

ROMANIA AND THE TRIPLE ENTENTE (AUGUST 1913-JUNE 1914)

PART II

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Abstract: Romania and the Triple Entente (August 1913 – June 1914)-Part II.

The author researched the orientation of Romania's external politics regarding the politico-military groups of the Great Powers, the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente.

The study thoroughly analyzes the beginning of Romania's external politic reorientation towards the Entente, in the historical context of the degradation of the Romania – Austro-Hungarian Empire relations. Based on an analysis of the diplomatic documents, we present the Romania - France, Romania - Russia and the Romania – Great Britain relations during August 1913 – June 1914, between the Treaty of Bucharest and the international crisis that ultimately led to the ignition of the First World War.

The author emphasizes the main factors that contributed to Romania's detachment from the Central Powers and to its external politics reorientation towards the Entente.

Keywords: *Romania – France relations, Romania – Russia relations, Romania – Great Britain relations, external politics reorientation.*

Beyond the diplomatic actions of France or Russia, to determine a reorientation of Romanian foreign policy towards the Allies, the most significant role in abandoning Romania's old policy directions was played by the public opinion that grew more and more hostile towards the Austro-Hungary. On March 30, 1914, Blondel advised Doumergue in a long report, about the development in Bucharest of an impressive meeting of the Cultural League in order to protest against "*tyranny that Hungarians are to press the Romanians in Transylvania*". Politicians, cultured people, lawyers, officials, officers gave fulminating speeches. Among the speakers, of course, was N. Iorga. At the end, a motion was passed which, inter alia, indicated that "*before an uncertain future, only the entire autonomy can make Romanian people support their traditional policy*". A long procession was formed on the main streets of the capital. Patriotic songs were sung, and King Carol was acclaimed in front of the Palace¹. The next day, the

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¹ The Central National Historical Archives (to be quote as C.N.H.A.), France Microfilms, reel 25, f. 267-268.

Austro-Hungarian press provided an ample space for the important demonstration from Bucharest supporting Romanians in Transylvania and Bukovina. Despite the reality, it was stated among others that the views expressed "do not correspond to the feelings of the entire nation" or that the demonstration was "encouraged, if not caused by the influence of an order that came from abroad". "Pester Lloyd" used a violent and even threatening language: "[...] *If the Romanian government does not take a strong position against the declarations made at the League meeting, it gives the impression that those events suited them; and this fact will change the attitude that Austria-Hungary will further take towards Romania. It is time to ask Romania if it is a friend or foe to the Monarchy* (author's underlining)". "Neue Freie Presse" in Vienna adopted a more reasonable tone, acknowledging that "the mistakes committed by the Austro-Hungarian diplomacy are undoubtedly the main cause of this movement of opinion hostile to Austria"¹.

During the days when the Cultural League demonstration exacerbated the tensions between Romania and Austria-Hungary, Prince Ferdinand and his wife Maria, accompanied by Prince Carol, were in St. Petersburg. The French ambassador in the Russian capital, M. Paléologue, informed Paris, by a telegram on April 2, 1914 that, although officially "the visit did not have a political character", the Russian media "advises Romania to develop a closer and more intimate relationship with Russia"². The next day, M. Paléologue came back with details in a report to Quai d'Orsay, in which, among other things, showed the very good impression Princess Mary made at the Court, who herself was a relative of the Russian royal family. On her mother's side, she was the niece of former Tsar Alexander II. Regarding Grand Duchess Olga's first impression, M. Paléologue said it was "not less favorable to the suitor who has just been presented". The French diplomat also referred to the points of view of Tsar Nicholas II and Tsarina Alexandra, regarding the marriage between Prince Carol and Grand Duchess Olga: "[...] Emperor Nicholas and Empress Alexandra have decided not to influence their daughter's decision in any way. A person close to Their Majesties told me yesterday **that the big political interests engaged in the affair can not allow the Sovereign to maintain its attitude of restraint all the way and that the state reason will eventually rule** (author's underlining)"³.

On April 6, 1914, after the Romanian princely family had left St. Petersburg, M. Paléologue drafted a new report to the Foreign Minister Doumergue. The French diplomat reported the contents of a discussion that Sazonov had had with Diamandy, the Romanian minister in the capital of Russia. After the Romanian diplomat had thanked the Russian authorities for their warm welcoming of the Romania's royal family, "he expressed **the hope to soon see the closest relationships established between his government and the imperial government** (author's underlining)". Sazonov told him: "**We only ask you**

¹ *Ibidem*, f. 269-271. Extensive extracts from the Hungarian press on this subject see the report sent to Paris on April 5, 1914 from the French embassy in Budapest. *Ibidem*, c. 613-614.

² *Ibidem*, f. 238.

³ *Ibidem*, c. 888.

not to have your hands tied and to not be subjugated by anyone. To have an exclusive Romanian policy; do not put yourself in the service of foreign interests, and you will have our full support (author's underlining)". Diamandy answered that "**Romania is absolutely free in its action** (author's underlining)". M. Paléologue showed that Sazonov "*objected that the two letters which the Emperor Franz Joseph and Carol had exchanged a few years ago, equate with a military convention*". Diamandy replied: "**If these letters exist, which I do not think so, they have no value. The public opinion strongly rejects any cooperation with Austria** (author's underlining)"¹.

With respect to the mentioned marriage prospect, M. Paléologue later obtained informations from Sazonov, which were transmitted by the French diplomat on May 17, 1914 to Paris. They had a secret character and revealed that "*the issue of the projected marriage was resolved*", the engagement having to take place "*within a year*"².

Meanwhile, as Blondel pointed out in a report to Doumergue on April 8, 1914 "*the anti-austrian demonstrations occur regularly starting to worry the government*", in order "*not to provoke official protests of the Austro-Hungarian government*". The French diplomat had in mind the fact that the meeting of the Cultural League, which he had reported widely on the April 3 report, "*caused repercussions in the province*". In this sense, Blondel widely presented the speech given by A.D. Xenopol in Braila "*before a large audience*". Iasi's great historian had been recently elected, At Lacour-Gayet's proposal, a member of the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences in Paris, the high academic forum presided by Paul Deschanel, President of the Chamber of Deputies of France. In his speech in Braila, according to Blondel's story, A.D. Xenopol, "*one of the most knowledgeable people to speak about the international relations in Romania*", strongly criticized "*the policy followed up until last year by those governments who had been succeeding in power*". Based on undisputed historical arguments that largely took place in his expose, A.D. Xenopol concluded that "*Austria had never adopted a friendly policy toward us, and we had nothing to gain from its doubtful friendship*". His statements, as quoted by most newspapers in Bucharest, "*produced a very vivid impression*", stressing "*the animosity that Romanians had been feeling against Austria*". In this regard Blondel mentioned the fact that the National Theatre was staging for a few weeks a play in regards of a Romanian family from Transylvania, persecuted by Hungarian authorities. Almost every day "*a numerous audience ostentatiously applauded, and several street demonstrations took place in front of the author's home*". Blondel said that "*new meetings were announced by the Culture League*" and that the Students

¹ *Ibidem*, f. 240. See also *Documents diplomatiques français (1871-1914)*, (please quote D.D.F.), 3e série, tome X, doc. no. 79, p. 123-124. Paléologue to Doumergue, April 6, 1914. About the discussion content, see the minutes sent from Bucharest on April 8, 1914 to the Prime Minister of France. C.N.H.A., France Microfilms, reel 25, c.891.

