Apple of Discord
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Published by Purdue University Press

Armour, Ian D.
Apple of Discord: The “Hungarian Factor” in Austro-Serbian Relations, 1867–1881.
Purdue University Press, 2014.
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Chapter 10

Serbia’s Swing Toward Russia
1870–71

Kállay had long predicted to Andrásy and Beust, as if appealing to one of the laws of nature, that a Serbia disappointed in, or, as it thought, repulsed by the Habsburg Monarchy, would automatically scuttle in the opposite direction. If Serbia were not under Austro-Hungarian influence, Kállay consistently argued, it must infallibly fall under Russian influence. In the event this is precisely what happened, at least for a time. Whether it was as inevitable as Kállay maintained, however, is another matter. Kállay also ignored the extent to which Hungarian promises, and the shortfall between those promises and reality, had undermined his and Andrásy’s objective of creating a South Slav satellite, tied to the Monarchy by economic and political interest.

Of the two Regents, Ristić’s position vis-à-vis Austria-Hungary and Russia is by far the easier to analyze. Ristić had always been suspicious of the link with Hungary and the benefits which might spring from it. His politician’s mind logically asked, how was the traditional opposition of the Habsburg Monarchy to the creation of an enlarged South Slav state to be overcome? And as a supreme tactician on the domestic political front, Ristić was concerned to safeguard his reputation as a liberal nationalist, albeit a rather authoritarian one. This meant that too great a subordination to Austro-Hungarian policy was political death; obeisances in the direction of a more distant Russia, by contrast, were politically much safer.

Even when relations with the Monarchy, through the mediation of the Hungarians, were at their closest, Ristić never entirely cut himself off from Russia. Not for Ristić the outspoken aversion to Russia expressed by Blaznavac. On the contrary, Ristić appears to have believed in the innate strength of Russia’s position.
At the height of the Black Sea crisis in 1870, for instance, he remained convinced
that no one, not even the Hungarian government, was really willing to challenge
Russia militarily. Especially after Filip Hristić arrived in Constantinople in 1870,
Ristić kept a fine ear tuned for whatever General Ignatiev had to say about Serbia.
The “friend,” as Ristić and Hristić both referred to Ignatiev, was an old acquain-
tance; and although Ristić frequently rebutted Ignatiev’s charge of having become
an “instrument” of Austria-Hungary, this diplomatic channel was always kept
open. Hristić, advised Ristić in September, should try to show the Regents’ desire
for better relations with Russia.

Blaznavac’ motivation is harder to fathom, in part because, unlike Ristić,
he left so little written record behind. Nevertheless one overriding reason for
Blaznavac’ pro-Hungarian policy in the past, as for his obstinate and frequently
voiced fear of Russia, is plain. As the soldier who had staked his career and
possibly his life on ensuring the succession of an Obrenović to the throne in
1868, Blaznavac had far more cause than Ristić to regard his fate as bound to the
dynastic question. The Monarchy, at the instigation of Andrássy, had endorsed
Prince Milan; therefore Blaznavac was willing to hail the Hungarians, if not the
Austrians, as friends. Russia had not only backed Nikola of Montenegro for the
Serbian throne, but ever since had used the Montenegrin rivalry as an unsubtle
threat in its relations with the Regency.

Blaznavac may also have been temperamentally less inclined than Ristić
to look Hungarian gift-horses, such as the Bosnian plan, in the mouth. Far more
important for him than the prize of Bosnia, however, was the desire to see Alex-
ander Karađorđević put away by the Hungarian courts. Since Blaznavac, and not
Ristić, was the strongman of the Regency, this interest in Karađorđević’s convic-
tion was probably the decisive factor in keeping Serbia within Austria-Hungary’s
orbit. After June 1871, with the prospect of any solution to the Karađorđević
threat receding, Blaznavac was in a bitter frame of mind, and willing at least to
consider other policy options. The extent of his disillusionment was recorded
late in July by the German consul. Apropos of the Beust circular, the Danube and
Karađorđević, Blaznavac was quoted as asking: “what answer can we make to
Russia, . . .when it reproaches us for our philomagyarism with reference to these
three open acts of hostility?” Blaznavac clearly felt he had been led up the gar-
den path, and in a sense he was right.

The reference to Russia is significant because, bereft of the Monarchy’s
practical support, and despite his view, expressed as late as June 1871, that “Rus-
sia’s goal is domination,” Blaznavac was increasingly aware of a need to make
his peace with the Tsar’s government. Neither Regent, however, had any clear
idea of how to escape their isolation. That they urgently desired to do so, by the
autumn of 1871, was due to one circumstance above all which motivated them
both. Throughout that year, momentum was building up for revolt in the Otto-
man provinces, and the preparations for it were, from the viewpoint of Belgrade, unofficial and quite unauthorized. Leaders of opinion like Miletić, and activists on the ground like the Bosnian priest Vaso Pelagić, were increasingly determined to act on their own. Miletić, for example, helped coordinate the plans despite his incarceration in Vác prison; and in late July Pelagić went so far as to inform the Serbian minister president, Milojković, that the revolt would break out that autumn, or at the latest in the spring of 1872.8

Such activity put enormous pressure on the Serbian government to act, since it lost what little prestige it had left among the Balkan Christians if it did not. Blaznavac and Ristić did respond, with token encouragement and time-consuming organization, but also with secret trepidation. Far more than the nationalists pushing them in this direction, they were aware of the risk for Serbia. “God alone knows what will come of this,” Ristić complained to Hristić early in August.9 The Regents feared the uprising getting out of hand, and being led by more radical elements like the Omladina. It was at their request that the Hungarian government closed down the sixth, and last, Omladina Congress at Vršac on 29 August, because it belligerently elected the firebrand Pelagić as president.10 On the public stage, however, the Regents were more reluctant than ever to be seen as the playthings of Austria-Hungary, on the one hand, and the scorn of Slav Russia, on the other. It was therefore domestic concerns which moved the Regents to take seriously the first olive branch held out by Russia.

