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Balkan Entanglements – Peace of Bucharest

Edited by
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PREFACE

On 10 August 1913, Bucharest became the spotlight of European politics. Since the beginning of autumn 1912, the Balkan states had been engulfed into an all-out war firstly to expel the Ottoman Empire from the area and secondly to ensure the biggest territorial gain at the end of fighting. The hybrid connection created in 1912 between the Balkan states managed to ensure the first task and to undermine the second one. During less than a year, the borders within the Balkan Peninsula recorded astounding changes. For the first time in the history of the last five centuries, the Christian states in the area had the capability to face their biggest enemy and free their co-nationals that were still under the Ottoman yoke.

The beginning of the 20th century represented a period of turmoil for the whole of Europe. In the midst of the debates there were several constant issues generated by the Balkan states as new actors on the stage. The disputes between them and the disputes with their neighbors, leaving aside the continuous conflict with the Ottoman Empire, played an important role in the agenda of many European capitals. Increasing amounts of pressure were generated by the unresolved "Southern Slav problem". The Russian Empire, with a new diplomacy, decided to play a major role in the Balkans, bringing together Bulgaria and Serbia for a common cause. For the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the creation of a multinational state with a Slavic population was of major concern, generating serious social and ethnic tensions. The Ottomans continued to see the Balkans as their own territory, while the latest changes disturbed the Sublime Porte because it endangered both her regional status and her national tranquility.

Overall, the Balkan Wars burst into the European affairs in order to solve the different latent issues among the countries from this part of the continent. But after the war against the Ottoman Empire, the member countries of the Balkan League – Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece and Montenegro – crashed into an inter-allied conflict. Bulgaria had been accused of attacking her former allies but the governments in Belgrade and Athens had done little to avoid a confrontation. Romania's entry into the war by crossing into Bulgaria and occupying a stretch of land at her South-Eastern frontier defined the outcome of the war. Sanctioned by the Great Powers, the Romanian army's campaign was regarded as a mission to

end the conflict. For her role in stopping the blood-spilling in the Balkans, Romania was granted the possibility of becoming the mediator between the belligerent countries of the Second Balkan War. The Peace Conference in Bucharest that concluded the fighting on different Balkan territories aimed to find a solution to the new Balkan system. Both the belligerents and the Great Powers had an interest in ending the fighting, but all understood that the settlement was a mere bandage for an area with deep wounds.

The historiography of the Balkan Wars, in Romania especially, has been enriched after the fall of communism. As numerous archives became available to researchers – both in the Balkan countries and in the former Great Powers – the evolution of the Balkan area in the years preceding World War One recorded a much needed increase of level of attention. The centennial of the Balkan Wars triggered a wave of academic gatherings with scholars who brought into the light a large amount of research concerning the two conflicts which took place between 1912 and 1913.

The collection of studies entitled *Balkan Entanglements - Peace of Bucharest* represents the joint contribution of scholars from both Balkan states and other European countries. This thematic collection represents the result of the international conference organized in Bucharest on 7th and 8th November 2013 as a result of cooperation between the Faculty of History of the University of Bucharest and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania. The commemoration of the Peace of Bucharest brought together scholars from Serbia, Poland, Romania, Republic of Macedonia, Greece, Bosnia and Herzegovina, United Kingdom and Bulgaria.

Following the proceedings that had been carried on in English, this publication comprises 13 articles, each with an abstract and keywords. The authors of the studies are university professors and PhD. Candidates, as well as scholars from research institutes. Based on their interests in researching the Balkan Peninsula at the beginning of the 20th century and the importance of the Balkan Wars in understanding the changes recorded in the area, this collection represents an interdisciplinary outcome, structured into Three Chapters.

The First Chapter – Great Powers and their Balkan interests – is dedicated to the attitude of the two major alliances in Europe, Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente, regarding the Balkan Peninsula before and during the conflicts in 1912-1913. Among the Powers with a major interest in the Balkans, France had been isolated some of the times in analyzing the two conflicts. Both Aleksandra Kolaković with “French intellectuals about the Austro-Hungarian interests in the Balkans (1894–1914)” and Biljana Stojić with “French Policy toward Romania

during the Balkan Wars (1912–1913)” bring more evidence regarding the evolution of French interests and intellectual thinking in this previously Ottoman-dominated area. Connected to the French policy, in “Russia’s brinkmanship in the Balkan Wars”, Cosmin Ioniță assesses the aims and the outcomes of the risky foreign policy generated in St. Petersburg to wash away the memory of the Bosnian crisis. The last study of the chapter belongs to Rudolf Dinu and it offers the Triple Alliance framework for Romanian policy. The article named “Triple Alliance’s Outpost on the Danube. Romanian Strategy in the Balkans before the World War I” explains numerous reasons behind the Romanian decisions before and especially during the two Balkan conflicts.

In the Chapter Two – War at Home: The Two Balkan military conflicts – the authors provide new interpretations concerning the military conflicts in the Balkans and their effect on the populations of the Peninsula. With a growing interest in Europe for armaments, the Balkan Wars offered numerous lessons for military planners and influenced the interests of politicians and people alike. In “Strategic considerations of Greek involvement in the First Balkan War (1912-1913). Internal and international context”, Jędrzej Paszkiewicz provides an analysis on the role of the government in Athens to enter the war against the Ottoman Empire and its impact on the Greek people. A new approach concerning military conflicts is outlined by Bogdan Popa in “War, Body Culture and Prejudice: The Physical Training of the Romanian Army in the Second Balkan War”. The study identifies and analyzes details concerning army preparations before the conflict and the soldier’s general condition before the military encounters. Based on one of the most important instruments of public opinion – the press – Jaroslaw Rubacha in “Second Balkan War in the publications of the newspaper *Czas* (Time)” offers a new interpretation of the Polish public opinion concerning the crisis in the Balkans and the Bulgarian army. Radu Stancu in “A brief description of the social impact of the Romanian military campaign in the second Balkan war” brings to light the social impact of the Romanian mobilization, the conduct of the military campaign and the outrage triggered by the outbreak of cholera among the soldiers, as well as on the rest of the society.

Chapter Three of this collection – A short truce in the Balkans: The Peace Conference of Bucharest – is dedicated to the Peace Conference of Bucharest and its consequences for the belligerent states, as numerous issues remain unsettled after the war. Zoran Bajin in “«We’ll Break Your Teeth» or The Splendors and Miseries of the Balkan League: Miroslav Spalajković at the Peace Conference of Bucharest” depicts the Peace Conference in Bucharest through the role of one of the representatives of the belligerent countries. Bogdan Cătană in “Immediate

consequences of the Bucharest peace treaty of 1913 upon the Romanian - Serbian relations" highlights the importance of the peace settlement for the political relations between two neighbors that shared a consistent degree of common interests.

In a world of turmoil, life in the Balkans depended to a large degree on chance and the two wars in 1912-1913 did not manage to bring the desired peace and improve the situation of minorities. Liljana Gushevska and Natasha Kotlar-Trajkova in "Aromanians in Macedonia before and during the Balkan Wars (in Diplomatic Sources)" depict mainly the Austro-Hungarian and Russian primary sources concerning the ethnographic composition of Macedonia, focusing on the Aromanian nationality. Vladimir Crețulescu in "The Greek-Romanian conflict pertaining to the Aromanian question, as reflected in the writings of Apostol Mărgărit – a discourse – analytical approach" defines the activity of a defender of the Aromanian minority in the historical Macedonia to preserve cultural survival. Kyrillos Nikolaou in "Migrations and identity dilemmas: Ottoman Greeks and Ottoman Jews from the Balkans to the Americas 1900-1914" brings into light the relocations of individuals and families due to the social impact of the transformations in the Balkan area before World War One.