² D.D.F., 3e série, tome X, note 2, p. 123. Interesting details about Romanian princely family visit to St. Petersburg see the Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (to be quote as A. M. F. A.), Fond 71 to 1914, E2, Part II, Petrograd, 1914-1924, vol 13. Political reports from Petersburg. 1914, f. 13.

League would be involved in organizing the event. In this situation, *"the government was seeking to restore calm, and was trying to call for moderation"*. Some political leaders, as evidenced by Blondel, advocated for *"a more discreet action that is not likely to cause large response from Vienna and Budapest"*. Blondel himself recommended to his supporting Romanian politicians *"the most extreme caution"*. The French minister concluded in his report: *"It is hoped that the Cultural League, as well as students, will not remain deaf to the advice coming from all sides and that they should refrain from spreading the discussions on the streets, discussions that can be usefully carried out behind closed doors"*¹.

In fact, exhortation to moderation was justified by the need to prepare the grounds for the reorientation of the Romanian foreign policy towards the Allies, which involved increasing diplomatic contacts with them. It is significant that, while England and France were working to strengthen the Cordial Entente², and in St. Petersburg there was a particular interest to give a more precise understanding of Anglo-Russian alliance³, at the Romanian initiative, in order to strengthen the Entente positions in South-Eastern Europe, the Russian and French diplomacies envisaged the opportunity of a visit by Sazonov to Romania. The report from April 21, 1914 by the French ambassador, M. Paléologue to Doumergue was very eloquent in this regard. With the title *"highly confidential"*, M. Paléologue advised the French foreign minister that, the Romanian minister in St. Petersburg, C. Diamandy, asked if he believed that Sazonov ***"who encourages the arisen sympathies of Romanian nation towards Russia, could find a pretext to go to Bucharest, where the Romanian government and even King Carol would be very happy to receive him"*** (author's underlining). The French minister objected because *"such an initiative of the emperor's foreign minister would be serious, any excuse would be raised, and because Mr. Sazonov is too cautious, too shrewd to take such a step, without having serious guarantees. At least King Carol will have to plan a type gesture to Sazonov; this could be expressed, for example, in a wish to thank him for the favor granted by Russia at the Prince of Wied nomination as sovereign of Albania. Finally, it will be needed that the political significance of the journey not be subsequently challenged in any part, especially from Vienna"*. Sazonov, whom M. Paléologue had briefed on the content of the meeting with C. Diamandy, approved the language of the French ambassador and said: *"The frankness showed by Mr. Diamandy is precious and must be upheld. I would gladly go to Bucharest, for I would love to meet King Carol. But how can I explain to the Russian's public a journey so unusual?? And who can assure me that, after my visit, King Carol will not have a condescending attitude as an*

¹ C.N.H.A., France Microfilms, reel 25, f. 274-275.

² The King of England visit to France took place in April 1914, at the invitation of President R. Poincaré. About its importance see the extensive report from April 12/25, 1914 of the minister of Romania in Paris, Al. Em. Lahovary. A.M.A.E, Fond 71-1914, E2, Part II, Madrid-Paris, 1914-1924, vol.12. Political reports from Paris . 1914, f. 263-266.

³ See A.M.A.E., Fond 71-1914, Part II, Petrograd, 1914-1924, vol. 13. Political reports from Petersburg. 1914, f. 14-16.

excuse towards Austria? Because the Romanian government is in such an animated mood, why couldn't Mr. Bratianu take advantage of the coming visit of Emperor Nicholas at Livadia, so he would come to greet him? I will certainly be called; we will maintain under the auspices of His Majesty. After that, nothing would preclude me to leave Romania".

After the meeting with Sazonov, M. Paléologue resumed discussions on this subject with C. Diamandy who said: *"I am authorized to declare that King Carol would be ready to express his desire to meet Sazonov personally, if this gesture is done by His Majesty then it's not likely to lose its effect"*. Then, the French ambassador exposed to his Romanian counterparty the favorable arrangements that he had found in this regard at Sazonov, insisting on *"the interest that the Romanian government should have to further enhance the new direction, a necessity he acknowledges"*. Diamandy – the French ambassador reported - *"seemed quite disappointed of Sazonov's prudent guarantees he wanted to secure"*. *"He asks too much!"* a Romanian diplomat replied. *"Instead of already suspecting us, he should help us!"* Then he added: ***"For Russia it is a psychological time to draw us on its side. My Sovereign, which is known to be fond of the Emperor Franz Joseph, is not looking to fight against the national movement which manifested itself so strongly in the recent months."***

A happy gesture from the Russian government shall have a significant response at this time. And, to make this gesture, no one is better qualified than Sazonov, whose character enjoys a high esteem throughout Europe [...] (author's underlignment)". M. Paléologue further reported that since Diamandy was forced to go to Bucharest, presumably to get instructions, he advised the Russian foreign minister to call him immediately upon his return, *"to make his views known directly"*. The Diamandy-Sazonov meeting took place, *"their talk was very cordial, without any private character"*, as M. Paléologue appreciated. However, the French diplomat estimated that Diamandy was expecting to receive new, precise instructions from Bucharest, about the problem presented¹.

It is known that the establishment of diplomatic contacts at a high level between Romania and Russia, from the Romanian government's initiative, had been prepared by both sides for nearly two months. If the Romanian government initially considered this to be achieved through a visit by Sazonov, the Russian foreign minister, which he would have to undertake it to Romania, later on the project was changed. Sazonov's proposal to I.I.C. Bratianu, the Romanian prime minister, to undertake a visit to Russia, in which he would meet with Tsar Nicholas II at Livadia, was rejected in Bucharest, to avoid any unwanted reactions from the Central Powers against Romania. In addition, for the Romanian government, for the same reasons, it was necessary that the establishment of diplomatic contacts between Romania and Russia to be seen as the result of an initiative from Petersburg. The dialogue was facilitated by the intermediary role

¹ D.D.F., 3^e série, tome X, doc. no. 134, p. 225-226. Paléologue to Doumergue, April 21, 1914; see C. N. H. A., France Microfilms, reel 25, f. 242-243.

assumed by the French diplomacy. In terms of Russian diplomacy, it is noteworthy that Sazonov renounced the alleged "*guarantees*" that he originally had requested, because he wanted to capitalize on the opportunity, that was offered, to put into practice important foreign policy objectives regarding the future of Russian-Romanian relations. In the conversation he had with Diamandy, the Russian foreign minister devised a new alternative of the meeting, intending to better disguise the political nature of discussions that Sazonov was to have with the Prime Minister I.I.C. Bratianu. Thus, Sazonov suggested that an exchange of views between him and Bratianu should take place when the Tsar of Russia would make an official visit to Romania¹. The motion made by Sazonov was accepted by Nicholas II², and the Russian sovereign made the visit, officially presented as a courtesy, as a response to the visit made by King Carol I in St. Petersburg in 1898. In order not to create difficulties to materialize this project, the Russian government postponed the organization of the festivities related to the unveiling of a monument mounted in Chisinau in memory of Tsar Alexander I. The general counsel of Romania to Ismail informed on May 12, 1914 the Foreign Minister Em Porumbaru that the reason for postponement, as shown in a telegram to the governor of Bessarabia, was that the Tsar of Russia himself would attend the festivities³.

