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PREFACE

Although the course of European diplomatic history from 1870 to World War I has been covered in both general and specific works, a careful study of French foreign policy during the first decade of this period is still lacking. It is my purpose to trace the developments of French policy in this decade which witnessed the formation of the Third Republic as well as the efforts of France to regain the prestige lost by her collapse in the Franco-Prussian War. The foreign policy of any nation does not operate in a vacuum, however. It has been my effort to include sufficient descriptive narrative about European diplomacy and the struggles in the Balkans to afford the reader a general understanding of the situations facing French diplomats.

I should like to express my gratitude to the members of my dissertation committee: Dean William E. Livezey, Dr. Alfred B. Sears, Dr. Kenneth I. Dailey, and Dr. Ralph E. Olson. In particular, I wish to acknowledge the assistance of Dr. Brison D. Gooch, who directed this dissertation.

FRANCE AND THE BALKANS, 1871-1879

CHAPTER I

ROLE OF FRANCE IN EUROPE, 1871-1874

The Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871 marked a turning point in European diplomacy. The empire of Napoleon III which had dominated the diplomatic scene for two decades had been destroyed in less than six months by the newly emerging power across the Rhine. The war ushered in the 'Age of Bismarck' which was to last until 1890. During this period the German chancellor manufactured policies and alliances at will in order to keep his defeated enemy prostrated and isolated. Bismarck now aimed at maintaining the status quo in Europe as a whole.

To deny the dynamic character of Bismarckian diplomacy would be useless if not futile, and as success breeds respect, the 'pilot' has fared rather well at the hands of subsequent chroniclers of the period. Bismarck is pictured as the master strategist, the 'honest broker', and the balance wheel of Europe for the two decades beginning in 1870. The rise of Germany's industrial and economic power has been carefully chronicled, the contributions of her scientists have been held up as a target for the world to admire, and the stature of her universities during the latter half of the nineteenth century was one of pre-eminence in the Western World.

On the other hand, too little has been said of the developments of

the other participant in the Franco-Prussian War. Perhaps a loser is soon forgotten, or perhaps the ensuing twenty years in French history failed to produce the outstanding single leader upon whom subsequent writers could concentrate. Admittedly much has been said about particular incidents such as the Boulanger Affair, the Paris Commune, and the political struggles encountered in founding the Third Republic. Some modest treatments have also been composed of domestic developments, but in general the course of French diplomacy after 1871 has been given but slight attention.¹

Is closer scrutiny worth while? Were French diplomatic efforts in vain? Did France have a consistent foreign policy with definite aims? Was the stature of France in Europe of little consequence? In order to obtain the answers to these questions, this study will examine in particular French diplomacy in the Balkans during the decade of the 1870's. The Eastern Question became a focal point of continental politics, and the developments of Balkan diplomacy should furnish some measure of testing the effectiveness of French diplomatic efforts.

To set the stage upon which French diplomacy was based, a cursory review of internal developments reveals the seriousness of the defeat suffered during the Franco-Prussian War. Many problems carried over from the Second Empire added to the intensity of the struggles within France after the Treaty of Frankfurt of 1871. Garibaldi once remarked about Emperor Napoleon III that he had a tail of straw and was afraid of its catching fire.²

¹A. J. P. Taylor, The Struggle for Mastery in Europe 1848-1918 (Oxford Clarendon Press, 1954) p. 241.

²C. E. M. Hawkesworth, The Last Century in Europe, 1814-1910 (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1912) p. 329.

The rising discontent of the various groups in France with Napoleon III was manifested by the gradual easing of the restrictive laws throughout the 1860's. The liberals wanted these political restrictions removed even more rapidly, the clerics and ardent lay Catholics were insisting that French troops be maintained in Rome, the nationalists and militarists bemoaned the decline of gloire, and the working classes in the urban centers were being imbued with radical socialist philosophy.

This uncertainty and instability of the latter years of the Second Empire contributed to the magnitude of the disaster in 1870 and intensified the severity of the problems which were revealed when the Empire collapsed. The Treaty of Frankfurt merely confirmed the degree of French weakness.¹ France was deprived of three departments containing 1000 square miles and more than 1,500,000 inhabitants.² In addition, France was to pay an indemnity of three billion francs and the northern areas of the country were to be occupied until this was paid.

The government was held responsible by the frustrated public of France for the course of events, and when the extent of the military disaster became known, a provisional government was established. This eventually led to the creation of the Third Republic of France. In the midst of these developments, it was necessary to utilize 130,000 troops to put down the bloodiest affair that Paris had ever seen. Military trials were held and hostages shot, large sections of the capital were put to

¹Johannes Lepsius, Albrecht Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Friedrich Thimme (eds.) Die Grosse Politik der Europäischen Kabinette, 1871-1914 (Berlin: Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft Für Politik Und Geschichte, 1922-1927) I, 38-43. Hereafter cited as DGP.

²Charles Seignobos, A Political History of Europe Since 1814 (New York: H. Holt & Co., 1899) p. 819.

the torch, and the term 'Communards' became a symbol for violence and savagery in French traditions.

The loss of population in Alsace and Lorraine was damaging enough to a nation with a declining birth rate, but the war and the attendant unrest further reduced the population by 500,000. The loss of the two provinces dealt a heavy blow to French industry and it remained in a stagnant condition for the next twenty years.¹ Foreign competition in agricultural products created serious problems in the 1870's and forced passage of protective tariffs, stimulation of cooperative movements, and a new emphasis upon agricultural education.²

To increase the difficulties, the political struggles between the Monarchists, Imperialists, Republicans, and Clericals only added to the domestic discord. Internal affairs were to be torn apart by trafficking in the Legion of Honor; the Panama Canal scandal; the pork barrel appropriations for harbor improvements; highway and railroad construction contracts of dubious integrity; and the Boulanger Affair. Many questioned whether France would ever recover the pre-eminent position which had so long been hers. Even some Frenchmen shared this doubt.

The psychological result of the military debacle was a serious decline in national confidence, and this was reflected in the output of literature in this period which was steeped in pessimism and fatalism. The romantic movement which had swept France earlier in the century was condemned and discredited. Gustave Flaubert, Guy de Maupassant, Emile Zola, and Alphonse Daudet were making the subtle transition from

¹C. P. Higby, History of Modern Europe (New York: Century Co., 1932) p. 219.

²Ibid.

romanticism to realism and eventually naturalism. Their efforts reflected in general a tendency to belittle the individual's role in bettering society. The single force which carried over from previous years was that of nationalism, and Maurice Barres was feeding his soul on a diet of French resurgence and revanche to equip himself for his stirring tales to be published after the turn of the century.

In spite of foreign troops on French soil, domestic insurrection, political turmoil, and national apathy, the Third Republic not only survived but launched an aggressive program to meet these problems. Adolph Thiers, the provisional president, issued a call for a loan of two and one quarter billion francs in June, 1871. It was twice over-subscribed. A year later, he asked for a second loan of three billion francs and this was oversubscribed many times. This demonstration of the remarkable resiliency of France enabled Thiers to pay off the last installment of the war-inflicted indemnity in March, 1873. The Convention of March 15, 1873 between Germany and France provided for the withdrawal of German troops from French soil.¹

Although Frenchmen could unite for a nationalistic cause to free their country of the hated Germans, the internal political struggles were regarded as a private family quarrel. With the Germans ousted from France, it was politics as usual and Adolph Thiers was forced to resign on May 24, 1873. The oversubscribed money from the bond issues was invested in railroad and industrial developments. During these years France gave an example of soundness and financial strength which allowed it to assume its former position as one of the world's business leaders.

¹DGP, I, 186-188. For an interesting insight into Bismarck's feelings concerning these negotiations see ibid., 184-185.

While the loans were being raised to meet the war indemnity, plans were initiated to revamp the French military forces. A compulsory military training law was passed on June 19, 1872 which provided for five year terms of service. Five hundred million francs were appropriated for military purposes and the government envisioned a remodeling of the three major branches of the armed forces.

Although the domestic progress in France was notable in its achievements it was by no means unaccompanied by the usual vagaries of French political life. Nevertheless, the increase in the strength of the French economy after 1871 provided the basis upon which French diplomatic efforts were launched.

If France faced severe internal problems after the war, her posture in European diplomacy was indescribably worse. Austria-Hungary had failed to come to the aid of France in the recent war and moreover, Russia had stood silently by while Prussia crushed her. Italy had seized the opportunity offered by the withdrawal of French troops from Rome to occupy the eternal city and make it the new Italian capital. Great Britain apparently had abandoned a direct interest in foreign affairs, and was concerned with domestic reform programs under Gladstone.¹

The Franco-Prussian War made Germany predominant in Europe and at the same time created new conditions on the continent. The neutrality of the Black Sea which had been stipulated at the peace conference in Paris in 1856 was ended by the Russians during the war. The newly formed Italian state fronted on the Mediterranean and Adriatic Seas and was seeking to gain stature as a Great Power. Austria-Hungary, no longer

¹Hawkesworth, p. 32.

dominant in the German Confederation created by Metternich, was casting covetous eyes toward southeastern Europe. The expansionists of the Dual Monarchy were pointing to the necessity of strengthening the Dalmatian littoral by seizing the hinterlands of Bosnia and Herzegovina.¹ The emerging Pan Slavist sentiment in Russia indicated that there would be further Russian probings in the Balkans. The Ottoman Empire was steadily declining into total incompetence in southeastern Europe and thereby offering an ever increasing inducement for intervention by the stronger powers.

Charles Seymour states that German unification reopened the Eastern Question since Bismarck had agreed to the Russian violation of the Black Sea clauses of the Treaty of Paris of 1856 in order to win her benevolent neutrality in 1870.² Georges Michon maintains that "there is justification for the assertion that the Franco-Russian Alliance was a product of the Near East Question." He dates the beginning of the Franco-Russian accord with the Berlin Conference of 1878.³ This would appear to be an oversimplification, however, of the forces which eventually brought about the consummation of the Franco-Russian Alliance in 1894.⁴ Theophile Delcasse, writing in Paris June 7, 1897, remarked: "The astonishing thing about the Franco-Russian Entente is that an entente of such obvious mutual

¹George Hoover Rupp, A Wavering Friendship: Russia and Austria 1876-1878 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1941) p. 29.

²Seymour, The Diplomatic Background of the War, 1870-1914 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1916) p. 10.

³Michon, The Franco-Russian Alliance, 1891-1917 (New York: Macmillan Co., 1929) p. 11. Translated by Norman Thomas.

⁴See William L. Langer, The Franco-Russian Alliance, 1890-1894 (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1935).

advantage should have taken so long to fructify."¹

In a sense, the Franco-Russian rapprochement which developed after the Franco-Prussian War was simply the extension of a tendency existing in the old Austrian Empire from 1741 to 1866. Whereas that tendency involved cooperation between Prussia and Hungary to wrest concessions from Vienna whenever a power vacuum occurred, the stage was now broadened and France and Russia found it desirable to sustain each other against the encroachments of a powerful, united Germany.²

Jules Favre, French foreign minister, was keenly aware of the European situation and displayed a remarkable insight into the power politics of his day. He advised his ambassador at Constantinople in June, 1871 of his analysis of Balkan diplomacy and the course of action which France would take.³ He indicated that the loss of French prestige as a result of the German victory would be most keenly felt at Constantinople, since power was the yardstick by which the Great Powers had been measured there for many long years. The first instance of this had been the abrogation of the Black Sea clauses.⁴ These had been made an integral part of the Peace of Paris which ended the Crimean War in 1856.

Favre felt that French diplomats should above all use caution, care, and great reserve, since this would be a most inopportune time for a

¹As quoted in Michon, p. 20.

²Walter Dorn, Competition for Empire, 1740-1763 (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1940) p. 144.

³Ministere Des Affaires Etrangeres (Commission de Publication Des Documents Relatifs aux Origines de la Guerre de 1914), Documents Diplomatiques Francais, 1871-1914, 1re serie, 1871-1900 (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1929 et. seq.) I, 17. Hereafter cited as DDF.

⁴Ibid.

Balkan conflagration to begin. Russia would be eagerly seeking to intervene in Moldavian and Wallachian questions and Austria-Hungary would oppose her. Great Britain would surely oppose the extension of Russian influence on the Danube. He noted that Bismarck might be willing to modify his actions in the Balkans so as not to endanger Russian sentiment towards Germany.¹

France should continue to press upon the Porte her desire for the improvement of conditions for all Christians in the Turkish empire and try to convince it of the benefit this would bring to the Turks themselves. At the same time he warned his representative at Constantinople to notify him immediately in the event of difficulties. Favre desired above all to avoid a flaring up of the latent animosity among the submerged peoples in the Balkans. He was fearful that the consequences of any incidents would lead to hostilities. France was in no position to play an active role in any Balkan War since her military reorganization program was largely in the planning stage.²

Favre was particularly worried about instability in Crete and suggested that the Turks be reminded of their promises for reforms on the island. He warned against permitting the Greeks or the Turks to use arguments over alleged or actual brigandage as a pretext for any rectification of frontiers.³ Italy had manifested desires to gain a status equal to France claiming that the tradition of the church (Rome) had now evolved upon her. Without doubts there would be disputes with Italian agents

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

contesting the traditional French rights of intervention, but Favre intended that France should defend her ancient position. Above all, French representatives were to endeavor at all costs to avoid irritants and maintain her basic interests.¹

Favre's portrayal of the interests of the Great Powers in the Balkans was highly accurate, but should not mislead the reader into believing that the policies of the Great Powers were motivated solely by the Eastern Question at this time. The underlying factors determining European power politics were instituted by the Franco-Prussian War. It was only when the incipient unrest in the Balkans became violent that the Great Powers took the Near East into consideration in formulating their national policies toward the other European nations.

Thiers remarked to the Assembly on the occasion of the signing of the peace treaty with Germany that: "This treaty is impregnated with the fear which France inspires in our foe."² Thiers meant that the cession of Alsace and Lorraine, the occupation of northern France by German troops, and the huge indemnity simply indicated German fears of a possible French resurgence. Bismarck was fully aware of the blunder in annexing Alsace and Lorraine in 1871 and realized that he would have to come to an understanding with Russia and Austria-Hungary in order to escape the consequences of mutilating France.³ This would be a difficult maneuver in view of the conflict of interests of these two powers in the Balkans. The

¹Ibid.

²Emile Bourgeois, Manuel Historique de Politique Etrangere (Paris: Belin Freres, 1925) 4 vols., III, 757.

³Luigi Albertini, The Origins of the War of 1912 (London: Oxford University Press, 1952) 3 vols., I, 7. For a contradictory view see W. M. Fullerton, Problems of Power, A Study of International Politics from Sadowa to Kirk-Kilisse (New York: Charles Scribners' Sons, 1913) p. viii.

French consul-general at Bucharest noted in 1874 that apparently the two nations, Germany and Austria-Hungary, had made an agreement concerning Schleswig in exchange for a free hand for Austria in the Balkans. He surmised that this did not mean that Germany was ignoring Russia, but he predicted that Bismarck's benevolent system would break down due to the conflict of interests between Austria and Russia in the future.¹

If Bismarck was solely interested in maintaining the status quo in Europe after 1871 in order to digest his conquests, the other German-administered empire was interested in penetration of the Balkans. The German bourgeois business groups looked to the Balkans for further economic opportunities and the military clique was looking for compensation for the loss of prestige and territories which Austria had suffered in the previous decade.² While the government's official policy was contradictory to these aims after 1867, the undercurrents were sufficiently strong to push Austrian policy towards a stiffer attitude in the Balkans. Austria had lost her hegemony in the Italian peninsula and in the German Confederation, her control over Schleswig, and had been forced to recognize the autonomy of Hungary with the creation of the Dual Monarchy. These factors were keenly felt by the military groups in Vienna.

Not only did external forces necessitate this orientation of her policy, but the existence of the polyglot minorities within the Dual Monarchy made Austrian diplomats extremely sensitive to the stirrings of their kindred in the subjected areas of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans. This did not mean that Austrian diplomats would not deny any ulterior aim

¹DDF, I, No. 341, Michels to Decazes, Nov. 3, 1874.

²Rupp, p. 13-17.

in their policies.¹

The major power with which Austria would come into contact in the Balkans was Russia. The latter had not only remained neutral when Bismarck attacked France, but had mobilized part of her forces in order to insure that the Austrians would not intervene to gain revenge for the defeats inflicted by Prussia in 1866.² Russia's desire to expand southward had a long tradition dating back to the tenth century. Russia and Turkey had engaged in numerous struggles which resulted in the elimination of the Turks from the Crimea in 1774. Thereafter the struggle continued along the western and eastern littoral of the Black Sea almost without abatement. The emergence of Pan-slavism in the 1860's out of the Slavophile movement among Russian intellectuals added interest in the Balkans for Russia. Nicholas Danilevskii wrote in 1869 that:³

for every Slav: Russian, Czech, Serb, Croat, Slovene, Bulgar-after God and His holy Church-the idea of Slavdom should constitute a lofty ideal, above freedom, above science, above learning, above all wordly riches, for not one of these will be achieved without the realization... of a spiritually, nationally and politically autochthonic, independent Slavdom.

Rupp asserts that the Pan-slavic movements in the Balkans became subjected to expansionist and imperialist ambitions of groups in both Austria and Russia.⁴

¹Count Andrassy, Austrian foreign minister, considered "any annexation of Slavic provinces to the Austro-Hungarian Empire would lead undoubtedly to its ruin, and would be thus suicidal." DDF, I, 334, Le Flo to Decazes, June 1, 1874. Compare this with Metternich's prediction that Serbia must be Turkish or Austrian. Albertini, I, 11.

²Albertini, I, 7. For a contradictory view, see Taylor, p. 207.

³Michael Boro Petrovich, The Emergence of Russian Panslavism 1856-1870 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956) p. 77.

⁴Rupp, p. 5.

Whether it was because Russia recognized the conflict of interests between Austria and herself in the Balkans, or whether it was due to the recognition of the unsuspected power of Germany, Prince Alexander Gortchakov, Russian chancellor, sent word to Thiers in 1872 that France had nothing to fear from the Dreikaiserbund which was under discussion. "We (Russia) are not indifferent to your army or to your reorganization," he wrote on Sept. 14, 1872. "On this point Germany has not the right to address any criticism to you. I have said, and I repeat with pleasure, that we need a strong France." (Italics mine)¹

If the Russians felt that the proposed Dreikaiserbund of 1873 was not directed against France, the Austrians were apparently of the same opinion. Count Andrassy, Austrian foreign minister, indicated that the purpose of the alliance was not to threaten France, but simply to come to a compromise with Russia.² In effect, Andrassy agreed to withdraw Austrian support of the Poles on condition that Russia would deliver the Slavs of the Danube and the Balkans over to the Magyars.³

The French were highly alarmed at the formation of the alliance in 1873 and inquired at length into the motives of the participants. President Thiers believed that France had nothing to fear from Austria-Hungary, and that the death of Beust, Austrian foreign minister, would not create any change in Austrian policies. He felt that despite the fact that his successor, Count Andrassy, was a Hungarian, and therefore favorably

¹DDF, I, No. 156, Gontaut-Biron to Remusat, Sept. 14, 1872. Seymour claims that the Dreikaiserbund was not an alliance in the strict sense of the word and that it never achieved anything in the way of real solidarity, p. 20.

²P. Hanotaux, Histoire de la France contemporaine (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1903) 2 vols., I, 500.

³Bourgeois, III, 787-789.

inclined towards Germany, that the Vienna government would keep his policies within bounds.¹ Nevertheless, the French foreign minister was overjoyed to receive assurances from Austria and Russia that the agreements being reached in Berlin were not aimed at France and that they held the French in high esteem.²

While the three powers to the north and east of France were assuring her that they had no evil intentions toward her, the new nation to the south was giving strong evidence that Italian hopes were at cross purposes with hers. Italian efforts to bring about a readjustment in the relations between the Regent of Tunis and Turkey were based on a policy of stimulating Turkish fears of possible French action in Tunisia.³ In response to this threat, the French attempted to gain the support of the British to offset the Italian diplomatic effort. The French were correctly expectant of British help in this area since Italian control of Tunisia would give the Italians both land areas in that narrow part of the Mediterranean.⁴ British help was forthcoming not because they wanted to assist the French necessarily, but in any final choice, the British would desire to have the French in Tunisia to offset Italian control of Sicily in order to keep the Mediterranean open to her commerce.

Although Great Britain had not objected to the German conquest of France in 1870, her basic policy of maintaining the balance of power in European diplomacy was expressed succinctly by Lord Salisbury writing in

¹DDF, I, No. 151, Thiers to Le Flo, Aug. 22, 1872.

²Ibid., No. 154, Gontaut-Biron to Remusat, Sept. 10, 1872.

³Ibid., No. 45, Remusat to Broglie, Oct. 9, 1871.

⁴Ibid.

the Quarterly Review October 1, 1870:¹

At the head of 600,000 men, under the walls of beseiged Paris, the Count Bismarck has the courage to pretend that the pacific and idyllic German state has need of being protected against his formidable and turbulent neighbor. The submission of a couple of million individuals, who detest her, is the guarantee which his weak nation demands against the crushing superiority of the French forces. Europe will no longer share the apprehensions of the Chancellor. The other nations will be disposed to think that they have more to dread from the intoxication of a triumphant Germany, than from a France which is the prey of unrest and revolution. Peaceful Germany is only commonplace diplomacy. There exists nothing in history to justify such pretensions.

Nearly two years later during the formation of the Dreikaiserbund in Berlin, the British indicated their desire to avoid diplomatic isolation by dispatching a part of the Home Fleet to pay President Thiers a visit at Le Havre. Thiers pointed out to Russia that this was a completely unexpected development, and reminded his ambassador to the Court at St. Petersburg that he felt that the really true alliance France was seeking was with Russia.²

While Thiers felt strongly about the possibilities and necessity for a close alignment with Russia he was more than willing to accept any friendship offered to his nation. He announced that France would be the friend of all the world (Italics his),³ and in September, 1871 he indicated that the role of France was to be one of calmness and confidence in the re-establishment of her physical and moral strength. He held firmly to the belief that France would again be strong and would be a force to be

¹Jacques Bardoux, Quand Bismarck Dominait L'Europe (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1953) p. 49.

²DDF, I, No. 157, Thiers to Le Flo, Sept. 26, 1872.

³Ibid.

reckoned with in Europe within two or three years.¹

This remarkable faith in the resurgence of French power was all the more striking in view of the German ambassador's description of Thiers following an interview with him in May, 1872. Von Arnim described the French President as being "tired, old, sick, and so disgusted with the behaviour of the stupid, thoughtless acts of the National Assembly, that he can have no other thoughts, but to free his land from the occupation, and then to retire."² Thiers spoke frequently of his great desire for peace and advised the German ambassador that France was not desirous of a new war and that she wished to avoid all complications.³

Bismarck, however, took a dim view of the French leader's protestations of good will, and reflected that Thiers' actions in trying to create a rapprochement with Vienna and St. Petersburg indicated motives to the contrary. The Iron Chancellor felt that so long as Germany maintained proper relations with those two powers that the Frenchman's efforts would be in vain and that Thiers would be unable to turn those powers against the German Fatherland.⁴

From the time of his accession to the presidency until his resignation in 1873, Thiers' primary consideration in the conduct of his nation's foreign policy was the liberation of French territory from the German occupation troops.⁵ It was towards this end that he bent his whole

¹DDF, I, No. 54, Thiers to Le Flo, Sept. 4, 1871.

²DGP, I, 114.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., 119-120.

⁵DDF, I, xvii.

energies and his success constituted a major element in European politics.

The change of government from Thiers to Marshal MacMahon in 1873 did not cause any basic change in French foreign policy. The new foreign minister, Duc de Broglie, noted that the policy of Thiers during the last two years of establishing rapport with the other powers had not been the subject of debate in the National Assembly. He announced that the new president would formulate new policies on new matters as they arose, and that in the interim the adopted line of the past policy should be continued.¹

MacMahon attempted to frame his government into a conservative mold and nearly assumed monarchistic authority especially exercising strong control over the military and the clerics. His continual efforts to reform the administration of the bureaucracy by playing one minister off against another eventually caused his downfall.² It was in this fashion that he replaced the Duc de Broglie with the Duc Decazes who was of a more conservative political hue. Decazes wanted to score quick successes in foreign affairs in order to clear the way for the restoration of the monarchy.³

Although MacMahon's efforts to push France politically toward the Right had disastrous consequences for his career domestically, it was a decided asset to the stature of France in international diplomacy. Tsar Alexander II of Russia expressed his interest in French internal

¹Ibid., No. 207, Broglie to Gontaut-Biron, May 28, 1873.

²Benedetto Croce, Geschichte Europas in Neuzehten Jahrhundert (Zurich Wien: Europa-Verlag, 1947) p. 286.

³Taylor, p. 224.

developments and indicated his appreciation of the conservative announcements of Marshal MacMahon.¹ Undoubtedly a conservative administration in France, even under a republican form of government, would be more to the liking of the Russian autocrat and facilitate any possible diplomatic rapprochement. Yet in fact, a great number of Russians in court circles were not in favor of a restoration of monarchy in France probably due to their fear of Bonapartism.²

The possibility of closer ties between France and Russia during the early years following the disaster at Sedan dangled itself before the eyes of French diplomats but never quite reached consummation. Prince Gortchakov repeatedly made statements that Russia was desirous of a strong France and wished for her a speedy return to the councils of Europe.³ Tsar Alexander also expressed similar thoughts.⁴ Gortchakov assured General Le Flo, the French ambassador to St. Petersburg, that the Dreikaiserbund did not constitute any threat to France,⁵ and on one occasion flatly advised Bismarck that Germany should not count upon personal agreements between the Kaiser and the Tsar to sustain any aggression.⁶

During one of his many visits to Switzerland to see his son who was

¹DDF, I, No. 218, Banneville to Broglie, June 9, 1873.

²Ibid., No. 242, Le Flo to Broglie, Oct. 24, 1873. Le Flo noted that the conservative reports emanating from France every day were doing much to dispel Russian fears of republicanism.

³Ibid., No. 156, Gontaut-Biron to Remusat, Sept. 14, 1872; No. 218, Banneville to Broglie, June 9, 1873.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., No. 247, Le Flo to Decazes, Dec. 12, 1873.

⁶Ibid., No. 251, Gontaut-Biron to Decazes, Dec. 26, 1873.

in school there, Gortchakov was approached by M. de Chaudordy on a special mission from Paris. Chaudordy apprised the Russian chancellor of Germany's anti-clerical policy and indicated French fears that Bismarck apparently thought that the clerics in France were aiding and abetting the opposition to the Kulturkampf. Gortchakov assured him twice that Europe would not permit any new provocation by Germany to upset the peace and that France had nothing to fear.¹

There has been some hesitation in accepting Gortchakov's assertions by historians, but there can be no doubt that, whatever the source of his true feelings, he encouraged the French foreign office during the critical years after Frankfort. His personal bitterness against Bismarck may have been founded on jealousy, but nevertheless the ill feeling between these two key figures had a definite impact upon the course of European diplomacy. M. Gontaut-Biron, French ambassador to Berlin, noted that the attitude of Gortchakov and the Russian delegation towards the Germans had been very haughty, but very cordial to the French.² While Russian sentiment vis-a-vis France was strictly verbal, it was about the only ray of light to the French in the diplomatic scenery of Europe in the early 1870's. The hopes that were raised by Russian utterances were dampened frequently by discouraging reports from Berlin.

Gontaut-Biron sadly wrote in 1873 that Bismarck had imposed his system on nearly all of continental Europe by his prestige and military force, and grimly added that he would not be astonished that Bismarck would be able to bring Great Britain within his league against France.

¹Ibid., No. 227, Chaudordy's note, Aug. 21, 1873.

²Ibid., No. 156, Gontaut-Biron to Remusat, Sept. 14, 1872.

He noted that the Chancellor's relations with Lord Odo Russell, the British ambassador, had been very intimate.¹ It was obvious that the French ambassador discounted the assurances of Bismarck that there was nothing going on in Berlin hostile to his nation.² The French diplomat felt that Bismarck was continuing his inflexible policy of isolating France, nevertheless.³

Aside from the question of the payment of the war indemnity and the removal of the last of the German troops, Franco-German relations had been disturbed by a number of small incidents which continually occurred. Bismarck complained to the Kaiser about the number of conflicts arising between the German occupation forces and the French civilians in order to gain his support in bringing pressure to bear on the French government. Bismarck obviously held the French government in contempt for its inability to control its citizens,⁴ and apparently misread the depths of French feeling against the Germans.⁵

Gontaut-Biron noted that certain persons in the entourage of the German chancellor seemed apprehensive about each sign or event in France which indicated a recovery of her force and influence.⁶ The German press engaged in campaigns against the French in articles with a hostile tone and the constant theme of their reports concerned French armaments,

¹Ibid., No. 251, Gontaut-Biron to Decazes, Dec. 26, 1873.

²Ibid., No. 239, Gontaut-Biron to Broglie, Oct. 2, 1873.

³Ibid., No. 251.

⁴DGP, I, 101-103.

⁵Taylor, p. 211.

⁶DDF, I, No. 209, Gontaut-Biron to Broglie, May 29, 1873.

interest in world religious quarrels during the Kulturkampf, and revanche.¹ Some even went so far as to discuss the possibility of when France would be strong enough militarily to launch an attack upon Germany.²

Decazes tried very hard to convince the Germans of French desires for good relations with them and indicated that the French foreign office would do all within its power to facilitate matters in this regard.³ Despite these efforts the German attitude remained intransigent and this forced the French to seek more determinedly than ever to regain their stature as a great power in the diplomatic councils of Europe.

Some measure of reassurance came from the Dual Monarchy when the Emperor Franz-Joseph notified the French in 1871 that the presence of General Gablenz in the triumphal march of German troops into Paris was not to indicate that Austria-Hungary approved of the German conquest, but that the general was there only to represent the Emperor at the inauguration of Wilhelm I.⁴ Both Count Andrassy and Emperor Franz-Joseph expressed satisfaction with the selection of MacMahon as president in 1873. As one might expect, they were extremely well pleased with the conservative statements of the new president and Andrassy believed that the consolidation of authority in France would serve the cause of peace of all Europe.⁵

The French were aware of the problems facing the Dual Monarchy and

¹Ibid., No. 251, Gontaut-Biron to Decazes, Dec. 26, 1873.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., No. 256, Decazes to Gontaut-Biron, Jan. 5, 1874.

⁴Ibid., No. 9, Banneville to Favre, June 13, 1871.

⁵Ibid., No. 205, Banneville to Broglie, May 27, 1873; No. 245, Broglie to d'Harcourt, Nov. 22, 1873.

largely discounted the exaggerated statements of Andrassy who claimed that the defeat of France had created a vacuum in the concert of Europe which forced Austria to look elsewhere in order to maintain the equilibrium.¹ The French consul general at Belgrade, M. Engelhardt, gave some indication of the difficulties facing the Dual Monarchy in the Balkans. The maze of conflicting interests and nationalistic aspirations was growing ever more tortuous. The Croats were having troubles suppressing the Serbs in Voivodie, the Hungarians in controlling the Croats, and the Turks in collecting taxes and maintaining order in the provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Grand Idea of a Yugoslavian federation which was to include Serbia, Bosnia, and Herzegovina was gaining strength as the movement for some form of union between the Slavic peoples was gradually taking definite shape.²

Engelhardt predicted that great problems were confined within the Balkans and that they would directly affect the Austrian empire.³

In the early years after the war, France looked at the Balkans as a possible source of great difficulty of an indirect nature. She realized that her greatest need in Europe was to maintain peace at all costs, and the strongest threats to that aim were the views of the German foreign office and the possibility that Austria-Hungary and Russia would come to blows over the Eastern Question. Reports from Vienna and St. Petersburg reflected the acuteness of the rising Balkan questions and the two courts stated that the formation of the Dreikaiserbund had been primarily an effort on their part to reach an understanding between themselves and at the

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., No. 109, Engelhardt to Remusat, Feb. 4, 1872.

³Ibid.

same time to act as a counter measure against any aggressive designs of Germany. Both capitals were not deceived by the intentions of Germany in forming the Bund; that is, they understood the real intention of Bismarck had been to guarantee Germany that Austria-Hungary and Russia would not enter into an agreement with France.¹

On one occasion in 1874, Andrassy remarked that "Bismarck has lost all his self-composure and does not know it."² Such comments tend to give added significance to the dubious worth of the Bund to Germany, and despite French fears that it was primarily directed against her, there is no evidence to suggest that the Dreikaiserbund ever contemplated military action or even the threat of force against France. The real significance of the Bund to French foreign policy was that it temporized the solution of the problems in the Balkans for a few years and gave France additional time to recover from 1870-1871. The association of Russia and Austria-Hungary in the area where they were necessarily rivals was a guarantee of moderation of the two powers which suited the needs of France at the time.³

At the same time, the French were aware of the inherent dangers in the situation, and clearly saw the possibility of eventual war between Russia and Austria-Hungary. The Austrian search for a modus operandi since 1867 to settle her mosaic of nationalities into a comfortable pattern stipulated a policy of stability in the Balkans, whereas Russian imperialistic designs, surcharged now with Pan-slavism, dictated a

¹Ibid., No. 241, Broglie to d'Harcourt, Oct. 22, 1873.

²Ibid., No. 284, Le Flo to Decazes, Feb. 17, 1874.

³Ibid., No. 164, Remusat to Banneville, Jan. 25, 1873.

diplomatic offensive aimed at unsettling the status quo. The sentiment in the Russian capital that a war with Austria-Hungary was probable was held by many.¹

It was through these perilous waters that French policy navigated and the sheer achievement of staying afloat after the debacle of the Franco-Prussian War was considerable. The interim between the shock of the collapse of the Second Empire and the outbreak of hostilities in the Balkans in 1875 afforded France a desperately needed breathing spell in which to stabilize her government, rid her land of the hated occupation troops, and reorganize her military forces for the tests which lay ahead. While France was engaged in these constructive processes of binding up her wounds, the subject nationalities in the Balkans were preparing for the destructive explosion of 1875 which threatened to upset the status quo and embroil Europe in another major war.

¹Ibid., No. 40, Gabriac to Remusat, Aug. 11, 1871.

CHAPTER II

THE TWIN CRISES OF 1875

Two developments of 1875 concerning the tapestry of European diplomacy caused near hysteria in all of the continent. One of these affected two major powers directly, but was soon settled, whereas the second arose in the obscure provinces of the Ottoman Empire and led to the involvement of every major power and seemed to be incapable of any permanent solution. Both of these crises were of supreme importance to the course of French diplomatic action.

France had been gravely concerned with the status of Franco-German relations and the Dreikaiserbund between Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia. The residue of the Kulturkampf, the revitalization of the French army, and the constant stream of revanche literature pouring forth in the French press had served to make the relations between the new German Empire and the Third Republic less than smooth. In January, 1874, Bismarck had requested that the French government take action against the Bishop of Nimes for allegedly aiding and abetting Catholics in Germany.¹

Duc Decazes, the French foreign minister from 1873 to 1877, was sufficiently worried that he asked his minister to Vienna to obtain an audience with Emperor Franz Joseph of the Dual Monarchy before the latter's departure to St. Petersburg in order to explain the difficulties between Germany and France over the religious question. Decazes was hoping that

¹DDF, I, No. 263, Gontaut-Biron to Decazes, Jan. 14, 1874.

Franz Joseph would be able to exert pressure on the Russian Tsar and that the two emperors would exercise a moderating influence upon Bismarck.¹

Bismarck had viewed with profound resentment the recovery of Germany's 'hereditary foe', and his distaste was increased by the actions of his own ambassador to Paris, Count Harry Arnim, whom the chancellor accused of being a Francophile.² Bismarck eventually replaced Arnim with Prince von Hohenlohe, whose memoirs reveal how odious to a refined gentleman was his assigned task of bullying France.³

Whether or not the mission of d'Harcourt to Emperor Franz Joseph met with success, quickly became an academic matter. The French National Assembly passed the Cadres Law almost simultaneously with the efforts of the ambassador to Vienna to quiet Franco-German relations by bringing in outside pressure from the other members of the Dreikaiserbund. This law provided for an increase in the size of the French infantry strength to 144 battalions.⁴ At the same time, the French chief of staff placed an order for 10,000 horses in Germany seemingly as an obvious forerunner to some kind of military action on the part of the French.⁵

This was more than the German Chancellor could tolerate, and articles soon appeared in German newspapers speaking of the French threat⁶

¹DDF, I, No. 271. Decazes to d'Harcourt, Jan. 22, 1874.

²C. Grant Robertson, Bismarck (London: Constable & Co., 1918) p. 334-335.

³Ibid., p. 335. See also Friedrich Haselmayr, Von Russischem Freundschaft zu Russischen Groll (1871-1878), (Munchen: F. Bruckmann, 1955), p. 91-94.

⁴Haselmayr, p. 96. In reality the size of the increase was a modest one due to the reorganization of infantry divisions.

⁵Ibid., p. 97.

⁶DDF, I, No. 365, de Sayve to Decazes, March 7, 1875; No. 368, de Sayve to Decazes, March 9, 1875.

and talk of a renewal of the war spread throughout European capitals.¹ Bismarck spoke of a possible "clerical circle" comprising France, Austria-Hungary, and Italy uniting in a war against protestant Germany.² General Joseph Maria von Radowitz, frequently used by Bismarck for special diplomatic missions, remarked to Gontaut-Biron, the French ambassador, of the peril that France was in, and talked freely of a preventive war by Germany to put a halt to French resurgence.³

The tension was heightened by an article appearing in the Kölnische Zeitung on April 5, 1875, entitled "New Alliances?". Three days later Die Post carried a banner story "Ist der Krieg in Sicht?"⁴ As these articles were obviously published with the knowledge of the German chiefs of staff and the Foreign Office, Decazes was greatly disturbed and requested aid from the major powers to stop Germany from launching any preventive war against France.⁵

The results of his inquiries were most reassuring as Great Britain and Russia announced that they would not condone any outbreak of hostilities between Germany and France.⁶ Germany denied any intention of fighting a preventive war against France and maintained that the whole war scare was just a misunderstanding. Bismarck was particularly

¹ Ibid., No. 361. Decazes to Jarnac, March 5, 1875.

² Ibid., No. 371; Haselmayr, p. 97-98.

³ C. E. M. Hawkesworth, The Last Century in Europe, 1814-1910 (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1912), p. 358. DDF, I, No. 395.

⁴ DDF, I, No. 381, de Sayve to Decazes, April 11, 1875.

⁵ Ibid., No. 375, Decazes to ambassadors, April 3, 1875.

⁶ Ibid., Nos. 396, 403, 404, 405, 410. Emile Bourgeois, Manuel Historique de Politique Etrangere (Paris: Belin Freres, 1925-1926) 4 vols. III, 780.

infuriated with Prince Alexander Mikhailovich Gortchakov, Russian Chancellor,¹ claiming that the Russian treated him as though he were still his student.²

The real significance of the war scare was that it demonstrated the crucial weakness of the Dreikaiserbund in that Russia gave strong moral support to France and thereby indicated to the German Chancellor that he could not count on future Russian neutrality in the event of a war with France.³ The bitterness with which Bismarck describes the events surrounding the crisis of early 1875 confirms how deeply he was shaken by the turn of affairs. He offered to strike off five franc pieces inscribed "Gortchakov Protects France" and to present a special theatrical performance where Gortchakov could be cast as a guardian angel in white clothes accompanied by the French with cymbals of bengal tones.⁴

He was most incensed by Gortchakov's comment that "Now, peace is assured" upon his arrival in Berlin during the crisis. (Italics mine)⁵ He was slightly less provoked by Decazes. Unleashing his venom upon the French foreign minister, Bismarck described him as being "like a ball, if

¹B. H. Sumner, Russia and the Balkans, 1870-1880 (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1937) p. 20. Thumbnail sketch of Gortchakov's career in footnote.

²Otto, Furst von Bismarck, Gedanken und Erinnerungen (Stuttgart: hrsg. von H. Kohl, 1898) p. 174-175. During Bismarck's earlier days, he had been Prussian ambassador to the Court at St. Petersburg where Gortchakov had frequently discussed diplomatic matters with him as an 'old hand' to a neophyte.

³Charles Seymour, The Diplomatic Background of the War, 1879-1914 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1916) p. 21.

⁴Bismarck, p. 175.

⁵Otto von Bismarck, Bismarck, The Man & Statesman, Being the Reflections and Reminiscences of Otto, Prince von Bismarck (New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1899) 2 vols. Trans. by A. J. Butler. II, 190-191.

pricked, he rolls away; nothing goes in".¹ In reality, Bismarck had been probing the ball, hoping that the French would precipitate some action, but France played the game neatly and got England and Russia to protest. This marked the culmination of German attempts to bully France.²

Publicly, Bismarck claimed that the war scare was a Stock Exchange manoeuvre, inflated by the chauvinism of the General Staff, the chief of which, Moltke, was a 'street Arab (gamin) in politics', and utilized by Gortchakov to score an empty diplomatic triumph.³

Spender points out that there was a decided shift of opinion in European capitals from the side of Germany to that of France, and that the crisis of 1875 had in some measure broken the spell which Bismarck till then had cast over Europe. He speculated that the eventual decision of Bismarck to side with Austria-Hungary at the Congress of Berlin in 1878 may have been to get even with Gortchakov for his actions during the war crisis of 1875.⁴ What seems more logical was that Decazes took advantage of the loose statements of General Radowitz and the German press to test the validity of the Dreikaiserbund and to ascertain the position of Great Britain. Whereas he managed to extricate himself from the war scare with what he desired, it was not likely that he would venture such a risk again. Before another two months had passed, however, the events in the Balkans had overshadowed any lingering memories of the spring crisis, and France was to play a distinctly different role in these

¹Robertson, p. 337.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 335.

⁴John Alfred Spender, Fifty Years of Europe: A Study in Pre-War Documents (London: Cassell & Co., 1933) p. 35-36.

events than she had from January to May, 1875.

The outbreak of hostilities in July, 1875 in Bosnia and Herzegovina resulted directly from the bad harvests in the Balkans in 1874 and 1875 together with a refusal by the Turkish tax-farmers to make any concessions to the hard-pressed inhabitants.¹ For years these two provinces had been considered the poorest in the Ottoman Empire and the sufferings of the people had been continuous for nearly a century. The Turks had taken control of Bosnia in 1463 and twenty years later had extended their hegemony over Herzegovina.² Following the occupation by Ottoman forces, the upper class had accepted the faith of Islam in order to gain a privileged position in the provinces so as to enable it to exploit the great mass of the peasantry which remained Christian.³

In addition to this bifurcated class division along economic lines, there was added the bitterness and hatred engendered by the age old rivalry between not only Moslems and Christians, but also between the Byzantine and Latin churches of the Christian world.⁴ The natives of the two beleaguered provinces had been subjected to constant and unremitting pressure and brutality by the Turks and also by members of the upper class of their own racial and language stock. They had felt the urge of nationalism earlier in the century while witnessing the successful revolts of the Greeks, and of the Serbs who were their blood brothers. The

¹ Lord Eversley, The Turkish Empire, Its Growth and Decay (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1917) p. 318.

² David Harris, A Diplomatic History of the Balkan Crisis of 1875-1878, The First Year (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1936) p. 11.

³ Ibid.

⁴ William Miller, "Bosnia Before the Turkish Conquest", English Historical Review XIII (October, 1898) p. 643-644.

formation of autonomous Rumania had given their hopes a new impetus and the promised aid from neighboring Serbia and Montenegro stimulated their desire to strike out for themselves.

The insistence of the tax-farmers that no relief be afforded to the peasants was a result of the severe financial plight into which the Ottoman Empire had fallen. The financial irresponsibility practiced during the reigns of Abdul Mejid and Abdul Aziz between 1831 and 1876 had succeeded in placing Turkey in the position of absolute bankruptcy. The European financing of the Empire had been predominantly French with strong British support.¹ By 1875, Turkey had contracted an indebtedness to these two Western powers alone totalling 200,000,000 pounds sterling which required a yearly interest payment of 12,000,000 pounds.² In 1874, the faith in Turkish bonds had fallen to such a level that a forty million pound bond issue was quoted at forty-three and one-half which was at least sixteen pounds below issues of the years immediately preceding.³

Shortly after the outbreak of the fighting in July, 1875, the Turkish government was forced to announce not only a five year suspension on the payment of the bonds, but also to declare that it would be able to pay only half the interest due.⁴ The only two Turkish ministers who had the confidence of the West, Fuad Pasha and Ali Pasha, had died in 1869 and 1871 respectively, and this only furthered the loss of Western confidence in the ability of the Turkish government to meet its

¹Sumner, p. 101.

²Ibid., p. 100.

³Ibid., p. 101.

⁴Ibid.

commitments.¹

The increasing pressure of meeting the costs of government and paying off foreign loans was accentuated by the poor administration of tax collection which was marked by dishonesty, inefficiency, and corruption. Together with the basic religious struggles which were growing more severe in the early years of the decade, a situation was created in which any spark would set off violence. That spark in 1875 was the decision of the Turkish authorities to collect taxes in Bosnia and Herzegovina by force in early July.

