

The Balkan Wars through the Prism of the Wider Theoretical Framework of the Concept of the “Security Dilemma”

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Abstract

This paper researches the two Balkan wars and the actions of the participating countries by using the theoretical concept of the so-called “security dilemma” as one of the key concepts in the science of international relations. It’s an attempt to make an analysis of the Balkan wars, or, more specifically, of all the key elements of this theoretical framework. The goal is to find out whether this theoretical concept can be applied to the countries which took part in the Balkan Wars, and if its application in this specific case can offer some answers about the reasons behind the start of the two Balkan Wars, the question of the balance of power and its shifts, as well as the changes in alliances between the participating countries. In order to successfully accomplish this goal, the paper is going to utilize relevant literature on the topic of this theoretical concept, but also on the historical period of the two Balkan wars (1912 and 1913). With this approach, we hope to look at the subject from a different angle, which has not been sufficiently explored.

Keywords: *Balkan wars, security dilemma, balance of power, alliances*

Introduction

The theoretical framework of the “security dilemma” (Jervis, 1978: 167-174; Jervis, 1976: 58-113) is often used to explain the eruption of the First World War and the relations between the warring parties. However, it was exactly the Balkan Wars that were a prelude to the First World War (Lieber, 2007: 155-191; Sondhaus, 2011). Therefore, it is baffling how little research has been done on them from the aspect of the wider theoretical concept of the “security dilemma”. This paper attempts to analyze these wars, or, more specifically, the relations between the participating countries through the concept of the “security dilemma”, as well as from the wider theoretical framework of the structural realism (Mearsheimer, 2003; Waltz, 1979). In this way, the paper hopes to give answers to some questions about the reasons behind the wars, the change of the balance of power, as well as the shifting alliances between the participants in the two Balkan wars.

The paper is organized in three parts. In the first part, the theoretical framework of the “security dilemma” is introduced, along with all of its key elements in the system of structural realism. In this context, the two main branches of the structural realism are also presented, as well as the theoretical research on the causes of forming and disbanding of alliances. In the second part, the First Balkan War is explored through the aspect of this theoretical framework. The research is focused both on the individual countries which were the key players in the First Balkan War, as well as on the alliances between the countries. The third part deals with the same subjects, but in the context of the Second Balkan War. The paper aims to find out whether the wider theoretical framework of the “security dilemma” can be applied to the First and Second Balkan Wars, and, if so, what insights we can gain from it. However, we need to note that, in order to get more relevant and encompassing answers, this theoretical framework needs to be applied to a wider area and also include the major powers of the time, which would certainly require a much larger and more comprehensive research to be carried out. We also need to point out that, unfortunately, this theoretical framework cannot be applied to Macedonia for the simple reason that Macedonia was not yet a country at the time.

The Security Dilemma – a Wider Theoretical Framework

The “security dilemma” is the name of one of the most famous theoretical concepts in the science of international relations (Jervis, 1978: 167-174; Jervis, 1976: 58-113). It is a concept that has been developed within

the wider framework of one of the branches of the science of international relations, called structural realism or neorealism (Mearsheimer, 2003; Waltz, 1979). The neorealist perspective emerged mostly thanks to the work of Kenneth Waltz and his 1979 book "Theory of International Politics". Unlike classical realism, which uses anthropology and human nature in order to explain the international policies, the structural realism claims that it is the structure of the international system itself which is much more relevant for the creation of international policies and the relations between countries. This is what gave rise to the name "structural realism".

According to the neorealists (Robert J. Art, Christopher Layne, Kenneth Waltz, John Mearsheimer), countries behave the way they do because of the way the international system is structured. The structure of the international system is anarchic by nature for the simple reason that there are many actors (mostly sovereign countries), but at the same time, there is no a central authority. In such an anarchic system, countries are left to fend for themselves. This means that each country participates in the creation of international policies in a way that is congruent with its interests, and does everything in its power in order to achieve them and not let them be subordinated to the interests of other countries.

