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**ROMANIA'S RELATIONS WITH FRANCE AND RUSSIA
AND BUCHAREST'S FEARS CONCERNING A BULGARIAN
OFFENSIVE (FALL OF 1915 – AUGUST 1916).
SOME FRENCH DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE**

Since the summer of the year 1915, the powers of the Entente have intensified their efforts in order to simultaneously attract Romania and Bulgaria into the conflagration. The Allies expressed their trust in the good intentions of the government from Sofia, headed by Vasil Radoslavov. Actually, Ion I. C. Brătianu, the president of Romania's Council of ministers perceived that government as a tool in the hands of the emperor Wilhelm II and of the Bulgaria's King, Ferdinand. Brătianu promised to do all his best to please as much as possible Bulgaria regarding its territorial solicitations¹. He shared the opinion of the French diplomats concerning a possible conflict between Serbia and Bulgaria. This conflict would have very bad effects on the geostrategic interests of the Allies in the Balkan zone and therefore it had to be avoided². Brătianu was afraid that a war between Serbia and Bulgaria would complicate much more the situation in Balkans, anyway characterized by uncertainty. For this reason, the Balkan region was qualified as the «powder keg» of the Europe.

The attitudes that Bulgaria and Romania would adopt in the world conflict have not been known yet despite the efforts of the Entente's diplomacy. Entente failed to attract Turkey on its side and hoped to obtain at least Bulgaria's intervention into the war.

Unfortunately, the evolution of the events will confirm that its expectations were in vain. When he declared that he would give satisfaction to Bulgaria, Brătianu was taking

¹ See: *Gorun H. G. Relații politico-diplomatice și militare ale României cu Franța în primul război mondial*. Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut, 2009. P. 84–115.

² Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères Français. Série Guerre 1914–1918. Sous-Série Roumanie (we shall abbreviate — A.M.A.E.F.). D. 353. P. 15.

into account the possibility of a few concessions in favour of this country. The Romanian prime-minister found out as well that in Bulgaria, some important personalities of the opposition would accept a coalition government if the King approved that. This cabinet will join the Entente. Radoslavov will be a member of this government. Moreover, Bucharest had already received an offer from Sofia to join Germany into the world war. Ion I. C. Brătianu refused the Bulgarian proposal, declaring that Romania would never take into consideration such a solution³.

On 31st August 1915, Romania's minister in the capital of Bulgaria, Derussi, received instructions to persuade friendly but firmly as well, the authorities of Sofia that Romania would not remain indifferent if the Southern neighbour took action against Serbia⁴. These directives showed that in some circumstances, Romanian Kingdom would agree the military aid for Serbia.

In the fall of the year 1915, Bulgaria's preparations for the entry into the war were almost ready. The treaties concluded with Turkey and Germany were followed by a series of military measures, involving first of all the military mobilization. At the beginning of September, Radoslavov pretended, probably by complaisance, that the relations with Romania had been amiable. However, the assiduous concentration of troops next to the border⁵ proved the opposite.

In the mid-September 1915, the Brătianu cabinet showed its intentions not to act with hostility toward Bulgaria and to allow all the freedom of action if the government of Sofia adopted similar foreign policy behaviour in the relations with Bucharest. Immediately, the Romanian government received assurances from Bulgaria that the military deployments near the border were not permanent and they did not mean a hostile action against Romania⁶. Later, the Allies realized they could hardly obtain Bulgaria's military aid and every step taken in this direction was in vain. Therefore, the Entente had to look for help in the other capitals from Balkan region, namely at Niš, Bucharest and Athens. The efforts of the Greek prime-minister, Eleftherios Venizelos against Bulgaria had to be supported. Even though the King of Greece, Constantin, a follower of the Central Powers, disapproved the demarches of his prime-minister, France suggested the mediation of a military agreement between Romania and Serbia⁷. Certainly, this agreement had to counteract the Bulgarian threat.

On the other hand, in the autumn of 1915, in the eve of Bulgaria's entry into the war on the side of the Central Powers, Russia continued to be quite permissive toward Bulgaria. We do not see the same attitude concerning Romania. Later, the Russian military authorities admitted the psychological errors of their government. These mistakes generated the failure of all the projects which aimed at joining to Entente all the states from Balkan area. Russia perceived the states from the Balkan space as «younger

³ A.M.A.E.F. D. 353. P. 16.