The editors of this collection intended to highlight new interpretations of the increasing number of new sources, as well as the reinterpretation of the ones established already, based on the latest research. The studies reunited under *Balkan Entanglements - Peace of Bucharest* are largely based on archival sources from numerous countries, published primary sources and press. This volume is a proof that the Balkan Wars and the Peace of Bucharest played a decisive role for shaping European perceptions in many fields at that time. Establishing more means for research, at transnational level, would consistently enrich our understanding of the events in 1912-1913 in the Balkans.

The editors

GREAT POWERS AND THEIR BALKAN INTERESTS

FRENCH DIPLOMACY TOWARD ROMANIA DURING THE BALKAN WARS (1912–1913)¹

BILJANA STOJIC *

Since 1883, Romania was a part of a secret alliance with Austria–Hungary and Germany. Therefore, France did not consider it an area suitable for spreading its political influence. Analyses by French diplomats persistently showed that Romania was a loyal ally of Austria–Hungary and the Triple Alliance.² Relying on these analyses, until the First Balkan War, the French diplomacy was cautious and reserved towards Romania.

At the beginning of the First Balkan War, there were two issues that particularly worried France: one was the concern that the Ottoman Empire would defeat small Balkan states and disrupt the existing political balance in the Balkans and Southeast Europe; while the other was the fear that the Balkan war would spread to the rest of Europe. The main task of the French diplomacy in autumn 1912 was to localize the war to the Balkans. For France, this meant that it had to keep away from the war not only its ally Russia but also Austria–Hungary, because these two countries were the most interested in the Balkan issue. Furthermore, France strove to keep away from the war the only Balkan country that did not get involved in the war – Romania. From the French perspective, Romania's potential involvement in the war against the Ottoman Empire would have been very hazardous because it could have led to the interference of Austria–Hungary, Germany and Italy, causing a local war to become a European conflict.

Accordingly, the main task of the French minister in Bucharest, Camille Blondel³, was to persuade the Romanian government, headed by Titu Maiorescu,

¹ This paper is a part of the project: *Europe and the Serbs (1804–1918): Incentives and temptations of the European Modernism* (№ 177031), under the support of the Ministry for Education, Science and Technological development the Republic of Serbia.

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² Archives des Ministère des affaires étrangères (AMAE), Nouvelles série (NS), Turquie, doss. 229, № 23, Budapest, le 15 janvier 1912.

³ Jean Camille Blondel (1854–1935), was a French diplomat. He started diplomatic carrier as an attaché in London 1878. Soon he was transferred firstly in Berlin, then 1882 in Madrid and Tanger.

that it was in Romania's best interest to remain neutral.⁴ The task of minister Blondel was all the easier because Romania was not ready for the war. At the time when the Balkan Alliance was being established, between March and October 1912, Romania was invited twice by Bulgaria to join in, but it refused. France believed that Austria-Hungary had influence in the decision-making process in Bucharest. On 10 August 1912, during his visit to Bucharest, Count Leopold Berthold, the Austro-Hungarian minister of foreign affairs, advised the ally to remain neutral in case of an armed conflict in the Balkans. He promised that, after the victory of the Ottoman Empire – and Austria-Hungary believed that it would be an unquestionable outcome of the war – Romania would gain territories that had belonged to defeated Bulgaria.⁵ When the war started, Romania declared the *stricte neutralité* and proclaimed its determination to maintain the status quo in the Balkans, as well as the expectation to be appropriately awarded for its neutrality.⁶ Also, one of the reasons why Romania chose to stay aside from current war in the Balkans was a concern for the status of the Aromanian minority in Macedonia and in the other parts of the Ottoman Empire. Apart from this mostly diplomatic question, the Ottoman Empire was not a threat to any vital national interests of the Romanian state. These two countries did not share common border like Bulgaria and the other Balkan states.⁷ The Great Powers were very pleased with this "wise" decision of Romania. Their primary assignment called "*neutralisation de la Roumanie*" was accomplished.

Despite its own rational decision to stay out of the war, soon after the first victories of the Balkan allies in the battles of Kumanovo and Kirkkilise, Romania and the rest of Europe realized that the Ottoman Empire was far from victory, and that Romania was not any closer to the promised territorial extensions.⁸ As a consequence, Romania began to reconsider its decision of not being involved in the Balkan war. Romanian press apprehensively complained over "the poignant

His first service as an appointed minister was in the Mexico 1900–1907. In 1903 he becomes the Officer of the Legion of Honor. Four years later Blondel was nominated as the minister plenipotentiary I class in Bucharest. In that diplomatic position Blondel stayed until 1916. Blondel had a main role along with Romanian Prime minister Ion Brătianu in entering the Romania in the First World War on the side of France and the Triple Entente. (*Annuaire diplomatique et consulaire de la République française pour 1913*, t. XXXI, (Paris: Berger-Leverault, février 1913), 165.)

⁴ *Ottoman Diplomatic Documents on the Origins of World War One, The Balkan Wars 1912–1913 (part I)*, edited by Sinan Kuneralp and Gül Tokay, (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2012), № 470, 266–267.

⁵ AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 248, № 181, St-Pétersbourg, le 4 décembre 1912; Gheorghe Zbucnea, *România și războaiele balcanice 1912–1913, pagini de istorie sud-est europeană*, (București: Albatros, 1999), 68.

⁶ Ion Bulei, *Brève histoire de la Roumanie*, trans. Ileana Cantuniari (Bucarest: Meronia, 2006), 130.

⁷ Andrew Rossos, *Russia and the Balkans (1909–1914)*, (Stanford University: manuscript PhD thesis, 1971), 321.

⁸ AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 241, № 9, Belgrade le 27 octobre 1912.

fate of Romania", which stayed in the shadow of the political and military success of other Balkan states. Although the chances to be granted a territorial extension by Austria-Hungary were thwarted, Romania was nevertheless determined to gain an advantage from the ongoing war.

Late in October 1912, the government of Titu Maiorescu first revealed their intention to demand the alteration of borders in Dobrogea. Romanian minister of internal affairs, Take Ionescu, told the French minister Blondel that the Romanian request was justified because the uncontrolled strengthening of Bulgaria and other Balkan states would disrupt the balance and relations among the Balkan states after the dissolution of the Ottoman rule. In his opinion, in order to maintain the balance, it was necessary to meet the national aspirations of all Balkan states, including Romania.⁹

Apart from the territorial expansion, Romania put forward another important demand: the protection of the rights of Aromanians living in Macedonia and Epirus. Those rights should include the introduction of Aromanian schools, education programs in Romanian, as well as the establishment of a bishopric under the jurisdiction of the Romanian church and state. France deemed that none of the two demands of the Romanian government could be a critical reason for Romania to get involved in warfare. Therefore, France did not approve the intensive military preparations undertaken by the Romanian General Staff since the early November 1912. Maiorescu informed Blondel that the government had prepared instructions for military commanders in case of mobilisation. In same time, the Ministry of internal affairs made all trains available for the transport of troops to the border.¹⁰

The Great Powers planned to discuss Romania's demands and all other problems resulting from the First Balkan War at a Peace conference which they were intensively preparing since the beginning of the conflict. On 12 October, the French Prime minister and the minister of foreign affairs, Raymond Poincaré, suggested that a conference dealing with all problems resulting from the Balkan War should be organized.¹¹ It was not before December that the conditions necessary for such conference were fulfilled; after all Balkan states, except Greece, signed the armistice with the Ottoman Empire at Çatalca. It was decided that the conference be held in London. The four members of the Balkan Alliance and the Ottoman Empire, as participants in the conflict, were invited to send their delegations to London to negotiate peace conditions. Along with them,

⁹ AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 241, № 122–123, Bucarest le 29 octobre 1912.

¹⁰ AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 240, № 92–93, Bucarest, le 23 octobre 1912.

