
Protocol no. 5 of March 12, 1932. A legal approach with delayed effects on bilateral investigation of incidents at the Romanian Bulgarian border

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Abstract

In 1923, the Dobrogean Revolutionary Internal Organization – V.D.R.O. was created by reorganizing the revolutionary section of „Dobrogea” Society. Amid intervention by the Bulgarian authorities informed that the leaders of this group, influenced by the Bulgarian communists, were planning to start a revolt in the autumn of 1925, the Dobrogean Internal Revolutionary Organization – V.D.R.O split, creating a new organization called the Dobrogean Revolutionary Organization – D.R.O. – under communist coordination. From this moment, internally, a strong rivalry began between these terrorist organizations, V.D.R.O and D.R.O. Therefore, between 1925 and 1932, the irredentist activity of Bulgarian counties was reflected in numerous border incidents, investigated by joint military commissions, exchanges of fire between Romanian and Bulgarian border guards, mainly caused by fraudulent crossings of Bulgarian counties, who robbed the Romanian peasants of the villages near the Romanian-Bulgarian border and killed the Romanian border guards who surprised them as they tried to cross the border. In order to stop these events and their investigation in a good collaboration by both parties, in 1932, a protocol agreed by the Government of Romania and Bulgaria was concluded and signed, known as Protocol no. 5, which sought to implement a simple procedure and methodology adapted to a concrete situation in the joint investigation of border incidents.

Keywords:

border incidents; mixed military commissions; komitadji; terrorism; South Dobrogea.

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A brief history of the Romanian-Bulgarian border after the end of the second Balkan war

On August 10, 1913, the Peace Treaty in Bucharest was signed by the warring parties: Romania, Turkey, Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia and Montenegro. According to Article 2 of the Peace Treaty, the southern border between Romania and Bulgaria was delimited from the Danube, from Turtucaia, to the Black Sea to the south of Ekrene. Thus, a new part of the old Dobrogea, with an area of about 7,770 square kilometers, and a population of about 280,000 inhabitants, enters the Romanian state, territory that would go down in history as the Cadrilater ([Vulpe 1938](#), 1).

As Professor G . Murgoci said, it was only a part of the military Quadrilater, which started above Turtucaia and stopped at the north of Varna “a quadrilater formed by the old border of Dobrogea, Danube, Danube, The Black Sea and a conventional line; but it cannot be compared to the old military quadrilateral and it is not even the geographical quadrilateral, which Tsar Alexander II wanted to give us since 1878, in exchange for the Romanian Basarabian counties Cahul, Bolgrad and Ismail” ([Murgoci 1913](#), 5).

However, the conclusion of the Peace Treaty in Bucharest, in the summer of 1913, in addition to the fact that Romania was consolidating its role as mediator in the region at the same time, put an end to the Balkan crisis and achieved a fairer territorial configuration in the area. From an administrative point of view, the territory ceded to Romania, which had been under the control of its army since July 11, 1913, was to be organized in two counties: Durostor – with its capital in the ancient fortress of Silistra and Caliacra – residing at Dobrici (Bazargic). From 15 August 1913, with the official end of the state of war between Romania and Bulgaria and after the joint commission provided by the Peace Treaty had completed the new border line between the two countries, the process of installing the Romanian civil administration in the two counties was slow but safe until October 1913. The army, represented by the 17th Infantry Brigade, of the 5 Corps, ensured the transition from the Bulgarian administration to the Romanian one, a reality also sanctioned by the Law for organizing the New Dobrogea from 1/april 14, 1914 ([Tudor 2005](#), 71).

Under this legislative framework, the Romanian administration was present in South Dobrogea until October 1916, when the organization of the economic, social and administrative activity of this territory was taken over by the Bulgarian government that empowered the „Dobrogea” Company to implement the management plan of the region.

