

The Emerging US-Albanian Relations and Kosovo Issue

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Abstract

US policy toward Southeast Europe, Albanian-Kosovo issue has been a reflection of an American political isolation at the beginning of the XX Century. The shift in the role of USA in World international relation with the engagement in First World War and the approval of the Presidents Wilson Fourteen Point as a base for the World peace program at the Paris Peace Conference, has shifted the involvement of the US foreign policy to a more active one, especially towards the balance of Italian expansionism in the Adriatic sea and the right to self-determination of the emerging countries, Albania and Yugoslavia. Albania, bordering Adriatic Sea, and as a new country in a process of reconstitution of her statehood in the Paris Peace Conference, have been a part of political arena and divergences of Great Powers throughout the Conference. The Kosovo issue on these not favorable circumstances for Albanian question has been overlooked by the Conference and has been postponed for future deliberations. As part of the Adriatic issue at the Conference, Albanian issue have gained the support of the only world power the United States and the favorable position of the President Wilson regarding the existence and reconstitution of the state of Albania and the halt of its territorial division. This American shield has been proven at the Paris Conference as essential to these new emerging states, the right to self-determination and the non-support for the secret agreements, as was the London Treaty that proclaimed the division of Albania in three parts between neighboring countries Italy, Greece and Serbia. Even though this concept and treaty was supported by other great powers as France, Italy and Great Britain, US foreign policy and President Wilson position on these issues and Albania was unyielding and essential for the reinstatement of Albanian state on the borders of 1913, the other emerging states on Adriatic sphere and the managing of Italian expansion in Balkans. American-Albanian relations in making in Paris Peace Conference have been a milestone and a prospect on future affiliation regarding the Albanian and Kosovo issue.

Keywords: US Foreign Policy, Kosovo, Albanian issue, Adriatic issue, Paris Peace Conference, Balkans, Southeast Europe

US foreign policy towards Southeast Europe, respectively Albanian issue, Kosovo and the Adriatic issue at the beginning of its international relations in the early twentieth century, had oscillations in different periods of time, depending on the American internal political relations and the position of the involvement of the United States in international constellations. The historical relationship between the Balkan countries and United States, respectively the involvement in the fate of the Albanian affair, part of which was Kosovo, has been an elongated journey since the beginning of the 20th century. This entanglement path is comprised of patronage in reinstatement of the state of Albania, American shield toward Adriatic question, to the revival of US foreign policy toward the Bosnian and Kosovo with the end of the Cold War, and the rescue of the Albanian populations during the war in Kosovo and the crowning of the freedom and independence of Kosovo.

The Peace Conference in Paris was the main starting point of an active involvement of the US in the world international relations and also the involvement on the European and Albanian issue. In this context the main content on this paper is concentrated on this period of the American-Albanian emerging relations around the Conference.

The American policy towards Albanian question during the First World War was a part of general approach of USA towards world political developments and its more active commitment in global policy. Thus, the shift from political isolation of US and participating in FWW, taking part in the drafting of world peace program, and as a leader of the establishing new world order, changed the interest of USA for this part of the world, including the region of Balkan, as a whole. The period 1912-1917, is characterized by an observation isolationism of US foreign policy on World events in other Continents and Europe.

Taking into account the political isolation of the United States throughout its earliest history before the Twentieth Century and its secondary role, US more serious involvement in international relations began to emerge with joining the First World War and the plans for the new world order.¹ In this context the interest in Southeastern Europe and Albania was of information character and in the domain of the creation of geostrategic definitions of American interest in Europe and the World. Initially, the awareness was based on the idea and concept of President Wilson for the creation of the project of League of Nation and Fourteen Points that would be the base for the peace accord, whose task would be to establish a joint international body composed of sovereign states that would be subject to international law and would be able to apply economic and military sanctions against any state that would refuse to a peacefully settlement.²

Albanian and Kosovo question at the Peace Conference in Paris is characterized by three important phases in American foreign policy³:

- I. The period before the Peace Conference - this is distinguished by vague and undecided attitude of American Administration towards Albanian question, though relying on general international principles established by President Wilson;
- II. Defensive period of Albanian state by President Wilson and by negotiating USA Delegation during all deliberations in the Paris Conference and in the Conference of Ambassadors until the end of Presidential mandate of Wilson, and
- III. The period after Wilson, new hesitating position of new American Administration and its initial pondering in the negotiation of Albanian state.