⁴ A.M.A.E.F. D. 353. P. 42.

⁵ *Nastovici E.* Cu privire la unele aspecte ale relațiilor româno-bulgare în anii 1914–1916 // *Analele Universității București. Secția Științe Sociale. Istorie.* 1968. Vol. XVII. P. 136.

⁶ A.M.A.E.F. D. 353. P. 46.

⁷ A.M.A.E.F. D. 353. P. 47.

children» who needed protection. From this perspective, Russia has always proved hegemonic tendencies towards the Straits and the city of Constantinople and attempted to hide its expansionist intentions, merely claiming it had been the natural protector of the Slavic and orthodox peoples and states from Balkan zone. Petrograd did not tolerate the interference of the other countries of the Entente in the matters regarding this region. At the same time, it did not dissimulate the sympathy for Bulgaria and the distrust for Romania⁸. In fact there was a mutual distrust between the two states, which originated in past events. We think of the incorporation of Basarabia (the region between Prut and Dniester rivers) in the year 1812, or the Congress of Berlin in 1878, when the counties Cahul, Bolgrad and Ismail have become again components of the Russian Empire, after a short period of Romanian administration since 1856.

After the outbreak of the Austro-Hungarian campaign against Serbia, the obtainment of Bulgaria's alliance had become essential for the facilitation of the Entente's military operations in Balkans. Due to its geographical position in the center of the Balkan Peninsula, Bulgaria was overwhelmed by proposals concerning the military cooperation and growing pressures from both camps, Entente and the Central Powers. Entente made concrete proposals for an alliance to Bulgaria in the summer of the year 1915. Bulgaria was to receive as reward the territories assigned to its neighbours by the Treaty of Bucharest, in 1913: Kavala from Greece, Macedonia from Serbia, Cadrilater (South Dobruja) from Romania. Unfortunately, the offers were made in an unfavorable moment, when the Central Powers were in a certain advantage. The offers did not have the effect anticipated by Russia and France. They had even a negative effect on the states which had to consent to territorial sacrifices. Bulgaria was not attracted to Entente. It has already carried out secret negotiations in order to join Central Powers.

On 6th September 1915, the King Ferdinand of Bulgaria and the president of the Council of ministers, Radoslavov, signed the treaty of alliance with Central Powers⁹ and the military intervention took place in October¹⁰, Serbia being attacked in terms of this treaty. Finally, under the constant pressures of the Austrian-German forces commanded by the General August von Mackensen and caught like in a claw, Serbia was defeated. The worsening of Romania's relations with Bulgaria was proved by some incidents. We think of the arrest of Romania's military attaché in Sofia, the captain Florea Țenescu and also the arrest of a teacher from the Romanian school. As a result of the intervention of the cabinet from Bucharest, the chief of the Bulgarian police presented his excuses, actually telling he had received instructions «to treat gently especially Romanian subjects». Radoslavov declared the same thing to Romania's minister at Sofia, Derussi. Taking into considerations these intentions aiming at saving the appearances, we can conclude that Bulgaria did not want to cause incidents, maybe hoping to find a solution of appeasement

⁸ *Kirișescu C.* Preludiile diplomatice ale războiului de reîntregire. București: Imprimeria Centrală, 1940. P. 22.

⁹ *Kirișescu C.* Preludiile diplomatice... P. 23.

¹⁰ *Torrey G. E.* Romania and World War I. Iași; Oxford; Portland: The Center for Romanian Studies, 1999. P. 138.

with Romania. In this case, the result would have been Romania's intervention in the war by the side of the Central Powers¹¹.

In September 1915, it seems that Prime Minister Brătianu did not take into account a military intervention in the conflict between Serbia and Bulgaria, at least for that moment. He was aware that if he attacked Bulgaria, he would be, on his turn, attacked by the Austrian and German troops. His actions will be influenced only by the evolution of the events. The president of the Romanian Council of ministers rejected in front of the Allied representatives the rumours regarding a commitment concluded with Bulgaria, involving the mutual non-aggression. He reiterated that he would always preserve his freedom of action. At first, Brătianu was sure that Bulgaria would not begin the operations against Serbia. In the opinion of the minister of France in Bucharest, Jean-Camille Blondel, Brătianu had to assure Serbia that Romanian government would pay attention to Sofia's attitude¹². On the other hand, the mobilization of the army and a possible warning given to Bulgaria did not mean a military intervention. Romania's position would express a similarity between the interests of Greece, Serbia and Romania. Bucharest hesitated to decide the mobilization, fearing the reaction of the Central Powers. Germany and Austria-Hungary could demand an explanation and perceive the Romanian action as a threat for their allies, the Bulgarians¹³.