In the context of the First World War and the conclusion of the Peace Treaty of Bucharest on May 7, 1918, Romania had been required to transfer the annexed territory to Bulgaria following the decision of the Peace Conference in Bucharest in the summer of 1913, namely the Cadrilater with the two counties of Durostor

and Caliacra. Bulgaria also received almost half of Northern Dobrogea, until a line approaching the Cernavoda-Constanta railway (Tudor 2005, 73). It should be noted that this peace treaty signed by Alexandru Marghiloman and imposed on Romania by the Central Powers, was not recognized nor ratified by King Ferdinand I. Moreover, by Article 15 of the Armistice concluded on 11 November 1918 between Germany and the Entente Powers, the Peace Treaty of Bucharest, of 7 May 1918, it was declared null and void (Scurtu, Mocanu and Smârcea 1995, 21).

The new frontiers of Romania, much and fiercely discussed and negotiated by the Romanian delegation present at the meetings of the Peace Conference in Paris 1919-1920, they were recognized by the signing of treaties with Austria (Saint-Germain-en-Laye on 10 September 1919), Bulgaria (Neuilly-sur-Seine on 27 November 1919) and Hungary (Trianon on 4 June 1920). The treaty with Bulgaria reconfirmed the Romanian-Bulgarian border, as it had been established by the Peace Treaty of Bucharest on August 10, 1913, at which point, in Bulgarian society, a strong revisionist trend was born, supported by the political class. On 20 September 1920, the Romanian Parliament adopted the Law ratifying the treaty and ordered its publication in the Official Gazette¹. Amid this general discontent of the Bulgarian people, the paramilitary and terrorist organizations had grown significantly, even if, sporadically, the Bulgarian politicians had disapproved at declarative level the actions of the Bulgarian komitadjis, which in the period 1920-1932 gradually intensified.

¹The full text of the Treaty was published in Official Monitor no. 135 of 20.09.1920.

In these conditions, of the frequent attacks of the komitadji gangs, especially in the border localities in South Dobrogea, the Romanian government decided to colonize the Romanian Macedo in the counties of Durostor and Caliacra. In this regard, on April 24, 1924, the law amending the Law on the organization of New Dobrogea of July 26, 1921, was promoted, by which it was expressly provided that the State could make colonizations and estrangements in small consignments. Once the legal framework was created, the Macedo-Romans intensified their activity among the Romanian decision makers in order to obtain the approval of their colonization and ownership in Cadrilater (Tudor 2005, 188). In this context, several assassinations committed by Bulgarian komitadji against Romanian settlers were reported. By approving the text of the law on colonization of July 17, 1930, it was tried to create a legislative framework that would ensure their safety, but Romanian border guards reported border incidents that had an exponential frequency, with several killings of both settlers and Romanian civil servants and gendarmes being reported.

In this context, a new methodology for investigating these incidents was imposed, which was transposed into the provisions of a new protocol for investigating all events of any type that happened near the Romanian-Bulgarian border. It became obvious that the old procedure agreed in the joint

military commissions could no longer guarantee the safety of both the citizens who were close to the border and the Romanian border guards who were performing border guard missions.

A new legal framework for investigating incidents at the Romanian-Bulgarian border (12 March 1932)

In the spring of 1932, the Romanian-Bulgarian bilateral relations were tense as a result of frequent incursions and attacks by Bulgarian komitadjis, which took place in 1931 and the first three months of 1932. Therefore, at the initiative of the two governments, on March 9, 1932, the Bulgarian-Romanian Joint Military Commission met to investigate the border incidents on 22/23 September 1931, 14/15 October 1931 and 18/19 November 1931. The Bulgarian side was represented by Colonel Gheorghe Popov, commander of the 6th District Border Varna, Major Stefan Popov commander of the 18th Kemanlar Border Section, Major Serafimov, commander of the 17th section Coslugea, captain Ioscov, commander of the Oboriste subsection, captain Pencov, commander of the Ghiucediurluc subsection and a translator.