The revolt quickly spread throughout the provinces and volunteers arrived in Bosnia and Herzegovina from Serbia, Bulgaria, Montenegro, and even the Slavic provinces of the Austro-Hungarian Empire sent aid.² This indeed, was exactly the development which the Great Powers feared: that the revolt in Bosnia and Herzegovina would spread into a general Balkan conflagration. Once the issue was joined, only two possibilities could ensue, either the Turks would be able to crush the rebels, or the latter would force the Turks to grant them independence. The first possibility was distasteful in that it meant that the Christian populations of the Ottoman Empire would be further subjected to increasing persecution on the part of their rulers. The second development meant that the two nations most directly concerned with the political, social, and religious aspects of the Balkans, Russia and Austria-Hungary, would be faced with the creation of new nations that would exert a strong attraction toward

¹A most interesting commentary on the status of government finances is contained in an article by Fuad Pasha published under the title: "The Political Testament of Fuad Pasha", Nineteenth Century, LIII (1903), 190-197.

²Mihailo D. Stojanovic, The Great Powers and the Balkans, 1875-1878 (Cambridge: University Press, 1939) p. 15.

the subject nationalities in adjacent areas. And these contiguous lands were either an integral part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire or lay in the path of Russian plans for future aggrandizement.

To further complicate the picture, the Danube River flowing from Vienna through the Balkans made the control of the trade along it as well as control of its mouth of vital concern to the Dual Monarchy. Seeking to expand their influence, the Russians had long probed the Balkans. The decade of the 1870's witnessed the cresting of Pan-slavic sentiment which meant that whatever action Tsar Alexander II and Chancellor Gortchakov might decide to take would have strong popular support. In addition to their sympathetic ties based on religious affinity and racial relationships, the Russians had been interested in the destruction of the Ottoman Empire throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in order to gain control of the Straits for the dual purposes of expansion and protection.¹

The primary concern of the French in the Balkan situation was the protection of its financial interests which were of greater scope than that of any other European power.² In addition the French had long considered themselves to be protectors of the Christian population in the Ottoman Empire, and had gone to war only two decades before to carry out their responsibilities in this respect. The position of Decazes, however, was not that of Napoleon III since France was no longer considered the prime power on the continent. The center of gravity had shifted from

¹The Tilsit agreement of 1807 between Alexander I and Napoleon; the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi, the Crimean War, the abrogation of the Black Sea Clauses in 1870 in the London Protocol reflect her continuing interest.

²Henry H. Cumming, France-British Rivalry in the Post-War Near East (London: Oxford University Press, 1938) p. 9.

Paris to Berlin and Decazes was faced with the problem of reinstating French prestige which Thiers had so earnestly begun.

At this time, Decazes found himself in a dilemma (as did nearly every other foreign minister in Europe). If he were to overcome the effects of the Dreikaiserbund it meant that he would have to continue wooing the interests of Russia and at the same time not alienate Great Britain. Such a course was fraught with dangers, but Decazes worked hard at his task of diplomatic tight-rope walking. The difficulties which would be incumbent upon France if the revolt in Bosnia and Herzegovina should spread were obvious to Decazes and he tried to use his influence to limit the conflagration.

In these hopes he was doomed to disappointment for the news which began to trickle back from the Near East during July and August indicated that the revolt was spreading and that the numbers of the insurgents were steadily growing.¹ At the same time General Le Flo advised from St. Petersburg that the Russians were desirous of avoiding any general disturbance of the peace and indicated that Berlin felt likewise. Russia invited France through Le Flo to bring moral pressure in conjunction with the other powers in order to force the insurgents to submit. Russia aimed at keeping Serbia and Montenegro neutral and forcing Turkey to show clemency by making fair reforms.²

This was entirely in accord with the desire of Decazes who appreciated Russia's aim to involve all the powers instead of limiting any settlement to the three members of the Bund.³ Decazes noted that this

¹DDF, II, No. 1, Bourgoing to Decazes, July 18, 1875.

²Ibid., No. 4, Le Flo to Decazes, Aug. 14, 1875.

³Ibid., No. 6, Decazes to Le Flo, Aug. 20, 1875.

action of Russia was of greater importance since it indicated that the Tsar was not thinking of the Bund as the only agency for settlement of the Eastern Question.¹

The next intelligence from St. Petersburg, however, served to heighten the dangers inherent in the Bosnian revolt. Le Flo advised in August, 1875 that the revolt in the two provinces was different from those in the past since Catholics were now joining the fray with a bishop at their head. It was evident to the foreign consuls in the provinces that the revolt had been long planned, and their reports indicated that the flames would spread to Montenegro and Serbia. Le Flo opined that the Eastern Question might explode at any minute like a bomb. But Decazes' appraisal of the diplomatic actions of the Austrians, Germans, and Russians convinced him that for the present they were looking for joint action in only bringing moral pressure in the Balkans.²

If relations with Russia were thus far going according to Decazes' wishes, the news from Vienna indicated that Count Andrassy, Austrian foreign minister, was of a different mind. Andrassy complained bitterly to the French minister that the suspicions prevalent in Paris concerning his Balkan policy were unfounded. He severely criticized Great Britain and France for giving encouragement to the Turks to resist his demands for the initiation of a reform program by the Turks. In Andrassy's view, the Turks could only alleviate conditions in the provinces by making immediate improvements.³

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., No. 2, Le Flo to Decazes, Aug. 5, 1875.

³Ibid., No. 3, Ring to Decazes, Aug. 9, 1875. Ring was charge d'affaires in Vienna.

While the complaints of the Austrians were not taken lightly, the Quai d'Orsay was more interested in obtaining the concurrence of the British for the policy of joint moral suasion at the Porte. Decazes advised his envoy to London that France desired to prevent a unilateral intervention, but favored joint action. He pointed out that the French had been trying to deter the Serbs and Montenegrins from taking part in the insurrection and at the same time were exerting pressure at Constantinople for a peaceful conclusion of the crisis.¹ He emphasized that the French advice to the Porte had only gone this far, and that Paris was waiting for the views of London before proceeding any further. Decazes shrewdly drew the conclusion from the actions of the British agents in the Balkans that the British cabinet would certainly follow the same line as the French.² The idea of deferring further French action until the British cabinet had come to a decision was simply an attempt to align the views of Paris with those of London. Decazes hoped that in this way he could continue to straddle the issue raised by the conflict of interests between Russia on one hand with Great Britain on the other.

Two days later, Decazes was writing encouragement to the Russians since the situation in the Balkans was growing worse daily. He made the most of the Tsar's intentions of utilizing joint action and advised that the French consuls in the Ottoman Empire were continuing their close adherence to the line laid down by the Court at St. Petersburg.³ While the French were thus trying to maintain close relations with both the British

¹Ibid., No. 5, Decazes to d'Harcourt, Aug. 18, 1875.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., No. 6, Decazes to Le Flo, Aug. 20, 1875.

and the Russians, they were also keenly aware of the grave challenge that the insurrections presented to the Dual Monarchy.

Decazes noted in his instructions to Vienna in mid-September, that the Austrian wish to take unilateral action was primarily resultant from the fears at the Ballplatz that any further spread of the fighting would make it extremely difficult for the Austrians to contain their own Slavic peoples in southern Hungary.¹ The French minister was to indicate a sympathetic attitude towards the demands of Andrassy and at the same time push his efforts for joint action on the part of all the powers. Decazes was cognizant of the agreements which had been reached between Austria-Hungary and Russia since July 31 concerning the affairs in the Balkans,² and was apparently willing to go along with these developments so long as France could have a voice in the presentation of any demands to the Porte. He planned on gaining this voice by staying on good terms with the Court at St. Petersburg.

To the conversations between Austria and Russia, the third member of the Bund, Germany, was a reluctant partner. From the beginning of the Balkan controversy in the summer Bismarck had maintained an attitude of indifference and had tried to keep Germany apart from any role in Balkan policy making.³ Bismarck's sole interest was in preventing any rupture between his two partners which he feared might develop over their differences in the Balkans. He also noted that Russia and France were coming closer together over the Eastern Question and that a similar rapprochement

¹Ibid., No. 7, Decazes to de Vogüé, Sept. 18, 1875.

²Harris, p. 75-76.

³DGP, II, No. 227.

was occurring between Great Britain and Austria-Hungary.¹

In order to sound out the British minister to Berlin, Lord Odo Russell, Bismarck inquired as to how the British would react to a solution whereby Bosnia and Herzegovina would be given to Austria-Hungary, Bessarabia returned to Russia,² and Britain would be given the rights of a protector nation in Egypt.³ Bismarck's plan evidenced his insight into the possibilities created by the outbreak of the revolt in July. He hoped to use the crisis to completely isolate France and to eradicate all French hopes of a possible revanche over Alsace-Lorraine. He conjectured that even if the French were successful in aligning Russia on their side, if he could succeed in bringing Great Britain into his camp through her friendship with Austria-Hungary, that the French coup would be more than offset. The Iron Chancellor surveyed the possibilities of a North Sea Alliance of Great Britain, Germany, and Austria-Hungary which would have the advantage of interior lines of communication and transportation should a major war break out on the continent.⁴

The possibilities which he envisioned did not materialize, but they did reflect the German chancellor's preoccupation with matters concerning the north central European plain. His interests in the Eastern Question were viewed only from the geopolitical considerations mentioned above, and the religious nationalistic struggles of the Slavic populations in

¹Ibid.

²Taken from Russia by the Treaty of Paris in 1856 which represented her only territorial loss in the entire nineteenth century.

³This conversation was recorded by von Bülow in his private papers as noted in DGP, II, 29. Russell's reaction was not recorded, but can be deduced as negative from the ensuing actions of his Home Office.

⁴Bardoux, p. 57.

the Balkans were of secondary importance. As the flames of revolt spread during the latter months of 1875, the threat to each of the European capitals of a general conflagration increased accordingly.

The aid to the rebels from the Slavic peoples in Dalmatia and Montenegro was deemed mainly responsible for the continuance of the hostilities.¹ The strategic position of Montenegro with its mountain ranges gave it an importance far beyond what its diminutive size would sustain in normal circumstances. The little principality formed the main road for any Turkish military effort since the Turks could not be expected to reach Bosnia and Herzegovina through Serbia or Novibazar which were on the verge of joining the action of the rebels against the Ottoman Empire.

The Turks had dispatched a commissary, Server Pasha, to Bosnia and Herzegovina early in August with instructions to watch local developments.² At the same time, Count Andrassy had requested Germany and Russia to join him in sending a commission to watch developments in Herzegovina, but the Russians had unilaterally asked the other three Great Powers to join in this venture.³ Decazes was quick to realize the implications of this action by St. Petersburg to the general European diplomatic picture, and his concurrence reflected his view that unilateral action by any nation in the Balkans was to be avoided.⁴

The six nation commission (Austria, Germany, Russia, Great Britain,

¹Sumner, p. 140-141; 580.

²Ibid., p. 143.

³DDF, II, No. 4, Le Flo to Decazes, Aug. 14, 1875.

⁴Ibid., No. 5, Decazes to d'Harcourt, Aug. 18, 1875.

Italy, and France) arrived in the troubled spots with instructions to inform the rebel leaders that they could not expect military assistance from the Great Powers. It suggested that the rebels send a petition to the Porte which was supposed to be received favorably.¹ In the meantime the rebels should remain calm and peaceful and await action by the Porte. That this advice would be accepted was an impossibility in view of the state of public opinions in the two provinces.² Meanwhile the military strength of the insurgents was increasing rapidly.³

Unfortunately the six nation commission found itself a microcosmic reflection of the Great Power macrocosmic views in the Balkans. The Russians were suspicious of the Austrians since the commission plan had been originated by Andrassy, and the British followed their traditional policy of supporting the Turks, while the sympathies of the French and Italian representatives were with the rebels.⁴ The crucial point in the failure of the commission was its failure to promise the rebels any more than diplomatic intervention on the part of the European governments. The exhortations to the insurgents that diplomatic pressure at Constantinople would result in proper reforms for them were practically useless in view of past actions of the Sultan. The insurgents demanded that the Great Powers guarantee a series of reforms before they would even consider laying down their arms and returning home.⁵

¹Sumner, p. 143.

²Ibid.

³DDF, II, No. 2, Le Flo to Decazes, Aug. 5, 1875.

⁴Actions of the Russian members are graphically recounted in Sumner, p. 144. Actions of the other consuls are adequately described in Harris, p. 88-95.

⁵Harris, p. 93.

A planned ambush by the Turkish forces under Server Pasha of some insurgent leaders while they were consulting with members of the six nation commission wiped out all hopes of attaining any understanding between the Turks and the rebels.¹ Early in October, the Porte offered to reorganize the administration of the whole empire, and to wipe out past injustices.² This offer was repeated on December 12 but was without effect upon the insurgents in view of the notorious history of past Turkish promises which had never been fulfilled.

The language of these Irades (decrees) by the Sultan was conciliatory enough and seemingly some specific reforms were included. The October 2 Irade promised to exempt the Christian populations of the Ottoman Empire from one quarter of the Tithe that had been formerly established. It further promised to abandon all tax arrears up to 1875 by cancelling the tax records to that date for all but the wealthy class. Better government was to be obtained by the creation in each community of an Administrative Council which was to be popularly selected and whose opinions would be taken into consideration by the Porte. In addition to local government reforms, the principle of an annual delegation to the Porte from each province was to be re-established. Finally, the Irade promised to change the tithes into land taxes so as to be more equitable.³

The later Firman of December 12 promised reforms of the judicial system, as well as concluding the practice of using the police to collect

¹ Ibid.

² Emile Bourgeois, Manuel Historique de Politique Etrangere (Paris: Belin Freres, 1925) III, 793.

³ Sir Edward Hertslet, The Map of Europe by Treaty Showing the Various Political and Territorial Changes Which Have Taken Place Since the General Peace of 1814 With Numerous Maps and Notes (London: Harrison & Sons, 1891) 4 vols. IV, 2407-2408. The complete documents are contained herein.

taxes by force. It also indicated that the corvee (forced labor system) would be abolished at once and that henceforth the Zapties (Police) would be chosen with more care. Complete religious equality and freedom were promised to all, and Christians were to be given the right to hold property on equal footing with the Moslems. The last testaments of Christians were to be held inviolate hereafter, and non-Moslems were to be freed from the military service tax unless they were between the ages of 30 and 40.¹

The emphasis upon religious questions was the only indication that these two decrees of the Porte were intended for Bosnia and Herzegovina. The population of the former province contained 500,000 Greek Orthodox, 200,000 Catholics, and 450,000 Moslems.² Hence over half of the peoples were non-Moslem and vitally concerned about the status of their religious beliefs and the discrimination which had been widespread against them in economic and political matters. One contradictory element in the religious controversy, however, was the position of the landowners who in most instances had been Christians, but had changed their professed religion since Turkish law did not permit Christians title to land ownership. As a result, the December Firman of the Sultan granting Christians the right to own property in the same fashion as Moslems only served to further complicate the picture in Bosnia since the faithful Christians regarded the landowners as being caricatures of Judas Iscariot.

Aside from religious matters, there was little expectation among

¹Ibid., IV, 2409-2417.

²Luigi Albertini, The Origins of the War of 1914 (London: Oxford University Press, 1952) 3 vols. Translated and edited by Isabella M. Massey. I, 13. It should be noted that these figures are approximations. Littell's Living Age, CXXVII (1875) 646-647 gives slightly different totals, and Harris, p. 13 cites British Consular Reports (1860) with still different numbers. The ratios remain nearly the same regardless of the estimate used.

foreign diplomats in Constantinople that the insurgents would be pacified by the two Firmans of the Sultan.¹ The past history of his promises contained too many dashed hopes among the Christians to place any trust in the Sublime Porte. The Hatti-Cherif of 1839 and the Hatti-Houmayoun of 1856 had both promised prompt, energetic, and speedy reforms (Italics mine) in the treatment of Christians, but no improvement had occurred. Indeed, many of the clauses of the October and December Firmans of 1875 were nearly identical to the earlier decrees.²

Under such circumstances, the officials of the Porte apparently had little hope that the new pronouncements of the Sultan would have any effect upon the insurgents. His purpose in issuing such high-sounding platitudes was simply to offset any action on the part of the Great Powers since the Porte maintained that the insurgency was a matter of internal policy and not subject to outside intervention. Behind this screen of asserting the rights of sovereignty lay the fact that the British ambassador to Constantinople, Sir Henry Elliot, was serving the Sultan's advisors large portions of starch to stiffen the Sick Man's backbone.³

While the Great Powers and the Porte were debating as to how the rebellion in Bosnia and Herzegovina should be handled, the other nationalities in the Balkans were engaging in actions which eminently earned that peninsula the sobriquet of later historians as being a "powder keg." The nation lying between Bosnia and the remainder of the Empire was Serbia, inhibited by Slavs who considered themselves to be blood-brothers of the

¹Stojanovic, p. 25; Bourgeois, III, 793.

²Hertslet, IV, 2425-2426.

³Turkey No. 2 (1876) No. 17, Elliot to Derby, Aug. 20, 1875.

insurgents. Public support for the rebels was instantaneous and the elections in August of a new Skupstina (assembly) returned a large majority in favor of declaring war on Turkey at once.¹ At that time, the only dissenting voice in Serbia against war was that of the ruler. Prince Milan Obrenovich had been impressed in July by Andrassy with the great need for peace in the Balkans. Andrassy had threatened that if the Serbs entered the conflict, Austria would consult her own interests and might contemplate military action.²

In his speech opening the session of the newly elected Skupstina on August 29, 1875, Prince Milan gave assurances of the high regard and sentimental attachment which he had for Bosnia and Herzegovina, but spoke of the great menace to Serbia in the massing of Turkish troops on her southern border.³ He reiterated the danger of risking war without some support from the Great Powers. He wanted Serbia to follow a policy of peace at the present while trying to alleviate the sufferings of her brothers in the rebel provinces. In order to get the discussions of the Skupstina away from war, he proposed a series of domestic reforms.⁴ The Skupstina was not so easily influenced, however, and in its reply to the Prince on September 7, it recalled Milan's statement of 1872 in which he had said to the Serbian nation that "it would be a grave responsibility to lose

¹Harris, p. 109.

²Ibid., p. 103-104.

³Hertslet, IV, 2401-2402.

⁴Ibid. It should be noted that Milan's visit to the Ballplatz in Vienna was not for the purpose of discussing matters concerning the Balkan situation which arose as a matter of course. His trip was actually a wedding trip. His bride was Nathalie Petrovna, a Russian by birth, which was pleasing to the Skupstina. Ibid., IV, 2401. An interesting account of Milan's personality is contained in Harris, p. 104 quoting a British diplomat.

even the least of the acquisitions of our fathers, and little to our credit to add nothing to them".¹ The representatives called upon the Prince to take action and indicated that the nation was ready to fight. Words were all that resulted, however, and the Prince was able to forestall any military action during the two months before winter set in.

At the bottom of Serbia's interest in the affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina lay her old ambition to expand her borders and become Greater Serbia.² M. Bogitshevich, a Serbian Charge d'Affaires at Berlin, wrote that "Serbia, financially tied to France and politically mortgaged to Russia" planned to expand at the expense of Turkey and Austria.³

The failure of Serbia to engage in hostilities also kept Montenegro from taking any official military action, since its ruler, Prince Nicholas, was aware that his tiny country could not hope to match the Turks in an offensive war without the help of Serbia. This did not prevent him or the Serbs from giving the insurgents money, arms, and other necessities. A seemingly mutual agreement resulted in Serbia sending aid to Bosnia while Montenegro concentrated on helping Herzegovina.⁴

Feelings in Serbia and Montenegro reached a fever pitch in November, 1875 when the Sultan's forces massacred the inhabitants of the village of

¹Hertslet, IV, 2405.

²Momcilo Nincic, La Crise Bosniaque, 1908-1909 et les Puissances Europeennes (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1937) 2 vols. contains a good background account of Serbian aspirations in the 19'th century. Camille Bloch, The Causes of the World War: An Historical Summary (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1935) Trans. by Jane Soames, lays heavy emphasis upon the rivalry between Austria and Serbia for control of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

³G. P. Gooch, Recent Revelations of European Diplomacy (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1930) p. 116.

⁴Stojanovic, p. 25-26. Indeed, Peko Pavloci, the chief of rebel headquarters in Herzegovina, was an agent of Prince Nicholas.

Sulmichi in Bulgaria in order to intimidate the Bulgars from arming themselves. The use of cruel tortures by the Turks was widespread at Sulmichi and only served to heighten tension in the adjoining areas.¹

At this critical juncture, being fully cognizant of the failure of the consular mission, Count Andrassy decided upon a new tack to settle the turmoil in the Balkans. He was alarmed at the reaction to the process of Magyarization being carried on by Budapest in Croatia where Austrian influence was being undermined and the loyalty of the Croats was weakening.² After working through most of the month of December and exchanging confidential notes with St. Petersburg and Berlin, he dispatched a circular note to the major foreign offices in Europe and to the Sublime Porte. This note has since become famous as the Andrassy Note of December 30, 1875.³

Although Andrassy couched his message in such terms that it would appear to be the joint demands of the Great Powers, it actually represented his own viewpoint. The note declared that the reforms by the Porte had been insufficient up to this time. Andrassy castigated the Porte for being more interested in principles than with the pacification of the rebellion, and since the Turks had been unable to suppress the revolts it was now necessary for the Great Powers to take steps to insure the peace.

The Great Powers were therefore demanding that:⁴

1. Turkey should actually bring about complete religious liberty
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¹Bourgeois, III, 793.

²Raymond J. Sontag, European Diplomatic History, 1871-1932 (New York: Century Co., 1933) p. 113.

³Hertslet, IV, 2418-2420 contains the note in its entirety.

⁴Ibid.

in the Balkans. This should be done at once and with guarantees against any fanatical outbreaks.

2. The evils of the tax-farming system must be completely abolished.
3. Turkey should leave some of the tax monies collected in the provinces for local use rather than require that all be sent back to Constantinople.
4. The Porte should take immediate action to place the reforms promised in the firman of 1858 into effect. (These primarily affected rights of Christian farmers).
5. A special commission composed of both Moslems and Christians should be created to superintend the imposition of these measures.

From the first shot in July, 1875 to the Andrassy Note at the end of the year, the situation in the Balkans had steadily worsened. While the Great Powers were at first concerned with maintaining the status quo so as not to disturb the alignment on the continent, the Turks were proving themselves to be masters of inefficiency in either treating honestly with the rebels or in crushing the revolt militarily. The consular mission effort had failed in August and September due to the confusion among the Great Powers and the treachery of the Turks. The massing of Turkish troops and the suffering of the Christian Slavs in Bosnia and Herzegovina had widespread repercussions in the adjacent areas. The longer the strife continued, the greater the danger of the fire spreading into a general war which would fragmentize the Ottoman Empire. The Andrassy Note was a desperate attempt to solve the dilemma before the advent of spring would hasten the continuance of hostilities.

France had contributed nothing unique toward settling the problems in the Balkans, but had concentrated her efforts on remaining in good standing with Russia and Great Britain. The obvious divergencies of these two nations' policies in the Balkans was making this diplomatic feat ever more difficult for the men who made policy at the Quai d'Orsay.

CHAPTER III

THE FATE OF THE ANDRASSY NOTE

The Andrassy Note was received with mixed emotions in the various capitals of Europe which was not surprising since it incorporated the various demands which the Great Powers had tried in vain for the previous six months to enforce upon the Sublime Porte. Duc Decazes' immediate reaction to the Austrian proposal was quite favorable, although he indicated some hesitancy about accepting in toto the proposals about direct taxes being kept in the provinces.¹ He was assured by the Austrian minister that the sheep tax earmarked to meet Turkey's foreign loan indebtedness, was actually an indirect tax. Decazes thereupon gave his wholehearted support to the Andrassy program. "We do not believe it possible to refuse to agree to a concerted policy of demands since it would destroy the European concert, whose authority is necessary to re-establish the tranquility in the Near East and to safeguard the general peace".² The French foreign minister was more than willing to go along with Andrassy's plan of restoring the old Ottoman Empire in order to avoid any forced choice between Great Britain and Russia whose interests were of a different nature. France remembered that in the previous year that it had been these two powers which had protected her from the alleged militaristic plans of Germany.

¹Accounts and Papers. State Papers. British Session Papers. Turkey No. 1 (1878) No. 55, Andrassy to Beust, Dec. 30, 1875.

²DDF, II, No. 28, Decazes to Gontaut-Biron, Jan. 4, 1876.

It is dubious whether Decazes himself thought that the Andrassy Plan had any real chance of solving the Balkan problems. He was advised early in January, 1876, that the Russians were not desirous of success for the Andrassy proposals and "were working for a more practical result via overtures to open negotiations directly between the Porte, Montenegro, and the insurgents."¹ At the same time, Great Britain was following a policy of great reserve and hesitation in Near Eastern matters. Derby pointed out that most of the demands of the Andrassy Note had already been granted by the Firman of December 12, 1875, so it did not make sense to ask the Porte to do the same thing over again. He further raised questions as to what action was planned in the event that either Turkey or the insurgents refused to accept the proposals. It was only after the Porte itself asked the British to join into the action that Derby was finally prompted to move in its favor. At best, he felt that Britain could not completely disengage herself from the European diplomatic scene, and hence he gave the Note his "general support" with some doubts expressed about the application of certain local taxes.²

The hesitation of the British government to take action on the Andrassy Note was due not only to the usual caution inherent in the actions of its foreign minister, Lord Derby, but also to approaches from Germany. Bismarck made overtures in early January using the Andrassy Note as a pretext for an exchange of views between London and Berlin in regard to the Balkan question. He proposed that England and Germany should act as the arbiters in the dispute between the Ottoman Empire and the Eastern Powers

¹Ibid., No. 27, Bourgoing to Decazes, Jan. 3, 1876.

²Turkey No. 1 (1876) Nos. 9, 14, 15, 23, 24, 70. All dated January, 1876; Stojanovic, p. 48-49.

and that perhaps a program of territorial acquisition and compensation would provide a final solution. The British delayed their answer to these suggestions and finally advised that they were in favor of close agreement with Germany, but that there were too many details to be handled to make any definite commitments.¹

When the final assent to the Andrassy Note had been obtained by late January, 1876, it was delivered to the Porte on the thirteenth and apparently received in friendly fashion.² The Porte officially announced that it would enforce four of the main recommendations of the Andrassy Note, but that if it were to accept the idea of using direct taxes this would conflict with the general administrative system of the empire. To compensate for this, however, the Porte advised that it would allocate supplementary revenues to Bosnia and Herzegovina for the benefit of the public needs.³

While the Porte was apparently willing to accept the major portions of the Andrassy Note, the problem of getting the insurgents to agree to its provisions constituted a much more difficult task. Since the issuance of the October 2 and December 12 edicts, the Porte had acted upon the assumption that these two decrees would be all that was necessary to put down the rebellion and satisfy its recalcitrant subjects. Herzegovina had been established as a separate vilayet early in January, 1876, and Ali Pasha, a former ambassador to Paris, had been named as the first

¹DGP, II, No. 227; DDF, II, No. 32; William L. Langer, European Alliances and Alignments, 1871-1890 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1950) p. 76-77.

²Turkey No. 1 (1876), No. 86, Elliot to Derby, Jan. 31, 1876.

³DDF, II, No. 34, Bourgoing to Decazes, Feb. 8, 1876.

governor-general.¹ On February 2, 1876, the new decrees of the Porte were introduced officially into Bosna-Serai, the capital of the vilayet, with much fanfare and display. This failed to impress the populace, and a British observer noted that the poor quality of the Turkish officials would prevent any real improvements from being made.²

During the enforced retardation of military action due to winter, the preparations going on in the adjacent areas to the insurgent provinces were developing momentum. In Serbia, the Skupstina voted extraordinary powers to the administration and entered into negotiations for foreign loans in order to be prepared for the worst.³ Incidents constantly occurring over the question of convoys of supplies to the winter quarters of the Turkish troops added more fuel to the flames of growing agitation for a Greater Serbia to arise and meet its obligations to its neighboring Slavic brothers.⁴

Sir Henry Elliot, the British ambassador to the Sublime Porte, noted that the Russian consulate was busy keeping the insurgents stirred up and remarked that its offices were wide open to the insurgents and that General Ignatiev's actions were certainly offsetting the remarks of the Russian government that it desired peace.⁵ Insurgent wounded allegedly were reported as saying that they were fighting because the Russians told them to. Russia's Pan-slavic feelings were rising to fever pitch in 1876

¹Turkey No. 3 (1876), No. 64, Acting-consul Freeman to Derby, Jan. 7, 1876.

²Ibid., No. 9, Id. to Id., Feb. 3, 1876.

³Turkey No. 3 (1876) No. 2, White to Derby, Feb. 5, 1876.

⁴Ibid., No. 5, Elliot to Derby, Feb. 5, 1876.

⁵Ibid., No. 11, Id. to Id., Feb. 14, 1876.

and the Tsar's pacific declarations were of no avail in even slowing down the growth of war fever in Serbia,¹ this despite the failure of Serbian efforts to negotiate a loan which caused her suppliers to refuse delivery of guns and ammunition. New outbreaks were reported in Novi and Kroupa at this time involving several hundred insurgents.²

At the same time Chancellor Gortchakov was stating that Russia would not act alone in the Eastern Question or separate herself from the other powers,³ one of her consuls was flying his nation's colors at half-mast in sympathy for a dead rebel chieftain.⁴ The double-barreled Russian approach to the Eastern Question was also reflected by the Tsar who sent telegrams to Serbia and Montenegro advising them to abstain from military preparations and provocative actions and spoke to Europe of his peaceful intentions while permitting widespread agitation on the part of the slavophile movement both in the press and at public meetings in his own capital.⁵

Bourgoing, the French ambassador to Constantinople, was obviously aware of the actions of the Russian Panslavists as General Ignatiev was quite open in his actions and statements in support of the insurgents. His oft repeated demands for his countrymen to meet their responsibilities by protecting their fellow Christians in the provinces would permit no

¹Ibid., No. 16, White to Derby, Feb. 22, 1876.

²Ibid., No. 24, Freeman to Derby, Feb. 18, 1876.

³Ibid., No. 31, Loftus to Derby, Feb. 29, 1876.

⁴Ibid., Nos. 28, 29, Id. to Id., Feb. 29, 1876.

⁵Ibid., No. 32, Elliot to Derby, Feb. 17, 1876; Alfred Fischel, Der Panslawismus zum Weltkrieg (Stuttgart und Berlin: Cotta, 1919) p. 136.

other interpretation but that his sympathies lay with the rebels. Decazes, however, made no protests concerning these acts in Moscow, and although he privately believed that Russia's diplomatic performance did not coincide with her true approach to the Balkan tangle, officially he followed the line stipulated by Gortchakov and the Tsar that Russia was desirous of peace and the status quo. It was still of prime importance to Decazes that the first condition of any European entente concerning the Balkans hinged on French and Russian views being in agreement.¹ He felt sure that the Chancellor and the Emperor were convinced of the loyalty of France to Russian aims and policy and derived much comfort from this deduction.² Upon hearing of the admonitions addressed to the principalities by the Tsar, Decazes instructed his agents to lecture Prince Milan of Serbia and Prince Nicholas of Montenegro along the same lines.³

While the Russians were more or less undermining any chance of success of the Andrassy Note, the author of that document was not sitting idly by and hoping for the best. He had remarked at the time of the preliminary exchanges concerning his plans that: "We are not trying to solve the Eastern Question for eternity, we are only trying to maintain the status quo for the present time, we are fighting for time; this would be advantageous to all of us; and would permit us to prepare for future eventualities." He disclaimed any intention of taking the provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina at the end of 1875, and maintained that all he was trying to do was to provide some help for the Christian populations in the

¹DDF, II, No. 31, Decazes to de Vogüé, Jan. 18, 1876.

²Ibid.

³Harris, p. 382-383.

Ottoman Empire.¹

The French ambassador to Vienna, M. de Vogüé, pointed out to Andrassy from his own personal experiences in the Balkans the miserable conditions prevalent in the Turkish Empire. De Vogüé believed that if its structure were altered it would simply disintegrate and thus present Europe with far graver problems.² To forestall any idea that the Austrians might have about compromising France into a position of using its fleet for a display of force, de Vogüé remarked that the French naval forces in Turkish waters had been reduced to only one dispatch boat for the past fifteen years as an economy measure.³

With Bismarck holding aloof from the Balkan question except as it affected Europe, Great Britain maintaining her policy of splendid isolation, France proclaiming love for all and particularly for Russia, Andrassy pushed ahead almost single-handedly for the success of his plan. He dispatched General Rodich, governor of Zara, to meet with the insurgents and to explain the terms of his note. After some exasperating delays, Rodich met the insurgents in Ragusa but failed to achieve any concrete results. Andrassy thereupon brought pressure upon Prince Nicholas of Montenegro to intervene with the insurgents. Nicholas complied by arranging a meeting for Rodich at Suttorina with the rebel chiefs. At the same time, Nicholas was negotiating with Russia agents to continue the insurrection. The Montenegrin prince was thus playing a two-faced game by appearing to work for a peaceful settlement with Austria-Hungary while at the same time carrying on negotiations with the rebels to insure

¹DDF, II, No. 25, de Vogüé to Decazes, Dec. 28, 1875.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

their continued action against Turkey. In this way Nicholas hoped to utilize Austrian pressure upon Turkey to gain some additional territory for himself while using the insurrection in Bosnia and Herzegovina to maintain pressure upon the Porte. He therefore formulated a reply for the insurgents to the Andrassy Note which would be unacceptable to the Great Powers or Turkey.¹

M. de Kerjegu, French acting consul general in Belgrade, presented the demands of France that Prince Milan of Serbia cease all military preparations on February 29, 1876.² Milan disclaimed any offensive nature in the steps being taken by his army and argued that certain defensive measures were necessary in view of the uncertainty of the times. The support being given to the insurgents by both Nicholas and Milan in the early months of 1876 made it increasingly clear that the insurgents were determined to fight to the last in the crisis. As a result, Andrassy exerted greater pressure on Prince Nicholas, and General Rodich reported early in March that at least Nicholas had agreed to stop sending aid to the insurgents.³

Both Russia and Austria-Hungary announced that they were prohibiting the export of any arms to Serbia,⁴ but Raschid Pasha, Turkish foreign minister, still complained of shipments of arms and ammunition from Austria to Herzegovina and to the Dalmatian frontier which was supposed to be guarded by Austrian troops. He threatened that if the proper steps

¹Stojanovic, p. 52.

²Turkey No. 3 (1876) No. 53, White to Derby, Mar. 1, 1876.

³Ibid., No. 46, Buchanan to Derby, Mar. 8, 1876; No. 45, Freeman to Derby, Mar. 2, 1876.

⁴Ibid., No. 26, Buchanan to Derby, Mar. 3, 1876.

were not taken Turkey would take whatever means necessary to protect her interests.¹

Decazes noted in a general advisory circular to his ambassadors early in March that Kerjegu had warned the Belgrade government of the danger inherent in Milan's attitude of provocation which would encourage the insurgents of Herzegovina and at the same time tend to create a movement in Serbia itself, which the Prince might not be able to control.² Kerjegu warned Prince Milan that there was no need for armaments since Serbia was protected by Article 29 of the 1856 Treaty, and that if he continued his provocative mobilization that he might lose his protection under this clause.³ While Decazes was willing to exert strong pressure on Milan and the Serbian war party, he avoided doing the same with Montenegro since his postscript noted the strong friendship existing between Russia and the little mountain principality. Decazes recommended that perhaps a conciliatory attitude toward Montenegro on the part of the French might work best for a rapprochement.⁴

While the diplomats were congratulating themselves upon their efforts to avoid general hostilities in the Balkans, the concrete events which were taking place boded ill for their hopes. New outbreaks of hostilities were reported in various areas of the two provinces and the refugees from previous disorders were becoming increasingly restless in Dalmatia, Austria, and Serbia.⁵ General Mollinary of the Austro-Hungarian

¹Ibid., No. 66 (inclosure) Mar. 8, 1876.

²DDF, II, Decazes to ambassadors, Mar. 4, 1876. (No. 36)

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Turkey No. 3 (1876), No. 79, Freeman to Derby, Mar. 10, 1876. Freeman was in Bosna-Serai during most of February and March.

general staff thought that the Serbs might go into action at any time and reported that they had placed pontoon bridges at three points on the Drina to be ready for the passage of a large force.¹ Stevno Paulovitch, an officer of Serbian artillery, came to Bucharest to purchase trained artillery horses. He was offering twenty pounds per mount which was low for the prevailing market, and his main efforts were concentrated in Bessarabia.²

The serious defeat of the Turks at Muratovizza by the rebels on March 6 greatly encouraged the insurgents, and despite the peaceful pronouncements of Prince Milan, the Serbian militia was undergoing maneuvers designed for offensive rather than defensive action.³ Small bands of Serbs crossed the border into the provinces, entered the towns of Novibazaar and Vischegrad in Bosnia, killing and pillaging the countryside.⁴ These actions became so frequent that Arthur Holmes, the British consul, reported that the so-called insurrection in Bosnia might be better termed an invasion by bands openly formed in Austrian Croatia and Serbia.⁵ He thought that the real cure for the solution to the situation was for the Sublime Porte to appoint governors who would have definite tenures so

¹Ibid., No. 84, Buchanan to Derby, Mar. 24, 1876.

²Ibid., No. 72, Vivian (in Bucharest) to Derby, Mar. 13, 1876. The French and Austrian consuls were keeping track of his movements.

³Ibid., No. 98, Holmes to Elliot, Mar. 20, 1876; No. 105, Elliot to Derby, Mar. 27, 1876. At the battle of Muratovizza, the Turks were successful in provisioning Piva but were later ambushed in the mountain passes and one observer noted that the insurgents cut off over 800 noses. These barbarities on both sides only served to heighten the tension.

⁴Ibid., No. 105, Elliot to Derby, Mar. 27, 1876.

⁵Ibid., No. 67, Id. to Id., Mar. 10, 1876 (memo of Holmes).

that they could develop a thorough knowledge of the provinces.¹

The Porte, however, continued its policy of shifting these officials in and out of office with the precision of a pendulum dependent for its motion upon the whims of political favoritism and graft that dominated the Turkish administrative system from top to bottom. On March 4, Wassa Effendi was appointed to superintend the reforms which were to be inaugurated in Herzegovina and the return of the refugees. Although a capable administrator he was handicapped from the beginning by an insufficient grant of authority. In addition the Porte decreed that any soldier who killed a civilian would be tried by a civil rather than a military court. This meant that any sentence imposed by the civil court would have to be confirmed by the authorities in Constantinople.² Therefore speedy punishment was impossible and with Moslems agitating for revenge against the refugees, the procedure practically amounted to voiding all protection for Christians.

It was necessary to send a second Turkish official within two weeks to handle this aspect of the crisis. Haidar Effendi arrived in Bosna-Serai on March 13 to warn the Moslems that the Sultan did not intend to lose two provinces by pandering to the wishes of a few fanatics among his followers.³ Despite these warnings the number of incidents between Moslems and Christians increased and the twelve day suspension of hostilities agreed to by the Turks for General Rodich's mission was frequently broken on both sides. At best the cessation of action merely meant that no major bodies of troops were involved in these incidents.

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., No. 62, Elliot to Derby, Mar. 4, 1876.

³Ibid., No. 96, Freeman to Derby, Mar. 16, 1876.

As a basic sine qua non to their cessation of action, the Turks demanded the right to keep the road open to the fortress of Nischich which was in desperate need of provisions. The insurgents wanted any Turkish supply force to be limited to one battalion which the Turks refused to accept.¹ An attempt to provision the fortress was thrown back by the rebels at Douga Pass on March 22 with the loss of 160 men.² The insurgents feared that any large Turkish force would turn upon them once Nischich had been supplied and the Turks feared that the dispatch of only one battalion into the area would be a ready invitation for ambush.

The Turkish foreign minister, Raschid Pasha, pointed out these difficulties. He pointed out that the Treaty of Paris of 1856 technically prevented Turkey from attacking Serbia so long as that principality kept the peace. Yet, Raschid maintained that the actions of Serbian bands raiding across the border into Bosnia and Herzegovina constituted outright violations of peace.³ Feeling outraged and humiliated, the Turkish government stiffened its stand against the Great Powers and the Sultan announced to Ignatiev that in view of the circumstances he would not consider any territorial expansion for Montenegro.⁴ In response to this stiffening of the Porte's attitude, the Great Powers reiterated their demands upon the insurgents to refrain from all provocative military acts and that they scrupulously respect the truce provided for the Rodich mission. Milan of Serbia was the first to feel this new pressure from Andrassy in March, 1876. He therefore marked time hoping that the Russian court would

¹Ibid., No. 83, Buchanan to Derby, Mar. 24, 1876.

²Ibid., No. 84, Monson (at Ragusa) to Derby, Mar. 25, 1876.

³Ibid., No. 69, Elliot to Derby, Mar. 13, 1876.

⁴Ibid., No. 92, Id. to Id., Mar. 20, 1876.

adopt a more lenient tone than Vienna. His hopes sank rapidly, however, as M. Kartzoff, the Russian consul, read him the note from the Tsar which fairly bristled with stern reprimands.¹ Prince Nicholas of Montenegro was also subjected to the same pressures as St. Petersburg and Vienna tried to give the Rodich mission some chance of success.²

The final meeting between the insurgents and General Rodich on April 6 and 7 at Suttorina witnessed the most extreme demands of the rebels. They demanded that Turkey grant one-third of the land in Bosnia and Herzegovina to Christians, remit taxes for the past three years, evacuate all troops and station them in six towns where there would be permanent Austrian and Russian agents to watch them. They did agree upon Rodich's insistence to cease their revolt if Turkey would withdraw her forces, care for the refugees, and permit the insurgents to keep their firearms.³

The Porte thereupon announced that it was willing to extend the amnesty period until four weeks from March 24 and give assistance to the returnees and grant some exemptions from tithes and other taxes for a limited period. Turkey threatened those who did not return within the stated period with confiscation of their lands.⁴ The insurgents refused to accept these promises of the Porte and stepped up their military preparations.⁵ Border activity between Serbia and Bosnia was noticeably

¹Ibid., No. 88, White to Derby, Mar. 20, 1876; No. 104, Elliot to Derby, Mar. 24, 1876.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., No. 122, Loftus to Derby, April 7, 1876; Sumner, p. 156.

⁴Ibid., No. 135, Taylor to Derby, April 4, 1876.

⁵Ibid., No. 128, Elliot to Derby, April 4, 1876.

increased, but Andrassy advised the Porte that it should not under any conditions be encouraged to add a single hair's breadth to the concessions which it had already promised.¹ The temporary cessation of hostilities in the provinces thereby ended and the Turks made repeated efforts to supply their beleaguered garrisons with little if any success.

This breakdown of negotiations between the Turks and the insurgents occurred shortly after the general elections to the national chamber in France, and the March 5 returns indicated that France was to be firmly embarked upon the path of republicanism. The French ambassador to St. Petersburg, General Le Flo, was keenly aware of the impact of the electoral results upon the autocratic government of Alexander II, and spent many hours trying to convince the Tsar and his chancellor that republic though the the form might be, France was in conservative hands and would follow a conservative policy.²

Le Flo also noted the first signs of a basic difference in the aims of Russia and Austria-Hungary in the Balkans. The contradictory news from Herzegovina only served to put the Russian chancellor on edge. Gortchakov was further hampered by the insistent demands for action of the Pan-slavists.³ The ultimate effect of the Andrassy Note was to force the hand of General Ignatiev, the Russian ambassador to the Porte, who had been working diligently behind the scenes in Constantinople during the latter half of 1875 to convince Sultan Abdul Aziz that he should undertake a series of reforms in the Balkans under aegis of Russian direction. Ignatiev's position was one not to be envied since he did not have the

¹Ibid., No. 146, Elliot to Derby, April 11, 1876.

²DDF, II, No. 38, Le Flo to Decazes, Mar. 18, 1876.

³Ibid., No. 39, Id. to Id., April 12, 1876.

support of his home foreign office, and his attempts to win the Tsar over to his point of view in October, 1876 had failed. Alexander II was still under the influence of Prince Gortchakov which meant that Russia's official policy would be oriented around the position of the Great Power balance in Europe rather than toward the situation in the Balkan peninsula. Since Ignatiev could not gain support at home, he followed a double policy by trying to establish the pre-eminence of Russian influence at the Porte and at the same time endeavoring to maintain friendly relations with the insurgent movements in the various Balkan areas.¹

This placed the French ambassador, Bourgoing, in a difficult position at the Porte, since he was forced to follow the official French line of wooing the Russian government by supporting the Andrassy Note a la Gortchakov, while at the same time working closely with Sir Henry Elliot, the British ambassador, who was the only pro-Turkish diplomat in Constantinople. Bourgoing performed his cliff-hanging feat by making strong representations in regard to the financial policies of the Porte in accordance with the desires of Elliot,² while making vague statements to Ignatiev about the desires of the French government to alleviate the lot of the Christians under Moslem domination.

