Diplomatic Relations Between Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria During the Balkan Wars, 1912-1913

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1912

- Triple Entente/Triple Alliance rivalry
  - Russia vs. Austria-Hungary
  - Bulgarian balancing act
- Spring 1912: Serbo-Bulgarian military accord, formation of Balkan League
- October 1912: First Balkan War
  - Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece, Montenegro vs. Ottoman Empire
  - Points of contention: Macedonia, Salonika (Thessaloniki)

Europe in 1912 | http://omniatlas.com/maps/europe/19120517/
1913

- May 1913: Treaty of London signed
  - Increasing tensions, eventual breakup of the Balkan League
- June 1913: The Second Balkan War
  - Serbia, Romania, Greece, Montenegro, Ottomans vs. Bulgaria
- August 1913: Treaty of Bucharest
- Outcome: permanent shift in Bulgarian policy, tension, WWI
Research questions

- What were the characteristics of diplomatic relations between Bulgaria and Austria-Hungary in 1912-1913?
- What motivated each state’s foreign policy vis-à-vis the other?
- Why did the friendly relationship never become a formal alliance?
- What effects did this relationship and the Balkan Wars have on Austro-Hungarian and Bulgarian foreign policy in the Balkans?
Sources

- Primary sources
  - Telegrams from Austrian State Archives: political developments, public opinion, intrigue
  - Bulgarian prime ministers’ political memoirs
- Secondary sources
  - Diplomatic studies of Balkan Wars
  - Military histories
  - Analysis
Limitations

- Bulgarian government primary documents were not examined
- Focus on two states simplifies interconnectedness of diplomacy
- Research focuses on official diplomatic relations; other interests (e.g. economic) largely unexamined
Conclusions

- Austro-Hungarian Bulgarian relations were warm
  - Emphasized complimentary and non-conflicting geopolitical interests
  - Common enemy in Serbia
- Relationship was complicated by Bulgarian refusal to seek rapprochement with Romania on Austria-Hungary's advice
- After Second Balkan War, Bulgaria no longer able to conduct politique d'oscillation; increased tensions between Bulgaria and Serbia/between Austria-Hungary and Russia
Future research opportunities

- Economic dimensions of Austria-Hungary-Bulgaria relationship
- Comparative study of diplomacy of other Balkan states during Balkan Wars
- Balkan Wars in context of causes of World War I
Works consulted

- Politisches Archiv, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv. Vienna.