Even though Bulgaria had already signed the treaty of alliance with the Central Powers, the Foreign Minister of Romania, Emanoil Porumbaru, received from Simeon Radev, the Bulgarian diplomatic agent in Bucharest, peaceful assurances that Bulgaria, despite its mobilization driven by the overall situation, actually continues to negotiate with the two groups of powers and that, consequently, Romania «did not have to fear any attack against Serbia» (sic!). But Blondel by proving caution and presence of mind has put the Romanian authorities immediately on guard about Entente's opponents shunting, designed to fall asleep the vigilance of Romania¹⁴.

At the beginning of October 1915, the Romanian Parliament shows its concern regarding the events that had happened in Greece. The unexpected resignation of the Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos created a crisis that could encourage the aggressive attitude of Bulgaria. Romanian leaders did not want to expose the country to a war on two fronts, as they were convinced that Germany would attack Romania after any attempt of campaign against Bulgaria¹⁵. In order to eliminate or at least limit this risk, Brătianu put among the conditions for Romania's participation in the war an energetic action of Entente undertaken against Bulgaria.

On 24th October 1915, Tsar Nicholas II of Russia authorized Sergey Sazonov, the Foreign Minister to request permission to the Romanian State of allowing to pass a Russian army through Moldova¹⁶. The Russian troops had to reach the Balkans in order

¹¹ *Nastovici E.* Cu privire la unele aspecte... P. 136–137.

¹² A.M.A.E.F. D. 353. P. 63–66.

¹³ A.M.A.E.F. D. 353. P. 65.

¹⁴ A.M.A.E.F. D. 353. P. 67.

¹⁵ A.M.A.E.F. D. 353. P. 74.

¹⁶ A.M.A.E.F. D. 353. P. 122.

to provide their support to Serbia, which starting with the month of October was not only subjected to Austrian-German attacks but also to military pressure of the Bulgarians. This initiative of Russia was received with reluctance at Bucharest, causing great concern.

On 1st November 1915, France, Russia and England have negotiated with the Romanian Government to obtain the permission of passing through Moldova and then across the Danube of an army of 200,000 Russian soldiers in order to provide support to Serbians. Three days later by a formal declaration, Romania categorically refused to allow this crossing through Romanian territory. With the same occasion, the executive from Bucharest also pointed the military conditions of the Romanian cooperation. Among these was also included the wish that a Russian army of 200,000 men to be concentrated in Basarabia. Together with English-French army of 500,000 soldiers which was to be formed in the Balkans, it had to carry out actions against the Bulgarians. Also, the Russian army had to attack forcefully the Austro-German troops from Baltic Sea to Bukovina¹⁷.

Russia's initiative to send troops for the support of the Serbians in the conflict with Bulgarians, enjoyed the endorsement of France and England. The project was doomed to failure, since the Romanian government has expressed concerns that by giving its consent of crossing for those armies would have even risked the territorial integrity of the country. The Tsarist Russia's expansion, its tendencies made the reluctant attitude of Brătianu Government a justified one.

From military perspective, the end of the year 1915 and the beginning of 1916 were under unfavorable auspices for Entente. First of all, in the Balkans, the Allies were forced to abandon Gallipoli. Moreover, Serbia ceased to exist as a state. This reality complicated the situation.

Considering the risk for Romania to be surrounded by the armies of the Central Powers, the French diplomats had become aware of the need for presence of some Russian forces in Basarabia, troops which could be easily mobilized and whose aid was extremely useful for Romanian case of certain pressures. The Prime Minister Brătianu considered as being vital for Romania the concentrating of these military forces in order to provide protection against a Bulgarian attack in Dobruja¹⁸.

