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100. YILINDA BALKAN SAVAŞLARI (1912-1913): İHTİLAFLI DURUŞLAR

CİLT I

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11. THE BALKAN WARS (1912-1913) AND RESTRUCTURING OF THE REGIONAL ORDER IN SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE (BALKAN SAVAŞLARI (1912-1913) VE GÜNEY DOĞU AVRUPA'DA BÖLGESEL DÜZENİN YENİDEN YAPILANDIRILMASI)

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Abstract

The paper is aimed at analyzing the transformation of the Balkan regional subsystem in the wake of the Balkan Wars (1912-1913). I'm going to examine factors which caused this transformation, moving force of the regional changes and their impact on the global balance of power. An analytical model of the subsystem is used towards Southeastern Europe in order to present the Balkans as an autonomous segment within the system of international relations and thus to define a mutual influence of regional level (situation in the Balkans) and international level of world politics. The emergence of the Balkan subsystem can be traced back to the signing of the Treaty of Berlin (1878), in which heterogeneity of the Balkan political space (the co-existence of multi-ethnic empires and smaller nation-states) was fixed. The expulsion of the Ottoman Empire from Southeastern Europe in the aftermath of the First Balkan War altered one of the basic parameters of the regional subsystem and signified its transformation. It is proposed that the Second Balkan war was a struggle for creation of a new political hierarchy in Southeastern Europe (Bulgaria's claim for regional leadership was nip in the bud). Hence, the Second Balkan war established polycentrism of regional subsystem. The fragility of the new regional order was predestined from the outset because the post-war Balkan equilibrium contradicted the interests of one of the great powers – Austria-Hungary – that considered the Balkans to be its "backyard". The Habsburg monarchy associated its great power status with hegemony in the Balkans. Thus a regional subsystem, relatively free from great power interference, could not be easily integrated into the pre-WWI international system.

Intruduction

Due to the serious international crises, which occurred in the Balkans in the decade before World War I, it is important to reveal the interdependence between the instability in Southeastern Europe and the processes that were taking place in the system-wide level. In this paper, I am going to apply an analytical model of the regional subsystem[1] to the Balkan peninsular in order to present it at as

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[1] On the concept of the regional subsystem *see* P. Berton, "International Subsystems – A Submacro approach to International Studies", *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 13, No 4 (Special Issues on International Subsystems), 1969, pp. 329-334. L. Binder, "The Middle East as a Subordinate International System" *World Politics*, vol. 10, No 3, 1958, pp. 408-429.; L. Cantori, S. Spiegel, "International Regions: A Comparative Approach to Five Subordinate Systems" *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 13, No 4, 1969, pp. 361-380.; *W.* Zartman, "Africa as a Subordinate State System in International Relations" *International Organization*, vol. 21, No 3, 1967, pp. 545-564; M. Brecher "International Relations and Asian Studies: The Subordinate State System of Southern Asia" *World Politics*, vol. 15, No 2, 1963, pp. 213-235; W.R. Thompson, "The Regional Subsystem: A Conceptual Explication and a Propositional

an autonomous segment within the international system. The Balkan wars (1912-1913) marked the transformation of the Balkan subsystem and hence the restructuring of the regional order in Southeastern Europe. My purpose is threefold: 1) to define what the Balkan subsystem is, 2) to find out factors, which caused its crisis and subsequent transformation, 3) to analyze the key features of the post-wars regional order in the Balkans and how it integrated into pre-WWI international system.

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The Balkan subsystem traced its formation back to the Eastern Crisis of 1875-1878. The rise of national liberation movements in the European provinces of the Ottoman Empire (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Rumelia) and the wars waged by the vassal principalities of Serbia and Montenegro against the Ottoman rule put the Eastern question on the agenda. These developments triggered the Russo-Turkish war which resulted in the signing of the Treaty of Berlin (1878). The Balkan subsystem emerged as a consequence of complex correlation of two trends, regional and European. The local forces exploded the Balkan political space dominated by the Ottomans while the great powers interaction shaped a new regional order. The subsystem, based on the Treaty of Berlin, was a heterogeneous one. It included such diverse elements as the nation-states (Serbia, Montenegro, Rumania, Greece and Bulgaria[2]) and two multinational empires – Austria-Hungary and Turkey. Furthermore, the place of these empires in the Balkan subsystem was specially fixed: Macedonia and Thrace were returned to Turkey; Austria-Hungary was sanctioned by Europe to occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina and to bring its troops into the Sanjak of Novi-Bazar.

The new subsystem was built into the existing system of international relations rather smoothly. Though the Treaty of Berlin was not a product of the European Concert (Russia had to give way to tough diplomatic pressure), it was a compromise achieved by the great powers, which did not consider the Balkan issue to be worth a European conflagration. The Ottoman Empire and Austria-Hungary were the pillars of the Balkan regional order. The Dual Monarchy as the Balkan's great power and England, on its part, as the leading world power did their best to postpone the collapse of Turkey in Europe. Thus, the Austro-British cooperation, aiming at counterbalancing Russian influence in the Balkans, maintained the regional order intact. Nevertheless, the interaction of internal and external great powers could not prevent the rise of disruptive tendencies within the Balkan region.