The resolution of the problem was achieved with considerable speed. On 5 September Hristić reported that General Ignatiev, in Constantinople, proposed using his personal influence with the Tsar to arrange a visit by Prince Milan. The Prince would of course have to be accompanied by one or more of the Regents, which would afford an opportunity for a face-to-face exchange of views. To make things less Canossa-like for the Regents, Ignatiev suggested timing the visit with the Tsar’s tour of the Caucasus.11

On 12 September, Hristić reported that Ignatiev was pressing for an answer. The Tsar in the meantime had left the Caucasus, which made the next likeliest venue for a meeting the imperial summer palace at Livadia, in the Crimea. If, as Ignatiev had already suggested, some location outside St. Petersburg was to be preferred, then the Regents must act soon if they wished to meet on relatively neutral ground. Once the Tsar had returned to the capital, any decision to accompany Milan, the Sultan’s vassal, to a foreign court would assume far greater, and hence more daunting, proportions.12

Ignatiev’s proposal produced something like a crise de nerfs, not only in the Regents but in young Milan as well. According to Ristić’s later account, both Blaznavac and Milan, upon reading Hristić’s despatch of 5 September, exclaimed that “this can’t be true.”13 After years of abuse from the Russians for Serbia’s pro-Hungarian policy, after Russia’s consistent cultivation of Prince
Nikola of Montenegro, and the coldness of the Russian consul’s personal relations with Ristić and especially Blaznavac, the proposal seemed incredible indeed. Blaznavac, especially, had reason to be sceptical, finding it difficult to believe that his anti-Russian stance of the last four years would be forgiven.¹⁴

Ristić had most title to welcome the Russian initiative, since he had always been less committed to the Hungarian orientation, and more concerned with maintaining reasonably good relations with Russia. In his opinion, Ignatiev’s proposal was a genuine attempt to bridge differences, and not a demand for unconditional submission to Russian interests. And if it was Blaznavac who, in the past, had most identified himself with an anti-Russian policy, then Blaznavac should be the Regent who accompanied Milan to Livadia. He would then be able to explain his and Ristić’s policy to the Tsar in person.¹⁵

On 22 September, the Regents telegraphed Constantinople, enquiring whether Ignatiev would agree to clear the visit with the Tsar personally, and obtain some assurance that Milan would be accorded a dignified reception.¹⁶ Ignatiev complied with this request a couple of days later and, in agreement with Hristić, worded his telegram to Alexander II in such a way as to suggest a certain diffidence on the part of the Serbian government. This, as Hristić explained, was in case the Tsar, for whatever reason, was inclined to put off the visit: postponement in response to such a hypothetical enquiry would not give the appearance of a personal rebuff to Milan.¹⁷ After that, another nervous week was spent waiting for a reply.

Eventually the Russian embassy in Constantinople received a telegram from Count Shuvalov, the Tsar’s aide-de-camp and minister attendant. The Tsar, Shuvalov confirmed, would receive Prince Milan “avec plaisir à Livadia.”¹⁸ Hristić, informing Ristić of this on 3 October, passed on Ignatiev’s recommendation that Milan, accompanied by one Regent, should travel incognito, so as not to give unnecessary offense to the Ottomans. He would be met at Odessa by a steamer specially sent by the Tsar. Ignatiev engaged to apprise Shishkin, his subordinate, since for reasons of protocol it would be advisable if the latter went with Milan as well.¹⁹

A few difficulties remained to sort out. The Regents insisted that Milan be met at Galatz on the lower Danube, rather than Odessa. They were also concerned at the request for incognito. According to Ristić, writing on 6 October, both the Skupština and the public would have to be notified of the intended journey, since an unheralded departure by the Prince might give rise to destabilizing rumors.²⁰ Hristić, who was also to meet the Prince en route, was able to report on 10 October that Ignatiev had agreed to place a Russian naval vessel at Milan’s disposal at Galatz. The ambassador still favored incognito, but at length accepted Hristić’s claim that “our world doesn’t understand that,” and that it would create a bad impression in Serbia if Milan appeared to be going “furtively” to see the Tsar.²¹

It was not until 14 October that the formal communication the Regents had been waiting for arrived.²² The next day being a Sunday, the members of the
Skupština were convened for a special session in Kragujevac, and informed of Milan’s imminent departure. After a church service and blessings by the Metropolitan Michael, Milan and Blaznavac left the same afternoon. If Ristić’s account is to be believed, both the Skupština and the citizens of Kragujevac were delighted at the new development. As the Prince and the Regent set off, Ristić says, many of the deputies threw their caps into the air, and “It seemed as if the shouts of joy would never end.”

Ristić was probably right in interpreting such scenes, even retrospectively, as proof that a rapprochement with Russia would be popular. Nevertheless his mood at the time continued to be one of foreboding. He confided to Hristić, on 15 October, that

Now the West is going to turn against us and especially Austria or rather Hungary. Kállay has already begun to campaign against me both publicly and in secret even before this, and now he will do so even more.

Hristić must work closely with Ignatiev at Livadia, and draw Blaznavac’ attention to the need to say or do nothing that might create a bad impression. Above all, Hristić should convince Ignatiev that Ristić was “as little a German (which he accuses me of) as little as I am a Turk, a Hungarian or anything else, which is not a Serb. And that I deserve his confidence, the proof is this trip of the Prince to the Crimea.” In return for the risk of Austro-Hungarian displeasure, in short, it would be useful to have some proof of Russian confidence in Serbia.

In the event, Prince Milan’s visit to Livadia went off very well from the Serbian point of view. On 20 October Milan was received by Alexander and the Tsaritsa en famille. After a two day stay, the Prince and his retinue were back in Kragujevac by 1 November.

What was most important about the Livadia visit was the chance Blaznavac had to discuss Serbian policy face to face with the Tsar, Ignatiev, and others. Our main source for these encounters is Ristić who, while admittedly writing after Blaznavac’ death in 1873, had in this instance no particular reason for blackening the latter’s memory, nor for praising him unduly. It was more than probable, as Ristić claims, that “The prejudice against Milivoje Blaznavac in the circle of the imperial family was great,” since he had been consistently portrayed as an enemy of Russia by the foreign ministry, and had been content to describe himself as such in the past. Yet the mere fact that it was Blaznavac, rather than the more acceptable Ristić, who accompanied Milan to Livadia spoke for itself. Under the encouraging influence of Ignatiev and Hristić, Blaznavac rapidly made the right impression.

Alexander II, once assured of Blaznavac’ willingness to please, appeared content to confine himself to diplomatic generalities. In line with his policy in the Eastern Question since the Crimean War, the Tsar assured Serbia of future
“good prospects” [dobre izglede], but “recommended patience.” Ignatiev, in the meantime, was skilfully showing the Tsar how much his view of Serbia, especially since the fall of Garašanin in 1867, had been colored by the reports of Garašanin’s partisans in the Russian foreign ministry. Such was the revolution in Alexander’s attitude toward the Regents that he promised Blaznavac, “My government will not intervene in your domestic affairs, and I am amazed that such a thing could have happened.”

