ALLIANCE THEORY: THE CASE OF TURKEY AND ISRAEL

A THESIS PRESENTED BY WOLFAVDO PICCOLI

TO

THE INSTITUTE OF ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

BILKENT UNIVERSITY

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Approved by the Institute of Economics and Social Sciences.

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The question of the origins of alliances is one of the most debated issues in the theory of International Relations (IR). After reviewing the main theoretical approaches about alliances formation, the short-lived alliance of 1958 between Turkey and Israel and the rapidly developing new alliance between the same countries will be examined to test the alternative explanations of alliance behavior. The Turkish-Israeli alliances are of considerable interest intrinsically, given the importance of the two states and the region(s) in which they are located, and theoretically, given that both can shed light on different approaches to alliance formation and the relative dearth of attention paid to alliances between or among smaller states. The various factors adduced to explain alliance formation – external, domestic and ideational – all play a role in this case study. Nevertheless, the evidence of the Turkish-Israeli relations indicate the predominance of external factors.
ÖZET

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CHAPTER I

THE ORIGINS OF ALLIANCES.

1.1 Introduction:

The question of the origins of alliances is one of the most debated issues in the theory of International Relations (IR). Indeed, numerous studies and reflections come together under the generic label of alliances, all of them aimed at explaining why states form alliances, when states ally and which alliance — given certain conditions — can we expect to come about. Turning to the first issue, why alliances form, the most prevalent speculations concern the collective provision of national security. In other words, nations create alliances fundamentally as a response to perceived threat to national security. The different source of the threat, external or domestic, leads to two broad categories reflecting different approaches to why alliances form. The former, focused on external security, is linked to realism which has tended to draw on relations among great powers; the latter, focused on internal security, scrutinizes alliance formation by smaller states, especially developing countries. Apart from these two leading approaches, other explanations emphasizing the importance of social, cultural and political similarities or the function of alliances as tools constraining the behavior of states are also put forth by a smaller number of scholars.

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1 For the purposes of this study, I define an alliance as a formal or informal relationship of cooperation between two or more states involving mutual expectations of some degree of policy coordination on security issues under a range of conditions in the future. Thus, I define alliance broadly to include informal alignments as well as formal alliance treaties. This is consistent with Stephen Walt, The Origins of Alliances, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987) which can be consulted for a survey of definitions.
After reviewing all these different arguments, the short-lived alliance of 1958 between Turkey and Israel and the rapidly developing new alliance between the same countries will be examined to test the alternative explanations of alliance behavior. The Turkish-Israeli alliances are of considerable interest intrinsically, given the importance of the two states and the region(s) in which they are located, and theoretically, given that both can shed light on different approaches to alliance formation and the relative dearth of attention paid to alliances between or among smaller states.

1.2 Approaches based on external security:

Alliance theories are traditionally dominated by the realist and neorealist schools of thought. According to this tradition, the systemic structure, structural polarity and systemic anarchy, determine the formation of alliances. In particular, the anarchy characteristic of the international system leads states to accord primacy to their security. According to Martin Wight, the function of an alliance is to “reinforce the security of the allies or to promote their interests in the external world.” States incapable of facing unilaterally a stronger enemy decide to cooperate with other states in the same situation in order to increase their security by massing their capabilities against a common enemy.

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3 Liska argues that “Alliances are against, and only derivatively for, someone or something” (p.12) and emphasizes the role of external threat, calling it the “primary source of alliance”, George Liska, *Nations in Alliance. The Limits of Interdependence*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1962), p.13
Essentially, this is what is usually called the “aggregation of power” model, the most well-known explanation of the origin of alliances. This model assumes that allies value each other for the military assistance they can provide one another in deterring a common threat. In other words, in the face of external threat, states seek alliances for the primary purpose of enhancing their effective military capabilities through combination with others. Therefore, military power, security interests and external threats rather than domestic factors determine states’ alliance behavior.

In this regard, it is necessary to point out the connection between the theory of balance of power and the theory of alliances: alliances, according to this perspective, are the means by which states maintain among themselves an approximately equal distribution of power, in Morgenthau’s words “a necessary function of the balance of power operating in a multiple-state system”. In his opinion, within the struggle for power that characterizes international politics, each state may increase unilaterally its own power by internal means, or aggregate its power to the one of other states, or prevent that other states mass their power with the enemy. The first choice implies an armaments race, whereas, the second and third options entail the formation of alliances.

More recently, Stephen Walt has developed an in-depth analysis of the formation of alliances, in which the concept of “external threat” is central to his “balance of threat theory”. Walt criticizes the classic structural balance of power theory for its overemphasis on the concept of power (defined as aggregate capabilities). According to him, states seek allies not to balance power but, rather, to

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6 Ibid.
balance threats. The degree to which a state threatens others is not exclusively determined by its material capabilities (population, economic, industrial and military resources), as suggested by the balance of power approach, but it is also affected by its geographic proximity, offensive capabilities and perceived intentions.

The debate about alliance formation is also focused on the issue of how states choose sides in a conflict, in short on the dichotomy between balancing and bandwagoning. The term "bandwagoning" as a description of international alliance behavior first appeared in Kenneth Waltz's *Theory of International Politics.* In his structural model of balance-of-power theory, Waltz uses "bandwagoning" to serve as the opposite of balancing: bandwagoning refers to joining the stronger coalition, balancing means allying with the weaker side.

The balancing/bandwagoning dichotomy, as two distinct hypotheses about how states will select their alliance partners in the face of a rising threat, is endorsed and further developed by Walt. Indeed, he declares that his use of the terms balancing and bandwagoning follows that of Kenneth Waltz; nevertheless, he redefines bandwagoning as "alignment with the source of danger." In his theory of balance of threat, Walt argues that the tendency of bandwagoning can be motivated by defensive reasons (to appease the dominant power), offensive reasons (to profit, directly or indirectly, from the victory of the dominant power), or by a combination of both of them. Walt forcefully argues that balancing is, empirically, the dominant

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8 As Walt points out, "states balance against the states that pose the greatest threat, and the latter need not to be the most powerful states in the system." *Ibid.,* p.263
10 Kenneth Waltz credits the term of Stephen Van Evera, see *Theory of International Politics,* p.126
response to external threats, and bandwagoning is almost always confined to weak and isolated states. Bandwagoning is risky because it requires trust and increases the resources available to the threatening power: today's ally can always turn to be tomorrow's enemy. Joining the weaker side (balancing) prevents the emergence of a hegemon that could threaten the independence of all.

Taking into account Walt's "neorealist" orientation, it is rather surprising that the variable of system structure plays little role in his analysis. He underplays the importance of structural differences by believing that his generalizations are equally applicable to multipolar and bipolar systems. For example, we can argue that bandwagoning is logically more likely in a multipolar system than in a bipolar one. Balancing may be hindered in a multipolar system by ambiguity about which state poses the greatest threat. Bandwagoning is also encouraged by the thought that there are other targets toward which an aggressor's energies may be directed and there are other potential allies that a state may call upon for help in the event that its aggressor-ally turns against it. Moreover, in multipolarity efficient balancing is inhibited because of collective goods anxieties and hopes that somebody else will do the job: a pathology known as "buck-passing". According to the logic of "passing

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15. Walt: "In general, the weaker the state, the more likely it is to bandwagon rather than balance...States will also be tempted to bandwagon when allies are simply unavailable", Stephen Walt, The Origins of Alliances, pp.29-30.

16. In Waltz's words: "secondary states, if they are free to choose, flock to the weaker side; for it is the stronger side that threatens them. On the weaker side, they are both more appreciated and safer, provided, of course, that the coalition they form achieves enough defensive or deterrent strength to dissuade adversaries from attacking", Kenneth Waltz, Theory of International Politics, pp.126-7.

17. In the now classic "An Economic Theory of Alliances", Review of Economics and Statistics 48: 266-279 (1966), Olson and Zeckhauser (p.267) argued that public, or collective, goods and services (e.g., deterrence) which (1) cannot feasibly be withheld from nonpurchasers or nonproducers and (2) if available to one member of the group can be made available to others without cost or at marginal
the buck” some states – unwilling to share the costs of stopping a rising hegemon or because they expect their position to be strengthened by keeping itself out from the war – may feel an incentive to stand aside if warfare occurs in hopes that some other state will face the aggressor. In short, they may try to free ride on other states’ balancing efforts. Inevitably, the balancing process becomes inefficient since the aggressor is given “the chance to overturn the balance by eliminating the system’s opposing poles through piecemeal aggression”. The other pathology affecting balancing in multipolarity is caused by the phenomenon of “chain-ganging”. Given the anarchic setting and the relative equality of alliance partners that characterize a multipolar system, each member-state feels that its own security is integrally intertwined with the security of its alliance partners. In such a scenario, chaining occurs when nations are dragged into a war in order to save reckless allies because they fear that the demise of the latter would decisively affect the security of each of them. States chaining themselves unconditionally to reckless allies threaten the stability of the system “by causing unrestrained warfare that threatens the survival of some of the great power that form the system’s poles”. In a bipolar system, bandwagoning is less likely not only because of the virtual certainty that the super power protector will continue to balance off the superpower threat but also because the threat itself is less ambiguous.

Several scholars point out that Walt’s study-span is severely curtailed because of the defensive bias characterizing his perspective, which views all

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20 Thomas Christensen and Jack Snyder, “Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity”, p.141.
alliances as responses to "threat". Apart from the bandwagoning type, offensive alliances are absent in his scheme: as Schweller points out "alliances are responses not only to threats but also to opportunities".\textsuperscript{21} In this regard, it is interesting to notice that despite the fact that many realist scholars have usually distinguished between "imperialistic and status-quo power", or "satisfied or unsatisfied powers", or "revolutionary and status-quo states", both realism and neorealism suffer from a status-quo bias in their interpretation of alliance policies.\textsuperscript{22}

Randall Schweller is one of the scholars who bases the analysis on the distinction between status-quo powers and revisionist states by arguing that "generally, revisionist powers are the prime movers of alliance behavior; status-quo states are the reactors".\textsuperscript{23} According to Schweller the main problem of the critiques raised about Walt's arguments is their acceptance of his assumptions that 1) alliances are the outcome of a threat - whether domestic or external and 2) bandwagoning is interpreted as capitulation.\textsuperscript{24}

In contrast, Schweller points out that bandwagoning should be interpreted as the alignment not with the state posing a threat but with the stronger one; moreover, the promise for rewards rather than the threat of punishment motivates a state to bandwagon. However, Schweller acknowledges that the desire for profit is not the unique explanation for bandwagoning, states may ally with the stronger side - either as "jackal bandwagoning", whose goal is profit (to share the spoils of victory), or "piling-on bandwagoning", that usually takes place at the end of wars when "states


\textsuperscript{22} See Hans Morgenthau, \textit{Politics among Nations. The Struggle for Power and Peace}.

bandwagon with the victor to claim an unearned share of the spoils” – because of fear.\textsuperscript{25}

As observed so far, almost all scholars interested in the question of alliance formation have coined \textit{ad-hoc} terminology (terms/definitions) in order to distinguish their specific theories from the other. Schweller follows the trend and calls his theory as “balance-of-interests”.\textsuperscript{26}

Schweller argues that “the most important determinant of alignment is the compatibility of political goals, not the imbalances of power or threat”.\textsuperscript{27} Accordingly, if one state is pleased with the status quo it will join the coalition defending the systemic equilibrium, even if it is the stronger one. On the other hand, a revisionist state aimed at “profit” rather than security will align with a rising expansionist state or a coalition that seeks to overthrow the status quo.\textsuperscript{28} In short, according to Schweller, a state’s alliance behavior is not necessarily determined by the presence of an external threat but by opportunities for gain and for profit.

This theory is able, according to its author, to explain alliance formations both at the state and at systemic levels. The former refers to “the costs a state is willing to pay to defend its value relative to the costs a state is willing to pay to extend its values”.\textsuperscript{29} In this way, Schweller distinguishes among four different kinds of states: 1) The “Lions”, states satisfied with the status-quo that are willing to pay a high price to protect what they possess; 2) The “Wolves”, which consider their

\textsuperscript{25} Walt writes that “bandwagoning involves unequal exchange; the vulnerable state makes asymmetrical concessions to the dominant power and accepts a subordinate role”. Stephen Walt, “Testing Theories of Alliance Formation: the Case of Southwest Asia”, p.282.

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid, p.99.

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid, p.88.

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid, p.93.
situation as intolerable and, therefore, are willing to pay an high price to subvert the status-quo; 3) the “Jackals”, unsatisfied free-riders ready to trail “Wolves” or “Lions” who are on the verge of a victory; 4) the “Lambs”, willing to pay low costs for their defense or their expansion, which are usually suspected of bandwagoning because of fear.

At the systemic level, balance-of-interests theory suggests that the distribution of capabilities, by itself, does not determine the stability of the system. More significant are the objectives and means to which those capabilities or influence are put to use. Schweller asserts that when the states pleased with the status quo are stronger than the revisionist states, the system will be stable. {superscript}30

However, Schweller’s conclusions about the systemic level neglect completely one of the core-points of structural realism: the argument that broad outcomes of international politics derive more from the structural constraints of the states system than from unit behavior. Waltz argues that the interactions of major actors—the number of poles—select and socialize states to a particular form of behavior. In other words, it determines what types of international behavior will be rewarded and punished and, therefore, what types of foreign policy will seem prudent to actors in the system. This is clearly in contradiction with Schweller’s emphasis on the role of states’ motivations in shaping their foreign policies, which leads him to explain systemic effects (i.e. stability) uniquely in the light of the

{superscript}29 Ibid

Schweller defines status-quo powers as the states that “seek self-preservation and the protection of values they already possess; they are security maximizers, not power-maximizers”. In contrast, “revisionist states value what they covet more that what they currently possess...they will employ military force to change the status quo and to extend their values”, Ibid, pp 104-105.

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preferences of the units composing the system and disregards the impact of systemic factors.  

In short, Schweller says that bandwagoning is the policy of the state that has not much to lose but something, or much, to gain; balancing is the policy of the state that has not much to gain but much to lose. Rather that being opposite behaviors, balancing and bandwagoning are associated with opposite systemic conditions: balancing with stasis, bandwagoning with two phases of a system in flux - the rise of Wolves that attracts, for different reasons, the Jackals and the Lambs (i.e. the end of a war and the linked phenomenon of piling on the winning coalitions).

Following this analysis, mainly focused of Walt’s balance of threat theory and on Schweller’s balance of interests theory, one question emerges: How to articulate the causal linkage that drives states’ alliance policy? Walt’s theory focuses on the concept of threat, which can drive a state to ally against, as well as, together with the state that constitutes the threat. How can the same cause lead to two outcomes so different? Are the strength of the state and the availability of allies the only factors determining states’ alliance choices as suggested by Walt? Schweller, on the other hand, argues that "positive sanctions (i.e. profit) are the most effective means to induce bandwagoning behavior" but also admits that fear may precipitate the decision to align with the stronger side. Hence, what drives states’ alliance policy? Profit or fear?

As Glenn Snyder put it: “Alliances should also be placed in the context of system structure and process. Systemic anarchy is one stimulus to ally, although not always a sufficient one. Structural polarity - how military power and potential are distributed among major states - has important effects on the nature of alliances and alliance politics”. Glenn Snyder, “Alliance Theory: A Neo-Realist First Cut”, Journal of International Affairs 44:1 (1990), p.107.


Allying with a threatening state may be also motivated by different phenomena than the ones indicated by Walt and Schweller. States may choose to ally with adversaries in order to contain threats emanating from one another. Patricia Weitsman labels this dynamic tethering. Tethering differentiates itself from bandwagoning because: 1) it implies a compromise from a position of strength rather than capitulation or appeasement; and 2) it involves reciprocal threats rather than asymmetrical threat as it is the case with bandwagoning.

Finally, it is necessary to point out that the dichotomy balancing/bandwagoning, which is endorsed by both Walt and, albeit to a lesser extent, by Schweller, obscures the full range of choices within the alliance realm and inhibits a more discriminating analysis. In reality, there are many ways to accommodate a threatening state besides allying with or against it: the choices available are not strictly restricted to the ones implied in the drastic alternative “with the stronger, or against the stronger”. As suggested by Schroeder, this could take various forms: declaring neutrality, whether formal or informal; approaching other states on one or both sides to improve relations, but short of alliance; trying to withdraw into isolation; and conciliating and compromising with the threatening state without capitulating and joining that power in order to keep options open and

36 Weitsman recognizes that her argument is built on Schroeder, but she argues that the pacts analyzed in her article are among states posing a grave threat to them in the international system, rather than pacts forming among relatively friendly states. Ibid, p.163.
37 Walt has subsequently relaxed the dichotomy. Balancing and bandwagoning are ideal types which actual behavior only approximates: “balancing against a potential threat does not require unremitting hostility to it”. See Stephen Walt, “Testing Theories of Alliance Formation: the Case of Southwest Asia”, p.315.
gain time. Indeed, reconciliation, even if precarious, may allow the preservation of some autonomy that, on the other hand, would necessarily be jeopardized by forming an alliance with the stronger. These externally oriented conciliating strategies may also be accompanied by internal balancing efforts (arming): many combinations of balancing and conciliation are conceivable, as diplomatic history makes abundantly clear.

1.3 Approaches based on internal security:

Deborah Larson suggests that in order to better grasp the question of when states bandwagon it is necessary to abandon the systemic level of analysis in favour of focusing on the domestic scene of the countries that decide to ally with the greater powers. Empirically, in her analysis, she refers to the behavior of the small Central and Eastern European powers towards Germany in the 1930s. By adopting what she defines as an “institutionalist approach” and positing that the élites ruling a state want, in the first instance, to keep their hold on power and do not necessarily act both in order to protect the territorial integrity and to increase the power of the state, she concludes that “alignment with a potential hegemon helps a weak regime to retain authority in a variety of ways – by putting an end to external subversion,

39 A great power has a good chance to have its way with a weak ally as concerns benefits and policies, and it is for this reason that Machiavelli warned weak nations against making alliances with strong states except by necessity. The Prince, Chapter 21
40 For example, it is wrong to suggest that Britain, France and Russia in the late 1930s were “appeasing” instead of “balancing”: they did both. While underreacting to the threat posed by Hitler, they were also building-up their arsenals. As Christensen and Snyder argue, “Appeasement is a diplomatic strategy that can either accompany or preclude balancing strategies, in the same way that “talking tough” and leveling coercive threats can accompany or preclude taking concrete measures to improve one’s power position in the world”, Thomas Christensen and Jack Snyder, “Progressive Research on Degenerate Alliances”, American Political Science Review 91:4 (1997), p. 921.
undermining the political position of domestic rivals, providing them with a source of economic assistance and an aura of invincibility by association with the great power’s victories".  