In comparison with the alignments of forces during the Eastern crisis of 1875-1878, the configuration of the international system in the early 20th century was in the process of transformation. This change had a direct impact on the functioning of the Balkan subsystem. Under conditions of great powers' division into two blocks (the Dreibund and the Franco-Russian Alliance) and growth of German economic and military might, Great Britain had to revise its policy of *splendid isolation.* From Britain's stance, one of the most alarming points of Germany's *Weltpolitik* was the penetration of the German influence into the Ottoman Empire. To check this tendency London had to alter its policy on the global and regional scales. The first meant gradual rapprochement with France and Russia, the second resulted in Britain's unwillingness to cooperate with Austria-Hungary in the Balkans and maintain the integrity of Turkey's European territories. Thereby the weakening of the Ottoman Empire and containment of Austria-Hungary in the Balkans were the means to prevent Germany's *Drang nach Osten.* Under certain circumstances Britain, which had guaranteed the existence of the Berlin regional order in the Balkans, was inclined to its dismantle. In other words, the most consisted external supporter of the Berlin Treaty admitted that the local players could revise it.

Inventory" *International Studies Quarterly*. vol. 17. No 1, 1973. pp. 89-117.

[2] Though Bulgaria nominally remained under the suzerainty of the Turkish sultan until 1908, it pursued independent foreign policy after unification of the Bulgarian Principality and Eastern Rumelia in 1885-1886.

Proceeding to the regional level of the analysis one can state that the Balkan subsystem was full of inner contradictions from the outset. The process of national liberation in the Balkans was not completed. It meant that further anti-Ottoman protests of the Balkan Christians were inevitable. In addition, one could hardly predict the impact, which the absorption of recently occupied Slav provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina would have on the national and political equilibrium of Austria-Hungary's dual structure.

As for the Ottoman Empire, the vigorous destructive factor that undermined its dominion in the Balkans was the strife among the local states to implement their national programs: the Greek *Megali idea*, Ilija Garašanin's *Načertanije*, Bulgaria's San Stefano project. These clashing ambitions became a part of Macedonian issue, in which the problems of national liberation struggle against Ottoman rule and inter-Balkan rivalries intermingled. The Macedonian affairs, and in the first instance the Ilinden-Preobrazhenie Uprising of 1903, raised the question concerning a future of the "sick man of Europe" and therefore indicated a critical state of the Balkan subsystem. Acceleration of centrifugal forces within Turkey's Balkan provinces made the great powers adjust their policies to new regional realities. The primary goal of the Macedonian insurgents, meanwhile, was to provoke Europe's intervention. This meant that external environment continued to remain a key factor of the political developments in the Balkans.

The Western segment of the Balkan regional order in its turn was eroded by the Austro-Serbian antagonism, which came into existence after the May Coup d'état in Serbia (1903) and accession of the Karađorđević dynasty to the Serbian throne. The Austro-Hungarian political élite perceived the Serbian kingdom, which aspired to pursue independent foreign policy, as a menace to internal stability of the Dual Monarchy. The Bosnian crisis of 1908-1909 revealed impossibility of peaceful coexistence of Serbia, South Slav Piedmont, and Austria-Hungary in the framework of one region. As A.J.P. Taylor put it, 'Aehrenthal's [Foreign Minister of Austria-Hungary] great stroke, far from settling the South Slav question, created it…The Bosnian crisis did not humiliate Serbia, though it ended in her defeat; it humiliated Austria-Hungary, for it pulled her down to the Serb level'.[3] Thus, the second supporting structure of the Balkan regional order began to collapse.

Among the factors that destabilized Balkan political space, one can mention the desire of the small nation-states to have its voice in the regional affairs. The great powers treated them not as full-fledged international actors, but as an object of their politics. However, the developments of the early 20th century proved this practice to be out of date. The Balkan states were turning into key elements of the subsystem. For example, Sir George Buchanan, British agent and consul-general at Sofia (1903-1908), characterized Bulgaria as 'the most important factor in the Balkans'.[4] Even complicated international position could not force the local states to give up their national goals, as it was the case with Serbia's Southern Slav project. After the Annexation Crisis, influential politicians of Serbia, like Stojan Novaković, called their fellow-countrymen to raise the Serbian question before Europe, resorting to arms if needed.[5] Step by step, the Balkan region became an organism that functioned by its own rules. Moreover, it acquired immunity to external interference. Austria-Hungary, which acted both as the member of the European Concert and the Balkan power, refused to admit this fact and continued to claim for the regional supremacy.

Thus, the intention of the local players to change the existing regional order in accordance with their own national aspirations, the decay of the national constructions of multiethnic empires, hege-

[3] A. J. P. Taylor, *The Habsburg Monarchy, 1809-1918: A History of the Austrian Empire and Austria-Hungary*, (London, 1948), p. 217

[4] G. Buchanan, *My Mission to Russia and Other Diplomatic Memories,* vol. I. (London, 1923), p. 62.

[5] S. Novaković, *Najnovija balkanska kriza i srpsko pitanje. Beleške, razmišljanja, razgovori i politički članci iz 1908-1909*, (Beograd, 1910), pp. 54-55.

monism of Austria-Hungary operated as system-destructive factors towards the Balkan subsystem. It continued to accumulate conflicts. Under these circumstances, maintenance of the status-quo in the region was not equivalent to stabilization. It was evident that the inner resources for the peaceful modification of the subsystem were up. At the same time, active interference from without could produce negative effect. It was a stalemate.

