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HATAY ISSUE WITHIN THE SCOPE OF TURKISH-FRENCH RELATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Sanjak Alexandretta which was added to the borders of the National Pact during the War of Independence remained within the borders of Syria via Ankara Treaty, providing ceasefire with France and determining Turkish-Syrian border on 20 October 1921, however a "private administration regime" was provided for the Sanjak, and both Sanjak Alexandretta and Syria were mandated by France. Turkish government wanted the Sanjak Alexandratta,to be given independence as Syria and Lebanon.Turkey took the conflict to the League of Nations. The negotiations of Sanjak status and constitution started on 14 December 1936 and they were approved at LN on 26 January 1937. According to the agreement, the Sanjak was recognized as an "entite distincte", independent in internal affairs, had its own Constitution, however its foreign policy was governed by Syria. According to the agreements in1937, the elections must have been held by 15 April 1938, however, French activities and Syrian intervention created trouble in the region. To provide peace in the Sanjak, a military unit comprising of 6000 soldiers provided by Turkey and France was formed. 2500 Turkish troops entered into the Sanjak on 5 July 1938. At the elections held on August 1938, Turkish side won 22 of total 40 deputyships. The Assembly approved the name "Hatay State" for the Sanjak. Hatay State was founded on 2 September 1938 and added to the Mainland (Turkey) on 29 June 1939.

Keywords : Sanjak , Hatay, Mandate, Turkey, France , Syria

1.INTRODUCTION

Alexandretta was a vital district during history because of its importance both as a port city and location at a key point for railways which provided passing from Ottoman State to Iraq and Syria. Therefore, France longed to possess this district as of early 18th century, and tried to increase its influence by means of making investments on education, health, religion and railways in the region (Sarınay, 1996). Before the First World War, this district was considered as a strategical district not only for France but also for Britain and Germany (Çabuk,1991:11). When Mondros Armistice Agreement was signed, Sanjak Alexandretta was possessed by Turkish Powers. In accordance with 16th article of the Armistice; Ottoman Government retreated all its (military) Powers in the district. In accordance with the London Agreement signed on 26 April 1915; the rights given to Italy in Antalya region were extended by St.-Jean de Maurienne Agreement signed on April 1917. And Southern and Eastern Anatolia were being shared between France and Britain by Skyes-Picot Agreement signed on May 1915. However, the Bolsheviks brought these collusions to light after the collapse of Tsarism (Deringil, 2012). During the sharing of the Middle East, Britain didn't want to be a direct border country with France, and gave some places such as Mosul, Irbil and Dohuk to France, thus, it put France between Russia and itself, and took Kirkuk and Suleymaniye (Eskander, 2000). Thus, the territories of Ottoman State in Anatolia, Southern-Southwestern Anatolia and Syria remained in France and Iraq region remained in Britain.

According to Sykos-Picot Agreement, the territories beginning from eastern Mersin; east-middle district of Central Anatolia from Cilicia to Sivas, from the line of Elazığ, Diyarbakır, Mardin, İskenderun-Antakya in southeastern Anatolia to Lebanon in the south were going to be left to France. However, the Allied Powers were going to put their plans into practice following Mondros Armistice Agreement signed on 30 October 1918. The Armistice agreement contained so heavy conditions in terms of Ottoman State that British and French Powers were going to occupy Alexandretta and Hatay districts based on 7th article stating that "the Allied Powers have the right for occupation of any strategical districts considered to be threatening their own security" (Soysal, 2000). By breaking out of the War of Independence, Alexandretta started to be on the agenda of Ankara.

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2. RELATIONS WITH FRANCE

France had intensive financial relations with Ottoman Empire both on public and private capital levels before the First World War. French companies had intensive commercial activities in some fields such as construction and operation of railways, banking, mining in Ottoman territories and the French capital constituted about 60 % of foreign capital in Ottoman Empire. On the eve of the First World War, almost half of the foreign debts of Ottoman Empire was provided by France. This situation explained the reason why France was interested in these territories. (Sönmezoğlu, 2011).

"Sanjak Alexandretta" comprising the districts of Alexandretta, Antakya and Harim was founded by the decree of French Higher Board of Commissioners centered in Beirut on 27 November 1918. The Sanjak was going to be an independent unit from Beirut,and administrated by a military governor, however the French troops invaded the city in the following days (Pehlivanlı, 2001). In accordance with Sykes-Picot Agreement, France was so determined to dominate the region including Syria, Lebanon, Cilicia as well as Hatay. The occupations both in the region and whole southeastern Anatolia showed that the French dictated some uncertain geographical terms such as "Cilicia" and "Syria" to Mondros Armistice Agreement consciously, and foundation of the Sanjak of Alexandretta (Sancak D'Alexandrette) was realized as part of a plan (Sonyel, 1987). Britain and France signed a contract between each other called "Syrian Contract" on 15 September 1919. In accordance with this contract; Britain left Adana, Maraş, Antep, Urfa, Alexandretta and Syria to France, and Mosul was taken by Britain (Circular Letters, Telegrams and Declarations of Atatürk, 1999).

According to 1st article of "the National Pact" accepted by the First Turkish Parliament on 28 January 1920 (Tunçay, 1976:18), " the situation of the people in this enemy-held territory by Mondros Armistice Agreement on 30 October 1918 must be determined by their free votes. (Soysal, 2000).

