

SOUTH-EAST EUROPEAN DIPLOMACY

100 YEARS SINCE THE BALKAN WARS

Edited By
Ionuț Cojocaru and Abidin Temizer

International Symposium South-East European Diplomacy.
100 years since the Balkan Wars

21-23 Nov., 2013

The University of South-East Europe Lumina and The Academy of Romanian
Scientists

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The Great Powers in the First Balkan Wars with Special Survey on the Activities of The British Diplomacy

Aleksandar RASTOVIĆ, PhD*

***Abstract:** In this article on the ground of the archive documents is analyzing Policy of the Great European Powers, specially the Policy of the British Diplomacy towards territorial and all other goals of the members of the Balkan League in the First Balkan War. The most severe policy showed the Austria-Hungary who tried to limit all territorial changes in favor of the maintain of the status quo in the first phase, and further to cut off territorial aspirations of the Serbian government towards her access to the Adriatic and modification of the eastern boundaries of the new Albanian state. Germany supported the standpoints of the Austrians, while official Russia pleading in favor of the Serbian goals. The most impartial was Great Britain who tried to take some sort of buffer zone between Russia and Austria, and looking for some sort of conciliation between them in order to preserve the European peace.*

***Keywords:** The Balkans, Great Powers, Turkey, The First Balkan War, Serbia*

The First Balkan War represented one of the most important events in modern political history of Southeast Europe, because on one hand, it marked the end of centuries of national liberation struggle of the member states of the Balkan League and on the other hand, abandonment of the Balkan territories by the Ottoman Empire.¹

The Great Powers were highly interested for all aspects of the First Balkan Wars, because of geostrategic and political reasons, as well as their special interests on the Balkans. However, four Powers were in particularly interested for the Balkans (Austria-Hungary and her the closest ally Germany, as well as Russia and Great Britain).

In accordance with its aggressive foreign and imperial policy which meant penetration toward Thessaloniki and Aegean Sea, Austria-Hungary have had the most reserve and negative attitude toward the Balkan allies and their military successes and territorial claims. The Vienna government took all measures to prevent territorial changes in favor of the Balkan states. Practically Austro-Hungary did all to disable Serbian access on the Adriatic Sea as well as getting a few cities in the former Kosovo vilayet. Also Austria-Hungary played the most decisive role in creation of new Albania state, as the most

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¹ A. Rastović, The British Policy towards Serbia during The First Balkan War, in: *International Thematic Collection The First Balkan War: Social and Cultural Meaning (On the 100th Anniversary of the Liberation of the Old Serbia and Macedonia 1912)*, book 1, Niš 2013, 73.

effective buffer zone to the break-through of Serbia toward Adriatic Sea. She planned to form the higher Albanian state.²

In Austria-Hungary Policy were two directions over the Balkan Affairs which were leaded by politicians on the one side and generals on the other side. It is important to stress that both of them agreed that the triumph of the Balkan nations and their ambitions or the Balkan nationalism would have disaster consequences for the Austrian empire. What was the ambition of the Austrian military Circles. They wished to see collapse of the Ottoman Empire rather than her success in the future, and to establish the Austrian authority over Serbia, Roumania and Bulgaria, even maybe and annexing of Serbia and Roumania while the politicians wanted to extended the role of the Ottoman authorities over the Balkan Peninsula.³

