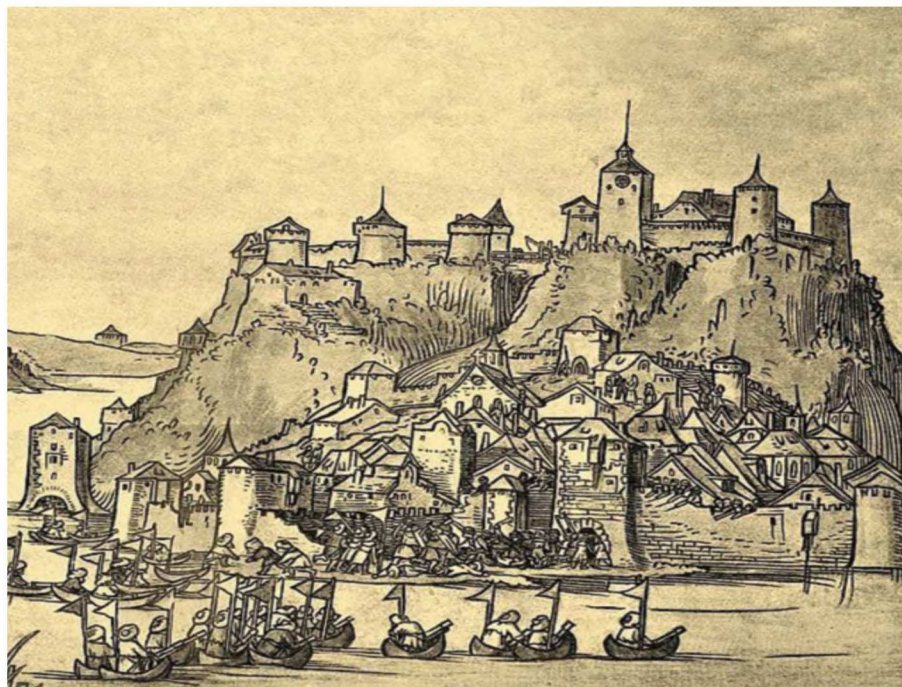




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Suzana RAJIĆ

BELGRADE AND THE CITY QUESTION 1866/1867 IN CONFIDENTIAL CORRESPONDENCE OF FOREIGN OFFICE*

Abstract: A strictly confidential correspondence between British diplomatic representatives in Saint Petersburg, Paris, Belgrade and Constantinople and its Royal Majesty's government relates to the period from September 1866 to March 1867. From that correspondence we can find out how the issue of cities, and especially of Belgrade, was solved as one of the important international issues. Also, the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Lord Edward Henry Stanley's instructions to the ambassador on the Bosphorus are important for understanding the impact of that Great Power on the definitive withdrawal of Turkish garrisons from the Serbian capital and other cities in 1867. The entire correspondence presented to the members of Parliament is available in electronic form – *Correspondence Respecting Affairs in Servia, 1867*. However, it contains only twelve documents of fifty-six documents in total, which were collected for the confidential needs of the Foreign Office – *Affairs in Servia*. This means that British parliament's members did not have an insight into the most important part of the correspondence and instructions exchanged between their Ministry and diplomatic representatives. From the point of view of historical science, more important is the content of these unpublished documents, which are stored in the British National Archives, and labeled as "confidential".

Keywords: Serbia, Belgrade, Turkey, Great Britain, Prince Mihailo, Edward Henry Stanley, Richard Bickerton, Pemell Lyons.

*

The confidential documents of the Foreign Office *Affairs in Servia*, unequivocally testify that the city question¹ was one of the important international issues, and that Britain's influence was decisive to resolve it, as the Foreign Office said, in favor of the Ottoman Empire. During the second rule of Prince Mihailo Obrenović (1860–1868),

^{*} This article is the result of the project No. 177014 of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia.

¹ In 1862, Turkish soldiers bombed Serbs in the town from the Belgrade fortress. Thus, they breached the international obligations, since the Ottoman Empire did not have the right to armed

Belgrade, the capital of the Autonomous Principality of Serbia, was at the heart of the city question. The other fortresses: Šabac, Smederevo, Kladovo, were of secondary significance.

The position of Great Britain and its advice to the Ottoman government in 1867 significantly differed compared to 1862. According to the definitive conclusions of the Kanlica Conference, only the less significant fortifications, Užice and Soko were sacrificed. The Ottoman Empire got out of disadvantage in 1862 undamaged, thanks to Great Britain.² However, in 1867 the positions of the two pillars of the Ottoman Empire defence – Britain and Austria – were different. But the positions of Serbian Prince Mihailo also changed. In 1862 he threatened with abdication, and in 1867 with war.

