

**NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY**  
**THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**  
**MASTER THESIS**

**TURKEY-ISRAELI RELATIONS**  
**DURING THE JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT PARTY**  
**PERIOD (2002-2015)**

**BAHROOZ JAAFAR JABBAR**  
**20135600**

**NICOSIA**

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SUPERVISOR: Ali Dayıoğlu

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International Relations Master Program

Thesis Defense

**TURKEY–ISRAELI RELATIONS DURING THE JUSTICE AND  
DEVELOPMENT PARTY PERIOD (2002-2015)**

We certify the thesis is satisfactory for the award of Degree of

Master of **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**Prepared by:**

**BAHROOZ JAAFAR JABBAR**

Examining Committee in Charge

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ali Dayıoğlu

Near East University  
Thesis Supervisor  
Department of International  
Relations

Asst. Prof. Dr. Sinan Evcan

Cyprus International  
University, Department  
of International Relations

Dr. İlksoy Aslım

Near East University,  
Department of International  
Relations

Approval of the Graduate School of Social Science

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa Sağsan

Director

## Özet

Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP) Dönemi Türkiye-İsrail İlişkileri (2002-2015)

Hazırlayan: Bahrooz jaafar jabbar

Ocak 2016

1923 yılında Türkiye cumhuriyeti ilan edilmeden önce Araplar ve Yahudiler Osmanlı İmparatorluğu yönetiminde bir arada yaşamaktaydılar. 1916'da Sykes Picot Anlaşması ile Yahudilerin birçoğu Filistin topraklarına göç etmişlerdir. 1917'deki Balfour Deklerasyonu ile Britanya, Filistin toprakları üzerinde bir Yahudi yurdunun kurulmasına karar vermiş, İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nın ardından da 1948'de Filistin toprakları üzerinde bağımsız bir İsrail devleti kurulmuştur. Türkiye, 1949 yılında İsrail'i tanımıştır. Böylece, nüfusu ağırlıklı olarak Müslümanlardan oluşan bir devlet ilk kez İsrail'i tanımıştır. 1949'dan 2002 yılına kadar Türkiye-İsrail ilişkileri çalkantılı dönemler geçirdikten sonra Türkiye'de 2002 yılıyla birlikte başlayan Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP) dönemine gelinmiştir. AKP, kendisini, muhafazakâr-demokrat olarak tanımlamakla birlikte, İslami kökenleri bulunan bir partidir. Dolayısıyla, ilk bakışta Türkiye-İsrail ilişkilerinin 'sorunlu' olabileceği düşünülebilir. Buna ilaveten, AKP gücünü yükselttikçe 'derin ve stratejik' siyaset çerçevesinde Orta Doğu'da merkezi bir güç olmayı hedeflediğini söylemek gerekmektedir. Bu politikasından dolayı AKP Hükümetleri Türkiye'nin 'dünyası' dışındaki sorunları çözmeye yönelmişlerdir. Türkiye'nin bu politikası Türkiye-İsrail ilişkilerine de yansımıştır. Her ne kadar Türkiye ve İsrail istihbarat, ekonomi, politika ve ticaret anlamında 1990'lardan 2008'e kadar 'stratejik ortaklık' ilişkisi sürdürmüşlerse de, 2008'den özellikle de 2010'dan sonra ikili ilişkilerde ciddi bir gerileme yaşanmıştır. Dolayısıyla, tüm bu gelişmeler çerçevesinde tezin amacı Türkiye'deki AKP iktidarı döneminde Türkiye-İsrail ilişkilerini tüm yönleriyle ele almak, ikili ilişkilerdeki iniş-çıkışları nedenleri ve sonuçlarıyla tartışmaktır.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Orta Doğu; Türkiye; İsrail; Arap Dünyası; İslam; İkili ilişkiler; Stratejik Derinlik; Dış Politika.

## **ABSTRACT**

**Turkey – Israel Relations: During the Justice and Development Party**

**Period (2002-2015)**

Prepared by: **BAHROOZ JAAFAR JABBAR**

**JANUARY, 2016.**

This research attempts to understand the Turkey-Israel relations during the rule of AKP (2002-2005). It analyses the internal, regional and the foreign policies of both countries as well as the Arab world. Also, this operation tackles the existing historical and bilateral relations and asks many questions about the nature of the current and future relations between both countries. In the light of and prior to the creation of Modern Turkish state in 1923 both Arabs and Jews coexisted during the reign of the Ottoman Empire. Then in the framework of the Sykes-Picot agreement in 1916 the majority of Jewish people immigrated to the Homeland and then Britain supported the creation of a Jewish state in the Balfour Declaration. Now one century after those agreements the AKP has won the election for the fourth time in June 2015. AKP considers itself as a democratic- conservative party with an Islamic background. After 2010 the political and diplomatic relations have declined between Israel and Turkey due to AKP support for Palestine. This research employs a qualitative method and a theoretical, conceptual approach of international relations theories known as the balance of powers and seeks to understand and explain the dynamic regional changes and transformations as well as the political, economical, and military relations of Turkey and Israel.

**Keywords:** Middle East; Turkey; Israel; Arab World; Bilateral Relations; Strategic Depth; Foreign Policy.

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Almighty God says in the Holy Koran “If you give thanks by accepting Faith and worshipping none but Allah, I will give you more “of My Blessings”. The most sacred effort is the attempt to gain and explore knowledge. Until the day I die, I will never forget about anybody who helped me.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AKP:</b>	Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi
<b>CHP:</b>	Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi)
<b>EU:</b>	European Union
<b>GAP</b>	Great Anatolian Project
<b>HDP</b>	Halkların Demokratik Partisi
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>IS</b>	Islamic State
<b>ISIS</b>	Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (Sham)
<b>JDP</b>	Justice and Development Party
<b>KRG</b>	Kurdistan Region of Government
<b>MENA</b>	Middle East and North Africa
<b>MIT</b>	Millî İstihbarat Teşkilatı
<b>NATO</b>	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
<b>PDK</b>	Kurdistan Democratic Party
<b>PKK</b>	Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê
<b>PLO</b>	Palestine Liberation Organization
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>US</b>	United States of America

## INTRODUCTION

The two perspectives that make Turkey of significant interest to America and Israel in the Middle East region are its geopolitical and geostrategic location. Turkey is the only Islamic state in the NATO membership, league that is directly neighboring the Arab world, with two key countries, Iraq and Syria, by its borders. From the beginning, Turkey realized the strategic aspects of this relationship that is to be built by Israel. Turkey was the first Islamic country, with majority Muslim population, to recognize the independence of the state of Israel in 1949, the president of Turkey at that time “İsmet İnönü” saying that ‘we look forward for a diplomatic relation between both countries’. Then, he wished Israel to be the core of peace and stability in the region (Gaul, 2011, p. 2). The course of the relation did not stop at this point, but led to the treaty of the three DAGGERS in 1958 among Israel, Turkey, and Iran, in order to encounter communism, Arabism, and to hinder the rise of Baathism. Later, thorough strategic relations were ratifying between Israel and Turkey in 1996, and within this framework there were numerous economic and military conventions that brought under implementation.

Meanwhile, close relation and look upwards to the bilateral relations with Turkey and Israel, means distance and doubt in the relation of Turkey and Arab states. This became clearer in the tri-aggression operation in Egypt in 1956, when Turkey supported Israel over Egypt. In that state, Turkey voted against the independence of Algeria at the United Nations in (1957). Afterwards, the role of Turkey in Baghdad convention in 1956 was more like an American patriotic fighter, and the establishment of Incirlik base in Turkey, the American army was attacking Iraq through this base without prior consent of the Turkish Government in (1958) (National Defense Magazine, 2010). When the AKP became the ruling power in the country, they started to work on balancing and developing relations with their neighboring Arab states. When the AKP won the election in (2002), they started to find an appropriate mechanism to set balance in the foreign relations around the world, in particular with the Arab Muslim states. In the beginning, they bound together in terms of an interrelation with Europe and the US as a strategic relation to enhance and affect the intra-sides, AKP used these relations against the

military facilities in Turkey, in which they were protecting secularism and Atatürk principles. At a later stage, AKP started restructuring the political process with the Arab world and their neighbors, thus giving birth to a new era in regional relations.

Moreover, close and diversified approaches to the Arab states, resulted in the thawing of relations with the state of Israel: This new equation was made possible by the decision of the US aid Iraq in 2003. In terms of the economy and security interest, Turkey and Arab states were bonded together. If Saddam had been overthrown, their interests would be jeopardized, after the military and intelligence intervention of Israel in Kurdistan region of Iraq, to overthrow the Baath regime, the national security of Turkey was threatened. So, the Turkish media criticized the statements of the United States for failing to fight against separatists in northern Iraq as a reference to the possibility that Turkey's military operations near the northern Iraq for the first time since the occupation of Iraq. As so far second signal came from the President of the Turkish intelligence Emre Taner, who warned the continued watching policy towards what is happening in the region and called for Turkey to be a founding partner in the national game (Ghauri, 2011, p. 109).

It is obvious that the level of the relations between Israel and Turkey decreased gradually and shifted backward, especially when Israel put an embargo on Gaza strip. This offensive act in October 2008 resulted in the death of 1500 Palestinians. From this point onwards, the support of Erdoğan to Gaza strip displeased Israel. In his speech, Erdoğan used the term “terrorist state” against Israel recently at Davos forum. Erdoğan’s speech was found offensive by the Israeli Prime minister, Shimon Peres, who made him to stage a walkout from the forum at January 29, 2009 (Balci & Kardaş, 2012, p. 99).

Generally, relations between Turkey and Israel after (2010) are a dark Era. In this thesis, we are looking each of these internal and external aspects, and regional developments, as her relationship our study.

## **Statement of the Problem**

The nature of Israeli-Turkish relations were defined as a series of waves that went through some ups and downs, and this is due to regional and international changes. Turkey is in pursuit of its relations with US, European Union, and Israel achieves its interests in economic, military, commerce, and other aspects, but when AKP reached the peak of the government in Turkey, all this changed, and rendered Turkey to apply self-dependent policy, then to count on “strategic depth” with the aim of representing the countries of middle Asia, Muslim states, and the neighboring countries, as an immense regional leader (Balci & kardaş, 2012, p. 99). This affected badly its bilateral dealings with Israel. The tension and the anxiety between both parties have been revealed, during the invasion of Iraq in 2003. When in the beginning the Turkish Parliament objected and did not allow the US army to use Turkish territory to attack Iraq, stripped embargo to the Gaza, the acquaintance and the courtesy of Turkey towards the Arab states, condemnation of Lebanon war in 2006, and when the attack occurred on Gaza strip Ankara stated that Israel is a terrorist state, then the support of US to Israel, relations on halt during the Arab spring, then the ISIL came to being and the silence in the relations between Israel and Turkey..

It can be reasoned that it is not easy within this environment and rapid changes, in particular in this era of AKP rule, to trust the bilateral relations. Moreover, the Gaza strip ship attack, and the outcome of Arab spring made it difficult to know how the future of the bilateral relations between the two countries would be. Another main obstacle in this research was that, most of the available sources obtained in Turkey-Israel relations were between the years 2002-2011. Meanwhile, appropriate books for the study between the years 2010-2014 on the bilateral relations could not be obtained due to the strained relations the two countries were experiencing.

## **Aim of the study**

The main objectives of the study are as follows:

- \* Trace the roots of Turkish-Israeli relations, and the nature of its inception.

- \* Identify the internal and external determinants that led to the emergence and development of the relationship between the two countries.
- \* Review of the emergence of the Justice and Development Party in Turkey and the historical root conditions.
- \* Identify the nature of the bilateral relations between Ankara and Tel Aviv, in the presence of the JDP in power.
- \* Exploring the future of Turkish-Israeli relations, and scenarios for each of them after the rise of the Justice and Development Party for the fourth time.

### **The Research of Questions**

According to (Ghaul, 2011) has mentioned the accompanying inquiries, it can be resolved in this inquiry:

### **What are the influences and the outcomes of AKP success (2002-2015) on the relations between Israel and Turkey?**

This question within itself, is divided into some sub-questions?

- What are the origins and the developmental factors of Turkey-Israel relations?
- Internal-characteristics, and external characteristics of both states, how did reflect on the method of the relations?
- What is the historical base of the Turkish AKP rise? And how did the environment and circumstances affect this development?
- What is the future of Israel-Turkey relations in the reign of AKP?

### **Scope and limitations of the research**

Building a scope for any research has a crucial role. In general, the scope of the research strove to start from the title of the research, in consideration to objectivity, limitation and setting. For instance, in terms of objectivity, this research focused on the points that have direct influence on the methods of the bilateral relations such as; the history of the relations, the nature of the party's activity from both sides, the regional changes, trade, military and intelligence relations,

Turkish and Israeli diplomacy according to both sides, geopolitics. All these directly participate, and they are considered within the framework of the research.

### **Timeframe to the research**

In terms of time, between the years 2002-2015, any upcoming situation and factors that are considered necessary have been discussed within the frame of the research. For instance: development of the Kurdish case in Turkey, and the ebb and flow in the economic, military, and diplomatic relations, progression of the Islamic radicals, the war in Syria, and the rise terrorist group known as “ISIL” in the region.

The research also focuses on a stand-point on the matter of energy and the new strategy of Russia. Other than that, the research disregarded some matters to make sure the size and the framework of the research are not occupied by subsidiary matters.

In general, the level of the research is about, on the other hand, the economy and security, based on regional changes, and on the other hand, the internal and external circumstances of both states.

### **Methodology**

This research will use qualitative analysis in its efforts. There is no precise meaning as to what qualitative method means. However, Van Maanen (1979) believed qualitative analysis to constitute a variety of techniques which “seeks to describe, decode, translate and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the hesitation of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world”(p. 520). Traditionally, qualitative method looks at verbal situations that involve a series of “phenomena relating to or involving quality or kind” (Kothari, 2004, 3). Traditionally, qualitative method looks at verbal situations that involve a series of “phenomena relating to or involving quality or kind” Qualitative method investigates human behaviors, thereby answering questions as to why political units do certain things. Why do the different systems behave in this fashion and not in that way? It also uncovers motivational factors leading to this way related to the world outside. From the above, qualitative method is the

most appropriate technique for investigating bilateral relations in the light of regional developments.

Furthermore, this research utilizes and benefits from secondary library research as its instrument in selecting and constructing research technique. By this, the research seeks to explore from theoretical and conceptual sources such as books, journals, reports from think-tank organizations, newspapers, magazines, annual reports like "Palestine Strategic Reports" and the most trustworthy international media, like: Aljazeera, Sky News (Arabic), BBC...

Nevertheless, this work will utilize new Concepts about Turkey and Israeli relations from Ghaul, Y (2011).. And Balci, A. kardeş (2012). It will focus on the Turkey- Israeli relations in the Era after the Cold War and the attacks of 11 of September and Arab spring. This should serve as the theoretical framework of this thesis.

The study also benefited from the literature of the so-called "**Balance of Power Theory**", which is based on the study of international relations through the identification of power System dimensions in international relations, where each state is seeking to increase national strength at the expense of other countries, and this theory can be employed in understanding of the role both Turkey and Israel play in the regional environment in the framework of mutual interests. On the other hand, Historical aspects constitute a vital instrument to use for looking at the issues, along with the information used as a sample to be considered for the analysis. The research asks what is the role of historical factor and whether they impact current or future changes? So, without keeping in mind the historical background.

## **Literature Review**

Given the topic of research, it is important to review literatures relevant to the impact of JDP's on bilateral relation, and how Turkey attempts to play a major role in the Middle East, and that is by making use of its geostrategic location, to strengthen its relations with Arab states and Israel. In spite of this, there was a negative influence on the relations between Israel and Turkey in the period between the years 2002-2015, and that is due to the ruling policy of the JDP's in which Turkey must keep the balance in the interests with Israel and Arab states.

By this, the difficulty around the relations between Turkey and Israel as a two affected power in the region, contributions made by various scholars and as well its changing nature should be revealed.

Ifraim, Inbar (2010), an Israeli researcher, and head of the Begin- Sadat center, in the work entitled, “Israeli–Turkish Tensions and Beyond”, sees Turkey’s foreign policy has changed. It would be very difficult for Israel to swallow the current AKP-led Turkish attitude and continue with business as usual. The most sensitive issue is, of course, arms sales and strategic cooperation. Yet, even if Turkey continues its present line, the diplomatic and economic relations will only be marginally affected. Israel has no interest in deterioration, while Turkey understands that its regional aspirations require correct relations with the Jewish state. Jerusalem wonders why Ankara prefers the dictators of Tehran, Damascus and Gaza over the democracy of the Jewish state (Inbar, 2011, p. 33). When we are reading the Inbar's argument, it can be seen that he appears like Zionism author, not like an independent researcher, whose work needs to take into account the political condition of Turkey to taking a balance of power in this era.

As for the implications of the bilateral relations on the level of Arab States. Having a “Palestinian Strategic report (2010)”: which was published annually by the *Zaytuna Center for Research and Consulting*, the report states the vital events in 2010: from putting Gaza strip under pressure to the standpoints of the Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan. In the report, the Turkish prime minister is introduced as a regional leader, while there were hundreds of Palestinian children and women killed and their houses were ruined all the Arab leaders chose to be silenced, but the center of authority in Turkey especially AKP condemned the government of Israel for their deed, and named them as terrorist and fascist.

The report revealed all the information for the year, from the event of Davos to the Gaza strip ship crisis (Palestine Strategy Report, 2010, p. 378). It means this report just described and registered the events, which had been happening in Gaza. It can be seen this like an information source, but not like an academic research.

Galen Olson’s (2013). In research operations titled, “Normalizing Turkey-Israeli Relation and Possibilities for U.S. Involvement” is broader and different from the others, because firstly it is written after the Arab spring, secondly the research discussed three main international characters; The US, Turkey, and Israel, all three are compiled together. The research states that

all the relations of Turkey and Israel were based on the US request, and the US played the role of mediator.

Olson sees that the Obama administration the relations between Israel and Turkey is vital, on the other hand the deterioration in that relation is a risk to the US, because Turkey is an immense regional power, which leads to the separation of Israel from the region, which covers more issues; like finding natural gas in the eastern side of the Mediterranean, the Iran nuclear issue, and the intervention in the region, encountering Russia in the west, and the issue of Greek Cyprus (Olson, 2013, p. 38). However, one can criticize this argument, as it does not examine Turkey's internal political situation, for example Kurdish issues and duplication in hypocrisy. Can Israel- trust Turkey under the JDP's role?

In the aspect of military relations, some of the researchers believed that Israel and Turkey need each other as long as for solving some of the significant cases between themselves. According to Hisham Abdul Aziz (2014) it is believed that Israel supplied Turkey's best-of-the art military at the global level to him, and that would put Turkey at the forefront of the developed countries in the region militarily, and even on a global level, in the coming periods. In contrast, the Turkish military will rely on Israel, making the Turkish policy hostage to the Israeli conditions and desires... The same way "Ali Balci and Tuncay Kardaş" in their work entitled "The Changing Dynamics of Turkey's Relations with Israel: An Analysis of 'Securitization'" has shown that the Turkish military embarked upon a strategic alliance with Israel for discursive reasons in addition to the necessities of Realpolitik such as military modernization. It was predominantly Turkey's domestic political power struggle that impacted upon both the start and the collapse of the relations with Israel. There are a number of conclusions that can be drawn from this present case. Firstly, Turkey's alliance and a burgeoning relationship with Israel, to a considerable extent, where an initiative exclusively conducted by the military; that is, it was an undertaking that literally bypassed the civilian government, which at times was not even aware of the contents of the agreements signed between the two countries (Balci & Kardaş, 2012, p. 116).

"While some of the researchers like "Inbar" emphasizes that the relations between two both of their countries which they cannot feel patient until JDP's role in Turkey".

As well, I have chosen this topic “Turkey -Israeli relations During the JDP's, period (2002-2015). To show that developments in the Middle East are dramatic, especially after the Arab spring events, and deliberate about what is the future of Israel-Turkey relations with the ruling of AKP? As it has been mentioned above, the earlier studies dealt with the nature of Turkey -Israeli relations away from the vision and the role of the JDP towards those relations, indeed they did not refer to the development and the repercussions after the Arab Spring and ISIS crisis.

## **CHAPTER ONE: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE TURKISH-ISRAELI RELATIONS UNTIL 2002.**

### **1.1. Developments from 1923 to the Establishment of Israel (1948)**

The period between the years 1923-1948 was the time of reorganization of the new political life in Turkey; it was the period of coloring all the different points more than to have relations with the outside world.

As it seems, the Jews had a great role in transforming Turkey from Khalifat to Secularism and Western style, from here, a new era began with Mustafa Kamal in the pact of Lausanne 1923 to determine the new borders of Turkey, Greece, and Bulgaria plus the eastern part of Arabia. The pact was to reorganize Anatoly between the coalition and the National group of Turkey presided by Mustafa Kamal Ataturk in which the UK has put four conditions to Turkey:

1. Abolish the Khalifat
2. Demise of the relationship between Turkey and Islam.
3. Ousting the friend of Khalifat
4. Assurance a secular constitution in for Turkey (Ghaul, 2011, p. 15).