In this historical crossroad of Albanian history as a redemptory shield emerged USA policy personified by President Woodrow Wilson, that during the whole deliberations of the Peace Conference presented and founded the basis of mutual and closer Albanian -American relationships.

The Albanian cause at the end of the First World War, at the eve of the Paris Conference, was in an irresistible situation, both with its internal aspect and within the international constellation. The largest parts of Albanian lands were under foreign domination, while Albania did not participate actively in the World War in the ranks of Allied Powers. As a consequence, its position in International arena was not so firm. Albania was under occupation of foreign military zones of Italian, French, Greek and Serbian troops, whereas Serbian army again forcefully occupied Kosovo, western Macedonia and the lands inhabited by Albanians.⁴

Among the factors which caused this position of Albanian question at the beginning of the Conference, was the fact that Albanian state did not have sufficient time to consolidate itself, in order to secure political stability and military force, because the storm of the course of FWW, found it by surprise and control, the solution of Albanian question was conditioned by the whole series of elements, and the most important ones were relation of various forces, which were at her detriment, as well as the recognition of the principles of conqueror in the war, which were not in conformity with the principles of self-determination. This unenviable position faced Albanian nation with the renewal of political independence and defense of its sovereignty. One of the most acute issues of Albanian cause was the question of Kosovo and of other inhabitants of Albanian ethnic lands, which remained outside the borders of official territory of Albania in 1913.⁵ Unfortunately these issues were pending due to incapability of backing and difficult situation of Albania. This position was obvious during the deliberation of the Conference and had negative consequences for Albania.⁶ The former equilibrium of international forces, from which has gained Albanian question, was changed completely to Albania's detriment. In 1918 were defeated Powers of Central Block, while Austro-Hungarian Empire which was hostile to expansion of Serbia in Balkan, was disintegrated.

¹Keegan, John (1999). *The First World War*. New York, p. 350-353.

²Woodrow, Wilson, ed. Link, S. Arthur. (1984). *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*. (Vol. 45), New Jersey: Princeton University Press, p. 535-540.

³Hadri, Arbër. (2012). *Presidenti Vllson dhe çështja shqiptare: Politika e SHBA në Konferencën e Paqes në Paris 1919-1920*. Prishtinë: Instituti i Historisë - Ali Hadri, p. 203.

⁴Ibid, p. 75-76.

⁵Rizaj, Gazmend. (2011). *Shqipëria e Sipërme 1800-1913 – Në projektet dhe traktatet e Fuqive të Mëdha dhe Shteteve Ballkanike*. Institute of Albanology, Prishtina, p. 365-385.

⁶Ibid, p. 75-78.

Furthermore, the four neighboring countries, Italy, Serbia, Montenegro and Greece, were the winners of the war. Italy, as a signer of Secret treaty of London of the April, 1915, was making efforts to take advantages as much as possible from its clauses, trying to benefit from the issues that were in its interest, and avoiding the other uninteresting questions, such as the question of Rijeka, causing in this way an international contradiction.⁷ In such a whirlpool was found Albanian question.

Two neighboring monarchies, as winners of the war not only were keeping annexed Albanian lands by force, but were coveting other territories, while Albania, which was claiming the revision of injustices, was a country that remained neutral during conflicts of belligerent blocs. Above all the war for Albanian people was alien, because two blocs, concretely Italy and Austro-Hungary had expansionist pretensions on Albania. In order to complete this gloomy picture, out of four main Great Powers victors of the war: USA, France, England and Italy, only the latter one was interested to support Albanian territorial claims in an indirect way, only in the cases when such claims were helpful for its own interest in the rivalry with the newly establishing Kingdom of Serbians, Croats and Slovenians. Otherwise, the mere existence of the state of Albania was endangered both from the interests of neighboring states and by Great Powers.⁸

At this time, the foreign policy of USA was in the phases of making a general idea about the international developments and definition of American interest. That is why the American President Woodrow Wilson, as soon as USA joined the war proposed "A Preparatory American Commission --Inquiry", in order to exploit the issues that should be treated in the Peace Conference and compilation of recommendations in the national interest for future American Delegation, American Commission for Negotiation of Peace in Paris, and after the end of the war.⁹

