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BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA IN BRITISH DIPLOMACY, 1875-1878

by

ARTHUR J. DAHL

B.A., Montana State University, 1951

Presented in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts

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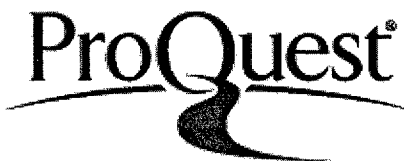


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A. J. D.

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## INTRODUCTION

The chronological scope of this study covers the period from July 8, 1875 to July 16, 1878. On the former date an insurrection occurred in the Turkish province of Herzegovina and rapidly spread northward into the Turkish province of Bosnia. The two provinces, inhabited by a mainly Serbian population, were Turkey's outermost European territories. Serbia and Montenegro, lying to the west and southwest of Bosnia-Herzegovina, were part of the Turkish Empire in Europe, but each was practically independent, being only under the suzerainty of the Sultan. The Serbians and Montenegrins, being of the same nationality as the Bosnians and Herzegovinians, aided the insurrectionists. Turkey failed in her attempts to restore peace, so the European Powers intervened. Their initial intervention was unsuccessful. The situation became more and more aggravated, eventually causing two wars. The crisis, as viewed by Britain, ended on July 16, 1878 with Lord Beaconsfield's announcement to the English people that he had brought them "Peace with Honor."

This study is confined to a consideration of British policy in so far as it was prompted by Balkan events, 1875-78. Naturally, the diplomacy of this brief period must be

considered in the framework of Britain's vital interests in the Balkans and Near East, especially in relationship to Russia. Domestic considerations, in so far as they strengthened or weakened Disraeli's hand, also lie within the scope of this survey of British diplomacy.

Bosnia-Herzegovina in British Diplomacy, 1875-1878, in view of Benjamin Disraeli's dominant role in British policy, is centered very much about the figure of the Conservative Party Leader. As Prime Minister, Disraeli was almost solely responsible for British foreign policy in the period from 1875 to 1878. If it were not for the constitutional right of England's monarch to advise and be advised, this history could not have been written. Much of the material was contained in the letters from the Prime Minister to Queen Victoria. During the period, the members of the British Cabinet were not allowed, by custom, to keep minutes or records of the Cabinet meetings. There are some standard sources which the author did not use, such as Die Grosse Politik der Europäischen Kabinette, 1871-1914. In place of the latter, he used German Diplomatic Documents, 1871-1914, an English translation of the documents from Die Grosse Politik which bear most directly on English history. A comparison of the documents appearing in the two collections demonstrates that no vital omissions appear in the shorter German Diplomatic Documents.

## CHAPTER I

### UNSUCCESSFUL DIPLOMACY

In July, 1875, the Slav inhabitants of Herzegovina, southern Bosnia, refused to pay taxes or to perform labor services. A Turkish force was dispatched to compel the peasants to fulfill their obligations, but, on July 24, it met with determined resistance and was defeated. The initial success of the peasants encouraged a spreading of the insurrection, and aid rapidly came from Bosnians, Serbians and Montenegrins. The causes of the uprising were more economic and social than political, with unbearable fiscal burdens and religious oppression being the subject of the most loudly voiced complaints, and with lamentations of corruption being often heard. For longer than a decade the area had been the scene of serious unrest. Mr. Holmes, the British consul in Bosnia, reported, in 1860, that "the conduct of the Turkish authorities in these provinces had been sufficient, in conjunction with foreign agitation, to bring Bosnia to the very verge of rebellion, whilst the Herzegovina was in a state of war."<sup>1</sup> In 1867, '71, and '73

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1. J. A. R. Marriott, The Eastern Question: An Historical Study in European Diplomacy (Oxford, 1917), 282ff.

the British Foreign Office received additional reports from Mr. Holmes describing "the open bribery and corruption," and saying that "of all cases of justice, whether between Mussulmans alone, or Turks and Christians, ninety out of a hundred are settled by bribery alone."<sup>2</sup>

The fast spread of the revolt in Bosnia and Herzegovina caused some concern in the capitals of Europe. London was content, at first, with instructing her Minister at Vienna to represent to the Austrian government that:

Her Majesty's Government would be glad to learn that the Government of Austria-Hungary had taken steps to secure the peace of the frontier and to prevent the disturbances in Hercegovina from receiving support or encouragement from Austrian territory.<sup>3</sup>

The British agent at Belgrade was instructed in a similar manner, and Sir H. Elliot, the British Ambassador at Constantinople, was asked to "dissuade the Prince of Montenegro from helping those who had struck for freedom."<sup>4</sup> At this point England was much in favor of non-intervention. Disraeli, the Prime Minister, desired that Turkey should resolve the situation. The continental powers, however, were desirous of joint action by the consuls, and England adhered reluctantly, as can be seen in a telegram from Disraeli to Derby, the Foreign Minister, August 24, in which he said:

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2. Ibid. 282ff.

3. H. C. Thomson, The Outgoing Turk: Impressions of a Journey through the Western Balkans (London, 1897), 214.

4. Ibid. 214.

"'There is no alternative, but I don't like it.'"<sup>5</sup> When agreeing to a Consular mission Derby used these words:

Her Majesty's Government consented to this step with reluctance, as they doubted the expediency of the intervention of Foreign Consuls. Such an intervention, I remarked, was scarcely compatible with the independent authority of the Porte; it offered an inducement to insurrection as a means of appealing to foreign sympathy against Turkish rule, and it might not improbably open the way to further diplomatic interference in the internal affairs of the empire.<sup>6</sup>

The peasant leaders, in September, presented their case to the consuls, demanding religious freedom, taxation reforms, the right to give evidence in the courts, and the formation of a local Christian militia. They suggested the following alternative remedies: (1) land to which they might emigrate; (2) Bosnia and Herzegovina to be an autonomous state under a Christian prince; or (3) a temporary foreign occupation.<sup>7</sup> Turkey would not accede to the demands of the insurgents. The latter, in turn, would not accept the promises of Turkey. Persuasions of the consuls availed nothing, so the mediation of the Powers failed to restore peace, and the revolt continued to spread.

The British desire that the Powers remain aloof from the new situation is easily understood in the light of Britain's traditional Balkan policy. Her Near-Eastern

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5. W. F. Money Penny and G. E. Buckle, The Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield (2 vols., rev., N.Y., 1929), II, 884. Vol. II is used exclusively in this study.

6. Thomson, Outgoing Turk, 214.

7. Marriott, Eastern Question, 285f.

diplomacy was based upon the Treaty of Paris of 1856 as modified by the Treaty of London of 1871,<sup>8</sup> a combination of treaties mainly significant in that it represented a decisive check to Russia's advance into the Balkans. An important aspect of the Treaty of 1856 was the provision, contained in Article VII, which secured for the Powers the right of considering any violation of Turkish integrity to be "a question of general interest."<sup>9</sup> This right was affirmed by Article VIII of the Treaty of 1871.<sup>10</sup> British policy after 1856 was one of non-intervention in the Balkans. Her demand that the continental Powers follow the same policy was valid from the point of view of the Law of Nations. It was, in addition, ideally suited to Britain's major interests. The chief of these was the maintenance of her empire, and, since Britain viewed Russia as a potential disturber of her Asiatic Empire, this made England highly desirous of a European Turkey standing between Russia and the Straits. Hence the attempt of any Power, but particularly Russia, to meddle in Turkish affairs in such manner as to threaten her territorial integrity was bound to concern Britain. The British fear of Russia was based upon the British conception of Russian imperialism, the Russian threat to the balance of power, Russian autocracy, and

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8. T. E. Holland, ed., The European Concert in the Eastern Question: A Collection of Treaties and Other Public Acts (Oxford, 1885), 241-255 & 272-277.

9. Ibid. 245.

10. Ibid. 275.



Russian reaction,<sup>11</sup> but more especially upon British understanding of Russia's trade problem. As long as the Straits were controlled by Turkey the trade to and from Russian Black Sea ports was vulnerable. Incidents continually fanned the flames of British fear. Moscow, in 1867, played host to a Pan-Slav congress, giving to the movement a new energy; Pan-Slav literature was circulated everywhere in the Balkans; Russian universities attracted more Serbians, Montenegrins, Bosnians, and Bulgarians than previously. The movement received Russian official support.<sup>12</sup> Russia took advantage of the Franco-Prussian War to repudiate the Black sea clauses of the Treaty of 1856. Though this was a violation of the Law of Nations, Russia was able to force her will on Britain and the Powers at London, where the latter signed the Treaty of 1871 which legalized the Russian action.<sup>13</sup> These actions and others by Russia gave Britain little hope of a rapprochement.

A second British interest was her trade. British investors had looked to the Near East and were associated there with railroads, markets, and general commerce. Turkey had procured many loans from British financiers. If Russia should be allowed to conquer Turkey, British subjects, and

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11. M. W. Tyler, The European Powers and the Near East, 1875-1908 (Minneapolis, 1925), 46-50.

12. Marriott, Eastern Question, 283f.

13. G. P. Gooch and J. H. B. Masterman, A Century of British Foreign Policy (London, 1917, 18), 24.

thus Britain, would lose huge sums of money, and British trade would be severely damaged.<sup>14</sup> Naturally, in times of crisis in the Near East, money and trading interests exerted pressure in the right places in favor of the maintenance of Turkish integrity and the status quo. At various times an opposing pressure was brought to bear upon the government by that section of the populace which was usually sympathetic to the nationalities in the Balkans, wanted to see Turkish misrule removed, and other political and territorial arrangements made. However, money and trading interests were more powerful and closer to governmental circles, so their will prevailed, and England dedicated herself to the cause of maintaining Turkey in Europe.

By October the burden of combat in Bosnia-Herzegovina had overtaxed Turkish finances, which, because of the misrule of the Sultan,<sup>15</sup> were in no condition to stand a military campaign in its outermost provinces. Turkey had received nine foreign loans prior to 1875.<sup>16</sup> When she announced on October 7<sup>17</sup> that she could not pay the interest on the public

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14. Tyler, European Powers, 48.

15. A. Debidour, Histoire diplomatique de l'Europe: Depuis l'ouverture du congrès de Vienne jusqu'à la fermeture du congrès de Berlin, 1814-1878 (2 vols., Paris, 1891), II, 478. Where he says, "Abd-ul-Aziz . . . alourdit chaque jour un peu plus par les grossiers plaisirs du harem, auxquels il sacrifiait avec une parfaite insouciance tout son temps et toutes les ressources du trésor public."

16. R. W. Seton-Watson, Britain in Europe, 1789-1914: A Survey of Foreign Policy (Cambridge, 1938), 512.

17. Tyler, European Powers, 56.

debt, the creditors, of whom many were English, demanded action to bring an end to hostilities in the provinces and to put Turkish finances in order.<sup>18</sup> Disraeli realized that the Eastern Question now faced him. In a letter to Lady Bradford, written November 3, he said:

Matters are large and pressing. Five weeks ago Russia, and indeed all the Great Powers, agreed 'the Herz. question was settled.' The Prince of Servia changed his Ministry, at their dictation, to ensure that result. But this extraordinary, and quite unforeseen, bankruptcy of the Porte has set everything again in flame, and I really believe 'the Eastern Question,' that has haunted Europe for a century, and wh[ich] I thought the Crimean War had adjourned for half another, will fall to my lot to encounter--dare I say to settle?<sup>19</sup>

It might be beneficial, at this point, to examine briefly the policy advocated by Disraeli. The Eastern Question was only a part of the problem of protecting the British Empire, which was Disraeli's foremost concern.<sup>20</sup> In dealing with this problem, he was motivated by a fear of Russia, which "amounted to a monomania."<sup>21</sup> Consequently, his every action was for the purpose of restraining Russian influence among the Balkan Slavs, and preventing any Russian advance toward Constantinople. He believed that this could be best accomplished by a strict adherence to the Treaty of Paris of 1856, and it was on this principle that he made his

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18. W. S. Davis, A Short History of the Near East: From the Founding of Constantinople (330 A.D. to 1922) (N.Y., 1923), 331.

19. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 886.

20. Ibid. 875.

21. Davis, A Short History, 332.

stand.<sup>22</sup> Disraeli's traditional fear of Russia was substantiated by reports from Sir Henry Elliot, the British Ambassador at Constantinople, who "insisted that the rebels were encouraged by Russia in every possible way; that the leaders met at the house of Yonin, the Russian consul at Ragusa; and that they were aided by information supplied by Ignatief himself."<sup>23</sup> Reports of this nature strengthened Disraeli in his determination that there should be no rearrangements made in the Balkans, at least not without his consent. The creation of independent Slav states, he thought, would simply throw them into the hands of Russia, or, at the very least, greatly increase Russian strength.<sup>24</sup> In the light of the Pan-Slavist movement, this line of reasoning was well grounded. Then too, Disraeli did not believe in the capacity of the Balkan peoples for self-government. This is illustrated in a letter of October 1 to Lady Bradford in which he comments on the Austrian proposal for autonomy for Bosnia-Herzegovina: "Fancy autonomy for Bosnia, with a mixed population; autonomy for Ireland w[oul]d be less absurd, for there are more Turks in proportion to Xtians in Bosnia than Ulster v. the three other provinces. . . ."<sup>25</sup>

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22. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 881.

23. Cited in W. L. Langer, European Alliances and Alignments, 1871-1890 (N.Y., 1931), 69.

24. Tyler, European Powers, 59.

25. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 885.

Another factor taken into consideration by Disraeli at all times was the greater importance of the Eastern Question to England as a result of the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. This became the shortest route to India and must be protected above all else.<sup>26</sup> This protection he intended to secure by an individual action, and manifested a reluctance to co-operate with the Powers,<sup>27</sup> as was clearly shown during the period of mediation by the Consuls. Yet, this lack of co-operation on his part was not to be construed by the Powers as an invitation for them to act without him in the Balkans. To make sure that this was clearly understood he addressed a warning to them, November 9, in a speech on Lord Mayor's Day.

Now that the financial catastrophe in Turkey had revived the struggle in Bosnia, it could not be denied that circumstances were critical. The Great Powers immediately interested, however, had exercised, and he believed would continue to exercise, a wise forbearance; and he was therefore convinced that peace would be maintained and the public opinion of Europe satisfied. But he significantly added that, though the interests of the Imperial Powers in this question were more direct, they were not more considerable than those of Great Britain; and 'those to whom the conduct of your affairs is now entrusted are deeply conscious of the nature and magnitude of those British interests, and those British interests they are resolved to guard and maintain.'<sup>28</sup>

As if in verification of his announced forward policy, Disraeli, on the twenty-fifth of November, startled the Powers by

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26. Langer, European Alliances, 73.

27. Tyler, European Powers, 59.

28. Cited in Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 888.

announcing that the British Government had purchased the Khedive's shares in the Suez Canal.<sup>29</sup> He was, indeed, "conscious of the nature and magnitude of those British interests."

On January 3, 1876 Count Beust, Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in England, delivered a dispatch to Derby from Count Andrassy, the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister.<sup>30</sup> This dispatch, commonly referred to as the Andrassy Note, was issued on December 30, 1875, as the product of the joint efforts of Germany, Russia, and Austria.<sup>31</sup> It expressed a desire of the Powers to restore peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and to effect this peace it invited the Guaranteeing Powers to join in the presentation of the note to Turkey. It stated that Serbia and Montenegro were to be prevented from joining in the insurrection. Specific demands were made upon Turkey to grant religious liberty, to abolish the farming of taxes, to turn some of the revenue from direct taxation back to the provinces, to better the condition of the rural population, and to allow the establishment of a commission to oversee the reforms. It ended with a request that Turkey furnish the Powers with a formal notification of

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29. British and Foreign State Papers, 1874-1875, Vol. 66 (Compiled by the Librarian and Keeper of the Papers, Foreign Office, London, 1882), 670. There were 176,602 shares purchased for 4,000,000 pounds sterling less the proportionate value of 1,040 shares.

30. Sir Edward Hertslet, ed., The Map of Europe by Treaty; Showing the Various Political and Territorial Changes which have Taken Place Since the General Peace of 1814 (4 vols., London, 1891), IV, 2418. Only Vol. IV is used in this study.

31. Marriott, Eastern Question, 286.

acceptance.<sup>32</sup> Derby's inclination was to adhere,<sup>33</sup> but Disraeli, feeling slighted by the action of the Three Powers independently of England, and feeling that adherence might not be in England's best interests, sent a telegram to Derby on January 9, in which he said:

. . . We should pause before assenting to the Austrian proposal. . . .

I think it will land us in a false position, and it would be preferable to appear isolated, wh[ich] I usually deprecate, than, for the sake of a simulated union, wh[ich] will not last many months, embarrass ourselves, when independent action may be necessary.<sup>34</sup>

A request that Britain join the other powers in the presentation of the Note was delivered by Masurus, Turkish representative, to Derby on January 17.<sup>35</sup> The speech from the throne on the opening of Parliament indicated Britain's adherence, but warned that she would not disturb Turkish independence.<sup>36</sup> On the twenty-fifth Derby dispatched a reply to the Andrassy Note which represented a formal adherence,<sup>37</sup> and also pointed out that previous Turkish Iradsés had already promised to carry out the indicated reforms.<sup>38</sup> The Andrassy Note was presented to Turkey on January 31,

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32. Hertslet, Map of Europe, 2418-29.

33. Tyler, European Powers, 60.

34. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 891.

35. Ibid. 891. Disraeli to Bradford.

36. Ibid. 891.

37. France and Italy had readily given adherence.

38. Hertslet, Map of Europe, 2430-40.

1876,<sup>39</sup> and in two weeks Turkey issued a circular to the Powers, accepting all points of reform but one, that being relevant to direct taxation.<sup>40</sup> This attempt of the Powers to restore peace to the provinces ended in failure, because "the insurgents refused to accept the program laid down and demanded a more extensive scheme of reforms as well as guarantees by the Powers that the reforms would be carried out."<sup>41</sup>

This failure was quickly followed by another, that of an attempted rapprochement between Germany and England, which, if it had been successful, might have averted the Russo-Turkish War. Bismarck initiated a conversation with Lord Odo Russell, the British Ambassador at Berlin, on January 2, 1876.<sup>42</sup> The conversation dealt with the "attitude of the Powers towards the Turkish question," and expressed a hope harbored by Bismarck that he might get "into closer touch with Lord Derby," thus bringing about an exchange of ideas between England and his own country. The long conversation amounted to an invitation to Britain to work more closely with Germany in finding some solution for the problem presented by the outbreak in Bosnia-Herzegovina.<sup>43</sup> On February

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39. Tyler, European Powers, 60.

40. Hertslet, Map of Europe, 244lff.

41. Tyler, European Powers, 60.

42. Langer, European Alliances, 76.

43. E. T. S. Dugdale, J. W. Gerard and J. W. Headlam-Morley, German Diplomatic Documents, 1871-1914 (4 vols., N.Y. & London, 1928), I, 20. Bülow to Münster. Hereafter referred to as German Diplomatic Documents. Only vol. I is used in this study.



1, Bismarck talked again to Russell. He reiterated his sincere desire for peace, a peace which he thought might be more easily maintained with Germany and England working together.<sup>44</sup> The English Ambassador, in reporting home, pointed out that "we should lose no time in giving Prince Bismarck to understand that we shall be ready to act with Germany."<sup>45</sup> The zeal with which Russell advocated that England work with Germany stirred Queen Victoria to action. On February 9, she wrote as follows to her Foreign Minister:

The Queen therefore thinks that it is of the utmost importance that we should accept the proffered aid of Germany, a strong state whose interests are the same as ours and whose policy can or should seldom be opposed to that of an English government. . . .

The Queen considers that the importance of establishing a link between the two countries cannot be overrated, and desires earnestly to impress upon Lord Derby the necessity of authorising Lord Odo Russell to enter into free and unrestricted communication with Prince Bismarck upon Eastern affairs.<sup>46</sup>

Derby was not quite as eager as the Queen, though he believed that the offer was "one to be accepted, as the assistance of Prince Bismarck in carrying into effect English views on Eastern subjects might under certain circumstances be of incalculable value."<sup>47</sup> He warned, however, that "more

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44. Langer, European Alliances, 78.

45. G. E. Buckle, ed., The Letters of Queen Victoria: Second Series: A Selection from her Majesty's Correspondence and Journal Between the Years 1861 and 1878 (2 vols., N.Y., 1926), II, 443. Queen to Derby. Only vol. II is used in this study.

46. Ibid. 443f.

47. Derby to Queen. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 893.

may be intended by this communication than meets the eye," and he wondered "what assistance England is expected to give in return for that which is offered."<sup>48</sup> In order that this suspicion would not jeopardize the possibility of a working agreement with Germany, Disraeli urged upon Derby that he co-operate "with the offers and overtures of Prince Bismarck."<sup>49</sup> He as well as Derby, realized that Bismarck was a dangerous man, but he believed that "if a concerted action on public affairs between Germany and England be established . . . the chances of so great a calamity as a general, or even considerable, war would . . . be infinitely reduced."<sup>50</sup> Thus, Derby drafted a reply to Bismarck, which he submitted to Disraeli for approval. The old master added a final paragraph and the reply was dispatched, but it proved insufficient to bring about the hoped-for agreement. Bismarck remained with the Three Emperors League, and England worked alone.<sup>51</sup>

The chiefs of the rebel forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina came together on February 28 and decided to resume with double vigor the battle which, in the cold of the winter, had been carried on at a slackened pace.<sup>52</sup> By March,

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48. Ibid. 893.