In addition, Turkey had no right to ask for the former borders of the Ottoman Empire that it held before the First World War, this became a huge mechanism for a new transformation of Turkey, plus facilitation to the Jews to go to Palestine and occupy it.

Thus, the Turkish Republic was formed in 1924, the system of Khalifat was abandoned totally in 1922, the abolition of the post of the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, Ankara has been the capital, the proclamation of the Turkish Republic, and the abolition of the post of the Caliph of the Ottoman Empire. The unification of education, closure of religious schools, also, integration of education the state began its reforms and turned a new page in history to the West and Turks voted for the new constitution in 1937 (Morsi, 2015).

## **1.2. Turkey-Israel Relations: From Recognition of 1949 to the End of Cold War 1989**

### **1.2.1. Political Relations**

In a formal way, relations between Turkey and Israel began in March 1949; Turkey was the first Islamic state with majority Muslims which recognized Israel as an independent state. Followed by Iran the second Muslim country in 1950, the relations from a small military and strategic, diplomatic one to becoming a very important source for providing the weapons, information and political and military help for both the countries on the basis of having the same fear and paranoid (National Defense Magazine, 2010).

The period between 1948-1989 is a restricted period in the relationship between Turkey and Israel, the point of view of Israel about politics in this period was hard, its aim was to get rid from the blockade imposed on her by Arabs, it had the peripheral Alliance strategy in which Israel should get into tie with some neighbors surrounded by the same enemy as it is like Iran, Turkey and Ethiopia. Having secret relations with the minorities located in the Arab world, especially the Kurds of Northern Iraq, the tribes of the south of Sudan, Iran and Turkey were two big countries which were Muslims, but non-Arabs, they have deviated from the line as Israel was a vague body in the Islamic world, a stranger to the region and the culture of the region (Nachmani, 1987, p. 46).

Another reason why Israel wanted to have good relations with Turkey after 1949 was that Turkey is neighbored with Iraq and Syria; it will find itself in a front with these two countries that represent the Arabic Nationalism. Thus, the tension with Israel has existence without end, especially after Baath Party, which came to power in 1963 and made a National union with Syria ideologically. During this period Israel did not work too much on its relations with Turkey as Turkey had its problems naturally with both the countries in water issues as both the sources of the Euphrates and Tigris lie there plus the issue of Iskenderun region which Syria thinks it is a part of its land. Plus, the problems of the Kurds in Turkey of helping and backing them to a confrontation with Turkey needed a secret diplomatic and information exchanging relation between both. Practically, the first secret pact between Turkey and Israel was in 1958 in the

meeting of both Prime Ministers “Adnan Menderes and David Ben-Gurion” (Nachmani1987, p. 49).

#### **1.2.1.1. The Baghdad Pact (1955)**

The West, after the Second World War, and the beginning of the Cold War was seeking in the Middle East to form a front of the Arab countries to confront communism and the Soviet experience in the area. For this reason, the USA, backed by the UK could do so. Turkey, Pakistan, Iran and Iraq assembled in this pact and were aided militarily and economically. The importance of the pact was not just to confront the Soviet Union, but also to form a semi-front away from the Arab-Israel Tension “means it had a role in weakening the tension”.

The politics of Turkey in Middle East did not pass with the politics of the West in a parallel way. After Turkey joined NATO in 1952 and the tension raised between Turkey and the Arab States, especially Egypt. The tension paralyzed the relation entirely to a degree which the public opinion in the Arab countries was for that Turkey is just an agent of the West. At this time, a new Arab Nationalism appeared as embodied in the leadership of Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt (Hamud, 2012, p. 140).

If we notice that this relation was in the time of the Cold War, both Turkey and Israel would condemn the intervention and the meddling of the Soviet Union to the issues of the Middle East; Accordingly, Turkey, Iran, and Israel should have all cooperated militarily and intelligently to confront communism and Baathism in the East, based in Syria and Iraq.

#### **1.2.1.2. The Suez Crisis**

On the 26 July 1956 the Government of Egypt decided to renovate the Suez Cannel and to build on the Aswan Dam, which could bring huge revenue for the government of Abdel Nasser, America, Israel and UK, directly began opposing such a project, but backed by Soviet as they had good ties together. Britain and France claimed that such project is a thread for the Maritime ways of Suez Cannel.

The point of view of Turkey was more politic before being a legal one. This clearly could be seen in one of the writings of a Turkish writer in which he said “if the big forces could have given the chance for communism to spread out in the Middle East, the region could have faced danger and this important area could have gone out of their control, the tension in this area could have been between the West and Abdel Nasser”. Not just that, even Nasser was the reflection of this tension, Nasser did not close the channel, but it was the Bolsheviks whom did so (Hamud, 2012, p. 144).

At the time, the USA, UK, and France held a conference in London on 16 August 1956 in which fourteen states had been invited, including Egypt plus Turkey; the majority of the states belong to the Western countries. The head of the Turkish mission in the name of his government said: “the Turkish government backed the Arab states, Egypt was free and independent and away from threats and outside pressures, if ever we felt that the future of Egypt is under attack”.

Then a second conference was held for the second time in the 19-20<sup>th</sup> 1956 chaired by Selwyn Lloyd, the foreign Minister of UK ,without Soviet ,majority of states participated in it ,in which John Foster Dallas gave a final project for the problem which was forming the ”benefiters of Suez Cannel group“, led by USA, UK, and France as a triple aggression in Egypt ,Turkey become one of those who benefits from this staff ,the task of the staff was to run the affairs of fees in Suez Cannel, if ever Egypt did not obey, it will be considered as an aggression of the pact of Costantinopoly of 1888, Which was held for organizing the maritime ways of Suez, then the Western countries will go back to the Security Council to attack Egypt. Thus, they sent two ships, one to Suez, and the other one to Port Said. Turkey backed this project, Egypt refused this, thus, in 1956, Egypt was attacked Israel (Balci & kardaş, 2012, p. 81).

The problem of Suez, with the support of Turkey at the end for the western project, existed because Turkey was a member of the Baghdad pact of 1955, and one of the states in Costantinopoly pact of 1888. In 1954, there was a declaration made between the UK and Egypt in which “UK has the right to go back to Egypt in the case there may be any external threat to Turkey and the Arab States” (Smith, 2000, p. 26). In general, Turkey’s attitude towards the triple aggression was positive.

### 1.2.1.3. Turkey and the Arab- Israeli War 1967

On 5 of June 1967, there was the Arab-Israel War, which is recognized by the setback of June or the six day war between Israel and Egypt, Syria and Jordan. Israel occupied Gaza, West Bank and Golan. The war caused the death of 15,000-25,000 people from the Arab Countries versus 800 people from Israel, the destruction of %70-80 of the Arabic Arsenal versus %2-5 from Israel (Haikal, 1990, p. 432). Then, the decision No: 242 issued by the Security Council was changed in the conference in Khartoum, there was some decisions like “no peace, no recognition, and no negotiation” with Israel Plus, because of the war, the majority of the inhabitants of the Suez Cannel. ”Suez Cannel, is an artificial seaway has 193 km length, it is like a link between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean” also, the migrated of the inhabitants of Quneitra in Syria, and Zife in Palestine and other causalities (Haikal, 1990, p. 434).

We should remember that in an epoch, both the Jews and Arabs lived together in Palestine under the rule of the ottomans till the epoch of Sultan Abdul Hamid 1886-1908, Then, it was divided into two parts, Jerusalem was one of them, Quds had a great importance by the Ottomans, thousands of Pilgrims used to visit it. When the Sick Man entered the war with Germany against the coalition forces, the Ottoman Empire was destroyed in the pack of Sykes–Picot. In 1916 the remains of the Ottomans, Syria, Palestine and Iraq were given to UK and France. Then, in Belford in 2<sup>nd</sup> in Nov 1917 the UK expressed its support for a Jewish state on the Palestinian Land, hence, the Jews under the Ottoman empire immigrated to Palestine which they consider it their land it is about 2,000 years.

Thus we see, at the time of the formation of Israel in 1948, Turkey recognized it, but in the triple aggression of “USA, France, and the UK” against Egypt, back Egypt and the Arab states. In the war on Arab-Israel in 1967, Turkey stayed neutral and we see it was smooth with both sides of the war. To a degree, Turkey backs the decision No: 242 of the United Nations that Israel should withdraw from those occupied lands in Golan, Sinai, Gaza District and Zifa (Sleiman, 2002, p. 10).

In Cyprus problem, Israel backed Greece against Turkey in 1963-1964, the relations between Turkey and Israel was not fixed. To a degree in the war on Arab-Israel, Turkey protested against the aggression of Israel on Gaza and Zifa, asked the decision No: 242 to be respected which led to take back of the occupied lands.

#### **1.2.1.4. War of 1973**

The war in October is the fourth one between Arabs and Israel, which began on 6 October 1973, both of Egypt and Syria attacked Israel in Sinai and Golan Heights. It is known by the war of the 10<sup>th</sup> of Ramadhan by the Arabs and by the Israel by the way of forgiveness. The majority of the Arab states logistically helped Syria and Egypt, Soviet indirectly backed the Arabs, and the USA military helped Israel.

At the end of the war, the Foreign Minister Henri Kissinger mediated between Syria and Israel and made ceasefire that has lasted till now. The agreement which was made on 31 May 1974 led to take back sovereignty to Suez Cannel and the surroundings to Egypt, back to Kenitra to Syria and the lands of Sinai, forming a force of the United Nations to safeguard the agreement.

The standpoint of Turkey in this war too was toward the Arab world as it gradually was moving toward the petrol existing in the Arab countries, thus later; it recognized the PLO (Hashima, 2013).

#### **1.2.1.5. Turkey and the PLO**

Turkey has a mutual history with the Palestinian people, it is one of the states that recognized the PLO in 1975, when the independent state of Palestine was announced in 1988, and Turkey recognized it.

The founding of the PLO as a political, semi-Military, Sunnit, public, was in a tie the Arab world and the land of Palestine was under the attack of Zionism and an external complaint against the people of Palestine, they needed an organization that could organize their

administrative, politics and military affairs in a front. Thus, after the first Arab –Palestine conference in 1964, its creation was decided and it has been recognized by both the United Nations and the Arab League as the only representative of the Palestinian people.

Not every time the politics of Turkey toward the Judo-Palestinian case is stable, it is more tactical than the other, routinely opposes Israel and somehow recognizes its enemies, it even gives the permission to the PLO to have an office in Ankara, votes for the decision of the UN, which recognizes Zionism as a racist movement, and opposed 9 months the linkage of Jerusalem to Israel, but even now, Turkey does not know how the Arab states use petrol as a weapon (Sleiman, 2002, p. 10).

#### **1.2.1.6. Camp David Peace Agreement 1978-1979**

If after the declaration of the state of Israel to the end of Cold War the theory of Alliance Parties could have been a base to rely upon, the stage after that shows that the view of Israel toward Turkey has no any sense of negligence, especially in forming the basic element of the foreign policy that could get in use with the external changes, On one hand the Shah of Iran was gone, in place, there is an Islamic Republic, and suddenly Iran changed from a good partner of Israel to an enemy. Israel smartly dealt with the changes and step by step could find Alliances and never let to be left and cut from the diplomatic movement in the region.

For example, with the mediation of Jimmy Carter, the former president of the USA, and the presence of the former president of Egypt, Anwar Al-Sadat and the Prime Minister of Israel Menachem Begin, Israel signed the Camp David agreement with Egypt in Maryland province in the USA in 1978. This peace agreement was to guarantee the relations between both as after the fall of the Shah of Iran; Egypt is the only Arab state with a huge Muslim population, plus its place among the Arab and Islamic state, the existence of Azhar University and has a vast authority over the Islamic world (Inbar, 2011, p. 2).

## **1.2.2. Economic Relations**

### **1.2.2.1. Water Partnership Square**

It is clear that in the Middle East, there was a tension over water that could affect the security and stability, especially to reduce water resources in many countries. Thus, water became a national security issue and a card to use in political pressure used by Turkey, especially against Syria and Iraq, as both Euphrates and Tigris unfold from there “from Toros in Anatoly and pass by Iraq and Syria”.

For this reason, after Turkey sent his delegation to Israel in 1989 to take benefit from their technical skills, Israel sent a delegation from skilled people in different field of food security and land cleaning, and land reform in Ankara.

By knowing such a thing, the Arab league became upset as this is the project of Israel, which is from Nile to Euphrates; the league expressed its distress about such cooperation (Report and Information, 2010, p. 25).

In June 1987 through the council or of Prime Minister Jim, Dona announced the project of peace pipes in the third conference of the investigation center of Jorge town in the USA as a sign of economic and strategic international relations in the Middle East in order to take mutual benefits from the water sources. Although this project had been proposed by an Israeli engineer under the name “Peace water” to fill the water needs in the Middle East, especially Syria and Jordan, from both Seyhan and Ceyhan rivers, it could cost too much, the distance would be about 2650 km plus there would be a cost of 21 Billion dollars with a capacity of sending 6million cubic meters. Plus, it could create a security problem, so it was refused by the Arab countries (Ghoul, 2011, p. 28).

The peace pipe project did not succeed; another Israeli engineer ”Boaz Atchel” had another project. Israel still had the ability to import water from Turkey, for this reason, the Israel Institute of Investigation in New York named the project “Peace River” which is two pipes from Ataturk Lake or from both Sayhan and Cayhan rivers to go to the Gold heights and to fill a basin of 670 M wide and 60 km long there. This will be like a barrier between Syria and Israel as one

of the pipes go to the Tabari Lake for Israel and the other to Yarmuk River behind the Wahda dam for both Jordan and Syria (Al-Deen & AL-Ali . 1997, p.118).

The aims of this project are:

1. This Channel is important for Israel security, it is a barrier in gold heights and to better Jordan River
2. Preserving the quantity and quality of water, distributing it in a fair manner for Syria, Jordan, Palestine and Israel
3. Production of electricity of (100 mg. W). Without any environmental obstacles
4. Guarantee the security on basis of hydrology and security (Al-Deen & AL-Ali. 1997, p. 198).

But this project has its dangers too. It gives a capacity to Israel to control the water in the Golan and Euphrates. It leads to blockade Syria with water, a fixed maritime border. A line for a new agreement, plus taking water from the Euphrates, and leads to drought in Iraq.

#### **1.2.2.2. The Great Anatolian Project “GAP”**

GAP Project “Guneydogu Anadolu Projesi” is one of the most important projects for the development of Anatoly; it goes back to the start of the establishment of the Turkish Republic in the time of putting in function the electric stations and doing some Damon Euphrates River in 1930. All the governments subsequently were trying to benefit from the waters of South Anatoly “Euphrates”, there was an establishment to run the affairs of water in Turkey in 1986 to put it in a function as one of the huge projects. The government listened to such a project called “Directorate of Developing the South Anatoly, determined a Minister for it called “Minister of South Anatoly Affairs” (Tsakalidou, 2013)

GAP is the hugest and the most expensive project held by the Turkish government in its history, %80 of it depended on the Euphrates River and %20 on the Tigris. It contained some governors and areas most of which were the Kurdish ones like “Batman, Diyarbakır, Sirt, Liks, Mardin, Ghazi Antab, Shanli, Adarna”. It contained 9, 7% of the area of Turkey, and 20% of the agricultural areas which make 8, 5 Million Hectares.

Vast plane of Euphrates s and the Tigris basin encompass in the history of this area is called the Fertile Crescent and it is known as the cradle of civilization from which civilization was handed down to the rest of humanity in the 70<sup>th</sup>. This project became a great regional project like, Irrigation sector, electric production, agriculture, hydroelectric, economic infrastructure plus the educational, health and tourists. Until now, 22 big Dams and 19 hydroelectric projects have been planned (Unver, 1997, p. 459).

It has cost till now 32 Billion of dollars, general energy produced is a 7476 Mega Watt which means the annual production is 27 Billion mega in an hour, in itself, this project contains 13 other head projects, 7 of them are on Euphrates s and 6 of them are on the Tigris, their area are 6,76 Million feedings.

This project participates in guaranteeing the social stability and economic development, sectors of communication, agriculture, irrigation, tourism, residential, job opportunity, health, education, national Renaissance, the design of the project was done by the Israeli irrigation expert “Sharon Aluozorf” the engineer is Usha Kale, an Israeli, the project may pose a big danger to the national security of the Arabs. It could be another card to mold the Arab world, to force them to make a pact.

In a visit of Minister of Industry and Trade of Israel to Ankara on 25 May 1998, he headed to a mutual economic conference between Turkey and Israel, and he said “Turkey and Israel has a mutual cooperation for the South Anatoly Project, Israel has sent its experts in the field of irrigation and agriculture to the project and uses every developed technics in both the fields” (Ghoul, 2011, p. 30).

### **1.3. Relations between 1989 and 2002**

#### **1.3.1. Political**

Between the years 1990-1992 the political, economic and military changes appeared in the globe, Middle East and Asia in which the peace process between Arabs and Israel in Madrid conference was held, and they had good reflections on the event chaired by President George Bush, the father. It was made between Israel and each of the Arab countries that have tension

with Israel like "Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine". Even the majority of the Islamic countries accepted the notion of the existence of Israel in the area and deal with; they even promised to lift up the Arab-Israel tension. At the same time the Soviet Union was dismantled in 1991, the second Gulf War was over and the economic relations between Turkey and the Arab countries was diminished, both internal and external political tension appeared in Turkey and this made both Israel and Turkey get closer and make strategic agreements (Report and Information, 2010, p. 18).

At the end, the Arab-Israel tension is endless; thus, in the security field, Turkey is important for Israel. From now and then, the changes are to be repaid in Ankara, from the outcome of the Madrid conference, the diplomatic relations are to be raised to the Embassy level. In June 1992, the former Minister of Tourism of Turkey, Abdul Kadir Ates visited Israel and signed an agreement in the field of tourism and traffic. In November 1992, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey visited Israel, held a meeting with his Israeli Homologue and signed a memorandum of cooperation in the domain of economy, science, and military and agreed on having mutual efforts to communicate with USA (Abdul Aziz, 2014).

Hence, although we see, the Islamic parties grew, presided by Necmettin Erbakan, the father of Political Islam and the Head of Rafah Party. They took power in 1996 but the relations between Turkey and Israel continued, Erbakan was the Prime Minister from June 1996 to June 1997 and his opinions are known by opposing the West and Israel and ask for an approach to the Islamic world. In the Ballot campaign, he used some vocabulary like "we will liberate Quds, and we refuse agreement with Israel". Although the political situation in Turkey had much coup state after taking power by Erbakan, the power had been divided between the military, which was secular and the authority which was Islamic and works to eradicate secularism and radicalization of Islam (Akgun Gundogar & Gorgulu, 2014, p. 3).

### **1.3.2. Economic Relations**

In the middle of 90<sup>th</sup>, the contract of renovating the jet fighters of Turkey by Israel like Phantom F-4 arrived at 700Million Dollars, plus 688million Dollars to buy Tanks of M-60 and other developed weapons were given to Israel (Inbar, 2010, p. 28).

In June 1990, Jerusalem Post published that 16 Israeli experts in the field of water resources gave a report to Yitzhak Shamir about shortage of water for different aims, in which they speak about a long term agreement with Turkey to buy 250 to 500 m<sup>3</sup> of water per year with an amount of 22, 3 cent for every m<sup>3</sup>. The water was to be transported by huge tankers which may contain one million m<sup>3</sup>, by Turkish ships and Medoza Co. Which is a Canadian company from the Mediterranean Sea in Israel (Al-Zameri, 2002, p. 29).

There was such other discussion and visits between both sides, about selling water to Israel. On June 1995, the Minister of Agriculture of Israel visited Ankara, in 1996, the Prime Minister of Turkey "Demirel" visited Israel. In the same year, the President of Israel went back to Turkey, and then on 14 July 1999, in a visit of Süleyman Demirel to Israel, they formed a joint committee to transport the water by using the undersea petrol pipes. Ehud Barak visited Turkey on 25 October 1999 and declared after forming a joint committee for transportation on the water from Turkey, the cost of the project was 150 million Dollars. On 26 January 2001, Turkey and Israel signed a protocol in which Turkey annually sells the amount of 50 million m<sup>3</sup> of water to Israel (Al-Zameri, 2002, p. 33).

The aim of Turkey in its economic relations with Israel was to find an important economic gain to cover its economic shortcoming, as in the 90<sup>th</sup>, Turkey faced a huge debt, both in the scale of local and external, to push Israel, which has a strategic ties with the USA, to pull out Turkey from this mess it had in 2000, the debt of 426 million plus the annual profit. The debts were never used for construction or service projects; it was the hugest economic crisis ever a country has faced after WWII.

