

TURKISH-ISRAELI ENTENTE: THE IMPACT OF TURKISH-ISRAELI ALIGNMENT ON TURKISH-IRANIAN RELATIONS

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis analyzes the Turkish-Israeli relations, which reached an apex with the 1996 military agreement respectively for both countries. Whether this cooperation is an alliance will be discussed. In the press and in some certain academic circles it is argued that Turkish-Israeli alignment would harm Turkey's relations with its other Middle Eastern neighbors and it would cause an isolation of Turkey in the region. While Turkish-Israeli alignment can be deemed as a effect of evolving Turkish foreign policy toward the Middle East in the post-Cold war era depending on its shifting threat perceptions, this alignment is far from being depicted as an alliance. Apart from targeting a third state, PKK (Partiye Karkaren Kürdistan) terrorism constituted the main motivation of the alignment. On the other hand, including from the Kurdish and Palestinian issues, Turkey and Israel lacked accord on many critical topics. In contemporary multipolar world order Turkey's maintaining relations with its neighbors despite the fluctuations, traditional Turkish foreign policy which oppose polarization in the Middle East are significant factors that obstruct an alliance type relation between Turkey and Israel.

Keywords: Alliance Theories, Turkish-Israeli Alignment, Multipolarity, Middle East, Iran, Weapons of Mass Destructions, PKK.

ÖZET

TÜRKİYE-İSRAİL ANTANTI: TÜRKİYE -İSRAİL İŞBİRLİĞİ'NİN TÜRKİYE-İ İRAN İLİŞKİLERİ'NE ETKİSİ

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Bu tezde 1996 yılındaki askeri işbirliği antlaşmasıyla doruğa ulaşan Türk-İsrail ilişkilerinin iki ülke açısından değerlendirmesi yapılarak, oluşan işbirliğinin bir ittifak olup olmadığı incelenecektir. Basında ve çeşitli akademik çevrelerde Türk-İsrail işbirliğinin Türkiye'nin Ortadoğu'daki diğer komşularıyla olan ilişkilerini zedeleyeceği ve Türkiye'yi bölgede bir kamplaşma sürecine itebileceği öne sürülmüş ve İran işbirliğinin hedefi olarak gösterilmiştir. Her ne kadar Türk-İsrail işbirliği Türkiye'nin Soğuk Savaş sonrasında tehdit algılamalarına bağlı olarak Ortadoğu'da değişen ve aktifleşen dış politikasının bir yansıması olarak algılanabilirse de, bu işbirliği ittifak olarak adlandırılmayacak niteliktedir. Bir devletin hedef alınmasının ötesinde PKK terörizmi işbirliğinin en önemli maddesidir. Kürt meselesi ve Filistin sorunu başta olmak üzere iki ülke pek çok konuda ayrılık halindedir. Ayrıca, her iki ülkenin coğrafyası, demografik yapısı, dinsel faktörleri ve kültürleri Ortadoğu'da bir ittifak oluşturarak kamplaşmaya neden olmalarına engel olmaktadır. Çok kutuplu yeni dünya düzeninde Türkiye'nin bölge ülkeleriyle ve komşularıyla geçmişe dayanan ve iniş çıkışlarına rağmen süreklilik arz eden özel ilişkileri, Ortadoğu'da kutuplaşmaya karşı olan geleneksel Türk dış politikası Türk-İsrail işbirliğinin ittifak olarak değerlendirilmesinin önündeki önemli etmenlerdir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İttifak Teorileri, Türk-İsrail İşbirliği, Çok kutupluluk, Ortadoğu, İran, Kitle İmha Silahları,PKK.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CENTO	Central Trade Organization
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CSFP	Common Security and Foreign Policy
DOP	Declaration of Principles
ECO	Economic Cooperation Organization
ECTA	Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement
ESDP	European Security and Defense Project
EU	European Union
GATT	General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GME	Greater Middle East
IAI	Israeli Aircraft Industries
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IR	International Relations
KDP	Kurdistan Democratic Party
NAFTA	North America Free Trade Association
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NBC	Nuclear Biologic and Chemical
NIA	Turkish National Intelligence Agency
NPT	Non-proliferation Treaty
PfP	Partnership for Peace

PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
RCD	Regional Cooperation for Development
RPP	Republican Peoples' Party
TAF	Turkish Armed Forces
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
USA	United States of America
USSR	United Soviet Socialist Republics
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destructions
WTO	World Trade Organization
WWI	World War One
WWII	World War Two

INTRODUCTION

The end of the Cold war and the break-up the Soviet Union made Turkey face new conditions both in the international and in regional domains. It would not be wrong to argue that international and national politics have been increasingly shaped by regional as well as sub-regional and local dynamics with the demise of bipolarity. We are approaching a new world order in which none of the states does not have adequate power to tackle intra-state, inter-state, regional and international matters. In this picture the Middle East region, absolutely spearheaded by the post-Cold war policy-making in global terms with its potential & present energy resources, peace processes, and religious and ideological discrepancies. Developments in the Middle East have inevitable impacts for regional states as well. Turkey, unavoidably, has been affected by developments in the region in that Ankara shifted its threat perceptions from the north to south, which led to re-orientate its foreign policy towards the Middle East in conformity with its security requirements.

In this study, the rapprochement between Turkey and Israel in the post-Cold war era, which reached its apex in 1996 with a military cooperation agreement, will be analyzed from the perspective of alliance politics. The major questions, which I will explore the answer for in this study are, can the relations between Turkey and Israel be depicted as an alliance in the post-Cold war multipolar world order?; how can the Turkish-Israeli alignment and its effect on Turkish-Iranian relations be explained in a multipolar environment?

The significance of this study is twofold. In the first place, Turkish-Israeli-Iranian relations are evaluated as test cases in explaining a dimension of regional dynamics. This brings another reality/dimension to the discourse on globalization.

Secondly, approaching to the issues from a multipolar direction signifies a peaceful approach. And such an approach may serve the needs of a region whose people suffered too much already.

The topic of research is of interest due to increasing importance of the Middle East region and evolving Turkish foreign policy towards the region. The nature and content of the Turkish-Israeli relations has been perceived and hailed as an alliance by regional countries immediately after the military agreements in 1996 and 1997. It has been long debated whether Turkey took sides in the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict and polarized the region through destabilizing sensitive balances. This has extracted from the argument that security based relations have serious repercussions on foreign policies of a state. While the statesmen of both countries have avoided targeting any third country despite enhancing relations, the term alliance had been used by many scholars to portray the rapprochement decreasing Turkey's "freedom of maneuverability" in the region.

This study argues that Turkish-Israeli relations which reached a climax in the late 1990s can not be depicted as a traditional alliance and it did not target any regional state though Turkey had severe ideological and security dominated problems with many a Middle Eastern country, such as Iran, Iraq and Syria. The term "alignment" is thought to be more suitable regarding the nature and effects of Turkish-Israeli rapprochement. Since classical alliances include the provision of *casus foederis*, this kind of a relationship does not conform to multipolar world order. Turkey, throughout the Republican history, adopted a cautious and exclusive foreign policy toward the region which depends on the preservation of balances in the Middle East. Relations with Israel in the type of traditional alliance approach

would deprive Turkey of the maneuver realm, which is a must for Ankara to deal with its increasing security needs in the region.

Another objective of this study is to show that Turkey maintains continuity in its relations with many regional countries which is not affected by regime changes and religious rhetoric. As a case study, Turkish-Iranian relations are discussed from a historical perspective.

Apart from the international level analysis, the focus of this study is restricted to regional political analyses by using a model for small states and empirical evidence from regional developments. The applicability of traditional alliance theory is assessed for Turkey in the post-Cold war era. The neorealist analyses of international politics start from the assumption that the international system is an anarchical self-help system in which states must be primarily concerned with their security, if they want to survive and protect their sovereignty. In accordance with this theoretical tendency it is argued that Turkey should preserve its freedom of maneuverability in the region by avoiding polarization. To emphasize the argument that Turkey and Israel do not have an alliance type relationship, controversial issues between the two countries such as their approach to the Kurdish issue, definition of terrorism and water debacle is put forward.

The study comprises four chapters. Chapter 1 provides a background for theoretical explanations pertaining to alliance theory. It commences with a brief evaluation of traditional alliance theories which are based on the neo-realist balance of power theory. The study assumes Turkey and Israel as regional powers who do not conform to classical alliance theories since traditional approaches suppose two types of actors, namely the patron and client. Different types of alliances, given the dichotomy of balancing and bandwagoning are discussed. Moreover, traditional

theories fell short of expectations in explaining the Turkish-Israeli alignment due to their polarized, uncooperative but competitive spirit. In general, the deficiencies and inadequacies of the classical alliance theories regarding regional cooperative structures have been put forward throughout the chapter.

The nature and development of Turkish-Israeli relations are the focus of the second chapter. The chapter begins with a theoretical explanation of contemporary multipolar world order. Basic premises of multipolarity have been discussed and it is argued that Turkey should enhance its realm of maneuver to better tackle with its security topics. Turkish-Israeli relations have been analyzed in accordance with this theoretical approach. The motivations of both countries and the controversial issues have made it clear that let alone establishing an alliance, the two countries may be in conflict in the future near due to their approach to the region and their ambitions. Turkish-Israeli relations have never been ruptured since the declaration of the state of Israel. Fluctuating relations, however, reached its climax in the late 1990s for various reasons. The growing strength of the PKK terrorist organization, severing bilateral relations with Syria made Turkey close to Israel to a considerable degree, but not sufficient to break its mutual relations with other regional states.

In the third chapter the repercussions of Turkish-Israeli alignment on Turkish-Iranian relations are evaluated. It is argued that Turkey has a special relationship with its eastern neighbor independent of regime changes and ideological discrepancies. Thus, Turkish-Israeli relations are not deemed to be a powerful determinant in Turkish-Iranian relations. Turkey has historically rooted relations with Iran beginning from the 15th century. The general direction of relations is that neither of the two states even desired the other to accumulate more power than itself. This approach characterizes the bilateral relations as relations of restrictions. On the

other hand, the mutual relations of Israel and Iran are full of rhetoric rather than tangible evidence of threat for each others' existence. The Israeli and Iranian policymakers benefit from the Turkish-Israeli alignment for domestic consumption. Moreover, the limited conventional armed capabilities of Iran make it vulnerable against Turkey and Israel respectively in the aftermath of an improbable Iranian nuclear attack on these two states. Thus the issue of WMD (Weapons of Mass Destruction) is also an instrument of domestic politics both in Israel and Iran. This scheme lessens the importance of the claim that Iran is targeted by the Turkish-Israeli alignment.

Consequently, Turkey-Israeli relations are far from being depicted as an alliance. Though they benefited from the cooperative relations to some degree the structural constraints in the politics of both countries depending upon geography, society and history limit the nature of Turkish-Israeli relations, but provide a breathing space for both, nonetheless.

CHAPTER I:

THE ORIGINS OF ALLIANCES

1.1. A Framework for Analysis

The question of origins of alliances is one of the most central phenomena in the theory of International Relations (IR). Numerous studies have come together under the label of alliances all of which tried to explain the questions of how states choose their friends and what are the forces that bring states together and drive them apart?¹

There is an extensive literature on alliance theory, which mainly falls within the compass of balance of power theory and is dominated by the realist and neorealist schools of thought, though other approaches appear as well, not surprisingly from the realpolitik perspective. According to these traditions, anarchy in the international system leads states' agendas to be dictated by security topics. As has been iterated in the studies on neo-realist alliance theory "national security" and "survival" have always been the chief underpinnings in states' agenda while deciding to form an alliance or join a collective security organization though there are different structures by definition and function. The European alliances beginning from the 17th century, Central Powers and Entente, Axis and Allies in the two World Wars, classical environment of polarization during the Cold war and Middle Eastern alliances, to a lesser degree, are generally chosen as models by scholars to prove their hypotheses developed on theories of alliances where by a serious criticism is impinged upon them due to their limitations.

In the Cold War era patron-client relations shaped the general explanations and characteristics of alliance theory specifically. Neo-realist Kenneth Waltz

¹ Stephen Walt. *The Origins of Alliances*. (New York: Cornell University Press, 1987), p.1

declared, with his systemic approach, “In a bipolar world there are no peripheries. With only two powers capable of acting on a world scale, anything that happens anywhere is potentially of concern to both of them”.² As for superpowers, efforts to restrict the sphere of influence of the other and to consolidate the unity in its own polar via foreign aid, political penetration or intimidation are perceived as the key instigators to form alliances or means to make their allies dependent. According to the traditional literature, all in all, the primary purpose of most alliances is to combine the member’s capabilities in a way that furthers their respective interests³ which is usually called the “aggregation of power”⁴ model, the most prominent explanation of the origins of alliances.

This chapter will mainly focus on the Third World aspect of alliance theories that is neglected throughout the Cold War era and mostly evaluated within the parameters of patron-client relationship in the literature. In most of the Third World countries, response to an external threat against national security or the struggle for consolidation of dictators’ respective regimes against domestic threats are configured as major factors in determining alliance politics of the Third World countries. Traditional alliance theories assume these two types of states as the main actors (unit of analyses) in system level explanations (poles) neglecting the impact of the security dominated relations between regional powers⁵ who are worthy of attention. Relations between Turkey and Israel, and between Turkey and Iran which will be touched upon

² Kenneth Waltz. *Theory of International Politics*. (Reading MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979), p.171 cited in Neumann, Stephanie G. “International Relations Theory and the Third World: An Oxymoron?” cited in *International Relations and the Third World*, Stephanie Neumann eds. (New York: St.Martin’s Press, 1998), p.11

³ Stephen Walt. “Why Alliances Endure or Collapse” *Survival* Vol. 39, No. 1(Spring 1997), p.157.

⁴ Stephen Walt. *The Origins of Alliances*. (New York: Cornell University Press, 1987), p.22

⁵ Ersel Aydınli. “Strong State, Fragmented Society Approach” (Unpublished Paper, Bilkent University, Dept of IR, December 2002). Asst. Prof. Ersel Aydınli calls these states “the modernizing world (democratizing world) which refers to those states of developing world that have long-standing strong state traditions, that have a history of aspiring to modernize, and that are highly concerned with traditional security dilemmas. He iterates China, Russia, Turkey, Pakistan, India, as the examples.

later, can be categorized as relations between regional powers, not actually the Third World. But, initially, we have to assume that there is a huge gap between the traditional literature and regional power politics and very few studies have been conducted in this realm. Thus, we have to pace a long way to claim consistent hypotheses and finally theories pertaining to regional powers per se.

The alignment between two regional (Turkey and Israel) states is to be studied as a case study for this thesis. The form of the cooperation between these two states, whether it is an alliance or an alignment, and the type of the states, both of which are not in conformity with the Cold War categorization (patron-client) states, needs to be reevaluated.

The type of the state is a crucial dimension of alliance studies in traditional IR literature. As argued above IR scholars have categorized the states in two classes during the Cold War years and paid little attention to Regional Powers since they focused on the US-Soviet confrontation. At first scholars studied the superpowers also known as the “core” or the “patron” which were labeled as the locomotives of the world political system.⁶ They set the rules for others to obey during the Cold War as polar leaders. In this categorization, state and society became the main variables when defining the position of the state.

On the other hand, the Third World or “client” has been characterized as poorly developed political entities, institutions and apartheid societies.⁷ In this category the state is so premature and weak that it has no power to impinge upon the society for internal peace and order, which gives birth to a legitimacy problem. Due to lack of power, the state or the “elite” in the administration is open to political manipulation by foreign powers and needs foreign support to consolidate its regime.

⁶ Ersel Aydınli. “Strong State, Fragmented Society Approach” (Unpublished Paper, Bilkent University, Dept of IR, December 2002), p.5

⁷ Ibid, p.6

The state has to resort to external aid to maintain its sovereignty and territorial integrity against an external threat due its inefficiency to mobilize its domestic sources because of lack of financial means, educated and experienced manpower or time restrictions. As a third world realist scholar Steven David, arguing largely from the Egyptian case in the 1960s that leaders of unstable and poorly institutionalized regimes seek out allies, particularly at the Great Power level, to combat their domestic enemies, and cannot respond to foreign threats.⁸ Barry Buzan points out these kinds of states are located particularly in Africa and Central Asia e.g. Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Somalia, Nigeria, Sudan and Zaire.⁹

At this point Mohammed Ayooob, as a realist, criticizes major IR theories for their inadequacies in explaining Third World countries' politics. According to Ayooob, "the fundamental premise of structural realism that the anarchical nature of the system determines the behavior of the units (or states), is based upon a clear and rigid distinction between anarchy outside (at systemic level) and order within it (at unit level)."¹⁰ As for the neorealist school, he detects a minor difference of emphasis as to whether states balance against power or against threat. For him, neoliberalism also offers system-based explanations for the behavior of states.¹¹ As stated by Steven David, another realist, foreign policy making in Third World, especially why

⁸ Steven David. "Explaining the Third World Alignment". *World Politics*. Vol. 43 (January 1991), p.235

⁹ Barry Buzan, "Conclusions: System versus Units in Theorizing About the Third World," in Stephanie Neumann eds. *International Relations Theory and the Third World*, (New York:St.Martin's Press,1998) cited in Ersel Aydinli. "Strong State, Fragmented Society Approach" (Unpublished Paper, Bilkent University,Dept of IR, December 2002), p.5

¹⁰Muhammed Ayooob. "Subaltern Realism:International Relations Theory Meets the Third World" in *International Relations and the Third World*, Stephanie Neumann eds. (New York: St.Martin's Press,1998), p.34

¹¹ Ibid, p.35

Third World states ally as they do, is not well understood and it is central to understanding the course of international politics.¹²

This study does not claim to fill this gap but tries to identify a specific gap in classical alliance theories and their perceived deficiencies related to the Third World in general. Given the post-Cold War environment, which is characterized by intra-state conflicts based on ethnicity, religion or separatist fractions with territorial ambitions, it can be easily argued that the bilateral relations of the regional powers such as Turkey and Israel will have a great impact in a multipolar (post-Cold War) systemic structure and deserves a respective position in IR theory.

1.2. Alliances and Alignments: The Definitional Distinction

Another important point in the literature is the distinction between definitions of alliance and alignment and it is useful to stipulate their somewhat different meanings while in many studies they are used interchangeably. A complex bilateralism is evident in the evolving international system and the character of state relations tend to be more cooperative in an economically and politically globalizing environment. Consequently, fluid alignments are replacing rigid alliances.¹³

According to Glenn Snyder, alignment is a broader and more fundamental term related to expectations in state-to-state relations in future interactions.¹⁴ Any interaction between states, no matter how minor, may create expectations and feelings of alignment. The label “alignment” is a confirmation to cooperate based simply on shared interests rather than on a negotiated reduction of conflict.

¹² Steven David. “Explaining the Third World Alignment”. *World Politics*. Vol. 43 (January 1991), p.233

¹³Edward A. Kolodziej. “Implications of security Patterns Among Developing States” 10 April, 2001. Available at <http://www.airpower.maxwell.af.mil/airchronicles/aureview/1982/sep-oct/kolodziej.html>. Accessed on 29,12,2003

¹⁴ Glenn H. Snyder. *Alliance Politics*.(New York: Cornell University Press, 1997), p.6

On the other hand, alliances are simply one of the behavioral means to create or reinforce alignments. Alliances generally strengthen preexisting alignments by introducing elements of precision, legal and moral obligation, and reciprocity. Formal alliances introduce a sense of obligation not present in tacit alignments¹⁵ that can be thought in the context of normal bilateral state relationships. According to George Liska, “Alliances are against, and only derivatively for, someone or something”.¹⁶ He continues that alliances are formal associations of states for the use of military force, in special circumstances, against states outside their own membership. Alliances also vary in scope of commitments that is *casus foederis*, in their anticipated duration and may be limited geographically (e.g. NATO to the North Atlantic area).

The definition differentiates alliances from tacit alignments, based only on common interests and goals. The “other” or the “third party” orientation points to the main differences between an alliance and an alignment. We distinguish formal alliances from alignments by the greater length of commitment present in the alliance, while alignments reflect similarity in interests without the formal mutual commitment present in an alliance.¹⁷

Alliances are more prone to occur in anarchic environments against external threats or a common enemy in the form of pooling military strength, which create the “security dilemma” given irreducible uncertainty about the intentions of others and reverse effect intrinsically. Alliances somewhat reflect contingencies such that they are valid as long as the interests of allies converge. The most obvious example can

¹⁵ Ibid, p.8

¹⁶ George Liska. *Nations in Alliances: The Limits of Interdependence* (Baltimore:Johns Hopkins University Press, 1962),p.3 in Snyder, Glenn H. *Alliance Politics*. (New York: Cornell University Press, 1997), p.2

¹⁷ James D. Morrow. “Alliances and Asymmetry: An Alternative to the Capability Aggregation Model of Alliances.”*American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (November 1991), p.906

be seen in the divergence of Soviet and American interests at the end of WWII, which resulted in the Cold War.

In this study, the term “alignment” is used, meaning non-binding cooperative agreements in bilateral relations, supporting mutual interactions in conformity with Glenn Snyder’s views, whereas the term “alliance”, meaning binding security guarantees which includes the *casus foederis*¹⁸ provision.

Since this study does not claim to come up with a generalized system of relations between regional powers (whether alliances or alignment is more widespread between them or what the nature of the relationship is since these type of regional powers were not mentioned adequately in traditional literature), the different aspects of up-to-date alliance theories and their relevant dimensions will be discussed. The aim is to raise the following questions in the light of the empirical case study presented here. Namely, what is the ability and discrepancies of classical alliance theories to explain the relations between regional powers in the post-Cold War environment? And how can the Turkish-Israeli alignment and its effect on Turkish-Iranian relations are explained in post-Cold War environment?

1.3. Explaining Alliance Formation

Generally speaking, nations create alliances fundamentally as a response to perceived threat to national security since “survival” is the main goal of all states. As a general principle states form or join alliances if the benefits of doing so are greater than the costs. In traditional realism and neo-realism, alliance theory argues that

¹⁸ A stipulation about who will support whom in what contingencies and a secret agenda against third states asking for the help of an ally in the event of an aggression (including military attacks). According to Stephen Walt (*The Origins of Alliances*, p.167) an alliance may be either offensive or defensive, for example, intended either to provide the means for an attack on some third party or intended as a mutual guarantee in the event that another state attacks one of the alliance members. An alliance may also be symmetrical or asymmetrical, depending on the whether the members possess roughly equal capabilities. Another category is the level of institutionalization in alliances. (An extreme example is NATO).

changing power configurations are responses to changing alliances. The main difference between the two approaches is that realism offers a unit level (state-level) analysis and assumes the international system as anarchic emphasizing power maximization, whereas the neorealist approach provides us with a systemic analyses (international-level) and suppose that there is a hierarchy between states in conformity with the distribution of capabilities among them emphasizing security maximization. States deal with perceived external threat by adding their respective power¹⁹ and naturally balance the distribution of relative capabilities.

