

Analytical Study on Balkan Wars: The Polarization of the International Relation, from Allies to Enemies, on the eve of the First World War

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ABSTRACT

The research investigates what historical events caused the Ottoman Empire to fight against Balkan nations seeking independence from their domination. The writing outlines the path of combat during the war, while also analyzing how the Balkan Wars influenced both regional areas and international diplomacy leading up to World War I. The research methodology combines qualitative research with secondary literature to evaluate the effect of the Balkan wars on International Policy. The collection of data relies on literary research that uses corresponding publications and scholarly articles, and various other materials as secondary documentation. Research findings showed that the war resulted in solidifying the regional socio-political unity, together with homogeneity. Ambition combined with personal animosity between rulers of the Balkan countries and the Ottoman Empire remained the chief reason behind the Balkan Wars. The war developed because of the sultanate's decline, together with Russian control, Turkish Italian warfare, nationalism, propaganda as well as Balkan force alliances, and a lack of diplomatic efforts. Geopolitical transformations emerged from the Balkan War as it simultaneously turned into a devastating humanitarian crisis, which started the chain of events that led to the First World War. This research functions as an educational framework for counselors and educational experts to develop proficiency in the Balkan Wars and the First World War. Readers who acquire information from this research will gain a detailed understanding of the reasons behind the conflict between the Empire and Balkan nations confronting freedom. A distinctive element of this research focused on analyzing how the wars led to the beginning of World War I. National and international governments, along with peace advocates and policy makers, need to study the collective war memories to enhance cultural identity while rebuilding national consciousness so they can establish regional relationships for developing a better resilient nation.

Keywords: *Balkan Wars, Ottoman Empire, Polarization, International Relation, First World War, Nationalism.*

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INTRODUCTION

South-Eastern Europe experienced rapid and violent warfare known as Balkan Wars throughout 1912 and extending through 1913 winter and spring to summer. The time period when the Balkan Wars took place resembled the pre-Ottoman Empire conditions of Europe before its arrival. Ottoman control in Europe persisted for longer than 500 years before the occupied territories decided to eradicate Ottoman control of their lands (Wesley & Gewehr, 1931). During Turkish governmental instability Serbia and Bulgaria along with Greece and Montenegro ventured to initiate the First Balkan War. The main purpose behind Balkan states' military operation was to eliminate Ottoman Empire control throughout the region and then share retrieved territories between themselves (Holt, Lucius, Alexander, & Chilton, 1917).

Besides Russia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire various other European states maintained strong interest in this issue because Russia needed Black Sea access and the Austro-Hungarian Empire opposed both Russian access and Serbian dissolution (Edward & Thaden, 1965). The Balkan states consumed eight months to dismantle every European territorial goal of the Ottoman Empire until practically eliminating everything. The core reasons why four sparse states attacked an ex-world power during this transition were driven by two elements - the fast-expanding nationalistic movement in those states and Turkey's weakening governance which bolstered the belligerents' confidence. Nationalism enabled Turkish attacks yet the declining status of Turkey as "sick man of Europe" served as the primary cause for starting the war. A historic opportunity had arrived for Balkan states to unite against Ottoman territorial movements in contested ethnically disputed land as will be outlined in this discussion.

MATERIALS & METHODS

The research methodology combines qualitative research through secondary literature that evaluates the Balkan wars' effect on International Policy. A descriptive qualitative approach to literature study was utilized which consists of planned activities to explain and disclose informant interpretations through description. The collection of data relies on literary research that uses corresponding publications and scholarly articles and various other materials as secondary documentation. The research contains multiple photographs and applicable information tables.

Introduction to the Balkan region

The Balkan region refers to a historical region in Southeastern Europe, and this region is also known as the Balkan Peninsula. The locale consists of three peninsula located in the easternmost part of Europe. Although the countries included in the region are disputed, generally the region consisting of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia is called the Balkan region. Many also consider parts of Greece and Turkey to be part of this region. Not only the country but also the border of the region is disputed. But to controversy, generally speaking, the region is bordered by Italy on the northwest, Hungary on the north, Moldova and Ukraine on the north and northeast, and Greece and Turkey on the south, or the Aegean Sea (Encyclopedia of Britannica, 2018).

'Balkan' is a Turkish word meaning "wooded mountains"; geographically the region is so named because its western part is particularly mountainous. Except for the Danube, Sava and Vardar river valleys and the Aegean seaboard, the mountain-rich Balkan Peninsula stretching from the Serbia-Bulgaria border to the Black Sea is marked by a paucity of arable land. The feature of the geography has influenced the climate of the region. The northern and central Balkan region has a Central European climate, characterized by cold winters, warm summers,



and moderate rainfall. On the other hand, the southern and coastal areas are influenced by the Mediterranean climate with dry and hot summers and rainy winters. A notable feature of the Balkan Peninsula is its ethnic diversity. A sense of individuality prevails among the various ethnic groups as the mountainous topography isolates them from each other. Few places in the world have such a large number of ethnic groups living in an area of only 2, 57, 400 square miles (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2018).

Historical Background of Balkan Conflicts

From early times, the Balkans region maintained strategic importance within international standards for both regional and worldwide influences. The Balkan region has a key strategic position between worldwide regions because it combines multiple geographic advantages and natural wealth. Many empires and nations waged countless wars during history to gain authority over this susceptible strategic area because of its vital geopolitical position (Laura, 2011).

Non-Muslims were able to live within Muslim governance under a policy that required payment of jizya or tax since the time of Rasulullah SAW. The system grants non-Muslims protection of their rights together with equal social responsibilities. They are called *Zimmis*. The origin of Dhimmi policy began when the Prophet found a polytheist defeated in battle who was the first to receive such treatment. Xenophobia policies established by Prophet Rasulullah SAW continued to be enforced by his subsequent caliphates until the Ottoman Caliphate period. The primarily Christian Balkan territories managed to exist through five Ottoman Turkish centuries by maintaining the same policy. The Muslims launched their conquest of this Balkan Peninsula soon after conquering Constantinople in 1453.



Figure 1. Political Map of the Balkan States and Surrounding Regions as of 1912.

Serbia experienced Ottoman rule in 1459 while Bosnia and Herzegovina fell to Ottoman control in 1465 AD as Greece including Morea and Euboea submitted to Ottoman rule during 1468 AD. Together with Muslim achievements from expansion came the slow European nation's attempt to end its prolonged sleep. After the 1789 through 1815 French Revolution the Dark Ages which others refer to as the Dark Ages finally faded away and gave rise to human rights along with nationalist movements. According to Lenczowski (1934), after being governed by the Ottoman Turks the idea caused significant disruption in the subjected states. From the 15th century onward the Ottoman Empire worked as a major power to control the Balkan region until the 18th century when Ottoman officials began their conflict against

neighboring regional powers including the Austrian Empire. Several states in the region including the Austrian Empire and Russia sought an opportunity to enforce dominance across the region at the same time the Balkan peoples pursued their national aspirations thereby triggering many years of warfare between these powers. The Hungarians won independence from the Ottoman Empire through their empowered status within 1804 and Greece won their independence through intense revolution and outside support in 1832. The first Balkan attackers against the Turks were Serbs even while Greek autonomy existed first but Serbs kept fighting against the Ottoman Empire to win their independence in 1867 under Sultan rule (Laura, 2011).

People in Bosnia and Herzegovina were subjected to Sultan rule but they intensely disliked Ottoman authorities and expressed their desire to become part of Serbia after gaining autonomy. The Ottoman Empire received its name "The Eastern Question" as it approached rupture because all ongoing conflicts refused to let go while every resolution resulted in failure. Russia and France simultaneously attempt to rescue Christians in Ottoman territory while Russia promotes defense of Orthodox believers and France defends Catholic interests. Austria on the other hand looks to Expand into the Balkans.

The revolt in Herzegovina occurred because Ottoman tax officials used cruel tactics to collect payments thus igniting "The Eastern question." The rebels who belonged to Serbia, Montenegro and Bulgaria received help from volunteers as they united against their shared enemy the Serbs (Lenczowski, 1934).

The Russian military engaged in war against the Ottoman Empire after Serbia and Bulgaria formed a coalition with Romania and Montenegro. The Russian Army achieved conquest of Istanbul while the year came to an end yet British forces hurried to stop their ancient foe from taking control of the same territory. In 1878 Russia recognized it could not achieve its goals so an agreement was made in San Stefano peace treaty with the Ottoman Empire. The treaty accepted different strengths and weaknesses because Russia utilized its strong positions by claiming Romanian territory and Serbian and Montenegrin independence from Ottoman rule as well as securing parts of Caucasus Territory (Evera, 1999).

Through Berlin Treaty stipulation in 1878 the two combatants Serbia and Montenegro obtained their independence from Ottoman rule. Exactly one day before the Bosnian Crisis began Bulgaria announced its complete independence in 1908. The European powers guided Greece in its independence from Ottoman rule during 1832 because Greece had previously left Ottoman control.

During the Bosnian Crisis Russia and Austria-Hungary allowed their relationship to deteriorate while the Balkan Peninsula faced new instability because both powers wanted to exploit Ottoman rule collapse (Wesley & Gewehr, 1931). Compact states within Albania experienced armed rebellion against Ottoman rule and then struggled against Young Turk government control over the Balkan lands during their attempts to enforce Ottomanization (Wesley & Gewehr, 1931).

The region experienced rapid Turkish power decline which led to national instability while the world primarily focused on the Italo-Turkish War alongside the Bosnia embezzlement. The Italian victory in their objective served as motivation for the Balkan states to create the four-way alliance referred to as the Balkan League for future territorial conquests in March 1912. Austria-Hungary and Germany opposed the League because of historian "containment of Russia" analysis and their opposition to Ottoman Empire breakup (Geoffrey & Blainey, 1973). Other powers showed "status quo" opposition but refused to join the League because of their support for existing alliances.



The desire of Russia to develop its territories led to its complete support for Balkan League activities and desire for proactive measures yet Russia resisted allowing Bulgaria to control the Black Sea region (Belleza, 2022). The participants formed exclusive agreements before the incident to distribute specific territorial advantages if they fought against Turkey. Several treaties detailed the underlying purposes of state offensive collaborations because Serbia wanted Albanian and Macedonian regions while Bulgaria sought Macedonian territories and Greece wanted Crete alongside the Montenegrin desire for Albanian territories. Montenegro maintained limited participation in the plot to cleanse the Balkans from Ottoman rule but declared war after the other members due to its understanding of removing foreign opposition.

The Balkan League members held distinct territorial goals against Turkey which they could not achieve through their own strength and did not provide enough reason for launching a fully committed war.

Formation of Powerful Anti-Ottoman League

The Balkan states formed a strategic alliance to remove Turkish presence from European soil after its imminent Ottoman decline from the Turkish-Italian War and additional factors. All Balkan states refused to let their neighbors seize individual sections of Ottoman territory which demanded combined action for achieving victory. During that era Türkiye was a vulnerable empire that managed to handle each Balkan state independently. The Ottoman Empire was weakened at that time but still possessed enough strength to confront each Balkan state individually. Following the Austrian and Hungarian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina both Italy and Bulgaria promoted Balkan nations to unite. Although their intentions were genuine they failed to find paths toward unity without basic communication between one another.

Türkiye chose to continue working with Bulgaria for military purposes in order to counter Serbia even after observing numerous conflicts among strong states (Ristelhueber, 1971). A basic degree of unity developed when Balkan states formed the Balkan League despite their substantial internal differences. The Balkan League developed as a four-sided alliance due to multiple agreements between Greece Bulgaria Serbia and Montenegro as Eastern Orthodox states. For the creation of the Balkan League Greek Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos together with Serbian Prime Minister Milovan Milovanovic and Bulgarian Prime Minister Ivan Gesov took the most prominent roles. When the league was forged its primary function was to avoid conflicts between the Ottoman Empire, Russia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Establishment of Alliance between Serbia and Bulgaria

The first bilateral agreement about forming a Balkan League arose from Bulgaria and Serbia together with Russian mediating functions. Russia aimed to acquire Balkan state friendships following the Crimean War to protect its Mediterranean Sea dominion which faced threats. The appearance of Russia as Bulgaria's protector followed independence in 1908 AD after the Austro-Hungarian Empire lost out to gain Ottoman support. Russia helped Bulgaria conclude peace terms with the Ottomans making them become friends. The Austro-Hungarian Empire pursued their plan to take control of Serbia during 1907 AD for Balkan domination but Russia stepped forward when Serbia searched for allies to fight this expansion.

Serbian and Bulgarian reconciliation occurred after Albania started its revolution against the Ottoman Empire since Serbian Southward expansion ambitions would end if Albanian autonomy gained ground. Serbia lost its northern expansion prospects when the Austro-



Hungarian Empire annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1908 AD so it exploited this Serbian decline to secure Bulgarian support for Macedonian control after Ottoman rule ended (Despot, 2012). Serbia lost northern ambitions after Austro-Hungarian Empire seized Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1908 AD so they pursued Bulgarian support to claim Macedonian control upon Ottoman rule termination (Ristelhueber, 1971).

The Treaty between Bulgaria and Greece

The agreement between Serbia and Bulgaria made it evident that Greece had to choose a side in the conflict. Upon gaining power from military backing Greek Prime Minister Venizeles conducted domestic reforms while working on extending Greek imperial projects into the Balkan territory. Venizeles recognized the need for a Balkan alliance with Slav states to gain control of Crete as well as Epirus and Thessaly thereby starting talks with Bulgarian Prime Minister Pesov. On May 29 1912 AD Greece signed an alliance treaty with Bulgaria. On October 5 the Joint Military Convention set a goal for Bulgaria to form 300,000 soldiers in addition to 120,000 Greek troops (Despot, 2012).

The Treaty between Serbia and Montenegro

This agreement, signed on October 6, 1912, can be said to be an extension of the agreement signed between Serbia and Bulgaria. Not only was the treaty against the Ottoman Empire, it also considered the Austro-Hungarian Empire as an opposing party, noting that Montenegro had made a verbal agreement with Bulgaria prior to the treaty with Serbia. According to this agreement, Montenegro agreed to go to war against Turkey first, and in return, Bulgaria promised it a certain amount of financial aid every month during the war. The process of forming the Balkan League was completed through the above alliance agreement between Montenegro and Serbia, and reviewing the context and formation process of the Balkan League, it can be said that Bulgaria was the center of this league (Helmereich, 1937).

The First Balkan war (1912-1913)

The Balkan League entered war after Montenegro officially declared war against the Ottoman Empire on October 8th followed by the rest of the alliance in just 10 days. Within the Balkan League each section chose a unique tactical approach to fight against Turkey. Bulgaria prepared its armed military to drive directly into Thrace before threatening Constantinople while Serbian and Montenegrin forces operated to remove Turkish forces from Macedonia (Holt and Chilton 1917).

According to historians the Greek infantry had disabled combat skills and this led people to claim "If there is a war [between Greece and Turkey] we might likely see that the only thing Greek officers can do other than talking is to run away:" though their military navy successfully obstructed enemy logistical operations (Holt, Lucius, Alexander, & Chilton, 1917).

The Turkish military displayed better performance during its war preparation and execution phase than it had during the Italo-Turkish war. The Youthful Turks initiated a dynamic rebellion which tried to revitalize the Realm yet failed to create a modernized army although their primary efforts concentrated on building up a modernized army. The Balkan League took control of the declining Ottoman Domain because the territory experienced massive institutional failures and organizational chaos. During this period it was noted that supplies were insufficient and the officer corps lacked both efficiency and effectiveness as well as numerous soldiers broke their noses from incorrect firearm handling (Helmereich, 1937).



London Peace Conference and Treaty

After an obvious incline in the battle favoring the four allies and the proclamation of Albanian Freedom, transactions began to emerge at a London peace conference in December of that year. Any progress through negotiations was ended by a political change in Turkey; the resilient Young Turks had once more forcibly ousted the Sultanate and effectively ended the peace negotiations and armistice, favoring proceeding resistance against the Ottoman decline.

Eight months after the declarations of war, a more successful round of consultations led to the Treaty of London, subsequently ending the first Balkan War and clearing out Turkey without control over the Aegean Islands, Crete, and its former provinces in Europe and, excluding a small region stretching from Enos to Midia, harboring the Dardanelles and Bosphorus straits (Helmreich, 1937).



THE BALKAN PEACE CONFERENCE OF 1913 IN LONDON

1. Eleutherios Venizelos (Greece); 2. Andra Nikollitch (Serbia); 3. Stoyan Novakovitch (Serbia); 4. General Paprikoff (Bulgaria); 5. Dr. Daneff (Bulgaria); 6. Michael Madjaroff (Bulgaria); 7. Mustafa Rechad Pasha (Turkey); 8. Lazar Miontechkovitch (Montenegro); 9. Lieutenant-Colonel Popovitch (Montenegro); 10. Dr. Milenko Vesnitch (Serbia); 11. Osman Nizami Pasha (Turkey); 12. Mr. Skouloudis (Greece); 13. Lord Haldane; 14. George Streit (Greece); 15. Joannes Gennadius (Greece); 16. Str Edward Grey; 17. Count Volnovitch (Montenegro); 18. Premier Asquith

Figure 2. The Balkan Peace Conference in London, 1913.

The territorial gains created problems among alliance members by severing Serbian ground in Albania while Serbia sought territorial growth for itself which resulted in modest prizes despite its wartime contributions. During the pre-war era Bulgaria maintained possession claims over southern Macedonia which Greek and Serbian activity ultimately triggered Bulgaria into war. Serbia plainly refused to relinquish any part of its war-prized territory to Bulgaria through the abandonment of their Serbian-Bulgarian pre-World War treaty (Wesley & Gewehr, 1931).

Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia faced each other in a second Balkan War after their pre-war alliance because they pursued small remaining territories within Balkan territory.

The Second Balkan War (1913)

The Balkan War first conflict concluded when Britain signed the Treaty of London. Although it signed the Treaty of London, this agreement established no permanent Balkan

peace because it neglected to determine various Balkan states' claims toward Ottoman regional possessions they seized during the conflict. Bulgaria launched military strikes against both Greece and Serbia shortly after the conclusion of the first Balkan War leading to the start of the Second Balkan War because of disputes about seized territory control.

The main reason Bulgaria participated in the Balkan War focused on acquiring control of Macedonia. During June 1913 Bulgaria unexpectedly struck its former Balkan League members in a predominantly territorial operation that bore no strategic purpose. The Bulgarian military force collapsed within approximately one month at the hands of Greek and Serbian and Romanian troops. Bulgaria took on all her erstwhile Balkan confederates together with the Ottoman Empire and Romania during their involvement in the Second Balkan War of 1913. The Treaty of Bucharest from 10 August 1913 showed Bulgaria as the victorious power but confirmed the loss of Macedonia to Greece and Serbia while Romania received the southern Dobruja agricultural land.

When Bulgarian leaders saw Russia fail to shield their nation from her Balkan allies' attacks in 1913 they began looking for security from the Triple Alliance powers. During the Second Balkan War Bulgaria fought against an informal alliance of Montenegro along with Greece and Serbia and Romania and the Ottoman Empire. Escalation of armed conflict started on June 29th 1913 which provoked immediate hostilities for one month. The Allies had overcome Bulgaria.

During the Second Balkan War Turkish rule eliminated from the Balkans but Turkey retained Istanbul along with small areas surrounding its capital in Thrace. A direct conflict between Bosnia states over the Ottoman inheritance marked a new perspective for future hostile relations. The Bulgarian defeat marked an end for the existence of the Balkan League (Mikietynski, 2009). Bulgaria started a pursuit to identify a new political alliance after this incident. A Bucharest treaty signed in August 1913 together with the Constantinople treaty finalized the Second Balkan War. After a brief period of 364 days the Balkan nations once again took up arms against each other.

Battlefields and Onlookers

Different mental reactions along with positive and negative emotions emerged among peninsula residents when the Balkan Wars started. The fighting forces received equal intensity from dedicated defenders and equally dedicated opponents. The public displayed passionate backing for the “brothers in faith and in arms” at the same time that the political powers officially declared neutrality for the armed conflict (Kolev & Koulouri, 2009).

Political discourse regarding Balkan regional development intensified after wars began. The creation of new states in Ottoman territory emerged as a point of discussion in its European provinces. During the new political situation ordinary people experienced shock due to war disasters and uncertain peace prospects where victors planned to enforce their demands without considering others' requirements.

People from different religions and particularly Slavic nations developed a feeling of unity which caused significant concern for ruling governments from nearby non-participating nations that continued for multiple years beyond the conclusion of the wars (Jelvich, Charles, & Jelavich, 1996).

The attitudes of the Balkan people towards the Balkan Wars

The written materials throughout this chapter work to determine Balkan citizenry perspectives about the Balkan Wars under various political systems. The attitudes across different countries ranged between full commitment to create voluntary military forces and



general indifference with humor during the Balkan Wars. These natural reactions of the populace existed alongside political plans which seriously contradicted each other. People residing in Ottoman Empire provinces within the Balkan region reacted differently to the wars that took place in the Balkans. Different individuals joined the Ottoman military forces with the goal of protecting its institutional unity alongside those who fought to establish their own national sovereign states.

The Balkan Wars erupted just when Albania received its modest autonomy framework so the people of the country maintained mixed feelings towards the fighting nations. Protecting along with enlarging the autonomous territories forming part of the Albanian lands proved to be the primary objective. Temporary independence could be secured when acting as an ally to winning powers while benefiting from support from the Great Powers.

The Albanians discarded their historical demands for autonomy because of Ottoman military setbacks during the initial Balkan War thus pursuing total independence. New Albania faced a difficult existence from the Great Powers after independence because they continued to challenge each other through diplomatic maneuvering and military attacks during multiple years (Kolev & Koulouri, 2009).

The circumstances in Macedonia featured increased complexity in comparison to those present in Albania. Some political circles in the emigration revived the autonomy proposal stated in Article 23 which was part of the Berlin treaty written in 1878 as parts of its population desired neighboring nations' unification. Despite Austria-Hungary declaring official neutrality through Vienna the territories in Balkan provinces believed their commitment exceeded what central ministers in the capital understood.

During the Balkan Wars Slovenes demonstrated extensive interest and they openly showed their support for other South-Slav nations. The war achieved multiple representations which included fighting against Turkish control of suppressed nations as well as being a battle between Christianity and Islam and finally serving to unify South-Slav populations. Slovenian political parties lacked any specific strategy regarding national perspectives outside imperial borders but they all believed that liberating southern nations would enhance the status of Slav nations inside the Dual Monarchy.

The position as an allied member of Balkan nations allowed Croatia to develop specific awareness regarding the Balkan Wars. The Zagreb newspapers presented both analytical features together with reports about the combatant nations which received Croat opinions. The cartoons delivered criticism toward substantive information about both sides of the conflict. Presently part of Austria-Hungary since 1908 yet previously subject to Ottoman rule since centuries the province held an exceptional standing at the Balkan Wars commencement. Though the provincial government required neutrality the population showed no such restraint (Kolev & Koulouri, 2009).

After the War

Every war creates its results according to how winners and losers see them. Anything concerning political results links to map alterations and parameters concerning territorial areas and population changes. Every state and every society together with their families experience substantial life-altering impacts from war throughout numerous successive years. States together with societies manage to recover from destruction and disease and injuries within minimal time.

A whole generation faces an unalterable psychological trauma which people expressed as “the horrors of the war” during those times. These memories encompass grotesque human



rights abuses as well as the pain experienced when individuals lost loved ones or lost their homelands in addition to the grief expressed by refugee populations through the terms used by hundreds of thousands of displaced persons.

Traumatic memory gets passed down through time to subsequent generations before it gets included in historical records which allow its continuation across multiple generations.

The results of the Balkan Wars adopted patterns which follow historical trends. The aftermath of war brought physical pain and emotional fear which outlasted the conflict and drove citizens to leave their ruined homelands behind. In addition to this outward movement there was intensive population stress for those who stayed in areas that ended up part of new states during wartime. The political aspects of becoming a nation-state were not the total story (Kolev & Koulouri, 2009).

The First World War began precisely one year after the Balkan Wars finished which necessitated strong consequences to handle the situation. States that won conflicts during the Balkan Wars united with Entente constructivists whereas countries that felt defeated joined their enemy forces from Central Powers. Not all of them had an option as foreign armies launched invading attacks against their territories.

The majority of contemporaries alongside historians identify World War 1 as "the next Balkan war". This section avoids comprehensive documentation of Balkan War short and long-term consequences. According to Kolev & Koulouri (2009), the text presents multiple curated sources for studying how the post-war results produced vast secondary effects.

The Consequences of the Balkan Wars

The Balkan War established its status as one of major historical importance throughout Ottoman imperial history and European annals. The Ottoman defeat in this war became so extensive that it shaped both the future outlook and political direction of the empire.

The breakdown of the territorial integrity of the Ottoman

Nearly all parts of European territory vanished from the kingdom totaling 60,000 square miles while the population reached 4 million individuals. At that time Istanbul was home to Muslim refugees who had become homeless just like the 1878 situation. Refugees suffered high mortality levels from typhus and cholera epidemics at that location. Eastern Thrace remained the only Ottoman region preserved in Europe while the rest of the European territories were lost (Zurcher, 2003).

Public morality proves as the most significant influence. Ottoman military personnel together with the public refused to accept defeat at the hands of Balkan states whose territories had previously belonged to the grand Khilafah. Yusuf Akcura documented that his intellectual colleague observed the Ottoman defeat at the hands of "The Bulgarians, the Serbs, the Greeks whom we colonized for five centuries, whom we hate, defeated us."

The realization that we cannot conceive in our thoughts will awaken us only if our souls have not lost everything entirety (Rogan & Eugene, 2016). The Ottoman Empire failed to recognize the powerful nature of the Balkan areas which it previously held as territories.

The Balkans defended themselves against their underestimated strength thus created significant difficulty for the Ottomans to accept their loss and substantial territorial reductions.



Table 1. Area and population of the Balkan States before and after the War.

	Area in square miles		Estimated Population	
	Before the war	After the war	Before the war	After the war
Albania	...	11,317	...	850,000
Bulgaria	33,647	43,310	4,337,516	4,467,006
Greece	25,014	41,933	2,666,000	4,363,000
Montenegro	3,474	5,603	500,000	500,000
Romania	50,720	53,489	7,230,418	7,516,418
Serbia	18,650	33,891	2,911,701	4,527,992
Turkey in Europe	65,350	10,882	6,130,200	1,891,000

(Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Report of the International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars, 1914).

Enormous human devastation

The total Ottoman Turkish loss in human life during the First Balkan War reached approximately 100,000. War casualties of Ottoman forces numbered at 125,000 soldiers based on sources explaining their deaths through war and starvation and warfare-related diseases. The war produced 500 to 600 Ottoman POW deaths because Bulgarian forces killed them at Stara Zagora (Hall & Richard, 2000). Bulgaria suffered 14,000 fatal casualties together with 50,000 wounded and 19,000 deaths from illness during the First Balkan War. Under the evaluation of the Second Balkan War Bulgaria faced 18,000 casualties in addition to 60,000 wounded that led to 15,000 deaths from disease.

Bulgaria faced intensive warfare with Greece and Serbia in a brief period that caused its highest casualties in the Second Balkan War (Hall & Richard, 2000). The number of Greeks who perished and became injured in the 1st Balkan War amounted to 5,169 victims alongside 23,502 wounded soldiers. The Second Balkan War proved less destructive than the first since it claimed 2,563 lives as well as 19,307 wounded casualties.

During the First Balkan War Montenegro suffered a loss of 2,836 lives together with another 6,602 injured casualties. The majority of casualties during the Scutari military operations drove most of these losses. The Second Balkan War caused Montenegro to experience 240 mortalities while leaving another 961 individuals wounded. The casualties Montenegro incurred are considerable for its modest population size.

The total victors of both Balkan wars were Serbia. The Serbian military captured all planned targets in Albania, Macedonia, Thrace and defeated Bulgarian forces in Macedonia while simultaneously achieving substantial growth in land size and population. The territorial growth after the war more than likely led to severe mistreatment of Muslim people.

Setting aside the wrongdoings against its enemies Serbia managed to emerge victorious in the Balkan conflict despite its reported casualties of around 36,550 fatalities leaving 55,000 soldiers wounded. Hall (2000) shows Serbia sustained losses from the conflict with Bulgaria as 9,000 battlefield killed, 5,000 cholera deaths and 36,000 wounded soldiers.



Table 2. Casualties (Losses) incurred during the Balkan Wars.

Country	Population (in thousands)	Maximum strength of the armed forces (in thousands)	Killed and deceased (in thousands)	Casualties coefficient for the population (in %)	Casualties coefficient for the armed forces (in %)
1.Bulgaria	4430	607	30,000	0.68	4.9
2.Serbia	2910	175	5,000	0.17	2.8
3.Greece	2630	90	4,75	0.18	5.2
4.Monte Negro	247	30	2,00	0.80	6.6
Total (for coefficients- mean):	10217	902	41,75	0.46	4.9
5.Turkey	23000	400	50,00	0.22	12.5

(Georgiev, 1983)

The Political polarization in Istanbul

Political polarization intensified throughout Istanbul after the Ottoman Turks lost their territorial integrity. It did not matter as much to the Ottoman Turks that they lost Libya after they let go of Albania and Macedonia and Thrace. European territories have operated as the economic and administrative core of the Ottoman realm after the Byzantine Empire lost them five centuries ago. All three provinces lead the economic development and growth among all the provinces within the Kingdom. A large part of the ruling Ottoman elite originated from the wealthy provinces of Macedonia Thrace and Albania while these regions maintained their status as the highest developing areas (Rogan & Eugene, 2016).

The Refugee Problem

Serbia and Montenegro welcomed Albanians but Greeks opted to remove Albanian Muslim residents from their conquests. Persecution of Muslims spread during the period preceding Balkan War before Ottoman Turkish leadership suffered their fatal defeat in this battle. A significant number of Muslims lived predominately in Varna and Plovdiv (filipe) and Pleven during 1876 alongside being prevalent as a minor population in Sofia city.

Ottoman authorities brought 350,000 Crimean Muslim refugees to settle in the region starting from 100,000 Tartars and 90,000 Circassians after the Crimean War. According to McCarthy (2017), Mass migration towards Anatolia occurred because the 1877 Turkish-Russian war created disastrous consequences for Turkish Muslims.

The independence of Bulgaria in 1908 resulted in increased persecution toward Muslims which instigated a fresh immigration wave toward Turkey. Royal Bulgarian authorities maintained their religiously motivated policy to remove the Muslim community despite retaining their official position. Between 1876 and 1939 the Bulgarian Muslim population declined from 50% to 13% which reduced their number to 858,000 people in a total population of 6,600,000 (McCarthy, 2017).

In October 1912 the governments from Greece and Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro united to start an offensive against the Ottoman Turks for removing them from the Balkan



region. Their population represents only a small percentage in Ottoman European territories since Muslims make up 51% of their total subjects concentrated in western Albania together with eastern Turkey.

Their power faces constant danger from the dominant Muslim population that exists throughout their territory. To address the problem researchers advocate Muslim expulsion as well as extermination (McCarthy, 2017).

Table 3. Balkan Immigrants to Turkey (Mostly from Thrace and Macedonia)

Year	Number of Immigrants
1912-1913	177,352
1914-1915	120,566
1916-1917	18,912
1918-1919	22,244
1919-1920	74,848
Total	413,922

(Behar, 1996)

Ottoman finances suffered additional difficulties when they had to fund the financial expenses of the First Balkan War. Thousands of displaced persons require relocation to more stable settings. The combination of starvation makes the population susceptible to health outbreaks that typically strike those weakened by food shortages.

The government incurred massive expenses to reconstruct the Ottoman military forces following destruction resulting from losing two wars (Turkish-Italian War and Balkan War I). The reconstruction of resettlement areas created significant obstacles for authorities who ultimately failed to offer permanent residence to most refugees who became city slum dwellers afterwards (Shaw, Stanford, & Ezel, 1977).

The impact of Balkan wars in International Relation

Modernization together with peaceful development constituted the principal historical trend throughout the Balkans. After losing the war both Bulgaria and Turkey underwent a pursuit to acquire responsibility as they simultaneously used war instrument identifications for political purposes. During warfare, Serbia and Greece emerged victorious thus incorporating the Balkan conflicts into prolonged conflicts as World War I in Serbia and Asia Minor war in Greece.

The First World War developed about one year following the conclusion of the Second Balkan War. Elements of a progressive plot emerged during almost every Balkan nationalist movement that occurred throughout that time. The realization of specific goals and objectives heavily depended on intensely romantic violence-based and terror-based rhetoric. The secret societies of that time used shared rituals which included bizarre symbols and flags and oaths (Mikietynski, 2009).

Under the First World War period Serbs established two major organizations starting with National Defense in 1908 and later the Black Hand also known as Union or Death in 1911. Soon after the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary in 1908 the



National Defense organization took shape. The army officers created the Black Hand in 1911 after they discovered the National Defense exhibited no activity in Dual Monarchy relations (Access Date, 09.04.2014).

World War I started when the assassination took place of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie during their June 28, 1914 visit to Sarajevo. The visitors adopted a bad organizational approach because they decided to conduct the trip without proper security measures. Vidova Dan served as the Serbian national holiday on its annual occurrence since the Battle of Kosovo anniversary. Gavrilo Princip executed the act of assassinating Archduke Ferdinand as part of his revolutionary work in Bosnia. At that time all of the assassins belonged to extreme Serb nationalist movements.

A Serb radical group used the killing of Archduke Franz Ferdinand as a major justification for Austria-Hungary to wage war against Serbia. Humility wrapped the fatal incident at Sarajevo since it served merely as a vital opportunity for both Serbia settlement and final resolution "to settle accounts" against Serbia (Holger & Herwig, 1918). The Austrian-Hungarian government opted to wait before their counter action against Germany had been prepared.

The Dual Monarchy activated its military operation against Serbia based on its unified alliance with Germany for a strong and loyal defensive support in 1914. The mastery of the Balkans by Austria-Hungary failed to gain acceptance from Russia since it threatened a potential Serbian defeat. The alliance between Russia and Serbia proved beneficial for Serbia when Russia stood behind it.

The Balkan crisis in 1914 triggered World War I yet failed to result in global conflicts in similar circumstances across Europe during other times. Multiple explanations exist for this issue although both governments of Austro-Hungary and Serbia strongly believed their national credibility and glory faced risk domestically and internationally. Both nations approached foreign diplomacy with critical circumstances: Austria-Hungary did not desire the position of the weakened Ottoman Empire and Serbia rejected becoming a Russian protectorate.

These governments felt they could prosper from a potential war because Austria-Hungary possessed German support as well as Serbia's potential backing from Russia. At the beginning of the conflict both countries neglected to predict that European war might emerge. According to Richard & Hall (2011), the majority of individuals failed to foresee the prospective impact of World War which led to a lack of fear among either side.

CONCLUSION

The most prominent historical event of the Balkan people and the rest of the world happened during the Balkan Wars of 1912 – 1913. These conflicts characterized as a series of sharp, bloody Eastern European conflicts recently. The Ottoman Empire was involved in the Balkan nations' united alliance in the First Balkan War, against the Balkan nations including Bulgaria, Greece, and Montenegro as well as Serbia. Bulgaria fought during the Second Balkan War against the coalition of Greece, Montenegro, Serbia, Romania and the Ottoman Empire.

During and after the Balkan Wars they constantly fought amongst themselves for hegemony in the peninsula; and at that time the Christian states had no peace between them. Nevertheless, concerning contemporaneous relations of the international character, it should be borne in mind that from the latter part of the 18th century, the operational plans of Paris,



London, Vienna, and St. Petersburg concerning the problems on the East were again different.

However, situations and events in the Balkans had an influence and result in new changes in the politico geology of the European continent. Finally, the Balkan Wars mostly affected the outbreak of the World War I because, first, it bred instability and nationalism in territory that could serve as a 'powder Keg' for the outbreak of the war, second, that caused the rising tensions and finally, the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand became the spark that lit the war.

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