich-Ungarns seit 1866...* 357, and Lorey, *A.: Frankreichs Politik...* 112. The Romanians informed Danev on their point of view on 27 June. *DDF*, 3. VII. Nr. 68, Nr. 73, Nr. 170, and *G.P.* XXXV. Nr. 13435. and *Ö-U.A.* VI. Nr. 7530. St. Petersburg decided not to tolerate the occupation of the Sanjak of Novipazar as a counterstep. *DDF*. VII. Nr. 135, Nr. 86; *BD*. IX-2. 1111.

177 According to Lorey, *A.: Frankreichs Politik...* 113. similarly to St. Petersburg, Paris did not want to weaken Bulgaria too much, in order to avoid a revanche-policy of Bulgaria drifting to the side of Austria-Hungary.

178 Sosnosky, *Th. von: Die Balkanpolitik Österreich-Ungarns seit 1866...* 357.

This plan, mentioned by Sosnosky as the idea of the Russian diplomacy, reflects the deepest Austro-Hungarian fears on the one hand, and shows similarity to the 1911 plan of Milovanović and Geshov on the other, which means that this combination was not an isolated phenomenon, and influenced Power policy as well.

The behavior of Romania was more and more worrying for Bulgaria, therefore it is interesting to examine, how diplomats reacted to the growing tensions. On 28 May Teodorov, Bulgarian Minister of Finance sent a message from Paris: *“I think we should not buy Romania’s friendship by offering new territories. I repeat that after a victorious (!) war against Serbs and Greeks our situation would be more difficult, due to the demands of Turkey and Romania ... just let them find support at our enemies”*<sup>179</sup> ... *“Sooner or later we have to make a deal with the Greeks giving a peaceful outcome to our debate, rather than accepting the arbitration of Powers or – in worst case –, Russia. This won’t be such bad as initiating a war... We have to do everything to avoid a conflict – lasting for days – with two states at the same time, since after winning a victory over two opponents, we have to count on that a third or a fourth will attack us from among our neighbors. The Russians said that they encouraged the Serbs for peace.”*<sup>180</sup>

Teodorov – though overestimated the value of the Bulgarian army – saw the Greek question quite well. But we have already seen that the following day the Greek offer – which was interpreted by Mishev – was refused by the Bulgarian government.

Teodorov’s opinion on the Romanian question is worth comparing with Salabashev’s telegram, dated from 17 May, reflecting the opinion of Tschirschky, German ambassador to Vienna. The Germans urged an agreement with Romania. *“If Bulgaria magnanimously gives something to Romania ... then Romania will help Bulgaria in a war for Macedonia against the Greeks and Serbs.”*<sup>181</sup> The explicit opinion of Tschirschky was that Romania would help Bulgaria with her armed forces. This telegram, suggesting a solution completely the opposite of Teodorov’s idea, made the Bulgarians reconsider an alliance with Romania. Unfortunately,

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179 CSA, F. 176k, Inv. 2, a.u. 1369. l. 54.

180 Ibid. l. 55.

181 Ibid. l. 107. May 30 (May 17 in old style), 1913.

Tschirschky's opinion was not the official policy adapted by Germany, indeed, it is still dubious, whether Tschirschky gave fake information intentionally (as Romania was more important for German policy than Bulgaria) or was simply ignorant. Bulgaria really calculated with Tschirschky's idea, but a diplomatic mistake of Austria-Hungary (mentioned here later) seemed to verify Teodorov's point of view.

In the beginning of June the Bulgarian government still found the doors opened for any of the above mentioned solutions: (1) an agreement with Romania or Turkey, (2) the arbitration of one or more Powers, and (3) making a deal with Greece or Serbia. Although Teodorov recognised that the gradual increase of the demands was a part of the tactics of the former allies, and his views contained the elements of *Realpolitik* – like the necessity of avoiding a war – his solution of making a bargain with Greece was undermined by his unrealistic trust in Bulgarian weapons, and the Serb-Greek agreement also forbade separate agreements.

Teodorov's strategy was one of the most viable ideas mentioned up to now to fix the problems. Bulgaria could have regained its independence from Power policy and ability to manoeuvre, if she had made up with Greece by her own will, without external pressure.

The preliminary peace treaty with the Ottoman Empire signed on 30 May created a new situation. Madzharov, representing the aggressive wing of the Bulgarian foreign policy, which soon became predominant openly urged a showdown. *"In my opinion the only way to prevent war (with Serbia) is to dispatch our troops towards Sofia as soon as possible, then to offer a deadline to the Serbs to retreat from the uncontested zone, of course, only in case they refuse Russian arbitration. We mustn't enter to any kind of negotiations beyond the principles laid down in the convention. It is time to raise our voice, and let the world, especially the Russians, know that we are not afraid of a war with Serbia. Any proposal on a conference between the allies is a trap. I guess the Greeks have got frightened, that's why they intend to come to an understanding with us... From now on we have to make an agreement with Montenegro against Serbia. The behavior of Serbs is so dishonest that it relieves*

*us from any kind of obligation.*"<sup>182</sup> It is important to emphasize that Madzharov did not reject an agreement with Greece.

Another telegram – different from the above written – arrived from I. S. Geshov, Bulgarian ambassador to Berlin. The relative of the former Prime Minister wrote that the Romanians would be happy to grab more territories beyond Silistra (given officially to Romania by the protocol of St. Petersburg) and would not let such an opportunity slip away, as *"more or less everybody is dissatisfied with the result of the Protocol of St. Petersburg. If there won't be armed conflict with Serbia, the Romanian discontent may remain within the frame of inner policy, without any international importance. But if war breaks out, Romania will demand compensation, therefore our interest is to settle a preliminary agreement with Romania and promise something ... Serbia has already made her offer twice to Romania."*<sup>183</sup> According to the ambassador, Bulgaria had to make up with Turkey. (The German interests – an alliance with Turkey, an agreement with Romania and Greece, potentially establishing a new Balkan League – also appear here between the lines). Geshov warned that the Germans – although they sympathized with Bulgaria – would not interfere into the course of events, while Greece was backed by the Entente.

Although both parties were lacking trust towards each other, Austria-Hungary's dreams about a Romanian-Bulgarian agreement were thwarted by an unexpected diplomatic event. On 8 June, A. Toshev, Bulgarian ambassador to Serbia warned the Bulgarian government that a Power was planning compensation for Serbia in Macedonia, if she retreated from the Adriatic. Toshev suspected that Nikolai Gartwig, the Russian ambassador made the offer, but he refused the accusation. From a letter sent to I. E. Geshov (then Prime Minister of Bulgaria) on 28 May it became evident that it was Austria-Hungary who offered the Vardar-valley to the Serbs for their deliberate withdrawal from Albania.<sup>184</sup>

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182 Ibid. I. 115. May 31 (May 18 in old style), 1913.

183 Ibid. I. 130. June 1 (May 19 in old style), 1913 and 140.

184 Ibid. I. 262. See further: *Voynata mezhdu Balgariya i drugite Balkanski darzhavi prez 1913 g. T. II/1*. Sofia, 1941. 25, and CSA, F. 176k, Inv. 2, a.u. 1369. I. 82–83.

Pašić, the Serbian Prime Minister thought they had obeyed; therefore Serbia had the right to get the compensation and to revise the Bulgarian-Serbian agreement of 1912. This step of Austria-Hungary created distrust in Bulgaria towards Austria-Hungary, and thus a contract with Romania also became suspicious. The game was won by Serbia, as implicitly – through her offer – the Dual Monarchy supported the revision of the 1912 treaty. Berchtold's objection, that the offer was not valid, as the Serbs left Albania under the pressure of Powers and not deliberately, was futile, and from that time on the Bulgarian-Austrian relations were deteriorating.

An alliance with Romania therefore became an undesired solution for Bulgaria. One of the Russian proposals similarly shocked the Bulgarian diplomacy: when on 31 May, a day after signing the preliminary peace in London, Sazonov proposed Struga, Kratovo, Veles and Krushevo – towns located in the southern part of the contested zone, or even beyond that, in the uncontested zone – to be given to the Serbs. This meant that in case of a Russian arbitration Bulgaria would not only lose the full contested zone, but territories beyond.<sup>185</sup> This increased Bulgarian distrust towards a Russian arbitration.

Mishev's account from the same day was even less calming. The ambassador wrote that Venizelos wanted to meet Geshov in order to settle the territorial questions. If it was impossible, he offered all the four allies<sup>186</sup> to travel to St. Petersburg. Mishev's personal opinion was that such an arbitration may cause serious harm to the Bulgarian cause. *"Today the Russian ambassador openly agreed with the demands of Pašić, stating that he will always find an opportunity to promote the cause of the common Serb-Greek border, which we have interpreted that we should renounce the Lake of Ohrid, and the territories to the east of the lake."*<sup>187</sup> Sazonov admitted that morally the Serbs had the right for the revision of the treaty of March 1912. This was another proof for Bulgaria that the

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185 Ibid. I. 103. (May 18 in old style).

186 The Serb-Bulgarian agreement about the Russian arbitration was valid originally for these two states, therefore the interference of the further two states was annoying the Bulgarians, as they knew, in case of voting, these would support Serbia's demands, while the Russians hoped to maintain the unity of the League in this way.

187 CSA, F. 176k, Inv. 2, a.u. 1369. I. 127.

Russians would not keep the principles of the 1912 agreement, therefore they lost their belief in that solution too. So, nothing more remained, beside a separate agreement with the former allies.

Bulgarians emphasized that their policy is based on confidence of the the given word laid down in the treaties, but indeed they trusted nobody: *“If Bulgaria had not been so resolute to be faithful to her allies, and if her deeds had been driven by egoism and opportunism, Bulgaria would have found several ways to defend her interests. And she wouldn’t have remained isolated surrounded by the bloc of her neighbors.”*<sup>188</sup> Although the frankness of the sentence (as of the Bulgarian policy) may be questioned, at the end of May 1913 Bulgarians realized that they had isolated themselves by their maximalist policy.

The Bulgarians refused the first two solutions, i.e. an alliance and a deal with one of their neighbors and the arbitration. Neither were they able to secure the support of the Powers, as the latter would suppose the realisation any of the first two mentioned solutions. That time the influence of the Powers over the peninsula was present only indirectly, by supporting the aspirations of their satellite-states, since the direct interference of the Powers would only lead to a counterstep from another, thus escalating the conflict. This circumstance was neglected by the Bulgarian government, which committed a serious mistake. The direct involvement of Powers into the events was now missing, unlike in the case of Skutari or Durrës, as the distribution of the occupied territories was not a primordial interest of any of the Powers, unlike maintaining peace, (if possible) between the two great alliance systems.

The decision-making in the Bulgarian government was delayed by the lack of proper selection of the arriving information. Salabashev on 6 June reported another interesting opinion from Tschirschky. According to the German ambassador to Vienna *“Austria-Hungary will support immediately, to the bitter end Bulgaria’s interests against Serbia and Greece. Italy has already arranged everything with Austria. Germany agrees with Austria-Hungary, and accepts that she is entitled to lead the Triple Alliance politically in any question arising on the Balkan Peninsula.”*<sup>189</sup>

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188 Ibid. I. 105.

189 Ibid. I. 220. (May 24, 1913 in old style).

Reading these lines one may wonder what goals these words meant to serve, because almost nothing was true, what Tschirschky pointed out. Was it an intentional disinformation (especially compared to Tarnowski's concept)? Did the Germans believe – what Thallóczy also mentioned in his diary – the rumours of intervention under certain circumstances? Was it a betrayal of the Austro-Hungarian concept and interests? Or an attempt to influence the official German Balkan-policy? Or Salabashev simply misunderstood something and gave fake information in order to to influence the Bulgarian foreign policy? Salabashev continued: *“Beyond these, Germany is of the opinion, that a strong Bulgaria is needed to step against Serbia. Germany should attempt to isolate Greece from the Entente, and to elaborate a Turkish-Romanian-Bulgarian-Greek alliance against Serbia. From this purpose, Bulgaria has to make up with Greece and renounce from Saloniki, but any other settlements should fall into Bulgaria's hands. Thus Bulgaria's war against Serbia will be easier.”*<sup>190</sup>

The quoted text contained only partial truths. It is true that Germans wanted to create a new Balkan League – with Turkey, but without Bulgaria. Thus, German plans were against Berchtold's idea. The German ambassador openly encouraged Bulgaria to wage war against Serbia, which was also against the official German policy.

It was also true that an agreement between Greece and Bulgaria was not only a German interest, but Bulgarian as well. But it is also well-known, that later at the Bucharest peace conference, Germany did not support Bulgaria, even Kavala was given to Greece. The German ambassador refused Berchtold's Bulgarian-Romanian agreement, as it was against the German interests. Although Tschirschky was convinced that Bulgaria and Turkey had to shake hands as Germany needed strong states to promote her economic penetration towards Baghdad – a Turkish-Bulgarian alliance was not welcomed by the official German foreign policy.

Beside this, the Bulgarians had one more chance. Salabashev wrote that Hussein Hilmi Pasha warned Austria-Hungary that Turkey would

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190 Ibid.

attack Greece, if the Aegean Islands were given to Greeks by the Powers at the London conference of ambassadors.<sup>191</sup> But the Powers were working slowly, and no decision was made before the end of the second Balkan War.

The Bulgarian ambassador to Bucharest, Kalinkov warned his government in May that Bulgaria either had to come to terms with Romania, or had to negotiate with *all* of her neighbors on a *broadened* base – the latter seemed to be more difficult. According to him, the broken balance of the Balkan League can be restored with the support of Romania, and if the Balkan Alliance collapsed, in case of external threat Bulgaria could still rely on Romania's support.<sup>192</sup>

The Bulgarians were informed that the mobilisation of Romanian troops was proposed by Russia and France. The opportunity of an agreement in which Bulgarians could count on Romania's active support slipped away. Having supporters among the Powers, the Romanians could step into action more energetically to satisfy their claims. At the outbreak of the war, on 29 June, Danev wrote: "*everything shows that Romania does not want to reach an agreement with us, hoping that in case of war, she may increase her demands, since she neither wishes a strong Bulgaria, nor the maintenance of peace.*"<sup>193</sup> On the one hand this was true, but Bulgaria was also responsible for this situation. Romania's interest was to wait, who "pays more". In this situation the Bulgarians needed Romania's help and not contrary. Romania had nothing to lose in a war on the same side with Greece and Serbia.

