

Published by
INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC
RESEARCH

Editorial Board:

Editor-in-Chief
Dr. *Milan Terzić*,
Head of Military History Department,
Institute for Strategic Research

Nikolaos Delatolas,
Brigadier General, Director/Hellenic Army
General Staff/Army History Directorate
(HAGS/AHD)

Dr. *Efpraxia Paschalidou*,
Historian, Director/Military Archives
Service (HAGS/AHD)

Lt.C. Dr. *Miljan Milkić*,
Research Associate, Military History
Department, Institute for Strategic
Research

Dr. *Dmitar Tasić*,
Research Associate, Military History
Department, Institute for Strategic
Research

Lt.C *Dalibor Denda*,
Mgr, Research Assistant, Military History
Department, Institute for Strategic
Research

Reviews:
Prof. dr *Mira Radojević*
Dr. *Efpraxia Paschalidou*
Lt.C Dr. *Miljan Milkić*
Dr. *Danilo Šarenac*

Translation from Serbian in English:
Branka Dimitrov
Maja Šimrak-Grbić
Dana Zelenović
Mirjana Vučić
Tamara Vukomanović

Co-publisher
MEDIA CENTER "ODBRANA"

Library "Vojna knjiga"
Book no. 2097

Director
Colonel
Stevica S. Karapandžin

Editor in Chief
Dragana Marković

Editor
Mr Snežana Đokić

Graphic Editor
Dipl. ing. *Goran Janjić*

Design and Layout
Olivera Sinadinović

Printed in
300 copies

Print
Vojna štamparija, Beograd

ISBN 978-86-81121-14-6
(INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC RESEARCH)

ISBN 978-86-335-0548-2
(MEDIA CENTER "ODBRANA")

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

DEFENCE POLICY SECTOR

Institute for Strategic Research

THE SERBIAN (YUGOSLAV) – GREEK
RELATIONS IN THE FIRST HALF
OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

СРПСКО (ЈУГОСЛОВЕНСКО)-ГРЧКИ ОДНОСИ
У ПРВОЈ ПОЛОВИНИ ДВАДЕСЕТОГ ВЕКА

Belgrade 2016

CONTENTS

FOREWORD	7
› Dr. Milić J. Miličević NAVAL COOPERATION BETWEEN SERBIA AND GREECE AS AN EXAMPLE OF INFORMAL ALLIANCE IN 1912-1913	9
› Dr. Efpraxia Paschalidou GREECE AND SERBIA IN THE BALKAN WARS, 1912-1913; VARIOUS DOCUMENT ASPECTS	39
› Master Sergeant (ORD) Athanassios Dimitrios Annopoulos THE TRACING OF THE GREEK-SERBIAN BORDER LINE (19 MAY 1913)	59
› Lt. Colonel Panayiotis Spyropoulos THE CIVIL-MILITARY SITUATION IN THE BALKANS ON THE EVE OF WORLD WAR I - THE REASONS OF GREECE'S NEUTRALITY IN RELATION TO THE POSITION OF THE OTHER BALKAN STATES AND THE GREAT POWERS	69
› Miladin Milošević PRICE OF SERBIAN-GREEK ALLIANCE - BETWEEN TRIPARTITE AGREEMENT AND TRIPLE ALLIANCE	95
› Warrant Officer Theophanes Vlachos MEMORANDA AND REPORTS FOR THE PARTICIPATION OF GREECE IN THE WAR WORLD I (JULY 1914 - SEPTEMBER 1915)	119
› Lt. Colonel Dimitrios Kariotis DIPLOMATIC PROCEEDINGS ON THE EVE OF THE ATTACK OF THE ALLIES IN THE MACEDONIAN FRONT (JANUARY-SEPTEMBER 1918)	141
› Dr. Aleksandra Pečinar DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS OF THE KINGDOM OF SERBS, CROATS AND SLOVENIANS (YUGOSLAVIA) AND GREECE IN THE LIGHT OF MILITARY- POLITICAL INDICATORS (1918-1932)	153
› Dr. Milan Terzić , Senior Research Fellow DOOM OF EXILE (YUGOSLAV AND GREEK ROYAL GOVERNMENTS IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR)	181

-
- › Professor **Milan Ristović**
IN THE SHADOW OF THE CIVIL WAR: YUGOSLAV POLITICAL
EMIGRATION IN GREECE 1944-1950. 197

 - › Dr. **Dmitar Tasić**, Research Associate
A TIP OF AN ICEBERG: BORDER INCIDENTS ON YUGOSLAV -
GREEK BORDER 1945 - 1948 AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES ON YUGOSLAV -
GREEK RELATIONS 219

 - › Assistant Professor **Aleksandar Životić**
USSR, BALKAN COUNTRIES AND CIVIL WAR IN GREECE (1946-1949) 235

 - › **Evangelos Despotidis**
THE GREEK CIVIL WAR (1946-1949) AND THE ROLE OF
TITO'S YUGOSLAVIA 265

 - › Colonel **Georgios Skaltsogiannis**
THE FOREIGN POLICY OF YUGOSLAVIA FOR THE PERIOD 1953-1958
AS IT WAS PUBLISHED IN THE GREEK DAILY PRESS. 289

› Dr. Milić J. Milićević

Historical Institute
Belgrade - Serbia
E-mail: milicevic@live.com

94(497)''1912/1913''
327(497.11:495)''1912/1913''
359(497)''1912/1913''

NAVAL COOPERATION BETWEEN SERBIA AND GREECE AS AN EXAMPLE OF INFORMAL ALLIANCE IN 1912-1913

Abstract: *The paper points to the fact that despite efforts nearly a century old and unfulfilled agreement between the Allies from 1867-1868, at the beginning of the war with Turkey in 1912, Serbia and Greece were not bound by any formal agreement. Regardless of this fact, allied and military cooperation still existed. The most striking example of this was the Greek diplomatic support in terms of Serbian access to the Adriatic Sea. This, although unplanned and almost completely unprepared, turned into quite extensive engagement by the Greek merchant navy and maritime force in the transport of Serbian troops to the port of Shengjin for their participation in the siege of Shkodra. This action lasted from February to April 1913 and there were a number of problems, from those financial and technical to the political and military ones. However, the greatest challenge for the Serbian troops and the Greek fleet was a breakthrough and the subsequent attack on the Turkish cruiser Hamidiye.*

Keywords: *Balkan War, Serbia, Greece, diplomatic relations, naval cooperation*

1.

During the whole of 19th century, the relations between Serbia and Greece were generally good, although, as some of our more recent historians rightly found, the building of these relations was on a rather small scale and discontinuous,

but dynamic as well as notably versatile.¹ However, the geographical proximity and perhaps more significant factor, the presence of Ottoman rule, has always determined, if not the same, then at least quite similar historical fate that caused frequent attempts at rapprochement between the two countries. In this, it should be noted that there was certain unity or togetherness, but also competition, especially between merchant classes, from Belgrade to Skopje and farther south, representing almost centuries-old tradition. These and many other reasons prompted the two nations and their leaders to various attempts at a joint appearance, or at least many contacts that almost did not stop during 19th century. Brutal death of the Greek poet Rigas Feraios within the walls of the Belgrade Fortress in 1798 was therefore only a romantic hint of all future attempts to find two people on the same line of fighting against the common enslaver. More than a century had passed before this intention was achieved, so the joint armed action of the two countries started only in October 1912. However, this, in a broad historical sense, episode would have its direct or indirect introduction, which will be only briefly presented in this paper.

The first and probably the oldest chronological attempt at rapprochement took place after the First Serbian Uprising in the form of relation between Karađorđe and Vujica Vulićević, where the main mediator was a known heterist, Belgrade resident Georgije Nikolajević Olinpijati known as “Captain Jorgač”. He was a key figure in Karađorđe’s adherence to the ideas of the organization, which happened in the spring of 1817, during the meeting of the two of them in Khotyn.

Despite the fact that Prince Miloš was the inspirer of Karađorđe murder, the Greek side did not break contact with the new ruler in Serbia. It was resumed during 1818-1821, by the already mentioned Georgije Olinpijati and the new leader of Heteria, Alexander Ypsilantis, the son of a former master of Walachia and the Russian general. During these years, namely 1821, the agreement on joint struggle against Turkey was made, but remained unsigned by Miloš, as (possible not accidentally), it came into the hands of Turkish authorities. Even without this incident, Serbian prince would hardly decide on the action because, despite the obvious sympathy for the Greek revolution that began the same year, he faithfully followed the instructions of Moscow not to engage in the armed intervention against the Ottoman Empire at any cost.²

1 S. Terzić, *Srbija i Grčka (1856-1903). Borba za Balkan*, Beograd, 1992, p. 382. This work, in recent bibliographic sense, can be considered as a reference. See, p. 405-419

2 Read more in J. A. Kumanudi, *Srbija i Grčka u 19. veku. Odnosi Karađorđevi i Miloševi sa Grcima 1804-1821*. Beograd 1907. S. Terzić, Op. Cit., p. 17-24. R. Ljušić, *Vožd Karađorđe*,

A large part of the foreign policy of Prince Mihailo passed, among other things, in constant contacts with the Greek side, which as the first national Balkan state was their first inspirer. This happened in early 1861 in Constantinople where, according to recent historians, the first major disagreements among rather conflicting national programs appeared. This was the reason why Ilija Garašanin considered the preliminary draft agreement presented by the Greek representative Mark Reneiros utterly unacceptable. The Greeks sought Constantinople, all of Macedonia and Thrace, completely ignoring the potential interests of Bulgarians.³ Despite the obvious disagreements, the contacts between the two sides were renewed as soon as the following year in Paris, during the meeting of former Defense Minister Dimitri Bocaris and Serbian representative Milojko Lešjanin, while at the same time, the chief of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, trader Jovan Kumanudi, was sent to Athens. New efforts to reach a potential alliance between Serbia and Greece were not successful. The main obstacle this time was the official Paris and its fear of war in the Balkans and opening a new chapter of the Eastern Question.⁴ Permanent search of questions about the alliance and the joint armed action continued in the coming years, between 1863 and 1866, but they were almost entirely fruitless. It was not until 1866 that major changes in this field were brought, and the reason for this was twofold. The first was the uprising on the island of Crete and the second was the appointment of Alexander Kumunduros for a new Prime Minister in Athens. These two events led to renewed negotiations and finally, at the end of August 1867, the Alliance Agreement was signed.⁵ In February 1868, this document was joined by the Military Convention on war operations against Turkey.