Speaking to the Duma on May 10, 1914, about the prospects of Russian-Romanian relations, in a broader context of Russian foreign policy, Sazonov said: "*Speaking of the Balkans, I can not help myself to mention the recent visit of Crown Prince and Princess of Romania to Petersburg. The cordial reception proves our sovereigns guests of the Russia's sincere and friendly relationship with their country and how much their wisest Sovereign is valued. Soon it is hoped that His Majesty the Emperor will make a visit to His Majesty King Carol on Romanian territory. This meeting, corresponding to the two Emperors's mutual feelings, I'm also confident, that it will serve as a new stimulus on the way to a close relationship between the two nations, united by the ties of a glorious past, through common interests and sympathies*"⁴.

Blondel remarked on May 26, 1914 that the official news about the upcoming meeting between Tsar Nicholas II and King Carol I "*was very favorably received by the public and the press in Romania, which greeted it with great satisfaction*"⁵. Excerpts from the Romanian press, which accompanied his report to foreign minister of France, justified that assessment. In another report, dated June 6, 1914, Blondel, referring to the preparations which were made in Romania for the visit of the Tsar to Constanta, had indicated however an "*incident*" which displeased the Russian minister at Bucharest, Poklevsky-Koziell. It was that King Carol I awarded Austria-Hungary minister, Count Czernin, "*The Grand Cord*" of

¹ Ion M. Oprea, *Romania and Russia Emperors. 1900-1924*, doc. I, Editura Albatros, Bucharest, 1998, p. 60-61.

² S. Sazonov, *Les années fatales. Souvenirs ... (1910-1916)*, Paris, 1927, p. 118.

³ A. M. F. A., *Fond 71-1914, E2, Part II, Petrograd-Ismail, 1914-1924*, vol. 14. *Political Reports from the Romanian consulate in Ismail 1914*, f. 276-277.

⁴ A.M.F. A., *Fond 71-1914, E2, Part II, Petrograd, 1914-1924*, vol. 13. *Political Reports from Petersburg, 1914*, f. 31.

⁵ C. N. H. A., France Microfilms, reel 25, c. 901.

Romanian Crown, a distinction that was usually granted to diplomats after at least one year of residence in Romania or under special circumstances. Newspapers in Vienna hastened to qualify Romanian sovereign gesture as a *"manifest evidence of the will of the king not to change his attitude towards Austria and to mitigate the effect it might produce on the spirits, as a result of the Tsar's intention to visit Romania"*. In order to reduce the consequences of the Russian president visit on the Romanian public opinion, the same newspapers showed that, after Tsar Nicholas II would leave Constanta, he would return to Bessarabia to inaugurate the monument erected in memory of Tsar Alexander I, *"which could only underline, after his visit to the King of Romania, the Russian domination in Bessarabia"*. Blondel's report indicated some different opinions from his Russian counterpart. The French diplomat considered that *"Russia is interested to proceed in stages and is not demanding Romania to assert a new policy too quickly; Romania would be better off left to acquaint itself to its independence, rather than to be pushed to make premature statements"*. However, Blondel found that his Russian colleague was trying to obtain, since he had come to Romania, *"if not commitments at least explanations, which the government had refrained from giving them"*. Blondel regretted *"his colleague impatience"*. The French diplomat compared Romania's foreign policy to a compass needle: *"leaving its natural oscillations, it will go alone to the North, but if you would try to force down its natural direction, it would be a risk, if not to distort it, at least to delay its orientation"*¹.

The visit of the Tsar Nicholas II to Romania took place on June 14, 1914. At Sazonov's proposal, it was coordinated to take place towards the end of the stay of the Russian imperial family at Livadia, in Crimea. Russian foreign minister considered the facilities of traveling by sea, since the distance from the Crimea to the Romanian seaside was not too long. For this reason, in agreement with the Romanian side, it was decided that the meeting between the two heads of states to be held in Constanta. Thus, organizational measures implied by such high-level meeting would have to be much simplified².

At present we know, almost in detailed, all the moments of the Russian Tsar's visit to Constanta, and the political significance of the meeting between the two monarchs. At that time, however, the contents of the talks was largely shrouded in mystery, despite persistent concerns of diplomats accredited in Bucharest and journalists to discover them. Therefore, especially in the press, there were issued a lot of speculations, and some of them were even fanciful. That was understandable because, under the appearance of its state etiquette character, commented very generous in newspapers, Tsar's visit in Constanta veiled lengthy political talks between the statesmen of the two neighboring countries. Basically the most important discussions regarding the relations between the two countries, but also for expressing opinions on various aspects of the international situation, took place after the Imperial Tsar and his suite had

¹ *Ibidem*, p. 251-252.

² S. Sazonov, *op. cit.*, p. 118-119.

left Romania, between the Russian Foreign Minister, Sazonov and the Romanian Prime Minister, I.I.C. Bratianu, in Constanta, and later in Bucharest and Sinaia.

Tsar's visit lasted only 14 hours. Everything was set up perfectly down to the smallest detail, and its unfolding took place according to the schedule¹. A very good description has been left for us by General Al. Socec, in his diary, then the commander of the Territorial Command 5 (Constanta). He was tasked by King Carol I to provide optimal security conditions for the visit of the Tsar. Because he memorized the details of the entire program of the visit, his notes have a high degree of credibility². General Socec was not only concerned, in writing his notes, to describe the visit of the Tsar, but also, to emphasize its political significance. His appreciations are very suggestive and were later on confirmed by historical research: *"No matter how little value is placed on the sincerity of Russia's friendly demonstrations, we can not deny the political character of the visit! Whispers – from the palace backstage- that there was an intended marriage between (Prince - author's note) Carol and one of the imperial princesses - they would have a value, but the political core of the importance of this visit must be looked further in. And from the long conversations that I had with the Minister [of Russia in Bucharest] Poklewsky, with the security director, with colonel Solowiew and, other important Russians, I saw that the real purpose is to bring us out of the action orbit of the Austro-German influence! (author's underlinement). Europe sees two strong power centers face to face. Which one? Here's the great mystery of the changes. Only a fortune hand will give us a favorable solution"*³.