In short, worried about their own political survival, the dominating élites of a weak state are not in the position to face an hegemonic threat and, consequently, they are more likely to align (bandwagoning) with a threatening state to prolong their position in power.  

Taking into account Larson’s focus on the domestic structure of states, it is somehow surprising that she does not pay any attention to the different types of political regime that ruled the Eastern and Central European states in the 1930s. Moreover, Larson’s argument that bandwagoning alliance behavior is associated to “weak states” does not challenge at all balance-of-threat theory’s explanation of alliance formation. Walt’s theory predicts that states with illegitimate leaders, weak governmental institutions, and/or little ability to mobilize economic resources are weak states likely to bandwagon: “the weaker the state, the more likely it is to bandwagon rather than balance”.  

Besides, in Larson’s analysis what is missing is exactly what she intends to explain: the link between the weak domestic position of the ruling élites and the choice to ally with the source of the threat. Why should the leaders facing difficulties decide in that direction? Why can the guarantees that the élites are pursuing only be provided by an expansionist and aggressive state?  

The intrinsic domestic weakness of the elite in Third World countries and their alignment decisions are the object of the studies carried out by Steven David.  

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42 Ibid, p.103.  
43 Ibid, p.102. Specifically, Larson measures the strength of a state not only by its size and capabilities but also by its level of institutional identity and elite legitimacy.  
Because of their lack of legitimacy and consensus, Third World countries leaders’ main aim is to ensure their political and physical survival, which is far more likely to be challenged by internal threats (with or without external backing) than from external threats. According to David, the necessity to consolidate their domestic position pushes the ruling elite to assume an appeasing stance toward eventual external threats, especially toward the countries that support subversive groups, with the aim of conserving strength to be used to counter the more immediate and dangerous internal threats. What superficially appears as bandwagoning is in reality balancing: the accommodation towards the secondary external threat is instrumental for conserving strength for the battle against the primary domestic menace. Alignment decisions are taken by authoritarian leaders with the goal of preserving their power rather than serving state interest: leaders prefer to align with states that ensure their hold on power rather than with states that may increase their power, but at the risk of endangering their survival. In short, it is the leadership of the state and not the state itself that is the appropriate unit of analysis for understanding Third World alignment. David calls the theory that emerges from these observations “omnibalancing.”

In essence, David’s theory of “omnibalancing” is not in contradiction with the traditional balance of power logic, rather, it asserts that “realism must be broadened to examine internal threats in addition to focusing on external threats and capabilities

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66 For a detailed discussion of why internal threats are so common in the Third World see Mohammed Ayoob, “Security in the Third World: The Worn about to Turn?”, *International Affairs* 60 (1983/84).
68 “Omnibalancing is thus not misled into concluding that bandwagoning to threatening states necessarily means that the leadership choose to balance against the most pressing threats it faced”, Ibid, p.245.
69 David argues that “it [omnibalancing] incorporates the need of leaders to appease secondary adversaries, as well as to balance against both internal and external threats in order to survive in power. This theory rests on the assumptions that leaders are weak and illegitimate...It assumes that...”
(that is, structural arguments), and that the leader of the state rather than the state itself should be used as the level of analysis".\textsuperscript{50}

An additional explanation, largely complementary with David's omnibalancing theory, that highlights the role of state-society relations in shaping the state's security policies is provided by Michael Barnett and Jack Levy, in their studies on Egypt's foreign policy between 1962 and 1973 and Third World security.\textsuperscript{51}

More specifically, these two scholars analyze domestic events in order to highlight the incentives to conclude external alignments. First, a state facing an external threat may not be able to mobilize its domestic resources in order to increase its ability to cope with the danger. Second, a policy of external alignment may be preferred over the option of internal mobilization if internal threats to the government are more salient than external ones. In this situation, which is frequent in Third World countries,\textsuperscript{52} by pursuing a policy of alliance the ruling élites try to secure the material resources necessary to deal with internal threats.

In this way, the pursued policy of alliance is not a mere function of the presence or absence of external threats (a systemic variable), but is also linked to the "domestic objectives of state actors and the social, economic, and political constraints that limit the availability of resources in society and the governments’

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\textsuperscript{50} Ibid, p.236.
\textsuperscript{52} "It has become commonplace among those who study Third World politics that political leaders tend to perceive the central threats to state security as deriving more from domestic than foreign sources", Michael Barnett and Jack Levy, "Alliance Formation, Domestic Political Economy, and Third World Security", p.24.
access to those resources at acceptable costs...". Facing a security threat, Third World countries may turn to alliance formation because: 1) they simply lack the resources to support an arming program; 2) an extraction of domestic resources may weaken the long-term strength of the economy and therefore the security of the state; 3) heavy military expenditures may affect the process of distribution of resources within the government partners and therefore undermine the ruling élites’ narrow base of political support; and 4) domestic threats to the political stability of the government may force the leaders to look for the necessary material resources to placate or suppress the internal unrest by concluding an alliance.54

The relationship between alliances and arming as two distinct strategies to counter an external threat has been discussed at length by several authors. On the one side, there are authors denying, on empirical basis, that there is a relation between internal balancing (arming) and external balancing (allying).55 On the other side, others have developed microeconomic interpretative schemes aimed at explaining why in some cases states choose to undertake an arming program, and in other cases they decide to form an alliance.56 The choice, according to these models, is made by the balance of costs and benefits of each option; thus, states will decide in favour of the alternative that provides additional security at a lower domestic cost.57

57 One caveat here: The question of autonomy versus security benefits in alliances is not addressed here because it is a consequence and not a cause of alliances; this chapter considers only the primary phase of alliance formation and not the secondary one after alliances have formed. On autonomy costs generally, see James Morrow, “Alliances and Asymmetry: An Alternative to the Capability Aggregation Model of Alliances”, American Journal of Political Science, 35 (1991), pp.904-933.
More specifically, James Morrow argues that even if systemic factors (magnitude of external threat) play a role, the choice between the available alternatives to meet a state’s security needs is determined by both their internal costs and their external benefit. A policy is chosen according to its ability to face an external threat and to provide domestic support: without domestic consensus, security policies will fail to counter a threat. As Morrow puts it, “Efficiency of a policy is not measured solely in terms of the security added. Instead, the benefits in security from a change in policy must be measured against the cost of overcoming domestic opposition to the change”. The greater the resistance, the costlier the policy. According to Morrow, states choose the combination of arming and allying within a contest delimited by the internal political costs and external benefits of each option.

However, in reality, in the external environment a state does not have many possibilities to choose: to form an alliance it is necessary to find another state willing to do it, and this is not always the case for reasons which are well beyond the domestic politics of the state looking for allies. Because of the possibility that allies are simply unavailable and/or unable to communicate, it is awkward to speculate, as Morrow does, on the idea that alliance and arming provide alternate paths nations can pursue when faced with an external threat. In short, Morrow’s thesis should be interpreted as a warning not to underestimate the role and weight of domestic

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59 As suggested by Walt (1987), “...a further prerequisite for balancing is an effective system of diplomatic communication. The ability to communicate enables potential allies to recognize their shared interests and coordinate their responses”, Stephen Walt, The Origins of Alliances, p.30.
factors on alliances formation but it does not constitute a successful alternative theory able to conjugate coherently domestic and international politics.

1.4 The Other Sources of Alliances:

So far, we have discussed the hypothesis regarding alliances formation in two broad categories. The first emphasizes the predominance on external factors, the second stresses the role of domestic factors; anyway, both approaches are focused on the main rationale of countering a threat. However, there are other elements that we should take into account in our analysis.

Liska suggests that alliances may serve two other functions: to keep an international equilibrium by restraining an exuberant (destabilizing) ally (Liska calls it as “interallied control function”) and to legitimize or strengthen a regime by its international recognition. In this regard, it is interesting to notice that Liska indicates these two functions of alliances without differentiating between greater and lesser powers.

Following a similar approach, Robert Rothstein distinguishes between military (close to the aggregation of power model) and political alliances. The latter are undertaken with the purpose of influencing a restless ally, and, to a certain extent, to restrain its behavior: they emerge from the perception of a situation, and not of a

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60 This is coherent with Morrow’s assertions that “alliance strategies cannot be studied apart from military allocations: the choice between the two is decided by the balance of costs and benefits of each” and that “because arms and alliance policies have both domestic and international consequences, they cannot be considered separately”, James Morrow, “Arms Versus Allies: Trade-offs in the Search for Security”, p. 208, 213.

61 George Liska, Nations in Alliance. The Limits of Interdependence, pp. 30-39.
threat that could not be dealt with unilaterally, that can be exploited exactly by an alliance.\textsuperscript{62}

Similarly, Paul Schroeder criticizes the widespread perception of alliances as "weapons of power" to which he proposes an alternative explanation based on the idea of alliances as "tools of management".\textsuperscript{63} By analyzing the most important alliances between 1815 and 1945, Schroeder argues that all alliances work, to a certain extent, as \textit{pacta de contrahendo}, since they constrain and control the actions of the allies. By viewing alliances as pact of mutual control, he comes to the conclusion that peace is better guaranteed by an international system composed by states tied by strict alliances. Despite the major emphasis on the cooperative phenomenon entailed by alliances, Schroeder's thesis can be interpreted through a strictly realist perspective. Indeed, he brings our attention to a crucial fact that Realism, because of its insistence on the balance-of-power, has missed: conflict and competition are also present within an alliance. This is perfectly coherent with realism: despite their cooperative outlook, alliances are also plagued by the unceasing competition among the member-states.

Security, on which much emphasis is placed, may concern not only the physical survival of the state but also the defense of its political principles. Thus, it is plausible to suggest that the alignment between ideologically alike states is "natural" and that commonality of values and principles constitutes a good reason for alignment. However, most of the studies regarding alliances, especially the ones linked to the realist and neo-realist schools of thought, are inclined to limit


\textsuperscript{63} Paul Schroeder, "Alliances, 1815-1945: Weapons of power and Tools of Management". 
drastically the role of ideology in alliance choices. The most articulated critique on the role of ideology had been carried out by Walt. In the conclusions of his studies on alliance formation in the Middle East (1955-79) and Southwest Asia, Walt stresses that ideology plays relatively little role in determining alliance preferences and that, in any case, the slight preference for alignment, spurred by ideological similarity, showed by the states examined "was readily abandoned in the face of significant threats". Though the initial hypotheses of his analysis are neither very clear nor always persuasive, Walt argues that: 1) only the states already "fairly secure" are more likely to follow ideological preferences in their alliance choices; and 2) the impact of ideology is greater in a bipolar world and, particularly, when states' defense capabilities are superior to their offensive potential. Yet, if defense is predominant over offence why states should look for allies. Only because of ideological solidarity?

Moreover, Walt postulates that there is a link between weak or unstable regimes and the alliances concluded in order to bolster their legitimacy. The example chosen by Walt (i.e. Cuba's alignment with the Communist block) does not appear to be appropriate at all: explaining Cuba's alliance with the Soviet Union on mere ideological basis, as Walt does, neglects completely the sense of threat coming from the United States perceived by Fidel Castro.

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64 According to Liska, conflict is more important than ideological affinity: "Alliances are formed primarily for security rather than out of a sense of community", George Liska, Nations in Alliance. The Limits of Interdependence, p.11-12.
65 Stephen Walt, The Origins of Alliances, p.266. In the case of Southwest Asia the argument is even more marked: "These cases also suggest that ideology plays relatively little role in determining alliance preferences. In particular, alliances between dissimilar states (for example, Pakistan and China, the Soviet Union and India, the United States and Iran and Pakistan) were more common that alliances among states sharing similar domestic orders. See Stephen Walt, "Testing Theories of Alliance Formation: the Case of Southwest Asia",p.313.
Paradoxically, Walt’s theoretical framework and observations of alliance patterns in the Middle East are utilized by Michael Barnett in order to assert that state identity offers theoretical leverage over the issue of the construction of the threat and the choice of the alliance partner. According to Barnett, looming large in Walt’s analysis is “ideology”, specifically, Arabism. By arguing that Arabism shaped the identity and the policies available to Arab leaders, Barnett concludes that Arabism imprinted its mark on inter-Arab security dynamics and alliance politics. More specifically, he points out that identity explains/influences alliance dynamics in two different ways: 1) it provides theoretical leverage over the construction of the threat (a shared identity is likely to generate a shared definition of the threat); 2) it provides a handle on who is considered to be a desiderable alliance partner (identity makes some partners more attractive than others).

While Barnett’s theoretical argument is well formulated, the historical evidence that he put forward to endorse his thesis gives, somehow ironically, rather more credit to Walt’s conclusions than to the contention that identity offers important insights into the dynamic of security cooperation and alliance politics in the Middle East. The case of the Baghdad Pact, chosen by Barnett as a historical case corroborating his thesis, vividly illustrates how states – Iraq, Turkey, Great Britain and (informally) the US – having different ideological preferences formed an alliance to defend Western interests against the Soviet threat and allow some of its members (i.e. Iraq and Great Britain) to retain their shrinking influence in the region. The second case suggested by Barnett is the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) arrangement of 1981 that constitutes undoubtedly an example of an alliance scheme.

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"based on ideational factors, a shared history, and a similar political profile". Yet, what seems apparently as an ideological alliance is a form of balancing behavior by the Gulf conservative monarchies against the threat, both ideological and military, posed by revolutionary Iran and Saddam Hussein's Iraq. The loose alignment among the GCC states strikingly resembles the various pacts among Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and monarchical Iraq "intended to counter the threat from the aggressive revolutionary nationalism espoused by leaders such as Nasser".

Finally, regarding the US-Israeli relationship - the last historical case scrutinized - Barnett argues that the "US-Israeli relation is dependent upon Israel's having a particular identity", an assertion that exceedingly oversimplifies the strategic cooperation existing between the two countries. The uniqueness of the relations between the US and Israel is well exemplified by the fact that both states have never signed a military alliance: because of the identical interests there has never been a question that the US would provide military assistance to Israel in a crisis. As suggested by Morrow, "Their military interests have been sufficiently similar that an alliance has been unnecessary".

In short, Barnett's thesis does not constitute an alternative approach for understanding security politics and security cooperation but rather a complementary approach, which highlights one of the "particular" interests of states (i.e. identity) that reduces the indeterminacy characterizing the bargaining process of alliance

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68 Ibid, p.446.
69 Ibid, p.446.
71 Since the end of the 1967 War, Israel has been almost entirely dependent on the US as its source of strategic support, which includes, among many other things, annually $1.8 in US military assistance. As Ed Blanche argues, "Israel's relationship with the USA is a crucial element in its policy-making and critical to its military capabilities", in idem, "Israel addresses the threats of the new millennium", Jane's Intelligence Review 11 (February 1999), p.26.
formation in a multipolar system. As demonstrated by Snyder, the security dilemma creates a general incentive to ally with some other state or states but theoretically it is impossible to predict who will align with whom. This indeterminacy is reduced by the existing pattern of conflicts and commonalities – stemming from ideological, ethnic or economic values – among states, which affects the bargaining process by predisposing the system toward certain alliances against others. Previously, Morgenthau had suggested a similar argument by stating that “The ideological factor, when it is superimposed upon an actual community of interests, can lend strength to the alliance by marshaling moral convictions and emotional preferences to its support”.

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74 As Snyder suggests, “Particular conflicts or affinities of interest establish a tacit pattern of alignment, prior to or apart from any overt alliance negotiations”, ibid, p.464.
CHAPTER II

TURKEY AND ISRAEL IN THE “PERIPHERAL ALLIANCE”

Since the establishment of the Republic in 1923, Turkey's relationship with its Middle Eastern neighbors has been awkward, if not overtly hostile. The collapse of the Ottoman Empire left a legacy of territorial grievances, historic resentments, political tensions and mutual suspicions which neither the Turks nor the Arabs have so far overcome. Despite its geographical position, Turkey decided to isolate itself from developments in the Middle East and adopted a very cautious and hands-off approach to the region. Ideologically, Turkey's separation from the Middle East was largely the result of Atatürk's determination to turn the Turkish republic into a modern and Westernized state, which could defend its territorial integrity and political independence against external aggression and could become an equal member of the Western world of nations.

As Philip Robins points out, the main features of Turkey's foreign policy toward the Middle East have been strict adherence to the principles of non-interference and non-involvement in the domestic politics and interstate conflicts of all countries in the region, and to the development of bilateral political and economic relations with as many states in the region as possible. However, the most striking characteristic of Ankara's Middle East policy has always been its subordination to Turkey's relations with the Western states. Turkey's political, cultural, military and

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76 As Rouleau put it, "Seventy years after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, a mutual suspicion - largely unfounded - persists. The former rulers have not forgotten what they saw as the Arab "betrayal" of rallying to the British during World War I to gain their independence. The former subject peoples have not forgotten the centuries of Ottoman rule and the harsh repression that followed the emergence of their national movements and some Arabs suspect Ankara of harboring Ottoman ambitions" in Eric Rouleau "The Challenges to Turkey", Foreign Affairs 72.5 (November-December 1993), p.115.
economic alignment with the West is undoubtedly the chief factor conditioning Turkish-Arab relations. Hence, it is not surprising that Ankara has historically seen its relations with the Middle East as an extension of its pro-Western policy. Moreover, as Kemal Karpat suggests, "this pro-Western foreign policy gave new impetus to Turkish urge for cultural and ideological identification with the West, which in turn increased its commitments [towards the West]."  

The ultimate aim of Turkey’s foreign policy behavior towards the Middle East since World War II has been to minimize any danger to its security and independence and to its Western-focused agenda. As a consequence, Turkey has not been able to build so far a solid, reliable, working relationship with any of its southern or eastern Muslim neighbors. Rather, historically Ankara’s relations with the Middle Eastern countries have been characterized by open hostility in the case of Syria and, albeit to a lesser extent, Iraq; permanent distrust in the case of Iran and Saudi Arabia; and lack of substance in the relations with Egypt and Jordan. 