The Alliance Agreement between Serbia and Greece included 17 articles, while purely military involvement was justified in the second one. According to this, it was agreed that Serbia would form an army of 60 000 people, without reserve force, and Greece an army of 30 000 people. The same article provided for the Greek activity at sea, or the engagement of “the fleet as stronger as possible”.⁶

The next step in the relations was the conclusion of Military Convention that, despite the power of attorney given by the minister of defense Milivoje Blaz-

2, Beograd, Gornji Milanovac, p. 241-246

3 G. Jakšić, *Op. Cit.*, p. 4-5; S. Terzić, *Op. Cit.*,

4 S. Terzić, *Op. Cit.*, p. 107-108

5 All dates, unless indicated otherwise, are given according to the old calendar.

6 G. Jakšić, *Op. Cit.*, p. 11

navac in September, and due to the conspiracy, was signed only in February 1868.⁷ The signatories of this document composed of 16 articles were Franjo Zah on the Serbian and General Staff Colonel Nicolas Manos on the Greek side.⁸ What could be concluded even at first sight is that “there was vast disparity between the pretensions of the then Greek patriots and statesmen and true power which Greece at that time possessed”.⁹ Today, analyzing the historic essence of further events, this finding could also be related to the Serbian side, which can certainly be taken as a major cause of a quite large chronological distance of forty-five years between the signing of these documents and the joint crossing of the Ottoman Empire border in October 1912.

During this time, relations between the two countries were oscillating to a considerable extent, so that the idea and implementation of the policies of the Balkan Alliance was almost constantly on trial, with some recent historians who have also noticed certain phases in this. The first one occurred before the outbreak of the Great Eastern Crisis (1868-1875), while the other is related specifically to its three-year duration (1875-1878). Then, there were three more phases (1878-1885, 1885-1891, 1891-1903), in which, on the Serbian side, the main actors were Stojan Novaković, followed by Vladan Đorđević. Looking from the perspectives of these two personalities, the relation in the first case would mean new attempts at “opening to the Greeks”, followed by a renewed failure to reach an agreement, due to the disagreement over the issue of Macedonia.¹⁰

The whole period was full of various events, but some of them have far-reaching and contradictory consequences for the Serbian-Greek relations. The establishment of Exarchate (1870), international recognition, and then the proclamation of unification with Eastern Rumelia in 1878 and 1885 introduced to the Balkan scene another new player – Bulgaria. Serbia, Greece and Turkey, of course, had to re-establish relations, with the issue of potential alliances directly related to this. However, this issue between Serbia and Greece was not resolved until 1912, so somewhat absurdly, they found themselves on the same side, without having established formally allied relations, as opposed to Bulgaria and Montenegro.

7 Ratification of the document was done even later, on May 4 of the same year.

8 See the attached text of the agreement, as well as the military convention.

9 G. Jakšić, *Op. Cit.*, p. 16.

10 S. Terzić, *Op. Cit.*

In Serbian historiography, this fact remained almost completely unnoticed.¹¹ For the same reason, it is possible to ask the question of the validity of the term “Balkan Federation”, at least viewed in the singular, since with the exception of Bulgaria, other member states, according to the principle all-play-all, have not reached bilateral agreements, nor has this political institution created by the joint signature of all four countries ever been founded.

In the second half of the first decade of the twentieth century, more precisely in 1907, the relations between Serbia and Greece once again were intimate to some extent, and the main reason was Serbian (and Greek) anxiety about Bulgaria’s activities in Macedonia.¹² Bulgarian “Komit” (guerilla) companies were, according to data from 1908, certainly the most numerous (73), although the number of Greek (40), and even Serbian (8) and Vlach (2) units was not to be underestimated.¹³ The conflicts with the Turkish authorities accompanied by more frequent Serbian-Bulgarian ones contributed to the chaotic situation, while the relations between Greek and Serbian troops, at least in domestic historiography, have not been covered yet.

The beginning of the First Balkan War was preceded by a series of bilateral agreements at different levels, but a formal agreement between Greece and Serbia was still missing. There were still some mutual attempts in this direction and they, in spite of ultimately unfulfilled status, certainly deserve historiographical attention.

As to the temporal aspect, the sequence of these events started in mid-summer of that year at the latest, immediately after the signing of the Greek-Bulgarian Agreement. Already on 1/14 August, a minister in Athens Matija Bošković was ordered to prepare the political ground with the aim of signing a similar agreement with Serbia. President Venizelos was for the allied agreement with Serbia, as well, and a week later, after his consultations, there came a positive signal of the Greek government.¹⁴ However, there was an obstacle even at the

11 In *Istorija srpskog naroda*, which can be considered as a reference book, this is not even mentioned. The similar case is with earlier historiography. See *Istorija srpskog naroda*, Vol. 6/1, Beograd, 1982; D. Popović, *Borba za narodno ujedinjenje 1908-1914*, Beograd; D. Đorđević, *Milovan Milovanović*; *Ibid*, *Pašić i Milovanović u pregovorima za Balkanski savez 1912*, IČ, 9-10/1959, p. 467-485

12 Archive of Serbia, Memoar MID of Srbija hist. no. 1865 of Dec. 10, 1907, on Serbian-Greek Agreement in Macedonia, according to *Balkanski rat*, Vol. 1, p. 43

13 *Istorija srpskog naroda*, 6/1, p. 166

14 *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici kraljevine Srbije 1903-1914*, Vol. 5/2, Beograd, 1985, part 132, 182

very beginning. The Greek-Bulgarian Agreement that was supposed to serve as a basis was exclusively defensive in nature and applied only to Turkey. The Serbian view of the allied relations was much wider, where the agreement or alliance between Serbia and Greece would be only the first phase. The last phase and the crown of all agreements would be quadripartite alliance of Balkan states (Serbia, Montenegro, Bulgaria and Greece), defensive and, if necessary, offensive in nature, or final concretization of the principle “the Balkans to the Balkan peoples”.

Despite the certainty of war, the confrontation of Greek and Serbian positions expressed during August and September could not be reconciled, and offers of either side, shown in the simplest way, were as follows. The Greeks offered the Triple Alliance (Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia), exclusively defensive in nature, while Belgrade consistently insisted on Article 2, i.e. bilateral military involvement in the case “that any great power tries to annex, occupy or hold even for a while any part of European Turkey and in the case when one of them considers it as contrary to their vital interests”.¹⁵ Translated from the language of diplomacy, that large force meant the Hapsburg monarchy. For Serbia, but not for Greece except for the issue of Thessalonica, it was, along with Turkey, almost equal danger.

The allied draft agreements also meant signing the Military Convention, but there was disagreement over this, as well. Belgrade involved only European Turkey, while Athens also had in mind military action on its Asian part.

Although some convergence, at least in the military domain, was certainly achieved, best shown by the appointment of General Staff Colonel Živko Pavlović as the authorized negotiator to conclude future military convention, neither this convention nor the alliance between the two countries was signed.¹⁶ When on October 5/18 or 6/19, 1912, Serbian and Greek troops crossed the border with Turkey, both these countries did it “each on its own account”.

