

# THE INTERNATIONAL CRISIS OF JULY 1914 AND THE GREAT DIPLOMATIC BATTLE FOR ROMANIA

## PART I

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**Abstract:** *The international crisis of July 1914 and the great diplomatic battle for Romania.*

*The study used diplomatic documents as the base for a thorough analysis of the great confrontation that took place between the two military and political groups – the Central Power and the Entente, during the international crisis of July 1914. Their intentions were to attract Romania, according to their own interests, in the world war that was under way. Entente would prove to be the winner in this diplomatic battle, for whom Romania's decision to be neutral represented a success.*

*Due to space restrictions, this study is structured in two parts. Part I presents the aforementioned diplomatic events, starting with the crisis of July 1914 up until the outbreak of the war between the Serbia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Part II continues this presentation with an analysis of the facts and events that led to the decision adopted by the Romanian government, as the conflict was spreading and transforming into a world war.*

*The study highlights that, although Romania's diplomatic treaties with the Allied Powers influenced the decision adopted by the Romanian state to a certain extent, they did not play a leading role in it. The decision adopted by the Crown Council in Sinaia on August 3<sup>rd</sup> 1914 was based exclusively on an analysis of the opportunity to apply the treaty of alliance with the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It did not take into account the possibility of a political affinity with the Entente, and to an even lesser extent that going to war on the same side.*

*Romania's relationship with the Entente had not been discussed given the circumstances in which the option of King Carol I was to enter war alongside with the Central Powers. The solution of army standby, supported by prime-minister I. I. C Bratianu and adopted by the Romanian government, was a solution that reflected Romania's real interests. At the same time, it served as a premise for a policy which supported – even if only partially – the ideal of national unity. As a consequence, Romania's foreign policy, which had taken shape in the previous period, continued on a new basis, formed by the decision of leaving the alliance with the Central Powers.*

**Keywords:** *diplomatic treaties, demand, offer, treaty of alliance, neutrality, armed standby, national interest, external political reorientation.*

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After the Sarajevo assassination, the Austro-Hungarian diplomacy led strong efforts towards maintaining the alliance with Romania and preparing for the war against Serbia – an action, which made a response from Russia possible. At the same time, it aimed to attract Bulgaria and reconcile with Greece, Turkey and Romania, for the purposes of isolating Serbia and building a new Balkan alliance, but under the command of the Triple Entente. According to the Ballplatz diplomacy, Serbia had to be prevented from playing any further political role in the Balkans<sup>1</sup>.

In order to reach its goals, the Austro-Hungarian empire asked for Germany's help. King Franz Joseph sent King Wilhelm II a letter on July 5<sup>th</sup> 1914, together with an ample statement from the Austro-Hungarian Government. As a result of the Government's request, the German diplomacy intervened in Bucharest immediately, in order to force the Romanian Government into fulfilling its obligations as an ally of the Central Powers. To this respect, Waldburg, who dealt with Germany's affairs in Bucharest, laid out the point of view of the Austro-Hungarian Government and King Franz Joseph to Carol I – at the request of German chancellor Th. Von Bethmann-Hollweg. They involved, among other things, discouraging Romania's "relationship" with Serbia, supporting Vienna's initiative to attract Bulgaria in the Triple Entente and stopping anti-Austro-Hungarian displays across the country<sup>2</sup>. In his reply, Carol I declared that he did not see an alliance between Bulgaria and Romania possible. Regarding the estrangement from Serbia, the Romanian King highlighted that Romania did not have any special interests in being tied to it. However, he warned that, in the case of an Austro-Hungarian attack on Serbia, "*Romanian does not have any obligation*" towards the Habsburg monarchy. In terms of the hostile agitations displayed towards the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Carol I showed that these could be stopped, under the condition that the Hungarian government adopts an attitude of understanding and kindness towards Romanians in Transylvania<sup>3</sup>.

