

## THE GERMAN-TURKISH RELATIONS DURING THE MACEDONIAN REFORMS (1903-1908)\*

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### **Abstract**

In February 1903, with the introduction of Austro-Russian “The Vienna Scheme”, the Macedonian issue became a European-wide problem. The diplomatic games of the Great Powers over the Macedonian reforms became one of the key factors affecting the adjustment of relations among the Great Powers. In order to expand its influence in Turkey and develop German-Turkish relations, Germany mostly stayed out of the Concert of Europe on Macedonian reforms and hindered the reform process. However, when faced with a choice between Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire, Germany sided with its ally Austria-Hungary. The Ottoman Empire took advantage of the differences among the Great Powers on the Macedonian reforms to slow down the reform process as much as possible and maintain the integrity of its European territory. However, in the face of the coercive power of the Great Powers, the Ottoman Empire’s claims of sovereignty and struggles often faced failures. In order to avoid the complete collapse of the Empire, the Ottoman Empire tried to develop German-Turkish friendship during the Macedonian reforms, and this diplomatic choice became the main basis for the implementation of national policy in the future and promoted the reorganization of the European power structure.

**Keywords:** Macedonian Reforms, the Ottoman Empire, Diplomatic Games, German-Turkish Relations.

### **Introduction**

At the beginning of the 20th century, an uprising against the Ottoman Empire broke out in Macedonia which successfully attracted the attention of the Great Powers. From 1903 onward, the Great Powers engaged in a fierce diplomatic game over Macedonian reforms. The Ottoman Empire, as the country concerned, tried to take advantage of the contradictions among the Great Powers to win Germany’s support in the process of Macedonian reforms and implement the policy of resistance to the reforms. Why did Germany, which originally claimed to have no direct interests in the Balkans, become involved in Macedonian affairs? What foreign policies did Germany and the Ottoman Empire adopt respectively in the process of Macedonian reforms? What impacts did the adjustment of the German-Turkish relations have on the subsequent international situation? All of this deserved an in-depth study. This article used the diplomatic archives of Britain, France and Germany as the basis to study, and took the Macedonian reforms as a case study to explore the process of the evolution of the German-Turkish relations,

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in order to enrich the scholarly understanding of the diplomatic games and reorganization of power among the Great Powers before the First World War.

### **The internationalization of Macedonian Issue and the involvement of German powers**

The origins of the Macedonian issue could be traced back to the Treaty of San Stefano signed by Russia and the Ottoman Empire in March 1878. The core of the treaty was the creation of Greater Bulgaria, which brought Macedonia into the international spotlight for the first time. However, Britain and Austria-Hungary argued that the treaty would destroy the balance of power of the Balkans; they proposed amendments to the treaty and convened international conferences. As a result of Anglo-Austrian intervention, the Treaty of Berlin, signed in July 1878, negated the main results of the Treaty of San Stefano; Greater Bulgaria was divided into three parts, and Macedonia was returned to the rule of the Ottoman Empire. Under the provisions of Article 23 of the Treaty of Berlin, the Ottoman Empire committed itself to implementing reforms in all its European provinces [20: 460-461; 4: 213-214]. However, the Turkish government lacked willingness to implement the reform programs, which delayed the reforms in Macedonia. In the quarter century following the Treaty of Berlin, Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia, the major Balkan states, began to infiltrate to Macedonia, which was called “no man’s land” or “residuum” of the Balkans [11: 362], through cultural, religious and linguistic points of view, they tried to incorporate all or part of Macedonia into their own territory, so as to realize their dreams of regional hegemony. The fierce competition among the Balkan states for Macedonia, coupled with the influence of European nationalism, contributed to the awakening of Macedonian nationalism. The Macedonian revolutionary groups established in the course of nationalism propaganda took advantage of the Balkan countries’ quest for regional hegemony and frequently launched armed uprisings, eventually forcing a fundamental change in the attitude of the European powers, which had long been on the sidelines. In 1903, the Austro-Russian “Vienna Scheme” was introduced, and the Macedonian issue was officially upgraded into a European issue.

In the process of Macedonian Europeanization, Germany continuously exercised its influence. In 1881, the League of the Three Emperors reaffirmed the existing Macedonian status by stipulating that Bulgaria was not to extend its influence into the Macedonian region. During the Bulgarian crisis of 1885-1887, Bismarck proposed to the Turkish government that their main forces were to be deployed in Macedonia in order to avoid serious consequences [16: 88]. In addition, Bismarck was also deeply concerned about Greek conspiracies in Macedonia [16: 94].