¹¹ Raymond Poincaré, *Au service de la France: neuf années de souvenir*, II, *Les Balkans en feu* (1912), (Paris: Plon, 1926), 266; John F. V. Keiger, *France and the Origins of the First World War*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1983), 45.

representatives of the Great Powers who undertook to solve some Balkan issues were also there; these issues included the status of Albania, Serbia's access to the Adriatic Sea, the Ottoman national debt, status of the Aegean islands, etc.¹²

Although it was not involved in the war, Romania considered that it was entitled to attend the Peace conference. Austria-Hungary supported the demand of its ally and suggested to other Great Powers to enable the Romanian delegate to attend the imminent Conference.¹³ During the negotiations among the Great Powers Count Berchtold was suggested on 6 November to other Powers that Romania could be a mediator between the Ottoman Empire and the Balkan allies. During consultations with the other Great Powers, Austria-Hungary promised that it will reconsider the possibility of Serbian extension to the territory of the Stara Raška, if France and her allies accepted Romanian demands.¹⁴ Poincaré and Sir Edward Grey opposed the idea that Romania should take part in the Peace conference, arguing that the other European states could have demanded the same status if Romania had been allowed to attend.

Lord Grey's assumption that the other states which had not taken part in the war could demand attendance at the Peace conference in London soon proved to be justified. On 14 December, the Spanish Prime minister Manuel Garcia Prieto asked the French ambassador to Madrid to confirm reports from the European press suggesting that the Great Powers would allow Romania to participate in the London Peace conference. Should the information prove true, Prieto demanded the same right for Spain, as a Mediterranean power.¹⁵ Being indecisive regarding this issue, Russia suggested a compromise: a Romanian delegate was allowed to formally attend the Conference sessions but was not to be allowed to vote.¹⁶

France offered Romania that its ambassador to London, Paul Cambon, could represent Romania as well. That suggestion was a part of the instructions for this French delegate. Despite this offer, Romania was offended by its treatment by the Great Powers, and decided to look for other solutions. First of all, Romania decided to appoint the Austro-Hungarian delegate at the Peace conference, Count Albert von Mensdorff, as a representative of Romanian

¹² AMAE, Fonds nominatifs (FN), Paul Cambon (PC), vol. 46, № 540, Londres, le 17 décembre 1912; *Documents diplomatiques français* (DDF), 3^e série (1911–1914), tome V, (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1933), № 78, 94; *British Documents on the Origins of the War 1898–1914* (BD), vol. IX, part II, edited by George P. Gooch and Harold Temperley, (London: H.M. Stationary Office, 1934), № 391, 292.

¹³ AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 249, № 259–263, Paris, le 15 décembre 1912.

¹⁴ AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 243, № 132, Paris, le 8 novembre 1912.

¹⁵ AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 249, № 242, Madrid, le 14 décembre 1912.

¹⁶ AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 249, № 15, Londres, le 9 décembre 1912.

interests as well. France thought, with this act, Romania proved itself as a loyal ally of Austria-Hungary and the Triple Alliance. It proved that the precociousness of French diplomacy toward Romania was justified. Still, France was willing to help Romania to achieve its demands in southern part of Dobrogea, but Minister Poincaré unhesitatingly rejected the Romanian proposition to be awarded with an island in the Aegean Sea. Poincaré and France suspected that Germany could use this island as advantage against France in the Mediterranean Sea and for establishing a naval base.¹⁷

Also, before the Conference, on 16 December, Romania decided to temporarily replace its minister to London. Nicolae Mișu, who had good relations with the president of the Bulgarian parliament, Stoyan Danev, ever since his service in Sofia as the minister plenipotentiary of King Carol I, was appointed as the delegate.¹⁸ Romania apparently hoped that Mișu and Danev would discuss the Romanian demands concerning Southern Dobrogea and the status of Aromanians in Macedonia outside official sessions.

The negotiations between the two representatives were conducted simultaneously with the official sessions of the Peace conference which started on 17 December, but with a very little progress. At first, Bulgarian delegate Danev who was not authorized by his government to offer to Romania any part of Bulgarian territory in Dobrogea. The Bulgarian government thought that the question of the cession of the territory was naturally a vital question, while the demand for territory on the part of Romania was merely prompted by *amour propre* and the responsibility of endangering European peace would fall entirely upon the Romanian government.¹⁹ In current negotiations' progress was made on 28 December when Danev took the initiative. He prepared a proposal containing four points and asked Count Beckendorff to communicate them to Saint Petersburg. They provided for: 1) church and school autonomy for the Aromanians in Macedonia; 2) the razing of all forts and fortifications in Southern Dobrogea, and in the last resort, the cession of the strategic position Medgidia-Tabia; 3) rectification of the frontier involving the cession of about twenty villages to Romania; 4) guarantee for the inviolability of Romanian Dobrogea.²⁰

Prime minister Ivan Geshov and the rest of the Bulgarian government were not aware of this courageous proposal of Danev. However, Sazonov seemed

¹⁷ AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 249, № 259–263, Paris, le 15 décembre 1912.

¹⁸ AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 250, № 5, Paris, le 16 décembre 1912; Arhivele Naționale ale României (ANR), Casa Regală – I, dosar 16/1912, № 11–12, București, 26 noiembrie/9 decembrie 1912.

¹⁹ BD, vol. IX, part II, № 769, Sofia, February 25, 1913.

²⁰ AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 253, MF, PO 8618, № 98–99, Paris, le 10 janvier 1913; ANR, Casa Regală – I, dosar 21/1913, № 1–14, Bucarest, 23 January/5 February 1913.

highly impressed by Danev's four points. They represented a radical departure from Bulgaria's previous stand and he advised Bucharest to utilize them as basis for an agreement. On 3 January, Mişu rejected the four points, because the Romanian government thought that Bulgaria offered too little. He told Danev that Romania's minimal territorial demands extended along the line from a point west of the town of Silistria to the Black Sea, south of Balchik. Also, during this phase of negotiations Romanian Minister of internal affairs and member of delegation Take Ionescu spread public accusations that Danev had not acted honestly and that he had broken all engagements and promises that he gave during his visit to Bucharest in December 1912. Insulted by these baseless and unjust attacks Danev refused to continue the negotiations. He recommended that Mikhail Madzarov, Bulgarian Minister to London, as a chief negotiator and began preparations to return to Sofia. But, the government in Bucharest threatened to occupy the demanded area, as a warning to Bulgaria to seriously consider Romanian claims. That persuaded Danev to postpone his departure and to continue the negotiations. Romanian representative in this dialog, Nicolae Mişu, described this phase of negotiations like "Romania was thrown in for bargaining".²¹

Simultaneously with the negotiations in London, Romania continued military preparations in case the dialogue failed. The rising tensions in the relations between Romania and Bulgaria were becoming increasingly apparent both in Romanian and Bulgarian public opinion. During November, some Bulgarian newspapers were reporting that Romania was secretly supplying the Ottoman Empire with war equipment and horses. Bulgarian public opinion believed that this conspiracy on the part of the Romanian and Turkish authorities was aimed directly against Bulgaria. An investigation, spurred by these reports, was undertaken by the French minister Blondel and it revealed that several shipments of war equipment sent by Austria-Hungary to the Ottoman Empire had reached the Romanian port of Constanţa. The shipments had been delivered at night, and it had been under ultimate secrecy that the Romanian authorities let the ships sail to Istanbul. Defending Romania, Blondel highlighted that the Romanian government had never formally declared neutrality in the First Balkan War. Accordingly, it had the right to support one of the sides in the conflict. Blondel also pointed out that the unfavourable circumstance for Romania was the fact its aid to the Ottoman Empire was indeed harmful to Bulgaria, while the relations between the two countries were already tense due to Romania's compensation demand related to Dobrogea. Furthermore, Blondel discovered that since late November 1912 Romania was regularly receiving supplies of war equipment from military