During the visit, the Tsar only talked with King Carol I, with the Prime Minister I.I.C. Bratianu and the Foreign Minister Emil Porumbaru, whom he invited on the yacht *"Standard"* that sailed to Constanta from Crimea. In addition to the Russian-Romanian bilateral relations, within these conversations, the Tsar discussed, in a more official way required by circumstances, some aspects of the international political landscape, especially in the Balkans. Tsar's exaggerated concern about the situation in the Balkans was disliked by Bratianu, since *"nothing justified it"*⁴. In fact, the Tsar of Russia addressed the issues that had been already on Sazonov's diplomatic agenda, and were presented to him in a report dated June 9, 1914. The document stated Russia's position towards certain issues that could be analyzed with the Romanian counterparty, during its visit to Constanta, like: the threat of an armed conflict between Turkey and Greece because of the claims issued over the Aegean islands; maintaining the Treaty of Bucharest as a guarantee of keeping the Balkan status quo; bringing Prince of Wied on the Albania's throne; defending the Romanian-Russian trade interests in the Black Sea; etc. Regarding Russian-Romanian relations, Sazonov believed that Russia should not go too far in its relations with Romania and therefore should not conclude an offensive or defensive alliance. Where, presumably, King Carol I

¹ See C. N. H. A., Russian Microfilms, reel 38, c. 250-546.

² See Al. Socec, *14 hours to Constanta with King Carol I and Tsar Nicolae II*, "Historical Magazine", no. 8 (389), August 1999, p. 38-41.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 41.

⁴ I.G. Duca, *Memoirs*, vol. I, Editor Express, Bucharest, 1992, p. 31.

would raise the issue of a military alliance, Russian point of view was that in case of a war between Russia and Austria-Hungary, Romania would state its proclamation of neutrality¹.

During the Russian Tsar's brief stay in Romania, the substance of the Romanian-Russian relations was not discussed. That was subsequently analyzed, as we had already noted, in the coming days by Sazonov with decision makers in Bucharest; the conversations were held in the Romanian capital and in Sinaia. Significant in revealing Romania intentions regarding the relations with Russia, was that I.I.C. Bratianu planned, in the visit's schedule of Sazonov to Romania, a short journey which they made it together with a car in the surroundings of Predeal, passing Austro-Hungarian border to Transylvania. That was a premeditated act, well prepared in advance and not a spontaneous thought; it was proved by the fact that the Romanian prime minister had announced that intention to the Austro-Hungarian minister at Bucharest, demanding him to take measures to avoid unnecessary difficulties at the border². Beyond the content of the discussions between I.I.C. Bratianu and Sazonov³, otherwise characterized by greater discretion, that action, after all, expressed new political developments of the Romanian state and the evolution of Romania's relations with the Allies on one side and with the Central Powers on the other side.

On his returning to Russia, Sazonov issued a report to the Tsar, where he exposed the entire area of the issues discussed with the Prime Minister I.I.C. Bratianu and with King Carol⁴. It was noted, regarding the issue of Romania's attitude towards the Austro-Hungary, that the Romanian prime minister told the Russian foreign minister that the relations with the Dual Monarchy were not that friendly at the time but the Romanian government wanted to avoid further tension. Because Sazonov was concerned to know, whether in case of a war between Russia and Austria-Hungary, Romania would stay neutral, the Romanian prime minister made it clear that Romania would engage in a conflict only based on national interests. This prompted Sazonov to conclude that Bratianu subordinated the Romanian-Russian closeness to the union of Romanian territories from Austria-Hungary to the motherland⁵. In fact, Bratianu, whom Sazonov found as being "*more curious than communicative*"⁶, believed it was premature to decide on Romania's neutrality. As generally appreciated later, I.I.C. Bratianu preferred, for that time, a closeness to Russia, and in general to the Entente, while maintaining the freedom of action, even limited as it was, thus avoiding specific commitments in order to prevent the Powers Central's

¹ *Mejdunarodnaia Otnošenija v epohu Imperializma*, Seria a III-a, t. III, doc. nr. 185, p. 221-224 (to be quote as *M. O. E. I.*).

² Gh.N. Căzan, Șerban Rădulescu-Zoner, *Romania and The Triple Entente (1878-1914)*, Editor Științifică și Enciclopedică, Bucharesti, 1979, p. 376.

³ See E. Uribes, *Le rencontre de Constanza du 14 juin 1914*, "Revue roumaine d'histoire", VII, no. 2, 1968, p. 240-246.

⁴ *M.O.E.I.*, Series III, t. III, doc. no. 339, p. 385-387. See an analysis of the document in I.M. Oprea, *op. cit.*, p. 63-64.

⁵ S. Sazonov, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

⁶ *Ibidem*.

suspicion¹. In addition, in the case of a continental war, the decision to proclaim Romania's neutrality, of much interest to Russia, was far too much important to be decided unless the international situation dictated so.

Russian media presented the Tsar's visit to Constanta in laudatory terms, and labeled it in many articles of political analysis as "*a historic day*". It particularly emphasized the importance of the Romanian-Russian close relationship and the significant change in the orientation of the Romanian foreign policy towards the Allies. Romania detachment from the Central Powers was presented as a highly important diplomatic success for Russia². After his return to Russia, Sazonov thanked the Romanian minister in St. Petersburg for the cordial reception that the Russian delegation had enjoyed in Romania, and appreciated the optimistic outlook regarding the development of Russo-Romanian relations³.

The French diplomatic correspondence introduced several important details about the political significance of the Russian Tsar's visit to Constanta. From Sofia, on June 15, 1914, Dard, the charge d'affaires of France advised the French Foreign Minister Viviani, that the visit of the Russian Tsar and the imperial family to Constanta was watched with concern by the Bulgarian public opinion. Even the most ardent supporters of Russia were gripped by a deep feeling of dissatisfaction, noticing the achievement of a Romanian-Russian rapprochement. The French diplomat, assessing the mood of the Bulgarian population and the political leaders opinions, believed that "*Bulgaria can not have, for the moment, any other policy, other than the one for revising the Treaty of Bucharest*", this being supported by Austria-Hungary⁴.

On June 17, 1914, Blondel, in a comprehensive report about the visit of the Russian Tsar to Constanta, noted, inter alia, the discontent of his Russian colleague, Poklewsky-Koziell, regarding the fact that in the discussions between the two delegations, the Romanian government did not give clear explanations about "*the future Romanian government's attitude regarding the Russian-Romanian relations, set in opposition with the existing relations up until last year between Romania and Austria-Hungary*". Blondel warned his Russian counterpart on the "*disadvantages that might result from his impatience*". The French diplomat stated that his "*insistence to get the final commitments will put the Romanian government in a delicate situation*". In fact, such a situation was created by the Tsar Nicholas II himself. Blondel presented in this respect, in the same report, that immediately after his departure from Constanta the Tsar of Russia had gone to Bessarabia, where, the next day attended the inauguration of a monument erected in the honor of Emperor Alexander I, who had forcibly incorporated Bessarabia to the Russian Empire in 1812. Naturally, such a gesture could not be well received by the Romania public opinion, who, a day before,

¹ I.M. Oprea, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

² View extensive excerpts from the Russian press in A.M. F. A., Fond 71-1914, E2, Part II, Petrograd. 1914-1924, vol. 13. Political Reports from Petersburg. 1914, f. 44-99.