The French which were defeated by the troops of Nationalist Forces in Maraş, Antep and Urfa it had occupied after Mondros Armistice Agreement demanded to sign a ceasefire agreement, and thus, Turkey got a chance to negotiate on the Alexandretta issue.

Since 1918 the French started the first occupations in the region, the guerillas directed the battle against the French and Armenians. The battle in the district was between Turks and the French. The Arabs and Arabis-supporters were shattered after invasion of Aleppo by the French troops on 20 July 1920 (Sökmen, 1992). France, the mandate administrator, firstly separated Syrian state into two as Syria and Lebanon on September 1920; then founded four different administrative zones called Damascus, Aleppo, Druse, Alewi in Syria. Syrian governors were appointed to the first two of those administrative zones, the French governors were appointed to the others. Although the Sanjak with special status belonged to Aleppo Governorship until 1925, it was given under the govern of Syrian Government directly that year. And also on top of all these governors, there was a French High Commissioner as the administrator of Syria and Lebanon (Soysal, 2000). France started to negotiations with Ankara Government beause of some reasons as on one hand resistance of Turkish National Powers against the Occupation Forces, on the other hand the conflicts between Allied Powers and the reactions shown against the new wars in its own country, France (Gelvin, 1998).

The Assembly of Allied Powers invited İstanbul Government to London Conference on 26 January 1921 because the Nationalist troops gained victories against the British in the east and the Greeks in the west. At London negotiations, Turkish part was being represented by a committee under the presidency of Bekir Sami Bey, the Foreign Minister. London Conference lasted from 21 February to 12 March, 1921. Mustafa Kemal gave the representatives of Ankara Government some instructions to give no compromises on the principles of the National Pact in no way. In accordance with the agreement signed by Briand, French Prime Minister on 11 March 1921, the battle in southern region was going to be ended and Turkish troops there were going to be unarmed. On the other hand, some administrative powers were going to be given to the French in southern region, the French capital was going to be made use of economic progress of Diyarbakır and Sivas provinces, and the French were going to be granted economic privileges in the region. Bekir Sami Bey had signed these agreements not in consultation with Ankara Government and not receiving the approval of Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM). After Bekir Sami Bey returned to Ankara, he was severely criticised by Mustafa Kemal and TBMM since he signed these agreements which were not based on the equality principal, and not approved by the Assembly (Gönlübol and Sar, 1993). Then, the Assembly demanded Bekir Sami Bey's resignation and Yusuf Kemal Bey was appointed as new Foreign Minister. The most important side of the agreement signed in London was its articles concerning Hatay district. The border was highly changed when compared to Sevres Treaty; the new border was extending from Payas to Meydan-ı Ekber, then Kilis and finally

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Nusaybin in such a way that the railway was going to remain in Syrian side whereas Kilis-Karnaba in Turkish territories. These borders were not going to be changed in Ankara Agreement and the Lausanne Treaty either (Kinross, 199).

2. ANKARA AGREEMENT

As another important result of London Conference, difference of opinions appeared between the Allied Powers. Italian Government was trying to get rid of its Anatolian venture immediately. It started to withdraw its troops following the II. İnönü victories of Turks against Greeks. The same situation occurred in France too (Armaoğlu, 1993). French public opinion started to consider that the soldiers and money wasted in Çukurova (Akyüz, 1976). After the victory against Greeks at Sakarya War on 13 September 1921, France sent Henri Franklin-Bouillon, president of the Senate to Ankara to hold official talks for a new agreement. Atatürk governed the negotiations between France and TBMM Government. At first meeting, Atatürk laid down that the primary point at negotiations was going to be "the scope of National Pact" (Atatürk, 1997).

On 20 October 1921, "Ankara Agreement" was signed between TBMM Government and France by the signatures of Yusuf Kemal Bey, Turkish Foreign Minister and Henri Franklin –Bouillon, French Foreign Minister. According to this agreement, France was going to withdraw its troops in southern front. Current south border except the Sanjak of Alexandretta (Hatay) was approved by both sides. (Soysal, 2000). Determination of Turkish-Syrian border in details was confirmed by 3rd article of the Lausanne Treaty in 1923, the statement expressing a special status for Hatay to remain within Turkish territories was going to be preserved (Öymen; 2007).

According to Ankara Agreement, Adana, Mersin, Tarsus, Kilis and Gaziantep were abandoned and returned to Turkey, but the commitments made for the Sanjak of Alexandretta were not kept. By a decree; the Sanjak was given under the govern of Aleppo and the appointments were made by France, the towns and villages in the south of the Sanjak of Alexandretta were left to Latakia. Some parts of community around the Sanjak of Alexandretta started to migrate to Adana and Mersin, and "İskenderun and Neighbourhood Association for the Defence of the National Rights' was unofficially founded to help these migrants by Sami Ezer, Tayfur Sökmen, Rasim Yurtman, Nuri Aydın, İdris Antaki (Sökmen, 1992).

Because of some reasons Ankara Agreement was not completed and remained only as a pre-agreement. By San Remo Agreement on 25 April 1920, it was determined that Syria was going to be left to French mandate (Gönlübol and Sar, 1993). Turkish-Syrian border was determined by 8th article of Lausanne Peace Treaty identically as it was determined by Ankara Agreement (Lausanne Peace Conference, Official Reports-Documents, 1993). According to Ankara Agreement, Ankara Government had accepted the French Mandate in the Sanjak district by special terms. The Agreement was considered as a success of Ankara Government politically, culturally, and economically. By this Agreement, it was recognised by a western state for the first time, and a large part of its territory was rescued from occupation (Sonyel, 1987:201). Turkish army with all arms and articles provided from the French was going to weigh upon the Western front in force any more (Sönmezoğlu, 2011). On the other hand, the conflicts between Allied Powers appeared by Paris Peace Negotiations in the first months of 1919 came to surface and turned to separations. It was also a concrete evidence for disappearance of the possibility of implementation of Sevres Treaty which was prepared one year ago by the Allied Powers (Yavuz, 1994). Ankara Agreement arranged the special administrative status of the Sanjak of Alexandretta until 1938.

3-THE SANJAK OF ALEXANDRETTA UNDER THE FRENCH MANDATE (1921-1938)

The southern border of Turkey was drawn by the Lausanne Treaty signed on 24 July 1923 (Meray, 1993). According to the Treaty, the Sanjak of Alexandretta was left to the French mandate autonomously (Sanjıan, 1956). This situation did not please Turks and some activities were done directed for assimilation of Aghas and groups via tax collection, and militia forces knowing the community well were constituted, thus, the troops of National Forces were abolished. Militia forces constituted approximately one fifth of French military forces. French military forces in the Sanjak of Alexandretta included 5 police commissioners, 183 military police officers (gendarme), 44 agents, 589 militia forces, 4 generals, 1 captain, 1 lieutenant, 120 low-grade officers, 3 fully-equipped batallions (comprising of 600 soldiers), 770 soldiers in charge at various units (Demir, 2013). During the conference, the most significant issues for Turkish side were Capitulations, Ottoman Public Debts,etc. (Karacan, 1971).

After the Lausanne Treaty, some issues as Ottoman public debts, the situation of French educational, religious and health institutions in

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Turkey, privileges of French companies and purchasing of them between Turkey and France were going to continue until 1930s (Soysal, 2000).

On the other hand, France was taking some measures to break absolute majority of Turks (Yerasimos, 2010). On one hand, France settled foreign elements in the region, on the other hand, it also opened its doors to Yüzellilikler (150 people) who escaped from Anatolia. They were an extended group of people with various occupations. They were pro-Allied Powers and pro-İstanbul Government and were in the list of 150 people who were negotiated during Lausanne Peace Conference and excluded the general amnesty in consequence of the Peace Agreement (Erdeha, 1998). Within the frame of the issue dealt in the secret sessions in the Assembly, 150-person exile list was decided on 16.4.1924 (Ersel, Kuyaş,Tunçay, & Oktay, 2002). Together with these settlements, the Armenian population increased rapidly in some places such as the villages of Musa Dağı, Kırıkhan, Belen, Atik, Soğukoluk, Kesep (Melek, 1986).

During the Lausanne negotiations, Atatürk came to Adana on 15 March 1923, he addressed the people from the Sanjak stating that ”four thousand year Turkish land cannot remain as enemy territories’ in his speech and explained his view about the Sanjak clearly. (Sökmen, 1992). On October 5, Turkish Government sent a note to France stating that the special regime foreseen by Ankara Agreement was not being adopted. French Government sent a reply note and stated that the Sanjak of Alexandretta “was constituted in such a way that it would include the districts in which Turkish minorities lived, and only minorities lived there and Turkish population didn’t have majority in any districts”. It was not a really true claim. At census dated 1924, population census was as follow in whole Sanjak: Total population was 127.886; Turkish citizens constituted 37,10% of it, Alewis 28.14%, Shiites 20.96%, Arabs 11.31% and others 1.72% (Yerasimos, 2010). Primary tendency of Turkish foreign policy during inter-World war period was towards maintaining the status quo constituted by the Lausanne Treaty, thus, Turkey contributed to the efforts of the states to maintain the balance constituted after war in Europe (Koçak, 2012).

Forming mandate administration in Syria was accepted at San Remo Conference, and France was selected as mandatory state. LN Council approved the constitution of Syrian and Lebanon mandates on 24 July 1922. Syrian Mandate authority was confirmed by LN on 29 September 1923, and mandate administration started to be applied officially. France made new arrangements on Sanjak administration by the insistence of Turkey in 1924 (H.L.1937). According to these arrangements, the Sanjak was going to be dependent to Syria in terms of Constitution and Foreign Affairs, the Sanjak Assembly with 12 members was going to be formed and the decisions taken were going to be approved by the delegate and High Commissioner representing French High Commissioner. The Sanjak belonged to Aleppo Governorship until 1925, however, it was given under the govern of Syrian Government on that date and Syria increased its authority there. The border between Turkey and Syria was outlined by Ankara Agreement; and it was decided that a border commission would be formed within a month to determine the details of the border. The commission was able to gather hardly on September 1925, but the dispute was not settled. De Jouvenel, French High Commissioner came to Ankara and carried out negotiations on February 1926. Then, a contract which outlined the borders and arranged Turkish-French relations was initialised by Tevfik Rüştü Aras, Turkish official, and ambassador of France to Turkey on 18 February1926 (Gönlübol and Sar,1993). Meanwhile, after long negotiations, “Turkey-France Friendship and Good Neighbourhood Agreement” which outlined Turkish-Syrian border was signed on 30 May 1926 (Soysal, 2000). According to the Agreement; even though the Sanjak center was shown as Alexandretta, some offices concerning education, agriculture, public works,etc. were in Antakya. The agreement was reacted positively by Turks, and they came into an active operation. When the topic of amnesty was brought to agenda, Turks who could not return to the Sanjak in 1921 came back (Melek, 1991).

The period between 1926 and 1934 was a calm era in terms of the Sanjak. The Sanjak representatives in Syrian Assembly demanded the Sanjak to be given under the govern of French Higher Board of Commissioners directly, and the French administration looked it positively. On January 1926, the elections were held and they resulted in such a way that the French delegate desired. The Sanjak Assembly gathered on March 1926, and declared Alexandretta Government under the French mandate was loyal to French Higher Board of Commissioners by a Constitution. Pierre Durieux was the head of government. These developments in the Sanjak were overreacted in Syria and they enabled the Sanjak deter from independence. On 12 June 1926, the Sanjak Assembly decided that Alexandretta was going to be an autonomous district within Syrian state (Gönlübol and Sar, 1993). The most significant disputes in Turkish-French relations were debts and Turkish-Syrian border during this period. The dispute was settled exactly by “Turkish-French Friendship, Reconciliation and Arbitration

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Agreement' signed on 3 February 1930 (Soysal, 2000).

France targeted maintaining its domination in the region constitutionally by means of declaring so-called Republic. 1928 Syrian Constitution and its supplements prepared for this reason came into force by a decree of French Higher Board of Commissioners on 14 May 1930 (Melek, 1991:16). As another important development in 1928, the (language) courses which were opened to adopt Alphabet Reform in Turkey, to teach new letters were reacted severely by Syrian and Arabic press (Melek, 1991). During this period, an agreement was made concerning payment of Ottoman public debts on 13 June 1928, but Global Economic Depression in 1929 prevented the articles of agreement from coming into force. Turkey became an LN member on 18 July 1932, and started to have a role in international politics. National Socialism which came into power in Germany in 1933 was going to take important steps in a short time to change status quo formed by Versailles Treaty and to redetermine the borders of Germany (Koçak, 2012). This issue and other developments in Europe were going to make France familiar with Turkey to some extent (Erkin, 1987).

In 1931, elections for deputyship in Syrian Damascus Assembly, and for memberships in Sanjak Administrative Council were held. 2 Turks, 2 Sunni Arabs, 1 Orthodox and 1 Alewi from Antakya, 1 Turk and 1 Armenian from Kırıkhan, 1 Turk, 1 Alewi and 1 Orthodox from İskenderun; 12 members in total were elected for the Administrative Council (Melek, 1991). Tayfur Sökmen, a notable in the Sanjak moved to İstanbul and was elected the president of "Antakya ve Neighbourhood Association for the Defence of the National Rights' in 1933 (Sökmen, 1992:88). He was elected as Antakya independent deputy in 1934 (Sökmen, 1992). As representatives of the Sanjak Turks, Tayfur Sökmen, Abdurrahman Melek, Samih Azmi Ezer, İnayet Mürsel carried out negotiations with İsmet İnönü, Fevzi Çakmak, and Hasan Rıza Soyak, General Secretary of Presidency in Ankara in 1935 (Melek, 1991).

After its membership to LN, Turkey participated in the Balkan Pact in 1934, and these developments made pro-status quoist countries France and Turkey in Europe more familiar with each other. Membership of Turkey to LN was important against Italy regarded as a threat in the Mediterranean Sea. In these conditions, France didn't maintain a hard attitude against the initiatives of Turkey for the Sanjak, moreover, it was also effective on approval of Montreux Convention in 1936 (Armaoğlu, 1994). In this positive conjuncture, Turkey established its domination exactly on the Straits, and procured acceptance of Montreux Convention to the concerning states (Montreux Convention- Official Reports, Documents, 1976). Henceforth, Turkey eased in foreign policy and constituted a proper environment to solve the Sanjak issue (İnan, 1977)

This moderate period in Turkish-French relations entered to a tension period arisen from the Sanjak issue in 1936 and maintained until 1939. France gave independence to Syria on September 1936, and to Lebanon two months later. France offered France-Syria Agreement to LN Council on 26 September (Foreign Ministry, 50 Years in Turkish Foreign Politics, 1973). When France was withdrawing from Syria, it was passing its authority concerning the Sanjak to Syria. Turkish Government did not accept this situation. The negotiations made with France at LN meeting in Geneva were not concluded positively; so, Turkey gave a note to Delbos, French Foreign Minister via Suat Davaz, Turkish Ambassador to Paris on 9 October 1936, and demanded the Sanjak of Alexandretta to be given independence as in the example of Syria (Tekin,1999). French Secretary of Foreign Affairs replied this note via M. Viénot, LN representative on 6 October 1936, and referred to the negotiation with T. R. Aras, Turkish Foreign Minister and stated that Britain – Iraq model was taken in the agreement and "France- Syria Agreement provided the security of the region and minorities, however, French Government might make negotiations with Turkish Government within the frame of the Agreement in 1921' (Khadduri, 1945). France declared that giving independence to the Sanjak meant splitting Syria and it didn't have an authority to do it as a mandatory state (Yerasimos, 1988). By taking indivisibility of mandate authority given by LN into consideration, France suggested a proposal for Turkey to take the issue to LN, and Turkey accepted this proposal (Armaoğlu, 1993).

While the issue was being negotiated with diplomacy between Turkey and France, in his opening speech at TBMM on 1 November 1936, Atatürk stated that the Sanjak belonged to Turks, and this issue was the sole matter of dispute and was required to be settled (Speeches and Statements of Atatürk, 1981). On 2 November 1936, he ordered Tayfur Sökmen, one of the pioneers of battle in Sanjak, that "Turkey intervened the issue, from now on the name of Antakya- İskenderun and neighbourhood is Hatay, change the name of İskenderun – Antakya and Neighbourhood Association For the Defence of the National Rights as Hatay Sovereignty Community and continue your activities under this name" (Sökmen, 1992). By taking also the incidents into consideration, Atatürk chose a Hittite origin name instead of İskenderun or Antakya as in the history, and gave

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the name "Hatay" because he believed this name could comprehend, combine and integrate all the communities living in this district (Tekin, 1999).

Although official demand of Turkey concerning Hatay was its independence, it could be understood easily that both Turks in Hatay and some deputies at TBMM wanted Hatay to be integrated in Turkey directly (Sarınay, 1996). Atatürk negotiated with M.Ponsot, French Ambassador at Ankara Palace on 10 December 1936. He wanted the Ambassador transmit the French Government that he didn't demand integration concerning the Sanjak, he only wanted the dispute to be settled with both sides' satisfaction and Turkey was so determined on this issue (Şimşir, 1981). He told Ponsot that "I promised my nation to integrate Hatay in Turkey. My citizens believe in me, however, if I don't keep my promise, I can't come into their presence. I have never been defeated so far; if I am defeated, I won't live even a minute! Being aware of these expressions and considering that I can keep my promise please confirm my friendship" (Soyak, 1973). At the same day, following Turkey's note for LN Council, the issue was negotiated at LN Council on 14 December. Turkish side was represented by a delegation under the presidency of Tevfik Rüştü Aras, Turkish Foreign Minister. According to the thesis of French side, Syrian territories could not be divided as to the mandatory laws, the independence of Syria could not damage the administrative structure of the Sanjak, and the decision of LN Council was required to make a change on the mandate system (Soysal, 2000). The council decided Sandler, Swedish representative to be appointed as the reporter to settle the dispute (Gönlübol and Sar, 1993). In accordance with the report prepared by Sandler, a committee comprising of 3 observes from Holland, Norway and Switzerland was sent to the Sanjak. Turkish Foreign Minister made negotiations in Paris on 22 December 1936, and he offered concerning the Sanjak that a coalition must be formed between Turkey and Syria, and each district must be separate assets on all issues except foreign affairs, customs and common currency. But France didn't accept this offer (Erkin, 1987).

On 5 February 1937. Atatürk went to a 3-day journey to the south and negotiated with İsmet İnönü, the Prime Minister and Fevzi Çakmak, the Chief of General Staff and discussed the situation. İsmet İnönü stated determination of Atatürk to France via Suat Davas, Turkish Ambassador to Paris. On 18 January, Leon Blum, Prime Minister of France stated concerning the Sanjak issue that they would accept LN decision, and a special status would be formed under the administration of a French High Commissioner who would provide the administration in the Sanjak. Turkey refused this proposal of France considering that it was contrary to independence. Instead of independence that they could never accept for the Sanjak, France found a flexible expression called separate asset "éntité distincté" (Soysal , 2000). Turkey didn't accept this proposal. Anthony Eden, British Foreign Minister made hard efforts to reconcile the sides, France changed its attitude at last, thus, an agreement basis close to Turkish view was found. Sandler Report was unanimously accepted as it was at the Council. In the report, it was explained that the Sanjak was going to be independent in internal affairs, and be dependent to Syria in foreign affairs by a status and constitution to be prepared by the board of experts, however, Syria wasn't going to damage the status of the Sanjak without MC Council's permission, a French delegate was going to be appointed for this inspection, customs and monetary union be formed between the Sanjak and Syria, there was going to be no armament except the police and gendarme, and some provisions were going to be put into the Sanjak status for Turkey to benefit from Alexandretta port (H.L.1938). To prepare the status and the constitution foreseen in the report, the board of experts included by Turkey, France, Britain, Belgium and Holland went to the Sanjak to work together with Observers' Committee on 25 February 1937. Turkey was represented by Numan Menemencioğlu, General Secretary of Foreign Affairs, and France was represented by De Caix (Soysal, 2000).

3.1. TURKİSH-FRENCH AGREEMENT (29 May 1937)

The report prepared by the Observers' Committee was signed in Geneva by Turkish and French Foreign ministers on 29 May 1937. In the report, Bayır, Bucak and Hazne towns in which Turks constituted majority were excluded from the province. Turkish, and additionally Arabic was accepted as official language(s). In the Constitution, it was explained in details that legislative power will be used by the Assembly to be formed by a two-degree election and include 40 members of parliament, and elect the President. When the Sanjak state was founded, its land area was 4.805 km^2 and according to the latest French statistics, its population was 219.000 in total composed of the origins as follows: 39.7% Turkish, 28%' Alewi, 11% Armenian, 10% Sunni Arab, 9% Greek Orthodox, 3% Kurdish, Cherkess, Jewish, Albanian,etc. (Soysal, 2000).

Syrian Parliament didn't recognize the agreements and declared that the Sanjak was a part of Syria. And Syrian citizens organised anti-government demonstrations in some cities since the

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Sanjak was given independence. Alexandretta and neighbourhood was going to be integrated in Turkey, and this situation alarmed Syrians. (Thomas, 2005). The Sanjak Constitution was going to come into force on 29 November 1937 and firstly, it was required to hold the elections. A committee formed by LN came to the Sanjak on October 1937 and prepared the election regulations and decided the elections to be completed until 15 July 1938 (Armaoğlu, 1993). Meanwhile, France dismissed the Syrian officers in the Sanjak, and seized power itself directly (Yerasimos, 2010:194). Turkey transmitted the French Government that it cancelled "Friendship Agreement in 1930" by a note on 29 December (Soysal, 2000 b:92). LN Council wanted the provisions of the regulations to be corrected negotiating by Turkish Government. Meanwhile, Turkey sent troops including 30.000 soldiers to the Sanjak border (Erkin, 1980).

Germany occupied Austria on March 1938. Its domination and location concerning the Straits increased the strategical importance of Turkey. In a circular letter issued by German Foreign Affairs Ministry in early summer of 1938, it was mentioned that the difficulties concerning Hatay issue were overcome to some extent by the agreement dated 4 July and how it affected Turkish-German relations (Koçak, 2013).

According to the French sources, the population of the region was 220.000 in mid-1930s and Turks who constituted only 39% of total population didn't represent the majority. Arabic speaking population constituted 46% of total population and Armenians 15% (Watenpaugh, 1996). Distribution of population was as follows: 85.000 Turkish speaking Muslims, 62.000 Arabic speaking İsmailis and Alewis, 25.000 Christian Armenians of whole sectarians, 22.000 Arabic speaking Sunni Muslims, 21.000 Arabic speaking Christian Arabs of whole sectarians, 5.000 Sunni Muslim Kurds, 1.500 Sunni Muslim Circassians and 500 Arabic speaking Christians (Satloff, R. B., 1986). On 31 January 1938, LN Council decided the election regulations to be rearranged after objections of Turkey and at negotiations made in Geneva, it decided an Observers' committee to be formed for the Sanjak. In the elections, only male voters over 20 could vote. The election works in the Sanjak started under the monitoring of the Commission of LN Council on April 1938 (Dağistan&Sofuoğlu, 2008). France not only provoked Armenians to create troubles in Hatay or protected provocateur Armenians but also had an effective role on creating Armenian public opinion for riots against Ottomans since 1895, the first Armenian incidents occurred (Geçer, 2014). Meanwhile, several Armenians, Alewis and Arabs out of the Sanjak were brought to the Sanjak and registered.

The election works started under the monitoring of LN Commission in the Sanjak on April 1938. Voter lists were prepared in May. According to the first degree elections the Commission completed at the end of May, there were registered 43.735 voters; 49.98% of them were Turks and 50.02% of them were from other sectarians (Soysal, 2000). Meanwhile, the incidents occurred during the elections caused objections in Turkey, and they were protested at TBMM and Turkish press. In spite of his sickness, Atatürk went from İstanbul to Mersin, then Silifke and Adana on 20 May, and he inspected troops and a parade was held. Then, the troops including 30.000 soldiers were sent to Hatay border (Soyak, 1973). France softened its attitude due to the initiatives of Suat Davaz, Turkish Ambassador to Paris, Major Collet was appointed as French High Commissioner instead of Roger Garreau on 4 June. And Abdurrahman Melek was appointed instead of the French governor on 6 June 1938 (Sökmen, 1991). The elections restarted on 9 June, but the incidents were still continuing. Turkey made protests in the presence of French Government and LN on June 17 and 22. Upon the demands of Turkish and French governments, LN Election Commission stopped elections and left the Sanjak.

3.2. TURKİSH-FRENCH MİLİTARY AGREEMENT (3 July 1938) AND TURKİSH-FRENCH FRİENDSHİP AGREEMENT (4 July 1938)

The military mission under the presidency of Full General Asım Gündüz, Deputy Chief of the General Staff started negotiations with General Huntziger, Near East Army Commander of France on 14 June. Turkish-French Military Agreement was signed on 3 July 1938. According to the Agreement, territorial integrity and political status of the Sanjak were going to be provided by Turkey and France. Public security was going to be provided by 6000 officials; 1000 officials be provided from the Sanjak, and the others from Turkey and France (Soysal, 2000).

After the political negotiations in Paris and Ankara between Turkey and France, Turkish-French Friendship Agreement was signed in Ankara between Tevfik Rüştü Aras and Ponsot, French Ambassador. The Agreement included several provisions towards good relations, the articles concerning the Sanjak, and political and economical measures to be taken together in case of any attacks. (Dağistan& Sofuoğlu, 2008).