Although combat operations indicated the necessity of harmonizing the action and the agreement on the military level at least, this remained unrealized until the Convention was signed. The new military authorized agent of the Serbian

15 DOC, part 205, 231, 243, 325, 381, 587

16 Captain Metaxas was appointed the Greek emissary. DOC, part 610. Details about the General Staff Colonel Živko Pavlović, one of the most versatile personalities of the Serbian military history can be found in: B. Jovović, *Srpski oficiri u nacionalnoj kulturi*, Beograd 1998, p. 250-271

government, retired Colonel Miloš Vasić, submitted a draft agreement to the official Athens at the beginning of the second decade of October, but it remained unanswered.¹⁷

The main reason why Greece did not engage into formal alliance was the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which, according to our minister in Athens Bošković, directly plotted with the aim of lingering Serbian-Greek negotiations. Bošković further reported that the Allied agreement could not be reached because there is a belief that the other, Austrian-Greek agreement had already been reached. This alleged agreement ensured the Greek position in any political situation, and that is why its government cared little about what would happen with Serbia.¹⁸

The threat by Bulgaria, which would bring about a new conflict and whose causes and course will be discussed extensively elsewhere, completely changed the political and military situation. Faced with the common threat of war, on the same day, May 19 (June 1), 1913, Greece and Serbia hastily signed both the “Agreement on the Alliance”, and the Military Convention.¹⁹ In this, as in previous cases during the negotiations, Serbia failed to convince the Greek officials on the necessity of introduction of the clause “third power”, which is why the Agreement and the Convention related exclusively to Bulgaria. However, much more positive and definitely durable side of this agreement was that of an economic nature. It was about obtaining all the necessary benefits (Art. 7), within fifty years, to use the port of Thessalonica as well as the railway lines leading to it.²⁰

The fact that should certainly be emphasized here is the existence of another Military Convention. It is because of the urgency that it was signed even before the Agreement on the Alliance and as such, in terms of ranking documents, it was a complete example of violation of normal diplomatic protocol.²¹

17 DOC, Vol. 5/3, part 36

18 DOC, Vol. 5/3, part 27

19 DOC, Vol. 6/2, part 308, 309

20 The text of the Agreement, as well as the fate of this and other articles can be seen in more details. *Balkanski ugovorni odnosi 1876-1996*, Vol. 1, (1876-1918), (remark by M. Stojković), Beograd, 1998, part 136

21 It is a non-ratified military convention, including 10 articles and signed in Thessalonica on May 1/14, 1913. *Ugovorni odnosi 1876-1996*, Vol. 1, part 133

2.

The lack of agreement on the alliance, and consequently the lack of military agreements, first did the harm to the Greek side on the battlefield. When on October 23, they asked for help, as one of their divisions advancing towards Bitola, near Kožani, came across considerably more numerous Turkish forces, it is estimated around 40,000, the Serbian response that followed was utterly unsympathetic. Without any diplomatic phrases, they were clearly told that they “did not have the right to ask or expect us, prior to the conclusion of the agreement, to sacrifice the blood of our soldiers exclusively for them and outside the area of our aspirations”.²² The response to the new request, which followed the next day, just before midnight, was also negative, with further reminding that Greece agreed on the military aid of up to 100 soldiers with Bulgaria, not with Serbia. In this release, Bošković also delivered a reprimand to the Foreign Minister Lambros Koromilas that his country was to blame because bilateral agreements had not been concluded a long time before, thus resolving all the issues “concerning blood and large expenses”.²³

The legal vacuum between the formal alliance between Serbia and Greece created other problems, and a smaller one, of course, not for those who found themselves in that position, was the issue of prisoners. It turned out that among the detained members of the Turkish Army there was a considerable number of Greeks. Thus, for example, during the occupation of Lješ, in early November 1912, 854 privates were captured, among whom 10 were Greeks.²⁴ In this case, those people were immediately released, but it took about three weeks before this procedure was given legal status. It was not until November 27 that the Supreme Command, on the proposal of Nikola Pašić, issued the order to the lower levels not to treat the Greeks as prisoners, but that in case of imprisonment immediately send them to Belgrade, where they would make contact with the Greek Consul. Then, they would be gathered and send by train to Thessalonica.²⁵ It is not known whether and what kind of procedure was applied in the case of imprisoned Serbs who were part of the Ottoman army.

22 DOC, Vol. 5/3, part 88

23 DOC, Vol. 5/3, part 116

24 Among the captives, there were also 2 Bulgarians and even 7 Serbs. M. Miličević, *Rat za more, Dejstva srpskih trupa u severnoj Albaniji i na primorju od 23. oktobra 1912. do 30 aprila 1913*, Beograd, 2011, p.78

25 Military Archive, Register 2, box 16, folder/part 3/1

The lack of formal agreement caused a number of other issues, some of which were related to the functioning of the government on certain territories, i.e. towns. One such example was the events related to Florina. In fact, just a few days after the Battle of Bitola, on November 8, the Cavalry Division, pursuing shattered Turkish units, entered this place, and almost at the same time, the Greek troops did the same, advancing via Edessa (Voden) from Thessalonica.²⁶ On that occasion, the town was temporarily, until demarcation, left to the Greek military authorities, and as one of the reasons listed was courteous gesture made for better accommodation of the Greek Crown Prince. Logistics i.e. the railroad and the station at this place, played much more important role, and in the spirit of exclusively military agreement, they were temporarily ceded to the Greek side by the Serbian military authorities. Greeks immediately benefited from the aforementioned benevolent gesture, and the former head of the Bitola district Branislav Nušić was quite surprised when trying to organize the Florina district, in early December 1912, found an already established Greek administration. Its representative was the governor of southern Macedonia Mavroudis, who like Nušić was a former consul in Bitola. Similar complaints addressed to Serbian officials were expressed by our military attaché in Athens, Colonel Miloš Vasić. According to him, the main Greek argument for seizing the town was untruth that they first entered it, and as the main evidence, they mentioned 19 guns and three battalions of the Turkish army captured on the way from Florina to Korca.²⁷ The epilogue of these events was not favorable for the Serbian side. With the achieved demarkation of the Florina district, except for a few villages, and in spite of the majority of Slavic population, it was left to Greece.²⁸

Despite the general fact about mutual allied necessity, both diplomatic and military, it can be said that Greece certainly was more necessary for Serbia, at least on one basis. The Serbian war goals were threefold – the liberation of the Serbian population in the territory of Old Serbia, Macedonia and Kosovo, bordering the Adriatic Sea and unification with the other Serbian state, Montenegro.²⁹ As for the second objective, political support of Greece was certainly required, while military or naval support was practically necessary, since Greece was the only one among the Allied countries that possessed the military and merchant fleet.

26 *Balkanski rat*, Vol. 2, p. 202-203

27 DOC, Vol. 5/3, part 497; 6/1, part 23, 113, 243.

28 DOC, Vol. 6/2, part 481

29 Former historiography, it seems unjustified, points out only the first two. *Istorija srpskog naroda*, 6/1, p.193

At the end of October 1912, minister Bošković sent a report to Belgrade that Greece would support Serbian claims on the Adriatic coast, whereby it was perhaps overemphasized that, if necessary, Greece would even use force. This confirmation, though, more moderate, soon arrived from the Minister of Foreign Affairs Koromilas, as well as Prime Minister Venizelos. With this, Greece disengaged to a considerable extent from the Austria-Hungary, the main reason of failure to sign the Allied contract with Serbia. Another reason that has to be pointed out is the dispute over the island of Sazan, in which, along with Greece and Austria-Hungary, Italy was also involved.³⁰

Agreed positions with Greece on the Serbia's outlet to the sea was accompanied by the same opinion in terms of the division of Albania, which according to some authors, is the only real reproach in otherwise legitimate aspirations of Serbia to get access to the sea through this area. Another perhaps more severe criticism, on the verge of extreme political incorrectness, was the plan of the Secretary of the Crown, Prince Aleksandar Đurđe Jelenić, to involve Bulgaria in the complicity over the division of Albania by offering part of the coast and the port of Vlore, by which it would have found itself on the Adriatic Sea, between Serbia and Greece.³¹

Political support of Greece in terms of Serbia's outlet to the Adriatic Sea was not unconditional. There was a Greek-Bulgarian territorial dispute intensified after October 27, when their troops occupied Thessalonica, and the Bulgarian (and Serbian) entered immediately behind them. Just two days later, there was the first incident, when one captain who approached the Allied troops with the Greek flag was hit with several shots. Since the suspicion fell on the Bulgarians, the Greek Foreign Minister expressed his extreme displeasure on this occasion.³² During the subsequent months of joint stay in Thessalonica, officer's collegiality and good relationship between Serbian and Greek officers was constantly emphasized. "While Greek officers want to familiarize themselves with ours, welcoming and sending them off with a standing ovation, the allied officers and fraternal armies (the Bulgarian – author's note) avoided our officers, in the street and in public places, they look at the eyes of our officers and do not

30 Archive of Serbia, Political Department, (photo library), roll 367, folder 2, doc. 1, part 62, 109-110; roll 377, folder 10, doc. 8, part 736; DOC, Vol. 5/3, part 76, 180, 260. V. Ćorović, *Odnosi između Srbije i Austro-ugarske u 20 veku*, Beograd 1936 (rep. 1992), p. 427

31 DOC, Vol. 5/3, part 165; V. Ćorović, *Op. Cit.*, p. 417

32 DOC, Vol. 5/3, part 161

greet even our generals, although they distinguish ranks very well”, one of the reports said in March 1913.³³

The abovementioned examples of cooperation or non-cooperation on the ground were still relatively minor in relation to what the Serbian land and Greek naval forces experienced in the period from mid-February to the second half of April 1913. During this period, the actual Greek-Serbian military cooperation would take place, with the former having an active, and the latter mostly passive role.

3.

The catastrophic defeat of Montenegrin and Serbian troops in a three-day action near Scutari (Shkoder) on the last days of January fully revealed one unpleasant fact. The Montenegrin Army was immature to occupy the town, and the Serbian army was barely able to sustain the ports of Shengjin and Durres, as well as their connection with the Metohija hinterland.³⁴ Bringing fresh troops, which Serbia was only capable of, imposed itself as an imperative. Therefore, on February 4, 1913, with the exchange of dispatches between King Petar and King Nikola, new and final phase of Serbia’s participation at Scutari started.³⁵ An innovation was that Greece was included in the final phase of action, first with part of its railway park, and then to an even greater extent, the merchant and naval fleet.