As stated before by others, the position of King Carol I towards the diplomatic crisis of July 1914 showed his preoccupation with avoiding an armed conflict between the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Serbia. Prime-minister I.I.C. Bratianu acted in the same direction. The Romanian diplomacy made use of all possibilities in an effort to stop the conflict, wavering between the two extremes: on the one hand, intimidating the Government in Vienna by mentioning Russia's certain intervention; on the other hand, trying to influence the Belgrade Government into accepting the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum. The rest of the diplomatic actions carried out by the Romanian government were situated between these two extremes. Such examples were: consultations with the Governments in Petersburg and Rome, in order to prevent hostilities from occurring in the capital of the Double Monarchy<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> A. Iordache, *The Political Reorientation of Romania and the Armed Neutrality. 1914-1916*, Paideia Publishing House, Bucharest, 1998, p. 75.

<sup>2</sup> *Documents allemands relatifs à l'origine de la guerre*, Collection complète des documents officiels rassemblés avec quelques compléments par Karl Kautsky, Paris, 1922, Vol I, p. 44-45 (to be cited *Documents allemands*).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 78-83.

<sup>4</sup> Gh.N. Căzan, Șerban Rădulescu-Zoner, *Romania and the Triple Alliance (1878-1914)*, Bucharest, The Scientific and Enciclopedic Publishing House, 1979, p. 406-407.

Romania's relationship with the Central Powers were complex until the outbreak of the war. In the first part of the July 1914 crisis, the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Germany, which did not yet have any reasons to promote a policy of force towards Romania, intervened through diplomatic channels, especially through King Carol I, to determine the Romanian Government to remain in the alliance and keep a strict neutrality, if joining of forces was not possible in case of war.

In his instructions from 13/26 July 1914 to O. Czernin, Berchtold mentioned to King Carol that "given the duties that the alliance imposes, in what concerns us, we will of course not make decisions during future events that could touch upon Romania's interests, without having first agreed upon those decisions with our allies"<sup>1</sup>. In the hearing with the Austrian ambassador, the Romanian king offered guarantees that Romania's strict neutrality will be maintained in an Austro-Serbian war and was satisfied to hear the Berchtold's declarations concerning the Austro-Hungarian position towards Romania. However, King Carol I stated that Romania will not be able to enter any actions together with the Central Powers, if Russia is at war with them<sup>2</sup>.

As the international crisis of July 1914 was becoming worse, the issue of Romania's attitude towards the Austro-Serbian conflict was subordinated to the main problem concerning its position in the upcoming World War. Since the attitude that Romania was going to take was of utmost importance in the future strategy of the Central Powers, the governing circles in Vienna and Berlin increasingly pressured the Romanian government - and King Carol I especially - so that Romania would enforce the secret treaty of alliance.

As it is well known, the Austro-Hungarian Empire declared war to Serbia on 15/28 July 1914, without consulting Romania beforehand, as King Carol I had been reassured by Czernin. Even under these circumstances, the Austro-Hungarian diplomacy intervened in Bucharest again, to obtain Romania's assurance that it will still be part of the alliance - and even act on its side. However, these efforts produced no result. Czernin was only able to obtain a promise of neutrality from King Carol<sup>3</sup>. Right after a similar intervention from Germany, however, his position changed. Until July 29<sup>th</sup>, when the German government intervened through Waldburg, the affairs officer, the king had stayed neutral. An hour and a half after the conversations with the German diplomat, the king asked prime-minister I.I.C. Bratianu to prepare the public opinion towards fulfilling the treaty of alliance. Nevertheless, even in the discussion with Germany's officer, King Carol I made reference to the difficulties that Romania had in fulfilling its duties as an ally. These were not only the opposition that he met within the country, but also a potential Bulgarian attack directed towards Romania<sup>4</sup>. However, prime-minister I.I.C. Bratianu very tactfully opposed the

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<sup>1</sup> *Documents diplomatiques concernant les rapports entre l'Autriche-Hongrie et la Roumanie, 22 juillet 1914 - 27 août 1916*, Vienne, 1916, doc. nr. 2, p. 2. The telegram of Count Berchtold to Count Ottokar Czernin of 13/26 July 1914.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> N. Iorga, *Comment la Roumanie s'est détachée de la Triple*, Bucarest, 1933 p. 78.

<sup>4</sup> Gh.N. Căzan, Șerban Rădulescu-Zoner, *op. cit.*, p. 412.

idea of Romania entering war on the side of the Central Powers, as he was already carrying out discussions (*ducea tratative*) with Entente.

