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The Outbreak of the First Balkan War and the Italo-Turkish Peace Negotiations in Lausanne in 1912¹

Abstract: Analyzing published and unpublished sources, the paper aims to determine to what extent the crisis in the Balkan Peninsula influenced the dynamics and stages of the negotiations in Lausanne between the Italian and Turkish delegations to end the Italo-Turkish War. The analysis spans from mid-July to the signing of the First Treaty of Lausanne (Treaty of Ouchy) and the entry of Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece in the war against Turkey on 18 October 1912. Italy tried to end its conflict with Turkey and prevent the Balkan countries in their aspiration to disrupt the *status quo* in the Balkan Peninsula. Italian diplomacy used the friction between the Balkan countries and Turkey to conclude as favorable a treaty as possible, directly pressuring the Turkish delegation at Ouchy and using the great powers' pressure on Turkey. The practical results of signing the Treaty of Lausanne were the establishment of direct Italian rule in Libya and retaining temporary control of the Aegean islands.

Keywords: Italy, Turkey, Austria-Hungary, Balkans, *status quo*, First Balkan War, Italo-Turkish War, 1912, peace, Libya, Lausanne/Ouchy

After the founding of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861 and moving the capital to Rome in 1871, the process of its unification was incomplete. Austria-Hungary still retained the so-called *terre irredente*, Trentino, Trieste, parts of Tyrol, and parts of Dalmatia. Italy's need to complete the unification process by incorporating the Austro-Hungarian territories inhabited by ethnic Italians gave rise to the anti-Austrian irredentist movement. On the other hand, after the unification, Italian diplomacy took on a colonial component, directing its foreign policy to securing colonial possessions to increase Italian prestige and ensure the country's status as a great power. By the second half of the 19th century, few territories remained up for grabs. The geographic position of Tunisia meant that it was vitally important for Italian policy in the Mediterranean. The turn came in 1881 when France took control of Tunisia, irking the Italian general public and political circles. Following the French conquest of Tunisia, Italy

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redirected its colonial aspirations to Libya and the Horn of Africa. Inspired by the French move, the Italian Foreign Minister Pasquale Stanislao Mancini set out to rethink the fundamental premises of the Italian foreign policy, concluding that it could reach its international objectives with the support of Austria-Hungary and Germany.²

Cyrenaica and Tripolitania in the Italian Foreign-Policy Strategy

The new course of Italian foreign policy was formalized with the signing of the Triple Alliance between Italy, Austria-Hungary, and Germany on 20th May 1882.³ Italy's accession to the Triple Alliance distanced the country from France, suppressed the irredentist movement, and redirected its foreign policy to colonial expansionism. When the treaty was renewed on 20th February 1887, Germany pledged to support Italy in case of a war against France for the North African colonies. The promise was specified in the text of the Triple Alliance treaty in 1891, and Article IX promised that Germany would support the Italian violation of the *status quo* in North Africa and the occupation of territories in this region. After its defeat in Abyssinia (Ethiopia) in 1895–1896, Italy recognized the French Protectorate of Tunisia. This improvement in the relations with France in 1896 did not dilute the importance of the Triple Alliance for the Italian colonial policy. In the new treaty on the Triple Alliance signed on 30th June 1902, Austria-Hungary gave *carte blanche* to Italy in Tripolitania.⁴

Beyond the Triple Alliance, Italy sought to secure the support of the other great powers for its influence in Tripoli. When the Triple Alliance was renewed in 1887, Italian diplomacy managed to come to agreements with Britain and Spain. Britain agreed to maintain the *status quo* in the Mediterranean and

² L. Monzali, "The Balkans and The Triple Alliance In The Italian Foreign Policy". In *Italy's Balkan Strategies*, ed. Vojislav G. Pavlović, (Belgrade: Institute for Balkan Studies SASA, 2014), 61–64; L. Monzali, et al., *Storia delle relazioni internazionali (1492–1918): Dall'ascesa dell'Europa alla prima guerra mondiale* (Milano: Mondadori Education S.p.A, 2022), 362; Д. Р. Живојиновић, *У потрази за империјом Италија и Балкан почетком XX века*, (In search of an empire, Italy and the Balkans at the beginning of the 20th century) (Београд: Албатрос плус, 2013), 9–10; D. R. Živojinović, *Amerika, Italija i postanak Jugoslavije 1917–1919* (Beograd: Naučna knjiga, 1970), 7–9.

³ The Triple Alliance Treaty was renewed multiple times: in 1887, 1891, 1896, 1902, and, for the final time, on the eve of the First World War in 1912.

⁴ L. Monzali, *The Balkans and The Triple Alliance in the Italian Foreign Policy*, 65–78; L. Monzali, et al., *Storia delle relazioni internazionali (1492–1918)*, 369–375; М. Виденовић, „Избијање Италијанско–турског рата и Србија 1911. године“, („The Outbreak of the Italian-Turkish War and Serbia in 1911“) *Врањски гласник* (2021), 154; А. Mitrović, *Prodor na Balkan i Srbija 1908–1918* (Beograd: Nolit, 1981), 11; D. R. Živojinović, *Amerika, Italija i postanak Jugoslavije 1917–1919*, 8–11.

the Adriatic, Aegean, and Black Seas. London pledged to support Italy in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica in exchange for Italian support in Egypt. Spain promised not to support any moves that could undermine Italian interests in North Africa.⁵ Making use of the Franco-English rivalry in Africa, on 11th March 1902, Rome acquired London's firmer support for taking control of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania. In the summer of 1902, Italian diplomacy secured France's consent to take these territories in exchange for recognizing French interests in Morocco. Italy's diplomatic preparations for fulfilling its aspirations in Cyrenaica and Tripolitania were completed by a treaty signed with Russia in Racconigi (1909). The so-called Racconigi Bargain ensured Russian consent for taking Tripoli, and, in return, Italy pledged to support Russian policy in the Turkish Straits.⁶

The Second Moroccan Crisis and the Tripolitanian Question

By 1911, Italy had secured its interests in Libya with both great power blocs. The diplomatic struggle was followed by peaceful expansion, which involved the support of banks, trade exchanges, and investments. At first, the Italians steered clear of matters of Ottoman sovereignty in the provinces. The crisis in the Ottoman Empire had led to the Young Turk Revolution in 1908. The new regime did not look favorably on the expansion of Italian influence in Tripolitania, reasoning that the Italian economic penetration could lay the ground for a political intervention. Fearing the Italian threat, the Young Turk regime tried to make their position as difficult as possible by allowing the economic expansion of other great powers in the provinces. Their reinforcements of the Turkish garrisons in Tripoli and fortification projects solidified the Italian public in its conviction that an intervention was necessary.⁷

⁵ A. Duce, „The War in Libya and Russia“. In *The Libyan War 1911–1912*, eds. Luca Micheletta, Andrea Ungari, (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), 117; L. Monzali, et al., *Storia delle relazioni internazionali (1492–1918)*, 375.

⁶ F. Caccamo, „Italy, Libya and the Balkan“. In *The Wars before the Great War*, eds. D. Geppert, W. Mulligan, A. Rose, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 21; L. Monzali, *The Balkans and The Triple Alliance in the Italian Foreign Policy*, 76; C. Sforza, *L'Italia dal 1914 al 1944 quale io la vidi* (Roma: Mondadori Roma, 1944), 24; В. Поповић, *Источно питање* (Eastern Question) (Београд: Никола Пашић, 2007), 164–165; М. Виденовић, *Избијање Италијанско–турског рата и Србија 1911. године* (The outbreak of the Italian-Turkish war and Serbia in 1911), 154.