In the light of Russian policy toward Serbia, both past and future, one should not attach too much weight to this sort of language. True, the Emperor Alexander was well-known for setting great store by his pledged word, but Russian governments had browbeaten Serbian ones in the past, and would continue to do so in the years to come. Nor were the Tsar’s expressions of Slav solidarity proof against Russian self-interest and shifting international circumstances, as Alexander’s treatment of Serbia in 1876–78 was to demonstrate. Serbia, as Ristić and Blaznavac well knew, was apt to be handled by both great powers, Russia and Austria-Hungary, in much the same way. Which of the two was least likely to impede, and more likely to advance Serbian interests, at any given point, was always a question requiring fine judgment.

Nevertheless the immediate result of the Livadia visit was to improve, at least on the surface, relations between Russia and Serbia. In Serbia itself, which was of most concern to the Regents, the effect was also encouraging. While Milan was out of the country, the Skupština had remained in session; a few days after his return, the Prince closed the proceedings with an address in which he spoke of the warm reception he had been given by the Tsar. The deputies greeted this announcement with cries of acclamation for both the Tsar and Milan. Ristić, summing up the popular mood for Hristić, claimed that the news of Milan’s reception in the Crimea “has electrified both the Skupština and the entire country and has routed our opponents.” On the whole, Ristić had reason to be pleased with the effect the trip had produced.

Milan’s departure for Livadia had caused something of a diplomatic sensation, since the Regents’ refusal to accept an incognito visit meant the news was in the Belgrade press on the morning of 16 October. Kállay’s only way of reacting, for the moment, was to inform Vienna by telegram. He then had nothing else to do but sit down and try to draft an official explanation for this stunning reverse. Although he was well aware that the good understanding between Belgrade and Pest was at an end, he was clearly as surprised as everyone else by the Livadia visit, not least because he assumed Blaznavac’ fear of Russia was insuperable.

Kállay’s report of 16 October to Beust was, in its way, a masterpiece of plausible analysis. It managed to suggest an air of inevitability in Serbia’s swing toward Russia, with the implied conclusion that there was nothing the Monarchy, let alone Kállay, could have done to prevent it. Although he had to admit, like
everyone else, being completely surprised by the move, Kállay avoided anything that might recall his confident assertions, in the past, that Russian influence in Serbia was totally eliminated.

Instead he represented the trip as the natural consequence of the change in Serbian policy which, he now claimed, had set in up to a year ago. To some extent, this was a reasonable enough, if retrospective, conclusion. The sea-change in international relations produced by the Prussian victory over France in 1870, which Kállay cited first of all, was indeed a factor which was bound to have repercussions in eastern Europe. Russia’s support for Prussia naturally raised the likelihood of a quid pro quo in the Eastern Question. As a direct result, there was the Black Sea question and its successful resolution for Russia, “and Russia’s prestige in the Balkans arising out of this.” The Russo-Ottoman entente, which had accompanied this, had an even more direct effect on the mood in Belgrade. Then, Karadžorđević had been acquitted; and finally, the Regents had been influenced by “the ever increasing ferment among the Austro-Hungarian Slavs, especially in Croatia and the Military Border.”

Kállay also attributed the sudden decision over Livadia to domestic considerations. Pointing out how often he had reminded Beust of “the discontent rapidly gaining ground in the country,” Kállay cited as evidence the growing political opposition to the Regents. Hence the idea of disarming this opposition by the trip to Russia. Serbia had “until the next about-face—once again become the blind tool of Russian policy, and must be counted as such from now on in all political combinations.” For the man who had set out for Belgrade, in 1868, as the “friend of the Serbs,” this was a bitter admission indeed.

To Andrásy, the same day, Kállay displayed an even franker fatalism, as if he too had decided that Serbia had swung hopelessly beyond the control of either Hungary or the Monarchy. Serbia on its own, Kállay wrote, and even one which was the “blind instrument” of Russian policy,

can’t be a danger to us, only at the worst more or less of an inconvenience, as long that is as we can confidently rely on Germany’s support in the struggle which, sooner or later, is going to take place between us and Russia.

Here was the entire international strategy of the Hungarian political elite for the next forty-seven years, sketched out in a sentence. Kállay had his doubts about German support, since he found it difficult to believe the Serbian government would have taken such a step, “had it not been convinced, that Germany was standing behind Russia.” Nevertheless, if the Monarchy could really count on Germany, then “for Serbia this step [Livadia] can lead to dissolution.”

Other observers confirmed Kállay’s estimate of the seriousness of the setback to Austro-Hungarian influence in Serbia, although not all of them saw Kállay as entirely blameless. The embassy in Constantinople reported merely, at
first, that Milan’s departure to visit a foreign sovereign, without consulting his suzerain, had considerably annoyed the Porte. It was not long, however, before Prokesch-Osten himself weighed in with the observation that the grand vizier “deceives himself . . . over Serbia’s tendencies as little as his predecessors in the office,” adding the waspish rider that “even the belief of our agent in Belgrade in his victory over Russian influence in Serbia has suffered a certain diminution.” For Prokesch-Osten, the trip to Livadia had “only the value of a symptom.”

The shrewdest observations on Hungarian diplomacy in the light of Livadia, however, were made by Germany’s ambassador to Vienna, General Hans Lothar von Schweinitz, and by Bismarck himself. Schweinitz saw beyond the activities of Kállay, who was after all only the chosen instrument of Andrássy. Writing to Bismarck first on 21 October, the ambassador simply recorded Andrássy’s discomfiture at the news of Livadia. A week later, Schweinitz recalled how, for the past four years, Andrássy had striven to convince both the South Slavs and the Romanians that “their salvation was to be sought with him, not with Russia.” Andrássy was building here, in Schweinitz’s opinion, on “the Serbophile policy of Baron Beust,” who had after all begun his period in office by persuading the Turks to evacuate the Serbian fortresses. Kállay’s appointment had been part of this policy; and ever since Kállay had toiled, “not without success,” to win the Serbs over in matters like the railway question, and above all the Bosnian question. “In return he [Kállay] demanded, and ensured, that the Serbs on the right bank of the Danube did not support the agitation of their national brethren on the left bank.”