1.3.1. Theories on Balancing

The Realist and Neorealist Schools of thought dominate alliance theories. According to this tradition, the systemic structure, structural polarity and anarchy determine the formation of alliances. In particular, anarchic characteristics of the international system lead states to accord primacy to their national security. States, when unable to face a stronger enemy, generally decide to cooperate and mass their capabilities in order to balance the common enemy, which is usually called the “aggregation of power” model. According to neo-realist Steven David, the determinants of alliance come overwhelmingly from the structure of the international system, particularly the actual and potential external threats that states face.²⁰

The results of reconfiguration of capabilities’ distribution between states to form an equal distribution of power against these potential external threats are alliances. According to realist Hans Morgenthau alliance is “a necessary function of

¹⁹ Stephanie G. Neumann. “International Relations Theory and the Third World: An Oxymoron?” in *International Relations and the Third World*, Stephanie Neumann eds. (New York: St.Martin’s Press,1998), p.2

²⁰Steven David. “Explaining the Third World Alignment”. *World Politics* Vol. 43 (January 1991), p.234

the balance of power operating in a multi-state system”.²¹ Whether formal or informal, the key to determining whether an alliance has been contracted is the willingness of at least one of the parties to pay a cost in some tangible way to support the other.²²

The classical “balance of power” theory is the most prominent and common theory when explaining the alliance behaviors of states. Kenneth Waltz constructs balance of power theory as a central element of neo-realism in his book *Theory of International Politics*. In anarchy, he states, sovereign entities are concerned with security and survival; they are unitary actors that perform similar functions. Because state’s main concern is security and survival, they are very sensitive if a relative capability of another state increases. The outcome is the formation of balances of power. In other words weaker states will form alliances to oppose stronger powers.²³ Alliances, according to this perspective, are the means by which states maintain among themselves an approximately equal distribution of power. According to “balance of power” theory, population, technological prowess, economic, industrial and military resources constitute the power. For this balancing, respective military power, security interests and external threats, rather than domestic factors determine states’ alliance behavior. When exposed to an external threat, a state may either aggregate its power to one of the other states to balance the enemy’s power or try to

²¹ Hans Morgenthau. *Politics among Nations. The Struggle for Power and Peace*, p.201 cited in Piccoli, Wolfango. *Alliance Theory: The Case of Turkey and Israel*. (Unpublished MA Thesis) Bilkent University, (June 1999), p.18

²² Gregory Gause. “Discussion Paper: Alliances in the Middle East.” *Middle East Studies Association Convention*. Chicago, Illinois, (December 4-6, 1998) Available at <http://www.uvm.edu/~fgause/alliances.htm> Giris tarihi, 29.12.2003, p. 4

²³ Stephen Walt. “Testing Theories of Alliance Formulation: The Case of Southwest Asia.” *International Organization*. Vol.42, No.42. (Spring 1988), p. 276

increase its own power by mobilizing its domestic sources where the former leads to an alliance and the latter to armament race.²⁴

Another analysis of the formation of alliances came from Stephen Walt, in which the concept of “threat” is central to his neo-realist orientation of “balance of threat” hypotheses. As a main argument, Walt addresses, in contrast to traditional balance of power theorists that states ally to balance against threats rather than against power alone.²⁵ He criticizes the classical structural balance of power theory for its overemphasis on the concept of power. For him, although the distribution power is an exceptionally important feature, the level of threat is also affected by geographic proximity, offensive capabilities and perceived intentions.

The role of ideology as a cause of alliance is assessed difficult to measure by Walt. According to him ideological consistency has been readily abandoned when threats to other interests emerged.²⁶ In short, ideological preferences have been less important than more immediate issues of security. He argues that many forms of apparently ideological alliances are in fact a form of balancing behavior.²⁷

Geographic proximity meant that states that are nearby pose a greater threat than those that are far away. In conformity with Walt, Snyder argues that geographical features, by their effect on defensive or offensive capabilities, may also induce alignments.²⁸ While many scholars question the effect of geography with the technological developments of weapons (long-range missiles, hi-tech aviations) and changing type of threat from conventional to unconventional or unformatted (e.g. terrorism), geography is a crucial dimension of forming alliances especially for

²⁴ Hans Morgenthau. *Politics among Nations. The Struggle for Power and Peace*.p.201 cited in Piccoli, Wolfango. *Alliance Theory: The Case of Turkey and Israel*. (Unpublished MA Thesis) Bilkent University, (June 1999), p.18

²⁵ Stephen Walt. *The Origins of Alliances* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1987), p.5

²⁶ Ibid, p.183

²⁷ Ibid, p.6

²⁸ Glenn H. Snyder “Alliances, balance, stability” *International Organization*. Vol. 45, No.1, (Winter 1991), p.124

regional powers since a multipolar environment and intense regional conflicts make cooperative structures an essential element of the foreign policies of all regional states. States can choose their friends but not their neighbors. The geographic proximity of the danger or perceived threat, which can be depicted as coming from Iran, Syria and separatist groups in northern Iraq, made Turkey seek friends to counter the threat, which resulted in new cooperative realms.

Walt also argues that states that are viewed as aggressive are likely to provoke others to balance against them. Perceptions of intent are likely to play an important role in alliance choices.²⁹ Perceived intention is a long term phenomenon derived from the political, and military, economic implementations of the threatening state. The form of the regime (democratic, theocratic, autocratic, or communist) can also be thought as a variable in shaping that perception since democratic regimes are less likely to wage war, but impose *democratic peace* on each other.

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. Neo-realist Kenneth Waltz uses “bandwagoning” to serve as the opposite of balancing: bandwagoning refers to joining the stronger coalition, balancing means allying with the weaker side.³⁰

The balancing/bandwagoning dichotomy was further developed by Walt. While there are similarities between descriptions, Walt redefines bandwagoning as “alignment with the source of danger”.³¹ According to him, balancing is more preferable since no statesman can be sure about the act of others. For him, bandwagoning increases the resources available to the threatening state and leaves

²⁹ Stephen Walt. *The Origins of Alliances*. (New York: Cornell University Press, 1987), p.25

³⁰ Kenneth Waltz. *Theory of International Politics*. (Reading MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979), p.126

³¹ Stephen Walt. *The Origins of Alliances*. (New York: Cornell University Press, 1987), p.17

the weaker side at the mercy of the stronger.³² Moreover, in the conclusion of his analysis on alliance policies of Turkey, Walt argues that during the Cold War Turkey adopted a balancing strategy against the Soviets and explains the increasing ties between Turkey and Soviet Union in the late 1970s as a result of Turkish administration's belief that the Soviet Union was no longer a threat.³³

As a neo-realist, Randall Schweller is one of the scholars who bases alliance analyses on the distinction between status-quo powers and revisionist states by arguing that "generally, revisionist powers are the prime movers of alliance behavior whereas the status-quo states are the reactors"³⁴ with his hypotheses of *balance of interests*. According to him bandwagoning is an alliance not with threat but with the stronger one and argues that "the most important determinant of alliance is the compatibility of political goals, not the imbalances power or threat"³⁵ since the members of alliance sacrifice some of their foreign policy autonomy. The opportunities for gain and profit, as well as threat, are major motivations to ally besides political compatibility.

Evaluating the alliance formulations from status-quo and revisionist perspective, Schweller distinguishes between four type of states in unit level analysis; 1) The "Lions", satisfied with the status-quo and ready to protect it; 2) the "Wolves", ready to pay every price to change the status-quo; 3) the "Jackals" unsatisfied free-riders ready to trail "Wolves" or "Lions" who is perceived to be victorious; 4) the "Lambs" willing to pay low costs for their defense and suspected of

³² Ibid, p. 29

³³ Stephen Walt. "Testing Theories of Alliance Formulation: The Case of Southwest Asia." *International Organization* Vol.42, No.42 (Spring 1988), p.298

³⁴ Randall Schweller. "Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist state Back In", *International Security* Vol.19, No.1 (1994), p.105

³⁵ Ibid, p.88

bandwagoning.³⁶ Considering the mentioned aim of these states a differentiation cannot be detected from the classic patron-client relationship since Lions or Wolves are depicted in the role of patron. Even in the event of a status-quo transformation, Lions and Wolves solely change their respective position since Wolves desire to pursue the luxury of binding with a strong state and become a Lion.

But Schweller made this categorization to relax the dichotomy between balancing and bandwagoning, as did Walt. This dichotomy does not encompass the full range of choices within the realm of alliance. This stems from a rigid point of view in the Cold war style policy making of “you are the enemy of my enemy and ally of my ally”. At the systemic level he argues that the distribution of capabilities is not the only determinant of hierarchy. Objectives of the states and their abilities to use their power, namely the *fungibility of power*, are also important in the system, in conformity with neo-realist systemic approach.³⁷

With the end of the Cold war many formerly important Third World clients lost their strategic significance. This means that states have to adopt a policy to pursue their own objectives independent from the balancing/bandwagoning dichotomy. According to neo-realist Alvin Rubinstein “we are leaving the age of alliances”.³⁸ The lack of interest in alliances by rising powers suggests confidence in the inherent stability of the international system. Given the costs of a serious conflict for even a short time, the benefits of aggressive states are limited or uncertain. In his conclusion, Rubinstein focuses on the deterrence capacity of a reliable nuclear

³⁶ Ibid, p.100

³⁷ Ibid, p.105.

³⁸ Alvin Z. Rubinstein, “Alliances and Strategy: Rethinking Security” *World Affairs* Vol.3, No.2 (April-June, 1999), p. 10

power, which he believes, rendered alliances much less essential if not obsolete for security in traditional terms.³⁹

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 alternative “with the stronger, or against the stronger”. Paul Schroeder suggests the alternatives as: declaring neutrality; approaching other states on one or both sides to improve relations, but short of alliance.⁴⁰ Thus, regional states may find a way to improve their relations with neighbors or precipitate the already-formed relations in the absence of the Cold War and adopt different methods from that of alliance limitations while tackling with their security needs.

All in all, in the post-Cold war environment, while “threat” itself still has an explanatory capacity on alliance behaviors, the balancing/bandwagoning dichotomy is questionable since the states have other options. But we have to assume that all Cold War-originated theoretical explanations and arguments underplay the role of regional powers, by focusing on the patron and client relationship or classification. Similarly, Jack Levy and Michael Barnett maintain that realism is “relatively silent in concerning Third World alliances in general or how state-society relations in particular might give rise to distinctive patterns of alliance behavior”.⁴¹ Another comment came from K. J. Holsti who stated that in European history competitive arms race was the result of security dilemma between states whereas those in the Third World were motivated by fear of regimes to protect themselves, their desire to

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Paul Schroeder. “Alliances, 1815-1945: Weapons of Power and Tools of Management” in Klaus Knorr eds. *Historical dimensions of National Security*.(Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1976), p.117

⁴¹ Levy and Barnett. “Alliance Formation” cited in Randall Schweller. “Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist state Back In”, *International Security* Vol.19,No.1(1994), p.77

prop up governments and to pressure various segments of the population.⁴² Thinking that “ethnicity”, which is discovered as the source of trouble in peripheries, does not have the explanatory capacity, he proposes three different levels of analysis: first, individual psychology; second, inter-group dynamics; and third, systemic characteristics.⁴³

To be able to grasp the subject better and to analyze the mentioned gap that pertains to regional powers, a short review of Third World alliance theories will be provided.

1.3.2. Theories of Alliances in the Third World

Seeing the inter-connectedness between realist, neorealist theories and their explanatory capacity for the Third World, some scholars tried to fill this gap, arguing that the Third World is an integral part of the international system. Mohammed Ayoob believes that in many states in the Third World, elements of anarchy clearly co-exist with those of order within the boundaries of state and stresses that it is problematic to agree with the assumption about the sameness of states on which much of neorealist and neoliberal analyses are based⁴⁴ referring to developed states of Western Europe and America. For him neorealist and neoliberal theories neglect the domestic variables affecting conflict and order in the Third World.

Keeping in mind these considerations Ayoob suggests an alternative to the currently dominant paradigms in IR that is *Subaltern Realism*.⁴⁵ He assumes that the issues of domestic order are intertwined with those of international order including

⁴² K.J. Holsti. “International Relations Theory and Domestic War in Third World: The Limits of Relevance” in *International Relations and the Third World*, Stephanie Neumann eds. (New York: St.Martin’s Press,1998), p.107

⁴³ Ibid,p.110

⁴⁴ Muhammed Ayoob. “Subaltern Realism:International Relations Theory Meets the Thirld World” in *International Relations and the Third World*, Stephanie Neumann eds. (New York: St.Martin’s Press,1998), p.37

⁴⁵ Ibid, p.34

the variable of the stage of state making and evaluates the issues of domestic order as a part of state making. State making is a process of forming democratic institutions and administrative organs in a state, which is fully democratic and legitimate. The stage of state making is related to the level of political capacity of a state; it is in its initial stages in underdeveloped states and the highest rank in Western style developed states but mostly used as a variable to explain internal conflicts by Ayoob.

Another interesting and related point of Ayoob's suggestions for this study is that the existence of territorial and demographic problems between the states which are on the path of state-making should be examined.⁴⁶ While Ayoob does not make a distinction that is pertinent to the level of state making⁴⁷ between neighboring states and its effect on their policy-making, Turkey had some problems with its neighbors due to their intentions to hinder Turkey from becoming a regional power utilizing its demographic and economic dynamics. Seeing Turkey's becoming a developing state as a challenge, some of Turkey's neighbors' were intent to use its demographic structure and territory by supporting separatist fractions with territorial ambitions, which are corroborated by Ayoob's assumptions to a certain degree.

Relations between states are increasingly framed by available military power and many developing states are capable of producing their own weapons, either indigenously or under license. The most prominent factor prompting this tendency is their desire to be independent of foreign suppliers. According to Edward Kolodziej "the diffusion of economic and military resources and accompanying political influence to the advantage of selected but critically important developing states has fostered a more decentralized regional and international system. More developing

⁴⁶ Ibid, p.46

⁴⁷ Turkey is far more experienced than its neighbors considering the state-making procedure and as the most democratic Muslim country in the region.

states than ever before are significant actors on the international stage.”⁴⁸ While Ayoob did not clearly put forward the impact of the stage of state-making on alliance behavior of states, it is clear that the higher the level of state-making, the more freedom the state has in its choices whether it is a classic (patron-client) alliance or other form of bilateral relations.

Finally he emphasizes the effect of Great Powers that are capable of exacerbating or alleviating regional conflicts in the Third World and their policies toward particular regions.⁴⁹ Given the dominance of the US and its military existence in the Middle East region, it is highly possible for regional states, including Turkey, to be affected in their policy-making and implementing regional US policies either internally or externally.

The intrinsic domestic weakness of the elite in the Third World countries and their alliance decisions are the object of the studies carried out by realist Steven David. He offers *omnibalancing* as an alternate concept, holding that alliance in the Third World often reflects the government’s attempt to balance against internal threat rather than external enemies.⁵⁰ Omnibalancing is argued to emerge from observations from the Third World and incorporates the need of leaders to appease secondary adversaries, as well as to balance against both internal and external threats in order to survive.⁵¹

The crux of omnibalancing is that leaders will align to tackle with those threats that endanger their survival, internal or external. For him, it is more likely and more potent the internal threat that alliance theories ignore. He asserts that “realism

⁴⁸ Edward A. Kolodziej. “Implications of security Patterns Among Developing States” 10 April, 2001. Available at <http://www.airpower.maxwell.af.mil/airchronicles/aureview/1982/sep-oct/kolodziej.html> Accessed on 29,12,2003, p.2

⁴⁹ Ayoob, op.cit, p.46

⁵⁰ Neumann, op.cit, p.11

⁵¹ David, op.cit, p.236

must be broadened to examine internal threats in addition to focusing on external threats and capabilities (that is structural argument), and that the leader of the state rather than the state itself should be used as the level of analysis".⁵² Rational calculation of the Third World leader is assumed to be the most powerful determinant of Third World alignment.

He also argues that there are fundamental similarities between Third World states. With internal threat (with or without external support) and arbitrariness of their borders, many Third World states began and remain more as an artificial construct than a coherent unit.⁵³ In his analytical work he refers to Egypt and Ethiopia in the 1970s, two underdeveloped countries in the Cold War environment. These countries can be categorized in the first class of underdeveloped dictatorships and legitimacy of the regime in the eyes of the community is so low that the elite (either civilian or military) in the administration perceive a constant internal threat. This is not an issue in regional power since their ability to legitimize power in order to attain legitimacy with its own domestic resources independent of external aid, enables developing states to move more freely in their policy options. Thus the argument related to the explanatory capacity of omnibalancing theory by David seems to have little applicability in the states which are not autocracies under dictatorship or under the rule of a leader's hegemony since he is referring to the orientation of narrow authoritarian elite. In the post-Cold War environment, we need a more comprehensive and inclusive theory examining the regional powers and their alliance behaviors.

An additional explanation dedicated to state-society relations in shaping the state' security policies is provided by Micheal Barnett and Jack Levy. They

⁵² David, op.cit, p.237

⁵³ Robert H. Jackson and Carl G. Rosberg, "Why Africa's weak states Persist: The Empirical and Juridicial in Statehood," *World Politic* Vol.35 (October,1982) cited in David,op.cit.,p. 239

examined Egypt's foreign policy between 1962 and 1973. More specifically, these two scholars analyze domestic events in order to highlight the incentives to conclude external alliances. For them, a state facing an external threat may not be able to mobilize its domestic resources in order to cope with the danger, as a result of economic weakness or some other reasons. If the internal threats to government are more salient than the external ones, a policy of external alliance may be preferred over the option of internal mobilization in order to maintain the regime.⁵⁴ They also mention the difficulties of directing the weak countries' domestic sources to armament efforts, bypassing the basic needs of society which undermines the ruling elites' narrow base of political support.

The type of the state mentioned by Barnett and Levy is the same as iterated by Steven David, underdeveloped dictatorship or autocracy, which has a very limited legitimacy over the society. But in a given case all states do not have to choose either external alliance or mobilization of domestic sources. Some regional powers that Barnett and Levy neglect have also significant military and economic capacity to deal with external and internal threats.

There are other authors who base alliance behavior of the state on the combination of internal costs and external benefits. According to neo-realist James D. Morrow, one partner in an alliance receives autonomy whereas the other receives security at the expense of some of its dependence that he calls asymmetric alliance.⁵⁵ He argues that weak states lost some of their autonomy as a quit pro quo for security when allied with a powerful state. For him, these kind of asymmetrical alliances last longer than symmetrical alliances, which are formed by more or less equal powers,

⁵⁴ Micheal N Barnett and Jack S Levy . "Domestic Sources of Alliances and Alignments: the Case of Egypt, 1962-73" *International Organization* Vol.45, No.3 (Summer 1991), p.370

⁵⁵ James D. Morrow. "Alliances and Asymmetry: An Alternative to the Capability Aggregation Model of Alliances." *American Journal of Political Science* Vol. 35, No. 4 (November 1991), p.904

since there is competitiveness and drive to control between members of symmetrical alliances.⁵⁶

Consequently, the post-Cold war environment can be depicted as a multipolar scheme, which witnesses the increase of regional powers pursuing their own interests. Many states found themselves in richness of alternatives pertaining to their foreign policy in conformity with their geographic location, demography and the level of development. The balancing/bandwagoning dichotomy falls short of expectations to account for all state policies that the end of the Cold War makes available.

In this chapter, the theoretical background was provided by examining the dominant alliance theories in IR literature. The lack of a comprehensive theory of states' bilateral relations in the post-Cold War environment is severely felt as this chapter tried to put forward. We are leaving the age of alliances. What will be the states' reactions in given circumstances and which type of relations will they lead as Paul Schroeder iterated?

While these questions still await answers, it is obvious that states will pursue their interests and try to avoid being dependent and not to be manipulated by external forces. After all, the theoretical explanations related to alliance formation, examined above, fell short of the expectations given their explanatory capacity for regional co-operations which are independent of superpower effect to a certain degree. In this context, intensifying Turkish-Israeli relations figure out a new post-Cold war regional cooperation due to their respective motivations but can not be labeled as an alliance, but are rather an alignment.

⁵⁶ Ibid, p.919

CHAPTER II:

THE TURKISH-ISRAELI ALIGNMENT

Witnessing the shortcomings of Cold-war originated theories in explaining Turkish-Israeli relations which came up in an unprecedented epoch (during a transformation of the world order from a bipolar to a multipolar order when values were being re-evaluated), multipolarity comes to the surface as the most suitable model with its capacity to explain the subject. This chapter begins with laying down the main assumptions of a multipolar environment and characteristics of state behaviors. Then, it continues with explaining Turkish foreign policy of İsmet İnönü during the Second World War. Turkey was able to avoid joining WWII thanks to its “freedom of maneuverability” which was provided by agreements during war years and exploited the political environment by making non-aggression treaties with both sides for its national interests. Focusing on the analogy of world conjuncture in the context of multi-centric structure, the resemblances between contemporary and the İnönü-era Turkish foreign policies will be discussed by using multipolarity as a model in terms of political maneuverability. In the same context, how Turkey was able to broaden its maneuverability in its foreign policy by forming an alignment with Israel will be assessed.

2.1. Multipolarity

Multipolarity is defined as a circumstance in which roughly equivalent capabilities are possessed by three or more great powers in the world.⁵⁷ These nearly equal great powers struggle to increase their relative influence and obtain “relative advantage” by either co-operating or increasing their power with domestic resources

⁵⁷ Charles W. Kegley, and Gregory Raymond. *A Multilateral Peace? Great Power Politics in the Twenty-first Century* (New York: St.Martin’s Press, 1994), p.68

vis-à-vis their potential adversaries. An alliance of two states could easily deter a third state, even if the mentioned state would become more powerful than either of them.⁵⁸

Multipolar systems differ in the number of great and small powers in the system and their geographic positions. In general, poles are large and powerful states (or in some versions, alliances), separated by a big power gap from others.⁵⁹ Polarity is a measure of the distribution of capabilities among great powers but not equivalent in number to great powers which is related to the size of the system. Parties in the system may interact with each other either directly or indirectly. As a basic assumption, the number of interactions among great powers increases as the number of roughly equal powers increase.