Meanwhile the demands of the insurgents to Baron Rodich at the Suttorina conference led to a further separation of Russia and Austria-Hungary. Andrassy notified Russia that the seven demands of the insurgents should be divided into three groups and that only two of the seven warranted any serious discussion. He felt that the concentration of the Turkish troops in garrisons and the right of the Christians to

¹Sumner, p. 146-154.

²See Chapter 8.

bear arms along with the Turks might be matters for negotiation. He totally rejected any territorial grant to Montenegro which had been rumored to be a sufficient inducement to separate the Montenegrins from any joint action with either the insurgents or Serbia in case of war.¹ Andrassy instructed Rodich to notify the insurgent chiefs that their demands were totally unacceptable and that the grants of the Porte in conformance with his note of December 30'th were sufficient. Rodich was to emphasize that the Austrian government would continue to pressure the Porte to make good the demands of the Andrassy Note and nothing else.²

Prince Gortchakov on the other hand believed that the demands of the insurgents should not have been so abruptly put aside. He argued that their counter-demands showed that they were willing for some kind of a peace and that the insurgents had made no demands for territory nor the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. He refused to make a joint demand on Montenegro with Count Andrassy. This refusal meant the period of close cooperation between Russia and Austria to prevent full scale hostilities in the Balkans was finished.³

While European officials were struggling with their game of diplomatic chess by concentrating on the major pieces, the pawns in this struggle were beginning to stir restlessly. Hungarian newspapers began to contain many articles in April reporting that Serbia would go to war against Turkey in the near future. Rumors circulated that the Serbian government had called out all able-bodied men between 20 and 23 years of age. Belgrade dispatches indicated that the government was increasingly

¹Harris, p. 263.

²Turkey No. 3 (1876) No. 131, Buchanan to Derby, April 19, 1876.

³Ibid., No. 151, Loftus to Derby, April 14, 1876.

under the influence of the Omladinists, the war party, and would sooner or later succumb to its desires. Serbia's armed forces were estimated at 100,000 men in the field and a declaration of war on her part was freely predicted for April 20 th.¹

The armistice ended on April 12 and Moukhtar Pasha, the Turkish commander, formed 25 battalions and tried to provision Nicksich through the Douga Pass. On the 14 th, his troops made the Pass, but the next day encountered insurgent opposition and a sally from the garrison in Nicksich also failed. A major battle occurred and the insurgents claimed the victory.² Moukhtar Pasha following the usual pattern of Turkish commanders who had the unpleasant task of reporting failure to His Exalted Highness in the Sublime Porte announced that his defeat had been due to the presence of 7000 Montenegrins with the insurgent forces.³

This immediately touched off far reaching consequences. The Porte announced that it was sending a corps to Scutari in order to keep an eye on the Montenegrins and that the Porte would not accept the demands the insurgents presented to Baron Rodich.⁴ Decazes recognized that this would create a highly volatile situation in view of the Porte's suspicions of Russia's motives and actions in the provinces. He pointed out the divergencies which were becoming more apparent between the views of Vienna and St. Petersburg and urged the French ambassador to Great Britain to

¹Ibid., No. 133 (inclosure), Harris-Gastrell to Buchanan, April 10, 1876.

²Ibid., No. 149, Buchanan to Derby, April 19, 1876. Extract from the Politische Correspondenz.

³Stojanovic, p. 53.

⁴DDF, II, No. 40, Decazes to d'Harcourt, reporting a telegram from Bourgoing of April 17, 1876.

urge London to make some concessions to the desires of the Imperial courts in order to maintain the European concert towards Turkey. He indicated that the financial interests of Great Britain might be sufficient reason for the British to go along in maintaining the united action of the powers.¹

Decazes' view of the gravity of the situation was affirmed by the action of Gortchakov. The Russian chancellor, dressed in uniform, called in the entire diplomatic corps at St. Petersburg and demanded that all the European governments bring pressure on the Porte to call off its projected war on Montenegro (the massing of a corps at Scutari). Gortchakov did not believe that the defeat of the Nischich force had been due to Montenegrins as the Turkish general, Moukhtar Pasha, had claimed, but felt that Moukhtar was only using this as an excuse.²

General Le Flo advised from St. Petersburg that Gortchakov believed Russia was assured of the agreement of Italy, and could count absolutely on France. He observed that relations between Russia and Austria-Hungary had been somewhat strained in recent days, and felt that if necessary, Russia would go it alone in the Balkans.³ This raised the crucial question as to how far the French government should follow the action of Russia if this meant making a choice between Russia and Great Britain. Decazes refused to make the choice and redoubled his efforts to convince the British that they should soften their stand and maintain European unity in the Balkan situation.⁴

¹Ibid.

²Turkey No. 3 (1876), No. 163, Loftus to Derby, April 22, 1876.

³DDF, II, No. 41, Le Flo to Decazes, April 21, 1876.

⁴Ibid.

The uneasiness on the Quai d'Orsay was heightened by Gortchakov's prediction that a Turkish declaration of war on Montenegro would touch off a general war in the Balkans and that Serbia and Greece would join Montenegro at once.¹ Gortchakov denied that Russia had any territorial demands and insisted that all she wanted to do was to protect the Christians in the Ottoman Empire. He inferred that Andrassy would soon recognize the validity of his request that the demands of the insurgents be taken into consideration.² While lamenting publicly that Russia alone could not prevent an outbreak of full-scale war in the Balkans, Gortchakov was privately seeking concerted action of the various European capitals to detain the Turks from launching into a major military action against Montenegro.³

Decazes immediately ordered his representative at Constantinople to associate himself with all demands of the diplomatic corps in favor of peace. He noted later that apparently the diplomatic effort had rendered the desired results in that the Turkish government announced it would maintain an observation corps at Scutari, but that it would not take any offensive action against Montenegro. Decazes felt this change in Turkish policy was due to the joint efforts of Ignatiev and Elliot,⁴ and he was quick to point out the advantages which could accrue by joint cooperation between Russia and Great Britain.

The apparent villain in this war scare of April, 1876, Turkey, announced that she had not made any declaration of war against Montenegro

¹Turkey No. 3 (1876), No. 158, Musurus Pasha to Derby, April 23, 1876.

²Ibid., No. 162, Loftus to Derby, April 20, 1876.

³DDF, II, No. 42, Decazes to de Vogüé, April 23, 1876.

⁴Ibid.

and further that she was not contemplating any such action.¹ To offset this, Prince Nicholas of Montenegro issued a statement a few days later claiming that he had always acted in good faith with the Great Powers but alleging that the continued mistreatment of the Christians in Bosnia and Herzegovina was causing some grave misgivings within his country. His greatest fear was of a religious war between Moslems and Christians breaking out at any moment.²

During this week, Moukhtar Pasha made another attempt to provision the garrison of Nisch and on April 29 he succeeded in reaching the beleaguered fortress with supplies after winning a battle over the insurgents.³ It was clear by the end of April that the Andrassy Note had signally failed in its attempt to solve the Balkan crisis. Turkey was readying her military machine for possible action at any moment. Montenegro was still trying to placate all the powers bringing pressure upon her. Serbia was in the throes of violent political agitation and the Omaladinists were gaining surer control over that nation's policies with each passing day. The insurgents were being aided and abetted by funds from Nicholas, the Pan-slavist committees in Russia, and Russian

¹ Turkey No. 3 (1876), No. 158, Musurus Pasha to Derby, April 23, 1876.

² Ibid., No. 274, Russel to Derby, April 26, 1876. This was a formal statement of the Prince directed to Lord Derby in London originally issued on April 26 but later reissued on May 8. It represented the continuing efforts of Nicholas to play his extremely devious game of trying to be friends to all of the interested parties. During these months he was receiving subsidies from Austria, Russian Pan-slavist groups, and was secretly encouraged by diplomats of most of the Great Powers excepting Great Britain. Elliot claimed that the insurrection was wholly a fabrication of Nicholas and the Serbs, and that it was not indigenous to the provinces themselves. Most of his information from the scene of action came from the British consul, Holmes, who was as markedly pro-Turkish as the British ambassador himself.

³ Ibid., No. 188, Musurus Pasha, April 30, 1876.

agents who were now operating quite openly throughout the entire peninsula. Ignatiev, himself, was beginning a series of intrigues with Hussein Avni Pasha to get rid of the Grand Vizier.¹ Frequent raids across the border from Dalmatia and the Save River were occurring with increasingly strength, and the situation appeared to be getting rapidly out of hand. The Turks did not seem competent to put down the revolt militarily nor to indicate any guarantees of reforms which the insurgents would be willing to accept. Abdul Aziz was convinced through the efforts of Server Pasha, an accomplished liar, that thanks to Server's administration in the provinces, there was no longer either rebel or refugee in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and that such trouble as still persisted was exclusively the work of adventurers from neighboring areas.²

Despite the glowing assurances of his administrator on the scene, the early days of May saw the conflict spreading still further. Several villages in Bulgaria were fired by insurgents who were apparently Bulgarians led by Serbians. The insurgents aimed at distracting the Turks and weakening the Sultan's military action in Herzegovina.³ At the same time, the British ambassador to Constantinople reported that feeling in the Turkish capital was rising, tempers were flaring, and that Moslems and Christians alike were buying arms for self-defense. The Softas (students of the Koran) numbering between five and six thousand were deemed to be the worst offenders in stimulating the unrest of the Moslem population. Sir Henry Elliot recommended that the British fleet at Jaffa

¹Turkey No. 3, Nos. 2, 3, 16, 17, 18, 28, and 29. Reports from British consuls located in the provinces; Harris, p. 236.

²Harris, p. 236.

³Turkey No. 3 (1876) Elliot to Derby, May 6, 1876.

be moved to Besika Bay to protect Christian civilians in the event of further disturbances.¹

This growing tension in the Balkans and its repercussions throughout Europe prompted Bismarck to call a conference in Berlin for his partners in the Dreikaiserbund. The obvious deterioration in the relations between Russia and Austria-Hungary goaded him into action despite his protestations of disinterest in Balkan affairs.

To give added weight to the urgency of Bismarck's proposal, an incident occurred on May 6 which greatly increased the possibility of an all-out religious war. A young girl decided to change her faith from Christian to Moslem and, as was necessary in such cases, left her rural home to come to Salonika to make her statement before the proper officials. When she got off the train in Salonika, an enraged mob of Christians seized the girl and took her to the house of a nearby Christian. A Moslem crowd soon assembled and proceeded to the residence of the governor demanding the restoration of the girl. The Moslem band gathered in a mosque and the German and French consuls entered to reason with the mob. Despite the efforts of the governor to let them out safely, they were beaten and killed by the mob. The girl involved was later directed to return to her home.²

The reaction to the news from France and Germany was what one would expect. Both Bourgoing and Prince Reuss, the German ambassador,

¹Ibid., No. 255, Elliot to Derby, May 6, 1876; No. 256, May 9, 1876.

²Turkey No. 4 (1876), No. 1, Musurus Pasha to Derby, May 7, 1876. The house to which the young girl had been taken was that of the American consul who was either a Greek or Bulgarian by nationality. No. 13, Elliot to Derby, May 7, 1876. M. Moulin was the French consul and Henry Abbott, the German consul. No. 30, May 10, 1876.

immediately demanded satisfaction for the crime.¹ Decazes notified his ambassador to adhere closely with his German colleague in all matters. Decazes asserted that France would not be satisfied with mere regrets from the Turkish government. He tersely commented that two frigates and a dispatch boat of the Mediterranean squadron would leave that night for Salonika.²

In his next dispatch after evaluating the possible repercussions of the 'Crime of Salonika', Decazes indicated his belief that the assassinations did not change the basic diplomatic lines laid down previously. He felt that there was no definite evidence of a Moslem holy war in the making against all Christians, but that this was a possible danger for the future. He thought that the murders pointed up the necessity of finding some new basis for the solution of the struggle between the insurgents and the Porte. The last propositions of the Austro-Hungarian government were no longer considered sufficient by the leaders of the insurrection, while the Turks judged the rebel counter propositions as inadmissible.³

Looking forward to the Berlin conference between the three Imperial powers, Decazes asserted the imperative need of maintaining all avenues open for a peaceful settlement. France was firmly opposed to any military occupation of Herzegovina by either Russia or Austria-Hungary, separately or jointly, and Decazes felt sure that the idea of an occupation would be discussed at the meeting in the German capital.⁴

¹DDF, II, No. 46, Bourgoing to Decazes, May 7, 1876.

²Ibid., No. 47, Decazes to Bourgoing, May 8, 1876.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

The other powers readily joined French and German demands on the Porte for prompt punishment of the assassins. Her Majesty's Ship Bittern arrived in Salonika on May 9 to join the French gun-vessel, Gladiateur. A Russian frigate was expected on the next day, two Italian frigates on the 12th, and an Austro-Hungarian ironclad on the 14th.¹ Thus, the Great Powers asserted their solidarity with a material demonstration which made a definite impression on the Porte.

The Salonika affair increased the prevailing uneasiness in Constantinople, and the readiness of the Porte to do all that it could to atone for the assassinations only further incensed the Turkish population. The situation was described by observers as now approaching fever pitch and the lives of Christians were placed in greatest jeopardy. The unpopularity of the Sultan and of Mahmoud Pasha, coupled with the universal distress of the country arising from its poor financial status, gave rise to a deep-seated discontent among the people. The majority of the Turks were frustrated by the long-continued insurrection, and felt that the Great Powers had followed a one-sided policy in helping the insurgents while at the same time bringing pressure upon the Porte to prevent it from attacking the source of the revolt by efficacious measures.²

Due to the high pitch of excitement in Constantinople, diplomats there were hopeful that the Berlin conference would not make demands upon the Porte which would be impossible for the Turks to put into effect. The general sentiment was that if the Imperial powers insisted on proposals which the Porte would resist, the lives of Christians in Constantinople

¹Turkey No. 4, No. 31, Consul J. E. Blunt to Derby, May 9, 1876.

²Turkey No. 3 (1876), No. 288, Elliot to Derby, May 12, 1876. Elliot was quoting from local newspapers and Turkish officials.

would be placed in immediate jeopardy.¹

The Softas demonstrated vociferously before the Sultan demanding the removal of Mahmoud Pasha as Grand Vizier. Abdul Aziz acquiesced to their demands and Mahmoud's dismissal seemed to quiet the protests and uneasiness for the time being. The long range outcome of this incident, however, was the deposition of the Sultan himself.²

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

THE SPREAD OF HOSTILITIES IN THE BALKANS

Amidst these momentous developments Andrassy, Gortchakov, and Bismarck convened a conference in Berlin in May, 1876. Decazes was highly suspicious and concerned over the possible agreements that might be undertaken at Berlin. Prior to the Tsar's departure for Berlin, Decazes advised General Le Flo to cultivate the best rapport possible with him. Le Flo was to remind the Tsar of the sincere and undying sentiment of loyalty on the part of the French for the part that Russia had played the previous year during the War Scare. He was to pledge that France would cooperate with Russia's aims in the Balkans and that Russia stood first with France in the general European diplomatic scene.¹

The Berlin Memorandum which was completed on May 12, 1876 marked a victory for Andrassy in that the strong demands of Gortchakov for some form of partition of Turkey and the granting of autonomy to the insurgent provinces were set aside in favor of an extension of the original Andrassy Note of December 30, 1875.² Briefly the Berlin Memorandum called for an armistice of two months in order to negotiate peace between the insurgents and the Porte. The Turkish government was to provide for the refugees through a mixed commission with a Christian as its president. The Turkish troops were to be concentrated in a few places and the Christians were to

¹DDE, II, No. 45, Decazes to Le Flo, May 6, 1876.

²Stojanovic, p. 61; Langer, p. 81.

be permitted to keep their arms. The consuls of the Great Powers were to supervise the installation of the reforms and the return of the refugees.¹

The Berlin Note was stillborn as far as making any headway in the settlement of the Eastern crisis, but it did cause some diplomatic repercussions which presented grave problems for France. M. Gontaut-Biron, French ambassador to Berlin, indicated his doubts as to the efficacy of the demands, when he notified his superior of the memorandum.² Despite this warning from his minister, Decazes presented the note to the French Council which adopted it at once, and Decazes lost no time in advising Berlin of French acquiescence.³

At the same time, he wanted to be kept directly informed as to how the English cabinet received the dispositions of the Berlin demands. He obviously felt that Great Britain would go along with the general concert as his rapid approval indicated.⁴ When the approval of Great Britain was not forthcoming, Decazes realized that his efforts at keeping on good terms with the 'wing' powers of Europe were in severe jeopardy. Decazes complained to Lord Adams, the British ambassador to Paris, that he was deeply grieved that the British government would not agree to the Berlin Note. He thought that the armistice would be as advantageous to the Sublime Porte as to the insurgents, if not more so. He pointed out to Lord Adams that the Turkish war department was certainly better organized than the insurgents' loose confederation, and that therefore the Turks could put the two months armistice to better use in reorganizing their military effort.

¹Langer, p. 81-82.

²DDF, II, No. 51, Gontaut-Biron to Decazes, May 13, 1876.

³Ibid., No. 52, Decazes to Gontaut-Biron, May 14, 1876.

⁴Ibid., No. 53, Decazes to ambassadors, May 14, 1876.

He argued that the cost of paying for the return of the refugees would be far less than the British had stated in their objections to the Berlin Memorandum, and that the insurrection was not a religious one in its inception between Christian and Moslem, but had been caused by agrarian discontent, bad harvests, and extremely poor and cruel Turkish administration. Decazes tried to impress the British with his view that if the fighting in the provinces were allowed to continue one after another of the Balkan nations would be drawn into the fray and would involve all of Europe.¹

The Turks expressed deep regret and bitter discouragement over the contents of the memorandum of which they had been unofficially advised. They were opposed to letting both sides keep their arms and reiterated that they could not go beyond the agreement to the requests of the Andrassy Note.² Decazes tried to persuade the Grand Vizier and Raschid Pasha to bring pressure upon Great Britain by having Gourgoing argue that Britain would be rendering greater service by taking an active part in the deliberations rather than abstaining from them.³ While the British were willing to go along with the French and German demands over the matter of the assassinations and reparations,⁴ they were not willing to change their stand on the Berlin Note. Now fully aware of the possible damage to the position of France if forced to choose between Russia and Great Britain, Decazes made one final effort by appealing to Andrassy to postpone the

¹Turkey No. 3 (1876) No. 292, Adams to Derby, May 22, 1876.

²Ibid., No. 290, Musurus Pasha to Derby, May 21, 1876.

³DDF, II, No. 67, Decazes to Bourgoing, May 26, 1876.

⁴Turkey No. 4 (1876), No. 38, Derby to Elliot, May 25, 1876.

official presentation of the Memorandum to the Porte while he engineered a pressing plea to the British cabinet.¹ He prepared the groundwork for this last effort by advising Adams that he had refused a telegram from Russia asking for the Five Powers to go it alone since Great Britain had refused. Decazes said that he intended to wait hoping that perhaps Great Britain would change her mind.² His true views were reflected in a message to the French ambassador to London the next month when he said: "If the British and Russians can get together and re-establish the concord of the six powers on the basis of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire and the maintenance of the general peace we will be very happy."³ That Decazes would be very happy was probably the understatement of that entire year. He realized the difficulty of his position since the divergent opinions of Great Britain and Russia over the Berlin Memorandum presented the French with a choice of supporting one or the other. Decazes, feeling that France needed both powers to offset the menace across the Rhine, was looking for a miracle to extricate himself from making such a fateful decision. The British ambassador to Paris interpreted the general feeling among pro-British Frenchmen that Britain had been right in refusing to agree to the Berlin Note. They blamed the precipitate action of the French government for the current position of France.⁴

Fortunately for the French foreign minister, the miracle did occur. On May 30, 1876, it was announced that Abdul Aziz had been deposed and

¹Turkey No. 3, (1876), No. 300, Adams to Derby, May 24, 1876.

²Ibid., No. 294, Adams to Derby, May 22, 1876.

³DDF, II, No. 69, Decazes to d'Harcourt, June 21, 1876.

⁴Turkey No. 3 (1876), No. 325, Adams to Derby, May 30, 1876.

that Murad, his nephew, had been proclaimed as the new Sultan.¹ The change was not due to the international situation in which Turkey found herself, but was rather the result of a reforming movement primarily concerned with domestic problems. The reform party was headed by Midhat Pasha whose candidacy for the position of Grand Vizier had been opposed by the Sultan's harem the previous year. The Sultan's appointment of Mahmud Pasha was bitterly opposed by the reformist groups and Midhat Pasha had become their leader by the spring of 1876. These reformist groups had been mainly responsible for the removal of Abdul Aziz since they were convinced that he would not make any major reforms in his corruption-ridden regime.²

The day of the deposition of Abdul Aziz was the date for the official presentation of the Berlin Memorandum to the Porte. Since Britain was no longer joined to the general European concert, Decazes was now thoroughly uncomfortable and he utilized the removal of Aziz to withdraw French approval of the Berlin Memorandum. Decazes hoped to use the opportunity afforded him by the installation of a new Sultan to bring Great Britain back into the European concert. He immediately inquired of the British government as to its views on the Turkish change of government as an opening wedge to get Great Britain to draw closer to the other powers in her Turkish policy.³

At the same time, he instructed Bourgoing to await further orders before acting on the Berlin Memorandum, and on June 1, 1876 he told his

¹Sir Edwin Pears, Life of Abdul Hamid (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1917) p. 38.

²Ibid., p. 38-39.

³Harris, p. 336; Turkey No. 3 (1876) No. 351, Adams to Derby, May 31, 1876.

ambassador to enter into semi-official relations with the new government at the Porte.¹ Decazes completely rejected any idea of recognizing the Sultan except through the joint action of the major powers unless Great Britain was willing to go along. He proposed to the Imperial courts that they defer the Berlin Note until regular official relations had been established with the new Turkish regime and succeeded in getting Andrassy to convince both Bismarck and Gortchakov to agree to this policy.²

With this new lease on life, Decazes advised the Porte that France favored an armistice in the Balkan fighting at once and then direct negotiations between the Turkish government and the insurgents on one hand, and between Turkey and Montenegro on the other.³ Decazes tried to convince the British ambassador that the assumption of power by a new Sultan would actually simplify the Eastern Question rather than complicate it further.⁴ The precipitate action of Decazes in affording recognition to the new Sultan, and his initiative in wooing Great Britain and urging the Porte to call an armistice was not without consequences. Gortchakov indicated at once the displeasure of the Russian government over the French action, and made a plea for the dispatch of the French fleet to Turkish waters.⁵ This proposal was made with little hope of French acceptance, but it did reflect Gortchakov's awareness that the previously intimate relationship between his country and France had received a severe jolt.

¹Harris, p. 337-338.

²Ibid.

³Turkey No. 3 (1876) No. 351, Adams to Derby, May 31, 1876.

⁴Ibid., No. 353, Id. to Id., May 31, 1876.

⁵DDF, II, No. 59, Gontaut-Biron to Decazes, June 2, 1876.

Jarring as the French action was to the Russian chancellor's nerves, the insistent refusal of Great Britain to join in any European collective action caused him still deeper unrest. Gortchakov realized that with France temporarily estranged and Great Britain standing aloof, he was without any lever to work against the interests of Andrassy. The Russian drive to secure autonomy for the provinces in the Balkans and perhaps some territorial gains for Montenegro was now placed in jeopardy. In addition, the deposition of Aziz was generally considered to be a defeat for Russian diplomacy inasmuch as General Ignatiev had had increasing influence upon the Sultan. The Tsar did not intend that all should be lost through the game of musical chairs in the Sublime Porte, and he advised the French that if Great Britain persisted in her present state of mind, that the other powers were going to press their program of reforms without her.¹

Still thinking in terms of six rather than of five Great Power pressure, Decazes suggested on June 5 that the installation of Murad V called for a complete reappraisal of the whole problem in the Balkans. He recommended that the Berlin Note should be adjourned, its contents modified, and if Great Britain still persisted in her isolated position the five Great Powers would reaffirm the identity of aims in restoring law and order in the Balkan peninsula.² By this time, the new Sultan had been officially recognized by the Great Powers and under the influence of Midhat Pasha had granted an armistice of six weeks.³

Following this step, Murad sent messages to the Imperial Commissioner

¹Ibid., No. 60, Decazes to Gontaut-Biron, June 3 and 5, 1876.

²Ibid., No. 62, Gontaut-Biron to Decazes, June 6, 1876; Harris, p. 342.

³Stojanovic, p. 67.

in Bosnia and Herzegovina ordering them to accord a full amnesty to all the insurgents. They were to be allowed an interval of six weeks from June 5 to return to their homes, and to expose their complaints and demands to the local authorities. All military preparations and operations on both sides were to be suspended during the armistice period.¹ Any efforts on the part of the government at the Porte to overcome the impetus of the forces at work in the Balkans, however, were doomed to failure. The insurgent forces were growing in numbers and more significantly they were receiving a steadily increasing amount of support from outside powers. General Mikhail Grigorovich Tcherniaieff, a former commander of the Russian army, was now in the Balkans representing the "Russki Mir" which was the chief organ of the Pan-slavist party in Russia. He toured the embattled areas and talked in grandiose terms of the inevitability of the rapid end of Turkish rule. He failed on many occasions to indicate clearly that he was no longer officially connected with his home government and many rebels felt that his presence assured them of future Russian military aid.² Information received in Paris and London indicated that shipments of arms and munitions destined for Montenegro were being landed at Cattaro, and apparently the Austrian government was unable to lay its hands on Kara-georgevich who flitted back and forth across the border between Austrian Croatia and the rebellious provinces.³

The tension in the atmosphere was heightened by the arrival of more units of the French fleet and German ironclads at Salonika. These ships

¹Turkey No. 3 (1876) No. 381, Musurus Pasha to Derby, June 5, 1876.

²Ibid., No. 498, Loftus to Derby, June 1, 1876.

³Ibid., No. 423, Derby to Buchanan, June 13, 1876.

threatened the Turks with bombardment should any further violence occur.¹ Ever mindful of the need for British support, Decazes assured London that the French fleet would act in accordance with the Treaties of 1841, 1845, and 1871 respecting the Straits.² Despite the warm comments about Anglo-French unity of action in which Decazes couched his message, the London foreign office regarded the two new French drafts of the Berlin Memorandum as merely rehashings and refused to give them any serious consideration.³

In contrast to the French policy of desperately seeking agreement with Great Britain, even at the expense of alienating the Russians, Prince Gortchakov advised France of British efforts to effect a working agreement solely between Russia and Great Britain. The Russian government rejected this British approach out of hand, and accused the British of trying to separate Russia, Austria-Hungary, and France.⁴ Decazes viewed this effort of Derby's as being indicative of the British desire to re-enter the general area of the European diplomatic concert, but he was as puzzled as his Russian informant, Prince Orloff, as to Lord Derby's statement that Great Britain desired to wait another month until the situation in the Balkans became clearer.⁵ Apparently the British felt that as long as the foreign powers supported the insurgents on one hand and made demands on the Porte at the same time, that there was little that could be done to stop the insurrection.⁶ Derby felt that the insurgents were fighting for

¹Turkey No. 4 (1876) No. 33, Russell to Derby, May 22, 1876.

²Turkey No. 3 (1876) No. 419, Decazes to Lord Lyons, June 10, 1876.

³Harris, p. 343.

⁴DDF, II, No. 69, Decazes to d'Harcourt, June 21, 1876.

⁵Ibid. This statement was made on June 14, 1876.

⁶Turkey No. 3 (1876) No. 428, Derby to Lyons, June 14, 1876.

independence or at least autonomy rather than for administrative reforms and that since the Porte was not willing to grant the former, the situation was hopeless and there was nothing that the Great Powers could do to resolve the dilemma.¹

Any hopes of serious reform from the regime of Murad V were given a body blow on June 15 when the Circassian soldier, Cherkess Hassan, a brother of a lady of the harem of the deposed Aziz, rushed into a room with revolvers blazing and killed the Turkish minister of war, Raschid Pasha, and wounded two other high officials.² This unfortunate incident only served to convince the rebels that there was no adequate government in Constantinople and they hastened to make preparations for their major struggle.

When the news of the assassination reached Paris, Decazes was greatly discouraged. He believed that speedy pacification of the troubles in Bosnia and Herzegovina could be reached only through the joint action of the six Great Powers. In his view, the only way that hostilities could be brought to a halt was for the Great Powers to make it crystal clear to both the insurgents and the Porte that there was complete accord between the Great Powers. (Italics mine) Decazes stated repeatedly that the form of this concert of the Great Powers was inconsequential to him, but that it must be an action of all six.³ As the news from the Near East trickled in concerning the military build-up, his hopes for a peaceful solution declined in direct ratio. He observed that Serbia had already called up

¹ Ibid., No. 427, Derby to Loftus, June 14, 1876.

² Pears, p. 40; Turkey No. 3 (1876) No. 453, Elliot to Derby, June 16, 1876.

³ Turkey No. 3 (1876) No. 460, Lyons to Derby, June 16, 1876.

nearly 60,000 militiamen and that the most Turkey could muster for action in the Balkans was about two-thirds that number.¹

His worst fears were realized on June 28 when Prince Milan rejoined his army, and Serbia declared war on Turkey.² The next day, Prince Nicholas took Montenegro into the fray and what had been a mere rebellion now became a full-fledged Balkan war. Decazes immediately made strong representations to Prince Milan about the crisis. He telegraphed the French consul in Belgrade to bring pressure on the Serbian Prince to desist from his military undertaking at once. Decazes was still hopeful that a calamity could be averted.³

The diplomatic game of chess was in such a jumble in June, 1876 that the very basis of Decazes's actions-fear of being isolated by the three Imperial Powers-was at the same time responsible for an improvement of Franco-German and Franco-Austrian relations. The French efforts to include Great Britain with the Berlin Memorandum had caused some dampening of Franco-Russian relations, but Andrassy realized that the French refusal

¹Ibid., No. 486, Lyons to Derby, June 23, 1876. Another matter that was giving Decazes some worry at this time was the light sentence which had been inflicted upon some of the Turkish officials for their negligence in the Salonika murders. He was particularly incensed that the Turkish governor had been treated extremely well. Conscious of the delicacy of the matter at this time, he appointed M. Mallet, a nephew of M. Charles Mallet, the banker, to be the new French consul at Salonika. Mallet had seen previous service at Adrianople and Rustchik, and was well acquainted with Turkey and the elements of Bulgarians and Greeks to which a large part of the population of Salonika belonged. Turkey No. 4 (1876) Lyons to Derby, No. 74, June 23, 1876.

²DDF, II, No. 70, Gontaut-Biron to Decazes, June 28, 1876. The Kaiser felt that when the Serbs were beaten the moment would arrive for all the Great Powers to intervene. He advised Gontaut-Biron that he appreciated French efforts to avoid bloodshed which may have been of some consolation to Decazes.

³Turkey No. 3 (1876) No. 530, Lyons to Derby, June 29, 1876.

to acquiesce to a program of only five powers could be used to pressure Russia into relenting upon her demands for autonomy for the insurgent provinces. Both the Austrians and the German Emperor indicated their approval of Decazes's efforts to keep the peace.¹ The German approval was obviously forthcoming since the Kaiser and his chancellor both realized the explosiveness of the divergent views between their allies.

It has been suggested by some writers that the failure of the Berlin Note changed the situation in the Balkans and paved the way for the spread of the conflict.² While it is true that the failure of the Great Powers to unite in the program of the Berlin Note must have created an image in both the Turkish and insurgent quarters that there would be little to fear from the Concert of Europe, there were many other factors at work which would have brought the situation in the Balkans into open warfare. The murder of the foreign consuls at Salonika, the assassination of Turkish officials in Constantinople, the deposition and murder of Abdul Aziz, were omens of a rising tide of Turkish nationalism. The terrible episode of the Bulgarian massacres in May, 1876 although unknown to the West for at least one month had been carried out by overenthusiastic Bashi-Bazouks employed by the Turkish government hard-pressed for regular troops. The war fever was rising in Constantinople in the spring of 1876, and its heat and intensity approached that of a 'holy war' of Moslem against Christian.

While the deposition of Abdul Aziz evinced a decline in the influence of General Ignatiev at the Sublime Porte, the Pan-slavist crusade was being

¹DDF, II, No. 63, De Vogüé to Decazes; No. 70, Gontaut-Biron to Decazes, June 28, 1876.

²Langer, p. 83; Stojanovic, p. 73.

strengthened by the actions of Russian agents in the Balkans. General Tcherniaeff was made commander-in-chief of the Serbian army late in June and declared: "We are fighting for the sacred idea of Slavdom ... Behind us stands Russia ... If we are standing in blood to our shoulders, and unable to bring freedom to our land, the iron hand of Russia will do it for us."¹ The Moscow Slavonic Benevolent Committee supported nearly two thousand volunteers from Russia and the number of Russians operating in the Serbian army approached five thousand.² In addition to men, the Pan-slavic societies in Russia were pouring large sums of money into Serbia and Montenegro during 1876.³ These developments increased the support of the insurgents and gradually effected a change in Russian policy.

In view of these events, it would seem that regardless of the efforts of the Great Powers officially to solve the Balkan tangle, violence would spread. When the Serbs and the Montenegrins openly declared war, Russia requested the other powers to maintain neutrality, obviously thinking that the insurgents would win. Decazes accepted this proposal at once for his government, but Great Britain hedged in her statement appearing fearful of what the other powers might propose.⁴ Austria refused outright to approve such a policy since she could not afford to have an enlarged Serbia at her southern frontier. This disagreement between Russia and Austria resulted in the famous conclave at Reichstadt on July 8, where apparently the two interested parties agreed to maintain neutrality in the conflict. They also appropriated segments of territory to themselves in the event of an

¹Fischel, p. 412-413.

²Sumner, p. 189-190. Quoting records of the society by Aksakov.

³Langer, p. 91.

⁴Stojanovic, p. 73-74.

insurgent victory, and promised to intervene to prevent reprisals in the case of a Turkish victory.¹

Just prior to his departure for Reichstadt, Andrassy advised the French ambassador to Vienna that he would not commit himself to any program in the Balkans which would take into account a victory on either side. Both the Quai d'Orsay and the Ballplatz had received a suggestion from Lord Derby after the outbreak of hostilities to the effect that in the event of an insurgent victory, Bosnia and Herzegovina would receive autonomous status, and in case of defeat, the two provinces would receive an administrative establishment similar to that of Crete.² Andrassy refused to commit himself to such a program arguing that an announcement to that effect would stimulate further uprisings in Bulgaria. Andrassy indicated that at the present hour he wanted merely to assure the neutrality of Europe in the Balkan struggle. For the future he wanted to be free of any solid commitments which might be of an embarrassing nature in the light of the uncertainties of the Balkans.³ The official pronouncement of the Reichstadt agreement written by Gortchakov reflected the desires of Andrassy toward this end.⁴

Upon receiving the British proposals Decazes emphasized to the Russians that these sentiments from London indicated that the British

¹Ibid., p. 75; Langer, p. 92-93. The fact that both Andrassy and Gortchakov later reported different versions of their agreement has resulted in much acrimonious debate.

²DDF, II, No. 72, de Vogüé to Decazes, July 7, 1876.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., No. 74, de Vogüé to Decazes, July 11, 1876. "The two emperors separated with the most cordial understanding, proclaiming the principal of non-intervention at the present time. They reserve to themselves a future entente with the great Christian powers if the circumstances demonstrate the necessity."

government was now taking an active part in Balkan affairs. He accepted these suggestions as constituting an opening wedge with which to once again gain British support for a general European concert in Balkan matters.¹ Andrassy shrewdly guessed that regardless of what France or any other continental power did, Great Britain would want to be in on the denouement of the crisis. To him, the British proposal was just a gesture to keep that power in the running pending future developments.²

Following the Reichstadt meeting between the august heads of two members of the Dreikaiserbund, Franz Joseph scheduled a meeting with Kaiser Wilhelm at Salzburg to keep Germany in touch with the diplomatic developments.³ Certainly neither Franz Joseph nor Andrassy were concerned about the possibility of German support for their Balkan policy. Bismarck had reiterated his neutral stand not only to the Austrian government on several occasions, but prior to the visit of the Austrian Emperor, he remarked to the French ambassador that he was not directly interested in the Eastern Question so long as Russia and Austria-Hungary got along well together. He showed a definite preference for the ideas of Andrassy and his policies throughout the entire year.⁴

The necessity of Austria maintaining close ties with Germany was apparent to Decazes who realized that the possibility of an insurgent victory resulting in the creation of autonomous governments in Bosnia and Herzegovina was the real difficulty for Andrassy. The continuous

¹Ibid., No. 71, Decazes to Le Flo, July 6, 1876; Turkey No. 3 (1876) No. 529, Buchanan to Derby, July 10, 1876.

²Ibid., No. 74, de Vogüé to Decazes, July 11, 1876.

³Turkey No. 3 (1876) No. 529, Buchanan to Derby, July 10, 1876.

⁴DDF, II, No. 76, Gontaut-Biron to Decazes, July 18, 1876.

insistence of Austria-Hungary that the revolt be squelched and guarantees be given to the Christian populations stemmed from the basic fear that the polyglot Dual Monarchy envisioned from the formation of new Slavic areas on its borders. Andrassy, himself a Hungarian nobleman, was readily aware of this danger and continually fought off the militant advice given to his Emperor by the chiefs of staff in Vienna. Bismarck's knowledge of the Austrian internal political situation explains his preference for Andrassy's line of action. The German chancellor was convinced that, if the military staff gained the upper hand in Vienna, Austrian troops would soon move into the Balkans. Such a development would result in Russian military intervention to the detriment of the alliance between the three Imperial Courts.¹ Decazes welcomed the situation as being pure gain for France in that the Balkan crisis would put a severe strain on the friendly understanding between Vienna and St. Petersburg.²

Since he had jarred the cordiality existing between Russia and France late in May by refusing to approve the Berlin Memorandum after Abdul Aziz had been deposed, Decazes considered the Austro-Russian conflict of interests as serving the interests of France. If Russia were to find Austria and Germany opposed to her aims in the Balkans, she would overlook the temporary French indiscretion and draw nearer to France. While Decazes was playing a passive role in regard to the negotiations between the three Imperial Courts in July, he stood to gain thereby. At the same time, he was continuing his efforts to influence British official opinion to take stronger measures in the Balkan struggle.

¹Langer, p. 79 citing unpublished dispatch of Lord Russell.

²DDF, II, No. 75, Decazes to d'Harcourt, July 12, 1876.

To Lord Lyons, the British ambassador to Paris, Decazes emphasized the great concern in France over Turkish affairs. He suggested that Bismarck might bring Austria and Russia to blows which would dangerously threaten French security. It is doubtful whether Lyons was taken in by this piece of bait dangled before him by Decazes, but the British ambassador correctly surmised the basic aim of France was to maintain good relations between Britain and Russia. He felt that Decazes had acted with great diligence in trying to circumvent the troubles in Turkey and that his policy had contributed to the maintenance of the peace in Europe.¹

The problem Decazes faced in trying to establish good relations between Great Britain and Russia was a difficult one. The British were convinced that Serbia would have never declared war upon Turkey unless she had been aided and abetted by Russian agents. Disraeli pointed to the large numbers of Russian volunteers in the Serbian army and to the leadership of General Tchernaiieff as evidence of Russian intrigue in Belgrade. The conversation in high circles in London tended in the direction of debating when, not whether to go to war with Russia.² Disraeli had bragged near the end of May that the British refusal to accede to the Berlin Memorandum had prevented Russian occupation of Constantinople.³

This sentiment in itself precluded any success of diplomatic pressure from the French foreign minister, but on June 23, 1876 a London newspaper published the first account of the Bulgarian atrocities at the

¹Harris, p. 412-413.

²W. F. Monypenny and G. E. Buckle, The Life of Benjamin Disraeli (New York and London: Macmillan Co., 1920) Vol. II, 906.

³Ibid., p. 902.

hands of the Turks.¹ Within two weeks sufficient outcry was raised that the British government dispatched Sir Walter Baring to investigate the authenticity of these reports. During the next few months, the Baring Reports gave credence to the first messages concerning the massacres and each detailed account served to push British public opinion more strongly against its government's policy of lending support to the now infamous Turkish government.²

The result of these disclosures was an almost complete reversal of British policy during the latter half of 1876. Gladstone's pamphlet, Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East, indirectly attacked the Disraeli government for blocking Russia's moves against the Turks and raised British public animosity against the Ottoman Empire to a near fever pitch.³ Given this big assist by events entirely beyond his control, Decazes hoped to bring Russia and Great Britain closer together. He now sought to further identify his policy with the British by ordering his ambassador to the Porte to make strong representations concerning the Bulgarian episode. Bourgoing relayed the message to the Ottoman government that French public opinion was strongly aroused and that the Porte should make immediate amends for the actions of the Bashi-Bazouks and the Circassians.⁴

¹ J. A. R. Marriott, The Eastern Question, An Historical Study in European Diplomacy (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1917) p. 329.

² Ibid., p. 330. The Baring Reports are contained in Volume XCI (1877) British Session Papers. His conclusions were that approximately 12,000 Christians had been killed by Turkish irregulars, although not without some provocations from the Bulgarians.

³ Langer, p. 94. Langer cites as further reason for anti-Turkish feeling in Britain the failure of the Ottoman government to maintain its interests payments on the bonds held by British and French investors.

⁴ DDF, II, No. 77, Decazes to Bourgoing, July 20, 1876.

It was typical of the Turkish government to upset the diplomatic timetable of the Great Powers throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century, and the summer of 1876 proved to be no exception. The disclosures of the Bulgarian atrocities brought the Great Powers of Europe together in a common cause to wrest genuine guarantees for the Christians in the Ottoman Empire from the Turkish government. Support and sympathy for the insurgents, Serbia, and Montenegro were widespread, but unfortunately their forces were no match for the regular troops of the Turkish army. Tcherniaieff had unwisely divided the Serbian forces early in July, and within one month they were reeling back into Serbia after suffering one defeat after another.

Since the insurgents had been defeated, there was nothing that the Great Powers could do now but to try and obtain a cessation of hostilities. Disraeli felt that the time had come for France and Great Britain to step forward and prevent further useless shedding of blood.¹ On August 16, the British suggested to Prince Milan of Serbia that he make a formal appeal to the Great Powers for an end to the hostilities.² Decazes at once seconded the British suggestion and advised Serbia that France would be willing to accept such an appeal.³ Actually, Decazes had sounded out the Austrian government a week earlier as to whether it would be disposed to take the initiative in bringing about an armistice.⁴

After some days of delay, Prince Milan agreed to the British suggestion and asked for the good offices of the Great Powers to establish

¹Ibid., No. 79, M. Gavard to Decazes, Aug. 8, 1876.

²Ibid.

³Turkey No. 1 (1877) No. 66, White to Derby, Aug. 16, 1876.

⁴Ibid., No. 9, Derby to Buchanan, Aug. 8, 1876.

the peace.¹ Decazes realized the difficulties the Serbian ruler had had in overcoming the bellicose attitude of his cabinet and expressed the hope that the Porte would take his position into account when it considered the proposals of the Powers for a suspension of the hostilities. He ordered Bourgoing to join in the demands of the Great Powers on the Porte and thought it best for the Powers to act in concert on this matter.²

While the Great Powers were presenting their demands for a suspension of hostilities to the Porte, public opinion in the two nations most vital to France, Great Britain and Russia, was becoming thoroughly aroused. On August 28, just two days after the presentation of the demands of the Powers to Turkey, Decazes received disquieting news from St. Petersburg. General Le Flo reported that:³

The situation remains serious. It is now that the contrary interests and views are manifesting themselves. There must be an armistice and at all costs and at once, and a conference as soon as possible without which the worst might happen. You have no idea of the Slav agitation, growing stronger each day and to which the departure of the Tsar will leave a wide open field. The general sentiment is taking the serious character and presents a great danger; any hesitation on the part of the Porte and the Powers will be fatal perhaps; there is not a day to lose. For us, this is perhaps the supreme moment. We must sustain Russia frankly, sincerely, and without equivocation. In so doing we can assure ourselves of establishing the first major landmark of another alliance which is the sole means upon which we can count. We are certain of the Tsar's unselfishness, of his loyalty, and we will be serving a holy Christian human cause.

The next day, Count Schouvaloff advised the French ambassador in London that the Tsar was determined to relieve Europe of the pillaging and

¹DDF, II, No. 79, Decazes to ambassadors, Aug. 26, 1876.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., No. 80, Le Flo to Decazes, Aug. 28, 1876.

cupidity of the Turks despite the cost in lives and money of a war.¹

Decazes reacted to these developments by instructing Bourgoing to emphasize the necessity of obtaining a suspension of hostilities and at the same time extended the area of cease-fire to include Montenegro. He thought that since the Turks were not doing so well in the latter area its inclusion would make the armistice more palatable to them.² Apparently none of the ambassadors in Constantinople had received instructions concerning Montenegro and Decazes's suggestion was accepted by the other members of the diplomatic entourage.³

The pressure brought to bear upon the Porte to yield to the demands for a suspension of hostilities was not in the form of identical notes from the Great Powers, but the representatives of the Powers made similar oral appeals. France and Great Britain probably worked more closely than the others. Sir Henry Elliot proposed that the Porte should grant an armistice to include all combatants which would be of not less than one month duration.⁴

In the midst of the diplomatic efforts at Constantinople, the unpredictable Turks deposed Murad V on August 31, 1876 and installed Abdul Hamid II as the new Sultan. Murad had apparently deteriorated mentally since the murder of his uncle, the previous sultan. It was generally understood behind the scenes that the change in government had been sponsored by Midhat Pasha, the leader of the reform group in Turkish official circles. Abdul Hamid had promised to follow Midhat's policies of

¹Ibid., No. 81, d'Harcourt to Decazes, Aug. 29, 1876.