49. Disraeli to Queen. Buckle, The Letters, 444.

50. Disraeli to Derby. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 893f.

51. Ibid. 894.

52. Debidour, Histoire diplomatique, II, 485.

approximately 156,000 refugees from the provinces had entered neighboring states, and, with the increasing popular agitation in Serbia and Montenegro, the situation was becoming critical.<sup>53</sup> Gortchakoff exerted pressure on Austria for another meeting of the Emperors, but Andrassy refused. On May 7, however, an incident occurred (the murder of the French and German consuls by a fanatical mob) which provoked Andrassy to accede to the demands of Gortchakoff for a meeting.<sup>54</sup> Accordingly, on May 13, the note, referred to as the Berlin Memorandum, was issued. The text of the Memorandum was in stronger language than that of the previous Andrassy Note. It contained: proposals for combined naval movements for protection of Turkish subjects, and for a restoration and maintenance of peace; a proposed armistice for two months; a plan of Turkish reconstruction of houses and churches, and of Turkish subsistence for returnees to the provinces; provisions for the establishment of a relief commission; methods for cessation of hostilities; and a stipulation permitting consular supervision. More important than the body of the Memorandum was the concluding note, which stated that if the terms of the note were not fulfilled at the end of the two-month armistice it would be necessary for the Powers to "supplement their diplomatic action by the sanction of an agreement with a view to such efficacious measures as

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53. Langer, European Alliances, 81.

54. Debidour, Histoire diplomatique, 487.

might appear to be demanded in the interest of general peace, to check the evil and prevent its development."<sup>55</sup>

The British Ambassador in Germany was presented with the Memorandum, on the date of issue,<sup>56</sup> and was invited to procure British adherence within two days.<sup>57</sup> Disraeli was enraged; he absolutely was not a man to be so slighted. On May 16 he read a long note to the Cabinet, giving the following reasons for non-adherence:

- (1) He Disraeli believes it is impossible for the Sultan to reconstruct the houses and churches of the insurgents, or to find food for the refugees.
- (2) The distribution of relief by means of such a Commission as that proposed, would be a huge system of indiscriminate almsgiving, totally beyond the power of the Porte to effect, and utterly demoralising to any country.
- (3) The concentration of troops in certain places would be delivering up the whole country to anarchy, particularly when the insurgents are to retain their arms.
- (4) The 'consular supervision' would reduce the authority of the Sultan to a nullity; and, without a force to support it, supervision would be impossible.
- (5) The hope of restoring tranquillity by these means being, in Mr. Disraeli's opinion, groundless, we should then be asked to 'join in taking more efficacious measures in the interests of peace,' which, it is supposed, means taking more efficacious measures to break up the Empire.<sup>58</sup>

Disraeli informed the cabinet, moreover, that he thought it would be far better for Turkey to give up Bosnia-Herzegovina than for England to give adhesion to the Memorandum, and that

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55. Hertslet, Map of Europe, 2459-63.

56. Ibid. 2463.

57. Langer, European Alliances, 82.

58. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 896.

also it might be better for Turkey to surrender the provinces "than adopt the alternative now offered."<sup>59</sup> The situation was indeed serious when Disraeli would agree to a possible dismembering of Turkey. Consistent with his policy, above all, he intended to hold Russia, even if necessary to give up the provinces to Austria. The Cabinet stood solidly behind their Prime Minister, but the Queen was hard-won-over. She wrote to Disraeli that she disliked being separated from the Powers and that she feared that "Turkey will look to us to help her against the rest of Europe, and that we shall thus precipitate rather than prevent the catastrophe."<sup>60</sup> Eventually Disraeli was able to convince her, and Britain sent a formal reply to the Memorandum on May 19.<sup>61</sup> This reply was a blanket refusal to join the Powers in the Memorandum.

The May murders at Salonika created great alarm among the Christians at Constantinople, so, for the purpose of dispelling the fear, Sir Henry Elliot informed Admiral Drummond, at Jaffa, "that his early presence at Constantinople might be very useful, and that he would be glad if he would bring the squadron to Besika Bay."<sup>62</sup> Orders were transmitted to the fleet on the twenty-fourth.<sup>63</sup> The Powers were prone to connect this event with Britain's defiance of the Powers in

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59. Ibid. 896.

60. Buckle, The Letters, 453.

61. Hertslet, Map of Europe, 2464-68.

62. Ibid. 2464-68.

63. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 898.

refusing to co-operate with them in a presentation of the Berlin Memorandum. Consequently, there was uneasy feeling in the Capitals of Europe, but less than a week lapsed before there occurred a major event, which completely altered the situation. A palace revolution in Turkey placed a new Sultan, Murad, at the helm. He professed "a programme of constitutional reform and of friendly co-operation with foreign Powers."<sup>64</sup> England, thereafter, easily persuaded the Powers to withdraw the Berlin Memorandum. On June 9 Disraeli announced: "'There is a complete understanding between us and the Great Powers that there should be no undue pressure put upon the new Sovereign of Turkey; that he and his counsellors should have time to mature their measures.'"<sup>65</sup>

Thus, British diplomacy was to have a respite. It must have been welcome, for nearly a year had been spent in continual negotiation. In July the insurrection had occurred. England would have preferred a policy of non-interference, but external pressures had been too great and reluctantly she had joined the Powers in an attempt to mediate the dispute through the Consuls. The demands of the insurgents having been excessive, mediation had failed. In October the Sultan had announced his repudiation of the interest on the Turkish foreign debt, so many English financiers, as well as those of other nations, had begun to demand active intervention. At the turn of the year, the Andrassy Note was being studied in

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64. Ibid. 900.

65. Ibid. 900.

England. Turkish insistence that England join the Powers in the presentation of the note, had brought England into the European concert. The note, though accepted by Turkey, had proven no more effective than mediation by the consuls. The following month England had experienced another failure, an attempted rapprochement with Germany. The Salonika murders and the Berlin Memorandum occurred in May. England had refused to join the Powers at that time, and had sent her fleet to Besika Bay, an action somewhat misinterpreted by the Powers. The Berlin Memorandum had never been forced on Turkey, because of the palace revolution which had placed Murad on the throne. Truly, it had been a busy period for the British statesmen, who could show little for all their work--only that they had made the Powers aware of the fact that there was still an England, that she would have to be reckoned with as in the days around mid-century and before. The fleet at Besika Bay was the proof of this. Yet, up to this point, diplomacy had been unsuccessful, for the insurrection was expanding, an ever present danger to the existence of the Turkey-in-Europe which England deemed essential to the maintenance of her Empire.

## CHAPTER II

### WAR AND MASSACRE IN THE BALKANS

Less than a month passed after the dispatch of the British Fleet to Besika Bay before the British Foreign Office had warnings of impending danger in the Balkans. On June 20, 1876 Derby wrote, relative to these warnings, that "indeed if the report be true that the Prince of Serbia has asked for the Governorship of Bosnia, the real troubles are just about to begin. The demand is so absurd that it can be put forward only as an excuse for a quarrel; and I doubt whether even Russian influence could prevent war, if it were made and refused."<sup>1</sup> Disraeli, having received verification of the disturbing report, realized the need for immediate action. Yet the courses of action open to him were few. In his analysis of the situation, Russia was the key power. If she were willing to co-operate with the other powers, war might be averted. Thus, representations were made to the European Powers to bring their influence to bear upon Serbia to maintain peace. Disraeli's instructions to Derby, on June 28, were that the British Foreign Office should dispatch

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1. Derby to Ponsonby. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 905f.



a declaration to Russia, stating that "if war takes place between Turkey and Servia, and the Porte is victorious, and seeks the legitimate consequences of victory, as, for example, the restoration of Belgrade . . . that if Russia interfere under these circumstances, the position of affairs will be considered by England as most grave."<sup>2</sup> Also, the instructions suggested that determined and quick efforts be made to detach Montenegro from Serbia. In Disraeli's words -- "Even hours are precious."<sup>3</sup>

To understand Serbia's demand that she be allowed to occupy Bosnia-Herzegovina, it is necessary to survey briefly the preceding decade. Serbia had long nurtured a hope to acquire the two provinces, composed of a mainly Serb population. Over three-fourths of the 1,100,000 population were Christian Slavs.<sup>4</sup> The alternative to westward Serb expansion was expansion into Macedonia. This, Serbia did not desire, because the population was so mixed that it was "impossible to say where the Serb population" ended and the Bulgarian began.<sup>5</sup> As early as 1866, when Crete rose in revolt against Turkey, Serbia agreed with Rumania to work mutually for independence. On September 23, 1866, a Serbian-Montenegrin Treaty was signed, followed

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2. Disraeli to Derby. Ibid. 908.

3. Ibid. 908.

4. Ibid. 886.

5. R.W. Seton-Watson, The Balkans, Italy and the Adriatic (2nd. ed., London, 1916), 27.

by "a tentative Greek-Roumanian Treaty (February 1867), the crucial Serbian-Greek Treaty (August 26, 1867) and the military convention between Greece and Serbia of February 28, 1868."<sup>6</sup> The terms of the Greek-Serbian Agreement provided, among other things, that Serbia was to acquire Bosnia-Herzegovina.<sup>7</sup> The plans not maturing, Serbia, in 1871, approached the Powers with the "proposition that the two provinces be occupied by Serbia under the suzerainty of the Sultan."<sup>8</sup> Neither Austria nor Russia dared open the Eastern Question at that time, so Serbia gained nothing more than vague promises that at some future date she might be permitted to make some "acquisitions in this direction."<sup>9</sup>

The insurrection in Bosnia and Herzegovina appeared to the Serbs and Montenegrins to be their golden opportunity. It was impossible for the governments of the two countries to prevent their subjects from aiding their oppressed brothers in the neighboring provinces.<sup>10</sup> Only the concerted influence of the Powers prevented Serbia and Montenegro from entering the war. In the latter part of May, 1876, after the failure of the Berlin Memorandum, one of the more able Russian army officers, Tchernayeff, placed himself at the disposal of the Serbs. He was given the command of the Serb

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6. Langer, European Alliances, 61f.

7. Ibid. 62.

8. Tyler, European Powers, 65.

9. Ibid. 65.

10. Langer, European Alliances, 81.

army.<sup>11</sup> On June 9 Turkey demanded of Serbia that she explain her recent arming and make her intentions known. The Serb army, under the new commander, was eager to initiate a campaign, so the government, recently assured of aid by a treaty of alliance with Montenegro, was scarcely disposed to bow to the demands of Turkey. Instead, it countered with the demand that the Turkish troops evacuate the provinces and permit Serbia to occupy Bosnia. Montenegro was to be permitted to occupy Herzegovina.<sup>12</sup>

It was this demand by Serbia that stirred the British Foreign Office to action. Though the Powers co-operated with Britain in attempting to induce Serbia and Montenegro to abstain from so drastic a move as a declaration of war, failure resulted.<sup>13</sup> Serbia was counting heavily upon revolts, which she believed would break out everywhere in the Turkish Empire following a Serbian attack upon Turkey, and upon an anticipated disintegration of the Turkish army.<sup>14</sup> She was confident of victory, so, on June 30, 1876, she declared war against Turkey.<sup>15</sup> Montenegro followed with a declaration

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11. Debidour, Histoire diplomatique, II, 491.

12. Ibid. II, 491.

13. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 908.

14. French Ambassador at Constantinople to French Foreign Minister. Affaires étrangères: documents diplomatiques: affaires d'Orient, 1875-1876-1877 (Paris, 1877), 157f. Hereafter referred to as French Diplomatic Documents.

15. Hertalet, Map of Europe, 2471-74.

of war on July 2.<sup>16</sup> Very shortly thereafter, the insurgents of Bosnia-Herzegovina declared their provinces to be annexed by Serbia and Montenegro.<sup>17</sup> This most certainly would not be accepted by Austria. Russia would not allow Austria to side with Turkey. The Eastern Question was still open.

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While the Turkish-Serbian situation had been developing, another insurrection had taken place in the Turkish Empire. On May 4, 1876, Sir Henry Elliot reported that an insurrectionary movement had broken out in Bulgaria at the village of Otloukeui not far from Philippopolis.<sup>18</sup> This information was not so worded as to cause alarm. The Foreign Office regarded it lightly, for, after all, such disturbances were rather common. The Bulgarians had made at least three attempts, in the sixties, to "throw off the Turkish yoke."<sup>19</sup> This insurrection, which came to be known as the "Bulgarian Horrors," was not directly related to that of Bosnia-Herzegovina, but it is part of this study, because the extent of the popular reaction in Britain was such that it made complete freedom of action by the government impossible, and it influenced the government to modify its Balkan policy. It is not suggested, however, that the Bulgarian Horrors were the sole cause of this modification.

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16. Ibid. 2475ff.

17. Debidour, Histoire diplomatique, II, 491.

18. Hertslet, Map of Europe, 1471.

19. W. M. Gewehr, The Rise of Nationalism in the Balkans, 1800-1930 (N.Y., 1831), 36.

The British people were first made aware of the massacres on June 23, 1876, by a Daily News article, based on a Letter from Mr. Edwin Pears, a resident at Constantinople.<sup>20</sup> Eventually it was learned that the story was greatly exaggerated, but, upon publication, it was believed by huge numbers of the British populace. Three days after publication, Disraeli was questioned in the House of Commons, and again on July 10.<sup>21</sup> He took the position, on both occasions, that "the information which the Government had received did not justify the statements made in the Daily News."<sup>22</sup> Articles continued to appear in the Daily News, but Disraeli, though concerned, maintained a rather calm attitude, because the paper was the leading Liberal organ and had been hostile to him in the past. When, however, The Times printed similar articles, he became worried. A special envoy, Walter Baring, was charged with finding out the truth. His preliminary report fixed the number of Bulgarian victims at 12,000.<sup>23</sup> This report, by comparison with the newspaper report, permitted Disraeli to maintain that "his scepticism had been justified."<sup>24</sup> It was an event, he said, "which no

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20. R. B. Mowat, A History of European Diplomacy, 1815-1914 (London, 1922), 225.

21. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 915.

22. Ibid. 915.

23. Ibid. 919.

24. Ibid. 919.

one can think of without emotion."<sup>25</sup> He made it clear in his last speech in the House of Commons that his foreign policy was still headlined by the maintenance of the British Empire:

But Sir, we must not jump at conclusions so quickly as is now the fashion. There is nothing to justify us in talking in such a vein of Turkey as has been, and is being at this moment, entertained. The present is a state of affairs which requires the most vigilant examination and the most careful management. But those who suppose that England ever would uphold, or at this moment particularly is upholding, Turkey from blind superstition, and from a want of sympathy with the highest aspirations of humanity, are deceived. What our duty is at this critical moment is to maintain the Empire of England. Nor will we agree to any step, though it may obtain for a moment comparative quiet and a false prosperity, that hazards the existence of that Empire.<sup>26</sup>

The agitation of the British people reached a boiling point; public meetings were held; idealistic men appeared on public platforms; and everywhere the cry to expel the Turk was heard. Gladstone came out of retirement to lead the crusade. On September 6 he had published a pamphlet entitled "The Bulgarian Horrors," in which he called on the Turks to quit the Balkans, "bag and baggage."<sup>27</sup> The situation for the government was serious. Disraeli was greatly aided by Derby during the crisis, and together they were able to survive, but not without some compromise. Derby's words, in speaking to the City deputation, express this well: "I

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25. Ibid. 919.

26. Ibid. 920. Disraeli was elevated to the peerage as Lord Beaconsfield. Hence, his last speech.

27. Ibid. 931.

do not at all wish to disguise the fact that what has happened in Bulgaria has to a certain extent changed the position, not only of our own Government, but of every European Government."<sup>28</sup> In returning, now, to the Serbo-Turkish War it must be kept in mind that, during the whole period of the war, the British government faced this problem of popular hysteria, and consequently had to proceed with caution.

Serbian armies suffered defeat from the beginning of the conflict, a fact which caused no little surprise in the European capitals. It had been thought that Serbia and Montenegro, under Russian generalship and with the aid of large numbers of Russian volunteers, would be successful against Turkey, whose impotence was supposedly proven by her inability to restore order in Bosnia-Herzegovina. It cannot be doubted that the British Prime Minister and his Foreign Minister were somewhat pleased at the turn of events, but, because of the hostility evinced by the British public against Turkey, no public utterances to this effect were possible. Montenegro achieved some minor successes, but Serbia suffered one disaster after another. Not only were they unable to enter the Turkish provinces, but they were hurled back upon their own territory. The fanaticism of the Turkish soldier was as intense as ever, and terrible atrocities took place, in all parts of the Empire, against

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28. Ibid. 941.

the Christian population. "Bosnia and Herzegovina were literally deluged by fire and blood."<sup>29</sup>

From the beginning of the conflict, the British Foreign Office adopted a policy of "non-interference and neutrality."<sup>30</sup> The Powers followed this lead. On July 31, British tensions having increased with each Turkish victory and atrocity, the British government barely survived a great debate upon the general Eastern policy. At the close of the debate, Hartington, the leader of the opposition, stated that in general he agreed with the government's policy, but that he objected to the means used to carry out that policy.<sup>31</sup> This was not the end of the government's troubles, for, on August 11, the opposition launched an inspired attack. Harcourt shouted that European opinion "would support any Power that would emancipate Europe from the curse which afflicted her, and redeem Christendom from the shame by which she had been too long dishonoured."<sup>32</sup> This attack had its effect. If the government were to remain in power, some course of action would have to be initiated.

Derby instructed Mr. White, the British agent at Belgrade, to inform Prince Milan that a request from him that the Powers extend their good offices for mediation

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29. Debidour, Histoire diplomatique, II, 492f.

30. Beaconsfield to Bradford. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 909.

31. Ibid. 910.

32. Ibid. 919.



would be favorably received by Great Britain.<sup>33</sup> In two weeks, Milan acted upon this suggestion, and asked the Powers for their help in re-establishing peace. He suggested that it would be desirable to include Montenegro.<sup>34</sup> This country requested Austria to act in her behalf in securing the aid of the Powers.<sup>35</sup> This being accomplished, the Powers agreed that "the cessation of hostilities should also apply to Bosnia and Herzegovina."<sup>36</sup>

Negotiations were not interrupted by the palace revolution which occurred at Constantinople on August 31.<sup>37</sup> The new Sultan, Abdul Hamid, influenced by his First Minister, Midhat, a definite Anglophile, seemed to offer hope. Beaconsfield, for one, was in a mood of elation. He wrote: "The new Sultan, I hear, really promises. He has got the Commons' blue book translated for him--and Forster's speech on 'atrocities.'"<sup>38</sup> It was not to be very long before Beaconsfield would regretfully see his mistake. Just one day after the revolution, Derby instructed Elliot to propose to the Turkish government that it grant an armistice of not less

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33. French Diplomatic Documents, 176f.

34. Ibid. 180.

35. Ibid. 187f.

36. Ibid. 188.

37. Mowat, European Diplomacy, 226.

38. Beaconsfield to Salisbury. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 943ff.

than a month's duration.<sup>39</sup> Turkey did not accept the plan of an armistice, but sent a memorandum to the Powers on September 14.<sup>40</sup> It contained the conditions of peace that would be acceptable to her. Upon learning from the Powers that a suspension of hostilities was acceptable, Turkey put an end to hostilities until September 25.<sup>41</sup>

Some of the Turkish conditions of peace were considered inadmissible by Britain. Hence, Derby entered into a series of negotiations with the Powers for the purpose of devising a program which would be suitable to the Powers as a basis of pacification. The three following points, finally agreed upon, were presented to Turkey: (1) the status quo for Serbia and Montenegro; (2) administrative autonomy for Bosnia-Herzegovina; and (3) a similar arrangement for Bulgaria--details to be worked out later.<sup>42</sup> Turkey would not agree to an armistice, but prolonged the suspension of hostilities until October 2.<sup>43</sup> Prince Milan, the Serbian monarch, would not agree to a mere suspension, but continued to demand an armistice.

On September 26 Russia proposed that, if Turkey should reject the terms of peace offered by the Powers, she should occupy Bulgaria, Austria should occupy Bosnia, and a

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39. French Diplomatic Documents, 214.

40. Hertslet, Map of Europe, 2482-87.

41. French Diplomatic Documents, 215.

42. Ibid. 198.

43. Ibid. 218.

united fleet of the Powers should enter the Bosphorus.<sup>44</sup> Lord Beaconsfield remarked that "England looks upon the proposed occupation by Russia as a real Bulgarian atrocity."<sup>45</sup> The British Cabinet rejected the Russian proposal. It was obvious that Russia had counted upon public opinion in Great Britain (Gladstone's pamphlet had appeared shortly before) to sufficiently influence the government that it would feel bound to side with the Russians. This was a mistake.

By October 3, Turkey had not accepted the pacification program submitted by the Powers, and an additional suspension of hostilities had not been arranged. Consequently, the war was resumed.<sup>46</sup> Russia proposed to the Powers that the bloodshed be stopped immediately by the imposition of a six-week truce.<sup>47</sup> The British Cabinet decided to accept the proposal. Elliot was instructed to inform Turkey that she must either accept the terms of peace, or grant an immediate armistice of not less than a month; that, if she refused, he would be recalled and no further aid would be given to Turkey.<sup>48</sup> How drastic a step this actually was can be seen in the words of Beaconsfield:

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44. Ibid. 219. See also, G. W. Chrystal, translator, Memoirs of Prince Chlodwig of Hohenlohe-Schillingsfuerst: Edited by Friedrich Curtius for Prince Alexander of Hohenlohe-Schillingsfuerst (2 vols., London, 1906), II, 181.