²¹ Rossos, *Russia and the Balkans*, 343–356.

factories in Austria-Hungary, Germany and France. In order not to disturb the public, the whole operation of arming was conducted secretly.²²

Meanwhile, Bulgaria did not stay inactive and it undertook the same preparations for a possible war against Romania. Romanian "excessive demands" regarding Dobrogea generated strong dissent among Bulgarian public opinion. In a conversation with Paul Cambon in London, Stoyan Danev said that Bulgarian public opinion was justifiably dissatisfied because the entire Europe was pressing it to relinquish a part of its legitimate state territory, while at the same time covering up the fact that Romania had mobilized a part of its troops, which were lined along the border towards Bulgaria and ready to fight.²³

Despite the war preparations on both sides, negotiations between Bulgaria and Romania in London were continued. In fact, these unofficial negotiations between Mişu and Danev resulted on 29 January 1913 in an agreement concerning the Aromanian minority which was to find itself within the borders of Bulgaria as a consequence of its territorial extensions.²⁴ In a protocol signed by those two delegates, Bulgaria promised the autonomy to Aromanian schools and churches. They also agreed upon the establishment of a bishopric under the jurisdiction of the Romanian Church.²⁵ However, the alteration of state borders demanded by Romania was a far greater problem than the status of the Aromanian minority.

Soon after the Agreement between Bulgaria and Romania was signed, the peace negotiations in St James's Palace were compromised because the Ottoman Empire refused to cede Adrianople to Bulgaria. Instable political situation in the Ottoman Empire led to a revolutionary protest on 23 January when couple hundreds of the Young Turks led by Enver Bey forced Grand Vizier Kâmil Pasha to resign and appointed General Mahmud Şevket Pasha as the new one. When the peace negotiations were interrupted early in February 1913, the relations between Bulgaria and Romania were among the unsettled issues. Bulgaria pleaded for postponing the negotiations until the end of the war against the Ottoman Empire. The interruption of the London peace negotiations and the resumption of hostilities caused immense dissatisfaction in Romania. The Council of ministers unanimously criticized Maiorescu's policy towards Bulgaria, designating it as "indecisive and unconvincing". The Romanian government and public opinion

²² AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 247, № 43–44, Bucarest, le 26 novembre 1912.

²³ AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 251, № 119–120, Londres, le 27 décembre 1912.

²⁴ ANR, Casa Casa Regală – I, dosar 14/1913, № 1–2, Copie, Londres, le 16/29 janvier 1913.

²⁵ AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 259, MF, PO 8624, № 59–75, Bucarest, le 3 mars 1913; Tsentralen D'rzhaven Arkhiv (TsDA), Ministerstvo na v'shrite raboti i izpovedanijata (MVRI), f. 176K, op. 2, a.e. 1454, 1–29, Bucharest, 22 July 1913.

urged the minister of foreign affairs and other participants in the negotiations to undertake more decisive action. Principally, public opinion unanimously pushed the government to let the army invade Dobrogea. Blondel sought to calm down all those who advocated the "policy of decisive action" and was very sceptical regarding the Great Power's ability to restrain Romania for long from entering into war against Bulgaria.²⁶

Although Bulgaria demanded to delay negotiations with Romania, it was clear that the political situation in Romania was rather delicate and the negotiations had to be resumed at all cost through the mediation by the Great Powers, and primarily Russia. Bulgaria's relenting on the issue of territorial compensation to the Romanian government was preceded by the visit of the Bulgarian minister of finance, Teodor Teodorov, to Saint Petersburg. Sergey Sazonov assured Teodorov that Russia would stand in defence of Bulgaria in case Romania kept on putting forward new demands. Nevertheless, Teodorov's visit to Russia merely augmented Romania's suspicion towards the newly established close collaboration between Russia and Bulgaria. The fear of a new wave of Pan-Slavism was revived in Bucharest and all around Romania.

Romanian public opinion remembered too well that Russia chose to sacrifice Romanian interests in Bessarabia and Dobrogea for the sake of Bulgaria and Pan-Slavic movement 35 years ago, at the Berlin Congress. It seemed apparent that the same fate was awaiting Romania once again. Therefore, instead of accepting the Medgidia-Tabia territory as the compensation, Maiorescu's government called for excluding Russia as a mediator in the negotiations between Bulgaria and Romania. Romania threatened an armed solution to the problem in case Russia refused to withdraw from the negotiations. Faced with these threats, Sazonov refreshed Maiorescu's memory on the fact that Romania had been first to demand the mediation of the Russian Empire, whereas Bulgaria had merely followed its example.²⁷ Sazonov's advice failed to tranquilize the Romanian government, which resolutely insisted on excluding Russia from further negotiations. Realizing that it was necessary to avoid the growth of anti-Russian and anti-Slavic sentiments in Romania in order to peacefully resolve the conflict, Bulgaria suggested involving one or more supervisors, along with Russia.²⁸ Maiorescu's government conceded to this and on 23 February the suggestion that all of six Great Powers be involved as mediators in the negotiations between Romania and Bulgaria was put forward.²⁹ Facing a new degradation in Bulgarian-Romanian relations the Great Powers were

²⁶ AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 256, Microfilm (MF), PO 8621, № 233-234, Bucarest, le 7 février 1913.

²⁷ Rossos, *Russia and the Balkans*, 349-350.

²⁸ TsDA, MVRI, f. 176K, op. 2, a.e. 1365, 1-173, Peterburg, 7/19 February 1913.

²⁹ TsDA, MVRI, f. 176K, op. 2, a.e. 1365, 1-198, Bucharest, 9/21 February 1913; Rossos, *Russia and the Balkans*, 362.

still convinced that problems between these two countries were not so much dangerous as to be resolved in an armed conflict.³⁰

Having agreed to act as mediators, late in February 1913, the Great Powers offered to make the final decision, which would be additionally confirmed by Romania and Bulgaria. Bulgaria accepted the offer promptly, while Romania was hesitant. In order to put pressure on Maiorescu and his government, the Great Powers used diplomatic demarches. The first demarche was delivered by the British minister in Bucharest, Sir George Barclay. This measure of the British Foreign office was supported by the German minister Julius Freiherr von Waldhausen. Five days later on 22 February identical demarches were submitted by the rest of the Great Powers.³¹ On 1 March, the French minister Camille Blondel sent a collective diplomatic demarche on behalf of the Great Powers. Despite the demarches, Maiorescu at first refused the mediation of the Great Powers.³² Maiorescu pointed out that a great damage had been made to Romania by the Treaty of Berlin, namely Article 46, in which it had been decided to hand over the territory of Dobrogea to the newly established Bulgarian state. This decision was based entirely on conjecture on the part of the participants in the Berlin Congress who drew the state border without consulting Bulgarian and Romanian authorities.

As Maiorescu emphasized in his address, there had been two occasions when Romania had aided Bulgaria in gaining significant territorial acquisitions: in 1877, when the Romanian army had fought together with Russian forces against the Ottoman Empire, thereby helping Bulgaria gain independence; and in 1912, when in a note sent on 8 October, Bulgaria pleaded Romania's neutrality in the intended war against the Ottoman Empire. According to Maiorescu, in October 1912, Romania had acted in accordance with the desire of Bulgaria and its allies.³³ Under the jurisdiction of Romania that small territory in Southern Dobrogea couldn't become "*point d'attaque*" against Bulgaria. Its importance for Romania was strictly defensive. On the other hand, for Bulgarians the fortress Silistria and the territory around it were strategically very important and possible "*point offensif*" against Romania.³⁴ Blondel promised that, in the process of mediation, France would take into consideration the rights and merits of Romania, thereby persuading Maiorescu to let the Great Powers resolve the dispute with Bulgaria.³⁵

³⁰ AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 258, MF, PO 8623, № 51, Paris, le 19 février 1913.

