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ANGLO-RUSSIAN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

1907-1914

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No one has investigated in detail the totality of Anglo-Russian relations from the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 to the outbreak of World War I. Those who have written on the history of the Triple Entente have tended to claim that France was the dominant partner and that her efforts pulled Great Britain and Russia together and kept them together. Britain and Russia had little in common, the standard argument asserts; their ideological and political views were almost diametrically opposed, and furthermore, they had major imperial conflicts.

This dissertation tests two hypotheses. The first is that Russia and Britain were drawn together less from French efforts than from a mutual reaction to German policy. The second is that there was less political and ideological friction between Britain and Russia than previous writers have assumed. The first hypothesis has been supported in previous writings only tangentially, while the second has not been tested for the period under review. Studies of the period have been detailed studies on specific events and crises, while this investigation reviews the course of the Anglo-Russian partnership for the entire seven year period.

British sources for the study include the official documents of the British Foreign Office and the Cabinet, found in the Public Record Office in London, as well as the memoirs and private papers of major personalities of the period, located in the British Museum, London, the

Bodleian Library, Oxford, the University Library, Cambridge, and the National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh.

Original Russian sources are less available; therefore the dissertation depends on printed Russian sources. The most useful collections include the papers of the Ministerstva Inostrannykh Del, which have been published in part by the Soviet government as Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia v epokhu imperializma; Dokumenty iz arkhivov tsarskogo i vremennogo pravitelstvo, 1878-1914, and Materialy po istorii franko-russkikh otnoshenii za 1910-1914 (1925), covering Franco-Russian relations, as well as the correspondence of several important Russian diplomats. The published documentary collections of the other major European nations were used as well.

The dissertation begins with an historical investigation of Anglo-Russian relations prior to 1907, for it was within the context of the late nineteenth century that the ideas and problems of the friendship were shaped. Chapter II deals with an investigation of the organization and functioning of the foreign offices of Great Britain and Russia in order that the major hypotheses might be dealt with in proper context. Beginning with Chapter III, on the formation of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, and continuing through Chapter VII, on the outbreak of World War I, the operation of the Anglo-Russian Entente is examined through the description of events and crises of the seven years.

The dissertation concludes that it was primarily the need for allies in the face of German military and economic expansion that motivated and sustained the Anglo-Russian friendship. It furthermore concludes that the ideological and political differences of the two countries were less

important to their diplomatic relationship than has usually been contended, and that they were easily overcome in their mutual desire for strength against Germany. In the long run, Britain and Russia pursued diplomatic and imperial policies that were not dissimilar. Their primary needs were allies in Europe, with which to oppose the Triple Alliance, and they could both afford to overlook differences of approach and policy to achieve this strength. Expediency, not ideology, was the key to the Anglo-Russian friendship.

PREFACE

No one has investigated in detail the totality of Anglo-Russian relations from the making of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 to the outbreak of World War I. Those who have written on the history of the Triple Entente have tended to claim that France was the dominant partner and that her efforts pulled Great Britain and Tsarist Russia together and kept them together. Britain and Russia had little in common, the standard argument asserts, their ideological and political views were almost diametrically opposed, and on the surface, they had major imperial conflicts.

This dissertation tests two hypotheses. The first is that Russia and Britain were drawn together less from French efforts than from a mutual reaction to German policy. The second hypothesis is that there was less political and ideological friction between Britain and Russia than previous writers have assumed.

The first hypothesis has been supported in previous writings only tangentially. Sidney B. Fay, Oron J. Hale, and William B. Langer are among those who have emphasized the French role in the Triple Entente.¹

¹ Sidney B. Fay, The Origins of the World War, 2 vols., 2nd ed. rev. (New York: Free Press, 1966), 1:312-42; Oron J. Hale, The Great Illusion, 1900-1914 (New York, Evanston & London: Harper & Rowe, 1971), pp. 250, 275, 283; William B. Langer, The Franco-Russian Alliance, 1890-1894 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1929), pp. 356-58, 399-400, 414-15.

A. J. P. Taylor, in his larger work on European diplomacy, touches on the problem of German responsibility for Anglo-Russian friendship,² and Oswald Hauser claims that it was the German navy that forced Britain and Russia together.³ This dissertation will examine, as the first hypothesis, whether it was indeed not only the German navy, but also a far more extensive vision of German policy that frightened Russia and Britain. It was German economic policy, German military expansion, and especially increasing German influence in the Near East as seen in Constantinople, the Liman von Sanders affair, and potential German influence in Persia through the Berlin-to-Bagdad railway.

The second hypothesis--that British and Russian ideology and politics were not nearly so antithetical as usually assumed--is novel. C. J. Lowe and M. L. Dockrill stress the troubled relations between Russia and Britain,⁴ and Rogers Platt Churchill, in his work on the formation of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, defends the British position, emphasizing the difficulty of reconciling British liberal groups to an agreement with reactionary Russia.⁵ Keith Robbins does

²A. J. P. Taylor, The Struggle for Mastery in Europe, 1848-1918 (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1954), p. 427.

³Oswald Hauser, Deutschland und der englisch-russische Gegensatz, 1900-1914 (Berlin & Frankfurt: Musterschmidt-verlag, 1958), p. 356.

⁴C. J. Lowe and M. L. Dockrill, The Mirage of Power, vol. 1, British Foreign Policy, 1902-1914 (London & Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), pp. 72, 93, 133-38.

⁵Rogers Platt Churchill, The Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 (Cedar Rapids, Iowa: Torch Press, 1939), pp. 212-13, 221, 225.

suggest that there were many areas in which the Russians and the British would cooperate from expediency,⁶ and Firuz Kazemzadeh indicates that there was less worry about ideology than about pragmatic matters.⁷ But no one has tested this hypothesis for the whole period under review.

Studies of this period have been detailed studies, such as Mary McCarthy's Anglo-Russian Rivalry in Persia (1925),⁸ Bernadotte Schmitt's The Annexation of Bosnia (1937),⁹ William Habberton's Anglo-Russian Relations Concerning Afghanistan, 1837-1907 (1937),¹⁰ E. C. Helmreich's Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars, 1912-13 (1938),¹¹ Churchill's Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 (1939), Ima C. Barlow's The Agadir Crisis (1940),¹² John A. Murray's "British Policy and Opinion on the Anglo-Russian Entente, 1907-1914" (1956),¹³ and Edward Thaden's Russia and the Balkan Alliance of 1912 (1965).¹⁴ Only an examination of the

⁶Keith Robbins, Sir Edward Grey: A Biography of Lord Grey of Fallodon (London: Cassell & Co., 1971), pp. 186, 195, 224.

⁷Firuz Kazemzadeh, Russia and Britain in Persia, 1864-1914: A Study in Imperialism (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), pp. 502-5, 510-37.

⁸University of Buffalo Studies, ser. 4, no. 2, 1925.

⁹Cambridge, England: University Press, 1937.

¹⁰Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1937.

¹¹Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1938.

¹²Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1939.

¹³Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 1956.

¹⁴Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State University, 1965.

entire seven-year period, only through seeing the entire course of the Anglo-Russian partnership, can the two hypotheses be tested.

British sources for this study are easily accessible. Many of the major characters wrote memoirs, and government archives and private manuscripts are now open to investigation. The private papers of the prime ministers, the foreign secretary, the chief assistants at the British Foreign Office, as well as the official documents of the Foreign Office and the Cabinet--all are now open and were used in this study.

Russian sources are less available. The present Russian government discourages foreign scholars from investigating modern foreign relations; it denies access to most papers. Even if access is given, the archives are not well-organized and are difficult to use.¹⁵ Therefore, this dissertation depends on printed Russian sources. Both foreign ministers of the period wrote memoirs; many other figures in the Ministerstva Inostrannykh Del have published some sort of record. The papers of the Ministerstva Inostrannykh Del have been published by the Soviet Government as Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia y epokhu imperializma,¹⁶ and certain questions have had source materials

¹⁵Patricia Grimsted, Archives and Manuscript Repositories in the USSR: Moscow and Leningrad (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1972), pp. 70-83, 249-53.

¹⁶Komissiiia po izdaniuu dokumentov epokhu imperializma, Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia v epokhu imperializma; Dokumenty iz arkhivov tsarskogo i vremennogo pravitel'stvo, 1878-1917, ser. 2 and 3, eds. A. P. Bolshemennikov, A. A. Mogilivich, F. A. Rothstein, A. S. Yerusalimsky, et al (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoye izdatel'stvo politicheskoy literatury, 1931-1939).

published on them, such as E. A. Adamov, ed., Constantinopol i prolivy (1925-6),¹⁷ which is based on secret documents of the Ministerstva, and Baron Schilling's diary of the Ministerstva, How the War Began in 1914 (1925).¹⁸ There is also the valuable collection, Materialy po istorii franko-russkikh otnoshenii za 1910-1914 (1925),¹⁹ covering Franco-Russian relations.

The other European governments have published extensive sources for this period. Owing to the political demands of the war guilt question, every major European country published collections of diplomatic sources for at least the decade before the war. For Germany, there is Die Grösse Politik der Europäischen Kabinette, 1871-1914 (1922-27):²⁰ for France, Documents diplomatiques français, 1871-1914 (1930-53):²¹ for Austria, Österreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik von der Bosnischen Krise 1908 bis zum Kriegsausbruch 1914 (1930).²²

¹⁷E. A. Adamov, ed., Konstantinopol i prolivy po sekretnym dokumentam byvshego ministerstva inostrannykh del, 2 vol., (Moscow: Litizdat NKID, 1925-6).

¹⁸M. F. Schilling, How the War Began in 1914: Being the Diary of the Russian Foreign Office from the 3rd to the 20th of July, trans. Cyprian Bridge (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1925).

¹⁹Kommissariat inostrannykh del (Moscow: Kommissariat inostrannykh del, 1922).

²⁰Auswärtiges Amt, 40 vols., ed., Johannes Lepsius, Albrecht Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, and Friedrich Thimme (Berlin: Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft für Politik und Geschichte, 1922-27).

²¹Ministère des affaires étrangères, ser. 2 and 3 (Paris: Commission de publication des documents relatifs aux origine de guerre de 1914, 1930-53).

²²Diplomatische Aktenstücke des Österreichisch-Ungarns Ministeriums des Aussern, 9 vols., ed. Ludwig Bittner, Alfred Francis Pribram, Heinrich Srbik, and Hans Übersberger (Vienna & Leipzig: Österreichischer Bundesverlag, 1930).

This dissertation begins with an historical investigation of Anglo-Russian relations, focusing on the late nineteenth century, for it was within the context of this historical matrix that ideas were shaped.

It became clear in the course of preparing this investigation that the organization and functioning of the foreign offices of Great Britain and Russia were crucial to the question. Although the function and operation of the British Foreign Office have been examined in Frans Gosses, The Management of British Foreign Policy Before the First World War (1948),²³ Zara Steiner, The Foreign Office and Foreign Policy, 1898-1914 (1969),²⁴ and the Public Record Office's The Records of the Foreign Office (1969),²⁵ an examination of the interaction of persons was essential to verify the hypotheses. The Russian Foreign Office has never been investigated at length, so the author of this dissertation had to break new ground on this subordinate topic in order that the major hypotheses might be dealt with in proper context.

Beginning with Chapter III on the formation of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 and continuing through Chapter VII on the outbreak of World War I, the operation of the Anglo-Russian Entente was examined through the description of events and crises of the seven years. This approach does afford another value to the investigation. Many of the standard narrative histories of the individual crises were prepared

²³Leiden: Sijtoff, 1948.

²⁴Cambridge, England: University Press, 1969.

²⁵Public Record Office Handbook no. 13 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1969).

before the archives were as open as they are today. Thus, this dissertation can assess the historical accuracy of the studies that have heretofore been accepted as correct.

This dissertation, therefore, will test two hypotheses: first, that Germany brought together and held together the Anglo-Russian Entente, and second, that Great Britain and Russia were less opposed politically and ideologically than has been assumed. Additionally, this dissertation will provide a description for the first time of the workings of the Russian Foreign Office, will give a new narrative of diplomatic events from 1907 to 1914, and will test, in the light of newly available evidence, the continued merit of standard writings on the period.

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CHAPTER I

ENGLAND AND RUSSIA IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

In August 1914 Great Britain and Russia entered the World War as allies, yet a generation earlier such an event would have been extremely improbable. The development of the friendship between these two nations and the diplomatic revolution it involved are important yet neglected parts of the diplomatic history of the pre-war period. The diplomatic relations of Russia and France and of England and France have received the attention of countless historians, while those of England and Russia have usually been seen only in the light of the agreements of those nations with France. No one could doubt that France's encouragement of Anglo-Russian friendship was a major force in bringing the two countries together, but Russia and England had problems to settle that did not involve France, as well as mutual goals and interests that could only be resolved by their own cooperation. There were, therefore, important considerations drawing the two countries together that lay outside the realm of France's involvement. A study of the history of Anglo-Russian diplomatic relations reveals these interests and goals and helps to explain how the nation with soundest liberal and parliamentary traditions in Europe and the autocratic and reactionary Empire of the Tsars could become friends and allies.

In viewing the stormy course of Anglo-Russian diplomatic relations, a pattern of national self-interest and some realization of diplomatic realpolitik emerges. As in most diplomatic relations, ideology seldom surpassed necessity. Moreover, any assessment or value judgments of either nation are difficult, for both Great Britain and Russia frequently pursued selfish and short-sighted courses, and many times both governments were obliged to follow foreign policies that arose or were dictated by the domestic and international crises of the times. In both cases, bitter criticism and opposition assailed the direction of foreign policy, and the increasing cooperation of Britain and Russia was never wholeheartedly accepted by the people or governments of either country. The rapprochement did continue, however, and the alliance of Britain and Russia, however informal, did become a reality.

In 1907, after more than a century of rivalry and tension, Russia and England concluded a colonial agreement initiating a friendship that would last until the beginning of the First World War. Although the provisions of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 related to the major areas of colonial rivalry between the two countries--Persia, Afghanistan, and Tibet--the implications of the rapprochement must be found not in these far-away places, but in Europe, for it was this convention that prepared the way for Anglo-Russian cooperation in the major crises facing Europe in the prewar year. From the first

crisis to test the Anglo-Russian friendship, the annexation of Bosnia by Austria in 1908, through the Italo-Turkish War, the Agadir Crisis, the Balkan Wars of 1912-13, to the final outbreak of the World War, the same motives that brought Russia and England together in the first place continued to operate to sustain their relationship. The last crisis, the assassination at Sarajevo and the outbreak of the war, found the Anglo-Russian convention stronger than ever, despite the storms it had witnessed in its seven years. The story of why and how the convention endured is unique in the diplomatic history of the years before World War I.

During the first three centuries of contact, which followed the opening of trade between the two nations in 1533, Russia and England enjoyed consistently friendly relations. In the eighteenth century contacts were more frequent but still relatively smooth. In 1734 England and Russia established a commercial treaty, a rare occurrence for Russia, which gave English merchants a major role in the development of Russian economy and set the pattern for Anglo-Russian relations for over half a century. Although England viewed Russia's advent as a Baltic power in that century with mixed feelings, the Baltic did not cause serious diplomatic problems between the two countries. Even England's cooperation with Prussia against Russia during the Seven Years' War did not disrupt the friendly commercial relations. Later in the century

the English actively contributed to the growth of Russian power in the Eastern Mediterranean as a means of countering French strength there.¹

By the end of the eighteenth century the situation was strained somewhat by the Russian desire to assert its economic and national independence and resist English domination in the Mediterranean. Besides this, the English watched the Russian advance in Central Asia in the mid-eighteenth century with some apprehension. The British attitude was prompted by the growth of her own empire in the Near and Middle East, which centered increasingly around India. Any encroachment on border territories represented a threat to India's safety and Britain's interests.²

In 1805 England and Russia signed a treaty forming a European league to face Napoleon and made diplomatic preparations

¹Hajo Holborn, "Russia and the European Political System," in Russian Foreign Policy: Essays in Historical Perspective, ed. Ivo J. Lederer (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1962), p. 379; Barbara Jelavich, A Century of Russian Foreign Policy, 1814-1914 (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1964), pp. 13-15.

²Richard A. Pierce, Russian Central Asia, 1865-1917; a Study in Colonial Rule (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1960), p. 18. The matter came to a crisis in 1801 when the Russian Emperor Paul broke diplomatic relations with Britain and dispatched Cossack troops to conquer India. The murder of Paul in the same year and the accession of Alexander I to the throne brought immediate rapprochement. Alexander called back the troops, reappointed the Russian Ambassador to London, and concluded a convention with Britain on 17 June 1802 that temporarily removed the threat to India and initiated a short era of peace. Michael T. Florinsky, Russia, A History and an Interpretation, 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan Co., 1958). 1:651-53.

for war. Crushing Russian military defeats at the hands of Napoleon plus the meager and unenthusiastic subsidies and support offered by the British forced Alexander I to sue for friendship with the French.³ An alliance with France concluded at Tilsit in 1807 was not popular in Russia, and the economic consequences of friendship with Napoleon were too great a strain for the country to bear. Because agricultural Russia was dependent on British manufactured items, it was impossible for her to abide by Napoleon's Continental system, which would prohibit trade between French allies and England. The French invasion of Russia that followed her defection from the Continental system proved disastrous for Napoleon. In January 1813 the Russian army crossed the Nieman River into Prussia. Austria, Prussia, Sweden, and finally England, joined the anti-French coalition and in a year it defeated Napoleon. In 1814 Russia emerged from the Napoleonic campaigns as the strongest power in Europe. Alexander I was able to dominate the early months of the Congress of Vienna, but after the Hundred Days his policy was influenced and restricted by the more practical attitude of the British aided by the Prussians. Only after laborious negotiations,

³A. M. Stanislavskaia, Russko-Angliiskii otnoshenii i problemy sredizemnomoria, 1798-1807 (Moscow: Akademiia Nauk USSR, 1962), pp. 300-305. This Soviet study follows Anglo-Russian relations to Tilsit, and attributes the breach in relations to differences of policy regarding the Ottoman Empire. It gives Alexander special credit for efforts to heal the breach in 1804-5 and again in 1806.

hindered by difficult problems and conflicting policies, was a final settlement reached. Although the actual terms of the Vienna settlement were embodied in a Quadruple Alliance signed by England, Russia, Austria, and Prussia, Alexander preferred to treat all political problems in moral terms. He therefore called for a Holy Alliance, by which the nations of Europe agreed to be guided in their relations with each other and their peoples by the principles of Christian morality. The British, suspicious of Alexander's motives, feared the possible interpretation that might be put on such a vague document and adroitly sidestepped the issue. The Alliance, which Russia eagerly upheld and England ridiculed, became the symbol of reactionary foreign policy throughout Europe in the early nineteenth century.⁴

The wave of revolutions which swept Europe in the 1820's and 1830's further divided England and Russia because while Alexander consistently called for allied action to suppress revolutionary movements, England generally sympathized and aided the revolutionaries while formally advocating a policy of non-intervention in continental affairs. After 1822 the English Foreign Secretary, George Canning, led England even more firmly away from entangling European alliances and intervention.⁵

⁴Jelavich, Century of Russian Foreign Policy, p. 34; Florinsky, Russia, 2:682-86.

⁵Cyril E. Black, "The Pattern of Russian Objectives," in Russian Foreign Policy, p. 25; Florinsky, Russia, 2:682-85.

The Eastern Question, which became increasingly important in European affairs in the nineteenth century, and which was to play so prominent a role in Anglo-Russian relations, came to the attention of Europe in 1821, when the Greeks launched a revolt against the Ottoman Empire. The Eastern question involved not only the control of Constantinople and the Straits, a persistent goal of the Russians, but also the fate of the Christian population in Turkey, and ultimately, the possible dissolution of the Ottoman Empire itself. For the rest of the century, with a few exceptions, it was the central question of Russian foreign policy and a constant source of conflict between England and Russia. Between the Greek revolution and the Crimean War in 1854, Anglo-Russian relations revolved almost solely around the Eastern question and the crises it called forth. The official theory of both countries was that the maintenance of the status quo in Turkey was in the best interest of all Europe, but the belief that the demise of the failing Turkish Empire was inevitable colored their attitudes and actions. Neither country was willing for the other to secure any advantage at the Straits, and both feared that a complete Ottoman collapse might set off a European war. Officially, Nicholas I, Alexander's successor on the Russian throne in 1825, stood for the principle of legitimacy and had little real sympathy for the fate of the Orthodox Slavic peoples within the Ottoman Empire, as he was inclined to see them as rebels

against a legitimate monarch. His major interest was in enhancing Russian interests in the area, and Russia's encroachments in the Turkish territories of Moldavia and Wallachia, adjoining Russian borders, were interpreted as evidence of Russia's hypocrisy in dealing with the Turkish Empire. Unable to grasp the limitations the British Parliamentary system imposed on the crown, Nicholas' relations with England were often based on curious and unfortunate misunderstandings.⁶ On the other hand, British dealings with the Ottoman Empire, while usually couched in more moralistic rhetoric, were influenced by very real strategic and commercial British interests in the Eastern Mediterranean and India.

Despite deepseated British suspicion of Russian policy, Russia and Britain were able to come to an agreement on the Greek question, first in the Anglo-Russian Protocol of April 1826, and later in the Treaty of London in 1827 which was signed by Great Britain, Russia and France, and which assured the establishment of an autonomous Greek state. The death of the British Foreign Secretary George Canning placed a different light on British policy. Canning's policy of cooperation with Russia was motivated by a desire to prevent independent Russian action in Turkey, and to safeguard British interests there.⁷ His successors,

⁶Michael T. Florinsky, Russia: A Short History, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan Co., 1969), p. 288.

⁷Sir A. W. Ward and G. P. Gooch, eds., The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, 1783-1919, 3 vols. (New York: Macmillan Co., 1923), 2:87-94.

especially the Duke of Wellington, reversed Canning's policy and refused to support Russian interests. In 1828, Russia and Turkey went to war and Wellington refused to allow Britain to become part of the hostilities on either side.⁸

Although Nicholas apparently entered war with Turkey to take advantage of the Empire's weakness, he knew Britain would not stand by and allow him to occupy the Straits without protest. Accordingly, he stopped short of Constantinople, and in September 1829 concluded the Treaty of Adrianople with the Ottoman Empire. Russia agreed to the principle of the maintenance of the status quo in Turkey, but she enjoyed important concessions by the terms of the Adrianople Treaty, most significant of which was a virtual protectorate over the Danubian provinces of the Ottoman Empire.⁹ Britain viewed this increased Russian domination at Constantinople with alarm. British fears were strengthened further in the last years of the decade by a Russian victory over Persia, concluded by the Treaty of Turkmanchai on 22 February 1828, which gave Russia increased territory and commercial privileges in Persian territory.¹⁰

⁸Charles Breunig, The Age of Revolution and Reaction (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1970), p. 138.

⁹Florinsky, Russia, 2:833.

¹⁰Mary M. McCarthy, Anglo-Russian Rivalry in Persia, University of Buffalo Studies, ser. 4, no. 2 (June 1925), pp. 32-3.

In the 1830's the outbreak of hostilities between Turkey and her subject state, Egypt, offered yet another opportunity for Russia to increase her hold on the Ottoman Empire and to intensify her rivalry with Britain. Alone among the powers, Russia offered military aid to Turkey to fend off the Egyptian attack, and in 1833 a temporarily grateful Porte concluded the Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi with Russia. A secret article in the treaty provided that Turkey should "limit her action in favor of Russia to closing the Straits of the Dardanelles, that is, to not allowing any foreign vessel of war to enter them under any pretext whatever."¹¹ News of the treaty created an immediate sensation in Britain, where the government and the press assumed that only Russian warships would have access to the Straits while others would be refused.¹² British protests did nothing to ease the situation, however, and for the moment Russia won a diplomatic victory. In the long run, the victory was a hollow one. "Unkiar Skelessi is the true turning point in the attitude of English statesmen

¹¹Quoted in Florinsky, Russia, 2:838.

¹²Philip E. Mosely, Russian Diplomacy and the Opening of the Eastern Question in 1838 and 1839 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934) pp. 9-24. Mosely states that "Russia's real aim in making the treaty of 1833 was therefore to secure recognition from the Porte of her paramount interest in Turkey and of her previous right of intervention, to the exclusion of the alliance and intervention of other powers." Harold Temperly, England and the Near East: The Crimea (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1936), p. 413, agrees with this conclusion, but Florinsky, Russia, 2:839-840, states that this interpretation is not defensible. He agrees, however, that Britain and France accepted the interpretation and therefore the situation became dangerous.

towards Russia," wrote Temperley.¹³ It converted even Whigs to the Tory policy of upholding Turkey.

An even more serious consideration from the English point of view was the threat posed to India by Russian expansion in Central Asia, which proceeded throughout the 1830's. Russian campaigns to subdue the commercial and strategic center of Herat in 1837-38, and the conquest of Khiva in the Caucasus in 1839 were neither successful, but they stirred British tempers.¹⁴ With little regard for the realities of the geography of the Caucasus, or the capacity of the Russian troops to subdue the rebellious mountain tribes, British leaders dreamed of a Russian attack on India through Persia or through the Caucasus. Under the Foreign Secretaryship of Lord Palmerston the British attitude and policy toward Russia became exceptionally antagonistic, largely as a result of the competitive imperial ambitions of the two countries.¹⁵

British leaders and diplomats in responsible positions encouraged the growing Russophobia,¹⁶ which reached a point which Gleason describes as "pragmatically complete," a point when a nation is

¹³Temperley, England and the Near East, p. 413.

¹⁴C. W. Crawley, "Anglo-Russian Relations, 1815-1840," Cambridge Historical Journal 3(1929):57.

¹⁵John H. Gleason, The Genesis of Russophobia in Great Britain (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950), p. 1.

¹⁶Crawley, "Anglo-Russian Relations," pp. 60-3, 66; Gleason Genesis of Russophobia, pp. 172-1973, 184-185; Florinsky, Russia, 2:841-42.

psychologically ready for war if the proper provocation appears.¹⁷ In this instance, the provocation was not forthcoming, the crisis passed, and the forties witnessed a slight detente in Anglo-Russian relations, although the Russophobia never disappeared completely from important parts of British society.

Actually Russia had strong reasons for desiring an understanding with England. Neither Prussia nor Austria seemed likely to be of real assistance to Russia in the Near East, although these two conservative monarchical powers were the most natural ideological allies for Russia. In reality, however, Austria was destined to become Russia's chief rival in the Balkans, and in the event of conflict there, Russia feared Prussia would support Austria. English influence at Constantinople was surpassing Russia's, and furthermore, Nicholas I could see an understanding with England as a satisfactory way to counter the French, whose revolutionary tendencies were distasteful to the Russia tsar. As for Britain, Palmerston had no faith in the Russian diplomatic integrity and thoroughly disliked the Russians, but he was anxious to prevent the weakening of Turkey, either by forces from within or by further Russian encroachment. As France demonstrated dangerously strong sympathy with Turkey's Egyptian insurgents, Palmerston turned his attention to engaging Russian aid in maintaining Turkey. By 1840,

¹⁷Gleason, Genesis of Russophobia, p. 280.

Russia was indicating a willingness to support collective action at the Porte and seemed more receptive to British suggestions.¹⁸

In 1841 the long struggle within the Ottoman Empire was finally resolved by joint action of the powers, culminating in the Straits Convention of July 1841,¹⁹ which neither Britain nor Russia wholeheartedly supported. Ultimately it led to conflict between them, but for the time being war was avoided and Nicholas continued to court British friendship.

In 1844 the Russian Tsar visited England, where he was received enthusiastically, and came away convinced he had scored a personal coup with the British.²⁰ Lord Aberdeen, who succeeded Palmerston briefly in 1841, was more receptive to Russian overtures, and in 1844, by a secret agreement, Russia and England arranged a plan for cooperation in Turkey and for the ultimate peaceful partition of the Empire in the future if necessary.²¹ Aberdeen preferred to interpret the secret agreement as merely a check on the activities of the Russians, but Foreign Minister Nesselrode and Nicolas viewed it as a much firmer commitment.²² Beyond this,

¹⁹Vernon Puryear, England, Russia and the Straits Question, 1844-1856 (1931; reprint ed., Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1965), p. 150.

²⁰Crawley, "Anglo-Russian Relations," p. 52.

²¹Puryear, England, Russia and the Straits Question, pp. 1-74, outlines the negotiations for the secret agreement. S. M. Goriainov, "The Secret Agreement of 1844 between Russia and England," Russian Review 1(1912):95-115 and 4(1912):76-91, gives the text of the note and commentary.

²²Florinsky, Russia, 2:849-50.

the forties passed largely without incident for Anglo-Russian relations.

The European revolutions of 1848 cast a shadow on the diplomatic rapprochement of England and Russia. Nicholas I enthusiastically accepted Emperor Franz Joseph's appeals for military aid in suppressing the nationalistic Hungarian revolt within the Austria Empire. The British public, however, sympathized with the Hungarians in their struggle against overwhelming odds, and although Britain was not willing to come to Hungarian aid, she encouraged their revolt. War was avoided, but the real problems between Russia and England remained unsolved, and were to reappear in the following decade.²³

The diplomatic efforts of the 1840's had provided an interlude of comparative peace and cooperation between Russia and England, but when faced with the possibilities of a Turkish downfall in a new crisis in 1853, Britain departed from her short-lived rapprochement with Russia. In 1854 Russia was confronted with an alliance of European nations in the Crimean War. The immediate cause of the war was a Franco-Russian dispute about certain religious shrines within the Turkish Empire, but the economic rivalry and inherent conflict of colonial policy between England and Russia

²³Temperley, England and the Near East, p. 263; Florinsky, Russia, 2:855.

must be considered more fundamental.²⁴ Both France and Russia claimed the right to administer and protect the religious places, and initially the French were more successful. Russia reacted to the success of French demands by threats to occupy the Danubian Turkish provinces of Wallachia and Moldavia, which bordered Russian soil, and began mobilization of two army corps. Despite several European diplomatic projects of pacification, war broke out between Turkey and Russia in October 1853.²⁵

Early Russian victories alarmed the British and stories of brutality and torture incensed the British public who clamored for war.²⁶ A joint Anglo-French ultimatum demanding Russian withdrawal from the Danubian principalities and a cessation of fighting went unheeded, and in March 1854, to Nicholas' chagrin, the Crimean War began; it ended in Russia's ignominious defeat.

Nicholas I's foreign policy brought only humiliation for Russia, but the war as a whole was wasteful and foolish. From the British point of view, it was especially unnecessary, considering that Russia had already agreed in 1844 to Britain's principal conditions for the settlement of the Eastern Question. British public opinion and the distrust of Russian leaders reinforced the idea that the only

²⁴Puryear, England, Russia and the Straits Question, p. 413.

²⁵Temperley, England and the Near East, p. 371-74.

²⁶Puryear, England, Russia and the Straits Question, p. 340; Norman Rich, The Age of Nationalism and Reform, 1850-1890 (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1970), pp. 45-6.

way to secure the future peace of Europe was to relieve Russia of some of her frontier territories.²⁷

In February 1855, after more than a year of unspeakable hardship and bloodshed, the antagonists met at the Congress of Paris to settle the peace. Anti-Russian feeling was at its peak and the British grasped every opportunity to punish the Russians. The Treaty of Paris was not as harsh as the defeated Russians might have expected, but Russia was forced to accept a rectification of the Russo-Turkish border and the neutralization of the Black Sea and its ports. Free access by the merchant ships of all nations was allowed, but ships of war were prohibited. The last stipulation deprived both Russia and Turkey of the right to maintain navies on the Black Sea, or naval ports or arsenals on the shores.²⁸

Although the end of the war came none too soon for Russia, the Treaty was considered a humiliation. Slavophiles particularly resented the abandonment of the Christians of the Danubian principalities. Official circles, however, declared that the Treaty was satisfactory. Indeed, they could do little else, for the ability

²⁷ Jelavich, Century of Russian Foreign Policy, pp. 121-22; Werner E. Mosse, The Rise and Fall of the Crimean System, 1855-71 (London: Macmillan & Co., 1963), pp. 11-12.

²⁸ Mosse, Rise and Fall of the Crimean System, pp. 32-3; An interesting short study of the Congress of Paris can be found in Harold Temperley, "The Treaty of Paris and its Execution," Journal of Modern History 3(1928):387-407.

of the Russian government to carry out the war had been embarrassingly incompetent, and the domestic scene was a shambles. Besides, Nicholas I's death in 1855 shifted the burden of state to the untried shoulders of Alexander II, who, while he publicly carried forward his father's foreign policy, was more concerned with broad changes in Russia's internal government. In fact, the only redeeming feature of the Crimean War might be that Russia's defeat gave impetus for reform in almost every area of Russian life.

In London, the Treaty met with bitter criticism from Parliament and public opinion as well.²⁹ The British government further sought to safeguard the terms of the agreement by a treaty of guarantee with Austria and France which they hoped would forestall any Russian efforts to circumvent the provisions of the Paris document.³⁰ Until 1870, Britain was largely successful in containing Russian ambitions in the Ottoman Empire.

An especially difficult and contradictory aspect of Russia's foreign policy in the Balkans after the Crimean War was the development of a movement known as Pan Slavism. A term covering a variety of attitudes and opinions, B. H. Sumner defines it as a "connecting link between slavophilism and panrussianism."³¹ Michael Petrovich, in his study of Russian Pan Slavism, makes a distinction between Slavophilism, as a loosely defined romantic movement of the 1830's

²⁹Puryear, England, Russia and the Straits Question, p. 427.

³⁰Mosse, Rise and Fall of the Crimean System, pp. 35-46.

³¹B. H. Sumner, Russia and the Balkans, 1870-1880 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1937), p. 57.

with no apparent political program but embracing the idea of the mystical brotherhood of all Orthodox Slavic peoples, and Panslavism, as the outgrowth of Russian intervention for her own interests in the internal affairs of other Slavic nations.³² In any case, Panslavs generally agreed, for whatever reason, that it was the historic mission of Russia to defend Slavic interests within the Ottoman Empire. This mission was translated into reality by rights awarded the Russian Empire under the Treaty of Kutchuk Kainardji in 1774, and these rights affected Russia's Balkan policy until World War I.

Panslavism was never, most authorities agree, official policy, but rather a state of mind and a means of manipulating public opinion in many cases.³³ Many of Russia's most effective statesmen were against the policy, and in no case did it become more than a pronounced form of Great Russian nationalism with "crude appeals to national mass emotions."³⁴ This interpretation is accepted by Michael Florinsky,³⁵ but David McKenzie argues that the Slavic

³²Michael Petrovich, The Emergence of Russian Panslavism, 1856-1870 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956), pp. 32-35.

³³Alexander Dallin, "The Use of International Movements," in Russian Foreign Policy, p. 316.

³⁴B. H. Sumner, "Russia and Panslavism in the Eighteen-Seventies," Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 4 ser., 18(1935):26.

³⁵Florinsky, Russia, 2:809-10.

sentiment was not controlled by St. Petersburg at all but represented a very real national consciousness in the Balkan states.³⁶ Petrovich points out that the movement was potentially dangerous but lacked strength because the illiterate Russian peasant was very little affected by it and, as the majority of the Russian populace was peasantry, the movement was confined to a small, though vocal, group.³⁷ In the long run, Balkan interests, whether expressed Panslav sentiments or not, were always subordinate to Russian interests throughout Russia's history.

From the Congress of Paris to the Congress of Berlin, Russian foreign policy revolved around several major issues. First, she unsuccessfully sought revision of the terms of the 1856 Treaty of Paris. Second, she increased her expansion in the Far East and in Central Asia, which brought her into further conflict with Britain. The dominant influence in British foreign policy during most of this time was Lord Palmerston, who, until his death in 1865, maintained a thoroughly anti-Russian attitude. Palmerston had sympathy with the Turkish Empire, although he was not convinced that it could be reformed or modernized. Moreover, he had a sharp realization of British interests in the Near East, and a deep and abiding distrust of the Russians. He was an outspoken opponent

³⁶David McKenzie, The Serbs and Russian Pan-Slavism, 1875-1878 (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1967), p. 338.

³⁷Petrovich, Emergence of Russian Panslavism, pp. 383-84.

of the Russians and on at least one occasion had used the threat of the British fleet to circumvent Russian attempts to regain territory lost in the Crimean War. English and Austrian hostility to Russia in these years paved the way for a slight rapprochement between France and Russia, and despite formidable obstacles, the French and Russians cooperated in the establishment of an independent Rumania, and France supported Russian policies elsewhere in the Balkans.³⁸

In the late 1860's a central point of concern for Europe was the national unification movements of Germany and Italy. Russian policy, often inconsistent and short-sighted, actually facilitated German unification, even though the Russian Foreign Minister Gorchakov made proposals to Britain for joint measures to protect the integrity of France in the Franco-Prussian war.³⁹

German victories in the war and Bismarck's promise of support in revising the Black Sea clauses of the Treaty of Paris soon convinced the Tsar and his foreign minister of the wisdom of abandoning France. The war presented Gorchakov with his first real opportunity to denounce the clauses. Taking advantage of the confusion of the war and the diplomatic scene, the Russian Minister

³⁸Jelavich, Century of Russian Foreign Policy, p. 133; Moose Rise and Fall of the Crimean System, pp. 129-157, gives a detailed account of the clash between England and Russia in 1866 regarding the Rumanian situation.

³⁹Mosse, Rise and Fall of the Crimean System, p. 159.

declared that the neutralization provisions would be ignored.⁴⁰ Although such a step had long been anticipated, its announcement provoked a considerable outburst. The British charged Russia with a violation of the sanctity of international treaties, and diplomatic relations between England and Russia cooled another several degrees.⁴¹ At the suggestion of Bismarck, the powers met in a Seven Power Conference in London in January 1871.⁴² Supported by the German Chancellor, whose victorious new nation willingly repaid Russia for her diplomatic support in the unification struggle, Gorchakov succeeded in removing the most odious of the Treaty provisions.

British reaction was bitter, and anti-Russian feeling reached a new high in Britain. With the union of the Danubian principalities under the new state of Rumania and the removal of the Black Sea neutrality clauses, the Crimean system set up by the Treaty of Paris--the basis for Palmerstonian foreign policy--was practically at an end. British influence at the Porte declined as the Turkish government

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 162; Jelavich, Century of Russian Foreign Policy, p. 157; Chester W. Clark, "Prince Gorchakov and the Black Sea Question 1866; A Russian Bomb that did not Explode," American Historical Review 48(1942):52-54, cites a newly discovered document from Russian archives which proves that Gorchakov tried to initiate such an action much earlier but was restrained by the Tsar.

⁴¹Jelavich, Century of Russian Foreign Policy, pp. 165-67; Florinsky, Russia, 2:968.

began to feel that Britain had failed in its obligation to protect the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. Russia gained not only the desired changes in the Treaty of Paris, but benefited, at British expense, in increased strength and prestige.⁴³

After 1870, an important part of the diplomatic adventures of Europe depended on the will of the Iron Chancellor, Bismarck. Haunted by the possibility of a Franco-Russian or a Franco-Austrian alliance, Bismarck worked diligently to achieve a rapprochement between the three imperial governments. Aided in part by the increasing hostility between Russia and England, Bismarck's efforts paid off, and in 1873 he succeeded in establishing the Dreikaiserbund of Germany, Austria, and Russia. An ill-defined commitment, the league was unworkable from the first because of the inherent distrust and rivalry between Austria and Russia, but it continued off and on during the years of Bismarck's career to demonstrate the traditional ties between Russia and Germany.

A far more important concern for Anglo-Russian relations during the 1870's and 1880's was Russia's expansion in Central Asia. Vast uncharted areas peopled with wild and marauding tribesmen lay just to Russia's south and the dynamics of an expanding empire

⁴³Florinsky, Russia, 2:968-70; Mosse, Rise and Fall of the Crimean System, pp. 178-80, 101-3; W.E. Mosse, "Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: The British Public and the War Scare of November 1870," Historical Journal 6(1963):38-58.

called for their subjugation. In the 1870's, therefore, Russia, ostensibly in the interests of security and trade, pushed into the unconquered area from just north of the Caspian Sea to the frontiers of Persia and Afghanistan.⁴⁴ Alternately succeeding and failing militarily, the somewhat unsteady progression of Russia into Central Asia was not really a formal policy of the Russian government. Russia's trade never justified the military and administrative costs of her expansion, and the ventures were more often than not controlled by local commercial and military officials than St. Petersburg.⁴⁵ By 1884, with the conquest of Merv, Russia's territorial expansion came to a virtual close, although this was by no means apparent to the British.⁴⁶

British commercial interests and political leaders viewed Russian advance with keen interest and apprehension. Russia probably could never have carried out an invasion of India, the major fear of the British, despite detailed plans for such a conquest

⁴⁴ McCarthy, Anglo-Russian Rivalry in Persia, pp. 35-9; Firuz Kazemzadeh, "Russia and the Middle East," in Russian Foreign Policy, p. 493.

⁴⁵ Kazemzadeh, "Russia and the Middle East," pp. 493, 496.

⁴⁶ Sumner, Russia and the Balkans, pp. 35-56, gives a good short account of Russian expansion. William Langer, European Alliances and Alignments, 1871-1890, 2nd ed., (New York: Random House, 1950), p. 310, mentions that England was "afflicted with Mervousness" at the prospect of Russia's conquest of the Turkoman tribes of Merv.

by General Sobolev in 1876-7,⁴⁷ but the danger of Anglo-Russian conflict was nevertheless very real. As England approached from the South and Russia from the North, the meeting on the frontiers of Afghanistan seemed inevitable and dangerous.

In 1865 Lord Russell had tried to obtain an agreement over spheres of influence, and in 1869 Lord Clarendon proposed that Afghanistan be recognized as a neutral buffer zone between Russia and English areas, but Russia dismissed both proposals.⁴⁸ In 1874, when Disraeli replaced Gladstone as British Prime Minister, Lord Derby took over the Foreign Office and Salisbury the India Office. As a result, England began to push a more forward policy in Central Asia. One of the signs of such a policy resulted in proclamation of Queen Victoria as the Empress of India in 1877. Disraeli's policy in many ways rehabilitated the Palmerstonian view of foreign affairs, accenting Anglo-Russian differences and encouraging anti-Russian feeling in Britain. His efforts were strengthened by a new crisis in the Eastern Question in 1877-78.⁴⁹

In June of 1875 a revolt broke out in the tiny provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, a predominantly Slavic, Serbian, and Orthodox region of the Ottoman Empire. Many of the landowners in

⁴⁷ Kazemzadeh, "Russia and the Middle East," p. 495.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 497-99.

⁴⁹ Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, 3:172-75; Mosse, Rise and Fall of the Crimean System, pp. 3-4.

these provinces had embraced the Moslem religion to escape the restrictions placed on the Christian population, and the oppression of the lower class Orthodox Slavs was especially severe. The insurrection spread rapidly and soon drew the attention of the European powers. Both Vienna and St. Petersburg called for intervention, while the British attitude, encouraged by Sir Henry Elliot, Ambassador to Constantinople and a strong supporter of the Porte, was strongly non-interventionist. Perhaps because of the British attitude, which the Porte interpreted as strongly supportive, attempts at mediation proved useless. By the summer of 1876 the entire Balkans were in turmoil, with Bulgaria, Montenegro, and Serbia joining the fray. Throughout Europe, especially in England, Russia was blamed for encouraging the hostilities. In reality, Alexander II and Gorchakov had at first worked to localize the affair, for neither had great sympathy with the Slav cause. Not until it seemed apparent that Turkey would be victorious over the rebels, and an excited and unprecedented Panslav sentiment began to develop in Russia, did the Russian government begin to become alarmed.⁵⁰

In fact, in July, 1876, Russian and Austrian representatives at Reichstadt sought to turn the Balkan problem to their own advantage

⁵⁰R. W. Seton Watson, Disraeli, Gladstone, and the Eastern Question: A Study in Diplomacy and Party Politics (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1962), pp. 168-70; Florinsky, Russia, 2:993-96.

by entering into an agreement not to intervene in the hostilities, and to assure an outcome satisfactory to them. If Turkey should be victorious, they would cooperate to protect the Serbs from undue punishment; if Turkey lost, Russia would regain the Black Sea territories lost in 1856, Austria would annex Bosnia, all the Balkan states would gain territory, and Constantinople would be declared a free city. The most important provision of the Reichstadt agreement was that no large Balkan state which might conceivably disrupt the balance of power in the area would be formed.⁵¹ The agreement was, in principle, a plan between Russia and Austria to partition the Ottoman Empire, but each power interpreted the provisions to its own advantage.

By the fall of 1876 the situation in the Balkans had deteriorated so badly that it was apparent Russia would soon be involved in the hostilities. England, fearing a Russian victory over the Turks would allow Russia to establish the protection over the Straits she desired, called for the inevitable European conference. The powers met at Constantinople in the winter of 1876, but their efforts to force reforms on the Porte and to bring the conflict to an end failed.⁵² In April of 1877, partly to defend the badly beaten Serbs and

⁵¹ Alfred F. Pribram, The Secret Treaties of Austria-Hungary, 1879-1914, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1920-21), 2:188-203; "Reikhshtadt," Krasnyi Arkhiv 1(1922):36-61. Both sources give slightly varying versions of the document. G. H. Rupps, "The Reichstadt Agreement," American Historical Review 30(April 1925): 503-510, summarizes the agreement.

⁵² Florinsky, Russia, 2:1000-01.

partly to fulfil strong public sentiment at home, the Russians declared war on Turkey.⁵³

Russian troops, hampered by poor leadership and supply problems, nevertheless pushed nearly to the gates of Constantinople by early in 1878, whereupon an alarmed British government dispatched a fleet to the Straits and pointed out to the Russians that entry into Constantinople would constitute a cause for war.⁵⁴ Halting at San Stefano, a few miles from Constantinople, the Russians were now able to dictate a treaty to the Turks which left the Ottoman Empire in Europe only Constantinople and a small area around the Straits. The treaty enlarged the territories of Rumania, Serbia, and Montenegro at the expense of Turkey, and created a large, independent, and grateful Bulgarian state, apparently increasing Russian influence in the Balkans.⁵⁵

From the beginning London had disapproved of Russia's entry into the war and now argued that Russia was violating the terms of the Treaty of Paris. Salisbury argued that Russia had in fact disregarded the interests of the non-Slav population of the Ottoman Empire and aimed at establishing herself as the dominant power in the Balkans and the Near East.⁵⁶ Finally, at the insistence of

⁵³Seton Watson, Eastern Question, pp. 168-70.

⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 315-16; Florinsky, Russia, 2:1009.

⁵⁵Sumner, Russia and the Balkans, pp. 399-424, 627-36, gives the best discussion of the San Stefano treaty.

⁵⁶Seton Watson, Eastern Question, pp. 345-8.

Austria and Great Britain, Russia was forced to submit the controversial Treaty of San Stefano to a general conference of European powers which met in June 1878 in Berlin.

The negotiations of the Congress of Berlin are well known.⁵⁷ England and Austria worked to cut down the Russian gains and to keep Russia away from Constantinople, and to revive the weakened Ottoman Turkish Empire. The Russians, represented by one of the most able diplomats in their service, Count Peter Shuvalov, Russian Ambassador to London, and by the aging Gorchakov, struggled to retain as many gains as possible while Bismarck acted as "honest broker." Possibly only the tact and diligence of Shuvalov, who worked well with Bismarck and who was popular with the British, kept the Berlin settlement from becoming a disaster for Russia. Embarrassed by the blatant Panslav sentiment of the San Stefano treaty, Shuvalov was glad to cooperate for a more equitable and palatable agreement.⁵⁸

The destiny of the Slav peoples was set aside at Berlin as the great powers fenced for positions. Russian hopes for increased influence in the Balkans faded as Bulgaria was reduced by about one-third, Serbia and Montenegro were deprived of territory, and Austria was given the right to occupy and administer the territories of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

⁵⁷Sumner, Russia and the Balkans, pp. 425-553, is the most adequate coverage and analysis of the Berlin settlement.

⁵⁸A.J.P. Taylor, The Struggle for Mastery in Europe, 1858-1918 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), p. 249; Langer, European Alliances, pp. 123, 148.

Britain obtained the island of Cyprus in return for the promise to protect the Ottoman Empire against further Russian attack. Russia was embittered at having fought an expensive and bloody war only to be outmaneuvered at the conference table.⁵⁹ As a matter of fact, the treaty was not a complete defeat for Russian desires, but compared to the San Stefano settlement, it was to many Russians a humiliation. In St. Petersburg it was soundly denounced, and the British were seen as the principal antagonists. Panslav groups were especially bitter, and the immediate effect was to encourage Russian cooperation with the Eastern monarchies, and reinforce the suspicion and hatred of Britain.⁶⁰

In the decade after the Congress of Berlin, Russia worked to avoid isolation, to gain security in Europe, and to repair her influence in Bulgaria.⁶¹ She was confronted with a series of disturbing domestic issues, and, at the same time, her policies were more and more influenced by an overt Panslavism, especially noticeable in the press and among certain members of the diplomatic service

⁵⁹Seton-Watson, Eastern Question, pp. 460-4; Sumner, Russia, and the Balkans, pp. 550-53.

⁶⁰Boris Nolde, L'alliance Franco-russe; Les origines du système diplomatique d'avant-guerre (Paris: Droz, 1936), pp. 208-9; Charles Jelavich, Tsarist Russia and Balkan Nationalism: Russian Influence in the Internal Affairs of Bulgaria and Serbia, 1879-1886 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1962), p. 15.

⁶¹Jelavich, Tsarist Russia and Balkan Nationalism, p. 1.

in the Balkans.⁶² Even Bismarck's finesse in juggling the diplomatic relations of his allies could not long relieve the hostility between Austria and Russia, although for a time he was able to use Russia's resentment of British policy to keep Russia in the German camp.

At the same time, Bismarck laid the cornerstone of his alliance system in the establishment of the Austro-German Dual Alliance of 1879. The actual provisions of the treaty were, of course, kept secret, but Russia suspected correctly that they were directed against her. Most authorities agree that the Dual Alliance pushed Russia closer to a friendship with France, and ultimately with England, but these considerations were not apparent until the fall of Bismarck.⁶³ In the meantime, Russia, not yet convinced of the need of French friendship and suspicious and hostile to England, was still receptive to the traditional bonds with Germany.

In 1882, the adherence of Italy to the Dual Alliance completed the third side of the Triple Alliance.⁶⁴ Originally and essentially a defensive treaty aimed at preserving the peace of

⁶²Baron S. A. Korff, Russia's Foreign Relations during the Last Half Century (Williamston, Mass.: Institute of Politics Publication, Williams College; New York: Macmillan Co., 1922), pp. 5-7.

⁶³Sidney B. Fay, Origins of the World War, 2 vols., 2nd ed. rev. (New York: Free Press, 1965), 1:70-1; Langer, European Alliances, pp. 217-247.

⁶⁴Pribram, Secret Treaties, 1:24-6.

Europe, ultimately the Triple Alliance became a weapon in the hands of Austria. It certainly contributed to the suspicions of other powers, and encouraged both Russia's and France's feelings of isolation. Bismarck also managed to prolong the Dreikaiserbund until 1887, when the distrust of Austria and Russia became too much and Alexander III refused to renew the alliance. Never one to let an ally slip away, Bismarck managed to conclude the short-lived Reinsurance Treaty with Russia, which lasted from 1887 to 1890 and which recognized Russia's rights in the Balkans, even to the possible acquisition of the Straits, and agreed not to permit the modification of the status quo in the Balkans without previous agreement between the two nations.⁶⁵ But if Bismarck thought the Reinsurance Treaty would prevent the rapprochement between Russia and France he was wrong. The most it could do was delay it for a few years.

In April 1880 Gladstone came to power in England and Anglo-Russian tensions eased somewhat. The Russian advance in Central Asia was troublesome, as usual, but the new administration preferred a policy of cooperation rather than confrontation. The Foreign Office under Lord Granville sought to solve the Asian problem and avoid further trouble by appointing a boundary commission. The commission, appointed in 1884, made little progress. Russian exploration

⁶⁵ Ibid., 1:305; Baron M. de Taube, La Politique russe d'avant guerre et la fin de l'empire des tsars, 1904-1917 (Paris: Bibliothèque du Monde Slav, 1928), pp. 74-84.

⁶⁶ Kazemzadeh, "Russia in Central Asia," p. 506: Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy 2:188.

and discoveries in the area really encouraged her representatives to revise their ideas of a frontier settlement and to push further into Afghan territory, to the consternation of the British. In February of 1885 Russian forces occupied the area near Penjdeh and evoked strong British protests, even an appeal from Queen Victoria to the Tsar. Action was stalled temporarily, but in March Russian troops defeated an Afghan force near Ak-Teppe. The battle took place in violation of instructions from St. Petersburg, a common occurrence in Russia's Central Asian expansion, but it convinced the British of Russia's bad faith. Even Gladstone, normally conciliatory toward Russia, asked Parliament for funds to meet a possible military situation. Gladstone's firm stand won the day, and hostilities were averted. Russia kept the Penjdeh district, but her forward movement was halted. The British regained the important Zulfikar Pass for Afghanistan, and the boundary negotiations were resumed.⁶⁸

Both Russia and England continued to compete for concessions and trade in Persia and Afghanistan. Tension between the two Great Powers continued to build, aided by the steady deterioration of the Persian state, which provided ample opportunities for intervention from both sides. Until the Russo-Japanese War in 1904, Russian

⁶⁸Florinsky, Russia, 2:1128; Taylor, Struggle for Mastery, pp. 198, 203.

agents were more successful than British--a fact acknowledged by the British Minister in Tehran, Sir Cecil Spring-Rice.⁶⁹ After 1905, however, a reassessment of Russia's colonial policy led her to abandon her traditional policy and seek to come to an agreement with Britain.⁷⁰

Russia and England were also on opposite sides of the diplomatic fence in the Balkan crisis concerning Bulgaria in 1885. Since the Congress of Berlin Russia had worked for the unification of Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia, and generally sought to strengthen her position in the Balkans with Bulgarian support. When Bulgaria declared the unification and her independence of the Ottoman Empire in September 1885, however, Russia, by her own inept intrigues in Bulgarian politics, had lost most of her influence and control in Bulgaria.⁷¹ When the powers met to define their stand on the new situation, Russia therefore protested the union of the two areas, while the British approved. The resulting confusion was not settled until 1887, when a monarch acceptable to all the powers except

⁶⁹Sir Cecil Spring-Rice to Ferguson, Teheran, 28 May 1900, Stephen Gwynn, ed., Letters and Friendships of Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, 2 vols. (London: Constable & Co., 1929), 1:319-20.

⁷⁰"Anglo-Russkoe sopernichestvo v Persii v 1890-1906 gg," Krasnyi Arkhiv 56(1933):60-1

⁷¹Langer, European Alliances, pp. 323-61; Jelavich, Tsarist Russia, pp. 205-36, details the Russo-Bulgarian problem on the eve of unification.

Russia was named, and, in effect, Russian policy in Bulgaria was defeated. Russia's foreign minister, N. K. Giers, blamed England for the failure of Russia's Balkan policy, and Russia turned her enmity as well to the partners of the Dreikaiserbund. The situation had much to do with the non-renewal of the treaty in 1887 and with Russia's willingness to accept French overtures of friendship. Russia was mistaken, however, in placing blame for her failure on England. Although the British were sympathetic with the Bulgarian nationalist movement, and eager to see a suitable monarch on the Bulgarian throne, they did no more than offer moral support. Russia's failure must be found in her inability to follow a single line of action in the Balkans. Her fluctuations, her ineffective representatives, her lack of control of both policy and persons--all compared poorly to the able and effective men who represented Britain in the Balkans and at Constantinople.⁷²

The dismissal of Bismarck changed the European picture and introduced a diplomatic revolution among the nations of Europe. Even before his fall the traditional ties between Germany and Russia had begun to weaken. Austria and her rivalry with Russia served as a wedge in the relationship, and other problems began to intervene as well. The press of both nations frequently waged bitter campaigns against each other, and in 1887, when Russia passed

⁷²Jelavich, Tsarist Russia, pp. 279-80.

a ukase forbidding the acquisition or inheritance of landed property in Western Russia by foreigners, the German press began the usual barrage. Many Germans already owned large estates in this area. In November the German government retaliated by issuing a decree forbidding the Reichsbank to accept Russian securities as collateral for loans.⁷³ Always in need of money, Russia felt this blow sharply.

In addition, the growth of German commercial and colonial ventures, especially in the Near East was as alarming to Russia as it was to England. In Germany, the new kaiser, William II, surrounded himself with counsellors less able than Bismarck and less favorable to Russian friendship. Shortly Germany decided to drop the Reinsurance Treaty, despite repeated overtures from the Russian Foreign Office to renew it.⁷⁴ Besides these important developments, France was still smarting from the loss of territory and prestige in the Franco-Prussian War and was actively seeking allies, not only

⁷³Fay, Origins of the World War, 1:106; Langer, European Alliances, p. 491.

⁷⁴Fay, Origins of the World War, I, pp. 93-5, states that "historians have exaggerated the non-renewal of the Reinsurance Treaty as a factor in the formation of the Franco-Russian Alliance," and claims this was due to Bismarck's propaganda after his dismissal. William Langer, Diplomacy of Imperialism, 1890-1902, 2nd ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), pp. 3-5, does not agree with Fay but follows the traditional interpretation.

to balance her position against Germany, but to buttress her colonial rivalry with England. Thus, by 1890, the steps toward the ultimate formation of the Triple Entente were in process.

In 1891 France and Russia concluded an entente which was the result, in part, of their mutual antagonism toward Germany and toward England as well. Isolation and resentment drove the two seemingly incompatible governments together to form the first link in the Triple Entente. Several factors besides their diplomatic positions encouraged the alliance. Russia was suffering from one of the worst famines in her history in 1891-2. At the same time, she needed funds for her rapidly expanding industrial program and for her efforts to build up her armed forces to capacity.⁷⁵ Opportunely, also at this time, France was seeking a field for investment, and one of the first steps toward friendship came with a series of loans floated in France. The first

⁷⁵Herbert Feis, Europe the World's Banker, 1870-1914 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930), pp. 210-16; Georges Michon, The Franco-Russian Alliance, 1891-1917, trans. Norman Thomas (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1929), pp. 63-4; William Langer, The Franco-Russian Alliance, 1890-1894 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1929) is the most exhaustive study in English of the alliance, while Nolde, L'alliance Franco-russe, is a superior study in French. Michon's study, The Franco Russian Alliance, is the only one which follows the alliance throughout the war. E. DeCyon, Histoire de l'Entente Franco-russe (Paris: Droz, 1895), is a narrative account by a Russian agent but it is incorrect in many instances and of little use; L. B. Packard, "Russia and the Dual Alliance," American Historical Review. 24(April 1920):391-410, is a short assessment of the alliance, in which Packard concludes the alliance was established even more by the desire of Russia than of France.

loan, a great success, led to larger loans and gave French investors a serious interest in the diplomatic and political as well as the financial fortunes of Russia. Loans were followed by the sale of military arms and equipment.⁷⁶

Despite the reasons for the Franco-Russian friendship, there were fundamental differences which held up the conclusion of the alliance. While the major opponent of France was Germany, Russia had more to fear from England, who blocked her ambitions at the Straits and in the Near East. France's interest in Russia's colonial expansion was certainly slight and Russia did not wish to break all ties with Germany for France's sake.⁷⁷ Ultimately, the problems were ironed out, or at least smoothed over. The initial entente was extended and supplemented by a military convention in 1892. After further negotiations, lasting another year, the alliance became complete on 4 January 1894.⁷⁸ William Langer, whose study of the alliance remains the standard work in English, says all the advantages of the alliance were on the Russian side. By it, he states, Russia gained not only the financial support of the French money market, but also a free hand in activities outside Europe. In the end, Langer feels, both France

⁷⁶Feis, Europe the World's Banker, pp. 214-15.

⁷⁷Langer, Diplomacy of Imperialism, pp. 31-60.

⁷⁸Langer, Franco-Russian Alliance, pp. 354-55.

and England were dragged into a conflict in which they had no interest as a result of the alliance and its subsequent history.⁷⁹

At the time, however, it appeared that both members of the Franco-Russian Alliance benefited from their cooperation. Although there were no provisions against the English, the alliance made it possible for the French and the Russians to stand up to England, and, in the long run, it made British isolation impossible. Britain could not maintain friendly relations with one power without conciliating the other.⁸⁰

Negotiations for the Franco-Russian Alliance complete, Russia turned her attention to the Far East and virtually left the European diplomatic scene for more than a decade. Russia's attention in the Far East was motivated by political and military considerations as well as the desire for markets for her new industrial products and the need for an ice-free port to aid the development of Siberia.⁸¹ As early as 1885, when the British seized the island groups of Kyomon off the Korean coast, Russia made protests and threats of retaliation, and relations became stormy and complicated.⁸²

⁷⁹Ibid., pp. 399-400, p. 415.

⁸⁰Ibid., pp. 356-58, 414-15; Langer, Diplomacy of Imperialism, pp. 48-9, 788-89.

⁸¹Jelavich, Century of Russian Foreign Policy, p. 235.

⁸²Florinsky, Russia, 2:1263.

Russia's actions in the Far East are perhaps the most deplorable example of her entire foreign policy. Claiming to preserve the "true governmental structure of China,"⁸³ she embarked on a course of interference and duplicity that drew the antagonism not only of the helpless Chinese Empire, but of Japan and Britain as well. Through a concession to build the Chinese Eastern Railway, Russia gained access to Manchuria and used the railway as an excuse "for illegal control of and interference with the affairs of Manchuria, and thus with the internal affairs of China."⁸⁴ Although the Japanese initially considered an agreement with the Russians to counter their expansion,⁸⁵ Russian intransigence eventually made Japan turn to the British, who had been making overtures of friendship. Lord Lansdowne, convinced that the overextended British Empire was too vulnerable to Russian advances in the East as well as Central Asia, encouraged the formation of an Anglo-Japanese alliance in 1902.⁸⁶ The alliance was a major diplomatic event for both Japan and Britain, for it signalled Japan's entrance into big power-politics, and

⁸³Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 1267.

⁸⁴Peter S. H. Tang, Russia and Soviet Policy in Manchuria and Outer Mongolia, 1911-1931 (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1959), p. 266.

⁸⁵Ian H. Nish, The Anglo-Japanese Alliance: The Diplomacy of Two Island Empires, 1894-1907 (London: Athlone Press, 1966), p. 144; Zara Steiner, "Great Britain and the Creation of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance," Journal of Modern History 31(March 1959):32.

⁸⁶Nish, Anglo-Japanese Alliance, pp. 256-57.

Britain's first abandonment of her policy of isolation. In addition, the pact should have been a warning to the Russians, for it was a defensive alliance directed toward Russian aggression.⁸⁷

Instead, Russia's policy in the Far East irresponsibly led her to war in 1904 with Japan, in spite of the fact that several approaches had been made to Russia in 1902 and 1903 to encourage her to make a satisfactory arrangement with the Japanese over their mutual goals.⁸⁸ The Russo-Japanese war proved to be a disaster for Russia. Ill-prepared to fight a war half a world away, the Russian forces were beset with inefficiency, confusion, and corruption. In less than a year she lost the war, and ultimately Russian efforts to wrest control of the Far East from Japan failed.

Although Britain gave Japan only diplomatic aid in the war, the very fact of her neutrality helped the Japanese. In addition, an incident occurred which very nearly caused hostilities between the British and the Russians. In September 1904 the Russian Baltic Fleet, commanded by Admiral Rozhdestvensky, sailed for Japanese waters. Crossing the Dogger bank in the North Sea on the foggy night of 21 October, the Russian ships opened fire on two of their own squadron, mistaking them for Japanese torpedo boats. Several English fishing boats from Hull

⁸⁷Jelavich, Century of Russian Foreign Policy, p. 242.

⁸⁸Nish, Anglo-Japanese Alliance, p. 257; George Monger, The End of Isolation; British Foreign Policy, 1900-1907 (London & New York: T. Nelson, 1963), pp. 71-2.

were involved in the confusion--one was sunk, two Englishmen were killed and eighteen wounded. An immediate and indignant British populace demanded redress, and only the willingness of St. Petersburg and London to negotiate prevented a major crisis.⁸⁹

The Russo-Japanese War helped precipitate revolution in Russia, and in the following decade her interest in the Far East lessened and she turned her attention to European affairs once more. A rapprochement with Japan resulted in a Russo-Japanese Convention in 1907, which was encouraged by the British and which relieved the tense situation between the three countries.⁹⁰

The next step in the diplomatic revolution of Europe took place while Russia and Japan were battling in the Pacific, and ultimately it influenced the development of Anglo-Russian friendship. In 1904 Russia's ally, France, and her rival, Britain, concluded an Entente Cordiale, the second link in the Triple Entente. England's traditional policy had, of course, been one of "splendid isolation," enjoying her power on the seas and her ability to sway the European Balance of Power whenever it seemed necessary. Although approached several times by Bismarck about an Anglo-German Alliance, few British statesmen seriously

⁸⁹Taube, *La Politique russe d'avant guerre*, pp. 30-35; Florinsky, *Russia*, 2:1275-76.

⁹⁰This agreement was augmented in 1910 and 1912 by further conventions between Russia and Japan; Florinsky, *Russia*, 2:1282.

considered the possibility before 1900. Until 1904 such agreements as England had with European countries did not, in her view, constitute any real commitment.⁹¹

By the end of the nineteenth century isolation had lost some of its appeal. The coalitions on the continent presented a disturbing possibility of power combinations too great for England to meet alone and a series of unpleasant colonial incidents began to make British leaders consider the advantages of continental friendships.⁹² Edward Grey, entering the Foreign Office in 1892, was already aware of the "atmosphere of ill will" caused by the conflict of British interests with France and Russia in many parts of the world.⁹³ Many leaders felt that English commitments stretched too far, and that her resources were not capable of sustaining the Empire alone. European reaction to the Boer War all too clearly pointed out to the British their lack of friends in the European community. In addition, by the end of the century, German naval growth was an important ingredient in England's international outlook.