Local Election Commission was constituted under the govern of Colonel Collet, delegate of French High Commissioner in the Sanjak and Cevat

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Açıkalın, Minister plenipotentiary who joined at the military negotiations with Turkish delegation in Antakya. The Commission decided the elections to be restarted on 22 July. First degree elections were completed on 31 July and 358 Turks, 113 Alewis, 55 Armenians, 18 Arabs, 20 Greek-Orthodoxes were elected as the second degree voters. At a meeting held in Dörtyol on 10 August, names of Turks who will be nominated as deputies were determined and Tayfur Sökmen was determined as the candidate for Presidency. Abdülgani Türkmen was nominated for speakership of parliament and Abdurrahman Melek for Prime Ministry. The selected deputies were declared on 21 August. According to the election results, 22 Turks, 9 Alewis, 5 Armenians, 2 Arabs, 2 Greek-Orthodoxes were elected to the parliament. (Melek, 1991).

4. HATAY STATE (2 September 1938-23 June 1939)

The Sanjak Assembly held its first meeting on 2 September 1938 (Gönlübol and Sar, 1993). Tayfur Sökmen was elected the President at the first meeting of the Assembly and all the deputies swore in Turkish. The name "Hatay" was accepted for the new founded state. A commission was formed to determine the image of Hatay flag, and the Hatay flag which looked like Turkish flag so much was determined. Tayfur Sökmen, the President appointed Abdurrahman Melek as Prime Minister on 5 September, and Hatay National Assembly accepted the Constitution and Government Program of Hatay State on 7 September 1938. Application of the laws in force in Turkish Republic was principally accepted, and the Turkish National Anthem was accepted as the Hatay National Anthem.

According to the Sanjak status, Hatay State belonged to Syria in foreign affairs. It was going to be represented by Syrian President abroad, the customs were going to be administrated jointly by Syria and no joint political or military borders were going to be with Syria. Official currency of Hatay was accepted as Syrian lira, however, salaries of officers in February paid in Turkish lira and it was accepted as official currency of Hatay on 13 March 1939 (Melek, 1986).

Another new application in Hatay was to appoint Turkish origin officers instead of French or other foreigners to government offices. The experts coming from Turkey arranged Law Enforcement Agencies (gendarme and police). French wasn't an obligatory course any more, and the curriculum of Antakya High School was accommodated to the curricula of Turkish high schools. Supreme Court of Hatay State was founded on 23 September 1938. Hatay National Assembly accepted Turkish Civil Law and Turkish Criminal Law on January 1939. The Law concerning acceptance of Turkish Republic Laws as Hatay State Laws was accepted on 16 February 1939.

After foundation of Hatay State, Syria created troubles for those who wanted to enter to Hatay or exit from there (Pehlivanlı, Sarınay and Yıldırım, 2001). The tension which was maintaining in Europe when Hatay State was founded directed France to make an agreement with Turkey as of September 1938 (Soysal, 2000).

French foreign policy had followed a pro-conflict policy until the period George Bonnet was appointed as the Foreign Minister. During the ministry of Edouard Daladier between 1937 and 1938, the crisis arisen from Antakya conflict reached to the top level, and Turkey didn't hesitate threatening France concerning Eastern Mediterranean. Georges Bonnet who was appointed as new Foreign Minister had a close friend and admirer of Atatürk. This appointment was the signal of the first step considered to be taken against Italian threat in Eastern Mediterranean, and also German-Italian cooperation. In conclusion, French Foreign Ministry showed an agreeable attitude in the region. France compromised on its military and political position in the Near East for the first time by recognizing Hatay State, and it is possible to state that this situation realized as a result of the change in internal politics (Demir, 2013).

The main point for Hatay was to become integrated with Turkey. Suad Davaz, Turkish Ambassador to Paris applied to French Foreign Affairs and gave a note demanding making the new situation in Hatay official on 30 September 1938. By this note, Turkey tried to officialize the situation of "Hatay is a small state under the monitoring and guarantee of Turkey". In his reply to the note, Bonnet, French Minister stated that "France will be agreeable to the extent permitted by its liabilities'. He didn't accept the demand of removing mandate system, but stated that he was ready to negotiate other demands (Ada, 2013).

Turkey signed Turkish-British-French alliance on 19 October 1939. According to this treaty, if a war breaking out with an attack of a European state and joined by Britain and France had expanded to the Mediterranean Sea, Turkey would have been going to help to Britain and France. Turkey was going to provide considerable financial aid and military articles via financial agreements made by Britain and France after the alliance. Then, negotiations on military and technical issues started between sides (Koçak, 2012). Turkish-French committee which

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was formed to determine the borders of Hatay State started to work as of 4 November. (Melek, 1991)

Atatürk who gave great importance to settlement of Hatay dispute died on 10 November 1938 and the effects of developments in Turkey on Turkish foreign policy were discussed at length in French Foreign Ministry Quai d'Orsay (Ada, 2013). René Massigly was appointed as French Ambassador to Ankara on November 1938 and arrived in Ankara on January 1939. The new Ambassador was known as pro-British and anti-German, and he had served as general secretary at Lausanne Peace Conference (1922-1923). Throughout the conference, he was frequently in communication with İsmet İnönü, head of Turkish delegation at that time. (Güçlü, 2001).