45. Beaconsfield to Bradford. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 951.

46. French Diplomatic Documents, 201.

47. Ibid. 201.

48. Ibid. 202ff.

There were great, and just, objections to this course, because, when an Ambassador retires, he cannot reappear. All personal influence is lost, and in 1829, the last time when the Embassies left Constantinople, war between Russia and Turkey instantly ensued.

And yet affairs had come to such a pass, thro' the conduct of Gladstone and Co., that it was necessary to try this last card--and it succeeded!<sup>49</sup>

When Beaconsfield wrote to Lady Bradford expressing his joy over the Turkish acceptance of an armistice, he knew that Turkey had accepted with the provision that the armistice was to be of six-month's duration. This pleased him for as he said, "this will give us breathing time."<sup>50</sup> It didn't occur to him that the Turkish provision might be rejected. Yet, rejected it was, on the ground that Serbia "could not keep its army on a war footing for such a length of time without putting too severe a strain on its resources."<sup>51</sup> British pressure on Russia to induce her to force acceptance of the six-month armistice on Serbia availed nothing. Russia felt that she now had the upper hand, and, by leading the way, might be able to procure the support of Britain. Once again Russia misjudged Lord Beaconsfield. He refused to bring his influence to bear on Turkey that she accept the six-week armistice, but added that he would not oppose any such demands that other Powers might desire to make.<sup>52</sup> Before this

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49. Beaconsfield to Bradford. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 952.

50. Ibid. 952.

51. Ibid. 952.

52. French Diplomatic Documents, 212f.

reply had been given to the Russian Ambassador, a diplomatic attempt in another direction had been made. Although it failed, it merits narration, since it so aptly describes the extent to which Beaconsfield was willing to go in search for a solution to the Eastern Question.

He believed that Russia was the real threat to the peace of Europe; that she, alone, was responsible for the present state of confusion in the Balkans; that, if he could find some means short of war to thoroughly intimidate her, his subsequent diplomacy would be successful. To him, there appeared but one method of accomplishing this: the League of Three Emperors must be broken, so that Russia would be deprived of that security which permitted her to act so audaciously as she had in the recent past. He knew that if he could effect a treaty with Germany he would have nullified the efficacy of the Three Emperor's League. Derby, Salisbury, and the Queen were "generally sympathetic" to the plan.<sup>53</sup>

Bismarck was approached without success. Beaconsfield felt strongly that Gladstone and Lowe were responsible for the failure. In a speech at Aylesbury, Beaconsfield had made the statement that "the Government had not the 'unanimous' support of the country, but that a large party in the country was using the 'atrocious cry' for party purposes."<sup>54</sup> Gladstone and Lowe changed the wording of the statement so that it sounded as if Beaconsfield had said that the

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53. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 953.

54. Ibid. 955.

Government was opposed to the feelings of the majority of the country. These assertions, Beaconsfield said, "had done immense harm in retarding negotiations with Foreign Powers on this question."<sup>55</sup> He believed that Bismarck refused to enter into a treaty with England on the assumption that the country would not go along with the Government; and that the following built up by Gladstone had become too powerful for the Government to be able to maintain itself. Whatever the truth concerning the reasons for Bismarck's refusal might be, the fact remains that he responded to the British proposal with only a polite note, which stated that, while he might have wished that Russia would have accepted the six-month armistice, he didn't feel justified in exercising a pressure on her.<sup>56</sup>

When the Turkish proposal for a six-month armistice was officially rejected by the Russians, the Turkish army was given orders to attack. The resistance offered by the Serbs, heavily supported by Russian volunteers, rapidly collapsed. Town after town fell, until even the road to Belgrade was without defense.<sup>57</sup> Ignatieff learned of this critical position of the Serbian army just when Lord Loftus, the British Ambassador at Saint Petersburg, delivered a British note, stating that Britain had no intentions of advancing any fresh propositions.<sup>58</sup> On the next day, October 31, Russia,

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55. Ibid. 955.

56. French Diplomatic Documents, 226.

57. Debidour, Histoire diplomatique, II, 496.

58. French Diplomatic Documents, 227.

fearing that she must act at once in order to save Serbia, delivered an ultimatum to Turkey.<sup>59</sup> It demanded that Turkey grant an armistice of from six weeks to two months. If this was not done within forty-eight hours the Russian Embassy was to be withdrawn. When Beaconsfield received this news, he adopted, for the moment, an extremely pessimistic attitude. He expressed his feelings very plainly in the excerpt of the letter to Lady Bradford which follows:

A little after noon came the awful news that Genl. Ignatieff had received orders from Livadia to deliver the offensive and hostile ultimatum you are now well acquainted with!

This was the consequence of the Turkish victories, and the humiliation the Emperor felt at the probability of the Turks reaching Belgrade. The pretext that the Turks carried on hostilities during negotiations for armistice is quite hollow. The Russo-Servian army has never ceased attacking and harassing the Turks during the whole time. Besides, negotiations for armistice never suspend hostilities as a matter of public law.

What will happen now? I think it looks as black as possible. The whole affair has been a conspiracy of Russia from the beginning, and she has failed in everything--even in active warfare the Porte has defeated her. I don't think she can stand it, and she will rush to further reverses.<sup>60</sup>

Turkey accepted the conditions of the ultimatum on November 1,<sup>61</sup> the armistice to be for two months rather than six weeks.

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59. Hertslet, Map of Europe, 2502f.

60. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 958.

61. Hertslet, Map of Europe, 2504f.

The event of the armistice did not permit British diplomacy to rest. There was the matter of arranging for a conference of the Powers and the conference itself to concern the British Foreign Office and the Prime Minister. This, however, will be discussed at length in the next chapter.

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For the present, it is well to review briefly the diplomacy of the four month period just passed. When it was affirmed that Serbia meant to make war, Britain requested of the Powers that they attempt to induce Serbia to maintain peace. In addition, a stern warning was given Russia that, in the event of a Turkish victory, Britain would consider gravely any interference by Russia in the settlement demanded by Turkey as the victor. These steps did not prevent Serbia and Montenegro from declaring war. Britain adopted a policy of "non-interference and neutrality," and was supported in this policy by the Powers. In August Britain suggested to Serbia that she ask for the mediation of the Powers in securing peace. Mediation followed, and a suspension of hostilities (applying to Bosnia-Herzegovina also) was made effective until September 25. Turkey submitted a list of conditions upon which she would willingly make peace. The Powers devised a program of peace that would be acceptable to them, since some of the Turkish conditions were inadmissible. Turkey did not accept, but granted an additional suspension of hostilities. This term expired without anything definite having been decided upon. War was resumed. Russia proposed that the powers impose a six-week truce upon



the combatants. Britain and the other powers co-operated-- Britain even going so far as to threaten Turkey with a British withdrawal of her Embassy if Turkey declined the truce. Turkey accepted with the provision that the truce be for a six-month period. Serbia, backed by Russia, found this unacceptable to her, so the Turkish army pressed forward successfully. Russia, fearing for Serbia, dispatched an ultimatum to Turkey on the last day of October. The terms of this ultimatum, that Turkey grant an immediate armistice, were accepted by Turkey. Thus fighting ceased. The outstanding fact that emerges from the British diplomacy of this period is that Britain's first point of her Eastern diplomacy--that there be a Turkey-in-Europe--was still a fact in spite of pressure from the opposition. The Russian desire to advance on the Straits was thwarted. The British Empire was not really threatened.

### CHAPTER III

#### CONFERENCE AND PROTOCOL

The Conference of Constantinople was a long time being born. As early as May, 1876, Beaconsfield was aware of a desire on the part of some of the Powers for a Congress or Conference. He wrote, on May 29: "There is no doubt that France is strongly urging a Congress, and, I am assured, at the instance of Russia."<sup>1</sup> He, too, was in favor of a gathering of the Powers, and informed Derby that he felt that a Congress would be "the only practical solution in the long run."<sup>2</sup> Despite this desire of three of the Powers for a Conference it was not then brought about, because the Palace revolution at Constantinople and the subsequent withdrawal of the Berlin Memorandum,<sup>3</sup> while not restoring order to Bosnia-Herzegovina, had effected a temporary cessation of diplomatic attempts by the Powers to solve the Eastern Question. The Serbo-Turkish War revived the Conference idea. On October 5, 1876, the British Foreign Office suggested to the governments of the

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1. Sir Sidney Lee, King Edward VII: A Biography (2 vols., N.Y., 1925), I, 418.

2. Disraeli to Derby, May 31, 1876. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 902.

3. Above, 18.

Powers that a Conference be held.<sup>4</sup> This suggestion was initiated by Derby after learning from Schouvaloff that "this course would meet with the approval of his government."<sup>5</sup> Andrassy expressed reluctance to agree to a Conference which he thought could only lead to "abortive or dangerous results."<sup>6</sup> Instructions were forthwith dispatched to Buchanan, the British Ambassador at Vienna. He was to explain to Andrassy that the Conference should not assemble "until a basis should have been arranged which should define the subjects to be considered and secure their being confined within certain limits . . . and . . . that all that is asked of him at present is that he should not object to the principle of a Conference."<sup>7</sup> Andrassy, of course, did not object. Turkey, however, at this time advancing on the road to Belgrade,<sup>8</sup> informed the British Foreign Office that she absolutely protested against the proposed Conference.<sup>9</sup> Thus the Conference idea was again suspended.

On November 4 a Cabinet Council decided that the British Foreign Office should issue a Circular inviting

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4. State Papers, V. 67, 269ff.

5. Ibid., V. 67, 269.

6. Buchanan to Derby. Ibid., V. 67, 270f.

7. Ibid., V. 67, 272f.

8. Above, 34.

9. State Papers, V. 67, 280f.

the Powers to a Conference to be held at Constantinople.<sup>10</sup> Each government was to appoint two Plenipotentiaries. The basis for the deliberations was to be as follows:

1. The independence and the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire.

2. A declaration that the Powers do not intend to seek for, and will not seek for, any territorial advantages, any exclusive influence, or any concession with regard to the commerce of their subjects, which those of every other nation may not equally obtain. . . .

3. The bases of pacification proposed to the Porte on the 21st of September, viz.:--

(a.) The status quo, speaking roughly, both as regards Servia and Montenegro.

(b.) That the Porte should simultaneously undertake, in a Protocol to be signed at Constantinople with the Representatives of the Mediating Powers, to grant to Bosnia and Herzegovina a system of local institutions which shall give the population some control over their own local affairs and guarantees against the exercise of arbitrary authority.

There is to be no question of the creation of a tributary State.

Guarantees of a similar kind to be also provided against maladministration in Bulgaria. The reforms already agreed to by the Porte in the note addressed to the Representatives of the Powers on the 13th of February last, to be included in the administrative arrangement for Bosnia and the Herzegovina, and so far as they may be applicable for Bulgaria.<sup>11</sup>

By November 20 all the Powers had accepted the invitation to the Conference.<sup>12</sup> Russia had expressed a desire to omit the word "territorial" from point one of the basis, since she thought it would still be necessary

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10. Moneypenny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 959.

11. Hertslet, Map of Europe, 2516f.

12. State Papers, V. 67, 297-322.

to occupy certain Turkish provinces.<sup>13</sup> However, she finally accepted the British program as it stood (tel quel).<sup>14</sup> Turkey accepted the invitation to the Conference only after Britain warned her that a refusal would result in the withdrawal of "all support and countenance from the Porte."<sup>15</sup>

None of the Powers went to the Conference with much optimism. The British and Russian pre-Conference attitudes were clearly revealed in speeches and diplomatic exchanges. On Lord Mayor's Day, November 9, Beaconsfield spoke in a tone that was described by his domestic critics as one of "warlike defiance."<sup>16</sup> He said that the object of the Government was to secure peace by observance of the Treaties of 1856 and 1871, and to secure an amelioration of the condition of the Turkish subjects.<sup>17</sup> The passage which caused so much excitement follows:

I am hopeful, in the present temper of Europe, we shall be able to accomplish the objects we have in view without those terrible appeals to war, of which, I think, we have heard too frequently and too much. . . . There is no country so interested in the maintenance of peace as England. Peace is especially an English policy. She is not an aggressive Power, for there is nothing which she desires. She covets no cities and no provinces. What she wishes is to maintain and to enjoy the

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13. Ibid., V. 67, 299.

14. Ibid., V. 67, 303.

15. Ibid., V. 67, 317.

16. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 962.

17. Ibid. 963.

unexampled empire which she has built up, and which it is her pride to remember exists as much upon sympathy as upon force. But although the policy of England is peace, there is no country so well prepared for war as our own. If she enters into conflict in a righteous cause--and I will not believe that England will go to war except for a righteous cause--if the contest is one which concerns her liberty, her independence, or her empire, her resources, I feel, are inexhaustible. She is not a country that, when she enters into a campaign, has to ask herself whether she can support a second or a third campaign. She enters into a campaign which she will not terminate till right is done.<sup>18</sup>

On the following day, without knowing of Beaconsfield's speech, Emperor Alexander addressed the nobility and Municipal Council of Moscow. The European Press erroneously reported the speech as an answer to Beaconsfield, which, of course, caused a misinterpretation by the public. Comparing the following passage of Emperor Alexander's speech with the above passage from Beaconsfield's, one can readily see the tenseness of Europe at this time.

Negotiations will commence shortly at Constantinople between the Great Powers to bring about a peaceful arrangement. My ardent wish is for a peaceful agreement. Should we not obtain from the Porte such guarantees for carrying out the reforms we have a right to demand, I am firmly determined to act independently; and I am convinced that the whole of Russia will support me, should the honour of Russia require it, and that Moscow will give the example. May God help us to carry our sacred mission.<sup>19</sup>

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18. Ibid. 964. The "appeals to war" of which Beaconsfield spoke were those of Russia.

19. Lord Augustus Loftus, The Diplomatic Reminiscences of Lord Augustus Loftus, P.C., G.C.B., 1862-1879 (second series, 2 vols., London, 1894), II, 194.

As if in substantiation of the Emperor's speech, the British Foreign Office received information concerning Russian war preparations. It was reported that 8,000 tons of lead were being brought to Russia, and that the Russian Army had placed an order for 800,000 pairs of boots. The tone of the Russian press was depicted as being exceedingly hostile; a large section of society was supposedly disappointed at the conclusion of the Armistice; and a desire for war was "evinced by a great portion of the army."<sup>20</sup> On November 18 Derby learned that a portion of the Russian Army had been mobilized.<sup>21</sup> Armed with this knowledge the British Government was scarcely disposed to believe in the peaceful intentions of Russia, which were conveyed to Derby by Loftus, the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg. He had had, on November 2, a long talk with Emperor Alexander, who, with great detail, had gone into the matter of Russo-British relations. The dispatch did not reach the British Foreign Office until November 18.<sup>22</sup> It did little to allay British suspicions of Russia, though it is true that the British Government believed that the Russian Army would not march until spring.

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20. Doria to Derby (received November 13). State Papers, V. 67, 307f.

21. Hertslet, Map of Europe, 2519.

22. Ibid. 2506-12.

On November 20 Lord Salisbury, the Indian Secretary, was appointed to represent England conjointly with Sir Henry Elliot at the Conference of Constantinople. His formal instructions stated that the immediate necessity was "to restore tranquillity to the disturbed Provinces."<sup>23</sup> This was going to be a real chore. The crux of the thing lay in establishing "religious liberty" and "administrative reforms."<sup>24</sup> The Powers were to be permitted to demand that security be provided "for carrying those measures into operation."<sup>25</sup> In addition, "it would be necessary that some steps should be taken to establish an equitable system of taxation before deciding on the distribution of the funds to be made applicable to local purposes."<sup>26</sup> The most important phrase of the instructions was the last sentence, which read--"should the Turkish Government reject these proposals, the British Government will reserve to itself entire liberty as regards its policy."<sup>27</sup> Salisbury left England early enough to permit him to make a tour of the European Capitals. In Paris he saw Decases, the French Foreign Minister, and Marshal MacMahon;<sup>28</sup> in Berlin the Emperor William I, the Crown Prince

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23. State Papers, V. 68, 1064-80.

24. Ibid. 1064-73.

25. Ibid. 1064-73.

26. Ibid. 1064-73.

27. German Diplomatic Documents, I, 44.

28. French Diplomatic Documents, 256.



and Princess and Prince Bismarck;<sup>29</sup> in Vienna Count Andrassy;<sup>30</sup> and in Rome Prince Humbert and several Italian ministers.<sup>31</sup> The tour went far toward establishing a sociable atmosphere for the Conference.

The Conference was preceded by preliminary discussions lasting from December 11 to 22. These discussions, to which Turkey was not admitted, were under the Presidency of General Ignatieff, the Russian Plenipotentiary.<sup>32</sup> He easily brought Salisbury under his influence, and the Preliminary discussions reflected more Russian thinking than British. Elliot attributes this to Salisbury's lack of knowledge of Turkish affairs.<sup>33</sup> Salisbury, it is true, felt the need of British-Russian understanding and was willing to make concessions.<sup>34</sup> These concessions were not all in accord with Beaconsfield's viewpoint. As a matter of fact, he was quite disgusted with his representative and said, "Sal. seems most prejudiced, and not to be aware, that his principal object, in being sent to Const., is to keep the Russians out of

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29. German Diplomatic Documents, I, 39.

30. State Papers, V. 68, 1082f.

31. Ibid. 1084f.

32. French Diplomatic Documents, 267. Contains a 153 page appendix covering the preliminary and regular meetings of the Conference.

33. Sir Henry G. Elliot, Some Revolutions and Other Diplomatic Experiences (London, 1922), 276ff.

34. Langer, European Alliances, 105.

Turkey, not to create an ideal existence for Turkish Xtians."<sup>35</sup>

The demands formulated by the Powers were, briefly, as follows:

Serbia was to be left as before the war, Montenegro was to gain a port on the Adriatic, two states were to be formed to include the Bulgarians in the eastern Balkans and these states were to have some control over their local affairs; for Bosnia and Herzegovina a thorough scheme of reforms was proposed. An international commission was to supervise these changes and an international gendarmerie of 6000 men was to secure their execution.<sup>36</sup>

Ignatieff referred to these demands as the "irreducible minimum,"<sup>37</sup> because he had had to surrender the Russian occupation plan, and would surrender no more. The demands were to be submitted to Turkey at the first meeting of the Conference; she could accept or reject, but she could not negotiate. Such was the will of Ignatieff. On the last day of the Preliminary Discussion Derby sent a dispatch to Salisbury warning him that England would not consent to coercive measures against Turkey. Turkey was to be told that she could not expect assistance from Britain in case of war. In the event of a Turkish refusal to accept the demands Salisbury and Elliot were to return home, leaving the Embassy in the hands of a Secretary.<sup>38</sup>

The first meeting of the Conference, under the Presidency of Safvet Pasha, Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, took place December 23.<sup>39</sup> In the midst of

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35. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 983.

36. Tyler, European Powers, 75.

37. Elliot, Some Revolutions, 285.

38. State Papers, V. 68, 1090.

39. German Diplomatic Documents, I, 44.

discussions the delegates were interrupted by the booming of cannon.<sup>40</sup> Safvet Pasha explained that a new constitution had just been promulgated. This constitution was the work of Midhat Pasha, who had become Grand Vizier only four days previously.<sup>41</sup> Beaconsfield, speaking of Midhat's ascension, indulged in understatement when he said, "there was a change of Government yesterday at Constantinople, but I doubt whether that will help us."<sup>42</sup> He was, of course, anticipating the promulgation which had been reported in the making as early as October. Naturally this event greatly disturbed the normal course of the Conference. Midhat desired to present the Constitution to the Conference in a formal way, but the delegates would have none of that. Elliot suggests that this was a grievous error on the part of the Powers, because as he said:

. . . if the offer had been accepted the Powers would have obtained an engagement little less binding than a formal treaty, and would have secured the right of authoritatively insisting that its provisions should be respected; and, though the Sultan might, perhaps, endeavour to evade it, he could not have ventured, as he afterwards did, openly to repudiate it; for he would have known not only that the Powers would sternly remind him of the engagement he had taken towards them, but that they would be supported in their protest by the immense majority of his own subjects.<sup>43</sup>

An examination of Beaconsfield's writings at this time clearly reveals that the British Government had little hope of success at the Conference. Beaconsfield was striving to get

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40. Langer, European Alliances, 107.

41. French Diplomatic Documents, 267.

42. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 980.

43. Elliot, Some Revolutions, 250.

military preparations under way, and seemed to be aiming at the protection of Constantinople against Russia and the acquisition of a post in the Near East.<sup>44</sup> Russia had not stopped her program of military preparations. In fact, France was the only Power which seemed to believe that the Conference might be successful.<sup>45</sup> It is quite certain that the Powers, believing and acting as they did, were reasonably confident that Turkey would refuse the "irreducible minimum." When the Turks offered the quite liberal constitution (providing for a Legislative Body of two Houses, and complete religious liberty),<sup>46</sup> they offered their maximum. It would seem to the author that Elliot was right in suggesting that the Powers made a mistake in not settling for the Constitution.