⁹¹Langer, European Alliance, p. 400.

⁹²William Langer's Diplomacy of Imperialism gives an excellent survey of Britain's African, Far Eastern, and Near Eastern commitments and problems to the conclusion of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and the abandonment of isolation. Monger's End of Isolation is a more interpretive and general account.

⁹³Edward Grey, Viscount Grey of Fallodon, Twenty-Five Years, 1892-1916, 2 vols. (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1925), 2:11.

In January 1898, pressed by dangerous French rivalry along the Nile, and the increasingly volatile situation with the Boers in South Africa, the British proposed an entente with Russia which they hoped would eliminate some of the sources of Anglo-Russian trouble. Approaching the Russians in secret, the British Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury suggested a "partition of preponderance," or political influence in both China and Turkey where Anglo-Russian interests clashed.⁹⁴

The Tsar, rightly suspecting British motives were to check Russian development in the Far East, turned down the proposal.⁹⁵ The British then turned to the possibility of rapprochement with Germany. The British Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, apparently acting as a private agent, made overtures to Germany.⁹⁶ Instead of playing fair with Britain, the mercurial German Kaiser tried to use Chamberlain's tentative feeler as a tool to persuade Nicholas II to listen to his

⁹⁴Lord Salisbury to Sir Nicolas O'Connor, 25 January 1898, British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898-1914, eds. G. P. Gooch and R. V. Temperly, 11 vols. (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1929 et seq.), 1:8, (Hereafter cited as BD); O'Connor to Count Muraviev, St. Petersburg, 12 February 1898, BD, 1:12.

⁹⁵Nicholas II to William II, 3 June 1898, Die Grosse Politik der Europäischen Kabinette, 1871-1914, eds. J. Lepsius, A Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, F. Thimme, 39 vols. (Berlin: 1922-27), 11:67, (Hereafter cited as GP).

⁹⁶The British Foreign Office archives contain no documents concerning Chamberlain's proposals; BD, 1:101, ed. note.

grandiose ideas of a Continental League. The Chamberlain proposal and those he made later brought no alliance, but they did increase Russia's suspicions of England. Other efforts of England and Germany to arrive at a satisfactory solution to their growing problems also proved fruitless. Then, the outbreak of the Boer War unleashed a fury of anti-British sentiment in Germany. French and Russian opinion was strongly in sympathy with the Boers as well, and the intense outburst of public opinion intensified England's feeling of isolation.⁹⁷

The failure of efforts to produce an Anglo-German understanding undoubtedly contributed to the formation of the Triple Entente. Much misunderstanding existed on both sides, and the Germans frequently suspected English motives; on the other hand, there was no solid Parliamentary or even Cabinet support for an Anglo-German alliance. Germany gambled that England would not make an alliance with France, and certainly not with Russia. The Kaiser, encouraged by advisors such as the new Chancellor von Bülow and the Foreign Office counselor von Holstein, convinced himself that Germany could control the Balance of Power, that Britain needed Germany, and that ultimately she would

⁹⁷Oron J. Hale, The Great Illusion, 1900-1914 (New York, Evanston & London: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 234.

be forced to defer to German wishes in colonial as well as other matters.⁹⁸ William's under-estimation of Britain's desire for allies and British fear of Germany's growing naval and commercial power proved to be dangerous mistakes.

When Théophile Delcassé became Foreign Minister of France in 1898 he declared that a primary goal of his policy was a rapprochement with England.⁹⁹ He did not waver from this resolve, although his own career went through frequent diplomatic storms. Delcassé's work to achieve British and French friendship was not easy. Colonial clashes had left a heritage of bitterness between the two countries and public opinion mirrored the conflict.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, working through commercial and diplomatic channels, French efforts began to produce encouraging results. The accession of Edward VII to the British throne in 1901 eased relations between the two countries because Edward enthusiastically admired the French and was anxious to see a detente. In 1900

⁹⁸Chancellor von Bülow to the Kaiser, 21 January 1901, GP, 17:20-1; Fay, Origins of the World War, 1:139-40; Hale, Great Illusion, p. 227.

⁹⁹Christopher Andrew, Théophile Delcassé and the Making of the Entente Cordiale: A Reappraisal of French Foreign Policy, 1898-1905 (London: St. Martin's Press, 1968), p. 23.

¹⁰⁰E. M. Carroll, French Public Opinion and Foreign Policy, 1879-1914 (New York: Century Co., 1931), pp. 162-176.

the British Foreign Office went to Lord Lansdowne, another Franco-ophile who would become best known as the architect of the Entente Cordiale.¹⁰¹

In July 1903 the President of France made a state visit to England and Delcassé, who accompanied him, was able to begin the conversations with Lansdowne which resulted the next year in the Entente Cordiale. The Entente was actually no more than a series of conventions settling long-standing colonial disputes between France and England, the most important concerning Egypt and Morocco. The removal of restrictions on British activity in Egypt was a significant victory for the British. For this privilege the British allowed the French a free hand in Morocco.¹⁰²

The Entente Cordiale was, in fact, not an alliance, and there were no provisions for assistance in case of war. There was, however, the distinct possibility that the Moroccan provision might involve France in a conflict with Germany. For France, then, the Entente was an assurance of British aid in such a conflict. And for both partners,

¹⁰¹Sir Sidney Lee, King Edward VII; a Biography, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan Co., 1925-27), 2:221-23; Andrew, Delcassé, p. 211, Monger, End of Isolation, p. 135.

¹⁰²"Anglo-French Convention of April 8, 1904, concerning Egypt and Morocco." BD, 2:374-407; The secret articles actually contemplated a partition of Morocco between France and Spain, but this was played down by both British and French leaders; Grey, Twenty-Five Years, 1:49; Raymond Poincaré, Au Service de la France, Neuf années de souvenirs, 10 vols. (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et cie, 1926-330), 1:107.

it was an attempt to localize the rapidly developing conflict between Russia and Japan in the East. Neither Britain nor France desired to be pulled into a war between their two partners, and the Entente provided a convenient tool to use in this instance. Indeed, the value of the Entente became apparent when Delcassé used all his powers of persuasion to keep England and Russia from each other's throats in the unfortunate Dogger Bank incident.¹⁰³

The Germans also tested the Anglo-French Entente almost immediately. In March 1905 the German Kaiser, on a Mediterranean cruise, landed at Tangiers and loudly and publicly declared German's support for Moroccan independence and integrity. Of course, William II had no more concern for Moroccan independence than France or England did, but he was giving France and England notice that he would not be left out of any agreement regarding Morocco, and, in effect, trying to sabotage the Anglo-French friendship if possible. In the process, he could demonstrate to Russia that cooperation with Germany would benefit her far more than her alliance with France. At the Conference at Algeciras which was called in 1906 to settle Germany's claims, William found himself outvoted on every issue, however. France and England stood firmly together, while Russia, busy with her own domestic revolution, quietly lived up to her commitments with France. The Algeciras conference

¹⁰³Joachim Remak, The Origins of World War I, 1871-1914 (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1967), pp. 39-40.

which William II had intended to test the Entente Cordiale, did just that. The results showed, to William's disappointment, that the Entente was a far more reliable instrument than he had imagined.¹⁰⁴

In 1906 the British and the French reinforced the bonds of their friendship by initiating informal military conversations, which continued until the outbreak of World War I. Although no formal agreements were made in the course of these conversations, and although the British Cabinet did not even learn of them until 1912, they increased the reliance of France and Britain on each other and forged another link in the Triple Entente.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴Raymond J. Sontag, European Diplomatic History, 1871-1932 (New York & London: Century Co., 1933), pp. 99-111; Taylor, Struggle for Mastery, pp. 427-31. For a detailed account of the complicated crisis and the conference, see Eugene W. Anderson, The First Moroccan Crisis, 1904-06 (1936; reprint ed., Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1966).

¹⁰⁵The Anglo-French military conversations have been the subject of much comment and criticism by historians and politicians. Grey felt there was no question of policy involved, and therefore no necessity of informing the Cabinet. Later he tried to pass this decision off as an oversight, but in fact, the decision was made by Grey, Campbell-Bannerman, the new Prime Minister, and Richard Burdon Haldane, Grey's intimate. Lord Ripon, as Leader of the House of Lords was consulted. If blame should be placed, certainly Campbell-Bannerman had as much responsibility as Grey to report the conversations to the whole Cabinet. The reason they did not do so was that they were quite sure they would be opposed by many Cabinet members. Grey, Twenty-Five Years, 1:76; Richard Burdon Haldane, An Autobiography (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1929), p. 204; Grey to Campbell-Bannerman, 10 January 1906, Papers of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, British Museum Add. MS 41218, British Museum, London, England. For an exceptionally critical view of Grey's actions, see Monger, End of Isolation, p. 255. For a defense, see Keith Robbins, Sir Edward Grey: A Biography of Lord Grey of Fallodon (London: Cassel & Co., 1971), pp. 147-48.

In addition to the complicated problems of war and international diplomacy, Russia and Britain, in 1905-06, each faced internal changes and crises which had an influence on their relationship with each other. The debacle of the Russo-Japanese War and the revolution it fostered left Russia in need of time and money to rebuild her badly damaged army and even more seriously crippled government. The financial problem was solved once more by France, who, with British aid, came forth in 1906 to shore up the shaky resources of the Tsarist state.¹⁰⁶ In addition, the revolution had forced the Tsar to accept the establishment of a constitutional government with a representative body, the State Duma, and a greatly widened franchise. In actuality, the situation changed very little in the next few years, but in 1906 Russian liberals had great hopes for the system.¹⁰⁷

The new and energetic Russian Foreign Minister, Alexander Izvolski, who took office in 1906, faced a unique situation in Russia. Considered far more liberal than his predecessor, Izvolski was eager for friendship with France and Britain. He was determined to settle Russia's problems in the Near East, and he was anxious to re-establish her reputation at the diplomatic tables of Europe. Even though

¹⁰⁶ Olga Crisp, "The Russian Liberals and the 1906 Anglo-French Loan to Russia," Slavonic and East European Review 39(June 1961): 497-51; "Zayom 1906 g. v doneseniyakh russkogo posla," Krasnyi Arkhiv 11-12(1925): 421-32.

¹⁰⁷ Florinsky, Russia, 2:1184-88.

he did not rule out cooperation with Germany, Izvol'ski saw the path to Russian strength in cooperation with Britain and France.¹⁰⁸

Britain also had a new government in 1906. In December of 1905, after ten years in office, the Conservative government, floundering over tariff issues, resigned, and a new government was formed by the Liberal Party under the leadership of Henry Campbell-Bannerman. The elections of 1906 returned the badly split Liberals to office by an unprecedented majority. Campbell-Bannerman, faced with dissident elements in his own party, created a cabinet of extraordinarily capable and experienced men, but almost all of them, including Campbell-Bannerman, were ignorant of foreign policy. His choice for Foreign Secretary, Edward Grey, also faced sweeping administrative changes which were taking place in the Foreign Office in 1906.¹⁰⁹

In 1907, therefore, on the eve of the Anglo-Russian Convention, both England and Russia had new men in charge of foreign policy and faced significant changes in their government. They also had similar goals and fears. Russia desired to remove any possible friction

¹⁰⁸George P. Gooch, Before the War: Studies in Diplomacy, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1936), 1:292; Alexander Iswolsky The Memoirs of Alexander Iswolsky, ed. and trans. Charles L. Seeger (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1921), pp. 12-13.

¹⁰⁹C. J. Lowe and M. L. Dockrill, British Foreign Policy, 1902-1914, vol. 1, The Mirage of Power (London & Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), p. 16.

in the Far East, and England was willing to help her negotiate with Japan. Both nations were increasingly apprehensive of Germany, whose growing commercial and naval strength threatened British and Russian interests. Both were friends of France, who encouraged their rapprochement in every way possible. Both nations looked forward to easing tension in areas where their own colonial ambitions clashed. After a century of rivalry and friction, circumstances pointed toward an Anglo-Russian detente.

CHAPTER II

THE FOREIGN OFFICES AT WORK

The foreign ministries and the diplomatic services of Great Britain and Russia in the years between 1907 and 1914 shared the basic administrative forms, practices and languages of the major European nations, yet the two countries had distinctive problems and differences which often made their diplomatic relationship difficult. While the British system, sometimes lagging behind, had generally followed the democratic and liberal tendencies of the country, the Russian system was less responsive to the demands of the Russian people and more dependent on the desires of the sovereign. A series of reforms begun in 1906 had made the British Foreign Office more efficient and at the same time more effective in the formulation of policy. The British Diplomatic Service was indirectly affected by these reforms as well. The Russians, however, had made few changes in their over-staffed, inefficient service since the 1860's, and even these few changes did not serve to create a more responsive or modern bureau. More often than not, when compared to the British, the Russian Foreign Office exhibited a state of backwardness and disorganization that appalled

both foreign and Russian diplomats.¹ The British Foreign Office and British diplomats abroad at least showed a more integrated policy and considerably more evidence of coordination and cooperation between the home office and its representatives in foreign countries. Besides this, an examination of the individuals carrying out the policies of the two countries reveals a greater level of ability and dedication among the British than among many of their Russian counterparts. Men of intelligence and sincerity did appear in both services, but the Russian service did not always attract as qualified or responsible personnel as the British did.

Historically, Russian foreign policy was concerned not only with developing and maintaining the traditional role of a great power within the European state system, but it was also involved in problems of a nature peculiar to its own history and

¹There is no adequate study of the development or the function of the Russian Foreign Ministry or the foreign minister. The official centennial history of the Foreign Ministry, Ocherk istorii ministerstva inostrannykh del, 1802-1902 (St. Petersburg, 1902), provides a general descriptive summary and includes background chapters on the period before 1802, but was written before the period dealt with in this dissertation. The general structure of the foreign office remained the same, however, and much valuable information concerning the office can be found in studies of diplomatic history of Russia during the nineteenth century; see, e. g., Patricia Grimsted, The Foreign Ministers of Alexander I: Political Attitudes and the Conduct of Russian Diplomacy, 1801-1825 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), and B. H. Sumner, Russia and the Balkans. The memoirs and letters of various ministers and diplomats are also valuable for information regarding the Russian service. Russian Foreign Policy, ed. Ivo J. Lederer, deals chiefly with post-1861 developments, and in general the essays are interpretive rather than definitive.

physical geography. The quest for security within the European community, involving customary diplomatic intercourse and participation in alliance systems and international agreements, was considered to be Russian because of ethnic, religious, national, or dynastic ties.² The actual implementation of policy by the Russian state was never consistently and effectively directed toward the realization of these goals. The autocracy of the tsars, the problems of a poorly developed central bureaucracy, and the personalities and often limited abilities of the ministers and diplomats frequently led to the frustration of the diplomatic aims of the empire.

The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs was formally established in 1802 by the reforms of Alexander I, although in many ways the 1802 reforms brought only a titular change. The organization, and frequently the nomenclature, of the organ charged with the administration of foreign affairs and diplomacy for many years after 1802 differed little from the old College of Foreign Affairs established by Peter the Great. The changes that came about in the nineteenth century under Nicholas I and later in the 1860's during the reign of Alexander II brought the foreign service more in line with the practices of other European nations, but did not ever create a modern organization. The paramount problem in the Russian Foreign Ministry throughout its entire existence was inefficiency and lack of coordination. The problem was especially

²Cyril E. Black, "The Pattern of Russian Objectives," in Russian Foreign Policy, p. 26.

exemplified during the many crises in the Balkans when instructions from St. Petersburg frequently went unheeded by over-zealous diplomats.³

The ministry was divided into several departments, usually about a dozen, the most important of which were the Chancellery and the Asiatic Department.⁴ A rivalry developed between these two main departments early in the nineteenth century and increased with the growing importance of the Asiatic Department throughout the period. The Chancellery was the department which maintained the closest relationship with the tsar, and since the foreign policy of Russia was always to a special degree the tsar's policy, this meant that the Chancellery maintained its preeminent position. It provided the best way for an aspiring diplomat to gain influence and advancement in the diplomatic service, and it was from this section that the tsar chose his closest advisors.⁵ The department frequently drew on the services of foreigners as diplomats and even as foreign ministers. While this tradition furnished men who spoke perfect French, were well versed in the diplomatic and social behavior of the Western European

³For a detailed discussion of this problem see Chapter VI.

⁴Ocherk istorii ministerstva inostrannykh del, pp. 18-19; Grimsted, Foreign Ministers of Alexander I, p. 25. Other departments handled such matters as protocol, financial affairs, relations with other parts of the government, and records.

⁵Dmitrii I. Abrikossow, Revelations of a Russian Diplomat: The Memoirs of Dmitrii I. Abrikossow, ed. George A. Lensen (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1964) p. 85; Sumner, Russia and the Balkans, pp. 19-23.

world, and may have increased the competence of Russian diplomacy and its ties to the European community, it did little to make the policy of the foreign service responsive to the needs of the Russian state. In fact, the situation encouraged the breach between Russian diplomacy and Russian internal problems.⁶

The department of Asiatic Affairs was first established by a ukase of the Emperor Paul in 1797 as an agency for administering newly acquired lands in the East. It continued to exist as a separate department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs after the reforms of 1802. Its sphere included European Turkey as well as Asia proper, and between 1907 and 1914 its major concern was with Balkan affairs. The department was staffed with pure Russians in contrast with the European and foreign membership of the Chancellery, and most of its officials were experts in Eastern languages and problems.⁷ The Asiatic Department supplied most of the consuls and diplomats of the Near East, and while it was possible for a diplomat to move from the Chancellery to the

⁶Grimsted, Foreign Ministers of Alexander I, pp. 28-9, points out that several of the ministers of the nineteenth century encouraged programs that were not in the interests of Russia because of their patriotic attachments to other areas. From the reign of Alexander I to the turn of the century the most talented and prominent of Russia's foreign ministers, including Capodistrias, Nesselrode, and Giers, were non-Russians.

⁷Robert M. Slusser, "The Role of the Foreign Ministry," in Russian Foreign Policy, pp. 202-3; Ocherk istorii, pp. 89-90; Sumner, Russia and the Balkans, pp. 23-5.

Asiatic Department or the other way around during his career, it was unusual.⁸ The department manifested a particularly independent spirit of Panslavism, and while the Foreign Ministry as a whole sometimes dominated in matters of policy, the Asiatic Department frequently pursued its own way. In addition, the expert knowledge of Near and Middle Eastern affairs originated within the Asiatic Department and contributed to its sense of independence.⁹

Compared to the foreign offices of other European powers, the Russian ministry contained an overabundance of officials. The exact number of persons actually serving in an official capacity is difficult to determine, as the registers always listed persons who rarely served as well as some who were not actually employed. One Russian ambassador lamented that the Russian ministry contained more people than the foreign ministries of all the other European states combined.¹⁰ Part of the problem stemmed from the

⁸Nicholas Giers is an example of a diplomat who served in both departments. He began his career in the Asiatic Department, although his outlook and policies always remained Western. He was appointed head of the Asiatic Department in 1875, probably as part of an effort to integrate the department more closely with the rest of the ministry. After becoming Foreign Minister, Giers continued to serve for several years as head of the Asiatic Department. Diplomaticheskii slovar (Moscow: Akademiia Nauk USSR, 1960); 1:391; Slusser, "Role of the Foreign Ministry," p. 205.

⁹Sumner, Russia and the Balkans, pp. 23-25; Slusser, "Role of the Foreign Ministry," p. 202; Hugh-Seton-Watson, The Decline of Imperial Russia, 1855-1914 (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1952), p. 92.

¹⁰Grimsted, Foreign Ministers of Alexander I, pp. 26-7.

lack of qualified personnel, and this in turn was the result of the poor recruitment policies and lack of effective training programs. After 1860, entrance into the foreign service was by examination, usually after a short apprenticeship in office. With few exceptions, however, only the wealthy and well-connected applicants had any success in winning important posts. Dmitrii Abrikossow relates that when he took the examinations in 1904 they were concerned largely with evaluating the general behavior, appearance, and quick thinking of the applicant. The examinations were taken orally before a board of reviewers, and Abrikossow thought they were actually a sort of comedy. Although about one-half of the candidates failed, Abrikossow attributed his appointment to his relationship with a rich family rather than to his success in mastering the examination.¹¹ The diplomatic service, as well as the foreign office, continued throughout the period to be an area of the highest prestige appointments, dominated by members of the gentry and appointed by the tsar for reasons other than superior professional qualifications.¹²

One particular problem stemmed from the fact that, despite the reorganization of the government in 1802, the tsar was not in

¹¹Abrikossow, Revelations of a Russian Diplomat, pp. 80-1. Abrikossow was a diplomat of bourgeois origin, a rarity in the Russian foreign service, which was a profession largely restricted to the aristocratic families of Russia.

¹²Grimsted, Foreign Ministers of Alexander I, pp. 27-8; Sumner, Russia and the Balkans, p. 25.

fact restrained by any of the ministries created by that re-organization. Each of the tsars of the nineteenth century believed, according to his own conception of duty, that he should serve the interests of his country, but that conception was rarely determined by outside forces. In theory, the ministers, who were responsible only to the tsar, should have acted in an advisory and directing capacity at the very least. In fact, the tsar might or might not take into consideration the advice of the ministers. In the Russian government, the ministers' task was to carry out the will of the tsar, not to determine policy.¹³ This was particularly true in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Alexander II and Alexander III actually offered little interference in the area of foreign affairs and both sovereigns were fortunate enough to be served by fairly able men in the ministry, although some--Prince Gorchakov, for instance--outlived their usefulness.¹⁴ Under Nicholas II a succession of ineffective individuals held the Foreign Office and this,

¹³For further information on the influence of the tsar on foreign policy, see George Katkov and Michael Futrell, "Russian Foreign Policy, 1880-1914," in Russia Enters the Twentieth Century, 1894-1917, ed. Erwin Oberlander (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), pp. 9-33; Harry Schwartz, Tsars, Mandarins and Commissars: A History of Chinese-Russian Relations (Philadelphia & New York: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1964), pp. 70-1; George Bolsover, "Aspects of Russian Foreign Policy, 1815-1914," in Essays Presented to Sir Lewis Namier, eds. Richard Pares and A. J. P. Taylor (London: Macmillan Co.; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1956) pp. 320-56; Robert C. Tucker, "Autocrats and Oligarchs," in Russian Foreign Policy, pp. 171-78; and Marc Raeff, "The Russian Autocracy and its Officials," in Russian Thought and Politics, ed. Hugh McLean (The Hague: Harvard Slavic Studies, 1957), pp. 77-91.

¹⁴Jelavich, Tsarist Russia, p. 281.

coupled with Nicholas' own conception of his responsibilities, resulted in a less consistent course of action. The government reforms forced by the Revolution of 1905 left foreign policy as a prerogative of the tsar, but Nicholas II, indecisive, irresolute, and faced with increasingly serious and complex problems, failed to achieve an effective relationship with any of his ministers.¹⁵ Furthermore, Nicholas never hesitated to use other forms of diplomatic intercourse or special agencies to accomplish his international goals, thereby sometimes nullifying the policy of his own foreign office.¹⁶ Nicholas also showed a particular reluctance to allow regular organs of the government, such as the Council of Ministers, even to discuss foreign affairs, although constitutionally they were entitled to do so whenever the tsar commanded it or the foreign minister thought it was necessary.¹⁷

Further difficulty lay in the lack of coordination between the various ministries of the government. Although there was a

¹⁵Nicholas II viewed his primary responsibility to the Russian people as upholding the autocracy, and in attempting to do this he refused to tolerate the individuals or advice he thought might circumvent his absolute power. He was, however, not a strong character himself and while he frequently refused to listen to the advice of competent statesmen such as Count Witte or Peter Stolypin, he often let himself be influenced by unwise or unscrupulous individuals. Abrikossow, Revelations of a Russian Diplomat, p. 90; Eugene N. deSchelling, Recollections of a Russian Diplomat: The Suicide of Monarchies (New York: Macmillan Co., 1918) p. 248.

¹⁶Slusser, "Role of the Foreign Ministry," p. 208; Previous tsars also followed this policy, see; Sumner, Russia and the Balkans, p. 20.

¹⁷Bolsover, "Aspects of Russian Foreign Policy," p. 328.

Council of Ministers and a chairman of this council, it did not have the functions or powers of the British Cabinet, so the ministers were, under the tsar's control, to some degree independent agents. In 1906 there was also a Duma, or representative body, but again, this group bore no resemblance to the British Parliament and had no power over the ministries. If the policies of the ministries ran into conflict with each other, the only agent of the government who could resolve the conflict was the tsar himself, and in the case of Nicholas II this was almost never done. The ministry of Foreign Affairs found itself at odds with the Ministries of War and Navy, and more often with the powerful Ministry of Finance.¹⁸ Within the ministry itself, and especially in the diplomatic and consular branches, officials frequently acted independently and with little heed to the Foreign Minister's directions.¹⁹ Lack of communication between officials caused part of the problem; more often inadequate direction and inconsistent policy were at fault.

Although the conduct of foreign policy must be affected by economic problems and revolutionary unrest, Russian foreign policy was less coordinated and influenced by domestic issues than other

¹⁸Katkov and Futrell, "Russian Foreign Policy," pp. 10-1; Slusser, "Role of the Foreign Ministry," pp. 107-8; B. H. Sumner, "Tsardom and Imperialism in the Far East and Middle East, 1880-1914," Proceedings of the British Academy 27(1941):28.

¹⁹Sumner, "Tsardom and Imperialism," p. 46; Edward Thaden, "Charykov and Russian Foreign Policy at Constantinople in 1911," Journal of Central European Affairs 16(April, 1956):25-44. Thaden's article describes an excellent example of the impetuous and independent actions of the Ambassador at Constantinople.

European states. There was no administrative control of foreign policy except that of the tsar, and besides, with few exceptions, public opinion had very little effect on foreign issues.²⁰ In general, Russian public opinion centered on domestic problems and the growth of a vigorous revolutionary atmosphere emphasized this concern. The Russian people and their Duma representatives were uninformed and often uninterested in foreign policy, and as a result, that policy was often conducted with little concern for the domestic scene.

Despite all these problems, the Foreign Minister was an important figure in the Russian government. In fact, precisely because the government lacked effective procedures for the formation and implementation of policy, the Foreign Minister was in

²⁰Richard Pipes, "Domestic Politics and Foreign Affairs," in Russian Foreign Policy, pp. 148-51. Pipes cites the study by Irene Grüning, Die russische öffentliche Meinung und Stellung zu den Grossmächten, 1878-1894 (Berlin-Königsberg, 1929), pp. 137, 177, et al, which points out how Russia concluded the French alliance in the face of almost unanimous opposition by Russian public opinion. See also; Langer, Franco-Russian Alliance, pp. 253-56. Pipes also mentions that after 1905 certain political parties took deep interest in foreign policy; see p. 148, n. 6. However, if Jack Swanson's survey, "The Duma Debates on Russia's Balkan Policy, 1912-1914," (Columbia University Russian Institute Certificate Essay, 1957), is correct, foreign policy was infrequently considered in the Duma, and then no policy questions were resolved. G. H. Bolsover, "Aspects of Russian Foreign Policy, 1815-1914," pp. 329-30, n. 3, notes that Izvol'ski reported to the Duma only three times during his career, and Sazonov twice, less than one per cent of the entire Duma sessions. For an interesting discussion of Izvol'ski's speeches in the Duma in defense of his policies see Edward Thaden, Russia and the Balkan Alliance of 1912 (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1965), pp. 16-25.

a position of relative power. If he lacked the means to control his vast and inefficient foreign ministry, he still could and often did pursue an independent and arbitrary course. The same thing was true of the diplomatic corps. Much depended on the personality and the forcefulness of particular ambassadors and consular officials, but their independence was a problem which plagued the conduct of international relations during the whole period under study.

Six foreign ministers served under Nicholas II--two of them were in office between 1907 and 1914. In the first dozen years of Nicholas' reign he was served by foreign ministers who complied with tradition by being merely executors of the tsar's will.²¹ A much more important influence on the Russian international position during those earlier critical years was the powerful Minister of Finance, S. Yu. Witte.²²

²¹Ministers of Foreign Affairs under Nicholas II included Prince A. B. Lobanov-Rostovskii (1895-1896), Count M. N. Muraviev, (1896-1900), Count V. N. Lamsdorff (1900-1906), Alexander Izvolski (1906-1910), Serge D. Sazonov (1910-1916), and Boris Stürmer (1916-1917).

²²Katkov and Futrell, "Russian Foreign Policy," pp. 25-8. Witte's own somewhat misleading memoirs, The Memoirs of Count Witte ed. and trans. Abraham Yarmolinsky (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1921), are designed to make Witte appear as a modest and devoted servant of Russia and the Tsar. In fact, Witte was a completely arrogant, somewhat unscrupulous, but thoroughly capable individual who pushed Russia into industrialization and expansion and exercised more influence than any other single person in the government in the score of years spanning the turn of the century. There is no good biography of Witte, although practically no contemporary or historian of his period has neglected to include at least a few paragraphs on

In May 1906 Alexander Petrovich Izvolski became Foreign Minister of Russia. Born in Moscow in 1856 in a family of Polish origin, Izvolski distinguished himself in school and entered the Foreign Office when he was only twenty years old. His work as Attaché to the Chancellery brought him to the attention of the Tsar and at twenty-three he became the first secretary of the legation to Bucharest and began his long preoccupation with affairs in the Balkans states. Between his appointment at Bucharest and his acceptance of the Foreign Minister's portfolio, Izvolski gained experience in diplomatic posts in Washington, the Vatican, Belgrade, Munich, Tokyo, and Copenhagen.²³

Optimistic and able, Izvolski came to the Foreign Office with ambitious plans to resolve Russia's differences with Japan, with whom she had just ended a disastrous war, and to concentrate on interests in the Balkans and Near East. He wished to reinforce Russia's position in Europe by building on the foundations of the alliance with France and by bringing an end to Russia's differences with England,²⁴ Izvolski was not averse to enhancing his own

this fascinating individual and his influence. The best monographs on Witte are Theodore von Laue, Sergei Witte and the Industrialization of Russia (New York: Atheneum Press, 1963), and Howard D. Mehlinger and John M. Thompson, Witte and the Tsarist Government in the 1905 Revolution (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1972).

²³Iswolsky, Memoirs, pp. 12-13.

²⁴Ibid., pp. 91-2; Nicholas Mansergh, The Coming of the First World War: A Study in European Balance, 1878-1914 (London, New York & Toronto: Longmans, Green & Co., 1949), p. 122; Gooch, Before the War, 1:292.

personal power and prestige in the process. His overweening ambition and his desire for status often stood in the way of his successful control of foreign affairs.

Izvolski's colleagues and superiors were generally in accord in recognizing his ability, but their opinions of his personality and character varied widely. Baron Taube, legal counsellor of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, described him as a man of intelligence, broad views, and an alert mind, marred by snobbishness and an almost morbid ambition.²⁵ Charles Hardinge, Permanent Undersecretary of the British Foreign Office, wrote of him, "He was not a very agreeable personality, his vanity being his outstanding characteristic."²⁶ The Slavophile diplomat and political journalist, Eugene deShelking, found Izvolski intelligent and expert but ambitious and snobbish,²⁷ while Baron Rosen, the Russian Ambassador in Washington and later Tokyo, thought the Foreign Minister was the only Russian statesman who was thoroughly familiar with the parliamentary institutions of Western Europe and, with Stolypin, one of the few able members of the Russian Council of Ministers.²⁸ Another Russian diplomat described him as "well-fed

²⁵Taube, La Politique russe d'avant guerre, pp. 104-9.

²⁶Gooch, Before the War, 1:127.

²⁷DeSchelking, Recollections, p. 169.

²⁸Roman R. Rosen, Forty Years of Diplomacy, 2 vols. (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1922), 2:13.

and ultra-fashionable."²⁹ While still Ambassador at Copenhagen, a fairly insignificant post, Izvol'ski impressed the English King Edward VII, who expressed his delight in the new Russian Minister to the Tsar, writing, "In him you have a man of remarkable intelligence and who is, I am sure, one of your ablest and most devoted servants."³⁰

Perhaps the best characterization of the controversial Izvol'ski came from one who knew him well, the British Ambassador to Russia and later Permanent Undersecretary of the British Foreign Office, Sir Arthur Nicolson. Nicolson had many opportunities to work with Izvol'ski, particularly during the early successful years of both their careers. Nicolson's immediate reaction upon meeting the new Foreign Minister was not favorable. He wrote,

He was obviously a vain man, and he strutted on little lacquered feet. His clothes . . . were moulded tightly upon a plump but still gainly frame . . . He wore a pearl pin, an eyeglass, white spats, a white slip to his waistcoat . . . His voice was at once cultured and rasping. He left behind him, as he passed onwards, a slight scent of violette de parme.³¹

Nicolson's opinion of the dandified Izvol'ski modified as time passed.

²⁹Andrew D. Kalmykov, Memoirs of a Russian Diplomat (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1971), p. 176.

³⁰Lee, King Edward VII, 2:284.

³¹Harold Nicolson, Portrait of a Diplomatist: Being the Life of Sir Arthur Nicolson, First Lord Carnock, and a Study of the Origins of the Great War (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1930) pp. 158-9.

He found the Russian a good companion with subtle and alert intelligence, and believed that Izvol'ski dealt loyally and honestly with England.³² In the long run, Nicolson characterized Izvol'ski as having a basic misunderstanding about the ideas and ideals of his countrymen. He had been absent from Russia so long that he failed to realize a subtle change in Russian opinion, and this led him to make serious mistakes in his approach to the Balkan problems. Russian opinion, in Nicolson's view, was no longer centered on the acquisition of the Straits, but on the larger problem of the "ethnic salvation" of the Balkan states.³³ Izvol'ski's sacrifice of Serbian and Slavic interests in his drive to achieve success at the Straits could not help but arouse Russian sentiment against him. In this, at least, Nicolson was correct. Izvol'ski's greatest humiliation stemmed from his independent and unsuccessful actions in the Bosnian annexation crisis of 1908. After this fiasco, his position was so damaged and his embarrassment so great that he ceased to be an effective agent of Russian foreign policy. Almost the entire remainder of his career as a diplomat was directed toward seeking revenge for an event that was really much his own fault. In 1910 he resigned his position as Foreign Minister

³²Ibid., pp. 159, 186; Sir Arthur Nicolson to Grey, 30 August 1907, Papers of Sir Edward Grey, FO 800/33, Public Record Office, London, England.

³³Nicolson, Portrait of a Diplomatist, pp. 193-4.

and accepted the post of Ambassador to France. There he remained, bitter and disillusioned, intriguing against Austria and the Germans and trying, in his own way, to cement the ties between Russia and France and England.

When Izvolski finally received the well-paying and prestigious embassy at Paris, Sergei Dimitriyevitch Sazonov became the new Foreign Minister. Although Sazonov had served his diplomatic apprenticeship under Izvolski and continued under the influence of his former chief, no greater contrast could have been found in personality and temperament. Sazonov's experience was limited to a few years as Second Secretary at the London Embassy, and a disappointing period as Minister to the Vatican from 1906 to 1909. When Nicolai Charykov went as Ambassador to Constantinople in June 1909, Sazonov became Deputy Foreign Minister.³⁴ Sazonov could hardly have hoped for such a plum, but he served Izvolski well and his promotion to Foreign Minister in 1910 was natural. The Tsar was pleased with him, Izvolski recommended him, and the fact that he was the brother-in-law of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Peter Stolypin, further assured his position.

Sazonov, however, deplored his own lack of experience and wished for a few more years of apprenticeship.³⁵ Small and slim, with delicate health, Sazonov was by nature nervous and emotional.

³⁴Sergei Sazonov, Six Fateful Years, 1909-1916; Reminiscences of Sergei Sazonov (London: Jonathon Cape, 1928), p. 9; Gooch, Before the War, 2:298-90; Fay, The Origins of the World War, 1-264.

³⁵Sazonov, Six Fateful Years, p. 21.

Baron Taube called him a "slav feminine spirit," and wrote, "Happily he had hardly any of his [Izvol'ski's] faults, but unfortunately he had hardly any of his qualities."³⁶

In domestic politics Sazonov was also unlike Izvol'ski, whose tendencies were considered liberal. The new Foreign Minister belonged to the conservative group in Russia and was by tradition a Germanophile.³⁷ In foreign policy, however, he was an ardent patriot, and while he was eager to reestablish mutual confidence and cooperation with Germany, he accepted the inheritance of his predecessor and upheld the partnership with France and the friendship with England forged under Izvol'ski in 1907.³⁸ In fact, as the tension with Germany increased, Sazonov sought to strengthen the French alliance and convert the English agreement into something more like the French one.³⁹

Perhaps because of his inexperience or his more timid nature, Sazonov pursued a more cautious policy in many instances than Izvol'ski did, but his inadequacy as a foreign minister has been exaggerated

³⁶Taube, La Politique russe d'avant-guerre, pp. 248-49.

³⁷Gooch, Before the War, 2:291; Fay, Origins of the War, 1:265-66.

³⁸Sazonov, Six Fateful Years, p. 31; Gooch, Before the War, 2:291, 301; Fay, Origins of the War, 1:266.

³⁹Sir George Buchanan to Grey, 6 February 1913, Grey Papers, FO 800/74, PRO; Sazonov, Six Fateful Years, p. 24; Sir George Buchanan, My Mission to Russia and Other Diplomatic Memoirs, 2 vols. (London: Cassell & Co., 1923), 1:137, 190.

by many historians.⁴⁰ Probably Russia did not contain a man equal to the tasks facing Sazonov in the years before the war, and he was, as historians Otto Bickel and Edward Thaden point out, a capable and diligent diplomat and administrator.⁴¹ If Sazonov lacked the experience of Izvol'ski, he more than made up for it in prudence and common sense. He was, wisely, less devoted to the acquisition of the Straits and had overall a more realistic view of the problems of the near East and the Balkans. His failure to achieve peace in the Balkans does not demonstrate any lack of consistent effort in this area, for the efforts of other European diplomats were no more successful. Hampered by circumstances and by precarious health, he made the best of an impossible situation, and showed himself to be no less a diplomat than many of his European counterparts. In his memoirs Sir George Buchanan, Ambassador to Russia after 1910, referred to Sazonov as, like Sir Edward Grey, "a statesman endowed with the gift of tact, patience and forbearance, so necessary for the conduct of delicate negotiations. . ."⁴²

⁴⁰Luigi Albertini, Origins of the War of 1914, 3 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1952-57), 1:366; Taube, La Politique russe d'avant guerre, p. 249; and William Langer, "Russia, the Straits Question and the Origins of the Balkan League, 1908-1912," Political Science Quarterly 43(September 1928):335, are all indictments of Sazonov's policy.

⁴¹Otto Bickel, Russland und die Entstehung des Balkanbundes 1912 (Berlin: Ost-Europe-Verlag, 1933, pp. 99-100; Thaden, Russia and the Balkan Alliance, pp. 82-3.

⁴²Buchanan, Mission to Russia, 1:101.

Buchanan never doubted Sazonov's good faith, although he complained of some of his diplomatic procedures. In 1916 he vigorously protested to the Tsar when Sazonov was dismissed in favor of the reactionary Stürmer.⁴³

Sazonov's worst moments, and the period in which he acquitted himself least defensibly were in the weeks immediately preceding the war. He became convinced that there was no alternative to standing firm against Austrian aggression in order for Russia to achieve her "historic mission" in the Balkans. Pressed by the influence of the Pan-Slav press and by the militarist and nationalists in Russia, he took steps which certainly made hostilities with Austria and Germany more likely. Nevertheless, a close examination of Sazonov's actions reveals that Sazonov did not wish a general European war. Uncertain of the loyalty of Russia's allies and determined not to let Russia suffer further diplomatic humiliation, Sazonov's diplomatic acumen faltered at a time when he needed it most. The same accusation can be made of nearly every diplomat in Europe on the eve of the war.⁴⁴

⁴³Buchanan to Tsar Nicholas II, 22 July 1916, in Buchanan, Mission to Russia, 2:16-17.

⁴⁴Sazonov's policy on the eve of the war is best revealed in Baron M.F. Schilling's How the War Began in 1914: The Diary of the Russian Foreign Office (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1925), especially valuable because Schilling was Sazonov's confidential assistant at the Foreign Office. Sazonov's policy is admirably summarized in Fay, Origins of the War, 1:524-452. Friedrich Stieve, ed., Der

In the Diplomatic Service Russia was served by men of a wide variety of character and skillfulness. From the ambitious and enterprising Charykov, who served as Deputy Foreign Minister before his appointment as Ambassador at Constantinople, to the unfortunate Abrikossow, who climbed to the position of Ambassador to Japan in 1917, only to find himself a diplomat without a mission, the diplomatic scene was complicated by a great number of individuals who pursued courses of action explainable only by their own ambitions or their particular conceptions of Russia's position in Europe and the near East.

Perhaps the best qualified and most capable of Russia's ambassadors was Count Alexander Benckendorff, who served in London from 1903 to the Bolshevik coup in 1917. Benckendorff was representative of the European oriented diplomats who staffed the Chancellery of the Russian Foreign Ministry. His family was of Baltic origin, and although they had long been servants of the Crown, Benckendorff had been educated abroad and spoke French more fluently than Russian. He was also fluent in English and was an elegant and intelligent member of the diplomatic world of Western Europe. He was liked and respected by the English, and was on intimate terms with Edward VII and with several members of the British government.

Diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis, 1911-1914, 4 vols. (Berlin: Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft für Politik und Geschichte, 1924), is useful, but suppresses several important passages regarding Sazonov.

A good marriage to a member of the famous Shuvalov family added to his social prestige, and the Countess Benckendorff proved to be a great aid in London society. Because of Benckendorff's personal contacts with members of the British government, the Russian Embassy was one of the best informed in London and found its work considerably facilitated by the ambassador's position.⁴⁵ DeSchelking called Benckendorff Russia's greatest ambassador.⁴⁶

While Benckendorff originally approached the Anglo-Russian Convention with great caution, he was receptive to the idea of Anglo-Russian friendship.⁴⁷ He was convinced the real danger to Russia was Germany,⁴⁸ and he worked through his tenure to uphold the entente between England, France, and Russia. He was, however, a man of such understatement that it is doubtful if he was a real influence in Anglo-Russian relations. He did his work well and quietly, according to British standards, and his Anglophile sentiments made him welcome to the London scene. He rarely caused any of the crises his diplomatic colleagues frequently aroused. "His only shortcoming," wrote Abrikossow, "was that he belonged to the

⁴⁵Abrikossow, Revelations of a Russian Diplomat, pp. 98-111. Abrikossow served in the Russian Embassy in London.

⁴⁶DeSchelking, Recollections, p. 237.

⁴⁷William Habberton, Anglo-Russian Relations Concerning Afghanistan, 1837-1907 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1937) pp. 75-6.

⁴⁸Abrikossow, Revelations of a Russian Diplomat, pp. 112, 128.

the twentieth century, while the majority of his countrymen still lived in the sixteenth."⁴⁹

The most controversial diplomats were in the Asiatic Department of Russia's Foreign Ministry. Russia's Minister in Sofia, a trouble spot between 1907 and 1914, was Anatole V. Nekliudov. Nekliudov was well-educated, honest, and urbane, and he was more capable than the ordinary Russian diplomat. His attachment to the cause of Bulgaria in Balkan affairs, however, often brought him into conflict with other important members of the Russian service.⁵⁰ Nicholas G. Hartwig was a notable opponent. An experienced and capable man of driving energy and personal ambition, Hartwig was Russia's Minister to Serbia between 1909 and 1914. He had spent most of his life in the Asiatic Department and was a specialist in Slavic affairs. His position in Serbia placed him in a particularly important position in the years preceding the war, and he was often at odds with Nekliudov. Many diplomats considered Hartwig as virtually a counselor of the Serbian government, and he was on

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 142.

⁵⁰Anatole Nekliudov, Diplomatic Reminiscences: Before and After the World War, 1911-1917, trans., Alexandra Paget (London: J. Murray, 1920), pp. 1, 130, 164-5; Thaden, Russia and the Balkan Alliance, pp. 70-72.

close personal terms with the Serbian Premier Pašić.⁵¹ Hartwig's relationship with the British was not good. During a term as Minister to Persia, from 1906 to 1909, his defense of Russian interests in Persia aroused the bitter opposition of the British Minister in Tehran.⁵² This rivalry caused his transfer from Tehran but did not alter his incessant activity on the part of Russian and Slavic interests. His confirmed anti-Austrian position, his outspoken defense of Serbian interests, and his rigid and dogmatic adherence to Russia's mission in the Balkans, aroused widespread misgivings in various diplomatic quarters, but his activities continued unabated until his death only weeks before the 1914 crisis.⁵³ Nekliudov and Hartwig were typical of many Russian nationalists of their generation, and their Slavophile sentiments, though not concerted, were heartily applauded by admirers in and out of the Foreign Office. Unfortunately for Russia, they were also typical of the many rash and short-sighted diplomats who served their country in the years between 1907 and 1914.

By comparison, the British Foreign Office and its Diplomatic and Consular Service seemed almost a model of efficiency, but this was not exactly true. While the British certainly outshone

⁵¹Sir Ralph Paget to Grey, 22 November 1912, BD 9:257; Nekliudov, Reminiscences, pp. 49-50; deSchelking, Recollections, pp. 240-42; Thaden, Russia and the Balkan Alliance, pp. 65-69.

⁵²Nicolson, Portrait of a Diplomatist, pp. 256-57; Nekliudov, Reminiscences, p. 49.

⁵³Nekliudov, Reminiscences, pp. 49-50.

the Russians as administrators, and while British diplomats were considerably more circumspect than their Russian counterparts, there were problems in the British foreign service as well. There is some opportunity for comparison in many of the problems, for they were inherent in the diplomatic system of the major European states, but on the whole the British suffered less for their errors in foreign relations than other countries.

The British Foreign Office became a separate administrative department in the government in 1782, when reforms in the administration brought about a separation of domestic and foreign affairs. The office was at first referred to as "Mr. Fox's Office," for the first Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Charles James Fox. The name "Foreign Office" did not occur until 1807. The Chief Clerk of the new department described its duties as follows:

The business of the Secretary of State's Office for the Foreign Department, consists in conducting the correspondence with all Foreign Courts, negotiating with the Ambassadors or Ministers of all the Foreign Courts in Europe, as well as of the United States of America, and receiving and making representations and applications to and from the same, and in corresponding with the other principal Departments of State thereupon.⁵⁴

These functions changed little in the following century, and in 1955 Lord Strang described the Foreign Office's main function in this century,

⁵⁴Great Britain, Public Record Office, The Records of the Foreign Office, Public Record Office Handbook #13 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1969), p. 3.

" . . . to achieve as many of our national desiderata as can be made acceptable to other sovereign governments. . . . To some extent the Foreign Office may be regarded as the headquarters of British diplomatic activities and the establishments abroad as the front lines through which it operates.⁵⁵

Throughout the nineteenth century the activities and policy of British foreign relations depended largely on the Foreign Secretary. A series of great ministers dominated the office and raised it to a position of importance in the British government. The Secretaries had few restrictions placed on them, and this, together with the uncommonly long tenure of most of them, contributed to an increasingly independent and important office.⁵⁶

The British Foreign Office was divided into internal divisions known as departments--political departments which conducted diplomatic relations with the various foreign countries, and non-political or administrative departments, which included the Chief Clerk's Office, Commercial and Sanitary, Consular, and Library and Treaty.⁵⁷ Each department was staffed with a Senior Clerk and several

⁵⁵Lord William Strang, The Foreign Office (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1955), pp. 10, 17.

⁵⁶Zara Steiner, The Foreign Office and Foreign Policy, 1898-1914 (Cambridge: University Press, 1969), pp. 1-3; Frans Gosses, The Management of British Foreign Policy Before the First World War (Leiden: Sijthoff, 1948), p. 144.

⁵⁷Frank T. Ashton Gwatkin, The British Foreign Service (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1951), p. 20; Steiner, The Foreign Office, p. 11; Records of the Foreign Office, pp. 15-23.

assistant and junior clerks. As the work of the Foreign Office increased, the position of Permanent Undersecretary was established. By the twentieth century there was a Permanent Undersecretary who was the highest ranking civil servant in the Foreign Office, and a Parliamentary Undersecretary who served as a link with the party in office and who was not usually a permanent official. The Foreign Secretary was also served by a private secretary whose position was one of importance and distinction and was often used to advantage by enterprising individuals.⁵⁸ The main responsibility lay with the Foreign Secretary, and the undersecretaries and clerks followed his lead throughout most of the nineteenth century. Much of a clerk's work--copying dispatches, affixing numbers, and sorting and recording documents--was tedious and boring, and more than one energetic and ambitious young man chafed at the unrewarding tasks.⁵⁹

The Foreign Office, with its Diplomatic and Consular Service, was a bastion of the aristocracy from its inception, drawing its membership from the great families of England. Appointment depended

⁵⁸Donald G. Bishop, Administration of British Foreign Relations (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1961), p. 256; Steiner, The Foreign Office, pp. 4-5, 30-31; Records of the Foreign Office, p. 7; Gosses, Management of British Foreign Policy, pp. 150-51.

⁵⁹Richard Cosgrove, "Sir Eyre Crowe and the English Foreign Office," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, 1957), p. 47; Steiner, The Foreign Office, p. 14; John D. Gregory, On the Edge of Diplomacy: Rambles and Reflections, 1902-1928 (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1929), pp. 18-19.

on social connections and wealth, as in most European foreign services. The mid-Victorian atmosphere of the Office continued throughout the century, although several changes brought a slightly more open policy of recruitment and training. Examinations were introduced in 1856, although only for candidates already nominated by the Foreign Secretary. In 1871, these were made more stringent, emphasizing languages, précis-writing, spelling, and general intelligence.⁶⁰ These requirements were not extended to entrance into the Diplomatic Service until 1892. As salaries in this area of foreign service were low, those interested had to have individual income, a restriction limiting the service largely to the well-born.⁶¹ Long after the doors of the Foreign Office had been opened to men of merit and ability, the Diplomatic Service remained in the hands of the aristocracy.

Compared with the large establishments conducting the foreign relations of other European countries, especially Russia, the British Foreign Office had a small staff. In 1914, it numbered only 176 persons, forty of whom were custodial employees. In addition

⁶⁰Steiner, Foreign Office, pp. 16-18; Ashton Gwatkin, British Foreign Service, p. 13.

⁶¹Robert T. Nightingale, The Personnel of the British Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service, 1851-1929, Fabian Tract no. 232 (London: Fabian Society, 1930). p. 5.

to this, the annual cost of the Office at home and abroad was nominal. In 1914 it was less than one million pounds.⁶²

Two events occurring in Lord Salisbury's last administration brought the British Foreign Office more in line with the democratic tendencies of the British government. The first was that Salisbury lost authority because of age and failing health. The result was an increase in the responsibilities and powers of the senior permanent officials on the staff. The other was that increasingly complex and pressing foreign affairs of the pre-war period called for more experts and greater information in the department. No longer was it possible for a single man to handle and direct the foreign policy of Great Britain. Aggressive and able men in positions of authority gradually assumed more of the decision-making power as well as many of the actual administration duties.⁶³

By 1900, however, the Foreign Office was still the most backward office in the British government. The administrative machinery made much of the routine work almost hopeless. No general index to the records existed and often it was nearly impossible to locate important documents. The first steps toward change were taken during Lord Lansdowne's tenure as Foreign Secretary, 1901-1905. Lansdowne's term was a period of transition and reform for

⁶²Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, 3:627; Strang, The Foreign Office, p. 30; Steiner, Foreign Office, p. 4.

⁶³Steiner, Foreign Office, pp. 23-43 passim.

the Office at both administrative and policy-making levels. Lansdowne's willingness to accept advice and his flexibility led to an atmosphere conducive to change. By the end of his term the personnel and character of the Foreign Office were noticeably changed.⁶⁴ The culmination of these reforms came in 1906 under the direction of Charles Hardinge and Eyre Crowe.

Although the reforms of 1906 overall were disappointing and not as thorough as necessary, they did facilitate much of the work of the Foreign Office. A registry system for the registration and filing of documents was introduced, the internal administration of the office was restructured for greater efficiency, and typewriters and telephones were installed in all the departments.⁶⁵ More important, junior clerks were now allowed to attach comments, or minutes, to the documents as they received them in their various departments. The younger men in the Office took a more important part in the decision making process, and some matters could be disposed of at lower levels. Matters important enough to go on to the Permanent Undersecretary and the Foreign Secretary had valuable information in the form of minutes on each document. Eyre Crowe, who was a Senior Clerk at the Foreign Office in 1906, thought this was a good way to insure the Foreign Secretary of access to a

⁶⁴Nicolson, Portrait of a Diplomatist, pp. 237-8; Steiner, Foreign Office, pp. 46-7, 55-6, 60-76; Rohan Butler, "Beside the Point," World Review (April-May, 1953), p. 9.

⁶⁵Records of the Foreign Office, pp. 60-67; Steiner, Foreign Office, pp. 78, 82; Sir John Tilley and Stephen Gaselee, The Foreign Office, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), p. 156.

wide range of information on any subject.⁶⁶ Also on Crowe's recommendation, the heads of foreign missions began the custom of making annual reports to the Foreign Office, and each department was required to make annual reports as well.⁶⁷ By 1907 the reforms had done much to modernize the entire atmosphere of the Foreign Office, and while they left much undone, they put the British Foreign Office far ahead of its counterparts in Europe.

The relationship of the Foreign Office with other organs of the government was an important and highly controversial one. Besides areas of conflict and overlapping functions with other ministries, such as the Board of Trade and the India Office, the Foreign Office was also in contact with the Cabinet and Prime Minister, the Crown, and the Parliament.

The British Cabinet, of which the Foreign Secretary was always an important member, rarely provided a check on the affairs of the Foreign Office. In the nineteenth century Salisbury had combined the offices of Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary in the Cabinet, and occasionally in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Prime Ministers intervened in the conduct of foreign affairs, but this was not usually the case.

⁶⁶Steiner, Foreign Office, pp. 79-81; Nicolson, Portrait of a Diplomatist, pp. 325-6.

⁶⁷Steiner, Foreign Office, p. 81.

⁶⁸Records of the Foreign Office, p. 29; Gosses, Management of British Foreign Policy, pp. 126-28.

The Prime Minister and the Cabinet were frequently too involved in domestic programs to interfere in foreign policy, and there were on the whole few members who bothered to acquaint themselves thoroughly enough with the intricacies of foreign policy and diplomacy to offer any real criticism. This state of affairs continued to be true under Sir Edward Grey, who went to great lengths to avoid such interference. In fact, Grey consistently consulted only with specific cabinet members on issues of importance and only a limited number of documents and confidential prints were circulated to the entire Cabinet.⁶⁹ Grey also avoided, whenever possible, explaining policy matters or consulting the Cabinet on specific controversial issues.⁷⁰

Parliament proved even less of a deterrent or influence in the matters of foreign policy. Here, too, domestic issues more often demanded the attention of the members, and debates on foreign policy tended to be few in number and limited in time. Parliamentary control over foreign policy in any case was not a specific power, but resulted

⁶⁹Bishop, British Foreign Relations, pp. 102-109; Steiner Foreign Office, pp. 86-88. Lloyd George complained that Grey purposely left most of the Cabinet members ignorant of vital points of foreign policy. David Lloyd George, War Memoirs (London: Odhams, 1938), 1:45-6. Grey defended himself and maintained that "Members of the Cabinet were kept in touch with the current work of the Foreign Office to a far greater extent than with the work of any other department." Grey, Twenty-five Years, 2:266. Asquith concurred with Grey. H. H. Asquith, The Genesis of War (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1923), pp. 17-18. Often unjustly critical of Grey's policy, in this case Lloyd George was correct.

⁷⁰Monger, End of Isolation, p. 307.

from its general legislation. Normally, Parliament did not decide on an action but approved or disapproved the action after it was taken. Even a declaration of war was an executive action, although no Foreign Secretary would have committed the country to war without the support of Parliament. On the other hand, few Foreign Secretaries hesitated to conclude secret treaties or agreements, the provisions of which were unknown to the members of Parliament.⁷¹ Parliament had one useful tool with which to check on the activities of the Foreign Office--the daily question time during which questions might be put from the floor to the Foreign Secretary or the Parliamentary Under-secretary. Even here, the Foreign Office officials became adroit at avoiding the issues. Besides this, the Foreign Office always tried to avoid laying papers before Parliament, and when it became necessary took the utmost precautions to protect what it considered privileged information. Blue Books, a source of information for Parliament, were carefully edited by both the Foreign Office and the various diplomats involved, always with an eye to avoiding conflict with foreign powers.⁷² Under Edward Grey, Blue Books on foreign policy were infrequent.⁷³

⁷¹Bishop, British Foreign Relations, pp. 132-36; Steiner, Foreign Office, pp. 192-93. Lord Strang defended the principle of secret diplomacy, suggesting that open diplomacy would mean no diplomacy at all. He held that secret negotiations were really necessary to carry out the work of diplomacy, and that even the public would condemn day-by-day, blow-by-blow accounts. Strang, The Foreign Office, pp. 169-72.

⁷²Steiner, Foreign Office, pp. 194-97; Gosses, Management of British Foreign Policy, pp. 87-89.

⁷³H. W. V. Temperly and Lillian M. Penson, eds., A Century of Diplomatic Blue Books, 1814-1914 (Cambridge: The University Press, 1938), pp. xi, 495.

There was, of course, dissent expressed in Parliament. After 1907 the Liberal Party opinion was by no means unanimous on foreign policy issues, and bitter and frequent criticism came from within the party as well as from the Conservative and Labour members.⁷⁴

In the end, the Foreign Secretary and his office enjoyed a measure of independence from governmental control not shared by any other department of the government. Each Foreign Secretary from Salisbury on, however, was quite conscious of the limits to which he might ignore parliamentary and public opinion. These limits were maintained by the form of the parliamentary system rather than by specific powers, but the limits could not be entirely disregarded. Even though authorities do not agree on exactly how public opinion through Parliament was manifested in any specific instance, nor on its effect on the ultimate actions of the Foreign Office, it is clear that each Foreign Secretary faced the necessity of maintaining a precarious balance in dealing with parliamentary demands.⁷⁵

⁷⁴Arthur Ponsonby, Democracy and Diplomacy--A Plea for Popular Control of Foreign Policy (London: Methuen & Co., 1915), T. P. Conwell-Evans, Foreign Policy from a Back Bench (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), and A. J. P. Taylor, The Troublemakers: Dissent Over Foreign Policy, 1792-1939, (London: Hamish-Hamilton, 1957), pp. 94-131, all contain valuable contemporary and historical accounts of parliamentary discontent over foreign policy and Parliament's role in its creation.

⁷⁵Bishop, British Foreign Relations, pp. 183-88; Steiner, Foreign Office, p. 199; Strang, Foreign Office, pp. 169-72; John A.

While democratic controls on the Foreign Office were limited, the control and influence on foreign policy from the crown also underwent considerable erosion during the nineteenth century. The traditional powers of the crown--treaty making, declaration of war and peace, cession of territories--had been taken over by the Cabinet, and the real force of the crown on foreign policy was no longer formal nor consistent. Two kings sat on the British throne between 1907 and 1914. Edward VII's role in foreign policy was exaggerated even in his own lifetime, and although he took a hearty interest in foreign affairs, his actual activities were confined to personal and ceremonial contacts.⁷⁶ The King did take part in diplomatic appointments and his frequent and popular visits abroad made him a high successful "good-will ambassador."⁷⁷ In the real business of foreign policy, however, Edward VII accepted the policy of the Foreign Secretary.⁷⁸

Murray, "Foreign Policy Debated: Sir Edward Grey and his Critics, 1911-1912," in Lillian Wallace and Wm. C. Askew, eds., Power, Public Opinion and Diplomacy: Essays in Honor of Eber Malcom Carroll by his Former Students (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1959), pp. 140-171, *passim*.; John A Murray, "British Policy and Opinion on the Anglo-Russian Entente, 1907-1914," (Ph.D. Dissertation, Duke University, 1957), from which the above article was taken, mentions several instances in which public opinion decided the course of foreign policy and more where it had little effect. Murray's conclusion is that the many facets of British opinion objecting to Grey's policy between 1907 and 1914 had only "modest results," p. 618.

⁷⁶Harold Nicolson, King George the Fifth: His Life and Reign (London: Constable & Co., 1951), p. 141; Alfred F. Pribram, Austria-Hungary and Great Britain: 1908-1914, trans. Ian F. D. Morrow (London & New York: Oxford University Press, 1951), pp. 68-9.

⁷⁷Steiner, Foreign Office, p. 204; Grey, Twenty-Five Years, 1:198-99.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, 1:197.

Edward's successor, George V, continued the policy of non-intervention.⁷⁹

Grey and his Foreign Office received a full measure of opposition and criticism from the British Press. Influential and widely read, the press was free from governmental control and interference, and was the best and often the only source of information on foreign affairs. The Foreign Office had no formal press bureau and, although it appreciated the uses of the press, did not seek to supply the newspapers with a consistent source of news. Some officials, such as Grey's private secretary, Sir William Tyrrell, had frequent contact with members of the press and occasionally passed on information to them. Others, like Eyre Crowe, disliked the press and resented their intrusion into foreign affairs.⁸⁰ The role of the press was more significant in Britain than in Russia. In the first place, more Britons could read, and in addition, the British press was generally more accurate. More important, however, was the lack of government supervision in England, permitting a broader spectrum of opinion. If it is true that the press often forms public opinion rather than reflecting it, a wider range of ideas existed for the British public to choose from. Moreover, British newspapermen were often leaders in efforts to open up the

⁷⁹Nicholson, King George V, pp. 79, 141, 175-77, 371.

⁸⁰Oron J. Hale, Publicity and Diplomacy: With Special Reference to England and Germany, 1890-1914 (1940; reprint ed., Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1964), p. 9; Nicholson, Portrait of a Diplomatist, p. 239.

business of government to public scrutiny, especially in foreign affairs, a traditionally secretive area.

While the London Times was the best informed newspaper in matters of foreign affairs, partly because it maintained correspondents in the major European capitals, other papers also took an active interest in foreign affairs. The Times could usually be counted on to support Grey's policies. Usually, so could the respected Morning Post, the oldest of the English dailies, and the influential Westminster Gazette, the quasi-official organ of the Liberal government and the "voice of Edward Grey when it dealt with foreign affairs."⁸¹ The editor of the Westminster Gazette, J. A. Spender, was an intimate of Grey and other members of the Liberal government, and although he denied that they influenced his views, he had the advantage of their opinions and access to much vital information.⁸² Valentine Chirol, foreign editor of the Times, was especially successful in his contacts with the Foreign Office and diplomatic circles. He had served in the Foreign Office and maintained his contacts there, especially his close friendship with Charles Hardinge.⁸³

⁸¹Hale, Publicity and Diplomacy, pp. 24-5.

⁸²J. A. Spender, Life, Journalism and Politics, 2 vols. (New York: Stokes, 1927), 1:170.

⁸³Steiner, The Foreign Office, p. 189.

Several leading papers, however, were outspoken in their criticism of Grey's policies, especially the Manchester Guardian, the Daily News, the Economist, the Labor Leader, and the Illustrated Graphic, all liberal or radical papers. Even the conservative Daily Telegraph joined the clamor for full policy statements from the Foreign Office.⁸⁴ Although the opinion of the press cannot be accepted as synonymous with public opinion, the press played a vital role in informing and educating the public in England between 1907 and 1914. In fact, the press was the single most important factor in the effort to curb the secretive and independent policies of the Grey Foreign Office.

Edward Grey, later Viscount Grey of Fallodon, became the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in December 1905, when the new Liberal government under Henry Campbell-Bannerman took office. From 1905 until 1916 the Foreign Office was guided by a man whose preference was a quiet country life with long days filled with birdwatching and fishing rather than the dramatic diplomatic life of Europe. His shyness and overwhelming desire for privacy made his eleven years in Whitehall an excessive burden for

⁸⁴The Manchester Guardian was edited by C. P. Scott, an influential Liberal theorist whom Trevelyan describes as "the most well-informed and intelligent of Grey's critics." See, George M. Trevelyan, Grey of Fallodon: The Life and Letters of Sir Edward Grey (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1937), p. 227. John Murray's dissertation, "British Policy and Opinion. . ." includes an exhaustive discussion on the merits and political opinions of the British newspapers; see especially pp. 42-45.

him, but his deep sense of obligation to government service was also strong. It led him early to stand for Parliament as the Liberal candidate for the Berwick-on-Tweed district of his home Northumberland neighborhood. He was elected in November of 1885.⁸⁵

In 1892 Grey was returned to Parliament for the third time, and was selected as Parliamentary Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs by Lord Rosebery, Foreign Secretary in Gladstone's last government. Grey had no special training for the job, and looked upon himself as a public servant charged with the responsibility of explaining and defending Foreign Office policy rather than directing it.⁸⁶ He served in this self-effacing capacity until 1895, when his party went out of office. Ten and a half years passed before Grey returned to the Foreign Office. During these years he contented himself with a minimum of public activity and the leisure to enjoy his coveted country life.

Grey had remained in close contact with his Liberal friends, however, and soon became identified, with Lord Rosebery and his

⁸⁵Grey, Twenty-Five Years, 1:xxvi. Grey was a descendant of Earl Grey of Reform Bill fame; his grandfather had been a member of the House of Commons for forty years and a member of several cabinets, with special experience as Home Secretary, and, as Grey's father died young, had been a great influence on Grey; *ibid.*, xxiii-xxiv.

