

From Ankara to Jerusalem:
An Analysis of the Decline in Turkish-Israeli
Relations

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Introduction:

Turkey and Israel had been strong allies in the Middle East, however in recent years, these relations have turned sour. Turkey was the first predominantly Muslim country to recognize the state of Israel upon its creation in 1948. However, Present day Turkey has gone as far as to pull its ambassador from Tel Aviv. The importance and implication of the decline in relations between Turkey and Israel will be explained in the following chapters. The examination of Turkish foreign policy, and specifically a history of its relations with Israel, gives a basis to explain the changes that occurred with their relationship. With an understanding of the historical implications of Turkish-Israeli relations, each country will be looked at from its own perspective. Through each country's view, there will be a cost benefit analysis of how the decline has affected each polity. Ultimately, the loss in relations is unfortunate for both nations, and may have implications for the Middle East in general. The analysis of the downfall of the relationship yields that Israel suffers most from the changes in relations.

The Republic of Turkey was created in 1923, and from this point until 2002, the general sentiment towards foreign policy had revolved around the philosophies of Kemal Ataturk. The leader of the Turkish nationalist movement in the war of independence had a clear intention for Turkey to become part of the West. All of his foreign policies reflected his efforts to move westward, and become a part of Europe. Throughout this time, Turkey and Israel engaged in different types of alliances. In the 1950s, the two nations were part of a secret alliance, and their relations remained constant until 1990. In the 1990s, the two countries heightened

their relations, and entered a public military agreement in 1996. This agreement had negative implications for Turkey's relations with the Arab world.

In 2002, the Justice and Development Party won majority in the parliament, and from this point on, the Israeli-Turkish relations were on the decline. In alignment with the events of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, this created a climate for negative relations. The boiling point of the relations, as seen by the rest of world, was the "Free Gaza" flotilla that left from Turkish ports and made an attempt to break through Israel's blockade of Gaza. The boat was boarded by Israeli soldiers and as a result, left 8 Turkish civilians, and one U.S. citizen dead. This situation solidified the decline in relations between Israel and Turkey. It had implications internationally, and affected public opinion within both Israel and Turkey.

For Israel, its alliance with Turkey was very important for regional politics. The Turkish-Israeli relationship was a source of pride for its government and citizens. Along with the socio-political benefits, the relationship brought economic prosperity. The decline of relations highlighted a major weakness in Israeli foreign policy. Specifically, with its current policies, Israel does not view public relations as a way to combat international security threats. With the downfall of the relations, Turkey started to align with other nations, creating a security threat for Israel. Turkey has engaged Hamas and strengthened its ties with Israel's enemies, Syria and Iran.

For Turkey, the loss of relations manifested itself in a different manner. On one hand, there were a few losses for Turkey; specifically Turkey's tourism suffered significant economic hits due to Israeli boycotts. Also, if the trend in Israeli-Turkish

relation continues, there may be an effect on Turkish-US and Turkish-EU relations. On the other hand, the loss of such strong ties with Israel gave Turkey the opportunity to create alliances with major players in the region. The European Union, up until now, has rejected Turkey's application. This lack of acceptance has provoked Turkey to look towards the Middle East for a role in the global community. Furthermore, without the political baggage associated with Israel, Turkey was able to create stronger relations with other nations, most notably Iran and Syria. Overall, the decline in Israeli-Turkish relations allows Turkey the opportunity to take advantage of its position within the Middle East.

An examination the cost-benefit analysis for both Turkey and Israel, shows that the loss is overwhelmingly more severe for Israel than it is for Turkey. Through this divergence, Israel is losing the only warm relationship it has in the Middle East. The recent revolutionary uprising in the Middle Eastern, have created a much more hostile situation Israel and its regional foreign policy. Turkey has taken advantage of new foreign policy opportunities and there appears to be minimal damage to Turkish national security.

Although the recent events have created grim relations between the two states, there is a possibility for change in the future. The new philosophy of Turkish foreign policy allows for possible change in the relationship. Also, the democratic structure of the Turkish government may create a situation in which leading opposition party, who support strong ties with Israel, may gain the majority. Finally, In light of the revolution in Egypt, Israel has expressed desires to create a speedy remedy for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which would drastically improve the

Turkish-Israel relation. All in all, with minor changes to the political environment of the two nations, it is possible to see an increase in the strength of the relationship between the two states.

Chapter 1: A History of Turkish Foreign Policy

In 1923 the Republic of Turkey was officially born with newfound ideas that were Western oriented. Throughout the twentieth century, Turkey had stable and consistent foreign relations, with a strong pull towards the West. In that same fashion, Turkish-Israeli relations developed consistently throughout the earlier history of the two countries. The two countries over time were consistently more willing and able to have public relations, regardless of how this relationship was received by the global community. However, as the political party in power in Turkey changed, so did the Israeli-Turkish diplomatic relations. Ultimately there was a change in this long-time friendship between the two nations.

Turkish foreign policy is the result of an aggregation of many different factors. Many of these stem from internal, domestic policy issues, which then reflect upon its foreign policy. There is a cultural clash between the Kurds living in Turkey and the rest of the population. In the southeast of Turkey there is a large Kurdish population whose demands from the government are different from those of the rest of the population. The cultural differences lend themselves to conflicting interests of foreign policy, specifically with the Mosul issue in Iraq. There is also a constant internal battle between the secular, political elite, and Islamic political movements, which also influence foreign policy. At the same time, Turkey struggles from an identity crisis; is it a European nation or Middle Eastern? One scholar, Kut, has explained that throughout the history of this modern polity, it appears that for the majority of the time, in spite of its domestic political instability, Turkey has maintained consistent and unwavering foreign policy (Kut 10-11).

In order to explain the progression of Turkish foreign affairs, it is crucial to understand the history that precedes it. The Ottoman Empire was occupied in the late 1910s, which sparked a nationalist movement. Shortly after, with British encouragement, Greece invaded part of the Ottoman territory, and the nationalist movement (in what is present day Turkey) flamed up. In 1919 the Associations for the Defense of Rights was created in order to front the revolution. This group was led by Mustafa Kemal who ultimately Ottoman nationalist party to an eventual victory. The Associations for the Defense of Rights was part of the Grand National Assembly (GNA) and it used nationalism and religious symbols in order to rally support for the cause. Soon the movement has 60 religious leaders join the GNA in support of the movement. The last Ottoman parliament of 1919 reflected the growing support of the nationalist movement, revealing support in Ankara. It had a powerful body of people who were able to fight against the sultan's government in Istanbul, and more importantly the Entente¹. The sultan had agreed for Greece to advance into Anatolia, and created the struggle for the Turkish nationalists (Altunisk and Tur 13-14).

In the meantime, Ankara had signed a peace agreement with Armenia, which shortly after became part of the Soviet Union, giving the nationalist movement military support. Kemal, the leader of the revolution, took the name Ataturk, which meant "father of the Turks". The war of independence was ultimately successful; an armistice was signed on October 11th, 1922. This armistice was signed between the British and Kemal's new government (Altunisk and Tur 13-15). Finally, after the

¹ After the Ottoman's were defeated in WW1, the entente, or allies, was the enemy for the Turkish Nationalist.

nationalist movement was victorious, the Lausanne conference was set up to establish peace in the region. Even though two issues were left undecided, the treaty was finally signed after eight months of deliberation, on July 24th 1923, granting sovereignty to a new Turkish state (Altunisk and Tur 15).

Mustafa Kemal had desires of modernity for his new nation. He and his supporters looked towards Europe when establishing the workings of the polity. Ataturk had the challenge of implementing a modern political system while attaining a sense of Turkish nationalism. He took the necessary steps to create this modern nation state, which included writing a constitution, sending the sultanate into exile the year before, and therefore abolishing the caliph. The caliph interpreted and ruled Muslim law, which legitimized the sultanate. With the abolishing of the caliph, Ataturk's Turkey was transformed from religious to secular.

Furthermore, the new state created a party system based upon a parliamentary system. Ataturk created the People's Party, which would later be called the Republican's People Party. The constitution was accepted on October 29th 1923, officially creating the Republic of Turkey (Altunisk and Tur 16-17). The caliph dominated the previous legal system and now a new secular code of law overrode Islamic law. With these changes came one to the dismay of already literate Turkish citizens. Ataturk changed the Turkish alphabet from Arabic to Latin Arabic, in attempts to solidify the progress of modernity. With this change, Turkey officially entered new secular territory that would look much different than the Ottoman Empire that preceded it.

Ataturk's concerns with foreign policy contained a specific agenda. One basic principle was that Turkey should limit its influence and involvement within the Middle East (Larrabee 1013). The central argument to this is that Turkey would benefit from emulating the West, for this is where the future lay. Turkey would continue to look Westward under the Republican's People Party, and not until 2002 would this change.

Considering the European orientation of young Turkey, during World War II it was imperative that Turkey made a decision as to how it would act. There were conflicting loyalties for Turkey during World War II. Due to the peace agreement Turkey had signed with the Soviets, there were complications for Turkey after the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact was signed. There was pressure from Germany, and from the Allies, specifically Great Britain, and Turkey was caught in the middle as far as foreign policy went. On October 19th, 1939 Turkey signed the Anglo-Franco-Turkish treaty of mutual respect. In essence this eradicated any obligations that Turkey would have had in helping the allied forces during World War II. It was seen as a last resort treaty for Turkey, and Great Britain saw the treaty as a way to ensure that the Balkans and Middle East would not fall to the Axis powers (Altunisk and Tur 100-101). This marks one of the first stable foreign policies that the Republic of Turkey implemented in its earlier years.

After the end of the Second World War, and the rise of the Cold War, Turkey faced a turning point in its foreign policy. Turkey saw the Cold War as a way to become closer to the Western powers. The policies instated by Turkey were rooted in the creation of the Republic of Turkey; during the years after World War II

Turkey created stronger bonds with the West. At this point, Turkey and the Soviet Union's interests had been diverging. The Soviets had been too demanding and wanted specific territory from Turkey. Also, Turkey was seen as a threat by the Soviet Union, because of its ability to relate to the portion of Muslim individuals within the Soviet Union (Altunisk and Tur 103).

The deeper ties with the West were reflected in the Truman Doctrine and Marshal Plan. U.S. President Harry Truman created the Truman Doctrine on March 12th 1947, in order to assist countries, specifically Turkey and Greece, from falling into the hands of the Soviet Union. Under the Truman Doctrine, Turkey was included in the Western bloc, and began to receive financial assistance from the United States. Under the Marshal Plan the United States promises assistance, both military and economic, to war torn countries, and Turkey was eventually included as a country that received assistance (Altunisk and Tur 103-104).

Turkey was included into the Western bloc at this point; however, it was concerned about its chances of getting into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). NATO is "the pillar of the post-war order as far as the Western bloc is concerned" (Altunisk and Tur 104). Turkey first pleaded its case for admission in NATO in 1950, and was rejected by both Britain and the United States. The United States did not want to take on more security commitments than it was already engaged in, and Great Britain thought that Turkey would detract from creating an Atlantic Community, under the Atlantic pact. Turkey was not situated in the Atlantic Region of the world; thus, the Middle Eastern country would create a different global community than the one Great Britain desired (Yesilbursa 74-77).

However, within the next two years, Turkey's case was made, and it was accepted into NATO in 1952. Ultimately, Turkey was seen as a Mediterranean power, which would be able to aid the United States. In addition, the United States believed that if the West showed no interest in aligning itself with Turkey, it would join the Soviet efforts in the Cold War. This was not in the best interest of the Western powers (Altunisk and Tur 105). Furthermore, the United States began to understand the importance of Middle Eastern politics and Turkey was seen as a Middle Eastern power that, as an ally, would increase the United States' power globally. Regardless of the amount of security ties the U.S. currently had, it was in its best interest to create an alliance with Turkey (Yesilbursa 80-81).

The alliance between Turkey and the Western world had implications for Turkey's role in the Middle East. Moreover, it had implications for Turkish-Arab relations. Once Turkey was accepted into NATO, while the Republican People's Party maintained power in Turkey, the agenda seemed to be the same: maintain and enhance relations with the West. Keeping this in mind, the Arab-Turkish relations during this time frame were weak, and the Arab nations were suspicious of Turkey's intentions in regards to foreign policy revolving around the Middle East (Nafi 68). As far as the Arab nations were concerned, there was no evidence that the new Turkish nation would have Arab interests in mind through its foreign policy actions; there was no sign that Kemalist interests and Arab interests would coincide (Nafi 67). Most of Turkey's attention was focused on building its ties with the West, and that would reflect upon Turkish-Arab relations.

Furthermore, throughout the 1960s and 1970s the Arab world saw two players in Turkish domestic politics. First were the political elites, supporters of Atatürk, who led the Republican Party, and were fully backed by the Turkish military; their interests seemed to clash with those of the Arab nations. A prime example of this complex political dynamic is Turkey's involvement in the Baghdad Pact of 1955. This pact was between Turkey and Iraq, and later Iran, Pakistan and Britain joined. It was perceived as anti-Arab in the sense that this alliance was threatening to the Arab world, as opposed to coexisting with the Arab world, which was the true intent (Bengio and Ozcan 54). The Arab world had become increasingly more pious and more Islamic during the 20th century. Along side the political elites, the Islamic political groups were present in Turkey. With this in mind, the players within Turkey who had these same values appealed to the Arab world and created signs of hope for them (Nafi 69-71).

The Turkish response to the 1967 Arab-Israeli war created a different sentiment in the Arab world towards Turkey. Turkey, though remaining Western oriented, showed solidarity with the Arab world in regards to its defeat (Nafi 69). More specifically the developments within Turkey politically had a positive effect on its relations with the Arab world. The Turkish Left in particular showed sympathy for the Palestinian cause, which helped the relations. Furthermore, with developments within Turkey of Islamic parties during the 1970s and 1980s, which drew upon Turkey's Ottoman heritage, Arab-Turkish relations strengthened (Nafi 70).

The political elite throughout the 20th century had been consistently secular. There was a large Islamic population, which desired a more Middle Eastern oriented foreign policy. By 2002, Turkey had elected an Islamic political group into power. The party came to be in a post 9/11 world, and should be considered a prime example of a well-intentioned Islamic group with democratic principles (Inbar 594-595).

To a large degree, Turkish-Israeli relations shape Arab-Turkish relations. In fact, Turkey is sometimes torn between the Israelis and the rest of the Middle East with regard to foreign policy. However, up until recently, there has been a strong relation between Israel and Turkey. As Bengio and Ozcan write, "Turkey's recognition of Israel has remained a painful memory in the annals of the Arab-Turkish relations and a stumbling block for real development"(58). To the Arab world, with the recognition of Israel, Turkey had abandoned the Palestinian cause, and betrayed much of the Arab world (Bengio and Ozcan 57). Regardless of the implication on Arab relations, Turkey had maintained steady relation with Israel.

The roots of the relationship between Turkey and Israel began before Israel was officially a state. Israel is a Jewish nation, and Turkey had been a place of refuge for many Jews during its history. Even during the Ottoman Empire, Jews found it a place of asylum. The most obvious display of Turkish willingness to help Jews was during World War II. The Jews of Turkey, and essentially Europe, were able to find a safe haven in Turkey, when almost no other place offered the same.

Israel became an independent nation state in 1948. Turkey was the first predominantly Muslim nation to recognize Israel. With this recognition began a

series of public and private alliances between the two nations. Thus, diplomatic relations have existed between Israel and Turkey since 1948. There have been shifts in the relationship from the birth of Israel until the present day; however, in a large way Israel and Turkey have been allies in the Middle East (Inbar).

Under Menderes's leadership during the first part of the 1950s, Turkey was initially reluctant to engage in a formal alliance with Israel. However, in 1958, the two polities formed a secretive alliance, called the Peripheral Alliance (Brandenburg 2-3). The Peripheral Alliance was derivative of Uzel's idea of creating an alliance between all the non-Arab cultural groups in the region. This alliance would have included Marinites in Lebanon, Jews of Israel, Turkish, Greeks, Kurds, Armenians, Assyrians and Persians. The idea of the Peripheral Alliance was based upon the notion that there were more non-Arabs than Arabs living in the region, yet Arab nations maintained authority in the region. Thus the alliance would attempt to balance the power in the region. This ideal of the periphery alliance was not realized, mainly due to the conflicts between the marginalized groups. However, Turkey and Israel did enter a bilateral secret alliance (Bengio).