As was expected, the Turks refused to accept the demands, even though Salisbury strongly urged acceptance and told them that England would withdraw all support in case of refusal.<sup>47</sup> Safvet Pasha proposed a prolongation of the Armistice until March. Ignatieff acquiesced, and the Powers gave their adhesion to the proposal. Serbia and Montenegro were notified of the additional armistice.<sup>48</sup> Odian Effendi was sent from Turkey to confer with the British Foreign Office. He told Derby that Turkey could not accept the demands, not

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44. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 970-86.

45. Tyler, European Powers, 80.

46. French Diplomatic Documents, 272-83.

47. Ibid. 270.

48. Ibid. 292.

because of the proposed reforms as much as because of the "guarantees demanded for their execution."<sup>49</sup> He added that Turkey had 600,000 men under arms and would face a campaign with Russia rather than accept dishonor. Derby immediately informed Salisbury of the contents of this communication. The Powers then resorted to negotiation with Turkey. On January 12 they submitted a modified plan to Turkey and asserted that this would be the last reduction of demands, that, if the latter were not accepted, the Conference would be at an end.<sup>50</sup> The modified plan still contained the "points relative to the International Commission, and to the nomination of the Valis (Governors) with the previous consent of the Powers."<sup>51</sup> These were the guarantees for execution which Turkey had informed Derby that they would never accept. On January 17 a Turkish Grand Council rejected the plan. Salisbury reported that "the Sultan was anxious to accept the terms of the Powers, but the Grand Vizier was resolved upon resistance, and brought the proposals before the Council in such a form that their rejection was a foregone conclusion."<sup>52</sup> This was not very accurate reporting. The Grand Council of 237 persons<sup>53</sup> comprised the most important personages of the Empire, including Nahometans, Christians, Greeks, and Armenians.

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49. State Papers, V. 68, 1094ff.

50. Ibid., V. 68, 1103.

51. Ibid., V. 68, 1102.

52. Ibid., V. 68, 1103.

53. Ibid., V. 68, 1103.

"Without a single dissentient voice the Council pronounced an unequivocal rejection of the Proposals concerning the nomination of Governors and the international Commissions."<sup>54</sup> On the ninth and last meeting of the Conference, January 20, Turkey agreed to accept a proposal put forward by Andraassy, which called for the establishment of "two Commissions composed of equal numbers of Christians and Mussulmans, freely elected by the inhabitants of the provinces."<sup>55</sup> The Powers refused to accept this last possible chance of conciliation. Thus, the Conference ended in complete failure. Salisbury and Elliot returned to England, leaving Mr. Jocelyn as Chargé d'Affaires.

The failure of the Conference left Russia and Turkey opposed to one another. Neither, in her position, had any visible support from any other power. Russia could march into Turkey, or she could wait to see if Turkey would grant the desired reforms. She decided to wait, and, in the meantime, try again to gain the support of the Powers for her anticipated venture.

Turkey's rejection of the Conference proposals placed Russia in a serious position. Very strong pressures were being brought upon the Government by various organs of the Russian Press. The original outburst of national feeling had become, by this time, a fanatically religious

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54. Elliot, Some Revolutions, 289. Loftus, Diplomatic Reminiscences, II, 201, is in agreement with Elliot.

55. Elliot, Some Revolutions, 288.

movement, which was demanding Russian intervention to alleviate the suffering of the brothers in the Turkish Empire.<sup>56</sup> It would be difficult for the Government to satisfy its subjects with any action short of war, but Gortchakoff intended to try. On January 19, even before the last meeting of the Conference, he issued a Circular Dispatch. He noted that the Powers had reached agreement at the Conference as to the measures relative to conditions of peace and to reforms, which were submitted to Turkey and subsequently rejected by her. This rejection called for further action, but he desired to know what the other Powers intended doing before originating an individual Russian action. He still believed that, if there were any possibility, the Powers should proceed in common.<sup>57</sup> It was obviously difficult for Britain to answer this dispatch, since her view was that nothing further could be done, that the Powers should at least wait to see what progress would be made under Turkey's new constitution. Derby drafted a reply which was wholly unacceptable to Beaconsfield, whose instructions to Derby for a revision of the draft follow:

. . . There runs throughout all Gort[chakoff]'s circular an assumption as to the raison d'être of the Conference.

The Powers were mediators: they were invited by the Porte to mediate: by no one was the position of the Powers, as mediators, and the character and object in which, and for which, they

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56. Loftus, Diplomatic Reminiscences, II, 137, contains a good account of the movement.

57. State Papers, V. 68, 1104.

made these proposals to Turkey, more clearly defined than by the Plenipotentiaries of Russia at the Conference.

As we were all mediators only, the refusal of the Porte to adopt our recommendations was no offence to the dignity of Europe.

Time would not allow me to attempt a sketch, even were I physically capable, but I throw out these rough lines.

If the draft is to remain, see that the word reform, etc., do not occur too often, and too slangishly.<sup>58</sup>

The reply, as finally submitted to Russia, was constructed along the lines desired by Beaconsfield. It positively rejected the supposition that Turkey had insulted the Powers by refusing to accept the Conference proposals.<sup>59</sup>

Gortchakoff was persistent in his attempts to revive the concert of Powers, or, probably better said, in his attempts to receive a mandate from the Powers for individual Russian action. Toward the last of February he sent General Ignatieff on an extraordinary mission. Armed with a Protocol, Ignatieff made a round of the Capitals of Europe seeking to induce the Powers to sign the Protocol when it would be presented in London.<sup>60</sup> On March 5 Bismarck announced that Germany was in agreement with the scheme and would communicate this fact to London and Vienna.<sup>61</sup> England was little influenced by the action of Bismarck. Ignatieff's mission was not welcome in England, and Beaconsfield expressed

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58. Beaconsfield to Derby. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 999.

59. Langer, European Alliances, 114.

60. German Diplomatic Documents, I, 48.

61. Ibid., I, 49.



his views in these words: "The Ignatieff arrival is a thunderbolt; nothing c[oul]d be more inopportune . . . ."62 Ignatieff was in England from January 16 to January 22.<sup>63</sup> During this short stay he found supporters among the opposition and the Government members who had shown an especial interest in the cause of the Eastern Christians. This caused the Cabinet to give a more careful consideration to the Protocol than might otherwise have been given. Queen Victoria seemed a little worried that the Cabinet might weaken, so she wrote the following to her Prime Minister:

The Queen . . . trusts the Cabinet will be very firm, and Lord Derby seemed so yesterday. She is prepared to speak or write to good but nervous and somewhat weak and sentimental Lord Carnarvon, if necessary, as well as to Lord Salisbury. This mawkish sentimentality for people who hardly deserve the name of real Christians, as if they were more God's creatures and our fellow-creatures than every other nation abroad, and forgetting the great interests of this great country--is really incomprehensible.<sup>64</sup>

The Cabinet remained firm. It rejected the Protocol as submitted by Ignatieff, because of the Russian desire that Turkey demobilize while she remained armed.<sup>65</sup>

After the departure of Ignatieff, Schouvaloff revised the Protocol and resubmitted it to the British Cabinet. Negotiations ensued. Finally, on March 31, the London

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62. Beaconsfield to Bradford. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 999f.

63. German Diplomatic Documents, I, 48.

64. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1002.

65. German Diplomatic Documents, I, 50.

Protocol was signed by the representatives of the six Powers. It stated that the Powers desired to maintain the agreement established between them at the Conference of Constantinople as regards the proposed reforms for Bosnia-Herzegovina and Bulgaria; that they "take cognizance of the conclusion of peace with Serbia, 28th February, 1877"; that they consider a rectification of the frontier of Montenegro to be desirable; that they invite the Porte to place its armies on a peace footing; that they hope Turkey "will apply energetically such measures as will cause . . . effective improvement in the condition of the Christian populations"; that they intend to watch over "the manner in which the promises of the Ottoman Government are carried into effect"; and that if the condition of the Christians is not improved they will "consider in common as to the means which they may deem best fitted to secure the wellbeing of the Christian populations, and the interests of the general peace."<sup>66</sup>

The wording of this Protocol was such that it appeared that the Powers were truly united, and determined to force their will upon Turkey, but this was far from the truth. Three of the Powers signed the Protocol with reservations. Russia stipulated that Turkey must send a Special Envoy to St. Petersburg to negotiate disarmament, and stated that disarmament would cease if new massacres occurred;<sup>67</sup> Italy declared that she would be bound by the Protocol only "so long as the

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66. Hertslet, Map of Europe, 2563ff.

67. Ibid. 2566.

agreement . . . between all the Powers" was maintained;<sup>68</sup> and England reserved the right to consider the Protocol null and void if "reciprocal disarmament on the part of Russia and Turkey, and peace between them" were not attained.<sup>69</sup> Thus, the reservations of the three Powers rendered the document practically worthless. Derby evaluated the Protocol accurately in this report to the Queen:

Lord Derby never has been, and is not now, sanguine of the success of this document in ensuring peace; but as it is now worded, it can do no harm even if it fails to do any good: and it will at least prevent the Russian Government from throwing the blame on England, if war ensues; which assuredly would have been done if signature had been refused. If the Russian Emperor is sincere in his alleged desire for an excuse to enable him to disarm, he has got what he wants; if not, we are only where we were, neither better nor worse than before.<sup>70</sup>

In the same Cabinet meeting in which it was decided to sign the Protocol, Mr. Layard was appointed Interim Ambassador at Constantinople in place of Sir Henry Elliot.<sup>71</sup> This appointment was looked upon as an unfriendly demonstration toward Russia, because Layard was considered even more Turkophile than Elliot. It was supposed that Turkey would accept the appointment as an indication that England meant to "hold to her traditional policy of protecting Turkey."<sup>72</sup> Schouvaloff was much disturbed by the appointment, especially as it

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68. Ibid. 2566.

69. Ibid. 2567.

70. Buckle, The Letters, 524.

71. German Diplomatic Documents, I, 50.

72. Ibid., I, 50.

occurred simultaneously with the signing of the Protocol. It was only natural that Layard should have received his appointment then, because the Protocol charged the Powers to observe the actions of Turkey through their representatives at Constantinople. What was not a generally known fact was that Beaconsfield had long desired to replace Elliot, and this was an opportune time since he was then in England. As early as August 7, 1876, Beaconsfield told Derby that "Elliot [had] shown a lamentable want of energy and deficiency of information throughout."<sup>73</sup> A week later he told him that "Elliot has many excellent qualities, both moral and intellectual, but he has not energy. This is probably the consequence of his wretched health; but, what[ever] the cause, the result is the same."<sup>74</sup>

Turkey rejected the Protocol, because, as she said, it was both an attack on the dignity of Turkey and, because of the stipulation calling for supervision of reforms by the Powers, a violation of the Treaty of 1856.<sup>75</sup> The Powers were now no further than they had been before the convening of the Conference of Constantinople. All the negotiation at the Conference and concerning the Protocol was unavailing. True--Turkey and Serbia were at peace, but not Turkey and Montenegro, and it looked as if Montenegro was being obstinate. The terms they offered for peace were the

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73. Moneypenny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 918.

74. Ibid. 921.

75. French Diplomatic Documents, 356-64.

proposals of the Conference and the port of Spizza, plus three islands in lake Scutari.<sup>76</sup> On March 19, before the signing of the Protocol, the Ottoman Parliament was opened for the first time.<sup>77</sup> Russia still had two choices--to give the new constitution a chance to bring about the desired reforms, or to march her armies across the Turkish border now that the Protocol was rejected.

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76. Ibid. 341f.

77. Hertslet, Map of Europe, 2531.

## CHAPTER IV

### BRITISH NEUTRALITY IN RUSSO-TURKISH WAR

Emperor Alexander, on April 19, 1877 gave the Russian armies orders to cross the Turkish frontiers,<sup>1</sup> and Gortchakoff, on the same day, issued a circular dispatch to the Governments of the interested European Powers. This dispatch noted the fact that all efforts for a conciliatory agreement had failed; that the Porte had resisted every "understanding established between the Cabinets"; that the Porte had just refused to sign the London Protocol; and that "in these circumstances, every chance is closed for efforts of conciliation."<sup>2</sup> The dispatch continued:

There remains no alternative but to allow the state of things to continue which the Powers have declared incompatible with their interests and those of Europe in general, or else to seek to obtain by coercion what the unanimous efforts of the Cabinets have not succeeded in obtaining from the Porte by persuasion.

Our august master has resolved to undertake this work, which His Majesty had invited the Great Powers to pursue in common with him.

He has given his armies the order to cross the frontiers of Turkey. . . .<sup>3</sup>

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1. State Papers, V. 68, 840.
  2. Hertslet, Map of Europe, 2586f.
  3. Ibid. 2587.

The Russian resort to war, formalized by a declaration dated April 24,<sup>4</sup> was taken in spite of the fact that Turkey and Serbia had negotiated peace, Bulgaria was enjoying complete tranquillity under the surveillance of Turkish regular troops, and the devastated villages in Bulgaria "were being rapidly rebuilt."<sup>5</sup> Montenegro was still fighting desperately, but the Turks had shown great willingness to grant peace on the status quo ante.<sup>6</sup> The insurrection in Bosnia-Herzegovina was still raging. The Turkish army, however, had been greatly strengthened<sup>7</sup> by this time, so that it appeared as if Turkey would be able to resolve the situation. In view of these facts England felt that the war was unjustifiable. Loftus, British Ambassador at St. Petersburg, approached Gortchakoff with the possibility of mediation, but was told "that it was too late, as the Russian troops, if not already in movement, were on the eve of marching."<sup>8</sup>

The Russian advance against Turkey seemed a bold and careless move, because her flank was completely exposed to Austria, who had definite interests in the Balkans. It had been recognized for a long time that Austria kept her eyes turned southward, and even harbored the hope that she might one day be in Salonika. It was difficult

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4. French Diplomatic Documents, 374f.

5. Elliot, Some Revolutions, 274.

6. Above, 56f.

7. Above, 49.

8. Loftus, Diplomatic Reminiscences, II, 213.

to understand how Austria, with these aspirations, could allow Russia to freely march into the Balkans. The answer to this enigma was contained in a long series of secret negotiations between Russia and Austria. On July 8, 1876, the two countries had come to an agreement in a Secret Conference of Reichstadt.<sup>9</sup> The subsequent events in the Balkan tangle made it necessary that the two countries have a new agreement. This was achieved by the Secret Treaty of Budapest, of January 15, 1877.<sup>10</sup> Under this treaty, Austria agreed, in case of war between Russia and Turkey, "to observe an attitude of benevolent neutrality in the presence of the isolated action of Russia, and by its diplomatic action to paralyze, so far as this [lay] in its power, efforts at intervention or collective mediation which might be attempted by other Powers."<sup>11</sup> In return for this, Austria was to be allowed to occupy Bosnia-Herzegovina whenever it desired.<sup>12</sup> There were limitations placed upon the radius of military actions of both Russia and Austria, and Serbian and Montenegrin troops could join Russia in military action. On March 18 an additional convention was signed. This validated the agreement of

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9. A. F. Pribram, The Secret Treaties of Austria-Hungary, 1879-1914 (2 vols., Cambridge, 1921), II, 189f. Austrian and Russian texts are at variance. An excellent discussion of this agreement is contained in Langer, European Alliances, 92f and Tyler, European Powers, 67f.

10. Pribram, Secret Treaties, II, 191-203.

11. Ibid., II, 195.

12. Ibid., II, 197.



January 15, and comprised the territorial adjustments to be made if Russia were victorious.<sup>13</sup> Through these agreements Russia's flank was fully protected. Another set of negotiations had been necessary. Russia did not have a fleet in the Black Sea sufficiently large to permit her to attack Turkey from that direction. Thus she had to secure the privilege of moving her troops through Rumania. On April 16 Rumania and Russia signed two conventions which regulated the passage of Russian troops.<sup>14</sup>

The Russian declaration of war, while not a surprise in England, was a highly provocative event. Two distinct reactions occurred: one captained by Gladstone; the other, by Queen Victoria and her Prime Minister. Gladstone submitted a series of resolutions to Parliament, which were almost a plea that England join Russia in her humanitarian crusade.<sup>15</sup> He found little support for this ignominious policy. On the other hand, the reaction headed by the Queen and her Minister was markedly anti-Russian. Victoria's words to Beaconsfield make this apparent:

. . . there ought to be an understanding that we cannot allow the Russians to occupy Constantinople, and that we must see that this is promised or the consequences may be serious. To let it be thought that we shall never fight and that England will submit to Egypt being under Russia would be to abdicate the position of

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13. Ibid., II, 199-203. Date of signature found in Tyler, European Powers, 81f.

14. Hertslet, Map of Europe, 2576-85.

15. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1009.

Great Britain as one of the Great Powers--to which she never will submit, and another must wear the crown if this is intended.<sup>16</sup>

On May 1 Derby sent a reply<sup>17</sup> to the Russian dispatch of April 19. He stated therein that the British Government was not of the opinion that the terms of the Turkish protest to the London Protocol "necessarily precluded the possibility of the conclusion of peace with Montenegro, or of the arrangement of mutual disarmament"; that it believed that patience and moderation might have obtained these objects; and that it could not agree that the entrance of Russian armies on Turkish soil would alleviate the difficulty, "or improve the condition of the Christian population throughout the Sultan's dominions."<sup>18</sup> Derby concluded the note in saying that, since Russia assumed that she was acting in the interests of Great Britain and the other Powers, it was necessary for England to state in a formal and public manner that the "decision of the Russian Government is not one which can have [her] concurrence or approval."<sup>19</sup> This clearly worded note warned Russia that her action was contrary to the wishes of England and could

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16. Ibid. 1005.

17. Britain was the only Power that replied to the Russian dispatch.

18. Hertslet, Map of Europe, 2607ff.

19. Ibid. 2609.

have grave consequences. England declared neutrality, but a "watchful and conditional" neutrality.<sup>20</sup>

At a Cabinet meeting on May 5 it was decided that the note already dispatched to Russia was insufficient. Derby was to prepare another dispatch which would warn Russia "of the circumstances which would render it impossible [for England] to continue a policy of abstention and neutrality."<sup>21</sup> The note, dated May 6, which was carried by Schouvaloff to the Russian Government, stated in effect: Britain desired to make her interests clear at the outset of the war. The most important one was the Suez Canal, and "an attempt to blockade or otherwise to interfere with the Canal or its approaches would be regarded . . . as a menace to India, and as a grave injury to the commerce of the world." An attack on Egypt, or the occupation of it, could not be regarded with unconcern. Constantinople was not to be allowed to pass into hands other "than those of its present possessors." There would be serious objections to the alteration of the existing arrangements of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles. The Persian Gulf was another interest, and the course of events might reveal still other interests. Gortchakoff's reply to this note was satisfactory.<sup>22</sup> Thus the first stage of difficulty was passed.

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20. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1006. The Powers followed the lead of Britain in declaring neutrality. See State Papers, V. 68, 467f, 782, 851f.

21. Beaconsfield to Victoria. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1007.

22. State Papers, V. 68, 869ff.

Other than the warning given Russia by the British Government there was little in the way of a definite policy. The Cabinet drifted while Beaconsfield groped for a possible course of action. Even had Beaconsfield stumbled upon some course, it is probable that the Cabinet, at this time, would have refused to sanction it. Northcote, one of the Cabinet members, has left a memorandum which clearly describes the Cabinet division. An excerpt follows:

. . . The Prime Minister was most anxious to keep us all together. Lord Derby was chiefly bent on keeping us out of war, but was ready to go almost any length which his colleagues desired in writing despatches, apparently not perceiving that the strength of his language would be held to involve, under possible and probable circumstances, the necessity for corresponding action. In the earlier days of our difficulties the peace party in the Cabinet may be said to have consisted, under Lord Derby, of Cairns, Cross, the Duke of Richmond, Salisbury, Carnarvon, and myself. As time wore on, Cairns, Cross, and Richmond seemed somewhat to modify their views. I was much in communication with Salisbury and Carnarvon, and I was also in communication with Derby, between whom and the other two there was some coldness. Carnarvon was strongly impressed with the belief that the Prime Minister was desirous of war. Derby, judging more correctly, said to me: 'I don't think he desires war; he desires to place England in a "commanding position."' The Prime Minister himself said to me more than once that his great fear was that Derby's policy would lead us to war; and, looking back, I am more and more convinced that there was much ground for the apprehension.<sup>23</sup>

One of the possible courses of action explored by Beaconsfield was an attempt to get the British Fleet stationed

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23. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1011.

at Constantinople and 20,000 British troops on the Peninsula of Gallipoli. It would be necessary, Beaconsfield wrote in a secret letter to Layard,<sup>24</sup> that the proposal come from Turkey. Without such an invitation, accomplishment would be impossible. The Sultan, by now suspicious of England, did not welcome the plan. During these negotiations, Beaconsfield turned a deaf ear on a proposal by Bismarck that the Turkish Empire be partitioned. The nub of the rather involved scheme was that England was to take Egypt, other Powers were to have territorial compensations, and Russia was to be allowed control of the Black Sea.<sup>25</sup>

Such a plan as this was not at all suitable to Beaconsfield. Not only did he believe that such a partitioning would not bring peace among the Powers, but also he was highly suspicious of Bismarck. He thought that Bismarck would welcome a British-Russian war as an opportunity for Germany to march her armies to Paris again. Considering the history of the previous decade, Beaconsfield's interpretation of the Bismarckian scheme was not so surprising. Still another course of action explored by Beaconsfield was the possibility of a British-Austrian alliance. If this could be accomplished Russia would be thoroughly intimidated and might not proceed south of the Balkan range. Austria replied to the British suggestion coolly. She stated that she could not accept any one of the following seven points:

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24. Ibid. 1014f.

25. Langer, European Alliances, 123f.

(1) that the exclusive protectorate over the Balkan Christians should be conceded to any one Christian power; (2) that the definitive peace settlement should take place without the participation of the powers signatories of the Treaty of 1856; (3) that Russia should acquire territory on the right bank of the Danube; (4) that Roumania should be incorporated with Russia or made dependent upon her; (5) that a prince of either the Austrian or the Russian reigning family should be established on a Balkan throne; (6) that Russia should occupy Constantinople; (7) that a large Slav state should be established in the Balkans at the expense of the non-Slav elements, or that the reorganizations should go beyond the granting of autonomy to the present provinces, under a native prince.<sup>26</sup>

This was not exactly what Beaconsfield had wanted. He inquired if Austria would object to an English occupation of Gallipoli. Andrassy replied that he had no objections, and further, that "he would regard the retention of Constantinople by Russia as a casus belli."<sup>27</sup> Any more than this, Andrassy refused to grant.

On June 8 Russia communicated to England the terms of peace she would offer if Turkey sued for peace before the Russian forces crossed the Balkans. This offer was dependent upon the maintenance of neutrality by the Powers. Bulgaria was to be autonomous; Montenegro and Servia were to "receive an increase of territory"; Bosnia and Herzegovina were to be provided with institutions "compatible with their internal state"; Serbia was to "remain under the suzerainty of the Sultan"; Russia was to be compensated for the costs of war by the annexation

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26. Ibid. 125f.

27. Ibid. 126.

of Batoum and Bessarabia; and Austria was to find any compensation she might desire in Bosnia-Herzegovina.<sup>28</sup> England did not submit these terms to the Turks, because she regarded them to be in excess of what the Turks would accept.

Toward the latter part of June the Russians made a successful crossing of the Danube. Queen Victoria became more disturbed as the Russians advanced, and scarcely a day went by that she did not write to her Prime Minister urging him to action. After the Danube crossing, she wrote:

. . . Be bold! Why not call your followers together, of the House of Commons as well as of the House of Lords; tell them that the interests of Great Britain are at stake; that it is not for the Christians (and they are quite as cruel as the Turks) but for conquest that this cruel, wicked war is waged, that Russia is as barbarous and tyrannical as the Turks! Tell them this, and that they should rally round their Sovereign and country--and you will have a large and powerful majority. And only say Russia shall not go farther and she will stop. But if this be not done and done quickly it will soon be too late; and we shall then have to do much more than we shall have to do now. . . .<sup>29</sup>

The Russian armies moved rapidly, and, in mid-July, were pushing south through the Balkan mountains. On July 16 the Queen beseeched Beaconsfield to send the fleet to Constantinople. The fleet was not dispatched. The Queen became frantic. She penned a long letter of which some parts follow:

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28. Hertslet, Map of Europe, 2634-39.

29. Queen Victoria to Beaconsfield. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1020f.

. . . But she hears of no troops moving or going, and becomes more and more alarmed. The Queen always feels hopeful and encouraged when she has seen Lord Beaconsfield, but somehow or other, whether intentionally or thro' want of energy on the part of those under him or at the offices, nothing material is done!! It alarms her seriously.

The Queen most earnestly urges on Lord Beaconsfield to hold very strong language to the Cabinet tomorrow and to insist on the speedy despatch of the troops to increase the garrisons, as speedily as possible.<sup>30</sup>

Beaconsfield had been working earnestly to bring the Cabinet to decision. The position of Queen Victoria undoubtedly aided him, for she was a strong Queen and commanded much respect. Finally, on July 21, the Cabinet agreed unanimously to declare war against Russia if she occupied Constantinople and refused to withdraw immediately.<sup>31</sup> In addition, orders were given to dispatch troops to the Mediterranean garrisons.

The Russian advance was checked at Plevna, a road center on the Russian right flank. It was imperative that Plevna be taken before the Russians proceeded with any campaign south of the mountains, so, by August, it was apparent that Constantinople was in no immediate danger. This unexpected development considerably relieved the tension in England, and little was done officially about the Eastern Question. However, Beaconsfield, outside the knowledge of the Cabinet and Foreign Office, sent an emissary, direct from the Queen and the Prime Minister,

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30. Ibid. 1025f. Reference is to Mediterranean garrisons.

31. Beaconsfield to Queen Victoria. Ibid. 1026.



to Russia. As this emissary, Beaconsfield used Colonel Frederick Arthur Wellesley, British military attaché in Russia, who had come to England in August, with a message from the Tsar's headquarters. The Russian difficulty at Plevna had shaken its confidence to the point where it was deemed necessary to again assure the British Government of the peacefulness and purity of Russian intentions. The war was being waged only for the purpose of aiding the Christians under Turkish rule; no annexations were being considered except Bessarabia and certain areas in Asia Minor; no permanent occupation in Bulgaria was being anticipated; Constantinople would only be occupied if absolutely necessary; and British interests in Egypt, the Suez Canal, and India would be respected.<sup>32</sup> Russia, of course, expected an official reply. Beaconsfield furnished Wellesley with a Foreign Office document written in the conciliatory manner usually employed on such occasions, but he also furnished him with something much more important, verbal and top-secret instructions. When delivering the official reply to the Russian communication, Wellesley was to personally confer with the Emperor and inform him of the actual British policy. In a memorandum by Wellesley, that policy is stated to have been:

The Queen and H. M. Government have a sincere desire to see the speedy re-establishment of peace on terms honorable to Russia and would be glad to contribute to such a result; should, however, the war be prolonged and a second

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32. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1045.

campaign undertaken, the neutrality of England could not be maintained and she would take her part as a belligerent.<sup>33</sup>

In addition to British Policy, Wellesley was to let the Emperor know that the Queen and her Prime Minister were in perfect agreement, and were the actual heads of a strongly united Government. The rumors of Cabinet dissension were absolutely false. Should the Government decide on action it would be supported by the people.

The Emperor, after having heard Wellesley, expressed his gratitude for the frank manner with which he had been treated. Russia forced the war during the winter of 1877-78. It may have been that the Wellesley message convinced the Tsar that prolongation of the war would be dangerous. General Todleben, one of the top Russian military-strategists, was charged with the task of breaking the defense of Plevna, which he was finally able to do on December 10. This event was viewed with alarm by Beaconsfield, and he summoned the Cabinet to meet on December 14. The Foreign Office dispatched a note to Russia warning the latter that an occupation of Constantinople or the Dardanelles "might call for measures of precaution on the part of Great Britain from which they have hitherto felt justified in abstaining."<sup>34</sup> The Russian answer was far from satisfactory. Gortchakoff asserted that such an attitude on the part of Britain delayed the end of the war. He said:

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33. Ibid. 1046f.

34. Hertslet, Map of Europe, 2646f.

. . . If the Turks were to acquire the conviction that a menace or an attack directed against Constantinople would cause England to depart from her neutrality, their resistance, in spite of its evident uselessness, in such a way as to force Russia to pursue her operations as far as the capital. It would be different, in all probability, if the attitude and language of the Cabinet of London were such as thoroughly to convince the Porte that it has no assistance to hope for from abroad.

In such a case the Porte would resign itself more promptly to abandon a resistance which can only aggravate its position.<sup>35</sup>

Gortchakoff added that the question of the possession of Constantinople belonged to the Powers, not to any one Power. Finally, he requested Britain to state more clearly what the British interests were, i.e. those that might "be touched by the eventualities of the war within the limits to which the assurances of the Imperial Cabinet have restricted them."<sup>36</sup> Since this dispatch was not communicated to Derby until January 2, the requested definition of interests was not handled until January 13. In the meantime much had happened, both on the war front and in the British Cabinet.

On December 14 Serbia declared war against Turkey.<sup>37</sup> This time she was more successful, and occupied southern Serbia, including Nish and Pirot. Montenegro, which had been fighting continuously, was now in a position to push forward. She captured Dulcigno, Budua, and Antivari on

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35. Ibid. 2653ff.

36. Ibid. 2655.

37. State Papers, V. 68, 885.

the shore of the Adriatic.<sup>38</sup> Russia began a war of movement now that her right flank was protected, and Sofia was immediately endangered. It fell to General Gourko in the early part of January.<sup>39</sup>

Beaconsfield, on December 14, placed a very strong program before his Cabinet. He proposed that Parliament be summoned immediately and asked to grant a considerable increase in the armed forces. Simultaneously, the British Government should "commence negotiations, as mediator, between the belligerents."<sup>40</sup> The Cabinet split into several factions over this issue. It seemed as if the rift were beyond repairing, but Beaconsfield, in a Cabinet meeting on the seventeenth, announced that he would resign if the Cabinet did not agree to his program. On the following day his policy prevailed. It was decided to call Parliament for January 17.

England suggested to Austria that she join the former in a note to Russia offering mediation. Andrassy declined to act along these lines, arguing that it would be better if the Turks obtained the peace terms and then appealed to the Powers to reduce them.<sup>41</sup> Beaconsfield,

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38. Nevill Forbes and others, The Balkans: A History of Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece, Rumania, and Turkey (Oxford, 1915), 124.

39. Langer, European Alliances, 129.

40. Beaconsfield to Queen. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1073f.

41. Langer, European Alliances, 130f.

though disappointed by the Austrian refusal, was determined to act alone. In this he was aided by an appeal from the Sultan (December 24) for English mediation.<sup>42</sup> Twelve days previously Turkey had requested the Powers to mediate, but, because of Bismarck's reluctance to act, this appeal had resulted in nothing. The British Ambassador at St. Petersburg was commissioned to ask the Russian Government if the Emperor would agree to overtures of peace. On December 30 Gortchakoff said that Russia did not desire peace through a third party. Turkey should contact the Russian Generals in the field and find out the conditions for terminating hostilities.<sup>43</sup> On January 9 Turkey, having no other choice, approached the Russian commanders, but ten additional days were necessary for Turkish delegates to arrive with proper credentials. The Russian advance was not halted by the Turkish peace approach. England now answered the Russian request, contained in the Russian memorandum of December 16, for a definition of British interests. All that was said was that "any operations tending to place the passage of the Dardanelles under the control of Russia would be an impediment to the proper consideration of the terms of a final settlement."<sup>44</sup> Gortchakoff was asked if he would assure that no troops would be sent to the Peninsula of Gallipoli. He answered

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42. Ibid. 131.

43. German Diplomatic Documents, I, 58.

44. Hertslet, Map of Europe, 2656.

that Russia would not direct operations on Gallipoli unless Turkish regular troops were concentrated there, and that Russia would construe a British occupation of the Peninsula as a violation of neutrality.<sup>45</sup>

On January 15 Beaconsfield urged his Cabinet to authorize orders for the fleet to be sent to the Dardanelles, communications to Austria attempting the creation of a closer working agreement, and communications to Loftus.<sup>46</sup> Accordingly Loftus was instructed to inform Gortchakoff that "any Treaty concluded between the Governments of Russia and the Porte, affecting Treaties of 1856 and 1871," would have to be a European Treaty, and "would not be valid without the assent of the Powers who were Parties to those Treaties."<sup>47</sup> The order for fleet movement was never sent, because Layard telegraphed the Sultan's objections to such a move and the Russian answer concerning Gallipoli had been received.<sup>48</sup>

On the same day (January 17) that Suleiman Pacha's army suffered complete defeat,<sup>49</sup> the British Parliament convened. The speech from the throne contained one paragraph of direct warning to Russia. It follows:

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45. Ibid. 2656.

46. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1093.

47. Hertslet, Map of Europe, 2657.

48. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1093.

49. Loftus, Diplomatic Reminiscences, II, 226.

Hitherto, so far as the war has proceeded, neither of the belligerents has infringed the conditions on which my neutrality is founded, and I willingly believe that both parties are desirous to respect them, so far as it may be in their power. So long as these conditions are not infringed, my attitude will continue the same. But I cannot conceal from myself that, should hostilities be unfortunately prolonged, some unexpected occurrence may render it incumbent on me to adopt measures of precaution. Such measures could not be taken without adequate preparation and I trust to the liberality of my Parliament to supply the means which may be required for that purpose.<sup>50</sup>

In the debate concerning the speech Beaconsfield spoke well, and an unexpected aid came to the Queen and Prime Minister from Salisbury, who spoke in Derby's absence. From this point on Salisbury moved away from the peace faction of the Cabinet, and alligned himself more and more closely with Beaconsfield until finally he became the latter's Foreign Minister.

The communications with Austria had been proceeding satisfactorily, and on January 21 England offered her a defensive alliance and pecuniary aid, the latter on the condition that Austria mobilize a force on her frontier and join England in an identic note to Russia.<sup>51</sup> On the same day Beaconsfield again proposed to the Cabinet that the fleet be sent to Constantinople. Two days later the fleet received its orders, and the Cabinet decided to give notice to the House of Commons that a Vote of Credit

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50. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1096.

51. Ibid. 1099.

would be "moved on the following Monday."<sup>52</sup> Derby and Carnarvon resigned their positions in the Cabinet. These two resignations had been long expected. Beaconsfield had begun questioning Derby's ability as early as the spring of 1877.<sup>53</sup> Queen Victoria shared her Prime Minister's views, and seemingly felt even more strongly concerning her Foreign Minister. In June she wrote:

The reports in Mr. Layard's last letter of the 13th inst., which the Queen saw yesterday, are very alarming! Surely Lord Derby cannot be indifferent to the dangers expressed therein? Warning after warning arrives and he seems to take it all without saying a word! Such a Foreign Minister the Queen really never remembers!<sup>54</sup>

On the day after the Cabinet resignations a telegram from Layard was received, informing the Cabinet that the terms of peace had been agreed upon. Among other things, the question of the Straits was to be settled between the Emperor of Russia and a Congress.<sup>55</sup> This news changed much that had been decided upon the day before. The sending of the fleet to Constantinople resulted from a British fear that Turkey and Russia would settle the question of the Straits between themselves, excluding the Powers. Now that it was learned that this would not happen, it was decided to countermand the fleet orders. The order was too late to stop the fleet, but it brought it back to

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52. Ibid. 1100.

53. Ibid. 1011ff.

54. Ibid. 1019.

55. Ibid. 1102.



the entrance of the Straits. The next day another telegram came from Layard, stating that he had been mistaken as regards the Straits question. The position of Britain was extremely embarrassing. She could send a third order to the fleet causing the first order to be acted upon, or she could leave the fleet at the mouth of the Straits and hope for the best in her weakened position. Jokes were beginning to be heard in Constantinople concerning the strange movements of the fleet. The Powers might well lose respect for Britain for such a display of indecision. Ultimately it was decided to avoid the embarrassment by leaving the fleet in its present position.

Derby was a popular man. His resignation caused quite a stir in England, for he was known as standing for "prudence and commonsense in politics."<sup>56</sup> The Party Whips feared that the Government would be defeated in the coming Vote of Credit if Derby were not convinced that he should retract his resignation. Since Derby had based his resignation only on the movement of the fleet, it seemed that there was no longer any cause for him to resign. Northcote was charged with the task of making Derby change his mind. A difficult day was spent by Northcote, but he was successful. Derby told the House of Lords, upon his return, that his resignation and subsequent retraction had been the most natural thing in the world. The cause having been removed, "he had no hesitation in withdrawing

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56. Ibid. 1104.

his resignation."<sup>57</sup> Carnarvon's resignation, however, was final, because he had objected to the Vote of Credit as well as the orders to the fleet.

At the time that England first approached Austria, January 15, the treaties between Russia and Austria seemed to Andrassy a sufficient guarantee, and he told the British Ambassador that the speech from the throne opening the British Parliament had been a great disappointment to him.<sup>58</sup> All things considered, he thought he should prevent a break between Austria and Russia, but he would not object if the British sent the fleet to Constantinople. As far as Austrian mobilization was concerned, that was too expensive to "be undertaken unless absolutely imperative."<sup>59</sup> He would not join in an identic note to Russia warning her against the continued occupation of Bulgaria, or the occupation of the shores of the Bosphorus, the Sea of Marmora, or the Dardanelles, because it might be interpreted by Russia to mean that England and Austria did not object to any acts but these.

Schouvaloff, on January 25, communicated the Russian peace terms to Derby. For an answer to the British note of the fifteenth, which stated that modifications of treaties would have to be submitted to the Powers, Schouvaloff said that he was instructed by Gortchakoff to add a promise to

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57. Ibid. 1105.

58. Langer, European Alliances, 132.

59. Ibid. 133.

the peace terms that "all phases of the treaty that concerned Europe would be submitted to the review of the Powers."<sup>60</sup> This wording was not the same as that contained in the British note and was, therefore, unsatisfactory. The terms themselves were regarded by the Cabinet as "more studious of British than of Austrian interests."<sup>61</sup> The Cabinet considered that it was necessary, however, to proceed with the Vote of Credit, and Derby handed another memorandum to Schouvaloff. It stated that England would not permit the occupation of Constantinople by Russian troops. In the event that this happened England would find herself "compelled to take energetic measures to protect the threatened interests."<sup>62</sup>

Russia had communicated the peace terms to Austria and England at the same time. The Austrian reaction was much different from that of England. The terms were in many instances a violation of the Russo-Austrian agreement, and in others they were so vague as to cause Andrassy to be suspicious of the Russian intentions. Consequently, he ordered Beust, the Austrian Ambassador in London, to get in touch with Derby. Since this was the period in which Derby had resigned, Beust saw Beaconsfield on the twenty-seventh, who reported that the Austrians were "terribly alarmed, and believe they have been entirely

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60. Tyler, European Powers, 96.

61. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1103.

62. German Diplomatic Documents, I, 63.

deceived by Russia."<sup>63</sup> Austria even went so far as to ask England for armed aid,<sup>64</sup> but this was not granted. An understanding between the two countries was arrived at, however, and in the coming period they worked together against Russia.

In the meantime, Russia had occupied Adrianople and had marched on toward Constantinople. The Turkish delegates accepted the Russian terms on January 27, and signed an armistice on January 31. The terms of the armistice ended only hostilities, not the diplomacy of the Powers.

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63. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1109.

64. Langer, European Alliances, 134.

## CHAPTER V

### A SHOW OF FORCE AND DIPLOMACY

It would seem, now that the armistice was signed, that England could have sat back and rejoiced over her good fortune in having avoided a major war. Such, however, was not the case. Actually, she was entering a period that was to be one of the most trying in her peace-time history. The month of February opened rather serenely, but few days passed in this manner. On the seventh the streets of Westminster were filled with "excited and patriotic crowds,"<sup>1</sup> and the London Stock Exchange experienced a minor panic. The night before this day of anxiety, news had come from Constantinople that the Russians were in "the defensive works" of the city, and had cut the wires so that news to London had to be dispatched via Bombay.<sup>2</sup> This report, later found to be exaggerated, had immediate results. Opposition to the Vote of Credit, which had been introduced January 28, collapsed, and a credit of six million pounds for military preparations was granted.<sup>3</sup> On February

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1. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1114.

2. Beaconsfield to Bradford. Ibid. 1114.

3. Langer, European Alliances, 135.

8 the Cabinet resolved to send the fleet to Constantinople. Neutral Powers were to be invited to do likewise.<sup>4</sup> This move, which had previously produced two Cabinet resignations, was now received by the country as fitting and proper. Beaconsfield was pleased to hear that the "announcement was received with much cheering in the House of Commons," and remarked that "the country is greatly stirring at last."<sup>5</sup> Truly, the people of England were "stirring." They lifted their voices in a new song, which contributed the word "Jingoism" to the English language:

We don't want to fight, but by jingo if we do,  
We've got the men, we've got the ships, we've  
got the money too.<sup>6</sup>

England and Austria had been thinking for a long time of the eventual settlement of the Russo-Turkish war in relation to a Conference. In May, in reply to the British offer of an alliance, Andrassy had stated, as one of seven points, that he would not agree to the definitive peace settlement's taking place without the participation of the Powers signatories of the Treaty of 1856.<sup>7</sup> Derby informed Russia on January 15 that "any Treaty concluded between the Governments of Russia and the Porte, affecting Treaties of 1856 and 1871 . . . would not be valid without

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4. Beaconsfield to Queen Victoria. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1116.

5. Ibid. 1116.

6. Langer, European Alliances, 135.

7. Ibid. 125. See above, 67.

the assent of the Powers who were Parties to those Treaties."<sup>8</sup> As soon as Austria learned that Turkey accepted the Russian peace terms (January 27), she suggested a Conference.<sup>9</sup> Russia quickly agreed to the principle of a meeting of the Powers, but with reservations which she did not make known to Austria. She would refuse to take part in a conference if it were to be held in either Vienna or London; Berlin, however, would be acceptable.<sup>10</sup> Austria proceeded with the preliminary negotiations with the other Powers, and, finding them agreeable, extended an invitation for a conference to be held in Vienna.<sup>11</sup> On February 7, the day of cheering crowds and significant decisions, Derby accepted the invitation, agreeing to Vienna as the site.<sup>12</sup>

In accordance with the decision taken by the Cabinet on February 8, the fleet, under Admiral Hornby, commenced its journey to Constantinople. The fleet stopped at Charnak. Permission was supposed to be given by the Turks for the fleet to proceed, but, since permission was not granted, after waiting several hours Hornby ordered the fleet to return to Besika Bay. The English Ambassador at Constantinople failed to get this permission, because the Russians warned the Sultan that they would occupy

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8. Hertslet, Map of Europe, 2657. See above, 75.