The developments concerning Hatay issue started to be negotiated on January 1939. Meanwhile, Europe was approaching to a widespread war quickly. Germany occupied Czechoslovakia on 15 March 1939, then it ended the nonagression pact with Poland. Italy occupied Albania on April 1939. On 12 Mayıs 1939, Turkey and Britain which had vital importance in terms of defence of the Balkans and Eastern Mediterranean declared that they would form a joint security pact (Olmert, 1987). On 19 October 1939, this agreement turned to a triple alliance by the participation of France (Kasliwal, 1945).

France was in need of agreeing with Turkey immediately. René Massigli, French Ambassador to Ankara transmitted the proposal of Şükrü Saraçoğlu, Turkish Foreign Minister to Bonnet and the proposal was accepted. According to the proposal, Turkish-French Declaration was signed by Bonnet and Davaz in Paris, and Hatay Agreement was signed by Şükrü Saraçoğlu and Massigli in Ankara. On 23 June 1939, Turkish-French Declaration signed "The Agreement concerning Exact Solution of Territorial Issues between Turkey and Syria" providing integration of Hatay to Turkey and it came into force on 13 July. 1st article of the Agreement; determined Turkish-Syrian border, accepted corrections in favour of Turkey in the border, demanded French troops leaving Hatay within a month. 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th articles of the Agreement were concerning citizenship; they explained that the citizens living in Hatay territories would be the citizens of Turkish Republic, but they had also rights choosing Syrian or Lebanon citizenship within 6 months. 6th article took Post cemetery in Alexandretta under protection. By 7th article, Turkey guaranteed territorial integrity of Syria and declared that it would abstain from all actions to break civil peace of Syria. By 8th, 9th and 10th articles, on behalf of Syria; France and Turkey would prevent actions towards state security and regime of each other. At the Agreement's annex, some issues as follows were available: some regulations on transferring properties, rights and benefits for those who would leave Hatay, transferring Payas-Alexandretta railway to Turkey within thirty days the Agreement came into force. As long as the agreement came into force France accepted to transfer all its military articles etc. in Hatay to Turkey in return for 3 million French francs (Soysal, 2000). The Agreement was reacted by Syrians and regarded as politically illegal. It was interpreted that France "sacrificed Sanjak to appease Turkey" (Melhem, 1998). But Turkish-French Declaration stated that Turkey and France presented their determination to protect the security in Eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans, and provided 12 May Turkish-British Declaration to be a triple one (Ada, 2013).

After Hatay Agreement was signed, Hatay State decided to join to Turkey unanimously at the last meeting held in Hatay National Assembly on 29 June 1939. The decision was approved at TBMM on 30 June and Hatay joined Turkish Republic as 63rd province. It was transferred to Turkey by a ceremony held between Turkish and French troops on 23 July. Integration of Hatay to Turkey was welcomed joyfully both in Hatay and Turkey. By 11th article, it had been foreseen that the Agreement would have come into force on 22 July at the latest by giving certifications to each other in Paris. After Turkey's approval, it was approved by France too and signed texts were given to each other in Paris on 13 July, and the Agreement came into force that day. Then Georges Bonnet, French Foreign Minister sent the Agreement text in French to LN General Secretary by a letter and the Agreement text was published in LN gazette (Soysal, 2000).

5. CONCLUSION

Hatay's intergration in Turkey comprehends a two-stage process from declaration of National Pact on 18 January 1920 to its integration in Turkey on 30 June 1939. Turkey firstly provided independence of Hatay separating it from Syria, then integrating in the Mainland (Turkey). After France explained to remove its mandate system in Syria, Atatürk got involved in the incidents by diplomatic efforts and provided to take fast steps to conclude the process. Turkey sent a note to France demanding independence of the Sanjak Alexandretta on 9 October 1936. The purpose of Turkish peaceful policy was to use diplomacy as a tool, but Turkey also made other sides feel that it could use its armed forces unhesitatingly when required. In his opening speech at Assembly on 1 November 1936; Atatürk explained that Antakya, Alexandretta and neighbourhood was the most

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important issue for Turkey. All the alternatives were taken into consideration to reach the objective. For that purpose, the issue was taken into LN and LN explained its expected decision supporting independence of the Sanjak Alexandretta on 20 January 1937 and the Sanjak Constitutiton was accepted on 29 May 1937. On the other hand, considering global political conditions, mutual negotiations were made and the requested objective was never given up. Turkish Government protested activities of French representatives towards prevention of the elections to the French Government and LN on 17 June 1938 and election committee left the Sanjak on 29 June 1938. Various organizations were held through public opinion for Hatay's integration in Turkey, Hatay-born citizens in the Mainland were settled to this province to constitute the majority, and the Assembly was formed. Within the frame of the articles of Ankara Agreement concerning the Sanjak Alexandretta, Hatay gained its independence and then integrated in Turkey. Atatürk who was alive during independence of Hatay couldn't see Hatay's integration in Turkey, but his last wish "four thousand year Turkish land" was not left to enemies. In a process the World was being riden to war, the policy followed during Hatay's integration in Turkey showed how disputes could be settled via mind and common sense and Turkey served as a model for World peace.

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