The Central Powers continued the diplomatic offensive to attract Romania in war on their side. Romania's minister in Berlin, Al. Beldiman, a confirmed pro-German individual, sought to influence the decision-making process in this regard. On 18/31 July 1914, he sent a letter to King Carol I which showed that Romania is still in the way of a great option, and the only course of action, in his vision, was alongside Germany<sup>1</sup>.

In order to secure Romania's entrance in war on the side of the Central Powers, the German diplomats made promises guaranteeing the union between Bessarabia and Romania, and gave assurances regarding Bulgaria. In telegram sent by the secretary of state of the German Ministry of External Affairs on July 18/21 1914, he gave instructions to Waldburg, the affairs minister in Bucharest, to declare to King Carol I that Germany will guarantee the union between Bessarabia and Romania, "if [Romania] fulfills its obligations as an ally and actively participates in the war alongside us"<sup>2</sup>. Waldburg was giving reassurances again to the Romanian government on July 19/August 1, 1914, that – in the case of a military cooperation between Romania and the Central Powers – Bulgaria will not take up any hostile action against it: "*After a solemn declaration from the Bulgarian government, the amicable attitude of Bulgaria towards Romania seems certain*"<sup>3</sup>. The same day, Waldburg informed Berlin through a telegram that King Carol stated he would call the Crown Council in order to decide on the measures that should be taken. It mentioned that the prime-minister assured the king that he had the intention of mobilizing, but signalled the difficulties that he will encounter because the public opinion is hostile towards the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Carol I stated that he would do everything possible to fulfill the obligations which arise from the treaty and expressed his wish for Hungary give reassurances that it will award rights to Romanian residing in Transylvania after the war<sup>4</sup>.

Accurately inferring the intentions of the Romanian prime-minister, on July 20th/August 2nd 1914, the German minister in Bucharest stated that, in his opinion, I.I.C. Bratianu, wanted to win some time since the public opinion was unfavourable to the Austro-Hungarian Empire at that moment. He also believed that Romania would not attack Bulgaria if the latter began hostilities against Serbia<sup>5</sup>.

The Italian government's policy greatly differed from that of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Germany. As noted, since the Austrian-Serb diplomatic conflict broke out, the Italian government expressed concern towards the aggressive intentions of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Modifying the *statu-quo* in the Balkans in favour of the Habsburg monarchy could not be

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<sup>1</sup> *The Central National Historical Archives* (to be quote as C. N. H. A.), Royal House Archives, File no. 40/1914, f. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Documents allemands*, t. III, p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 75.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 91.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 186-187.

tolerated by the government in Rome, even more so as it was contrary to the provisions in the Triple Alliance treaty<sup>1</sup>. The External Affairs minister, San Giuliano, had established a permanent connection with the Romanian diplomats, even since the beginning of July. He asked Romania for a moderating intervention, in the capitals of the Central Powers, as well as in Belgrade<sup>2</sup>. The Romanian-Italian diplomatic contacts intensified as the events became more heated, gravitating towards a bilateral agreement outside of the Triple Alliance. Although they had started out with completely different interests and premises, the positions of both Italy and Romania towards the ongoing events leading to a world war were similar: avoiding an outbreak, and - when this had become impossible - not joining the Central Powers<sup>3</sup>. Italy's attitude largely influenced the position of the government in Bucharest. Having the reassurances of Fasciotii, the Italian minister in Bucharest, I.I.C. Bratianu was certain of Italy adopting neutrality in the future. A significant fact is that the telegram which announced Italy's proclamation of neutrality arrived just as the Crown Council meeting to decide Romania's position towards the war was taking place on August 3rd, 1914. Whether it was a simple coincidence or perhaps the result of a prior arrangement, the Italian government's declaration influenced the decision of the Romanian government even more. As soon as Italy proclaimed neutrality, the Triple Alliance basically stopped existing<sup>4</sup>.