In June 1866, Great Britain got a new government led by Lord Derby, the leader of conservatives. Foreign Office jobs were entrusted to his son, Lord Stanley. From the English conservatives Serbia could expect only *status quo* politics and the preservation of the Ottoman Empire. Still, aware of the constant decline of Turkey, they were not deprived of a rational look at things. Moreover, France and Russia favored their projects in the issues of national movements in the Balkans since the beginning of the 1860s. Despite the significant differences in their attitudes, it was evident that due to the frequent exchange of thoughts between Paris and Saint Petersburg, London was increasingly approaching Vienna. Nothing less important for new commitments and re-assignments among the Great Powers were two important events – the defeat of Austria from Prussia in 1866, and the uprising in Crete (1866–1869). The first put into the game the new great player, Prussian Chancellor Bismarck, who wisely prolonged to choose the side, putting to Russia the look of the support that France constantly gave up to it. The second event was important in terms of an exam that would be used by the Great Powers to pursue the Eastern question –

interventions without the prior approval of the Great Powers. Despite the violation of international law, by the decisions of the Kanlica Conference, the Ottoman Empire remained in possession of the fortresses of Belgrade, Šabac, Smederevo and Kladovo (Fetislam), while garrisons in less significant fortresses – Soko city and Užice, were forced to leave. The issue of the eviction of Turkish garrisons from the remaining four towns is called the *city question* in Serbian historiography.

² At the conference of the Great Powers representatives, held in the vestibule of the Grand Vizier in Kanlica in 1862, regarding the concessions to Serbia, opinions were divided. British and Austrian diplomats were opposed to all required concessions, while French and Russian ambassadors advocated the option that Serbia should be satisfied after the unjustified bombardment of Belgrade. British Foreign Secretary John Russell accused Serbia of hostile behavior towards Turkey, and recommended to his Ambassador that Turkey make concessions to Serbia in order to “calm down the ghosts”, that is, minimal ones. Ambassador Bulwer considered that the assignment of the Belgrade fortress could not be found among the concessions to Serbia, as this would jeopardize the entire European system in which this fortress was a key position. Г. Јакшић, В. Вучковић, *Спољна политика Србије за владе кнеза Михаила: први балкански савез*, Београд 1963, 122, 140–141, 146–154; Љ. П. Ристић, *Велика Британија и Србија 1856–1862*, Београд 2008, 233–271.

whether for the rights of nations, or by protecting the legitimist principles and preserving the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. Nothing less important was the question of the choice of the actions of the Balkan peoples in the exercise of their rights – would they choose an armed action, or diplomatic means? In the midst of many dilemmas, the Serbian Prince wrote a letter to the Grand Vizier and asked for the cession of cities, which was an unusual manner of communication between the suzerain and vassal until then. For the prince and his first associates, the cession of Turkish garrisons from Belgrade was an important state and national issue. None of them were willing to accept any offer that would not encompass the capital city. Ilija Garašanin said: “There is only one city in Serbia, Belgrade, and the rest are creatures”, but he also emphasized that Serbia wanted to get, not to seize Belgrade.³

Although in large debts, destabilized by insurrections and rebellions, in July 1866 the Ottoman government refused the Serbian request to evict Muslims from Mali Zvornik and Sakar.⁴ When the turmoil in Crete grew into an open rebellion in early September 1866, Constantinople was ready for concessions and offered Mali Zvornik in fear that Serbia would put forward the city question. The fears of Turkey were justified. Already at the end of September, with the help of Russia, Serbia made plans to reclaim city fortifications, and above all Belgrade. Prince Mihailo, Prime Minister Ilija Garašanin and representative in Constantinople, Jovan Ristić, denied the former position of the British ambassador in Constantinople Bulwer that Belgrade was a European issue. They made everything to present it as an internal matter between Serbia and the Ottoman Empire.⁵

The Serbian diplomatic representative in Constantinople in 1862, as well as in 1866 and 1867, was Jovan Ristić. Before addressing the Ottoman government, he visited British Ambassador Richard Bickerton Pemell Lyons, to inform him of the step he would take, but not to seek his support. Ristić did not mention what fortifications Serbia was seeking, certainly not by accident. The British ambassador was aware of the fact that Serbian demands were supported by his Russian colleague Nikolay Pavlovich Ignatyev. This time, Britain recommended to Ristić to enter into negotiations with the Ottoman government and not to address the representatives of the Great Powers. Using his experience from the time of the Kanlica Conference, and even more inefficiency of European diplomacy ahead of the Paris Conference in May 1866, when the issue of candidates for the Romanian throne was solved, Ristić did not intend to seek the mediation of the states signatories to the Paris Treaty of 1856. Lyons had the same opinion about the city question as his predecessor.

He believed that the Ottoman government should meet Serbian demands regarding all fortifications except Belgrade. He encouraged Ali Pasha to take a

³ Писма Илије Гарашанина Јовану Мариновићу, 2, од 4. јан. 1859. до 29. марта 1874, Београд 1931, 197–198; Ј. Ристић, *Спољашњи одношаји Србије новијега времена*, 2, Београд 1887, 398.

⁴ Muslims from Mali Zvornik and a smaller village called Sakar, had to be evacuated from Serbia by the Hatt-i Sharif of 1833, within five years.