Multipolarity makes the international system more complex, because movements in the system are relatively more fluid in the context of “freedom of maneuverability” and state diplomacy could be more flexible.⁶⁰ According to Samuel P. Huntington, in a multipolar world of the 21st century, the major powers will inevitably compete, clash and coalesce with each other in various permutations and combinations.⁶¹

Here comes the question of how to preserve stability in the system. Generally, in multipolar systems, strict competition through alliances and counter-alliances are replaced by the strategy of give-and-take. For Richard Aliano *shifting alignments* are the central mechanism for the preservation of equilibrium in a multipolar (balance of

⁵⁸ <http://courses.essex.ac.uk/gv/gv214/GV214%202003%20lect5.doc> Accessed on Jan 17,2004

⁵⁹ <http://bdm.cqpress.com/chapter4.htm>, The Principles of International Politics.

⁶⁰ Binnendijk Hans. “Back to Bipolarity?” *The Washington Quarterly* Vol.22, No.4 (Autumn 1999), p.1

⁶¹ Samuel P.Huntington. “The Lonely Superpower” *Foreign Affairs* Vol.78, No.2 (March/April 1999), p.39

power) system.⁶² This shifting balance encourages conciliation between states and affects the threat perceptions by assuming any country as a potential partner at first, not the enemy. According to Charles Kegley, as more states ascend to great power status, the number, range and diversity of mutually beneficial trade-offs among them rise, declining the prospect of armed conflict.⁶³ Lacking rigid polarization, multipolar systems provide medium-level powers with more room for maneuver and opportunities to articulate themselves. (Shown in Figure 2.1)

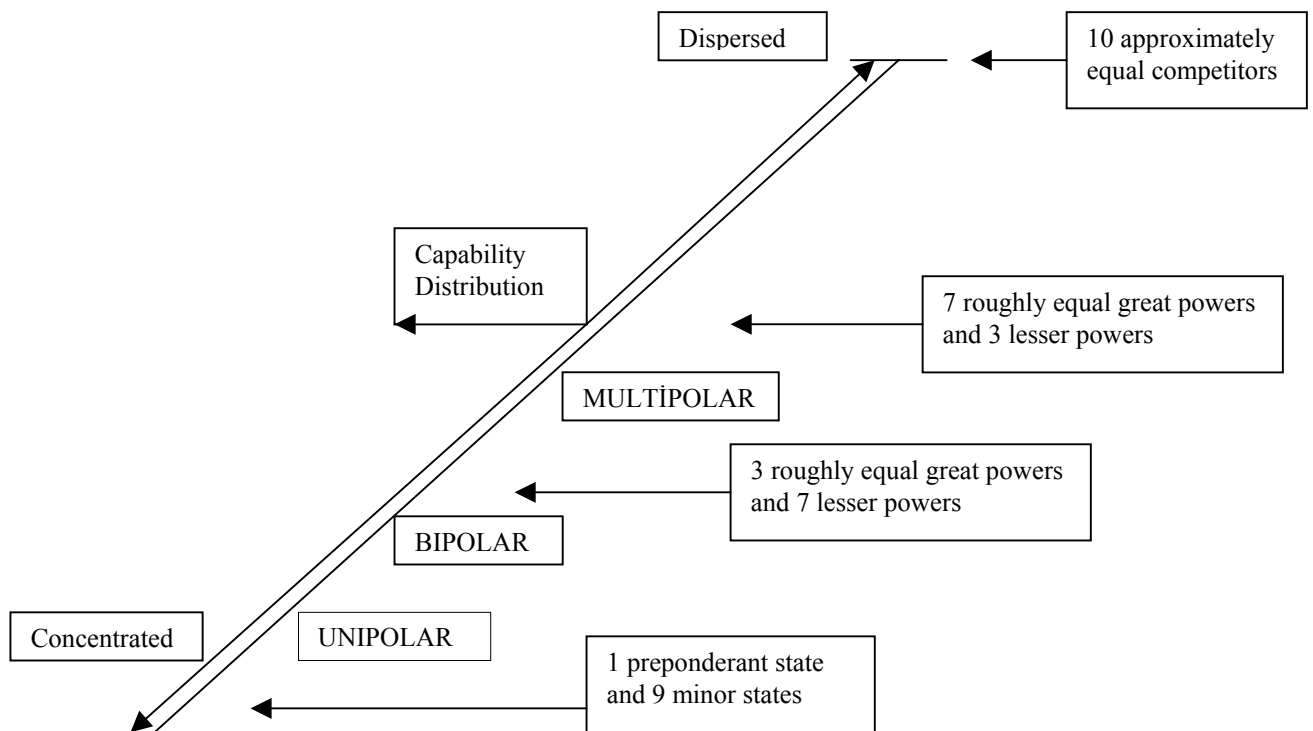


Figure 2.1 Distributions of Capabilities in a Hypothetical Ten-Member State System.⁶⁴

⁶² Richard Aliano. *The Crime of World Power* (New York: G.P.Puntham's Sons, 1978), p.206 cited in Charles W. Kegley, and Gregory Raymond. *A Multilateral Peace?: Great Power Politics in the Twenty-first Century*. (New york: St.Martin's Press, 1994), p.96

⁶³ Ibid, p.51

⁶⁴ Charles W. Kegley, and Gregory Raymond, *A Multilateral Peace?: Great Power Politics in the Twenty-first Century*. (New york: St.Martin's Press, 1994), p.54

But there are critics as well. According to some neo-realist authors, it is highly difficult for great powers to assess their relative strength which results in the form of uncertainty within the system. For the same authors, multipolar systems are more war-prone for reasons mentioned which is a consequence of the system's complexity and fluid alliance structure.⁶⁵

The difficulty in keeping coordination between actors to form an influential power constitutes another point of criticism. Members of alliances may be reluctant to bear the burden of providing shelter for other members. Moreover, to take support from a great power may not be probable unless the mentioned power perceives a real and imminent threat to its own security. Besides, when confronted with two possible enemies, a party might choose to keep silent, exploiting the situation and may not be able to foresee being subsequently the target of the victorious side. Accordingly, security alignments will become more flexible on the familiar realist assumption that today's friend may be tomorrow's enemy.⁶⁶

All in all, multipolar systems generally provide states with many opportunities and options but not a zero-sum game. Accordingly, the (relative) freedom of maneuverability in multipolar systems has been evaluated as the utmost important and analogical point in this study given the nature of pre- and post-Cold war environments.

2.2. The Political Environment before WWII

After WWI, changes in borders created a new distribution of capabilities (power) in Europe. The collapse of the monarchies in Europe led the victors to form a flexible proto-collective security structure to bring peace to Europe in the

⁶⁵ J.J. Mearsheimer. "Back to the Future" *International Security* Vol.15, No.1 (Summer 1990), p.30

⁶⁶ Micheal Mastanduno. 'A Realist View: Three Images of the Coming International Order' in *International World Order and the Future of World Politics*. eds. T.V.Paul and John.A.Hall. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.22

beginning of the 20th century. They created the League of Nations under which states agreed to provide collective security by aligning against the potential aggressor. A formal but fluid structure was formed which sought to provide security without rigid alliances.⁶⁷ But most great powers preferred to enhance their security by forming alliances rather than using the negotiating platform of collective security because they had not much faith in the mechanism.⁶⁸

Vengeful treaties of WWI that paid little attention to borders and economic conditions in Europe, arbitrary behavior of the victors in the League of Nations and their efforts to exploit the institution on behalf of their interests instigated the defeated towards revenge and paved the way of another world war.

During this era, Turkey actively joined and supported peaceful efforts by playing a leading role in establishing the Saadabad Pact (Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan) in 1934 and the Balkan Entente (Turkey, Greece, Romania, Yugoslavia) in 1937 to establish a belt of peace and prosperity surrounding the country⁶⁹. Ankara avoided joining the European poles (either camp: Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, Communist Soviet Union, Great Britain, France, USA) keeping in mind the memories of WWI and War of Liberation. This avoidance was put into practice by an experienced Turkish statesman, İsmet İnönü.

2.2.1. Policies of İsmet İnönü during WWII

İsmet İnönü was elected as the second President of the Republic following Atatürk's death in 1938. He was the President and chairman of the Republican

⁶⁷ Binnendijk Hans. "Back to Bipolarity?" *The Washington Quarterly* Vol.22, No.4 (Autumn 1999), p.8

⁶⁸ Charles W. Kegley, and Gregory Raymond. *A Multilateral Peace?: Great Power Politics in the Twenty-first Century*. (New York: St.Martin's Press.1994), p.110

⁶⁹ <http://www.byegm.gov.tr>

Peoples' Party (RPP) at the same time. İnönü's greatest success was in keeping Turkey out of the Second World War.⁷⁰

His policy in this regard was based on establishing various balances at the same time and insisting adamantly on active neutrality. Turkey had no outstanding issues to resolve through war. The object was to maintain its independence, sovereignty and unity. It tried to avoid adventures and pursued a logical policy under İsmet İnönü's administration.⁷¹ To keep promises given to other nations, respect the inviolability of borders and territorial integrities of all states, abide by the rules of international law but to use force only if national interests were at stake were the main principles that shaped İnönü's foreign policy during WWII. Consolidating the Republican regime, in addition to the poor state of military power, which was still equipped with WWI accoutrement were added conditions as a domestic reasons to adopt this position went.

When the Soviet-German Agreement was signed on 23 August 1939, İnönü thought that this agreement could harm Turkey and signed agreements with France and Britain on 13 October 1939 which did not stipulate Turkey to go to war with Soviet Union while it obtained economic aid from the former. In this agreement, Turkey added secret articles that restricted joining war under certain conditions. At no time was this alliance, which was geared to protect the Eastern Mediterranean from yet another Mediterranean aggressor- Italy-was to bring Turkey to hostility with the Soviet Union.

⁷⁰ http://www.tbb.gen.tr/english/history/inonu_period.html

⁷¹ Server Aşar. "İkinci Dünya Savaşı ve İnönü'nün Uyguladığı Dış Politika" (Second World War and The Foreign Policy of İsmet İnönü) in *Altıncı Askeri Tarih Semineri Bildirileri*, Vol.2 (Proceedings of the Sixth Military History Seminar), (Ankara: Genelkurmay Basımevi , 1999), p.557

Later İnönü signed a nonaggression pact with the Soviet Union on 25 March 1941. By signing this agreement, İnönü preferred to develop mutual relations with both the Soviets and Franco-Britain Pact rather than aligning with one side. He stated that “our interest is to find allies in the West; we will behave according to this main idea”.⁷² In June 1941, a few days before Germany attacked the Soviet Union, İnönü signed a nonaggression pact with Germany to ensure Hitler of Turkey’s neutrality. İnönü was careful to establish multilateral relations with the powers engaged in the conflict. With the 1941 agreement, Turkey expanded its maneuverability and attained the freedom of forging economic ties with both Germany and Britain.⁷³

In accordance with this principle Turkey adopted active neutrality when Germans attacked the Soviet Union which caused the occupation of Iran by Britain from the south and by the Soviets from the north in order to supply Soviets with Allied assistance. This policy of balances continued throughout the war. Turkey remained formally neutral, but sought to enhance its regional influence by bargaining with both the Axis and Allies but without any aspirations. That is why Turkey’s demands came into conflict with the interests or diplomatic tactics of the warring parties.⁷⁴

When the war was about to end, in conformity with İnönü’s multi-faceted foreign policy, Turkey sided with the USA, Britain and the Soviet Union and declared war against Germany and Japan, and signed the United Nations communiqué dated 24 January 1945. Turkey joined officially the San Francisco

⁷²Ibid, p.565

⁷³Zekeriyâ Türkmen. “Türk Basının da Çıkan Haberlere Göre İkinci Dünya Savaşı Yıllarında Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’ni Savaşa Çekme Gayretleri” (The Efforts to Force Turkey into War on Turkish Press During WWII) in *Altıncı Askeri Tarih Semineri Bildirileri*, Vol.2 (Proceedings of the Sixth Military History Seminar), (Ankara: Genelkurmay Basımevi, 1999), p.91

⁷⁴Robert M. Cutler. “(Russian) and Soviet Relations with Greece and Turkey: A systems Perspective” Available at <http://robertcutler.org/ch91dc.htm> Accessed on Feb 01, 2004.

Conference on 5 March 1945 in order to be a founding member of the United Nations.

According to Turkish foreign policy makers during WWII, Turkey was a small power at the crossroads, thus had to maximize its capacity to maneuver in politics and had to oppose polarization in international relations. A small state could only survive with its own sources. For these kinds of states, while adopting a policy, concepts like “traditional friendship”, “strategic alliance”, “eternal enemy” and “relations in historical roots” did not have permanence.⁷⁵

We know from history that analogies can suggest lessons. Though the past can not provide us with perfect analogies, we need to look for types of behaviors that may guide us in an unprecedented international system.⁷⁶ In the same context the absence of hostility with its neighbors (though Turkey perceive threat from many of them to some extent), a geography sharing borders and a peace-oriented policy-making and foreign policy options in the post-Cold War era constitute some analogies in terms of “freedom of maneuverability” with the political environment of the İnönü era.

Today an ongoing debate is whether we live in multipolar or unipolar world. Many social scientists comment on the subject, taking into account various dimensions. They believe that after the demise of the Soviet Union, US leads world affairs as the only superpower. The European Union, the emergence of the Russian Federation as an important actor, the rise of China with its huge economic and human resources, the efforts by Japan-world’s second largest economy- to participate

⁷⁵ Server Aşar. “ İkinci Dünya Savaşı ve İnönü’nün Uyguladığı Dış Politika” (Second World War and The Foreign Policy of İsmet İnönü) in *Altıncı Askeri Tarih Semineri Bildirileri*, Vol.2 (Proceedings of the Sixth Military History Seminar), (Ankara: Genelkurmay Basımevi ,1999), p.573

⁷⁶ Charles W. Kegley, and Gregory Raymond. *A Multilateral Peace?: Great Power Politics in the Twenty-first Century* (New York: St.Martin’s Press, 1994), p.10

in world affairs, and India with its enormous population and experience on high-tech industries are signs of multipolar structure. Polarization indicates opposition, but none of these formations oppose democratic values of the 21st century. Though implementations of democratic values may vary in these spots of power, at least there seems to be official consensus on such values.

2.3. The Israeli-Turkish Alignment

The Turkish-Israeli relations are one of the most discussed and current subjects in the Middle East since it have many repercussions in the region. The dissatisfaction of Turkey with its Arab neighbors since the beginning of the Cold War, changing threat perceptions of Turkey following the Cold War and the Arab-Israeli rapprochement in the post-Cold War are commonly believed to contribute to the development of Turkish-Israeli alignment. It can be argued that Turkish-Israeli alignment is a part of a new dimension in Turkish Foreign Policy as a result of the new international structure following the demise of Soviet Union. Turkey found itself surrounded with hostile neighbors in an unstable environment. Instability in the Middle East, adverse relations with Syria, the risk of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) projects by its neighbors, the threat of fundamentalism, problematic relations with Europe, doubts about Russian intentions and propensity towards America can be laid down as factors that shaped Turkish-Israeli alignment from a broader perspective.⁷⁷

The claim that Turkish-Israeli relations have developed in the form of “strategic alliance” with the participation of USA against Iran and Syria in the post-

⁷⁷ Efraim Inbar. *Türk-İsrail Stratejik Ortaklığı (Turkish-Israeli Strategic Alliance)*, (Ankara: Asam, 2001), p.6

Cold War era came to the surface following the 1990/1991 Kuwait crisis.⁷⁸ But is it really possible to assert that Turkey developed a “strategic alliance” with Israel in the post-Cold War era in the Middle East? Ismail Cem, the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, complained that there is deliberate exaggeration when Turkey’s relations with Israel are described as damaging to Turkey’s position in the Middle East.⁷⁹ At this point it is beneficial to discuss the post-Cold War and its repercussions for Turkey’s security.

2.3.1. Developments in the Post-Cold War Era

As the most critical point of all, survival and security have always been the main concerns of policymakers in uncertain and unstable environments.

Accordingly, the *Security* dimension has always been the determinant factor which shaped Turkish Foreign Policy against the Middle East. To meet this end, Turkey benefited from the NATO shield and some regional organizations such as the Baghdad Pact (in 1955-1959) throughout the Cold War. During 1990 Kuwait crisis, Turkish policy makers watched with anxiety that European members of NATO were not as sensitive about Turkey’s defense concerns “in the event of a Muslim attack on Turkey” from the Middle East.⁸⁰ Turkey’s deep dissatisfaction with the ambivalence shown by its Western European allies was well outlined by General Çevik Bir (Rtd.), 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

⁷⁸ Mahmut Bali Aykan. *Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Dönemi Ortadoğu’sunda Türkiye’nin İsrail’e Karşı Politikası:1991-1998 (Turkey’s Foreign Policy toward Israel in post-Cold War Middle East)* (İstanbul: Yeditepe University, 2000), p.1

⁷⁹Amikam Nachmani. *Turkey: Facing a New Millennium*, (Manchester:Manchester University Press, 2003), p.202

⁸⁰Alan Makovsky. “Israeli-Turkish Relations:A Turkish Periphery Strategy” in *Reluctant Neighbor: Turkey’s Role in the Middle East*, eds. Henri J. Barkey (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996), p.153

Europe".⁸¹ Beyond all the political rifts between Turkey and Europe, which were kept secret to some extent, were made public after the Cold War which caused tensions.

Freed from the constraints of the Cold War era, Turkey seemed to have a better chance of playing bigger and different roles enhancing its strategic importance in the eyes of Western countries. On the contrary, in post-Cold War era the West, in general and Europe in particular, continued to perceive Turkey as an outpost for their own security. But in the same era the West can not be depicted as a compact unit since crack voices emerged. European countries initiated to establish their own army (European Security and Defense Project, ESDP), while the US tried to enhance NATO's sphere of influence by commencing Partnership for Peace (PfP) programs. The diminishing effect of NATO, changing character of threat perceptions of Turkey, especially from some of its southern neighbors, and irredentist movements by PKK (a terrorist organization which is responsible of killing thousands of Turkish citizens) compelled Ankara to shift its security priorities from the North to South at the beginning of the 1990s.⁸²

Meanwhile Turkey and the West diverged in defining their interests in the Middle East, which raised uncertainty for Turkey and resulted in mistrust between Turkey and its Western allies.⁸³ While western countries perceive the Middle East as an economic asset for its huge oil reserves and potential market for themselves, the region constitutes the top security concern of Turkey. Developments in the region caused Turkey to shift its threat perceptions from the North to South in the early

⁸¹Çevik Bir. "Turkey's Role in the New World Order: New Challenges" *Strategic Forum* No.135 (1998), p.4

⁸²Ahmet Davutoğlu. *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu (Strategic Depth: International Position of Turkey)* (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2001), p.412 The same comment has been reiterated by Prof.Meliha Benli Altunışık in a conference in Ankara University on 18.02.2004

⁸³ Comment by Prof.Meliha Benli Altunışık during her conference in Ankara University, 18.02.2004

1990s. The power vacuum in Northern Iraq since the 1990 campaign which paved the way of a powerful PKK, ongoing water debacle with Syria and its backing for PKK were the main reasons of Turkey's shifting policy. Thus, Turkey tried to find a regional solution to its Middle Eastern problems by pursuing ties with Israel.

Additionally, domestic developments also had repercussions on Turkey's foreign policy decisions in that era. Given the security dominated foreign policy of Turkey, the rising power of PKK and other terrorist activities that has trans-border connection also caused strains on relations with neighbors such as Syria, Iraq and Iran.⁸⁴

2.3.2. Enhanced Maneuverability

All these factors instigated Turkey to make a rapprochement with Israel beginning from the 1990s which reached a climax in 1996. On February 23, 1996, Turkey and Israel signed a Military Training and Cooperation Agreement. The two countries also signed a Defense Industry Cooperation Agreement on August 26, 1996. Despite the military character of agreements, Turkish-Israeli relations cannot be categorized as a traditional alliance since there is no formal and documented commitment to mutual defense and military cooperation. Even then the agreement had been made public two months after the signature. The two states did not define a *casus foederis*⁸⁵, which specifically identifies the situations that will necessitate them to undertake military assistance to one another in the event of an armed conflict.⁸⁶ Both countries shun participating in a crisis which has nothing to do with their respective national security and neither expects the other to take their side actively in

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ A stipulation about who will support whom in what contingencies and a secret agenda against third states asking for the help of an ally in the event of an aggression by a third state (including military attacks). That is a clear sign of why Turkish-Israeli relations can not be categorized as an alliance.

⁸⁶ İsmail Selvi. "Countering State-Supported Terrorism: The PKK and Turkish Foreign Policy Towards the Middle East" .(Unpublished Thesis in Bilkent University, July 2003), p.143

a conflict.⁸⁷ Accordingly, Turkey, right from the beginning, opposed “polarization” in the Middle East through strategic alliances as a general policy. According to Marios Evriviades, it is erroneous to think that Turkey, who has always been in favor of peace, stability and comprehensive cooperation to the benefit of all peoples in the region - where the main problems and conflicts continue -, would create new concerns and further divisions. He continues that Turkish-Israeli cooperation, which does not target any third country, will contribute to regional peace and stability.⁸⁸

However, there are several crucial issues on which the Turkish and Israel policymakers diverge. This interest-based relation between two countries cannot shadow the emergence of controversial topics such as Iraq, improving relations of Turkey with its Arab neighbors lately and the water issue.⁸⁹ Amikam Nachmani iterates that Israel had the same kind of special relations with France in the 1950s (to establish its nuclear program), Iran in the 1960s and 1970s essentially on energy and intelligence domains and South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s.⁹⁰ So this relationship can be categorized as a special and conditional alignment with various beneficial results enhancing Turkey’s maneuverability in regional and international terms.

In a post-Cold War world the two states have much to gain mutually without formally binding themselves. Though they lack formality, provisions of the 1996 Agreement can open doors to a cooperation that can only be reached by allies.⁹¹

⁸⁷ Efraim Inbar, *Türk-İsrail Stratejik Ortaklığı* (Turkish-Israeli Strategic Cooperation) (Ankara: ASAM, 2001), p.36

⁸⁸ Marios Evriviades. “The Turkish-Israeli Axis: Alliances and Alignments in the Middle East”, *Orient: German Journal for Politics and Economic of the Middle East* Vol.39, No.4 (1998), p.568

⁸⁹ Turkey is the only country with a water surplus so long as weather conditions (i.e. rainfall) cooperate, in the Middle East. The water issue constitutes an important topic in agreements and peace talks in the Middle East.