The first phase of this action, transport of the Coastal Corps, was conducted by land, with the participation of Serbian and then Greek railways. The first Serbian train went to Thessalonica on February 4, and then at relatively regular intervals, until March 25, there were a few more.³⁶

33 DOC, Vol. 6/1, part 385

34 See about all previous Serbian actions in this part of Albania in M. Milićević, *Rat za more. Dejstva srpskih trupa u severnoj Albaniji na primorju od 23. oktobra 1912. do 30. aprila 1913.* Beograd, 2011

35 This was followed by an order dated February 8, by which the so-called “Coastal Corps” was formed, the unit directly subordinated to the Supreme Command. By the decree signed on the same day, General Petar Bojović was appointed the commander of the Corps, and Colonel Živko Pavlović its Chief of Staff. The Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, The legacy of Živko Pavlović, 10 012/6-7; Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts 14429/5; Military Archive, Register 2, box 57, folder 1, part 22/1; folder 9, part 67/17

36 M. Milićević, *Rat za more*, p. 220

Described in detail, on the example of part of a howitzer section of the Coastal Corps, the Serbian-Greek transport was carried out as follows. The first train with the battalion headquarters, 5th battery and part of 6th battery had 39 wagons. It was boarded between 7 a.m. and 11 a.m. on February 24, and then started. It was in Vranje on the same day and after a short stopover, it left for Đevđelija, where it arrived the next day at 10 o'clock in the morning. An hour later, the train was on the border, where the Serbian locomotive was replaced with the Greek one. The composition continued to Thessalonica, where it arrived at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. The trip lasted a little less than thirty hours, which for the other four compositions loaded with howitzer section, as well as the entire Coastal Corps, was some average.³⁷

Simultaneously with the movement of Serbian troops, two officers were sent to Thessalonica on February 11th, with the task to assist our military attaché, Colonel Miloš Vasić, in implementation of all activities related to boarding, accommodation, food and the like.³⁸ Dispatched officers, the Corps' Chief of Staff, Colonel Živko Pavlović, and the corps quartermaster (the Chief of Quartermaster Service), Colonel Antonije Ivanović, as well as Vasić, maintained a direct link with the Supreme Command, as it was considered that the mediation of Serbian and Greek government caused unnecessary waste of time.³⁹

Immediately upon his arrival in Thessalonica and after the meeting with the Governor of the city, Pavlović and Ivanović encountered enormous difficulties. First, the port was empty because, as reported, most of the available commercial ships was involved in the transportation of 15,000 Greek soldiers. Specifically, it was the contingent from southern Macedonia sent to Preveza, as reinforcement to Epirus army at Ioannina.⁴⁰ The first problem raised the other, financial one, which perhaps would not be so great that Greek ship owners did not set such a

37 The third composition loaded with part of the howitzer section arrived in Thessalonica for only 23 hours, but it took the fourth one much longer, 38 hours. Military Archive, Register 2; box 145, folder 1, part 5/1

38 Retired Colonel, later General Miloš Vasić, was reactivated at the end of November 1912, and as a delegate of the Serbian government and Supreme Command sent to Athens, where he stayed until the end of the second Balkan War. Read more in M. Milićević and Lj. Popović, *Generali vojske kneževine i kraljevine Srbije*, Beograd 2003, p. 69-73

39 Military Archive, Register 2, box. 16, folder 6, part 9/2; box 20; folder 3, part 2/60, 2/62; box 56; folder 1, part 2/1; Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Legacy of Živko Pavlović, 10 012/6-7

40 Military Archive, Register 2, box 56, folder 1, part 2/1

high price. For daily rental, they asked 1,000 dinars (drachmas) per ship, which multiplied with the necessary number of vessels (65) and time of their use amounted to a total of about one million dinars.⁴¹ Actual disbursements were still significantly lower, since by the urging of the Secretary of the Navy and the commander of Thessalonica Prince Nikola, the number of ships was reduced to 40, although only 26 were actually involved in the upcoming operation and grouped into three instead of five echelons as originally planned. Despite all the measures taken, the entire transport of the Coastal Corps cost more than a million and a half dinars.⁴²

The idea of additional savings by sending troops via land was also taken into consideration, but it was soon abandoned. The road from Bitola, via Resan, Ohrid, Struga Elbasan, and all way to Durres, was partly passable. Besides, the horses and the load they carried were a great challenge for Albanian looters. Therefore, the upcoming transportation of people and equipment would be carried out exclusively by sea.⁴³

Sending transport from the port of Thessalonica also imposed the third problem. It was securing merchant ships by the navy in order to prevent a possible Turkish attack. To fully demonstrate this most complex and most dangerous obstacle, at this point we will come out of the previous course of the presentation and give explanation about the strength, capability and functioning of the two opposing war fleets.

The conclusion that can already be given during the preliminary analysis is that neither the Turkish nor the Greek side possessed a distinct superiority. Capital ships of the Turkish fleet consisted of three units – battleships *Turgut Reis* and *Hayreddin Barbarossa*, as well as somewhat smaller and considerably older iron-clad *Mesudiye*. Two of the three mentioned were actually German ships more than twenty years old that the original owners had sold to Turkey at a price of 10.5 million francs per unit. During 1903, both ships were reconstructed, so despite their

41 Archive of Serbia, Political Department, (photo library), roll 398, folder 12, doc. 2, part 174, 194; Military Archive, Register 2, box 20, folder 3, part 2/65; Potapov Nikolaj Velimirovič (further Potapov), *Izveštaji, Raporti, Telegrami, Pisma, 1902-1915*, Vol. 1, Podgorica-Moskva, 2003, p. 631

42 Archive of Serbia, Political Department, (photo library), roll 398, folder 12, doc 2, part 148, 174, 194; Military Archive, Register 2, box 9, folder 1, part 1/1; box 20, folder 3, part 2/65, 2/67, 2/69, 2/73

43 Military Archive, Register 2, box 47, folder 1, part 1/1

age they were still capable of quite a serious fight.⁴⁴ Unlike them, the third ship, ironclad *Mesudiye*, despite reconstruction conducted in Genoa in 1902 was, due to the age (launched in 1874) and weapons, the ship barely worth mentioning.⁴⁵

Contrary to the Turkish trio, there were four Greek capital ships, of which the majority – ironclads *Psara*, *Hydra* and *Spetsai*, had a second-rate combat value. In terms of tonnage, they were half the weight of Turkish ships, and their firepower could be measured only with that of *Mesudiye*.⁴⁶

The backbone of the power of the Greek fleet was a brand new armored cruiser *Georgios Averof* launched and fitted just before the start of the war (1911). The construction of this unit was quite original because the machinery and hull were made in the Orlando shipyard in Italy. The artillery was English, boilers and armor French, while the Germans contributed with electrical installations. Even more bizarre was the fact that the Turks also offered to purchase the same vessel, and identical case repeated during the Balkan War. Both sides scrambled for the unfinished ironclad *Rio de Janeiro*, which was built in Britain for Brazil, but finally because of the imminent start of the First World War, the ship entered into the composition of the British fleet.⁴⁷

In terms of light fleet units, the rank of light cruisers, the Turks had a great advantage, because contrary to their two units, the Greeks did not have any. The advantage of Turkey was also reflected in the quality, since *Mesudiye* and *Hamidiye* were almost brand new cruisers (both launched in 1903), completely built according to Western patterns. The first of them was built in the United States and the other was a British product.⁴⁸ Each of these ships in the hands of an able commander was a very serious threat that was fully proved in the case of *Hamidiye* and its commander Rauf Orbay.

The two opposing fleets also had a number of destroyers where the numerical advantage, unlike light cruisers, was strongly in Greek hands. Before and during

44 In fact, those are German ships of *Brandenburg* class. More about their technical details in *Janes fighting ships of World War 1*, London 1919 (reprinted in 1990), p. 253; *The encyclopedia of the ships*, London 2001, p. 233

45 More about technical characteristics of these ships in *Janes*, p. 253

46 Ibid, *Janes*, p. 292

47 V. B. (according to Greek Admiral Theopanides), *Grčka mornarica u Balkanskom ratu*, (further *Grčka mornarica*), Ratnik, Vol. 9 (Sept.), 1926, p. 9

48 More about technical characteristics of these ships in *Janes*, p. 254

the war, their fleet was composed of 14 of these units while the Turkish fleet had only seven. In addition, the size and firepower of Greek ships, especially the four built in the UK was significantly higher. In contrast to destroyers, the number of torpedo boats in the Turkish fleet (28:5) was much higher.⁴⁹ The common characteristic of the ships on both sides was their western origin (Britain, Germany, Italy), and the age – as a rule they were not more than a few years old.

The Greek side had a number of auxiliary ships – corvettes, gunboats, as well as four auxiliary cruisers, or merchant ships armed with one 100 mm cannon. In their fleet composition, there was also a ship – depot with two of these weapons, and special avant-garde, especially for the navy of such scope and capabilities, was the possession of a submarine. This new type of ship, equipped with modest armament consisting of only one torpedo tube and four torpedoes, was bought in France.