In the mid-1890s, Macedonian revolutionary groups took advantage of the Turkish government’s suppression of the Armenian national movement and the Eastern Questions caused by the Greek-Turkish War to launch several uprisings, which further complicated the already volatile Balkan situation. In May 1895, the German *chargé d’affaires ad hoc* in Constantinople mentioned that the Macedoni-

ans were eager for regional autonomy and demanded reforms from the Turkish government in accordance with Article 23 of the Treaty of Berlin; at this point, a bloody and deadly rebellion by Macedonians could not be ruled out [13: 121-122]. In July, Prime Minister Hohenlohe mentioned that the Macedonian issue was entering a dangerous phase, and that the Armenian movement for autonomy had stimulated the Macedonians' desire to break away from Turkish rule and to strive for a union with Bulgaria [13: 124]. In November, the German ambassador to Austria-Hungary stated that revolutionary movements were being awakened in Macedonia and that the situation would be critical if the Turkish government did not gain a firm foothold in the Balkans [12: 163]. In view of the serious situation in Macedonia, the German ambassador in Constantinople proposed that the Great Powers could intervene jointly in Macedonian affairs, on the one hand, to suppress the ambitions of the Balkan states, and, on the other hand, to urge the Sultan to agree to implement reforms in Macedonia as soon as possible, so as to preserve the status quo in the Balkans and the Ottoman Empire [12: 128].

In order to avoid further deterioration of the situation in the Balkans, Germany issued a stern warning to the Bulgarian government and its support of Macedonian revolutionary groups, in an attempt to quell the potential renewed unrest in Macedonia. Germany noted it doubted that the Great Powers would support the existing Bulgarian government if European countries decided that the actions in Macedonia were motivated solely by Bulgarian instigation [13:123]. However, German attempts to quell the Near East crisis were thwarted again by the Greco-Turkish War of 1897. According to Hohenlohe, the Greek government had already planned to attack the Turkish frontier in Macedonia in the future, and the Serbian and Bulgarian armed forces would attack the Turks immediately. Therefore, only strong combined pressure from St. Petersburg and Vienna could deter the restless souls of Sofia and Belgrade. Germany supported Austro-Russian cooperation, and would be more than happy to help if Russia needed German cooperation in Vienna [13: 141]. The Secretary of State Marschall also stated that as long as Russia and Austria-Hungary were coordinated, both countries would not tolerate the peace and order in Macedonia being broken by any Balkan countries [13: 144]. In 1897, the Austro-Russian agreement was signed under the strong impetus of Germany. Despite attempts by Russia and Austria-Hungary to maintain the status quo in the Balkans and to avoid the spread of unrest in Macedonia, the situation in Macedonia did not improve [14: 516-520]. In December 1898, the German ambassador in Constantinople mentioned that in the local diplomatic circles, the Macedonian issue had become the main topic of political dialogue, that it was only a matter of time before a catastrophe in Macedonia, and the intervention of the Great Powers had become indispensable, but that the Macedonian region was full of fierce conflicts between different Christian peoples, which prevented the final settlement of the problem, and the Turkish government enjoyed such strife, so it was necessary for the Great Powers to act in concert to urge the Turkish government to carry out reforms. In January 1899, after communication between German, British and Italian ambassa-

dors in Constantinople, they agreed that the Great Powers were to take joint action to urge the Sultan to improve the situation of Christians in Macedonia and to avoid the outburst of ethnic hatred. Macedonians would tend to remain stable if they realized that the Concert of Europe of the Great Powers was working to solve their problems [14: 527].

At the beginning of 20th century, Austria-Hungary and Russia decided to take the lead in Macedonia to avoid a war among the Balkan states over Macedonia and other Great Powers accessing the Balkan Peninsula, which they regarded as their own sphere of influence. On February 21, 1903, the Austro-Russian “Vienna Scheme” was formally submitted to the Turkish government, which requested the latter to carry out the necessary reforms; thus the Macedonian issue formally became a European-wide issue. Later, on the basis of the “Vienna Scheme”, Austria-Hungary and Russia further proposed the “Mürzsteg Programme” which involved more extensive contents.

### **Reasons for Germany’s involvement in Macedonian reforms**

Germany originally did not have much interest in the Balkans, so Bismarck argued against sacrificing the bones of a Pomeranian grenadier for the sake of interests in the Balkans for several times. However, since the Berlin conference, German-Turkish relations had slowly developed in a friendly direction. The Treaty of Berlin brought Macedonia back under the Ottoman Turkish rule, made Eastern Rumelia autonomous, and limited Russian expansion in the Black Sea and the Balkans. Although the Ottoman Empire was no longer a de facto Great Power [1: 263], at least the treaty prevented Russian expansion into the Balkans, and preserved the temporary stability of the Ottoman Empire and the prestige of the Sultan. Germany’s actions objectively won the goodwill of the Ottoman Empire. The Turks believed that the Germans would provide protection from the Great Powers and would allow the Empire to continue its domestic reforms and eventually become strong enough to survive without their protection [19:132-133].