As far as the attitude to Balkans is concerned before the Peace Conference, the best illustration of the back of interest by USA is the fact that there was only one political representative for Rumania, Bulgaria and Serbia, and his seat was in Bucharest.¹⁰

The recommendations of "Inquiry" were not able to mark out official American policy at the Peace Conference in Paris, but they were confined within the sphere of information's and recommendation. However, this attitude in the case of Balkans did not succeed to make positive radical changes, because these conceptions were not based on the strength of arguments or were not formulated by experienced specialists of Balkan problems. The program of Preparatory Commission in Europe was accomplished only partially.¹¹

The Influence of "Inquiry" proposal on the final peaceful conclusions on Balkans Peninsula was limited and brought only some results at the beginning, especially in the approval of a few conceptions of Fourteen Points, The Balkan Peninsula was dealt within the framework of the Fourteen Points, only in IX and X points, in which was underlined necessity of evacuation, return of occupied territories, establishment of friendly relationships on the basis of historical lines and national belonging independence and territorial integrity of Balkan states and agreement about the outlet of Serbia on the sea. The occupied territories where foreseen to be evacuated, and then relations between Balkan countries renewed and treated in the framework of friendly negotiations according to historic determined lines and national belonging. Also the international guarantees to political and economic independence and maintaining the territorial integrity of some Balkan states where highlighted. As far as the destiny of nations under the rule of Austro- Hungary is concerned, as it was not yet obvious the full collapse of that Empire, it was suggested to give them a freedom and autonomy.

⁷Çami, Muin. (1996). Shqiptarët për problemin e Kosovës në mbarim të Luftës së I Botërore. Çështja e Kosovës – një problem historik dhe aktual. Tiranë, p. 138.

⁸Ibid; Hadri, Arbër. (2012). Presidenti Villson dhe çështja shqiptare: Politika e SHBA në Konferencën e Paqes në Paris 1919-1920. Prishtinë: Instituti i Historisë - Ali Hadri, p. 204-205.

⁹Wilson to Haus, (2 September 1917), Woodrow, Wilson, ed. Link, S. Arthur. (1984). The Papers of Woodrow Wilson. (Vol. 44), New Jersey: Princeton University Press, p. 120-121; Gelfand, E. Lawrence. (1963). The Inquiry - American preparations for peace 1917-1919. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, p. 26.

¹⁰Silajxhiq, Haris. (1991). Shqipëria dhe SHBA në arkivat e Vashingtonit. Tirana, p. 48; N.A., Doc. nr. 77. Records of the American Commission to Negotiate Peace.

¹¹Walworth, Arthur. (1986). Wilson and His Peacemakers: American Diplomacy at the Paris Peace Conference-1919. New York, p. 7-11.

However, it was not foreseen any national and political independence to the Southern Slavs, but only to treat them as autonomous elements within the framework of the Empire. The Fourteen Points I and V dealt with questions interconnected with Balkan questions, respectively with open agreements for public opinion and rejection of all secret treaties. Finally, also it was stressed out the principle of self-determination.¹²

The memorandums of "Inquiry" on Adriatic issue pointed out that there were no excuses for enlargement of Italian sovereignty in the region of Adriatic coast -Dalmatia. This was the only recommendation of "Inquiry" that was accepted as a whole and was not changed during all negotiating process in the Conference. Wilson supported this point of view and general views included in the memorandum of "Inquiry". President was very prudent and did not want to tackle with many specific questions in the memorandum, which were suggested by Commission, preferring to discuss the aims of war and peace in a more general level.¹³

As far as Albanian question is concerned the attitude of the staff of "Inquiry", as presented in memorandums and draft recommendations of December 22nd, 1917, January 2nd, 1918, and January 21st, 1919, were in discrepancy with the real situation in the terrain owing to lack of information and ignorance of Balkan questions, in general and of Albanian question in particular. Thus, Albania was considered "almost surely" as an undesirable political entity. To the economic factors in Balkan questions, were given more priorities than to ethnic belonging.¹⁴