At the beginning of the war Austria-Hungarian diplomacy did it all in their power to maintain the present status quo in the Balkan. British ambassador in Vienna Fairfax Cartwright informed Foreign Office that policy of Austria towards the Ottoman Dominions is a not positive, but negative one. On the one hand she seeks for no territorial arrangements for herself, but on the other hands she will not permit that port of Salonika shall fall in possession of Bulgarians. Also she will not admit to Serbia to take Novipazar Sandjak.⁴ Same attitude had showed in the leading article of the semi-official Austrian newspapers Fremdenblatt on October 13, 1912. Shortly author of the article said that "Great Powers have drawn up a common program; all the Great Powers have announced in an unequivocal form to the Balkan States that they would not tolerate any infringement of the status quo".⁵ It is interesting that in the next weeks official circles of the Austria-Hungary changed his mind especially in the meaning of the term status quo. Practically they were aware that status quo has to be correct. In one report of Cartwright to Edward Grey on October 30, it is said that principle of maintenance is still held but new interpretation is appear to be given. By Cartwright "Status quo is now said to signify maintenance of a state of equilibrium between interests of the Great Powers and the Balkan States in the Near East, and not merely territorial integrity".⁶

After accepting that principle of the status quo had to be changed, Austrian diplomacy focused on the forming of the Albanian state, as the most effective buffer zone of the Serbian spreading towards the Adriatic. This attitude declared the Austrian minister for Foreign Affairs to Sir Cartwright on October 26, 1912. He said that he "didn't reject idea of creating principality of Albania either great or small even under suzerainty of the Sultan".⁷ Similar standpoint expressed and R. Kuhlmann, the German Councillor of

² M. Vojvodić, *Stojan Novaković*, Belgrade 2012, 361.

³ G. D. Clayton, *Britain and Eastern Question, Missolonghi to Gallipoli*, London 1971, 211.

⁴ British Documents on the Origin of the War 1898-1914, ed. by G. P. Gooch and H. Temperley, vol. IX, The Balkan Wars, part II, The League and Turkey, № 15, Cartwright to Nicolson, October 10, 1912, 11. (Furhter B. D.)

⁵ B. D, vol. IX, part II, № 26, Cartwright to Grey, October 14, 1912, 20.

⁶ B. D, vol. IX, part II, № 77, Cartwright to Grey, October 30, 1912, 62.

⁷ B. D, vol. IX, part II, № 64, Cartwright to Grey, October 26, 1912, 52.

Embassy at London in conversation with Edward Grey on October 28, when said that Albania might become some sort of autonomous unit.⁸

The most open views of the Austria-Hungary Policy towards the Balkan matters were showed by Count Albert Mensdorff to Grey on November 5. Those plan were composed from a few points. The first point was that all countries wouldn't pursue a policy directly hostile to Austria. It practically meant that Serbia would maintain friendly and neighborly relations with Vienna. On that way many advantages would be transfer to Serbia. As for Serbian claim for Adriatic port it would be rejected ad limine. Such claim would be proof that Belgrade didn't contemplate friendly relationships and confidence with Austria. Also if Serbia based herself upon the point of principality she could have no right to take purely Albanian territory and to do so would be an unjustified injury to legitimate Albanian goals. The third point concerning Albania and it mean that Albania must be allowed to develop freely and predominately as independent.⁹

A few days later Cartwright reported that Austrian government will refrain from making any resolution as to their reservations about alternations of the status quo in the Balkans until close the war. Minimum of Austria-Hungarian demands relate to Albania, whose will stay autonomous or independent State, and that no part of the Adriatic coast shall be held by Serbia. Even more railway route to Salonica and the freedom of that port be secured to Austria as a right for her trade. So it mean that the railway to Salonica should be internationalized.¹⁰

By the passing time attitude of the Austrian government towards Serbian aspirations for access to the Adriatic sea growing more and more sharp particularly with case of so called ill treatment of the Austrian consul Oscar Prohaska by the Serbian authorities. All the most prominent Austrian authorities repeated that his state will not permit Serbian getting out to the Adriatic. Also, Count Leopold Berchtold, the Austrian minister for Foreign Affairs instructed the Austrian diplomats to confute all so called informations about the Austrian readiness to consent that San Giovanni di Medua might be the object of transaction between the Austrian and the Serbian governments, so that it might be severed from Albania and cede to Serbia as her port. Behind those attitude was hiding the Austrian fear that Albania would disturb the neutralized strip, and that Serbia would later take this as pretext for additional claims. It is thought that this port would be become a military base.¹¹