The Romanian side was represented by Colonel Badulescu Alexandru, commander of the 3rd guard brigade Braila and Major Popa Isaiah, commander of the Turtucaia border battalion. According to a previous agreement, the members of the commission met at 10.00 in the chancellery of the Romanian picket „Sublieutenant Stoica”/Boteni station, where by mutual agreement, they agreed on a plan after which the work of the joint committee was to be carried out. However, shortly before the start of the working meeting, the president of the Romanian military commission, Colonel Badulescu Alexandru, had a friendly discussion with Colonel Gheorghe Popov. According to the report submitted to the Border Guard Corps, *„colonel Popov told me that he has the government’s order to be as peaceful as possible in the discussions; that the Bulgarian government is animated by the most peaceful and good feelings for the Romanian country; that he, Colonel Popov, cherishes the most perfect feelings of collaboration; that he was sent from Sofia from the General Staff where he was working at the command of the VI-th Varna Section (the Romanian border) precisely to put order in the relations and service relations at the border; that these three border incidents that are being discussed all occurred in the same sector and during his three-month absence from command, being on sick leave; that, finally, he himself is very dissatisfied with Captain Pencov’s conduct in the command sector and where the incidents happened, which is why he asked for this officer’s relocation. Colonel Popov, as commander of the sector, seems to be willing to perform an urgent and local trimming of future incidents that will arise and which he frankly told me that he wants to avoid them”* (AMFA n.d.).

In this positive atmosphere, the president of the Romanian commission read and handed the text of the official communication on the border incidents on the night

of October 14/15, 1931 and November 18/19, 1931, to Colonel Popov Gheorghe, colonel, the president of the Bulgarian commission, with the request that, after joint investigation of the events, the response of the Bulgarian party be transmitted in writing on March 10, 1932, 10.30 at the picket „Traian”. The work plan for the events of 23/24 September 1931 was to be established on 10 March 1931 after the first two issues were settled. This protocol was read, approved and signed by the respective delegates at the meeting ([AMFA](#) n.d.).

After agreeing on this framework, the Romanian delegation presented the facts about the event on 14/15 October 1931 at the picket „Traian”. According to this text, the Romanian commission informed the Bulgarian side of the following: „on the night of October 14/15, 1931, around 01.00 hours on the Romanian picket „Traian” from the Bulgarian territory, 7 shots were fired, of which one went through the porch of the picket hitting the front wall, while the second penetrated through the street of the picket in the attic exiting through the roof olana, after which five shots were fired over the picket. All the bullets were fired from a distance of about 50-100 meters from the border line on Bulgarian territory” ([AMFA](#) n.d.).

In the same press release, the Romanian side mentioned that the gunfire stopped immediately after the Romanian border guards fired alarm missiles in the direction of the attackers. On the morning of October 15, 1931 at 08.00, in front of the Bulgarian picket no. 5, the commander of the Romanian border guard company sent a written invitation to the commander of the Bulgarian border platoon, but he was told that he was away in Varna until the next day. Therefore, on 16 October 1931, the Bulgarian officer was again requested to appear at 08.00 in vicinity of the picket „Traian”. It was answered by phone that one cannot come at the requested time, being available only in the evening, at 17.00, when he could show up at the Romanian picket no.50, when he could show up, in an opposite direction from the scene of the incident. Romanian officers insisted that the Bulgarian representative come to the scene before 17:00 so that the investigation could be carried out during daylight. However, „the Bulgarian officer showed up at 18.00 at the Romanian picket no.54 with a very strong attitude and hostile to a just investigation. After Captain Tutoveanu exposed the incident, Bulgarian captain Pencov avoided answering about the event, in reference to other incidents, no strangers occurred to the incident for which the meeting took place. Captain Pencov being asked by the Romanian captain Tutoveanu to present a Bulgarian projectile responded positively to his request, but when he was shown an identical one found near the Romanian picket „Traian”, Captain Pencov, in the face of such evidence, he had an indecent attitude leaving the picket without further investigation” ([AMFA](#) n.d.).