Against this background, the essential correctness that has always characterized Turkish-Israeli relations stands in sharp contrast, remarking the cultural affinity and political affinity that they both share together with the "common sense of otherness" in a region dominated by Arabs and non-democratic regimes. In other words, because of their common deep attachment to the West and Western values,
which is unique in the Middle East, Turkey and Israel find themselves having to exist in a region where “they feel profoundly ill at ease".81

Yet, despite their common ground – the pro-Western foreign policy orientation, the commitment to democracy and secularism and similar economic interests – the relations between Turkey and Israel have fluctuated historically between intense cooperation and almost imperceptible interaction. Accordingly, the decisive factors influencing the relations revolve around regional82 and global developments.

Indeed, it was mainly due to US pressure that Ankara granted, in March 1949, de-facto recognition to the Jewish State of Israel.83 Twelve months later diplomatic relations were established.84 While the Turkish government explained its decision to recognize Israel through a strictly legalist perspective by arguing that the recognition of a state which had already been admitted to the United Nations (UN) was a requirement of international law, it is possible to discern that the Turkish élites’ perception of Israel as an example of a modern and Western state and their admiration for the strength demonstrated during the 1948 War presumably positively influenced Ankara.85 In short, the Turkish policymakers saw the decision as a further

81 Philip Robins, Turkey and the Middle East, p.82.
82 The thesis that the decisive factor in the two countries’ relations revolves around developments in the Middle East is originally suggested by Amikam Nachmani, Israel, Turkey and Greece. Uneasy Relations in the East Mediterranean, (London: Frank Cass, 1987), p.77.
83 Turkey initially refused to recognize the Jewish State. However, soon after, as Robins argues, “factors external to the region became primary in determining Turkish policy...In particular the urgency of Turkey’s need to court the US in the run-up to the creation of NATO took precedence over the situation on the ground”. Philip Robins, Turkey and the Middle East, p.75.
84 Turkey recognized the State of Israel on March 28, 1949 and established diplomatic relations on March 9, 1950 by posting a Ministry plenipotentiary to Tel Aviv. Then, in 1952, Ambassadors were exchanged.
85 Mim Kemal Oke explains the Turkish élites’ favorable attitude towards Israel with the following reasons: “Israel’s military victories against her Arab neighbors and the various development plans she had successfully undertaken”. Quoted by Hakan Yavuz, “Turkey’s Relations With Israel”, Foreign Policy (Ankara) 5:3-4 (1991), p.45.
demonstration of Turkey's Westernness and in clear opposition to the ostensibly neutralist position adopted by the Arab states in the East-West conflict.

On the other side, Israel immediately showed its eagerness in further developing its ties with Turkey as part of a more widely conceived "periphery strategy" – devised by David Ben-Gurion – in an effort to develop friends beyond the "Arab fence". However, Israeli advances were met throughout most of the 1950s by a substantial ambivalence from Ankara, which was fostered by Turkey's ties with the Arab states and, in particular, by the assignment – given to Ankara by the US and Great Britain in exchange for Turkey's membership in NATO – to induce the Arab countries to adhere to regional defense pacts against the Soviet Union. Inevitably, the relations with Israel suffered, and Ankara did not hesitate to include in the Baghdad Pact (1955) a declaration stressing that the article relating to military assistance at times of crisis were valid for, and specifically linked to, the Palestinian problem. Moreover, in seeking other Arab states to join in the pro-Western defense treaties, Turkey pointed out repeatedly the limitations of its ties with Israel and its refusal to issue a declaration of support for Israel's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

Turkey's ambivalence and hesitation towards improving its ties with Israel were suddenly swept away by new regional and international circumstances that pushed the two countries toward genuine cooperation. The growing instability that

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86 Altemur Kiliç – a former assistant to the Turkish representative to the UN – wrote in 1959 that the decision was taken "as if to emphasize her [Turkey's] Westernness". See Altemur, Kiliç Turkey and the World (Washington, 1959).

87 Israeli's marked interests towards Turkey is well exemplified by the fact that the Israeli authorities embarked in an active campaign aimed at persuading the Turks about their commitment to confront the Communist threat. "Convincing the Turks that Israel was not 'red' almost assumed the status of a top national priority" indicates Amikam Nachmani, Israel, Turkey and Greece: Uneasy Relations in the East Mediterranean, p.48.

88 According to Karpat, the British withdrew their objections to Turkey's membership in NATO only after they were assured about Ankara's support for the Middle East pact aimed at defending UK interests in the region. Kemal Karpat, "Turkish and Arab-Israeli Relations", p.116.

characterized the Middle Eastern region in the second half of the 1950s, the increasing evidence of Soviet-backed Communist and Nasserist subversion, the overthrowing of the allied pro-Western Hashemite regime in Iraq (1958) and the contemporaneous emergence of the US as the dominant Western power in the region pushed Turkey to hasten to join Israel in a secret "peripheral alliance".

Before turning to analyze one of the most fruitful periods in Israeli-Turkish relations and the several factors that led to it, a brief review of the historical relations between the Turks and the Jews provides useful insights about the sympathy that both nations have for each other and, consequently, a better understanding of the relevant role played by ideational factors in the Turkish-Israeli relationship.

2.1 The Positive Historical Background:

"Israel will never forget that the Jews were accepted by the Ottoman Empire when they were expelled from various European countries some 500 years ago" said the Israeli President Ezer Weizman at his arrival in Turkey in 1994. Two years earlier, the Turkish Jewry had celebrated the 500th anniversary of the arrival of their forefathers at the Ottoman cities following Sultan Bayezid II's decision to offer sanctuary to the Jews fleeing from the Spanish inquisition of 1492 and from other European countries later on. The Jews in the Ottoman state enjoyed special recognition as the third millet along with the Armenians and Orthodox Christians,

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91 The "Periphery doctrine" was designed to create the image, in the region and in the world at large, that the Middle East is not exclusively Arab or even Islamic but rather a multi-religious, ethnic, cultural, and national area. See Michael Brecher, The Foreign Policy System of Israel. Setting, Images and Process, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), p.278.

92 SWB EE/1907 B/6, 28 January 1994.
and this permitted them to preserve and continue their culture up to these days.\textsuperscript{93} Since then, the Jewish community flourished along with the other religious/sectarian peoples to excel particularly in trade and industry. Several Jews also attained high positions in the courts of the Sultans, the most famous of whom was Joseph Nasi, the trusted confident of Selim II. In the closing years of the Empire, despite the Ottoman government opposition to Zionism, as to all other forms of nationalism, this did not have anti-Jewish motivation and, in fact the bulk of the Jewish community in the country was not affected by the measures adopted against the Zionists.

While the Kemalists' position vis-à-vis the Jewish community (and other minorities) was somewhat unclear during the War of Independence, it soon became evident that the Turkish Republic was strongly opposed to any manifestation of racism or anti-Semitism and was treating its Jews on an equal footing with other citizens. Mustafa Kemal's fierce and determined reaction in the face of an attempt by an anti-Semitic group, in the summer of 1934, to force the Jews out of several places in Thrace was acknowledged with praise by the Turkish Jewish community.\textsuperscript{94} He also welcomed thirty-five Jewish professors from Nazi Germany and offered them the opportunity to resume their academic work at Turkish universities. The positive attitudes and perceptions of the Jewish community in Palestine towards Mustafa Kemal Atatürk were well captured in the articles published in the Hebrew press the day after his death on 10 November 1938. The newspaper \textit{Davar} (World) wrote "Turkey has lost her founder and builder who restored her national youth, and humanity has lost one of the foremost and enlightened reformers of the modern age"; similarly, \textit{Ha-Aretz} (The Land) underlined that Atatürk was deservedly seen by many

\textsuperscript{93} For example, the Turkish Jewish community based in Istanbul publishes a magazine called "Šalom" which is written in Ladino and Turkish.
as the greatest reformer of his time, and it was expected that his name would be eternally preserved in the history of the Turks and of the world.\(^\text{95}\)

Later on, the Istanbul offices of the Jewish Agency were allowed to organize the emigration to Palestine – whether of the local community or of people in transit from Iran, Syria, Iraq and Bulgaria. As a result of the emigration, nowadays, the number of Turkish Jews living in Israel is estimated at 120,000, most of them located in the coastal city of Bat Yam. According to Robins, this community is very active as a lobby on Turkey’s behalf because their sense of Turkish identity is very important to them.\(^\text{96}\) The number of Jews in Turkey, predominantly concentrated in Istanbul, is around 24,000, but they are very influential, thanks to the wealth of the community and their historically prominent position in commercial life.

What is important to note is that historically speaking friendly relations between Turks and Jews prevailed, that as communities they never confronted each other, and apart from sporadic anti-Semitic statements from politicians linked to ultra-nationalist or Islamic parties, the Turks as a whole have always held their Jewish citizens in high regard. In plain words, as one Israeli scholar put it, “historically the Jews never suffered persecution in Turkey, and no Jewish blood had ever been spilled by the Turks”\(^\text{97}\).

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\(^\text{96}\) Philip Robins, *Turkey and the Middle East*, p.85. In this regard, it should be pointed out that Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Çiller during her visit to Israel in November 1994 joined in a sabbath meal organized by the community.

2.2 1958: The Turkish-Israeli Peripheral Pact:

The summer of 1958 found Israel and Turkey entering into an alliance, with an agreement for cooperation in the diplomatic, military and intelligence spheres, as well as in commerce and scientific exchanges. This was to become known as the "peripheral pact". Besides their sense of commonality, linked to their being non-Arab enclaves in a predominantly Arab Middle East and sharing a positive historical heritage, what were the predominant factors that pushed Turkey to take the Israeli offer of a military alignment and what were the interests that Israel was seeking in including Turkey in its "peripheral strategy"?

From the Israeli perspective the matter appeared self-evident. Together with Iran, Turkey was the northern main pillar of David Ben-Gurion's strategy to improve relations with non-Arab Middle Eastern countries. The importance attributed to Turkey, as a Muslim country bordering on the Arab states, was well illustrated by the accreditation in Ankara of an Israeli military attaché – one of four, the others serving at the Israeli embassies in London, Paris and Washington.

Turkey's unique status was further fostered by the several military pacts in which it was involved; by 1954, Turkey belonged to three separate defense treaties: NATO, the Balkan Pact (with Greece and Yugoslavia) and an alliance with Pakistan. The year later Turkey became member of another defense arrangement, the ill-fated Baghdad Pact. While Turkey's activism towards Europe attracted and pleased Israel – which unsuccessfully tried to become member of the Balkan Pact – Ankara's opening towards the East, despite its evident anti-Soviet character, caused deep apprehensions in Jerusalem. For Israel, it was absolutely clear that while Turkey's alignment with both Pakistan and Iraq were Western-backed alliances, and Israel
would be strengthened by Turkey's adherence to the Balkan Pact, and it would be weakened through Turkey's approach to the East.  

While Turkey's pact with Pakistan did not spark great concern in Israel, as it was merely attributed to Turkey's total dependence upon the US and its consequent acquiescence to Washington's requests and to Turkish Prime Minister Adnan Menderes's violent anti-communism and anti-Soviet stand, Ankara's alliance with Iraq significantly upset the Israelis. Israeli officials were worried that the arms provided to Iraq could find their way into anti-Western hands, or even worse, into anti-Israeli hands. Both possibilities could not be excluded, taking into account the presence in Iraq of a relatively powerful Communist movement and the country's serious lack of internal stability. The Israeli mistrust was so acute that it assumed elements of paranoia: in January 1955, a month before the actual conclusion of the Turkish-Iraqi mutual defense treaty, the Israeli Foreign Ministry's Research Department considered the possibility of the Turkish army aiding Iraq in the event of war against Israel.

Following the Suez War, Israel's isolation in the international scenario increased considerably, in particular the confrontation with the Eisenhower administration over the 1956 intervention, along with France and Great Britain, against Egypt badly affected Israel's relations with the dominant Western power. Consequently, Israel's obsession to break out of its international isolation reached a climax: in order to overcome the impasse vis-à-vis the US, Israel hoped that by

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98 Ibid, p.72.
99 Already in 1953, the Israeli Ambassador to Ankara cabled to the Israeli Foreign Ministry the following: "The Turks adopt everything the Americans say. But we must not forget that there is scarcely a Turk in existence capable of distinguishing between Socialism and Communism". As quoted by Nachmani, Ibid, p.49.
100 Quoted by Nachmani, Ibid, p.74.
allying with Turkey, the latter would undertake the assignment to act on Israel's behalf in Washington, in particular by lobbying in favor of arms supplies to Israel.  

Finally, the growing role of the Soviet Union in the region, as exemplified by the 1955 arms shipment to Egypt through Czechoslovakia, and the greater success of Nasser's attempts to extend his authority over other Arab countries, which culminated in the union between Egypt and Syria on February 1, 1958, named the United Arab Republic, provided additional incentives for Ben-Gurion's collecting the call from Turkey and embarking in a secret trip to Ankara on August 29, 1958 aimed at securing Menderes' signature on the agreement.

Ankara's motivations in joining Israel in a military cooperation arrangement were principally linked to the changed regional circumstances, to Moscow's war of nerves against Turkey and, albeit to a lesser extent, to the economic crisis that hit the country in the second half of the 1950s. The predominant rationale for Turkey was to ease its way to the US administration by securing Israel's support: the Turks were still convinced, despite the recent US-Israeli confrontation over the Suez intervention, that Israel could act as an advocate for Turkey's interests in Washington. The British retreat from the Middle East and the launching of the Eisenhower Doctrine in January 1957 clearly indicated to Ankara that the US was the new Western superpower in the region. As such, strengthening relations with it was simply an imperative for a country bordering with the Soviet Union and facing increasing isolation in the Middle East.

Moreover, as of 1956, the tide had begun to turn against the Democratic Party regime. As Criss points out, "Concurrent with major development projects was

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101 Ibid, p.75.
102 Ibid.
mismanagement of resources; bad weather and harvests eradicated benefits to be derived from massive purchases of tractors for agriculture; trade and budget deficit had increased; the opposition began to be sharply critical; and the government became more authoritarian and oppressive”. Consequently, the US criticized Menderes’s mismanagement of economic assistance and its irresponsible spending, and negatively replied to the continuous requests for additional economic assistance that the Turkish authorities advanced in the second half of the 1950s. Ankara was convinced that Turkey’s prospects of receiving US financial aid would improve greatly if its request were backed by US Jewry, whose hearts it hoped to soften by way of closer relations with Jerusalem.  

At the same time, Turkish-Russian relations, despite Moscow’s official withdrawal of the 1945-46 demands for border changes and joint control of the straits, were going through a new phase of tension. In September 1957, the Soviet Union started a war of nerves, backed up by troop movements in the Caucasus, against Turkey by accusing it of planning an invasion of Syria. Attributing the crisis and even Turkey’s role to “foreign circles”, the Soviets promised “great calamities” to be brought upon Turkey should it participate in a war against Syria. Moscow again manufactured a similar crisis in July 1958: in this case Turkey was accused of preparing an attack against Iraq, whose pro-Western regime had just been overthrown. Indeed, Kassem’s revolution in Iraq left the Baghdad Pact and Turkey in disarray, up to the point that Turkey considered the possibility of intervening

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militarily in Iraq but it was stopped short by the US and dissuaded by the maneuvers conducted by 24 Soviet divisions near the Turkish border. Contemporaneously, in Lebanon a civil war fomented by pro-Nasserite elements threatened a revolution, pushing Washington to dispatch its troops.

Subsequently, Turkey's support for the Eisenhower Doctrine, its confrontational policy toward Syria in 1957 and Iraq in 1958, and its granting permission to the US to station troops at the NATO base in Adana during the crisis in Lebanon all caused Turkey's credibility to sink even further in the eyes of the Arabs, deepening its alienation in the region.

Hence, it is not surprising that Turkey, the "weak link" in Ben-Gurion's strategy, became suddenly eager to improve its ties with Israel. From a Turkish perspective, the periphery pact symbolized the deep mistrust with which Ankara viewed the Arab world, while in terms of policy, the accord marked the high point of political cooperation with Israel. As Nachmani argues, "In the 1958 agreement, the Turks appeared to have adopted the notion of 'complementary nations'".107 The cooperation between the two countries took place in a number of fields: Israel provided the know-how for the construction of an oil pipeline from Iran to Turkey, expertise in the development of Turkish industry and agriculture, and military equipment for the Turkish armed forces; scientific cooperation in highly sensitive spheres was also developed mainly through secret meetings held in Geneva; and diplomatic through frequent consultations between the diplomats of the two countries accredited in various capitals and international organizations. In return, it was agreed that Israel would enjoy the support of Turkey's massive army.108 Turkey also

108 Ibid.
replaced Cyprus as Israel’s chief listening post for monitoring the Arab states. Moreover, an agreement on joint military action in the event that Aden, which lay on the route of the oil tankers, fell into Nasser’s hand was also concluded.109

2.3 An Alliance Unborn:

However, most of the 1958 agreements never fully materialized. The confluence of regional and international developments that acted as a catalyst for the alliance soon disappeared. Consequently, Turkey’s commercial relations with Israel went down to almost negligible levels and diplomatic relations were downgraded.

The overthrowing of the corrupt and repressive regime of Adnan Menderes by a military coup (May 27, 1960) and the lessening of the Communist threat in the region, enabled Turkey to adopt a new policy towards the Middle East, characterized by greater autonomy in respect to its alignment with the West. Moreover, two events in the early 1960s – the Cuban and the Cyprus crises – precipitated a search for a foreign policy approach that would be less dependent on the US and NATO.

Turkish foreign policy makers perceived the manner in which the Cuban missile crisis was resolved as an example of how a superpower, when the need arose, could overlook the concerns and interests of a small ally. This sparked a debate in Turkey which seriously questioned the wisdom of a foreign policy that relied too much on the goodwill of the US for ensuring Turkish security.110 The second international event was constituted by Turkey’s experience during the Cyprus crisis of 1964, when Ankara realized that it was isolated in the international arena and, even worse, threatened by the US President Lyndon Johnson of being deprived from

109 Ibid.

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the protection of NATO umbrella in the event of a Soviet intervention precipitated by a Turkish invasion of the island. The Johnson letter rapidly eroded the credibility of the whole Western alliance in the eyes of the Turks, who realized that “rigid loyalty to the Western block was no guarantee of securing the national interest”.

The deterioration of the Turkish relations with the West caused by the Cyprus dispute and, second, the improved commercial opportunities in the Arab countries convinced Ankara that a multifaceted foreign policy was needed; nevertheless, the foreign policy orientation remained unquestioned. In the Middle East, the newly “multi-faceted foreign policy” entailed a lessening of the cooperation with the US in the region, efforts to strengthen ties with the Arab states and a more balanced attitude towards the Arab-Israeli dispute. Inevitably, Turkey’s policy to play a more constructive and independent role in the Middle East was accompanied by a steady reduction in its ties with Israel.