The cause of the secrecy of the relationship between Turkey and Israel was due to the fragility of the Arab-Turkish relationship. The alliance was not meant to provoke a counter alliance, nor was it to attract any sort of attention. Rather, it was meant as a strategic alliance to serve in the best interest of Israel and Turkey. The two nations had a common threat, and the bilateral agreement added to the military capacity of the two nations and was a form of security (Bengio 35).

The reason Turkey in particular went into this alignment was due to the unsteady regime in Iraq. Turkey felt threatened by a potential dramatic shift in the Iraqi regime, which could have threatened the Baghdad Pact. Also, Israel was offering to balance the powers in the region against Arab control. With its Western orientation, Turkey felt this to be the best foreign policy strategy (Brandenburg 3). In the end, most scholars believe that Israel played the driving role in constituting the 1958 Peripheral Alliance.

Israel was more persistent in creating ties with Turkey because the 1958 Peripheral Alliance served a more important role for them than for Turkey (Bengio 73). Israel was alone in the region, and it was a young country surrounded by enemies. Turkey served as a strategic alliance for Israel in the sense that it had no other alliances in the region. History shows that the hostility within the region would only escalate, with the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, and the Yom Kippur war soon to come. Thus, it was extremely important for Israel to attain some sort of alliance in the meantime. Turkey, on the other hand, had a stable foreign policy, strongly rooted in Kemalist ideology, and had just been accepted into NATO. The necessity for an alliance with Israel was not of top priority, and it had potential to threaten its interaction with the rest of the Arab region.

The relations under the secret pact between Israel and Turkey were maintained until 1966. In 1966 the head of the Turkish military froze the agreements between Israel and Turkey because of the United State's policies in regards to the Turkish-Greek conflict. The United States had been support Greek policy as opposed to Turkish policy. Greece and Turkey had become NATO members

simultaneously; yet at a time when the two nations should have related to one another, there was a major conflict. The conflict between Greece and Turkey revolved around the Greek isle of Cyprus. Turkey's main concern was access to the Aegean port, and sovereignty of maritime and air space in order to have military strategic control. Much of the issue revolves around the fact that Greece controlled the majority of Cyprus (Bahcheli 131-135). Thus, the conflict infiltrated other areas of foreign policy, and affected Turkish-Israeli relations, based upon Israel's alliance with the United States. Even though the Israelis were not directly attacking Turkey, the Turkish military felt that it could use Israel as a negotiation tool with the United States. Ultimately, the bilateral relations between Israel and Turkey were held intact; however, there were no more advances in relations for many years to come (Brandenburg 4).

During the early 1990s, relations between Israel and Turkey began to warm up. In 1991, Turkey declared that it would raise the status of Israel² to embassy status, which allowed for a closer relationship between the two nations than they had in the past. In part, the Arab-Israel peace process that was represented in the Madrid Conference in October of 1991 and the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993 legitimized Turkey's public involvement with Israel (Brandenburg 5). Turkey could now be open about its relations with Israel without sending threatening signals to the Arab world (Bengio 78-80).

The early 1990s was truly a period of increased positive relations between Turkey and Israel. Not only was Israel now a legitimate partner for the Turks but

² It also raises Palestine to embassy Status

also relations between Arab nations and Turkey had been decreasing. Turkish total exports to the Middle East dropped 14 percent between 1987 and 1993 (Altunisik 60). At the same time, Turkish and Israeli interests had become more and more similar. For example, they both had similar concerns in regards to Syria. Turkey and Israel shared a bond in the desire to strengthen their relationship with Syria. Israel's conflict with Syria had partially to do with the larger Arab-Israeli conflict, but also it was an issue of land. Israel shares part of its border to the north with Syria, and had had a major conflict over land since the 1967 war. Turkey had conflicts regarding how Syria reacted to the Kurdish problem. Syria has a Kurdish population of its own, and Syria's response was not consistent with that of Turkey. This will be discussed further in Chapter 3. The Syrian issue strengthened Turkish-Israeli compatibility, which complemented the Western orientation of both nations. Finally, the political elite were backed by the military, and made it clear that involvement would ultimately benefit Turkey (Inbar 591-592). With those factors in place, Turkey began to normalize its relations with Israel in the early nineties (Altunisik 61).

It is not until 1996 that Turkey and Israel would sign an open agreement. On February 23rd, 1996 a bilateral alignment between Turkey and Israel was made official which was focused around military trades. Many people in the government saw this as simply a formality, as opposed to the peak of relations, due to the constant diplomatic contact during the years leading up to this event. However, other countries view this move as a turning point in their relations, which was a critical component to the agreement (Bengio 103-110). "To the outside world the

main event that put Turkish-Israeli relations on the map was the agreement...”
(Bengio 108).

While Turkey was advancing its military capability through its alignment with Israel, Israel was gaining something else. To Israel, having diplomatic relations with other countries in the region was vital to its foreign policy. Israel was a country isolated from its neighbors, looking for allies in the region. The fact that Turkey became its public ally is arguably one of the best things it received out of the 1996 agreement (Bengio 119). Moreover, the importance of this agreement was apparent not only through military and intelligence factors but economic factors as well (Bengio 108).

The military alliance was a reflection in part of their common threat: Syria. This was a preceding critical issue that brought the two countries into alliance. As far as the military benefits of the agreement went, there was substantive exchange of military technology, as well as aspects that were not as concrete. For example, there was exchange of military training. With the conjoining of the two nations, the new balance of power decreased the impending threat of Syria on both Israel and Turkey. Moreover, Turkey tried to mediate some kind of relations between Israel and Syria; although unsuccessful, it was still an attempt (Walker 81-83).

In terms of economic gains, Israel and Turkey came out with different results. With this new open foreign relationship, Turkey in particular opened its doors to Israeli industry. Many Israeli companies moved factories, or headquarters to different parts of Turkey. However, many Turkish businessmen felt that Israel did not open its doors in the same manner to help Turkish industry grow. In Israel's

defense, it was argued that Israel lacked the physical space to invite in Turkish businesses (Alturnisik 67).

On the domestic front, there was some discussion as to what effects this agreement would have. In Israel there was minimal debate, because most Israelis were on board with the Turkish-Israeli alliance. Like their government, Israeli citizens were eager to have a friend in the region. On the other hand, in Turkey there was some debate as to whether this move was positive or negative for the Turkish nation. There is constant debate between different news sources, and other public outlets, about Israel. The sentiment within Turkey about Israel, and Turkish public opinion on its policies with Israel was in constant debate. However, at the time that the agreement was signed, the political elite and a lot of the Turkish public were in support of Israel (Bengio 120).

There was nonetheless contestation to the policies towards Israel within the Turkish public. Not only were there citizens in Turkey who questioned the alliance with Israel on a fundamental level, but they also questioned the legitimacy of the agreement. Many people highlighted how militarily oriented the agreement was, and whether the actions of the military truly reflected the will of the Turkish people. In addition, according to the Turkish constitution, the committee on foreign relations was supposed to negotiate any kind of agreement with other countries. In this case, the military was the body that signed the agreement and in doing so they went against the authority of the committee on foreign relations. The military defended its actions by stating that these were times of international crisis and that the military had the authority to proceed with the actions it did because it was doing

so in the interest of international security (Bengio 120-127). This was referring to the arms agreement, and the potential threat that Turkey could be put in without the advancements in military arms. Turkey and Israel created a military agreement that would subsequently help Turkey defend itself.

One important point of consideration regarding the 1996 agreement between Israel and Turkey is the Arab response. Though the agreement was not meant to provoke any of the surrounding Arab nations, it definitely brought some suspicion among the surrounding nations about Israeli-Turkish intentions. The regional perception of Israeli-Turkish relations changed, and this created unease in many of the surrounding countries (Walker 79).

There is abundant evidence, specifically in the press, that the Arab world felt threatened shortly after the agreement was made official. Ugur Akinci expresses that the Arabs were scared that the alignment was actually an anti-Arab pact and that specifically Syria was very worried (*Turkish Daily News*). The mentality behind the fright from the Arab nations was rational. The two countries represent the two biggest military players in the region, and with the newfound bond, there was a subsequent shift in the balance of power in the region. Finally, what shocked some of the countries were the close ties both Israel and Turkey had with the United States, which brought added hard power to the equation (Walker 79-80).

Israeli-Turkish relations were especially strong when the Republican People's Party, and other secular parties, stayed in power; however, there would be a turn in relations that coincided with the change in regime power in Turkey. In 2002 the AKP party took control. Subsequently, relations between Israel and Turkey

changed. Much of the change in relations was documented by the media sources throughout Turkey, especially the newspapers in Turkey.

It is clear that there was a change in the perception of Israel in the Turkish media. After the agreement in 1996, the articles written represent the Turkish-Israeli relationship in a relatively positive light. For example, Cevik argues that ill-informed domestic newspapers are perpetually blurring the facts of the Israeli-Turkish alliance, in his opinion. He explains that these authors are dramatizing facts and realities in order to have more appeal for their writing. He refers to one article in particular that blows out of proportion the military interaction between Israel and Turkey, and essentially creates conspiracy theories around Israeli military support in Turkey. Cevik reassures that the purpose of the Turkish-Israeli military interaction in this incident was simply to train Turkish pilots. In essence, the author defends Israeli-Turkey relations, in the widespread national newspaper (*Turkish Daily News*).

A second article shows strong support for Israel. It depicts the strong historical ties between Israel and Turkey, and describes the lack of reason for a disfiguration of the relationship (Bagci). A third article describes the critical issues that the Turkish-Israeli relations were faced with. It acknowledges the different sentiments within Israel and asks for Turkey to maintain its relations with Israel. Cevik provides two reasons as to why this would benefit Turkey. First and foremost, although anti-Israeli sentiment existed in Turkey in 1997, he believes that the majority of Turkish citizens believe Israel has the right to exist. Secondly, he believes that Turkey needs to play a role in the conflicts of the region, and to do so

Israeli-Turkish relations must be upheld (Cevik “The Things Israelis Don’t Want to Hear”). It is important to note that, as positive as the press was, there was always an undertone of hesitation or negativity throughout the 90s. In other words, it is clear that the press represented the importance of the Turkish-Israeli relationship; however, it did not hide the negatives either.

Moving into the 20th century, after the AKP took leadership in Turkey, there is a clear shift in the press coverage of Israel. The same newspapers that earlier depicted Israel in a positive light now had many more negative comments about Israel. Different authors had different opinions about Israel; however, most of what was said was negative. There were claims that Israel was fostering hatred, the articles criticize? the way Israel was handling its own domestic policy in regards to the Palestinian issue, and, most radically different, the articles attack Israeli-Turkish relations. One article proclaimed that the AKP party cannot act as a mediator between the Palestinians and the Israelis. The author of the article felt that it was detrimental to Turkey’s politics. Turkey did not need the political baggage that came along with mending Palestinian-Israeli relations (Aras). This view may not have been the completely dominant view, as Turkey would seek to adopt a much more soft power role in foreign policy, but this was indeed negative press.

Not only was there a change in the press, but also, more importantly, there was a change in political actions that signified a change of relations between Israel and Turkey. To be clear, there had been no official change to the 1996 defense agreement; rather there had been continuous change in policy and actions from leaders in Turkey which implied a change in relations. These dramatic changes in

the relationship between Turkey and Israel confirm that actions speak louder than words.

In early 2002 when the AKP party was first elected, there was an initial threat to the stability of the long-standing alliance between Israel and Turkey. However, there was no fallout within the relationship because of the U.S. invasion into Iraq and the first Gulf War. The two nations, Turkey and Israel, both shared a unifying goal in establishing a democratic nation in Iraq. These efforts in fact became the glue to their relationship in 2002. In the interest of national security, the AKP understood that Turkey and Israel needed to maintain their relationship, at least superficially. Under the surface however, the Iraq War instigated Turkey's talking with governments that were anti-Israel such as their common concern, Syria. Ultimately, Turkey and Israel were not able to maintain the type of relationship they shared in 1990 (Walker 86).

There are two key factors that have significantly influenced the decline in Turkish-Israeli relations: the change in the party that held power in the Turkish parliament and the Palestinian-Israeli ongoing conflict. The Gaza war in particular is a key factor in the ultimate decline in relations between Israel and Turkey (Bahgat 65). Furthermore, it is a constant unresolved conflict as it coincides with the new leadership in Turkey, which could be why the relationships declined.

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict reached a peak point for three weeks between December of 2008 and January of 2009, which Israel called Operation Cast Lead. Israel was responding to the Qassam rockets fired by Hamas into Israel; Israel argued that it was fighting out of self-defense. Israel was criticized for using too

much force against Gaza, and carrying out a collective punishment for the actions of Hamas. At the same time, Israel had a difficult time fighting the battle against Hamas. Hamas combatants had not been in uniform when fighting against Israel and furthermore strategic sites were placed around schools. Therefore, Israel had been put in a very difficult situation. Operation Cast Lead created a lot of reaction internationally, and Turkey was not the exception.

In 2005, Erdogan made a diplomatic visit to Israel. He met with the Israeli prime minister at the time, Ariel Sharon. Subsequently, he made a visit to Ramallah. On this visit, Erdogan made a remark that Israeli-Turkish relations constituted a historical relationship (Nafi 73). His later remarks would not be as forgiving in regards to Israel.

The change in Ankara's position towards Israel created an imbalance in the pre-existing Turkish, Israeli, and Arab foreign policy interests. With the AKP in power, Turkey now called upon the shared religion between themselves and the Arab nations in order to create unity in the Middle East. This left Israel out of the equation, and ties between the nations became increasing more difficult. The actions of the country, and the remarks of its leaders, clearly indicated a decline in Israeli-Turkish relations.

The actions of the Erdogan-led government undermined the relationship that had been established between the Israelis and the Turks. Most dramatically, in 2006 Khalid Mashaal, a representative from Hamas, made a visit to the capital of Turkey, Ankara, and met with President Gul (Walker 86). Arguably the most threatening political group to Israel, Hamas was welcomed into the country of Turkey. Although

this was the case, at the same time Mashaal was not welcomed in the Turkish foreign ministry; instead he met with Gul in the headquarters of the AKP party. It is also significant that the Prime Minister, Erdogan, did not meet him; rather he was only welcomed by Gul. After this event, there was no serious disturbance between the international relations between Israel and Turkey (Nafi 72-74).

Regardless, Israel should be very wary of this kind of act. This is a serious change in the diplomatic actions Turkey had been taking, which implies a change of foreign relations between Turkey and Israel. Furthermore, even though Erdogan's specific actions did not reflect the change, he has voiced many harsh remarks against Israel. Since the AKP has been in power, there has been a decline in relations between Israel and Turkey.

After the 2008 military engagement by Israel in Gaza, Erdogan vocally defended Hamas. He proclaimed that Israel would have to pay for the atrocities it was committing against the Palestinian people. He has also stated that Israel was engaging in state-sponsored terrorism in regard to how it was treating the Palestinian people in Gaza (Brandenberg 9). He called the 2008 military actions of Israel an atrocity. He made very public remarks that reiterate this notion. In a televised meeting with his party, the Justice and Development Party, he said, "this act against the populace in Gaza, who have already been in a type of open-air prison, is a blow to peace" (*Today's Zamman* "Erdogan Angered by Israel's Gaza campaign"). It became clear that Ankara no longer shared the same opinion on its relationship with Israel as it had previously.

The remarks stem from different pressures that the AKP was experiencing. There was domestic pressure from his fellow AKP party members, and Turkish civilians, against the support of Israel. There had been no invitation from the European Union to Turkey; thus, the polity started to look eastwards in terms of foreign policy and alignment. Furthermore, Erdogan saw Israeli aggression with Gaza as a factor that ruined the Syrian-Israeli peace initiative, which Erdogan had tried to softly negotiate. These factors only led to a downward spiral in terms of Israeli-Turkish relations. Frankly, the evidence of the declining relation is present (Bahgat 65-68).