The reasons for Germany’s involvement in Macedonian reforms and the development of German-Turkish relations were manifold. Firstly, from the economic aspect, Germany’s economic penetration into the Ottoman Empire was constantly strengthening. In 1888, the Deutsche Bank made the first major loan to the Ottoman Empire. For Germany, the purpose of the loan was to facilitate Deutsche Bank’s entry into the financial sphere of the Ottoman Empire, and the loan would allow the Deutsche Bank to rise quickly to a position comparable to, or even higher than, that of the Imperial Ottoman Bank [19:144]. According to statistics, from 1888 to 1913, German investment in the Ottoman Empire rose from £166,000 to £20,653,000. The investments involved the construction of railways, ports and public works; as well as this, there were investments in banking, industry and mining. Of these, Germany had the greatest influence in railway and port construction and banking investment [22: 64-66]. Secondly, Germany’s political influence in the Ottoman Empire was increasing as German-Turkish economic ties grew closer. In

1898, under the background that the Ottoman Empire adopted the high-pressure policy against the Armenians, the major European Powers, especially Britain and France, unanimously supported many anti-Ottoman revolutionary groups; the Kaiser became the first head of European Powers to visit the Ottoman Empire and conveyed the message of support for the Sultan's regime. The chancellor, Bernhard von Bülow, recalled that during his visit to the Ottoman Empire, the Kaiser had assured His Majesty the Sultan and the 300 million Muslims who regarded him as their caliph that he would always be their friend, no matter where they lived on earth [2: 254]. Even after his return to Germany, the Kaiser did not forget to express his friendship for the Ottoman Empire, which he regarded as an example for other countries because of the absolute obedience of its subjects to the Sultan. Behind the improved relations between the two countries was Germany's intention to expand its influence in the Ottoman Empire. In this regard, scholars commented that one of the motivations for the Kaiser's visit to the Ottoman Empire was to obtain concessions for the Baghdad railway to the Persian Gulf, and this initial goal was quickly achieved after the visit [19: 185]. Thirdly, Germany and the Ottoman Empire had a good basis for cooperation in the military field, and the relationship between the two countries was further enhanced. On the one hand, Germany sent several military delegations to the Ottoman Empire to help the latter modernize its military system. Among them, Colmar Frieheer von der Goltz and Otto Limon von Sanders were the most representative. Goltz expressed satisfaction with his work in that after the reform of German officers, the Turkish army was ready to help the Germans in war and to ensure the survival of his country in the war, if not its revival [19: 91-192]. On the other hand, a new class of officers was formed in the course of the Ottoman Empire's reform in accordance with the German military model. They had close ties to German instructors; many Turkish officers believed in German military doctrine and intended to rely on the German military model and strength to reconstruct their weak military system. Their admiration for Germany enabled the latter to gain great influence in the political and military fields of the Empire, and Germany gradually assumed the role of the protectorate of the Ottoman Empire [19: 197-199].

Therefore, after the Berlin Conference, along with the continuous development and strengthening of German-Turkish relations, Germany realized that the Ottoman Empire was its necessary ally; without this partner, Germany could neither compete with Britain and Russia in the East and Asia, nor obtain the expected benefits [21: 127]. With Macedonian reforms on the agenda, German-Turkish relations changed.

### **German-Turkish foreign policy during the Macedonian reforms**

Macedonian reforms were mainly concerned with three aspects: the gendarmerie, finances and justice. Throughout the period of Macedonian reforms, the established strategy of the Ottoman Empire was to take advantage of the contradictions among the Great Powers to win the support of Germany, to prevent the reforms

from advancing as much as possible, and to preserve the interests of the Empire and the prestige of the Sultan. Germany's strategy was to maintain the solidity of the Dual Alliance, support Austro-Russian leadership in the reforms, create obstacles for the reforms, minimize the loss of the Ottoman Empire, and promote the development of German-Turkish relations.

On the issue of the reorganization of the gendarmerie, the major powers proposed to grant foreign officers' full responsibility for the reorganization of the gendarmerie, increase the number of officers of the Great Powers and speed up the process of the reorganization. Faced with the proposal of the Great Powers, the Ottoman government responded with countermeasures.

On the same day that the Ottoman government announced its acceptance of the "Mürzsteg Programme", Britain proposed to send a certain number of officers to reorganize the gendarmerie, and the Great Powers could specify the duties of the officers, formulate rules of procedure and set up committees [6:144]. The British proposal was immediately supported by France and Italy. Austria-Hungary and Russia, on the other hand, advocated that they had to take the lead in matters of reforms. In addition, there was considerable disagreement among the Great Powers over the appointment of a foreign general to take charge of the reorganization of the gendarmerie. In order to draw Italy in and undermine the Triple Alliance, Britain proposed that an Italian hold the post [6:156]. Austria-Hungary, on the other hand, opposed the appointment of an Italian general in charge of the gendarmerie reorganization, fearing that Macedonian reforms would tilt in favor of Italy and facilitate its expansion in the western Balkans, which would harm Austria-Hungary's interests in the region. Faced with the disagreement among the Great Powers, the Ottoman Empire opposed the proposals of the Great Powers one by one.