Schweinitz singled out the Karadordević débâcle, and the dispute over the regulation of the Danube, as the two issues which had done most to endanger the influence over Serbian policy thus built up by the Hungarian government. In Schweinitz’s view, however, what had really dealt the death blow to Andrássy’s project was the recent strengthening of the Slav element in Austria, as represented by the appointment of the Hohenwart-Schäffle ministry the previous February. No matter that, by the time Schweinitz was writing this, the great experiment with the Monarchy’s Slavs had already collapsed; its very existence “called forth tremors from the sources of the Sava to the mouth of the Danube.” Despite Andrássy’s efforts, all peoples in this region regarded the Hungarians as a common enemy, and Serbia as “their strongest, because state-based support.” Consequently,

order was assured, as long as the Serbian Regency went hand in hand with the Hungarian government, and now, in the very moment when Austria’s Slavs, first triumphant, then disappointed and indignant, turn their eyes towards Russia, Mr. Blaznavac travels to Livadia with young Milan.

The Livadia trip, trivial in itself, was “perhaps the biggest setback that Count Andrássy has suffered in a period in office otherwise so successful.” Yet the Hun-
garian minister president persisted in believing, Schweinitz thought, that deals could still be done with the governments of both Serbia and Romania, whereby the latter would not encourage their co-nationals within Hungary.46

Bismarck, who had recently discussed high policy with Andrássy at the Salzburg meeting between Francis Joseph and William I, agreed with this analysis. He thought Andrássy attached too much importance to Livadia, and that this was due to a lack of perspective.

Otherwise so far-sighted, he [Andrássy] looks for the dangers with which his country is threatened, and the defenses against these, in too narrow a field, in that he tries to remain on good terms with the Slavs and Romanians, [but] in the long run thinks he can defend himself against them with Hungary's strength alone. The real threat, and the real defense, lie outside this field.

Bismarck’s point here was that neither Serbia nor Romania was in a position to withstand serious pressure from Russia: “they will never survive a serious test of strength.” The Slav sympathies of Serbia’s population, and Romania’s physical proximity to the Russian Empire, would always outweigh anything Hungary had to offer. In these circumstances, confronted with the united hostility of the East, “Hungary will always be obliged to rely upon the German alliance.”47

Bismarck touched here upon a profound truth about Hungary’s position. He was shrewd enough also to spot the inherent contradiction in Hungarian policy since 1867, a contradiction of which Andrássy seemed so far still unaware:

In individual questions and for the time being Count Andrassy may succeed in pacifying the Romanians and South Slavs. He cannot keep them contented forever and, from his utterances, I believe that, despite his good will towards the Serbs, he will call a halt at the Bosnian border just like Count Beust.

The answer to this dilemma, according to Bismarck, was that Andrássy “must . . . not think of himself as standing between Hungary on the one side and the South Slavs and Romanians on the other, but of Hungary standing between Germany and Russia.” Implicit in this insight, however unwelcome it might initially be to Andrássy, was that Hungary stood to gain more from cooperation with both Germany and Russia, than from dubious deals with its southern neighbors. The Three Emperors’ League of 1873 was the logical outcome of such reasoning.48

Bismarck’s assessment of Andrássy’s South Slav policy came at a particularly interesting juncture, since it was shortly after this that Andrássy finally took over the direction of the Monarchy’s foreign policy, on 14 November.

The supreme irony of Andrássy’s appointment as foreign minister was that, after four years promoting the cause of Serbo-Hungarian friendship, he was now thoroughly disillusioned with the Serbs. Beyond that, however, Andrássy also came to office following a major change in the Monarchy’s diplomatic relations, a change initiated by Andrássy’s great rival, Beust, and which Andrássy merely
furthered and consolidated. This was the switch from hostility toward Prussian expansionism, the legacy of 1866, to acceptance of the new Germany as the Monarchy’s most logical partner. The prospect of Austro-German partnership, in addition, opened up the question of an entente with Russia on conservative, counter-revolutionary and dynastic grounds. Andrásy, for whom the inevitability of war with Russia was axiomatic, did not at first accept this conclusion, but eventually found it forced on him as the price of German cooperation.\footnote{49}

On 18 May 1871, Beust had submitted a lengthy memorandum to Francis Joseph.\footnote{50} Effectively, it proposed a realignment of the Monarchy with Germany. The entente was given practical point that summer, with the meetings of the two emperors at Ischl and Salzburg. More important, Bismarck and Beust also met at Bad Gastein, then, in the company of Hohenwart and Andrásy, at Salzburg where, on 28 August, a general agreement was reached. Without seeing the need for a formal alliance, the two powers nevertheless recognized that there were no longer any vital interests dividing them.\footnote{51}

The significance of the Austro-German rapprochement, in the context of the present study, lies in its effect on the Monarchy’s eastern policy. Specifically, the two principles which Beust laid down in May 1871, and which Andrásy was obliged to accept later, if not in November 1871, involved an improved relationship with Russia, and the possibility of territorial gains for the Monarchy at the expense of the Ottoman Empire.

Beust and the Emperor accepted that better relations with Russia were a necessary condition of the new cordiality with Germany. Yet as Beust had pointed out in May, opinion in Hungary labored under the false impression that reconciliation between Austria-Hungary and Germany would somehow divide the latter from Russia, and might even make possible an Austro-German coalition \textit{against} Russia. This attitude in Hungary had not only made difficulties for the Monarchy at the London Conference; it made it “almost impossible . . . to open up better relations with Russia directly, without giving rise to foolish shrieks that a second Holy Alliance is in train, aimed specifically against Hungary, etc.” Undeterred, Beust recommended that the only solution was “to look for the path to Petersburg via Berlin and in this fashion reach a modus vivendi.”\footnote{52}

There were other reasons for this de facto revival of the old axis between the three northern courts. One of the most prominent, in 1871, was the spectre of revolution raised by the Paris Commune, a danger which virtually all the Monarchy’s leaders, Andrásy included, took very seriously indeed.\footnote{53} Regarding relations with Serbia, however, the most significant thing about the shift in Austro-Hungarian policy was the recognition that the Monarchy still had certain interests in common with Russia. This in turn made it possible to envisage a return to the practice of tacitly accepting the predominating interests of each power in different parts of the Balkans. At the time of his appointment as foreign
minister, Andrásy might not yet have accepted this premise; but the Emperor implicitly had.