At the same time hostilities against Serbia in Austria-Hungary growing up, particularly when the Serbian military troops entered in Durazzo town on the Albanian coast. All political circles and public opinion were united in condemnation of the Serbia. However, at the beginning of December 1912, the Austrians were ready to change partially attitude about Serbian outlet to Adriatic in sense of secure of commercial interests of Serbia on the Adriatic, but never in sense of the territorial expansion of Belgrade to the Adriatic or

⁸ B. D, vol. IX, part II, N° 70, Grey to Goshen, October 28, 1912, 55.

⁹ B. D, vol. IX, part II, N° 134, Grey to Cartwright, November 5, 1912, 102.

¹⁰ B. D, vol. IX, part II, N° 146, Cartwright to Grey, November 7, 1912, 110.

¹¹ B. D, vol. IX, part II, N° 275, Grey to Cartwright, November 25, 1912, 203.

the acquisition of a port.¹² Even more the Austrian diplomacy was ready to accept the construction of an international railway across Albania to some neutralized port on the Adriatic Sea. In one diplomatic report Sir Fairfax Cartwright indicated to his minister for Foreign Affairs that this offer was rejected with scorn by Serbian politicians.¹³

With concerning of the future of Albania, the Austrian delegation repeated well known attitude at the beginning of Conference of Ambassadors in London on December 17, 1912. that the autonomous Albania should be guaranteed and controlled exclusively by the six Powers under the sovereignty of the Sultan. At the same session was discussed question of access of the Serbia to the Adriatic Sea. Unanimously as concluded that could be no territorial access for Serbia to the Adriatic.¹⁴ It is remained ground for discussion about some commercial benefits for Serbian side.

Finally The London Conference of Ambassadors on December 20, adopted agreement with regard to the autonomy of Albania and commercial port for Serbia. Regardless of the Serbian rejection the Ambassadors accepted the compromise suggestion of Edward Grey. By his proposal Serbia would get commercial outlet on the Adriatic by international railway across one free and neutralize port, but practically this proposal wasn't convey.¹⁵ By opinion of ambassador Albert Mensdorff "a new Albanian state should be enough large in order to stand by itself".¹⁶

Discussion about eastern question of Albania was much more complicated than previous issue. On that question were the most interfered interests of the Austria-Hungary in the Balkans. The most disputable were status of the five towns Scutari, Dibra, Ipek, Djakova and Prisrend. The Austrian diplomacy seeking for new Albanian state all of them. On the other side the Russians tried to provide some sort of compensation. They were ready to leave some of them to Albania, but insisted that a few towns belong to Serbia. Some sort of diplomatic and political war was played in the future months. The Austrians could talk about giving way eventually Ipek and Prisrend, but not about Scutari, Dibra and Djakova, because without those three cities Albania could not exist as functionally state. Each of them were economic center of a large district, and in case that Albania didn't have the town in each case the Albanians who came for supplies to the district would be obliged to pay an extra duty on everything they bought.¹⁷ Austria-Hungary was ready to give way from Ipek, Prisrend, and Dibra, but not from Scutari and Djakova. In one conversation between Count Berthold and Cartwright, the Austrian minister for Foreign Affairs argued that Djakova was purely Albanian town and essential as a market for the Albanian population in those areas. Berthold rejected argumentation of his Russian colleague that main reason why Russia insists that Djakova should belong to Serbia was intention to strengthening of position of Serbian Prime Minister. Also Count Berthold refused at the first moment idea of ceding Djakova to Serbia, if special

¹² B. D., vol. IX, part II, N° 345, Grey to Cartwright, December 6, 1912, 255-256.

¹³ B. D., vol. IX, part II N° 406, Cartwright to Grey, December 20, 1912, 307.

¹⁴ B. D., vol. IX, part II N° 389, Grey to Cartwright, December 17, 1912, 292-293.