Economic exchange between Ankara and Tel Aviv were in 13 stages, 11 of them were military and security agreements plus exchange of weapons and developed technology. 2 of them were in the field of agriculture, water and cotton. In 1991, there was the exchange of 100 million Dollars, in 1995 arrived at 445 million, in 2000 because of the food factories and the need of the countries of Middle Asia for it; the exchange arrived at 1 Billion dollars. In the same year, these two countries began building electric Stations through the Russian natural gas that moves through Turkey to Israel, the value of this agreement was 800 Million Dollars (Ghoul, 2011, p. 41). Plus, the number of Israeli tourists to Turkey in 1996 was 300,000 tourists in 2000 was 350,000, the revenue in Turkey was 300 Million Dollars (Yafuz, 1998, p. 67).

The schedule below analyzes the economic exchange between Turkey and Israel from 1991 to 2001 (Abu-Mutllaq, 2011, p. 57).

Year	Export of Israel to Turkey	Export of Turkey to Israel	General Trade with \$
1991	62,5	46,5	109
1992	78	78,6	156,6
1993	97	90	187
1994	121	80	201
1995	126	178	304
1996	167	240	407
1997	192	254	446
1998	234	392	626
1999	283	480	763
2000	298	585	883
2001	503	622	1125

On the schedule, we see there was a huge promotion between both the countries economically, in 1991-2001, economic exchange between Turkey and Israel in 2000 was one Billion of dollars, both in 2000 agreed on building electric stations by the natural gas that moved from Turkey to Israel with an amount of 800 million dollars.

### 1.3.3. Military Relations

In the 90s, it is the time of the good relations between Turkey and Israel, in 1990; Turkey gave permission to Israel to build intelligence and security stations in the neighboring countries like Iran, Syria and Iraq, at the time of the Gulf War. Turkey permitted the Israeli jet fighters to hold intelligence missions from the military airport in Iraq. To a degree, all ports of Turkey were open to Israel to hold intelligence missions in Iraq, Iran, and Syria, the general commanders and the commanders of the sky forces visited each other's and were in military and intelligence meetings (Yafuz, 1998, p. 63).

Ezer Weizman, president of Israel had a three day visit to Turkey on 25 January 1994, he had the investigation of all the ways with Turkey to encompass the relations to contain all the fields, in March 1994 the Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Çiller visited Israel and signed some military, economic and political agreements (Abdul Qadir & Okasha, 2010).

In 1996, once Suleiman Demiril visited Israel as an answer for that both of Shimon Peres the prime Minister of Israel and the foreign Minister visited Turkey, within the repetition of the meetings and exchange of point of views, every time they used to sign on an agreement most outstanding one is the signing of strategic military agreement, renovation of F-5 jet fighters ,system of quick warnings, manufacture of 200 tanks, and reparation of F-16 jets to Turkey (Yafuz 1998, p. 64).

Then information exchange and the technological inventions began, then agreement on renovating the Air Forces of Turkey, Turkey became one of the owners of jet fighter F-4, Manors, Maritime and Air Military trainings, counter terrorism. Discussing the situation in the Middle East, the Mediterranean countries, all these were being discussed by Turkey and Israel (Akgun Gundogar & Gorgulu 2014, p. 3).

In 1997, Israel gave Turkey 40 missiles from pop-eye 1, later in 1998 another 60 one, and then it showed Turkey how to manufacture pop-eye missiles. The cost of this deal was 500 million Dollars. This type of missile could be used both terrestrially and in the air plus, it could be adjusted on the jets F-4, and F-16. Then they agreed to form a union to produce such a missile consists of 3 companies, 2 of them are Turkish, the other is Rafael which is an Israeli company, the production begins after 20 months and the destination is about 150 km.

Both countries agreed on manufacturing pilotless planes "drones" for the benefit of Turkish Army that could stay in air for 8 hours specially designed for intelligence reason and surveillance and has new programs like Sikorisky wobble 209, program of renovating the Turkish Tanks style 47-48 Baton with 1 Billion dollars worth of money ,then program of mutual manufacture for chariots, Hamlets and Armors "anti-bullets", agreement on changing the weapons of the Turkish soldiers from Kalashnikov to Galil ones (Abu-Mutllaq, 2011, p. 48).

One of the most important reason of cooperating with Israel was the confrontation with PKK specially between 1985-1995 that had irradiated the military, economic, human and political energy from Turkey, Turkey suffered 20,000 dead, and 2000 villages were destroyed, the annual coast of war with PKK was 6-8 Billion US\$, that is the reason why Turkey needed the Israeli skills concerning tactics, technical, intelligence and military domains, at the end Israel in

1999 helped Turkey in capturing Abdulla Öcalan in Nairobi and delivered him to Turkey (Balci & kardaş, 2012, p. 109).

On the other hand, in 18 of June 1997 Erbakan had been obliged to resign his authority under the attacker that happened during that time (Abdul Aziz, 2014). After his resignation, relations continued, the Minister of Defense of Turkey Turkhan Taiyhan on 3 April 1997 visited Israel and met with the Israeli President Ezer Weizman and the president of the government Binyamin Netanyahu plays the defense minister Yitzhak Mordechai speaking about military cooperation (Kirdon 1997, p. 4). Then the Vice General Commander of Turkey Sivil Bayer with 24 Turkish military bodies visited Israel and met with the military commanders there, plus Netanyahu speaking about military cooperation between the two countries. In the same year, the Israeli Defense Minister Mordechai visited Turkey and met with Mesut Yılmaz and other high ranked personalities there.

#### **1.3.4. Cultural Relations**

After Erbakan came to power through a ballot, it is proven that there is the advent of a new Islamic trend in Turkey. Some ties the mutual feelings of the Turks for the people of Palestine surprised Israel. In 1994 in a referendum in Istanbul a secular city compared with others, the vote and public attitude of more than 80% of people is that Israel is a bad state for Turks after Armenia, Greece, and Cyprus. In 1999, the former Israeli ambassador in Turkey “Dr Alwan Lieel” writes: in the normal sense the Turks are more Western than to be Muslims, but sometimes unconsciously shows attitudes that one cannot stay neutral in some cases as the case of Quds, thus in the time of the uprising of the Palestinian people against Israel in 2000, once more the Turkish street agitated and showed their animosity against Israel (Okash & Abdul Qadir 2010).

The internal changes in Turkey and the new situation in the world and the region, led to discrepancies between the point of views of the military commanders of Israel and the responsible bodies in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the new politics of Turkey after Erbakan came to power. The Military authorities insisted on continuation of the relations through

the former Defense Minister of Israel Yitzhak Mordechai (1996-1999) who thought alliance with Turkey is strategic, but the ones working in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were asked to go after this new file in order to analyze the relations with Turkey very carefully ,they saw a risk in this relation, and that in the near future Turkey tries to arm itself once more with both Iran and Syria and put some danger on Greece, Cyprus and Egypt. Professor “Ifraim Inbar”, the former President of ”Begin –Sadat” Center for Strategic Investigations in one of the investigations in 2001 speaks about the nature of this alliance like “the approach between Turkey and Israel in this way could not be considered a military alliance in its classic form, as if any one of them at the time of facing an attack, the other one may not defend, and no one of them may participate in a war for the other, thus we can call it a strategic partnership”.

## **CHAPTER TWO: TURKISH-ISRAELI RELATIONS BETWEEN 2002 AND 2008: BRIGHT ERA IN BILATERAL RELATIONS**

### **2.1. The historical background and coming to power of the Justice and Development Party**

After the fall of Communism and Soviet as a political ideology and the collapse of the Berlin Wall made a gap in the global system. This gap became a ground for establishing many political Islamic parties in the region and Turkey as well. Previously, Islamic Brotherhood was already established in Egypt. Meanwhile, they have branches in 80 countries. Thus, it is not surprising that Turkey excluded from the presence of this Egyptian party.

Despite having the obstacles of secularism and practicing and following some other western beliefs and programs in Turkey, finally, Islamic party appeared in the country. This is due to the fact that at least there was an extensive, historical legacy that prevents from the rulers to ban Islamic parties (Davutoğlu, 2010, p. 96).

Where he witnessed the Middle East after the collapse of the socialist system and the end of the Cold War, an Islamic awakening generally moderate and extreme in both, which has had a significant impact on the course of international relations of the countries in the region, including the Arab countries, and led to strained relations with the West, especially after the terrorist bombings carried out by Islamic movements.

In this respect, there is selection possible they are controlled by the moderate Islamic forces: all Islamic forces in the Middle East and the Arab world are not from extremist forces, but there are moderate forces such as the Muslim Brotherhood of Freedom and Justice Party in Egypt, and of the Islamic Ennahda Party in Tunisia and the Justice and Development Party in Morocco and some other political parties and movements in the Arab world. Many of these moderate forces accused of doing their policies on the basis of hatred for the West - or divide the world into the world of disbelief and faith, but the moderate policies of these parties are founded on the pragmatic basis (Balci & kardaş, 2012, p. 106).

So, political Islamic parties in Turkey have its root in the society and it is not a product of an abrupt situation or even a foreign equation. That is why the conflict between both Islamic and secular wings with their military and civil elites was strong and hard. Later, in this research, more details will be provided and we will see the reflection of this conflict on the regional equation and development.

Existing Islamic movements in Turkey and Turkish constitution itself, in 1961 allows civil freedom and establishing Islamic parties, in this way, Necmettin Erbakan, a father of the Turkish Islamic Party, appeared. He found a good piece of land which is Turkey and planted his seed on the ground which is Islamic political party. He found a series of Islamic parties such as a National Order Party “Milli Nizam Partisi” from 1970 to 1971, National Salvation Party “Milli Selamet Partisi” in between 1972 and 1980, Welfare Party “Refah Partisi” from 1983 to 1998, the Virtue Party “Fazilet Partisi” in 1998 to 2001 and finally he has established Felicity Party “Saadet Partisi” from 2001 until now (Balci & kardaş, 2012, p. 109).

In the following section, we will discuss the political parties which have an Islamic background and end it with JDP.

### **2.1.1. The Historical Background of JDP and its Ideology**

The appearance of the Islamic political party in Turkey is directly tied to its engineer Necmettin Erbakan, He found National Order Party with some other Islamic background elites in 6 January 1970. His party members were a mixture of Risale- INur students, the Sufis and the reformists who were under the influence of Islamic Brotherhood (Yavuz, 2009, p. 48).

Erbakan was elected in the Konya area to be a member of Turkish Parliament and he obtained the support of the majority of the 10,000 students of the graduate religious institutes in this area (Ghaul, 2011. p. 81) and then he started a dialogue with some other Islamic figures and established National Order Party.

The party claimed that they have their own political beliefs, but they have been inspired by Islam. In a short period of time, the party was popular amongst Turkish cities. They could open 60 centers and 200 branches. His members were mostly the students of the religious institutes

and soon they found Turkish Student Union “Türk Öğrenci Birliği” in the universities. Their major goal was they demanded to reform some articles of the Turkish 1961 Constitution and they claimed that the democratic system is improper if freedom of speech does not practice. Erbakan’s purpose by using democracy was to get further opportunities to practice Islamic ideologies. That is why both secular newspapers in Turkey, Cumhuriyet and Milliyet interpreted Erbakan’s intention as ‘Erbakan wants to use religion for political reasons’ (Ahmed, 2005, p .28).

After the complaint of Muhsin Batur, Turkish Commander-in-chief in 21 March 1970, Turkish Constitutional Court banned Erbakan’ party as they thought that the party is not secular. The Constitutional Court described the party as:

1. The principles of the party were against Turkish Constitution;
2. Attempt to work against secularism and work for a establishing an Islamic Government;
3. The party stood some religious demonstrations;
4. The actions and steps of the party were against the principles of Atatürk ((Yavuz, 2009, p. 49).

As a result of the repressive policies practiced by the government of Adnan Menderes, Gen. Cemal Gürsel a military coup overthrew the government in 1960 and executed Menderes. In the era of Gursel swept Turkish conflicts between pro-power parties and to demand a return to luxury Atatürk and the opposition, even Justice Party led by Süleyman Demirel came to power in 1965, and was elected Cevdet Sunay President of the Republic (1966-1973) and the demonstrations intensified unrest and violence between the right and left, called the Army to intervene again to put an end to chaos and the reform of economic and social conditions. But the unrest did not stop and continued conflict between supporters of the application of the principles of luxury, and supporters of the hard-line nationalist movement and supporters of the left-wing Socialist and supporters of the Islamic trend, which confronted a big resistance from the military and secularists since the return of Süleyman Demirel as prime minister during the reign of President Fahri Korutürk (1973-1980) and governments came after him (Balci & kardaş, 2012, p. 105).

The army under the guidance memorandum warning the civilian government in 1971, and was followed by **another military coup** led to overthrow the government of Süleyman Demirel.

In 1972, Erbakan established another party, National Salvation Party, Süleyman Arif Emre. Soon, in all Turkish regions opened its branches, entering the secondary, high school and institutes. Also, they claimed to follow religious morals, Islamic ideology and freedom of conscience. Under the influence of this party, the Presidency of Religious Affairs made a statement and demanded for wearing hijab by the Turkish Women (Ahmed, 2005, p. 39).

The National Salvation Party could make some progress between 1972 to 1980 and also could get the passions of the Islamic world. Their newspaper, Milli Gazete, suggested reviving Islamic state and criticized secularism as they believed that they should go back to Islamic Sharia. Furthermore, they showed their disagreement against the existence of the American military headquarters in Turkey. In this regard, one of their achievements was their cooperation with the Republican People's Party in which they could withdraw confidence from the Turkish Foreign Minister, Hayrettin Erkin who had affiliations with the Jews (Sadq, 2011, p. 29).

In the general elections of June 1977, Erbakan's party could take only 8.56 % of the votes and won only 44 seats in the parliament. This made the members of the party to be separated particularly the group who called Nur "*Nurcular*". This was because of the fact that Erbakan had a coalition with the Republican People's Party, which is a leftist and secularist party. Not only this, after he had an agreement with Bülent Ecevit, military commanders felt that the role of the National Salvation Party was increased. Moreover, the party withdrew confidence from the foreign minister and the supporters of Erbakan demonstrated and verbally assaulted secularism, Atatürk and Zionism. Because of all of these, in January 1978, Turkish General Prosecutor asked for banning Erbakan from being a president of his party because he worked against secularism, the principles of Atatürk and intended to mix religion and politics (Narli, 1999, p. 41).

On 12 September 1980, Turkish Military with the leadership of Canan Ercan made a coup, controlled the government and imprisoned all parties president including Erbakan and 33 other leaders of the party. On 24 April 1981, Erbakan was accused of doing some actions that

were against the principles of both Kamalism and secularism. Thus, he was imprisoned and in 1985 he was set free, but he was under a tight observation of the government. In July 1983, Refah Party was founded and first Ahmet Tekdal became a president temporarily. In 1986, Erbakan went to Mecca to perform Umrah, when he returned; he started his activities again and in 1987 he became the leader of Refah Party.

He started his political activities via practicing religion and Sufism. Particularly, both Qadiri and Nakhsbandi orders were developed into a new stage by Erbakan since further religious institutes and Sharia colleges were found.

That made the Islamic parties to develop further and the supporters of Erbakan party were more and more increased. Thus, because of forming a coalition government between Erbakan's party and Tansu Çiller "True Path Party", Erbakan could become Turkish Prime Minister in 1996. That event was surprising in which it was for the first time in the history of an Islamic Political Party in Turkey, an outstanding Islamic political figure could become a Prime Minister in a secular government. This is apart from the fact that during the election campaign, Erbakan called building an Islamic state and liberating Jerusalem from the Jews (Report and Information, 2010, p. 31).

But, he resigned because of the threat of Turkish Military in August 1996. Following that, Constitutional Court suspended Erbakan, Şevket Kazan, Ahmet Tekdal and other outstanding politicians and parliamentary rights for 5 years (Narli, 1997, p. 42). This led them to found another Islamic political party again. Thus, they found Fazilet (Virtue) Party in January 1998 and some names were suggested to be the leader of the party, namely, Erdoğan, who was the Mayor of Istanbul at that time, Melih Gökçek, Ankara Mayor, Abdullah Gül, the rector of the party's foreign relations and, Bülent Arınç MP and former Minister of Energy. On 22 June 2002, again, Constitutional Court banned Fazilet Party since they thought that they were violating the Turkish Constitution. This is the fourth Islamic Political Party so far that was banned by the Constitutional Court in Turkey (Yavuz, 2009, p. 68).

After that, two other parties were founded. First, Justice and Development Party, an Islamic-liberal Party under the leadership of Erdoğan, The second party was Saadet "Felicity" Party in which they have the same Islamic method as Fazilet Party and they followed in Islamic

traditions because they did not have any economic plan, they could not pass the 10 % threshold (Margulies& Yıldızoğlu, 2009).

What are the differences between the essential and the core visions? The traditionalists seeking to undermine the secular state of luxury, and standing anti-Western stance, and they look to Islam as hostile to Western values is not compatible with it, and are opposed to Turkey joining the European Union. In contrast, it was announced by the modernists “AKP” respect the Turkish Republic's secular, and compatible with the West fully with him and cooperation, and declared their acceptance of Western values such as democracy and human rights, and their desire to join the European Union.

Finally. The Justice and Development Party was formed on August 14, 2001 by dissidents of the Islamic Virtue “Saadet” Party who dissolved the House of Representatives after the decision of the Turkish Constitutional Court, and these were these deputies representing wing innovators in the Virtue Party.

Thus Recep Tayyip Erdoğan - the former mayor of Istanbul, and a prominent figure in the Islamic political movement in Turkey was elected as the first leader of the party (Al-Jazeera Center for Studies, 2015).

## **2.1.2. Domestic and Foreign Policy of the JDP**

### **2.1.2.1. Domestic Policy**

JDP or AKP classified it as a democrat-conservative party and has an Islamic root. However, they have refused that they are an Islamic party and mix religious slogan with politics, instead they are a modern party with an Islamic background, and capitalism and market economy are on its agenda and seriously strived to join the European Union.(Sadq, 2011, p. 41).

After issuing a decision of banning Fazilet Party by the Turkish Constitutional Court on 22 June 2001, some of the outstanding party's leaders with the leadership of Erdoğan called themselves the reformists and modernist publicly, separated themselves from the mentioned parties. One week after establishing Saadet Party on 14 August 2001, Former Istanbul Mayor,

Erdoğan, presented an application for forming JDP Party which was the 39<sup>th</sup> Turkish Political party. Erdoğan refused that his party is inherited from any political parties, but he claimed that he is inherited from justice and liberalism which was earlier led by Adnan Menderes. (Davutoğlu , 2010, p. 389). One of the most important principles that the party took as a responsibility, was a national development. Thus, the party was formed by various new political figures from different political parties. Some of its leaders like Erdoğan, Gül and Bülent Arınç were from Fazilet party, Cemil Çiçek and Abdülkadir Aksu were from the Motherland Party “Anavatan Partisi” and Hussein Sislek and Köksal Toptan were from the Turkish Democratic Party and all of them formed JDP (Yavuz, 2009, p. 10).

As we mentioned, JDP was formed by a great number of different political and religious leaders with different background. When the party was established, Turkey was at the political gap and it was hard to see anybody to believe the parties which had parliament seats. It was for ages that the economy of the country was deteriorated and this led the JDP leaders to form the party so that they could free the country from the deep current economy crisis occurred in 2001 and step towards an economical welfare status. Also, they tried to develop the country without having any clashes with the military (Saed, n.d, p. 471).

Amongst the important principles that JDP advocated are:

1. Building a unified, central republic that offers social rights and depends on the democratic and secular principles.
2. Providing equal opportunities for all and reformulating and practicing a good relationship with the other countries.
3. Having a policy for applying equality over taxes and distributing the taxes in a way that should keep the balance of the social state people.
4. Refusing all kinds of torture, terror and insult.

President of the party understands secularism in a way that the state must be neutral and in a way that they think and believe and thus secure the democratic principles (Balci & kardaş, 2012, p. 111).

5. Because of the fact that JDP is a mixture from the three political parties such as a Fazilet party in which they were the owner of the initiative of establishing JDP, the nationalist

wings that were separated from Nationalist Movement and the Liberalists that were also separated from different liberal parties, they all secretly refused the dominance of the military over the political and civil life and being far from working on a holy ideology. Further, they promised to activate the institutional government, and reducing the dominance of the military in the political process (Aydin & Cakir, 2007, p.3).

This party could win in the elections of November 2002 and get the majority of the parliament seats and this continues for three subsequent elections. Apart from this, because Erdoğan read a story that was totally related to the Islamists in 1994, they prohibited him to be a president; instead, Abdullah Gül was selected. Thus, he ultimately became a Prime Minister after they had constitutional amendment. In 2007, JDP obtained 47% of the votes. However, their parliament seats were decreased in 341. Finally, Erdoğan was assigned to be Prime Minister and Abdullah Gül to be a president (Sumer, 2013, p.10.).