9. Langer, European Alliances, 134.

10. German Diplomatic Documents, I, 61.

11. State Papers, V. 69, 794f.

12. Ibid., V. 69, 795.

Constantinople if the British fleet arrived. England was in an extremely embarrassing position. Once before, the fleet had been the subject of ridicule. This time it was reported that placards had been posted on the British embassy at Constantinople, reading: "'Lost--between Besika Bay and Constantinople--one fleet. Reward to anyone furnishing information.'"13 Obviously, Britain had to carry through her original order, with or without permission. Orders were sent for the fleet to go to Constantinople without permission, and to fire on any shore batteries that fired first. On February 13 the fleet entered the Sea of Marmora.<sup>14</sup> The Sultan earnestly appealed to England with the result that the fleet was eventually withdrawn to the Asiatic side of the Sea of Marmora. Russia did not make good her threat of occupation, but the situation was perilous. England and Russia exchanged several notes which ultimately resulted in an agreement that Russia would not occupy Gallipoli nor enter inside the lines of Boulair as long as England refrained from landing troops on the European side of the Straits. Also, the agreement was extended to the Asiatic side, both powers agreeing not to "occupy that side of the Straits."<sup>15</sup>

Just before the agreements with Russia had been concluded, England had made another attempt to bring Austria

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13. Langer, European Alliances, 136.

14. German Diplomatic Documents, I 64.

15. State Papers, V. 69, 731f.



closer to England. These negotiations had been conducted by Beaconsfield, because from the date of Derby's first resignation he had taken over nearly all of the first-line Foreign Office duties. Derby's position was similar to that of an under-secretary. Austria was urged to place 300,000 men into the field, and join England in an identic note to Russia. The note would announce that neither Austria nor Britain would attend the proposed conference unless Russia withdrew from Constantinople, or consented to Gallipoli's being placed in the custody of Great Britain or of other neutral powers.<sup>16</sup> Andrassy tried to push the plan in Austria, but, because of the opposition brought forward by the military element, he failed to convince his government of the necessity of so bold a move.<sup>17</sup>

Meantime, Gortchakoff had protested against the selection of Vienna as the site of the conference and had forced a postponement. With the fleet in the Sea of Marmora and the Russians at San Stefano (only ten miles from Constantinople), the situation was critical. Russell, the British Ambassador in Germany, and Münster, the German Ambassador in England, believed that war was not far off.<sup>18</sup> England urged Germany to arrange for a conference at an early date, since this was "the last remaining chance of

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16. Beaconsfield to Queen Victoria. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1120.

17. Langer, European Alliances, 137.

18. Bismarck to Schweinitz. German Diplomatic Documents, I, 65.

staving off war."<sup>19</sup> Bismarck informed Gortchakoff of these facts, and on February 21 it was learned that Russia would "accept Baden-Baden as the seat of the Congress, but not the second week of March as the opening date."<sup>20</sup>

Though England was trying to avert war by every means possible, she continued her military preparations. On February 16 Layard was authorized to purchase "the chief ships of the Turkish fleet."<sup>21</sup> Nothing came of this plan, but the fleet was being constantly enlarged by home building. Beaconsfield, in early March, told his Queen that "your Majesty will soon have a navy superior to all the navies united of the world, and, in a short time, an army most efficient, not contemptible in number, and with a body of officers superior to that of any existing force."<sup>22</sup> An expeditionary force was being built on paper, and Lord Napier was appointed commander-in-chief, with General Wolseley as chief of staff.<sup>23</sup>

Another plan, closely allied with the program of military preparations, was launched at this time. As early as the preceding November, Beaconsfield had toyed with the idea of acquiring a place, either port or island, in the

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19. Ibid., I, 65.

20. Memorandum by Bülow. Ibid., I, 65.

21. Beaconsfield to Queen Victoria. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1120.

22. Ibid. 1128.

23. Langer, European Alliances, 136.

Levant. Wherever the place, it should be one that could be used both as a coaling station and as a troop-assembly point. It occurred to Beaconsfield that he might make use of the Turkish need for financial assistance to gain this end. On November 22 he wrote a letter to Layard asking him to investigate the possibility of a British purchase of some Turkish territory "conducive to British interests."<sup>24</sup> No purchase was made, but Beaconsfield kept the plan in mind. During the critical period at the end of February, the Cabinet was informed of the project.

The British Cabinet knew that Russia and Turkey were negotiating a peace treaty. There was no knowledge of the terms, but rumor had it that they were more harsh than those of the armistice. Beaconsfield told his Cabinet on March 2 that whatever the terms might be there were three points on which England should feel anxious: "the military position of the country, as affecting its communications with the East"; the financial situation; and the question of British trade with the Black Sea and Asia.<sup>25</sup> With these points in mind, Beaconsfield proposed the formation of a Mediterranean league, which would include Italy, Greece, Austria, France, and England. The object of the league would be "to secure the trade and communications of Europe with the East from the overshadowing

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24. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1123f.

25. Northcote to Queen Victoria. Ibid. 1125.

interference of Russia."<sup>26</sup> At this same Cabinet meeting various places were discussed in connection with the plan of occupation as proposed by Beaconsfield at the end of February. Since no decision was possible, a committee "was appointed to consult the military and naval authorities as to the best course of action."<sup>27</sup> Both projects, that of a league and that of an occupation, were discussed in conjunction with one another in subsequent Cabinet meetings, and so came to be thought of as one plan.

When it was learned that Turkey and Russia were negotiating a peace treaty, Derby telegraphed to Layard, on February 27, that he should request of the Porte that she inform England, "with as little delay as possible," of the terms being negotiated.<sup>28</sup> The same request was made of Schouvaloff, but there was no response from either party. On March 3 Turkey, under threat of a Russian occupation of Constantinople, signed the Treaty of San Stefano. As had been suspected in England, the terms were stiffer than those of the armistice, though this fact was not known by the British Cabinet until March 23.<sup>29</sup> Even so, the signing of the treaty caused much anxiety, and the Cabinet daily worked on many different projects, one of the most important being that of the Conference. When

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26. Ibid. 1125.

27. Ibid. 1125.

28. Ibid. 1122.

29. Hertslet, Map of Europe, 2672-96.

Baden-Baden had been proposed as the place of meeting, Britain had accepted the invitation.<sup>30</sup> However, on March 7 Austria withdrew the proposal for a Conference to be held at Baden-Baden. She suggested that a Congress be held instead of a Conference, and that the Congress be attended by the Prime Ministers of the Powers. This Congress was to take place at Berlin at a time named by the German Cabinet, which had already declared itself in favor of the plan.<sup>31</sup> England declared herself in favor of Berlin, but stated that "no alteration in the condition of things previously established by Treaty should be acknowledged as valid until it [had] received the assent of the Powers."<sup>32</sup> After the Cabinet meeting on March 8 Beaconsfield informed Queen Victoria, with respect to Berlin, that every Government, except Great Britain had accepted that city as the scene of the Congress, and if she declined to be represented there, the Congress would probably be held without her, "which would not be desirable."<sup>33</sup> This fact, plus the fact that Austria assured England that she had no secret understanding with Russia, hastened the decision. The next day England formally accepted Berlin as the place of the Conference, but she added that it must be understood "that all questions

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30. Ibid. 2668.

31. State Papers, V. 69, 797f.

32. Ibid., V. 69, 798.

33. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1128.

dealt with in the Treaty of Peace between Russia and Turkey should be considered as subject to be discussed in the Congress."<sup>34</sup>

Other projects were discussed in the Cabinet meeting of March 8. The Mediterranean league plan, for one thing, was further developed. It was decided, in relation to the occupation part of the plan, to appoint a committee to further examine the harbor of Mytilene. Previously that place had been selected, but an objection was raised because of a rock in the main channel of the harbor. If the committee could discover a preferable location they were to so report.<sup>35</sup> In this plan, Derby did not concur, but since no occupation was ordered he did not offer his resignation. As for the rest of the plan, it was decided to launch "the League with Italy and Greece alone," if the other Mediterranean Powers refused to join.<sup>36</sup> Representations were made to Italy on March 13, but a new Cabinet with Count Corti as Foreign Minister rejected the British proposal.<sup>37</sup> Since Italy refused, it seemed useless to proceed with the plan, and it was not mentioned again. However, the original portion, dealing with a new military base, was not dropped.

There was no reaction to the reservation expressed in the British communication to Austria of March 9, so the

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34. State Papers, V. 69, 798f.

35. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1127.

36. Ibid. 1127.

37. Langer, European Alliances, 137.

Foreign Office thought another statement necessary in order that the Powers be perfectly clear as to the conditions under which Britain expected to attend the Congress of Berlin. On March 13 Austria was informed that the British Government "must distinctly understand before they enter into Congress that every Article in the Treaty between Russia and Turkey will be placed before the Congress, not necessarily for acceptance, but in order that it may be considered what Articles require acceptance or concurrence by the several Powers, and what do not."<sup>38</sup> The following day Russia informed England that the Powers would receive the text of the Treaty as soon as it was ratified, that Russia had nothing to conceal.<sup>39</sup> This statement was not acceptable to the British Foreign Office, which desired an unequivocal concurrence with its terms. Between the fourteenth and nineteenth several dispatches were exchanged, and finally, on March 19, Russia stated her position to be as follows:

. . . The Government of the Queen, in like manner as the other Great Powers, reserved to themselves at the Congress their full liberty of appreciation and action. This same liberty, which she did not dispute to others, Russia claimed for herself. Now, it would be to restrict her, if, alone among all the Powers, Russia contracted a preliminary engagement.<sup>40</sup>

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38. State Papers, V. 69, 800.

39. Hertslet, Map of Europe, 2700.

40. State Papers, V. 69, 804f.

This statement, too, was considered as evasive, so, on March 21, Derby informed Schouvaloff that England adhered to the position already defined by them.<sup>41</sup> Thus, Russia and England were deadlocked. The fate of the Congress depended upon the decisions of these two powers. Of course, in England it was felt that the Congress depended upon the Russian reply, since there was no disposition on the part of the British Government to make any concession. The German Ambassador in London, who had been keeping his Government well informed, described the situation as it existed on March 22:

Since the British side admits that a majority decision by the Congress cannot in effect be binding, I really fail to see how the Russian 'Liberté d'action', which Prince Gortchakoff mentions in every despatch, every telegram, can possibly be disturbed. But it appears inevitable that the Congress will be called upon to examine the Treaty now to be submitted to it in the light of former Treaties sanctioned by the Powers, if it is to settle the Eastern Question. That is all that England demands. Prince Gortchakoff's pretension to submit for discussion only those points, calling, in Russia's opinion, for alteration, in the former Treaties, is quite untenable.<sup>42</sup>

Ratifications exchanged, the Powers received (March 23) the full text of the Treaty of San Stefano. The terms were such as would not be accepted by either Austria or England. It is not necessary to analyze that treaty, because the major points were repudiated by the Treaty of

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41. Ibid., v. 69, 805.

42. German Diplomatic Documents, I, 82.



Berlin. However, since the British attitude toward the treaty is important in this work, Beaconsfield's description follows:

The Treaty of San Stefano completely abrogates what is known as Turkey-in-Europe; it abolishes the dominion of the Ottoman Empire in Europe; it creates a large State which, under the name of Bulgaria, is inhabited by many races not Bulgarians. This Bulgaria goes to the shores of the Black Sea and seizes the ports of that sea; it extends to the coast of the Aegean and appropriates the ports of that coast. The treaty provides for the government of this new Bulgaria, under a prince who is to be selected by Russia; its administration is to be organised and supervised by a commissary of Russia; and this new State is to be garrisoned, I say for an indefinite period, but at all events for two years certain, by Russia.<sup>43</sup>

The only effect of the revelation of the terms of the treaty upon England was to stiffen the determination to continue a policy of resistance to Russia. Plans, long maturing, were soon to be introduced in the Cabinet.

In the British note of the twenty-first, the following question had been directed to Russia: Was the Government willing to treat the communication of the entire Treaty to the various Powers "as a placing of the Treaty before the Congress, in order that the whole Treaty, in its relation to existing Treaties, might be examined and considered by the Congress?"<sup>44</sup> An affirmative answer, which could have broken the deadlock, was hoped for but not expected by Beaconsfield. On March 27, one of the most

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43. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1130.

44. State Papers, V. 69, 805.

eventful days of this period, the Russian reply was delivered. The final paragraph stated that the Russian Government "leaves to the other Powers the liberty of raising such questions at the Congress as they might think suitable to discuss, and reserves to itself the liberty of accepting or not accepting the discussion of these questions."<sup>45</sup> Naturally, Beaconsfield considered this to be a categorical refusal. His preparation for the Cabinet meeting of that day is well revealed in the few words he addressed to Hardy before the meeting:

'The critical time has arrived when we must declare the emergency. We are drifting into war. If we are bold and determined we shall secure peace, and dictate its conditions to Europe. . . . We have to maintain the Empire, and secure peace; I think we can do both.'<sup>46</sup>

At the Cabinet meeting, Beaconsfield proposed that a proclamation declaring an emergency be issued,<sup>47</sup> a necessary step, because the Reserves could be called out only in case of imminent national danger or of great emergency,<sup>48</sup> and he wished the Reserves to be called. The Indian Government was to be directed "to send out a considerable force, thro' the Suez Canal."<sup>49</sup> They should

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45. Ibid., V. 69, 806f.

46. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1133.

47. Ibid. 1136.

48. German Diplomatic Documents, I, 86.

49. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1134.

occupy Cyprus and Scanderoon,<sup>50</sup> for the purpose of commanding "the Persian Gulf and all the country round Bagdad," and neutralizing "the Russian conquests and influence in Armenia."<sup>51</sup> Only Derby objected to this three-pronged proposal. He resigned on March 28.<sup>52</sup>

Both Beaconsfield and the Queen were happy about the resignation, the Queen regarding it as "an unmixed blessing."<sup>53</sup> The decisions of the Cabinet, except for calling out the Reserves, were kept secret, so the people thought that Derby had resigned on this issue alone. This was unfortunate for Derby, but circumstances were such that nothing could be done about it. Surely the other decisions of the Cabinet could not be made known, because their success depended upon secrecy. Much later, Derby had his say.

At the end of March, it looked very much as if the plan for a Congress had failed. War was thought to be imminent. Only Beaconsfield felt assured. He, as a matter of fact, quite accurately predicted the future (missing only the time element) when he informed Queen Victoria that "Russia will, in all probability, immediately commence a direct negotiation with your Majesty's Government."<sup>54</sup>

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50. Ibid. 1136.

51. Ibid. 1134.

52. Derby's resignation is discussed at great length in Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli.

53. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1135.

54. Ibid. 1132.

Lord Salisbury was appointed to fill the vacancy created by Derby's resignation. He, immediately on taking over the Foreign Minister's post, worked upon the draft of a circular dispatch, continuing until three the next morning.<sup>55</sup> Beaconsfield shared with Salisbury the responsibility for the formulation of this lengthy document. The Cabinet, after a critical examination, gave its concurrence to the content,<sup>56</sup> which was briefly as follows: a two month summary of the British negotiations relative to the proposed Congress; a defining of the British position relative to the Congress as being a demand that every provision of the Treaty of San Stefano be submitted to the Congress; a criticism of the creation of a large Bulgaria, neglect of Greek rights, forcible seizure by Russia of Bessarabia, acquisitions in Asia Minor, and the virtual destruction of Turkish political independence; and finally:

But neither the interests which Her Majesty's Government are specially bound to guard, nor the well-being of the regions with which the Treaty deals, would be consulted by the assembling of a Congress whose deliberations were to be restricted by such reservations as those which have been laid down by Prince Gortchakow in his most recent communication.<sup>57</sup>

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55. Seton-Watson, Britain in Europe, 535. Lord Cranbrook replaced Salisbury as the Indian Secretary. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1154.

56. Beaconsfield to Queen Victoria. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1154.

57. Hertslet, Map of Europe, 2698-2706. State Papers, V. 69, 807-14.

This explicit declaration warned all Europe that England was firm in her policy and would not yield to Russia. Schouvaloff, who believed that there was no longer any chance to avert war, delivered the Russian reply which was not so worded as to alleviate the precarious situation. It complained that England revealed only that which she did not desire, and suggested that Salisbury "be good enough" to make known that which England desired, "with a view to arrive at a clear understanding upon the situation."<sup>58</sup> Salisbury said that he was not ready to present the English demands.<sup>59</sup> It seems to have been the intention of Beaconsfield and his Foreign Minister to wait for Russia to approach England, a move which they were strongly anticipating.<sup>60</sup>

While they were waiting, there was danger in the proximity of the British Fleet and the Russian troops. England decided, therefore, to suggest to Germany that she lend her influence to the solving of this delicate problem. Salisbury had reason to believe that Germany would be happy to act as mediator, because Münster, the German Ambassador in London, had often spoken to him of the "danger to peace arising from the neighbourhood of the British fleet and

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58. Hertslet, Map of Europe, 2707.

59. Langer, European Alliances, 144.

60. Above, 95.

the Russian army near the Marmora."<sup>61</sup> He thought that Münster's insistence was "more than accidental" and meant that Bismarck wished "for peace and therefore for the cessation of this dangerous proximity."<sup>62</sup> On April 6 Salisbury informed Russell that:

Our fleet is in the Marmora because the Russians are at Constantinople. The Russians would say their army was at Constantinople because our fleet is in the Marmora. Each is deterred from being first to propose a simultaneous retreat by fear that enhanced pretensions would thereby be encouraged on the other side. A friendly suggestion from Prince Bismarck to both that, pending negotiations, the fleet should retire below the Dardanelles, and the army retire the same number of miles from Constantinople, would evade the difficulty.<sup>63</sup>

Bismarck fell in with this scheme, and, on April 9, proposed the following course of action to the two Powers: "'The British Fleet to leave Constantinople and to repass the Dardanelles;--the Russian forces to retire from the Bosphorus to a distance equivalent to the time required to reinstate the British Fleet in its present position.'"<sup>64</sup> Both Powers agreed to the proposal, but neither would move first. A long discussion ensued "concerning the number of days required to bring the British fleet and the Russian Army back to their respective positions in front of Constantinople."<sup>65</sup>

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61. Salisbury to Russell. Buckle, The Letters, 612.

62. Ibid. 612.

63. Ibid. 612.

64. German Diplomatic Documents, I, 91.

65. Ibid., I, 91.

The result was that neither the army nor fleet were withdrawn until after the Congress of Berlin. This factor more than any other contributed to the extreme tension during April, May, and the first part of June.

Two moves, indicative of British preparedness and determination, were made during April. First, Parliament voted to call out the Reserve, the House of Lords without a division, and the House of Commons by the majority of 310 to 64.<sup>66</sup> Second, on April 17, it was announced that 7000 Indian troops were being sent to Malta.<sup>67</sup> These troops actually arrived there before the end of May.<sup>68</sup> These moves, occurring so shortly after Salisbury's circular dispatch, which in itself impressed Europe greatly, settled any doubts, still-existent on the Continent, as to British firmness of policy. Beaconsfield's anticipation of the prestige value of the Indian troops had been one of the chief purposes in originating the move. On April 12, prior to the final decision, he had said: "After all the sneers of our not having any great military force, the imagination of the Continent will be much affected by the first appearance of what they will believe to be an inexhaustible supply of men."<sup>69</sup> There is no doubt that the determined policy of Britain, as revealed by the circular dispatch, the calling

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66. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1155.

67. Langer, European Alliances, 146.

68. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1159.

69. Beaconsfield to Queen Victoria. Ibid. 1157f.

of the Reserve, and the deployment of the Indian troops, greatly influenced Russia. In May that Power made huge concessions. Had she believed England unprepared and unwilling for action, she may well have maintained a more stubborn adherence to her peace treaty with Turkey.

British policy, however, was not the only factor contributing to the eventual Russian concessions. Russia had hoped that by coming to an agreement with Austria she could effectively isolate England, and thus force that Power to modify its demands. Ignatieff, the successful diplomat of the Constantinople Conference, exerted his greatest effort toward these ends at Vienna. He discovered a resolute adversary in Andrassy, who placed a high price upon Austrian co-operation. Briefly stated, that price consisted of a limitation upon Montenegrin gains to the east, the maintenance of a corridor between Serbia and Montenegro, and the exclusion of Macedonia from the new Bulgaria. Austrian predominance in Bosnia-Herzegovina went without saying.<sup>70</sup> Clearly--the Austrian aim was to keep the route to Salonika open, and reserve that region for Austrian economic expansion. Ignatieff considered the price much too high, so, since he could not induce Andrassy to lower it, the Russian attempt failed. It was Russia who now felt helplessly isolated. The Three Emperor's League still existed, but it provided Russia with little actual support. There was no point in approaching Bismarck, for, on February

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70. Langer, European Alliances, 143.



19, he had revealed his position in a speech to the Reichstag. On that day he had said, "whatever will bring about a change in the stipulations of 1856 will have need, undoubtedly, of the sanction of the signatory powers."<sup>71</sup> This meant, of course, that Bismarck, though remaining sympathetic to Russia, would never actively support her against England.