Situation on both levels, regional and global, prompted decisionmakers in Serbia and Bulgaria to coordinate their efforts. The emergence of any political combination in Southeastern Europe that could conserve the existing regional order did not correspond with Serbian and Bulgarian interests. In the light of Turco-Romanian alliance negotiations, which took place in 1910, such a scenario seemed actual. These talks were of the great importance, as they were expected to put an end to Ottoman Empire's isolation in the Balkans and associate it with the Triple Alliance.[6] Moreover, Romania's assurances to mobilize Danubian army in the case of the Turco-Bulgarian conflict automatically reinforced Turkish strategic positions.[7]

As for the external factors, which greatly disturbed the Serbs and the Bulgarians, two things should be stressed. First, it seemed that the direction of Russia's Balkan policy was about to change. The Austro-Russian rapprochement in 1910, Russo-German "détente", materialized in the form of the Potsdam Agreement, "demarche" of Nicolay Charykov, Russian ambassador at Constantinople, regarding the opening of the Straits to Russian warships (autumn of 1911) indicated St. Petersburg's reluctance to sanction the revision of the status quo in the Balkans at least in a short-term perspective. Second, it was the Turco-Italian war with its unclear international consequences that accelerated the move of Serbia and Bulgaria towards mutual understanding.

Conclusion of military and political alliances or integration into existing international organizations is, in principle, a natural strategy of small countries' behavior in the international arena. They do not possess sufficient material, military, and political resources to shape the regional order or to resist effectively the pressure of the great powers. Rapprochement between small states is realizable, providing a set of common interests outweighs their contradictions. This thesis seemed doubtful about the Balkan states, especially Serbia and Bulgaria that would later make up a core of the Balkan League. Some of the Russian diplomats believed that formation of alliance between Serbia and Bulgaria was a utopian enterprise in view of their historical divergences in Macedonia. In January 1910, former Russian consul in Prizren and Mitrovica Tukholka pointed out that Belgrade and Sofia could not even agree upon the delimitation of spheres of influence and propaganda in Macedonia, not to mention the territorial demarcation.[8]

Nevertheless, taking into consideration current state of affairs in Europe and in the Balkans Serbia and Bulgaria managed to frozen, if not to solve, their old controversies. Greece and Montenegro also regarded the moment opportune to join the Serbo-Bulgarian coalition. The Balkan League was conceived as an instrument to rearrange the political space of Southeastern Europe. The main paradox was that in the first instance the allies prepared for war (various casus foederis were envisaged), but they did nothing to work out principles on which the new regional order would base. In April 1912, Serbia and Bulgaria, at last, reached an agreement concerning the distribution of spheres of influence in Macedonia, but the future of the "contested zone", according to the Serbo-Bulgarian Treaty, was unclear. The territorial problems were as a whole excluded from Greco-Bulgarian negotiations.[9] Thus, the Balkan League was aimed at ruining the old order but not at establishing a new one.

[6] Arkhiv vneshney politiki Rossiyskoy imperii (AVPRI) (Archive of the Russian Imperial Foreign Policy, Moscow) fond 180 (Embassy at Constantinople), opis 517/2, delo (folder) 3767, list (folio) 40-ob. (reverse).

[7] AVPRI, f. 180, op. 517/2, d. 3767, l. 52.

[8] AVPRI, f. 192 (Legation at Sophia), op. 527, d. 10, l. 304.

[9] I. E. Gueshoff, *The Balkan League*, (London, 1915), p. 40.

The Balkan states creating the League followed those rules of the game that defined the development of international relations in the early 20th century (emergence of two opposing groupings of the great powers). In this sense, Ottoman ambassador in Vienna Alexander Mavroyéni Bey stated that functioning of the complex system of alliances and ententes was the distinctive feature of the international environment (he hoped that one day Turkey would integrate into this system). Though ententes and alliances complicated world politics, they, in Mavroyéni's opinion, contributed to the preservation of peace among nations, and greatly reduced the likelihood of war.[10] However, this theory could be mostly applied to principles, which determined interactions between the great powers, but the logic of political developments in the Balkans was quite different. If France and Great Britain, Russia and Great Britain settled their colonial disputes in order to protect their positions on the periphery in the face of a new strong rival, the Balkan states, in fact, did not resolve territorial issues but from the outset were ready to fight against their centuries-old and declining enemy. And if alliance system of the great powers, as William Mulligan pointed out, sustained peace in Europe,[11] the creation of the Balkan League launched the war. Thus, the dynamics of international relations in the Balkans discorded with the great power politics. The First Balkan war, which broke out in October 1912, proved this fact.

Energetic offensive of the Balkan allies, their "reconquest" of the former Ottoman territories, Turkey's military defeat made the great powers update their approach towards the victorious Balkan states and their capacity to restructure the region. Military and political power of the allies was highly appreciated by the Entente as well as the Triple Alliance. Sir Charles Hardinge, viceroy of India, wrote that he never 'imagined for one moment that the Servians and the Greeks would ever be able to win successes over the Turks…'[12] The great powers had to recognize that the Balkan states had gained a right to political rearrangement of the region. European news editions, as did it the French semi-official press, marked impossibility of the further status quo maintenance in the Balkans. [13] Under these new circumstances, most of the great powers were ready to restrain their involvement in the Balkan affairs. Referring to British public opinion, Sir Edward Grey refused to undertake any actions that could deprive the Balkan states of the territories, which they had acquired by their own arms.[14] Paris called the great powers to stick to "the absolute disinterestedness" while mediating between belligerents.[15] Wilhelm II likened the Balkan League to "the seventh great power", thus stating the emergence of a new powerful player in the world politics.[16]

The triumph of the Balkan allies signified the collapse of the old regional order. Redrawing the map of the Balkans was not just a question of a regional scale. It expanded into a system-wide level, for it dealt with two sets of problems related to the vital interests of the great powers. On the one hand, the approach of the Bulgarian army to the Ottoman capital automatically raised two interconnected issues: Constantinople's status and the future of the Turkish Asiatic possessions. On the other hand, possibility of Serbia's gaining access to the Adriatic and Austria-Hungary's intention to curb this movement by force, as well as Austro-Serbian and Austro-Montenegrin conflict over demarcation of Albanian boundaries threatened to trigger a European war.