On April 2007, Turkish Military Forces notified the government that to regret the policy that they implemented and they called it as an attempt to decrease their dominance and the government realized that this threat is a beginning of another coup. Those actions were happening at the time that the supporters of JDP were increased and on the other hand, they thought that the military statement shows there will be a conspiracy and their party becomes a victim. As a result, Constitutional Court cancelled the first presidential election round. This event was the same as the scenario in 1996 when military forces pushed Erbakan to step down. Taking into the consideration to the fact that JDP could offer stability and grow the economy of the country from 2002-2007 with the ratio 7%. Further, many elites with an economic background appeared to support JDP. This makes JDP to be in the strongest position to confront military forces (Yusuf, 2009, p. 38).

In spite of the fact that the military forces always accused JDP as a party that intended to ignore secularism in Turkey, but this time the Constitutional Court decided to avoid having dominance of the military and arrest a number of its leaders who wanted to stand a coup against the government. In a series of assaults, Turkish police arrested the Former Commander of Turkish Air Forces Retired General, Ibrahim Fırtına, and Former Commander of Turkish Naval Forces, Retired Admiral, Özden Örnek, 34 other Military Generals and 98 officers (Balci & Kardaş, 2012, p. 104).

On the other hand, JDP ruling time in Turkey is domestically peaceful, It is clear that when any country is at war with such a group in which they have a historical right in Turkey, it is hard to get any economic progress. Thus, Turkey under the rule of JDP is a miracle in terms of economy and economic development.

Economic crisis in Turkey from 1980 to 2004 was the most difficult crisis the world had seen since the WWII. Turkish Lira in 2004 lost its strength against USD with the ratio of 40%. Turkey's foreign debt in 1980 was 15.7 billion dollars and their annual interest was 1 billion dollars which was accumulated in Turkey. In this way, 1999, the foreign debts exceeded 100 billion dollars and annual interest was 5 billion dollars. Surprisingly, the debt was not for the sake of Turkey's infrastructure and other public services. Moreover, the country has many domestic debts and in 1980 it was 7.9 billion dollars and in 1999 it reached 63.6 billion dollars. Thus, according to the Turkish economists, the country in the beginning of 2000, it reached 427 billion dollars while they could borrow 12-15 billion dollars annually from both World Bank and International Monetary Fund "IMF" (Ali, 2004).

JDP could take some successful steps in a certain period of time to solve the economic crisis. For example, in 2002, Turkey's export was 36 billion dollars and in 2010 it reached 102 billion dollars. Also, in 2002, the national income was 220 billion dollars raised in 618 in 2010. Thus, Turkey became the sixth largest economy in Europe, for instance, in 2002; personal income was 3,500 USD and increased to 8590 USD in 2010 (Saed, n.d, p. 471).

This made JDP to obtain the votes of 42,532,000 amongst 74,000,000 Turkish voters in 185,700 polling stations of the election in 2007. In the same election, 14 political parties and independent lists were participated to compete for 550 parliamentary seats. Moreover, in this election, there were 7393 candidates, including 699 independent one. Ultimately, JDP could win 341 parliamentary seats (Hssan, 2012, p. 46).

In the election of 2007, Erbakan and Saadet Party strongly attached JDP and its leaders, claiming that from the time that JDP came to power, Turkey takes off its Islamic clothes. Further, in 2007 election campaign, they said that "those who intended to vote to JDP, s/he will go to hell in the doomsday." And, Erbakan said, "Erdoğan was one of the members of my

school and he has cheated and run away. ‘ ‘ He also claimed that ‘ ‘Erdoğan was separated from my party due to the command that he got from Israel and America (Aydin& Chakir, 2007).

Similar to the parliamentary election in 2007, Erdoğan could win the votes of 68 provinces out of 81 Turkish provinces. Generally, obtaining the majority of the votes, which was  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the Turkey’s votes, so that they could stand constitutional reform and overcoming the presidency election, which faced some challenges for two continuous rounds, were amongst the JDP’s goals.

As a result, JDP presented a project for implementing some amendments in the constitution. The amendments were:

1. Electing the president is done by the people rather than parliament.
2. The president’s ruling period decreased from 7 to 5 years.
3. The president can re-candidate him/herself.
4. Government election is decreased from 5 to 4 years.
5. Legal MPs presence for enacting law in the parliament decreased from 367 to 184 members (Ghaul, 2011, p. 97).

#### **2.1.2.2 JDP’s Foreign Policy**

Ending the Cold War was a turning point in the history of Turkey. Despite being a NATO member, the country’s security faced danger, particularly after the fall of the Soviet Union. Further, some new countries in a number of regions such as Central Asia, Caspian and Black Seas and Balkan areas were created (Davutoğlu, 2010, p. 208). This made many changes in Turkey’s foreign policy and let it become a power in the region. This role was not new for Turkey as the country was freer in terms of foreign policy during the Cold War due to the coordination between former World Bank economists and TurkutÖzal while he was Turkey’s Prime Minister between the years 1983-1989 and Turkey’s President during 1989 until his death in 1993. “Özal ” had made some neo-liberal and economic reforms like what Margaret Thatcher was owned. This made Turkey to be attractive by the capitalism countries and opened its door to the foreign investors. Further, privatization, which means transferring the tasks from the government to the private sector, was formed by Özal (Sumer, 2013, p. 6).

Since 2002, Turkey's foreign policy, has widened step by step. It has continued with the Özal 's policy. Under JDP's foreign policy, Turkey has continued to join with the EU and strengthening its position in NATO. Turkey's situation, is important and it is situated in an area called Caspian, Balkan and Middle East. Turkey is a strategic place where energy is transported and gone through to the other countries. This makes Turkey to have a project which will help it to be a regional and international player (Stern & Ross, 2013, p.116).

Due to the dominance of Turkey in the region, it obtained a number of posts such as Organization of the Islamic Conference "OIC" Secretary General, to be an observer in the Arab League, join G20 which is the largest World economy Forum, Non- Permanent Member of the United Nation Security Council, recruiting NATO Deputy Secretary General, Organization of Economic and Co-operation Development "OECD" Secretary General, attempting to obtain a seat in IMF and World Bank Executive Council (Sumer, 2013, p.8).

During 2002-2008, Turkey was successful in decreasing the amount of concerns of its neighboring countries. It tried to close Syria, Iran and Russia in terms of the economy and it was avoided competing and implementing geopolitical strategy to stand against others. Also, it had a practical policy in case of Cyprus and a good deal with Armenian Case. Further, it steps forward towards a better relation with Greece, started a diplomatic effort to solve the disagreement between Syria- Israel and Palestine-Israel. This makes Turkey deteriorating its relations with Israel finally in 2009. Certainly, the engineer of all foreign policies was Former Turkish Prime Minister, Dr. Ahmed Davoutoglu (Aydin & Cakir, 2007, p. 4).

The American role in the region is historical and critical. The relations between both America and Israel are historical and the relations between both America and Turkey dated back to WWII and it has focused on the economy, politics and security. America regarded Turkey as a strategic and friendly country in which it can have a great role in the region during and after the Cold War and at the time of the conflicts with Russia. Not only this, they think that both Turkey and Israel are two American allies in the Middle East. The ambition of having relations with Turkey from American side, even belongs to the 1920s. This was to organize the Britain's dominance in the region as this has a Geo-strategic significance for America in the Arab World (Olson, 2013, p. 14).

Furthermore, Turkey is the only country that is the member of NATO and has borders with Arab countries, and Turkey is an important part of an Eastern country in which both America and Israel have an interest in rebuilding the region. Under the light of these above mentioned the agenda of American and Turkish relationship included:

1. Building a front line to confront the Soviet Union
2. Having a detailed and earlier study for the importance of Turkey in the Middle East
3. After the World War II, Turkey has had intention to keep global situation calm.
4. Getting benefit from the position of the United State to join the European Union (Balci & Kardaş, 2012, p. 101).

The USA believes that Turkey deserves to be a member of the European Union, politically, America has always taken some steps in this regard. Also Turkey intends to obtain military and economic aids from the US. Furthermore, Turkey needs to have strong and disciplined military forces so as to confront the foreign threats particularly from the neighbor countries.

When Turkey would be in a sensitive situation or crisis, they need an ally with Israel first and through this, cooperate with America consequently so as to overcome its crises (Xamash, 2010, p. 59).

Despite of all these points mentioned above, America funded a great amount of money to renew the Turkish planes; this is part of the agreement of US- Israel in 1996. Also, America participated in a series of joint military maneuvering which were held between Turkey and Israel such as Turkey- Israeli maneuvering in 1999, January 2001 in the Mediterranean Sea, June 2001 and August, 2007. After developing and strengthening Turkey-Israeli relations, America nominated a Jewish-American to its ambassador in Ankara as a Jewish person understands the needs of Israel there. (Olson, 2013, p. 10) This step was to secure and serve the relationship between the two countries to its interests.

To summarize, based on all provided scientific and political discussions above, we can claim that, Turkey-America relations is directly tied with Turkey-Israel relations. So, any difficulties happen in Turkey-Israel relations, directly affect Turkey-America relations. This is

because of the fact that basically Jewish lobby had an important role in building the relationship between America and Turkey.

The differences and disagreement between Turkey and America belongs to 2002 when the Justice and Development Party came to power. Meanwhile, American Congress approved that American troops attack on Iraq with the aiding of Turkish ground to overthrow Saddam Hussain's regime in 2003. Although Erdoğan is the first man of his party who preferred American step, the majority of Turkish Parliament refused to allow America to use its ground to attack Iraq.!

Is it surprising and questionable for a party which came to power for 5 months and does not allow an American Congress decision? Generally, the Justice and Development Party started a series of policy which step by step tried to lessen American influence. As a part of the meeting of foreign ministers of the neighboring countries in Kuwait, Turkish foreign minister, Abdulla Gul visited the country on 14 February 2004 and proposed establishing an economic, political and security committee, like the European Union, so that all the Middle Eastern Countries participate and call Middle Eastern Union. This was as an alternative to American plan which was performed after September 11 (Milkawy, 2013, p. 28).

As it indicated by Davutoğlu, in the book ‘‘ Strategic Depth’’ he said “even in the past, Turkey was a great international player, but it did not realize that it has a strong visual and a weak stomach, apart from this, its heart has a problem and its brain is medium (Davutoğlu, 2010, p. 634).

In other words, Turkey has a strong army and a weak economy, but it has no confidence in itself and its strategic thinking was not good. Later, we can see that Turkey could mediate between both Georgia and Russia by Davutoğlu. Then, the country implemented a ‘‘strategic triangle’’ in which it was planned when JDP came to power in 2002. This strategic triangle depends on three main goals:

1. Domestic Peace Process (it is related to the PKK)
2. Regional Legitimacy
3. Establishing a connection with European countries and America.

In brief, during 2002-2008, JDP identified a new method so that it deals with the new defacto in Turkey and it was successful in being far away from the umbrella of Islamic Political Parties, which was Erbakan style. That led those Islamic Parties to stand against JDP on one side and other secular establishments in the other. Despite having those obstacles, JDP could develop the country to a great extent and the most important ones were economically developed, providing further freedom and constitution reform, which led Turkish citizens to be the owner of decision (Balci & Kardaş, 2012, p. 104).

## **2.2. Parties and their Impact in Shaping Israeli Policy**

The most distinguished features to find Israeli parties are having ‘ ‘ multiple political parties’ ’ in which each party has its own program and vision to administrate the Israeli policy (Alawy, 2008, p. 1).

Multiple parties in anywhere and anytime in the world are a healthy state of the party system of democracy, but in Israel, this is different and strange, because the country is built on 21,000 square Kilometers, they have many enemies, establish the biggest agricultural land on sand, they have always more than a billion enemies while their population is less than two millions. In the Middle East, democracy is a tree in which it could be produced. However, when the Jews built their country, they did not forget democracy, multiple parties and color to plant and grow (Al-Jazeera Center for Studies, 2015)

Another feature in Israel party system is having separation and creating new parts when the Knesset “Parliamentary” Election is ahead. For example, Ariel Sharon created Kadima Party in 2005, just a year before Knesset election in 2006.

In modern history, in each country, a political party has an impact on politics and law of the political system. For an instant, the type of the party system that practiced in a certain country has influence on the hierarchy of the political system, constitution, managing foreign and local politics (Hillel, 2015).

Israeli parties have a special feature in which some of them were existed before Israeli State was formed in 1948. However, some other parties were established after the existence of

the Israeli State. First of all, they depended on 'multiple party system'' because they knew that this kind of system will become a common feature in the political system of the modern world.

Establishing Israeli state in 1948 was an outcome of the Zionist and religious movement. Israeli parties were different from the western parties in which in western world parliament, election and external factors were the base of their formation of the structure of the political parties while in Israel the political parties were classified as following (Alawy, 2008. p. 5):

1. Labour Party
2. Conservative party
3. Religious Party
4. Marxist Party
5. Arab Party

Amongst the topics of this research, we identify 5 outstanding and strong Israeli parties in which they have role in parliament and authority of the country in both domestic and foreign politics. Those parties have their own vision of Arab-Israeli conflict, especially in the election campaign propaganda:

### **2.2.1. Likud Party (Center- Right)**

A Likud party founded in 1973 after the unification of both Hirit and Liberal Parties which is a right wing party. Amongst the outstanding leaders of this party was Menachem Begin, Isaac Shamir, Ariel Sharon, Benjamin Netanyahu (Harbi, 2008). This party came into power in several times during 1977-1984, 1986-1992, 1996-1999 and 2001-2005 (Alawy, 2008. p. 15).

Amongst the most important situation of the party over the Israel-Palestine conflict and peace process were:

1. Standing against the withdrawal in the Arab lands where they have been occupied during the Arab-Israeli conflict during 1948-1973.
2. Supporting the Zionists who have lived in Palestine lands and Golan Heights.

The long and local conflict amongst Likud party leaders, Ariel Sharon and political opposition party and unilateral decision for withdrawing Israeli troops in the Gaza Strip has

negative impact on the government and as a result of this the party withdrew from the government called for early elections (Mustafa, 2015).

Then, the events above, led Ariel Sharon and some other members of the party withdrew from the Likud Party and created a new party called Kadima. After that, Likud Party by the leadership of Benjamin Netanyahu could win the 19 December 2005 election. **Netanyahu** is an extreme leader in the case of Palestine, especially the Palestine Government, which was constituted by Hamas Movement (Mustafa, 2015).

In the last election, which was held on 17 March 2015, Likud Party could obtain 23.4% of the votes which are 30 Parliament seats out of 120. This shows that Likud with the leadership of Netanyahu could win the election (Al-Jazzera, 2015).

### **2.2.2. The Labor Party**

The history of Labor Party belongs to 1930 where even the Israel State was not found. The founders of the party were members of different syndicates and foundations with they have a socialist background and they implement secularism. At the beginning, two wings controlled the party, the first one was a Zionist Labours group in Palestine in 1920 in which it strived to collect the Jews in Palestine. The second one was International Zionist Movement, in which later formed two organizations named Hagana “Israeli Underground Army” and Blmakh (Saspost, 2014).

Due to having different attitudes amongst its leaders, this party faced some brakes and separations and now it is named as Israel Labor Party. Amongst the outstanding founders of this party who have been taken posts in Israeli domestic and foreign policies were David Bn-Gorion, Golda Meir, Shimon Peres, Yitzhak Rabin and Ehud Barak.

This party was amongst the outstanding parties in which it came to power many times after the establishment of the Israeli State in which there were 1947-1977, 1992-1996 and 1999-2001. This is apart from the fact that this party sometimes was a part of a coalition to form the government like the coalitions of 1984-1990 with the Likud Party.

This party had a role in signing the Oslo Agreement in Washington between Israel and Palestine in 1993. This is apart from the fact that the president of the party, Amir Peretz was invited to the agreement (Alawy, 2008. p. 14).

Previously, the party had a security and political program. But, when Amir Peretz became a president, the program of the party turned into social and made some changes in the leadership of the party. After the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin on 4 November 1995, this party could not get power. However, due to continuous program for serving the poor people and labors, in 2006, Amir Peretz could overcome on the other candidates, which they were mainly military figures (Saspost, 2014). After the election of 2015, Labour Party by the leadership of Isaac Hertzog could get 18.6% of the votes (Al-Jazeera, 2015).

### **2.2.3. Kadima Party**

Kadima is a Hebrew word means ‘to go forward’. This party was founded in November 2005 (Hillel, 2015). After the separation of Ariel Sharon from Likud Party, Sharon took two important steps:

1. Asked the president to resolve the Parliament on 21 January 2005.
2. Resign from the leader of the Likud Party and create a new one (Saspost, 2014).

Kadima is the newest political party in Israel in which it works with the public. It is the only party which formed and succeeded in the same year. This was an outcome of the fact that the party is innovative and there was a political and institutional vacuum. When Sharon was ill and did not appear in the world of politics, Ehud Olmeret became the president of the party. Nowadays, Kadima is the main political party that has many followers. This is related to the fact that both the right and left wings of the party are alike in viewing at Israel.

Regarding the party’s attitude over the Israel and Palestine conflict and peace process is that they announced they are committed to the ‘road map’ and refuse any Palestinian government, which will be led by Hamas (Alawy, 2008. p. 18).

#### **2.2.4. Shas Party:**

Shash Party is a political, religious and social party which was formed by Jewish religious leader Hakham Ofadia in 1984. He is still the spiritual leader of the movement and represents the western Jewish conservative and religious class in Israel (Awda, 2015).

Establishing Shas party was like a reaction to the discriminations that were felt by the eastern Jewish “Sephardic” from the time that Israel State was founded by a Jewish westernized elite called Ashkenazi.

So far, this party has played an important role in political life. Unlike other religious parties in Parliament in which they only focus on the religious topics, this party has tried to differently, deal with Palestine and refuse any negotiation with them over the future of Jerusalem. In the last election, this party stood as the third party in the country, but 2015 electoral, their votes were falling by 5.73 %, which was only 7 parliamentary seats (Al- Jazeera, 2015).

The principles of Shash party are caring into the habits and traditions of the Jews, continuing on the Rabbi “Hakham” and Sephardi methods like what comes in their Eastern Jewish Legacy, educating Israeli children based on what comes in the Torah, advocating people to love Israel and keeping Saturdays and other Jewish religion occasions (Awda, 2015).

#### **2.2.5. Yisrael Beiteina Party:**

Yisrael Beiteina Party or Home for Israeli is a party which formed after their separation from the Likud Party in 1999 with the leadership of Avigdor Lieberman. The reason of their separation with Benjamin Netanyahu was due to the disagreement they had about Israeli rockets in the Gaza Strip.

This party is right, racist and extreme. Its principles are based on standing against Arab and their immigration. They always focused on using military forces to defend the Israeli national security. And, they care for the Jewish immigrants from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics “USSR” as they could guarantee their votes in the elections (Al-Jazeera, 2015).

The party organized a campaign against raising the call of the mosques in Jerusalem in which they gave a bill to the parliament to prohibit this phenomenon because calling is disturbing the Israeli people. This bill was supported by the leader of the party as they thought that the Arabs and Palestinians do some racist actions against the religion (Mustafa, 2015). The party participated in Netanyahu's government in 2009 and they obtained five ministers, including Foreign, Tourism and Domestic Security Ministries. In 2015, the party could get eight parliamentary seats (Al-Jazeera, 2015).

## **2.3 Bilateral Relationships (2002-2008)**

### **2.3.1 Political Relationships**

From the time the AK party took the power, there has been a strategy in the party, which was to close the ties with the surrounding neighbors, to reactivate all sorts of political, economic and cultural relationships with the Arab and Islamic countries. According to this policy, which was hammered by Erdoğan's Advisor, the former Foreign Minister, the current Prime Minister, Ahmet Davutoğlu, they had a negative impact on the nature of the relationships between Turkey and Israel (Aydin&Cakir, 2007, p. 9).

Therefore, after November 2002's election, there has been a better relationship between Turkey and Arab countries. Erdoğan immediately decided to gather all the Arab ambassadors in Ankara to reveal his intentions to enhance the relationship with Islamic and Arab countries. Earlier, he refused to meet with Israel's Ambassador in Ankara (Report Information, 2010, p. 25).

In 2004, Erdoğan was elected as the Secretary General for organizing the Islamic conference. At the same time, Turkey's President was elected as the chairman of the permanent committee for economic and trading cooperation in the Islamic countries, and Turkey was admitted as an observatory member in the Arab League. Later on, when NATO members met in Turkey, Turkey played a great role in improving the relationships between the Arab Gulf and the NATO members, aiming at stabilizing global and regional security from this cooperation. These

Turkish steps towards the Arab countries witnessed the beginning of Lebanon war in 2006, then the violence and terror from Israeli's towards the Arab people in Palestine (National Defense Magazine, 2010).