The value of the fleet was also determined based on their crews that in both cases were under foreign military influence. As for the Turks, until the mid of the first decade of the 20th century, English maritime pattern prevailed, and since that time, due to the origin of the ships and the growing number of officers-instructors, it gave way to the German one. In terms of the Greek fleet, the situation was somewhat different. First, the campaign in favor of the construction of the fleet started quite late, after 1897, and it was directly related to the developments on the island of Crete. Furthermore, in Greece there was quite a big dilemma about the choice of fleet units, in terms of a greater number of lighter (light cruisers and destroyers), or heavier (dreadnoughts), but in much smaller number. In addition to this, there was a general shift in the military and maritime influence. Rather complicated tactics of the French Admiral Lejeune, a quarter of a century old, was replaced by a new, much simpler. This step was taken in 1910, when under the influence of the British Admiral Tufnell, the reorganization of the Greek Navy started.⁵⁰

Generally, naval war assets that Turkey and Greece possessed were equal, but it was considered that regarding the readiness and morale of the crew, the Greek navy had a significant advantage.

49 Classification of these types of ships was made and their number given according to the abovementioned Theopanides's work printed in the given edition of *Ratnik* (Vol. 9, p. 14-15). According to other professional publications, classification, and thus the number of these types of warships is quite different. See in *Janes*, p. 255, 293

50 *Grčka mornarica*, Vol. 9, p. 9-10

The Greek Navy entered the First Balkan War divided into two squadrons – the Aegean and Ionian. The first of them, stationed in Falerone, represented the majority of the fleet and was under the command of Admiral Konduriotis. The second one, much smaller flotilla, gathered in Lefkada, was led by Captain Damianos. Unlike the Greek, entire Turkish fleet at the beginning of the war was concentrated in the Dardanelles, which gave it a very favorable opportunity for the choice of place and time in case of possible failures.⁵¹

The first task of the Greek fleet, in fact a prerequisite for further actions on the Aegean Sea, was winning the position as closer to the Dardanelles as possible, which is why taking Mudros, the main port on the island of Lemnos, was imposed as imperative. Three days after the declaration of war, on October 8, the assault detachment of the Greek fleet successfully completed this task. Ten days later, the islands of Thassos and Samothrace came into Greek hands. In early November, with the mediation of foreign consuls, Turkish troops left Mytilene and after that, on December 20, the island of Chios.⁵² At the same time, the activity of the Ionian squadron took place. On November 20, it took Nikopol, and then entered Preveza.

During this time, the Turkish fleet was also active, but its actions were directed mainly towards the Black Sea coast. Just a day after the declaration of war, Varna was bombed, and then the other targets, as well. Cruiser *Hamidiye* also participated in one of these actions. On the night of October 9 to 10, it encountered the Bulgarian torpedo boats. Having identified the enemy late, *Hamidiye* was hit in the stern, after which it began to sink. The loss of the ship was prevented by the adjacent battleship *Turgut Reis*, which towed *Hamidiye* to Constantinople. In the later period, until the armistice, the Turkish fleet operated along the Black Sea coast, supporting the wing of Cataldza line.⁵³

The second phase of the Turkish warfare at sea was much more aggressive, and its main line of action was only the Greek fleet. The result of this was two battles near the Dardanelles. The first was fought in December and the second in January 1913. This December battle, also known as the Battle at Cape Helles, ended in the nominal defeat of the Turkish fleet. Its attempt made on December 5, to penetrate forcefully from the direction of the Dardanelles, after four-hour

51 *Grčka mornarica*, Vol. 9, p. 13-14

52 Unlike the other members of the Alliance, Greece has not signed of the armistice (Nov. 20/ Dec. 3) and continued the military operations.

53 *Grčka mornarica*, Vol. 9, p. 22-23

exchange of fire, ended in failure. Almost the entire Turkish fleet participated in a similar attempt made on January 6 at Cape Irene. As the previous ones, the conflict ended in the withdrawal of the Ottoman fleet and their quite severe damage. The Hayreddin Barbarossa's original flag, taken from the museum to raise the morale of the crew, disappeared without a trace when the command ship mast was damaged.⁵⁴

Although successful, the Greek operations during the takeover of the island and two naval battles showed a number of weaknesses, some of which would be manifested later during the upcoming transportation of the Serbian troops.

The first weakness was a bad calculation regarding coal consumption, because within two months of the war, more than 145,000 tons were spent instead of the 35,000 planned, whereby the technical process of transfer of this fuel was extremely painful. The commanders of the Greek fleet seemed to have forgotten about the storage of drinking and technical water, so there was usually its significant lack. In addition, the ammunition, especially for *Averof*, the backbone of the naval forces, was also insufficient, and its subsequent delivery was two months after the commencement of hostilities. Three older ironclads showed, especially in the second battle at the Dardanelles, a large number of technical deficiencies. Mechanical parts, boilers, were extremely outdated and this referred to the artillery, as well. During the battle, the shooting was too slow, and the range not greater than 4,000 meters. The Greek maritime headquarters proved extremely immature in one more situation. Despite the clear knowledge of the imminent commencement of the war, merchant ships docked in Turkish waters were not even informed about this. Thus, the enemy effortlessly seized 55 Greek ships.⁵⁵

Two Greek victories gave the hope, but their fleet was not completely safe from the Turkish fleet; therefore, it was still thought that the protection of cargo ships by the warships was definitely a necessity. However, due to the complete lack of marine experience, Serbian military representatives had no idea about their number and strength. Colonel Miloš Vasić asked for torpedo boats only, which according to experts could be considered inadequate. Russian attaché in Belgrade, Colonel Viktor Alekseevich Artamonov, said over the Supreme Command that two torpedo boats for a group of five to six ships are weak protection. In the event that a cruiser appeared, they would withdraw leaving the convoy

54 *Grčka mornarica*, Vol. 10, p. 65-70

55 *Grčka mornarica*, Vol. 9, p. 16-18; Vol. 10, p 62

at the mercy of the enemy. Therefore, Artamonov considered that at least one ironclad should be required.⁵⁶ However, there were few of these, because the Greeks, as we have already mentioned, beside *Averof* had only three quite old ships of this rank. In addition, due to the implementation of the blockade, all of them were pinned down around the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles.

The consequence of all this was a promise that in the end was not complied with. When in the early morning of February 16, the first convoy consisting of four ships left the port of Thessalonica, there were not any Greek warships with it.⁵⁷ In the beginning, the voyage went smoothly. The sea was calm, and there were not any enemy ships on the horizon. During the night, the situation changed completely, since near Chalcis on Euboea, the convoy ran into a storm. The next morning, there was an explosion in one of the boilers of the ship *Apostolos*, followed by stranding due to the loss of control. The resulting panic was soon under control, and a bold swimmer managed to reach the shore and alert the population of Chalcis, who responded to the call for help in large numbers. However, mooring rope to the shore succeeded only at the third attempt, which was followed by the five-hour evacuation. The next day, when the storm calmed down, the livestock and equipment were rescued, with the generous help of the local authorities and people of Chalcis. During the next days, the Greek hospitality was even more evident. The injured immediately received hospital care and the healthy ones were given accommodation, officers at the hotel and soldiers in private houses. All were given blankets, clothes and other essentials, and during the next seven days, the locals supplied them with food.⁵⁸

Other three boats survived the storm without major damage and in a short time on February 21 and 22, arrived in Durres.⁵⁹

Despite two lost battles, the risk of sudden appearance of Turkish warships was not completely dispelled, although their blocking in the waters of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, at least for the time being, worked pretty well. However,

56 Military Archive, Register 2, box 20, folder 3, part 2/52, 2/62

57 Military Archive, Register 2, box 20, folder 3, part 2/65, part 2/67, part 2/69; box 47, folder 1, part 1; Archive of Serbia, Political Department, (photo library), roll 398, folder 12, doc. 2, part 188, 191, 194

58 Archive of Serbia, Register (photo library), roll 398, folder 12, doc. 2, part 225; doc. 6, part 750, 753; *Politika* of Feb. 27, 1913, No. 3279, p. 3

59 Military Archive, Register 2, box 50, folder 2, д. 7/5; box 52, folder 5, part 19/2; box 57, folder 3, part 29/13

the frequency of commercial navigation through the straits and short winter days did not suit the Greeks, and it was only a matter of time before some brave commander and his ship would manage to get through. Thereby, the entire Mediterranean basin would become the immediate zone of action, which would lead the already weakened Greek navy forces to the limit. Transportation of the Serbian troops would be threatened to such an extent that it would ultimately be necessary to suspend it.