³ *Ibidem*, f. 100-101.

⁴ D.D.F., 3e série, tome X, doc. no. 381, p. 553-555. Dard to Viviani, June 15, 1914. A contrary reaction of great satisfaction, was registered in Serbia. See C. N. H. A., France Microfilms, reel 25, c. 912-916.

acclaimed the Tsar in Constanta. Many Romanians doubted the value of "*the Russian friendship*". Most newspapers dedicated almost entirely the first page for this event, with a significant title: **Anniversary of Bessarabia rapt**. The newspaper "Universe", for example, could not hide the bitterness that the Tsar of Russia did not understand "*that the Bessarabia's shadow is spreading all over the Romanian soul*". It is interesting that Blondel attached two annexes to his report to Viviani. The first presented the full text of speeches toasted by the two heads of state in Constanta, expressing the sincere desire of consolidating the Romanian-Russian relations. In the second annex, the presented extracts from the Romanian press were about the inauguration of a monument from Chisinau. From this last one we retain some considerations:

- "*Tsar Nicholas presided himself over the ceremony immediately after the visit that he made to see King Carol in Constanta. We must remember this «coincidence»*".
- "*Tsar Nicholas II, who is pursuing a policy aimed to attract Romania in his sphere of influence, ought to avoid taking part at a ceremony that might re-open an unhealed wound. Thus, the Mighty Emperor of all Russians is not afraid to hurt the feelings of those who he wants to win over*".
- "*After the visit to Constanta, the ceremony from Chisinau is truly a mockery*".
- "*The Monument of Tsar Alexander [...] will be a permanent warning to all whom might be tempted to accept the kindness of Russia's authorities*"².

On June 20, 1914 Blondel drafted a new report to Viviani, where he synthesized a number of conclusions that he had arrived after the discussions he had had with Sazonov and Poklewsky-Koziell. Mainly, we retain that "*the meeting in Constanta allowed the two sovereigns to clarify the points of view regarding the events from the Balkan Peninsula [...] and to declare their agreement regarding full compliance with the terms of the Treaty of Bucharest*". Regarding the attempt of the Russian ambassador "*to determine the king and the government to make statements of alliance or close collaboration*", Blondel showed that it "*remained without result*". Regarding I.I.C. Bratianu's position, the French diplomat synthesized: "*Faithful to the conduct which several times he presented to me in its general lines, **the President of the Council, in perfect agreement with the king, sought to leave to Romania its entire liberty of action, a fact which was not hidden to Sazonov*** (author's underlignment)". Blondel concluded that "***the Romanian-Russian closeness took shape, and, despite the Russian diplomacy mistakes, Count Berchtold efforts would not prevent it from strengthening*** (author's underlignment)"³.

¹ *Ibidem*, doc. no. 397, p. 572-573. Blondel to Viviani, June 17, 1914. See C. N. H. A., France Microfilms, reel 25, p. 257-258.

² C. N. H. A., France Microfilms, reel 25, p. 259-260.

³ D.D.F., 3^e série, tome X, doc. no. 416, p. 595-597. Blondel to Viviani, June 20, 1914. See A.N.I.C., Microfilms France, reel 25, f. 267-269.

On June 22, 1914, Blondel drafted a new report to Viviani where he widely exposed King Carol I various views, which the Romanian sovereign had introduced to him during a hearing requested by the French minister. The discussion focused exclusively on addressing the Balkan issue; therefore we will not dwell on them. We shall remember only the clear appreciation made by King Carol I, that in the conversations with Tsar Nicholas II the two monarchs reached an agreement "on all issues" that were addressed. Mainly it was highlighted the decision of the two heads of states to strictly maintain the provisions of the Treaty of Bucharest¹.

Al. Em. Lahovary from Paris, on June 24, 1914, informed the Foreign Minister Em Porumbaru that the Russian Tsar's visit to Romania was received with great satisfaction by the French political circles and the media. Romanian minister in Paris quoted extensively the statements made in this respect by the Foreign Minister Viviani, by Delcassé, by M. Paléologue (been on a short vacation), Margerie (head of cabinet of the minister of Foreign Affairs) etc. It was evident that, in the achievement of a Romanian-Russian rapprochement, France had a very important role, acting mainly through its ministers in St. Petersburg and Bucharest. The French diplomacy aimed that between Romania and Russia to be established some sort of relationships based on "*solidarity of interests*". It sought "*to make disappear everything that in the past would have caused (in Romania - author's note) fair susceptibility and reasonable doubts (against Russia - author's note)*". Form French approved sources, Al. Em. Lahovary reported that "***the Russian foreign minister has the impression that Romanian policy is now free. It is what Russia and France could wish for*** (author's underlignment)". This would allow Romania to be, in the opinion of the French political circles, "*a true referee of the East*"².

Captain Pichon, the France military attaché in Bucharest reported that after the visit of the Tsar to Constanta, even the attitude of King Carol I had changed, he showed more openness in the meetings with representatives of the Triple Entente in Bucharest. He wrote in this regard, on June 23 / July 6, 1914, to the France minister of war: "*The influence of the recent meeting in Constanta is still felt and, definitely, the King being satisfied with the increased importance that is given to his country by a common action with Russia, welcomes the representatives of the Triple Entente with an entirely new mindset*"³.

Obviously, the reorientation of the Romanian foreign policy was influenced by the Triple Entente intense diplomatic activity in Bucharest. The deterioration of the Romania relations with Austria-Hungary, expressed within the public opinion by a state of mind requiring an alignment of the foreign policy with the national will for a state unity, was promoting the Entente Great Powers policy to attract Romania in their political orbit. As we had seen, the most active proved to be the French and Russian diplomacies. Although, there were sometimes differences of opinion regarding the means used to detach Romania from the Central Powers, the two diplomacies effectively cooperated, having a key role, but

¹ *Ibidem*, doc. no. 428, p. 611-615. See *C. N. H. A.*, France Microfilms, reel 25, c. 318-321.

² See *A.M.F. A.*, Fond 71-1914, E2, Part II, Madrid-Paris, 1914-1924, vol. 12, Political Reports from Paris, 1914, f. 282-283.

³ *C. N. H. A.*, France Microfilms, reel 25, f. 222-223.

not decisive, in steering the Romanian foreign policy towards a new course. Proved crucial were the internal impulses of the entire nation, which represented the true *"driving force"*, that required the decision makers in Bucharest to redirect the Romanian foreign policy on different directions.

