

# DEVELOPMENT IN THE BALKANS

**SPLITTING NATIONALISM IN BALKANS:** We see a gradual disintegration in the Balkans of the Ottoman Empire – the “*Eastern Question*”. This disintegration came in various stages:

1. **The Greek Independence War of 1821-1829/30 - Results:** Greece independent
2. **Crimean War 1853-56 - Results:** Serbia and Romania become autonomous area
3. **Congress of Berlin in 1878 Results:** Serbia and Romania become independent; Bulgaria becomes an autonomous region; Bosnia and Herzegovina became occupied and governed by Austria-Hungary; Cyprus became a British island and Russia gained part of Bessarabia

**SPLITTING NATIONALISM IN other great powers:** The new states and the Ottoman Empire's two large neighbors Austria-Hungary and Russia wanted to expand at its expense. This meant trouble! The two Empires (Austria-Hungary and Russia) were affected by the internal pressure that's called "*splitting nationalism*" - ie, a variety of nationalities in both Austria-Hungary (Germans, Czechs, Hungarians, Poles, Bosnians, Serbs, Croats, Turks, Italians, etc ...) and Russia (Poles, Finns, Ukrainians, etc ...) wanted to become independent.

**AUSTRIA-HUNGARY:** Note that the various independence movements affected several minorities in Austria-Hungary. Among the Slavic groups they discussed the possibilities of creating a major South Slavic kingdom together with Slavs in the Balkans

**RUSSIA:** Russia supported various Slavic groups' dissatisfaction in different ways. Among other things they presented the idea of a large common Slavic kingdom (with Russia in the lead) - this idea of a united Slavic Union is called Pan-Slavism! Besides Pan-Slavism as Russia had other motives to the weakening and fall of the Ottoman Empire:

- *They wanted to strengthen their own position in the Balkans*
- *They wanted to control the outlets between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (the Dardanelles and Bosphorus)*

**AUSTRIA-HUNGARY:** After the defeat in the Prussian-Austrian War of 1866 (Seven Week War) the Double Monarchy of Austria-Hungary (founded in 1867) changed its foreign policy to gain more influence in the Balkan region!

**BALKANS 1875-1878:** To better understand the frictions that arose after the war between Russia and the Ottoman Empire in **1877-78** it's important to know:

- **1875** - Revolts in the Ottoman provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- **1876** - The revolt spread to Bulgaria! Serbia and Montenegro declares war on the Ottoman Empire!

Russia made a secret agreement with Austria-Hungary:

- *Serbia and Montenegro will gain Novibazar*
- *Austria-Hungary will gain Bosnia and Herzegovina*
- *Russia will gain Bessarabia*

Germany (Bismarck) said OK to the settlement between Austria-Hungary and Russia. Britain does not leave any answer...

- **1877** - War between Russia and the Ottoman Empire (for the sixth time within hundred years)
- **1878** - Russia wins the war between Russia and the Ottoman Empire.

This led to two peace treaties:

## 1. *Peace Treaty of San Stefano*

- *Very favorable conditions for Russia and her Slavic allies.* Great Britain protests! They move the British Mediterranean fleet to the Dardanelles and occupy the Ottoman island of Cyprus. Austria-Hungary also protests against the peace settlement. Germany and France remain relatively neutral. A proposal for an international conference is suggested and the various nations accept this solution...

## 2. *The Congress of Berlin* (Britain, Russia, the Ottoman Empire, Austria-Hungary, France, Italy and Germany)

- Russia lost most of the San Stefano gains
- Serbia became independent
- Romania became independent
- Bulgaria was divided into three parts (with varying degrees of autonomy)
- Great Britain received Cyprus
- Austria-Hungary was authorized to "*hold and administrate*" Bosnia and Herzegovina

**1879-1900...** - During the rest of the 1800s the disintegration of the Balkans continued...

**1897:** The Austrian Emperor Francis Joseph made a state visit to Russia. Austria-Hungary and Russia made some agreements about the Balkans which eased the tension between the countries.

**1903:** The Serbian king Alexander Obrenović and his wife Draga was assassinated by Serbian officers. Alexander was the head of a dictatorial government marked by corruption, surveillance, a brutal secret police and a friendly foreign policy towards Austria-Hungary. The officers replaced the king with Peter Karageorgevic (who was the son of a previous Serbian king and now became king Peter I). One of the results of this assassination was an upsurge of Serbian patriotism:

- Several pro-Serbian clubs were formed.
- King Peter I showed interest in better relations with Russia. This made Austria-Hungary worried. During a rebellion among the South Slavs in Macedonia the Austrian-Hungarian agreements with Russia were tested. They both still respected the agreements and therefore reaffirmed them by signing *the Mürzteg Agreements* (October 1903)
- Plans for a creation of "*Greater Serbia*"...

**NOTE:** One of the main officers involved in the coup 1903 against King Alexander was Colonel Dragutin Dimitrievic ("*Apis*") - he is better known as the leader of the "*Black Hand*"...

**1904-05: The Russo-Japanese War** was a huge Russian miscalculation. Japan defeated Russia who lost the influence and expansion into Manchuria and Korea. When her foreign policy in the east failed she focused more on her European affairs. The Balkans with the Straits of Bosphorus and the Dardanelles was once again Russia's number one priority (together with some areas in the south, including Persia)...

**1905-1907:** Tension due to the first Moroccan Crisis and the Conference of Algeiras. This led to the formation of the **Triple Entente** (1907) (France, Russia and Great Britain). Europe was now divided into two power blocs (the other one was the **Triple Alliance** with Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy).

... and then came the next crisis in the Balkans

**1908–09. Bosnian Crisis.** After secret negotiations between Austria- Hungary and Russia – Austria-Hungary annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina. Germany (Chancellor Bülow) backed Austria-Hungary. When Russia and Serbia protested against the annexation Germany suggested that Austria-Hungary should force Russia and Serbia to formally accept the annexation. This meant that Germany had showed complete support to Austria- Hungary (a "*blank check*"), that Germany now got involved in the Balkan affairs and that both Serbia and Russia were humiliated. After this humiliation Russia got even closer to France and Great Britain...

### **1912-13. First Balkan War**

### **1913. Second Balkan War**

**1914.** The Archduke was assassinated in the Bosnian capital Sarajevo by some young pro-Serbs...