On the first day of January, this worst-case scenario became reality. On the foggy night of January 2nd to 3rd, 1913, the Turkish cruiser *Hamidiye* managed to sidestep the Greek patrol units and until morning reach the open sea.⁶⁰ Thus, the captain of *Hamidiye*, Hüseyin Rauf Orbay started the cruiser war that would bring pretty great, although quite forgotten glory. As for him personally, this would represent the first step towards the military, and even more political rise, and as for the Ottoman weapons, this would be one of the few famous episodes.⁶¹

In January 1913, the newspapers were full of articles about the movement of *Hamidiye* and its occasional attacks, creating a constant headache to the Greek and Serbian commands. Not even the whole day after breaking through the straits, the cruiser came across the auxiliary cruiser Macedonia in the Cyclades, in the port of Syros, inflicting heavy damage upon it. Then it opened fire on the coastal plants, causing limited damage.⁶² After this, *Hamidiye* was headed to Beirut, then turned toward Alexandria and on the way seized one sailboat. On the sixth day of January, it dropped anchor in Port Said, greeted with a standing ovation by the Muslim population. Taking advantage of 24-hour stay at the port, as much as international maritime law allowed, the Turkish cruiser supplied with coal and food. Then, it passed through the Suez Canal and sailed into the Red Sea, spending the rest of January at the port of Hodeida. Already on February 1, *Hamidiye* appeared near Valleta and after four days headed to

60 *Grčka mornarica*, Vol. 10, p. 63-65

61 Soon after these events, Hüseyin Rauf Orbay (1881-1864) was promoted to the rank of admiral. As the minister of war, he signed the armistice of Mudros, which informally meant getting Turkey out of the First World War. After the war, from 1922 to 1923, he became the Prime Minister. One of the founders of the Republican Party of Progress, which is why he was expelled from the country from 1925 to 1935. During World War II, he was ambassador in London. He left an autobiography titled *Cehennen Degirimeni* (Windmill of Hell), Empire Publishing, 1993

62 Military Archive, Register 2, box 16, folder 10, part 32/5; *Grčka mornarica*, Vol. 10, p. 70; *Politika* Feb. 28, 1913, no. 3230, p. 1

Tripoli. In the meantime, there was a meeting with the two ships that, having been sent from Naples and Marseilles, re-supplied it with coal.⁶³

As *Hamidiye* left Malta, the flow of information dried up, but the press did not mind, bringing a flood of unverified news about the cruiser and especially its commander. Overnight, the cruiser became the largest and strongest Turkish ship, while its commander became an Italian or even German.⁶⁴ *Hamidiye's* successes were also exaggerated and there were rumors about three Greek shipwrecks, one of which was the ocean liner *Themistocles*.⁶⁵

Hamidiye's departure from Malta and even worse, a complete lack of information on its voyage, occurred at the worst possible moment. Some of the Coastal Corps troops had already been in Thessalonica from where they were sent to Shengjin and Durres. Being aware of an imminent danger at sea, the Supreme Command immediately sought the support of the Greek fleet, which despite all the interventions did not come.⁶⁶ Thus, the first echelon went without and the other one with only a symbolic accompaniment.

During this time, the Greeks held most of the fleet in the waters of the Strait for quite legitimate reasons. Simply, if one Turkish ship had already escaped, the other one could do the same, and further developments made such possibility more certain. In this, however, an exception was made, when due to the suspicion that *Hamidiye* could enter into the Adriatic, *Psara* was sent towards Durres. In fact, *Hamidiye* was in Tripoli at that time and only then headed into the waters of the Adriatic, just as *Psara*, chasing the seas, began to lack fuel. Therefore, in order to refuel, it returned to Corfu. These days, precisely on February 22, the second echelon of Serbian troops made up of five ships set

63 Archive of Serbia, Register (photo library), roll 387, folder 3, doc 8, part 589-591; roll 406, folder 17, doc. 7, part 636-640; *Grčka mornarica*, Vol. 10, p. 70-71. Ž. Pavlović, *Opsada Skadra 1912-1913* (hereinafter: *Opsada*). Beograd, 1925, p. 168

64 *Hamidiye*, named *Abdul Hamid* until Young Turk Revolution, was launched in the British shipyard Armstrong in 1903. It had a displacement of 3800 t and was armed with two 152 mm, eight 127 mm and six 47 mm guns, and two launch tubes for torpedoes. For its size, the ship had a quite solid shield (58-100 mm), and developed a speed of 22 knots. With these *Hamidiye's* performances, the only ship it could be measured with was *Averof*. The other three Greek ironclads were more strongly armed, but their speed was only 17 knots. *Janes*, p. 254; *Almanah K. und. K. Kriegsmarine*, Pola 1909, p. 394

65 *Politika* of Feb. 14, 1913, no. 3266, p. 1; Feb. 22, 1913, no. 3274, p. 3; *Samoupravna*, Feb. 23, 1913, no. 46, p. 3

66 Military Archive, Register 2, box 16, folder 1, part 32/14; box 56, folder 1, part 3/1

sail. The sixth one, *Varvara*, started earlier that day, with the task of previously picking up the shipwrecked in Chalcis.⁶⁷

Similar to the previous convoy, the first day of sailing to Shengjin passed peacefully. The ships arrived at the entrance of the Bay of Aegina, where two accompanying destroyers left them. The convoy spent the first night in the waters south of Euboea, and the next one at a port at the entrance to the Gulf of Corinth. On its way across the Ionian Sea, the convoy passed by Corfu. There, it met with the ironclad *Psara* and arrived near Shengjin during the night. At dawn, the ships sailed into the port, with the last one, *Marika*, anchored at about 8 a.m.⁶⁸ It was quiet, without any hint of danger.

However, the drama in which *Hamidiye* was the main actor had just started at the entrance of Durres. Around 6 a.m., the cruiser intercepted a ship from the first convoy, *Leros*. The cargo ship was stopped and sent to the bottom, as the *Hamidiye's* bow shot its side. Rauf Orbay's ship was meanwhile observed, but the pursuit from Corfu led by *Psara* and two more destroyers proceeded too slowly. *Hamidiye's* shells began to fall on Durres at about 10 a.m., but the intensity was so small and the shooting inaccurate that, at least initially, there was not any sign of panic. Simply, everyone thought it was a welcome gun salute from a ship just entering the port. The small fire caused negligible damage. However, despite the facts, the press raised it to the highest possible level.⁶⁹

The events in Durres were merely a prelude to the drama in Shengjin. On this occasion, the Serbian and Montenegrin, as well as the Greek side, showed their courage, while there would also be plenty of opposite examples.

The moments in which the Turkish cruiser assailed the harbor were just the most critical. Nine ships were located, with the five of them from another convoy that just started unloading and therefore stationary. The ships were crammed with

67 *Grčka mornarica*, Vol. 10, p. 71; Military Archive, Register 2, book 58, folder 6, part 15/14, 15/16

68 Military Archive, Register 2, box 47, folder 1, part 3; box 108, folder 1, part 11/1. *Samouprava*, March 12, 1913, no. 60, p. 2

69 *Grčka mornarica*, Vol. 10, p. 71-72; Military Archive, box 16, folder 10, part 32/16, 32/17, 32/18; Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 14 429/5, p. 883, 906; *Zapisi*, Vol. 14 (1935), Vol. 6 (December), p. 382; *Samouprava* 1. 13, 1913, no. 51, p. 1; *Politika*, Feb. 28, 1913, No. 3230, p. 1; *Štampa*, March 1, 1913; no. 60, p. 3. Information on these events differs in some details; therefore, 08.45 a.m. is stated as the beginning of the attack, instead of 10 in the morning. The number of shells fired at Durres ranges from 10 to 15, although in any case it is quite a small number.

about 5,000 people, guns, planes, food, and worst of all, a large quantity of ammunition. Fortunately, *Hamidiye's* attack on Durres at least enabled Colonel Popović to warn those in Shengjin of the danger, and the port managers, Serbian Major Selimir Ostojić and Montenegrin Niko Hajduković, as well as the place headmaster, Second Lieutenant Kusovac, proved to be up to the adversity they were faced with. After a brief meeting, it was quickly decided to immediately stop unloading ships and get them deeper into the bay, with the ridge outside the port serving as a partial protection at least. The planned action was not easy as the movement could be possible only through a canal, deep enough and not more than ten meters wide. To make the passage just a little bit more visible, the paddles were set on the edges. Simultaneously with the movement of ships, there was an attempt to organize the defense. A battery commander was ordered to put two already shabby cannons into effect. An immediate problem arose as towing saddles were left below decks and thus disabled the use of horse-drawn carts. That is why the guns were pushed and dragged by the soldiers, and the same case was with the grenades.⁷⁰

Greek sailors were also tempted, and most of them proved their courage and skill. Some of them, like the commander of *Hrisomalis Sifneo*, were in completely impossible situation. His ship had shut down boilers, without pressure, and therefore could not move from the anchorage. This also prevented the movement of a Montenegrin boat that was tied to it. The ship *Tryphilia* headed through the channel first, but missed it and stranded at the bottom. A similar situation occurred with the ship *Verveniotis*, which started first, but, due to speed, was also mired in the shallows. Even worse, this particular ship was carrying artillery ammunition. Seeing that the ship and crew were threatened with certain death, Hajduković immediately sent Kusovac to the Austro-Hungarian ship *Shkodra* that, due to the shallow draft, could get closer to *Verveniotis* and pick up those affected. The captain of *Shkodra* refused this, and when Kusovac pulled a gun on him, he fainted. Kusovac then recaptured the ship and with the help of two machinists, a Montenegrin and an Albanian, managed to start it. Approaching *Verveniotis*, he boarded the crew and in two runs successfully transported them to the shore by saving them from certain death.⁷¹

Two other ships, *Zanos Sifneo* and *Zeus*, got through the channel, but the drama about the rescue repeated with the third one. When *Hamidiye* opened fire,

