

reasonable to accuse her of aggression because she began to mobilize when a large Austrian army had already advanced on Serbia. Consider the previous history of the Balkan peninsula.

A generation ago, what is now the Balkan problem appeared to the British simply as a question of preventing Russia from seizing Constantinople and posting herself on the route to British India. But Britain had no territorial ambitions in the Balkans, and when the young Slav nationalities there sprang into life from the ruins of the Turkish Empire, she left the field to them and to Greece. But though it was Russia that had unclosed the grip of the Turk on them, Russia's own path to the open waters of the Mediterranean was closed by their coming into being. That was the final result of the Crimean war, were John Bright still alive to ask about it. All that was left to Russia was to play the part of the big Slav brother in advising, controlling, protecting.

But now the Germanic powers, who had hitherto stood aside, began to put a finger into the pie. At the Congress of Berlin in 1878 after the Russo-Turkish war, Austria-Hungary supported by Germany, acquired a protectorate over Bosnia and Herzegovina and re-entered the circle of German interests as the ally of that now dominant military power. Russia got Bessarabia, but paid for it with the loss of Roumania's friendship. Since that time the Balkan peninsula has been a hot-bed of diplomatic intrigues, the young nationalities there being jealous competitors for what remained of the inheritance of the "sick man" and almost equally distrustful of Germanic encroachment and Russian control. Russia had an advantage in being the natural standard-bearer of the Pan-Slavic ideal, but the Germanic powers have been scoring the most points in the contest. Roumania, which has a German prince as its ruler, was drawn to their side. Another German prince was planted quite recently in Albania. Russia also had to sit still during the period of her disorganization after the Japanese war and see Austria's final annexation (in 1908), of the Slav peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina. And what is the ultimate goal of these encroachments and intrigues? Albania is already struggling in the net, and Russia naturally suspects that it is a Germanic control stretching to the Aegean, perhaps to Con-