⁷ *Документи о спољној политици Краљевине Србије 1903–1914* (Documents on the foreign policy of the Kingdom of Serbia 1903–1914) (henceforth: ДСПКС), Књ. IV, св. 4/1, (1/14. јула – 30. септембар/13. октобар 1912) прир. Љ. А. Пејковић, К. Џамбазовски, (Београд: САНУ одељење историјских наука, 2009), док. 371; F. Rudi, *Soglie Inquiete, L'Italia e la Serbia all'inizio del novecento (1904–1912)* (Milano: Mimesis edizioni, 2020), 176–189; М. Виденовић, *Избијање Италијанско–турског рата и Србија 1911.*

When the liberal politician Giovanni Giolitti formed a new cabinet in March 1911, foreign affairs were entrusted to Antonino, Marchese di San Giuliano. The economic reform that was to involve placing insurance companies under state control made things more difficult for Giolitti's government. The reform was seen as a blow against industrialists, private property, and capitalist relations. The summer saw an energetic debate in the Parliament about the constant attacks on the government. It was in this internal climate that the Second Moroccan Crisis (Agadir Crisis or Incident) caught Italy when it broke out on 1st July 1911.⁸

In Rome, the Second Moroccan Crisis was seen as a turning point because the resolution of the Moroccan question would have untied France from the promises it had made to Italy in the 1902 agreement. Italian political circles feared that Libya might go down the same path as Tunisia had done in 1881. The Italians could not put all of their trust in Germany – it had become the chief protector of the Ottoman Empire because of the concessions for the construction of the Baghdad railway. On 28th July 1911, San Giuliano sent the King and Giolitti a secret memorandum in which he judged that Italy would have to intervene in Tripolitania in a matter of months.⁹ The campaign in North Africa was to help Giolitti's government consolidate its position in internal politics as its program was encountering sharp criticism. The government hoped that the popularity of the colonial conquest might eliminate the negative impact of the clash about the reform program. Some liberal politicians such as Sidney Sonnino, the leader of the liberal-conservative opposition, offered support to the government, seeing the Libyan campaign as an opportunity to resolve the social question, ensure Italy's prestige, and confirm its status as a great power. Despite internal pressure, Giolitti was aware that a declaration of war should have a good reason or, at least, a convenient trigger. The Italian government's decision to intervene in Libya does not seem to have been driven by internal factors but solely by the international situation.¹⁰

године (The outbreak of the Italian-Turkish war and Serbia in 1911), 154; I. Bonomi, *La politica italiana da Porta Pia a Vittorio Veneto 1870–1918* (Roma: Giulio Einaudi Editore, 1946), 300; F. Caccamo, *Italy, Libya and the Balkan*, 24.

⁸ A. A. Mola, *Giolitti, il senso dello stato* (Roma: Rusconi Libri S.p.A., 2019), 388; I. Bonomi, *La politica italiana da Porta Pia a Vittorio Veneto 1870–1918*, 298–299; F. Rudi, *Soglie Inquiete, L'Italia e la Serbia all'inizio del novecento (1904–1912)*, 188–190;

⁹ F. Rudi, *Soglie Inquiete, L'Italia e la Serbia all'inizio del novecento (1904–1912)*, 189–190; A. A. Mola, *Giolitti, il senso dello stato*, 388.

¹⁰ G. A. Haywood, *Failure of a dream, Sidney Sonnino and the rise and fall of the liberal Italy 1847–1922* (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki editore, 1999), 379–384; F. Caccamo, *Italy, Libya and the Balkan*, 23–29.

The preoccupation of the great powers with the Second Moroccan Crisis was convenient for Italy, allowing it to present the conquest of Tripolitania as a *fait accompli*. On the other hand, San Giuliano and Giolitti were concerned that the campaign might undermine the prestige of the Ottoman Empire and embolden the Balkan nations. The movements of the Balkan peoples and the crisis of the Ottoman Empire could ultimately lead to an Austro-Hungarian initiative in the Balkans. Such a scenario did not align with the objectives of Italian diplomacy, as it would have prevented its involvement in Balkan matters. Its efforts to prevent a disruption of the *status quo* in the Balkans stemmed from concerns that Austria-Hungary might use Italy's focus on North Africa to gain the upper hand in the Balkans. In August and September 1911, San Giuliano was informed by diplomats that the non-violent expansion had failed and that more drastic measures needed to be taken before the end of the Second Moroccan Crisis. The Italians had expected a swift initiative in Tripoli, believing that a rapid move could prevent turmoil in the Balkans, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, and a unilateral offensive of Austria-Hungary in the Balkans. To put it differently, once it acquired control over Tripolitania and Cyrenaica, Italian diplomacy could redefine its treaties with Austria-Hungary and Germany and emphasize its irredentist and Balkan interests.¹¹

The Italo-Turkish War of 1911–1912

San Giuliano and Giolitti held their last consultations about the planned intervention in Libya in the first half of September, proceeding to meet with Victor Emmanuel III at Racconigi on 19 September 1911. The signing of the Franco-German preliminary agreement on Morocco on 23 September 1911 and the incoming fall and changing weather conditions, unfavorable for naval missions, hastened the decision of the Italian government. During the night of 26/27 September, San Giuliano sent the Italian representative in Constantinople a tele-

¹¹ *I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani* (henceforth: DDI, IV, VII–VIII), Serie IV, vol. VII–VIII (Roma: Ministero degli Affari Esteri, 2004), doc. 120, 136–137, Rome, 9. 8. 1911, *San Giuliano to De Martino*; *Ibid.*, doc. 123, 143, Vienna, 12. 8. 1911, *Pansa to San Giuliano*; *Ibid.*, doc. 132, 163–164, Therapia, 21. 8. 1911, *De Martino a San Giuliano*; *Ibid.*, doc. 153, 194–195, Paris, 7. 9. 1911, *Tittoni a San Giuliano*; A. A. Mola, *Giolitti, il senso dello stato*, 388–391; G. A. Haywood, *Failure of a dream, Sidney Sonnino and the rise and fall of the liberal Italy 1847–1922*, 381–383; I. Bonomi, *La politica italiana da Porta Pia a Vittorio Veneto 1870–1918*, 300; F. Rudi, *Soglie Inquiete, L'Italia e la Serbia all'inizio del novecento (1904–1912)*, 188–191; F. Caccamo, *Italy, Libya and the Balkan*, 25–27. Italian diplomats were worried that Austria-Hungary and Germany might use the renewal of the Triple Alliance treaty in 1912 as an opportunity to demand modifying the terms of the agreement in exchange for concessions to Italy in Africa (F. Caccamo, *Italy, Libya and the Balkan*, 26).

gram informing the Sublime Porte that Italy was forced to occupy Tripolitania and Cyrenaica to establish order in the provinces and protect the local Italian citizens. The Ottoman Porte had little choice: it was given 24 hours to respond to the ultimatum and recognize the Italian occupation of the two provinces. The ultimatum to Turkey left a negative impression on the Italian allies in Vienna and Berlin, as the two countries were trying to be on friendly terms with Turkey because of the Austro-Hungarian penetration toward Thessaloniki and Germany's eastward expansion. The Porte rejected the ultimatum, giving Italy the grounds to officially declare war on the Ottoman Empire on 29th September 1911 at 14:30.¹²

Rome was not preparing for a protracted war, initially deploying only naval forces. In the first few days of the conflict, Italian troops took control of all relevant coastal positions in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica. Giolitti believed that after the conquest of Tripoli, Turkey would accept the *fait accompli* in exchange for monetary compensation. Under the impression that Libya was already lost, the Ottoman government, with the support of Austria-Hungary and Germany, offered to recognize the Italian occupation; in return, the Sultan would retain sovereignty in the provinces. In other words, the Turkish side offered Italian *de facto* control in what *de iure* would remain Turkish territory. With this approach, Turkey wanted to protect the Sultan's prestige and prevent any revolts of the Arab population. The Turkish offer aligned with San Giuliano's view: Italian *de facto* control in a territory officially ruled by the local dynasty or through a model similar to the one implemented in the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1878. The Turkish proposal created the preconditions for implementing the Italian concept of a speedy and short intervention.¹³

And yet, Giolitti disagreed with San Giuliano's views, believing that Italian sovereignty needed to be established in Libya. On 13 October, the Italian government announced annexation as its new war aim. Less than a month later, on 5 November 1911, a royal decree declared suzerainty over the *Fourth Shore* (Libya).¹⁴ The motivation for this move lay in the Italian government's flawed

¹² M. Rallo, *Il coinvolgimento dell'Italia nella Prima Guerra Mondiale e la „Vittoria Mutilata“ – La politica estera italiana e lo scenario egeo-balcanico dal Patto di Londra al Patto di Roma (1915–1924)* (Roma: Settimo Sigilo, 2007), 15; I. Bonomi, *La politica italiana da Porta Pia a Vittorio Veneto 1870–1918*, 300–301; F. Rudi, *Soglie Inquiete, L'Italia e la Serbia all'inizio del novecento (1904–1912)*, 189–192; A. A. Mola, *Giolitti, il senso dello stato*, 390; ДСРКК, IV–4/I, doc. 368, 369, 371; F. Caccamo, *Italy, Libya and the Balkan*, 26–29.

¹³ ДСРКК, IV–4/I, doc. 368; G. A. Haywood, *Failure of a dream, Sidney Sonnino and the rise and fall of the liberal Italy 1847–1922*, 384; F. Rudi, *Soglie Inquiete, L'Italia e la Serbia all'inizio del novecento (1904–1912)*, 188; F. Caccamo, *Italy, Libya and the Balkan*, 30.