⁸⁶*Ibid.*, 1:1-3.

close friends, Herbert Asquith and Richard Haldane, as leader of the Imperialist wing of the Liberal party. Henry Campbell-Bannerman led the non-imperialist majority of the party. The Imperialist had embarrassed the anti-war, anti-imperialist faction of the party by supporting the Conservative government on the issue of the Boer War and by advocating a policy of imperialism for Britain.⁸⁷

The 1905 General Elections, following the resignation of the Conservative Balfour government, resulted in a thumping victory for the Liberal party.⁸⁸ Campbell-Bannerman was asked to form a government, and because he wished to heal breaches in the badly split Liberal party, he wanted to include the Liberal Imperialist leaders in the cabinet. At first it seemed unlikely that Grey, Haldane, or Asquith would accept.⁸⁹ Despite their previous agreement not to join Campbell-Bannerman's government unless he relinquished the leadership of the House of Commons to Asquith, in the end all three were persuaded. Asquith accepted the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, the second place in the Cabinet, Haldane took the War

⁸⁷Ibid., 1:34-58, passim.

⁸⁸The Liberals won 377 seats out of a possible 679, the Conservatives and Liberal Unionist took 157, the Irish Nationals 84, and most surprising of all, the recently formed Labour Party and the Radical Liberals gained 54 seats. R. K. Ensor, England, 1870-1914 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936), p. 388.

⁸⁹Grey, Haldane, and Asquith had previously pledged themselves to insist on Campbell-Bannerman's going to Lords and leaving the leadership of the House of Commons to Asquith. They made the pledge at a country fishing spot in Scotland--hence, the "Relugas Compact." Grey, Twenty-Five Years 1:62-3; Richard Burdon Haldane, An Autobiography (New York:

Office, where he distinguished himself through his comprehensive reforms, and Grey went to Whitehall, albeit with great reluctance.⁹⁰

The ministry organized under Campbell-Bannerman was one of exceptional talent, but Grey did not show indication of brilliance. His experience was limited and his qualifications for the office were questionable. He was fastidious, conciliatory, and dependable, and his integrity and sincerity were never questioned, but his critics called him indecisive, secretive, shallow, and ill-informed. To many he seemed always to retain the quality of the gifted amateur in foreign affairs. As a student, Grey's record at Oxford was undistinguished. He excelled in sports, was amiable and popular, but was sent down at Balliol for idleness and never earned a degree. He knew French only slightly, and was the first British Foreign Secretary to address foreign ambassadors in English.⁹¹ He had been abroad only once, to Paris. In his whole career as Foreign Secretary he added only one trip, again to Paris in 1914 when he accompanied King George on a state visit.⁹² Lloyd George, who had few words of praise for Grey, wrote:

Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1929), pp. 127-37; Roy Jenkins, Asquith, Portrait of a Man and an Era (New York: Chilmark Press, 1964), pp. 145-6.

⁹⁰The Cabinet also included David Lloyd George, who proved to be one of Grey's most outspoken critics, and Winston Churchill, then only twenty-nine years old.

⁹¹Taylor, Struggle for Mastery, p. xxiii.

⁹²Trevalyan, Grey of Fallodon, p. 78.

He is the most insular of our statesmen, and knew less of foreigners through contact with them than any Minister in the Government. He rarely, if ever, crossed the seas.⁹³ He had no real understanding of foreigners.

Haldane, Grey's friend, less bitterly echoed Lloyd George's charges, regretting Grey's lack of sympathy with the Germans.⁹⁴ Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, a career diplomat and associate of Grey's, suggested that he "spare a little time from his ducks to learn French."⁹⁵

Even more trenchant criticism came from others. Arthur Ponsonby, one of Grey's most vocal opponents in Parliament, complained, "He trusts the opinion of his permanent officials more than his own judgment and is, therefore, capable of making rather serious mistakes."⁹⁶ Other voices agreed with this criticism,⁹⁷ and it is true that Grey relied heavily on his subordinates in office for information and advice.⁹⁸ The strong anti-German voices of Eyre Crowe,

⁹³Lloyd George, War Memoirs, 1:98.

⁹⁴Haldane, Autobiography, pp. 229-30.

⁹⁵Gwynn, ed., The Letters and Friendships of Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, 1:325.

⁹⁶Steiner, The Foreign Office, pp. 84-5, quoting the Ponsonby Papers, "Notes on members of the Liberal Cabinet by Ponsonby, January 1913."

⁹⁷Ponsonby, Democracy and Diplomacy, p. 45; Hermann Lutz, Lord Grey and the World War (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1928) pp. 82-3.

⁹⁸Trevalyan, Grey of Fallodon, p. 168; Hardinge, Diplomacy, p. 192.

William Tyrrell, Charles Hardinge, and Arthur Nicolson could not be dismissed lightly, and, in any event, Grey respected their knowledge and experience. But it is too harsh to declare that Grey could not make up his own mind. In the end the responsibility for major decisions was his own, and he realized it. Grey's hesitation to put much trust in Germany and his reluctance to commit England fully to a defensive alliance with France and Russia sprang not from indecisiveness, but from his own deep moral convictions.

Despite these apparent shortcomings, Grey was liked and respected in many circles. Prince Karl Lichnowsky, the German Ambassador in London, remarked,

Sir Edward Grey's influence in all matters of foreign policy was almost unlimited. On important occasions he used, indeed, to say, 'I must first bring the matter before the Cabinet,' but the Cabinet invariably agreed with him. His authority was undisputed.⁹⁹

The Russian ambassador, Count Benckendorff, often more British than the Britons, admired and had great faith in the British Foreign Secretary.¹⁰⁰ In his own diplomatic service as well, Grey had loyal followers. Sir George Buchanan, the British Ambassador in St. Petersburg after 1910, referred to him as a "great

⁹⁹Karl Max Lichnowsky, Heading for the Abyss: Reminiscences, trans. Sefton Delmar (London: Constable & Co., 1928), p. 67.

¹⁰⁰Taylor, Struggle for Mastery, p. 111.

statesman" and applauded his efforts to maintain peace in Europe.¹⁰¹ Before 1910 Arthur Nicolson had filled the ambassadorship to Russia, and although there were serious difficulties between Nicolson and Grey, especially after Nicolson returned to the Foreign Office, Nicolson usually omitted Grey from his outspoken criticisms of the Liberal Party.

Grey's primary concerns upon taking office were to strengthen and support the Anglo-French Entente,¹⁰² to come to an understanding with Russia,¹⁰³ and to preserve the Balance of Power in Europe.¹⁰⁴ Deeply suspicious of Germany and her growing economic power, Grey felt his fears were confirmed almost immediately after taking office by the German intransigence at Algeciras and by her stepped-up naval policy. In the years between 1907 and 1914 Edward Grey labored assiduously to attain his objectives. He successfully, perhaps too successfully, strengthened the Entente. He ended Britain's isolation and countered German power by making a friend of a long-standing rival, Russia. The preservation of the Balance of Power proved to be beyond his, or indeed any European statesman's, talents.

¹⁰¹Buchanan, My Mission to Russia, 1:178, 2:16-17.

¹⁰²Grey, Twenty-Five Years, 1:100-2; Count Metternich to Bulow, London, 3 January 1906, GP, 21:69.

¹⁰³Grey, Twenty-Five Years, 1:147-48.

¹⁰⁴Fay, Origins of the World War, 1:216; Taylor, Struggle for Mastery, p. 436.

While Grey dominated British foreign policy in a manner that could not have been duplicated by his Russian counterparts, he was not alone in the Foreign Office. Many outstanding personalities served both at home and abroad during Grey's tenure. Although Crowe and Tyrrell were only indirectly concerned with Anglo-Russian affairs, they held positions of importance in the Foreign Office, and their attitudes and influence made them significant enough for consideration. Both men were at various times considered to be the power behind Edward Grey, and both men were responsible to some degree for the anti-German atmosphere at Whitehall. Hardinge and Nicolson were, of course, directly responsible for the negotiations of the Anglo-Russian Convention, one at St. Petersburg and the other in London, and each man served in turn as the Permanent Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Hardinge took up his duties as Permanent Undersecretary in 1906 after serving as Ambassador at St. Petersburg for two years. He had both more experience and more prestige than his chief; he had served in several foreign posts, the most important being those in Russia and Persia; and he had powerful personal contacts abroad and at home. For instance, he was a close friend of King Edward and through him could have considerable influence on diplomatic and consular appointments as well as other areas of concern to the Foreign Office.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵Charles Hardinge, Old Diplomacy: The Reminiscences of Lord Hardinge of Penshurst (London: John Murray, 1947), p. 192.

The new system in the Foreign Office allowed much of the business to be concentrated in the hands of the Permanent Undersecretary, so that Hardinge, pressing his advantage, soon became a key figure at Whitehall. Like Grey, he was anxious to counter increasing German power and desired to come to terms with Russia. Hardinge was much less committed to France than his chief.¹⁰⁶ Along this line, he took an aggressive role in the formation of the Anglo-Russian agreement in 1907. Indeed, the Foreign Office Russian policy was to a great extent the product of Hardinge's ingenuity and hard work.¹⁰⁷ After the agreement was formed Hardinge constantly sought ways to increase its value and keep it operative despite the difficulties involved. Hardinge also turned his attention toward supporting Grey's efforts to check German naval power because he, like Grey, distrusted the Germans and thought Britain's strength lay in maintaining a superior naval force. He supported the Big Navy group in the British Cabinet and was relieved when their program was accepted.¹⁰⁸ In spite of his apprehensions, Hardinge was not radical

¹⁰⁶Charles Hardinge to Grey, 20 February 1906, Grey Papers, FO 800/91, PRO.

¹⁰⁷Even a superficial investigation of the Foreign Office documents of this period reveal the extent of Hardinge's involvement. Many of the documents are included in BD, vol. 4.

¹⁰⁸Hardinge to Schön, 7 December 1908, vol. 13, The Papers of Sir Charles Hardinge, 15 vols., The University Library, Cambridge, England; Hardinge to the King, 31 March 1909, vol. 18, cited in Steiner, Foreign Office, p. 98.

in his attitude toward Germany. He cooperated, though without much hope for a successful outcome, in the discussions between the two countries concerning a naval understanding.¹⁰⁹

Grey respected Hardinge's ability and allowed him considerable freedom in appointments and administration of the Foreign Office. The result was not only an amplification of Hardinge's own powers but an increase in the number of anti-German voices in the office. Hardinge also relieved Grey of much of the burden of correspondence with diplomats abroad, and here too was able to inject his views and interpretation of British foreign policy.¹¹⁰

Hardinge's powers at Whitehall did not go unnoticed. Rather, he was attacked frequently by those jealous or fearful of his influence with the Foreign Secretary. One irate editor charged that Hardinge was a "Tchinovnik" of the Foreign Office who had usurped power from Grey, and demanded, ". . . let the country and foreign nations understand that Sir Edward Grey is a master in his own office, and not Sir Charles Hardinge."¹¹¹ Hardinge's presence at the Foreign Office did bring an expansion of the influence and duties of the Permanent Undersecretary, but it is inaccurate to interpret his relationship with Grey as one of

¹⁰⁹Steiner, Foreign Office, p. 100.

¹¹⁰Ibid., pp. 100-103.

¹¹¹W. T. Stead, Review of Reviews, December 1909, p. 575. quoted in Steiner, The Foreign Office, p. 103. A chinovnik is a Russian bureaucrat or civil servant, and Stead was surely using it here as a derogatory term.

excessive influence. The opinions of the Permanent Undersecretary and his chief were essentially the same, and Grey was grateful to Hardinge for his ability and willingness to share the burdens of the office.¹¹² Ultimately, Grey made decisions based on the information and the advice of his subordinates, and while this information and advice was at times faulty or incomplete, the decisions were those of the Foreign Secretary.

Two other of Grey's associates also expanded the powers of their positions while in his service. William Tyrrell and Eyre Crowe were a contrast in almost every way imaginable, but they managed to work harmoniously during their years at the Foreign Office, and to form a close and lasting friendship. In many ways they complemented each other--Crowe as the ultimate British civil servant and Tyrrell as the charismatic charming individual. William Tyrrell served as Grey's private secretary from 1908 until 1915. Previously Tyrrell had been private secretary to Thomas Sanderson during his tenure as Permanent Undersecretary, and précis writer for Grey from 1905 to 1907. He became Grey's most intimate associate in the Foreign Office, especially during the years prior to the outbreak of World War I, when the gulf between Grey and much of his

¹¹²Hardinge, Old Diplomacy, pp. 192-3.

staff was particularly apparent. A complex man, Tyrrell aroused conflicting emotions in others, who found him, variously and sometimes simultaneously, subtle, witty, devious, shrewd, superficial, and even humble.¹¹³ Obviously gay and amusing, Tyrrell performed his official duties with ease, but found his forte in personal contacts, where he used his remarkable ability to win others to his or the Foreign Office's point of view. Commenting on Tyrrell's ability to understand the point of view of foreigners, Grey sagely observed, ". . . nothing so predisposes men to understand as making them feel that they are understood."¹¹⁴ He disliked paperwork and rarely even minuted documents, and was clearly devoted to the power of the spoken word. Fundamentally in agreement with the general opinion of the majority of Foreign Office officials, Tyrrell was skeptical of the Germans and welcomed the rapprochement with Russia.¹¹⁵ After 1912, Tyrrell seems to have undergone a change in attitude toward the German problem. At any rate, it is clear

¹¹³Lord Ponsonby to Grey, 20 April 1911, Grey Papers, FO 800/93, PRO. Spender, Life, Politics and Journalism, 1:171; Grey, Twenty-Five Years, 1:xviii; Sir Owen O'Malley, Phantom Caravan (London: Methuen & Co., 1954), p. 45; Lord Strang, At Home and Abroad (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1956), p. 308. Grey commented, "I had occasion, in office, to know the great value of Tyrrell's public service; but the thing that I prize is our friendship . . ." Grey, Twenty-Five Years, 1:xviii.

¹¹⁴Ibid.

¹¹⁵Tyrrell to Spring-Rice, 1 May 1906; Tyrrell to Spring-Rice, 11 December 1907; Spring-Rice to Tyrrell, 17 April 1908, The Papers of Sir Cecil Arthur Spring-Rice, FO 800/241, Public Record Office, London, England.

that his dislike of Arthur Nicolson, then Permanent Undersecretary, led him to advocate a policy contrary to that of the pro-Russian Nicolson.¹¹⁶

No real conclusio- can be reached concerning the extent of Tyrrell's influence on Grey, but clearly Grey trusted and relied on him. His influence increased after 1910, possibly because of Grey's displeasure with Arthur Nicolson's line. In 1913 Tyrrell served as Grey's private ambassador to Washington, and increasingly he tried to relieve Grey, already suffering from the eye problems that culminated in his blindness. When Tyrrell, suffering from the strain of wartime, became ill and had to leave office in 1915, Grey was distressed and felt a real loss.¹¹⁷

Tyrrell's colleague in the Foreign Office, Eyre Crowe, served the Grey Foreign Office as Senior Clerk and from 1912 as Assistant Secretary. Crowe was well-qualified for the position, having been a resident clerk in the office since 1885. Crowe has been described as the "perfect type of British Civil Servant,"¹¹⁸ and he did fulfill the description. He was logical and painstaking, and never seemed bored by paper work. His first duties in the Grey administration involved the administrative reforms of 1906, sometimes referred to as the "Crowe Reforms." Crowe was born and educated in Germany, and his knowledge

¹¹⁶Valentine Chirol to Hardinge, 2 June 1913, Hardinge Papers, vol. 93, cited in Steiner, Foreign Office, p. 150.

¹¹⁷Steiner, Foreign Office, pp. 164-5. Tyrrell returned to the Foreign Office in 1916, but to head the newly formed Political Intelligence Department.

¹¹⁸Nicolson, Portrait of a Diplomatist, p. 239.

of the German language and culture were unsurpassed in the Foreign Office, and possibly in the British government. He was convinced, because of this knowledge, that German aims were dangerous to England and the world, and he consistently tried to point this out in his copious and well-written memoranda and minutes.¹¹⁹ Unlike Grey and other Foreign Office officials, Crowe did not consider the attempts at an Anglo-German understanding useful in the least, insisting that Germany would eventually, intentionally or accidentally, bring Europe to war.¹²⁰

Crowe was no less a controversial person than Tyrrell and aroused as many diverse opinions. In addition to his strong opinions, he was an entirely unconventional man in an atmosphere still starched with Victorian manners, and his startling behavior only added to his already peculiar reputation. Acknowledged to be brilliant and a first-class administrator, Crowe despised amateur diplomats and careless work. He disliked the press, and was never shy about expressing these opinions.¹²¹ Naturally, these qualities did not endear him to everyone. Hermann Lutz called him "the Holstein of the British

¹¹⁹"Memorandum on the Present State of British Relations with France and Germany," BD, vol. 3, Appendix A, written by Crowe, is a good example of the logic and industry Crowe applied to any task.

¹²⁰Ibid.

¹²¹Nicolson, Portrait of a Diplomatist, p. 239.

Foreign Office,"¹²² while a British critic remarked that "his mentality, his culture, his outlook, were to some extent Germanic; his methods of- ten enough entirely Prussian."¹²³ Crowe also had admirers, who extolled his virtues of integrity, good nature, and sensibility.¹²⁴

Crowe's influence with the Foreign Secretary is as controversial an issue as that of any of Grey's associates. Crowe and Grey were not close, and Grey often ignored Crowe's advice, although he respected his views. Crowe frequently advocated a harsher course than Grey was willing to follow. In addition, Crowe figured very little in the relationship with Russia. His major concern was with Europe, especially Germany, and he had little interest in the problems that involved Anglo-Russian diplomacy. Nevertheless, because of his German apprehensions and his prominent position in the Foreign Office, he was at least an indirect supporter of the Entente. Later he figured deeply in the Balkan problems of 1913-1914, and after 1910, the inability of the Permanent Undersecretary, Arthur Nicolson to meet the demands of his office made Crowe's position increasingly important.¹²⁵

¹²²Hermann Lutz, Lord Grey and the World War, trans. E. W. Dicks (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1928), p. 109.

¹²³John D. Gregory, On the Edge of Diplomacy; Rambles and Reflections, 1902-1923 (London: Hutchinson & Son, 1929), p. 260.

¹²⁴O'Malley, Phantom Caravan, pp. 46-7; Nicolson, Portrait of a Diplomatist, p. 239. Nicolson's complimentary description is all the more to be expected in view of the fact that Crowe was one of the few officials at Whitehall with whom his father, Arthur Nicolson, had a satisfactory relationship.

¹²⁵Richard Cosgrove, Sir Eyre Crowe and the English Foreign Office, (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, 1967) is an extensive

One man who figured directly and significantly in several aspects of Anglo-Russian relations, both with great success and unfortunate failure, was Sir Arthur Nicolson. Nicolson must first be viewed as a diplomat, as this was where he began his career in the foreign service, and where he had his greatest success. His appointment as Ambassador to Russia, 1906-1910, was a major step in the rapprochement between Russia and England, and Nicolson distinguished himself there by his diligent work and careful handling of the negotiations for the Anglo-Russian Convention. Nicolson was popular with the Russians, and he in turn liked them. His son records that he was careful not to neglect the social obligations which were such an important part of the old diplomacy. His unpretentious attitude, his attraction to le charme slav, and the best food in St. Petersburg, made his company and therefore, the British Embassy, one of the most popular in the Russian capital.¹²⁶ Nicolson had all the qualifications for the British diplomatic service, including aristocratic

study of Crowe's influence in the Foreign Office. Cosgrove maintains that Crowe actually had little opportunity to alter policy, and that his greatest contribution was as an ordinary civil servant whose highest ambition was to become Permanent Undersecretary. As for his anti-German stand, Cosgrove found it in tune with the general sentiment of the Foreign Office, but agrees with Monger that Sir Francis Bertie, the Ambassador at Paris, was really the key figure among the anti-German element. See also; Monger, End of Isolation, pp. 99-103. It is difficult to study Crowe's policy from Foreign Office papers, because he systematically destroyed his own papers before he left the office and his attitudes and ideas must be discovered in his minutes. He finally achieved his ambition to become Permanent Undersecretary in 1925.

¹²⁶Nicolson, Portrait of a Diplomatist, pp. 179-180.

birth, independent income, a sophisticated and charming personality, and a great liking for the diplomatic life. He was at ease with a wide variety of diplomats, and proved apt at handling Izvol'ski and others in the Russian government.

In 1910, when Nicolson returned to London to become Permanent Undersecretary, he was sixty-one years old and reluctant to take the position. He was unsuited for the job and took it only out of a deep sense of duty to the service.¹²⁷ His apprehensions were soon born out. Harold Nicolson wrote that his father "cordially disliked" being Permanent Undersecretary of State.¹²⁸ After only a year and a half in the office, Nicolson begged to be returned to an embassy, but despite repeated requests, he did not receive one, and finally retired in 1916.¹²⁹ Considering his regrettable performance at Whitehall, it is unfortunate he was not granted an embassy.

Nicolson and Grey did not enjoy the rapport that had been present between Grey and Hardinge, and Nicolson's relations with other members of the Foreign Office staff were often uncordial. Tyrrell bitterly disliked and distrusted him and even accused him of disloyalty and "criticizing his chief's policy in conversations with foreign diplomats."¹³⁰ Nicolson liked and respected Crowe, and the feeling

¹²⁷Nicolson, Portrait of a Diplomatist, pp. 232-34.

¹²⁸Ibid., p. 244.

¹²⁹Nicolson to Grey, 14 August 1912; Nicolson to Grey, 21 October 1913, Grey Papers, FO 800/93, PRO.

¹³⁰Chiro1 to Hardinge, 18 April 1913; Chiro1 to Hardinge, 10 April 1913, 13 May 1913, 20 June 1913.

was returned, but by 1914 they too had clashed.¹³¹ Only part of Nicolson's trouble lay in his dislike for the details of an administrative position. He was opposed to the majority of the Liberal party, especially the anti-Russian factions, and he thought Grey was often weak and likely to be influenced by them. He repeatedly urged the Foreign Secretary to strengthen Britain's understanding with France and Russia as a deterrent to German power. Unfortunately, Nicolson took office just in time to see the last efforts to rebuild Anglo-German friendship-- efforts which deeply distressed the Undersecretary. He was also forced to witness a deterioration in the relations between his country and Russia in the Near East, and he had no faith that Grey would be able to stand against the increasing criticism of the Foreign Office policy with regard to Russia. More than anything else, Nicolson's strong pro-Russian stand annoyed many of his colleagues and widened the gap between him and Grey. He repeatedly urged Grey to take a firmer stand than Grey was willing to adopt. The Foreign Secretary was annoyed at Nicolson's insistence that he clearly state Britain's position with regard to Russia and France, and the gulf between them widened.¹³² In the end Nicolson was not only ineffective as the Parliamentary Undersecretary,

¹³¹Steiner, Foreign Office, p. 139.

¹³²Nicolson, Portrait of a Diplomatist, p. 241. Nicolson gives Grey a harsh judgment, saying, "It is always irritating for a gentleman in a false position to be assured by other gentlemen that his position is false. And from 1906 onwards Sir Edward Grey's position has been very illogical indeed."

but actually contributed to the demoralization and the inability of the Foreign Office to meet the demands of the world situation.

The diplomat who replaced Nicolson at St. Petersburg was Sir George Buchanan, who remained in the Embassy there until just before the Bolshevik revolution. Buchanan was typical of the best members of the British Diplomatic Service and served well in this difficult post. The Diplomatic Service did not enjoy even the extent of reforms the Foreign Office at home had undergone, but remained a small, narrow group of men serving the thirteen embassies and several consular posts around the world. Like its European counterparts, it drew its membership from the ranks of the aristocrats, and right up to the war, position and income were more important considerations in securing a diplomatic post than examinations. Unlike the Russian diplomatic service, the British diplomats rarely acted independently but instead were loyal followers of the policy laid out for them by the Foreign Secretary. A few of the grand-style diplomats of the nineteenth century remained, such as Sir Francis Bertie, but for the most part the British diplomatic staff was socially acceptable in the best circles in Europe, moderately well-educated, and properly British. The chief function of the diplomats was to furnish the Foreign Office with information and to represent British policy and carry it out effectively in their respective posts. They were permitted only a small role in developing policy. British policy might have been better implemented if the representatives had been allowed more flexibility, or had been drawn from a wider circle of society, but

these are criticisms that could be applied to the whole European national diplomatic scene. The "Old Diplomacy" was conservative and narrow, for all its glitter, but it was the best any European nation had to offer in the years before 1914.

The diplomatic relations between Britain and Russia were directed by these agencies and these men in the years between 1907 and 1914. Neither the British nor the Russian establishment was really modern, although the British far outstripped the Russians in efficiency and coordination. Both services suffered from some of the same problems, such as an antiquated diplomatic branch and lack of interest and knowledge by the public. There were distinct differences between them as well, perhaps the most important being the degree of integrity and responsibility present in many of the British representatives and lacking in the Russians. In any event, the administrative structure, the policy-making apparatus, and the ability and character of the personnel of the foreign services were important factors determining the course of Anglo-Russian relations in the troubled years from 1907 to the outbreak of the war.

CHAPTER III

THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN CONVENTION OF 1907

The Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 marks a significant point in the diplomatic affairs of the years preceding World War I. It was not a formal alliance since it concerned only the disposition of certain colonial rivalries between the two countries, but its importance far exceeded its substance. The agreement ended Britain's flirtation with Germany and the Triple Alliance powers and formed the last side of the opposing triangle powers which became known as the Triple Entente. The convention gave Russia and Britain a basis on which to cooperate in other areas of the world besides those laid out in the agreement, and reassured France of the friendship of her two allies in Europe. For Russia, too, the convention was a significant change. Now assured of British as well as French friendship, Russia could exhibit more independence of her traditional and overbearing friend, Germany, and could begin to regain the diplomatic prestige shattered by her defeat in the Russo-Japanese war and by pressing domestic problems. For both nations, it offered a redoubt from which to oppose the growing power of Germany in European affairs. Although the aims of Britain and Russia in extending the ties implicit in the convention were far from identical, the fact of the agreement rather

than its terms was a major diplomatic development affecting not only Russia and England but the entire European balance of power.¹

Edward Grey, the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, had been in favor of an Anglo-Russian rapprochement since his early days in the Foreign Office, and had inherited such a policy from his predecessors in that department.² Unlike many of his colleagues in the Foreign Office, however, Grey did not initially see an agreement with Russia as a threat to Germany. He was aware

¹The most detailed investigation of the diplomatic maneuvers concerning the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 remains Rogers P. Churchill, The Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 (Cedar Rapids, Iowa: Torch Press, 1939), which despite its age still stands up admirably. Using primarily published sources in English, with a few significant exceptions, Churchill followed the negotiations in minute detail and this work is essentially undisputed. He is generally sympathetic to the convention and to the British part in it. His conclusions have been challenged by Firuz Kazemzadeh, Russia and Britain in Persia, 1864-1914: A Study in Imperialism (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968). Other early studies are Mary M. McCarthy, Anglo-Russian Rivalry in Persia. University of Buffalo Studies, ser. 4, no. 2 (June 1925), and William Habberton, Anglo-Russian Relations Concerning Afghanistan, 1837-1907 (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1937). Helpful unpublished studies include John Murray, "British Policy and Opinion on the Anglo-Russian Entente, 1907-1914" (Ph. D. dissertation, Duke University, 1956), and Hossein Nazem, "Russia and Great Britain in Iran, 1900-1914" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1954).

²Thomas Sanderson to Spring-Rice, London, 6 August 1907, Spring-Rice Papers, FO 800/241, PRO, records that all the Foreign Office chiefs back to Lansdowne had been in favor of an agreement with Russia under the right conditions. See also, Grey to Spring-Rice, 17 April 1907, Spring-Rice Papers, FO 800/241, PRO, and Grey, Twenty-Five Years, 1:4.

of the fact that the Russian agreement would complement the French ties that both countries had, and hoped it would remove the dangerous areas of friction between England and Russia.³ His policy was not unorthodox, for besides having a precedent in the policy of his immediate predecessors, most of the members of the Liberal Cabinet as well as those of the Foreign Office were in agreement with him.

Despite the eagerness of the Foreign Office officials to come to an agreement, a series of complications forestalled immediate negotiation. The Russian government, suffering from the humiliating defeat of the Russo-Japanese War, was struggling with the revolutionary conditions at home bequeathed by that war, and the inability of the Russian government to take action was evident.⁴ Nevertheless, encouraging events began to take place. In January, Charles Hardinge, who had been serving as Ambassador to St. Petersburg, returned to London to serve as Permanent Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs. In his final interview with the Tsar on January 10, Hardinge was assured of the Tsar's satisfaction at the improvement in Anglo-Russian relations and his pleasure that the British Foreign Office would now have a "warm advocate of friendly relations between the two countries."⁵ The diplomatic situation improved further when Sir Arthur Nicolson, who was already an ardent supporter of Anglo-Russian friendship, replaced

³Grey, Twenty-Five Years, 1:148.

⁴Grey to Spring Rice, 18 December 1905, BD, 4:218.

⁵Hardinge to Grey, 10 January 1906, ibid., pp. 22-21.

Hardinge at St. Petersburg. Nicolson did not go immediately to St. Petersburg; instead, he served as the British representative at the Algeiras Conference, where the opportunity to support French claims improved Anglo-Russian relations.

An even more important development for the increasing friendship of the two countries was forthcoming when the powerful Count Witte, now Chairman of the Russian Council of Ministers, gave his support to the idea. Judiciously assessing the relative support Russia might get from England and from Germany, Witte abandoned his earlier desire for a continental agreement and opted for an arrangement with the British. In fact, Witte, now intent on achieving British friendship, would have detoured around the arduous tasks of diplomacy and completed the entente through a meeting of the sovereigns of Russia and Britain if the British had been willing. Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, in temporary charge of the Russian Embassy in St. Petersburg, was suspicious of Witte's real intentions. In early January he wrote Grey he thought what Witte really wanted was a loan from England and afterward would be less eager for negotiations.⁶ Along this line, the British cautiously rejected a proposal by Witte that the British monarch visit

⁶Spring-Rice to Grey, 16 January 1906, Grey Papers, FO 800/33, PRO: Spring-Rice to Grey 3 January 1906, BD, 4:219; Lee, King Edward VII, 2:265. Spring Rice might well have suspected Witte's motives for later, after the convention had been concluded without Witte's aid, Witte wrote in his memoirs that he was opposed to tying Russia down with treaties and arousing the jealousy of Germany; Witte, The Memoirs of Count Witte, p. 433.

Russia.⁷ Undaunted, Witte continued to press for a personal meeting between the two sovereigns.⁸

Regardless of the reluctance of the British to follow Witte's plans, relations between the two countries continued to improve. The Algeciras Conference, as well as trouble in Crete, Macedonia, Persia, and other places, offered opportunities for co-operation, despite the internal revolutionary disturbances that occupied much of Russia's attention throughout 1906. In answer to a question put to him in the House of Commons, Grey commented on the "increasing tendency for England and Russia to deal in a friendly way with questions concerning them both as they arise."⁹

Both England and Russia viewed an agreement as security against the increasing power of Germany in the Near East, but neither country was willing to admit such a convention might be directed solely against Germany. For this reason, both Russia and England were careful to explain all the ways in which their friendship would not harm their future relations with Germany.¹⁰

⁷Spring-Rice to Grey, 26 January 1906, Grey Papers, FO 800/33, PRO, Grey to Lord Knollys, 28 March 1906; Grey Papers, FO 800/64, PRO, Spring-Rice to Grey, 31 January 1906, *ibid.*

⁸Spring-Rice to Grey, 3 April 1906, Grey Papers, FO 800/33, PRO.

⁹Great Britain, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 4th ser., (1906), 157:1416.

¹⁰Protocol of Deliberations of the Russian Ministerial Council of February 1, 1907, on the Project of a Treaty with England on Persian

In May 1906 Alexander Izvolski replaced Count V. N. Lamsdorff as Russian Foreign Minister. Already considered a more able and liberal diplomat than Lamsdorff, Izvolski was welcomed in most European circles.¹¹ His reputation, as yet unsullied by his unfortunate Balkan adventures, was high in British and French circles. He had recently been justified in his resistance to the Russo-Japanese War, and his determination to build on the foundations of Russia's alliance with France was well known. At the same time, the new Russian minister did not wish to do anything to jeopardize a friendly relationship with Germany. In response to the German statement that while Germany would welcome an arrangement between the two powers on "exclusively Anglo-Russian interests [which] promote the general peace through the removal of Anglo-Russian grounds for dispute," but would expect Russian cooperation on decisions touching German interests, such as the Bagdad railway,¹² Izvolski was quick to answer. Expressing his

Affairs, Benno von Siebert and George A. Schreiner, eds., Entente Diplomacy and the World: Matrix of the History of Europe, 1909-1914 (New York & London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1921), pp. 474-77: "Materialy po istorii anglo-russkikh dogovor za 1907g," Krasnyi Arkhiv 69-70 (1935): 15-9.

¹¹Maurice Bompard to Maurice Rouvier, St. Petersburg, 9 September 1905, Documents diplomatiques français, 1871-1914, 3 ser., 7:544-46 (hereafter cited as DDF); Schön to Bülow, Paris, 14 May 1906, GP, 22:21-24; Sir A. Johnstone to Grey, Vienna, 27 May 1906, BD, 4:235-6.

¹²Bülow to Schön, 19 May 1906, GP, 25:11-12; Grey to Nicholson, 23 May 1906, BD, 4:231.

gratification at German approval of a prospective agreement, Izvol'ski wrote that "the Russian government recognized the German interests in the question of the Bagdad railroad, and they would not take any decision in connection with it without previous friendly explanations with the German government."¹³ The British agreed with Izvol'ski's action because they too were anxious to point out that any Anglo-Russian agreement should not offend Germany.¹⁴

By late May, Sir Arthur Nicolson had arrived in St. Petersburg, fresh from his successes at Algieras. The situation was designed to make the rapprochement with Russia as smooth as possible, with Hardinge, who had already laid much of the groundwork, at the Foreign Office, and Nicolson at St. Petersburg. Despite frequent historical assessments of Nicolson as an uncritical Russophile, the new Ambassador was aware of the limitations and the problems inherent in friendship with the Russians. However, he firmly believed their aid was necessary to curb German ambitions in Europe, and he was willing to make certain allowances to gain the entente.¹⁵

¹³Schön to Bülow, 23 May 1906, and Schön to Bülow, 30 May 1906, GP, 25:14, 15-6; Grey to Nicolson, 23 May 1906, BD, 4:231.

¹⁴Grey to Prince Metternich, London, 3 July 1906, BD, 3:364.

¹⁵Harold Nicolson writes that the German historians are incorrect in attributing to his father a desire to destroy Germany. Nicolson thought that the agreement, although in his opinion wholly honest and innocent, would probably be unpopular with Germany, and admitted that the "subconscious feeling did exist that thereby we were securing defensive guarantees against the overbearing domination of one power." Nicolson, Portrait of a Diplomatist, pp. 172-73.

On the day following his arrival in St. Petersburg, Nicolson called on Izvolski "to exchange views on several important matters. . . understanding that the Russian government were desirous of entering upon a discussion that might lead to a satisfactory conclusion."¹⁶ Izvolski agreed, and on 4 June the Tsar supported his position in an audience granted to the new British Ambassador.¹⁷ Nicolson was satisfied that the first real steps toward negotiations had been made. The first meetings did begin, but Nicolson was premature in his optimism. The negotiations proved to be long and tortuous, filled with frequent delays and set-backs. After his initial receptiveness, Izvolski used all the delaying tactics at his disposal, while his British counterpart patiently urged the conversations to a successful conclusion.

Other incidents besides Izvolski's vacillations threatened to mar the proceedings. An ill-timed request for a visit of the British fleet to some Baltic ports was, after some discomforting moments, avoided by the Russian government.¹⁸ A few months later at

¹⁶Nicolson to Grey, 29 May 1906, BD, 4:237; Nicolson, Portrait of a Diplomatist, p. 158.

¹⁷Nicolson to Grey, 5 June 1906, BD, 4:238; Nicolson, Portrait of a Diplomatist, p. 158.

¹⁸The event was especially unpleasant to the Russians in view of the fact that their own fleet had been almost totally destroyed during the Japanese war; Editor's Note, BD, 4:241; Grey, Twenty-Five Years, 1:150; Lee, King Edward VII, 2:565-66; Benckendorff to Izvolski, 16 July 1906 and Izvolski to Benckendorff, 18 July 1906, Alexander Iswolsky, Au Service de la Russie; Correspondance diplomatique, 1906-1911, 2 vols., trans. Helene Iswolsky (Paris: Les Editions Internationales, 1937), 1:333-35.

the London meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Union where representatives of all European parliaments were in attendance--the Russian Duma representatives for the first time--the Russian visitors were distressed by the news that the Duma had been summarily dissolved by the Tsar.¹⁹ Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, the British Prime Minister, impetuously commented publicly on the action, proclaiming, "La Duma est morte; Vive la Duma," The Russian government, especially the Tsar, was inclined to interpret Campbell-Bannerman's words as a criticism of the imperial government, and only after extensive explanations and assurances were Russian feelings assuaged.²⁰ In addition to these seeming trivialities, which nevertheless precipitated sizable crises in the diplomatic world, there were powerful interests in Russia hostile to the idea of an agreement with Britain. The military clique, whose designs on Persia and other strategic spots clashed with those of the British, discouraged every move. In addition, the Tsar's real attitude was difficult to discern, partly because

¹⁹Hugh Seton Watson, The Decline of Imperial Russia, 1855-1914 (New York & Washington: Frederick A. Praeger, 1952), pp. 155-56.

²⁰J. A. Spender, The Life of the Right Honorable Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, 2 vols. (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1924), 2:261-4; Lee, King Edward VII, 2:566-68; Nicolson, Portrait of a Diplomatist, pp. 162-63; Grey to Nicolson, 3 October 1906, Grey Papers, FO 800/72, PRO; Paul Miliukov, Political Memoirs, 1905-1917 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1967), p. 185.

of his family relationship with his cousin, the German Kaiser William II.²¹

In October 1906, months after Nicolson's arrival in St. Petersburg, Izvol'ski was still troubled about the German reaction to the negotiations. On a trip to Paris he explained to Sir Francis Bertie, the British Ambassador there, that he needed all the information he could get "in order to enable me to judge how far I can go without the risk of German opposition."²² Izvol'ski made two trips to Berlin in October where he sounded out both the Kaiser and the German Foreign Office again, pointing out how essential the agreement was to Russia.²³ Receiving the assurance he sought, the Russian minister regained some of his earlier enthusiasm for the project.²⁴ Conversely, these German conversations brought criticism from Grey, who was not entirely sure Izvol'ski was playing fair with the British.²⁵

Throughout the negotiations for the Anglo-Russian convention, France watched with keen attention. Having secured the cooperation

²¹Nicolson to Grey, 26 September 1906, BD, 4:242.

²²Bertie to Grey, 22 October 1906, Grey Papers, FO 800/34, PRO

²³Memorandum of Schon, 13 October 1906 and 30 October 1906, GP, 22:35-6, 38-41.

²⁴Izvol'ski to S. A. Poklewski-Koziell, Charge d'Affaires, London, 21 October 1906, Isvol'sky, Correspondance Diplomatique, 1:382-85.

²⁵Grey to Nicolson, 31 October 1906, BD, 4:249-50.

of both Russia and England for herself, nothing would please her better than a cordial agreement between her two partners. Formally, France played little part in the proceedings, but behind the scenes, Paul Cambon in London and Maurice Bompard in St. Petersburg did everything they could to encourage the negotiations.²⁶

In spite of the uncertain course of the negotiations, the British continued to work toward an agreement. The instructions the British government gave Nicolson were to remove the points of friction between Russia and his government concerning troublesome areas of Persia, Afghanistan and Tibet. The British desired Russian recognition of the division of Persia into spheres of influence, while protecting the principle of Persian independence and integrity. Regarding Afghanistan, Nicolson was to secure Russia's acknowledgement of Britain's special interest in that country, agreeing that no Russian agents would penetrate Afghan territory and that the diplomatic and external relations with the Afghan Amir would be conducted only through British agents. As for Tibet, Russia must refrain from any interference whatever in the affairs of that country.

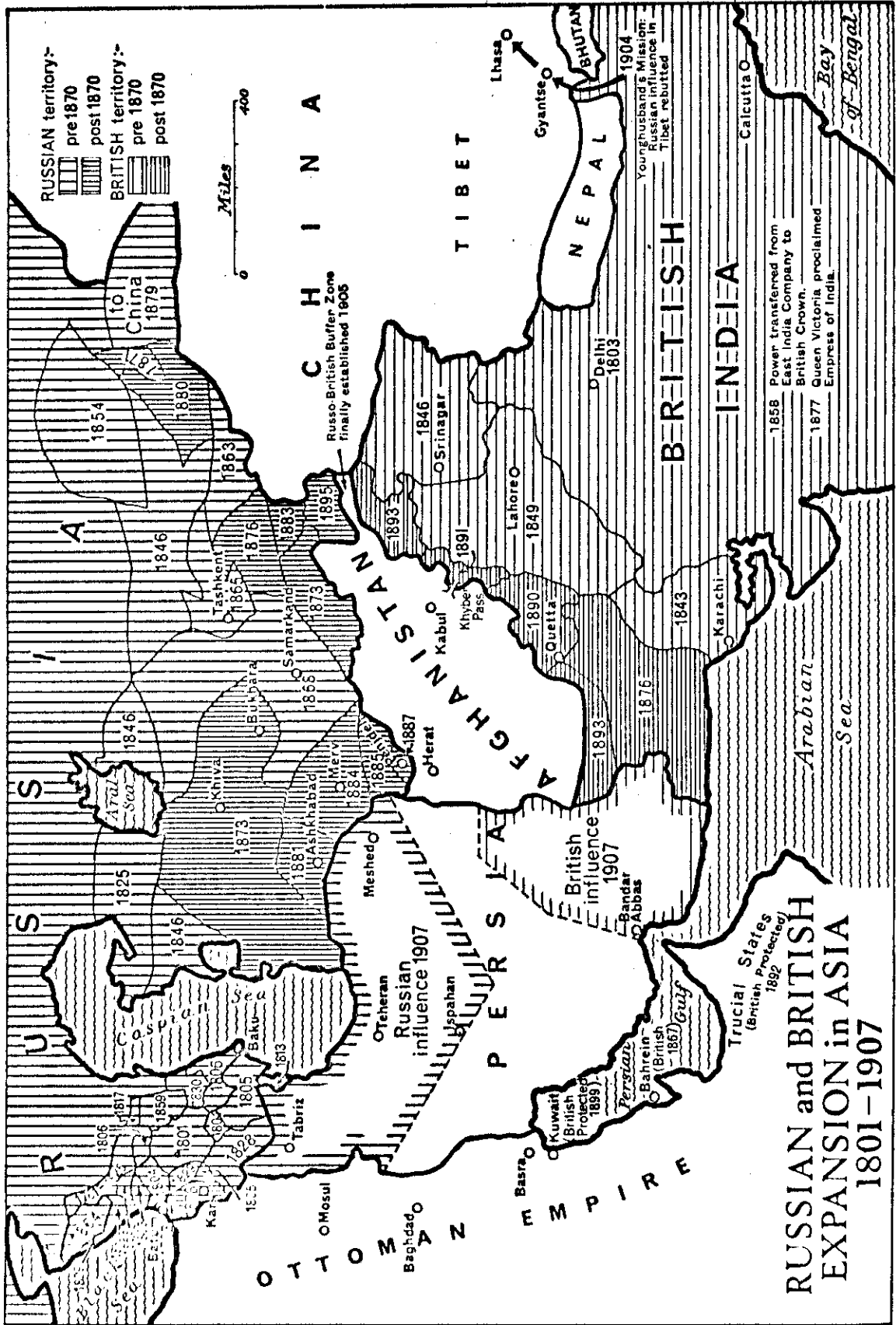
²⁶Keith Eubank, Paul Cambon; Master Diplomatist (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960), pp. 123-24; Maurice Bompard, Mon Ambassade en Russie, 1903-1908 (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1937), pp. 241-45; Korff, Russian Foreign Policy, p. 39.

From June of 1906 to August 1907 Nicolson labored carefully and skillfully to achieve these goals.²⁷

The Tibetan negotiations, lasting from 7 June 1906 to 15 January 1907, were the simplest and most easily concluded. Although Russia objected to the British claims of dominance over the external relations of Tibet, to the British reluctance to allow Russian Buddhist pilgrims and scientific missions to enter Tibet, and to the British occupation of the Chumbi Valley, which controlled an important approach to Tibet, none of these differences proved insoluble. In many ways, the intrusion of Britain and Russia into the affairs of Tibet was the least defensible of their activities. Backward, inaccessible, and inhospitable, Tibet actually offered little more than an extra area of contention between two imperialistic countries. In fact, the Tibetan experience offers a good historical example of the most ignoble motives of expanding powers. The British rationalized their actions with excuses about protecting their imperial possessions, especially India, while the Russians' only reason for challenging British power in this area was the

²⁷Nicolson's methods were described by his son and biographer as "those of a humane and highly skilled dentist dealing with three painful teeth. He would work for a bit on Afghanistan, proceeding delicately but firmly: at the first wince of pain, he would close the cavity with anodynes, cotton wool and guttapercha, and proceed at the next sitting with Thibet. . ." Nicolson, Portrait of a Diplomatist, p. 175.

²⁸Besides India, British dependencies in the area included Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim, the last providing access to Tibet through the Chumbi Valley. See map, p. 121.



rivarly already existing between the two nations.²⁹

In theory at least, Tibet owed suzerainty to the failing Chinese Empire, but since 1890 the Chinese had recognized British predominance over the country as a result of British military action in settling Tibetan-Sikkim disputes.³⁰ This gave the British virtual control over Tibet's internal administration and foreign relations, ostensibly for the purpose of protecting British trade.³¹ The Tibetans cared so little for the diplomatic amenities of the European world that besides frequently antagonizing the British government in India over boundary disputes and grazing rights, they often failed to answer official dispatches and

²⁹Taraknath, Das, British Expansion in Tibet (Calcutta: N.M. Rayenowury & Co., 1928), offers a bitter attack on British activity in Tibet. Interesting treatments can be found in Peter Fleming, Bayonets to Lhasa; The First Full Account of the British Invasion of Tibet in 1904 (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1961), a colorful, popular account of the Younghusband expedition, and in Alastair Lamb, Britain and Chinese Central Asia: The Road to Lhasa, 1767-1905 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960). An Eastern point of view is found in Tieh-Tseng Li, The Historical Status of Tibet (New York: Columbia University, King's Crown Press, 1956).

³⁰Churchill, Anglo-Russian Convention, p. 179; Das, British Expansion, pp. 17-8; Editor's note, BD, 4:305.

³¹Churchill points out that British trade in Tibet was so negligible between 1895 and 1912 that the "Annual Statement of Trade of the United Kingdom with Foreign Countries and British Possessions" did not contain separate statistics for such trade: Churchill, Anglo-Russian Convention, p. 180, n."f".

even at times returned them to the British Foreign Office unopened.³² Even the formidable Lord Curzon, when Viceroy of India, could not bring the Tibetans to heel.³³

Russia's interest in Tibet, aside from a general rivalry with Britain and an expansionist policy in Central Asia, sprang from the fact that Russian Central Asia included a large number of Russian Buriats--Buddhists--who regarded the Dalai Lama as their spiritual leader. The Russians had sponsored several scientific and geographical missions in the area, and the British suspected these missions really had political purposes. Continued British concern over Russian agitation in and near Tibet peaked in 1903 when the British requested a categorical statement from the Russian government concerning its intentions in Tibet. Russia replied that she had no designs whatever on the country.³⁴ The British were not completely satisfied, however, and later that year, under the encouragement of Lord Curzon, undertook a mission to Tibet led by Colonel Francis Younghusband.³⁵

³²Lansdowne to Spring-Rice, 17 November 1903, BD, 4:306; Editor's note, ibid., p. 305; Nicolson, Portrait of a Diplomatist, p. 159.

³³Earl of Ronaldshay [Lawrence John Lumley Dundas, 2nd Marquis of Zetland], The Life of Lord Curzon, 3 vols. (London: E. Benns, 1928), 2:205; Lamb, Britain and Chinese Central Asia, pp. 327-28; Churchill, Anglo-Russian Convention, p. 181.

³⁴Hardinge to Lansdowne, 20 June 1904, BD, 4:311; Ronaldshay, Lord Curzon, 2:278.

³⁵Lamb, Britain and Chinese Central Asia, pp. 239-313; Li, Tibet, pp. 87-92.

The mission was apparently to punish the Tibetans for not living up to their treaty obligations with the British, which had been made for them by China, but the added motive of curbing Russian activity in the area was as important. Colonel Younghusband far exceeded his instructions from the British government and, after some fighting, arrived in Lhasa in July 1904. By 7 September he had secured the Lhasa Convention, humiliating to the Tibetans, promising concessions and imposing restrictions favorable to the British. Thus the British firmly established domination, no less alarming to the Russians, and incidentally to the Chinese, than it was unpalatable to the Tibetans.³⁶ Russia, however, was not in a position to defend her own pretensions regarding Tibet and in 1906 declared once again that Russian policy was one of "absolute non-intervention."³⁷

On 7 June 1906 the conversations regarding Tibet were opened with Nicolson's proposal of five points set forth by the British Foreign Office. First, Russia must recognize the suzerainty of China over Tibet and to respect its territorial integrity and refrain from interference in its domestic matters. Second, the most important point, Britain expected Russia to recognize the special interests of Great Britain with regard to Tibet's external relations. Third, neither power would send representatives to Lhasa. Fourth,

³⁶Convention Between Great Britain and Tibet," BD, 4:314-16.

³⁷Spring-Rice to Grey, 10 April 1906, BD, 4:326; Spring-Rice to Grey, 2 May 1906, *ibid.*, p. 329.

neither would seek concessions of any kind in Tibet. Last, both powers would refrain from interference in Tibet's economic affairs.³⁸ The British demands were, in effect, designed to maintain British predominance in the area.

By 13 June Izvol'ski indicated that the Russian government would agree to most of the points, with the exception of reserving special rights for the Buddhist subjects of Russia who required some sort of intercourse with Tibet on religious matters.³⁹ In addition, Izvol'ski wished to reserve the privilege of sending Russian geographical and scientific expeditions into the country.⁴⁰ The resolution of these problems, while dilatory, was not especially troublesome. As Grey suggested, Tibet was "one of the few places in the world where to leave things alone causes no inconvenience to anyone."⁴¹

The most difficult consideration concerned the British demand under their draft clause two, that Russia recognize British special

³⁸"Draft Instructions to Sir A. Nicolson," 23 May 1906, *ibid.*, p. 331; Nicolson to Grey, 18 June 1906, *ibid.*, pp. 332-33.

³⁹Nicolson to Grey, 20 June 1906, Nicolson Papers, FO, 800/337, PRO.

⁴⁰"Memorandum on the Correspondence relating to the proposed Agreement between Great Britain and Russia on the subject of Thibet," *BD*, 4:337-38.

⁴¹Gwynn, Letters and Friendships of Spring-Rice, 2:72.

interests in Tibet's foreign relations, something the Russians were determined to avoid if possible. On 8 October, when Izvol'ski submitted Russia's first counterdraft, no such recognition was included.⁴² Along this line, the Russians especially objected to the British occupation of the Chumbi Valley, considered by the British to be a strategic approach to India. The Russian Foreign Minister wished to insert a provision in the agreement limiting the time of occupation.⁴³ This had really already been provided for, but in more indefinite terms than the Russians were willing to accept. Somewhat to Izvol'ski's surprise, both the British government at home and the government of India agreed to this suggestion. In reality, the British Liberals were not averse to withdrawing military forces from Tibet. The most important aspect of the problem from their point of view was not their own withdrawal, but seeing that the external relations of Tibet were not disturbed by any other power, especially Russia. The geographical proximity of Tibet to India seemed to the British to demand this concession. Twice Izvol'ski tried to bring the British to accept revisions in their clause two, omitting it or at least leaving only very vague allusions to British special interests in Tibet's external affairs.⁴⁴ As many times the British refused. Finally, the British government,

⁴²"Memorandum on Thibet," BD, 4:342-44.

⁴³Ibid., note 7, p. 343.

⁴⁴Ibid., note 7, pp. 345-46, note 6, 342-43; Churchill, Anglo-Russian Convention, pp. 207-08.

with the compliance of the India Office, accepted a slightly watered-down version of their original proposal, preserving the claim of "a special interest in the external relations of Tibet generally," and the Tibetan part of the convention was complete.⁴⁵

One question which occupied the powers during the negotiations and caused several exchanges between the governments of Britain, Russia, India, and China was an understanding of what exactly comprised the nature of Tibet. On finally agreeing that it was a geographical unit rather than merely an administrative one, the problem then became one of just where the geographical boundaries of the state were. At length, both powers agreed to accept the boundaries as China defined them, but the best information they could get from China was that "no change had ever been made in the limits of Tibet, and the old limits should be regarded as authoritative. There is no necessity to send a definition on them."⁴⁶ If the Chinese ever knew where the boundaries were, and Nicolson thought they did not, they were not telling. The negotiators dropped the question, and the convention contained no mention of boundaries.

⁴⁵"Memorandum on Thibet," BD, 4:346-7.

⁴⁶ Enclosure in Sir J. Jordon to Grey, 14 October 1907, *ibid.*, p. 603; Churchill, Anglo-Russian Convention, pp. 195-97.

Another less humorous problem concerned the Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of the Buddhist religion. His Holiness, the Supreme Head of the Tibetan people, had been languishing in Mongolia since his flight from Tibet during the British difficulties of 1903-1904. No friend of the British, the Dalai Lama had actively resisted their intrusion into his country; now he wished to return to Lhasa. The Russians wished to aid his return, especially so that they might justify their demands for spiritual access to Tibet on the part of the Russian Buriats. Again, after a series of exchanges, the British grudgingly accepted the principle, suspecting correctly that the Russians would soon overstep the limitations of purely religious visitations.⁴⁷

In effect, after a preamble recognizing the suzerain rights of China over Tibet and Great Britain's "special interests," the two powers agreed to stay out of Tibet as long as they could be sure other powers could be prevailed upon to do the same. Buddhists of all sorts might have spiritual relations with the Dalai Lama and with other Buddhist leaders in Tibet, but other relations would, with few exceptions, be carried on through China. An annex providing for the end of British occupation in the Chumbi Valley was appended to the convention.⁴⁸ The whole matter evoked a slightly dog-in-the-manger attitude on the part of both Britain and Russia, but was in retrospect the most lasting part of the Anglo-Russian

⁴⁷Nicolson to Grey, 13 June 1906, BD, 4:334-5; "Memorandum on Thibet," ibid., pp. 337-40.

⁴⁸"Arrangement concernant le Thibet," ibid., pp. 352-54.

Convention. True, the Russians did occasionally violate the restrictions on scientific and geographic expeditions, and the British, especially the government of India, could scarcely refrain from some unwarranted interference in Tibetan affairs, but the truth was that no crucial issues existed over Tibet. It simply was not worth fighting over. The same thing could not be said for the other areas where the two powers sought to come to an agreement.

Afghanistan stood second in significance with regard to the convention, and posed far more complex problems than Tibet.⁴⁹ Inhabited by turbulent tribes having little contact and less use for the amenities of European civilization, Afghanistan nevertheless loomed great in the problems that separated Russia and Britain. The mountain country lay on India's northwestern boundary, and Britain had long been concerned with containing the Afghan warriors within their own borders. As Russian power in the north increased the British had stepped up their efforts to control the area, and by 1907, by conquest and bribery in the form of subsidies to the Afghan Amir, had a predominant position in the country, with the right to control the foreign relations of Afghanistan with the outside world.⁵⁰

⁴⁹In addition to Churchill's definitive study of the diplomatic negotiations, Habberton, Anglo-Russian Relations Concerning Afghanistan, mentioned earlier, and Ludwig W. Adamec, Afghanistan, 1900-1923; A Diplomatic History (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), are useful monographs for the background study of Afghanistan.

⁵⁰Grey to Nicolson, 7 March 1907, BD, 4:278; "Memorandum on Afghan Relations," 11 December 1905, ibid., pp. 519-22.

From time to time, Russia, who bordered Afghanistan's northern frontier, had assured England that it "recognized Afghanistan as entirely outside the sphere of Russian action,"⁵¹ but as Russia's position in Central Asia improved, her regard for greater exploitation of Afghanistan increased proportionately. By 1900 Russian officials desired a revision of existing relations between Russia and Afghanistan, especially the establishment of direct diplomatic and commercial relations between the two countries, with a Russian agent at Kabul, the capital.⁵² Although Russian commercial relations and railroad activity in the area demanded such action, the British were suspicious of Russia's suggestions and especially offended that the memorandum containing the Russian policy changes was presented at a time when the British had just suffered a series of reverses in the Boer War. In addition, the government of India was adamantly against any change.⁵³

The question of direct Russian communication with the Amir was revived in late 1901, but the British succeeded in putting off

⁵¹Précis by Mr. Parker on Subject of Russo-Afghan Relations," in Spring-Rice to Lansdowne, 19 October 1903, *ibid.*, p. 310.

⁵²Memorandum to the British Foreign Office, 6 February 1900, *ibid.*, pp. 306-7; "Memorandum Respecting Russia and Afghanistan," 14 October 1903, *ibid.*, p. 512; I Reisner, "Anglo-russkii soglashenie za 1907g.," Krasnyi Arkhiv 10(1925)54-5.

⁵³Viscount John Morley, Recollections, 2 vols. (London: MacMillan & Co., 1917) 2:167, 178; B. H. Sumner, "Tsardom and Imperialism in the Far East and Middle East, 1880-1914," Proceedings of the British Academy 27(1941):30.

any action on the matter.⁵⁴ In 1903, Count Benckendorff once more broached the subject with as little success. During the same year, a boundary dispute between Russian officials and Afghans near Herat brought sharp remonstrances from the British Government and a demand for an entire revision of the boundary question. The matter was dropped, however, when Russia became involved in the Japanese war.⁵⁵ It was now England's turn to take advantage of her rival's military embarrassment in the Far East and to dispatch a mission to renew the old Afghan commitment under a new treaty signed 21 March 1905.⁵⁶ For the next few years Russia's major interest in Afghanistan was to preserve her existing trade there. Compared to the Russians, the British had hardly any commercial interests in Afghanistan, but they were motivated almost entirely by the country's strategic position on India's northern border. The Russians were well aware of this and often used military action near the Afghan border to exert pressure on the British. Even Russians who derided the idea that Russia ever entertained thoughts of an invasion of India through Afghanistan were not blind to the apprehensions of the British.⁵⁷

⁵⁴Habberton, Anglo-Russian Relations Concerning Afghanistan, pp. 70-1.

⁵⁵"Memorandum Respecting Russia and Afghanistan," 14 October 1903, BD, 4:514-19; Hardinge to Lansdowne, 18 May 1904, *ibid.*, p. 190.

⁵⁶Lansdowne to Benckendorff, 17 February 1905, BD, 4:520; Great Britain, Foreign Office, British Foreign and State Paper, 1909, 98:36-7.

⁵⁷For a summary of Russian and British trade with Afghanistan, see Churchill, Anglo-Russian Convention, pp. 178-81, and Reisner, "Anglo-Russkii soglashenie za 1907 g." Krasnyi Arkhiv 10(1925):60-1.

Edward Grey authorized conversations concerning Afghanistan on 7 September 1906,⁵⁸ but because negotiations over Persia proved troublesome, actual consideration of Afghanistan did not begin until February of 1907.⁵⁹ On 23 February Nicolson presented Izvolski with a British draft for his consideration,⁶⁰ but it was more than a month before the Russian minister replied. Izvolski dallied, asking that certain points be clarified. The problems arose over the absence of direct communication between the Russian government and the Afghan Amir and the British demand that the "bounties in subsidies" given to Russian trade with Afghanistan be discontinued. Izvolski also wished clarification of the term "agents" in the requirement that Russia send no agents to Afghanistan. The Russians procrastinated while the British chafed. The Tibetan matter seemed to be settled, and the British were eager to complete negotiations before the press and the public became aroused.⁶¹

Finally, in May, Izvolski gave Nicolson the Russian counterdraft, complaining that he had had a hard fight to overcome the conflicting views in his government on Afghanistan.⁶² Nicolson was pleased to learn

⁵⁸Grey to Nicolson, 7 September 1906, BD, 4:389.

⁵⁹Grey to Nicolson, 22 February 1907, *ibid.*, p. 433.

⁶⁰Nicolson to Grey, 23 February 1907, *ibid.*, pp. 525-6; Nicolson to Grey, 20 March 1907, *ibid.*, p. 527; Nicolson to Grey, 2 April 1907, *ibid.*, pp. 528-9.

⁶¹Nicolson to Grey, 15 May 1907, *ibid.*, pp. 533-5.

⁶²"Materialy po istorii anglo-russkii dogovor za 1907g.", Krasnyi Arkhiv 69-70(1935):25-28, contains a journal of the ministerial conference of 14 April 1907; Nicolson to Grey, 15 May 1907, BD, 4:533-5.

that the Tsarist Empire agreed formally to the major British requests.

The British Ambassador wrote to Grey,

It should be born in mind that the Russian government have made a great departure from the attitude that they have hitherto maintained in formally acknowledging that Russia must treat with the Amir only through the intermediary of His Majesty's Government and in engaging not to despatch agents into Afghanistan.⁶³

The Russians did propose that Afghanistan serve as a buffer state between Russia and India, and especially that the British not undertake to annex or occupy any part of Afghanistan, interfere with its foreign affairs, nor to influence the Amir to take any military actions menacing to the Russian frontier.⁶⁴ On the commercial matters of bounties and tariffs, the British found the Russian proposals especially complex, perhaps deliberately so. The India Office objected strenuously on many points, and finally, only the preamble and one point were accepted without change.

The British again made counterproposals, objecting to the Russian request that Britain not occupy Afghan territory, because the possibility of Afghan military action against India was always foremost in British considerations. With regard to the commercial proposals, the British made so many changes that the entire thrust of the convention was changed.⁶⁵ Upon receiving the British counter-proposals, Izvol'ski observed that the British "had preserved the grand lignes," but that the whole "économie" of the project had been altered, and he predicted that he would have great

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴"Anglo-Russian Convention Concerning Afghanistan," *ibid.*, pp. 541-44; The Russian draft, the British counterdraft, and the final text of the agreement are printed in parallel columns for comparison.

⁶⁵Grey to Nicolson, 29 May 1907, *ibid.*, p. 537.

difficulty in securing the assent of the Russian government to these changes.⁶⁶

Two months of complicated negotiations were necessary before the text of the agreement was acceptable to both powers. What the Russians wanted was exact equality with the British regarding Afghanistan, something the British were determined not to concede. Izvol'ski was aware of the British attitude for Nicolson expressed it precisely, but strong opinion in Russian military and economic circles refused to accept the situation obligingly.⁶⁷ To the British, any concession, such as allowing direct relations between Afghan and Russian frontier authorities, could lead to unwarranted Russian penetration in the area. Furthermore, the British had no intention of giving up a handy tool to use on the Amir by pledging not to occupy Afghan territory.⁶⁸ At last Nicolson was forced to return to London for a conference with Grey and the Foreign Office on the matter. The Ambassador's visit home was fruitful, however, for the British authorities proved unexpectedly conciliatory.⁶⁹

Even with this heartening news, Nicolson still found Izvol'ski stubbornly claiming that the convention would tie Russia's hands with regard to Afghanistan.⁷⁰ The British Ambassador was to some degree

⁶⁶Nicolson to Grey, 17 June 1907, *ibid.*, p. 545.

⁶⁷Nicolson to Grey, 8 July 1907, *ibid.*, p. 549.

⁶⁸Minute by Hardinge and Grey, 9 July 1907, *ibid.*, p. 550; Grey to Nicolson, 10 July 1907, *ibid.*, p. 551; Grey to Nicolson, 8 July 1907, *ibid.*, p. 550.

⁶⁹Nicolson, Portrait of a Diplomatist, p. 185.

⁷⁰Nicolson to Grey, 17 August 1907, BD, 4:557.

sympathetic to the Russian objections, but still thought he must avoid weakening Britain's favored position. Throughout August the arguments continued. Spirits were raised only to be dashed at the next meeting. Finally, on 24 August, the Russian Council of Ministers unexpectedly raised some serious last minute objections, emanating especially from the War Ministry and echoing earlier dissatisfactions.⁷¹ This time Grey reacted sharply and telegraphed Nicolson,

I hope the Russian government will bear in mind that larger issues are indirectly at stake even than those directly involved in these agreements, for it has throughout been our expectation and belief that an agreement as regards Asia worked in a friendly manner would so influence the disposition of this country towards Russia as to make friendly relations possible on questions which may arise elsewhere in the future. Without such an Agreement this expectation must be disappointed.⁷²

The point was well taken, and despite Izvol'ski's misgivings, the Russian Council accepted the Afghan convention on 28 August. The next day the Tsar approved, and the long and trying proceedings were over.

The Afghan convention assured British predominance in the area, while the Russians were content that Britain would not change the political status of Afghanistan, not take any measures to menace Russia, not occupy or annex Afghan territory, and allow designated Russian frontier officials to settle purely local questions. The principle of equality of commercial opportunity was agreed upon, and on Russian demand the

⁷¹Protocol of the Deliberations of the Russian Ministerial Council of August 24, 1907, in "Materialy po istorii anglo-russkii dogovor za 1907," Krasnyi Arkhiv 69-70(1935):34-39; Nicolson to Grey, 25 August 1907, BD, 4:564; Nicolson, Portrait of a Diplomatist, p. 185.

⁷²Grey to Nicolson, 26 August 1907, BD, 4:565.

powers also agreed that the convention would not go into force until the consent of the Amir had been received.⁷³ The last proposition seemed a bit inconsistent, considering the two great powers had been busily arranging the affairs of three Asian nations for over a year without consulting any of their political leaders in any way, and indeed the Afghan Amir never did give his consent to the convention. In November 1908 the situation was resolved for Britain and Russia, if not for Afghanistan, when the two powers agreed that the convention was nevertheless in force.⁷⁴

With the conclusion of the Convention of 1907, Afghanistan ceased to be an important question with regard to Anglo-Russian relations. As with Tibet, some questions did arise occasionally, but more important considerations on other fronts occupied the attention of both Britain and Russia. Britain had achieved a much-hoped-for consolidation of the Indian frontier. The Russian gains must be seen in an entirely different light. Although her generals complained bitterly that her hands were tied with regard to Afghanistan, Russia received benefits elsewhere. In Persia and in Europe her position was strengthened as a result of the convention, and her benefits outweighed anything she may have given up on the wild border of Afghanistan. Not until after the beginning of World War I

⁷³Habberton, Anglo-Russian Relations Concerning Afghanistan, p. 80.