¹⁵ A. Rastović, *Great Britain and Serbia 1903-1914*, Belgrade 2005, 172.)

¹⁶ B. D., vol. IX, part II N° 407, Cartwright to Grey, December 21, 1912, 309.

¹⁷ B. D., vol. IX, part II N° 642, Grey to Cartwright, February 20, 1913, 518.

protection could be assured to the Albanians in town under the guarantee of the Powers. He replied that no guarantee would be of any avail against systematic extermination of Albanians by Serbian authorities.¹⁸ The final solutions were found for Djakova and Scutari on March 21, 1913. The Russian side accepted that Scutari should be included in the future Albanian state after withdrawal of the Serbian and Montenegro military troops, and Austro-Hungary agreed that Djakova should not be belonged to Albania.

Germany generally was supporting almost at all the aggressive policy of the Austria-Hungary according to the claims of the Balkan states, and primary the Serbian territorial claims. In fact, the Germans moderated aggressive goals of the Austrians especially those aspects of their policy with regard to direction of the Serbian territorial aims towards the Adriatic. At the beginning of the First Balkan war, Waechter Kiderlen, the German minister for Foreign Affairs said that in case of decisive victory of the Balkan Allies it would be very difficult for the Powers to keep status quo.¹⁹

With refer to the Serbian outlet to the Adriatic, in the first phase of the Balkan war, the German authorities regarded that it would be very utilize for Serbia to get access to the Egean Sea rather than through Albania to Adriatic Sea. Minister Kiderlen believed that would be useless to suggest Serbian authorities to treat all disputed points separately with Austria, and that "only thing to be done is to try and persuade them to avoid anything which may give Austria impression that her commercial interests may suffer".²⁰ In direction of the economic interests of Serbia towards the Adriatic, the German authorities pleading in the continuation of the war. For instance Herr R. Kuhlmann, Counselor of the German Embassy in London has written that if economic independence was what Serbia wished to have, a one railway station to the Adriatic might be arranged for Serbia on economic terms.²¹ Almost same opinion repeated the German Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs with one correction that the one railway for Serbia have to exist with every guarantee that commerce should have free access to the Adriatic, railway to be under Serbian control and probably port to which it would be run a free port.²²

During the Prohaska affair when the relationships between Serbia and Austria were in critical phase and when it was obviously that war might erupt in every moment, it was very important attitude of the Germany towards possibly war. In one conversation between Edward Goschen, the British ambassador in Berlin and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, it was said that if "Serbia and her friends received military support from Russia, Germany would march with her ally, otherwise not".²³

The German Government almost in all shared opinion with the Austrian authorities with regard to status of the Albania and her eastern frontiers. Alfred Zimmermann, The German Under Secretary of State stated that it seemed that Serbian government is not capable to control their military authorities either on the coast or in the interior, and

¹⁸ B. D, vol. IX, part II, N° 654, Cartwright to Grey, February 24, 1913, 531.

¹⁹ B. D, vol. IX, part II, N° 61, Goschen to Grey, October 28, 1912, 48.

²⁰ B. D, vol. IX, part II, N° 61, Goschen to Grey, November 4, 1912, 91.

²¹ B. D, vol. IX, part II, N° 61, Goschen to Grey, November 4, 1912, 91.

²² B. D, vol. IX, part II, N° 158, Goschen to Grey, November 8, 1912, 118.

