

**DOKUZ EYLUL UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS  
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS PROGRAM  
MASTER'S THESIS**

**AK PARTY'S FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS ISRAEL IN THE  
FRAMEWORK OF PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT (2002-2016)**

**Halil ORHAN**

**Supervisor**

**Asst. Prof. Dr. İlkin ÖZDİKMENLİ ÇELİKOĞLU**

**İZMİR-2019**

**APPROVAL PAGE**



## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this master's thesis titled as "AK Party's Foreign Policy towards Israel in the Framework of Palestinian-Israeli Conflict (2002-2016)" has been written by myself in accordance with the academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that all materials benefited in this thesis consist of the mentioned resources in the reference list. I verify all these with my honor.



**Date**

.../.../2019

Halil ORHAN

**Signature**

## **ABSTRACT**

**Master's Thesis**

**AK Party's Foreign Policy towards Israel in the Framework of Palestinian-Israeli Conflict (2002-2016)**

**Halil ORHAN**

**Dokuz Eylül University**

**Graduate School of Social Sciences**

**Department of International Relations**

**International Relations Program**

Since the establishment of Israel in 1948, Turkish-Israeli relations have been shaped by the Palestinian-Israeli conflicts. From the 1950s until the end 1980s, although majority of the time Turkish governments supported the Palestinian cause, there were also brief periods in which Turkish state elite preferred to remain neutral or follow pro-Israeli policies. Throughout 1990s, Turkish-Israeli relations reached to its zenith with military and economic agreements. Since Justice and Development Party's (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* –AK Party) coming to power in early 2000s, AK Party political elite followed a pro-Palestinian foreign policy in its relations with Israel as can be observed significantly in the examples of Turkey's reaction to Israel's attacks to Gaza, Davos crisis, Mavi Marmara incident and others. This thesis aims at analyzing AK Party's pro-Palestinian foreign policy through social constructivist approach. In its attempt to analyze Turkish-Israeli relations in the framework of Palestinian-Israeli conflict through social constructivist approach, this thesis will focus on norms, values, identities (religion), history as well as the discourses of political elites.

**Keywords:** Turkish foreign policy, AK Party, Turkish-Israeli relations, Palestinian-Israeli conflict, social constructivism.

## ÖZET

Yüksek Lisans Tezi

AK Parti'nin Filistin-İsrail Çatışması Çerçevesinde İsrail'e Yönelik Dış  
Politikası (2002-2016)

Halil ORHAN

Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü

Uluslararası İlişkiler Anabilim Dalı

İngilizce Uluslararası İlişkiler Programı

1948'de İsrail'in kurulmasından bu yana, Türkiye-İsrail ilişkileri Filistin-İsrail çatışması ile şekillendi. 1950'lerden 1980'lerin sonuna kadar, Türk hükümetlerinin çoğu Filistin davasını desteklese de, Türk devlet elitinin tarafsız kalmayı veya İsrail yanlısı politikaları izlemeyi tercih ettiği kısa dönemlerde oldu. 1990'lı yıllar boyunca Türkiye-İsrail ilişkileri, askeri ve ekonomik anlaşmalarla zirveye ulaştı. Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi'nin (Justice and Development Party-AK Party) 2000'li yılların başında iktidara gelmesinden bu yana, AK Parti siyasi seçkinleri İsrail'in Gazze saldırısı, Davos krizi, Mavi Marmara olayı ve diğer tepki örneklerinde ciddi biçimde gözlemlenebileceği gibi İsrail ile ilişkilerinde Filistin yanlısı bir dış politika izledi. Bu tez, AK Parti'nin Filistin yanlısı dış politikasını sosyal inşacı yaklaşımla analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Türkiye-İsrail ilişkilerini Filistin-İsrail çatışması çerçevesinde sosyal inşacı yaklaşımla analiz etme girişiminde olan bu tez, normlar, değerler, kimlikler (din) ve tarihin yanı sıra siyasi seçkinlerin söylemleri üzerinde duracaktır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Türk dış politikası, AK Parti, Türkiye-İsrail ilişkileri, Filistin-İsrail çatışması, sosyal inşacılık.

**AK PARTY’S FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS ISRAEL IN THE  
FRAMEWORK OF PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT (2002-2016)**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

APPROVAL PAGE	i
DECLARATION	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
ÖZET	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
ABBREVIATIONS	xi
INTRODUCTION	1

**CHAPTER 1  
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK  
FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS THROUGH SOCIAL  
CONSTRUCTIVISM**

I. EXTERNAL ISSUES THAT HAVE AN IMPACT ON FOREIGN POLICY MAKING: REALISM AND LIBERALISM	14
A. Realism	15
1. General Assumptions of Realism	16
2. Analyzing Foreign Policy through Realism	17
B. Liberalism	19
1. General Assumptions of Liberalism	20
2. Analyzing Foreign Policy through Liberalism	21
II. INTERNAL ISSUES THAT HAVE AN IMPACT ON FOREIGN POLICY MAKING: SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM, SOCIETAL GROUPS AND LEADERS	22
A. Social Constructivism	23
1. General Assumptions of Social Constructivism	24

2. Analyzing Foreign Policy through Social Constructivism	26
B. Societal Groups	33
C. Leaders and Leadership Styles	35
Concluding Remarks	36

## CHAPTER 2

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY ON PALESTINIAN- ISRAELI CONFLICT

I. TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS PALESTINIAN-JEWISH CONFLICT BY THE END OF OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND THE EARLY YEARS OF TURKISH REPUBLIC	40
A. Ottoman Rule in Palestine	41
B. Jewish Settlements in Palestine, Balfour Declaration (1917) and British Mandate System in Palestine	43
II. TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT DURING REPUBLIC OF TURKEY (1940-1980)	45
A. Establishment of the State of Israel and the Palestinian Question	47
B. Turkish Foreign Policy towards the Middle East in the 1950s	48
1. Baghdad Pact	49
2. 1956 Arab Israeli War (Suez Crisis) and Peripheral Pact	51
C. Turkish-American Relations and Turkish Foreign Policy towards the Arab-Israeli Conflict in the 1960s	53
1. 1964 Cyprus Crisis and Johnson Letter	54
2. 1967 Arab-Israeli War (Six Days War-The Occupation of Eastern Jerusalem)	55

D.	Developments in the 1970s and Its Impact on Turkish-Arab/Israeli Relations	57
1.	1973 Arab-Israeli War	58
2.	1974 Cyprus Peace Operation	59
III.	TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT THROUGHOUT THE 1980s	61
A.	1980 Coup d'état	61
B.	Prime Minister Turgut Özal Era	63
IV.	TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT FROM 1990s to EARLY 2000s	66
A.	Regional and Global Factors in the 1990s and Their Impacts on Turkish-Arab and Turkish-Israeli Relations	68
V.	CONCLUDING REMARKS	74

### CHAPTER 3

#### TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT DURING AK PARTY PERIOD

I.	TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT PRIOR TO AK PARTY ERA	78
A.	Increasing Tension between Israel and Palestine	79
B.	The Second Intifada (Al-Aqsa Intifada) and Sharon's Period in Israel	80
II.	TURKISH-ISRAELI RELATIONS DURING THE 2000s: FROM STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP TO THE PERIOD OF TENSION	82
A.	AK Party's Relations with Israel and Palestine in its early years	83
B.	AK Party's Foreign Policy towards Palestinian-Israeli Conflict during late 2000s	88
1.	Israel's Attacks to Lebanon and Operation Cast Lead (2008-2009)	91
2.	Davos Crisis (January 2009)	93



3. Cancellation of Anatolian Eagle Exercise (October 2009)	94
4. The Chair Crisis (2009)	95
5. The Mavi Marmara Incident (2010) and Palmer Report	96
C. Recent Developments in 2015-16: Israel's Apology and Compensation	100

#### **CHAPTER 4**

### **ANALYSIS OF AK PARTY FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT**

I. FOREIGN POLICY CONCEPT OF THE AK PARTY ERA	102
II. A CONSTRUCTIVIST ANALYSIS OF AK PARTY'S FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT	108
A. The Role of Identity (Interest, Culture, Norms, Values, History and Religion) in Shaping Turkish-Israeli and Palestinian Relations	110
1. AK Party's Reaction Against Israel's Attacks on Gaza	113
2. Davos Crisis	115
3. Cancellation of Anatolian Eagle Exercise	119
4. The Chair Crisis	120
5. The Mavi Marmara Incident	121
B. Perception and Discourse Analysis (Ideas, Beliefs and Shared Understandings)	121
1. AK Party's Reaction Against Israel's Attacks on Palestine	124
2. Davos Crisis	127
3. Cancellation of Anatolian Eagle Exercise	129
4. The Chair Crisis	129
5. The Mavi Marmara Incident	130

III. CONCLUDING REMARKS	133
CONCLUSION	137
BIBLIOGRAPHY	144



## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AK Party</b>	<i>Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi</i> ---Justice and Development Party
<b>ANAP</b>	<i>Anavatan Partisi</i> ---Motherland Party
<b>AP</b>	<i>Adalet Partisi</i> ---Justice Party
<b>ASALA</b>	Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia
<b>BOP</b>	<i>Büyük Ortadoğu Projesi</i> ---Greater Middle East Initiative
<b>CENTO</b>	Central Treaty Organization
<b>DSP</b>	<i>Demokratik Sol Parti</i> ---Democratic Left Party
<b>DYP</b>	<i>Doğru Yol Partisi</i> ---True Path Party
<b>EC</b>	European Council
<b>EEC</b>	European Economic Community
<b>EOKA</b>	<i>Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston</i> ---Greek Cypriot Nationalist Guerrilla Organization
<b>EU</b>	The European Union
<b>HAMAS</b>	<i>Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiye</i> ---Islamic Resistance Movement
<b>ICJ</b>	International Court of Justice
<b>IHH</b>	<i>İnsani Yardım Vakfı</i> ---Humanitarian Relief Foundation
<b>MHP</b>	<i>Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi</i> ---Nationalist Movement Party
<b>MNP</b>	<i>Milli Nizam Partisi</i> ---National Order Party
<b>MSP</b>	<i>Milli Selamet Partisi</i> ---National Salvation Party
<b>NATO</b>	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-governmental Organizations
<b>OIC</b>	Organization of Islamic Cooperation (Organization of the Islamic Conference)
<b>OPEC</b>	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
<b>PKK</b>	<i>Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan</i> ---Kurdistan Workers' Party

<b>PLO</b>	Palestinian Liberation Organization
<b>RP</b>	<i>Refah Partisi</i> ---Welfare Party
<b>SHP</b>	<i>Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti</i> ---Social Democratic Populist Party
<b>TBMM</b>	<i>Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi</i> ---Turkish Grand National Assembly
<b>TİKA</b>	<i>Türk İşbirliği ve Koordinasyon Ajansı</i> ---Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency
<b>TSK</b>	<i>Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri</i> ---Turkish Armed Forces
<b>UN</b>	The United Nations
<b>UNSC</b>	United Nations Security Council
<b>UNSCOP</b>	United Nations Special Committee on Palestine
<b>US</b>	The United States
<b>USA</b>	The United States of America
<b>USSR</b>	The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
<b>WTO</b>	World Trade Organization

## INTRODUCTION

Turkey and Israel are two countries that are non-Arab and pro-western and considered as relatively democratic in the Middle East. These characteristics bring the two countries closer when their alliance with the United States of America (USA) is taken into consideration. In fact, Turkish-Jewish relations go back to the Ottoman Empire period when the Ottoman Sultan Bayezid II invited exiled Jews from Spain in 1492. These warm relations continued in the early years of Republic of Turkey. In spite of the criticism by the Arab countries, Turkey had been the first Muslim country to recognize the independence of Israel in 1949 and both states had experienced relatively warm relations with some ups and downs for many decades.

Starting from the late 1940s until the mid-1990s, Turkey tried to maintain relations both with Israel and the Arab states on the basis of a balanced politics. Turkish-Israeli relations from the 1950s until today have been on a roller coaster ride under the influence of various factors. Due to the threats coming from Russia, Turkey in the aftermath of the Second World War and at the beginning of the Cold War until the 1970s had no choice but to join the Western bloc and ally with the USA. Turkish alliance with the USA also pushed Turkey to establish close but cautious relations with Israel since Turkey was both surrounded and had historical ties with Arab and Muslim countries. Turkish governments particularly by the end of the 1960s and mid-1970s with the onset of the deterioration of its relations with the USA, opted for pursuing an equally balanced politics in the formation of the Middle East policy by paying attention to the concerns of the Arabs.<sup>1</sup>

Although Turkey had been the first Muslim country to recognize Israel, Turkish foreign policy towards the Middle East from the mid-1950s until now has in general taken a pro-Palestinian stance on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. At the same time, Turkey has also defended the necessity of ensuring peace between the Palestinians and Israelis in every platform.<sup>2</sup> The Arab countries that considered the establishment of an independent Palestinian state as a condition for stability in the

---

<sup>1</sup> Bülent Aras, "Academic Perceptions of Turkish Israeli Relations", **Turkish Journal of International Relations**, Vol: 1, No: 1, 2002, (Perceptions), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Bülent Aras, "Turkish-Israeli-Iranian Relations in the Nineties and Impact on the Middle East", **Middle East Policy**, Vol: 7, No: 3, 2000, (Nineties), p. 158.

Middle East, proclaimed the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people in 1973. Moreover, they supported the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip occupied by Israel. Turkey was not able to give an open support to this Arab stance in the Palestinian issue due to its ties with the West. For this reason, Turkey has pursued a balanced policy by reducing the support it gave to the Arabs in order not to damage its relations with Israel.<sup>3</sup>

To keep away from any direct interference into the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Turkish politicians had gone through some troubles. This attitude was sometimes interpreted as a pro-Arab stance and sometimes as a pro-Israeli stance. For example, during the 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli conflicts, Turkey refused to allow Israel to use its military bases. In this respect, it benefited from this political decision that it had given during the second oil crisis caused by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) policy. However, the policies followed by Turkey for the complete neutrality disappeared in favour of the USA and Israel in the aftermath of the active participation of Turkey in the second Gulf crisis and following the emergence of the Turkish-Israeli alliance in the region due to the Peace Process that started between Palestinians and Israelis starting with Madrid Conference in 1991 and Oslo Accords in 1993.<sup>4</sup>

The relations between Turkey and Israel reached to a strategic alliance level in the 1990s. Due to the rising terror of Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK—*Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan*) in Turkey, Turkish-Israeli relations initially started with the cooperation on the military industry and continued in the fields of economics and tourism.<sup>5</sup> However, once the Israeli attacks to Palestinians restarted in the 2000s, these harmonious relations took a negative turn. In the aftermath of the second intifada that started in September 2000 with the attempt of opposition leader Ariel Sharon to walk into al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem in the company of heavily guarded Israeli soldiers and policemen, Turkish-Israeli relations started to decline steadily. While the second intifada lasted for 5 years with an intensified violence between

---

<sup>3</sup> Mahmut Bali Aykan, "The Palestinian Question in Turkish Foreign Policy from the 1950s to the 1990s", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol: 25, No: 1, 1993, p. 91.

<sup>4</sup> Aras, *Perceptions*, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Halil Erdemir, "How worthy Israeli Relations for Turkey", *Turkish Journal of International Relations*, Vol: 9, No: 2, 2010, p. 32.

Israelis and Palestinians, in 2007 Israel started to enforce a naval blockade on Gaza Strip. The Israeli attacks to Gaza Strip in late 2008 and early 2009 for three weeks (Operation Cast Lead) that led to thousands of Palestinian civilian casualties. All this tension between Israelis and Palestinians led to the fight between Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Israeli President Shimon Peres in Davos Summit in 2009, Low Chair Crisis in 2010 and the attacks of Israeli soldiers to Turkish ship Mavi Marmara in 2010. Consequently, the relations between the two countries started to deteriorate considerably, leading to the complete breakdown of relations.

This thesis aims at analysing the impact of Palestinian question on Turkish-Israeli relations. In other words, it will thoroughly examine the extent in which the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis affect the Turkish-Israeli relations. Consequently, the development of the bilateral relations between Turkey and Israel in the context of Palestinian question, the strengths and weaknesses of these relations will be analysed from the social constructivist point of view. The thesis argues that the realist theory by itself cannot analyse the recent deterioration of relation between Turkey and Israel and it supports the argument that there is a need for sorting to social constructivist approach. The thesis will search for the most significant factors and dynamics that shape Turkish-Israeli relations in the context of Palestinian question from the social constructivist point of view. The thesis will ask the questions: Does Turkey's foreign policy towards Israel in the framework of Israeli-Palestinian conflict depends on the rational calculation of costs and benefits or the social identities of the relevant actors? How the perception of Palestinian issue by the Turkish society impact Turkish-Israeli relations is one of the issues the thesis aims at examining. Moreover, the purpose of this study is to analyse how Palestinian-Israeli conflict had affected the Justice and Development Party's (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* –AK Party) Foreign Policy starting from mid-2000s on since the relations between the two countries reached to the lowest level during this period. Therefore, the growing tension between the two sides will be analysed through the social constructivist approach by concentrating on the role of identity, norms, values, history and religion in shaping Turkish-Israeli and Palestinian relations.

Turkey and Israel got closer for mutual interests and common goals from 1949 -when bilateral relations started- until the beginning of 2000s. However, bilateral relations have been under the influence of Palestinian-Israeli conflict and other domestic or international political developments. From the mid-1990s until the early 2000s, peace environment between the Palestinian and Israeli sides was reflected in a positive way to the relations between Turkey and Israel. However, due to the conflicts between Palestine and Israel from the beginning of 2000s and the changes in the domestic politics of Turkey and Israel, the course of relations entered into an undesirable process for both sides.

Theoretically, an alliance may face several limitations. These limitations can come to the forefront in various aspects, both domestically and internationally. In this context, an alliance may face an opposite alliance or a state. A second limit may be a change in the domestic political atmosphere. Accordingly, as regards the domestic limits, the internal politics of the alliance may also change.<sup>6</sup> These internal and external factors are also influential in order to understand the development of Turkish foreign policy in the course of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The level of the Western and Islamic elements in the modern Turkish identity has an important place in policy making. These factors have profound implications for Turkey's relations generally with Europe and the Middle East, and in particular Israel and the Arabs.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, these issues under social constructivist approach will be taken into consideration in this thesis.

## **Methodology and Literature Review**

In its analysis of Turkish-Israeli relations within the framework of Palestinian question, this thesis will analyse the political developments during the AK Party period by referring to various secondary sources including journal articles, newspaper articles and books. In order to analyse the discourses of the leaders of the political parties, mainstream newspapers of the period are searched. The main

---

<sup>6</sup> Gökhan Bacik, "The Limits of an Alliance-Turkish Israeli Relations Revisited", **Arab Studies Quarterly**, Vol: 23, No: 3, 2001, p. 50.

<sup>7</sup> M. Hakan Yavuz and Mujeeb R. Khan, "Turkish Foreign Policy toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict: Duality and the Development (1950 - 1991)", **Arab Studies Quarterly**, Vol: 14, No: 4, 1992, p. 69.



element determining Turkish foreign policy towards Palestinian-Israeli conflict during AK Party period is values and identity. From this point of view, in order to analyze how Palestinian-Israeli conflict had affected AK Party's Foreign Policy decision-making towards Israel, social constructivism was referred as an approach that can bring logical and consistent explanations and strong justifications for the AK Party's foreign policy towards Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Constructivism includes values in addition to material components and emphasizes the role of identity in the formation of interests and actions. Moreover, constructivism argues that structures and agents mutually form one another. It re-handles the basic principles of rationalist theories and contributes to the development of a sociological perspective in international politics.<sup>8</sup> In the aftermath of the Cold War period, traditional theories have been insufficient to interpret the change and transformation in the foreign policy decision-making processes of states. Because only analyzing states' foreign policy decisions in the context of power, cooperation and national interests has been insufficient. Foreign policy decision-making processes of states should be analyzed by paying attention to social and cultural values. For this reason, in this thesis AK Party's foreign policy towards Palestinian-Israeli conflict is analyzed with the main assumptions of Social Constructivism.

There are numerous books, book chapters and articles written on Turkish-Israeli and Turkish-Palestinian relations. Many of them concentrate on factors affecting Turkish-Israeli relations. Mahmut Bali Aykan argues that the first among the factors affecting Turkish-Israeli relations is the Palestinian issue. While the conflict between Palestinian-Israeli sides causes rapprochement between Turkey and Muslim Arab states in the region, it led to the deterioration of relations between Turkey and Israel. However, as a result of Turkey's increasing economic and political interdependence with the Middle Eastern countries including Israel, Turkey was forced to take an active role with a more neutral policy in the regional conflicts.<sup>9</sup> M. Hakan Yavuz examines Turkish-Israeli relations in the context of the deepening polarization between Turkey's secular elite and religious-oriented segments of society. He argues that deepening ties are at least partly a function of the

---

<sup>8</sup> Richard Price and Christian Reus-Smit, "Dangerous Liaisons? Critical International Theory and Constructivism", *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol: 4, No: 3, 1998, p. 259.

<sup>9</sup> Aykan, p. 107.

conservatism of the Turkish army, which is the Kemalist orthodox protector in the face of internal difficulties.<sup>10</sup> George E. Gruen published an article examining the future of Turkish-Israeli relations after the election of the Welfare Party led by Necmettin Erbakan. He addresses previous speeches and rhetoric of Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan against Israel and he argues that Turkish-Israeli relations will be shaped in accordance with the opinion of both government leaders. He emphasizes that although a common support to improve relations with Turkey, the Welfare Party voters give great support for the Palestinian issue. He assumes that this situation would have had a negative impact on the development of relations between Turkey and Israel. In this case, the failure of peace talks between Palestine and Israel has had a negative impact on Turkish-Israeli relations. However according to Gruen, the Welfare Party was going to find areas of common interest with Israel if it were pragmatist, as the previous governments did itself.<sup>11</sup> Amikam Nachmani examines the political, economic and religious contentions between Turkey and Israel. He argues that the cooperation and joint movement between Ankara and Jerusalem during certain periods was the product of the temporary common interests of the two countries.<sup>12</sup>

According to Şevket Ovalı and Yücel Bozdağlıoğlu, following the beginning of AK Party's rule, the changes of the Turkish foreign policy in the Middle East were mainly the result of the policies followed by AK Party leaders. They argue that role theory can be included in a theory of securitization in order to decode Turkey's tense relations with Israel. They claim that the AK Party's politicians see Israel as a threat not only against Turkey's security but also Muslims and Islamic values. Therefore, the question of ideology and identity has been played a major role in the AK Party's securitization of Israel.<sup>13</sup> Ovalı and Bozdağlıoğlu examine the change in Turkish foreign policy during the AK Party period in terms of role theory.

---

<sup>10</sup> M. Hakan Yavuz, "Turkish-Israeli Relations Through the Lens of the Turkish Identity Debate", **Journal of Palestine Studies**, Vol: 27, No: 1, 1997, p. 23.

<sup>11</sup> George E. Gruen, "Turkish-Israeli Relations: Crisis or Continued Cooperation?", **Jerusalem Letter**, Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, No: 338, 1996, (Cooperation), p. 1.

<sup>12</sup> Amikam Nachmani, **Israel, Turkey, and Greece: Uneasy Relations in the East Mediterranean**, Frank Cass, London, 1987, p. 7.

<sup>13</sup> Şevket Ovalı and Yücel Bozdağlıoğlu, "Role Theory and Securitization: An Agency Based Framework for Decoding Turkey's Diplomatic Offensive against Israel", **The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations**, Vol: 43, 2012, p. 3.

According to Hasan Kösebalaban, the Turkish and Israeli politicians have a very large role for the deterioration of Turkish-Israeli relations. However, he states that the leaders alone cannot determine the foreign policies of states and domestic and international political variables.<sup>14</sup> According to David Kushner, certain events and situations, political changes and personalities of politicians will always have a strong influence on the quality of relations between states. Similarly, national interests determined by statesmen will remain dominant and will have an impact on decisions. At this point, the development of trade, economic cooperation, and common interests, such as the extent of political and military cooperation will continue to affect relations between Turkey and Israel. Kushner has addressed Turkish-Israeli relations from the point of view realistic. From this point, Kushner has addressed Turkish-Israeli relations from the realistic point of view. However, he also indicates that religious, historical and cultural factors are not involved in relations with Israel leading the development of Turkey's relations with the Muslim countries. In this respect, the development of relations between Turkey, Israel and the Arab states are discussed in terms of social constructivism. Thus Turkish-Israeli relations will continue with its ups and downs in the coming period.<sup>15</sup>

According to Halil Erdemir, religious, cultural, strategic and economic conditions are important in the foreign policy making process. In terms of Turkish-Israeli relations, the military and economic capability of both states as well as the developments in the domestic policies of these states have significant affected the relations of these states. Moreover, particularly regional and international developments, including the Palestinian issue have had an impact on the course of relations between Turkey and Israel. In order to develop relations, a strong economic and political relationship between the two states as well as the establishment of an environment of socio-cultural cooperation will contribute to the establishment of peace in the region.<sup>16</sup> According to Umut Uzer, worsening of bilateral relations between Turkey and Israel is not based solely on Islamic ideology of the AK Party. However, the biggest factor for the deterioration of Turkish-Israeli relations is the

---

<sup>14</sup> Hasan Kösebalaban, "The Crisis in Turkish-Israeli Relations: What is its Strategic Significance?", **Middle East Policy Council**, Vol: 17, No: 3, 2010, p. 48.

<sup>15</sup> David Kushner, "Turkish-Israeli Relations in Historical Perspective", **Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs**, Vol: 10, No: 2, 2016, p. 222.

<sup>16</sup> Erdemir, p. 24.

result of the casualties of Palestinian civilians as a consequence of Israeli operations in Gaza and the West Bank. In this case, the negative perception in the Turkish society poses a great pressure on the Turkish political authority in terms of the course of relations.<sup>17</sup>

Social constructivism is a theoretical approach that gives priority to values such as identity, culture and norms instead of underlining the power factor in foreign policy making process. Identity-based explanations provide a better understanding of a state's preferences, interests and foreign policy priorities. According to Constructivism, shared values such as culture, religion and identity are the main factors that determine a constructivist foreign policy. From this point of view, it is seen that the historical, cultural and religious elements of the AK Party government's foreign policy decisions towards the Middle East are at the forefront. Therefore, in this thesis the events that occurred between Turkey and Israel in the framework of the Palestinian issue based on common identity and interests will be analyzed.

According to Onuf's constructivism approach, rules are constructed through speech act and the constructor and structure construct each other mutually through these rules. Therefore, in Onuf's constructivism approach, word acts, that is, speech act constitute the starting point of construction. A speech act is the one that moves someone into action.<sup>18</sup> Consequently, in this thesis, starting with 2002 on, the influence of AK Party politicians particularly Prime Minister/President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's impact on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict will be examined and the impact of political leaders on the foreign policy decision-making process will be discussed in line with the main arguments of Social Constructivism in foreign policy analysis. AK Party's foreign policy towards Palestine-Israeli conflict, the speeches of leading AK Party politicians are discussed as a discourse analysis in this study that tries to contribute to the literature.

---

<sup>17</sup> Umut Uzer, "Turkish-Israeli Relations: Their Rise or Fall", *Middle East Policy*, Vol: 20, No: 1, 2013, (Rise), p. 98.

<sup>18</sup> Maja Jehfuss, *Constructivism in International Relations: The Politics of Reality*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004, p. 20.

## **Organization of the Thesis**

This thesis is comprised of four chapters that aim to analyse AK Party's foreign policy towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict during the period between 2002 and 2016. The first chapter of the thesis focuses on theoretical framework by discussing the theories and approaches of international relations and foreign policy analysis. These theories and approaches will include Realism, Liberalism and Social Constructivism. Other issues that have an impact on foreign policy decision-making that includes leadership style will also be explained. In this chapter the main concentration will be on the analysis of social constructivism since this approach will be used to explain the main case study of this thesis.

The second chapter gives an overview of the historical background of the Turkish foreign policy towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict since the late Ottoman Empire period until the late 1990s. It is important to understand the historical background of Turkish-Israeli and Turkish-Palestinian relations in order to analyse the current situation. This chapter gives an insight to the historical developments prior to the establishment of the Israeli state, the declaration of the Israeli state in 1948, and Arab-Israeli conflicts, and the regional and global developments affecting Turkish-Israeli relations until the late 1990s. From the establishment of the state of Israel, the Turkish foreign policy towards Palestinian-Israeli conflict was addressed in the historical context between the years 1940 and 1980. Especially after the proclamation of the state of Israel, the agreements and crisis such as Baghdad Pact, Suez Crisis and Peripheral Pact that had both positive and negative impact on Turkish-Israeli relations were discussed. This section also examined both Turkish-American relations and Turkish foreign policy towards the Arab-Israeli conflict throughout the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. Moreover, the chapter concentrated on the regional and global factors that influenced Turkish -Israeli relations starting from the 1990s to the early 2000s.

The third chapter which can be considered as the heart of the thesis analyses Turkish foreign policy towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict during the AK Party period. This chapter examines the causes and events that led to the development or decline of the relations between Turkey and Israel during the AK Party governments

in early 2000s until mid-2010s. It is considered that the main reasons for this negative course were the conflicts between Palestine and Israel and Israel's asymmetrical attacks on Palestine. In this chapter, Turkish foreign policy towards Palestinian-Israeli conflict prior to AK Party era, AK Party's relations with Israel and Palestine in its early years, AK Party's foreign policy towards Palestinian-Israeli conflict during late 2000s including Israel's attacks to Lebanon and Operation Cast Lead, Davos crisis, cancellation of Anatolian Eagle exercise, the chair crisis, the Mavi Marmara incident and recent developments in 2015-2016 including Israel's apology and compensation are examined in depth.

The fourth chapter -the main analysis chapter of the thesis- mainly concentrates on the examination of the research questions. In this chapter, the analysis of the AK Party foreign policy towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is analysed in depth. This thesis attempts to analyse the AK Party's foreign policy towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict with the help of constructivism. This study focuses on a social constructivist analysis of international relations through an examination of the Turkish-Israeli relations. At this point, it is evaluated how the Palestine-Israeli conflict has shaped the relations between Turkey and Israel. These two countries that are witnessed to be close and reliable states are sometimes seem to be suspicious of each other, and the reasons behind these dualities are examined. Especially during the AK Party governments, the question of whether the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has affected the relations with Israel is investigated. The assumptions and basic principles of Social Constructivism are used in the field of International Relations, which are accepted as the most effective theory in foreign policy analysis. The foreign policy decisions during AK Party period will be analysed through identity and discourses of both states' politicians that can provide us a better understanding for the explanation of the developments and course of the relations between Turkey and Israel.

Although Turkey and Israel seem to have low-level relations with each other during the 2000s and 2010s, it is seen that they are working together behind the scenes. Although they seem to have common interests in economy, tourism and militarist matters, they have sometimes broken off the relations especially because of the conflicts and other dynamics experienced between the Palestinians and the

Israelis. Although foreign policy choices in international relations are often determined in line with the national interests and objectives, the widespread public communities -changes in the domestic politics- reveal the importance of domestic political approaches in the relations between Turkey and Israel. The deterioration of relations between Turkey and Israel is clarified on social constructivism argument 'identity'. Following the events of Davos and Mavi Marmara, identity has an important place in the foreign policy decision-making process of both countries. Particularly, discourses of the Turkish and Israeli politicians concerning each event were analyzed.

International conjuncture and periodical foreign policy preferences have also influenced Turkey's relations with Israel. When the historical development of Turkish-Israeli relations is examined, it is seen that both countries are eager to sustain their relations in a positive direction. Bilateral relations between Turkey and Israel will continue both politically and commercially in the future. The current developments in the Middle East and the international security issue will bring the two countries closer. Both countries need each other particularly in dealing with their security problems. For this reason, both countries constantly tend to sustain their relations at a certain level. Ultimately, this thesis emphasizes the rising significance of the Palestinian issue on Turkish foreign policy during the AK Party period. This thesis argues that an analysis of the Turkish-Israeli relations is fully dependent on the developments between Palestine and Israel.

**CHAPTER 1**  
**THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**  
**FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS THROUGH SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM**

The rapid change in the field of international relations perpetuates the theoretical debates in this area. International relations theories are used to understand the trends of states in the international political decision-making process. As in other fields of social sciences, it is not possible to analyze all foreign policy decisions with one theory in international relations. All theories of international relations bring different explanations regarding under what conditions states' decision-making processes are carried out or how decision-making processes are affected. Foreign policy analysis is "totality of a country's policies toward and interactions with the environment beyond its borders."<sup>19</sup>

Foreign policy analysis is a branch of international relations dealing with analyzing why states make certain foreign policies. Foreign policy analysis helps us to analyze how political actors make policy decisions and what factors motivate them in this decision-making. It is a complex discipline in which many actors function within structures that are both inside and outside of the state. Analyzing foreign policies of countries is significant to understand why a state made certain decisions in its foreign policy. It is important understand the motivations behind this decision-making, factors that have an impact on those decisions and the people or institutions that were influential in this decision-making process.

Therefore, it is significant to grasp the dynamics behind the foreign policy decision-making. The study of foreign policy in general has focused on the quest to maintain and enhance a country's power and security.<sup>20</sup> Do countries make such decisions for their survival or for power competition? Or was the decision made because of dependence to another country? Or perhaps it was a result of interdependence between two countries? Another explanation may be related to the values such as nationalism, religion, belonging to an ethnic group that is constructed in the society. These values may shape the foreign policy. Values such as historical

---

<sup>19</sup> Marijke Breuning, **Foreign Policy Analysis: A Comparative Introduction**, Palgrave MacMillan, New York, 2007, p. 5.

<sup>20</sup> Breuning, p. 5.



background and historical experiences may shape foreign policy. One single leader can make all the decisions, or a leader and his/her advisors make the decisions. A non-popularly elected group such as the military or religious organizations or businessmen or even a mafiotic group may get involved in foreign policy decision-making. Or in a more democratic environment, ministers or parliamentarians or even the civil society organizations may get involved in the decision-making.<sup>21</sup>

Different scholars refer to diverse ways, approaches, theories or frameworks to analyze foreign policies of the countries. Some scholars concentrate on levels of analysis such as individual level of analysis, state level of analysis or systematic level of analysis. While individual level of analysis focuses on decision-makers, their perceptions, misperceptions, personality traits and values and group interactions, state level of analysis concentrate on institutional framework of state such as relationship between executive and legislative, organization of government bureaucracy, domestic constituencies, economic conditions, state's national history and culture. State level of analysis in general analyzes how factors internal to the state influence the behaviour of that state on the global stage. System level of analysis while examining the relative power of states focuses on comparisons and interactions between states. System level of analysis defines international system as a set of states and judges these states with their relative capabilities that include power, wealth and their influence in world politics at the global level.<sup>22</sup>

Another framework designed by Juliet Kaarbo et al. concentrate on external and internal factors that affect foreign policy making process. As external factors, they focus on Realism, which emphasizes anarchy and power in the international system, and liberalism, which emphasizes cooperation and interdependence in the international system.<sup>23</sup> In addition, Kaarbo et al. consider social constructivism as an external factor that concentrates on social values such as public opinion, identity and culture. However, values such as identity can also be considered as an internal factor. As internal factors Kaarbo et al. also describe the impact of internal factors on the

---

<sup>21</sup> For the details of such framework see Ryan Beasley et al., (eds) **Foreign Policy in Comparative Perspective: Domestic and International Influences on State Behavior**, CQ Press, Washington, 2012.

<sup>22</sup> Breuning, pp. 11-13.

<sup>23</sup> Juliet Kaarbo et al., "The Analysis of Foreign Policy in Comparative Perspective", **Foreign Policy in Comparative Perspective: Domestic and International Influences on State Behavior**, (Eds., Ryan Beasley et. al), CQ Press, Washington, 2012, p. 7.

foreign policy making. Among these they focus on social groups such as military, interest groups, political parties and non-governmental organizations. As an important internal factor, Kaarbo et al. also concentrate on the personality and beliefs of the leaders.<sup>24</sup>

In this study, AK Party's Foreign Policy towards Palestinian-Israeli conflict will be analyzed by referring to the basic assumptions of social constructivism. In other words, this thesis will analyze how Palestinian-Israeli conflict affects the AK Party's Foreign Policy decision-making towards Israel. In terms of AK Party's Foreign Policy towards Palestinian-Israeli Conflict, Constructivism has very strong explanatory power compared to other international theories or approaches. In order to analyse why the other theories or approaches of foreign policy analysis cannot adequately explain AK Party's foreign policy towards Palestinian-Israeli conflict, this chapter will also examine other theories of foreign policy analysis besides social constructivism by referring to Kaarbo et al's framework.

First part of this chapter by taking Juliet Kaarbo et al's framework focuses on the Realism and Liberalism as external issues or factors that have impacts on foreign policy making. In the second section, as internal issues or factors that can affect foreign policy-decision-making the study will concentrate on social constructivism, societal groups and leaders by analysing the assumptions of constructivism as the most feasible explaining theory for the foreign policy analysis of AK Party governments.

## **I. EXTERNAL ISSUES THAT HAVE AN IMPACT ON FOREIGN POLICY MAKING: REALISM AND LIBERALISM**

Power, survival and interdependence are among the significant factors that affect the foreign policy of countries. The features of contemporary international relations and the policies of other countries can prevent governments from freely deciding on foreign policy. All states are in an international system that limits the foreign policy choices of the countries regardless of their political system, history or culture. Because of the worldwide distribution of military power and economic

---

<sup>24</sup> Kaarbo et al., pp. 18-19.

wealth and the actions of other powerful states, governments cannot decide and act as they want in foreign politics.<sup>25</sup>

To analyze the foreign policy of the countries and to figure the reasons and motivations a country took a certain foreign policy decision we have to look at the external factors that have an impact on foreign policy decision-making. Among these the most significant issue is related to the security and survival that is analyzed by realism. Central focus of realism is as stated Kelly Kate Pease “acquisition, maintenance and exercise of power by states.”<sup>26</sup> Another external factor that has an impact on foreign policy decision-making is cooperation and interdependence between countries and this is the subject of liberalism.

### **A. Realism**

‘Realism’ which is considered as one of the oldest theories of international relations, in fact, is a term used in various forms in many different disciplines. Political realism in international relations is an emphasis on the necessity of following a power policy for the national interest. Political realism, realpolitik, power politics is the oldest and most widely accepted theory of international relations.<sup>27</sup> The order that established to provide lasting peace in the international system after the World War I lost its function with the outbreak of the World War II, Great Depression in 1929, and as a result of the revisionist policies followed by Germany, Italy and Japan. These developments in the international system showed that aggressive states did not recognize international law and the decisions taken by League of Nations. As a result, realism, which was based on the fact that the predictions of idealism were not materialized during the period between the two wars, was seen as the strongest theory to explain the post-World War II international system.

Realism became the prevailing theory of the period since it brought logical and powerful explanations to the events that took place during the Cold War era.

---

<sup>25</sup> Kaarbo et al., p. 7.

<sup>26</sup> Kelly Kate Pease, **International Organizations**, Pearson Education, USA, 2012, p. 43.

<sup>27</sup> Scott Burchill et al., **Theories of International Relations**, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2005, p. 29.

Realism is considered as a significant theory of the Cold War era, and this stems from its strong theoretical explanations of war, alliance, imperialism, obstacles to cooperation and other international phenomena.<sup>28</sup> The leading realist thinkers of the twentieth-century are Hans Morgenthau, George Kennan, Reinhold Niebuhr and Kenneth Waltz in the United States, and Edward Hallett Carr in Britain. In the history of the Western political thought, Niccolo Machiavelli and Thomas Hobbes are generally considered as the father of realists. In this section, the general assumptions of the realism and its power in explaining foreign policy will be examined.

### 1. General Assumptions of Realism

Realism continues to exist today as a persuasive theory to explain and understand political decision making process and disputes in international relations. In the discipline of international relations, realism builds its own view on the nature of human, and the absence of an upper authority in the international arena.<sup>29</sup> Realists give emphasis to the constraints on politics enforced by human selfishness (egoism) and the absence of international government (anarchy), which necessitate “the primacy in all political life of power and security”.<sup>30</sup> According to realism, human beings are selfish and this leads to conflict and war that is ingrained in human nature.

Realists argue that states are the main actors in international relations and they act by focusing on power and interest. Realists see politics as a struggle for power. Therefore, for them rather than international law and international organizations, power and anarchy dominate international system. The anarchic structure of the international system is explained by the absence of any supranational authority or law in the international arena. In this context, while states act as equal members of the system following their interests, international relations are shaped around the potential of war. Accordingly, war is seen as a legitimate tool of the state

---

<sup>28</sup> Stephen M. Walt, “International Relations: One World, Many Theories”, **Foreign Policy**, No: 110, 1998, p. 31.

<sup>29</sup> Robert O. Keohane, **Theory of World Politics: Structural Realism, Neo-Realism and Its Critics**, Columbia University Press, New York, 1986, pp. 164-165.