In early 1916, the relations between Romania and Bulgaria were colder than ever. The strain was increased with the concentration of the Central Powers' army at the Bulgarian-Romanian border. Bulgaria ordered the closure of its landborder and in agreement with Germany, the troops were directed to Dobruja. The Central Powers were deeply unsatisfied because of the grain sales made by Romanian Government to England. They even threatened to organize attacks of German and Bulgarian armies if Romania did not remain neutral¹⁹. A more pronounced deterioration of the Romanian-Bulgarian relations was also reflected in the new Regulation of the Bulgarian police

¹⁷ *Paléologue M. G.* Istoria va spune dacă Brătianu a ales bine ora // România în timpul primului război mondial. Mărturii documentare / Ed. by D. Preda, M. Georgescu, Ș. Pâslaru, M. C. Stănescu. Vol. I. București: Editura Militară, 1996. P. 275; A.M.A.E.F. D. 353. P. 160.

¹⁸ A.M.A.E.F. D. 354. P. 8–9.

¹⁹ *Nastovici E.* Cu privire la unele aspecte... P. 137.

for foreign subjects, whose exit from the country had become almost impossible. The targeted ones were Romanians and Greeks. As a response to these actions characterized by deliberate hostility, the Romanian government adopted a series of measures designed to regularize the situation of foreigners in Romania. Those decisions created critical situation in relations with Bulgaria²⁰.

On 1st March 1916, the Prime Minister of France, Aristide Briand had told his ambassador to Petrograd, Maurice Paléologue, that a Russian-Romanian military cooperation could involve the use of most part of the Romanian Army in Transylvania, with the participation of some of the Russian troops. As a consequence, most Russian forces would act against Bulgaria. Such a combination would elucidate the Russian intentions in the eyes of the Romanian government and would have the advantage of weakening the defensive of Bulgarians. According to Briand, it was difficult to believe that the Tsarist authorities, who were requesting the French-English army from Salonika to threaten Bulgaria's southern border would not be willing to act by themselves on its northern border. These considerations were to be developed by the French High Command during its negotiations with General Mikhail Alekseyev²¹.

On the other hand, it was likely for the Russian government to consider the Romanian matters as being the exclusive competence of the Cabinet from Bucharest and look with significant reticence the involvement of France in discussions relating to a possible collaboration of the Romanian army with the Russian Army. Moreover, some French diplomats as the Minister from Bucharest, Blondel began to believe that the Tsarist government sought to avoid as much as possible a direct conflict with Bulgaria, to which some Russian circles were still expressing an undeserved indulgence²².

The official circles from Bucharest were worried because of the rumour of a possible separate peace with Bulgaria, which had been promised also the obtainment of Macedonia. As regarding those rumors, which have not been actually confirmed Brătianu felt obliged to take action, saying that Romanian officials should not be willing to cede parts of the territory of Dobruja to facilitate a potential agreement with Bulgaria and would never accept territorial concessions in order to mediate an agreement between Bulgaria and Serbia²³. Even the Romanian Prime Minister talked about troops concentrations from the borderland the probability of attacking his country. Blondel, acting in accordance with Quaid Orsay's recommendations took advantage of this opportunity promising that, if necessary, the English-French troops from Salonika would not hesitate to launch the offensive in order to contain the enemy troops. Romania did not have confidence in the expeditionary force from Salonika. According to some information, the Commander of this army, General Maurice Sarrail had only 150,000 combatants while Austro-Germans along with Bulgarians could have on their disposal on the Greek front an army larger than 350,000 people²⁴.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ A.M.A.E.F. D. 354. P. 57.

²² A.M.A.E.F. D. 354. P. 70–70 bis.

²³ A.M.A.E.F. D. 354. P. 78.

²⁴ A.M.A.E.F. D. 340. P. 159.

The French Ambassador at Petrograd believed that to end the so-called duplicity of Ion I. C. Brătianu's government would be enough a categorical demarche of the French and British governments. If Romanian Prime Minister was indeed of good faith, Aristide Briand would possess the main argument to demonstrate that Russia was ready to support Romania, by attacking Bulgaria. The essential argument consists in the urges of the Tsar of Russia as a brigade sent from Vladivostok to be landed at Salonika to combat as soon as possible the Bulgarian troops²⁵.

The news according to which several Bulgarian military trains were circulating towards the border with Romania has worried the military authorities in late March 1916. The General Staff was concerned about the hypothesis of an attack. The information provided by military and diplomatic representatives of France highlighted some military measures that were adopted with great rapidity on both sides, in Bucharest and Sofia. Although an act of aggression from the Bulgarian side seemed illogical in the French view, the threat certainly existed. To dispel all the anxieties and fears of the Romanian government, the Tsarist Empire was obliged to take all measures to make harmless the Bulgarian threat²⁶.

