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## Supplement: The Austro-Hungarian red book.

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THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN RED-BOOK.

Diplomatic Documents Concerning the Relations between Austria-Hungary and Italy during the Period from July 20th, 1914 to May 23rd, 1915.

The recently published Red Book of the Austro-Hungarian government on the relations and negotiations with Italy, prior to the declaration of war by the latter, contains in all 205 documents and 16 appendices. During the period covered there were two successive Foreign Ministers in each country, —Count Berchtold and Baron von Burian in Austria-Hungary and the Marquis di San Giuliano and Baron Sonnino in Italy.

A natural division of the material is into that which belongs to the time when the first-named of each country was in charge of its foreign affairs and that which dates from the period when the last-named of each country occupied that office; although the administration of Count Berchtold overlaps for a few weeks that of Baron Sonnino in Italy.

To the world at large the history of the Balkan states and the dreadful witch-kettle of constant plots Serbia became under the goading fires of Russia, is entirely unknown. Scant recognition is given to the fact that the vital interests of Austria-Hungary were at stake, that the patience and forbearance of a great civilized state in the face of constant outrage, murder and agitation on the part of a semi-savage nation such as the Servian, must finally come to an end. Austria-Hungary and its integrity had been plotted against for many years and as soon as it was discovered that it could not be detached from its faithful ally, Germany, it was included in the plots and machinations of the Triple Entente Powers. Serbia was the rope with which Russia sought to strangle Austria-Hungary. And attached to that rope by secret pledges and financial and political understandings, were France and Russia, with Italy already half purchased and suborned. History, impartial, cold and just, will decree before the court of humanity and the consciences of men, that Austria-Hungary like its great ally Germany, chose the only course left to nations forced to defend not only their existence but their honor.

We give herewith a synopsis of the principal contents of the book together with some explanatory and connecting remarks. Count Berchtold in Vienna and the Marquis di San Giuliano in Rome.

The very first paper contradicts the Italian statement that Italy had no idea that Austria-Hungary was about to take steps against Serbia. Count Berchtold wrote to the Austrian ambassador at Rome Herr von Merer before the handing of the ultimatum to Serbia (No. 1, July 20, 1914) as follows:

"In the course of the discussion that will possibly arise over the matter Your Excellency can provisionally, without being commissioned to do so, express your well-founded persuasion that even if peaceable means do not prove effectual, the Vienna Cabinet has no thought of a campaign of conquest or of an incorporation of any part of Serbia territory." Count Berchtold mentions further in this note that the Italian minister had told him that "Italy needs a strong Austria-Hungary." And Italy caused it to be stated in Vienna after the outbreak of the war with Serbia that "Italy will in no wise take advantage of the fact that Austria-Hungary is at present otherwise occupied." (No. 29, Aug. 4.)

We further see that before the Ultimatum had been handed to Serbia, Count Berchtold had given directions to Herr von Merer as to what he was to say in case Italy should demand compensation based on the much talked of Article VII of the Treaty of Alliance. The purpose of this article was to quiet Italy after the occupation of Bosnia by assuring her that she should be offered a corresponding compensation if the *status quo* in Turkey could not be maintained, and a further occupation of Turkish territory should be undertaken. That was an alternate obligation, which however could have no reference to a war waged by the Monarchy, without any intention of conquest, for the sake of its own safety against an independent Balkan state responsible for its actions.

Count Berchtold clearly sets forth in his note to Herr von Merer (No. 2, July 20) this well-understood reason for the article of the treaty, and the ambassador on the very next day had the opportunity of carrying out his instructions. (No. 3, July 21.) The Italian minister thereupon said he wished a strong Austria-Hungary, but such as it was and with no increase in size. His sentiments however showed themselves when the ambassador told him that Austria-Hungary did not have the intention of capturing Lovcen, the height above Cattaro fortified by Montenegro. The interest of the minister was already at that time evident for the father-in-law of the king, for Cetinje and against any strengthening of the position of the Monarchy on the coast. Already at that time too the playing on popular feeling had begun, and San Giuliano said significantly: "the nation was now liberal in politics, remembered its revolutionary

origin, and is always "in sympathy with irredentist demonstrations". Herr von Merer reported by telegraph to Count Berchtold concerning this conversation: "that he heard many friendly phrases and noticed many silent reservations."