These basic outlines of the international system from the perspective of the structural realism give the foundations for the emergence of the theoretical framework of the "security dilemma". This theoretical framework is born out of the anarchic character of the international system, in which all the countries are equally sovereign and independent. Therefore, only the country itself (or rather, the creators of its policies) can know and be certain in its own intentions and goals. However, a country can never be certain about the intentions other countries have towards it. Ascertaining those intentions is one of the parameters in determining the level of danger to its survival a country faces, which is one of the most essential interests of every country. However, in a system that is based on anarchy, the intentions of other countries cannot ever be guessed with certainty. This fact, in turn, feeds the uncertainty that is one of the basic characteristics of the anarchic international system. When there is uncertainty in the intentions of others, each country always has to be prepared for the worst. It is this uncertainty that generates the security fears of any country, especially since the defensive tools and resources can also serve an offensive purpose (Waltz, 1979).

For example, in antiquity, making new spears could signify getting ready for hunting in order to gather food, but also preparing for war by enhancing the military capacities. To a large extent, the same holds true in

today's modern international system. Thus, while a country could be buying weapons for purely defensive purposes, the other countries in an anarchic international system can never be sure in its intentions. In most cases, the increase of the defensive capabilities of a country will not be deemed as a defensive, but as an offensive move with aggressive and hostile intentions. Therefore, every increase in the military capacities of a country will bring its intentions into question. Even if the country only wanted to increase its defensive capabilities with no aggressive intentions, this move could be perceived as an attempt to change the balance of power in its favor, and at the expense of other countries. Since the international system is anarchic and the countries are left on their own, they act in accordance to the so-called "action and reaction spiral", or security paradox (Ken, B. and Wheeler J. Nicolas, 2008; Kydd, 1997: 371-400).

We can explain this spiral through a hypothetical example. Let's say that a country A increases its defensive capabilities with no aggressive intentions. However, since it cannot be certain of its intentions, a neighboring country, country B, sees this as a purely aggressive behavior aimed towards it. Because of this, country B reacts in the same way, and it also increases its defensive mechanisms. Since country A knows that its own actions were of a purely defensive nature, it meets its neighbor's reaction with suspicion and considers it as aggressive behavior. Because of this, it undertakes additional defensive measures, which are again perceived as aggressive behavior by its neighbor. As a response to this, the neighbor also continues with the increase of military capacities and so on. This action and reaction spiral soon gets the two countries involved into a full-fledged arms race. It also leads to a situation where the military segment of the society gets a much larger role in the decision making process of the country. This is an illustration of the "action and reaction" spiral. The paradox is that both countries only aim to better protect themselves. However, even though neither of them wants to go to war, the possibility is very real. The main reason for this tragic scenario is the mutual suspicion and the uncertainty because of the misinterpretation of the actions of the other country. Therefore, the incorrect interpretation of each other's actions can lead to the worst possible scenario. The example above is a situation where we say that there is a "security dilemma".

We should also note that structural realism itself has two perspectives – the defensive realism and the aggressive or offensive realism. Both of these perspectives accept the basic tenets of the structural realism and operate with its basic notions, such as the survival of the basic units – the countries, self-help, the anarchic character of the international system and so on. However, defensive realism, best represented by Kenneth Waltz (Waltz, 1979), goes

assumes that the most important and essential goal of every country is its survival. According to the defensive realism, the lack of a global government leaves countries to take charge of their own security and, with that, their survival. Therefore, we cannot expect countries to have faith in each other. On the contrary, by the logic of things, every country in an anarchic international system will aim to secure its safety and survival, which is never guaranteed and is at all times under a possible threat from other countries. (Jervis, Stephen Van Evera, Sean Lynn-Jones, and Charles Glase, Barry Posen, Michael Mastanduno) The defensive realism, placing the survival of the country above everything else, is a fertile ground for support of the concept of the “security dilemma”. The offensive realism, on the other hand, represented, above all, by Mearsheimer (Mearsheimer, 2003; but also Eric Labs, Fareed Zakaria, Kier Lieber, and Christopher Layne), assumes that countries are the basic aggressive units of the anarchic international system which are, at all times, in a predatory race for the maximization of their power. The more power a country has, the safer it will be.