⁵ Ј. Ристић, *op. cit.*, 398, 402, 438–440.

favorable attitude towards Serbian demands, because it was in the Turkish interest to leave all positions in Serbia that it could not hold firmly. The Foreign Office confirmed that this could be taken for the Great Britain's official position.⁶

Ristić received the requested absence and arrived in Belgrade on October 22, 1866. After talks and arrangements with the Prince and ministers, he visited British consul John Longworth, who was acquainted with the real aims of Ristić's absence.⁷ After nine days, Ristić returned to the place of service, with a letter from Prince Mihailo for the Grand Vizier. The letter was written in a flattering and conciliatory tone, but with a clear demand that the cities be given to Serbia. At Ristić's insistence, it was decided that Serbia should not address the Great Powers, until further notice, thereby saving sensitivity of the Ottoman government. The day after he arrived, on November 10, 1866, Ristić handed the Prince's letter to Grand Vizier Mehmed-pasha.⁸

Emphasizing that mistrust should be eliminated, and peace, style and understanding between Serbia and Turkey established, Ristić probably flattered more than he knew and could. He claimed that by assigning the cities to Serbia, the Prince's friendship with the Ottoman government would be publicly acknowledged by the Prince's visit to the Turkish capital and the Sultan, and that Serbia would no longer make any new demands.⁹ The Great Powers sought peace in the East, and it was one of Ristić's trumpets when he chose a moment to take action.

Britain's growing interest came about ten days later, when Consul Longworth managed to overtake the letter of Prince Mihailo to the Grand Vizier, and to send it to Stanley and Lyons to be translated.¹⁰ Until then, it was sensed, but was not certain, what exactly the Serbian requests contained. Unlike Russia and France, which were familiar with the problem in detail, Vienna was informed officially two days before the official delivery of the Prince's letter to the Vizier. Britain, or its diplomat, did not inform any of the Serbian officials about the intended move. It was not a coincidence, but a consequence of the negative attitude of Britain that was known to Serbia in the spring of 1866 when the government questioned European diplomacy concerning its intention to request cities from the Ottoman government.¹¹

Britain was uncomfortable with news that Serbia was preparing to raise the entire Balkans in the spring of 1867 and to create a Serbian kingdom that would include

⁶ The National Archives at Kew, Great Britain, Foreign Office (= FO), 881/1500, Lyons to Lord Stanley, 10 October 1866, and answer of Lord Stanley from 20 October 1866.

⁷ *Ibidem*, Longworth to Lord Stanley, Belgrade, November 3, 1866; Also see: Г. Јакшић, В. Вучковић, *op. cit.*, 301.

⁸ Ј. Ристић, *op. cit.*, 468–471.

⁹ *Ibidem*, 466, 474.

¹⁰ These efforts soon turned superfluous because Jovan Ristić personally met Lyons with the content of the letter, and Ali-pasha gave him the original for reading on November 16.

¹¹ The mission of Serbian envoy Jovan Marinović in London, in April and May 1866, with all the external signs of curtesy, ended with an apology that Britain could not, however, submit a request of cities to the Ottoman government. Г. Јакшић, В. Вучковић, *op. cit.*, 223–225; Ј. Ристић, *op. cit.*, 409.

most of the Slavs.¹² Moreover, from the beginning of the Serbian diplomatic action, the new French minister of foreign affairs, the former representative in Constantinople, marquis Lionel de Moustier, did not hide that in conversations with the Russian deputy in Paris Andrey Budberg there was a common position that the Serbian demands should be supported, but the motives for such a decision were very different.¹³

Longworth made an unquestionable assessment of the goals of Marinović's mission in Saint Petersburg, which occurred immediately after Jovan Ristić went back to Constantinople with the Prince's letter. This was confirmed by the report of British ambassador in Saint Petersburg Sir Andrew Buchanan after a conversation that he had with Chancellor Alexander Gorchakov. Russia openly stated that the Serbian demands were justified and that, because of its situation, the Ottoman government should act with caution and accept them. Gorchakov argued that if the Serbian demands were not accepted, Russia's influence on the Serbian Prince would be significantly weakened. This statement warned of the war in the spring that Serbia would launch and which would certainly lead to complications in the East. Buchanan tried to divert the talk to emigration of Muslims from Mali Zvornik and Sakar¹⁴, but the Russian chancellor decidedly said that this would not be a concession to Serbia, but a rectification of injustice, and that the right concession, as a sign of trust to Prince Mihailo, would be the cession of all fortifications. The new attempt by Buchanan to talk with Gorchakov about Serbian claims was not successful.¹⁵

Buchanan had the opportunity to meet Serbian envoy Jovan Marinović in the Russian capital. On Marinović's attempt to explain that the Serbian-Turkish relations would be stabilized if the source of permanent tension appearing in Turkish garrisons in Serbian cities was removed, the British ambassador said that Turkish feelings could not be offended and that England could not advise the Sultan to give up in the direction that the emblems of the Sultan's authority over the province were destroyed. The ambassador placed a special emphasis on the fact that the Principality of Serbia was only a Turkish province and nothing more than that.¹⁶

¹² FO, 881/1500, Lord Henry Richard Charles Wellesley to Lord Stanley, Paris, November 2, 1866.