In the opinion of the Commander-in-Chief of French army, General Joseph Joffre, it was inconceivable engaging Russian military operations against Bulgaria without Romania taking part in them. Russian forces could not reach the border with Bulgaria without entering the Romanian territory and it was obvious that the formation of a Russian army in Dobruja would cause the opening of hostilities. It was essential that before beginning such an «adventure» the Russian army of support had the certainty of counting on the Romanian army²⁷.

On 23rd April 1916, Paléologue still took into consideration a possible agreement between Romania and Bulgaria. He also suggested to Briand a demarche of French and British governments at Bucharest, with a double objective: to assure the Government that Russia was ready to support Romania by attacking Bulgaria and thus force Ion I. C. Brătianu to end its delays and hesitations. There were even rumours about commercial negotiations between Romania and Bulgaria²⁸. This information has not been verified and confirmed, remaining only at the stage of assumptions and speculations.

In the opinion of some personalities of the French army, the military aid of the Allies for the Romanian troops at the beginning of May 1916 was limited to the necessary measures to assure the complete security of Romania's southern border. As a consequence, the Army from Salonika will start attack, pointing towards it an important part of Bulgarian forces. Also, a big part of Russian troops would intervene in Dobruja to neutralize the rest of the Bulgarian army²⁹.

²⁵ A.M.A.E.F. D. 354. P. 81.

²⁶ A.M.A.E.F. D. 340. P. 159.

²⁷ A.M.A.E.F. D. 354. P. 87–88.

²⁸ A.M.A.E.F. D. 340. P. 229.

²⁹ A.M.A.E.F. D. 354. P. 92; Service Historique de l'Armée de Terre. Vincennes. Cabinet du Ministre. Carton 5N142. Telegrams no. 298–299 of the General Commander-in-Chief to the

In May, the military situation in the Balkans tends to clearly change in favour of Entente. Bulgarian forces were left alone due to the departure of the German troops and they were to no longer have numerical superiority starting with the moment when the transportation of a Serbian contingent in Salonika will be completed. According to the Commander-in-Chief of the French army, these Serbian troops, were reaching 160,000 men. Thanks to this useful support and war materials with which the troops were to be equipped, the Army of Salonika will soon gain an important offensive force³⁰.

One of the purposes of Entente's conference from London, which opened in June 1916 was the dispelling of Romanian Government's anxieties regarding the potential Bulgarian danger. Through the Protocol adopted on 11th August 1916, the Allies decided that the English and French governments perfectly agree the terms of the Romanian belligerence. The Allied troops were to have as essential aim the blocking of Bulgarian forces to facilitate actions for the Romanian troops. The French and British governments were to ask the Russian authorities to send against Bulgaria enough troops, once the military and political agreements between Romania and the Allies will have been signed³¹.

In order to determine sooner the Romanian intervention in the war France and England promised the support of the Salonika Army against the Bulgarians. Willingly or unwillingly the government from Bucharest was misled. The Allies officially announced that they would have at Salonika an army of 450,000 men which will start the offensive against Bulgarians, will crush them and then join the Romanian army. But at the same time, the British General George Milne was instructed not to undertake any offensive operations. Military forces held by the Allies in the Balkans were limited. For example, the number of French troops from the Salonika forces did not reach 50,000 combatants. The British army had only 51,000 fighters. The Russian army, recently landed, contained only one brigade of infantry that consists of 5,000 people. An Italian division of 10,000 troops has arrived in Salonika only at the end of August 1916. Therefore overall allied armies had approximately 140,000 combatants³², a number of troops well below the one that was requested by the Romanian Prime Minister Ion I. C. Bratianu. It was believed that in August-September 1916, General Sarrail had at his disposal more than 100,000 combatants who were meant to take a major offensive in the Balkans, in order to provide security for Romania and crush Bulgaria, which possessed 700,000 men under arms. The number of people from the Salonika Army who were receiving a ration did not actually suggest any idea of its real potential and forces. General Sarrail practically has only the French and Serbian troops and the Russian brigade in order to undertake active operations. This small army was designed to determine the exit of

commander of the French military mission at the Russian General Staff, 1st May 1916; see also: Telegram no. 307 of the General Joffre to the President of the Council.