Bulgaria was thrown with a chance once more. On 5 July Romania informed Danev that in the following 10 days the troops would not cross the border, therefore Bulgaria had two solutions to avoid the consequences of the events. Sofia could either suspend military actions

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191 Ibid I. 260. June 7 (May 25 in old style), 1913.

192 Kalinkov, G.: *Rumaniya in neynata politika sryamo Balgariya (1911–1913)*. Sofia, 1917. 206–07. Teodorov, Minister of Finance refused Romanian claims, as he thought that Romania would not help actively Bulgaria even in case of a compensation now, and he wanted to negotiate with Greece. The hesitation and indecision of the Bulgarian diplomacy is clearly seen from the fact that Kalinkov did not get response for 10 days, and later Danev informed him that he resigned.

193 Ibid. 216–17. Danev to Kalinkov.

and accept the arbitration of the Russian Tsar (on a widened base!) or could offer a compensation to Romania (Tutrakan-Balchik line). But this time the latter did not imply a Romanian intervention on Bulgaria's side, just neutrality. Bulgaria decided to choose a third solution: she wanted to defeat Greece and Serbia within the given ten days, before the Romanian attack.<sup>194</sup>

According to the information of Kalindero, Romanian ambassador to Sofia, Romania would have been satisfied with the Tutrakan-Balchik line even on 8 July, and in that case it would have stopped mobilisation (but this would not help Bulgaria, since it had lost the battle of Bregalnica by 8 July). Owing to the rumours of Bulgarian defeat, the second part of the telegram was full of threats that Romania would dictate peace from Sofia, with different terms – demanding the Ruse-Shumen-Varna line.

The Bulgarian response was harsh (and futile): *“Bulgaria is not afraid of any threat from Romania, she should understand that until the fortune of Macedonia is endangered, Bulgaria is ready to sacrifice anything”*<sup>195</sup> - anything, except sacrificing Southern Dobrudja. Although S. Bobchev from St. Petersburg warned Bulgaria that in case of Romanian attack, Russia would remain neutral, and that St. Petersburg denied help based on the agreement of 1902, Danev agreed to initiate negotiations with Romania only after the defeat (on 9 July, 1913). It meant that Bulgaria had now nothing to gain, and its goal was to minimize territorial losses, while Romania increased her demands. Bulgaria had no other possibility to avoid total humiliation, as to turn to Russia (Austria-Hungary did not help). An earlier step would have been welcomed by Russians and Bulgarians of Macedonia as well...

The conditions of armistice were the following: (1) Bulgaria immediately renounces from the Tutrakan-Balchik line, thus Russian could play the role the savior of Bulgaria overshadowing Austria-Hungary. (2) Bulgaria immediately suspends military operations (saving Greece from a defeat under Simitli), (3) Romania will play a decisive role in solving the disputed questions on the Balkans (here

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194 Ibid. 221. Kalinkov's telegram to Danev.

195 Ibid. 223–24. Kalinkov to Ferdinand.

Russia gave chance to Romania to play a leading role in the peace, in order to avoid the interference of Austria-Hungary into the events).

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The above written all evidenced that the Bulgarian government was aware of the dangers threatening its aims, and had ideas about the possible outcomes, risks and consequences. The two point of views "*За Македония ще дадем ръка на дявола*" ["for Macedonia we would shake hands even with the devil"] and "*Политиката на всичко или нищо е политиката на авантюристите*" ["the policy of everything or nothing is the policy of adventurers"] clashed during these months, but the political elite was unable tie itself consequently to a firm solution. Overestimating her military success, Bulgaria thought that she could force the realization of the agreement of 1912 in favour of her demands, although several Bulgarian diplomats warned the leaders that even a military victory over two enemies could not solve the crisis.

Bulgaria probably thought that a military conflict among the former allies might endanger the maintenance of the balance of power between the two alliance systems, and might result an European war, therefore the Powers would never let the escalation and prolongation of hostilities between the former allies happen. But Bulgaria forgot about the fact that this fragile equilibrium of Power policy could only be guaranteed by the strict non-intervention of the Powers.

The Bulgarian policy was oscillating (*'politique d'oscillation'*), searching for both Russia's and Austria's friendship without undertaking any serious obligations.<sup>196</sup> This inconsequent policy of adventurers (everything or nothing) was a complete failure. Bulgaria was unable to sign an alliance either with Romania or Turkey, lost the opportunity to reach an agreement with her former allies without the arbitration of one or more Powers, refused a bargain with the Greeks to weaken Serbia, and alienated herself from the Powers. The mesmerised Bulgarian diplomacy trusted nobody, but a paper (the accord of 1912) and an idea (the principle of nationality) which were questioned (or at

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196 Tugin, C.: *Die politische Beziehungen zwischen Österreich-Ungarn und Bulgarien von 1908 bis zum Bukarester Frieden*. Hamburg, 1936. 176.

least its interpretation) not only by her allies, but by the arbiter as well. The political elite was fully responsible for the forthcoming political isolation of the country. Hungary committed the same mistake in 1918.

## Expansionism or Self-Defence? The Plans of the Austro-Hungarian Diplomatic Circles towards Serbia (1913–15)

The present study investigates the changes in Austro-Hungarian concepts related to Serbia after the Balkan Wars of 1912–13.<sup>197</sup> The two extremist concepts mentioned in the title clearly mark the range of diverse opinions in Austria-Hungary regarding the Serbian problem. After 1903 Serbia was considered not only as a barrier to the Austro-Hungarian economic penetration into the peninsula, but as a growing threat to the existence of the Hungarian statehood – according to Hungarian politicians. The attitude towards Serbia varied from conquering the state to temporary occupation, mutilation or total division of the country between her neighbors (with or without the participation of Austria-Hungary), including economic subjection as the least aggressive plan. The relevance of these plans depended on the relative strength of the numerous competing pressure groups and was also influenced by the situation on the battlefields between 1912–15.

This study focuses only on the activity of the 'Magyars' including the imperialistic tendencies of press, and the attitude of a certain (conservative)<sup>198</sup> group of decision-makers Baron István Burián and Count István Tisza. The numerous pressure groups had different concepts regarding foreign policy, and their rivalry did not increase the efficiency of executive power. The mentioned group deserves our interest due to the fact that from being quite underinformed in 1913 without consolidated, influential positions, by 1915 it had managed to control almost all key positions in decision making. In 1912 Burián – who had great experience in Balkan affairs after his mission in Sofia and

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197 The Hungarian version of the article was published in *Világtörténet* 37, 2015/3. 391–408. The book of Dániel Szabó bearing a similar title deals with the ideas of the period between 1915–18 Szabó, D.: *A magyar álláspontok helye a Szerbiával szembeni hadicélok rendszerében 1915–1918*. Budapest, 1976.

198 Indeed they were liberal-nationalists, like the party of Bratianu in Romania. But we use the term conservative, as they wanted to conserve the given political situation in Austria-Hungary, being strong supporters of the dualism, opponents of trialism and universal suffrage.

Athens<sup>199</sup> – lost his position as Joint Minister of Finance. This meant the weakening of Hungarian influence in foreign policy and in Bosnia too. His colleague, Lajos Thallóczy, as a civil official was forced to balance between Bilinski, the new Joint Minister of Finance and the Hungarian pressure group. Although István Tisza visioned a foreign political concept serving Hungarian interests, he lacked proper information and power until mid-1913. After having been appointed to the position of Hungarian Prime Minister again, Tisza immediately employed Burián as Mediating Minister between the Emperor and the Hungarian government, thus restoring the formal positions of the pressure group and the accessibility to confidential information. Burián finally became Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1915 after the fall of Berchtold – whose policy was continuously being criticized by Burián (partly because of his dismissal from Bosnia, partly because their intentions regarding foreign policy were in opposition). And finally, Thallóczy became the civil governor of the occupied Serbia in 1915.

It was the death of Francis Ferdinand and the failure of Berchtold in the two Balkan Wars that contributed remarkably to the emergence of this pressure group. Nonetheless, their opinion did not coincide in all cases. Burián was a supporter of an appeasement with Russia,<sup>200</sup> while Tisza neglected this question and focused on the Balkans. In order to counterbalance Romanian aspirations towards Transylvania, he wanted to use Bulgaria. This meant that his ideas were in contradiction with the plans of the allied Germany: the latter wanted to establish a Greek-Romanian cooperation on the peninsula.

The ideas of other groups, including the political circles of Francis Ferdinand, or the army (Beck, Conrad, Krobotin, Hoyos, Sarkotić) or those, who supported the German policy (partially Berchtold) are not discussed here (for their plans see *figure 4, Chapter 2*), the focus is on the activity of the above mentioned *triumvirate*. But it is worth mentioning that the constant rivalry between these groups decreased the efficiency

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199 Consul in Sofia, later ambassador to Athens between 1887–1903.

200 From 1849 on the Hungarians' and Andrassy's greatest fear was a Russian takeover in the peninsula, promoting the self-consciousness of Slavs in the Dual State and checkmating Austria-Hungary. His successor inherited this fear of panslavism.

of the foreign policy – both the Joint Minister of Finance, like Kállay and Burián, as well as the Minister of Foreign Affairs tended to pursue his own foreign policy on the Balkans – instead of reinforcing it.

Extremist expansionism was not a typical feature of this group. Nonetheless, they believed in Hungarian political and cultural superiority over the Balkans, but their imperialistic tendencies were 'only' of economic character. The Eastern Academy of Trade and Commerce (Keleti Kereskedelmi Akadémia) was the institutional background of these ideas. The politicians' activity was rather driven by certain fears than by territorial expansion. The political elite considered Serbia as a constant threat to the integrity of the Hungarian statehood due to the Serbian propaganda. Thus they agreed in the necessity of a possible preventive war – in this respect they took a similar stand to Conrad – but the conquest and annexation propagated by the latter (figure 4) was against their interest.

The propagation of expansionism came from the 'Magyar' middle class, not from the political elite and was expressed through popular publicistics in the press. The famous economic entrepreneur, Rezső Havass was one of the founders of the Hungarian political geography and geopolitics. He wrote the following: *"we have not any colonies yet, and we have not enough power to compete with other nations in distant continents to gain economic supremacy over our rivals, but the neighboring Balkan peninsula can offer us hegemony in this economic space ranging from the Black Sea to the Aegean."*<sup>201</sup> Generally he was rather thinking of economic penetration and gaining cultural supremacy in this region: *"Budapest should be the Paris of the Balkans, let us spread the Hungarian economic and mental forces over the peninsula."*<sup>202</sup> The arguments of the editor of the Vasárnapi Újság (Sunday News) Pál Hoitsy were of scientific character, but aggressive. In his rhetorics popular science was used to support political ideas. He argued that the Carpathian Basin<sup>203</sup> is opened

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201 Quoted by Ábrahám, B.: *A Balkán képe a 19–20. századi magyar geopolitikai és tudományos gondolkodásban*. Regio 18, 2007/2. 47–78.

202 Ibid.

203 This term was quite unknown in European geography (Pannonian Basin was more common) and was applied mainly in geology (although the theory of Tisia-block – which

towards the South hydrogeographically, so who established a state here would be forced for expansionism forever.<sup>204</sup> *“Nature itself delimited the necessary boundaries of the Hungarian states towards the watershed of the Alps, including the territory of Dalmatia, Bosnia and Serbia, and towards the Balkan Mts. including Bulgaria and the lower basin of the Danube towards the Danube-delta. The country will not expand beyond this line.”*

The teacher of the Academy of Eastern Commerce and Trade<sup>205</sup> (which could be considered as the institutionalization of Hungarian imperialistic tendencies) Dezső Szegh pointed out in his work that *“the Berlin Congress did hinder international calamities, but could not settle the Eastern Question and with its hidden thoughts, doors opened, created the acute Balkan Question... The economic positions of the Dual Monarchy were deteriorating since the Berlin Congress, with no advances gained, but with positions abandoned. Therefore it is not surprising that in political actions this state functioned only as stuffing. In order to realize Hungarian claims we have to fight with Austria too. If finally the Ballhausplatz recognised that Austria-Hungary should turn into a Great Power while looking to the East, then the realization of this idea could be carried out together with securing the Hungarian interests, which is also in the interest of the Dual State.”*<sup>206</sup>

Similar thoughts were expressed by Lajos Lóczy, the leading Hungarian physical geographer. *“Lóczy now expressed his pleasure that the Balkan Wars put an end to this pending Turkish question. A great area has been liberated for the purposes of economy and science. We have iron ore only for 80 years. We still have coal, but we need the coalfields in Bosnia for the Hungarian industry. Salt and petroleum can also be found in Bosnia”* – wrote Thallóczy in his diary. Capital for the exploitation could have been supplied by Leo Láczy (banker with relations to the Rimamurány Iron Co.). The debate over the exploitation of the iron ore in Prijedor and the direction of Bosnian railway lines is another testimony of this internal

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this term relied on proved to be false later). Nowadays this term is not used by neighboring countries (successor states) due to its implicit political meaning.

204 See: Hoitsy, P.: *Nagymagyarország. A magyar történet jövő századai*. Budapest, [1902], 26.

205 Among its teachers we may mention Ignác Kúnos or Adolf Strausz, the Hungarian propagator of the Mitteleuropa Plan, and among the students there was Mátyás Rákosi, the later communist leader too.

206 Szegh, D.: *Magyarország a Balkánon. Gazdaságpolitikai tanulmány*. Budapest, 1908.

rivalry between the parts of the Habsburg Monarchy.<sup>207</sup> The Hungarian lobby<sup>208</sup> could count on more and more officials with pro-Hungarian sentiments in Bosnia due to the activity of Joint Ministers of Finance of Hungarian origin.