First of all, the Ottoman government refused the proposals of the Military Commission, established by the representatives of the Great Powers, on the powers and responsibilities of the officers of the reorganization of the gendarmerie. It insisted that the authority of the representatives appointed by Austria-Hungary and Russia was limited to consultation and did not have the power to intervene directly in the administration, while the representatives sent by the Ottoman government had full authority over Macedonian reforms, and their instructions were all from the Ottoman government. In a note sent to Austria-Hungary and Russia, the Ottoman government wrote that the plans of the Military Commission did not take into account the views of the imperial government and violated its sovereignty and prestige. In addition, the privileges granted to foreign officers were contrary to the previous agreement between the Ottoman Empire and Austria-Hungary and Russia, which stipulated that foreign officers were only responsible for reorganizing the gendarmerie and did not have the right of command and execution [7:71-72]. By denying executive powers of foreign officers, the Ottoman Empire aimed to put the initiative of reforms ultimately firmly in its own hands. Secondly, the increase in the number of foreign officers beyond what was stipulated in the agreement by the

Great Powers was not accepted. The Turkish government expressed the hope that the Austro-Russian ambassadors would reach a consensus with the imperial government on the issue in a spirit of reconciliation and would not send additional foreign officers [7:102-103]. The reorganization of the gendarmerie had already achieved remarkable results, and it was believed that it would achieve even more in the short term. Adding the number of foreign officers would only increase the financial burden on the three Macedonian provinces. Therefore, increasing the number seemed superfluous [8: 38-40].

In order to force the Ottoman Empire to accept the offer of additional officers, the Great Powers (except Germany) sent officers to Macedonia with the intention of creating a *fait accompli*. However, the Turkish government did not give in and once again rejected the overtures [8:73]. Enraged by the repeated refusal of the Ottoman Empire, the Great Powers decided to take joint action to force the Turkish government into submission. The Austro-Russian ambassadors in Constantinople sent a strongly worded note to the Turkish government: in view of the disorder and chaos in the Macedonian provinces, it was imperative to hire additional officers. If the Turkish government refused to accept the proposal, the Great Powers would embark on joint action, and France and Italy had already expressed their support for such action [8:79]. Britain expressed its support for coordinated efforts by the Great Powers to put pressure on the Turkish government [8: 79]. The French ambassador also drafted a document asking the Turkish government to acknowledge the additional officers [8:80]. Eventually, the ambassadors of the five powers (except Germany which promised to support the actions of the representatives of the five powers) formally signed the joint note and presented it to the Turkish Government [8: 80, 8:95-96]. In the face of the combined pressure of the Great Powers, the Turkish government finally made a compromise decision, but on the following conditions: first, the number of foreign officers was not to be further increased under any pretext or reason; second, the period of appointment of new officers was not to exceed the period established by previous officers; third, the new officers were not to have effective command of the gendarmerie, and their duties were to be limited to the reorganization of the gendarmerie; fourth, the Great Powers would do their utmost to limit the revolutionary agitation that led to the existing evils [8: 98]. Subsequently, the imperial edict of the Ottoman Empire officially recognized that the Great Powers had assigned additional officers to reorganize the gendarmerie [8:116].

During the period of gendarmerie reform, Germany basically followed the policy of non-interference, tried to undermine the Concert of Europe as much as possible and gained the confidence for the Ottoman Turkish Empire to resist. In response to the British request to put pressure on the Ottoman Turkish Empire, Germany stated that it had no intention in the Near East other than to keep the peace, that it was satisfied with its position in the second or third line, that it supported all measures to improve the situation in the Balkans, and that it would give Austria-Hungary and Russia the right to take the initiative if they could coordinate their

actions with Britain [6:151-152]. In order to avoid causing a political dispute with the Ottoman Turkish Empire, Germany relinquished the military command it enjoyed in the formed Macedonian gendarmerie corps [15:100]. Furthermore, regarding the Military Commission's view that officers were to enjoy absolute command, Germany considered that the command of foreign officers serving in the Turkish army was something entirely new and that the Turks, for political and religious reasons, would protest against it in the strongest possible terms. For the sake of German-Turkish relations, the German representatives on the Military Commission would exercise restraint and would not accept the position of the commander [15:100-101]. Finally, Germany refused to participate in the Great Powers' proposal to partition Macedonia as a gesture of goodwill to the Ottoman Turkish Empire. However, it also made it clear that it would not interfere with the actions of its allies, Austria-Hungary and Italy, and tried to resolve the Austro-Italian differences on the issue of partitioned occupation in order to preserve the stability of the alliance.

In terms of the dispute between the Great Powers and the Turkish government over the number of commissioned officers and their responsibilities, it could be concluded that firstly, the Turkish government's determination to implement the reform program was questionable. Although the appointment of officers to reorganize the gendarmerie had the element of interfering in the Ottoman Empire's internal affairs and endangering the prestige of the Sultan, the intention of the Great powers was to calm the restlessness of the Christian population in the region and to eliminate the elements of revolutionary unrest, which would contribute to the stability of the Turkish European territories. Secondly, the Concert of Europe was difficult. Germany's policy of non-interference and rejection of the reform program made the reform process extremely difficult, and the effect of the Concert of Europe was insufficient due to Germany's policy toward the Ottoman Empire.

On the issue of financial reform, Austria-Hungary and Russia initially submitted a draft of reform to the Ottoman Empire that was mainly the responsibility of the Imperial Ottoman Bank. Later, due to the Turkish government's opposition, Austria-Hungary and Russia drew up a new reform proposal, which consisted mainly in the establishment of a Fiscal Council by one financial representative of each of the Great Powers, with full responsibility for the reform.