[10] S. Kuneralp, *Dépêches D'Alexandre Mavroyéni Bey, ambassadeur de Turquie à Vienne au ministre ottoman des affaires étrangères (décembre 1911- octobre 1912)*, (Istanbul, 1989), p.100.

[11] W. Mulligan, *The Origins of the First World War*, (Cambridge, New York and Melbourne, 2010), p. 229.

[12] *Public Record Office* (PRO), National Archives, Kew, London, PRO FO800/360/131, 29 November 1912.

[13] *Le Temps*, 2 November 1912, 27 November 1912.

[14] Gooch and Temperley, *British Documents on the Origins of the War* (hereafter BD), (London, 1934), IX (2), doc. 70, 28 November 1912, Grey to Goshen, p. 55.

[15] *Documents diplomatiques. Affaires balkaniques* (hereafter DD), vol. 1, doc. 210, 30 October 1912, p. 127.

[16] R. W. Seton-Watson, "William II's Balkan Policy" *The Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 7, No 19, June 1928, p. 7.

The First Balkan war once again revealed the close connection between Balkan and Near Eastern questions. In the European capitals, it was much feared that Turks' retreat would provoke anarchy in major cities of the Ottoman Empire. Admiralties of the great powers, as well as diplomats accredited to Turkey, were obliged to elaborate security plans in order to protect citizens of their countries, and if needed, organize their evacuation. Such a scenario implied a dispatch of warships to the shores of the Ottoman Empire[17] with eventual occupation of the Ottoman territory. In this case the great powers' scramble for the "the debris of the Ottoman Empire" would exacerbate. Sir Arthur Nicolson, Permanent Under-Secretary in British Foreign Office, believed that the great powers' struggle for the "legacy" of the sultan but not the Balkan issues would cause a European war.[18]

The future control over Constantinople and the Straits was the problem of the primary importance to most of the great powers, especially to Russia. The Russian government would not stand aside when the fate of the Balkan territories adjoining the Straits was decided. St. Petersburg could not tolerate neither Bulgarian presence in Constantinople and the Straits zone nor their internationalization, proposed by the British Cabinet. Admiral Grigorovich, Russian Naval Minister, even received the consent of Nickolas II to send 'unlimited number of warships and even the whole squadron' to Constantinople.[19] Given the lack of sufficient material and naval resources as well as possible international complications, Russian Foreign Ministry supposed that the best provisional solution was the preservation of the Ottoman authority over Constantinople, the Straits and neighboring territories, including Adrianople.[20] Trying to explain Russia's anxiety Nicolson concluded, 'It is very clear that either the Turk or the Russian must be in possession of Constantinople'.[21] Sergey Sazonov, Russian Foreign Minister, hoped to exploit military disaster suffered by the Turks in order to ameliorate Russo-Turkish relations. In his calculations, the Bulgarian menace would be a more urgent matter for the Porte than traditional distrust of Russia. In fact, both countries were interested in preventing attempts of the third party, that is to say Bulgaria, to seize Constantinople and the Straits. Sazonov told Turkhan Pasha, Turkish ambassador in St. Petersburg, that the problem of Bulgarians' being at the walls of Constantinople should be tackled in bilateral manner, i.e. between Russia and the Ottoman Empire.[22] Sazonov stated that Turkey would secure oneself from Bulgarian aggression by relying on the help of Russia, which had at her disposal necessary tools to exert influence on Bulgaria.[23] In some ways, Sazonov's words could be interpreted as an attempt to revive the Treaty of *Unkiar Skelessi* (1833). If this attempt had been successfully realized, the shift of power in the systemic level would be profound.

In Istanbul, there was no consolidated assessment of the Russian policy towards the Straits. Russia seemed a mortal enemy, under which auspices the Balkan League had been forged. St Petersburg was supposed to intervene in the situation at any moment.[24] However, the Turks admitted that 'Russia was discontent with successes of the Bulgarians who had approached Constantinople too nearly'.[25] From the Russian stance, Bulgarian power should be counterbalanced by the Turkish control over Constantinople and the Straits. Thus, Russia, which had constantly waged wars against Turkey in the 18th and 19th centuries, stood for the Turkish presence in Southeastern Europe, thought limited to the

17 PRO, CAB 17/55, fos.10-15.
18 PRO, FO 800/363/255, 4 February 1913.
19 Krasniy arkhiv (hereafter KA), (Moscow, 1924), vol .6, p. 51.
20 AVPRI, f. 133 (Chancellery), op. 470 (1913), d. 33, l. 5-10.
21 PRO, FO800/360, fos. 269-270, 21 November 1912.
22 S. Kuneralp, G. Tokay, *Ottoman Diplomatic Documents on the Origins of World War One* (hereafter ODD), (Istanbul, 2012), vol. VII (1), doc. 607, 24 December 1912, p. 332.
23 KA, vol. 6, p. 63, 18 April 1913.
24 ODD, vol. VII (1), doc. 599, 23 December 1912, p. 325.
25 ODD, vol. VII (1), doc. 607, p. 331.

