

BALKAN PACT AND TURKEY

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Abstract

As well as Italy's expansionist tendencies in Mediterranean and the Balkans and Nazi's coming into power in Germany in 1933, the armament race of the European countries began to threaten the world peace. Inevitably, these events led Turkey to search for territorial security. Thus, with the directives of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Turkey made attempts to establish close ties with the whole Balkan countries. In this context, Turkey initially solved the problems with Greece remained from Lausanne and then signed the treaty of friendship with Greece on September 14th, 1933 in Ankara. Turkey, giving much importance to the collaboration in Balkans, also concluded agreements of cooperation with Romania on October 17th, 1933 and with Yugoslavia on November 27th, 1933 within the fields of Friendship, Nonaggression, Judgmental Solutions, Arbiter and Conciliation. Furthermore, with the pioneering steps of Turkey and Greece and the participation of Yugoslavia and Romania, Balkan Pact was signed on February 9th, 1934 in Athens. Though Balkan Pact, surviving between 1934 and 1941, never realized the territorial defence precisely, Turkey took an important role in maintaining the world peace by remaining true to the pact.

Key words: Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Turkey, Greece, Balkan Pact, The Balkan Conferences

INTRODUCTION

After World War I, 1st Paris Peace Conference was held in January 18, 1919 by the participation of 32 diplomats. After that in June 28, 1919 Germany was made to sign the Treaty of Versailles; Austria in September 19, 1919 Saint German; Bulgaria in November 27, 1919 Neuilly; Hungary in June 4, 1920 Trianon; and lastly Ottoman Empire in August 10, 1920 Sevres. Different from the others, Turkish Nation didn't admit the Treaty and as a consequence of the Turkish War of Independence under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Treaty of Lausanne was signed in July 24, 1923 with prevailing countries on equal terms and in October 29, 1923 Turkish Republic was founded.

In Balkans, Romania was the country that got the highest profit in the World War I as a result of those Treaties and had become the biggest country in the Balkans by conquering Transylvania from Austria-Hungary, Bessarabia from Russia and South Dobruja from Bulgaria. On the other hand, Bulgaria by giving in South Dobruja to Romania, Komotini and Alexandroupoli to Greece and its lands in Macedonia to Yugoslavia turned to be a small country lacking access to Aegean Sea while Albania proclaiming independence in 1913, stayed as a small and weak country. (Soysal 1985: 128-129; Sarıay 1987: 232).

Meanwhile, Ottoman Empire, Austria-Hungary, German Empire and Tsarist Russia were dissolved and Nation States were founded upon the same territories. The end of the historical missions of these four empires resulted in a serious chaos especially in Europe and thus the balance of power were under risk of a break up. This chain of treaty creating an order seemingly on map, but collapsing the overwhelmed balances totally provoked international conflicts. There had been created such a political geography in Balkan Peninsula that nearly all the nations in the region were able to lay a claim to the lands of neighboring countries. Boundaries formed by Peace Treaties caused too many problems not to let them have a stable peace in the area. Therefore, this situation begot discomfort and inconsistency both internationally and in Europe and Balkan Countries. Besides, Status Quo League of Nations system

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established by these agreements could be protected only until 1930's by Treaty of Locarno in October 16, 1925 and Briand-Kellog Pact in 1928. (Uçarol 1985: 422-427)

States, by the effect of grand economic crisis shaking the whole capitalist world in 1929, started to divide into two as the victors "revisionists", who no matter what happens, stood for newly established international order and defeated "anti-revisionists" that are reactive to heavy conditions entailed upon them. When it comes to 1930's, Revisionist States, discontented from the international order achieved after the World War I, focused their activities on altering status quo.

Especially, Germany and Italy both made use of the displeasure towards the new order established before the World War I and oriented the nationalism aroused in their country to expansionism. In this period, even Italy-one of the triumphant of the World War I -was in great anger due to the fact that Allies of World War I didn't give them as much land as they expected from Anatolia during the war (Soysal 1985: 126). When this anger combined with tough economic situations the country was undergoing and accretion of social chaos generated by laborer movements, Benito Mussolini gained the power of the country in October 30, 1922. On the one hand, Mussolini ruled the country by dictatorial system; on the other hand he began to lead an expansionist strategy in foreign policy (Daver 1969: 128-136). In one of his speeches in Italian Parliament in 1923, Mussolini claimed that Adriatic Sea would not be enough for Italy and lead the Italian public opinion by "rebirth of Roman Empire" slogan (Cassels 1970: 99).