¹⁴ The decree on Italian suzerainty was formally and legally a proclamation of its sovereignty over Libya and did not mention annexation. Because of this, on 23 February

calculation and excessive self-confidence, as well as in the pressure of political groups in the Parliament, which were demanding the annexation of Libya in the name of protecting national interests. Giolitti was concerned that a partial solution might allow the question of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica to resurface in the future. The change of Italian war aims fundamentally altered the situation and had the opposite effect: the war entered a new phase, and the chances of quickly ending it evaporated. The Ottoman Empire could not accept the Italian annexation of Libya because such a precedent could lead to rebellions in Arab-majority provinces, threatening the very survival of the Empire.¹⁵

As the war dragged on, the local population rebelled in Libya, forcing Italy to deploy 100,000 troops to maintain its control in the coastal strip. In its first stage, the war against Turkey was limited to the territory of Libya because of the interests of other powers. At the beginning of the war, the Italian incursion into the waters near the Albanian coast led to protests from Austrian diplomats, who did not want the Italian actions to cause upheavals in the Balkans. The Russians and the British were against threatening the Turkish Straits, and the French had their special interests in Syria. The Aegean islands were the only maneuvering space the Italian navy had. However, due to protestations of Vienna, an offensive in the Aegean was delayed until the spring of 1912. The aim of the operations in the Aegean was to pressure Turkey into offering peace terms. Should the disruptions in the islands fail, the Italians hoped that the destruction of the Turkish fleet would force Turkey to ask for peace. After the Italian navy shelled the fortifications at the entrance to the Turkish Straits on 18 April, Turkey closed off the strait until 2nd May, when it was opened on Russian insistence. Although the talks in Lausanne had begun on 12th July 1912, in a demonstration of power, the Italian fleet, led by Admiral Enrico Millo, sailed into the strait during the night of 18 July. Although this move failed to achieve significant results, its psychological effect was immense.¹⁶ One of the consequences of this war was the formation of an alliance of Balkan countries. Turkey responded with force to the turmoil in the European part of the Ottoman Empire, leading to a new conflict.¹⁷

1912, the Parliament passed an act on Italian suzerainty over Libya, (A. A. Mola, *Giolitti, il senso dello stato*, 393–394).

¹⁵ A. A. Mola, *Giolitti, il senso dello stato*, 392–393; G. A. Haywood, *Failure of a dream, Sidney Sonnino and the rise and fall of the liberal Italy 1847–1922*, 384–386; F. Caccamo, *Italy, Libya and the Balkan*, 30.

¹⁶ M. Rallo, *Il coinvolgimento dell'Italia nella Prima Guerra Mondiale e la „Vittoria Mutilata“*, 15–16; A. A. Mola, *Giolitti, il senso dello stato*, 396; I. Bonomi, *La politica italiana da Porta Pia a Vittorio Veneto 1870–1918*, 302–305; В. Поповић, *Источно питање* (Eastern Question), 164–165; F. Caccamo, *Italy, Libya and the Balkan*, 33–35.

¹⁷ *Документи о спољној политици Краљевине Србије 1903–1914* (Documents on the foreign policy of the Kingdom of Serbia 1903–1914) (henceforth: ДСПКС), Књ. V, св.

Italy's colonial and Balkan strategy

Italy strove to realize its irredentist and expansionist aspirations in Albania through compensations for supporting the Austro-Hungarian expansion in the Balkans. In that spirit, Mancini's successor, Robilant, was willing to accept Austria-Hungary's penetration to Thessaloniki in exchange for Tripolitania, Tyrol, and demarcating the border on the Isonzo (Soča) River. The Triple Alliance treaty of 1887 defined Italy's Balkan policy in Article I, which in 1891 became Article VII of the renewed Triple Alliance treaty. Italy and Austria-Hungary pledged to coordinate their policies in case of disrupting the *status quo* in the Balkans. The treaty stipulated coordinated action in the event of a temporary or permanent occupation of territory in those areas. With the provision on compensations in case of gaining any advantage in the Balkans, Italy ensured a more or less equal position to that of Austria-Hungary.¹⁸

In the 1890s, the Italians had increased their political presence in the Balkans. The marriage of King Victor Emmanuel III with Princess Elena (Jelena) of Montenegro in October 1896 opened the door to Italian influence in Montenegro. The intensifying internal crisis in the Ottoman Empire made it easier for Italy to implement its cultural and economic expansion in Albania, Epirus, and Macedonia. Its expansion in Albania met with displeasure in Vienna because of concerns that an Italian foothold in Albania might disrupt the equilibrium in the Adriatic Sea in Rome's favor. Therefore, Vienna and Rome reached a verbal agreement on Albania at Monza (1897). The agreement was confirmed by

2, (15/28. јул – 4/17. октобар 1912) прир. М. Војводић, (Београд: САНУ одељење историјских наука, 2014), документ број 175, 178, 193, 200, 208, 209, 210, 218, 220, 236; V. Vigezzi, „L'Italia dopo l'unità: liberalismo e politica estera.“ In *La politica estera italiana 1860–1985*, a cura di Richard J. B. Bosworth e Sergio Romano, (Bologna: Società editrice il Mulino, 1991), 284; V. Vidotto, *Atlante del ventesimo secolo: I documenti essenziali 1900–1918* (Bari: Editori Laterza, 2011), 164–165; F. Rudi, *Soglie Inquiete, L'Italia e la Serbia all'inizio del novecento (1904–1912)*, 176–180, 206; С. Д. Станојевић, „Утицај Италијанско–турског рата на прилике у Србији, према извештају руског посланика у Београду Н. Г. Хартвига“ („The impact of the Italian-Turkish war on the situation in Serbia, according to the report of the Russian representative in Belgrade, N. G. Hartwig“), *Зборник радова Филозофског факултета* XLIII/2 (2013), 183–193; Д. Ђорђевић, „Италијанско–турски рат 1911–12 године и његов утицај на Балкан“ („The Italo-Turkish War of 1911–12 and its impact on the Balkans“) *Историјски прегле* 4 (1954), 46–54; F. Saccamo, *Italy, the Adriatic, and the Balkans*, 123.

¹⁸ Д. Р. Живојиновић, *У потрази за империјом Италија и Балкан почетком XX века* (In search of empire, Italy and the Balkans at the beginning of the 20th century), 10; L. Monzali, *The Balkans and The Triple Alliance in the Italian Foreign Policy*, 65–68; С. Sforza, *L'Italia dal 1914 al 1944 quale io la vidi*, 24–25. А. Mitrović, *Prodor na Balkan i Srbija 1908–1918*, 12.

letters in 1900 and 1901. The two sides agreed to maintain the *status quo* in Albania. Should it be disrupted, the allies planned to grant Albania autonomy.¹⁹

The principal problem in the Vienna–Rome relations was that Austria-Hungary did not see Italy as an equal partner in the Balkans and refused to make specific agreements with it. The ascent of Victor Emmanuel III to the Italian throne in 1900 steered Italy's policy toward the Balkans. The new king believed that Italy must rival Austria-Hungary and Russia in the Balkans. The Italian initiative to secure the status of a power with vested interests in the Balkans was not welcomed in Vienna. During the talks on renewing the Triple Alliance in 1902, Italian diplomacy wanted to increase its influence in the Balkans and ensure a diplomatic solution to the Italian national question. The Italians wanted to concretize the compensation issue, but Austria-Hungary and Germany disagreed, ultimately thwarting this move. The following year, irredentist developments soured Italy's relations with Austria-Hungary; as a consequence, Italy was not a signatory of the Müritz Agreement, which ensured synchronized actions of Russia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire in matters concerning the Ottoman Empire. The tense relations between Austria and Italy and the Austro-Hungarian pressure on the Balkan states at the beginning of the 20th century opened up space for cooperation between Italy and the Balkan nations. However, from 1910 onward, the Italians saw the rise of the Slavic element in the Adriatic as a threat, which is why they opted to support Albania.²⁰

The disagreements between Austria-Hungary and Italy in the Balkans were a result of their different interpretations of Article VII in the Triple Alliance treaty. In Rome's view, in the event of a disruption of the *status quo* in the Balkans, Italy would be entitled to territorial compensations in Albania and the irredentist territories. Rome aimed to secure a strategically safe border with Austria-Hungary and an equal position in the Adriatic. In its interpretation of Article VII, Vienna argued that Italy would be entitled to compensations only in Albania. When Austria-Hungary annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908, Italy did not receive the expected compensation. In response, the Italians planned

¹⁹ Д. Фундић, *Аустроугарска и настанак Албаније (1896–1914)*, (Austria-Hungary and the Emergence of Albania (1896–1914)) (Београд: Clio, 2021), 73–74; L. Monzali, *Italiani di Dalmazia: Dal Risorgimento alla Grande Guerra* (Firenze: Le Lettere, 2011), 191–193; L. Monzali, *The Balkans and The Triple Alliance in the Italian Foreign Policy*, 71–74; D. R. Živojinović, *Amerika, Italija i postanak Jugoslavije*, 12.