³¹ ANR, Casa Regală - I, dosar 16/1912, № 25-26, 2/22 February 1913.

³² AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 259, MF, PO 8624, № 55-57, Bucarest, le 2 mars 1913.

³³ AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 259, MF, PO 8624, № 59-75, Bucarest, le 3 mars 1913.

³⁴ ANR, Casa Regală - I, dosar 24/1913, № 1-16, Bucarest, le 15/28 février 1913.

³⁵ AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 259, MF, PO 8624, № 59-75, Bucarest, le 3 mars 1913.

Although Sazonov's original intention was to organize a peace conference in London, simultaneously with the Conference of Ambassadors, Ivan Geshov and he agreed to the idea to organize it in Saint Petersburg.³⁶ This decision was also accepted by the ministers at the London Conference. During the preparations for the conference to be held in Saint Petersburg, the relations between Austria-Hungary and Montenegro were verging on war.³⁷

The Great Powers were preoccupied with their attempt to appease Austria-Hungary and preparations for a naval demonstration of power to Montenegro. Therefore, it was convenient for them to let Russia, which did not take part in the naval manoeuvres, to act as a mediator in the dispute between Romania and Bulgaria. For the Great Powers, the disagreement between Romania and Bulgaria was less dangerous than the Shkodër crisis. Apart from Sazonov, the representatives of the other five Great Powers accredited in Russia were invited to take part in the conference.³⁸ Romania and Bulgaria, as parties in the dispute, were not invited, not even to formally attend the meetings, which were closed to public. According to the official procedure, Romanian and Bulgarian ministers to Saint Petersburg were to present arguments in favour of their state's demands, but the decision was to be entirely entrusted to the Great Powers. Sazonov appealed the Bulgarian and Romanian government not to send special delegates in order to prevent pressure on conference participants or press intrigue.³⁹

The conference began on 31 March and was concluded on 17 April 1913. On the first session of the Conference, Ambassadors of Triple Alliance supported Romania's claim to the line of Silistria-Balchik. At the beginning of the Conference Sazonov tried to gain some compensation for Bulgaria. He pointed out that Thessaloniki is proper reward for lost Southern Dobrogea. The Italian ambassador agreed that Southern Dobrogea should be ceded to Romania in the interests of the general peace and that it would be right that Bulgaria got compensation elsewhere. However, the other delegates declined to discuss on the subject of Thessaloniki, fearing that could start off a new disagreement between Bulgaria and Greece, which seemed eager to preserve Thessaloniki under its own

³⁶ TsDA, MVRI, f. 176K, op. 2, a.e. 1365, 1-229, Petersburg, 12/24 February 1913.

³⁷ Ernst Ch. Helmreich, *The Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars (1912-1913)*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), 301-302.

³⁸ France was represented by ambassador Théophile Delcassé; Germany by ambassador Count Friedrich von Pourtalès; United Kingdom by ambassador Sir Georges Buchanan; Austria-Hungary by ambassador Duglas Graf von Thurn; and, in the name of the Kingdom of Italy Marquis Carlotti di Riparbella was present (ANR, Casa Regală - I, dosar 29/1913, № 1-2, Copie, Saint Pétersbourg, le 26 avril/9 mai 1913).

³⁹ Rossos, *Russia and the Balkans*, 363.

jurisdiction at any cost.⁴⁰ To accomplish an arrangement the Great Powers needed only five sessions, while Bulgaria and Romania had not succeeded during the several months of intense negotiations.

The treaty, known as the Saint Petersburg Protocol, was signed on 9 May. It resulted in the alteration of the border at the town of Silistria and an area in a three-kilometre radius around it. Silistria become a part of Romania and Bulgarians who wished to leave the annexed area were to be compensated. Bulgaria was to pull down all fortifications and was forbidden to build new fortifications along the new border. According to the Saint Petersburg Protocol one mixed Bulgarian-Romanian commission with experts appointed by the six Great Powers should have determined the precise direction of the new border within a period of three months. Also, the ambassadors in Saint Petersburg agreed that the Danev-Mișu agreement made in London should become an integral part of the Protocol.⁴¹

The Great Powers had many reasons to be satisfied with their mediation, at least until the two delegations returned home. French Ambassador Delcassé pointed out that the Conference completely fulfilled its task, mostly thanks to Bulgaria "which submitted a great sacrifice for the sake of peace".⁴² Still, the Romanian public opinion expressed their dissatisfaction with the conduct of the French ambassador Delcassé during the conference in Saint Petersburg. He was expected to support Romania simply because Russia supported it. The Romanian public opinion believed that ambassador Delcassé should have supported the Russian minister of foreign affairs, Sergey Sazonov, in order to ensure greater compensation for Romania in territory of Southern Dobrogea.⁴³

The Protocol was the most loudly disapproved by the leaders of the Conservative Party - Petre Carp, and the Liberal Party - Ion Brătianu. The two politicians led a campaign in the Romanian Parliament against the ratification of the Saint Petersburg treaty. They believed that Romania could have gained more than the town of Silistria and a three-kilometre zone around it. According to Carp and Brătianu, Romania was treated unfairly in the Protocol, with the exception of the minor border correction at Silistria; in no other place, as far as the Black Sea was the state border altered in its favour. The opponents to the Protocol highlighted that the correction did not ensure better strategic defence of the Romanian state border than it had been before the modification. Following

⁴⁰ BD, vol. IX, part II, № 769, Saint Petersburg, March 31, 1913.

⁴¹ AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 266, № 11, Saint-Pétersbourg, le 15 avril 1913.

⁴² AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 266, № 139-140, Saint-Pétersbourg, le 18 avril 1913.

⁴³ AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 266, № 177, Bucarest, le 20 avril 1913.

the example of political parties, Romanian public opinion divided into supporters and opponents of the Saint Petersburg treaty. Despite the boiling political situation in Romania, the French minister Blondel continued to be a "conciliator and a voice of conscience" for Maiorescu and his government. He was strongly convinced that France still might influence and change Romanian political orientation which would lead to its separation from the Triple Alliance.⁴⁴

The French minister to Sofia, André de Panafieu, deemed the dispute and the negotiations in Saint Petersburg pointless. What particularly worried Panafieu was the attitude of Romania, whose acts he considered "diplomatically unreasonable". The French minister to Sofia emphasized that two solutions were offered to Romania by negotiators in Saint Petersburg but, in his opinion, it chose "the worse solution – the one flattering to its vanity rather than serving the true interests of the state". Panafieu did not accuse the government headed by the Prime minister Maiorescu of irrationally obeying public opinion, nevertheless he rather believed that Maiorescu merely used public opinion to strengthen his authority and the authority of his party. According to Panafieu, the domination over Silistria had never had a strategic character, no matter how eagerly Romania strove to present it as such, but was rather a product of the "Romanian *amour propre* and the pride hurt by the decision made 35 years ago". If Romania had accepted the other offer and had incorporated into its territory the coastal area of the Black Sea offered by Bulgaria already in February, it would have gained an economically more developed region, while the port of Mangalia could be transformed into a strong military base on the Sea.

Panafieu was not any less critical to Bulgaria and its part in crisis over Silistria. According to him, the town Silistria was not strategically important to any state. He believed that the Protocol of Saint Petersburg was untenable because Bulgarians considered it as a "national disaster", while the Romanian public opinion and opposition parties believed that Romania deserved better compensation than that granted by the agreement. Panafieu was convinced that in a couple years Bulgaria would try to regain the lost territory by war and in that moment the European states would regret their decisions made in Saint Petersburg.⁴⁵ In May 1913, Romania and Bulgaria were much closer to the war than any time before and disputes within the Balkan alliance that surfaced after the Treaty of London had been signed additionally fuelled the war euphoria.