³⁰ A.M.A.E.F. D. 341. P. 18.

³¹ A.M.A.E.F. P. 60; *Vesa V. Le front de Salonique et l'entrée de la Roumanie dans la première guerre mondiale // Revue Roumaine d'Histoire. 1973. Vol. III. No. 2. P. 270.*

³² *Deygas F. J. L'Armée de l'Orient dans la Guerre mondiale. Gloires et misères de l'Armée de l'Orient (1915–1919). Paris: Payot, 1932. P. 106–108.*

Romania from neutrality and to assist it in stopping the Bulgarian army³³, a goal too bold compared to real power and capacity of this army.

General Joffre considered that the Allies had a huge interest to undertake an immediate military effort against Bulgaria and remove this power from battle. The main action was to be taken from north by Russian- Romanian forces with the help of the army from in Thessaloniki, which was to fight in the south³⁴.

On 4th July 1916, the Prime Minister Ion I. C. Brătianu declared he was ready to sign a military agreement with Entente if the Allies protect Romania against the Bulgaria's offensive. Thus the army from Salonika will attack the Bulgarian forces³⁵. The French authorities announced that if it was necessary, the French and Serbian troops will also launch an action against the Bulgarians. The Foreign Minister of England, Edward Grey, confirmed the participation of English divisions in those attacks. The Commander-in-Chief, Joffre anticipated that the military offensive from Salonika was about to attract the whole Bulgarian army and eliminate any possibility of aggression against Romania. Under these circumstances Joffre raised serious doubts on the usefulness of sending Russian divisions in Dobruja, as this step would be a superfluous one³⁶. There were voices saying that Russians still hated the idea of fighting against the Bulgarians. Pan-Slavic spirit was still animating the Russians. Former Foreign Minister, Sergey Sazonov (meanwhile replaced by Boris Stürmer) declared himself as a philo-Bulgarian. The main opposition leader, the historian Miljukov, was president of the Pan-Slavic League and faithful friend of Bulgaria. Bulgaria was labeled by some Russian ruling circles «a rebellious younger brother who must be quarreled, but not hit»³⁷.

Brătianu asked the Allies on 26th July not to insist that Romania to declare war on Bulgaria, Turkey and Germany. The Romanian Prime Minister wanted to preserve and spare all forces of the army with the purpose of conducting the operations in Transylvania and Banat against the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy. 50,000 Russians were to protect Romania against of a possible threat from Bulgaria in the region of Danube. Meanwhile, the military French-English army from Salonika was about to keep the Bulgarians in south³⁸.

At the insistence of Paléologue, the Russia's Minister of Foreign Affairs has agreed that Romania only to attack Austria and Hungary. He has however demanded that on 1st August Romania to be in a state of war with Bulgaria and Turkey. Romania had to give up its diplomatic missions from Sofia and Constantinople and to cease economic relations with the two countries as well³⁹. The tsarist Government believes that, since Romania did not intended to declare war on Bulgaria, its claims regarding the offensive

³³ Deygas F. J. *L'Armée de l'Orient...* P. 108–109.

³⁴ Joffre J. *Intervenția română // România în timpul primului război mondial. Mărturii documentare.* Vol. I. P. 245–246.

³⁵ A.M.A.E.F. D. 354. P. 139–140.

³⁶ A.M.A.E.F. D. 354. P. 147–148.

³⁷ Kirițescu C. *Preludiile diplomatice...* P. 32.

³⁸ A.M.A.E.F. D. 355. P. 102, 119.

³⁹ A.M.A.E.F. D. 355. Part II. P. 1.

of the army from Salonika were absolutely without foundation. From this perspective, Romania wanted only to gain time⁴⁰. The events were further precipitated. On 5th August 1916, the Russian General Alekseyev has joined the opinions of General Joffre and Foreign Minister Briand agreeing that the effort of the Romanian army to be directed exclusively against Austria-Hungary. He accepted, therefore, that the actions against Bulgaria to be postponed. Moreover, he believed that these operations would begin by themselves⁴¹.

Given that the delays of Brătianu continued, Paléologue explained somewhat in a fanciful way through the hope that the Prime Minister of Romania still kept in order to reach a direct agreement with the Bulgarians⁴².