Looking at the wider context of the science of international relations, and also considering the context of the theoretical framework of the “security dilemma”, the question of the forming of alliances seems inevitable. In general, the dilemma is when and with what purpose a country would enter in a certain alliance. It seems that there are two possible answers to this question. In the first case, countries enter into alliances with the aim of counterbalancing the increasing power of a country that threatens to shift the balance of power in its favor. These are called “balance alliances” (Mearsheimer, 2010: 79-85). In the second case, the weaker countries join the more powerful country through a “bandwagoner”, or “join the trend” alliances (Mearsheimer, 2001: 139-161).

Bandwagoning occurs when weaker countries calculate that the cost of opposing the stronger country is much greater than the possible benefit. The stronger country often tries to entice the weaker countries by offering them territory, trade agreements, protection and so on. In this way, it stops them from forming a mutual alliance that could oppose it (Ibidem).

However, it is generally accepted that this happens rarely and in cases where, because of the geographical position, a country is surrounded by enemies, depriving it room to maneuver. This is completely logical if one takes into consideration that a country’s position will always be much stronger in a “balance alliance” than in a “bandwagoning alliance”, where there is a much more powerful partner. In general, it is thought that countries prefer “balance alliances” (this is especially supported by defensive realists Walt, (Walt, 1987: 17-29).

In the context of this discussion regarding alliances, it is worth noting the work of Snyder (Snyder, 1997), according to whom the answer to the question about which alliances countries are more likely to enter into is theoretically undeterminable and depends on the deal making process, territorial interests, as well as ideological affinities, the structure of the decision making body at the time and so on. Snyder also claims that alliances, once formed, are not absolutely stable. This is because of the fear that some of the allies might regroup and join another alliance. In fact, this fear itself might make some countries do the same as a preventive move. Therefore, the stability of the alliance depends on the degree of mutual dependence of its members, the level of mutual interests, as well as their conduct in the past.

The Wider Theoretical Framework of the “Security Dilemma” and the First Balkan War

The First Balkan War lasted for seven months, from October 1912 to May 1913. The war was waged on the territory of what was then the European part of the Ottoman Empire (Macedonia, Thrace, Sandzak and Albania). The adversaries in this war were the Balkan Alliance (consisting of Serbia, Montenegro, Bulgaria and Greece) on one side and the Ottoman Empire on the other side. In total, 5 countries took part in the war (Hall, 2000: 9-12).

The Ottoman Empire was in an unenviable security situation in the period preceding the war. It was already at war with Italy because of their dispute over Libya. This war kept most of the Ottoman army occupied, especially since it was getting dangerously close to the Aegean islands. Additionally, only a few years before, the Young Turk Revolution in 1908 and the counter-revolution in 1909 significantly shook the once strong Ottoman Empire. In the meantime, the Empire was also suffering territorial losses, for example Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908 (Hall, 2000: 7,8; Kodet, 2013: 29-38). In this context, we should note that it was also facing trouble from within, especially in its European part. There only 2 million out of the 6 million citizens were Muslims, and therefore loyal to the Empire¹. Of course, the long and practically indefensible European border was an additional negative security factor. Furthermore, the Empire was in an unfavorable geographical position because the sea separated its European and Asian parts. The Greek fleet and the fact that most of the Ottoman fleet took part in the war with Italy

¹ Even this was not the real number, since there were Muslims who wanted their own country. For example, this was the case with the Albanians.

posed large threats to the sea routes connecting the two parts. At the same time, the threat to its European territories by the four Balkan countries was on the rise. Put simply, the Ottoman Empire was seriously weakened before the start of the Balkan wars.²