Despite the heavy criticism from the public, Maiorescu and his government decided to propose to the Parliament to ratify the Saint Petersburg Protocol. On the session of 28 May, the Romanian parliament ratified the

⁴⁴ AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 269, № 23–24, Bucarest, le 12 mai 1913.

⁴⁵ AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 266, № 178–179, Sophia, le 20 avril 1913.

agreement from Saint Petersburg. A day after, the Protocol was ratified the Senate with a majority of 77 votes. Even after this promising first step, the Great Powers were still concerned over the fate of the Bulgarian–Romanian relations. After the signing of the Protocol, the Great Powers planned that in a period of three months both sides would ratify the Protocol and that the commission would establish now border. In the end of May this plan seemed unrealistic because Romania spent one whole month to ratify the agreement.⁴⁶

According to the Saint Petersburg Protocol, after the ratification of the treaty, Romania and Bulgaria were to establish three commissions with the task of precisely tracing the new border. On 9 June, Blondel informed his Ministry that Romania had delivered the list of representatives in these commissions.⁴⁷ The implementation of the Protocol was thwarted by the outbreak of the Second Balkan War, initiated by the attack of the Bulgarian army on Serbian and Greek positions along the Bregalnica River in the night between 29 and 30 June 1913. War supporters in Bulgaria declared that "Bulgaria demanded of Serbia the execution of the treaty of 1912; of Greece, recognition of the right of nationalities; of Romania, to respect her territory".⁴⁸ In Bulgarian perspective this attack seems like the only rightful choice for defending its national claims.

Since the signing of the London Treaty on 30 May, Europe was convinced that the dissolution of the Balkan Alliance was inevitable, while a conflict between Serbia and Bulgaria was a matter of days. Minister Blondel believed that Romania would mobilize all of its military forces at the first hint of war.⁴⁹ On 26 June, the Romanian minister to Saint Petersburg, Constantin Nanu, told to Delcassé that in case of war, Romania would protect its interests. He also said that Romania would not make the same mistake as eight months before, when it had remained a silent spectator and, due to its passivity, had failed to get a proper reward. Even Carp, who was known as the most fervent supporter of Romania's alliance with Austria–Hungary and Germany, was stressing in his statements made in June 1913 that "Romania had to change the course of its foreign policy".⁵⁰

In the period between two Balkan wars, Romania did not want to enter into an alliance with Serbia and Greece against Bulgaria in order not to lose the

⁴⁶ AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 270, № 131–132, Bucarest, le 28 mai 1913; AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 270, № 135, Bucarest, le 29 mai 1913; AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 270, № 227, Paris, le 31 mai 1913.

⁴⁷ AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 271, № 186, Bucarest, le 9 juin 1913.

⁴⁸ Ministry of foreign affairs, *The Bulgarian question and the Balkan states*, (Sofia: State Printing Press, 1919), 6.

⁴⁹ AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 271, № 230–231, Bucarest, le 10 juin 1913.

⁵⁰ AMAE, PA 211, Papiers Delcassé, Ambassade de Saint-Petersbourg, vol. 20, № 128, Saint-Petersbourg, le 26 juin 1913.

freedom of choice in case of war.⁵¹ On 22 June, King Carol informed the Serbian minister to Romania, Mihailo Ristić, about his final decision regarding Romania's stance in case of war between Serbia and Bulgaria, Romania would mobilize armed forces and wait. If Serbia won, Romania would hail its victory with satisfaction, but if there were a threat that Bulgaria could triumph, in a decisive moment, Romania would interfere in war to support Serbia.⁵²

In June, minister Blondel spoke with Maiorescu and King Carol on several occasions. He had the latest information which enabled him to closely observe every change in Romanian policy. During one of those conversations, Maiorescu told Blondel that in case that Romania decided to enter the war against Bulgaria "it would only secure the line Tutrakan-Balchik and it would stop there". Blondel wanted to get a confirmation of this statement from King Carol, but he gave a vague answer and told Blondel "that the second part of Maiorescu's statement was exaggerated". He and Romanian government could not make a promise of any kind in advance. If Romania joined the warfare, it would fight until got its guarantees from Bulgaria that its demands in Dobrogea would be fulfilled. Also King Carol indicated the possibility that Romania would spread its area of operations, because he could not allow "that Serbia be overrun by Bulgaria".⁵³

On 3 July, King Carol and Romanian General Staff ordered the army mobilization.⁵⁴ The Romanian government explained this action to the Great Powers as a "confirmation of its territorial integrity" and "securing its strategic position towards Bulgaria".⁵⁵ The very same day when mobilization was ordered in Romania, Danev contacted Serbian and Greek Prime ministers Nikola Pašić and Eleftherios Venizelos, suggesting that the three of them should command a cease-fire to their troops. Venizelos responded that he would order a cease-fire only after the withdrawal of Bulgarian troops to the positions held before the attack on the Bregalnica.⁵⁶ While Romanian troops were being mobilized, Austria-Hungary advised the authorities in Sofia to conclude a treaty with Romania at any cost in order to prevent a possible fight on the third side.⁵⁷

Subsequently, on 9 July, the Romanian minister to Sofia, Prince Dimitrie Ghica, informed the Bulgarian government that together with the embassy staff

⁵¹ ANR, Casa Regală – I, dosar 36/1913, № 1–7, Bucarest, le 20 juin 1913.

⁵² *Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903–1914 (1903–1914)*, priredio Dušan Lukač, urednik Vasa Tsfilović (Beograd : Srpske akademija nauka i umetnosti, 1981), VI–2, № 565, 597–598.

⁵³ ANR, Casa Regală – I, dosar 36/1913, № 1–7, Bucarest, le 20 juin 1913.

⁵⁴ AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 274, № 88, Bucarest, le 3 juillet 1913.

⁵⁵ AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 274, № 135–137, Bucarest, le 4 juillet 1913; ANR, Casa Regală – I, dosar 38/1913, № 1, Bucarest, le 3/16 juillet 1913.

⁵⁶ AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 274, № 89, Saint Pétersbourg, le 3 juillet 1913.

⁵⁷ TsDA, MVRI, f. 176K, op. 2, a.e. 1371, l-233, Berlin, 24 June/5 July 1913.

he would leave Sofia as soon as possible, in accordance with the instructions received from his government. Prince Ghica also notified the Bulgarian Ministry of foreign affairs that he entrusted to the Italian embassy the care for the Romanian population in Bulgaria, the embassy's residence and archives.⁵⁸ In response to this note, Danev informed minister Ghica that the Bulgarian government was going to place at his disposal a special train that would transport the Prince and the Romanian embassy staff from Sofia to Ruse on Danube at 7.30 AM on 10 July.⁵⁹

Before leaving Sofia, Prince Ghica officially delivered to Bulgaria the declaration of war stating that the Romanian government considered itself to be in a state of war against Bulgaria beginning with 10 July.⁶⁰ The citizens of Bucharest fervently greeted the government's decision to enter a war against Bulgaria. Street gatherings were spontaneously organized and citizens carried banners with slogans such as "Down with Bulgaria" and "Down with tyrannical Austria-Hungary".⁶¹ Corresponding on Romanian war declaration the Bulgarian General Staff declared that Bulgaria would not resist the Romanian army, which took the control over the entire area along the right bank of the Danube by 17 July.⁶²

The French minister of foreign affairs Stéphen Pichon was unpleasantly surprised by Romania entering in war. Nevertheless, he believed that Romania wanted to secure the territory gained by the Protocol of Saint Petersburg and, possibly, war reparations.⁶³ France was convinced that the situation was still under European control and it chose not to directly involve itself, but to carefully observe the development of the political situation in the Balkans through its diplomatic representatives in the Balkan capitals.