In the early August, Brătianu said that it was ready to initiate hostilities on the 15th of the current month. He further expressed his reserves and fears regarding the Bulgarians. But the Romanian Prime Minister did not hide his desire to see removed all misunderstandings with Bulgaria and safeguard his future relations with this power. He sought to find a foothold in Bulgarian to counter any Serbian expansionist ambitions⁴³.

Eventually, after long and complicated negotiations, Romania and Entente signed on 4th/17th August 1916 the two fundamental acts of cooperation: the Political Convention and the Military Convention.

Article I of the Political Convention stipulated that France, Great Britain and Russia should ensure territorial integrity of Romania, into the whole extent of its current borders. If Romania is committed to declare war only to Austria-Hungary, in return it was going to break the economic relations and interrupt the trade with all enemies of Entente, therefore with Bulgaria too. The Military Convention made it obligatory for Romania to attack Austria-Hungary no later than 15th/28th August 1916. Among other things, Russia undertakes that, at the time of mobilization for the Romanian army, it will send in Dobruja two infantry divisions and a cavalry division against the Bulgarian troops. The same article, the 3rd one, which concerned Russia's commitment to send troops in Dobruja, stated: «Allies are committed that the entrance into the war of Romania to be preceded by at least eight days. The army from Salonika will launch an energetic offensive. Its action was meant to facilitate the mobilization and concentration of the Romanian army. This offensive was to begin at 7/20 August 1916»⁴⁴.

But things were not just as in the political and military agreements. The East Army from Salonika remained inactive. Numerically reduced despite the official statements and poorly equipped, it was not able to conduct an effective offensive action against Bulgaria. The army from Salonika did not proceed to attack the Bulgarians, helping

⁴⁰ A.M.A.E.F. D. 355. Part II. P. 65.

⁴¹ *Paléologue M. G.* La Russie des tsars pendant la Grande Guerre. Paris: Librairie Plon, 1922. T. II. P. 329.

⁴² *Ibid.* P. 329–330.

⁴³ A.M.A.E.F. D. 342. P. 56.

⁴⁴ 1918 la români. Desăvârșirea unității național-statale a poporului român. Documente externe 1879–1916. Vol. I. București: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1983. P. 754–756; A.M.A.E.F. D. 355. P. 124–126.

this way the military intervention of Romania. This is one of the tasks which Entente has assumed, but did not respect it. Moreover, sometimes military cooperation between Romania and Russia worked rather poorly and it was held in unsatisfactory parameters. The collaboration was marked by a strong distrust between the two sides. The above mentioned are two of the key factors that led to the defeat of the Romanian army.

Despite some tendencies of reconciliation that were made vaguely felt, in August 1916, Romania and Bulgaria will be in a state of war against each other, fighting in rival camps. The Bulgarian victory from Turtucaia (24th August / 6th September 1916) could be considered a crowning of revanchist latent intentions to which Bulgaria did not intend to give up any moment since 10th August 1913, when the peace treaty of Bucharest had been signed.

Until October 1915, when adopted a decision of joining Central Powers, Bulgaria and its attitude was one of the favorite topics of political-diplomatic and military contacts between Romania, France and Russia. By determining Romania to make territorial concessions in the benefit of Bulgaria, France and Russia hoped to approach both Bucharest and Sofia. The Bulgarian claims were not limited to the Cadriater. Bulgaria also aimed at obtaining the territories lost in favour of Serbia and Greece according to the Peace Treaty from Bucharest (10 August 1913). The hopes of Entente placed in restoring of a Balkan League (which this time have in its composition not only Serbia and Greece, but both Bulgaria and Romania as well) have been shattered. Territorial concessions, which ought naturally to be designed to win the contest of Bulgaria were not possible. The reticences expressed in this regard were too high⁴⁵.

Bulgaria's entry into the war on the Central Powers' side was a diplomatic failure for Entente. Since October 1915, Bulgaria was regarded with great reluctance and fear by the Romanian statesmen. They always deferred to declare the mobilization of the army and the entrance into war against Austria-Hungary, as always a potential danger could come from South of the Danube.