¹³ Lionel de Moustier emphasized that the French government supported Serbian demands to strengthen Turkish influence in Serbia, and Russia, however, to weaken this influence. Moustier also noted that Turkey was always reluctant to receive Serbian requests for concessions and that there were always great differences in Turkish ministers' reflections when considering Romanian and Serbian demands. For them, the Romanian element was unimportant, unlike the Slovenian one that spread in all directions and in places where Turkey could not maintain its control. Milorad Ekmečić noted that the advocacy of France for the transfer of the Belgrade fort to Serbia represented a radical turn of Napoleonic policy. *Огледи из историје*, Београд 2002, 404.

¹⁴ According to the Hatt-i Sharif of 1833, Muslims from Mali Zvornik and Sakar were to be evacuated not later than 1838.

¹⁵ FO, 881/1500, Longworth to Lord Stanley, November 6, 1866; Andrew Buchanan to Lord Stanley, Saint Petersburg, November 8, 1866, and report from Saint Petersburg; Andrew Buchanan to Lord Stanley, Saint Petersburg, November 14, 1866.

¹⁶ FO, 881/1500, Andrew Buchanan to Lord Stanley, Saint Petersburg, November 21, 1866.

While Ristić traveled to Constantinople, Longworth tried to get as accurate information as possible about the conclusions of the Serbian government and the instructions given to representative Ristić. He noticed that all were very reserved and avoided talking about the essence of the case. The avoidance of the diplomatic members in Constantinople and consular representatives in Belgrade was a clear sign that the Serbian Prince and the government chose different ways than previously practiced, which did not benefit them. Ambassador Lyons announced to Ristić that the Ottoman government would hand over to Serbia Belgrade and other fortifications, if they deemed that necessary and desirable for Turkish interests. Longworth could not restrain himself from transferring such ambiguity to the ambassador, which he considered was, in addition to the news from Crete, the main instigator of Marinović's mission in Saint Petersburg on November 6.¹⁷

Tackling the internal issues of electoral reform, and the Crete uprising, the United Kingdom, at first only watched the Serbian demand for cities.¹⁸ Longworth sent alarming news from Belgrade that did not overwhelm Lord Stanley: the alliance with Montenegro, 50,000 rifles from Berlin, the public in favor of the war, and plans to cross the Serbian Rubikon – Drina. All of the hopes were laid to soberness and responsibility of the Prime Minister, Ilija Garašanin, who was believed not to allow engagement of an army outside the borders of the Principality. On November 19, 1866, Lord Stanley wrote to the ambassador in Paris about his view of the current situation: the Serbian demand for the removal of Turkish garrisons from cities, and above all from Belgrade, was supported by France and Russia, Austria was initially opposed, but France exerted pressure on it to make a statement. After considering the circumstances, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Habsburg Monarchy, Friedrich Ferdinand von Beust, stated that the Monarchy was not ready in military terms, and that it was better that Belgrade be surrendered to Serbia as a peace patch in the East. After summarizing everything, Stanley made the first official, though not final, British opinion on the question of Serbian cities.

First he pointed out that this issue did not require urgent resolution and did not believe that it would seriously come to the fore in the spring of 1867. And once this happened, by the collective action of the Great Powers they would see what they should do. Hence, Stanley emphasized, there was still no need to go into details regarding the question of Serbian cities. However, on the whole, he had nothing against the Austrian government's stance that, in order to preserve Turkey, the handover of cities to Serbia might be the only solution. In practical measures of Turkey in autonomous provinces, he saw the continuation of a policy that had already begun in Romania and Montenegro.¹⁹ Stanley was not willing to give more precise definitions, as he had written off to the British diplomacy missions.

¹⁷ FO, 881/1500, Longworth to Lord Stanley, Belgrade, November 5, 1866; Г. Јакшић, В. Вучковић, *op. cit.*, 303–306.

¹⁸ K. Bourne, *Great Britain and the Cretan Revolt, 1866–1869*, *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 35, No. 84 (1956) 74–94.

¹⁹ FO, 881/1500, Lord Stanley to Lord Cowley, November 19, 1866.

A few days later, the French ambassador brought him a telegram from Moustier. In it, the French minister expressed a strong desire to work in Serbian affairs in concert with England. Stanley called for an already existing arrangement from early November 1866 that the two countries worked in concert. He recalled the common view that liberal concessions would be a very wise gesture by Turkey, especially in the case of more remote provinces which already enjoyed a high degree of autonomy. As we have seen, Stanley continued to observe general provisions, stressing that it was important to examine the mood of the Ottoman government. He was testifying that at the end of November he still had no clear position, sending his message to the ambassador in Paris that he had the impression that the entire enterprise with the cities would collapse, but that it was still early to think about what should be done at that moment. It was also referred to the reports from Paris that Moustier often spoke about the aspirations of the Serbian government to free themselves from the Turks, but that he did not say whether Turkey should accept demands.²⁰

However, Consul Longworth from Belgrade had a completely different view of the city question, which he presented to the ambassador in Constantinople Lyons on November 20. He considered that the possible concessions to Serbia could be only Mali Zvornik and Sakar, as military irreplaceable points for Turkey. As for the Belgrade fortification, things were, according to the British consul, quite different.