As opposed to the First Balkan War, when the Balkan states demanded the mediation of the Great Powers, in the Second Balkan War, the warring sides wished to reach the peace alone. In contrast to the situation in November and December 1912, when all of the six Great Powers had competed for the prestige of hosting a peace conference under their own auspices, in July 1913, that sort of enthusiasm was entirely gone.⁶⁴ On 17 July, during the sessions of the Ambassador Conference in London, Russian delegate Count Alexander von Benckendorff suggested to his colleges that the final Peace Conference should be

⁵⁸ TsDA, MVRI, f. 176K, op. 2, a.e. 1371, l-302, Sofia, 27 June/9 July 1913.

⁵⁹ TsDA, MVRI, f. 176K, op. 2, a.e. 1371, l-314, Sofia, 27 June/9 July 1913.

⁶⁰ TsDA, MVRI, f. 176K, op. 2, a.e. 1371, l-306, Sofia, 28 June/10 July 1913.

⁶¹ TsDA, MVRI, f. 176K, op. 2, a.e. 1371, l-151, Sofia, 20 June/2 July 1913.

⁶² AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 276, № 8, Sophia, le 11 juillet 1913; AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 277, № 78, Bucarest, le 17 juillet 1913.

⁶³ TsDA, MVRI, f. 176K, op. 2, a.e. 1371, l-328, Paris, 28 June/11 July 1913.

⁶⁴ AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 277, № 212–213, Londres, le 19 juillet 1913.

held in Paris. The task of this Conference would be to resolve only the problems raised from the Second Balkan War. On the other hand, Pichon proposed that the Ambassador Conference in London should extend its jurisdiction to the issues from the Second Balkan War.⁶⁵ In reality that was not possible because the Ambassadors in London were still struggling with the problems of the First Balkan War, which were too severe and complex to be resolved even after six months. In that situation, the Great Powers agreed that it would be quite unreasonable to add new problems to so many unsolved ones.

On 17 July, all belligerent parties accepted the proposal of the Serbian Prime minister, Nikola Pašić, to send their delegates to Niš in order to negotiate a cease-fire.⁶⁶ Instead of the minister of finance Teodorov, who was suggested by Sazonov and Delcassé, Bulgaria sent to Niš General Paprikov and Sava Ivanchev. The two of them were escorted to the venue of negotiations by the Russian military attaché Romanovski, who immediately returned to Sofia.⁶⁷ This fact clearly shows that Russia was involved as a mediator between Bulgaria and its opponents. During the negotiations in Niš, General Paprikov stayed in constant telephone contact with the Russian minister to Belgrade, Nicholas Hartwig. Hartwig offered to be mediator between Bulgaria, on the one side, and Serbia, Romania and Greece, on the other, in order to help reach a consensus on the cease-fire.⁶⁸ Despite Hartwig's efforts, on 26 July, General Paprikov complained that the negotiations, which were going on for five days, failed to yield any result. He suspected that Bulgaria was trapped into negotiations in Niš, while its adversaries continued to gain and strengthen positions in the battlefield.⁶⁹ The only result of the six-day negotiations was a cease-fire, offered as a compromise by Serbia, Greece and Romania.⁷⁰ The delegates at the Niš negotiations accepted the invitation of the Romanian government to organize the final peace conference in the Romanian capital. The Great Powers approved the proposal to hold a peace conference in Bucharest, provided the presence of their representatives.⁷¹

The only one unsatisfied with this "unruly" decision of the Balkan states was Austria-Hungary, which turned the blade of discontent towards Théophile Delcassé, the French ambassador to Russia. The Austro-Hungarian public opinion accused Delcassé of "diplomatic intrigues" which managed to challenge

⁶⁵ AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 277, № 212–213, Londres, le 19 juillet 1913.

⁶⁶ AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 277, № 92, Saint-Petersbourg, le 17 juillet 1913.

⁶⁷ DDF, 3^e série, t. VII, № 428, Sophia, le 20 juillet 1913, 463.

⁶⁸ TsDA, MVRI, f. 176K, op. 2, a.e. 1373, l-308, Nish, 13/26 July 1913.

⁶⁹ TsDA, MVRI, f. 176K, op. 2, a.e. 1373, l-309, Nish, 13/26 July 1913.

⁷⁰ TsDA, MVRI, f. 176K, op. 2, a.e. 1373, l-325, Nish, 13/26 July 1913.

⁷¹ DDF, 3^e série, t. VII, № 424, Rome, le 20 juillet 1913, 459.

the decades-long balance between Austria and Russia in the Balkans in no more than three months of his office as the minister to Russia. According to the Viennese press, Delcassé succeeded in turning the entire Balkans against Austria-Hungary, including the latter's ally – Romania.⁷²

For the Serbian delegation headed by the Nikola Pašić, the trip to Bucharest was strenuous, because they needed to travel by ship to Turnu Severin and from there by road to Bucharest.⁷³ Montenegro sent General Janko Vukotić as its delegate to the Peace Conference. The Bulgarian delegation was numerous and was led by General Paprikov and Major Ivan Fichev.⁷⁴ The Greek representative was Dimitros Panas, minister in Bucharest, but in the last moment the Prime minister Venizelos declared that he would join the delegation.⁷⁵ The Conference started on 30 July 1913.⁷⁶

As the French delegate, Blondel stood aside in the negotiations, in accordance with the instructions of the Quai d'Orsay. A complete change in the French diplomatic policy towards Romania was apparent during the Second Balkan War. As long as Romania acted in accordance with the proclaimed "strict neutrality", France approved its demands put forward during the First Balkan War.⁷⁷ French diplomats referred to Romania as the "epitome of political sobriety". As soon as Romania got involved in warfare, France's sympathy for Romania vanished. This is confirmed by a confidential note sent to Minister Pichon by the Bulgarian minister to Paris, Stanchov. In this note, minister Stanchov pleaded France to support Bulgaria at the Bucharest conference. He also stressed that it would be unjust to decide on the fate of the Bulgarians solely based on what happened in the latest war. Having adopted Stanchov's opinion, Pichon sent a telegram to the other Great Powers in which he reminded them that the purpose of the Bucharest conference was not to decide simply on the fate of Bulgaria but also on the political balance in the Balkans. He underlined that the creation of a "Greater Greece or a Greater Serbia would irreversibly disturb that balance". According to Pichon, if European powers sincerely wished to restore a lasting peace in the Balkans and re-establish an alliance of the Balkan states, this wouldn't be possible "with a politically humiliated and territorially mutilated Bulgaria".⁷⁸

⁷² AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 277, № 112, Budapest, le 17 juillet 1913.

⁷³ Arhiv Srbije (AS), Ministarstvo inostranih dela – Političko odeljenje (MID-PO), rolno 411, № 4–10.

⁷⁴ TsDA, MVRI, f. 176K, op. 2, a.e. 1454, l-30, Sofia, 12 July 1913.

⁷⁵ DDF, 3^e série, t. VII, № 473, Bucarest, le 26 juillet 1913, 514.

⁷⁶ AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 279, № 166, Bucarest, le 28 juillet 1913.

⁷⁷ DDF, 3^e série, t. VII, № 503, Paris, le 31 juillet 1913, 543–545.

⁷⁸ AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 280, № 99–103, Paris, le 4 août 1913.