The country was mesmerized by its imaginery superiority. But from the political left a different tone arose. László Rubin, the comrade of the leftist Ervin Szabó interpreted this “*scientifically confirmed superiority and ‘chosenness’ that gave authorization to intervene into Balkan affairs*” as a false indoctrination and refused these ideas emerging to the rank of political doctrines (re)presented by Havass, Hoitsy or Lóczy. As a witness of the attempt of the Dual Monarchy to create the Albanian state, he wrote the following:

*“We wanted to establish a colony. Our megalomaniac dreams have almost been fulfilled. This masterpiece of the art of violence, hurry, clumsiness and the lack of principles was observed by the author of these lines from the first row, because he was appointed as civil governor of the area in the name of General Können-Horák, who rather acted like a twit ‘Tischlermeister’. The main goal was the establishment of bureaucratization. The new statehood was manifested indeed in bureacratization. Albania soon became flooded by so many military officials that the proportion of officers reached one for each hundred of sheep. The highest levels of administration were immediately established. In Scutari hundreds of k.u.k. officers were deposited and garrisoned who grew ideas and produced documents. You could see them hurrying in the streets, holding plans under their arms, each was ‘Albanienkenner’, who arrived from the West yesterday to solve the Eastern Question by tomorrow. For these plenty of officers new palace-like barracks were erected to store these documents. The age of documents has arrived to a country where nobody could write and read.*

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207 Országos Széchényi Könyvtár (National Széchényi Library). *Néhai Dr. Thallóczy Lajos osztályfőnök hátrahagyott iratai sztenographalt részének átírása (The Diaries of Ludwig von Thallóczy)*. Fol. Hung. 1677. Bosniaca VIII/7. 303, 320–329, 254, 330–331. November 21, 1912. For the debate over Prijedor iron mines see Burián’s diary, 82. For the debate regarding railways see: Sándorffy, M.: *Bosznia-Hercegovina vasúthálózata és új vasútépítési tervszete*. Magyar Katonai Közlöny, 1914/2. 152–56.

208 This included officials-propagandists like Zoltán László, economic theoreticians of the Academy for Eastern trade, Dezső Szegh, the orientalist-adventurer Adolf Strausz, Ödön (von) Horváth or the journalist Géza Lengyel. The link between them was Thallóczy or the Academy.

*Hundreds of orders were issued, which were not executed, because nobody could read them, and noone dared enter the central parts of the country called 'Sauland'. The structure of administration was similar to an upside-down pyramid. ... In Scutari each case, like collecting turtles, forestry or mining had a special reference person, but nobody collected frogs and turtles, nobody dared go to the woods, and the mines did not exist at all."*<sup>209</sup>

This 'testimony' was one of the rare overt expressions of the colonial plans of the Dual Monarchy (often refused by historians). Although the word *colonization* had already been put down by civil officials a decade before,<sup>210</sup> but the picture drawn by the Austro-Hungarian way of state-building, which was "bureacratization at first, second and at last", was rather sad, but funny.

*"The good people looked upon us as the bearers/manifestations of impartial justice and rigour. And we flooded the land with the Hungarian gendarmerie, who were sniffing spies everywhere and political opponents in everyone. While the robbers and burglars were running away, Hungarian policemen were creating artificial political trials together with the Czech auditors, and the most occupied person happened to be the ketch."*<sup>211</sup>

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The above mentioned thoughts did not mean the necessity of a conquest against Serbia, but definitely meant its economic subjection, forcing the country to return to its former policy (before 1903).

Baron István Burián, then minister appointed to the king summarized the political situation after the Bucharest Peace Treaty (10 August, 1913) with the following words:<sup>212</sup> *"Berchtold is tainted by the thought to exploit the situation – when Bulgaria is so pleading and Serbia is so exhausted – to enter into a showdown with the latter (whatever this means) saying 'within few years people will blame me, that I failed to exploit this possibility.'* Taking into consideration the problems of our internal affairs I

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209 See: Rubin, L.: *Albánia állammá alakulása*. Huszadik Század, 1919. 135–41.

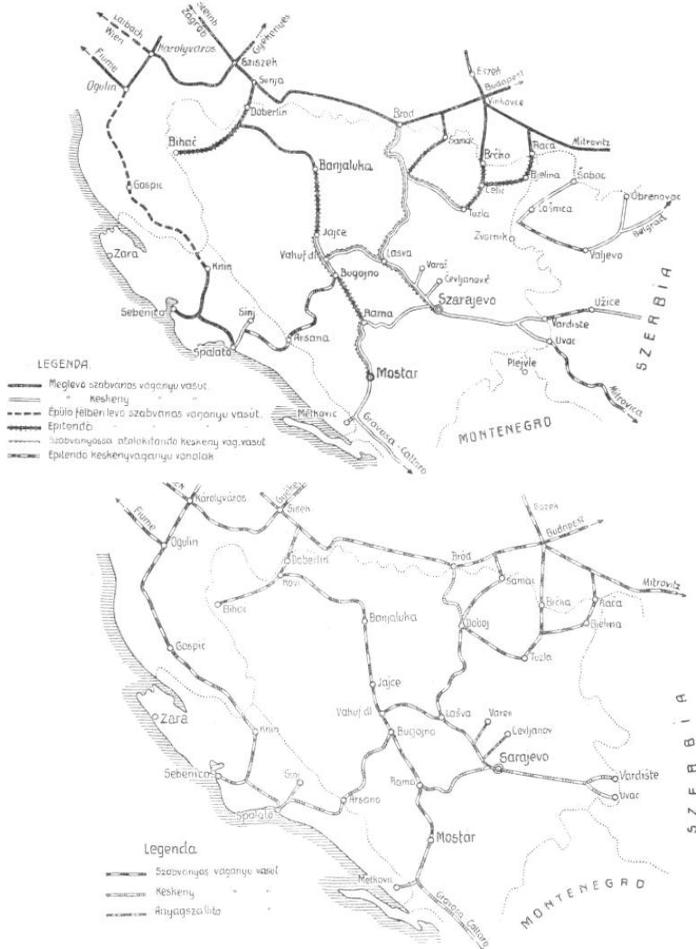
210 The term 'colonization' also appeared after the death of Kállay, but prior to the annexation of Bosnia (in connection with Kállay's failure in creating the „Bosnian" nation in order to decrease Serbian influence). Gratz, G.: *Bosznia Kállay halála korában*. Huszadik Század, 1904/1. 376.

211 Rubin L.: *Albánia állammá alakulása...*

212 See: *Báró Burián István naplói...* 69. July 28, 1913.

would not consider this as a good political idea, even if Bulgaria would be in a different situation, as we originally calculated. We cannot attack and dismember Serbia, because we cannot put our part of the deal to anywhere, while the justness of Bulgarian aspirations would not be acknowledged by anyone in Europe.”

Figure 1. Austrian-Hungarian rivalry in Bosnia as reflected in the railway proposals<sup>213</sup>



213 Source: Sándorffy, M.: *Bosznia-Hercegovina vasúthálózata ...*

This short note on the events enlightens that (1) the Hungarian and Austrian plans did not coincide; (2) the two Balkan Wars did not ameliorate the positions of Austria-Hungary; (3) a showdown with Serbia gave plenty of space for the different combinations. This included (a) a war without annexation to smash the military potential of the country, (b) the annexation of Serbia, (c) mutilation or total dismemberment of Serbia without the participation of Austria-Hungary, (d) mutilation or total dismemberment of Serbia with the participation of Austria-Hungary, (e) economic subjection of Serbia. Between 1913–15 each was a relevant alternative, and their realization depended on the foreign political situation and the relative power of different pressure groups.

Burián's opinion was that although the declaration of independence of Albania and the withdrawal of Serbia from the Adriatic Sea was a success, the second Balkan War resulted in a huge loss of prestige for Austria-Hungary.<sup>214</sup> *"The only possible solution of the events would be now (after the Bucharest Peace Treaty), when the Powers are against any revision, an attack on Serbia (following the Romanian example on Bulgaria) forcing it to withdraw from Bulgarian inhabited territories. Probably this would not mean a war. But such an act would require ability to react: good diplomatic leadership, subjection of military aspects (annihilation of Serbia) to political decision-making... and financial readiness."*<sup>215</sup> Each of these circumstances were missing and it was well-known by Burián. His assumption – that an attack on Serbia could not initiate a world war – might be dubious, but it was evident that he did not feel the time opportune for the destruction of Serbia

If anyone wanted to destroy Serbia a good pretext, a provocation had to be found, which would give at least an ostensible justification to the Austrian step.<sup>216</sup>

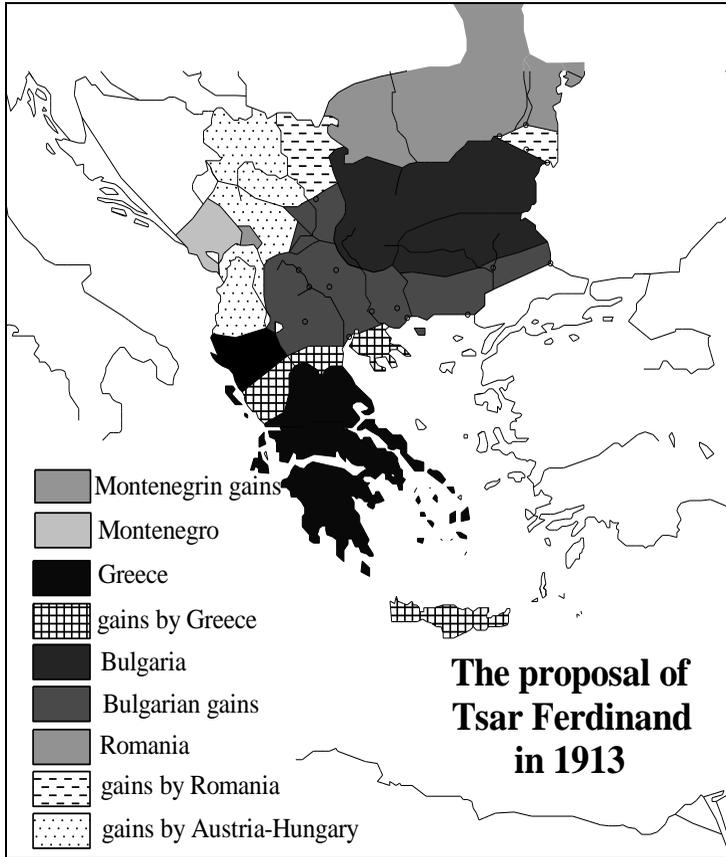
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214 *Báró Burián István naplói...* 71. August 16, 1913.

215 *Ibid.* August 14, 1913.

216 For a thorough analysis of the Hungarian stance during WWI see Imre Rösser for the late periods. *Rösser, I.: Das Königreich Ungarn in ersten Weltkrieg.* In: *Die Habsburgermonarchie. Band XI. Teilband 1/2.: Vom Vielvölkerstaat Österreich-Ungarn zum neuen Europa der Nationalstaaten.* Ed.: *Rumpler, H.* Wien, 2016. 1095–1163.

Figure 2. The proposal of Tsar Ferdinand to dismember Serbia



The dismemberment of Serbia was not a new concept (see *figure 4* in chapter 2). We know Bulgarian maps from 1913 that completely dismembered Serbia between Romania, Bulgaria and Austria-Hungary (*figure 2*). The diary of Lajos Thallóczy also gives account on promises of Austria-Hungary towards Bulgaria in case of Bulgarian-Serbian clash. Tsar Ferdinand was promised military aid even in case of defeat from Serbia. But – unlike Tsar Ferdinand’s offer – even this straightforward

diary did not contain further details on the mutilation or dismemberment of Serbia after the Balkan Wars.<sup>217</sup>

However, a military aid contradicted to the interests of Austria-Hungary. *“We cannot bind our forces and alliance to Bulgaria. They will fulfill their function as the enemy of Serbia – which is important for us – even without support, because it is their destiny. But working together with Bulgaria – which ruined everything – is impossible.”*<sup>218</sup> This concept of Burián was soon overshadowed by the reluctant Romanian behavior towards the Dual Monarchy, and Tisza became the propagator of a cooperation with Bulgaria.

Serbia could play a key role in the foreign policy of Austria-Hungary not only because of its propaganda in Bosnia or in Vojvodina, which enhanced the centrifugal tendencies in this multiethnic empire, and not only because of the economic interests of the Dual Monarchy – several plans existed to isolate or bypass Serbia economically. It was the changing geopolitical situation and the increasing Russian penetration that overvalued Serbia and Bulgaria. Prior to 1903 Romania and Serbia were lining up along the southern frontiers as buffer states of the Dual Monarchy. By 1913 these had become hostile towards Austria-Hungary, which had to create a new buffer zone. This gave an opportunity for Bulgaria to appear in the political map again: the Hungarian pressure group – having no trust in the future behavior of Romania<sup>219</sup> – became the propagator of an autonomous or independent Albania and a closer cooperation with Bulgaria. *“Berchtold remains silent about the weakening of our positions, supposing that there was no change in the relative strength of Austria-Hungary on the one side and Romania and Serbia on the other”*<sup>220</sup> – summarized Burián.

This also means that the plans of the investigated pressure group were in contradiction with the official policy of the Triplice.

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217 See: *Thallóczy*, IX/1. 500. April 19, 1913. and XI/2. 581. July 4, 1913. Here the reoccupation of the Sanjak of Novi Pazar and a joint border with Albania was also mentioned.

218 *Báró Burián István naplói...* 71. August 24, 1913.

219 *“Rumänien ist durchgegangen”* – admitted Burián in his diary.

220 *Báró Burián István naplói...* 79. November 18, 1913.