⁹⁰ Amikam Nachmani. *Turkey: Facing a New Millennium* (Manchester:Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 202

⁹¹ Mustafa Kibaroğlu. “Turkey and Israel Strategize” *Middle East Quarterly* Vol.9,No.1 (Winter 2002) Also available in <http://www.ciaonet.org/srchfrm.html>. Accessed on 22.11.2002, p.2

Doubtless, in the post-Cold War era Turkey emerged as a regional actor pursuing its interests to a considerable degree.

This political and security condition in which Turkey can deter its regional adversaries without formal commitments to its friends and without being dragged into the Middle East's own internal conflicts in a fluid environment. This resembles İnönü's foreign policy principles in the Second World War in terms of "freedom of maneuverability". To avoid polarization in the Middle East Turkey desired to resolve problems through peace talks in conformity with international law, the principle of territorial integrity and mutual respect for national unity.

According to Meliha Benli Altunışık, in 1996 and 1997 when the relations between the two countries were at an apex, Turkey was able to benefit from this relation by pressing its hostile neighbors who supported terrorist factions, which then constituted the main security concern of Turkey.⁹² The process, at the end of which the PKK terrorist leader, Abdullah Öcalan, was captured, was pursued with the help of Israel's various security units both in terms of conventional forces and intelligence support.⁹³ In 1998, while Öcalan resided in Russia, it is believed that Israel provided Turkey with intelligence on his whereabouts. Publicly it was first reported in the *Jerusalem Post*.

This is a clear sign of how Turkish-Israeli alignment served the regional interests of Turkey without bearing the burden of the stipulations of a classical alliance and enhanced its realm of maneuver in the Middle East. This alignment can not be categorized as a classical regional *balance of power* structure since the accumulative power of Israel and Turkey is far more than all other combinations in

⁹² Interview with Meliha Benli Altunışık in Ankara University, 18.02.2004.

⁹³ Çevik Bir. "Reflections on Turkish-Israeli Relations and Turkish Security." *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policywatch* 422, 05 December 1999. <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/watch/index.htm>

the Middle East.⁹⁴ In this respect the alignment can be explained with respective interests of Turkey and Israel in cooperation.

2.3.3. Beginning of Relations

Following the declaration of state of Israel in 1948, the Turkish-Israeli relations have been kept in “low-profile” due to Turkish foreign policy of “balance” and “non-interventionism” toward the Middle East. While the Suez Crisis in 1956, proclamation of Jerusalem as the capital by Israel in 1980 and the well-known crisis between Israel and the Palestinian Authority in the Middle Eastern Peace Process caused some severe political repercussions, the two states have never ruptured bilateral relations.⁹⁵ The need to fill the power vacuum in the Middle East after the demise of the Soviet Union and the changing character of threat perceptions of Turkey caused Ankara to reevaluate its traditional regional policy of non-interference.⁹⁶ In this respect, while Turkey’s foreign policy priorities are still firmly focused on its relations with the Western powers, Turkey responded to the developments in the Middle East with a somewhat more activist and assertive regional foreign policy.

The Madrid peace process that started in October 1991 can be evaluated as an epoch whereby the impediments before Turkish-Israeli rapprochement were removed.⁹⁷ In December 1991 Israel raised its diplomatic mission from Charge d’Affaires to Ambassadorial level to Ankara and Ankara reciprocated⁹⁸ by upgrading

⁹⁴ Efraim Inbar. *Türk-İsrail Stratejik Ortaklığı (Turkish-Israeli Strategic Cooperation)*.(Ankara: ASAM, 2001), p.8

⁹⁵ Efraim Inbar. *Türk-İsrail Stratejik Ortaklığı (The Turkish-Israeli Strategic Cooperation)*. (Ankara: Asam Yayınları, 2001), p.8

⁹⁶ Gencer Özcan. “Türkiye-İsrail İlişkileri 50. Yılına Girerken” (Turkish-Israeli Relations in its 50th year) in *Türk Dış Politikasının Analizi* eds. Faruk Söylemezoğlu. (İstanbul: Der Yayınları, 2001), p. 168

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Amikam Nachmani. *Turkey: Facing a New Millennium* (Manchester:Manchester University Press, 2003), p.201

its diplomatic representation to ambassadorial level in both Israel and Palestine at the same time.⁹⁹ The signing of the Israel-PLO Declaration of Principles (DOP) on September 13, 1993, turned the page to a new era in Turkish-Israeli relations. It seemed to have removed all obstacles to close bilateral relations. Israel's recognition of the PLO-and the PLO's of Israel meant that Ankara no longer had to restrain its ties with Tel Aviv in order to impress the Arab world.¹⁰⁰ On October 14, 1993, came the visit of then Turkish Foreign Minister Hikmet Çetin. It was the first highest ranking Turkish officials' visit since Turkey's recognition of the state of Israel in 1949.

The first official declaration of the newly emerging rapprochement came from Çetin that was presented as a "New-Era in Turkish-Israeli relations". It was reaffirmed by Çetin's words "Turkish-Israeli relations will develop in all fields, we have agreed that Turkey and Israel should co-operate in restructuring the Middle East in 1993."¹⁰¹

Then official visits followed Çetin's visit after 1993. Israeli president Ezer Weizman's visit to Turkey in January 1994, Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Çiller's visit to Israel in November 1994, President Demirel's visit to Israel in March 1996 and a visit by Prime Minister Mesut Yılmaz in September 1998 enhanced the relations.

While there have been noteworthy developments in all fields, the most significant element of developing relations between two countries in the 1990s has been in the military domain. In 1996, Turkey negotiated and signed two military

⁹⁹ Meliha Benli Altunışık. "Güvenlik Kısılcacında Türkiye-Ortadoğu ilişkileri." in Gencer Özcan and Şule Kut eds, *En Uzun On Yıl* (The Longest Decade), (İstanbul: Boyut Matbaacılık, 1998), p.331

¹⁰⁰ Alan Makovsky. "Israeli-Turkish Relations:A Turkish Periphery Strategy" in *Reluctant Neighbor: Turkey's Role in the Middle East*, eds. Henri J. Barkey (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996), p.161

¹⁰¹ Hakan M. Yavuz. "Turkish-Israeli Relations Through the Lens of the Turkish Identity Debate" *Journal of Paletsine Studies* Vol.27, No.1 (Autumn 1997), p.26

agreements with Israel; the Military Training Cooperation agreement in February and the Defense Industry Agreement in July. The contents of military agreements still remain secret, but agreements are believed to provide a framework for expanded Israeli-Turkish cooperation in the areas of officer exchange, naval port calls, access to training area, joint air and naval training, counter terrorism, border security and joint defense industry.¹⁰² Modernization by the Israel Aircraft Industry (IAI) of Turkish planes fifty-four F-4s (Phantoms) and forty-eight F-5s with Israeli know-how at a cost of 900 million dollars, the purchase of F-16 extra fuel tanks from Israel, joint production of Popeye missiles and a probable modernization of Turkish M-60 tanks are all negotiated based on the Military Agreements.¹⁰³ Additionally intelligence ties are believed to be reinforced¹⁰⁴.

Joint training programs are included in the agreements. In January 1998, and in December 1999, joint naval exercises, the “Reliant Mermaid”, between Turkey and Israel with the participation of US took place. Some air-force exercises are practiced mutually.¹⁰⁵

But the relation can not be restricted to military domains. The civilian agreements the 1996 “Free Trade Agreement” which was ratified in April 1997, is the main component of commercial relations. The “Customs Agreement” in December 1996 and the “Trade Agreement” in June 1996, contributed to developed relations.

	1990	1993	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
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¹⁰² Ayşegül Sever. “Turkey’s Stance on Dual Containment” *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies* Vol.24, No.2 (Winter 2001), p.66

¹⁰³ *The Turkish Probe*, August 30, 1998, issue 294. “Turkey, Isarel: Unprecedented Ties”

¹⁰⁴ Micheal Eisenstadt. “Turkish-Israeli Military Cooperation: An Assessment.” *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policywatch* 262, 24 June 1997. <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/watch/index.htm>

¹⁰⁵ Efraim Inbar. *Türk-İsrail Stratejik Oratklığı.(Turkish-Israeli Startegic Coopertaion)*.(Ankara: ASAM, 2001), p.29

Export	88.7	121.8	197.2	256.7	287.2	334.2	430.5
Import	36.2	80.3	252.1	355.4	443.1	556.8	586.6

Table 2.1. The Civilian Commerce of Israel with Turkey (million US \$)¹⁰⁶

Despite the increasing numbers of bilateral trade, Israel is not an alternative for Iran and Arab markets for Turkey since the mutual trade volumes between Turkey and Israel constitute even less than two percent of the total annual trade volume of both countries.¹⁰⁷

2.3.4 .Motivations

Different from the Cold-War era, in a multipolar world, alignments were established, in favor of member countries' own interests in Middle East. Without any doubt, concerns about the respective national security of their countries have been the determinant factor that shaped the Turkish-Israeli alignment.¹⁰⁸ In this respect countries try to make non-binding but lucrative and beneficial agreements which provide them with freedom of maneuverability as much as possible. It is highly important to ensure one's security while not binding oneself to formal documents or promises. When asked by his advisor to take Turkey into NATO in 1949, İnönü replied "can we get out of this organization if it harms our national interests?"¹⁰⁹ This example clearly shows how a state can boost its maneuverability in the political arena. Likewise, despite their common goals, the difference in Turkey's and Israel's motivations in forming the alignment and their diverging positions in many crucial subjects proves this "maneuverability". Diverging issue on topics will be mentioned

¹⁰⁶Ibid, p.26

¹⁰⁷Ibid, p.27

¹⁰⁸Ibid, p.35

¹⁰⁹ A historical anecdote related by Prof. Orhan Güvenen in his class lecture on the European Union .April, 2003.

in order to comprehend the position of Turkey and how Ankara tried to use this alignment in favor of its interests.

2.3.4. a. Turkey's motivations

Several factors have played a role in Turkey's motive for boosting an alignment with Israel. Turkey never wants to lose initiative in the incessantly changing Middle East environment and wants to strengthen its defense against possible Arab blocs. With apprehension of their supposed decreasing strategic importance in post-Cold War era, Turkey and Israel desired to take part in the *new order* of the Middle East which was to be enforced by the USA¹¹⁰ in conformity with their respective national security.

According to many scholars, Turkey could not attain what it expected from pro-Arab policies since the mid 1960s.¹¹¹ In order to fulfill the expectations of Arab states, Turkey suspended its relations with Israel and supported the PLO at times. Ankara's support for the Arab world provided Turkey with only an occasional progress in economic relations during the 1970s and 1980s, which diminished in the early 1990s.¹¹² As Alan Makovsky puts it, Israel and Turkey share a "common sense of otherness" in a region dominated by Arabs and non-democratic regimes.¹¹³

Under these circumstances an alignment with Israel on economic, political military and other domains would strengthen the position of Turkey against Arab states on one hand, and would help Turkey enhance its position as a regional actor by

¹¹⁰ Meliha Benli Altunışık. "Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Dönemde Türkiye-İsrail İlişkileri" in Altunışık, Meliha B. eds. *Türkiye ve Ortadoğu Tarih Kimlik Güvenlik (Turkey and Middle East:History,Identity,Security)*. (İstanbul: Boyut Kitapları, 1999), p.191

¹¹¹ The Cyprus issue and Arab reluctance to support Turkey on its war against terrorism, namely PKK, are clear signs of the disappointment.

¹¹² Meliha Benli Altunışık. "The Turkish-Israeli rapprochement in the post-Cold War Era." *Middle Eastern Studies* Vol.36, No.2 (2000), p.175

¹¹³ Alan Makovsky, "Israeli-Turkish Relations:A Turkish Periphery Strategy" in *Reluctant Neighbor: Turkey's Role in the Middle East*, eds. Henri J. Barkey, (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996), p.150

improving its relations with the US.¹¹⁴ This policy indicates that Turkish foreign policy can flex its muscles (to some extent) under certain conditions and create room to maneuver.

Ankara's Gulf War experience, when NATO responded to the danger of an Iraqi attack on Turkey only with reluctance since West Europeans saw NATO strictly as an organization for deterring conflicts inside Europe and had no intention of defending a peripheral NATO state¹¹⁵, caused some anxiety in Turkey about its security in regional and international terms.

Turkey also wanted to break its isolation from the Western world which reached its apex with Turkey's applicant rejection to European Union in 1997. That signified EU as an unreliable partner for Turkey's political and security worries. In this respect Turkey aspired to obtain the support of Jewish lobby which was depicted by Şükrü Elekdağ identified as "The Israel lobby in the US is far superior to all other ethnic lobbies put together. Whenever this lobby has worked for us (Turkey), Turkey's interests have been perfectly protected." Ankara evaluated this alignment as a compensation for Turkey's weakening ties with EU in the context of a triangular relationship with the US.¹¹⁶

But, Amikam Nachmani iterates that the Israeli efforts have achieved a limited success. He argues that while the US Administration is interested in closer ties with Turkey, the Congress remains critical. Given the stipulation of Congress approval on critical subjects as arms sales and financial aid, the function of Jewish lobby can be better evaluated. Thus Turkey's returning to Middle East and Israel may be deemed

¹¹⁴ Mahmut Bali Aykan. *Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Dönemi Ortadoğu'sunda Türkiye'nin İsrail'e Karşı Politikası:1991-1998. (Turkey's Foreign Policy toward Israel in post-Cold War Middle East)* (İstanbul: Yeditepe University, 2000),p .27

¹¹⁵ Alan Makovsky. "Israeli-Turkish Relations:A Turkish Periphery Strategy" in *Reluctant Neighbor: Turkey's Role in the Middle East*, eds. Henri J. Barkey,(Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996), p.153

¹¹⁶ Wolfango Piccoli. *Alliance Theory: The Case of Turkey and Israel*. (Unpublished MA Thesis), Bilkent University, Dept. of International Relations, (June 1999).

as a balancing factor to create maneuverability against EU and US Congress¹¹⁷ though the availability of expected results is controversial. Though the major Turkish policy points to a balancing of Euro-Atlantic ties while reiterating a Middle Eastern balance.

Another case for Turkey is the supersensitive issue of PKK terrorist organization. Israel, it should be noted, possess superior intelligence on Kurds because in the early 1970s Israeli advisors, in collaboration with the CIA and the Shah's SAVAK, operated clandestinely in the Kurdish mountains with Kurdish guerrillas against Iraq.¹¹⁸ Gökhan Çetinsaya states that these rebels were able to engage a large number of Iraqi forces at that time.¹¹⁹ According to Turkish and Western sources and press reports, during the April 1996 forays against Hezbollah bases in Lebanon's Bekaa valley, Israel targeted suspected bases of PKK.

Besides the supply of intelligence on the activities of PKK in the region, Israel, together with US were to help Turkey electronically "seal" its borders with Syria, Iraq and Iran so as to stop the infiltrations of PKK terrorists. There are many Kurdish Jews living in Northern Iraq. Even today there are about 30 high ranking Kurdish Jews in KDP (Kurdistan Democratic Party, a dissident to Iraqi regime)¹²⁰. Turkey's explicit goal is to reach the intelligence gathered by MOSSAD (Israel intelligence service), the satellite photographs or the other subsidiary organs in Northern Iraq to control the activities of PKK. Contrary to some claims that Israeli security units help Turkish Forces within the borders of Turkey to gather intelligence seems illogical since this kind of an operation needs a trans-border dimension and the

¹¹⁷Amikam Nachmani. *Turkey: Facing a New Millennium* .(Manchester:Manchester University Press,2003), p.233

¹¹⁸ Marios Evriviades. "The Turkish-Israeli Axis: Alliances and Alignments in the Middle East", *Orient: German Journal for Politics and Economic of the Middle East* Vol.39, No.4 (1998), p.566

¹¹⁹ Comment by Gökhan Çetinsaya in a conference in Ankara University, 18.02.2004

¹²⁰ Ümit Özdağ. "İsarial'in Kuzey Irak Politikası." (Northern Iraq Policy of Israel), *Avrasya Dosyası, İsrail Özel*, Vol.5, No.1(İlkbahar 1999), p.224.

Turkish-Israeli military agreements inhibit the involvement of the soldiers of either signatory on the territory of the other in conflicts between the host state and any third party.¹²¹ Surely, this can be done with physical contact.

Syria was known to support this terrorist organization along with some other neighbors. Syria even provided shelter for the leader of the organization for many years. Damascus also signed an unsubstantiated agreement with Greece in July 1995 which opened Syrian air and naval bases to the latter. In military terms, this agreement may have harmed Turkey's interests in Mediterranean. Şükrü Elekdağ commented that Turkey should be ready to wage a war with Greece, Syria and PKK at the same time.¹²² An Israeli support to coordinate strategies against Syria-or more accurately, Syrian perception that such coordination might exist-would complicate Syria's own strategic planning and its approach to peacemaking with Israel, its support for terrorism, and perhaps other policies as well.¹²³ The extradition of Öcalan and the signing of the "Text of Minutes" in Adana between Turkey and Syria on October 20, 1998 seemed to stop Syria's classical water-terror approach. According to Nachmani, these occasions may have signaled to Greece the futility of aligning with Syria.

In May 1997 Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu condemned the Kurdish terrorism and maneuvers to establish a Kurdish state. He even went further claiming that there would be no peace between Israel and Syria unless Syria quits giving support to PKK.¹²⁴ However, these claims did not reverberate in the actions of Israel. Amikam Nachmani argues that Israel declined the Turkish request to take

¹²¹ Amikam Nachmani. *Turkey: Facing a New Millennium* (Manchester:Manchester University Press,2003), p223

¹²² Şükrü Elekdağ. "2 ½ War Strategy" *Perceptions*. Vol.1,No.1 (March-May, 1996), p.52

¹²³ Alan Makovsky. "Israeli-Turkish Relations:A Turkish Periphery Strategy" in *Reluctant Neighbor: Turkey's Role in the Middle East*, eds. Henri J. Barkey (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996), p.149

¹²⁴ Amikam Nachmani. *Turkey: Facing a New Millennium* .(Manchester:Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 203

sides against Kurdish terrorism. He argued that anti-terror efforts were excluded from the 1994 agreement since Israelis found the definition of “terrorism” combined with the term “Kurdish” unacceptable.¹²⁵ In essence, Israel would not want to add yet another terrorist organization against itself.

Turkey, in the same era, iterated its concerns of a probable proposal by the US to compensate Syria for water from the Golan Heights that Damascus had to give to Israel in order to facilitate the Syria-Israel peace agreements.¹²⁶ In the same era, not to be ousted from the peace process and to prevent unwanted results for itself, Turkey offered Israel the Military Agreement.¹²⁷ This was not a result of confidence in Israel against a Syrian threat since two countries had different perceptions pertaining Syria. Accordingly, when security is concerned, Turkey could not trust Israel totally.¹²⁸ Israeli President Ezer Weizmann, during a visit to Greek Cyprus in 1998 iterated that if the Turkish-Syrian tension increased, Israel can not be seen as a second front against Syria.¹²⁹ However, to bear in mind, Turkey enhanced its maneuverability since it was able to change Syria’s threat perception to some degree which can be seen in the Öcalan case.

Turkey perceived terrorism as the most ostensible impediment before the Middle East Peace Process and regional instability to which it paid considerable attention. Therefore Ankara tolerated the Israeli military operations in Lebanon against Hamas and other terrorist organizations, while there are certain differences

¹²⁵ Ibid, p.204

¹²⁶ Mahmut Bali Aykan. *Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Dönemi Ortadoğu’sunda Türkiye’nin İsrail’e Karşı Politikası:1991-1998. (Turkey’s Foreign Policy toward Israel in post-Cold War Middle East)* (İstanbul: Yeditepe University, 2000), p.38

¹²⁷ Wolfango Piccoli. *Alliance Theory: The Case of Turkey and Israel.* (Unpublished MA Thesis in Bilkent University, June 1999), p.58

¹²⁸ Mahmut Bali Aykan. *Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Dönemi Ortadoğu’sunda Türkiye’nin İsrail’e Karşı Politikası:1991-1998. (Turkey’s Foreign Policy toward Israel in post-Cold War Middle East)* (İstanbul: Yeditepe University, 2000), p.38

¹²⁹ Ahmet Davutoğlu. *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye’nin Uluslararası Konumu(Strategic Depth:International Position of Turkey).* (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2001), p.424

between the struggle by Israel against Hezbollah and Hamas and Turkey's efforts to suppress PKK.¹³⁰

Self-sufficiency in military terms means to be able to produce the needed equipment and weapons in a given country, whatever kind, without the help of another state. According to General Şadi Ergüvenç (Ret), "perhaps the most rational explanation for Turkey's recent rapprochement with Israel"¹³¹ is Turkey's desire to become a more self-sufficient regional power in economic and military domains. He continues that given the unreliable security structure of Europe, military cooperation with Israel turned out to be an obligation for Turkey. This approach represents the aspiration of Turkey to decrease its dependency on other states for military equipments, spare parts or weapons since many states which supply military equipment, stipulate the improvement of human rights in Turkey or some suggestions on Kurdish issue, such as a political solution to the problem.

At this point, there is another important subject as an impediment related to the development of a national weaponry industry. The transfer of Israeli technology or weapon systems that were developed with American participation is subject to US Congressional approval, which is not always granted.¹³² Israel develops its missile technology that it is heavily dependent on US technology.

2.3.4. b .Israeli Motivations and Common Goals

Israel also has many some security concerns. Realizing that it is a small state surrounded by numerous Arab countries, the help of extraregional powers has also

¹³⁰ Mahmut Bali Aykan. *Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Dönemi Ortadoğu'sunda Türkiye'nin İsrail'e Karşı Politikası:1991-1998. (Turkey's Foreign Policy toward Israel in post-Cold War Middle East)* (İstanbul: Yeditepe University, 2000), p.87

¹³¹ Şadi Ergüvenç. "Turkey's Security Perceptions", *Perceptions* Vol.3, No.2, (June-August 1998), p.38

¹³² Amikam Nachmani. *Turkey: Facing a New Millennium* .(Manchester:Manchester University Press, 2003), p.224

been sought to offset asymmetries in resources with the Arab world.¹³³ To form close relations with a non-Arab Muslim country can contribute to alleviate the “religion” dimension of Arab-Israeli conflict which is an aim of Israeli foreign policy.¹³⁴ Efforts to find markets for high-tech Israeli weapons constitute another dimension of the relations. To preempt possible missile attacks from hostile regional countries, Israel needs Turkey’s airspace.¹³⁵

As for common goals, whichever state intends to launch an attack against either country must take into consideration the combined military strength of Turkey and Israel. Intelligence exchange between the two countries, which is gathered through border observations and surveillance oriented flight missions, lessen the probability of a surprise attack by their hostile mannered neighbors¹³⁶.