⁷⁴Nicolson to Grey, 3 November 1908, BD, 4:576; Editor's Note, ibid., p. 577; Lee, King Edward VII, 2:570; Sir Percy M. Sykes, A History of Afghanistan, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan Co., 1940), 2:236.

did serious problems between Russia and Britain again arise in this area.

Although the Afghan negotiations were the last to be concluded, the problems concerning Persia were the most troublesome and the real key to the relationship between Britain and Russia. Unlike Tibet and Afghanistan, Persia offered more resources for exploitation, and British and Russian presence there was prompted by further considerations than mere strategic and imperial rivalry.⁷⁵ This presence was also facilitated by the increasing deterioration of the Persian government, which by 1906 was not only economically and administratively bankrupt, but was in the midst of a revolution of its own. Unable to cope with internal problems, Persia was

⁷⁵"Anglo-russkoe sopernichestvo v Persii v 1890-1906 gg," Krasnyi Arkhiv 56(1933):33-64, contains minutes of special conferences in Russia regarding railroads, economic concessions, and loans in Persia and possible English reaction to these activities. The best on-the-spot record of the Persian problem is found in E. G. Browne, The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909 (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1966, 1910). Browne was considered an expert on Persia and published several works on the subject as well as many newspaper articles. A highly biased though informative source of later Persian problems is Morgan Shuster, The Strangling of Persia (New York: Century Co., 1912). The most recent scholarly monograph, already mentioned, is Firuz Kazemzadeh, Russia and Britain in Persia, 1864-1914, which is an indictment of Edward Grey and British policy and more useful for the background to the convention than for the period 1907-1914. The period has been covered in several unpublished works, the most useful of which is Hossein Nazem, "Russia and Great Britain in Iran, 1900-1914," mentioned earlier. A related, excellent study is Briton Cooper Busch, Britain and the Persian Gulf, 1894-1914 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967). "Tsarskaia Rossiia i Persia v epokhu russko-iaponskoi voiny," Krasnyi Arkhiv 53(1932):3-37, is also helpful.

unprepared to resist British and Russian encroachment. At the turn of the century Russia's position in Persia was more advantageous by far than Britain's. Russia dominated commerce throughout Northern Persia and had considerable political influence at the capital at Teheran. Indeed, British diplomats assigned to Persia were inclined to write off the area as lost to Russian influence, but the size, resources, and geographical location of Persia were of such importance to British interests in the Near East and to her desire to protect India that she could not seriously entertain any notions of withdrawal from the area.⁷⁶ The Russian position was maintained by large sums of money both loaned to the corrupt Shah and spent in construction of roads and railways, and by preferential rates and bounties to Persian export trade. In addition, the highly efficient Persian Cossack Brigade was Russian-armed and officered.⁷⁷

Besides all this, the Russians seemed intent on expanding southward into British controlled areas and threatening not only the jealously guarded Indian border but the Persian Gulf area as

⁷⁶Grey, Twenty-five Years, 1:148; Nicholson, Portrait of a Diplomatist, pp. 176-77; Gwynn, Letters of Spring-Rice, 1:278; Churchill, Anglo-Russian Convention, pp. 212-13, 221, 225.

⁷⁷Firuz Kazemzadeh, "The Origin and Early Development of the Persian Cossack Brigade," American Slavic and East European Review 35(October 1956):351-63, McCarthy, Anglo-Russian Rivalry, pp. 27-36; Sumner, "Tsardom and Imperialism," pp. 46-53.

well. Britain determined to prevent this extension by protecting her control of Persian Gulf trade and the vital routes to India throughout southeast Persia, notably the far eastern province of Seistan.⁷⁸ In 1897 the British made efforts in this direction, and they repeated them several times in the following years, alternately threatening and extorting promises from the Persian government.⁷⁹ Using some of the same methods they criticized in the Russians, the British lent money to the Persian government, securing the loans with revenues and customs, improved their diplomatic services, developed a telegraph line in southern Persia, and made future plans for railroad construction. From time to time, cooperation with Russia in Persia was even suggested, and more than once the idea of partition of that unfortunate country had been broached. In actuality, Russian policy was designed to maintain an impoverished and weak Persia, and British policy, while couched in more altruistic terms, aimed at little better.⁸⁰

⁷⁸"Survey of British Policy in Persia," 31 October 1905, *BD*, 4:368-70; T. P. Brockway, "Britain and the Persian Bubble, 1888-1892," *Journal of Modern History* 13(March 1941):46-7.

⁷⁹"The Government of India to the Secretary of State for India in Council," 21 September 1899, *BD*, 4:356. This is the famous Curzon despatch in which the Viceroy summarizes British policy.

⁸⁰"Memorandum on British Policy in Persia," 31 October 1905, *ibid.*, p. 367; Sir Arthur Hardinge to Grey, Teheran, 23 December 1905, *ibid.*, pp. 374-5; "Tsarskaia Rossiia i Persiia v epokhu ruskoi-iaaponskoi voiny," *Krasnyi Arkhiv* 53(1932):14.

The continued support of Britain in Persian affairs was in direct relation to the continued security of British interests in Persia. Despite the claim that "from the experience of 100 years, that Great Britain has no designs upon the sovereignty of the Shah or the independence of his state,"⁸¹ Britain by 1906 was as eager as Russia to exploit Persia's weaknesses and her resources. On the other hand, Russia, defeated and demoralized from her Japanese adventure and its consequences, was forced to become more receptive to the idea of cooperation with the British. In addition, both nations desired to block any intrusion of Germany into the Persian state, an eventuality that was both probable and unwelcome.⁸²

When Edward Grey assumed office in 1905, his predecessor had already made the first overtures to Russia toward a general agreement regarding Persia. The unsettled internal situation in Russia, however, made postponement necessary. Early in 1906 the situation arose again. The Persian government approached both powers with requests for a loan. Both powers initially declined, but in May, when it became evident that the Germans might make such a loan, British authorities suggested that perhaps a joint Anglo-Russian loan might be undertaken. Izvolski was forced to decline

⁸¹Lansdowne to Hardinge, 6 January 1903, BD, 4:369.

⁸²Taylor, Struggle for Mastery in Europe, p. 442; Robbins, Sir Edward Grey, p. 159; Churchill, Anglo-Russian Convention, pp. 231-32. Protocol of the Ministerial Conference of 7 September 1906 in "Anglo-russkoe sopernichestvo v Persii v 1890-1906 gg," Krasnyi Arkhiv 56(1933):60.

⁸³Spring-Rice to Grey, 3 January 1906, Grey Papers, FO 800/72, PRO.

for Russia, because the financial problems of the Russian government put it in no position to advance money to anybody. In fact, the Russians were in the process of securing a large loan raised mostly in France and Britain at almost the same time.⁸⁴ Besides this, neither the British nor the Russians had any illusions about the value of another loan to Persia. Experience had at least taught them that the Persia government was unlikely to respond effectively in any case.

Further complications resulted from the highly volatile revolutionary situation in Persia, where something of a nationalist constitutional movement was underway. The crisis, beginning in 1905, led by merchants, religious leaders, and other assorted dissident elements against the Shah, demanded a constitution and a national assembly, as well as other concessions. In August 1906 the Shah gave in and called the national assembly, the Mejlis, which met in October and drew up a constitution which was signed by the Shah on 1 January 1907. A week later the Shah died, leaving his tottering

⁸⁴The 1906 loan was of particular importance because of the Russian government's desperate financial straits, and because it allowed France to use financial pressure to prevent a Russo-German rapprochement and encourage the Anglo-Russian friendship. The negotiations for the loan may be followed in B. A. Romanov, "K. peregovoram V. N. Kokovtsova o zame 1905-6," Krasnyi Arkhiv 10(1925):3-35 and in "Zayme 1906 g. v doneseniyakh russkogo posla," ibid., 11-12(1925):421-32. Olga Crisp, "The Russian Liberals and the 1906 Anglo-French Loan to Russia," Slavonic and East European Review 39(June 1961): 497-511, points out the objections of the liberal element in Russia, especially in the Duma, to the loan which they felt would strengthen the autocracy in its struggle against them. See also Michon, Franco-Russian Alliance, pp. 160, 173.

monarchy in the hands of his eldest son, who was no more inclined than his father to treat with the Mejlis and its supporters. During 1907 the Persian internal situation remained in flux, but neither the Russians nor the British were inclined to intervene. Both the British Chargé d'Affaires, Grant Duff, and his superior, Sir Cecil Spring-Rice, were personally sympathetic to the constitutional movement, while the Russian Minister, Nicholas Hartwig, favored the reactionary establishment. Relations between the British legation and the Russian diplomats therefore became increasingly hostile, not only during the immediate crisis, but intermittently between 1907 and 1914.⁸⁵

⁸⁵"Russko-angliiskii otnosheniia v Persii nakanune mirovoi voiny," Krasnyi Arkhiv 65-66(1934):86-117, is a report by I.Y. Korostovets, former Russian envoy in Persia, dated 28 May 1915, summarizing Anglo-Russian relations in Persia in the years prior to the war and emphasizing the need to strengthen these relations. See also, Nicolson to Grey, 21 November 1906, Grey Papers. FO 800/72, PRO: McCarthy, Anglo-Russian Rivalry in Persia, pp. 45-6; Kazemzadeh, Britain and Russia, pp. 492-93; George Lenczowski, Russia and the West in Iran, 1918-1948: A Study in Big Power Rivalry (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1949), pp. 4-5. A Soviet interpretation, I. V. Bestuzhev, Borba v Rossii po voprosam vneshnei politiki, 1906-1910 gg. (Moscow: Akademiia Nauk, 1961), pp. 148-49, argues that one of the most important motives for the Anglo-Russian agreement was the desire of Russia and England to join in a struggle against the revolutionary movement in Persia. Later, however, he suggests that England would object to direct intervention by Russia in Persia's revolutionary situation. See also, Kazemzadeh, Russia and Britain, pp. 510 ff., which follows up the Anglo-Russian involvement in Persia after the convention of 1907.

Although the Persian domestic situation had little to do with the actual negotiation of the agreement between Russia and Britain, because the Persian government was neither included in nor informed of the agreement until its conclusion, it did make it more difficult for Grey to get full support at home for his project. Trenchant and bitter criticism came from the Radicals and Socialists, who accused the Foreign Office of ignoring the liberal and democratic movement in Persia, as well as from Grey's ambassador in Tehran, Spring-Rice. Spring-Rice bitterly denounced the negotiations going on in St. Petersburg and continually complained that the British Foreign Office did not keep him informed of the proceedings.⁸⁶ The Persian situation was not resolved during the negotiations, and Grey was probably correct in his view that not much could be done to stabilize the situation.⁸⁷

Not until after Izvolski's October visits to Berlin and his reassurance that an Anglo-Russian agreement would not upset Russia's relations with Germany did negotiations begin. Even then Izvolski faced other problems, such as the opposition of the military and court groups in Russia. In addition, important members

⁸⁶Spring-Rice to Chirol, September 1907, Gwynn, Letters of Spring-Rice, 2:103; Spring-Rice to Grey, 18 July 1907, ibid., p. 105; Spring-Rice to Ferguson, 18 July 1907, ibid., p. 102; Robbins, Sir Edward Grey, p. 163; Kazemzadeh, Britain and Russia, pp. 500-1.

⁸⁷Grey, Twenty-Five Years, 1:160.

of the Foreign Office and diplomatic staff were unable to see the merit of an agreement with Britain and were anxious to maintain more traditional ties with their German friends.⁸⁸ Initially, the British Foreign Office hoped the Persian draft would be drawn up by the Russians, but this did not materialize. Nicolson eventually impressed upon Grey the importance of making a move themselves.⁸⁹ The British Foreign Office then outlined a sphere-of-influence plan which was deliberately vague in its details, although later the ambassador insisted this was not the intention. The draft was presented to Izvolski, who immediately objected to it on those very grounds.⁹⁰ For almost two months the conversations lagged. Then in February, at the meeting of the Russian Council of Ministers in St. Petersburg, the members agreed, as a basis for discussion, to the principle of the spheres of influence, as well as to the British proposal of the division lines of those spheres.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Sumner, "Tsardom and Imperialism," pp. 59-61; Grey, Twenty-Five Years, 1:155; Izvolski to Benckendorff, 12 December 1906, Izvol'ski, Correspondence Diplomatique, 1:408-10; Izvolski to Benckendorff, 25 October 1906, ibid., 1:391-3.

⁸⁹ Nicolson to Grey, 4 November 1906, BD, 4:408-10.

⁹⁰ Grey to Nicolson, 17 November 1906, and enclosed draft agreement, ibid., pp. 415-16; Nicolson to Grey, 3 December 1906, ibid., p. 417.

⁹¹ Protocol of the Deliberations of the Russian Ministerial Council of February 1, 1907, in "Materialy po istorii anglo-russkii dogovor za 1907 g." Krasnyi Arkhiv 69-70(1935):12; Excerpts from this meeting can also be found in Siebert, Entente Diplomacy, pp. 474-77; Nicolson to Grey, 19 February 1907, BD, 4:275; Nicolson to Grey, 22 February 1907, Grey Papers, FO 800/72, PRO.

As usual Izvolski prefaced his presentation of the Council decision to Nicolson with an account of the great trouble he had persuading the Russian ministers to accept the proposal, and then gave the British Ambassador the Russian counterdraft.⁹² The British Foreign Office, no doubt surprised at the conciliatory attitude of the Russians, was encouraged and instructed Nicolson to go ahead with proposals on Afghanistan as well.⁹³ No real problems were apparent. The Russians were not anxious to give up Seistan,⁹⁴ and the British wished to insist on the neutrality of the capital at Teheran which was far inside the Russian sphere,⁹⁵ but there was no reason to imagine these and similar problems could not be worked out. Nicolson handed Izvolski some British amendments on 10 March,⁹⁶ and a period of diplomatic sparring began. Despite the halting discussions, a pattern emerged. The British were determined to secure India from invasion, while the Russian interest centered on the commercial and economic domination of northern Persia. The problem of concessions, which preoccupied the Russians, and collection of revenues that had secured loans obtained from both Russia and Great Britain caused serious wrangling.

⁹²Nicolson to Grey, 20 February 1907, and Enclosure, Draft Convention communicated by M. Izvolski to Sir A. Nicolson, BD, 4:431-32.

⁹³Grey to Nicolson, 22 February 1907, *ibid.*, p. 433.

⁹⁴Nicolson to Grey, 19 February 1907, *ibid.*, p. 429.

⁹⁵Nicolson to Grey, 20 February 1907, *ibid.*, p. 431.

⁹⁶Nicolson to Grey, 10 March 1907, *ibid.*, p. 437.

In April Izvol'ski brought up the subject which was to be his diplomatic goal for the next decade, the opening of the Straits and the revision of the Treaty of Berlin article which prevented unlimited use of this strategic area by the Russian Empire. He told Nicolson that he would like to see some agreement about the Straits included in the convention.⁹⁷ The British had already held out some hope to the Russians that they might be prepared to take such an action, and, in November of the previous year, Charles Hardinge had informed Poklevski, Counsellor of the Russian Embassy, that the British Foreign Office would be glad to consider any proposals the Russians might submit regarding the Dardanelles.⁹⁸ On 15 April 1907, however, Nicolson wrote Grey that Izvol'ski had been instructed by his government to drop the matter because they did not wish to enlarge the scope of the convention.⁹⁹ By late April so many details were resolved that Nicolson thought he saw the end in sight. He was over-optimistic.

From Persia, Spring-Rice continued to complain throughout the negotiations, noting the decline of British prestige in Persia as a result of her lack of support for the nationalist forces. He

⁹⁷Nicolson to Grey, 11 April 1907, Grey Papers, F0800/72, PRO.

⁹⁸Nicolson, Portrait of a Diplomatist, p. 178.

⁹⁹Nicolson to Grey, 15 April 1907, Grey Papers, FO 800/72, PRO; Izvol'ski's instructions came from the meeting of the Ministers on April 14, "Materialy po istorii anglo-russkii' dogovor za 1907," Krasnyi Arkhiv 69-70 (1935):24.

urged absolute non-intervention in Persian affairs, pointing out what damage such intervention by Russian authorities was doing.¹⁰⁰

The harmonious division of Persia, which both the Russians and the British were intent on now, was jolted in June, however, and this time by the British. The British Foreign Office was anxious that the convention should include an article whereby Russia would recognize the special interests of the British in maintaining the status quo in the area of the Persian Gulf. This was especially important to the British because Russia had not penetrated into this area, and British circles were especially anxious to prevent such an occurrence. Nicolson predicted the Russian reaction in a letter to Hardinge on 19 June 1907:

There is one point which may cause difficulty, and that is the Gulf. In the first place I have no doubt that Iswolsky would require to be informed as to the precise meaning which we attach to the phrase status quo. There is, however, a more serious difficulty which he may raise. He is, as you know, exceedingly anxious to avoid giving offense to Germany, and he assured Berlin that our negotiations would not touch upon the Bagdad Railway, and he will have seen from our memorandum that the railway might, if entirely in Germany hands, be considered a disturbance of the status quo in the Gulf.¹⁰¹

Nicolson had evaluated his Russian colleague correctly, and he was not able to get Izvolski to agree on the insertion of such an article. The question of the Gulf was eventually settled by

¹⁰⁰Spring-Rice to Grey, 30 January 1907, Grey Papers, FO 800/70, PRO; Spring-Rice to Grey, 26 April 1907, *BD*, 4:404; Spring-Rice to Grey, 11 October 1906, *ibid.*, 404:21; Spring-Rice to Grey, 21 December, *ibid.*, pp. 420-21.

¹⁰¹Grey to Nicolson, 6 June 1907, *ibid.*, p. 465.

means of an official despatch from Grey to Nicolson outlining the British policy regarding the Gulf. The despatch was attached to the convention as an appendix.¹⁰² Grey was not completely happy with the outcome for he was left with the onerous task of explaining to the India Office and the Liberal Cabinet why the article was left out, but there was nothing else he could do.

By August most of the real problems seemed to be solved, and on 16 August Nicolson wrote to Spring-Rice that he was confident that the agreement would allow Britain and Russia to live peacefully at last.¹⁰³ With a further short delay over the transfer of the control of telegraph lines in each other's spheres, the agreement was concluded. Prefaced as usual by the preamble pledging "to respect the integrity and independence of Persia," the two powers had divided Persia into three zones--one large northern one for Russia and a small but strategic one in the south for Britain divided by a neutral zone in the middle. The remaining articles settled commercial problems between the two nations. There was no reference in the text of the agreement to the Persian Gulf, nor the problem of the Straits. The division lines enclosing the Russian sphere in Persia ran from Kasr-el-Sherin southeast to Yezd, and then northeast to a point where the Russian and Afghan borders met, giving Russia almost all the large cities of Persia, including the capital, and the most fertile agricultural lands as

¹⁰²Nicolson to Grey, 24 June 1907, *ibid.*, pp. 477-78.

¹⁰³Nicolson to Spring-Rice, 16 August 1907, Spring-Rice Papers, FO 800/241, PRO.

well. The British zone covered the approaches in India, included the important province of Seistan, and was drawn to exclude Russia from access to any Persian Gulf ports.¹⁰⁴

By late August, agreements over all three of the areas--Tibet, Afghanistan, and Persia--had been completed, in spite of the many delays and arguments. Persia had proved the most troublesome and when the agreement was finally reached in that area the remaining considerations concerning Afghanistan were quickly taken care of. On 28 August the Russian Council of Ministers accepted the Afghan convention, the next day the Tsar confirmed their acceptance, and on 31 August 1907, the Anglo-Russian Convention became a reality.¹⁰⁵

European reception of the convention varied. Most of Europe saw it as opposed to the Triple Alliance and interpreted it in this light. The French Ambassador in St. Petersburg, Maurice Bompard, thought it rounded out the French-Russian-English agreements well,¹⁰⁶ and his colleague in London, Paul Cambon, told Charles Hardinge that the convention definitely favored the British.¹⁰⁷ From Vienna, Sir Edward Goschen wrote that the Viennese press was

¹⁰⁴ See map on p. 121.

¹⁰⁵ British Foreign and State Papers, 1911, 100:555-60; the Russian text may be found in Iu. V. Kliuchnikov and A. Sabanin, Mezhdunarodnye politika noveishego vremeni v dogovakh, notakh i deklaratsiakh (Moscow: Akademiia Nauk, 1925), pp. 333-36.

¹⁰⁶ Bompard, Mon Ambassade, p. 278.

¹⁰⁷ Hardinge, Old Diplomacy, p. 146.

favorable on the whole,¹⁰⁸ while Bertie in Paris reported a welcome French reaction.¹⁰⁹ In Munich, however, Sir Fairfax Cartwright thought that Germany would surely "try to do harm to the agreement." In fact, the Germans, although they officially had sanctioned the agreement, now thought the finished product constituted an encirclement of their nation.¹¹⁰

In Tehran, Spring-Rice, beset with the problem of communicating the document to the Shah and the Persian government, pessimistically wrote to Grey that he thought Russia might "use the agreement . . . to carry on her old designs under a new cover."¹¹¹ The Persian reaction was one of shock and anger, more toward England than Russia. Persian leaders had long looked to Britain for support and now were completely overwhelmed that the home of parliamentary government should join Russia in what they considered "the rape of Persia."¹¹²

Real criticism of the convention came as well from inside Russia and Britain. Because Parliament had risen only three days

¹⁰⁸Goschen to Grey, 5 September 1907, BD, 4:582.

¹⁰⁹Bertie to Grey, 9 September 1907, ibid., p. 585.

¹¹⁰Cartwright to Grey, 8 October 1907, ibid., p. 602. For a summary of the German press reaction to the convention, see E. M. Carroll, Germany and the Powers, 1866-1914: A Study in Public Opinion and Foreign Policy (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1938) pp. 563-4.

¹¹¹Spring-Rice to Grey, 13 September 1907, Gwynn, Letters of Spring-Rice, 2:105.

¹¹²Kazemzadeh, Britain and Russia, p. 501.

before the publication of the convention, official criticism was tardy in appearing. Other sources were immediately vocal, however. The Indian government had, of course, been against the bargain from the beginning, and Lord Minto, the Viceroy, had protested at every turn, especially with regard to Afghanistan. Grey wrote Campbell-Bannerman that only help from Lord Morley at the India Office had secured agreement from the Indian government.¹¹³ Lord Kitchener objected to the agreement, and Lord Curzon, Minto's predecessor, ultimately led the attack on the convention in the House of Lords, saying, "The efforts of a century sacrificed and nothing or next to nothing in return. . ."¹¹⁴

In the House of Commons, another imperialist, Lord Percy, spoke in a similar argument. Besides the imperialists, the left wing of the Liberal Party and the Labourites were important critics of the convention. Their attack pointed out the "essential immorality" of the agreement, objecting to the betrayal of liberal and democratic elements in Persia for the doubtful advantage of a deal with the reactionary Russian government. The liberal Daily News wrote, "We have never concealed our opinion that any extensive agreement with Russia at this moment is unnecessary and undesirable. Our

¹¹³Grey to Campbell-Bannerman, 31 August 1907, Campbell-Bannerman Papers, British Museum Add. Ms. 52514; Trevalyan, Grey of Fallodon, p. 209.

¹¹⁴Ronaldshay, Life of Curzon, 2:38; Nicolson, Portrait of a Diplomatist, p. 187.

relations with a Government at war with its own people ought to be as guarded and as limited as possible. . ."¹¹⁵

On the other hand, the conservative Morning Post expressed another aspect of British sentiment when it wrote, "It is the modern growth of Germany in population, in territory, in trade, in industry, in organization for peace and war alike, that has brought about the change. . ."¹¹⁶ Ultimately, however, press reaction and public opinion counted for less than the fact that in 1907 Grey had the backing of his party and his government, who were, on the whole, pleased with the convention. The King wrote to Charles Hardinge from Marienbad, "It [the signing of the convention] must be a great relief to your and Grey's minds and Nicolson deserves the greatest praise for having carried out these most difficult negotiations with such skill and perseverance!"¹¹⁷ Hardinge himself wrote, "As regards the treaty itself it was not so much its text

¹¹⁵Raymond Postgate and Aylmer Vallance, England Goes to Press: The English Public Opinion of Foreign Affairs as Reflected in Their Newspapers Since Waterloo, 1815-1937 (Indianapolis & New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1937), p. 241. For a summary of British press opinion on the convention, see Murray, "British Policy and Opinion," pp. 91-141, and Anthony M. Banusevich, "Anglo-Russian Relations Concerning the Origins and Effects of the Persian Question, 1906-1911," (Masters thesis, Georgetown University, 1950), pp. 109-114.

¹¹⁶Postgate, England Goes to Press, p. 240.

¹¹⁷Quoted in Hardinge, Old Diplomacy, p. 146.

as the fact of its existence that was important, and it served its purpose and maintained peace and friendly relations between England and Russia for ten years."¹¹⁸

Campbell-Bannerman, most of the Cabinet, and a large number of the diplomatic corps approved of the agreement. Sir George Buchanan, who later replaced Nicolson as ambassador to St. Petersburg, wrote later, "It proved, indeed, in the end more successful in promoting an understanding that was outside the purview of the written agreement, than in reconciling their conflicting interests in Persia."¹²⁰ Buchanan's views reflected the ideas of many British, especially Grey himself, that the worth of the treaty lay in its long-range effects.

The real architects of the agreement, Nicolson and Grey, were both satisfied although by no means deceived about the real extent to which Britain might count on Russia to carry out its terms.

Nicolson wrote to his wife,

I confess that occasionally . . . I have some qualms. They do not keep me awake at night. I am sure that the best has been done in the circumstances and the only alternative was no agreement at all. We shall be pelted with criticism, but this we can bear.¹²¹

¹¹⁸Ibid.

¹¹⁹Spender, Life of Campbell-Bannerman, 2:363.

¹²⁰Buchanan, My Mission to Russia, 1:91.

¹²¹Nicolson, Portrait of a Diplomatist, p. 187.

Later, the Ambassador speculated on the "artificial nature" of the convention and admitted that Russia did not really live up to its terms,¹²² but Nicolson, like Hardinge and Grey, valued the agreement for the road to European cooperation it opened for Britain. Edward Grey was even less idealistic about the convention, but had determined that it was necessary to Britain's international and diplomatic security. He was convinced that Britain got the best part of the negotiations and that the gains far outweighed the price necessary to get them. Russia's hold on northern Persia was firm, in his view, and he was satisfied that the agreement could curtail her actions in areas of strategic importance to Britain.¹²³ It would also allow Britain a stronger diplomatic base from which to operate in Europe. The Foreign Secretary's attitude was expedient and therefore unpalatable to many of his critics. It was, however, in line with British policy and marked no departure from previous British actions with regard to colonial territory. The departure from traditional British policy came as a result of the implications of the convention and Anglo-Russian actions elsewhere in Europe.

In Russia, the government officially approved of the convention, and this attitude was reflected in the largely government-controlled press. The official Rossiia, the Anglophile papers Russ and Reych

¹²²Nicolson to Grey, 8 February 1909, Annual Report (6057), no. 92., Foreign Office 418/45, Russia. Public Record Office, London, England.

¹²³Grey, Twenty-Five Years, 1:60.

approved, while the Pan-Slav Novroe Vremya voiced dissatisfaction.¹²⁴ St. Petersburg circles gave only restrained approval, and the military and pro-German factions spoke out harshly against the convention.¹²⁵ Only a few leaders actively defended the agreement. The Cadet Leader, Paul Miliukov, spoke favorably in the Duma, but as the Duma had no control over the conduct of foreign affairs, Miliukov's statements were of little consequence.¹²⁶ Hardened Russian imperialists disliked the arrangement as much as their British counterparts because they feared Russia's hands were now tied in important areas. The Russian diplomat who had the most experience in Persia and had spent several years as head of the important Asiatic Department of Foreign Affairs, I. A. Zinoviev, wrote after his retirement,

Only those international agreements are reliable and fruitful which in an equal measure ensure the dignity and the rightful interests of both contracting parties, but not those which subordinate the interests of one party to the benevolent judgement of the other. The agreement . . . of 1907 between Sir Edward Grey and A. P. Izvoiskii belongs undeniably to the second category. Such an agreement would hardly satisfy even a secondary power. A first-rate power like Russia can reconcile itself to it even less.¹²⁷

¹²⁴p. N. Efremov, Vneshnaya politika Rossii, 1907-1914 gg. (Moscow: Akademiia Nauk, 1961), pp. 65-66; Murray, "British Policy and Opinion," p. 119.

¹²⁵"Anglo-russkoe sopernichestvo v Persii v 1809-1906 gg." Krasnyi Arkhiv 56(1933):63.

¹²⁶Gosudarstvennaia дума, Stenograficheskkii otchet, tretii sozyv, sessia 1, zasadenie 39 (27 February 1908), pp. 119-124.

¹²⁷I. A. Zinoviev, Rossia, Angliia i Persiia (St. Petersburg: I. D. Sytin, 1912), p. 172.

Even Witte, who ambivalently took credit for the agreement and condemned it as well, thought Russia had lost too much in the convention.¹²⁸

The future of Anglo-Russian relations and the countries involved in the convention was not all bright. While the provisions concerning Tibet and Afghanistan worked out fairly well in practice, the seven years preceding the outbreak of the war saw conditions in Persia deteriorate steadily. The checkered history of Anglo-Russian relations in Persia after the conclusion of the agreement has been told many times. The siege of Tabriz, the unfortunate Morgan Shuster incident, and the continued conflicts of Britain and Russia are too well-known to repeat, but in reviewing them, a pattern emerges. The matter of ethics was incidental, for both Britain and Russia were inclined to self-interest and ruthlessness when the conditions dictated. In general, however, Russian policy was more aggressive and less given to moralizing and self-recrimination than the British when it came to exploitation of Persia. Edward Grey, on the other hand, was convinced of the necessity of maintaining the ties of the convention, and so British policy at least allowed and frequently cooperated with Russian intervention in Persian affairs. The Russian Foreign Office was aware of Britain's determination to maintain the agreement for European reasons, and they took advantage of the situation whenever possible. The fear of Germany and Grey's own conviction that Persia was not really worth saving were more impelling than any other concerns.

¹²⁸Witte, Memoirs, pp. 432-34.

If the convention is taken at face value, then, it was surely a failure, for it did not preserve the integrity or independence of Persia, Afghanistan, or Tibet, and it did not prevent the interference of Britain and Russia in the affairs of these nations. If the agreement is judged by other merits, such as a check on German aggression and thereby a major diplomatic contribution to the Eastern balance of power, or even as a restraint on unlimited Russian penetration in Central Asia, then its reputation fares better. The real significance of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 is not in doubt, however, regardless of the consequences to Persia or any Near Eastern country, for it was not there but in Europe that the real results would be seen. The convention opened the door for the cooperation of the most liberal and the most reactionary of Europe's nations in the prewar years. As unlikely as this occurrence might have seemed previously, after 31 August 1907 it was a diplomatic and political reality that had far reaching consequences in the history of Europe.

CHAPTER IV

TESTING THE FRIENDSHIP: THE ANNEXATION CRISIS OF 1908

Anglo-Russian friendship received its first real test in 1908, the year following the Anglo-Russian Convention, when a serious European crisis arose over the Austrian annexation of the Balkan provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Bulgaria's declaration of independence from the Ottoman Turkish Empire. Although Britain had only an indirect interest in the Balkan provinces, she was vitally concerned with anything that might upset the equilibrium of the Ottoman Empire; moreover, Russia was deeply involved in Balkan affairs. For several generations before the Anglo-Russian friendship, Britain had supported Turkey as a bulwark against Russian penetration in the Mediterranean. In the late nineteenth century, as British popularity with the Turkish government declined and problems with both France and Russia increased, the British sought to maintain their position in the Mediterranean. By 1908 Britain had not only settled her problems with Russia and France, but had regained a position of power at Constantinople. Jealously guarding this power, she looked with suspicion on the actions of any nation which might endanger her position and so, with her new partner, found herself embroiled in a bitter and complicated struggle in the Balkans.

Austria's annexation of the provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina and even Bulgaria's declaration of independence did not alter the actual territorial situation in the Balkans, since Austria, by Article XXV of the Treaty of Berlin (1878), occupied and administered Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Bulgaria already exercised almost complete autonomy within the Ottoman Empire. The actions did, however, violate not only the Treaty of Berlin, but several other treaties, including the London Agreement of 1871, which stated that any changes in a European treaty must be accomplished only by the concerted action of all the signatories.¹ The signatories of the Berlin treaty included the great powers, England, Russia, France, Germany and Austria, as well as the Ottoman Empire. The real crisis involving Britain and Russia arose from the nature of the diplomatic relations accompanying these events. For over six months Europe hovered on the brink of war, and at the end of the crisis irreparable damage had been done to the international prestige of Russia and to the diplomatic reputation of her chief representative, Alexander Izvol'ski. In addition, relations between Russia and Austria on one hand, and Austria and Britain on the other, suffered a severe decline. The crisis, moreover, accurately foreshadowed the events which preceded the outbreak

¹Pribram, Austria-Hungary and Great Britain, p. 97; Fay, Origins of the World War, 1:72-3; W. M. Carlgren, Izvol'ski und Aehrenthal vor der bosnischen Annexionskrise (Uppsala: Almqvist & Weksells boktr., 1955), p. 4.

of war in 1914, and ultimately tightened the friendship of Britain and Russia.²

The chief architects of the Bosnian crisis were the Russian Foreign Minister, Izvolski, and his Austrian counterpart, Baron Alois von Aehrenthal.³ Both men were ambitious and ruthless, and

²The annexation crisis is covered by almost all standard histories of the period. The most detailed description of the crisis and the Bulgarian declaration of independence is found in Bernadotte Schmitt, The Annexation of Bosnia (Cambridge: University Press, 1937). M. M. Ninčić, La crise bosniaque, 1908-1909 (Paris: Alfred Costes, 1937), is an account from the Serbian point of view, written by a former Serbian foreign minister, and is especially critical of Izvolsky. Pribram, Austria-Hungary and Great Britain, includes a detailed chapter of the diplomatic negotiations of these two countries, while Oswald H. Wedel, Austro-German Diplomatic Relations, 1908-1914 (Berkeley: Stanford University Press, 1932), sees the event from a Central European point of view. Kenneth I. Dailey presents a study of exactly what happened at the controversial Buchlau meeting in "Alexander Izvolsky and the Buchlau Conference," Russian Review, 10(1951):55-63, but actually adds little to the standard versions. W. M. Carlgren, Iswolsky und Aehrenthal, investigates the relationship of the two statesmen up to the annexation. A. M. Zaionchkovski, "Vokrug aneksii Bosnii i Khertsegoviny," Krasnyi Arkhiv 10(1925):41-53, contains some Russian documents, part of which have been translated in Die Kriegschuldfrage 4(April, 1926):238-50. Soviet interpretations of the Bosnian affair include P. N. Efremov, Vneshnaya politika Rossii 1907-1914 gg. (Moscow: Akademiia Nauk, 1961), who devotes all of Chapter 3 to the crisis and Bestuzhev, Borba v Rossii, cited earlier, whose long chapter on Bosnia, pp. 200-242, more nearly meets the standards of Western historians. Bestuzhev worked from the Russian archives, while Efremov used printed sources only. A shorter monograph interpreting the Balkan crisis as a rehearsal for the 1914 crisis is K. B. Vinogradov, Bosniiskii krizis, 1908-9: prolog pervoi mirovoi voiny (Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe universitet, 1964).

³Nicolson describes Aehrenthal as "an unwieldy man, with heavy happless jaws, a stubble head of hair, and sad turbot eyes," Portrait of a Diplomatist, p. 196. Aehrenthal came to the foreign ministry on 24 October 1906. He was regarded as an authority on Russia, having been secretary of the Austro-Hungarian embassy in St. Petersburg from 1878 to 1883 and again from 1888 to 1894, and ambassador there from 1902 to 1906.

both were determined to secure for themselves and their ailing empires a major diplomatic coup. From the time of the Treaty of Berlin in 1878, when Austrian administration of the adjacent territories of Bosnia and Herzegovina had begun, Austria had made clear her determination to annex the Turkish provinces eventually. She had frequently and repeatedly affirmed this intention, while Russia had alternately agreed and objected to such action--in any case, demanding a quid pro quo.⁴ Baron Aehrenthal, succeeding to the Austrian foreign ministry in 1906, brought to the office an active and vigorous policy which included plans for Austrian expansion in the Balkans, and he drew support from important individuals who also resented their country's unfortunate diplomatic position. Notable among these were the heir to the Austrian throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, and the Chief of the General Staff, General Conrad von Hotzendorff.⁵

On the Russian side, Izvol'ski was eager to secure for Russia the opening of the Straits and the Dardanelles for Russian warships, a project which had long been part of his dreams but which he could never have realized without the cooperation of Austria.

⁴Nicolson to Grey, 27 November 1908, FO 371/557, PRO; Pribram, Secret Treaties of Austria-Hungary, 1:43; Pribram, Austria-Hungary and Great Britain, p. 95.

⁵Schmitt, Annexation of Bosnia, p. 4; Conrad von Hötendorff, Aus Meiner Dienstzeit, 1906-1918, 5 vols. (Vienna: Rikola verlag, 1921-25), 1:528-30; Dailey, "Alexander Izvol'sky and the Buchlau Conference," pp. 55-6.

As a matter of fact, the regulations set down by the Berlin treaty regarding the Straits had probably been the most favorable Russia could have attained at the time, for they called for the closure of the Straits to warships of all countries. Thus, the treaty protected Russia from invasion along her Black Sea shores. Nevertheless, during the Russo-Japanese War the problem of moving the Russian fleet all the way from the Baltic Sea to Japan had demonstrated the apparent necessity of some new arrangement. The ideal situation for Russia would have allowed the free passage of Russian warships in and out of the Black Sea and denied equal access to ships of all other nations. Improbable as it appears, this arrangement was what Izvolski sought. Nor was Izvolski initiating new policy in his desire for the Straits, for several ambitious Russian ministers had considered such projects in the past.⁶

As early as the spring of 1904, during his tenure as ambassador in Copenhagen, Izvolski had broached the subject of the Straits in a conversation with King Edward VII. The British king told Izvolski that the closure of the Straits was not absolute in his opinion, but that he could not take any measures in opposition

⁶M. Pokrovski, "Russko-germanskii otnoshenii," Krasnyi Arkhiv 1(1922):63; Jelavich, Century of Russian Foreign Policy, p. 264; B. H. Sumner, "Ignatiev at Constantinople, 1864-1874," Slavonic and East European Review 11(1932-33):342-43.

to British public opinion which opposed any change in the Straits situation at that time.⁷ During the negotiations for the Anglo-Russian Convention, the Russian minister had sought and been assured of Great Britain's willingness to consider the question of the Straits at some appropriate time, and at one time Izvolski considered proposing joint Anglo-Russian military action to secure his goal.⁸ The scheme was frankly rejected by the Russian Council of Ministers, especially Prime Minister Stolypin and Finance Minister V. N. Kokovtsov. Even the Chief of General Staff, General V. N. Palitsyn, turned down the idea because of Russia's military unpreparedness.⁹ In any event, the British Foreign Office had earlier been successful in discouraging the inclusion of any provisions concerning the Straits in the Anglo-Russian Convention, and continued to put off serious discussion of the matter. It is

⁷Izvolski, Memoirs, p. 20; Lee, King Edward VII, 2:183-85.

⁸Protocol of the Ministerial Council of 3 February 1908, M. N. Pokrovski, ed., Drei Konferenzen: Zur Vorgeschichte des Krieges (Berlin: Arbeiterbuchhandlung, 1920), pp. 17-30; These minutes are also found in part in E. Adamov, ed. Konstantinopol i prolivy po sekretnym dokumentam byvshego ministerstva inostrannykh del, 2 vols. (Moscow: Litizdat NKID, 1925) 1:5-8.

⁹Ibid.; For a discussion of the conflicting views on the annexation of Bosnia between Izvolski and his colleagues see Bestuzhev, Borba v Rossii, pp. 200-207, and V. I. Bovykin, Ocherki istorii vneshnei politiki Rossii; konets XIX veka-1917 g. (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatelstvo, 1966), pp. 73-5.

unlikely that they would have been receptive to Izvol'ski's plan.¹⁰ In the face of British reluctance to aid his aspirations, Izvol'ski began to look elsewhere for a solution of the Straits question.

Izvol'ski's first overtures to the Austrian Foreign Minister on the matter were not fruitful. Only days after signing the Anglo-Russian Convention, Izvol'ski visited Vienna and tried to impress Aehrenthal with the importance of Russia's gaining access to the Mediterranean. Aehrenthal was noncommittal, but a few days later he discussed with General Conrad the possibility of gaining Russian support for Austria's Bosnian ambitions by conceding the freedom of the Straits to Russia.¹¹ Instead of the cooperation Izvol'ski was seeking, however, Aehrenthal's next move gave the Russian minister an unwelcome shock. On 27 January 1908,

¹⁰There are several recorded instances of conversations between English and Russian authorities on the matter; see, Grey to Nicolson, 14 October 1908, Grey, Twenty-Five Years, 1:176-79; Captain Hintze, to the Foreign Office, 14 October 1908, GP, 22:80-1 (Captain Hintze was the Kaiser's personal representative at the Russian court); Isvol'ski to Benckendorff, 15 January 1911, Russia, Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, Materialy po istorii franko-russkikh otnoshenii za 1910-1914 (Moscow: People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, 1922), p. 222; The foregoing set of documents has been translated, with deletions, as Un livre noir: diplomatie d'avant guerre d'après les documents des archives russes, novembre 1910-juillet 1914, 3 vols. ed. Rene Marchand (Paris: Librairie du travail, 1922-34), 1:148; The discussion are also recorded in Friedrich Stieve, ed., Der diplomatische Schriftwechsel Izvol'skis, 1911-1914, 4 vols. (Berlin: Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft für Politik und Geschichte, 1924), 1:163. Later both Grey and Izvol'ski denied that the question of the Straits had been discussed; Grey, Twenty-Five Years, I, 159; Fay, Origins of the World War, note 20, 1:367-68.

¹¹Conrad, Aus Meiner Dienstzeit, 1:513-530.

Aehrenthal announced that Austria had received a concession from Turkey to conduct surveys for a railroad across the Sanjak of Novibazar, a strip of territory between Serbia and Montenegro. Austria coveted the sanjak as a means of keeping Serbia and Montenegro apart and keeping Serbia from access to the Adriatic. If such a railway were built, Austrian and Turkish railways would be joined, which would make Austrian domination of the area inevitable.¹²

Izvolski immediately protested the action as a threat to Russian and Slavic interests and a violation of Austro-Russian cooperation in the Balkans. This cooperation was based on a number of agreements dating back to the secret agreement of 1897, renewed in 1902 and 1907,¹³ and the Muerzsteg Programme of 1903,

¹²Arthur J. May, "The Novibazar Railway Project," Journal of History 10(December, 1938):496-527; Arthur J. May, "Trans-Balkan Railway Schemes," Journal of Modern History 24(1952):352-67.

¹³The Austro-Russian agreement of 1897 was of considerable value to Russia at the time in view of her Far Eastern commitments. According to its terms, the two countries agreed to maintain the status quo in the Balkans, or if this was not possible, to consult in advance on future territorial changes. Constantinople and the Straits, "having an eminently European character," was to remain outside the jurisdiction of their agreement. Russia agreed to hold to the provisions relating to the Straits which prohibited access to the Black Sea to foreign warships. "The territorial advantages, accorded to Austria-Hungary by the Treaty of Berlin, are and remain acquired by her. In consequence, the possession of Bosnia, of Herzegovina, and of the Sanjak of Novibazar may not be made the object of any discussion whatsoever, the Government of His Imperial and Royal Apostolic Majesty reserving to itself the right of substituting, when the moment arrives, for the present status of occupation and of right of garrisoning that of annexation." With a further stipulation about the rights of the small Balkan states, Russia and Austria

which called for reforms in Macedonia and the maintenance of the status quo in the Balkans.¹⁴ Faced with the possibility of the Austrian railroad, Izvol'ski immediately tried to secure for Russia and for her client, Serbia, whose interests were also threatened by the Austrian move, some concession from the Ottoman Empire. The Russian plan involved railways as well--from the Danube to the Adriatic, excluding Austria altogether.¹⁵ The British Cabinet approved Izvol'ski's demands on the condition that the Danube-Adriatic line and the sanjak line be built simultaneously. Britain's concern for the success of the reforms she supported in Macedonia led her to withhold official endorsement of the plan.

agreed to avoid in the future everything which might engender between them the "elements of conflict or of mistrust." Pribram, Secret Treaties of Austria-Hungary, 1:185-95; In effect, the two countries had given notice to the rest of Europe that the Balkans were their affair, and any action taken there would be subject to their involvement.

¹⁴In 1903, as a result of a major revolt in the Balkan states, especially Macedonia, against the Ottoman Empire, Austria and Russia drafted the Muersteg Programme, which called for the maintenance of peace in Macedonia by means of an international police force and the implementation of a series of reforms by the Ottoman Empire. The plan was supported by all the great powers, but did not succeed because of the failure of the Turkish government to cooperate and because of the continued revolutionary activities of the Balkan states themselves; Pribram, Austria-Hungary and Great Britain, pp. 94-5; Barbara Jelavich, The Habsburg Empire in European Affairs (New York: Rand McNally & Co., 1969), p. 140; Albertini, Origins of the War of 1914, p. 135.

¹⁵Albertini, Origins of the War of 1914, 1:194-97; May, "Trans-Balkan Railway Schemes," p. 354; M. B. Cooper, "British Policy in the Balkans, 1908-1909," Historical Journal 7(1964):260.

However, Grey and the Board of Trade were aware that any trans-Balkan railways were of little commercial value and were moved by political rather than economic considerations.¹⁶ Although sources indicate that Aehrenthal did not officially disapprove of the Russian-Serbian demands in spite of strong objections by General Conrad,¹⁷ rivalry and tension increased between Russia and Austria for the next few months.

The succeeding resentment and bad feelings between Russia and Austria gave Britain an opportunity to strengthen the tenuous ties with Russia the Anglo-Russian Convention provided. Nicolson wrote to Grey from St. Petersburg that he thought all they need do was to allow "the inevitable logic of events to work out its natural effects," which would be a closer friendship between Russia and Britain.¹⁸

In these circumstances of general confusion in the Balkans, the Russian Tsar Nicholas II and King Edward VII met at the Estonian port of Reval in June to confirm the rapprochement between their

¹⁶Memorandum to Count Benckendorff, 4 March 1908, *BD*, 5:347; Grey to Whitehead, 25 February 1908, *ibid.*, p. 344; Grey to Goschen, 4 March 1908, *ibid.*, p. 348-9; Board of Trade to the Foreign Office, 24 May 1907, *ibid.*, 327-8; Grey to Barclay, 7 January 1907, *ibid.*, p. 322; Grey to Whitehead, 8 April 1907, *ibid.*, p. 330.

¹⁷Goschen to Grey, 15 February 1908, *ibid.*, p. 342; Conrad, *Aus Meiner Dienstzeit*, 1:555; May, "Trans-Balkan Railway Schemes," p. 358.

¹⁸Nicolson to Grey, 26 February 1908, Grey Papers, FO 800/34, PRO.

countries. The Radicals and Labourites in England greeted the meeting with considerable apprehension, and Grey was forced to defend his policy before the House of Commons. He even went so far as to imply that if the House rejected the new course of British foreign policy, he would be compelled to resign.¹⁹ Izvol'ski and Charles Hardinge accompanied their sovereigns to Reval, and this opportunity for conversations between them allowed Izvol'ski to set forth his policy. Their discussions concerned the balance of power in Europe, the Middle East situation, and especially the reform program for Macedonia.²⁰ Hardinge concluded that the Macedonian cooperation alone would "probably result in the closing of our ranks, and will cement our agreement

¹⁹Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 5th ser. (28 May 1908) 189:1150, and (4 June 1908), 190:211-25; Gooch, Before the War, 2:29-31. Early in April Prime Minister Henry Campbell-Bannerman resigned because of ill-health. On 22 April he died, having been replaced by Grey's close friend, H. H. Asquith. Although there was some shifting about in the Cabinet, Grey's position was even stronger in the government than before. Asquith was also more acceptable to the Russians, and Benckendorff wrote that he thought Asquith was more frank than Campbell-Bannerman had been. Benckendorff to Izvol'ski, 15 April 1908, Izvol'ski, Correspondance diplomatique, 2:154; Jenkins, Asquith, p. 177.

²⁰Izvol'ski to Benckendorff, 18 June 1908, Benno von Siebert and George A. Schriener, eds., Entente Diplomacy and the World: Matrix of the History of Europe, 1909-1914 (New York & London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1921), p. 479. Baron von Siebert was the secretary of the Russian Embassy at London and this selection of documents, as well as others Siebert made public, came from the Embassy archives. Documents in BD, 5:232-46, especially the Memorandum by Hardinge, p. 239, cover the Reval meeting from the British side.

with Russia in the same manner as the action of Germany at Algeciras cemented our friendship with France."²¹

Outside of a festive spectacle with lavish press coverage,²² the Reval meeting accomplished little except the agreement on Macedonian reforms, and these were never carried out. The meeting did, however, have some significant side effects. The Germans interpreted the Reval visit as a threat to the Central Powers, and the reaction in Turkey was significant as well.²³ Undoubtedly prodded by the possibility of further foreign intervention in the Ottoman Empire in the form of the Macedonian reforms as well as the increased railway activity, a group of young and extremely nationalistic Turks pulled off a successful revolt against the corrupt and impotent government of the Sultan and took over the government.²⁴ Without actually deposing the Sultan, the Young Turks forced

²¹Hardinge to Barclay, 14 July 1908, Hardinge Papers, 15 vols., University Library, Cambridge, England, vol. 3, 1908.

²²Cabinet Report of 9 June 1908, CAB 37/93, reporting on the Russian press reception; Nicolson, Portrait of a Diplomatist, pp. 197-200; Murray, "British Opinion and Policy," pp. 203-10, 217-20, 236, 240; Taube, La politique russe, p. 186.

²³Nicolson, Portrait of a Diplomatist, p. 210; Pourtalès to Bülow, 12 June 1908, GP, 25:451-4; Pourtalès to Bülow, 12 June 1908, *ibid.*, pp. 454-6.

²⁴Memorandum respecting the Turkish Revolution and its Consequences, 1 March 1909, BD, 5:816-9; Nicolson, Portrait of a Diplomatist, p. 203.

him to accept a constitution and made plans to allow for a representation of the various Turkish Balkan provinces in a legislative assembly. Although at first the Young Turk program seemed admirable and liberal and gained the support of many Europeans, especially the British, the new leaders soon showed that they were more intent on freeing their country from foreign intervention than in advancing liberal or democratic programs. Aehrenthal was aware that their program of representation would interfere with his projected plans for the provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and was determined to make his move toward annexation as soon as possible.²⁵ He was already sure of Izvol'ski's cooperation because the question had come up on several previous occasions. Accordingly, Aehrenthal was pleased to receive a memorandum from Izvol'ski on 2 July 1908, offering to agree to the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as the Sanjak of Novibazar in return for Vienna's support of the Russian desire to settle the Straits problem.²⁶

²⁵Carlgren, Izvol'ski und Aehrenthal, p. vii.

²⁶Russian aide-mémoire, 1 July 1908, Ludwig Bittner, A. F. Pribram, Heinrich Srbik, and Hans Übersberger, eds., Österreich-Ungarns Aussenpolitik von der Bosnischen Krise 1908 bis zum Kriegsausbruch 1914: Diplomatische Aktenstücke des Österreichisch-Ungarischen Ministeriums des Aussern, 9 vols. (Vienna and Leipzig: Österreichischer Bundesverlag, 1930), 1:9 (hereafter cited as O-UA): Conrad, Aus Meiner Dienstzeit, 1:107-11.

The British attitude toward the controversial Straits question had naturally been altered by the signing of the 1907 Convention. Although formerly Britain had resisted Russian efforts to open the Straits, she actually had no real objections as long as the integrity of Turkey and Britain's own position could be maintained. Since the vague assurances which Grey had given Izvol'ski during the long negotiations for the Convention, both Grey and Nicolson had avoided the subject. The British Foreign Office would have preferred not to take up the subject again, especially in view of Britain's improved relations with the new Turkish regime. Grey felt that too strong support for Izvol'ski's desires would complicate matters at the Porte, but he also thought that open opposition might endanger the Entente. Therefore, Grey moved cautiously in this potentially dangerous area. He wrote the British Ambassador in Constantinople, Sir Gerald Lowther, warning him to avoid giving Russia any impression that Britain was supporting the Turkish regime as a barrier against her,²⁷ and he calmly accepted Nicolson's report from St. Petersburg that Izvol'ski was determined "to go hand in hand" with the British government in the Middle and Near East.²⁸ Other

²⁷Grey to Lowther, 11 August 1908, Lowther Papers, FO 800/193, PRO.

²⁸Nicolson to Grey, 13 August 1908, Grey Papers, FO 800/73, PRO.

Foreign Office correspondence throughout 1908 indicated that the Russian minister was cooperating and that relations between Russia and England were improving. Much earlier Hardinge had predicted, "All we have to do is play the game quite straightly with Russia in Persia and we ought to have her entirely with us not only in Asia but in Europe also." As the year progressed Hardinge and Nicolson both supported and complimented the Russian Minister, noting that his position in the Russian government was a great aid to England.²⁹

While Grey somewhat complacently remained under the impression that Britain and Russia were cooperating fully in the Balkans, the Russian Foreign Minister was taking steps that would upset the whole international scene. Baron von Aehrenthal was delighted with the proposal contained in Izvol'ski's aide-mémoire of 2 July because it gave him the desired opportunity to move quickly. In order to complete the details for the bargain, the two ministers met at the country estate of Buchlau in Moravia on September. The estate belonged to the Austrian Ambassador in St. Petersburg, Count Berchtold, who had prevailed upon Izvol'ski to make the visit. At this point one of the most controversial and curious events of the whole Balkan tangle occurred. The details of the meeting have been the source of endless speculation as subsequent reports of the two participants

²⁹Hardinge to Nicolson, 7 January 1908, and Hardinge to Nicolson, 19 February 1908, Nicolson Papers, FO 800/341, PRO.

disagree on what took place. Aehrenthal's report in the published Austrian documents is the only official version,³⁰ but it is undated, and in view of Aehrenthal's diplomatic reputation, it certainly may be questioned. Izvol'ski told a series of varying stories, fitting them to the situation as necessary to absolve himself of blame.³¹ It is sufficient to say that the true story, intriguing as it may be, will never be known, and in any event, the details were incidental to the results. At the Buchlau meeting, Izvol'ski and Aehrenthal came to some sort of verbal agreement on their goals, and Izvol'ski left, apparently convinced that neither country would act immediately, and that he had plenty of time to secure the agreement of the other

³⁰Memorandum of Aehrenthal, O-UA, 1:86-92.

³¹The matter is treated at length in almost all the histories concerning the crisis. The most interesting and colorful are those in Fay, Origins of the World War, 1:375-78, and Laurence Lafore, The Long Fuse: An Interpretation of the Origins of World War I (Philadelphia and New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1965), pp. 155-56. Schmitt, Annexation of Bosnia, presents the standard version, which indicts Aehrenthal, and the study by Dailey, "Alexander Izvol'ski and the Buchlau Conference," pp. 55-63, supports this view. Nicolson to Grey, 3 November 1908, Grey Papers, FO 800/55, PRO, gives Nicolson's report to Grey of a meeting with Izvol'ski in which Izvol'ski told Nicolson what he had reported to the Tsar about the Buchlau meeting. Nicolson's personal view is presented in Nicolson, Portrait of a Diplomatist, p. 204. Apparently Izvol'ski removed many incriminating papers concerning his part in the affair and "Vokrug anneksii Bosnii i Gertsegoviny," Krasnyi Arkhiv 10:41-53, contains only a few documents and no report of the Buchlau meeting. Izvol'ski refrained from mention of the meeting in his own memoirs. One cannot escape the conclusion that neither minister was playing fair and that Izvol'ski got what he deserved, even if he was tricked by the clever Aehrenthal.

European powers to the Austrian plans for the annexation and the Russian plans for opening the Straits. Izvolski leisurely vacationed his way across Europe, stopping to see the German Foreign Secretary, Schön, on 26 September.³² There he brought up the matter of a European conference he hoped would settle the Balkan matter. A few days later he visited the Italian Foreign Minister, Tittoni, who was agreeable to the Straits proposals, but was irritated that he had not been informed earlier of the plans.³³ On 30 September Izvolski arrived in Paris, only to be confronted with the unpleasant news that Aehrenthal planned the annexation for the following week. Whatever Izvolski and Aehrenthal had agreed on at Buchlau, it is evident that the Russian Minister did not expect such precipitate action. He has been criticized for not pinning the Austrian minister down on the exact date. Some authorities think he probably even knew the date,³⁴ but it is

³²Schön to Bülow, 26 September 1908, GP, 26:39-43.

³³Izvolski to Benckendorff, 4 November 1909, Siebert, Entente Diplomacy, p. 151.

³⁴Nicolson says Izvolski knew of the plans, but used his denial as sort of a "red herring" to disguise the fact that he had misjudged the British attitude about the Straits. He mentions Izvolski's meeting with Schön on 25 September when he explained that he expected the annexation on 8 October, and also points out that Izvolski's reaction to the annexation news was quite calm until he reached London on 9 October and discovered the British stand. Some other sources agree; see, de Schelking, Recollections, pp. 174-5; Charykov, Glimpses of High Politics, p. 269; Albertini, Origins of the War, 1:206; and a letter from the Emperor Francis Joseph to Nicholas II, 29 September, "Vokrug Anexii Bosnii i Khertsegoviny," Krasnyi Arkhiv 10:42-43.

not likely that he would have dallied so long in securing his part of the bargain if he had been sure of how quickly Aehrenthal planned to act.

Izvol'ski found himself in an extremely awkward position. Aehrenthal's move left him in the embarrassing predicament of having sold out Russia's traditional Slavic interests without guaranteeing the compensating opening of the Straits. Russia could not now move alone to open the Straits, and Izvol'ski was faced with the dual problems of explaining his conduct to his allies, Britain and France, and to the Russian government and people, who knew nothing of the proposed diplomatic coup. He appealed immediately to the French Foreign Minister, Pichon, who was cool to Izvol'ski's plight, mentioning only that France would have to see what England's attitude was before taking action.³⁵ Izvol'ski then visited Sir Francis Bertie, the British Ambassador in Paris, to whom he tried to explain his actions. Bertie reported to the Foreign Office that he was convinced that Izvol'ski had agreed to the annexation and that he feared the Russian minister did not tell the "whole truth." Bertie wrote,

I cannot believe that Austria would venture to proceed with the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina without any consultation whatever with France and England unless she had already obtained the consent of

³⁵Livre noir, 2:145; Carrol, French Public Opinion, pp. 262-63.

Germany, the concurrence of Russia, and the acquiescence of Italy.³⁶

Bertie was only partly right, but more important, he sensed correctly that Izvol'ski was not being honest with the British.

The British Foreign Office was indignant but not completely surprised at the annexation. News had been coming in for several weeks about the possibility of such an event. On 30 September the British Minister in Belgrade reported a conversation with the Serbian Foreign Minister, Milovanović, in which he learned that Milovanović was certain all preparations for annexation had been completed.³⁷ On 1 October, Goschen reported from Vienna that the local newspapers had carried the news of possible annexation,³⁸ and on 4 October Goschen reported a conversation with Aehrenthal in which he had questioned Aehrenthal about the rumors of the Bulgarian declaration of independence. Aehrenthal professed to Goschen his complete disbelief in such rumors.³⁹ On 27 September Nicolson had reported to Grey that the rumor of the impending annexation had reached Russia and the press was in "full cry."⁴⁰

³⁶Bertie to Grey, 12 October 1908, and Bertie to Grey, 5 October 1908, FO 371/550, PRO.

³⁷Whitehead to Grey, 30 September 1908, FO 371/550, PRO.

³⁸Goschen to Grey, 1 October 1908, FO 371/553, PRO.

³⁹Goschen to Grey, 4 October 1908, FO 371/553, PRO.

⁴⁰Nicolson to Grey, 27 September 1908, FO 371/551, PRO.

Then, on 3 October, news came from Paris of the announcement of the annexation by the Austrian Ambassador to the French government.⁴¹ At the same time the Austrian Ambassador in London, Count Mensdorff, handed Sir Charles Hardinge a letter which explained why his government intended to annex the provinces.⁴² Thus, on 6 October, when Austria made the formal announcement of the annexation, the British Foreign Office was fairly well prepared, although later Hardinge wrote that he was surprised to receive Mensdorff's letter.⁴³

The events caused serious protests in London. The British press and public denounced the actions, and the government resented the violation of the Berlin Treaty and the blow to the prestige of the new Turkish regime.⁴⁴ Grey was particularly disturbed by the way in which the annexation had been carried out, and his sentiments were echoed by the British Cabinet.⁴⁵ The British Foreign Office refused to recognize either the Austrian

⁴¹Bertie to Grey, 3 October 1908, FO 371/550, PRO.

⁴²Memorandum respecting an interview between Hardinge and Mensdorff, 3 October 1908, FO 371/552. This memorandum is also found in O-UA, 1:103-4.

⁴³Hardinge, Old Diplomacy, p. 165.

⁴⁴Hale, Great Illusion, p. 256, Lowe, Mirage of Power, 1:82; Murray, "British Opinion and Policy," p. 255.

⁴⁵Grey, Twenty-Five Years, 1:275; Ripon to Asquith, 7 October 1908, Marquis of Ripon Papers, British Museum, London, England, Add. MS 43518, vol. 28.

or the Bulgarian actions immediately, and Grey adopted a rather moral and indignant attitude in subsequent communications. He wrote the Prime Minister, Asquith, calling the action "monstrous" and proposing, "that we should be the Turks' friend in the contest; inclination and policy both point that way, for the Young Turk regime is the injured and deserving party."⁴⁶ To some extent, Grey's attitude was unrealistic, as the events were not faits accomplis, but his protest gave him the opportunity to keep the question open and to attempt to secure some concessions for Turkey. The inherent contradictions in Grey's foreign policy are nowhere more evident than in the Bosnian matter. If Britain supported the Turks, Russia would be aggrieved, because she was loudly championing the cause of Serbia as the injured party. If Grey stood too firmly behind Russia and her demand for Serbian compensation and ignored the Turks, he would find himself in trouble with the British people, the press, and a large part of the government. Even within the British diplomatic camp problems became apparent. From Sophia, the British Ambassador wrote that the most important thing to do was recognize Bulgarian independence in order to keep Bulgaria from becoming an Austro-German satellite,⁴⁷ while from Constantinople, Lowther advocated support for Turkey and some kind of indemnity from the Bulgarians.⁴⁸

⁴⁶Grey to Asquith, 5 October 1908, Grey Papers, FO 800/100, PRO.

⁴⁷Buchanan to Hardinge, 14 October 1908, Hardinge Papers, vol. 1, 1908.

⁴⁸Lowther to Grey, 6 October 1908, BD, 5:313.

Izvol'ski arrived in London on 9 October, seeking British support for the opening of the Straits and loudly proclaiming his innocence. He asked for a European conference to settle the question. He had not approved of the annexation, he vowed, and while Russia would not regard the event as a casus belli, she would insist on some advantages at the Straits as compensation.⁴⁹ In view of the outcry of Panslav opinion at home and the repudiation of his own government, Izvol'ski warned the British Foreign Office that lack of support at this critical time might bring about his fall, and even that of Prime Minister Stolypin. If they were replaced by the reactionary elements, he suggested, the British orientation of Russian foreign policy might be ended.⁵⁰ While his cries did not exactly fall on deaf ears, Izvol'ski found Grey and his colleagues less enthusiastic in support of his position than he had hoped.

To Izvol'ski's disappointment, Grey opposed his proposals for opening the Straits to Russian warships while leaving them closed

⁴⁹Grey to Nicolson, 14 October 1908, FO 371/552, PRO.

⁵⁰Grey to Nicolson, 14 October 1908, FO 371/552, PRO; Grey, Twenty-five Years, 1:178; Hardinge to Nicolson, 13 October 1908, Nicolson Papers, FO 800/341, PRO. The Russian Council of Ministers had not been informed of the plan, and their outcry was based largely on Izvol'ski's agreement to subject two Slavic, Orthodox Christian provinces to Austrian German Catholic domination. Nicolson reported a conversation with Charykov which indicated that the Russians knew little of Izvol'ski's plans; see, Nicolson to Grey, 5 October 1908, FO 371/550, Nicolson to Grey, 6 October 1908, FO 371/551, PRO; and Charykov, Glimpses of High Politics, p. 269. Nicolson's opinion was, however, that Izvol'ski's fall would not affect Stolypin's position in the Council.

to vessels of other powers. Grey declared that any change must contain an element of reciprocity which would place belligerents on equal footing.⁵¹ Nothing could have been further from Izvol'ski's mind. As Grey predicted, when he presented Izvol'ski's plan to the Cabinet, the members refused to consider it, objecting, to Hardinge's consternation, to the advantage Russia might gain over Britain's ships in wartime. The Cabinet also thought the time was inopportune and feared the reaction of the British public if the subject were brought up.⁵²

In the face of the Cabinet refusal, Izvol'ski retracted his proposal and tried another course. In the event of war, he suggested, Turkey should observe neutrality and give equal rights to all belligerents. Grey urged the Cabinet to accept this more equitable proposition since it would save Izvol'ski's position and possibly also the Entente. On 14 October, Grey was successful, and the Cabinet did at least accept the principle of Izvol'ski's suggestion. The British Cabinet was still not willing to come face to face with the question of the Straits. The Russian Minister's demands for a European conference received a somewhat warmer welcome,

⁵¹ Grey to Nicolson, 12 October 1908, Grey, Twenty-Five Years, 1:173-75.