This involuntary path in foreign policy coincided with the economic needs of the Dual State: the isolation of Serbia was important not only because of military reasons, or to economically weaken the enemy, but the Dual Monarchy proposed its new railway lines towards the Aegean Sea along the Albanian seashore in order to bypass Serbia and the Otranto Straits in order to reach the Via Egnatia through Valona and Monastir. This concept – including the will to control river Danube down to the Danube Delta and together with a proposal aiming at connecting the Danube with Saloniki through the construction of a channel between the Morava and Vardar rivers – was summarized by the theoretician Adolf Strausz (teacher at the Eastern Academy of Commerce) in 1917.<sup>221</sup>

This was the fourth combination of Austria-Hungary. The first – economic outlet through the Belgrade-Saloniki railway line – failed in 1903 after the Serbian political turn. The second was the Sanjak railway project abandoned in 1908 and hindered again in 1913 by the allied Germans, because Austria-Hungary refused to accept the German conditions on the necessary loans. The third failure was the Romanian attack on Bulgaria, which crossed the plans to reach the port of Kavala through Romania and Bulgaria.

In order to realize the fourth concept to reach the Via Egnatia a friendly Albania and a landlocked Serbia left without maritime outlet was required. It is not surprising that the Dual Monarchy did not hesitate in October, 1913 to stop the Serbian advance in Albania. *“What would we do if Serbia was to occupy – even temporarily – Albanian territories? We would occupy a part of Serbia as a counterstep. I heard many oppositions, especially that the soldiers would only march if the annihilation of Serbia was in question. I guess this is not necessary, but would be a political mistake indeed”* – wrote Burián.<sup>222</sup> Before analyzing the Hungarian fears behind this “relatively peaceful” attitude (especially compared to the behavior of the ‘war eagles’) it is worth mentioning that during the two Balkan Wars the k.u.k. army was mobilized four times meaning a 1 billion

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221 Strausz, A.: *Grossbulgarien*. Posen, Leipzig, Budapest, Warchau, Konstantinopel, Sofia, 1917. 180–90.

222 Bátor Burián *Istoán napló*... 73. October 7, 1913.

francs surplus in expenses reaching 16% of the total budget!<sup>223</sup> The Habsburg Monarchy was poor in capital, it was only able to cover these expenses from credit. But the inland banks were no more prone to finance an army that had not shot even a gun. (The Balkan Wars cost twice as much for the Bulgarians fighting for eight months). A foreign (German) financial support would have serious political and economic consequences reducing the manoeuvring ability of Austria-Hungary. Behind the militant attitude of the army this economic aspect has also to be taken into consideration. Attacking Serbia without any territorial gains was simply not profitable, at least some economic consequences should have been achieved.

The concept of the economic subjection of Serbia was not a new one, since prior to the “pig war” of 1906 Serbia was bound economically to Austria-Hungary. A desire for the reinstatement of a strict control over Serbia emerged again in 1913 as a compensation for the Serbian territorial aggrandisement. If we analyze these demands (official renouncement from Bosnia; the disbandment of the Narodna Odbrana; territorial compensation for Austria-Hungary in the Sanjak of Novipazar around Plevlje and Prijepolje as a hinterland of the Sanjak railway project; the acquisition of the Montenegrin Lovčen mountain to secure the planned railway lines and the harbors towards Albania; the creation the Užice-Vardište railway line to connect Bosnia with Serbia, with a junction towards River Morava; free trade till 1917, then customs union; the creation of the Sarajevo-Mitrovica-Saloniki line under the auspice of Austrian entrepreneurs within six years), then we may come to the conclusion that many of these had economic character, and their realization would have been equal to the complete economic subjection of Serbia.<sup>224</sup> If we compare these demands to the ultimatum of 1914 hardly any differences can be seen from economic aspect.

Burián thought that the Austro-Hungarian neutrality should have been sold at a high price in 1912–13, and then all these demands could

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223 *Thallóczy*, XI/1. 486.

224 *Thallóczy*, XI/1. 398–400. January 9, 1913.

have been realized.<sup>225</sup> Berchtold had right aims (Albania), but his instruments and measures were not adequate for this purpose.<sup>226</sup> Although he was sure that an Austro-Hungarian intervention would not result in the escalation of the warfare, this assumption remained untested. In 1913 all six Great Powers wanted peace. It was the contradiction of interests emerging during the peaceful settling of the debated questions, that proved indeed that the concert of Powers did not work any more. In 1914 in a similar situation neither of the Powers considered non-intervention as a solution to the stalemate any more.

But the main problem laid not in the unsatisfied economic demands. The public opinion saw Serbia as a constant threat to the integrity of the dual state. In Bosnia and Croatia the opinion that the next king would be named Petar spread quickly:<sup>227</sup> a conflict with Serbia seemed to be more and more realistic day by day, and it was supposed to be a struggle for the survival of the Monarchy even within political circles. Therefore, the attack on Serbia in 1914 was labelled as self-defence, even if it was a preventive attack indeed. *“The showdown will begin immediately as soon as we are prepared to it. It will be a struggle for survival both for the Dual Monarchy and for Hungary as well”*<sup>228</sup> – wrote Burián.

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225 Burián was forgetting about the contradictions and asymmetric interdependence in alliance politics of Austria-Hungary: the German support was not unconditional. To realize the Sanjak railway and other plans Austria-Hungary needed credits owing to the lack of internal financial possibilities. In 1912–13 the Germans offered a loan and their diplomatic support, if German materials were to be used during the construction works. But Austro-Hungarian circles protested against this – the Salgótarján-Rimamurány Iron Works and the banker Leó Lánczy claimed that the construction should be based on domestic raw materials and had to rely on domestic firms (as they were also able to carry out such a project). Politicians were angered when Germany wanted to enforce similar financial conditions on the Dual State as they did on the small states in the Balkans. Finally, the Germans withdrew their proposal for loan, and the Dual State had to refrain from the railway plan without diplomatic and financial support.

226 *Báró Burián István napló...* 79. November 24, 1913.

227 *Ibid.* 100. May 22, 1914. The Hungarian side severely criticized the official foreign policy and Berchtold personally. Burián had a crucial role in doing this, as he felt himself insulted after his removal from the position of joint Minister of Finance. He thought that Francis Ferdinand was behind Berchtold (but this was only partly true), therefore Burián attacked both.

228 *Báró Burián István napló...* 106. July 1, 1914.

So, most of the diplomats saw a fight with Serbia unavoidable, although the date, the pretext, the goals and its consequences remained unclear. What was then the original reason for Tisza to oppose the idea of war, and what made him change his mind? In his letter to Francis Joseph dated on 1, July he warned that he would consider war as a fatal mistake and did not want to share the responsibility for it. *“Up to now we have no evidence to consider the Serbian state responsible (for the murder of the heir apparent) ... we would initiate a war under the worst circumstances. ... I think this is a very inadequate timing, since we have been unable to substitute the loss of Romania, and the only state we could count on, Bulgaria, is exhausted.”*<sup>229</sup>

The Hungarian pressure group (Tisza, Burián, Thallóczy) considered Bulgaria much more important as a counterweight to the Romanian aspirations towards Transylvania than to sacrifice it as a consequence of settling the Serbian question, while Berchtold did not refrain from such an act. *“I warned Berchtold – wrote Burián – to refrain from the idea of giving free hand to Romania against Bulgaria, if – in turn – Romania gives us free hand against Serbia.”*<sup>230</sup>

Diószegi wrote that Tisza had been afraid of the modification of the balance between the two constituents of the Dual State.<sup>231</sup> Both a victorious war and a failure could have disturbed the equilibrium, and this could have threatened the position of the Hungarians and the system of the dualism itself. Tisza did not consider the murder of the heir apparent serious enough to create a *casus belli*, until the complicity of the Serbian state was proved. Vermes went further, when he claimed that Tisza thought, an anti-Serbian coalition still could be realized, and this would ameliorate the positions of Austria-Hungary without warfare.<sup>232</sup>

We cannot fully agree with this opinion, since the Germans only tolerated an alliance with Bulgaria in order to make Tisza change his

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229 *Tisza István írásai és beszédei 1888–1918*. Vol. 5. Budapest, 2011. Nr. 433.

230 Burián's letter to Tisza, June 16, 1914. *MREZSLT* 44 a fond, Tisza István iratai 47. 66–67.

231 Tisza was against of the annexation of Serbia, because – as he admitted in his retrospective speech at the Parliament in 22 October, 1918. – *“it would have meant weakening and complications for the Monarchy instead of strengthening it”*. Diószegi, I.: *A Ballhausplatzi palota...*

232 Vermes, G.: *Tisza István*. Budapest, 2001. 246.

mind regarding the question of war. In case of peaceful outcome of the events Germany would have never supported such a pro-Bulgarian idea of Hungarian circles.<sup>233</sup> Conrad von Hötzendorf wrote that Tisza's hesitation was caused by the fear of a Russian attack, and that Germany would not come to reinforce the Monarchy if this happened.<sup>234</sup> Berchtold thought that Tisza had feared a Romanian attack on Transylvania in case of war.<sup>235</sup> Therefore, in order to ease Tisza's anxiety, Berchtold convinced Francis Joseph – who was also willing to enter into fight – to write a letter to Kaiser Wilhelm on 5 July containing the principles of Austria-Hungary's Balkan policy.

The letter had two aims: to win Germany for an alliance with Bulgaria, and to make it clear whether Austria-Hungary could count on Germany in a war against Serbia or not. Tisza was noticed by Berchtold on 6 July about the position of Germany in these questions. *"We can count on the wholehearted support of Germany against Serbia. Russia is unprepared. We should not let this favourable opportunity be unexploited."* In his diary Thallóczy added: the Kaiser wrote that Austria-Hungary should not fear of the Romanian attack, but at the same time warned, that this was possibly the last chance, because after the death of the old King Carol no one would be able to deter Romania from intervention without offering territorial compensations<sup>236</sup> (Which meant Transylvania, as the offered Bukovina proved to be too small).

Despite these assurances, prior to the joint *Ministerrat* on 7 July Tisza still maintained that *"everything has to be done to avoid the violation of the sovereignty of Serbia, which could lead to a war. If You want the latter, the emperor has to find a new Prime Minister for it."*<sup>237</sup> During the Council of

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233 The Greeks would have never accepted such a coalition of the Triple in which Bulgaria was included, and Greece was important for Germany. There was another confrontation between the German policy and Tisza's attempts: in order to win Romania Germany would have sacrificed even Transylvania (not only Bukovina!) to his cause against the *Entente*, while Tisza wanted to keep the province, that is why he was searching for a counterweight against Romania.

234 *Conrad, Feldmarschall: Aus meiner Dienstzeit*. Vol. IV. Wien-Berlin, 1921–1925. 34.

235 *Tisza István írásai és beszédei* 5... Nr. 433.

236 *Hauptmann, F.–Prasch, A.: Dr. Ludwig von Thallóczy. Tagebücher*. 23. VI. 1914–31. XII. 1914. Graz, 1981. 36. July 7, 1914.

237 *Tisza István írásai és beszédei* 5... Nr. 433.

the Ministers he also refrained from the immediate attack prior to any diplomatic intervention, recommended by Berchtold and Krobatin and also supported by Bilinski. Having the German support behind his back Berchtold remained surprisingly stable and steady contrary to his hesitant behavior during the Balkan Wars. He had nothing to lose: he knew that another failure against Serbia would be his last – the Hungarian lobby would enforce his dismissal. Contrary to Berchtold, Tisza was thinking of diplomatic steps first: *“we have to express our demands against Serbia, but an ultimatum is only necessary, if these are refused. These demands have to be hard, but not humiliating or unacceptable. If Serbia accepts them, then we gain diplomatic success and our prestige on the Balkans will be restored.”* Tisza probably had in mind the economic demands outlined above. If the Serbian promises did not meet the demands, Tisza accepted to support the military solution, but only under one condition: the attack could not be aimed at annihilating Serbia, only a mutilation could be acceptable.<sup>238</sup> The members of the council opposing Tisza claimed that *“a mere diplomatic success, even if it resulted in the humiliation of Serbia, would be useless /would increase only revanchism/, therefore it would be wise to come out with demands that could not be fulfilled, thus paving the way to the military intervention.”*<sup>239</sup>

The Austrians – criticizing the alliance policy of the Hungarian conservatives – were of the opinion that the ‘simple’ humiliation of Serbia would not change anything: neither its relationship towards Austria-Hungary, nor the relationship of other Balkan states towards the dual state and Serbia. Bulgaria still would have aspirations unfulfilled towards Macedonia, and Austria-Hungary could lose control over Bulgaria as a year before,<sup>240</sup> while military expenses would be too high without any results. So, the Dual Monarchy could gain (again) nothing, therefore the Hungarian Balkan policy was considered flawed.

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238 Ibid.

239 Ibid.

240 *“Tisza sees the diplomatic success as an instrument to strengthen our position in the Balkans, while I am of the opinion even regarding the diplomatic successes of 1909 and 1912, that these were futile on the long run, and contributed to the deterioration of our relations with Serbia, therefore I am very sceptic about the results of another pure diplomatic success ... and Stürgkh agrees with me.”*

Ö-U.A. VIII. Nr. 10459. Berchtold an Mérey.

Burián was balancing between Tisza and the others – his opinion was that the annihilation of Serbia was unnecessary, but the policy of Austria-Hungary should be based on securing the way towards Albania, thus the points laid down early in 1913 could be renewed together with the claims on the Sanjak of Novipazar. But Berchtold thought it would only anger Serbia further, which could still count on Russians, even if the country was mutilated.<sup>241</sup> Therefore the only solution was the annihilation. This could be carried out by the annexation of Serbia, which would immediately trigger Hungarian opposition, or by the dismemberment between the neighbors, which was not refused by Hungarians.