After reading the press release and presenting the facts, the Romanian delegation asked a series of questions about this incident and how the Bulgarian commander responded to the requests of the Romanian border guards ([AMFA](#) n.d.). Therefore, the Romanian delegation asked the Bulgarian commission to answer the following questions: „*did*

Captain Pencov know about the fires fired on Romanian territory and the alarm missiles fired by the Romanian border guards? if not, why not?; On October 15, 1931, Captain Pencov was in Varna and if so why did he not answer? If this event was investigated to discover the attackers, who are they and what measures were taken?; For what reason did Captain Pencov set another meeting point instead of the one where the event occurred when we know that on October 18, 1931 he was in Koslugea?; For what reason did Captain Pencov arrive at the time of the meeting when an investigation cannot be conducted?; For which reason did Captain Pencov, right from the beginning, have a strong attitude towards the Romanian officer instead of being conciliatory and willing to solve the incident amicably addressing the words what did you call me for?; That is why Captain Pencov when he was presented with a projectile found at the attacked picket identical to those found in the cartridges of the Bulgarian border guards became irrevocable and left the scene without completing the investigation. However, the Romanian officer led Captain Pencov to the border line. Does he remember this?" (AMFA n.d.)

After reading the questions, the Romanian delegates indicated that, „on October 18, 1931, at 08.00, they met at the picket „Traian” Captain Tutoveanu with Major Serafimov who was accompanied by the commanding captains of the platoon Oboriste and Ghiuccediurliuc for the investigation of the event on the night of October 14/15, 1931. On the spot, Major Serafimov noted the thoroughness of Captain Tutoveanu’s statements, yet he refused to conclude the acts, proposing the establishment of a joint commission. Captain Pencov told the sub-locutor Perelighin that if the major had signed such an act, he would have been removed from the army the next day. The drivers of the carts who came with the Bulgarian officers declared in the kitchen at the picket „Traian” in front of the inhabitant of Cociu Curtev from Vladimiresti and the platoon leader Barbu Andrei, that they heard the soldiers of the Chiuccediurliuc platoon talking about that the Bulgarian picket patrol no.5 fired on the night of 14/October 15, 1931 in the dogs of the Romanian picket „Traian” and following the shots fired by the Romanian border guards answered again the patrol with gunfire” (AMFA n.d.).

With these clarifications and views of the Romanian delegation, the first working meeting of the Romanian-Bulgarian joint commission was concluded. The next day, March 10, 1932, the members of the commission met at 10.30, at the Romanian picket „Traian”, to check and confront on the ground, on the spot, the evidence supporting the Romanian side’s claims regarding the incident on the night of October 14/15, 1931. These testimonies consisted of: the ricocheted blow produced by the bullet in the wall in front of the picket; the other blow indicated in the complaint could not be shown as the roof of the picket had burned the night before. At the same time the name Gociu Gh. Curtev from Vladimiresti commune was heard on the claims of the Bulgarian soldier in the kitchen of the picket on October 19, 1931, the day of Captain Tutoveanu’s meeting with Major Serafimov and platoon leader Barbu Andrei on the same issue. After the completion of these on-the-spot checks, the Joint Commission went to the picket „Sergent Dogaru Adam” where the work on verifying the answers given by the Bulgarian commission in contradiction began.

With all assurances of good intentions of the Bulgarian government to resolve incidents at the common border, the answers given by members of the Bulgarian commission to the concrete questions of the Romanian side showed that the Bulgarian officers understood in a particular way the politics of their own government. Therefore, the Bulgarian delegates responded thus on the incident at the picket „Traian”: on the night of 14/15 October 1931 „Bulgarian soldiers at picket no.5 did not hear any shots and did not see the signals given by the Romanians from the picket with missiles and as a result did not make known to their boss, Captain Pencov. The second man didn't know anything about those shots fired. The weather information that night recorded that the wind was blowing from the northwest and prevented the possibility of Bulgarian soldiers at picket no.5 to hear the shots fired/ even if in truth such a thing happened at a distance of 4 km” (AMFA n.d.).