²³ B. D, vol. IX, part II, N° 150, Goschen to Grey, November 7, 1912, 113.

because he considers that Serbian territorial goals in the delimitation of the Eastern frontier of Albania show unreasonable attitude on their part and complete absence of all sense of proportion.²⁴

In the first days of discussions about the future of the Eastern boundaries of the Albania the German diplomats supported the attitude of their Austrian colleagues that disputes cities like Dibra and Djakova should remain in Albania. Otherwise Albania would be too narrow.²⁵ Later the Germans tried to convince Vienna politicians to give up from Dibra, and after that from Djakova in exchange for Scutari. Gottlieb Jagow, the German Minister for Foreign Affairs at the beginning of the March 1913, confirmed that kind of deal.²⁶ In fact in those days of diplomatic efforts for settlement of that complicated issue German as Russia have had special mission. At the urging of Edward Grey Germans had to moderate The Austrian side as well as Russians had to moderate the Serbian and Montenegro authorities.

As for Russia, its foreign minister Sergey Sazonov played double policy. In home public opinion he was standing for support of the territorial claims of the Balkan states and Serbia as well as. On the other hand on behalf of Austria-Hungary authorities he played neutral position. Sazonov was aware that his country was not capable for war conflict with Austria-Hungary and had to be cautious toward territorial changes on the Balkans. However, Russia in large contributed to the exercise of the territorial claims of the Balkan allies. British Ambassador in St. Petersburg Sir George Buchanan reported about alternative effusions of war and peaceful rhetoric of Sergey Sazonov, during the Balkan crisis. In the first phase of the Balkan war, Sazonov uncompromisingly has supported Serbian access to the Adriatic sea, but when the crisis go on and faced with tough stance of Austro-Hungary he has demonstrated willingness fort compromise with Vienna government. The most clear Russian standpoint about Serbian access to the Adriatic sea, Sazonov has expressed to Buchanan on October 30, when he said that Serbia seems determined to obtain access to the Adriatic by acquiring a strip of Albanian territory which would enable her to build a railway to San Giovanni di Medua, ant it should be done.²⁷

In meantime Sazonov had conversation with Count Friedrich Pourtales, the German ambassador in St. Petersburg convincing himself that Serbian port on the Adriatic couldn't in any way prejudice Austrian interests, as Serbia would never become a naval State.²⁸ Sazonov was disappointed when Count Douglas Thurn, Austro-Hungarian Ambassador informed himself that Austria excluded for herself the idea of territorial compensation for Serbia as well as other Balkan states. However the Russian minister further supported Serbian access at the Adriatic "it was necessary to take into account every serious claims of Serbia to access to the Adriatic, and that it was in the interest of Austria not to oppose this". But Thurn replied to him that thy must take in consideration

²⁴ B. D, vol. IX, part II, № 485, Goschen to Grey, January 10, 1913, 386.

²⁵ B. D, vol. IX, part II, № 581, Grey to Goschen, January 31, 1913, 466.

²⁶ B. D, vol. IX, part II, № 671, Goschen to Grey, March 1, 1913, 547.

²⁷ B. D, vol. IX, part II, № 78, Buchanan to Grey, October 30, 1912, 65.

²⁸ B. D, vol. IX, part II, № 129, G. Buchanan to E. Grey, November 5, 1912, 99.

the public opinion of Austria, and that the interests of his country must be guaranteed by something more important than commercial treaty.²⁹

Step by step Sergey Sazonov changed his mind about Serbian territorial compensations. He assured Buchanan that he never encouraged Serbia to put forward a claim for the whole Albania, and he had warned Niikola Pašić that this was a matter on which Serbia couldn't count on support of St. Petersburg. He would be satisfied were Serbia to be given a commercial access to Adriatic in the same way as Austria to the Aegean Sea. But he believed that Serbia never accepted this. Nevertheless he feared that "Servians were losing their heads". But he warned Austria-Hungary if she attack Servia, in that case nothing could prevent Russia taking part in war".³⁰

Sazonov attitude according to the Serbian territorial compensations was changed on November 16, 1912 in conversation with ambassador Buchanan when he said that Serbia has right to have San Giovanni di Medua with narrow strip of territory connecting it with Prisrend or some other point in Serbian territory, under condition that Serbia wasn't to fortify it or keep warships there.³¹ Same standpoint to Buchanan showed and Vladimir Kokovtsov, president of the Russian government who literary said that "Serbia couldn't live without a port any more than the lungs could breathe without air".³²