However, the editor of the text of the ultimatum, Alexander Musulin pointed out that the concept of moderate demands had won. So everybody at the Ballhausplatz thought – with the exception of some pessimists – that Serbia would be willing to accept these.<sup>242</sup> Thallóczy gave detailed account on the behavior of the ‘war eagles’, who feared the fulfillment of the demands. Burián himself admitted that even if Serbia was willing to accept the ultimatum, the Dual Monarchy would not have any coercive measure to control its execution – with the exception of the army, but this would also mean war.<sup>243</sup> When Sándor Popovics mentioned that the deficit of the budget would be 400 million francs even without any military intervention,<sup>244</sup> constituting 6% of total expenses, and the costs of the mobilization of an army corps for three months would mean an extra expenditure of 1100 million francs reaching 16% of the budget, it became clear that the events of the previous year could be repeated. Mobilization without war was a waste of money and time. If Serbia refused the ultimatum (and without preliminary mobilization it surely did so), the only coercive measure would be an attack or a mobilization. Therefore – due to military-financial purposes – everybody was sticking to the one-step procedure (ultimatum at first and at last), with the exception of Tisza, who wanted

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241 *Hauptmann, F.–Prasch, A.: Tagebücher...* 36. July 7, 1914.

242 *Tisza István írásai és beszédei* 5... Nr. 434.

243 *Hauptmann, F.–Prasch, A.: Tagebücher...* 59. July 20, 1914.

244 *Ibid.* 23.

a two-step method. The mediating Burián had an idea to solve the financial problems. If the Serbs accepted the ultimatum only after the mobilization, they had to pay the costs. If they refused to do so – the above mentioned costs ranged up to the six-year budget of Serbia – Austria-Hungary would occupy territories neighboring Albania and the Lovćen mountain<sup>245</sup> until Serbia repaid the costs. This could satisfy those, who wanted territorial aggrandisement, while at the same time would promote the realization of the Hungarian political-economic concept as well.

*“Tisza pointed out that he would give his consent to the one-step method /ultimatum/ under one condition: if the Council of Ministers declares – before the ultimatum is delivered – that Austria-Hungary does not intend to gain Serbian territories with the exception of minor modifications of borders” – wrote Berchtold to Francis Joseph. The report of the German ambassador Tschirschky reveals Berchtolds insincere behavior in this question: “if the Serbs accepted our demands, this would result a very inconvenient situation for him /Berchtold/, therefore he was constantly thinking of new demands, unacceptable for Serbia.”<sup>246</sup>*

Tisza’s stance went through major modifications between 3 July (when he only wanted the humiliation of Serbia) and 14 July (when he accepted Serbia’s mutilation), although he still did not agree with the annexation of Serbia. We have already enumerated his arguments in connection with the refusal of war, now we enumerate the arguments that forced him to accept it.

In Galántai’s opinion the German approval to the Bulgarian alliance and Berlin’s promises to hinder the Romanian entrance to war made Tisza accept the violent solution.<sup>247</sup> Vermes claimed that Tisza feared the loss of Germany’s friendship.<sup>248</sup> This could have meant that the Dual

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245 Without declaration of war it seemed to be impossible as this was Montenegrin area!

246 It is evident from Thallóczy’s diary that many of the diplomats were against the Serbian acceptance of the ultimatum. *Hauptmann, F.–Prasch, A.: Tagebücher...* 49. July 20, 1914.

247 *Galántai, J.: Magyarország az első világháborúban.* Budapest, 2001. 93. és *Vermes, G.: Tisza István...* 249–50.

248 For Tisza the price of accepting the possibility of war (implicitly) was the withdrawal of the German idea to hand over Transylvania to Romania (the acceptance of the Bulgarian alliance was equal with this).

Monarchy and Hungary would become politically and militarily defenseless (Therefore Tisza himself also supported the renewal of the Triple Alliance in 1913). Berchtold manipulated Tisza,<sup>249</sup> when he interpreted the German point of view that Austria-Hungary's hesitant behavior would influence the future alliance policy of Germany.<sup>250</sup>

Diószegi pointed out that the Hungarian Prime Minister (or a Hungarian Foreign Minister) had only space for manoeuvring in this dualistic system, if he could rely either on the Court or on the Parliament. But both the former and the Hungarian public opinion took side with the war party during the crisis in July 1914. Everybody was convinced that if the Hungarian Premier resigned, his successor would immediately support the ultimatum (and the war).<sup>251</sup> We may add another argument: the position of Austria-Hungary among the southern Slavs of the empire was weakening. The patriotism of the Croats shrank to their anti-Serbism (owing to their rivalization over the contested areas). The Hungarian government did not want to weaken further its diminishing prestige with a tolerant attitude towards the Serbs. The Bosnians also attacked the Balkan policy of Austria-Hungary during the internal debates in 1912, claiming that while autonomy was promised to the Albanians, and the principle of nationality – “the Balkans for the Balkan peoples”<sup>252</sup> – was generally accepted by Tisza, but the southern Slavs within Austria-Hungary did receive nothing similar.

As a result of the next Council of Ministers on 14 July, the text of the ultimatum changed. “*Berchtold accepted it, but Stürgkh, Forgách and me felt it too soft*” – wrote Burián. The final text was accepted on 19 July. As Tisza wrote to the historian Henrik Marczali on 25 January 1918, he

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249 Fay, S. B.: *Der Ursprung des Weltkriegs*. Vol. 2. Berlin, 1930. 170.

250 Vermes, G.: *Tisza István...* 248. The fear of losing German alliance was the main cause of Tisza's turn according to Diószegi. (See details: *Diószegi, I.: Tisza István és a világháború*. In: Diószegi, I.: *A magyar külpolitika útjai. Tanulmányok*. Budapest, 1984).

251 *Diószegi, I.: Tisza István és a világháború...* 283–87.

252 See his speech in *Budapesti Hírlap*, June 20, 1913. Nonetheless, this principle was expressed only to avoid the intervention of powers (especially of Russia) into the Balkan affairs. Tisza himself (as a conservative liberal applying the French constitutional model, he thought that equal individual rights were enough to secure the free development of nationalities) was against the self-government (and positive discrimination) of nationalities within Hungary.

accepted the idea of an ultimatum, but it was him who tried to moderate its text.<sup>253</sup>

Berchtold finally decided – since the Hungarians came up with the Russian card – “to warn the Powers immediately in case of outbreak of a war, that Austria-Hungary did not fight for territorial aggrandisement, and did not plan to incorporate the Serbian Kingdom. But this did not exclude border corrections based on strategic considerations, or the concession of Serbian territories to other states, and temporary occupation of Serbian areas.”<sup>254</sup> But Berchtold was incorrect, when he forwarded the ultimatum. He delivered an arbitrary interpretation of the text to St. Petersburg and added: “until the war between Serbia and Austria-Hungary remains localized, the Dual Monarchy does not think of territorial conquest.” With this step Berchtold simply wanted to secure the Russian neutrality, but this meant an additional condition indeed, which was refused by the Russians. Furthermore, he meant something different under border corrections than the Hungarians. Thallóczy’s diary mentions that Berchtold and Bilinski advised the acquisition of Belgrade (!) and Šabac as border corrections on 19 July, 1914 (which was also against the plans of regaining the Sanjak of Novipazar), and did not forget to compensate Romania and Bulgaria with Serbian territories.<sup>255</sup>

Those, who were supporting the idea of energetic steps argued that “Serbia could not pursue a fair policy toward us, because she was convinced that she could do anything because Russia would defend her. This belief or legend has to be tested, because we cannot live longer under these circumstances. ... a new era will begin, as it was at Valmy.”<sup>256</sup> This means that they were aware of the possible consequences, including the Russian intervention. “Hoyos who was sent by the Emperor’s letter to Germany ‘caught fire’ and annexed Serbia. Tisza poured cold water on them (at the Joint Council of Ministers) and led them back to the realities. The King agrees with your ideas to avoid the annexation of any Serbian territories.”<sup>257</sup>

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253 Tisza István írásai és beszédei 5... Nr. 434.

254 Ibid. Nr. 436.

255 Ö-U.A. VIII. Nr. 10389.

256 Báró Burián István naplói... 108. July 22, 1914.

257 Ibid. 106–07. July 7 and 12, 1914.

This statement was necessary not only to decrease the possibilities of the Russian intervention, but also to moderate the Italian demands on compensation.<sup>258</sup>

So, the politicians of Austria-Hungary primarily wanted to break out from the diplomatic stalemate by an attack on Serbia, secondly, they wanted to punish the unruly state for the murder (this was the ideological basis of intervention). Territorial consequences were not among the major goals – this was confirmed by the fact that the standpoints regarding the territorial claims were not consistent!

The analyzed group of Hungarians did not calculate with the annexation of Serbia at all. There is no sign of this in the diaries of Burián or Thallóczy prior to 1914: whenever they mentioned plans regarding the partition of Serbia they immediately added that this was not their idea, or it should be executed by other small states of the Balkans. At the outbreak of the war their ideas were quite moderate compared to the others. This changed radically only after 1916. It is true that the annexation of Mačva and Negotin appeared in the diary of Burián early in November, 1914, but it was a small area regarding its extent, although geostrategically significant.<sup>259</sup> This territory was to secure the connection between Hungary and Bulgaria (even the plans of railway connection to Turkey were elaborated), while at the same time it separated the inimical Romania and Serbia. The region was rich in natural resources (ores), which were needed by the army and industrial circles of Rimamurány-Salgótarján Iron Company, furthermore it facilitated the control of the traffic on river Danube. The annexation of Serbia to Hungary remained an unpreferred outcome as it would have strengthened the Slavic element in the country and weakened the 'Magyar' supremacy. The incorporation of Serbia into the Austrian part was also an undesirable outcome, because it could have led to the federalization of Austria, and later to that of Hungary, or it would have promoted the way to *trialism*, which was refused by this pressure group. It could have also resulted in the change of the settled equilibrium between the constituents of the Dual Monarchy, which was the basis of

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258 Ibid. 109. July 27, 1914.

259 Ibid. 128–29. November 3, 1914.

legitimation for the Tisza party against the radical 48-ers. Such a change might have removed the Tisza-party from political power.<sup>260</sup>

But a war without any result was against the interests of soldiers and banks. So, this Hungarian group had to articulate a coherent and executable Balkan policy contrary to the conventional trends, that would make it possible to ameliorate the worsening geopolitical situation of the country (creating a new buffer zone to counterbalance the loss of Serbia and Romania along the southern borders), and could be viable and profitable at least economically (as annexation was refused by this group).

This lobby did not oppose the idea of territorial aggrandisement, but wanted to realise it not at the cost of Serbia. This was the core idea of the Albanian-Bulgarian buffer zone concept. In his memorandum (15 March 1914) Tisza explained that the only viable way to ameliorate Austria's position was the incorporation of Bulgaria into the Triple alliance, and the creation of a new Balkan League led by Bulgaria.<sup>261</sup> The realization of this plan could have prevented a war against Serbia. But this plan was neither supported by Germany, nor by Hoyos, Conrad and Berchtold in peaceful circumstances, until the death of the heir apparent.

Therefore this Hungarian group propagated the dismemberment of Serbia between her neighbors instead of its annexation. Burián wrote to Tisza on 27 July 1914: *"The Romanian king is frightened and hesitating /whether to support Austria-Hungary or not, thus losing the opportunity either to get Transylvania or the Negotin district/. He is hungry for the Negotin district, but the Bucharest Peace Treaty forbade changes. For the future we may promise only that we will consider the balance*

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260 The Hungarians were sticking to the agreement made in 1867, because any changes like the above mentioned trialism could create a multiplayer bargaining position, in which any two parties could cooperate against the third (which would be Hungary knowing the feelings of Francis Ferdinand). In order to avoid isolation, Hungary would have to give rights continuously to the Slavs in Hungary. Tisza wanted to avoid such constellations. He even refused the the immediate broadening of suffrage and wanted to implement it only after the proportion of ethnic Hungarians grew over 66% (in 1910 it was 50% without Croatia). He considered twenty-thirty more years enough to reach this, thinking that such an ethnic pattern would stabilize the country's position (and his party's power as well).

261 Ö-U.A. VII. Nr. 9482.

*of power between the Balkan states. So – in case we have the opportunity –, not only Bulgaria can get a piece of Serbia, but Romania, Greece and Albania too.”*<sup>262</sup>

Paradoxically, the mutilation of Serbia arose in 1914 because of the Italian ally. Italians wanted compensation even in case of temporary occupation of Serbia, even if there were not any territorial concessions given to Austria. The compensation for Italy would have been the Albanian Valona, which would have enabled Rome to close the Otranto Strait. *“I guess we may give Valona to Italy, if Serbia loses Macedonia,*<sup>263</sup> *its Albanian territories, Šabac, or the northeastern parts of the country – inhabited by Romanians. In that case Macedonia could be given to Bulgaria, southern Albania to Greece, and we could create a viable Albania around Skutari with Antivari acquired from Montenegro including the Sanjak of Novibazar. An independent Albania having common borders with Austria-Hungary would be a good compensation – together with the sharpening of the Greek-Italian rivalry – for the Italian rise in power after their acquisition of Valona”* – wrote Tisza and Burián.<sup>264</sup> However, Thallóczy claimed Valona to be the key of a viable Albania and also a key position against Austria-Hungary, thus – in his opinion – the loss of the Otranto Strait could not be compensated by the acquisition of the Sanjak of Novipazar.

In this latter concept the mutilation of Serbia was not merely an element of the compensation of the small states any more, it became the integral part of Austria-Hungary's Adria-policy to promote her interests against Italian penetration. The desire to create a Greater Albania clearly marks this change – *the Balkan states get compensation in turn of the creation of the new state, or to counterbalance the Italian 'Vordrang', the punishment or mutilation of Serbia is only a secondary effect, not the main aim any more.*

This meant that the Italian problem – which made the temporary occupation of Serbia futile and unreasonable owing to the necessary territorial concessions given to Italy – also influenced Austria-

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262 Burián to Tisza, July 27, 1914. MREZSLT 44 b fond Tisza-Balogh iratok 10a/9. 145–47.

263 In that case the Austrian railway project could have been realized through the Sanjak and the new Bulgarian territories.