In the margins of America's invasion of Iraq in 2003, the relationships between Turkey and the Arab countries has been directly affected in a negative way. Israel started to intervene in Iraqi Kurdistan in terms of military and intelligence, at the same time; they started violence and massacre against the Palestinian people. At this time the AK Party took the opportunity to directly influence the voters and the general opinion of the people by showing commiserations with the Palestinian people, aiming at increasing its votes in 2007. This is when Turkey has pretended to be neutral for decades in Israel-Palestine plight, ignoring what Israel was doing at the expense of Arab and Islamic countries (Xamash, 2010, p. 11). As we earlier stated and one must remember that after the declaration of the state of Israel, Turkey was the only Muslim country which immediately recognized it.

We see that after AK party took power in Turkey, Israel strongly criticized Turkey's political stance in which they accuse Israel of invading Palestine's soil, terrorizing, racially abusing, murdering and massacring Palestinians (Nasr, 2013).

At the same time, Israel's attack against Palestinians was another reason for a destabilizing relationship between the two countries. Not only this, but with AK Party's forming the government, they called back their ambassador to Israel, **Feridun Sinirlioğlu**, as they considered Israel as a terrorist government which is murdering Palestinians in cold blood.

At the level of the relationships between Turkey and the Arab countries, Abdullah Güle's government took a step to show Turkey's independence in making decisions, especially when Gül visited Damascus in 2003, he stated that Turkey will take nobody's side in Iraq's War and they will not be part of America's interest in invading Iraq which aims at surrounding and isolating Syria as well (Abdulqader, 2010).

Erdoğan, whilst presenting a lecture at Harvard University on 30 January 2004, asked for stabilizing the security of the Middle East which will be done by solving the Arab- Israel conflict in way that Palestinians establish their own government and be recognized, and democracy takes its path in Iraq considering the national unity, and a forum will be held for regional security and cooperation in order to work on changing the political culture in the region (Ghaul, 2011, p. 111).

In the beginning of 2005, Turkey's Foreign Minister, Abdullah Güle, made a trip to Israel in which he reaffirmed keeping the balance in Turkey's new policies under AK party's authority. Israel considered the trip to be very important as it was the first high profile person to visit Israel as it come at the time when Erdoğan refused to receive Israel's Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, as Erdoğan considered Sharon's treatment with Palestinians as 'Government Terrorism'. This is despite the assassination of Sheik Ahmed Yaseen and Sheik Abdul Aziz Rantisi who were Hamas' leaders. Regardless of all of this, Gül's trip aimed at playing as a mediator between Syria and Israel on one hand and Israel with Palestine on the other. The major goal of the trip was to open a new page in the relationship between the two countries (Abdul-Tahr, 2005, p. 44).

In the same year, on 1 May 2005, Turkey's Prime Minister, Erdoğan, visited Israel. He was very warmly received there. The trip aimed at making more efforts by Turkey in the peace process. Despite the economic, Erdoğan took a delegation composed of Ministers, investors and high profile people from his government. Israel's Foreign Minister mentioned that 'having such a Turkish delegation to visit Israel hints at the importance of the economical bilateral relationships' (National Defense Magazine, 2010). Israel's Foreign Minister, Silvan Shalom, whilst Erdoğan's trip to Israel stated that 'this trip shows that the two countries have a calm relationship in a high friendly way'. Moreover Shalom believed that Turkey can be a bridge between Israel and the Arab countries. He stated this in a way that 'Modern Islam can have a huge power and influence over the neighboring countries with Israel'. Israel's Haaretz newspaper published that Erdoğan's trip can be regarded as Israel's diplomatic success after hesitation in the relationships, especially after assassinating Sheik Ahmed Yaseen and Sheik Abdul Aziz Rantisi.

The production of the relationships between Israel and Turkey at that stage was Turkey's attempt to unify the different opinions and perspectives between Islamic countries and Israel. This is reflected in Turkey's role in organizing a meeting between Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Khurshid Qasuri, and Israel's Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom in September 2005 (Nasr, 2013).

After his trip to Tel Aviv, Turkey's Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül, on 4 January 2005 he visited the Head Quarter of Palestinian authority in Ramallah, after his meeting with Palestinian authority in Ramallah, he stated that 'the ways Israel use against Palestinians such as economic embargo and starvation would never bring stability with it, a peaceful and secure way is to establish a state for Palestinians' (Saleh & Nafi, 2007, p. 118).

As Gül reaffirmed that 'violence and terror would not serve the peace process for the parties'. Later on, he asked the Palestinian leaders to make a huge effort to implement some improvements in order to establish a strong Palestinian state, as the only way to reach peace is through a full agreement based on coexistence between both Israeli state and a Palestinian state. Reaching a peaceful agreement based on UN's Security Council resolutions is a typical solution for the Arab-Israel conflict in the region. Gül concluded his statements by saying that 'Turkey fights with the Palestinian leaders to make their dream come true in establishing a Palestinian state, Turkey is in the process of development of Palestine (Saleh & Nafi, 2007, p. 116).

In 2006, bilateral relationships between Israel and Turkey witnessed some hesitation and conflict due to Israel's attacks on Lebanon. All the movements were stopped and demonstrations started in Istanbul and other cities condemning Israel. Turkish people asked their government to put pressure on Israel to stop Israel's violent behavior, even they asked for considering using military force as an option. The mosques and public places were full of people asking for revenge. Despite this, Turkish military pressed on the government to normalize its relations with Israel due to Israel's war against Palestine and Lebanon (National Defense Magazine, 2010).

After Hamas' victory in Palestinian parliamentary elections and the accidents happened in Western strip and the Gaza strip on 25 January 2006, Erdoğan announced that he with Pakistan's President, Pervez Musharraf, initiated in Islamic congress organization to play as a

sort of mediator between Israel and Palestine. Moreover, on 21 February 2006, Erdoğan criticized Israel for putting economic sanction on Palestinians as they elected Hamas. He considered this as disrespecting democracy and Palestinian people's rights.

Obviously, Erdoğan was happy for Hamas' victory in the 2006 elections to win the majority of Palestinians' votes as it has an Islamic root and has the same agenda as AK party. After that Turkish government decided to invite Hamas to Ankara. The general secretary of Hamas' political bureau, Khalid Mushal, along with a delegation consisted of Hamas' leaders visited Ankara on 16 February 2006.

Erdoğan received the delegation and stated that 'Ankara fights for a big role in the Middle East, despite that, Turkey will not remain as a spectator'. Based on its long ruling history in the region for many centuries under the supremacy of the Ottoman Empire, Erdoğan hinted to the Turkish leaders and explained to the Hamas delegation that the position of the international community demand that they should abandon violence and recognition of Israel. Erdoğan said 'we sent you a right message at the right time' (Saleh, 2007, p.188).

US Ambassador to Ankara, Ross Wilson, criticized Hamas' delegation visit to Ankara and stated that 'the source of our concern in holding any meeting with Hamas is that Erdoğan should have sent the message to Israel on his dissatisfaction with terror and recognition of Israel's right which exist in the agreements'.

On the other hand, Israel gave so many excuses for the economic sanctions on Gaza strip, Including the liberation of an Israeli prisoner, Gilad Shalit. Another excuse by Israelis was that 'we put the economic embargo on Gaza as they receive military equipment and ammunition which might be used for making missiles and weapons of mass destructions.

Turkey's position was to protest the embargo more actively and try to break it politically. Although, earlier Erdoğan promised to keep the balance in the international relationships, he might have forgotten that step by step until he became a stage on which many Islamic activities were done to support Palestinians. For instance, Turks clearly worked for the success of

Palestinians and demanded to lift the embargo on the Gaza strip by protesting, collecting charities and sending supports for Palestinians (Saleh, 2008, p. 213).

Formally, in relation to the economic embargo imposed by Israelis on Gaza, in front of the AK party's parliamentary bloc, Erdoğan stated 'Realistically, in this way, Palestine became a big prison, but its sky is open. Its people face a tragic humanitarian crisis. Israel punished a nation to warn others that they can all be punished. When Israel intensively bombs Gaza, this is not acceptable; we cannot understand why they fire all these missiles. We all wonder why Palestinians are bombed, what are the damages made by this bombardment, we do not get the rate of Israeli victims in return'.

After controlling the Gaza strip by Hamas in 2007, AK party was in the last days of the election time in which they scored very well, in a phone call made on 23 Jul 2007, Erdoğan told Ismail Haniyeh, the Prime Minister of Gaza government, that Turkey can reactivate the peace process. Erdoğan stated 'we in Turkey after forming a government in the next few weeks are ready to work on reuniting you after all the attacks you faced. We will become your enemy when you are successful in maintaining peace amongst yourselves'. 'We are hurt by the bloodshed of our brothers in Palestine, your separation shatters and weakens you, it damages the nation's interest and your cause as your continuous local disagreement will have a negative impact on your future and establishing Palestinian state' he added, (Saleh, 2008, p. 215).

Turkey publicly attempted to solve the crisis amongst the Palestinian parties which are Hamas and Fatah. Erdoğan did his best to build a bridge of understanding until they reach peace. The relationships between Turkey and Palestine were getting better and better. Turks expressed their support for the Palestinians against the economic embargo which was imposed on them, but the Palestinians were still fighting each other. Therefore, there was a need for a united body instead of being apart from each other (Report Information, 2010, p.33).

It can be said that the relationships between Turkey and the Arab states has witnessed a huge progress between 2007 and 2008. To show this level of closeness, it was not only Turkey who attempted to build such a relationship, but the Arab countries need that as well. For

example, only during 15 months, there were 2 formal meetings between Saudi Arabia and Turkey. There was a meeting between Palestinian President and Israeli President in the Turkish parliament building. There was work well under way to make peace between Damascus and Tel Aviv. There were political and cultural relations with the Arab League countries which led to the permanent existence of Turkish leaders in the Arab summits (Jibaly, 2008, p.154).

### **2.3.2 Economic Relationship**

Before the reign of the AK party, 53% of the Turkish trading were with the Europeans, but in 2010, this figure plummeted to 42%. Accordingly, Turkish trading with the Middle East and North American countries increased from 13% in 2002 to 26%, which has to be taken into account. Therefore, the slogan for the 'New Turkey' would be a strong economy and a strong foreign policy at least until 2020 (Berelovich, November, 2014).

Since the beginning of 1990s, there has been an increase in the ration of the economy, trading and strategic relationships between Turkey and Israel. Generally, with AK party's ruling the country; there has been a continuation of all the sorts of the relationships. At the end of 2002 and in the beginning of 2003 the average rate of economic exchanges between Turkey and Israel increased in a way that at the end of 2002, the size of the trading exchanges between the two countries reached 1.2 trillion dollars, increased by 19.5 compared with 2001. The size of the Israel's export to Turkey was about 378 million dollars. At that time, Israel was very responsive to the Turkish demands. They attempted to reach an agreement on taxes on importing iron and cement which are against the international rule, but they did it. This shows the importance of Turkey to Israel (Abu-Mutllaq, 2011, p. 59).

The price of the Israeli import in the trading exchange with Turkey was about 1 billion US dollars in 2003. On 4 March 2003, Israel signed a 20 year long contract with Turkey about buying water from Manugat River, which sends 50 million cubic meters of water from Turkey to Israel (Dahal, Slutzky, 2006, p. 7).

On 14 July 2004, Israel's industrial minister, Ehud Olmert, visited Turkey. There he met the Turkish President, Ahmet Necdet Sezer, Turkish Foreign Minister, Abdullah Güle, Turkish Minister of Economy, Ali Babacan, Minister of Transportation, Binali Yıldırım, Minister of Energy, Hilmi Güler. The main aim behind Olmert's visit was to set up a meeting between a bilateral economic committee from Turkey and Israel which he himself was the head (Memduh, 2009, p.63).

Turkey and Israel signed an 800 Million US dollar contract on 24 May 2004 for establishing 3 energy stations which works with natural gases in Israel. This was done when Israel's infrastructure minister, Joseph Baritsky, visited Turkey in May 2004. This agreement was done when Turkey was criticizing Israel for the violence against Palestinians and the assassination policy they followed.

In 2005, Turkey was a great trading partner for Israel in the Middle East. Turkey's import from Israel was about 900 Million US dollars. This was when Turkey's export for Israel was about 1.2. Billion US dollars (Dahal, Slutzky, 2009, p. 8).

Generally, the size of the export from Turkey to Israel in 2006 was worth 1.4. Billion dollars, this is when the export from Israel to Turkey was worth 800 million dollars. The goods exported from Israel to Turkey were mostly chemical staff. Israel has had an active role in exporting the progressive technology to Turkey, especially for industrial and agricultural purposes.

When the relationship between Israel and Turkey slowed down and trembled, the trading exchange was at its climax between the two countries. In 2008, the rate of the trading exchanges reached 3.38 Billion dollars, regardless of the military and basic staff exchanges. However, the hesitation in the relationships at the end of 2008 and beginning of 2009 had a very negative impact on the trading exchanges in a way that the 3.38 Billion dollar trading in 2008 plummeted to 2.25 Billion dollars. Only in the first half of 2009, the rate of the decrease was about 28%. At the end of 2009, the rate of the trading exchanges decreased to 44%, meaning in one year the rate of the trading exchanged reached 44% (Abu-Mutllaq, 2011, p. 60).

After trembling and conflicts in the relationship between Turkey and Israel, Turkey has been witnessing economic progressions since then. Only by the increase in the number of the tourists from 2002 to 2005, Turkey profit increased from 12.8 to 21.2. Turkey has gained 17.5 Billion US dollars only in 2005. This has made Turkey to be the 10<sup>th</sup> country for tourism in the world. Only in 2008, the number of the tourists to Turkey was 30,929,192 tourists which generated 21.9 Billion US dollars (Shaho, 30\1\2013).

During the AK party's ruling Turkey from 200-2008 and even after then, the economy of Turkey has improved. The GDP has increased from 350 Billion in 2002 to 75 Billion in 2008. The personal income has increased from 3300 in 2002 to 10000 US dollars in 2008, with the annual development of 6.9%. This is despite the fact that there was a global depression in 2008; the size of the export has increased from 33 Billion in 2002 to 130 Billion in 2008. The increase in the private sector has increased by 300% from 2001 to 2008 (Administrative, 2008).

### **2.3.3 Military Relationship**

With AK Party's winning the power, there has been controversy in the military institutions in Turkey. This has become an important factor that the two countries were concerned about the future of their military and intelligence relationships.

The government when it was run by AK party did not want to show itself as a leaning government. The reason was to gain the support of EU and USA. That is why they worked on documenting the relationships with Israel. Military and security was among the most important areas that they hardly worked on.

Turkey signed a bond worth 668 Million US dollars with Israel in March 2002. The aim was to amend all the Turkish military tanks and equip them with the most up-to-date and advanced technology. This would help the Turkey to work independently on improving their military capability in the future (Berelovich, November 2014).

Turkey's chief of the general staff, Himli Ozkok, visited Israel in July 2002 for discussing the bilateral military relationships between Turkey and Israel. He met Israel's chief of

the general staff, Moshe Ya'alon. In November, 2002, the head of the political unit of the Ministry of War in Israel, Major General, (Amos-Gilad), held a debate about the security relationships between Turkey and Israel in which an assistant for military affairs in the Turkish Ambassador and General Marcel Aviv took part in. On 7 November 2002, the Ministry of Defense in Ankara held a seminar in which senior staff members for technology of both Turkish and Israeli armies participated. Amos-Gilad, frankly stated that the level of the military and security cooperation between the two countries has increased by 40% from 2003 in comparison with 2002.

On 24 December 2003, there was a meeting between Turkey's interior minister, Abdülkadir Aksu, and Israel's general security Minister, Tzachi Hanegbi, for signing an understanding of military and security cooperation. Israel has asked Turkey to play as a mediator to solve the problems between Israel and Syria. At the beginning of 2005, Turkish Prime Minister, Erdoğan, visited Israel in which he met Israel's president, Moshe Katsav, and the former Prime Minister, Sharon. They agreed upon many different ways for cooperation for many strategic issues. The most important one was establishing the military relationships between Turkey-Israel and the USA. They reaffirmed the development of 17 bilateral projects between Israel and Turkey. According to this agreement, all the military and logistic equipment made by Israeli army will be sold to Turkey; in return Turkey will increase the amount of water going to Israel (Mehmud, 2009, p. 104).

The contracts that have been signed included the amendment of Phantom-4 planes which are F-4 in the Turkish sky. It was worth 400-500 Million dollars, including the renewal of 170 Turkish tanks, type M-60. Then, a team of pilots arrived in Turkey to investigate the partnership in setting up an American defense rocket system which is against all types of missiles. It was in multiple stages, starting with setting up an alarm system to warn in advance in the whole country, then purchasing Aro-2 anti-ballistic missiles. Then, bring Turkey to the already existed agreements in relation to the Middle East between America and Israel (Abu -Mutallaq, 2011, p. 52).

Erdoğan's visit to Israel and signing many important agreements with them showed that Turkey under the rule of AK party wants to maintain these strategic relationships, especially in terms of military and security. This is at least how it appears from the outside to the European countries.

On the inside, however, the Turkish general view was against the Israeli attacks Palestinians. Finally, Turkey's strategy has been decided upon which was clear on the road map declared by Davutoğlu. As the military relationships between the two countries are deteriorating, Israel thought that they will get all they want from the AK party, and the Turkish government was doing a maneuver over its military to calm them down inside the country as there was a possibility for another coup due to by the military to intervene in the civil and political life again.

In April 2005, Turkey once again bought 3 advanced systematic planes from IAI and Eibit Israeli companies working on air space services. It was worth 183 Million dollars. Moreover, they agreed that Turkey should have 10 ground stations; each one contains three or four UAVS system through which Turkey takes benefit from the available technology (Mamduh, 2009, p. 56).

On 21 January 2005, Dan Halutz, Israel's chief of the staff arrived in Ankara in order to improve the military relationships between the two countries. For that purpose, he met with his counterpart Hilmi Ozkok, and the Prime Minister, Erdoğan. They have signed many huge contracts which were worth hundreds of millions of dollars. Generally, this contract was to renew the Turkish-American planes, type Tiraz F-4 and Tanks, Tiraz-baton M-48by Israeli companies in Turkey. From the perspective of the Israeli companies, the military relationship between Turkey and Israel increased only from 2004 to 2005, and after that nothing happened except having some meetings (Mehmud, 2009, p. 109).

Israel's Prime Minister, Barack, visited Ankara on 13 February 2007 to reassure the relationships between the two countries. Similarly, on 11 February 2008, Israel's Minister of Defense visited Ankara, where he met his counterpart, Vecdi Gönül, as from this meeting Turkey's minister of defense stated 'Turkey and Israel are working on developing their relationships and their work to prevail peace in the Middle East. Gönül stated 'his country signed 15 contracts with the Israeli military to have cooperation with Israel. Senior defense officials talked about buying radar for spying. Earlier, Israel attempted to approach Turkey through these contracts (Abu-Mutllaq, 2009, p. 53).

Finally, in November, 2009, Turkey suspended a bilateral air space maneuver which was not held for year in collaboration with America and Israel by some members of NATO countries. The maneuver was named 'Anatole victor'. Israel stated that Turkey wishes that they do not take

part in the maneuver, not for political, for technical, not for political, reasons (BBC, October2009).

Some political commentators believe that the reason why Turkey refused this air maneuver is because they are worried that Israel might take this opportunity to obtain secret intelligence about Iran in order to use it later on to attack Iran using Turkish soil. Israel has done this before, as they attacked a Syrian station, 'Syrian Kuper' near to Der Al Zur in 2007. They passed over Turkish soil, which was very embarrassing for Turkey in front of the Arab countries and Syria. This has had a negative impact on the AK party by the local people. Turkish-Israeli bilateral relationships have faced troubles and hesitation until it went that far that the Israeli Navy attacked Marmara ship which caused many people to be injured and 9 people to be killed. After that Turkey closed its door in front of Israeli military planes. The military and economic contracts were suspended with Israel; among them a contract which was worth 1.5 Billion US dollars for buying US-Israeli tanks (BBC, 28\6\2010).

### **2.3.4 Cultural Relationships**

Taking all the aspects of the bilateral relationships, one can say that the cultural part is the weakest part of this relationship in comparison with military, economic, political and intelligence relationships. It was almost the same in various times. When Ottoman Empire was in power, Israel was not a state; even the Jews were shattered in different places. Even after establishing the state of Israel, the Jews were busy with defending themselves against Arab attacks. When there was a Cold War and the time of creating coalitions, Israel could not pay attention to the cultural issues. They could not travel and do performances and do cultural activities. After the AK Party's victory in 2002, Israel was hesitant about the relationships with Turkey as AKP has Islamic roots and the religion is part of any nation's culture. Despite Gul's harsh statements against Israel, in AK Party's first term government, they strengthened the relationships with Arab states as Gül was a member of the Rafah party.