It is said that Sazonov continually changing his attitudes about the Serbian question, and it was difficult to follow phases of pessimism and optimism through he passed.³³ After clear the Austrian opinion that Vienna never permitted Serbian territorial access to the Adriatic, Sazonov agreed as well as the Serbian prime minister.³⁴

Beside the Serbian territorial access to the Adriatic the other stumbling block was question of the eastern frontiers of a new state of Albania. The Russian ambassador in London Count Alexander Benckendorff .expressed attitude of the Russian government to the Edward Grey on January 14, 1913. He said if Russia gave way about Scutari, she must have complete satisfaction for Serbia about the eastern frontier of Albania, precisely about a few cities in former Kosovo vilayet (Ipek, Dibra, Prisrend, Djakova).³⁵ After a months of diplomatic games finally it was disputable a question of the city of Dibra and Djakova. Russian standpoint was that Scutari has to be ceded to Albania, but on the other hand Dibra and Djakova has to be ceded to Serbia. Finally it was done, and with insisting of the Russian diplomacy and minister Sazonov Serbia have got Ipek, Dibra, Prisrend and Djakova.

Great Britain was leading some sort of buffer zone policy which mean policy of the compromise between extremely position of Austria-Hungary and territorial claims of the Balkan allies. The keyword of her Policy and one of the huge protagonists of the First Balkan War and makers of the peace conference was Edward Grey, the foreign minister

²⁹ B. D, vol. IX, part II, N° 155, E. Grey to G. Buchanan, November 7, 1912, 116.

³⁰ B. D, vol. IX, part II, N° 171, G. Buchanan to, E. Grey, November 9, 1912, 127-128.

³¹ B.D, vol. IX, part II, N° 216, G. Buchanan to E. Grey, November 17, 1912, 162-163.

³² B. D, vol. IX, part II, N° 218, G. Buchanan to, E. Grey, November 17, 1912, 164-165.

³³ B. D, vol. IX, part II, N° 303, G. Buchanan to A. Nicolson, November 28, 1912, 227.

³⁴ B.D, vol. IX, part II, N° 371, G. Buchanan to E. Grey, December 11, 1912, 275-276.

³⁵ B. D, vol. IX, part II, N° 507, E. Grey to G. Buchanan, January 14, 1913, 406-407.

who is belonged for the success of negotiations.³⁶ He was master of diplomacy although until August 1914, he had been abroad only once to France three month earlier.³⁷ As a convinced peacekeeper, his starting viewpoint was in the premise that armed conflicts were an immoral means in the conduct of foreign policy and resolution of political and territorial problems of conflicting peoples and nations, and that the First Balkan War had to end as quickly as possible.³⁸ He and his country believed that there was danger that the war of the members of the Balkan League and Turkey could turn into a great European conflict over competing interests of the members of the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente. With the outbreak of the First Balkan War, the state of status quo, which had been guarded by the Austria-Hungarian Empire and Russia for several decades, ceased to exist, and the victory of the Balkan allies broke illusions about the possibility that Turkey could continue to keep its estates in the Balkan Peninsula under control. Great Powers were very surprised by the fact that the Balkan allies succeeded to achieve victory over the Turkish army in such a short time, considering that they were convinced that their mutual animosity was stronger than their readiness to enter into conflict with Turkey, that their armies were poorly trained and their weapons were bad. They believed that the Balkan alliance was to be defeated by Turkey soon after start of hostilities.

A new reality imposed the need to pursue a new policy whose spiritus movens was indeed Edward Grey. He himself was in a dilemma of what to do first and how to meet demands of the Balkan allies for territorial changes on the one hand, but, in accordance with traditional British policy of defending the status quo, how not to allow Turkey to be completely devoid of its European possessions after the military victory of the Balkan countries on the other hand. Therefore, in the initial phase of the First Balkan War, he only formally supports the territorial aspirations of the Balkan allies, especially Serbia, and does everything in his power to restrain those requests as much as possible and reduce them to a minimum.