In this respect, the efforts of the Central Powers diplomacy to impose Romania a political direction that was in line with the provisions of the treaty of alliance had limited chances of success. A significant contributor was the hostility of the Romanian public opinion towards the Austro-Hungarian Empire, something which those in Bucharest who held the power of decision could not ignore. Even King Carol I, finally influenced by Germany insisting that the old political views be maintained, could realize the difficulty which resided in applying the provisions of the treaty with the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Apart from the "*national factor*", a significant role in adopting a decision of crucial importance imposed by the circumstances surrounding the outbreak of the war the powerful diplomatic offensive coming from Entente. Romania was placed between the strong pressures coming from both the Central Powers and Entente. Each group within the Great Powers was trying to attract Romania on its side, with all the ways and means possible. Finally, the great national interests would prevail.

It is obvious that after the visit of the Tzar of Russia in Constanța, Romania's relations with Entente during the outbreak of the international crisis determined by the assassination of Franz Ferdinand would suffer significant changes. Even Count Czernin, the Austro-Hungarian minister in Bucharest, considered that "the event in Constanța represents a military stone in the course of the life of the Romanian State and perhaps even that of the Monarchy (Austro-Hungarian - author's note)"<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Gh.N. Căzan, Șerban Rădulescu-Zoner, *op. cit.*, p. 408.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 408-409.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 416.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 417-419.

<sup>5</sup> N. Iorga, *Under Three Kings. The History of a battle for a moral and national ideal*, Bucharest, Pro Publishing House, 1999, p. 154.

On June 29th 1914, the next day after the Sarajevo attempt, Blondel transmitted from Bucharest that it had caused “a profound impression. The King was especially affected. [...] The press is unanimous in deploring the attempt. [...] Today, the Senate and Chamber of Deputies, suspended the session in sign of mourning, as its presidents associated with the prime-minister and external affairs minister’s expression of a profound emotion on behalf of the Government cause by the attempt and very sincere regrets”.

Blondel expressed that hope that “on the one hand, Austria will exhibit moderation and, on the other hand, Serbia will carefully avoid anything that could provide its adversaries with a reason to have a warlike attitude”<sup>1</sup>. The same information was transmitted retrospectively, on July 6th 1914, to the Foreign Office of Great Britain. The same information was transmitted on the 6-th of July 1914 to the Foreign Office from the Great Britain Council. Among other things, it also added that: “The Romanian Court will be in mourning for four weeks and has announced that the Crown Prince will be present at the wake in Vienna. Displaying an honest compassion on behalf of Romania, the press pointed out that the archduke would have been a great *«protector of minorities and a supporter of national corps»*”<sup>2</sup>.

The news about the Sarajevo attempt sparked great concern in Russia, because it could provide the Austro-Hungarian Empire with the pretext for military action against Serbia – a situation to which the Petersburg government could not remain indifferent<sup>3</sup>.

Another significant aspect is that, during the crisis outbreak in July 1914, Romania’s relations with Entente had evolved significantly towards manifesting a reciprocal willingness for political consultations. Without a doubt, the opening in the Romanian-Russian relations that took place after the Russian Tsar’s visit to Constanța played an important role. It also continued to manifest itself in the following period, a fact highlighted, among others, by the presence of Major Prodan, the Romanian military attaché, in Petersburg during the maneuvers that were taking place in the Odessa region at the beginning of July. A second aspect which served to strengthen this was also a delegation of Regiment 6 ‘Rosiori’ officers visiting Russia, whose honorary command the Tsar had received during his meeting with the King of Romania. Constantin Diamandy, Romania’s minister in Petersburg, informed Em. Porumbaru in his reports of July 8th and 9th 1914 that the chief of mission, Colonel Herescu, was received by the Tsar of Russia in a meeting in Peterhof. On this occasion, Herescu offered the Russian chief of state the uniform of the sixth regiment and handed him a letter from Carol I. Worth pointing out is that the contents of the letter, apart from expressing “*the most profound respects*” out of protocol reasons, also specified that the regiment “*had*

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<sup>1</sup> *Documents diplomatiques français (1871-1914)*, 3<sup>e</sup> série, tome X, doc. nr. 457, p. 656-658. Blondel to Viviani, June 29th 1914 (to be cited as *D.D.F.*).