²Ibid., No. 82, Decazes to Bourgoing, Aug. 30, 1876; Turkey No. 1 (1877) No. 111, Lyons to Derby, Aug. 28, 1876.

³Ibid., No. 110, Lyons to Derby, Aug. 29, 1876.

⁴Ibid., No. 152, Id. to Id., Sept. 2, 1876.

granting reforms in order to gain the throne.¹

The new Sultan did not leave Europe in suspense long as to his views upon the granting of an armistice. On September 6, the Porte absolutely rejected an armistice unless it was preceded by a statement of the conditions of peace with Serbia. The Turkish government demanded that the Serbian militia be reduced; the revocation of the Firman of 1867 relative to the fortresses along the Serbian border or their destruction; indemnity for villages destroyed by the Serbian forces in Turkish territory; and the revocation of Article XXIX of the Treaty of Paris which forbade armed intervention in Serbia without the consent of the treaty powers.²

Decazes was most unhappy about the Porte's refusal of an armistice and observed that the Turks seemed to be prosecuting the war more vigorously than ever against both Serbia and Montenegro. He felt that the Turkish ministers were blind to the danger of Turkey's position and Bourgoing expressed to the Porte the sorrow and displeasure of France over its delay in granting an armistice. Bourgoing clearly advised the Porte that it must not look for any help from France in extricating itself from the dangers which would certainly follow any further delay. The French government would not consent to any conditions which would change the situation assigned to Serbia by previous treaties, and therefore the stipulations suggested by the Turkish regime were wholly inadmissible. At the same time, Decazes pushed Great Britain to declare to the Porte that if it resisted the conclusion of an armistice, it would have nothing whatever to hope from either Great Britain or France. Lord Lyons assured

¹Pears, p. 41-43.

²Turkey No. 1 (1877) No. 202, Derby to Lyons, Sept. 12, 1876. Derby's information had come from d'Harcourt, the French ambassador.

Decazes that any Turkish delay would be in spite of plain language and earnest remonstrances on the part of the British government.¹

By the middle of September, the Turkish demands became even more specific and included a request that Prince Milan must come to Constantinople and pay homage to the Sultan. The Serbian militia was to be reduced to 10,000 men and two batteries of artillery. The four fortresses given to Serbia by the 1867 Firman were to be reoccupied by Turkish troops. All other Serbian fortifications were to be destroyed.²

This only served to make Decazes more impatient with the Turkish government, and he suggested to Britain that both countries should recall their ambassadors if the Turks persisted in refusing to grant an armistice. Bourgoing advised that the Porte had stated that it was not making an outright refusal to the demands for an armistice since it had submitted considerations to the Powers; meanwhile the Porte would tell its major commanders to maintain a defensive posture. Decazes was now thoroughly aroused and pointed out that such a guarantee by the Turks was absolutely worthless since the decision as to what was a defensive or offensive action would be left to the discretion of the commanders in the field.³

On September 16, Nasri Bey, Turkish ambassador to Paris, read the Turkish demands to Decazes who reacted most unfavorable. Decazes pointed out the foolishness of the Porte in giving offense to the Great Powers since they would reject the Turkish proposals out of hand. He further lectured the Turk on the naivete of the Turkish plan of suspending

¹Ibid., No. 193, Lyons to Derby, Sept. 10, 1876.

²Ibid., No. 236, Elliot to Derby, Sept. 15, 1876; Hertslet, IV, 2482-2487 has the complete text of the Turkish reply.

³Ibid., No. 235, Lyons to Derby, Sept. 15, 1876.

hostilities within twenty-four hours of receiving the answer of the Powers to the Porte's condition for an armistice. Decazes indicated that he could (*Italics mine*) say: "The conditions for an armistice which you propose are one and wholly inadmissible and unacceptable; and now, having communicated to you my decided opinion, I summon you to arrest hostilities within twenty-four hours."¹

The threatening tone of Decazes's comments to Nasri Bey coincided with the rising sentiment in Russia. That nation was completely disgusted with the Turkish demands for peace which Russia considered entirely separate from any request for an armistice. The Turkish reply was deemed as insolent in the Russian press, and Russia began taking steps to ready herself for action.² A week earlier, Marshal Manteuffel, a personal aid to Kaiser Wilhelm, had been sent to visit Tsar Alexander at Varsovie. During the course of this mission Russia indicated that she viewed military action in the Balkans as being almost inevitable. Gortchakov actually inquired of the German military attache at St. Petersburg what stand Germany would take in the event of a war between Russia and Austria.³ Bismarck's reply reflected his continuing aim of preventing any serious damage to either of his two Imperial allies and stressed that Germany would remain neutral.⁴

The Quai d'Orsay was well aware of the Manteuffel mission and tried to ascertain specifically just what had transpired. Despite the purposely evasive general comments of Prince von Bülow, the German minister of

¹ Ibid., No. 235, Lyons to Derby, Sept. 16, 1875.

² Ibid., No. 256, Lyons to Derby, Sept. 16, 1875.

³ Langer, p. 97; DGP, II, Nos. 227, 228, 229.

⁴ DGP, II, No. 247.

foreign affairs, the French charge d'affaires at Berlin gathered the general tenor of the interchange. His assumptions as to the nature of Russia's requests were correct, but he wrongly guessed that the Germans had assured the Russians that they would sustain them should the crisis come to a head.¹ In effect this meant that Russia could declare war on Turkey without meeting any serious objection from Berlin. Although the Germans had agreed to some Russian action against Turkey, this did not mean that they would stand idly by and watch Austria-Hungary forced into a corner diplomatically. The French staff in Berlin noticed increased irritation against the Turks during September and the German foreign office spoke more strongly of preventing any further blood-letting in the Balkan conflict and of gaining solid guarantees for the Christian populations.²

It was obvious by September 19 that none of the Great Powers considered the Turkish position on the armistice as being worthy of serious consideration.³ Decazes circularized the Great Powers on that day inviting them to take a firm stand at Constantinople and to adopt timely and energetic measures to guard against excesses by the Bashi-Bazouks and Circassians who would be discharged from the Turkish armies when the peace was made.⁴

¹DDF, II, No. 83, de Sayve to Decazes, Sept. 7, 1876; No. 85, Sept. 14, 1876.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., No. 86, Decazes to de Vogüé, Sept. 18, 1876.

⁴Turkey No. 1 (1877) No. 307, Lyons to Derby, Sept. 19, 1876. He also considered sending the French military attache at Constantinople to Philippopolis where his presence might have a good effect in preventing a recurrence of excesses in Bulgaria.

While Decazes was still trying to pull the Great Powers together for joint action against Turkey's position, the British government made three demands on the Porte as conditions for peace. These included the maintenance of the status quo for Serbia and Montenegro; local or administrative autonomy for Bosnia and Herzegovina; and solid guarantees against any maladministration in Bulgaria. The British were eager that these broad points should be settled at once, and indicated that they would be willing to discuss the details later.¹

Decazes ordered Bourgoing to support the British proposals for a peace settlement. The latter reported that the Porte had received the British suggestions favourably but that it urged the omission of the word autonomy for Bosnia and Herzegovina.² While these demands were agreeable with the French and British aim of bringing the fighting to a close by diplomatic pressure on the Porte, the Russians were thinking in another vein. Tsar Alexander dispatched General Soumarokoff to Vienna with a proposal for Austria-Hungary to intervene militarily in Bosnia and Herzegovina while Russia invaded Bulgaria, and the combined fleets of the Great Powers in the Near East should enter the Bosphorus. Alexander's advisers felt that these steps were indispensable to bring the Porte to its senses and to prevent a general massacre of Christians throughout the Ottoman Empire.³

¹Ibid., No. 370, Lyons to Derby, Sept. 23, 1876; DDF, II, No. 87, Decazes to Bourgoing, Sept. 24, 1876.

²Turkey No. 1 (1877) No. 436, Lyons to Derby, Sept. 28, 1876.

³DDF, II, No. 88, Decazes to diplomatic representatives, Sept. 27, 1876; Turkey No. 1 (1877) No. 536, Lyons to Derby, Oct. 6, 1876. It is interesting to note here that while Russia was asking Germany for at least neutrality in the event of war with Austria, that she was also negotiating with Vienna at the same time.

The Soumarokoff mission to Vienna was treated by Andrassy as merely an exchange of ideas between the two Imperial courts and not necessitating any definite action on his part. Nevertheless, the end result deepened of the gloom on the Ballplatz. The Austrian government was apparently resigned to a military intervention in the Balkans and the official journals began preparing public opinion for such an eventuality. Count Zichy advised from Constantinople that hopes for a peaceful solution to the armistice question were dim indeed.¹ Since the Kaiser was apparently giving the Tsar a free hand to punish Turkey, the best that Austria-Hungary could propose was a suggestion that the best means of exerting pressure upon Turkey was to have a mass naval demonstration in the Bosphorus.²

Decazes was now convinced that unless something new were interjected into the diplomatic negotiations that Russia would be forced into action by the overwhelming force of the Pan-slavic agitation.³ He therefore suggested to Vienna and London that Article VIII of the Treaty of Paris of 1856 be invoked providing that in the event of disagreements between Turkey and one of the guaranteeing powers leading to the use of force, it would be incumbent upon one of the other signatory powers to offer its good offices for mediation to prevent military action. Decazes felt that it would be better if this offer came from Austria or Great Britain since these were the two nations that would be most directly affected by Russian action against Turkey.⁴

¹ DDF, II, No. 90, de Vogüë to Decazes, Oct. 2, 1876.

² Ibid., No. 91, Gontaut-Biron to Decazes, Oct. 3, 1876; No. 92, Paris, Oct. 4, 1876.

³ Ibid., No. 94, Id. to Id., Oct. 4, 1876.

⁴ Ibid., No. 93, Decazes to Gontaut-Biron, Oct. 4, 1876.

London responded to the French request and notified the Porte the next day that an armistice of at least one month should be granted in order to give the Great Powers time to confer among themselves and to call a conference to settle the matters relative to the war. The British added that if the Porte refused to grant a cessation of hostilities that they would refrain from taking any steps to help the Turks from the difficulties in which they would certainly find themselves.¹ This action by London came almost too late to ward off what seemed like a rapid deterioration of conditions between Turkey and Russia. On the same day that the British request was forwarded to Constantinople, the Russians demanded that the guaranteeing powers of the 1856 Treaty of Paris should impose an armistice or a truce of six weeks immediately upon the combatants.²

The renewed Turkish offensive in the Morava Valley had thrown the Serbian forces into such disarray that the Russians feared that the entire Serbian defense system would disintegrate. Such a catastrophe Russia meant to avoid at all costs and she moved swiftly to bring more pressure to bear on the Porte. The Turks were conscious of Russian aims and had accused the Russians of moving troops up to the frontier and preparing for war.³

The double-barreled diplomatic attack on the Porte was not without consequence, and in view of Russia's increasing military preparations, the Porte announced on October 10 that the Grand Council of the Ottoman Empire had decided to conclude a formal armistice with Serbia and Montenegro

¹Ibid., No. 96, Decazes to ambassadors, Oct. 5, 1876.

²Ibid., No. 95, Id. to Id., Oct. 5, 1876.

³Ibid., No. 93, Decazes to Gontaut-Biron, Oct. 4, 1876; No. 89, de Sayve to Decazes, Sept. 29, 1876 reporting conversation with Edhem Pasha, Turkish minister to Germany.

which would last until March, 1877.¹ Although this was apparently just what the Great Powers had desired, the Russians and Serbians were opposed to such a lengthy extension of the armistice since this would mean that Turkish forces would be in occupation of Serbian territory throughout the winter. The Turks indicated that the six months period was essential for an armistice in order to enable their troops to obtain winter quarters and to take proper security precautions.²

The next week witnessed the exchange of much correspondence upon the length of the armistice. Decazes thought it best to accede to the opinion of Russia although he recognized that Russia had acted in haste and upon insufficient information. He felt that it would be of no great importance to the interests of Great Britain or France and that it might mollify Russian public opinion which was becoming daily more vociferous.³

Decazes's actions in trying to persuade the British cabinet to go along with the demands of Russia were in line with his constant aim of trying to bring Britain and Russia together. He had consistently refused to be led to either one side or the other of these two powers, and whenever the heat and tension of the Balkan tangle became intense, the Russians tried to invoke French aid for their cause. The dispute over the length of the armistice was another case in point. Ignatiev advised Bourgoing on October 20 that the situation in Russia was becoming critical and the tension unbearable; so much so that the Tsar would not be able to

¹Ibid., No. 99, Bourgoing to Decazes, Oct. 19, 1876; Turkey No. 1 (1877) No. 608, Lyons to Derby, Oct. 12, 1876.

²DDF, II, No. 99, Safvet Pasha to Bourgoing, Oct. 16, 1876.

³Turkey No. 1 (1877) No. 691, Lyons to Derby, Oct. 16, 1876; No. 692, Lyons to Derby, Oct. 16, 1876.

resist the national conscience any longer, and that if a rapid solution to the Balkan problem were not forthcoming, a crisis would arise which the Tsar would be powerless to prevent.¹

The French foreign minister's efforts to get the British to soften their stand on the length of the armistice was undoubtedly aided by the decided shift in British public opinion against the Turks. On October 21, the British cabinet announced that it would have no objection to a reduction in the duration of any armistice if the Turkish government wished to grant such a request.² Decazes clearly recognized that in effect this meant the British cabinet was giving the Russians a completely free hand at Constantinople for whatever demands they wanted to make. Ignatiev's return to Constantinople under these conditions meant that Russia would follow a policy of direct action against the Porte and that if any hesitancy were shown on the part of the Turkish officials, Ignatiev would resort to an ultimatum.³

Confirmation of Decazes' interpretation of these events was soon forthcoming. D'Harcourt advised the following week that Lord Derby had told him: "If Russia invades Ottoman territory, I do not think that the actual state of public opinion in Britain would authorize us to make it a cause for war... we would content ourselves with protesting, so long as Constantinople and its environs were not threatened."⁴ That Russia meant to take advantage of her opportunity to act without interference from

¹DDE, II, No. 100, Bourgoing to Decazes, Oct. 20, 1876.

²Ibid., No. 101, Decazes to ambassadors, Oct. 21, 1876.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., No. 103, d'Harcourt to Decazes, Oct. 26, 1876.

Great Britain was obvious from the attitude of General Ignatiev upon his return to Constantinople. His demeanor to the Sultan was distinctly haughty and he suggested darkly in diplomatic circles that if the Sultan did not give an adequate response to Russia's demands, he would take significant action.¹

On October 31, Ignatiev advised the Porte that Russia would sever her diplomatic relations with Turkey and that he would leave with all Russian consular personnel unless the Porte answered the Russian demand for an immediate cessation of hostilities within forty-eight hours.² Decazes had announced the day before that France would support the Russian proposal for a limited armistice. He noted that the other guaranteeing powers would do likewise and in this way added his pressure on the Porte to accept the Russian demand.³

On November 1, the Turkish Council of Ministers decided to accept all the conditions of the Russian ambassador and others were expedited for all hostilities in Serbia and Montenegro to cease.⁴ The fighting thus ground to a halt and the way was paved for the Great Powers to try their hand again at trying to solve the Balkan riddle at the conference table.

Throughout the first sixteen months of the struggle in the Balkans, France had stuck doggedly to her main aim of working for the concert of Europe approach to the problems in the Near East rather than unilateral

¹Ibid., No. 102, Bourgoing to Decazes, Oct. 25, 1876.

²Ibid., No. 105, Bourgoing to Decazes, Oct. 31, 1876; Hertslet, IV, 2502-2503.

³Turkey No. 1 (1877) No. 817, Lyons to Derby, Oct. 31, 1876.

⁴Ibid., No. 866, Lyons to Derby, Nov. 3, 1876; DDF, II, No. 106, Bourgoing to Decazes, Nov. 1, 1876; Hertslet, IV, 2504-2505.

action. Although Decazes couched his aims upon the high plane of working for the sole goal of peace, his real intentions were to keep his nation on good terms with both Russia and Great Britain. He availed himself of every opportunity to smooth over ruffled feelings between these two powers and when the tensions reached the point of no return, insisted upon the traditions of the European concert embodied in the Treaty of Paris of 1856. He continually emphasized that all the guaranteeing powers had a stake in the future of the developments in the Ottoman Empire. In this way, Decazes strove mightily to prevent an open rupture between the two nations whose support he needed if France were to be secure from the menace across the Rhine. His position was readily recognized by others, but so far he had trod the path with consummate skill. It remained to be seen how France would fare in the future.

CHAPTER V

THE CONSTANTINOPLE CONFERENCE

While the negotiations had been underway to achieve a cessation of hostilities in the triangular struggle between Turkey, Serbia, and Montenegro, the groundwork was already being laid for a conference to find the final solutions to the Balkan entanglement. Early in October, 1876, the British, German, and Russian foreign offices were conducting preliminary soundings about the advisability of a conference. Great Britain had stated the case most strongly since she desired to avoid having Russia and Turkey face each other alone without the counsel of Europe's Great Powers.

Russia had announced early in October that if the Turks agreed to an armistice she would consent to the conference at Constantinople proposed by Great Britain at the end of September. Gortchakov stipulated that the conference would have to be composed of all six Great Powers and that the Porte should not be allowed to participate in the deliberation.¹ The French thought that it would be almost impossible to refuse the Porte representation in the conference since this would permit the Turks to lodge a formal protest over the violations of their rights based on Article VIII of the Treaty of Paris of 1856.² On the other hand, Gortchakov

¹DDF, II, No. 98, Decazes to ambassadors, Oct. 9, 1876. British fears of Russian aims were more than justified by the Russian dictated Treaty of San Stefano in 1878.

²Ibid.

maintained that the Turks could be kept out of any conference in accordance with a protocol signed in 1861 which stated that the Great Powers could confer among themselves on Turkish matters. Decazes was unable to find any such protocol in the French archives.¹

In order to avoid a breach over this, Decazes proposed that the conference should be divided into two parts. The first meeting should be held among the representatives of the Great Powers at which time Europe would codify its demands. The second meeting would include both the representatives of the Porte and the guaranteeing Powers.² He recommended that the conference should be held at Constantinople and that the foreign ministers of the Great Powers should not participate but that they should appoint plenipotentiaries to represent them. He felt in this way that this would give him more time to coalesce the differences between Russia and Great Britain before the conference actually opened. This was in direct opposition to the desires of Russia, or at least of General Ignatiev, who wanted to start the conference the day following Turkish acceptance of the Russian ultimatum for an armistice.³

Decazes assumed that the program of the conference would be the proposals drawn up by the British cabinet as a basis for discussion.⁴ These proposals included: first, the independence and territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire; second, a declaration that the Great Powers

¹Turkey No. 1 (1877) No. 609, Lyons to Derby, Oct. 12, 1876. Gortchakov told Decazes that he would locate this protocol and send him a copy. This was never done, however, in view of the compromise on the representation of the Turks.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.; Turkey No. 1 (1877) No. 877, Id. to Id., Nov. 3, 1876.

⁴Ibid., No. 609; DDF, II, No. 107, d'Harcourt to Decazes, Nov. 4, 1876.

would not seek any territorial advantage, exclusive influence, or any concession of commerce which would not be apportioned equally to all others; third, the status quo speaking roughly for Serbia and Montenegro; fourth, a system of local or administrative autonomy for Bosnia and Herzegovina with guarantees against the use of arbitrary authority; fifth, guarantees against maladministration in Bulgaria.¹

The Russians agreed to the British propositions without a shadow of hesitation but objected to the word 'territory' prior to 'integrity' arguing that if a military occupation became necessary to carry out the execution of whatever reforms the conference agreed upon, this would prove to be a source of embarrassment.² To this deletion the British agreed and the other Powers followed suit. Preparations thereupon began for the approaching meeting. Decazes felt that the divergence of the Great Powers over the length of the armistice had been pure gain for the Turks since it indicated to them that the Powers were not united on a policy towards the Near East.

His optimism about the success of the future conference was certainly modified by a speech of Disraeli on Lord-Mayor's Day in London on November 9 and an address by Tsar Alexander in Moscow on the following day. The British Prime Minister used the occasion³ to review the progress of events during the year in the Near East, and then concluded; "But although the policy of England is peace, there is no country so well prepared for war

¹Hertslet, IV, 2516-2517.

²DDF, II, No. 108, Gontaut-Biron to Decazes, Nov. 10, 1876.

³Monypenny and Buckle, II, 962. Disraeli wrote to Queen Victoria that this was the most distressful day in the year. He also noted that his speech would be read carefully throughout Europe and that each word would be criticized.

as our own."¹

Tsar Alexander's speech on November 10 contained a warning that if the conference failed to bring peace, and if he could not obtain sufficient rights from the Porte for the Christians which he desired, that "he was firmly resolved to resort to the use of arms, in which case he was sure that he could count absolutely on the support of the nation."² Le Flo added that the paper work of Russian mobilization was completed and that the Grand Duke's departure to take command of the army in the field was likely at any time.³

The coincidence of these two speeches cast a somber shadow over the horizon and Decazes recognized that something new would have to be injected into the situation in order to offset the rising war fever in Russia. This time his fertile mind came up with the suggestion of creating a "Cour d'Abus" in Constantinople. This tribunal, to which appeals might be made from the various provinces, would best reconcile the dignity and independence of the Porte with the necessary superintendence on the part of the Great Powers. Decazes suggested that the six Powers might be represented in the tribunal by judges nominated in somewhat the same way as those of the Mixed Tribunals in Egypt. This court might send commissions of its members to investigate complaints in the Balkan provinces of the Ottoman Empire, or might even establish regular circuits at fixed intervals. Despite the strong support of the British ambassador to Paris, the plan was still-born. It did serve its purpose, however, of readjusting

¹ Ibid., 964.

² DDF, II, No. 109, Le Flo to Decazes, Nov. 11, 1876.

³ Ibid. Le Flo also noted that the sentiment in Moscow was that Germany was beginning to push Russia to take definite action in the Balkans.

the thinking of the Great Powers to other than military means for settling the Ottoman problem.¹

Despite Decazes's proposals, the general tenor of diplomacy in the middle of November was one of uncertainty and disquiet. Austria-Hungary officially agreed to a conference on November 14, but was highly disturbed by reports of Russian mobilization.² General Werder delivered a personal letter from Tsar Alexander to Kaiser Wilhelm purporting to demonstrate the Tsar's resolution to use coercion to force the Turks to accept the desires of Europe and demanding the moral support of Germany in the event of military action.³ Decazes wanted to know specifically what response the German foreign office gave to this request.⁴

Although his ambassador to Berlin was unable to ascertain the extent of any German commitment to Russia, the news from St. Petersburg the next day must have given Decazes sufficient proof that the Kaiser had not discouraged the Tsar. Le Flo reported that the Tsar had been given a tremendous reception in St. Petersburg and had presented his brother, the Grand Duke, as the commander-in-chief of the army soon destined to enter upon a campaign. The Tsar complained bitterly to the French ambassador that apparently Great Britain had two policies, one formulated by Lord Derby, the foreign secretary, and the other by Sir Henry Elliot, the ambassador to Constantinople. The Tsar reminded Le Flo that Russia had

¹Turkey No. 1 (1877) No. 941, Lyons to Derby, Nov. 12, 1876. Derby rated Lyons very highly so his views carried weight. Monypenny and Buckle, II, 983.

²DDF, II, No. 111, Decazes to de Vogüë, Nov. 14, 1876.

³Ibid., No. 112, Decazes to Gontaut-Biron, Nov. 14, 1876.

⁴Ibid.

had agreed to a conference, an armistice after Russia had served an ultimatum. He asked Le Flo which policy of England's was the true one, since Derby apparently was pressuring the Porte to accept European intervention while Elliot was trying to persuade the Porte not to accept one. Alexander stated bluntly that this dichotomy was "clear as day."¹

Le Flo reassured the Tsar of the kindly sentiments of France toward Russia and noted that France would not forget the great services which Russia had rendered to France in the past. He felt that the current situation was so difficult that it was necessary for his nation to act with caution and reserve, but that France would certainly desire success for Russian arms in the event of hostilities. Le Flo observed that the Tsar had no ill feelings toward France, but that war would be most difficult to avoid in view of Russian popular excitement.²

Meanwhile Bourgoing had been called back from Constantinople for instructions prior to the conference and met with the French cabinet and Count Chaudordy who was to be the special ambassador to the international conclave.³ Chaudordy was the regular ambassador to Spain, but he had served in several posts in the Near East as a French consul. This past experience made him a natural for the assignment. In his written instructions to these two representatives, Decazes laid down general guidelines for their actions in Constantinople. France would maintain her traditional concern for the welfare of Christians in the Ottoman Empire and would do all within her power to ameliorate their condition; but the

¹Ibid., No. 113, Le Flo to Decazes, Nov. 15, 1876.

²Ibid.

³Turkey No. 1 (1877) No. 909, Derby to Lyons, Nov. 9, 1876; No. 940, Lyons to Derby, Nov. 12, 1876.

preservation of the general peace of Europe was the permanent aim of French policy. At the same time, France would endeavor to maintain the general concert of the Great Powers and would associate herself with any project that would strengthen it.¹

The French plenipotentiaries should work specifically for an improvement of local administration in the Turkish provinces, the elimination of illegal discrimination against the Christians, and for a means whereby the Christians might secure redress for their complaints and grievances in a direct efficient manner. The purpose of the conference would be to coordinate the various desires of the guaranteeing Powers and to weld them into an acceptable form so that the Ottoman cabinet would not object to their imposition. Decazes felt that the question of autonomy for Bosnia and Herzegovina and Bulgaria would be the most difficult.²

He was also in favor of the status quo ante bellum for Serbia and cautioned his representatives about agreeing to any imposition of a financial indemnity upon her since Serbia was basically a very poor nation. Montenegro did not appear to pose such a difficult problem in Decazes' eyes for he thought that even the Porte realized that Montenegro needed a port on the sea and an adjustment of her frontiers. He emphasized that the maintenance of the peace was of primary importance to France and that France would not separate from the Great Powers unless they agreed to apply material coercion or initiate a military occupation. Decazes specifically stated that on no account would France abandon her position of

¹DDF, II, No. 115, Decazes to Bourgoing and Chaudordy, Nov. 19, 1876.

²Ibid. Decazes actually meant autonomy for Bosnia and Herzegovina but only administrative reforms for Bulgaria. There had been no mention of Bulgarian autonomy up to this point.

neutrality in the Near East.¹

The troubled situation opened up a vast field for the imagination of the various powers who had desires for territorial gains at the expense of the Ottoman Empire. Russia was seeking to recoup her losses of the Crimean War. French intelligence reported that if Russia took Bessarabia, Austria-Hungary would be encouraged to extend the frontiers of its Slavic provinces to the south and annex all of Croatia. Rumors floated around the European capitals that if this were accomplished, Italy would be able to take the Trentino. The Italian and Austrian press engaged in a verbal battle over the authenticity of these reports which became so heated that government officials had to quiet their outbursts.²

The reserve and caution which marked French action during October and November of 1876 was not unnoticed by Gortchakov who was disappointed by the lack of support from Paris to which he thought Russia was entitled. Le Flo felt that Russian sympathies for France were beginning to weaken despite the friendly statements of the Tsar, and that Germany was gaining the favor that France was losing. He felt that France would have to take a strong stand in support of Russia at the Constantinople Conference or risk losing the fruit of five years effort to gain the confidence of Russia.³

Bismarck felt that a war between Russia and Turkey was nearly inevitable and although it would be a serious matter, he believed that such a war would be localised. He desired a Russian victory since that would

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid., No. 116, Decazes to plenipotentiaries, Nov. 19, 1876.

³ Ibid., No. 117, Le Flo to Decazes, Nov. 20, 1876.

make the Turks more conciliatory in their attitude. He recognized that the position of Austria-Hungary was very delicate, but that France and Germany should obviously remain neutral. The German chancellor did not feel that public opinion in Germany was either pro-Russian or pro-Turkish in this matter and that the people were not too interested. It was clear that as long as Bismarck thought that the war could be kept in the Balkans he could support Russian aims to recoup her losses from the Crimean War. There was some indication that the Germans would be opposed to any Russian move to dominate the delta of the Danube south of Bessarabia.¹

Assured of German support and Austro-Hungarian neutrality,² Russia continued to heap abuse and invective upon the Turks. Gortchakov issued repeated circulars to the other capitals of Europe. His theme was constant and repetitious: Turkey could not be trusted (italics mine). He asserted that Europe could no longer continue to tolerate the insufferable delaying tactics of the Porte and the conditions of the dying and suffering Christians demanded definite action be taken. Russian armaments were increasing and military preparations were being undertaken due to the actions of the Turks who apparently were to blame for any and all ailments in Europe according to the verses being sung by the Russian chancellor.³

¹Ibid., No. 119, Gontaut-Biron to Decazes, Dec. 2, 1876; No. 116. A continuing sore point between Germany and France during these months was the failure of the German government to appropriate any funds for a German display at an upcoming Paris industrial exhibition. Bismarck explained that German wares had fared so poorly at Philadelphia and Vienna that he did not feel that it would pay his government to invest in another such enterprise. Kaiser Wilhelm was in favor of German participation. Ibid., No. 118.

²Ibid., No. 121, Id. to Id., Dec. 8, 1876. Andrassy was still in control of affairs in Vienna although the military circles were advocating action in the event of any Russian move. Their intent was some aggrandizement of territory in the Balkans.

³Herslet, IV, 2520-2525; Turkey No. 1 (1877) No. 39, Gortchakov Circular, Nov. 30, 1876.

The expected result of this verbal barrage was a growing conviction on the part of the Turks that Russia would attack them sooner or later. Safvet Pasha, ambassador to London, complained bitterly against these attacks, but the British advised him to notify his government to grant the concessions which would be demanded at the upcoming conference and thereby avoid giving the Russians an excuse for initiating military action. Elliot felt that if the Porte should reject the proposals of the conference, Great Britain would be in a poor bargaining position if she tried to prevent Russia from taking military action since Britain would have previously agreed to the rejected proposals.¹

In recognition of the necessity for reaching some sort of agreement with the Russians, Lord Salisbury, British plenipotentiary, adopted a conciliatory attitude in his first conversations with Ignatiev in the Turkish capital. Although ignorant of the specifics of their conversation, Bourgoing interpreted Ignatiev's generally improved disposition to mean there was sufficient ground to hope for some kind of an understanding between Russia and Great Britain.²

While the jockeying for position was still in progress, the first meeting of the plenipotentiaries took place in the Russian Embassy on December 11, 1876. The question as to whether the Turkish plenipotentiaries should be invited to the conference had been solved by Decazes' compromise whereby the delegates of the Great Powers would meet first in a preliminary conference to coalesce their demands, and then the regular conference would include the Turkish delegates. It was arranged at the

¹Turkey No. 1 (1877) No. 83, Elliot to Derby, Dec. 10, 1876; No. 39.

²DDF, II, No. 120, Bourgoing to Decazes, Dec. 6, 1876.

first meeting on December 11, that M. de Mouy, the first secretary of the French Embassy, should be present at all meetings and prepare a compte-rendu of the proceedings. His records were to include only the content of the discussions without naming the plenipotentiaries who took part in them.¹

Throughout the nine sessions of the preliminary conference General Ignatiev acted as the presiding officer since he was the doyen of the diplomatic corps. His opening speech at the first session consisted of a lengthy discourse upon the insincerity of the Turks and the grave danger of further massacres which might be perpetrated upon the Christian populations in the Ottoman Empire at any time. Russia was insistent upon having sufficient material force on hand as a security for the Christians during the period when the reforms of the Turkish government were to be introduced. Elliot proposed that regular Turkish soldiers would be appropriate for this task, but Ignatiev turned this idea down emphatically.²

At the fourth session, Chaudordy proposed that this security force be composed of Belgian troops numbering from three to five thousand. Chaudordy had previously gained the assent of the Sultan to the importation of such a force to act as a body of gendarmie for the Commission of Supervision which was to be appointed by the Great Powers to oversee the institution of reforms in the Balkan provinces.³ (Although the Great Powers

¹Turkey No. 1 (1877) No. 82, Salisbury to Derby, Dec. 11, 1876. The representatives were Elliot and Salisbury for Great Britain, Count Zichy and Baron de Calice for Austria-Hungary, Count F. de Bourgoing and Count de Chaudordy for France, Baron de Werther for Germany, Count L. Corti for Italy, and General N. Ignatiev for Russia. Hertslet, IV, 2526.

²Hertslet, IV, 2526-2530 contains the abstracts of the preliminary conferences. Turkey No. 1 (1877) No. 57, Salisbury to Derby, Dec. 14, 1876.

³Ibid., No. 81, Id. to Id., Dec. 11, 1876.

eventually agreed to the use of Belgian regiments, the Sultan reversed his field arguing that any such stipulation was a reflection upon his sovereign dignity.)¹

On December 22, the conferees notified the Porte that they were prepared to enter into the full conference on the next day although they still differed upon the exact demands to be made. Ignatiev referred to the preliminary program as constituting the "irreducible minimum" as far as Russia was concerned and noted significantly that her demands for protection of Christians in the Balkans was now the united program of all of Europe.²

In essence the political program of the Great Powers stipulated that peace should be arranged between Turkey and Serbia. The details provided for the restoration of prisoners of war, evacuation of Serbia by Turkish troops within eight to ten days, general amnesty to both Christians and Ottomans, and the creation of a Turco-Serbian Commission to settle the question of the islands in the Drina Valley.³

The peace terms for Montenegro provided for territorial adjustments on the Herzegovinan side as well as on its frontier facing Albania. Montenegro was to be given free navigation of the Boiana River and this river was to be made navigable. Ignatiev was seriously opposed to refusing a seaport for the little mountain kingdom, and the clause requiring

¹Ibid., No. 60, Id. to Id., Dec. 15, 1876. The Belgians notified the Turkish ambassador to Brussels that they would not dispatch any troops under any conditions except upon the express invitation of the Porte itself. Ibid., No. 171, Elliot to Derby, Dec. 30, 1876.

²Hertslet, IV, 2530.

³Turkey No. 1 (1877) No. 111, Salisbury to Derby, Dec. 21, 1876. They specified that Little Zvornik and Zakar, two villages in the Drina Valley should be assigned to Serbia.

the Turks to improve the Boiana was inserted to overcome his objections.¹

The question of Bulgaria was solved by recommending the creation of two Bulgarian vilayets with a Christian Vali (governor) named for five years by the Sultan with the consent of the Great Powers. The Porte was to permit these vilayets to have provincial assemblies elected for four year terms, and the native tongue was to be used in the local schools along with Turkish. The participants in the massacres were to be punished but otherwise a general amnesty was to be declared. The conference insisted upon the disarming of Moslems and the disbanding of the Turkish irregular troops in Bulgaria at the earliest moment.² The provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina were treated similarly to Bulgaria, except that the Vali could be a Turk, and the local assemblies were to have less power.³

Meanwhile the first announcement of the conference for Constantinople set off a series of domestic events in Turkey itself which were to have major significance upon the outcome of the conclave. Midhat Pasha, the leader of the reformist groups in the Ottoman Empire, decided to utilize the demands of the foreign powers for reform within Turkey as a buttress to his own desires to remake the government of his native land. He proposed to the new Sultan that one way of avoiding interference from the Great Powers in the internal affairs of his domain would be to outbid the European delegates by proclaiming a program of reforms not only for the disaffected European provinces, but for the entire empire.⁴ Midhat was

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., No. 73, Salisbury to Derby, Dec. 17, 1876.

³Ibid.

⁴Pears, p. 48.

appointed Grand Vizier in the place of Mehemet Ruchdi Pasha on December 19, 1876,¹ and immediately set his plans in motion. On December 23, when the plenary Conference opened, the booming of hundreds of guns from the Turkish fleet anchored nearby announced the promulgation of a new constitution by the Sultan for all his subjects.²

The superb irony in the timing of the announcement must have given great pleasure to the Turkish officials since their foreign minister, Safvet Pasha, as presiding officer of the conference had just received the demands of the European nations as presented by Count Chaudordy.³ Safvet solemnly announced that the Sultan had just modernized the government of the 600 year-old Ottoman Empire. In effect Safvet was saying that the Sultan was granting a series of reforms so great in scope for all of the empire that the "irreducible minimum" demands of the Great Powers for a few provinces were not only niggardly in comparison but superfluous.

During the ten days of the preliminary sessions, the Turks had privately notified the British and French ambassadors that they would protest most strongly against the acceptance of the reforms being demanded. It was during this time that the Turks were given copies of the Baring and Schuyler Reports on the Bulgarian massacres. The Turks took exception to the comments about the charges of dishonoring and enslaving Christian women as being effective to the honor of Islam. They charged that the

¹Turkey No. 1 (1877) No. 105, Elliot to Derby, Dec. 19, 1876. Elliot regarded him as being a most energetic and liberal statesman, and a man of action. Midhat was opposed to centralization and in favor of giving the provincial populations greater control over their local affairs. This automatically earned him the intense dislike of the old Moslem Party.

²Pears, p. 49.

³Turkey No. 1 (1877) No. 168, Salisbury to Derby, Jan. 4, 1877.

Schuyler Report omitted any mention of Moslem children burned alive by the Bulgarians which had caused the outbreak. Schuyler's statement that the Turkish regulars committed the atrocities was also vehemently denied.¹

Midhat Pasha had notified Chaudordy prior to the opening of the Conference that Turkey would not agree to the appointment of an International Commission to supervise the institution of reforms and argued that the Sultan's promises were sufficient.² At the same time, Safvet Pasha pointed out that even though the preliminary sessions were under way in order to establish peace in the Near East, Russia was now negotiating a military alliance which could only be aimed against Turkey.³

It may be noted here that the constitution which the Sultan solemnly promulgated in the presence of his ministers and religious authorities of the empire included practically every measure of a democratic nature that the Sultan's advisors could envision. Religious freedom was guaranteed, and equality of all before the law was proclaimed. The new document posited a general assembly composed of a Senate and a Chamber of Deputies which was to meet on the first of November in each year for sessions of four months duration. The Senate was to be nominated by the Sultan while the members of the lower house were to be elected by free and secret balloting. There was to be one deputy for each 100,000 population. All taxes were to be prescribed by law. Apparently Abdul Hamid

¹Ibid., No. 103, Elliot to Derby, Dec. 15, 1876.

²Ibid., No. 110, Salisbury to Derby, Dec. 21, 1876. It should be stated, however, that it was the usual Turkish policy to start all conferences with absolute refusals.

³DDF, II, No. 123, M. Debains to Decazes, Dec. 15, 1876.

was decreeing the creation of a liberal empire primarily based on the French model.¹

Most significantly, Article XVIII of the new constitution provided for the decentralization of administration in the various provinces. Although this was clearly in line with the political philosophy of Midhat Pasha, it also permitted the Turks to maintain to the Conference that its demands for reforms in the administration of local areas within the Balkan provinces were now superfluous since this principle was applied to the entire Ottoman Empire.²

The implications of the provisions of the new constitution and the timing of its promulgation left little hope on the part of the plenipotentiaries that the Turks had any serious intention of accepting the proposals of the preliminary sessions. The Russians still thought that the Turks were being secretly encouraged by the British, and Schouvaloff, Russian ambassador to London, called on Lord Derby to plead for him to refuse any support for the Turks which would lead them to refuse the conference demands. Derby maintained stoutly that Britain had already made this point emphatically clear to the Porte.³

To give punch to his verbal assurances, the British fleet was withdrawn to Athens from Besika Bay on Christmas Day. This underlined Derby's determination not to give the Turks the impression that they could count on British support to offset Russian designs as expressed by the demands

¹Turkey No. 1 (1877) No. 88, Safvet Pasha to Musurus Pasha, Dec. 23, 1876; Hertslet, IV, 2531-2540 contains the text of the constitution. It should be noted that Article CXVI providing for amending the constitution permitted the Sultan practically carte blanche to approve or reject any fundamental changes in the structure of the government.

²Hertslet, IV, 2538.

³Turkey No. 1 (1877) No. 75, Derby to Loftus, Dec. 21, 1876.

of the conference.¹ Derby advised d'Harcourt in London that Britain would press for acceptance of the conference proposals like the other powers, but that in the event of a refusal by the Porte, Great Britain would have to reserve judgment upon what further action she would take. Derby qualified his future action by predicating it upon the type of refusal which the Turks would make, and insisted that while Britain would exert no pressure on the Porte to force it to accept the demands of the Powers, she would not help the Porte to withstand pressure from the other European Powers.²

Decazes thought that if the Turks were to refuse the demands, the Eastern situation would then develop into a more serious crisis.³ Just what action he envisioned for the Great Powers at this time is uncertain but the position of Great Britain against joining France in exerting any pressure upon the Porte had long been known to the French foreign office.⁴ At least Decazes was sure that in the event of a war between Russia and Turkey the latter could not count on any help from the British government. Despite reassurances from Derby on this score, Decazes was still basically concerned about the extent of British restraint should the Russian forces push too close to the Bosphorus. As far as he was concerned, the possibility of a conflict between Russia and Great Britain was a nightmare which gained hue and brilliance with each successive setback to the efforts of the Great Powers to effect a settlement between Turkey and the

¹Ibid., Nos. 89, Salisbury to Derby, Dec. 25, 1876; 90, Derby to Salisbury, Dec. 26, 1876.

²Ibid., No. 76, Derby to Lyons, Dec. 21, 1876.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., No. 126, Derby to Lyons, Jan. 2, 1877.

Balkans. Such a settlement would have to contain substantial enough guarantees to permit the Russians to retract their military preparations without losing face. Christmas season of 1876 was certainly not a happy time at the Quai d'Orsay.¹

Decazes gloomily contemplated the severance of diplomatic relations with the Porte by all the Great Powers and all that such a step entailed for the future peace of Europe. He encouraged his delegates to the conference to use all means possible to bring about a friendly understanding between the Porte and the other powers. He had no doubts about the rapidity with which the Russians would recall General Ignatiev and his diplomatic corps. Italy seemed likely to follow the same steps.² Bismarck appeared to be unconcerned over the entire matter and was quite sure that any struggle between Russia and Turkey could be localised and not involve all of Europe. Germany was only concerned about the possibility of a conflict between Austria and Russia, and since the Reichstadt Agreement in July, 1876, he felt that the Eastern Question as a serious issue to the peace of Europe was somewhat of an academic nature. The friendly interchanges between Franz Joseph and Alexander only substantiated the basic agreement between his two allies which had been laid down at Reichstadt.³

General Ignatiev remarked to the French ambassador in Constantinople on Christmas Day that it was indeed the Berlin Cabinet which had been

¹Nor in London, for Disraeli commented rather petulantly that Queen Victoria had chided him for leaving the capital in such serious times. Monypenny and Buckle, II, 962.

²DDF, II, No. 124, Decazes to ambassadors, Dec. 23, 1876.

³DGP, II, No. 263, Bülow to Münster, Nov. 27, 1876; No. 264, Bülow to Schweinitz, Nov. 29, 1876.

exerting pressure on Russia to force bellicose resolutions upon the Turks. Bourgoing further inferred that the hesitancy of the Belgian government to agree to dispatch troops to the Ottoman Empire to assist the proposed International Commission had its origins in German pressure upon the Brussels government.¹ A few days later, Ignatiev advised Chaudordy that the Austrian government which had hitherto more or less impeded the deliberations of the conference had decided that it would now be willing to support the demands of the conference with armed force. Decazes interpreted this to mean that the Ballplatz had now decided that a Russo-Turkish War would furnish an opportunity for it to fish in troubled waters. Such an eventuality would permit Austrian occupation of the Herzegovina at the very least and this might solve two problems at one stroke: the incessant discontent of its Slavic population believed to originate from the Slavs in Bosnia and Herzegovina; and the creation of an efficient administration for the Christian populations in the two provinces.² Decazes noted that Austria-Hungary could always count on German support in the event of a war and that perhaps this had helped to cause a more aggressive policy in Vienna.³

Decazes observed that the definitive settlement of the Turkish question would depend upon the action of Great Britain and Russia and that it was certainly to France's best interests to prevent any hostility between them. Decazes feared that a struggle in the Balkans would either

¹ DDF, II, No. 126, Bourgoing to Decazes, Dec. 25, 1876.

² Ibid., No. 127, Decazes to plenipotentiaries, Dec. 29, 1876.