By adopting a policy of “benevolent neutrality” toward the Arab-Israeli conflict, Turkey was able, on the one side, to express its solidarity towards the Arab states and the Palestinians, and on the other side, to maintain its relations with Israel. The 1973 oil price hikes brought added pressure to expand commercial and political relations with the oil-rich Arab countries. The worsening economic

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111 Philip Robins, Turkey and the Middle East, p.78.
112 The definition is by Criss and Bilgin, who argue that the new policy was not meant to result in a shift toward the Arabs at the expense of Turkey’s connections with the West. It was rather intended to achieve the best from both sides. Bilge Criss and Pinar Bilgin, “Turkish Foreign Policy Toward the Middle East”, MHERA 1 (1997) (electronic journal at www.biu.ac.il/besa/meria.html).
113 As Makovsky suggests, “In the 1960s and 1970s, as Turkey was driven by both economic and diplomatic reasons to improve ties with the Arab world, Ankara began to loosen its Israel connection. Trade with Israel dipped to almost imperceptible levels and diplomatic relations were downgraded at Turkey’s initiative”. Alan Makovsky, “Israeli-Turkish Relations: A Turkish “Periphery Strategy’?”, p.150.
114 Ferenc A. Vali, Bridge Across the Bosporus: The Foreign Policy of Turkey, p.308
conditions of the country\textsuperscript{115} – already badly affected by the dramatic increase in oil prices – and the need for diplomatic support following the military operation in Cyprus in July 1974 pushed Turkey once more to increase its efforts aimed at improving its political and economic relations with the Arab states. Therefore, in the 1970s, Turkey generally supported Arab resolutions at the UN General Assembly, including the 1975 resolution labeling Zionism as a form of racism.

Israeli Knesset’s decision (1980) to enact the law declaring that “Jerusalem is united and it is the permanent capital of Israel” was met by Turkey’s sharp reaction condemning the “Israeli annexation of Jerusalem”. Demirel’s government, supported by a heterogeneous and weak coalition that included the Islamist National Salvation Party (MSP), soon came under intense domestic and Islamic pressure to break off its relations with Israel. By declaring, on 28 August 1980, the closure of the Turkish general consulate in Jerusalem, the Turkish government adopted the minimum move necessary to alleviate domestic criticisms and maintain friendly relations with the Arab countries, a skilful action that did not cause significant harm to its relations with the US.\textsuperscript{116}

On December 2, 1980 the military regime that had taken power the previous September, seeking to gain internal and external Islamic credibility, formally downgraded the relations with Israel at the second secretary level. Turkey’s decision was adopted according to the spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the following reason: “Israel would not retreat from its intransigent policy toward the Middle East conflict and the fait accompli that it wishes to create in connection with

\textsuperscript{115} Turkey’s economy was affected by the following: 1) oil price hikes; 2) continuous population growth (around 3% a year); 3) growing defense spending following the conflict in Cyprus and the US arms embargo; 4) ceasing of the migration of Turkish workers to Europe.

\textsuperscript{116} Despite the decision, the motion of censure against the Foreign Minister, Hayrettin Erkmen, introduced by the MSP was passed on 4 September 1980 and Erkmen was ousted from office.
Despite this official explanation, it seems that the decision to downgrade relations with Israel was substantially determined by mere budgetary needs: in 1980, the total amount of Turkish exports was about $2.2 billion, while oil import expenditure by itself reached the figure of $2.6 billion. Because of the severe economic crisis, and in order to obtain the necessary oil for the oncoming winter, the Turkish authorities were forced to seek the assistance of the Arab oil-producing countries. According to George Gruen, a Saudi check of about $250 million was delivered to Turkey on December 2, exactly the same day that Turkey announced the downgrading of relations.

Turkey’s political and economic interests, rather than its ideological orientation, were of paramount importance for the military regime. The new pragmatism was perhaps most clearly reflected in Turkey’s economic policy, which put a big emphasis on the development of significant commercial ties with the Arab countries. Thanks to the new export promotion policies enacted by Turgut Özal and to the higher purchasing power of the oil-rich countries, Turkey’s trade with the Middle Eastern countries in the first half of the 1980s increased fivefold, from $630 million (1980) to $3,188 million (1985). The economic figures well elucidate also the correlation between Turkey’s economic expansion in the Middle East and the

118 As Yavuz argues, “Though the decision to close its consulate in Jerusalem was related to the economic pressures of the Arab countries, the Turkish governments presented the decision as stemming from Islamic solidarity with the Palestinian people”, Hakan Yavuz, “Turkey’s Relations With Israel”, p.43. However, it should be pointed out that Turkey’s perception of Israel underwent a significant change, as Karaosmanoğlu stressed in an article published on Foreign Affairs (62:1, 1983), “Turkey views this state’s [Israel’s] uncompromising attitude as the main, if not the only, source of Middle East unrest”. Ali Karaosmanoğlu, “Turkey’s Security in the Middle East”, Foreign Affairs 62:1 (1983).
119 In 1980, Turkey received its oil from: Iraq (5 million tons); Iran (3.4 million tons); Libya (2 million tons) and Saudi Arabia (1 million tons). All figures are indicated by Hakan Yavuz, “Turkey’s Relations With Israel”, p.55.
downgrading of economic and political relations with Israel: between 1980 and 1985, Turkey’s exports to Israel were characterized by a marked contraction that brought the bilateral trade to almost imperceptible levels.

However, the pro-Arab oscillation proved to be, once more, only temporary, tied to transitory international and regional circumstances, and never affected the basic pro-Western orientation of Turkish foreign policy. Turkey’s abstention from the UN voting on resolution ES9/1, which condemned Israel’s annexation of the Golan, clearly showed that the pendulum was swinging back in favor of Israel.

The decline of the Middle Eastern markets in Turkey’s trade profile and the oil price falls of the mid-1980s eroded significantly the economic and political leverage of the Arab states vis-à-vis Turkey. Because of the oil price collapse in 1986, the value of Turkish exports to Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia declined immediately by 48%, 42% and 17% respectively.122

Moreover, Turkish Prime Minister Özal’s desire to improve Turkey’s relations with the US, and especially with the Congress, added other reasons to swing back to Israel. Özal openly relied on the sympathy of the influential Jewish lobby to reach his aim. In an interview given to the newspaper Güneş (Sun), he declared that “If the Arab countries ask for it [severing ties with Israel] we will always place emphasis on the cost-benefit issue. We know the role of the Israeli lobby in the US”.123 Three years later Özal’s words were confirmed by events: in August 1987, thanks to the support of the Jewish lobby, the resolution aimed at declaring April 24

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122 Philip Robins, Turkey and the Middle East, p.109.
123 Quoted from Hakan Yavuz, “Turkey’s Relations With Israel”, p. 49.
as the “day of commemoration of the Armenian genocide” was rejected by the House of Representatives.\textsuperscript{124}

\textsuperscript{124} The same happened in February 1990 at the Senate.
CHAPTER III

TURKEY’S POST-COLD WAR DILEMMAS.

As Duygu Sezer asserts, “the end of the Cold War and the Gulf crisis have brought Turkey’s grand strategy to an impasse”. The irreducible, paramount goal of Turkey ever since its foundation as a modern state in 1923 has been the preservation of its territorial integrity and sovereignty. Turkey’s post-World War II grand strategy had been almost fully based on NATO, which provided the security for the defense of Turkey’s territorial integrity and sovereignty. Moreover, during most of the Cold War period, Turkey’s alliance with the Western bloc guaranteed the economic and political support from the West which Ankara considered essential for its goal of becoming an equal, modern, and industrialized state within the Western world. The end of the East-West conflict and the consequent demise of the Cold War raised fundamental questions about Turkey’s role in NATO and Turkey’s relations with the West.

3.1 Turkey and the West in the Post-Cold War Era: Ambivalent Allies:

Between 1989 and 1991 the global geopolitical mold broke. In November 1989 the Berlin Wall fell, leading to the unification of Germany the following year. In August 1990 Iraq invaded Kuwait, and the real end of the Cold War was marked by Moscow’s support for US-sponsored UN resolutions against a former Soviet client. In December 1991 the Soviet Union itself was dissolved, and a new hybrid, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) appeared. The implications of this
revolution in world affairs for Turkish policymakers were dramatic, challenging and worrying.

The revolutionary developments in Eastern Europe and the transformation of East-West security relations, in which the West no longer feared the East, meant that the military importance of Turkey for the West as a key NATO front-line state bordering a hostile Soviet Union was undermined. Ankara received with mixed feelings the gradual improvement in the relations between the two blocs. The reasons for that ambivalence were both simple and convincing: Turkey, as a geostrategic rent-seeking country, was worried that the West and especially its main ally, the US, would no longer be willing to extend its unconditional protection and political support and contribute financially to its security. Representative of Turkey's anxiety toward the thaw in East-West relations was Sezer's analysis in 1989: "It seems highly possible that at this juncture of Super Power accommodation, Turkey's defense requirements would constitute only a marginal concern for Washington. The practical result of this situation is that Turkey must shoulder the costs of being a member of the NATO-US alliance alone while in the meantime assuming the risks alone in the furthest corner of the alliance".

Moreover, the Cold War hid, but never cancelled, the political and social tensions and incompatibilities between Turkey and its Western partners. Turkey's membership in Western institutions was mainly determined by the imperatives of the fight against Communism rather than as recognition of the country's "westernness";

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125 Duygu Sezer, "Turkey’s Grand Strategy Facing a Dilemma", *International Spectator* 37:1 (1992) p.21. Sezer uses the term "grand strategy" to specify the security and non-security goals that a state should pursue, and to delineate how military power can serve those goals.

126 Generally, the term refers to those countries located in crucial geographical position that, unable to generate resources to develop their societies or defend them from external threat, by making security-based appeals to greater powers are able to obtain the political, economic and military support needed for their defense and development.
in other words, the role of the Turks within NATO resembled the Latinized barbarians that garrisoned the provinces of the Roman Empire against their similar located *ultra limes*. Following the end of the Cold War, these ambiguities and differences were accentuated by two main developments: 1) questions of human rights and democracy were brought to the forefront of the Western agenda; and 2) the West was forced to give urgent priority to the task of assisting the economic and political transition of the former Eastern European Communist countries. Turkey’s political leverage, already undermined by the reduced strategic importance of the country, in any negotiations with the European Community was outpaced by these two developments.

Ankara’s relations with Western Europe entered a state of paralysis following the rejection of the Turkish bid for membership in the EC in December 1989. Turkish exclusion from full participation in both the EC and the Western European Union (WEU) was understood in Ankara as a demonstration of Europe’s unwillingness to grant Turkey a legitimate security and political role on the old continent. Suspicions of Europe in Turkey were later raised further by other developments. First and foremost, the EU’s decision, at the December 1997 summit in Luxembourg, to exclude Ankara from the list of candidates from membership in the Union while it extended invitation to several formerly communist Eastern European countries and Greek-Cyprus. Kamran Inan, a former Turkish Ambassador and Minister of State, argued that the possibility of joining the EU in the future is diminishing because of the developments in Eastern Europe, and suggests that

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Europe gives priority to the Eastern European states rather than Turkey for cultural reasons.\(^{128}\)

The second factor is linked to the European reactions to human rights violations in Southeastern Anatolia, where the Turkish security forces have had to face a recrudescence of PKK terrorism supported by Syria and Iran, increasingly aroused indignation in Turkey. As Şadi Ergüvenç, a retired General, argues, “while Turkey expects its allies to give support that it deserves from them in its fight against the PKK terror, it receives an unwarranted embargo on associated weapons sales”.\(^{129}\)

Turkey’s fear of being marginalized by its Western partners were swept away by two developments – namely, Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990 and the disintegration of the Soviet Union in December 1991 – that, temporarily, reversed the geostrategic balance in favor of Turkey.

Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait provided Ankara with a new trump card to reconfirm its strategic value to its Western allies.\(^{130}\) By supporting the US-led coalition against Baghdad, Turkey managed to transform itself into an indispensable partner in a particularly sensitive region, the Middle East and in particular in the Gulf area.

However, while the events in the Gulf returned Turkey to the front rank in terms of strategic attention, they did not yield tangible political, military, and economic benefits. The reassertion of Turkey’s strategic importance after the Gulf War focused on the country’s role in Middle Eastern rather than European

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\(^{128}\) Kamran Inan, *Dış Politika* (İstanbul: Ötüken, 1993), p. 70.


\(^{130}\) The importance of Turkey’s role during the Gulf War had been well summarized by a well-known Israeli scholar, Barry Rubin: Without the cooperation of Turkish President Ozal, the trade sanctions against Iraq would have been ineffective and the war effort far weaker. By letting Allied air forces use Turkish bases to bomb West Iraq, Ozal has also made their defense of Israel against Iraqi missiles far...
security. This sparked a growing tension between Turkish political aspirations and traditional Western foreign policy orientation, and Western images of and interests in Turkey. Ankara’s essential role in the Gulf War reinforced the widespread European perception that Turkey is part of the Middle East, thus Turkey was, and still is, increasingly perceived by the European countries as a strategic liability because of the additional burden imposed by its exposure in the Middle East. In response, Ankara felt it had to become more proactive in pursuing security policies in its Middle Eastern neighborhood and, at the same time, develop a “new strategic cooperation” with the US. President Özal’s strategy of close cooperation with the Bush administration was primarily designed, as suggested by Sayari, “to reaffirm Ankara’s commitment to US-Turkish bilateral relations and to highlight Turkey’s importance to US strategic interests and concerns in the Middle East”.

However, events following the end of the Gulf War did not evolve as Turkey hoped. Because of Washington’s inability to develop an effective policy for the Middle East in the post-Gulf war phase, the strategic cooperation between the US and Turkey never fully materialized. The wartime consensus between the two allies over the policies to be pursued towards Saddam Hussein-led Iraq collapsed with the liberation of Kuwait, and was replaced by distinct goals concerning Iraq. In this regard, the repeated extensions by the Turkish Parliament of operation “Provide

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131 As Kuniholm put it, “...with the Soviet threat sharply diminished and Ankara having assumed an important role in the allied coalition against Iraq, Turkey’s strategic significance is once again assessed chiefly in its Middle Eastern context”, Bruce Kuniholm, “Turkey and the West”, Foreign Affairs 70:2 (1991), p.34.

132 See the interview with President Özal on the concept of “strategic cooperation” in Foreign Broadcast Information Service-Western Europe Series, 2 April 1991, p. 32.

Comfort” – renamed “Northern Watch” in December 1996 – appear to be the result of rational calculations by Turkish statesmen of the benefits for Turkey of keeping this force on Turkish soil, despite the evident disadvantages that made Turkey become the biggest economic victim, after Iraq, of the Gulf War. Moreover, Ankara fears that the US efforts to topple Saddam Hussein may further destabilize the region and open the way for the creation of an independent Kurdish state in Northern Iraq, an event that would pose a dangerous precedent for the Kurds in Turkey. This sense of distrust toward the Clinton administration’s initiatives in Iraq has been manifestly expressed by Bülent Ecevit, then Turkish Prime Minister, who said that the US intends to violate Iraq’s territorial integrity by establishing a Kurdish state in the north, a Shiite state in the south and a weak Arab state in the central part of Iraq.

While relations between Turkey and its Western allies were reaching a critical point in 1991, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of newly independent Turkic states in the Transcaucasus and Central Asia provided Turkish officials with new opportunities and challenges.

Although the disappearance of the Soviet threat radically improved the security of the country, Ankara did not alter its pro-Western policy, rather it hoped and believed that an active role in the post-Soviet Turkic Republics would have boosted Turkey’s international image, enhanced the prospects of its admission to the EU and improved the Turkish-US relations. In his speech at the opening of the

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134 The former American Ambassador to Turkey, Morton Abramowitz, argues that “Bush chose not to take up the offer of ‘strategic cooperation’”, in idem, “Dateline Ankara: Turkey After Ozal”, Foreign Policy 91 (1993), p.179.

135 As Aykan put it, “the departure of the force would, however, deprive Turkey of an important bargaining chip in contacts made with both the North Iraqi Kurdish leaders and the Western states with a view to discouraging the establishment of an independent Kurdish state in Northern Iraq” in
Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM) in September 1994, President Demirel likened Turkey to an opened gate through which Europe and the US could enter and develop relations with the Turkic states.\textsuperscript{137}

Turkey’s euphoria\textsuperscript{138} was further strengthened by Washington’s endorsement in the early 1990s of Turkey’s secularism, democracy and market-oriented economy as a model of development for the former Soviet Muslim republics; a strategy based largely on the fear that Islamic fundamentalism, supported by Iran, would make major inroads into Central Asia.\textsuperscript{139}

Yet, despite the inflated US public rhetoric promoting the “Turkish model”, Washington’s political and financial support never materialized. Rather, the US by pursuing its “Russian-first” policy sanctioned Moscow’s “Near Abroad” doctrine and Russian request to relax the CFE (Conventional Forces in Europe) Treaty restrictions on the “flanks” (i.e. the Caucasus). In both issues Ankara felt it was being ignored and sidelined about decisions that affected its immediate interests. As suggested by Nicole and Hugh Pope, “Turkey was being manipulated. When the international configuration changed in 1993, talk of a ‘Turkish model’ disappeared from the geopolitical scene as fast as it had arrived”.\textsuperscript{140} As a result, the earlier – largely unrealistic and exaggerated – expectations have been gradually replaced by more sober and less ambitious analysis of Turkey’s potential regional role and policy objectives.


Ilner Cevik, “Iraq remains a source of concern for Turkey”, \textit{Turkish Probe}, 10 January 1999, p. 10.

President Özal declared that “the 21st century will be the century of the Turks”; the PM Demirel stated that “With the collapse of Communism, a new Turkish world is opening up, which stretches from the Adriatic Sea in the West to the Great Wall of China in the East”.


The US remains the most important Turkish bilateral relationship, but new irritations compound traditional ambivalence. In particular, the different Turkish and US approaches to the Kurdish issue have the potential to undermine the Turkish-US alliance in the post-Cold War era. As Aykan argues, "these differences stem from incompatibilities in the political and cultural traditions of Turkey and the US that have come to the forefront with the disappearance of the Soviet threat." The US Administration finds it more and more difficult to defend indefinitely Ankara before members of Congress who are worried about the growing dimensions of the Kurdish conflict and its potential threat to the stability of the region – leaving aside its implications for human rights. Indeed, strains on the Turkish-US relationship are caused, from time to time, by Congress’s linking economic and military assistance to the improvement of Turkey’s human rights record, a conditionality bluntly rejected by Turkey. Though many Turkish decision-makers increasingly acknowledge that Turkey has human rights problems, they find US policy in this area irreconcilable with the longstanding alliance relationship between the two countries. Ankara has also found the US an increasingly less reliable source of arms: in 1996, pro-human rights groups together with the pro-Greek and the pro-Armenian lobbies in Congress were able to block the shipment of ten Super Cobra helicopters and freeze for more than a year the transfer of three frigates to Turkey. As the Director of the Foreign Policy Institute in Ankara, Seyfi Taşhan, stresses, "the anti-Turkish lobbies in the US are capable, from time to time, to cause major setback in Turkish-US strategic

cooperation". Clearly, one disadvantage Turkey has in this regard is the absence of an effective lobby able to influence the Congress.

Finally, the uneasiness that underlies the relations between Ankara and Washington is also partially linked to the steady decrease in levels of US security and economic assistance, which was ended completely in the 1999 fiscal year budget.

In short, the US has shown little interest in the post-Cold War era in building Turkey into a strong regional power capable of enforcing common bilateral interests. According to Makovsky, this reflects "constraints on US resources, domestic political considerations, particularly with regard to US supporters of Greece and Armenia; skepticism regarding Turkey's regional image, which is still colored by age-old rivalries and imperial past; concerns about Turkey's human rights shortcomings; and a certain wariness among some officials as to whether a strong Turkey able to act as an independent regional force would necessarily behave in ways to enhance US interests".

Thanks to its crucial geopolitical position, Turkey is, and will remain, important to US policy initiatives in the region; nevertheless, unprecedented challenges originating from the domestic politics of both countries and their different regional approaches to regional challenges may easily cause a deterioration in the Turkish-US relationship. On the other side, a state of malaise characterized by frustration at unrealized ambitions and an overall feeling of marginalization, coupled with a somewhat excessive nationalism, has become a quasi-permanent feature of

144 Interview, 10 April 1999, Ankara.
Turkey’s relations with Europe, a broad range of grievances vis-à-vis Europe that has led to a virtual paralysis in the relations between Ankara and the EU. Turkey’s deep dissatisfaction with the ambivalence shown by its Western European allies is well outlined by General Çevik Bir, who noted that “the same West which once described Turkey as a ‘staunch ally’ and a ‘bastion’ is now following a policy of excluding Turkey from the map of Europe”. The Turkish General continues by stressing that “today Europe is, on the one hand, keeping Turkey outside the EU, while on the other, adopting an attitude that almost ignores and even complicates Turkey’s legitimate security requirements”.

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CHAPTER IV

AN ISRAELI SOLUTION FOR TURKEY’S DILEMMAS?

On November 13, 1993, exactly two months after the handshake by Yitzak Rabin and Yasser Arafat at the White House, Hikmet Çetin became the first-ever Turkish Foreign Minister to visit Israel. Since then, Turkish-Israeli relations have developed in an unprecedented way – the extraordinary flurry of high-level visits between the two countries over the past six years has resulted in various agreements embracing virtually all sectors.

Against an overall background characterized by Turkey’s growing involvement in the affairs of the Middle East – where its future political and economic role is ambiguous and not easily definable – at a time when its status with its Western allies is on the decline, Ankara has seen in Israel a potential ally that may help to overcome both challenges. In this perspective, Israel constitutes a regional, as well as Western, solution to Ankara’s Middle Eastern problems, and, at the same time, the best ally to improve its relations with the US.

4.1 Factors Shaping Turkey’s Israeli Initiative:

Despite its strategic location, Turkey’s primary economic and political relationship has been historically with Western Europe and the US. This was a comfortable – even if not always satisfactory – relationship that provided Turkey with security and access to markets in the West as well as to economic aid. But the chain of events unleashed by the end of the Cold War badly affected Turkey’s bargaining position vis-à-vis the US and the West more generally.
Turkey responded to this challenge by introducing foreign policies that are considerably more activist and assertive compared to the past and by stressing in a more active manner the regional character of its foreign policy.\(^{147}\) However, it should be stressed that these developments did not lead to any change in Ankara’s foreign policy orientation: Turkey’s foreign policy priorities are still firmly focused on its relations with the Western powers. For most Turkish foreign policymakers, the principle enunciated by Atatürk in 1923 is still a dominant theme: “The West has always been prejudiced against the Turks...but we Turks have always and consistently moved towards the West...In order to be a civilized nation, there is no alternative”.\(^{148}\) In short, Turkish foreign policy changed in term of style, by becoming more activist and assertive, but it did not deviate from its long-held Western focus.\(^{149}\)

Ankara’s new activism in the international arena is nowhere more evident today than in its opening of a bold diplomatic, economic and military relationship with Israel. Contrary to what is commonly perceived in the Arab world, the impetus for the military alignment between the two countries did not come from Israel, but from the Turkish side and more precisely from the Turkish Armed Forces. While in the late 1950s it was Israel looking at Turkey as a suitable partner for its “peripheral pact” strategy, in the early 1990s the initiative was largely undertaken by Ankara’s powerful generals. As Henri Barkey suggests, “the old courtship game has been

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\(^{148}\) Quoted in Altemur Kilic, *Turkey and the World*, p.49.

\(^{149}\) As Aykan suggests, “Turkish foreign policy during the Kuwait crisis was not, in fact a deviation from Turkey’s traditional foreign policy of maintaining a balance between the requirements of Turkey’s membership in the Western Alliance and those of preserving friendly relations with its neighbors”. Mahmut Aykan, “Turkey’s Policy in Northern Iraq, 1991-95”, *Middle Eastern Studies* 32:4 (1996), p.344.
reversed". Several factors resulting from Turkey’s domestic, regional and international environment combined to encourage Ankara to boost its relations with Israel. These factors included: a distinct sense of self-confidence; the Arab-Israeli peace process; the strained relations between Turkey and most of the Arab countries; increasing lack of confidence on NATO’s security guarantees; and the new security and political challenges emerging in the Middle East.

The first reason is the general sense of self-confidence prevailing among the Turkish élites. Despite persistent fiscal problems such as inflation and budget deficits, the structural changes of the last two decades allowed the Turkish economy to grow at breathtaking rates throughout most of the 1980s (average growth rate nearly 8%) and early 1990s (average growth rate nearly 5%). As a result, by 1991 the per capita gross national product (GNP) had doubled from $1.300 to $2.600, foreign trade as a percentage of Turkey’s Gross National Product increased from 9 per cent (1979) to 26 per cent (1993) and foreign direct investments stood at the end of 1995 at $2.9 billion, a figure far superior to the $97 million registered sixteen years earlier. This robust economic performance provides the Turks with a sense of accomplishment and self-confidence about the long-term economic perspective of the country. During the last decade, Ankara has also significantly improved its military capabilities. Between 1985 and 1995, Turkey’s defense expenditures more than doubled, from $3.1 billion to $6.8 billion. Thanks to the increased expenditure and to the "cascade program" that resulted from the 1990 CFE treaty,

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152 A process the resulted from the 1990 Conventional Forces in Europe treaty (CFE) limiting the military equipment that states of NATO and the former Warsaw Pact are allowed to maintain. As
Turkey has now a modern conventional force, whose building blocks are 180 F-16 and 140 F-4 combat aircraft and 3 KC-135R aircraft tankers, 1100 M-60 and 325 Leopard tanks, 49 S-70 Blackhawk helicopters, and a naval fleet which has been significantly modernized and expanded. Furthermore, its ground forces and pilots have gained valuable combat experience fighting the PKK separatists in Southeastern of Anatolia and northern Iraq; in May 1997, at one stage, up to 50,000 Turkish troops were deployed in Northern Iraq carrying out a major offensive against the guerrillas.

Turkey’s higher profile in the neighboring regions is further spurred by the growing sense that the military gap between itself and its traditional rivals is steadily growing in its favor. Turks still love to bemoan their bad neighborhood, but their neighbors have suffered serious setbacks in military strength in recent years. Most important, the Russians are no longer even neighbors; the common borders are gone, a development that swept away more than three hundred years of fear. The Russian threat is to a great extent diminished, if not ended. The poor performance of Moscow’s forces in Chechnya has strongly reassured the Turks. Moreover, thanks to the mitigating security concerns, Moscow and Ankara are close economic partners, a key factor that explains Russia’s decision not to grant political asylum to the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan.

Without its Soviet protector, debt-ridden Syria has been unable to renew significantly its military inventory in the last decade. A significant portion of the Syrian weapon arsenal is out of commission since Soviet military aid came to an end as a result of the CFE. Turkey received the excess top-of-the-line equipment formerly owned by the US and some European countries, who were cutting down their arsenals to meet the CFE- required limits. The former Foreign Minister, Hikmet Çetin, for example, stated in 1993, that “because its geopolitical location places Turkey in the neighborhood of the most unstable, uncertain and
and the supply of spare parts has stopped. As Şükrü Elekdag suggests, "Turkey has a clear superiority over Syria as regards a comparison of the two countries' armed forces". Iraq’s military machine has been heavily damaged in two wars and by the subsequent US-British bombings, and the very future of the state is uncertain. Compared with Iraq and Syria, Iran’s challenge to Turkey’s national security interests is more subtle and varied. Iran may aspire to primacy in the Persian Gulf, but, it is far from posing a military threat to Turkey. The main source of tension between the two countries regards Teheran’s relentless support for Islamic fundamentalist movements in Turkey. More recently, the practices of co-optation and direct military intervention in Northern Iraq by Turkey and Iran not only exacerbated intra-Kurdish discord, but also contributed to Turkish-Iranian friction. In short, "Turkey considers the nature of the Iranian threat to be more political than military".

However, it is clear that Turkey’s neighborhood is not trouble-free. From a short-term perspective it is the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and tactical ballistic missiles (TBMs) that poses potential military risks to Turkish security. Turkey has no known national WMD capability, no anti-missile capability and no offensive missile capability. In contrast, Iran, Syria and Iraq all have WMD programs. Iran, in particular, is widely believed to be pursuing a nuclear program. Yet, the sense of alarm and urgency about the possibility of proliferation is not overwhelming- at least not yet. Thus, it is not surprising that in his analysis

unpredictable region of the world, it has turned into a frontline state faced with multiple fronts". Quoted by Malik Mufti, “Daring and Caution in Turkish Foreign Policy”, p.33.
"Turkey’s security perceptions", General (Rtd.) Ergüvenç does not indicate the proliferation of WMDs as a major threat for Turkey, rather, he asserts that “Turkey’s military capabilities are presently superior to those of most of its neighbors”. 157 The same conclusion is re-stated by Seyfi Taşhan, who argues that “Turkey is the strongest military and economic power in the Middle East”. 158

The second factor is related to the Arab-Israeli peace process. In particular, Ankara realized that it had nothing to gain from a deal between Israel and Syria through the Middle East peace process. Peace with Israel could free some Arab countries, notably Syria, to pursue long-standing grievances against Turkey. Turkey had been closely observing with worry the Israeli-Syrian peace talks. First, Ankara was concerned that a possible redeployment of Syrian troops from the Golan Heights might result in a Syrian military build up along the Turkish border, which would have altered in Syria’s favor the military balance in Turkey’s Southeast. In 1996, Elekdag rang the alarm bell in Ankara by saying that “When peace is struck between Syria and Israel, Damascus can be expected to pursue her objectives concerning Syrian demands over Hatay and the waters of the Euphrates much more actively”. 159

Second, the Turks feared that after an agreement between Israel and Syria, there might have been a concerted pressure on Turkey, this time possibly involving Israel and the Western countries, to make agreements with its neighbors on the water issue. Specifically, at the beginning of 1996 when the peace negotiations were moving towards an agreement, the US put forward a proposal to ask Turkey to compensate Syria for water from the Golan that Damascus had to give to Israel in order to

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157 Şadi Ergüvenç, “Turkey’s Security Perceptions”, p.36.
159 Şükru Elekdag, “2 ½ War Strategy”, p.52.
facilitate the peace agreements. The request was forthrightly rejected by Ankara. According to an Israeli scholar, Ankara was also perturbed by "the possibility of Israel lobbying for Syria's removal from the US list of states that support terrorism or trade in drugs." Finally, the establishment of full peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors would almost inevitably make irrelevant the so-called peripheral strategy; Turkey would not have the same importance for Israel. The timing of Turkey's offer to Israel of a comprehensive military agreement and the following leak of most details to the press exactly when the peace-negotiations reached a critical stage are a further indications that Ankara's aims in concluding the alliance with Israel were far-reaching: the prevention of an Israeli-Syrian peace treaty and the isolation of Damascus.

The third factor is linked to the poor state of Ankara's relations with the Arab world. By the early 1990s, it became clear that Turkey had derived neither the economic nor the diplomatic benefit it had hoped from its ties with the Islamic world. As mentioned in the study "Turkey's Foreign Policy Objectives" published by the Ankara-based Foreign Policy Institute (DPE), "religious rapprochement with the Middle Eastern states and the Turkish support of the Arab cause did not necessarily obtain the desired results as far as Turkish foreign policy was concerned". This consideration leads to the conclusion that "this reluctance to support Turkey by the Middle Eastern countries is against the Turkish national interests". The disaffection with a pro-Arab policy that failed to pay anticipated diplomatic

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160 Alain Greish, "Turkish-Israeli Relations and their Impact on the Middle East", *Middle East Journal* 52:2 (1998), p.198. Turkey's unwillingness to supply water to the Syrians in order to facilitate the conclusion of a peace agreement between Israel and Syria has been recently re-stated to the author by Türkekul Kurttekin, Director General for Bilateral Political Affairs at the Turkish ministry of Foreign Affairs. Interview, 7 April 1999, Ankara.

dividends is well expressed by Semih İdiz, a Turkish journalist: “Looking at recent history one sees nothing but negative examples ranging from nonexistent ‘Islamo-Arab solidarity’ for the Turkish cause in Cyprus, to Arab countries actually claiming chunks of Turkey, as Syria does, to the dangerous meddling in Turkey’s internal affairs, again as Syria does, through support for a group that every civilized nation sees as a terrorist organization.” \(^{163}\) Consequently, there is a deep resentment, both at the governmental level and among the public, about the lack of understanding and support shown by the Arab world vis-à-vis Turkey’s security issues in the Eastern Mediterranean. \(^{164}\) Based on this, Turkish foreign policy-makers have concluded that religious brotherhood with the Arab world cannot be a crucial criterion for developing policies related to the national security of Turkey whenever an Arab nation or its interests are involved. Moreover, the Islamic Middle East has declined in economic importance to Ankara; once consuming some 45 per cent of the Turkish export in the mid-1980s, it now buys just around 12 per cent. Meanwhile, growing disagreements over the water issue have badly affected Ankara’s relations with the Arab countries since 1990. Finally, the Gulf War and its aftermath highlighted the fragmentation of the Arab world – with Egypt and Syria supporting the US-led allied coalition against Saddam Hussein and Saudi Arabia and Kuwait cutting off financial aid to the PLO because of its pro-Iraqi stance – and led the Turkish policymakers to conclude that Ankara did not need to worry about retaliation from the oil-rich Arab states if it chose to improve its relations with Israel.

\[^{162}\] "Turkey’s Foreign Policy Objectives" Foreign Policy (Ankara) 17: 9 (1993).

\[^{163}\] Semih İdiz, “So what does Turkey owe the Arabs?”, Turkish Probe, 14 June 1996, p.3.

\[^{164}\] Historically, an earlier negative evaluation of the idea of an “Arab/Muslim bloc” by the Turks was provoked by the lack of support showed by the Muslim states during the 1974 Cyprus crisis. This view was further reinforced by the lack of Muslim solidarity during the forced migration of the Turkish minority (in less than 3 months, 320,000 people crossed the border with Turkey) from Bulgaria in June 1989.
Turkey’s lack of confidence on the full support of NATO in the protection of Ankara’s interests in the Middle East and Turkey’s uneasiness toward the enlargement of the Atlantic Alliance and the emerging security architecture in Europe gave Turkey additional reasons to look for alternatives to safeguard its national interests in its Middle Eastern neighborhood. The Gulf War confirmed what the Turks had long suspected: in the post-Cold War, aggression against Turkey by one of its Arab neighbors would not be considered by some NATO members as an aggression against all NATO members. The debate that took place, during the Gulf War, within each European country about the necessity, wisdom and merits of getting involved in protecting Turkey left the Turks with a bitter taste; the Western partners showed that they were far from being reliable allies. Turkey realized that it could not count on NATO support against Middle Eastern threats.

As Elekdag argues, “With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, NATO has totally lost its function of providing support for Turkey’s defense”. The “Central European oriented” approach implicit in NATO’s enlargement to some former Warsaw Pact members creates further suspicions, from a Turkish perspective, that the Alliance’s primary strategic goal has become the enhancement of security in Central Europe. Taking into account that the new NATO members from Central Europe are going to become soon full members of the EU and, therefore of the WEU, Turkey may find itself providing security as a NATO member and as an associate of the WEU to the EU countries without benefiting from whatever security guarantee.

165 As Sczer argues, “It was obvious that NATO’s European allies would have been reluctant to invoke Article 5 of the NATO Treaty if Turkey had actually become a target of an Iraqi attack”, Duygu Sczer, “Turkey’s Grand Strategy Facing a Dilemma”, p.29.
166 NATO deployed an allied mobile force in Turkey more than a month after Ankara’s official request, moreover, most of the 40 planes sent were obsolescent F-104s and Alpha-Jets. The move triggered off complaints in Germany, where there was strong opposition to any military involvement.
that the WEU arrangements would provide to its EU-members. In short, Turkey may find itself being a contributor to European security without being entitled to take part in the actual decision-making process. It appears that, as Taşhan indicates, "the lessening of West European concern in Turkey's security interests and the lack of disposition to avail itself of Turkey's strategic assets, Turkey needs to establish new strategic balances in its region in an effort to reduce its defense burden, although, such an effort involve a certain degree of decoupling between Turkey's and West European security perceptions and interests". Besides the shortcomings of the new European security architecture, the various arms embargos imposed by the US and by some European countries to Turkey in the last few years pushed Ankara to look for some other reliable suppliers and "to become more self-sufficient in meeting its own military requirements".

Finally, Ankara's increasing involvement in the affairs of the Middle East has constituted a further reason to look for a reliable ally in the region. Since the end of the Cold War, the most pressing political and security challenges that Turkey has been facing have a Middle Eastern connotation: the Kurdish problem, the future of Iraq and the water question. Kurdish nationalism constitutes the most important threat to Turkey's national security, that is, to its territorial integrity and national unity. While noting that the Kurdish issue remains one of the most urgent and complicated domestic problems facing Turkey, it is more important, from the

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in the Middle East. This in turn provoked some sharp attacks by Turkish President Özal on the Germans as unreliable allies, see The Guardian (25 January 1991).

Şükrü Elekdağ, "2 ½ War Strategy", p.54.

Seyfi Taşhan, A Review of Turkish Foreign Policy in the Beginning of 1998", p.5.

Barlaz Özener, Turkey's ambassador to Israel, observed that Ankara sought to purchase more weapons and arms from Israel because the US was an "unreliable partner". Cumhuriyet, 25 February 1997.


perspective of this study, to stress the transnational character that the Kurdish question has assumed recently. Post-Gulf War developments have vastly complicated Turkey’s Kurdish problem. The crisis of late March 1991, when more than 1.5 million Iraqi Kurds fled towards Iran and Turkey in order to escape from the Iraqi military operations against them, had three important effects on Turkey.

First, in Northern Iraq the creation of a safe heaven under the protection of the allied forces increased the ability of the PKK to launch operations against Turkey. The creation of a de-facto Kurdish controlled zone above the 36th parallel has greatly worried Ankara, which perceives the Kurdish enclave as a possible future model for its own Kurdish minority and as part of a broader Western scheme to weaken Turkey. This is probably best captured by a retired Turkish colonel who remarked: “The United States, under the pretext of protecting human rights, is assisting the formation of a Kurdish state in Northern Iraq which eventually will demand land from Turkey”.

Second, there had been, in several instances, signs that Saddam Hussein had armed and supplied the PKK in apparent retaliation for Turkey’s close cooperation with allied forces during the war. Baghdad joined Damascus and Teheran in supporting and encouraging the PKK to carry out attacks on Turkey: the Kurdish problem remains a tool of power politics that Turkey’s neighbors actively exploit against it. PKK attacks originating from Iran have frequently brought tensions between the two countries: in May 1995 the Turkish press reported that Ankara was considering a military attack on PKK basis in Iran. Since the early 1980s the Syrian government has provided shelter to the PKK, supplied it with weapons, trained PKK

militants and used them against Turkey. Concern over Syria’s backing the PKK and its close relations with Greece led Şükrü Elekdağ to argue that Turkey should base its national defense strategy on the ability to fight contemporaneously two and a half wars: against Syria, Greece and the PKK. In conclusion, as Barkey put it, “The fact that the PKK has managed to obtain support from Syria, Iran and Saddam Hussein to mount multifaceted political and military operations demonstrates that resolving the internal conflict will require an internal strategy as well as an external one”.

Third, the attention of the world was drawn to the Kurds and attention to Turkey’s own Kurdish problem was accentuated. It was at the time of the 1991 refugees crisis that the problem came to the fore to such an extent that it led the government to recognize a “Kurdish reality” in Turkey. Turkey realized that it is, in a way, a hostage of the Kurdish conflict: its ability to maneuver on the international scene, especially in the West, is severely curtailed by the internationalization of the Kurdish issue. Turkey’s failure to resolve the Kurdish problem accompanied by the problem of human rights violations and democratization have cast a long shadow on Ankara’s relations with its Western allies. US assistant secretary of state Richard Holbrooke reportedly warned that “persistent problems” concerning the human rights situation in Turkey might “deter trade” with Ankara following “legislative pressure” in the US. However, much more problematic for Ankara is the “ politicization of arms sales”. Turkey is heavily dependent on US military equipment – 80 per cent of its military arsenal is US made – but it has found Washington an increasingly less reliable source of weapons in recent times. Protecting and promoting the Turkish

\[174\] Şükrü Elekdağ, “2 ½ War Strategy”, p.56.
\[175\] Henri Barkey, “Turkey and the New Middle East” p.33.
\[176\] FBIS-WES, 10 February 1995, p.41.
political, military, economic interests in the Congress has become a dire imperative for Ankara due to the increasing capacity of human rights groups together with anti-Turkish lobbies to affect negatively the US legislation regarding Turkey.

4.2 Turkey’s Goals:

Ankara envisions potentially wide-ranging benefits from close ties with Israel. The most important, from the Turkish perspective, is enhancing Turkey’s influence in the West – most notably in the US. Turkish foreign policy-makers increasingly perceive Western foreign policy priorities as running counter to Turkey’s interests, especially regarding Ankara’s security priorities in the Middle East. Whereas Western, and especially American, vital interests in the region surrounding Turkey have diminished somewhat with the end of the Cold War, Turkey’s own interests have grown and expanded across a much broader region and have become more vital.

The conflictual attitude that characterizes Turkey’s relations with its Western allies is reflected in Hasan Köni’s conclusion that “Western European and US policies have given rise to the isolation of Turkey on the international scene”. This sense of isolation has been significantly fuelled by several developments. First, Ankara’s relations with its Western allies have been showing increasing signs of strain. In particular, relations between Turkey and the EU have gone badly wrong in the last decade, up to the point that Ankara decided, following the EU’s infamous sidelining of Turkey’s application for full membership in December 1997, to suspend all political relations (but not the customs union) with Brussels. While the

177 Quoted from Henri Barkey and Graham Fuller, *Turkey’s Kurdish Question*, (New York; Rowman 1998), p.163.
explanation for Turkey’s application rejection was fundamentally based on economic criteria, this was widely perceived in Ankara as an excuse to exclude Turkey because it is a Muslim country. This perception was reinforced by the European incapability or insensitiveness to stop timely the slaughter of Muslims in Bosnia and then in Kosovo and by incautious statements by European politicians. The European criticisms to Turkey’s human rights practices, especially in relation to the Kurdish issue, and the weapons embargo declared, from time to time, against Turkey by several European countries (for example, Germany, Norway, Denmark and Holland) have further aggravated relations. The sum result is a widespread impression in Turkey that Europe is at best unsympathetic and unreliable, and at worst racist and a promoter of terrorism in Turkey.¹⁷⁸

If the European pillar of Turkey’s foreign relations was increasingly showing cracks, relations with the US, the other pillar, showed growing strains. While it is clear that the US is of all the Western countries the most sympathetic to Turkey’s interests, it is also evident that domestic politics, and not only American strategic considerations, have an increasing influence on Washington’s foreign policy. This is intimately linked to the demise of the Soviet threat and to the growing assertiveness of human rights groups and NGOs within the US Congress. This development has further worsened Turkey’s standing vis-à-vis the Congress, in which Turkey has historically met the joint opposition of the powerful Armenian- and Greek-American lobbies and suffered for the absence of an effective pro-Turkish lobby.

In light of repeated Congressional criticism and efforts to limit aid levels based on Turkey’s human rights record, the recurrent attempts to pass legislation

¹⁷⁸ The Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ismail Cem, in an interview to the Turkish Daily News has openly stated that “Europe is promoting separatism in Turkey and accused Europe of being
commemorating the “Armenian genocide”, and, most seriously, the setbacks suffered in procuring US weapons, Ankara duly realized that if historically not alienating the pro-Israeli lobby was a factor in some decisions, recently gaining its support to balance the strength of the anti-Turkish lobbies drastically increased in importance. Already in 1994, Şükrü Elekdağ – who is very familiar with the dynamics of US domestic politics thanks to his nine-year (1980-89) tenure as Turkish Ambassador to Washington – argued that “The Israel lobby in the US is far superior to all other ethnic lobbies put together. Whenever this lobby has worked for us [the Turks], Turkey’s interests have been perfectly protected against the fools in the US. The development of relations between Turkey and Israel and the formalization of their de-facto alliance will place this lobby permanently on our side”. Ankara deeply believes that its alignment with Israel would ease its way to the US legislature and “conquer” Congress on its behalf. As Kemal Kirişçi put it, “Jewish lobby groups are seen by many Turkish officials and commentators as another means with which to counter anti-Turkish influence in the Congress. In these circles there is a belief that this would be a natural outcome of enhanced Israel-Turkish relations”. This perception is further strengthened in the Turkish opinion by positive past experiences: in the 1980s the Israeli lobby played a key role in setting aside April 24 as a day of “commemoration for the victims of the Armenian genocide” whenever it emerged in Congress’ agenda. Ankara’s reliance on the American Jewish lobby to promote Turkey’s interests and image in the US does not seem to trouble Israel;

responsible for the atrocities suffered by the Bosnian Muslims during the war in Yugoslavia”, Turkish Daily News, 23 January 1998.
181 Kemal Kirişçi, “Turkey and the US: Ambivalent Allies”.

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rather Israeli officials have openly acknowledged that they fully understand and support Ankara's goal to strengthen its ties with the US. Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai confirmed that Israel is assisting Turkey on the American political scene and encouraging Jewish organizations to follow this example. Zvi Bar'el, one of the leading editorialists of the Israeli newspaper *Ha-aretz*, wrote that "The strategic alliance [Turkey] really wants, then, is not with a regional power, even if its name is Israel, but with the US". Perversely, as Zvi Elpeleg, Israel's former Ambassador in Ankara, notes, it is helpful that Turks believe in the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and other conspiratorial anti-Semitism, for this leads them to think that Israel has vast powers.

In conclusion, Ankara sees its alliance with Israel as part of a triangular relationship with the US that may well compensate for Turkey's weakening ties with the EU. While it is at best uncertain whether friendship with Israel may translate into support in the Congress, it is certain that Turkey's cooperation with Israel has fundamentally a Western rather than a Middle Eastern "target".

Because both Israel and Turkey's military inventories are based on US equipment, Turkey also sees Israel as an alternative and at times cheaper source of supply. In particular, purchases from Israel may enable Turkey to circumvent US conditions on arms sales, such as those requiring a balance of forces between Greece and Turkey, or restricting the transfer of specific arms when they might be used in the abuse of human rights (because of the strings attached, Ankara cannot use some

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182 Şükrü Elekdağ told the author that as Turkish Ambassador to Washington he used to contact personally all the Jewish members of Congress right before the decision on the "Armenian resolution" was expected. Interview with the Ambassador, 15 May 1998, Ankara.
185 Quoted by Nachmani, "The Remarkable Turkish-Israeli Tie", p.21.
kind of weapons in the southeast). Israel's state of the art military technology and its well-documented specialty to modernize aging and obsolete equipment made it an invaluable partner for Ankara.°" We heard and learnt about, and saw high-tech, state of the art technological ventures, pertaining to almost all areas on the military, and all of them developed and produced by Israel” said General Bir after visiting some Israeli defense industries. Moreover, Israel has demonstrated – in contrast with the US – the willingness to share with Ankara its technology and know-how in joint defense projects; this access to Israeli technology is fundamental for Turkey’s policy of strengthening its own defense industry. Israel has already agreed to set up production lines for the stand-off air to ground missile Popeye II in Turkey,® while the upgrading of the Turkish 54 F-4s is carried out by both the Israeli Aircraft Industries (IAI) and the maintenance center (Hava Ikmal Bakım Merkezi-HIBM) of the Turkish Air Force in Eskişehir. According to General Ergüvenç, Turkey’s need to become more self-sufficient in meeting its military requirements is “perhaps the most rational explanation for Turkey’s recent rapprochement with Israel”.®

During a visit to Israel in February 1997, Turkey’s then Chief of General Staff, General Ismail Karadayı, stated: “The prior item of this cooperation should be the struggle against international terrorism”. In so doing, General Karadayı clearly delineated an additional Turkey’s goal in improving its ties with Israel. However, despite the fact that the two countries share a similar approach to terrorism, Ankara’s

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186 The Commander of the Turkish Air Force stated that Turkey had no option but to make use of Israel to upgrade the aircraft [the F-4s]” as reported by Dror Marom, “Phantom Jet Deal Won’t Be Cancelled Despite Turkish PM’s Opposition”, Israel Business Arena, 2 December 1996.
187 Information Division, Israel Foreign Ministry-Jerusalem, “Mordechai Meeting with Turkish Deputy Chief of Staff”, 5 May 1997 in gopher:Wisrael-info-go.. ./dip/docs/970505t.fan
190 Şadi Ergüvenç, “Turkey’s Security Perceptions”, p.41.
pleas for cooperation against the PKK and Syria had been always played down by
Israel. The Turkish thesis put forward by Foreign Minister Çetin during his visit to
Israel (13-14 November 1993) that several terrorist factions protected and sponsored
by Syria equally threatened Ankara and Jerusalem did not entirely convince the
Israelis. The Israeli authorities pointed out that the PKK – engaged since 1984 in a
bloody armed-struggle against the Turkish government – had never targeted Israel.
Çetin’s call for a joint Turkish-Israeli effort against the PKK failed; the Israelis
quickly rejected the Turkish request by replying that "Israel did not wish to have new
enemies". Nevertheless, Israel did not exclude the possibility of cooperation
against international terrorism but refused to join in a campaign specifically designed
against the PKK. This materialized in an arrangement concluded in November
1994 that relegated antiterrorist efforts to a bilateral police agreement. Israel’s
rejection to take sides against Kurdish terrorism results principally from fears of
opening a new terrorist front vis-à-vis the PKK and the existence of persistent pro-
Kurdish sentiments in Israel, as demonstrated by the extensive support for the
Kurdish struggle in Northern Iraq in the 1960s and 1970s.

Having realized the impossibility to obtain Israeli military help in fighting the
PKK, Ankara decided to seek Israeli assistance against Syria, the main sponsor of the
PKK. Again, Israel was clearly ambivalent about close cooperation with Turkey if it
appeared too obviously aimed at Syria. Both the Rabin and Peres governments were

191 Quoted by Joseph Leitmann and Cagri Erdem, "Turkey: Benefiting from David’s Army", SFSU IR
192 Çetin, in an interview given to the Jerusalem Post, openly accused Syria of protecting and
guaranteeing a safe-heaven to the terrorists of the PKK, Jihad and Hizbullah and added that "Turkey
and Israel should fight together against Damascus’ sponsored terrorism". The Israeli position also
appears in the same article: Jerusalem Post, 16 November 1993, p.1.
193 According to the Turkish Probe, the Israeli authorities decided to examine carefully the Turkish
proposal for a cooperation agreement against drug trafficking, weapons smuggling and organized
crime. See Turkish probe, 18 November 1993, p.3.
194 Regarding the pro-Kurdish sentiment existing in some circles in Israel, see Makovsky, 1996, p.166.
too involved in pursuing a peace agreement with Syria to take into account Turkey's susceptibilities and interests vis-à-vis Damascus.\textsuperscript{195} The government led by Rabin, and afterwards by Peres, had mixed feelings about the relationship with Turkey because, in Efraim Inbar's opinion, "they believed, and there are people still in Israel who do so, that good relations with Turkey might interfere with our plans to make peace with Syria".\textsuperscript{196} Nevertheless, all the Turkish officials who visited Israel before the conclusion of the military cooperation agreement repeatedly stressed the threat posed by Damascus' support for "terrorism".\textsuperscript{197} Contemporaneously, Turkey adopted an increasingly hard stance toward Damascus: in January 1996, Ankara demanded that Syria extradite Abdullah Öcalan. While the request did not constitute anything new, this marked the first time that Ankara publicly announced its demand.\textsuperscript{198} In short, Ankara, having secured a military agreement with Israel - at that time still undisclosed - decided to put maximum pressure on Damascus by openly announcing its demand for the extradition of the PKK leader. As no positive reply came from Asad, the subsequent step was to leak to the press the news regarding the Turkish-Israeli military agreement\textsuperscript{199}. This was interpreted by the Turkish press as a clear sign of Ankara's unwillingness to support a peace process between Israel and Syria, which in early 1996 had reached a critical stage,\textsuperscript{200} that might have affected Turkey's

\textsuperscript{195} In summer 1994, Israel's Ambassador to the US, Itamar Rabinovich, said that Jerusalem did not want to give Asad the impression that Israel and Turkey are "ganging up on him". As reported by Makovsky, "Israeli-Turkish Relations: A Turkish 'Periphery Strategy'?", p.155.

\textsuperscript{196} Efraim Inbar, "The Turkish-Israeli Strategic Partnership".


\textsuperscript{198} Robert Olson, "Turkey-Syria Relations Since the Gulf War: Kurds and Water", Middle East Policy 5:2 (1997), p.177.

\textsuperscript{199} "In the beginning, we would argue with the Turks over who was responsible for the leaks", an Israeli officials stated. As reported by Steve Rodan, "Ties with Turkey – The Most Important Story of the Decade", Jerusalem Post, 13 June 1996.

\textsuperscript{200} Uri Savir, one of the chief Israeli negotiators involved in the peace talks with Syria, said that "In February 1996 we had passed the point of no return, the moment when you feel you are moving
Turkey’s apprehensiveness in early 1996 about the Israeli-Syrian peace negotiations was reflected by Onur Öyemen, the Turkish Deputy Foreign Minister, who, during his talks in Israel, in very undiplomatic terms called Israeli policy towards Syria “appeasement.”

While it remains to be determined whether – or to what extent – Turkey’s stratagem of announcing its military deal with Israel was responsible for the failure of the Israeli-Syrian negotiations, it is clear that Ankara was fully aware that its offer to conclude a military cooperation agreement was too enticing for the Israelis to refuse. The alliance with Turkey immeasurably strengthens Israel’s security while reducing its perceived need to negotiate a settlement with Syria. In the words of Uri Or, a reserve General and former joint-Minister of Defense in the Peres government, “it is a positive factor for Israel that Syria has an enemy on its northern frontiers. Syria will never attack Turkey, but it cannot exclude the reverse.” Such a scenario that came close to reality during the Turkish-Syrian crisis of September-October 1998.

4.3 Israel’s Goals:

As Ed Blanche argues, “Israel is now conducting what is probably the broadest and most far-reaching review of its strategic doctrine in history.” Following recent developments in the region, in particular the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and long-range ballistic missiles, and the shock

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201 See Robert Olson, “Turkey-Syria Relations Since the Gulf War: Kurds and Water”, pp.177-178.
202 The episode is described by Efraim Inbar, “The Turkish-Israeli Strategic Partnership”.
203 As reported by Alain Greish, “Turkish-Israeli Relations and their Impact on the Middle East”, p.198.
of the Gulf War when the country was paralyzed for weeks because of the Scud threat, the Israelis have come to the conclusion that impeding regional threats cannot be dealt with unilaterally, especially when they are concentrated in the more distant countries. This has encouraged Israeli policy-makers to seek tacit or overt alliances with nearby states and cooperation with foreign partners. In 1993, the former Israeli Foreign Minister, Shimon Peres, suggested that the traditional approach to security based primarily on self-reliance was no longer relevant and it had to be substituted with a regional approach.

The combination of Turkey's military power, its strategic location bordering Iran, Iraq and Syria and its close ideological affinity with Israel, make Turkey an invaluable ally in the region. Despite the fact that both countries have made clear countless times that their cooperation does not target any third country in the region, Israeli officials have not hesitated to stress, whenever possible, the great value that they place on Israel's relationship with Turkey. In a press briefing during his visit to Ankara, on 8 December 1997, the Israeli Minister of Defense, Yitzhak Mordechai, summed up the overall Israeli aim of the relation with Turkey, stating that "when we lock hands we will form a powerful fist. This relation will help us defend ourselves against any threat and help establish peace in the region". He also added that "I certainly described the relationship between us and the Turks as the development of a

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205 As Naveh points out, "By employing surface-to-surface ballistic missiles against civilian targets located in depth, a hostile state which does not share a mutual border with Israel managed to inflict strategic terror upon the Jewish state" in Shimon Naveh. "The Cult of the Offensive Preemption and Future Challenges for Israeli Operational Thought" in Efraim Karsh, ed., Between War and Peace. Dilemmas of Israeli Security (London: Frank Cass, 1996), p. 170.


207 Ha-aretz, "Turkey pledges to deepen ties", 9 December 1997.
strategic relationship". Mordechai's remarks were echoed by Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, who stated that the new Israeli-Turkish military ties could serve as the "axis" of a future regional structure.

Facing the threat of long-range missiles that has made the home front more vulnerable, Israel is now focusing more and more on "over-the-horizon capabilities" that would allow its Air Force to hit a distant enemy, possibly with a preemptive strike. Turkey – even without directly participating in a war – could play an important role: it could allow damaged Israeli aircraft to land at Turkish bases, permit Israeli combat Search and Rescue (SAR) crews to snatch downed pilots while operating from its soil and allow air-refueling operations in its skies, which would greatly increase Israeli striking range and "allow the Israeli air force to be more aggressive and take greater risks". In this regard, it is relevant to note that such a war-like scenario has been depicted, during the February 1998 crisis with Iraq, by the former Turkish Ambassador to Washington, who openly stated that Turkey would consider allowing Israel to use Turkish airspace to retaliate for a possible Iraqi missile attack on Israel.

For Iran and Iraq, Turkish-Israeli military cooperation has brought Israel to their borders. Israel now has a "window" on the territories of both the "rogue states" through which it can undertake monitoring and electronic listening operations and stage air strikes on Iran's non-conventional weapons infrastructure. What is certain is the fact that Syria, Iran and Iraq now have to take into account the new strategic

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209 Alparslan Esmer, "PM Yilmaz's trip to Israel clouds other visits", Turkish Probe, 13 September 1998, p. 12 and for an Israeli source see Ha-aretz, "Bashing, promising and whitewashing" 3 September 1998.
reality brought about by the Turkish-Israeli axis when developing their military-strategic plans: an “element of uncertainty”\textsuperscript{212} has been introduced in the military calculations of Teheran, Baghdad and Damascus. As Zvi Bar’el put it, “The strategic cooperation [with Turkey] is of supreme importance to Israel”.\textsuperscript{213}

As in the case of Turkey, Israel sees its alignment with Ankara as an important asset to strengthen its ties with the US and, at the same time, as an “alternative” in the case that its ties relations with Washington turn to the worse. Both Turkey and Israel fear a reduced involvement of the US in the Middle Eastern region. Efraim Inbar openly argued that “Both Israel and Turkey fear abandonment by the West...Israel seems to be in a better position that Turkey in Washington, but both are interested in strengthening their ties with the US, which for various reasons is not sensitive enough to their security needs”.\textsuperscript{214} Indeed, Turkish links with the US through its participation in NATO also tie well with Israel’s close relationship with the US. In the new US-dominated international order, the differing points of view between Jerusalem and Washington, most notably on the implementation of the peace agreement with the PLO, are clearly resurfacing. This is also linked to the fact that, in the post-Cold War era, US-Israel relations are much harder to isolate from Washington’s other relationships in the region. In the long run, this could undermine the mutual trust between Israel and the US, which had been already partially affected by the espionage scandal between the two countries that broke out in 1996.\textsuperscript{215}

Against this background, it is not surprising that several Israeli scholars have

\textsuperscript{211} Ugur Akinci, “Kandemir: Turkey may allow Israel to retaliate against Iraq”, \textit{Turkish Daily News}, 21 February 1998, pp. 1-2.
\textsuperscript{212} Eisenstadt, “Turkish-Israeli Military Cooperation: An Assessment
repeatedly advocated the development of contingency plans to augment or to substitute—wholly or partially—the current main source of strategic resources: the US. 216 Turkey, by strengthening Israel’s security and by reducing Israel’s perceived need to conclude a settlement with Syria, perfectly suits Jerusalem’s need for strategic diversification.

A further rationale for Israel to join in a strategic alliance with Turkey is provided by its giant defense industries’ dire need to find new markets. The Israeli military industries, an essential element in Israel’s technological superiority, have been facing in the last years serious economic trouble as a result of the shrinking world arms market after the end of the Cold War and the decrease in Israeli defense expenditures. 217 Consequently, this has in turn reemphasized the concentration on finding strategic partners who will purchase weapons and to whom Israel feels able to sell to. As Inbar plainly acknowledged, “The Turkish Army has at its disposal $30 billion dollars for the next ten years to spend on modernization, and, of course, it will be nice if we get a nice piece of it.” 218

In conclusion, on a military-strategic level Turkey does suit the Israeli objectives of putting pressure on Syria, offering new options for potential air strikes on Iraq and Iran, and carrying out intelligence activity on Turkey’s southern neighbors. On the economic and political level, Turkey has already demonstrated itself to be a formidable purchaser of Israeli weapons and it may become a bridge to

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215 The US General Accounting Office, the investigative arm of Congress, reported in 1996 that Israel “conducts the most aggressive espionage operation against the US of any US ally” in Ed Blanche, “Israel addresses the threats of the new millennium”, p.27.
218 Efraim Inbar, “The Turkish-Israeli Strategic Partnership”. 

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Central Asia for the Israeli entrepreneurs looking for business opportunities in the newly independent republics of the former Soviet Union.

4.4 The Military Cooperation:

On February 23, 1996, Israel and Turkey signed a military cooperation agreement providing for the exchange of military information, experience, and personnel. It called, *inter alia*, for joint training exercises, exchange of military observers at each other’s exercises, and reciprocal port access for naval vessels. Each country’s planes exercise in the other’s airspace for one week four times a year: since April 1996 these exercises have occurred regularly. Such visits are mutually beneficial. They enable the Israeli pilots to gain experience flying long-range missions (a skill that would be necessary for missions over Iran) and over mountainous areas, where visually identifying an enemy aircraft is more difficult than during over-sea flights. In exchange, Turkish pilots have the opportunity to benefit from Israel’s systems of training in advanced technology warfare, in particular, they have access to the air combat maneuvering instrumentation range in the Negev. Since such exercises also enable both air forces to become familiar with procedure and tactics used by their counterparts, this could greatly facilitate cooperation in wartime.

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219 The original memorandum that constituted the basis for the military cooperation agreement reached in February 1996 was signed in the previous September. Regarding the exact place and date of the latter signature a substantial confusion still prevails. The data indicated are the ones given by General Bir to the Turkish newspaper *Yeni Şafak* and *Cumhuriyet*, see SWB ME/2634 MED/8, 10 June 1996.

220 According to the *Jerusalem Post*, in 1997, “the Israeli fighter jets have carried out 120 sorties in Turkey, many of them practice for long-range missions, since Israeli air space is so limited” in Arieh O’Sullivan “IAF jets fly long-range training sorties in Turkey”, *Jerusalem Post*, 12 December 1997, p. 3.

221 According to some press reports, in August 1998, the Israeli Air Force had trained Turkish pilots for an air-strike against Paphos (the new Greek-Cypriot airbase where the Russian S-300 missiles were supposed to be deployed), using a mockup of the airbase derived from reconnaissance photos taken by Israeli aircraft. See *Global Intelligence Update*, “Turkey attempts to forge bloc impeding Cyprus Crisis”, 10 September 1998.
In January 1998, the navies of Israel, Turkey and the US held joint naval search and rescue (SAR) exercises in the Eastern Mediterranean that have involved five vessels and helicopters. Despite their official “humanitarian purpose”, the SAR maneuvers were, according to the experts, similar to naval operations aimed at localizing and intercepting an enemy vessel.222

The military agreements are also believed to have strengthened the long-standing intelligence ties between Turkey and Israel. In April 1996, addressing the Washington Research Institute, General Çevik Bir, revealed that Israel had requested Turkey’s assistance in collecting information. Israel’s first priority target is Syria, while Iran is the second, General Bir said. The positive reply by Ankara was taken for granted.223

In exchange, Turkey will benefit from Israel’s experience in the “security zone” in Lebanon in monitoring its borders with Iraq and preventing cross-border infiltration by the PKK terrorists. During his visit to Israel in May 1997, the Turkish Defense Minister visited the Golan Heights in order to check if the methods employed by the Israelis to prevent cross border infiltration were applicable along the Turkish-Iraqi border. It seems also likely that – despite the denials by the Turkish and Israeli authorities – Israeli military advisers have been involved in the planning of the Turkish military offensive in Northern Iraq and in the laying of mines and trip wire sensors along the Turkish-Iraqi border.224

222 Jane’s Defence Weekly, “Naval exercise will link Israel, Turkey and USA”, 17 December 1997, p. 6.
223 SWB ME/2581 MED/9, 9 April 1996.
224 Robert Olson, “Turkey-Syria Relations Since the Gulf War: Kurds and Water”, p.178-9. The Secretary of the Socialist Party of Kurdistan, Muhammad Hajji Mahmud has stated that, in June 1997, 17 Israeli military advisers took part in a military action carried out by the Turkish forces along the border. As reported by both IRNA and MED-TV, see SWB ME/2922 MED/8, 19 June 1997.
Regarding the PKK issue, Israel has clearly abandoned its reluctance to be involved in the conflict against the PKK; the changed attitude can be attributed to Benjamin Netanyahu’s election as Israeli Prime Minister (May 1996) and to the subsequent freezing of the peace-process. Netanyahu did not hesitate to condemn Syria’s support for the PKK and supported vigorously the idea of a joint struggle against terrorism aimed at isolating countries sponsoring terrorist groups. The former Israeli premier, in a television interview to a Turkish network, openly rejected the idea of a Kurdish state and condemned the PKK: “Turkey has suffered the attacks from terrorist attacks from the PKK and we see no difference between the terrorism of the PKK and that which Israel suffers”. But the Israeli officials immediately stressed that “We are not talking about hurting the Kurds. We are talking more about dealing with the host of groups that Syria supports”.

Finally, a joint forum for strategic research and assessment, which meets every six months, has been institutionalized. During these meetings high level officials discuss the dire strategic issues at stake. As Efraim Inbar argues, “This is probably the heart of the relationship”.

The military agreement on defense industry, signed on August 26, 1996, has established the legal framework for the transfer of military technology and know-how. This allows the Turkish Army – with the Pentagon’s blessing – to obtain weapons and technology that Turkey would not be able to get in Europe and/or in the US, because of its human rights record and its dispute with Greece.

The reliability, the technology and the capacity to cover almost all needs of defense has made the Israeli military industry an unique partner for the Turkish

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225 Printed in Ha‘aretz, 27 May 1997.
227 Efraim Inbar, “The Turkish-Israeli Strategic Partnership”.

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Armed Forces, which are currently engaged in a giant program of investment: a plan for rearmament and modernization of about $31 billion over five years, which will reach $150 billion in 25 years. The transfer of Israeli technology is also functional to the goal of developing the Turkish defense industry that today can cover only 21% of the Armed Forces’ requirements.

The agreement on military industry cooperation has led to an extraordinary range of actual and possible arms sales, overwhelmingly from Israel to Turkey, characterized by a significant amount of work given to Turkish firms. The giant investment program in defense undertaken by Turkey constitutes a “gold mine” for Israeli defense industries. As the then Israeli Minister of Defense Yitzhak Mordechai said “we have opened the way to Israeli firms in order to increase the volume of sales and activities in Turkey...we are just at the beginning”. The defense contracts concluded with Turkey constitute an invaluable opportunity for the Israeli defense industries striving to maintain their technological advantage over the neighboring countries and, contemporaneously, suffering because of Israel’s decreasing defense budget and the crisis of the world arms market.

The potentialities inherent in Turkey’s defense needs were clearly remarked by General (Rtd.) Sitki Orun, a technical adviser of the Turkish Armed Force

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228 Turkish Daily News, 7 February 1998.
229 Regarding Ankara’s plan to expand its defense industry see “A Turkish Defence Industry” in NATO’s 16 Nations & Partners for Peace-Special Issue: ‘Defence and Economics in Turkey: Pillar of stability’ (Bonn: Monch, 1998).
230 The largest contract that Israel has won so far is a $630 million agreement to upgrade 54 Turkish F-4 fighters, then an Israeli-Singaporean consortium won a $75 million contract to do the same to 48 F-5. Turkey agreed to buy 100 Popeye I air-to-ground missiles, larger fuel tanks for its F-16s and to co-produce 200 Popeye II for the same aircraft. Israel is bidding to have its Merkava chosen as Turkey’s new battle tank and has proposed to upgrade Turkey’s aging M-60 tanks, to sell unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and early warning aircraft (AEWC). Israel is also participating in a joint venture with the Russian Kamov helicopter company and in a similar arrangement with the competing Italian firm Agusta, both bidding to sell combat helicopters to Turkey. In 1998, Israel and Turkey reportedly agreed to cooperate on the production of a new medium range anti-ballistic missile called “Delilah” similar to the “Arrow” missile that Israel has developed with considerable US funding.
Foundation in an interview given to the Jerusalem Post on January 1997. After pointing out that Turkey’s defense budget keeps growing, General Orun declared that the suspensions in arms export adopted ever more frequently by the US and the European countries give a great advantage to Israeli firms.\textsuperscript{232} The same opinion has been re-stated by Efraim Inbar, who said that “We [Israelis] have learned long ago, and the Turks more recently, that the United States as well as other Western powers are not always reliable weapons suppliers for political and various reasons, and therefore, you have to get some kind of a new genesis capacity”. He concluded by mentioning that “It is a good business and we are willing also to transfer technology which is very important to the Turks, because they buy weapons under the conditions that some of the technology is being transferred to them”.\textsuperscript{233}

\textbf{4.5 Cooperation in Civilian Domains:}

Turkish-Israeli relations have developed in an unprecedented way, the extraordinary flurry of high-level visits between the two countries over the past six years has resulted in various agreements embracing virtually all sectors. These include interaction in the domains of culture, education and science; the environment and nature protection; mail and telecommunications; efforts to stop the smuggling of drugs and narcotic substances; health and agriculture: regulation of free trade of custom duties; encouragement and protection of financial investments; avoidance of dual taxation; and technical and economic cooperation.\textsuperscript{234} In short, alongside close military ties, there is extensive non-military cooperation between Turkey and Israel, with great potential for further expansion.

\textsuperscript{232} Steve Rodan, “Turkey wants more arms deal with Israel”, 

\textsuperscript{233} Efraim Inbar, “The Turkish-Israeli Strategic Partnership”.

\textsuperscript{234} As indicated by Amikam Nachmani, “The Remarkable Turkish-Israeli Tie”, p.26.
On July 18, 1997, a week after the vote of confidence, the coalition government headed by Mesut Yılmaz approved the decree that put into force the free-trade area agreement between Israel and Turkey.\(^{235}\) The agreement was originally signed during Turkish President Süleyman Demirel’s visit to Israel (March 1996), and ratified by the Turkish Parliament in April 1997, but the necessary final approval by the government had been postponed several times by the Erbakan-led cabinet.\(^{236}\)

The decree signed by Prime Minister Yılmaz opened new possibilities for economic relations between the two countries, not only in the commercial sphere but also in investments, industrial and agricultural cooperation. The aim of both sides is to reach in 2000 a bilateral trade volume of $2 billion, an ambitious target but not unrealizable: in 1998, bilateral trade has registered a volume of more than $700 million, whereas only eleven years earlier it was about $18 million.

Israel has also opened the US market to Turkish products: Turks sell textiles and other commodities duty-free to Israel, which adds its labor to the product and re-exports then to the US duty-free.\(^{237}\) This boosts the Turkish economy, which hires Israeli companies to develop irrigation and agricultural projects in the GAP (the Southeastern Anatolian Project) region. Israeli firms have shown a considerable interest in the GAP, several textile firms attracted by the lower labor costs moved from Israel to Turkey’s Southeast. Many opportunities to use Israeli technology for the transportation and distribution of water are also foreseen. The cooperation includes also training activities: Turkish officials involved in the GAP project are

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\(^{235}\) The Free Trade Agreement provides for the mutual elimination of custom duties for more than 90 per cent of goods. For the remaining 10 per cent, custom duties are to be abolished by the year 2000.


\(^{237}\) See Saadet Oruç, “Turkish trade via Israel to the US expected to boost export volume” Turkish Daily News, 5 January 1999.
regularly attending training courses at the International Training Center for Agricultural Development and Cooperation (CINADCO), Israel's large agriculture research and training center.

Tourists are a prominent part of non-military relations: some 300,000 to 400,000 Israeli tourists visit Turkey each year, spending more than $400 million, an impressive growth in comparison with the just 7,000 Israelis that visited Turkey in 1986.

Moreover, Turkey has been showing since 1990 – despite sharp Arab criticism – a marked interest in selling water to Israel. In 1996, President Demirel announced that Turkey would have been able, starting from late 1998, to sell 150 million cubic meters of water per year to Israel. The same offer was reiterated by Prime Minister Yılmaz during his visit to Jerusalem in September 1998. Despite the Israeli interest in buying water from Turkey – indicated by both President Weizman and Prime Minister Netanyahu – the conclusion of the deal has been so far hindered because the Israelis want a 30-year long agreement, whereas Ankara is willing to sign only a medium-term contract.

The importance of the economic relations cannot be underestimated, especially if we take into account the existing opportunities for further developments both in the two countries and in neighboring regions of Central Asia and the Transcaucasus, where a Turkish “entrance card” may facilitate Israel’s desire to expand exchanges. The Israeli Trade Minister Micha Harish, during Turkish

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238 Figures indicated by Ekrem Guvendiren, President of the joint Turkish-Israeli Council for Economic Cooperation and reported by the Turkish Daily News, 7 February 1998.
239 SWB MEW/0427 WME/6, 19 March 1996
242 Laurent Mallet, “Nell’ex Asia Sovietica sionismo fa rima con capitalismo”, Limes 4 (1995), p.255. However, it should be pointed out that the Israeli-Turkish relationship on the politics of Central Asia.
Foreign Minister Hickmet Çetin's visit in November 1993, indicated that Ankara was a cardinal partner in the Israeli plan to penetrate economically the countries of Central Asia and the Transcaucasus. The Israeli minister openly stated that “Turkey can play an essential role as an intermediary between Israel and the Muslim Republics of the former Soviet Union”.\textsuperscript{243} Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres attracted the interest of the Turks when he proposed – during his visit in April 1994 – the possibility of a collective partnership between the US, Israel and Turkey aimed at launching economic projects in the Central Asian Republics of the former Soviet Union. Following Washington’s approach, Peres declared that “any person of common sense should prey for the success of the secular and democratic Turkish model over the Iranian in the competition to achieve influence over the Central Asian Muslim Republics”\textsuperscript{244}. A few months later, an agreement was signed between the Turkish International Cooperation Agency (TIKA), Israel and the US to launch a common agricultural program in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.\textsuperscript{245} More recently, Israel has manifested its interest in gaining access to oil and gas from Turkey should Turkey’s ambition to become a major pipeline route for energy resources from the Caucasus and Central Asia be realized.\textsuperscript{246}

The 19 agreements concluded, since 1990, by Turkey and Israel clearly manifest the importance attached by both sides to their bilateral relations.\textsuperscript{247}

\textsuperscript{243} Jerusalem Post, 15 November 1993, p.2.
\textsuperscript{244} SWB EE/1972 B/6-7, 15 April 1994.
\textsuperscript{245} Turkish Daily News, 1 November 1994.
\textsuperscript{246} See Saadet Oruç, “Turkey wants to become a transit country for Turkmen gas to Israel”, Turkish Daily News, 11 March 1998; and by the same author, “Turkey, Israel to enhance strategic ties with Caucasus”, Turkish Daily News, 16 March 1998.
\textsuperscript{247} The total number of the agreements has been indicated by Oguz Çelikkol, a high-ranking official at the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in his speech “Turkey and the Middle East: Policy and Prospects” given at the Washington Institute on 6 April 1998.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSIONS.

The Turkish-Israeli alliances of 1958 and 1996 constitute an interesting test of alternative explanations of alliance behavior. The various factors adduced to explain alliance formation – external, domestic and ideational – all play a role in this case study. Nevertheless, the evidence of the Turkish-Israeli relations indicate the predominance of external factors. However, an open question remains: is there a difference in terms of the stability of alliances between those based purely, or mainly, on strategic and environmental factors and those which in addition have ideological components? This thesis tentatively concludes that an analysis of the Turkish-Israeli relations between 1949 and 1999, generally, and specifically a comparison between the short-lived Turkish-Israeli alliance of 1958 and the recent developments of a new Turkish-Israeli military alignment, indicates that alliances based on community of interests are distinct from alliances based on community of interests and shared ideational values.

After briefly reviewing theories of alliance formations, this chapter will discuss the relevance of the different theoretical approaches to the specific case of Turkey and Israel.

5.1 Review of explanations of alliances:

The aggregation of power model of alliances assumes that allies value each other for the military assistance they can provide one another. According to this
model, the increased credibility of military intervention advances the allies' mutual interest in the deterrence of a common external threat.

In contrast, in the internal approach the alliance behavior of Third World states or small states is determined by the trade-offs that political leaders make among domestic and international goals. In these states, choices between external alliances and internal military mobilization are often determined more by domestic threats to the stability of the regime rather than by solely external threats.

Finally, a third approach argues that due to the importance of the relation between states' identity and the construction of the threats, it is the politics of identity rather than the logic of anarchy that provides a better understanding of alliance behavior.

5.2 The case of Turkey and Israel:

In both 1958 and 1996, Turkey and Israel have been motivated by mutual interests to weave their ties. Both countries, in defiance of their geographical location, have always had Western aspirations and, therefore, found themselves profoundly at odds with the region in which they are located. Yet, despite the shared sense of commonality, their relationship has been historically characterized by discontinuity rather than continuity, a feature that hindered the possibility to develop a genuine and consistent cooperation.

Accordingly, it is possible to argue that the decisive factors influencing the relationship revolve around regional and global developments. In 1958, the circumstances surrounding the "peripheral alliance" between Turkey and Israel were predominantly external: Soviet and Nasserist subversion in four Middle Eastern countries (Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and, albeit to a lesser extent, Jordan); the growing
profile of the Soviet Union in the region, and the progressive emergence of the US as the new Western power in the Middle East. In 1996, the main factors underlying the new Turkish-Israeli military cooperation agreement were again linked to security concerns spurred by developments in the external environment: the end of the Cold War and the post-Gulf War developments in the Middle East (i.e. peace process, and the internationalization of the Kurdish question) that affected Turkey and Israel's standing vis-à-vis their Western allies; the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the region; and the increasing instability of the Middle East, the Balkans and the Caucasus.

The key role played by external factors in favoring the formation of a Turkish-Israeli alliance in 1958 and 1996 indicates that the classical approach to alliance formation is better borne out than the domestic-centered one. In particular, the hypothesis on alliance formation indicated by Walt's balance of threat theory provide the best explanation for the Turkish-Israeli alliance of 1958 and, albeit to a lesser extent, of 1996.

In 1958, Turkey and Israel joined in an alliance to balance the threat posed by the Soviets and Nasser. Through the combination of Israel's military know how and Turkey's huge army, the two states sought to enhance their military capabilities to deter the common threat posed by Moscow and Cairo. A sense of threat which was aggravated by the four factors that Walt identifies as affecting the level of threat that states may pose: aggregate power (i.e., population, industrial and military capability, and technological prowess); geographic proximity; offensive power; and aggressive...

248 As Nachmani argues, "In the August 1958 agreement, the Turks appeared to have adopted the notion of 'complementary nations'... Apparently it was to be effected in a number of ways: export of Israeli military equipment to Turkey's armed forces...in return, Israel would enjoy the support of the Turkish giant and of its army". Amikam Nachmani, *Israel, Turkey and Greece. Uneasy Relations in the East Mediterranean*, p.75.
intentions. The first factor is self-evident: Moscow was one of two world superpowers, whose military potential was not only constituted by its massive population and industrial capability but also by its military strength, as indicated in 1957 by the successful launching into orbit of the Sputnik. On the other hand, with 30 per cent of the Arab population of the Arab world, Egypt was easily the most powerful state in the Middle East. Moreover, its already considerable military potential was reinforced in the second half of the 1950s by Moscow’s shipment of weapons and by the union with Syria. It was thanks to its geographical proximity to Turkey that Moscow could undertake a war of nerves against Ankara characterized by the concentration of troops close to the border with Turkey and radio and press verbal attacks. On the other hand, Egypt has a common border with Israel and, at that time, had also a common border with Turkey thanks to its union with Syria. The large mobile military capabilities of the Red Army, as indicated by the contemporaneous concentration of 24 divisions close to the border with Turkey and by the sending of a naval unit to Syria during the 1957 crisis, allowed Moscow to threaten the territorial integrity of any state in the region at acceptable cost. Finally, Moscow and Cairo’s aggressive intentions vis-à-vis Ankara and Jerusalem were also evident: during the Syrian crisis of September 1957, “Turkey was threatened with Soviet retaliation in unmistakable terms should she undertake any of her alleged sinister activities.” Previously, in 1954, Nasser had already declared that “Turkey, because of its Israeli policy, is disliked in the Arab world.” On the Syrian front, Damascus staged mass demonstrations in Syria’s major cities to claim Hatay, and to

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250 Egypt received $150 million worth of Soviet arms in 1957-58, including 700 MIG-17s, additional artillery and several naval vessels. Ibid, p.65.
251 Ferenc Vali, *Bridge Across the Bosporus*, p.175.
declare that peace in the Middle East would come only after all Arab lands have been returned to their proper owners. As Karpat suggests, "The allusion was obviously to Turkey and Israel whose relations had improved".253 At the same time, Syria's ties with Moscow were improving: a new arms package was signed in December 1956. Following the 1957 crisis, according to Walt, "Egypt and Syria were closer than ever, and closer to Moscow".254 The situation was no better for Israel: 1) The British withdrawal from Suez removed an important buffer between Egypt and Israel; 2) Nasser was beginning to place greater pressure on Israel in order to enhance his image as the Arab leader most devoted to the Palestinian cause; and 3) the formation of the Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi alignment increased Israel's fears of Arab encirclement. The news of the coup, on July 14, 1958, by a group of Iraqi army officers who overthrew the pro-Western monarchy and declared a republic based on the model of the "Egyptian revolution" left Turkey in complete disarray. Encircled by a ring of hostile Arab countries and by the divisions of the Red Army, Ankara hastened to join Israel in the "peripheral alliance".

All things considered, it is evident that by concluding an alliance Turkey and Israel were, in 1958, balancing against an external threat, more specifically they sought to counter threats posed by other regional countries by joining their military power. In particular, the alliance examined supports Walt's proposition that geographic proximity is an important factor in determining which threats will prompt states to seek allies.

Again in 1996, the regional character of the threat perceived by Turkey and Israel has been continuously stressed by officials of both countries. The fact that Iran...

253 Kemal Karpat, "Turkish and Arab-Israeli Relations", p.121.
and Syria have surface-to-surface missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction and reports of Iran's effort to acquire a nuclear capability are serious sources of concerns for both Turkey and Israel. As Ali Karaosmanoğlu indicated, Turkey's population centers, dams, power stations, air bases, and military headquarters are all within range of these missiles systems. Israeli Defense Minister Mordechai identified Iran, Syria, and Iraq as "above the surface threats" because of their long-range missiles and non-conventional weaponry. The same conclusion was put forward by General Bir: "Turkey and Israel face the same threats of weapons of mass destruction". Hence, it is not surprising that both countries have launched a joint-project for the development of an anti-ballistic missiles (Delilah) capable of a range of 150 Km.

The other threat to be countered is, according to both countries, constituted by terrorism. At present, the main threat to Turkish national defense comes from the terrorist activities of the PKK, which has strongly benefited from the logistical, economic and political support received by Turkey's neighbors. As the Turkish Defense Minister put it, "We [Turkey and Israel] regard terrorism as one of the major woes confronting the 21st century. Israeli-Turkish cooperation can lead to the uprooting of terrorism and to peace in the region".

It is therefore evident that the security stimulus which recently led Turkey and Israel to join in an alliance is linked to a shared perception of an external threat, which is not as well defined as in 1958 but, nevertheless, just as dangerous. However, it is necessary to distinguish between the threat that Turkey and Israel are

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255 As quoted by Michael Gunter, "Turkey and Iran Face off in Kurdistan", p.39.
256 Çevik Bir, "Turkey's Role in the New World Order", p.3.
facing in the region where they are located. As already indicated, Ankara’s military activism in the region may have grown out of valid strategic concern, but it is not in response to any serious external military threat to Turkey’s security. The repeated incursions in northern Iraq and the recent crisis with Syria reflects Turkey’s emergence as an assertive, self-confident power in the region, emboldened by the increased strength of its military posture. For Israel, a nation that was born in war and that has lived, ever since, in its shadow, the prospect of surmounting the challenges posed by its Arab neighbors is no small accomplishment. Israel, on the one hand, has to adopt a military profile that does not overtly threaten the Arab neighbors with whom one day it will one day hopefully live in peace and, on the other, it has to redefine its capabilities and restructure its armed forces to meet challenges from more distant states such as Iran and Iraq. Israeli Major General Matan Vilnai’s well summarized the dilemma facing Israeli planners:

We have to prepare for three very different and often incompatible scenarios. First, there is the day-to-day fight against terrorism... Secondly, we must be ready to fight the next major conventional war. There is no peace agreement with Syria. Thirdly, we have to look beyond the horizon in our time Iran and also Libya have developed into potential threat, being in possession of weapons of mass destruction... The big difficulty with having to plan for these three operational environments is that quite often a decision that is very good for the fight against terrorism will be bad for other requirements... The trouble is that half-solution is not good, you must have the full answer for each environment.  

Taking into account the role played by the perception of external threat in urging Turkey and Israel to join in an alliance in 1996, it is possible to argue that the evidences presented here are in favor of Walt’s theory of balance-of-threat. Examining the different components of threat (power, proximity, offensive

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capability, and perceived intentions) perceived by both states, provides a compelling account of why Turkey and Israel decided to become alliance partners.

This sense of threat has been aggravated by the increasing strains that have characterized Turkey and Israel’s relations with their Western allies since the end of the Cold War. The collapse of the Soviet Union lessened the strategic worth of US clients, and the US has been more reluctant to meet the changed security priorities of its regional allies, which can no longer count on unconditional economic and military assistance and thus fear that they will be abandoned without warning. The end of the Cold War also means the decline of the globalizing forces of bipolarity and ideology and the growing regionalization of world politics, therefore, security arrangements in the post-Cold War era will increasingly be local in breadth and scope. Notwithstanding the importance of gaining and maintaining the support of the great powers, regional states may come to believe that allying with other regional states may provide a number of benefits. As Walt points out, one benefit of alliances among regional states is that they are more immediately affected by regional developments and are thus more likely to take active measures to influence regional events. A second related benefit is that the synergy of cooperation between regional states may increase the importance of each to the great powers.

In the specific case of Turkey and Israel, both countries felt that Washington was increasingly less sensitive to their security needs and still fear the possibility

263 Efraim Inbar stated that “these countries [Turkey and Israel] feel that they would not get the fairest treatment from the US, but it is a very important country as far as their strategic interests”. See “The Turkish-Israeli Strategic Partnership”.

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of diminished superpower involvement in the region. By acknowledging the first crucial fact, Ankara and Jerusalem see the Turkish-Israeli alliance as an alternative to safeguard their national sovereignty and protect their vital interests in the region. As the former Turkish General Chief of Staff, General Ismail Karadayı, put it, “We [Turks and Israelis] are surrounded by regimes with various problems. Israel and Turkey are two islands of stability which must be preserved together”.

Hence, internal mobilization, which involves the domestic mobilization and production of the means of war, and external alignment, which concerns the construction of strategic alliances, are the choices made by Turkey and Israel as they attempt to increase their security and to respond to security threats. At the same time, the synergy of cooperation between Turkey and Israel increases their importance to the US. This is most likely to happen because Turkey and Israel’s roles within a US-oriented regional security system can be advocated on the basis of their strategic importance, especially in the case of Turkey, and the ideological similarity of both countries with the US. To the extent that the two regional powers have considerable domestic support within the great power, whether due to ethnic/diaspora groups as in the case of Israel or due strategic relevance for the Executive as in the case of Turkey, their ability to withstand pressure from the great power will be higher than otherwise.

What remains to be seen is whether the present Turkish-Israeli alliance will be able to overcome future regional and international developments or will dissolve because of them as it happened in 1958. In this regard, the importance played by ideational factors in the Turkish-Israeli relationship may positively influence the alliance dynamic. Indeed, Turkey and Israel’s sense of commonality has been

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Quoted by Joseph Leitmann and Cagri Erdem, “Turkey: Benefiting from David’s Army”.

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264 Quoted by Joseph Leitmann and Cagri Erdem, “Turkey: Benefiting from David’s Army”.
strongly reinforced by the ambiguity shown by the West towards both countries in the post-Cold War. During the Cold War, Turkey and Israel were not just allies but “stable and reliable” allies because of their democratic features and Western values. The decline of the East-West confrontation has placed their Western character in doubt: Turkey’s repeated rejection by the West and Europe and the crisis that characterizes the special relationship between Israel and the US are clearly challenging Turkey and Israel’s standings vis-à-vis the Western community. Therefore, it is possible to argue that Turkey and Israel collaborate so as “to survive as Western societies”. In particular, the cooperation with Israel serves well the interest of Turkey’s Kemalist élites in demonstrating Ankara’s continued orientation towards the West and its commitment to secularism at a time when the country is facing a severe identity crisis that has eroded the main pillars of Atatürk’s doctrine while allowing greater public space to political Islam, nationalism and neo-Ottomanism. In other words, the partnership with Israel allows Ankara to assume a greater profile in the Middle East without having to fear any interference in its own internal affairs that may challenge Turkey’s long pursued Westernization project.

In conclusion, even though the Israeli-Turkish relationship is not one in which either partner is committed by a mutual defense pact in case of war, it enables Israel to augment significantly its military superiority in the region. The growing military relationship with Turkey has introduced a new element into Israeli military posture which perfectly fits the new defense doctrine currently being implemented,

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266 Amikam Nachmani, “The Remarkable Turkish-Israeli Tie”, p.29.
267 According to Hakan Yavuz, Neo-Ottomanism has two faces. “One face looks back to an invented Ottoman-Islamic past as a Turk-made epoch. The other looks forward to a vision of a regionally dominated industrialized, but not necessary civic and democratic, Turkey”. For a deeper analysis, see Hakan Yavuz, “Turkish Identity and Foreign Policy in Flux: The Rise of Neo-Ottomanism”, Critique 12 (Spring 1998), pp.19-41.
an element that “changed the regional balance of power” according to Moshe Arens.268

From a Turkish perspective, doubts and differences with US policy in the Middle East have lead Ankara to pursue closer ties with Israel that bolster Turkish position in Washington and, at the same time, make sure that if necessary alternatives will be readily available. May be these were the considerations that Özal had in mind in 1986 – ten years before Turkey concluded the alignment with Israel – when he explained the necessity of keeping contacts with Israel, which he regarded “as a window…on future events”. For Turkey “to play a role in solving the problems in the Middle East…” he maintained, “that window must remain open”.269

268 Quoted by Alain Gresh, “Turkish-Israeli Relations and their Impact on the Middle East”, p. 189.
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