

prejudice. This warning had been conveyed not only by her diplomats in private conversations with responsible Austro-Hungarian officials, but was proclaimed publicly by Italian statesmen on the floors of Parliament.

Therefore when Austria-Hungary ignored the usual practices and menaced Serbia by sending her an ultimatum without in any way notifying the Italian Government of what she proposed to do, indeed leaving that Government to learn of her action through the press rather than through the usual channels of diplomacy, when Austria-Hungary took this unprecedented course she not only severed her alliance with Italy but committed an act inimical to Italy's interests.

The Italian Government had obtained trustworthy information that the complete program laid down by Austria-Hungary with reference to the Balkans was prompted by a desire to decrease Italy's economical and political influence in that section, and tended directly and indirectly to the subservience of Serbia to Austria-Hungary, the political and territorial isolation of Montenegro, and the isolation and political decadence of Roumania.

This attempted diminution of the influence of Italy in the Balkans would have been brought about by the Austro-Hungarian program, even though Austria-Hungary had no intention of making further territorial acquisitions. Furthermore, attention should be called to the fact that the Austro-Hungarian Government had assumed the solemn obligation of prior consultation of Italy as required by the special provisions of Article VII. of the treaty of the Triple Alliance, which, in addition to the obligation of previous agreements, recognized the right of compensation to the other contracting parties in case one should occupy temporarily or permanently any section of the Balkans.

To this end, the Italian Government approached the Austro-Hungarian Government immediately upon the inauguration of Austria-Hungarian hostilities against Serbia, and succeeded in obtaining reluctant acquiescence in the Italian representations. Conversations were initiated immediately after July 23, for the purpose of giving a new lease of life to the treaty which had been violated and thereby annulled by the act of Austria-Hungary.

This object could be obtained only by the conclusion of new agreements. The conversations were renewed, with additional propositions as the basis, in December, 1914. The Italian Ambassador at Vienna at that time received instructions to inform Count Berchtold, the Austro-Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs, that the Italian Government considered it necessary to proceed without delay to an exchange of views and consequently to concrete negotiations with the Austro-Hungarian Government concerning the complex situation arising out of the conflict which that Government had provoked.

Count Berchtold at first refused. He declared that the time had not arrived for negotiations. Subsequently, upon our rejoinder, in which the German Government united, Count Berchtold agreed to exchange views as suggested. We promptly declared, as one of our fundamental objects, that the compensation on which the agreement should be based should relate to territories at the time under the dominion of Austria-Hungary.

The discussion continued for months, from the first days of December to March, and it was not until the end of March that Baron Burian offered a zone of territory comprised within a line extending from the existing boundary to a point just north of the City of Trent.

In exchange for this proposed cession the Austro-Hungarian Government demanded a number of pledges, including among them an assurance of entire liberty of action in the Balkans. Note should be made of the fact that the cession of the territory around Trent was not intended to be immediately effective as we demanded, but was to be made only upon the termination of the European war. We replied that the offer was not acceptable, and then presented the minimum concessions which could meet in part our national aspira-