Информация о статье

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Заголовок: Romania's Relations with France and Russia and Bucharest's fears concerning a Bulgarian offensive (Fall of 1915 – August 1916). Some French documentary evidence (на англ.). [Отношения Румынии с Францией и Россией и угроза болгарского наступления на Бухарест (конец 1915 – август 1916). Некоторые свидетельства французских документов]

Резюме: В статье рассматриваются несколько важных аспектов международных отношений между Румынским королевством и Францией и некоторые эпизоды румыно-российских отношений с конца 1915 по август 1916 г. В работе предпринята попытка анализа зарождения и эволюции румынских грозных предчувствий и опасений военного вторжения Болгарии. Источниковедческой базой

⁴⁵ For this problem and the reasons of the failure of Entente's project, see: *Gorun H. Demersuri ale Antantei pentru normalizarea raporturilor româno-bulgare în vederea reconstituirii unui bloc al statelor balcanice // Studia Universitatis «Babeş-Bolyai». Historia. 2006. Vol. 51. P. 97–113;* for a more theoretical approach which uses a few concepts belonging to the theory of international relations, see: *Gorun H. Considerations on the Romanian-Russian and Romanian-Bulgarian Relations at the Beginning of the World War I. A few Romanian and French Documentary Evidence // Analele Universităţii din Craiova. Seria Istorie. 2014. Vol. XIX. 25. P. 67–78.*

исследования послужили новые документы из французского дипломатического архива Министерства Иностранных дел Франции.

Осенью 1915 г. Болгария выступила на стороне Центральных держав. Румыния продолжала соблюдать нейтралитет, опасаясь угрозы войны на два фронта. Она оказалась лицом к лицу с двумя врагами: дуалистической Австро-Венгерской монархией на севере и Болгарским царством на юге. Опасность удара из-за Дуная стала главной причиной, почему Румыния откладывала вооруженное выступление против Австро-Венгрии. Вероятность болгарского вторжения со стороны южной границы затягивала принятие правительством решения об активном вступлении Румынии в войну. В Россию был направлен запрос о введении русских войск в Добруджу, чтобы прикрыть румыно-болгарскую границу. Эти войска должны были быть готовыми помочь румынской армии.

Вступив в войну, Румыния столкнулась с наиболее боеспособными болгарскими войсками. Если отношения между Петроградом и Бухарестом после начала войны наладились, то с южным соседом, Болгарией, они оставались натянутыми. Румыния и Болгария принадлежали к разным военно-политическим блокам, что и привело к их военной конфронтации в годы Первой мировой войны.

Ключевые слова: Антанта, Румыния, Болгария, военная угроза, Армия союзников в Салониках, Ион Братиану

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Title: Romania's Relations with France and Russia and Bucharest's fears concerning a Bulgarian offensive (Fall of 1915 – August 1916). Some French documentary evidence

Summary: This study points out some significant aspects of the relations between Romanian Kingdom and France and a few episodes of Romania's relations with Russia as well since the fall of the year 1915 until August 1916. I also tried to analyse the birth and the evolution of the Romanian apprehensions regarding Bulgaria's intentions. So, from methodological point of view, I used somehow a multilateral approach. My paper is based mainly upon documents from French diplomatic archives of Quai d'Orsay. In the autumn of the year 1915, Bulgaria joined Central Powers. Romania, still in neutrality, feared and rejected the possibility to fight on two fronts. In this case, Romania had to face two enemies, the Dualist monarchy of Austria-Hungary, in the North and the Kingdom of Bulgaria, in the South. The possible danger from the South of the Danube worried Ion I. C. Brătianu's government. This was one of the main reasons for which Romania has delayed the military intervention against Austria-Hungary. The probability of a Bulgarian offensive against the Southern border of the country delayed the decision of intervention of the Romanian government. In order to enter the war, the authorities from Bucharest asked for Russian troops in Dobruja. These troops had to be able to help Romanian army. As the military agreement of August 1916 stipulated, the Allied Army of Salonika had to begin an offensive in order to prevent a Bulgarian attack against Romania. Romania's entry into the World War I had to begin eight days after the offensive from Salonika. This army had also to counteract the most important part of the Bulgarian troops. In conclusion, if the relations between Bucharest and Petrograd improved immediately after the beginning of the First World War, Romania's relations with its Southern neighbour remained strained. Actually, some of Romania's apprehensions regarding Russia persisted as well. Finally Romania and Bulgaria adhered to rival belligerent blocks and became enemies in World War I.

Keywords: Entente, Romania, Bulgaria, fears, the Army from Salonika, Ion I. C. Brătianu

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