70 Military Archive, Register 2, box 16, folder 10, part 16/29; box 47, folder 1, part 3: Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 14 429/5, p. 888-889

71 Read more about these events and reactions to them in M. Milićević, *Rat za more*, p. 232-233

the captain of *Marika* used the only lifeboat and abandoned the ship with the crew, leaving passengers, members of the air force unit. Fortunately, Lieutenant Miloš Ilić could swim and jumping with a rope into the water reached the coast. Thanks to him, all thirty airmen were saved.⁷²

In the meantime, *Hamidiye*'s shots were raining down on the ships. The ship *Elpis* was broken in several places but managed to keep on the surface. Another one, *Tryphilia*, was completely stranded with almost no chance of being rescued. However, a pair of capable operators on two unloaded cannons on deck responded to the fire and in an extremely unequal fight managed to hit the opponent's ship. Captain Grigorios Nomikos stayed with the gunners, standing on the deck bridge and constantly correcting Serbian cannon fire, and when his ship was already bored, used his clothes to clog the holes. The resistance that *Tryphilia* showed did not save two other ships. The first in turn was *Hrisomalis Sifneo*, then *Verveniotis* where the ammunition also detonated.⁷³

The commander of *Hamidiye* seemed pleased with partial or complete destruction of these vessels, although by further sailing into the Gulf, it would potentially cause even more damage. Nevertheless, the risk of stranding in the shallow bay seemed too great to him, and radio communication between destroyers *Longi* and *Psara* also warned him of the emergence of the Greek Navy. Therefore, Rauf Orbay suspended the action and after about one hour of fire and more than 140 shells fired, sent his ship back to the open sea.⁷⁴ *Hamidiye* then allegedly found itself in Bari, then Brindisi, and was seen in the Gulf of Taranto and the Aegean Sea, as well. Yet, the only reliable information was that in early March it got coal supplies in Alexandria and at the end of the month passed through the Suez Canal. By this, it moved away far enough from the Albanian waters, with its first attack on Shengjin being also the last one.⁷⁵

The damage caused by *Hamidiye* was not negligible, since the Greek side only came out with two sunken ships and several more ships suffered minor damage. Number of Serbian losses was even higher, starting from the 77 dead, 55

72 Military Archive, Register 2, box 108, folder 1, part 1; Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 14 429/5, p. 838; S. Mikić, *Istorija jugoslovenskog vazduhoplovstva*, Beograd, 1932, p. 74; Group of authors, *Srpska avijatika*, Beograd, 1993, p. 26-27

73 *Rat za more*, p. 234

74 The number of fired shells, as well as the duration of action differs in some places. *Rat za more*, p. 234, 235, 278

75 *Ibid*, p. 236-237

wounded and 3 missing soldiers. Material losses, especially the damage caused by the explosion of *Verveniotis*, were not negligible, either. Rauf Orbay's success, however, did not reflect in the numbers but the real point was something else – the time lost and the fear caused. That is why the next contingent of ships set sail with a big delay, on March 4, which might be crucial for the future events. Accordingly, *Hamidiye's* attack on Shengjin was a great success.

All the troubles caused by the Turkish cruiser had at least one good side. It was not just the expression of regret on everything that had happened which the Greek Foreign Minister sent to the Serbian government.⁷⁶ Much more valuable was practical prudence of the Greek authorities and their final readiness to allocate their warships to escort Serbian convoys, especially because the new contingent of 16 vessels was significantly larger than the previous two.⁷⁷

The convoy or third echelon in turn set sail on March 4, just after noon. A heavy ocean liner *Patras* was at the head, followed by the other ships in line. Escort ships included a cruiser *Hydra* and a small destroyer *Doxa*. During that and the next day the ships were on their way to Corinth. The weather was sunny, but the sea was quite rough, which immediately caused nausea in the soldiers unaccustomed to swinging.⁷⁸ On March 6, the convoy began passing through the canal, but due to its narrowness, it lasted all day, especially because of *Patras*, as it took more than three hours for the ship to cover 6 kilometers. During this action, the news of the murder of the Greek king George suddenly came, which caused further slowdown.⁷⁹ Thus, ships arrived at the Gulf of Corinth only on March 7, where new unpleasant surprise was waiting for them. Frigate Commander Sakuturis said to the Commanding General Bojović that, by the order of the Minister of the Navy, the convoy remained in the Gulf until March 10, without giving the reasons for delay. Bojović immediately informed the Supreme Command about this, the Supreme Command informed the attaché in Athens, Colonel Vasić, but all the urgencies remained without echo. The

76 Military Archive, Register 2, box 16, folder 10, part 32/27

77 On these ships, there were 6637 people, 1171 horses, 808 oxen, 505 carts, 17 cannons and 8 wheeled cannons. Military Archive, Register 2, box 56, folder 1, part 2/1; Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 14 429/5, p. 717, 877; Records Vol. 15 (1936), Vol. 2 (February), p. 126; More details in *Rat za more*, p. 237, 278

78 Archive of Serbia, Political Department, (photo library), roll 398, folder 12, doc. 3, part 286, 295, 300; Military Archive, Register 2, box 145, folder 1, part 6

79 Archive of Serbia, Political Department, (photo library), roll 328, folder 12, doc. 3, part 301, 305, 347

convoy remained at the entrance to the bay until March 13 when they heard they would set sail the next day. This was done at about 3 p.m.⁸⁰

The effects of prolonged stay on the crowded ships quickly left consequences. Typhus appeared, but thanks to the presence of medical personnel and sending patients to Corinth was quickly localized. Hunger was much larger problem, because the bread issued before departure was completely sour, due to moisture and heat. This was followed by a new fast delivery, but until it arrived, hunger had taken on immense proportions so that, as the Minister Stojan Ribarac put it, people were forced “to eat what is not to be said”.⁸¹ Water was consumed faster than food, as the needs for almost 7,000 people and about 2,000 livestock exceeded the capabilities of local supply. Therefore, it was sent by train all the way from Athens; at the port, tanks were filled with water and sailing from ship to ship performed the delivery.⁸² This procedure was of course much more complicated than in the cases of the division of food and the usual Greek obliviousness on the issue of water supply was proved for the umpteenth time.

The end of these misfortunes began only at noon on March 14. Accompanied by three warships, the convoy left Corinth and at dawn, the next day sailed into the port of Patras. There was another stalemate there, and when they set out again at 9 p.m., the commander of *Psara* after just an hour of sailing ordered the return to the port. The reason for this was not announced.⁸³

On the morning of 16th, the ships were out at sea again, and a day later, they sailed into the port of Corfu. There, *Psara* had to load coal, and the delay dragged on until 5 p.m. During the night and the next morning, the final phase of sailing completed. On March 18th, about 1 p.m., the ships of the third echelon found themselves near Shengjin.⁸⁴ Thus, instead of the usual few days, the Serbian soldiers spent two weeks at sea, of which two thirds were wasted at various Greek ports.

80 Military Archive, Register 2, box 56, folder 1, part 2/1; box 145, folder 1, part 6; Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 14 429/5, p. 717

81 STEN, 1912-1913, p. 528

82 Military Archive, Register 2, box 56, folder 1, part 2/1; *Opsada*, p. 171

83 Military Archive, Register 2, box 56, folder 1, part 2/1

84 Archive of Serbia, Political Department, (photo library), roll 398, folder 12, doc. 4, part 390; 395, 402; Military Archive, Register 2, box 20, folder 4, part 7/3; box 145, folder 1, part 6. *Ratovanje petog pešadijskog puka Kralja Milana* (hereinafter: *Ratovanje*), (прир. S. G. Nikolić, Valjevo 1998, p. 17

Extreme disorganization of the Greek ally manifested during these days immediately awakened considerable amount of doubt. In this, the most interested was the Montenegrin side, particularly King Nikola, who reportedly had reliable information. At the same time, the king blamed the Russians, considering that they put pressure on the official Athens. There was some truth in this, but the most responsible for the pressure, at least according to the report of minister Bošković, were mainly Vienna and Rome. The others were also trying to find political motives in this, claiming that, on the issue of Shkodra, the Greek government was waiting for the decision of great powers. The presence of *Hamidiye* and finally, the possible involvement of the Greek fleet in the parade of warships in honor of King George were also mentioned as the motive.

Besides the abovementioned, we should add that the Greeks were experienced in the field of transport of troops because, apart from theirs, they also transported the Bulgarian troops. As for the numbers, it was a Bulgarian corps, which in November 1912, with as many as 17 ships, accompanied by the whole squadron of warships, was sent to land in Dedeagac (Alexandroupoli).⁸⁵

All the motives are likely to have been significant, but probably the prevailing one was the most banal. Transportation of Serbian troops for 1,000 dinars per day was agreed, so more time spent in sailing and delay, with as many days as possible, certainly suited to the carrier.⁸⁶

After the arrival and deployment of Serbian troops, the inevitable followed, fatal for both the Serbian and Montenegrin side. Austro-Hungary, which, during the entire Balkan war by all means, particularly by creating Albania, thwarted all attempts of Serbia to reach the coast, did the same with Shkodra. The culmination of this pressure was the implementation of the idea of an international naval blockade of the coast. This happened on March 30, 1913, on the line from Bar to the mouth of the Drim River, or in the area from 42.6 to 41.15 parallel north. Five warships were deployed, each under the flag of a European force, and the joint command was entrusted to the British Admiral Cecil Burney. The only exception was made by the Russians, formally justifying that they did not have warships in these waters.⁸⁷ A certain curiosity in this was close, but not the direct presence of the American ironclads, *Tennessee and Montana* sent to the

85 *Ratna mornarica*, Vol. 9, p.19

86 *Rat za more*, p. 239

87 Read more in *Rat za more*, p. 240-255

waters of the Dardanelles. At the same time, Washington officials argued that this did not show any intention to participate in the demonstration of power, but the ships were there only to protect the lives of American citizens in the territory of the Ottoman Empire.⁸⁸

Demonstration of naval force meant not only the cancellation of the deployment of the fourth contingent of Serbian troops, but there was even more extensive task before the Serbian Supreme Command, Maritime Corps and the Greek Ministry of the Navy.⁸⁹ That was the return of all previously deployed troops to Thessalonica.