³ Ibid. Such a comment deserves notice in view of the date which places it nearly three years before the Dual Alliance and a full 18 months before the Congress of Berlin.

spread to the other nations of Europe and result in a full scale war, or if Russia made some territorial gains, the other powers would immediately seek some compensation for themselves. The role of France as Decazes surveyed the diplomatic scene was to ward off such eventualities by acting vigorously within its restricted sphere of action.¹ He took it for granted that Germany would break off diplomatic relations with the Turks if Russia did so.²

In line with the policy of Germany to encourage Russia to act aggressively towards Turkey in her demands at the conference, the Russians negotiated a secret arrangement with Austria-Hungary during the period of the conference with German approval. This convention signed on January 15, 1877 laid the basis for the actions of these two governments in the Balkans up to the Congress of Berlin the next year. It provided that, in the event of war between Russia and Turkey, Bulgaria would be established as an autonomous province; Austria-Hungary would maintain a benevolent neutrality by aiding in the transportation of Russian wounded and shipping military supplies to her in so far as possible; Austria-Hungary was to have a free choice as to the moment of her occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by her troops; Serbia and Montenegro were to be permitted to join Russia in her war against the Turks; the territorial dispositions to be made following the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire were to be regulated by a special convention but would include complete independence for Albania, Bulgaria, and the annexation of Crete by Greece.³

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., No. 128, Gontaut-Biron to Decazes, Dec. 29, 1876.

³DGP, II, No. 265, Jan. 15, 1877; No. 266, Jan. 15, 1877. Both of these documents were delivered to Bismarck in Berlin and marked 'very secret'.

While France's 'friend' on the eastern flank of continental Europe was thus clearing the way for any military action she deemed necessary, Great Britain, the 'friend' in the West was trying to do likewise. The British general staff had computed the exact number of days which it would take Russian troops to reach the environs of Constantinople. The best guess of the military experts was that the British could be in position before Constantinople 22 days ahead of the Russians if the order to embark British troops were given when Russian troops crossed the Pruth River. If the embarkation order was given when Russian troops were at the Danube, arrival would be only one day before the Russians, and if the troops embarked when the Russians crossed the Balkan Mountains, they would arrive 16 days too late.¹

Such were the ominous sounds and rumors floating around Europe during the month of December and January while the delegates talked away the hours in Constantinople. The French were keenly alive to the explosiveness of the situation and Count Chaudordy probably outshone the entire assemblage in the strength and vigor he displayed in pushing for a genuine settlement of the disagreements between the Porte and the Great Powers. Chaudordy maintained that the demands of the preliminary sessions of the conference were not ethereal dreams of persons unacquainted with the problems facing the Ottoman Empire, but were practical and worthwhile points which should be seriously considered. He analysed the objections

¹ Monypenny and Buckle, II, 973. Disraeli was often exasperated with the work of his 'Intelligence Dept.' and remarked that its name should be changed to the 'Dept. of Ignorance'. This was due to its constant revisions of the number of British troops that would be needed to defend Constantinople. Ibid., II, 978.

of the Porte with devastating effort,¹ and pointed out that their arguments were based on lack of intelligent study of the proposals. The Porte had raised serious objections to the idea of decentralization of central authority, the question of an International Commission, and that of the introduction of foreign troops to supervise the institution of reforms.

Chaudordy pointed out that the actual recommendations for decentralization of administration did not refer to the whole Ottoman Empire but only to three areas, namely, Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Bulgaria. Furthermore he asked with veiled sarcasm whether or not the new Turkish constitution did not embrace the principle of decentralization of administration. The objections that the International Commission was a violation of Turkish sovereignty were brushed aside by his insistence that the Commission was to be of a limited duration. Moreover had not the Turks agreed to a commission just the year before to negotiate a truce with the rebel chieftains when the revolt broke out? Numerous other international commissions had been operative in the Ottoman Empire previously and in fact, just recently the Turks had asked for a financial commission made up of European experts to come in and advise the Sultan's government. Surely they had not regarded this as being a violation of their administrative sovereignty?²

Despite the strong urging of Chaudordy for the Turks to accept the reasonable demands of the Great Powers in order to prevent any outbreak of hostilities, the Porte continued in its determination to deny any such

¹Turkey No. 1 (1877) No. 218, Salisbury to Derby, Jan. 10, 1877. Salisbury was particularly impressed with the knowledge and skill that Chaudordy displayed during the conference.

²Ibid.

reforms.¹ Decazes reached an agonizing conclusion early in January, 1877, that under no circumstances would France participate in any military action to force the Turks to accept the wishes of the Great Powers. The French navy and army were not to take part in any demonstrations and this was to be stated categorically and formally to all. He explained his decision on the grounds that France felt that any military action would lead to serious consequences and that France would therefore stick to its announced policy of seeking conciliation. This abstention was the result of the position of France in the general European power structure at the time. What Decazes's decision meant was that France would not side with Russia in her attempts to force the Turks into taking substantial reform measures for fear that she would be exposed once again in the West to German aggression. Decazes ordered Bourgoing to make this clear to Ignatiev so that he would not be under any illusions about the French position.²

His fears of possible German action were heightened perceptibly two days later when the plenipotentiaries presented a series of modified demands on the Porte. Upon this occasion, Baron Werther, the German delegate, withheld his support from the modifications and defiantly avouched that "if the other powers of Europe were willing to compromise the dignity of Europe... he refused to debase the German Empire."³ Decazes thought this comment of such grave import that he ordered every French official

¹ Ibid., No. 193, Derby to Salisbury, Jan. 16, 1877. It is of note that the Turkish sentiments on these matters were delivered not to Salisbury who saw the need for these reforms, but to the British foreign office through Musurus Pasha, the ambassador to London. The Turks still felt that despite the statements of its representatives Britain would come to the support of Turkey in a showdown.

² DDF, II, No. 130, Decazes to Bourgoing, Jan. 6, 1877.

³ Ibid., No. 131, Decazes to all diplomats abroad, Jan. 8, 1877.

in all consulates to ascertain the true aims of the German foreign office but to make no revelations as to their purpose in making inquiries as to future German actions.¹

Meanwhile, the Turks were sullenly going their chosen path of refusing to give serious consideration even to the modified demands of the Great Powers. Safvet Pasha announced that there were still two points in the new demands which could not be accepted by the Porte. The insistence upon an International Commission to supervise the execution of reform measures and the provisions concerning the nomination of the Valis were listed as the chief stumbling blocks. Safvet maintained that to subject the nomination of government officials by the Sultan to the approval of the Great Powers would constitute a serious affront to the dignity of His Imperial Majesty and an insult to the sovereignty of the Turkish government. He privately predicted on January 16 that the General Council of the Porte would reject even the modified proposals.²

Three days later his prediction came true whereupon the British advised the Porte to come to a speedy agreement with Serbia and Montenegro in order to avoid the risk of hostile action by any of the Great Powers. This obviously meant Russia.³ The decision to end the conference was that of the delegates from the Great Powers and not that of Turkey. The final

¹Ibid., Schouvaloff told d'Harcourt that Bismarck must have been in bad humor. Chaudordy sent similar word. Ibid., No. 133, d'Harcourt to Decazes, Jan. 12, 1877. This must have been small comfort for the harried French foreign office. It does serve as a reminder though of how very sensitive the French were to any threat from across the Rhine. This sensitivity explains what Decazes meant when he spoke of the 'position' in which France found herself during these years.

²Turkey No. 1 (1877) No. 193, Derby to Salisbury, Jan. 16, 1877.

³Ibid., No. 201, Derby to Salisbury, Jan. 19, 1877.

decision of the General Council of the Ottoman Empire had been to reject the two clauses relating to the International Commission and the approval of the nomination of the Valis by the Great Powers. But at the same time, the Turkish General Council instructed the Turkish delegates to submit substitute measures for these two points. Instead of an International Commission, the Turks proposed to nominate two Moslems and two Christians to a commission and that they should be freely elected by the people. One of these commissions would be operative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the other in the provinces of the Danube. Each of these commissions would be invested with powers similar to those asked for the International Commission of the Great Powers.¹

Recognizing this device as merely another example of the deviousness of the Porte, the delegates of the Great Powers considered the rejection of their proposals by the Turkish Council as constituting an insuperable obstacle to any further negotiations. They thereupon declared their intention of leaving Constantinople.² The final word at the conference was given by Ignatiev who solemnly warned the Turks that their failure to meet the demands of the Great Powers did not absolve them from their responsibilities toward their Christian populations under the terms of the Treaty of Paris. He averred that the failure of the Porte to institute any real reforms would have the most serious consequences for the peace of Europe.³

Within one week the plenipotentiaries and the ambassadors to the

¹Hertslet, IV, 2548.

²Ibid., 2549; DDF, II, No. 135, Bourgoing to Decazes, Jan. 20, 1877.

³Ibid.

Porte had left Constantinople leaving only the consuls in charge of their diplomatic functions.¹ The Russians regarded the refusal of the Turkish government to accept the demands of the Conference as being a "box on the ears."² The Russians thought that the recent anti-French campaign in the German press was occasioned by both internal and diplomatic developments. German industry was considered to be in poor condition and unable to compete with other nations in the upcoming French industrial exposition. According to the Russian view, Germany could no longer sustain the burden of a large army since the indemnity of the Franco-Prussian War was now exhausted. She was becoming jealous of the prodigious wealth of France and the success of French military reorganization was causing uneasiness in German official circles. Le Flo commented that the Russians expressed the warmest regards for France while commenting upon the reports of the German press.³

Whether the Russians hoped to influence the French to support any future moves in the Balkans by these expressions of moral support is uncertain. One fact was clear, however, to the German chancellor, namely that the Russians would not side with France in the event of a new struggle between Germany and France. Bismarck realistically viewed the discomfiture of the Russian foreign office over the failure of the Constantinople Conference. He recognized that military action by Russia against Turkey was almost inevitable now unless Russia was willing to eat

¹ Ibid., No. 139, Le Flo to Decazes, Jan. 30, 1877. Elliot was recalled on leave and Salisbury of course departed since his mission was completed. This emphasized to the Turks that the British were not going to support them. Monypenny and Buckle, II, 986.

² DDF, II, No. 139; DGP, II, No. 274, Jan. 25, 1877.

³ DDF, II, No. 139.

crow by backing down. Such a course appeared to be highly unlikely since Pan-slavic sentiment was so strong. In addition the belligerent attitude assumed by General Ignatiev at the conference left little room for a graceful withdrawal. Knowing that Russia would require the neutrality of both Germany and Austria-Hungary in case of a Balkan invasion, Bismarck remained sure that, regardless of the sentiments which flowed from St. Petersburg and Moscow, Russia would have to follow a benevolent policy towards the Second Reich.¹

While the Great Powers were in deep contemplation over their diplomatic efforts during the Constantinople Conference, events in Turkey were continuing to keep the tension at high pitch. Even during the actual meetings in the capital, there had been recurring reports of incidents between Christians and Moslems throughout the Ottoman Empire. Complaints about the abuses of Turkish tax collectors, excessive floggings for punishments, assaults upon Christian girls were reportedly occurring during the first three weeks of December, 1876.² Violent religious fanaticism was increasing on both sides and the consuls of the Great Powers who were scattered throughout the various main cities of the Ottoman Empire reported that there was no fault to be found with the Turkish promises of reform if they would only put them into effect.³

Fires broke out in the business districts of cities showing the marks of arsonists and seemed to always to be centered in that section of town where the Christians owned the shops. Instances of the destruction

¹DGP, II, No. 273, Bismarck to Schweinitz, Jan. 24, 1877.

²Turkey No. 15 (1877) No. 5, Vice-consul Bilottie to Derby, Dec. 11, 1876; No. 2, Consul Skene to Derby, Dec. 14, 1876.

³Ibid., No. 1, Consul Barker to Derby, Dec. 16, 1876.

of over 800 buildings in one business quarter were reported.¹ The Christians accused the military forces stationed in these towns of being responsible for these outrages and of using the fires as an opportunity to rob and loot the shopkeepers. The Christians indicated that they had the most to fear from the lower officials of the Turkish government and the lesser army officers than from the general Moslem population.²

During the Christmas services in a Greek Orthodox Church near Aleppo, a group of Moslems entered the sanctuary and mimicked the voice and gestures of the priest ridiculing him and his faith. After the priest dismissed the services, he was severely beaten by them when he attempted to leave the church. At the same time, Turkish reservists brandished their way through the Christian quarter of Aleppo cursing the cross and threatening the Christians with future violations of their wives.³ The consular officials of the Great Powers thought at first that the Turkish officials could keep things under control, but by early January, 1877, the gross inefficiency of the local Turkish police departments and the injustices in the law courts led them to give up any hope of succor from Turkish sources. They reported that even the Turkish regular troops were beginning to give anti-Christian demonstrations.⁴

It was at this time that the uprising of the Mirdite peoples in the mountains of northern Albania yielded an example of the almost unbelievable ability of the Turkish government to procrastinate in meeting its

¹Ibid., No. 3, Consul Zohrab to Derby, Dec. 18, 1876; No. 9, Dec. 24, 1876.

²Ibid., No. 10, Id. to Id., Dec. 26, 1876.

³Ibid., No. 8, Consul Skene to Derby, Dec. 28, 1876.

⁴Ibid., No. 25, Skene to Elliot, Jan. 9, 1877; No. 12, Dec. 30, 1876.

obligations. This group was apparently led by a young Mirdite Roman Catholic priest who had been smuggled back into the country from Rome. He was encouraged by the Montenegrins and Nicholas aided him upon the urging of the Russian Slavic committees.¹ The basic reason for the discontent of these people was that the Turkish government had not paid them for their services in the Turkish militia during the Crimean War some 21 years before. In addition the Turks had long since promised certain grants to Prenk Bib Deda, their chieftain, but had never fulfilled these. Apparently the Turks felt that they could just ignore the Mirdites and pretend that no problem existed.² The Mirdites were quite vociferous in their complaints to the consuls of the Great Powers at Scutari, and reportedly were receiving several thousand pounds of money through the Russian consul, M. Jastreben, at this port city.³

By the end of January, the Mirdites were occupying the high roads passing through their mountainous district and were seizing prisoners including an envoy sent to them belatedly by the Turkish governor who was beginning to realize that this uprising might be serious.⁴ The Mirdites reportedly were still receiving large sums of money from abroad and hinted that they had been promised more funds for early spring.⁵ Rumors assigned the source of these funds to either Russia or Austria-Hungary. Russian efforts to stir up the Balkan peoples had almost become an

¹Ibid., No. 6, Consul Green to Derby, Dec. 31, 1876.

²Ibid., No. 4, Green to Derby, Dec. 23, 1876; No. 15, Green to Elliot, Jan. 12, 1877.

³Ibid., No. 22, Green to Elliot, Jan. 12, 1877.

⁴Ibid., No. 43, Green to Derby, Jan. 31, 1877.

⁵Ibid., No. 44, Green to Elliot, Jan. 22, 1877.

officially stated policy of St. Petersburg or at least of its Pan-slavic societies. On the other hand, Austria-Hungary had remained comparatively quiet on the diplomatic questions during the conference, but she was nevertheless protecting her interests in the adjacent Balkan areas. In January, 1877, she dispatched a reinforcement of 20,000 men into Dalmatia, and rumors increased that there was a standing offer for large rations of food for any Herzegovinans who would abandon their home and return to Austria. A Herzegovinan priest, Mussich, was reported as being free again and using Austrian territory to collect a band of his countrymen near Lysinanchke.¹

The sole accomplishment of the conference relative to these conditions was that of extending the armistice to March 1, 1877 between the Porte and Serbia and Montenegro.² The reaction of the Ottoman subjects when the conference closed its last session was generally one of anger. They felt that Europe wanted to impose humiliating conditions upon them and hatred for Russia rose to a high level. Enthusiasm for enlisting in the Turkish army was very great, and the general attitude of the Moslems was that they would rather fight than submit themselves and their nation to total disgrace.³

The Turks were also taking a serious look at their internal situation both financially and administratively. If they were likely to be engaged in a war with Russia, it behooved them to set their affairs in

¹Ibid., No. 90, Jocelyn to Derby, Jan. 31, 1877. Jocelyn had been left in charge of British affairs at Constantinople upon the departure of Elliot. Ibid., No. 21, Jocelyn to Derby, Jan. 25, 1877.

²Hertslet, IV, 2529.

³Turkey No. 15 (1877) No. 84, Bilotti to Derby, Jan. 22, 1877.

order. Their first appeal was to ask France to furnish a financier to the Porte who would superintend reforms in the Ottoman treasury. France was also asked to furnish officers and non-commissioned officers for the reorganization of the Turkish police force.¹ Sadik Pasha, the Ottoman ambassador to Paris, pressed these requests on Decazes explaining the necessity of having a nucleus of efficient police officers from which to improve and enlarge the local zaptiehs.

Decazes was willing to furnish an able financial officer to act as controller of Ottoman finances in conjunction with an English colleague. He at first suggested that the financial councillors among the French and British officers of the Imperial Ottoman Bank at Constantinople could handle the task, but Sadik pressed him to name persons of more prestige. He felt that the appointment of some outstanding persons would quiet the complaints about the failure of his government to effect necessary reforms. Decazes refused to appoint such a person at once and wanted more time to consider the matter. He declined absolutely to furnish any police officials without prior consultation with the other powers.²

The end of the conference without any agreement between the Powers and the Porte meant that the question of a peace treaty between the belligerents once again assumed importance. Following the attempts to bring in an outside expert for its internal reforms, the Porte extended feelers to the various capitals about coming to terms with Serbia and Montenegro. Decazes urged Turkey to lose no time in making a fair peace with these two countries since he felt that each passing day brought the March 1 deadline

¹Ibid., No. 24, Derby to Lyons, Jan. 26, 1877.

²Ibid., No. 26, Lyons to Derby, Jan. 26, 1877.

closer, and would only serve to increase the tension.¹ Both France and Great Britain sought to prepare the ground in Belgrade for the arrival of Pertew Effendi on a peace mission from the Porte.² The Grand Vizier asked these two powers to bring pressure upon Prince Milan in order to facilitate the negotiations. He threatened a Turkish occupation of Belgrade if peace were not accepted before the armistice expired, in which case the terms demanded of Serbia would necessarily be more stringent due to the public attention which an extension of the conflict would arouse.³

Midhat Pasha had no intention of appointing Christian governors to the provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina alleging that he was unable to find suitable men for these posts. The Turkish plans called for Herzegovina to be included with Bosnia for administrative purposes and the appointment of Constant Effendi, a Christian, to the post of Mustcchar.⁴ Meanwhile the Serbian foreign minister, M. Ristitch, sent a favourable reply to the Grand Vizier concerning the peace feelers. Actually the Serbs were in no condition to continue the conflict even with the respite they had gained since the imposition of the armistice. Their finances were shattered to such an extent that it had been necessary to reduce the salaries of their top government officials to a bare subsistence level.⁵

The Turks announced that they did not intend to seek any advantages in the consequence of their military successes in Serbia, and that they

¹Ibid., No. 27, Id. to Id., Jan. 26, 1877.

²Ibid., No. 29, Derby to Jocelyn, Jan. 27, 1877.

³Ibid., No. 86, Jocelyn to Derby, Jan. 28, 1877.

⁴A Mustcchar was an official who operated as a councillor to the governor general of Turkish provinces. Ibid., No. 87, Jocelyn to Derby, Jan. 28, 1877.

⁵Ibid., No. 97, St. John to Derby, Jan. 29, 1877.

were ready to make peace on the basis of the status quo ante bellum. They did desire that Serbia should bind herself with certain guarantees to Turkey, namely that she would not attack the Ottoman Empire nor align herself with any nation in the event of war against Turkey. The Serbs objected to these provisions arguing that if there were guarantees of any kind it would be the status quo.¹

Serbia applied to France and Italy for their good offices in negotiating the peace treaty. Decazes considered the question of guarantees which the Turks were seeking as being wholly inadmissible.² Andrassy regretted that the Porte had requested any guarantees and urged the Turks to drop these before entering into negotiations. The Porte replied that the guarantees would only apply to the period of the armistice and that they were necessary to prevent any interruptions in the negotiations for the final peace settlement. Andrassy urged Turkey to initiate its reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina before the Austrian parliament opened its meetings on February 8 so as to make the general sentiment in his country more favorably inclined towards the Porte.³

When Serbia and Montenegro informed Russia of the peace overtures from Turkey, the St. Petersburg foreign office announced that it could neither give any advice nor assist them in any way. Gortchakov inferred that Serbia and Montenegro were to be guided by their own individual interests in the negotiations.⁴ While the Serbs were inquiring of the power

¹Ibid., No. 62, Buchanan to Derby, Jan. 29, 1877; Nos. 41 and 42, Derby to St. John, Jan. 31, 1877.

²Ibid., No. 40, St. John to Derby, Jan. 31, 1877.

³Ibid., No. 63, Buchanan to Derby, Jan. 30, 1877.

⁴Ibid., No. 68, Loftus to Derby, Jan. 29, 1877.

most friendly to them, the Turks dispatched Odian Effendi to London to ascertain the position of their 'friend' at court. The English position towards the Porte was the same as Russia's vis-a-vis Serbia. Both Russia and Britain were now washing their hands of events in the Balkans, at least on the surface. Underneath each continued its moral support to the opposing negotiations carried on by the participants. Despite the views expressed by Lord Salisbury during the Constantinople Conference which were pro-Russian if anything, the general opinion in diplomatic circles was that Sir Henry Elliot more nearly uttered the true sentiments of the London cabinet. Elliot had consistently championed the Turkish cause.¹

The period from November 1, 1876 until the end of January, 1877 witnessed another series of frustrations for the Great Powers. Although the fighting between Serbia, Montenegro and Turkey had been brought to a halt, the number of incidents involving mistreatment of Christians within the Ottoman Empire had increased. As Turkish nationalism was fanned to a brighter flame by the affront to the nation presented by the preliminary meeting of the delegates in their capital without native representatives being present, the hatred of Christians which was always latent among the Moslems was expressed in more violent terms. As this feeling became more widespread among the subjects of the Sultan, it served to strengthen his hand in refusing to grant any reforms which would be considered as having been imposed by Europe. Under such circumstances, it was highly unlikely that whatever the Constantinople Conference recommended or demanded of the Porte that the Turks would or could have placed them in operation. Abdul Hamid, playing the game of politics expertly, had supported the reforming group led by Midhat Pasha merely to gain access to the throne,

¹DGP, II, No. 275, Hohenlohe to Bismarck, Feb. 4, 1877.

and once there, he resorted to the same devious policy of playing one European power off against another. The spectacular proclamation and timing of the new liberal constitution was a master stroke of duplicity, for it not only stole the thunder from the plenipotentiaries, but indirectly stirred the old Moslem Party, which was strongly reactionary in its domestic policies and virulently nationalistic in foreign affairs, to rouse itself from its lethargy. Its support of the Sultan's policy during 1877 was aimed at re-establishing the old society of the nineteenth century by eliminating the liberal constitution of December, 1876. At the same time it could be counted on to support the Sultan in his policy of restricting any change in the territorial or administrative prerogatives of the Empire.

The adamant stand of the Turkish government created serious problems for the French foreign office. While the Bulgarian massacres had caused a decided shift in British public opinion towards aligning itself with Russia in carrying out some program of efficacious reform within the Ottoman Empire, the British foreign office still held aloof from exerting any pressure upon the Turks to give in to the demands of the Great Powers. Whether the British were as aloof as the Turks assumed them to be was really immaterial, because whenever the question arose of taking concrete steps to force a program upon the Turks, British silence was accepted as opposition by the other Powers. Russia was still highly frustrated over matters in the Ottoman Empire. The military defeat of the Serbians had placed her in a somewhat embarrassing position since all that she could now demand at the conference was the original program of the Andrassy Note. The open role in the Serbian conflict played by Russian volunteers and officers plus the activity of the Pan-slavic committees was clear

evidence of Russian designs to hasten the demise of Ottoman control in Europe.

This period and its agonizing quibbling over minor points of boundaries and the rights of Christians only served to paint a picture which was highly disturbing to officials of the Quai d'Orsay. The French aim of preserving friendship between Russia and Great Britain was given no great critical threat or trial in these months, but the suggestions of Bismarck to Salisbury that Great Britain should take Egypt and prepare for military action against the Slav power caused much distress in Paris. The question in Paris was to know what was the ultimate purpose of the German chancellor. If he encouraged Russia to move on Turkey and mentioned Balkan acquisitions for Austria-Hungary, and Egypt for Great Britain, what did he have in mind for Germany? The anti-French campaign in the German press early in 1877 only added fuel to the flames of gnawing doubt in the French foreign office. The overall reassurances of the Kaiser and his chancellor did little to soothe the ruffled feelings of the men in Paris.¹

¹DDF, II, No. 136, Decazes to Gontaut-Biron, Jan. 23, 1877.

CHAPTER VI

THE BREAKDOWN OF NEGOTIATIONS

The rejection of the Constantinople Conference by Turkey left Europe still confronted with the two major problems which that meeting had failed to solve. Turkey was still at war with Serbia and Montenegro and the mistreatment of Christians in the Balkan provinces was continuing unabated. The situation was not the same as before the conference, however, since public opinion in Europe as a whole had shifted markedly in favor of some action being taken in the Eastern Question. Turkish public opinion felt that the exodus of the ambassadors was tantamount to a declaration of war, and whereas the Turks had expected to fight Russia at some time, they had now to contend with the eventuality of a struggle against all Europe.¹

The Sultan was disillusioned with the plans of Midhat Pasha to weaken the demands of the Great Powers by granting a liberal constitution and wide-ranging reforms. On February 5, he dismissed Midhat and replaced him with Edhem Pasha who represented the conservative Moslem interests.² Decazes believed that the dropping of Midhat should have convinced London that it was illusory to expect the Turkish government to reform.³

¹Turkey No. 15 (1877) No. 207, Bilotti to Derby, Feb. 7, 1877.

²Ibid., No. 107, Jocelyn to Derby, Feb. 6, 1877.

³DDF, II, No. 141, Decazes to d'Harcourt, Feb. 7, 1877. Another aspect of Midhat's dismissal was furnished by Andrassy who reported that Midhat was considering an offer to Montenegro to extend its frontier towards the Sutorina. Austria would have objected to this possibility most strenuously. Turkey No. 15 (1877) No. 103, Buchanan to Derby, Feb. 5, 1877.

Despite this apparent setback to any solid reform program, Count Schouvaloff, Russian ambassador to Great Britain, thought it might be possible for the Turks to adopt some reform measures proposed by the conference when it could do so without the appearance of acting under pressure. Being fully aware that Russia could not make suggestions of this nature to the Porte, he requested the British to exert their influence towards this end.¹ In response to the subsequent request from London, the Turkish government asked to be left alone and spared any further humiliation. Their officials pointed out that they were proceeding with a program of reform which included the establishment of a new gendarmerie composed of both Christians and Moslems, a requirement for licensing the carrying of arms, and a decision not to utilize irregular troops unless absolutely necessary.²

A week later, Derby presented Schouvaloff two copies of the reforms which the Turks were allegedly instituting. The Turks hoped that this would create a good impression in Russia.³ The general efforts of Schouvaloff and Derby to gloss over the realities of the situation in the Balkans were of little avail at this juncture. Schouvaloff painfully pointed out to Derby, and later to Decazes, that his nation was in a position of considerable difficulty since it cost a large sum to maintain the Russian armies on their present scale. He indicated that the Tsar could not order demobilization unless it could be demonstrated that some concrete gains had accrued by the original mobilization order. The

¹Ibid., No. 92, Derby to Loftus, Feb. 9, 1877.

²Ibid., No. 96, Derby to Jocelyn, Feb. 11, 1877; No. 124, Derby to Loftus, Feb. 15, 1877.

³Ibid., No. 177, Derby to Loftus, Feb. 22, 1877.

activities of the Pan-slavists and an aroused Russian public opinion meant that the Turks would have to take clear and definite steps to protect Christian populations before the Russians could even consider demobilization.¹ Intelligence reports from the Balkans contained estimates of a Russian army numbering 500,000 ready for action as soon as the weather permitted large scale military movement.²

The overall actions of the Turkish government in February indicated that it was still thinking of the unrest in the Balkan provinces as being of local significance. Whether this feeling was the result of Turkish assumptions that Great Britain would offset Russian pressure is uncertain, but the Sultan apparently was determined to handle the difficulties in his own fashion regardless of European opinion. Herzegovina was again annexed to the Vilayet of Bosnia and Constant Pasha, an Armenian known for his brusque and brutal methods, was appointed Mustcchar to the governor-general.³ A new constitution had been promulgated for Bulgaria on December 4, 1876 but no one had any faith in its stipulations. Its exemption of Christians from military service was particularly aggravating to the Moslems, and the presence of eighty to ninety thousand Turkish troops in the province created an explosive situation since the Bulgarians were not permitted arms.⁴

At the end of January, 1877 when the Grand Vizier posted notices that nobody could carry arms unless specifically authorized by the

¹Ibid., No. 167, Derby to Loftus, Feb. 21, 1877.

²Ibid., No. 189, Id. to Id., Feb. 26, 1877.

³Ibid., No. 45, Musurus Pasha to Derby, Feb. 1, 1877.

⁴Ibid., No. 51, Salisbury to Derby, Jan. 26, 1877. Information based on reports of British military observer, Captain R. E. Ardagh.

authorities, Prince Nicholas of Montenegro retaliated by refusing any further provisioning of Turkish garrisons through his country.¹ In addition the state of affairs in Miridicia was becoming daily more serious, and a steady stream of reports indicated that the insurrection was likely to spread rapidly and link up with a similar movement in Albania.²

Later in the month when the British suggested to Decazes that he join their efforts to quiet the disturbance, he refused to so instruct the French consul at Scutari. Decazes said that he had given the most serious advice to the Porte on the Miridacian situation since the first of the year. He therefore thought that it was useless to continue such meaningless expositions.³ After the Constantinople conference, Decazes had completely lost faith in any Turkish promises of reform. The instructions given to Count Chaudordy prior to the conference had been given only after careful study of the situation in the Ottoman Empire, and not merely with hope, but with real expectation that some solid accomplishments would be achieved which would lessen the danger of an explosion in the Near East. The failure of the conference and the miserable condition of the Christians in the Balkans would have been sufficient grounds for France to have withdrawn completely from the negotiations, but the insistent complacency of the Sultan's government in refusing to assume any positive policy in enforcing logical reforms convinced Decazes that some military action by Russia was unavoidable.⁴

¹Ibid., No. 110, Freeman to Derby, Jan. 30, 1877 from Bosna-Serai; No. 111, Jan. 31, 1877.

²Ibid., Green to Derby, No. 57, Feb. 3, 1877; No. 126, Green to Derby, Feb. 5, 1877.

³Ibid., No. 210, Lyons to Derby, Feb. 27, 1877.

⁴DDF, II, Decazes to d'Harcourt, Feb. 7, 1877.

The International Commission of Control which had been appointed in March, 1876 to watch over the execution of the promised reforms was finally dissolved in February, 1877. The results of its efforts were absolutely nil. No attention had been paid to the commission's recommendations, and the governor-general of Bosnia, Ibrahim Pasha, as well as his successor, Nasif Pasha, were always in opposition to the leader of the commission, Haidar Effendi. The latter had been recalled to Constantinople after the conference ended, and this was interpreted by the Great Powers as a defiant gesture by the Sublime Porte.¹

While the Turks were unwilling to make any improvement in the general conditions of life for their subject peoples in the Balkan provinces, they did show a willingness to negotiate an end to the war with Serbia and Montenegro. The armistice which had been extended at the Constantinople Conference was due to expire on March 1. The suggestions of Decazes and Derby that the Turks should settle their differences with these two principalities apparently had some effect.²

The Turks stipulated that the bases for negotiation should include: Serbian guarantees not to permit the formation of revolutionary committees, equal civil and religious privileges for Jews and Armenians, guarantees not to increase the number of fortresses, and that an agent of the Porte be installed at Belgrade permanently.³ While Prince Milan was certainly in no condition to question the terms since his defeated armies were still

¹Turkey No. 15 (1877) No. 112, Freeman to Derby, Feb. 1, 1877.

²Ibid., No. 56, White to Derby, Feb. 2, 1877. White was the British consul at Belgrade and worked in close conjunction with the French consul, M. Kerjegu, throughout these years.

³Ibid., No. 74, Jocelyn to Derby, Feb. 6, 1877.

disorganized and ill-equipped, the Serbs did object to the provisions relating to the treatment of minorities and the establishment of a Turkish agent in their capital city. Milan was supported in this position by Gortchakov although the Russians insisted officially that Serbia and Montenegro would have to settle their differences with Turkey the best way they could.¹

The negotiations dragged on through the month of February, interrupted by the dismissal of Midhat Pasha which necessitated the recall of his special envoy to Belgrade, Pertew Eliendi, and the appointment of a new Turkish delegate. The peace talks were further hampered by pressures exerted from London and St. Petersburg.² By the nineteenth of the month the question of the treatment of Jews in Serbia had been practically settled with the Turks agreeing that the Serbian legislature should take definite action in this regard at a later date. At this point Derby urged the Turks to drop their demands for the agent at Belgrade and on February 27 the Porte gave way.³ The Serbs had objected strongly to the positioning of a Turkish agent in their midst, and M. Ristich, chief advisor to Prince Milan and highly influential in Serbian political circles, believed that the Serbian Assembly would reject the peace treaty if this were included.⁴

With these objectionable features of the negotiations removed, the Skuptschina voted unanimously on Febtuary 28 in favor of the peace and

¹Ibid., No. 146, Loftus to Derby, Feb. 12, 1877.

²Ibid., No. 75, White to Derby, Feb. 6, 1877.

³Ibid., No. 149, Jocelyn to Derby, Feb. 19, 1877; No. 195, Derby to Musurus Pasha, Feb. 27, 1877; No. 198, Jocelyn to Derby, Feb. 27, 1877.

⁴Ibid., No. 194, Jocelyn to Derby, Feb. 26, 1877; No. 191, Derby to White, Feb. 26, 1877; No. 180, White to Derby, Feb. 16, 1877.

immediately adjourned.¹ The protocol of the treaty signed on the same day provided that the Ottoman flag was to fly with the Serbian flag at Belgrade. The Serbs were not to rebuild any fortifications, secret revolutionary societies were to be banned, and religious liberty was to be guaranteed to all minority groups.² Prince Milan proclaimed the signing of the treaty on March 5 and excused his failure to accomplish the aims contained in the declaration of war the previous July by alleging that the fate of the Christian subjects of the Porte was now in other hands.³

Negotiations with Montenegro, however, were much more difficult and with the end of the truce set for March 1, the Turks proposed an extension of the armistice until March 21.⁴ The only positive accomplishment of their negotiations was a convention signed on February 7 to provide for the transportation of provisions and medical supplies to the Turkish garrisons at Nisch and Rieka.⁵ Any progress towards a complete peace was delayed at least two full weeks over quibbling as to the place of negotiations. Prince Nicholas of Montenegro suggested Vienna as a suitable site, but the Grand Vizier objected, whereupon Nicholas indicated that Cattaro would be his next choice. The Porte likewise objected to this location so Nicholas agreed finally to send two representatives to Constantinople and treat directly with the Porte.⁶

¹Ibid., No. 199, St. John to Derby, Feb. 28, 1877.

²Hertslet, IV, 2553-2558.

³Ibid., 2561-2562.

⁴Turkey No. 15 (1877), No. 200, Jocelyn to Derby, Feb. 28, 1877.

⁵Hertslet, IV, 2551-2552.

⁶Turkey No. 15 (1877), No. 80, Monson to Derby, Feb. 7, 1877; No. 95, Feb. 11, 1877. His two appointees were V. B. Petrovich, President of the Senate, and V. S. Radonich, Senator and Head of the Foreign Affairs Chancery. No. 222, Monson to Derby, Feb. 20, 1877.

In agreeing to send his delegates to Constantinople Nicholas pointed out that he was doing so only on the insistence and encouragement of the Western Powers, and he expected them to put pressure on the Turkish government to grant his territorial demands.¹ Nicholas had agreed originally to negotiate on the basis of the status quo ante bellum with some rectification of the frontiers in his favor.²

During the first week of March the Montenegrin delegates finally arrived by steamer at Constantinople and opened negotiations with the Porte. They demanded that the recommendations of the Constantinople Conference regarding Montenegro's borders be accepted and also claimed some territory around the Lake of Scutari. They demanded free navigation of the Boiana and that the Turks undertake necessary steps to make the river navigable to at least small vessels. In addition, they asked the Turks to provide homes for the restoration of some 80,000 Herzegovinians to their native land. The Montenegrin delegates maintained a determined front and insisted from the outset that any difficulty raised over territory around Nischich would force them to break off negotiations at once.³

It was apparent that the Montenegrins believed that they had fared rather well in the war with Turkey and that the Turks would hasten to make a treaty in order to prepare for the expected Russian onslaught with the coming of spring. The Porte's immediate reaction was considerably less than Nicholas had hoped to obtain. It only offered a small adjustment of the frontier between Montenegro and Herzegovina and demanded some

¹Ibid., No. 128, Monson to Derby, Feb. 16, 1877; No. 129, Feb. 16, 1877.

²Ibid., No. 80, Id. to Id., Feb. 7, 1877.

³Ibid., No. 240, Musurus Pasha to Derby, Mar. 6, 1877; No. 242, Jocelyn to Derby, Mar. 8, 1877.

territory south of Montenegro in return.¹ To make matters worse and add insult to their refusal, the Turks appointed Moukhtar Pasha and Constant Pasha as the representatives to deal with the Montenegrin envoys.²

The choice of Moukhtar Pasha was certain to bring a strong reaction from Nicholas since he had been in command of the Turkish forces which had been defeated by the insurgents in Herzegovina and later by the Montenegrins. Nicholas was chagrined at the news of their appointment and pointed out to the representatives of the Great Powers that this indicated that the Porte had no desire to negotiate in a friendly spirit.³ Nicholas adamantly stood his ground and flatly declared that he would not make peace with the Porte under any circumstances unless he obtained Nisch and the Douga Pass in the north and the Kutchi district on the southwestern frontier.⁴ Moukhtar's argument that Nisch was necessary to the defense of the southern half of Herzegovina was without basis and the French and British consuls in Cettinje believed that he was continuing to cover up his miserable military performance in Herzegovina the previous year.⁵

The Porte again refused to grant any of the demands of Nicholas and by the middle of March the negotiations were deadlocked. Nicholas said that although he knew any agreement was impossible he would keep his delegates at Constantinople in hopes that the Great Powers could make the

¹Ibid., No. 249, Jocelyn to Derby, Mar. 10, 1877.

²Ibid., No. 242, Id. to Id., Mar. 6, 1877.

³Ibid., No. 345, Monson to Derby, Mar. 11, 1877.

⁴Ibid., No. 346, Id. to Id., Mar. 11, 1877.

⁵Ibid., No. 375, Monson to Derby, Mar. 13, 1877; No. 359, Jocelyn to Derby, Mar. 15, 1877. Jocelyn was more favorable to Moukhtar's point of view.

Porte see the reasonableness of his requests. The Turkish parliament opened on March 19 with a speech by the Sultan, and three days later Nicholas made a final demand for Nicksich and the Kutchi district. The Porte again refused, but agreed to submit his proposals to the ministerial council and then to the parliament.¹

The impasse in these negotiations involved most of the Great Powers in the argument over a few square miles of territory and the right of navigation over a minor river which was not even navigable at the time. The two contestants each implored the major countries to intervene diplomatically on their behalf. Nicholas was supported generally by both Austria-Hungary and Russia, while Great Britain acted on behalf of the Porte. France maintained a strict neutrality although her sympathies lay with Montenegro. Gortchakov declared that Turkey was treating Montenegro as if she was a vassal state and this alone would make the conclusion of a peace treaty absolutely impossible.² The Porte wanted all the powers to pressure Nicholas to drop his demands and offered to disarm at once if the Great Powers would guarantee her from attack by Russia.³ The Turks pointed out that they could not negotiate away any territory to Montenegro since the Treaty of Paris of 1856 provided that Turkey could not alienate any territory without the express consent of the Great Powers.⁴ Reports emanated from St. Petersburg that if the negotiations were broken off between the Porte and Montenegro and their war renewed, Russia would enter

¹Ibid., No. 344, Monson to Derby, Mar. 10, 1877; No. 373, Jocelyn to Derby, Mar. 25, 1877; No. 361, 362, Jocelyn to Derby, Mar. 22, 1877; No. 326, Mar. 19, 1877.

²Ibid., No. 329, Derby to Loftus, Mar. 20, 1877.

³Ibid., No. 286, Derby to Jocelyn, Mar. 14, 1877.

⁴Ibid.

the conflict.¹

Perhaps with this in mind, Gortchakov requested Nicholas to be moderate in his demands. While this was undoubtedly the official stand taken by the Russian government, Nicholas warned that if he needed help against the Turks should the negotiations break down, that the Russian Slavic Committees would come to his aid.² Derby requested his representatives in the Balkans to use their influence to make the Turks more conciliatory, but without avail. The only concrete accomplishment during the entire month of negotiations in March was to extend the armistice to the first of April and subsequently to April 13.³

Toward the last of the month, the pressures from Great Britain, Austria-Hungary, and Russia upon Nicholas to moderate his demands bore fruit to the extent that he gave way on several minor points. He still insisted upon the navigation of the Boiana and control of Lake Scutari as well as Nischich.⁴ As March wore on and spring came ever closer the acrimonious maneuvering between the Porte and Montenegro became interwoven into the broader fabric of European diplomacy as well as into the immediate future of the peoples in the Balkans.⁵ The problem of bringing

¹Ibid., No. 382, Loftus to Derby, Mar. 21, 1877.

²Ibid., No. 318, Id. to Id., Mar. 14, 1877; No. 391, Monson to Derby, Mar. 18, 1877.

³Ibid., No. 307, Derby to Jocelyn, Mar. 17, 1877; No. 348, Musurus to Derby, Mar. 21, 1877.

⁴Ibid., No. 388, Monson to Derby, Mar. 17, 1877; No. 408, Mar. 27, 1877; No. 312, Derby to Buchanan, Mar. 18, 1877.

⁵Ibid., No. 387, Derby to Jocelyn, Mar. 26, 1877. It was apparent that Nicholas had over 100 of the leading men in Herzegovina in Cettigne. With spring approaching, it meant that the negotiations would have to end soon, or their return home would be too late for planting the crops. Since these 100 men controlled over 80,000 refugee families, the course of the negotiations meant either a harvest or starvation.

peace to the Balkans as a whole enveloped the Turko-Montenegrin dispute and eventually forced it into merely an aside to the main show which involved far greater forces. The chief vehicle which concerned the diplomats of Europe during the months of February and March was the circular of Prince Gortchakov.

This circular had been issued late in January when it became apparent that the Constantinople Conference would be barren of any concrete results. It recapitulated the Andrassy Note, the Berlin Memorandum, and the conference itself. Gortchakov pointed out that "after more than a year of diplomatic efforts attesting the importance attached by the Great Powers to the pacification of the East" the situation remained the same as before. He commented upon the aggravations by bloodshed, heated passions, accumulated ruin, and the prospect of an indefinite prolongation of the deplorable state of affairs in the Balkans which now distressed Europe. Gortchakov demanded that Russia needed to know the "limits within which the Cabinets... are willing to act in common."¹

Whether Gortchakov was sincere in hoping for continued unity of action by the Great Powers or whether he was merely playing for time is uncertain, but at any rate the response of the various European cabinets suggested anything but a desire for positive or immediate action. Bismarck indicated that he wished more time before giving any answer to the Russian demands.² Derby excused Great Britain by alleging that conditions had changed since the circular had been issued and replied that his government would await the outcome of the pending peace negotiations between

¹Turkey No. 8 (1877) Circular of Prince Gortchakov.

²Turkey No. 15 (1877) No. 141, Derby to Russell, Feb. 17, 1877.

Turkey, Serbia, and Montenegro.¹ Andrassy expressed sympathy with the moderate tone of the Russian note and hoped that some agreement might be reached.² Decazes first requested the British view on the circular and then asked for more time to consider the matter. He recognized the legitimacy of Russian interests in the affairs of the Balkans and expressed the belief that if peace were not negotiated by the Porte by March 1, that Russia would be entitled to say that she could no longer stand by and see further bloodshed and could take military action.³

Following this response from the European cabinets, the imperial council met in Russia where the struggle between the peace party and the war party lasted until the last of February and served to embitter the relations between Gortchakov and Ignatiev.⁴ As no definite decision was obtained, the Tsar decided to send a special envoy to tour the major capitals in order to ascertain just how far the Great Powers would be willing to support strong measures against the Porte. The decision to send General Ignatiev was tantamount to foredooming the mission to failure since he was extremely disliked in London, and without approval from Great Britain any protocol would be meaningless since Britain was the chief prop under the tottering government of the Porte.⁵

¹Ibid., No. 124, Derby to Loftus, Feb. 15, 1877.

²Ibid., No. 194, Buchanan to Derby, Feb. 8, 1877.

³Ibid., No. 93, Lyons to Derby, Feb. 9, 1877; No. 137, Feb. 16, 1877.