<sup>2</sup> *British Documents on the Origins of the War (1898-1914)*, tome XI, doc. nr. 43, p. 35. Akers Douglas to Sir Edward Grey, July 6th 1914 (to be cited as *B.D.O.W.*).

<sup>3</sup> See the ample extract from the Russian press in *The Archive of the External Affairs Minister*, Stacks 71-1914, E2, Part II, Petrograd, 1914-1924, Vol. 13, Political reports from Petersburg. 1914, f. 123-132 (to be cited as *A.M.A.E.*).

been created on the battlefield in 1877”, making it “worthy of such high favors”. Equally interesting is that the visit of the Romanian military delegation occurred when the French president, Raymond Poincaré, was still in Russia. Ample festivities were organized at Crasnoe-Selo in honor of the distinguished French guest. The Tsar himself invited the members of the Romanian military mission to participate at the gala lunch and the military festivities<sup>1</sup>, together with the personnel of the Petersburg delegation. In his report of July 12 1914, C. Diamandy, Romania’s minister in Petersburg, informed that at the gala lunch “His Majesty raised the glass for Poincaré, Viviani, Paléologue and myself, one at a time, and expressed His satisfaction to see the Romanian minister in the uniform of the fifth regiment of ‘Rosiori’, which he considered to be very attentive of His Majesty the King”. During the military festivities in Crasnoe-Sel, the Romanian military mission and the members of the delegation in Petersburg assisted to the “King’s suite”, together with the distinguished French guests and Russia’s most striking political and military figures<sup>2</sup>. All this did not escape the attention of the Russian press, which - according to C. Diamandy - had a “political interpretation” of the events<sup>3</sup>.

One day before C. Diamandy sent this final report to Em. Porumbaru, Sazonov has asked Poklewski-Koziell, the Russian minister in Bucharest, to point out to the Romanian government that if Austria assaults Serbia today, accusing it of irredentism, Romania should expect the same fate tomorrow; otherwise will be forced to give up on “accomplishing its national ideal”<sup>4</sup>.

The worsening of tensions in the Austro-Hungarian and Serbian relations - which made a war imminent - launched a very prompt reaction from Russia. On July 18 1914, Major Prodan, Romania’s military attaché in Petersburg, informed Bucharest - under the specification “urgent confidential” - that a general mobilisation was decided during Russian government meeting. It had only been communicated to some circumscriptions at that time, which made it a partial mobilisation. The note also mentioned that “Bulgaria has been mobilising for two days, as it is in perfect understanding with Germany, Austria and Turkey”. As for Romania, Major Prodan noted: “Romania will work directly against Bulgaria and Turkey. **No Russian soldier for the cooperation with Romania** (author’s underlining)”<sup>5</sup>.

The next day, Romania’s general consul in Ismail reported that there had been ample pro-Serbian demonstrations during the 17th and 18th of July, some even in front of the Romanian consulate. Having been surprised by the demonstrators which yelled “Long live Serbia”, “Down with Austria”, the Romanian consul pointed out that these men stopped his carriage and chanted “Long live Romania”, “Long live King Carol”. The demonstration was prolonged

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 135-136.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 137-138.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, f. 139-141. C. Diamandy to Em. Porumbaru, July 14th 1914.

<sup>4</sup> *Documents diplomatique secrets russes. 1914-1917*, Paris, Payot, 1928, p. 20. Sazonov to Poklewski, July 13th 1914.

<sup>5</sup> *A.M.A.E.*, Stacks 71-1914, E2, Part II, Petrograd, 1914-1924, Vol. 13. Political reports from Petersburg, 1914, f. 142-143.

in front of the consulate, where speeches were held and the Russian hymn was sung. Since the pro-Romanian slogans continued for a long time, the Romanian consul appeared at the balcony and thanked the demonstrators for their tribute to the country and its king, and also shouted: “Long live His Majesty the Tsar”, “Long live Russia”<sup>1</sup>.