The culmination of the AKP's actions indicating the declining Israeli- Turkish relations which made this fact clear to the international community was the flotilla incident in spring of 2010. The flotilla incident is greatly affected by, and has implications upon, the Gaza war. Since 2008 there has been an economic blockade by Israel on Hamas-controlled Gaza. The method of letting goods in and out has been a white list. As opposed to a black list, a white list means that only goods on the list can go into the territory; if it is not on the list, it is not allowed in. This blockade created increasing hostility around the world--and within AKP-ruled Turkey (Bahgat 64-75).

This situation provoked harsh feelings, especially in the Turkish population, as many felt that the way Israel was treating the Palestinian territory was unjust. In May of 2010, six boats --or the "free Gaza flotilla" -- departed from Turkey for Gaza, claiming to be a humanitarian mission to bring goods to Gaza. The flotilla was sent not by Erdogan or the AKP party; rather it was planned and organized by 6 non-

governmental organizations, including one Turkish organization: the Turkish Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Aid (Eisenstaedt). In reality, much of the mission of the Free Gaza Flotilla was an attempt to draw negative attention to Israel. Ultimately, Israeli soldiers boarded the boats, which resulted in the death of eight Turks and one Turkish-American. Defense Minister Ehud Barak proclaimed that the flotilla was a “provocation” and that Israel acted in the best interest of its national security (Bryant and Schleifer).

After the incident, Erdogan called the issue a massacre, and felt strongly that Israel should face repercussions. On this note, the U.N Security Council had an investigation; Israel failed to participate in the fact-finding mission. The UN fact-finding mission found that what Israel had done was illegal under international law. Ultimately, Turkey decided to bring back its ambassador from Israel, indefinitely. This was a diplomatic decision that had serious implications for Turkish-Israeli relations (Schleifer and Bryant). It is fair to say that the flotilla event and the subsequent diplomatic actions that Turkey took mark a true turn in Turkish-Israeli relations.

Turkish foreign policy towards Israel has remained fairly stable up until recent times. Ataturk’s hope for the Turkish nation was Western-oriented. Throughout the twentieth century Turkey has worked towards strengthening its relations with Israel. Alongside this foreign policy initiative, Israeli-Turkish relations appeared to have grown. However, once the AKP party took control in 2002, a downward spiral began to be seen in Turkish-Israeli relations, culminating with the flotilla incident. Only time will tell what will come of the relations;

however, the hope for the once resilient relationship of the peripheral nations in the region is fading quickly.

The change in the relationship affects the two nations, Turkey and Israel, differently within the realm of Middle East. Through the next chapters, the costs and benefits for both Israel and Turkey will be analyzed. Ultimately, the chapters will present why in fact it is important that there is a loss of relation. Although the loss of diplomatic relations does not yield any winner, Israel will come out with the most losses. Finally, there is an inkling of hope through this situation, and the concluding chapter will reflect the potential in regaining relations between the two nation. There is a lot of political diplomacy needed, and changes to the current circumstances, in order for this to hold true. However, it does exist. The declining Israeli-Turkish relations are significant not only to the two nations, but to the greater Middle East, and the subsequent chapters explain why this is so, and how it may be possible to mend it.

Chapter 2: An Israeli Perspective

Turkey and Israel are currently going through a rough patch in their historical ties. This prompts an important question: if the two proceed with a divorce, what ramifications will this have on Turkey and Israel respectively? The facts have shown a downward pattern in their relations, and the chances of a directional shift, with the AKP in power and a right-leaning Knesset in Israel, are not likely. This decline has serious implications for Israel's national security and there are a lot of opportunities for Israel to have major losses. Given its location relative to its neighbors in the region, Israel will have harsher struggles without its alliance of Turkey. However, there is a chance for a different relationship to develop, and this is one between Israel and the Balkans.

Historically, security issues have been looked at from a literal, realist stance. In other words, the military capabilities of the country were juxtaposed to those of the country's enemies, and from this the safety and security of the nation could be evaluated. The battlefield was literal, and the way to win wars was through weapons and military power. Currently, there is a trend throughout the world toward re-defining the "battlefield". As Mor describes, what is created is the modern battlefield (157). This is applicable for all nations, not just the state of Israel.

With increased access to and reliance on new forms of technology, a new plane in international conflict has been realized. Images and emotional sentiment among the general public of a given society have become more relevant than before, and are a critical aspect of modern day warfare. The increase in media coverage of wars, for example the Iraq war, and individual access to media, most notably the

internet, have provided for public relations wars, which all governments must address. It is not enough anymore to have more ammunition than the enemy, but rather one must effectively reach out to people of other nations and win them over, so to speak.

Israel is not exempt from the modern battlefield, and furthermore, one could apply a theory of grand strategy to the case of Israel to further understand the ramifications of the decline in Turkish-Israeli relations, and how it affects the state of Israel. Grand Strategy is utilizing domestic and foreign resources both militarily and politically in nature, in order to achieve a sustainable national security (Ben Mor 159). Keeping in mind that the military still plays a major role in international security, there are three important components in this conception of national security. The first component involves understanding the limited national resources a nation has to achieve security. Second, the nation must attain and maintain allies. Lastly a nation must be able to keep what Mor describes as “national morale and political culture”; in other words, the general public is a key factor in Grand Strategy (Mor 159). Thinking outside of the historical security box is what can allow nations to keep safe in the modern world of you-tube and Google, where every mistake has the potential to be global.

Looking first from a traditional standpoint of national security, there are serious military threats to Israel from its surrounding neighbors, and without the support and backing of Turkey, Israel will struggle in the region. Surrounding countries, including Iran and Syria, and their relationships with Hezbollah, pose a threat. Another aspect to examine is the internal problems facing Israeli security in

Gaza with Hamas. These relationships are affected by Turkey's relationship with the respective governments and the changing relationship between Turkey and Israel. Understanding these threats also is relevant to grand strategy because it allows one to evaluate what it is that needs to be portrayed both nationally and internationally in order to achieve the goals of the grand strategy.

Iran arguably poses one of the greatest and most existential threats to Israel in the region, and with the decline of the relations between Turkey and Israel, the threat will increase. Only time will tell what the depth of the Iran threat is with regard to Israel; however, until then many believe that the threat must be taken seriously. A nuclear empowered Iran will prove even more threatening. Having taken a step away from Israel, Turkey is taking a leap forward with its ties to Iran, and this is a huge loss for Israel.

The leaders of Iran and some of the general public have produced questionable and frankly frightening remarks about the West, and more specifically Israel. Most drastically, Iran has threatened that Israel should be "wiped off the map" (BBC News). Iran's stance is anti-Western, anti-American and anti-Israel. This sentiment has penetrated throughout the government, so far that one author describes that during a soccer game in Iran, once the home team scored a goal, in celebration fans shouted "death to America, Death to Israel" (Maghen 11). Furthermore, Ahmadinejad, the semi-democratically³ elected president, has continuously denied the Holocaust and Israel's right to exist in public. As Maghen

³ The system of government in Iran is semi-democratic, There is a Supreme Leader and Council of Guardians which are chosen religiously, and then there is a president and a parliament which are chosen democratically, but must be approved by the Supreme Leader.

argues, during his presidency Iran's portrayal of and stance on Israel have become more radical and severe (Maghen 11-13). With this kind of language, it is evident there exists conflict between Israel and Iran, and understanding the root of the conflict is not a simple task.

As Maghen explains, the conflict between Iran and Israel is not rational. There is no territorial threat between each country for the two countries do not border each other, and therefore it is not due to territory issues. The two do not compete on an economic level; thus, it is not based upon a financial conflict. Therefore, it is not much of a tangible contestation between the two nations, making it less rational. It is a conflict based upon ideology: the two clash over Israel existing as a Jewish state. Even more importantly, it is a clash over Western ideology (Meghan 11-13). Israel is an extension of the West and an "easy" target, which it therefore receives a lot of attention for.

The irrationality of this type of argument is derived from the solution. It is extremely difficult to eradicate an ideology. However, there is a rational explanation of the contestations between Iran and Israel at some level that must be mentioned. As the BBC mentions, in 2005 Iran's viciously anti-Israel rhetoric increased immensely in the 1990's with developments in the Palestinian issue and the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land. This is a major reason as to why there is a conflict between Iran and Israel. Thus, the conflict may be clear to explain; however, it is extremely hard to solve, and the attempt to fight ideologies can become a dangerous battle.

Iran, together with its allies, sees Israel as a realistic target. This is based upon an ideology in which the end goal is to strike against the West, and the United States. In a realistic sense, there is no possibility that Iran will be able to destroy the United States; however, Israel allows for different possibilities. Israel is close in proximity, and surrounded by potential allies of Iran. With this type of thought, statements made by Iran against Israel carry a lot more weight and threat (Maghen 14-17). Harming Israel would be seen both as a victory against the West, and a victory over a Jewish state.

To Israeli leaders, the threat of Iran exists. However, As far as Israelis are concerned, at this point they have the military capability to strike back (Ben-Meir 62). The real threat arises when nuclear weapons are added to the equation. An Iran with nuclear weapons is a direct threat to Israeli national security and Iran is trying to create such a situation. Iran's past critiques and accusations against Israel indicate a warning flag to Israel.

There are scholars who believe that the existence of two nuclear powers in the region, Israel and Iran, will lead to a state of deterrence from both sides, in which neither side will fire an attack because of mutually assured destruction. In other words, the consequences of releasing a nuclear bomb onto the other country would prove to be too great for either country to use this military tactic. This theory explains why during the Cold War, neither the United States nor the Soviet Union launched a nuclear attack.

Yet very few political scholars in Israel believe that Israel can exist with a nuclear Iran. There are a small number of people who believe that Israel should

check its public ambiguity regarding its own nuclear capabilities at the door, and openly express what it possesses to Iran. One philosopher, Avner Cohen has argued to create a transparent nuclear Israel for the sake of its democracy, for this issue has created an extremely secretive national environment. Moreover, Cohen believes that Israel has earned the right to openly discuss its nuclear program within the Arab community, including what would be its second strike capability, red lines which would help deter other nations from formulating an attack on Israel (Ephron). Other scholars in this group of thought feel that Israel is not necessarily Iran's main target and that other regional instabilities, for example, Iraq, Pakistan and Afghanistan, are more of Iran's focus. This view is by no means the dominant stance, and in fact, there are no political parties in Israel that accept this view (Ben Meir 65). Therefore, though some in Israel believe that the two states could coexist with the presence of a nuclear capable Iran, this has no leverage on Israel's official national stance.

Not only is a nuclear Iran a direct threat to Israel, but also many Arab countries have an anxiety that surrounds the concept of a nuclear Iran because if in fact it does become nuclear capable, un-natural allies would be forced. Saudi Arabia has expressed much concern about a nuclear Iran and would rather have a prior incident where Israel takes military actions against Iran, than have Iran be successful in its plans. The Saudis have gone as far as to offer countries like China and Russia, who have been giving aid to Iran, financial incentives to stop giving Iran help (Ben-Meir 69). Saudi Arabia's concern has a modern context⁴, but stems from a

⁴ Iran's influence in Lebanon and connection to Hezbollah undermines Saudi aid in the country, and in Israel Iran supports Hamas, while Saudi Arabia has been giving its support to Palestinian Authority (PA). The two nations are constantly clashing.

historical balance of power in the region, between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Nuclear power in the region would tilt the balance of power against the Saudis (Teitelbaum 38).

Due to the change in Iran's policy towards obtaining nuclear weapons, the general attitude of the UN and many of the countries that make up the UN has dramatically shifted (Ben-Meir 67). Considering that not only Israel is at risk with a nuclear Iran, but also that it would affect many Arab nations, and the West, an Obama-backed UN is talking about a fourth set of economic sanctions against Iran (Dreyfuss 15). The idea is to use this as a political gesture towards Iran, indicating the Western disapproval. The state of Israel supports these sanctions, and believes that even harsher sanctions are appropriate. The fact is that Israel needs the UN and the United States in particular for support; thus, it will accept the sanctions, while trying to increase the severity of them.

The sanctions have been accepted by many UN nations; however, many countries have acted to undermine these sanctions. Russia, for example, has given aid in the form of nuclear technology to the Iranians (Ben-Meir 67-68). Turkey, along with Brazil, has actively has opposed the sanctions placed upon Iran. In fact the Turkish government in 2010 signed a 25 billion dollar deal with Iran, considering the two countries "trading partners." Part of this agreement includes four nuclear plants that are supposed to be built in Iran, which would lead to energy trade between Turkey and Iran. This is in anticipation of a stronger and long lasting relationship between Ankara and Tehran (Conn 3).

With thoughts other than America, the UN, and Israeli interests in mind, Turkey is stepping out of what would be a comfort zone, particularly for Israel. Insofar as Turkey defies the UN sanctions, it implies to Israel where its loyalty is directed. Ultimately, Turkey is interested in its own internal security issues, and the government of Turkey feels diplomacy, not sanctions, is in its best interest (Ustun 21). With a decline in relations between Israel and Turkey, it is not likely that Israel will be swayed by Turkey's conceptions of its self-interest in the near future.

As previously stated, the Turkish direction in foreign policy has historically had a Western direction. However, in recent years, with the rise of the AKP, Turkey has started to look eastward to develop ties in its own region. Its relationship with Iran is a prime example of this, and this has implications for Israel. Turkey has a desire to strengthen its relationship with Iran, and it has attempted to do so with Syria as well. Turkey's lack of acceptance of the sanctions on Iran, regardless of the intent, is seen as a fundamentally anti-Western and anti-American gesture (Ustun 24).

Considering that Israel and the U.S. have both accepted and advocate for the UN sanctions, Turkey's stance is not seen as solely an anti-UN gesture. It can be viewed as an anti-Israeli gesture as well, and adds to the evidence that there is a decline in relations between Jerusalem and Ankara. This loss, or in the Turkish perspective a foreign policy shift, has provided an atmosphere in which Turkey is able to create its own agenda. Its interest in the region overrides any concerns that the sanctions would be a positive thing for Israel (Ustun 24). It is unclear if Turkey ever had this type of loyalty to Israel, but regardless, what is important is that there

is no sign that this type of relationship will form. Israel needs an ally in the region that will support it unconditionally, as the United States has historically done, and with the decline in the relations, hopes of a close alliance with Turkey are fading quickly.

As far as Israel is concerned, from a practical standpoint, Turkey's alliance with Iran is dangerous from a traditional strategic point of view. Throughout the history of the Israeli Turkish relation there was a strong link between relations and military support. The fact is that much of the relationship was based upon military exchanges, and this creates fright within the Israeli government due to current Turkish Alliance with Iran. There was information shared between Israel and Turkey that could be placed into the hands of Iran, whose president calls for the destruction of Israel. The threat is there, however, the severity of this type of threat is unclear, in the sense that the amount of information shared between Israel and Turkey is not known.

As an article from *Turkish Weekly* states, Israel has a fear that some of its military secrets will be leaked to Iran, ultimately jeopardizing its existence as a state (Tilting the Turkey-Israel US Triangle). This appears to be a legitimate fear; much is left unknown to public knowledge. The exact number of military secrets that were shared between Israel and Turkey is not clear, and how much damage those secrets can cause Israel is also ambiguous. However, this hesitation stems from a loss Israel has faced due to the decline of Turkish-Israeli relations, the loss of trust and confidence in a neighboring nation.

Furthermore, not only is there a lack of confidence between Jerusalem and Ankara, but also there may be a boost in the confidence between Tehran and Ankara, which could be detrimental to Israel, considering Iran's beliefs towards Israel. It must be noted that officially Turkey does not want a nuclear Iran; however, it believes that diplomacy is the best way to achieve this. If Iran does achieve nuclear warfare capability, as it wishes to, however, it will be elevated to a position of hegemony in the region (Ben-Meir 64). With this position, Turkey will most likely pursue stronger relations to maintain its power in the region.

Even though according to the *Turkish Weekly* military arrangements between Israel and Turkey will proceed as planned, Israel may have suffered an economic loss. Although Israel and Turkey have maintained military exchange publicly, in private Israeli business have become more reluctant to sell military equipment to Turkey. This is not to say that the political unrest between Turkey and Israel have had drastic economic repercussions to Israel, but there is a residue of economic drawback due to the decline in relations (Turkey's Military Programs With Israel Remain). Moreover, the stronger Turkish-Iranian economic ties become, with nuclear plants included between Turkey and Iran, it should be expected that the relationship that was once with Israel would decline further. Israel had failed to reciprocate business opportunities in Jerusalem, as Turkey did for Israeli businesses in Ankara when the initial relations begin to expand. If Turkish and Iranian relations proceed perfectly, there may be implications for Israeli business in Turkey.