Therefore, in the determination of territorial borders in Balkan, according to "Inquiry", economic factors had primary importance. In the following memorandums, the attitude towards Albania was her detriment, with other words; it was considered that Albania should be divided into three parts. Shkodra was promised to Montenegro, Durres to Serbia and Vlora to Greece.¹⁵ Next, Italian pretension over Albania, was rejected, though this attitude was changed in other memorandums. In the last report of "Inquiry" was proposed large changes in national borders of Balkans countries. For a newly founded state of Serbians, Croats and Slovenians were recommended the borders of 1913. It was also changed the attitude towards Albania, compared to other memorandums. Proposals about partition of Albania in three parts were rejected. Nonetheless, southern Albania, according to this report was assigned to Greece, while it was also suggested that northern Albania should adhere to Yugoslavia as a mandatory under the auspices of the League of Nations.¹⁶

The part about Balkans, compared to other parts, was radically changed during the process of negotiation and was used only as "Informative text", and did not define American policy in the Peace Conference in Paris, because the authority of the formulation as political viewpoints had plenipotentiary negotiators and the President, as the leader of this policy. Structuring, organization and conception of American foreign policy were under the supervision and in the hands of President Wilson, while his custom was to take independent decisions regardless of suggestions and advices of his staff.¹⁷

The undesirable position of Albanian question had an impact in this elementary approach of this advisory organ, though the beginning of the consolidation of Albanians state was turned into a positive factor in the further development of attitudes towards Albanian question by American and International policy in general. Likewise, despite the continuous efforts of Albanian emigration in America, their influence on official policy of Washington was very deficient. The exception was Noli's meeting with the President Wilson and his given promise to defend Albanian cause in the Conference.¹⁸

¹²Walworth, Arthur. (1986). *Wilson and His Peacemakers: American Diplomacy at the Paris Peace Conference-1919*. New York, p. 7-11.

¹³Baker, Ray Stannard. (1923). *Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement*. (Vol. III). New York, p. 3, 35-37; Gelfand, E. Lawrence. (1963). *The Inquiry - American preparations for peace 1917-1919*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, p. 144-145.

¹⁴Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States 1919 – The Paris Peace Conference. (1942). Volume I, Inquiry Document No. 887. United States Government Printing Office, Washington, p. 50-51.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Gelfand, E. Lawrence. (1963). *The Inquiry - American preparations for peace 1917-1919*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, p. 220-221.

¹⁷Walworth, Arthur. (1986). *Wilson and His Peacemakers: American Diplomacy at the Paris Peace Conference-1919*. New York, p. 7-11.

¹⁸Seminari ndërkombëtar i Federatës Panshqiptare. (1969). New York: Vatra, p. 91-92.

There were also some memorandums sent to the State Department, which were not treated sufficiently. In brief, there was not any serious commitment that could orient American policy in the favor of Albanian question.

The great devotion of the President Wilson for the protection of right questions and moral policy on which he was persisting to present as a part of new -world order, thanks to his “Fourteen Points”, as well as the right for self-determination even of small nations and the protection from colonial expansion in the Balkan region, were turned to a shield for Albanian question and had positive results later. This peaceful program aimed at implementing many principles of the internal American reforms known as “progressivism” in foreign policy as well. Nations of free trade, open and public agreements, democracy and self-determination were ordinary versions of the internal policy programs. What is more important, whereas many countries were believing that only the proper interest should be the principal aim of foreign policy, in his “Fourteen Points” Wilson was stressing out that moral and policy ought to be the crucial element both of internal and foreign policy of a democratic society. The defense of this policy by its originator, President Wilson, parallel with accomplishments of right purposes of nations for self-determination, especially in the Balkan including Albanian question and limitation of penetration of Italian expansionism in the Adriatic, characterized further determination of American policy in the Peace Conference in Paris.¹⁹

Just at this decisive time for Albanian question, the attitude of USA and the President Wilson at the eve of the Conference and during its deliberations was the only support for Albanian question and its historic survival. The backing was multifold so at the beginning of the Conference it was rejected the notorious secret London Treaty which was at detriment to Albania, because USA had not signed it. This ill reputed Treaty was not in conformity with President Wilson’s “Fourteen Points”, proclaimed in order to maintain World Peace. This Treaty violated the basic principles of self-determination of nations, disregarding their number and size.²⁰

The principles of self-determination, independence and management of natural space for the functioning of newly born state after the war as it was the case of Adriatic respectively the new state of Yugoslavia, its coast and the protection of the independence of Albania, was one of the crucial principles backed strongly by President Wilson from the outset of the Conference. This attitude was strengthened furthermore, owing to the fact that these states were victims of strategically and territorial aspirations of Italy, while American policy and President Wilson was determined, no matter what, to prevent penetration and changes of political equilibrium both in Adriatic and in Balkan Peninsula, from the beginning of the deliberations of the Conference until its closure.²¹ The Albanian question profited from this natural shield created from the relation of international forces and it managed to survive thanks to protection of moral principles of peace program of the President Wilson.

