

1. INTRODUCTION

The negotiations through which the league between Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece, and Montenegro was formed were carried on in the latter part of 1911 and the earlier part of 1912. The negotiations were conducted in secret. The treaties likewise were kept secret by express stipulations of the treaties themselves. Rumors that such an alliance was being formed were first circulated several months after the conclusion of the more important treaties and definite knowledge that the league existed did not reach European capitals until the eve of the war between the league and Turkey in October 1911. The Russian Government was promptly informed of the Bulgar-Serbian alliance, for reasons, which will appear. The treaties and military conventions were published, in French translation, in *Le Matin*, Paris, November 24 and 26, 1913.

The question of combination or cooperation (with regard to relations with Turkey, particularly concerning Macedonian affairs) had been before the four countries almost constantly during the last four decades. The severity of the Ottomanizing policy of the Young-Turkish régime and the outbreak of the Turko-Italian War in September, 1911, clarified and energized, in all the countries simultaneously, the impulses toward joint action. It is not possible to ascribe to any one of the Governments concerned primary responsibility for taking leadership in the negotiations of 1911-12 now to be reviewed.

2. GREEK PROPOSALS TO BULGARIA IN 1911

Venizelos became Prime Minister of Greece in October 1910. His express policy at the outset was to avoid difficulty with Turkey. The Turkish Government, by renewing with increased energy its boycott of Greek commerce in Salonica and its policy of repression and assassination in Macedonia forced him out of his pacific attitude. He thereupon made efforts to secure the cooperation of Bulgaria in a defensive agreement. In April, 1911, he transmitted to Sofia, through private channels, a proposal that the two countries enter into an understanding for joint defense of Christians in Macedonia and for an eventual defensive alliance against Turkey.

Gueshoff became Prime Minister of Bulgaria in the spring of 1911, supported by two parties which had always advocated a conciliatory policy toward Turkey; and Gueshoff announced that

he would use every effort to avoid provocative movements of any sort. Moreover, his doubts as to the military strength of Greece and his suspicion that a Greco-Turkish War over the Cretan question was imminent, led him to make no response to the proposal of Venizelos.

3. NEGOTIATIONS OF THE BULGAR-SERBIAN TREATY

Turkish abuses in Macedonia and the obstinate procrastination of the Turkish Government in the matter of the promised junction of the Turkish and Bulgarian railways, changed the conciliatory attitude of Gueshoff, and the outbreak of the Turko-Italian War in September, 1911, made more impatient and aggressive the disposition of Bulgarian public opinion.

Realizing that Serbian military assistance would be indispensable in an alliance against Turkey, the Bulgarian Government took steps to procure the cooperation of Serbia before negotiating with Greece. Serbia, which had for several years, under Russian auspices, sought an alliance whereby she might regain "Old Serbia," made known her readiness to receive proposals. King Ferdinand and Gueshoff were on holiday in Vichy at the time of the outbreak of the Italian War. Rizoff (Bulgarian minister to Italy, in Sofia on leave of absence) and Theodaroff (Bulgarian minister of foreign affairs) held conferences with Milovanovitch (Serbian prime minister) in Belgrade and Sofia, as a result of which arrangement was made for a secret interview between Gueshoff and Milovanovitch. This took place at night on the train from Belgrade to Nish. Through this three-hour conference an agreement was reached to enter into negotiations on the basis of Macedonian autonomy, with, however, a preliminary determination of spheres of influence of the two States.

Definite negotiations were taken up in December at Sofia, Dr. Spalaikovitch being appointed Serbian minister to Bulgaria for the purpose in hand. Kings Ferdinand and Peter were consulted on more important questions, and Dr. Daneff, president of the Bulgarian National Assembly, and Paschich, Radical leader in the Serbian Parliament, were consulted on certain matters. Russian interests in the negotiations were represented through the Russian minister and military attaché at Sofia, who used their influence to secure accommodation of territorial claims and to press the parties to a conclusion. The treaty was signed February 29 -- March 13, 1912, by Gueshoff and Milovanovitch, and also by the Bulgarian and Serbian monarchs.