The second principle regarding Balkan policy, set forth in Beust’s May memorandum, was that of a general disinterest in the future integrity of Turkey-in-Europe. With fine impartiality, Beust observed that “We have no interest in, and no inclination towards, bringing about Turkey’s downfall, but also no very good reason . . . to contribute to its protection with expensive exertions and artificial means.” As a corollary, which he knew would not displease the Emperor, Beust now felt able to declare the Monarchy’s own interest in expanding in this area. Designs which had hitherto been confined to the planning of the war ministry and the military chancery could now be elevated to the level of *raison d’état*, since every assumption has to be that Austria’s expansion in future can only take place in the Near East, and this would be especially desirable in the direction of strengthening our possession of Dalmatia by means of a corresponding hinterland. In addition, and without actively working for the Ottoman Empire’s dissolution, the Monarchy would need to sponsor the welfare of the Balkan Christians, lest these in despair sought salvation in Russia’s arms. Equally undisputable was the fact that the Monarchy could not plan the occupation of Bosnia, and at the same time continue Andrásy’s policy of offering this territory to Serbia.

Andrássy as foreign minister would thus have found it difficult, not to say impossible, to reconcile his new duties with the keystone of his Serbian policy while Hungarian minister president. It is admittedly not clear, from Beust’s memorandum, whether the chancellor envisaged taking over only a portion of Bosnia, as had been discussed by Kállay with the Regents, or whether the new strategy reckoned on acquiring the whole of the province. Beust’s memorandum is silent on the subject of Serbia, although he had long known the outlines of Andrásy’s Bosnian project, if not the details. Nor is it clear whether, by May 1871, Francis Joseph had revealed to Beust the initiative undertaken by the Hungarians, without Beust’s knowledge, in December 1870 and January 1871. What is clear is that the Monarchy’s foreign policy establishment had already, long before Andrásy became foreign minister, come out in favor of expansion into Bosnia. It seems unlikely that the foreign ministry, any more than the military, would have welcomed a condominium arrangement with Serbia.

That the Emperor should have approved Beust’s program in May did not, of course, mean that Andrásy was somehow bound to adopt it in its entirety in November. On the contrary: while Andrásy naturally would have to tailor his views to those of his master, Francis Joseph to a certain extent was also obliged to take Andrásy as he found him. Despite the Beust memorandum, for instance, the Emperor knew that Andrásy could be relied on to take an anti-Russian stance; only with time and circumstance was this to be modified. Equally obvious, though
in this case in line with Beust’s legacy, was Andrássy’s willingness to cultivate the friendship of Germany. It was precisely with regard to the Eastern Question, however, that Andrássy’s views had undergone a transformation. From being an advocate of sacrificing the integrity of the Ottoman Empire in the cause of binding Serbia to the Monarchy, Andrássy by November 1871 had swung full circle in the opposite direction.

For Kállay there was, at first, no indication of just how far Andrássy’s thinking on the subject had changed, although Kállay knew that Andrássy had long ago lost patience with the Regency. He knew, also, that the Regents had heard the rumors of Andrássy’s appointment, “and fear his decisiveness.”

Kállay’s first encounter with Blaznavac and Ristić after their return to the capital was on 10 November. From the reception Kállay got, it was clear that the Regents were extremely nervous about the Monarchy’s response to Livadia, and Kállay did nothing to allay their qualms. Ristić claimed that he and Blaznavac were morally bound to hand over to Milan, when he came of age, a country strong internally and on good terms with all the powers. To this, Kállay returned only a classic piece of diplomatic double-talk: “since we were on good terms with Russia, we could not take it amiss if Serbia entered into good relations with a country with whom we were friends.” Decoded, the message was clear: the Monarchy’s leaders were taking it very much amiss.

Blaznavac was even less able to conceal his unease, emphasizing how much, in the past, he had been “singled out as an enemy of Russian policy, so that Slavs from all countries were attacking him as such.” If there were no improvement in this situation, Blaznavac claimed, he would be forced to step down once Milan attained his majority next year, and to watch helplessly from the sidelines as someone else pursued a policy directly opposed to his own. As a result of Livadia, however, Blaznavac now hoped to maintain his influence over Prince Milan, and gave Kállay to understand that, as long as this was the case, “he would continue with his anti-Russian policy.”

The following day the Regents supplied further anxious testimony that their policy toward Austria-Hungary had not changed. Blaznavac, Dr. Rosen told Kállay, stressed that an explicitly anti-Austrian policy would not be practical, and repeated his assurances that the Serbian government had no intention of stirring up trouble in Hungary. There was, however, an important *quid pro quo*: “The Serbian government hasn’t become Russian, so it wouldn’t be right for the Hungarians now to agitate against Serbia, because precisely by this means they would drive the Serbs into the arms of the Russians.” Serbia’s chief needs, Blaznavac stressed, were peace and internal development.

Both Regents knew that in speaking to Dr. Rosen they were indirectly addressing Kállay. This makes the unconcealed rancor with which Ristić expressed himself, later in the day, all the more remarkable. Ristić, as Rosen reported, had
never intended to perform this about-turn, only the Hungarians, who could have done a lot in the Bosnian business, had forced him to it by their behavior. Their hypocrisy had been seen through before the end of his life by Prince Michael too, whom they had promised Bosnia but, when the opportunity offered, drew back.63

Inevitably, Ristić also dredged up the Beust circular, and Karadordević, as additional reasons. It was clear that, despite their surface determination to maintain normal links with the Monarchy, both Regents were not only apprehensive but at the same time in rather bullish mood.

Kállay’s suspicions were only heightened by the rest of Rosen’s report on 11 November. According to Rosen, Ristić had just had a long conversation with Milan Kujundžić, a civil servant in the ministry of the interior. Kujundžić, who evidently had no doubts about the Regents’ wholehearted support for the cause of national revolt in the Ottoman provinces, allegedly urged the mounting of agitation within the Monarchy, in order to distract the latter from any eventual uprising. Coming a mere few weeks after the abortive attempt by Serb nationalists to raise a revolt at Rakovica, in the Military Border, this was disturbing news. Rosen, like many other observers, believed the government intended acting on Kujundžić’s advice.64

Kállay was therefore all the chillier in manner when, on 21 November, he took leave of Blaznavac prior to going up to Pest. With more prescience than he realized, Kállay made a point of stressing especially, that I believed Andrássy would try to establish a better relationship with Russia. To this he [Blaznavac] asked: didn’t we perhaps intend effecting a partition of the Turkish provinces. He asked this, to be sure, in a joking tone, but despite this he couldn’t conceal his deep apprehension.65

Having thus stirred the pot, Kállay proceeded to deny any such intention on the part of the Monarchy. In any case, he concluded, he did not really know what Andrássy’s policy would be.