⁵² Prime Minister to the King, 12 October 1908, Henry Herbert Asquith, 1st Earl of Oxford and Asquith, Papers, 152 vols. Bodleian Library, Oxford, England, vol. 5; Hardinge, Old Diplomacy, p. 168; Lee, King Edward VII, 2:639-40.

but even here the British wished to impose restrictions on the agenda of the conference.⁵³

Izvol'ski was by now nearly frantic for some tidbit to restore his prestige and diplomatic reputation. In Russia the Panslavs were assailing him bitterly for sacrificing the Slav cause to such meager gains, and his own ambassadors and colleagues in the ministry were criticizing his actions. Stolypin requested that the Tsar issue an official statement saying that the Foreign Minister had acted without the consent of the government. The Tsar was hesitant to do this, however, since he preferred to believe Izvol'ski's version of the Buchlau incident and its aftermath, having been the only one in Russia besides Izvol'ski who was aware of the Foreign Minister's involvement.⁵⁴ The subsequent disagreement between Izvol'ski and Stolypin was sharp and bitter and quickly degenerated into a general name-calling which settled nothing and reflected discreditably on both ministers.⁵⁵

⁵³Memorandum of Grey to Izvol'ski, 14 October 1908, FO 371/552, PRO. A copy is also found in Materialy po istorri franko-russkikh otnoshenii, p. 530. The memorandum informs Izvol'ski of the Cabinet's decision.

⁵⁴Charykov, Glimpses of High Politics, pp. 269-70; Nicholas Charykov, "Reminiscences of Nicholas II," Contemporary Review (October 1928): p. 287. The Tsar in fact did not know the true story of Buchlau because Izvol'ski did not tell him. His correspondence in "vokurg anneksii Bosnii i Khertsegoviny," Krasnyi Arkhiv 10:45-46, indicates this.

⁵⁵Bestuzhev, Borba v Rossii, pp. 212-216; Bovykin, Ocherki istorii, p. 75.

Having lost once more in his quest for the Straits, Izvol'ski changed his plea. Despite his earlier damning statements and his obvious complicity in the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina at Slavic expense, the Russian minister now began to increase his cries of support for Serbian interests. He had never lost sight of their plight, he declared, and he would do everything in his power to secure compensation for them.⁵⁶ Aware of the delicacy of his position, however, he repeatedly cautioned the Serbs to practice "moderation and prudence" until something could be done.⁵⁷

Grey did as much as he could to salvage Izvol'ski's sinking reputation because he did not wish to see Izvol'ski completely discredited. Grey supported Izvol'ski's proposal for a conference, and he even persuaded the King to write a letter to the Tsar praising Izvol'ski's efforts to secure Anglo-Russian friendship.⁵⁸ Grey was more concerned with the future of the Entente than he was with the fate of Bosnia and Herzegovina and, although he found it difficult to agree with many of Izvol'ski's demands and actions, he continued

⁵⁶S. Gruić to Foreign Office, London, 13 October 1908, Milos Bogičević, ed., *Die Auswärtige Politik Serbiens, 1903-1914*, 3 vols., (Berlin: Brucherverlag, 1928-31):2:157-161. Bogičević, a pro-German Serb, obtained the documents in this collection from the German Legation in Belgrade. The collection is rather unreliable and must be used with care.

⁵⁷Nicolson to Grey, 12 October 1908, FO 371/554, PRO.

⁵⁸Hardinge to Nicolson, 28 October 1908, Nicolson Papers, FO 800/341, PRO; Nicolson, *Portrait of a Diplomatist*, p. 207. For the text of the King's letter see, Lee, *King Edward VII*, 2:642.

to cooperate with the Russian minister. British anger was directed toward Austria, and it was the usual specter of German domination that guided the actions of the chief British Foreign Office officials. The most ardent advocate of the Russian friendship, Charles Hardinge, wrote,

. . .the object of Aehrenthal has been to destroy, at the instigation of Germany, the position of England at Constantinople, and at the same time to nullify the entente with Russia by raising the question of the Treaty. I am thankful to say, however, that we have managed to steer clear of that rock, and have come to a satisfactory arrangement with the Russians on the question of the Straits, when⁵⁹ ever a suitable moment shall arise for raising that question.

Izvolski's championship of the Serb cause made it especially difficult for the British to cooperate with Russia. In Grey's view, most of the Serbia's troubles seemed to be caused by her own agitation, for nationalistic feelings more than any legal provisions prompted her claims to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Serbia was not a signatory to the Berlin Treaty which had given Austria a foothold in the provinces, and her provocative attitude during the crisis seemed increasingly unreasonable. The inability of Izvolski to restrain the aggressive and militant Serbs became evident early. Although the French were sympathetic, and actually encouraging Serbian demands, Grey had little sympathy with the Serbian aspirations, and personally questioned the

⁵⁹Hardinge to Goschen, 20 October 1908, Hardinge Papers, vol. 3, 1908.

sincerity of Izvol'ski's pleas. Both Grey and Nicolson were aware that the Straits had been Izvol'ski's chief goal, even though he did not have whole-hearted Russian support for his desire, and they were skeptical of his campaign for Serbia.⁶⁰ Grey and Nicolson, however, were certain of the importance of supporting Russia's cause in the Balkans for unity's sake, while Hardinge complained bitterly that the "wretched little state" was "bent on mischief" unless she received compensation for the loss of her national aspirations.⁶¹ Grey wrote Nicolson in St. Petersburg,

I have not, myself much sympathy with the clamour of Servia and Montenegro for territorial compensation. If they are afraid of the Austrian advance, they had better sit still, put their own houses in order, make friends with Turkey, and hope that she will get strong under the new regime. But I do not want to cold-shoulder Izvol'sky on the Servian question, if the Russians are keen about it, and will do my best to support him. . . . It will be useful to me to know how far Izvol'sky means to go in support of Servia, if he has definite plans on the subject and if you can ascertain what they are.⁶²

Back in Russia, Izvol'ski was greeted with a great hue and cry accusing him of bad faith in sacrificing the Serbian Slav brethren. The British Cabinet learned that the Russian press and the

⁶⁰Nicolson to Grey, 13 October 1908, FO 371/554, PRO.

⁶¹Hardinge to Bryce, 23 October 1908, Hardinge Papers, vol. 3, 1908.

⁶²Grey to Nicolson, 27 October 1908, Nicolson Papers, FO 800/341, PRO.

Duma were both preoccupied with the Balkan question and strongly demanded support for the Slav principle there.⁶³ The Duma viewed the question of a European conference with disfavor and were reluctant to go to one unless annexation would be a part of the agenda. On 25 December Izvolski made a rare foreign policy speech before the Duma explaining and defending his policy.⁶⁴ Prior to the speech he had attempted to brief the various party leaders in Russia, excluding the socialist groups, but with little success. The Kadets were also not invited and the extreme right refused to attend his briefing, which left only the Octobrists and a few nationalist parties to hear him.⁶⁵ After the speech, A. I. Guchkov, founder and leader of the moderate right Octobrist party, and Paul Miliukov, a leading Kadet, both of whom might be described as moderates in foreign policy, commented on the speech. Neither were hostile, although Miliukov questioned whether Izvolski had done all he could to prevent annexation.⁶⁶ Except for brief sharp criticism from the extreme right

⁶³Nicolson's report, 9 November 1908, CAB 37/96, no. 148. This is the customary report made from the British Embassy to the Foreign Office and circulated to the Cabinet. Nicolson to Grey, 13 October 1908, FO 371/554, and Nicolson to Grey, 29 October 1908, FO 371/555, PRO, review the attitude of the Russian press.

⁶⁴Gosudarstvennaia Duma, Stenograficheskie Otchety, tretii sozyv, sessiia 2, zasadenie 31 (25 December 1908), pp. 2616-30.

⁶⁵Bestuzhev, Borba v Rossii, pp. 258-64; Thaden, Russia and Balkans, p. 20.

⁶⁶Stenograficheskie Otchety, tretii sozyv, sessiia 2, zasadenie 31, pp. 2648-52 (Guchkov's speech), and pp. 2677-2704 (Miliukov's speech).

and extreme left, the rest of the Duma took no action. The press, however, attacked the speech bitterly, complaining about the important points Izvol'ski had left out. The general tenor of the press impressed the British officials as more concerned with the defense of Slav interests than peace.⁶⁷

In the month to follow Grey walked a precarious path. He tried to obtain compensations for Turkey, placate the troublesome Izvol'ski by taking up the Serbian cause, avoid outright confrontations with Germany and Austria, arrange for a European conference, and save the Entente. He was especially anxious that all the powers should be party to any settlement that was made, especially Germany, so there would be no dissatisfaction with the settlement after the

⁶⁷Nicolson's report, 4 January 1909, CAB 37/97, #2. The Embassy in St. Peterburg kept London well informed on the press in Russia. On the matter of a conference, Novoe Vremya ventured some speculations on a union of Bulgaria, Serbia, and Montenegro, but carried the following indictment of Izvol'ski's policy, "He is, in fact, leading Russia from failure to failure, and it is time that, in view of this, our Minister should cease from his efforts to bring about a Conference. A Conference is necessary to Austria-Hungary for legalizing the Germanization of Bosnia and Herzegovina. A Conference is necessary to France in order to save French capital invested in Turkey; and a Conference is necessary to England so that the British Government, at a period difficult for Turkey, may preserve in the eyes of the Moslem subjects of Turkey the role of the savior of the debased prestige of the Caliph. But why is a Conference necessary to Russia?" Nicolson to Grey, 20 October 1908, FO 371/554, PRO. Rech, the organ of the Kadet party, expressed fear "that M. Izvol'ski might prove in London [at a conference] as pliable as regards Turkey as he was at Buklau in respect to Austria," and "forgo Slav interests once again," Nicolson to Grey, 13 October 1908, FO 371/554, PRO.

fact.⁶⁸ To include all the powers proved difficult since neither Germany nor Austria favored a conference, and Germany was doing little to resolve the crisis at this time. All of the British Secretary's actions were carried out in an atmosphere of extreme tension and suspicion. Five countries began military mobilization, including Austria, Serbia, and Turkey, and Grey was afraid of the European consequences in case the Balkan powers actually went to war. Britain would have difficulty remaining neutral in such an event, he wrote, but he resisted Russian efforts to get a show of force from the Entente powers.⁶⁹

The dispute between Austria and Turkey and between Bulgaria and Turkey dragged on throughout the winter, and Grey tried to support the Turkish cause in each case. Eventually he was forced to shelve the idea of a conference, because neither Austria nor Germany would agree to it. Even the Turkish government was reluctant to agree to a program for the conference. Izvol'ski alone among the Russians actually favored it. Grey therefore abandoned the idea, and hoped to solve the problem by individual negotiations, urging this course on Izvol'ski.⁷⁰ Primary among Grey's aims was gaining compensation for

⁶⁸Grey to Nicolson, 10 November 1908, FO 371/555, PRO.

⁶⁹Ibid.; Pribram, Austria-Hungary and Great Britain, p. 110.

⁷⁰Grey to Nicolson, 14 November 1908, FO 371/556, PRO.

Turkey, and here he was ultimately successful. In the beginning neither Austria nor Bulgaria were prepared to make any territorial or monetary compensations, and several times serious hostilities seemed inevitable. Nevertheless, despite Austria's claims that her voluntary evacuation of the Sanjak of Novibazar was sufficient compensation, Grey persisted until Austria agreed to award the Turks two and one-half million Turkish pounds in compensation for the crown lands in Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁷¹

Although Hardinge predicted that with the Austrian payment to Turkey, "Bulgaria will now be much more moderate and conciliatory in her attitude,"⁷² Grey had more trouble helping the Turks gain compensation from Bulgaria, even though his efforts there were supported by all the other powers and aided materially by Russia. Aehrenthal's desire to claim the favor and support of the newly independent state complicated the problem, and Russia, too, was eager to gain Bulgarian friendship and willing to pay well for it.

⁷¹Baron von Tschirshchky to the Foreign Office, Vienna, 9 January 1909, GP, 26:477-8; Schmitt, Annexation of Bosnia, pp. 100-125, details the negotiations of the Austro-Turkish settlement. The British naval dispositions in the Mediterranean, while having no direct connection with the question, had an unintentional effect on Aehrenthal's determination to bring Turkey to heel. Grey was not aware of it at the time, but learned later from several sources that the presence of the fleet was a deterrent to Aehrenthal's demands, Cartwright to Grey, 21 December 1908, and Rodd to Grey, 12 January 1909, FO 371/558, PRO. See also, Robbins Sir Edward Grey, p. 193; Cooper, "British Policy," p. 272.

⁷²Hardinge to Bryce, 15 January 1909, James Bryce, Viscount of Dechmount, Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford, England.

Russia offered to advance the necessary funds to compensate Turkey for the loss of Eastern Rumelia, which Bulgaria had annexed in the move for independence, on a long-term, low-interest basis.⁷³ Grey was gratified to be relieved of this problem by Izvol'ski's willingness to support Bulgaria monetarily, since he was thereby able to avoid a further conflict with Britain's own interests. Lowther remonstrated sharply, however, and warned that the British position at Constantinople might be compromised by such a solution. The British Foreign Secretary defended Britain's policy in a long dispatch:

I see that you have grudged our support of the Russian proposal about Turkey and Bulgaria.

I believe that the Russians are quite sincere now in wishing to keep the Balkan States together and on good terms with Turkey; and this policy is obviously in Turkey's interest. I saw too in the Russian proposal the only chance of avoiding war . . . If I had refused to support the Russian proposal, the result would have been a diplomatic separation between Russia and us that would have reacted unfavorably on the whole of our relations . . . it seemed to me imperative to support the Russian proposal and, though I was aware of the risk at Constantinople, I gave my support with a good conscience.⁷⁴

⁷³Eventually the problem was settled by Russian renunciation of more than one-half of the Turkish debt to Russia remaining from the Russo-Turkish war of 1879, and the capitalization of the rest at four per cent. Actually in this way Turkey received a greater compensation than she expected, although later she deprecated the gains and blamed her position on the fact that she had taken British advice. Schmitt, Annexation of Bosnia, details the settlement between Bulgaria and Turkey, pp. 125-143.

⁷⁴Grey to Lowther, 8 February 1909, Grey Papers, FO 800/79, PRO. Part of Lowther's concern might have been prompted by the fact

Grey's patience with Turkey became somewhat strained when she raised objections to mere financial compensations. The Porte had been determined to receive territorial compensation from Bulgaria, and only after Grey warned that in case Turkey became involved in a war with Bulgaria over territorial compensations, she could no longer count on British support, did she agree not to demand territorial compensation.⁷⁵

The most crucial settlement of all, from the viewpoint of Anglo-Russian relations, was that of the Serbian and Montenegrin claims.⁷⁶ As noted, Grey was less interested in the claims themselves than in Izvol'ski's support of them, and in reality they were difficult to rationalize, especially on the part of Serbia. Although Serbia's ambitions and prestige had been damaged, her actual territories and political status remained unchanged. Moreover, her claims had no connection with the Berlin Treaty, on which Grey based much of his action. Montenegro had a slightly better case, as she sought removal of restrictions placed on her sovereignty by Article XXIX of the Treaty of Berlin, which was being altered to the advantage of other states.

that he was extremely popular at Constantinople and had been so lionized by the Young Turk regime that it was difficult for him to remain objective in the circumstances.

⁷⁵Schmitt, Annexation of Bosnia, p. 127, Lowe, Mirage of Power, I;83.

⁷⁶Schmitt, Annexation of Bosnia, pp. 144-65 investigates the question of the Serbian claims.

Matters were complicated further by the provocative attitude of the Serbs themselves, who certainly could not support their bellicose attitude on their own, but nevertheless seemed bent on war.⁷⁷ Izvol'ski, humiliated and frustrated at every turn, hesitated to give up this last effort to salvage his diplomatic reputation, although he knew well that his country was in no position to push the situation to war. He warned the Serbians to be patient several times during the crisis.⁷⁸ Uncertain of his allies and cognizant of the Russian military situation, Izvol'ski was reduced to begging the Serbians to be patient. "Serbia will be condemned to a pitiful existence until the moment for the downfall of Austria arrives," he told the Serbian Chargé d'Affaires in St. Petersburg. He continued, "The Annexation has brought this moment nearer, and when it comes, Russia will unroll and solve the Serbian question."⁷⁹

The obstinacy of the Serbian claims for territorial compensation were met with equal determination from Austria, who would not allow the Serbians to gain an inch. Britain's position was further made uncomfortable by her pledge to guarantee Turkish territory, and Turkey was the

⁷⁷Whitehead to Grey, Belgrade, 27 October 1908, and Nicolson to Grey, 29 October 1908, FO 371/554, PRO.

⁷⁸Memorandum of N. Pašić, St. Petersburg, 29 October 1908, APS, 2:24; Pašić to Foreign Office, 2 November 1908, ibid., 2:27; Nicolson to Grey, 2 November 1908, BD, 5:478; Nicolson to Grey, 31 October 1908, FO 371/555, PRO.

⁷⁹Report of N. Kosutić, St. Petersburg, 10 March 1909, Deutsch-Schuldig?, p. 114, cited in Fay, Origins of the World War, 1:385.

only place besides Austria where Serbia might gain compensation. By February the situation was so grave that Nicolson wrote Grey that he should not discount the possibility of active Russian support to Serbia in case war broke out.⁸⁰ From the Foreign Office in London, Hardinge gloomily predicted that war seemed inevitable.⁸¹

In Austria, the outlook was also discouraging. Conrad advised military action because he thought it was the only way to meet the Serbian problem, and Aehrenthal constantly implied that Austria might take forcible measures against Serbia.⁸² On 19 February, Grey communicated with Cartwright,

We are very seriously disturbed by the report that Austria feels she may be compelled to take active measures against Serbia in the near future and is already contemplating them. We doubt whether any assurances would induce Russia to regard such a situation with equanimity and the consequence of war between Austria and Serbia might therefore be so far-reaching as to disturb the peace of Europe and involve the other Powers⁸³

Grey then asked Cartwright to try to find out what concessions Austria would agree to, but the effort was useless. A major problem was that none of the powers, including the Russians, were disposed to help Grey

⁸⁰Nicolson to Grey, 23 February 1909, Grey Papers, FO 800/73, PRO.

⁸¹Hardinge to Bryce, 26 February 1909, Bryce Papers.

⁸²Conrad, Aus Meiner Dienstzeit, 1:120-28; Pribram, Austria-Hungary and Great Britain, p. 122,

⁸³Grey to Cartwright, 19 February 1909, BD, 5:610-11.

untangle this knot. In a conversation with Mensdorff Grey admitted that it would be useless to attempt anything with Serbia without Russia's cooperation.⁸⁴ On the other hand, Aehrenthal's actions were so determined that Grey finally decided the Russians must be made to realize that there would be no question of territorial compensation for Serbia.⁸⁵ By the time Grey sent this message to the Foreign Office in St. Petersburg, however, the Russians had already come to the same conclusion and had advised the Serbian government of their decision.⁸⁶

Austria was not yet satisfied, however. On 26 February the Austro-Turkish agreement was signed, ending that part of the question. In his usual arrogant manner, Aehrenthal demanded that Serbia recognize the settlement at once and stated that hereafter Austria would negotiate directly with Serbia.⁸⁷ Both Grey and Izvol'ski were opposed to this, because they knew Serbia would be at a disadvantage in direct negotiation. Their protests were useless, however, and Aehrenthal proceeded to act in an arbitrary way, threatening Serbia with commercial and economic consequences if she did not acquiesce

⁸⁴Mensdorff to Foreign Office, 24 February 1909, O-UA, 1:874-75.

⁸⁵Grey to Nicolson, 27 February 1909, BD, 5:637.

⁸⁶Nicolson to Grey, 28 February 1909, *ibid.*, p. 641; S. A. Poklevski-Koziell to Izvol'ski, London, 24 February 1909 and 27 February 1909, Stieve, Diplomatische Schriftwechsel, 1:75-76.

⁸⁷Aehrenthal to Mensdorff, 27 February 1909, O-UA, 2:4-5.

peacefully to Austria's demands.⁸⁸ Izvol'ski was as displeased as Grey with the action that was taking place, but was even more helpless to change it. His bitter feud with Aehrenthal, who threatened to make Izvol'ski's part in the Buchlau episode public through the newspapers, colored his every action, and the criticism and repudiation of the Russian government and press made his diplomatic efforts practically useless.

Meanwhile, negotiations between Serbia and the powers were underway on drafting a declaration that Serbia was to present to the signatory powers of the Treaty of Berlin, stating that she was willing to maintain friendly relations with Austria and refrain from further military action against her neighbor. The problem was that Serbia and the powers disagreed on the exact terms and form of the note. Serbia naturally opted for provisions favorable to herself, while Grey and Izvol'ski tried to soften both the tone and the terms of the document.⁸⁹ The first declaration of 10 March 1909 was so skillfully drafted that it appeared to meet all the demands of the powers and Austria, but actually fell far short of

⁸⁸Aehrenthal to Count Forgach, 5 March 1909, *ibid.*, 2:30-1; Aehrenthal to Szögyény, 26 February 1909, *ibid.*, 1:886.

⁸⁹Whitehead to Grey, 4 March 1909, with enclosure, "Proposed Circular to the Servian Representatives at the Capitals of the Signatory Powers of the Treaty of Berlin," *BD*, 6:657-60. For the Russian situation, see Nicolson to Grey, 10 March 1909, *ibid.*, p. 667.

the kind of capitulation Austria demanded.⁹⁰ Instead of conciliating Aehrenthal, the note only made the crisis more acute. Aehrenthal refused to accept the note, and Grey and Izvol'ski were forced to renew their pressure on Serbia to draft a new and more acceptable document. Meanwhile, Grey revived some half-hearted efforts to get a conference of the Powers, but he was painfully aware of the obstacles to such a conference and in the end had to abandon the idea altogether.⁹¹

Aehrenthal was not the only one who disliked the note of 10 March. Although the British Foreign Office had been in contact with Serbia, and even though the Serbian note was based on a Russian draft, the note did not meet British expectations either. William Tyrrell called it "silly," while Parker minuted the document with the observation that it was "an insolent reply." Mallet noted, "This reply does not meet the Austrian requirements in any particular and is impertinent in substance."⁹² From Russia, Nicolson lamented,

⁹⁰Gruić to Grey, 10 March 1909, BD, 5:666; Forgach to Foreign Office, 10 March 1909, O-UA, 2:69; Pribram, Austria-Hungary and Great Britain, p. 128, and Schmitt, Annexation of Bosnia, p. 171, carry the text of the note in English.

⁹¹Grey to Cartwright, 12 March 1909, BD, 5:674.

⁹²Minute on Whitehead to Grey, 15 March 1909, ibid., p.679.

It is unfortunate that . . . Russia held out until recently hopes to Serbia that she would obtain territorial compensation and that Russia would employ every diplomatic and pacific means to secure them for her. It would have been better, and perhaps juster to Serbia, if from the outset the true situation had been explained to her.⁹³

Even Izvol'ski knew the note was unacceptable and told Nicolson that the document contained some phrases which would have been better left out.⁹⁴

While Grey labored in drafting a new note for the Serbians, and Aehrenthal himself drew up drafts which would be acceptable to Austria, help came from an unexpected source. Suddenly, in the middle of March, Germany decided the matter had gone far enough. Until this point the German government had played a relatively small role in the negotiations. Several times the German Foreign Office had expressed its desire for a peaceful solution, but had made it clear that it must support its ally Austria in the matter. It had, however, been surprisingly noncommittal throughout most of the crisis. Then, on 21 March, the German Ambassador at St. Petersburg was instructed to inform Izvol'ski that the German government was prepared to propose to the Austrian government that Austria should invite the signatory

⁹³Nicolson to Grey, 15 March 1909, *ibid.*, pp. 685-6.

⁹⁴*Ibid.*

powers of the Treaty of Berlin to join her in agreement of the abrogation of Article XXV concerning the status of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Berlin wished to be certain Russia would accept such an agreement before communicating it to the other Powers. A "yes" or "no" answer was demanded from the Russian government. Otherwise, Germany would "draw back and let matters take their course; the responsibility for all subsequent events would then fall exclusively on M. Izvolsky. . ."95

Izvolski's reaction was immediate. The Russian minister gave way and hastily explained the situation to a meeting of the Russian Council of Ministers, who were already agreed that Russia was in no position to hold out any longer. The Council instructed Izvolski to comply, and he forwarded his capitulation to Berlin without even consulting the British Ambassador in St. Petersburg. When Nicolson complained to Izvolski about his precipitate action, he explained that the German note constituted an ultimatum and that he had no time for consultation.⁹⁶ Although this was the line Izvolski adopted with several colleagues in order to make it seem that he had no other choice, later he agreed that the German note had indeed been quite

⁹⁵Bülow to Pourtalès, 21 March 1909, GP, 26:693, Nicolson, Portrait of a Diplomatist, p. 219.

⁹⁶Nicolson to Grey, 23 March 1909, Grey Papers, FO 800/73, PRO; Berchtold to Aehrenthal, 24 March 1909, O-UA, 2:190-91; Schmitt, Annexation of Bosnia, p. 186.

conciliatory in tone.⁹⁷ In fact, Izvolski had already decided to abandon his support for Serbia's territorial claims and try only for economic concessions. Izvolski may have been unwise but he was not a complete fool, and, however unwillingly, he recognized that Russia's position was untenable, and so, therefore, was Serbia's. France could not be counted on, and the British had made it clear that they were not willing to go further than diplomatic assistance, so there was nothing left for Izvolski to do but save face as much as possible. By spreading an exaggerated version of the German demand, he could at least appear to have been faced with an unconditional ultimatum and hope to salvage some thread of his tattered reputation. As for the feelings of the British Ambassador, although Nicolson protested about being uninformed, he privately admitted that he was relieved Izvolski had acted without consulting him because it would have been difficult to give advice on such a situation.⁹⁸

⁹⁷Izvolski to Nelidov and Poklevsky, 23 March 1909, Siebert, Entente Diplomacy, p. 259. Others confirm this opinion; see, Charykov, Glimpses of High Politics, p. 270; Steed, Through Thirty Years, 1:300-1; Fay, Origins of the World War, 2:391; Schmitt, Annexation of Bosnia, pp. 195-7. Schmitt's explanation of the tone of the note was that it was drafted not by Schön, the Foreign Minister, who was ill at the time, but by Kiderlen-Wächter, who was a lover of action and vigorous language. Schön later wrote in his memoirs that the language of the note was "forceful," Schön, Erlebtes (Berlin: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1921) p. 79, while Kiderlen only noted in his diary that the language was "clear and plain," Ernest Jäckh, Kiderlen-Wächter, der Staatsmann und Mensch, 2 vols. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlag-Anstalt, 1925), 2:26.

⁹⁸Nicolson, Portrait of a Diplomatist, p. 220.

In London, Grey refused to be stampeded into a rout like the one his Russian counterpart had taken. Foreign Office officials complained bitterly in public about Izvol'ski's actions, but like Nicolson, they privately admitted that the German demand and the Russian acceptance made it possible for Britain to escape from an embarrassing situation. Grey displayed a final show of determination and declared that the British would not recognize the annexation until the Austro-Serbian problem had been amicably resolved and a satisfactory settlement of the questions concerning Montenegro had been made. Russia's demarche, however, left him little room to maneuver. He continued to wrangle with Aehrenthal over the exact wording of the proposed Serbian note of capitulation, but by the end of March, Britain had followed the Russian retreat. The British Foreign Secretary wrote his diplomats in Europe that "there was no use to risk the cause of general peace by splitting hairs over Servia."⁹⁹

On the face of things, the Central Powers had apparently secured a diplomatic victory at the expense of Anglo-Russian friendship. On closer examination, the victory was, in Nicolson's terms, "more disastrous to themselves than any possible defeat."¹⁰⁰ The most

⁹⁹Grey to Goschen, 25 March 1909, BD, 5:740, and Grey to Nicolson, Bertie, and Rodd, 26 March 1909, ibid., pp. 741-42.

¹⁰⁰Nicolson, Portrait of a Diplomatist, p. 220.

obvious problem was in the Balkans where seeds of deep resentment had been sown. Although Serbia had been forced to accept the annexation, the question was not really resolved. Russia continued to give secret encouragement for future victories, and Serbia herself did all she could to stimulate nationalist agitation among the Balkan Slavs. Austria was faced with a potentially dangerous situation which would eventually lead to war.¹⁰¹

On the British side, Hardinge admitted to the King that the affair was something of a "climb-down," but he insisted that it had the advantage of showing to the whole world that "we are ready to stretch a great many points to secure European peace."¹⁰² The fact was that Britain was not willing to go to war for the cause of a Slavic state, and so long as her friendship with Russia was still in its formative stage, she felt compelled to give only diplomatic support to her impetuous ally.

Beyond this, the crisis had some other results for Britain. While Anglo-Turkish relations became less close as a result of Turkish resentment over what they considered to be meager gains received by following British advice,¹⁰³ Anglo-Austrian relations became even cooler. Grey noted that he could never again trust

¹⁰¹Fay, Origins of the War, 1:399-403, Lowe, Mirage of Power, 1:84-6.

¹⁰²Hardinge to the King, 26 March 1909, Hardinge Papers, vol. 1, 1909.

¹⁰³Lowther to Hardinge, 20 April 1909, and 25 April 1909, Lowther Papers, FO 800/193, PRO.

Aehrenthal and wrote, "d"Aehrenthal is not only unscrupulous himself, but so mean that he never can believe he has honest men to deal with anywhere."¹⁰⁴ Considering Grey's strict moral sense, his words constituted especially strong criticism of the Austrian Minister. Grey had worked hard to untangle an almost impossible situation, and although his efforts were only partly rewarded, at least one authority has assessed them as significant. The British Secretary could justly claim, wrote Professor Alfred Pribram, that it was due to his efforts that Turkey had obtained monetary compensation, Serbia was less humiliated, Montenegro's sovereign rights were enlarged, and war was avoided.¹⁰⁵ Unfortunately, all these gains were temporary, and in some instances, only illusory.

As for the Russian side of the question, the animosity between Izvol'ski and Aehrenthal was never laid to rest. Izvol'ski's diplomatic reputation was ruined, and he remained a bitter and vengeful man, seeking redress in the capitals of Europe. His usefulness as Foreign Minister was over, and he was not able to secure a desirable embassy for several months, he frankly sought release from the humiliating office. A man with much ability and a man whose career had begun with so much promise was now a pitiful caricature of himself, devoting himself to promoting Russia's friendship

¹⁰⁴Grey to Hardinge, 13 January 1909, Hardinge Papers, vol. 1, 1909.

¹⁰⁵Pribram, Austria-Hungary and Great Britain, p. 147.

with England and France by every means possible, fair or foul. The Panslav press in Russia attacked him violently and, in effect, Russia was without a foreign minister for the last few months of Izvolski's term. Fortunately for Russia, these months were relatively quiet ones in foreign affairs, and Russia was able to turn her attention to a reorganization and increase of her army and navy.¹⁰⁶

In many ways, the outcome of the Bosnian crisis displayed the weakness of Anglo-Russian cooperation in the Balkans. Russia resented Britain's reluctance to do more than lend diplomatic support during the crisis, while many British were more than ever convinced that their new friend was a dangerous one. Hardinge and Nicolson both ventured the opinion that the only way to strengthen

¹⁰⁶Jelavich, Century of Russian Foreign Policy, p. 267; Fay, Origins of the World War, 1:397, note 75, mentions numerous communiques from Pourtales to the German Foreign Office describing the press attack, not only on Izvolski, but also on Germany; Paul Cambon wrote the trouble began when Izvolski lost his head, Cambon to Xavier Charmes, 30 March, 1909, Cambon, Correspondence, 2:282, Paul Miliukov states he followed Izvolski's failures in Rech, unreservedly condemning him, but that later he felt he was unjust, as he was actually following the policy of the emperor and his failures were repeated by others after him, Miliukov, Political Memoirs, p. 184. Miliukov also noted that Izvolski claimed to have selected and trained his successor, Sergei Sazonov, but that Sazonov's position as Prime Minister Stolypin's brother-in-law probably had more to do with his gaining the Foreign Office post, p. 239.

the Anglo-Russian friendship was to turn the convention into a real alliance, but in the face of strong resistance within the Liberal party, no one held out much hope for such a move. Hardinge admitted in a memorandum of 4 May 1909 that the British people would not agree to an alliance with Russia as long as a reactionary government was in power there,¹⁰⁷ but he rejected Nicolson's fears that Russia might blame her humiliation on the ineffectiveness of British support and drift into a closer relationship with Germany.¹⁰⁸ Grey concluded that as far as Russia was concerned, she had gained Bulgarian support, which was worth more than that of many Serbias, and that, even though Russia was too reactionary for an alliance with Britain, they must keep the entente with her.¹⁰⁹

In the end, the Anglo-Russian rapprochement was strengthened by the Bosnian crisis. There were still obstacles, and many of these would remain throughout the length of their friendship, but the situation in Europe was clearer than ever and both countries were aware of a common foe in the Central Powers. As German policy became more committed to the support of Austria, and Austria became

¹⁰⁷Memorandum of Hardinge, 4 May 1909, Nicolson Papers, FO 800/342. A draft of this memorandum in Hardinge's own handwriting dated 8 April 1909 may be found in Grey's Papers, FO 800/93, PRO.

¹⁰⁸Hardinge to Nicolson, 12 May 1909, Nicolson Papers, FO 800/342, PRO.

¹⁰⁹Grey to Nicolson, 2 April 1909, Grey Papers, FO 800/73, PRO.

more confident of her position as a result of this support, Russia and England could not avoid a closer cooperation in answer to the Austro-German combination. While Balkan problems were most immediate, it would be difficult to accept cooperation in the Balkans as the only, or even the most important factor in strengthening the Anglo-Russian friendship. The problem centered not only in the Balkans, where Russian aims were far more important than Britain's, but also on the rapidly growing strength of Germany, especially her naval program, which presented an even more pressing problem for Britain. In a memorandum by Hardinge on the question of what England would do if she were called upon by a reactionary Russia to give material aid in the event of a Russian war with Germany and Austria, the Undersecretary wrote,

" . . . it is assumed in this memorandum, as has been quite frankly asserted by official and unofficial Germans, that the ambitious programme of the German Navy is being carried out with a view to contesting the supremacy of the British Navy at sea. Germany may accordingly be regarded as our only potential enemy in Europe.¹¹⁰

In an investigation of the Anglo-German fleet question and the relationship of England to Russia, Professor Oswald Hauser concludes that it was the German naval program which provided the cement that held together the basically unstable bond between London and St. Petersburg.¹¹¹ The Bosnian crisis provided an opportunity to test the

¹¹⁰Memorandum of Hardinge, 4 May 1909, Nicolson Papers, FO 800/342, PRO.

¹¹¹Oswald Hauser, Deutschland und der English-russisch Gegensatz, 1900-1914 (Gottingen: Musterschmidt-verlag, 1958) pp. 283-84.

entente, and although the primary goals of British and Russian policy would remain divergent, the Anglo-Russian entente was clearly now a reality.

CHAPTER V

AGADIR, TRIPOLI, AND THE STRAITS

The summer of 1911 brought further crises which threatened the European nations with the prospect of general war and tested the strength of the Anglo-Russian friendship. The problems of the Agadir crisis and the Italo-Turkish war provided both challenges to the Entente between Britain and Russia and opportunities for strengthening its ties. As usual, a catalyst in the major problems was Germany and its growing power, and the scene, involving the interests of the Entente powers both in and out of Europe, was played against a background of European diplomacy. The crises had their origins in the colonial ambitions of France, Germany, and Italy, but the consequences of the quarrels were significant for England and Russia as well.

The years between March 1909, when the Bosnian crisis temporarily subsided, and July 1911, when the new crisis arose, had been relatively quiet ones for Anglo-Russian relations. The Russian rapprochement continued to be the object of constant criticism from the British Liberals, and even though Grey maintained that conditions in Russia were improving, he had to admit that Russian progress toward freedom and liberalism was slow.¹ Anti-Russian feeling ran high

¹Grey to Master of Elibank, 1 February 1909, Grey Papers, FO 800/90, PRO.

in many circles, and when the Tsar visited Britain in August 1909, the sovereigns met at Cowes on the Isle of Wight, so that no public incidents might mar the royal visit. In the background, Anglo-Russian disputes in Persia and Turkey were stormy.² Grey was often preoccupied elsewhere during this period, and Louis Mallet, head of the Eastern Department, took care of the difficult technical problems of Persia, Turkey, and the Balkans. Mallet worked closely with Grey, and in most instances Grey accepted Mallet's proposals for these areas. Mallet, like Grey, was often irritated at the Russians' actions, but was more fearful of Germany's growing power and did not wish to see her intrude in the Near East.³ Therefore, while Russia and England were frequently at cross-purposes, Grey's determination to continue cooperation with Russia in order to block Germany and avoid isolation for Britain led him to a conciliatory policy with Russia in many instances. Many members of the government and press sharply criticized the Foreign Office Eastern policy, but neither the

²Nicolson to Hardinge, 18 April 1912, Nicolson Papers, FO 800/356, PRO; Nicolson to Buchanan, 22 April 1913, *ibid.*, FO 800/365, PRO; Nicolson, Portrait of a Diplomatist, pp. 256-9; Grey Twenty-Five Years, 1:164, Professor Edward G. Browne's classic study of the Persian Revolution was published in 1910, The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909, (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1910), and furnished fuel for the increasing attacks on Grey. Browne was considered an expert on Persia and a bitter critic of Grey's policy. At one point he said Grey was "so ignorant that he hardly knew the Persian Gulf from the Red Sea," quoted in Robbins, Sir Edward Grey, p. 224.

³Steiner, The Foreign Office, pp. 104-5.

British government nor Russia ever seriously threatened it. Russian policy itself, often uncoordinated and aimless, continued to arouse minor crises and countless aggravations, but the real threat to the solidity of the entente came from the European scene, the main area of Grey's concern.

England's major difficulties in these years were the naval race with Germany and the alarm created by the assertiveness of the other entente partner, France. Russia proved a troublesome and unreliable friend at times, and France often did not perform much better in the eyes of the British Foreign Office. Russian and French attempts to establish a peaceful relationship with Germany created concern in the British Foreign Office, and Britain feared the consequences of detente with Germany on the shaky agreements she had with these countries.

Tensions established between France and Germany at Algeciras in 1906 were eased perceptibly on 9 February 1909 when the two countries signed an agreement of mutual economic cooperation in Morocco.⁴ Although Grey instructed Hardinge to congratulate the

⁴Ima C. Barlow, The Agadir Crisis (Chapel Hill, N.C., University of North Carolina Press, 1940) is the most scholarly and comprehensive treatment of the crisis, but it says little about the Russian reaction. Joseph Caillaux, Agadir; ma politique extérieure (Paris: A. Michel, 1919), is an emotional little volume by a premier of France. Barlow, The Agadir Crisis, treats the Franco-German agreement of 1909 on pp. 68-83; Caillaux, Agadir, mentions it on p. 39. A more recent scholarly article on the agreement is found in E. W. Edwards, "The Franco-German Agreement on Morocco, 1909," English Historical Review 78 (July 1963):483-513.

Germans on the agreement when he visited Germany with the King early in 1909, to express congratulations did not represent the view of most of the Foreign Office officials. France's cooperation with Germany not only ignored British commercial interests in Morocco, but aroused the general concern of the anti-German members at Whitehall.⁵ Tyrrell and Crowe especially viewed the agreement with distaste.

France proved a difficult partner in other areas as well; she violated a 1904 agreement with Britain over the Newfoundland fishing rights,⁶ and caused problems by arms-trading activities in Muscat, a country which bordered Afghanistan and therefore threatened British India.⁷ Members of the Foreign Office and the Cabinet complained frequently about the behavior of Britain's Gallic partner, but Grey refused to quarrel with France over colonial and economic questions. He also avoided outright ruptures with Russia. Instead he worked to preserve the Entente by playing down colonial disputes and avoiding offense in matters he did not consider important. In 1911 he remarked on a Foreign Office dispatch which was particularly critical of British policy regarding France and Russia that "unless we had the Entente we should be isolated and might have everybody against us."⁸ This,

⁵Robbins, Sir Edward Grey, p. 203.

⁶Colonial Office to Foreign Office, 7 January 1911, and Minute by E. Crowe, FO 371/1116, cited in Lowe, Mirage of Power, 1:38.

⁷Busch, Britain and the Persian Gulf, pp. 270-73.

⁸Minute by Grey on Captain Mark Kerr, R. N. to Grey, 30 March 1911, Grey Papers, FO 800/108, PRO.

in effect, had been the basis of Grey's policy in the years following the 1907 convention. While he was not willing to give Britain's partners any firm assurances of British support in case of actual war, he was anxious to maintain the diplomatic friendships which he thought were absolutely essential for Britain's own security. The contradictions inherent in the course of his diplomatic relations with Russia and France were in part the result of his somewhat ambiguous goals, but in any case, the Cabinet would have prevented Grey from making more clearly defined alliances. Grey was well aware of this restriction. The long tradition of British isolation from continental affairs colored the views of too many Britons to be casually cast aside.

In addition to the difficulties with the French and the Russians, Grey had to face a growing radical Liberal campaign in press and Parliament against what was considered the anti-German orientation of his foreign policy. Pushed by opponents like Lloyd George and Winston Churchill, and friends like Haldane, who both approved and worked for conciliation with Germany, Grey was urged to try to arrange a naval or political agreement with Germany.⁹ Grey acknowledged the advantages of a naval arrangement, considering the cost of an increased navy and the fight naval appropriations were causing in the government. He was also aware that an agreement, in addition to easing the naval tension between England and Germany, might restore his position with some of the major critics of his policy. But the British Foreign Secretary was unable to convince the Germans that a naval reduction was an absolute prerequisite to any

⁹Nicolson, Portrait of a Diplomatist, p. 246; note 3; Steiner, The Foreign Office, p. 99.

agreement between the two nations.¹⁰ The Germans continued to hold out for a political arrangement over a naval understanding, and Grey was convinced a political arrangement would offend both Russia and France. The diplomatic struggles of more than two years only intensified the suspicions England and Germany held of each other. Both Grey and Arthur Nicolson, who had returned to London in 1910 to take up duties as Permanent Undersecretary in the Foreign Office, felt an agreement was unlikely, and in the end their convictions were borne out.¹¹ On the eve of the Agadir crisis, Germany and Britain were still far from any agreement.

¹⁰Asquith to the King, 8 March 1911 and 17 May 1911, Asquith Papers, vol. 6; Grey to Goschen, 5 May 1910, BD, 6:478.

¹¹Others in the government disagreed so forcefully that in January 1911 the Cabinet was persuaded to set up a committee on Foreign Affairs to meet the need for greater information about foreign policy and to consider an agreement with Germany. Those who favored the committee included Lloyd George, Lord Loreburn, and Lord Morley. The committee had little effect on Grey's policy and on 8 March 1911, when the Cabinet agreed with Grey that a naval agreement must form a part of any Anglo-German agreement, and that any agreement at all must be worded so that it could not be misinterpreted by France or Russia, it was clear that the committee's purpose had failed. After the Agadir crisis, the committee ceased to meet. Asquith to the King, 8 March 1911 and 17 March 1911, Asquith Papers, Vol. 6. This committee was, however, only one aspect of the attack on Grey's policy which grew to major proportions in 1911. The Agadir crisis also brought about the establishment of a Foreign Affairs group of the Liberal Party in Parliament, with over seventy members, headed by Noel Buxton. This group was mildly sympathetic to Germany and tried to organize a campaign against secret diplomacy and official foreign policy. Outside Parliament a Foreign Policy Committee under Lord Courtney of Penwith, which included Phillip Morell, R. C. K. Ensor, and E. D. Morel, demanded fuller publication of foreign affairs and friendship with Germany. See, Taylor, Troublemakers, pp. 118-19.

In 1910 Grey was also preoccupied at home with a hard-fought campaign for a general election. To complicate matters, on 6 May of that year, Edward VII died, and a few months after the king's death, Charles Hardinge left the Foreign Office to become Viceroy of India. These changes left Grey with a much different situation than he had enjoyed during his first years in office. Hardinge had been intimate with the king and a close friend and advisor to Grey. The loss of this connection with the monarch and the replacement of Hardinge with Arthur Nicolson, with whom Grey was far less compatible, deprived Grey of a valuable source of information and influence.¹² Nicolson, while an able diplomat, did not fit into the Foreign Office work comfortably. He found the Foreign Office dominated by Eyre Crowe, then head of the Western Department and later Assistant Undersecretary, and William Tyrrell, Grey's private secretary. Both men were confirmed Germanophobes, which should have pleased Nicolson, who constantly pushed for a closer relationship with Russia. In fact, however, Nicolson was a poor administrator, and his personality and attitudes led to frequent clashes with other officials and prevented the success of much of his work. As the years went by, Nicolson came to rely to a great extent on Crowe, who, like Nicolson, wished to see a firmer commitment to the Entente powers as a defense against the "German Menace." On the

¹²Several other changes in the staff of the Foreign Office and the Diplomatic Service occurred near the same time. See, Steiner, The Foreign Office, p. 101.

other hand, Nicolson grew more estranged from Grey, whom he considered amateurish in diplomatic areas and often wrong in his decisions.¹³

In 1911, the big issues in British domestic politics were a constitutional crisis, industrial unrest that involved a number of serious strikes, and the suffrage problem--all of which made Grey's work increasingly difficult because he was involved in these issues as well as in foreign policy.¹⁴ Meanwhile, Russia was pursuing her own independent course, which was destined to complicate matters still further.

The results of the Bosnian crisis were less disastrous for Russia's relations with Germany than they might have been, and many Russians were still eager to revive a close relationship with Berlin. The new Chancellor in Berlin, Bethmann-Hollweg, and the energetic Alfred von Kiderlen-Wachter, who replaced Schön, carefully fostered good relations with Russia.¹⁵ The new Russian Foreign Minister, Sergei Sazonov, was more conservative and more inclined toward German friendship

¹³Nicolson, Portrait of a Diplomatist, pp. 238-41.

¹⁴The constitutional crisis is colorfully related in Barbara Tuchman, The Proud Tower: A Portrait of the World Before the War, 1890-1914 (New York: Macmillan Co., 1966), pp. 385-403, and in a more scholarly treatment in Jenkins, Asquith, pp. 213-232.

¹⁵Schön gave up the Foreign Ministry and moved to the German Embassy in Paris in June 1910; Charykov, who had been Izvol'ski's subordinate at the Russian Foreign Office and had taken over many of his duties after the Bosnian fiasco, went to Constantinople the same month. Izvol'ski finally got the lucrative and long-awaited Russian Embassy in Paris in September.

than Izvol'ski had been. Not particularly Slavophile, he was not intent on pursuing Izvol'ski's ill-fated schemes in the Balkans. Sazonov was, however, much more sensitive to the influence of the Russian press, which was, for Russia, generally liberal and favorable to the Entente.¹⁶

On 10 November 1910, the Russian Tsar and the German Kaiser met at Potsdam, where the diplomatic representatives of their countries had frank and cordial discussions on several issues involving both countries' ambitions in the Near East. Although Sazonov reported to the Tsar that the subject of the Bagdad railway had not been raised,¹⁷ the ministers agreed that Russia would not oppose the completion of the Bagdad railway while Germany would not seek concessions in North Persia that might effect Russian interests there. More important, the Russian minister assured Berlin that if England followed an anti-German policy, she would not find Russia following her.¹⁸ Sazonov obviously leaned toward friendship with Germany, and he certainly wished to

¹⁶For a discussion of government-press relations in Russia, see, Jacob Walkin, "Government Controls Over the Press in Russia," Russian Review 13(1954):203-09. First hand accounts of the relationship of Sazonov and the Russian press may be found in many of Pourtalès' dispatches to the Berlin Foreign Office in GP, vols. 27-28. Good examples of Pourtalès to Bethmann-Hollweg, 16 November 1910, GP, 27:851, and 10 January 1911, *ibid*, p. 924. The Russian government was often closely connected with certain organs of the press, especially Novoe Vremia, and occasionally "leaked" information to this paper.

¹⁷Report of Sazonov to Nicolas II, 17 November 1910, Krasnyi Arkhiv 3(1923):5-8. This report is found in part in Livre noir, 2:331-34.

¹⁸Kiderlen's Memorandum of 30 October 1910, GP, 27:832-34; Bethmann-Hollweg to the Kaiser, 1 November 1910, *ibid.*, p. 835.

reconcile the problems between Russia and Germany, but it is doubtful that he actually considered abandoning the Entente. His assurances to Germany could not, then or later, represent actual Russian policy.

The Potsdam meeting aroused British suspicions, however, even before the agenda was known. Indignant because Sazonov had not kept them informed of the discussions, the British Foreign Office feared Germany would overwhelm the inexperienced Sazonov. Nicolson wrote, ". . . he [Sazonov] appears to have been completely hypnotized by Berlin,"¹⁹ and Grey was so disheartened he threatened to resign and make way for a pro-German foreign secretary.²⁰

Back in St. Petersburg, Sazonov found he could not carry out a pro-German policy, although he told the German Ambassador, Pourtalès, that he strongly supported German friendship, and they agreed informally that the two countries should not enter into any hostile combination against each other.²¹ Sazonov was careful not to let this information reach the British Ambassador. The British did not learn the substance of the Potsdam talks until they were revealed in Bethmann-Hollweg's Reichstag speech of 10 December 1910, which startled the British into

¹⁹Nicolson to Lowther, 6 February 1911, Lowther Papers, FO 800/193, PRO.

²⁰Lowe, Mirage of Power, 1:90. Grey's latest biographer says there was no principle involved in Grey's wish to resign in early 1911, but that the death of his brother George caused a sense of great personal loss; see, Robbins, Sir Edward Grey, p. 234. It is true that Grey was very close to his brother, but he used the threat of resignation several times in his career, almost always when strong opposition to his policies arose. On this occasion, Grey confided his thoughts to Count Benckendorff, Benckendorff to Sazonov, 9 February 1911, Benckendorff's Schriftwechsel, 2:342.

²¹Romberg to Pourtalès, 11 November 1910, GP 27:844.

action.²² Sir George Buchanan, who had just replaced Nicolson as Ambassador to St. Petersburg, immediately protested to the Tsar, but Nicholas assured Buchanan that Russia would make no arrangement with Germany unless it was first submitted to the British for approval.²³ The Tsar's action was in keeping with the general lack of coordination between the departments of the Russian government. Although actually the Tsar could control foreign policy, Nicholas II did not, except in certain isolated instances, take direct part, and was often not well informed of his minister's actions. Sometimes his ignorance was because of his own lack of interest; often, however, Sazonov did not give full reports to Nicholas.

Obviously, Sazonov was off to a bad start with the British. Nevertheless, despite British dissatisfaction, cooperation between Russia and Germany continued. Sazonov tried hard to minimize the initial impact of his efforts for a closer friendship with Germany on the British, according to Sir George Buchanan, and to bring the proposed agreement more in line with Russia's commitments to Britain. On 11 August 1911, Russia and Germany finally reached an agreement based on the Potsdam talks.²⁴ One historian has concluded

²²Bethmann-Hollweg to Kaiser William II, 10 December 1910, GP, 27:866.

²³Buchanan, My Mission to Russia, 1:93.

²⁴Report of Sazonov to Nicholas II, 19 August 1911, Krasnyi Arkhiv 3:10-13; Buchanan to Nicolson, 24 August 1911, Nicolson Papers, FO 800/349, PRO; The correspondence leading up to the agreement may be found in Siebert, Entente Diplomacy, pp. 501-576.

that in the long run the Russian agreement with Germany over the Bagdad railway made it possible for other nations, especially England to pursue the question on favorable terms,²⁵ but this possibility was not apparent to the British and did nothing to ease the tension caused by the Potsdam agreement.

While Russia and England were trying to adjust the situation following the Potsdam meeting, a new European crisis interrupted the scene. Although Russia and England were not directly involved in the crisis, their Entente partner, France, was, and once again Russia and Britain faced important events which threatened their own diplomatic relationship. The crisis arose over renewed German and French rivalries in Morocco and led to a serious confrontation at Agadir.

The Algeiras settlement concerning French and German claims in Morocco had not worked well. The 1906 agreement appeared to work smoothly for a while, but difficulties between the two nations inevitably appeared. The French consistently expanded their control of the port towns and tightened their financial hold on the affairs of the corrupt Sultan Mulai Hafid, much to the resentment of the Germans. The Sultan's government had slight control over its subjects at best, and early in the summer of 1911 a group of rebellious Moroccan chieftains revolted against the government. The French seized upon this opportunity to march French military forces to the capital at Fez, under the pretext of protecting the lives and property of the Europeans

²⁵Fay, Origins of the World War, 1:276-77.

living in Morocco. Although the Germans knew of the possibility of such action in advance and did not become alarmed at once, no one, least of all the German Foreign Office, accepted the explanation the French offered as an excuse for this further intrusion into Morocco. When Izvolski questioned the French Foreign Minister on the occupation, he received only an evasive answer.²⁶ The German government, Izvolski thought, was acting very shrewdly to allow the French to go far enough to constitute a violation of the Algeciras act. Germany would then be in a good position to dominate the diplomatic situation themselves and to occupy some Moroccan Atlantic ports.²⁷ Edward Grey was also convinced that the German goal was the establishment of an Atlantic port, something the British had objected to for a long time. Kiderlen was probably quite sure the British would not allow German occupation of any part of Morocco, but

²⁶Izvolski to Neratov, 24 May 1911, Livre noir, 1:107. The inexperienced French Foreign Minister, Cruppi, was influenced by the re-entry of Delcassé into the French Cabinet. Delcassé's earlier political fall as a result of the Moroccan crisis of 1905 gave him adequate incentive to work against German interests, and in some circles he was credited with the role of originator of French Moroccan policy, see, Russian Chargé d'Affaires at Berlin to Sazonov, 28 April 1911, Siebert, Entente Diplomacy, p. 580; Izvolski to Sazonov, 3 March 1911, Materialy po franko-russkikh otnoshenii, p. 41; Izvolski to Sazonov, 14 March 1911, ibid., p. 43. Other sources deny this, however; see, Raymond Sontag, European Diplomatic History, 1871-1932 (New York & London: Century Co., 1933), p. 156.

²⁷Izvolski to Sazonov, 11 May 1911, Materialy po franko-russkikh otnoshenii, p. 88; Livre noir, 1:104, Iswolsky, Diplomatische Schriftwechsel, 1:98.

he was also sure Germany could receive compensation elsewhere. Again and again he hinted at possible compromises. "It must be a decent mouthful," he quipped.²⁸ In June French and German talks of possible settlement began, but when agreement failed to come, Kiderlen made a bold move. On 1 July the German gunboat Panther suddenly appeared at the Moroccan port of Agadir. The German Ambassador in London explained to Nicolson that German action was taken in the interest of German subjects in Morocco, but no one in the British Foreign Office accepted this explanation any more than they had the French claims.²⁹

The Moroccan crisis was not unexpected, nor even unwelcome to the British. They had been suspicious of the Franco-German cooperation in Morocco and feared that the French would make a bargain with Germany that would eventually threaten British interests in North Africa. Nicolson was "not at all sorry that the Agadir incident has occurred, as I think it will open the eyes of all those who have been so clamorous of late for an understanding with Germany."³⁰ He urgently requested Grey to support the French request for the British to send a gunboat to counter the German move.³¹ Grey was more cautious than Nicolson, however.

²⁸Quoted in Sontag, European Diplomatic History, p. 156.

²⁹Minute by Nicolson to Grey on Aide Memoire Communicated by Count Metternich, 1 July 1911, BD, 7:322-23. In fact, there were no German subjects at Agadir when the Panther appeared, but they hurriedly imported some; see, Taylor, Struggle for Mastery, p. 467, n. 2, and Nicolson, King George V, p. 186, n.1.

³⁰Nicolson to Hardinge, 4 July 1911, BD, 7:338.

³¹Churchill to his wife, 3 July 1911, in Randolph Churchill, Winston S. Churchill, vol. 2, Young Statesman, 1901-1914 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967), 2:504.

While he was intent on blocking Germany in Morocco, he feared acting too hastily, and, at a Cabinet meeting on 4 July, he accepted the Cabinet's decision not to dispatch a warship. Instead the Cabinet authorized Grey to tell Germany that the British would not allow the future of Morocco to be determined without consideration of British interests. He also informed the French that, because her actions had precipitated the crisis, some concessions from her would be in order.³²

The French were outraged at the British action, but Grey found it difficult to ignore the pressures of the British Cabinet. The Cabinet seemed intent on punishing France, while at Whitehall Nicolson and Crowe urged a stronger commitment to the French cause. Grey wished to avoid war, so he did not want to encourage the French too far, but at the same time he thought the Cabinet's stand would endanger the entente. The British diplomats seemed certain that the Germans would not stop short of war.³³

On 15 July the Germans and the French opened formal negotiations, but no offers seemed to satisfy the Germans. When it became known that the Germans would accept the entire French Congo in return for their rights in Morocco, the British Cabinet concluded that the German demands were "too greedy" and that the French could not be expected to comply with them. On 19 July Grey proposed to the Cabinet

³²Asquith to the King, 4 July 1911, Asquith Papers, vol. 6; Metternich to the Foreign Office, 4 July 1911, GP, 29:504. Grey to Count de Salis, 4 July 1911, Grey, Twenty-Five Years, 1:214.

³³Goschen to Grey, 14 July 1911, and Minutes by Crowe, Nicolson, and Grey, BD, 7:363-4.

that a conference might be the best way to settle the problem, but Lloyd George and other members objected on the grounds that the British interest in Morocco was only indirect. Animated discussion followed, resulting only in the decision that the Cabinet would "work in concert with French diplomacy."³⁴ The British, however, had little idea of what French diplomacy might lead to in this ticklish situation. Crowe and other Foreign Office officials speculated on the real motives of the French as well as of the Germans.³⁵ As long as Grey thought negotiations between the Germans and the French would solve the problem, he was satisfied for Britain to take little active part in the crisis. When there was no reply to the British note of 4 July, however, and when the talks between the two nations threatened to break down, Grey knew the time had come to intervene. On 21 July he met once more with the German Ambassador and received what he considered to be an unsatisfactory response to his questions on what sort of compensation would satisfy Germany. Grey told Metternich that Britain would welcome a settlement based on some French concessions in the Congo, but Metternich replied that he had no instructions from his government.³⁶

³⁴Asquith to the King, 19 July 1911, Asquith Papers, vol. 6.

³⁵Minute by Crowe, 15 July 1911, BD, 7:364.

³⁶Asquith to the King, 22 July 1911, Asquith Papers, vol. 6; Grey, Twenty-Five Years, I, p. 216.

On the same day, the famous Mansion House speech of David Lloyd George warned Germany that Britain would not stand aside where her interests were vitally affected. She would not allow herself to be treated "as if she were of no account in the Cabinet of nations," Lloyd George said. He told his listeners, "I say emphatically that peace at that price would be a humiliation intolerable for a great country like ours to endure."³⁷ The speech caused a variety of reactions. It was especially unexpected because Lloyd George had a reputation as a pacifist and a supporter of German friendship.³⁸ In addition, the speech possibly had not been cleared by the entire Cabinet. Grey and Asquith approved of it beforehand, but Grey insisted the speech was "entirely Lloyd George's own idea."³⁹ Whether

³⁷Grey, Twenty-Five Years, 1:216-17; Nicolson, Portrait of a Diplomatist, p. 251; Hale, Publicity and Diplomacy, pp. 388-90; Richard A. Cosgrove, "A Note on Lloyd George's Speech at the Mansion House, 21 July 1911," Historical Journal 12 (1969):698-701, discusses A. J. P. Taylor's judgment that the speech was directed against France, not Germany; see, Taylor, Struggle for Mastery, p. 471. Cosgrove maintains that the traditional interpretation of the speech as a warning to Germany and a sign of British support of the entente is the correct view; Cosgrove, "Lloyd George's Speech," p. 701.

³⁸Nicholas Mansergh, The Coming of the First World War: A Study in European Balance, 1878-1914 (London, New York, & Toronto: Longmans, Green & Co., 1949), p. 153; Fay, Origins of the World War, 1:289; Sontag, European Diplomatic History, p. 158.

³⁹Taylor notes that Grey, Churchill and Lloyd George all agree that Lloyd George, on his own initiative, drafted the speech after the Cabinet meeting of 21 July 1911. He attributes their accounts, written much later, to "notoriously bad" memories, and points out that Mensdorff, who was intimate with many members of the government, wrote Aehrenthal that the speech had been settled in the Cabinet. See Taylor, Struggle for Mastery, p. 471, n. 1, and Mensdorff to Aehrenthal, 24 July 1911, O-UA, 3:283. For the statements of the British

Grey or Lloyd George suggested the speech in the first place, or whether the Cabinet approved it or not is really incidental. Grey welcomed the support from a notable critic in the Liberal Cabinet. The Foreign Office officials, especially Tyrrell and Nicolson, also supported Lloyd George's sentiments, and even many who had opposed Grey's policies were in accord for once.⁴⁰

The German Foreign Office quite naturally interpreted it as a threat and an interference in affairs that were none of Britain's business, and an uproar in the German press followed. The French press was encouraged to mount an attack on Germany, and the French government was heartened by the speech. Perhaps the effect would

Cabinet members, see Grey, Twenty-Five Years, 1:217; Churchill, World Crisis, 1:46-7, and Lloyd George, War Memoirs, 2:43-5; Asquith supports their versions in Asquith, Genesis of the War, p. 148. The Cabinet was informed of the plan, but it does reveal that most of the members, except Lords Loreburn and Morley felt England must make some clear statement of her position to Germany; Asquith to the King, 21 July 1911, Asquith Papers, vol. 6. Cosgrove believes that Mensdorff was probably the one who was confused and concludes that the proposed speech was not discussed at a meeting of the full Cabinet; Cosgrove, "Note on Lloyd George's Speech," p. 701.

⁴⁰On 1 August Tyrrell wrote to Spring-Rice, "Don't ever forget to teach your children to keep alive the memory of Lloyd George who by his timely speech has saved the peace of Europe and our good name.

"I shall never forget the service rendered by him, as he risked his position with the people who have mainly made him."

"His co-operation with the Chief is delightful to watch." Tyrrell to Spring-Rice, 1 August 1911, Spring-Rice Papers, FO 800/241, PRO; See also, Cosgrove, "Note on Lloyd George's Speech," p. 699, and Steiner, The Foreign Office, p. 148. Not everyone in the government was as enthusiastic, however. Lord Morley and Lord Loreburn protested that the speech was too provocative, and Loreburn threatened to resign if Grey did not alter the pro-French line of his foreign policy; Lord Morley to Asquith, Private, 27 July 1911, Asquith Papers, vol. 13.

have been less emphatic if the speech had not been accepted on the continent as an indication of British ministerial solidarity. Germany had no intention of seizing a Moroccan port on the Atlantic coast, and immediately informed Grey of this. In addition, Germany began to show some signs of moderating her demands on France.⁴¹ But despite Britain's plainly worded indication that she would not be left out of any Moroccan settlement, negotiations dragged on until November. Grey's suspicions of Germany increased and during the summer, Grey, Asquith, Haldane, Churchill, and Lloyd George participated in a series of private meetings to discuss British policy and to make sure the country was ready for possible hostilities.⁴² In August, Grey privately confided to the Russian Ambassador that, "In the event of a war between Germany and France, England would have to participate." When Benckendorff assured him that a war between France and Germany would also involve Russia, Grey anticipated Austrian involvement as well, and consequently a general war.⁴³ Benckendorff communicated Grey's words to the Russian Foreign Office, where they were received with some apprehension. Russia was not eager to be drawn into the Agadir matter at all. Russia would

⁴¹Grey to Goschen, 24 July 1911, Twenty-Five Years, 1:218-19; Fay, Origins of the World War, 2:289-90.

⁴²Lowe, Mirage of Power, 1:43; Robbins, Sir Edward Grey, p.243.

⁴³Benckendorf to Neratov, 16 August 1911, Siebert, Entente Diplomacy, p. 598; Benckendorff to Neratov, 16 August, Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia v epokhu imperializma, 1878-1917, eds., A. P. Bolshe-mennikov, A. A. Mogilevich, F. A. Rothstein, and A. S. Yerusalimsky, 2nd series (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatelstvo politicheskoe literatury, 1930-38), 18-1:335, (hereafter referred to as MO. In the second series of these documents each volume has two parts, therefore, 18-1:355 refers to volume 18, part 1, page 335.).

honor her commitments, the French Ambassador in Russia wrote to the Quai D'Orsay, but he warned that Russian public opinion would not support a French colonial problem like Morocco.⁴⁴ In any event, Grey's words to Benckendorff probably did not arise from anything more than Grey's great preoccupation with keeping the peace in the summer of 1911. Although Grey felt England should support France, he felt even more strongly that every means should be taken to preserve peace. His problem was even more difficult because he was forced to deal on one side with Churchill, Lloyd George, and a Foreign Office eager to chastise the Germans, and on the other side by a large group led by Loreburn and Morley, who wanted no involvement in foreign matters at all.⁴⁵ Later Grey wrote that he was convinced Germany was set on war or the diplomatic humiliation of France, and his course in 1911 confirms his words.⁴⁶

At a secret meeting of the Committee of Imperial Defense on 23 August, the British discussed the possibility of British military support for France in case of war. While Grey did not participate actively in the discussion, the problem of how such support might be carried out stirred up an acrid exchange between the representatives

⁴⁴George Louis, St. Petersburg, to DeSelves, 7 September 1911, Ernst Judet, Georges Louis (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1925), p. 156.