⁴The peace party was headed by Reutern, Valuev, and Timashev. Reutern, the finance minister, pointed out the sheer impossibility of conducting a war in view of Russian finances. The minister of war, Milyutin, delivered a memo which although contradictory in nature, came out fully for military action. Summer, p. 255-260.

⁵Ibid., p. 260-261.

Actually, Ignatiev was instructed not to visit London except with special telegraphic permission of the Tsar. Although this permission was eventually given, it indicated the lack of confidence which St. Petersburg had in the general's mission.¹ Decazes announced that Ignatiev was going abroad to see an oculist and that he would consult with the various governments concerning the circular.² Ignatiev arrived in Berlin on March 4 and held a lengthy conference with Bismarck and another with Kaiser Wilhelm I.³ Ignatiev assured the German chancellor that Russia was firmly resolved to maintain her cordial relations with Germany and denied that his country was drawing any closer to France. He discounted the press intrigues of Count Chaudordy in the course of his conversations in Berlin. Bismarck assured Ignatiev of Germany's benevolent neutrality in the event of war in the Balkans and offered his services in advance to prevent any hostile coalition from being formed against Russia. Ignatiev departed from Berlin feeling that things were going well indeed.⁴

On March 9 the general arrived in Paris and changed tactics, speaking of the possibility of Russia going on a peace footing if the Great Powers would sign a protocol to complete the unfinished business of the Constantinople Conference. He constantly berated the Turks describing them as being too dissolute to carry out any responsible policy. While in Paris, Ignatiev met with Prince Orlov, Russian ambassador to France,

¹Ibid., p. 263.

²Turkey No. 15 (1877) No. 224, Lyons to Derby, Mar. 2, 1877.

³DGP, II, No. 276, 278. Both mentioned the length of Ignatiev's comments as being extraordinary. Bismarck was privately pleased to listen to one Russian condemn Gortchakov in vehement terms. The rancor of the War Scare of 1875 was still in his mind.

⁴Ibid., No. 279, Bülow to Schweinitz, Mar. 8, 1877.

and Count Schouvaloff who had been in Paris since March 5. Schouvaloff's presence was due to his fear that Ignatiev's appearance in London would only make negotiations with Great Britain more difficult since both Derby and Disraeli were disposed against him.¹

Decazes was hopeful that a complete understanding could be reached between London and the Russian ambassadors. He felt that the Russian demands were moderate and that together with the pressures being exerted at the Porte by Layard and de Mouy that it was still possible to arrive at a peaceful solution to the Balkan questions.² The British were well aware of the French position and Lord Derby kept d'Harcourt, French ambassador to London, fully informed as to the content of the Russian proposals to the British government.³ Britain seemed ready to agree in principle to a moderate protocol embodying the demands of the Great Powers provided that an understanding could be reached upon the details.⁴

Britain demanded three things from Russia before agreeing to the protocol: a formal pledge by Russia to disarm, the exclusion of the Porte from participation, and an agreement from the other powers before the terms of the protocol could be considered as settled.⁵ Ignatiev finally arrived in Great Britain as the guest of Lord Salisbury, and together with Schouvaloff objected to the British demands for Russian disarmament since

¹DDF, II, No. 142, Gontaut-Biron to Decazes, Mar. 7, 1877; No. 143, Decazes to d'Harcourt, Mar. 9, 1877; Turkey No. 15 (1877) No. 247, Lyons to Derby, Mar. 9, 1877.

²DDF, II, No. 143, Decazes to d'Harcourt, Mar. 9, 1877.

³Turkey No. 15 (1877) No. 308, Derby to Lyons, Mar. 17, 1877.

⁴Turkey No. 8 (1877) No. 5, Derby to Loftus, Mar. 13, 1877.

⁵Turkey No. 15 (1877) No. 280, Id. to Id., Mar. 13, 1877.

this would let Turkey go free in ignoring the demands for reform. They said that Russia would be willing to disarm only if the Porte should take the initiative by sending a delegate to St. Petersburg, if peace should be concluded with Montenegro, and if Turkish reforms were undertaken at once and efficaciously.¹

Bismarck was agreeable to the Russian demands and advised Great Britain that the rumors abroad that Germany was seeking a quarrel with France as an excuse for military action were without any basis whatsoever. Court Münster, German ambassador to London, relayed this message to d'Harcourt, but refused to make this statement in public when the French minister so requested.² The specter of German aggression against France had been raised again after Ignatiev had left Berlin earlier in the month. Bismarck was reported as saying that: "I have no pretensions against France. She does not have a Bohemia to tempt us or colonies which we envy. But she will not accept the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine to Germany. She is silently preparing to retake them and I must strike first." French sources from Berlin reported that Bismarck spoke quite nervously about French rearmament in his talks with Ignatiev and seemed particularly concerned with French cavalry movements.³ Bismarck now felt that official assurances to Great Britain of his peaceful intentions would serve to hasten British acceptance of Russia's draft protocol.

The other member of the Dreikaiserbund, Austria-Hungary, refused to make any official statement concerning the protocol until the final text

¹Ibid., No. 338, Id. to Id., Mar. 21, 1877.

²DDF, II, No. 147, d'Harcourt to Decazes, Mar. 17, 1877.

³Ibid., No. 142, Gontaut-Biron to Decazes, Mar. 7, 1877.

had been settled. Subsequently, she signed the document in London with little objection.¹ At the same time, Emperor Franz Joseph discounted German military aggression. He was deeply impressed with the extent of the military preparedness of France and indicated his respect for the French government which despite its profound divisions of political parties seemed to be held together by the quality of patriotism.²

On March 24, 1877, Kaiser Wilhem I celebrated his eightieth birthday in Berlin. Bismarck took this occasion to assure the French ambassador that he had no designs whatever upon France. He discounted the exaggerated reports in the German press as being totally unreliable. Gontaut-Biron reported that Bismarck's peaceful manner impressed him more than his words, and felt that perhaps nothing more serious would develop out of the current rumors.³

Meanwhile the British and Russians had succeeded in compiling a joint statement which became officially known as the London Protocol of March 31, 1877. Each of the Great Powers attached their signature to this document although three signed with reservations. In general, the protocol contained exhortations to the Turks to carry out reforms on behalf of the Christian populations of the provinces, a recommendation to grant Montenegro free navigation of the Boiana River, and some adjustments of her frontiers, and an invitation to the Porte to reduce its armaments to a

¹Turkey No. 15 (1877) No. 309, Derby to Buchanan, Mar. 17, 1877.

²DDF, II, No. 148, de Vögue to Decazes, Mar. 20, 1877. Such a viewpoint was certainly understandable for a monarch with such divergent national groups under his rule.

³Ibid., No. 149, Gontaut-Biron to Decazes, Mar. 24, 1877. It was on this occasion that Bismarck described France as being two nations in one: rural France which wanted peace, and Paris which loved rumors and war.

peacetime footing. It further provided that the Great Powers intended to watch carefully through their diplomatic representatives at the Porte and in the provinces the manner in which the promised reforms were carried out. The protocol concluded by reserving to the Great Powers freedom of action in the event that the Turks failed to follow through on the reforms.¹

Count Schouvaloff appended a statement for Russia requesting Turkey to send a special delegate to St. Petersburg to treat of disarmament if she was serious in her promises of reform. His statement included a threat that if any further massacres occurred, this would automatically stop any Russian demobilization.² Derby's contribution to the confusion stated that the protocol would be considered null and void by Great Britain if reciprocal disarmament on the part of Russia and Turkey did not follow.³ I. F. Menabrea signed for Italy with the understanding that his country would consider itself bound only so long as the agreement between all the powers was maintained.⁴

For all the diplomatic maneuvering which preceded the signing of the London Protocol, it actually did nothing to solve the problems facing Europe. The Turks were still delaying the implementation of the reforms promised in numerous official decrees of the Sultan, and the Russians were still demanding specific measures be taken prior to ordering demobilization of her vast army. Ignatiev himself was highly displeased with the

¹Hertslet, IV, 2563-2565.

²Ibid., 2566.

³Ibid., 2567; Turkey No. 8 (1877) No. 7, Derby to Loftus, Mar. 31, 1877.

⁴Hertslet, IV, 2567.

polite tones of the final document and attacked it for not listing specific demands on the Turkish government.¹

The other major issue still unsettled was the question of peace with Montenegro. Decazes recognized the gentle treatment accorded to Turkey in the Protocol and urged the Porte to conclude peace at once with Montenegro and to enter into conversations with Russia on the subject of mutual disarmament. He wanted his representatives to the Porte to associate themselves with other consuls who were pressing this point of view upon the minister of foreign affairs, Safvet Pasha.² Decazes was generally in favor of the Protocol recommendations that Montenegro be given some territory and free navigation of the Boiana. He was hoping to utilize the London document as a means of eliminating the possibility of war between Great Britain and Russia. The highly ambiguous character of the London Protocol and its modifications made his chances very slim indeed.

Had Decazes been aware of the moves of the Russian government during the two months after the Constantinople Conference, he would have given up hope entirely. Secret agreements with Austria-Hungary had freed Russia from any recurrence of her Crimean War isolation, and the next step, to gain permission for the transport of her troops through Rumania, was already under way. The threat of taking Bessarabia was used against Prince Carol of Rumania during March,³ but the course of events made this unnecessary in April. Although Decazes was ignorant of the Budapest agreement between Austria-Hungary and Russia, he knew that Bismarck was giving

¹Sumner, p. 267.

²DDF, II, No. 151, Decazes to de Mouy, April 1, 1877.

³Ibid., No. 150, Debains to Decazes, March 28, 1877.

the Tsar strong exhortations to take military action against Turkey. Indirectly this created a fear in Paris of some German action on the Rhine, and some concern was manifested in London lest Bismarck try to seize Holland as compensation for territorial gains of the other powers in the Balkans should the Ottoman Empire crumble before the expected Russian advance. The only way to prevent such a calamity was to secure Turkish acquiescence to a peace with Montenegro and some form of demobilization which would lessen the tension.

Unfortunately for the French position, the signing of the London Protocol had not improved the likelihood of a rapid culmination of the Turko-Montenegrin negotiations. Nicholas, seeing his position strengthened by the inclusion of some of his demands in the protocol, at once threatened to recall his emissaries from the Porte.¹ Andrassy intervened at this point and urgently requested Nicholas not to recall his envoys even if the Turkish answer was unfavorable.² Turkish concentration of troops for attacking the Mirdites in Albania adjacent to Montenegro during the first week in April was an indication that the Porte had resolved to take military action rather than negotiate.³

Any hopes that the French had of achieving a peaceful solution to the Balkan problems were completely dashed by the rejection of the London Protocol by the Porte on April 9. The refusal to consider even the

¹Turkey No. 25 (1877) No. 30, Monson to Derby, April 5, 1877.

²Ibid., No. 33, Monson to Derby, April 7, 1877.

³Ibid., No. 34, Monson to Derby, April 9, 1877. The state of affairs in Miridacia had been steadily growing worse since the conference in January. The consuls of Britain, France, and Italy all advised their home governments in February that if the Turks continued sending troops to the area that a conflict was inevitable. Turkey No. 15 (1877) No. 177, Green to Derby, Feb. 21, 1877.

moderate proposals of the Great Powers came as a shock, and the tone of the Turkish reply only served to deepen the anger of the Russians. Specifically the Turks refused to give ground on their stand toward Montenegro, stalled on the implementation of reforms, blamed Russia for the necessity of maintaining a large Turkish military force, negated the suggestion of dispatching an envoy to St. Petersburg for disarmament talks, and serenely ignored all other recommendations of the Great Powers by emphasizing the Sultan's need to be unhampered by any foreign agencies in the exercise of his sovereign rights.¹

In a sense the declaration of the Turkish foreign minister, Safvet Pasha, on April 9 was the last round in the diplomatic game preceding the Russo-Turkish War. The actions of the Turks following Safvet's pronouncement were certainly directed toward a military solution of the problems. On April 11, heavy fighting broke out against the Mirdites just south of Montenegro,² and the Turkish parliament refused to grant any territory regardless of the Protocol or the demands of Nicholas.³ Nicholas thereupon summoned the various consuls to his palace and read them a telegram from his emissaries at Constantinople indicating that because of Turkish intransigence they would remain in that city only under his direct orders.⁴ Nicholas requested that they remain until the 14'th at which time they were to demand a definite answer from Safvet Pasha as to

¹Hertslet, IV, 2568-2575.

²Turkey No. 15 (1877) No. 513, Green to Derby, April 11, 1877; DGP, II, No. 285, Radolinski to Foreign Office, April 10, 1877.

³Turkey No. 15 (1877) No. 512, Monson to Derby, April 11, 1877.

⁴Turkey No. 25 (1877) No. 113, Id. to Id., April 11, 1877.

Turkey's intentions.¹ If the answer were unsatisfactory, they were to leave Constantinople by the first steamer for Vienna or Odessa.

On April 13, the Porte advised Montenegro that the armistice agreed upon had expired and that since negotiations had ended, hostilities would be resumed.² The next day, the Montenegrin delegates consequently informed the Turks that they had been instructed to break off negotiations and to leave Constantinople.³ Two days later the Turks were driving the Mirdites back from their advanced positions in the low areas and the latter were retreating into the hills for protection.⁴

At this point the foreign consulates attempted to intervene between the Turks and the Mirdites to bring the hostilities to a halt. The Turks claimed that the consuls had no right to interfere and that they were determined to reduce the Mirdites by force. Primarily due to the efforts of M. de Ceccaldi, the French consul, a forty hour extension of the peace was negotiated, but further efforts to halt the fighting were of no avail.⁵ While the Turks were taking their first steps to apply military force to overcome the opposition forces within their empire, Russia was taking significant measures to complete her preparations for invasion.

A secret convention signed on April 16 between Russia and Rumania permitted Russia to send her troops through Rumania in order to reach Turkish territory. The convention provided that Russia would pay for the

¹ Turkey No. 15 (1877) No. 514, Id. to Id., April 11, 1877.

² Turkey No. 25 (1877) No. 2, Musurus to Derby, April 13, 1877.

³ Ibid., No. 11, Jocelyn to Derby, April 14, 1877.

⁴ Ibid., No. 123, Green to Derby, April 16, 1877.

⁵ Ibid., No. 45, Id. to Id., April 18, 1877.

expenses entailed, sustain Rumanian political integrity, and protect her territorial rights.¹ Another protocol signed the same day provided that Rumania would furnish the Russian army with the material resources necessary to facilitate the passage. Close liason was to be maintained with the commander-in-chief of the Russian armies and special tariff provisions were included to the benefit of the Russian forces. Furthermore the Rumanians agreed to transport all supplies for the Russian armies which were to be used against the Turks.²

Nicholas issued a letter on April 23 stating his fears that the build up of Turkish troops indicated that war was imminent. Four days earlier, Russia had issued a circular to the capitals of Europe indicating that Alexander II had decided to invade Turkey. The circular alleged that the refusal of the Turkish government to consider the London Protocol made it imperative for Russia to act in order to protect the rights of the Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire.³ The official declaration of war by Russia came on April 24.⁴ The same day, Rumania announced that it was being 'invaded' by Russian troops and since its parliament was not to meet until April 26, Rumania would await the meeting of its assembly to decide what steps to take. Meanwhile Russian troops were moving through the principality according to the prearranged secret convention.⁵ The

¹Hertslet, IV, 2576-2578. The signatories were Baron Dimitri Stuart and M. Cogalniceano. Turkey No. 25 (1877) No. 233, Mansfield to Derby, April 30, 1877.

²Hertslet, IV, 2579-2585.

³Ibid., 2586-2587; Turkey No. 25 (1877) No. 181, Monson to Derby, April 23, 1877.

⁴Hertslet, IV, 2590; 2598-2599.

⁵Ibid., 2596-2597; Turkey No. 25 (1877) No. 234, Mansfield to Derby, May 3, 1877.

Turkish declaration of war against Russia came on April 26 and the situation which the French government had wished to avoid was now a matter of record and the die had been cast to settle the Eastern Question by force of arms.¹

While Russia and Turkey were preparing to wage a general war during the latter part of March and throughout the month of April, the other powers in Europe were gradually coming to realize that such a war was becoming daily more inevitable, and consequently were beginning to revise their policies to accommodate the expected changes in the general situation in the Balkans. Decazes expressed his sympathy for the Russian cause, but at the same time indicated serious concern for the position in which Russia would find herself if she acted alone in the Eastern Question. He was ignorant of the secret agreements between Austria-Hungary and Russia and recognized that the advance into the Balkans would pose a serious threat to the interests of the Dual Monarchy. Therein lay the basis for the spread of hostilities, although he was well aware of the steady stream of encouragement which Berlin was forwarding to St. Petersburg. Decazes pointed out that the aggrandizement of Serbia or Montenegro would create disadvantages for Austria and that the creation of independent states along the northern tier of Balkan states would pose a menace to Austria's interests along the lower Danube.²

Decazes felt that the controlling influence which Bismarck exercised over Austrian policy, as well as the close relations between Germany and Austria would dictate that in the final analysis that they would not

¹ Hertslet, IV, 2601-2606.

² DDF, II, No. 153, Decazes to Le Flo, April 12, 1877.

abdicate their interests in the Danubian valley. He foresaw the possibility of a conflict of interests between these two powers and Russia, and believed that the requirements of sound strategy would override the personal relationship between Kaiser Wilhelm and Tsar Alexander. Decazes felt that the impact of national interests, the sympathies between the cabinets of Vienna and Berlin, as well as the practical effects of controlling the Danube, would eventually lead to a rupture between these two powers and Russia.¹

General Le Flo, French ambassador to St. Petersburg, was obviously in sympathy with the Russian viewpoint on the Turkish question. He regarded the Turkish reply to the Protocol as a brutal statement, and of such a nature that Russia was left with little choice but to accept the challenge. He was predicting Russian military action as early as the middle of April.² The day after war had been officially declared, Decazes issued a general advisory to all French ambassadors abroad to emphasize that the policy of France was to remain absolutely neutral and to guarantee the most scrupulous abstention from the hostilities. In view of the distance from the struggle and the essential interests of the nation, France, he felt, could do no other.³

In addition to the outbreak of war in the Near East, French diplomatic circles had been alarmed by a speech of General von Moltke to the Reichstag on April 27 in which he alluded to massive French cavalry movements along the Department of the East in the vicinity of Alsace and

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., No. 155, Le Flo to Decazes, April 16, 1877.

³Ibid., No. 159, Decazes to ambassadors, April 25, 1877.

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Lorraine. Together with inflammatory statements in the National Zeitung, the specter of war with Germany again raised itself to haunt the Quai d'Orsay. Moltke, himself, and the Kaiser later stated that the content of the general's speech had been greatly exaggerated, and that perhaps Moltke had made a few strong statements in order to gain sufficient funds for military operations from the Reichstag. It is interesting to note that Moltke's conversations with the French ambassador revealed a new respect for the speed and efficiency of the reorganization of French military forces.² France in 1877 was no longer held in the same disdain as in 1873.

From the German standpoint, her sole interest in the Balkan conflict was to see that it remained local in scope and to prevent any interference with a rapid Russian victory. Kaiser Wilhelm believed that the crucial power involved was Great Britain. So long as the British remained neutral he felt sure that the war in the Near East could be localised. Wilhelm thought that the British should be sick of the Turks and they could not legitimately object to Russian action.³ His reaction to the Turkish Circular of April 9 rejecting the moderate proposals of the London Protocol was little short of withering and completed his utter disgust with the government in the Porte.⁴

Russia was advised the very next day of Germany's intentions to be neutral in the event of war between Russia and Turkey, and the Kaiser added

¹Ibid., No. 161, Gontaut-Biron to Decazes, April 30, 1877. Reference to a telegram dated April 27, 1877.

²Ibid., No. 162, Id. to Id., May 9, 1877.

³DGP, II, No. 286, April 4, 1877.

⁴Ibid., No. 287, April 14, 1877.

that his neutral posture would be of a most friendly nature to his nephew's country.¹ Following the declaration of war, Wilhelm wrote a personal letter to Alexander expressing strong sympathy for the position of Russia, and indicated his willingness to accede to the Tsar's request that Germany take over the diplomatic protection of Russian interests and personnel in the Ottoman Empire. To underscore his intentions he appointed Prince Reuss on a mission extraordinaire to fulfill his obligations along this line.² Bismarck had previously expressed his hopes for a short and speedy war.³

Prior to the rejection of the London Protocol by the Turks, Germany's partner in the Dreikaiserbund, Austria-Hungary, had followed a policy similar to that of France. Andrassy told the Turks that they should accept the principles of the Protocol as Europe would hold Turkey responsible for the consequences should they refuse. The question of peace or war was now in Turkish hands according to Andrassy.⁴ When word was received in Vienna that the Turks were contemplating rejection of the London document, further pressure was exerted on Turkey but to no avail.⁵ Austria then proposed that Great Britain and Austria combine their efforts to press both Russia and Turkey to give orders for demobilization of their ground forces. Derby was already of the opinion, however, that any such effort was doomed to failure and no action was taken.⁶

¹Ibid., No. 288, April 15, 1877.

²Ibid., No. 292, Wilhelm to Alexander, April 28, 1877; Turkey No. 25 (1877) No. 164, Russell to Derby, April 27, 1877; Ibid., No. 80, Russell to Derby, April 21, 1877.

³DDF, II, No. 157, Decazes to Gontaut-Biron, April 20, 1877.

⁴Turkey No. 25 (1877) No. 35, Buchanan to Derby, April 8, 1877.

⁵Ibid., No. 36, Id. to Id., April 9, 1877.

⁶Ibid., No. 6, Derby to Buchanan, April 10, 1877.

Such a suggestion did reveal the hesitancy of the Dual Monarchy to turn Russia loose on Turkey despite the agreements which had been negotiated in January and March with Russia as to the disposition of certain areas in the event of a Russian victory. After the Russian Circular of April 19 expressing her sentiment towards Turkey, Andrassy was resigned to the inevitable outbreak of hostilities and indicated that it was then too late to make any further representations to St. Petersburg to head off the war.¹ He felt that it would be impossible to bring about an early cessation of hostilities, and that therefore it would be inexpedient to interfere until the events of the war offered a suitable opportunity.²

As to matters directly affecting Austria in the war, Andrassy announced that so long as the Porte abstained from sending any troops into Serbian territory, he would use his influence to keep Serbia neutral in the conflict. Subsequently, the Porte declared that it would not dispatch any troops into Prince Milan's homeland since it appeared that the Russians had decided not to do so. The Turks feared that Austria would take action if the fighting got too close to the Austrian border.³

While the members of the Dreikaiserbund were furthering their solidarity towards Turkey, the one member of the Great Powers supporting Turkey, Great Britain, underwent a grudging metamorphosis in her policy. Derby was sure that the London Protocol would be acceptable to the Porte

¹Ibid., No. 131, Buchanan to Derby, April 22, 1877.

²Ibid., No. 169, Id. to Id., April 26, 1877.

³Ibid., No. 194, Id. to Id., April 26, 1877; No. 195, April 28, 1877. There had been a prior secret understanding with Russia that she would not engage Serbian troops in the war with Turkey. Such a concession on the part of Russia amounted to very little since the Tsarist government was thoroughly disillusioned with the military capabilities of Serbia following her showing the preceding year.

in view of the watered down demands which it contained. He dispatched a confidential copy of the Protocol in advance to Musurus Pasha, Turkish ambassador to London, and pointed out that there was nothing in the document to which the Porte could reasonably object.¹ Hence, the Turkish rejection of that document took him by surprise and forced the realization that there was little that Britain could now do to save the Porte from its own folly. Lord Loftus, British ambassador to St. Petersburg, thought that Russia would make still another appeal to the Great Powers, but Derby soon advised that it was too late to take any further diplomatic action. He would only agree to act as a mediator if the Porte suggested this action, and if Russia would agree to such a procedure. There was no thought now of trying to offset the demands of Russia that something concrete be done to alleviate the conditions of the Christians in the Ottoman Empire.²

Derby discussed the matter with the French charge d'affaires in London indicating that the response of the Porte must have been decided upon by a nation under the inspiration of a war party. He considered British intervention in the situation as being completely finished and added that "there is nothing more to do."³ He reached this decision even before the Russian Circular of April 10 stating the intensity of Russia's views.⁴ After the war started, Derby rejected the Turkish appeal for some kind of mediation by declaring that the time was not appropriate for

¹Turkey No. 8 (1877) No. 8, Derby to Jocelyn, April 2, 1877.

²Turkey No. 25 (1877) No. 19, Loftus to Derby, April 11, 1877; No. 68, Derby to Layard, April 21, 1877.

³DDF, II, No. 154, Gavard to Decazes, April 13, 1877.

⁴Turkey No. 25 (1877) No. 98, Derby to Loftus, April 24, 1877.

any successful mediation.¹ On April 30 the Queen's proclamation of neutrality was officially issued and Britain was apparently washing her hands of the Eastern Question so far as preventing Russia from achieving her goal of ameliorating the condition of Christians in the Ottoman Empire.² The British did agree to protect the Ottoman subjects who were still resident in Russia and to have their consuls in Russia handle Turkish affairs during the war.³

At this juncture, Decazes received two requests of a desperate nature. M. Callimake Catargi, Rumanian agent to Paris, said that it was feared Turkish troops might try to seize Kalafat and other military positions in Rumania even before the Russians crossed into his country at the Pruth River. In such case, Rumania would have to resist and thus might have the stigma of firing the first shot in the war. He begged France to intervene at Constantinople in order to prevent any violation of Rumanian territory by Turkey. He pointed out that since there were no natural frontiers between his country and Russia that it would be impossible for his nation to oppose the Russian advance. Decazes temporized this request by saying that he would consult with the other powers.⁴

The second request came from Halil Pasha, Turkish ambassador to Paris, who presented an appeal from the Porte citing Article VIII of the Treaty of Paris of 1856 calling upon the powers to mediate between Russia and Turkey. Decazes regarded this appeal as actually containing two major

¹Ibid., No. 147, Derby to Layard, April 27, 1877; No. 136, Layard to Derby, April 25, 1877.

²Ibid., No. 170, Derby to Representatives, April 30, 1877.

³Ibid., No. 139, Musurus to Derby, April 24, 1877.

⁴Ibid., No. 66, Lyons to Derby, April 20, 1877.

problems. He pointed out that the first was created by the rejection of the London Protocol by Turkey which constituted a difference between Turkey and the Great Powers. The second was simply a special quarrel between Turkey and Russia. In order to give the Great Powers a chance to intervene, Turkey would first have to accept the Protocol. If this were done, then the questions of a cease-fire and disarmament might be submitted logically to mediation. Halil argued that the Great Powers were obliged to mediate regardless of any other factors. This obstinacy negated any serious consideration of the Turkish request at a time when war was already in progress.¹

¹Ibid., No. 144, Lyons to Derby, April 26, 1877.

CHAPTER VII

THE RUSSIAN SOLUTION TO THE BALKAN PROBLEM: SAN STEFANO

The declaration of war by Russia accomplished what two years of diplomatic wrangling had failed to achieve. The almost constant concern about Balkan internal developments among the capitals of the Great Powers now gave way to a period in which the weavers of the diplomatic tapestry no longer concerned themselves with each minute thread, but began to consider the overall pattern and long range consequences of the events in the Near East. A note of intellectual disengagement was discernible in the messages contained in diplomatic pouches. Whatever the outcome, the war appeared to indicate that something definitive would have to be done at its conclusion, and the Great Powers devoted their main efforts to analyzing various possibilities in terms of their own national self interests. It was as if the Russian advance into the Balkans had divided the Balkan question into macrocosmic and microcosmic spheres. The former relating to the give and take, between the Great Powers, and the latter to the military events and their political repercussions in the Balkans. To be sure, a relationship did exist between these two spheres, but it was only when the conclusion of the war appeared imminent that the threads and patterns became closely interwoven in diplomatic circles.

The advance of the Russian army had been well prepared by two

conventions signed with Rumania prior to the declaration of war.¹ Passage through that country was accomplished without incident and the Tsar's forces under the command of Grand Duke Nicholas moved swiftly into Turkish Bulgaria. For the first sixty days of the struggle, the Russians encountered little difficulty and actually succeeded in crossing the Balkan Mountains separating the Bulgarian area from Roumelia by forcing the Shipka Pass. It appeared as if the end of the Turkish Empire in Europe was finally at hand, but Osman Pasha's forces at Plevna succeeded in administering a severe setback to the Russian army in July, and subsequently were able to forestall the Russian avalanche for nearly six months. Ultimately the beleaguered fortress fell to the Russians in December, and the Tsar's armies quickly overran the greater portion of European Turkey. Adrianople fell in January and with Russian forces in sight of Constantinople, the Turks agreed to an armistice in January 31, 1878.²

As these military events unfolded, a myriad number of ramifications presented themselves and served to complicate the general picture. Given the intense ferment of national aspirations, religious animosities, and Turkish misrule in the past, it was obvious that the other peoples in the Balkans would seek to further their own interests by taking advantage of the presence of the Russian army south of the Danube. The first of these to take definite action was the principality of Rumania. Following the passage of the Russian army through its territory, the Rumanian government was quick to utilize its opportunity to assert its independence from Turkish suzerainty. The Ottoman government protested vigorously against

¹Hertslet, IV, 2576-2585.

²Ibid., 2658-2660.

the granting of free passage to the Russian army, and declared that such action had deprived the Rumanian authorities of their legal rights.¹ On May 3, 1877, Turkey suspended diplomatic relations with the government of Prince Carol and suspended him from office.² Two weeks later, the Rumanian minister of foreign affairs, M. Cogalniceano, circularized the capitals of Europe justifying the role of his government and laid the groundwork for a subsequent declaration of Rumanian independence.³ On May 22, Prince Carol appeared before the Rumanian assembly and promulgated the decree for outright independence. The notification of this action to the Great Powers included a plea for their recognition of the new state and above all a guarantee that Rumanian areas should never again be subjected to Ottoman control.⁴

If the war had given an impetus to Rumanian independence, it also re-fueled the fires of the Serbian war party to restore the prestige it had lost in the debacle of the previous year. Within ten days after the declaration of war, however, Serbia's freedom of action was restricted by the actions of the three powers most directly concerned with the conflict. Turkey extended a formal promise to Andrassy that she would abstain from all military operations upon Serbian soil so long as the Russian army did likewise. The Russian consul at Belgrade insisted that the Serbs refrain

¹Ibid., 2610-2613.

²Ibid., 2614.

³Ibid., 2618-2623; Turkey No. 25 (1877) No. 309, Lyons to Derby, May 16, 1877. It is of note that this circular was first dispatched to Paris and Britain first learned of this through Lord Lyons who was advised by M. N. Callimaki Catargi, the Rumanian consul to France.

⁴Hertslet, IV, 2631-2632; Turkey No. 26 (1877) No. 92, Lyons to Derby, June 12, 1877.

from all manifestations which would disconcert Austria-Hungary, and M. Ristich, Serbian foreign minister, found it necessary to assure Vienna that his country was not contemplating any military action.¹

St. Petersburg was aware of Serbia's desire to enter into the war, but felt that militarily any action by Serbia would be an embarrassment to Russia. Le Flo believed that secretly General Kichineff was encouraging Prince Milan's government to take action.² Despite the official statements of Gortchakov that no Serbian aid was desired by the Tsar's armies, Milan dispatched an emissary to visit Grand Duke Nicholas,³ and angled for a meeting with Alexander when he visited the southern front a few weeks later. Milan apparently hoped that he could change the Tsar's attitude when he was surrendered by his Slavophile advisors.⁴ Undoubtedly the policy of Grand Duke Nicholas in appointing well-known Slavophiles to official positions in the Russian military government sections gave him cause for entertaining such hopes.⁵

Milan left Belgrade for Bucharest and Ploesti in the middle of June to await the arrival of the Tsar with high hopes and fully aware that the Skupstchina was to convene on July 1.⁶ Tsar Alexander quickly dashed Milan's aspirations and warned him in blunt terms to stay out of the war.⁷

¹DDF, II, No. 163, de Vogüé to Decazes, May 10, 1877.

²Ibid.

³Turkey No. 26 (1877) No. 25, White to Derby, May 20, 1877.

⁴Ibid., No. 26, Id. to Id., May 21, 1877.

⁵Ibid., No. 27, Id. to Id., May 25, 1877; Turkey No. 1 (1878) No. 1, White to Derby, June 19, 1877.

⁶Turkey No. 1 (1878) No. 2, Id. to Id., June 11, 1877; No. 4, June 19, 1877; No. 6, Mansfield to Derby, June 19, 1877.

⁷Ibid., No. 12, Buchanan to Derby, June 3, 1877.

Understandably, Milan spoke of his meeting with Alexander as being very friendly in his report to the Skupstchina on July 2.¹ The Turks advised that the concentration of their troops around Nish should give rise to no uneasiness on the part of Serbia since Turkey had given her word that Serbian neutrality would be respected.² It thus appeared that any military action by Serbia was highly unlikely. The war party in the Serbian Skupstchina, however, was highly incensed by the course of events and 36 deputies resigned en masse on July 13. This paralyzed the operation of the assembly since the Serbian constitution required the presence of three-fourths of its members to constitute a quorum.³

While it was obvious that the weakened status of Serbian finances would not permit the Serbs to engage in any major military effort at this juncture, the Turks grew ever more suspicious of their intentions. The Porte filed protests with Paris and London against the threatening attitude of the Serbs, and indicated its irritation over military preparations in Serbia while Milan still spoke of peace.⁴ The great fear of the Porte was that the Serbs would suddenly appear in the rear of Osman Pasha's position at Plevna, and the Turks complained that they should have taken the Serbian fortresses the previous year when Serbia was prostrate instead of listening to the requests for moderation from France and Great Britain.⁵

¹Ibid., No. 45, White to Derby, July 4, 1877. Milan also announced the birth of a son, Alexander, to carry on the Obrenovitch dynasty.

²Ibid., No. 49, Safvet to Musurus, July 9, 1877.

³Ibid., No. 131, White to Derby, July 13, 1877.

⁴Ibid., No. 132, Id. to Id., July 16, 1877; No. 146, Layard to Derby, July 24, 1877; No. 190, Derby to Layard, Aug. 13, 1877.

⁵Ibid., No. 146, No. 224, Layard to Derby, Aug. 11, 1877.

The French agent at Belgrade had been constantly applying pressure on Milan's government to avert a reopening of the conflict between that country and Turkey. The Turkish protests brought urgent directions from Derby to British agents to make strong overtures at Belgrade to restrain the Serbs from taking action.¹ Decazes pointed out to Derby that the French government alone had been making the most energetic remonstrances with Belgrade during the summer and that these had been repeated several times during August. M. de Rochechouard, French consul in the Serbian capital, did not feel that his protests alone would avail and Decazes agreed with this point of view.² Germany refused to put any pressure on Serbia alleging that the Kaiser's pledge of neutrality absolved the Second Reich from any responsibility in the Balkan War.³

The crucial change in Serbian policy occurred during the middle of August. Milan officially notified Austria-Hungary on August 9 that his nation planned no action of any kind against Turkey. The Skupstchina had adjourned a few days earlier without being able to provide sufficient funds for any large-scale military action. Serbs under arms numbered about thirty to forty thousand, too few for any offensive thrust.⁴ By the last week in August, however, M. Ristich indicated that Russian views on Serbia's neutrality had been modified and Milan now thought that Austria would not take any action if Serbia decided on war. The extent of the

¹Ibid., No. 263, Derby to Adams, Aug. 29, 1877; No. 234, Derby to White, Aug. 23, 1877.

²Ibid., No. 275, Derby to Adams, Sept. 1, 1877.

³Ibid., No. 278, Russell to Derby, Aug. 31, 1877.

⁴Ibid., No. 245, Buchanan to Derby, Aug. 9, 1877; No. 242, White to Derby, Aug. 7, 1877.

change in Russia's policy was underscored a few days later when Prince Tzeretelew arrived at Belgrade with one million rubles in specie to finance a Serbian military effort.¹

The ultimate break with Turkey did not come until the Serbian reservists had been called up and reorganized. On December 13, 1877, Prince Milan issued a manifesto proclaiming a renewal of the war with Turkey. He alleged that the Turks had continued to commit atrocities against Serbian subjects and had repeatedly violated the provisions of the amnesty contained in the Peace Protocol of February 16, 1877. Milan adjured his countrymen to join with the 'Tsar Liberator' in order to gain glory for their country.² Unfortunately for the Serbs, their declaration of war came a few days after the siege of Plevna had ended and hence any strategic significance of her entry was considerably limited. It was obviously an attempt to get on the bandwagon with the Russians in order to gain a voice in the peace negotiations.

The other participant of the three-cornered struggle of 1876, Montenegro, was still at war with the Turks although the major theatre of activity was elsewhere. Early in July, 1877, Turkish military authorities in northern Albania indicated that they would like to open peace negotiations with Montenegro so that they could devote their efforts to resisting the Russian advance.³ Prince Nicholas replied that he was honor bound to keep as many Turkish troops occupied as possible, but that if

¹Ibid., No. 307, White to Derby, Aug. 22, 1877; No. 310, Aug. 27, 1877; No. 601, Dec. 3, 1877.

²Hertslet, IV, 2648-2650; Turkey No. 1 (1878) No. 605, Musurus to Derby, Dec. 15, 1877.

³Turkey No. 1 (1878) No. 71, Green to Derby, July 2, 1877.

Russia wanted him to come to terms with the Turks that he might enter into negotiations.¹ There was no further attempt along this line, however, and on September 8 the Turkish fortress of Nischich capitulated to Montenegro. This represented a great loss of prestige for the Turks despite its actually military insignificance.²

While the small powers in the Balkans were following policies directly related to their aspirations toward independence of the Porte and the increase of their territory, the Great Powers of Europe were primarily concerned with the repercussions of the Balkan struggle on the balance of power in Europe as a whole. Shortly after the opening of the war, Andrassy announced that Austria-Hungary would be strictly neutral.³ Shortly thereafter, he made a trip to Hungary allegedly for his health and to look after his private interests. M. de Vogüë, French ambassador to Vienna, believed Andrassy's mission was purely political in nature. Andrassy's foreign policy vis-a-vis the events in the Balkans had aroused much dissatisfaction in Budapest, and opposition to his neutral stand was daily growing more heated. An inspection trip by Archduke Albert of the garrisons in Croatia at this time only added to Andrassy's difficulties in quieting the anti-Slav feeling among his countrymen.⁴

¹Ibid., No. 125, Green to Derby, July 13, 1877.

²Ibid., No. 384, Freeman to Derby, Sept. 13, 1877. The prestige factor was great due to the major emphasis that the Porte had placed upon maintaining Nischich during 1875 and 1876. Turkish efforts to revictual this garrison had led to interminable wrangling between the Porte and Montenegro for two years.

³Turkey No. 25 (1877) No. 244, Buchanan to Derby, May 6, 1877.

⁴DDF, II, No. 163, de Vogüë to Decazes, May 10, 1877. During the Archduke's visits, the display of the Austrian imperial colors of yellow and black alongside the Slavic tricolor and the systematic exclusion of the Hungarian flag infuriated the Hungarians.

Upon his return to Vienna, Andrassy protested the declaration of Turkey that the Danube would be considered its line of defense. He argued that the London Protocol of 1871 expressly provided for the neutrality of the Danube, and Turkey's assertion was contrary to that document.¹ With the Budapest Convention in his pocket, the Austrian foreign minister felt safe in pressuring Turkey in this matter, and Gortchakov supported his position by giving the most formal assurances that the principle of free navigation of the Danube would be maintained. This enabled Andrassy to utilize the Russian statement as a standard of policy with which to exert pressure on Turkey.² Andrassy used this issue to justify his pro-Russian position at home. French diplomats correctly surmised that an agreement between Austria and Russia had been reached prior to the Russian declaration of war in April. Andrassy's comments about the future adjustments in territories after the conclusion of hostilities indicated his belief that there would be widespread changes in the Balkans and that Austria-Hungary would be forced to claim some compensation for herself.³

The Austrian support of Russia was given the official blessing of Germany at the conference between Emperor Franz Joseph and Kaiser Wilhelm at Ischl.⁴ The confidence of Austria in the efficacy of the Budapest Convention of January, 1877 was given its first shock in September, however. Count Zichy, Austrian ambassador to Constantinople, approached the

¹Turkey No. 26 (1877) No. 17, Andrassy to Zichy, May 22, 1877. Article VIII of the 1871 Protocol expressly stipulated that the Danube was to be opened to all nations at all times and should not be closed even for military operations.

²Ibid., No. 18, Loftus to Derby, May 27, 1877.

³DDF, II, No. 181, de Ring to Decazes, June 5, 1877.

⁴Ibid., No. 195, de Vogüé to Decazes, Aug. 11, 1877.

French charge d'affaires to verify a report that France and Russia were preparing to conduct conversations with the Porte to the exclusion of the other powers.¹ Decazes immediately discounted any such policy for France and the issue died upon the confrontation of Layard by M. de Mouÿ who emphasized the strict neutrality of France.² Zichy's discomfiture was allayed at the same time, and the situation at Plevna at any rate did not offer much serious ground for immediate concern in Vienna.

The role of Austria's partner to the north throughout 1877 was so strongly in favor of Russia that Count Schouvaloff commented to d'Harcourt of his suspicions concerning the zeal with which Germany had encouraged Russia to have recourse to military measures.³ The timing of Schouvaloff's remarks coincided with the disruption of French political life over the dismissal of Jules Simon as minister of the interior on May 16, 1877.⁴ Despite the internal furor caused by this action the continuance of Decazes in his role as foreign minister was seen by Berlin to indicate that there would be no fundamental change in French foreign policy.⁵

¹Ibid., No. 200, de Mouÿ to Decazes, Sept. 14, 1877. Zichy had been told by Layard, British ambassador to the Porte, that such discussions were under way and obviously pointed out the dangers this would present to any Austrian interests in the final settlement of the Balkan question. Apparently, Layard wanted to force some split into any prior Russo-Austrian agreement. There is no evidence that the London foreign office instigated any such action on the part of Layard. Layard was even more of a Turcophile than Elliot whom he had replaced.

²Ibid., No. 201, Decazes to de Mouÿ, Sept. 16, 1877.

³Ibid., No. 165, Decazes to Le Flo, May 17, 1877.

⁴Chastenet, Jacques, L'Enfance de la Troisième, 1870-1879, (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1952) p. 226. This struggle over the position of the president under the Third Republic had widespread repercussions abroad. It was feared that the monarchist-clericalist group might usurp the constitution, and Bismarck feared that this group might embark on an adventurous foreign policy.

⁵DDF, II, No. 167, Tiby to Decazes, May 18, 1877.

Bismarck was thinking of engineering a coalition between Russia and England with the former being given free control of the Black Sea and the latter gaining unitary hegemony over Egypt. In this way, Bismarck hoped that he could reforge the kind of alliance between these two powers which had existed at the beginning of the century against Napoleon. The ultimate goal of his design was still the same in that he hoped thereby to drive a wedge between Britain and France over spheres of influence in the Mediterranean. As Bismarck viewed the position of the Great Powers in the summer of 1877, he observed that all except France were in need of some support from Germany, and that therefore he could maintain his policy of isolating France.¹

Count Münster, German ambassador to London, reported late in June that the internal struggles within France had severely damaged that nation's prestige and influence in London. In his eyes, British officialdom frowned on French political instability and was becoming increasingly distrustful of French policy.² All this was more than pleasing to Bismarck and he appeared satisfied with the situation in Europe.³ Nevertheless, he inquired at St. Petersburg as to French intentions toward Germany just to make sure, and was reassured that France was not contemplating any action against Germany.⁴ Vienna sent the same assurances,⁵ and Decazes officially sent word that French policy had

¹DGP, II, No. 294, June 15, 1877.

²Ibid., No. 295, Münster to Bismarck, June 28, 1877.

³DDF, II, No. 172, Tivy to Decazes, May 22, 1877.

⁴Ibid., No. 178, Le Flo to Decazes, May 30, 1877.

⁵Ibid., No. 180, de Vogüé to Decazes, May 31, 1877.

undergone no change despite the cabinet shake-up.¹ Bülow expressed the fear in Germany of the ultramontaine group in France, and Kaiser Wilhelm found it necessary to request that pressure be applied on the German press to cease its violent attitude towards France, feeling that this might lead to war.² The Kaiser indicated that he was not even dreaming of a war against France,³ and the British ambassador to Berlin, Lord Odo Russell, felt that Bismarck was completely satisfied with the course of events. Bismarck had indicated to Russell that he did not feel that the war in the Balkans would be finished that year, and when the outcome was decided in 1878, it would be necessary to have the concurrence of the Great Powers to the final peace settlement. Bismarck saw his role in the future as being that of a mediator.⁴

The question of the ultimate course France would follow vis-a-vis Germany continued to raise itself throughout the summer. The core of German fears about French military moves was centered in the German army circles. The French charge d'affaires reported at the end of August that the consuming topic of conversation at the Imperial Court in Germany was the role of the clericalists in the French government. Radowitz asserted that between the Germans and the clericalists, it was a "war to the death."⁵ Decazes emphasized that the French diplomats in Germany should do all within their power to convince the Germans that the clericalists did not

¹Ibid., No. 184, Tivy to Decazes, June 21, 1877.