Namely, in May 1866, Longworth proposed that Turkey renounce Romania in favor of Austria in order to strengthen the dam against the breakthrough of Russia, and that Turkey should direct force to the reconstruction and armaments of the fortresses on the Sava and the Danube, and force Serbia to dissolve the national army.²¹ In November 1866, Longworth was, it is gentle to say outside the clock, when he spoke to Prince Mihailo and his superiors about why it was impossible for Turkey to renounce the Belgrade fortress. Any prior and later concession would have the effect of increasing the appetite and new demands of Serbia, he argued. Therefore, he defended the idea of Belgrade as the bastion of the Ottoman Empire, regardless of the current state of the fortress and its actual weakness. Belgrade was always much more than a material building – a symbol of the Sultan's power “from Belgrade to Baghdad,” said consul Longworth. If Turkey renounced Belgrade, it would be as if it had lost a “half of the empire,” said the British consul, deliberately underlining the fact that to Belgrade belonged the glory thanks to the Turkish greatness, unlike anonymous Serbia whose name could never carry such a strong symbolic.²²

At the source of events, in Constantinople, Lyons had a reserved attitude to the Turkish Foreign Minister, and to the Serbian representative. Both of them were in his

²⁰ FO, 881/1500, Lord Cowley to Lord Stanley, Paris, November 22, 1866; Lord Stanley to Lord Cowley, November 23, 1866; J. Ристић, *op. cit.*, 538–539; Archive of Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (=ASANU), 12577/Б6, prints from French archives.

²¹ Г. Јакшић, В. Вучковић, *op. cit.*, 225.

²² FO, 881/1500, Longworth to Lord Lyons, Belgrade, November 21, 1866; Љ. П. Ристић, *op. cit.*, 227.

residence. The former explained to him the delicacy of the situation from the positions of Turkish feelings and rights, with the allusion that the prince's request, sparked by the best possible style and language, would not be completely rejected. Ristić was clear to the British ambassador: if Serbia did not get cities from Turkey, in the future, it will not ask for anything more; if it did not receive them, it would seek other ways to satisfy its legitimate feelings of national pride and to overcome the limitations on the path of further spiritual and economic development. Lyons asked for closer instructions for work and suggested a concerted deal with France, as both Russia and Austria had already expressed their views in favor of Serbia.²³

Stanley's nirvana and flat-rate forecasts sparked statements by Austrian officials that Belgrade had no military significance for Turkey, and that all international treaties should be left aside and Turkey be persuaded to hand over fortresses to Serbs. This, in Vienna's view, would save the Great Powers of possible conflicts and unrest between Christians and Muslims and bring peace to the borders of Austria. Concluding that the constant proliferation of Serbia, which had been taking place for a long time, could lead to realization of Russian threats that the Prince would receive Belgrade by will or by force, Stanley himself began to look differently at the Serbian request. What contributed to it was the news from Paris that Turkey was so absorbed in various internal problems, and that the visit of the Serbian Prince to the Sultan should be accepted as a proper satisfaction for the cities and continue on.²⁴ At the beginning of December 1866, the British Cabinet found itself lonely against the French, the Viennese and the Russian. Gorchakov called on the British Cabinet to join, asking all the Great Powers to make the most practical thing to avoid the general movement of Christians against Turkey.²⁵

Stanley announced instructions to Lyons on December 11, 1866. He did not want the British government to put pressure on the Ottoman government in association with other Great Powers, and pointed out that England, as a proven friend of Turkey, could only give advice, respecting the full right of the Ottoman Empire to be independent in deciding. Nevertheless, Stanley suggested to Lyons that Turkey should get rid of the ballast of tradition and former glory, in order to find a rational and beneficial solution. Money for fortresses in Serbia was only a burden, and it was clear that, over time, they should be abandoned. Otherwise, it would give Serbia a reason to use the disagreements of the Christians in the Balkans against Turkey. Offering his observations for evaluation, Stanley directed Lyons to support the Sultan in resisting the pressure from the other side, because the extorted solutions were not permanent.²⁶ On the same day, with the notion "confidential", Stanley warned that Aali Pasha should draw attention to the consequences that could result in Turkey due

²³ FO, 881/1500, Lord Lyons to Lord Stanley, Constantinople, November 21, 1866.

²⁴ FO, 881/1500, Lord Lyons to Lord Stanley, Constantinople, November 28, 1866; Lord Cowley to Lord Stanley, Paris, December 8, 1866.