It is difficult, from a historical perspective, to consider which of the two diplomacies, French or Russian, had a greater contribution in detaching Romania from the Central Powers. As we have seen, from the Russian point of view large merits were awarded in this regard to the diplomacy led by Sazonov. From the French point of view, it is recognized the role of Paris, in the accomplishment of a closeness between France and Romania, but also in the improvement of the Romanian-Russian relations. In this regard, it was even noted the appreciation of historiography, exaggerated in our view, that *"the success of the Entente in attracting Romania to its side can be considered primarily as a success of France"*¹. In our opinion, both views should not be overrated, in fact as we showed it was the combined conduct of the Franco-Russian diplomatic actions in order to attract Romania in the Entente. In addition, these actions would not have had the desired outcome, if Romania had not offered the appropriate conditions and shown a real interest towards an open alliance that could have led to the achievement of its national aspirations, even to a lesser extent.

Regarding the role of British diplomacy, that was less active. Without being uninterested, England was not as much involved in attracting Romania towards the Entente. This is explained by the special position of Britain in the Triple Entente, by not having similar commitments to its partners: France and Russia, as there were in the Franco-Russian alliance. The English diplomatic correspondence showed an area of a particular interest to South-East Europe, but it did not show a clear intent to influence the political orientation of the states within the region, in a manner favorable to one or another political and military continental groups. The posture of impartial arbitrator assumed by the English diplomacy was reflected in a less active attitude to directly interfere with bringing the countries of South-Eastern Europe into the spheres of influence of the Entente.

Political reports of the England minister in Bucharest, Sir G. Barclay, showed him as a savvy observer of Balkan politics. The information contained and the assessments made were distinguished by clarity and objectivity, maybe for the reason cited above, related to certain equidistance, and derived from uncommitted political interests in the region. They included also references, worthy of consideration, from a historical perspective about the Romania foreign policy orientation.

Barclay's reports in the early months of 1914 particularly showed the attempt of a reconstruction of the Balkan Alliance, in a new formula, by including Serbia, Greece and Romania, which, in terms of power among the Great Powers, could mean a consolidation of the Ententes' positions in the region. He showed that such

¹ V. Vesa, *Romania and France at the beginning of XX century (1900-1916). Diplomatic history pages*, Ed. Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 1975, p. 55-56. The author believes that, "as were the events, French relations with Romania in that period can be confused with Romania's attitude towards the Triple Entente's powers". *Ibidem*, p. 56.

an alliance¹ was unlikely, and the Foreign-office was informed about the hypothetical alliance constitution via several diplomatic channels². The English diplomat was concerned about the development of the Romania's relations with Austria-Hungary, showing some skepticism compared to French and Russian counterparts in assessing the prospect of a reorientation of the Romanian foreign policy towards the Entente. Thus, in a report dated May 20, 1914 to Sir Edward Grey, Sir G. Barclay stated: *"The coldness that marked, in May last year, the relations between this country and Austria-Hungary has increased lately rather than diminished. [...] The state of things is of course agreeable to my Russian colleague, but his understanding of the general international situation might be slightly exaggerated. Even if there is or not, as Russians are suspecting, a defense arrangement between Austria and Romania as a response to an attack from Russia, Austria has in any case a valuable acquisition in the friendship of King Carol with the Emperor Franz Joseph and a more valuable one in the excellent relationship between Germany and Romania. [...] Indeed - continued Barclay - German influence in Romania today is as strong as ever and while this lasts, whatever is the feeling in the country towards Austria, and given this country's friendly relations with Russia, I think to talk about Romania as being detached from the Triple Alliance and joining the Triple Entente hardly fits in this case"*³.

In its report of May 24, 1914, Sir G. Barclay informed Sir Edward Grey that he was asked by his Russian colleague to be more active and to work together with them in the same direction. The inactivity of the English minister, believed Poklevsky-Koziell, could be interpreted as a lack of interest from London and could harm the chances for The Entente to detach Romania from the Triple Alliance. Barclays explained to the U.K. chief diplomat why his Russian counterpart made such an objection to its work: *"While I behaved in a manner as to leave no doubt that I was on the side of the Triple Entente, I carefully refrained myself from any language or action that would indicate that I would try to draw Romania on one side or the other, and it is probably due to my passivity in the last year, contrasting with the activity of my Russian and French colleagues, that the Triple Alliance press talked about the attempt to detach Romania from the Triple Alliance as being of France and Russia and not of the Triple Entente"*⁴.

The indications received by Barclay in early June 1914 clearly defined the foreign office's attitude to the persistent concerns of France and Russia to remove Romania from the sphere of influence of the Triple Alliance: *"Regarding your desire, as asked by the Russian colleague, to cooperate more actively with other representatives of the Triple Entente in Bucharest, I believe, judging by what you are reporting, that **your attitude seems to have been until now a reasonably one. You should give a general support to your French and Russian colleagues, but I do not see it necessary to take a very***

¹ *British Documents on the Origins of the War (1898-1914)*, vol. X, Part I, doc. no. 347, p. 312. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey, February 13, 1914 (please quote *B. D. O. W.*).

² *Ibidem*, doc. no. 327, 330, 334, 337, 339, 341, 344, 345, 348, 351.

³ *Ibidem*, doc. no. 367, p. 330-331. Sir G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey, May 20, 1914.

⁴ *Ibidem*, doc. nr. 368, p. 332. Sir G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey, May 24, 1914. See *A.N.I.C.*, Microfilms England, reel 253, F.O. 371/2089, f. 213.

active role in Bucharest (author's underlignment). If there is any matter in which it is desirable to act, you should contact me for further instructions"¹.

Regarding the visit of the Russian Tsar to Constanta, Sir G. Barclay transmitted information from his Russian counterpart: "[...] *the emperor, the imperial family, and Mr. Sazonov were very satisfied with their visit to Romania. [...] Mr. Poklevsky told me that during the discussion with Mr. Sazonov, Mr. Bratianu said that Romania, in a case of a European war, had made no commitment to prevent embracing the direction that its own interests dictated it. [...] Mr. Sazonov assured both the king and Mr. Bratianu that Russia's intentions were peaceful and honest and if there would be a European war, this would not happen because Russia. As far as Mr. Poklevsky knows, no progress was made during the meeting, regarding the possibility of a marriage between Prince Carol and Russian grand duchess, although my colleague tells me that he and Mr. Sazonov were so busy during the ceremonies in Constanta that they could not obtain any information in this regard*"².

In a new report of June 22, 1914, sent from Bucharest to the Foreign Office, clarifications were made; we retain: "***It seems doubtful that there had been something that would denote a change in the general policy of Romania and it is reasonable to suppose that it maintains an independent attitude towards the groups of power, without, at least until now, having taken any new commitments*** (author's underlignment). *No doubt keeping intact the Treaty of Bucharest and peace in the Balkans has been recognized as a common desire of both governments, and as the need to do everything, in the interest of trade and navigation of these two countries, to prevent the Dardanelles Strait to close*". In the same report it was showed that, in general, *"the press warmly received the closeness to Russia"* apart from some newspapers that were expressing *"sympathy to German or Austria"*. The last ones warned about the dangers of *"attracting Romania on Russia's orbit"* and about the loss of her freedom of action. Reference was made in the same report towards the deep disapproval reaction against the Tsar's gesture to participate, immediately after the departure from Constanta, to the celebrations in Chisinau, *"where he talked about Bessarabia as being attached to Russia for a hundred years and as being inspired by sincere Russian feelings"*³.

References regarding the Russia Tsar's visit to Constanta are found not only in the English diplomatic correspondence from Bucharest. The British ambassador in Berlin, E. Goschen, reported in the German press the concern about Romania's political orientation. Mainly, the opinion said that during the life of King Carol there would not be a change in the Romanian politic arena, but the Tsar's visit would be a warning signal about the danger of the Russian orientation trend in Romania⁴. The English ambassador in St. Petersburg, Sir G.

¹ *Ibidem*, doc. no. 369, p. 368-369. Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Barclay, June 2, 1914. See C. N. H. A., England Microfilms, reel 253, F.O. 371/2089, f. 215.

² *Ibidem*, doc. no. 372, p. 334-335. Sir G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey, June 17, 1914. See C. N. H. A., England Microfilms, reel 253, F.O. 371/2089, f. 194.

³ *Ibidem*, doc. no. 373, p. 335-336. Akers Douglas to Sir Edward Grey, June 22, 1914.

⁴ C. N. H. A., England Microfilms, reel 253, F.O. 371/2089, f. 184. Sir Goschen to Sir Edward

Buchanan, said that Russian media wrote in the warmest terms about the Tsar's visit to King Carol, and that Romania was advised to continue strengthening the friendship with Russia¹. From Vienna, the English ambassador Sir M. de Bunsen reported that *"almost simultaneous visits from last week, of the German Emperor to Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Conopiște, in Bohemia, and of emperor of Russia to the king of Romania, in Constanta, have been occupied large areas in the Viennese press"*. In this respect, the English diplomat stated on the second noted event that *"the entire press has joined in a chorus of angry comments against the visit of Tsar to Constanta. [...] The king's speech at the banquet in Constanta and the exchanged courtesy between the two sovereigns are treated in the press as dangerous indication of the fact that [...] Romania has finally decided to join with Russia in case of a European conflict. This is a topic that has generated far more anxiety in this country, and the honor given to Count Czernin, the Austro-Hungarian minister, only a few days before the arrival of the Tsar, was not enough to dispel the fears that Austria-Hungary will not count in the future on a military support from Romania"*².

On June 25, 1914, the English ambassador in St. Petersburg returned with an important qualification: *"Sazonov told me in strict confidence about what has happened in Constanta. He asked me not to tell Paléologue, because he feared of an information leak at the Quai d'Orsay. **Was not asked, he said, the question of an alliance or agreement of any kind, but the results of the visit were satisfactory** (author's underlignment). [...] There were two problems - the Black Sea and the status quo in the Balkans - which were common interest for Russia and Romania"*³.

Regarding how the Tsar's visit to Constanta was received in England, on June 6 / 19 1914, the Romanian ambassador in London, N. Misu, reported to Bucharest: *"The English press generally refrained from any comment on the visit that was made by the Tsar of Russia to our August Sovereign in Constanta, and was confined to publish the correspondence from Vienna, Paris and St. Petersburg in the views expressed in those capitals"*⁴.

We do not want, of course, to present in detail the reactions recorded in the political environments and in the Great Powers's media of the Triple Alliance regarding the visit to Romania of Tsar Nicholas II and of Russian Foreign Minister Sazonov⁵. We believe it is useful to put out only a few conclusions

Grey, June 13, 1914.

¹ *Ibidem*, f. 186. Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey, June 17 1914.

² *B.D.O.W.*, vol. XI, doc. no. 1, p. 1-2. Sir M. of Bunsen to Sir Edward Grey, June 19, 1914.

³ *Ibidem*, doc. no. 3, p. 3-4. Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Arthur Nicolson, June 25, 1914.

⁴ A.M.F. A., Fond 71-1914, E2, Part II, Londra, 1914-1924, vol. 11. London's political reports, f. 78. Extensive extracts from the English press in *Ibidem*, f. 79-85.

⁵ See political reports extracted from the press in *A.M.F. A.*, Fond 71-1914, E2, Part II, Viena 1914-1924, vol. 24, Viena's political reports. 1914, f. 56-112; *Ibidem*, Fond 71-1914, E2, Part II, Berlin, Cairo, Cernăuți, Copenhaga, Cristiania, Durazzo. 1914-1924, vol. 9, Political rapoarts from the Consulate from Cernăuți. 1914, f. 137-140; *Ibidem*, Berlin's political reports. 1914, f. 5-22; *Ibidem*, Fond 71-1914, E2, Part II, Roma. 1914-1924, vol. 19, Political rapoarts from Roma, f. 105-112.

validated by historical research undertaken so far to outline a clearer picture of Romania's foreign policy direction.

It is known that, during the meeting in Conopiște between Emperor Wilhelm II of Germany and Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian crown, that took place at a time close to the visit of Tsar Nicholas II to Romania, there had been made landmarks of common politics between Berlin and Vienna regarding the South-East European issues. In essence, the action program, on which was agreed, aimed at maintaining Romania in the Triple Alliance system and at attracting Bulgaria. Given that Romania was an unreliable ally, the visit to Romania of Tsar Nicholas II and Russian Foreign Minister Sazonov could not but give rise to concerns in Vienna and Berlin¹.

The German government reaction presented a particular importance for the policy makers in Bucharest, as the support from Germany was conditioned to maintain the alliance with Austria-Hungary. The clarification of the Berlin's position was made in due course and, in our opinion reflected a change in the attitude of the German diplomacy towards Romania, through the outcome of the meeting in Conopiște, which, in terms of the Austro-Hungarian diplomacy represented obtaining the consent of Berlin for the Vienna Balkan policy. Germany's position was firmly presented by the German ambassador in Vienna, Tschirschky to the Romanian Minister Edgar Mavrocordat, on June 4 / 17 1914. Em. Porumbaru, the Romanian diplomat, in a report to the foreign minister of Romania informed that *"Berlin is not looking in any way to influence our friendship and that we are perfectly free to choose according to our interests. **What Germany claims, after thinking to be for or against, is that we should speak clearly and openly, whereas in the current political circumstances must be either hot or cold but not warm** (author's underlining)"*. The German ambassador warned the Romanian minister that Romania would not have good relations with Germany, if it refused the friendship with Austria: *"This is absolutely excluded, because, **to be and remain friend of Germany, it is absolutely necessary to be at the same time friend of Austria, the inseparable friend and ally of Germany** (author's underlining)"*².

Historian Serban Radulescu-Zoner, author of the best documented books on Romania's relations with the Triple Alliance, said that the statement made on June 16, 1914, just after the Russian Tsar's visit to Constanta, was in fact a change of Berlin's attitude, which, until then, it did not welcome the idea of a hard intervention in Bucharest to obtain an indication of Bucharest position vis-vis the Triple Alliance, as the Austro-Hungarian government demanded many times³.