²Ibid., No. 186, Gontaut-Biron to Decazes, July 1, 1877.

³Ibid., No. 189, Tivy to Decazes, July 14, 1877.

⁴Ibid., No. 198, D'Aunay to Decazes, Aug. 31, 1877.

⁵Ibid.

control French foreign policy.¹

During the course of the war in the Balkans, German officers attached to the Russian command as observers served as counterweights to the stories of atrocities allegedly committed by Russian soldiers. Stories of these atrocities poured forth from Turkish sources through the British ambassador's hands to Great Britain. The German observers on the contrary forwarded accounts of atrocities committed by the Turks and furnished data to Berlin for Bismarck to make official protestations to the Porte about the conduct of Turkish soldiers.² The Sultan's request for mediation by the Great Powers to end the conflict on December 12, 1877 met with a cold response from Berlin, and the Kaiser rejected the request at once.³ It was evident that Germany was living up to her promise of benevolent neutrality to Russia.

While the Russian government was obviously concentrating its efforts upon the prosecution of the war against Turkey, it was aware of the precarious balance between the Great Powers and preferred to prevent the war from spreading into a general European war. Schouvaloff's letter to Decazes from the battlefield in May displayed rare insight into the problems facing France at this time. He pointed out that for France to approach Britain would be considered a direct move against Russia. If France showed tendencies toward a rapprochement with Italy, the fear of a clerical entente would be raised; if toward Austria, it would be interpreted as a move against Russia. He argued that if France maintained

¹Ibid.

²Turkey No. 1 (1878) No. 216, Derby to Layard, Aug. 18, 1877.

³Turkey No. 2 (1878) No. 3, Russell to Derby, Dec. 16, 1877; DGP, II, No. 299, Dec. 15, 1877.

her absolute neutrality she would have nothing to fear for a long time.¹ Hence Decazes's official statement of French neutrality was well received in St. Petersburg, for even at this early date, Le Flo reported that the Russians might find it necessary to occupy Constantinople for a short time.²

In response to German requests about the course of action that Russia would take in the event of a war between Germany and France, the Tsar indicated that if France took the initiative Russia would abstain; but that otherwise, Russia considered a strong France as being an absolute must for the general equilibrium of Europe.³ Le Flo pointed out to Decazes that any Russian pressure upon Germany would be very slight, however, since she had 38 of her 48 divisions committed to the action in the Balkans, and only an observation corps stationed along the Polish areas in the West.⁴

As the war dragged on with no major Russian military successes, Russian public opinion became less than enthusiastic about its prolongation. A feeling that the sooner the war ended the better arose, and Germany was felt to be the nation most likely to offer its mediatory services. The domestic political struggles in France had severe repercussions in St. Petersburg and the hostile attitude of the French press was exaggerated in Russian journals. In particular a remark of a French aide at St. Petersburg describing M. Aksakoff as being the bete noire of Russian government was construed as reflecting the sentiment of the

¹Ibid., No. 168, Le Flo to Decazes, May 19, 1877.

²Ibid., No. 179, Id. to Id., May 30, 1877.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., No. 203, de Laboulaye to Decazes, Sept. 22, 1877.

French government. The Russian press blamed the intellectual classes in France for being unable to forgive past grievances between the two countries. According to the Russian view, France had great need for friendly relations with Russia but her recent actions and statements were destroying all hopes for a rapprochement between the two nations.¹ The French consul in St. Petersburg sadly indicated that the anti-Russian views expressed in French papers were undoing all the work which Decazes had achieved.²

While the sentiments between Russia and France reflected by the press in each country were not those desired by the French foreign office, there was little that could be done other than the usual protestations of absolute French neutrality. The French refusal to align themselves with either of the two protagonists over the Turkish question, Great Britain and Russia, was reaping its expected results. Decazes tolerated this dissatisfaction, however, because any other choice would have yielded even more serious dilemmas.

Great Britain wasted little time in announcing that it did not approve of the Russian decision to resort to military force to solve the Balkan crisis. On May 1, 1877, Derby forwarded a dispatch to St. Petersburg in which he clearly repudiated the position taken by Gortchakov's Circular of April 19. Derby maintained that the Russian action was a violation of the Treaty of 1856 and the London Protocol of 1871. Both of these stipulated the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire. Derby argued further that Russian troops would contribute nothing to the

¹ Ibid., No. 203, de Laboulaye to Decazes, Sept. 22, 1877.

² Ibid.

to the improvement of the populations in the Balkans by their presence, but that on the contrary this would only incite further Moslem fanaticism. He adjudged that Russia's action alienated the Tsar's government from the general European concert.¹

Having laid the groundwork, Derby next prescribed the interests of his nation in the Balkans. The declaration of neutrality issued by Great Britain was in line with British policy of not furnishing aid to the Turks so long as they refused to initiate any serious reform programs, but Derby added that Britain would maintain this neutrality only so long as Turkish interests were involved. (Italics mine). Britain indicated that she regarded the maintenance of free access to the Suez Canal, protection of Egyptian territory, Turkish control of Constantinople, and continuance of the status quo in the Straits as of fundamental concern to Britain's well-being.²

In general, the Russians agreed to the statement of British interests, but indicated that the question of the Straits and a possible temporary occupation of Constantinople by Russian troops would have to be held in abeyance pending the outcome of the war.³ While Russia categorically assured the British that she would in no way disturb British possessions in Asia, she nevertheless drew a rather detailed picture of the Balkans which would result from a successful conclusion of the war.⁴ The Russian statement stipulated an autonomous Bulgaria of undetermined

¹Hertslet, IV, 2607-2609; Turkey No. 18 (1877) No. 2, Derby to Loftus, May 1, 1877.

²Hertslet, IV, 2615-2617.

³Ibid., 2624-2627.

⁴Ibid., 2634-2639.

size, territorial gains for Serbia and Montenegro, and a deference to Austria-Hungary for the ultimate disposition of Bosnia and Herzegovina. These were generally congruent with the demands of the Constantinople Conference to which Great Britain had been a participant.

The negotiations proceeded no further at this point due to the departure of Gortchakov and the Tsar to the headquarters of the Russian army in the South.¹ British official sentiments were pro-Turkish by this time, but the pressure of public opinion prevented any outward opposition to the Russian advance. During the next three months, however, Henry Layard, British ambassador to Constantinople, furnished huge quantities of ammunition to change the general tenor of public feeling in Great Britain. From June through August, 1877, his reports contained a veritable landslide of allegations concerning Russian atrocities and massacres in the course of the war. An analysis of his own reports indicated that he accepted without hesitation the charges laid before him by the Turkish officials.

The Russians were charged with burning and pillaging Moslem villages and forcing the people to become orthodox Christians.² Sinkings of unarmed Turkish merchant vessels with the crews aboard, firings upon hospitals flying Red Cross colors, Cossacks murdering Turkish women and children were reported in great detail and attested to by signed statements of foreign newspaper correspondents.³ The worse atrocities were allegedly perpetrated upon the Circassians by the Bulgarians to whom the

¹Turkey No. 26 (1877) No. 81, Loftus to Derby, May 31, 1877.

²Turkey No. 23 (1877) No. 1, Safvet to Musurus, June 24, 1877.

³Ibid., Nos. 2, 6, 7, 8, 10, 15, 31; dated from June 20 to July 21, 1877.

Russians had turned over the Turkish irregulars as prisoners. One particularly fiendish practice was to make a hole in the top of the captive's head, fill it with tar, and then set this on fire.¹

Many of these stories were later discredited by careful investigation. Turkish merchant vessels had been warned before being attack, casualties had been grossly exaggerated, and the mission of Colonel Wellesley in July, 1877 to the theater of operations resulted in more accurate accounts being returned.² The Sultan begged Queen Victoria to use her influence with the Tsar to end the cruelties. In response, the Russians formally denied any and all atrocities on their part, and accused the Turkish forces of committing outrageous barbarities.³ In each instance, the offended power always cited newspaper correspondents as unbiased sources and neutral observers. This was a typical Balkan struggle involving racial and religious feelings and atrocities were apparently common occurrences. The constant spate of these stories from Layard's office, however, did serve to soften that segment of British public opinion which had been aroused to bitter anti-Turkish sentiments by the episode of the Bulgarian Horrors. It now appeared that both Russians and Turks were equally guilty, and this paved the way for the British cabinet to regain some public support to follow its traditional line of maintaining the integrity of the Ottoman Empire.

¹Ibid., No. 26, Layard to Derby, July 13, 1877; No. 28, July 21, 1877; No. 3, June 20. 1877.

²Ibid., No. 9, Stanley to Derby, July 4, 1877; Turkey No. 24 (1877) No. 12, Wellesley to Derby, July 25, 1877.

³Turkey No. 24 (1877) No. 8, Layard to Derby, July 24, 1877; Turkey No. 28 (1877) No. 5, Schouvaloff to Derby, July 30, 1877. Nearly all of this title is concerned with atrocities committed by both sides.

The French policy of trying to maintain friendly relations between Great Britain and Russia was placed under severe strain throughout 1877, and the domestic struggle between the Monarchist-clericalist groups against those of the republic only added to the difficulty of keeping French policy on an even keel. This internal struggle played a key role in determining the policies of France from the inception of political turmoil on May 16, 1877 until the Congress of Berlin.

After the dismissal of Jules Simon on May 16, Gambetta speaking for the Left of the French Assbmely, raised a vehement protest against his removal. When the Duc de Broglie accepted a message from President MacMahon dissolving the Chamber until July 16, the protests rapidly spread to all corners of France. The 363 Republicans of the Chamber issued a manifesto declaring that the Republic was endangered. This manifesto served as a rallying point for the divergent camps within the Republican fold and the issues rapidly assumed national proportions. The crux of the dispute concerned the question of whether the ministers of the Cabinet were responsible to the President or to the Chamber. The Constitution of 1875 had been meritoriously brief, and on this point it had failed to properly delineate the lines of authority.¹

What had started out to be perhaps a simple move on the part of the President of the Republic erupted into a full-blown controversy which brought to fever pitch the desires of the various groups with political aspirations. Bonapartists, Legitimists, Royalists, Clericalists, all saw the opportunity offered by the dispute to further their cause. Government posts were vacated and great pressure exerted by the forces

¹Chastenet, p. 226-228.

on the Right to fill these positions with persons loyal to their side. The Republican groups began to mobilize their press and local political machines to place their position before the public. On June 16, the prorogued Chamber reconvened amid rabid cries from both sides. It was during this session that M. Gailly, a deputy from Ardennes, literally galvanized the Republicans into fervent action by saluting Thiers as the "Liberator of France."¹

Gambetta utilized this opportunity to express the fears of the Republicans that the Right would lead the nation into war against Germany or against Italy to satisfy the clericalists. Decazes appeared before the Chamber and discussed French foreign policy at length emphasizing the need for peace and indicating the course he had followed during the Eastern crisis. He continued in his foreign office post and the Chamber voted unanimously to support the neutral position which France had followed.²

In June, the Chamber voted by 363 to 158 in opposition to permitting the President to consider the Cabinet members responsible to him rather than to the Assembly. Four days later, the Senate voted 149 to 130 to dissolve the Chamber. On June 25, the dissolution decree was signed and in accordance with the Constitution, September 22 was fixed for the date of the elections; October 14 for the first primaries and October 28 for the general elections.³

The next three months witnessed as exciting a political campaign

¹Ibid., p. 229.

²DDF, II, No. 168, Le Flo to Decazes, May 19, 1877.

³Chastenet, p. 230.

as the Third Republic ever produced. The divergent Republican parties merged their differences and forged a united block around the 363 deputies who had voted the order of the day defying the executive power over the cabinet. They carried out an extensive fund raising campaign and organized their forces down to the smallest village. Prosperous businessmen of the bourgeoisie, Masons, local authorities who had been removed by the Rightist Broglie-Fourtou Cabinet, and literary groups throughout France added their efforts to the Republican cause. The Broglie Cabinet was castigated as having concentrated more despotism in five months than Emperor Napoleon III had in 18 years. The guiding spirit of the Republican fight was Gambetta who reached the peak of his career in the summer of 1877.¹

During the height of the campaign, Bismarck wrote to Prince Hohenlohe, his ambassador to Paris, of his conviction that the ultimate outcome of the French internal struggle would be a war against Germany either with or without a coalition.² Shortly thereafter, Gambetta made his contacts with Henckel de Donnersmarck who was operating in Paris as a confidential agent of the German chancellor. It is apparent that Gambetta's aim was to avoid a war with Germany despite the reports which filtered out from many sources that he was trying to negotiate for the return of Alsace-Lorraine. The proposed interview with Bismarck never occurred and nothing was heard of any further attempts to deal directly with Germany.³

¹Ibid., p. 234-235.

²Bardoux, p. 105.

³Chastenet, p. 236.

By the middle of August, 1877, Gambetta was demanding that MacMahon either submit to the will of the people or resign. The government assessed a fine of 2000 francs for Gambetta's verbal attacks on the President which only served to make the rabid Republican more popular than ever. Thiers' death on September 3, 1877 after a profession of his faith in the Republic, and his burial ceremony only served to heighten the tension. He was placed in the cemetery of Pere-Lachaise which had been the scene of the final struggle of the Communards in 1871. Thousands marched by his grave not only to pay their respects to the "Liberator" but to indicate their political preference in the upcoming elections.¹

Although the Republicans lost nearly fifty seats in the new Chamber, their total of 315 gave them a clear majority over the 199 seats won by the Conservatives.² Since Gambetta was deemed too young for the nation's top office, Jules Grevy was elected president, but it was not until December 13, 1877 that MacMahon signed a message to the Chambers recognizing the responsibility of the ministers to the Chamber.³

Decazes fundamentally disapproved of the political controversy, and did not participate in the campaigning. He had been a moderate liberal during the last days of the Second Empire, but had slowly shifted to the conservative point of view after the Commune.⁴ Aside from his political preferences, he was keenly aware of the ramifications of the internal struggle upon the image of France abroad. Bismarck had even

¹Ibid., p. 236-237.

²Ibid., p. 238. It is interesting to note that the Conservative group gaining the most was the Bonapartist.

³Ibid., p. 241.

⁴Ibid., p. 339.

taken steps to convoke an emergency session of the Reichstag in the event of a coup d'etat after the 1877 election results assured Republican control of the government.¹ Throughout the whole summer, Decazes tried desperately to maintain his policy of absolute neutrality in the Russo-Turkish War.

Shortly after this war had broken out, he made a major policy statement to a joint session of the Chamber and the Senate in which he outlined his plans for the most scrupulous abstention from all hostilities. His declaration met with loud cheering and was obviously a faithful reflection of the public sentiment for peace. Decazes thought that the position of France vis-a-vis Europe was at its best since 1870, and as he saw current problems, the best way to improve his nation's posture was to stay on good terms with all the Great Powers.²

The nation most difficult to maintain good rapport with during the summer of 1877 was the new power to the south, Italy. The bitter attacks against the clericals issued by the Republicans antagonized Italian Catholics and fears of French aggression should the Conservatives win the election alienated the Italian liberals. M. de Noailles, French ambassador to Rome, reported that the only persons who were calm in Italy were the members of the cabinet. The specter of clericalism haunted Italy as it would have constituted the death knell of Italian unity. Noailles reported that imaginations were running wild as to the possible outcomes of the internal struggle in France, and the Italian press was

¹Turkey No. 25 (1877) No. 190, Lyons to Derby, May 2, 1877.

²DDF, II, No. 173, Noailles to Decazes, May 23, 1877; No. 185, June 29, 1877.

bitter in its denunciation of France and French policy.¹

Decazes regarded the Rumanian declaration of independence in May, 1877 as being imprudent, but felt that there was nothing that could be done to regularize this until after the war.² His sole interest was not to offend Russia and he directed Le Flo to reassure the Russians of continued French abstention from any compromise in her stand of neutrality.³

When the Russian forces appeared to have crossed the Balkan Mountains in large numbers in July, 1877, Decazes suggested to Great Britain that the opportune moment had arrived for an offer of mediation.⁴ It was apparent that he wished to avoid a Russian occupation of Constantinople, feeling that this would bring Great Britain into open competition with Russia. His fears along this line were temporarily removed by the check applied to Russian arms at Plevna. Derby indicated that Adrianople was not menaced since only Russian cavalry units had traversed the Balkan range.⁵

The outcome of the French elections in October, 1877 was well received in Berlin and Rome. The press in these two cities reflected that perhaps the Republican victory meant that France would not be committed to a war policy, and even conjectured that the existence of a Republican form of government was the best guarantee of peace.⁶ On November 24 a

¹DDF, II, No. 173, Noailles to Decazes, May 23, 1877; No. 185, June 29, 1877.

²Ibid., No. 175, Decazes to Debaines, May 23, 1877.

³Ibid., No. 176, Le Flo to Decazes, May 27, 1877; No. 178, May 30, 1877.

⁴Ibid., No. 190, Decazes to d'Harcourt, July 16, 1877.

⁵Ibid., No. 191, d'Harcourt to Decazes, July 18, 1877.

⁶Ibid., No. 208, Noailles to Decazes, Oct. 18, 1877; No. 212, Tivy to Decazes, Oct. 25, 1877.

new cabinet was formed and Decazes was replaced by M. de Banneville as foreign minister. He notified the French representatives abroad that there would be no change in basic policy and that France would continue to work for peace. Banneville's career as foreign minister lasted less than a month, however, for a new cabinet was formed on December 1, 1877 which named William Henry Waddington as the bearer of the foreign affairs portfolio.²

Although there was no profound change in French policy, the advent of the new cabinet marked a relaxation of Franco-German tensions. This was accentuated by the appointment of Count Saint-Vallier as the new ambassador to Germany. Von Bülow commented in January, 1878 that German fears of ultramontanism and Bonapartism were now permanently put to rest, and that the relations between the two nations should proceed along the most friendly lines in working for a final settlement of the Eastern crisis.³ Bismarck had never liked the previous ambassador, Gontaut-Biron, since he feared that the latter had an undue influence on the Empress.⁴

The final solution of the French internal struggle represented by the advent of the new cabinet on December 13 came almost simultaneously with the fall of Plevna to Russian arms. The first Turkish request for mediation by the Great Powers had been forwarded on December 12.⁵ The

¹ Ibid., No. 215, Banneville to representatives, Nov. 30, 1877.

² Ibid., No. 219, Dec. 14, 1877.

³ Ibid., No. 237, Saint-Vallier to Waddington, Jan. 30, 1878.

⁴ Bardoux, p. 106-107. Gontaut-Biron's superb social graces and his knowledge of court protocol had ingratiated him with the Empress. Bismarck feared that this influence was often transmitted through her to the Emperor.

⁵ Turkey No. 2 (1878) No. 1, Musurus to Derby, Dec. 12, 1877.

fall of Plevna had caused a strong reaction among the Hungarian elements of the Dual Monarchy who were now threatening dissolution of the empire if something were not done to stop the establishment of complete Russian hegemony in the Balkans.¹ Another event of significance occurred on December 13 which was to play its part in determining Great Power actions. The Sultan opened the session of the Assembly of Notables and devoted the major portion of his speech to the progress of domestic and religious reforms being carried out in his empire.² He thereby hoped to impress Great Britain and France that his government was carrying out a series of reforms similar to those proposed by the Constantinople Conference despite the Russian invasion.

Turkish hopes for Great Power mediation or intervention were given a cold reception on December 16 when Kaiser Wilhelm refused to accede to the Sultan's request.³ On the same day, Serbia entered the war joining the banners of the "Tsar Liberator" which added greater pressure upon the Turkish military forces which were now in a state of complete disarray.⁴ Layard, pro-Turkish as ever, advised a few days later that the Turkish forces were exhausted, but that they would still fight on against the invaders.⁵ Such heroism was not to be required, however, because

¹Turkey No. 1 (1878) No. 602, Buchanan to Derby, Dec. 12, 1877. The Imperial Council had unanimously approved Andrassy's policy of neutrality before but had increased the empire's military preparations. Ibid., No. 159, Buchanan to Derby, July 31, 1877.

²Ibid., No. 616, Layard to Derby, Dec. 13, 1877. Layard refers to groups as constituting a parliament, but this is misleading since the Notables only served as a sounding board for the Sultan to declare his policies.

³Turkey No. 2 (1878) No. 3, Russell to Derby, Dec. 16, 1877.

⁴Ibid., No. 626, White to Derby, Dec. 16, 1877.

⁵Ibid., No. 4, Layard to Derby, Dec. 21, 1877.

Great Britain responded to the direct appeal of the Sultan for mediation. On December 27, Britain notified Russia that the Turks had requested a peace settlement and offered to serve as the intermediary in the negotiations.¹

Not wishing to act alone, Derby requested France to support the British effort to bring the war to a close.² Waddington's reply was one of polite refusal. Gortchakov had notified Britain that Russia was indeed desirous of peace, but that it would have to be negotiated without the interference of a third party. Germany supported him in this stand.³ Waddington refused to be drawn into the position of making a choice between the two powers upon whom so much depended for French security. He directed Le Flo to exert all possible pressure in Russia for the negotiation of at least an early armistice, if not a conclusive peace treaty. Waddington recognized that if he made a premature judgment as to which country he should choose to support, Britain or Russia, France might be drawn into the struggle against her better interests.⁴

He pointed out to his ambassadors in London and St. Petersburg that the nearer the Russian forces came to Constantinople, the greater would be the danger of an active entry by Great Britain. He also noted that Austria-Hungary was supporting the British demand for an immediate cessation of hostilities which reflected the uneasiness on the Ballplatz

¹Ibid., No. 9, Musurus to Derby, Dec. 24, 1877; No. 11, Derby to Loftus, Dec. 27, 1877.

²Ibid., No. 12, Derby to Lyons, Dec. 27, 1877.

³DGP, II, No. 300 Dulow to Russell, Jan. 3, 1878; DDF, II, No. 235, d'Harcourt to Waddington, Jan. 29, 1878; No. 223, Waddington to Le Flo, Dec. 31, 1877.

⁴Bardoux, p. 107.

about future Russian plans in the Balkans. As Waddington observed the situation at the turn of the year, the quicker the fighting came to an end the better for France. Consequently he requested the Italian government to use its influence at London and St. Petersburg on behalf of peace in the Balkans.¹

In order to convince the Austro-Hungarian government that France would not give a repeat performance of the Crimean War by allying herself with Great Britain in a war against Russia, the French minister to Vienna, M. de Vogüé, stressed the necessity for extreme French caution in Balkan affairs at this time. France had no unsatisfied ambitions to fulfill nor any desire for territorial aggrandizement from the Ottoman Empire, and she declared that the other Great Powers exercise the same reserve in their Balkan policies. This was not to indicate that France would abandon the general interests of Europe or her own special interests in her foreign policy.²

Andrassy privately acknowledged a strong congruence between French and Austrian Balkan policies, but did not wish this to be made public. He replied to de Vogüé's direct inquiries about the nature of the agreements between Austria and Russia by confessing that "he could not transmit arrangements which did not exist."³ Any publication of the Budapest Conventions with Russia would have seriously weakened Andrassy's plan of using British pressure to force Russia to abide by her agreement with him of the previous January.

¹DDF, II, No. 223, Waddington to Le Flo, Dec. 31, 1877; No. 224, Waddington to d'Harcourt, Jan. 1, 1878.

²Ibid., No. 225, de Vogüé to Waddington, Jan. 1, 1878.

³Ibid.

Waddington's forecast of British reaction to the swift movement of Russian forces toward Constantinople was, if anything, too modest. The winter months of 1877-1878 witnessed a near panic both in British government circles and the general populace. The Bulgarian Horrors were now over one year old and the reports from Layard, some of which were published in the British press, as well as some sober second thoughts upon the true interests of Britain in the Near East began to cause a shift in public opinion. The urban areas in general supported Disraeli's belligerent attitude towards Russia and war fever reached sufficient proportions that a new word, jingoism, was found necessary to describe it.¹

Officially, the British and Russians exchanged indecisive notes as to the exact areas to be occupied by the advancing Russian troops.² Shipka Pass fell on January 9 and Gortchakov was sticking by his insistence that the Turks should treat directly with Russia in any peace discussions. He reminded Le Flo that his proposals were supported by Berlin and there was not the slightest fissure in the Dreikaiserbund.³ Gortchakov thereby indicated his knowledge of the British overtures to Vienna. He also reassured France that the Bund was not directed against France in any way,⁴ hoping to prevent France from being attracted to Great Britain.

From the fall of Plevna on December 10, 1877 to the Salisbury Memorandum on April 1, 1878, British policy was subject to variations on

¹R. W. Seton-Watson, Britain in Europe, 1789-1914 (New York: Macmillan Co., 1937) p. 526-528.

²Hertslet, IV, 2656.

³DDF, II, No. 226, Le Flo to Waddington, Jan. 4, 1878.

⁴Ibid.

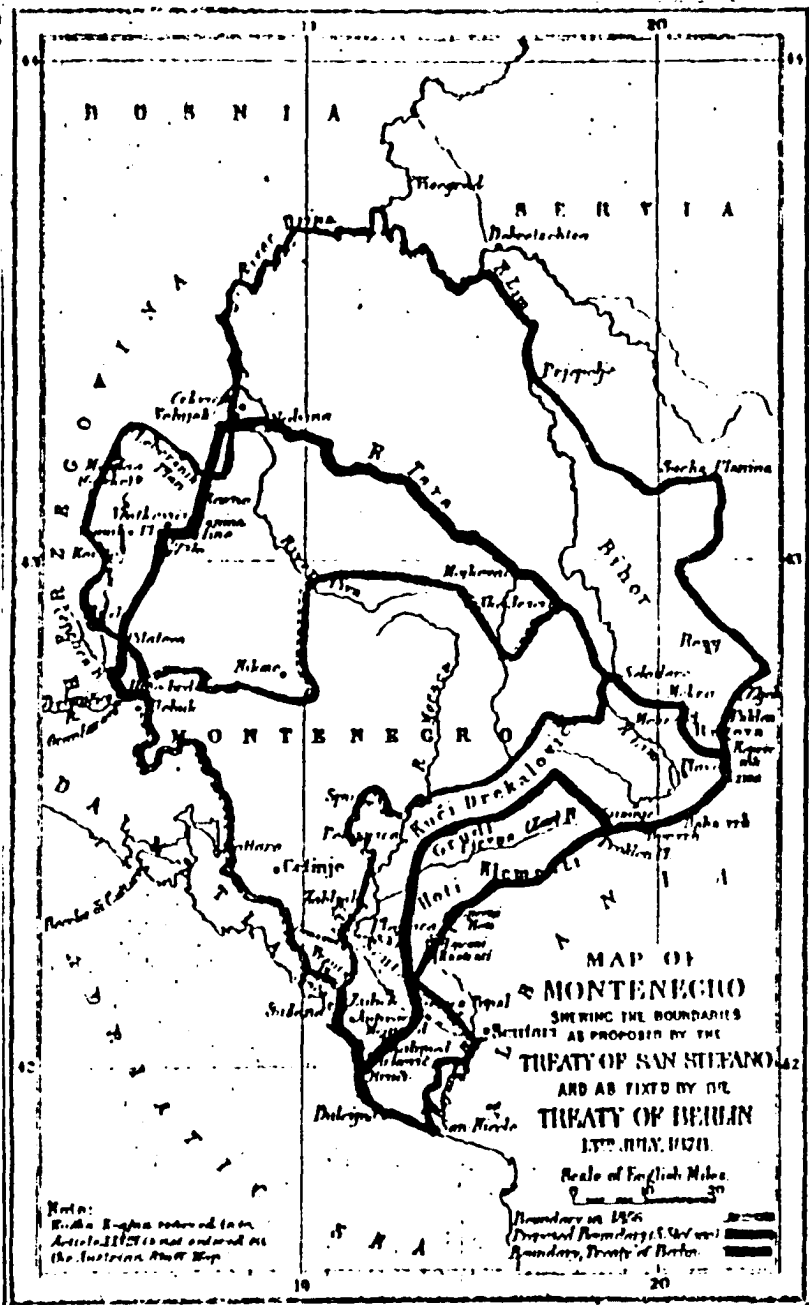
an almost day to day basis. The fleet was ordered into the Sea of Marmora no less than three separate times, and then had its orders twice countermanded. Derby resigned, reinstated himself in the cabinet, and late in March resigned permanently only to attack the government bitterly in April while gravitating to the opposition group of Lord Granville.¹ Derby was replaced by Lord Salisbury who at once circularized a note to the capitals of the Great Powers clarifying the British position. Salisbury's summary of events and formal statement of British interests actually represented a retreat from the stand of Disraeli's traditional Palmerstonian policy of maintaining the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire. Salisbury's compromise aimed at bringing about real reforms in both Asiatic and European Turkey and at gaining some assurances for Britain which would protect the line to India.²

If a conflict between Great Britain and Russia was the great danger to the French position in Europe that both Decazes and Waddington feared, the divergencies of opinion in Britain during these crucial months prevented Britain from following any uninterrupted policy. Disraeli remarked that war was almost impossible since the country was so badly divided on the Eastern crisis.³ To complicate the picture further, Sir Henry Layard was in daily contact with the leaders of the Sultan's government. He apparently had no doubts as to the ultimate entry of Britain into the war and dictated the strategy to be followed by Server

¹Seton-Watson, p. 528-535.

²Hertslet, IV, 2698-2706.

³Seton-Watson, p. 531. Gladstone denounced the sending of the fleet as an 'act of war'. Disraeli in turn described Gladstone as a 'vindictive fiend' rather than a 'pious Christian'.



Pasha, Turkish foreign minister.¹

Russian policy was similarly indecisive during the period between the dates of the fall of Plevna and the signing of the armistice on January 31, 1878. A fortunate breakdown in communications between St. Petersburg and the headquarters of the Grand Duke Nicholas in the field probably accounted for the failure of the Russian army to take action when the British fleet ultimately entered the Sea of Marmora late in January. Tsar Alexander ordered his nephew to take Constantinople but then forwarded a series of conflicting stipulations to modify this original position. Grand Duke Nicholas apparently decided that his troops were too exhausted and too disorganized to attempt the seizure of the city at that time, and the crisis slowly subsided.²

The preliminary peace between Russia and Turkey was signed on January 31, 1878. It included the creation of an autonomous Bulgarian province which was to have a Christian government and a native militia. Montenegro was to be independent and enlarged in territory. Rumanian and Serbian independence were also to be guaranteed, and Bosnia and Herzegovina were to be endowed with autonomous administrations. Russia was to be paid a large indemnity which was to be settled later, and the question of the Straits was to be negotiated between the Sultan and the Tsar by direct discussions.³ A formal convention signed the same day provided for an extension of the armistice to include Montenegro, Serbia, and Rumania, so that the fighting in the Balkans officially came to an

¹DGP, II, No. 301. Reuss to Bülow, Jan. 15, 1878.

²Sumner, p. 355-360.

³Hertslet, IV, 2658-2660.

end at this time. The Turkish government was restricted militarily by these provisions, but the Great Powers were yet to be heard in the final settlement.¹

Three days after the signing of the armistice between Russia and Turkey, Saint-Vallier presented his official credentials to Kaiser Wilhelm. The fears of Waddington over the possibility of war between Britain and Russia were in part offset by the improvement in Franco-German relations following the advent of the DuFaure Cabinet in Paris shortly after the fall of Plevna. The Kaiser's friendly comments on the status of the French government were further indications of the sentiments previously voiced by von Bülow.² The fear of ultramontanism and monarchism was allayed in Berlin, and Bismarck thought that Germany and France could now work together for the cause of European peace.³

This improvement in relations with Germany was certainly well-received by Paris because the specter of a war between Russia and Great Britain cast an ominous shadow over Europe during February, 1878. Disraeli inquired of Germany as to her role in a Russo-British conflict while at the same time he was trying to purchase the remnants of the Turkish fleet to bolster British naval power in the eastern Mediterranean.⁴ While Bismarck stated that he would maintain a neutral role, he pointed out the ultimate necessity of realigning the territorial situation in the Ottoman Empire regardless of which Great Power won the

¹Ibid., 2661-2667.

²DDF, II, No. 237, Saint-Vallier to Waddington, Jan. 20, 1878; No. 242, Feb. 4, 1878.

³Ibid., No. 250, Id. to Id., Feb. 16, 1878.

⁴Stojanovic, p. 221; Seton-Watson, p. 532.

conflict. He argued that since Russia had already started the dissolution of the European sector of the Ottoman Empire, Great Britain and Austria-Hungary should do likewise and secure to themselves such sections as would be necessary to protect their own national interests.¹

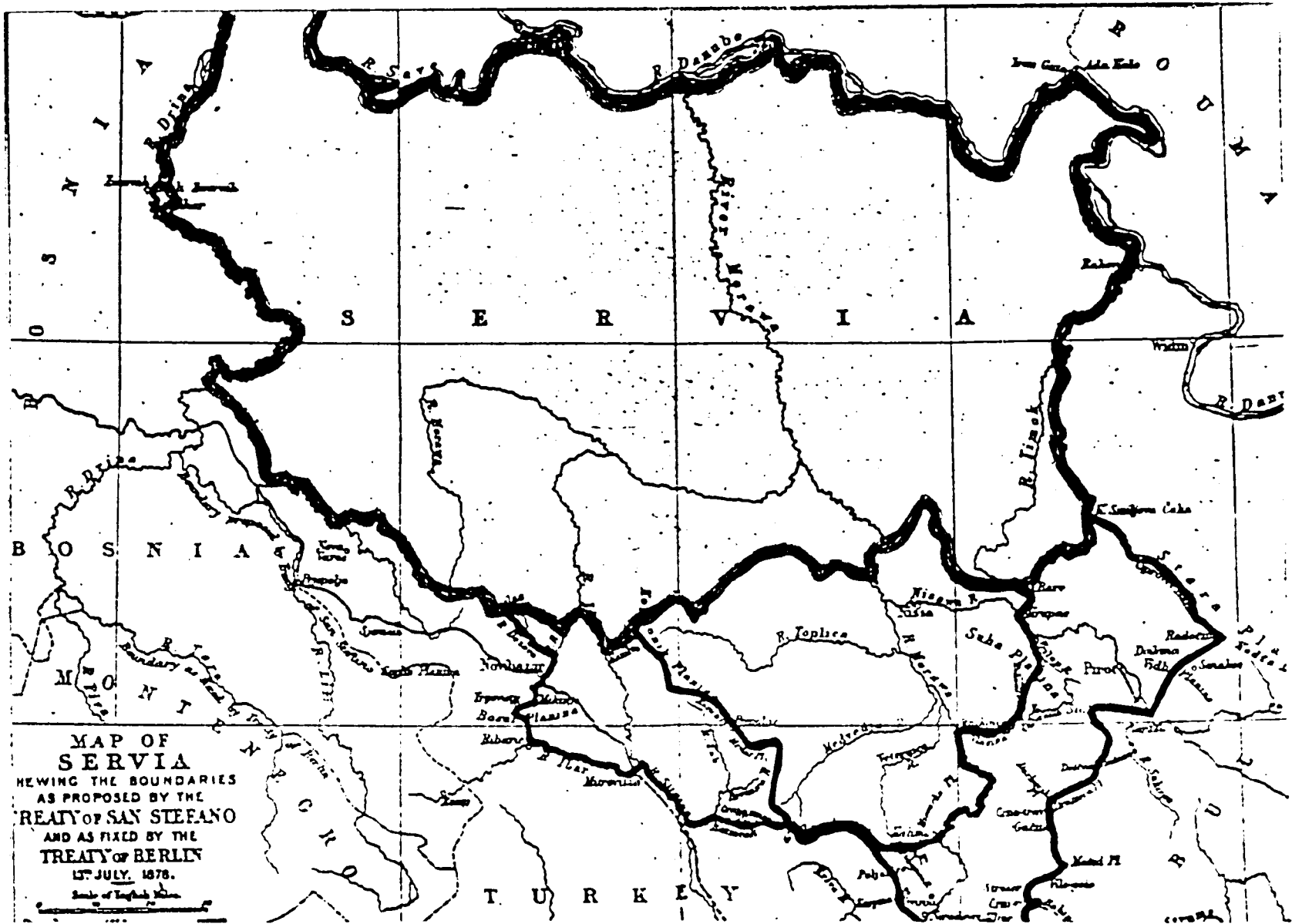
Perhaps more significantly, Saint-Vallier commented that his conversations with Bismarck had convinced him that Bismarck's primary interest was in saving Andrassy. Russian armistice terms had placed the Austrian foreign minister in a most difficult position, and Bismarck was concerned about the possibility that Andrassy might be forced to resign at any moment.² The sentiment in Germany was strongly pro-Austrian, and Bismarck interpreted the Austrian proposals for a European conference to discuss the Eastern Question as perhaps laying the groundwork for a pro-English policy on the part of the Dual Monarchy. It therefore was necessary to reassure Andrassy of solid German support to prevent this from happening. British negotiations with Austria-Hungary during the early weeks of February were disturbing to the German chancellor.³ These negotiations proved to be fruitless, but they did reflect the ramifications of the terms of the armistice between Russia and Turkey.

The eventual treaty which emanated from the discussions between Russia and Turkey following the signing of the armistice was such that

¹Stojanovic, p. 221-222.

²DDF, II, No. 249, Saint-Vallier to Waddington, Feb. 15, 1878.

³Stojanovic, p. 219. Britain desired that Austria place a land force in the field against Russia as a preliminary to a declaration of war. This tactic had been a constant policy of Britain throughout the century. It meant that she would not engage a continental power unless another major power were allied with her.



MAP OF SERBIA
 SHOWING THE BOUNDARIES
 AS PROPOSED BY THE
TREATY OF SAN STEFANO
 AND AS FIXED BY THE
TREATY OF BERLIN
 17 JULY, 1878.
 Scale of English Miles

1878
 San Stefano
 Berlin

its implications upon Europe assumed earthquake proportions. The Treaty of San Stefano was signed on March 3, 1878 and represented the epitome of Russian hopes and plans for the Balkan nations. In addition to the provisions of the armistice and preliminary conventions, San Stefano envisioned the creation of a vast new autonomous tributary principality of Bulgaria. Its frontiers were to include the area from the Danube River on the north to the Black Sea on the east, the Aegean Sea on the south, and approximately one hundred miles west of Sofia on the west. Turkey was to pay a total indemnity of 1,410,000,000 rubles which Russia translated into territorial cessions, although roughly one-fourth of the amount was left open to future settlement. In time of war or peace the Straits were to remain open to merchant vessels from other nations bound to or from Russian ports, and Turkey was not to establish a blockade in the Black Sea at any time.¹ Ignatiev had simply ignored the agreements between Russia and Austria-Hungary in laying down the terms to the Turks which, although they made the Pan-slavists happy, created the basis for the calling of a general European conference to mutilate the treaty.

The proposed map of the Balkans drawn by Ignatiev at San Stefano constituted a complete rejection of the idea of a division of spoils which had been the basis of the Budapest Convention in January, 1877. The new enlarged state of Bulgaria would have completely severed any Austrian move towards the seaport of Salonika, and a new Balkan power under the aegis of Russian Slavs was obviously an immediate peril to the Dual Monarchy. Waddington was advised early in April that Austria-Hungary could never agree to the creation of a Bulgaria as constituted by

¹Hertslet, IV, 2672-2696. This contains the entire text of the treaty.

the San Stefano arrangement.¹

The treaty was just as repugnant to British interests. Salisbury's circular note of April 1, 1878 objected to the unilateral Russian action in making territorial changes in the Ottoman Empire without consultation with the other guaranteeing powers of the Treaty of Paris of 1856. Salisbury insisted that the treaty as a whole would actually give the Russian government an absolute veto over the operations of the Turkish government in the future. It would be necessary therefore to reconsider the total effects of the San Stefano arrangements rather than isolated sections of the treaty whenever the general European conference should meet.²

While Great Britain and Austria-Hungary were vitally concerned with the remapping of the Balkans, France was primarily concerned that the consequences of the war should not spread into other areas. Waddington was particularly concerned about the position of Egypt and Syria as well as the traditional role of France in preserving the Holy Places in the Ottoman Empire. He had previously warned Great Britain that any unilateral occupation of Egypt would create serious dissatisfaction in France.³ Derby assured d'Harcourt late in December, 1877 that Britain had no desire to change the joint project in Egypt and the British agent at Cairo noted to his French counterpart that the British position had not changed since the assurances given to Decazes earlier in the year.⁴ Britain was solely interested in maintaining free navigation through the

¹DDF, II, No. 231, Fournier to Waddington, April 3, 1878.

²Hertslet, IV, 2698-2706.

³Bardoux, p. 109.

⁴DDF, II, No. 228, Michels to Waddington, Jan. 12, 1878; No. 138, d'Harcourt to Decazes, Jan. 26, 1877.

canal and in preventing any other power from gaining a preponderance influence in the areas around the canal.¹

The question of English interests in Egypt and the possibility of a British seizure of the entire country continued to be conspicuous in Waddington's thinking.² A joint commission was established early in April, 1878 to investigate Egyptian finances and the British instructions to M. Baring seemed to alleviate Waddington's fears.³ At the same time, Disraeli advised that although England might have to take certain steps to protect her interests in the eastern Mediterranean, France could be sure that the British would fully recognize French interests.⁴ Disraeli regarded the Egyptian question as the keystone of Franco-British relations, and hence was quick to agree with Waddington's determination to keep the Egyptian question off the agenda of the proposed European conference.⁵

The new French foreign minister was apparently drawing the circle within which he could freely act even more tightly than his predecessor, Decazes. Waddington aimed at preserving the holdings of France in the Near East, and protecting her vast financial interests represented by Turkish bonds and various capital investments. While Britain and Russia were nearly coming to blows after the fall of Plevna and war fever was rising in London, Waddington was content to refuse to opt for either of

¹ Ibid.

² DGP, II, No. 348, Hohenlohe to Bismarck, Mar. 15, 1878.

³ DDF, II, No. 282, Waddington to Michels, April 5, 1878.

⁴ Ibid., No. 283, d'Harcourt to Waddington, April 5, 1878.

⁵ Ibid., No. 263, Id. to Id., Mar. 8, 1878.

these two nations whose good will France needed. Although there was nothing new in his instructions to French diplomats in other countries, Waddington's notes contained less urgency than had his predecessors, and he was more confident of the policy he was following.

One major rationale appeared for this change in tone at the Quai d'Orsay. The appearance of Saint-Vallier in Berlin marked a turning point in Franco-German relations. This was capped by Germany's agreement to participate in a limited way in the Fine Arts division of the Exposition in Paris scheduled for 1878.¹ Apparently, with the menace across the Rhine casting a softer shadow southward, Waddington felt that he could be less concerned with the Russo-British crisis. The solution of this crisis was now being delegated to a major European conference for which the European capitals were laying the groundwork.

¹Ibid., No. 259, Saint-Vallier to Waddington, Mar. 6, 1878.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ROLE OF FRANCE AT BERLIN

The signing of the armistice on January 31, 1878 signalled the formal end of hostilities in the Balkans but one sore spot still remained active. The Greeks had been growing ever more restive during the autumn of 1877 despite French and British pressure to keep them from entering into the fray. The Greeks hoped to extend their country's frontiers by annexing parts of Thessaly and Macedonia. M. Tissot and C. Wyndham, the French and British consuls to Athens, had long been warning the Greeks to follow a pacific and prudent policy vis-a-vis Turkey.¹ Their position became highly unpopular as a result and incidents involving mobs throwing rocks and other materials into the consulates were noted on several occasions.² The fall of Plevna stimulated the war party in Greece to more extreme actions and despite the official stand of the government for neutrality, Greek volunteers began to gather in the northern part of the country. They felt that if they could invade Thessaly and Macedonia the eventual settlement of the war would give them some additional territory.

By the time the armistice had been signed, Greek 'volunteer' units

¹Turkey No. 19 (1878) No. 65, Wyndham to Derby, Sept. 28, 1877.

²Ibid., No. 134, Barker to Derby, Dec. 20, 1877.

were already crossing the Thessalonian frontier. Tissot continued to make strong remonstrances to the Greek government demanding that these troops be recalled. The British joined in these protests and promised that they would help the Greeks get a privileged position at the prospective European conference being discussed in diplomatic circles.¹

The previous day, Feb. 4, 1878, Waddington had heard rumors of the Turkish fleet being moved from the Black Sea to Piraeus and immediately acted to force the Greek government to recall its troops from Thessaly.² He advised Great Britain of his actions afterwards and requested that the British exert the strongest possible pressure on the Greek government. This joint effort was successful for the Greeks agreed two days later to recall their troops.³ Waddington's statements to the Greeks about the extremely poor impression their aggressive action would make on any future European conference were the convincing arguments.⁴

While France was taking the initiative in preventing the spread of the war in the Balkans to the southern shores of the peninsula, Austria-Hungary was taking steps to readjust the balance in the central and northern sections. On February 4, 1878, Andrassy forwarded to the other European capitals a suggestion for a general conference to modify the Treaty of Paris of 1856 and the Protocol of London of 1871 in the light

¹Ibid., No. 163, Derby to Wyndham, Feb. 5, 1878; DDF, II, No. 244, Waddington to de Vogüé, Feb. 5, 1878.