<sup>30</sup> Robert G. Gilpin, “The Richness of the Tradition of Political Realism”, **International Organization**, Vol: 38, No: 2, 1984, p. 290.

policy. With this assumption, realists argue that states apply self-help policies in the international system, and thus each state must be responsible for its own safety. For this purpose, the states that strive to survive in order to make their power sustainable and define their interests independently in the foreign policy process.<sup>31</sup> Realism also sees states as unitary and rational actors. They argue that states are monolithic speaking on one voice. However, states are consisted of individuals, groups and many governmental actors. States have diverse structures. Moreover, realism accepts security as high politics that would dominate international agenda. Other issues such as economic or environmental issues are considered as issues of low politics.<sup>32</sup>

Realism asserts that international politics differs sharply from the domestic politics due to the anarchic nature of the international system.<sup>33</sup> In the international system, states are usually governed by a hierarchical political authority and system of rules, and they must obey this order. However, in the chaotic environment of international system, the absence of such an authority and the non-determination of the rules reveal all the negative features of the human nature. This situation causes inevitable conflicts in the international arena. In a condition of anarchy, the acquisition of power by a state is a natural threat to other states. In this case, other states must strive to protect their national interests at the highest level and provide a balance of power.<sup>34</sup>

## **2. Analyzing Foreign Policy through Realism**

Realism states that international system is made up of sovereign states and there is no authority over the states. Therefore the international system is anarchic, sees the states as actors that try to achieve their own interests by getting into a power struggle. Thus, states try to realize their interests at the highest level by aligning their powers with more powerful states. Realists argue that states are rational actors when

---

<sup>31</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, "International Politics Is Not Foreign Policy", *Security Studies*, Vol: 6, No: 1, 1996, p. 54.

<sup>32</sup> Pease, pp. 48-50.

<sup>33</sup> Kaarbo et al., p. 7.

<sup>34</sup> Kaarbo et al., p. 8.

they want to reach their aims in pursuing their foreign policies.<sup>35</sup> Kaarbo et al. argue that the driving force behind foreign policies is the constant need to acquire and safeguard one's security and power. Every state aims at surviving and protecting its territorial integrity.<sup>36</sup> If states do not have enough power, they must join an alliance with other states that are powerful and able to protect it. For this reason, alliances and strong allies become external factors that could limit the foreign policy decisions of states. According to Realism, whatever their military capabilities and their place in the international system, all states must be alert to potential threats. States as rational actors constantly strive to balance with the power of other states within the international system.<sup>37</sup>

17<sup>th</sup> century scholar Thomas Hobbes argues that when one state has more power than the other such an imbalance can shake the foundation of the social order and lead to anarchy. The three motives that drive humans to act according to Hobbes are: competition, insecurity and glory. In anarchy, people in competition always want to surpass other people and act like this at the expense of others' property, life and freedom. Since there is no authority to protect human from danger, then the people have to protect themselves most probably by attacking.<sup>38</sup> That is what shapes their foreign policies.

Machiavelli states that there is no room for moral values in international relations and every state works to maintain its own existence by using its own power.<sup>39</sup> States in the anarchic system cannot take chance of being moral. The possibility of moral behavior is based on the existence of an effective international government that can prevent and penalize illegal actions.<sup>40</sup>

E. H. Carr rejects the idea that states create their own interests for universal interests, but in fact for their own interests. Carr emphasizes that states present their interest as a universal interest in order to impose their own interest on the rest of the

---

<sup>35</sup> Paul R. Viotti and Mark V. Kauppi, **International Relations Theory**, Pearson Education, Boston, 2010, p. 43.

<sup>36</sup> Kaarbo et al., p. 8.

<sup>37</sup> Kaarbo et al., pp. 8-9.

<sup>38</sup> Jack Donnelly, **Realism and International Relations**, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000, p. 13.

<sup>39</sup> James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, **Contending Theories of International Relations**, Harper Collins Publishers, United Kingdom, 1990, p. 91.

<sup>40</sup> Robert J. Art and Kenneth N. Waltz, **Technology, Strategy and the Uses of Force**, University Press of America, Lanham, 1983, p. 6.

world.<sup>41</sup> These interests have a significant impact in foreign policy. According to Morgenthau, even if the states have different aims in the anarchic nature of the international system, the ultimate purpose is to get the power. Because the interests of the states surpass all the other interests and values. Morgenthau sees international law and international morality as the second level elements against the concepts of “national power and national interest”. Thus, Realism preserves the universal moral principles that cannot be applied to the activities of states.<sup>42</sup> Morgenthau advocates that states realize their policies to protect the status quo and to make the state more powerful or gain credibility. According to Morgenthau, internal and external politics can be abridged to three basic types. These are to maintain power, to increase power and to display power.<sup>43</sup> Mearsheimer argues that every state has had defence military power, which allows them to harm and even destroy each other. The main reason that drives the states into action is to maintain its own presence.<sup>44</sup>

## **B. Liberalism**

Liberalism is an economic and political school that emphasizes the rights and freedoms of the individual in all relations between the state and society in the field of economics and politics. It supports the freedom of conscience, belief and thought for every individual. In this context, it also advocates that the state should intervene in economy at the lowest level, but the ideal is that the state should not interfere in individuals, classes and international economic relations.

Liberalism emphasizes cooperation and interdependence among actors in international relations. It argues that international interdependence affects actors’ foreign policy decisions. In an environment where interdependence prevails, the destiny of a state depends on the fate of other states. The damage of a state in the system will cause other interdependent states to suffer from it.<sup>45</sup> Economically weak states are more dependent on other states. This situation causes weak states to fail to

---

<sup>41</sup> Donnelly, p. 8.

<sup>42</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, **Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace**, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1973, (Struggle), p. 9.

<sup>43</sup> Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, p. 97.

<sup>44</sup> John Mearsheimer, “Back to the Future: Instability in Europe After the Cold War”, **International Security**, Vol: 15, No: 1, 1990, p. 12.

<sup>45</sup> Kaarbo et al., p. 11.

act freely in the foreign policy decision-making process. In this section, the general assumptions of the Liberalism and its basic principles in the foreign policy analysis will be examined.

### 1. General Assumptions of Liberalism

In contrast to realism, states in liberalism are not the only major actors in world politics. Non-state actors in the international system have an important place in international relations. In this case, the relations between people, groups and organizations in different countries can also affect the functioning of the system. Because of this emphasis on society, the state and many different actors, liberalism is also called as 'pluralism'.<sup>46</sup>

The state for liberals consists of bureaucracy, interest groups and individuals who try to influence foreign policy. These actors can be in conflict, coalition and reconciliation. The foreign policy created is a product of competition between these parties and each one can have a different view.<sup>47</sup>

Liberalism rejects the idea that the international political agenda is predominantly dominated by military-security issues. According to liberals, the agenda of international politics is comprehensive and diverse. So, liberals do not consider security as the high politics. For liberals economic or environmental issues can form the high politics and have the priority in international relations too.<sup>48</sup> They argue that economic and social issues could often be at the forefront of foreign policy debates. The issues of energy, natural resources, environment, and pollution issues are as important as issues of security and regional competition. For this reason, the distinction between low and high policy made by realism is rejected. The international system is not anarchic as realism claims. Cooperation is possible between states through norms and rules.<sup>49</sup>

Liberalism claims that world peace may be possible in a system where free market economy rules are valid. Moreover according to Liberalism's Democratic

---

<sup>46</sup> Richard Bellamy, **Liberalism and Pluralism: Towards a Politics of Compromise**, Routledge, London, 2001, p. 4.

<sup>47</sup> Kaarbo et al., p. 15.

<sup>48</sup> Pease, pp. 65-66.

<sup>49</sup> Viotti and Kauppi, p. 33.



Peace Theory, democratic states never fight with each other.<sup>50</sup> Liberal theory argues that democracies are more peaceful than authoritarian systems because of differences in government organization. In democracies, leaders are often responsible for society which is more interested in economic issues than military affairs. Moreover, democratic institutions are built on a political culture that emphasizes the value of peaceful solution.<sup>51</sup>

## 2. Analyzing Foreign Policy through Liberalism

Liberalism focuses on the distribution of economic wealth as a fundamental feature that affects the foreign policies of states. Liberalism sees the world in a much different way. With the rise of global trade and financial relations between states, states have become interdependent. Liberalism argues that states cooperate to increase mutual gains. Mutual economic relations enable states to become actors with common interests. According to contemporary liberalism international transaction create complex interdependence since the states get connected to each other through trade and finance. States and other non-state actors sometimes are forced to cooperate since they are dependent to each other.<sup>52</sup>

While realism sees international relations as affairs full of conflicts, liberalism sees international relations as combination of cooperation and conflict. Although human nature is self-interested, it is still cooperative.<sup>53</sup> According to liberalism, states prefer a collaborative environment rather than conflict for their own interests. Agreements to take arms into control, trade agreements and other mutual cooperation agreements are made in the interests of the states. The international institutions are established to cooperate with other states and to facilitate this cooperation process which enables states to reach their economic interests and benefits more easily and quickly. As there is no inclusive authority to ensure cooperation within the international system, states support international organizations such as the United Nations (UN) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) in order

---

<sup>50</sup> Immanuel Kant, **Perpetual Peace**, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1991, pp. 94-95.

<sup>51</sup> Kaarbo et al., pp. 16-17.

<sup>52</sup> Pease, p. 65.

<sup>53</sup> Pease, pp. 59-65.

to coordinate the interests of states. Along with the rise of international organizations and multinational corporations, states cooperate and dialogue with these non-state actors to ensure their interests.<sup>54</sup>

Liberalism sees economic interdependence as a fundamental feature of the international environment in which states need to take into account when they make a foreign policy decision. Thanks to regional economic integration, rich and poor states participate in agreements and dialogues to create more interdependence at the regional level. Therefore, regional integration emerges as another external factor that may affect the foreign policies of states. Liberalism argues that the interdependent international system is open to more cooperation in which international organizations coordinate activities and this situation enables economically weak states to enter in international market.<sup>55</sup>

## **II. INTERNAL ISSUES THAT HAVE AN IMPACT ON FOREIGN POLICY MAKING: SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM, SOCIETAL GROUPS AND LEADERS**

The issues and factors that have an impact on foreign policy decision-making does not always come from external dynamics such as power struggle with other states or interdependence with other states. Sometimes the most important impact on foreign policy decision-making comes from inside the country itself. These factors may be related to the values and norms in the country or societal actors, its bureaucratic organization and/or the leaders. What is called social constructivism in fact is the way people perceive and construct the international system. Although Kaarbo et al. consider constructivism as an external factor that has an impact on foreign policy, this study will consider it as internal factor since social constructivism explains states' foreign policy decisions by emphasizing socially constructed values such as identity, interests, norms and cultures that guide the actors' behavior. Besides the values domestic political system such as the governmental system that includes whether the system is authoritarian or hybrid or democratic or ruled by one-man regime or parliamentary or presidential or how its bureaucratic politics is run are

---

<sup>54</sup> Kaarbo et al., pp. 10-11.

<sup>55</sup> Kaarbo et al., pp. 12-13.

significant in understanding foreign policy-making. Moreover, the influential societal groups such as the military, religious groups or business groups are important in the sense that they can influence the foreign policy-making. Another crucial factor that can also be analyzed by constructivism is the leadership style. Foreign policy-making can significantly change from one leader to another even in the most democratic and stable looking countries. While some leaders are aggressive and ready to challenge to whole world, others are more low-profile and modest in their decision-making. Therefore, leaders really matter in foreign policy decision-making process.<sup>56</sup>

The culture and the characteristics of leaders may cause states to make different foreign policy decisions on the same issues. Internal factors that are effective in foreign policy decisions may be at different levels. States are governed by the beliefs and governance styles of state leaders that depend on different core values, historical experience, social opposition, the degree of centralization of the political authority, and bureaucratization levels.<sup>57</sup>

### **A. Social Constructivism**

Constructivism which has started in the 1990s is mostly considered as an approach rather than a theory. It does not say much about international relations as much as it concentrates on internal values. It is relatively a new approach to social sciences. Post-modernism and post-structural movements have an impact on it. Constructivism in fact is a kind of “process of uncovering how the world we know is socially constructed.”<sup>58</sup> The existence, meaning and value of a socially constructed issue are created by the people in a group. It is the individuals and groups that give meanings to the concepts and institutions. Social constructivists try to understand the social construction of international system and they try to investigate norms and rules that are related to global governance. According to social constructivists, the reality we assume is socially constructed and this construction differs from individual to individual and from state to state since they all have different complicated social

---

<sup>56</sup> Kaarbo et al., p. 13.

<sup>57</sup> Kaarbo et al., p. 20.

<sup>58</sup> Pease, p. 106.

relations.<sup>59</sup> While Alexander Wendt and John Ruggie are considered the founders of Constructivist theory, Nicholas Onuf was the first scholar to use the term ‘Constructivism’ in 1989 in the literature of international relations. Friedrich Kratochwil and Peter Katzenstein are also important scholars of Constructivism.

Constructivism, unlike the previous theories, introduced new subjects and actors into the international scene. One of the most important features of constructivism is its bringing social and historical perspective to the field. Such a perspective was neglected especially in the 1980s when the whole world was busy with the Cold War fights. With the end of the Cold War, Realism and Neorealism were often criticized. In fact, realism and the mainstream rationalist theories were not able to predict and bring an explanation to the upcoming Cold War. This situation led the Constructivists to gain an effective position in the field. Constructivists were interested in intellectual and social qualities of actors and states including identity and culture. Constructivists by referring to identity and culture brought new explanatory variables to international relations and foreign policy analysis.<sup>60</sup> As a result, prevailing concepts such as power, anarchy, institution, norm and foreign policy were reinterpreted within the framework of social reality. The debates taking place nowadays are based on whether the actions of the state are determined by the structure, process or by the institutions that constructs the state.<sup>61</sup> In this section, the general assumptions of the Constructivism, its basic principles in the foreign policy analysis, and its various forms will be examined.

## **1. General Assumptions of Social Constructivism**

The most substantial emphasis of constructivism in international theory is its acceptance of the states as a social entity, and it accepts international relations as a social area and examines social relations. Social constructivism argues that social elements are important in intergovernmental relations and states should take social aspects into account when making their choices in foreign policy.

---

<sup>59</sup> Pease, p. 106.

<sup>60</sup> Friedrich Kratochwil, “The Embarrassment of Changes: Neo-realism as the Science of Realpolitik without Politics”, **Review of International Politics**, Vol: 19, No: 1, 1993, (Changes), p. 67.

<sup>61</sup> Yücel Bozdağlıoğlu, **Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach**, Routledge, New York, 2003, (Turkish Identity), p. 3.

According to Kelly Kate Pease constructivism has four significant assumptions: While the first one argues that ideas, beliefs and identities are important in understanding international relations, the second assumption argues that these ideas, beliefs and identities are shaped by their group affiliations, The third assumption argues that the social factors are more significant than material factors in understanding international relations since it is our perception that last makes the judgement about an ongoing issue. The last assumption is that while cooperation and conflict between states are subjective issues to judge, what matters are the actors' views. It is the actors that see that event as a conflict or a normal harmless procedure.<sup>62</sup> According to constructivism, human is a social being that interacts with nature and the environment. This process of socialization is realized in a social structure that is based on some rules through agents and institutions. Since constructivism argues that social events and phenomena including interstate relations are in constant construction, it allows for the reinterpretation of theories that are supposed to be based on invariable assumptions in terms of changing circumstances. According to Onuf, the world we live in has both physical and social characteristics. Living in the world is related to our physical existence, but moving or making decisions on it is related to our sociality. The world which we create for ourselves and where we count ourselves as an actor is realized through social relations to which we attribute a meaning to the physical area.<sup>63</sup>

Constructivists argue that recent debates are formed in the context of structure, namely, anarchy and power distribution, and in the context of process, namely interaction, learning, and institutions.<sup>64</sup> There are three main points that constructivist theory differs from the traditional theories. The first one is that the Constructivists are not materialists but idealists. They do not deny the material structure and the interests, but do not explain the actor's behaviour only in this material field, but they also attach importance to the shared meaning structures. The material factors such as human, natural resources, geography, production forces and demolition forces have great influence on the structure, but this influence has a

---

<sup>62</sup> Pease, p. 107.

<sup>63</sup> Nicholas G. Onuf, **World of Our Making: Rules and Rule in Social Theory and International Relations**, Columbia University Press, New York, 1989, (Rules), p. 56.

<sup>64</sup> Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics", **International Organization**, Vol: 17, No: 4, 1992, (Anarchy), p. 393.

secondary effect. Secondly, they argue that structure and actors build each other in mutual interaction. Accordingly, the identities and interests of the actors are not given by nature; it is built with the common thought process. Thirdly, they try to explain the behaviour of actors within the framework of norms stemming from international interests and interests derived from identities.<sup>65</sup>

## 2. Analyzing Foreign Policy through Social Constructivism

Constructivist theory mainly deals with the interpretation of anarchy and balance of power, the relation between state identity and interest, and different meanings of power.<sup>66</sup> Constructivists argue that there are other variables more important than anarchy and power in explaining the state behaviour. Constructivism includes values in addition to material components and emphasizes the role of identity in the formation of interests and actions and advocates that structures and agents mutually form one another, re-handles the basic principles of rationalist neo-realism and contributes to the development of a sociological perspective in international politics.<sup>67</sup>

Constructivism claims that the international system consists of the social interactions of states and the shared conception in international society. The international system contains more than a conflict of power and interest.<sup>68</sup> Constructivists argue that accounts based primarily on interests and the material distribution of power cannot fully explain the major international events.<sup>69</sup> Material resources are only meaningful for human action through the structure of shared knowledge where they are entrenched.<sup>70</sup> For this reason, Constructivists emphasize the importance of normative and ideological constructions, and indicate that these

---

<sup>65</sup> Alexander Wendt, **Social Theory of International Politics**, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999, (Social), p. 110.

<sup>66</sup> Ted Hopf, "The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory", **International Security**, Vol: 23, No: 1, 1998, p. 172.

<sup>67</sup> Price and Reus-Smit, p. 259.

<sup>68</sup> Kaarbo et al., p. 12.

<sup>69</sup> Mlada Bukovansky, "American Identity and Neutral Rights from Independence to the War of 1812", **International Organization**, Vol: 51, No: 2, 1997, p. 209.

<sup>70</sup> Alexander Wendt, "Constructing International Politics", **International Security**, Vol: 20, No: 1, 1995, (Constructing), p. 73.

elements shape the social identities of political actors.<sup>71</sup> According to Constructivists, norms are collective understandings that elicit behavioural claims on actors. The effects of norms are more profound; because the norms not only determine the behaviour of the actors but also form the identities and interests of the actors.<sup>72</sup> Thus, actors (states) and structures (global norms) are mutually established by constant interactions.<sup>73</sup>

Three different types of constructivist theories emerged in the 1990s. These are systemic, unit-level and integrative constructivism. While Onuf and Kratochwil emphasize the rules and speech act theory, Wendt draws attention to the sociological traditions that revolve around identity. However, these three scholars can all be considered as constructivists.<sup>74</sup> There are various forms of constructivism that are basically similar but differ in some respects according to Wendt, Onuf and other theoreticians studying in this field. Alexander Wendt's constructivist approach is very significant in international relations. According to Wendt, state identity is the basis of interest. He argues that "actors often cannot decide what their interests are until they know what they are representing 'who they are' which in turn depends on their social relationships".<sup>75</sup>

International relations enable the construction of the international community. Construction is a continuous and mutual process. Alexander Wendt tries to handle the key concepts in international relations over again and bring the intellectual dimension of these concepts to the forefront. In this context, Wendt deals with the accepted concepts such as identity, interest, power, anarchy as in the rationalist theories, and paves the way for the discussion of the factors which constitutes the international system. While considering these elements, Wendt focusing on the intellectual background rather than the materialist point of view, developed a theory in which the structure and the constructor build each other mutually and constantly. This construction process is realized through interaction between the subjects.

---

<sup>71</sup> Burchill et al., p. 196.

<sup>72</sup> Kaarbo et al., p. 12.

<sup>73</sup> Jeffrey T. Checkel, "The Constructivist Turn in International Relations Theory", **World Politics**, Vol: 50, No: 2, 1998, p. 328.

<sup>74</sup> Jehfuss, p. 22.

<sup>75</sup> Ronal L. Jepperson, Alexander Wendt and Peter J. Katzenstein, "Norms, Identity, and Culture in National Security", in Peter J. Katzenstein (Ed.), **The Culture of National Security**, Columbia University Press, New York, 1996, p. 53.

Therefore, the identity and the interest are shaped by the interaction process between the subjects.<sup>76</sup>

Wendt argues that Kenneth Waltz's definition of political structure based on the ordering principles (anarchy) and the distribution of capabilities have little to say about the state behaviour alone. Waltz's definition cannot predict whether the two countries that recognize each other's sovereignty will be friends or enemies, revisionists or status quo powers. These factors which are fundamentally intersubjective affect the interests of the states' security and hence the character of their interaction under anarchy. Alternatively, Wendt developed the concept of "structure of identity and interest" and, claimed that Waltz's definition of structure cannot predict the content or dynamics of anarchy without assumptions about the identity and interests of the system.<sup>77</sup>

Accordingly, the construction theory that was systematized by Wendt was built on three basic concepts as a structural theory of the international system. These are the states that are the main analysis units of international political theory. The key structures within the state system are not material but intersubjective. State identities and interests are not externally given to the system by human nature or internal politics, but are largely built by social structures.<sup>78</sup> According to Wendt, the first claim is also shared by Neorealism. The second argument, however, distinguishes Constructivism from Neorealism since it attaches importance to intersubjectivity.<sup>79</sup> The third argument is that the Constructivists have both material and cultural items, but the cultural ones have more prevalence since the actors act according to the importance that the objects carry for them and the meaning structured within the social context.<sup>80</sup>

Wendt argues that state identity is a crucial factor in explaining international relations including anarchy and cooperation. At this point, Wendt suggests that the collective identity can emerge at a systematic level and this process can create

---

<sup>76</sup> Wendt, Social, p. 171.

<sup>77</sup> Wendt, Anarchy, p. 396.

<sup>78</sup> Alexander Wendt, "Collective Identity Formation and the International State", **The American Political Science Review**, Vol: 88, No: 2, 1994, (Formation), p. 385.

<sup>79</sup> Alexander Wendt, "Identity and Structural Change in International Politics", in Yosef Lapid and Friedrich Kratochwil (Eds.), **The Return of Culture and Identity in IR Theory**, Lynne Rienner Publisher, London, 1996, (Change), p. 48.

<sup>80</sup> Wendt, Change, p. 50.



cooperation.<sup>81</sup> Another element of the social structure consists of practices. According to Wendt, “social structure exists, not in actors’ heads nor in material capabilities, but in practices. Social structure exists only in process”.<sup>82</sup>

Wendt explains anarchy with the argument “anarchy what states make of it”.<sup>83</sup> According to Wendt, in the anarchy of the neo-realist theory, states are units that are in military competition, are inclined to incite war, and establish relations within the power balance. In this context, states act to survive in the international system.<sup>84</sup> While Wendt considers the states as the main actor in the structure, he explains the structure within the interstate relations by taking the ideas to the foreground instead of the material elements.<sup>85</sup> According to Wendt, the structure is not comprised of material abilities but also social interactions. Social structures include three main elements: shared knowledge, material resources and practices. Thus, these three elements are interrelated. First, shared understandings, expectations or knowledge describe social structures. These are the nature of the actors and their relationships in a situation, whether they are friends or enemy.<sup>86</sup> According to Wendt, in this context, ideas define the meaning and content of the power, the strategies and interests that the states follow. In other words, power and interest are built by the ideas. Wendt, who states that ideas shape social structure, points out that there are three cults in the anarchic system: enemies, rivals and friends.<sup>87</sup> Thus, amity or enmity is a function of shared understandings.<sup>88</sup> Wendt states that rival actors can use violence to realize their interests and friendly actors act collectively in the name of security by avoiding violence.<sup>89</sup>

In Wendt’s approach to constructivism, social structure is constructed with interaction and this construction can be repeated all the time. In this process of interaction, states can change their behaviour and the structure of the international system as well. At the core of this change lies the identity of the states. In this context, identity is accepted as fixed and continuous in rationalist theories. However,

---

<sup>81</sup> Wendt, *Anarchy*, p. 409.

<sup>82</sup> Wendt, *Constructing*, p. 74.

<sup>83</sup> Wendt, *Anarchy*, p. 398.

<sup>84</sup> Wendt, *Formation*, p. 383.

<sup>85</sup> Wendt, *Constructing*, p. 74.

<sup>86</sup> Wendt, *Anarchy*, p. 397.

<sup>87</sup> Wendt, *Formation*, p. 306.

<sup>88</sup> Wendt, *Constructing*, p. 73.

<sup>89</sup> Wendt, *Constructing*, p. 76.

no inquiry has been made about the structure of the identity. Wendt argues that the identity of states is in constant change and transformation interactively.<sup>90</sup> Institutionalized norms and ideas describe the identity of the individual actor and the economic, political and cultural actions that these individuals will put into practice.<sup>91</sup>

According to Wendt, identity signals “who or what the actors are”. Indicating that an identity is formed by the combination of the self and the other, Wendt argues that these two views construct identity during the interaction. Through strategic practices, actors construct both structures and themselves again and continuously. For example, states acting for cooperation expect other states to cooperate. In this context, states try to rebuild their and the other side’s identity through interaction.<sup>92</sup>

The concept of constructivism was used by Nicholas Onuf, who stated that discipline should be “reconstructed” by criticizing existing theoretical debates in the discipline of international relations. Onuf does not see constructivism as a theory because it does not provide general explanations of what people do, why societies are different, and how the world will change.<sup>93</sup> According to Onuf, constructivism redefines the commonly used terms.<sup>94</sup> Therefore, Onuf argues that constructivism shows a theoretical approach to issues that seem to be irrelevant, and it is a way to understand social relations.<sup>95</sup> According to Onuf, Constructivism is applied to the field of any kind of social inquiry and has the potential to bring together issues which seem irrelevant at first sight. Constructivism begins with the belief that people are social.<sup>96</sup>

In evaluating Onuf’s constructivism approach in general, it is seen that rules are constructed through speech act. The constructor and structure construct each other mutually through the rules. Therefore, in Onuf’s constructivism approach, word acts, that is, speech act, constitute the starting point of construction. The field of

---

<sup>90</sup> Jehfuss, p. 38.

<sup>91</sup> John W. Meyer and George M. Thomas, “Ontology and Rationalization in the Western Cultural Account”, in G. Thomas et al. (Eds.), **Institutional Structure: Constituting State, Society, and the Individual**, London, 1989, p. 12.

<sup>92</sup> Alexander Wendt, “Ortak Kimlik Oluşumu ve Uluslararası Devlet”, in Esra Diri (Ed.), **Uluslararası İlişkilerde Anahtar Metinler 1**, Röle Academic Publishing, İstanbul, 2013, p. 694.

<sup>93</sup> Nicholas Onuf, “Constructivism: A User’s Manual”, (Eds.) Vendulka Kubalkova et al., **International Relations in a Constructed World**, M.E. Sharpe Press, 1998, (Manual), p. 58.

<sup>94</sup> Nicholas Onuf, “The Constitution of International Society”, **The European Journal of International Law**, Vol: 5, No: 1, 1994, (Constitution), p. 18.

<sup>95</sup> Onuf, “Manual”, p. 58.

<sup>96</sup> Jehfuss, p. 19.

international relations is a social structure which has rules. Within this structure, states are the main institutions.<sup>97</sup>

Onuf's conceptualization of rules relies on speech acts. A speech act is the one that moves someone into action. Thus, language is more performative than being descriptive.<sup>98</sup> According to Onuf, Constructivism does not make a sharp distinction between "material and social facts", but Constructivism emphasizes the role of social reality. This is very important for Onuf's conception of knowledge. Ideas and events are not independent phenomena; on the contrary, they are absolutely in interaction.<sup>99</sup>

Friedrich Kratochwil and Rey Koslowski in their article titled "Understanding Change in International Politics: The Soviet Empire's Demise and the International System" draw the theoretical framework of the constructive approach and they try to explain the practical developments within the context of the constructive approach. Kratochwil and Koslowski explain the change in the international system with the end of the Cold War with the approach of constructivism. The most important emphasis of this approach is that social reality is not independent of actors. In this context, social reality is built by the actors.<sup>100</sup> According to this approach, the actions of national and international actors reproduce and transform the international system.<sup>101</sup> This approach is considered as Integrative Constructivism sees national and international structures as the two sides of a single global social order.

Rules and norms are central to Kratochwil's constructivism. The context of rules and norms which provides the basis for intersubjectivity, and thus the possibility of understanding politics as involving meaningful action and normative questions, is crucial.<sup>102</sup> According to Kratochwil and Koslowski, institutions are built by routine actions and norms. The established institutions create a community in the

---

<sup>97</sup> Nicholas Onuf, "Worlds of Our Making: The Strange Career of Constructivism in International Relations", (Ed.) Donald J. Puchala, **Visions of International Relations**, University of South Carolina Press, Columbia, 2002, (Career), p. 120.

<sup>98</sup> Jehfuss, p. 20.

<sup>99</sup> Nicholas Onuf, "Sovereignty: Outline of a Conceptual History", **Alternatives**, Vol: 16, No: 4, 1991, (Sovereignty), p. 429.

<sup>100</sup> Friedrich Kratochwil, "History, Action and Identity: Revisiting the 'Second' Great Debate and Assessing its Importance for Social Theory", **European Journal of International Relations**, Vol: 12, No: 1, 2006, (Second), p. 11.

<sup>101</sup> Rey Koslowski and Friedrich Kratochwil, "Understanding Change in International Politics: The Soviet Empire's Demise and the International System", **International Organization**, Vol: 48, No: 2, 1994, p. 216.

<sup>102</sup> Jehfuss, p. 19.

international system. Thus, change occurs in the international system as the actions and norms that build institutions change.<sup>103</sup>

Kratochwil and Koslowski, who base their approach on the fact that the international system has a changeable structure, argue that there may be changes depending on the actions the actors reproduce. In this direction, the actions that the actors re-produce cause radical changes in the international system by changing the rules and norms which build international interaction. The same change is observed in national politics. The actions that the international actors –namely the states- regenerate depend on the re-productions of the actions of the actors -individuals and groups- in the domestic politics. Therefore, the change of the internal rules and norms that determine the actions of national actors causes a change in the beliefs and identities of the actors, which in turn changes the international system with the changes in the norms that constitute the international system.<sup>104</sup> Kratochwil and Koslowski emphasize that national and international politics cannot be considered apart from each other and explain the change in the international system with these two elements.

Rules and norms emphasize not just the calculations of individual interests but also the importance of rational strategies and criteria. Norms not only establish certain games but also allow the actors to direct their actions to each other by enabling the players to pursue their own goals by themselves, to establish relations with each other, to assess the quality of their actions, and to derive inter-subjective meanings that make them criticize their actions.<sup>105</sup>

While systemic and unit-level constructivists reproduce the traditional duality between the national and international area, the integrative constructivists try to bridge the two areas. In order to explain all the factors that restrict the identities and interests of the states, they bring the collective and social circles together and they see the national and the international area as two facets of a single social and political order.<sup>106</sup> We cannot comprehend the role of norms provided that we take the

---

<sup>103</sup> Price and Reus-Smit, p. 269.

<sup>104</sup> Koslowski and Kratochwil, p. 216.

<sup>105</sup> Friedrich Kratochwil, "International Order and Individual Liberty: A Critical Examination of Realism as a Theory of International Politics", **Constitutional Political Economy**, Vol: 3, No: 1, 1992, (Liberty), p. 40.

<sup>106</sup> Burchill et al., p. 201.

regulative rules as a paradigm because conceptualizing norms just as restrictive would be a mistake. Even though rules and norms affect human behaviour deeply, they cannot determine it. Thus, the processes of discussion and interpretation must be analysed.<sup>107</sup>

The three representatives of constructivism handle the agent and structure in international politics. In this context, the constant construction of the agent and structure mutually is the starting point of the three representatives. In this construction process, Wendt focuses on the power of ideas, Onuf focuses on the impact of the rules, while Kratochwil and Koslowski focus on the actions of the actors. In this context, Wendt, Onuf, Kratochwil and Koslowski focus on the constructive influence of ideas, rules and actions in international relations. They emphasize that changes take place in the international system depending on the changes in ideas, rules and actions.

## **B. Societal Groups**

As for internal factors, the bureaucratic institutions, the media, political parties, pressure groups, civil society organizations have a great influence on states' foreign policy decisions. In fact, the impact of societal groups on foreign policy decision-making can also be considered as a constructivist analysis since the societal groups also represent the values, norms and identities in a country. The reason why a societal group such as the military can affect foreign policy is the result of the norms and values that puts the military in such a position. Similarly if a religious group is strong in politics again this is the result of the historical background and values that brought this group to this position.

Political culture can be defined as the basic principles, values, norms and traditions which are shared by citizens that guide the functioning of the political institutions of countries. The common experiences of a nation enable them to gain an insight into the place and role of the states in the world system.<sup>108</sup> These persistent

---

<sup>107</sup> Friedrich Kratochwil, "Thrasymachos Revisited: On the Relevance of Norms for International Relations", *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol: 37, No: 2, 1984, (Norms), p. 344.

<sup>108</sup> Martin W. Sampson, "Cultural Influences on Foreign Policy", (Eds.) Charles F. Hermann et al, *New Directions in the Study of Foreign Policy*, Unwin Hyman, Boston, 1987, p. 384.

cultural features can also determine the extent and boundaries of foreign policy. A country's culture can dignify individualism, collectivism, or moralism, and these cultural-based values have an impact on foreign policy.<sup>109</sup>

As Robert Putnam states the domestic groups pursue their interests at the national level. They do this by putting pressure on government, so the government can adopt policies that are favorable to these groups.<sup>110</sup> National governments work hard to satisfy societal groups so that they can get support from these groups during the elections. Sometimes they can even permit these groups to interfere into foreign policies and sometimes they do not even have the choice. They just have to let the societal groups or pressure groups to take over the foreign policy. For all societal groups their aim is to maximize their interests. Their purpose to pursue political and economic benefits which can be related to religious beliefs, ideological goals or they may be concerned with cultural demands.<sup>111</sup>

Military can be a significant actor struggling for power. In many countries they may take over the foreign policy decisions as can be observed in Turkey in early 1990s during the coalition government between pro-Islamist Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*) and center right True Path Party (*Doğru Yol Partisi*). The reason for military's dominance in politics and foreign policy-making in general takes place during the rule of fragile and vulnerable governments and economic crisis. Particularly, when the foreign policy decisions are on national security issues then there is a higher involvement of military in politics.<sup>112</sup> Political parties play a significant role in order to link social thought to political leadership. In many respects, the functions of political parties are very similar to interest groups. Leaders take into account the ideas of organized societal groups more than the general population, because organized societal groups and political parties are more likely to react to certain events. Interest groups reflect the position of a particular societal sector and they put this sector into action to persuade and oppress the government. With the acceleration of globalization and liberalization process, the number of

---

<sup>109</sup> Kaarbo et al., pp. 14-15.

<sup>110</sup> Robert D. Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games", **International Organization**, Vol: 43, No: 3, 1988, p. 444.

<sup>111</sup> For an analysis of relation between foreign policy and pressure groups see Ioannis D. Stafinidis, "Pressure Groups and Greek Foreign Policy", **The Hellenic Observatory, The European Institute**, 2001, pp. 8-11.

<sup>112</sup> Kaarbo et al., p. 16.

economic interest groups shows an increase that is economically affected from their state's foreign policy decisions. Economic interest groups help to increase the welfare level of states which is the fulfillment of the most important basic tasks of the states.<sup>113</sup> Economic groups are often interested in foreign policy decisions in order to expand business volumes abroad or to protect the domestic market from foreign rivalries. For this reason, economic interest groups may also have an important effect on foreign policy decisions.

### **C. Leaders and Leadership Styles**

States are governed by a leader or leaders who have the authority to decide on foreign policy. The characteristic features of the leaders have an important place in the formation of foreign policy. Especially under the complex conditions that frequently arise in foreign policy making, a leader's personality and beliefs enable the determination of the foreign policy that the state will follow. Decisions made by leaders in domestic or external politics can be shaped by their personal history.<sup>114</sup> For example, an event in which the leader lived during a certain period of his life may lead to the leader having a stereotyped beliefs and take into consideration certain issues and preferring to handle the problems in the direction of these beliefs. Since each leader's personal characteristics are different, each leader decides on the direction of particular beliefs, values and experiences regarding their foreign policy affairs.

Leaders can be classified according to their personal characteristics. Some leaders can exercise a confrontational foreign policy method by dominating and controlling others except themselves. Some leaders can apply a collaborative and compromising foreign policy by giving great importance to being accepted by other persons or states. Since some leaders have a more nationalistic and skeptical structure, they believe that problems can only be solved by the use of force. Some leaders prefer to solve the problems they face with mutual dialogue and cooperation because they see themselves and their states as part of the world community. The

---

<sup>113</sup> Kaarbo et al., p. 15.

<sup>114</sup> Kaarbo et al., p. 18.

decision-making styles of leaders and people around the leaders also have a great influence in shaping foreign policy decisions.<sup>115</sup>

Leaders identify and organize the events they experience in their past with events that the community has lived. Societies are just like a big family. As long as the family elders and heads of the family are in agreement with each other, the children of these families will continue their friendship with each other. In other words, the relationship between family members is closely related to the attitudes of heads of the family. No matter how advanced the societies, they finally showed attitudes and behaviors towards the basic principles of mass psychology and its leaders. The emotions and psychology of the leader are an important influence on the formation and determination of the followers' psychology. Based on this information, the course of relations between Turkish and the Israeli government varies from time to time as leaders lead societies and mobilize social feelings.

Personality characteristics of leaders play an important and determinant role on the tensions between Turkish and Israeli governments that emerged in recent years. Because the events that are happening between the two countries are reflected differently in order to be used in domestic politics by the leaders and the social psychological dynamics are actuated. With the movement of social and psychological dynamics, the sense of 'we' and 'other' deepens and the differences among the groups come to the forefront.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Theories make the complex world understandable and it provides simplified information about the world. In foreign policy analysis it is significant to understand why a country made a certain foreign policy? What factors led the leaders of the states to follow specific foreign policies? Theories try to find an answer to this question. Is the foreign policy decision result of the survival strategy of a country or is it a result of interdependency? Does the leader of a country follow a certain foreign policy due to his/her values or identity? Theories of international relations attempt to answer these questions.

---

<sup>115</sup> Kaarbo et al., p. 19.



Realism in foreign policy focuses on survival and power struggle and analyzes foreign policy decision-making from this perspective. States are the main unit of analysis and they aim for achieving their national interests. States are considered as monolithic actors and they aim at maximizing the interests of their countries. While realism concentrates on power in foreign policy decision-making, liberalism that takes the individuals as the main unit of analysis focus on cooperation and collaboration. For liberalism in foreign policy analysis complex interdependence is significant. States that are interdependent on each other do not go to wars. They prefer to resolve their disputes through peaceful methods.

Social Constructivism argues that the social reality is socially constructed. Moreover, international relations as a social reality is also a social construction. The Social Constructivism argues that the material world is understood by cognitive structures. In this context foreign policy decisions are taken in a socially constructed environment. Perceptions are very important in this decision-making. Social constructivism argues that values and identity play a significant role in foreign policy decision-making. Therefore, according to social constructivism leaders and their ideology and beliefs matter. It assumes that the interests and identities of states are shaped by certain historical processes. Contrary to Realism and Liberalism, Social Constructivism argues that no 'structure' including the international system is fixed and invariable.

In general terms, the main element determining Turkish foreign policy is identity particularly Turkish foreign policy towards Palestinian-Israeli conflict during AK Party period is values and identity. From this point of view, social constructivism is considered as an approach that brings logical and consistent explanations for the AK Party's foreign policy towards Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

## CHAPTER 2

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY ON PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT

Turkey's relations with Palestine is a significant issue since the land of Palestine was part of the Ottoman Empire for centuries. Turkey's relations with Palestinian entity was shaped by Turkey's relations with Israel. Once the Turkish-Israeli relations improved Turkish-Palestinian relations deteriorated and once the Turkish-Palestinian relations improved Turkish-Israeli relations deteriorated. Since its foundation, the ultimate purpose of the Republic of Turkey was to become a member of the West. In order to accomplish this purpose, Turkish foreign policy makers aimed at following pro-American and pro-Western foreign policies. Another western oriented foreign policy of Turkey was its recognition of Israel as the first Muslim country in 1949. Turkey's recognition of Israel and establishing diplomatic, political and economic relations with Israel is a part of Turkey's efforts to establish good relations with the Western world particularly in the aftermath of the Second World War under the Soviet threat.

In a period where significant Arab countries including Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq, that did not accept Israel's declaration of independence and incited war against Israel in 1948, and in an environment where the clashes continued despite the call for ceasefire by the United Nations, United Nations Palestinian Reconciliation Commission was established on the 12<sup>th</sup> of December 1948. The fact that Turkey was elected as a member to this commission along with the US and the UK, to which the Arabs opposed, in fact had formed the starting point of change in Ankara's approach to Tel Aviv and the Palestinian question. Turkey, who left its pro-Arab stance during the investigation of the Commission, has adopted a neutral line as a requirement of undertaking an important task in an international organization.<sup>116</sup>

While Turkey's pro-Israeli policies deteriorated its relations with the Palestinians and the neighboring Arab states, establishment of Bagdad Pact in 1955 and the Suez Crisis in 1956 led to the beginning of cooling down of Turkish-Israeli

---

<sup>116</sup> George E. Gruen, "Defining Limits On Religious Expression in Public Institutions: The Turkish Dilemma",

*Jewish Political Studies Review*, Vol: 11, No: 3, 1999, (Limits), p. 167.

relations.<sup>117</sup> Even during the 1960s and 1970s when Turkey had to warm up its relations with the Arab neighbors due to the support Turkish government needed from the Arabs during the Cyprus conflict, Turkish foreign policy-makers still did not break their ties with Israel completely. However, during the 1967 Arab-Israeli conflict Turkey did not permit Americans to use their military bases on Turkish territory and announced its neutrality. During the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, Turkey again did not permit the use of the İncirlik Air Base and started supporting the Palestinian cause. Moreover, Turkey allowed the Soviet Union to use airspace of Turkey for the shipment of the weapons and materials to the Arab countries.

The fluctuating Turkish-Israeli relations were kept at a minimum level in the aftermath of 1980 coup in Turkey to receive the support of Muslim countries for the coup and to ensure the flow of oil to the country. During the period of pro-American Prime Minister Özal in the 1980s, Turkish-Israeli relations improved a little in order to provide support for the Jewish lobby. Turkish-Israeli relations reached to the ambassadorial level by the late 1980s when Turkey needed Israel's support in its new fight against PKK terror that was supported by Syria.<sup>118</sup> The Oslo Peace Accords of 1993 in which Jordan signed a peace accord with Israel and the Palestinians moved towards rapprochement with Israel led to the improvement of Turkey's relations with Israel in an unprecedented level in security, economics and tourism.

In an attempt to analyze Turkish-Israeli relations, this chapter gives an overview of historical background of Turkish foreign policy towards Palestinian-Israeli conflict since the late Ottoman Empire until the late 1990s. This chapter will first start by analyzing the Turkish-Palestinian relations in the framework of Turkish-Israeli relations during the period prior to the declaration of the Israeli state in 1948 and then will continue by examining the regional and global factors affecting Turkey's relations with Israel as well as Palestine between the years 1950-1990.

---

<sup>117</sup> Ömer Kürkçüoğlu, *Türkiye'nin Arap Orta Doğu'suna Karşı Politikası (1945-1970)*, Sevinç Matbaası, Ankara, 1972, p. 67.

<sup>118</sup> Nezih Tavlaş, "Türk-İsrail Güvenlik ve İstihbarat İlişkileri", *Avrasya Dosyası*, Vol: 1, No: 3, 1994, p. 17.

## I. TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS PALESTINIAN-JEWISH CONFLICT BY THE END OF OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND THE EARLY YEARS OF TURKISH REPUBLIC

The relations between the Turks and the Jews date back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century when the Ottoman Empire offered asylum to the Iberian and the other European Jews after they were expelled from Spain in 1492 and from Portugal in 1497. For the Jews looking for a safe haven to live in Europe, the Ottoman Empire became the most secure and desirable place to live.<sup>119</sup> The Armenians, Orthodox Christians, and the Jews in the Ottoman state enjoyed special recognition as the third nation. Upon their arrival during this period, the Jews in the Ottoman Empire played an important role in contributing to the economic and social development of the empire.<sup>120</sup> The Jews served as doctors in the Sultan's palace. They also served in the Ottoman army during the First World War. Young non-Ottoman Jewish volunteers served as soldiers in the army and confirmed the loyalty of the Jewish community to the Sultan. Besides, the Jews helped the finance of the war expenditures and contributed to the empire by providing animals and vehicles to the local military units.<sup>121</sup>

Palestine joined the Ottoman lands in 1516 when the Ottoman Sultan Yavuz Sultan Selim Khan won the Battle of Marj Dabiq. For 400 years the land of Palestine was under the governance of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire divided Palestine into three provinces of Damascus State, as Jerusalem, Gaza, and Nablus. Before the Ottoman Empire collapsed, the Palestinian people lived in welfare, prosperity and peace. The European states, particularly the British provoked Arabs by promising them an independent Arab Kingdom. The Arabs sided with the British against the Ottomans in the Palestinian Front during the First World War. Following the World War I and upon the collapse of Ottoman Empire the governance of the Palestinian lands was transferred to the British mandate.<sup>122</sup>

---

<sup>119</sup> Avigdor Levy, **The Jews of the Ottoman Empire**, The Darwin Press, New Jersey, 1994, p. 8.

<sup>120</sup> Kemal H. Karpat, **Turkey's Foreign Policy in Transition: 1950:1974**, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1975, p. 113.

<sup>121</sup> Stanford J. Shaw, **The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic**, New York University Press, New York, 1991, p. 231.

<sup>122</sup> Levy, p. 9.

## A. Ottoman Rule in Palestine

Due to antisemitic movements<sup>123</sup> that began in the Middle Ages, Jews were forced to emigrate from France, England, Spain and Portugal throughout the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. While some of the Jews settled in the Eastern European countries, a considerable number of them immigrated to the Ottoman territory.<sup>124</sup> Due to the increase in antisemitic movements in the world in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Jews decided to move to Palestinian lands which they considered as the promised lands for the Jews as it is written in the old testimony. In the First World Jewish Congress in 1897 held under the chairmanship of Theodor Herzl, significant decisions were taken for the resettlement of the Jews in Palestine. In 1901 and 1902, Theodor Herzl proposed Ottoman Sultan Abdulhamid to receive the land of Palestine as a homeland for the Jews for paying the debts of the Ottoman State. The Sultan did not accept the proposal by stating that such a bargain would not take place during his lifetime.<sup>125</sup> Despite the Sultan's rejection of the proposal, Jewish groups slowly and secretly started to move to Palestine and build small settlements among the Arab villages.

By the end of the First World War, Ottomans lost their land in the Middle East to British and French. Tsarist Russia left the war because of the 1918 Bolshevik Revolution and revealed the secret agreement between the French and British. Secret Sykes-Picot Treaty that was signed in 1916 showed how British and French planned to divide and rule the Middle East among themselves without allocating any land to Arabs. In this context, majority of the current conflicts that are experienced by Middle Eastern countries are the results of this divide and rule policies.

The uprising of the Arab people against the Ottoman Empire by allying with British during the First World War showed the willingness of the Arabs to establish their independence countries. The negotiations between Britain and the Arabs were the result of the correspondence made between the Egyptian governor Henry Mc.

---

<sup>123</sup> Antisemitism can be described as the hostility towards the Jewish religion, race, culture and nation.

<sup>124</sup> Tayyar Arı, **Geçmişten Günümüze Ortadoğu Siyaset Savaş Diplomasi**, MKM Yayıncılık, Bursa, 2008, p. 112.

<sup>125</sup> Ribbi Halloum, **Belgelerle Filistin: Dün Bugün Yarın**, Yeni Alan Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 1989, p. 133.

Mahon and Emir of Mecca Shariah Emir Hussein.<sup>126</sup> During this period the number of Jews moving from Europe and Russia to Palestine increased tremendously.

### **B. Jewish Settlements in Palestine, Balfour Declaration (1917) and British Mandate System in Palestine**

The root of Palestinian question has historical, cultural and religious dimensions and Palestinian-Israeli conflict shapes Middle Eastern politics. The Palestinian lands which were governed by the Ottoman Empire in 1517 were captured and ruled by the British at the end of the World War I. The anti-Semitism and the development of the Zionist movement in Europe by the end of the 19th century can be shown as the main reasons for Jewish immigration to Palestine.

The Jewish immigration to the Palestinian land came from different directions in different waves. Following the assassination of Tsar of Russia Alexander II in 1881, an intense anti-Semitism and pogroms arose in Russia. Between the years of 1881 and 1891, the Jews emigrated from Russia in groups. In this first migration wave, 134.000 Jews migrated to the United States, 5.000 Jews immigrated to Palestine, and 10.000 Jews immigrated to the other countries.<sup>127</sup> Pressure on the Jewish people continued following this wave of immigration, and 60.000 Jews migrated from Romania in five years between 1899 and 1904 as a result of the pressures in Romania.<sup>128</sup> The second and the greater wave of immigration from Russia took place in 1892, and approximately 500.000 Jews were forced to immigrate to other countries, particularly to the United States.<sup>129</sup> Following these Jewish migrations, the Jews increased their political activities in the US and started organizations of diaspora.

Aliyah, which is described as the migration of the Jews to the Palestine, can be examined under three periods. These are as follows: the first migration between the years of 1881 and 1903, the second migration between the years of 1904 and

---

<sup>126</sup> Manuel Hassassian, **Palestine: Factionalism in the National Movement (1919-1939)**, PASSIA, Jerusalem, 1990, p. 13.

<sup>127</sup> Arı, p.113.

<sup>128</sup> Fahir Armaoğlu, **Filistin Meselesi ve Arap-İsrail Savaşları (1948-1988)**, Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, Ankara, 1994, (Filistin), p. 13.

<sup>129</sup> Arı, p. 113.

1918 which especially forms the main team of the Zionist state, and the third migration between the years of 1919 and 1923 which paved the way for the settlements in the Palestinian lands.<sup>130</sup>

Theodor Herzl, founder of the political form of Zionism (a movement to establish a Jewish homeland) wrote the book “The Jewish State” (*Der Judenstaat*) in 1896.<sup>131</sup> According to the Basel Program that was published at the end of the first Zionist Congress that was held in 1897, it was decided that a Jewish state would be established in the Palestinian territory. The World Zionism Organization would be working for the achievement of this purpose. Funds were created to build a Jewish state and more organizations were established in Europe. With the money donated, expansive lands were bought from the Arabs that lived in Palestine, but these were not enough to establish a Jewish state. By the beginning of 1900s, the Jewish settlers in Palestine reached to twenty five thousand and most of these people came from Eastern Europe. By that time there were approximately half a million Jews living with the Arabs in the region. A second Jewish migrant wave of forty thousand people migrated to Palestine between 1904 and 1914.<sup>132</sup>

The weakening of the Ottoman Empire during the First World War gave the opportunity to the Jews to settle into the Palestinians land. With the support of the Britain, the Jews made an important step towards the establishment of Israel with the Balfour Declaration, which was published in 1917. The Balfour Declaration that was issued by British Foreign Secretary, Lord Arthur Balfour was a letter of support from the British government to one of the leaders of Zionist movement, Lord Rothschild for the establishment of a Jewish state in the Palestinian territories. The Declaration was published by the persistent efforts of the Zionist leaders Weizmann and Skolov, who desired Palestine to be solely a Jewish country. It was the first internationally recognized step that was taken to establish a Jewish settlement in Palestine. In fact, Britain aimed at settling its Jewish community in Palestine to protect the Suez Canal

---

<sup>130</sup> 1881–1923 yıllarını kapsayan üç temel göç hareketi ile ilgili daha detaylı bilgi için bkz. M. Lütfullah

Karaman, Uluslararası İlişkiler Çıkmazında Filistin Sorunu, İz Yayıncılık, İstanbul 1991, pp. 18-30.

<sup>131</sup> David W. Ziegler, **War, Peace, and International Politics**, Addison Wesley Longman, New York, 1999, p. 54.

<sup>132</sup> Muzaffer Dönmez, “İsrail-Filistin Sorununun Tarihçesi”, 02.08. 2014, <http://muzafferdonmez.blogspot.com/2014/08/israil-filistin-sorununun-tarihcesi.html> (11.01.2017)

and its own trade route to India. In a month following the declaration, Ottomans lost Jerusalem and the entire region went under the control of the United Kingdom.<sup>133</sup>

Following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire by British-Arab Alliance during the First World War, British started to control the Palestinian lands. At the meeting of the High Council of the Central Powers and the Ally Powers, held on 19-26 April 1920, the Ally Powers decided that Palestine would join Britain as a mandate and the Balfour Declaration would be strengthened. The United States of America recognized the British mandate in June 1922. Between two world wars under the British mandate the Palestinian lands were full of chaos and small-scale wars due to the fight between Arabs and Jews. Britain's efforts to reconcile the Arabs and Jews did not produce results. Due to the clashes between the two sides, Britain put restrictions on the Jewish immigration to Palestine in 1939. However, the Jews continued to enter Palestine illegally. British efforts to prevent these illegal immigrations to Palestine caused armed conflicts between the British troops and the Jews.<sup>134</sup>

British attempts wanted to find a solution to this problem however, their attempts failed. The Jewish forces that refused the mandate and wanted to establish a Jewish state in Palestine began attacking British forces in the region. Due to the increasing attacks on all sides, Britain referred the Palestinian issue to the United Nations on 2 April 1947. The UN gathered on the 28<sup>th</sup> of April 1947 and decided to establish the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP).<sup>135</sup> In the November 29, 1947 voting the UN General Assembly accepted the proposal of the UNSCOP to establish two separate states on the Palestinian territory, a Palestinian State and a Jewish State and to put the city of Jerusalem under the UN control despite the negative votes of Turkey and the Arab States. After this decision, the Arabs and the Jews living in Palestine began to arm quickly.<sup>136</sup> This was the beginning of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict which is commonly referred as Arab-Israeli conflict since other Arab countries also joined the war. While the Arabs

---

<sup>133</sup> Faruk Sönmezoglu, **Uluslararası İlişkiler Sözlüğü**, 3. Baskı, Der Yayınları, İstanbul, 2000, pp. 123-124.

<sup>134</sup> Poyraz Gürson, **Suriye**, Ankara Üniversitesi Yayınları, Ankara, 2006, p. 25.

<sup>135</sup> Arı, p. 218.

<sup>136</sup> Fahir Armaoğlu, **20. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi**, Alkım Yayınları, İstanbul, 2005, (Siyasi), pp. 483-484.



wanted to establish an Arab state in Palestine, Jews on the other hand, were struggling to establish their own state.

## **II. TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT DURING REPUBLIC OF TURKEY (1940-1980)**

Following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Republic of Turkey was established by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in 1923. Turkish policy-makers in the early years of the Republic decided to follow a neutral foreign policy. They followed a foreign policy based on Atatürk's "Peace at home, Peace in the world." slogan.<sup>137</sup> In its early years Turkey was in general neutral to the developments in the Middle East and did not want to be part of the chaos in the region since Turks felt that they were betrayed by Arabs during the last years of the Ottoman Empire. The distrust that began between the Turks and the Arabs during the First World War grew even more during the 1950s when the Arab states sided with Soviet Union and Turkey allied with the USA. However, while following neutral foreign policies, in fact Turkish foreign policy makers leaned towards a pro-western foreign policy. By the end of Second World War, particularly when Turkey was threatened by the Soviet Union, by Stalin in his attempt to get a control on the Straits, Turkey openly started to follow a pro-western foreign policy. The Democratic Party leader, the first prime minister of the multi-party period, Adnan Menderes in the 1950s accepted the fact that the Soviets were a political and military threat to Turkey. For this reason, the Democrat Party policy-makers strengthened Turkey's ties with the West; especially the military ties with the United States (US) and became a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1952.<sup>138</sup>

In early 1950s and 1960s the most significant issue that determined the relations between Turkey and the Arab countries was communism since Turkey was scared that the newly established Arab states would be communists. That is why Turkey followed a hostile foreign policy towards the establishment of independent

---

<sup>137</sup> Aras, Nineties, p. 151.

<sup>138</sup> Aykan, p. 92.

Iraq and Syria. Cold War era politics had a direct impact on Turkey's relations with both Syria and Iraq.<sup>139</sup>

Although Turkey has been the first Muslim country to recognize Israel's independence as part of its pro-Western foreign policy, Turkish foreign policy makers kept distance with its relations to Israel throughout the 1950s and 1960s and in general followed a somehow neutral foreign policy in the 1948, 1956 and 1967 Arab-Israeli War. From time to time Turkish policy makers also criticized the Israeli attacks to Palestinians. In fact, Turkey's disdain for the Arabs contributed to the development of bilateral relations between Turkey and Israel.<sup>140</sup> Kemal Karpat argues that "Turkey's relationship with Israel is a by-product of relations with the Arabs and the West." Turkish elite was impressed with the fast economic and social development of Israel between 1949 and 1963.<sup>141</sup>

In the 1970s Turkey's demand for petroleum shaped its foreign policies against the West and Arabs. As a result of the Johnson Letter sent by American President Johnson as warning to Turkish foreign policy towards the Cyprus Crisis as well as the Cyprus crisis itself and the Cyprus issue that deteriorated the relations between the USA and Turkey, Turkey started following a more multidimensional foreign policy. At the beginning of the 1970s and 1980s, the lack of support from the Arabs concerning the Cyprus problem, the silent stance of the Arabs against the ill-treatment of the Bulgarian Turks in the Balkans, tensions over the water rights concerning Euphrates and Tigris, differences over the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA) and PKK attacks brought the end of the high level economic and political relations between Turkey and some Arab countries.<sup>142</sup>

Turkey carried out policies on equal footing to the parties in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. However, the internal and external political and economic developments of the period determined the level of the relations between Turkey and Israel, and Turkey and the Arab states. Turkish-Israeli relations suffered constant damage due to the conflicts between Israel and Palestine. The 1956 and 1967 Arab-

---

<sup>139</sup> Meliha Benli Altunışık and Özlem Tür, "From Distant Neighbors to Partners? Changing Syria-Turkish Relations", **SAGE Publications**, Vol: 37, No: 2, 2006, (Partners), p. 233.

<sup>140</sup> Nachmani, p. 8.

<sup>141</sup> Karpat, p. 114.

<sup>142</sup> Süha Bölükbaşı, "Behind The Turkish- Israeli Alliance: A Turkish View", **Journal of Palestinian Studies**, Vol: 29, No: 1, 1999, pp. 28-29.

Israeli Wars and the Jerusalem Law which was adopted by Knesset in 1980 led to the weakening of Turkish-Israeli relations.<sup>143</sup>

### **A. Establishment of the State of Israel and the Palestinian Question**

Arab cooperation with the British during the First World War had a profound place in the memory of the Turkish nation. Although Arabs were considered as an untrustworthy society, Turkish foreign policy-makers followed a kind of neutral foreign policy towards the Arabs in its early years. During the negotiations held in the United Nations in 1947, Turkey was on the same platform with the Arab countries by taking a stance for an independent Palestinian state and opposing the General Assembly law in November 1947 which divided Palestine.<sup>144</sup> The Israeli executives were not in consensus for the termination of the British mandate. The issue of the establishment of the state of Israel was discussed at the Jewish Provisional National Council, and on 14 May 1948 the establishment of the State of Israel was decided by six votes to five, and David Ben Gurion declared that the State of Israel was established.<sup>145</sup> Following the announcement, following the American recognition of Israel's independence, Soviet Russia also acknowledged its independence. The fact that these two opposing states recognized the newly established State of Israel was a clear indication of that Israel would become an important actor in the international arena.

Although the Turkish-Arab alliance over the Palestinian issue was a significant stage for Turkish Arab relations, Turkish fear of communism led the country to follow a pro-western foreign policy. This pro-western foreign policy started in the early years of the Republic and gained new dimensions during the Second World War. The pro-western alliance got stronger with the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan. Truman doctrine is a support and containment policy on the governments that fight with Communism in order to counter the expansion of the Soviet Union and its influence on the surrounding countries. Marshall Plan is a program planned by the USA to aid the restoration of European countries in the post-

---

<sup>143</sup> Gruen, Cooperation, p. 3.

<sup>144</sup> Aykan, p. 92.

<sup>145</sup> Oral Sander, **Siyasi Tarih:1918–1994**, İmge Kitabevi, Ankara, 2005, pp. 298-300.

World War II era.<sup>146</sup> Turkey was on the side of the West for the first time in favor of establishing a reconciliation commission for Palestine in the United Nations in December 1948. However, Turkey became the first Muslim state to recognize Israel on 28 March 1949. This was part of Turkish pro-western foreign policy. Moreover, Turkey needed the American aid it had been receiving and the strong Jewish lobby in the US could have stopped that. This move confirmed Turkey's alliance with the West, particularly with the United States, but had a negative impact on the relations with the Arab states.<sup>147</sup>

Although Turkey recognized the state of Israel, it did not recognize the territories Israel had occupied in the following Arab-Israeli wars. In the process, Turkish policy-makers continued to support the view that the Palestinian Arabs also had the right to establish their own state. During this period Turkey was not able to follow a coherent foreign policy concerning Arab-Israeli relations. Approximately one year after the announcement of its decision to recognize Israel, Turkey opened an embassy in Tel-Aviv on 9 March 1950 and sent its first ambassador in 1952.<sup>148</sup> Following the start of official political relations, the relations between the two countries had made significant progress in the military, economic and intelligence fields. However, the Turkish-Israeli relations were mostly overshadowed by the Arab-Israeli conflicts. Both Turkish-Israeli relations and Turkish-Palestinian relations were all determined according to the incidents between Israel and Palestine.

### **B. Turkish Foreign Policy towards the Middle East in the 1950s**

The decision of Turkey to recognize Israel in 1949, and to establish diplomatic relations with Israel by sending Seyfullah Esin to Tel-Aviv in January 1950 was part of its pro-Western foreign policy aiming at achieving full membership in the NATO.<sup>149</sup> However, the geostrategic position of Turkey, and the political and ideological objectives of the leaders of the period put the country's foreign policy

---

<sup>146</sup> United States of America Department of State, Office of the Historian, "Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan", <https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/short-history/truman>, (16.02.2017).

<sup>147</sup> Aykan, p. 92.

<sup>148</sup> Malike Bileydi Koç, *İsrail Devleti'nin Kuruluşu ve Bölgesel Etkileri 1948–2006*, Günizi Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 2006, p. 295.

<sup>149</sup> Yavuz and Khan, p. 72.

into a strong duality. The duality meant that Turkey had to make efforts to become a part of the Western state systems such as the Council of Europe, NATO and the European Union (EU) and to actively participate in Middle Eastern politics. This natural dual-policy approach and contradictory orientations in foreign policy resulted to a combination of Islamic and Western characteristics of Turkey.<sup>150</sup>

This duality exists in the Turkish political identity as well. Turkey currently is the only Muslim country in the NATO and the only democratic-secular state in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Despite its western orientation in its foreign policy, Turkey can be defined as a Middle Eastern country with a Muslim identity and cultural heritage.<sup>151</sup> Throughout the 1950s, Turkish ruling elite tried to balance their relations with Israel and the Arab countries by attempting to separate the two relations.<sup>152</sup> During the 1950s since Turkey's national interests were identical to the NATO and Western interests, the ruling party and the bipolar system led Turkey to follow a pro-western foreign policy which had a negative impact on Turkey's relations with Palestine but a positive impact with Turkey's relations with Israel.<sup>153</sup> Turkey's pro-western foreign policy can be observed with Turkey's membership to Baghdad Pact.

### **1. Baghdad Pact**

In 1955, Democratic Party government under the rule of Prime Minister Adnan Menderes got involved into the Middle Eastern affairs by joining the Baghdad Pact. It was a Western-backed military defense network that was built to protect the Middle Eastern countries from the Soviet threat. Its real purpose was to make sure that the newly established Arab countries and Iran would not ally with the Soviet Union vis-à-vis the United States.<sup>154</sup> Although Turkey in general paid attention to keep away from Middle Eastern affairs, Turkish foreign policy makers joined the

---

<sup>150</sup> Yavuz and Khan, p. 69.

<sup>151</sup> Yavuz and Khan, p. 70.

<sup>152</sup> William Hale, "Turkey, Middle East and Gulf Crisis", **International Affairs**, Vol: 68, No: 4, 1992, (Gulf), p. 681.

<sup>153</sup> Yılmaz Türel, "Türkiye-İsrail İlişkiler: Tarihten Günümüze", **Akademik Ortadoğu**, Vol: 5, No: 1, 2010, p. 12.

<sup>154</sup> Aykan, p. 92.

pact.<sup>155</sup> The Democratic Party government signed the Baghdad Pact and entered into military cooperation with the Iraq, Iran, and Pakistan under the observation of the United Kingdom and United States.

In fact, for the Arab countries, the Soviet threat remained very mild compared to Israel in the region. Even the pro-Western Jordan and Lebanon were not ready to join the Baghdad Pact and they did not mind withdrawing the reaction of the other Arab states. Moreover, the nationalist Arab regimes in Egypt and in Syria argued that the West was trying to use Turkey to create anti-Soviet pacts in the region. For this reason, the Arab countries did not see Turkey as a suitable ally to create an anti-communist defense pact in the region and they criticized all the other members for acting for the benefits of the West.<sup>156</sup>

Following the Baghdad Pact, the support given to the Eisenhower Doctrine in 1957 and the granting of the NATO base in Adana to the USA to establish a military unit led the loss of trust towards Turkey by the Arabs since these bases were used against Syria in 1957 and Lebanon in 1958.<sup>157</sup> Kemal Karpat's comment on the Baghdad Pact summarizes the situation in the Middle East. According to Kemal Karpat, "there is hardly any other alliance in the recent history of foreign affairs as unnecessary, ineffectual and harmful to all parties as the Bagdad Pact."<sup>158</sup>

Baghdad Pact, in fact, led to the separation between the member states and the non-member states. Countries that were not members of the Pact even claimed that the member states got under the control of the Western countries. The overthrow of the kingdom in Iraq on 14 July 1958 threatened the future of the Pact. The Iraqi government officially announced that it would withdraw from the Pact on 24 March 1959. The title of the Pact was changed as the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) on 21 August 1959. The center of the organization was moved to Ankara, and the Baghdad Pact was abolished. Following the end of Democrat Party rule in 1960, it was widely acknowledged that the Baghdad Pact strengthened anti-Western attitude in the Middle East and alienated Turkey from the Arab countries.<sup>159</sup>

---

<sup>155</sup> Yavuz, p. 23.

<sup>156</sup> Aykan, p. 93.

<sup>157</sup> Aykan, p. 93.

<sup>158</sup> Karpat, p. 116.

<sup>159</sup> Karpat, pp. 123-125.

A US general was appointed to the head of the military planning board of CENTO. However, no tangible effort was exerted in military. CENTO, which was constrained to just boosting economic cooperation, lost its importance due to the dispute between the US and India-Pakistan, and the attitude of Turkey in the Cyprus issue. Pakistan and Iran both left the organization in March 1979. CENTO was completely dissolved with its abolishment by its Permanent Committee.<sup>160</sup> Throughout its existence Israel was against the pact since the country was not recognized by Pakistan, Iraq and Iran. Israel assumed that it was pact that was established against the existence of Israel.

## **2. 1956 Arab-Israeli War (Suez Crisis) and Peripheral Pact**

Due to Turkey's pro-western foreign policies and the impact of the US on Democratic Party governments, Turkey's relations with Israel improved significantly during the 1950s. This improvement naturally led to the regression of Turkey's relations with the Arabs. By aligning with the West, in the summer of 1951, Turkish government protested Egypt's decision to ban Israeli ships from crossing the Suez Canal.<sup>161</sup> The political decision of Turkey had a blow to Turkish-Egyptian relations and led to a harsh criticism of Turkey by the Arab world. Before the crisis started, Turkish Prime Minister Menderes stated that the Suez issue was not only a concern for Britain and Egypt but had a global character which also concerned Turkey.<sup>162</sup>

Another event that affected the bilateral relations during this period was the Suez Crisis. In his inauguration speech delivered on the 4th anniversary of the foundation of the Republic of Egypt in Alexandria, the Egyptian President Nasser declared that the Suez Canal Company was nationalized together with its all facilities and properties. After this declaration, while the UK and France recognized the nationalization of Suez Canal as *casus belli*, Israel took for granted the arms treaty signed with the Czech Republic as *casus belli* and the closure of Tiran Strait in

---

<sup>160</sup> Archive of US Department of State, "The Baghdad Pact (1955) and the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO)", <https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/lw/98683.htm>, (24.02.2017).

<sup>161</sup> Philip J. Robins, **Turkey and the Middle East**, Council on Foreign Relations Press, New York, 1991, p. 76.

<sup>162</sup> Gencer Özcan, **Türkiye İsrail İlişkileri 50. Yılına Girerken**, DER Yayınları, İstanbul, 2001, p. 162.

September 1955 as well. British, French and Israeli officials prepared a plan to attack Egypt after long negotiations. This crisis started in 1956 and caused the Second Arab-Israeli War in the Middle East. On 29 October 1956, the Israeli army attacked Egypt. The French and British aircrafts bombed the Egyptian airports.<sup>163</sup>

Turkish-Israeli relations were affected by the invasion of Egypt by Britain, France and Israel in 1956. During the war, the Egyptian President Nasser accused Iraq of cooperating with the “Zionist enemy” through the Baghdad Pact and Turkey’s diplomatic mission in Israel. Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Said rejected these accusations, but he still exerted pressure on Ankara to break the diplomatic relations with Israel.<sup>164</sup> In the 1956 Suez crisis, the attack on Egypt by the French, British and Israeli forces made the policies of Prime Minister Menderes even more indefensible towards the Muslim East and the West. During the Baghdad Pact meetings, Turkey declared Israel as the greatest threat to the peace and withdrew its ambassador from Israel in order to show its good faith to the Arab countries and not to remain a puppet of the West.<sup>165</sup> Turkish officials stated that they would remain friends with Israel and would continue the friendship although the diplomatic relations were at a lower level. As usual Turkey was trying to please both sides at the same time.

Following these developments, Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion signed a security cooperation agreement with Ethiopia and Iran in 1958. In order to strengthen the security cooperation, Ben Gurion came to Turkey secretly on 29-30 August 1958 to meet Prime Minister Menderes. Two prime ministers signed an agreement named “Peripheral Pact”. This agreement included covert cooperation between the two countries in military, diplomatic and security fields. The timing and signing of this agreement was an obvious sign of the fact that Turkey’s relations with Israel were based on its relations with the Arab countries.<sup>166</sup> The greatest supporter of the idea of the Peripheral Pact was the United States. The Peripheral Pact showed Turkey’s political cooperation with Israel and its distrust towards Arab countries.<sup>167</sup>

---

<sup>163</sup> Peter Mansfield, *Osmanlı Sonrası Türkiye ve Arap Dünyası*, Sander Yayınları, İstanbul, 1975, p. 151.

<sup>164</sup> Yavuz and Khan, p. 72.

<sup>165</sup> Aykan, p. 93.

<sup>166</sup> Özcan, p. 162.

<sup>167</sup> Robins, p. 77.



There were three reasons why Turkey was involved in the Peripheral Pact. First, Turkey was uncomfortable with the establishment of United Arab Republic between Egypt and Iraq. It was obviously a new Republic that would be hostile to Turkey. Turkish policy-makers moreover, were uneasy about the military aid given by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) to Syria. Second, Iraq's withdrawal from Baghdad Pact because of a coup that took place under the leadership of General Kasım in July 1958 increased the threats for Turkey coming from its southern border. Finally, the US wanted Turkey to be included in the newly formed Pact.<sup>168</sup> After the establishment of the Peripheral Pact, Turkish-Israeli relations regained its vitality came to level prior to the Suez crisis. However, the developments in the region, particularly in the second half of the 1960s, did not let this cooperation to last long.

### **C. Turkish-American Relations and Turkish Foreign Policy towards the Arab-Israeli Conflict in the 1960s**

Turkey's support for the Arab position on the Palestinian issue first emerged as part of a new policy which was founded in the 1960s and based on rapprochement with the Arab world. The relations between the Turks and the Arabs moved to a smoother phase.<sup>169</sup> The deteriorating domestic politics and economic situation in Turkey triggered a military coup that overthrew the Democratic Party government in May 1960. In the aftermath of the coup a more multi-dimensional foreign policy was followed.

During the period between 1960 and 1980, Turkey generally carried out an equal distance policy against the parties in the Palestinian-Israeli issue. Turkey followed a more stable policy in this conflict due to its deteriorating relations with the US which was mainly the result of the Cyprus question. Turkey's economic problems of the 1960s also had a significant impact on Turkey's foreign policy towards this conflict.<sup>170</sup> The problems in Turkish-American relations, which began

---

<sup>168</sup> Çağrı Erhan and Ömer Kürkçüoğlu, **Türk Dış Politikası**, Ed. Baskın Oran, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2001, p. 644.

<sup>169</sup> Aykan, p. 91.

<sup>170</sup> Türel, p. 13.

with the 1964 Cyprus Crisis and the Johnson Letter and continued with the American embargo in mid 1970s, had a negative impact on Turkish-Israeli relations as well.<sup>171</sup> Therefore, not only Turkish-Israeli relations were affected from the Palestinian conflict but also the Turkish-American relations declined due to the conflict.

Following these developments, Turkish policy-makers shifted their foreign policy towards Palestinians and started supporting the PLO openly on international platforms. Turkey openly condemned Israel in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War for its excessive use of force and for occupying Arab land. Turkey did not allow the NATO bases to be used in the country during the war. Moreover, Turkey allied with the Arabs and voted against Israel asking it to withdraw from the occupied territories at the end of the war.<sup>172</sup>

### **1. 1964 Cyprus Crisis and Johnson Letter**

The first most significant issue that started the deterioration of Turkish-American relations in the 1960s was the American decision to remove the Jupiter missiles unilaterally. US followed this policy after it was threatened by the Soviet Union with its deployed missiles in Cuba. The second most significant issue that led to the deterioration of Turkish-American relations was the reluctance of the United States to support Turkey in the Cyprus war. This reluctance was made clear in the letter sent to the Turkish Prime Minister İnönü in June 1964 by the US President Lyndon B. Johnson.

In late 1963, conflicts between the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots turned into warfare. The federal system did not work. Greeks aimed at annexing the island to Greece and therefore started a guerrilla fight through their organizations, Greek Cypriot Nationalist Guerrilla Organization (EOKA—*Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston*). Upon the tense and bloody events that occurred in Cyprus in December 1963, Turkey planned to intervene into Cyprus conflict in June 1964. Turkey planned to do this by using its rights entitled by the 1960 Guarantee Treaty to safeguard Turkish nation. It aimed at preventing the massacre carried out by Greek

---

<sup>171</sup> Ahmet Davutoğlu, **Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu**, Küre Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 2009, (Stratejik Derinlik), p. 418.

<sup>172</sup> Türel, p. 13.

Cypriots from turning into genocide. However, İnönü in fact was not planning to start a war since the Turkish army and the navy was not ready for such a war. İnönü acted as the country was ready for a war in order to receive an intervention from the USA that would lead to peace.<sup>173</sup>

Due to İnönü's bluff American President Johnson sent a letter to Turkish government warning Turkey not to attempt such an intervention on the island. In such an attempt Turkish military was not supposed to use the American arms and the Americans would not come to help of the Turks in case the Soviets intervened into the war on the side of the Greek Cypriots.<sup>174</sup> This was the proof of Turkey's diplomatic isolation in the Cyprus issue.

President Johnson's letter was written in a politically incorrect and humiliating way and therefore, angered the Turkish people. This letter persuaded the Turkish policy-makers that it was time for Turkey to become more independent in its foreign affairs. Concerning the Cyprus problem in its attempt to protect the Turkish Cypriots from the Greek Cypriots' attacks Turkish government did not receive the support it needed from the USA. As a result, Turkish policy-makers decided to follow a more balanced foreign policy and rather than following a solely pro-American foreign policy, they decided to turn to both Muslim countries and the third world countries.<sup>175</sup> As already stated, Turkey's deteriorating relations with the USA had a negative impact on Turkey's relations with Israel. Moreover, the other elements of the Turkish identity, namely the Turkish-Islamic component and the need for Turkey's oil in the Middle East, forced the Turkish political elite to take a pro-Arab attitude in matters related to the West.<sup>176</sup>

## **2. 1967 Arab-Israeli War (Six Days War-The Occupation of Eastern Jerusalem)**

The 1967 War is a war that lasted for six days between Israel and its Arab neighbors lasted with the loss of land for the Arabs. Arab countries that lost the 1948

---

<sup>173</sup> Armaoğlu, Siyasi, p. 788.

<sup>174</sup> Aykan, p. 93.

<sup>175</sup> Aykan, p. 94.

<sup>176</sup> Karpat, p. 123.

War aimed at starting another war to end the existence of Israel on Palestinian land. Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria provided weapons to the Arab countries neighboring Israel. Despite fighting with numerous Arab groups, Israel won a landslide victory and enlarged its borders four times by occupying the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, the Golan Heights from Syria and the Gaza and West Bank lands of Palestine.

Turkey clearly stood in favor of the Arab countries in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. The reasons behind the stance of Turkey can be listed as follows: First, Turkey was not supported by the US government in its fight to protect the Turkish Cypriots from the attacks of Greek Cypriots. Turkish attempt to intervene into the situation on the island was prevented by Johnson's Letter. Therefore, to receive the support of the Arab countries concerning the Cyprus issue, Turkish policy-makers supported the Arab cause in the 1967 War. Second, Justice Party (*Adalet Partisi*—AP), a liberal right wing party under the leadership of Süleyman Demirel received the votes of the conservative population in the aftermath of 1960 coup and wanted to serve them in return by adopting friendly relations with the Arab countries. This attitude was generally supported by the left-wing parties and the public who were also against the US. Third, the petroleum crisis that broke out in the early 1970s, altered Turkish foreign policy since Turkey was dependent on oil producing countries, particularly the Arab countries. Turkey while importing oil from the Arab countries were at the same time exporting goods to the same countries. Finally, the left-wing groups in Turkey were also against Israel's treatment of Palestinians from a leftist point of view that Palestinians were being the oppressed by Israel.<sup>177</sup>

The new Turkish foreign policy in the 1960s was implemented in a balanced way. While Turkey in general was preserving its pro-western foreign policy, at the same time was paying attention to keep good relations with the Arabs by not fully supporting the Palestinian issue. For example, Demirel government abstained from joining the Arab political groups, which would harm relations with the other countries. Thus, Turkish politicians declared that it would be useful to convene an Islamic conference with the participation of Turkey in the Arab-Israeli conflict, but they did not support the plan that was put forward by the King of Saudi Arabia Faisal

---

<sup>177</sup> Karpat, p. 126.

claiming that it might cause disintegration at the end of 1965. Turkish politicians refrained from condemning Israel as “aggressive” following the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. However, at the same time Turkish government wanted Israel to withdraw from the territories it occupied in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War.<sup>178</sup>

#### **D. Developments in the 1970s and Its Impact on Turkish-Arab/Israeli Relations**

Throughout the 1970s, Turkish politicians started to support the Palestinian issue as a humanitarian problem. But at the same time Turkey did not consider cutting its relations with Israel.<sup>179</sup> Turkey voted against the UN decision of December 18, 1972 that accepted PLO a terrorist group. However, in January 1975 in a joint declaration Turkey and Libya announced their support for the right of Palestinians to fight for their freedom and for the occupied land. Taking into consideration the economic importance of the oil wealth of the Arab countries for Turkey, it was clearly seen that economic conditions were influential in changing Turkey’s foreign policy decisions in 1970s.<sup>180</sup>

The main reason for Turkey’s pro-Arab policies in the 1970s was the expectation that the Arabs could provide support for Turkey’s foreign policy and economic problems. Diplomatically, the persistent effort of Turkey to acquire the Arab support for the Cyprus issue did not mean anything. The Arabs condemned the declaration of independence of the Turkish Cypriots and the Islamic Conference Organization never recognized the Turkish Cypriot community more than observer status.<sup>181</sup>

Although Turkey followed pro-Arab policies throughout the 1970s, it did not even consider interrupting its relations with Israel, and even maintained a balanced policy between Israel and Arabs to a certain extent. In this sense, although a pro-

---

<sup>178</sup> Aykan, p. 95.

<sup>179</sup> Aykan, p. 96.

<sup>180</sup> Aykan, p. 97.

<sup>181</sup> Alan Makovsky, “Turkey: Erbakan at Six Months”, **Policy Watch**, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, No: 230, 1996, p. 149.

Arab foreign policy emerged in the 1970s, this situation did not affect Turkish-Israeli relations very much.<sup>182</sup>

### 1. 1973 Arab-Israeli War

In an attempt to get back the occupied lands from Israel, Egypt and Syria attacked Israel on 6 October 1973 unexpectedly, and the events experienced during and after the war cooled the already stagnant Turkish-Israeli relations. Moreover, during this period, Turkey established close relations with the PLO which was considered as a terrorist organization by Israel.<sup>183</sup> This recognition showed the change in Turkish foreign policy concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict in terms of active support given to the Arab world. The most concrete sign of this was the backing was Turkey's support to the PLO and the Palestinian issue on international platforms.

Turkey tried to maintain a balanced policy towards the parties during the 1973 Arab-Israeli War. Although Turkey stated that it was neutral to the both sides, the fact that it opened its airspace to the Russian airplanes that helped the Arab countries and closed the İncirlik base to the US airplanes to help Israel was a sign that it took sides with the Arabs.<sup>184</sup> The Second meeting of OIC that gathered in Lahore in February 1974 evaluated the results of the 1973 war and published a statement. Although it was openly debated that the OIC member states would cut all their relations with Israel in this declaration, Turkey expressed its reservations on this issue.<sup>185</sup>

The fourth Arab-Israeli war in 1973 showed that the Arab-Israeli conflict was an important factor affecting the peace in the Middle East. In addition, the rise in oil process in the aftermath of 1973 Arab-Israeli War and the oil embargo had a very negative impact on Turkish economy since Turkey was dependent on other countries for oil. This situation led Turkey to establish economic ties with oil rich Arab countries. Moreover, the junior partner of the coalition government established in

---

<sup>182</sup> Meliha Benli Altunışık, "Turkish-Israeli Rapprochement in the Post-Cold War Era", **Middle Eastern Studies**, Vol: 30, No: 2, 2000, (Rapprochement), p. 174.

<sup>183</sup> Erhan and Kürkçüoğlu, p. 800.

<sup>184</sup> Erhan and Kürkçüoğlu, p. 798.

<sup>185</sup> Özcan, p. 164.

1974, conservative National Salvation Party (*Milli Selamet Partisi*—MSP) under the leadership of Necmettin Erbakan also attempted to strengthen Turkey’s ties with the Muslim Arab world. However, the influence of the party on Turkey’s relations with Arab world was limited since the coalition only lasted eight months.<sup>186</sup>

## 2. 1974 Cyprus Peace Operation

Turkey intervened into the conflict on the island of Cyprus in the summer of 1974 in order to protect Turkish Cypriots from the attacks of the Greek Cypriots. Turkish intervention into the island of Cyprus was not welcomed by the American government since the Americans tried to discourage Turks from such an attempt. In 1975 American government with the impact of a strong Greek lobby applied an arms embargo to Turkey for this intervention which they identified as an invasion. This arms embargo that included other economic sanctions ruined the fragile Turkish economy.<sup>187</sup>

The alienation of Turkey from the western world after the Cyprus issue, the increasing economic prosperity of the Middle East and the increase of the Islamic feelings within the country made the Turkish state more vulnerable to the previously disdained Arab world.<sup>188</sup> Having faced the reaction of the West because of the Cyprus Peace Operation in 1974, which gave freedom to the Muslim Turks, Turkey naturally leaned towards the Arab-Islam brotherhood to find support for its own Palestinian issue on the international platform.<sup>189</sup>

It should not be thought that the relations of Turkey with Israel were not precisely determined with respect to the Arabs. On the contrary, Turkey’s ongoing relations with Israel were influenced by the independent factors, which are superior to the pressure of the Arab states, including the financial pressure of Saudi Arabia. The factors that encouraged Turkish-Arab relations weakened Turkey’s position on Israel indirectly. These factors are: Turkey’s situation in Cyprus, Arab oil sources and the Turkish public opinion pressure. The emergence of these factors

---

<sup>186</sup> Aykan, p. 97.

<sup>187</sup> Aykan, p. 97.

<sup>188</sup> Yavuz, p. 24.

<sup>189</sup> Mim Kemal Öke, *Siyonizm’den Uygurluklar Çatışmasına Filistin Sorunu*, Ufuk Yayınları, İstanbul, 2002, p. 128.

strengthened Turkish relations with the Arab world and led to an increase in Turkey's support for the Palestinian issue. Turkey in fact needed the support of the Arab world in its fight in Cyprus.

During this period, Turkey started voting in favor of the Arabs in the UN. In 1979 Turkey allowed the PLO to open a representation office in Ankara at the level of charge d'affaires. At the same time Israel also had a representative office at the level of charge d'affaires in Ankara. The opening of PLO offices in Ankara was a significant move on the Turkish side to conciliate relations with the Palestinians. This was the first real balancing political movement that the Turks had ever done since the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel as of 1949. However, the opening of the PLO bureau was not seen as a new beginning for the Turkish-PLO relations.<sup>190</sup> Erbakan as the junior partner of the following so called rightist National Front coalition governments that were established in March 1975 continued his attempts to establish closer relations with the Muslim countries. However, senior partner of the coalition government AP, under the leadership of Demirel did not welcome these attempts since he did not want Turkey to follow a more balanced foreign policy. However, Turkey accepted with reservation the final communiqué of the Seventh Islamic Conference which issued to break all relations with Israel, to call for all kinds of aid to the Palestinian people, and to take steps for the withdrawal of the membership of Israel from all the international organizations.<sup>191</sup>

Prior to 1979, Turkey's support for the right to self-determination of Palestine remained unfulfilled. However, it was in 1979 that the Ecevit government allowed the PLO to open a diplomatic office in Ankara. This change was based on two factors; Turkey needed Arab support in the Cyprus issue, and the cheap Arab oil to overcome the balance of payments.<sup>192</sup>

---

<sup>190</sup> Aykan, p. 100.

<sup>191</sup> Aykan, p. 99.

<sup>192</sup> Yavuz and Khan, p. 71.



### **III. TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT THROUGHOUT THE 1980s**

Following the military coup initiated by the Turkish Armed Forces on 12 September 1980, the Demirel government was abolished and the Turkish Grand National Assembly was dissolved. The leaders of the political parties were sent into exile or imprisoned. The liberal 1961 Constitution was replaced by more authoritarian 1983 Constitution.

Turkish-Israeli relations were reduced to a minimum level during the September 12 military coup. This decision was taken before the meeting of the OIC to be held in the province Taif in Saudi Arabia, and Turkey was represented by Bülent Ulusu at the prime ministry level (under military rule) for the first time. Ulusu's government reduced diplomatic relations with Israel to the second secretary level on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 1980. The junta embarked on rapprochements with Islamic countries when Turkey was criticized by the European countries concerning human rights and democratization following the 12 September 1980 military coup.

Turkey, bringing its relations with Europe to the point of break due to the long-lasting military coup, started rapprochement with countries in the region. Turkey began to establish Turkish-Saudi friendship, and moderate Islam was developed in the country. Meanwhile, following the Islamic revolution in Iran, the US lost a major ally, and the region became unstable gradually as the revolution spread to the countries in the region. During this period, Turkey, who condemned the annexation of Jerusalem to Israel and the Israeli attack to Lebanon, launched aid campaigns for Palestinians. After Palestine declared its independence, Turkey was the first country to recognize Palestine on the western block.<sup>193</sup>

#### **A. 1980 Coup d'état**

On 6 September 1980, Erbakan and the National Salvation Party organized the famous Konya rally, calling on Turkey to cut off its relations with Israel and to save all the Muslims from Jerusalem. At the rally, party supporters carried posters

---

<sup>193</sup> Yavuz, p. 24.

entitled “Death to Jews”.<sup>194</sup> This led to a strong reaction in the army, and it was believed that this was one of the most important reasons for the September 1980 military coup d’état.

The September 12 military intervention was met with reaction in the western countries and Turkey’s diplomatic isolation forced the military to establish relations with the Islamic countries. The Turkish foreign policy towards the Palestinians and Israelis was mostly defined within the scope of the attitude of the western countries towards Turkey.<sup>195</sup> The September 12 government attached great importance to the relations with the Muslim countries to strengthen its legitimacy in the country, to take the advantage of the social control function of Islam, and to overcome the economic difficulties it faced.

In the 1980s, the period of decline began in the Turkish-Israeli relations. During the 1980s when the former coup leader General Evren served as the president Turkey’s relations with Israel started deteriorating since President Evren stated that Israel was the most important source of instability in the region and criticized Israel in a very harsh manner. This attitude of Turkey against Israel drew both the reaction of Israel and the United States. In January 1981, sixty-one American senators sent a letter to the Turkish Embassy in Washington to warn Turkey for the foreign policy it was following towards Israel. They even warned that this Turkish foreign policy affected the Turkish-American relations negatively.<sup>196</sup>

Throughout the late 1970s and 1980s Israel kept occupying the land that belonged to Palestinians. First, Israel built Jewish settlements in the West Bank in 1978, annexed East Jerusalem in July 1980 and then Golan Heights in December 1981. Meanwhile, Israel’s capital was moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The annexation of the East Jerusalem and the declaration of Jerusalem as the capital were described as null and void by the UN Security Council Resolutions 476 and 478. Turkey closed the Consulate General of Jerusalem on 28 August 1980 and decreased the level of representation from the charge d’affaires to the level of second secretary

---

<sup>194</sup> George E. Gruen, “Turkey’s Relations with Israel and its Arab Neighbors: The Impact of Basic Interests and Changing Circumstances”, *Middle East Review*, Vol: 17, 1985, (Circumstances), p. 37.

<sup>195</sup> Bülent Aras, *The Palestinian-Israeli Peace Process and Turkey*, Nova Science Publishers, New York, 1998, (Turkey), p. 114.

<sup>196</sup> Türel, p. 14.

in Tel Aviv on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 1980.<sup>197</sup> Western press considered this decision as a natural consequence of the increasing economic dependence of the Turks on the Arabs. In contrast, the Turkish press stated that after the Iran-Iraq war had split the Arab world into two, Israel was not only option for Turkey in the region. According to this reasoning, as long as Turkey kept good relations with the conservative Arab countries such as the pro-Western Saudi Arabia and Egypt in the Middle East, it remained within the political framework approved by the West, although it lowered its representation level of relations with Israel.<sup>198</sup>

### **B. Prime Minister Turgut Özal Era**

In the aftermath of the first elections following the coup period, center-right and pro-American Turgut Özal's party ANAP came to power and Özal served as the prime minister until 1989 and president until his death in 1993. The 1980-90 periods can be defined as the period of activism in Turkish foreign policy and it was shaped by the vision of Turgut Özal, the founder of the first civilian government, following the 1980 coup. Under Özal's premiership Turkey followed an active role in the international arena following a free-market economy. Turkey economically was opened to the world and entered a process of reintegration into the Western countries, especially with the United States, where it had sustained its relations.<sup>199</sup> While economic and strategic relations with the US and the European countries were developing during this period, the breakout of conflicts with the PKK in the country affected Turkey's relations with the Middle East countries.

Özal's open market economy and close relations with the United States also brought Turkey and Israel closer one more time. Acquiring close contact with Israel for the highest level of relations with the US during the Özal period meant getting the support of the Jewish lobby against the Greek and Armenian lobbies which had impact on the American Congress. Turkish Armed Forces also supported strengthening of cooperation with Israel for security purposes. Turkish military

---

<sup>197</sup> Erhan and Kürkçüoğlu, p. 150.

<sup>198</sup> Aykan, p. 101.

<sup>199</sup> Bezen Balamir Coşkun, "İran-İsrail Ekseninde, Türk Dış Politikasının Analizi", Cüneyt Yenigün, Ertan Efeğil (Ed.), **Türkiye'nin Değişen Dış Politikası**, Nobel Yayın Dağıtım, İstanbul, 2010, pp. 459-460.

wanted to put pressure on the Islamic fundamentalist organizations operating in Turkey and benefit from Israel's experience in this field.<sup>200</sup> The fact that the Jewish and Turkish nations did not have any problems throughout the history made them sympathize with each other, which had a positive impact on Turkish-Israeli relations.

President Turgut Özal was convinced that Ankara should remain equally distant to Israel, Egypt and Iran, which were the three major regional power centers. However, he expressed that the military relations between Turkey and Israel made this impossible and Turkish-Israeli military relations damaged Turkey's relations with Iran.<sup>201</sup> Although Turkey clearly condemned Israel's actions against the Palestinians and voted with the Arabs at the United Nations and reduced its representation to a minimum level, these actions were never strong enough to completely dismantle the Turkish-Israeli relations. Turkey was trying to establish a balance between the Arabs and the Israelis, and to maintain their relations with Israel without disturbing the Arabs.<sup>202</sup> Even though Turkish-Israeli relations were at the minimum level during this period, it was seen that Turkey maintained its relations with Israel secretly to prevent the Arab reaction.

Throughout the 1980s Turkey's relations with the Arab states also showed some improvements. Regardless of pro-American tendencies of Prime Minister Özal, he seemed to be very eager to make Turkey to be recognized as a part of both the West and the Muslim world. This fact was confirmed in April 1987 when Özal government became the first Turkish government to apply to the European Economic Community (EEC).<sup>203</sup> Within the context of Özal's politics for civilianization and democratization, who came to the government after the coup administration, relations with the EEC were resumed. The relations between Turkey and EEC seemed to vary generally due to the developments in Turkey's domestic politics. The military coups in 1960, 1971, and 1980 had a significant impact on the relations between the EEC and Turkey. While the EEC was holding the membership application of Turkey due to economic and democratic reasons in the country,

---

<sup>200</sup> Aykan, p. 105.

<sup>201</sup> Alan Makovsky, Cengiz Çandar and Efraim Inbar, The Washington Institute, "The Turkish-Israeli-Syrian Triangle", **Policy Analysis**, Policy Watch 249, "Special Policy Forum", 15.03.2000, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-turkish-israeli-syrian-triangle>, (23.04.2017).

<sup>202</sup> Altunışık, p. 174.

<sup>203</sup> Aykan, p. 100.

Turkey was persistent in improving relations with the EEC and the membership to the Community as an indicator of a “western” foreign policy ideologically. When the Turkish economy showed signs of recovery, the Arab countries tried to improve their relations with Turkey due to the politically stable period in the aftermath of the coup. From the perspective of Turkey, Arab markets became even more important with the revival of the Turkish economy in connection with the increase in production and exports.<sup>204</sup>

Turkish foreign policy during the Özal administration was based on two points. First, Turkey was supposed to increase its regional political participation with its large population, military and increasing economic power. In this context, Turkey would make much more contribution to the protection of the peace in the region. Second, Turkey was supposed to regulate the role of mediation in the region in order not to harm the balanced relations with the Muslim East and the West. In order to contribute to peace, Prime Minister Özal conveyed his views concerning the resolution of the Middle East problem to PLO leader Arafat as well as to American President Reagan in his visit to the United States in 1985. Özal government kept its communication channels open to Israel, despite criticizing Israel’s foreign policy, including its air attack on the PLO headquarters in Tunis in October 1985. Özal government was playing the role of a bridge between the Muslim East and the West. Although Özal government wanted to play an active role in peace in the region, it was reluctant to act as a mediator.<sup>205</sup>

Dealing with the Cyprus issue, Turkey did not receive the support from the Arab countries it expected. When Turkey did not receive this support, it started working on improving its relations with Israel particularly in the area of intelligence. When Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982, it also entered the ASALA camps in this country and shared intelligence with Turkey. Consequently, Turkey assigned Ekrem Güvendiren as charge d’affaires to Israel in 1986.<sup>206</sup> This change marked the rapid normalization of the relations between the two countries.

It was expected that the collaboration on ASALA would lead to a good level of relations with Israel. However, the incidents that broke out with a great uprising

---

<sup>204</sup> Aykan, p. 102.

<sup>205</sup> Aykan, p. 103.

<sup>206</sup> Türel, p. 16.

called “Intifada” in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which was under the Israeli occupation since December 1987, prevented the recovery of the relations. The recognition of the new Palestinian state by Turkey 15 November 1988 could be considered as a goodwill step to promote Turkey’s rapprochement with the Muslim world. It is also seen as a step taken by the PLO towards a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. The Turkish government was concerned about the negative impact of the new Palestinian state on the Jewish lobby in the United States and the Israeli government.<sup>207</sup>

#### **IV. TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT FROM 1990s to EARLY 2000s**

Turkish-Israeli relations started to develop in the early 1990s and the relations entered a new era. Throughout the 1990s, Turkish-Israeli relations were identified as “strategic partnership”. Since the early 1990s, the establishment of comprehensive peace talks between the parties for the settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict had been an important factor in the development of Turkish-Israeli relations. Regional and global developments played a significant role in the rapprochement of Turkey and Israel.<sup>208</sup> In fact, Turkey’s rapprochement with Israel in the mid-1990s was the result of a security issues. When Turkey’s two southern neighbors, Syria and Greece signed a military training agreement in 1995, Turkey felt itself surrounded by these two enemy countries, thus it was very normal to sign the series of cooperation agreements and come close to Israel in 1996.<sup>209</sup> The agreements were signed in the fields of military, economy, tourism and technological areas. Among these most significant ones were signed in the military area. Arab states did not welcome this close cooperation between Turkey and Israel. They went back to their old views on Turkey viewing the country as the representative of the West.<sup>210</sup>

---

<sup>207</sup> Aykan, p. 104.

<sup>208</sup> Tarık Oğuzlu, “The Arab Spring and The Rise of the 2.0 Version of Turkey’s Zero Problems with Neighbors Policy”, **SAM Papers**, No: 1, 2012, (Neighbors). p.16.

<sup>209</sup> Joshua Walker, “Turkey and Israel’s Relationship in the Middle East”, **Mediterranean Quarterly**, Vol: 17, No: 4, 2006, (Relationship), p. 83.

<sup>210</sup> William Hale, **Türk Dış Politikası 1774–2000**, Arkeoloji ve Sanat Yayınları, İstanbul, 2003, (Türk Dış Politikası), p. 335.

Given the uncertainties in the region and the potential for instability from the Islamic extremists both within and outside the two countries, Turkey and Israel began to look for more cooperation with each other.<sup>211</sup> The flourishing relations between Turkey and Israel by the mid-1990s were the result of Turkey's strained relations with the EU. In this case, Turkey found a way to overcome the difficulties to take military technology and materials through cooperation with Israel. Therefore, during this period, military dimension in the relationship with Israel had great importance for Turkey.

The most important factor in Turkish-Israeli rapprochement in the 1990s was that Turkey and Israel agreed upon the fact that they felt isolated in the strategic sense and that they were surrounded by enemies. Iran and Syria posed potential threats for both countries, and the presence of the Saddam regime in Iraq was treated with suspicion. As long as Israel felt that it was surrounded by the enemy Arab regimes in the region, it attempted to develop relations with the secular, pro-Western, and Muslim but not an Arab country like Turkey. Turkey was disturbed by the presence of the PKK camps in the Syrian territory and by PKK terrorism which was used as a trump card against Turkey by Hafez Assad. Military relations that would be developed with Israel could contribute to the political pressure of Ankara over Damascus. For Israel, establishing good relations with a Muslim country would serve to "alleviate the religious component of the conflict with the Arabs and to repel the accusations that Zionism is characteristically anti-Islamic".<sup>212</sup> Moreover, for Israel cooperation with Turkey would be beneficial for Israel's geo-cultural integration into the region.<sup>213</sup>

The period after 1998, the terrorist leader Abdullah Öcalan was taken out of Syria, and then with the signing of the Adana Accord, the threat perceptions of Turkey on the southern neighbors decreased to a large extent.<sup>214</sup> In this new era, while Turkey was getting closer to Syria and Iran, it wanted to develop good relations with the Arab world in general. Moreover during this period, positive developments in Turkish-EU relations helped Turkey to develop commercial,

---

<sup>211</sup> Walker, Relationship, p. 81.

<sup>212</sup> Makovsky, p. 152.

<sup>213</sup> Aras, p. 154.

<sup>214</sup> Efraim İnbar, "The Resilience of Israeli-Turkish Relations", *Israel Affairs*, Vol: 11, No: 4, 2005, p. 593.

political and cultural relations with the Middle Eastern countries. During this period, Foreign Minister Ismail Cem said that “the close relationship with Muslim countries will not affect our relations with Israel, we cannot sacrifice one friend to another friend”.<sup>215</sup> However towards the beginning of 2000s, the developments concerning the relations with Israel decreased and the closer strategic cooperation relationship started to decline. By the end of the Cold War, the pressures of the block on Turkey and Israel decreased and the acceleration of the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks within the framework of the Oslo process prepared suitable ground for Turkish-Israeli rapprochement. At a time when peace talks started between Israel and the Palestinian authorities, the obligation on Turkey to make a choice among the two sides was removed, thus this condition made it possible to collaborate more easily with Tel Aviv.<sup>216</sup>

#### **A. Regional and Global Factors in the 1990s and Their Impacts on Turkish-Arab and Turkish-Israeli Relations**

Regional and global transformations in the 1990s, the rise of the US as a single global power, the globalization of the international economy, the beginning of the peace process between Israel and Palestine, the defeat of Iraq in the Gulf War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the establishment of the new states in Central Asia, Caucasus and Soviet Union changed the course of Turkish-Israeli relations.<sup>217</sup>

Changes in the international system that emerged with the end of the Cold War caused the fading of Turkey’s role in the eyes of both NATO and the United States.<sup>218</sup> In the aftermath of the Cold War, the USA needed strong alliances in the Middle East region for the establishment of the “New World Order”. Therefore, the US government wanted Turkey and Israel to have closer relations at economic, political and military level. Moreover, both Turkey and Israel were afraid of losing their strategic significance with the end of the Cold War.<sup>219</sup> At that time, Turkey

---

<sup>215</sup> Hürriyet “İsmail Cem Kahire’de”, 30.07.2001, <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=7198>, (29.06.2017).

<sup>216</sup> Oğuzlu, Neighbors, p. 15.

<sup>217</sup> Balamir, p. 460.

<sup>218</sup> Walker, Relationship, p. 72.

<sup>219</sup> Erhan and Kürkçüoğlu, p. 569.



aimed to increase strategic cooperation with Israel to increase its significance in world politics. The political and economic cooperation between the two countries turned into a more security-oriented military and strategic cooperation by the second half of 1990s. Therefore, many military agreements were signed during this period. The Arab-Israeli multilateral peace negotiations that began with the Madrid process in the 1990s as well as the Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Jordanian peace processes turned Turkish-Israeli relations in a positive direction.<sup>220</sup>

Following the Madrid Peace Process in 1991 and the Oslo Peace Agreement 1993 between Israelis and Palestinians, an agreement was signed between Israel and Jordan in 1994.<sup>221</sup> The success of this process had also a positive impact on Turkish-Israeli relations. At the end of this process, the relations with the Palestinians and Israelis were raised to the embassy level and comprehensive cooperation agreements with Israel were accomplished in a very short time. Moreover, this process helped Turkey to develop relations with Israel, without drawing any reaction both from the Arab world and the Turkish public. In the post-Cold War era, there was a need to support Turkey in the international arena whose strategic bargaining power against Europe and the US was weakened. Israel had this powerful lobby to support Turkey in the international arena.<sup>222</sup> This new period in Turkish foreign policy affected also Turkish-Israeli relations positively.

The peace process clearly changed the political equation in the Middle East and provided significant changes and developments within and outside the region. The Madrid Process created theoretically an ideal environment for Turkey to improve its relations with Israel and to participate in new projects for economic cooperation in the region.<sup>223</sup> These peace talks were instrumental in giving Turkey more attention to its relations with Israel. Within the next 10 years, Turkish-Israeli relations continued to improve. Initiatives to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian issue allowed Turkish-Israeli relations to be legitimized in the eyes of Turkish society. Turkish people did not feel uncomfortable with the development of relations in terms of putting the solution on the basis of the close interest of Turkey on the Palestinian

---

<sup>220</sup> Bülent Aras, “Yenilenen Türk-İsrail İlişkileri”, **TASAM**, 22.11.2006, [http://www.tasam.org/tr-TR/Icerik/222/yenilenen\\_turk-israil\\_iliskileri](http://www.tasam.org/tr-TR/Icerik/222/yenilenen_turk-israil_iliskileri), (16.07.2017).

<sup>221</sup> Bulent Aras, “The Turks and Jerusalem”, Vol: 279, No: 1629, 2001, (Jerusalem), p. 203.

<sup>222</sup> Balamir, p. 461.

<sup>223</sup> Uzer, Rise, p. 99.

issue in the negotiations of the political authority with its close relationship and cooperation with Israel.

After the Cold War, the Gulf Crisis was the starting point for the development of Turkish-Israeli relations. The post-crisis war that occurred in 1990 led to both sides to ally with each other. The occupation of Kuwait by Iraq in August 1990 revealed the similarities between Turkey and Israel, which were two democratic and pro-western countries that were exposed to common threats in the region of the authoritarian Arab countries. Turkey opened İncirlik Air Force Base to the use of the US for the bombing of Iraq. Thus, for the first time, Israel and Turkey were on the same side with the United States against an Arab country to remove common security threats altogether.<sup>224</sup> However, Turkey's military cooperation agreements with Israel in the 1990s led to its isolation from the Arab world as could be observed in the Organization of the Islamic Conference.<sup>225</sup>

Immediately following the formation of the coalition government between True Path Party (*Doğru Yol Partisi*—DYP) and Social Democratic Populist Party (*Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti*—SHP), the Turkish press made assessments that the balanced policy of Turkey in the Middle East had entered a “fundamental change” during and after the Gulf crisis in August 1990.<sup>226</sup> Turkish nation and the political elite of Ankara supported the Palestinian side. However, especially after the Gulf War, Turkey began looking for regional allies to end security concerns stemming from the Kurdish and Islamic threats in the region. Under these circumstances, Turkey could easily establish relations with Israel. The Turkish political elites of the era hoped that the pro-Israel forces in Washington would lobby to support Turkey in the face of these threats.<sup>227</sup>

In the 1990s, when compared to the rest of the Eastern European and Middle Eastern countries, Turkey became an economically successful, democratic and stable country.<sup>228</sup> From this point of view, the reasons for the normalization of Turkey's relations with Israel and the subsequent military alliance in the 1990s would be understood more clearly. In this period, thanks to the strategic relations established

---

<sup>224</sup> Aykan, p. 105.

<sup>225</sup> Aras, Jerusalem, p. 205.

<sup>226</sup> Aykan, p. 106.

<sup>227</sup> Aras, Turkey, p. 132.

<sup>228</sup> Hale, Gulf, p. 679.

with Israel, Turkey expected to get support against “the Greek and Armenian lobbies” in Washington through the mediation of Israel. Moreover, maintaining good relations with Israel was a way to confirm Turkey’s Western inclination and to display its “secular” identity. Thanks to good relations with Israel, Turkey could also resist local Islamist groups and countries such as Iran and Syria, which gave regional support to the PKK. As a result of the positive relationships, Turkey also found a reliable new source of military technology that was not subject to human rights restrictions.<sup>229</sup>

In the 1990s, Turkey gave great importance to the modernization and strengthening of the Turkish army due to its internal and external problems. Israel is a potential state for Turkey to modernize the army and to get new weapons to fight against the PKK terror. PKK had been terrorizing the southeastern part of the country. Concerning the Kurdish issue, many European states stopped selling weapons to Turkey because of acts that were launched against Turkey in many European countries, especially in Belgium, Germany and Norway, on human rights violations in Turkey. This encouraged Turkey to develop national arms industry and to seek help from Israel, a country that did not attach great importance to human rights conditions.<sup>230</sup> During this period, America was reluctant to sell weapons to Turkey, referring to at least one human rights violation in Turkey.<sup>231</sup> As a matter of fact, the Turkish authorities regarded their cooperation with Israel as a general solution to the structural problems of the Turkish foreign policy. When the authorities were asked about the reactions of the Arab states, they were constantly giving the same response. The response was: the cooperation between Turkey and Israel was not against a third state in the region. However, due to the military nature of these agreements, many regional countries stressed that these agreements “threaten both individual and collective security” and they characterized these agreements as “another Zionist encroachment”.<sup>232</sup>

From an Israeli point of view for the revitalization in the relations, Israel aimed at finding market for military and technological products and to obtain

---

<sup>229</sup> Yavuz, p. 27.

<sup>230</sup> Yavuz, p. 27.

<sup>231</sup> Aras, Turkey, p. 121.

<sup>232</sup> Peter Feuilherade, “Arabs Slam New Israel-Turkey Accords”, *The Middle East*, No: 229, 1996, p. 12.

economic profit. Israel undertook the modernization of the Turkish Armed Forces (*Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri*—TSK), aiming to create a new market for its military, technical and technological products and contribute to the economic development by getting income from there.<sup>233</sup> During the 1990s, Turkish-Israeli cooperation progressed towards a strategic integration. Israel aimed to make Turkey an international force in military driven by both its strategic and economic concerns. For this reason, it offered Turkey all kinds of technical and technological support. During this period, Turkey was dependent on Israel for military reasons and shaped its domestic politics by being influenced by Israel. As a result of Turkish-Israeli cooperation, the balance of power in the Middle East changed in favor of Turkey and Israel. Turkish-Israeli military cooperation was shaped in a wide range, and Israel which sold weapons to Turkey in the scope of cooperation, had a great role in the modernization of the Turkish Armed Forces.<sup>234</sup> As a result, the regional role of Turkey and Israel was strengthened. Turkish-Israeli military cooperation served also to the US interests in the Middle East.

The rapprochement in the form of a triangular mechanism between the US-Israel-Turkey affected Turkey's relations with the global actors such as the European Union, China and Russia. The dynamics of this triangular mechanism could be guided by Israel's highly effective diplomacy and, where necessary, by the use of real political power. During this period, for Israel facing serious security problems, there were three basic conditions of existence and activity in the region. First, international security support and legal legitimacy would be ensured; second, the active support of the components of the non-Arab Middle East or at least passive neutrality would be ensured in the Arab-Israeli problem; and third it was significant to control the balances among the Arabs in order to prevent the Arab countries becoming a bloc.<sup>235</sup> The normalization of relations between the two countries in the 1990s to become a strategic partnership was in fact the priority of the Turkish army. Despite strong Arab criticism, Turkey continued to maintain its relations with Israel in military and economic areas.

---

<sup>233</sup> Yavuz, p. 29.

<sup>234</sup> Oğuzlu, *Neighbors*, p. 2.

<sup>235</sup> Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik*, pp. 420-421.

Developments in the post-1998 period provided a significant reduction in threat perceptions in Turkey, because the Syrian government extradited the terrorist Öcalan upon Turkey's insistence on 9 October 1998. The deportation of Öcalan from Syria had a great impact on the formation of this perception. The Adana Agreement that was signed on 20 October 1998 between the governments of Ankara and Damascus can be regarded as a turning point in the cooperation between Turkey and Syria against terrorism. The reduction in PKK attacks and the beginning of peaceful relations with Syria in fact reduced the need for Turkey to cooperate with Israel. During this new period, starting with the three-party coalition Democratic Left Party (*Demokratik Sol Parti*—DSP), Nationalist Movement Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*—MHP) and Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi*—ANAP) and continuing with AK Party) period Turkey, Syria and Iran began to get closer, and the Arab world made efforts to establish good relations with Turkey. Positive developments in the EU process during the same period again starting with three party coalitions and continuing during AK Party rule also allowed Turkey to develop political, cultural and commercial relations with the Middle Eastern countries. Although the relations with Israel did not end up abruptly but they slowed down compared to the past.<sup>236</sup> Since 1993, Turkey had pulled itself away from the Palestinian issues, apart from the symbolic visits by the Turkish authorities to the Palestinian autonomous areas. The Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat complained about Turkey's stance in his visit to Turkey in 1999 and called Turkey to play a greater role in ensuring a fair and lasting peace in the region.<sup>237</sup>

According to Meliha Benli Altunışık, Turkish-Israeli relations in the 1990s can be considered as “the most controversial aspect of the Turkish foreign policy in the post-Cold War period”.<sup>238</sup> The main reason for the rapprochement with Israel in the 1990s was the central role of the military and civil bureaucracy in Turkey, which defined its cooperation with Israel as a policy to protect the secular system in the country. However, especially after the mid-1990s, there was a deep dissensus between the military and the government regarding the cooperation with Israel. The

---

<sup>236</sup> Louis Fishman, “Turkish-Israeli Relations in a post-Arab Spring: A Historical Perspective”, *Middle East Analysis*, Vol: 5, No: 50, 2013, p. 37.

<sup>237</sup> Aras, *Impact*, p. 158.

<sup>238</sup> Antunışık, p. 172.

first boundary of the Turkish-Israeli alliance was the shadow of the army on the alliance. In the second half of the 1990s, the most important development concerning Turkish-Israeli relations was the conservative Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi* —RP) that was known with its anti-Israeli stance coming to power. During the short rule of RP (with the junior coalition partner True Path Party (*Doğru Yol Partisi*—DYP) Turkish-Israeli relations turned into a battlefield between RP's leadership and the military.<sup>239</sup>

The development of relations in 1990s does not mean that there were no anti-Israeli policies and politicians. Then the Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan continued his anti-Israeli stance and discourse. In 1990s, the opposing dynamics of Turkish-Israeli relations in the country were the secular state bureaucracy-military and the Islamic views. The discrepancy between these two opposing dynamics led to the post-modern coup in 1997. The 28 February period was considered as an indirect coup in which the military did not take over the power but forced for a change of government. During this period the military was dominant both in domestic and foreign policies. The Turkish military was the driving force behind the events leading to the end of the coalition under the leadership of the RP.<sup>240</sup> Under the military's dominance Turkish-Israeli relations gained another momentum.

Considering the 1997-1999 period in bilateral relations, it is probable that this alliance is called the Turkish Army-Israel Alliance instead of the Turkish-Israeli Alliance. In other words, since the Israeli issue gained symbolic meaning during the 28 February period, the Turkish community had considerable doubts about this alliance. A large part of the society interpreted the Turkish-Israeli alliance, not as a foreign policy but as an internal struggle within the country against the so-called Islamic threats of the military.<sup>241</sup> Hence, the role of the army in relation to Israel damaged the social legitimacy inherent in bilateral relations. According to Don Waxman, agreements between Turkey and Israel were perceived by the Turkish people as agreements between the generals.<sup>242</sup>

---

<sup>239</sup> Özcan, p. 163.

<sup>240</sup> Bacik, p. 52.

<sup>241</sup> Bacik, p. 53.

<sup>242</sup> Don Waxman, "Turkey and Israel: A New Balance of Power in the Middle East", **Washington Quarterly**, Vol: 22, No: 1. 1999, p. 29.

## V. CONCLUDING REMARKS

An analysis of Turkish-Israeli relations shows that both countries were at the recognizing each other stage during the 1940s. It took some time for both countries to understand the each others' vision of the world and their existing conjuncture lied in those years. During Ottoman Empire period Turkish-Jewish relations were quite friendly. However, establishment of Israel on the land of Palestine was a significant challenge for Turkish politics. The Arab alliance with the British during the First World War kept Turkey away from Arab affairs in its early years. Moreover, Turkish fear of Soviet domination and Communism led Turkey to ally with the USA in the aftermath of the Second World War. This alliance also led Turkish policy makers to follow a moderate foreign policy towards the newly established Israel. Turkish fear of Communism and the alliance of the newly established Arab countries with the Soviet Union also encouraged Turkey to keep distance with its relations with the Arabs.

Israel's suspicions towards Turkey due to its Baghdad Pact membership strained the relations between both sides. Although Turkey did not support Israel in the 1956 Suez Crisis conflict and withdrew Turkish ambassador from Tel Aviv, it still did not break all relations with Israel. Moreover, Turkey and Israel entered an alliance called Peripheral Pact in the summer of 1958 in the fields of military and intelligence as well as commerce. Turkey's new multi-dimensional foreign policy throughout the 1960s due to its deteriorating relations with the USA did not aim at shifting foreign policy towards Arabs at the expense of relations with the West. It aimed at enlarging friendships and provides more alternate sources of security and economic relations.

Apart from these, political tensions in the Turkish public in 1970s, separation of large public groups due to political opinions and the violence of these separatist events strained the relations of two countries. The perception of the left-leaning young people of the Palestinian issue in the same period and seeing this issue as an anti-imperialist struggle of libertarian and independent peoples, created sympathy for Palestine in the society and a coldness against Israel. Turkish-Israeli relations

changed depending on the domestic political balances and the views of the ruling parties' grassroots.

The 1980 military coup in Turkey and the right-wing government's declaration of Jerusalem as the capital in the same year decreased the bilateral relations to the lowest level in history. The fact that Jerusalem became the capital of Israel was not a priority for the Turkish politicians of the period, but the fact that Jerusalem had a distinct importance in the heart of the Turkish people put this situation in the foreground. The positive atmosphere which started in the middle of the 1980s created by the Arab-Israeli rapprochement and the peace agreements signed, and the fact that Turkey sought a military strategic ally in the region against the terrorist organizations, especially the PKK, the relations started to progress rapidly.

The rapprochement, which started with the second half of the 1980s, developed and progressed in military and commercial fields in the 1990s. The joint military exercises that were started in the mid-1990s brought the military of the two countries closer, while reciprocal visits made by the first President, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs increased the sincerity among the political leaders. A positive course of Palestinian-Israeli affairs, especially in the 1990s, was one of the most important factors in the development of Turkish-Israeli relations.



### CHAPTER 3

## TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT DURING AK PARTY PERIOD

Turkish foreign policy towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has shown its ups and downs throughout the history of Republic of Turkey. Although the majority of the time Turkish governments were on the side of the Palestinians, there were also brief periods in which Turkish state elites preferred to remain neutral or followed pro-Israeli policies. The variation in Turkish foreign policy towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict was actually the result of the changes in foreign policy followed towards Israel. In fact, the most fundamental factor shaping Turkish-Israeli relations from 1949 until the beginning of the 1990s has been the Palestinian issue.

By the end of the Cold War during the 1990s, Turkey's foreign policy shifted strategically towards a regional interest and followed a threat-centered approach. This change had a significant impact on Turkish-Israeli relations. Post-Cold War period was followed by security-oriented developments.<sup>243</sup> The close relations between Turkey and Israel that first showed stagnation by the end of 1990s and at the beginning of 2000s eventually started to decline by mid 2000s due to the change in domestic politics in Turkey but more significantly as a result of the increase in Israeli attacks to Gaza. The changes of governments in the two countries and regional developments have become influential on the numerous crises that emerged between the two countries. After each crisis, the relations seemed to enter into a softening period and normalization process. However, on the negative side the relations among two countries have transformed into a new dimension following Israel's Gaza operation, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's Davos outburst and Mavi Marmara incident. These events led the bilateral relations to enter a very difficult period. However, as a result of the dynamics such as the civil war in Syria that have been changing in the region in the last one or two years, Turkey and Israel have once again begun to soften their relations.

This chapter will analyze Turkish foreign policy towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in the context of Turkish-Israeli relations particularly starting from

---

<sup>243</sup> Fishman, p. 33.

AK Party's coming to power in 2002. Following an analysis of ups and downs of Palestinian-Israeli conflict in the period prior to AK Party era in the first section, the second section will concentrate on AK Party's relations both with Israel and Palestine as well, and its foreign policy towards the conflict between the both sides during the 2000s. The chapter will be concluded in the third section with an in-depth analysis of strong Turkish support for the Palestinian cause throughout the late 2000s and 2010s in the context of rapid deterioration of Turkish-Israeli relations.

The chapter will argue that the change in bilateral relations between Turkey and Israel have taken place in the light of the positive or negative developments experienced between the Palestinians and Israelis. The factors that shaped Turkish government's policy towards Palestinian-Israeli relations are mainly related to domestic dynamics in Turkey, AK Party elites' Islamic rooted foreign policy, the hard-liner Israeli political parties coming to power and finally due to Israel's asymmetrical attacks on Palestine.

## **I. TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT PRIOR TO AK PARTY ERA**

Diplomatic relations between Turkey and Israel began in 1949 when the Republic of Turkey recognized the State of Israel officially. However, as it was analyzed in the previous chapter, it was in the 1990s that the relations fully improved in economic, military, intelligence and cultural areas. As part of agreements between the two countries while Israeli pilots were trained in Turkey, Israel supported Turkish military in the modernization of its army. During this period, United States played a significant role in the improvement of the relations between Turkey and Israel.

The main developments in the 1990s shaped Turkish-Israeli relations and Turkish foreign policy towards Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Among these developments the changing balance of power in the region, the initiation of Peace Processes both in Madrid and Oslo in early 1990s as well as Turkey's perceived threats from the regional countries such as Iran, Iraq and Syria due to their support to PKK can be included. Israel which considered itself isolated in the region, preferred Turkey as partner since it was a strong Muslim country following a more secular,

democratic and pro-Western policies compared to the other Middle Eastern countries.<sup>244</sup> However, the main factor that shaped the relations between the two countries has been Israel's continuous attacks to Palestine.

### **A. Increasing Tension between Israel and Palestine**

A rapprochement between Israel and its Arab neighbors during the first half of the 1990s contributed to the positive development of relations between Turkey and Israel. Furthermore, a series of failures in the peace process, the failure of the peace talks in Camp David in 2000, the visit of Ariel Sharon to the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif, and the beginning of the Second Intifada were all signs of "Ice Age" as described by İlker Aytürk in the Turkish-Israeli relations.<sup>245</sup>

The most strategic cooperation between Turkey and Israel during the 1990s was the help Turkey was receiving from the Israeli military and intelligence in its fight with the PKK. However, when the relations between Syria and Turkey started normalizing by the end of 1990s due to the Turkish-Syrian military and economic agreements in Adana Accords, Turkey's need for Israeli support in its fight with PKK decreased.<sup>246</sup> Especially after the deportation of PKK leader Öcalan from Syria, an atmosphere of reconciliation was created between Turkey and Syria. Following the death of Syrian President Hafez Assad, his son Bashar al-Assad who took over the power aimed at rapidly developing Syrian-Turkish relations. Consequently, with the improvement of Turkish-Syrian relations by the late 1990s and the early 2000s, the pace of Turkish-Israeli relations has constantly declined.

The harmonious Turkish-Israeli relations of the 1990s have gone into a new and more problematic era by the 2000s. Thus, the suspension of the peace process that had started in Madrid in 1991 and continued in Oslo in 1993 and a change of government in Israel towards hard-liners had a great impact on the deterioration of relations between Turkey and Israel. Al-Aqsa Intifada began with a visit by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to Temple Mount in late September 2000. The visit was

---

<sup>244</sup> Uzer, Rise, p. 98.

<sup>245</sup> İlker Aytürk, "The Coming of an Ice Age? Turkish-Israeli Relations since 2002", **Turkish Studies**, Vol: 12, No: 4, 2011, p. 675.

<sup>246</sup> Aytürk, p. 676.

considered as a deliberate attempt to violate Muslim presence on Temple Mount and was met with a violent uprising.<sup>247</sup> The increase of violence against the Palestinian people by the Israelis at the beginning of 2000s changed the direction of Turkish-Israeli relations.

### **B. The Second Intifada (Al-Aqsa Intifada) and Sharon's Period in Israel**

A turning point in Turkish-Israeli relations in the early 2000s that brought the relations to a break was the Second Intifada, which was also called the al-Aqsa Intifada. This uprising began as a reaction to Likud Party's fanatic leader Ariel Sharon's visit to the holy places in Eastern Jerusalem, particularly the Al-Aqsa Mosque in September 2000. Israel's violent use of arms to respond to the Palestinian demonstrators who reacted to this visit and its attack on PLO buildings and facilities damaged both Israeli-Palestinian peace talks and the development of Turkish-Israeli relations. Both Turkish President of the time Ahmet Necdet Sezer and Prime Minister Ecevit reacted to these Israeli attacks on Palestine.

After the escalation of the conflicts in the Palestinian territories in September 2000, Advisor to the President of the State of Egypt, Nebil Osman, at the Arab League Summit said, "the Palestinian and Jerusalem causes belong not only to Arabs but to all Islamic countries and especially to the Turks."<sup>248</sup> Osman in fact, pointed out the potential role of Turkey in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. A survey conducted in October 2000 found that 71 percent of Turks were concerned about Palestinian rights and 60 percent supported a more active Turkish role on behalf of Palestine.<sup>249</sup>

During the 1990s and early 2000s, the Israeli Air Forces were trained in Turkey for long-range missions. However, in the wake of the air strike on Gaza, Turkish government opposed the presence of the aircraft of Israeli Air Forces in

---

<sup>247</sup> Yariv Katz, "The al-Aqsa Intifada", **Ynetnews**, 19.03.2009, <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3689276,00.html>, (08.03.2017).

<sup>248</sup> Aras, Jerusalem, p. 205.

<sup>249</sup> Aras, p. 205.

Turkey.<sup>250</sup> Israel's ruthless attacks to Gaza during the 2000s had a significant impact on the worsening of Turkish-Israeli relations.

Following Sharon's visit to Al-Aqsa mosque, in the February 2001 elections, Sharon was elected as the Prime Minister. His election led to the end of the peace process. Israel's disproportionate use of force in Palestine particularly during this period has caused reactions against Israel in Turkey.<sup>251</sup> The first sign of Turkey's reaction to Israel came from Prime Minister of the time Bülent Ecevit. On an official visit to Israel in 2001, Ecevit warned Sharon "If the hope for peace is lost, it will affect our relations adversely".<sup>252</sup> Following Israel's growing operations in the occupied territories in April 2002, massive anti-Israel demonstrations were held in many cities of Turkey. Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit accused Israel of genocide leading to the deterioration of relations between the two sides. However, despite the increasing tension in the relations, the cooperation in economic and military fields continued.<sup>253</sup>

While in Israel conservatives and nationalists came to power as senior partners of coalition government, in Turkey in November 2002, religiously conservative AK Party came to power. AK Party once consolidated its power in politics by mid 2000s and the elections in 2007, started following a more apparent pro-Palestinian policies.

With Ariel Sharon's coming to power in 2001, the Israeli policy against Palestine became more ruthless leading to more high-tensioned Turkish-Israeli relations. These developments led to a transformation in Turkish foreign policy from one dimensional to multi-dimensional by taking its own interests into consideration. Despite the deteriorating relations with Israel, Turkish government did not completely cut off its relations with Israel. High level visits between Turkey and Israel including several visits by the Israeli Prime Minister Sharon to Turkey had taken place. This was a sign that Turkish government was going to continue its relations with Israel due to its own security concerns in its fight with PKK. While Turkish government wanted Israel to take the necessary steps for the peace process in

---

<sup>250</sup> Uzer, Rise, p. 99.

<sup>251</sup> Türel, p. 19.

<sup>252</sup> Özlem Tür, "Türkiye-İsrail İlişkileri: Yakın İşbirliğinden Gerilime", *Ortadoğu Analiz*, Vol: 1, No: 4, 2009, (Yakın), p. 24.

<sup>253</sup> Bacik, p. 59.

the Middle East, Israeli Prime Minister Sharon asked Turkish authorities to persuade Palestinians for a ceasefire. Sharon's demand from Turkey in fact highlighted Turkey's mediator role in the Middle East Peace Process. However, the election of Ariel Sharon as Prime Minister in Israel has caused various debates about both the future of the Middle East Peace Process and how Turkish-Israeli relations would continue, and the election has been interpreted as the Israeli people's political views would shift to the right and that the Middle East Peace Process came to an end.

At that time, Prime Minister Sharon believed that the only solution to the Palestinian issue was the use of force. Upon coming to power, he initiated the building of a security barrier for the West Bank to separate the both sides. He believed that real security could be achieved through a security barrier and it could be done unilaterally without the need for negotiation.<sup>254</sup> Consequently, with Sharon period, the violence between the two sides one more time started reaching a peak point.

## **II. TURKISH-ISRAELI RELATIONS DURING THE 2000s: FROM STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP TO THE PERIOD OF TENSION**

The rise in Turkish-Israeli relations began in 1990 has lost momentum when it comes to the 2000s. Because in the 2000s, Turkey's increasing influence in the region as a regional power, Israel's uncompromising attempts to ensure regional peace and stability have led to tension in Turkish-Israeli relations. However, in the 2000s Turkish-Israeli relations have experienced the most strained periods at certain times. Especially Israeli operations to Lebanon in 2006 and Gaza in 2008 were a major blow to Turkey's quest for regional peace and stability. With Low Chair Crisis and Mavi Marmara attack, Israel tried to harm Turkey's rising prestige in the region. Because of Israel's disproportionate attempts to disregard international law and human rights, Turkish-Israeli relations has affected in a very negative way in the 2000s.

The most important point to be understood here is the fact that since the early years of the Republic of Turkey, Western identities and Western relations have been

---

<sup>254</sup> A. Murat Ağdemir, "Ariel Sharon: A Man of Peace or A Man of War?", *Turkish Studies*, Vol: 10, No: 9, 2015, p. 10.

the most important element of the Turkish foreign policy, but in recent years “new identities” has become effective in Turkish foreign policy. Especially with the emergence of Islam and Muslim identity as an important element in Turkish foreign policy, Turkey has begun to take more interest in the Middle East. During the AK Party period, Turkey was described as an essential element of the region as much as it was Western world. The fact that only a western identity does not exist in the country brought out the Muslim and Ottoman identity out decreasing the common values with Israel. In the second section, the AK Party’s relations with both Israel and Palestine and the foreign policy towards the conflict between the two sides in the 2000’s will be discussed.

#### **A. AK Party’s Relations with Israel and Palestine in its early years**

Turkish politicians perceived their relationship with Israel as a liability rather than as an asset. Therefore, this understanding was a general understanding which existed even before the AK Party administration. In March 2002, Prime Minister Ecevit, in response to Operation Defensive Shield, condemned Israeli policies by describing them as “genocide”.<sup>255</sup> The AK Party governments continued similar discourse upon coming to power in 2002. Prime Minister Erdoğan accused Israel of killing civilians by “terrorizing the state”.<sup>256</sup> AK Party came to office two years after the Second Intifada of 2000 and witnessed the asymmetric Israeli-Palestinian conflict. For this reason, anti-Israeli policies and discourses had already taken place in Turkish society. The ties came to a halt when Sharon started serving as the Prime Minister in Israel, and Turkish political parties and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) condemned Israel’s actions following the Operation Defensive Shield that was launched in the West Bank. Again, suffering of Palestinian shaped the declining Turkish-Israeli relations.

AK Party’s coming to power in November 2002 started a new era in Turkish foreign policy. AK Party aimed at developing relations with all neighboring countries by following a dynamic foreign policy that would also have an impact on

---

<sup>255</sup>Sema Emiroğlu, “Yahudi Lobisi Küstü”, **Milliyet**, 10.04.2002, [http://gazetearsivi.milliyet.com.tr/Arsiv/2002/04/10, \(16.04.2017\).](http://gazetearsivi.milliyet.com.tr/Arsiv/2002/04/10, (16.04.2017).)

<sup>256</sup>Aytürk, p. 676.

the improvement of the national trade volume.<sup>257</sup> Moreover, AK Party government followed foreign policies that promoted integration with the EU, whilst it pursued policies to solve long-standing problems with its neighbors. AK Party government aimed at improving the long-lasting problematic relations with Arabs, particularly with Syria, Iraq, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, by following the policy of “Zero Problem with Neighbors”.

The developments of the 2000s led to the collapse of the cooperation between Turkey and Israel. The failure of the 2000 Camp David talks between Palestine and Israel led to the deterioration of Israeli-Palestinian relations immediately following the Second Intifada. As a result, Turkish politicians became very sensitive to the Palestinian crisis.<sup>258</sup> The leadership of the AK Party has demonstrated a renewed zeal for involvement in the affairs of the Muslim regions including Middle East, the Balkans, Caucasus and Central Asia since many of the political elites of the party including Erdoğan came from an Islamic-rooted party origin. Erdoğan started his political career in the National View Association (*Milli Görüş Teşkilatı*), which was a think-tank of three former pro-Islamist parties the National Order Party (*Milli Nizam Partisi*—MNP), National Salvation Party (*Milli Selamet Partisi*—MSP) as well as Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*—RP).

Besides AK Party’s coming to power, Israel’s attacks to Palestinians and its use of asymmetric power to Palestinians starting in early 2000s played a significant role in the deterioration of the relations between the both sides. AK Party administration believed that the only way to improve relations between Turkey and Israel would be realized through a resolution of Palestinian-Israeli conflict. According to Bilgin, by the beginning of the AK Party administration, bilateral relations between Turkey and Israel has become more dependent on regional developments especially on Palestinian Issue.<sup>259</sup> Although the political tension began in early 2000s, both sides somehow continued maintaining economic relationships. In terms of Israel, Turkey was the closest country in the Middle East to cooperate in terms of culture, tourism and education.<sup>260</sup>

---

<sup>257</sup> Fishman, p. 38.

<sup>258</sup> Aytürk, p. 676.

<sup>259</sup> Hasret Dikici Bilgin, “Foreign Policy Orientation of Turkey’s Pro-Islamist Parties: A Comparative Study of the AKP and Refah”, *Turkish Studies*, Vol: 9, No: 3, 2008, p. 414.

<sup>260</sup> Fishman, p. 38.



The politicians who make up the administrative body of the AK Party mostly came from the Islamic movement of Turkey. Erdoğan and his team took part in many Islamist movements and actions in the 1970s and 1980s. The National View movement, which Erdoğan participated, is a view of Anti-Semitism and Anti-Israel. However, Erdoğan and his team, when declaring the establishment of the AK Party in 2001, acted very rationally and proclaimed that they have left the National View movement in the past and adopted a conservative model of democratic thought. In fact, Erdoğan has never changed his negative mind on Israel. However, the international situation and the security concerns of Turkey led him to pursue a balanced policy towards Israel.<sup>261</sup> From this stance, the straining of the relations could be explained within the framework of the ideological views of the ruling parties in Turkey and Israel. As a result, the founders of the AK Party, while making politics during the Welfare Party, have criticized the development of relations with Israel and claimed that Turkey should be the leader of the Islamic world rather than getting closer to Israel. Rapprochement with Israel could cause Turkey to move away from the Islamic world, and Turkish foreign policy would unilaterally only turn to the West. This was not in line with the national interests of Turkey.

In the summer of 2001, Turkish-Israeli relations gained a new momentum. The September 11 attacks on the US revealed the vital position of both Turkey and Israel in American strategies.<sup>262</sup> As a result of the terrorist attacks in the United States on 11 September 2001, perceptions of security and threats have changed not only in America but all over the world. The claims about the existence of mass destruction weapons in Iraq administration and by using these attacks as an excuse, US launched air operations in Iraq in March 2003. There was a tension between Turkey and the United States, as memorandum permitting military troops to be sent through Turkey was voted in the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM) on 1 March 2003 and it was not accepted in the TBMM. Moreover, a significant improvement in Turkey's relations with the Arab countries especially with Iran in this process caused the US and Israel began to feel uncomfortable with the development of relations with Iran.

---

<sup>261</sup> Aytürk, p. 683.

<sup>262</sup> Umut Uzer, "Türkiye- İsrail İlişkilerinde Bunalım", **Ortadoğu Etütleri**, Vol: 2, No: 2, 2011, (Bunalım), p. 153.

One of important tensions in relations was appeared after the operation on the Refah refugee camp organized by Israel in 2004. The reactions of Turkish officials especially Prime Minister Erdoğan's speeches concerning the Israel's operation on the Refah refugee camp showed that relations among two countries will not reach to a friendly level in the near future. In one of his speeches, Prime Minister Erdoğan expressed his concern regarding the catastrophic situation in Refah Refugee Camp. He pointed out the need to establish a common international platform to eliminate state terrorism by Israel.<sup>263</sup> In reply to the speeches of Erdoğan, Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom stated that these statements can affect the nature of the Turkish-Israeli relations, but he added that he will do his best in maintaining a close relationship between Turkey and Israel.<sup>264</sup> Following these developments and speeches, both sides started to lose their expectations to cooperate in existing fields. The reaction of Erdoğan has found its largest support from the Arab world increasing Turkey's popularity and credibility among the Arab countries.<sup>265</sup> In June 2004, Turkey withdrew its Ambassador in Tel-Aviv and the Consulate General of Jerusalem to Ankara. Turkey also criticized the Israeli construction of the wall surrounding the entire city in the West Bank. Turkey voted against Israel in the UN General Assembly on the decision against the wall on 21 July 2004.

Turkish-Israeli relations have gone through a friendly period for a short time in 2005. This was the first result of the temporary peace that was settled between Palestine and Israel. Second, the withdrawal of Israel from Gaza in August 2005 was perceived by Turkey as a sincere act supporting the peace process leading to the softening of Turkish-Israeli relations one more time. Third and finally, The United States, which made plans for regional restructuring under the Greater Middle East Initiative (BOP), suggested that relations between its closest allies should be resolved. These suggestions that were most intense during the NATO summit in Istanbul in June 2004 proved to be effective. Consequently, Turkish Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül and Prime Minister Erdoğan paid official visits to Israel in 2005. These visits contributed to a further improvement of bilateral relations as well. These

---

<sup>263</sup>“Erdoğan: Afganistan'a asker talebi var”, **Hürriyet**, 20.05.2004, <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=227035>, (12.05.2017).

<sup>264</sup> Kösebalaban, p. 41.

<sup>265</sup> Kösebalaban, p. 43.

positive developments produced results. Thus, Israel supported Turkey in its nomination to the UN Security Council's temporary membership in April 2005.<sup>266</sup>

However, these close relations did not last long when Turkey recognized Hamas that won the election in Palestine in January 2006. Following the elections, Turkey expressed its opinion that the election results should be respected, and in February 2006, the Hamas Committee visited Ankara. This visit was severely criticized by Israel. Israeli Prime Ministry officially stated that such a visit was a big mistake for the Turkish-Israeli relations. The response of the Turkish authorities to this statement was also harsh. Turkish authorities even called Israeli Ambassador Avivi to the Turkish Foreign Ministry for explanation. Ambassador Avivi rejected the invitation arguing that there was not an issue to discuss. The threats between the both sides escalated more in July 2006, when 8 Israeli soldiers killed and 2 soldiers abducted by Hezbollah.<sup>267</sup> Hence, until the Israeli-Palestinian dispute in 2006, Erdoğan and his team declared that Israel was not a rival or an enemy to them. Even before coming to power Erdoğan and his team of advisers were in contact with some American-Jewish organizations such as Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs and American-Israel Public Affairs Committee in order to get their supports in the US Congress.<sup>268</sup>

The slowing down of fights between Palestine and Israel in 2007 and 2008 enabled Turkish-Israeli relations to gain a momentum. In the second half of 2008, indirect negotiations started between the Turkish and Israeli officials. Due to Turkey's mediating role between Israel and Syria, Israeli Prime Minister Olmert paid an official visit to Ankara on 22 December 2008 in an attempt to resolve the disputes between Israel and Syria. During these visits, the ceasefire with the Palestinians, reconciliation among the Palestinian groups, and the reconstruction of Gaza was discussed. The accomplishment of a ceasefire between Palestine and Israel contributed positively to Turkish-Israeli relations as well.

Upon coming to power AK Party paid special attention to Turkish-Israeli relations. In its early years due to the pressure from the Turkish military and the

---

<sup>266</sup> Nuri Yeşilyurt, **Türk Dış Politikası**, Ed. Baskın Oran, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2013, p. 441.

<sup>267</sup> Herbert A. Friedman, "Psychological Operations during the Israel-Lebanon War 2006", 14.08.2006, <https://www.psywar.org/content/israellebanon>, (14.05.2017).

<sup>268</sup> Aytürk, p. 677.

threat coming from PKK terror, AK Party kept its close relations with the Israeli governments. However, once AK Party started consolidating its power in politics in 2007 and the shift of power from the military secular groups to the conservative and moderate Islamist elites had taken place in Turkey, Turkish-Israeli relations started to weaken. Moreover, AK Party's attempt to establish peaceful relations with its Arab and Muslim neighbors decreased its need for Israel's help concerning security. The most significant issue that led to the weakening of Turkish-Israeli relations has been Israel's continuous attacks to Palestinians in Gaza.

In fact, Turkey's changing relations with its neighbors such as Syria, Iraq and Iran had a significant impact on the decline of Turkish-Israeli relations. The enemy perception of Turkey over regional Arab countries has diminished and close cooperation between Turkey and these countries have emerged. Such differences between 1990s and 2000s paved the way for the construction of peaceful negotiation base with Turkey's 'old' enemies in the region. In this context, the AK Party's foreign policy principle 'zero problem with neighbors' created the suitable ground to establish friendly relations with regional Arab states. However, this foreign policy of zero problem with the neighbors did not work with Israel due to increasing Israeli attacks to Palestinians throughout the 2000s.

### **B. AK Party's Foreign Policy towards Palestinian-Israeli Conflict during late 2000s**

While the Turkish military played a significant role in the determination of Turkish-Israeli relations in the early years of AK Party, starting from mid 2000s on, once AK Party consolidated its power in politics, it was the government who took the lead in determining Turkish-Israeli relations. In all cases, Prime Minister Erdoğan and then Minister of Foreign Affairs Davutoğlu showed that they were dominant to make significant foreign policy decisions.<sup>269</sup> Leadership of AK Party was able to take the lead in foreign policy decision-making mainly as a result of erosion of the military's power in politics due to the EU-anchored constitutional amendments and harmonization packages. In addition, Turkey's friendly relations with its neighboring

---

<sup>269</sup> Aytürk, p. 682.

countries also decreased Turkey's need for Israeli security aid particularly in its fight with PKK. Moreover, issues that used to be under security sphere and under the military's domination (such as fight with Syria or Iran or Iraq or PKK) were being de-securitized by the AK Party governments leaving the military out of scope of decision-making.

Both Prime Minister Erdoğan and Foreign Minister Davutoğlu paid special attention to Turkey's relations with the Arab world. Foreign Minister Davutoğlu had pointed out in his "strategic depth" argument that Turkish foreign policy was supposed to be based on consequence of its history and geographic position and he had listed Turkey among a small group of countries which he called "central powers". According to Davutoğlu's view, Turkey was a Middle Eastern, Balkan, Caucasian, Central Asian, Caspian, Mediterranean, Gulf and Black Sea country and thus Turkey was supposed to concurrently use its influence in all regions. Therefore, Turkey was supposed to resolve all bilateral disputes which had hampered its relations with its neighbors.<sup>270</sup> Consequently, according to Davutoğlu Turkey was supposed to follow a "zero problem policy with neighbors" foreign policy. However, developing close relations with the Muslim neighbors including Iraq, Iran and Syria as well as Arab nations in the region, in fact meant the deterioration of relations with Israel. Therefore, for the AK Party government it was not possible for Turkey to keep the same close relations with Israel while Israeli armed forces were continuously attacking the Palestinians in Gaza.

Although Islamist ideology of AK Party had a relative impact on worsening of Turkish-Israeli relations, the most significant reason for this deterioration was the losses resulting from the attacks and actions that Israel carried out on the West Bank and Gaza in 2006 and 2008.<sup>271</sup> Erdoğan's clash with Israeli President Shimon Peres in the World Economic Forum in Davos over Gaza in 2009 led to a significant decline in the relations. Moreover, the incident of Mavi Marmara, in which Israeli navy attacked a flotilla crewed by an alliance of pro-Palestinian activists delivering 10,000 tons of aid to Gaza leading to the death of nine people in 2009 speeded up this deterioration. Strained relations after Davos clash became even tenser especially

---

<sup>270</sup> Alexander Murinson, "The Strategic Depth Doctrine of Turkish Foreign Policy", **Middle Eastern Studies**, Vol: 42, No: 6, 2006, p. 946.

<sup>271</sup> Uzer, Rise, p. 97.

with the exclusion of Israel from “Anatolian Eagle” military exercises and the “Chair Crisis” that had taken between diplomats. Relations increasingly began to get into a cycle of crisis.

Another development that harmed the Turkish-Israeli relations was the Hamas crisis. Following the Palestinian elections in January 2006, the visitation of Hamas political bureau leader Khalid Meşal to Turkey appears as a new tension factor in the relations between Turkey and Israel. Thus, Khalid Meşal’s visit in 2006 to Turkey has created discontent on the Israeli side and the AK Party government’s approach to Hamas has accelerated the negative process in Turkish-Israeli relations. Although Turkey did not send an official invitation to Meşal, this situation has led to a new tension in relations. Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman Ra’anan Gissin stated that this visit deeply harmed Israel’s bilateral relations with Turkey and he asked a question: “If we negotiate with Öcalan, what will Turks feel?”<sup>272</sup>

Following these developments, Turkish-Israeli relations got tenser when Turkey strongly responded to Israeli attack to Lebanon in 2006. During these tensions, the research and development projects between the two countries were suspended and the most importantly, modernization projects particularly in the military field have started to fall off the agenda. As a result of these tensions, Turkey’s role as a facilitator or mediator between Syria and Israel has lost its steam particularly following the Gaza War.

Turkish-Israeli relations had gone through the most challenging period in history between 2009 and 2012. This was mainly the result of ruthless attacks of Israel to Palestine. Moreover, Turkey decided to follow a more neighborly foreign policy attempting to keep good relations with its neighbors. Closer relations with the Muslim neighbors led Turkey to keep distance with its relations with Israel. Moreover, Turkey’s peaceful relations with its neighbors decreased the need for Israel’s help concerning security. Erdoğan’s outburst against Israeli President Shimon Peres at the Davos Conference and Mavi Marmara incident also gave Turkish-Israeli relations the greatest damage of its history. Within the four years from 2009 until 2012, Israel found itself completely isolated in the region. Foreign policy choices of Prime Minister Netanyahu and Foreign Minister Lieberman caused

---

<sup>272</sup>“Hamas’la Diyalogun Perde Arkası”, **Türkiye Gazetesi**, 12.11.2010, [www.turkiyegazetesi.com/makaledetay.aspx?id=467915](http://www.turkiyegazetesi.com/makaledetay.aspx?id=467915), (14.06.2017).

Israel to become isolated in the region.<sup>273</sup> This isolation was not only felt in the Middle East, but all over the world. This situation emerged in the voting at the United Nations for the recognition of the Palestinian state. In UN voting the presence of the Palestinian state was recognized by the international community as well. Following sections will analyze the events that led to the deterioration of relations between Turkey and Israel. These will include the Operation Cast Lead, Davos Crisis, Cancellation of Anatolian Eagle Exercise, Chair Crisis and Mavi Marmara Incident.

### **1. Israel's Attacks to Lebanon and Operation Cast Lead (2008-2009)**

The Israel-Lebanon Crisis started on July 12, 2006 when Hezbollah organization in Lebanon killed eight and kidnapped two Israeli soldiers. Israeli government considered Hezbollah attacks to the Israeli lands as a cause of war and consequently began to organize operations on Lebanon. Leading politicians of the AK Party condemned Israel's use of excessive force against the Hezbollah forces in Lebanon in 2006. Israel was accused of carrying out state terror with its attacks.<sup>274</sup>

While Turkey was playing a significant role in Israel's mediation with Syria in the last days of 2008, once Israel's attacks to Gaza started Turkey's reaction to these attacks was very harsh. Israel's attack to Gaza that was called Operation Cast Lead that has taken place on December 27, 2008 was met with severe reaction by Erdoğan government. Erdoğan expressed that Israel's operation on Gaza as disrespectfulness against Turkey's mediation efforts since five days before the operation, Israeli Prime Minister Olmert visited Ankara and did not give information on the Gaza operation he was planning to. Thus, after the operation, Erdoğan described Israel as an aggressive country and Palestine as an "open-air prison". He also stated that Turkey was not going to be silent against humanitarian tragedy in Palestine and would continue efforts for the stabilization of peace in the region.<sup>275</sup> As

---

<sup>273</sup> Fishman, p. 39.

<sup>274</sup> TUIC Akademi, "Nedenleri ve Sonuçları ile 2006 İsrail-Lübnan Savaşı", 26.01.2011, <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=4743389&tarih=2006-07-13>, (16.10.2016).

<sup>275</sup> Lally Weymouth, "Filistin Bugün Bir Açık Cezaevi", **The Washington Post**, 31.01.2009, <http://www.haberler.com/Erdogan-washington-post-a-konustu-haberi/>, (19.10.2016).

a result of these developments, Erdoğan did not visit Israel during his Middle East tour.

Following the Operation Cast Lead that had taken place in December 2008-January 2009, while Arab states held Hamas as responsible for the operation, Turkey regarded Israel responsible for the operation. Arab states considered that Hamas was under the influence of Iran and they were glad to see that Hamas got a blow with this operation. In Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and the Gulf countries Israel's Cast Lead Operation was protested very weakly and ineffectively.<sup>276</sup> However, Turkey's pro-Palestinian stance following the operation has increased Turkey's popularity in the eye of Muslim populations in the region. In addition, Turkey did not only criticize Israel in meetings with different countries and in different platforms, but also proposed the disposal of Israel from the United Nations. Israeli government did not welcome Turkey's reaction and Israeli journalists harshly criticized Turkey by questioning the mediation role of Turkey. Many Israeli officials have attempted to draw parallels between Israeli's Gaza operation and Turkey's struggle with the PKK terrorism.<sup>277</sup>

With the coming of right-wing Likud Party to power and election of its leader Benjamin Netanyahu as prime minister weeks after the start of Gaza operation and the appointment of extreme rightist politician Avigdor Lieberman as Foreign Affairs Minister by Netanyahu, the course of foreign political balances and relations began to change completely.<sup>278</sup> Following the Operation Cast Lead, Turkey changed its attitude towards Israel. Israel has begun to be perceived as a state threatening regional peace and stability. These developments were the beginning of the negative atmosphere that extended to current problematic Turkish-Israeli relations. All the incidents took place after the Operation Cast Lead caused Turkey and Israel to move away from each other.<sup>279</sup>

---

<sup>276</sup> Aytürk, p. 683.

<sup>277</sup> Tür, Yakın, p. 27.

<sup>278</sup> Tür, Yakın, p. 39.

<sup>279</sup> Özlem Tür, İsrail'in Özür Dilemesi Sonrası Türkiye İsrail İlişkileri, Ankara, **Ortadoğu Analiz**, Vol: 5, No: 54, 2013, (Özür), p. 29.



## 2. Davos Crisis (January 2009)

By the end of 2008, Turkish authorities strongly criticized Israel for carrying out a military campaign to Gaza strip and for the ending of the ceasefire between Israel and Hamas forces. AK Party administration also criticized Israeli army's excessive use of force to civilians and its application of embargo on Gaza. These negative developments led to a clash between Prime Minister Erdoğan and Israeli President Shimon Peres during a panel discussion on Gaza at the World Economic Forum in Davos in January 2009.<sup>280</sup> This incident is known as "Davos Crisis" deteriorated Turkish-Israeli relations considerably, while making Erdoğan a hero in the eyes of the Arab World and among the conservative electorate in Turkey. Prime Minister Erdoğan criticized Israeli President Peres for Israel's disproportionate use of power against the Palestinians in Gaza. In fact, Erdoğan was angry when the moderator, David Ignatius of Washington Post curtailed his response to remarks of President Peres on the recent Israeli military campaign. Erdoğan turned to the Israeli President and said "Your voice comes out in a very loud tone and the loudness of your voice has to do with a guilty conscience. My voice, however, will not come out in the same tone." He continued saying, "When it comes to killing, you know well how to kill."<sup>281</sup> Prime Minister Erdoğan gathered his notes and left the panel stating that Davos was over for him.

After this incident, Turkish-Israeli relations came to the level of breaking point. The outburst of Erdoğan in Davos had a significant impact on Turkish-Israeli relations. The Turkish-Israeli relations at Davos made a sharp turn to the most negative direction. Israeli officials evaluated Erdoğan's outburst as a policy he followed to attract his constituency prior to the local elections in Turkey. Thus, the critics of senior executives and politicians in Israel transformed the relations into an unrepairable stage. For instance, Israeli Land Forces Commander Avi Mizrahi stated that "Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan should have looked in the mirror before slamming President Shimon Peres last month at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland". Mizrahi also said that "Turkey was not in a position to

---

<sup>280</sup> Oğuzlu, *Neighbors*, p. 16.

<sup>281</sup> Katrin Bennhold, "Leaders of Turkey and Israel Clash at Davos Panel," *New York Times*, 29.01.2009, <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/30/world/europe/30clash.html>, (22.10.2016).

criticize Israel's actions in the Palestinian territories when it stations troops in Northern Cyprus".<sup>282</sup> These types of speeches and declarations from both sides have paved the way for further deterioration of relations between Turkey and Israel.

As already stated with his rhetoric, Erdoğan gained a lot of credibility in the Islamic world. Many Middle Eastern people were very happy to watch the confrontation of Israel by a Muslim leader. He has conquered the hearts of the Middle Eastern people with his discourse. The so called "One Minute" incident has made Erdoğan a regional folk hero on the Arab streets. Anti-Israeli protests and actions have been wide spread in the Arab countries during this period.<sup>283</sup> The Jerusalem Post gave a wide coverage to the developments in Davos stating that "Turkish-Israeli relations are making a sharp turn to worse in Davos, and Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan has lost all credibility as an honest broker in peace discussions after the Davos crisis".<sup>284</sup>

A very critical psychological threshold was passed in Davos. After the incident in Davos, the Turkish public showed their response to Israel by organizing a wide range of demonstrations on the streets. At this point, the most rational policy method for Israel is to establish mechanisms to correct relations and to convince Turkish politicians that Israel is indeed committed to maintaining the old strategic relationship with Turkey.<sup>285</sup> In order for the relations to be accelerated to an advanced level, it is firstly necessary for Israel to review the oppressive and sanction-based policies against the Palestinians.

### **3. Cancellation of Anatolian Eagle Exercise (October 2009)**

The increase in PKK terrorist attacks in Turkey in the 1990s and the Syrian government's support for these attacks forced Turkey to establish military cooperation with Israel during that period. When Turkish-Israeli relations boomed in

---

<sup>282</sup> Yossi Melman, "IDF: Officer's Criticism of Turkey Does Not Represent Official View", **Haaretz**, 14.02.2009, <https://www.haaretz.com/1.5075287>, (25.10.2016).

<sup>283</sup> Abdulkadir Çevik and Bahar Senem Ersaydı, "Türkiye-İsrail İlişkilerinde Psiko-Politik Etkenler ve Toplumsal Algılar", **Akademik Ortadoğu**, Vol: 5, No: 2, 2011, p. 12.

<sup>284</sup> "Erdoğan-led Turkey cannot mediate peace talks", **Hurriyet Daily News**, 01.02.2009, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/Erdogan-led-turkey-cannot-mediate-peace-talks-israeli-newspaper-10902527> (11.07.2017).

<sup>285</sup> Aytürk, p. 682.

the 1990s, besides economic and trade agreements, two countries also started organizing joint military operations. Firstly, air operation under the name of “Anadolu Kartalı” (Anatolian Eagle) was carried out in Konya on 19 April 2001 with participation of Turkey, Israel and the US. Israel attended a great number of operations in Turkey based on the Framework Agreement on Educational and Technical Cooperation in Military Area signed in February 1996. Anatolian Eagle Operation has been a sign of friendly relations between the two countries. However, the operation that has carried out regularly since 2001 was cancelled by Turkey in 2009. In fact, Turkish government objected Israel’s inclusion to the joint military operation due to the continuing attacks of Israel to Gaza and the crisis in Davos by barring Israel from the multi-national air force exercise. Turkey cancelled the international exercise after Italy and USA pulled out protesting Israel’s exclusion.<sup>286</sup> More precisely, due to the Gaza Strip and the Davos Crisis in 2008 and 2009, it was announced that the military operation planned to be carried out between 12 and 23 October 2009 was nationalized, and the international part of the exercise was cancelled.

In fact, the Foreign Minister Davutoğlu stated that once the situation in Gaza would improve, Turkey would consider restarting the operation. Prime Minister Erdoğan argued that his voters did not want an alliance with Israel and therefore they would not make an agreement with Israel.<sup>287</sup> As a basis to this declaration, he stated that they would not allow Israel to participate in the regular Anatolian Eagle military operations. Despite America’s announcement that it would withdraw from the operations to protest Turkey, Erdoğan had not stepped back from his decision. The cancellation of the international part of the operation showed that Turkey was no longer continue to make military or trade agreements with Israel.<sup>288</sup>

---

<sup>286</sup> Jukian Borger, “Turkey confirms it barred Israel from military exercise because of Gaza War”, **The Guardian**, 12.10.2009, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/oct/12/turkey-israel-military-gaza>, (12.08.2017).

<sup>287</sup> “Davutoğlu, İsrail’in Gazze Yaklaşımını Eleştiriyoruz”, **Radikal**, 12.10.2009 <http://www.radikal.com.tr/dunya/one-minuteun-ardindan-anadolu-kartali-gerilimi-958829/>, (17.08.2017).

<sup>288</sup> Aytürk, p. 678.

#### 4. The Chair Crisis (2009)

While the debates on the nationalization of the Anatolian Eagle Operation and Davos Crisis were continuing, Israel voiced discomfort concerning two Turkish TV series broadcasted on Turkish television that were titled “Farewell” and “Valley of the Wolves”. In these TV series Israeli security forces were shown as kidnapping of children and shooting of old men. The incident which is known as “Low Chair Crisis” increased the tension further between the two countries. Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon called the Tel-Aviv Ambassador Oğuz Çelikkol to the Israeli Parliament to discuss the content of the mentioned TV series broadcasted in Turkey. First improper behavior of Ayalon was not to shake the hand of Turkish ambassador, and second Ayalon made Çelikkol to sit in a chair that was lower than his. Ayalon drew the attention of the press to the situation. Moreover, Turkish flag was not located on the table while the Israeli flag was replaced.<sup>289</sup> Following these developments, the Israeli Ambassador was called to the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It was also stated that Turkey expected an apology from Israel and condemned Israel’s behavior. President Abdullah Gül gave a deadline until evening on the same day to Israel to apologize and Israel delivered the letter of official apology to the Embassy of Tel-Aviv in the evening.<sup>290</sup> This behavior that aimed at humiliating the Turkish ambassador worsened the already fragile relations between the two countries.

The Low Chair Crisis, when assessed from a crisis management standpoint, was successfully managed by Turkey and ended without further problems as a result of Israel’s stepping back and apologizing for this improper behavior. This crisis should not be interpreted only as a diplomatic gaffe but should also be seen as evidence that Israel was able to take unexpected steps when bilateral relations were strained.<sup>291</sup> In the aftermath of the Low Chair Crisis, no progress has been made to

---

<sup>289</sup> “İsrail’le Alçak Koltuk Krizi”, **Milliyet**, 13.01.2010, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/israil-le--alcak-koltuk--krizi-gundem-1185364>, (13.09.2017).

<sup>290</sup> “Turkey demands apology from Israel over envoy slight”, **BBC News**, 13.01.2010, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/8455460.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8455460.stm), (09.10.2017).

<sup>291</sup> Bilal Karabulut, “Alçak Koltuk Krizi”, **Türk Dış Politikasında 41 Kriz: 1924-2012**, Kripto Yayıncılık, Ankara, 2012, pp. 380-381.

reduce the amount of tension between the two countries; on the contrary, leaders of both countries continued accusing each other.

## 5. The Mavi Marmara Incident (2010) and Palmer Report

Gaza has been under the occupation of Israel since 2007. The Israeli state has been keeping all the inbound and outbound land and sea operations that goes to Gaza under its control to stop the activities of Hamas in Gaza. Israeli control of Gaza makes the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the area very difficult since they are not able to receive any aid from international organizations. On 22 May 2010, a fleet of nine ships, under the campaign of “Palestine our route–Humanitarian aid our loud,” set out from Istanbul to provide humanitarian assistance to Gaza. This project was accomplished under the leadership of the IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation. The Foundation aimed at drawing the attention of the world to this region by breaking the blockade of Israel.<sup>292</sup> The six ships in the flotilla were boarded in international waters around 130 km from the Israeli coast. Israeli commandos landed on the Turkish-owned Mavi Marmara killing nine people (eventually ten people) and injuring dozens.<sup>293</sup> Turkey’s response to this operation has been very tough. Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs has declared that this massacre could lead to irreparable damages.<sup>294</sup>

Following these events, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Israel, Ayalon stated that Israel was not going to apologize for the operation on the Mavi Marmara flotilla. Moreover, Israeli Prime Minister, Netanyahu visited the commandos of Shayetet 13 (elite naval commando unit of the Israeli Navy) which performed the attack on Mavi Marmara Flotilla. He congratulated these commandos for their ‘heroic acts’. In addition, senior Israeli politicians emphasized Israel’s fairness in this operation. Thus, the centrist and liberal opposition Kadima party’s leader Tzipi Livni

---

<sup>292</sup> “Rotamız Filistin Yükmüz İnsani Yardım”, **Hürriyet**, 22.05.2010, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/rotamiz-filistin-yukumuz-insani-yardim-14806330>, (18.10.2017).

<sup>293</sup> “Mavi Marmara: Why did Israel stopped Gaza Flotilla,” **BBC News**, 27.06.2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/10203726>, (23.10.2017).

<sup>294</sup> Uzer, Bunalım, p. 157.

even stated that there was a provocation in the flotilla; therefore, Israeli commandos had no choice but to react to protect themselves.<sup>295</sup>

Consequently representatives from both sides met in order to negotiate for a solution. Prime Minister Erdoğan has also shown his goodwill by sending Turkish planes to help extinguishing fire in the northern forests of Israel in December 2010.<sup>296</sup> Negotiations came to a deadlock as Israel did not make official apology to Turkey. Turkey, getting the support of the international community, described Israel's action as "state terror" and "piracy", and Ambassador Çelikkol was withdrawn to Turkey without delay and the relations were decreased to the level of charge d'affaires.<sup>297</sup>

Following the incident, Turkey attempted to put international community into action against Israel by calling UN Security Council, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and NATO to hold extraordinary meetings and ensuring that these organizations published notifications of condemning Israel. Turkey cancelled all the military operations it planned with Israel. Besides its diplomats, Israel withdrew its military officers who were sent for training Heron unmanned aerial vehicles. Foreign Minister Davutoğlu requested five issues on behalf of Turkey to normalize Turkish-Israeli relations. These requests included Israel's apology to Turkey, compensation to the families of the people who lost their lives, the abolition of the blockade on Gaza, the establishment of an international commission to resolve this incident and return of the seized ships. However, these requests were not met when Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu refused to apologize and rather protected the commandos who were involved in the incident.<sup>298</sup>

Turkey brought the Mavi Marmara incident before the UN Security Council (UNSC) on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2010. However, UNSC did not reach a result. The Council established an international commission to investigate the incident. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon led to the establishment of an investigation commission under

---

<sup>295</sup> Barak Ravid, "Gaza flotilla Turkish provocation", **Haaretz**, 25.10.2010, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/gaza-flotilla-was-turkish-provocation-livni-tells-inquiry-1.321073>, (27.10.2017).

<sup>296</sup> Aytürk, p. 685.

<sup>297</sup> Harriet Sherwood, "Israel accused of state terrorism after assault on flotilla carrying Gaza aid", **The Guardian**, 01.06.2010, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/may/31/israel-accused-state-terrorism-assault-flotilla-gaza>, (03.11.2017).

<sup>298</sup> "Mavi Marmara: Why did Israel stop the Gaza flotilla?", **BBC News**, 27.06.2016, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10203726>, (23.10.2017).

the chairmanship of Geoffrey Palmer who was the former Prime Minister of New Zealand.<sup>299</sup> Following the investigation of Mavi Marmara incident, the Palmer Report stated that Israeli commanders met with “an organized and violent resistance” while raiding the ship Mavi Marmara, and that they had to use force to protect themselves, and the power used was “excessive and unproportioned.”<sup>300</sup>

The Palmer Report underlined three points in general: The Israeli security forces used excessive and unproportioned force during the Mavi Marmara raid; it was possible to avoid this, but Israel did not avoid it. Israel was required to pay compensation to the families of the civilians who died in the attack. Moreover, Israel was expected to make a statement of regret concerning the incident.<sup>301</sup>

Turkey’s attitude toward Israel became even harsher after the report. Turkey declared that it did not recognize the report. Shortly after the infiltration of the report, Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoğlu announced a list of sanctions against Israel consisting of five articles. According to these sanctions, the level of diplomatic relations with Israel was supposed to be decreased and Turkey was supposed to be represented at the second secretary level in Israel. Turkey was supposed to take necessary measures for freedom of navigation in the Eastern Mediterranean. Finally, all military agreements with Israel were to be suspended. Turkey was not going to recognize the Gaza blockade and make an initiative in the UN General Assembly for the matter to be handled in the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Besides, Turkey was going to support the victims of the Mavi Marmara raid on the quest for right to legal remedies against Israel.<sup>302</sup>

Turkey’s anger at Israel was not only about the issue of apology but also about Israel’s cooperation with the Southern Cyprus Government in a natural gas drilling they have initiated in the south of Cyprus. Southern Cyprus natural gas drilling was undertaken by Noble Company that was based in Texas. The Company benefitted from the airspace of Israel. Turkey argued that it was not legal for Southern Cyprus to claim the region as its own exclusive economic zone, unless the

---

<sup>299</sup> Kemal İnat and İsmail Telci, **Türk Dış Politikası Yıllığı 2010: Türkiye’nin İran, İsrail ve Suriye Politikası**, Seta Yayınları, Ankara, 2011, p. 116.

<sup>300</sup> Yusuf Aksar, “Birleşmiş Milletler Palmer (Mavi Marmara) Raporu ve Uluslararası Hukuk”, **Uluslararası İlişkiler Dergisi**, No: 9, 2012, p. 37.

<sup>301</sup> Aksar, p. 33.

<sup>302</sup> Çakmak, p. 322.

dispute was resolved, and the maritime boundaries were determined by an agreement.<sup>303</sup>

Following Davutoğlu's announcement of the sanctions, Israeli government refused to apologize, and they even warned Turkey to respect international maritime law. Although they were sorry for the deaths, they would not even discuss about apology. Israeli authorities declared that they accepted the UN report and they expressed that they hope the relations with Turkey would be improved. Israeli prominent newspaper Haaretz pointed out that the findings of the UN report heightened tensions between Israel and Turkey. Turkey's relations with Israel entered its worst period in history as Turkey took the decision of applying sanctions composed of five points. As a result of this crisis, Turkish-Israeli relations have been damaged, perhaps not to be repaired for years.

After all these developments, in March 2013, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu apologized from Turkey and stated that they were ready to pay the compensation to the families of those killed in the raid of Mavi Marmara. The US played a significant role in forcing Netanyahu for the apology.<sup>304</sup> The fact that Israel and Turkey are the strongest allies of the US in the region, and the ongoing civil war in Syria has been the most important cause of this arbitration. Given that Israel did not apologize to any country throughout its history, the factors behind this apology are the United States, the conflict in Syria, and the rising isolation of Israel in the region. Both Turkey and Israel have been watching the course of civil war in Syria with great concern. Neighbors of Syria have valid reasons for their common concerns about Syria. The fact that Turkey and Israel jointly acted together against the developments in the region, taking security measures and sharing intelligence would be more effective than acting individually in terms of security and stability of the region.

### **C. Recent Developments in 2015-16: Israel's Apology and Compensation**

In May 2010, the most significant crisis in the history of Turkish-Israel relations had taken place as a result of Mavi Marmara incident. Turkey reacted very

---

<sup>303</sup> Kösebalaban, p. 49.

<sup>304</sup> Aytürk, p. 675.



harsh to Israel due to this crisis and took a series of measures and sanctions against Israel. Turkey demanded an apology from Israel, asked for compensation to the family of those who lost their lives, the abolition of the blockade on Gaza, the establishment of an international commission and return of the seized ships. The last two requests were fulfilled immediately following these requests. However, Israel insisted on not extending an apology to Turkey.

Over the past three years, Turkey has not received any response to its requests from Israel. However, on 22 March 2013, Obama made his first visit to Israel after his election as the President of the United States for the second time. Following this meeting, which was attended by the US President Obama as well, the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs publicly announced that Israeli government would apologize to Turkey with an official statement.<sup>305</sup> Consequently, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu called Prime Minister Erdoğan by telephone and apologized for the Mavi Marmara crisis and announced that he would apologize to Prime Minister Erdoğan and pay compensation for the attack on Mavi Marmara. Thus, Israel has apologized to a country for the first time in its history because of its illegal action.

Despite this apology, it was not easy to normalize relations between Turkey and Israel since the condition for the removal of Gaza blockade requested by Turkey was not realized. Thus the Israeli prime minister, who is clear on the issues of apology and compensation, he preferred to use the expression “as long as the calmness of the Gaza blockade continued”.<sup>306</sup> However, after the formal declaration of apology by Israel, the two countries began negotiations again to remove the blockade in Gaza.<sup>307</sup> As a result of the negotiations, on 30 September 2016, a compensation of 20 million dollars was paid to the families of those who lost their lives on the Mavi Marmara ship.<sup>308</sup> Eventually two countries reached an agreement

---

<sup>305</sup> “İsrail'den Mavi Marmara özrü”, **Sabah**, 22.03.2013, <http://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2013/03/22/israilden-mavi-marmara-ozru>, (16.12.2017).

<sup>306</sup> Faruk Köse, “İsrail'in özür hamlesi”, **Yeni Akit**, 25.03.2013, <http://www.habervaktim.com/yazar/58356/israilin-ozur-hamlesi.html>, (18.12.2017).

<sup>307</sup> “Mavi Marmara'dan sonra İsrail'den ilk resmi ziyaret”, **CNN Türk**, 24.06.2016, <http://www.cnnurk.com/turkiye/mavi-marmaradan-sonra-israilden-ilk-resmi-ziyaret>, (21.12.2017).

<sup>308</sup> “İsrail Mavi Marmara tazminatını ödedi”, **Takvim**, 30.10.2016, <http://www.takvim.com.tr/guncel/2016/09/30/israilden-mavi-marmara-tazminati>, (11.01.2018).

on the partial abolition of the Gaza blockade. Consequently, Turkey sent humanitarian aid to Gaza.<sup>309</sup>

Concerning Palestinian-Israel conflict, in March 2013, the US government launched a new initiative, centering a two-state solution. This initiative was pursued by the Secretary of State, John Kerry. Israel and the Palestine were asked to start negotiations again without any preconditions. These talks focus on a plan that Israel can normalize its relations with the entire Arab world, based on the provision of peace between Israel and Palestine.<sup>310</sup>

Peace talks between Israel and Palestine halted in April 2014, as Israel refused to return to the 1967 borders and to end the construction of Jewish settlements. According to Haaretz, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu allegedly held a secret meeting with the former US Secretary of State John Kerry, Jordanian King Abdullah II and Egyptian President Abdulfettah es-Sisi in Aqaba, Jordan in 2017. During that meeting, Kerry proposed to Netanyahu a peace plan that included “the recognition of Israel as a Jewish state by Arab states and the initiation of reconciliation with Palestinians”. However, Netanyahu rejected the plan on the grounds that “he could not impose the plan on the coalition government”.<sup>311</sup>

In the light of all these developments, in the last days of the Obama administration, the UNSC adopted Resolution 2334, which requires that all illegal settlement activities in Palestinian territories under Israel’s occupation should be stopped “immediately and completely”. 14 of the 15-member states of the Security Council voted 'yes' for the resolution, while the US voted ‘abstention’. Israel responded very harsh to the US’ abstention vote and stated that it would not comply with the UNSC resolution. In accordance with the resolution adopted at the UN Security Council, Israel was asked to put an end to the ongoing settlement activities in Palestine, including the East Jerusalem.<sup>312</sup>

---

<sup>309</sup>Sultan Coğalan, “Gazze'ye bir gemi insani yardım daha gidecek”, **Anadolu Ajansı**, 14.07.2016, <http://aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/gazze-ye-bir-gemi-insani-yardim-daha-gidecek/607616>, (19.01.2018).

<sup>310</sup>Tür, Özur, p. 33.

<sup>311</sup>“Netanyahu barış planını reddetmiş”, **Yeni Şafak**, 19.02.2017, [http://www.yenisafak.com/dunya/netanyahu-baris-planini-reddetmis-2615633#cxrecs\\_s](http://www.yenisafak.com/dunya/netanyahu-baris-planini-reddetmis-2615633#cxrecs_s), (21.01.2018).

<sup>312</sup>“BM kararı İsrail politikasına büyük bir tokattır”, **Yeni Şafak**, 24.12.2016, <http://www.yenisafak.com/dunya/bm-karari-israil-politikasina-buyuk-bir-tokattir-2585722>, (29.01.2018).

During the last decade, Turkish-Israeli relations have undergone a rather difficult process due to the changes in the international and domestic arena. As usual, the Palestinian question shaped Turkish-Israeli relations. Israel's continuous attacks to Gaza, the religiously conservative AK Party's coming to power in Turkey and the rightist Likud Party's coming to power in Israel, decrease of Turkey's needs for Israeli help concerning security, due to Turkey's improving relations with its Muslim neighbors led to the weakening of Turkish-Israeli relations. Moreover, the events particularly, Davos clashes and Mavi Marmara incident worsened the already weak relations. It looks as Turkish Israeli relations will never get into a normal path without the resolution of Palestinian-Israeli conflict.



## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS OF AK PARTY'S FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT

States pursue a variety of foreign policies that can be analysed with the help of theories and approaches of international relations. One single theory or approach usually cannot explain a certain foreign policy followed by a country. AK Party throughout the 2000s and 2010s followed a multi-faceted foreign policy moving from use of hard power to soft power towards a more security oriented foreign policy. Domestic politics played a significant role in Turkey's relations with Israel. Recent crises between Turkey and Israel including Israel's attacks to Gaza, reaction of Prime Minister Erdoğan to Israeli leader Shimon Peres in Davos and Mavi Marmara attacks are supposed to be analysed in the context of Turkey's domestic politics as well as its relations with other Middle Eastern countries. Turkish foreign policy decisions during AK Party governments have been specifically planned both for rapprochement with the Middle Eastern countries as well as the Muslim world. Turkish governments focused on strengthening of trade relations with the neighbouring states in order to overcome the domestic economic depression.

Realism, which brings the power relations and anarchic system to the forefront, can help to make reasonable explanations in the assessment of relations between Turkey and Israel particularly towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. However, in the analysis of the recent Turkish-Israeli relations, constructivism, which gives priority to the social aspects of interstate relations, is an important reference for the collective identity built between Turkey and Palestine. Moreover, constructivism can explain the polarization between Turkey and Israel concerning the Palestinian question. It also constitutes a reference for Turkey's perception of Palestinian conflict during the AK Party period. This chapter will analyse Turkish-Israeli relations towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict through constructivism.

## I. FOREIGN POLICY OF THE AK PARTY ERA

Turkish foreign policy is basically determined by its geopolitical position. Turkey, which is located at the intersection of the Balkans, the Middle East, Caucasus, the Black Sea and the Central Asia, has been the focus of attention for a number of powers throughout the centuries. This strategic presence has always maintained Turkey's significance in world politics. In its early years Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Republic of Turkey aimed at keeping the status quo rather than following a revisionist policy at the end of the First World War. Turkish governments planned to keep a balance on the basis of security and politics in order not to diverge from the West. Following the establishment of new Turkish Republic, Turkish politicians in general followed a foreign policy based on 'peace at home and peace in the world'. However, Turkey, during the Cold War era, followed a foreign policy based on the safety of its borders by following military strategies. In the aftermath of the Cold War era, Turkish politicians started to follow western oriented policies first by becoming a member of NATO and then by following a pro-US foreign policy.<sup>313</sup> Due to the problems with the US throughout the 1970s particularly concerning the Cyprus issue, Turkey began to follow more multi-faceted foreign policies by establishing warm relations with the Muslim countries. By the beginning of 2000s when the AK Party government came to power, religion started to play a significant role in Turkey's multi-faceted foreign policy. The party aimed at making significant changes both in terms of discourse and action in its foreign policies. Policy-makers in the party aimed at moving Turkish foreign policy from neutral foreign politics to active and proactive foreign politics.<sup>314</sup>

AK Party was shaped within the National Vision Movement (*Milli Görüş Hareketi*) that was represented respectively by the National Order Party (*Milli Nizam Partisi-1970*), National Salvation Party (*Milli Selamet Partisi-1972*) and the Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi-1983*) which were all established under the leadership of Necmettin Erbakan. The AK Party was established on 14 August 2001, as the

---

<sup>313</sup> Baskın Oran, *Türk Dış Politikası-Cilt II 1980-2001*, İletişim Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 2001, pp. 32-34.

<sup>314</sup> Ahmet Davutoğlu, "Turkey's Foreign Policy Vision: An Assessment of 2007", *Insight Turkey*, Vol: 10, No: 1 2008, (Vision), p. 79.

innovative wing of Welfare Party that was dissolved with the 28<sup>th</sup> February Coup. Upon the dissolution of Welfare Party two new parties, Virtue Party (*Fazilet Partisi*) and Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*) were established. While the Virtue Party represented the more conservative wing of former Welfare Party, Justice and Development Party–AK Party represented the more modern and younger cadre of Welfare Party.<sup>315</sup> Within this context, AK Party entered the Turkish political life as a more modern representative of Islamist movement that was formed with the division of the National Vision Movement. AK Party defined itself as a “conservative democrat” rather than an Islamist party similar to the Christian Democratic Parties in Europe.<sup>316</sup>

AK Party aimed at making Turkey a regional power in the Middle East. In order to do that AK Party elite reinterpreted and transformed Atatürk’s principle “Peace at home, Peace in the world” into “zero problem with neighbours” policy. AK Party had acted as a problem solver in the Middle East.<sup>317</sup> AK Party government first attempted to improve its relations with its neighbours including Syria, Iraq and Iran and second worked on its problem solving role by acting as a mediator between Syria and Israel, Hamas and al-Fatah, the US and Iran. Such mediating efforts of the party increased Turkey’s influence in the region. AK Party elite aimed at participating in international politics as an effective actor rather than a spectator. To do that they had sought to establish closer relations with the Islamic countries, Middle Eastern countries as well as the western countries. Moreover, the party brought historical and geographical elements to the forefront in foreign policy making.<sup>318</sup>

Under Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmet Davutoğlu’s guidance Turkey had adopted the policy of “zero problem with neighbours” approach and reversed the conflicts Turkey had experienced throughout the 1990s with Greece, Syria, Iraq and Iran. Majority of the conflicts were related to the help PKK received from the neighbouring countries. Therefore, in order to find a peaceful resolution to the

---

<sup>315</sup> İlhan Uzgel, **AKP: Neoliberal Dönüşümün Yeni Aktörü**, Phoenix Yayınevi, İstanbul, 2010, p. 16.

<sup>316</sup> Meliha Benli Altunışık, “The Possibilities and Limits of Turkey’s Soft Power in the Middle East”, **Insight Turkey**, Vol: 10, No: 2, 2008, (Possibilities), p. 44.

<sup>317</sup> Volker Perthes, “Turkey’s Role in the Middle East: An Outsider’s Perspective”, **Insight Turkey**, Vol: 12, No: 4, 2010, p. 2.

<sup>318</sup> Joshua W. Walker, “Learning Strategic Depth: Implications of Turkey’s New Foreign Policy Doctrine”, **Insight Turkey**, Vol: 9, No: 3, 2007, (Implications), p. 32.

Kurdish question, AK Party governments aimed at establishing warm and peaceful relations with the neighbouring countries. By doing so the governments aimed at decreasing the support that PKK had been receiving from these countries.

Hard-core security oriented foreign policies that were followed throughout the 1990s had a significant impact on AK Party's intention to follow more moderate and more soft-core foreign policies. Consequently, Turkish foreign policy towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict during this period moved towards a pro-Palestinian phase which in turn led to a deterioration of Turkish-Israeli relations.

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan upon coming to power as the prime minister following the electoral victory of AK Party in November 2002, had undertaken an activist role in foreign policy decision-making. By the end of 2000s Minister of Foreign Affairs Davutoğlu, a professor of International Relations had started playing a significant role in shaping foreign policy by basing it to the Islamist roots of the government and by giving it a strategic thinking and ideological support. By focusing on the strategic vision of Turkey, Davutoğlu argued that Turkey had "strategic depth" due to its history and geographic position and listed Turkey among a small group of countries which he has called "central powers". According to Davutoğlu, Turkey was not supposed to get satisfied with a regional role in the Balkans or the Middle East since it was not a regional but a central power. He argued that Turkey was a Middle Eastern, Balkan, Caucasian, Central Asian, Caspian, Mediterranean, Gulf and Black Sea country and therefore was supposed to concurrently put its influence in all these regions. However, to be able to have an impact on politics in these regions, Turkey was supposed to develop a proactive policy by resorting to its historic and geographic depth. On the international front, Davutoğlu argued that Turkey needed to resolve all bilateral disputes which deteriorated its relations with its neighbours. The fundamental factors that constituted the essence of this political structure lied in its nature. In other words, as the main factors geography, history and culture were all considered as important determinants in Turkish foreign policy.<sup>319</sup>

Davutoğlu's book called as "The Strategic Depth: The Turkish International Location" had offered a comprehensive articulation for establishing peaceful relations with the neighbours. This new foreign policy included establishing zero

---

<sup>319</sup> Ahmet Davutoğlu, **The Strategic Depth: The Turkish International Location**, Küre Yayınları, İstanbul, 2001, (Strategic Depth), p. 65.

problem with the neighbours, multi-dimensionalism, freedom-security relationship, and a rhythmic diplomacy. Davutoğlu emphasized that “mentioning multidimensional relations, neither our relations with Europe are an alternative to America nor our relations with the neighbouring countries are alternative to Europe. If we see all of them as complementary factors in the big picture, then we can develop a strategic vision in a real sense.”<sup>320</sup> Davutoğlu avoided the idea that “Turkey is surrounded by enemies.” He claimed that it was not possible to determine Turkey’s status by static policies under the new international environment that emerged after September 11 attacks of 2001. He supported a multi-faceted foreign policy to contribute to the global and regional peace in Asia-Europe, Islam-West and North-South polarizations by attempting to resolve the disputes with neighbours.<sup>321</sup> However, disputes with Israel were not solved peacefully. The close relationships of the 1990s between Turkey and Israel have disappeared in the 2000s due to the negative developments between the Israelis and Palestinians.<sup>322</sup>

In AK Party’s 2002 election manifesto, it was stated that military alliances and blocks after the Cold War had lost the feature of being a decisive factor of international relations and that the interstate relations to be established in the new period were supposed to be on the axis of cooperation. The 2002 election manifesto of the party emphasized psychological and socio-cultural elements in foreign policy-making. Historic and geographic location of Turkey was taken into consideration.<sup>323</sup> 2007 election manifesto aimed at moving Turkey from a defensive position to a decisive actor who can direct the developments with its global vision.<sup>324</sup> 58<sup>th</sup> Government Program focused on the mediating role of Turkish foreign policy. Turkey was not going to turn its face from the West. Rather, it would improve its relations with the EU in order to promote its own democracy. Moreover, Turkey

---

<sup>320</sup> Davutoğlu, *Strategic Depth*, p. 68.

<sup>321</sup> Ahmet Davutoğlu, “Türkiye Merkez Ülke Olmalı”, **Radikal**, 26.02.2004, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/yorum/turkiye-merkez-ulke-olmali-702116>, (14.03.2018)

<sup>322</sup> Uzer, *Rise*, p. 108.

<sup>323</sup> Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, “Herşey Türkiye İçin”, 3 Kasım 2002 Genel Seçimleri Seçim Beyannamesi, 2002, p. 91, <https://www.akparti.org.tr/site/dosyalar#!/>, (18.03.2018).

<sup>324</sup> Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, *Güven ve İstikrar İçinde Durmak Yok Yola Devam*, 22 Temmuz 2007 Genel Seçimleri Seçim Beyannamesi, Haziran 2007, p. 227, [www.akparti.org.tr/upload/documents/2007-beyanname.pdf](http://www.akparti.org.tr/upload/documents/2007-beyanname.pdf), (18.03.2018).



would develop its relations with countries out of the region.<sup>325</sup> The 2023 Political Vision of the AK Party, decided abandon the “zero problem with the neighbouring countries” and decided to establish “economic integration” “multiculturalism.”<sup>326</sup>

Concerning the Palestinian issue, AK Party elite had led a more active foreign policy in the international platform. Particularly due to the common identity concerning religion between the Palestinian people and the Turkish people, Turkish politicians have become more sensitive in the Palestinian issue. As a result of the Turkish support for the Palestinian issue on every platform and critical discourses of both Turkish and Israeli politicians following each event, Turkish-Israeli relations have become tenser. In this context, the foreign policies of AK Party governments on the Palestinian issue will be analysed in the following by resorting to the fundamental assumptions and propositions of constructivism.

## **II. A CONSTRUCTIVIST ANALYSIS OF AK PARTY’S FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT**

Constructivist theory which has been one of the most controversial theories in the discipline of international relations has come to the forefront among the post-positivist theories with the emphasis on the social aspects of international politics. Constructivist theory rose due to the inadequacy of rationalist theories in the explanations of the end of the Cold War. In this respect, while neo-realism and neo-liberalism are accepted as main theories in the discipline of international relations, constructivist theory has also gained some significance. Many scholars concentrating on constructivism developed their thesis on the critique of positivist theories. These theorists redefined concepts such as structure, anarchy, cooperation, actors, interest and process in realist and liberal theories, and added social elements such as identity and culture to these concepts. The constructivists emphasize the intersubjective structure although they accept the effects of material capabilities. Accordingly, the

---

<sup>325</sup> Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi 58. Hükümet Programı ve Dış Politika, 12.03.2008, [www.akparti.org.tr/.../documents/58inci-hukumet-programi.pdf](http://www.akparti.org.tr/.../documents/58inci-hukumet-programi.pdf), (21.03.2018).

<sup>326</sup> AK Parti 2023 Siyasi Vizyonu: Dünya ve Dış Politika Vizyonumuz, 29.09.2012, p. 61, <http://www.akparti.org.tr/upload/documents/akparti2023siyasivizyonuturkce.pdf>, (21.03.2018).

identities and interests of the actors are not given by nature; they are built with the common thought process.<sup>327</sup>

Realists assume that states are concerned about the material abilities of the other states. Constructivists are not concerned with material capabilities themselves; rather they care about the states that own these material capabilities. Constructivists focus on how each state perceive and interpret each other's material capabilities. In constructivist analysis, there is a difference between the material capabilities of friends and the material abilities of the enemies. Since the historical and social dimensions have not been adequately addressed in the realist theory, the concepts of structure and power remain quite superficial in realist theory.<sup>328</sup> Social factors are more important than material factors in understanding international relations. Social relations define how we view, understand and evaluate material factors such as military power or economic wealth.

Ideas, beliefs, and identities of individuals and states are important in understanding international relations. Constructivism accepts the states as a social entity. It also accepts international relations as a social area and examines social relations. According to constructivism, human being is a social entity that interacts with nature and environment. This socialization process takes place in a social structure through agents and institutions based on some rules. These ideas, beliefs and identities are socially constructed by the groups to which they belong.<sup>329</sup>

Constructivists try to explain the behaviour of actors within the framework of norms derived from international interests and identities.<sup>330</sup> They emphasize the importance of normative and ideological structures and show that these elements shape the social identities of political actors. According to constructivists, norms are collective understanding of behavioural claims on actors. The effects of norms are deeper; because norms determine not only the behaviour of the actors, but also construct the identities and interests of the actors.<sup>331</sup> Thus, actors (states) and

---

<sup>327</sup> Wendt, Social, p. 110.

<sup>328</sup> Alexander Wendt, "The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory", **International Organization**, Vol: 41, No: 3, 1987, (Agent-Structure), p. 365.

<sup>329</sup> Onuf, Rules, p. 56.

<sup>330</sup> Özev, p. 485.

<sup>331</sup> Kaarbo et. al, p. 12.

structures (global norms) are mutually established by mutual interactions.<sup>332</sup> Constructivism claims that the international system consists of the social interactions of states and the shared concepts in international society. Cooperation and/or conflict between state and (non-state) actors are the results of intersubjective relations of the actors. The actors' views and ideas about each other at any given time and (over time) affect the nature of their relationship. The constructivist approach is centred on explaining change showing how key concepts that are used to explain international relations have changed over time.

In order to analyse AK Party's foreign policy towards Israel concerning the Palestinian issue, it is necessary to examine what the preferences and interests of its implementation are. These interests and their implementation must be analysed both at the national and international level. This section will analyse the impact of the Palestinian-Israeli issue on AK Party's foreign policy decisions on the basis of the interests and identities that are formed by mutual interaction. There are two reasons for adopting a social constructivist approach to examine the Turkish-Israeli relations within the context of the Palestinian-Israeli issue. First, traditional approaches do not provide a consistent explanation by including issues such as identity, norms, culture and civilization. Second, community-based values and norms have great significance to understand and analyse the dimension of relations between countries. Any research to be conducted on Turkish-Israeli relations must refer to the social perceptions including cultural and religious values in both countries.

### **A. The Role of Identity (Interest, Culture, Norms, Values, History and Religion) in Shaping Turkish-Israeli and Palestinian Relations**

Social constructivism is an approach that prioritizes values such as identity, culture, norms, values rather than emphasizing the power in transformations and crises.<sup>333</sup> According to Constructivists, realist theories describe states as basic actors who act rationally and strategically, and they describe the international arena as an anarchic result of this relationship. Since realists focus only on the empirical and

---

<sup>332</sup> Checkel, p. 328.

<sup>333</sup> Stefano Guzzini, "A Reconstruction of Constructivism in International Relations", **European Journal of International Relations**, Vol: 6, No: 2, 2000, p. 148.

practical consequences of anarchy, they have neglected the historical and social dimension in the international arena and have not included identity and interest in their studies.<sup>334</sup> With the advent of constructivism, such concepts as identity and culture have begun to be re-examined in the discipline of international relations.

According to constructivists, the interaction or process constitutes the main interest of the systemic theory. Although they can change in a very difficult way, the identity is the only thing that actors can change throughout the process. In constructivism, the process is in conjunction with relativity and discourse. Constructivism considers processes to be understood in order to comprehend the natural existence. According to Wendt, states that are considered as the main actors in fact are not the only actors. They can be influenced by society's identity or the interaction with that identity. Foreign policies can be changed according to this interaction. Such factors can even change the international system that realists and neorealists define as anarchy.<sup>335</sup> In this context, states' national interests change according to the identity they have. In other words, these interests can be redefined. States build their interests after they build their identities. In other words, in constructivism it is accepted that identity is given priority in the formation of interests, and interests and behaviour can change depending on the alteration of identity.<sup>336</sup>

Identity-based explanations provide a better understanding of the preferences, interests and foreign policy priorities of a state. The ignorance of social elements such as culture, identity and norms that are cited by positivist theory in explaining the change/transformation in the international system is in fact the basis of criticism on positivism.<sup>337</sup> Since coming to power, AK Party politicians have strongly emphasized international norms and cooperation contrary to the views of the realist/neorealist tradition. Constructivism, which emphasizes the actors of the emerging international system and the mutual construction process between these norms, constitutes a useful theoretical infrastructure for the evaluation of AK Party

---

<sup>334</sup> Wendt, *Constructing*, p. 72.

<sup>335</sup> Ertem, p. 186.

<sup>336</sup> Bill Mc. Sweeney, **Security, Identity and Interests: Sociology of International Relations**, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1999, p. 127.

<sup>337</sup> Helin Sarı Ertem, "Kimlik ve Güvenlik İlişisine Konstrüktivist bir Yaklaşım: 'Kimliğin Güvenliği' ve 'Güvenliğin Kimliği'", **Security Strategies Dergisi**, No: 16, 2008, p. 182.

foreign policy by putting the norms back to the rationalist theories at the centre of the international relations theory in a different way.

According to Constructivism, there is a functioning logic in foreign policy. The norms that determine original behaviour, shared values and expectations, concepts such as culture and identity, are fundamental factors determining a constructivist foreign policy. While norms do not play an important role in realistic theories, they form the identities and preferences of actors in constructivism. Norms order or prohibit the conduct of behaviours by emphasizing common goals.<sup>338</sup> For constructivists, these elements and intellectual structure are of great importance in the determination of actor behaviours and interests in international politics. As states are in constant interaction, social norms can change their social identities, or they can have multiple social identities. For example, Turkey's Western identity attaches itself to be a member of organizations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Council (EC), while its religious identity enables itself to be member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

Turkey and Israel have been referred as the two secular democratic states in the Middle East; from the beginning secularism has been the basis of the alliance between the two states. Even perceived threats for both nations are formulated on the basis of their co-operation in secularism. These commonalities put Israel and Turkey in a different position while Middle East is considered as a region under the control of the Arabs and identify it as a "conflict zone where mostly military dictatorship and Islamic regimes dominate".<sup>339</sup> Daniel Pipes emphasizes that this bilateral relation improves not only Turkey's Western identity, but also that Israel's Middle Eastern identity by legalizing its presence in the region.<sup>340</sup> Turkey's role in the international state system has an important place in determining Ankara's attitude toward its Israeli and Arab neighbours. National identity forces Turkish politicians to establish a precarious balance between the two competing poles or to choose between the two. The choices made by the various Turkish governments that face these parameters can only be understood within the context of various international and domestic pressures

---

<sup>338</sup> Bozdağlıoğlu, Turkish Identity, p. 16.

<sup>339</sup> Gruen, Circumstances, p. 33.

<sup>340</sup> Daniel Pipes, "A New Axis: The Emerging Turkish- Israeli Entente", **National Interest**, No: 50, 1998, pp. 36-37.

of that time.<sup>341</sup> The cooperation of Turkish foreign policy makers with Israel during and after the Cold War served to preserve the image of “political correctness and cultural correctness” of the country. In a sense, the development of relations with Israel is an attitude that remains from the pro-American attitudes of the Cold War era, and from then on, the increasingly deepening identity crises. However, these relations as official state policy, has served Turkey for consolidation of its modern Western identity.<sup>342</sup>

Cultural, historical, religious and economic elements have become increasingly influential in the AK Party’s foreign policy understanding. Davutoğlu reproduced the realistic foreign policy by bringing geographical and strategic elements to the forefront and melting the cultural elements including history, religion and Neo-Ottomanism in the same pot. Geopolitical and cultural duality are the primary factors in determining Turkey’s foreign policy on Israel and the Arab world. Due to Turkey’s bilateral policy approach, the continuation of diplomatic relations with Israel, and to support the political objectives of the Palestinian issue and establish good relations with a number of Arab states have constantly been in conflict with each other.<sup>343</sup> In addition to the impact of the cultural and historical factors, Turkey has been both trying to resume diplomatic relations with Israel and supporting the Palestinian cause in self-determination. In the following section Turkish-Israeli relations will be analysed through specific events by taking the common identity and interests on the basis of Palestinian issue into consideration.

### **1. AK Party’s Reaction Against Israel’s Attacks on Gaza**

Wendt argues that since states cannot have an opinion about each other before mutual interaction, they are supposed to contact with each other. In other words, the mutual interaction process will determine the relations of states with each other. Israel’s disproportionate attacks on the Palestinian territories play a significant role in the determination of Turkish foreign policy towards Israel. Due to the Israeli attacks on the Palestinian territories, Turkish relations with Palestinian people were formed

---

<sup>341</sup> Yavuz, and Khan, p. 69.

<sup>342</sup> Aras, Jerusalem, p. 204.

<sup>343</sup> Yavuz and Khan, p. 70.

in the context of common identity. Consequently, while the bilateral relations between Palestinian and Turkish people were developed in the context of common identity, the Turkish-Israeli relations moved towards a decline. One of the most important causes of tense relations between Turkey and Israel stems from Turkish relationships built on centuries of shared religion with the Palestinian people.

Constructivists see the first encounter or first interaction among actors as necessary for the creation of identity and mutual meaning. In fact, the actors have an idea about their place and identity in the system even before this encounter and interaction takes place. That is, before the actors get into communication, they build themselves and their counterparts mostly with images or discourses and produce identities that will express themselves and others.<sup>344</sup> The identity of the Israeli and Palestinian states that they built in the process as a result of mutual interactions, constitute the most fundamental factor in Turkey's relations with each state.

The main pillars of Turkish foreign policy on the Palestinian issue during the AK Party government have been as follows: assuming the role of mediator in international initiatives for the solution of the Palestinian issue, showing will for mediation, embracing a sensitive discourse for the Palestinian issue, creating a dialogue process covering all aspects of the issue, deepening economic and humanitarian relations with the Palestinian people.<sup>345</sup> Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs addressed Palestine issue in a way that encompasses all the actors of the problem: "Turkey supports the solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict -or the Palestinian issue- within the framework of the Resolutions of the UNSC numbered 242, 338, 1397 and 1515, Land Principle for Peace, Road Map and the Arab Peace Initiative, based on the vision of the two states that will live side by side within safe and recognized boundaries through mutual negotiations, fair and lasting resolution, and the revitalization of the Middle East Peace Process on all other channels (Israel-Syria, Israel-Lebanon)."<sup>346</sup> This statement shows that Turkey was against violence and had tended to resolve the problem through peaceful means. In this context, as a

---

<sup>344</sup> Yücel Bozdağlıoğlu, **Konstrüktivizm ve Rol Teorisi: Kimlik, Rol ve Dış Politika Analizi**, MKM Yayıncılık Bursa, 2012, (Dış Politika), p. 136.

<sup>345</sup> Nuri Yeşilyurt, **2001-2012: 11 Eylül Olayı Ertesinde AKP Dönemi, Ortadoğu'yla İlişkiler**", İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2013, p. 430.

<sup>346</sup> T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı, "Orta Doğu Barış Süreci", <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/orta-dogu-baris-sureci.tr.mfa>, (21.07.2018).

result of increasing Israeli attacks on the Palestinian territories especially in 2008 and beyond, further relations between Turkish and Palestinian people were established in the context of norms and religion based on common identity that has led to the decline of bilateral relations between Turkey and Israel.

Despite the negative images created by the Arabs at a time when the Turks were fighting for national existence in the early years of the 20th century, the Palestinians were always regarded as innocent and suffering Muslims in the eyes of the Turks. Turkish society has often been strongly sympathetic to the problems of the Palestinians.<sup>347</sup> Despite the recognition of Israel, in general Turkish politicians and people rejected Israel's full sovereignty over the Palestinian territories. A large part of the conservative religious groups as well as the leftist groups in Turkish society perceive Palestine as an independent state. In this context, the Palestine issue and Jerusalem mostly carries an Islamic essence in Turkey. From the leftist perspective Palestinians are seen as victims. From the conservative Islamist perspective, the Palestinian issue is seen as an issue of faith and belief.

During the 1990s, in the context of serious security problems arising from PKK attacks and due to Israel's conciliation with the Arab world in Madrid and Oslo Conferences Turkish politicians supported alliance with Israel.<sup>348</sup> However, during the AK Party period in mid 2000s, the "Zero Problem Policy with Neighbours" policy emphasized the importance of historical, Islamic and cultural values and the relations with Palestine. In order to maintain good relations with the Muslim countries in the Middle East, AK Party governments have started to defend the Palestinian issue more internationally. Due to the increasing Israeli attacks and influence over the Palestinians, Turkish people have begun to question the political relations with Israel. The existing strategic partnership with Israel has gradually declined with AK Party coming to power. Since Turkey has gradually improved its tense relations with its neighbours in this new era and become more active in the Arab world, its need for Israel decreased.

Constructivism associates the identity with the security dilemma of the basic principles of Neorealism. The perceived threat of actors against actors is related with

---

<sup>347</sup> Bacik, p. 58.

<sup>348</sup> Bacik, p. 53.



the fact that how you describe that actor and its identity. According to a fundamental principle of Constructivist theory, people act according to the meanings they express to objects and other actors. In line with this, states behave differently to their enemies and friends. Wendt criticizes the positivist theories in another way. The parameters of anarchy and power will not be enough to tell who the friend is and who the enemy is.<sup>349</sup> Power distribution can have an immense effect in the calculations of states, but the main point depends on the inter-subject understanding which shapes the thoughts about themselves and others, and it also depends on expectations and distribution of information.<sup>350</sup> Because the knowledge that the actors possess will become shared information with the actors' interaction. This is the way for the formation of social structure.<sup>351</sup> The way how communities understand each other and the discrimination of them-us that is tried to be expressed through the other factor are seen as the most important factor affecting the subject of societal clash and the perception of security. Because of Israeli attacks on Palestinian land, the perception of insecurity between Turkey and Israel has become even more insurmountable. The involvement of the other states into the tense relations between the two states has led to the deterioration of relations between the Israeli-Palestinian sides and also the deterioration of Turkey's relations with the other third states, who closely follow events in the region.

The identity built for decades between Israel and the Palestine led many states including Turkey to maintain mutual insecurity feelings to Israel. The structure has a social nature in Constructivism and all these social structures are formed in a process. Practices are of great importance in the formation of this process. Social constructs will not exist in the minds of actors or in physical capacities, but in practical terms.<sup>352</sup> Looking at the developing relations between Turkey and Israel-Palestinian axis, it is clear that the influence of the practical processes that have lasted for many years in these states has a negative influence on the relations of states. These states, which have acted on the basis of their identity-based interests for

---

<sup>349</sup> Bozdağlıoğlu, *Turkish Identity*, p. 17.

<sup>350</sup> Thomas Risse-Kappen, "Collective Identity in a Democratic Community: The Case of NATO", in Peter J. Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Security*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1996, p. 367.

<sup>351</sup> Wendt, *Social Theory*, p. 141.

<sup>352</sup> Bozdağlıoğlu, *Turkish Identity*, p. 18.

years, produce policies against each other under the influence of the practical processes experienced in the past years.

Until Operation Cast Lead in 2008, Turkish foreign policy on the Palestinian issue developed as a process in which Turkey's various non-governmental organizations (IHH- *İnsani Yardım Vakfı*---Humanitarian Relief Foundation) and soft power elements (TİKA-*Türk İşbirliği ve Koordinasyon Ajansı*-Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency) were involved. However, from 2008 onwards, the Palestinian issue has developed directly as a policy dominated by top-level politicians of the state. In the process, Palestine has tried to bring together the human and settlement elements in order to overcome the problems including the refugees and the settlements in the region. Palestine, depending on the construction of self and others, has been working to build a collective identity in the issue of "Palestine together with Turkey" and the other states towards the same goal, through the common social, historical, and religious values.

## **2. Davos Crisis**

The concept of identity, one of the basic analysis units of constructivist theory has a significant impact on foreign policy making of a country. Existence of a common identity based on westernization and secularization between Israel and Turkey contribute to the establishment of good relations between the two countries. Both non-Arab countries are perceived as foreign states by Muslim countries in the region due to their distinct identities. This allows the two countries to approach each other and establish cooperative relations. The close relations established between the two countries during the 1990s due to so-called two perceived internal threats i.e. Islamic fundamentalism and the Kurdish separatist movement Turkey was facing completely changed throughout the 2000s. This change was first due to an Islamist party coming to power and second desecuritization policies followed by this party towards the Kurdish separatist movement by establishing friendly relations with the neighbouring countries. Therefore, identity concept changed its direction this time towards establishing commonalities with the Palestinians. The way the new party, AK Party perceived threat has changed completely.

The first significant crisis faced by Turkish and Israeli politicians during AK Party period was the Davos crisis. The tension between the two countries stems from the disappearance of the common identity for the interests of the two countries constructed in the 1990s. In short, the close relations between countries have also decreased because of the fact that both states have begun to act in accordance with different objectives in the region. Particularly with Israel, the interest-based relations tremendously decreased. For this reason, Erdoğan has made statements as the defender of Muslim Palestinian people at the Davos summit.

Another concept related to identity is the concept of interest. Every human being has many identities, such as siblings, sons and teachers, in line with his institutional role. It is possible that states, like people, have more than one identity. Every identity actor is a theory-based social description. Through these identities, actors define themselves and each other mutually, thus forming the social world. These identities created are also the basis of the concept of interest which is widely used by many previous theories, especially by Realism. It is not possible for states to define their interests without first specifying their identities. Interests are also extensions of identities, because in order to have an idea about interests, the existence of identity is required.<sup>353</sup>

In this context, both Turkish and Israeli politicians have followed policies that had promoted their interests in the direction of their identities resulting from the historical interaction processes. Davos crisis between Turkish and Israeli politicians was based on the Palestinian issue. Prime Minister Erdoğan in his speech in Davos highlighted the common identity between the Turkish people and the Palestinian people by drawing attention to the Israel's persecution of Palestinian people. At Davos Summit, Erdoğan criticized Israel's disproportionate use of force against Palestinians with whom Turkish community established a common cultural identity and determined their interests in this direction.

Determination of the interests of states in foreign policy is a social process. According to the constructivist theory, it is possible to construct the common interests in the same way if the states define their identities at the end of a social process. During the AK Party period, Turkey's improving relations with the

---

<sup>353</sup> Bozdağlıoğlu, Dış Politika, p. 132.

authorities in Palestine ( Hamas/al-Fatah) have shown a collective identity-building between Turkey and Palestine in the aftermath of the Davos Crisis. In this regard, according to Wendt's opinion, it is seen that the collective identity built between Turkey and Palestine brought the communities closer.

### **3. Cancellation of Anatolian Eagle Exercise**

Turkey, adopting an active foreign policy in the Palestinian issue, exerted effort to take initiative to protect the Palestinian rights as a regional power when necessary. Following the Operation Cast Lead, Davos crisis and the Mavi Marmara attacks, it was seen that Turkey had become a state that increasingly played a primary role on the Palestinian issue. Consequently, Turkey cancelled the Anatolian Eagle Exercise.

Concept of anarchy occupies a significant place in the theory and discipline of international relations, gains different meanings according to the identities of the actors. While anarchy may mean a war at the expense of their lives for the revision it can be considered as a competition of arms for the status quo states, and a nonviolent discussion for the collectivist states.<sup>354</sup> This means that the actors' perceptions of situations and events will determine the identities and sense of belonging they possess. The identity is the concept that shows who the actor is, what preferences should be made, and who "the others" are. Israel's increasing persecution on Palestinian people has led to a complete rupture of the interest-based ties between Turkey and Israel. An example of this situation was experienced on the Anatolian Eagle Exercise that was a regular exercise conducted between the Turkish and Israeli armies.

Due to the bloody attacks Israel launched to Palestinian territories that started on December 27, 2008 and ended on January 18, 2009, the Turkish authorities announced the cancellation of the international part of the Anatolian Eagle Exercise. By establishing a common identity with Palestine, Turkey replaced as Israel in a different status as "the other". By doing so Turkish-Israeli relations started to decline increasingly.

---

<sup>354</sup> Wendt, Social, p. 106.

#### 4. The Chair Crisis

State identities and interests are not external to the system by human nature or domestic politics but are largely built by social structures. Norms not only create specific games, but also allow players to pursue their own goals, establish relationships with each other, evaluate the nature of their actions, and direct their actions to each other.<sup>355</sup> Such a problem with norms took place between Turkish and Israeli diplomats during the low chair crisis that deepened the deterioration of relations between Turkey and Israel and brought Turkey and Palestine closer. The apology of the Israeli authorities in the aftermath of the event was a success on the Turkish side in the international arena. The reason for this crisis was the two Turkish TV series that dealt with Israel's repressive and bloody attacks on Palestine. These series provided an understanding of the reaction by Turkish authorities to the Israeli attacks on the basis of common identity. Turkish authorities suspended relations with Israel in order to defend the interests of the Palestinian people due to the cohesion of culture and religion between Turks and Palestinians.

Behaviour is shaped by identity, and behavioural patterns, priorities and policies are decided according to what is learned in the result of interaction. According to Hopf, the identity that a state possesses reveals cognitive structures that make threats and opportunities, and enemies and allies comprehensible. The conflict between the states of Israel and the Palestine over the years is the conflict of interests within the context of identities they have. Since they see each other as threats and they produce hostile policies and the conflict continues. The way the states achieve their aims depends on their social identities and how they see relations with the other states in the international arena. States form their national interests in line with these identities. The Low Chair Crisis that took place between Turkish and Israeli politicians stem from the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. Turkish and Palestinian relations depend on the basis of common interests and a common identity.

---

<sup>355</sup> Kratochwil, Liberty, p. 40.

## 5. The Mavi Marmara Incident

Following the Mavi Marmara incident in which 10 activists mostly Turkish were killed by Israeli soldiers, Turkish government withdrew its ambassador and lowered the level of representation in the Israeli embassy in Ankara to the rank of second secretary. The actions that the international actors –namely the states– regenerate depend on the re-productions of the actions of the actors –individuals and groups– in the domestic politics. In the aftermath of Mavi Marmara incident, the AK Party government launched a campaign to erode Israel's credibility in the international arena and started questioning the unconditional support of other Western states against Israel. The incident was moved to an international platform. The change of the internal rules and norms that determine the actions of national actors causes a change in the beliefs and identities of the actors.<sup>356</sup> AK Party politicians produced pro-Palestinian policies that led to a change in former pro-Israeli Turkish foreign policy. Although the governments prior to the AK Party administration criticized the use of disproportionate force by Israelis on Palestine, but the extent of criticism has never been in any way to offend Israel or to break the relationship completely. However particularly, in the aftermath of Mavi Marmara attack, the religion-based relationship between Turkey and the Palestinian people has become even stronger in the context of the Palestinian issue. Turkish politicians have started to support the problems of the Palestinian people, whom they see as their religious brothers. In the aftermath of the incident, Israeli side had accepted all the terms except for the removal of the Gaza blockade. Turkey's foreign policy over the Palestinian issue particularly following the Mavi Marmara attack shows the weight Turkey gives to the mutual identity with the Palestinian people.

### **B. Perception and Discourse Analysis (Ideas, Beliefs and Shared Understandings)**

The basis of the relations between Turkey and Palestine/Israel is founded on the understanding of the Israeli perception within the Turkish society and the Turkish

---

<sup>356</sup> Koslowski and Kratochwil, p. 216.

perception within the Israeli society. These perceptions have been formed throughout centuries of relationship. Societal limits, unlike strategic limits, cannot be easily changed or overcome. Societal limits generally relate to identity-based themes such as religion, social values and traditions. The post-Cold War era has resulted in internal and social phenomena that play a much more effective role in the political arena. For example, since the Cold War was a period of high politics, the strategic limits of the age of high politics were very influential at that time. However, in the post-Cold War era, societal factors became much more effective. Today, the perception of the society is very influential in the foreign policy decision mechanism. From this point of view, the negative perception and outlook of the Turkish people lies in the development of relations between Israel and Turkey. Today in Turkey, there is a negative perception of many leftist and conservative Muslims against the State of Israel.

Since the early 2000s, the changes that occurred in Turkish-Israeli relations, affected the Turkish and Israeli societies negatively. This undesirable situation led to the change of social perception. No matter how advanced the societies are, no matter how educated they are, they finally display the attitudes and behaviours of major group psychology, mass psychology and the psychology of the leaders. These attitudes and behaviours displayed by the societies are laid out in a manner intertwined with the individual feelings and characteristics of the leaders just as they are in the families. In other words, the leaders' feelings and psychology are an important factor on the formation and determination of the followers' psychology. At the same time, however, leaders also display their leadership qualities by expressing feelings on behalf of them that they cannot express their feelings deeply.<sup>357</sup>

In this sense, Turks and Israelis can be defined as a large group that includes religious, national, cultural, historical and social characteristics. The course of the relations between these two large groups change from time to time as the leaders lead the societies and mobilize the communal feelings, as in other large groups. According to Ofra Bengio, Turkish-Israeli relations should be dealt with in two separate triangular frames. The first triangle constitutes the Turkish-Israeli-Arab side and the second triangle constitutes the Turkish-Israeli-American side. In this context,

---

<sup>357</sup> Çevik and Ersaydı, p. 5.

psychological factors play a major role in Turkey's relations with Israel shaping the social perceptions.<sup>358</sup>

The perception of the statesmen has a significant role in foreign policy decisions. If political elite believe that ideology determines international cooperation, they will see similar states as their potential friends, and dissimilar ones as their potential enemies.<sup>359</sup> Between Turkish and the Israeli governments, in the tensions emerged in recent years, traits of personality of the high-ranked politicians on both sides, relations with their followers, and expectations from the politicians and followers have been important moment that determine the course of relations between the two states. Because the events between the two states are reflected differently in order to be used in internal politics by the leaders and the social psychological dynamics are realized. With the realization of the social psychological dynamics, the perception of "us" and "the other" deepens and differences among the groups come to the forefront. If this situation is evaluated on the axis of the Palestinian issue, it can be seen that the concept of collective social identity in Turkish foreign policy had been identified with Palestine. Such social identity leads to the moving away of Turkey and Israel from each other. Building collective identity with Palestine is closely associated with Turkey's historical background and religion. In this context, the collective identity built between Turkey and the Palestine is a problem based (the Palestinian problem) and threat based (Israel) issue. If this situation assessed in accordance with Wendt's opinions, it is seen that Turkey and Palestine are friends, and Turkey and Israel are enemies at the centre of the anarchic structure of the Palestinian issue.

In Turkey and Israel, the discourse of foreign policy tends to dramatize the threats originating from the imaginary or real enemies. Thus, states aim at keeping foreign policies active and plan to legitimize their domestic affairs. Another natural consequence of this situation is that foreign policy becomes an extension of the domestic politics and foreign policy suffers from this situation.<sup>360</sup> Even though AK Party period is generally considered to be a reflection of a change in Turkish foreign

---

<sup>358</sup> Ofra Bengio, "The Historical Evolution of the Israeli-Turkish Relationship", **Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies**, 2005, p. 51.

<sup>359</sup> Wendt, *Anarchy*, p. 397.

<sup>360</sup> Aras, *Nineties*, p. 152.



policy, it is acknowledged that the reflection of this change is especially seen in Turkey's Middle East policy.<sup>361</sup> The AK Party's new approach to the Middle East is based on implementing non-passive and impartial policy in the conflicts taking place in the Middle East. In this context the leaders' discourses and psychological dynamics have a significant impact on foreign policy decisions during the AK Party period. From this point, the events between Israel and Turkey during the AK Party governments will be analysed by taking the perception and discourses of the leaders into consideration.

### 1. AK Party's Reaction Against Israel's Attacks on Palestine

One of the political strategies of AK Party government might be considered as taking care of the victims. These people can be victims of poverty or victims of oppression or victims of their religious conservativeness. AK Party acts as it is the protector of the oppressed and victimized. Therefore, AK Party elite followed the same strategy to Palestinians: people who are oppressed and victimized by Israelis.

On 8 June 2004, following Israeli attacks on Gaza and West Bank, Prime Minister Erdoğan at the group meeting of the AK Party stated: "We want to make more effective strides considering our national interests, values and our spiritual responsibility. The violence exerted by Israel cannot be accepted. Neither Israel nor Palestine can be considered legitimate in any attempt to put the lives of the innocent people at risk. Israel and Palestine must stop the violent and countervailing policies that lead to the death of innocent people."<sup>362</sup> Erdoğan expressed that peace should be kept in the region.<sup>363</sup> During the same year, Prime Minister Erdoğan made another speech on Palestinian politics: "Turkey is ready to take part in the peace process. For Turkey, there is Israel on one side with whom we have military, economic and political relations; on the other side there is Palestinians with whom we have the bond of religion. Unfortunately, there is an undesirable process between these two countries. We do not want women and children to be killed. I would like to express

---

<sup>361</sup> Nuri Yeşilyurt and Atay Akdevelioğlu, "Turkey's Middle East Policy under the JDP Rule", **The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations**, Vol: 40, 2009, p. 40.

<sup>362</sup> "Erdoğan: Başarıyı görmek istemeyen var", **Hürriyet**, 08.06.2004, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/erdogan-basariyi-gormek-istemeyen-var-38613227>, (19.04.2018).

<sup>363</sup> "Erdoğan: Başarıyı görmek istemeyen var", **Hürriyet**, 08.06.2004.

sincerely that it is the same for me both for Israeli people and the Palestinian people.”<sup>364</sup> He went on to referring to the cooperation made with Israel in a number of areas and he also mentioned the sufferings of Palestinians.<sup>365</sup> These speeches show that in its first years AK Party was slowly moving away from the cooperation with Israel to cooperation with the Palestinians.

The first important issue affecting the Turkish-Israeli relations during AK Party period was Turkey’s disapproval of Israel’s Iraqi policy following the Iraq War. Turkey was against the Israeli troops’ existence in northern Iraq and Israel’s interference in the internal affairs of Iraq. This situation was expressed by Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül. In September 2003, Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül said, “The countries in the region, including Israel, get land from the Northern Iraq.”<sup>366</sup>

Another important event was the Operation on Gaza refugee camp launched by Israel in 2004. Israeli forces killed at least 23 Palestinians by pushing into the heart of a heavily defended Gaza refugee camp.<sup>367</sup> Turkey reacted strongly to this operation. Reaction of Prime Minister Erdoğan and Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül to this operation was the potential indicator for the future relations of the two countries showing that these relations would not be as close as they used to be. Turkey’s equidistant approach began to change in time due to Israel’s policies in the region. In addition, assassination of Hamas’ spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin (March 2004) and Hamas leader Abdul Aziz Rantis (April 2004) was condemned by Turkey.<sup>368</sup> Prime Minister Erdoğan described Israel’s actions as “state terrorism” following Israeli-led attacks on refugee camps and said it was an “inhumane, unforgivable” attack.<sup>369</sup>

HAMAS’s winning the election in 2006 initiated a different process in the Palestinian issue. Following the elections, Palestine was shared between HAMAS and al-Fatah. Although HAMAS was seen as a terrorist group by Israel, the US and

---

<sup>364</sup> Gencer Özcan, “Türkiye-İsrail İlişkilerinde Dönüşüm: Güvenliğin Ötesi”, **TESEV Dış Politika Programı, Dış Politika Analiz Serisi 1**, Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi, 2005, (Dönüşüm), p. 121.

<sup>365</sup> Özcan, Dönüşüm, p. 121.

<sup>366</sup> Tür, Yakın, p. 25.

<sup>367</sup> Chris Greal, “23 killed in Israeli raid on refugee camp”, **The Guardian**, 01.10.2004, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/oct/01/israel>, (19.11.2018).

<sup>368</sup> T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı, “HAMAS Lideri Rantis’inin Öldürülmesi Hk”, No: 62, 18.04.2004, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no\\_62--\\_18-nisan\\_-2004\\_\\_hamas-lideri-rantis\\_i\\_nin-oldurulmesi-hk\\_.tr.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_62--_18-nisan_-2004__hamas-lideri-rantis_i_nin-oldurulmesi-hk_.tr.mfa), (22.06.2018)

<sup>369</sup> “Adeta Devlet Terörü”, **Hürriyet**, 21.05.2004, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/adeta-devlet-teroru-227276>, (23.06.2018).

the members of the EU, Turkey interpreted the election results differently. In this context, Erdoğan stated in the World Economic Forum in Davos in January 2006 that the election results in Palestine should be respected, and he pointed out that Turkey desired to be a mediator in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.<sup>370</sup> Erdoğan's speech concerning the respect for the election of HAMAS which is considered as a terror group by Israel and some European countries has put more strain on relations between Turkey and Israel.

The clashes that began between Israel and HAMAS in 2008 resulted in the application of blockade to Gaza. Turkey criticized Israel's policy, and called for an end to the blockade and embargo against Gaza.<sup>371</sup> Israel resumed its operations against Gaza at the end of 2008. In this context, Turkey was no longer unresponsive to the attacks referred to as Operation Cast Lead in Gaza. In the press release by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it is stated that the operations initiated against Gaza were of great concern. Operation Cast Lead led to crises between Turkey and Israel.

As Wendt prescribes, the anarchic structure consists of shared information, material resources and practices. Considering these three factors, it can be observed that the information shared, and the discourse followed in Turkish foreign policy was the result of harsh policies Israel pursued against the Palestinians throughout the 2000s. Statements of Prime Minister Erdoğan had fallen into the categories of assertive speech acts, which make counterfactual determinations. This is also an illustrative example of shared knowledge, one of the three elements of Wendt's anarchic structure. In this context, Turkey has taken the Palestinian issue to the centre, and has started to rebuild new thoughts and new expectations towards Israel. Turkey attempted to bring the idea of "Israel is violating international law" in the international community. Thus, Turkey has tried to influence not just the actors that are involved in the Palestinian issue but also the other actors in the international system.

Following the Operation Cast Lead in 2008, Turkish press and the political circles with their harsh critics of Israel strained the relations between two countries

---

<sup>370</sup> Ömer Kürkçüoğlu and Fatih Koraş, **2000 yılı sonrası Türkiye'nin Orta Doğu Siyaseti**, Palme Yayıncılık, Ankara, 2011, p. 206.

<sup>371</sup> T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı, "İsrail - HAMAS Arasındaki Ateşkes Hk", No: 109, 19.06.2008, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no\\_109\\_-19-haziran-2008\\_-israil-hamas-arasindaki-ateskes-hk\\_.tr.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_109_-19-haziran-2008_-israil-hamas-arasindaki-ateskes-hk_.tr.mfa), (23.06.2018).

further. This discourse was expressed by pro-government think-tanks and foreign policy experts in the Turkish press. They emphasized the increasing power of Turkey in the Middle East while Israel was being isolated in the region.<sup>372</sup> Sharon's violent policies regarding the Al-Aqsa Intifada in 2000 had already led to the decrease in Israel's credibility in the region. However, the decline of relations between Turkey and Israel emerged particularly following the developments in Davos crisis.

## 2. Davos Crisis

Speech act constitute the starting point of constructivism. Constructivism emphasizes that actors use of language to express their wishes, to turn their wishes into reason and to achieve their goals. The language that has a constructive function brings the performance of speech into action. Following the Davos crisis, the linguistic transformation used in Turkish foreign policy became a general conviction within the structure. According to Onuf, repeated acts of speech leads to a belief that is usually accepted by everyone in a certain period of time. In this direction, the AK Party politicians have always used language as a tool in the Palestinian question and entered into a new construction process with promises. This situation was seen particularly with Davos crisis as well as the Mavi Marmara incident.

Constructivism argues that social reality is not independent of actors; rather it is built by the actors.<sup>373</sup> Following the Operation Cast Lead, in the session of the World Economic Forum titled "Gaza: model for the Middle East" held in Davos, Switzerland, on 29 January 2009, a big crisis arose between Israel and Turkey. Prime Minister Erdoğan in the session harshly criticized Israel's Palestinian policy.<sup>374</sup> Erdoğan turned to the Israeli President and said "Your voice comes out in a very loud tone and the loudness of your voice has to do with a guilty conscience. My voice, however, will not come out in the same tone." He continued stating, "When it comes

---

<sup>372</sup> Aytürk, p. 684.

<sup>373</sup> Kratochwil, Second, p. 11.

<sup>374</sup> Robert Tait, "Turkish PM Greeted by Cheers after Israel Debate Clash", **The Guardian**, 30.01.2009, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/jan/30/turkish-prime-minister-cheered-davos-row-gaza>, (03.07.2018).

to killing, you know well how to kill.”<sup>375</sup> Following the Davos crisis, Israeli Land Forces Commander Avi Mizrahi’s stated that “Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan should have looked in the mirror before slamming President Shimon Peres last month at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland”. Mizrahi also said that Turkey was not in a situation to criticize Israel’s policies in the Palestinian territories when it positioned troops in Northern Cyprus.<sup>376</sup> Such speeches and declarations from both sides have paved the way for further deterioration of relations between Turkey and Israel.

According to constructivism, the actions that the actors re-produce cause radical changes in the international system by changing the rules and norms which build international interaction. In this context, Prime Minister Erdoğan’s reaction in Davos found great support in Turkey and in Middle Eastern countries. In addition, Erdoğan’s harsh reaction to Israel led to the rise of Turkey’s image in the Middle East. While Erdoğan’s popularity increased in the Middle East, animosity towards Israel rose drastically. Israel was considered as an enemy by the majority of the Middle Eastern countries.<sup>377</sup> Loğoğlu emphasized that the conflict in the Middle East had been taking place between the Muslims and the Jews, rather than the Arabs and Israel. He also argued that there was an increase in the sympathy of HAMAS and Iran towards Turkey.<sup>378</sup> The religious sentiment was increasing in Turkey’s reaction to Israel.

Wendt states that ideas shape social structure and he points out that there are three cults in the anarchic system: enemies, rivals and friends.<sup>379</sup> Thus, amity or enmity is a function of shared understandings.<sup>380</sup> Wendt states that rival actors can use violence to realize their interests and friendly actors act collectively in the name of security by avoiding violence.<sup>381</sup> The AK party politicians used to pursue a pro-Palestinian foreign policy because of Israel’s increasing repressive policies on the

---

<sup>375</sup> Katrin Bennhold, “Leaders of Turkey and Israel Clash at Davos Panel,” **New York Times**, 29.01.2009, <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/30/world/europe/30clash.html>, (22.10.2016).

<sup>376</sup> Yossi Melman, “IDF: Officer's Criticism of Turkey Does Not Represent Official View”, **Haaretz**, 14.02.2009, <https://www.haaretz.com/1.5075287>, (25.10.2016).

<sup>377</sup> Çevik and Ersaydı, p. 12.

<sup>378</sup> Faruk Loğoğlu, “Davos: The Stage, The Street and Diplomacy,” **Hurriyet**, 05.02.2009, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/davos-the-stage-the-street-and-diplomacy-10928037>, (07.07.2018).

<sup>379</sup> Wendt, *Formation*, p. 306.

<sup>380</sup> Wendt, *Constructing*, p. 73.

<sup>381</sup> Wendt, *Constructing*, p. 76.

Palestinian people. In other words, in the light of the developments experienced by the AK Party politicians, the perspective on the Palestinian issue has changed. Ankara has become an advocate of Palestinians on the international platform. This has emerged as a result of the changes of thoughts experienced by Turkish people and changes in the perceptions of Turkish politicians over time. Israel that used to be a former friend and ally now was an enemy.

### 3. Cancellation of Anatolian Eagle Exercise

Israeli repressive attacks on the Palestinian territories and the killing of many innocent Palestinian citizens affected the Turkish people and particularly Turkish political elite deeply. In order to protest Israel for its repressive policies, Turkish government decided to change the list of participating states to the Anatolian Eagle exercise by excluding Israel from the exercise. The Foreign Minister of the period Davutoğlu made a statement on the subject “We hope that the situation in Gaza will be improved, that the situation will be back to the diplomatic track and that will create a new atmosphere in Turkish-Israeli relations as well. But in the existing situation, of course, we are criticizing this approach, the Israeli approach.”<sup>382</sup> The other participants of the Anatolian Eagle exercise, the US and Italy also pulled out as a reaction to the exclusion of Israel from the exercise. Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan later accused the international community for blaming Muslims for violent attacks while “phosphorus bombs rained on innocent children in Gaza”.<sup>383</sup>

As a reaction to Turkish exclusion of Israel from the exercise, Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman accused Turkey of hypocrisy in criticizing Israel over Gaza, “while it is using much heavier tactics in its fight against the Kurdish movements on its border with Iraq”.<sup>384</sup> The speeches made by the authorities of both countries were open manifestos of perceptions of both sides for each other and these negative perceptions led to the further deterioration of bilateral relations between Turkey and Israel.

---

<sup>382</sup> “Turkish FM criticizes Israel over Gaza”, CNN, 12.10.2009, <http://edition.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/meast/10/11/turkey.israel.nato.drill/index.html>, (02.11.2018).

<sup>383</sup> Anshel Pfeffer, “The end of Israeli-Turkish ties?”, **The Jewish Chronicle**, 15.10.2009, <https://www.thejc.com/news/israel/the-end-of-israeli-turkish-ties-1.11899>, (03.11.2018).

<sup>384</sup> Anshel Pfeffer, “The end of Israeli-Turkish ties”.

#### 4. The Chair Crisis

The crisis that arose in the World Economic Forum on 29 January 2009 revealed the great disagreements between the presidents of the two countries. The most obvious proof of the conflict between the two countries was perhaps the speech made by Erdoğan in Davos. The “low chair crisis” that took place in October of the same year showed once again how the tension between the two countries moved to such a large dimension. The crisis that broke out due to a scene shown by a TV series drew big reaction from Israeli people and these developments foreshadowed how relations between the two countries could have worsened. Following the low chair crisis Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs called Israel’s Ambassador Gabby Levy to the Ministry and protested the behaviour of the Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon. Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that “We stress that no one can dare to limit Turkey for a moral order.”<sup>385</sup> As a response, Deputy Foreign Minister of Israel Danny Ayalon sent an apology letter to Ambassador Oğuz Çelikkol on 13 January 2010.

After the incident, Erdoğan criticized Israel by stating that “The Israelis have disproportionate capabilities and power and they use them. They do not abide by the UN resolutions. They say they will do what they like.” Following this statement, Israel’s Foreign Ministry condemned Erdoğan’s “unbridled tongue-lashing.”<sup>386</sup> As can be seen from the perceptions and discourses, sarcastic rhetoric of both countries’ leaders resulted in further deterioration of Turkish-Israeli relations.

#### 5. The Mavi Marmara Incident

The fluctuated chronic feature of the Turkish-Israeli relations at the beginning of the 2000s showed its effects as it has never happened before. Due to the conflicts such as the Davos Crisis and the Low Chair Crisis, diplomatic rapprochement

---

<sup>385</sup> T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı, “İsrail Dışişleri Bakan Yardımcısının Tel Aviv Büyükelçimiz İle Yaptığı Görüşmede Takındığı Tavır Hk”, No: 7, 12.01.2010, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no\\_-7\\_-12-ocak-2010\\_-israil-disisleri-bakan-yardimcisinin-tel-aviv-buyukelcimiz-ile-yaptigi-gorusmede-takindigi-tavir-hk\\_.tr.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-7_-12-ocak-2010_-israil-disisleri-bakan-yardimcisinin-tel-aviv-buyukelcimiz-ile-yaptigi-gorusmede-takindigi-tavir-hk_.tr.mfa), (07.07.2018).

<sup>386</sup> Yigal Schleifer, “Why Israel humiliated Turkey in response to a TV show”, **The Christian Science Monitor**, 12.01.2010, <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/2010/0112/Why-Israel-humiliated-Turkey-in-response-to-a-TV-show>, (06.11.2018)

between the two countries lost momentum. Following the Mavi Marmara incident, relations came to the breaking point. Turkey, freed from political and diplomatic obligations to Israel, started openly expressing its support for the Palestinian cause by criticizing Israel in the harshest way. In brief, the two former allies turned out to be rivals in the region.

Following the Mavi Marmara incident, Prime Minister Erdoğan stated that Israel's attitude was unacceptable and said, "There is a law in the war and in peace. Children, women and old people are not attacked in war. Clergy and aid servicers are not attacked in war. Those who attack in peace are out of humanity. Even rogues, pirates, and bandits have rules."<sup>387</sup> He criticized Israel with heavy words, saying, "Those who do not obey the rules are even beyond these descriptions."<sup>388</sup> Turkish government judged the Mavi Marmara attack on the basis of international law, and showed its reaction to Israel through diplomacy.

The directive speech acts that Onuf refers to aim to convince the other parties concerning what they should do. Intergovernmental relations are governed by international law, a rule governing these relations. In Israel's policies towards Palestine Turkey has constantly referred to Israel's violation of the rules of international law. Such repetition of the speech would build the rules. By doing so Turkey aimed at giving legitimacy to the Palestinian problem through international law. Following the Mavi Marmara attack, Turkey called the Oğuz Çelikkol, Turkish Ambassador in Tel Aviv, to Ankara, and reduced the representative office to the level of temporary charge d'affaires level.<sup>389</sup> Moreover, Turkey called the UN Security Council for an extraordinary meeting by requesting condemnation of Israel.

According to Onuf, the promises given among the actors become widespread and become a rule to learn about the rights and duties of the actors.<sup>390</sup> While Turkey has been trying to prove that Israel acted against the international law following the blockade and attack on Gaza; it was also trying to build this as a rule in the international community. Turkey considered Mavi Marmara attack as an

---

<sup>387</sup> "Erdoğan: İsrail Cezalandırılmalı", **BBC Turkish**, 01.06.2010, [http://www.bbc.co.uk/turkce/haberler/2010/06/100601\\_turkey\\_gaza.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/turkce/haberler/2010/06/100601_turkey_gaza.shtml), (14.07.2018).

<sup>388</sup> "Erdoğan: İsrail Cezalandırılmalı", BBC Turkish.

<sup>389</sup> T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı, "Türkiye-İsrail Siyasi İlişkileri", <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-israil-siyasi-iliskileri.tr.mfa>, (14.07.2018).

<sup>390</sup> Onuf, Career, p. 122.



international violation of rights and also accepted the blockade against Gaza as a violation of human rights law.

Following the incident, Turkey had three demands from Israel for the normalization of relations. These demands were as follows: Israel's apology, compensation to the families of those who lost their lives, and the abolition of the Gaza blockade. Prime Minister Erdoğan stated that the Turkish-Israeli relations could not return to the normal level in the event that Turkey's demands were not met by Israel. Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu called Prime Minister Erdoğan on 22 March 2013 and apologized to the Turkish people on behalf of the State of Israel "for any loss of life or injury which leads to injury under the light of the investigation in a series of operational faults in connection with the Mavi Marmara incident."<sup>391</sup> In the wake of the disaster, the State of Israel paid compensation to the families of those who lost their lives in the Mavi Marmara incident. It is clear that this apology, which is echoed not only in the Turkish and Jewish press but in the press of the whole world, was not able to normalize the relations by itself. Therefore, normalization of diplomatic and political relations was not going to be realized in the short term.

Davutoğlu drew attention to the importance of diplomacy in foreign policy by stating that "no military superiority lacking diplomatic flexibility infrastructure can bring a lasting victory" in the Middle East.<sup>392</sup> Davutoğlu expresses that interstate relations were supposed to be developed within the framework of "very dynamic equilibrium relations rather than permanent alliance relations". According to Davutoğlu, the imbalance of Turkish-Israeli equation undermined the image of the Turkey in the eyes of the Arab/Islamic states. During the rapid development of Turkish-Israeli relations following the end of the Cold War, while Israel realized different equations in the Middle East, Turkey continued its security-oriented foreign policy. Therefore, Davutoğlu stated that Turkey should take into consideration the regional interactions by considering the overall structure of the Middle East.<sup>393</sup>

During AK Party rule, social factors in foreign policy making were taken into account in bilateral relations by decreasing the intensity of security-oriented foreign

---

<sup>391</sup> Samira Shackle, "What does Israel's apology mean for future relations with Turkey?", **Middle East Monitor**, 23.01.2014, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20140123-what-does-israels-apology-mean-for-future-relations-with-turkey/>, (20.11.2018).

<sup>392</sup> Davutoğlu, *Strategic Depth*, p. 405.

<sup>393</sup> Davutoğlu, *Strategic Depth*, p. 426.

policy. Discourses of Turkish political leaders especially by Erdoğan have created a new leader identity in the eyes of the Arab Muslim states in the Middle East. The perception that Turkey was serving for the interests of western countries began to change. At this point, the discourses of the AK Party politicians have always supported the Palestinian issue. In Turkish society, the sensitivity on Palestine issue has forced the country's politicians to make anti-Israel discourses.

Turkey's support for Palestinians was also observed in the process during which Palestine gained the status of observer state in the United Nations on 29 November 2012.<sup>394</sup> During the process of Palestinians' application for the full membership and to the observer state status, Turkey actively supported Palestine and lobbied for this end. Turkey's future Palestinian policy was expressed as follows: "We will continue resolutely our efforts for Palestine to be accepted to the UN membership in the near future with our other international partners, and we will defend the just cause of our Palestinian brothers."<sup>395</sup> While the Palestinian people were regarded as brothers, the state of Israel was seen as a rival state.

### III. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Palestinian issue, which dates back to 2000 BC, continues to be a problem that still remains unsolved. The Palestinian territory, which is ideologically considered to be sacred land for the three Abrahamic religions, creates the inevitability of a clash for these lands. In the aftermath of the Second World War, where the most powerful states were not able to resolve their problems peacefully, the land conflict between Jews and Palestinian was not resolved either.

Turkish-Israeli relations that was considered as strategic partnership during the post-Cold War period could only be taken into consideration within the framework of Palestinian issue. In fact, Turkish policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian equation changed in favour of Palestine particularly in mid 2000s. This has led to a

---

<sup>394</sup> Ewen MacAskill, "UN general assembly makes resounding vote in favour of Palestinian statehood", **The Guardian**, 29.11.2012, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/nov/29/united-nations-vote-palestine-state>, (22.10.2018).

<sup>395</sup> T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı, "Filistin'in BM'de 'Üye Olmayan Gözlemci Devlet' Statüsü Kazanması Hk", No: 275, 20.11.2012, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no\\_-275\\_-30-kasim-2012\\_-filistin\\_in-bm\\_de-\\_uye-olmayan-gozlemci-devlet\\_-statusu-kazanmasi-hk\\_.tr.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-275_-30-kasim-2012_-filistin_in-bm_de-_uye-olmayan-gozlemci-devlet_-statusu-kazanmasi-hk_.tr.mfa), (28.07.2018).

decline in Turkish-Israeli relations which were in full harmony throughout the 1990s. This decline arose from the contradiction between the obligation of AK Party governments to act within the framework of the problematic international and regional circumstances to the Palestinian question. In addition, conservative identity of the AK Party grassroots also promoted the decline in Turkish-Israeli relations.

In fact, Republic of Turkey had not broken away from its 85 years of traditions and ideologies that have remained in the background in the issues of foreign policy. At the root of this lies the positive and strong stance of the pillars forming the administrative structure of the Republic of Turkey within the framework of the state decisions. Nevertheless, Turkey has not maintained the expected traditional Israeli policy especially in the last decade, and sometimes even at the expense of facing opposition of Israel. Turkey tried to develop political and economic relations with the states in the Middle East defined as enemies by Israel and the US. Starting from the establishment of the Israeli in 1948 state until the 2010s, Turkey has experienced significant dilemmas in the Palestinian issue concerning its cultural/historical ties and the regional security. On the basis of the dilemma it experienced, the strategic importance of geopolitical position it has in the international arena and the effects of other actors in the system came to the forefront. The USA's pro-Israeli stance helped Israel to establish a strong military. Although Turkey followed pro-American foreign policy during the Cold War, at the same time it also had kept its cultural and historical ties with Palestine.

Turkish-Israeli relations can be considered as an example of the determination of foreign policy decisions by the national identities. In this context, Bülent Aras states that the "identity factor" is important in Turkish-Israeli relations and that both societies perceive themselves as two separate societies that are left alone in the Middle East.<sup>396</sup> This analysis shows that the rapprochement between the two countries is closely related to their mutual identities, which in turn, define their interests. Both countries emphasize their respective identities in terms of their ethnic, cultural, and political distance from the rest of the Middle East and their links with the West. Turkey and Israel both share the same goal of integrating into the West culturally, economically and politically, yet find themselves distanced from the

---

<sup>396</sup> Aras, *Perceptions*, p. 7.

continent of their choice. Being “outsiders” both in the Middle East and the West had brought two countries closer.

The perceptions of the actors are not independent of the social world they live in. They interpret the events and define their interests according to this social world. During this process actors can make use of their knowledge and experience they have gained. However, they do not have any knowledge or experience concerning the events then they create new knowledge by referring to analogy or virtue.<sup>397</sup> Since the establishment of Israel, Turkey and Israel have produced a common policy in line with the knowledge and experience which they acquired over time. However, concerning the Palestinian issue, the two states continued to produce policies in the direction of their own identity and interests. As a result of the dynamic feature identities and interests carry, they keep changing and formed and reformed in international politics. The constant breakout of problems in the Palestinian issue and failing to reach peaceful resolution of the conflicts has had a negative impact on the Turkish-Israeli cooperation. Turkey in fact is a significant regional actor that can make a positive contribution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Turkish politicians have the ability and strength to strike a balance between the two sides considering the current internal and external conditions that includes Turkey’s ties with the Muslim Middle Eastern states and the Western states.

Due to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, diplomatic and economic relations between Turkey and Israel had been fluctuating. One can observe that interests of the two countries do not align as it used to go parallel in the past. Particularly, following the Mavi Marmara incident, when Turkey’s request of “complete removal of the Gaza blockade” is taken into consideration, a quick normalization of relations cannot be expected. Instead of the realistic security understanding seen in the Turkish foreign policy especially during the Cold War, throughout 2000s until mid-2010s soft power elements of social constructivism seems to have replaced security. Historical, cultural, religious and economic relations seemed to have been playing significant role in Turkey’s relations with its neighbours throughout 2000s until mid-2010s.

---

<sup>397</sup> Wendt, *Anarchy*, p. 402.

## CONCLUSION

The official relations between Turkey and Israel began in 1949 with the recognition of Israel by Turkey. Although Turkey and Israel established military, economic and political relations until the 1990s, these relations were strategic relations due to the influence of the post-Cold War period on the international system and the influence of the Gulf War on the regional system. This strategic partnership that developed under the special conditions of the 1990s has remarkably changed to a negative direction starting from early 2000s and continuing throughout the 2010s. The Israelis attach great importance to the alliance with Turkey and consider the current detrimental situation as strategically harmful to the interests of Israel. However, Israeli policies towards Turkey since the beginning of 2000s were not sensitive to the values of Turkish community particularly when a religiously conservative party's coming to power. Turkey's support to the Arabs for the Palestinian issue has increasingly continued particularly throughout the 2000s and 2010s. This support can be expected to remain unchanged in the near future. The Arab-Israeli conflict has a privileged status in the tradition of Turkish foreign policy since 1960s. Starting from the 1950s until 2000s. Turkish governments very often criticized Israel for its attacks to Palestinians. However, reaction of AK Party governments and their leaders in the last two decades has been harsher. Violent attacks of Israel particularly to Gaza restarting in mid 2000s and its illegal construction of new settlements lead to the development and warming up of Turkish-Palestinian relations while Turkish-Israeli relations suffer great damages.

The chronic instability in the region leads the rapprochement of Turkey to the Islamic world and this reconciliation will continue to be important for the national security of Turkey in the future. The Iran-Iraq War in the 1980s and the Gulf War in the 1990s showed that competition between the Muslim states disturbed the stability in the region as much as the series of Arab-Israeli wars. As long as interdependence increases between Turkey and the regional states in the political and economic areas, it will be necessary for Turkey to maintain an impartial diplomatic policy to contribute to the regional stability with active diplomacy in the regional affairs.<sup>398</sup>

---

<sup>398</sup> Aykan, p. 107.

The thesis examines general assumptions of International Relations theories and approaches such as Realism, Liberalism and Social Constructivism that can bring explanations to foreign policy analysis. These theories can also provide reasonable explanations to Turkey's foreign policy towards Israel in the perspective of Palestinian issue. For example, Turkish-Israeli relations in the 1990s can be analysed with the help of realism. During the 1990s, security threats particularly coming from PKK have constituted the basis of military agreements that were concluded between Turkey and Israel. From a realistic point of view, when the Turkish-Israeli relations in the 1990s are analysed, it can be stated that both countries had common interests and were facing common threats in the region. Since PKK attacks during the 1990s were supported by all of Turkey's neighbours including Iraq, Iran and Syria, Turkey needed help from another Middle Eastern country in the region. Therefore, Israel filled this gap. Moreover, Iraq, Iran and Syria that were hostile to Turkey were at the same time enemies of Israel. This situation naturally led the Turkey and Israel to establish a strategic co-operation, even though they were in conflicts occasionally. Besides military agreements the two countries have also cooperated in the areas of economy as well as tourism and created interdependence. Therefore, during the 1990s, survival attempts, security concerns and common interests that served for rational decisions between the two countries can be explained by realism, while cooperation that leads to interdependence can be analysed by liberalism.

Turkish public, in general supports the idea of peace between the Jewish people and the Arabs. However, when Israeli attacks to Palestinians, independence of Palestine and the status of Jerusalem are taken into consideration Turkish society supports the Palestinian cause.<sup>399</sup> The alliance between Israel and Turkey had been a natural result of the interaction of the two democratic, secular, Western and non-Arab states in the region. However, in the last two decades of the Turkish-Israeli relations, due to the existence of religiously conservative AK Party in power and increasing sensitivity of the Turkish public into the Palestinian issue and increasing asymmetric attacks of Israel to Palestinians, the analysis in foreign policy moved towards an examination of social perceptions, norms and values. In this study, the

---

<sup>399</sup> Bacik, p. 59.

development of Turkish-Israeli relations in the perspective of Palestinian issue in its historical process, particularly its new dimension during the AK Party governments is evaluated. In addition, the breakdown of the bilateral relations between Turkey and Israel starting from the second intifada and coming to a breaking point along with the Mavi Marmara incident is analysed on the basis of the Palestinian-Israeli issue. The thesis study first examined the historical background of both Turkish-Israeli relations and Turkish-Palestinian relations in order to give an insight to these encounters. Since the days of the Ottoman Empire, Turkish-Jewish relations have been in harmony. Although Turkey was neutral during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War and became the first Muslim country to recognise Israel in 1949, starting from the 1956 Arab-Israeli War continuing with 1967 and 1982 Wars Turkey started supporting the Palestinian cause. Turkish governments constantly condemned the attacks of Israelis to the Palestinians.

The third chapter of the thesis examined the last two decades of Turkish-Israeli relations in the framework of Palestinian-Israeli conflict. With AK Party coming to power in 2002 and consolidating its power by mid 2000s, the sensitivity towards the Palestinian cause increased dramatically. Starting with the second intifada in 2000, continuing with Operation Cast Lead in December 2008 and January 2009, Davos Crisis in January 2009, Low Chair Crisis in January 2010 and Mavi Marmara Incident in June 2010, Turkish-Israeli relations in the framework of Palestinian conflict drastically took a very negative and toxic turn. Even before AK Party coming to power Turkey's firm attitude towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict starting with the second intifada had taken place during the three-party coalition of DSP-ANAP-MHP. The coming of extreme right-wing Likud Party to power under the leadership of Ariel Sharon in the Israeli elections in 2003 was the beginning of deterioration of Peace Process. Turkish recognition of the victory of Hamas in 2006 elections in Palestine brought new tensions to the Turkish-Israeli relations since Hamas was considered a terrorist organization by Israel. This tension continued with Israeli attacks to Palestine in 2008 and 2009 (Operation Cast lead) that led to the death of more than 1.400 Palestinians. In Davos Crisis of 2009 when Prime Minister Erdoğan accused President Shimon Peres of Israel of knowing how to kill people the relations came to a breaking point and finally were completely shattered with the

June 2010 Mavi Marmara incident when the Israeli soldiers attacked the flotilla that was delivering humanitarian aid to Palestinians living in Gaza.

This negative turn on Turkish-Israeli relations can be partially explained with the help of realism since this move and discourses of Prime Minister Erdoğan consolidated Turkey's power as a regional actor in the Middle East and he himself gained a lot of credibility as a strong, charismatic and reliable leader in the region. However, main explanation to this negative turn of relations comes from the social constructivist analysis. Hence, relations between Turkey and Israel during the AK Party governments can be explained based on the ideological factors of the new era. It is possible to expect AK Party as an Islamist party producing anti-Israel foreign policies in order to become the leading country of the Islamic world. Rapprochement with Israel could have accelerated Turkey's deviation from the Islamic world. However, Turkish political elite did not tailor itself a guardianship role of Palestinians to get closer to the Middle Eastern countries. Turkey did this by permitting the deteriorating its relations with Israel and consequently the USA. This move was the result of identity factor, Turkey's aim was to protect a fragile Muslim community.

Social constructivism is one of the leading theories for comprehensive foreign policy analysis with an emphasis on the social aspect of international politics. AK Party's foreign policy preferences concerning Palestinian Israeli conflict can only be analysed by looking at the identity-based preferences, interests and foreign policy priorities. In the analysis of Turkish foreign policy towards Israel in the framework of Palestinian-Israeli conflict, ignoring social elements such as identity, culture and norms does not let us make a complete foreign policy analysis.

Identity as one of the basic analysis units of constructivism is a major driving force that shapes foreign policies. Westernization and secularization that is based on the existence of a common identity between Israel and Turkey in the 1990s has contributed to the establishment of good relations between the two countries. Identity also leads decision-makers to decide who is an attractive ally in a threatening atmosphere. From the beginning of the 2000s, especially AK Party politicians began to follow pro-Palestinian policies that led to a change in the pro-Israeli Turkish foreign policy. Prior to AK Party coming to power, governments in differing ways



criticized Israel's use of disproportionate force against Palestine, but the scope of the criticism has never been aimed at annoying Israel or breaking the relationship altogether. Particularly, following the events in Davos and Mavi Marmara attack, identity-based relations in the context of Palestinian issue between Turkey and the Palestine was further strengthened. For this reason, the AK party politicians have tried to support the problems of the Palestinian people, whom they consider as religious fellow of Turkish people.

The basis of relations between Turkey and Palestine/Israel is founded on the understanding of the Turkish perception within the Israeli society and Israeli perception within the Turkish society. These perceptions are the result of relations between countries for centuries. Today, the perception of society is very effective in foreign policy decision making. In this regard, negative perceptions of the Turkish people concerning Israelis have led to the worsening of relations between Turkey and Israel. Since the early 2000s, the events and clashes between Israel and Palestine influenced the Turkish community in a damaging way. Perceptions of statesmen have also played a significant role in foreign policy making of both Israeli and Turkish politicians. If statesmen believing in certain ideologies, beliefs and values will ally with countries that have similar ideologies, beliefs and values and will consider these countries as potential friends and the others as potential enemies. The tension between the Turkish and Israeli governments in recent years, the personality traits of the top politicians on both sides have determined the course of relations between the two states. In both states political elite used the crisis in their domestic politics as social psychological dynamics. With the realization of the social psychological dynamic, as "us" and the "other" perceptions were established in a deeper negative direction. Consequently, we can argue that the discourses and psychological dynamics of the leaders have a significant impact on the foreign policy decisions during the AK Party period.

Starting with 2000s on Turkish governments has realized that they were not able to follow an active foreign policy by staying away from the regional problems. One way of participating in regional problems was through the peaceful settlement of disputes. Consequently, Turkish governments rather than following a security-based foreign policy attempted to resort to more peaceful foreign policy that depended on

culture and identity and the discourse of the leaders. Throughout the 2000s, AK Party political elite has moved away from the realist point of view, giving more importance to socio-cultural factors and leaders' discourses in foreign policy making process.

The close relations between the Turks and Palestinians due to their past and religious ties have also shaped Turkish-Israeli relations. Beside the deeply rooted relations between the Turks and the Jews, the establishment of the Israeli state and the Palestinian issue has constituted an important item on Turkish foreign policy agenda. With AK Party's coming to power starting with 2000s on and its attempt of becoming a regional power in the Middle East had increased Turkey's rapprochement with the region. The party and its political elite were sensitive to the Palestinian issue. Due to this sensitivity and as a result of AK Party elites' negative rhetoric towards Israel, Turkish-Israeli relations had gone through a serious deterioration.

Currently, the ongoing crises in the Middle East are directly reflected in the relations between the two countries. However, Israel needs more than ever to establish good relations with Turkey. Due to the Arab Spring, Israel has lost Egypt, its the strongest ally in the Middle East. Former President Hosni Mubarak supported Israel against Hamas to help the Gaza blockade. However, Israel was left alone in the region after the Mubarak lost power. Despite negative relations during President Morsi period, following General Sisi coup in Egypt, the Egyptian government, in particular with the initiative of the Saudis, has attempted to get closer to Israel. Nevertheless, currently, Turkey and Israel should consider and redefine bilateral relations in the region by taking into consideration the other variables. The Tel Aviv administration should involve in initiatives to make the peace process more solemn. Israel has to admit that the precondition of its legitimate presence in the region is only possible with the presence of an independent Palestinian state.

Israel does not have the luxury to lose an ally like Turkey. The deterioration of Turkish-Israeli relations will affect Israel more negatively than it will affect Turkey. The most basic justification for this view is that Israel's need for Turkey is much more than Turkey's need for Israel and it has a long-lasting tendency. Israel has to treat Turkey well due to the geopolitical reasons. Concerning the Syrian crisis, Turkey, Russia and Iran have recently announced a joint declaration in Kazakhstan's

capital Astana. In Astana Talks Turkey signed a joint resolution with Israel's most significant enemy in the region, Iran. Turkey's close relationship with countries adopting anti-Israel policies in the Middle East constitutes a threat to Israel's future. Moreover, with the bilateral military, political, economic, intelligence and touristic dimensions of relations, Turkey is a crucial reference point and gateway for Israel to open to the Islamic world, the Turkish world and perhaps to the Balkans.<sup>400</sup>

Today, Turkey has stronger ties with both the Arab states and other neighbours contrary to the 1950s and 1990s. In order to strengthen its relations with Turkey, the Israeli state needs to pursue more peaceful and deal-oriented policies on the Palestinian issue. Considering the concerns of the Israeli state in the region, Turkey should guarantee that peace is not solely dependent on Israel, and that the coordination and mediation for Palestine is ensured to act with peaceful ways. However, in order for Turkey and Israel to conciliate and establish long-lasting strategic alliance, they both need to take each other's sensitivities into consideration and have a peaceful solution for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

---

<sup>400</sup> Uzer, Bunalım, p. 150.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi. “Herşey Türkiye İçin”, 3 Kasım 2002 Genel Seçimleri Seçim Beyannamesi, 2002, p. 91, <https://www.akparti.org.tr/site/dosyalar#!/> (18.03.2018).

Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi. Güven ve İstikrar İçinde Durmak Yok Yola Devam, 22 Temmuz 2007 Genel Seçimleri Seçim Beyannamesi, Haziran 2007, [www.akparti.org.tr/upload/documents/2007-beyanname.pdf](http://www.akparti.org.tr/upload/documents/2007-beyanname.pdf) (18.03.2018).

Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi 58. Hükümet Programı ve Dış Politika. 12.03.2008, [www.akparti.org.tr/.../documents/58inci-hukümet-programi.pdf](http://www.akparti.org.tr/.../documents/58inci-hukümet-programi.pdf) (21.03.2018).

“Adeta Devlet Terörü”. **Hürriyet**, 21.05.2004, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/adeta-devlet-teroru-227276> (23.06.2018).

Ağdemir, A. Murat. “Ariel Sharon: A Man of Peace or A Man of War?”, **Turkish Studies**, Vol: 10, No: 9, 2015, pp. 9-22.

AK Parti 2023 Siyasi Vizyonu: Dünya ve Dış Politika Vizyonumuz. 29.09.2012, <http://www.akparti.org.tr/upload/documents/akparti2023siyasivizyonuturkce.pdf> (21.03.2018).

Aksar, Yusuf. “Birleşmiş Milletler Palmer (Mavi Marmara) Raporu ve Uluslararası Hukuk”, **Uluslararası İlişkiler Dergisi**, No: 9, 2012, pp. 23-38.

Altunışık, Meliha Benli and Özlem Tür. “From Distant Neighbors to Partners? Changing Syria-Turkish Relations”, **SAGE Publications**, Vol: 37, No: 2, 2006, pp. 229-248.

Altunışık, Meliha Benli. “The Possibilities and Limits of Turkey’s Soft Power in the Middle East”, **Insight Turkey**, Vol: 10, No: 2, 2008, pp. 41-53.

Altunışık, Meliha Benli. “Turkish-Israeli Rapprochement in the Post-Cold War Era”, **Middle Eastern Studies**, Vol: 30, No: 2, 2000, pp. 172–191.

Aras, Bülent. “Academic Perceptions of Turkish Israeli Relations”, **Turkish Journal of International Relations**, Vol: 1, No: 1, 2002, pp. 1-17.

Aras, Bülent. “Turkish-Israeli-Iranian Relations in the Nineties and Impact on the Middle East”, **Middle East Policy**, Vol: 7, No: 3, 2000, pp. 151-164.

Aras, Bülent. **The Palestinian-Israeli Peace Process and Turkey**, Nova Science Publishers, New York, 1998.

Aras, Bülent. “The Turks and Jerusalem”, **Contemporary Review**, Vol: 279, No: 1629, 2001, pp. 201-207.

Aras, Bülent. “Yenilenen Türk-İsrail İlişkileri”, **TASAM**, 22.11.2006, [http://www.tasam.org/tr-TR/Icerik/222/yenilenen\\_turk-israil\\_iliskileri](http://www.tasam.org/tr-TR/Icerik/222/yenilenen_turk-israil_iliskileri) (16.07.2017).

Archive of US Department of State. “The Baghdad Pact (1955) and the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO)”, <https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/lw/98683.htm> (24.02.2017).

Arı, Tayyar. **Geçmişten Günümüze Ortadoğu Siyaset Savaş Diplomasi**, MKM Yayıncılık, Bursa, 2008.

Armaoğlu, Fahir. **Filistin Meselesi ve Arap-İsrail Savaşları (1948–1988)**, Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, Ankara, 1994.

Armaođlu, Fahir. **20. Yüzyıl Siyasi Tarihi**, Alkım Yayınları, İstanbul, 2005.

Art, Robert J. and Kenneth N. Waltz. **Technology, Strategy and the Uses of Force**, University Press of America, Lanham, 1983.

Aykan, Mahmut Bali. “The Palestinian Question in Turkish Foreign Policy from the 1950s to the 1990s”, **International Journal of Middle East Studies**, Cambridge University Press, Vol: 25, No: 1, 1993, pp. 91-110.

Aytürk, İlker. “The Coming of an Ice Age? Turkish–Israeli Relations Since 2002”, **Turkish Studies**, Vol: 12, No: 4, 2011, pp. 675-687.

Bacık, Gökhan. “The Limits of an Alliance: Turkish-Israeli Relations Revisited”, **Arab Studies Quarterly**, Vol: 23, No: 3, 2001, pp. 49-63.

Balamir, Coşkun Bezen. “İran-İsrail Ekseninde, Türk Dış Politikasının Analizi”, Cüneyt Yenigün, Ertan Efegil (Ed.), **Türkiye’nin Değişen Dış Politikası**, Nobel Yayın Dağıtım, İstanbul, 2010.

Ravid, Barak. “Gaza flotilla Turkish provocation”, **Haaretz**, 25.10.2010, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/gaza-flotilla-was-turkish-provocation-livni-tells-inquiry-1.321073> (27.10.2017).

Bellamy, Richard. **Liberalism and Pluralism: Towards a Politics of Compromise**, Routledge, London, 2001.

Bengio, Ofra. “The Historical Evolution of the Israeli-Turkish Relationship”, **Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies**, 2005, pp. 51-58.

Bennhold, Katrin. “Leaders of Turkey and Israel Clash at Davos Panel,” **New York Times**, 29.01.2009,

<https://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/30/world/europe/30clash.html>  
(22.10.2016).

Bilgin, Hasret Dikici. "Foreign Policy Orientation of Turkey's Pro-Islamist Parties: A Comparative Study of the AKP and Refah", **Turkish Studies**, Vol: 9, No: 3, 2008, pp. 407-421.

"BM kararı İsrail politikasına büyük bir tokattır", **Yeni Şafak**, 24.12.2016,  
<http://www.yenisafak.com/dunya/bm-karari-israil-politikasina-buyuk-bir-tokattir-2585722> (29.01.2018).

Borger, Jukian. "Turkey confirms it barred Israel from military exercise because of Gaza War", **The Guardian**, 12.10.2009,  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/oct/12/turkey-israel-military-gaza>  
(12.08.2017).

Bozdağlıoğlu, Yücel. **Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity A Constructivist Approach**, Routledge, New York, 2003.

Bozdağlıoğlu, Yücel. **Konstrüktivizm ve Rol Teorisi: Kimlik, Rol ve Dış Politika Analizi**, MKM Yayıncılık, Bursa, 2012.

Bölükbaşı, Süha. "Behind the Turkish-Israeli Alliance: A Turkish View", **Journal of Palestinian Studies**, Vol: 29, No: 1, 1999, pp. 21-35.

Breuning, Marijke. **Foreign Policy Analysis: A Comparative Introduction**, Palgrave MacMillan, New York, 2007.

Bukovansky, Mlada. "American Identity and Neutral Rights from Independence to the War of 1812", **International Organization**, Vol: 51, No: 2, 1997, pp. 209-243.

Burchill, Scott et al. **Theories of International Relations**, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2005.

Checkel, Jeffrey T. “The Constructivist Turn in International Relations Theory”, **World Politics**, Vol: 50, No: 2, 1998, pp. 324-348.

Çevik, Abdulkadir and Bahar Senem Ersaydı. “Türkiye-İsrail İlişkilerinde Psiko-Politik Etkenler ve Toplumsal Algılar”, **Akademik Ortadoğu**, Vol: 5, No: 2, 2011, pp. 1-17.

Davutoğlu, Ahmet. **Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu**, Küre Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 2009.

Davutoğlu, Ahmet. “Türkiye Merkez Ülke Olmalı”, **Radikal**, 26.02.2004, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/yorum/turkiye-merkez-ulke-olmalı-702116> (14.03.2018).

Davutoğlu, Ahmet. “Turkey’s Foreign Policy Vision: An Assessment of 2007”, **Insight Turkey**, Vol: 10, No: 1 2008, pp. 77-96.

“Davutoğlu: İsrail’in Gazze Yaklaşımını Eleştiriyoruz”, **Radikal**, 12.10.2009 <http://www.radikal.com.tr/dunya/one-minuteun-ardindan-anadolu-kartali-gerilimi-958829/> (17.08.2017).

Donnelly, Jack. **Realism and International Relations**, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000.

Dougherty, James E. and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff. **Contending Theories of International Relations**, Harper Collins Publishers, United Kingdom, 1990.



Dönmez, Muzaffer. “İsrail-Filistin Sorununun Tarihçesi”, 02.08.2014, <http://muzafferdonmez.blogspot.com/2014/08/israil-filistin-sorununun-tarihcesi.html> (11.01.2017).

Emiroğlu, Sema. “Yahudi Lobisi Küstü”, **Milliyet**, 10.04.2002, <http://gazetearsivi.milliyet.com.tr/Arsiv/2002/04/10> (16.04.2017).

Erdemir, Halil. “How worthy Israeli Relations for Turkey”, **Turkish Journal of International Relations**, Vol: 9, No: 2, 2010, pp. 24-38.

“Erdoğan: Afganistan'a asker talebi var”, **Hürriyet**, 20.05.2004, <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=227035> (12.05.2017).

“Erdogan-led Turkey cannot mediate peace talks”, **Hurriyet Daily News**, 01.02.2009, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/Erdogan-led-turkey-cannot-mediate-peace-talks-israeli-newspaper-10902527> (11.07.2017).

“Erdoğan: Başarıyı görmek istemeyen var”, **Hürriyet**, 08.06.2004, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/erdogan-basariyi-gormek-istemeyen-var-38613227> (19.04.2018).

“Erdoğan: İsrail Cezalandırılmalı”, **BBC Turkish**, 01.06.2010 [http://www.bbc.co.uk/turkce/haberler/2010/06/100601\\_turkey\\_gaza.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/turkce/haberler/2010/06/100601_turkey_gaza.shtml) (14.07.2018).

Erhan, Çağrı and Ömer Kürkçüoğlu. **Türk Dış Politikası**, Ed. Baskın Oran, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2001.

Ertem, Helin Sarı. “Kimlik ve Güvenlik İlişisine Konstrüktivist bir Yaklaşım: ‘Kimliğin Güvenliği’ ve ‘Güvenliğin Kimliği’”, **Security Strategies Dergisi**, No: 16, 2008, pp. 177-236.

Ewen, MacAskill. "UN general assembly makes resounding vote in favour of Palestinian statehood", **The Guardian**, 29.11.2012, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/nov/29/united-nations-vote-palestine-state> (22.10.2018)

Feuilherade, Peter. "Arabs Slam New Israel-Turkey Accords", **The Middle East**, No: 229, 1996, pp. 1-33.

Fishman, Louis. "Turkish-Israeli Relations in a post-Arab Spring: A Historical Perspective", **Middle East Analysis**, Vol: 5, No: 50, 2013, pp. 33-50.

Friedman, Herbert A. "Psychological Operations during the Israel-Lebanon War 2006", 14.08.2006, <https://www.psywar.org/content/israellebanon> (14.05.2017).

Gilpin, Robert G. "The Richness of the Tradition of Political Realism", **International Organization**, Vol: 38, No: 2, 1984, pp. 287-304.

Greal, Chris. "23 killed in Israeli raid on refugee camp", **The Guardian**, 01.10.2004, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/oct/01/israel> (19.11.2018).

Gruen, George E. "Defining Limits On Religious Expression in Public Institutions: The Turkish Dilemma", **Jewish Political Studies Review**, Vol: 11, No: 3, 1999, pp. 163-196.

Gruen, George E. "Turkey's Relations with Israel and its Arab Neighbors: The Impact of Basic Interests and Changing Circumstances", **Middle East Review**, No: 17, 1985, pp. 33-43.

Gruen, George E. “Turkish-Israeli Relations: Crisis or Continued Cooperation?”, **Jerusalem Letter**, Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, No: 338, 1996, pp. 1-6.

Guzzini, Stefano. “A Reconstruction of Constructivism in International Relations”, **European Journal of International Relations**, Vol: 6, No: 2, 2000, pp. 147-182.

Gürson, Poyraz. **Suriye**, Ankara Üniversitesi Yayınları, Ankara, 2006.

Hale, William. “Turkey, Middle East and Gulf Crisis”, **International Affairs**, Vol: 68, No: 4, 1992, pp. 679-692.

Hale, William. **Türk Dış Politikası 1774–2000**, Arkeoloji ve Sanat Yayınları, İstanbul, 2003.

Halloum, Ribbi. **Belgelerle Filistin: Dün Bugün Yarın**, Yeni Alan Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 1989.

“Hamas’la Diyalogun Perde Arkası”, **Türkiye Gazetesi**, 12.11.2010, [www.turkiyegazetesi.com/makaledetay.aspx?id=467915](http://www.turkiyegazetesi.com/makaledetay.aspx?id=467915) (14.06.2017).

Hassassian, Manuel. **Palestine: Factionalism in the National Movement (1919-1939)**, PASSIA, Jerusalem, 1990.

Hopf, Ted. “The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory,” **International Security**, Vol: 23, No: 1, 1998, pp. 171-200.

İnat, Kemal and İsmail Telci. **Türk Dış Politikası Yıllığı 2010: Türkiye’nin İran, İsrail ve Suriye Politikası**, Seta Yayınları, Ankara, 2011.

İnbar, Efraim. “The Resilience of Israeli-Turkish Relations”, **Israel Affairs**, Vol: 11, No: 4, 2005, pp. 591-607.

“İsmail Cem Kahire’de”, **Hürriyet**, 30.07.2001, <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=7198> (29.06.2017).

“İsrail’le Alçak Koltuk Krizi”, **Milliyet**, 13.01.2010, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/israil-le--alcak-koltuk--krizi-gundem-1185364> (13.09.2017).

“İsrail'den Mavi Marmara özrü”, **Sabah**, 22.03.2013, <http://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2013/03/22/israilden-mavi-marmara-ozru> (16.12.2017).

“İsrail Mavi Marmara tazminatını ödedi”, **Takvim**, 30.10.2016, <http://www.takvim.com.tr/guncel/2016/09/30/israilden-mavi-marmara-tazminati> (11.01.2018).

Jehfuss, Maja. **Constructivism in International Relations: The Politics of Reality**, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004.

Jepperson, Ronal L. Alexander Wendt and Peter J. Katzenstein. “Norms, Identity, and Culture in National Security,” in Peter J. Katzenstein (Ed.), **The Culture of National Security**, Columbia University Press, New York, 1996.

Kaarbo, Juliet et. al. “The Analysis of Foreign Policy in Comparative Perspective”, **Foreign Policy in Comparative Perspective: Domestic and International Influences on State Behavior**, (Eds., Ryan Beasley et. al), CQ Press, Washington D.C., 2012.

Kant, Immanuel. **Perpetual Peace**, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1991.

Karaman, Lütfullah. **Uluslararası İlişkiler Çıkmazında Filistin Sorunu**, İz Yayıncılık, İstanbul 1991.

Karabulut, Bilal. “Alçak Koltuk Krizi”, **Türk Dış Politikasında 41 Kriz: 1924-2012**, Kripto Yayıncılık, Ankara, 2012.

Karpat, Kemal H. **Turkey’s Foreign Policy in Transition: 1950:1974**, E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1975.

Katz, Yariv. “The al-Aqsa Intifada”, **Ynetnews**, 19.03.2009, <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3689276,00.html> (08.03.2017).

Keohane, Robert O. **Theory of World Politics: Structural Realism and Beyond**, in **Neo-Realism and Its Critics**, Columbia University Press, New York, 1986.

Koç, Malike Bileydi. **İsrail Devleti’nin Kuruluşu ve Bölgesel Etkileri 1948–2006**, Günizi Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 2006.

Koslowski, Rey and Friedrich Kratochwil. “Understanding Change in International Politics: The Soviet Empire’s Demise and the International System”, **International Organization**, Vol: 48, No: 2, 1994, pp. 215-247.

Köse, Faruk. “İsrail’in özür hamlesi”, **Yeni Akit**, 25.03.2013, <http://www.habervaktim.com/yazar/58356/israilin-ozur-hamlesi.html> (18.12.2017).

Kösebalaban, Hasan. “The Crisis in Turkish-Israeli Relations: What is its Strategic Significance?”, **Middle East Policy Council**, Vol: 17, No: 3, 2010, pp. 36-50.

Kratochwil, Friedrich. "The Embarrassment of Changes: Neo-realism as the Science of Realpolitik without Politics", **Review of International Politics**, Vol: 19, No: 1, 1993, pp. 63-80.

Kratochwil, Friedrich. "History, Action and Identity: Revisiting the 'Second' Great Debate and Assessing its Importance for Social Theory", **European Journal of International Relations**, Vol: 12, No: 1, 2006, pp. 5-29.

Kratochwil, Friedrich. "International Order and Individual Liberty: A Critical Examination of Realism as a Theory of International Politics", **Constitutional Political Economy**, Vol: 3, No: 1, 1992, pp. 29-50.

Kratochwil, Friedrich. "Thrasymachos Revisited: On the Relevance of Norms for International Relations", **Journal of International Affairs**, Vol: 37, No: 2, 1984, pp. 343-356.

Kushner, David. "Turkish–Israeli Relations in Historical Perspective", **Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs**, Vol: 10, No: 2, 2016, pp. 213-222.

Kürkçüoğlu, Ömer. **Türkiye'nin Arap Orta Doğu'suna Karşı Politikası (1945-1970)**, Sevinç Matbaası, Ankara, 1972.

Kürkçüoğlu, Ömer and Fatih Koraş. **2000 yılı sonrası Türkiye'nin Orta Doğu Siyaseti**, Palme Yayıncılık, Ankara, 2011.

Levy, Avigdor. **The Jews of the Ottoman Empire**, The Darwin Press, New Jersey, 1994.

Lewin, Anat. "Turkey and Israel Reciprocal and Mutual Imagery in the Media, 1994-1999", **Journal of International Affairs**, Vol: 54, No: 1, 2000, pp. 239-241.

Loğođlu, Faruk. “Davos: The Stage, The Street and Diplomacy,” **Hurriyet**, 05.02.2009, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/davos-the-stage-the-street-and-diplomacy-10928037> (07.07.2018).

Makovsky, Alan. “Turkey: Erbakan at Six Months”, **Policy Watch**, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, No: 230, 1996.

Makovsky, Alan, Cengiz Çandar and Efraim Inbar. The Washington Institute, “The Turkish-Israeli-Syrian Triangle”, **Policy Analysis**, Policy Watch 249, “Special Policy Forum”, 15.03.2000, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-turkish-israeli-syrian-triangle> (23.04.2017).

Mansfield, Peter. **Osmanlı Sonrası Türkiye ve Arap Dünyası**, Sander Yayınları, İstanbul, 1975.

“Mavi Marmara: Why did Israel stopped Gaza Flotilla,” **BBC News**, 27.06.2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/10203726> (23.10.2017).

“Mavi Marmara'dan sonra İsrail'den ilk resmi ziyaret”, **CNN Türk**, 24.06.2016, <http://www.cnnturk.com/turkiye/mavi-marmaradan-sonra-israilden-ilk-resmi-ziyaret> (21.12.2017).

Mearsheimer, John. “Back to the Future: Instability in Europe After the Cold War”, **International Security**, Vol: 15, No: 1, 1990, pp. 5-56.

Melman, Yossi. “IDF: Officer’s Criticism of Turkey Does Not Represent Official View”, **Haaretz**, 14.02.2009, <https://www.haaretz.com/1.5075287> (25.10.2016).

Meyer, John W. and George M. Thomas. "Ontology and Rationalization in the Western Cultural Account", in G. Thomas et al. (Eds.), **Institutional Structure: Constituting State, Society, and the Individual**, London, 1989.

Morgenthau, Hans J. **Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace**, New York, 1973.

Murinson, Alexander. "The Strategic Depth Doctrine of Turkish Foreign Policy", **Middle Eastern Studies**, Vol: 42, No: 6, 2006, pp. 945-964.

Nachmani, Amikam. **Israel, Turkey, and Greece: Uneasy Relations in the East Mediterranean**, Frank Cass, London, 1987.

"Netanyahu barış planını reddetmiş", **Yeni Şafak**, 19.02.2017, [http://www.yenisafak.com/dunya/netanyahu-baris-planini-reddetmis-2615633#cxrecs\\_s](http://www.yenisafak.com/dunya/netanyahu-baris-planini-reddetmis-2615633#cxrecs_s) (21.01.2018).

Oğuzlu, Tarık. "Türkiye-İsrail İlişkilerinin Değişen Dinamikleri", **Ortadoğu Analiz**, Vol: 1, No: 4, 2009, pp. 14-21.

Oğuzlu, Tarık. "The Arab Spring and The Rise of the 2.0 Version of Turkey's Zero Problems with Neighbors Policy", **SAM Papers**, No: 1, 2012, pp. 1-16.

Onuf, Nicholas. **World of Our Making: Rules and Rule in Social Theory and International Relations**, Columbia University Press, New York, 1989.

Onuf, Nicholas. "Sovereignty: Outline of a Conceptual History", **Alternatives**, Vol: 16, No: 4, 1991, pp. 425-446.

Onuf, Nicholas. "The Constitution of International Society", **The European Journal of International Law**, Vol: 5, No: 1, 1994, pp. 1-19.



Onuf, Nicholas. “Constructivism: A User’s Manual”, (Eds.) Vendulka Kubalkova, Nicholas Onuf, Paul Kowert, **International Relations in a Constructed World**, M.E. Sharpe Press, 1998.

Onuf, Nicholas. “Worlds of Our Making: The Strange Career of Constructivism in International Relations”, (Ed.) Donald J. Puchala, **Visions of International Relations**, University of South Carolina Press, Columbia, 2002.

Oran, Baskın. **Türk Dış Politikası-Cilt II 1980-2001**, İletişim Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 2001.

Ovalı, Şevket and Yücel Bozdağlıoğlu. “Role Theory and Securitization: An Agency Based Framework for Decoding Turkey’s Diplomatic Offensive against Israel”, *The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations*, Vol: 43, 2012, pp. 1-28.

Öke, Mim Kemal. **Siyonizm’den Uygarlıklar Çatışmasına Filistin Sorunu**, Ufuk Yayınları, İstanbul, 2002.

Özcan, Gencer. **Türkiye İsrail İlişkileri 50. Yılına Girerken**, DER Yayınları, İstanbul, 2001.

Özcan, Gencer. “Türkiye-İsrail İlişkilerinde Dönüşüm: Güvenliğin Ötesi”, **TESEV Dış Politika Programı, Dış Politika Analiz Serisi 1**, Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi, 2005, pp. 1-140.

Pease, Kelly Kate. **International Organizations**, Pearson Education, USA, 2012.

Perthes, Volker. “Turkey’s Role in the Middle East: An Outsider’s Perspective”, *Insight Turkey*, Vol: 12, No: 4, 2010, pp. 1-8.

Pfeffer, Anshel. “The end of Israeli-Turkish ties?”, **The Jewish Chronicle**, 15.10.2009, <https://www.thejc.com/news/israel/the-end-of-israeli-turkish-ties-1.11899> (03.11.2018).

Pipes, Daniel. “A New Axis: The Emerging Turkish- Israeli Entente”, **National Interest**, No: 50, 1998.

Price, Richard and Christian Reus-Smit. “Dangerous Liaisons? Critical International Theory and Constructivism”, **European Journal of International Relations**, Vol: 4, No: 3, 1998, pp. 259-294.

Putnam, Robert D. “Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games”, **International Organization**, Vol: 43, No: 3, 1988, pp. 427-460.

Risse-Kappen, Thomas. “Collective Identity in a Democratic Community: The Case of NATO”, in Peter J. Katzenstein, **The Culture of National Security**, Columbia University Press, New York. 1996.

Robins, Philip J. **Turkey and the Middle East**, Council on Foreign Relations Press, New York, 1991.

“Rotamız Filistin Yükümüz İnsani Yardım”, **Hürriyet**, 22.05.2010, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/rotamiz-filistin-yukumuz-insani-yardim-14806330> (18.10.2017).

Sampson, Martin W. “Cultural Influences on Foreign Policy”, (Eds.) Charles F. Hermann et. al, **New Directions in the Study of Foreign Policy**, Unwin Hyman, Boston, 1987.

Sander, Oral. **Siyasi Tarih:1918–1994**, İmge Kitabevi, Ankara, 2005.

Schleifer, Yigal. “Why Israel humiliated Turkey in response to a TV show”, **The Christian Science Monitor**, 12.01.2010, <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/2010/0112/Why-Israel-humiliated-Turkey-in-response-to-a-TV-show> (06.11.2018).

Shackle, Samira. “What does Israel’s apology mean for future relations with Turkey?”, **Middle East Monitor**, 23.01.2014, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20140123-what-does-israels-apology-mean-for-future-relations-with-turkey/> (20.11.2018).

Shaw, Stanford J. **The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic**, New York University Press, New York, 1991.

Sherwood, Harriet. “Israel accused of state terrorism after assault on flotilla carrying Gaza aid”, **The Guardian**, 01.06.2010, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/may/31/israel-accused-state-terrorism-assault-flotilla-gaza> (03.11.2017).

Sönmezoğlu, Faruk. **Uluslararası İlişkiler Sözlüğü**, 3. Baskı, Der Yayınları, İstanbul, 2000.

Çoğalan, Sultan. “Gazze'ye bir gemi insani yardım daha gidecek”, **Anadolu Ajansı**, 14.07.2016, <http://aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/gazze-ye-bir-gemi-insani-yardim-daha-gidecek/607616> (19.01.2018).

Sweeney, Bill Mc. **Security, Identity and Interests: Sociology of International Relations**, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1999.

Tait, Robert. “Turkish PM Greeted by Cheers after Israel Debate Clash”, **The Guardian**, 30.01.2009, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/jan/30/turkish-prime-minister-cheered-davos-row-gaza> (03.07.2018).

Tavlaş, Nezh. “Türk-İsrail Güvenlik ve İstihbarat İlişkileri”, **Avrasya Dosyası**, Vol: 1, No: 3, 1994, pp. 5-32.

T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı, “Türkiye-İsrail Siyasi İlişkileri”, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-israil-siyasi-iliskileri.tr.mfa> (14.07.2018).

T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı, “Orta Doğu Barış Süreci”, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/orta-dogu-baris-sureci.tr.mfa> (21.07.2018).

T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı, “HAMAS Lideri Rantisi'nin Öldürülmesi Hk”, No: 62, 18.04.2004, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no\\_62--\\_18-nisan\\_-2004\\_\\_hamas-lideri-rantisi\\_nin-oldurulmesi-hk\\_.tr.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_62--_18-nisan_-2004__hamas-lideri-rantisi_nin-oldurulmesi-hk_.tr.mfa) (22.06.2018).

T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı, “İsrail - HAMAS Arasındaki Ateşkes Hk”, No: 109, 19.06.2008, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no\\_109\\_-19-haziran-2008\\_-israil-hamas-arasindaki-ateskes-hk\\_.tr.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_109_-19-haziran-2008_-israil-hamas-arasindaki-ateskes-hk_.tr.mfa) (23.06.2018).

T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı, “İsrail Dışişleri Bakan Yardımcısının Tel Aviv Büyükelçimiz İle Yaptığı Görüşmede Takındığı Tavır Hk”, No: 7, 12.01.2010, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no\\_-7\\_-12-ocak-2010\\_-israil-disisleri-bakan-yardimcisinin-tel-aviv-buyukelcimiz-ile-yaptigi-gorusmede-takindigi-tavir-hk\\_.tr.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-7_-12-ocak-2010_-israil-disisleri-bakan-yardimcisinin-tel-aviv-buyukelcimiz-ile-yaptigi-gorusmede-takindigi-tavir-hk_.tr.mfa) (07.07.2018).

T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı, “Filistin'in BM'de ‘Üye Olmayan Gözlemci Devlet’ Statüsü Kazanması Hk”, No: 275, 20.11.2012, [http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no\\_-275\\_-30-kasim-2012\\_-filistin\\_in-bm\\_de-\\_uye-olmayan-gozlemci-devlet\\_-statusu-kazanmasi-hk\\_.tr.mfa](http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-275_-30-kasim-2012_-filistin_in-bm_de-_uye-olmayan-gozlemci-devlet_-statusu-kazanmasi-hk_.tr.mfa) (28.07.2018).

TUIC Akademi, “Nedenleri ve Sonuçları ile 2006 İsrail-Lübnan Savaşı”, 26.01.2011, <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/haber.aspx?id=4743389&tarih=2006-07-13> (16.10.2016).

“Turkey demands apology from Israel over envoy slight”, **BBC News**, 13.01.2010, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/8455460.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8455460.stm) (09.10.2017).

“Turkish FM criticizes Israel over Gaza”, **CNN**, 12.10.2009, <http://edition.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/meast/10/11/turkey.israel.nato.drill/index.html> (02.11.2018).

Tür, Özlem. “Türkiye-İsrail İlişkileri: Yakın İşbirliğinden Gerileme”, **Ortadoğu Analiz**, Vol: 1, No: 4, 2009, pp. 23-29.

Tür, Özlem. İsrail’in Özür Dilemesi Sonrası Türkiye İsrail İlişkileri, Ankara, **Ortadoğu Analiz**, Vol: 5, No: 54, 2013. pp. 26-34.

Türel, Yılmaz. “Türkiye-İsrail İlişkileri: Tarihten Günümüze”, **Akademik Ortadoğu**, Vol: 5, No: 1, 2010, pp. 9-24.

United States of America Department of State, Office of the Historian, “Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan”, <https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/short-history/truman> (16.02.2017).

Uzer, Umut. “Türkiye İsrail İlişkilerinde Bunalım”, **Ortadoğu Etütleri**, Vol: 2, No: 2, 2011, pp. 137-168.

Uzer, Umut. “Turkish-Israeli Relations: Their Rise or Fall”, **Middle East Policy**, Vol: 20, No: 1, 2013, pp. 97-110.

Uzgel, İlhan. **AKP: Neoliberal Dönüşümün Yeni Aktörü**, Phoenix Yayınevi, İstanbul, 2010.

Viotti, Paul R. and Mark V. Kauppi. **International Relations Theory**, Pearson Education Inc. Boston, 2010.

Viotti, Paul R. and Mark V. Kauppi. **International Relations and World Politics**, Pearson Education Inc. Boston, 2013.

Walker, Joshua W. "Turkey and Israel's Relationship in the Middle East", **Mediterranean Quarterly**, Vol: 17, No: 4, 2006, pp. 60-90.

Walker, Joshua W. "Learning Strategic Depth: Implications of Turkey's New Foreign Policy Doctrine", **Insight Turkey**, Vol: 9, No: 3, 2007, pp. 32-47.

Walt, Stephen M. "International Relations: One World, Many Theories", **Foreign Policy**, No: 110, 1998, pp. 29-46.

Waltz, Kenneth N. "International Politics Is Not Foreign Policy", **Security Studies**, Vol: 6, No: 1, 1996, pp. 54-57.

Waxman, Don. "Turkey and Israel: A New Balance of Power in the Middle East", **Washington Quarterly**, Vol: 22, No: 1, 1999, pp. 1-30.

Wendt, Alexander. "The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory", **International Organization**, Vol: 41, No: 3, 1987, pp. 335-370.

Wendt, Alexander. "Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics", **International Organization**, Vol: 17, No: 4, 1992, pp. 391- 407.

Wendt, Alexander. "Collective Identity Formation and the International State", **The American Political Science Review**, Vol: 88, No: 2, 1994, pp. 384-396.

Wendt, Alexander. "Constructing International Politics", **International Security**, Vol: 20, No: 1, 1995, pp. 71-81.

Wendt, Alexander. "Identity and Structural Change in International Politics", in Yosef Lapid and Friedrich Kratochwil (Eds.), **The Return of Culture and Identity in IR Theory**, Lynne Rienner Publisher, London, 1996.

Wendt, Alexander. **Social Theory of International Politics**, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999.

Wendt, Alexander. "Ortak Kimlik Oluşumu ve Uluslararası Devlet", in Esra Diri (Ed.), **Uluslararası İlişkilerde Anahtar Metinler 1**, Röle Akademik Yayınları, İstanbul, 2013.

Weymouth, Lally. "Filistin Bugün Bir Açık Cezaevi", **The Washington Post**, 31.01.2009, <http://www.haberler.com/Erdogan-washington-post-a-konustu-haberi/> (19.10.2016).

Yavuz, M. Hakan and Mujeeb R. Khan. "Turkish Foreign Policy toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict: Duality and the Development (1950-1991)", **Arab Studies Quarterly**, Vol: 14, No: 4, 1992, pp. 69-94.

Yavuz, M. Hakan. "Turkish-Israeli Relations Through the Lens of the Turkish Identity Debate", **Journal of Palestine Studies**, Vol: 27, No: 1, 1997, pp. 22-37.

Yeşilyurt, Nuri. **Türk Dış Politikası**, Ed. Baskın Oran, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2013.

Yeşilyurt, Nuri. **2001-2012: 11 Eylül Olayı Ertesinde AKP Dönemi, Ortadoğu'yla İlişkiler**", İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul, 2013.

Yeşilyurt, Nuri and Atay Akdevelioğlu. "Turkey's Middle East Policy under the JDP Rule", **The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations**, Vol: 40, 2009, pp. 40-69.

Ziegler, David W. **War, Peace, and International Politics**, Addison Wesley Longman, New York, 1999.