The beginning of the Peace Conference and formation of attitudes, aimed at resolving the Albanian and Adriatic question, had different oscillations during the sessions of the Conference. However, the attitudes can be summarized and classified in five columns:²²

I. The period of formation viewpoints and attitudes for the solution of Albanian and Adriatic question, from January to June 1919 until the Versailles, is characterized by the examination of the interests of the parties involved in the context, including the states directly implicated in the conflict and the interests of Great Powers, that were involved in decision making process in the solution of the question within the framework of Fours.

II. In this phase despite the endeavors at the end of negotiations known as “Versailles Agreement” aimed at finding a solution for Adriatic question, which included also the Albanian question, the Great Powers could not reach an agreement.

¹⁹Hadri, Arbër. (2012). Presidenti Villson dhe çështja shqiptare: Politika e SHBA në Konferencën e Paqes në Paris 1919-1920. Prishtinë: Instituti i Historisë - Ali Hadri, p. 60, 61, 208-209.

²⁰Woodrow, Wilson, ed. Link, S. Arthur. (1988). The Papers of Woodrow Wilson. (Vol. 59), Mantoux’s Notes of a Conversation among Wilson, Clemenceau, and Lloyd George, May 26, 1919, 3:30p.m. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, p. 429-494.

²¹Woodrow, Wilson, ed. Link, S. Arthur. (1987). The Papers of Woodrow Wilson. (Vol. 57), New Jersey: Princeton University Press, p. VII-IX.

²²Hadri, Arbër. (2012). Presidenti Villson dhe çështja shqiptare: Politika e SHBA në Konferencën e Paqes në Paris 1919-1920. Prishtinë: Instituti i Historisë - Ali Hadri, p. 209-211.

III. In this phase²³ there were efforts to resolve the Albanian and Adriatic question. In this case an agreement was reached and included in the “The Memorandum of 9 December 1919” by four Great Powers. This agreement implied a balanced solution without a dominant winner. So, in this phase the American policy was characterized by the protection of Albanian question, namely Albanian state against tendencies for disintegration and territorial division by neighboring countries. As a matter of fact, according to this agreement the mandate over Albania was given to Italy.

IV. This is the phases²⁴ of devaluation of “The Memorandum of 9 December” by three Great Powers: France, Great Britain, and Italy, avoiding completely by the involvement of USA in this process. The primary aim was paralyzing of Adriatic and Albanian question and the fulfillment of Italian interests at the detriment of Albania and Yugoslavia. According to intentions of these endeavors, proclaimed as draft proposals of January 14, 1920 of Great Powers. Albania ought to be divided in three parts as a result once more the “Secret Treaty of London” was revived. American policy formulated by definitive attitudes of President Wilson was determined to stop the evasion of the solution of these questions. According to American attitude, there should not be revision of the previous questions on the basis of the unprincipled and unacceptable criteria, concerning parties in the terrain. At the same time USA would not accept any secret international agreement making an allusion to secret Treaty of London, in which America was not involved. This dimensions of American attitude and policy protected the existence of Albanian state.

V. The fifth phases²⁵ starts at the end of Peace Conference in Paris on February 21st, 1920, and it includes the beginning of the Conference of Ambassadors, until the admission of Albanian in the League of Nations and recognition of Albania by USA, It is characterized by consolidation of Albanian internal factor and confirmation of the renewal of Albanian state.

The Council of Ten, respectively by the Council of Fours, received the Albanian Delegation, only once and then the Albanian question was treated first within the context of Commission for Greek and Albanian relations afterwards became a part of Adriatic question. The nod of divergences and positions of Great Powers about the Adriatic question began to be resolved and canalized at the beginning of December 9, and resulted as the first and the unique agreement between USA, France and England, on December 1919, known as the “Memorandum of December 9”. According to this Memorandum, Albanian was recognized as an independent country, while the mandate for its administration would have Italy, under the umbrella of “The League of Nations”.²⁶ The Kosovo issue was neglected from the beginning proceedings at the Paris Peace Conference, bypassing the northern territories of Albania neighboring Yugoslavia that were defined at the London Conference.²⁷