In fact Kállay must have had a fair idea of what Andrássy’s position was by now, with regard to Serbia, and his own was one of near total disillusionment. If Ristić is to be believed, Kállay’s rage at Livadia was far greater than he indicated even in his private diary. According to Ristić, “Kállay especially arrived beside himself, saying, ‘This is now a Russian province!’”66 Commenting on the uproar in the Austrian and Hungarian press over Livadia, Ristić ventured the (erroneous) opinion that Andrássy’s appointment as foreign minister might even be a reaction to Livadia, or at least that Livadia had provided the final justification for entrusting the direction of foreign affairs to so notorious a Russophobe.67

Ristić had his own theory about the significance of Andrássy’s appointment. Andrássy, he claimed, “thought to surround Hungary with a Slavonic league, but
he fears the Slavs, and especially the Russians, as the greatest danger. . . . Now Austria really is in the hands of the Hungarians, who are going to be our open enemies.”

As a result, Ristić concluded, Serbia’s position after Livadia was undoubtedly weaker diplomatically, but the Regency had made things easier for itself at home and among the Slavs generally, “and that’s the main thing.”

There was certainly no mistaking the shock to public opinion in both halves of the Monarchy. For some time, relations with Serbia had been perceived as satisfactory at least; now, according to Ristić, “The attacks in the Vienna, and especially the Pest press, exceeded every bound of decency.” Some of this invective, as might be expected, was directly inspired. Two articles in the Hungarian Reform, in particular, were written by Dr. Rosen, clearly with Kállay’s approval, and threatened Serbia with dire consequences. The first of these suggested that the plans which had surfaced since Livadia for betrothing Prince Milan to the Grand Duchess Vera would not get very far. Such a marriage would make Serbia little more than a province of Russia, and the Monarchy would not permit this.

The second article was even more vituperative, especially where Ristić was concerned. The latter was accused of being prepared to do anything to stay in power, and knew that he could only do so by carrying out Russia’s orders. Since these entailed creating unrest among the Monarchy’s Slavs, such a situation was not to be endured, and Austria-Hungary would react accordingly. Ristić was warned of personal risks in his pro-Russian policy: “even he has to await the day of reckoning.”

The Reform articles cost Dr. Rosen his job as a Serbian civil servant, since the Regents knew perfectly well that he was one of Kállay’s hirelings. Nor was all the mudslinging on one side: Kállay had been singled out for particular attack in mid-November by the semi-official Jedinstvo, in a leading article which mocked his naïveté in thinking Russian influence in Serbia vanquished, and for talking of the Regents as if they were “in his pocket.” The point about the mutual newspaper fusillades is that they marked a deep antagonism on both sides, an antagonism all the more bitter because both Kállay and the Regents knew just how much such tirades were the result of official inspiration.

Kállay’s first official report to Andrássy as foreign minister, on 19 November, reflected this breakdown in relations. Kállay concluded that Livadia was simply “the public, demonstrative final act of a revolution in Serbian policy which had been impending for some time.” This of course ignored all the evidence, repeatedly offered by the Regents, that it was no part of their ambition to be subservient adjuncts to Russia. Since, however, as Kállay claimed, the Regency had so demonstrably been “taken in tow by Russian policy,” it followed that the watchwords for Austro-Hungarian policy toward Serbia from now on must be caution and suspicion. All the Regents’ explanations for Livadia were calculated to lull the Monarchy into a false sense of security. In reality, Kállay believed,
the Serbian government “will seize every opportunity by which they can embar-
rass us without compromising themselves.” To judge by these words, the many
expressions of friendship and mutual interest of the last four years might never
have been uttered.75

Andrássy was in a similarly intransigent mood. Only days before Kállay ar-
rived in Pest for talks, the foreign minister spoke his mind to Lord Lytton, of the
British embassy. Considering that only the previous June Andrássy had still been
preaching the compelling logic of Serbo-Hungarian cooperation, the change in
attitude was startling. He now professed himself “entirely converted” to the cause
of propping up the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. In such a scheme the Serbian
government, which had proved itself a willing conduit for Pan-Slav propaganda
aimed at the Monarchy’s Slavs, could have no share. On the contrary, by the trip
to Livadia the Serbian Regents had revealed themselves for what they were. Both
the Monarchy and the Ottomans must keep a sharp eye on Serbia “and crush her
the moment she moves.”76

To Kállay, on 28 November, Andrássy explained why the Serbian govern-
ment was no longer to be trusted. As a consequence, Andrássy concluded that the
Serbian government
doesn’t want our friendship, so . . . from now on he [Andrássy] will adopt a
position of expectancy, taking care only to safeguard the political and material
interests of the Empire. If, however, the Serbian government believes it to be in
its interests to win our friendship, let it turn to him, but in any event only if it
is able to offer proofs of its sincerity.77

In diplomatic terms, this was the equivalent of cold war. Serbia could expect
no more favors unless it publicly allied itself with Austria-Hungary. The special
relationship to which Andrássy and Kállay had devoted so much thought and
rhetoric was dead.

Kállay, in return, had some suggestions to make which are of considerable
interest, in view of the Monarchy’s subsequent strategy in dealing with Serbia
and the Balkan Slavs, a strategy which Kállay for many years to come was to help
in shaping. First, he wanted Andrássy to replace the present Austro-Hungarian
consul in Sarajevo with Kállay’s own Belgrade deputy, Theodorovics. The latter,
in addition to being a Hungarian Serb, was a man Andrássy would be able to trust
in carrying out whatever policy he now intended pursuing vis-à-vis Bosnia.78

Most practical, and in the event most effective, was Kállay’s suggestion
that, in response to a recent increase in Serbia’s protective tariffs, the Monarchy
should retaliate by raising its own tariff on swine imported from Serbia. Andrássy
asked for a detailed set of proposals on this last, and one of the principal instru-
ments of the Monarchy’s economic control of Serbia for the last quarter of the
nineteenth century was conceived.79
At this and a subsequent meeting on 17 December, Andrásy enjoined Kállay to lay particular emphasis in dealing with the Regents on the Monarchy’s supposedly excellent relations with Russia. In the meantime Kállay also had a couple of interviews with Menyhért Lónyay, the new Hungarian minister president. Lónyay too responded favorably to the idea of a ban on Serbian swine imports. He also was inclined to press ahead with a new Hungarian rail link on the Danube below Belgrade, which would act as a warning to Belgrade that the Monarchy was capable of bypassing Serbia completely in its pursuit of a Vienna-Constantinople railway.