On July 21-st 1914, Blondel informed Bienvenu-Martin, the French interim minister of External Affairs, that “*the Romanian government is preoccupied with the concentration of troops that is taking place in Bulgaria along the Romanian frontier*”. As such, the French diplomat pointed out that the Romanian minister of External Affairs “*by making the situation known in Belgrade and Athens, let to understand that he is ready to face any events. However, he would be happy to know that, in case of a Romanian-Bulgarian conflict, Serbia and Greece will not remain indifferent and will act in line with the Romanian government to watch over and maintain the state of events instituted by treaty of Bucharest*”<sup>2</sup>. The next day, Blondel pointed out in a new report that the Romanian minister in Sofia received instructions to discuss with Bulgaria in order to stop the incidents in the frontier zone and to receive “*clarifications on the movement of troops that had been taking place for the past two days along the Romanian frontier*”<sup>3</sup>. The news supplied by Blondel were considered very important in Paris, and as a result they were sent to all the French embassies in the capitals of the Great Powers and the Balkan countries<sup>4</sup>. In a new report on the same day, Blondel specified that meanwhile he had found out that “*according to the wish expressed by the Romanian government, the Serbian and Greek governments let Sofia to understand that they will not be indifferent in the case of a conflict with Romania*”<sup>5</sup>.

While Romania was facing the dangers of a Bulgarian attack, its relations with the Great Powers of Entente were amplified because an ultimatum sent by the Double Monarchy to Serbia on July 24, 1914.

C. Diamandy had consultations with Sazonov and the French and British ambassadors in Petersburg, even on the afternoon when the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum had been announced<sup>6</sup>.

Since Russia’s preparations for war had not finished, on the aforementioned occasion Sazonov asked the French and British ambassadors, as well as the plenipotentiary Romanian minister to send their governments Petersburg’s wish to work **on a joint action plan** in order to avoid a war between Serbia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Romania was asked to “*perform an amiable intervention not only in Belgrade, but in Vienna as well, to tone down some of the excessive requirements of the ultimatum*”<sup>7</sup>. At the same time, the Romanian

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibidem*, Stacks 71-1914, E2, Part II, Petrograd-Ismaile, 1914-1924, Vol. 14. Political reports from the Romanian consulate in Ismail, f. 280-281.

<sup>2</sup> *D.D.F.*, 3<sup>e</sup> série, tome X, doc. nr. 545, p. 773-774. Blondel to Bienvenu-Martin, July 21<sup>st</sup> 1914.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, doc. nr. 552, p. 783-784. Blondel to Bienvenu-Martin, July 22<sup>nd</sup> 1914.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, doc. nr. 556, p. 786, July 22<sup>nd</sup> 1914.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*, doc. nr. 560, p. 793-795. Blondel to Bienvenu-Martin, July 22<sup>nd</sup> 1914.

<sup>6</sup> *Documents diplomatique secrets russes*, p. 12-13; C. Diamandy, *Ma mission en Russie. 1914-1918*, “Revue des deux mondes”, February 15<sup>th</sup> 1929, p. 798-800.

<sup>7</sup> C. Diamandy, *op. cit.*, p. 799.

government was requested to join Russia's diplomatic efforts in the capitals of the Great Powers, in order to obtain from the Austro-Hungarian Empire a prolonging of the expiration date of the aforementioned ultimatum<sup>1</sup>.

Since he was also requested by the Italian government for a mediating intervention of Romania both in Belgrade and in the capitals of the Central Powers<sup>2</sup>, prime-minister I.I.C. Brătianu acted as such. He was sent to Belgrade on a special mission by Nicolae Cantacuzino, an former adviser in Vienna. He has to convince the Serbian government to accept the solution proposed by the Romanian government, *in extremis*, to maintain peace. Since the deadline of the Austrian ultimatum had expired, the Austro-Hungarian Empire attacked Serbia immediately. The war was starting and it would quickly become a world war.

The Romanian prime-minister had been willing to intervene in Vienna as well, in an effort to avoid the war. He had done it even before Russia had formulated a request to Bucharest in this sense. Even before July 3rd he had confessed to Czernin one of the secret aspects of the conversation he had had with Sazonov, during the Tsar's visit to Constanta: in the case of an Austro-Hungarian attack against Serbia, Russia will offer the latter its military aid<sup>3</sup>. His initiative to thus intimidate Vienna was not successful. After Russia formulated the request to the Romanian government, I.I.C. Brătianu tried this approach again. It was too late, however, since the ultimatum had expired and - under these circumstances - he could only ask Czernin, the Austrian diplomat, to stop the hostilities and restart the talks, in order to offer Serbia the chance to award the reparations claimed by Austria<sup>4</sup>.