In the context of the weather conditions mentioned, it is obvious that the Bulgarian soldiers did not warn Colonel Popov Gheorghe about the request of the Romanian officers to investigate the incident. More than that, at the inspection of the cartridges made to the soldiers of the Bulgarian pickets, all the cartridges were found and as such it was not credible that these shots were fired by Bulgarian soldiers. The Bulgarian patrol that night „did not shoot at the dogs from the Romanian picket nor on any other objective. The patrol card, official document, can be consulted and found that the patrol came to picket no.5 after performing his service, as early as 23 am on 14 October 1931, and the shots fired on the picket „Traian”, as Captain Tutoveanu claimed, said, they fired at 0100 on the night of October 15, 1931. All residents of nearby villages, Korcut village, Ceanlar and Capugmahle were investigated/controlled and did not fire a gun that night. Only the forest gendarme of the village Korcut fired three shots at some shepherds to drive them out of the forest where they cut smuggled wood. It is possible that one of those bullets fell near the picket „Traian”. In order not to repeat this (fire draws), interventions were made immediately at the Ministry of Agriculture, which prohibited its forest guards from shooting in the future border area, even when justified. This was done in order to avoid such matters. In general, all Bulgarian border authorities have done everything possible with the intention of removing in the future all misunderstandings caused by special views between us and the Romanian authorities” (AMFA n.d.).

Towards the end of the talks, this Bulgarian point of view was reinforced by the fact that the frequent linguistic misunderstandings and terms between Bulgarian and Romanian officers are based on poor translation or understanding of soldiers on both sides at the moment when the presence of commanders is requested to discuss certain incidents or when a particular case is presented. Finally, although there was a need for clarification, a minutes was concluded, both in Romanian and in Bulgarian, agreed and signed by both parties, this is why at 18.30, the Bulgarian commission passed on its territory.

The common feeling of finding and discussing a methodology, a framework procedure, for investigating these incidents, materialized on March 12, 1932, when

a fundamental document was signed for both parties whose main purpose was normalization and finding common points, taking steps to follow in the investigation of incidents by future joint committees, so as not to leave room for interpretation. This document was Protocol no.5.

Joint efforts to improve bilateral relations between Romania and Bulgaria. Implementation of the new procedure for the investigation of border incidents

At the conclusion of the work of the Romanian-Bulgarian joint military commission, the president of the Romanian delegation was Colonel Alexandru Badulescu. He drew up a report to the Border Guard Corps, which drafted a report sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in which he appreciated the fact that the Bulgarian delegation acknowledged the facts in part, correcting the Romanian complaints, for which the incidents were declared liquidated. In order to prevent further incidents, Colonel Alexandru Badulescu proposed and the Bulgarian delegation accepted a new investigation procedure which was recorded in Protocol no.5. Both delegations committed themselves to applying exactly those provisions on the entire Romanian-Bulgarian land border ([AMFA](#) n.d.).

According to this document concluded on 12 March 1932, the procedure accepted by both parties for improving service relations between the border guards of both countries stipulated that *„to the written or telephone invitation then confirmed in writing, the invited officer must show up as soon as possible within 24 hours of receiving the invitation except in urgent cases requiring immediate contact between officers. The commanders of platoons of both countries when they meet to investigate together a border incident, conclude in writing the findings made on the spot by signing them to each other for a change. The final investigation documents are made by the company commanders when the incident is appreciated by their resort, otherwise they address the higher authorities for validation. On the missile signal or the firing of 2 shots, the head of the neighboring country picket in the immediate vicinity, he immediately comes to the border stone to inform himself and ask for clarification by giving on their territory immediately the necessary competition. Regarding the animal crossings on one side or another of the border to proceed as follows: - if a picket animal crosses the border, the head of the neighbouring picket is forced to return it immediately without any act being completed; - if cattle of the inhabitants have crossed the border, they have, the platoon commander shall communicate in writing to the platoon commander of the neighbouring country to investigate. If the cattle have been found, they surrender to the owner before the platoon commander and record it in a report. We cannot settle matters of cattle crossings between the heads of the pickets, they are cut only by the commanders of platoons who are obliged to answer the invitation to meet. When smuggling is discovered, the respective platoon commander, after completing the investigation, announces the platoon commander of the neighboring country to track*

