

1. INTRODUCTION

The efforts of the Powers to prevent the outbreak of the First Balkan War probably dates back to the latter part of 1911, when the situation in Albania and Macedonia attracted attention. In January, 1912, the Russian Government brought to the attention -of the English and French Governments the dangers that might arise from this situation. The three Governments associated them-selves in a joint demand on Turkey to put down the insurgent bands and to reform the Government. In the early spring of 1912 it was known that a rapprochement had been effected between Serbia and Bulgaria and that one between these two and Greece was under way.

2. BALKAN ALLANCE NOTIFIED TO THE POWERS

In May, 1912, Danef, Bulgarian special ambassador, notified Sazonof, Russian foreign minister, of the conclusion of the Balkan Alliance and also called his attention to the bad situation in Macedonia which might necessitate vigorous action by the Balkan allies against Turkey. Sazonof counseled moderation and caution.

3. AUSTRIAN PROPOSAL OF AUGUST 14, 1912

Austria became alarmed, and on August 14 Count Berchtold, min-ister of foreign affairs, sent a note to the powers urging (1) "progressive decentralization" of the government in Macedonia, (2) the maintenance of the status quo in the Balkans. (3) the strength-ening of Turkey. This step was welcomed by all the powers, although they requested a definition of the phrase "progressive decentraliza-tion." Berchtold then visited Roumania personally in order to induce her to take steps to restrain the Balkan allies. Russia also continued her appeals for moderation.

4. TURKISH MILITARY MANEUVERS

In late September the Turks decided to hold army maneuvers at Adrianople. The powers of the Triple Entente felt that this would provoke the Balkan allies to mobilize also, and sent a note to Turkey protesting against these maneuvers. Turkey, in reply (Sept. 27), refused to give up the plan, but promised to limit the number of men taking part.

5. FRENCH PROPOSAL OF OCTOBER 4, 1912

On September 30 the Balkan States mobilized, and October 1 Turkey followed suit. Sazonov, who had been visiting in England, arrived in Paris October 2, and he and Poincaré at once started to devise a plan to ward off war. October 4 France opened negotiations with the various European chanceries with the view of either (1) joint action by all the powers or (2) joint action by Austria and Russia in the name of Europe. After some delay, England accepted the proposal in the form that Russia and Austria should act jointly in the name of Europe in the Balkan capitals and that all the powers should act jointly in Constantinople. Austria accepted this plan October 6 with the proviso: (1) Maintenance of Ottoman integrity and sovereignty (Balkan status quo); (2) general lines of Berchtold note of August 14 to be followed in this new procedure; (3) the accord of the powers not to be communicated to Turkey. These amendments were accepted by France, and the other powers rallied to the French proposition.

6. AUSTRO-RUSSIAN NOTE OF OCTOBER 8, 1912

On October 8, 1912, an Austro-Russian joint note was handed in at the Balkan capitals. It stated that (1) the powers would not permit a breach of the peace; (2) they would themselves take in hand the question of Macedonian reforms; (3) should war break out, the powers will not permit any change in the Balkan status quo; (4) collective action will be taken in Constantinople. Some hours before its presentation in Cetinje, Montenegro declared war on Turkey. The remaining members of the alliance replied October 13, thanking the powers for their action, but stating that they preferred to deal directly with Turkey.

7. NOTE OF THE POWERS TO TURKEY, OCTOBER 10, 1912

On October 10 the collective note of the powers was handed in at Constantinople. It demanded reforms in Macedonia in accordance with the law of 1880. Turkey replied October 14 with a promise of reforms. But before further action could be taken war broke out.

Source: Anderson, Frank Maloy and Amos Shartle Hershey, ***Handbook for the Diplomatic History of Europe, Asia, and Africa 1870-1914.***

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