During 2002-2008, despite people's dissatisfaction with the relationships with Israel, Israel blocked the Gaza Strip and attacked Palestinians. Erdoğan named Israel as a terrorist country. Then, Lebanon's war came in the summer of 2006 as Israel becomes such a monster and

invader; they were hated by the Islamic world and Turkey. It reached a level where Israel warns its people not to visit Turkey (National Defense Magazine, 2010).

Hesitation in Turkish-Israel relationships were not only reflected in the politics, it was a nationwide hatred against the wars in the Gaza strip as they were all protesting to pressure the government to stop the economic and security cooperation between the two countries. The ministry of education decided to hold a one minute silence to respect the children who have been killed in Gaza. The Turkish Government TV showed how an Israeli soldier fires at a Palestinian child who was isolated from the crowd. In a poll, 63% of people supported AK Parti's policies against Israel in 2008. Even the rate of Israeli tourists decreased significantly from 558 thousand in 2008 to 311 thousand in 2009 (Abas, 2013).

## **2.4. The Regional Changes and the Bilateral Relations**

### **2.4.1 Kurdish Question**

The Kurdish issue is among the huge problems during the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923 by Atatürk until the AKP ruling in Turkey. This is for the Kurds, indicating a matter of historical and geographical, if we take the hypothesis that the establishment of the state of "Israel" in "Palestine" nucleus to create a "Greater Israel" from the Nile to the Euphrates, which continues to have the Jews sought to know. The semi-autonomous independence of the "Iraqi Kurdistan" self-rule in the (1991) is an introduction to the dream of the great Kurdish state "Greater Kurdistan" withheld from Iraq, Syria, Turkey and Iran.

Despite all of this, 194400 Km<sup>2</sup> of north Kurdistan is located in Turkey. And also in Iran, 124 950 km<sup>2</sup>, 72000 km<sup>2</sup> in Iraq "South Kurdistan", and 18300 km<sup>2</sup> in Syria, "West of Kurdistan" (Balci& Kardac, 2012, p. 106).

In the historical backgrounds, it can be seen that Turkey had witnessed twenty-nine protest Kurdish, since the era of the Ottoman Empire, it was the most that happened between 1925 - 1937. The longest, was the last war, which was lost between 1984-1999, then returned to renew again 2004.

Ultimately, the PKK is considered the leader of the Kurdish armed movement, and it was the first heavyweight Turkish and Kurdish arena. This party was founded on 27<sup>th</sup> November in 1978, and was appointed its Chairman Abdullah Ocalan. The party has begun military activity inside the Kurdistan since 1984, and took the northern Iraq from the background to his area of operations, which lasted until 1999. For its part, Turkey has massed in this confrontation 50 thousand commandos of the special teams in various parts of the provinces and the mountains, and 220 thousand soldiers from the infantry, in addition to 45 thousand guard and a warrior, were selected from among the people of the region (Balci& Kardaş, 2012, p. 106).

According to official figures, the number of the people who had been killed in clashes with the PKK 11 735 has reached, in a period of major war, between 1984 – 1999. The total number of casualties among Turkish citizens during this period, including the Kurdish elements, is considered to be around fifty thousand people, because of the war nearly three million people; has emigrated they went to the western provinces in search of safety (Balci& Kardaş, 2012, p. 107).

The annual expenses of the war in the nineties, of weapons and military equipment and logistics cost 8.5 billion \$. As well as losses resulting from the disruption of the activities of the Southeast Anatolia region, and the total financial cost of the war is around three hundred billion dollars (Al-Jazeera Center for Studies, 2015).

Abdullah Ocalan was arrested in Nairobi on February 15, 1999, after 15 years of his leadership of armed military action. And sentenced to death in June of the same year, then the sentence was amended to life imprisonment, after Turkey abolished the death penalty, as part of the terms of its involvement in the European Union.

In general, The Kurds' demands in Turkey include the following:

1. The right to be educated in the mother tongue in the Kurdish areas.
2. Releasing Tens of thousands of Kurdish from Turkish prisons.
3. Releasing the PKK leader, Ogalan, who has been detained since 1999 in a global plan in Kenya? Later on, Israel handed him to Turkey.
4. The Autonomous Kurdish belongs to their own areas (Ghaul, 2011, p. 39).

As for the PKK, they are enlisted as a terrorist organization by USA, UK, EU, Turkey and Australia. According to a statement by Öcalan, the party's leader, listing PKK as a terrorist organization is due to political and economic interests of those countries (Dle, 2013).

During the years (2002-2008), Erdoğan did some stuff to show the goodwill for talking about the Kurdish issue, such issue legalizing talking in Kurdish, opening TRT6 in Kurdish language, setting hundreds of Kurdish prisoners free, allowing Kurdish delegates to visit Öcalan, in İmralı prison. As the former Foreign Minister, Davutoğlu stated, 'the government started negotiating with PKK a long ago for solving the Kurdish issue' (Gurbuz, 2015, p. 3).

After 31 years "1984-2015", the PKK has had 17000 guerrillas in the mountains, 12000 martyrs, 54 parliament members in Turkey, nearly 10 million voters, 100 municipal heads as well as the support of 3 million Kurds in diaspora. Moreover, they own 25 political parties and organizations in all the 4 parts of Kurdistan. According to informal sources, PKK receives 500 million Euros each year, along with 10 satellite channels (Ghaul, 2011, p, 62).

Generally, the AK party's term 2002-2008 is famous as the stage of establishing economy as well is the peace process stage and starting to talk with the PKK. Due to the peace process, Turkey has witnessed a period of economic stability. The rate of the tourists has increased significantly and Turkey gained 30-35 Billion dollars (Gurbuz, 2015, p. 9) . According to Turkey's Minister of Finance, Mehmet Şimşek, as he stated during discussing 2015 budget, 'the war with PKK has cost 435 Billion US dollars. The observers doubted this number, as for the economists the damage is much more which is around 800 Billion US dollars (Dle, 2013).

Even though the Kurdish issue has become a global topic politically, finally, Turkey has not put the Kurds' rights in the constitution. Until now, whoever lives in Turkey is a Turk. Sometimes Erdoğan used the Kurdish issue as a card for staying longer in power, he used it to collect votes. It appears that negotiation with the PKK, the calm relationships with Kurds in Turkey is related to the Turkey's strategic relationships with Kurdistan Regional Region, Iraq, and Syria. The only border checkpoint between Turkey and Iraq is run by the KRG, regardless of the two pipelines which go from Kurdistan to Turkey and to Europe or Haifa Harbor in Israel (Gurbuz, 2015, p. 9).

### 2.4.2. Palestine Question

In the beginning of AK party's ruling in Turkey (2002-2008), despite the attempts to rebuild the infrastructure of Turkey and increasing the amount of the income and economic gains, returning to the Middle East and Turkish political behavior to the diplomatic initiations, Turkey has become open to the Islamic and Arab states, such as intervening in the peace process in Palestine, the issue of the Israeli soldier, Gilad Shalit, attempted to unify the Palestinian political leaders, condemning the siege of Gaza and Israeli bombardment and accumulating humanitarian help to Palestinian homeless people (Lindenstrauss & Kivam, 2014, p. 10).

Erdoğan in a remark states that 'the proof of the ownership of Palestinians is kept in the archive of the Ottoman government' (Ghaul, 2011, p.123). The former Foreign Minister of Turkey, Ali Babacan, also stated that 'we feel that we have a historical responsibility towards Palestine and its issue' (Lindenstrauss & Kivam, 2014, p. 8). Similarly, the father of the political Islam and the former Turkish Prime Minister states that 'Palestine only belongs to Palestinians, not only for the Arabs, but for all the Muslims (Hssan, 2012, p. 43).

When the AK Party was formed in Turkey in 2001, they investigated what is important for the Turkish general public opinion. From that point of view, the Palestine issue has been used as a card as Turks historically and religiously support Palestine issue and Israelis besieged them at that time. The Turkish policy was to return to the Islamic countries. All of these helped AK party to use the card successfully.

Turkey's position is based on that their role in the Palestine issue will benefit the peace and security of the regional countries and the international community, as it has political and economic benefits for Turkey as well as the regional countries. Moreover, intervening in the Palestine issue would help Turkey to be open with other Arab countries who name Turkey as a servant for Jews and the west for decades. From that point, Turkey helped Gaza in a humanitarian way to progress its economy. This is what the former foreign minister, Davutoğlu, said 'Turkey would have a role in all the progressions in the Middle East (Basl, 8\9\2011).

On 30 April 2003, the US State Department announced a formal plan known as the 'road map' in which the ways to achieve peace in the Middle East have been outlined. For that purpose, a formal committee known as the 'quarters' has been set up which included the US, the

EU, Russia, and the UN. The map consisted of 3 stages in order to achieve the peace process and establish a Palestinian state. The first stage was to end terror and violence and normalizing the life of Palestinians and reestablishing the Palestinian institutions within two months. The second stages were traditional starting from June 2003 to December 2005. The third stage was a permanent agreement and ending the Palestine-Israel conflict during 2004-2005 (Gurkaynak, 2007, p. 98).

On 9 July 2003, the press section of the Prime Minister's office issued a statement in which the Prime Minister, Erdoğan supported the 'road map'. At the same time Erdoğan had a phone call with Israel's Prime Minister, Sharon, in which they confirmed working for the betterment of their relationships and they would increase their bilateral cooperation in multiple ways. Turkey looks at the Sharma Al Sheik conference with great importance which was held on July 4, 2003. It was the beginning of implementing the US plan to resolve the conflict between Arabs and Israel on one hand and to fight terror in the region on the other.

Above all of this, the Turkish president, Ahmet Necdet Sezer, in November, 2006 sent an invitation for Palestinian president, Mahmood Abbas, and the Israeli president, Shimon Peres, to come to Ankara for a meeting in front of the Turkish parliament. Turkey wanted to show that they work as a mediator in the peace process between Palestine and Israel. This shows the concern of Turkey for the peace process on one hand, and they wanted to be seen as working equally with both parties to keep the balance between the two conflicting parties for the sake of being successful to achieve the peace process (Hssan, 2012, p. 48).

On 13 May 2004, the Israeli military forces surrendered Rafah and besieged it in an operation they called 'the rainbow'. The cuts Rafah from other governors and Gaza strip, 58 Palestinians were killed, among them 12 children, and injured 200 people. They destroyed all houses belonging to Palestinians which were located on the border with Egypt. They were about 100 residential places. The Israelis destroyed all the infrastructure of the area. The forced all the scientific places to stop and started to captivate physicians, cabs and ambulances. Around this time, something unexpected happed; there was a peaceful demonstration towards Tal Al Sultan residential areas to protest Israelis aggressive acts. In that accident, Israeli troops killed 8 Palestinians and injured 650 more (Aras, 2009, p. 5).

When the Arab world and Palestinians shouted loud, On 19 May 2004, which the UN enacted a resolution in relation to the Israeli killing of the civilians in Rafah, An amnesty International organization called this a war crime in accordance with the Geneva treaty. The EU condemned Israel aggression in Rafah. They called it as an irresponsible act against Human lives. Turkish Prime Minister, Erdoğan, considered the Israeli acts and the government as terror (Basl, 8\9\2011).

Turkey's Foreign Minister, Abdullah Gül, during a visit to the Palestinian territory on 4 January 2005, stated that the policy that Israel follows against Palestinians will harm the relationship between Turkey and Israel. Furthermore, Turkey, called their ambassador back to discuss this issue. They increased their representation in Palestine from conciliate to the Embassy. At that time, Erdoğan refused to receive Sharon in Turkey. Similarly, he refused an Israeli invitation to visit Tel Aviv. He stated that 'this visit is not in my schedule' (Lindenstrauss & Kivam, 2014, p. 11). If we look at Turkey's position, we find it to be in agreement with the position of the general public opinion and UN Security Council against the massacre of the Palestinians'.

In July, 2005, Erdoğan visited Tel Aviv and explained the Turkish position for them and stated 'we have a good relationship with Israel. We have not forbidden ourselves from frank criticism. I hope my visit will be a good push for our relationships'. Israeli foreign minister, Sivan Shalom, stated 'Turkey can be a bridge between us and the Arab world' (Hssan, 2012, p. 51).

On 25 January 2006, in a clear and calm election, with the attendance of the international observers and political analysts, an election for the Palestinian Legislative Council was held in which Hamas Movement "Change and Amendment list" recorded a victory. They won 76 seats out of 136 seats.

Although Hamas won in a fair and secure election, the US, EU and Israel did not admit acknowledge the results. They stopped their cooperation for Palestinians. All the international and regional parties encouraged Hamas to abandon violence and recognize the Israeli state (Lindenstrauss & Kivam, 2014, p. 11).

The sudden and unexpected position of Turkey appeared here in which they said that it is necessary to respect the choice of the Palestinian people and accept Hamas' government. One day after Hamas' victory, on 27 January 2006, the Turkish Prime Minister, in a joint meeting with Pakistani President, initiated a joint effort for the Islamic Congress to mediate between Israel and Palestine. At the same time, Erdoğan criticized the economic embargo, which Israel imposed on Palestine and stated 'this shackles democracy; it is against the Palestinian will'.

In relation to the Israeli, international as well as an Arab embargo, which was put on Hamas Movement. The head of the Political Bureau, Khaled Mashal, visited Ankara on 16 February 2006. There he met with the Foreign Minister, Abdullah Gül, and some of the officials of the Foreign Ministry. What was questionable in this trip was whether Mashal was meeting with the AK party or the Foreign Minister. Who invited whom? Or did the trip come with Mashal's wish? That is why Erdoğan could not meet with him in this visit. Abdullah Gül received Mashal in the AK HQ in Ankara. The trip was a good step, however, to press in order to breach the embargo on Palestine.

Turkey's request for Hamas was to recognize Israel and abandon violence and change its policies. On these bases, Turkey will support Hamas (Aras, 2009, P.6). Mashal's visit triggered many local as well as foreign reactions to Turkey. The most obvious one was when the Israeli Government spokesperson, RaananGissin, said 'we ask the Turkish government, how they feel if the Israeli government received Öcalan? (Hssan, 2012, p. 54)

'Turkey does not consider Hamas as a terrorist organization' the Prime Minister Erdoğan said. He sent a message to the US that Turkey would not enlist Hamas as a terrorist organization, but we see Hamas as a defense force that defends their soil. Hamas' members are in Israeli jails; with this the democratic election process gains its legality (Gurkaynak, 2007, p. 104).

On 27 November 2007, Annapolis conference for peace was held in the US for reconsidering the negotiations and how to manage the peace process and work on the road map. Especially, after the failure of the Camp David summit. The US invited 40 stated and international organizations to take part in the conference, which took only one day. Turkey took part in the conference and welcomed the results. The Turkish Republic Presidency, Abdullah

Gül, in a statement said ‘the decision to reconsider the negotiations is the right step. He called upon all the parties to support the peace processes (Lindenstrauss & Kivam, 2014, p. 8).

It appears from this that Erdoğan and Gul’s participation in the conference and their remarks aimed at protecting the peace and security which was the concern of Turkey internationally and regionally.

### **2.4.3. The Lebanon War 2006**

This war has many meanings. The Lebanese say July War, the Israelis say Lebanon Second War, Arab Media called Israeli War against Lebanon in 2006 and international media called confrontation of Israel against Hezbollah in 2006. This is also a massacre and it started in 12<sup>th</sup> July 2006 in South and East of Beirut. The war happened between both Hezbollah forces and Israeli Defense Forces. It lasted for 34 days and had an impact on Golan Height as well.

Based on the continuous conflict between Arab and Israel, Israel insisted on the fact that it was not going to hand over the Lebanese prisoner of war. On the other hand, Hezbollah insisted on the fact they must be released. There are some Lebanese prisoners who have been caught for 30 years by the Israel, the oldest one Samir Qantar in which he has been imprisoned since 1979. After the disappointment of Hezbollah from indirect negotiations to set free the prisoners, they started a process titled “ true promise”. Then, Israeli forced to start fighting, overrun the Lebanese fence and entered the Lebanese ground. As a reaction, Hezbollah forced to start shelling the Israeli tanks. As a result of this, 8 Israeli soldiers were killed (Hany T, 2007, p. 5).

On the following day, Israeli started airing strike in Lebanon. As a consequence, power stations, Beirut Airport, bridges and other strategic roads were targeted. Then, Hezbollah President, Hassan Nasrallah, mentioned the release of the Israeli soldiers and started an initiative to cease fire. He also said this war is not Lebanese Government’s war and it is not related to them. Arab countries were not passionate about Hezbollah and they divided into the two fronts; Egypt and Saudi Arabia. On the other hand, Iran intended to keep Shia Crescent, which included

some countries like Iran, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon. Defending those countries are always part of Iran's agenda and this always worried Israel (Hany T, 2007, p. 9).

When Turkey knew that both America and Europe countries did not support the war, the UN wanted to intervene militarily and Iran was in the equation, Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan visited Lebanon and said “are the Israeli troops enough for killing many innocent people?” He also said “this massacre made the region concerned. Thus, we do not agree the Israel's behavior and they must say sorry to the people of the region”. Erdoğan also emphasized that Lebanon defeat Israel, not only in this war, but also in the others that may happen later”. Then, Turkish Parliament voted to send Turkish troops to Lebanon as a part of UN forces UNIFIL in 5<sup>th</sup> September 2006 (Sumer, 2013, p. 16).

Turkish acceptance to be part of the UNIFIL has some strategic goals. It was to attract the European countries and get their votes to be a member of the EU and remove the eyes of the region of Cyprus. Then, renew and reformulate its relations with Israel and tell the Israeli leaders that Turkey has a great role in the Middle East. Also, Turkey wanted to be closed further to America and deepen its relations with them, so that it can get the support of the Zionist lobby in Congress, which will be beneficial for supporting Turkey in the case of the Armenian genocide (Sumer, 2013, p. 17).

Between the years 2002-2008, Turkey did not only mediate between Palestine parties, or Israel-Palestine, but also it became a mediator in Lebanon. For example, in the assassination of former Lebanon Prime Minister, Rafiq Hariri, the country tried to mediate between the domestic parties in Lebanon. It is worth mentioning that, Turkey defended calm and secure Lebanon and the country was far away from the war of Hezbollah and Israel. That is why, in Erdoğan's visit to Lebanon, he promised to work for prohibiting the chaos in Lebanon and tried to find a solution for the assassination of Rafic Hariri via International Court of Justice.

Moreover, in November 2007, as a mediator, Turkey held a meeting for both Mahmoud Abbas and Shimon Peres in Turkish Parliament so that they could have a dialogue together. This was the first time that the Israeli President has a discussion in the Parliament of an Islamic country (Hany T, 2007, p. 24).

#### **2.4.5. Turkish Mediation in the Negotiations between Syria and Israel**

Regarding the role of Turkey as a mediator between Israel and Syria, Erdoğan visited Syria in 24<sup>th</sup> April 2008 and he said ‘‘both Syria and Israel asked Turkey to mediate between them and close their attitudes towards each other, so that they could sign a peace agreement (bbc,27\4\2008).’’

During his visit to Syria, Erdoğan conveyed the message to Syrian President, Bashar Al-Assad that Israel if they reach a peace agreement, Israel was ready to withdraw from Golan Height in which it was occupied by Israel since 1967. Just like David Ben-Gurion, who is the Israel State Founder, said they suggested peace process with the Arab countries, but their voice was like the man who shouted in the dessert.

Meanwhile, Israeli Ambassador in Turkey, Ghabi levy, said ‘‘due to Erdoğan’s visit to Syria, meant that Turkey indirectly tried to have negotiation between both Israel and Syria. In June 2008 until the time that mediation process started, Turkey sent two delegations to the two countries. In this regard, Turkey’s Foreign Minister, Ali Baba Jan said ‘‘this is the last indirect negotiation round between Syria and Israel with the mediation of Turkey, in which it has been successful so far and the parties described the negotiations positively (BBC, 17/5/2000).

Parallel to the ongoing peace process between Syria and Israel, formal visits between Turkey and Israel were increased. This was to review the strategic relations of both country and return it to its normal track in which it faced some obstacles earlier.

That is why, Ehud Olmeret, Israeli Prime Minister, on 18 December 2008, visited Turkey to start the fifth round of the negotiations. There, he got a promise from Erdoğan, Turkish Prime Minister, and Abdulla Gul, Turkish President that not to regard Gaza Strip as a humanitarian tragedy any more (Abu-Mutllaq, 2011, p. 36).

When Gaza War on 27 December 2008 began, strong reaction from the Turkish parties started. Then, it was known that they got the promise from the Turkish authorities that they would be silent over the war. While the negotiation was not ended between Syria and Israel,

Turkish President described the Gaza events as “tyrannical” and Erdoğan described it as “humanitarian catastrophe” as well. At the same time, Turkish leaders had a fast diplomatic journey to the Arab countries so that they could stop Gaza strikes. At the same time, Mohammad Ali Shahin, the Turkish Justice Minister described Israel as a source of international terror.