⁴⁵Churchill to Lloyd George, 31 August 1911, Churchill, Winston S. Churchill, Young Statesman, 2:530-1; Lowe, Mirage of Power, 1:43; Robbins, Sir Edward Grey, pp. 243-5.

⁴⁶Grey, Twenty-Five Years, 2:231; Fay, Origins of the World War, 1:290.

of the army and the navy. Thoroughly aroused, Lloyd George urged Churchill, as First Lord of the Admiralty, to investigate Russian strength, because the British must know what they could expect from Russia before they could complete their own military preparations.⁴⁷ Earlier meetings between the English and French military officials had already determined conditions of support for the French armies,⁴⁸ and now the question of what Russia could do was significant. Grey reported that the Russians had already given assurance of military support to their French ally, but admitted that he did not know what this involved. This might better be discovered from France than from Russia, he thought.⁴⁹ Later Prime Minister Asquith told Grey that in his opinion Russia might be ready for war or on the other hand might fear the consequences of a war both at home and abroad.⁵⁰ The entire discussion seems peculiar in view of the fact that the Russian military reorganization was common knowledge.

The Russian Foreign Office had been extremely hesitant about taking an active role in the crisis from the very beginning, although in Paris Izvol'ski did as much as he could to influence his government

⁴⁷This meeting is ably described in Arthur J. Marder, From the Dreadnought to Scapa Flow, vol. I of The Road to War, 1904-1914 (London & New York: Oxford University Press, 1961), I, 389-93. The minutes of the meeting are found in Committee of Imperial Defense, Minutes of 114th Meeting, 23 August 1911, C.I.D. Papers, CAB 38/19/49, PRO.

⁴⁸Lowe, Mirage of Power, 1:44; Robbins, Sir Edward Grey, p. 244.

⁴⁹CID Meeting, 23 August 1911, CAB 38/19/49.

⁵⁰Asquith to Grey, 3 September 1911, Grey Papers, FO 800/100, PRO.

to give strong support to France. Aside from Benckendorff, who wrote the Russian Foreign Office from London that he thought Russia would surely take part in any war between France and Germany,⁵¹ and aside from Izvolski, who longed for revenge on Germany and Austria, there were few Russians who cared to step forward. Friendlier relations existed between Russia and Germany than they had enjoyed in several years, and the Russians were unwilling to place their friendship in jeopardy for a cause so far removed from their own interests. Early in the Moroccan crisis, when France asked St. Petersburg to use its influence at Berlin, they had done so in the mildest manner.⁵² At the height of the crisis, when the French pressed for a definite commitment,⁵³ the Tsar called a special meeting of his top ministers to discuss the subject. Besides the Tsar, Neratov--sitting in for the ailing Sazonov--Kokovtsov, Sukhomlinov, and Zhilinsky met on 29 August, and decided that Russia could offer little assistance and was in no position to encourage a war in which they would have to take part.⁵⁴ Izvolski was instructed to break the news gently but firmly in Paris.⁵⁵

The Russian position was made even more uncomfortable when, only two days after this meeting, a conference of French and Russian

⁵¹ Benckendorff to Neratov, 16 August 1911, MO, 18-1:335.

⁵² Neratov to Nicholas II, 4 July 1911, *ibid.*, p. 170; Neratov to Count Osten Sacken, Berlin, 4 July 1911, *ibid.*, p. 175.

⁵³ Neratov to Nicholas II, 25 August 1911, *ibid.*, p. 369.

⁵⁴ Philip E. Moseley, "Russian Policy in 1911-12," Journal of Modern History 12(March, 1940):85.

⁵⁵ Neratov to Izvolski, 30 August 1911, MO, 18-1:377.

military officers met to hear the French Chief of Staff, General Dubail, tell the Russians that France was ready to go to war against Germany "with the aid of the English army on its left wing."⁵⁶

During the course of the Agadir crisis, the news of the secret Anglo-French military conversations initiated in 1906 leaked out, and Lord Morley raised the question at a Cabinet meeting on 1 November 1911.⁵⁷ Grey, supported by Haldane and Asquith, argued that the conversations did not interfere with the right of the Cabinet to decide questions of war or peace, but the majority of the Cabinet insisted that the Cabinet must be supreme "over all other bodies on the matter of land and sea defense."⁵⁸ Haldane threatened to resign if the talks were interrupted, and Churchill and Lloyd George came out in favor of continuing the conversations, but the rest of the members sided against them.⁵⁹ On 15 November, after a prolonged and animated discussion, Asquith finally proposed a resolution that the members approved unanimously. First, no communication should take place between the British General Staff and the staffs of other countries which could, directly or indirectly, commit Britain to military or naval intervention. Second, such communications, if

⁵⁶Protocol of the Franco-Russian Military Conference of 31 August 1911, Materialy po istorii franko-russkikh otnoshenii, p. 698; Protocol . . ., MO, 18-1:384.

⁵⁷Asquith to the King, 1 November 1911, Asquith Papers, vol. 6.

⁵⁸Diary of John Burns, 2 November 1911, Burns Papers, quoted in Lowe, Mirage of Power, 1:46.

⁵⁹Robbins, Sir Edward Grey, p. 246; Lowe, Mirage of Power, 1:46.

they related to concerted action by land or sea, would not be entered into without previous approval from the Cabinet.⁶⁰ The draft of the document was minuted by Grey with the comment, "I think that last principle is a little tight," and then the words were scratched out.⁶¹ In fact, the resolution had practically no effect on the conversations. Anglo-French military cooperation had already been planned down to the last detail, and the contacts continued, broadening into naval conversations in 1912.⁶² On the eve of the war, military conversations with the Russians began as well, although they were too late to be of much use.

The most curious fact about the talks aside from the controversy their secrecy caused was that Grey always insisted that they did not form a binding commitment on England's part, although they were clearly directed against possible German military action.⁶³ It is true that each conversation started with the statement that "these conversations, devoid of all official character, cannot bind either Government in any way," and aimed merely "to foresee the indispensable preparatory measures."⁶⁴ Nevertheless, the British and French Staff Officers who were involved prepared thoroughly for the possibility of war, and certainly

⁶⁰Asquith to the King, 15 November, 1911, Asquith Papers, vol. 6.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Lowe, Mirage of Power, 1:46; Churchill, Winston S. Churchill, Young Statesman, 2:578-79.

⁶³Grey, Twenty-Five Years, 1:91-4, 274-7.

⁶⁴Quoted in Fay, Origins of the World War, 1:292.

the French depended on British military cooperation as a sure and essential part of their plans in case of a war against Germany. In turn, the French assured the Russians of the certainty of British support. As early as 1908, at the annual conference of French and Russian military leaders, the French were able to persuade the Russians to promise to mobilize their forces in case there should be a German mobilization against England alone, even though the Russian commitment was only to France.⁶⁵ Undoubtedly Grey and other British political leaders who knew of the talks did not foresee the implications of the conversations. As the relationships between England and France and Russia strengthened, and as the tension between the Entente powers and Germany and Austria deepened, British leaders failed to see that military and naval cooperation assumed a more significant and binding commitment than any of them would have been willing to make. They also failed to understand how greatly the French and Russians came to depend on British military support.

At last, on 4 November 1911, the long negotiations between Germany and France were concluded when they signed an agreement which established French hegemony in Morocco; in return the Germans would get a large section of the French Congo.⁶⁶ The Germans got less than they had wanted, the French were bitter at losing anything at all, and the

⁶⁵A. M. Zaiontchkovski, Les allies contre la Russie (Paris: Droz, 1926), pp. 20-21.

⁶⁶"Moroccan Convention of November 4, 1911"; GP, 29:452-54.

agreement was bitterly criticized in both countries. Berlin charged the agreement to British interference, and discord between Britain and Germany increased. The agreement brought relief and enthusiasm to England and Russia, however. Despite some eagerness for a confrontation with Germany, neither Russia nor England wanted war. Once more they had avoided being drawn into hostilities in which neither country had direct interests. Once more, however, the implications of their agreements were made clearer to each side. In Paris, Izvolski stepped up his efforts to tighten the ties between France and Russia, while in London, Grey's suspicions of the Germans were strengthened. As they grew, the Foreign Secretary's conviction that Britain must support her friendships with France and Russia grew as well.

The Moroccan crisis set off a chain reaction of events in Europe. The one most potentially damaging to Anglo-Russian friendship was the Tripolitan War.⁶⁷ Fearful of increased French domination in Morocco, Italy sought to balance the French action by moving in on Tripoli. Italy had long desired and planned to acquire the province of Lybia, and the acquisition had been approved by all the powers. The last nation to give its support to Italy's plans was Russia by the Racconigi Agreement of 1909, and Italy gained Russia's compliance, not

⁶⁷William C. Askew, Europe and Italy's Acquisition of Lybia (Durham, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1942) is the best monograph on this subject. Albertini, Origins of the War, 1:341-63, is the best treatment of the documents concerning the Tripolitan War. Richard Bosworth, "Great Britain and Italy's Acquisition of the Dodecanese, 1912-1915," Historical Journal 13 (1970):683-705, comments on Grey's Italian policy in general as well as the reaction to the seizure of the islands.

surprisingly, by supporting Russia's desires at the Straits.⁶⁸ Thus armed, when the preliminary agreement over Morocco was announced by France and Germany on 28 September 1911, Italy delivered an ultimatum to Turkey proclaiming her occupation of Tripoli. The ultimatum was designed to be rejected--Italian Prime Minister Giolitti said it was "couched in such a way as not to leave any possibility of evasion open, and so as to avoid lengthy discussions, which were to be avoided at any cost."⁶⁹ The Italians were not disappointed. Turkey did reject the ultimatum, and the following day war broke out between the two powers. Italy's proclamation of war was made without even consulting her allies.⁷⁰

Italy's actions pleased no one, but in view of their previous agreements, the powers could do little but try to localize the conflict.⁷¹ Although in the beginning the operation went well for Italy, in the ensuing months she found the native Arabs more stubborn than she expected. A decree proclaiming Italian sovereignty over the colony was issued on 4 November 1911, and the Porte came to terms with Italy by the Treaty of Ouchy, signed in October 1912, but hostilities were not over when World War I broke out. In Britain, Italy's actions

⁶⁸Albertini, Origins of the War, 1:340-41; Pribram, Secret Treaties of Austria Hungary, 1:96-7.

⁶⁹Quoted in D. F. Fleming, The Origins and Legacies of World War I (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1968), p. 118.

⁷⁰Albertini, Origins of the War, 1:344-5.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 345; Conrad, Aus Meiner Dienzeit, 1:110, and 2:15.

aroused both the Liberals, who objected to the behavior of the Italian troops, and the Conservatives, who had strong pro-Turkish prejudices. Churchill urged Grey, on the basis of these opinions, to take strong measures to support Turkey because she would prove a more valuable friend than Italy.⁷² Grey opposed the Italian invasion because he thought Italy could have gained economic interests in Lybia without resorting to war, but he was not enthusiastic for the Turkish cause either.⁷³ His admiration for the young Turks had declined seriously as their nationalism began to exceed their liberalism. When their efforts to gain the support of the non-Turk population of the Ottoman Empire failed, the new regime, like the old, resorted to coercion. Grey was not optimistic about the possibilities of reform in Turkey, but he wrote, "I am willing still to give the Turks the benefit of the doubt; we cannot in fact do anything else. . ."⁷⁴ Again, Grey revealed the dilemma of his position.

While Britain hoped to be able to stabilize the situation and prevent the spread of hostilities, Russia had some definite plans of her own. To say the plans were definite does not suggest that they were coordinated as well, for the opportunity for action occurred simultaneously

⁷²Churchill to Grey, 4 November 1911, cited in Robbins, Sir Edward Grey, pp. 369-70.

⁷³Grey to Rodd, 14 November 1911, Grey Papers, FO 800/64, PRO. Bosworth, "Britain and Italy's Acquisition of the Dodecanese," pp. 704-5, concludes that Grey had no knowledgeable and well-thought out policy toward Italy at this time.

⁷⁴Grey to Crowe, 17 February 1911, Crowe Papers, quoted in Robbins, Sir Edward Grey, p. 265.

but separately in the minds of several Russian statesmen. Since the unfortunate Bosnian affair, Russia had tried in vain to secure a formula that would check the expansion of the Triple Alliance in the Balkans until she was strong enough to act in her own interest. Racconigi, Potsdam, her various attempts to form a defensive Balkan union--all were prompted by her ambitions regarding the Ottoman Empire. The almost sure disintegration of the tottering empire filled Russian diplomats with the fear that Russia would be left out when the final collapse came and the spoils were divided. The Italian action only enhanced these fears. The possibility occurred that Austria might take advantage of the situation to move against Serbia, Albania, or other trouble spots.

In the face of these uncertainties, Russian diplomatic activity increased furiously in every capital of Europe. At least three contradictory courses seemed to be under way at once, as Izvol'ski in Paris, Charykov in Constantinople, and Hartwig and Nekliudov in the Balkans all strove to win gains for Russia. Hartwig and Nekliudov's actions brought about a union of the Balkan states and properly belongs to the story of the Balkan Wars. Izvol'ski and Charykov, however, played parts in another chapter to open the Straits. The Russian attempt to take advantage of the Turkish weakness that the Tripolitan war revealed apparently sprang from the ideas of both Izvol'ski and Charykov and resulted in some independent actions on Charykov's part. The affair, involving more sound and fury than results, once more brought into play the unsteady relationship between England and Russia.⁷⁵

⁷⁵Anglo-Russian relations for this period are covered in *MO*, 18, parts 1 and 2, and surveyed in articles by William Langer, "Russia,

The Russian Foreign Minister, Sazonov, was ill and unable to carry out his duties during most of 1911 and the far less competent A. Neratov filled the position in Sazonov's absence. Neratov's inability to cope with the complex situation was responsible to a large degree for what happened.⁷⁶ Although historians have usually attributed the genesis of the 1911 attempt to open the Straits to Izvoľski, the Russian documents indicate that the idea had actually been discussed before the outbreak of the Tripolitan War.⁷⁷ Not all opinion in the Russian

the Straits Question, and the Origins of the Balkan League, 1908-1912," Political Science Quarterly 43(September 1928):321-63; Philip Mosely, "Russian Policy in 1911-12," Journal of Modern History 12(March 1940): 71-8; and E. C. Thaden, "Charykov and Russian Foreign Policy at Constantinople in 1911," Journal of Central European Affairs 16(April 1956):25-44, Monographs which treat the period adequately are Otto Bickel, Russland und die Entstehung des Balkanbundes 1912, (Berlin: Ost-Europaverlag, 1933), who did not have access to the more recently published Russian documents, and Thaden, Russia and the Balkan Alliance, cited earlier, who did use the documents. The most useful Soviet source for the period is Bestuzhev, Borba v Rossii, also cited earlier. Iu. O. Boiev, Polityka Frantsii na Balkanakh naperododni pershoi svitovoi imperialistychnoi viiny, 1911-1913 gg. (Kiev: Academia Nauk USSR, 1958), is a more typical Soviet offering, highly critical of French imperialist policy in the Balkans during these years.

⁷⁶Neratov's associates gave him credit for very little ability and less judgment. DeSchelking characterized him as mediocre and narrow-minded and "wholly devoid of the attributes of the great statesmen he fondly imagines he resembled," deSchelking, Recollections, pp. 229-30, See also, Taube, La politique russe, p. 209; Buchanan to Nicolson, 23 March 1911, Nicolson Papers, FO 800/348, PRO.

⁷⁷Memorandum of A. Giers, 11 May 1911, MO, 18-1:227, mentioned in note 2 and in several letters. The document itself is not printed. A member of the Austrian Embassy in St. Petersburg reported that the Russian newspapers had begun speculation on the possibility of opening the Straits; Szilassy to Aehrenthal, 20 September 1911, O-UA, 3:371.

government agreed with the Foreign Office concerning the opening of the Straits, and in July Russian naval leaders voiced concern that such a move might threaten Russian naval power in the Black Sea more than it would help.⁷⁸ Early in August, however, Neratov proposed that diplomatic pressure might be brought on the Porte to open the Straits in return for an abrogation of the Russo-Turkish agreement of 1900 which placed railroad construction in Eastern Anatolia under Russian control.⁷⁹ Two months later, on 2 October, Neratov instructed Charykov to make such proposals to the Turkish government, emphasizing the favorable conditions created by the Italian attack in September.⁸⁰

Charykov had long supported mending diplomatic relations with Turkey, but he was convinced that "Russia should be the master of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles and use them for her warships on a basis of equality with Turkey as long as this nation continues to exist, and then alone when Turkey disappears."⁸¹ Charykov's policy was as ambitious as Izvol'ski's, but it was evidently begun without Izvol'ski's participation. Once started, the Ambassador at Constantinople proved far more intent on gaining his goal than either Izvol'ski or Neratov. He was aware of the necessity of receiving the recognition of Russia's interests by the

⁷⁸Mneniye morskogo gen. shtava po voprosii o prolivakh, 20 July 1911, MO, 18-1:249; Sukhomlinov to Neratov, 11 August 1911, *ibid.*, p. 314; Memorandum of A. Giers, 21 and 27 July 1911, *ibid.*, pp. 249, 267.

⁷⁹Neratov to Kokovtsov, 7 August 1911, *ibid.*, 18-1:305.

⁸⁰Neratov to Charykov, 2 October 1911, with prilozhenie, *ibid.*, 18-2:58-61.

⁸¹Charykov to Neratov, 26 September 1911, *ibid.*, 18-2:31.

powers, but the lack of enthusiastic support by Russia's allies did not change his course at all.

The instructions Charykov received in October were accompanied by several draft proposals he was to negotiate with the Turks.⁸² The instructions themselves, as Charykov later admitted, were not explicit,⁸³ and the Ambassador's subsequent actions exceeded his authority to a degree that alarmed the Russian Foreign Office, the Ambassador in Paris, and the British. The impetuous Charykov proceeded in the next six weeks to carry on negotiations with the Turkish government designed not only to open the Straits but to bring about a Balkan alliance which would include the Ottoman Empire.

Curiously, his initial efforts drew approval from Neratov and some interest from the Porte. Late in October, Grey told Benckendorff that England would consider the overtures raised by Charykov "with sympathy," but he referred to his memorandum of 14 October in which he pointed out that the British agreed that Russia's demand was reasonable, and that they were not against it in principle. But still the time was not opportune, Grey thought, and furthermore, he insisted that Turkey must consent to any efforts to change the status of the Straits.⁸⁴

⁸²Neratov to Charykov, 2 October 1911, with prilozhenie, ibid., 18-2:58-61.

⁸³Charykov, "Sazonoff," Contemporary Review 133(1928):287.

⁸⁴Benckendorff to Neratov, 25 October 1911, MO, 18-2:237; Grey's Memorandum of 14 October 1911, BD, 10-1.

Alarmed to hear that Charykov already claimed full British support, Grey instructed Lowther to learn the exact nature of Charykov's proposal and to find out what he had said about British support. Upon discovering that Charykov's proposal included a Russian guarantee for "its effective support for the maintenance of the present regime of the Straits of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, extending it also to the territories adjacent," Grey objected that it went far beyond the original proposals to open the Straits. Grey did not intend to approve such a broad program, but he was still hesitant to put the matter bluntly to the Russians. He was, however, relieved to hear that the only mention of foreign powers was that their consent would be necessary.⁸⁵ In St. Petersburg, Neratov informed the British Chargé d'Affaires that Charykov's actions were not official yet, and although he personally thought the time for raising the Straits question might be right, he knew English consent was essential.⁸⁶

By November, optimism generated by Charykov's efforts began to fade. The French were unwilling to give the Russians the "full liberty of action" they demanded, despite Izvol'ski's eager requests.⁸⁷ Disheartened at a small amount of support Russia had given when French interests

⁸⁵Grey to Lowther, 23 October 1911, *BD*, 9-1:313; Lowther to Grey, 25 October 1911, and Grey's minute, *ibid.*, p. 315.

⁸⁶O'Bierne to Grey, 24 October 1911, *ibid.*, p. 314. A Russian document, supposedly a copy of this dispatch, reads that Neratov told O'Bierne that the question had already been decided and the Russian Government had declared against raising the question at this time; see, *MO*, 18-2:222.

⁸⁷Neratov to Izvol'ski, 2 November 1911, *MO*, 18-2:286.

in Morocco were at stake, DeSelves held back to see what the British would do.⁸⁸ By this time, however, it was obvious that the British would do as little as possible. Neratov began to understand that Grey would not favor any Russian project that did not first meet with the approval of the Turkish government, and Turkish interest in the Russian proposal cooled as they became aware of British reluctance to support Russia.⁸⁹ The British were aware that Charykov's scheme could succeed only with their aid, because the Turkish government had indicated that the only way they would accept an agreement with the Entente powers was through England. A primary object in gaining British aid was obviously to maintain sovereignty over Tripoli, but it would be valuable as a bulwark against Russia as well.⁹⁰ Grey had no wish to be caught in this kind of a diplomatic situation. Supported by Lowther at Constantinople and Nicolson at the Foreign Office, he decided against supporting Charykov's effort to open the Straits.⁹¹

Undaunted, Charykov continued his work, presenting his proposals to the Turkish government as official Russian policy. He seemed unaware that his efforts were becoming more futile by the day. Not only was Grey reluctant to give support, and the Turks unwilling to listen to further

⁸⁸DeSelves to Daeschner, French Chargé d'Affaires in London, 13 November 1911, DDF, 3me Ser., 1:93-4; Poincaré, Au Service de la France, 1:281.

⁸⁹Neratov to Benckendorff, 2 November 1911, MO, 18-2:286.

⁹⁰Communication of Tewfik Pasha, 31 October 1911, BD, 9-1:779.

⁹¹Grey to Lowther, 1 December 1911, BD, 9-1:340.

proposals, but trouble began within the Russian camp as well. From Belgrade and Sofia, Hartwig and Nekliudov began to protest the Charykov proposals. They were aware that neither Serbia nor Bulgaria would agree to an alliance that included Turkey. Serbian and Bulgarian desires could only be achieved by an offensive alliance against the Ottoman Empire.⁹² One interpretation of Charykov's impetuous action is that the Russian documents do not indicate that Neratov ever informed him of many of the things that were going on between St. Petersburg, London, and Paris, or especially informed him of the reluctance of the British and the French to support his project. Charykov later claimed that he knew the plan could only succeed with British aid, and that the Russian Foreign Office had assured him that such help had been secured.⁹³ In any event, Neratov did not, voluntarily or otherwise, restrain Charykov's actions. The situation was left for Sazonov to resolve, and he, emerging from his long recuperation in Switzerland, completely disavowed Charykov's actions, saying,

There is no "Dardanelles Question" such as is printed frequently everywhere. A "question" in the diplomatic sense of the word presupposes a demand made by a Government, as well as a plan of action or negotiations. But Russia demands nothing, has undertaken no negotiations, nor attempted any actions.⁹⁴

⁹²Hartwig to Neratov, 5 November 1911, MO, 18-2:309-11; APS, 2:1150-53; Nekliudov to Neratov, 22 November 1911, MO, 19-1:62-3.

⁹³Charykov, Glimpses of High Politics, p. 277.

⁹⁴Sazonov to Neratov, 9 December 1911, MO, 19-1:186. This statement was originally made in an interview by Stephen Lauzanne of the Paris newspaper Matin, and is also quoted in part in Fay, Origins of the World War, 1:425, and in Askew, Europe and Italy, p. 142.

Other explanation for Charykov's actions are possible, of course. Sidney B. Fay says "the truth is the whole affair originated with Izvol-ski, while Charykov was made the scapegoat. . .," and he mildly reproves G. P. Gooch, who earlier attributed the initiation of the affair to Sazonov and only incidental involvement to Charykov.⁹⁵ More recent studies, supported by the Russian documents, indicate that Charykov's actions were not initiated by Izvol'ski, although they received his whole-hearted support. His contribution to the proposals was the suggestion of a Balkan League including Turkish power, while the opening of the Straits was ever in the minds of many Russian diplomats. Professor Edward Thaden points out that Izvol'ski's letter to Neratov surely came too late to have much effect on a program that was well under way, and that Charykov indeed acted on the suggestion and instruction of the Russian Foreign Office.⁹⁶ A study of the Russian documents by Philip E. Mosely supports this thesis.⁹⁷ I. V. Bestuzhev's study agrees that Charykov did not act independently; however, Bestuzhev feels that Charykov's 1911 adventure was only part of a larger operation in Russian diplomacy which aimed at the creation of an all-Balkan alliance under Russian direction. The plan, Bestuzhev claims, originated as early as July 1909 under the direction of Prime Minister Stolypin rather than the Russian Foreign Office.⁹⁸

⁹⁵Fay, Origins of the World War, 1:415; Gooch, History of Modern Europe, 1878-1919, p. 488.

⁹⁶Thaden, Russia and the Balkan-Alliance, pp. 42-5; Thaden, "Charykov and Russian Foreign Policy," pp. 25-6.

⁹⁷Mosely, "Russian Policy in 1911-12," pp. 69-86.

⁹⁸Bestuzhev, Borba v Rossii, pp. 338-44.

Once again, Russia had failed to secure special privileges at the Straits. Sazonov, however belatedly, had salvaged a little Russian prestige and had avoided a breach in Anglo-Russian friendship, but the future was not promising. Charykov was bundled off to Russia in the spring of 1912 where he was made Senator, no doubt on the premise that he could do little damage there. Hartwig and Nekliudov continued, with Sazonov's support, to work for a Balkan alliance. Izvol'ski, disappointed once again, increased his efforts to tighten the Entente. The troubled situation in Persia as well as pressing obligations in Europe undoubtedly stayed Grey's hand in supporting Russia in the Balkans, and the Russian reaction was bitter. The crises of 1911 made every European nation aware of the probability of an all-out war and forced them to review their relationships with each other. Any evaluation of the Anglo-Russian friendship only emphasized its unreliable character.

Between 1912 and 1914 relations between England and Russia were less cordial than at any time since 1907. The British complained that the Russians were increasing their activities in Northern Persia, which was true, and the Russians complained that the British were only too willing to cooperate with Germany in the Balkans, Turkey, and Africa. Disagreements over Turkey continued as well. The Anglo-Russian friendship seemed almost a contradiction in terms, but there were still other chapters in the diplomatic relations of England and Russia.

CHAPTER VI

BRITAIN, RUSSIA, AND THE BALKAN WARS

In the autumn of 1912 the Balkans exploded, and Europe once more faced an international crisis. Russia and England again had to review their commitments to each other through the complexity of European diplomatic relations. The formation of the Balkan League and the Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913 meant diplomatic involvement for both nations and served to emphasize further their dependence on each other and on the European balance of power.

Although Anglo-Russian friendship was dangerously weak at the end of 1911, both nations sincerely desired a period of tranquility in the Balkans. Britain was increasingly anxious over the unfortunate circumstances of the Ottoman Empire, both because of British commercial interests in the area, and because Britain had no desire to follow a policy which would cause unrest among the vast Moslem population in her colonial possessions. Russia, frustrated in her attempts to open the Straits and to control events in the Balkans, was also concerned with the cause of peace. Her military and government officials were painfully aware that Russia was still not ready for war. Unlike Britain, however, Russia had vital interests in the Balkans and could not be content to sit back and pass up the opportunity to increase her prestige at the expense of Turkey. In

her own eyes, her actions were not designed to bring about war. Russia saw instead her encouragement of Balkan cooperation as a defensive precaution and hoped to introduce an element of stability into a potentially volatile situation. In true Russian fashion, her diplomats envisioned themselves guiding the Balkan union, able to control the troublesome states both in the interests of Slavdom and, more important, of the Russian Empire. Their mistaken evaluation of their own abilities both frustrated the desires of their British partner and brought Europe to the brink of a general war.

The Tripolitan War had aroused fears in London and St. Petersburg that the Balkan states might take advantage of Turkey's difficulties to attack the European provinces. The Balkans had a long history of conflicts among themselves. Although attempts to establish a league of Balkan states had been made on several previous occasions, they had produced no agreements.¹ On 25 December 1908 Izvol'ski had made a speech in the Duma in which he openly favored the creation of a Balkan League.² Sir Edward Grey would have been happy to demonstrate to his critics some improvement in the Balkans as a result of the Anglo-Russian cooperation there; moreover, in December 1908 Grey probably wished to assure Izvol'ski of continued British friendship in spite of the obviously

¹Leften S. Stavrianos, The Balkan Federation (1942; reprint ed., Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1964) pp. 111-13, 128-30, 133-36; Bestuzhev, Borba v Rossii, pp. 186, 222-25.

²Gosudarstvennaia Duma, Stenograficheskie Otchety, tretii sozyv, sessiia 2, zasadenie 31, 2616-30.

reluctant help offered during the annexation crisis.³ He therefore responded favorably to the speech and wired the British Ambassador in St. Petersburg:

Izvolsky's speech seems to me very satisfactory. . . . I am glad he emphasized the need for a community of feeling between the Balkan states and the combination of all three of them with Turkey for defence of common interests. I am quite in favour of this and will encourage it, whenever I can.⁴

Negotiations for an alliance had actually begun between Serbia and Bulgaria in 1909, but differences in the two countries' attitudes toward Austria had precluded an agreement.⁵ Still another attempt to form a league including Turkey came from Charykov in Constantinople before his retirement. Until 1912, however, the Balkan states had no united policy that would allow them to act against the Ottoman Empire.

Edward Grey would have liked to have seen a revival of Austro-Russian cooperation in the Balkans because he thought, as the two great powers most intimately involved there, they would be most successful in maintaining peace.⁶ English reluctance to become involved

³Robbins, Sir Edward Grey, pp. 186, 194.

⁴Grey to Nicolson, 1 October 1912, Nicolson Papers, FO 800/358, PRO.

⁵E. C. Helmreich, The Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars, 1912-1913 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938), pp. 21-5.

⁶Sir George Buchanan, My Mission to Russia, 1:120; I. S. Galkin, Diplomatia evropeiskikh derzhav v sviazi s osvoboditel'nyim dvizheniem narodov evropeiskoi Turtsii nakanune Baikanskikh vojn 1912-1913 gg. (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo Universiteta, 1960), pp. 95-104, claims that Anglo-Russian differences in the Balkans were so deep that the British, through secret contact with Austria, were conspiring to weaken Russian influence in the Balkans. Professor Thaden, in Russia and the

in the Balkans again was clearly demonstrated by Arthur Nicolson, who wrote to the British Minister in Sofia, ". . . we have so much on our hands elsewhere that we have no wish to add to our responsibilities.⁷ Russia, however, had other plans which did not include a rapprochement with Austria. Although authorities do not agree on the amount of influence Russia was able to exert on the establishment of the Balkan League, Balkan cooperation certainly had the approval of official Russia and the assistance, both competent and meddling, of several Russian diplomats in Balkan countries. Even while Charykov launched his unsuccessful venture to open the Straits and establish a Balkan-Turkish alliance from Constantinople, more successful efforts were underway in other parts of the Balkans.⁸

Balkan Alliance, p. 166, n. 69, says Galkin's thesis is purely conjecture, because the documents do not uphold his theory.

⁷Nicolson to Findlay, 18 October 1910, Nicolson Papers, FO 800/344, PRO.

⁸Literature on the Balkan League and the Balkan Wars is abundant and varied. Edward Thaden, Russia and the Balkan Alliance of 1912, is most recent study of the formation of the alliance and has the advantage of having used the printed Russian documents which were not available for earlier studies. E. C. Helmreich, The Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars, 1938 is the standard and traditional treatment of this aspect of the events. An earlier monograph of Russia and the Balkan Alliance, using British, French, and Austrian documents, is Otto Bickel, Russland und die Entstehung des Balkanbundes 1912 (Königsberg-Berlin: Osteuropa Verlag, 1933). A less detailed study can be found in W. L. Langer, "Russia, the Straits Question and the Origins of the Balkan League, 1908-1912," Political Science Quarterly 43(September 1928):321-63. An important Soviet study is Bestuzhev's Borba v Rossii, and Iu. O. Boiev, Polityka Frantsii na Balkanakh naperododni pershoi svitivoi imperialstychonoj viiny, 1911-1913 gg. (Kiev: Akademiia Nauk USSR, 1958) is a study of France's imperial ambitions in the Balkans during the years, 1911-1913.

After 1908 Balkan unity was stimulated not only by the encouragement of the Russians, who were interested in recouping the disgrace of the Bosnian annexation, but also by the severe Turkification policy of the Young Turks. The intense nationalism of the Turkish regime resulted in oppression and persecution for the Christian and Slavic population of the Empire, and sporadic revolts occurred throughout the entire Balkans. Revolutionary bands in Macedonia and Albania proved especially persistent, but revolutionary activity occurred in every state, frequently with the approval and cooperation of government officials.⁹

Russian officials renewed steps toward fostering Balkan unity in the spring of 1911, even before Foreign Minister Sazonov went on leave to recuperate from his long illness. The overtures came from Nicholas Hartwig, the Russian minister to Serbia, who eagerly supported the cause of Slavic interests against Turkey, and who wanted Russian policy to follow his lead. Sazonov had encouraged Hartwig's actions, but when, in the Foreign Minister's absence, Hartwig requested permission to meet with Nekliudov in Sofia to renew negotiations toward an alliance between Serbia and Bulgaria, the Russian Foreign Office refused. Acting Foreign Minister Neratov, always hesitant to act forcefully, could only caution Hartwig that any such negotiations must be carried on in the utmost secrecy so as not to disturb the European

⁹Stavrianos, Balkan Federation, pp. 158-9. A. V. Nekliudov, Diplomatic Reminiscences (London: J. Murray, 1920), pp. 22-3; I. E. Gueshoff, The Balkan League (London: J. Murray, 1915), pp. 10-14.

powers.¹⁰ Then, and several times later, Neratov voiced his reluctance to become actively involved in such a plan.

Few other circles in Russia were so apprehensive about Russian participation in forming a Balkan alliance. Some Russian officials thought it might hasten a revolt against Turkey, and despite Russian espousal of the Slavic cause, an ambiguity concerning the status of the Straits was always present in Russian policy. Russia demanded hegemony at the Straits, by whatever means, and it was not always evident that the demise of the Turkish Empire would bring this desire about. Always prompted more by national self-interest than by the ideological consideration of Pan Slavism, the Russian government would not hesitate to cooperate with the Turks to gain their desires. Along the same line, some Russian officials thought that direct Russian military and financial aid might allow Russia greater control of Balkan activities than an alliance.¹¹ Aid of this sort had proved successful in containing the actions of Montenegro. In any event, Neratov's warnings fell on deaf ears. Hartwig and Nekliudov instead began active encouragement of Balkan unity. Indeed, they were pursuing the line that was most popular in Russia, especially in the press and among the people.

¹⁰Hartwig to Neratov, 27 May 1911, Benno von Siebert, ed., Graf Benckendorff's diplomatischer Schriftwechsel, 3 vols. (Berlin & Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1928), 2:270; Neratov to Hartwig, 20 May 1911, MO, 18-1:65; Neratov to Nekliudov, 30 October 1911, ibid., 18-2:265; Hartwig to Neratov, 5 November 1911, "Diplomaticheskaiia podgotovka balkanskoi voiny 1912," Krasnyi Arkhiv 8(1925):45.

¹¹Prince Urosov, Chargé d'Affaires in Sofia, to Neratov, 15 May 1911, MO, 18-1:3; Neratov to Nekliudov, 4 October 1911, ibid., 18-2:71.

Hartwig's firm convictions that Russia must support the Slavic nations against the Turks and against Austria and that it was Russia's destiny to establish control over the Straits always influenced his actions.¹² Nekliudov, more moderate than his colleague, was not eager for an offensive alliance, which he thought might provoke the Austrians, but he was just as confident that Russia could exercise control over a Balkan alliance.¹³ He therefore, somewhat more cautiously, followed Hartwig's example of support. Throughout the fall of 1911, Nekliudov and Hartwig communicated frequent warnings to the Russia Foreign Office of the danger of Austrian action in the Balkans and the necessity of supporting the Balkan states.¹⁴

Actually, meetings between Serbian and Bulgarian officials had already begun, and were being carried out in a wonderfully Balkan cloak-and-dagger manner. Secret railway car meetings, incognito voyages, and

¹²Hartwig to Neratov, 5 November 1911, MO, 18-2:309; Many other dispatches by Hartwig give evidence of his interpretation of Russian policy, such as Hartwig to Neratov, 28 December 1911, and Hartwig to Neratov, 11 February 1912, MO, 19-1:277, 448. A large number of these letters are also found in "Diplomaticeskaja podgotovka balkanskoj vojni, 1912," Krasnyi Arkhiv 8(1925):1-48, and 9(1925):1-22. The selection from Krasnyi Arkhiv has been published in part in German translation in Berliner Monatshefte 7(1913), nos. 7 and 9; 8(1930), nos. 5, 6, 10, 11 and 12 and 9(1931), no. 1. Sazonov was later especially critical of Hartwig for his independent actions; see, Fateful Years, p. 80.

¹³Nekliudov to Neratov, 4 October 1911, MO, 18-2:71; Nekliudov to Neratov, 12 October 1911, *ibid.*, p. 139; Nekliudov to Neratov, 30 October 1911, *ibid.*, p. 269; Nekliudov, Diplomatic Reminiscences, p. 45.

¹⁴Nekliudov to Neratov, 12 October 1911, MO, 18-2:139; Nekliudov to Neratov, 30 October 1911, *ibid.*, p. 269; Hartwig to Neratov, 8 October 1911, *ibid.*, p. 111; Hartwig to Neratov, 22 October 1911, *ibid.*, p. 209.

important messages carried by sympathetic supporters of the Balkan cause--all characterized the dramatic proceedings. Using the Serbo-Bulgarian Agreement of 1904 as a basis, the two states produced a proposal for an alliance which would provide for concerted defensive action in case of threat or invasion by either Turkey or Austria; the proposal also provided for the approval and support of Russia in making the agreement. Both Serbia and Bulgaria, prompted by the Russian diplomats, agreed on the importance of the Russian support against the ambitions of other nations in the Balkans, and they hoped Russia could act as a mediator in differences between the Balkan states themselves.¹⁵

Both the British and Russian governments knew of the meetings by early October. Neratov still refused to give official encouragement, but at least he approved of the Russian diplomats attending the Serbo-Bulgarian meetings as a means of keeping the Russian Foreign Office informed about the activities. He repeated Russia's desire for an agreement based on maintaining the status quo in the Balkans, merely allowing Serbia and Bulgaria a sphere of cultural influence rather than allowing a partition of territory between them. Neratov also held out for the possibility of Turkish inclusion in the alliance, which both Hartwig and Nekliudov recognized would be unacceptable to the Balkan states.¹⁶

¹⁵Gueshov, Balkan League, pp. 17-36; Thaden, Russia and the Balkan Alliance, pp. 76-7.

¹⁶Neratov to Nekliudov, 4 October 1911, MO, 18-2:71; Neratov to Hartwig, 10 November 1911, ibid., p. 348; Neratov to Nekliudov, 6 December 1911, MO, 19-1:176; Neratov to Nekliudov and Hartwig, 6 December, ibid., p. 177.

The British Foreign Office was equally cautious. Although Grey had indicated a favorable attitude in 1908, the situation in 1911 was quite different than it had been. The British were now afraid that the situation in the Balkans could easily get out of hand. Besides, Russian behavior in Persia had done little to maintain British confidence in her good intentions. A Balkan alliance in the control of the Russians and directed against the Turks was too dangerous for British tastes.¹⁷

When Sazonov returned to active duty in the Russian Foreign Office in December, he soon indicated that he favored the Balkan negotiations. Although William B. Langer suggests that Sazonov supported the establishment of a Balkan League because he wished to destroy the Ottoman Empire,¹⁸ the evidence does not support such a conclusion. Sazonov wrote later that he thought Russia's participation in the conclusion of an alliance would give her some control over Balkan activities, and his actions indicate that this is what he did believe, even though his hopes proved futile.¹⁹ At one time he had supported the proposal for a league including Turkey, and it is likely that he objected to the provisions directed against the Ottoman Empire finally included in the alliance. He could not avoid them, however, because of Balkan insistence.²⁰

¹⁷Robbins, Sir Edward Grey, p. 264; Lowe, Mirage of Power, 1:107-8.

¹⁸Langer, "Russia and the Straits Question," p. 335.

¹⁹Sazonov, Fateful Years, p. 55; Bestuzhev, Borba v Rossii, pp. 219-20.

²⁰O'Bierne to Grey, 20 October 1910, BD, 5:394.

Evidently, Sazonov would have welcomed whatever solution was most favorable for Russia.

The British Ambassador in St. Petersburg during most of Sazonov's tenure, Sir George Buchanan, knew Sazonov well, and he thought Sazonov always kept Russia's interests in the foreground. His opinion was confirmed by Baron Taube of the Russian Foreign Office.²¹ In reality, Sazonov was much less dedicated to the acquisition of the Straits and also cared less for the Slavic Balkan interests than Izvolski had. He was interested in furthering peaceful relations in Europe. At several points during the negotiations for the league, Sazonov urged compromise on details which he thought were unimportant, and encouraged the conclusion of an agreement based on broad terms, leaving arbitration of the questioned points for later consideration.²²

²¹Buchanan, Mission to Russia, 1:121; Taube, La politique russe, p. 269.

²²Sazonov to Hartwig, 24 February 1912, MO, 19-2:180; Sazonov to Nekliudov, 24 February 1912, ibid, p. 180; Thaden believes that Sazonov has been dealt with too harshly by historians and that his policy as revealed by the Russian documents indicates that he was more sincere and more flexible than he has been characterized, and that he did exercise leadership and common sense in his actions; see, Russia and the Balkan Alliance, pp. 82-3. Bickel's work, Russland und die Entstehung des Balkanbundes, pp. 99-100, also credits him with diligent and capable administration. Bestuzhev, while more critical of Sazonov, does point out that he once backed Charykov's idea of a Balkan-Turkish league before he became Foreign Minister; see, Borba v Rossii, pp. 219-20; 339-44.

Throughout December, January, and February, the negotiations continued with Hartwig at Belgrade and Nekliudov at Sofia playing roles of consultants and arbiters, working to smooth over the suspicions and jealousies the Bulgarian and Serbian officials held toward each other, but sometimes heatedly disagreeing among themselves. In general, Serbia demands exceeded Bulgarian generosity, and on several occasions Serbian intransigence, backed by Hartwig's support, threatened to disrupt the whole proceedings. Serbia was especially stubborn concerning the boundaries of their proposed sphere of influence in Macedonia, and Hartwig insisted they had made many concessions during the negotiations and that they suffered from the inequality of Russian favors.²³ Although Nekliudov was a more moderate advocate of Bulgaria's demands than Hartwig was of Serbia's, Sazonov ultimately chose a mildly pro-Bulgarian policy as a means of circumventing Austrian influence in Bulgaria. He correctly assumed that Serbia was more firmly established in the Russian camp than Bulgaria was, and that Russia should take steps to assure Bulgaria's friendship. On 1 March 1912, after months of wrangling, Sazonov instructed Hartwig to explain the Russian decision to the Serbs. All points except the question of a short boundary near Struga had been settled, so the Serbians finally

²³Hartwig to Nekliudov, 21 December 1911, MO, 19-1:245; Nekliudov to Hartwig, 20 December 1911, *ibid.*, p. 243; Hartwig to Sazonov, 21 January 1912, 19-2:30; Gueshov, Balkan League, pp. 48-55; Nekliudov, Reminiscences, p. 52.

somewhat grudgingly yielded and on 13 March the Serbo-Bulgarian Alliance was signed.²⁴

The treaty provided for mutual aid in case of threat or attack by outside powers, and it was accompanied by a secret annex which provided for Russia's participation in the alliance and for the division of the disputed Macedonian territory. Although the text of the treaty was a defensive agreement against Austrian aggression, the secret provision made it an aggressive instrument directed against the Ottoman Empire as well. Russia's desire to retain the phrase status quo regarding the Balkans was respected, but the phrase meant little considering the other provisions of the agreement. Although confident of Russia's power over the alliance, Nekliudov ominously pointed out that it would be easy for Bulgaria to find a convenient excuse to attack Turkey, and even Sazonov agreed that the Balkan states exhibited dangerously warlike attitudes.²⁵ The discrepancy between what Sazonov said and what he really thought is always intriguing. Edward Thaden, in his study of the formation of the Balkan Alliance,

²⁴For the text of the treaty see, "Treaty of Friendship and Alliance between the Kingdom of Bulgaria and the Kingdom of Serbia," 29 February, 1912, BD, 9-1:781-2. It is also found in Gueshov, Balkan Alliance, pp. 112-114, and Stojan Protić, The Aspirations of Bulgaria (London: Simkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent, 1915), pp. 96-109.

²⁵Sazonov, Fateful Years, pp. 59-60; Nekliudov, Reminiscences, pp. 64-5.

implies that even at this point Sazonov did not believe that Russia could control the Balkan states.²⁶

During the Serbo-Bulgarian negotiations, discussion had been going on between Greece and Bulgaria as well. In this case, the first overtures had taken place through the intermediary of the London Times correspondent in Bulgaria, J. D. Bouchier, and his colleague in Serbia, Henry Wickham Steed.²⁷ The feelers were not immediately productive, but as in the case of Serbia and Bulgaria, the Tripolitan War was an encouragement to friendlier relations between Greece and Bulgaria. In May, Greece and Bulgaria overcame a long history of unpleasantness and signed an agreement of mutual defense against Turkish aggression, completing another part of the Balkan league.²⁸ Although Russia objected to this addition to the alliance, complaining that it would only add unnecessary complications to her Balkan policy, ultimately her disapproval had little to do with the final negotiations.²⁹ In August 1912, Bulgaria and Montenegro also reached an agreement, adding a third partner. Montenegro concluded a similar agreement with Serbia in October,

²⁶Thaden, Russia and the Balkan Alliance, p. 95.

²⁷Henry Wickham Steed, Through Thirty Years (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1925), pp. 360-1; Lady Elinore Grogan, The Life of J. D. Bouchier (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1926), p. 136; Helmreich, Diplomacy of Balkan Wars, pp. 69-80.

²⁸Gueshov, Balkan League, pp. 223-4; Protić, Aspirations of Serbia, pp. 110-15.

²⁹Prince Urasov to St. Petersburg, 19 September 1911, "Diplomatičeskaia podgotovka Balkanskoi voini 1912," Krasnyi Arkhiv 8(1925): 10; Nekliudov to St. Petersburg, 24 September, *ibid.*, p. 12; Nekliudov to St. Petersburg, 31 October 1911, MO, 18-2:280.

and by this round of alliances and verbal agreements the Balkan League was at last a reality.³⁰

Although the British Foreign Office received no formal announcements of the negotiations or the treaties, Grey had been well-informed of Serbo-Bulgarian relations by Sir Henry Bax-Ironside, the British Minister in Sofia. Bax-Ironside's intimate knowledge of Balkan affairs and special talent for perceptive observations made him a valuable reporter. Only Nicolson, Grey, and the King saw the private letters from Bax-Ironside, which in retrospect proved to be extraordinarily accurate in their information. In October, Bax-Ironside wrote of the secret railway car interview between the Serbian and Bulgarian foreign ministers,³¹ and in following reports mentioned many of the problems facing the two nations.³² On 14 March, one day after the completed negotiations, Bax-Ironside sent a summary of the treaty to the Foreign Office, having seen both the Serbian and Bulgarian drafts. He did not mention the secret annex, but he did mention the decision to divide

³⁰Helmreich, Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars, pp. 81-6.

³¹Sir Henry Bax-Ironside, British Minister at Sofia, to Nicolson, 23 October 1911, Nicolson Papers, FO 800/349, PRO.

³²Bax-Ironside to Grey, 3 November 1911, BD, 9-1:514-5; Bax-Ironside to Grey, 14 November 1911, ibid., pp. 515-16; Bax-Ironside to Grey, 23 December 1911, ibid., pp. 524-25; Bax-Ironside to Grey, 15 January 1912, ibid., pp. 529-32; Bax-Ironside to Nicolson, 31 January 1912, Nicolson Papers, FO 800/350, PRO; Bax-Ironside to Nicolson, 18 January 1912, ibid. On 6 January 1913 Bax-Ironside sent a report to the British Foreign Office giving a full account of the negotiations for the Serbo-Bulgarian treaty; see, Bax-Ironside to Grey, 6 January 1913, BD, 9-2:360-68.

Macedonian territory, which was included in the annex.³³ London did not learn officially about the secret annex until November 1912.

Sazonov's first declaration of Russia's part in the proceedings was made to Britain and France on 30 March 1912, when he telegraphed London and Paris,

With our consent an alliance has been concluded between Serbia and Bulgaria for mutual defense and protection of common interests in case the status quo on the Balkan peninsula is violated, or a third party attacks either of the contracting parties. Gueshov and the Serbian minister in Sofia, Spalaiković, have informed the English minister in Bulgaria of the conclusion of this treaty. Please inform Poincaré, at an opportune moment, orally, and for his personal information, of the above, stressing very carefully the necessity of keeping the treaty absolutely secret. You can add, that inasmuch as a special secret clause pledges both parties to seek the opinion of Russia before they undertake active measures, we are of the opinion that we, in this fashion, have a means to influence both sides, and that at the same time we have erected a protective barrier against the expansion of influence of a certain Greater Power in the Balkans.³⁴

The attitude of the Russian Foreign Office as the danger of war approached indicates once more the gap between illusion and reality in Russian foreign policy. Despite repeated warnings of diplomats and observers, Russian efforts to calm her nervous

³³Bax-Ironside to Nicolson, 14 March 1912, Nicolson Papers, FO 800/355. Bax-Ironside cautioned Nicolson that the British Foreign Office must remain "officially ignorant," about the affair because he had not received official communications.

³⁴Sazonov to Benckendorff, 30 March 1912, Siebert, Entente Diplomacy, p. 339; Sazonov to Izvol'ski, 30 March 1912, Diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis, 2:76-7; Poincaré to French Ministers in Sofia and Belgrade, 1 April 1912, DDF, 3 ser., 2:284; Minute by Nicolson telling of conversation with Beckendorff concerning the agreement in BD, 9-2:1007; Boiev, Polityka Frantsii na Balkanakh, pp. 9-10, 47-53.

Balkan brothers were feeble. The government was bombarded with telegrams from Nekliudov and Hartwig warning the Foreign Minister of impending hostilities and urging him to exert Russia's influence to pacify the Balkans. Ominous reports came from other sectors as well. A. I. Guchkov, a Russian industrialist and former Duma president, toured the Balkans during the summer as a special representative for an insurance company and reported that preparations for war were going on everywhere in the Balkan states.³⁵ Sazonov seems not to have been unduly alarmed at the war rumors, or at least never to have admitted openly that it was beyond Russia's capacity to restrain the belligerent Balkan states. In any event, warnings to the Balkan states from the Russian Foreign Office were frequently interspersed with indications of support and encouragement, which no doubt made the warnings seem only commonplace caution on the part of the Russians. In addition, the ardent Panslav Russian press continued to stir up what support it could for its cause.

In London, the British Foreign Office was not optimistic about the situation in the Balkans. Nicolson noted that much depended on the individuals involved in the Balkan affairs. "Gueshov's attitude is all that can be desired. So long as he remains at the helm, peace can be preserved, but if he finds his position untenable and resigns, probably nothing can stop a Bulgarian attack on Turkey," he minuted.³⁶

³⁵Nekliudov, *Reminiscences*, pp. 99-100; Eugene deSchelking, the Russian journalist and diplomat, also visited in Bulgaria and Serbia during the summer of 1912 and predicted the outbreak of hostilities almost to the date; deSchelking, *Recollections*, p. 118.

³⁶Minute by Nicolson on Sir Ralph Paget to Grey, Belgrade, 23 July 1912, *BD*, 9-1:594.

Conversely, no one seems to have thought that Sazonov's presence at the helm was either significant or possible. Grey had difficulty formulating a Balkan policy in 1912. He was again caught between the conflicting aims of his own foreign policy. While he wished to maintain the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, and was supported by most of his party and the government, he was aware that the British reticence to support Russian claims in the Balkans and at the Straits had been disappointing to the Russians. Reports from Nicolson and later from Buchanan at St. Petersburg constantly reminded him that there was much criticism of Anglo-Russian friendship in Russia, especially among the conservative military and court circles. Sentiment for a rapprochement with Germany never entirely disappeared, and on the rare occasions when foreign policy was discussed in the Duma, rightist speakers always mentioned the desirability of German friendship.³⁷ Grey strove not to allow any circumstances that would threaten the Entente and drive Russia into German arms, but his task was difficult.

Late in September, Sazonov visited Great Britain and had discussions with Grey at Balmoral Castle in Scotland. Grey reported that he found Sazonov "very amiable," but that he did not think what Sazonov had to say would amount to very much.³⁸ Grey hoped Sazonov would not bring up the Balkan question, because Grey had no wish to express a position of support there.³⁹ Fortunately, the conversations centered around Anglo-

³⁷Swanson, "Duma Debates on Russia's Balkan Policy," pp. 70, 79-82.

³⁸Grey to Crewe, 29 September 1912, Crewe Papers, quoted in Robbins, Sir Edward Grey, p- 264.

³⁹Grey to Buchanan, 8 October 1912, Grey Papers, FO 800/74, PRO

Russian difficulties in Persia, where Sazonov was eager to improve relations. Aside from this, Sazonov was anxious to get some declaration from Grey setting forth what Russia might expect from Britain in the event of a conflict with Germany.

Just previous to Sazonov's Balmoral visit, Raymond Poincaré had just visited Russia. According to Sazonov, Poincaré secretly confided to him the details of the Anglo-French military exchanges and urged him to try to make similar arrangements between Russia and England--perhaps a naval agreement--which would be helpful in aligning the Entente powers more effectively in case of war with Germany.⁴⁰ During Poincaré's visit, the final details of the naval agreement between France and Russia were completed.⁴¹

Thus primed, Sazonov informed Grey of Russia's naval convention with France and pointed out that, because of this convention, the French fleet would be employed in safeguarding the Russian interests in the Mediterranean. Could Britain, he wondered, render Russia the same service in the North Sea: In his report to the Tsar, Sazonov wrote,

⁴⁰Sazonov's report to the Tsar, 17 August 1912, Materialy po franco-russkikh otnoshenii, p. 256; Poincaré, Au service de la France, 2:164.

⁴¹G. M. Derenkovsky, "Franko-russkaya morskaya konventsia 1912 i anglo-russkie morskije peregovory nakanune pervoi mirovoi voiny," Istoricheskie Zapiski 29(1949):25. The French and Russian military staffs had held annual meetings since 1900; see, A. M. Zaiontchkovski, Les allies contre la Russie (Paris: Droz, 1926) pp. 8-39. The protocols of the meetings of 1911, 1912, and 1913 may be found in Materialy po franco-russkikh otnoshenii, pp. 697-718.

Grey declared that if the circumstances in question [war with Germany] arose, England would put forth every effort to deal a most telling blow to the naval power of Germany. . . . Grey also voluntarily confirmed to me what I already knew from Poincaré; the existence of an arrangement between France and England, by virtue of which, in case of war with Germany, England has incurred the obligation of lending to France her assistance, not only on sea but also on land by means of landing troops on the continent.⁴²

Sazonov was reading far more into the conversation than Grey intended. Grey's report of the conversations differed drastically from Sazonov's. "The question of the use to be made of the British fleet if we were at war was one for naval experts," Grey reported.⁴³ He doubted that Britain would send ships into the Baltic unless it were sure of the control of the entrance. But if the British fleet could not get the German fleet to come out and fight, it would shut up and blockade the German North Sea coast, and if they went to war, do all it could against Germany for whoever was at war with Germany. He warned, however, that Britain could not go to war unless backed by public opinion, though he did not think they should stand by and look on if Germany were led to crush France.⁴⁴ If, in Grey's mind, the commitment was primarily to France against Germany, obviously Sazonov chose to interpret Grey's words as an indication of support for Russia as well. In his report to the

⁴²Sazonov's report to the Tsar, 17 August 1912, Materialy po franko-russkikh otnoshenii, p. 262.

⁴³Memorandum by Sir Edward Grey, 24 September 1912, Grey Papers, FO 800/94; Grey to Buchanan enclosing Memorandum on Conversation at Balmoral between M. Sazonov and Sir Edward Grey, 8 October 1912, BD, 9-1:765-9.

⁴⁴Ibid.

Tsar, Sazonov greatly exaggerated both Grey's and Poincaré's statements. His interpretation of the British position, if it was sincere, is significant because it indicates how much the Russians came to rely on what the British saw as only general conversations.⁴⁵

What Grey did say during the Balmoral conversations made it clear that he wished to work with Russia in Europe as well as in Asia. He told Sazonov that Britain would not enter into any engagement with Germany which might tie its hands or prejudice its relationships with France or Russia, but beyond this he was as careful as ever to avoid outright promises.

Back in Russia, Sazonov was greeted with disappointment because he had not been able to produce a more meaningful commitment. The Russian press attacked the weakness of Russian diplomacy, and Russian public opinion attributed much of the Balkan crisis to the lack of support Russia received from the Entente partners. Buchanan reported to the British Foreign Office that Russian confidence in the value of the Entente was severely shaken, and again some Russians suggested that the Entente might well be abandoned in favor of an agreement with Germany.⁴⁶

⁴⁵Part of the reason for Russia's misconceptions must be attributed to the untiring efforts of Poincaré. Although Poincaré was often justly annoyed with the Russians, he bitterly hated the Germans, and encouraged the solidarity of the Triple Entente as much as he could. Faye, Origins of the World War, 1:329-342.

⁴⁶Buchanan to Grey, 6 October 1912, BD, 9-1:763-64; Buchanan, Mission to Russia, 1:122.

In London, both Nicolson and Eyre Crowe thought it would be wise to turn the Entente into an alliance. On October 22 Nicolson wrote Buchanan that a serious breach in the good understanding with Russia would be disastrous. Furthermore, he thought the understanding was more vital to Britain than to Russia, and that it should be the keystone of Britain's foreign policy.⁴⁷

Grey was not as enthusiastic for a commitment as his staff was. If Russia desired Britain's cooperation in the Balkans, he thought she should do nothing in Persia that might add to the difficulties.⁴⁸ He agreed with the Russians that the Balkans states should not be deprived of what they might conquer by their own forces, and he assured Sazonov that if Austria attacked the Balkans it would be impossible for a British government to side diplomatically with Austria against Russia.⁴⁹ The future, however, did not look promising to Grey. In April he had written with regard to the Balkan problems,

We shall have to keep out of this and what I fear is that Russia may resent our doing so; the fact that the trouble is all of her own making won't prevent her from expecting help if the trouble turns out to be more than she had bargained for.⁵⁰

⁴⁷Nicolson to Buchanan, 22 October 1912, BD, 9-2:44. Benckendorff attributed British support to the work of Nicolson and Buchanan and thought he saw Grey leaning more to Russia's side; Beckendorff to Sazonov, 21 October 1912, Siebert, Entente Diplomacy, p. 376.

⁴⁸Grey to Buchanan, 21 October 1912, BD, 9-2:41; Benckendorff to Sazonov, 21 October 1912, Siebert, Entente Diplomacy, pp. 370-73.

⁴⁹Grey to Bertie, 30 October 1912, Grey Papers, FO 800/94, PRO.

⁵⁰Minute by Grey, 23 April 1912, BD, 9-2:1008.

By early October the trouble was turning out to be more than Russia had bargained for, and both Grey and Nicolson feared Sazonov had created a monster he could not control in the Balkans. Grey thought Sazonov had gravely underestimated the pro-Slav feeling in Russia, and now, if he were confronted with Austrian aggression in the Balkans, Russia would have to support the Balkan states or lose their friendship.⁵¹

Throughout the summer, peace in the Balkans had been disturbed by a series of border incidents between Turkish officials and Macedonians, which Russian officials made hasty efforts to check. New uprisings in Albania and Macedonia aroused more hostility, and it soon became evident the situation was out of control. Even before Sazonov left England in September, Bulgaria had issued an order for mobilization. By 1 October, the four Balkan allies had all mobilized against the Ottoman Empire, and on 8 October, by a preconceived plan, Montenegro began the war. By 17 October, all four powers had declared war on Turkey.⁵²

When actual hostilities in the Balkans became imminent, the powers had begun to take steps to prevent or at least localize the problem. The efforts of Austria, Russia, and France to pacify the Balkan states made no headway, however, and neither did the appeals of the powers to the Porte that reforms would be necessary to avoid the war. The diplomatic manoeuvres of the powers were chiefly significant for their effects on each other

⁵¹Thaden, Russia and the Balkan Alliance, pp. 131-32.

⁵²Demidov to Neratov, Cetinje, 9 October 1912, MO, 20-2:961; Notes of the Bulgarian, Greek and Serbian Governments to the Turkish Government, 13 October 1912, ibid., p. 1012; Helmreich, Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars, pp. 138-45.

rather than on the belligerents. As the tension increased, the powers redoubled their efforts to secure a settlement on the question of reforms. On 8 October, Austria and Russia, at the insistence of the powers, presented a note warning the Balkan states that they would not allow any changes to take place in the territorial status quo in the Balkans.⁵³ The note came too late. The war had already begun.

In spite of Russia's confidence that she could control the League, her advice and restraint had been ignored. Indeed, Sazonov greatly overestimated the effect Russia's diplomatic persuasion would have on the Balkan allies. Moreover, in spite of constant warnings from Nekliudov and other Balkan diplomats, the Russian Foreign Office showed a peculiar lack of concern with the increasingly dangerous situation. Even Izvol'ski was unsuccessful in his efforts to make the Foreign Office aware of the extent of Balkan ambitions.⁵⁴ In fairness to Sazonov, he had little real chance of restraining the Balkan states. The moment was far too favorable for them to inaugurate the steps they had been waiting so long to take against the Turkish Empire. The problems the Tripolitan War had created for Turkey and the confidence the establishment of the Balkan League instilled in the states were considerations of greater importance than their obligation to follow Russian advice. In fact, one critic points out that

⁵³Gueshov, Balkan League, p. 52.

⁵⁴Izvol'ski to Sazonov, 6 June 1912, MO, 20-1:146; Izvol'ski to Sazonov, 6 June 1912, Diplomatische Schriftwechsel Isvol'skis, 2:139.

Russian efforts may have been too successful in convincing the Balkan leaders they could not support them militarily, for they had assured Russia of having very little control over events in the Balkans.⁵⁵

Even though Russia could not control the Balkan powers, she did not welcome other European nations intervening. She was willing to ask help from England or France, but she was not interested in allowing members of the Triple Alliance to have an excuse for intervention which might eventually work to Russia's disadvantage. This attitude was especially directed toward Austria, whom she thought might use the Balkan uproar as a pretext for aggression against Serbia. England was not enthusiastic about collective action at first either, but for different reasons. Grey wrote, "if we join in pressing Turkey to agree to a conference our negotiations regarding the Persian Gulf will be in jeopardy."⁵⁶ Sazonov was more concerned in establishing Entente solidarity, as Poincaré was, than in allowing a general revival of the Concert of Europe. Grey eventually came to feel that all the European powers should concern themselves with the outcome of the Balkan Wars, but Sazonov accepted collective action reluctantly, even when it became obvious he must do so.

To make the outbreak of hostilities more complicated, a trial mobilization of the Russian army in Poland began on 30 September, coinciding suspiciously with the outbreak of the war. Although Sazonov

⁵⁵Thaden, Russia and the Balkan Alliance, p. 113.

⁵⁶Minute by Alwyn Parker, on Bertie to Grey, 29 August 1912, BD, 9-1:671.

swore he knew nothing about the mobilization, apparently Neratov not only knew but approved of it. He stated that it had been planned for a long time and had no connection with the Balkan hostilities.⁵⁷ Baron Taube wrote that there was a definite connection between the Balkan and the Russian actions, and that Russia wished to make a show of force to indicate she would not accept a repetition of the 1908 Balkan humiliation. He thought that it was incidental whether Sazonov knew or not, because the Russian generals would have paid no attention to him.⁵⁸

In October the Italo-Turkish War ended, and the Turkish forces were free to take on the Balkan nations. An early victory was predicted for the German-trained Ottoman troops, but to the amazement of all Europe, the Balkan armies did not fall before the Turkish forces. Within a month, the "great land weapon" of the Turkish army collapsed before the onslaught of the Balkan forces. Each of the Balkan states, operating in a different area, was remarkably successful in pushing the Turkish forces back. Bulgaria, advancing in the Maritsa Valley, defeated the main Turkish army at Kirk Kileşé and at Lule-Gurgas and pushed it to within twenty miles of Constantinople. They captured Monastir and laid siege to the fortified city of Adrianople. The Greeks bottled up the Turkish navy in the Dardanelles and occupied most of the

⁵⁷C. A. Popović to Foreign Office, 3 October 1912, APS, 1:196; Neratov to Benckendorff, 23 October 1912, Benckendorff's Schriftwechsel, 1:696.

⁵⁸Taube, La politique russe, pp. 256-7.

Turkish islands in the Aegean Sea, while the Serbs advanced deep into Macedonia and turned westward to the sea to gain their coveted outlet on the Adriatic. By November they had reached the Albanian coast. Montenegro's successes led her to the outskirts of the disputed city of Scutari, which was to become a point of real contention in the efforts to settle the peace. Albania, hoping to avoid a division of her own territory by the victorious allies, declared herself an independent state.⁵⁹

The astonishing successes of the Balkan powers excited the European states who were now primarily concerned with keeping the action localized. Grey did not agree with Nicolson that Russia must inevitably move into the Balkans, and, although he no longer had any faith in the Turkish government, he was unwilling to see Turkey collapse completely. A strong pro-Turk feeling among British conservatives had been influential in British politics in the past, and Grey still had some sympathy for the idea. During the Italo-Turkish War he had listened to such pro-Turks as Winston Churchill urge him to support the Turks as a weapon that might later be used against Germany.⁶⁰

Now the situation became more complicated, Asquith thought Britain should take an initiative of its own because, "if we do so

⁵⁹Agreement between Bulgarian and Serbian General Staffs, 15 September 1912, Geushov, Balkan League, pp. 126-27; Helmreich, Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars, pp. 193-230.