However, negative attitude of Vienna towards territorial demands coming from the Balkan capitals, especially from Belgrade, and at the cost of a new Europe-wide war, forced Grey as a real-politician that originally gave encouragement to Serbia and other Balkan states in respect of large territorial changes, to bring that encouragement to a minimum. The British foreign minister was aware that the issue of ports on the Adriatic, which was an essential question for Serbia and its economic independence and a matter of life and death, was a source of difficulty with Austria. However, at the same time he thought that a satisfactory solution could be achieved by reconciliation of Serbian claims with Austrian interests. For him it already meant that Serbia should accept the

³⁶ L. Albertini, *The Origins of the War 1914*, vol. 1: *European Relations from the Congress of Berlin to the Eve of the Sarajevo Murder 1878-1914*, London 1952, 423.

³⁷ K. Robbins, *Experiencing the Foreign: British Foreign Policy Makers and the delights of Travel*, in: M. Dockrill and B. McKercher, *Diplomacy and World Power. Studies in British Foreign Policy 1890-1950*, London 1996, 24.

³⁸ D. Djordjević, *Access of the Serbia to the Adriatic and London Conference of Ambassadors 1912*, Belgrade 1956, 41, A. J. P. Taylor, *The Trouble Makers. Dissent over Foreign Policy 1792-1939*, London 1969, 114.

compromise in order to achieve a peaceful solution which was presented to Sazonov who agreed.

Grey showed his mastery of diplomatic balancing during the London Peace Conference, which marked the beginning of backstage diplomatic games, behind which were conflicting interests of the great powers that had temporarily buried their own "hatchets" accepting European concept as a mode of diplomatic activity. The essence of European concept from 1912, the intention of the great powers was to localize and end the Balkan conflicts as soon as possible through mutual agreements and understanding. The pillar of the concept were Germany and Great Britain, which at the time had no direct political interests in the Balkans. Germany, for its part should constrain the extreme demands of its allies, especially Austria, and London had an obligation to calm Russian ambitions and using the influence of St. Petersburg on the Balkan allies, especially on Serbia, to reduce their claims. Therefore, Russia was supposed to be a corrective factor of Serbia and its allies.

Grey showed his diplomatic capability in addressing the Serbian request to obtain several towns near the Albanian border (Ipek, Prizrend, Debar, Djakova). So in this case he did everything to reassure the Serbian side and find a compromise that would satisfy both Austria as a protector of the newly created state of Albania and Serbia. Although he was in favor of the compromise proposal to meet Serbian requests regarding the eastern Albanian border, he, however, did not want to risk war. He assured Serbia that Britain would continue to provide it with diplomatic support, but if it became apparent that Djakova and Debar could not be secured except by force, the British government would not go to war because of these two towns. He expressed understanding for Serbia's desire to win these the two cities as well, but thought that would be completely unreasonable to risk a conflict to obtain what had already been achieved. He also warned about the danger of the war with Austria that could jeopardize the very existence of Serbia and repeated that he was its friend. Therefore, towns of Debar and Djakova became the main stumbling block. Serbian hard attitude to these two towns made Grey use even many literary metaphors in order to persuade the Serbian side to give in. Grey again promised diplomatic assistance to Serbia, but also warned that he could not claim that he would succeed, and that would be suicide for Serbia if it made war with her powerful neighbor. In further diplomatic outwitting there was only disputed Djakova, whose status was resolved thanks to, once again, diplomatic virtues of Edward Grey. Djakova was ceded to Serbia for withdrawal of its army around Scutari. Russians once again put pressure on the Serbian government and in return received guarantees from Vienna that it would not object to Djakova becoming a part of the Serbian state.

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