The technical part of starting the return began with the grouping of troops around the port of Shjengin, from April 3 to 8.⁹⁰ Almost simultaneously, some protocol activities took place. One of them was sending an official request to Athens to approve the transportation of Serbian troops, which was positively answered by April 1. In this, apparently in order to avoid previous improvisation, the exact extent of the hull, the date of embarkation and all other elements necessary for sailing activities were requested. Upon receipt of this information, Vasić informed the Supreme Command that the departure from Piraeus could be expected in the afternoon of April 5. As the transport of Serbian troops was inevitably supposed to pass through the international blockade, the permission had to be asked for that. Rome gave a positive response first, followed by those of Vienna, Berlin and Paris on the next day, April 6. Assurance that transportation would not be affected by the Turks arrived with some delay, on April 9, 1913.⁹¹

The difficulties on arrival had a positive effect in terms that, on return, little was left to chance. First, the total number of cargo ships, 35, was more than enough. Secondly, the conditions of life at sea were much better regulated. Loaded food

88 B. Vučetić, *Javnost Sjedinjenih Američkih Država o Crnoj Gori u Balkanskim ratovima*, Historical record, 2010/3, p. 87

89 Military Archive, Register 2, box 56, folder 1, part 2/1; Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts 14 429/5, p. 731

90 Military Archive, Register 2, box 18, folder 6, part 17/41; box 57, folder 1, д. 3/7; box 58, folder 1, part 2/16, 2/21, part 2/22; box 108, folder 1, part 11/1; box 145, part 1, folder 1, part 6; Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 14 429/5, 695-697, 700, 819, 850-851

91 Archive of Serbia, Political Department, (photo library), roll 399, folder 12, doc. 5, part 552, 598, 600-604; Military Archive, Register 2, box 13, folder 2, part 2/8; box 56, folder 1, part 2/1; box 58, folder 1, part 2/22; folder 5, part 15/21; DOCP, Vol. 6/2, part 3; Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 14 429/5, p. 760, 763

and water supplies were twice as larger, for 10 days, than the time scheduled for sailing. The health of the people was also monitored, since on each of the ships, there was a doctor or a paramedic at least, ordered to isolate the patient immediately, at the first suspicion of infection.⁹²

Conducting comprehensive medical measures was of the utmost importance, not only because of the total number, around 1500, but also because of their structure. According to the data of the Lezhe hospital, there were few wounded, only 27. Contrary to that, the number of diseased was significantly higher – 319, of which 2/3 were contagious.⁹³ With regard to this situation, the evacuation of the sick was the primary consideration, but on this occasion considerable difficulties appeared, and on the first ship that left Shengjin on April 10, not a single patient could be found. In fact, the special purpose ship, which had been sought since February did not arrive, although the Serbian authorities contacted Italian, French and Austro-Hungarian side. Only the Russian response changed the embarrassing situation. On April 9, it was reported that *St. Petersburg* would be urgently sent from Odessa with 1,000 hospital beds and the Red Cross team led by the wife of the Russian consul, Helen Jenkins Hartwig.⁹⁴ Yet, despite all the efforts, the last 200 wounded, instead of the first were on the last ship. It was *Antigone*, which on April 20 finally left Shengjin.⁹⁵

The trip to Thessalonica lasted for two weeks. The first anchor was dropped at this port on April 14 and the last on April 25. The ships navigate without problems along the usual course, and only *Themistocles*, which due to its size had to avoid the Corinthian Canal, had a slightly longer route – around Cape Matapan.⁹⁶

Upon return, another attempt of Greek captains to slow down in order to gain additional profit was recorded. They demanded that, due to the alleged threat

92 Military Archive, Register 2, box 2a, folder 1, part 2/4, 5/4

93 Military Archive, Register 2, box 2a, folder 1, part 4/6, 4/7; box 57. folder 1, part 7/16; box 58, folder 1, part 2/32, 2/34; folder 2., part 2/67. Archive of Serbia, Political Department, (photo library), roll 407, folder 18, doc 2, part 184; doc. 3, part 240, 241

94 *St. Petersburg* arrived in Shjengjin on April 18. Find more in: *Rat za more*, p. 460-461

95 Military Archive, Register 2, box 14, folder 1, part 5/19, 5/21; box 58. folder 5, part 12/55; *Ratovanje*, p. 17-18

96 Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 14 429/5, p. 700, 705, 736, 796; Military Archive, Register 2, box 56, folder 1, part 2/1; box 58, folder 5, part 2/51, 12/55; Ž. Pavlović, p. 187

of attack, the ships gather together first and then leave for Thessalonica. Taking into account the presence of international squadron and guarantee of the Turkish authorities, it was rejected. It was ordered that the ships immediately after boarding, individually or in a group, without any further delay be sent away.⁹⁷

Rail transport from Thessalonica to Skopje lasted as long as the naval. It started on April 15 and ended on April 29, 1913. When the last composition crossed the Serbian-Greek border, this episode of cooperation between the two countries and their armed forces was definitely over.⁹⁸ The start of new cooperation related to the alliance in the conflict with Bulgaria was already on the horizon.

Common servitude to the Ottoman Empire resulted in the decades of closeness between Serbia and Greece, and the best proof of this was the alliance and military convention signed in 1867-1868. However, the fact that each country had its own political direction and political interests reflected on the somewhat absurd fact that all attempts to formal alliances in 1912, even in the conditions when the war with Turkey was more than certain, were unsuccessful. Such an undefined condition remained throughout the Balkan war, and only the risk of a new opponent, Bulgaria, made joint military efforts to have been previously formalized.

The situation during the First Balkan War was fundamentally different, because although the alliance was not confirmed by the agreement, it was usually present in the field, and few sporadic incidents were mostly of episodic character. Certainly, the best example of this is the participation of Greek naval forces in the events related to the siege of Shkodra and their participation in the transport of Serbian troops in the period from February to April 1913.

⁹⁷ Archive of Serbia, Political Department, (photo library), roll 399, folder 12, doc. 6, part 618, 634, 635; Military Archive, Register 2, box 58, folder 3, part 10/42; box 13, folder 2, part 2/8

⁹⁸ Military Archive, Register 2, box 47, folder 1, part 3; box 56, folder 2/1, part 1; box 57, folder 12, part 67/59, 67/60; box 108, folder 1, part 11/1; Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 14 429/5, p. 851, 858-859, 864, 875,876, 880,881; DOSP, Vol. 6/2, part 3

Institute for Strategic Research
Neznanog junaka 38
11105 Belgrade
e-mail: isi@mod.gov.rs
Phone: + 381 11 / 20 63 852, fax +381 11 / 3005 - 183

МЕДИЈА ЦЕНТАР „ОДБРАНА”
Београд, Браће Југовића 19
e-mail: medijacentar@mod.gov.rs
www.odbrana.mod.gov.rs

Продаја
011/3201-810, 3241-254
e-mail: komercijala@odbrana.mod.gov.rs

Књижара
Београд, Васе Чарапића 22
Тел. 011/2184-925

CIP – Каталогизација у публикацији
Народна библиотека Србије, Београд

327(497.11:495)”19”(082)

327(497.1)”19”(082)

355.48(497.11)”19”(082)

323(495)”19”(082)

The SERBIAN (Yugoslav)-Greek Relations in the First Half of the Twentieth Century = Српско (југословенско)-грчки односи у првој половини двадесетог века / [editor-in-Chief Milan Terzić ; translation from Serbian in English Branka Dimitrov ... [et al.]]. - Belgrade : Institute for Strategic Research : Media Center „Odbrana”, 2016 (Beograd : Vojna štamparija). - 303 str. ; 25 cm. - (Library Vojna knjiga ; Book no. 2097)

Tiraž 300. - Str. 7-8: Foreword / Milan Terzić. - Napomene i bibliografske reference uz radove. - Bibliografija uz pojedine radove.

ISBN 978-86-81121-14-6 (IFSR)

ISBN 978-86-335-0548-2 (MCO)

1. Up. stv. nasl.

- a) Међународни односи – Србија – 20в - Зборници
 - b) Међународни односи – Грчка – 20в – Зборници
 - c) Југославија – Спољна политика – 20в – Зборници
 - d) Србија – Војна историја – 20в – Зборници
 - e) Грчка – Политичке прилике – 20в – Зборници
- COBISS.SR-ID 227812108