The Turkish government refused to accept the Austro-Russian reform proposal and considered it as an infringement of its sovereignty by giving the Imperial Ottoman Bank government powers [15:214]. In order to make it harder for the Austro-Russian reform proposal, the Turkish government asked the Great Powers to raise tariffs from 8% to 11%, and argued that since the reorganization of the Macedonian gendarmerie, it had been overburdened with financial deficits in order to maintain a large military force in Macedonia to suppress the fighting between ethnic armed groups. The increase in taxation would be only used to cover Macedonia's budget deficit, not in other ways, and it was hoped that the Great Powers would amend the commercial treaty with the Ottoman Empire to meet its demands



[9:23-26]. In addition, the Turkish government took advantage of the conflicts among the Great Powers with the intention of undermining the Concert of Europe. Firstly, the Ottoman Empire asked Germany to mediate, urged the Great Powers to abandon the creation of the Fiscal Council in Macedonia, which threatened its sovereignty, and explained its rejection of the powers' proposal; it considered the creation of the Fiscal Council beyond the scope of the Great Powers' previous reform program, and believed that once the Turkish government accepted the proposal, more reforms would follow. The idea of establishing the Fiscal Council was merely a product of British design, which took advantage of the current lack of political power in Russia and the plight of Austria-Hungary, busy with its internal affairs, with the intention of gradually taking the reins of reforms into its own hands. Britain had been trying to persuade the Turkish government to extend the reforms to the province of Adrianople, which was bound to cause a series of chain reactions. In view of this, the Turkish government hoped that Germany would use its influence to persuade the other Great Powers to drop the idea of creating the Fiscal Council [15: 270-271]. In addition, the Turkish government presented to Italy that the establishment of the Fiscal Council meant changing in the Balkan situation, which Italy had been trying to maintain the status quo of, and therefore hoped that Italy would not participate in the action of the joint note [15: 256]. Germany's hesitancy over the coordinated action of the Great Powers had emboldened the Turkish government to reject the proposal. The Turkish government stated that the new proposal of the Great Powers was a direct interference in its internal affairs and seriously undermined the independent sovereignty of the Empire, which the Great Powers had repeatedly declared and promised to respect in the past. The Turkish government had already fulfilled the requirements of the "Mürzsteg Programme", and the reforms were effective, while the new proposal of the Great Powers, which went far beyond the scope of the original plan, was unacceptable to the Turkish government [10: 50-51].

In order to force the Turkish government to accept the reform plan, the Great Powers decided to resort to naval demonstrations. In order to solve the dilemma, the Turkish government once again sought the help of Germany. Although Germany wanted to support the Turkish government's claim, it persuaded the latter to accept the reform plan in order to maintain the stability of the Dual Alliance in view of the firm position of Austria-Hungary in the reform at this time. Germany expressed the hope that the Turkish concessions would provide a modicum of accommodation in diplomatic relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Great Powers [15: 293-294]. Under the coercive power of the Great Powers and in the absence of any hope for foreign aid, the Turkish government finally had to accept the financial reform plan of the Great Powers.

Germany became proactive on financial reform instead of the policy of staying out of the gendarmerie reform. It emphasized that if international financial control over Macedonia were to be exercised, the possibility of such control extending to the entire Turkish Empire was to be considered and Germany was to have a seat in

the Fiscal Council [15:216]. The reasons for Germany's change of attitude were mainly the following.

Firstly, Germany believed that the Imperial Ottoman Bank was a French-run institution that competed with German enterprises in the Ottoman Empire. In essence, France was Germany's real enemy, and if the Imperial Ottoman Bank, which was the pioneer of the economy of France, enhanced its political character, it would be contrary to Germany's interests and thus would seriously weaken its position in the Ottoman Empire. In view of its huge economic interests in the Ottoman Empire, Germany could not accept the financial control of Macedonia by French or even foreign banks [15: 209-210].

Secondly, Germany believed that the basic idea of the fiscal reform plan was to separate Macedonia from other Turkish provinces, which not only meant that Macedonian revenues would not have to be handed over to the Turkish Treasury, but also that this mode of international control might be extended to other provinces of the Empire, which was harmful to Turkish national interests and would inevitably be resisted by the latter [15:209-210].

Thirdly, the contradictions among the Great Powers provided the conditions for Germany to destroy the Concert of Europe. In the first place, Britain opposed the Austro-Russian fiscal reform plan and argued that it could result in Macedonian local authorities without enough funds for regional development and payment of civil servants [5:76]. In addition, the men assigned by Austria-Hungary and Russia to the fiscal reform were not financial experts, and Britain worried about the effectiveness of the implementation of the reform plan [9: 16]. In the second place, Italy was dissatisfied with the lack of prior consultation with Austria-Hungary and Russia believed that the two countries' actions did not take Italy's interests into account [15: 206], and hoped that the signatories of the Treaty of Berlin would supervise Macedonian fiscal reform together [15:247], with the intention of transforming Macedonian reforms from Austro-Russian domination to shared management of the Great Powers. Italy had proposed to Britain that the situation in Macedonia was at stake and that it was important for the Great Powers to agree on concerted action [17: 79]. In the third place, France sought to use its opposition to the Austro-Russian reform plan as an opportunity to mediate the Anglo-Russian relations. On the one hand, on the grounds of maintaining friendly Franco-Turkish economic relations, France expressed that it did not want the Imperial Ottoman Bank to take the responsibility of Macedonian fiscal reform, aimed at denying the Austro-Russian reform plan [15: 224]. On the other hand, France reminded Russia that the continuation of the current predicament in Macedonia would only facilitate the expansion of Austro-Hungarian influence [17: 79]; Germany and Austria-Hungary might take advantage of Russia's internal and external difficulties to seek hegemony in the Balkans. Austria-Hungary, as an instrument of German policy, pursued policies in both the Balkans and the Near East that were strictly Germanic. Therefore, France had good reasons to frustrate German-Austrian policy in a certain way [17: 79-80]. Finally, Russia, which had been tied up by the Russo-