In Balkans; Yugoslavia, Greece and Albania were the first expansion targets of fascist Italy in Eastern Mediterranean. Yugoslavia was made to compromise of border change by the fact that Fiume City -given "independent city" status by Italy and Yugoslavia in 1920-was invaded by Mussolini in 1924 and Yugoslavia was solely given Baros Harbor (Stravrianos 1963: 576; Cassels 1970: 80-85).

After invading Italy's Corfu Island, Greece started to feel indisposed of this state which was gradually extending its authority area in Eastern Mediterranean. In the meantime, Greece's anxiety was totally increased when Dictator Ahmet Zogo gained the power in Albania in 1925 and backed by Italy to preserve his authority. Italy's hegemony set upon Albania both in economical and political areas was guaranteed by the Amity and Security Pact signed between two countries in November 27, 1926 (Soysal 1985: 129; Cassels 1970: 330-336). This situation between Italy and Albania was reinforced by another Security and Military Cooperation Pact signed in 1927 (Castellan 1980: 26-35). Yugoslavia showed their reaction to this pact by signing a Treaty of Friendship and alliance with France in the same year. Italy's interference to Balkans by means of Albania irritated Turkey, too; as much as Yugoslavia and Greece owing to Italian presence in 12 Islands (PRO, FO 371/ 22346).

In spite of that Bulgaria was the only state not to be distracted with the Italy's expansionist policies and thus, Italy backed to Bulgaria for the sake of their benefit. In this respect, in 1929 an Italian air and sea fleet under the rule of General Italo Balbo by visiting Bulgaria encouraged this country to intensify their demands upon Yugoslavian Macedonia. Moreover, Italy also helped Macedonia organization in Bulgaria. On the other hand, when Hitler who set off by motto of "breaking the Versailles chain" in Germany which was in political and social difficulties because of the obligations brought by Versailles became Prime Minister and "Führer" next year in 1933, he began to follow an expansionist policy like Mussolini. Thus; when Disarmament Conference, having been continuing their studies in Geneva since February September, came to a dead end; Hitler withdrew both from League of Nations and this conference in September 14, 1933 by putting forward that there would be no positive gain from this for Germany. Germany began to arm despite prohibitions of Treaty of Versailles and aimed at abolishing Versailles system (Soysal 1985: 127). While there were Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria within the revisionist group headed by Germany; Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Greece formed anti-revisionist bloc under the leadership of France (Soysal 1985: 126). In Balkans, while all the states except from Bulgaria were anti-revisionist; Albania could not lead a liberal foreign policy owing to entering into areas under Italian authority. In addition, at the beginning of 1930s or from the second half of 1900s all the Balkan countries apart from Turkey inclined from democratic and constitutional monarchy and tended to dictatorship. National Sociologist Germany and Fascist Italy had great influence upon this. After World War I, either revisionist or status quo Balkan Countries could not stand on their own potential and turned away to systems of allies based upon Europe. As required by their positions and foreign policies they pursued, they developed a kind of protection mechanisms towards the nations they

perceive as rival. Thus, as a consequence of Italian-French rivalry in Europe these two grand nations sought out supports for themselves in this area by building up expansionist or protectionist strategies towards Balkans.

In addition to all these, their requirements for an external support due to weaknesses in their internal problems such as rapid increase in population of Balkan States, limited national income per person, defects in income distribution and political and economical inconsistency frequently laid the groundwork for the intervention of global powers into the region. Since it is not possible to claim that there was an equal distribution of power among these states, maintaining a balance between weak states and the allies had been mostly endeavored by super powers in the area. When historical enmity was included in the ethnic, religious and cultural disparities among the countries in the region; contradictions within both the Balkan Nations and grand powers which were trying to preside over them increased day by day. Whereas, Turkey intended to look for peace and consistency abroad along with leading a supportive policy in the area owing to the situations in Balkans and improvements in Europe.

A. STUDIES FOR THE CREATION OF BALKAN UNION

1. Turkey-Greece Convergence

Greece gaining independence in April 24, 1830 after Edirne Treaty signed between Ottoman Empire and Russia in September 14, 1829 and London Protocol signed among England, France and Russia in February 3, 1830 was founded in Mora and around it in nearly half of its today's area under the control of England, Russia and France (Kocabaş 1984: 155-157). Rums, which were under Turkish rule for just 433 years, started to struggle actively to obtain their wants especially about Anatolia since Mora Rebellion they initiated in March 17, 1821 (Çay 1992: 121; İnan 1986: 93; Kütükoğlu 1986: 133- 136). After gaining liberty, they invaded Seven Islands in 1864 and were given the Sanjak of Thessaly for their assistances to Russia during 1877-78 Ottoman-Russian War (Uçarol 1986: 228). After Balkan Wars (1912-1913) Greece succeeded in getting South Macedonia and South Epirus along with Salonika and Crete (Tosun 2002: 106). During the following days, Greece managed to double its lands by conquering Lemnos, Imbros, Thasos, Samothrace, Tenesos, Ikaria, Lesbos and Chios Islands including Shkodër (Çaycı 1987: 2; Hayta 2000: 654). They invaded West of Anatolia and Thrace starting from İzmir in May 15, 1915 with the approval of the Allies in order to fulfill the main aim of Greek foreign policy `Megali Idea` (Kitsikis 1974: 21) known as `Great Idea` (Kurat 1973: 842-853). However, Greece's these wants and demands upon Anatolia were prevented as a result of Turkish War of Independence by Turkish People under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. War between the two countries was concluded by Armistice of Mudanya signed in October 11, 1922 (Bilge 2000: 108-109).

Nevertheless, problems between two countries such as boundaries, minorities, Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and Population Exchange were discussed in Lausanne and `Protocol and Agreement about Exchange of Greek and Turkish People` was signed between two countries in November 11, 1922 (Sarıay 2000: 670; Gurun 1984: 25).

In the mentioned Agreement and Protocol, it was decided that Orthodoxies in Turkey and Rums in Greece would be exchanged and Rum People in Istanbul and Muslim People in Western Thrace would be excluded from this exchange and be considered as `settled`. However, it hadn't been easy to apply the Exchange Agreement and this enhanced the economic and social problems in both countries. Furthermore, while putting the proprietorship into effect, there happened to be tension between two countries.

During this tension, Turkey while starting to strengthen the borders towards Greece attempted to solve the problem. Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Tevfik Rüştü Aras met with Exchange Commission, but they didn't get into a result. On the other hand, Greece exhibited a calm manner both because of their hesitations since Turkish Army was more potent than theirs and also England and France's attempts (PRO, FO 286/917). It could be observed that especially Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs M. Roussos seemed to agree with Turks (PRO, FO 286/917). As a result of these events, this problem could at least be solved politically in December 1, 1926 by Athens Treaty known as Argiropulos-Saraçoğlu (Düstur, Üçüncü Tertip, Cilt: 8: 129-142). This document was approved by the sides in

February, 1927 and came into effect in June 23, 1927 (Ladas 1932: 797-816; Alexandris 1983: 129). According to this, estates in Greece belonging to Turks would be purchased by Greek Government upon a price ascertained by a commission. Similarly, estates owned by Rums in Turkey, who abandoned Anatolia before 1912 and other Rums (including the ones in Istanbul) were going to be given back to their owners (Alexandris 1983: 128).

Nonetheless, execution of Treaty of Athens again caused technical and physical difficulties in both sides. Hence, there arose new problems about the lands and other properties of Turks in Western Thrace including the distribution and proprietorship of estates, associations and establishments owned by Istanbul Rums in the city.

In the meantime, deportation of around 20.000 Rums from Istanbul who couldn't verify whether they were among "etablis (settled)" or not, made Greek Government exhibit menacing attitudes which tensed the relations between two countries again (Alexandris 1983: 129-131). Another problem encountered during putting Treaty of Athens into practice was resulted from Greek Government's taking the wants of 119 Turks slow that made a claim on their assets depending upon Treaties of Ankara and Athens (Promiades 1968: 81). It was only a matter of time that this tense atmosphere might turn into a Turkish-Greek conflict (Cumhuriyet, March 5-6, 1929). Turkish-Greek tension, though not turned into a war, persisted till 1930.

Eleftherios Venizelos, who experienced how much grief and catastrophes war could cause, gained power again in 1928. Afterwards, he inferred that it would be disadvantageous to go to a war against Turkey and began to reveal amicable rapprochement towards Turkey by deterring from Megalo Idea. Venizelos gave importance to establishing positive relations with both Italy that was a menace in Eastern Mediterranean and his neighbors especially with Turkey (Stravrianos 1963: 665; Soysal 1985: 137)

Though Venizelos' gaining authority again was effective in improvement of Turkish-Greek association, the main factor in this rapprochement-as mentioned before- was the alterations under the political conjuncture of Europe and Balkans. In this period, Mussolini in Italy and Hitler in Germany started to lead an imperialist policy. Especially, Italy's extension of population area in Mediterranean discontented both countries because Turkey possessed areas in the coastline towards Mediterranean via Thrace and Bosphorus and also was anxious of activities of Italy, possessed Dodecanese, in Mediterranean to give harm to their country. Likewise, Greece having a long coastline overlooking Mediterranean and Adriatic Sea in the East also considered Italy as a threatening factor. Both countries perceived Bulgaria, leading a revisionist policy, as a second threat factor in this period. Turkey was worried about a military action from Bulgaria in this region since Thrace was in a disarmed status while Greece was uncomfortable with Bulgaria who was looking for a permanent passage to Aegean Sea owing to their secret aims on Macedonia (Hatipoğlu 1988: 69-71). Besides, Japan's leading an expansionist policy in Far East also raised the anxieties of both countries about a second war around the world (Soysal 1985: 126).

All the factors we stated above accelerated two countries' developing a more amicable relation. From 1928 on, Italy began to endeavor to conjoin Turkey and Greece in an Eastern Mediterranean Block under its control and the first diplomatic contacts between two countries to some extent took place by the mediator ship of Italy (PRO, FO 286/1017; Akşin 1991: 253). However, commonsensical Turkish and Greek leaders, who were aware of the fact that Italy did not have good intentions about Eastern Mediterranean, ended the conflicts between each other unexpectedly.

All the troubles related to population exchange were resolved by Ankara Agreement signed in June 10, 1930 (Düstur, Üçüncü Tertip, C. 7, 1376; PRO, FO 286/928). A rapprochement process had been initiated by the dissolution of political, economical and legal problems between two countries. As an indicator of this reconciliation, Venizelos visited Turkey between the dates October 27-31, 1930. According to the 10th item of Ankara Agreement, no matter when they settled or where they were born; Istanbul Rums and Western Thrace Turks were all included in the coverage of "étaibli". In addition, many adjustments had been made in the Agreement about the assets of both countries' minorities (Armaoğlu 1989: 326). This agreement terminated the most important problem continuing since Lausanne and a new era between the relations of two neighboring countries started. This agreement was the first step for

international convergence towards regional cooperation in Balkans at the same time. Then, a bilateral agreement was signed between two countries in February 1931 (Alexandris 1983: 180).

On the other hand, Turkey implemented similar agreements with other Balkan countries as well. Turkey signed the first Treaty of Amity with Albania in December 15, 1923 in Ankara which was put into effect June 23, 1925 and mutual delegates presented their letters of trust between the years 1925-1926 (Düstur, Üçüncü Tertip, Cilt 6: 203-218). Another Treaty of Amity was signed with Bulgaria in Ankara in October 18, 1925 and this Treaty was come into effect in August 17, 1926. Also the Treaty of Amity signed with Yugoslavia in October 28, 1925 in Ankara was put into effect in February 16, 1926. After this agreement in 1926, mutual delegates delivered their letters of confidence (Soysal 1989: 248). Political relations between Ottoman Empire and Romania were ended during World War I in August 30, 1916. In spite of both countries' mutual delegates' presenting their letters of trust in April 1924 after the Treaty of Lausanne, Treaty of Amity between Turkey and Romania was going to be signed later (Soysal 1989: 82). In 1930, subsequent to an Agreement about Residence, Commerce and Sea Transportation and a Treaty about Protection of Cemeteries; Turkey and Romania signed Treaty of Amity, Nonaggression, Arbitratorship and Reconciliation in October 17, 1933 (Düstur, Üçüncü Tertip, Cilt 15: 189).

2. Balkan Conferences

2.1. 1st Balkan Conference

Greece, by enforcing their status towards Serbia in Salonika, presented a suggestion to England about the creation of a Balkan Union so as to maintain the persistence of unalterable balances in Balkans and establish a general peace among Balkan Countries. Including that English Ministry of Foreign Affairs was in the opinion of defending Greece in order to gain additional regional guarantees in the borders of Greek Government and provide an external support in case they were attacked (PRO, FO 286/917). On the other hand, since England and Romania got Serbia by Little Entente, they thought that Serbia might attack to Salonika. Also, they were in the opinion that there was no need to mention about Albania as it was under the authority of Italy but Bulgaria would try to get Alexandroupoli by indicating their disarmament as an excuse for their being unable to do anything. Moreover, Greece was doubtful about whether they would support the other signing Balkan countries if such a Union was established. The unique reason for this was the Italian policy, carried on certainly successfully, to keep Greece under control. It was seen that England was extremely worried about Italy's insistent attitudes about Turkey and Greece's signing Agreement along with Nonaggression Pact and Greece's being timid of Italy (PRO, FO 286/1052).

In addition, England was with the opinion of the establishment of this Union so as to prevent revisionist states from their activities in the Balkans. Thus, what were the principles of the Union was come up. According to England, Balkan powers-as it was in Locarno Pact-was not going to fight against each other in no way and if a Balkan Country was attacked, other Balkan States were to agreed to help them (PRO, FO 286/917). These principles were seemly approved by Balkan States in the 1st Balkan Conference and this indicated that England had an active role in the foundation of Balkan Pact.

Likewise, after the approval of England, 27th Universal Peace Convention was held in Athens between the dates of October 6-10, 1929. In this Convention, Alexandr Papanastasiu one the Greek Statesmen suggested to establish a Balkan Union Institute to handle the common matters and benefits among Balkan States. Upon this, it had been decided to gather a conference about the foundation of Balkan Union (Gönlübol-Sar 1990: 96). Under this decision's circumstances, by the participation of Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Yugoslavia and Greece's semi-legal representatives; the first Balkan Conference was held in October 31, 1930 in Athens (Kitsikis 1969: 120-123).

Even though discussions about political matters were avoided, some problems had come out among Balkan Countries from the very first days of the conference. Especially Bulgaria's insistence about the discussion of minority problems created tension between Yugoslavia. This tension resulted from Macedonia's asserts for the fact that people living in Macedonia's lands which now belonged to Yugoslavia were Bulgarian. Furthermore, contrary to Bulgarians' claims that there was a minority

problem between two nations; it was also caused by the insistence of Yugoslavia about the fact that all the people living in their country were first Serbian and then Yugoslavian.

On the other hand, Yugoslavian representative by stating in the conference that *'the Balkans belongs to Balkan Nations and they should get rid of external interferences.'* (PRO, FO 286/1017); criticized Albania for their relations with Italy. Albania put the minority problem forward by taking part near Bulgaria. Romania, who considered themselves as a state having benefits in the Balkans, rather than a Balkan state, was expecting the preservation of status quo just like Turkey and Greece and exhibited a positive rapprochement in the conference (Aydın Tarihi Birinci Teşrin-Birinci Kanun 1930: 6773-6774). Since Greece wanted to get rid of the Balkan Union and Italian threat, to secure their boundaries in the north of Aegean Sea and to guarantee the consistency of stable balance in the Balkans by reinforcing their status against Serbia in Athens; they strived hard to manage reconciliation among Balkan States (Hakimiyet-i Milliye, 19 Ekim 1930).

For this sake, Greece offered Bulgaria even to provide a passage from Western Thrace lands to Aegean Sea and to grant them with a free trade zone in the Athens Harbor in case Bulgaria didn't have enough capacity to set up one their own (Cumhuriyet, 19 Ekim 1930). Turkey followed the principle *'peace at home, peace in the world'* in the conference and endeavored a lot by collaborating with Greece to obtain cooperation among the Balkan States (Aydın Tarihi Birinci Teşrin-Birinci Kanun 1930: 6761-6763).

During the 1st Balkan conference, it was decided by the great efforts of Turkey and Greece that there would be a meeting among the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Balkan States every year; a Balkan Pact was going to be prepared (there would be some requirements about the prohibition of war, solving the disagreements by peaceful means and mutual supports in case of an attack. It was also agreed that a permanent association, which was intended to simplify the establishment of Balkan Union by providing economical, social, cultural and political convergence among Balkan countries, was going to be founded (Aydın Tarihi Birinci Teşrin-Birinci Kanun 1930: 6761-6763).

Even if Balkan Nations aimed by 1st Balkan Conference to resolve their problems between each other without external interventions, it could easily be observed the impossibility of this when the involvement of Grand Nations in the conference was considered. Yet, in the conference they came to a decision about exchanging students among Balkan States (Cumhuriyet, 8 Ekim, 1930), establishing a Balkan Institute (Cumhuriyet, 9 Ekim, 1930) and a Balkan Press Service (Cumhuriyet, 11 Ekim, 1930). These indicated a sign of success to some extent in maintaining cooperation.

1st Balkan Conference and decisions taken in this Conference were pleasantly pursued by France and England who were in favor of continuance of status quo and even took the responsibility of protecting it in the Balkans. But for Italy who was leading and expansionist politics in the Balkans and for Russia having some prospects related to the Balkans were displeased about it. The declaration of the political marriage just at that period between the daughter of Italy's King and Bulgarian King Boris so as to strengthen their statuses in the Balkans was an indicator of this situation (Cumhuriyet, 12 Ekim 1930).

2.2 2nd Balkan Conference

As required by the decisions taken in the 1st Balkan Conference, 2nd Balkan Conference was held between the dates October 20-26, 1931 in Istanbul (Hakimiyet-i Milliye, 20 Ekim 1931). At that time disagreements between Turkey and Greece were found to a solution which gave them possibility to cooperate for the accomplishment of the Balkan Union. These two countries which wanted the continuation of status quo in the Balkans were the leaders of this movement (Gönlübol-Sar 1990: 97). Bulgaria, who had ideals in Eastern Thrace and Edirne, was discomfoted about Turkey's having good relations with Yugoslavia and Greece (BCA Arş. 030-10-239-617-6; 030-10-240-618-6; 030-10-240-618-8). Therefore, Bulgaria was not willing to participate to the conference. However, Bulgarians were specially invited to this meeting by the close concern of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk who wished to see the Bulgarians within the Balkan Union and so that Bulgarian representatives took part in the Conference (Vakit, 28 Teşrin-i Evvel (Ekim) 1931).

In the 1st Balkan Conference, it had been agreed to maintain cooperation among Balkan Nations and become organized. Also in the 2nd Balkan Conference; economical, technical and cultural aspects were given emphasis in order to create a rapprochement among the revisionist and status quo Balkan States. In addition, it was intended to solve the minority problems and remove the inconsistencies peacefully among the Balkan States. By this way, it was aimed that a Balkan Union Project was going to be arranged among the mentioned states based upon the principles of non-aggression and amity (Cumhuriyet, 17 Ekim 1931). But these objectives reasoned the meetings to be argumentative because the most important matter among Balkan Nations was minority problem. Except for Turkey and Greece, the other states participating to conference especially Bulgaria had special sensitivity about this matter.

During the conference, Albania and Bulgaria acted together as they did in the 1st Conference as well. Albanian and Bulgarian representatives asserted that their people were experiencing minority problems in Yugoslavia and Yugoslavian delegates rejected the claims of two states by stating that there were no minorities in their country (Cumhuriyet, 23 Ekim 1931). Upon seeing that the disagreements between them were not cleared, Turkey gave importance to lead a unitary and conciliatory policy. Turkey's efforts about this were also uttered by the statesmen (Cumhuriyet, 23 Ekim 1931; Hakimiyet-i Milliye, 26 Ekim 1931). Even though some decisions were taken about economic and socio-cultural matters, the desired success could not be achieved due not to reach agreement about minority problem. Including that, preparing a Balkan Union Project based upon the principles of non-aggression and amity, which were the core objectives of the conference, could not be achieved.

2.3 3rd Balkan Conference

The 3rd Balkan Conference was gathered between the dates October 23-26, 1932 in (Romania) Bucharest (Gönlübol-Sar 1990: 97). As stated before, the fact that not having an improvement about minority problem during the 2nd Balkan Conference intimidated the establishment of the union in this conference. Bulgaria left the meeting when their proposals about related states' resolving the problem between each other till the next meeting was rejected and their ideas about the minority matters (Gönlübol-Sar 1990: 97) were disapproved (Milliyet, 27 Ekim 1932). Afterwards, Albanians withdrew from the conference by using the minority problem as an excuse (Sander, 1969, 9). This situation gave sorrow to the other Balkan States. Hence the other four members of the conference (Romania, Turkey, Yugoslavia and Greece) went on with the negotiation of Balkan Pact (Cumhuriyet, 25 Ekim 1932). The mentioned states continued their works on economic and social issues and agreed upon setting up a Customs Union among Balkan Countries (Gönlübol-Sar 1990: 97). In the last session of the conference, it was concurred to make Balkan Pact (Cumhuriyet, 28 Ekim 1932).

Nevertheless; Bulgaria, discontented with the maintenance of status quo as mentioned before, attempted to attract some of the Balkan States to their sides in order to reach their goals (BCA Arş. 030-10-240-643-21). Bulgaria got into touch with Yugoslavian authorities, who could go after them apart from Albania, to get their supports (BCA Arş. 030-10-251-693-5; 030-10-251-693-21; 030-10-252-698-11). Meanwhile, a `Cordial Agreement Pact` (Pacte d'Entente Cordiale) was signed between Turkey and Greece in September 14, 1933 so as to prevent the revisionist policies of Bulgaria (Düster, Üçüncü Tertip, C. 15, 195; Milliyet, 14 Eylül 1933).

2.4 4th Balkan Conference

Balkan Countries gathered in Athens between the dates of November 4-10, 1933 (Cumhuriyet, 5 Kasım 1933). Before this conference was held; instant diplomatic contacts took place between Balkan States to include Bulgaria in the Balkan Union. A committee under the presidency of Turkish Prime Minister Inonu went to Sofia and had a meeting with Yugoslavian King Alexandre and Bulgarian King Boris in Varna in October 4, 1933 (Vakit, 4 Ekim 1933). After this meeting, Yugoslavian King Alexandre came to Turkey in October 4-5, 1933. Since Venizelos was also in Turkey at that date; there had been triple meetings among King Alexandre, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and Venizelos (Vakit, 8 Ekim 1933). Then again within the frame of Bulgaria's inclusion into pact, Corfo meetings had taken place between Yugoslavian King Alexandre and Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs in October 6, 1933 (Anadolu, 8 Ekim

1933). After that Tuna meetings came about in October 31, 1933 between Roman King Carol and Bulgarian King Boris (Aksam, 1 Kasim 1933). However, despite this efforts Bulgaria couldn't be persuaded to join the Balkan Union.

In addition, these mutual visits done before the 4th Balkan Conference made the meetings go by in a more pleasant environment. As in the other conferences, it could be said that Turkey and Greece coordinated together and even lead an active and coercive policy in this conference.

In spite of not being among the issues to be discussed in this conference, the most important issue of the conference was minority problem again. Bulgaria's meaning to join the Union If their minority and passage to Aegean Sea issues could be solved (Akşam, 7 Kasim 1933) indicated that their sensitivity was still persisting about this matter. On the other hand, Yugoslavia's being insistent on their hypothesis; `there is no Bulgarian in our country. People claimed by Bulgarians their compatriots are first Serbian and then Yugoslavian. (Akşam, 20 Kasim 1933) was an indicator of the fact that termination of this problem between these two Balkan States was not possible.

Moreover, they agreed on that they could not totally get the main aim expected from the conference. Greek statesman Papanastasyu, by declaring that the reason for this was resulting from economical problems' causing political disagreements, requested to focus more on issues about maintaining cooperation in economical areas in the conference (Akşam, 2 Kasim 1933). In this respect, `Balkan Agreement` issue and Pact Project arranged before, was handled.

As a consequence of the conventions, significance of making multilateral agreements among Balkan States was stressed and the decisions taken in the 3rd Balkan conference were admitted in the same way. With a declaration published, the conference was concluded by summoning all the Balkan States to join the Balkan Pact (Cumhuriyet, 11 Kasim 1933).

B. BALKAN PACT

1. Signature of The Balkan Pact

Balkan Pact and its Additional Protocol, initialized in February 4, 1934 in Geneva were signed in Athens in February 9, 1934 by the participations of Turkey, Yugoslavia, Romania and Greece (PRO, FO 371/23739; Düstur, Üçüncü Tertip, C. 15, 186). According to this the pact beyond requiring cooperation in political, cultural and social areas of the mentioned states; aimed at continuing present land order in the Balkans. Furthermore, it secured the borders of the countries that signed the pact towards each other and laid down a condition to them to assist in case of an attack by a Balkan State. If a state different from the Balkans attacked one of the four states that signed this pact and if a Balkan state entered the war on the side of this state, not one of the Balkan States; requirements of the pact would be carried out against this Balkan state. Briefly, if these four Balkan States, signed the pact, were attacked by a state or states other than the Balkans, they were going to take action just for the Balkan States which entered the war (Soysal 1989: 459).

Nonetheless, goals of pacts were prevented from being fulfilled due to the fact that Albania kept away from the Balkan Union; Turkey declared that they would never take part in any movement against Soviet Union; Greece, on the other hand, withdrew by saying `...Greece, as required by the pact, does not fight against one of the grand states in no way` (Soysal 1989: 450). Including that, in April 15, 1934 Greece signed a secret protocol with England and Greek Government assured Albania and Bulgaria a military movement. But Greece stayed away from organizing a movement against Albania, since they were hesitant of Italy (PRO, FO 371/22347). These developments obviously indicated that the pact was created so as to prevent from threats that were able to come from Bulgaria.

Ataturk wasn't totally able to achieve his expectations because he planned to prevent an attack from Bulgaria with this pact while organizing a regional defense against Italy. Besides, Balkan Pact was valid between the years 1934 to 1941 and slowed down at least the expansionist policies of Bulgaria.

Turkey was loyal to this pact and conceived it as a document that Balkan States approved the rights of each other. As Ataturk stated in the opening of 4th term gathering year of Turkish Grand National Assembly in November 1, 1934; `...Balkan Treaty is a pleasing document which considers

Balkan States to show special respect to each other's status. It is particularly clear that this has a great value upon the protection of boundaries. (Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri, C. I, 1997, 396).

2. Turkey's Attempts to Revive Balkan Pact

Yugoslavia's signing a Treaty of Amity with Bulgaria in January 24, 1937 irritated Greece and this situation resulted in discredit of Balkan Pact. The fact that Yugoslavia signed another treaty of amity with Italy in March 25, 1937, resulted in reactions of Balkan Union States. Yugoslavia declared that the fact that it had signed those treaties would not damage its responsibilities towards the union and also their aim was to solve the problems between themselves and other Balkan States through those treaties. However, this was not enough to convince Balkan Union States. Moreover, it was considered by the union states as something against the spirit of the union to sign treaties with the revisionist countries such as Italy and Bulgaria. In the following years, putting into political attempts about the disagreements among Balkan States caused the union to weaken.

In this situation, Turkey, which considered Balkan Pact as an important factor in saving peace in the Balkans, needed to refresh the Balkan Pact and the Prime Minister, İnönü, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Aras, visited all Balkan States in 1937. These visits which were managed through Atatürk's directions are clear signs of the importance that Turkey gave to Balkan Union and their efforts to keep the pact alive. However, these visits did not conclude positively and the spreading of World War II to Balkans through occupations of Italy and Germany was a sign for Balkan Union's ending.

CONCLUSION

World War I ended in Balkans with the signing of Treaty of Saint-Germain with Austria in September 19, 1919, Neuilly Treaty with Bulgaria in November 27, 1919, Treaty of Trianon with Hungary in June 2, 1920 and finally Treaty of Lausanne with Turkey in July 24, 1923. The new world regulation, which Western Countries who were the winners of the war planned to establish, totally changed the political map of Balkan Peninsula. Ottoman Empire, Austria-Hungary and Russian Empires broke up and Romania, Yugoslavia, Albania, Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey were established as Nation States on that land. In Balkan Peninsula, such a political geography was established that almost all countries on that region could claim right on the lands of neighboring countries. The borders determined by peace treaties caused so many problems that there was no opportunity for them to bring real peace. It is clearly seen how difficult it was to save peace in such an environment.

After 1933, world peace was threatened by Nazi Party's coming to power in Germany; Italy's struggles for expanding geographically in Mediterranean and Balkans; and the competition of European Countries for getting armed. This fact was a factor that caused Turkey to seek for regional security and in the light of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's directions; they struggled to establish friendly relationships with all Balkan countries. With this aim, Turkey firstly solved the problems with Greece caused by Lausanne Treaty and signed a treaty of amity with Greece in September 14, 1933 in Ankara. Turkey, which gave great importance to cooperation in Balkans, signed treaties of amity, nonaggression, judgmental solution, arbitrator and pacification with Romania in October 17, 1933 and with Yugoslavia in November 27, 1933. Then, with leadership of Turkey and Greece and with the participation of Yugoslavia and Romania, Balkan Pact was signed in February 2, 1934 in Athens.

This pact was a result of close relationship and cooperation among Balkan States which was achieved by Balkan Conferences that started to develop after 1930s. On the other hand, Albania was not included in the pact because it was influenced by Italy and neither was Bulgaria because it claimed right on the lands of its neighboring countries. Although the pact was valid between the years 1934 and 1941, it did not exactly manage to make Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's expectations come into reality owing to the fact that not all Balkan States were included in this pact and the pact was not able to be a regional defense against the danger of Italy.

The pact which relied on the base of Balkan States' being respectful to each other was not able to do more than preventing possible attacks of Bulgaria and after the World War II, with the occurrence of new balances, Balkan Pact lost its validity.

Besides, Turkey, through Turkish foreign policy which based on Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's principle of '*Peace at home, peace in the world*', was stick to the pact and played an important role in saving world peace.

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