both the smuggler and those who have any mixture. The drafting of the documents concluded by the officers of both countries must bear the seal of best faith. Any distortion in this direction shall be sanctioned immediately. Any tree on the border line which is tabulated as a sign of boundary may be cut only on the basis of a protocol concluded by the officers of both countries. Let both countries leave a one-meter strip of land along the border line and the mounds be bypassed” (AMFA n.d.).

To be well understood by the border guards, Protocol 5 of 12 March 1932 was accompanied by the Instructions, drafted and signed on 26 November 1932, which explained various aspects of the meeting of the officers, the contest that the commanders gave each other, the arrangement of the water and hay issues at pickets and border terminals, the animals passing from one side to the other, smuggling, guarding border signs and meeting place for Romanian and Bulgarian border guards (commanders). These instructions came into force on 1 December 1932 (AMFA n.d.). For example, the meeting of the commanders of the border guards units took place for important issues such as: investigating attacks from one side or another on the picket, sentry or border patrol, or, investigating the attacks from one side or another on the inhabitants working on land adjacent to the border area, investigating the theft of cattle and crops, to return cattle passed from one side to another, for the pursuit of smugglers, the investigation of the lack of politeness on the opposite side, as well as in all cases when one of the commanders of the precarious units requires relations for the proper running of the service (AMFA n.d.).

The officer invited to the meeting was obliged within 24 hours of receiving the invitation to appear at the fixed point. Exceptions were killings, mass attacks or major smuggling passes. If one of the officers called to investigate an incident was missing, his help reported this to the higher authority, while also notifying the officer who requested the meeting. The request for a meeting should always be in writing. In case of force majeure, the request could also be verbal, but at the first opportunity it had to be recorded in writing. Considering that, in general, the commanders of platoons at the Bulgarian border guards were only officers, in the Romanian sectors where platoon commanders were re-engaged the investigation of various incidents was carried out by the Romanian officer commander of the neighboring platoon or company commander. Romanian employees platoon commanders could only ask for information about the incident. At the meeting, the officers were obliged to be careful, fair and calm. Regardless of the character and result of their investigation, they were obliged to part in the most cordial way possible, a fact of great importance for the future relations between the border guards of both countries. In the event of an impoliteness, they were obliged to report to their superiors (AMFA n.d.).

The on-the-spot investigation was recorded „*in a minutes or protocol concluded in triple copy in Bulgarian and Romanian signed by both parties for the changeover and applying the official seals. Each officer will take one copy in the neighbouring language and two in their mother tongue. The copy written in foreign language concluded on*

the occasion of the important incidents must be signed by the official translator. The minutes (the protocol) must contain exactly the content expressed and established. If, as a result of the investigation performed, the officers do not agree, then each one exposes you in the same report (protocol) showing the reasons why he does not agree. In the important incidents where they do not agree, call the immediate superior officer for clarification. In principle, the meeting will take place at the place where the incident happened for the investigation to be done on the spot. In unimportant cases such as: return of cattle, taking relations, the meeting is made for Romanians: a) the general picket Ramniceanu (Ecrene platoon); for Bulgarians - picket no. 2 On Varna-Balcic road or picket 4600 m N.V. village of Climentov (subsection 1/16); for Romanians – at the King Ferdinand picket (pluton Kuiuungiuc); for Bulgarians – picket no.8 Varna road – Bazargic (subsection 2/16); for Romanians – picket second lieutenant Stoica (Boteni platoon); for Bulgarians – picket no.2 Dobrich (subsection 1/17); for Romanians – picket Lahovari (Vladimiresti platoon); for Bulgarians – picket no.6 road Vladimiresti-Ghecedeluci (subsection 2/17); for Romanians – picket sergeant Neagu (Ekiscea platoon); for Bulgarians – picket no.11 Bestepe-Trupciular road (subsection 3/17); for Romanians – picket Panculescu (pluton Kili-Kady); for Bulgarians – picket no. 2 road Mahmutslia-Sahinlar village (subsection 1/18); for Romanians – Vasile Lupu picket; ; for Bulgarians – picket no.8 Sarvii-Silistra Road (subsection 2/18); for Romanians – picket Omurgea; for Bulgarians – picket no.1 Omurchioi-Ferhatlar road (subsection 1/18)” (AMFA n.d.).