²⁰ L. Monzali, *The Balkans and the Triple Alliance in the Italian Foreign Policy*, 75–79; Д. Ђорђевић, *Националне револуције балканских народа 1804–1914* (National revolutions of the Balkan peoples 1804–1914) (Београд: Службени лист СРЈ, 1995), 97; Д. Фундић, *Аустроугарска и настанак Албаније (1896–1914)*, (Austria-Hungary and the Emergence of Albania (1896–1914)), 74–75; Lj. A. Pejković, „The Serbian Question in Italy's Balkan Policy Until The First World War“. In *Italy's Balkan Strategies*, ed. Vojislav G. Pavlović (Belgrade: Institute for Balkan Studies SASA, 2014), 96–100.

to insist on specifying the territorial compensations in the event of disrupting the Balkan *status quo* at the next meeting on renewing the Triple Alliance.²¹

Austria-Hungary as an Obstacle to Italian Plans in the Balkans

After the unification of Germany and the Risorgimento, Austria-Hungary directed its expansion toward the Balkan Peninsula. Once it was allowed at the Congress of Berlin (1878) to occupy the Turkish provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, its influence in the small Balkan countries increased. Its interests in the Balkans clashed with the interests of the Balkan nations, Russia, and Italy. The main objective of the Austro-Hungarian policy in the Balkan Peninsula was to get to Thessaloniki. Given that Italy used the provisions of the Triple Alliance treaty as a veto against Austro-Hungarian initiatives in the Balkans, Vienna tried to sidestep the Italians, seeking an agreement with the Russians. Russia and Austria-Hungary reached a verbal agreement in St. Petersburg in 1897, agreeing to jointly control the developments in Turkey. At the beginning of the 20th century, Austria-Hungary, Russia, and Italy – each out of their interests – all supported the policy of keeping the *status quo* in the Balkan Peninsula. The national awakening of the Balkan peoples threatened to disrupt the established order in the Balkans. The powers saw reforms as the solution to the problems in the Balkan provinces of the Ottoman Empire. The Ilinden Uprising of 1903 led to the Mürzsteg Reforms, based on Article 23 of the Treaty of Berlin (1878).²²

The decisive chapter in Austria-Hungary's foreign policy began in 1906 when Alois Lexa von Aehrenthal became the Foreign Minister. Aehrenthal started to pursue an actively imperialist policy in the Balkans. When, in January 1908, the plan to build a railway via the Sanjak of Novi Pazar to Thessaloniki was announced, the direction of Austro-Hungarian expansion was clearly outlined. The outbreak of the Young Turk Revolution in July 1908 gave the Viennese diplomacy a convenient opportunity to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina in October. After the Annexation Crisis in 1908–1909, Austria-Hungary was left

²¹ F. Rudi, *Soglie Inquiete, L'Italia e la Serbia all'inizio del novecento (1904–1912)*, 120–155; Д. Ђорђевић, *Историја модерне Србије 1800–1918* (History of Modern Serbia 1800–1918) (Београд: Завод за уџбенике, 2017), 353–356; L. A. Pejković, *The Serbian Question in Italy's Balkan Policy Until the First World War*, 97; L. Monzali, *The Balkans and The Triple Alliance in the Italian Foreign Policy*, 63–65.

²² Д. Ђорђевић, *Националне револуције балканских народа* (National revolutions of the Balkan peoples 1804–1914), 97; Д. Фундић, *Аустроугарска и настанак Албаније (1896–1914)* (Austria-Hungary and the Emergence of Albania (1896–1914)), 54–55, 74–75; L. Monzali, *Italiani di Dalmazia*, 191–193; L. Monzali, *The Balkans and The Triple Alliance*, 69–79; А. Митровић, *Prodor na Balkan i Srbija 1908–1918*, 62–63; Владимир Стојанчевић, *Србија 1908–1918* (Serbia 1908–1918) (Београд: Српска књижевна задруга, 1995), 22–23; В. Поповић, *Источно питање* (Eastern Question), 154–155.

outside of the Sanjak of Novi Pazar, continuing its economic penetration into the European provinces of the Ottoman Empire.²³

In February 1910, Austria-Hungary came to an agreement with Russia about their future actions in the Balkans. The agreement stipulated that Russia and Austria-Hungary would maintain the *status quo* in the Balkan Peninsula and support the consolidation of the Ottoman regime, which would pledge to ensure the equality of all of the Empire's nations. The agreement also envisaged joint efforts to consolidate and develop the Balkan countries. Although the two powers did not include Italy in the agreement, maintaining the *status quo* aligned with its interests, giving it a free hand in Tripolitania and Cyrenaica.²⁴

Vienna did not look kindly on Italy's declaration of war to Turkey, especially when Italian warships shelled Preveza and San Giovanni di Medua. Aehrenthal protested and, in a threatening tone, demanded leaving the Balkans out of the war operations of the Italian fleet. San Giuliano agreed to this concession and gave guarantees that Italy would not intervene in the European territories of the Ottoman Empire. In the fall of 1911, Aehrenthal spoke out against the Italian offensive in the Aegean, emphasizing that the Aegean Sea was covered by Article VII of the Triple Alliance treaty. However, San Giuliano claimed that the operations in the Aegean would be temporary and aimed at ending the war and pacifying the situation in the Ottoman Empire. He argued that the eastern islands of the Aegean were more part of Asia than Europe and that any offensive of the Italian fleet in this area could hardly have repercussions in the Balkans. Austria-Hungary's protests forced the Italians to move their war operations to the Red Sea at the turn of 1911/1912. After Aehrenthal's death in February 1912 and the appointment of Leopold von Berchtold as his replacement, Austria-Hungary relaxed its position and accepted a temporary occupation of the Aegean islands. The movements of the Balkan peoples had decisively influenced the compromise because a swift end to the Italo-Turkish War suited Austria-Hungary's interest in pacifying the Balkans.²⁵

²³ A. Mitrović, *Prodor na Balkan i Srbija 1908–1918*, 74–75; В. Поповић, *Источно питање*, 159–161; Р. Мантран, *Историја Османског царства* (The History of the Ottoman Empire) (Београд: Клио, 2002), 696–697.

²⁴ F. Rudi, *Soglie Inquiete, L'Italia e la Serbia all'inizio del novecento (1904–1912)*, 177–178.

²⁵ F. Caccamo, *Italy, Libya and the Balkan*, 33–36. I. Bonomi, *La politica italiana da Porta Pia a Vittorio Veneto 1870–1918*, 303–304; F. Rudi, *Soglie Inquiete, L'Italia e la Serbia all'inizio del novecento (1904–1912)*, 198–200.

The Intensification of the Crisis in the Balkans and the Mediation Attempts of the Great Powers

The crisis of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the 19th century allowed the economic and political expansion of the great powers. The situation was more complex in the Balkan provinces of the Empire because the nascent Balkan countries also had interests in this region. To maintain the *status quo* in the Balkans, the great powers tried to implement reforms in European Turkey. The Young Turk Revolution of 1908 put an end to those reforms. That same year, the new regime faced the declaration of Bulgaria's independence and the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Besides international problems, the Young Turk regime also had to contend with numerous internal challenges inherited from the previous regime.²⁶

The Albanians were particularly disaffected with Young Turk policies, although they had initially actively participated in the Young Turk movement. The Albanian leaders had supported the movement, hoping it would result in the decentralization of power; however, to make taxation more effective, the new government was instead pursuing centralization. Disagreements with the Young Turk regime led to a string of open revolts that came one after another until the outbreak of the First Balkan War in 1912. The first major Albanian rebellion lasted from 24th March to 24th July 1910. The second uprising of the Albanians started in the spring of 1911 and ended on 18th June 1911 when Sultan Mehmet V personally met with the rebels and offered them pardon. New frictions with the Albanians surfaced during the elections in Turkey in the spring of 1912. The uprising intensified in late May and continued over the summer, leading to the fall of the Turkish government on 22nd June.²⁷

The difficult position of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans coincided with the beginning of the negotiations between Italy and Turkey in Lausanne in July 1912. Viennese diplomacy took the leading role in pacifying the situation in the Balkan provinces of the Ottoman Empire. Berchtold decided to support the Albanians, which was apparent at the Austro-Italian consultations in August. The Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister saw the solution to the Balkan problems in decentralization and granting privileges to the Albanians. However, the Balkan countries were concerned about the Albanian movement, seeing Berchtold's initiative as a threat to their interests. The initiative to implement

²⁶ Д. Фундић, *Аустроугарска и настанак Албаније (1896–1914)*, 56–58, 87–89; В. Поповић, *Источно питање*, 160–161; Р. Мантран, *Историја османског царства*, 696–697; М. Војводић, *Србија и Турска 1878–1914* (Serbia and Turkey 1878–1914) (Београд: Филип Вишњић, 2019), 183–195.