Iran’s desire to export its Islamic revolution to Turkey, its relations with Syria and information confirming its support to organizations which are declared “terrorist” by Israel and Turkey cause some parallelism in both countries’ threat perceptions pertaining to Iran.

It is long known that Iran supplies Hezbollah and PKK terrorist fractions with military equipment against Israel and Turkey respectively¹³⁷. That in June 2000 Turkey demanded that the cargo of Iranian aircrafts, en-route to Turkey, be reported to Turkish officials and immediate condemnation by Iran is a clear indication for Israel about Iran’s support to terrorism. İsmail Hakkı Karadayı, Turkey’s then Chief

¹³³ Efraim Inbar. “Contours of Israel’s New Strategic Thinking” *Political Science Quarterly*. Vol.111, No.1.(1996), p.43

¹³⁴ Efraim Inbar. Türk-İsrail Stratejik Ortaklığı(The Turkish-Israeli Strategic Partnership). (Ankara: Asam Yayınları, 2001), p.4

¹³⁵ Mustafa Kibaroglu. “Turkey and Israel Strategize.” *Middle East Quarterly* Vol.9, No.1 (Winter 2002), Also available in <http://www.ciaonet.org/srchfrm.html>. Accessed on 22.11.2002, p.2

¹³⁶ Efraim Inbar. “Regional Implications of Israeli-Turkish Strategic Relationship.” *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol.5, No.2 (Summer 2001)

¹³⁷ For more information about historical conflicts and disputes between Turkey and Iran See. Graham Fuller. *Turkey Faces East* (RAND, Santa Monica, 1992), pp. 34-36.

of Staff, during a visit to Israel in February 1997 stated: “The priority issue of this cooperation should be the struggle against international terrorism”¹³⁸.

2.4. Controversial Issues

According to Mahmut Bali Aykan, Considering Turkey’ point of view, two hypotheses lie under the alignment. At first, a change in regional and international circumstances which stipulated the Turkish-Israeli alignment is not expected to alter in near future. For example, there was an uncertainty regarding the behavior of Greece-Syria cooperation on terrorist activities against Turkey with the help of the Russian Federation. Turkish-Israeli alignment would form a guarantee and a deterrent factor for Turkey’s security. Secondly, the continuity of the Arab-Israeli Peace Process was to be assured, though some intervals were expected independent from the Israeli political parties in power.¹³⁹ It can not be argued that Turkey would sever its bilateral relations with Syria and other regional states while forming close ties with Israel which proves that Turkey perceived its alignment with Israel as a “tool” not the “aim” of its Middle East policy.¹⁴⁰ As Hikmet Cetin, then the Minister of Foreign Affairs, stressed in 1993, Turkey perceives Turkish-Israeli rapprochement not as a pact against a common enemy but as an alignment for deterrence¹⁴¹ which was proven in the cases of Syria and Greek Cypriot efforts to deploy Russian-made S-300 missiles in Cyprus. While not confirmed officially, concerns that the Turkish pilots were trained in Israel with sophisticated attack capabilities and rumors about a possible attack on S-300 missile positions if they were deployed on Cyprus Island

¹³⁸ Wolfgang Piccoli. “Alignment Theory: The case of Turkey and Israel.”, (Unpublished MA Thesis in Bilkent University: Ankara, June 1999), p. 68.

¹³⁹ Mahmut Bali Aykan. *Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Dönemi Ortadoğu’sunda Türkiye’nin İsrail’e Karşı Politikası: 1991-1998. (Turkey’s Foreign Policy toward Israel in post-Cold War Middle East)* (İstanbul: Yeditepe University, 2000), p.64

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Süha Bölükbaşı. “Türkiye ve İsrail: Mesafeli Yakınlıktan Stratejik Ortaklığa” Available at <http://www.liberal-dt.org.tr/dergiler/ldsayi13/1311.htm>. Accessed on 22.11.2003

with the help of these trainings created the expected result for Turkey in 1998. Cengiz Çandar, a commentator on foreign policy, confirms this attitude by arguing that the isolation of Turkey from its other neighbors will harm its interests in the long run. According to him, Turkey should find some grounds to cooperate with other surrounding countries whether Arab or not. This does not mean that Turkey will suspend relations with Israel or relinquish them.

Despite the existence of controversial issues between the two countries both Israel and Turkey learned to stabilize the direction of the alignment. But during this era some issues were avoided or not even articulated, and Turkey was able to reach its targets, to a considerable degree, without being dragged into the hot debates of the Middle East such as the Palestinian-Israeli dispute or Syrian-Israeli peace process. Ankara also did not have to make concessions from its general principles such as changing the volume of water given to Syria, from its transboundary water courses, such as the Euphrates. Israel desired to satisfy Syria with water from Turkey through Euphrates in order to assure its water reserves from Golan Heights during the Peace Process.

Besides, extradition of the PKK leader and some 300-400 PKK members from Syria and later developments drew a new path in Turkish-Syrian relations. With the coming of Bashar Assad to power on July 11, 2000, a new era of bilateral relations commenced. Improved relations were seen with the visit of Syrian Chief of Staff to Ankara in June 2002.¹⁴² During the visit of Syrian President Bashar Assad to Turkey in January 2004, Damascus officially declared to abolish its claims on Alexandretta.¹⁴³ The Vice President of Syria, Abdulhalim Haddam, declared that

¹⁴² Amikam Nachmani. *Turkey: Facing a New Millennium* .(Manchester:Manchester University Press, 2003), p.108

¹⁴³ *Milliyet*, January 06, 2004. “Suriye’den Sınır Tanıyan Antlaşma” (Border Recognizing Agreement from Syria)

Damascus is ready for negotiations with Israel in conformity with the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and stated that the messages declaring Syria's desire to continue peace talks have been transmitted to Abdullah Gül, the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs.¹⁴⁴ This event implies that Syria wants Turkey to be a mediator in peace talks. The Spokesman of the Israeli Foreign Ministry Jonathan Peled stated "We accepted Turkey's offer to be a mediator in Syrian-Israeli peace talks and we think that Turkey can play a crucial role".¹⁴⁵ Turkey's close relations with Israel gave Ankara an important opportunity to play an active role in an event from which it feared to be ousted in the mid-1990s. Turkey obviously broadened its sphere of influence and was able to benefit from its relations with Israel to become a mediator.

When, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared the PKK as a terrorist organization and condemned its activities there were a persistent pro-Kurdish sentiment in Israel which caused reservations till 1997. Currently Israel gives extensive support for the Kurdish struggle for independence in northern Iraq.¹⁴⁶ According to Alon Liel, Israeli Ambassador (Ret), there would be a weak federation in Iraq though a separation would not occur. He stated that Northern Iraq (Kurds) is a friend of Israel. While he depicts Turkey as the only regional friend of Israel Liel warns that Turkey should be ready for such phenomenon like a "separated Iraq".¹⁴⁷ Israel also helped Kurdish groups in northern Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1987) by organizing forces to engage a large number of the Iraqi Army. Ariel Sharon, then Israeli Foreign Secretary, stated in 1999, "It is a known fact that we

¹⁴⁴ *Milliyet*, February 12, 2004. "İsrail'e Gül Aracılığıyla Barış Mesajı Gönderdik" (The Message of Peace to Israel through Gül)

¹⁴⁵ *Milliyet*, January 26, 2004. "İsrail'den Türkiye'nin Arabuluculuğuna Evet" (Israel's Approval of Turkey's Mediation)

¹⁴⁶ Amikam Nachmani. *Turkey: Facing a New Millennium* .(Manchester:Manchester University Press, 2003), p.204

¹⁴⁷ Sedat Ergin,*Hürriyet*, February 24, 2004. "İsrail'in Kürt Devletine Bakışı" (The View of Israel on Kurdish State)

have good relations with the Kurds in Northern Iraq and especially with Barzani, but we do not have relations with PKK.”¹⁴⁸ In this respect, some claims were raised in the Turkish media such as buying land in huge amounts in northern Iraq by Kurds with the help of Israeli financing.¹⁴⁹ According to Meliha Benli Altunışık, today the stance of Israel towards Iraq is different from that of Turkey and the developments in Iraq will directly effect Israeli-Turkish relations.¹⁵⁰ Until now Turkey was able to make Israel recognize PKK as a terrorist faction and pursued its relations in cooperation without taking Iraq into the agenda of bilateral relations.

According to Ahmet Davutoğlu, there is not an issue in the Middle East, either an agreement or peace talks, independent from the water issue. He continues that all wars are related to attain water resources and all peace talks are subject to distribution of water reserves.¹⁵¹ Different approaches by Turkey and Israel towards the water issue signify that the two countries may part on so crucial a subject which refutes the claims about “strategic alliance” between them.¹⁵² Turkey, the only country in the region with a water surplus, rapidly became the focal point of the Middle East water planning with considerable energy devoted to figuring out how to supply Israel with water from rivers in Southern Turkey.¹⁵³ The water reserves of Israel are diminishing with increasing demand. Turkey’s water is deemed as a feasible and available alternative for Israel. In April 2001 the Israeli government made an agreement with Turkey on supplying water from Manavgat River for 50

¹⁴⁸ *Milliyet*, March 18,1999 quoted in Amikam Nachmani, *Turkey: Facing a New Millennium* (Manchester:Manchester University Press, 2003), p.204

¹⁴⁹ *Hürriyet*, Ferai Tınç, October 27, 2003.”

¹⁵⁰ Comment by Prof.Meliha Benli Altunışık in a conference in Ankara University on 18.02.2004

¹⁵¹ Ahmet Davutoğlu. *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu (Strategic Depth: International Position of Turkey)*. (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2001), p.425

¹⁵² Mahmut Bali Aykan. *Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Dönemi Ortadoğu'sunda Türkiye'nin İsrail'e Karşı Politikası:1991-1998. (Turkey's Foreign Policy toward Israel in post-Cold War Middle East)* (İstanbul: Yeditepe University, 2000), p.38

¹⁵³ Gil Dibner, “My Enemy’s Enemy” *Harvard International Review* Vol.21, No.1 (Winter 1998/99), p.36

million cubic meters annually.¹⁵⁴ But, Israel does not want to become dependent on Turkey for water as a general policy. Water has an increasing value in Middle East, thus raising the worth of Turkey's cards in the region. Turkey may benefit from the water card in northern Iraq by Tigris, in the event of an independent Kurdish state, and in Syria, if a political discrepancy between Ankara and Damascus enhances, by Euphrates Rivers since these are the main water sources of the region.

The signing of another military agreement between Greece and Israel, which resembles the Israeli-Turkish military agreement, indicates that Israel does not perceive the Turkish-Israeli relations as an alliance. Given the chronic problems between Ankara and Athens, it seems that Tel Aviv desires to find markets for its military products through these agreements.¹⁵⁵ In the same context, Israel and Turkey discussed the proposal of broadening cooperation on national security during the visit of İlhan Kılıç, then Commander of Turkish Air Force, in December 1998. During the meetings, a *formal defense agreement* did not seem probable while to broaden *cooperation* was deemed a better option. According to Efraim Inbar, Israel did not believe in signed documents and even avoided signing a defense agreement with the US lest it could restrict Israel's freedom of maneuverability. He continues that Turkey's agenda did not include a more formal agreement of alliance with Israel anyway.¹⁵⁶ Given that the Greece-Israeli military agreement was signed in 1994, by signing a similar agreement, Turkey counter-balanced the rising power of the Greek

¹⁵⁴ Efraim Inbar. *Türk-İsrail Stratejik Oryaklığı.(Turkish-Israeli Strategic Cooperation).(Ankara: ASAM, 2001), p.26*

¹⁵⁵ Amikam Nachmani. *Turkey: Facing a New Millennium .(Manchester:Manchester University Press, 2003), p.207*

¹⁵⁶ Efraim Inbar. *Türk-İsrail Stratejik Ortaklığı.(Turkish-Israeli Strategic Cooperation).(Ankara: ASAM, 2001), p.34*

Army and preempted a possible plot against itself since Israel wants to become a supplier of the Greek Cypriot Army following Russia and France.¹⁵⁷

2.5. Broadened Impact

Joining of Jordan to Turkish-Israeli alignment increased its sphere of influence. Its importance lies in the fact that the alignment was not established against Arab countries as an anti-Arab bloc. While Jordan had military ties with Turkey since 1984 this reached the apex with a 1996 secret military cooperation agreement. According to Amikam Nachmani, Turkish-Jordanian military cooperation turned out to be an intensive interaction, “the most significant cooperation of Turkey other than NATO.”¹⁵⁸ Many Jordanian officers are being trained in the Turkish Army and Turkish officers join exercises in Jordan.

2.6. Reactions to Alignment

In the Arab world it is really hard to talk about a consensus as to how to react to Turkish-Israeli cooperation. Though in general Arab countries expressed their anxieties about the alignment, the policies of Arab countries varied from joining the cooperation to exert great endeavor to isolate and contain Turkey and Israel. Most Arab countries despised the Turkish-Israeli relationship. Moreover they depicted the alignment as an extension of American and Western attempts to promulgate their hegemony over the region. Historical roots that are full of enmity between Arabs and Turkey spurred Arab hatred¹⁵⁹. They even evaluated this alignment and Turkey’s activities in the Middle East as “new Ottomanism”. The backlash of the Arab

¹⁵⁷Ahmet Davutoğlu. *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu*(*Strategic Depth: International Position of Turkey*). (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2001), p424

¹⁵⁸Amikam Nachmani. *Turkey: Facing a New Millennium* .(Manchester:Manchester University Press, 2003), p.221

¹⁵⁹Amikam Nachmani. *Turkey and Middle East*, (The Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, Bar-Ilan University, Israel,Ramat Gan, May,1999), pp.28.

community involves “alienation, denying the legitimacy of alignment and to establish counter coalitions”¹⁶⁰.

Arab complaints have also revealed the security priorities of reactionary countries. Syria, possibly the most affected one, accused Turkey and Israel of forming a “military alliance” against itself for fear of being a target. The Libyan news agency worried about this “suspicious military partnership” that would steal Arabs’ petroleum and water resources. The Iranians worried about Israel’s current capability of targeting their nuclear facilities.¹⁶¹ The involvement of Jordan in the alignment brought about the establishment a counter-bloc which includes Syria, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the PLO at least in the rhetorical realm. In a parallel way, Iran tried to renew the possibilities of cooperation with Armenia and Russia against Turkey as it did during Nagorno-Karabakh conflicts in 1993. But the vitality and durability of mentioned counter-blocs are still subject to discussion.

That the contents of alignment are not known to Arabs also revived and increased their preexisting fears. Above all while risks are always present against the Turkey-Israel alignment, the mentioned regional reactions and the threats of counter-alliances will be mostly confined to the verbal domain¹⁶². The reliability and operability of these counter-alliances are also limited given the old enmities between war-torn Arab countries. But it is clear that every attempt of cooperation between Turkey and Israel was attacked by countries mentioned. Turkey’s project of selling water to Israel from Manavgat River was subjected to criticisms of Arab countries during the meeting of Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Arab League in

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, p.29

¹⁶¹ Daniel Pipes. ”A New Axis: Emerging Turkish-Israeli Entente” , *National Interest*, (Winter 1997/98), p.38

¹⁶² Alan Makovsky. “Israeli-Turkish Cooperation: Full Steam Ahead” ,*Policywatch*,No.292, (06 February 1998). in <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/watch/index.htm>

March 1996 despite the fact that the project had nothing to do with the water disputes between Turkey-Iraq and Syria.¹⁶³

The Agreement that was signed between Iran, Greece and Armenia could be evaluated as a maneuver against Turkish-Israeli alignment especially targeting Turkey since Greece is on good terms with Israel.¹⁶⁴ Additionally, in 1998 the Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs, Theodoros Pangalos, depicted the alignment as “alliance of the guilty parties” implying Turkey and Israel, and joined the triple meeting in Tehran with Ministers Foreign Affairs of Armenia and Iran.¹⁶⁵

All in all it is hard to talk about a robust and powerful counter-bloc by states who stated their anxiety about Turkish-Israeli alignment. Reactionary states diverge on the method of backlash since their respective national interests do not converge. The improvement of relations between Syria and Turkey with the visit of Bashar Assad is a historical development given the hostile policies of Hafez Assad during the 1980s and 1990s. Syria gives an impression that if it tries to solve its problems with its neighbors.

Currently, Turkey also has a relatively unproblematic relation with Iran. President Khatami has a positive impact on relations between the two countries by relegating to the backburner some state policies such as exporting the Islamic regime to neighboring countries. Turkey has close ties with Iran especially in commerce and energy.¹⁶⁶ According to Gökhan Çetinsaya, relations between Turkey and Iran have

¹⁶³ Mahmut Bali Aykan. *Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Dönemi Ortadoğu'sunda Türkiye'nin İsrail'e Karşı Politikası:1991-1998. (Turkey's Foreign Policy toward Israel in post-Cold War Middle East)* (İstanbul: Yeditepe University, 2000), p.62

¹⁶⁴ Efraim Inbar. *Türk-İsrail Stratejik Ortaklığı.(Turkish-Israeli Strategic Cooperation)*.(Ankara: ASAM, 2001), p.87

¹⁶⁵ Ahmet Davutoğlu. *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu(Strategic Depth:International Position of Turkey)*. (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2001), p.424

¹⁶⁶ Amikam Nachmani. *Turkey: Facing a New Millennium* .(Manchester:Manchester University Press, 2003), p.206

never been better than today.¹⁶⁷ But on the other hand, though officially denied by Iranian officials, it is suspected that there are thousands of PKK terrorists on Kandil mountains in the Iranian border region with Iraq.

Consequently, despite Turkey's improving relations with states such as Syria and Iran, the dilemma of regional multipolarity, "today's friend may turn out to be tomorrow's enemy", coerced Turkey to protect and even to broaden its alignment with Israel. We are leaving the age of alliances. To develop close relations, provided that a country's interests are protected, is a more convenient method than binding oneself to strict stipulations which may create other enemies and counter-alliances. After the Cold War, we can not talk about an alliance either in Middle East or on global terms. Many states pursue their interests, be they on security or economic terms, by forming close relations or improving their already established connections. In this context, Turkish-Israeli relations provided Turkey with an enhanced maneuverability in its relations with Syria, Iran and some other regional states.

Finally, does this alignment really target Iran? How did Turkish-Israeli relations affect Turkish-Iranian relations in the post-Cold War environment? It can not be argued that Turkish-Israeli alignment directly targeted Iran and Turkish-Iranian relations present a continuity beginning from the 16th century despite the existence of small intervals. This trend tends to continue even after the Turkish-Israeli Military Agreement. In the next chapter the questions above will be discussed from a historical perspective.

¹⁶⁷ Comment by Gökhan Çetinsaya in a conference at Ankara University, 18.02.2004

CHAPTER III:
**THE IMPACT OF TURKISH-ISRAELI ALIGNMENT ON TURKISH-
IRANIAN RELATIONS**

To be able to understand the impact of Turkish-Israeli alignment on Turkish-Iranian relations it is necessary to look at the general nature of Turkish-Iranian relations. All in all if the relations between Turkey and Israel are to be called an “alliance” it is supposed to cause a change in Iranian foreign policy patterns towards Turkey.

It was generally thought that the Islamic Revolution in Iran were to constitute a severe rupture in Turkey-Iranian relations and was logically expected that Turkey and Iran would be in conflict owing to different interests, camps and ideological orientations. It is an undeniable fact that the changing regime in Iran and its new policy of exporting the Islamic Revolution to other Muslim countries comprised a strain in bilateral relations. Nevertheless, as Gökhan Çetinsaya argues, in shaping the Turkish-Iranian relations the basic determinant instruments have traditionally been geography, history, religious differences, strategic and geopolitical values, and conditions stemming therefrom.¹⁶⁸

In this context Turkish-Iranian relations show continuity despite changing regimes and administrations right from the beginning of the Safavid dynasty in the 16th century since historical ties were established between the two countries.

3.1. A Brief Evaluation of Relations Prior to the Revolution

Until the 20th century, the rivalry between Sunni Ottoman and Shi’i Persia characterized of Turkey-Iranian relations. Leadership of the Islamic world was the

¹⁶⁸ Gökhan Çetinsaya. “Essential Friends and Natural Enemies: The Historic Roots of Turkish-Iranian Relations.” *MERIA* Vol.7 , No.3 (September 2003)

significant motivation of both empires. While avoiding waging a direct war against the Ottomans, especially when it was at its peak, Iran was successful in mobilizing small dissident groups inside Ottoman lands. Though more powerful than Iran militarily, the Ottoman Empire had to take into consideration the policy to conduct against Iran while fighting Western powers and Russia on other fronts. The nature of traditional relations had not changed after the Great War with the establishment of a new republic in Turkey in 1923 and the Pahlavi dynasty in Iran in 1924.¹⁶⁹

Until the Islamic Revolution in 1979, despite the legacy of conflict Turkey-Iranian relations pursued an unproblematic path. As Atilla Eralp argues, shared threat perceptions, namely the “red threat” and the same inclinations to be a modern Western type of state were the main instigators of good relations.¹⁷⁰ Another comment from John Calabrese indicates that at the core of Turkish and Iranian threat perceptions existed the containment of unfriendly neighbors¹⁷¹, implying Soviet threat.

After the consolidation period, old grievances prevailed between the two regimes. Turkey was anxious about a probable Iranian manipulation of Kurdish nationalism as was the case in the previous century and Iran was concerned that its Azeri population’s upsurge was the result of Turkish exploitation. The Kurdish card would be played in several ways and times by Iranian regimes regardless of their ideology and became an unchanging dimension of bilateral strain after the Islamic Revolution as before.

¹⁶⁹ Ünal Gündoğan. “Islamist Iran and Turkey, 1979-1989: State Pragmatism and Ideological Influences” *MERIA* Vol.7, No.1 (March 2003), p.1.

¹⁷⁰ Atilla Eralp. “Facing the Challenge: Post-Revolutionary Relations with Iran” in *Reluctant Neighbor: Turkey’s Role in the Middle East*, eds. Henri J. Barkey (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996), p.95

¹⁷¹ John Calabrese. “Turkey and Iran: Limits of a Stable Relationship” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* Vol.25, No.1 (1998), p.76

Yet, World War II and the occupation of Iran by Allied forces once more interrupted relations between two countries. After the war, the two countries' commitment to modernization and secularism had created an ideological affinity.¹⁷² In accordance with this affinity and Cold War polarization, Turkey and Iran had been the only Muslim countries to recognize the state of Israel immediately after its establishment in 1948 and instituted official relations and Israel developed its relations with Iran in the context of Ben-Gurion's policy of peripheral pact with non-Arab regional countries.