⁶⁰Churchill to Grey, 4 November 1911, quoted in Robbins, Sir Edward Grey, p. 264.

clearly and strongly, it may make all the difference to our future position in the Near East."⁶¹ Obviously, if the Balkan forces were to win the war, it would be unwise to have backed the Turkish side. Both Grey and Asquith were afraid Austria might invade Serbia, a concern shared by Russia. In fact, the military circle of General Conrad was putting pressure on the Austrian government to take such a step.⁶² The Austrians had no intention of allowing Serbia to become a big power, and to this end Austria and Italy were first in recognizing the independence of Albania. Russia was forced to agree, for she had supported the creation of an Albania state since 1897, but she could not readily give up the aspirations of Serbia without suffering another embarrassment.

As the Balkan situation became more complicated, the European powers watched the startling events with apprehension and alarm. Unwilling to see the complete defeat of the Turkish Empire, each nation, for various reasons, came to believe that they should undertake, if not direct intervention, an effort to restrain and direct the outcome of hostilities. Russia had been intimately involved in the creation of at least part of the Balkan League, and although her ability to restrain the Balkan states had proved illusory, she was still deeply interested in the final disposition of power and territories. Britain, although not directly involved in Balkan affairs, was interested in maintaining her position at Constantinople and in supporting the Entente. Each nation was concerned with the future of Constantinople,

⁶¹Asquith to Grey, 4 November 1912, Asquith Papers, vol. 13.

⁶²Conrad, Aus Meiner Dienstzeit, 2:281-3, 436-52.

which seemed in danger of falling to the Balkan armies, and they also feared the possibility of Austrian intervention to obtain some advantage for herself and to deprive Serbia of the gains she ardently desired. While none of the nations was willing to enter into a war over the Balkans, Russia's intimate Balkan relations and her desire to retain her prestige in the Balkans led her to sponsor the cause of the Balkan nations, especially Serbia, against Austria and against the Turkish Empire. At the same time Russian statesmen did not wish to see a powerful Bulgaria rise on the banks of the Bosphorus, and were therefore often torn between two conflicting policies.

Facing the Entente powers in the struggle for supremacy in the Balkans was Austria. The new Austrian Foreign Minister, Count Leopold Berchtold,⁶³ wished to frustrate Serbian ambitions to gain importance and territory on the Adriatic shores, and for this reason, he encouraged a plan drawn up by the Ballplatz in the 1890's which provided for the establishment of an independent state of Albania in the very area of Serbia's intended expansion toward the Adriatic.⁶⁴ Austria's

⁶³The Austrian Foreign Minister Aehrenthal died on 17 February 1912. Count Leopold Berchtold, former ambassador at St. Petersburg, filled his position. Berchtold is usually compared unfavorably to the more aggressive Aehrenthal, but O. Wedel in Austro-German Diplomatic Relations, 1908-1914 (Stanford University Press, 1942), pp. 137-8, defends Berchtold as a misunderstood and maligned figure. He was, Wedel claims, a conscientious, hard-working foreign minister whose policies were consistent and well-planned in the two years preceding the outbreak of World War I.

⁶⁴Berchtold's foreign policy is outlined in a Memorandum of 7 October 1912, O-UA, 4:569-72, and favorably summarized in Wedel, Austro-German Diplomatic Relations, pp. 138-40.

policy was seconded somewhat half-heartedly by Italy, and more enthusiastically by Germany.⁶⁵

In the fall of 1912 then, Europe was faced with a tense and volatile situation, which seemed to be repeating the pattern of the Bosnian crisis of 1908-09. The Entente powers faced what looked like a formidable alliance, much stronger and more cohesive than the Entente powers themselves. England was not in an admirable position. Russia could count on the active support of France, particularly as long as Poincaré directed French policy, but while Grey was willing to take strong measures to protect the Entente, he was still reluctant to give unconditional support to Russia's demands. Moreover, a major difference in the new crisis was that Russia showed a strong determination not to back down.

Grey's desire to work for peace led him to accept readily the suggestions of the Germany Foreign Secretary, working through Poincaré, that the two nations work together to prevent the Balkan wars from escalating into a full scale European conflict. Grey's reception of Kiderlen's overtures were not only discomfiting to Russia, but they were also alarming to the anti-German members of the British Foreign Office. Nicolson and Crowe warned him repeatedly that Russia might

⁶⁵The Triple Alliance was renewed 5 December 1912, in the midst of the Balkan crisis, giving a special importance to the apparent strength of this group; see, Albertini, Origins of War of 1914, 1:426-8.

⁶⁶Helmreich, Diplomacy of Balkan Wars, pp. 182-85.

take offense at what they considered to be German attempts to weaken the Entente. Nicholson wrote, "We should take very great care to keep closely in touch with Russia and endeavor to harmonize our action as far as possible with hers."⁶⁷ Grey himself was quite aware of the danger of offending Russia and, shortly after the outbreak of Balkan hostilities in October, he wrote to Bertie,

If Austria were to attack the Balkan States and Russia said 'Hands Off,' it would be impossible for a British Government, even if it desired, to side diplomatically with Austria against Russia. I propose to work for agreement between Russia and Austria but it will have to be with the limitation that Austria is reasonable.⁶⁸

Grey was, therefore, not seeking to block the aspirations of Russia insofar as they could be realized without resorting to force. If he sided with Austria or cooperated with Germany at times during the Balkan crisis, it was because he was convinced of the rightness of their claims and that to allow them was the only way to prevent a European war.

While the powers considered the question of a conference to discuss the Balkan situation, Turkey sued for an armistice on 3 December 1912. Of her former vast European territories, she now retained control only of Constantinople, Adrianople, Janina, and Scutari--the last three of which were besieged. Rejoicing, the powers now agreed to the conference,

⁶⁷Nicolson to Lowther, 14 October 1912, Lowther Papers, FO 800/193, PRO.

⁶⁸Grey to Bertie, 30 October 1912, BD, 9-2:69.

and Grey called for an informal meeting of the ambassadors of the powers to meet in one of the capitals of Europe to begin discussions. Grey suggested Paris, for he was not anxious to increase his work load, but the Germans opposed this site, and both the Germans and the Austrians wished to avoid the unwelcome interference of the Russian Ambassador in Paris, Alexander Izvolski. The powers agreed that London would be a more appropriate setting; Russia and France thought that the Entente ambassadors in London, Count Benckendorff, and Paul Cambon, both men with considerable skill and experience, would easily outshine the less able representatives from Germany, Austria, and Italy--Lichnowsky, Mensdorff, and Imperiali. Grey at last consented to host the conference.⁶⁹

On 17 December 1912, the London Conference held its first meeting with Edward Grey acting as chairman. Grey hoped the informality of the meetings would encourage the ambassadors to cooperate more readily with each other, and strove to maintain an atmosphere of ease and congeniality. The meetings had no set schedule or agenda, but the ambassadors

⁶⁹Everyone took credit for the initial proposal of the meeting. Apparently Kiderlen thought the Germans made the first mention; Kiderlen to Lichnowsky, 18 November 1912, *GP*, 34:3-4; Poincaré claimed the honor for France; Poincaré to Ambassadors in Vienna, Berlin, St. Petersburg, & London, 15 October 1912, *DDF*, 3 ser.4:170; Poincaré to George Louis, 20 November 1912, *ibid.*, p. 507; Izvolski to Sazonov, 26 November 1912, Siebert, *Entente Diplomacy*, p. 422. Grey, in his memoirs, says he proposed the conference, while Gooch says Sazonov made the first proposal; Grey, *Twenty-Five Years*, 1:255. Izvolski was aware that the distrust and lack of good will which the Vienna and Berlin representatives held for him would be an "unpropitious factor," and agreed the conference should be somewhere other than Paris; Izvolski to Sazonov, 4 December 1912, Siebert, *Entente Diplomacy*, p. 428.

took up matters as they seemed to be most pressing. Grey tried to let everyone be heard and to act as a moderating influence on the other members. No minutes of the meetings were kept, but Grey reported that Cambon wrote a summary of each meeting.⁷⁰ Each ambassador naturally sent a report of each of the proceedings to his own foreign office.

Throughout the Conference, which lasted from December of 1912 to August of 1913, Mensdorff took the lead for the Triple Alliance, while Cambon backed Benckendorff, and Grey tried to be neutral. Often the meetings became deadlocked over an issue, and then Grey would work behind the scenes, consulting with each ambassador individually and arriving at an agreement before the next meeting. Although each representative came with general instructions from his government and with obligations to that government's allies, frequently the ambassadors followed lines of their own choosing. Lichnowsky drew sharp reprimands from the German Foreign Office for his independent actions,⁷¹ and the members of the Triple Alliance were often no more agreed on their policy than the Entente powers. The closest cooperation was between Cambon and Benckendorff. Indeed, Cambon often pressed harder for Russian demands than Benckendorff did. Benckendorff wrote that he thought France was eager for a diplomatic coup and that she might readily accept a war to obtain one.⁷²

⁷⁰Grey, Twenty-Five Years, 1:255-56.

⁷¹Karl Max von Lichnowsky, Heading for the Abyss: Reminiscences, trans. Sefton Delmer (London: Constable & Co., 1928). p. 55.

⁷²Benckendorff to Sazonov, 25 February 1913, Livre noir, pp. 303-7. A British military official returning from a visit in France

At the first meeting, Grey proposed three major questions for the conference to discuss: Serbia's demands for access to the Adriatic Sea, the establishment and government of Albania, and the disposition of the Turkish Aegean islands, most of which were now occupied by some power other than Turkey.⁷³

Before the opening of the conference, Serbia had promised to be the chief difficulty. Austria was dead set against Serbian territorial expansion, and throughout November a series of Austro-Serbian incidents provoked serious outbursts from both countries and led to military preparations in both Russia and Austria. From St. Petersburg Sazonov loudly proclaimed Serbia's cause, while in London Serbian representatives were pressing their own case. The original agreement between Serbia and Bulgaria called for a division of Macedonian territory between them, and Sazonov knew this. Sazonov, however, had also agreed on the principle of the establishment of Albania. If the state was to be set up as Austria wished, Serbia's course to the sea would be closed. Austria came to the conference determined not to back down

reported the same thing to Nicolson; see, Nicolson to Grey, 24 February 1913, Nicolson Papers, FO 800/360, PRO. Occasionally Poincaré became impatient with Sazonov and commented sarcastically on his many concessions; see, Isvol'ski to Benckendorff, 2 January 1913, Diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis, 3:10.

⁷³Grey to Cartwright, 17 December 1912, BD, 9-2:292; Benckendorff to Sazonov, 17 December 1912, 18 December 1912, Benckendorff's Diplomatischer Schriftwechsel, 2:538-39, 541-2; Lichnowsky's report to the Foreign Office, 20 December 1912, GP, 34:53-4.

⁷⁴Berchtold to Szögyény, 18 November 1912, 0-UA, 4:914-15; Erlass to Berlin, 28 November 1912, ibid., pp. 1048-50.

on the matter.⁷⁴ Even Nicolson admitted that Austria had a point in trying to control the ambitious Serbs,⁷⁵ and Grey proposed that Serbia be encouraged to accept concessions of a different nature.⁷⁶ The Entente pressed Sazonov to try to get the Serbian government to moderate their demands. Sazonov underwent several changes of temper, all particularly trying to Buchanan, the British Ambassador in St. Petersburg, who had to listen to his fulminations.

At last Sazonov faced reality and instructed Hartwig to explain to the Serbian government the impossibility of obtaining a port on the Adriatic.⁷⁷ Thus, when the ambassadors met on 17 December, Sazonov had already settled the question of a Serbian port for them. When Benckendorff readily agreed to Mensdorff's suggestion that Serbia might be allowed a commercial outlet through a free and neutral Albanian port, reached by an internationally controlled railroad, one major problem seemed to be solved. Grey had backed Mensdorff's suggestion of giving Serbia a commercial port rather than granting territorial expansion because, as he had pointed out several times,

⁷⁴Berchtold to Szögyény, 18 November 1912, O-UA, 4:914-15; Erlass to Berlin, 28 November 1912, ibid., pp. 1048-50.

⁷⁵Nicolson to Buchanan, 5 November 1912, Nicolson Papers, FO 800/359, PRO.

⁷⁶Grey to Buchanan, 7 November 1912, BD, 9-2:110.

⁷⁷Sazonov to Benckendorff, 27 November 1912, Siebert, Entente Diplomacy, p. 420; Buchanan to Grey, 9 November 1912, BD, 9-2:127. Buchanan to Grey, 27 November 1912, ibid., p. 215. Several dispatches which follow the intricacies of Sazonov's thinking on the Serbian question may be found in Siebert, Entente Diplomacy, pp. 403-21.

Serbia was not worth a European war.⁷⁸ He was confident that Sazonov could more easily be led to give in on this question than Austria could, and he was right. Nicolson, in this instance, sided with Grey when he wrote, "It would be supremely ridiculous if Europe were to be involved in a war over such a petty question."⁷⁹ Sazonov did give in, but in the future he supported Serbian claims to as much territory as possible.

The ambassadors also took up the question of Albania at their first meeting. They were agreed on the principle of the establishment of an independent state, but further than this they agreed on nothing. Serbia again presented them with a problem, because Serbian troops occupied parts of the Balkans the powers wished to assign to the new Albanian state. Having yielded on questions of a harbor, Serbia resisted the efforts of the powers to dislodge her troops from the areas she had fought for and won. Grey held the position that the Balkan states could not be deprived of what they had actually taken in war, but the Serbians proved too greedy for Grey and eventually, even for Sazonov. To make matters more complicated, Montenegro was also occupying some areas that were basically Albanian, and she resisted as strongly as the Serbs did any efforts to make her evacuate her position. The most dramatic and persistent example was the city of Scutari, which

⁷⁸Grey to Buchanan, 26 November 1912, BD, 9-2:207; Lichnowsky, Heading for Abyss, p. 55; Grey, Twenty-Five Years, 1:257.

⁷⁹Nicolson to Goschen, 13 November 1912, Nicolson Papers, FO 800/359, PRO.

the Montenegrins claimed and were besieging with the help of Serbian troops. Montenegro claimed that Scutari should be assigned to her when the Turkish garrison defending the city surrendered, but the Austrian ambassador insisted on the inclusion of all territory inhabited by Albanians within the boundaries to be set for that state, and Scutari was clearly an Albanian city.⁸⁰

Sazonov supported the Montenegrin claims because, as he pointed out to Grey, Russia had forced Serbia to give up on the question of a Serbian port and could hardly be expected to encourage the Montenegrins to give up Scutari as well.⁸¹ Benckendorff had already proposed that the boundaries of Albania should border on Greece and Montenegro, thus ending the question of Serbian territorial expansion in that area, and Sazonov felt this was as far as Russia could go in meeting Austrian demands. Grey vainly attempted to go through the German Ambassador, Lichnowsky, to get Austria to compromise, but Lichnowsky, although willing to try, was unable to get far. Austria refused to budge, and Grey decided to stand by the Russians on the Scutari issue because

⁸⁰Benckendorff's Report of 18 December 1912, Benckendorff's Schriftwechsel, 2:542-44; Grey to Cartwright, 18 December 1912, BD, 9-2:295. The Albanian problem, its background and the siege of Scutari are colorfully related in Mary Edith Durham, The Struggle for Scutari (London: E. Arnold, 1914). Miss Durham was a newspaper correspondent who did relief work with the Montenegrin armies and was one of the first to enter Scutari.

⁸¹Sazonov to Benckendorff, 24 December 1912, Schriftwechsel Iswolskis, 2:420-3; Sazonov to Benckendorff, 29 January 1913, ibid., 3:44; Sazonov to Izvolski, 29 January 1913, ibid., pp. 45-6.

he thought they had been pushed far enough. The question was put off for later consideration.⁸²

At the initial meeting the ambassadors came to no agreement about the Aegean islands other than accepting a proposition that they should be neutralized. The islands were of less importance to Russia than any other question facing the Conference, but Britain had a special interest here because of her reluctance to alienate Greece and create further problems for herself in the Mediterranean.⁸³

Two more meetings of the conference were held in December, and the pattern for the entire conference was set. Austria would hold out for a large Albania which could serve as a buffer against Serbia and provide a way for Austria to retain her dominant position in the Balkans. Russia would stand for as many territorial gains for the Balkan states, especially Serbia, as were compatible with her own interests. At the end of December the conference recessed for a holiday, and Grey told Lloyd George that the progress made was encouraging. "Diplomatically we are past the biggest rocks and with good will we ought to be able to get past the others."⁸⁴ He believed the other powers would be able to restrain Austria, and he was heartened by the congratulations of his colleagues on the skill with which he was "piloting the European ship through troubled waters."⁸⁵

⁸²Grey to Goschen, 18 December 1912, BD, 9-2:296.

⁸³Nicolson to Hardinge, 29 October 1913, Nicolson Papers, FO 800/370, PRO.

⁸⁴Grey to Lloyd George, 21 December 1912, quoted in Robbins, Sir Edward Grey, p. 266.

⁸⁵Asquith to the King, 8 January 1913, Asquith Papers, vol. 7.

At the same time the London Conference was meeting, the Balkan allies and the Turkish Empire were also sitting at the negotiation table, and they were having considerably less success than the ambassadors. Turkey refused to act like a defeated power, especially over such matters as Adrianople, which Bulgaria claimed and Turkey would not cede, and by the end of December the peace conference was deadlocked.⁸⁶

When the Ambassador's Conference resumed in January, the powers tried several methods to prevent the renewal of hostilities between Turkey and the Balkans which seemed inevitable. Finally, they settled on sending a collective note to Turkey urging her to give up the disputed city of Adrianople and continue peace negotiations.⁸⁷ From Constantinople Ambassador Lowther warned Grey the note would probably have no effect because the German Ambassador in Constantinople was privately urging the Porte to refuse. Germany was only pretending to cooperate, Lowther thought.⁸⁸ In any case, the note was too late to even be considered, for on 23 January the aggressive and energetic Enver Pasha and his troops overthrew the Turkish government. Pro-German

⁸⁶BD, 9-2:1026-63, records the Balkan-Turkish negotiations.

⁸⁷Grey to Lowther, 4 January 1913, BD, 9-2:352. Although the conference accepted the idea of collective action, they decided the note would have more force if it came from the governments of the powers rather than the Ambassador's Conference; Grey to Cartwright, 10 January 1913, *ibid.*, pp. 390-31. Sazonov wanted further action by England, France, and Russia, but Grey objected to this as it would constitute a separation of the Entente powers from the other members of the conference; Lowther to Grey, 16 January 1913, and minute, *ibid.*, p. 415.

⁸⁸Lowther to Nicolson, 13 March 1913, Lowther Papers, FO 800/193, PRO.

and anti-British, described by Lowther as a "handful of desperadoes,"⁸⁹ the new Turkish regime renewed the war in February.

In this second session of hostilities, the Turks acquitted themselves no better than they had in the first. This time they lost Adrianople and Janina, and the Montenegrins occupied the hapless city of Scutari in defiance of the orders of the London Conference. While the Balkans battled on, the conference continued its struggles as well.

In February, Grey finally persuaded Sazonov to give up his demands for Scutari, and Sazonov indicated he would give up the claim for the city if the Montenegrins agreed and if Austria would allow Serbian claims for the Rika Valley and the cities of Dibra and Djakova.⁹⁰ Grey discovered that both Austria and Russia were willing to compromise, but each wished the other to give in first.⁹¹ At last, Benckendorff suggested Russia make the first conciliatory move and introduced a proposal that indicated Russia's willingness to compromise.⁹²

Sazonov gave in, but not without a few whimpers. He complained that the British had given only meager support to Russia's interests.

⁸⁹Lowther to Nicolson, 13 March 1913, Lowther Papers, FO 800/193, PRO.

⁹⁰Sazonov to Benckendorff, 10 January 1913, Benckendorff's Schriftwechsel, 3:33; Sazonov to Benckendorff, 19 January 1913, *ibid.*, p. 49.

⁹¹Grey to Goschen, 27 January 1913, BD, 9-2:419-20.

⁹²Benckendorff to Sazonov, 22 January 1913, Benckendorff's Schriftwechsel, 3:56-8.

In fact, he charged, Grey's cooperative attitude toward the Triple Alliance was giving the Austrians the confidence to be even more stubborn.⁹³ Grey defended his policy in a letter to Buchanan,

I should endeavor, if war broke out between Russia and Austria, to secure that Germany, France and Great Britain should all stand aside; if this failed I cannot say what would happen. It seems unreasonable and intolerable that the greater part of Europe should be involved in war for a dispute about one or two towns on the Albanian frontier.⁹⁴

Although Mensdorff had indicated to Grey that Austria could be persuaded to compromise, Berchtold's instructions were to yield no further. Berchtold thought the prestige of Austria depended on holding Scutari for Albania,⁹⁵ and as the situation grew more tense, Berchtold threatened to use force to get the Montenegrins to lift the siege of the city.⁹⁶ In order to prevent unilateral action by Austria, Grey proposed a naval demonstration by all the powers, which he hoped would convince the Montenegrins that they must comply with the demands of the powers and give up the siege.⁹⁷

Although the powers agreed to a demonstration, getting it under way was another matter. The original suggestion for a naval action

⁹³Sazonov to Benckendorff, 12 February 1913, Siebert, Entente Diplomacy, p. 668; Benckendorff to Sazonov, 13 February 1913, ibid., p. 669.

⁹⁴Grey to Buchanan, 13 February 1913, BD, 9-2:506.

⁹⁵Minutes of Meeting of Joint Ministers, 2 May 1913, O-UA, 6:324-26.

⁹⁶Berchtold to Cetinje and Belgrade, 22 March 1913, ibid., 5:1030-31.

⁹⁷Grey to Cartwright, 28 March 1913, BD, 9-2:622; Buchanan to Grey, 9 April 1913, ibid., p. 665-66.

seems to have come from Sazonov, but when the powers agreed to the plan, Sazonov refused to allow Russian ships to participate for fear that Russian public opinion would become aroused if Russia actively involved herself in coercing a Slav nation.⁹⁸ When Sazonov hesitated, France followed her lead. Not until Sazonov requested French compliance did Poincaré agree to join the demonstration.⁹⁹

The usually unruffled Grey lost his patience with the games Sazonov and Poincaré seemed to be playing. He resented the fact that they did not join his efforts to restrain Montenegro and complained that they were playing a part that might end in the European war they wished to avoid. He warned them both that under such circumstances he would not allow British ships to act alone, and that furthermore he would not oppose separate Austrian intervention against Montenegro.¹⁰⁰ Thus, on 6 April, the French joined British, German, Austrian, and Italian ships in imposing a blockade off Antivari. Russia could not send ships, having none in the Mediterranean, but gave her approval to the demonstrations.

Nevertheless, while the vessels of the united powers sailed back and forth in the Adriatic, the Montenegrin siege continued. Neither British warnings nor Russian counsel made an impression on the

⁹⁸Grey to Cartwright, 31 March 1913, *ibid.*, p. 625; Lowe, Mirage of Power, 1:114.

⁹⁹Delcassé to Pichon, 2 April 1913, DDF, 3 ser., 6:208-9.

¹⁰⁰Grey to Bertie, 3 April 1913, Sir Francis Bertie Papers, FO 800/161, PRO.

Montenegrin king. Austria became more annoyed by the day and again threatened military action. On 14 April, pressed by Sazonov, the Serbian troops taking part in the siege withdrew, but the siege continued without them.¹⁰¹ Finally, on 23 April the commander of the Turkish troops defending Scutari surrendered, and the victorious Montenegrins occupied the city. The Austrians were furious, and Berchtold called upon the powers to take military action by bombarding or at least occupying the port cities.¹⁰² Neither Sazonov nor Grey would agree to this, and the Austria government, encouraged by the militant General Conrad and his followers, renewed their threat of independent action if the powers would not agree to act.¹⁰³ As an alternative Grey proposed tightening the blockade and offering a loan to Montenegro to encourage them to withdraw, or else allowing limited Austrian action to expel the Montenegrins.¹⁰⁴

At the London Conference meeting of 25 April the powers declined to allow the bombardment of the cities, while the Germans commented that if the joint powers would not act, Austria and Italy, or Austria alone ought to be allowed to settle the problem.¹⁰⁵ Russia could not agree

¹⁰¹Albertini, Origins of the War of 1914, 1:436.

¹⁰²Berchtold to Berlin, Rome, London, Paris and St. Petersburg, 23 April 1913, O-UA, 6:215; Communication from Count Mensdorff, 23 April 1913, BD, 9-2:711-12.

¹⁰³Conrad, Aus Meiner Dienszeit, 3:272-75.

¹⁰⁴Grey to Buchanan, 3 May 1913, Bertie Papers, FO 800/161, PRO.

¹⁰⁵Jagow to Lichnowsky, 26 April 1913, GP, 34:737-38.

to Austrian action, Sazonov indicated, because they had no guarantee that Austria would not exceed the limitations of the powers to secure a Montenegrin surrender. If this happened, he was sure Russia would be forced to intervene.¹⁰⁶ Grey agreed that this was a possibility and warned the Austrian ambassador that a general war might ensue in which the problem of Scutari would be overshadowed by the more important interests of each of the great powers.¹⁰⁷

In the face of Austrian action, Sazonov was working hard to save the peace and Russia's prestige. He sent telegrams to Benckendorff in London, instructing him to urge the powers to remain firm against Austrian demands. He wired Cetinje, complaining that the Montenegrins did not understand the danger of the situation. He told Benckendorff, "It is not a question of the narrow interests of the Montenegrin dynasty and Government, nor of their follies, but of the supreme interest of European peace."¹⁰⁸ The conference seemed unable to solve the Scutari problem, but just at the moment Austria decided to send an ultimatum to Montenegro, the Montenegrin king decided to give up unconditionally and put the fate of the country in the hands of the joint ambassadors. On 14 May an international force occupied the city of Scutari.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶Buchanan to Grey, 9 April 1913, BD, 9-1:665-66; Buchanan to Grey, 28 April 1913, ibid., p. 724-5.

¹⁰⁷Grey to Cartwright, 1 May 1913, ibid., p. 748-49.

¹⁰⁸Sazonov to Benckendorff, 28 April 1913, Benckendorff's Schriftwechsel, 3:178-79; Sazonov to Cetinje, 28 April 1913, ibid., p. 179.

¹⁰⁹Giesel to Foreign Office, 3 May 1913, O-UA, 6:338-39. The decision of King Nikita to surrender the city was prompted by the

By the end of May it appeared that Grey had carried off a great coup. The question of a Serbian port was concluded without hostilities; Turkey, again defeated by the Balkan allies, had sued for peace, and on 30 May 1913 signed the Treaty of London, ending the First Balkan War.¹¹⁰ In most of these significant matters, Grey had exerted considerable influence.

Before the Conference could take up the other important problems it faced, a new round of hostilities broke out in the Balkans, this time between the Balkan states themselves. The Second Balkan War was probably inevitable, given the resentment and disagreement which existed among the Balkan states. All the states were disappointed by the outcome of their victory over Turkey. Serbia had not received the territory she had been promised by the Serbo-Bulgarian Treaty, Bulgaria had been tied down fighting near Adrianople and had not been able to occupy the areas she coveted in Macedonia, and now she was faced with Rumanian claims for compensations for remaining neutral in the First Balkan War. Greece was in conflict with Bulgaria over disputed territory as well. In June the situation became more acute as Greece and Serbia concluded an alliance and a military convention against Bulgaria.¹¹¹ The Tsar

offer of an international loan, which deSalis suggested earlier the king would accept in good time, deSalis to Grey, 20 April 1913, BD, 9-2:704. The British Ambassador in Vienna agreed that money would be the best way to gain King Nikita's cooperation; Cartwright to Nicolson, 9 May 1913, Nicolson Papers, FO 800/365, PRO.

¹¹⁰"Treaty of London", BD, 9-2:1049-50.

¹¹¹Dayrell Crackanthorpe to Grey, 25 September 1913, ibid., 10-1; 14; Helmreich, Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars, pp. 349-51.

attempted to exercise his prerogative to arbitrate the various Balkan claims, as provided for in the Serbo-Bulgarian Treaty, but he could not bring the intransigent states to the negotiation table. The Balkan League was falling apart, and all Russia could do was watch.

Russia had wanted to improve her position in the Balkans and to aid the Balkan states in achieving their nationalistic goals, but she had hoped for Serbian expansion at the expense of Austria, not Bulgaria. While she also wished to gain the gratitude and support of Bulgaria, she did not relish a Bulgaria that could command Constantinople, either by actual occupation or from nearby Adrianople. Sazonov wished to maintain the unity of the Balkan League, and he had no real desire to see the end of the Ottoman Empire. He supported Serbian desires most ardently, but he had no wish to destroy Russia's relationship with the other Balkan nations. Sazonov's predicament became more uncomfortable every day, and his indecisiveness reflected the conflicts in Russia's Balkan policy.

On 29 June the Bulgaria king order his armies to attack the Serbian and Greek forces, evidently without the knowledge of the Bulgarian Cabinet or other members of the Bulgarian government.¹¹² The situation was perfect for Serbia and Greece. Although they had been extremely provocative in every instance, Bulgaria could now be branded

¹¹²Nekliudov to Sazonov, 30 June 1913, Gueshov, Balkan League, p. 98.

as the aggressor.¹¹³ The London Conference was again faced with the thankless task of trying to localize the conflict and find a solution to the additional Balkan problems. No power wanted war. Grey had often expressed his feelings that a general war over a handful of Balkan territories would be unthinkable. Sazonov was opposed to war as well, knowing that Russia was not prepared and that she could well lose her allies if she pressed Balkan claims too energetically. Berchtold, even though he had discouraged the Bulgarian demands in an effort to demolish the Balkan League, saw the balance of power in the Balkans ruined if Bulgaria were beaten. Only General Conrad and his clique argued for intervention on the Bulgarian side in this second war.¹¹⁴

On 9 July the war was escalated when Rumania entered, siezed Silistria and marched on Sofia. On 13 July Turkey also entered the conflict against Bulgaria. Even before Turkey's entry, Sazonov called for an armistice and a conference of the Balkan representatives at St. Petersburg where Russia could carry out her role of mediator.¹¹⁵ Bulgaria accepted, but the other states, making rapid and exhilarating victories, ignored the offer. In little more than one month, on

¹¹³Poincaré indicated in his memoirs that Austria encouraged Bulgaria to attack Greece and Serbia; see, Poincaré, Au service de la France, 3:223. Fay asserts that there is no evidence to support this idea; see, Fay, Origins of the World War, 1:447, n. 164; see also, Grey to Bertie, 2 June 1913, BD, 9-2:829, and Gueshov, Balkan League, pp. 104-5.

¹¹⁴Conrad, Aus Meiner Dienstzeit, 3:333-35.

¹¹⁵Communique of Count Benckendorff, 10 July 1913, BD, 9-2:902-3; Sazonov to Ministers in Sofia, Belgrade, Athens, and Cetinje,

30 July 1913, a soundly defeated Bulgaria sued for peace. The Balkan states met at Bucharest to settle the peace terms.¹¹⁶

Greece and Serbia put forth exaggerated territorial claims as a result of their victories and were intent on a harsh punishment for Bulgaria. The powers were at first reluctant to act. No one of the great powers favored another conference, but each feared the influence of the others with the belligerents. At last they decided simply to send representatives to Bucharest to oversee what the Balkan nations decided. Russia became actively involved in trying to get a settlement that suited her, but Britain remained reserved.¹¹⁷ The Treaty of Bucharest, signed on 10 August, was short and concise and confirmed the loss of most of the territory Bulgaria had gained in the First Balkan War to Serbia and Greece. Rumania successfully claimed Silistria and the Dobrudja, while a separate Turko-Bulgarian Treaty of Constantinople restored Adrianople and Kirk Kilissé to the Porte. Bitterness and disillusionment were profound in Sofia. Although she had been defeated by her Balkan neighbors, the Bulgarian

13 June 1913, Diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis, 3:175-76.

¹¹⁶Barclay to Grey, 8 August 1913, BD, 9-2:970-74, gives a full account of the peace conference. Assen Tzankov, "The 1913 Balkan Peace of Bucharest," Bulgarian Review 4(December 1964):2-11, reviews it from a point of view sympathetic to Bulgaria.

¹¹⁷For a full discussion of Sazonov's intrigues to gain the city of Kavala for Bulgaria as a way of winning Bulgaria to the side of the Triple Entente and of containing Greek influence in the Aegean, see Fay, Origins of the World War, 1:455-63. England was disinterested in the specifics, but favored Greek occupation of most of the islands as the least troublesome solution.

government blamed much of her territorial loss on Britain's refusal to concern herself with the settlement. On the other hand, the gains of Serbia, Rumania, and Greece, substantial as they were, fell short of satisfying the territorial and national ambitions of those states. The powers at first reserved the right to revise certain provisions of the treaties as their prerogative as signatories of the Treaty of Berlin. This was never done, and as a matter of fact, no power except Britain even formally recognized the changes made by the treaties ending the Second Balkan War.¹²⁰ World War I followed the Balkan Wars in a few months and ultimately brought far greater changes in the Balkan states.

The London Conference had continued meeting during the Second Balkan War. The new round of hostilities did not change the significant questions which involved the attention of the powers. The conference still faced the problems of the disposition of the Aegean Islands and of deciding on a government and on final boundaries for the new state of Albania.

The problem of Albanian boundaries proved difficult to resolve, with Austria holding out for as large a state as possible, and Russia demanding as much territory for Serbia as she could get. The Conference, once thought to be concerned with broad questions of policy, had degenerated into a series of bickering sessions over every village and hamlet in Albania. Tired of the constant haggling, Grey continued to meet

¹²⁰Grey to Bertie, 6 May 1914, BD, 10-1:323-24.

individually with the ambassadors and on 1 August proposed the establishment of a commission to settle the boundary problems and also made several suggestions to expedite the problem of the Aegean islands. He insisted that the ambassadors reconcile their difference in short order because Parliament would recess in mid-August, and he wished to have a full report on the Balkan situation before adjournment. The boundary commission was at last accepted, and although it did not work smoothly, it relieved the London Conference of the problem of defining boundaries in area none of the representatives had seen and frankly cared little about.¹²¹

The conference only partially solved the problem of government for Albania, as well. The powers designated Prince William of Weid as head of the new principality, but when he arrived in Albania in March 1914, he was greeted with rebellion and uprising from the Albanian tribesmen. When Prince William departed at the outbreak of World War I, the country still had no orderly government.¹²²

The conference solution to the problem of the Aegean islands was also a final half-hearted measure. Benckendorff thought the islands

¹²¹Helmreich, Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars, pp. 326-40 summarizes the last days of the London meeting, and pp. 418-442 gives the endless details concerning the Albanian boundaries and the disposition of the Aegean islands. For Grey's speech in the House of Commons, see, Sir Edward Grey, Speeches on Foreign Affairs, 1904-1914, ed., Paul Knaplund (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1937), pp. 218 ff. See also, Pribram, Austria-Hungary and Great Britain, pp. 194-205, for a discussion of the end of the conference.

¹²²Helmreich, Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars, pp. 333-34.

might be used as a lever to get the Turks out of Adrianople, but no one paid any real attention to this proposal. What happened was best described by Nicolson, who wrote, "No formal decision was come to by the powers regarding those islands in Greek occupation, though there was perhaps an understanding that the majority of them were to remain in Greek hands."¹²¹ Helmreich refers to the problems of the Albanian boundaries and the Aegean islands as the "Siamese twins" of the London settlement, and adds, that "Neither fools nor angels, the amassadors preferred to tread no further."¹²²

At last Europe retreated, leaving the Balkans to solve the rest of their problems themselves. The last ambassador's meeting was on 11 August. Edward Grey wrote in his memoirs,

After August 1913 the Conference did not meet again. There was no formal finish: we were not photographed in a group: we had no votes of thanks: no valedictory speeches: we just left off meeting. We had not settled anything: not even the details of Albanian boundaries: but we had served a useful purpose . . . When we ceased to meet, the present danger to the peace of Europe was over: the things we did not settle were not threatening that peace: the things that had threatened the relations between the Great Powers in 1912-13 we had deprived of their dangerous features.¹²³

¹²¹Nicolson to Hardinge, 29 October 1913, Nicolson Papers, FO 800/370, PRO. For a report of the ambassador's discussion concerning the Aegean islands, see Cambon to Pichon, 5 October 1913, DDF, 3 ser., 8:334-7.

¹²²Helmreich, Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars, p. 339.

¹²³Grey, Twenty-Five Years, 1:262-63.

The London Conference had not solved all the problems, but it had done significant work. The ambassadors had a good reason to believe they had put the machinery of peace to work.

One last crisis had to be weathered before the year was out, however. Serbian troops were still occupying much of the territory the conference had allotted to Albania, and Serbia's stubborn refusal to evacuate these areas brought more problems with Austria. On several occasions the Austrians had threatened the Serbs, and the Serbs had promised to withdraw. In each instance they seemed intent on advancing instead of withdrawing.

The English minister in Belgrade reported gloomily to the Foreign Office on the tenseness of the situation,¹²⁴ and from Russia, Chargé O'Bierne reported the Russian Foreign Office's distress. Impatient with their bothersome ally, who now threatened to disrupt the hard won peace, Acting Minister Neratov told the English Chargé that although he understood the Serbian position and sympathized with their desire to deliver a "severe lesson" to Albania, he would urge prudence on the Balkan nation.¹²⁵ Neratov supported Serbia in theory because he thought she was entitled to territorial gains, but he was afraid Serbia might go too far in antagonizing Austria.¹²⁶ When the Austrian ultimatum

¹²⁴Crackanthorpe to Grey, 12 September 1913, BD, 10-1; 6-10; Crackanthorpe to Grey, 25 September 1913, *ibid.*, p. 13-16; and several similar communications.

¹²⁵O'Bierne to Grey, 27 September 1913, *ibid.*, p. 18.

¹²⁶O'Bierne to Nicolson, 2 October 1913, *ibid.*, p. 24-5.

of 13 October 1913 was delivered, Sazonov admitted, "Serbia has been more to blame than was generally supposed in the events which had led up to the recent ultimatum from Austria."¹²⁷ The ultimatum drew protests from London and St. Petersburg, but no real action. Sazonov had, in fact, already advised the Serbian minister at Paris to counsel his government to accept the Austria demands. In Serbia both Hartwig and Crackanthorpe used their considerable influence with the government to bring about Serbian compliance, and once more serious complications were avoided. Both England and Russia cautioned Serbia sharply that such actions dare not be repeated.¹²⁸ Serbia gave in to Austria in this instance, and Austria accepted her withdrawal with relief, but the pattern was set for the crisis of July 1914.

By the end of 1913 the powers took a breath of relief. Grey had done well during the difficult negotiations, and his efforts brought a few more months of peace. His reputation as a statesman and a diplomat was considerably enhanced. Even Nicolson admitted that Grey had "shown gifts which I confess I did not think he possessed,"¹²⁹ and Hardinge wrote that Grey had established himself as a great Foreign Secretary.¹³⁰ In recording his own thoughts on the Conference, Grey

¹²⁷O'Bierne to Grey, 28 October 1913, *ibid.*, p. 49.

¹²⁸Vesnić to Foreign Office, 10 November 1913, *APS*, 1:328; Hartwig to Etter, Chargé d'Affaires in London, 18 October 1913, *Diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, 3:315.

¹²⁹Nicolson to Hardinge, 9 January 1913, Nicolson Papers, FO 800/362, PRO.

¹³⁰Hardinge to G. B. Allen, 18 July 1913, Hardinge Papers, quoted in Lowe, *Mirage of Power*, 1:118.

wrote that he thought Paul Cambon would have preferred him to be a little less neutral, even a little more partisan in his attitude."¹³¹ He thought, however, that Count Benckendorff entirely approved of his part in the Conference, and showed less apprehension for Russian prestige than Cambon did. The British Foreign Secretary attributed much of his success to the willingness of Germany to cooperate in the localization of the Balkan Wars. He complimented the German Ambassador for his "whole-hearted support," although, in fact, Lichnowsky did not make such a favorable impression on his own Foreign Office.¹³²

Sazonov rode the storm of the Balkan wars more uneasily than Grey. Russian diplomacy had been responsible for unleashing the Balkan League, but in the end it had proved powerless to control the events that occurred. Clearly, the creation of the Balkan League was a significant event leading to the war because only with the League did the Balkan states feel strong enough to challenge the Turks. Poincaré had realized the league was not defensive, as Sazonov insisted, and after the outbreak of the war he remarked that Russia was "trying to apply the brakes, but it was she who started the motor."¹³³

¹³¹Grey, Twenty-Five Years, 1:264.

¹³²Ibid., pp. 264-65.

¹³³Poincaré to Paul Cambon, 15 October 1912, DDF, 3 ser., 4:176; Poincaré, Au service de la France, 2:114. This is the letter in which Poincaré told Cambon of his reaction to the Serbo-Bulgarian treaty when he informed Sazonov it was a "convention of war."

Poincaré was not the only one who blamed Russia. In London, Nicolson wrote,

To my mind the primary cause of all that has happened is the secret alliance which Russia encouraged the four states to conclude. I imagine that Sazonov had in his mind in the first instance merely to gain a diplomatic success over Austria and to re-establish Russian prestige in the Balkan peninsula. He should, however, have foreseen that by encouraging and promoting the close understanding between the four Balkan powers he was practically raising hopes and aspirations which they had some grounds for thinking Russia would enable them to realize.¹³⁴

From St. Petersburg, Buchanan speculated,

Now that the fat is in the fire one is inclined to ask oneself who placed it there; and as without the Serbo-Bulgarian alliance there would probably have been no Balkan war, Russia as the prompter if not the actual creator of that alliance naturally incurs considerable responsibility.¹³⁵

Sazonov always insisted the alliance had never been intended to be aggressive, that he had encouraged the alliance since he thought war would come anyway, and that Russia hoped the league would reduce the risks for the Balkan states and also help meet Austrian aggression in the Balkans.¹³⁶ Sazonov faced other problems regarding Balkan policy, too. While Sazonov and Kokovtsov frequently consulted together and agreed on policy, they were not always upheld by other members of the government

¹³⁴Nicolson to Hardinge, 9 October 1912, Nicolson Papers, FO 800/358, PRO.

¹³⁵Buchanan to Nicolson, 17 October 1912, *ibid.*

¹³⁶Sazonov, Fateful Years, p. 55.

and diplomatic service.¹³⁷ Neratov, frequently in charge of the Foreign Office in St. Petersburg during Sazonov's long illnesses, was inept and hesitant, while the military followed an independent course, and public opinion another. Pourtalès, who was in a good position to know, thought that public opinion in "unofficial Russia" had so much sympathy for the Balkan states that it would not permit Russia to abandon them no matter what the official policy of the Russian government might be.¹³⁸ As a result of the lack of direction from St. Petersburg, ministers in various capitals carried out their own ideas, some of them acting with discretion, but others doing little to restrain the Balkans, and still others actively urging them to be more provocative.

Throughout the crisis the two principal antagonists were Russia and Austria, for the real issue at stake at the diplomatic table was the prestige of these two nations in the Balkans, rather than the desires of the Balkan states. England was in the position of honest broker, trying to find an area of agreement for both sides. Austria's policy was actually more clearcut than Russia's, even though Berchtold has often been criticized as vacillating and weak-willed. Berchtold believed that any strengthening of the Balkan powers, especially Serbia, would be a menace to Austria and that it

¹³⁷Professor Helmreich states that Kokovtsov assured him in an interview in October 1929 that Sazonov took all major steps only after consulting with him; see, Helreich, Diplomacy of Balkan Wars, p. 155, n.32.

¹³⁸Portalès to Bethmann-Hollweg, 12 October 1912, GP, 33:2:2-14. This opinion was also shared by the Serbian and French officials.

should be prevented, or at least controlled, at any cost. Russia's policy of supporting Serbia was as much directed toward opposing Austrian policy as it was toward the support of Serbia's nationalistic desires. As always, the interests of Russia, rather than those of the Balkan states, prompted Sazonov's policy. If his policy wavered, faltered, or changed directions, it was in response to the dangers that threatened Russia's interests during the Balkan Wars.

Aware of Russia's unpreparedness, Sazonov was not eager for war, and overall followed a policy of moderation and conciliation, punctuated at times by an occasional resolute stand in favor of Serbia. His sensitivity to Russian public opinion, which especially favored the Slavic interests in the Balkans, influenced his actions, but only temporarily. His problems were not only complicated by the pro-Slavs of St. Petersburg, but by the Slavic sentiments of Russian diplomats, as the actions of Hartwig and Nekliudov proved only too well.

Nevertheless, as an overall policy, Sazonov followed the road he thought would lead to peace. Temperamentally opposed to war, he refused to let his mild Slavophile sympathies lead Russia into a position of absolute intransigence.¹³⁹ With regard to Albania, for instance,

¹³⁹Sazonov wrote in his memoirs, "I was brought up in the conviction that the only admissible type of nationalism is one that does not conflict with the fundamental principles of Christian ethics." Sazonov, *Fateful Years*, p. 12. Although his critics see his policy as more expedient and ruthless than he saw it himself, his recollections indicate that Sazonov's moral justification of his own acts was a primary consideration for him.

he refused to support the partition of this unfortunate area between the Balkan victors, even though he was aware that the terms of the Balkan League called for such a disposition. With regard to Montenegro, he was even more decisive and demanded that Montenegro withdraw from Scutari, convinced it was a necessity for peace. Russia, he said, was not prepared to help start "a world war in order that King Nicholas might cook an omelette."¹⁴⁰ Later, in October when the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia demanded the withdrawal of Serbian troops from Albania, Sazonov worked for unconditional agreement from Serbia. Sazonov had to accomplish these tasks in the light of nationalist and Panslav sentiments in Russia, the desire of important Russian officials for energetic action regarding the Straits, and the chronic instability of the Tsar.

A good illustration of the kind of actions Sazonov had to contend with can be found in the efforts of the Duma President, M. V. Rodzianko. Rodzianko orchestrated celebrations of the Bulgarian victories of early 1913 at the very moment Sazonov was pressing moderation on the Bulgarians. Rodzianko begged the Tsar to take advantage of the popular enthusiasm created by the war to seize the Straits. "War will be joyfully welcomed, and will raise the government's prestige," he counseled.¹⁴¹ Against these odds, Sazonov's work merits more applause than it has normally received.

¹⁴⁰Quoted in Florinsky, Russia: A History and an Interpretation, 2:1304.

¹⁴¹M. V. Rodzianko, The Reign of Rasputin: An Empire's Collapse (London: A. M. Philpot, 1927), pp. 78-86.

In December 1913, in a report to the Tsar on the general situation in the Balkans, Sazonov stressed his desire to maintain peace and to preserve the status quo in the Balkans. He was convinced, however, that in view of Turkey's weakened position that the final collapse of the Empire was at hand and that Russia must establish a policy with regard to the final partition of Turkish territories. Russia could not permit the Straits to come under the power of a hostile state. Therefore, Sazonov requested that the Tsar grant him permission to prepare plans for the Russian seizure of the Straits in the eventuality of Turkish collapse. He emphasized the fact that Russia was not interested in territorial increases, but that it was in her direct economic and strategic interests to safeguard the Straits.¹⁴² Sazonov was, therefore, determined to protect Russia's interests, and to gain English support in doing so. His position underlines as well his sincere desire to resort to measures of compulsion only if it proved impossible to act otherwise, and in the event Russia could be assured of Entente support. Sazonov's greatest problem with regard to Russia's allies was that he was not sure of British support.

Although France had given stronger and more energetic support to Russia than England had during the Balkan crisis, Grey did not throw

¹⁴² Sazonov's Report to the Tsar, 6 December 1913, *Livre noir*, 2:363-72; This report is found in *Diplomatische Schriftwechsel Iswolskis*, 3:374-83, but it is dated 8 December. Adamov gives a summary of the report in *Konstantinopol i prolivy*, pp. 70-75, and Fay, *Origins of the World War*, 1:524-41, contains a lengthy discussion.

caution or the Triple Entente to the winds. As eager as he was to perpetuate the cause of peace, he was careful to avoid offense to the Russian ally. And even though relations with Germany did improve in the months after the Balkan crisis, Grey did not wish to go too far with Germany. He remained suspicious of the German ability to make mischief, and retained his confidence in the importance of friendship with Russia.

In England, several Foreign Office officials expressed concern with Grey's foreign policy. Nicolson worried about the apparent detente with Germany and wrote, "So long as we maintain unimpaired the present grouping of the Powers a wholesome restraint will be exercised on Germany and it is the best means of preserving European peace."¹⁴³ He thought if England stressed the idea that she would remain neutral in a European War this would encourage Germany to attempt to humiliate France. Crowe seconded Nicolson's fears.

On the other hand, the Foreign Office also contained men who were disgusted with Russian behavior and who urged Grey to take a more independent line with Russia. Tyrrell, Grey's private secretary and a man with considerable influence on Grey, thought the Foreign Secretary might do more to encourage German friendship.¹⁴⁴ A breach grew between those Foreign Office officials who encouraged cooperation with Russia and those who favored a more flexible British policy including friendship

¹⁴³Nicolson to Lowther, 19 February 1914, Lowther Papers, FO 800/193, PRO.

¹⁴⁴Steiner, Foreign Office, pp. 147-52.

with Germany. The years between the Balkan Wars and the outbreak of World War I were difficult ones for the British Foreign Office. Lack of sympathy between Grey and Nicolson marred the administration of foreign policy, but most important, Grey did not lose sight of the basic principles of his policy. He was convinced of the advantages of preserving the Entente as insurance against Germany. He was, moreover, just as convinced that Britain could not make an alliance with Russia or even with France. Grey himself was basically opposed to this type of commitment, and in any case, the Cabinet would never have accepted it.

The unreality in Grey's policy was that he believed that England would have to aid her allies in case of war with Germany to insure England's own safety as well as that of Russia and France, but he also believed, or professed to believe, that England was not really obligated to Russia or France in case of war. He wrote,

The best course I think is to let things go on as they are without any new declaration of policy. The alternatives are either a policy of complete isolation in Europe, or a policy of definite alliance with one or the other group of European powers. My own desire has been to avoid bringing the choice between these two alternatives to an issue; and I think we have been fortunate in being able to go on as long as we are.¹⁴⁵

Throughout the Balkan Wars and the London Conference Grey had been fortunate in being able to follow this policy. He had backed the cause of peace without alienating Russia. On the Russian side,

¹⁴⁵Grey to Harcourt, 10 January 1914, Grey Papers, FO 800/91, PRO.

Sazonov had proved in the long run to be as concerned with peace and receptive to the efforts of the British Secretary to contain the Balkan conflict. Grey's great fortune in 1912-13 lay in the fact that no nation thought the Balkans were worth a world war. In 1914 he would not be so fortunate.

CHAPTER VII

THE ROAD TO WAR

From the end of the Balkan Wars to the outbreak of World War I, Anglo-Russian friendship continued to face serious trials. The conviction deepened in the minds of European diplomats and military leaders that each country's respective rivals must be dealt with sooner or later, and that no reasonable opportunity to insure their own victory could be neglected. In the feverish preparations for a war that most European statesmen saw as inevitable, the lines of battle formed. Haltingly, despite constant obstacles, Russia and Britain lined up on the same side, but it was still not clear they would be allies in August 1914.

The year of uneasy peace that preceded the outbreak of World War I reflected the problems of Anglo-Russian relations in most of the areas where the two countries had contact. The usual problem areas of Persia, Turkey, and Central Asia remained complicated, while the Russians claimed they received too little support from their British partners in European matters. Grey's apparent willingness to continue friendly relations with Germany provoked the Russians, while Russia's own relations with Germany and Austria deteriorated steadily.¹

¹Buchanan to Grey, 31 March 1914, BD, 10-1 : 788; Bestuzhev, Borba v Rossii, pp. 338-40.

Despite the Balkan peace settlement, the situation there remained especially dangerous. Arthur Nicolson characterized it perfectly when he remarked, "The fact of the matter is that peace has only been patched up and we have still many questions unsettled. . . . I expect that before many years have elapsed we shall find South-Eastern Europe plunged once again into the turmoil of hostilities."²

At Constantinople, Edward Grey made an attempt late in 1913 to revive British influence by replacing Gerald Lowther with Louis Mallet, who was more sympathetic to Grey's Turkish policy and whom Grey thought might have a better chance at coping with increasing German influence at the Porte.³ Mallet's eagerness for cooperation with Russia was well known, and it could work to Britain's advantage. Mallet wrote the Foreign Office optimistically, "If the Triple Entente worked together on the lines of preserving Turkey's integrity and improving her administration we could do a great deal and easily obtain a preponderating influence."⁴ From the start, however, Mallet's attempts to encourage reforms in the Ottoman state met with Russian opposition. Russian diplomats showed far greater enthusiasm for preserving Russian interests at Turkish expense than in cooperating with

²Nicolson to Goshen, 14 October 1913, Nicolson Papers, FO 800/370, PRO.

³Grey to Nicolson, 12 April 1913, Nicolson Papers, FO 800/365, PRO.

⁴Mallet to Nicolson, 24 February 1914, Nicolson Papers, FO 800/372, PRO.

Britain. The usual rivalries and jealousies flared up constantly, and, although Grey persisted in his efforts to postpone a complete collapse of the failing empire, Asquith reported to the King that "it was only a question of time before the same causes of instability and rottenness which have led to the practical expulsion of the Turks from Europe would bring about the same downfall in Asia, and that we ought to face these probabilities."⁵ Grey's Ottoman policy was hampered as well by his own inconsistencies. His desire to reconcile the opposing interests of Turkey and Russia while increasing British influence at Constantinople could not be resolved.

The Turkish problem manifested itself clearly when a new crisis arose over the Ottoman effort to upgrade the efficiency of her army following the Balkan Wars. The Turkish government secured the services of a German military mission to Constantinople led by General Liman von Sanders. Liman was to have command of the Turkish Army Corps in Constantinople and would therefore have a crucial position within the Empire.⁶ The Russian Foreign Minister, Sazonov, responded immediately by charging that Germany was attempting to gain control

⁵Asquith to the King, 10 July 1913, Asquith Papers, vol. 7.

⁶The Liman von Sanders affair has been carefully documented and interpreted in nearly every work on the period. A short interpretation may be found in Taylor, Struggle for Mastery in Europe, pp. 508-10, while Fay, Origins of the World War, 1:498-524, devotes a much longer section to a detailed account of the diplomatic negotiations concerning the crisis.

of the Straits, and he threatened Russian action to gain equal privileges elsewhere in Turkey.⁷

Grey warned Sazonov that his actions might precipitate the final collapse of the Empire, but Sazonov insisted that England and France back him in efforts to bring about Liman's dismissal.⁸ Grey was in an unenviable position, for at the same time a British admiral was in charge of reforms of the Turkish Navy that he also commanded in peace time. Grey knew that a protest about Liman would surely bring a similar response from the Germans concerning the British position, and with the possible dismissal of the admiral might also go the contracts for battleships, arsenal supplies and dock building held by British firms.⁹ Indeed, the whole Anglo-German friendship might go down the drain, and British efforts at Constantinople would be threatened.

On the other hand, refusal to back Russia's demands could place the entire Entente in jeopardy. Grey was sure Sazonov exaggerated the importance of the whole matter, and he wrote Goschen that he did "not believe the thing is worth all the fuss that Sazonov makes about it: but as long as he does make a fuss it will be important and very

⁷ Ministerial Conference, 13 January 1914 and 21 February 1914, MO, ser. 3, 1:296; Sazonov to Nicholas II, 20 January 1914, *ibid.*, 1:61; Sazonov to Benckendorff and Izvol'ski, 25 November 1913, Materialy istorii franko-russkikh otnoshenii, p. 642; Siebert, Entente Diplomacy, p. 678.

⁸ Benckendorff to Sazonov, 28 November 1913, Materialy istorii po franko-russkikh otnoshenii, p. 644; Siebert, Entente Diplomacy, p. 679.

⁹ Benckendorff to Sazonov, 12 December 1913, Materialy istorii po franko-russkikh otnoshenii, p. 657; Siebert, Entente Diplomacy, p. 688; Mallet to Grey, 5 December 1913, BD, 10-1:405.

embarrassing to us for we can't turn our back on Russia."¹⁰ To Grey's great relief, the situation was at last resolved when the Germans agreed to promote Liman to the rank of Marshal, whereby he was required to give up his command of the Turkish Army Corps, and the irate Sazonov withdrew his protests.¹¹

In Central Asia affairs were even worse. Russia's efforts to consolidate and extend her political and economic interests in Northern Persia met with constant protests from the British. In May 1913, Sazonov suggested a revision of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 which would allow Russia a freer hand in the north in return for British domination of the largest part of the neutral sphere. Grey declined for a number of reasons. He was then basically unwilling to enlarge Britain's responsibilities in Persia, and he was also aware that further partition of Persia would bring about renewed criticism from his Liberal supporters in England. Nicolson and Buchanan, however, urged Grey to accept a settlement that would recognize openly the inefficiency of the Persian government and the inability of Britain and Russia to maintain it under the present circumstances. Outright partition would be preferable, they argued, to the situation that existed. The Russians increased their interference in northern Persian financial and administrative

¹⁰Grey to Goschen, 2 January 1914, *ibid.*, 10-1:457.

¹¹Sverbeev to Sazonov, 16 January 1914, Materialy istorii po franko-russkikh otnoshenii p. 698; Siebert, Entente Diplomacy, pp. 706-7.

¹²Lowe, Mirage of Power, 1:113-34.

affairs, moreover, until Buchanan complained that "the greater part of North Persia is already Russian in all but name."¹³

When the Russians made commercial advances in the neutral zone, the British correspondingly urged greater efforts on the part of British traders. Then the discovery of oil in the neutral zone altered Britain's attitude and spurred some further activity. In February 1914 Britain purchased a controlling interest in the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, and the Admiralty negotiated a long-term contract with the company as a means of securing a cheap and reliable supply of oil for the British Navy.¹⁴ The Russian government protested immediately, claiming that the purchase of the company's shares by the British government nullified the existing concessions of the oil company to the Persian government.¹⁵ This concession allowed the company the right to drill for oil throughout all of Persia, including the northern sector. Grey insisted that the concession was valid because it was granted prior to the 1907 convention,¹⁶ while Sazonov continued to contend that the British had no right to drill in the northern sector. The Russian minister was further disappointed by the British reluctance to come to some agreement on the construction of a railway across Persia from Russia to India, a project to which the

¹³Buchanan to Nicolson, 28 May 1914, Nicolson Papers, FO 800/374, PRO.

¹⁴For a thorough discussion of the British government's activity in the Persian oil business, see Marian Jack, "The Purchase of the British Government's Shares in the British Petroleum Company," Past and Present 39(1966):139-68.

¹⁵Lowe, Mirage of Power, 1:136.

¹⁶Ibid.

Indian government and the Committee of Imperial Defense in particular objected.¹⁷

Russian activity in Outer Mongolia further complicated the problems between the two countries because it brought Russia perilously close to interference in Tibetan affairs. In 1913 Russia and the new Chinese Republic concluded an agreement giving Russia added influence in this area.¹⁸ From India, Hardinge argued that India should have compensation in Tibet for increased Russian domination of Central Asia, and he proposed that the Foreign Office agree to the establishment of a British agent in Lhasa, and for the conclusion of an agreement between Britain and China which would offset the Russian-Chinese agreement on Mongolia. Otherwise, he felt the Tibetan government might rely more and more on the Russians rather than the British to maintain their sovereignty against Chinese encroachment.¹⁹ Sazonov had already intimated to Grey that if England wanted to make any favorable changes in Tibet he would insist on direct relations for Russia in Afghanistan as a quid pro quo.²⁰ London therefore turned down Hardinge's proposals

¹⁷Grey to Buchanan, 3 July 1914, BD, 10-2:814; Grey to Buchanan, 2 July 1914, Grey Papers, FO 800/74, PRO.

¹⁸Buchanan to Nicolson, 5 March 1914, Nicolson Papers, FO 800/373, PRO; T. W. Holderness to Foreign Office, India Office, 5 March 1913, FO 535/16, PRO; Wm. Langley to Foreign Office, New Delhi, 15 April 1913, FO 535/16, PRO.

¹⁹Grey to Buchanan, 18 March 1914, Grey Papers, FO 800/74, PRO; Lamb, The McMahon Line, 2:440-44.

²⁰Buchanan thought Sazonov had been so much criticized for a weak and vacillating foreign policy that he wished to show how firm he could be; Buchanan to Grey, 14 April 1914, Grey Papers, FO 800/74, PRO.

for any renegotiations of the 1907 settlement, and Hardinge was forced to rely on indirect influence in Tibet through Chinese-Tibet relations.

In April 1914 the Indian Foreign Minister, Sir Henry McMahon, at Hardinge's instigation, persuaded Tibet and China to agree to the Simla Convention, which would bring Outer Tibet under British influence. The Convention called for the British right to mediate Chinese-Tibetan difficulties and to establish a trading agent with Lhasa.²¹ Buchanan thought this would represent an equitable concession for Russia's advances in North Persia, but Sazonov demanded still further concessions. As a start he suggested a protectorate in Azerbaijan, a commercial outlet for Russia on the Persian Gulf, and the inclusion of Herat in the Russian sphere of Persia.²²

Grey could never agree to such extensive demands, but he admitted that England wanted to make changes in Tibet and in Persia that would enlarge her influence without giving in to Russia on the matter of Afghanistan. "So all along the line we want something and we have nothing to give," he wrote. "It is therefore difficult to see how a good bargain is to be made. . . . For these reasons, I hesitate to propose a general discussion at present, although I realize that events are forcing us nearer to it."²³

²¹Lamb, The McMahon Line, 2:620-24.

²²Ibid., 2:510-12.

²³Grey to Buchanan, 18 March 1914, Grey Papers, FO 800/74, PRO; Grey to Buchanan, 10 June 1914, Grey Papers, FO 800/74, PRO.

Sazonov became increasingly impatient, complaining that England was hostile toward Russia. Buchanan and Nicolson, now joined by Crowe and other Foreign Office officials, continued to urge Grey to propose an outright partition of Persia as the only means of solving the problem. Buchanan and Sazonov had heated exchanges over the situation throughout the early summer, and at last, on 10 July 1914, Grey instructed Buchanan to present a letter to Sazonov pointing out the various Russian encroachments in Northern Persia and demanding that Russia accept England's increased role in the Gulf and the neutral area. The British Foreign Office hoped this would prompt Sazonov to propose partition because Grey was apparently too reluctant to do so. The Russian Minister, however, continued to hold out for concessions in Afghanistan, but he did promise that he would try to control Russia's agents in Northern Persia and relieve some of the pressure in that area. In view of the past performances of the Russian Foreign Office along these lines, it was unlikely that Sazonov would be very successful in any such endeavor. Nicolson, pessimist as usual, warned that "our relations with Russia are now approaching a point where we shall have to make up our minds as to whether we should become really intimate and permanent friends, or else diverge into another path."²⁴ The situation was indeed serious, and the British Foreign Office was preparing a new approach to Russia in late July when the crisis in Europe postponed for good any solution to Anglo-Russian relations in Central Asia. In the long run,

²⁴Nicolson to Buchanan, 28 July 1914, BD, 10-2:821

Anglo-Russian troubles outside Europe were merely further, though very serious, examples of the basic weaknesses in the relations of the two countries.

More significant for the future of Russia and England were the European consequences of the uneasy friendship. While Sazonov, eagerly supported by France, continued to press for a firm commitment by England, Grey stoutly maintained that England's liberty of action was not affected by her friendship with either France or Russia. England's role, as Grey saw it, was to act as an intermediate force between the two alliance systems of France and Russia on the one hand, and Germany and Austria on the other.²⁵ Grey never admitted, even to himself, that England's actions committed her to support of Russia and France in case of war. He maintained consistently that his goal was to keep peace on the continent by exerting a calming effect on both sides.²⁶

Sazonov, on the other hand, was troubled by the Balkan experiences and the controversy over Liman von Sanders and disheartened by what appeared to be the great solidarity of the Triple Alliance. He was convinced that it was important to transform the Triple Entente into a real alliance that might act as a counterpoise to the Triple Alliance.²⁷ At the very least he hoped the three powers--Britain, Russia, and France--could create an organ such as the Ambassadorial Conference in London,

²⁵Memorandum by Bertie, 16 July 1914, Grey Papers, FO 800/61, PRO.

²⁶Grey, Twenty-Five Years, 1:289, 2:308.

²⁷Sazonov, Fateful Years, p. 130; Buchanan to Grey, 31 March 1913, BD, 10-2:779.

whereby their representatives might establish a community of views, for "while the powers of the opposite group were acting," he claimed, "we have merely been debating."²⁸

In London, Benckendorff thought Grey would turn the Entente into an alliance if he could, but he recognized the difficulties the British Foreign Secretary faced. Too much pressure for an alliance, he warned Sazonov, would only arouse opposition in Britain.²⁹ Sazonov's efforts were not affected by Benckendorff's warnings, however. On 2 April he wrote to Izvolski in Paris, advising him that the forthcoming visit of King George and Grey to Paris would be an admirable opportunity for raising the question of Anglo-Russian relations. "A further reinforcement of the so-called Triple Entente, and if possible the transformation into a new Triple Alliance, appears to me to be a demand of the present hour," he wrote.³⁰ Keeping in mind the naval and military talks between France and Russia, and between England and France, Sazonov thought a step toward an alliance might be the conclusion of an Anglo-Russian naval convention.³¹ Izvolski agreed that "the system ought to be coordinated and completed by a corresponding accord between Russia and England."³²

²⁸Sazonov to Benckendorff, 12 February 1914, Siebert, Entente Diplomacy, p. 712.

²⁹Benckendorff to Sazonov, 25 February 1914, MO, ser. 3, 1:328.