²⁵ FO, 881/1500, Andrew Buchanan to Lord Stanley, Saint Petersburg, December 4, 1866.

²⁶ FO, 881/1500, Lord Stanley to Lord Lyons, December 11, 1866.

to Russia's strong influence on European politics. It is obvious that Britain was more concerned of leaving Russia out of isolation, after the Crimean War, than handing over the cities to Serbia. Stanley imposed strict control over the Ottoman government in order not to fall under the Russian influence, since in the end the joint action of the European force was better from giving Turkey to Russia's influence. In a confidential telegram to Lyons on December 12, Stanley gave the possibility that the Sultan would entrust the administration of the fortresses to the Serbian Prince, who would keep them in the Sultan's name. Thus, the Serbs would be freed from the presence of the Muslim garrison, and the Sultan's flag would remain on the Belgrade fortress as a sign of his supreme authority.²⁷

It is easy to see that Stanley was resolved to leave the reserve immediately after the Foreign Office received news about Marinović's return, and about the good reception he had with the Russian emperor, but also with Bismarck in Berlin, and in Vienna. Until then, reports from Belgrade about the permanent armaments of the Serbian army were taken informatively, but a quick response ensued in relation to the news from the beginning of December that military exercises in Belgrade and Kragujevac were performed continuously and that the arsenal was filled without interruption. In the first fifteen days of January 1867, he wrote to Lyons with telegrams and instructions, instructing him to urgently cooperate with his French colleague, and to stand unanimously. Stanley said that the British government considered it desirable that the Sultan should immediately take, without delay, a public and spontaneous action into his own hands and make fortresses as his gift to the Serbian Prince. These instructions from London were of great importance for the success of Serbia's diplomatic action, because in January a stalemate power prevailed among Turkish ministers. Lyons immediately started the action, "formally for us", and in fact in the interests of Turkey, as the Serbian representative had noticed.²⁸ Under the instructions of Stanley, Lyons pressured Aali Pasha. He suggested that it was best for Turkey to make a positive decision as soon as possible, and if there was any resistance, he and the French ambassador should persuade that Turkey would not get the needed loan. Aali Pasha noted with regret that it was quite clear that Turkey had no support among the European powers and that it remained alone. Lyons warned him that such decision was in Turkey's interest and that, in addition to being a victim, it had to be done to prevent numerous complications that could be fatal to Turkey. On the same day, on January 22, 1867, the British Embassy in Constantinople received the answer that the ministers were sitting and decided to settle the matter "in accordance with the advice of England and France".²⁹

When asked what caused the change of the British government's attitude towards Serbian claims, sources point to one single conclusion: fears of the dominance of the

²⁷ FO, 881/1500, December 11, 1866 (confidential, No 140); December 12, 1866 (confidential, No 141).

²⁸ J. Ристић, *op. cit.*, 540–543.

²⁹ FO, 881/1500, Lord Lyons to Lord Stanley, Constantinople, January 2, 16, and 22, 1867; Lord Stanley to Lord Lyons, January 14, 1867; ASANU, 12577/66, prints from French archives.

Russian influence in Constantinople and the growing degree of its participation in the Eastern issues, because Russia threatened that influence on the European politics, and the Balkan Christians, would turn into an exclusive right, as it was before the Crimean War. Fearing that Russia would raise an uprising in the Balkans, Lyons insisted that Aali Pasha tell to the Serbian representative that the Belgrade issue would be resolved. It happened on January 28, 1867, the day when his colleague from Belgrade announced with a telegram that Serbia sent two military battalions to the border with Bosnia and sent a secret proclamation to Serbs at the Habsburg border inviting them to join in the fight against the Turks. Lyons immediately informed the French representative and Aali Pasha about this. On February 4, Jovan Ristić was unofficially announced that Serbia would stand by and postpone any action, because Turkey was friendly.

There were delays from the Turkish side. Lyons said that the Ottoman government was close to the decision that the Belgrade fortress collapsed. That is why he repeated a warning that any further disposal was dangerous. After that followed the breakthrough step by Turkey, according to the British advice, that the Belgrade fortress, together with other fortifications, be surrendered to Prince Mihailo to management and guard, as a gift for the Prince's loyalty and respect for the Sultan. The Sultan made such decision on February 17, in effect from February 18, 1867. On the eve of the final decision, the minister of foreign affairs Aali Pasha was dismissed and replaced with the more fussy Fuad Pasha.³⁰

The letter, or the response of the Grand Vizier from March 3, 1867, can be considered the definitive end of the city issue. Two days earlier, the Prussian diplomat sent a particularly ironic remark to the Serbian representative Ristić that Serbia looked like a coquette that swirled and prepared for the fiesta. But when she left there was no fiesta. Ristić replied with the same measure: "There is the dress left! That is the point – to have the pleasure that the fiesta brings, and not being tired of playing there".³¹

The behavior of the Vienna cabinet in these events was very strange. The Austrian diplomat in London said that the Monarchy's interest in the events in the immediate neighborhood was high. He also pointed out that there was a "cross" of Austria's rights in the area south of its borders, while for it a critical issue was "outside the sphere of interest". Beus and Moustier agreed before that there would be no conferences on the Eastern issue³², where various wishes of Christians could arise in connection with compensation for the account of Turkey. That, but also all revolutionary movements, had to be decisively suppressed by the decision of the two cabinets. Recognizing Paris as "the center of diplomatic action in the East" since 1856, Beust was trying to keep the situation in Turkey after giving the cities of Serbia as

³⁰ FO, 881/1500, Lord Lyons to Lord Stanley, Constantinople, January 29, 1867 (Confidential, No 41); Lord Lyons to Lord Stanley, Constantinople, February 13, 1867 (Confidential, No 41); Lord Lyons to Lord Stanley, Constantinople, February 18, and March 6, 1867.

³¹ ASANU, 14556/452, J. Ristić to Ilija Garašanin, March 13, 1867.

³² The Paris Conference, in January 1869, solved only the Crete issue.

long as possible, and to prepare for itself the space in which to operate in the future. That is why he decided on a very strange thing, an unnatural diplomatic step, it can be said.

After receiving the news about the still undisclosed information that the Serbian demands were fulfilled, the Austrian diplomat in Belgrade Lenk, following the order of his government, went at three o'clock in the morning to announce it to Prince Mihailo exclusively. Turkey did not think of any satisfaction for such an indiscretion. This act further offended the representatives of other Great Powers in Constantinople, and their superiors. Vienna tried to explain this act with the need to stop Prince Mihailo to move to Bosnia, and the fear that Russia would use such a step for Serbia for its interests. Moustier himself defended this non-tactical move of the government in Vienna and said that in Turkey a much more serious turn was prepared than the Greek one, which was a "Slav Movement".³³ The original material of Russian provenance indicates that the above-mentioned charges on Russia's account were not entirely unfounded. In Vienna, they used them very skilfully to denounce and discredit Russia in the eyes of the Great Powers, which is not the subject of this paper.

After five months of exhausting tensions and the successful resolution of the city question, the diplomats in Constantinople began with "questioning" who of them was the most meritorious for a happy, saved peace in the East. Frenchman Bureau deeply considered himself to be the most deserving, while the Austrian representative Prokesch-Osten was told that he "was overwhelmed by the weight." Lyons give gentlemanlike the first place to Ignatyev, although he reported to his capital that the councils from London played a decisive role. Ignatyev was wisely silent, aware of the fact that Britain's fears of spreading the Russian influence on the Ottoman government and among Christians most contributed to Britain coming out of the eternal reserve and exerting pressure on the Ottoman government.³⁴ The role of Britain in the events of 1867 was pointed out by the famous Serbian diplomat and politician Jovan Marinović. In his memoir "The City Question", written in 1877, he expressed the opinion that the influence of this force on the Ottoman government contributed most to the positive solution of the Serbian request, but it did not "praise itself".³⁵

Without a doubt, the abandonment of fortifications in Belgrade, Šabac, Kladovo and Smederevo opened the issue of the heritage of Turkish possessions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, for which the most interested forces were Austria-Hungary and Russia. These events were only the overture for the Great Eastern crisis, which was delayed until the two most interested parties were sufficiently reinforced to settle with the remains of the Turkish authorities both west of Serbia and east of Timok in the Danube vilayet.

³³ FO, 881/1500, Lord Lyons to Lord Stanley, Constantinople, January 29, February 21 and 27, 1867; ASANU, 12577/66, prints from French archives, January 15, 1867.

³⁴ ASANU, 14556/452, Jovan Ristić to Ilija Garašanin, Constantinople, March 13, 1867; *ibidem*, 14556/456, Jovan Ristić to Ilija Garašanin, Constantinople, May 21, 1867.

³⁵AS, IG, 1573.

Suzana RAYIÇ

1866/1867 YILLARINDA BÜYÜK BRİTANYA DIŞİŞLERİ BÜROSU
GİZLİ YAZIŞMALARINDA BELGRAD VE ŞEHİRLER SORUNU

Özet

Sırbistan'daki şehir kalelerinin devri ve Osmanlı garnizonlarının ayrılması, Sırbistan'ın otonomisinin güçlendirilmesinde büyük rol oynayan, on yıl sonra (1878) gerçekleşecek olan Sırp devletinin bağımsızlığına giden yolu açan son derece önemli bir olaydır. 1866 yılının Haziran ayında Büyük Britanya, muhafazakârların lideri olan Lord Derby'nin başında olduğu yeni bir hükümete sahip olmuştur. Dış ilişkiler, oğlu Lord Stanley'e emanet edilmiştir. Doğu sorunu ile alâkalı olarak İngiliz muhafazakârlarından beklenen tutum, statükoyu devam ettirip Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nu koruyacak bir yol izlemektir. Ona rağmen, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun mütemadiyen devam eden gerilemesinin farkında olup olaylara karşı rasyonel bir bakış açısından yoksun değillerdi. Fransa ve Rusya XIX. yüzyılın 60'lı yıllarının başlangıcından beri Balkanlardaki milliyetçi hareketler konusundaki projelerini daha da güçlendirerek Büyük Britanya'nın tepkisine yol açmışlardır.