264 Tisza to Burián, July 28, 1914. MREZSLT, 44 b fond, Tisza-Balogh iratok, 10a/9. 145–57.

Hungary's behaviour, which then shifted more likely towards a war with territorial consequences. The regaining of the Sanjak had been a permanent question since 1908 due to its geostrategical significance (it was demanded as compensation or punishment in 1913 during the interallied war and during the Serbian advance in Albania in October 1913): it could detach the two Serbian states from each other, while securing the economic outlet to Albania and the Macedonian railways).

The 20th of July 1914 brought new combinations: the unification of Montenegro and Serbia arose enthroning the Njeguš-dynasty after the dismissal of the Karadjordjević.<sup>265</sup> After the occupation of Serbia the question became more problematic. Conrad urged the annexation of Serbia at any cost, he was not bothered by the consequences it might cause in the structure of the empire. General Sarkotić also shared his opinion, but Khuen-Héderváry (ban of Croatia) and Tisza refused the idea. Burián, as recently appointed Joint Minister of Foreign Affairs, stuck between the two groups. He wanted an independent, but weak and mutilated Serbia and the acquisition of the Sanjak of Novibazar to have a common border with Albania. He argued that Serbia and Montenegro should be separated.

Contrary to him Count Gyula Andrássy (representing the Hungarian political opposition) came up with the idea of creating a Switzerland in the Balkans, which would be comprised of Serbia, Montenegro and Albania – presumably under Austrian influence (similar to the plans of Calice and Beck in the 1890s). But Burián thought it would be impossible to establish longlasting Austro-Hungarian influence in such a state conglomerate weakened by internal tensions.<sup>266</sup> Furthermore, the hunger of the Bulgarians also began to grow: they wanted to delimit the spheres of influence between Grocka and Smederevo after the Serbian defeat in 1915. Burián replied that due to the economic significance of the region it would be better to realize the common Hungarian-Bulgarian border through Hungarian territorial gains (instead of Bulgarian). Since Bulgaria also demanded the Niš-Priština-Prizren line, which endangered the Austro-Hungarian outlet to Albania through the

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265 Hubka military attaché. *Báró Burián István naplói...* 151.

266 Ibid. 167. January 7 and 16, 1916.

Sanjak of Novibazar, Kosovo again became an 'apple of discord' this time between Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria.

We have heard the opinion of some politicians, but how did the Hungarian public opinion relate to the Serbs? Paradoxically, it was the Serbians – being accused of endangering the integrity of Hungary – who removed a person, who also meant a constant threat to the Hungarian state concept – Francis Ferdinand. The Hungarian elite gained success in short term, while on the long run it lost everything by initiating “a war without territorial consequences”.

The indoctrination of the war towards the public opinion at first glance seemed to be quite problematic owing to this paradox. However average people did not know too much about the aspirations and plans of the heir apparent, therefore the whole frustration was poured onto Serbia. We are going to show how this worked – through a small provincial paper, called 'Eger':<sup>267</sup>

The mood was enthusiastic, but not free of contradictory acts. The press exaggerated the moral superiority of Austria-Hungary (the superiority was constantly expressed earlier as well, sometimes in peaceful 'paternalistic' way, but was hardly ever put into the field of 'morality'), emphasizing Vienna's "tolerance", as Austria-Hungary did not attack Serbia immediately, but gave opportunity to investigate and settle the question by diplomatic measures. (It is definitely not tolerance, as everybody who is accused of something is entitled to have independent investigation and jurisdiction before he is claimed to be guilty). Enrolled soldiers sang the famous 'Kossuth-song', which was not only anachronistic, but had nothing to do with the Serbs. Another song, the 'Beware doggish Serbia, You won't get Bosnia' was popular too, revealing that average people might think, the bid was only Bosnia and not the existence of Greater Hungary or the maintenance of the structure of the dualistic state and its vertical (classes) and horizontal (nationalities) social system (which was well-known in political circles). The leader of Heves County, Viktor Majzik spoke about a

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267 Excerpts from the weekly paper, *Eger*, July–August, 1914.

war of self-defense, and antagonistically called it “war for rest, war for peace”. The “*si vis pacem, para bellum*” mood was abundant everywhere. Majzik stated that the Serbs “attacked our land”, which was not true – the attack was targeted to the dynasty. Lajos Szmrecsányi, the archbishop of Eger called the hated Francis Ferdinand martyr, and drew parallelism between the recent Serbian behavior and 1848. From historical perspective, this was not the best comparison, as in 1848 the Serbs rather defended the dynasty’s interest. Hysteria spread (and was spread by agents) everywhere: “Serbian spies” were arrested, molested. In Eger even an old lady, being unable to speak Hungarian, was beaten up: later it became clear that she was the new French teacher just arriving from Debrecen.

Of course, these words were needful to enhance the morale and motivation of the troops – the politicians were sure that the soldiers did not want to die for the Balkan interests of Austria-Hungary (and for the interests of the Hungarian political elite). Without the murder of the heir apparent it could have been difficult to expect enthusiastic mood. Early on 18 October 1913 when the first ultimatum was delivered to Belgrade<sup>268</sup> due to the Serbian advance to Albania during the Balkan Wars, Burián expressed his feelings that “*the war would not be popular in Austria-Hungary, if we did not target great aims to achieve*” (like territorial aggrandisement, annihilation of Serbia). Thallóczy’s diary also reveals the apathy, fears and impotence in political and civil circles during the two Balkan Wars (see next chapter).<sup>269</sup> But the murder of the ‘*Thronfolger*’ made it possible for the Hungarian elite to come up with the idea of the “war without territorial consequences” – without this it could have been difficult to explain why to wage war and die for ‘nothing’. This ‘nothing’ – the maintenance of the power of the political elite and the structure of the state – was not too attractive for the masses, while the ‘*Schlagwort*’ “territorial integrity” could still mobilize thousands – although not everyone.

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268 The ultimatum was successful in 1913, probably that’s why politicians wanted to come up with this again in 1914, in a hope that it would be accepted.

269 Thallóczy, October 18, 1913.

## Hesitation, Indecision or Astuteness? The Foreign Policy of Austria-Hungary in 1912–13 Based on the Diary of Ludwig von Thallóczy

Lajos Thallóczy, this late theoretician of Hungarian foreign policy entered into the political life in 1886, when he began to work as a secretary of Benjámín Kállay, who was then Austria-Hungary's Joint Minister of Finance and thus governor of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This experience determined his political views. He was appointed Head of Department at Austria-Hungary's Joint Ministry of Finance in 1908; during the Balkan Wars he was promoted to the rank of Real Internal Privy Counselor. Soon he reached the 3<sup>rd</sup> rank – the highest level for a civil servant in the Monarchy. In 1915–16, he was the civil governor in occupied Serbia.<sup>270</sup> He was lucky enough to die before the collapse of Austria-Hungary in a train accident, when he was traveling back to Serbia from the funeral of Francis Joseph in 1916.

Although he was a civil servant of the *joint* ministries, he also tried to promote the foreign political interests of a *Hungarian* pressure group represented by Count István Tisza, Prime Minister from 1913 and Baron István Burián, Joint Minister of Finance 1903–12, successor of Kállay.<sup>271</sup> He was clever enough to remain in shade and influence politics behind the scene. As a disciplined historian and well-known albanologist, he had unchallenged merits in creating the independent Albania and the

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270 Originally published in Demeter, G.: *Hesitation, indecision or astuteness? The foreign policy of Austria-Hungary in 1912-1913 based on the diary of Lajos Thalloczy*. In: Grebenarov, A. (ed.): 100th Anniversary of the Balkan Wars. Sources and Documents. Sofia, 2015. 438–51. For Thallóczy see: Szabó, D.: *Lajos Thallóczy, als Zivillandeskommissär im besetzten Serbien*. In: Ress, I.–Juzbašić, Dž.–Gottsmann, A. (Hrsg.): *Lajos Thallóczy der Historiker und Politiker*. Sarajevo–Budapest, 2010. 171–80. For his Bulgarian activity see: *Peykovska, P.: Lajos Thallóczy's Diary about Bulgaria and Austria–Hungary's Foreign Policy during the Balkan Wars (2 June 1912–26 November 1913)*. In: *Peykovska, P.–Demeter, G.: Bulgaria and Hungary at War (1912–1918)*. Budapest-Sofia, 2013. (in Bulgarian).

271 For their political concept regarding the relationship between Austria and Hungary see: *Somogyi, É.: Die Staatsrechtlichen Ansichten von Lajos Thallóczy*. In: Ress, I.–Juzbašić, Dž.–Gottsmann, A. (Hrsg.): *Lajos Thallóczy...* 115–28.

Albanian national consciousness.<sup>272</sup> He wrote the first concise Albanian history (also used by pupils at schools!) translated by his agent, Zef Zurani to Albanian. He was the first western scholar, who tried to create the myth of Skanderbeg as an anti-Turkish Christian hero (after the attempt of Albanian Pashko Vasa in 1879),<sup>273</sup> serving as an instrument for the unification of the Albanian nation. The idea to create a nation based on common language, thus diminishing the role of religious differences and in this way diverging Albanians from the Ottomans was also his initiative. Geographer-adventurers with good local connections, like Baron Ferenc Nopcsa,<sup>274</sup> who collected information about the internal situation in Albania, were among his students.<sup>275</sup>

He also had substantial field experience: when the soldiers and civil servants of Austria-Hungary were sent on holiday, their task was regularly to collect as many data as possible from the visited area. He participated in creating the network of secret service on the peninsula. His talent as a conspirator was discovered after his first trip to Albania early in the 1880s, when he managed to organize a small rebellion. In the summer of 1913 his task was to describe Albanian internal situation:<sup>276</sup> in order to avoid any suspect, he travelled through Russia (where he collected statistical data on Łódź and other Polish industrial cities)<sup>277</sup> to Constantinople, passed around Greece with his agents to

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272 Csaplár-Degovics, K.: *Ludwig von Thallóczy und die Albanologie: Skizzen eines Experiments zur Nationsbildung*. In: Ress, I.–Juzbašić, Dž.–Gottsmann, A. (Hrsg.): *Lajos Thallóczy...* 141–64.

273 Although recent studies has proved that he was a quite controversial personality. Csaplár-Degovics, K.: *Az albán nemzettévalás kezdetei (1878–1913)*. *A Rilindja és az államalapítás korszaka*. Budapest, 2010. 177–78; Schmitt, O. J.: *Skanderbeg. Der neue Alexander auf dem Balkan*. Regensburg, 2009.

274 Later self-made pretender of the Albanian throne. Csaplár-Degovics, K.: *Az albán nemzettévalás kezdetei...* 43; See further: Elsie, R.: *A Biographical Dictionary of Albanian History*. London–New York, 2013. 335–37.

275 Csaplár-Degovics, K.: *Az albán nemzettévalás kezdetei...* 176–77.

276 That is why he did not follow and comment the diplomatic achievements of the Bucharest Peace Treaty.

277 See: NSZL MS. *Néhai Dr. Thallóczy Lajos osztályfőnök hátrahagyott iratai sztenographált részének átírása*. Fol. Hung. 1677. Bosniaca, IX/3. 608–09, 613. The following data may illustrate that he considered his secondary task seriously: Łódź had 569 industrial units with 1 539 000 spindles, 36 384 looms and 81 000 workers. The total product of silk industry was 16 441 000 rubles, while industrial output of textiles was 187 million rubles (2300 rubles/person). In 1910 other forms of industry produced only 10 million rubles with 8000 workers (1200

reach his final destination. His mission was so confidential, that he did not put down the achievements in his diary, which – compared to other talkative parts – happened rarely.

Beyond the scientific circle an unofficial 'secret service' was working around him.<sup>278</sup> The above mentioned Zurani contributed to the smuggling of weapons into Albania with the knowledge of Austrian authorities. Thallóczy's talent was also appreciated by Rappaport and Ippen (also members of the diplomatic corps with field experience), official delegates of Austria-Hungary in London sent for the delimitation of Albania in 1913.<sup>279</sup> Thallóczy contributed to offering proposals for the Albanian border and for possible territorial concessions to the neighboring countries.<sup>280</sup>

The 'triumvirate' of Tisza, Burián and Thallóczy was following the concept of Andrassy and Kállay. As an albanologist, Thallóczy had a crucial role in creating a political program for this lobby: while the Austrian war-party of Conrad was focusing on the destruction of Serbia (and Italy), the Hungarian group wanted to shift Austria-Hungary's sphere of influence from the Morava-Vardar axis to the Albanian coast. Due to the strong Russian support of Serbia, this group refrained from the annexation of the neighboring state, thus reaching Saloniki that way (anyway the incorporation or annihilation of Serbia would have meant trialism, that the Hungarian elite feared more than a war with Russia). They thought that the creation of Albania and its connection to the Bosnian railways might also secure Austro-Hungarian economic outlet and in that case Italy would be unable to close down the Otranto Strait.

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rubles/capita; steel industry was leading among them with 4 million). 13% of workers was children, the proportion of adult males reached only 55%. The salaries reached 29 675 000 or 333 rubles per person (16% of the output). In Russian cities the per capita budget reached 4.36 kopek, in Polish territories only 1.8. The proportion of educational and charity costs from the budget reached 4,6% in Warsaw, while in Moscow it was 18% and in St. Petersburg 24%. In Poland 49% of the lands were peasant landholdings, meaning a 7.2% increase within two years, large estates represented 36% of the cultivated land, showing an 8% decrease within two years. Lower classes of nobility owned 6%, towns 3%, the state 6%.

278 See his staying in Constantinople, *Thallóczy*, 641. Description of his Albanian travels in 1913 has been found recently in a separate dossier.

279 *Thallóczy*, IX/1. 544–45.

280 *Ibid.* VIII/8. 365.

The creation of Albania became of primary importance during the Balkan Wars, that is why Austria-Hungary insisted on Serbia's retreat from the coast. As a recompensation Macedonia was offered, because the exacerbation of Bulgarian-Serbian antagonism was also another instrument which was utilized by this group.<sup>281</sup> Unfortunately the competition between the different pressure groups decreased the efficiency of Austria-Hungary's foreign policy in 1912–13.