The Memorandum of December 9, although pretended to be a neutral basis and a compromise between Italian - Yugoslavian antagonisms, it did not manage to satisfy insatiable appetites of both parties, which disavowed it. Besides, this memorandum was not in conformity with the right aspirations and claims of Albanian people for freedom and full political independence in its territorial integration, which had been accepted internationally as sovereign state in the Conference of London. The mandate was given to a neighboring country, Italy with large territorial and economic pretensions in Balkan Peninsula. Therefore, Italy was qualified as extremely impartial to deserve such a project. The part of border with Greece was not determined so there were possibilities for unjust changes at the detriment of Albania.²⁸

Nonetheless, the Memorandum of December 9, 1919, was an important step forward in the future course of Albanian question as it was an attitude approved by three main Powers, USA, United kingdom and France, which recognized Albania as an independent state and it was the same time, a corner - stone of USA attitude especially of President Wilson, who did not accept to make any other changes either in the Peace Conference or in the Conference of Ambassadors. On the other side, with intention to undermine the memorandum of December 9, the Italian delegation initiated the points of “compromise”, lines that it would be in positions to accept.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Hadri, Arbër. (2012). Presidenti Villson dhe çështja shqiptare: Politika e SHBA në Konferencën e Paqes në Paris 1919-1920. Prishtinë: Instituti i Historisë - Ali Hadri, p. 207-217.

²⁷ Ibid p. 90-99.

²⁸ Frank Lyon Polk to Robert Lansing. (December 9 1919). “The Papers of Woodrow Wilson”, Volume 64, Arthur S. Link, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1988, p. 171.

Italian proposals aimed at division of major powers attitudes and in reorienting the resolving of Adriatic question in its favor.²⁹ At the moment when it was believed that the main obstacle of the harmonization of attitudes about the Adriatic question, were overcome thanks to the Memorandum of December 9, there was again another handicap due to the acceptance of alternative Italian proposal on the Adriatic question by United Kingdom and France. This clandestine attempt for changing a preliminary agreement with USA, with new draft-proposals of January 9 and 14, 1920 of United Kingdom and France contained the essence of Secret Treaty of London about the partition of Albania in three parts. Therefore, President Wilson refused it categorically, because it would violate as a whole the principles of American policy in the Peace Conference.³⁰

According to President Wilson's point of view, Albanian territories could not be given to others in order to do a favor to Yugoslavia or to ensure territorial compensation for another country. It is obvious that he was making allusions to eventual territorial exchanges between Italy and Yugoslavia, at the detriment of Albania. In brief, the two proposals were deviating from former attitudes of United Kingdom and France and at the same time were avoiding the results of previous negotiations and President Wilson's attitude relating to Adriatic question.³¹

As far as London Treaty is concerned, President Wilson reaffirmed the line defined earlier by him, emphasizing that the Adriatic question could not become hostage of this agreement, reminding the following facts: dismembering of Austro-Hungary, secret character of the Treaty of London and his persistent opposition against any attempt to undermine the well-known principle accepted by all as the basis for achieving a peace.³²

Thus, President Wilson reacted openly about the problem of Adriatic, threatening with the withdrawal of the Agreement of Versailles by Senate, if British and French prime ministers will not give up from their new proposals January 14 and 20, which was made without his consent he stressed out that for him the previous "Memorandum of December 9", about the Adriatic question was still valid.³³ The reply of President Wilson towards the British-French proposals and towards his personnel suggestions related to Adriatic question, was the non-oscillation and persistence on the previously determined line by him during the process of negotiation and that the final attitude of American government is included in the joint note of December 9, addressed to the Italian government, signed by Polk, Crowe and Clemenceau. Likewise, President Wilson's opinion was that the Adriatic question could not be solved at the detriment of another party, making allusions to Yugoslavs, who were forced to accept the reserve-plan of January 20th only because they had some objections about the Memorandum of December 9.

However, President Wilson was not pretending that he was going to be against a common agreement, acceptable both for Italy and Yugoslavia, under the condition that such an agreement would not require compensation elsewhere, on the account of another nationality and country.³⁴

²⁹ Frank Lyon Polk to Robert Lansing, December 9 1919, "The Papers of Woodrow Wilson", Volume 64, Arthur S. Link, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1988, p. 171-178.