³⁰Sazonov to Izvolski, 2 April 1914, *ibid.*, 2:136; Siebert, Entente Diplomacy, pp. 713-14.

³¹*Ibid.*

³²Izvolski to Sazonov, 9 April 1914, *ibid.*, 2:199.

Sazonov was supported wholeheartedly by the Tsar, who told Buchanan that what was needed was a closer bond between England and Russia. When Buchanan pointed out that an alliance would be impracticable, the Tsar pressed for at least a naval understanding, and an extension of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 to include Anglo-Russian cooperation in Europe.³³ Although Grey was still against any sort of an alliance, he was willing to consider a naval convention, for he admitted that if Britain refused, Russia might well be offended. In his memoirs he wrote,

It might even give her the impression that, since we first agreed to military conversations with France, we had closed our minds against participation in a war. To give this impression might have unsettling consequences, as well as being untrue. On the other hand, it was unthinkable that we should incur an obligation to Russia which we had refused to France. It was as impossible as ever to give any pledge that Britain would take part in a continental war. The fact that we remained unpledged must be made quite clear.³⁴

This view was essentially supported by Crowe, who thought there was no reason why naval matters should not be discussed between the two powers, and by other members of the Foreign Office.³⁵ At last, Grey consented to let the Russians know what had passed between France and Britain with regard to naval and military matters as long as the French approved, but he wished to delay the actual discussion with Russia as

³³Buchanan to Grey, 3 April 1914, BD, 102:780-81; Buchanan, Mission to Russia, 1:183-84.

³⁴Grey, Twenty-Five Years, 1:284-85.

³⁵Minute by Crowe, 3 April 1914, BD, 10-2:783.

long as possible.³⁶ Sazonov was not satisfied with Grey's equivocal attitude and stressed to Buchanan the advantages of "securing oneself in advance once and for all against the numberless perils of the steadily growing ambitions of Germany."³⁷

The attitude and the actions of the French were significant at this point, for nothing would have pleased the French government more than a closer alliance between her two partners. The French Ambassador in St. Petersburg, Maurice Paléologue, was a willing advocate of such an agreement and made his government's attitude clear when he told Buchanan how much France would like to see the Anglo-Russian understanding take a more precise shape. France, he said, would take the lead by raising the question on the occasion of Grey's visit to Paris in April.³⁸ As the trip to Paris drew near, Sazonov stepped up his efforts to prepare the English for such a step. Russia wanted a written agreement, he declared to Buchanan, "which would make it clear to the world that in the event of Russia being involved in a defensive war, England would give her armed support."³⁹ Only this way, he felt, would Germany be forced to hold back from a war with Russia. Buchanan encouraged Sazonov because he was among those who felt that Britain should retain Russia's friendship at any cost.⁴⁰

³⁶Minute by Grey, 3 April 1914, *ibid.*, p. 783.

³⁷Sazonov to Benckendorff, 15 April 1914, MO, ser. 3, 2:224.

³⁸Buchanan to Grey, 16 April 1914, BD, 10-2:784.

³⁹*Ibid.*

⁴⁰*Ibid.*

In April Grey accompanied King George VII on a state visit to France--the only official trip Grey ever made outside England. When Grey and the King arrived in Paris, Grey thought he noted that the idea of the Entente had taken root deeply in France and rested on a firm and enduring basis, and he was apparently agreeable to an extension of Anglo-Russian relations.⁴¹ Accordingly, the French Foreign Minister, Domergue, raised the question at a meeting at the Quai D'Orsay on 22 April, pointing out that a naval convention between Russia and Britain would release part of the British fleet and that an enlargement of the Triple Entente would show Germany her efforts to get Britain to abandon the Entente were useless.⁴² Somewhat to Izvol'ski's surprise, Grey agreed, as he had decided earlier, to inform the Russians of the "state of things" between France and England, including the Grey-Cambon letters of November 1912 and the substance of the military and naval conversations, and also agreed in principle to the proposed conversations between England and Russia. Most of the members present were somewhat taken aback by Grey's ready acceptance of the proposals, for they had anticipated a more reluctant attitude. His acquiescence was based largely on his belief that nothing serious would come of the conversations with Russia, and they would serve only as a conciliatory gesture to Sazonov. He was so convinced of it that he never even inquired at the Admiralty afterwards about the conversations.⁴³

⁴¹Benckendorff to Sazonov, 12 May 1914, Siebert, Entente Diplomacy, pp. 716-7.

⁴²Izvol'ski to Sazonov, 29 April 1914, Livre noir, 2:259-61.

⁴³Grey to Bertie, 1 May 1914, Grey Papers, FO 800/94, PRO; Grey to Bertie, 21 May 1914, BD, 10-2:789; Grey, Twenty-Five Years, 1:285;

The Russians, on the other hand, placed considerable importance on Grey's attitude. Benckendorff thought that "even an alliance after the pattern of the other three powers was not excluded."⁴⁴ The Cabinet agreed to support Grey on the Anglo-Russian naval conversations, but only one meeting actually took place between the representatives of the two staffs.⁴⁵ The British government intended to send an Admiral of the Fleet, Prince Louis Battenburg, who was married to the sister of the Russian Tsarina, to St. Petersburg to conclude the convention. The whole matter of the naval conversations was leaked to the press, however--apparently through the German Foreign Office--and rather than stir up additional trouble, the trip was postponed until August.⁴⁶

Buchanan wrote Grey on 25 June, however, of a conversation with the Tsar, urging the British not to put the talks off. The Russian Naval attache in London, Volkov, had "full confidence of the Government and had received all the necessary instructions," the Tsar insisted. Besides, he was going abroad in August and wanted to see

Grey's account of the Paris meeting is found in BD, 102:787-78; Domergue's in DDF, 3 ser. 10:269; and Izvol'ski's in Livre noir, 2:259-61.

⁴⁴Benckendorff to Sazonov, 12 May 1914; Siebert, Entente Diplomacy, pp. 716-17; Sazonov to Benckendorff, 28 May 1914, ibid., pp. 724-25.

⁴⁵Marder, Dreadnaught to Scapa Flow, 1:309-10; Williamson, Politics of Grand Strategy, pp. 335-37; Asquith to the King, 13 May 1914, Asquith Papers, vol. 7.

⁴⁶The original leak was apparently made from the Russian Embassy in London to the German Foreign Office and then to the German press. The Secretary of the Embassy, Siebert, regularly supplied the German Foreign Office with documents and letters; see, Goschen to Grey, 23 May 1914, BD, 10-2:791, and Benckendorff to Sazonov, 25 June 1914, Siebert, Entente Diplomacy, p. 730-1.

the arrangements concluded before then.⁴⁷ Grey minuted Buchanan's letter, "I think the conversations are now in progress at the Admiralty."⁴⁸

On 7 July, Churchill wrote to Grey,

A conversation has taken place and another will occur shortly; but the Russian Naval Attache is not sufficiently informed or possessed of authority to discuss matters of such consequence with the First Sea Lord. At the best he can only listen and report to his government. No real progress will be made till a conversation takes place between equals.⁴⁹

In spite of the Tsar's conversation with Buchanan, Volkov apparently did not have instructions from the Russian Naval Staff. No record exists of any further meetings between the representatives of the two countries, and in any case, the war intervened and the naval agreement was never concluded.

Although nothing ultimately came of the naval conversations, the fact of their existence was immediately seized upon by the British press and constituted another excuse for an attack on Grey's policy. The ensuing demonstrations, blaming the Foreign Secretary for secret and insidious machinations, eventually led to questions in the House of Commons regarding the naval agreement. Grey proved a master of evasiveness when he reminded the House that Asquith had answered a similar question the year before,

The Prime Minister then replied that, if war arose between European Powers, there were no unpublished agreement which would restrict or hamper the freedom of the government or of the Parliament to decide whether or not Great Britain should participate in a war. . . It

⁴⁷ Buchanan to Grey, 25 June 1914, Grey Papers, FO 800/74, PRO.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Churchill to Grey, 7 July 1914, Grey Papers, FO 800/88, PRO.

remains as true today as it was a year ago. No negotiations have since been concluded with any powers that would make that statement less true. No such negotiations are in progress, and none are likely to be entered upon so far as I can judge, but if any agreement were to be concluded that made it necessary to withdraw or modify the Prime Minister's statement of last year. . . it ought in my opinion, to be, and I suppose it would be, laid before Parliament.⁵⁰

Grey evidently convinced no one--at least, not the press--but there was little effort to mount a real protest.⁵¹ Domestic matters were far too pressing to allow very much concern with rumors of this sort.

On 28 June 1914, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria and his wife Sophie were assassinated at Sarajevo in Bosnia. The assassination was to plunge Europe into a holocaust, because Austria would seek to punish Serbia for its suspected complicity in the affair while Russia would again take up the Serbian cause. The Balkan tangle would eventually draw all the powers into a bloody struggle in which the immediate provocation, a political assassination, would quickly be overshadowed by much greater problems.

The seriousness of the assassination was not immediately apparent, however, and the European diplomatic scene remained comparatively calm for the rest of June and most of July. The British Foreign Office was experiencing some internal problems, mostly stemming from the uncomfortable position of Arthur Nicolson as Permanent Undersecretary, but it was not hampered by any crisis in foreign affairs. In

⁵⁰Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 5th ser., 63(1914):457-58; Grey, Twenty-Five Years, I:289.

⁵¹Carroll, Germany and the Great Powers, p. 757; Murray, "British Policy and Opinion," pp. 569-70.

days immediately following the assassination, Grey apparently did not consult with anyone except Haldane, Asquith, and Churchill, nor did he take any of the members of the Foreign Office into his confidence. He wrote a personal letter of sympathy to Count Mensdorff, the Austrian Ambassador, as did the King and other members of the British aristocracy who were close friends of Mensdorff and certainly not enemies of Austria.⁵² The British press, with few exceptions, credited the assassination to a political conspiracy on the part of the Serbians, and expressed sympathy with the Austria government on the loss of the heir. In general, however, the press, like the government, was more concerned with the Irish question, which was the most pressing domestic issue of the day.⁵³

In the early weeks of July the Serbs consulted with the Russians, and also with the French military authorities, but not until 23 July, when the Austrian government delivered its famed ultimatum to Serbia, did the governments of Europe begin to realize the enormity of the problem. On 9 July Nicolson could still write, "I have my doubts whether Austria will take any action of a serious character and I expect the storm will blow over."⁵⁴

⁵²Grey to Mensdorff, 29 June 1914, Grey Papers, FO 800/41, PRO; F. R. Bridge, "The British Declaration of War on Austria-Hungary in 1914," Slavonic Review 67(July 1969):403.

⁵³Jonathan F. Scott, Five Weeks: The Surge of Public Opinion on the Eve of the Great War (New York: John Day Co., 1927), pp. 206-217 furnishes a well balanced survey of British opinion in July 1914.

⁵⁴Minute by Nicolson, 9 July 1914, FO 371/1899, PRO.

On 7 July the Austrian Council of Ministers was taking steps for the subjugation of Serbia, but Grey knew little of Vienna's attitude, and the several reports he received from Ambassador Maurice de Bunsen did not alarm him. On 8 July Grey had suggested that he would advise patience at St. Petersburg if Austria made some demarche against Serbia.⁵⁵ An article in the Westminster Gazette of 17 July incorrectly assessed the British attitude when it said, "Serbia will be well advised if she realizes the reasonableness of her great neighbor's anxiety and does whatever may be in her power to allay it without waiting for a pressure which might involve . . . warlike complications."⁵⁶ The article was reprinted in Vienna and the Austrian government, aware of the close relations of the Gazette and the British Foreign Office, accepted it as an accurate statement of British opinion.⁵⁷

Russia's position was clearer than Britain's from the first news of the assassination. Indeed, the murder at Sarajevo reopened the whole Balkan question for Russia. It is not true, as A. J. P. Taylor asserts, that Russia had no Balkan interests. In fact, Taylor immediately qualifies this startling statement by pointing out that the interest was not in the aggrandizement of her Balkan allies, but in maintaining their independence as a barrier against Germany.⁵⁸ The

⁵⁵Grey to Bertie, 8 July 1914, FO 371/2158, PRO.

⁵⁶Bunsen to Grey, 18 July 1914, BD, 11:46; Pribram, Austria-Hungary and Great Britain, p. 222.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Taylor, Struggle for Mastery in Europe, p. 517.

point seems trifling. The menace to Russia had never been the Balkan states. But her economic and diplomatic life depended on maintaining freedom of movement at the Straits, by whatever means this could be achieved. Increasingly, this goal had been frustrated by the two main members of the Triple Alliance. On at least two major occasions, and in countless smaller ways, Russia had been forced to back down in the face of Alliance power in Eastern Europe. She was determined not to repeat the performance.

From the moment of the assassination, war feeling ran high in Russia. Public opinion was outspoken in defense of Serbia, and few Russian newspapers or government officials offered much sympathy for the death of the Austrian Archduke.⁵⁹ Sazonov occupied himself with frequent conversations with the British and French ambassadors and letters to Count Benckendorff in London, encouraging British support of the Serbian--and, therefore, Russian--cause. Sazonov's vacillations and indecision during the tense month have prompted the most trenchant criticism, but from the first recognition that Russia might undertake hostilities he was hampered by the uncertainty of his allies, by the limitations and restrictions of the Russian government, its military forces, and even its Tsar. Sazonov did not want war, and he was aware that Russia was not really prepared for war, but he also knew that Russia could not back down in the face of Austrian intransigence one more time. If it came to a showdown, Serbia must be defended.

⁵⁹Paléologue, An Ambassador's Memoirs, pp. 18-9.

The Italian Ambassador in St. Petersburg was one of the first to recognize the urgency of the situation in Russia, and made a personal plea to Baron Schilling of the Russian Foreign Office to urge Sazonov to make Russia's intentions to protect Serbia known to Vienna. Schilling, like Sazonov, thought this would be premature, and Sazonov was hoping fervently that the Serbians would be compliant or that the Austrians would be reasonable.⁶⁰ On 7 July Sazonov had wired Hartwig in Belgrade to warn the Serbian government to be extremely careful in this dangerous situation.⁶¹ Hartwig died three days later of a heart attack, however, and, considering his close relation to the Serbian government, this left the Russians without close access to Serbian circles.⁶²

While Sazonov was cautioning the Serbs on one hand, he declared to Buchanan that an Austrian ultimatum to Serbia might well prompt Russia to take precautionary military measures,⁶³ and sent frantic telegrams

⁶⁰M. F. Schilling, How the War Began in 1914, trans. Cyprian Bridge (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1925), p. 25. Baron Schilling was the Director of the Chancellery of the Russian Foreign Office and an official similar to that of the Permanent Undersecretary of the British Foreign Office. How the War Began is his diary from 3 to 20 July, 1914, containing documents, private and personal notes, and observations. Part of it is published in Krasnyi Arkhiv.

⁶¹Sazonov to Hartwig, 7 July 1914, Schilling, How the War Began, p. 21.

⁶²Gooch, Before the War, 2:362. Although a few authorities considered Hartwig's death at this time a misfortune, Hartwig was just as likely to have spurred the Serbians on against Austria as he was to have restrained them.

⁶³Buchanan to Grey, 18 July 1914, BD, 11:47.

to Russian representatives in all the European capitals demanding to know what military steps those governments might be taking.⁶⁴ The tension was somewhat relieved on 18 July when Sazonov had an interview with the Austrian Ambassador in St. Petersburg, Szápáry, whose calm assurances put the Sazonov's fears to rest momentarily. As the crisis deepened, however, Sazonov's actions became more and more inconsistent. His confusing and changeable suggestions and proposals for maintaining peace, for restraining Austria, for protecting Serbia, and most important, for consolidating British support came so rapidly and sometimes so incoherently that Nicolson complained, "This is confusing. In three consecutive days M. Sazonov had made one suggestion and two proposals all differing from each other. . . . One really does not know where one is with M. Sazonov, and I told Count Benckendorff so this afternoon."⁶⁵

The diplomats of both Britain and Russia have been called to fault, like those of other European nations, for not taking effective steps to prevent the outbreak of World War I. Edward Grey's actions and attitude during the crucial month between the assassination and the outbreak of the war have been the special target of many critics, especially those who think he should have made more determined efforts to avoid hostilities. While Grey has both admirers and detractors, Sazonov can claim almost no apologist for his actions. Both men, nevertheless, were seeking a solution to the increasingly dangerous situation. Sometimes they worked at cross purposes, occasionally they seemed more like

⁶⁴Schilling, How the War Began, p. 27.

⁶⁵Minute by Nicolson, 27 July 1914, BD, 11:126.

rivals than allies, and of course, Sazonov's efforts had hardly any chance of succeeding. In the end, Grey's efforts were no more effective, but for a little while, at least, he seemed to be the best mediator available. Britain's interests in the Balkans were less immediate than the other powers, and her reputation as a peacemaker was well known from previous crises. Furthermore, she maintained friendly relations with both antagonists, so Grey began quietly to seek some way to alleviate the new crisis and at the same time remain in keeping with his particular obligations as Great Britain's representative.

Grey's position was particularly vulnerable, for while he was concerned with the peace of Europe, it was important that he maintain the independence of action most Britons still thought their country possessed. The problems confronting the Liberal government were so complex that Grey could not risk incautious or unpopular steps lest the government fall and he along with it. The split within the Liberal government over questions of foreign policy did not make his job easier. Few people in Britain followed continental events closely enough to be well-informed on what was happening, but the general feeling of those who did was strongly against intervention. Grey was therefore anxious to keep the country out of war, but he also was firmly resolved to preserve the Entente because he thought England's safety against Germany depended on it in the long run. For this reason he did not wish to offend Russia. Count Benckendorff counted on Grey's attitude to bring about the support Russia sought. When Prince Lichnowsky, the German Ambassador, urged Grey to restrain Russia's actions, Grey

hesitated to act hastily. Instead, his earliest proposal was for direct negotiations between Vienna and St. Petersburg as the best way to ease the situation.⁶⁶

Sazonov's reception to the idea was cool, prompted by French President Poincaré, who was on a visit to St. Petersburg between 20 and 23 July. Poincaré's disapproval was immediate and emphatic, and entirely in keeping with his intentions of always having the Triple Entente work together and present Germany with a united front. Poincaré thought it would be better to have the Entente ambassadors at Vienna put pressure on Austria, and Sazonov agreed.⁶⁷ At the British Foreign Office, Crowe, Nicolson, and other officials registered protest at this idea and Grey decided not to act on it.⁶⁸ While the question remained unsolved, Austria delivered her ultimatum to the Serbian government on 23 July, and Grey's initial efforts came to nothing.

The Austrian note has been the subject of considerable analysis and interpretation, but historians now generally agree that it was intended to be so harsh that Serbia could not comply with its terms and maintain her status as an independent nation. European diplomats accepted it in this manner when it was first delivered.⁶⁹ It was, in

⁶⁶Grey to Buchanan, 20 July 1914, BD, 11:54; Grey to Buchanan, 22 July 1914, ibid., p. 64.

⁶⁷Buchanan to Grey, 22 July 1914, FO 371/2158, PRO.

⁶⁸Buchanan to Grey, 23 July 1914, and Minutes by Crowe, Nicolson, and Grey, FO 371/2158, PRO.

⁶⁹Professor Fay devotes a lengthy chapter to a searching analysis of the document, Origins of the World War, 2:184-273. Other authors, not so verbose, still agree with Fay's conclusion.

Grey's terms, "the most formidable document I have ever seen addressed by one state to another that was independent."⁷⁰ In addition to the exceedingly harsh terms of the ultimatum, the document demanded compliance within forty-eight hours.⁷¹ Grey remained calm, but he warned Mensdorff of the gravity of the situation and immediately joined Sazonov's request for an extension of the time limit.

Grey was not interested in Serbia's fate, as he had often pointed out, but he was concerned about possible Russian reactions. He made a further proposal to circumvent any precipitate action on the Russian side. In a hurried meeting with Paul Cambon, Grey proposed mediation between Austria and Russia by the four other powers--Britain, France, Germany, and Italy. Cambon countered with a proposal for mediation between Austria and Serbia rather than Austria and Russia, explaining that in his opinion France and Britain "could not say anything at St. Petersburg till Russia had expressed some opinion or taken some action."⁷² Concerning Serbia and Austria, however, he felt it imperative to act at once to prevent an Austrian move into Serbia at the end of the time period specified in the ultimatum.⁷³ Grey pointed out that he did not contemplate any move until it was clear that there was trouble between Austria and Russia,⁷⁴ but Cambon's

⁷⁰Grey to Bunsen, 24 July 1914, BD, 11:73.

⁷¹Crackanthorpe to Grey, 23 July 1914, *ibid.*, p. 72.

⁷²Grey to Bertie, 24 July 1914, BD, 11:77.

⁷³*Ibid.*

⁷⁴*Ibid.*

attitude reflected France's more intense concern for preservation of the Entente and the role played by the French diplomats in reconciling the often divergent interests of Russia and Britain.

Cambon and Benckendorff consulted on every aspect of the tense situation and when Cambon made a quick trip to Paris on 24 July, Benckendorff worried because the French Ambassador was not present to use his influence with Grey.⁷⁵ Regardless of Cambon's efforts to alter Grey's proposal, the British Foreign Secretary presented the idea of mediation between Austria and Russia to Prince Lichonowsky on the evening of 24 July; the next day he explained it directly to Count Benckendorff and wrote to Buchanan about it.⁷⁶ Grey's insistence on Austro-Russian mediation arose from his conviction that Serbia was none of England's concern, and therefore he would not intervene in what was a purely local Balkan affair. Russia's participation was, however, another matter, and one which called for the attention of all Europe.⁷⁷

The German Foreign Office apparently accepted Grey's proposal, although their initial hope was that the conflict could be localized.⁷⁸

⁷⁵Benckendorff to Sazonov, 26 July 1914, Livre noir, 2:329.

⁷⁶Grey to Rumbold, 24 July 1914, BD, 11:78; Grey to Buchanan, 25 July 1914, ibid., p. 97; Grey to Buchanan, 25 July 1914, ibid., p. 87. Lichonowsky's version of the conversation with Grey is found in Kautsky Documents, 2:15.

⁷⁷Grey to Rumbold, 25 July 1914, BD, 11:103.

⁷⁸Jagow to Lichonowsky, 25 July 1914, Kautsky Documents, 2:193.

From Russia and France, however, Grey received less than enthusiastic replies. While they were agreeable to mediation between Austria and Serbia, neither France nor Russia would entertain Grey's own proposal. Benckendorff thought it "would give Germany the impression that France and England were detached from Russia,"⁷⁹ and Cambon did not even send the proposal to his government. While Grey waited for a reply the crisis became more serious.

As Grey struggled with various methods to maintain peace, his associates at the Foreign Office expressed especially gloomy views. Crowe was convinced that England could not remain neutral in case of war, and he was sure war was inevitable. He wrote,

It is clear that France and Russia are decided to accept the challenge thrown out to them. Whatever we may think of the merits of the Austrian charges against Serbia, France and Russia consider that these are the pretexts, and that the bigger cause of the Triple Alliance versus the Triple Entente is definitely engaged.⁸⁰

In fact, Crowe thought it would be dangerous for England to try to change the situation because her interests were tied up with France and Russia in a struggle against German political dictatorship of Europe.⁸¹ Nicolson added, "Our attitude during the crisis will be regarded by Russia as a test and we must be most careful not to alienate her."⁸²

⁷⁹Grey to Buchanan, 25 July 1914, BD, 11:97; Grey, Twenty-Five Years, 1:317.

⁸⁰Minute by Crowe, 25 July 1914, on Buchanan to Grey, 24 July 1914, FO 371/2158, PRO.

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Ibid.

Crowe and Nicolson more accurately grasped Russia's interpretation of Anglo-Russian relations and the European crisis than Grey did. In St. Petersburg, Sazonov told Buchanan and Paléologue that he understood Russia had a perfect community of views with France, and hoped that Britain would join France and Russia in opposing Austria. Paléologue assured Sazonov that France would accord Russia full diplomatic support, and, if necessary, fulfill its alliance obligations. When Sazonov asked Buchanan for a similar statement, the British Ambassador, lacking instructions, could only reply that while he could not speak in the name of his government, he had no doubt that Great Britain would give Russia all the diplomatic support in its power. He could not promise that it would make a declaration of solidarity that would entail an unconditional agreement to support Russia militarily on behalf of Serbia, where Britain had no direct interests.⁸³ Sazonov later wrote in his memoirs, "I could fully reckon on the help of the French Government; but it was still more essential to me to obtain forthwith an open declaration from the British Government about its solidarity with Russia and France on the Serbian question."⁸⁴

Buchanan wired London after his conferences with Sazonov and the Tsar that,

"Russia cannot allow Austria to crush Servia and become the predominant Power in the Balkans, and, secure of the support of France, she will face all the risks of war. For ourselves our position is a most perilous one, and we shall have to choose between giving Russia

⁸³Buchanan to Grey, 25 July 1914, FO 371/2158, PRO.

⁸⁴Sazonov, Fateful Years, p. 180.

our active support or renouncing her friendship. If we fail her now we cannot hope to maintain that friendly cooperation with her in Asia that is of such vital importance to us."⁸⁵

Besides the importance of maintaining her position in the Balkans and strengthening her own alliance system, Russia, like England, faced domestic problems of overwhelming importance. No doubt her attention should have been directed primarily toward the reform of her own governmental institutions to meet the growing dissatisfaction and revolutionary unrest, but such a policy required statesmen more far-sighted than Russia enjoyed in the years before the war. The government continued to stumble haphazardly from one crisis to another, frustrating almost every call for change or liberalization. In foreign policy, Sazonov sought a way to maintain Russia's status as a Great Power, but he had little chance of success. He was especially sensitive to press criticism, but there was no agreement among the Russian press on foreign policy. Nor could the government arrive at a consensus. Russian conservatives were unhappy over the estrangement from Germany and expressed almost as much criticism of British Persian policy as British Liberals did of the Russians. A strong Panslav sentiment existed among many Russians, but even this was not a united movement. It is not surprising, considering these obstacles, that Sazonov could neither formulate nor carry out a consistent and effective policy. He found his greatest strength in the support of the French, and it was here he turned for encouragement and counsel for a

⁸⁵Buchanan to Grey, 25 July 1914, FO 371/2158, PRO.

few days of the crisis. The visit of the French President Poincaré and Premier Viviani was of special significance.

The primary aim of the French trip to St. Petersburg was to encourage Anglo-Russian cooperation by a French effort to reduce tension between the two nations in Persia, and to further the proposed Anglo-Russian naval convention. One later authority wrote that the most significant purpose of the visit was to strengthen the indecisive Sazonov in his attitude toward Austria, since the Entente powers were already apprehensive about Austria's intentions.⁸⁶ During the three-day visit, Poincaré was lavish in his praise of the Franco-Russian Alliance and assured Sazonov of France's support of Russia according to its terms.⁸⁷ Poincaré's words, while certainly not the only decisive factor in Sazonov's actions, undoubtedly had an encouraging effect. During the visit, with Poincaré's approval, Sazonov dispatched a telegraph to the Russian Chargé d'Affaires in Vienna, instructing him to "Please point out in a friendly but firm manner the dangerous consequences of any Austrian action of a character unacceptable to the dignity of Servia."⁸⁸

While Poincaré applauded Sazonov's firm stand with Austria, at the British Foreign Office Crowe noted that the communication was

⁸⁶Fay, Origins of the World War, 2:379-82.

⁸⁷Schilling, How the War Began, p. 114; Poincaré, Au service de la France, 3:6.

⁸⁸Sazonov to Kudashev, 23 July 1914, Schilling, How the War Began, p. 27; Livre noir, 2:275.

likely to produce "intense irritation at Vienna,"⁸⁹ In any case, the warning was too late to have any effect at all, for the Austrian ultimatum had already been dispatched to Serbia before the Russian Chargé could deliver the message to the Ballplatz. Poincaré assuredly also strengthened Sazonov's resolve to reject Grey's first proposal for direct conversations between Austria and Russia.⁹⁰

Sazonov only learned of the ultimatum to Serbia after the French visitors had sailed for home, so he was not able to seek the counsel of his determined ally in the tense days that followed.⁹¹ The charges of his indecisiveness have been somewhat exaggerated; from 24 July to the declaration of war Sazonov struggled not so much with his own conscience as with the vacillations of the Tsar and the intransigence of the Russian military leaders.

Early on the morning of 24 July, Sazonov learned of the Austrian ultimatum. His excited comment to Baron Schilling upon arriving at the Foreign Office was, "It is a European war."⁹² About eleven o'clock, the Austrian Ambassador arrived at the Foreign Office in person to explain the ultimatum and to convince the distraught Sazonov that Austria was merely defending herself against Serbian revolutionary acts. Count Szápáry proceeded to read the Austrian note aloud

⁸⁹Buchanan to Grey, 23 July 1914, and Minute by Crowe, FO 371/2158, PRO.

⁹⁰Buchanan to Grey, 22 July 1914, *ibid.*

⁹¹Sazonov, *Fateful Years*, p. 152.

⁹²*Ibid.*, p. 152; Schilling, *How the War Began*, p. 28.

while Sazonov excitedly criticized the Ambassador, the note, and Austria in general.⁹³

During the day, Sazonov engaged in a frenzy of activity. He consulted with General Yanushkevich, Chief of the General Staff, about a proposal for a partial mobilization of the Russian army as a warning to Austria. Although the Chief of the Mobilization Section of the General Staff, General Dobrorolski, tried to point out the absolute impossibility of a partial mobilization directed only against Austria, Sazonov would not be deterred.⁹⁴

Sazonov had lunch on that day with the British and French Ambassadors, there assuring himself of France's support and urgently pressing Buchanan for some commitment. Buchanan reported after the meeting that "it almost looked as if France and Russia were determined to make a

⁹³Ibid., p. 39.

⁹⁴Dobrorolski explained that the plans for partial mobilization would throw the whole Russian army into confusion and make a general mobilization extremely difficult. The system of alliances had resulted in plans for mobilization against Germany and Austria at once, and the technical difficulties of changing these plans were insurmountable; S. Dobrorolski, Die Mobilmachung der russischen Armee, 1914 (Berlin: Deutche Verlagsgesellschaft fur Politik und Geschichte, 1922), pp. 17-19. The details of the Russian mobilization have been covered by several of the participants, including I. Danilov, Rossia v mirovoi voiny (Berlin: W. Biedermann, 1924), and V. A. Suchomlinov, Errinerungen (Berlin: Verlag von Reimar Hobbing, 1924). Danilov was Quartermaster General of the Russian Army and Sukhomlinov was Minister of War. Articles covering the mobilization include Michael Florinsky, "The Russian Mobilization of 1914," Political Science Quarterly 42(June 1927):203-27, an answer to Florinsky by A. von Wegerer, "The Russian Mobilization of 1914," Political Science Quarterly 43(June 1928):201-28, and L. C. F. Turner, "The Russian Mobilization of 1914," Journal of Contemporary History 1(1968):65-88.

strong stand even if we declined to join them."⁹⁵ At three o'clock the Russian Council of Ministers met for several hours, at last agreeing to request an extension of the time limit of the Austrian note, to advise Serbia not to resist Austrian force if it occurred and to ask the Tsar to accept Sazonov's proposal for partial mobilization.⁹⁶ Throughout the day, Sazonov heard from London and Paris that the Austrian diplomats in those cities emphasized that the note was not an ultimatum, and that an unsatisfactory reply need not mean immediate military action. Somewhat calmed, Sazonov dispatched several telegrams to London, pointing out the importance of England's attitude and urging Grey to make a request for mediation.⁹⁷ He also sent a note to the Russian representatives in the European capitols, asking their help in securing a longer time period for Serbia to consider the ultimatum, and a telegram to Belgrade which read, "In view of the helpless situation of the Serbians, it would be better for them to offer no resistance, but to address an appeal to the Great Powers."⁹⁸

During the short period between the ultimatum and the answer, enthusiasm for war mounted steadily in St. Petersburg. Paléologue

⁹⁵Buchanan to Grey, 24 July 1914, FO 371/2158, PRO; Buchanan, Mission to Moscow, 1:189.

⁹⁶Russian Council of Ministers, 24 July 1914, MO, ser. 3, 5:19; Schilling, How the War Began, p. 30.

⁹⁷Sazonov to Benckendorff, 25 July 1914, Schilling, How the War Began, p. 35; Aide Memoire of Benckendorff, 25 July 1914, MO, ser. 3, 5:235.

⁹⁸Sazonov to Vienna, Paris, Berlin, London, Rome, Buckarest, Belgrade, and Constantinople, 25 July 1914, Schilling, How the War Began, p. 33; Sazonov to Kudashev, 25 July 1914, ibid.

wrote that the activity and animation in the city "forced him to conclude that war was certain."⁹⁹ On 25 July another Ministerial Council met--this one crucial for Russia's future. Here the militarists won the day and convinced Sazonov and the Tsar that a series of military measures, including a "period preparatory to war," during which the initial measures for mobilization could be taken secretly, was absolutely necessary.¹⁰⁰ On the one hand, the assurances of his British and French colleagues and the insistence of Pourtalès and Szápáry that Austria had no territorial designs on Serbia seemed to encourage Sazonov. These circumstances did not, however, prevent him from agreeing to, even encouraging, far-reaching military preparations that contributed to the already tense situation.

On the evening of 25 July, Austria rejected the Serbian reply to her note. European diplomats were astonished for the Serbian answer had been, in their eyes, more than conciliatory.¹⁰¹ The British Foreign Office considered the Austrian action unreasonable, and Crowe wrote, "If Austria demands absolute compliance with her ultimatum

⁹⁹Paléologue, Ambassador's Memoirs, 1:27.

¹⁰⁰Russian Council of Ministers, 25 July 1914, MO, ser. 3, 5:25.

¹⁰¹The Serbian document, while apparently bowing to the greater part of the Austrian demands, has been analyzed as a masterpiece of diplomatic duplicity, actually giving up very little. In any case, both Austria and Serbia took military steps even before the delivery of the document. Fleming, Origins of World War I, p. 165; Schmitt, Origins of World War I, 1:538.

it can only mean that she wants war. For she knows perfectly well that some of the demands are such as no state can accept as they are tantamount to accepting a protectorate."¹⁰²

On Saturday, 25 July, Grey went for his usual week-end in the country, missing the first news of the Austrian action. When Nicolson contacted him with the news, Grey moved rapidly to make one more effort to secure peace. Acting on a previous suggestion by Sazonov, Grey proposed a conference of ambassadors of the four disinterested powers, while instructing the British representatives at St. Petersburg, Vienna, and Nish, where the Serbian government had moved, to try to hold off military action.¹⁰³

At a Cabinet meeting on 27 July, Grey reported on the state of affairs, pointing out, as Crowe had argued to him, that Britain was going to be forced to make a decision. Russia must begin mobilization if she was to be ready for war, as it would take at least a month for her preparations to be complete. If Russia mobilized, so would Germany, and, as German mobilization was directed in large part against France, this would call for a reaction by France. England could not then delay some decision, he argued. The Cabinet reached no decision, but it did consider the possibility of a German invasion of France through Belgium, and decided to discuss the question at the next Cabinet meeting.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰²Minute by Crowe, 28 July 1914, on Communication of the Serbian Minister, 27 July 1914, BD, 11:171.

¹⁰³Grey to Bertie and others, 26 July 1914, BD, 11:101.

¹⁰⁴Asquith to the King, 29 July 1914, Asquith Papers, vol. 7.

On the same day, 27 July, Grey spoke in the House of Commons, reviewing recent European events and pointing out his efforts to secure a conference. The House was so preoccupied with the Irish situation that it had given little serious thought to continental problems, and the speech caused very little comment.¹⁰⁵

On the morning of 28 July Grey heard from St. Petersburg that Sazonov would now favor direct conversations with Austria, and if these failed, he would agree to a conference to mediate the crisis, as Grey had suggested.¹⁰⁶ The same day, Austria declared war on Serbia. Grey made one last attempt to stop the hostilities by calling for the Austrian troops to halt in Belgrade while the powers mediated.¹⁰⁷ But events moved too fast for any power to give real consideration to the last proposals. Germany rejected Grey's appeal outright.

On 29 July the Cabinet met again, and Grey informed the members that Berchtold had rejected the Serbian capitulation and that although Russia had agreed, Berlin had turned down his proposal for a four-power mediation. The members received the news with varied feelings. The question of Belgium neutrality was the main subject of discussion, for here at least British interests were clearly involved. One of England's few treaty obligations called for the protection of Belgian

¹⁰⁵Parliamentary Debates (Commons) 5th ser., 65:937-39.

¹⁰⁶Buchanan to Grey, 28 July 1914, BD, 11:162.

¹⁰⁷Grey to Goschen, 29 July 1914, BD, 11:181-82.

neutrality, and any violation on Germany's part could serve as a clear pretext for war. The Cabinet, still divided, could only decide that the question of Belgian neutrality would be "rather one of policy than of legal obligations."¹⁰⁸

About one half of the ministers, including Lloyd George, Lord Morley, and Lord Harcourt, were honestly opposed to British involvement in a continental war. Asquith and Grey both reckoned that Lloyd George was the key to this problem and sought to bring him around to their side rather than force a break in the Cabinet, which they thought might result in the fall of the Liberal government.¹⁰⁹ Although the Cabinet was not able to make outright decisions on the 29th, it resolved to authorize precautionary measures and leave Britain with a free hand.

Britain's indecision may be the partial explanation for the incredible offer Bethmann-Hollweg made to Grey late on 29 July. If the British would pledge neutrality in the event of war, Germany would in return not seek territorial acquisitions at the expense of France, excluding colonial possessions. Eyre Crowe's reaction was that "the only comment that need be made on these astounding proposals is that they reflect discredit on the statesman who makes them."¹¹⁰ Grey was horrified and replied that such a proposal "could not for a moment be

¹⁰⁸Asquith to the King, 30 July 1914, Asquith Papers, vol. 7.

¹⁰⁹Lowe, *Mirage of Power*, 1:146-47.

¹¹⁰Goschen to Grey, 29 July 1914, and Minute by Crowe, 30 July 1914, *BD*, 11:185-6.

entertained."¹¹¹ Only Bethmann's mistaken opinion that Britain would not go to war under any circumstances and the most peculiar ignorance of Grey's sense of propriety could have prompted such a venture.

Grey did make one more effort to secure German cooperation for peace, however. To Berlin he wrote,

And if the peace of Europe can be preserved, and this crisis be safely passed, my own endeavor would be to promote some arrangement to which Germany could be a party, by which she could be assured that no hostile or aggressive policy would be pursued against her or her allies by France, Russia, and ourselves, jointly or separately.¹¹²

While the British Cabinet waited for a German response and pondered possible defense measures, the Russian leaders argued over mobilization. Late on 30 July, the Tsar issued an order for general mobilization.¹¹³

Russian mobilization was the key to German war plans. According to Germany's Schlieffen plan, Germany must move quickly to defeat France before Russia had time to complete her cumbersome mobilization and present Germany with a two-front war. Therefore, for Germany, Russian mobilization demanded German mobilization as well.¹¹⁴ Germany warned Russia on 31 July that a danger of war existed and demanded revocation of all war measures within twelve hours. When Russia refused, Germany

¹¹¹Grey to Goschen, 29 July 1914, Grey, Twenty-Five Years, 1:317; Grey to Goschen 30 July 1913, BD, 11:303-4. These letters seem to be the same, although the wording and the date is slightly different.

¹¹²Ibid.

¹¹³Danilov, Rossya v Mirovoi Voine, pp. 11-16. See also note 96 above.

¹¹⁴Lowe, Mirage of Power, 1:148.

declared war on Russia. Count Pourtales tearfully handed Sazonov the declaration on the evening of 1 August, and the next day the German diplomatic corps in St. Petersburg departed for Berlin.¹¹⁵ Sazonov argued that Russia did not refuse to continue negotiations for the purpose of arriving at a peaceful issue out of the present situation, but Sazonov was clearly no longer in control of the situation, if he ever had been.

Britain's attitude toward Russia's mobilization was sympathetic. Grey informed the German ambassador on 31 July that "he did not see how Russia could be urged to suspend them [her military preparations] unless some limits were put by Austria to the advance of her troops in Serbia,"¹¹⁶ and Nicolson thought that "Russia is taking very reasonable and sensible precautions, which should in no wise be interpreted as provocative."¹¹⁷ Grey was, however, painfully aware of the danger. Both Sazonov and Poincaré pressed him for a declaration that Britain would join the Entente powers in case of war.¹¹⁸ Both believed that a declaration by England might cause Germany to modify its position and put some pressure on Austria.

Grey's critics have deplored his inactivity at this point, but obviously Grey did not lack sympathy for France or Russia. He wished above all to avoid a breach with either of them, but he was restricted

¹¹⁵Schilling, How the War Began, p. 76.

¹¹⁶Grey to Buchanan, 31 July 1914, BD, 11:213.

¹¹⁷Minute by Nicolson, 31 July 1914, *ibid.*, p. 214.

¹¹⁸Buchanan to Grey, 29 July 1914, *ibid.*, pp. 176-77; Bertie to Grey, 30 July 1914, *ibid.*, p. 200.

in his freedom to act by a deeply divided Cabinet. Besides, Grey was not convinced that British intervention would be crucial to France and Russia's success. He was thinking of naval action alone, and he told Benckendorff he could not imagine sending a large military force to the continent.¹¹⁹

Grey promised to give Cambon a statement after the Cabinet meeting of 31 July, but the Cabinet decided that Britain could not give a definite pledge to intervene.¹²⁰ He could not pledge Parliament either, nor did he feel that the British public would be receptive to intervention. Grey thought the neutrality of Belgium might be a deciding factor in the Cabinet decision, and this, in the end, was the point on which the British Cabinet finally entered the war. On 1 August the Cabinet still could not reach a decision, although they discussed the neutrality question again. Only Grey, Haldane, Churchill, and Asquith supported British intervention regardless of what happened in Belgium.¹²¹ Grey told the Cabinet members that if an "out-and-out compromising policy of non-intervention at all costs" was adopted

¹¹⁹Albertini, Origins of the War of 1914, 2:514-5; Benckendorff to Sazonov, 2 August 1914, MO, ser. 3, 5:456; Grey, Twenty-Five Years, 1:330-31.

¹²⁰Enclosure in Grey to Bertie, 30 July 1914, BD, 11:201. This enclosure contains the text of the statement to Cambon. See also, Asquith to the King, 30 July 1914, Asquith Papers, vol. 7.

¹²¹The problem was somewhat complicated by the Belgians themselves, who as late as 2 August were claiming that Germany probably would not attack them. They showed some apprehension at being too well protected. For a discussion of this problem, see Jerome Helmreich, "Belgian Concern over Neutrality and British Intentions, 1906-1914," Journal of Modern History 36(December, 1964):416-27.

he would not be the man to carry it out. Asquith was determined to follow Grey if he resigned.¹²²

Grey was in constant communication with Cambon during these last days, and the situation became more and more an issue of defending France, not Russia. Eyre Crowe pointed out that Britain's duties and interests were in "standing with France in her hour of need,"¹²³ and Nicolson urged immediate mobilization as he could foresee Germany moving across the French frontier within twenty-four hours.¹²⁴ Most of the press, however, remained strongly anti-interventionist, and British Labour leaders were successful in engineering an enormous public demonstration in Trafalgar Square protesting the war.

The Cabinet sat almost continuously on Sunday, 2 August, and decided that Grey might be permitted to inform Cambon that the British fleet would not allow the German fleet to operate in the English Channel against the French coast.¹²⁵ Grey professed to believe that Britain was still not bound to go to war,¹²⁶ but Cambon more realistically remarked that "A Great Power does not go to war with half

¹²²Asquith, Memories and Reflections, 2:10-11; Lord Crewe (on behalf of the Prime Minister) to the King, 2 August 1914, Asquith Papers, vol. 7.

¹²³Memorandum by Crowe, 31 July 1914, BD, 11:229.

¹²⁴Nicolson to Grey, 31 July 1914, ibid., p. 227.

¹²⁵Lord Crewe (on behalf of the Prime Minister) to the King, 2 August 1914, Asquith Papers, vol. 7.

¹²⁶Grey, Twenty-Five Years, 2:3. Taylor supports this idea, Struggle for Mastery in Europe, p. 526.

measures."¹²⁷ Lord Loreburn, bitterly against the war, also thought the pledge of naval support against Germany irrevocably pledged Britain to war.¹²⁸

The decision made on Sunday evening to protect the French coast brought the immediate threat of resignation from several prominent members of the Cabinet. Lord Morley reflected the Radical Liberal attitude when he wrote to Asquith,

To bind ourselves to France is at the same time to bind ourselves to Russia, and to whatever demands be made by Russia on France. With this cardinal difference between us, how could I either honourably or usefully sit in a cabinet day after day discussing military and diplomatic details, in carrying forward a policy that I think is a mistake.¹²⁹

The Conservatives, however, promised full support, and even Lloyd George was at last converted to intervention.¹³⁰

On 3 August, the German army invaded Belgium on its way to France, and Britain's course was clear. On that afternoon Grey presented his case for intervention before the House of Commons. In an impressive performance he asked the members to approach the crisis "from the point of view of British interests, British honour, and British obligations."¹³¹

Except to mention that Russia and France were already at war with Germany, Grey did not bring up the matter of Russia. His speech

¹²⁷ Paul Cambon, "Memoires," Revue de France, 1 July 1912, p. 327.

¹²⁸ Loreburn, How the War Came, p. 2.

¹²⁹ John Morley, Memorandum on Resignation, August 1914 (London: Macmillan & Co., 1917), p. 11.

¹³⁰ Asquith, Memoires and Reflections, 2:14-15; Grey, Twenty-Five Years, 2:10.

¹³¹ Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 5th ser., 65(1914):1810.

carried the House by an overwhelming majority, with only a handful of Labourites and Radical Liberals dissenting.

On the evening of 3 August, news arrived that Germany had declared war on France and later that evening Belgium appealed for British diplomatic intervention.¹³² On 4 August the British Foreign Office demanded that the neutrality of Belgium be respected. Germany did not answer.

At eleven o'clock on the evening of 4 August 1914, Britain declared war on Germany. Sazonov's entreaties had at last been answered, and although he admitted that "right up to the moment of the German troops invading Belgium, the Russian Government was anxious and uncertain about the intentions of the English Cabinet,"¹³³ Britain and Russia were partners in a common cause against the Triple Alliance.

¹³²Helmreich, "Belgian Concern over Neutrality," p. 427.

¹³³Sazonov, Fateful Years, p. 218.

CHAPTER VII

AN EVALUATION OF ANGLO-RUSSIAN FRIENDSHIP

When Russia and Britain entered World War I, Anglo-Russia relations passed from diplomatic to military hands. Although the allies made further promises concerning the Straits and the disposition of other territories,¹ ultimately those promises had little effect. Russian troops fought bravely and tenaciously in the early years of the war, but the losses sustained by the Russian forces added the last unbearable strain to the already feeble government. In 1917 Tsarist Russia died, and the Revolution vastly altered Russia's relationship with England and her position in the European community.

A study of Anglo-Russian relations from 1907 to 1914 provides not only an opportunity to see the European power system at work in the pre-World War I era, but it also answers some of the questions concerning the cooperation of Russia and England--a cooperation that violated the traditional ideological positions of both countries. In addition, it demonstrates the importance of the professional diplomat and the influence

¹Robert J. Kerner, "Russia, the Straits and Constantinople, 1914-1915," Journal of Modern History 1 (September 1929):400-15, gives the details of the proposed division of territories England, France, and Russia agreed upon. England and France were motivated to agree to Russia's occupation of Constantinople to keep Russia from concluding a separate peace with Germany as a result of her stunning losses in the first months of the war.

of the Foreign Offices and foreign ministers during the period. Never again would these offices and their leaders exercise such unlimited power and make such momentuous decisions, but their effect on pre-World War I history is significant.

The Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 was the result of Russia's and Britain's efforts to settle their persistent colonial problems, and it was also the result, in part, of the encouragement of their mutual friend, France. More significant, however, the Convention demonstrated both Britain's and Russia's need for diplomatic allies, and their desire to gain advantages in the European power struggle. For England, German economic expansion and naval growth had meant rivalry in all parts of the world. After 1902, England's abiding desire in foreign policy was to provide herself with the military and diplomatic strength to counter what appeared to be a German threat to her security. For Russia, Germany's support of Austria--Russia's chief opponent in the Balkans--became the major stumbling block to Russo-German friendship. While most Russians would have been comfortable in a continuing friendship with Germany, German preference for her Austrian partner drove Russia to seek allies elsewhere. Although Russia and England appeared, on the surface, to be the least likely allies among the European nations, close investigation of the period from 1907 to 1914 reveals that the political and ideological friction between them was not great enough to prevent their diplomatic cooperation.

Neither Britain nor Russia formally ruled out continued cooperation with Germany between 1907 and 1914, but although both countries

actively continued efforts to conclude specific agreements with her, subsequent events proved such cooperation impossible. In return, Germany's foreign policy was never intended to encourage the Anglo-Russian entente; in fact, on several occasions she sought to drive a wedge between the two countries as a means of weakening the Triple Entente. German actions on the international scene, however, were far more responsible for fostering Anglo-Russian friendship than any other single factor. Given the absence of this common potential threat to both Russian and British goals in Europe, it is unlikely that the Anglo-Russian entente could have survived the many crises it faced in the pre-war years.

At no time between 1907 and 1914 were Russia and England in complete accord. Russia continued to interfere in the internal affairs of Persia, Afghanistan, and the Ottoman Empire, most often to the detriment of Anglo-Russian relations. She also came close to challenging British interests in Tibet and the Far East. Britain's interference in these areas continued too, although it usually reflected a more liberal attitude than Russia's and it was always rationalized in moral tones. Russian support of the corrupt and reactionary Persian government collided with British support of the efforts of Persian revolutionaries to establish a more liberal and representative regime. Russian commercial expansion in Persia and Afghanistan brought forth complaints from British business interests, and the thought of Russian power reaching the borders of India troubled both the British Foreign Office and the government of India.

Russia was also frequently dissatisfied with the partnership. British reluctance to support Russian efforts to control the Straits provided a constant source of resentment, while British willingness to cooperate with Germany on such matters as the Bagdad Railway aroused Russian suspicion. Russian officials complained that Britain wished to exclude Russian Buriats from access to Tibet and that Britain sought to curb Russian ambitions in Mongolia and northern China.

Ultimately, the British Foreign Office winked at Russian transgressions in the troubled colonial spots, and the Russians swallowed the resentment fostered by Britain's often vague and reluctant cooperation because, in the long run, the importance of Anglo-Russian cooperation lay not in these areas, but in Europe. The British could afford to sacrifice the good will of the Persian government, ignore the misfortunes of the Afghan tribes, and even incur the dissatisfaction of the Porte; she could not risk the disruption of the Triple Entente in Europe. Russia, too, had far more at stake in Europe than in Asia, for it was in the Balkans that she faced her greatest challenge for authority and influence. The significance of the Anglo-Russian convention, then, was that it led Russia and England to increasing reliance on each other in areas not even mentioned in the convention itself. It was the instrument on which rested much more important diplomatic considerations.

Throughout the crises which faced Anglo-Russian friendship, Edward Grey constantly faced the problem of reconciling divergent factions in Britain. While most of his associates at the Foreign Office encouraged him to strengthen the ties with Russia, important

groups in the Cabinet and in Parliament heartily disliked the Russian agreement and did all they could to force Grey to abandon it. Some argued a closer relationship with Germany, while others demanded a policy of strict non-intervention in continental affairs. Grey was inclined, from the beginning of his appointment as Foreign Secretary, to encourage the Russian ties because of his distrust of Germany. Moreover, he valued Britain's relationship with France, and saw the Anglo-Russian friendship as complementary to the French entente. Grey was quite aware, however, that no matter how impossible it was for Britain to maintain her previous diplomatic isolation, it was also out of the question for her to make formal alliances with her friends.

Grey's position in the British government was powerful, and he operated with very little actual restraint, yet he always had to consider the opposition to his policies which existed in Parliament and among the public. Grey's latest biographer, Keith Robbins, comments that a keener mind than Grey's would have been "unable to stand the strain created by the ambiguous relations between Britain and France without wishing for a sharper definition."² Robbins might have added Russian relations as well, but in any event, he does Grey a disservice. Grey certainly understood that a sharper definition of Britain's commitments would have been unacceptable to the majority of British leaders, as indeed it was to him.

Grey was convinced that England's mission in Europe was in peace-keeping, and in every crisis he sought to act as mediator and arbiter. His constant efforts to arrange conferences and negotiations and to work behind

²Robbins, Sir Edward Grey, p. 372.

the scenes to achieve peaceful goals are proof of his view of the English position. His success at the London Conference during the Balkan Wars speaks well for his ability to carry out this role. Grey's reluctance to commit Britain to war in 1914 reinforces such a view. His failure to avoid war in no way detracts from his sincere desire to seek peace. Only when Grey, backed by his party and government, became convinced that Germany must be stopped and that England's reputation and existence as a nation depended upon her entry into a European war, did he take that alternative.

Grey's reputation as Foreign Secretary has undergone the widest and most varied scrutiny of any diplomat of the period. Not only have foreign contemporaries and scholars assailed his policies and his actions, but bitter denunciation came from within his own country and party. Lloyd George condemned him resoundingly in his War Memoirs,³ and Ramsey MacDonald wrote that he was honest but incompetent, with a "tragic incapacity to drive his way to his goal."⁴

Grey was frequently accused of being secretive and devious, and he was sometimes guilty of both, but diplomacy and foreign policy can seldom withstand a constant public spotlight. Grey acted according

³Lloyd George, War Memoirs, 1:98. There is some evidence that Lloyd George could not forgive Grey for not supporting his position in the War Cabinet.

⁴Ramsey MacDonald to Gilbert Murray, 14 May 1925, Murray Papers, quoted in Robbins, Sir Edward Grey, p. 370. Murray wrote an indictment of Grey's policy shortly after the outbreak of the war; Gilbert Murray, The Foreign Policy of Sir Edward Grey, 1906-1915 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1915).

to the diplomatic rules of his era, and, to his credit, he followed them with greater fairness and integrity than most of his European counterparts.

One problem many students have in evaluating Grey's policy is in reconciling his Victorian morality, his reputation for integrity, and his apparent sense of duty and obligation to his office with his political and diplomatic astuteness. How could a Foreign Secretary of such high-minded idealism commit England to cooperation with Russia-- whose history was blighted with oppression, exploitation, reaction, and pogroms--asked his critics.

The answer is that despite Grey's idealism and his liberalism, he was a political realist. He realized, perhaps intuitively, what the British Parliamentary system and the British public could bear. Throughout his career he had a remarkably keen grasp of the political and diplomatic realities of the European scene, only rarely showing a misunderstanding of the problems Britain faced. He has been called an opportunist and an amateur in the diplomatic world, and it is true that Grey did not work out long range goals, other than his consistent support of the principle of the Triple Entente. Beyond this, he was only willing to act on the merits of the specific issues. At Agadir, he guided British policy in support of France, because he was convinced France's claims were just and that it was in the best interests of Britain to do so. At the London Conference, he placed a restraining hand on Russia, because he wished to avoid a confrontation between Austria and Russia, and he felt Russian demands could be tempered. He met each succeeding crisis as it appeared,

realistically making gains for England where he could while trying to avoid damaging her relationship with Russia and France.

Grey believed sincerely, as did many other British leaders, that the vague promises, the colonial agreements, and the military and naval talks England had engaged in with Russia and France were not real commitments. Apparently he did not believe in the true extent of French and Russian dependence on British support, for he carefully and repeatedly argued that Britain's hands were free. Perhaps, as historians have claimed, he erred in ignoring the implied moral commitments involved in these relationships. In the last analysis, however, the British decision to enter the war against Germany was not based on her commitments, implied or otherwise, to her allies, but on the conviction that Germany supremacy could not be permitted in Europe. France and Russia had already taken steps toward war, even though they were not completely assured of British support. The commitments, such as they were, merely spelled out the way Entente opposition would be implemented.

In addition to Grey's own attitude toward Anglo-Russian friendship, Arthur Nicolson and Eyre Crowe made significant contributions toward solidifying the friendship. Both Nicolson and Crowe disliked and distrusted Germany, and although Grey's decisions reflected his own feelings and judgments, he could not help being influenced by these key men in the British Foreign Office. Nicolson especially encouraged Anglo-Russian ties because of his successful ambassadorship in St. Petersburg and his strong attachment to Russia.

Crowe had no special preference for Russia, but he was the acknowledged expert on German affairs, and he consistently reminded the British Foreign Office of the menace of German expansion. Both Nicolson and Crowe pressed Grey to make a stronger commitment to Britain's partners in the Triple Entente in order to meet the German challenge, and their attitudes were strong factors in developing the anti-German tenor of the British Foreign Office in the pre-war years.

Edward Grey's Russian counterparts in the conduct of Anglo-Russian relations have few admirers. Alexander Izvolski was a man of talent and intelligence, but personal ambition and lack of integrity prevented him from serving either his own country or the cause of European peace. His most significant achievement was the conclusion of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, and if Izvolski's career had ended there, he might have still been considered a competent diplomat. The disastrous fiasco of the Bosnian annexation crisis in 1908 ended whatever chances of future diplomatic success Izvolski might have had, and his further career as ambassador in Paris was undistinguished. His constant intriguing and thirst for revenge were well known, and even his contemporaries viewed his activities with suspicion and distrust.

The reputation of Izvolski's successor, Sergei Sazonov, has rather recently undergone a revival by scholars working in Russian materials which were not available earlier. He appears more consistent, more capable, and more sincere than earlier assessments showed him to be. Sazonov's critics have assailed his timidity and his indecisiveness, but in many instances he could not act independently. More sensitive to

to public opinion than Izvol'ski, Sazonov was also more aware of Russia's shortcomings and weaknesses than his predecessor. He was, therefore, less enthusiastic than Izvol'ski had been about committing Russia to all-out support of the Balkan states. Although he approved of the establishment of the Balkan League, he thought Russia would be able to wield sufficient influence on the Balkan states to make the League work for peace rather than war. There is no reason to believe he wished to use the League to destroy the Ottoman Empire, and much evidence exists to show that he worked consistently to restrain the Balkan states from dangerous action against the Turks. After the Balkan Wars, while Sazonov worked to salvage Russia's influence in the Balkans, and to satisfy the demands of her Balkan friends, he still did not stand in the way of Edward Grey's efforts to arrive at a peaceful solution of the Balkan problems.

With regard to Russia's desire to control the Straits, Sazonov certainly took a more realistic and long range view than Izvol'ski had. He vetoed Charykov's precipitate actions in 1911, and did not renew the subject seriously until after the outbreak of the war when, with France and England, Russia made plans for the disposal of Ottoman territories in the event of their victory over the Central Powers.

Russia, and therefore Sazonov, has been harshly judged in connection with the actual outbreak of the war. The decision to mobilize Russian forces against Germany as well as Austria is often cited as a major cause of the extent of the war. The blame for this decision cannot be attributed solely to Sazonov, however, because he had neither the

power nor the military experience to change the rigid and ponderous mobilization plans of the Russian army. In the end, the decision was the Russian Tsar's, and Sazonov had little influence with the Tsar.

Sazonov's tragic career as Russian Foreign Minister was due more to the times than to Sazonov's lack of ability. Taking office in 1910, when Russia was deeply troubled by domestic problems and the growth of strong revolutionary forces, and when European crises followed each other rapidly, Sazonov could hardly be expected to save a diplomatic situation that was already lost. No amount of diplomatic victories could have saved the Russian Empire from disaster.

Both Russian foreign ministers suffered from problems that did not bother Edward Grey. The inconsistency of the Tsar, for instance, was always a consideration of Russian foreign policy, and both Izvol'ski and Sazonov suffered from the unexpected interference of Nicholas II in foreign affairs. The Russian Foreign Office never had the consistent control of its own officials that the British Office did, and policy that might have been initiated in St. Petersburg was frequently never carried out by diplomats in European capitals. This problem was especially persistent in the Balkans, where diplomats such as Hartwig and Nekliudov often pursued independent courses.

If the British Foreign Office under Edward Grey did not undertake unalterable long range foreign policy goals, British foreign policy was still more clear and consistent than Russian foreign policy in the years of their cooperation. Russian policy was never clear and rarely consistent, often following self-defeating patterns. Even with regard to the recurrent Pan-Slav theme, Russia never adopted a clear or consistent

attitude. Most of the time Russian national interests overcame any Slavic sympathies, but even so, Russian diplomats and their support of Slavic interests frequently endangered Russia's own diplomatic aims. The actual number of Panslav supporters in Russia was small, and the government never adopted Panslavism as a formal policy, but Russian support of Serbia, for instance, irritated her European partners, alienated her from Austria, and eventually involved her in a disastrous war. During all this time, however, Russia swayed back and forth between encouraging the Serbs to be intransigent and stubborn, and cautioning them and trying to restrain them. The case of the Balkan wars is a good example. After encouraging the establishment of the League, Russia was faced with the unpleasant task of trying to restrain its members and finally with the loss of both friends and prestige in the Balkans at the end of the war. Russia's involvement demonstrates the difficulty of coordinating policy with Russian actions and Russian goals.

Russia's problems in foreign affairs were even more complicated because they were accompanied by an increasingly chaotic and unstable domestic situation. The Russian government was unable to meet the growing revolutionary demands with any effective solutions, and the deteriorating domestic scene was accompanied by a series of diplomatic failures. Russia did not, and probably could not, produce the necessary men of stature and ability to cope with the problems. Her foreign policy ran itself, in effect, rather than being run by the ministers in office.

In the long run, England and Russia were always troubled partners, but the distances between their ideological positions have been

exaggerated, while their common interests have been neglected. Perhaps under more normal conditions, the friendship might have foundered, but Europe between 1907 and 1914 did not enjoy anything that might be considered normal conditions. The balance of power concept was accepted by all European statesmen, and this idea forced diplomats to seek allies and friends in order to maintain the delicate balance. Neither England nor Russia were exceptions to this situation. In addition, both countries practiced a universally accepted method of diplomacy to achieve their goals. The imperial and national desires of the European nations constantly clashed with each other and more than once brought forth crises that threatened war. Each nation's leaders professed the desire to avoid war and met frequently at the conference table to do so. They were all willing, however, to use tactics of bluff, threat, and sword-rattling to gain their own ends. In the end, most of them came to believe war was inevitable, and thus sought to protect their own nations as effectively as possible.

For Russia and England, the necessity of building a protective friendship with which to face Germany and Austria began with a colonial agreement. It was, however, a colonial agreement which caused a diplomatic revolution in Europe. Russia no longer stood in monarchical solidarity with the conservative nations of Central Europe, but with republican France and parliamentary England. Russia and England had found compelling priorities in Europe that called for their cooperation. The cooperation was encouraged and fostered by France, but the most important factor in cementing Anglo-Russian relations was the policy followed by Germany in the pre-war years.

German foreign policy displayed its own weaknesses and mistakes under the impulsive William II and his foreign ministers. Convinced that Russia and England would not nor could not cooperate on the international scene, Germany undertook projects that seemed to threaten the vital interests of both England and Russia. Germany policy in Turkey, for instance, was probably never a major threat to Russian goals, but German pursuance of the Bagdad Railway project and the untimely Liman von Sanders mission convinced Russia that Germany intended to impose her presence in the Ottoman Empire. More important, German support of Austria frightened the Russians and drove them to seek allies for themselves.

For the English, German naval expansion was a major problem, and although by the eve of the war England and Germany had reached an informal understanding to construct new battleships at a ratio acceptable to the British, the suspicion remained that Germany might change her plans. More important, German economic expansion threatened British goods in the markets of the world, and threats of colonial encroachment aroused British imperialists.

It is beyond the scope of this study to inquire into the question of war responsibility on the part of Russia or England. The study cannot reveal what would have happened if they had not been partners. Its purpose is to investigate how they became partners and why they remained so. The Anglo-Russian relationship was a stormy one, not only because of their inherent differences, but because of the many threats to their friendship that continued to exist down to the eve of the war. When faced with threats to their vital interests, both Russia and England overcame

their problems in their need for cooperation. They each thought they faced such threats many times between 1907 and 1914. The Germans underestimated the fear their own actions inspired in Russia and Britain, just as they underestimated the lengths to which each country would go to protect its interests. Ultimately, for good or ill, Russia and England stood together in World War I. Their friendship had withstood the crises of European affairs, survived the attacks of factions within each country, and overcome its own inherent weaknesses.

In the long view, the Anglo-Russian friendship of 1907 to 1914 is not an enigma. Ideology seldom directs the course of diplomacy. Russia and England needed each other's support, or at least thought they did, and what diplomats believe to be the truth and the priorities of their nations are more important than the actual truth or priorities. The foundation of Anglo-Russian friendship was expediency, as is the basis of many diplomatic relationships. For a little while England and Russia fought in common cause, and because of that, a little of the history of the world was made.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- Add. MSS British Museum, Additional Manuscripts.
- APS Bogićević, Milosh, ed. Die Auswärtige Politik Serbiens, 1902-1914.
- BD. Gooch, George Peabody, and Harold M. V. Temperley, eds. British Documents on the Origin of the War.
- CAB, PRO Cabinet Office Papers, Public Record Office.
- DDF. Ministère des affaires étrangères. Documents diplomatiques français, 1871-1914.
- FO, PRO Foreign Office Papers, Public Record Office.
- GP. Auswärtiges Amt. Die Grosse Politik der Europäischen Kabinette, 1871-1914.
- MO. Komissija po izdaniu dokumentov epokhu imperializma. Mezhdunarodnye otnoshenia v epokhy imperializma; Dokumenty iz arkhivov tsarkogo i vremennogo pravitelsto, 1878-1917.
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Library, Oxford, and FO 800/311-335.

Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Add. MSS 41206-41252, British
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Sir Eyre Crowe, FO 800/243, Public Record Office.

Sir Edward Grey, Viscount Grey of Fallodon, FO 800/35-113.

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Library, Cambridge, and FO 800/192, Public Record Office.

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