Thallóczy's diary is of primary importance for the examination of the diplomacy of the Dual Monarchy, because he was present not only at the official assemblies of the *delegations*, but was also invited to informal meetings, where most of the brainstorming took place. Through his friends he was able to collect information about many rumours, personal interests and even antagonisms that formed the official policy of Austria-Hungary behind the curtains. In this sense his diaries provide us much more, that can be reconstructed from officially published documents, like the „Österreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik“ or the notes on the Ministry Councils. He was not impartial: as a member of a political pressure group that temporarily lost its influence in 1912–13, he could not remain objective when writing his accounts and giving an analysis of decisions made.

Contrary to Burián, who wrote his diary to himself in order to explain and confirm his thoughts and deeds, and definitely not to the broad publicity, Thallóczy decided to write his memoirs as a publicist. Being disappointed from the internal and external political failures of Austria-Hungary, he dared criticize his opponents and political comrades in a sharp and sarcastic tone, although he knew it well, that his documents (after being deciphered by his secretary) would be used by the forthcoming generation as a valuable document of that era. His writing is full of anecdotes, stories alternating with strict facts and numbers. This uneasy personality was a 'real Hungarian' regarding his psychical features – he wrote very pessimistically.<sup>282</sup> Reading his

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281 *Báró Burián István naplói...*

282 By 1912 he had become mentally and psychically tired, and constantly blamed others for the failures. In his diary he not only offended and insulted the Balkan nations with his strict and unjust words, but also his colleagues, senior and superior officers– even the heir apparent. It

detailed accounts one may come to the conclusion that the collapse of the overbureaucratized Austria-Hungary was necessary and inevitable.

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When Berchtold became the Joint Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1912 after the sudden death of Aehrenthal, it also meant that the Hungarians' political influence lost ground and they were pulled out from decision-making (none of the three joint ministers represented Hungarian goals then). The growing conceptual and personal difference between the Hungarian pressure group and Berchtold soon became evident. Berchtold criticized Aehrenthal's policy regarding the annexation and the railway-question, claiming that these adventures had ruined the prestige of and trust toward Austria-Hungary,<sup>283</sup> and that Aehrenthal let himself be influenced by the concept of Burián, that time Joint Minister of Finance and Governor of Bosnia.<sup>284</sup> After the death of the previous – in a very critical period –, and the dismissal of the latter (he was substituted by the Polish Bilinski)<sup>285</sup> nobody represented 'Hungarian' interests at the highest levels. When finally Count Tisza became Prime Minister of Hungary in 1913, he was suffering from lack of information in foreign political questions. Although he had a clear concept to win Bulgaria as an ally, thus compensating the loss of Romania, he had no instruments to realize this, until Burián was appointed as a Mediating Minister between Francis Joseph and the Hungarian government. In this way the direct influence on decision-makers had been restored by mid-1913.

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is worth further investigation how a well-trained diplomat and official became frustrated under the heavy burden and the lack of success, and what threats it may impose on collective work. Thallóczy even used antisemitic tone owing to the frustration that his social position did not change within the last ten years, however his talent and knowledge was utilized and exploited as well. But hardly any of his advices was realised. His desire was to become a baron, but he did not obtain the title (he was born as a protestant and was not a nobleman). Remaining unrewarded, he felt his social position unstable as he experienced that many of his rivals overtook him in the competition for social safety and recognition when they became members of the high-society.

283 Thallóczy, VIII/5. 213.

284 Ibid. IX/1. 445.

285 As Berchtold was *de iure* Hungarian, and 2 Hungarians were not allowed to serve at the same time within the three joint ministers, Burián had to be dismissed.

For Thallóczy it seemed that the new Minister of Foreign Affairs had no clear concept on what to do in case of the probable collapse of Turkey. In his opinion Berchtold lacked strong will and was to pursue a reactive and not a proactive-preventive foreign policy. This annoyed Thallóczy's circles.<sup>286</sup> According to the malicious Hungarian Berchtold's idea was simple he wanted to put as many soldiers as possible along the border, but for this he needed money.<sup>287</sup> Unfortunately, Berchtold did not recognise that the question of military power was determined partly by the calamities of Hungarian internal affairs (the 48-er opposition being in power between 1905–10 refrained from voting extra military expenditures).

The first rumours about the Balkan League reached Thallóczy very late, on 19 September, 1912. Austrian diplomats were erroneously convinced that it was an anti-Turkish alliance created by Charikov (!),<sup>288</sup> and they did not know anything at all about its anti-Austrian character. On 1st October Thallóczy admitted that the Balkan states tricked not only Austria-Hungary, but Russia, the creator of the Balkan Alliance too.<sup>289</sup> Although the occupation of Belgrade immediately arose in certain Viennese circles to stop the further evolution of events, Thallóczy and his colleagues thought that it would mean a war with Russia, therefore refrained from advising preventive measures. They were convinced that a showdown between the two great alliance systems would come next after the Balkan war. The fear of Russia (including the Hungarian Minister of Defense, Baron Samu Hazay) and the war mesmerized the Austrian diplomacy.<sup>290</sup> Thallóczy recognized that Berchtold was unable to endure the burden: neither he wanted to undertake the responsibility for initiating a war, nor to be labelled as the one who did nothing at all. "*Berchtold is a great lord, but a weak hand*" – summarized Thallóczy his conversation with the foreign minister. Although the soldiers were not zealous for the reoccupation of Novipazar calling it a 'foxtrap',

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286 *Thallóczy*, VIII/5. 214.

287 *Ibid.* 213.

288 *Ibid.* VIII/6. 247.

289 *Ibid.* 258.

290 *Ibid.* 262.

Thallóczy warned that linking Novipazar to the Bosnian railways (which were just under negotiation) would be advantageous in the future either to enhance connections with Albanian lands or to promote the way to Saloniki bypassing Serbia.<sup>291</sup>

Thallóczy realized quite early that Turkey have collapsed by November, 1912<sup>292</sup> and this required the reorientation of Berchtold's foreign policy which did not calculate with the Turkish defeat.<sup>293</sup> He did not believe that the localization plans of the Powers and their insistence on *status quo* would work at all, because Bulgaria would never accept this after a victorious war. Powers could only block the sea, but not the inland, and an unilateral Austrian action only would be possible against Serbia, which Russia would never tolerate, but not against Bulgaria.<sup>294</sup> Thallóczy argued that the concert of Powers (1) had never really worked, (2) and it always resulted in territorial losses for Turkey. Thus accepting collective initiatives would immediately mean the abandonment of status quo (mostly propagated by Austria-Hungary) as well.

Having free access to secret military reports Thallóczy gives a typical example for the demoralization of Ottoman troops. The unpaid Moslem soldiers of Plevlje sold more than 25 thousand weapons to the Montenegrins (non-believers and future enemies) just before the outbreak of hostilities, as accounted witnesses from the starving Turkish troops numbering 1300 men who retreated to Bosnia early in November, 1912.<sup>295</sup>

Berchtold finally admitted that the status quo could not be maintained any more, but he was still unable to give a clear concept.

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291 Ibid 247. August 19, 1912.

292 When the newspapers wrote that the Turks had won –Thallóczy ironically criticized the press – one could be sure that the Bulgarians were the real winners (November 3, 1912). *Thallóczy*, VIII/7. 290. The reasons for the Turkish defeat were given by the consul in Janina as follow. (1) The Ottomans dismissed large number of soldiers, who had been serving for many years in the Tripolitanian War, just before the outbreak of the Balkan War. (2) Young Turk and conservative quarrels ruined the moral of the army. (3) Military supply was below any standard. Ibid. IX/1. 520.

293 *Thallóczy*, IX/2. 571.

294 Ibid. VIII/6. 262.

295 Ibid. 395.

Thallóczy wrote sarcastically that Austria-Hungary was the first one giving up the status quo unofficially, but the last one which accepted it officially.<sup>296</sup> *"We cannot bind ourselves to a cadaver"* – summarized Thallóczy – *"Austria-Hungary has lost her defense line by the collapse of Turkey, the southern borders became more vulnerable than ever, as the new combinations are always more dangerous than old ones"*.<sup>297</sup>

During the days of brainstorming on how to secure Austrian interests the question of the occupation of Albania – among many ideas – arose opposing the Serbian advance to the Adriatic.<sup>298</sup> A possible Albanian and Montegrin union was refused by Thallóczy, such as giving Scutari to Montenegro.<sup>299</sup> Rappaport warned that cutting all connections between Ottomans and Albania might anger Moslem Albanians, therefore instead of independence the autonomy of Albania was proposed. The Germans warned that the renouncement from the Sanjak of Novipazar in 1908 was a mistake, because it made impossible to reach Albania through Bosnia.<sup>300</sup> *"Everybody was saying in the Foreign Ministry what had to be done instead of telling what is to be done now"* – wrote Thallóczy, although he admitted that the Germans were right.<sup>301</sup>

Another interesting episode regarding the Albanian question and the shortage of qualified and capable decision-makers was also mentioned by Thallóczy in May, 1913. He criticized sharply the idea that the consuls of the six Great Powers were proposed to be the head of the controlling committee in Albania, because it would only result in rivalry and indecision.<sup>302</sup> Neither Rappaport nor Ippen had any ideas how to create a temporary government in Albania with real executive power, without basic institutions, lacking social support. Thallóczy offered to keep the government in Valona, expanded and supervised by the delegates of the Powers.<sup>303</sup> He claimed that Ippen had no elaborate plan,

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296 Ibid. VIII/7. 295.

297 Ibid. VIII/7. 296.

298 Ibid. 297.

299 Ibid. VIII/8. 374.

300 Ibid. VIII/7. 290. November 2, 1912.

301 Ibid. 303–04.

302 Ibid. IX/1. 533.

303 Ibid. 535.

he was just an executer of decision-makers, who also did not have a clear insight of the events. Berchtold finally called Thallóczy to ask for his proposals. Somebody advised Berchtold to search for a Catholic ruler for Albania and not a Protestant, arguing that Moslems would rather prefer faithful believers to heretics. Thallóczy warned Berchtold, that most of the Albanian Moslems were bektāši, which – according to 'eager Muslims' – almost equaled with 'free masonry and heresy'.<sup>304</sup> Furthermore, Albanians living in the north were Catholics only on paper, they were very far away from real confession. A catholic ruler would mean nothing for these tribal people, who would only listen to the local priests, but could exacerbate religious differences suppressed up to now. Middle Albanians were rather patriots than Moslems, but each wanted to be the leader of the country, while orthodox southern Albanians could become Serbs or Greeks easily, depending on who would pay more. Berchtold was astonished by the account of Thallóczy, who also warned him that the positions of Prince Wilhelm von Wied were very weak, and he would soon be expelled from the country. Thallóczy pointed out ironically that a woman would be the best solution, because – according to their traditions – Albanians would not harm her. Berchtold complained that Ippen wanted to work on international basis which hindered the promotion of Austrian interests, while Thallóczy replied that Ippen had told him just the opposite. Berchtold was surprised, and finally it turned out that nobody gave him proper information about what was going on at lower levels (31 May, 1913).

The above mentioned episodes prove that diplomats were quite embarrassed – it was rumoured that the heir apparent wanted war with the Serbs, but peace with the Russians, which seemed to be an impossible combination. Diplomats feared that if Serbian presence at the Adriatic led to war, it would cause Russia's intervention leading to the escalation of the conflict (7 November, 1912).<sup>305</sup> The Serbian victory over Turkey even contributed to the settling of the long disputed

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304 Ibid. 544.

305 Ibid. VIII/7. 300.

Bosnian railway question between the Austrian and Hungarian party (both wanted to secure the iron-mines themselves).<sup>306</sup>

Contrary to the opinion of the Ballhausplatz, Count Tisza did not consider the results of the Balkan War dangerous for Austria-Hungary, indeed he thought it was quite useful, because it ended a stalemate and made the realization of the plans regarding Albania possible. But the public opinion was very pessimistic, since the spiritless hesitation of the diplomats influenced the public opinion through the press.<sup>307</sup> Conrad claimed that the hesitant policy of Berchtold would ruin the moral of the army.<sup>308</sup> The financial agony even worsened the situation. The mobilization in Bosnia cost 240 thousand francs daily with no result, except the loss of prestige, internal and international trust. The constant governmental crisis made Hungary ridiculous in the eyes of Austrians.<sup>309</sup> *"The Tatars are eating up each other"* – wrote Thallóczy about the Hungarian elite.<sup>310</sup> The dilettantism and the lack of cooperation among high-rank officials angered the publicity further: the Joint Minister of War, Auffenberg, increased the number of soldiers contrary to the will of Berchtold, therefore he was soon dismissed.<sup>311</sup> Even the bankers began to think that a war would profit more than a peace like this:<sup>312</sup> the mobilization of the forces cost altogether 1 billion francs for Austria-Hungary in the two Balkan Wars without any materialized result, while the whole budget of the state reached 6 billion.<sup>313</sup> The spent amount almost equaled with the costs in Bulgaria, which fought two wars! The German ambassador, Tschirschky pointed out on 9 November, 1912 that the leading diplomats were still saying what they did not want, instead of telling what they wanted.<sup>314</sup> *"The country was so*

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306 Ibid. 307.

307 Ibid. 306.

308 Ibid. IX/1. 511.

309 Ibid. VIII/8. 378.

310 Ibid. 381.

311 Ibid. 365.

312 Ibid. VIII/6. 264, VIII/8. 380. Financiers refused to give the required 950 million francs credit to the Hungarian and Austrian Minister of Finances for mobilization. Ibid. VIII/8. 353.