If we apply the theoretical framework of the “security dilemma” to the specific situation in which the Ottoman Empire found itself before the start of the Balkan wars, we can draw several conclusions. In terms of the “uncertainty in the intentions of others” (Mearsheimer, 2001) as one of the elements of the “security dilemma” we can say that there was no wrong interpretation of the intentions the Balkan countries had towards the Empire. In other words, the “security dilemma” presupposes a situation where none of the countries really desire war. (Booth K. and N.J. Wheeler, 2008: 5, 23-25; Baylis and Smith, 2005). However, in this specific example, war was the goal of the Balkan Alliance and its intentions were not misinterpreted. It was pretty clear that it was acting aggressively in order to acquire new territories and change the status quo and the balance of power at the expense of the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, the mobilization by the Empire before the war erupted was not a consequence of the “action and reaction” spiral (Reiter, 2003: 27-43), but of a real threat to the Empire.

Regarding the question of forming alliances as a way to keep the desired status quo³, we can conclude that the Ottoman Empire did not have

² Analyzed from a historical distance, the interests of the Great Powers in this period, mainly, determined the destiny of the already established Balkan nation-states, simultaneously showing indifference for the national-liberating movements of the other ethnicities which were still under the reign of the Sublime Porte. Understandably, there were exceptions, but we can always observe them throughout the prism of the global politics of separate European Empires. So, for example, Austro-Hungarian empire and its strategy to support Albanian uprisings in the period of 1910-1912, and promotion of the creation of the Albanian state, through which, she established her influence in this part of the Balkan Peninsula (Донев, 1988: 32, 33)

³ The establishment of the two European Alliances and the desire of redistribution of supremacy between the Great Powers (which started during the last quarter of the XIX century, and was copied through the political and military conflicts for territories and resources in the colonial countries) determined the destiny of the Balkan Peninsula until the Balkan Wars. The agreed territorial status quo regarding the Balkans between Russia and Austro-Hungary in 1897 had been unconditionally respected by the other powers as well, predictably, until the moment when they agreed on the basis of some other mutual interest. The annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austro-Hungary in 1908 was an example of this kind of mutual agreements. After the initial intense pressure by

much room for maneuver. Put simply, even though the Empire was stronger than any individual Balkan country, it could not stop the four Balkan countries from forming an alliance that was able to disturb the existing balance of power. The possibility of forming “bandwagoner” or “join the trend” alliances (Waltz 1987: 21.) was very remote because of the lack of mutual interest, but also the lack of unifying grounds.

Because of this, before the beginning of the First Balkan War, the Ottoman Empire acted and could only act in accordance with the theory of defensive realism (Glaser and Kaufmann, 1998: 44-82). In other words, the Empire was forced into the Balkan Wars, and its only goal was to defend itself and ensure its survival. This is especially true if we consider the fact that, near the end of the First Balkan War, the Empire had to take measures to defend its very heart – the city of Istanbul (Hall, 2000).

With the Congress of Berlin, Serbia received formal international recognition of its independence, which it had acquired in 1878. With this act, Serbia finally got rid of the century-old Ottoman domination. However, Serbia was geographically positioned between two powerful empires, the Austro-Hungarian Empire to the north and the Ottoman Empire to the south. Since its establishment as an independent nation, Serbia had shown territorial pretensions towards Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H) and also some pretensions towards Vojvodina (Melicharek, 2014). However, these territories were already a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Because of this, the ambitions of the new and growing Serbian state were directed to the south where the Ottoman Empire was getting increasingly weaker. Serbia laid claim on the territories to the south on the basis of the concept of “Old Serbia” (Petrovich, 1976; Abazi, 2007; Mijakovic, M. 2000).⁴ In this way, Serbia saw a possibility to be territorially compensated for the territories that it claimed, but were under Austro-Hungarian rule. Therefore, Serbia’s intentions were clear, and the mobilization of its army had a clear purpose – the increase of its

Sankt Petersburg, a diplomatic agreement was reached by which Russia supported the Austro-Hungarian annexation on this part of the Ottoman Empire territory, while Vienna committed to help with opening the Ottoman Straits (the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles) for the Russian military ships (Јелавич, 1999: 111, 112).

⁴ The Serbian and the Greek greater state agenda dated 1844, the first called “Nachrtanie”, while the second one was termed “Megali Idea”. The Bulgarian agenda dates back to the period of the Great Eastern Crisis and the preliminary contract from San Stefano (March 3, 1878), which envisioned creation of Greater Bulgaria.

territory and power, which is in accordance to the offensive realism (Mearsheimer, 2001). Of course, this could be contested if we take Snyder's view (Snyder, 1997) into consideration. He claims that even these aggressive and offensive actions can be looked through the lens of ensuring of the survival of the state by carrying out preventive assaults on the enemy while he is in a weakened position. This has the goal of creating a buffer zone, strategic advantages and so on. In the case of Serbia, this was also possible, because it was assumed that, in the case of a Balkan Alliance victory, Serbia would no longer share a border with the Ottoman Empire. Unlike the Ottomans, Serbia had a much wider room for maneuver when it came to joining an alliance. Thus, Serbia entered and became one of the main players in the Balkan Alliance.

The autonomy Bulgaria gained in 1878 was the basis for the proclamation of complete independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1908. The foundations behind the Bulgarian pretensions were set in 1878, when, thanks to the great powers, the San Stefano peace agreement was revoked. Above all, Bulgaria laid claim to the territory of Macedonia, at the time part of the Ottoman Empire, claiming that it was inhabited by majority Bulgarian population (Detchev, 2009). Therefore, one can claim that Bulgaria was acting in accordance with the offensive realism and was hoping to increase its power and territory on the expense of the Ottoman Empire. Bulgaria's intentions were clear and known - it was amassing weapons and mobilizing its army exactly for this purpose. Even so, it was not sure if it could defeat the still militarily powerful Ottoman Empire by itself. There was ample room for entering into alliances, but, at the same time, this was a double-edged sword. Entering into an alliance would inevitably also mean that Bulgaria would have to share the spoils of war on which it laid exclusive claim. By entering into an alliance without first defining the future borders and the distribution of the future balance of power, Bulgaria brought upon itself its own "security dilemma" regarding its allies.

Greece gained independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1830. Nonetheless, Greek nationalists vocally claimed that a large part of the Greek population still lived within the borders of the Ottoman Empire (Ljorovski, 2012: 71-88; Константинова, Ю. 2006; Karas, 2004; Kaliopoulos, 2002; Angelopoulos, G. 1995; Jovanovski, D. 2008). At the same time, Greece was calling upon its cultural and historical heritage, or the "natural right" it had over Thrace, Epirus, most of Macedonia, and even Istanbul itself. Therefore,

the so-called “Megali idea”⁵ was the driving force behind the Greek irredentism. Even so, Greece was aware that it was militarily inferior to the Ottoman Empire, something that was previously demonstrated during the Greek – Ottoman War of 1897 (Ibidem), which was waged over the future status of the island of Crete. In the years before the First Balkan War, Greece had a small army and was not even included in the negotiations for the formation of the “Slav Alliance”, which were held between Serbia, Montenegro, and Bulgaria with Russian mediation. Even though it had a significantly smaller land force and a very demoralized army, Greece felt compelled to enter this alliance. This was because the Ottoman Empire was weakened and by not taking part in the seemingly inevitable war, Greece would also not take part in the future distribution of power in the Balkans. What Greece could offer to the Balkan Alliance was its navy, something that Serbia was completely lacking, and Bulgaria could contribute only a small number of vessels. In fact, it was the Greek fleet that disrupted the naval communication of the Ottomans, which affected the course of the war. Therefore, we can conclude that Greece, too, acted in accordance with the offensive realism.

The Balkan Alliance was a military alliance between Serbia, Montenegro, Bulgaria and Greece (Hall, 2000: 9-13; Katsaris, 2013: 55-64; Донеv, 1988; Cepreganov, 2008: 212-215). By themselves, none of these countries could match the military power of the, though weakened, still strong Ottoman Empire. Therefore, from a theoretical viewpoint, on first glance this seems like a classic “balance alliance”, where we have a strong country on one side and on the other side several less powerful countries that enter into an alliance in order to balance the power of the stronger country. However, in this specific example, the Balkan Alliance was not formed in order to keep the balance against the more powerful country and maintain the status quo (see theoretical framework above), but, on the contrary, in order to create a new balance of power that could match and directly threaten the more powerful country (the Ottoman Empire in this specific example).

⁵ In the period before the Balkan wars, the imagined north border to which Greece had territorial pretensions, and it was, generally, pointed towards Ottoman Macedonia and Albania, stretched from Durrës to the Aegean Sea, crossing north of Ser (Serres) on the east, to Bitola and Ohrid in the west (Битовски, 2001: 57). These borders introduced the so called “minimalistic program”, which dated from the period of the Great Eastern Crisis, unlike the “maximalistic program” which included the entire territory of Macedonia.

The alliance was built upon several foundations. The member countries publicly and proudly proclaimed their shared ideology and wanted to present themselves as defenders of Christian Europe from the Muslim Ottoman threat. In this context, the Orthodox religion that they all shared was further ground for allying, but also a justification for the “liberation” of the rest of the Christian population that lived in the European part of the Ottoman Empire. Another unifying aspect for Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro was pan-Slavism. However, it was not as encompassing, since it did not include Greece. Of course, the most important reason for entering into the alliance was they all had a common goal – the expulsion of the Ottomans from the Balkans. This also presented the opportunity for a large increase in their territory and their power by changing the balance of power on the expense of the Ottomans. Therefore, while the official reason for the alliance was that of “liberation” of the Christian territories, the members of the alliance were aware that the real reason was the desire for new territories and resources (Ibidem).

The Balkan Alliance was formed by countries that had clear intentions towards the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, one of the main elements of the “security dilemma”, the misinterpretation of intentions of one country by another (Wendt, 1992: 397), was not a factor in this case. The Ottoman Empire did not have any illusion regarding the true goals of the member countries of the Balkan Alliance. To a large degree, they were even hoping for a military outcome (something that does not fit in the suggested framework of the “security dilemma”). Indications that the Balkan Alliance was hoping for a military outcome included the demands made, which are regarded as the official reason for the start of the war. These demands were of such a humiliating and unacceptable nature that it was known that they would be rejected by the Ottoman Empire. In fact, this was a case of the “game of chicken”(Sugden, 2005: 132), which is a theoretical framework that can be most easily illustrated through an example. Let’s say that two opponents are in their cars, facing each other. They both drive at high speed towards one another, heading towards a collision. One of the possible outcomes is that one of the vehicles will turn to avoid the crash, giving the victory to its opponent and humiliating and labeling itself “chicken”. Of course, another possible outcome is that neither of the vehicles will turn, resulting in a collision. This is a bad scenario for both of the opponents, since both will suffer damage and neither will come out as the winner. This theoretical framework could be applied to this specific case only if the goal of the Balkan Alliance was for the Ottoman Empire to suffer humiliation by accepting their demands. However, their real goal was finding a cause for war. This brings us back to the theoretical framework of the “security dilemma”. Instead of rejecting it

outright, we can conclude that while this is not a classic case of the “security dilemma”, it is still a part of a wider framework that can be applied to this specific case. According to Jervis (Jervis, 1976: 58), a “security dilemma” can be caused by a situation where a country becomes weaker, thus “causing” other countries to try to disturb the status quo at its expense. In such a way, the spiral of action and reaction is formed. Such is the example of Greece that even though was it unprepared and demoralized, felt compelled to enter the seemingly inevitable conflict. To some extent, the same was also true for Serbia, which at the beginning only had territorial pretensions towards Bosnia & Herzegovina and Vojvodina (Melicarek, 2014).

The Wider Theoretical Framework of the “Security Dilemma” and the Second Balkan War

The Second Balkan War began in June 1913 and lasted until August 1913. It was waged between Bulgaria on one side and Serbia and Greece on the other. Later, Romania and the Ottoman Empire also joined the war against Bulgaria (Skoko, 1968; Костов, 2006; Тодоровски, 1995).

Bulgaria came out of the First Balkan War with only partially achieved goals. The Ottomans had been almost completely forced out of the Balkans, and their former territory was under the control of the Balkan Alliance, with Bulgaria as a member. However, the war ended with a new balance of power that enabled Bulgaria to control only a small part of the territories that it claimed as its natural right. At the same time, Bulgaria was also the dominant member of the Balkan Alliance. These two factors led Bulgaria to take part in the Second Balkan War (Gedeon, 1998: 255-263).

We can draw several conclusions regarding Bulgaria’s relations with the Balkan Alliance. According to the theory alliances, once formed, do not last indefinitely and their continuation relies on the common interests of their members. In fact, depending on the degree of common interests, a country can stay or choose to leave a certain alliance. In this specific example, Bulgaria, taking into consideration the accomplishment of its primary goal (the defeat of the Ottomans) and its military superiority over its allies, decided that it did not have any further interest in staying in the alliance. In the period before the Second Balkan War, Bulgaria felt strong enough to try to shift the balance of power in its favor, but this time at the expense of its former allies - Serbia and Greece.

Regarding the theoretical framework of the “security dilemma”, we can say that it was present both in Bulgaria’s relations towards its allies and in

their relations towards Bulgaria. This is especially evident by the war “games” in the cities of Thessaloniki and Seres⁶ (Hall, 112-114). This example is an illustration of a situation where there is insecurity in the intentions of others, causing a “security dilemma” between the former allies.

Looking at Bulgaria’s intentions, we can say that it is arguable whether Bulgaria really wanted a second Balkan war. This is especially so if we take into consideration that fact that the decision for a surprise attack on its former allies was issued hastily and practically only by the military command. Thus is in accordance with the “security dilemma”, where the military element of the society prevails. Thus, on June 29th, 1913, general Savov issued the orders to attack the Serbian and Greek positions. This was done without an official declaration of war and without consulting with the Bulgarian government (Phillipov, 1995).

Serbia and Greece, as member states of the Balkan Alliance, came out of the First Balkan War as victors. On the field, with their armies, they established a new balance of power at the expense of the Ottoman Empire, and, of course, in their favor. Yet, the situation in the Alliance was such that Bulgaria, as the most powerful member, was asking for a new distribution of the balance of power. On the other hand, Serbia and Greece wanted to keep the status quo⁷. It was this Bulgarian threat that was the reason behind the “balance alliance” between Serbia and Greece, as there were no other unifying grounds. When Bulgaria launched a military attack, the two countries entered into the Second Balkan War.

Romania, which did not take part in the First Balkan War, saw an excellent opportunity for action, in accordance with the offensive realism, and entered the ongoing Second Balkan War. The fact that Bulgaria was already at war with two countries and that its whole army was focused on them made the Bulgarian-Romanian border completely defenseless (Hall, 2000: 117, 118). Since it did not encounter any resistance, the Romanian army advanced almost

⁶ When the Greek troops entered Thessaloniki during the First Balkan War, Bulgaria asked to be allowed a military presence in the city. Greece agreed on the condition that Bulgaria only send a lightly armed battalion and asked to be allowed to do the same in the town of Seres. However, around 50 000 heavily armed Bulgarian soldiers entered Thessaloniki, which was met with worry and suspicions in Greece.

⁷ This was especially so because, with the creation of the independent Albanian state, Serbia did not get access to the sea and, therefore, felt that it had not yet realized its territorial ambitions. This did not leave any room for additional concessions.

to the gates of Sofia. It should be noted that Romania did not take part in any alliance, even though its actions indirectly helped the Serb-Greek Alliance, as well as the actions of the Ottomans to the south.

The Ottoman Empire, which was in a very unenviable position during the First Balkan War, when it was acting in accordance to the outlines of the defensive realism, changed its behavior with the beginning of the Second Balkan War. Thus, even though it had just gotten out of a war in which it had suffered a heavy military defeat, it decided to attack Bulgaria. Just as in the First Balkan War, the Ottoman Empire did not have much of a chance of joining an alliance, so it acted by itself. However, with the start military actions against Bulgaria, the Empire was practically helping the Serb-Greek Alliance, as well as Romania. With its inclusion, Bulgaria's borders became completely defenseless, which the Empire used in order to partially shift the balance of power back in its favor. The "security dilemma" was not present in this case. Even though there were misinterpreted intentions, they did not correspond with the suggested theoretical concept of the "security dilemma". In this case, Bulgaria falsely believed that the Ottoman Empire would not dare attack it (which is the opposite of the "security dilemma", where a country falsely believes that another country wants to attack it). Because of this, Bulgaria misjudged the presence of a "security dilemma" in its relation with the Empire.

Concluding Observations

The two Balkan wars were waged by (almost) the same countries. What was different was their regrouping in official or unofficial alliances with the goal of shifting the balance of power or keeping the status quo. Regarding the theoretical framework of the "security dilemma", we can conclude that its application to the Balkan Wars can offer some relevant answers about the causes behind the wars, the change of the balance of power, as well as the shifting alliances between the involved countries. Nonetheless, we should note that, in this specific example, we cannot speak of the application of the classic "security dilemma" by itself, but of its interpretation within the wider framework of the structural realism.

Jervis's claim (Jervis, 1976: 58) that a decrease in power of a certain country can "provoke" other countries as much as an increase in power can, and even lead to the creation of a "security dilemma" has been proven correct. This is illustrated by the example of the Ottoman Empire during the First Balkan War, but also Bulgaria during the Second Balkan War. Thus, the

Balkan countries saw the weakening of the Ottoman Empire as an opportunity to change the status quo in their favor. In Bulgaria's case, its strength after the First Balkan War was seen as a threat by Serbia and Greece, who formed an alliance in order to balance its power and keep the status quo. However, after the Second Balkan War began and Romania, too, declared war, Bulgaria found itself drastically weakened. This loss of strength was seen as an excellent opportunity by the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, we can conclude that while Serbia and Greece entered a military alliance against Bulgaria because of its strength at the time, the Ottomans and Romania joined the war because of Bulgaria's weak position.

Regarding the formation and disbanding of alliances during the First and Second Balkan Wars, we can confirm the theoretical assumption that, above all, it is the degree of mutual interests what motivates countries to enter into alliances, and it is the individual interest that motivates countries to leave them. We can also confirm the general tendency for weaker countries to form alliances in order to counter, and even defeat, stronger states. This is illustrated in the cases of the Balkan Alliance against the Ottoman Empire during the First Balkan War, and also the case of the Serb-Greek Alliance against Bulgaria during the Second Balkan War.

Furthermore, regarding the theoretical discussions about the offensive and defensive realism, we can conclude that countries rank their survival as their primary concern, and only act according to the offensive realism only if they feel that their survival is secured. However, this behavior itself can bring the country to a situation where it needs to fight for its survival, as was the case with Bulgaria during the Second Balkan War. Thus, while one of the main goals of all countries is to secure as much power as they can, when their own survival is put into question, they will always choose it as their primary goal.

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