²⁷ F. Rudi, *Soglie Inquiete, L'Italia e la Serbia all'inizio del novecento (1904–1912)*, 188–189; Д. Фундић, *Аустроугарска и настанак Албаније (1896–1914)*, 237–240.

sweeping reforms in the Ottoman Empire proposed on 13th August did little to pacify the Balkans and instead hastened the conflict. The Albanian movement and Berchtold's initiative directly influenced Greece to join the treaty with other Balkan countries. Italian diplomacy approved of Vienna's action because retaining the *status quo* in the Balkans and granting privileges to the Albanians aligned with Rome's interests.²⁸

Besides supporting Berchtold's initiative, Italian diplomats, aligning their policies with other great powers, sought more involvement in preventing complications in the Balkans. As the ongoing war meant that it could not influence the Porte, Italy tried to exert influence on the Balkan countries. On 24th August, the Italian envoy to Cetinje tried – and failed – to convince Nicholas I of Montenegro not to act. The King said that Turkey had deployed additional troops, armed the Muslim population in the borderlands, and started to harass the local Christians.²⁹ On 19th September, De Bosdari, the Italian representative in Sophia, tried to dissuade the Bulgarian Prime Minister Ivan Geshov from entering the war, claiming that the great powers would not support any territorial changes in the Balkans. He pointed out that should they defeat Turkey, the Balkan countries might clash with each other because of disagreements on dividing the liberated territories. Geshov promised that Bulgaria would make no move before the other Balkan countries.³⁰

The Ottoman Empire interpreted Berchtold's initiative and granting privileges to the rebelling Albanians as support for the separatist movement. After the failure of Berchtold's initiative, the Austro-Hungarian ambassador to Rome informed San Giuliano on 22nd September that the Russian government had proposed to Vienna a joint action in Constantinople. The proposed reforms included holding elections in Turkey and guarantees for the lives and property of the population. San Giuliano was skeptical and did not believe that the Porte's intention to implement reforms was genuine. The ambassador em-

²⁸ ДСПКК, V–2, doc. 16, 168, 169, 171, 172, 181, 182, 185, 186, 189, 190, 196, 197, 205, 211, 215, 231, 232, 243, 244, 245; DDI, doc. 984, pp. 1084, Rome, 21. 8. 1912, *Bollati to San Giuliano*; F. Caccamo, *Italy, Libya and the Balkan*, 33; Д. Фундић, *Аустроугарска и настанак Албаније (1896–1914)*, 241–242.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, V–2, doc. 166, 175, 178, 192, 193, 200, 203, 208, 209, 210, 218, 220, 221, 236, 237; Archivio Storico–Diplomatico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri (у даљем тексту: ASDMAE), Serie Politica 1891–1916 (у даљем тексту: SP 1891–1916), b. 199, n. 5411, 29. 8. 1912, *Avarna to San Giuliano*, n. 5436, 30. 8. 1912, *De Bosdari to San Giuliano*, n. 5439, 30. 8. 1912, *Rinella to The Ministry of Foreign Affairs*; DDI, IV, VII–VIII, doc. 986, 1086, Rome, 22. 8. 1912, *San Giuliano to embassies in Berlin, London, Paris, Saint Petersburg and Vienna, and to Legation at Cetinje*; *Ibid.*, doc. 987, 1086, Cetinje, 24. 8. 1912, *Squitti to San Giuliano*.

³⁰ DDI, IV, VII–VIII, doc. 1010, 1120–1122, Sofia, 19. 9. 1912, *De Bosdari to San Giuliano*.

phasized to the Italian Foreign Minister that an exchange of ideas between Italy and Austria-Hungary was crucial for avoiding a war in the Balkan Peninsula.³¹ Berchtold directly connected reaching peace terms between Italy and Turkey with pacifying the Balkans. However, the negotiations stalled, and the Austro-Hungarian chancellor was becoming impatient; on 24 September, he offered to help in the peace talks. Turkey was advised that a peace treaty with Italy would buy it time to implement reforms in the Balkans. The same day, Franz Joseph I declared that his government had taken the initiative for an exchange of views among the powers to ensure peace and the Balkan *status quo*.³²

In late September, the great powers agreed to dissuade the governments in Belgrade and Sofia from mobilizing troops and advise Turkey to keep its regiments away from the borders of the Balkan countries. The declaration of the Balkan countries' mobilization on 2nd October made the great powers' initiative to implement reforms quite difficult. The Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Sazonov suggested that Austria-Hungary and Russia, as the powers with vested interests in the Balkans, implement a joint diplomatic action. The Italians disliked the phrase "powers with vested interests," and the Russian Foreign Minister explained that due to the ongoing Italo-Turkish War, its interests would be represented by its ally, Austria-Hungary. Sazonov's suggestion was for the two powers to agree on an action plan and for Russia and Austria-Hungary to act as the representatives of the two groups of powers.³³

The Italian government accepted that Russia and Austria-Hungary would try to influence the Balkan countries on behalf of Europe and that the great powers would launch a collective diplomatic action in Constantinople.³⁴ The Russian and Austro-Hungarian envoys, in agreement with the other powers, had an audience on 8th October with King Nicholas and the Montenegrin government, informing them that, in the event of a war between the Balkan countries and Turkey, they would not allow a modification of the *status quo*.

³¹ *Ibid.*, IV, VII–VIII, doc. 995, 1097–1099, Rome, 31. 8. 1912, *San Giuliano to ambassadors to the Great Powers*; *Ibid.*, doc. 1013, 1123, Rome, 22. 9. 1912, *San Giuliano to ambassadors to the Great Powers*.

³² DDI, IV, VII–VIII, doc. 1013, 1123, Rome, 22. 9. 1912, *San Giuliano to ambassadors to the Great Powers*; *Ibid.*, doc. 1014, 1124–115, Vienna, 24. 9. 1912, *Avarna to San Giuliano*; *Ibid.*, doc. 1015, 1125–1126, Vienna, 24. 9. 1912, *Avarna to San Giuliano*.

³³ *Ibid.*, doc. 1021, pp. 1132, London, 30. 9. 1912, *Imperiali to San Giuliano*; *Ibid.*, doc. 1018, 1128, Cetinje, 27. 9. 1912, *Squitti to San Giuliano*; *Ibid.*, doc. 1025, 1137–1138, London, 2. 10. 1912, *Imperiali to San Giuliano*;

³⁴ *Ibid.*, doc. 1032, 1144–1145, Rome, 6. 10. 1912, *San Giuliano to ambassadors to the Great Powers*.

The action of Russia and Austria-Hungary failed to produce the desired effect: Montenegro declared war on Turkey on the same day.³⁵

After the Montenegrin declaration of war, the course of action that Austria-Hungary would take in the event of an all-out war in the Balkans became vital for Italy. Berchtold argued that the conflict needed to be localized and the Balkan countries should be made aware that, in the event of a war, there would be no territorial changes in the Balkan Peninsula.³⁶ Della Torretta, the Italian chargé d'affaires in St. Petersburg confirmed there was no threat of intervention from either Russia or Austria-Hungary because both were in favor of keeping the *status quo* in the Balkans.³⁷ That suited the Italians because it removed the possibility for any changes in the Balkans while Italy was still preoccupied with the war in Libya.³⁸

Unlike Montenegro, which had declared war on Turkey, the remaining Balkan countries ignored the Austro-Russian note. They doubted that the Porte would accept reforms and believed the great powers had no mechanisms to force it. In expectation of the response of the Balkan states to the Austro-Russian note, reports surfaced in the European press that Italy was pushing the Balkan countries into war. San Giuliano immediately denied this, highlighting that maintaining the *status quo* in the Balkans was in Italy's interest. Italian diplomats tried to prevent complications in the Balkans by suspending war operations and agreeing peace terms with Turkey. However, the possibility of an Italo-Turkish peace treaty meant that Turkey, having extricated itself from other war efforts, might come down with full force on the Balkan countries. With this looming threat, the reports of an imminent Italo-Turkish treaty hastened the Balkan countries to take action.³⁹

On 13th October at 7 o'clock, the Serbian government submitted its replies to the note to the envoys of Austria-Hungary and Russia, thanking them for the interest of the great powers in the peoples of European Turkey and the

³⁵ *Ibid.*, doc. 1036, 1151, Cetinje, 8. 10. 1912, *Squitti to San Giuliano*.