²Turkey No. 19 (1878) No. 166, Lyons to Derby, Feb. 4, 1878.

³Ibid., No. 194, Wyndham to Derby, Feb. 7, 1878; No. 196, Feb. 7, 1878. Wyndham noted to Derby that Tissot had taken the initiative throughout this episode.

⁴Ibid., No. 175, Derby to Lyons, Feb. 5, 1878.

of new conditions in the Balkans.¹ The terms which Russia would offer to the Turks had been known since January 24, and the signing of the armistice now provided a legal basis upon which Andrassy could take formal action.²

His move indicated the grave response in Vienna to the terms of the armistice which allocated certain areas to Russia in contradiction to that nation's prior agreements with Austria-Hungary.³ Saint-Vallier believed that Berlin was feigning disinterest in this matter only to cover its deep fears that a serious rift had been created in the Dreikaiserbund.⁴ Waddington expressed his agreement with the proposed conference and suggested that Gortchakov might be the logical person to preside over the meeting.⁵ He felt that in this way he might offset any ill feeling which the Russians might bear against France should the conference result in a diminution of Russian hegemony in the Balkans. Derby acceded for Great Britain and recommended that the meeting be held in Vienna.⁶

Bismarck was concerned about the position of Andrassy in Vienna and feared that his chief supporter might be eliminated any day by the

¹DDF, II, No. 243, Waddington to ambassadors, Feb. 5, 1878; Hertslet, IV, 2668-2669.

²Turkey No. 3 (1878) No. 34, Layard to Derby, Jan. 24, 1878.

³DDF, II, No. 245, Saint-Vallier to Waddington, Feb. 7, 1878. This is not too surprising since Ignatiev, who negotiated the terms of the armistice, had only recently been apprised of the Budapest Conventions.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., No. 244, Waddington to de Vogue, Feb. 5, 1878.

⁶Turkey No. 24 (1878) No. 1, Derby to Elliot, Feb. 4, 1878; No. 2, Beust to Derby, Feb. 5, 1878.

influence of Austrian military circles acting in conjunction with the Magyar magnates who were demanding stiffer action in the Balkans. The German chancellor had consistently supported Andrassy since the latter had maintained a status quo arrangement in the Balkans which fitted neatly into Bismarck's scheme for European peace. He recognized that Russia's armistice terms would cause a strong reaction in Vienna and since Andrassy had always been an advocate of close relations with Germany, Bismarck sought to strengthen his position. He decided that the Russian terms would have to be modified and consequently requested Kaiser Wilhelm to lay the groundwork by writing directly to Tsar Alexander.¹

The entrance of the British fleet into the Sea of Marmora on February 13 further complicated the situation.² The Russian advance to Rodosto only forty miles from Constantinople had caused the British to take this action even though the Sultan objected on the grounds that it would give the Russians an excuse for entering the capital city.³ Waddington recognized the dangers of the situation and although he was unaware of the Derby-Schouvaloff conversations,⁴ he urged St. Petersburg to avoid taking any action which would lead to war with Great Britain. Waddington now believed that the conference proposed by Andrassy was the only possible way

¹DDF, II, No. 249, Saint-Vallier to Waddington, Feb. 15, 1878. This letter was to be delivered by Manteuffel. Andrassy had pointed out to Berlin the dangers of a large Slavic state in the Balkans. DGP, II, No. 319, Stolberg to von Bülow, Feb. 12, 1878.

²DDF, II, No. 246, de Mouÿ to Waddington, Feb. 13, 1878.

³Seton-Watson, p. 531-532.

⁴An agreement was reached by these two that the Russians would not occupy Gallipoli if the British would not land any troops. DDF, II, No. 252, Waddington to Le Flo, Feb. 17, 1878; Seton-Watson, p. 532.

to avoid further hostilities and to maintain general peace.¹

The formal acquiescence of Turkey to the Russian demands as contained in the terms of the Treaty of San Stefano increased the tension in Austria-Hungary, and almost immediately thereafter, Andrassy requested the Great Powers to agree to a congress. He proposed that it should meet in Berlin and that Bismarck should act as the presiding officer.² The change in his request for a congress rather than a conference meant that he now wanted the chiefs of state from the Great Powers to participate in the European settlement. Gortchakov agreed to this proposal but refused to accept the pretensions of Greece and Rumania to be represented.³ Great Britain received the request belatedly and reserved her final answer for several weeks. Waddington gave his acceptance to the invitation, but indicated that his agreement was based upon the assumption that the congress would discuss only those matters which proceeded directly and naturally from the consequences of the Russo-Turkish War.⁴

Derby strongly approved Waddington's desire to exclude Egypt, Syria, and the Holy Places from the agenda of the congress. Derby believed that despite the Russian protestations of the unanimity of views of the Dreikaiserbund that Austria-Hungary would eventually repudiate it.⁵ While Britain had no objections to holding the meeting at Berlin, Disraeli

¹ DDF, II, No. 252, Waddington to Le Flo, Feb. 17, 1878.

² DGP, II, No. 331, Stolberg to von Bülow, Mar. 3, 1878; DDF, II, No. 258, Saint-Vallier to Waddington, Mar. 5, 1878.

³ DDF, II, No. 261, Le Flo to Waddington, Mar. 6, 1878.

⁴ Hertslet, IV, 2697; DDF, II, No. 262, Waddington to ambassadors, Mar. 7, 1878.

⁵ DDF, II, No. 263, d'Harcourt to Waddington, Mar. 8, 1878; No. 261, Le Flo to Waddington, Mar. 6, 1878.

flatly declared that he would not attend any such congress unless Russia agreed to British conditions beforehand. Meanwhile he increased British military preparations.¹

The formal British statement was written by Lord Salisbury who had replaced Derby on March 27. In his circular note to the Great Powers on April 1, 1878, Salisbury made specific objections to the size of the new Bulgaria and the transfer of Bessarabia to Russia. He reaffirmed the statement of Disraeli that Britain would not engage in any congress unless all the changes in the Treaty of 1856 could be discussed.² Waddington now faced the difficult task of not alienating either Russia or Britain. He knew the great differences which existed between their views upon the final settlement in the Balkans, and decided that the only feasible thing for France to do was to follow a policy of non-commitment to either side. He reminded St. Petersburg that France had suggested Gortchakov's name as a likely presiding officer for the congress and discounted the stories in the French press which advocated a policy of giving French support to the side which could offer the most to France.³ His desires to limit the agenda of the congress so as to exclude the areas which were of direct and vital concern to France were agreed to by Germany which hoped to solve the Eastern Question as rapidly as possible.⁴ Support for the French limitations from the other capitals was obtained by

¹DGP, II, No. 336, Russell to Bulow, Mar. 8, 1878; No. 337, Münster to Bülow, Mar. 9, 1878.

²Hertslet, IV, 2698-2706.

³DDF, II, No. 266, Waddington to Le Flo, Mar. 9, 1878.

⁴Ibid., No. 267, Saint-Vallier to Waddington, Mar. 9, 1878.

the middle of March.¹

The conflict of Russian and British aims hit its peak with the dismissal of Derby in London. Amid conflicting stories of serious military measures being taken, the ousting of the foreign secretary, who admittedly was for a peaceful solution of the crisis, was viewed in many quarters as a step towards British military action. Berlin was in despair. Bismarck felt that the British were working directly for a complete rupture of the concert of Europe, and Ignatiev was talking of the Bund taking matters into its own hands to regulate matters in the Ottoman Empire. Moltke told the Austrian minister, Count Karolyi, that the Austrians could march as far as Salonika and the Germans would approve and sustain them.²

At this point, Bismarck stepped forward with a proposal for Britain and Russia calculated to lessen the danger of war. He suggested that the British fleet should return to the west side of the Dardanelles and that the Russian troops should withdraw their lines a similar distance from Constantinople.³ Salisbury accepted this proposal at once but only on the condition that the withdrawal of the Russian forces would be guaranteed by the mediating power.⁴ The Russians agreed the next day and the agreement provided that the British fleet would return to Besika Bay and the Russian troops to the Adrianople-Midia line.⁵

¹Ibid., No. 270, Waddington to Saint-Vallier, Mar. 15, 1878.

²Ibid., No. 277, Saint-Vallier to Waddington, Mar. 28, 1878; No. 278, d'Harcourt to Waddington, Mar. 28, 1878; DGP, II, No. 373, Münster to Foreign Office, Mar. 28, 1878.

³DGP, II, No. 381, Bismarck to Münster, April 9, 1878.

⁴DDF, II, No. 290, Saint-Vallier to Waddington, April 17, 1878.

⁵Ibid., No. 292, Id. to Id., April 19, 1878.

With the tension thus relaxed, and Salisbury's recognition that the old Disraelian policy of maintaining the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire was no longer of any merit, the way was now open for negotiations to determine the division of spoils in the Balkans.¹ A protocol of May 30 between Britain and Russia laid down the general terms which were finally to emerge from the Congress of Berlin six weeks later. By this agreement, Russia was to keep Bessarabia and large areas of Armenia including the city of Batum, but Bulgaria was to lose its littoral on the Aegean Sea and was to be confined to the area between the Danube on the north and the Balkan Mountains on the south.²

On June 4, Great Britain and Turkey signed an agreement whereby the island of Cyprus was given to Britain and on the same day these two powers signed a defensive military alliance which gave Turkey support in her Asiatic provinces so long as she instituted a series of reforms in the government of these areas.³ These agreements paved the way for the congress to take place, and on June 3, Britain accepted the formal invitation of Germany to participate in the Congress which would convene on June 13.⁴

The delimitation of Bulgaria was in accord with the views of France since she had been gravely concerned with the extension of Russian sovereignty into the Mediterranean area. Le Flo had indicated this to the Tsar on April 26, and even earlier a Russian bond issue had failed on the Paris

¹Seton-Watson, p. 534.

²Hertslet, IV, 2717-2720.

³Ibid., 2722-2725.

⁴Ibid., 2721.

market due to French fears of the enlarged Bulgaria proposed by San Stefano.¹ Andrassy was pleased by the French position on Bulgaria since he realized that this meant that each of the Great Powers was opposed to the enlarged Bulgaria of Russian design.² At the same time he pressed for French support of an Austrian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. De Vogüé indicated that France would have no strong objections to this move so long as the commercial interests of the other nations were not placed in any jeopardy.³

The French position of opposing some of the provisions of the San Stefano Treaty caused a revival of prestige for France in the Porte. The French ambassador, M. Fournier, reported that Waddington's objections to enlarging Bulgaria and giving her access to the Aegean Sea were well received in Constantinople. It appeared to the Turks that the old Anglo-French alliance had been reformed in the Near East, and that this would serve the Sultan's aim of thwarting Russian aggrandizement.⁴ Fournier noted that the reports from Paris were being immediately translated for submission to the Sultan and that French influence and prestige were higher than ever before.

If Waddington had been willing to notify Russia in March of his discontent with the provisions of San Stefano despite the need for

¹ DDF, II, No. 294, Le Flo to Waddington, April 26, 1878; Ward and Gooch, p. 130.

² DDF, II, No. 295, de Vogüé to Waddington, April 30, 1878.

³ Ibid., No. 296, Id. to Id., April 30, 1878.

⁴ Ibid., No. 302, Fournier to Waddington, May 9, 1878. A speech of the Prince of Wales on May 4 in Paris stressing the good feelings existing between France and England accounts for the Turkish impression of Franco-British accord. The Prince had stated that the English loved the French people with all their hearts. This was front page news in Constantinople.

Russian friendship and support, he was now no less hesitant in refusing to consider aligning France with Great Britain. He instructed Fournier to dispel any such idea in Constantinople, and sought to clarify the impressions which Aarifi Pasha, Turkish ambassador to Paris, had mistakenly assumed. It was not a "question of an accord with England, but of common interests of France and England in the Mediterranean." (Italics mine)¹ Waddington insisted that he had not discussed the details of San Stefano with Aarifi and that he had not yet formulated his opinions as to what stand France would take at the upcoming congress. Fournier was to state explicitly that French policy was one of absolute neutrality and to avoid any comments upon the eventual position of France at the congress.²

France formally accepted the invitation from Germany to attend the congress on May 26, and again insisted that the discussions at Berlin be limited to the provisions of the Treaty of San Stefano.³ The Russo-British agreement came only a few days later, and the two year nightmare of a war between these two powers plaguing France began to disappear from the consciousness of the French foreign office.⁴ The implication of this agreement for the British was the abandonment of their insistence upon protecting the territorial and administrative integrity of Turkey in Europe.

The Turko-British Pact of June 4 was not made public, but the accord with Russia was published during the course of the congress and

¹Ibid., No. 303, Waddington to Fournier, May 11, 1878.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., No. 308, Waddington to Saint-Vallier, May 26, 1878; DGP, II, No. 416, May 26, 1878.

⁴DGP, II, No. 427, Münster to Bismarck, June 2, 1878.

caused the British cabinet some embarrassment at home. It did serve to lessen the tension accompanying the negotiations.¹ The French government designated Waddington as first plenipotentiary and Saint-Vallier as the second representative to the meeting in Berlin.² The opening session was held on June 13 and concerned itself with the removal of the British fleet and the Russian army from their positions in the Balkans. The comments of Gortchakov and Salisbury in this regard were highly conciliatory and indicated that the powers were primarily concerned with achieving a peaceful solution to their problems. This augured well for the future sessions and provided an atmosphere in which the decisions could be reached with remarkable speed.³

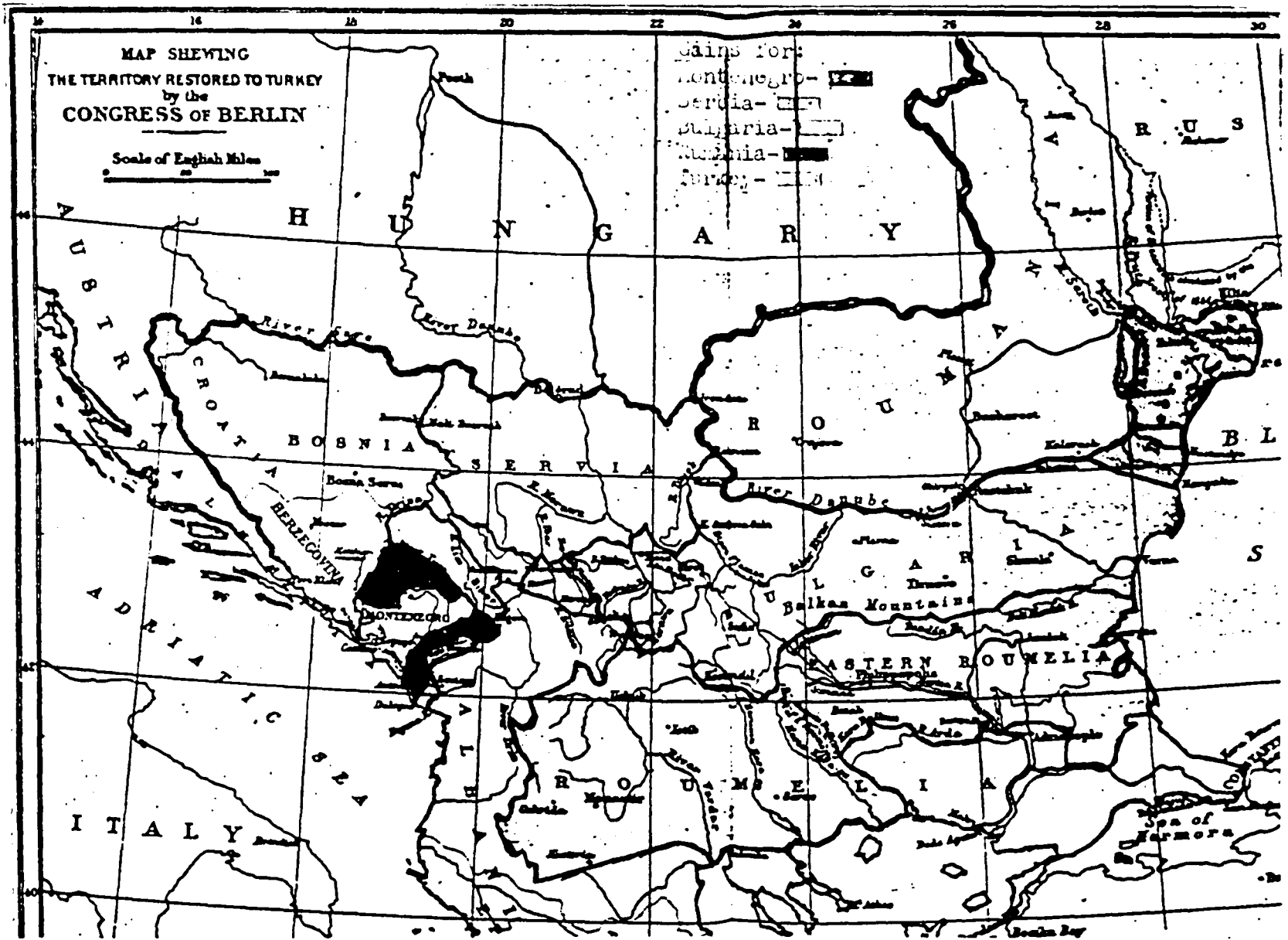
The issue of admitting Greece to the congress found Great Britain and Russia on opposite sides. The British had earlier committed themselves to advocate the participation of the Greek delegates as a result of their efforts to prevent further action by Greek volunteers in Thessaly during February, 1878. Russia was fearful that the Greeks would open up a Pandora box of complicated problems. Gortchakov had previously argued that if Greece were to be admitted, then the other small nations of the Balkans would also have to be admitted. After all, Montenegro and Serbia had been actual combatants in the war and their claim to representation had more justification than the Greek position.⁴

Waddington stepped in at this juncture and proposed a compromise

¹Hertslet, IV, 2717-2720; DDF, II, No. 325, Waddington to Defaure, July 8, 1878.

²DDF, II, No. 313, Waddington to Saint-Vallier, June 8, 1878.

³Ibid., No. 316, Waddington to Defaure, June 14, 1878.



whereby Greece would be permitted to send a delegate to the congress with limited powers. He would be permitted to lay the question of Greek frontiers and claims before the assembled delegates, but could not take part in the discussions which would ensue.¹ This was accepted by both Russia and Great Britain. The second occasion involving the good offices of France concerned the role of the province of Eastern Rumelia. This area was to include that part of San Stefano's Bulgaria which was south of the Balkan Mountains but north of Macedonia.

Both Russia and British delegates agreed that Eastern Rumelia should be a principality under the suzerainty of the Sultan, but the Russians insisted that the Turkish forces garrisoned there should only be stationed on the borders of the country. In addition they insisted that a European commission should be established in order to guarantee the rights of the Christian population. Disraeli objected strenuously to these two Russian demands. He pointed out that the European commission would constitute an affront to the prestige of the Sultan and would encourage the natives to ignore the necessary orders for proper civil administrative procedures. He argued that stationing Turkish troops only on the frontiers of the country would permit a lack of proper police protection for the inhabitants living in the center of Rumelia.³

These opposite positions resulted in an impasse, and the tone of optimism which had permeated the conference turned to one of almost resignation and despair. Bismarck was discouraged and ultimately sought

¹Ibid., No. 269, Viet-Castel to Waddington, Mar. 13, 1878.

²Ibid., No. 319, Waddington to Dufaure, June 24, 1878.

³Ibid., No. 320, Id. to Id., June 26, 1878.

out Saint-Vallier to ask him to try to work out some kind of a compromise with Britain and Russia on this matter privately.¹ Waddington agreed with Disraeli in rejecting the creation of a European commission in Rumelia. He also thought that the limitation of Turkish troops to the frontier posts would work serious inconveniences upon any government trying to maintain internal order. In order to effect the compromise, however, Waddington had to offer the Russian some means whereby their aims could also be recognized.

He therefore proposed that the Russians agree that the frontier garrisons would be manned by Turkish regulars exclusively and that matters of internal control be handled by an indigenous gendarmerie assisted by a local militia. Waddington further suggested that the Turkish garrison forces not be permitted to live in the homes of the inhabitants but that they be quartered in their own barracks, and that Turkish forces not be permitted to stop in transit across Rumelia. The local militia and gendarmerie were to be recruited from the native populations and were to reflect the various nationalities in each locality. After two days of discussions, the Russian plenipotentiaries agreed to these provisions.²

The Russian objection to the use of Turkish troops in the interior of Rumelia was based on their fears of future mistreatment of Christians. Waddington suggested that a stipulation be included whereby the governor-general of Rumelia, an appointee of the Sultan, would notify the ambassadors of the Great Powers at Constantinople before Turkish troops could be employed in internal affairs. The governor-general would have to state the necessity for such a proposed action, and justify his actions

¹Ibid., No. 319, Waddington to Dufaure, June 24, 1878.

²Ibid., No. 320, Id. to Id., June 26, 1878.

to the ambassadors. This recommendation of Waddington's was also accepted and the Rumelian problem disappeared from the discussions.¹

In addition, Waddington took the initiative in insisting that absolute freedom of religious practice be guaranteed in Bulgaria and Rumania. This proposal was readily agreed to by all parties. Waddington was also successful in inserting a clause to protect the previous treaties of commerce and other international arrangements negotiated with Turkey which affected the Balkans.² The relegation of the question of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the administrative control of Austria-Hungary by the congress was a matter of indifference to France. Waddington felt that the location of these two provinces contiguous to Serbia and Montenegro would make any further aggrandizement in the Balkans by the Dual Monarchy highly unlikely. France had no major commercial interests in the two provinces, and the support which Austria-Hungary received from the other Great Powers was sufficient to guarantee that any objections would be overcome.³

The Russian insistence in acquiring Bessarabia from Rumania was accentuated by the statements of her plenipotentiaries that it was regarded as an affair of honor. The past role of France in befriending Rumania was not totally neglected despite Russian pressure. Waddington suggested that Russia compensate Rumania for the loss of Bessarabia by attaching Silistria to King Carol's domain. In Waddington's view, this would constitute just compensation since it would give Rumania two parts

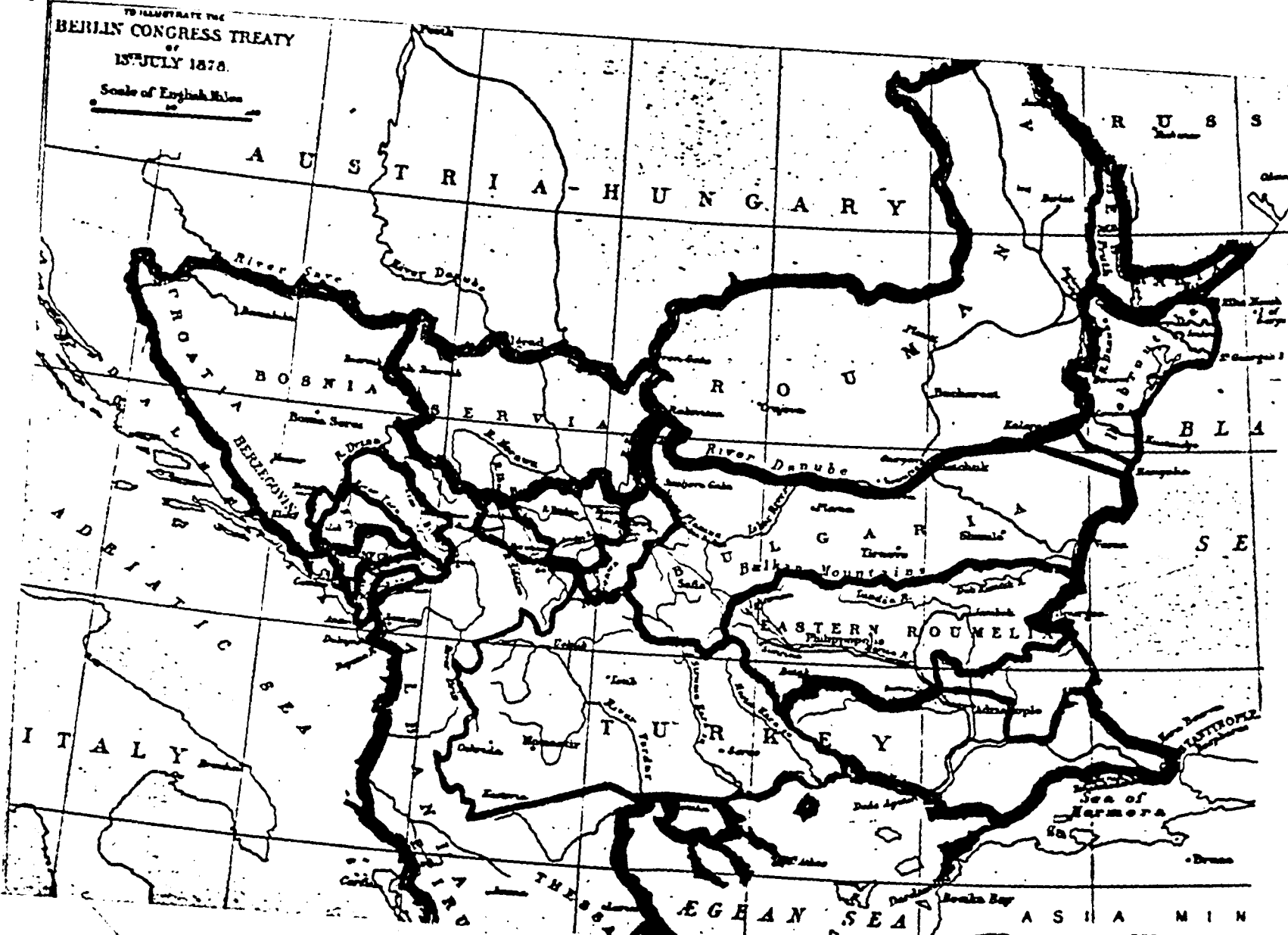
¹Ibid.

²ibid.

³Ibid., No. 322, Id. to Id., June 30, 1878.

TO ILLUSTRATE THE
BERLIN CONGRESS TREATY
of
13th JULY 1878.

Scale of English Miles
0 10 20 30 40 50



REFERENCE
J. Steiano
Berlin

on the Black Sea. Being mistress of the delta of the Danube would offset the loss of the fertile areas of Bessarabia.¹ The French recommendation was supported by the other powers and eventually was included in the final draft of the treaty.²

Waddington emphasized the need of an adjustment of the Greek frontiers since he realized that the war had given the Slavs a menacing position in the Balkans particularly vis-a-vis Greece. The French position as a Mediterranean power imposed the need for affording some relief to Greece in the way of defensible frontiers. Although Waddington proceeded cautiously at first, he brought increasing pressure on this matter which was not solved during the Berlin Congress. A commission was appointed to study the matter and throughout 1879 it was French insistence that eventually resulted in some adjustments being made.³

French interest in the Balkans was directly related to her position as a Mediterranean power, and her policy of supporting a strong Greece as a buffer against Slavic expansion was in clear accord with this role. During the congress, Salisbury had notified Waddington of the treaty between Turkey and Great Britain in order to forestall adverse French reaction. Salisbury recognized that the British occupation of Cyprus would offend France and he sought to emphasize the temporary nature of the

¹Ibid., Waddington conveniently forgot that the joint international conventions governing the use of the Danube would effectively prevent Rumania from exercising any unilateral policy as far as controlling the mouth of the river.

²Hertslet, IV, 2745.

³DDF, II, No. 322, June 30, 1878; No. 485, Waddington to Tissot, Dec. 12, 1879; No. 324, Waddington to Dufaure, July 6, 1878.

occupation.¹ Disraeli added his voice to reassure France in speaking to the House of Lords upon his return to London after the Berlin Congress had ended its work. He indicated that Britain would be willing to undertake all measures necessary to maintain cordial relations with France.²

Salisbury had offered Waddington the opportunity of gaining compensation for France by taking Tunis. "Do what you like there... you will be obliged to take it, you can not leave Carthage in the hands of barbarians."³ These words were confirmed by Disraeli, and when Bismarck was apprised of the British-French conversations he offered complete German assent. Upon his return to Paris, Waddington prodded his ambassador in London to gain a complete carte blanche regarding Tunisia from England.⁴

The Turko-British Convention of June 4 was published in Paris on July 18 and caused an immediate uproar. Despite the cordiality which had marked relations with England, the general response was one of serious dissatisfaction. The French insistence upon excluding certain areas from the agenda of the Congress of Berlin had been accepted by the other powers and this information had been made public in France. British

¹Ibid., No. 325, Waddington to Dufarue, July 8, 1878. The alliance with Turkey was adjoined on July 1 with a provision (Article VI) "that if Russia restores to Turkey, Kars and the other conquests made by her in Armenia during the war, the Island of Cyprus will be evacuated by England, and the convention of the 4'th of June, 1878 will be at an end." Hertslet, IV, 2725.

²DDF, II, No. 330, Waddington to d'Harcourt, July 21, 1878.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid. Waddington wanted this approval from England at once and he adjured d'Harcourt to note the the British Parliament was soon to disperse. Waddington believed that it was almost impossible to obtain a solution from the British Cabinet when Parliament was not in session.

control of Cyprus would place England in a strategic maritime position which would dominate the coasts of Syria and Egypt as well as provide a ready facility for intervention in the administration of the Asiatic provinces of the Ottoman Empire. Waddington felt that French public opinion would grant England certain privileges in view of her commitments and responsibilities as an Asiatic power so long as the British would recognize France as having similar interests in the Mediterranean.¹

In order to get the words of Salisbury and Disraeli in a formal state document which would pass the British Cabinet, Waddington authorized his ambassador to soften the wording but to maintain the sense of a free hand for France in Tunisia. By the end of July, Waddington was laying the groundwork preparatory to establishing some type of French protectorate there. He did not wish to move too rapidly in this matter and sought at first merely to restrict the activities of the British consul in Tunis who had built up great personal influence. Salisbury agreed to assist in this action.² The denouement of French action was not to occur until 1881 when a formal protectorate was established.

In reviewing the Congress of Berlin, Waddington felt that France had succeeded in those areas which were of vital importance to her position. She had supported the Greek claims for some additional territory in order to provide a buffer against Slavic encroachment upon the littoral of the Aegean Sea. France was successful in inserting special clauses in the final treaty to provide for the protection of the Holy Places as well as for religious minorities living in Bulgarian and the Turkish provinces.

¹Ibid., No. 331, Waddington to d'Harcourt, July 21, 1878.

²Ibid., No. 337, Waddington to Roustan, July 27, 1878; No. 339, Sept. 1, 1878; No. 340, Sept. 5, 1878; No. 342, Sept. 7, 1878.

Thus France maintained her traditional role as the protector of the Christians in the Ottoman Empire. It had been French insistence that permitted Rumania to secure Silistria after Great Britain had allowed Russia to retake Bessarabia. France had succeeded in setting the machinery in motion for mediation between Greece and Turkey to settle their differences, and most significantly in Waddington's eyes, France had regained the position of respect in international affairs which she had lost in 1871.¹

Concurrent with the political and diplomatic issues raised by the Eastern Question during the decade of the 1870's was the problem raised by the final situation of the Ottoman Empire. The overwhelming percentage of the borrowings of the Sultan's government had been from Great Britain and France. The first of these loans had been made during the Crimean War. At that time Turkey floated two major bond issues in Paris and London in order to carry on the war against Russia. Both of these loans were in a sense guaranteed by the British and French government; that is, the two governments agreed to guarantee the interest payments until the bonds were repaid.²

In addition to these two formal pledges of support for Turkish finances, Turkey had floated twelve other loans between 1855 and 1875 which totalled nearly 200 million pounds sterling. The annual interest payment by 1875 amounted to 12 million pounds sterling.³ More than two-thirds of these loans were in the hands of French and British bondholders, and the

¹Ibid., No. 327, Waddington to Dufaure, July 14, 1878.

²Turkey No. 1 (1876) No. 29 (inclosure) October, 1875.

³Sumner, p. 100.

payments were based on the Egyptian tribute and Turkish customs and in-taxes. During the early years of the decade, Turkish finances steadily worsened. In order to increase his tax collections, Sultan Abdul-Aziz installed and removed no less than six grand viziers and 72 valis between 1871 and 1874.¹

By April, 1876, it was necessary for the Sultan's government to completely suspend interest payments as well as payments to the sinking fund formulated to pay off the bonds.² The payments of the 1854 and 1855 loans had been secured by the allotment of one-half of the Egyptian tribute which had been paid without interruption for twenty years. The reduction of interest payments on all loans made by the Sultan in October, 1875 raised the fears of Western bondholders that the Khedive of Egypt would follow the action of the Sultan and repudiate his payments.³ Since the two Western governments had underwritten the interest payments on the 1854 and 1855 Loans, they were immediately subjected to local pressures to protect the bondholders. Various Councils of Foreign Bondholders were formed and proceeded to draw up resolutions protesting the Turkish action and demanding action from Paris and London.⁴

The French investors organized themselves into a powerful Committee of Turkish Bondholders and elected M. Bourre as its president. Bourre

¹Ibid., p. 105.

²Turkey No. 1 (1876) No. 1, Elliot to Derby, October 10, 1875. The Sultan announced in October, 1875 the interest payments would be halved, and by April, 1876 he abandoned the half payments.

³Ibid., No. 29 (inclosure) October, 1875.

⁴Ibid., No. 18, Clarke to Derby, Oct. 15, 1875. A number of schemes were drawn up by these groups. The advice of Henry W. Parnell was for the joint fleets of England and France to proceed through the Dardanelles and force the Sultan to honor his commitments. Ibid., No. 19, Parnell to Derby, Oct. 13, 1875.

had been a former French ambassador to the Porte. This committee advocated the Hamond Plan¹ to save their investments. This entailed the creation of a Joint Commission at Constantinople made up of representatives of the Great Powers excepting Russia. It provided that the interest rates on the bonds would be reduced to six per cent and that the Joint Commission should supervise the finances of the Ottoman Empire until the debts were paid in full.²

This plan drew the support of M. Foster, French director of the Imperial Ottoman Bank, and the French and British committees worked in close cooperation to represent their investors.³ Sadek Pasha arrived in Paris in December, 1875 to negotiate an agreement on the loans but Derby had already announced that any action he would take to support the bondholders would have to be unofficial.⁴ In January, 1876, Decazes advised a British committee representative that he would align his actions with those of Lord Derby either officially or otherwise. Hamond made a strong speech to the British Parliament during January which alienated the French committee since he emphasized the role of British investors while ignoring that of the French. Bourre thereupon requested Decazes to notify the Porte that the French would not accept the Hamond proposals as a settlement of the Turkish debt.⁵

Not discouraged by this rebuff, Hamond proceeded to Constantinople

¹Devised by Charles Fred Hamond, MP.

²Ibid., No. 79, Hamond to Derby, Dec. 13, 1875.

³Ibid., No. 62, Memorandum, Nov. 23, 1875.

⁴Ibid., No. 73, Derby to Lyons, Dec. 6, 1876; No. 47, Nov. 10, 1875.

⁵Ibid., No. 114, Otway to Derby, Jan. 16, 1876. Arthur Otway was the British representative.

himself, but was unable to elicit any official support from Elliot whom Derby had cautioned to avoid making any commitments to Hamond.¹ As Hamond's venture had proved to be unsuccessful and the hostilities continued in the provinces of the Ottoman Empire, Decazes became gravely worried over the ability of the Porte to make any payments on the bonds maturing that spring. He feared that the British would want to reduce the size of the debt by cancelling part of the bonds. To forestall this eventuality he intended to reject any British attempt to realize such a plan.² Consequently the Porte became thoroughly perplexed by the contradictory statements from investment interests in Britain and France.³ The Porte suggested that a meeting be held between the representatives of the bondholders and Turkish financial advisers to arrive at some arrangement. In the event that this failed, the Porte agreed to abide by the judgment of a competent tribunal at least as far as the loans guaranteed by the tributes were concerned.⁴ Decazes believed that his government was following a much firmer approach to the debt question than the London Cabinet, and pointed out to Britain's ambassador that the British suggestion to accept the Turkish plan was not in accordance with what he considered proper. Decazes maintained that although the British and French governments were technically responsible for the Tribute Loans of 1854 and 1855 since they had guaranteed the interest payments, it would leave other bondholders in a much weaker position. He argued that these

¹Ibid., No. 124, Elliot to Derby, Jan. 30, 1876.

²DDF, II, No. 39, Le Flo to Decazes, April 12, 1876 citing previous telegram of Decazes.

³Turkey No. 19 (1877) No. 1, Elliot to Derby, Feb. 28, 1876.

⁴Ibid., No. 92, Derby to Lyons, Mar. 15, 1877.

bondholders also were entitled to the protection of their governments and noted that the Tribute Loans amounted to approximately three per cent of the total amount held by British and French investors. He remained definitely opposed to any plan which would ignore the interests of the great majority of French bondholders.¹

The Tribunal Plan of the Porte thus failed to gain French approval. In April, 1876, the Turks announced that they could not pay the interest on the Tribute Loans. This interest payment amounted to 460,000 pounds annually. The Khedive of Egypt offered to give up the revenue of the Suez Canal which totalled 362,000 pounds yearly, but the British would not agree to this since they had purchased the controlling interest in the canal two years earlier.² The Russo-Turkish War was now underway, and the Turks were in dire need of funds. M. Foster, Director of the Imperial Ottoman Bank, visited Paris and London to negotiate some agreement whereby the Turks could get ready cash to prosecute the war.³ Although his visits resulted in some promises of loans he failed to solve the basic problems of the Turkish debt payments.

In July, 1877, the French Committees of Turkish Bondholders merged their organizations and assumed the name of the "Ottoman Syndicate." The syndicate aimed at a complete unification of the Turkish debt which would tie the Tribute Loans of 1854 and 1855 together with the other twelve

¹Ibid., No. 99, Lyons to Derby, Mar. 27, 1877; No. 95, Mar. 19, 1877.

²Ibid., No. 104, Layard to Derby, April 29, 1877; Turkey No. 46 (1878) No. 2, Vivian to Derby, May 12, 1877; No. 10, Derby to Vivian, June 14, 1877.

³Ibid., No. 7, Layard to Derby, May 30, 1877.

loans into one package.¹ Together with the English Committee on the General Debt of Turkey, the syndicate succeeded in pressuring the Turkish minister of finance to appoint a committee of bankers to study the financial structure of the Ottoman Empire. This committee reported in January, 1878 recommending an amortization plan for the debt. In addition it strongly urged the Porte to stop its inflationary practices by refusing to print any more paper money.²

By June, 1878, an agreement had been reached between the British and French committees whereby a Joint Commission would be established at Constantinople to assist the Turkish government pay off the debt. This commission was to be manned by one French delegate, one British representative, and the third was to be appointed by Britain and France. Under this plan, Turkey was absolved from paying any arrears of interest. In the future, interest and sinking funds would be paid together.³ It was from this project that the eventual Governing Body of the Ottoman Debt was established in 1881.

The necessity of maintaining close agreement with the British government in these financial negotiations was clearly shown in Egyptian matters during this decade. The French consul pointed out the prodigious waste and corruption that existed in the Khedive's courts which he described as being unbelievable. More significantly he noted that the

¹Ibid., No. 20, President of Ottoman Syndicate to Derby, July 26, 1877.

²Ibid., No. 33, Layard to Derby, Jan. 23, 1878. Emil Deveaux, president of this bankers' committee, was from a Parisian banking house. He actually signed the report on Dec. 31, 1877, but it did not reach the West until two weeks later.

³Ibid., No. 41, Hamond to Salisbury, April 16, 1878; No. 48, June 6, 1878.

Khedive, Ismail Pasha, frequently tried to play the British and French representatives off against one another in order to prolong his position in power.¹ During the decade of the 1870's, the British and French maintained a consistent official policy towards Turkey's financial difficulties. This was of little consolation to their bondholders, however, since the Turkish debt climbed to 250 million pounds sterling by the end of 1879.²

¹DDE, II, No. 326, Michels to Waddington, July 12, 1878.

²A. J. Toynbee and K. P. Kirkwood, Turkey (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1927) p. 234.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSIONS

The story of French foreign policy from the fall of Sedan to the end of the decade can be succinctly summarized by commenting that France had succeeded in breaking the strictures imposed upon her by Bismarck's policy of isolating France from the Great Powers. From the depths to which the German victory in 1871 had plunged France the resurgence of that nation to a position of prestige and respect in the councils of Europe was a remarkable feat, for the obstacles to be overcome in this struggle were immense.

The political instability which followed the fall of the Second Empire was vastly greater than that ensued in the post-Waterloo era. The viciousness of the Commune, the uncertainty as to whether the republican form of government would survive the onslaughts of the various groups on the Right, and the presence of foreign troops on French soil, all contributed to the difficulties which France faced in 1871. Each of these threats was eliminated during the decade, and the French army which had been almost totally incapacitated by the war underwent a complete re-organization.

Throughout the decade, the basic aims of French foreign policy were twofold. First was the maintenance of security of the national interests against the possibility of further German aggression. In pursuit of this goal, the indemnity to Germany was paid off within three years

and the German troops were withdrawn. The manipulation of the War Scare of 1875 by Decazes brought Great Britain and Russia into the scene in the roles of 'protectors' of France against Germany. The great significance of this episode in the spring of 1875 was that France discovered a technique by which she could neutralize the great military preponderance of the German war machine. This was to maintain close friendly relations with both Great Britain and Russia. Thus Decazes and his successors were continually on their guard to prevent a rupture between St. Petersburg and London for the very basic reason that French security on the Rhine rested upon the attitudes of these two foreign offices. Whether Bismarck would have engaged in any further military action against France is problematical, but it was this fear which weighed heavily upon the shoulders of the men at the Quai d'Orsay. It was this fear which guided their actions.

The crisis which arose in the Balkans in July, 1875 created several distinct problems for the French. France traditionally had been the power responsible for the protection of the Christians living in the Ottoman Empire. Her investments in this area were greater than those of any other nation, and French culture, literature, and influence were far more influential in Turkey than that of any other European nation. France considered herself to be a Mediterranean power, and therefore was vitally concerned with the disposition of key points in the Balkans from a strategic point of view. The combination of these factors meant that France must take an active role in the disputes within the Balkans during the three years that war raged between Turkey and the insurgents.

The spread of the conflict in 1877 to involve Russia was fraught with extreme difficulties for France. She had worked incessantly in

conjunction with Andrassy at first to limit the fighting, and had been an outspoken advocate of Turkish reform at the Constantinople Conference. The desire to limit the conflict was based not only on the protection of French interests in the Ottoman Empire, but on the realization that Russia's entry into the war might lead to antagonism between Russia and Great Britain. During these years, France was repeatedly asked to align herself with each of these two powers. Her proclamation of absolute neutrality in the Balkan conflict was not a mere profession of words, but the description of the policy which she followed most carefully. Decazes and Waddington both realized that if France swung her support to either of the 'wing' powers of Europe, it would throw Russia more closely into the arms of Germany or draw Great Britain closer to Austria-Hungary.

Although Decazes may have considered aiding the insurgent cause in 1876¹ and Waddington may have agreed too readily with Disraeli's proposals at the Congress of Berlin, by and large the French foreign office stuck to its role of being absolutely neutral. The threatened clash of British naval forces with Russian troops in the winter of 1877-1878 was a nightmare for the French, but the real alleviation of this danger should be credited to other than French diplomacy.²

Waddington's role at the Congress of Berlin was one of reserve and although France had serious objections to the Treaty of San Stefano, the French plenipotentiaries permitted Great Britain to press these

¹Turkey No. 1 (1877) No. 88, Lyons to Derby, Aug. 26, 1876.

²Derby and Schouvaloff should receive most of the credit for avoiding war in the first three months of 1878. Bismarck suggested the means whereby the opposing forces were withdrawn from the danger areas.

points in opposition to Russia.¹ Waddington successfully carried out his aim of keeping Great Britain and Russia from coming to blows at the Berlin meeting. His suggestions to overcome deadlocks improved the stature of France on the international scene. France did make some contributions therefore to the final settlement at Berlin. At the same time she successfully gained some compensation for Rumania as well as the recognition of Greek claims for adjustments of her frontiers. While France was not the headliner at the Congress, she played her role with skill and emerged from the Berlin meeting recognized as an equal among the Great Powers. Although Tunisia was not acquired at the time, Waddington commented on leaving the Congress that he had Tunis in his pocket.²

French foreign policy was consistent. It met the needs of the decade as well as the strength of France permitted. The foreign ministers survived the internal uncertainties which accompanied the establishment of a new form of government, and generally represented France and French interests sufficiently well to prevent any further damage after the disaster of the Franco-Prussian War. The loss of French prestige in the Eastern Mediterranean was not to come for another decade; certainly through 1879 France was still considered the chief competitor to the British commercial interests in the Mediterranean.

¹W. N. Medlicott, The Congress of Berlin and After (London: Methuen & Co., 1938) p. 38.

²W. L. Langer, "The European Powers and the French Occupation of Tunis, 1878-1881", American Historical Review, October, 1925, p. 67.

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