313 Ibid. XI/1. 486.

314 Ibid. VIII/7. 309.

*powerless and apathetic, that an energetic conqueror could take over power easily as it happened to Turkey*" – wrote Thallóczy.<sup>315</sup>

The group of Conrad and Krobatin wanted war against Serbia, partly to restore prestige, partly because the moral of the army declined quickly, but according to Thallóczy Berchtold resisted "*since no Power in Europe wanted war and plundering the carcass is not honor*". Finally, in November, 1912 the soldiers decided themselves to occupy the Sanjak of Novipazar in order to create a common border with the future Albania. But Thallóczy said that it was then too late, because the negotiations for the armistice between the fighting parties seemed to be successful: such a decision should have been made earlier.<sup>316</sup>

Later emperor Francis Joseph pointed out that if the Serbs did not withdraw from Durazzo, it would mean war, but Austria-Hungary did not want to initiate preventive war without any Serbian insult that could serve as a good pretext.<sup>317</sup> Such a good occasion occurred for the showdown, when the Serbian troops insulted Prohaska, consul of Austria-Hungary. Thallóczy mentioned that the Russian tsar had written a letter to Francis Joseph, in which he pointed out that such an insult would require a revenge and in that case Russia would not intervene.<sup>318</sup> In Thallóczy's opinion this was the moment when the bombardment of Belgrade would not cause a diplomatic incident. But after this opportunity slipped away an intimidation of Serbs without serious reasons would have been equal with aggression – analysed the situation Krobatin, the new Joint Minister of War. As most of the high-ranked military officers wanted *trialism*,<sup>319</sup> Thallóczy, who represented Hungarian interests, deeply despised them.

The war and peace parties of Austria were unable to reach an agreement on foreign political questions. When the Ottomans wanted to smuggle 30 thousand weapons to Albania through Zef Zurani, an agent of Thallóczy, the authorities of Austria-Hungary were hesitating to

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315 Ibid. XI/1. 311. November 7, 1912.

316 Ibid. VIII/8. 380–81.

317 Ibid. 383.

318 Ibid. 358. December 10, 1912.

319 Ibid. XI/1. 406.

forward them, because they received contradictory orders from the two parties, however this amount of weapons would have kept off Montenegrins from Scutari and would have promoted the positions of Austria-Hungary in Albania.<sup>320</sup> The same situation – even more ridiculous – took place, when Hasan Prishtina managed to escape from his Serbian prison in Belgrade, but the Hungarian authorities denied him to enter the country without papers – however he could have mobilized Albanians in Kosova, thus creating difficulties for the Serbs.

Finally, Austria-Hungary decided to declare her demands against Serbia – which had never been realized.<sup>321</sup> This proposal was elaborated by Bilinski, Joint Minister of Finance, chief of Thallóczy, who also wanted to push Berchtold toward a more active foreign policy, like Burián, who did the same when Aehrenthal was in charge. But Berchtold resisted to execute the plan, because the Germans refused to give support (contrary to their earlier promises)<sup>322</sup> as it could weaken German economic influence in the region.

Thallóczy clearly recognised the problem of the Romanian compensation and the hesitation of the Bulgarians early in 1913 – he claimed that the Romanians would penetrate into Bulgaria, if they lost their patience (nonetheless they would not try it without Russian encouragement – contrary to Thallóczy's belief).<sup>323</sup> He also recognised that Greece and Serbia would be a natural enemy of Bulgaria, therefore if the Serbs refused the Austrian demands, Austria-Hungary should promote the interests of Bulgaria,<sup>324</sup> as it would be also a good instrument to balance the Russian influence on the peninsula. Romania

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320 Ibid. 430. February 10, 1913.

321 This included (1) official Serbian renouncement from Bosnia, (2) full-scale prohibition of the activity of the Narodna Odrbrana, (3) recompensation of Austria-Hungary in the sanjak of Novipazar (Plevlje, Priepolje), (4) joint shipping on river Drina, (5) the acquisition of Mt. Lovćen from Montenegro, (6) building of Užice-Vardište line by Serbia that connects Bosnia with Serbia, creating a link towards river Morava, (7) free trade till 1917, then customs union with Serbia and Montenegro, (8) the creation of a Sarajevo-Mitrovica-Saloniki railroad by Austrian entrepreneurs within 6 years without Serbian objection. *Thallóczy*, XI/1. 398–400. January 9, 1913.

322 After the death of Kiderlen followed by Jagow, the German policy changed.

323 Ibid. XI/1. 432. February 12, 1913.

324 Ibid. 455.

had shown Russophile tendencies by then, since Russians promised them Transylvania in 1912 – which the Hungarian political elite knew well.<sup>325</sup> This raised a serious problem, as the Germans wanted to keep the benevolent alliance of Romania (and also tried to convince the Hungarians to give southern Transylvania to Romania) and Berchtold started to balance between the two concepts. Tarnowski, ambassador to Sofia added further that the Bulgarians would be the natural enemies of Serbia, even if their dreams about Macedonia remained unfulfilled, therefore the realization of Greater Bulgaria was not essential.<sup>326</sup> Thus, Austria-Hungary offered Serbia to obtain Macedonian territories as compensation for their withdrawal from the Adriatic. That was one of reasons for the weak Austrian support of Bulgarian claims during the peace negotiations in Bucharest (1913), another one was that Romania was backed both by Russia and Germany, and the latter simply did not take into consideration Hungarian interests. It was Germany indeed – claimed Thallóczy –, that gave free hand to Romania,<sup>327</sup> while Bulgaria was reluctant to give any concessions – although Berchtold had been convincing them for 8 weeks–, thus thwarting the policy of Austria-Hungary.

The diary contains an important element that throws different light on the Bulgarian attack against Serbia during the second Balkan War. Reading Thallóczy's diary one may come to the conclusion that the statements in early works, that Tsar Ferdinand attacked Serbia, as he was expecting Austrian intervention, are not completely groundless.<sup>328</sup> Thallóczy wrote that Austria-Hungary promised the Bulgarians to intervene in case of a Serbian-Bulgarian war, if the Bulgarians were defeated,<sup>329</sup> and in that case Serbia would be dismembered between

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325 Ibid. XI/2. 557. June 6, 1913.

326 For Tarnowski's opinion see: *Ö-U.A.* VI. Nr. 7133.

327 Thallóczy, XI/2. 578–80.

328 Mach, R. von: *Aus bevegter Balkanzeit...* 235; Bourgeois, E.–Pagés, G.: *Die Ursachen und Verantwortlichkeiten...* 356; *HHStA*, Ad. Reg. F. 23. Kt. 64. May 17, 1913. Berchtold to Tarnowski and Popper to Fanta, cited by Löding, D.: *Deutschlands und Österreich–Ungarns Balkanpolitik...* 81.

329 Thallóczy, IX/1. 500. April 19, 1913.

Romania, Bulgaria and Austria-Hungary.<sup>330</sup> This was a repetition of the offer made by Tsar Ferdinand in 1908 towards Austria-Hungary. Although officially published documents deny the possibility of an Austrian military intervention (only admitting an offer of 50 million francs), even if this was an unofficial rumour, it could have influenced the behavior of Tsar Ferdinand (as did in 1908 during the annexation crisis).<sup>331</sup> Thallóczy was quite sceptic regarding a Serbo-Bulgarian war,<sup>332</sup> and he wrote that neither Serbia, nor Bulgaria would do such a favour for Austria-Hungary to benefit from this event, anyway, neither parties had enough money to fight.<sup>333</sup> However, he also added that for Balkan states money is not essential to fight a war (29 May, 1913).<sup>334</sup>

In a talk to Bilinski on July 4th, 1913 (after the outbreak of hostilities) the possibility of an Austro-Hungarian military intervention was mentioned again, if war broke out and Bulgaria was defeated and the Romanians crossed the line officially given to them in Dobruja.<sup>335</sup> If these conditions fulfilled, Austria-Hungary would intervene and attack Serbia in order to occupy the Sanjak of Novibazar, thus creating a common border between Bosnia and Albania.<sup>336</sup> Although neither Berchtold, nor Francis Joseph was convinced by Bilinski, the above mentioned combinations were confirmed by Conrad von Hötzendorf<sup>337</sup> and appeared in Baernreither's the diary too. The latter wrote that Berchtold had told these ideas to the German ambassador, Tschirschky,<sup>338</sup> who usually (dis)informed the Bulgarian ambassador to Vienna, Salabashev (see previous chapter).

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330 Burián did not count on Russian intervention, because he supposed that Russia would never oppose Bulgaria as it is a Slavic state – wrote Thallóczy.

331 Thallóczy called this a policy of adventurers – but from the text it is not clear whether he meant the Austrian offer, or the Bulgarian behavior towards Serbia.

332 *Thallóczy*, XI/1. 531–32.

333 *Ibid.* 536–37.

334 *Ibid.* 542.

335 Thallóczy also pointed out that Romania had betrayed the Triple Alliance by his attack on Bulgaria. *Ibid.* 581.

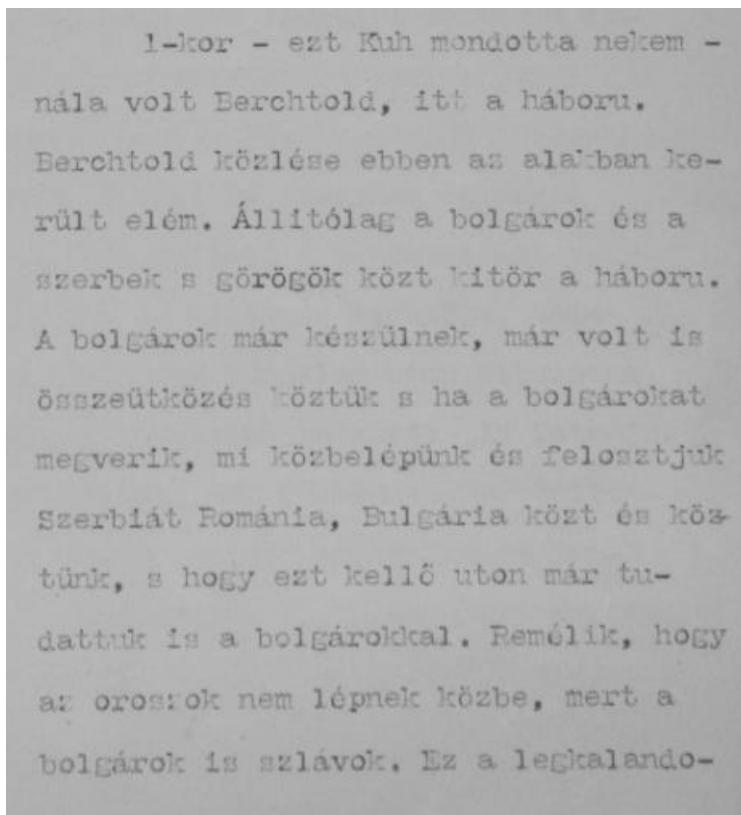
336 *Thallóczy*, XI/2. 581. July 4, 1913.

337 *Conrad von Hötzendorf, F.: Aus meiner Dienstzeit 1906–1918.* Wien, Leipzig, München, 1922. III.353.

338 *HHStA*, Nachlass Baernreither, Kt. 8. Tagebücher, November 23, 1913. Wien, and Löding, D.: *Deutschlands und Österreich-Ungarns Balkanpolitik...* 81. "Österreich habe Bulgarien darin

Therefore the thesis, that Tsar Ferdinand attacked Serbia without any (Austrian) encouragement is flawed, and documents put the question of his personal responsibility into a different light.

### *Appendix*



1-kor - ezt Kuhn mondotta nekem -  
nála volt Berchtold, itt a háboru.  
Berchtold közlése ebben az alakban ke-  
rült elém. Állítólag a bolgárok és a  
szerbek s görögök közt kitör a háboru.  
A bolgárok már készülnek, már volt is  
összeütközés köztük s ha a bolgárokat  
megverik, mi közbelépünk és felosztjuk  
Szerbiát Románia, Bulgária közt és köz-  
tünk, s hogy ezt kellő uton már tu-  
dattuk is a bolgárokkal. Remélik, hogy  
az oroszok nem lépnek közbe, mert a  
bolgárok is szlávok. Ez a legitalando-

Thallóczy, IX/1. 500-01.

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*bestärkt Serbien anzugreifen, und Bulgarien habe Gründe gehabt auf österreichische Hilfe zu rechnen..."* – wrote Tsar Ferdinand.

de most a románok elvesztették a türel-  
müket és nem engedik „Bulgáriát nagyra  
nőni.” A hármasszövetségnek tehát ez a  
becses aggratuma ~~XXX~~ ha nem is fordult  
ellene, mindamellett már velünk sincs.

Ma reggel, illetőleg tegnap este, azt  
telefonálta a külügyi kabinet, hogy ha a  
románok, kiknek ezt tanácsoljuk, átmen-  
nek a bulgárok engedte vonalon és ha a  
bulgárokat a szerbek és görögök megverik,  
mi mozgósítunk és bevonulunk Szerbiába. .

Nemigen hittem ennek az értesítésnek,

a fáciit, hogy Bilinski szerint vagy moz-  
gósítani kell és akkor ~~///~~ háborút viselni,  
vagy békésen elintézni a dolgot. Ha a  
bolgárokat megverik, nemcsak Szerbiába,  
de a Szandzsákba is be kell menni és az  
albánokkal határt alkotni. Nem szabad  
másodszor megismételni egy mozgósítást  
és azután lefujni. Berchtold erre csak  
ötölt-hatolt, hasalt is, de azután félt-  
úgy látszik, a felelősségtől és nem hitt,  
hogy a felséget ráveszi. Bilinski szerint  
ő Bismarckot hozta fel példának, aki az

Thallóczy, IX/2. 581.

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**Publications of the Bulgarian-Hungarian History Commission, Vol. 1.**

A Magyar-Bolgár Történész Vegyes Bizottság kiadványai, 1.

Издания на Българо-унгарската историческа комисия, т. 1

**GÁBOR DEMETER**

**Diplomatic Struggle for Supremacy  
over the Balkan Peninsula (1878–1914)**

Collected studies

Responsible editor: Penka Peykovska

Institute for Historical Studies, BAS

Institute of History, RCH, HAS

First edition, 2017

Format 145/205

Prepress preparation by Institute of History, RCH, HAS

Printed in Bulgaria by Direct Services