³⁰ Documents on British Foreign Policy, IV, p.237; Documents on British Foreign Policy, II, p. 738-744; Carroll to Secretary of State, U.S. Termination, 8577; Ambassador in Rome to Secretary of State, 25 December 1919, U.S. Termination, 8463; Hugh Campbell Wallace to Robert Lansing, Paris January 9 1920, "The Papers of Woodrow Wilson", Volume 64, Arthur S. Link, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1988, p. 263-266; Three Letters from Robert Lansing, Washington February 6, 1920, "The Papers of Woodrow Wilson", Volume 64, Arthur S. Link, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1988, p. 371.

³¹ Frank Lyon Polk to H.C. Wallace, No. 401, February 24, 1920, "The Papers of Woodrow Wilson", Volume 64, Arthur S. Link, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1988, p. 459-463; Silajxhiq, Haris. (1999). Shqipëria dhe SHBA në arkivat e Vashingtonit. Tiranë, p. 126; N.A., 875.01/73; To Robert Lansing, with Enclosure, The White House 7 February, 1920, "The Papers of Woodrow Wilson", Volume 64, Arthur S. Link, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1988, p. 375-380.

³² Frank Lyon Polk to H.C. Wallace, No. 401, February 24, 1920, "The Papers of Woodrow Wilson", Volume 64, Arthur S. Link, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1988, p. 459-463.

³³ "The Papers of Woodrow Wilson", Volume 64, Arthur S. Link, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1988, p. VIII.

³⁴ Frank Lyon Polk to H.C. Wallace, No. 401, February 24, 1920, "The Papers of Woodrow Wilson", Volume 64, Arthur S. Link, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1988, p. 459-463.

This issue of an agreement, which can be at the expense of a third party, is an allusion about question of territorial integrity of Albania. President Wilson pointed out that partition of Albania in three parts mentioned in British and French proposal, may be acceptable for Yugoslav government but President Wilson was opposing strongly all kinds of injustices against Albanian people at the advantage of Yugoslavia, and was also against the damage of Yugoslav people at the advantage of Italy. He stressed that differences among people among people of Christian and Muslim religion could deepen more if these two sides were ruled by nations with different languages, governments and economic levels.³⁵

The American policy rejected definitely all kinds of secret treaties at the detriment of other countries, based that they were not in conformity with Fourteen Points and violated the rights of people for self-determination. American Delegation has made several efforts to undermine the Secret Treaty. As the result of decisive and persistent point of view of President Wilson to find adequate solution, based on well-known principles in his agenda it was possible to achieve an agreement about Adriatic respectively Albanian question, and to postpone it for better times, that will respect conceptions of three Great Powers. The discussions and deliberations of the Peace Conference came to an end and a satisfactory solution about Adriatic respectfully Albanian question was left for next Conference of Ambassadors.³⁶

The Albanians, disappointed from the hesitation and ups and downs of European diplomacy and their projects about further partition of their country, in January 20th 1920 organized the Congress of Lushnja. This Congress was faced with reaffirmation of independence, confirmation of sovereignty and formulation of their constitution. The consolidation of Albania was one of the main pillars of reaffirmation of Albanian question in the sphere of international constellations.³⁷

As the Great Powers were attempting to discuss again the Adriatic and Albanian questions, President Wilson, on March 2, 1920, sent his proposal to France and United Kingdom. This time he stressed out once more *“he may accept an agreement between Italy and Yugoslavia, but with a condition that the agreement should not endanger territorial and other interests of third nations”* It is clear that he was making an allusion to Albania. In addition, the American points out President Wilson's opinion that *“Albanian question should not be included in common discussion between Italy and Yugoslavia and that the President declared that he would not accept any proposal aimed at giving to Yugoslavia parts of north Albania, as territorial compensations because of lost Yugoslav territories elsewhere”*.³⁸

The beginning of consolidation of interior policy was changing of the course in foreign affairs, which ensured a positive orientation to government of Tirana. Another positive accomplishment was the Albanian-Greek agreement of May 18, 1920, respectively Protocol of Kapshtica. This agreement was limited and treated the existing situation in a border area. Thus, after leaving of French troops, Greek soldiers did not advance deep in Albanian territory. However, Albania was permanently confronted with a danger of losing the independence and partition of its territories. Vlorë became symbol of resistance and its liberation became the principal objective of the action, which resulted, with withdrawal of Italian troops from Albanian territory. Despite the partial consolidation of Albanian state at the end of 1920, it was neither resolved the question of international recognition of independence and sovereign Albania, nor the defense of its borders determined by international treaty of 1913. After the withdrawal of Italian troops from Vlorë and French troops from Korçë, Albanian government was ruling in the largest parts of its territory.