Andrássy’s vaunting of good relations with Russia was, in fact, an elaborate blind, since the foreign minister had no intention of building a lasting bridge to St. Petersburg. Andrásy was actually intent on preparing the Monarchy for war with Russia, which he still estimated was likely in another two years. A top-level council on 17–19 February 1872, held in conditions of strict secrecy, was to lay the Monarchy’s own plans for rearmament and fortification in preparation for this conflict. In the end, of course, Andrásy’s feigned rapprochement with Russia turned into something like a real one, though this was against Andrásy’s better judgment. As a means of worrying the Serbian Regents, however, it proved convincing. Certainly Kállay himself seems to have had no inkling of just how far-reaching Andrásy’s plans were.

Kállay finally returned to Belgrade on 21 December in the midst of a severe blizzard, prompting speculation in the diplomatic community that his determination to reach the capital, in the face of such conditions, heralded some important new initiative. In reality his mission had an air of hopelessness about it, rather than of urgency. Primarily it consisted simply of delivering Andrásy’s adamantine “either-or,” and leaving the Regents to make what they would of it.

Blaznavac received him on Christmas Day, after Kállay had first been briefed by Dr. Rosen on the government’s position. As Rosen put it, the Regents’ attitude was almost a mirror image of Andrásy’s: “If Andrásy would do something openly which would show that he favors Serbian [interests], the mood would change in his favor in 24 hours.” Kállay, however, was having none of this. To Blaznavac, he enumerated the issues which had fallen victim to Serbian obstruction and ill will. The Danube; the railway question; the raising of customs duties on certain Austro-Hungarian goods; and most seriously the suspected agitation by Serbian agents in Croatia and the Military Border, and the distribution of the Grenzer pamphlet the previous autumn: all these, he insisted, were hardly the signs of a friendly disposition. In view of the numerous “services of friendship” which the Monarchy, largely through Andrásy’s agency, had shown Serbia, Andrásy could only conclude that he was wasting his time. The Regents could return to the fold anytime but, Kállay warned, this time they would have to furnish “convincing proofs of their sincerity.”
Both Regents denied utterly any interference in the Monarchy’s internal affairs. Both, as so often before, returned to the Beust circular and the acquittal of Karadordević. Kállay, again, rejected the continued reference to these two factors as a justification. Thus, although the Regents protested that they wished to remain on good terms with the Monarchy, Kállay stuck to his original position that the Monarchy’s confidence in Serbia “is with some reason shaken.” The Monarchy, in short, would remain the judge of what constituted “convincing proofs.”

Kállay remained of the opinion that, of the two Regents, Blaznavac “would gladly be able to return to more intimate relations with us.” This, however, was for the moment impossible, since Blaznavac had committed himself publicly too far, and would have to reckon with the political capital Ristić would make out of any recantation. The best option for the Monarchy, therefore, was to wait for the Serbian government to seek a rapprochement, but in the meantime to take “energetic measures” to safeguard the Monarchy’s material interests. Kállay did not specify what the energetic measures were to be, but it seems fair to assume that in any arising diplomatic negotiations he meant the Monarchy to drive a hard bargain. Protecting the Monarchy’s material interests also entailed keeping a strict watch on any subversive links between Serbia and the Monarchy’s South Slavs.87

Subsequent events were to show that Kállay was deluding himself. The combination of intransigence on both sides ensured that relations did not just remain static, but went steadily downhill thereafter. Less than three months after these exchanges, it was the normally emollient Blaznavac, rather than Ristić, who was openly threatening Hungary with a revival of the nationalities issue. “Wherever Hungary has the slightest wound on her body, (Blaznavac shouted) I will do my best where possible to inflame it.”88 Any thought of a closer understanding between Serbia and Hungary, according to Blaznavac, was an impossibility.

To a certain extent, such hysterical reactions were prompted by an underlying consciousness that, whatever Andrássy’s reputation as a Russophobe, the rumored Austro-Russian entente was showing increasing signs of becoming reality. This naturally made the Serbian government fearful of being caught in the middle, its interests in national liberation and territorial expansion squashed by a division of the Balkans into great power spheres of influence. Nor, as the subsequent history of the Eastern Question demonstrates, were such fears completely unfounded.

Beyond this, however, lay another reason for the Regents’ instinctive distrust of Andrássy as the new Habsburg foreign minister. It was not a reason which either Andrássy or Kállay appeared to appreciate, or were even aware of; but the British vice-consul, with whom Blaznavac discussed the matter, correctly reported it. As Blaznavac told Captain Watson,

he knew better than to believe Count Andrassy, when the latter says, that he wishes to see Servia prosperous and strong and become a center for the Slavs of Turkey, for that was not the Magyars’ programme; Count Andrassy, he said,
knew the danger which might accrue to Hungary, if Servia really should consolidate herself, for the Slavs of Hungary would then perhaps look to Belgrade as a capital.\(^9\)

Here, indeed, was the crux of the matter as far as the Serbs were concerned: Andrásy, as a Hungarian, simply ought to have known better. The fact that, by the time of his installation in the Ballhaus, Andrásy had come full circle and had concluded that the Serbs were untrustworthy after all, made all the protestations of the preceding four years seem like an elaborate confidence trick.

For four years, the relationship between the Habsburg Monarchy and Serbia had been distorted by the Hungarian factor. Whereas the traditional policy of the Monarchy had sought always to curb Serbian aspirations, especially with regard to Bosnia, Andrásy from the moment of his appointment as Hungarian minister president pursued goals which flatly contradicted this policy. By the beginning of 1872, however, relations between Serbia and the Monarchy might be said to have returned to something like normal. Hostility and tension reigned, interspersed with occasional threats on both sides. In the coming years, Kállay in Belgrade, and Andrásy in Vienna, were to evolve a number of different stratagems for bending the Serbian government to their will. The most effective, as well as ultimately the most self-defeating, was to involve securing a personal hold over Serbia’s head of state, Prince Milan, and reinforcing this hold through the political and commercial treaties of 1880–81. Thus the failure of the attempt at Serbo-Hungarian “friendship,” and the increased bad feeling it engendered, were to determine the Monarchy’s policy toward Serbia for the next generation. It is in this sense that 1867–71 deserves to be regarded as the formative period for relations between the Monarchy and its troublesome neighbor.