³⁶ ASDMAE, *Archivio di Gabinetto 1908–1913* (henceforth: ASDMAE, AG 1908–1913), b. 61, n. 162, 6. 10. 1912, *Нобили Сан Ђулијану*; DDI, IV, VII–VIII, doc. 1026, 1138–1139, Vienna, 2. 10. 1912, *Avarna to San Giuliano*.

³⁷ DDI, IV, VII–VIII, doc. 1029, 1141–1142, Saint Petersburg, 4. 10. 1912, *Della Torretta to San Giuliano*.

³⁸ ASDMAE, AG 1908–1913, b. 61, n. 162, 6. октобра 1912, *Nobili to San Giuliano*.

³⁹ Архив Србије, Министарство иностраних дела, Политичко одељење (henceforth: АС, МИД, ПО), 1912, ролна 369, Фасцикла III, досије III, 336; DDI, IV, VII–VIII, doc. 1047, 1159–1160, Rome, 10. 10. 1912, *San Giuliano to ambassadors to the Great Powers, and to legations in Belgrade, Athens, Sofia and Cetinje*; *Ibid.*, doc. 1045, 1158, Athens, 10. 10. 1912, *Carloti to San Giuliano*; *Ibid.*, doc. 1046, 1159, Rome, 10. 10. 1912, *San Giuliano to ambassadors to the Great Powers*.

promised reforms. The reply also stated that more concrete reforms needed to be ensured for the Empire's Christians. For these reasons, it informed the powers that they had directly contacted the Turkish government, emphasizing the principles for implementing reforms and guarantees for their implementation.⁴⁰ As an addendum, the first note submitted to the Russian and Austro-Hungarian envoys contained another note, which was submitted to the Turkish delegate at 4 o'clock. In this note, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece underscored that only radical reforms could improve the fate and position of the Empire's Christians, guaranteeing lasting peace in the Balkans. The Porte was called upon to implement reforms in cooperation with the Balkan countries.⁴¹

In the few days between the signing of the provisional Italo-Turkish treaty on 15th October and the entry of Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece into a war against Turkey on 18 October, Italy joined the action of the great powers. Raymond Poincaré, Prime Minister of France, came out with a proposal to prepare for the mediation of the great powers in the Balkans, which also envisaged an international conference to discuss the implementation of reforms in European Turkey. If mediation proved futile, the conference would take the necessary steps to maintain peace and the *status quo* in the Balkan Peninsula.⁴² San Giuliano decided to confer with Vienna and Berlin regarding Poincaré's proposal. This decision might have been motivated by the impending negotiations on renewing the Triple Alliance. His correspondence reveals that he supported Poincaré's mediation idea, which, in his view, had to take place immediately after the first battles because its earlier implementation would inevitably end in failure. Preparations for mediation or a peace-keeping mission were to be launched at once, as the synchronization of all powers regarding its details would take too long. The Italian Foreign Minister saw a conference as the most suitable mechanism for reaching the objective, which, together with the suggestion of maintaining the Balkan *status quo*, allowed him to respond affirmatively to Poincaré's proposal. San Giuliano saw the implementation of reforms to end the war and preserve the *status quo* in the Balkans and peace in Europe as possible only under the control of and with the cooperation of Europe.⁴³

⁴⁰ ΔСПΙΚС, V-2, doc. 645; DDI, IV, VII-VIII, doc. 1063, 1172-1173, Athens, 14. 10. 1912, *Carlotti to San Giuliano*.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, V-2, doc. 258, 643, 644, 645; DDI, IV, VII-VIII, doc. 1060, 1070, Belgrade, 13. 10. 1912, *Rinella to San Giuliano*; *Ibid.*, doc. 1063, 1172-1173, Athens, 14. 10. 1912, *Carlotti to San Giuliano*.

⁴² DDI, IV, VII-VIII, doc. 1071, 1182-1183, Rome, 18. 10. 1912, *San Giuliano to ambassadors to the Great Powers*.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, doc. 1072, 1183-1184, Rome, 18. 10. 1912, *San Giuliano to Pansa & Avarna*.

Italo-Turkish negotiations in Lausanne

The Ottoman Empire, aware of the negative consequences of the war and fearing complications in the Balkans, began to contemplate making peace with Italy. Carlo Garbasso, First Secretary of the Italian Embassy in Constantinople, and Bernardo Nogara, Director of the Oriental Trading Company, played prominent roles in initiating the peace talks. In June 1912, an Italian mission headed by Giuseppe Volpi was received in Constantinople. Per Giolitti's instructions, Nogara and Volpi probed the Turkish side and had a few informal conversations. This laid the ground for the negotiations that began on 12th July in Lausanne. The Italian delegation included Giuseppe Volpi and two trusted associates of Giolitti's – the MPs Pietro Bertolini and Guido Fusinato. Interestingly, official Italian diplomacy did not directly participate in the talks, although San Giuliano was kept up to speed. The Turkish delegation was first led by Said Halem Paşa, an Arab, and after the fall of Sait Paşa's government and the formation of Ahmet Muhtar Paşa's cabinet, he was replaced by Mehmed Naby Bey, the envoy to Sofia, and Roubeyoglu Fahreddin Bey, the Turkish minister at Cetinje.⁴⁴

The main objective of Turkish diplomacy was to curtail the demands concerning suzerainty over Libya. However, the offensive of the Italian fleet in the Turkish Straits in mid-July and the collapse of the government because of the Albanian uprising had revealed that the Ottoman Empire was weak. In August, Turkish diplomats demanded an end to hostilities as a prerequisite for continuing the negotiations. The chief obstacle during the August talks was still the suzerainty matter. Keeping the Sultan's suzerainty over Cyrenaica and Tripolitania was the primary concern of the Turkish delegation. The reasons for this position had not changed since the beginning of the war: fearing an Arab rebellion, the Turkish diplomats sought to come to peace terms that would be acceptable to the Muslim world.⁴⁵

In the second half of August, Italian diplomacy firmly stated that it would not accept a treaty unless Italy was given full suzerainty over Libya. As a compromise, Turkey was offered a way out of formally recognizing Italian sovereignty over these provinces and the resultant humiliation. San Giuliano was careful not to make it seem to the Turkish delegation that the Italians were in a rush to sign the peace treaty and thus preempt their demands for larger concessions. The truth was that the Italians were indeed in a hurry because an emerging crisis

⁴⁴ G. A. Haywood, *Failure of a dream, Sidney Sonnino and the rise and fall of the liberal Italy 1847–1922*, 386; I. Bonomi, *La politica italiana da Porta Pia a Vittorio Veneto 1870–1918*, 305; ДСИК, V–2, doc. 5; F. Caccamo, *Italy, Libya and the Balkan*, 37–38

⁴⁵ DDI, IV, VII–VIII, doc. 985, 1085–1086, Rome, 21. 8. 1912, Bollati to San Giuliano; *Ibid.*, doc. 988, 1087–1088, Rome, 24. 8. 1912, San Giuliano to ambassadors to the Great Powers.

in the Balkans, while Italy was still at war with Turkey, would have harmed its interests. In late August, because of the intensifying crisis in the Balkans, the other great powers showed more interest in mediating the peace talks between Italy and Turkey. It was more important to Italy to get its position in Libya recognized by the great powers than by Turkey because the Italian intervention in Libya had been based on treaties and agreements with them. Hence, it was proposed to the Turkish delegation that Italian suzerainty over Libya should be recognized only by the great powers.⁴⁶