Japanese War, was interested in shifting its diplomatic focus to the Near East in order to rid the plight of the Far East. Russia had declared that it would “never abandon the Christians of Macedonia” [15: 234], and was tired of having Austria-Hungary play a dominant role in the Balkans while it was subordinate [15: 248]. Germany seized the divergent interests among the Great Powers and constantly strengthened the differences between them in order to increase the difficulty of reforms.

Fourthly, Germany did its best not to participate in the joint action of the Great Powers and to provide support to the Turkish resistance. Germany had suggested that the joint action by the Great Powers could easily cause the Turkish government to make negative decisions, because the Turks were accustomed to strong and threatening notes from the Great Powers. In the opinion of the Ottoman Empire, the action of one or two countries had to be valued, because a strong attitude of one country showed its firm determination to act; consensus could be easily reached between two countries, and the collective action of the Great Powers often ended in failure because of their divergent interests [15: 266]. Germany was also pessimistic about the formation of the Fiscal Council, which it considered to be hasty and full of uncertainties; for example, the Great Powers had not yet defined the rules of the organization, the mechanism of its operation, the terms of reference of the council, the selection of the chairman, the powers of the inspectors, the relationship with the Imperial Ottoman Bank, among other issues. If the Fiscal Council could not formulate detailed regulations in advance, it would not function properly and the Great Powers might then talk to themselves and reduce the effectiveness of financial reforms in Macedonia [15:268]. In addition, when the Great Powers resorted to naval demonstrations to force the Turkish government to accept the reform plan, Germany did not put it into practice despite verbal expressions of cooperation with the other Powers’ actions. Germany explained to the other powers that it could not participate in the joint naval demonstration because it had no warships in the Mediterranean and was in the winter maintenance period for its warships [15: 304].

On the issue of judicial reform, differences between Austria-Hungary and Russia had intensified and the reform process had become deadlocked. After the Russo-Japanese War, Russia, whose ambitions for expansion in the Far East had been suppressed, wanted to escape from domestic pressure by expanding its influence in the Balkans; thus it became proactive in the issue of judicial reform. Austria-Hungary, in order to accelerate the pace of annexation of the two provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, wanted to make concessions to the Ottoman Empire on the Macedonian judicial reform and win the latter’s favor, so it became passive on the judicial reform. Faced with the intensification of conflicts between the two military blocs, the foreign policy of the Ottoman Empire was to fall back on the German-Austrian blocs and resolutely reject the demands of the Great Powers for reforms. The German foreign policy was to widen the differences between Austria-Hungary and Russia, undermine the reform process, and promote the de-escalation of Austro-Turkish relations and the development of German-Turkish relations.

In November 1906, when Russia proposed to Austria-Hungary an extension of the “Mürzsteg Programme” to introduce judicial reform in Macedonia, Austria-Hungary stated that Russia was preparing for the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and that it would not participate in the implementation of the policy. Germany supported the position of Austria-Hungary which believed that if Austria-Hungary supported the Russian proposal, it would only be detrimental to its interests and would stimulate the revolutionary enthusiasm of the Macedonian people. The Russian proposal was sinister; it was merely a way of looking at Eastern affairs from the British point of view in order to achieve reconciliation with Britain on other issues [15: 405]. To prevent Russia from taking the initiative in the judicial reform, Germany and Austria-Hungary wanted the Ottoman Empire to assume the role. Austria-Hungary stated that it would support the Ottoman Empire if the latter could take the initiative to propose improvements in the Macedonian judiciary [15: 407]. The Great Powers had to pursue conservative policies in the Balkans to ensure the integrity of Turkish territorial sovereignty [15: 411]. Germany also proposed that judicial reform had to wait, as much as possible, until the Ottoman Empire completed other reform measures before implementing them separately and that the Ottoman Empire had to decide on the measures to be taken at its own discretion [15: 407].

With the support of Germany and Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire decided to take the lead in proposing a judicial reform plan in line with its own interests in order to avoid further infringement of its sovereignty by the Great Powers, and at the same time it sent specialized personnel to Macedonia to take charge of the judicial reform [15: 409]. In March 1907, the Ottoman Empire formulated a judicial reform plan based on its self-interest. Austria-Hungary welcomed the Turkish initiative and proposed that Austria-Hungary and Russia had to give the Turkish government sufficient time to implement reform and give the Fiscal Council an important role in judicial reform. Russia, on the other hand, advocated the immediate process of judicial reform and the establishment of a new special commission to take charge of the reform. Russia actively sought British support for its claim to be widely accepted. Britain fully agreed with the Russian program and aimed to develop relations between the two countries in the direction of an agreement. The rapid development of Anglo-Russian relations led Germany to lament that there was no trace of Russian distrust of Britain. The mutual political trust that had accumulated during the Macedonian reforms process helped Britain and Russia finally conclude an agreement to adjust their colonial differences.