As regards the contest that the commanders were giving themselves, the pickets of border guards were obliged to be trained as the first responders to a possible incident or event, to support each other, and, certainly in the interests of good relations of friendship and neighborhood between the two parties. The request for competition was made by the head of the picket by launching one or two consecutive flares, in case of serious incidents, drawn only from the picket or the most visible place in the direction from which the danger came. On this call, the picket from the neighboring country was obliged to respond with a white flare signaling that he understood and sent patrols in the direction indicated by the flares (AMFA n.d.).

Relative to the problem of water and hay, the purchase of water at pickets was carried out according to previous agreements. In the border sectors where there were double (borne) border stones, the mowing of the hay between these border stones was simultaneously realized by Bulgarian and Romanian border guards, and the harvested hay was shared equally by the commanders of the respective platoons (AMFA n.d.).

Regarding the cattle or animals crossing the Romanian-Bulgarian border, the instructions of Protocol no.5 provided that *„different animals or birds belonging to the border guards who crossed the border had to be returned immediately by the picket commander without the completion of any act. Whether the cattle or animals belonged to the inhabitants of the area, the commander of the platoon (subsection) was obliged to notify in writing the neighboring platoon commander (subsection),*

mentioning some information related to the number and features of the cattle and the name and location of the owner and by which point they are suspected to have crossed the border. The commander of the platoon (subsection) in the neighboring country was obliged to immediately follow and notify the respective authorities in writing for their discovery and capture. For the ease of discovery of stolen animals, we propose to oblige the inhabitants of the border area (10 km deep) to mark their animals with insignia: for Romanians with R.m. The cattle are handed over at the meeting stones, personally by the officers with the minutes (protocol) after their property is established, with documents. The first three days after they are caught, they will not be charged any fee for maintenance, in the coming days the charge will be 14 lei per horse, 10 lei per cow and 4 lei per sheep as daily maintenance fee. It is not allowed for the heads of pickets to settle between themselves issues related to the crossing of cattle across the border that do not belong to the border guards" (AMFA n.d.).

As regards smuggling, the platoon commander (subsection) was obliged to notify immediately the commander in the neighboring country about the smuggling, the names of the persons involved in this activity and the area through which the fraudulent crossing of the border was made. The commander of the platoon (subsection) in the neighboring country was obliged, immediately after receiving the notice of smuggling, to start tracking the perpetrators and communicating in writing the result and the persons involved in smuggling. If the deed was found on its territory, but there were involved persons living in the territory of the neighboring country about whom the border guards authorities were not notified, the command was obliged to notify in writing and give information with precise data necessary for investigation.

Those who performed the guard service could not modify, cut or remove the border signs – trees or other distinct signs. If such an intervention was required, they were obliged to receive the approval of the higher authorities, after which the Romanian or Bulgarian officers responsible in the sector, concluded a report (protocol) (AMFA n.d.). If, from a technical point of view, on the map, the procedure agreed by both parties theoretically regulated the methodology of incident investigation on the spot, in practice things were different.