The British diplomacy, who had previously saved the peace through an efficient intervention in Berlin, began acting too late. On July 25 1914, Grey proposed to Germany, through Lichowsky, its ambassador in London, to suggest to Vienna an extension of the deadline for Serbia's answer and - in the case of tensions between Austria and Russia - a mediation on the part of Britain, Germany, France and Italy. However, Jagow did not communicate the proposal to Vienna until the deadline had expired<sup>5</sup>.

During the time in which the Great Powers of Entente were making these efforts to avoid war by collaborating with the Romanian diplomacy, the governments in Paris, Petersburg and London were preoccupied with finding out what Romania's attitude would be in case the war did break out. At the same time, they were looking to influence the government in Bucharest in a way that was favorable to Entente - just in case the war would extend by applying the already-existing systems of alliance.

In a report to Bienvenue-Martin, Blondel reported on July 27 1914 that the Romanian minister of External Affairs declared that the Romanian state

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<sup>1</sup> *Mejduнародnaia Otnoženija v epohu Imperializma* (to be cited as *M.O.E.I.*), Series no. III, t. V, nr. 72. Poklewski to Sazonov, July 12/25 1914.

<sup>2</sup> Gh.N. Căzan, Șerban Rădulescu-Zoner, *op. cit.*, p. 408.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 407.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 410.

<sup>5</sup> Mircea Mușat, Ion Ardeleanu, *From the Geto-Dacian State to the Unitary Romanian State*, Bucharest, Scientific and Encyclopedic Publishing House, 1983, p. 436.

*“considers itself joint with Greece and Serbia to respect the prescriptions of the Bucharest treaty and, as such, if Bulgaria wishes to take advantage of the current events [...], Romania and Greece will agree to take the best measures in order to oppose an armed Bulgarian action”*. At the same time, the Romanian minister of External Affairs stated that *“if Austria wishes to modify through its action the statu-quo established by the treaty, Romania and Serbia’s solidarity will have to manifest itself immediatly”*<sup>1</sup>.

The same day, in another report, Blondel added that the point of view expressed by the Romanian minister of External Affairs had been discussed in a government meeting, which reinforced it, thus *“calling Romania’s responsibility already into play”*. It was estimated, however, that the *“king will accept entering war against Austria with great difficulty”*. The French diplomat pointed out that *“the Romanian public opinion is manifesting itself stronger and stronger against Austria”*. In this respect, new demonstrastions were taking place, with people shouting *“Long live Serbia”* and *“Down with Austria”*<sup>2</sup>.

The next day, on July 28th 1914, Blondel had another meeting with Em. Porumbaru, who brought up a series of important issues concerning the Government’s position. The Romanian Minister of external affairs stated that *“it would be difficult for Romania to declare to Serbia that it is ready to go against Austria, as long as the latter will not bring any dispute to the Bucharest treaty”*. The French diplomat suggested to the Romanian minister of External Affairs *“to look for a solution which would definitely send the message to everyone that Romania has formally decided to respect the provisions of the treaty (in Bucharest – author’s note) and to declare itself the adversary of anyone who brought - in a direct or indirect manner – an alteration contrary to the will of those who signed it”*. Blondel stated that *“the problem was the subject of discussion in the Council of Minister which came to the final conclusion that Mr. Porumbaru communicated to me”*. The French diplomat commented: *“I suspect that the King hesitated before agreeing with the point of view displayed by the prime minister; [...] the sovereign does not wish to take up a hostile attitude towards Austria and thus appear that nothing has yet forced him to put into practice the decisions required of him by the circumstances”*<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> *D.D.F.*, 3<sup>e</sup> série, tome XI, doc. nr. 154, p. 127-128. Blondel to Bienvenue-Martin, July 27<sup>th</sup> 1914.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*, doc. nr. 172, p. 143.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, doc. nr. 232, p. 194-196. Blondel to Viviani, July 28th 1914.