The loss in the region for Israel is not solely dictated by the Iran-Israel-Turkish relationship. A fourth party, Syria, adds stress, post-flotilla incident, in the

realm of foreign relations for the West, and specifically Israel. Turkey is a strong regional power, and with the AKP is trying to make strong connections in the region (Maruskin 447). Syria and Iran are adamant enemies of Israel, and have appeared as such for much time. Turkey has a strong desire for peace in the region, and its actions try to stress this (Marukin 448). Turkey has historically tried to aid in a peace process between Israel and Syria, in order to create a more stable region. Along with the decline of relations with Israel, when Turkey sides with Iran regarding UN sanctions, the chances that Turkey will continue to play the role of mediator in the Israel-Syria peace process are slim (Saltoff, The Gaza Flotilla Incident).

Syria and Israel are bordering countries and have had an ongoing conflict, which is part of the larger Arab-Israeli conflict. The conflict between the two nations stems partially from land and water territory disputes in an area called the Golan Heights⁵. From Israel's perspective, the Golan Heights and much of the Jordan River, and ideally the Tiberius Lake, would be included in the Land of Israel. The water issue is a very important one to Israel. More than 40 percent of the country is desert, and there are constant water shortages. Thus, the more water bodies it has, the better off the nation is.

Israel captured the land that is disputed during the 1967 War, and there has been a disagreement revolving around the land up until the present day (Benn). The

⁵ In this area lie the Jordan River, and Lake Tiberius, which accounts for about 40 percent of Israel's fresh water source as of 2001 (Slater 97). There has been a continual struggle, that was present since 1948, and the Arab-Israeli war. The area received a lot of attention during the 1967 War as well, and the boards/borders? are in constant dispute between the two countries (Slater, Lost Opportunities for Peace).

issue between Syria and Israel, as far as the Golan Heights is concerned, is one of nationalism as well (Slater 80). There are slogans throughout Israel, as well as t-shirts that are sold and worn that proclaim that the Golan is ours. However, as Slater explains, there have been many failed negotiations between Israel and Syria, which Turkey has attempted to aid in. Both nations have legitimate claims to the land, and it will take some good diplomacy in order to properly and fairly conduct a negotiation. Ankara has been attempting to take on this role, which brings a point of contestation with Turkey. Erdogan's government had been trying to mediate negotiations between Israel and Syria. In the meantime, Israeli-Palestinian conflicts had been growing, which infuriated the AKP, because it believed that Israeli oppression of Palestinians and constant forceful contact hindered Turkey's ability to mediate between Israel and Syria.

The grievances that Israel has with Syria are not limited to the land disputes in the north. Rather, the Syrian government is suspected to have supported nation-states and terrorist organizations that directly threaten the well being of the state of Israel. First, the country has increased its dependency on Iran as an ally. However, even more dangerous to Israeli national security, while Iran has provided economic aid, Syria has provided military aid to Hezbollah (Soreson 112). Syria is not a super power in the region; however, it has had political leverage in Lebanon. Thus, in order maintain its power, it has supported a terrorist organization that is the enemy to Israel (Soreson 113).

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu has stated that he and Turkey will do all they can to start informal negotiations on both sides of the issue (Turkish Fm:

Turkey Ready to Reconcile Syria and Israel). Ideally, Turkey will be able to talk to both sides. The issue with Turkish-aided negotiations between Israel and Syria is the evident ties both Syria and Turkey have to Iran (Satloff, The Gaza Flotilla Incident). This alliance is described as the “Northern Alliance” between Iran, Turkey, and Syria with a possibility of the fourth leg to this alliance being Hezbollah (Satloff).

Considering this Northern Alliance, regardless of the intention of Turkey to prevent a nuclear capable Iran, this situation would not sit well, and does not sit well, with Israeli officials. Syria and Iran are the biggest enemies to Israel, aiding a terrorist group whose goals including getting rid of the State of Israel, and Israel is expected to trust Turkey in negotiations. Satloff reports that Israel’s confidence level in Turkey is low. The further declining relationship, which has left Israel unsure in other areas, further adds to the lack of confidence Israel has in Turkey’s ability to mediate relations. Statements out of Ankara have said that there will be no stability with Israel until Israel apologizes for the incident on the Mavi Marmara boat in May 2010. In fact, Israeli minister of Defense, Ehud Barak, stands by the country’s actions against the flotilla event. Due to Barak’s position, a formal apology from Israel should not be expected. The stubbornness from both sides fails to provide a promising outlook for Syrian- Israeli peace talks.

Even though Turkey is willing to do what it can for Israel and it has shown its will through economic ties and political dialogue, the reality is that it may not be possible any more (*Journal of Turkish Weekly: Turkey to do Everything It can for Israel-Syria Peace*). Strong ties between Ankara and Jerusalem may prove to be a prerequisite for proper peace talks between Israel and Syria, and due to the decline

in relations, Israel may not be able to achieve it. In fact, part of the cause for the decline in relations between Israel and Turkey is the reason for the breakdown of the talks between Damascus and Jerusalem. The offense launched by Israel in 2008 against Hamas in the Gaza Strip because of a reaction to rockets fired at Israel by Hamas signaled the end of talks (Turkish FM: Turkey Ready to Reconcile Syria and Israel).

It is clear that Turkey does not support the hardliner views of Ahmadinjad, and Hezbollah, for Ankara has released multiple statements that it does not desire a nuclear able Iran. Davutoglu has said, "We do not want any countries to own nuclear weapons in our region, and we want solution of Iran's nuclear problem through diplomacy" (Turkey to Do Everything It Can for Israeli-Syria Peace). The message is clear, however, that when Ankara's policies and Jerusalem's policies collide, there is a negative effect on Israel, especially when it comes to Hamas. Inconsistencies between Israel and the Abbas- led Palestinian Authority and Turkey's policy on Hamas are another setback to Israel in the failing Turkey-Israeli relationship.

First of all, when President Gul met with the top official of Hamas, he was ignoring the hardliner, aggressive, anti-Israel fundamentals of the organization that would scare most nations. "Turkey has embraced the leaders of Iran and Hamas, all of whom called for Israel's destruction' Ambassador Michael Oren declared" (Krieger, Turkey has Embraced). This is validated by the ideology and foundation of Hamas. Hamas was elected in 2006, and thus gained control of the Gaza Strip. It was once part of the Palestinian Authority (PA), which included other political groups as

well. Hamas failed to recognize the state of Israel, there was a split in the organization, and Hamas was no longer part of the PA.

The language that is present in Hamas's 1988 charter is racist and harsh. For example, a passage in article seven reads, "The time will not come until Muslims fight the Jews (and kill them); until the Jews hide behind rocks and trees, which will cry O Muslim! There is a Jew hiding behind me, come on and kill him!" (Alexander 51). Other passages are less vulgar; however, they show no sign of flexibility. An example is in article thirteen of the charter, which states, "there is no solution to the Palestinian problem except by Jihad" (Alexander 55). This charter remains a strong point of contention for Israel, and the West.

After establishing itself as an organization, Hamas created its 1988 charter that declares its hardliner goals. Later, scholars would argue that Hamas does not stand by its charter, but the fact is that this document was created and that calls for attention. The charter calls for the destruction of the state of Israel, and denies its right to exist. It claims that there must be Islamic control of Jerusalem, the third holiest city to Islam. Subsequently, it believes that the land Israel is occupying is considered an Islamic waqf ⁶and should be returned back to its rightful owners: the Palestinians, and more specifically Muslims. As far as Hamas is concerned, Israeli control of this land is not an attack directed towards the Palestinian people, but rather, an attack directed towards all of Islam (Gunning 199-200).

Not only is Hamas a physical threat to Israel, it will also be argued that engaging Hamas is detrimental for the Palestinian-Israeli peace process, and is

⁶ Islamic holy site

therefore negative for Israelis and Palestinians alike. This is an extremely sensitive situation in which Ankara's policies have been at a cross purpose to Israel's policies. Hamas would accept a Hudna⁷; a Hudna may not be a never-ending contract. It can range from as short as one month to as long as ten years, as long as it has a temporal limit. There is no long term peace, nor is there any security in a truce, for it could be nullified at any moment (Abu-Irshaid and Scham 9-10). Therefore, with this type of solution, a long lasting peace is not attainable.

There are many scholars who argue that the 1988 charter of Hamas is outdated, and that in fact there are new documents from the organization whose words are much more favorable. Furthermore, they argue, Hamas is not a Western political unit, and is accustomed to different ways of communicating. Non-Western Hamas is much more subtle and indirect. One scholar proclaims that Hamas's election platform in 2006 shows that the emphasis of the organization is to build up the Palestinian people as opposed to the destruction of the Israeli people (Hroub 10).

The fact that Hamas's language has shifted in documents does not give merit to an argument that supports engaging with Hamas at the present time. Actions speak louder than words, and at present, the organization has been actively attacking the civilian population. The Qassam Brigade, which is Hamas's military unit, partakes in terrorist activities against Israel's civilians (Alexander 12). Even after Israel disengaged from Gaza in 2005, Hamas continues to use terrorist techniques against the Israeli civilians. To date, Hamas has launched about 5,700

⁷ A Hudna is Arabic for truce. Furthermore, according to Islam, a Hudna is to favor the Muslim community, not its enemy, in this case Israel.

long-range rockets and 4,000 mortar shells onto the south of Israel, with Israeli civilians as targets (Yanga).

After the separation of Hamas from the Palestinian Authority in 2007, Israel has developed a policy against interaction with Hamas. At the same time, there have been great advancements with Fatah in the West Bank (Yaghi). Israel focused much of its efforts in the peace process on working with Fatah. The political party that heads the West Bank had previously been the head of Fatah, and he had harsher philosophies. The founder of Fatah, Yasser Arafat, believed that the Palestinians had no blame, and were the most deserving in the situation. However, today, without Arafat and with President Abbas and Prime Minister Fayyad there has been a change in ideology. Fayyad in particular was Western educated, and believes in emulating what Israel was able to accomplish. There is an emphasis on infrastructure, and so when there finally is a state of Palestine, the basis of a state will already exist (Makovsky).

With this type of intention, it has become Israel's focus to engage Fatah, for it has made compromises and so deserves attention. With the emergence of new political thinking within Fatah, especially with Fayyad, Israel has been given a great opportunity. Engagement with Hamas would jeopardize the success that has been achieved with Fatah (Makovsky). Turkey has not proved to be sensitive to this issue in the Palestinian Conflict, with Gul hosting a Hamas representative.

It is critical to keep Fatah in mind when Israel decides how to interact with Hamas. It is not a tangential arrangement between Israel and Hamas; rather Fatah is a crucial component to the peace process, and it represents approximately 2 million

Palestinians (CIA Fact book). Abbas and Fayyad have made strides and risked much for the prospect of peace with Israel. Fatah was willing to make sacrifices for the sake of the Palestinian people and for Israel, and this cannot have been done in vain. The split between Hamas and Fatah makes it clear that Israel cannot communicate with the two simultaneously, unless the two groups reconcile on their own terms.

If Israel were to try to accommodate Hamas, when its actions have been anything but compatible with Israel's desires, it sends a detrimental signal. It tells Fatah that Israel does not respect the compromises it has made. As Makovsky described it, Israel would be telling the world that as far as it goes, "you could kill and still be kosher" (Makovsky). Therefore, when Erdogan says "You'll never let Hamas rule, what kind of democracy is this?" (Krieger) it is inherently detrimental to Israel's efforts in pursuing peace with the Palestinians. Moreover, when Erdogan proclaims that "Hamas is not a terrorist organization" and that "They are Palestinians in resistance," he is disregarding the two million other Palestinians, who are not organized under Hamas (Krieger).

Moreover, by recognizing and engaging Hamas, the Turkish government is further empowering Hamas, a development that may lead to a more divided Palestinian population. This will result in a much larger conflict for Israel and the Palestinian people. The way in which Ankara reacts to the relationship between Hamas and Israel ultimately is a great loss for Israel. The increase in conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians will provoke further conflict between Israel and Turkey, enhancing the negatives for Israel.

Thus far, the ramifications from a realistic, traditional national security standpoint have been shown. However, arguably the greatest cost for Israel is seen in relation to its Grand Strategy. It is not new for Israel's approval rating, so to speak, to be low. In fact, Mor uses Israel, and the way it conducted itself during the second Intifada, as a prime example of what not to do. During this time, Israel had failed to recognize that the Arab media was a tactical threat, and on its own front, did not utilize Israeli media to counter the threat. Moreover, the minister of defense banned all Israeli media from entering the war area. Beyond the lack of Israeli media, there was no coherent voice to speak on behalf of Israel's stance that they were pro-peace and not trying to create a war. However, foreign media was present and was able to make a cohesive voice that spoke against Israel's use of force, negatively portraying Israel (Mor 167-169).

The emphasis on one particular incident, the Jenin operation, led to a complete failure in terms of public opinion (Mor 170-171). Jenin was a refugee camp during the time of the second Intifada. There was an issue as far as Israeli national security was concerned, because it was believed that some of the most wanted people were to be found at this refugee camp. As Mor describes, when the IDF decided how to handle the situation, there was no thought in minimizing the image of the military force Israel would use to the rest of the world. It was a "Bulldozer" operation (Mor 170). In order for Israel to secure the safety of its soldiers, it would simply destroy any house within the Jenin refugee camp that presented a potential threat. Without the presence of Israeli media, nor the consideration of the Israeli government to consider outside perception, Israel was

viewed as committing a massacre in the refugee camp, which created a dreadful image for Israel.

At the time of the second intifada a media expert from the United States “described Israel’s PR efforts in the United States as disastrous” (Diker 4). Experts from the United States explain that though Israel has a legitimate claim to its own territory, it is not able to formulate a direct consistent message, and fails to address the critical arguments made against it (Diker 4). Ten years later, the harm to the Turkish-Israeli alliance has facilitated an even worse public image for Israel, in Turkey, but also in the rest of the world. This alone may be the most detrimental loss for Israel to come from its declining relationship with Turkey. Furthermore, this was not a loss that Israel was prepared to have.

Even before the AKP was elected into power in 2002, the Turkish media had a lot of criticism for the State of Israel. Mainly, the criticisms were based around the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and how Israel was acting as an aggressor inappropriately. After the flotilla incident in the middle of 2010, the Turkish media and population expressed anger, disappointment, and shock as to what had occurred.

The critical component to a grand strategy, with an emphasis on public relations, focuses on political gains abroad. In order to attain this, a nation must be able to relate its situation and create a sense of empathy amongst the international community. Israel’s actions vis-à-vis the flotilla, as much as Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak will say that they were for self-defense, put a damper on any empathy it could receive (Mor 159). In Turkey, not only did the media yet again come down on

Israel, but also it was for an attack that was committed against its own people. The Turkish media and people were furious, and on the 31st of May there were Turkish citizens protesting in front of the Israeli embassy in Ankara, demonstrating the public's rage (*AA Journal of Turkish* weekly)

One Turkish film in particular represents the degree to which Israel's public image has declined within Turkish society. This film is called "The Valley of the Wolves: Palestine" and is a Turkish spin off of a TV series that is similar to a "24" type show, called The Valley of the Wolves. The movie tells the tale of an undercover agent and his quest is to find the man responsible for the flotilla raid (Fraser). The film depicts the Israeli soldiers as aggressive, crude people, and the scenes show Israelis as the villain. The villain of the movie says "the Arabian population will soon outnumber ours, so we have to establish the great Israel" (Official Trailer). Another scene shows the Turkish James Bond answering why he came to Israel; his response is "I did not come to Israel, I came to Palestine" (Official Trailer). Based upon this movie, which has a large cult-like following, one article expressed that if the "good-guy" wins, Israel should not exist. This is a terrifying piece of media from an Israeli perspective.

Moreover, the "Valley of Wolves: Palestine" is very likely to heighten tension between the two countries, as an article from *Today's Zaman* explains. The movie embodies a general sentiment of anger that the Turks are experiencing due to the 2010 flotilla incident. Moreover, as a highly negative depiction of Israel, the movie has plans to reach a large audience in Turkey: it had a 10 million Euro budget and stems from a popular TV series (Reuters). Alongside its large budget, it has acquired

a large cast of Turkish citizens -- men, women, and children -- as extras in the film, who, as a *New York Times* article described, are ready to show the world how the Palestinians are living (Arsu). Israeli officials are enraged by the anticipation of what is to come from this film, and believe it to be a low point in Turkish media. At the same time the Anti-Defamation League⁸ (ADL) has proclaimed that this is “mass media anti-Semitism” (Reuters). The true effects of the movie will have to wait until the movie is aired; however, the excitement and support that the Turkish population has given to the making of this film signifies a huge political loss for Israel, and for the Israeli-Turkish relationship. This support for the film indicates how at least some of the Turkish population feels about Israel, which may make it harder for the Turkish government to mend relations with Israel, even it wanted to do so.

Israel has not only begun losing the battle with public relations solely on the Turkish front, but also in the United States as well. Many Americans have become apathetic at best to the case of Israel. This notion includes the population that has been historically most supportive of Israel and its policies, American Jewry (Goekler). What used be the fundamentals of supporters of Israel, American Jews do not have the same level of enthusiasm for Zionist mentality as they used to. Adding to the equation, the way in which modern media is used allows for off-putting Israeli publicity to emanate through the online newspapers, blogs, and social networks of American Jews (Goelker). “The ‘freedom flotilla’ organizers knew and took advantage of this. The Israelis completely misunderstood it, were suckered in and

⁸ The Anti Defamation League (ADL) is an American organization focusing on how to deal with prejudices, included in this is anti-Semitism, and how to respond to it.

are now paying the price. Not only did they look to all the world like criminals and thugs, they also managed to look incompetent in the process” (Goelker).

More than anything else, the way in which American Jewish organizations perceived the Gaza flotilla event measured how fractionalized American Jewry has become. It sent one of two messages, first, as Goelker said, that it was a publicity stunt and those on the flotilla were purposefully provoking Israelis. This view can be seen with the American Jewish Committee (AJC). Or, there are Jewish Americans expressing how this is an example and extension of Israeli oppression and Israel is at fault. It is groups such as J-street, which opposes the blockade of Gaza to begin with, and believes that Israel does not need to be dripping with violence (Beckerman). Juxtaposing J-street and AJC, the clear contrast emanates the reality that American Jews are on two different planes as far as Israel is concerned. The flotilla incident added further separation, and Israel cannot afford to have its support divided anymore than it already is.

The Jews that are affected by the media against Israel are in some way predisposed to support Israel; it is after all a state for the Jews. Yet they are not supporting Israel, and this fact should be a clear sign to Israel that it needs to take the concept of public relations, and creating empathy for itself abroad, seriously. It is a critical part of its struggle to maintain itself in the Middle East. Losing the public support from Turkey is detrimental to the Israel’s positioning in the Middle East, and amongst its neighbors. However, losing the support of the American Jews, through critical media coverage, could potentially affect Israel’s relationship with its biggest ally, the United States.

The decline in relations between Turkey and Israel has created many moments of frustration and trepidation for Israel. However, in one area, this fallout of sorts has boosted Israel. The farther that Israel becomes from Turkey, it has appeared the closer Israel has become with the Balkans, and especially Greece. Since the most drastic decline in mid-2010, there have been military ties between Israel and the Balkans; in January of 2010 Bulgaria allowed the Israeli Air Force to use its facilities for practice. In the case of Greece, Israeli ties have turned around drastically. The prime ministers of Israel and Greece met earlier in 2010 (As Turkey Front Freezes, Israel looks to warming Balkans Tie). More importantly, relations with Turkey were a sign of social acceptance from an actor in the region and source of pride and legitimacy (Bengio 46). With the decline of the relationship came the decline of the ability to be proud of an alliance. Greece has taken that role for many Israelis. It is evident in the tourism numbers, which have increased over 200 percent since before the fallout with Turkey (As Turkey Front Freezes, Israel looks to warming Balkans Tie).

The Balkans are not in the Middle East as Turkey is, and do not hold the same political leverage in critical conflicts, which is beneficial to Israel's statehood, nor do they provide the same legitimacy in the region. However, the countries are members of the European Union, and this is a positive thing for Israel. The more allies that Israel is able to obtain, the more likely it will be able to work on its image in the rest of the world. The Balkan region of Europe is a perfectly good place for it to start. For what it's worth, if there is only one good aspect to a situation, it is what should be

celebrated. Israel should be proud of the advancements made in this region, and work on strengthening them further.

Looking at the overall effect that the decline of the Turkish-Israeli relationship has had on Israel, the results are grim. Turkey has strengthened its ties with Iran and Syria since 2002, and both of these countries have an unsavory relationship with Hezbollah. This is a direct threat to Israel's national security, the magnitude of which has only increased since the decline of its relations. Furthermore, the way in which Turkey engages Hamas, and the lack of respect that Fatah in effect receives as a result, has potential to increase the severity of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

What is more, not only is there an increase to national security threats, Israel has proven itself unable to properly present itself to the rest of the world. Israel's public image across the globe, post-flotilla incident, has declined, and it has not only affected Turkey's population. The American population, and specifically American Jewry, has shown a decline in public support for Israel. Israel has been the largest recipient of U.S. military aid in the globe (Davles). Thus, much of Israel's military success has been based upon constant aid from the United States, which is crucial to Israel's existence at this point.

The aid has partially from Jewish American lobbyists in Washington. American Jewry during the 1930's and 40's created a strong Zionist movement, which gave much support to Israel because of their insecurities as a people around the world. Today, much of the support that American Jewry has for Israel comes from either personal attachment, or pride in Israel. Israel is a democratic nation

with strong ties to the United States. Many of the American Jews are those who lobby in Washington in efforts to keep the US-Israeli ties strong (Foxman).

This decline in alliances situation is a dangerous one, and Israel has to realize that public opinions, and Arab propaganda, are just as much a security threat as a nuclear Iran is. Amongst all of these losses, there is a ray of hope with advancements of the relationship between Israel and the Balkans. Israel was able to seize an opportunity to strengthen ties especially with Bulgaria and Greece, which hopefully will bring political advantages to Israel and an ability to re-evaluate how it projects its image unto the world.

Chapter 3: A Turkish Perspective

Turkey and Israel have been affected differently by the change in their relations. Israel's national security has been negatively affected overall by the decline. On the contrary, besides a few minor consequences, Turkish foreign policy has remained intact. In some aspects of Turkey's foreign policy, the loss of strategic ties between Turkey and Israel is actually beneficial. With its new foreign policies, Turkey has made new allies in the region, separate from the Turkey-Israeli relation. Ultimately, Turkey may not need Israel's alliance for an agreeable foreign policy stance in the region.

The new foreign policy strategies in Turkey explain why Israel is less of an advantageous alliance for Turkey, and why it has steered into new directions in the region. Turkey has transformed itself, especially since Ahmet Davutoglu was appointed to foreign minister. Under his leadership, and the leadership of the AKP, Turkey has proven that its foreign agenda is independent from that of the West. The decline of Turkish-Israeli relations may prove to have less of significance for Turkey than it does for Israel.

The changes to the Turkish government have been, as Bengio calls it, a "quiet revolution" (15). The changes in foreign policy have been influenced by domestic changes. The political elite has changed from secular Western-oriented political elite during the Kemalist era to a conservative and pious elite. The new elite is content with becoming a major game changer within the Middle East. Turkey is bringing together Islam and democracy. In order to attain its position, the AKP has had strong political grassroots techniques, and focuses on domestic issues, which involved

economic reform. All the while, it advances its personal agenda regarding Islam and its interaction with the both the West and the Middle East (Bengio 15). Thus far, Turkey has been an example for the compatibility of Islam and democracy.

Turkey's new policies focus on becoming the soft power in the region, while attaining inclusionary goals. These policies emphasize diplomatic power, as opposed to military might. In order to be a soft power, it would mean Turkey would pursue dialogue and utilize pressures that do not include military threats. Many scholars have criticized Turkey for having contradicting views to those of NATO or the United States. Its actions create a notion that Turkey is becoming anti-Western. This is not the case. Rather than choosing a side, Turkey believes it is part of an international community, one that includes Turkey as an able power, opposed to a problem which needs international aid (Trayb 3). There are multiple forces that have provoked this change in Turkish foreign policy. The changes have brought about new priorities for Turkey, and it is made clear after assessing these new policies that Israeli-Turkish relations are not a top priority for Turkey.

The AKP, using its current power, has recreated a strong agenda that encompasses both foreign and domestic policies. Bengio summarizes these.

Three factors coalesced to produce a change: The 'mind'-the present foreign minister, Ahmet Davutoglu; the 'power'-The AKP *adalet ve kalkunma Partisi* [the Justice and Development Party] and its leader, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan; and the 'spirit'-ideological changes that embrace large sectors of Turkish society. (Bengio 15)

These changes to foreign policy are drastic turns from the previous government, and have re-prioritized who is valuable to Turkey as an ally. As Bengio describes in this quote, the changes to foreign policy and re-directing the nation's intentions does not stem from top-down policy, but rather is a result of a societal change. In fact, much of the AKP's focus is to create a stronger democracy for Turkey, so that the Turkey will reflect the population of the country.

Recent developments in a constitutional referendum have proved AKP's promise to ensure democracy throughout Turkey. Among other things, the referendum instates that individuals who are convicted of plotting a coup against the government will be tried in civilian courts, as opposed to military courts (Erdagon pulls it off, *The Economist*). This is important because historically, much of the political control, during times of instability, was held by the military. Turkey's military has been associated with the secular elite and the Kemalist ideology (Orbis 135). The change to the constitution ensures that those who were democratically elected will be in charge of trying individuals as well.

Those against the referendum have said that it is a step in the wrong direction for secular Turkey. Part of the package that was passed allows for greater Parliamentary and Presidential control over appointments in the judiciary sectors of government. Many in opposition to the AKP are concerned that Erdagon and his government will use this tool in order to choose individuals with hard-liner, non-secular ideology to fill these positions (Erdagon pulls it off, *The Economist*). However, this action should be seen as an advancement in Turkish democracy. It

will hopefully show to the world that Islam and democracy can and will coexist. This referendum marks a change in the political picture of Turkey.

Ahmet Davutoglu is the man behind the party who has transformed foreign policy in Turkey over the past two years. He has been one of Erdogan's closest advisors since 2003, and Erdogan appointed him foreign minister on May 1st 2009. Turkey has always played a balancing act between the West and the East and Davutoglu's foreign policy stance reflects a conscious effort to re-evaluate this situation. Through Davutoglu's philosophy and his character in foreign policy, he is attempting to restructure Turkish foreign policy in efforts to rejuvenate it (Ara 14). These changes have an effect on the way in which Turkey reacts to all actors in the international community, and especially how it reacts to Israel.

Davutoglu, as a philosopher and scholar, has a foreign policy dripping in rhetoric, with one phrase resonating loudest: "zero problem relations" (Duzgit and Tocci). Due to Turkey's geopolitical situation, this a hard task to accomplish. Considering that the neighboring countries include Iran and Syria, the goal of no conflict seems to be a challenge. However, given that this is the adopted policy, there is anticipation for future action. Once Davutoglu took power, Turkey adopted a peacemaking role in the Middle East (Traub 6). Turkey, under the leadership of the AKP, is interested in creating a global community, as opposed to being the hegemon of the Middle East.

In order to uphold Davutoglu's words and intention, he has key components to his foreign policies that will take Turkey from rhetoric to action. First, there is a component of adaptability that is calculated into foreign policy making (Aras 8).

What this entails is accounting for changes in foreign policy priorities; in other words, Turkey must be pliable in reacting to new advancements in the global community. As Aras describes, the goal is to focus on “strategic depth” in the region. A variety of strategic partners are necessary for a healthy foreign policy (8). Turkey must seize any opportunity in terms of foreign relations and give the proper attention to any issue that arises.

Second, in order to attain a zero-problem outcome, Turkey must be on constant search for peacekeeping initiatives within the international community. This is what Aras calls a “proactive” aspect to Turkish foreign policy (9). Davutoglu believes that prior to establishing this as a foreign policy concern, Turkey had failed to exert itself in crucial international communities such as the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)⁹. Turkey did not present a candidate for a judge in OIC, for example. With the new foci in foreign policy, this track record has been changing, and Turkey now has a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council (Aras 9).

Davutoglu also believes that in order to attain ideal foreign policy, Turkey must be on the ground when an international crisis arises (Aras 9). There should be no bias when sending aid to a country in crisis.¹⁰ Rather, Turkey should be ready to respond to various needs. Whether in Europe or the Middle East, good foreign policy means that Turkey will be readily available for all crises.

The last piece of Davutoglu’s policies incorporates inclusiveness within the international community, keeping in mind that non-state actors have a role in policy

⁹ It is the second largest inter-governmental organization, made up of 57 countries, similar to the United Nations.

¹⁰ This does hold true with Israel-Turkish relations. In the fires in the North of Israel in December 2010, Turkey was one of the first nations to send aid to Israel.

making as well (Aras 9-10). This inclusiveness means all “real” actors not only state actor. Rather, all politicized groups have an equal voice as far as the AKP is concerned. This stretches to include industries, NGOs and other social groups that could influence foreign policy (Aras 10).

This philosophy has been realized with the inclusion of both HAMAS and Hezbollah into Ankara’s political circle. Turkey is committed to engage both of these organizations (Aras 10). In addition Ankara has strengthened ties with many unsavory governments, from a Western standpoint. These regimes include Sudan, Syria, Iran, and Libya (Orbis 136). Relations with some of these countries have a strong strategic purpose, and enhance Turkey’s zero-problem zone. With this political philosophy in mind, there is a needed explanation then as to why Israel has been so brutally criticized by Erdogan and his government.

Much of the theoretical policies which Davutoglu stresses are not inherently anti-Western, and he constantly stresses that Turkey has no intention of turning its back on the West. Turkey strives to be part of the global community (Traub 5-6). However, the implications of Turkey’s actions have been perceived as anti-Western. More specifically, more than anti-Western, many of these actions have proven anti-Israel.

Looking from a strictly theoretical standpoint, based upon Turkey’s new foreign policy, it would not be expected that Turkey and Israel’s relationship would deteriorate at the rate that it has. The adaptability factor in the foreign policy explains how Israel, once a critical strategic ally to Turkey, was able to lose its importance in Turkish foreign policy. Even though Israel’s importance has declined,

a large part of the Turkish policies still aims at inclusion of all actors, while creating an influence on the land. Israel is apparently an exception to this policy. Turkey removed its ambassador to Turkey from Tel Aviv, creating an interesting interpretation of this new foreign policy plan.

Historically, Turkey has been on the outside of Middle East politics, which is what originally united Turkey and Israel. Turkey was secular and tried to become accepted as a part of the West throughout much of its early history. Present day Turkey has made efforts to Middle Easternize, so to speak (Oguzlu). The AKP uses Islam as a unifying factor in the region in order to gain the support of Arab countries (Oguzlu 14). Gaining these new strategic partners reduces the importance of the Israel as Turkey's historical partner. Furthermore it may prove beneficial for Turkey to distant itself from Israel, in light of its new strategic relationships.

Two of the newest Turkish partners in the international arena are Syria and Iran. From the perspective of the United States and Israel, it is puzzling why Turkey insists on strengthening its ties with these two nations. The two countries have connections to the terrorist organization, Hezbollah, and have aggressively negative views of Israel and the United States. However, both nations have a strategic significance and play an important role in Turkey's national security. With an understanding of Davutoglu's foreign policy stance, which emphasizes inclusion, it is evident that these nations are important to be included in Turkish foreign policy, especially considering that Turkey feels excluded from Europe.

Iran's value to Turkey rests upon one of the most important issues around the world: energy. Iran is the second largest provider of natural gases to Turkey¹¹ (Larrabee 108). Moreover, there have been initiatives between the two nations that allow for a Turkish company, Turkish Petroleum Corporation (TPAO), to use Iran to explore its land. It then brings oil and natural gases back through a pipeline to Turkey (Larrabee 108). Together with Brazil, Iran and Turkey have entered an agreement that consists of uranium exchange that takes place in Turkey (Migdalovitz 28). They signed an agreement that entails the exchange of 1,200 kilograms of low-enriched uranium¹². The deal was approved as a result of a 19-hour talk between Brazil's former president, Luiz Inacio Lula de Sevilla, Iranian President Ahmadinejad, and Prime Minister Erdogan (word rss). The agreement defies the UN economic sanction against Iran. Aside from the agreement with Brazil, Davutoglu has met with Saeed Jalili, the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) in Tehran, and expressed Turkey's support of Iran's peaceful nuclear program (Inbar 143). These actions reveal Turkey's reliance on Iran for energy trade, as well a public encouragement for Iranian policies.

Defying the international community and creating a separate agreement with Iran and Brazil indicates the AKP's intentions within the Middle East. In fact, there has been "400-year peace and stability on the Iranian-Turkish Border" (Turkish-Iranian Relations and Recent Developments in the Region). However, the importance is deeper than history. The two nations are both Muslim non-Arab

¹¹ The largest provider of energy to Turkey is Russia.

¹² The level of uranium that was relevant to the sanctions is 20 percent enriched uranium, which means that 20 percent of the uranium atoms are unstable. In comparison, weapon-grade uranium is 90 percent enriched.

actors in the region, which is more substantial than the bond shared between Israel and Turkey. These ties must be important to the future of foreign policy, and indicative of its direction, or it would not try to have it come between itself and the West.

Iran has become a strategic partner to Turkey. The two nations are both members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), and are fellow members of the Developing 8 (D-8). Both are inter-governmental groups, with an emphasis on Muslim countries unifying together (Inbar 139). Moreover, Turkey abstained from voting against Iran while sitting on the UN International Atomic Energy Agency, standing by its philosophy that Iran should be allowed a proper peaceful nuclear energy development program (Inbar 130). With more opportunities for diplomacy, Iran is a top priority for Turkish foreign policy.

Iran is a factor when considering the changing relations between Israel and Turkey. Iran can offer more to Turkey politically than Israel can. For one, Israel does not have the same capability for energy trade. Secondly, Iran is in fact becoming increasingly important to Turkey, therefore its own opinion of Israel matters. Israel and Iran have clashing politics. It is advantageous for Turkish policies with Iran to create anti-Israeli rhetoric; therefore, its relationship with its new strategic ally can become stronger.

Turkey and Syria had a clash of interests in the 1990s because of how Syria handled the Kurdish Issue. Turkey felt as though Syria did not comply with its own policies, feeling as though Syria sided with the Kurdish population. In the 1990s Syria's lack of compliance with the Kurdish problem had created frustrations

between the two countries. However, recently, Syria and Turkey have strengthened ties. As stated in previous chapters, as a result of the Iraq War, Turkey had increased diplomacy with Syria for national security Interests. The northern alliance, between Syria, Iran and Turkey has also been taking form. In the 1990's Turkey had worked towards friendly relations with the entire region, both east and west of Turkey so that it could be considered part of the EU. Syria was part of this attitude towards foreign relations. By 2009, Turkey and Syria had partaken in a few small military operations together, yet Turkey's membership in NATO hindered completely invested military operations between the two nations.

An addition to the new Turkish-Syrian alliance is the massive amount that Turkey exports into Syria, which amounts to 1.4 billion dollars yearly (Heydarian). Turkey's increasing alliance with Iran and Iran's alliance with Syria explains the importance of Syrian-Turkish relations. Much of the increase in relations between the two nations has stemmed from initiatives from Damascus, as opposed to Ankara. Syria is worried now about its own Kurdish minority and has turned to Turkey for aid (Larrabee 109). Syria and Israel represent another spot of contestation. Thus, with the recent ties to Syria, Turkey has reason to shift away from strong ties with the Israeli government.

Turkey has created a strategic relationship with many surrounding countries, Russia, Armenia, and Sudan (which will be further discussed later) in order to attain the control of soft power in the region. The bulk of the foreign policy Davutoglu presents and instills into the nation revolves around Turkey's ability to be a soft power in the region (Bengio 17)

Turkey's new attitude towards the international arena has already enabled it to make strides as the soft power of the Middle East. It hopes to take these achievements to the rest of the world as well. For example, Turkey was successful in creating a visa-free zone between Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. This will create moves towards a free trade zone between these nations. It will help the markets of all nations, and help them work towards becoming more dominant economic players.

While Turkey strives to reach out to its Arab neighbors, it is critical of its relations with Israel. Davutoglu's earlier writing had explicitly stated that ties with Israel have prevented Turkey from creating proper relations with its Arab neighbors (Bengio 17). In terms of the large political picture, Turkey may see Israel as an obstacle, in which case, the decline of the relations between the two nations would be politically valuable for Turkey. Bengio states, "Israel did not fit into the grand strategy of opening up to the countries of the region for ideological and economic interests" (18). With new advancements in their relations, Turkey has the liberty to engage with its Arab neighbors without the stigma of being associated with Israel.

Moreover, scholars will argue that the decline in the relationship between Israel and Turkey in recent years is a positive thing for Turkish foreign affairs in general. "Turco-Israeli Alliance in the region has potential hatred from some of the regional countries towards Turkey" (Erdemir 31). Just as Turkey's involvement with the West has some implications in the region, so too does its involvement with Israel. Therefore, when its relations with Iran, Syria, and other political alliances are

put in jeopardy, it will sacrifice its relationship with Israel first. This stems back to the adaptability part of the new Turkish foreign policy. It must make adjustments to its priorities, not remain static.

Many of these nations have negative views of Israel, and Turkey's recent remarks about Israel will prove to these nations where its loyalties lie. A prime example is Turkey's reaction in January of 2009, after Israel's military campaign against Gaza from December 2008-January 2009. Erdogan had released a statement in which he said to Shimon Peres, the president of Israel, that Israel killed people (Migdalovitz 11). His words were plain and simple, and yet they had a strong influence in the international community. Migdalovitz asserts that with this attack on Israel's actions against Gaza, Turkey was able to impress the Arab nations (11). Essentially, when the AKP attacks Israel it means that Turkey gains respect in the region.

Furthermore, some scholars argue that Israel is a threat to Turkey's national security. It is explicit in international relations that Israel has many security threats within the region. Turkey cannot afford to compromise its own international security in its relationship to Israel (Edmir 33-34). Though this is a valid argument, in reality the Middle East is a filled with national security threat, not unique to Israel. It is not a stable region, and Turkey's recent policy developments focus on mediating these issues. Furthermore, Turkey had recalled its ambassador to Israel in the fall of 2010 (Turkish Israeli relations head to uncharted waters) Without the ambassador of Turkey in Israel, there is a statement made towards Israel that

Turkey does not include Israel as a necessary part of the zero-problem policy. This goes against part of the fundamental theories of Davutoglu's foreign policy.

Insofar as Muslim countries are now the focus of Turkish policies, Inbar believes that the unraveling of relations with Israel is part of the process (142). As stated before, much of Turkey's strategy is to increase contact with not only the Arab nations, but with Muslim nations as well. This is seen through many inter-governmental organizations in which Turkey, under the AKP, is actively a part of (Inbar, 142). This desire to unite Muslim country especially in the immediate vicinity of Turkey leaves Israel out of the picture.

With the desire to bring Muslim nations together, the quality of the Israeli-Turkish relationship is not as much a concern for the Turkish government and the AKP. This implies that deterioration of Israeli-Turkish relations are yet again, a positive progression for Turkey. Furthermore, Erdogan's government views Syria, Iran and Turkey's relationship as a key unit to bring stability to the Middle East (Inbar 143). On the contrary, Turkey views Israel's policies as a threat to the security and stability of the region (Inbar 142). Therefore, the decline in relations for Turkey means that it can disassociate from Israel's negative ways.

Ankara understands that some sort of diplomatic ties with Israel would be advantageous to international relations, despite the actions and the contestations Ankara has with Israel. As much as the decline in relations between Turkey and Israel is beneficial for Turkey's other relations in the region, no deterioration is good. Inbar predicts that Turkey and Israel's relations will retain some interaction on the level of diplomacy and economics (145). There is a danger that if Israel-

Turkey relations proceed as they have, it may jeopardize Turkey's position with the West, and create a situation in which its goals for becoming a part of the international community, for both the West and East, will fail.

Though the decline in relations may not be as detrimental to Turkey as they may prove to be for Israel, there are losses for Turkey. Not for nothing, Israel and Turkey have had strong social ties in the past. In fact, Turkey was a subject of pride for many Israelis, and with this came a great industry, tourism. Due to the recent events, Israelis are boycotting Turkey, and the number of Israeli tourists visiting Turkey has reduced dramatically. This has resulted in a 400 million dollar loss in the Turkish tourism business. The many charter flights to Turkey from Israel have declined significantly. Individual flight companies, such as Turkish Liras, have had severe losses because of cancelations (Friedman). Turkey has tried to combat this by inviting and urging Muslims to come and tour Turkey (Eg lash).

As far as Turkish ability to retaliate and boycott a sector of Israeli business, it will be a bit more difficult. As Bilfesky has said, "You won't find any [Israeli goods] in Turkish supermarkets". Most of the Israeli products found in Turkey are in the form of technology, computers, cell phones, and GPS devices. However, even though there are Israeli tourists boycotting, most other sectors of Turkish-Israeli economic ties are business as usual. The business has not been jeopardized in Turkey as of yet. In fact Turkey uses Israeli markets to sell to America (Bilfesky). In this case, It appears that profit is more important than the political situation. The AKP is able to maintain itself in power due to good politics and a commitment to economic growth.

Part of Davutoglu's goals includes Turkey's desire and necessity for proper foreign relations, its ability to be a mediator in the region. Ozel explains that Turkey considers the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as an important issue in international politics (26). As previously seen, the AKP has tried to engage HAMAS, and Erdogan has created ample public discourse as to how Israel has committed grave crimes as far as Gaza is concerned. This is a central part of what the decline in relations is about.

For Turkey, it creates an inconstancy between its frustrations, and its own agenda in the region. With the decline in relations, Israel will be less likely to allow for Turkish-mediated talks. There is also the issue that talking with HAMAS ultimately may prove to undermine all other peace initiatives that Israel and the PA have attempted to make. With the loss of Israel as a key strategic partner, it loses its mediating abilities throughout the Middle East, and on an issue which Turkey has named as critical.

Rough ties between Israel and Turkey will subsequently influence the ties between Turkey and the United States. As much as the two nations are separate countries, typically the foreign policy of both nations have coincided. The U.S has determined its relations with Turkey based upon the needs of NATO, and its own foreign security (Migdavolwitz 26). Furthermore, it has historically been impressed with Turkey's ability to maintain relations with Israel, unlike most other Muslim countries in the region. Hilary Clinton visited Turkey shortly after the Obama administration took power. She declared that Turkey and the United States have a common interest to uphold democratic principles, and reiterated the notion that in

Turkey Islam and democracy are coexisting. In addition, after the constitutional referendum of September 2010, Obama had made efforts to congratulate Erdogan and his government for improving the quality of democracy (Migdavolwitz 28).

Some of the same concerns that Israel has concerning new Turkish policies in the international arena are points of concern of Turkey as well. For example, Turkey's relations with Iran and Syria are a point of concern for the United States. As well Turkey's failure to recognize HAMAS as a terrorist organization creates worries in Washington (Migdavolwitz 29). These changes in Turkish foreign policy have created doubts in the US-Turkish relationship. After the verbal attacks by Erdogan on Israel policies, the Obama administration had also threatened to stop military interactions between the U.S. and Turkey if Turkey continued to "shun" Israel (Service). Recall that the United States had pulled Turkey into NATO in 1950, and continues to have Turkish security in mind with their foreign policy actions. Furthermore, Obama stressed that it is imperative for Turkey to ease the strains between Turkey and Israel. This is one example of the strains between U.S.-Turkish relations caused by Israeli-Turkish relations.

According to Migdalovitz, not only is there growing concern over the intentions of Ankara when dealing with the Middle East, but also post-flotilla there has been a further strain on the relationship. Washington felt as though Turkey was making the United States choose between its relationship with Turkey and Israel (14). There were a few in Congress, previously adamant supporters of the Turkish-Israeli relationship and its consequential benefit to ties between Turkey and the West, who stressed their concern. Subsequently, Obama's administration holds the

stance that it is important to work on maintaining and improving the Turkish-Israel relationship (Migdalovitz 15). Thus, although there are hopes for the future of their relationship, the U.S.-Turkey relationship relies upon the grander U.S.-Turkey-Israel triangle.

The United States is an actor that Turkey needs to maintain good relations with. The U.S. gives plenty of aid to Turkey and it should make sure, for the sake of domestic affairs that the U.S. continues to provide this aid. For example, the United States USAID program is the one responsible for constructing the water structure in Istanbul, an important program for Turkish citizens to obtain water. Also, the United States provides economic programming to aid in Turkey. One of the programs works with economic factors to counter the anti-terrorism programming in Turkey. The United States AID program also set up a program in 2006 that encourages bilateral trade between the United States and Turkey (USAID Greenbook). The two nations have had a historically positive relationship, and in 2009 President Obama made his first diplomatic visit to Turkey, during which he emphasized the importance of the relationship between the two nations (US Department of States). The U.S. relations with Turkey provide a great deal for the nation.

The unraveling relations between Israel and Turkey add to the concerns of Washington. These concerns could lead to a downfall in Turkish-US relations as well as Israeli-Turkish relations. With increasing action against Israel, and measures that Turkey has taken contrary to Western ideology, the U.S. develops more concern towards Turkey. These sentiments are mirrored by anti-American sentiment that is being experienced in Turkey. There is a significant rise in Turkish nationalism in

Turkey (Grigoraidis 2-3). With the clashing anti-Americanism in Turkey that has been triggered by this nationalism, and U.S. concern caused partially by the Turkey-Israel downfall, there is reason to fret about the relations between Turkey and Israel.

Yet, Turkey has made an effort to create an environment in the Middle East that the EU would approve of. With these efforts in place, it seems as though Turkey values the opinion of the European Union and the United States. For example, Turkey had created stronger military exchanges with Syria, yet did not proceed in any major way because of its ties to NATO. Also, the EU is especially important to Turkey based upon its public's opinion. In a public opinion poll from Turkey in 2010 65 percent of the population thought it would a "good" thing for Turkey to attain membership into the EU (Harris Interactive 49). This is capered to only 27 percent who opposed joining the EU. Furthermore, the desire stems from the belief that joining the EU would bring economic stability and lower the unemployment rate in Turkey (Harris interactive 50). Thus, at the least, the relationship between Turkey and the EU should be of top priority.

As Israel has suffered due to perceptions, and lack of attention to the importance of strong public relations, Turkey may experience some of the same in coming years. Western perception of Turkey is on the fence, with many of its actions, and more importantly its words. As Turkey becomes an increasingly more dominant figure in the Middle East, taking on its desired role as soft power, Ankara, and specifically leaders of the AKP should be careful of the rhetoric they project. There are legitimate and illegitimate claims against Israel, and Turkey is owner to

both schools of thought. With all of Davutoglu's philosophy of inclusion, and a zero-problem foreign policy, it is puzzling as to why Israel is so harshly criticized by Turkey, especially since Turkey engages with many disagreeable international actors. Though there are many rational explanations to why Turkey is better off without Israel as a strategic ally, as previously described, much of the message coming from Ankara smacks of anti-Semitism, and putting Israel at a much higher standard than all of its neighbors. Anti-Semitism will not be tolerable to the West, and could ultimately hurt Turkey's position with the West. If Turkey does desire a widespread, West-meets-East, total foreign policy, it should be hesitant to be publicly anti-Semitic. Many scholars believe that this will create major worries within the West.

The most potent example of these inequalities, and the anti-Semitism that is possibly the root cause of Turkey's new foreign policy towards Israel, is how Israel is treated as compared to how Sudan is treated. Taking a look at how Turkey welcomed Omar Al-Bashir, the president of Sudan, even after it had publically attacked Israel for crimes against humanity, paints a vivid picture. Israel has been raised to a higher standard than all surrounding countries in the eyes of Turkey, and the explanation may lie on the anti-Semitic sentiment of Erdogan's government.

The conflict in Sudan arose in 2003 when two rebel groups, the Sudan Liberation Movement and the Justice and Equality movement in Darfur, made attacks against the national government. The government of Sudan led by Al-Bashir then began a counter attack, initially aimed at these two groups. The government

sent its army-militia, called the janjaweed (savedarfur). This Sudanese government ultimately targeted ethnic groups within villages.

Between 2003 and 2005 an estimated 300,000 people were killed, millions were displaced, and even more were affected by the crisis (SaveDarfur). The Bush Administration recognized the crisis in Darfur as genocide. He also created an initiative that brought aid to Darfur from the United States, and thus, the U.S. is responsible for providing 60 percent of the aid to Darfur (Natsios). Considering the ongoing killings in Darfur genocide is the mainstream ideology from the Western school of thought.

The Muslim world, which in recent years Turkey has brought to the top of its priority list, has been quiet about the Darfur genocide. The Muslim world in general has been defensive about the term that the West has used: genocide. Turkey, desiring a strong unification of the Muslim world to further its own political agenda, would then be wary of contradicting such findings (Ozkan and Akgun 5-6). Ozkan and Akgun argue that in regards to Darfur, Turkey is juggling the Western and Middle Eastern perception in a “quiet diplomacy”(10). It does not want to anger either party.

Though Ozan and Akgun argue that Turkey has had quiet diplomacy, there is evidence that the AKP is leaning towards the Muslim world on its stance on Darfur. In 2008 Ankara welcomed Al-Bashir in his high profile visit to the country, which drew some attention from the West, and especially the United States (Meral 81). This visit can be explained by the political and economic importance that Sudan has on Turkey, as a Middle East soft power. The Arab Union (AU) supports the growing

economy of Sudan, as does the OIC, where Turkey, under the AKP, wishes to hold more significance. Statements out of the OIC have proclaimed that there is no evidence to solidify that the actions taken against the civilians in Darfur are in fact genocide (Ozkan and Akgun 9). Furthermore, Sudan has been a gateway for Turkey into the African market, and the trade between Ankara and Khartoum more than tripled, from 35 million dollars a year in 2002 to 200 million dollars a year in 2007 (Ozkan and Akgun 10).

With the growing interests in Sudan, the AKP has been very “political” in interacting with Sudan. Not only did Ankara not protest the OIC position on whether or not there is a genocide in Sudan, Erdogan had publicly stated “I have been to Darfur as prime minister, and I did not detect [any] genocide there...no Muslim could perpetrate such a thing” (Zalewski 101). Moreover, Erdogan, and his government criticized the West for its views on Darfur, and proclaimed that it was too harsh on the country. The policy that the AKP is emitting includes an inclusive, non-critical stance on many regions, including Darfur and even welcomed the Sudanese president.

In contrast to Turkey’s understanding relationship with Sudan, its situation with Israel is drastically different. Erdogan in particular has had many harsh words towards Israel and its policies. For example, it has called the flotilla incident a massacre and a crime against humanity (Zelweski 100). As previously stated, Turkey has proclaimed that Israel is the root source of problems for stability in the region. Erdogan and his AKP government have stated that Israel is promoting “state

terrorism". The question, then, is how does this make sense with the grand picture of Turkish foreign policy?

First, the facts do not add up. With the dismissal by Turkey of the genocide in Darfur, how can it then call Israel's flotilla raid a massacre and a crime against humanity? Moreover, when Ankara has been questioned about its relations with Iran, Syria, and Hezbollah, and some of the atrocities which those countries are responsible for, it has responded by saying that it is a part of their respective internal issues and is not a priority of Turkey (Zalewski 98-99). Why does Israel not have that same luxury of having internal problems, which are not of Turkish concern?¹³ Furthermore, the economic deficits on the tourism industry from the Israeli boycott on Turkish travel have double the annual trade between Ankara and Khartoum. Does this not factor into play for the AKP?

One factor in the situation may be a cause of the criticism Israel has been receiving at a much higher, more brutal rate than their neighbors. With the emphasis on Muslim unity in the Middle East, it is a slippery slope between identifying with another nation, and being prejudice against another nation because it does not share the same quality. There is anti-Semitic public rhetoric projected by the AKP. According to Blackwell Encyclopedia, anti Semitism is "hostility or hatred directed at Jews. Anti-Semitism may be manifested as prejudicial attitudes or discriminatory actions toward Jews because of their racial, ethnic, and/or religious

¹³ Granted there are different circumstances within Israel, for the interactions between Israel are with another potential state.

heritage” (Bartkowski)¹⁴. One vivid example of such sentiment is after the flotilla incident when Erdogan was quoted saying “The world now perceives the Star of David alongside the swastika” (Zalewski 100). Erdogan had given a speech at Istanbul University filled with anti-Semitic remarks. He told the university that the Jews were controlling the media and skewing the Gaza situation for the world to sympathize with them (Orbis 142). This amount of anti-Semitism from the leader of a country may account for some of Turkey’s policies towards Israel. The anti-Semitism would also explain excluding Israel even with Davutoglu’s approach to foreign policy.

If the anti-Semitism that is perpetrated by the AKP, and more specifically Erdogan, is not terminated it will be a point of contestation with the West. If in fact this same rhetoric continues, it can be a turn for the worst for ties between Turkey and the United States and the European Union. As Zalewski says “It [AKP] has alienated a large segment of the Western political class” (102). The West will not likely tolerate anti-Semitic rhetoric, and Turkey will not be able to hold onto its historical ties with the West.

As far as Turkey is concerned, even if the ties with the West and the US decline, it may not be devastating to Turkish foreign policy. First of all, there are few indications that the ramifications for Turkey by the U.S. would accumulate to a devastating loss for Turkey. As Obama’s visit in 2009 stated, the Turkish-U.S. alliance is important to the Obama administration. Second, the West has not yet

¹⁴ This is different from Anti-Zionism, which argues that there need not be a Jewish state, which is also different from anti-Israel, which opposes the actions of the Israeli government.

accepted Turkey; rather it has constantly rejected its membership to the EU. The Middle East and Muslim nations have been welcoming to Turkey, under its AKP leadership, and it is logical to re-enforce these new strategic ties. Furthermore, with a rise in nationalism, and AKP's determination to maintain democracy in its nation, the party in place may shift.

The decline in the Israeli-Turkish relationship has had an impact on Turkey, but unlike in Israel, it is not all negative. On the negative side, the trend towards anti-Semitic remarks made by Erdogan specifically, will eventually have a negative yield in its future relationship between the EU and the U.S. Furthermore, U.S. foreign policy currently has unwavering support for Israel; thus, the Turkish-U.S. relationship potentially will be hindered if the negativity towards Israel continues. The decline in relations has created an unstable tourist industry within Turkey, which in the summer of 2010 created a campaign to attract new visitors. The economic relationship has, for the most part, remained intact, for both countries are fearful of economic instability. The instability in the 60-year strong relation has taken away some of Turkey's political leverage within Israel, and ability to mediate the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. On a different note, the decline in relations between Israel and Turkey has alleviated Turkey from the security threats that an alliance with Israel entails. It has allowed Turkey to be a stronger player in the region due to the perceptions amongst Arab countries. Without a strong relationship between Turkey and Israel, the neighboring countries have more respect for Turkey, allowing it the position of soft power that it covets. With the decline of Turkish-Israeli relations, Turkey's position in the Middle East has moved to the top of its priority.

Conclusions : Where will the relations go from here?

Turkey	
Losses	Gains
Decline in Israeli tourism	Focus on relations with other nations i.e. Iran and Syria
Loss of soft power within Israel	Disassociation with Israeli security threats
Potential loss of US/ West	Improved perception on Turkey by its Arab neighbors

Israel	
Losses	Gains
Lost greatest ally in the region	Stronger ties with the Balkans
Potentially stronger Iran and Syria and larger threats in the region	
Decline in the perception of Israel by other nations	

The past few years prove that an easy resolution for the broken relationship between Israel and Turkey in the near future does not seem like an option. Turkey and Israel have had different experiences due to the decline in relations. Israel has suffered, and will continue to suffer, more because of the loss of relations. Any attempt to improve the relations with the AKP in control of the Turkish parliament has been fruitless. Though the options look slim, with the recent developments in the Middle East, Egypt in particular, combined with the possibility of political change within Turkey, there may be a chance the Israeli-Turkish relationship will be salvaged.

The chart above demonstrates the costs and benefits for Turkey and Israel respectively due to their loss of relations. The Turkish tourism industry has suffered because of the Israeli boycott of Turkey, and there was a call for Muslim tourist to help neutralize this effect. The loss of relations has initiated a decline in Turkey's ability to negotiate and contribute to finding a solution for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The actions Turkey has taken against Israel and its actions within the region have the potential to put Turkish-West and more specifically Turkish-U.S. relations at risk. However, Turkey has also gained a substantial amount due to the change in Israeli-Turkish relations. It has been able to improve its relations with other nations, most notably those with Iran and Syria. It has distanced itself from an association with the Israeli national security threat, meaning that it will not stand by Israel and put its own national security in jeopardy for the sake of Israel. Lastly, neighboring Arab nations no longer view the Turkish-Israeli relation as a strategic threat. Turkey has now made it clear where its loyalties are in regards to the Palestinian issue. Due to these changes, Turkey is more accepted today in the Middle East than it has been over the last 60 years.

From an Israeli standpoint, the loss of relations appears bleak. Turkey had been the first predominately Muslim country to recognize Israel, and from that point and until recently, Israeli-Turkish relation had been a source of pride for Israel. That pride is now gone. Israel has lost a sense of security in the region due to the increased interactions between Turkey-Iran-Syria. Iran and Syria's previous military actions and political rhetoric demonstrate that these two states possess a grave threat to Israel. The threat is now magnified with Turkey's current

engagement with these polities. The only benefit for Israel in the loss of the relations with Turkey is its increased political and economic ties with the Balkans, most significantly Greece. However, this is a minute benefit in light of all of its losses. All in all, the diminished strategic relations between Israel and Turkey has had a much more negative effect on Israel.

There have been signs from both countries that reveal a desire to improve their mutual relations, though these desires have yet to prove fruitful. Interestingly enough, Turkey appears to be open to mending relations between Israel. "Hate each other they may, both governments have come around to understanding that Turkish-Israeli ties have a significance beyond their immediate limits" (Idiz). The relations of Turkey and Israel have a greater meaning for the rest of the region, and the nations understand this. It appears that in the long run, for the sake of the Middle East, both nations will put forth the effort into rebuilding some form of political trust.

The AKP has put one major condition on whether to proceed with rebuilding the relations between Israel and Turkey. The condition is an apology from Israel for its actions on the Mavi Marmara. However, it is interesting that the AKP would be open to rebuilding Turkish-Israeli relations at all, considering many of the advantages it has gained due to recent changes. One explanation could be that Turkey, and more specifically Davutoglu, is trying to stand by its new foreign policy philosophy of inclusion. Also, Turkey is interested in being a mediator in the region, and an Israeli apology might prove beneficial for Turkey's credibility. Israel is a

player in the Middle East, and for what its worth, proper relations will advance Turkey as a rising leader.

The improvement in relations requires an apology. Erdogan has called upon Israel to apologize for its actions against Turkish citizens who were killed on the Mavi Marmara ship, part of the flotilla sent to aid Gaza on May 31st 2010. During a visit to Lebanon in November of 2010, Erdogan implored Israel to apologize for its actions. In a very powerful quote, Erdogan expressed that he believes that the fate of Israel rests upon the fate of the Middle East. In order for Israel to enjoy peace, Erdogan contends that it must take action for itself and apologize for the acts it committed against Turkey.

The people of Israel should see this now. If peace comes to that region, Israel would win as the region wins. If there is war in this region, Israel's people will be harmed as people of the region will be harmed. That is why we call on Israel to turn back from its mistakes, apologize and accept peace. Azbarez
Staff 11.24.2010

In late December of 2010, Erdogan renewed his demand for an apology from Israel, in order to proceed with the rebuilding of Israeli-Turkish relations. Along with reasserting Turkey's demands, Erdogan also criticized the U.S. and the EU for standing with Israel, even with its mistakes (Press TV 12.20.10).

However, Netanyahu's government has yet to offer an apology. In light of its grave losses because of the decline in relations, it seems puzzling that Israel would not seize the opportunity to amend its relation with Turkey. This is not to say that Netanyahu's government has not made efforts to fix the dying relations. Israel

understands that Turkey is a rising power in the Middle East. Furthermore, Israel understands that it is best to do what is in its power to mend the ties.

There are efforts from the Israeli side to bandage that which has been bruised between Israel and Turkey. For example, Prime Minister Netanyahu commended secret talks between Israel and Turkey that were aimed at recovering the relations. These talks happened in early July, even prior to Erdogan re-requesting an apology from Israel in order to move forward. While praising these secret talks, Netanyahu stressed that Israel will not apologize for what happened in May. He continued to say that Israel has sympathy for those killed in the incident; however, he stands by the notion that Israel is not guilty of anything (Netanyahu rules out apology 7.03.10).

The debate as to whether or not Israel should apologize stems from the two different investigations of the Flotilla incident. The UN Security Council created a fact-finding mission to uncover the issues with the flotilla attack on May 31st 2010. To start the investigation, the UN Human Rights Council first and foremost found the blockade on Gaza, which those aboard the flotilla were concerned with, to be unlawful. The council proclaimed that the blockade went against international laws because at the time of the blockade there was a human rights crisis in Gaza (Siddique). Subsequently, the UN fact-finding mission found that the actions of the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) were unlawful as well. The report found the violence used against the Turkish civilians both unnecessary and disproportionate to the threat that was imposed upon the IDF. The findings read:

The conduct of the Israeli military and other personnel towards the flotilla

passengers was not only disproportionate to the occasion but demonstrated levels of totally unnecessary and incredible violence. It betrayed an unacceptable level of brutality. (Humans Rights Council)

The Israeli government did not agree with the UN Security Council's fact-finding mission, and thus has issued its own investigation of the incident. The Israeli investigation, the Turkel Commission, which was led by Justice Jacob Turkel, found the IDF's actions on May 31st 2010 to be legal. First, the Commission found the naval blockade against Gaza to be legal. Furthermore, the commission proclaimed that the IDF was acting out of self-defense (Report of Public Commission).

Differences between the findings show that there is room for interpretation with the Gaza flotilla incident. As far as Netanyahu is concerned, he would like to improve relations with Turkey because it would benefit his nation. However, Netanyahu will not put his own soldiers and military officers under unmerited scrutiny from the rest of the world to allow relations between Israeli and Turkey to proceed properly (Ravid). Israel has also asked Turkey to recognize that the IDF did not act in a malicious manner and that the death of the nine Turkish citizens was not the intent of the IDF (Keinon). This offers an explanation as to why Israel would be reluctant to apologize to Turkey for its actions in the flotilla incident.

A second reason for Israel to refuse to apologize to Turkey for the death of its citizens is due to current domestic political environment in Israel. This is what one author calls the "Lieberman factor" (Idiz). Avigdor Lieberman is the Israeli foreign minister as well as the head of the far-right part of Netanyahu's government, the

Yisrael Beiteinu party¹⁵. In terms of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict the advocates for a two state solution but offers little compromise. He rejects the idea of a shared Jerusalem and constantly questions the loyalty of Arab-Israeli citizens (Reuters). He has more radical, right wing opinions as to whether or not Israel should be apologizing to Turkey. He believes, in fact, that Turkey should apologize to Israel for the incident altogether. He is strong in his beliefs, and refutes any criticism by simply saying that he has a right to his own opinion (Idiz). Lieberman believes that Turkey is abusing its relationship with Israel and using Israel as its scapegoat (Ozerkan).

Lieberman's party represents 11.2% of the Israeli Knesset, while Netanyahu's Likud party makes up 22.3%, and the leading opposition group, Kadima, represents 23.2% of the Knesset. Netanyahu was successful in creating his coalition majority government; this includes 74 out of 120 seats of the Knesset (CIA factbook). Part of his coalition is Lieberman's Yisrael Beiteinu, which gives light to why Lieberman's words, aside from him being the foreign minister, carry such a heavy weight within Netanyahu's government. He needs the party to be content with his actions because there is always the threat that it can withdraw from the coalition.

Lieberman has displayed opposition to Tzipi Livni, leader of the Kadima party, a more centrist party in the Israeli Knesset. Livni has suggested that such policies are a threat to Israeli national security. She had implied in a radio interview with Israeli army radio, that Lieberman should be taking a greater risk with Israeli

¹⁵ He was previously part of Netanyahu's Likud party. Also Yisrael Beiteinu means Israel is our home in Hebrew.

foreign policy decisions. Livini believes that stepping outside of his comfort zone and apologizing would be an appropriate approach for Lieberman (Idiz). Lieberman and his party have been able to win votes for Knesset through its hawkish stance on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which encompasses the Gaza flotilla incident. In order to win battles at home, Lieberman is using the issue of Turkey to stick by his right wing views, and a compromise to these may affect his position within his party, making him seem weak.

However, as much as Livni expresses a need for the country to take more of a risk, and sacrifice a bit of its pride, for the sake of foreign policy, Netanyahu's views reside with Lieberman. Netanyahu has stated, "Israel cannot apologize because Israel's soldiers had to defend themselves to avoid being lynched by a crowd" (Netanyahu rules out apology). This issue represents the internal battle within the Israeli government. The unified voice may not represent the will of all, and it could put Israel in jeopardy. This is an example of how an international issue is greatly affected by internal political conflict between Livni's party and Lieberman's party (Idiz).

The result of this internal feud may prove detrimental to the health of Israeli international security. The repercussions on Israel from Turkey because it will not apologize will create an increased distance between the two nations. This is the opposite effect that Israel desires. Erdogan has called Netanyahu's government "The worst government Israel has ever seen" (Keinon 1.12.11). He is mainly referring to the stance and influence Lieberman is taking within the Israeli government. This point of contestation is unacceptable as far as Erdogan is concerned. His citizens

were killed in the incident and that merits an apology. Furthermore, as Idiz explains, Davutoglu is requesting that Israel take it upon itself to mend the situation and take responsibility for its actions. Though this stance presumes that Israel is at fault, the reality is that the Israeli-Turkish relationship is much more important for Israel than it is for Turkey, as outlined at the opening of this chapter. Therefore, the Israeli government should seriously rethink its stance on whether or not it will apologize for the deaths that resulted from the flotilla incident. It may be better for Israel to reluctantly disregard its pride and apologize.

On the other hand, there is an important factor in the decline of relations, which help rationalize Israel's position of standing by its actions and refusing to apologize. The flotilla incident is not the sole cause of the decline in relations. As has been expressed, the decline of Turkish-Israeli relations started when the AKP party came to office in 2002. In fact, if Israel does apologize to the Turkish government for its actions, this alone would not necessarily yield an improvement in relations between Israel and Turkey. The flotilla event did not cause the decline; rather it was a result of a frayed relationship. If Israel does go against its own actions and apologizes, it may prove ineffective. There could be domestic political repercussions for Netanyahu's government, which explains the risks involved in apologizing to Turkey.

Thus far, the strategic relationship between Turkey and Israel has been following a downward trend. With the remarks and actions from both Ankara and Jerusalem, any attempt to rebuild the relationship has failed. It is worth noting that while the attempts have failed the two nations have not yet put forth their best

efforts to mend the relationship. Both sides leave little room for compromise, and, with domestic politics interfering, it is a hard situation to navigate. However, all hope is not lost. There are a few aspects to the current circumstance in each country domestically, as well as in the rest of the Middle East that shed a ray of light upon the fading relationship between Israel and Turkey.

Though domestic politics has been a cause in preventing Israel from working on its ties with Turkey, in light of the recent Egyptian revolution, there should, and most likely will be, serious adjustments to the Israeli foreign policy stance. The overthrowing of former president Mubarak in Egypt, an ally to Israel with whom it maintained a cold peace for the past 30 years, puts Israel in a much less secure position in the Middle East. Now, with Egyptian elections in the future, Israel cannot rest assured that the next ruling party will maintain the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt. It most likely will not be as supportive as Mubarak's regime was. This is likely to affect how Israel henceforth responds to Turkish requests.

Although, Egypt was a very significant ally for Israel in the region, throughout the protests Israel remained quiet. Even in light of Mubarak's benefits to Israeli foreign policy, it was difficult for Israel to react to the Egyptian revolution. Israel did not want to support the pro-democracy protests, given the chance that Mubarak remained in power and would thus be offended. Nor did Israel want to support Mubarak for it would be perceived as supporting brutal dictatorship (Bronner 1). As Levi explains, throughout the relationship, if Israel ever needed the world's approval or regional legitimacy, it would turn to Mubarak's regime to take this role. Egypt became a crucial part of Israeli foreign policy and during the past few weeks,

the Israelis have been very apprehensive as to what will come next (Levi). As Bronner explains, if the next regime moves away from the current position of peace with Israel, it is going to have extreme repercussions. Israel relied on Egypt for about 40 percent of its oil imports as well as help with negotiations for peace with the Palestinians (Bronner 1).

The first obvious concern would be that Israel will lose its current standing with Egypt. It would have to secure the Egyptian border, creating more military concerns for Israel. This would revert the Egyptian border back to the hostile border it used to be. The other main concern is that Egypt not only has kept a peace with Israel, but it has been an example for other nations. If Egypt regresses away from the peace with Israel, Israeli officials fear that the other nations in the region, including the Palestinians, will be even more reluctant to form ties with Israel. Furthermore, there is a possibility that the new power in Egypt will decrease the power of the moderate Palestinians, the PA, and increase the power of Hamas (Bronner 2).

Zvi Mazel, a former Israeli ambassador to Egypt, advises Israel, "Forget about the former Egypt. Now it's a completely new reality, and it won't be easy" (Associated Press JPOST). With this in mind, Israel is in a much tighter situation in the Middle East, which will affect its stance on foreign policy. The reaction from Israeli President Shimon Peres reiterates what Mazel is referring to. Peres has made it clear that he believes that the large target on Israel's back is because of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. In light of the dynamics that will emerge from the regime change in Egypt, it is imperative that Israel elevates itself of this target. To

accomplish this, Peres has stated that Israel must make more concessions and compromises to achieve the two state solution needed for peace between the Palestinians and the Israelis. In the words of Peres: “The peace process is now crucial for our neighbors, and not just us. A true compromise, as painful as it may be, is preferable to the dangers that would be created in its absence” (Ravid). This new rhetoric stems from the changes in the region.

The new dynamic means that Israel’s interactions with Turkey are likely to change, hopefully making the relations between the two nations stronger. Israel potentially will lose the support of Egypt, and because of this the two other regional allies, Jordan and Turkey, will look much more appealing. Israel, and more specifically the right winged Lieberman, may reassess the significance of Turkey’s relationship to see that it means a lot to Israel. Apologizing without the guarantee of a positive outcome in relations, while having Egypt’s backing for many of its actions, does not seem likely. Now that Turkey looks to be potentially more important than the future Egyptian nation as an ally to Israel, it looks more promising that Israel would leave behind domestic political issues and apologize.

If Egypt does push Israel to make strides with the Palestinian-Israeli conflict it will alleviate much of the contestation between Turkey and Israel. If advancements are made, Turkey will most likely warm up to Israel, even without an apology. Much of the criticism of Israel that comes out of Ankara attacks Israel’s behavior with Gaza, and the injustices Ankara feels Israel commits against the Palestinian people. Erdogan especially has delivered many statements, albeit with an anti-Semitic undertone, against Israeli action in Gaza. As Ayturk explains, “The

crisis over Gaza has exposed the Achilles' heel for this [Turkish and Israel] relationship; Turkish governments will always feel embarrassed of their ties with Israel..." (Ayturk 71). Without Israel's conflict with the Palestinian people, Turkey would lose the source of much of its frustration with Israel.

Although, President Peres is propelling these notions that Israel must compromise and calls on the Israelis to form peace, the concept is extremely idealistic. To say the least, Coming up with a proper solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is a tall order for Israel to fill. With all the time and energy that has been spent on trying to mend the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which presides over the region, to suddenly ignore the frustrations and, as Peres says, fix this problem immediately seems to be a grave challenge.

First, part of the problem with a quick solution is that thus far, much of the negotiation has taken place in Egypt. Unfortunately, after the regime switch this will more likely than not cease to be the case (Levi). Secondly, attempts to create a positive situation have not yielded the desired results, that being peace. Levi suggests that in order for Israel to accomplish what Peres is urging, Israel must take extreme leaps. He suggests that Israel regress back to the 1967 borders, then the nation must acknowledge the misplaced Palestinians, and subsequently provide as much of a compensation as the nation is able to give. And finally, Levi believes that Israel must be ready and willing to give full rights to all citizens including Arabs living under the state of Israel. There appears to be a large challenge in developing a conclusion to the conflict. However, it should not be considered out of the question.

Aside from the recent changes in the Middle East, another aspect of Turkish-Israeli relations is subject to change. Much of the contestations between the two nations stems from the fact that the AKP is in power in Turkey. The AKP emphasizes Turkey's position as a regional power, creating a stronger bond between both Iran and Syria. Much of the decline in Israeli-Turkish relations has roots in the change in 2002 of the Turkish leadership. However, one thing that can help the Turkish-Israeli relationship is that Turkey is a democracy and therefore, the political power that runs the country can change as soon as the next election in 2011.

If there were to be a change in the political power that controls Turkey, it would be good news for Israel based upon the opposition parties in Turkey. The leading opposition group is the Republican's People party (CHP), which was the political group of Kemal Ataturk. In recent years, this party has had a lot of opposition to the actions of the AKP. For example, on the issue of Iran and Syria, the CHP has a lot of trepidation concerning the increase of relations between Turkey and those two nations. Osam Koruturk, who is head of foreign policy within the CHP, has expressed dismay towards Davutoglu's actions as foreign minister. He expressed frustrations when Davutoglu, at an international meeting in Munich, refused to sit in a meeting at which an Israeli representative was in attendance. Koruturk expressed that these actions were detrimental to Turkish foreign policy, for he had to sit in on the meeting in his place, and it lost Turkey some mediation power. This exemplifies the way in which Davutoglu's sentiments towards Israel are negatively affecting Turkey's international relations on a whole (Demiratas).

The CHP also has expressed great opposition not only on general Turkish affairs, but also specifically, as to how Turkey should be engaging (or not) with Israel. Kemal Kilicdaroglu is the head of the CHP, and has drastic criticisms for the AKP in how it handled the flotilla situation in May of 2010. Kilicdaroglu believes that Turkey should not have allowed the group, who initiated the flotilla to leave from Turkey, when it was made clear by Israeli officials that Israel would stop them. He believes that the Mavi Marmara instigated the reaction from Israel, and it is because of this that the Israeli relation with Turkey was shaken to the core (Middle East Online 2.2.11). With this type of rhetoric from the AKP's largest opposition party in the Turkish parliament, it is evident that the relations would be different if the AKP was not in power. With the CHP in power, Israel and Turkey would more likely than not attain a sound relationship.

The good news for Israel, and for Israeli-Turkish relations, is that Turkey is a democracy, and the CHP has the ability to regain power. In recent years, the CHP has not campaigned properly to gain the votes that are needed in order to win elections. This, along with the AKP's grassroots efforts to gain votes and its strong economic policies, enabled the AKP to stay on top. In recent years, however, it seems that AKP may start to lose its leadership in the Turkish parliament. Looking at some minority parties within Turkey, there is evidence that the AKP can potentially lose its support. The leaders of these parties, upon seeing and hearing the actions of Erdogan in regards to the Gaza flotilla no less, decided it best to band together behind the Republicans' People party (Kenner). With an added push, there is a chance the CHP will be able to win a majority in Parliament.

To add to the cohesion between secular pro-Western and Israeli-friendly opposition groups to the AKP, there seems to be a popular trend which shows that citizens may be turned off from Erdogan's AKP. Polls from mid 2010 show that the support for the CHP party has risen much higher than it has been for the past few years (Kenner). Furthermore, Kilicdaroglu is the new party leader who replaced Deniz Baykal due to a sex scandal. Kilicdaroglu is seen as a man who can turn the party around and has the ability to join parties together, as with the nascent Turkish political party (Geerdink). An interesting trend within the Turkish youth mirrors the growing opposition for the AKP. There is a recent pattern towards getting Atatürk tattoos to show nationalist pride. This great Turkish pride has caused many to see the Islamist AKP as somewhat of a threat to their lifestyle (Zalweski).

Turkish citizens have a growing concern with the actions of the AKP, for reasons both related to Israel and completely disassociated with it. The CHP seems to be a legitimate alternative for Turkish voters in the June 2011 elections. With that said, the AKP still holds a majority in public opinion and may be able to hold onto leadership in Turkey (Geerdink). It is not impossible though for there to be a change in leadership, and if it does happen, it would be very beneficial for Turkish-Israeli relations.

The new realities of the Middle East, which were ignited by Mubarak's overturn, combined with a democratic atmosphere allow some optimism about improving the Israeli-Turkish relationship. There is hope that one of the two nations will come around, and they will be able to work together to mend the ties, which have been so strong in the past. Until that point, it is important to see that not all

relations have completely deteriorated. Furthermore, not for nothing, the Israeli-Turkish relationship is an important symbol for the rest of the world. This was shown when Turkey chose to stand by Israel during a time of major disaster within the country.

On December 2nd, 2010 a forest fire was sparked in the northern Carmel mountain of Israel. This was a natural disaster that Israel was not fully prepared to handle. This is a startling fact because Israel is usually ready to respond immediately to emergency situations.¹⁶ The minister of interior, Eli Yahsi was criticized for his poor efforts. This was the worst forest fire in Israel's history; about 10,000 acres, and 4 million trees were burned (Kershner). At this time, regardless of the strained relations between the two countries, Turkey was one of the first nations to send helicopters and aid to help Israel battle the fire. Turkey sent two firefighting airplanes earning the acknowledgment and appreciation of Netanyahu. The Turkish media sympathized with Israel during this crisis, offering a positive image of Israel to the Turkish public (Bronner). This awful occurrence in Israel's history has shown that even though there are many concerns that the Israeli-Turkish relationship has turned completely sour, there is still an underlying message that Turkey and Israel continue to have each other's interest in mind when there is a crisis.

It seems as though there are many ways to analyze the Turkish-Israeli relationship, and the result it will have in the long term on both nations. For

¹⁶ An example is that the IDF was the first major player to be on the ground in Port Au Prince after the earthquake hit Haiti in January 2010 (Palm Beach Post).

example, a best-case, worst-case scenario description of the relationship is one way to understand the details of the relationship

Worst Case Scenario: If the relations between Israel and Turkey continue down the same path they are currently headed down, the result may be unsalvageable. If the Israeli government does not make sacrifices and apologize for its actions, in response to the minimum request that Ankara is asking for, the relationship will further unravel. To add to this, if the AKP maintains control of Ankara, and continues to attack Israel, as Lieberman says "Israel will not be Turkey's punching bag." This will lead to further aggravations on the part of the Israelis. Furthermore, if Israel is left without the help of Egypt, Israel may end up resorting to the one power they have: might. The hostility in the region will rise, and this will further aggravate Ankara. In this situation it would be very hard to repair ties between Ankara and Jerusalem.

Best Case Scenario: First and foremost, Israel could apologize for the deaths that resulted from the flotilla incident. Regardless of whether or not Israel's actions were legal, there were Turkish deaths when Israel and Turkey were in a time of peace. The apology would lead to an optimistic view of Israel from the Turkish perspective. To further improve the relations, the Republican's People party could gain enough political power and be voted into the leadership of the Turkish parliament. With the CHP, whose emphasis would again revolve not only around Turkish nationalism, but also on inclusion into the West, in power there would be changes. These changes would be directed away from relations with unsavory characters like Al Bashir in Sudan, and refocused on re-building relations with

Israel. With the new party in power, Israel and Turkey would be able to restore their relations to what they once were.

In the real life case scenario, the most likely outcome will lie somewhere in between the two. For the sake of the region, and for both nations, efforts in restoring relations will likely prove beneficial. There are large hurdles to overcome for the two nations to regain the ties they shared in the 1990s. One of these hurdles is that Turkey has been able to find from other nations what it once needed from Israel: regional support, military assistance. The losses are not so severe for Turkey. However, for Israel, especially in light of recent changes in Egypt, the loss of relations is severe and Israel should begin to take risks. Both nations should see the long-term advantages of maintaining ties between one another and mend their relationship to bring more peace and stability to the Middle East.

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