The establishment of the Triple Entente worsened Germany’s diplomatic environment; in order to avoid isolation, Germany paid more and more attention to the stability of the Dual Alliance and the development of friendly German-Turkish relations, so Germany was particularly active in promoting the easing of Austro-Turkish relations. Firstly, Germany persuaded Austria-Hungary not to follow in the footsteps of Britain and Russia and implement a hardline policy towards the Ottoman Empire. Germany told Austria-Hungary that it opposed the Anglo-Russian

proposal and feared that military action by Britain and Russia to force the Turkish government to accept the demands of the Great Powers would trigger a war against the Ottoman Empire and threaten the peace of Europe. So, Germany hoped that Austria-Hungary would stick to its original position and settle the row over the judicial reform [15: 448-449]. Secondly, Germany was outside the Concert of Europe and undermined the reform process. Although Germany noted it would support the actions of the Great Powers, it reserved the right to act in the event of further developments. In any case, Germany would not participate in the violence against the Ottoman Empire over the issue of the judicial reform [15: 456-457]. Moreover, Germany tried to divert the attention of the Great Powers from the judicial reform by using the issue of negotiating the renewal of the terms of the members responsible for the reorganization of the gendarmerie and the financial reform. Germany successfully persuaded Austria-Hungary and Russia to back its position that the judicial reform proposals had to be shelved for the time being and the extension of negotiations had to be put on the agenda [15: 464-465]. Finally, Germany privately advised the Turkish government to accept the note from the Great Powers as soon as possible to strengthen its position on the issue of the judicial reform, and suggested that it linked the extension of negotiations with a 3% tariff increase to add to the difficulties of the judicial reform [15: 465-466].

With the support of Germany, the Turkish government combined the extension of negotiations with the judicial reform as a response to the joint note. As a sign of its sincerity in developing German-Turkish relations, the Turkish government stated it had been doing everything in its power to maintain friendly relations with the Triple Alliance. For example, it was prepared to issue a royal decree which approved the Austro-Hungarian Novi Pazar Railway Project and made concessions in Tripoli in favor of Italy [15: 495]. The Turkish government's goodwill received a positive response from Germany. At a meeting of ambassadors organized by the German ambassador in Constantinople, the German ambassador made it clear that he insisted on resolving the issue of the negotiations first, since the judicial reform could be discussed only if the continuation of the functions of the Fiscal Council was ensured, and that Germany refused to participate in the collective intervention of the Great Powers. The French ambassador was impressed by the German ambassador's efforts to persuade the other ambassadors to accept his position throughout the meeting, and he mentioned that the German ambassador took up the note that the ambassadors had prepared and were ready to sign to refute it article by article. The disagreement among the Great Powers made them realize that this was a retreat and, in the present circumstances, even with the help of naval demonstrations, it was sure that the resistance from the Sultan could not be overcome [18: 474]. Eventually, the conference of ambassadors unanimously recognized that the Great Powers were unable to force the Turkish government to accept the judicial reform plan through diplomatic means [18: 470-471]. With the announcement of the Novi Pazar Railway Project by Austria-Hungary, a new crisis emerged in the Balkans that distracted the attention of the Great Powers, and the

struggle for the judicial reform in Macedonia, which lasted for more than two years, finally came to an end.

The failure of the judicial reform was closely related to the foreign policies of Germany, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. Firstly, Germany was reluctant to participate in the collective actions of the Great Powers, at the same time tried to undermine the joint note to the Turkish government as much as possible, and hoped to maintain a friendly relationship with the Ottoman Empire so as to establish Germany's economic, political, military and even strategic superiority in the latter. Secondly, Austria-Hungary had aggressive intentions toward the Balkans, but its focus was on the two provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina. As the conflicts between Austria and Serbia intensified, the rise of the nationalist movement in Bosnia and Herzegovina prompted it to accelerate the pace of annexation of the two provinces. Therefore, on the issue of the judicial reform in Macedonia, Austria-Hungary not only wanted to keep pace with Germany and maintain the stability of the Dual Alliance, but also hoped to obtain Turkish concessions on Bosnia and Herzegovina through the reform. Thirdly, the Turkish government's fierce opposition to the judicial reform was also an important reason why it could not be implemented. On the one hand, the Turkish government was well aware of the contradictions among the Great Powers, especially the support of Germany, which strengthened its determination and confidence to resist the reform proposal. Naum Pasha, the Turkish deputy foreign minister, said: "No one had the courage to suggest that the Sultan accepted the judicial reform program" [15: 475]. On the other hand, the Sultan hoped to win the support of the Muslim masses by resisting the judicial reform program of the Great Powers, to increase his prestige and to save his faltering regime from collapse. It was the cooperation of Germany, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire that made the Macedonian judicial reform end in failure, and the cooperation among the three countries also provided the conditions for further deepening of their relations in the future.