Straits zone. In general, the western powers shared this approach. For nobody was prepared to start a big war for the legacy of "sick man" of Asia, it was a reasonable solution to preserve the eastern end of the Balkan peninsular under the Ottoman rule.

The Balkan turmoil also shattered the second pillar of the old regional order – the Habsburg Monarchy. The political construction of Southeastern Europe was completely broken without Austria-Hungary's participation. So what would be a regional fate of the Dual Monarchy? Prior to the outbreak of large-scale hostilities in the Balkan peninsula, Count Berchtold, Austro-Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs, declared that the Monarchy would defend its vital interests in the Balkans under all circumstances.[26] Using this rhetoric, Berchtold warned the allies as well as the great powers, Russia in particular, that Austria-Hungary would not tolerate territorial changes in the region without its consent. The Austro-Hungarian Government was especially concerned with the alterations in the western part of the Balkans: common boundary between Serbia and Montenegro as a result of the Sanjak division, Serbia's eventual access to the Adriatic, the territorial expansion of the Slavic kingdoms.

Serbian success (the fall of Usküb, Prizren, and Monastir), occupation of Durazzo and other towns along the Adriatic coast of Albania by the Serbian army in November 1912 provoked military preparations of Austria-Hungary. On the one hand, expanded Serbia was a barrier on Monarchy's way to Salonika. On the other hand, acquisition of a seaport would ensure Serbia's economic independence from its northern neighbour. Thus, the strengthening of the Serbian kingdom could undermine Austria-Hungary's prestige in the region and loosen its grasp over its Southern Slav provinces, as Paget, British minister at Belgrade, predicted.[27] Grey and Nicolson supposed that Vienna, from its standpoint, was right threatening to halt Serbian territorial expansion by military measures.[28]

Austria-Hungary and its Triple Alliance partner/rival, Italy, attempted interfering in the process of the new Balkan order formation. They did it by insisting on creation of a new state unit in the Balkans: independent Albanian principality. Eventually their demand was satisfied by the Ambassadors Conference in London. Conceiving Albania as counterweight to Serbia and Montenegro, Vienna strived for Albanian territorial aggrandizement by inclusion of the disputed towns of Prizren, Peć, Gjakova, Dibra and Scutari in principality in order to make it viable. This territorial dispute was regulated by the Ambassadors Conference decision to assign four above-mentioned towns to Serbia and Scutari – to Albania. However, the problem of Albania boundaries, as the Scutari crisis showed (April-May 1913), posed new regional challenges for the great powers. It was not sufficient to work out this or that provision anymore; one should know how to impose it on the Balkan states. The tiny kingdom of Montenegro, for example, refused to obey great powers' will: it did not evacuate Scutari. Only the collective coercion – naval blockade of the Montenegrin seashore – made King Nikolas retreat. What was more important, this crisis caused by insignificant local issue put Europe on the verge of war because of Austria-Hungary's intention to resort to arms. Actions of the Austro-Hungarian government were determined by its perception of the balance of power problem in the Balkans. Vienna and Budapest, referring to the Scutari crisis, supposed that their concession to Montenegro would be interpreted as their weakness by the Balkan states.[29] Thereby it was vital for the great power, in the opinion of the Monarchy, to demonstrate its force.

The Treaty of London signed by the allies and the Ottoman Empire on 30 May 1913 concluded the First Balkan War. The London settlement replaced that of Berlin. The Treaties of London and Berlin

[26] PRO, FO881/10244, p. 19. Austria-Hungary. Annual Report, 1912.

[27] BD, IX (2), doc. 104, 2 November 1912, Paget to Nicolson, p. 84; doc. 347, 19 November 1912, Paget to Grey, p. 258.

[28] BD, IX (2), doc. 176, 26 November 1912, Paget to Grey, minutes by Nicolson and Grey, p. 136.

[29] PRO, FO800/360, fos. 34-37, 25 April 1913.

were system-establishing. However, they were based on completely different principles. Therefore, the First Balkan war brought about the transformation of the regional subsystem. Unlike the Congress of Berlin in 1878, representatives of the Balkan states, though they had not been admitted to the Ambassadors meetings, participated in the proceedings of the London peace conference. This time the document, which fixed the realignment of forces in the region, was not signed by the six great powers and the Ottoman Empire, but by the representatives of the Balkan States and those of the Ottoman Empire. And if the Treaty of Berlin provided preservation of a considerable parts of the Balkan peninsula within the Ottoman Empire, the Treaty of London, on the contrary, stated its expulsion from Southeastern Europe: Turkey retained only narrow part of Thrace to the east of the Enos-Midia line.

Some of the observers assessed a new political situation in the Balkans pessimistically. Sir Gerard Lowther, British Ambassador at Constantinople, stated, 'I fear the Powers will have lots of trouble eventually with the Balkan states and will live to regret the departure of the Turks. I think they will prove unfair and unmanageable'.[30] Considering the inherent political turbulence of the Balkans, this forecast was justified. Formerly most of the Balkan crises had been caused by the decline of the Ottoman Empire. Having settled these crises by proposing reform schemes, the great powers mainly dealt with the Porte, which was responsible for the regulation of conflicts among various ethno-confessional groups inhabited European provinces of Turkey. Elimination of the Ottoman presence posed, however, new problems for the great powers, which had now to deal directly with ambitious local players.

Incorporation of the new territories with heterogeneous population into the victorious Balkan states, their intention to revise the results of the war and therefore the rise of nationalistic propaganda accelerated tensions among the former allies. The conflict prone centers did not disappear from the map of the Balkans: Macedonia, where Bulgaro-Serbian and Bulgaro-Greek rivalries continued to exacerbate, Southern Dobrudja, which was the bone of contention between Rumania and Bulgaria. In addition, the revanchism of the Young Turks was also a considerable factor.

Since the Treaty of London recognized the Balkan states as full-fledged regional actors, they had to distribute former Ottoman territories among themselves without external interference (Albania and Aegean islands were exception). This delimitation question should be analyzed in the context of a more general problem concerning formation of a new political hierarchy within the Balkan subsystem. After its victory over the Turks, Bulgaria became an apparent regional leader. It had significantly improved its strategic position by annexing new territories. Bulgaria had not only obtained the access to the Aegean Sea and extended its Black Sea coast but it was actually in position to threaten Constantinople once again. However, the concentration of the Bulgarian troops in the south-eastern part of the peninsular during the First Balkan War allowed Greece and Serbia to gain more territories in Macedonia. Greece occupied Salonika, claimed by Bulgaria; Serbia invaded the "the contested zone" as well as that assigned to Bulgaria according to Bulgaro-Serbian Treaty. The sides tried to reach a compromise but in vain. Athens and Belgrade seemed aware of the fact that if Bulgaria's pretensions were satisfied it would turn into a dominant power in the Balkans. Under such circumstances, the conclusion of the Serbo-Greek Treaty was the most secure way to prevent disproportionate, relative to other states of the region, strengthening of Bulgaria.

The combination of external and internal factors, among the latter the Macedonian pressure group was the most powerful,[31] instigated the Bulgarian government to launch the Second Balkan war, which broke out on 29-30 June 1913. Rumania and Turkey sided with Greece, Serbia and Montenegro against Bulgaria.

[30] PRO, FO 800/363/175, 13 February 1913.
[31] R. J. Crampton, *Bulgaria*, (New York, 2007), p. 200.

The remoulding of the regional structure in the Balkans could not leave aloof Austria-Hungary and Russia, which for a long time directly or indirectly influenced a redistribution of power in Southeastern Europe. Vienna and St. Petersburg were involved in the events preceding the Interallied War. In the Ballhausplatz it was hoped that Serbia would suffer military humiliation from Bulgarian arms. Berchtold promised Sophia "active assistance" in the case of its conflict with Serbia.[32] As for Russia, it was vested, according to the Serbo-Bulgarian Treaty, with functions of arbiter; therefore, it had a right to interfere into the Balkan developments. The approach of St Petersburg to this problem was ambivalent. On the one hand, the Russian Government tried to prompt the allies to negotiations and save the Serbo-Bulgarian alliance. However, Sazonov's effort, as Richard Hall emphasized, was a tricky one: he had not to alienate both sides.[33] On the other hand, Russia continued to be concerned with the proximity of the Bulgarian territories to Constantinople. This concern was deepened by Russia's distrust of Bulgarian foreign policy orientation. The Bulgarian crisis of 1885-1886 and the subsequent events were not completely effaced from the memory of the Russian diplomacy. Moreover, Sazonov supposed that Bulgaria possessed sufficient resources for the decisive victory over the Serbo-Greek coalition and for annexing of the Macedonian territories. Sir George Buchanan, the British ambassador in St. Petersburg since 1910, wrote that Sazonov 'was afraid that Bulgaria after a successful war would acquire not only Salonica and Monastir but Usküb as well and thus establish her hegemony in the Balkans'.[34]

In the opinion of the Russian government, restoration of the equilibrium in the Balkans depended on the position of Romania. In this connection, St. Petersburg set the twofold goal: to win Rumania over from the Dreibund and use it against Bulgaria. Nicolay Schebeko, the Russian minister at Bucharest, did not conceal the fact that 'the Rumanian threat was the only means to avoid the crushing defeat of Serbia and the breaking of the balance of power'.[35]

New correlation of forces, brought about by the Interallied war, was fixed in the Treaty of Bucharest,[36] which, however, did not automatically annul the Treaty of London. The foundations of the regional order remained the same. Only those parameters of the Balkan subsystem, which characterized its inner structure, were modified. First, Bulgaria's bid for the regional leadership was curbed – the Balkan subsystem was polycentric. Second, the Ottoman Empire improved its strategic positions and this amelioration allowed it to defend its territorial integrity more effectively and thus to play a more important part in the Balkan affairs. Third, Romania, which was considered by the diplomats and the experts at the Balkan politics[37] as the key element of the regional stability, pretended to be a balancer of the subsystem.

The great powers reacted differently to the signing of the Bucharest Treaty. Great Britain and France underlined its legitimacy and rejected the possibility of its revision.[38] They considered the balance of power established in the Balkans optimal. From the view point of Entente powers, the

[32] Yu. A. Pisarev, *Vilikie derzhavy i Balkany nakanune Pervoï mirovoï voïny*, (Moscow, 1985), p. 169.

[33] R. C. Hall, *The Balkan Wars, 1912-1913: Prelude to the First World War*, (London and New York, 2000), p. 104.

[34] PRO, FO800/368/12, 9 July 1913.

[35] N. Schebeko, *Souvenirs: essai historique sur les origines de la guerre de 1914. Préface de Jules Cambon*, (Paris, 1936), p. 161.

[36] According to it, Bulgaria retained only a small area in the north-east known as Pirin Macedonia and the Aegean port of Dedeagach. It ceded Adrianople to the Turks, and Southern Dobrudja – to the Romanians. Macedonia was eventually divided between the Greeks and the Serbs.

[37] See, for example, E. J. Dillon, "Roumania and the Spring-Time of Peace in the Balkans" *The Contemporary Review*, vol. 104, No 576, December 1913, p. 878.

[38] *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, House of Commons, ser. 5, vol. 56, (London, 1912), col. 2292; DD. T. II. doc. 468. 9 August 1913.

domination of Serbo-Rumanian-Greek coalition in Southeastern Europe was the factor of regional stability, as it would restrict the influence of the Central powers in strategically important region and therefore it would restrain their abrupt policy in the East. Moreover, the new configuration of forces in the Balkans allowed Britain to limit its involvement in the affairs in Southeastern Europe and concentrate its activity in other diplomatic directions. To prove this statement one can quote Nicolson's words in reference to the Albanian problem, 'Our interest in that part of the world is so extremely indirect that we are not at all disposed to take the lead in the matter'.[39] London's disinterestedness in the Balkan affairs to some extent convinced the Central Powers that Britain would stand aloof in the case Balkan imbroglio led to confrontation between the Dreibund and the Franco-Russian alliance. Germany's attitude towards the Treaty of Bucharest was rather benevolent.[40] In addition, Berlin hoped to form a new Balkan League under the auspices the Triple Alliance. Vienna resented the Treaty of Bucharest and proposed to call the European conference in order to sanction the results of the Second Balkan war.[41] Moreover, the Austro-Hungarian Government, feeling that the ground was slipping from under their feet, offered Russia to revise the Treaty in the bilateral mode. Berchtold stressed that Vienna and St. Petersburg shared a common view on the Balkan politics, since both of them were interested in the pacification of the Balkans.[42] Actually, one could hardly count on the revival of the Mürzsteg spirit. As the Balkan wars demonstrated, the preservation of the status quo depended not on the Austro-Russian cooperation but on the will of the local players.

The political configuration constituted in form of the Serbo-Romanian-Greek triangle can be in some ways analyzed in terms of Barry Buzan's and Ole Wæver's complex of regional security theory. It is stated that in a region 'states or other units link together sufficiently closely that their securities cannot be considered separate from each other'. [43] Buzan and Wæver admitted that in the Balkans prior to World War I 'newborn states formed a system of interdependent balances of power as witnessed by the shifting coalitions of the wars'.[44] Serbia, Romania and Greece were fully aware that they could maintain the existing equilibrium of forces in Southeastern Europe, providing they closely cooperated. In the first instance, this implied military interaction, in case one of the allies was attacked by the hostile side. Thus, Titu Maiorescu, the Romanian Prime Minister, assured a Russian chargé d'affaires in Romania that the preservation of the Treaty of Bucharest was the *point d'honneur* for the Romanian Government, which could not permit military defeat of Serbia and Greece.[45] The Serbs in their turn were prepared to cooperate with the Greeks in face of Turco-Bulgarian offence.[46]

Another crucial factor of the Balkan balance of power was the Serbo-Romanian *entente*. On the one hand, Belgrade and Bucharest were interested in securing the region from the Austro-Hungarian intervention, on the other – both countries looked northwards waiting for an appropriate moment for the liberation of their kinsmen from the Habsburg rule. Referring to determination of Serbia and Romania to defend the Treaty of Bucharest R.W. Seton-Watson, the prominent expert at Slavic studies, noted, 'The only thing which could ever reconcile them to a revision of territory southwards in favour of Bulgaria would be their own acquisition of Transylvania, Bosnia, Dalmatia, and Croatia, and this

39 PRO, FO800/372/17, 13 January 1914.
40 R. W. Seton-Watson, *Wilhelm II's*..., p.15.
41 N. Schebeko. *Souvenirs*..., p. 63.
42 AVPRI, f. 172 (Embassy in Vienna), op. 514/2, d. 859, l. 14.
43 B. Buzan and O. Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 43-44.
44 *ibid*, p. 341
45 AVPRI, f. 151 (Political Archive), op. 482, d. 2281, l. 12, 24 September 1913.
46 Dokumenti o spoljnoj politici Kraljevine Srbije 1903-1914, vol. VII, pt. 1, (Beograd, 1980), doc. 89, 18/31 January 1914, p. 212.

would involve an upheaval in Central Europe'.[47] Meanwhile, the collapse of Austria-Hungary, as Paul Schroeder argued soundly, precipitated a great war for the mastery of Europe.[48]

Simultaneously the axis of revisionist powers, including the Dual Monarchy, Bulgaria, and the Ottoman Empire was forming in the Balkans. Albania, which was viewed by the revisionist powers as an important element of the new regional order, joined this informal coalition. The Albanian principality with its fluctuated frontiers, heterogeneous population, parts of which found themselves living within the borders of other states, played as a destabilizing factor against Serbia. Moreover, Albania was constituted as an autonomous principality under the guarantee of six great powers, which had to establish its financial and administrative structures and fix its borders. In this sense, Austria-Hungary as a member of the European concert had a full right to act on behalf of Albania. Since there was a permanent tension on the Serbo-Albanian border, Austria-Hungary intended to use a Serbo-Albanian clash or an incursion of the Serbian troops into the Albania territory as a pretext to restrain Serbia with military methods. That was the case with the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum presented to the Serbian Government on 18 October 1913.