England knew only that Ignatieff and Andrassy were negotiating, not the nature of the negotiations nor the results. Yet it was easy for her to guess at the nature, and, realizing the danger of an agreement between Austria and Russia, she was uneasy. During April the Foreign Office sought in vain to establish better relations with Austria. Finally, on the twentieth, Salisbury asked Andrassy if he would be willing "to insist on the restriction of the new Bulgaria to the region north of the Balkan Mountains."<sup>72</sup> Andrassy did not commit himself on the question of the Bulgarian southern boundary, but defined his program in a memorandum to the British Foreign Office. It was much the same as the one previously submitted to Ignatieff, except that Bosnia was discussed at greater length. Many reasons were advanced to explain why Austria regarded the occupation of that province as indispensable. Since the

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71. Tyler, European Powers, 98.

72. Langer, European Alliances, 145.

two countries could not agree on Bulgaria, negotiations ceased for a time, to be resumed later and successfully concluded.

In early May, after waiting longer than a month, England finally received word that Russia was desirous of coming to an agreement, so that the Congress could be convened.<sup>73</sup> Schouvaloff left England on May 8 with a knowledge of British wishes relative to the revision of the Treaty of San Stefano: (1) Bulgaria had to be reduced in size, (2) Russia's annexations in Asia Minor had to be reconsidered, and (3) England desired to have the Straits opened completely.<sup>74</sup> Schouvaloff submitted this list of British demands to his Government, which, because of the financial impossibility of prosecuting a war with England, was desirous of achieving a peaceful settlement. The Tsar told Schouvaloff "to make use of his influence with Bismarck to get the congress arranged for and to effect an agreement with England which would isolate Austria."<sup>75</sup>

Schouvaloff returned to England on May 23, prepared to accept "all the modifications of the Treaty of San Stefano, except one proposed by England, referring to the military

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73. Loftus, Diplomatic Reminiscences, II, 251. Loftus claims credit for having brought about the Russian initiation of talks with Salisbury, but see Moneyppenny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1160, where Bismarck is credited with the original suggestion. Tyler, European Powers, in a footnote on page 103, states his preference for the latter view.

74. Langer, European Alliances, 146.

75. Ibid. 147.

occupation of Rumelia by Turkey."<sup>76</sup> The Cabinet was unwilling to refuse to go into the Conference on this minor point, and was ready to accept the Russian concessions, but Beaconsfield was slow in sanctioning the Cabinet view. He was waiting for information from Constantinople relative to a plan being urged upon Turkey. When this was received, he authorized Salisbury to conclude the British-Russian agreement. Salisbury and Schouvaloff signed it on May 30.<sup>77</sup>

England made a few minor concessions in the agreement, but none that could compare with those made by Russia. The latter agreed to a complete revision of the San Stefano Bulgaria along the following lines: Bulgaria was to be excluded from the Aegean; the western frontiers were to be redrawn; there were to be two provinces rather than one, with the Balkan range as the delimitation; only the northern province would have political autonomy; the Turkish right of military action in the southern province was not finally decided upon, but was left to the Congress. In addition, it was agreed that England would not contest Russian acquisition of Bessarabia; Russia would return Bayazid (in Asia) to Turkey; and she would keep Kars and Batoum.<sup>78</sup> Concerning the Asiatic portion of the agreement England used these words in the memorandum:

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76. Beaconsfield to Queen Victoria. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1166.

77. Ibid. 1167.

78. Ibid. 1169.

In consenting not to contest the desire of the Emperor of Russia to occupy the port of Batoum and to guard his conquests in Armenia, the Government of Her Majesty do not hide from themselves that grave dangers--menacing the tranquillity of the populations of Turkey-in-Asia--may result in the future by this extension of the Russian frontier. But Her Majesty's Government are of opinion that the duty of protecting the Ottoman Empire from this danger, which henceforth will rest largely (*d'une mesure spéciale*) upon England, can be effected without exposing Europe to the calamities of a fresh war.<sup>79</sup>

The information for which Beaconsfield had been waiting before authorizing the conclusion of the British-Russian agreement concerned the phrase "*d'une mesure spéciale*" contained in the above warning to Russia. In all probability, Beaconsfield would have negotiated further with Russia before signing the agreement if the news from Constantinople had been that the negotiations for the "special measure" had failed. This measure was the final development of the proposal of March 27, which called for the occupation of a place of arms in the Levant. By May 5, Cyprus, which Beaconsfield described as "the key of Western Asia," had been chosen as the place to occupy.<sup>80</sup> Layard was informed, on May 10, of the British proposals to Turkey concerning the occupation of Cyprus. He commenced negotiations immediately, but not with a view of concluding them until he was further instructed. On May 23, when it was evident that Russia would insist on keeping Kars and Batoum, Layard submitted

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79. Ibid. 1169.

80. Beaconsfield to Queen Victoria. Ibid. 1163.

the draft agreement to Turkey.<sup>81</sup> The secret Convention between Great Britain and Turkey was signed on June 4. It provided that England would join Turkey in arms if Russia, at some future time, were to take possession of any more Turkish territories in Asia; that Turkey would institute reforms in Asia; and that England would occupy Cyprus.<sup>82</sup> An annex to the Convention established the conditions under which Great Britain would occupy Cyprus, the most important of which was the stipulation that England would pay Turkey a certain annual sum. With this Convention, which was to be effective only as long as Russia retained Kars and Batoum, Beaconsfield thwarted any Russian plans for farther advancement in Asia. The concession to Russia concerning Asiatic acquisitions did not result in the development of a new threat to the British Empire.

The last of the secret, pre-conference agreements, entered into by England in order that she might enter the Conference with a reasonable chance of achieving her aims, was signed on June 6 with Austria. Andrassy, learning of the Schouvaloff-Salisbury negotiations and fearing that its results would be injurious to Austria, suggested that he was ready to support the English plan for Bulgaria which previously had been rejected. Austria would ask

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81. Langer, European Alliances, 148. See Tyler, European Powers, footnote on 105, for an explanation of the document, dated May 30, which is in Hertslet, Map of Europe, 2717-20. It is reasonably certain that this document was merely an official follow-up of previous correspondence.

82. Hertslet, Map of Europe, 2722-25.

only that England support her designs upon Bosnia-Herzegovina and plans for Montenegro.<sup>83</sup> By May 26 the British Cabinet had agreed to support Austria "in all her declared points of policy, except in insisting, that the Montenegrins [should] not have the port of Antivari."<sup>84</sup> The Cabinet did not think that England could make a "casus belli" of such a question. The terms of the agreement provided that England, at the Congress, would support Austrian proposals relative to Bosnia-Herzegovina. Both Austria and England would attempt to limit Russian occupation south of the Danube to six months, passage through Rumania to nine months, and occupation to a force of 20,000 Russian troops. In the southern Bulgarian province, the Sultan should have "adequate political and military supremacy to guard against invasions or insurrections." The Balkan range was to be the southern boundary of the northern province of Bulgaria.<sup>85</sup> This agreement concluded British secret diplomacy. England was ready and anxious to go to Berlin, for success was clearly visible.

England won the battle of diplomacy which was waged during February, March, April and May. The three main factors contributing to this victory were: (1) the patience and skill of British diplomats; (2) a British show of force; and

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83. Langer, European Alliances, 148f.

84. Beaconsfield to Queen Victoria. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1166f.

85. Langer, European Alliances, 149.

(3) Russia's isolated position. The diplomatic victory consisted of gaining valuable agreements with three countries. With Russia, England gained an agreement disposing of the major problems to be presented at the Congress. England's chief concern was the large Bulgaria created by the Treaty of San Stefano. Russia agreed to reduce Bulgaria in size and to divide the San Stefano Bulgaria into two provinces, only the northern one to have a large measure of autonomy. With Austria, England reached an agreement that, in effect, secured the British gains in the Russian agreement, and added to those gains with respect to the southern part of Bulgaria. Austria would support a British demand that Turkey be allowed to have troops in that province. With Turkey, England made an agreement that nullified the Russian gain in Asia. England was to occupy the island of Cyprus in return for a guarantee of Turkish Asiatic possessions against any future Russian attack. In addition to these three agreements, England had won the right to enter the Congress on her own terms: all the stipulations of the Treaty of San Stefano were to be submitted to the Congress. This British demand had been voiced for the first time on January 15. During the long period of negotiations, the British statesmen never lost patience. They were rewarded by Russia's eventual acceptance of this demand. Five separate actions comprised Britain's show of force, the second contributing factor to the English diplomatic victory: (1) sending the fleet to Constantinople; (2) voting a credit of

six million pounds; (3) enlarging the army and navy; (4) calling out the Reserve; and (5) ordering 7,000 Indian troops to Malta. The combined effect of these measures was to convince not only Russia but all of Europe that Great Britain would fight rather than submit to a Russian settlement of the Eastern Question. This, in turn, contributed to Russia's position of isolation, the third factor responsible for the British diplomatic victory. Bismarck would not join Russia in a military opposition to England in a matter which he believed to be relatively unimportant. The conflict of Austrian and Russian interests in the Balkans made Russian isolation inevitable. Bismarck had to choose between Austrian and Russian interests. He chose the latter, but endeavored to conciliate both. The Russian concessions to England resulted from her inability to proceed against that Power alone. The diplomatic victory, won by England at little cost, enabled the British delegation to enter the Congress of Berlin with an advantage over the other delegations.



## CHAPTER VI

### "PEACE WITH HONOR"

As the negotiations with Russia, Austria, and Turkey were approaching a conclusion, the British statesmen began considering the choice of an English delegation to the Congress of Berlin. Salisbury urged Beaconsfield to attend, because, since Bismarck was requesting that it "be a Congress without ad referendum," no one other than Beaconsfield was qualified as the Chief Plenipotentiary; only he could "declare with authority the policy of England."<sup>1</sup> Little urging was necessary, because Beaconsfield deemed the Congress to be of such importance that it would require his being there, if only for the first few days. Queen Victoria, however, was reluctant to permit her aged Prime Minister to go as far as Berlin--his health was not good. If the Congress were to convene at "Brussels, The Hague, or Paris," she would urge that he go.<sup>2</sup> Yet, when the Prime Minister expressed his desire for the appointment,<sup>3</sup> she felt she could not refuse him.

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1. Beaconsfield to Queen Victoria. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1166f.

2. Queen Victoria to the Prince of Wales. Lee, King Edward VII, I, 434.

3. Beaconsfield to Queen Victoria. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1178f.

The Congress was too far away, though, and she would be worried, but not because of the quality of representation. She wrote her Minister that no one "could carry out our views, proposals, etc., except him, for no one has such weight and such power of conciliating men and no one such firmness or has a stronger sense of the honour and interests of his Sovereign and country."<sup>4</sup> Beaconsfield, Salisbury, and Russell, the British Ambassador at Berlin, were appointed by the Cabinet, on June 1, to act as Plenipotentiaries.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, after four diplomacy-filled months during which war could have broken out at any time, the last remaining obstacle to a Congress was removed with the signing of the British-Russian agreement. Apprised of this fact, Bismarck sent invitations to the Powers, signatories of the Treaties of 1856 and 1871. Immediately on receiving the carefully worded invitation on June 3, Salisbury notified Münster, the German Ambassador in London, that Great Britain accepted the invitation, it being understood that the "Powers in accepting this invitation assent to the terms stated" therein.<sup>6</sup> This reservation secured to England the right to withdraw from the Congress if all the "stipulations of the Preliminary Treaty of San Stefano" were not submitted there.<sup>7</sup>

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4. Queen Victoria to Beaconsfield. Ibid. 1179.

5. Ibid. 1179.

6. State Papers, V. 69, 830f.

7. Invitation to Congress. Ibid., V. 69, 830. Hertslet, Map of Europe, 2721.

Thus, England would enter the Congress on the terms which she had formulated in the very beginning. This diplomatic victory was an advantage which undoubtedly Beaconsfield intended to utilize to the greatest extent possible.

Beaconsfield's poor health caused him to plan carefully for the coming Congress. Suspecting that his endurance would fail, he intended to remain in Berlin for only the first and most important meetings, leaving it to Salisbury "to complete all the details."<sup>8</sup> In order that the British delegation could work harmoniously, Salisbury sent instructions to Russell informing him of "the general principles upon which . . . a settlement should be affected"; certain Articles of the Treaty, such as the arrangement of frontiers for Serbia and Montenegro and the problem of Bosnia-Herzegovina, would not be considered as of primary interest to England, but would nevertheless require "the vigilant attention of the Plenipotentiaries"; England, in treating this type of question, would "support any legitimate proposals tending to benefit and strengthen the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and, as far as possible, would work toward securing "the welfare and the good government of the populations concerned"; in such matters, however, Russia would not be opposed so strongly as to break up the Congress.<sup>9</sup> The points of major importance were laid down in the agreements with Austria

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8. Beaconsfield to Queen Victoria. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1178f.

9. State Papers, V. 69, 832-35.

and Russia, so that it was unnecessary to discuss them with Russell. With respect to Kars and Batoum, even though England had conceded this point to Russia in their secret agreement, England would strongly urge at the Congress that Russia surrender these acquisitions.<sup>10</sup> It would be beneficial to have "interviews with all the chief statesmen" before the first meeting of the Congress. In order that Beaconsfield would be well rested and up to the task of conversing with Europe's leading statesmen, he would allow four days for the trip, and at least one for interviews.<sup>11</sup>

Leaving England on June 8, Beaconsfield traveled only as far as Calais the first day, Brussels the second day, Cologne the third day, and Berlin the fourth day, June 11.<sup>12</sup> Almost on arrival he was informed that Bismarck desired a personal meeting. Beaconsfield, delighted that Bismarck's plan fell in with his own, went to the German Chancellor. That which he learned in the interview is best described in his own words:

The interview was not unsatisfactory, and Lord B[eaconsfield] arrived at the conclusion that the Prince was anxious for a peaceful settlement. He suggested to Lord B[eaconsfield] that, as, probably, President of the Congress, he should, in his initial speech on Thursday, group the questions according to their importance, and that he should like to begin with Bulgaria, as perhaps the most weighty. 'Tho' we need not avoid a single article of the Treaty of San Stefano, if we took them in their regular order,

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10. Beaconsfield to Queen Victoria. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1180.

11. Ibid. 1178f.

12. Ibid. 1186.

many days, and the freshness of the Congress, would be expended on such insignificant topics as the port of Antivari, "a cavern in a rock," and the borders of Montenegro and Servia, and places of which no one ever heard before this war. All these concern Austria and he wished to serve Austria, but Austria is not going to war with Russia. Let us therefore deal with the great things that concern England, for England is quite ready to go to war with Russia.'<sup>13</sup>

On the day before the Congress was to convene Beaconsfield talked with the more important Plenipotentiaries as well as with certain members of the German Nobility.<sup>14</sup> Each meeting was utilized by Beaconsfield in studying the men with whom he would have to deal at the conference table. He tried to ascertain "their purposes and their power to enforce them."<sup>15</sup> These men making up the delegations to the Congress were for the most part the leading statesmen of Europe. The English representatives are already known. From Germany came Bismarck, Hohenlohe, and Bülow; Russia, Gortchakoff, Schouvaloff, and Oubril; Austria, Andrassy, Karolyi, and Haymerle; France, Waddington, Saint-Vellier and Desprez; Italy, Corti and Launay; and from Turkey, Caratheodory Pasha, Sadullah Bey, and Mehemet Ali Pasha.<sup>16</sup> The three men who played the most important roles at the Congress were Bismarck, Beaconsfield, and Schouvaloff. The latter two men carried the greatest load in diplomatic fencing, and the former was kept busy

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13. Beaconsfield to Queen Victoria. Ibid. 1187.

14. Ibid. 1188.

15. Ibid. 1187.

16. Langer, European Alliances, 152f. Tyler, European Powers, 107.

trying to conciliate the one or the other. Gortchakoff seemed perfectly willing to withdraw from the heated controversy and allow Schouvaloff to fight on in defeat, for defeat it was almost certain to be. Andrassy, while the most interesting and colorful person at the Congress, was not influential and was satisfied to act as Beaconsfield's echo. The other men, although they were leading men in their own countries, played a minor role. Some, like Salisbury, had to work hours at the boring details and be satisfied with a strictly secondary role. All in all, the assemblage was as great, man for man, as any similar one in previous history.

At two o'clock in the afternoon on June 13 the many Plenipotentiaries assembled at Radziwill Palace.<sup>17</sup> In opening the Congress, Bismarck said that the object of the assembly was to discuss freely the Treaty of San Stefano. There were no objections--England's policy had prevailed. The members elected Bismarck as President of the Congress, and he proceeded to act in the role of the "honest broker," a phrase coined by him in his speech of February 19 when he had said that he would be willing to play the part of the "honest broker" in a meeting of the Powers concerning the Eastern Question.<sup>18</sup> Bismarck outlined the order in which the problems would be discussed, placing Bulgaria

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17. Beaconsfield to Queen Victoria. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1189f.

18. Tyler, European Powers, 98.

first on the agenda. Beaconsfield followed Bismarck with the suggestion that the Congress attack the problem presented by the proximity of the British fleet and the Russian army. He represented this situation as a serious threat to the peace and "a danger to the success of the Congress."<sup>19</sup> It was suggested that this was not a matter for the Congress, but for direct negotiation between Russia and England. Though an attempt was made to effect a withdrawal of the fleet and the army, the situation was not resolved. Several weeks were to pass before the fleet steamed out of the Sea of Marmora.

The second meeting of the Congress was not scheduled to take place until June 17. Work, however, did not cease on this account, and although the week end was filled with social events and important receptions, many important meetings occurred. Beaconsfield met with Bismarck, Caratheodory Pasha (the first Turkish Plenipotentiary), and Schouvaloff.<sup>20</sup> The meeting with Schouvaloff, on June 14, warned Beaconsfield of a coming struggle in the Congress. Schouvaloff said that Russia would not permit the Sultan to employ his army in the southern province of Bulgaria. A rather heated discussion ensued, from which each party gained a knowledge of the determination of the other. Nevertheless, Beaconsfield emerged from the meeting without

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19. Langer, European Alliances, 153.

20. Beaconsfield to Queen Victoria. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1191f.

loss of confidence. In reporting the interview to Queen Victoria, he stated simply that the demand "will be given up by St. Petersburg."<sup>21</sup>

June 14 turned out to be a very disturbing day for the English diplomats, because the Globe published the contents of the British-Russian secret agreement.<sup>22</sup> The English, not knowing the other half of British diplomacy, i.e. the Cyprus convention, were much perturbed concerning the English concessions to Russia in the portion of the agreement dealing with Asia. Nor did they know of Beaconsfield's intentions to attempt, via the other Powers, to induce Russia to give Kars and Batoum back to Turkey. The position of the Government was certainly awkward at this moment; it could not reveal the text of the Cyprus convention, nor could it promise that, at the proper moment, English influence would again be brought against Russia in the Asian question. Beaconsfield and his aids in Berlin had to suffer some embarrassing moments, even though the effect on the other Plenipotentiaries of the Globe article (June 14) was not really astounding. Many, of course, were not even surprised. Nevertheless, something had to be done, at least in the opinion of the Cabinet members in England. A search was instituted, and the guilty party was found. Mr. Marvin, employed at the Foreign Office as a copyist, had sold the

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21. Ibid. 1191.

22. Tyler, European Powers, 105. Globe is a London newspaper.



information to the newspaper.<sup>23</sup> Marvin was prosecuted in compliance with an order from Salisbury, but this move, naturally, had no calming effect upon the English populace. It is interesting to note how much Beaconsfield's view differed from Salisbury's in respect to the prosecution of Marvin. He wrote to Sir Stafford Northcote, his Chancellor of the Exchequer, expressing his extreme perturbation in words that, coming from him, had a humorous ring:

. . . What in the name of Heaven, or rather Hell, and all the infernal regions of all religions, could have induced you all to arrest, and prosecute, that poor wretch Marvin? This is the dirtiest linen that was ever washed in public by any family on record. You will not, probably, be able to punish him, and, if you do, he will have general sympathy--this sad wretch entrusted with secrets of State with a salary of 8d. an hour! Before this we were supposed to be the not contemptible victims of an imperial misfortune; now we are ridiculous.<sup>24</sup>

A probable result of the affair was the stiffening in the attitude of the British delegation toward Russia, which was clearly noticeable during the first few days of the Congress. Perhaps Beaconsfield and his underlings would have maintained the same attitude even if the event had not occurred, but it is probable that there was some effect.<sup>25</sup>

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23. Ibid. 105.

24. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1175. Beaconsfield believed Marvin was being prosecuted as a cover for someone else. He later learned that Marvin was guilty.

25. Langer (European Alliances, 154) states, without reservation that Beaconsfield became "more and more stiff in his attitude" as a result of the Globe article.

At the second meeting of the Congress, June 17, Article VI of the Treaty of San Stefano (the Article creating the large Bulgaria) was read, and thus, the Bulgarian problem was submitted to the Congress.<sup>26</sup> The British-Russian agreement had established the principle of a division of Bulgaria into a northern and a southern province with the Balkan range as the delimitation. Little else of a definite nature had been agreed upon.<sup>27</sup> Now that the problem was before the Congress, England proposed two resolutions: "1. That the chain of the Balkans should be the new frontier of Turkey. 2. That in the country south of the Balkans, the Sultan should exercise a real political and military power."<sup>28</sup> Russia argued against the proposals and submitted her desire for a longitudinal division of the two provinces. Turkish troops were not to be permitted to enter South Bulgaria, the name applied by Russia to the southern province. Bismarck adjourned the question until June 19, counseling the concerned parties to confer with each other in the interim.<sup>29</sup> This policy of introducing the problem to the Congress and

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26. Hertslet, Map of Europe, 2736. Protocols in short English version are contained herein, 2726-2758. The entire protocols in the French language are in State Papers, V. 69, 862-1078. Since the majority of decisions were made outside of the Congress, the story of British diplomacy at the Congress must be found in sources other than the protocols. However, they serve as a guide and check on dates and events.

27. Above, 104.

28. Beaconsfield to Queen Victoria. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1194.

29. Ibid. 1194.

settling it outside was adhered to by Bismarck throughout the duration of the Congress.

Schouvaloff, Oubril, Andrassy, and Haymerle met with Beaconsfield and Salisbury on the next day. Andrassy and Haymerle, living up to the Austro-British agreement, supported Beaconsfield in his presentation of the Bulgarian problem. Schouvaloff regretfully accepted the line of the Balkans, but, after four hours of discussion which Beaconsfield described as "nearly the severest four hours I can well recall," the solution of the second question was deferred until Schouvaloff should have referred the question to the Emperor.<sup>30</sup> When the Congress met on June 19, Schouvaloff had not received word, so the Bulgarian question was again deferred. That evening Beaconsfield told Corti, anticipating that he would tell Bismarck and perhaps other Plenipotentiaries, that he took "the gloomiest view of affairs," and that if Russia refused to accept the English proposals, he had "resolved to break up the Congress."<sup>31</sup>

There was much discussion at another meeting between England, Austria and Russia on June 20, but no decisions were reached, because news had not yet come from Russia. A special envoy, who had been sent to speak with the Emperor, would not be back until the next evening (June 21). For this reason, Russia was granted twenty-four hours in which to have an

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30. Ibid. 1194f.

31. Ibid. 1195.

answer for England.<sup>32</sup> The next morning, Beaconsfield, believing that the time had arrived to prove the sincerity of his threat to break up the Congress, ordered his Secretary to arrange for a special train to be in readiness.<sup>33</sup> Late that afternoon Bismarck called on Beaconsfield, asking him if he intended his demand to be an ultimatum. Being answered affirmatively, Bismarck asked Beaconsfield to dine with him that evening. This eventful meeting between the two men is best described by Beaconsfield himself:

After dinner, we retired to another room, where he smoked and I followed his example. I believe I gave the last blow to my shattered constitution, but I felt it absolutely necessary. I had an hour and  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the most interesting conversation, entirely political; he was convinced that the ultimatum was not a sham, and, before I went to bed, I had the satisfaction of knowing that St. Petersburg had surrendered.<sup>34</sup>

The next morning Beaconsfield telegraphed to Queen Victoria and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, informing them of the Russian acceptance of "the English scheme for the European frontier of the Empire, and its military and political rule by the Sultan."<sup>35</sup> The major points had been decided, but four additional meetings, devoted almost exclusively to the Bulgarian problem, and part of the meeting

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32. Ibid. 1195.

33. Corry, Beaconsfield's Secretary, to Lady Ilchester. Ibid. 1198. "At one moment all looked as if Russia could not give in, and I had made arrangements for a special train for England . . . ."

34. Beaconsfield to Queen Victoria. Ibid. 1196.

35. Ibid. 1196.

on June 28 were required to settle the many minor points. England insisted that "South Bulgaria" (Russia's name for the southern province) be called "Eastern Rumelia." The actual delimitation, particularly in the west, and the problem of garrisoning Turkish troops necessitated considerable debate.<sup>36</sup> The final settlement called for dividing the San Stefano Bulgaria into three parts, the northern part to be an autonomous principality under the suzerainty of the Sultan, the southern part to be a Turkish principality "under conditions of administrative autonomy," and the third part to be a part of the Turkish Empire in Europe. The northern province, called Bulgaria, was to have a prince elected by the people "and confirmed by the Sublime Porte, with the assent of the Powers." The Sultan was accorded the right to maintain troops in Eastern Rumelia. Russian occupation of the two provinces was "fixed at nine months."<sup>37</sup>

The Bulgarian settlement having been defined, the British delegation could relax until the introduction of the Kars-Batoum problem which Beaconsfield considered to be the only remaining problem of great importance to England. Between June 28 and July 6, settlements were made in connection with Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Greece, Rumania, the Straits, and the Danube.<sup>38</sup> Except for the Straits, England had no vital interests in the settlement of any of

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36. Hertslet, Map of Europe, 2737-44.

37. Ibid. 2764-78. State Papers, V. 69, 749-67.

38. Hertslet, Map of Europe, 2743-50.

these problems, but she had made commitments which she intended to fulfill. Accordingly, on June 28, after Andrassy spoke generally on the Austrian need of a satisfactory settlement for Bosnia-Herzegovina, Salisbury proposed that the two provinces be occupied by Austria-Hungary.<sup>39</sup> This proposal was made in compliance with an agreement made with Austria in the early days of the Congress: Austria was to support a certain English demand relative to Bulgaria, "in return for which the English were to propose the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria."<sup>40</sup> England, desiring to have the approval of the Turks before making the proposal, had tried unavailingly to secure Turkish assent. Although all other Powers at the Congress agreed to the proposal, Turkey maintained a stubborn resistance. Austria did not press the matter at that time, probably wishing to maintain some measure of Turkish friendship. Negotiations between Austria and Turkey resulted, on July 11, in a Turkish proposal, which stated that Austria-Hungary and Turkey reserve the right "to come to an understanding between themselves on matters of detail" concerning Austrian occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina.<sup>41</sup> Article 25 of the Treaty of Berlin restated the proposal, adding only that Austria-Hungary would occupy and administer Bosnia-Herzegovina, and, while not wishing to occupy Novi-Bazar (an ancient Vilayet of Bosnia extending

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39. Ibid. 2743f. Tyler, European Powers, 111.

40. Langer, European Alliances, 155f.

41. Hertslet, Map of Europe, 2755.

in a southeasterly direction between Serbia and Montenegro), would reserve the right "of keeping garrisons and having military and commercial roads in the whole of this part . . . "42

The British delegation supported all the Austrian proposals relative to a settlement for Serbia and Montenegro. Both obtained territorial acquisitions and complete independence. Montenegro gained access to the sea via the port of Antivari.<sup>43</sup> Rumania received independence, but had to surrender Bessarabia in return for Dobrudja.<sup>44</sup> On June 29 Beaconsfield had protested in Congress against the retrocession of Bessarabia as being a violation of the Treaty of 1856.<sup>45</sup> His speech was apparently mere oratory for the record, since the pre-Congress agreement between England and Russia contained a stipulation that England would not

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42. Ibid. 2780. Holland, European Concert, 292f. State Papers, V. 69, 758. On July 28, 1878 Austria-Hungary issued a Proclamation to the inhabitants of Bosnia-Herzegovina, announcing the Austrian intention to occupy the provinces. Hertslet, Map of Europe, 2800f. State Papers, V. 69, 1107ff. The inhabitants of Bosnia-Herzegovina resisted the entrance of Austrian troops and peace was not restored to the provinces until the end of September. On November 9 Austria-Hungary issued a Proclamation of Amnesty to the inhabitants of Bosnia and Herzegovina who had taken part in the Insurrection against Austrian troops. State Papers, V. 69, 1124f.

43. Hertslet, Map of Europe, 2781-90. Serbian independence was dependent upon the institution of equality among members of all religious creeds in respect to civil rights.

44. Ibid. 2790-93. Rumanian independence was dependent upon the same condition applied to Serbia. The condition to independence for Serbia and Rumania was proposed by Salisbury.

45. Ibid. 2745. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1205.

protest against Russian acquisition of Bessarabia. It might be claimed that Beaconsfield was instrumental in obtaining Dobrudja as compensation, but evidence for this is scanty.<sup>46</sup> England was a little more interested in Greece than in Serbia, Montenegro, or Rumania. Even before the convening of the Congress she had used her influence in behalf of the Greek Kingdom's request to be represented at the Congress.<sup>47</sup> The question of a revision of Greek frontiers was introduced on June 29, and the Greek representatives requested annexation of the provinces of Epirus and Thessaly.<sup>48</sup> Beaconsfield, still endeavoring to retain English influence at Constantinople, proposed on July 11 that the Governments of Turkey and Greece arrive at an agreement, out of the Congress, on the northward rectification of the frontier. Mediation of the Powers would be granted if the two Governments so desired.<sup>49</sup> Article 24 of the Treaty of Berlin, being only a restatement of Beaconsfield's proposal, did not provide a satisfactory settlement.<sup>50</sup>

On July 6 the problem of the territories in Asia (the long awaited Kars-Batoum problem) was brought before the Congress. Russia immediately conceded "Erzeroum, Bayazid,

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46. The only statement to this effect, discovered by the author, is in Moneypenny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1205.

47. State Papers, V. 69, 795ff, 799.

48. Hertslet, Map of Europe, 2744.

49. Ibid. 2756. Langer, European Alliances, 161.

50. Hertslet, Map of Europe, 2779f.



and the Valley of Alashkerd, containing principal Commercial Routes towards Persia."<sup>51</sup> These concessions had been made previously in the Anglo-Russian agreement, but the remainder of the agreement was rather vague. England had consented "'not to contest the desire of the Emperor of Russia to occupy the port of Batoum and to guard his conquests in Armenia.'"<sup>52</sup> Beaconsfield, after the Russian concession had been announced, began a struggle to limit the Russian occupation of Batoum. He desired that Batoum be made a free port.<sup>53</sup> This seemed agreeable to the Russians, but the other demands relative to a limitation of the other Russian gains in Asia provoked a strong resistance. Just as the Bulgarian problem had been decided outside the Congress, so now the Asian problem was decided.

Unfortunately, the delegations did not work together as they had on the previous occasion. This time Beaconsfield and Gortchakoff met together while Salisbury and Schouvaloff carried on separate discussions. It seems that, during the negotiations, Beaconsfield and Salisbury did not keep each other informed as to the course of the negotiations anymore than did Gortchakoff and Schouvaloff. Naturally, this resulted in a very confused picture with neither side knowing just where it stood in relation to the other. At one point

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51. Ibid. 2750.

52. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1208.

53. Beaconsfield to Queen Victoria. Ibid. 1204.

Bismarck had to intervene to prevent an extremely bad situation from developing.

The Salisbury-Schouvaloff discussions assumed a hostile tone from the beginning, because Salisbury, unlike Beaconsfield, desired a complete surrender of Batoum. Up to this time there had been no mention in Congress of the Straits, so Salisbury thought it might be advantageous to discuss this problem in conjunction with the Asian problem. He thought that the Straits might be a convenient lever with which to pry loose the Russian hold on Batoum, for it was known that Russia desired a modification of the Straits clauses in the former treaties if that modification were favorable to Russia. If this could not be accomplished, she wished the Straits clauses to remain unchanged. Salisbury threatened Russia with a change in the Straits clauses if she did not give up Batoum. He even approached Turkey with a proposition that Turkey allow the English fleet to enter the Black Sea if Russia retained Batoum, but Turkey rejected this plan.<sup>54</sup> More than this, Salisbury informed Schouvaloff that England would not keep her promise "not to resist the Russian possession of Batoum."<sup>55</sup> When Schouvaloff insisted that England was bound by Salisbury's signature, the latter replied that "he would resign and be replaced by another

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54. Langer, European Alliances, 157.

55. Tyler, European Powers, 109.

foreign secretary who would be free from any obligations incurred by the agreement of May 30."<sup>56</sup>

In the meantime, after Bismarck had intervened in favor of Russia, Beaconsfield and Gortchakoff had reached an agreement with respect to Batoum, Russia agreeing that it was to be a free port, essentially commercial.<sup>57</sup> The establishing of the boundary caused further trouble, but a settlement was finally achieved when both parties agreed to a line midway between the two extremes.<sup>58</sup>

Following the Asiatic settlement Salisbury read a British declaration relative to the Straits. The concluding paragraph stated:

I declare on behalf of England that the obligations of Her Britannic Majesty relating to the closing of the Straits do not go further than an engagement with the Sultan to respect in this matter His Majesty's independent determinations in conformity with the spirit of existing Treaties.<sup>59</sup>

Obviously such an interpretation meant that Turkey would be free to permit any country at war with Russia to enter the Black Sea even though Turkey were at peace. This interpretation was not in harmony with the clauses of the former Treaties which prohibited the use of the Straits to ships of war when Turkey was at peace. Consequently, on July 12,

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56. Ibid. 109f.

57. Langer, European Alliances, 158.

58. Articles 58-60 in the Treaty of Berlin. Hertslet, Map of Europe, 2794-96. Kars was retained by Russia.

59. Ibid. 2727.

Russia read a counter declaration to the Congress, which concluded as follows:

. . . the principle of the closing of the Straits is an European principle, and . . . the stipulations concluded in this respect in 1841, 1856, and 1871, confirmed at present by the Treaty of Berlin, are binding on the part of all the Powers, in accordance with the spirit and letter of the existing Treaties, not only as regards the Sultan but also as regards all the Powers signatory to these transactions.<sup>60</sup>

After the reading of these two declarations, the Straits question was not debated in the Congress. The Treaty of Berlin, under Article 63, left the Straits under the regulations prescribed by the Treaties of 1856 and 1871. Thus, it may be considered that the Russian view prevailed.

On July 6, while the Congress was concerned with the problem of Batoum, England occupied Cyprus.<sup>61</sup> This fact was announced to the Powers, of which only France and Italy registered a complaint. Salisbury is supposed to have suggested to France that Tunis be occupied by her. To Italy, he remarked that the "Mediterranean was large enough for all."<sup>62</sup> Many congratulations were received by Queen Victoria, and Beaconsfield was highly acclaimed. The Powers, for the most part, looked upon the move as a brilliant feat of diplomacy. The British people, except for the Gladstonians, were elated that their Government had not betrayed them, as had been suspected when the Globe published the contents of the

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60. Ibid. 2728.

61. Langer, European Alliances, 159f.

62. Ibid. 160.

Anglo-Russian agreement. For the Government, the long drawn-out Cyprus affair, which had caused much dissension in the Cabinet and two resignations, had a satisfactory conclusion.

Exactly one month after the convening of the Congress the work was finished and the Treaty of Berlin signed. Beaconsfield and Salisbury returned to England in the same leisurely manner in which Beaconsfield had come to Berlin. They were greeted by crowds at Dover and London on July 16.<sup>63</sup> In Downing Street, Beaconsfield happily announced that they had brought back "'Peace with Honour!'"

Looking back over the three-year period it becomes apparent that British policy, starting in 1875 as one of caution and inactivity, gradually grew into a policy of boldness and action. It is understandable that Disraeli advocated "non-intervention" at the outbreak of the Bosno-Herzegovinian insurrection. In the previous decade similar occurrences in the Turkish Empire had not produced an uncontrollable situation. It was not unwise to assume that Turkey, if left alone, would be able to suppress the insurgents. Moreover, it is entirely possible that Disraeli was suspicious concerning the actual cause of the insurrection. He probably knew, considering the reports from the consul in Bosnia, about the intolerable conditions under which the peasants of Bosnia-Herzegovina lived. It is not certain, however, that he believed this to be the cause of the insurrection. He

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63. Money Penny and Buckle, Life of Disraeli, 1217.

was receiving reports from Elliot at Constantinople that told of help being given the insurgents by the Russian consul in the area. Also, Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria had just been visiting his Dalmation province and there were rumors concerning the purpose of his visit. If Disraeli entertained the slightest suspicion that either Austria or Russia, or both, were partially responsible for having stirred the peasants to revolt, he naturally would try to discourage intervention on the part of the Powers. The last thing that he wished to see was a reopening of the Eastern Question, for if that happened it was reasonably certain that the final settlement would be contrary to England's interests.

By autumn of 1875, Disraeli knew that he could not prevent the reopening of the Eastern Question. Yet, in January, 1876 he favored non-adherence to the Andrassy Note, which, drafted by Germany, Austria, and Russia, was designed to compel Turkey to grant certain reforms to Bosnia-Herzegovina. Disraeli did not believe that presenting the Andrassy Note to Turkey would resolve the situation. He did believe that, by presenting the Note, the principle of intervention by the Powers would be firmly established and not relinquished thereafter. In both of these contentions, Disraeli was correct.. The Andrassy Note, though accepted by Turkey, did not provide a settlement. In May the Three Powers exercised the established principle of intervention by formulating another note known as the Berlin Memorandum. It

differed from the Andrassy Note only in that the language used was more severe and the reforms demanded were more extensive. Disraeli declined adherence to the Berlin Memorandum. Many writers have taken the view that this action was a mistake. They believe that the concert of Europe was broken, and that the only chance of solving the problem was lost. The author is much inclined to agree with the view held by Disraeli, that certain of the stipulations of the Memorandum were quite beyond the ability of Turkey to perform. Consequently, the end result of the Memorandum could only have been that the Powers would have brought measures of force against Turkey. In any such an action, England stood to lose, for the interests of the other European Powers were unlike those of England. Disraeli believed that the English aim could be better achieved outside the concert of Powers than within. It was a controversial point in England at that time, and, among the historians devoted to the subject, it is equally controversial. It is often stated that England should have offered a counter proposal, since she refused to adhere to the Memorandum as it stood. The author submits that Disraeli would hardly propose anything that was designed to bring the Powers into the settlement of Turkish problems. This is supposed to have been his great mistake and the cause of the wars that followed. That fact may be, but looking at the problem with Disraeli's eyes it would seem difficult to state that he should have known the ultimate result of his

action. He knew only that in any settlement devised by the Powers England would have to make concessions. This she later did, both at the Conference of Constantinople and at Berlin. The episode of the Berlin Memorandum made known to the Powers that they would not be able to act without considering England, as they might formerly have thought as a result of a long period of British isolation from European power politics.

War between Serbia and Turkey broke out in July, 1876, further complicating the Balkan situation. Disraeli believed that Serbia was wholly unjustified in commencing this war, that it was simply an opportunist measure. Serbia wanted, in his opinion, to take advantage of the supposed Turkish weakness to acquire additional territories. The author believes that much of this was true, but wishes to point out that, in respect to the Serbian people, their emotions, relationships, aims, and desires, Disraeli was woefully ignorant. It was beyond him to believe that the Serbians really and truly desired to help their oppressed brothers in Bosnia-Herzegovina. However, even had he understood the Serbians, his policy would have been unchanged, for in this war he adopted a policy of "non-interference and neutrality."

The Bulgarian atrocities, occurring at about this time, caused a great stir in England. Gladstone came out of retirement to lambast the Government at every opportunity. His following was tremendous at first, but as time passed it gradually diminished. It was extremely unfortunate for England that this prevented Disraeli's putting forth as bold a



policy as he deemed essential. It is certain that Russia was undesirably influenced by the agitation in England. Russia may not have declared war on Turkey had it not been for her belief that Disraeli would be prevented by the popular will from taking counter measures. Be that as it may, the Russo-Turkish war occurred.

Prior to this, however, the Powers had convened at Constantinople for the purpose of bringing peace to the Balkans. The event hardly merits more than mention, since it turned out to be a failure. The interesting thing to note is that Disraeli's prediction that an intervention by the Powers would ultimately result in English concessions was proven correct. Salisbury, for England, made the concessions at Constantinople. The Conference was of some value to England as a rehearsal of the later Congress of Berlin. At least, when the Congress of Berlin was in the formative stage, Disraeli made certain that it would be held on his terms, thus gaining for England as much advantage as possible.

The Russo-Turkish War, as it developed in favor of Russia, brought forth a determined policy in England. The people gradually gave support to the Government, so Disraeli could gradually expand the policy along desired lines. However, there was a knotty problem to be solved. His Cabinet contained a peace faction headed by his Foreign Minister. This resulted in a long battle in the Cabinet, which was finally won by Disraeli when the Foreign Minister resigned.

Some say that, had it not been for the opposition in the Cabinet, Disraeli would have plunged England into war. The author does not share this view. He believes that Disraeli wanted peace at all times and would have endeavored to keep the peace even had there been no opposition.

On March 3 the Preliminary Peace of San Stefano was signed by Turkey and Russia. The main feature of the treaty was the creation of a large Bulgaria, which was not acceptable to either England or Austria. England reiterated a former statement made to Russia that no Peace would be final until agreed to by the Powers. Austria co-operated with England in this respect and the Congress of Berlin was born. It did not convene, however, until England had three secret agreements concluded: one with Russia, concerned mostly with Bulgaria; one with Austria, establishing a basis of Austro-English co-operation at the Congress; and another with Turkey allowing England to occupy Cyprus in return for an English guarantee of the Turkish territories in Asia.

The Congress convened on June 13, 1878, and proceeded along lines laid down in the English secret agreements. One month of negotiation was required to draft the Treaty of Berlin. The great significance of the Treaty from the English view was the re-establishment of a Turkey-in-Europe. Actually, it was a stronger Turkey than had existed in 1875. The territorial losses served to tighten the Turkish line of defense, and released troops that had been employed in former times in the outer provinces. The line of the Balkans was a

defensible position as shown by the battle for Plevna in the Russo-Turkish War. It is said that this did not represent a Turkish victory since Turkey never made use of her right to fortify the passes. To this, the author can only ask--how could Beaconsfield know that Turkey would not take full advantage of her right to militarize Eastern Rumelia? With the settlement provided by the Treaty of Berlin, Russia's advance toward Constantinople was postponed. With the occupation of Cyprus and the Anglo-Turkish defensive alliance in Asia, Russia's overland threat to India was nullified.

British aims had been achieved without recourse to war. In July, 1878 British Diplomacy emerged victorious.

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