¹ See this excellent analysis of the representatives diplomatic reports of Austria-Hungary and Germany in Bucharest in Gh. N. Căzan, Șerban Rădulescu-Zoner, op. cit., p. 376-379. Czernin, in a report to Berchtold of June 22, 1914, underlined that, although not during the Tsar's visit had have come to an agreement, *"Romania, since the days of Constanta is counting on a new policy, which was the intention of Russia"*.

Ibidem, p. 378.

² See the integral text of the report of June 3/16 1914 of Romanian Minister to Vienna Edgar Mavrocordat to Em. Porumbaru, Romanian Foreign Minister, in *A.M.F. A.*, Fond 71-1914, E2, Part II, Vienna 1914-1924, vol. 24, Political Reports from Vienna. 1914, f. 87-89.

³ Gh.N. Căzan, Șerban Rădulescu-Zoner, op. cit., p. 377-378.

Historian Anastasie Iordache, in a valuable work published recently pointed out that under those circumstances, Germany expressed solidarity with Austria-Hungary in an open, unequivocal way: *"If Germany had taken sides with Romania in the relationship with Austria –Hungary, it only did it for a clear interest to maintain the alliance. Now, when it felt the danger of dissolving the alliance with Romania, Germany came out of the seemingly duplicitous policy, defending the interests of Austria-Hungary and conditioning its external relations on the external relations of his ally. That being said, the friend or enemy of Austria-Hungary will be the enemy or friend of Germany. By affirming these ties of interdependency, the diplomatic circles had to understand the eventuality of a war"*¹.

That was a clear warning for the Romanian government, and therefore I.I.C. Bratianu had to offer the representatives of the Central Powers in Bucharest some clarification about the nature of the Romanian-Russian relations, to dissipate Vienna and Berlin suspicions regarding Romania's foreign policy orientation. Historian Serban Radulescu-Zoner, had matched the reports from German and Austro-Hungarian diplomacies with those of the Entente Powers, firstly with the Russian foreign minister report to the Tsar on June 11/24, 1914, he concluded that I.I.C. Bratianu and King Carol I informed, only with a few minor reservations, the governments of Vienna and Berlin, on the content of conversations they had with Tsar Nicholas II and Sazonov. What Bratianu did not communicate was mainly the brief conversation he had had with Sazonov about the position of Romania in the event of a Russo-Austrian war. He said to the chief of Russian's diplomacy that *"Romania's attitude in this case will depend on the circumstances that would have prompted Russia to a military action against Austria-Hungary, as well as what Romania's interests will ask for"*². Therefore, an equivocal attitude, which did not imply stating the neutrality in case of a Russian aggression, neither entering into a war of any of the warring camps, if Romania's real interests were not satisfied. For Russia, it was a clear message that the Romanian-Russian political closeness, which would have led to a military cooperation in a future war, was conditional on the achievement of Romanian national aspirations of uniting with the Romanian territories taken over by Austria-Hungary.

The fact that the Prime Minister I.I.C. Bratianu and King Carol I provided information to the representatives of Austria-Hungary and Germany in Bucharest about the discussions they had with the Tsar of Russia and Sazonov reflected the desire to not jeopardize the relations with the Central Powers as long as their alliance served interests of state security. In this way it was validated that discussions were held only in relation to issues regarding the Balkan area, a general topic of interest in the European diplomatic circles that analyzed the hypothesis of a possible change in the status quo established by the treaties of Berlin and Bucharest. Central Powers diplomats had to be convinced that Romania made no general policy commitment towards Russia, and that the two countries limited

¹ Anastasie Iordache, *Romania's political reorientation and armed neutrality. 1914-1916*, Editura Paideia, Bucharest, 1998, p. 71.

² Gh.N. Căzan, Șerban Rădulescu-Zoner, *op. cit.*, p. 375-376.

discussions, stating their positions on specific Balkan problems, where they could reach common views in the interests of both parties. In general, the situation presented to the Central Powers diplomacy was in line with the reality, the analysis of the Balkan issues representing the essentials of the discussions. From this point of view, for Romania, the meeting was a success, since the Romanian government secured support from Russia for maintaining the status quo in the South-Eastern Europe. The fact hidden by Sazonov and I.I.C. Bratianu was that they were concerned about the prospect of the relations between Romania and Russia in case of a European conflict. It was essential for Sazonov to be ensured that Romania was not linked to any obligation which might lead it to act against Russia in any circumstance. For I.I.C. Bratianu the closeness to Russia was only necessary in the prospect of obtaining support for the achievement of the Romanian national aspirations. As appreciated later, without committing in any way during the talks, due to uncertainties of the moment, I.I.C. Bratianu and Sazonov were mutually convinced of the good will and the goals pursued in the European political context of that time. Their thoughts were very close to being expressed, and if it was not possible to communicate them in words, it had resulted in the symbolic visit made from Sinaia, across the border, to Transylvania¹.

Historian Serban Radulescu-Zoner convincingly explained I.I.C. Bratianu's attitude: *"Unlike the king, the Romanian prime minister wanted more of the visit of the Tsar and of his foreign minister in Romania. [...] Bratianu was not seeking, at that moment, a definite shift in the Romanian foreign policy direction with the purpose of breaking the treaty with the Triple Alliance, which would have jeopardized state security. The Romanian prime minister was still convinced of the military superiority of the Central Powers against the Allies. Also, he could still not foresee the dissolution of Austro-Hungarian, a prerequisite for unification of Transylvania with Romania. Another reason for Bratianu holding back, against a certain shift in Romania's foreign policy, was the king's position, who was the main supporter of the alliance with the Triple Powers. A change in Romania's alliances would have raised the monarch's opposition and a conflict between the king and the government, the last one also having public support; it would have turned into a constitutional crisis, which the prime minister would not, even remotely, be ready to agree with"*².

Therefore a complex of internal and external factors was dictated to the head of the Romanian government to not make any commitments to the Entente. A closeness to the Entente, however, seemed necessary for Romania to secure a favorable position, in the moment when the balance of forces on the international arena would tilt in favor of that, and internally would not meet an opposition of the King in that respect. Romania thus retained its freedom of movement on foreign policy, while avoiding the major risks of a sudden detachment from the alliance with the Central Powers.

However events of international politics precipitated the course of the Romanian foreign policy. The international crisis in July 1914 made the Great

¹ A. Iordache, *op. cit.*, p. 72-73.

² Gh.N. Căzan, Șerban Rădulescu-Zoner, *op. cit.*, p. 399.

Powers act for the implementation of the existing politico-military alliances. The world was heading step by step to a worldwide conflict. The Romanian diplomacy had to clarify its position. The two political-military groups wanted to obtain Romanian help during an upcoming war. In this case, the diplomatic struggle for Romania was entering a new phase.