As opposed to Blondel, the other representatives of the Great Powers did not act merely as observers at the Conference but tended to overtly take sides. According to Blondel, Austria-Hungary's minister to Bucharest, Prince Karl Emil Fürstenberg, took the lead in plotting and intrigue. He overtly advocated against Serbia and Greece, encouraging Romania and Bulgaria to reconcile and establish better neighbour relations under the patronage of Austria-Hungary and the Triple Alliance. Not even the Russian minister to Bucharest Shebeko acted as an indifferent observer in the peace negotiations; on the contrary, he used every opportunity to interfere in the protection of Bulgaria. The French minister Blondel advised him that it was not prudent to support Bulgaria so openly because Russia could lose the confidence of Serbia and Montenegro. Shebeko in turn assured Blondel that Serbia's confidence in Russia was so steady that the Russian protection policy towards Bulgaria could by no means challenge it. He stressed that according to the instructions of minister Sazonov, Russia's primary task was to retain the confidence of Bulgaria; therefore, it was unacceptable both for him and Russia to deny full support to Bulgaria at the Conference.⁷⁹

Blondel noticed that all delegates of the Balkan states, with the exception of Bulgaria, sincerely desired to conclude a definitive treaty that would finally ensure peace throughout the Balkan Peninsula. The Bulgarians hoped that the Bucharest Conference would end in failure, after which the Great Powers would interfere and organize a European congress – similar to the Berlin Congress of 1878, more favorable for Bulgaria and its national interests.⁸⁰

Owing to Maiorescu's masterly negotiations, which were highly praised in Blondel's reports, the text of the peace treaty was completed by 7 August. Only Greece refused to sign it until all of its demands were met. It was not Venizelos who insisted on these demands but King Constantine I, who had made a very precise proposal regarding territorial borders and refused to depart from it. Venizelos did not deny the opinion he had held previously on the subject of Cavalla. He always admitted that the port of Cavalla was not necessary to Greece and that it was indispensable to Bulgaria, but he declared, notwithstanding, that he would not sign the peace without Cavalla, being tied by the categorical orders of King Constantine.⁸¹ The stubbornness of Greece's sovereign put Venizelos in an awkward situation. He was pressured by other delegates not to annul the treaty merely because of several kilometres of territory. Despite the King's instructions, after a meeting with Blondel and other representatives of the Great

⁷⁹ AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 283–287, Bucarest, le 31 juillet 1913.

⁸⁰ DDF, 3^e série, t. VII, № 503, Paris, le 31 juillet 1913, 543–545.

⁸¹ *The Bulgarian question and the Balkan states*, 72.

Powers, Venizelos promised to sign the peace treaty.⁸² In fact, the great help to Venizelos was an intervention by the Emperor of Germany Wilhelm II who telegraphed strongly in favor of King Constantine in the matter of Cavalla.⁸³ France also expressed its sympathy toward Greece regarding this issue through some of the most influential newspapers. The final text of the peace treaty was signed by the all delegates on 10 August, and they all agreed to exchange the ratified treaties to 25 August.⁸⁴

Immediately after the peace treaty had been signed by all delegates, the Romanian King Carol informed the Emperor Wilhelm II that the peace had been concluded among the belligerent parties, placing this peace, symbolically, under the patronage of the German Kaiser. The Emperor congratulated King Carol on concluding the treaty and, having accepted the offered patronage, he put an end to speculations coming from Vienna that the Bucharest Treaty would be revised by European powers. Paul Cambon's comment on Berlin's positive reaction was: "Germany loves success! Its sympathy will always go to the victorious ones". The Berlin press was also full of praise for Romania, glorifying its role in the conclusion of the Treaty. Apart from Romania, the Berlin press also praised Greece. The most widely read Berlin newspapers featured articles on sympathy towards Greece and the traditional philo-hellenic sentiments among the German nation. In honor of the two victorious parties at the Bucharest conference, Emperor Wilhelm II awarded the King of Greece Constantine I and the Romanian minister of foreign affairs, Titu Maiorescu, with the Grand Cross of the Order of the Red Eagle.⁸⁵

France was also satisfied with the outcome of the Bucharest Conference and its own role in concluding the peace treaty. The only Balkan state that remained discontented with France's attitude and acts during the Second Balkan War and the negotiations in Bucharest was Bulgaria. Bulgarian public opinion was convinced that the French press had held the most critical attitude towards

⁸² AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 280, № 230–232, Bucarest, le 7 août 1913.

⁸³ The Emperor of Germany did not conceal the fact that he obtained Cavalla for Greece; and at a psychological moment, he demanded for this service a proof of gratitude on the part of King Constantine. On the 4 August 1914 the Emperor invited the Theotokis, the minister of Greece in Berlin. Wilhelm II wanted the minister to send a telegram to King Constantine and ask him as for thanks to the support during Peace conference in Bucharest of his Imperial Majesty that Greece retained definitely Cavalla to mobilise the Greek army on the side of Germany. (*The Bulgarian question and the Balkan states*, 72–73.)

⁸⁴ AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 281, № 19, Paris, le 10 août 1913.

⁸⁵ AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 281, № 25, Berlin, le 10 août 1913; AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 281, № 105–106, Bucarest, le 11 août 1913.

Bulgaria ever since the beginning of the Second Balkan War and such an attitude was later adopted by other European newspapers. Panafieu's opinion was that the favoritism of the French press towards Serbia, Greece and Romania would be harmful for the relations between France and Bulgaria in future.⁸⁶

On the other hand, French discontent with Romania was short-termed because the Romanian involvement in the Second Balkan War soon turned out to be directed against Austria-Hungary, which, though a Romanian ally, was overtly inclined to Bulgaria. During the war, in Bucharest, slogans against Austria-Hungary could be seen as often as those against Bulgaria. Vienna's insisting that the treaty signed in Bucharest should be revised further deepened the gap between Romania and Austria-Hungary. The Romanian press did not cease to criticize Austria-Hungary after the peace treaty had been signed on 10 August. Romania reproached Austria-Hungary for being more supportive of Bulgaria than of its ally, Romania, ever since the beginning of the First Balkan War and particularly during the Second Balkan War. In many Romanian newspapers it could be read that "Vienna's attempt to revise the Bucharest Treaty was the last in the series of mistakes made by Austria-Hungary in 1912 and 1913 due to which it irreversibly lost its political and economic influence in all Balkan states, including Romania."⁸⁷

Despite the fact that during the Second Balkan War the Balkan alliance was broken, in a new alliance, the position once held by Bulgaria was now assumed by Romania, which was regarded by the French as "a warrant of peace and balance of power in the Balkans". The balance of power in the Balkans after the two Balkan wars was favorable for France and its allies, because the new Balkan Alliance was economically entirely dependent on France and its monetary market, while politically it was orientated towards Russia. Also, the disagreements within the Triple Alliance were advantageous for France and Russia. They were a positive sign that Romania was not a part of the Central Powers Alliance and that it was possible for the Entente Powers to recruit it into their pact. An alliance with Serbia, Greece and Montenegro, the foundations of which were laid during the peace negotiations in Bucharest, was a step towards strengthening these relations.

⁸⁶ AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 283, № 23-27, Sophia, le 22 août 1913.

⁸⁷ AMAE, NS, Turquie, doss. 281, № 100, Bucarest, le 11 août 1913.

Abstract: *The First Balkan War began in October 1912 and was fought by Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece and Montenegro against the Ottoman Empire. The goal of the war was to expel the Ottoman Empire from the Balkans. Although it was a Balkan state, Romania did not take part in the war. Nevertheless, it observed carefully the development of the conflict. Romania's standing outside of the conflict was appreciated by the Great Powers and among them especially by France. Because of the political maturity that it showed, Romania was an important part of the French foreign policy toward Balkans during 1912 and 1913. The main task of the French policy during the First Balkan War was to ensure that the conflict remains local and that Romania does not enter the war. This paper analyses the French policy toward Romania and the Balkans in 1912 and 1913 on the basis of the reports of the French diplomats in Bucharest, Sofia, Saint Petersburg, etc. The special attention would be given to the Romanian demands that were considered at the London Conference and during the negotiations with Bulgaria conducted in the spring of 1913 in Sankt Petersburg. Moreover, the Romanian participation in the Second Balkan War and its role in the establishing of peace at the Conference in Bucharest will be considered according to French diplomatic reports.*

Keywords: *France, Romania, Bulgaria, Balkan Wars, Camille Blondel, Titu Maiorescu.*