During the Cold War, both countries felt threatened by the Communist Soviets and turned their face to the West to seek shelter. Turkey joined NATO and CENTO, Iran CENTO. The Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD), which came short of expectations, was established with a hope to boost economic and technical cooperation. The oil crisis of 1973-1974 was, in fact, a source of a serious divergence between Turkey and Iran. This development led to an armament policy by the Shah to enhance Iran's political weight in the region at the expense of deteriorating relations with Turkey.

The increase of Islamic opposition and dissatisfaction among people came to the surface obviously in the late 1970s in Iran as a political struggle between leftist and rightist groups constituted major domestic problems in Turkey, both of which resulted in drastic political changes; an Islamic Revolution in Iran and a military coup in Turkey, in 1979 and 1980 respectively.

¹⁷² Henry J. Barkey, "Iran and Turkey, Confrontation across an Ideological Divide", in *Regional Power Rivalries in the new Eurasia: Russia, Turkey and Iran*; eds. Alvin Z. Rubinstein and Oles M. Smolansky (New York: M.E.Sharpe, 1995), p. 152

3.2. The Islamic Revolution and Turkey's Attitude

The revolutionary process in Iran gained momentum in the middle of the 1970s. While the sociological aspects of the revolution are beyond the scope of this study, internal dynamics of Iran during the Shah Regime have to be mentioned briefly to be able to grasp the underpinnings of and necessities for such a widespread and deep-rooted Revolution.

At first, the hardliners in Iran had the support of Bazaaris (the merchants and small scale traders) who are the backbone of Iranian economy. They always had a say in internal and foreign affairs in Iranian political life, which was legitimized by a huge support of the majority of Iranians. Secondly, economic and sociological pressure on Iranian citizens which were basically high unemployment and strict Persian cultural hegemony over other ethnic entities, dissatisfaction caused by the Shah's arbitrary treatment and economic privileges for his protégées, juridical immunities for foreigners (for American oil company personnel)¹⁷³ paved the way for the Revolution. Fourth, the Iranian Army, while one of the most powerful in the Gulf after the increase in oil prices, was highly criticized for not winning a single war and protecting not Iran but the Shah himself and his régime. Consequently clerics convinced the people that under the *ulama's* leadership economic development and political reform were more likely to be realized. Immediately after the revolution hardliners dominated political life and exterminated or ousted the leftist groups, such as the Tudeh party, Mujaheddin-e-Khalq¹⁷⁴ and Fedayan-e-Khalq and the Shah supporters in the process of Islamization of the revolution..

¹⁷³ Mehmet Atay. "İran İslam Devriminde Tarihsel Süreç,Özgün Şartlar, iç ve Dış Dinamikler." *Avrasya Dosyası*, Vol.5, No.3 (1996), p.127

¹⁷⁴ To oust the Leftist-Islamic group seven thousand members were killed by the Regime. For more information see Cengiz Sürücü. "Otokrasi, Modernite, Devrim: İran'ın en uzun Yılı" *Avrasya Dosyası*, Vol.5, No.3 (Sonbahar 1999), pp.35-64. For more information see Barry Rubin. *Paved With Good Intentions* (New York, Oxford Univ. Press, 1980), pp.300-332.

The very fact of the Revolution argued in this study is that it formed a severe political crisis and a turning point in foreign policy tendencies based on different threat and opportunity perceptions between the two countries. While a supporter of the status quo in the region before the Revolution, Iran turned out to be a radical/revolutionist state. It adopted a policy of absolute neutrality against the Soviets and the US and Islamization of foreign policy within the context of “neither West, nor East”. It envisaged a new regional order through exporting the regime. But in time, as Çetinsaya argues it abandoned theoretical rhetoric due to its unchanging regional interests, orienting its foreign policies in accordance with regional and international developments.¹⁷⁵

On February 13, 1979 Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit’s government immediately recognized it as the legitimate administration while there were some fears on the Turkish side over the ‘the export of the regime’ efforts of Iran. Turkey’s first concern as a neighbor was about a possible Soviet intervention or Communist takeover in Iran which would be harmful for Turkey’s security interests.

Another important point for Ankara is the territorial integrity of Iran regarding the Kurdish question. Right after the revolution there were many Kurdish uprisings in Iran. Iranian Kurds had experienced a Soviet backed state, the short-lived Mahabad Republic, in 1946 and were looking forward to establishing another one. Turkey perceived these developments as a threat thinking that they could spark similar activities by Kurds in Turkey.¹⁷⁶

Taking into consideration the activities of hard-liners in Iran, Turkey tried to hinder a probable polarization which would damage its regional interests and

¹⁷⁵ Gökhan Çetinsaya. “Rafsanjani’den Hatemi’ye İran Dış Politikasına Bakışlar” in Mustafa Türkeş and İlhan Uzgel eds. *Türkiye’nin Komşuları* (Turkey’s Neighbors) (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 2002), p.239

¹⁷⁶ Nur Bilge Criss. “Ardous Diplomacy: Turkish Iranian Relations (1979-1996)” (Unpublished Article in Department of International Relations, Bilkent University), p.4

galvanize the radical-Islamic groups in Turkey to the detriment of the uncompleted Westernization process.¹⁷⁷ Though Turkey pursued correct and impartial policies, the Islamic revolutionaries perceived Turkey as an ally of the West and criticized it for acting in the interests of the U.S.¹⁷⁸

All in all, the hostile nature of the Islamic republic's foreign policy toward secular and Kemalist Turkey was much related to the identity (anti-secular) of the regime. Within the same context, the Islamic revolutionaries declared Israel as an 'enemy to be destroyed' determining *Jerusalem* as the final target of Iran-Iraq war and stood against Arab monarchs, whom it thought to be in collaboration with the U.S. But the same Islamic Regime did not hesitate to buy weapons and military equipment from the "Little Satan" Israel covertly during its war with Iraq¹⁷⁹, an open proof for the pragmatic policies of Tehran and not Islamic ones.

3.3. An Overall Assessment of 1980-1989: An Age of Neutrality

The Iran-Iraq war changed not perceptions but the way of foreign policy making once again between the two countries. Iraqi armed forces attacked Iran occupying a significant portion of the country on September 22, 1980. The military administration of Turkey immediately declared neutrality towards the eight-year-long war. With "active neutrality" policy Turkey refrained from policies that Iran could consider hostile despite Western states' pressure on Turkey. Turkish policy

¹⁷⁷ Atilla Eralp and Özlem Tür. "İranla Devrim Sonrası İlişkiler" in *Türkiye ve Ortadoğu: Tarih, Kimlik, Güvenlik*. eds. Meliha Benli Altunışık (İstanbul:Boyut Kitapları, 1999), p.71

¹⁷⁸ Tschangviz Pahlavan. "Turkish Iranian Relations: An Iranian View" in *Reluctant Neighbor: Turkey's Role in the Middle East*, eds. Henri J. Barkey (Washington DC: Unit States Institute of Peace Press, 1996), p.76

¹⁷⁹ Sohrab Sobhani. *The Pragmatic Entente:Israeli-Iranian Relations,1948-1988*. (New York:Praeger Publishers, 1989), p.141

makers thought that constructive engagement was the best means of moderating the challenges posed by the Iranian revolution¹⁸⁰ and the war.

Turkey's neutrality and its trade with Iran during the war impeded an unavoidable Iranian defeat against Iraqi forces, breaking down the isolation of Iran by the U.S. embargo. Therefore Iran chose realistic policies and refrained from stressing ideological ambitions against Turkey, at least officially, giving boost to economic relations in this era

Turkish Foreign Minister Vahit Halefoğlu stated, "Iran should not be isolated. Turkish-Iranian relations should be understood within the context of its special condition."¹⁸¹ The background of this statement lied in the fact that Turkey badly needed economic relations and trade with Iran and Iraq was an urgent necessity at that time.

Though adopting the neutrality policy and benefiting from increasing economic relations, Turkey had some anxieties over chronic security issues. First of all, the use of Kurds by two warring parties bilaterally during the war constituted a great concern to Turkey that belligerent policies of both sides might give rise to Kurdish demands of independence in Turkey. Secondly, while causing decrease to some degree this war did not bring to a standstill the policy of exporting the Islamic revolution by Iran.

However, Ankara and Tehran were committed to limiting damage to the bilateral relationship and exploiting the situation for the sake of economic gain and

¹⁸⁰ Atilla Eralp. "Facing the Challenge: Post-Revolutionary Relations with Iran" in *Reluctant Neighbor: Turkey's Role in the Middle East*, eds. Henri J. Barkey (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996), p.99

¹⁸¹ Gündoğan, op.cit, p.3

security which are the tenets of realistic and pragmatic policies two countries pursued toward each other.¹⁸²

3.3.1. Economic Relations

The Commercial Agreement of October 13, 1956, and the Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement (ECTA) of March 9, 1982 characterized the framework of economic relations between the two countries.¹⁸³ The Iranian revolution did not alter the nature of economic relations. Even after the revolution, Turkish decision makers never thought of interrupting relations since hostile engagement with Iran was not in the interest of Turkey.

In 1981 and 1982 barter agreements were signed according to which Turkey would buy oil from Iran with its own exports.¹⁸⁴ The revival of dormant Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD) under the name of Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) on 28 January 1985 was in favor of both countries' interests. As a result of decreasing oil prices at world markets and fall in Iranian oil income there was a sharp decrease in trade in 1986. Another reason was the demand by Iran to sell non-oil goods contrary to agreements. The end of the war, increasing instability in the Middle East and a shift toward European markets by Turkish entrepreneurs, coupled Iran's desire to lessen its dependency on Turkey were among many other major reasons which resulted in a decrease in Turkish-Iranian economic relations.

3.3.2. The Kurdish Issue and Efforts to Export the 'Regime'

Both countries have a significant Kurdish population in their boundaries and experienced many Kurdish rebellion. Given the 'restricted' nature of Turkish-Iranian relations both countries in the same geography tried to curb the other's influence

¹⁸² Calabrese, *op.cit*, p.78

¹⁸³Nur Bilge Criss. "Ardous Diplomacy: Turkish Iranian Relations (1979-1996)" (Unpublished Article in Department of International Relations, Bilkent University), p.15

¹⁸⁴ Gündoğan, *op.cit*, p.4

regionally and bilaterally. Putting the Kurdish issue in the same context Reza Shah tried to force Turkey to settle some controversial issues with Iran by using the ‘Kurdish card’ which turned out to be futile after the Ararat rebellion and the 1932 Turco-Iranian Frontier Treaty. During the Iran-Iraq war, Iran actively assisted Iraqi Kurds to help them engage some Iraqi forces, up to 160,000, and rebel against the Baghdad regime. During those years increasing Iranian existence in Northern Iraq caused some anxieties in Turkey since Iranian manipulations might intensify Kurdish nationalism and destabilize Turkey.¹⁸⁵

In 1983 increasing Kurdish separatist activities in the Southeastern region compelled Turkey to sign a ‘hot pursuit’ agreement with Baghdad thereby making the Iraqi territory more difficult to be used by the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). While rejecting a Turkish proposal for the same kind of accord, Tehran concluded an agreement in November 1984 committing each side to prevent activities on its territory which threatened the security of the other, to allay Turkey’s concerns. Turkey has been aware of Iran’s involvement in terrorism, mainly PKK for Turkey, but has been reluctant to make this the basis of an outright breach between the neighboring states.¹⁸⁶

Following the 1984 agreement with Iraq, the main Iranian concern was the increasing influence of Turkey in Northern Iraq and accused Turkey of the desire to seize the oil-rich Mosul and Kirkuk regions and of losing its neutrality, especially after consecutive Turkish air force attacks against PKK positions in Northern Iraq.

Another issue between the two countries is the way of tackling their respective Kurdish populations. Olson argues that assassinating Kurdish leaders or

¹⁸⁵ Gündoğan, op.cit, p.5

¹⁸⁶ Shahrām Chubin. *Iran’s National Security Policy*. (Washington: The Carnegie Endowment For International Peace, 1994), p.9

potential leaders was a means that Iranian governments pursued up to the 1990s.¹⁸⁷ As an intersecting point both countries are against an independent Kurdish state on their neighboring territory, conscious of probable threats which will be posed by such an entity.

Exporting the Islamic regime to other countries and carrying it out in the direction of supranational interests of an Islamic country is considered an inevitable mission.¹⁸⁸ This can be seen in article 3 of the Iranian constitution which stipulates a foreign policy based on Islamic criteria and unsparing protection for the underprivileged and deprived people of the world. Mostly, different ideological orientations were articulated in both countries' press rather than by governments or politicians. But in some occasions such as Iranian Prime Minister Mir Hussain Musavi's refusal to visit Atatürk's mausoleum-a protocol "must" during his summer 1987 visit, Iranian Embassy's not lowering its flag to half-mast to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Atatürk's death, Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* affair, and foiling of a plot of smuggling of a prominent Iranian regime dissident from Turkey in which Iranian embassy members were caught red-handed increased the tension between the two countries.

Besides the secular state and Atatürk's reforms, Turkey's recognition¹⁸⁹ and relations with the state of Israel posed another dimension of Iran's criticism, through the radio broadcasts. These acts can be construed as political rather than theological, as an issue of identity and an instrument of legitimacy for domestic consumption.

¹⁸⁷ Robert Olson, *The Kurdish Question and Turkish-Iranian Relations From WW I to 1998*. (California: Mazda Publishers, 1998), p.23

¹⁸⁸ İhsan Gürkan. "Turkish-Iranian Relations: Dynamics in Continuity and Change," *Turkish Review of Middle East Studies*. Vol.7 (1993), p.74 He recommends the book Alan R. Taylor, *Islamic Question in the Middle East Politics* (Westview Press, Boulder Col, 1988)

¹⁸⁹ The Islamic Revolution in Iran does not officially recognize the state of Israel since its establishment in 1979.

Despite all these developments between the two countries, officials chose to mitigate tension. During the 1980s all problems were managed for the sake of economic benefits, as it was the case for fear of possible Soviet invasion of Iran within the first years of the revolution. Both countries saw that there are no alternatives for themselves respectively and absolutely understood that they could choose their allies but not neighbors. So they found ways to manage their differences in spite of their different ideologies and dissimilar ways of conducting foreign policy as they did throughout centuries.

But some regional and international developments in the late 1980s and beginning of the 1990s changed the perceptions of Iran and Turkey in some respect though not affecting the competitive nature of bilateral relations. Following is an analysis of the repercussions of these developments on relations between the two countries.

3.3. Changing International and Regional Dynamics

In July 1988, Iran sued for peace in its brutal eight-year long war with Iraq from which Iran suffered much and directed its policies accordingly especially in economic and military spheres. Decreasing regional economic relations of Iran with Turkey due to its diminishing oil revenues got worse with giving economic priorities to Europe, especially Germany.¹⁹⁰ Here lies another fact that Iran wanted to lessen its dependence on Turkey even for daily goods.

The spiritual leader Khomeini died on 3 June, 1989. He was succeeded by Ayatollah Khamanei. With the election of Ali Akbar Rafsanjani as president in 1989, a new and realistic policy inclination took pace. Iran decided to break its isolation which lasted since the declaration of the Islamic Regime as a priority in its

¹⁹⁰Atilla Eralp and Özlem Tür.. “İranla Devrim Sonrası İlişkiler” in *Türkiye ve Ortadoğu: Tarih, Kimlik, Güvenlik*. eds.Meliha Benli Altunışık ,(İstanbul: Boyut Kitapları, 1999), p.78

foreign policy. Constructive diplomacy, economic and military reformation were the main instruments of these pragmatic policies. Economic needs gained priority over the ideology of Islamic regime because of a long war and deprivation in the country.

The end of the Cold War and new opportunities facing Iran with the dissolution of Soviet Union caused some strain in its relations with Turkey. Many disputes that were downplayed by the two countries during the Cold War era due to economic, security and political necessities prevailed.¹⁹¹ Another dimension of this tension was the perceptions of the Turkish elite about the diminishing of Turkey's geopolitical importance for the West after the Cold War and their desire to adopt an active foreign policy in the region, especially in Iraq.

The invasion of Kuwait by Iraqi forces in August 1990 and intervention by the coalition forces disturbed all regional and international balances. Anti-western Iran stood by the US-led alliance (including Egypt, Saudi Arabia....) during the crisis and war against Iraq which was perceived as a sign of normalization of its relations with Turkey and the West. At the same time sequence a major improvement was realized in Soviet-Iranian relations. President Ali Akbar Rafsanjani visited Moscow in 1989 and signed an agreement, which defined the framework for cooperation between the two states that helped the improvement of relations dramatically.¹⁹²

But post-Gulf war developments proved that Iran did not divert from its ambitions and pragmatic policies such as giving support to Christian Armenia against the Shia Azeri population. Accordingly Tehran's siding with the West was a conditional necessity. American military existence in Turkey, operations in Northern Iraq by Turkish Armed Forces (TAF), struggle for influence in Central Asia and the

¹⁹¹ Ibid, p.293

¹⁹² İhsan Gürkan. "Turkish-Iranian Relations: Dynamics in Continuity and Change," *Turkish Review of Middle East Studies*. Vol.7 (1993), p.80

Caucasus, Iranian support for PKK and Islamist militants in Turkey and the Kurdish problem continued to be the main topics of strain between the two countries.

In this premature and uncertain international and regional environment the threat perceptions of the two countries determined the path they would pursue in policy-making.

3.3.1. Threat Perceptions of Iran

Since its declaration, the Revolutionary regime pronounced all Western and so-called Western oriented countries as enemies due to political and sui-generis identity reasons. After the Iraqi war and Cold war this inclination did not change because of definitional characteristics of the regime. (Figure 1 for the security structure of Iran)

The demise of the Soviet Union was a paradox for Iran. While it eliminated the real threat to Iranian independence, political instability in the newly independent republics along its northern border created severe concern in Iran which created a Russian effect in Iranian politics.

There are approximately 22 million Azerbaijanis in Iran and Tehran feared that the former Soviet Azerbaijan could become a magnet for Iran's Azerbaijanis. Olson argues that Iran's great concern with regard to its Kurdish question is Ankara's dissatisfaction with its efforts to cooperate in controlling the PKK will impel Turkey to encourage Turkish nationalism among its Azerbaijani population.¹⁹³ However, Turkey, in spite of the existence of a very large Turkish minority in Iran, never attempted to gain influence over and/or instigate this community thanks to its concerns about upsetting Tehran, which is a sign of consistency and cordiality.

¹⁹³Robert Olson. *The Kurdish Question and Turkish-Iranian Relations From WW I to 1998*. (California: Mazda Publishers, 1998), p.xx

Iran evaluates the allocation of U.S. military forces in the Gulf countries¹⁹⁴ as a threat, and Tehran would, therefore, like to see an end to the U.S. presence in the region. NATO bases in Turkey were evaluated in the same context by Iranian officials and constituted another rhetorical instrument for Iran in bilateral relations. The US intervention in Iraq in 2003, capture of Saddam Hussein and lack of a central administration caused chaos and instability in Iraq. Tehran is concerned about the establishment of an independent Kurdish state in Northern Iraq and its repercussions in Iranian territory since it has a great number of Kurdish population within its borders.

Increasing unemployment, uncompensated agonies of the Iraqi war, deteriorating living standards and diminishing GDP per capita (much less than the Shah era) figured a lack of confidence among Iranian citizens. The Iranian regime was unsuccessful in bestowing wealth to its people with ideological rhetoric alone. Confidence towards the regime has been questioned.

3.3.2. Threat Perceptions of Turkey

The new international structure of the post-Cold War era, and the increasing PKK activities stemming from the power vacuum in northern Iraq, caused an adjustment in Turkey's threat perceptions. In view of that, the 1992 National Security Policy Document changed Turkey's previous defense concept, which was prepared against the Soviet Union and Greece, and labeled the primary threat as separatist PKK terrorism with sources in the southern neighbors of Turkey, namely Syria, Iraq and Iran.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁴ The U.S. has also bases in many Arab countries while the citizens of those countries are not happy with American policy-making. Comment by Prof. Howard Reed in a seminar on " Turkish-American Relations" in Foreign Policy Institute at Bilkent University.18.11.2003

¹⁹⁵Burak Ülman. "Türkiye'nin Yeni Güvenlik Algılamaları ve Bölücülük" in Gencer Özcan and Şule Kut eds, *En Uzun On Yıl (The Longest Decade)* (İstanbul: Boyut Matbaacılık, 1998), p.108

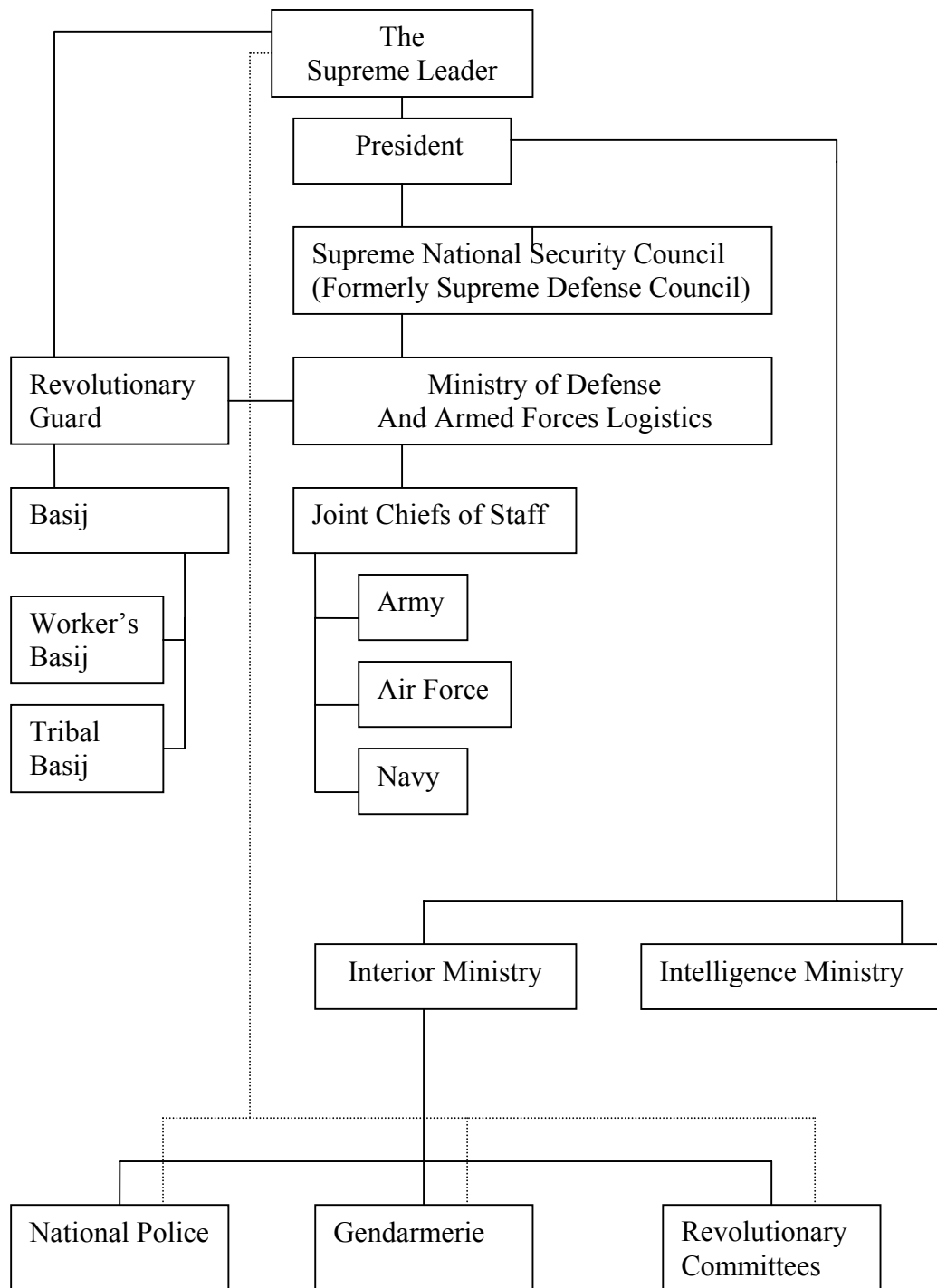


Figure 3.1. Iran's Security Organization¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁶Shahram Chubin. *Iran's National Security Policy: Intentions, Capabilities & Impact*. (Washington DC: The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1994), p.94

Developments after the 1990 Gulf campaign could lead to the fragmentation of Iraq and establishment of a Kurdish state in the region which is nightmare scenario for Turkey.¹⁹⁷ The territorial integrity of Iraq has always been the key issue when referring to Turkey's foreign policy toward that country. While Iran acted in conformity with Turkish policy-makers on the issue of Iraq's territorial integrity, it supported separatist Kurdish fractions against the Saddam regime and there is no obstacle in pursuing the same policy against Turkey for Iran.

Turkey did not perceive the Islamic regime as a major threat against itself in the religious realm. Ankara's concern about Tehran is the continuation of Islamic propaganda against Turkey and its support for Islamist militants and PKK in Turkey. With the election of Rafsanjani, Iran seemed to conduct a more moderate policy toward its neighbors. Improving relations with Saudi Arabia and the policy of lowering the volume of revolutionary rhetoric did not dissuade concerns about Iran and its unchanging ambitions to expand the revolution.

3.4. Redefining the Relationship

In the post-Cold War period it is detectable that the main drive of the two countries in their respective policies is to curb the other's sphere of influence. During this period Iran tried hard to break the "dual containment" policy and embargo of America by improving its relations with Europe (in the form of *critical dialogue*)¹⁹⁸ and to export the regime to Central Asia and Caucasus.

¹⁹⁷ Ramazan Gözen."Kuzey Irak Sorunu" in İdris Bal eds, *21. Yüzyılın Eşiğinde Türk Dış Politikası* (Turkish Foreign Policy at the Beginning of the 21th Century) cited in İsmail Selvi. *Countering State-Supported Terrorism: The PKK and Turkish Foreign Policy Towards the Middle East*. Bilkent University (Unpublished MA Thesis, July 2003), p.118

¹⁹⁸The policy of critical dialogue which is adopted by EU towards Iran emphasizes the preservation of political and economic relations with pressure on Tehran for the restriction on nuclear efforts and more freedom in Iran and trying to dissipate the government's harsh control over the society and press.

As for Turkey, being exposed to terrorism by PKK and instability in northern Iraq taught Ankara that the NATO shield in Middle East is not reliable in the post-Cold War environment. Naturally, security concerns made Turkey come close to Israel who shares the same type of administration, democratic values and threat perceptions in the region in larger perspective.

Within this wider structure from the death of Khomeini in June 1989 to the beginning of Gulf war in August 1990 was a transition period in relations between Iran and Turkey. During this time, just as the previous decade, both countries tried to lower tensions for the sake of stability and economic growth. Especially Iran tried to dilute its radical speeches under Rafsanjani.

3.4.1. The Iranian Support for PKK

Iran's support for PKK (Partiye Karkaren Kürdistan) separatists constituted the major issue of strain between Iran and Turkey in the 1990s. In essence, the basic ideology of the Iranian regime does not limit the administration in using unlawful methods against Turkey while the quality of state and regime besides elite groups in Turkey does allow these kinds of covert policies against Iran.

Iran allowed PKK to open a bureau in Urumiya.¹⁹⁹ PKK also connected with the Kurdish groups in northern Iraq with Iranian help, especially Barzani's KDP (Kurdistan Democratic Party) to facilitate actions from their camps in the preliminary phases. It is widely known that the PKK had facilities in Iran²⁰⁰ as they did in Syria and Iraq²⁰¹ at that time, many of which still exist.

¹⁹⁹Ümit Özdağ. *Türkiye Kuzey Irak ve PKK* (Turkey Northern Iraq and PKK).(Ankara: Asam Yayınları, 2000), p.45

²⁰⁰A Turkish journalist, Uğur Mumcu, published the location and the names of PKK camps in Iran: Ziveh, Kazhan, Selvanat, Dizah, Kaysan, Seklebat, Khalaj, Esmehav, Seykhan and Sino in Nilüfer Narlı. "Cooperation and Competition in the Islamic World" Spelling at <http://www.cerisciencespo.com/publica/cemoti/textes15/narli.pdf>. Accessed on 13.9.2003

²⁰¹Ihsan Gürkan. "Turkish-Iranian Relations: Dynamics in Continuity and Change," *Turkish Review of Middle East Studies*. Vol.7 (1993), p.88

Although the Turkish side delivered evidence of the incidents and camps to Iranian officials many times, Iran did not change its position and continued to reiterate that Iran had nothing to do with the terrorist attacks that occurred in Turkey. Iranian officials criticized the Turkish government, particularly the Prime Minister Demirel for his statements that Iran supported “Kurdish terrorists” operating in Turkey.²⁰² In 1996, a report by the Border Security Commission of the Turkish National Assembly stated that Iran gave a ‘green card’ to PKK members to utilize medical care and to transport in Iran freely.²⁰³

Regarding northern Iraq, Iran always had anxieties about Turkey’s cross-border operations and perceived these operations as a sign of the hidden agenda of Turkey about Mosul and Kirkuk. Thus, Iran supported PKK to prevent Turkey’s possible initiatives in the region.²⁰⁴ Within the same context, following the independence of Azerbaijan, PKK activities escalated as of 1992 in Kars and Ağrı near the Azerbaijan and Iranian border. Despite the protocol signed with Turkey on September 30, 1993 in which they assured to prevent activities against the other in their respective territories, Iran maintained its covert support for PKK as a simple but powerful instrument. Even in some reports of Turkish National Intelligence Agency (NIA) and TAF iterated that some Iranian officers participated in the planning of terrorist activities of PKK which escalated the tension.²⁰⁵

The main purpose of Iran was to destabilize Turkey’s southern regions in order to hinder any energy project that excludes itself. Iran does not limit itself to

²⁰²Nilüfer Narlı. “Cooperation and Competition in the Islamic World” Available at <http://www.cerisciencespo.com/publica/cemoti/textes15/narli.pdf>. Accessed on 13.9.2003, p. 66

²⁰³Atilla Eralp and Özlem Tür. “İranla la Devrim Sonrası İlişkiler” in *Türkiye ve Ortadoğu: Tarih, Kimlik, Güvenlik*. eds.Meliha Benli Altunışık ,(İstanbul:Boyut Kitapları, 1999), p.92

²⁰⁴Ali Nihat Özcan,. *PKK (Kürdistan İşçi Partisi): Tarihi, İdeolojisi, Yöntemi* (PKK-Kurdistan Worker’s Party:History, Ideology, Method (Ankara: Asam Yayınları, 1999), p.232

²⁰⁵Atilla Eralp and Özlem Tür. “İranla Devrim Sonrası İlişkiler” in *Türkiye ve Ortadoğu: Tarih, Kimlik, Güvenlik*. eds.Meliha Benli Altunışık ,(İstanbul:Boyut Kitapları, 1999), p.94

PKK in covert actions and supports other anti-Turkish and Islamic terrorist organizations while pursuing the policy of playing deaf and dumb.²⁰⁶

3.4.2. Ideological Discrepancies

Right from its declaration, Iranian Revolutionary regime perceived the secular and democratic Turkish regime as a threat because it was a NATO ally, a friend of ‘Great Satan’ U.S. and had good relations with the state of Israel. Iranian attitude did not change during the 1980s. The new regime’s “ideology of Islamic revolutionary universalism is anathema to Turkey’s secular nationalism”.²⁰⁷ According to Revolutionary Iran, exportation of the regime²⁰⁸ to neighboring countries was a means of consolidation of its national security in the region. Even the pragmatic Rafsanjani and his successor Khatami has little to do with the issue since the hardliners dominated the decision-making processes on foreign affairs and national security.

Though a revolution of Iranian kind in Turkey is always out of question due to sectarian differences and people’s confidence in the democratic values, Iran tried to influence the Turkish community through radio programs which can be received in Eastern Turkey.²⁰⁹ A major example of Iran’s support for Islamist movements is asking for lifting ban on “Turban”²¹⁰ after the Constitutional court’s decision of the

²⁰⁶ For more information on Turkey’s war against terrorism see Nur Bilge Criss, “Developments in Managing Terrorism in Turkey” *Perceptions*, (Dec-Feb 1996/1997), pp.76-87

²⁰⁷ Shreen T Hunter. “Post Khomeini Iran” , *Foreign Affairs* , Vol.68, No. 5, (Winter 1989/90) in Emir Salim Yüksel . *Turkish-Iranian Relations in the Post-Cold War Era:1991-1996*. (Unpublished MA Thesis in Middle East Technical University, June 1998), p.67

²⁰⁸ There were two approaches to the concept of exportation. The first was *Nazariye-i atesfeşan* (meaning permanent revolution), and the second *ummu’l qurra* (revolution in one country, hence forming a role model for others to imitate) Criss, op.cit, p.7

²⁰⁹ Nilüfer Narlı. “Cooperation and Competition in the Islamic World” Available at <http://www.cerisciencespo.com/publica/cemoti/textes15/narli.pdf>. Accessed on 13.9.2003, p. 67

²¹⁰ Türban is a religious wear which is depicted as a symbol of Islam among fundamentalist circles in Turkey.

ban in Turkey.²¹¹ The Turban crisis in 1989 reached in a peak that Ankara recalled its Ambassador in Tehran for consultation and Iran immediately retaliated in kind.

Another problem was the question of Iranian refugees in Turkey. Immediately after the revolution about two million regime dissidents came to Turkey many of whom used Turkey as a transit route to Europe and settled there. All in all Turkey did not accept any refugees in large numbers from its Eastern borders since the declaration of the Turkish Republic.²¹² It is estimated that approximately 600.000 Iranian live in Turkey at present and the operations against leaders of dissidents in Turkey by Iranian secret service was a source of tension between the two countries. The killing of four Kurdish dissident leaders in Berlin at a restaurant named “Mikonos”²¹³ is proof regarding the unchanging Iranian policy of going after dissidents.

During this phase the murder of some prominent Turkish journalists, for instance Uğur Mumcu, in a car bomb at Ankara on January 24, 1993, was one of the most important incidents. İsmet Sezgin then interior minister of Turkey linked the murder of Mumcu to the organizations located in Iran and then President Süleyman Demirel talked about “certain powers” behind the killings and efforts to create divisions in Turkey.²¹⁴ At the same time there were reports on Iranian support for the Hizbullah terrorist organization which was involved in many murders in southeastern Turkey. Consequently the Iranian Prime Minister Hasan Habibi canceled his visit to Turkey in February 1993.²¹⁵ Iran’s support for Islamist terror

²¹¹ Narlı., op.cit, p.67

²¹² Comment by Nur Bilge Criss during an interview in her office on September 2003.

²¹³ Gökhan Çetinsaya . “Rafsanjani’den Hatemi’ye İran Dış Politikasına Bakışlar” in. Türkiye’nin Komşuları (Turkey’s Neighbors) eds. Mustafa Türkeş and İlhan Uzgel (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 2002), p.315

²¹⁴Atilla Eralp. “Facing the Challenge: Post-Revolutionary Relations with Iran” in *Reluctant Neighbor: Turkey’s Role in the Middle East*, eds. Henri J. Barkey, (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press , 1996), p 106

²¹⁵ Ibid, p.107

was also condemned after Turkish Hizbullah members were apprehended by Turkish security forces in February 2000, and confessed to ties with Iran.

Though these incidents never resulted in a diplomatic break between the two countries, their opposing ideologies clearly made Iran and Turkey uneasy neighbors.²¹⁶

3.5. Khatami and His New Foreign Policy Orientation

President Mohammad Khatami took office in August 1997, and then Iran's foreign relations have undergone some kind of transformation, even though he does not have policymaking fully under his control.²¹⁷ In Iran the formal structure of power distribution suggests that the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, has ultimate authority.²¹⁸ The most important political problem of Iran is the struggle for power over the country's economy, culture and public between the hard-liners and reformists. Hard-liners have control over policies of WMD, Peace Process and support for terrorism. Khatami has been blocked by mullahs and had been unsuccessful in fulfilling his aim of a relatively freer Iran.²¹⁹

Khatami stated that, "Our revolution is a revolution of words"²²⁰ implying the Islamic Revolution. By stating that, he well understood the shortcomings of the Islamic regime in economic and cultural domains and the urgency of dialogue between regional states to stabilize the cosmopolitan region. As a general policy of

²¹⁶ Narlı, op.cit, p.54

²¹⁷ Jalil Roshandel, "Iran's Foreign and Security Policies", *Security Dialogue* Vol. 31, No.1 (March 2000), p. 105

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Barry Rubin, "Iran'ın İç Politikası Üzerine Notlar" (Notes on Domestic Policies of Iran) *Avrasya Dosyası*, Vol.5, No. 3 (Fall 1999), p. 84

²²⁰Renewing Relations? March 6, 1998. Available at http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/middle_east/jan-june98/iran_3-6.html

openness, President Khatami is calling for more individual freedoms, an independent media and judiciary, and hopes to restore normal relations with regional states.²²¹

President Khatami favors a dialogue of civilizations rather than a clash of civilizations and has hoped to improve relations with the U.S, E.U, and with the potential rival Saudi Arabia. In support of these efforts, Khatami visited Saudi Arabia, Syria, Qatar, the Vatican City, Italy and France. For him, detente, dialogue of civilizations, and a host of other clever approaches have aimed to rehabilitate Iran's reputation in the West and soothe its troubled regional ties in general.²²²

This policy direction had also impact on Turkey-Iranian relations under Khatami administration since 1997. According to Gökhan Çetinsaya, relations between Turkey and Iran have never been better than today.²²³ In the same respect, then Under-Secretary of Turkish Foreign Ministry, Faruk Loloğlu, met President Mohammad Khatami on June 24, 2001 in Tehran and said Turkey's cooperation with third countries, namely the U.S. and Israel, is not regarded as a threat to Iran. He added that Turkey's bilateral cooperation with these countries merely aimed to establish peace and security in the region²²⁴ to dissuade exaggerated Iranian concerns. Again, referring to the ups and downs in the bilateral relations, then Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, İsmail Cem, said Iranian and Turkish officials have always made efforts to find ways to lift obstacles against the expansion of bilateral relations²²⁵ during his Tehran visit in 2000.

President Khatami also diverted from the rhetoric of some critical policies such as exporting the regime to neighbouring countries. But that does not mean a

²²¹ Jalil Roshandel, "Iran's Foreign and Security Policies", *Security Dialogue* Vol. 31, No.1 (March 2000), p.112

²²² *Al-Ahram* weekly on-line. "God or Mammon?" 17 - 23 May 2001, Issue No.534, Available at <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2001/534/re6.htm>. Accessed on 26.03.2004

²²³ Comment by Gökhan Çetinsaya in a conference at Ankara University, 18.02.2004

²²⁴ "Khatami-Turkey Ties." <http://www.president.ir/cronicnews/1380/8004/800404/800404.htm>. Accessed on 22.02.2004

²²⁵ http://fpeng.peopledaily.com.cn/200102/14/eng20010214_62319.html. Accessed on 28.03.2004

total change in Iranian foreign policies since hard-liners dominate and easily affect the decision-making process of Iran.

Even though President Khatami asserted that the Turkish-Israeli alignment “provokes the feelings of Islamic world”,²²⁶ his efforts and ambitions for a more opportunistic Iranian foreign policy, developing relations with Turkey especially on the energy sphere manifest that there are many more critical determinants in pragmatic Turkish-Iranian relations than Turkish-Israeli alignment. Defence Minister Mohammed Furuzande, for example, blasted Turkey for its "cooperation with the Zionist regime, which is threatening the Islamic world." Iran's spiritual leader, Ayatollah `Ali Akbar Khamene'i, drew even more alarming conclusions, finding that these agreements with the Jewish state meant that Turkey "had bid farewell to Islamic traditions."²²⁷ The backlashes against the alignment were generally restricted to the verbal domain as been iterated earlier.

Despite the rhetorical accusations by Iranian officials pertain to Turkish-Israeli alignment and its severe impacts on Turkish-Iranian relations, Iran started to export gas from its southern depots to Turkey via pipelines in 2000 and when Turkish Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül gave a speech on the necessity of democratization of Iran during the 30th session of Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) foreign ministers conference in Tehran in May 2003, Iranian officials declared nothing but to agree with Gül. However, during the same organization, Iranian President Mohammed Khatami continued to comment on “Israeli state terrorism”

²²⁶ Efraim Inbar, “Regional implications of Israeli-Turkish Strategic Partnership” *Middle East Review of International Affairs* Vol.5, No.2 (Summer 2001), p.30

²²⁷ *Keyhan* (Tehran), Apr. 24, 1997, as cited in *FBIS-NES*, Apr. 24, 1997.

against Palestinians.²²⁸ Beginning to analyze the pragmatic relations between Iran and Israel it can be argued from the picture above that Iranian position vis-à-vis Turkish-Israeli alignment was cautious

3.6. Israeli-Iranian Relations in Historical Perspective

Since its establishment the state of Israel pursued close relations with Iran till the Islamic Revolution. After the establishment of the state of Israel, Ben Gurion hoped to develop the “peripheral pact” theory and create a ring of adversaries around the Arab countries. Prior to the Revolution, Iran and Israel had been de facto allies in the Middle East. The main purpose of the Israeli relationship with Iran was the development of a pro-Israel and anti-Arab policy on the part of Iranian officials. Following the cessation of oil supply by Soviets to Israel, Iran became the oil supplier of Israel in 1973.²²⁹

Intelligence sharing, training of Savak (Iran Secret Service) officers by Israel and cooperation in aiding Mullah Mustafa Barzani’s Kurdish rebels fighting the Iraqi Baathist regime can be counted as realms of cooperation. Collaboration between Israel and Iran touched many other fields, including oil, trade, air transport, and various forms of technical assistance. But their most important mutual interest was in the military sphere. Generally speaking Arab-Iranian and Israeli-Arab relations played a determinant role in Israeli-Iranian relations, bringing them closer.

3.6.1. Relations with the Revolutionary Regime

With the breakdown of law and order after the Shah’s departure in 1978, 30 years of Israeli-Iranian friendship was wounded severely. Immediately after the

²²⁸ <http://www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Daily/Day/030529/2003052904.html>. “OIC foreign ministers conference opened yesterday in Tehran”

²²⁹ Sohrab Sobhani, *The Pragmatic Entente: Israeli-Iranian Relations, 1948-1988*. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1989), p. xii

Revolution, Israel was declared as the “Little Satan” by the Revolutionary Regime. Khomeini did not agree to a continuation of relations with Israel and put an end to this legacy. With the establishment of an Islamic republic in Iran, the Israeli Embassy in Tehran was given to the Palestinians.²³⁰

Witnessing Iran’s predicament in its war with Iraq, Israel benefited from the situation by selling large sums of U.S. originated weapons to Tehran. A tacit agreement was made with the Islamic Republic: in exchange for military equipment, Iranian Jews would be allowed to leave Iran.²³¹ Many Jews are extracted from Iran via Pakistan and later Austria.

The critical point is that how a state can declare the other as “threat for its existence” while obtaining military aid from the latter? The traces of Iranian pragmatic policies can be detected in this trade with Israel no matter what type of administration rules the country. This situation manifests some resemblances to Iran’s relations with Turkey in that despite declaring Turkey as an ally of West and its voice in the region, Tehran continued to trade with Turkey for its daily needs especially during its war with Iraq. As for the arms sales issue, Israel lost no time supplying the new Khomeini regime with small quantities of arms, even after the seizure of the U.S. embassy. Arms market experts have put the total value at more than \$500 million a year, including aircraft parts, artillery and ammunition.²³²

According to Jonathan Marshall, though Israel, along with the United States, suffered a grievous loss with the fall of the Shah, its leaders concluded that lasting geo-political interests would eventually triumph over religious ideology and produce an accommodation between Tel Aviv and Tehran. The onset of the Iran-Iraq

²³⁰ Ibid, p.136

²³¹ Ibid,p.145

²³² http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Ronald_Reagan/Iranganate_Israel_TICC.html. Accessed on 21.03.2004

war in 1980 gave Israeli leaders a special incentive to keep their door open to the Islamic rulers in Iran: the two non-Arab countries now shared a common Arab enemy. As then Israeli Defense Minister, Ariel Sharon told the Washington Post in May 1982, justifying Israeli arms sales to Tehran, "Iraq is Israel's enemy and we hope that diplomatic relations between us and Iran will be renewed as in the past."²³³ Four months later he told a Paris press conference, "Israel has a vital interest in the continuing of the war in the Persian Gulf, and in Iran's victory." Such views were not Sharon's alone; then Prime Ministers Itzhak Shamir (Likud) and Shimon Peres (Labor) shared them too.²³⁴

How does one explain this contradictory behavior of the Iranian government? R.K. Ramazani argues that the character of challenge by Revolutionary Regime and the responses to this challenge by other Middle Eastern countries can be deemed multidimensional. He continues that "an exclusive emphasis on the military, ideological, or political aspects of these developments will not adequately explain them".²³⁵ Thus, Iran did not hesitate to purchase U.S.-made Israeli arms when its security imperatives following the Iraqi invasion compelled Tehran to do so with its general policy of pragmatism.

While Israel has been supplying Iran with arms, it has not hesitated to use force to protect itself from terrorist attacks which derived from Lebanon with the help of the Revolutionary Regime. In 1982 Israel conducted a military operation in

²³³http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Ronald_Reagan/Iranganet_Israel_TICC.html. "Iranganet: The Israel Connection" excerpted from the book; *The Iran Contra Connection Secret Teams and Covert Operations in the Reagan Era*, by Johnathan Marshall, Peter Dale Scott, and Jane Hunter South, (Boston: South End Press, 1987), p.169

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Rouhollah K. Ramazani and Stanley Hoffmann, *Revolutionary Iran: Challenge and Response in the Middle East*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), p.3

Lebanon against Hezbollah killing almost 2500 civilians, including women and children.²³⁶

It can be argued that the direction of Israeli-Iranian relations had been shaped by the Islamic and Zionist ideologies and realpolitik of the Middle East. Their relations have been marked by hostility and absolute conflict when Islamic and Zionist ideologies came to the surface. When security necessities marked an urgent requirement, the relationship between the two countries shifted towards realpolitik. These kinds of irregular and pragmatic relations dominate the general direction of Israeli-Iranian relations.

In the same are Iran enhanced its economic relations with Turkey to import its daily goods and other non-war commodities. Despite iterating Turkey as a tool of Western countries, giving a shelter to PKK and rescuing it from a total annihilation, supporting other fundamentalist organization Tehran denied all allegations officially and tried to benefit from all aspects of bilateral relations. This policy reflects the political culture of the Revolutionary regime and Turkish-Israeli alignment is not an exception for Tehran.

Besides, oil and gas resources in the Middle East and probable future energy routes in the region are on the top of the Iranian political agenda. Tehran does not want to be ousted from the energy routes. Knowing that the recrimination of the Zionist regime enhances its domestic posture but she needs Ankara's support to connect its energy resources with feasible international transportation routes, Tehran adopted different policies against Ankara and Tel-Aviv. Opening of long-delayed gas pipeline between Turkey and Iran in 2000 is a clear sign of this.

²³⁶“Israel has murdered thousands of Palestinians”, Available at <http://www.indymedia.org.uk/en/2002/09/42123.html>. Accessed on 26.03.2004

3.6.2. Relations in the post-Cold war era

These two states declared themselves as the most important enemies respectively with verbal recriminations and allocate each other at the top of threat perceptions. But, relating to Israel, President Khatami calls for "sober and pragmatic analysis," presumably free of conspiracy theories, aware of the futility of calling the Jewish State a racist, terrorist regime.²³⁷ The post-Cold war bilateral relations have also been dominated by this policy tendency. In the post-Cold war era the Iran-supported terrorist organizations in Lebanon, Israeli-Arab conflict, namely the Palestinian issue and WMD have constituted main topics of strain between the two countries.

Possibly, WMD is the most important issue of all, regarding the importance of proliferation in the Middle East region. Israel, with the U.S., accused Iran of struggling to attain nuclear arms and intend to use against the Zionist regime. But is it really Israel behind the ambition of Iran to obtain nuclear arms? Or do Iran and Israel perceive an impending nuclear threat from each other respectively? This is much related to the claim that Turkish-Israeli alignment has been formed against Iran and for using Turkey's airspace for reconnaissance in need of a retaliation or preemptive missile attack on Israel since Israel perceives a nuclear missile threat from Iran, even though all of the above are rhetorical as of yet.

3.6.3. Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)

It has long been known that Iranian representatives and sympathizers abroad point to the need to counter Israel's alleged nuclear arsenal and its nuclear monopoly in the Middle East as a justification for its pursuit of nuclear weapons. According to

²³⁷Harvey Sicherman."The Iranian Gorbachev: Khatami's "New Thinking" Available at: <http://www.library.cornell.edu/colldev/mideast/khat.htm> . Accesed on 28.03.2004

Brenda Shaffer, despite the Iranian rhetoric, the main strategic rationale for the Iranian nuclear program has not been to counter Israel's nuclear arsenal, but to bolster its role as a regional power and to counter Iraq, Iran's principal threat until 2003.²³⁸ It is an undeniable fact that, Iran learned much from Saddam's chemical weapon attacks on Iran during the 1980-1987 war, and this experience convinced Tehran that international instruments and guarantees are only useful if one is a friend of the Great Powers.²³⁹ Additionally, Iran is located in a nuclear neighborhood—next to Russia, Pakistan, and India—and seeks to become an important regional power. The fact that the Iranian nuclear weapons program started under the shah's regime, which at the time maintained excellent cooperation with the United States and Israel, is solid evidence that Israel has not been the main motivating factor for Iranian nuclear ambitions according to Shaffer.²⁴⁰

Shaffer argues that, with the removal of Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq through an American intervention, much of the original strategic motivation for Tehran to acquire nuclear weapons has been lost.²⁴¹ The current strategic rationale, however, may have changed, and it seems that in 2003 Tehran even presented its progress in its nuclear program as a way to deter the United States from creating a fate for the Iranian government similar to that of Hussein's regime. In 2003, Iran announced that it relinquished the uranium-enrichment program, which is vital for attaining nuclear capacity, in a meeting with Foreign Ministers of Germany, France and Britain. The Foreign Minister of Iran, Khemal Kharrazi stated that Iran is ready for full transparency on its nuclear program about which U.S. and other western

²³⁸ http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2003_11/Shaffer.asp?print. "Iran at the Nuclear Threshold", Brenda Shaffer.

²³⁹ Peter Jones. "Iran's Threat Perceptions and Arms Control Policies" *The Nonproliferation Review* (Fall 1998), p.41

²⁴⁰ http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2003_11/Shaffer.asp?printIran at the Nuclear Threshold, Brenda Shaffer. Also available at *Insigt Turkey* (January-March 2004)

²⁴¹ Ibid.

countries have suspicions. Iran also accepted to sign the additional protocol of NPT on uninformed inspections in 2003.²⁴²

Ehud Springzak argues that Iran has no reason to launch a nuclear attack on Israel. The Iranians, he says, "are far more rational and pragmatic than depicted in the Israeli media" and are well aware of Israeli superiority in unconventional weapons and missiles.²⁴³ According to him the Israeli government exploits the alleged Iranian threat to account for its huge military spending. Israeli defense and military officials are more pessimistic than their civilian counterparts, seeing a nuclear Iran towards Israel as the prime target.

In fact, Iran's alleged pursuit of nuclear weapons has made it a more likely target of Israel. Tehran always suspected an Israeli covert operation against its facilities as Israel made against the Osirek nuclear facility of Iraq in 1981 to curb Iraq's nuclear capability. An operation to destroy Iran's nuclear capabilities if necessary was under consideration, according to Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz. Speaking in Persian in February 2003 on Radio Israel, Mofaz said that if the need arises to destroy Iran's nuclear capability, "the necessary steps will be taken so that Iranian citizens will not be harmed"²⁴⁴ which indicate that Israel pursued its rhetoric on Iran's nuclear capacity. For the moment, those who would still downplay the Iranian threat argue that Tehran's unconventional capabilities remain problematic and/or that its willingness to attack Israel is assuredly very low.²⁴⁵

²⁴² *Hürriyet*, November 21, 2003. "İran'dan Nükleer Şeffaflaşma Adımı"

²⁴³ Ehud Springzak. "Reviving up Idle Threat", *Ha'Aretz*, , September 29, 1998.

²⁴⁴ <http://www.americandaily.com/item/4138>, "Iran Within Israel's Reach" Gary Fitleberg, 2/30/03. Accessed on 20.02.2004

²⁴⁵ Louis Rene Beres, "Iran's Growing Threat to Israel: Sketches For A Strategic Dialectic", November 1, 2000. Available at <http://www.gamla.org.il/english/article/2000/nov/ber1.htm> . Accessed on 07.10.2003

Iran is a member of all the major multilateral disarmament agreements currently in existence,²⁴⁶ and has an active role in international negotiations even though some argue that these are cover actions. Although the Nuclear-Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) allows transfers of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes to non-nuclear weapon states, the United States has opposed Russian-Iranian nuclear cooperation. The Clinton administration even signed a bill to force Russia to stop its contributions to the Iranian program in May 1995.²⁴⁷

On the other hand, the feeble economic situation and the incapacity of the Islamic Regime in fulfilling the role of “model for all Muslim states” failed and so did Tehran’s prestige. Thus, domestically, the regime seems to be using the nuclear program as a nationalistic rallying issue and a way for the desperately weak regime to project power.

Apart from being used in state-level conflicts, a serious concern is that these kinds of weapons could be a more serious threat in the event that they are obtained and used by terrorist organizations. Accordingly, Iran is a source of anxiety for its well-known support for terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah and Hamas.²⁴⁸

The main concern of Turkey should be the attainment of chemical and biological weapons by terrorist organizations because of the usefulness of these weapons and the difficulty of control. As Kibaroglu warns, such an attack as the Aum Shinrikyo sect realized in the Tokyo metro in 1995, which killed and disabled many, can be made by terrorist groups to realize their aims.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁶ Peter Jones, “Iran’s Threat Perceptions and Arms Control Policies” *The Nonproliferation Review* (Fall 1998), p.40

²⁴⁷ Greg J. Gerardi and Maryam Aharinejad, “An Assesment of Iran’s Nuclear Facilities”, *The Nonproliferation Review*. (Spring-Summer 1995), p. 207

²⁴⁸ Mustafa Kibaroglu. “ Iran Nükleer Bir Güç mü Olmak İstiyor?” (Is Iran Going Nuclear?) *Avrasya Dosyası* Vol.5, No.3 (Fall 1999), p.272

²⁴⁹ Mustafa Kibaroglu. “ Iran Nükleer Bir Güç mü Olmak İstiyor?” (Is Iran Going Nuclear?), *Avrasya Dosyası* Vol.5, No.3 (Fall 1999), p.273

As for conventional forces, Iran is far from challenging either Turkey, which has the largest army in the region, or Israel, whose military technology is coveted by all states except U.S. Iran's powerful army was exterminated by Iraq during war years and the embargo by U.S. impeded re-supplying its losses in conventional terms. While Tehran tries hard to bridge the gap with Soviet-Originated weapons, economic constraints hampered its efforts to a considerable degree. That is why Tehran revived its nuclear program in the middle of the 1980s. Iran's offensive options are limited. Its ground forces do not pose a threat to any of its neighbors, due to their small size and poor condition.

While some of Turkish officials declared their anxiety about Tehran with nuclear power, the WMD did not engage the top of Turkey's security agenda. Turkey bought some Popeye-I and Popeye-II type missiles (air-to-air and air-to-surface) from Israel through its alignment. These missiles were not produced to counter a missile threat. However Tel-Aviv refused the participation of Turkey in its missile shield project which will consist of 500-km-ranged Delilah missiles. This clearly indicates that Israel and Turkey perceives Iran's alleged nuclear threat from different dimensions. Conclusively, these differences in perceptions cause Turkey to put its bilateral relations with Iran to an independent course from that with Israel. All in all, it is hard to argue that Turkish-Israeli alignment had a severe impact on Turkish-Iranian relations.

3.7. A Brief Re-evaluation

The pragmatic and ever-shifting relations between Iran and Israel, the incapacity of nuclear assault of Iran without known target and exaggerated rhetoric from Israel with the possible intention of legalizing war with any regional state having nuclear capacity, so that it can pursue its nuclear monopoly, reveal that Iran

and Israel do not perceive each other as primary threat. In accordance with this argument a nuclear war or an intended Israeli attack on Iran's installations does not seem probable and logical in the near future. Given the pragmatic character of both states' foreign policies they probably will be able to find ways to manage controversial issues. The rhetoric of "existential threat" of each state is much related to their domestic policies. Since neither state is on the verge of war, an alliance against one, in this case Iran, of other regional powers such as Turkey nor is Israel out of question.

In that respect, as they did in the past, Turkey and Iran will pursue their relations despite the problematic and crisis-prone nature of Turkish-Iranian relations independent from Turkey's relations with Israel. The coming of Khatami and reformists to power also signals the "lowering the tension" between Iran and its neighbors. Seeing that it is the best way to prolong the life of the revolutionary regime, Tehran tries to adapt to the new international environment to break its isolation. Turkey-Iranian relations has continuity in terms of geography, history, religious differences, strategic and geopolitical values, energy routes and conditions stemming therefrom despite regime change. That's way the Islamic regime had to derail from its initial uncompromising attitude and put aside the classical Islamist rhetoric in order to develop its relations with regional states. However it is an undeniable fact that the changing course of Iranian political life in the mid-1990s makes it more complicated to assess the real impact of Turkish-Israeli alignment on Turkish-Iranian relations.

Given this picture, the argument that Turkish-Israeli alignment was formed against Iran has been considerably refuted. The pragmatic relations between these three countries impede polarization in the region. On the contrary, they benefit from

each other as Iran bought weapons from Israel in the 1980s and Turkey traded heavily with Iran during same years. Turkey still buys natural gas from Iran and transportation of Turkmen natural gas via Iran and Turkey to the Mediterranean is a much discussed subject.

After the Turkish-Israeli alignment relations between Turkey and Iran did not rupture or change dramatically. On the contrary Khatami overrode the futile issues such as “regime exportation” to some extent to enhance bilateral relations. However, the domestic capacity of reformists and their efficiency in decision-making processes are limited. Hard-liners are still powerful enough to dominate the issues of foreign policy and security of the country.

As has been iterated above, the subject of WMDs is rather controversial. There are still hot debates on Iran’s nuclear ambitions. Logically there is an unbridgeable gap between Iran and Israel’s nuclear capabilities. Iran is aware of a more efficient retaliation from Israel if Tehran dares a nuclear attack on Israel. As for Turkey, while Iran could achieve a limited success with a missile attack, it does not have the conventional capacity to resist the Turkish Armed Forces (the largest and most powerful Army of the region) with its limited conventional abilities.

All in all there is not much reason for an alignment between Turkey and Israel against Iran. It is an undeniable fact that Iranian officials condemned Turkey for its alignment with Israel. However, their reflections can be deemed as an instrument for domestic politics. It is most convenient to asses this alignment as a cooperative structure on various topics between two regional states without a specific target in the region.

CHAPTER IV:

CONCLUSION

With the end of the Cold war a world conjuncture based on bipolarity disappeared. Traditional alliance formations depending on the patron-client relationship vanished. This kind of a transformation resulted in the reorientation of threat and opportunity perceptions of all states. The changing international environment compelled states to find ways to tackle their own problems with their respective capabilities. They had limited freedom of maneuverability during the Cold war years due to strict polarization.

The balancing/bandwagoning dichotomy was used to predict and explain the alliance behaviors of states in the Cold War era. But either balancing or bandwagoning concepts has problems in explaining post-Cold War orientations of states. In general these concepts define a state's behavior in the event of an existential threat. The threat was the main motivation of governments in determining their maneuver. Accordingly, Turkey joined NATO to avoid Soviet threat and to benefit from its allies' defense capabilities. This can be identified as pure balancing. On the contrary, in contemporary globalizing world order economic interests not existential threat mainly determine the states' behaviors. The absence of strict bipolarity enables states to pursue multifaceted policies. NATO's diminishing popularity and changing character represents the problematic and obsolete nature of balancing and bandwagoning in the post-Cold War era.

The post-Cold War era also supplies regional states with alternatives to find a way to improve their relations with neighbors or precipitate the already-formed relations in the absence of the Cold war and adopt different methods from that of

alliance limitations while tackling their security needs. Many states found themselves in richness of alternatives pertaining to their foreign policy in conformity with their geographic location, demography and the level of development. They had the opportunity to choose the best alternative primarily to pursue their national interest.

The Turkish-Israeli relations in the post-Cold war era, especially the 1996 Military Cooperation Agreement and developing cooperative relations in its aftermath, in the context of multipolar world order, enables states to pursue a varied foreign policy. While many social scientists and officials call the Turkish-Israeli cooperation an alliance, the term “alignment” which is identified with non-binding but cooperative characteristics and enhances Turkey’s room for maneuver is more suitable than binding alliances when defining the nature of Turkish-Israeli relations. Turkey, with this alignment, not only demonstrated willingness and ability to follow its interests in the region but Ankara was also able to exert influence in the region which can be attested by to reactions to Turkish foreign policy behavior in the region.

There were many reasons for Turkey to establish a *sui generis* cooperation with Israel in the late 1990s. The Middle East region has attained a particular importance for the multi-faceted Turkish foreign policy with the changing threat perceptions of Ankara from north to south in the early 1990s. The power vacuum in Northern Iraq since the 1990 Kuwait campaign which paved the way for a powerful PKK, ongoing water debacle with Syria and its backing for PKK along with Iran were the main reasons of Turkey’s shifting policy. Additionally, the definition of interests diverged in the west and Turkey regarding the Middle East, causing some uncertainty and mistrust between them in post-Cold war era.²⁵⁰ On the other hand, in

²⁵⁰Comment by Prof. Meliha Benli Altunışık during her conference in Ankara University, 18.02.2004

the eyes of Western countries Turkey seems to play a more important role in the region, enhancing its strategic value despite the difference in interests.

Moreover there were also some positive factors as the announcement of Declarations of Principles (DOP) in the Madrid Peace Process which started in October 1991 and removed the impediments before Turkish-Israeli rapprochement.²⁵¹ But the most important motivation for Turkey to boost its strategic relations with Israel was the PKK. By the year 1992, separatist PKK terrorism substituted for the former northern menace as the primary threat against the security and territorial integrity of Turkey and led to the revision of the Turkish national defense concept. Israel did not respond to Turkey's offer to fight against PKK with enthusiasm, since Tel-Aviv had enough headaches at that time.

All these factors instigated Turkey to make a rapprochement with Israel beginning from the 1990s which reached a climax in 1996. But this relationship can not be depicted as an alliance since the two states did not define a *casus foederis*,²⁵² which specifically identifies the situations that will necessitate them to undertake military assistance to one another in the event of an armed conflict.²⁵³ Generally thinking, to avoid polarization in the Middle East, Turkey supported to resolve problems through peace talks in conformity with international law, the principle of territorial integrity and mutual respect for national unity. Thus a classical alliance does not conform to the philosophy of Turkish foreign policy since that venue may have established yet another polarity in the region.

²⁵¹ Gencer Özcan, "Türkiye-İsrail İlişkileri 50. Yılına Girerken" (Turkish-Israeli Relations in its 50th year) in *Türk Dış Politikasının Analizi* eds. Faruk Sönmezoğlu. (İstanbul: Der Yayınları, 2001), p.168

²⁵² A stipulation about who will support whom in what contingencies and a secret agenda against third states asking for the help of an ally in the event of an aggression by a third state (including military attacks). That is a clear sign of why Turkish-Israeli relations can not be categorized as an alliance.

²⁵³ İsmail Selvi, *Countering State-Supported Terrorism: The PKK and Turkish Foreign Policy Towards the Middle East*.(Unpublished Thesis in Bilkent University, July 2003), p.143

On the other hand, it can be easily said that the mentioned alignment supplied Turkey with considerable room for maneuver. For example the process, at the end of which the PKK terrorist leader, Abdullah Öcalan, was captured, was pursued with the help of Israel's various security units both in terms of conventional forces and intelligence support.²⁵⁴ While there have been noteworthy developments in all fields, such as trade, tourism and agriculture, the most significant element of developing relations between the two countries in the 1990s has been in the military domain.

The existence of some controversial issues indicates a weakness in the discourse of solidarity between the two countries. Currently Israel gives extensive support for the Kurdish struggle for independence in northern Iraq.²⁵⁵ According to Alon Liel, Israeli Ambassador (Ret), there would be a weak federation in Iraq though a separation would not occur. He continues that Northern Iraqi Kurds are friends of Israel. While he depicts Turkey as the only regional friend of Israel, Liel warns that Turkey should be ready for such phenomenon like a "divided Iraq".

Another topic of controversy is the long-discussed water issue. Water has an increasing value in Middle East, thus raising the worth of Turkey's cards in the region. Different approaches by Turkey and Israel towards the water issue signify that the two countries may part on crucial subjects which refute the claims about "strategic alliance" between them.²⁵⁶ Basically, Israel does not want to become dependent on Turkey for water as a general policy though it signed a draft agreement with Turkey on water supply from Manavgat River. Third, the signing of another military agreement between Greece and Israel, which resembles the Israeli-Turkish

²⁵⁴Çevik Bir, "Reflections on Turkish-Israeli Relations and Turkish Security.", *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policywatch* 422, 05 December 1999. <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/watch/index.htm>

²⁵⁵Amikam Nachmani, *Turkey: Facing a New Millennium* .(Manchester:Manchester University Press, 2003), p.204

²⁵⁶Mahmut Bali Aykan, *Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Dönemi Ortadoğu'sunda Türkiye'nin İsrail'e Karşı Politikası:1991-1998. (Turkey's Foreign Policy toward Israel in post-Cold War Middle East)* (İstanbul: Yeditepe University, 2000), p.38

military agreement, indicates that Israel does not perceive the Turkish-Israeli relations as an alliance due to well-known Turco-Greek disagreements.

The claim that Iran is the target of the mentioned alignment is a weak probability while forcing Iran to redeem its regional policies to some extent. In fact, Iranian support to the PKK was not as overt as that of Damascus, and Iranian officials always denied their support despite evidence given by Ankara to Tehran several times. Hopes for normalization of relations with Tehran are dictated by foreign policy and security elites in Ankara who deem cutting relations off with Tehran irrational.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁷ Meliha Benli Altunışık. “Turkish-Israeli Rapprochement in the post-Cold War era” , *Middle Eastern Studies* Vol.36, No.2 (2000), p.185 cited in İsmail Selvi, “Countering State-Supported Terrorism: The PKK and Turkish Foreign Policy towards the Middle East” (Unpublished MA Thesis at Bilkent University, July 2003), p.152

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INTERVIEW

Meliha Benli Altunışık , Ankara University, 18.02.2004.