On April 7, 1932, the Border Guard Corps Command issued order no. 2827 ordering the 3 Border Guard Brigade to apply the provisions set out in Protocol no.5 Concluded by the Romanian-Bulgarian joint military commission on 12 March 1932. If at declarative level the Bulgarian military authorities claimed that they had removed the provisions of Protocol no. 5, the border incident occurred on the night of 9/May 10, 1932 highlighted the lack of training of Bulgarian soldiers. That evening, two armed individuals tried to cross the border into Bulgaria, for which they were summoned by the Romanian border guards. Soon the two suspects opened fire on the scene. The investigation carried out after the incident highlighted the poor knowledge of Protocol no.5 by the Romanian officers and border guards (AMFA n.d.).

Another incident occurred on August 1, 1932. The guardians' boat D.nr.1, while sailing to Bechet in front of the Bulgarian picket „Vadinul” due to an engine failure was carried by the current to the Bulgarian shore while Bulgarian border guards summoned the Romanian sailors to moor. Frightened by the possibility of a long seizure and the possibility of failing to fulfill their orders, the sailors managed to start the engine accelerating to the Romanian shore. While the boat was moving away from the neighboring shore, Bulgarian border guards opened fire on the boat, hitting it in full, being fired over 20 bullets ([AMFA](#) n.d.).

On December 13, 1932, Vasile Stoica informed Nicolae Titulescu, the minister of foreign affairs, through Note no. 3312, about the discussions he had with General Al.Kissov, minister of War and N. Mushanov, President of the Council of Ministers, on the establishment of the joint commission to investigate several incidents, including the one in which the Bulgarian komitadji was involved. In the long conversation with General Al. Kissov, which took place at the home of the British minister, Sydney Waterlow, the Romanian diplomat highlighted the worsening relations between Bulgaria and its neighbors due to the repeated refusal of Bulgarian border officers to participate, according to the agreements, to the joint investigations to which they were invited, as well as the refusal of the Bulgarian government to allow the establishment of joint committees when they were proposed to it. The English diplomat also agreed with the Romanian point of view. General Kissov replied that at least in two cases the Bulgarian investigation proved that the facts mentioned by the Romanian side did not exist. The answer of the Romanian minister came promptly regarding the investigations made by the Romanian side that reached contrary conclusions, for this reason, it was preferable to establish a joint military commission and not restrictive measures that the Romanian government would take at the border. Eventually the Bulgarian general agreed with Vasile Stoica.

Conclusion

At the end of 1932, the Romanian minister from Sofia, Vasile Stoica, pleaded in discussions with the president of the Council of Ministers, N. Musanov, to create joint military commissions that could limit any unnecessary agitation and tension at the border. The refusal of one of the parts of the proposal to establish a commission allowed the suspicion that it was guilty to float on it. The president of the Bulgarian Council of Ministers was intrigued by the intervention of the Romanian diplomat, suspecting a deal between Romanians and Yugoslavians, the latter requesting through their diplomatic representative in Sofia the formation of commissions for the investigation of incidents that took place at the Bulgarian-Yugoslav border. After the Romanian minister assured him that there was no such deal, N. Musanov reproached him that in the official documents and discussions in which he pleaded for the formation of joint committees, he used the phrase „commitagii bulgari”, when in fact they were mere thieves who were only trying to cause agitation and a state of

tension at the common border. On the contrary, although he admitted that, in most cases, the incidents were caused by thieves or smugglers, Vasile Stoica replied that he could not name otherwise those who, after making inroads into the Romanian territory, were killed by Romanian border guards after attacking them, the magazines of the dobrogens in Bulgaria glorified them as national heroes, as was the case with Coliu Colev (or Curtev) killed on the night of October 3 to October 4, 1932 in Kidi-Kadi. In the face of such an argument, the Bulgarian prime minister replied that the organization supporting these magazines were communists and, of course, those who make inroads into the Romanian territory. This political belonging does not change the state of comitadji. In the end, N. Musanov said he wanted to eliminate any misunderstandings with Romania, accepting the establishment of joint military commissions. However, new border incidents were afterwards reported.

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