Notes

1 E.g., Kállay to Beust, 14 Sept. 1871, HHSA, PA XXXVIII/191.
3 Ristić to Hristić, 10/22 Nov. 1870, in Srp ska Kraljevska Akademija, *Pisma Jovana Ristića Filipu Hristiću od 1870 do 1877 i od 1880* (Belgrade: Narodna Štamparija, 1931), no. 2, 3; Ristić to Hristić, 17/29 Nov. 1870, ibid., no. 3, 8; and Ristić to Hristić, 8/20 Dec. 1870, ibid., no. 6, 15.
7 Rosen to Bismarck, 4 June 1871, quoted ibid.


17. Hristić to Ristić, 14/26 Sept. 1871, *Hristić Letters*, no. 82, 89.


32. The text is given, ibid., 3:218–19.

33. Ristić to Hristić, 4/16 Nov. 1871, in *Ristić Letters*, no. 37, 75.


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1871, HHSHA, PA XXXVIII/191; a copy of this was enclosed in Kállay to Andrásy, 16 Oct. 1871, OSZK, FH 1733/62.

36 Kállay to Beust, 16 Oct. 1871, no. 35, HHSHA, PA XXXVIII/191; Stokes, Politics as Development, 17.

37 Kállay to Beust, 16 Oct. 1871, no. 35, HHSHA, PA XXXVIII/191.

38 Kállay to Andrásy, 16 Oct. 1871, OSZK, FH 1733/62.

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid.

41 Mayr (chargé d'affaires) to Beust, 17 Oct. 1871, HHSHA, PA XII/98.

42 Prokesch-Osten to Beust, 24 Oct. 1871, HHSHA, PA XII/98. See also Longworth to Elliot, 18 Oct. 1871, PRO, FO 78/2185.


44 Schweinitz to Bismarck, 27 Oct. 1871, quoted ibid., 208–9; italics in original.


46 Schweinitz to Bismarck, 27 Oct. 1871, quoted ibid., 208–9. On the Hohenwart-Schaffle ministry of 1870–71, and the failed attempt at a “Czech compromise,” see Arthur J. May, The Hapsburg Monarchy 1867–1914 (New York: Norton, 1968 [1951]), 59–61; C.A. Macartney, The Habsburg Empire 1790–1918 (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1969), 579–85. The Hohenwart government tendered its resignation on 27 October 1871, a week after the crucial common ministerial council which persuaded the Emperor that the Czech compromise proposals would be impossible to implement. Beust’s intervention against the proposals, with explicit Hungarian support, was one of his greatest successes; it was also, however, an intervention in internal politics which Francis Joseph considered unwarrantable, and which prompted him to dismiss Beust on 1 November. See the excerpt from the common ministerial council, 20 Oct. 1871, in which Beust argued against the Czech compromise on foreign policy grounds; quoted verbatim in István Diószegi, Die Außenpolitik der Österreichisch-Ungarischen Monarchie 1871–1877 (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1985), note 11, 43–44.

47 Bismarck to Schweinitz, 2 Nov. 1871, quoted Reiswitz, Belgrad-Berlin, Berlin-Belgrad, 210–11.

48 Ibid.


55 Ibid.

56 Diószegi, *Die Außenpolitik*, especially chapters 2 and 3.

57 Kállay Diary, 8 Nov. 1871 (*Dnevnik*, 412).

58 Ibid., 10 Nov. 1871 (*Dnevnik*, 413–14; Kállay to Andrassy, 19 Nov. 1871, HHSA, PA XXXVIII/191.

59 Kállay Diary, 10 Nov. 1871 (*Dnevnik*, 414); see also Ristić, *Spoljašnji odnosaji Srbije*, 3:227; and Kállay to Andrassy, 19 Nov. 1871, HHSA, PA XXXVIII/191.

60 Ibid.


62 Kállay Diary, 11 Nov. 1871 (*Dnevnik*, 416).

63 Ibid.


65 Kállay Diary, 21 Nov. 1871 (*Dnevnik*, 420).


68 Ristić to Hristić, 4/16 Nov. 1871, *Ristić Letters*, no. 37, 75.

69 Ibid., 76.


74 *Jedinstvo*, 3/15 Nov. 1871, quoted in *Dnevnik*, note 302, 761–62. See also Kállay Diary, 18 Nov. 1871 (*Dnevnik*, 419).

75 Kállay to Andrassy, 19 Nov. 1871, HHSA, PA XXXVIII/191.

76 Lytton to Granville, 23 Nov. 1871, PRO, FO 7/791, quoted in Bridge, *Sadowa to Sarajevo*, 62–63.

77 Kállay Diary, 28 Nov. 1871 (*Dnevnik*, 422).

78 Ibid. Theodorovics was appointed to the Sarajevo consulate in March 1872. For his devotion to Hungarian interests, see Watson (vice-consul, Belgrade) to Rumbold (Constantinople), 18 Mar. 1872, enclosed in Watson to Granville, 20 Mar. 1872, PRO, FO 78/2227; also Kállay Diary, 30 Dec. 1871 and 26 Jan. 1872 (*Dnevnik*, 429, 438).

79 Kállay Diary, 28 Nov. 1871 (*Dnevnik*, 423).

80 Ibid., 28 Nov. and 17 Dec. 1871 (*Dnevnik*, 422, 426).

81 Ibid., 1 and 4 Dec. 1871 (*Dnevnik*, 423).

Kállay Diary, 28 Nov. and 17 Dec. 1871 (*Dnevnik*, 423, 426).

Ibid., 21 Dec. 1871 (*Dnevnik*, 426); Watson to Elliot, 1 Jan. 1872, enclosed in Watson to Granville, 2 Jan. 1872, PRO, FO 78/2227.


Kállay to Andrássy, 18 Mar. 1872, OSZK, FH 1733/3. Kállay had this account, in quotes, from Dr. Rosen the previous day; Kállay Diary, 17 Mar. 1872 (*Dnevnik*, 451).

Watson to Elliot, 1 Jan. 1872, PRO, FO 78/2227.