### **Conclusion**

After the internationalization of the Macedonian issue, the diplomatic games of the Great Powers around the Macedonian reforms played a key role in promoting the restructuring of the relations among the European Powers. Germany had great political, economic and military influence in the Ottoman Empire, and the latter had always sought to establish friendly relations with Germany; this two-way appeal promoted the rapid development of the relations between the two countries. During the Macedonian reforms, based on the development of German-Turkish friendship, Germany repeatedly undermined the Concert of Europe and put obstacles in the way of reforms in order to safeguard the Turkish interests. In addition, in order to maintain the stability of the Dual alliance, Germany supported Austria-Hungary to lead the Macedonian reforms, and, at the same time, in order to avoid being dragged into the confrontation with the Ottoman Empire by its alliance, Germany took the proactive diplomacy aimed at guiding the diplomacy of Austria-

Hungary in the direction of Austro-Turkish détente. However, when Austro-Turkish differences arose and a choice had to be made between them, Germany chose to side with Austria-Hungary more often. This was further demonstrated by the Bosnian crisis of 1908-1909, during which Germany chose to firmly support Austria-Hungary and satisfy its annexation intentions at the expense of the Turkish interests and the opportunity for German-Russian friendly negotiations. Bülow once noted that there was no need for Germany to throw Austria-Hungary directly into the hostile camp; Germany and Austria-Hungary would always be together on the Bosnian issue based on the alliance treaty, and Germany would never abandon Austria-Hungary [3: 332].

During the Macedonian reforms, the Ottoman Empire intended to take advantage of the differences among the Great Powers as much as possible, to undermine the Concert of Europe, and to put numerous obstacles in the way of Macedonian reforms in order to maintain the stability and integrity of the Empire. In addition, the Ottoman Empire bound its strategic interests with Germany and used Germany's influence on its allies Austria-Hungary and Italy and its deterrence power over the Triple Entente to seek diplomatic balance among the Great Powers and to survive in the gap. Although the Ottoman Empire did its best to maintain its imperial prestige and territorial integrity, its diplomatic initiative was not in its own hands in the face of *realpolitik*, and more often than not it could only hope for a smaller price in exchange for the greater losses it might face. Finally, in view of the friendly cooperation between Germany and the Ottoman Empire during the Macedonian reforms, the two countries also moved towards deepening the strategic cooperation, despite the emergence of the Young Turk Revolution which failed to interrupt the process of cooperation between the two countries. As the Austro-Russian rivalry intensified in the Balkans, many Balkan Slavic states supported by Russia tried to divide the Turkish European territories; the Ottoman Empire, which had a long-standing feud with Russia, fully realized that it needed powerful foreign aid to save its crumbling empire, and, eventually, the long-cultivated German-Turkish friendship blossomed into an alliance.

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**ԳԵՐՄԱՆԱ-ԹՈՒՐՔԱԿԱՆ ՀԱՐԱԲԵՐՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԸ ՄԱԿԵՂՈՆԱԿԱՆ  
ԲԱՐԵՓՈԽՈՒՄՆԵՐԻ ԺԱՄԱՆԱԿ (1903-1908 ԹԹ.)**

*Գաօ Ջիանժի*

**Բանալի բառեր՝** Մակեդոնական բարեփոխումներ, Օսմանյան կայսրություն, դիվանագիտական խաղեր, գերմանա-թուրքական հարաբերություններ:

1903 թվականի փետրվարին ավստրո-ռուսական «Վիեննայի համակարգի» ներդրմամբ մակեդոնական հարցը վերածվեց համաեվրոպական խնդրի: Մեծ տերությունների դիվանագիտական ջանքերը Մակեդոնիայի բարեփոխումների շուրջ դարձան այն կարևոր գործոններից մեկը, որն ազդեց մեծ տերությունների միջև հարաբերությունների կարգավորման վրա:

Փորձելով ընդլայնել իր ազդեցությունը Թուրքիայում և զարգացնել գերմանա-թուրքական հարաբերությունները Մակեդոնիայի բարեփոխումների հետ կապված՝ Գերմանիան մնաց եվրոպական համակարգի լուսանցքում և խոչընդոտեց բարեփոխումների գործընթացին: Այնուամենայնիվ, Գերմանիան, կանգնելով Ավստրո-Հունգարիայի և Օսմանյան կայսրության միջև ընտրության առջև, անցավ իր դաշնակից Ավստրո-Հունգարիայի կողմը: Օսմանյան կայսրու-թյունը, օգտվելով մակեդոնական բարեփոխումների հարցում մեծ տերություն-ների միջև առկա տարաձայնություններից, փորձեց հնարավորինս դանդաղեց-նել բարեփոխումների գործընթացը և պահպանել իր եվրոպական տարածքի ամբողջականությունը: Կայսրության լիակատար փլուզումից խուսափելու հա-մար Օսմանյան կայսրությունը փորձեց մակեդոնական բարեփոխումների ընթացքում զարգացնել գերմանա-թուրքական բարեկամությունը, և ապագայում դիվանագիտական այս ընտրությունը դարձավ պետական քաղաքականության իրականացման հիմքը: