

**ROMANIA, EUROPEAN DIPLOMACY AND THE NEW PHASE
OF THE “EASTERN QUESTION”**

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Abstract

The *Eastern Question* represents a diplomatic problem posed by the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and centering on the contest for control of its territories. Any internal change in the Turkish domains caused tension among the European powers, each of which feared that one of the others might take advantage of the political disarray to increase its own influence. The *Eastern Question* thus developed, in the last quarter of the 19th century, from that of the problems raised by the impending break-up of a decaying empire, into the even more complex question of how to deal with an empire which showed vigorous evidence of life, but of a type of life which, though on all sides in close touch with modern European civilization, was incapable of being brought into harmony with it.

For Romania, this event created the perfect opportunity for obtaining the status of independence. Although the Romanians hoped for the Great Power's support, this national goal was, in fact, obtained only after the Romanian army took part in the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-1878.

Key words: *Eastern Question, Diplomacy, Balkan Peninsula, European Concert, Constitution*

The outbreak of the *Eastern Question* and the events that took place in the period of 1875-1877, brought back into the European and world's conscience the political and national realities and aspirations of the Balkan populations¹.

In the summer of 1875 a revolt in a village in Herzegovina², judged at the outset to be merely “an internal affair of Turkey”, was the beginning of a movement which spread all over the Balkan Peninsula, a revolt of Christian population against the Ottomans, which, in a short period of time, involved even the Bosnians³ – an event with a profound national and religious character¹.

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¹ Dumitru Vitcu, *Lumea românească și Balcanii în reportajele corespondenților americani de război, 1877-1878*, Iași, Editura Junimea, 2005, p. 7; Iulian Oncescu, *România în politica orientală a Franței, 1866-1878*, ediția a II-a, revăzută și adăugită, Târgoviște, Editura Cetatea de Scaun, 2010, p. 238.

² The revolt began in several small villages in Herzegovina, where the tax farmers had been demanding full payment of the cultivation and sheep taxes despite a bad harvest in 1874. Peasant attacks on the tax collectors led to intervention by the provincial garrisons. Many of the rebels were able to secure arms and ammunition from Montenegro, which they used to raid roads, capture bridges, and attack and massacre Muslim villages (starting July 24th, 1877), leading to bloody replies in kind, and the crisis soon escalated; see Stanford J. Shaw, Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, vol. II, *Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 180a8-1975*, Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 158.

³ A.J.P. Taylor, *The struggle for mastery in Europe, 1848-1918*, Oxford University Press, 1954, pp. 228-242; see Constantin Căzănișteanu, Mihail E. Ionescu, *Războiul neatârării României. Împrejurări*

Grand Vezir, Ethem Pasha, sent negotiators to talk with the rebels, promising to solve all their problems, if only they laid down their arms, but the rebels felt they could get better terms by appealing directly to the foreign consuls in the area, complaining in particular of high taxes, forced labor, and the continued feudal attitudes of the great landowners. Within a short time, the revolt spread to all parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Arms came mainly from Habsburg territory in Hungary and Dalmatia, since the Russian leaders were too divided on what should be done. Prime Minister Gorchakov opposed Ignatiev's efforts, in the fear that they would only upset the European balance and lead to new troubles, while the Pan-Slavs in Russia and certain military elements strongly supported the ambassador².

Emerged due to internal crisis of the Ottoman Empire, the revolt constituted a starting point for the entire Balkan Peninsula, and a main point of interest for the Great Powers³. Once again, they had to face national issues in the Southeastern Europe, and obviously, the desires of the populations still under Ottoman leadership⁴. In this new phase of the *Eastern Question*, the attitude of the Great Powers was different and was portrayed by every state involved⁵, due to its interests and maintaining Europe's balance⁶.

Although Austro-Hungary, Russia and Germany wanted, for different reasons, a change in the Balkans, other states, such as France, Great Britain and Italy were in favour of maintaining the Paris Treaty's (1856) agreements⁷. In this respect, Great Britain and France enjoyed significant commercial concessions on the Ottoman market and wanted to maintain the integrity of the Ottoman Empire and their governments were, in general, hostile to any revolutionary movements⁸. During this new stage of the *Eastern Question*,

diplomatice și operații militare 1877-1878, București, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1977, pp. 25-28.

¹ Nicolae Ciachir, *Războiul pentru independența României în contextul european (1875-1878)*, București, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1977, pp. 125-128; Nicolae Ciachir, Gheorghe Bercan, *Diplomația europeană în epoca modernă*, București, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1984, p. 366; Nicolae Ciachir, *Marile Puteri și România (1856-1947)*, București, Editura Albatros, 1996, p. 70; Charles Jelavich, Barbara Jelavich, *Formarea statelor naționale balcanice (1804-1920)*, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Dacia, 1999, pp. 176-178; Nicolae Ciachir, *Istoria popoarelor din Sud-Estul Europei în epoca modernă (1789-1923)*, ediția a III-a, revizuită, Târgoviște, Editura Cetatea de Scaun, 2011, p. 170.

² Stanford J. Shaw, Ezel Kural Shaw, *op. cit.*, pp. 158-159.

³ *România în relațiile internaționale (1699-1939)*, coordonatori Leonid Boicu, Vasile Cristian, Gheorghe Platon, Iași, Editura Junimea, 1980, pp. 256-259; Nicolae Ciachir, Gheorghe Bercan, *op. cit.*, pp. 368-369.

⁴ Iulian Oncescu, *op. cit.*, pp. 238-239.

⁵ Sorin Liviu Damean, *România și Congresul de pace de la Berlin (1878)*, București, Editura Mica Valahie, 2004, p. 14.

⁶ Constantin Căzănișteanu, Mihail E. Ionescu, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-29.

⁷ Gheorghe Cliveti, *România și Puterile Garante*, Iași, Editura Universității "Alexandru Ioan Cuza", 1988, p. 212.

⁸ Nicolae Corivan, *Lupta diplomatică pentru cucerirea independenței României*, București, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1977, pp. 24-25; Lucia Taftă, *Relații româno-franceze în timpul războiului de independență în rapoartele diplomatice franceze*, în "Studii și materiale de istorie modernă", XVI, București, Editura Academiei, 2003, p. 49.

France adopted a reserved attitude and supported Russia's diplomatic initiatives, for fear it might be isolated by Germany¹.

This event, also created the international conditions for obtaining the *independence* of Romania. In the Romanian diplomatic circles, there was, at least, a hope, that one of the Powers favourable to this ideal, might be France, for whom the Romanians had an obvious sympathy², but after the fall of the Second Empire, France lost the former position in the diplomatic arena, in the Western part of the continent, as well as in the Eastern region³.

Naturally, Russia help the revolt, but in 1875 it wasn't fully prepared to engage in a war with Turkey⁴. In Petersburg, the officials thought that the Ottoman Empire wouldn't last long, an idea maintained by some Russian diplomats, such as Gorceakov or Ignatiev, although Russia used its methods to prevent the war⁵.

The outbreak of the Balkan Crisis of 1875, commencing with a revolt in Herzegovina, presented Romanians with several options, according to Frederick Kellogg. They might join Balkan Christians to expel the Turks from Europe, unite with the suzerain Ottoman Empire to suppress the rebels, ally with Austria-Hungarian Empire or Russia to intervene militarily to restore peace, or avoid any involvement in the crisis. Vienna would probably counteract St. Petersburg in pacifying the Balkan Peninsula, owing to their long-standing animosity⁶. Both powers were still recovering from military defeats and both pursued cautious foreign policies, neither side then, wishing to upset the uneasy *balance of power* in Europe.

Romanian patriots, for their part, were unwilling to assist the Turks against the Slavs. Therefore, Romanians seriously contemplated only two possibilities at first: they might fight the Ottoman Empire or remain aloof. Neutrality jarred the rising spirit of Romanian patriotism, but Romanian statesmen, nonetheless, sought to contain popular sentiment in favour of the Orthodox Christian insurgents. Frequent violations of neutrality would create a climate of distrust at home and abroad, and liberal and conservative leaders thus exposed an uncommitted stance as a means of survival. The Romanian army was too weak, the neighboring powers too strong, and the course of events too uncertain for the state to adopt another posture⁷.

The Powers could no longer refrain from interference, and their action was hastened by financial considerations⁸. The inherent extravagance of a bad system had combined with the peculation of officials to bring disaster upon Turkey, and on October 7th, 1875, the Sultan was compelled to inform his creditors that he could not pay the full interest on

¹ Constantin Căzănișteanu, Mihail E. Ionescu, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

² Iulian Oncescu, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

³ Lucia Taftă, *Relații diplomatice româno-franceze în ajunul proclamării independenței*, în "Revista Istorică", Serie Nouă, tomul XIII, nr. 3-4, mai-august, București, Editura Academiei, 2002, p. 28.

⁴ Nicolae Iorga, *Politica externă a regelui Carol I*, București, 1923, pp. 112-116.

⁵ Nicolae Ciachir, *Marile Puteri și România (1856-1947)*, p. 71.

⁶ Frederick Kellogg, *The road to Romanian Independence*, Purdue University Press, West Lafayette, Indiana, 1995, p. 119.

⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 119-120.

⁸ Edward S. Creasy, *History of the Ottoman Turks: From the beginning of their empire to the present time*, London, 1878, p. 548.

the debt¹. Partial repudiation complicated an international situation already sufficiently embarrassing. Accordingly, the Sovereigns of Germany, Russia, and Austria took counsel together, and on December 30th, 1875, the Austrian Chancellor, Count Andrassy, issued from Buda-Pesth, the Note which bears his name².

The Andrassy Note professed the anxiety of the Powers to curtail the area of the insurrection and to maintain the peace of Europe; it drew attention to the failure of Turkey to carry out reforms long overdue, and it insisted that pressure must be put upon the Sultan effectually to redeem his promises. In particular he must be pressed to grant complete religious liberty; to abolish tax-farming; to apply the direct taxes, locally levied in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to the local needs of those provinces; to improve the condition of the rural population by multiplying peasant owners; and, above all, to appoint a special commission, composed in equal numbers of Mussulmans and Christians, to control the execution not only of the reforms now proposed by the Powers, but also of those spontaneously promised by the Sultan in the *Irade* of October 2nd, 1875 and the *Firman* of December 12th, 1875. Finally, the three emperors required that the Sultan should, by a signed Convention, pledge himself to a prompt and effectual execution of the reforms; in default of which the Powers could not undertake to continue their efforts to restrain and pacify the insurgents³. To this Note, the British Government gave a general adhesion, though they pointed out that the Sultan had during the last few months promised to carry out the more important of the reforms indicated therein.

The Note was presented to the Porte at the end of January, 1876 and the Sultan, with almost suspicious promptitude, accepted four out of the five points, the exception being the application of the direct taxes to local objects. The friendly efforts of the diplomatists were foiled, however, by the attitude of the insurgents. The latter refused, not unnaturally, to be satisfied with mere assurances, or to lay down their arms without substantial guarantees⁴. The Sultan on his side insisted, again not without reason, that it was impossible to initiate a scheme of reform while the provinces were actually in armed rebellion. Meanwhile, the mischief was spreading. Bosnia threw in its lot with the Herzegovina; Serbia, Montenegro, and Bulgaria were preparing to do the same when, at the beginning of May, a fanatical Mohammedan outbreak at Salonica led to the murder of the French and German consuls⁵. Drastic measures were obviously necessary, if a great European conflagration was to be avoided.

On May 11th, 1876, the Austrian and Russian Chancellors were at the Berlin conference with Prince Bismarck, determined to make further and more peremptory demands upon the Sultan⁶. There was to be an immediate armistice of two months' duration, during which certain measures of pacification and repatriation were to be executed under the superintendence of the delegates of the Powers. A mixed Commission, composed of natives, faithfully representing the two creeds of the country and presided

¹ Mustafa Ali Mehmed, *Istoria turcilor*, București, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1976, pp. 338-344.

² Stephen Pierce Hayden Duggan, *The Eastern Question. A study in diplomacy*, New York, 1902, p. 130.

³ *Documente privind Istoria României. Războiul pentru independență*, vol. I, partea a II-a, București, Editura Academiei, 1954, p. 258.

⁴ Nicolae Ciachir, *Istoria popoarelor din Sud-Estul Europei în epoca modernă (1789-1923)*, p. 172.

⁵ Iulian Oncescu, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

⁶ *Istoria Imperiului otoman* (coordonator Robert Mantran), traducere de Cristina Bîrsan, București, Editura BicAll, 2001, p. 435.

over by a native Christian, was to be appointed in Bosnia and the Herzegovina and the insurgents were to be permitted to remain under arms until the reforms promised by the Sultan in October and December, 1875, had been carried into effect¹. If by the expiry of the armistice, the object of the Powers had not been attained, diplomatic action would have to be reinforced. France and Italy assented to the Note, but the British Government regarded the terms as unduly peremptory. They resented, very naturally, the independent action of the three imperial Powers and declined, on May 19th, 1876, to be a party to the Memorandum. Disraeli's refusal to assent to the Berlin Memorandum created profound perturbation abroad and evoked a storm of criticism at home².

Romania's statesmen saw the conference as a vehicle for redefining their country's international position and with that in mind, Dumitru Brătianu went to Constantinople to argue the Romanian case. Brătianu was to call for the "consecration of the political status of Romania by a special guarantee for its perpetual neutrality". In the event of war between The Ottoman Empire and one of the Powers, Romania would receive instructions from the other powers as to its "line of conduct" and an affirmation of its "rights, neutrality and territorial integrity". The powers, however, ignored Romania's demands and disregarded the Romanian question in Constantinople³.

The Balkan Crisis became more complex, with the outbreak of the Serbo-Turkish War on June 30th, 1876. Prince Milan had been stimulated to action, partly by irresistible pressure from his own people, and partly by fear of Peter Karageorgevic, the representative of the rival dynasty. One day later, Prince Nicholas of Montenegro followed his example. The Serbs had, of course, a direct interest – political, ethnic and economic – in the insurgents in neighboring Herzegovina and Bosnia. Serbs hoped not only for independence, but for the creation of a large Serbian state. In order to achieve their goals, they needed weapons. Prince Milan (1868-1889) purchased guns and swords (120,000 rifles, 12 field guns and 5,000 swords) in Germany and obtained transport for them by way of Russia⁴.

The Porte, already engaged in war with Serbia and Montenegro, was terrified at the idea of an attack upon the right flank of its army, and determined upon a prompt and terrible suppression of the Bulgarian revolt⁵. On June 23rd, 1876, a London newspaper published the first account of the horrors alleged to have been perpetrated by the Turks in Bulgaria. How much of exaggeration there was in the tale of atrocities with which England and the world soon rang it was and is impossible to say⁶.

Meanwhile, another complication had arisen. At the end of June, Serbia and Montenegro, as we have already indicated, had declared war upon Turkey. The Serbian

¹ *Ibidem*.

² Sorin Liviu Damean, *op. cit.*, p. 16; Iulian Oncescu, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

³ Nicolae Corivan, *Lupta diplomatică pentru cucerirea independenței României*, p. 38; Constantin Căzănișteanu, Mihail E. Ionescu, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-69; Gheorghe Cliveti, *România și Puterile Garante...*, pp. 217-218.

⁴ Frederick Kellogg, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

⁵ The Bulgarian revolt was mentioned even in the Romanian newspapers, indicating the atrocities committed. For this event see: "Românul" of September 14th, 1876; "Timpul" of July 16th, August 5th, 12th, and 25th, 1876 and "Telegraful român", Sibiu, of May 4th, 9th, 16th and 19th and June 3rd, 1876.

⁶ Constantin Căzănișteanu, Mihail E. Ionescu, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

army consisted largely of Russian volunteers and was commanded by a Russian general. The Serbian army, even reinforced by the volunteers, could offer but a feeble resistance to the Turk, and in August Prince Milan, acting on a hint from England, asked for the mediation of the Powers. England, thereupon, urged the Sultan to come to terms with Serbia and Montenegro, lest a worse thing should befall him¹.

The Sultan declined an armistice, but formulated his terms and intimated that if the Powers approved them, he would grant an immediate suspension of hostilities. But to Lord Derby's chagrin Serbia would accept nothing less than an armistice, and, after a six weeks' suspension, hostilities recommenced². Nevertheless, the English Government was untiring in its efforts to promote a pacification, and suggested to the Powers, on September 21st, 1876, some heads of proposals: the status-quo in Serbia and Montenegro; local or administrative autonomy for Bosnia and Herzegovina; guarantees against maladministration in Bulgaria, and a comprehensive scheme of reform, all to be embodied in a protocol concluded between the Porte and the Powers³.

Russia then proposed, on September 26th, that, in the event of a refusal from Turkey, the allied fleets should enter the Bosphorus, that Bosnia should be temporarily occupied by Austria, and Bulgaria by Russia. Turkey, thereupon, renewed her dilatory tactics, but Russia's patience was almost exhausted. General Ignatiev arrived at Constantinople, on a special mission from the Tsar, on October 16th, and on the 30th, presented his ultimatum. If an armistice were not concluded with Serbia within forty-eight hours, the Russian Embassy was to be immediately withdrawn. On November 2nd, the Porte gave way and Serbia was saved. A breathing space was permitted to the operations of diplomacy.

The interval was utilized by the meeting of a Conference of the Powers at Constantinople, which began on December 11th, 1876⁴. The Powers agreed to the terms suggested by Lord Derby in September, but the Porte was obdurate. Profuse in professions and promises of reform, the Porte, selected this moment for the promulgation of a new parliamentary constitution, but it stubbornly refused to allow Europe to superintend the execution of the reforms⁵.

There was to be a Legislative Body of two Houses: a nominated Senate and an elected Chamber of Deputies; a responsible Executive; freedom of meeting and of the press; an irremovable judiciary and compulsory education. But, though the Sultan was prodigal in the concession of reforms, on paper, no one but himself should have a hand in executing them. On this point the Sultan was inexorable⁶.

Thereupon, General Ignatiev, refusing to take further part in a solemn farce, withdrew from the Conference. The Tsar had already announced, on November 10th, 1876, his intention to proceed single-handed, if the Porte refused the demands of the Powers, his army was already mobilized on the Pruth, and war appeared imminent.

¹ Nicolae Ciachir, *Marile Puteri și România (1856-1947)*, p. 76; idem, *Istoria popoarelor din Sud-Estul Europei în epoca modernă (1789-1923)*, p. 175.

² Nicolae Ciachir, Gheorghe Bercan, *op. cit.*, p. 378.

³ *Ibidem*, pp. 379-380.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 382; see Vasile Maciu, *România și conferința de la Constantinopol*, în "Analele Universității București", *Seria Științe Sociale, Istorie*, nr. 9/1957, p. 174.

⁵ See: J.A.R. Marriott, *The Eastern Question. An historical study in European diplomacy*, Oxford, 1917, p. 294.

⁶ *Ibidem*.

However, the diplomatists made one more effort to avert it. Their demands were reduced to a minimum: putting aside an extension of territory for Serbia or Montenegro, they insisted upon the concession of autonomy to Bosnia, to the Herzegovina, and to Bulgaria, under the control of an international commission¹.

Regarding Romania's case, Andrassy supported its policy of arming for defense even against the unlikely prospect of an Ottoman attack. He suggested, that if Russia invaded, Romania should declare that it yielded to a superior force. Romania's army ought to move away from advancing Russian troops, thereby preserving neutrality. If Romania remained neutral, the Austrian statesman promised to endeavor to maintain the indivisibility of the territory. Savfet Pasha also favored Romania's neutrality, seeing their vassal as a defensive buffer against Russia. Savfet Pasha was willing to deal on some Romanian claims, but not at the Ambassadorial Conference².

Failure to win a hearing at the conference in Constantinople, plus Savfet Pasha's apparent willingness to discuss neutrality and some of Romania's requests, prompted Dumitru Brătianu to ask for new instructions. Nicolae Ionescu empowered Brătianu to negotiate on the basis of Kogălniceanu's seven demands³. Ionescu had earlier disavowed Kogălniceanu's points about the consular jurisdiction and the possession of the Danube Delta. Now, however, Ionescu – while still disregarding consular jurisdiction – called for the cession of the Danube Delta to Romania. Moreover, he insisted that Romania's neutrality be guaranteed by a treaty⁴. Previously, the Romanians had assumed that their neutrality came from the Powers, but now, they wanted a special covenant confirming this situation.

Having indicated that, we can say that one area on concord was that of neutrality, Savfet Pasha declaring that Turkey would forbear crossing the Danube River in case of war. Romania's neutrality would hence be safeguarded and, more important for Turkey, a protective shield would be raised against a Russian offensive in the Balkans. As to the Danube Delta, Brătianu gained support of neither Savfet nor the representatives of the other Powers, the latter being more concerned with other subjects⁵.

On January 20th, 1877, the Sultan categorically refused the demands and on the 21st, the Conference broke up⁶. Great Britain, nevertheless, persisted in her efforts to preserve peace, and on March 31st, 1877, the Powers signed in London a *protocol* proposed by Count Schouvalov⁷.

In the meantime, Midhat had been negotiating a separate peace with Serbia and Montenegro to undermine the position of the Powers at the Constantinople Conference

¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 294-295.

² Frederick Kellogg, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

³ Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe al României, București (The Archives of the Romanian Foreign Ministry, Bucharest), fond Paris, vol. 6, nota nr. 6174 din 16/28 iunie 1876, București; Mihail Kogălniceanu către Nicolae Calimachi-Catargi, agentul diplomatic al României la Paris.

⁴ *România în relațiile internaționale (1699-1939)*, p. 266; Sorin Liviu Damean, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

⁵ *Independența României în conștiința europeană* (ediție de documente îngrijită de Corneliu-Mihail Lungu, Tudor Bucur, Ioana Alexandra Negreanu), București, Editura Semne, 1997, pp. 172-173; Marius Alexandru Istina, *Crișta orientală și relațiile româno-franceze (1875-1878)*, în "Carpica", vol. XXIX, Bacău, 2000, pp. 257-258; Sorin Liviu Damean, *op. cit.*, p. 20; Iulian Oncescu, *op. cit.*, p. 245.

⁶ Edward S. Creasy, *op. cit.*, p. 549.

⁷ J.A.R. Marriott, *op. cit.*, p. 295.

and to remove the bases for the Russian threats. Right after Murat's deposition, Prince Milan had accepted the Ottoman conditions, and the peace agreement was signed on February 28th 1877, providing that Serbia return to its prewar status. It promised not to build any additional fortifications along the Ottoman boundaries or to support any of the terrorist bands operating within Ottoman territory. The Ottoman flag would continue to fly over the fort of Belgrade but without any Ottoman garrison and, in return, Serbia would recognize the religious freedom of all Muslims, Jews, Armenians, and Catholics within its territory. Efforts to secure a similar peace with Montenegro proved fruitless, however, since the latter was under Russian influence to continue the war in order to give the Tzar the pretext he wanted for direct intervention¹. The stage was being set for an attack on the Ottomans regardless of what the Porte arranged with its vassals.

The failure of the Constantinople Conference, however, finally enabled the Tzar to secure the desired agreement, at Budapest, on January 15th, 1877. Austrian benevolent neutrality was promised in case of a Russo-Ottoman war, in return for its being allowed to occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina when it wished, with Serbia, Montenegro remaining neutral and not to be occupied by either of the signatories. Russia would get Bessarabia, and the allies would support each other, against any objections by the other powers. No specific mentions regarding Bulgaria were included, though the agreement did prohibit any large state being formed in the area. If the Ottoman Empire broke up completely, Constantinople would be a free city, rather than going to Russia or Greece, but the latter would be compensated with Crete, Thessaly, and Southern Epirus. Russia, thus gained a free hand against the Porte, while Austria secured considerable territory as well as assurance that it rather than Russia would dominate Serbia – all in return for simple neutrality².

Taking cognizance of the Turkish promises of reform, the Powers declared their intention of watching carefully the manner in which the promises of the Ottoman Government are carried into effect. If, however, the condition of the Christian subjects of the Porte should again lead to a return of the complications, which periodically disturb the peace of the East, they think it right to declare, that such a state of things would be incompatible with their interests and those of Europe in general. Turkey rejected the *London Protocol* on April 10th, 1877, and on April 24th, the Tzar, having secured the friendly neutrality of Austria, declared war³.

During the *Balkan Crisis*, Romanian statesmen frequently sought the advice of the Great Powers. That counsel and Romania's military weakness dictated Bucharest's policy of neutrality, while many Romanians believed indeed that their goal of Independence could be won solely with the Power's aid in a victorious war against the Turks, an assertion that was far from being true.

¹ Stanford J. Shaw, Ezel Kural Shaw, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

² *Ibidem*, p. 181.

³ J.A.R. Marriott, *op. cit.*, p. 295.

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