However, Albanian government was faced with occupation of southern territories by Greek troops, while in the north, were continuing incursions of Yugoslav army.³⁹

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Hadri, Arbër. (2012). Presidenti Villson dhe çështja shqiptare: Politika e SHBA në Konferencën e Paqes në Paris 1919-1920. Prishtinë: Instituti i Historisë - Ali Hadri, p. 213-215.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ “The Papers of Woodrow Wilson”, Frank Lyon Polk with Enclosure, March 2 1920, vol. 65, ed. Arthur S. Link, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, p. 38.

³⁹ AQSh Fondi i Ministrisë së Punëve të Jashtme dok. nr: 233. “Lufta e popullit shqiptar për çlirimin kombëtar 1918-1920”, Vëllimi II, Tiranë 1976, p. 319-320; Puto, Arben. (2003). Historia Diplomatike e Çështjes Shqiptare. ASHSH: Tiranë, p.332-333.

The issue of other territories inhabited by Albanians outside the boundaries set on 1913, due to the unenviable position of Albania, which yet didn't have sufficient power to exert completely its territorial sovereignty in its area and because of the unfavorable international constellations, remained pending and without proper treatment. In these conditions as an urgent matter to be addressed was the confirmation of Albania's status as an independent and sovereign state, an act with which the Albania's government would be engaged in the international relations arena.

The support of the President of USA Woodrow Wilson to Albanian independence was once more strengthened in his attitude transmitted to Prime Minister of United Kingdom Lloyd George. In his reply sent to him on November 3, 1920, President Wilson accentuated that he believed in a right, fair and constructive solution of Adriatic and Albanian question. Related to Albania, President Wilson stressed once more that so far the Albanian question did not have an adequate treatment, making an allusion to delimitation of borders of Albania according to aspirations of Yugoslavia and Greece, without sufficient consideration for rights and aspirations of Albanian people. And finally he accentuated "*the primary goal is to accept the right aspirations of Albanian people for the final solution of this question*".⁴⁰

The admission of Albania in the League of Nations on December, 17, 1920, when Albania was recognized as independent state with a collective and international approval, was very important because it was reestablished international recognition of Albania at the time when Albania had passed through ups and downs after the war. In 1921 was ended a significant phases in Albanian history, after a lot of difficulties and efforts for its survival for more than two years after the First World War. The endeavors and the struggle of Albanian people to regain nation independence and to defend its territorial integrity of Albanian state thanks to unsparing support of the policy of USA during the years of the Peace Conference and self-sacrifice of Albanian people for freedom and independence.⁴¹

American policy during the mandate of President Wilson, a statesman of a great vision, was equitable, fair and consequent, as its primary purpose was to defend her constant attitude and position during the Paris Peace Conference and the Conference of Ambassadors and later on, without any hesitation defending persistently the existence and independence of Albanian state. Despite the fact that in the period after Wilson, there was certain removal ability in the policy of the new American Administration and a kind of hesitation for the recognition of Albanian state, however at the end of this process, potential of American capital interests on exploitation of oil and other natural resources of Albania, presuming that in this way USA would also contribute to social, economic and political developments of Albania and its political stability, instigated the decision of the American Government on August 28, 1922 to recognize⁴² "de jure" the Albanian State. This was also the closure of a very important chapter in the American – Albanian relationship.

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⁴⁰Woodrow, Wilson, ed. Link, S. Arthur. (1992). The Papers of Woodrow Wilson. (Vol. 66), New Jersey: Princeton University Press, p. 307-308.

⁴¹ Puto, Arben. (2003). Historia Diplomatike e Çështjes Shqiptare. ASHSH: Tiranë, p.336; Historia e Popullit Shqiptar III. (2007). Periudha e Pavarësisë. Grup Autorësh, Tiranë, p. 171-172.

⁴² Silajxhiq, Haris. (1999). Shqipëria dhe SHBA në arkivat e Vashingtonit. Tiranë, p. 157-164.

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