

## ROMANIA AND THE ENTENTE DURING THE LONDON PEACE CONFERENCE (DECEMBER 1912-JANUARY 1913)

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### **Abstract: Romania and the Entente during the London Peace Conference (December 1912 - January 1913)**

*The paper analyzes Romania's relations with the Great Powers of the Entente during the Peace Conference in London. The author considers that Romania's relations with the Great Powers of the Entente in the period of the Peace Conference in London were complex, being determined mainly by the evolution of the Romanian-Bulgarian conflict, which was about to worsen the "Balkan Crisis", through the possible generalization of the conflict. Great Powers of the Entente have shaped their policy towards Romania in terms of its relations with the Central Powers, while remaining mindful of the important role the Romanian state might have in the context of new political realities about to be established in South -East Europe. From this perspective, continuing the policy aimed at detaching Romania from the Central Powers and attracting it towards the Entente represented a major objective. In turn, Romania was interested in maintaining good relations with the Great Powers of the Entente, given the role they could have in facilitating the achievement of foreign policy goals of the Romanian state. With regard to obtaining diplomatic support for a favorable settlement of the territorial dispute between Romania and Bulgaria, Bucharest had to confront the great reluctance of the Entente, because Romania was perceived externally as a country revolving around the political orbit of the Central Powers and its territorial claims against Bulgaria complicated the decision to restore peace.*

*In conclusion, the author considers that Romania's relations with the Great Powers of the Entente suffered a setback during the Peace Conference in London, its hopes for solving territorial dispute with Bulgaria in its favor being more linked to a possible support that it might have received from the Central Powers. The latter one would be very valuable, given that, after the failure of the Romanian-Bulgarian talks, a solution was emerging through the use of mediation of the Great Powers.*

**Keywords:** territorial disputes, diplomatic bilateral negotiations, diplomatic support, mediation.

Conduct of the Balkan War and of the Peace Conference in London highlighted the complexity of the Great Powers interests in Southeast Europe. As

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the Great Powers of the Triple Alliance tried to promote them in the treaties that they were part of, the Great Powers of the Entente also acted in accordance with the agreements between them. Their specificity, but also the personality of the diplomatic leaders of the Great Powers of the Entente made a significant mark on the political and diplomatic steps taken.

Obviously, the taking place of the Peace Conference in the British capital made of Edward Grey the main figure directly involved in negotiations. Prince Lichnowsky, German Ambassador, praised Grey's negotiating skills, calm and tact with which he led discussions and especially the fact that Grey was not always placed on the side of the Entente. "*In all matters - Lichnowsky said - we supported Austria and Italy, while Sir Edward Grey almost never supported the claims of Russia and France. [...] Thus, with his support, it was possible to persuade King Nicholas to withdraw from Scutari*".<sup>1</sup> German Foreign Minister Jagow expressed other views on the role of Grey: "*I could not deny him the merit of an attitude of mediation. Of course, he often counseled moderation in Petersburg, as we did in Vienna, and found formulas for understanding, but he represented the Entente, because, like us, he never could and would not want to abandon his allies. We, like England, played a mediating role.*"<sup>2</sup>

How Grey led discussions, in many respects favorable the Central Powers, to the disappointment of Russia and France, was interpreted as an attempt to demonstrate that England wanted to keep straight, providing an opportunity for a lasting peace in the area<sup>3</sup>. In fact, Grey's attitude reflected the abandonment of the old guidelines of British foreign policy in Constantinople and the Straits. As noted, the Balkan war was the first occasion on which Britain abandoned its traditional policy of defending the integrity of the Ottoman Empire<sup>4</sup>, after this orientation was expressed as a trend since the late nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century<sup>5</sup>. In the conception of the British diplomacy, creation of independent states in the European territories of the Ottoman Empire eliminated any pretexts for Russia's intervention in the Balkan Peninsula and the Straits, which would have threatened British control of the Eastern Mediterranean. Grey's attitude towards Russia during the London Conference is explained, we believe, by the nature of the agreement between the two countries in 1907, which itself was not an alliance, but a division of spheres of influence in Asia, unlike the Franco-Russian agreements containing precise commitments of France to Russia, including in the Balkan problems.

As regards France, we notice the huge role of R. Poincaré in the establishment of the "*European concert*". During the Peace Conference in London, on 21 December 1912, R. Poincaré had a speech before the French Parliament, on

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<sup>1</sup> *The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy. 1783-1919*, Edited by Sir A.W. Ward and G. P. Gooch, vol. III, Cambridge, 1923, p. 472.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 472.

<sup>3</sup> Ileana Bulz, *England, Romania and South-Eastern Europe (1878-1914)*, PhD thesis, Iasi, 1999, p. 79.

<sup>4</sup> Radu Meitani, *Political History of Interstatal Relations 1856-1930*, Bucharest, 1943, p. 161.

<sup>5</sup> Codrin-Valentin Chirica, *England and the "Eastern Matter". 1830-1900. Synthetic Study*, Helios Publishing House, Iasi, 1999.

which occasion he said that France had dominated and was dominating the political situation, having the merit of reviving the "*European Concert*", giving it, at the same time, some shades of democracy. Poincaré concluded that time actually had come for "*Balkans to belong to the Balkan nations*".<sup>6</sup> It should be noted that even before the Peace Conference, Poincaré sent to Paul Cambon, French representative in London, the French Government program, which generally favored the Balkan states. Progress of discussions made Poincaré's ideas and programs to win the case, despite sustained opposition from Triple Alliance Members.<sup>7</sup>

Poincaré diplomatic influence, exerted on both the Conference of Ambassadors, and on the one of belligerent states, had undeniably an important role during the two meetings.<sup>8</sup> But since 18 January 1913, when Poincaré became President of the French Republic, he has not led directly political and diplomatic actions. However, Governments of Aristide Briand, then, from April 1913, Louis Barthou have consistently continued Poincaré's policy.

Active supporter of the principle of nationalities, Poincaré was dominated, at the same time, by the will to promote France internationally as a Great Power, wanting to substantially increase its prestige, which he succeeded.<sup>9</sup>

Russian diplomacy, led by Sazonov, a very clever diplomat, was very active during the "Balkan crisis" and the Peace Conference in London. Russia's diplomatic actions were, however, largely offset by those of the Triple Alliance. This was possible due to the failure of Russia's military preparations for an European conflict, but also due to the limited support received from its allies, France and England.

Its conduct during the "Balkan crisis" and the Peace Conference in London brought insufficient evidence that the Entente has strengthened its capacity enough to act together, Russia being confronted with an impartial arbitrator position of Great Britain and with France's visible reluctance to enter a war on Balkan issues. In this case, the support it could provide, in turn, to Serbia, could not be very consistent.

Even under these conditions, at the end of the First Balkan War, Entente positions in South-Eastern Europe strengthened at the expense of the Central Powers.

Relations between Romania and the Great Powers of the Entente in the period of the Peace Conference in London were complex, being determined mainly by the evolution of the Romanian-Bulgarian conflict, which tended to worsen the "Balkan Crisis", through the possible generalization of the conflict. Great Powers of the Entente shaped their policy towards Romania in terms of its relations with the Central Powers, while remaining mindful of the important role the Romanian state might have in the context of new political realities about to be established in South-East Europe. From this perspective, continuing the policy

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<sup>6</sup> Eliza Campus, *Raymond Poincaré. 1860-1934. One Man in the World's History*, Bucharest University Publishing House, 1988, p. 50-51.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 51.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 52.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 53.

aimed at detaching Romania from the Central Powers and attracting it towards the Entente represented a major objective.

In turn, Romania was interested in maintaining good relations with the Great Powers of the Entente, given the role they could play in facilitating the achievement of the foreign policy goals of the Romanian state.

Relations between Romania and the Entente seemed to be favored by their upward evolution during the Balkan War. Conditional neutral position that Romania had adopted was well appreciated by the leaders of the Great Powers of the Entente. In fact, the attitude of the Romanian state favored the military action of the Balkan Alliance against the Ottoman Empire, reinforcing Entente's positions in South-Eastern Europe at the expense of the Central Powers. In this context, Romania's territorial claims, even if they displeased Bulgaria, were accepted to some extent by the Great Powers of the Entente.

Paramount for the development of Romania's relations with the Great Powers of the Entente proved to be the Romanian-Russian relations. Russia, as we have seen, despite the links it had with Bulgaria, responded favorably to the Romanian government requests to intervene in Sofia to determine the Bulgarian government to be responsive to Romanian requests to rectify the Dobrudja border. Moreover, Russian diplomacy, which acted in conjunction with the French one, appreciating the insufficient support that Austria-Hungary was willing to grant Romania, made great efforts for its removal from the Central Powers and attraction towards the Entente.

By adopting this attitude towards Romania, Russia, however, was placed in a delicate situation in front of Bulgaria, because, wishing to attract Romania towards the Entente, it did not accept to lose its influence in Sofia. In fact, Russia was in a position opposed to Austria-Hungary on the issue of the Romanian-Bulgarian dispute. As Russia wanted to attract Romania, without upsetting Bulgaria, towards which it had older commitments, Austria-Hungary wanted to attract Bulgaria to oppose Serbia, while striving to maintain alliance with Romania.

Following such conflicting objectives in relation with Romania and, respectively, Bulgaria, the two great powers with direct interests in the Southeast Europe, Russia and Austria-Hungary, felt the need for clearer explanations of foreign policy options of the two countries under the deepening tensions between Russia and Austro-Hungary about Serbia's aspirations to expand its territory in the Adriatic Sea area. Considering the danger of conflict generalization through entry of Austria-Hungary and Russia into the war, the two Great Powers, belonging to opposing political and military systems, were equally concerned about Romania's attitude in this case. It is estimated that Romania's position in this situation had become a key factor that all the Great Powers, Austria-Hungary and Russia, had to take account. If Austria-Hungary was able to make sure that Romania would follow the political line of the Central Powers, in this regard concluding a military alliance during the visit in Romania of General Conrad von Hoetzendorf, Russia could not get needed assurances. During the visit of Grand Duke Nicholas Mikhailovich, intended to counteract the one of the Austrian general, Russia wanted to get the guarantee, in view of Romania's relations with

the Central Powers, that in case of war between Russia and Austria-Hungary, Romania would remain neutral. Furthermore, the proposal that the Grand Duke Nicholas Mikhailovich made to both King Carol I and Prime Minister Maiorescu, for Romania to join the "Balkan Confederation" targeted to attract it towards the Entente, which meant the changing of the external political orientation of the Romanian state. Despite the friendly attitude shown to the Russian high guest, the two statesmen, the king and the prime minister, did not take any commitment involving a significant change in the Romanian-Russian relations in the sense of political rapprochement. Only I.I.C. Bratianu and Take Ionescu, in discussions with the Grand Duke, showed such a willingness<sup>10</sup>. Not even the Tsar's consent to the annexation of Cadrilater by Romania<sup>11</sup>, nor the discussions of a marriage between a Tsar's daughter, Princess Olga Romanova, and Prince Charles, son of Crown Prince Ferdinand<sup>12</sup>, could remove the Grand Duke Nicholas Mikhailovich suspicion regarding the continuation of the old guidelines of Romania's foreign policy on the side of the Central Powers. Therefore, it seems exaggerated the opinion expressed in historiography according to which Romania would have manifested, in those circumstances, signs of a new orientation, different from the traditional one of submission to Vienna-Berlin axis.<sup>13</sup> While continuing the old policy guidelines would have had, to some extent, repercussions on how Russia intended to address the dispute between Romania and Bulgaria, for the moment, Russian diplomacy continued to have good availability to Romania, although France and England expressed their intention, as we have seen, not to allow the presence of a Romanian delegation at the peace conference in London on the grounds that in that case, Romanian delegation would support the view of the Triple Alliance on the establishment of the Albanian state.

Eventually admitted to the Peace Conference, but only to present its views strictly in matters of its concern, without participating in debates, the Romanian delegation, initially headed by N. Misu, was concerned with solving through direct bilateral negotiations the dispute with Bulgaria. Joining of minister Take Ionescu gave other connotations to Romania's diplomatic action, given his pro-Entente orientation. His actions, aimed at approaching Romania to the Balkan Alliance, thus to the Entente, were made possible by King Carol I accepting for the

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<sup>10</sup> *Lettres des grands-ducs à Nicolas II*, Paris, 1936, p. 133-137.

<sup>11</sup> **If we were to give credence to the European press articles. View the Central Historical National Archives (quote CHNA), microfilm Russia, reel 97, frames 373-375.**

<sup>12</sup> **There is also the assumption that a marriage between Prince Charles and Grand Duchess Olga, daughter of Tsar Nicholas II, was for the first time considered during participation of heirs Ferdinand and Mary in St. Petersburg festivities, during the inauguration of the monument Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaevich, commander of Russian troops in 1877. In this festival, held shortly after leaving of Grand Duke Nicholas Mikhailovich from Romania, also participated Prince Charles, being accompanied also by an important delegation of officers, headed by Minister of War CN Herjeu. See Gh. Zbucea, *Romania and the Balkan Wars. 1912-1913. Pages of South-Eastern European History*, Albatros Publishing House, București, 1999, p. 80, 236.**

<sup>13</sup> A. Rossos, *Rusia and the Balkans: Inter-Balkan rivalties and Russian foreign policy 1908-1914*, Toronto-Buffalo-London, 1981, p. 134.

moment, perhaps at the suggestion of Vienna, the idea of a Romanian-Bulgarian cooperation against the Turks, allowing Bulgaria to get Adrianople and the transfer Silistra to Romania.

Without conclusive documentary evidence, although we did investigate this, we make the assumption that for King Carol I, Romania's participation in military action side by side with Bulgaria for the conquest of Adrianople was meant to convince the Great Powers to accept the presence of the Romanian delegation at belligerents Conference in London, thus meeting the aspirations of the Romanian state in the context of changes that were to be enshrined in the Southeastern Europe at the end of the Balkan War. We do not think that King Carol I actually wanted direct involvement of Romania in the war, as no military preparations were made. It was perhaps more a possibility of exploring the intentions of the Bulgarian party, as a proposal for military cooperation against the Ottoman Empire would have made it more conciliatory. Especially since, as already mentioned, Romania's action did not contravene to Austro-Hungarian diplomacy projects, keen to attract Bulgaria, including through Romania, to quit the Serbian-Bulgarian and thus to remove Bulgaria from the influence of Russia, hence of the Entente. It was not a coincidence that Austria-Hungary was helping Bulgaria to achieve its goal of getting Adrianople. But if Vienna aimed just at attracting Bulgaria through Romania, King Carol I sought to obtain territorial concessions from Bulgaria, because in the context of establishing a new political configuration and a new balance of forces south of the Danube, incorporating in the Romanian state of territories inhabited by Romanians south of the Danube was geographically impossible. The territory claimed by Romania could be considered a compensation for Bulgaria's territorial growth.

Take Ionescu's remarkable diplomatic qualities and his pro-Entente and pro-Balkan Alliance orientation, could favor - at least that is what King Carol and Prime Minister Maiorescu could hope for - getting significant concessions from Bulgaria, in case of Romanian-Bulgarian cooperation against the Ottoman Empire, or at least would have led it to become more responsive to the requests of Romania, being convinced of its good intentions, where it would not be the case, however, for Romania's direct involvement in the war. But Take Ionescu, as he confessed, did not want to play in favour of Austria-Hungary, being convinced of the need for a sound Balkan Alliance, in the sphere of influence of the Entente. We have reason to believe that Take Ionescu would not accept the idea of attracting Bulgaria towards the Central Powers through Romania, because this would have undermined the Serbian-Bulgarian alliance. On the other hand, equally unacceptable, according to his statements, was the idea of an armed confrontation between Romania and Bulgaria, because in his view, Romania entry into the war would have led to a widespread conflict, in which the Romanian state would be allied with Austria-Hungary. Thus, Take Ionescu not only lacked firmness in claiming the territories requested by Romania from Bulgaria, according to the above mentioned instructions N. Misu had received, but was even willing, as we saw, to no more claim to Silistra and Balchik, which for King Carol I and Prime Minister Maiorescu was not acceptable. Therefore, the decision to recall him to Bucharest became necessary, especially since the Romanian

diplomat had exceeded his mandate, by having meetings with Serbian and Greek diplomats.

Staying on the line of this possible "scenario" in the absence of relevant documents, we wonder, from a historical perspective: who was right, Alexandru Marghiloman, who said that in London "*Take Ionescu ridiculised us*"<sup>14</sup> or Take Ionescu, who believed, according to his confession of 1915, that his action could have prevented the outbreak of the Second Balkan War and delayed World War I? "*I was still hoping - Take Ionescu wrote - that Bulgarians were to realize the situation and hurry to receive my suggestions. If so, peace with Turkey would have been signed in the first days of January 1913, the Second Balkan War would probably have never occurred and the general war would have been delayed for who knows how many years*"<sup>15</sup>.

Whatever the interpretation of Take Ionescu's action can be in terms of this reflective "challenge", it remains certain, we believe, that his entire diplomatic activity held in the British capital was in line with a trend, contrary to the official one, aiming at detaching Romania from Austria-Hungary and bringing it closer to the Entente.

On his return from London, confessing to Russian Minister in Bucharest, Schebeko the failure of his mission, Take Ionescu let the Russian diplomat understand that "*it had been the biggest disappointment of his career*"<sup>16</sup>." Commenting Take Ionescu's diplomatic action in the British capital, Schebeko wrote in his memoirs: "*He always aimed at an alliance between Romania, Bulgaria and the other Balkan states and this was the main purpose of his entry into Maiorescu cabinet, but in London, all his efforts were very badly received by the Bulgarian delegation. He saw in this attitude of Bulgaria a very alarming symptom for the future and for the future relations between the two countries*"<sup>17</sup>.

Around and during the Conference convened in London, Romanian-French relations damaged for a while, the peak being recorded in December 1912 and January-February 1913, along with aggravating differences between Romania and Bulgaria<sup>18</sup>.

Main reason for this evolution of the Romanian-French relations lies in the fact that France was ascertaining the nature of its relations with the Romanian state through the general interests of the Entente, primarily Russia, in South-Eastern Europe. As we have seen, although France, just like England, had some reticence about some aspects of Russia's Balkan policy, the general guidelines of its policy in the South-Eastern Europe had be consistent with those of Russia. Balkan Alliance had been created under the aegis of Russia and, therefore, had to ensure the rise of the Entente, to the detriment of the Triple

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<sup>14</sup> Apud A. Iordache, *The Political Crisis in Romania and the Balkan Wars, 1911-1913*, Paideia Publishing House, București, 1998, p. 199.

<sup>15</sup> R. Seișanu, *Take Ionescu*, București, 1930, p. 157.

<sup>16</sup> N. Schebeko, *Souvenirs. Essais historique sur les origines de guerre de 1914*, Paris, 1936, p. 145.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>18</sup> V. Vesa, *Romania and France at the Beginning of the XXth Century. 1900-1916*, Dacia Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 1975, p. 37.

Alliance, in this region. As long as Romania had adopted a neutral attitude towards the "Balkan Crisis", Romania's relations with France and also with Russia and England had known an upward trend, even paving the way for a political approach. But as Romania became more insistent in requesting territorial compensation from Bulgaria, member of the Balkan Alliance, these relations were deteriorating more and more. From this perspective, although France, just like Russia, admitted the idea of a Romanian-Bulgarian border adjustment as a price for Romania's neutrality, but also as a prerequisite for a successful policy of attracting the Romanian state towards the Entente, the French diplomacy was trying to settle the dispute between the two countries, while advising the Romanian government to show more moderation.

Another cause of Romanian-French relations deterioration and, more broadly, the deterioration of Romania's relations with the Great Powers of the Entente, was the suspicion with which continuation of the official policy of the Romanian state in line with the interests of the Great Powers of the Triple Alliance was regarded in Paris. The visit to Romania of General Conrad von Hoetzendorf, Chief of Staff of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, was indicating that Romania remained faithful to the Triple Alliance policy in the context of the "Balkan crisis"<sup>19</sup>, while the Romanian government's attitude on the Albanian state establishment, which was in fact in favour of Austria-Hungary, led Paris to even refuse to allow the presence of Romania in May at the Peace Conference in London. Finally accepted, as shown<sup>20</sup>, the Romanian delegation had to confront in the British capital the reluctance of the French diplomacy to satisfy the requests of the Romanian Government. Even the presence of Take Ionescu, known for his pro-Entente orientation, was not followed by assurances of a concrete support from the French diplomacy.

In the meeting Take Ionescu had with R. Poincaré in Paris on January 1, 1913, the Romanian diplomat was considering, among other things, to obtain the French government consent for a Great Powers intervention by the government in Sofia in order to meet Romania's claims. Poincaré, while trying to spare the Romanian government, evaded to promise something concrete and advised Take Ionescu to be more moderate<sup>21</sup>. And when the German ambassador in London, Lichnowski, asked the French government to rally the Triple Alliance governments to make a collective intervention in Sofia, the French ambassador in

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<sup>19</sup> French Ambassador in St. Petersburg, Georges Louis, transmitted to R. Poincaré on 5 December 1912, that "*as for General Conrad von Hoetzendorf visit to Bucharest, Neratoff told me today that he did not question the existence of a military link between Austria and Romania*". **Documents diplomatiques français (D. D. F.)**, 3<sup>e</sup> série, tome V, doc. nr. 4, p. 3; vezi și **Ibidem**, tome IV, 3<sup>e</sup> série, doc. nr. 608. Blondel Report of 2 December 1912.

<sup>20</sup> Blondel warned Poincaré that "*our refusal would provide Austria another opportunity to pose in Romania's only friend and would be immediately exploited by those who oppose a change in the Romanian foreign policy. We, above all, are interested in avoiding everything that could favor the Austrian advances. My Russian colleague shares the same view, he sent this to Sazonov...*" DDF, 3<sup>e</sup> série, tome V, doc. no. 90, p. 112. See also Poincaré's favorable response. **Ibidem**, doc. no. 91, p. 112.

<sup>21</sup> R. Poincaré, **op. cit.**, vo. III, p.1-5.



London, Paul Cambon, categorically refused<sup>22</sup>. For the Romanian government this attitude was proof that France, ultimately, was on the side of Bulgaria<sup>23</sup>, especially since Poincaré suggested to Paul Cambon that if a collective intervention was to take place in Sofia, then such an intervention should have been made in Bucharest too<sup>24</sup>.

Meanwhile, the Romanian government policy was becoming the target of incisive attacks from the French press. The attitude of the French media is explained by the fact that in Parisian political circles was accredited the idea of Romania's policy being merely an appendage of the Triple Alliance policy, its actions being directed by Vienna. Even some members of the French Government were convinced that Romania was only playing for Austria-Hungary<sup>25</sup>.

However, France was not willing to bet exclusively on Bulgaria. Blondel, ambassador in Romania, repeatedly informed the French government on public opinion changes in Romania and among some political circles desiring the reorientation of Romanian foreign policy in favor of the Entente. Thus, in one report, dated 11 January 1913, while resuming his earlier appreciation on "*the pro-Austrian policy in Romania being like a besieged citadel*" the French diplomat said that "***new defenses fall every day into the hands of besiegers. Some skillful and courageous efforts might remove the last strengths of the Triple Alliance, which would thus have to count on a continuously decreasing support in the East***" (author's underlinement).<sup>26</sup>

Although England's position seemed to be characterized by impartiality and fairness, aimed at moderating the dispute between Romania and Bulgaria in order to prevent the expansion of the Balkan conflict and to establish as early as possible peace in South-Eastern Europe, however, from the very beginning, its policy options were consistent with those of Russia and France, showing a certain reluctance towards the territorial claims of the Romanian government and gradually moving towards a support of Bulgaria's interests. English diplomatic correspondence and the political reports from the Romanian Minister in London are revealing for us to evaluate the Anglo-Romanian relations during that period, in the context of the Great Powers policies in Southeast Europe.

Since the start of negotiations concerning the peace conference venue, England expressed some reservations for a Romanian delegation participation as requested by the Central Powers diplomacy. Expressing his opinion on the matter, which had to be sent to Russia's Foreign Minister, Sir Edward Grey wrote to the English ambassador at Petersburg, Sir G. Buchanan: "*I would have preferred the discussions to include, for the beginning, only the six Great Powers that signed the Treaty of Berlin. We should have enough time to get the Romanians in the discussions after having overpassed the difficulties from*

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<sup>22</sup> Paul Cambon acted upon instructions from R. Poincaré on January 7, 1913. View D.D.F., 3e série, tome V, doc. nr. 186, p. 228-229.

<sup>23</sup> V. Vesa, *cited paper*, p. 39.

<sup>24</sup> *D.D.F.*, 3<sup>e</sup> série, vol. V, doc. nr. 199, p. 250.

<sup>25</sup> V. Vesa, *cited paper*, p. 39.

<sup>26</sup> *D.D.F.*, 3<sup>e</sup> série, vol. V, doc. nr. 209, p. 261.

*Serbs and Albanians; but I have not yet expressed any opinion since this problem concerns the Russians more directly.*"<sup>27</sup> His opinion has not changed after Austria-Hungary's insistence, which seemed to make Russian diplomacy concede. English ambassador in Vienna transmitted to Ed Gray: "*Foreign Minister told me that he would have liked Romania to be received at the ambassadors' meetings. He gave me several reasons for this, emphasizing the need to move from the stage of meetings towards a lasting arrangement in South East Europe, which we could not achieve without taking into account the interests Romania. He told me that the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs had raised no objection to this idea, when raised by the Austrian Ambassador at St. Petersburg*"<sup>28</sup>. Sazonov, the Russian foreign minister, though hesitant at first, accepted the view of E. Grey. English Ambassador to Petersburg communicated Foreign Office that "*Foreign Minister agrees that it would be a mistake to admit Romania, especially since the Balkan states will not take part in the discussion and he believes that it should be told to communicate any views it wishes us to consider through its representatives in various capitals*"<sup>29</sup>. Having the confirmation that Petersburg shared the same view, E. Grey communicated to Vienna: "*When the Austrian ambassador first mentioned Romania as a country that should be represented at the meeting, I realized that it would be better for Romania not to have a representative in the initial stage of discussions. It could be consulted in a later stage if necessary. It would be good to start only with the ambassadors of the Powers that signed the Treaty of Berlin. Albania would be probably one of the first issues under discussion and it would be better to overcome this difficulty before the Romanian representative is present*"<sup>30</sup>.

This diplomatic correspondence clearly shows that England's objections to the presence of a Romanian delegation to the Ambassadors Conference in London rested on the fear that Romania would support the Austro-Hungarian view on the Albanian state establishment. This difficulty being overcome, as we have seen, through Romanian delegation being received only to express its views on matters of interest, without participating in debates, on the forefront of Romanian diplomacy activities in the British capital stayed, once Take Ionescu had arrived, the Romanian-Bulgarian dispute resolution. In this matter, the Great Britain leadership offered their good offices to reach a convenient solution for both parties.

Sir Edward Grey kindly received Take Ionescu at the Foreign Office, but he did not provide any assurances of a concrete support. Take Ionescu would have desired to obtain the consent of England for a Great Powers common approach at

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<sup>27</sup> *British Documents on the Origins of the War. 1898-1914 (B. D. O. W.)*, London, 1929, vol. IX, p. a II-a, doc. nr. 350, p. 259-260. Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Buchanan, 7 December 1912.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*, doc. nr. 351, p. 260. Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey, 7 December 1912.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*, doc. nr. 357, p. 265-266. Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey, 8 December 1912.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*, doc. nr. 364, p. 270-271. Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright, 9 December 1912.

Constantinople, so that the Ottoman Empire should give Adrianople to Bulgaria and Bulgaria should be prepared in this way to make some reasonable concessions to Romania. On this occasion, Take Ionescu told him that R. Poincaré, with whom he had a discussion on the subject in Paris, said France could link the issue of giving Adrianople to Bulgaria to the one of considering Romanian requests. Take Ionescu had made the same proposal to the German Ambassador in London. E. Grey's answer was very evasive, without engaging England, especially since the British foreign minister was aware that Take Ionescu had not met from Danev, in this regard, a rigid attitude. Edward Grey's position was sent to Bucharest to Ambassador Sir G. Barclay: *"I said that the ambassadors would undoubtedly discuss any problem posed by the German ambassador, but I knew from experience that when the power started consultations on an intervention, things would go on very slowly. I also thought that, until the Great Powers would decide to make a real intervention in Constantinople, the opportunity to say something about Romania would not occur."* Moreover, Take Ionescu was also aware that *"only in case of a Powers intervention in Constantinople, the present suggestion would have any effect"*.<sup>31</sup>

When receiving credentials for the new Minister of Romania in London, King George of England received the N. Misu, during which meeting the British monarch appeared concerned about the prospect of an agreement between Romania and Bulgaria. Also, he expressed the uncertainty of achieving a final and lasting peace ending the Balkan war, given the differences between the Balkan allies and the Ottoman Empire, as well as between the victorious Balkan states.<sup>32</sup>

Sir Edward Grey was not willing to give diplomatic support to Romania also because Germany considered inappropriate the moment to take into account Romania's territorial claims against Bulgaria. Reporting the content of a conversation with high German official Zimmermann, British ambassador to Berlin, Sir E. Goschen, transmitted to the Foreign Office that *"he was afraid that public opinion in Romania was already disturbed and even the king (Carol I - **author's note**) had lost some of his usual calm. He however regretted that, because the differences between the two countries (Romania and Bulgaria - **author's note**) could encourage the Ottoman Empire to act against Powers advice and continue the war. He believes therefore that Romania has chosen a bad time to express its demands. Certainly, it had the right to request something from Bulgaria, especially since the latter would not have been able to act with such an immediate success against Turkey, if it had to deploy, at the start of the war, an important part of its forces against Romania. But Romania should have exposed its conditions before or should have waited until the end of the war. He does not anticipate a split between the two countries, but their inability to find an understanding certainly adds to the general difficulties of the international situation"*.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*, doc. nr. 459, p. 359. Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Barclay, 6 January 1913.

<sup>32</sup> Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (A.M.F.A.), Problem 21 Fund. Political Reports from London. 1905-1913, f. 197-198. Nicolae Mișu to Titu Maiorescu, 8/21 January 1913.

<sup>33</sup> *B.D.O.W.*, vol. IX, partea a II-a, doc. nr. 485, p. 386-387. Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey, 10 January 1913.

Take Ionescu also contacted other leading figures of the British diplomacy. In a discussion with Sir A. Nicolson, the Romanian diplomat said, after having recalled the difficulties that existed in negotiations with Danev, that "*Russia, through Grand Duke Nicholas Mikhailovich and Mr. Schebeko, Russian Minister at Bucharest, tried to bring Romania to the Russian side in case of war with Austria-Hungary, but king Carol and his government have made it clear they did not want to get involved in such a mess*".<sup>34</sup>

On January 11, 1913, Take Ionescu and N. Misu were received in audience by Sir Edward Grey. Take Ionescu informed the British diplomat that he offered Danev the proposal of an alliance with Bulgaria against Ottoman Empire, but it was rejected. Informing the British ambassador in Bucharest about the content of the discussion, Sir Edward Grey stated: "*Mr. Take Ionescu was against mobilizing the Romanians. Rather than go to war, he would advise Romania to call the Great Powers. He was ready himself to accept an agreement with Bulgaria in such terms that he would have to resign afterwards. But the fall of a government, even if only after two months, and the sacrifice of a personal position would be a small price to pay if peace could be ensured.*" Ed Grey clearly replied by expressing the British cabinet position "*War between Romania and Bulgaria would be a very serious thing. I hope that everything will be done to avoid it*".<sup>35</sup>

The prospect of a Romanian-Bulgarian war led to even more anxiety in Vienna. Reporting content of discussions with Foreign Minister of Austria-Hungary, English ambassador in Vienna informed Foreign Office that it "*has just instructed the Austrian ambassador in St. Petersburg to approach the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs for a possible collaboration of the two powers to settle the dispute between Romania and Bulgaria*".<sup>36</sup>

Alarming information also came from Bucharest. Sir G. Barclay advised Edward Grey that "*in case of obstacles in the negotiations in London, there is little hope for Romania to refrain much longer. I realize that only strong pressure from the Russian and Austrian ministers have stopped it from invading Bulgarian territory last week*".<sup>37</sup>

English diplomatic correspondence shows that Germany also put pressure on Romania to avoid a war with Bulgaria. English Ambassador in Berlin, Sir E. Goschen, informed Sir Edward advised that during a ceremony attended by foreign diplomats, Emperor Wilhelm II "*spoke with some severity to the Romanian minister and said, among other things, that Europe's patience had a limit and it was intolerable that the draft peace should be endangered by the poorly planned action of Romania. It must have been very bad for the Romanian minister to realize that the Bulgarian representative, who was one person away, probably heard what the king said.*"<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*, doc. nr. 491, p. 392-393. Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Barclay, 10 January 1913.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*, doc. nr. 494, p. 394-395. Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Barclay, 11 January 1913.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem*, doc. nr. 497, p. 396-397. Sir E. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey, 12 January 1913.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibidem*, doc. nr. 499, p. 398. Sir G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey, 13 January 1913.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem*, doc. nr. 500, p. 398-400. Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey, 13 January 1913.

Even in circumstances of the London Protocol conclusion by N. Misu and S. Danev, which actually was acknowledging the failure of negotiations,<sup>39</sup> the British Ambassador in Sofia, Sir H. Bax-Ironside, reported to Edward Grey that the Bulgarian Prime Minister Ghesov rejected the offer made by the Romanian Minister Ghica that Romania should join the Allies against the Ottoman Empire in conditions that Danev knew in London. He also informed that the Bulgarian government decided to send Teodorov, Minister of Finance, at St. Petersburg to request assistance from the Russian government in resolving the dispute between Romania and Bulgaria, the alleged reason being that his visit was going to discuss financial problems. As for Bulgarian government's future policy, the English ambassador recorded: "*The Bulgarian Government's immediate policy is to allow the Romanian government to take as much land as it wants without opposition for the moment and to postpone the problem of taking it back for later. It does not seem impossible that, if Bulgaria is able to overcome this problem until it is declared peace with Turkey, it will then call Serbia to help it resist the Romanians' requests, in which case Serbia would get, as a reward, an extension of its new frontiers in Perlepe, Küprülü and Monastir direction, while Bulgaria, had it come out victorious, might claim Dobrudja from Romania*".<sup>40</sup>

Shortly thereafter, Bulgarian Finance Minister, came to London to ask the British chief diplomat, Sir Edward Grey, to advise moderation in Bucharest, as the prospect of difficulties between Romania and Bulgaria was one that encouraged the Ottoman Empire and made the negotiations to be prolonged. Grey's answer was communicated to the British Ambassador in Sofia, Sir H. Bax-Ironside: "*I said that we all wanted to see peace concluded, but if one of the Powers would begin to give advice in Bucharest, other Powers would give advice in Sofia. All this would appear in newspapers, the Turks would read them and would realize that there is some division among the Powers. This would be more of an encouragement for Turkey than any other. Currently the Great Powers are not divided*".<sup>41</sup>

Such pressure the Bulgarian government also made in Petersburg. English Minister Sir G. Buchanan reported Sir Edward Grey that "*the Bulgarian government asked Sazonov to intervene in Bucharest, but he replied that he could not do anything, if they (the Bulgarians - author's note) are not making more substantial concessions.*" On the other hand, as the English diplomat reported, Sazonov was aware that the Bulgarian Sobrania would not accept giving up the town of Silistra<sup>42</sup>. In fact, two days before, Sazonov had warned the Romanian minister at St. Petersburg, who had let him know that Romania claimed Silistra-Balchik line, that the Romanians "*will never get it without war*", but had not informed him about the attitude of Russia in case of war.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> View copy in A.M.F.A., *Problem 21 Fund. Political Reports from London*, vol. 68, f. 206-209. N. Mişu to Titu Maiorescu, 16/29 January 1913.

<sup>40</sup> **B.D.O.W.**, vol. IX, 2<sup>nd</sup> Part, doc. No 514, p. 416-417. Sir H. Bax-Ironside to Sir Edward Grey, 16 January 1913.

<sup>41</sup> **Ibidem**, doc. nr. 536, p. 431. Sir Edward Grey to Sir H. Bax-Ironside, 21 January 1913.

<sup>42</sup> **Ibidem**, doc. nr. 611, p. 493. Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey, 13 February 1913.

<sup>43</sup> **Ibidem**, doc. nr. 607, p. 490. Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey, 11 February 1913.

On February 13, 1913, the head of the British diplomacy transmitted the following telegram to the British ambassador in Bucharest, "*I told the Romanian Minister (N. Misu - author's note) **that I was surprised to hear that a line to give Silistra and Balchik to Romania was the Romanians' minimal demand. I had the impression that less than that would be accepted at a deal and I assumed that Bulgaria could not give up Silistra and Balchik*** (author's underlignment). *I advised the Romanian minister that, while an agreement reached through direct negotiations between Romania and Bulgaria would be by far the best solution, if however this variant fell, **the call to Powers mediation for a solution*** (author's underlignment) *would be preferable to war. A war between Romania and Bulgaria would be something very serious, could involve some of the Great Powers and, once the Great Powers get involved in the war, smaller powers will surely lose, regardless on which side they are. If the Great Power defending the small one is defeated then the small power will lose territory, if the opposite happens, the small power will pay with political influence".*<sup>44</sup>

The official UK position on the Romanian-Bulgarian dispute was thus outlined, with regard to its settlement through Great Powers mediation, but also expressing the British diplomacy option to support Bulgaria. Therefore, the text of the telegram was also sent British embassies in Berlin, Paris, Rome, St. Petersburg, Vienna and Sofia.

In conclusion, one could appreciate that Romania's relations with the Great Powers of the Entente had a setback during the Peace Conference in London, its hopes for solving territorial dispute with Bulgaria in its favor being more linked to a possible support that it might receive from the Central Powers. The latter would be very valuable, given that, after the failure of the Romanian-Bulgarian talks, a solution was emerging through the mediation of the Great Powers.

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<sup>44</sup> *Ibidem*, doc. nr. 612, p. 494. Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Barclay, 13 February 1913.