Meanwhile, Masoud Barlaq, the President of Istanbul University sent out both Gabby Levy, Israeli Ambassador in Turkey and Mordechai Amishai, the Israeli consul in Turkey from the campus. This had a negative impact on the Turkey-Israeli relations. Even though the presidency of the university appointed a time for both, the President of the university told them “Turkey is not an occupied land and you can go out.” Following that, Israeli sources described the action as a “planned security event”, as both ambassador and consul had been attacked earlier by different students (Palestine Strategy Report, 2008, p. 172).

Turkey continued on the same remarks on Israel, Israel invited Nimaq Tan, Turkish Ambassador in Jerusalem. At the meeting, the Israeli official conveyed the concerns of Israel to Turkey due to the latest reaction of Turkey. Turkish ambassador had been told that Israel is working to prevent a resolution in the UN, which will be about the Armenian Genocide. Similarly, Turkish Government should have the same situation in supporting Israel attacks in the war of terror on Gaza (Palestine Strategy Report, 2008, p. 174).

### **CHAPTER THREE: TURKISH-ISRAELI RELATIONS BETWEEN 2008 AND 2015: DARK ERA IN BILATERAL RELATIONS.**

#### **Introduction:**

While, Turkey had good relations with Israel between 2002 and 2008, Turkish-Israeli relations have witnessed a decline that has increased year after year during JDP's ruling in Turkey. That is why, directly after the elections of 2002, Erdoğan refused to meet the Israeli ambassador in Turkey. Afterwards, Erdoğan held a meeting with all Arab countries' ambassadors and representatives and he told them Turkish new policy will focus on further openness and closeness with the Arab and Islamic states. In 2006, during the Lebanon War the position of Turkey was to stand against Israel similar to the Arab countries. In Palestine case, Turkey always supports their issue. For example, during the Gaza Strip embargoes and shelling by the Israeli authority, Turkey tried to help the Palestinian people. Moreover, in Davos Conference in 2008, Turkey started deepening its struggles with Israel.

Then, Turkey had a great role in solving Lebanese internal problems in 2009. In 2010, Israel fired against 'Freedom Ship' which carried Turkish humanitarian and medical aids to Gaza. As a result, tensions arose between the bilateral ties of the two countries and this also led Turkey to send back Israeli Ambassador to his country in 2011. Together with the regional and global changes, Turkey has a great role in terms of politics, security and economics. For example, Turkey assumed a great role in the Iranian Nuclear program and Radar System. Apart from this, Turkey's role was very clear during the Arab "Spring" and an energetic struggle in the Middle East region.

### **3.1. Developments in Domestic and Foreign Policies of Turkey and Israel**

#### **3.1.1 Developments in Turkey**

According to a study (Balci and Kardaş, 2012) Turkey's foreign policy falls into three different phases. The rule of JDP, during the three different periods, has adopted a new political influential form, and the new foreign policy gives top priority to the integration as well as the cooperation with the States regions, particularly in the economic and diplomatic fields, which will transform the understanding of regional policy paid-up common interests security in a more flexible relation to the values shared.

Furthermore, realizing Policy of Zero Problems with all Neighbors is very difficult, Especially in the MENA where regional conflicts are usual. However Turkey improved its relations with Iran and Syria through this policy. Then, Turkey as yet has problems with Armenia but it made some attempts to normalize its relation. But a relationship with Israel is still problematic because Turkey-Israel relations decline through a series of events such as Davos and Flotilla crisis. So it can be argued that it is not possible to perform this policy successfully in all regions.

In the second period of the JDP's era, Turkey with its growing economic strength and its role as a peace broker in the region commenced to intensify its relations with the Middle East. Furthermore, during this period Turkey's "strategic autonomy" gradually grew thanks to the diversification of foreign policy activities within various areas. Nonetheless, the Western allies leveled criticism at Turkey for pursuing "new engagement policy", moreover the local opposition constantly criticized Turkey for what it considered "a change in the Geo-strategic axis" as well as its departure from the regular term alliance with the West.

The Turkish officials' criticism of Israel and its strategic position is different from the Iranian nuclear issue. Its close relationship with Hamas is to sharpen criticism of "changing the strategic axis" policy and to realize whether Turkey was working as a partner of the West in the Middle East or it gives priority to the Middle East on the Western orientation. Despite sharp criticism of Ankara from both internal and external parties to alter its foreign policy compass, they successfully maintained its policy of zero problems as a delimiter of its foreign policy activities.

During the third period of the Justice and Development Party era, there is a change in all of Turkey's foreign policy and the role it plays in Ankara's regional policy. Initially, Turkey was planning to intensify its relations with the Arabic countries and making attempts to achieve a model "of regional integration." It was evident that Ankara aimed at further integration activities in the region, such as the abolition of visa offering with a number of Arab countries and the establishment of "boards of high-level strategic cooperation" with the main regional countries, furthermore Turkey intended to intensify cultural cooperation in the region.

Also, Arab Spring in 2011 was a real challenge to the strategy of Turkish foreign policy. They were desirable revolutions in the Arab world, but it is unexpected for Ankara. That was the reason why initially Erdoğan's government did not decide on how to respond the popular uprisings, like most of the governments in the world. However, there was one thing apparent, and that is to stand in a row legitimate popular demand in these countries. However, there were diverse approaches to expose this support from one case to another. This unveils how really Erdoğan responded the challenges faced by his foreign policy in the region as a result of the Arab awakening; Where sided with the people who were against dictatorships backed arise over the long decades of the West.

That implies Turkey's anti-Western approach to the Arab Spring has exacerbated the threat to regional leadership. The threat imposed by the Arab Spring on the grand strategy to open Turkey represents a danger to the goal of Ankara's leadership change in the Middle East. But the primary goals of the Arab Spring democracy, such as the application and growth of freedom and meeting the social rights quickly turned into a state of turmoil, especially with regard to the chaotic political environment in Turkey and the worsening crisis in Syria. What is more, it turned Turkish strategic environment of essential structural stability into chaos, which can be defined as "a state of unrest" directly affected by the crisis in Syria, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Tunisia and Iraq".

In addition, Turkey has two major domestic problems: Kurdish question, and the rise of the political Islam.

### 3.1.1.1. Kurdish Question

In 2007, Turkey-Iraq relations were getting better; this led Turkey-Iraqi Kurdistan relations to be improved as well. Meanwhile, Iraqi dossier was transferred from Turkish military to foreign ministry so that they could exchange information in terms of intelligence with the US. So, Turkey withdraws from any threat against PKK (Kirsici, 2007, p. 33). During 2007-2008, Turkey recognized Kurdish autonomy in Iraq and opened its consulate in Erbil. Kurdistan Regional Government cooperated with both Turkey and PKK to have an agreement. Then, Ankara and Erbil could build strong political, diplomatic and economic ties together. That is why, in 2011, Turkish Prime Minister, Erdoğan visited Erbil. This was a result of the fact that in 2010, according to statistics, there were 730 Turkish companies in Kurdistan and this number was increased in 2012 when it reached 1023 companies only in Iraqi Kurdistan (Zanotti, 2011, p. 31).

In 2009, Ankara started its secret negotiations with the PKK. This initiative did not come into forth because of the 2011 election. At 2012, both sides reached to a point that war did not lead each part to defeat the other. Thus, by the end of December 2012, Erdoğan said, the Turkish Intelligence Agency, MIT, will start negotiation with detained Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan so as to lead PKK stop struggling against Turkey and leave Turkish territory (International Crisis Group, 2014, p. 3). Following that, for the first time, they allowed Kurdish MPs to visit Öcalan in the prison

But after the appearance of ISIS in Iraq and Syria, PKK established another party in Syria called Democratic Union Party “DUP” or “in Kurdish PYD”, which is affiliated to the PKK, the party rooted its base in the Kurdish populated area in Syria in terms of logistics and military; thus, the party established a local council. Its military wing of PYD is called People’s Protection Unit “PPU” or “YPG in Kurdish”, was the only party which they proved to the world that they have successfully confronted fought against and could defeat ISIS. By the end of 2014, tensions have arisen again between Turkey and PKK because PKK believes that Turkey has helped ISIS and Syrian oppositions against the Syrian Kurds. That is why, Kobani put many political and media pressure on Erdoğan (International Crisis Group, 2014, p. 38).

### **3.1.1.2. The Rise of Political Islam in Turkey**

Political Islam in general; depends on the idea that the Qur'an, faith and revelation must be a core of society and politic system. Political Islam emerged as a star in the sky of the Middle East in the late sixties and seventies when Islamists began to search for new solutions to deep social, political and economic problems in the region. And the failure of Western ideologies "socialist secular Arab nationalism applied by Abdel Nasser" in the search for solutions to these problems and work to restore the regional role has led many to look for solutions from the depth of the community (Yavuz, H, 2009, p. 34).

During the invasion by Israel 1967; Egypt, Syria and Jordan and the occupation of Arab lands has confirmed the status quo in the perspective of the Islamists. Well, the overthrow of the Shah in Iran 1979 by Shiite Islamists and the subsequent Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the same year has helped to stimulate the conscience of the Muslim-nationalist in the Middle East, thus giving legitimacy to the argument that Islam is the solution. After September 2001 events unprecedented attention given to the study of Islam and the Middle East within the security, political and academic circles in the United States.

There seems to be growing interest nowadays, The Americans want to understand and recognize the circumstances that led to the worst terrorist attacks on US soil, especially regarding the emergence of the phenomenon of radical Islam and political Islam. Despite this curiosity, most of the commentators on the Islamic phenomenon filled with many generalizations and failure to differentiate between moderate Islam who supports the principles of political liberalization and democratization and other extremists (Yafuz, H, 2009, p. 38).

In fact, many observers still consider political Islam as a movement of the Cold War that is closer to the Soviet Union which threatens US national security. It is ironic to say; while the United States during the Cold War had considered the Islamists that they are allies in the face of the expansion of Soviet influence and Arab nationalism. Indeed, US resourced and financed the vast majority of Islamists, especially major groups like Kalihoan Muslims and Islamic

movements that were the most organized in the world; despite violent agendas and on top of that claiming and attacking terrorism explicitly.

In resisting this project, Islamists such as the “Brotherhood of Muslims” emerged as the most organized political opposition force of the Middle East. Failure of the ruling regimes in the region to meet the legal demands of citizens had the lion shares of pushing people towards political Islam as an alternative (Morsi, 2015, p, 52). However, the popularity of the Islamists cannot be attributed to religious competencies.

However, the map of Turkish Islamist movement forces can be classified into four basic groups:

The first parties of political Islam, are these parties began with Professor Necmettin Erbakan when he founded the National Order Party, in the year 1970, where for the first time a political party program explicitly contained Turkish substances that have a religious nature, which led to the ban from the judiciary after less than a year in government, Erbakan set the party form on the real Islamic basis and led to a series of political Islamic parties later, like National Safety party and then well-being and virtue, happiness, and finally Justice and Development Party. Then he was ripped off lead by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Abdullah Gül (Morsi, 2015, p, 59).

Second: the movements of Sufism and Method “Tarikat”; that have adopted what is known as the social and spiritual Islam, and perhaps most important of these movements are Tarikat, Noor movement "Nurcular" in relation to Said Nursî known as Bediuzzaman; best known for his messages of light that reflected his philosophy in proving monotheism, faith and intellectual conflicts (Morsi, 2015, p. 65). After he walked away of these Tarikat to exercise the partisan and political life, but at the same time formed a large reservoir for electoral political parties which found itself compelled to get close to them and respond to their aspirations for electoral reasons, however, these movements have spread in basic form in the countryside, but they have succeeded in the seventies in finding of their weight centers in major cities and the acquisitions of a lot of commercial, educational, social services and religious facilities, later the

service movement led by Fethullah Gülen succeeded in penetrating into the judiciary, security and education institutions before collapsing their alliance between them and the JDP, and starts the final campaign of exclusion against all that is related to the movement union (Ahmed, Y, 2009, p. 32). So, ideologically, both Erdoğan's parties and Gülen's movement are conservative, have Islamic identity and have a nationalistic role; still they have many political disagreements, particularly on Kurdish question and their relations with the US and Israel. In 2010, due to "Marmaris right ship", the conflicts between Erdoğan and Gülen were clearly seen. Gülen said, "Israel was about to remove its siege on Gaza, then a ship was sent there to deliver humanitarian aid to the Palestinians". He also said "this is an AK party's ship not Turkey". He also believed that it ought to have taken preliminary actions for sending the ship; after taking the consent of Israel, the aid was sent to Gaza (Margulies & Yldizoglu, 2015).

Third: the official Islam through the Presidency of Religious Affairs, known as "Diyanet" which is the official body responsible for managing the affairs related to the Islamic religion, "follow the Hanafi school, which is the doctrine prevailing in Turkey".

Fourth: the radical Islamic movements, which pursues violence, and perhaps the most important is "Hezbollah" Turkey, which emerged at the end of the eighties of the last century, and his involvement in a lot of assassinations against activists of the Kurds and leftists, however this party disappeared from the Turkish scene for two thousand years, but they came back at the middle of last year under the guidance bar name - the party of the right, and soon became active in the south east of the country, and entered in armed clashes with the PKK (Narli, 1999, p. 44).

In fact, it was only natural that the new rise the Ottoman controversy in the Turkish home, at the same time raises concerns go beyond the Arab world, due to the legacy of the Ottoman Empire from the legacy of fighting and invasions. All of them carry the policy of colonial concepts and see the current "Muslim Brotherhood" as a way out of the crisis of identity in Turkey and an input for a new relationship with the Arab and Islamic worlds. And the fact that between the tendencies "Brotherhood" and Ottoman, there are many questions about justice and development for future party project, and perhaps of checks in the behavior of the Justice and Development Party, which is still led by Erdoğan, "note that; the Turkish Constitution does not

provide the President of the Republic involvement in any partisan work and he should resign if he was a member in any party", and despite taking advantage of the nature of "Brotherhood" and its relations with organizations "Brotherhood" in the Arab world and even the exploitation of militant and terrorist organizations such as "ISIL and the victory (Ansar)" to achieve regional Turkish aspirations towards Iraq and Syria" (Margulies & Yldizoglu, 2015).

### **3.1.2. Developments in Israel**

Theoretically, as contained in the religious teaching of "Torah", the Jewish look at themselves as they are a different chosen ethnic society, they are sublime and the value of a Jewish individual is much more compared to other nations' individuals. This is the main element that determines the personality of the Jewish society, and its known trace is found in the Torah, "the chosen people by God". This very psychology has motivated them to move around three main goals: protecting their entity which stands different among all the other nations' entity that led them to accept different norms and measures for their policies, and forming a force ready to be deployed and moved to handle threats and challenges and responding to emerging situations. Finally, using this force and directing it to serve all the meanings contained in the concept of "the chosen people of God"... achieving those formerly mentioned three goals means achieving complete legitimacy of the Jewish and their point of view about the world (Davutoğlu, 2010, p. 407).

According to Professor Ahmet Davutoğlu, in his book titled "Strategic Depth" if we pay attention, Israel is a part of the United States of America strategically, a part of Europe culturally and intellectually and a part of itself religious which is trying to impose itself on others (Davutoğlu, 2010, p. 416).

"Hereafter, things appear was happening during the ancient time between these two countries, Turkish and Jewish as a nationality and countries was that being a big dishonest the only point that gathered these being the balance power forsake them. "This it will be discussed further below".

### **3.2. Developments that Directly Affected Bilateral Relations**

#### **3.2.1 Hamas and the War on Gaza (2008\09)**

In December 2008, during his meeting with Syrian president Bashar Al-Assad, Erdoğan said “the constant Israeli bombing and air strikes on Gaza, let us stop making efforts to provide peace and security in the region” (Abu-Mutllaq, 2011, p, 82). This means the Turkish government stopped mediating between Syria and Israel. In September 2008, Hamas tried to control Gaza; on the other hand, Israel extended Gaza shelling and bombing. Also, they put all kinds of sieges on the Palestinians. The people faced a terrible situation. Meanwhile, after his meeting with the Egyptian president, Hosni Mubarak, in January, 2009, Erdoğan confirmed that “Israel must directly stop the bombing and shelling on Gaza. Further, they must lift the siege of the city and allow others to deliver their humanitarian aid there” (Szymanski, 2010, p. 183).

Hamas also requested Israel to stop shelling and bombing the Palestinians. Nevertheless, Hamas continued on its reaction to the Israeli forces that they impose the siege on Gaza. On 5 January 2009, Erdoğan said “our relations will not be built until we can see a real signal in stopping war against Gaza. That is why, Israel cancelled UN Security Council Resolution (1860) in which it required urgent stop of shelling and bombing of Gaza”(Abu-Mutllaq, 2011, p, 90). This led Erdoğan saying that it is necessary to prohibit Israel entering the UN. Moreover, Erdoğan accused both European and Western countries of being silent about the ongoing humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza. However, when there will be any conflict in Georgia and South Ossetia, all of them will start taking action (Balci& Kardaş, 2012, p. 98).

Furthermore, In a press conference on 3 May 2008, Ahmet Davutoğlu said; “Our policy is clear which focuses on securing peace in the region, if Israel takes the steps towards peace, We will establish a good relationship with them. However, if Israel attacks on Gaza, our relations will be cut. So, it is impossible for us to be silent on the humanitarian crisis that was going on in Gaza. These Israeli actions are unacceptable”. If any parties are stepping towards peace, we will establish a good relationship with them, but if the steps are towards war, Turkey will react it”(Ghaul, 2011, p. 116).

### 3.2.2. The Event of Davos “ One Minute”

Having uncertainty and tension in the relation of Turkey and Israel, the events were extended. Thus, in Davos Forum, Erdoğan directly confronted Israeli president Shimon Peres. On 29 January 2009, in Davos Forum, Erdoğan defined the Israeli military process against the Palestinians as a “war crime” and left the forum, justifying that they did not allow him to have a comment of Shimon Peres’s speech which was about the Gaza war (Szymanski, 2010, p. 182).

Erdoğan looked at Peres and said,

“Sir, you are older than me; I think you feel guilty, so you were very harsh in your speech. I remembered the children whom they killed in the bank of the sea. It also reminded me the speech of your prime minister when he said we agree with our policy. No doubt that both of you agree to attack on the Palestinians. I feel sorrow when I see that People are clapping for you, because many people were killed. Thus, I think it is a mistake when people are clapping to some actions that they produce such result” (Brackman, October 2011, p. 4).

As mentioned above, the situation of Erdoğan was very aggressive regarding the Israeli policy towards the Palestinians. He supported Gaza with all his strength. At the end, Erdoğan returned from Davos. As a result, he was welcomed by thousands of people at Ataturk Airport and they called him a ‘charismatic and courageous figure of the region’. After this, relations between Turkey and Arab states has markedly developed. Also, formal and informal Turkey-Palestine relations were established so as to stand against Israel together.

Day by day, Turkish officials’ remarks were harsher and harder against Israel. Erdoğan, in particular, called the Israeli war on Gaza as ‘a big massacre in the history of humanity’ and he also said ‘Israel will be sunk in the bloods of the innocent women and children of Gaza’ (Report and Information, 2010, p. 44). In addition to this, the situation of the Turkish Justice Minister, Mehmet Ali Şahin was stronger when he said ‘‘ Israeli actions are another Holocaust against the Palestinians’’ and he also said, ‘‘ Israel is a primary reason for global terror’’. Those kinds of statements were not heard in the Islamic world and groups except Iran (Report and Information, 2010, p. 46).

Turkey stood against Israel in both words and actions. Both countries lost their trust in each other. Israel started their threats against Turkey by mentioning Kurdish and Armenian dossiers. One of the Israeli commanders said “after Davos forum, he met one of the Turkish officials and told him that Turkey must withdraw from its situations otherwise Israel will move the case of North Cyprus invasion, and stood genocide against both Kurds and Armenians (Al-bayati, 2011, p. 4).

Avi Mizrahi, Israeli Navy Commander attacked Erdoğan and called him the destroyer of Israeli-Turkey relations and accused Turkey of conducting genocide against the Armenians and invading North Cyprus. Following that, Turkish Foreign Ministry asked Israeli Ambassador in Ankara to convey him their strong anger over the recent statements and requested that he would stop repeating such remarks.

With the extension of tensions between the relations of the two countries, Ahmed Davutoğlu decided to cancel his visit to Israel. He was supposed to attend a political conference with the Israeli President, Shimon Peres titled “We Are Looking for Tomorrow” and held on 20 November 2009 (Turan, 2011, p. 3).