In August, the great powers energetically worked to facilitate the Italo-Turkish treaty, believing that this development would pacify the Balkans. Poincaré thought that Italy should relax its position on suzerainty, listing the examples of Tunisia and Morocco, where France would have encountered many problems was it not for the Sultan's suzerainty. Poincaré suggested a formula in which the Sultan would name a few officials to be confirmed by Italy. He believed that Turkey would accept such a solution. Germany considered offering to restore Turkey's fleet and admit the country into the Triple Alliance in exchange for a speedy peace agreement with Italy. It would take it upon itself to win over Austria-Hungary. Guglielmo Imperiali, the Italian ambassador to London, in a conversation with Sir Edward Grey, the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, said that Italy could not back down regarding suzerainty over Libya but was open to discussing all other matters. At this stage, Italy informed the great powers of the terms under which it would be willing to accept a peace treaty with Turkey.⁴⁷

Defining a Common Ground for Agreeing Peace Terms

The resistance of the Turkish delegation on account of the Balkan people's movement waned considerably in early September. Given the danger of an Arab rebellion, the Turkish side came out with new proposals formulated to be acceptable to the Muslim world. The Turkish suggestion was that the Sultan should issue a decree (berat) appointing a plenipotentiary steward of the autonomous province, who would then assume all sovereign rights except suzerainty. After that, the Italians would strip the appointed steward of his powers by a special act. The proposal was not acceptable to the Italian side because it was at odds

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, doc. 985, 1085–1086, Rome, 21. 8. 1912, *Bollati to San Giuliano*; *Ibid.*, doc. 988, 1087–1088, Rome, 24. 8. 1912, *San Giuliano to ambassadors to the Great Powers*.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, doc. 990, 1091–1092, Paris, 25. 8. 1912, *Tittoni to San Giuliano*; *Ibid.*, doc. 991, 1092–1093, Constantinople, 26. 8. 1912, *Nogara to Volpi*; *Ibid.*, doc. 993, 1096, London, 28. 8. 1912, *Imperiali to San Giuliano*; the Balkan countries thought that their coordinated action against Turkey would slow down the peace negotiation process with Italy and displease the interested powers (ДСПКС, V–2, doc. 229).

with the decree of November 1911 and the law of 27th February 1912, which had already established Italian suzerainty over Libya. Italy could not take sovereign rights from a third party that had not participated in the conflict. In addition, Turkey would not formally capitulate in Libya, and that would also contradict the law passed in February 1912. The Italian side wanted the appointed steward to be merely a symbol of the connection between Libya and Turkey, with no sovereign rights. The Porte disagreed with this solution because it would have amounted to a violation of the Turkish Constitution.⁴⁸

Aware of the international circumstances plaguing the Ottoman Empire, San Giuliano advised Nogara on 5th September to exert pressure on the Turkish delegation to achieve a more favorable result. Although autonomy did not align with Italy's interests, San Giuliano and Giolitti agreed that a breakdown of the talks should be avoided. Equipped with new instructions, the Italian delegation defined a new basis for negotiations and presented it to their Turkish colleagues on 10 September. This was a compromise solution in which the Sultan would grant the two African provinces the broadest autonomy possible. It included appointing an official to represent Turkish interests under the proviso that he could not hold the title of *Wali*. After the appointment of this official, the Sultan would issue a decree defining the position of the local population. A local religious representative appointed by the caliph and confirmed by the Italian government would represent the Ottoman interests in the province. The draft of the treaty included guarantees and amnesty for the local population of the Aegean islands controlled by Italy. The agreement would comprise a secret provisional agreement and a resultant public document based on it. The public document was to end the hostilities and recall the Turkish troops. The Italian delegation sent these proposals to be approved by the government in Rome, underscoring that even partially rejecting these terms could lead to a complete breakdown of the talks. On the same day, San Giuliano asked Vienna and Berlin to put pressure on Turkey to accept the proposal.⁴⁹

The reports of Italian envoys to Balkan capitals from late November and the mobilization of the Turkish army suggested that it would be advisable to expedite the peace treaty. The Italian government feared that a war in the Balkans could lead to the collapse of the Turkish government and the breakdown of the talks in Lausanne. The beginning of a war in the Balkans before agreeing on peace terms would allow Austria-Hungary and Russia to intervene without

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, doc. 1000, 1106–1107, Constantinopoli, 4. 9. 1912, *Nogara to Volpi*; *Ibid.*, doc. 1001, 1107, Constantinopoli, 5. 9. 1912, *Nogara to Volpi*.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, doc. 1001, 1107, Constantinopoli, 5. 9. 1912, *Nogara to Volpi*; *Ibid.*, doc. 1003, 1108, Ouchy, 11. 9. 1912, *Volpi to Nogara*; *Ibid.*, doc. 1004, 1109, Vallombrosa, 11. 9. 1912, *San Giuliano to Pansa&Cerruti*; *Ibid.*, doc. 1006, 1111–1112, Berlin, 13. 9. 1912, *Pansa to San Giuliano*.

Italy's participation. Another threat to Italian interests stemmed from the possibility that the signing of the peace treaty in Lausanne might lead to the fall of the Turkish government, block the implementation of reforms, and encourage the Balkan countries to declare war on Turkey. The decisive change came on 1st October when Turkey announced wholesale mobilization; the Balkan countries responded by announcing their mobilization on 2nd October. For the Italians this was a sign that it was time to make one last push for the peace treaty. In a bid to get the Turkish delegation to back down, the Italians offered their diplomatic support for keeping the *status quo* in the Balkans and four million Turkish lire. Giolitti gave the negotiators until 10 October to sign the preliminary agreement, or else Italy would stop the negotiations, leave Lausanne, and continue war operations. The offer had a set deadline to leave the Turks little maneuvering space. Germany offered to pressure Turkey to accept the Italian demands.⁵⁰

On 6th October, the Italian delegations were secretly instructed to include in the confidential agreement an article in which Italy would promise to extend eternal support to Turkey in resolving the Balkan question and guarantee the *status quo* in the Balkans and the Mediterranean. San Giuliano did not insist on the Mediterranean, and, more importantly, he was willing to avoid mentioning Italian suzerainty over Libya. The annexes of the secret agreement would be added to the official public text of the treaty. The text of the agreement, once it was ratified by the Council of Ministers in Rome, was to be submitted to the Italian delegation on 8 October. Nogara insisted on expediting the process because the dismissal of the Turkish Foreign Minister, whose position was far from secure, could thwart the signing of the treaty.⁵¹

According to the plan of the Italian government, the secret agreement was to be signed on 10th October, with a possible delay until 12th October. Turkey had to accept or reject the Italian demands in the set deadlines. Italy threatened to re-launch naval operations if the agreement was rejected again. The draft of the secret agreement allowed the Sultan to grant Libya the broadest autonomy and appoint his representative. The Italian government would then use a royal decree to declare full suzerainty over Libya. The Sultan would issue another decree ensuring guarantees and amnesty for the inhabitants of the Aegean islands. The public treaty would restore peace and the *status quo ante bellum*. Turkey would be obliged to withdraw its officials from Libya, and Italy

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, doc. 1018, 1128, Cetinje, 27. 9. 1912, *Squitti to San Giuliano*; *Ibid.*, doc. 1023, 1135, Constantinopoli, 1. 10. 1912, *Nogara to Volpi*; *Ibid.*, doc. 1025, pp. 1137–1138, London, 2. 10. 1912, *Imperiali to San Giuliano*; *Ibid.*, doc. 1027, 1139–1140, Constantinopoli, 2. 10. 1912, *Nogara to Volpi*; *Ibid.*, doc. 1028, 1140, Ouchy, 3. 10. 1912, *Volpi to Nogara*; *Ibid.*, doc. 1030, 1143, Constantinopoli, 6. 10. 1912, *Nogara to Volpi*; *Ibid.*, doc. 1025, 1137–1138, London, 2. 10. 1912, *Imperiali to San Giuliano*;

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, doc. 1030, 1143, Constantinopoli, 6. 10. 1912, *Nogara to Volpi*.

would leave the Aegean islands after the evacuation of Turkish officials.⁵² Montenegro's declaration of war on the Ottoman Empire on 8 October was seen as a positive development for Italy because it was believed that it would make the Ottoman government more eager to come to an agreement. Ahmet Tevfik Pasha, the Turkish ambassador in London, told the British diplomat Sir Arthur Nicolson that signing the peace treaty was the priority. The Italians tried to use the situation to make Turkey fully accept their terms.⁵³

The diplomatic circles in Paris were convinced that Bulgaria's entry into war would not allow Italy to come to peace terms with Turkey. This would potentially elicit a response from the Italian nationalists, who would be inclined to see the peace treaty as abandoning the Balkan peoples. Such a course of events would threaten to make the Italian public hostile to the peace treaty.⁵⁴ San Giuliano and Tomaso Tittoni, the Italian ambassador in Paris, judged that the entry of the Balkan countries into war would change Italy's situation and position because its continuation of the war would threaten Turkey's survival. Poincaré communicated this view to the Turkish ambassador in Paris, Mehmed Rifat Pasha, on 9th October and asked him to encourage signing the peace treaty with Italy before the Bulgarian government crossed the border. The Pasha argued that the Turkish government could not sign the peace treaty with Italy because it would seem that this was done out of fear of Bulgaria. According to Rifat Pasha, Turkey would not sign the peace treaty in the event of a war in the Balkans. On 8th October, Turkey's hesitation led Nogara to suggest – in a surge of pessimism and fear that the Turkish cabinet might fall – backing down and accepting the demands of the Turkish delegations.⁵⁵

⁵² *Ibid.*, doc. 1031, 1143–1144, Rome, 6. 10. 1912, *San Giuliano to Pansa & Avarna*; There was no guarantee that Italy would leave the Aegean islands after Turkey fulfilled its part of the bargain. The Italians planned to delay vacating the islands for as long as possible, which was apparent when D'Ameglio, the commander of the occupation army in Rhodes, submitted a report to the Prime Minister suggesting that Italy use the situation to permanently retain control of the Aegean islands. The commander said that this should be done without a formal annexation because it would require a lot of energy and funds and encounter international problems, (DDI, IV, VII–VIII, doc. 1008, 1114–1119, Rodi, 18.9.1912, *D'Ameglio to Giolitti*).

⁵³ *Ibid.*, doc. 1037, 1151–1152, London, 8. 10. 1912, *Imperiali to San Giuliano*.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, doc. 1039, 1153, Paris, 9. 10. 1912, *Tittoni to San Giuliano*.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, IV, VII–VIII, doc. 1040, 1154, Paris, 9. 10. 1912, *Tittoni to San Giuliano*; *Ibid.*, doc. 1038, 1152–1153, Constantinopoli, 8. 10. 1912, *Nogara to Volpi*.

The Turkish Delegation Changes its Stance

The mobilization of the Balkan countries and Montenegro's declaration of war on the Ottoman Empire stirred the great powers into action. To pacify the situation, the great powers collectively exerted pressure on Constantinople on 10th October, and the Balkan countries were sent the Austro-Russian note. Amidst these developments, on 11th October, the Ottoman government suddenly withdrew the proposals it had already accepted. Convinced that the Balkan crisis would be resolved with international intervention and reluctant to show weakness, the Turkish delegation proposed a completely different model from the one that had been agreed upon. After he was informed of the shift in the Turkish position, Giolitti started to prepare for sharpening his country's relations with Turkey.⁵⁶

In this new package of demands, the Turkish delegation refused to call the Arabs to peace and issue a statement on Libya's autonomy. The agreement on the Arab population – almost entirely worded by the Turkish delegation – was now challenged by the same delegation. They suggested a public agreement stipulating that the Ottoman Empire would withdraw its troops from Libya, leaving it up to them to decide whether they would obey the orders. San Giuliano rightly concluded that Italy would not receive anything tangible with this move. In return, it would suspend hostilities and, at a critical moment for Turkey, restore freedom at sea, relinquish control of the islands, and pay 50 million Francs as compensation for the Turkish government debt. This stance of the Turkish delegation was the most critical moment in the peace talks in Lausanne. The Italian government was ready to suspend the negotiations and more energetically launch naval and land operations. The outbreak of war in the Balkans would exacerbate Turkey's position because a disruption of the *status quo* would remove limitations on the theater of war. The Italians decided to postpone leaving the negotiations for a few days, hoping that Germany would persuade the Porte to back down.⁵⁷

As a gesture of goodwill, San Giuliano allowed the Italian delegation to extend the deadline for the Turkish side to accept the demands, pushing back the deadline until Tuesday, 15th October, with continuing war operations. If Turkey failed to sign the treaty by 15th October, the negotiations would be suspended.⁵⁸ The Italian Foreign Minister judged that the Turkish government might inter-

⁵⁶ AC, МИД, ПО, 1912, 369, ф. III, д. III, 336; ДСПКК, V-2, doc. 633; DDI, IV, VII-VIII, doc. 1051, 1162-1163, Constantinopoli, 11. 10. 1912, *Nogara to Volpi*.

⁵⁷ DDI, IV, VII-VIII, doc. 1048, 1160-1161, Rome, 11. 10. 1912, *San Giuliano to Pansa*; AC, МИД, ПО, 1912, 369, ф. III, д. III, 336.

⁵⁸ ДСПКК, V-2, doc. 636, 657; DDI, IV, VII-VIII, doc. 1054, 1164-1165, Rome, 12. 10. 1912, *San Giuliano to ambassadors to the Great Powers*.

pret Italy's haste to sign the treaty as an indicator of weakness. The Italians had long not launched any war operations beyond Libya, which could also influence the Turkish decision. When the extended deadline ran out on 12th October, the Italian delegates protested with the Turkish side about modifying the provisions. Following the instructions he was given, on 12th October, Volpi rejected the suggestions of the Turkish delegation and sent an ultimatum demanding a response by 15th October. According to the planned secret agreement, three days after signing the public treaty, a royal decree would follow, establishing Italian suzerainty over Libya. After the royal decree, the great powers would recognize Italian sovereignty. Thus, Italy's *de facto* rule in Libya would be based on a public treaty with the Ottoman Empire, and its *de iure* authority would stem from the royal decree and the great powers' recognition. The Arabs would receive concessions and privileges, and the representative would protect Ottoman interests. The two parties would agree to keep the acts secret, creating an illusion of spontaneity and unilateral action to prevent any internal upheavals. In practice, this meant that the Turkish delegation would secretly accept Italian suzerainty over Libya, making it seem as unilaterally proclaimed by Italy. Offering an increase of the sum to be paid as compensation for the Turkish government debt was the last concession Italy made before signing the treaty.⁵⁹

Signing the Treaty of Lausanne

The ultimatum of the Balkan countries, issued on 13th October, and German pressure led the Turkish delegation to back down and accept the Italian draft of the agreement. The preliminary Italo-Turkish agreement was signed in Lausanne on 15th October at six p.m. On that occasion, the secret annex to the Treaty of Lausanne (Ouchy) was formulated, stipulating that Italy would reestablish peace and friendly relations with Turkey and work to support the territorial *status quo* of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans and the Mediterranean. The treaty was signed by Pietro Bertolini, Guido Fusinato, and Giuseppe Volpi on behalf of Italy and by Mehmed Naby Bey and Roumbeyoglou Fahreddin Bey on behalf of Turkey.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, V-2, doc. 636, 653, 657; DDI, IV, VII-VIII, doc. 1054, 1164-1165, Rome, 12. 10. 1912., *San Giuliano to ambassadors to the Great Powers*; *Ibid.*, doc. 1056, 1166-1167, Rome, 12. 10. 1912, *San Giuliano to ambassadors to the Great Powers*; *Ibid.*, doc. 1057, 1168, Ouchy, 12. 10. 1912, *Volpi to Nogara*.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, V-2 doc. 670; DDI, IV, VII-VIII, doc. 1064, 1174, Rome, 15. 10. 1912, *San Giuliano to ambassadors to the Great Powers*; *Ibid.*, doc. 1066, 1175-1177, Ouchy, 15. 10. 1912, *Preliminary peace agreement*; *Ibid.*, doc. 1067, 1178, Lausanne, 15. 10. 1915, *A secret addition to the peace agreement*.

With the Balkan countries' declaration of war on Turkey on 18th October, the *status quo* in the Balkans ended, and, with it, Italy's promise to maintain it as defined in the secret annex of 15th October. On the day they declared war, the Balkan countries submitted identical notes to San Giuliano stating their reasons for declaring war on Turkey and seeking Italy's neutrality. The Italian Foreign Minister restrainedly said that his country, alongside other great powers, would help quickly end the war. The same day, the Italian delegation signed the final version of the peace treaty with Turkey in Lausanne.⁶¹ Having ensured suzerainty over Libya and established control over the Aegean islands, Italy created the conditions that would allow it to make its support to the great powers dependent on new positions in the Balkans and the Mediterranean.⁶²

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⁶¹ The Treaty of Lausanne concluded on 18 October 1912 is alternately called the First Treaty of Lausanne or the Treaty of Ouchy (a suburb of Lausanne) because another treaty, also known as the Treaty of Lausanne, was concluded in the city in 1923.

⁶² F. Caccamo, *Italy, Libya and the Balkan*, 39–40.

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