Sırplar, şehir kalelerinin devredilmesi ile ilgili taleplerini Bâb-ı Âli'ye sunduklarında Lord Stanley bunun acil bir konu olmadığına kanaat getirerek onun yakın bir gelecekte gündeme gelemeyeceğine inanmaktaydı. Bu konuyla ilgili olarak ayrıntılara girilmesinin gereksiz olduğunu, olayların ciddi bir şekilde değerlendirme şartlarının oluşmadığını iddia ediyordu. Ancak, sadece üç ay sonra Stanley'nin fikri değişmiştir. Sırbistan'ın devam eden silahladırılması ve Rusya'nın Balkanlardaki Osmanlı egemenliğine karşı ayaklanma hazırlıklarına katıldığı haberi, Britanya'yı sürdürdüğü çekimserliğinden vazgeçmeye zorlamıştır. Britanya, diğer büyük güçlerle birlikte Bâb-ı Âli'nin üzerine baskı yapmamakta bir süre direndikten sonra elçisine Bâb-ı Âli önünde Fransız meslektaşları ile beraber hareket etmesi için emir vermiştir.

Lord Stanley, Britanya Hükümeti adına Bâb-ı Âli'ye Osmanlı padişahının hiç vakit kaybetmeden meseleyi açık ve alenen ele alması gerektiğini ileterek kaleleri Sırbistan prensine armağan olarak teslim etmesi gerektiğini bildirmiştir. Londra'dan gelen bu talimatlar, Osmanlı nazırlarının uzlaşmaz tavırları sergiledikleri anda Sırbistan'ın diplomatik hamlesinin başarılı olmasında önemli bir rol oynamıştır. Talimatların sunulduğu 22 Ocak 1867 tarihinde bakanlar, Britanya Elçiliğine verdikleri cevapta meseleyi 'Büyük Britanya ve Fransa'nın tavsiyeleri' doğrultusunda çözeceklerini iletmışlerdir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sırbistan, Belgrad, Osmanlı, Büyük Britanya, Prens Mihailo, Edward Henry Stanley, Richard Bickerton, Pemell Lyons.

Сузана РАЈИЋ

**БЕОГРАД И ПИТАЊЕ ГРАДОВА 1866/1867. У ПОВЕРЉИВОЈ ПРЕПИСЦИ
МИНИСТАРСТВА СПОЉНИХ ПОСЛОВА ВЕЛИКЕ БРИТАНИЈЕ**

Резиме

Уступање градских утврђења Србији и исељавање турских посада из њих представља догађај од великог значаја за снажење српске аутономије и за утирање независности српске државе, до које је дошло деценију касније (1878). У јуну 1866. године Британија је добила нову владу предвођену лордом Дербијем, вођом конзервативаца. Спољни послови поверени су његовом сину, лорду Стенлију. У погледу Источног питања од енглеских конзервативаца могао се очекивати курс заснован на status-quo и очувању Турске. Ипак, свесни константног опадања Турске, они нису били лишени рационалног погледа на ствари. Француска и Русија су од почетка шездесетих година 19. века фаворизовале своје пројекте у питањима националних покрета на Балкану, што је изазвало реакције Велике Британије.

Када је српски захтев за уступањем градских утврђења доспео пред Порту, лорд Стенли је сматрао да то питање не захтева хитно решавање и да не верује да ће оно у скорије време доћи на дневни ред. Тврдио је да нема потребе за упуштањем у детаље, пре него се стекну услови да се то питање озбиљно разматра. После само три месеца Стенли је променио мишљење. Вести о континуираном наоружавању Србије и умешаност Русије у припремама устанка на Балкану против турске власти, приморали су Британију да изађе из резервисаности. Та сила је неко време истрајавала у отпору да врши притисак на Порту у друштву са осталим великим силама. На крају је наредила свом амбасадору да пред Портом наступи заједнички са француским колегом.

У име британске владе Лорд Стенли је поручио Порти да је пожељно да султан одмах, без одлагања, јавно и спонтаном акцијом узме ствари у своје руке и да тврђаве преда као свој поклон српском кнезу. Та упутства из Лондона била су од велике важности за успех српске дипломатске акције, у тренутку када је међу турским министрима преовладала непопустљива струја. Истог дана када су уручене, 22. јануара 1867, у британско посланство на Босфору стигао је одговор да су министри заседали и одлучили да питање реше „у складу са саветима Енглеске и Француске”.

Кључне речи: Србија, Београд, Турска, Велика Британија, кнез Михаило, Едвард Хенри Стенли, Ричард Бикертон, Пемел Лајонс.