The well-coordinated interaction of the revisionist powers, in opinion of the Serbian politicians, would have grave consequences for Serbia and Greece. The former being engaged in military operations against Albanian bands would be unable to reinforce the Greek forces in case of Turco-Greek war over the Aegean islands. Under these circumstances, Bulgarian strategic positions would considerably improve and this will enable it to regain the lost parts of Macedonia or Thrace.[49] In addition, the eventual disruption of the Balkan equilibrium in Bulgaria's favour would threaten Romania's territorial acquisitions.

Anyway, the trajectory of the political development of the Balkans was not clearly defined in the period between the Second Balkan war and the First World War. In view of extremely fragile balance of power, there were several scenarios of coming events: from the stabilization of the Bucharest regional order to the *Third Balkan war*, the conflict that could be either localized or grow into the world war[50]. As the July crisis of 1914 showed, the interaction of external, not internal, factors directed the course of events in the Balkans.

Conclusions

The analysis of emergence, evolution and final transformation of the Balkan subsystem allows us to understand the correlation between the global and regional levels of world politics at the end of the 19th- early 20th century. Though having been brought into life by the internal ferment and Russia's active involvement, the Balkan subsystem was formatted by the active participation of Great Britain, the leading world power that aimed at counteracting Russia, its most powerful geopolitical rival, in the Near East. Due to the British assertiveness, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire constituted the backbone of the Berlin regional order. The great powers interaction influenced the subsystem's functioning, which in its turn developed in accordance with the global system. Meanwhile, in the wake of great powers realignment Britain gave up its traditional status quo maintenance policy in the Balkans.

[47] R. W. Seton-Watson, "New Phases of the Balkan Question" *The Contemporary Review*, vol. 104, 573, September 1913, p. 329.

[48] P. W. Schroeder, "World War I as Galloping Gertie: A Reply to Joachim Remak" *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 44, No 3, September 1972, p. 343.

[49] BD, X (1), doc. 33, 8 October 1913, Crackanthorpe to Grey, p. 26.

[50] See J. Remak, "1914 – The Third Balkan War: Origins Reconsidered" *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 43, No 3, September 1971, pp. 353-356. S. Williamson, *Austria-Hungary and Origins of the First World War*, (Houndmills, 1992), p.1, for the conception of the Third Balkan war

The set of principles that determined the functioning of the Balkan subsystem was no longer relevant in the early 20th century, considering the existence of the Anglo-Russian entente in the global level and the inner pressure, emanating from the local players. While The Balkan region was integrating into the European alliance system, the local actors adopted the rules of the great powers game, namely the alliance and entente building. The transferring of these principles on the Balkan soil produced an opposite effect, however, from the standpoint of the victorious coalition, this experiment proved to be successful. The restructuring of the Balkan regional order, that is to say the transformation of the particular segment of the global system, should inevitably provoke the feedback of the latter. However, the transformation was accomplished without dramatic international complications due to the existence of the Anglo-German détente. The sphere of the Balkan politics, Richard Crampton argues soundly, was an appropriate space for constructing the policy of the détente, since the vital interests of Germany and Britain were concentrated out of the Balkans.[51] Both powers constraining their partners, Austria-Hungary and Russia, from taking hard measures demonstrated their mutual inclination to cooperation.

The expulsion of the Ottoman Empire from the Balkans did not actually affect the balance of power in Europe. However, the preservation of the Ottoman rule in Asia and the Ottoman control over the Straits had a stabilizing effect upon the international relations on the eve of the First World War. The power that would replace the Ottoman Empire on the shores of the Straits, Sazonov stated, was likely to follow the path of Turks, because it would get the key to the Black and Mediterranean Seas, the key to offensive move in Asia Minor and to hegemony in the Balkans.[52] The mutual fear of seeing its rival dominating the global system constrained the great powers from the conflict for the Ottoman legacy.

Meanwhile, the restructuring of the regional order in the Balkans raised the question concerning the future of Austria-Hungary, which unlike Turkey, was the great power and the important element of the European equilibrium: What place would the Dual Monarchy possess within the Bucharest regional order? Moreover, nobody could reply the question regarding the possibility of the regional subsystem being autonomous within the existing system of international relations. In the realities of the early 20th century the interactions among the great powers defined the structure of international system as well as alignment of forces on the regional level. Thus while the positions of the local states, and that of Serbia in the first instance, were strengthening, the Austro-Hungarian influence on the regional balance of power minimized. The political independence of the Balkan region within the existing system of international relations was incompatible with Austria-Hungary's status of the great power. On the system-wide level the disappearance of the Habsburg monarchy from the European Concert would involve the realignment or destruction of the whole structure of the international system, and this was fraught with a European war.

During the First World War the Balkan subsystem went through its second transformation. It resulted in the collapse of Austria-Hungary and the creation of the big Southern Slav state in the Balkans. The process of multi-ethnic empires expulsion, which started in the Balkans in time of the Eastern crisis of 1875-1878, was completed.

51 R. Crampton, *The Hollow Détente: Anglo-German Relations in the Balkans 1911-1914* (London, 1980).
52 KA, vol. 6, pp.71-72.

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