4. TERMS OF THE BULGAR-SERBIAN TREATY

There are two parts to the Bulgar-Serbian treaty. One part created a defensive alliance between the contracting parties, in which they pledged themselves to "succor one another with their entire forces in the event of one of them being attacked by one or more States." The other part is the "secret annex," in which they provided for possible war against Turkey, in the event of internal or external troubles of Turkey which might endanger the national interests of either of the contracting parties or threaten the maintenance of the status quo in the Balkan peninsula. The important feature of this part is the agreement as to territorial divisions in the event of a victorious outcome of such a war. All lands were to be held in common until after the signing of peace. Following peace, territory north of the Shar Range, including the Sandjak of Novi Bazar and "Old Serbia," were to go to Serbia, and the territory south and east of the Rhodope Range and the Struma River to Bulgaria. Autonomy was to be given to the intermediate region. If, however, both parties should agree that autonomy for this region was not feasible, it was to be divided between them according to lines defined in the treaty, with the exception of a further intermediate region left undivided and to be subsequently apportioned through arbitration by the Czar of Russia. The territorial arrangements represent an attempt to reconcile the Serbian desire for partitions and access to the Adriatic with the Bulgarian plan for Macedonian autonomy. Finally the treaty provided that the Czar should be arbitrator in other questions that might arise from the treaty.

5. THE GRECO-BULGARIAN TREATY

In the last week of February 1912, negotiations between Bulgaria and Greece were begun. The negotiations between the Prime ministers were carried on through Panas, Greek minister at Sofia. Venizelos proposed that the treaty should embrace territorial arrangements. But since the rigid claims of Greece would inevitably conflict with Bulgarian aspirations for Salonica, and since there was no time for delay, it was decided to omit all territorial understandings. The treaty was signed by Gueshoff and Panas on May 29, 1912. By this treaty the two States bound themselves to aid each other, if attacked by Turkey either by invasion or by systematic violation of rights derived from treaties or the fundamental principles of the law of nations, and to use their influence over their co-nationalists in Turkey, so as to assist in the peaceable existence of all the nationalities forming the population of the Turkish Empire, and to obtain for Bulgars and Greeks in Turkey the enjoyment of the rights assured to them by treaties or grants.

6. AGREEMENTS WITH MONTENEGRO

King Nicholas of Montenegro had always been eager for a combination against Turkey, and had made several proposals for an alliance with Russian aid. Immediately after the outbreak of the Turko-Italian War he suggested to the other States common military action. Serbia, at that

time looking to possible negotiations with Turkey, declined. Bulgaria and Greece promptly signified their approval, though formal agreements were not entered into until after the conclusion of the treaties above described. Near the middle of April 1912, Theodoroff, Rizoff, and Daneff held a conference with the Montenegrin prime minister in Vienna, where he had accompanied King Nicholas on an official visit to the Austrian Emperor, and an agreement was easily reached. No formal treaty was signed. The agreement on Bulgaria's part was to give financial assistance to Montenegro in case war should break out. A formal agreement with Greece was reached soon thereafter.

Agreement with Serbia was more difficult because of mutual suspicions of dynastic intrigues. However, the alliance was finally achieved, through the intermediation of Bulgarian officials, near the end of May 1912. This completed the formation of the Balkan League.

7. MILITARY CONVENTIONS

It was necessary to supplement the Bulgar-Serbian and Greco-Bulgarian treaties by military conventions in order to determine the respective military obligations of the parties in the event of war with Turkey. A convention between Bulgaria and Serbia was concluded April 29 -- May 12. This was supplemented by agreements between the general staffs concluded June 19 -- July 1, August 23 -- September 5, and September 15 -- 28. A military convention between Bulgaria and Greece was concluded September 22 -- October 5.

Source: Anderson, Frank Maloy and Amos Shartle Hershey, *Handbook for the Diplomatic History of Europe, Asia, and Africa 1870-1914*. Prepared for the National Board for Historical Service. Government Printing Office, Washington, 1918.