Rome was not surprised by the step Austria-Hungary had taken in Belgrade, and the Italian minister was informed the day before that the Monarchy intended to send an ultimatum to Belgrade along with a statement of its demands (No. 4, July 22). The next day July 23rd it was sent, and on the 25th the time limit expired. On the very same day (25th), the Duke of Avarna visited the Austrian Foreign Office and stated that the Italian government reserved for itself the right to compensation based on the treaty of alliance, and requested that an understanding be arrived at before an eventual occupation of Servian territory. "For the rest, the royal Italian government, in case of an armed conflict between Austria-Hungary and Serbia, intends to assume a friendly attitude and one corresponding to its obligations under the treaty."

Ten Months of Negotiations over the Compensation Question.

Now began that long series of shifts and subterfuges which marks the course of the Italian in the negotiations for compensation based on article VII of the treaty of alliance. How his claims rose from a most modest beginning to a height of insulting presumption is plainly to be seen from the documents here brought together. Count Szogyeny reported from Berlin (No. 12, July 26): "The State Secretary told me to-day that my Italian colleague had expressed surprise over the fact that Your Excellency had not earlier communicated to his government, as an allied power, the steps we were taking in Belgrade." Herr Jagow answered that this was quite comprehensible and correct, for it concerns a matter between Austria-Hungary and Serbia only. Count Berchtold and the Austrian ambassador in Rome seek to show in most excellently framed state papers, especially in No. 12 of July 26th that it is impossible the Monarchy should have been willing to conclude or had concluded a treaty hindering it from defending itself against evil-disposed neighbours. It is pointed out how obliging Count Aehrenthal and Count Berchtold were during the war between Italy and Turkey, which increased the power of Italy even in the Aegean Sea, and how they at that time rejected the English proposition to prohibit an attack upon the Dardanelles.

The matter was becoming earnest. Italy had on her part violated both the spirit and letter of the alliance in two respects: by refusing her military assistance and failing that by not observing an honourable and friendly neutrality (art. III and IV of the treaty of alliance). Germany already detected the evil disposition and wished to avoid the danger, or to delay its approach. Count Berchtold telegraphs to Herr v. Merer (No. 15, July 28): "By request of his government the Imperial German ambassador has urged me to come to an arrangement with Italy, if possible, concerning the interpretation of article VII of the treaty of alliance." The Italian ambassador in Berlin, Herr Bollati, declares: the attitude of Italy can be friendly only if the right to negotiate concerning the compensation is recognized. Upon this, Germany, in the effort to stifle the fire at its beginning, declares it will accept Italy's construction of the article in question regarding the duty of compensation. Count Berchtold makes a concession, and we have reached the first stage in the compensation question.

The First Declaration of Count Berchtold.

"Should we see ourselves compelled, against our expectations, to proceed to a more than temporary occupation of Servian territory, we are ready in such a case to enter into an interchange of views with Italy in reference to compensation. But on the other hand, we expect from Italy that it will not impede its ally in the actions necessary to achieve its ends, but will rather steadfastly continue towards as the promised attitude of a friendly confederate." (No. 15, July 28.) The Austro-Hungarian ambassador in Rome, Herr v. Merer, to whom the above note was addressed, already began to observe at the time he made the communication requested, that the Italian, began to assume a blackmailing tone.

The Second Concession in the Compensation Question.

Count Berchtold wished to leave a pretext open to the wily Italian, and made the following statement to the Duke of Avarna concerning the question: "The construction put upon article VII by Italy and Germany is accepted by me under the condition that Italy maintains a friendly attitude towards the operations of the present war between Austria-Hungary and Serbia and fulfils its obligations as an ally, in case the present conflict should kindle a general conflagration". (No. 20, Aug. 1.)

The Emperor Francis Joseph to the King of Italy.

On August 1st, the Austrian Emperor sent the following telegram to King Victor Emmanuel:

"Russia, presuming to have the right to interfere in our conflict with Serbia, has mobilised her army and navy, and threatens the peace of Europe."

In understanding with Germany I am determined to defend the rights of the Triple Alliance, and have ordered the mobilisation of my entire land and sea forces. Thirty years of peace and prosperity are owing to the treaty which unites us, the identical construction of which on the part of our governments I note with satisfaction.

In this solemn moment I am fortunate in being able to count upon the assistance of my allies and of their brave armies, and I cherish the warmest wishes for the success of our weapons and for a glorious future for our countries". (No. 21, Aug. 1.)

On the next day came the answering telegram from the King of Italy: "I have received Your Majesty's telegram. I need not assure Your Majesty that Italy, who has made all possible efforts to uphold peace, and who will do that lies in her power to assist as soon as possible in the restoration of peace, will preserve towards its allies a position of cordial friendship corresponding to the Triple Alliance, her sincere feelings and the great interests which she must guard". (No. 23, Aug. 2.)

The Italian government did not confirm the words of its King, and Herr von Merer reported: "My impression both before and since is that we have to do with a case of extortion which has already for the most part succeeded."

Italy, in the case of a localised as of a general war, wishes to be paid in advance for the position she may take (No. 22, Aug. 1.)

The Military Stipulations between the Austro-Hungarian and Italian General Staffs.

One of the most interesting of the despatches is that of Count Berchtold to Herr von Merer: "the inquiry of our Chief of General-Staff to the Chief of the Italian General-Staff in reference to the elaborating of the arrangements made between the allies to meet the case of war, has been answered as follows: Conferences would have no purpose since our Cabinet council has decided on the neutrality of Italy. Slight mobilisation ordered. If Austria-Hungary does not occupy Lovcen, and does not disturb the equilibrium in the Adriatic, Italy will never proceed against Austria-Hungary. Your Excellency will conclude from the above utterance how the extortion policy is being continued." (No. 31, Aug. 4.)

The Beginning of Military Preparation.

At that time the Italian ministers were making use of pleasing phrases while waiting to see which side would make the best offer, or show itself the stronger. The military manoeuvres were alleged as a pretext for assembling troops on the Austrian frontier, and the Italian press began its work of trying to break up the Triple Alliance. A word was now spoken that did indeed lead to the ultimate rending of the Alliance. The Italian minister for foreign affairs declared that mutual mistrust would never cease so long as no understanding was arrived at concerning the concrete compensations to be offered. (No. 39, Aug. 20.) From this time on this expression "concrete compensations" becomes the key-word of the Red-Book till its very close. In order to hurry along these concrete compensations, San Giuliano told Herr von Merer that the Entente-Powers had made enticing offers. It seems that already at that time these believed in the possibility of Italy playing the traitor.

The Third Concession in the Compensation Question.

The Austro-Hungarian ambassador in Berlin telegraphed on Aug. 22: it was urgently wished there that the Monarchy would admit that it would seek no increase of territory in the Balkans, even if Italy should remain neutral, before an understanding was arrived at with her, and corresponding compensations agreed upon (No. 42).

Count Berchtold answered: we are ready to enter into a conference with Italy concerning the compensation matter for the case of a temporary or definitive occupation by us of any Balkan territory. The Monarchy is also ready to guarantee to Italy territorial acquisitions at the cost of others.

The Appearance of Sonnino.

In October the Marquis di San Giuliano died, and the Italian foreign office was administered by the Premier Salandra until the appointment of Sonnino. Salandra gave the assurance that so long as he was at the head of the Cabinet, he would continue the course followed by San Giuliano. A sharper tone begins to be heard. The Duke of Avarna had a conversation with Count Berchtold, the gist of which was as follows: according to the view of the Italian government it is

necessary without loss of time to begin concrete negotiations, since a situation has been created which touches very closely the most vital political and economic interests. The Duke then referred to the unrest that had shown itself in the Italian parliament and to the public sentiment in Italy which manifested clearly the tendency of the national aspirations, and of which the government had to take earnest account. (No. 72, Dec. 12.) This was a sign of an approaching earnest complication.

Trentino Demanded.

The German ambassador in Vienna communicated to Count Berchtold the content of conversations which Prince Bulow who had been appointed German ambassador to Italy, had had with the Italian statesmen. We learn from this that Salandra and Sonnino held the view: Austria on account of its internal condition cannot carry on a war, and is destined to be overthrown. The Prince further reported that Trentino had been mentioned as territorial compensation and that the aspirations of some even reached to the acquisition of Trieste. (No. 83, Jan. 4.)

Baron Sonnino became ever more urgent. He said that Italy could not come out of this great crisis with empty hands. And now we reach the summit of hypocrisy: "He had resolved to have this painful conversation only in the interest of preserving the old relations of alliance which he considered the only right policy for Italy's interest; he had accepted the portfolio of office for the purpose of establishing harmony and setting aside the old causes of friction, and to find a healthier basis for our relations, and if he did not succeed in doing this he would retire." (No. 90, Jan. 6.)

The Last Note of Count Berchtold.

Count Berchtold retired from office in January, and the last note of his in the Red-Book is directed to Baron v. Macchio the Austrian ambassador in Rome. (No. 95, Jan. 12.) It is one of the most important in the book. The crisis had taken on a more serious form, Baron Sonnino telegraphed to the Duke of Avarna: "One must have the courage and the composure in the discussion concerning the compensations according to article VII, to touch upon the delicate question of the ceding a district belonging at present to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy."

The cat was out of the bag. Count Berchtold answered, in agreement with the wish expressed by Herr v. Jagow, that the Italian government had taken up a position which made it scarcely possible for Austria to enter into a conference; it had always been the purpose of the alliance to protect the territorial possessions of the allies. Two days later, on the 14th of January, the diplomatic contest between the new Austro-Hungarian Minister for foreign affairs, Baron Burian, and the Italian began. Notes continued to be exchanged, and the hand of the Italian government was more and more exposed. What it had at first only shamefacedly intimated, it began brazenly to demand; the concrete compensations were seen to mean a large slice of the ally's territory.

Baron Burian informed Baron v. Macchio on the 29th of Jan. "that Sonnino had declared the time was pressing and urged that we take up the discussion on the basis of a cession of territory; Italy must not seek to get something from any other belligerent state, for that would be a breach of her neutrality, but we were free to give up something voluntarily, and his government proposed singly and alone a territorial grant from the possessions of the Monarchy." (No. 99.)

The Threats of Baron Sonnino.

The Italian foreign minister proceeded a little later to declare that much time had gone by, and the Monarchy had not yet answered definitely if it would discuss a cession of its territory, "therefore the Royal government may find itself obliged, for the protection of its dignity to withdraw all its propositions and suggestions and intrench itself behind the clear provisions of article VII, with the declaration that it would consider any military action of Austria-Hungary, whether against Serbia, Montenegro or any other Balkan state as in open contradiction to the aforesaid article, if an understanding was not arrived at beforehand. If Austria-Hungary should withdraw itself from this obligation, it could lead to serious consequences for which the Royal government even now disclaims all responsibility." (No. 106, Feb. 15.)

Here we find the first allusion to the possibility of war, and Baron Macchio reported (No. 108, Feb. 19): he had received information that the Salandra-Sonnino Cabinet had five days before determined that if no territorial concessions were received they would let the matter come to war.

Concrete Proposals of Baron von Burian.

On March 28th (No. 131) Baron Burian informed the ambassador in Rome that Austria-Hungary had decided to offer the cession of Southern-Tyrol including the city of Trent

on condition that Italy would preserve a friendly neutrality and that the Monarchy should have a free hand in the Balkans. This was at once declared not enough, and Sonnino said that under the pressure of England he could not promise a friendly neutrality, but only an impartial one. That every suspicion of favouring the Central Powers would lead to reprisals on the part of England, and have as a consequence the closing of the straits of Gibraltar for Italian commerce. (No. 132.)

Meanwhile warlike preparations were being continued in Italy, and England was said to have offered to meet the cost of the war. The negotiations over the extent of the cessions to be made to Italy were further carried on. The telegram of Baron von Macchio to Baron Burian (No. 137, April 3) gives an idea of conditions in Rome: "The aim of Italy at first was to obtain an increase of territory at the expense of the Monarchy, but the Entente wanted war, in and for itself, to strengthen the ranks of the enemies of the Central Powers. The Entente at the beginning of March counted with certainty upon Italy's entering the war, for it never thought that we should accept the basis for negotiations demanded by her; our doing this was a heavy blow for the Entente, and it now seeks to represent to the Italian government that the position of the Monarchy is becoming daily more desperate. Herr Marini is said to have succeeded in procuring an interview for Barzilai, the leader of the Irredentists, with Sonnino in order to make it clear to the minister that his followers would only then acquiesce quietly in an arrangement with us, if the Adriatic aspirations were also satisfied. The government affected by all these influences is becoming continually more exacting in its demands, all the more since from the Russian reports of victories daily being sent in, it believes our strength is broken."

The Counter-Propositions of Sonnino.

Since Sonnino was not satisfied with the cession of the Trentino, Baron Burian requested him to make proposals himself. This was done, and they are set forth in No. 141 of the Red-Book under date of April 11th. These are already known from earlier publications; here it is enough to say that they consisted of eleven articles, and demanded, among other conditions, the cession of the Trentino, the cities of Gradiška and Görz, of the twelve-island group in the Adriatic, the turning of the city of Trieste and district into an autonomous state and the renouncing of certain actions and interests in the Balkans. And for all this Italy would agree to remain neutral during this present war in respect of her allies, Austria-Hungary and Germany! Was there anything more shameful than such an unheard-of attempt at extortion?

Prince Bulow in Rome continued his efforts, under these difficult circumstances, to pave the way for an agreement. Baron Macchio did not believe they would be successful. He reported in a despatch to Baron Burian: "The chief factors domineering the Italian government remain the same: fear of England; fear of a revolution—the Court especially seems to fear this more than a war—, and on the other hand, uncertainty as to the relative strength of the two groups." (No. 143 April 13.)

Further negotiations followed and although Austria-Hungary finally accepted all of the propositions of Italy which it was possible for a self-respecting state to do considering its ethnographic, strategic and economic conditions (see Nos. 178, 185, 188), it was of no use, Italy had determined upon war, and other influences were at work.

The Entente-Powers at Work.

During all this time both England and France were at work dangling baits of various sorts before the Italian, at which he was beginning to snap. The English ambassador is said to have promised a cheap loan of two milliards, the fulfilling of Italian wishes in Asia Minor and in the twelve-island group and the hindering of any hostile movement on the part of the Senussi. The French ambassador visited Sonnino daily and offered large cessions in Tunis, if France recovered Alsace-Lorraine, and some square kilometres of territory through rectification of the frontier at Ventimiglia. (No. 162.) These and other promises coupled with the network of lies, sensational reports and newspaper propaganda spread abroad and carried on by English and French influences, finished the work which an attack of megalomania had begun and a supposed favourable opportunity to extort territorial concessions from an ally in difficulties had furthered. Italy had ceased to be true to anything but the national type represented by a man with a stiletto up his sleeve waiting to stab his friend in the back.

On May 23rd 1915 the Italian ambassador in Vienna handed to Baron Burian the declaration of war and requested his passports (No. 205).