While Netanyahu welcomed his Spanish counterpart, Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, in October 2009, Netanyahu blamed Erdoğan and put the responsibility of the destroying the relations of the two countries on his shoulder. He also said the hardest problem is that the Turkish Government with the leadership of AK party lost the route to peace and became part of the war as a signal to Syria and Iran (Ghaul, 2011, p. 120). Furthermore, Israeli Prime Minister said he is ready to appeal to its relations with Syria without the mediation of Turkey providing that Syria does not have any preliminary conditions since Turkey is not accepted to be a mediator of the peace process; it could be France rather than Turkey.

On 12 September 2009, Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoğlu visited Iran directly after his participation in foreign ministers of the Arab League, which was held to tackle Syria and Iraq issue. In his visit, Davutoğlu told Iranian officials that Turkey is ready to mediate between Iran and the Western countries regarding the country’s nuclear program. Through this, Davutoğlu

sent a message to the Western countries that Israel is not only a threat to the security of Iran but also to the whole territory. Due to the fact that this issue does not have any interests in Turkey, both Obama and Netanyahu could depend on Turkey for fulfilling any military actions against Iran. That is why, Davutoğlu's situations carried some interpretations, including; if Israel becomes the owner of nuclear weapons, it will become a threat in the region and in Turkey. Also, Turkey must keep its relations with Iran since both countries have possibilities of splitting Kurdish people (Olson, 2013, p. 7). Apart from this, economic aspect can be found significant in the relations of both countries. Now, Turkey follows a new policy for encouraging Arab and Islamic investors to invest in Turkey.

Apart from the fact that Netanyahu is strongly attached to Turkey and said "AK Party government stood against the peace process and they have affiliation to be far from Israel and Western countries and approach Syria and Iran, which are two radical countries" (Inbar, 2010, p. 32). Then, the US expressed their concerns over Turkey-Iran close ties and by considering how Turkey does not believe in imposing economic sanction against Iran! Following that, Financial Times mentioned this subject as both Washington and Ankara have problems over Iran and titled this as "Obama's administration put its impact on Turkey regarding the international sanction on Iran."

### **3.2.3. The Low Seat Crisis**

On 12 January 2010, Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister, Danny Ayalon invited Turkish Ambassador in Israel, Oğuz Çelikkol to tell him first his country's discontentment over the series on TV in which Turkey produced them, in particular "Separation" shown on TRT, and "Cry of Stone", Valley of the Wolves and some other series. Those series carried similar themes that Israel is a terrorist country. Second, the purpose was to transfer his message to Turkish Prime Minister, Erdoğan, regarding his statements over Israel. This meeting was arranged by the officials of the Israeli Foreign Ministry in the Parliament instead of their department. The seat of the Turkish Ambassador was lower than that of the Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister. The lower seat was designed in a way that he could not appear very well in the press. This is apart from the

fact that he waited in front of the door of Mr. Deputy for a few minutes (Palestine Strategy Report, 2010, p. 172).

Furthermore, Turkish Ambassador did not inform that the press will attend at the meeting and take his pictures. He thought that it was only going to be a bilateral meeting, and it was not beyond the diplomatic norms. This was totally different from what Mr. Ambassador thought as Mr. Deputy invited the photographers to take the photos of their meeting. Moreover, he spoke in Hebrew with Turkish Ambassador while he did not understand the language. During his speech, he spoke loudly to Mr. Ambassador and said, “Look, I am sitting on a chair which is higher than yours.” (Lindenstrauss & Kivam, 2014, p. 11). This lets the Turkish officials to have a strong reaction against the event. Similarly, Israeli reactions were made in which Mr. Ambassador was not Israeli’s Deputy Foreign Minister’s counterpart.

When the event happened, Erdoğan was on his way to Moscow. He described the event as ‘diplomacy of shame’. He also said “we found the way how to live with Jews and Israel. Israeli behaviors need to have tolerance, Israel must be known as a country which always performs improper behaviors like this” (Akgun & Gundogar, 2014, p. 5). Following that, Israel released two consecutive statements and regretted what happened. After the event, different interpretations have been made for the Israeli behavior. Erdoğan described it as an Israeli domestic disagreement and said, “this is your domestic issue.” Other interpretations focused on the fact that the goal behind this was supported by Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman so that he could create obstacle on the proposed visit of Israeli Defense Minister on the following days. Also, it was to prohibit any chance of re-establishing Turkey-Israel relations which were supported by Ehud Barak. Liberman was a kind person he did not want to reconcile with Turkey. Through this event, Liberman revenged Israeli’s weak situation towards Turkey since Erdoğan’s speech had been so tough and strong concerning Israel. Finally, Ehud Barak’s trip to Turkey was not successful.

Meanwhile, Israeli Minister of Industry and Trading, Binyamin Ben-Eliezer, said “this event was not at the interest of Israel”. He also said, “Israel does not need this event since the country has not completed its struggle with the Arab world, it intensified the war by standing

against Muslim world". Further, he emphasized that "it is worth mentioning that Turkey is a country with 72 million populations and it has a leadership role amongst Muslim world." (Report and Information, 2010, p. 52). Meanwhile, Turkey threatened Israel that the country wanted to withdraw its ambassador, after two days, Israel officially expressed its apology to Turkey. Abdullah Gül, the Turkish President said "this topic is over, however, Israel is responsible for destroying Turkey-Israeli bilateral relations and he also called Israel to normalize the situation and re-establish the relations" (Palestine Strategy Report, 2010, p. 173).

### **3.2.4. Israeli Commandos Attack to the Mavi Marmara Flotilla Crisis**

Bilateral relations of the two countries were worse than before in 2010. Due to the suspended Arab issues, including the siege on Gaza, both Ahmet Davutoğlu, Turkish Foreign Minister, and Ehud Barak, Israeli Defense Minister had a telephone call on 19 January 2010. This call was conducted when the siege of Gaza was tougher. Davutoğlu demanded Israel send humanitarian aids such as food, medicine and basic needs to Gaza. In addition, he requested to let them build temporary houses for the displaced Palestinian people and who could not refurbish their house. Due to the siege, people could not bring constructional materials to rebuild their houses. Despite giving direct refusal to Davutoğlu, Barak said we will appeal the demand based on the policy that Israel practiced in Gaza Strip (Palmer & Uribe, 2011, p. 8).

Turkish support for the Palestinian people was day by day increased in a way that the Turkish demands were incomparable to what the Arab leaders did. The Arab countries only requested certain slogans from Israel such as keeping the people's entity in which they were difficult to implement on the ground. However, Turkey asked for lifting the siege on Gaza, where their leaders practically intended to deliver their humanitarian aids to the Palestinian people. In order to prove that they are serious, they sent a ship, gave up the negotiation process with Israel and their support to Palestine reached to the level that they ended their role as a mediator between Israel and Syria (Palmer, Uribe, 2011, p. 4).

As revenge against Erdoğan, the US Jewish lobby started using their pressure on the US administration and Congress so that they enact a law, recognizing the Armenian Massacre as genocide by the Turkish people in 1915. If Erdoğan avoided supporting Palestine and intervening Gaza, they would take the step that was mentioned above. On the other hand, Erdoğan continued his policy. Thus, on 27 March 2010, during the Arab League Summit in Sirt, Jerusalem was described as ‘an eye of the Muslims’ and the Israeli efforts were called to make Jerusalem a Jewish settlement as ‘a crazy action’ (Ghaul, 2011, p. 122).

On 31 May 2010, a bloody clash happened between Turkey and Israel. This event caused the death of 9 civil Turkish people and injured tens of others. Also, the flotilla was taken by the Israeli forces in which the humanitarian aids were carried to Gaza. According to the Israeli forces, the flotilla has been informed that they would block the entrance to Gaza. Also, the Israeli forces spokesperson said they prepared the warship to fight against the ship. Meanwhile, Avigdor Liberman, the Israeli Foreign Minister said, we are ready to block the flotilla whatever the expense is, he also said this flotilla is an intervene with Israel. However, the passengers of the freedom flotilla resisted on delivering their aids to Gaza that is why, the Israeli commando descended and shot the passengers with the aim of taking over the control. This war happened when the ship returned to Gaza near Limassol, in South Cyprus (Brackman, 2011, p. 8).

This flotilla set off from Istanbul and it consisted of 6 ships. Three of them carried food, medicine, and other basic needs. The rest were transferred to the volunteers so that they could present the service. The number of the volunteers was more than 700 and they were from 32 different countries, they were members of various civil organizations and other freedom foundations in all Islamic countries, “The Foundation for Human Rights, Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief “IHH”. All of them were administrated by Bülent Yıldırım, the founder of IHH.

The attack on Freedom Flotilla, which is the biggest ship caravan, is the deepest crisis in the history of the relations of the two countries. Turkey confronted this war with all its energy. After the WWII, it is the first time that 9 Turkish people were killed in overseas attack. As a result, Turkey withdrew its ambassador in Israel and called Israeli Ambassador in Ankara and

told him his concerns. Moreover, Turkey stopped all the sea tourism, travel to Israel (Palestine Strategy Report, 2010, p. 174). Later, they sent back the Israeli Ambassador home and they called for an urgent US Security Council meeting. In a statement, Turkey gave some demands to Israel and they were:

1. Give the flotilla back to Turkey.
2. Release all the detained passengers on board who are from different nationalities.
3. Formal Apology to Turkey
4. Compensate the victims
5. Invite an international committee
6. Lift the Gaza Siege (Turan, 2011, p. 3).

Davutoğlu said that our demands were concretized in this statement which was issued directly after the event. He also called the event as a Turkish 11<sup>th</sup> September. Meanwhile, on 1 June 2010, Turkish Prime Minister, Erdoğan, had an extreme statement over the Israeli's behavior in the Turkish Parliament. In his speech, he said, "their friendship was very strong with Turkey; we will be the same in hostility to them" (Palestine Strategy Report, 2010, p. 174). Taking into the consideration that their relation does not restore to the previous level, Erdoğan demanded punishment for Israel. He also said, "Turkey is not like any other countries, Turkey is not owned by tribes." (Report and Information, 2010, p, 53).

Moreover, the other Turkish official's reaction on the freedom flotilla continued. Ömer Çelik, AK Party Vice President said "we will cancel all military agreements with Israel except the ones which are part of the international law" (Ghoul, 2011, p. 133). Abdullah Gül, the Turkish President had a mediator role and he said Turkey and Israel are two friends despite all the tensions of the past. Their relations will stay as it has continued for several centuries. Turkey is the first Muslim country in which we recognized Israel as an independent state in 1949. So, we wait for Israel to take some steps to improve our relations (Palmer, Uribe, 2011, p. 69).

In addition, Vecdi Gönül, Turkish Defense Minister said, our Heron UAVs Jet Bond with Israel will hand it over in the meantime and it has nothing to do with the flotilla, even if Turkey initiated a ban of Israeli military jet on the Turkish territory (Basl,8/9/2011).

Despite all the tensions and concerns between the two countries, the economic relations continued. Turkish Statistical Institute confirmed that Turkey's exports to Israel were 2,083 million dollars in 2010, while it was 1,522.4 million dollars in 2009. Also, the Turkey's imports from Israel was 1, 359, 6 million dollars in 2010 and it was 1, 074, 7 million dollars in 2009. Trading between the two countries was 3, 442, 6 and 2, 597, 1 million dollars in 2009 and 2010 (Szymański, 2010, p. 187).

Moreover, the money that the Turkish investors spent in Israel was 583 million dollars in the first half of 2010. According to the data that has been taken from the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, in 2010, the number of the Israeli tourists who came to Turkey was five times less than the last two years. For example, in 2008, the number of Israeli tourists who visited Turkey was 558.183; the number was even less in 2009 when only 311,582 tourists visited Turkey. Dramatically, this number fell to 109, 559 tourists in 2010 (Palestine Strategy Report, 2010, p. 179).

In addition to the period (2010-2015) was a dark era in the bilateral relations, particularly, in terms of diplomacy and politics, the economic relation has been continued and, According to Al Jazeera Centre for Studies, that the trade relations between Turkey and Israel have doubled despite strained political relations following the incident Mavi Marmara ship in 2010, stressing that the trade exchange between the two countries has doubled in four years to exceed 5.5 Billion dollars. As the following table clearly mentions everything:

(General trade volume between Turkey and Israel, Period (from 2009 to mid of 2015) Source (Aljazeera Center for Studies, August 20, 2015).

Year	Turkey's exports to Israel Number: (by Billion \$)	Total trade Volume Number: (by Billion \$)
2009	1,522	2,597
2010	2,080	3,439
2011	2,391	4,448
2012	2,322	4,039
2013	2,649	5,067
2014	2,950	5,700
Until the June of 2015	1,370	500 Million

### **3.3. Other Regional Developments that Affect Bilateral Relations**

#### **3.3.1. Iran's Nuclear Practices and Radar System**

With the emergence of the new global system, the US policy in the Middle East is based on three pillars: First, banning Iranian Nuclear Weapons. Second, Arab-Israeli Peace Process, Third, building and maintaining relations between Turkey and Israel. Israel feels that Iran is a regional power and it could be a real threat to its national security, Also, Iran is in a regional competition with Israel and it has an infrastructure to create chemical weapons, ballistic and atomic missile and radar system (National Defense Journal, 1/10/2010). Iran is a major support of Hezbollah. That is why; one of the basic principles on which Turkey-Israel relations were built to which America also contributed is that they must put pressure on Iran by building military and intelligence base in Turkey as the country has a good geographical location. Also, they must use Turkey's ground for attacking Iranian military base. With the emergence of the new global system, the US policy in the Middle East is based on three pillars: First, banning

Iranian Nuclear Weapons. Second, Arab-Israeli Peace Process, Third, building and maintaining relations between Turkey and Israel. Israel feels that Iran is a regional power and it could be a real threat to its national security, Also, Iran is in a regional competition with Israel and it has an infrastructure to create chemical weapons, ballistic and atomic missile and radar system (National Defense Journal, 1/10/2010). Iran is a major support of Hezbollah. That is why; one of the basic principles on which Turkey-Israel relations were built to which America also contributed is that they must put pressure on Iran by building military and intelligence base in Turkey as the country has a good geographical location. Also, they must use Turkey's ground for attacking Iranian military base.

When the Freedom flotilla event happened on 31 May 2010, the US situation after the event was to support Israel. So, the US wanted to describe the event as the one that has global dimensions. Joe Biden, the US Vice-President said, Israel has right to behave like what they did. From the beginning of the event, the US situation in Israel was clear; avoid enacting any resolution from the UN Security Council (Balci& Kardaş, 2012, p. 104).

The American situation in Israel was real. Although Erdoğan said Turkey has concerns about the Iranian Nuclear Program in 2005, this concern turned positively towards Iran later. Therefore, the US intended to take revenge from Turkey. On 11 May 2010, Turkey participated in Iran and Brazil's nuclear cooperation so that they could work together in this aspect! This led Turkey to appear as a player on the world's stage. The Turkey-Iran relations reached to the level that the two countries have uranium exchange program and produce it in Turkey. As a result, Turkey refused to express its content to any international resolution, which carries economic and political sanction against Iran. That is why; US supported Israel during flotilla attack. This meant that Turkey must be careful about its behavior towards Iran and Gaza (Palestine Strategy Report, 2010, p. 175).

On 13 July 2010, Hillary Clinton, the US Foreign Secretary, told her Turkish counterpart Ahmet Davutoğlu that they must stop supporting the Iranian Nuclear Program, explained the US perspective on Gaza flotilla attack and expressed the US concern about the Turkey's situation

towards Iran “during this time, apart from Turkey-Israel disagreement, Iranian President lift slogans like ‘Wipe out Israel on the Map’” (Jonathan, S, 2010).

Davutoğlu refused Clinton’s demand and said “this is one of the demands that Turkey cannot accept. It is Turkey’s interest that the country should be closed to Iran (Ukasha & Abd-l-qadr, 2010).

After the emergence of the Arab Spring in 2011, both Iran and America have had several secret sessions in various countries, so as to reach a deal on Iran’s nuclear weapons. On 20 November 2013, Iran and 5+1 countries reached a primary agreement (Munahi, 2015). Towards the final days of the negotiation, Iranian official channel, General Farzad Ismaeli, Iranian Air Commander stated, “Iran installed a radar system in Ahwaz, south west of Khuzstan area located at the Iraq’s border. He said this system has a very high capability and it is designed and made in Iran. The system could detect targets airplanes and ballistic missile from 600 KM and 1,100 KM. The Iranian Fars Agency also referred to the previous commander by claiming that the radar system could also detect and target no pilot jet (Toukan, 2009, p. 31). Thus, Iran wanted to develop its air defense system so that the country could prevent any attack by both America and Israel which previously threatened Iran due to its nuclear program.

In the early morning of 14 July 2015, a very important agreement was signed by Iran and 5+1 countries. This agreement is a new page in the history of the international relations.

### **3.3.1.1. The Nature and Ground of the Agreement**

In order to talk about diplomatic relationships, we need to talk about the personality and character of the president, Hassan Rohani. He is the man of diplomacy outside and human rights violation inside. He is the seventh president of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In his political career, he was a member of the High Council of National Security (1989), the Council of Specifying the Regime Interests (1991), the Council of Experts (1999), the head of the research Center for Strategic Issues of Iran (1992), the head of the most important negotiating team of Iran’s nuclear program with European countries. He has written many significant books about

national security, Islamic political ideology and Iran's nuclear program and its foreign policy (Al-Jazeera, 2013).

In the election campaign, Rohani promised to solve the political and economic embargo on Iran. People have had a huge hope that is why he won 50.86% of the votes in 15<sup>th</sup> of July 2013. He was elected as the president of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Munahi, 2015). Hence, the US found its missing partner and the compliments with secret meetings between Washington-Iran started in order to:

1. Break the US silence about Iran's hegemony in Iraq and the region.
2. Invite and involve Iran in the second Geneva conference.
3. Break US's silence on the investigating team about Weapons of Mass Destruction in Syria. This was another compliment by the US for Iran.
4. Ignore Iran's behavior in Swiss harbor and Gulf countries, collaborating with Iran, China, and Russia. This means that Obama, during his presidency, tried to reach a form of solution on Iran's Nuclear Program (Al-Jazeera, 23/7/2015).

On 20<sup>th</sup> of November 2013, the first public agreement between Iran and five plus one and the permanent members of the UN Security Council has been signed. The Los Angeles newspaper stated that this agreement has been negotiated 5 times in 5 different countries secretly. The most confidential one was in Amman Saltant, and the King of Amman has become their mediator (Munahi, M, 2015).

The section of the agreement goes around the point that the Arak enrichment plant must stop working; it should remain as it is but with no more activity than what it has. Arak is the place where Uranium is enriched. Heavy water, or any other instrument which might give Arak more activity, including central enrichment, should not be sent to them. In April 2015, Iran increased the central enrichment equipment from 19 to 6104, from which it must be decreased to 5000 in accordance with the agreement (Al-Jazeera, 2013).

### **3.3.1.2. Negotiation for 20 months and the Division of the Center Of Decisions in Iran**

Iran's foreign policy is established on fighting against the US and Israel. All Iranians made it a habit to fight against those two countries under the slogan of 'death to the US'. After this agreement, thousands of international organizations will go to Iran and Iran will be open to the outside world.

In relation to the nuclear crisis in Iran, shaking the economic status and its currency, made the political decision centers to be divided into two different parties. One party supported Iran's agreement with the EU, US and the Security Council. They believed that marginalizing Iran for the last 40 years must be ended. This soft wing was supported by Hassan Rohani. The second wing consists of extremists and the military, supported by Khamenei; they were against the agreement from the beginning and held the slogan of 'death to the US'. For them, Iran should have continued enriching Uranium and its Nuclear program along with intervention in Iraq, Gulf countries, Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen. It must continue to see how it goes (Toukan, 2009, p. 80).

At the dawn of 14 July 2015, after 16 days of continuous negotiation, Iran and the West "5+1 countries" reached an agreement (Al-Jazeera, 2015). For the next 10 years, Iran will be under continuous observation of the UN in order not to produce nuclear weapons. Iran is not allowed to go over 3.67% of enrichment and should allow the observatory team to check its military stations.

In return, 120 Billion US dollars of the frozen money of Iran must be returned. The economic and political embargo by the EU, US and UN Security Council must be lifted immediately (Munahi, M, 2015). Iran will consequently be prosperous economically. The Iranian authorities will no more have the excuse of the international embargo to make their people hungry. Rohani's election campaign promises must be fulfilled. That is why Iranians went on the street to express their happiness. In August (2015), Iran decided to lift the slogan of 'death to the US' in all formal institutions. It is worth remembering that this agreement, neither talks about the human rights and Iran's violation even in one line, nor what happened in the past or what might happen in the future.

### **3.3.1.3. The Impact of the Agreement on Arab Gulf countries**

Even though the agreement between 5+1 and Iran does not mention the crisis of the Middle East, it only talks about Atomic issues. The EU and US attempted to prevent Iran from producing Atomic weapons, but this Atomic agreement might have resulted in other sorts of agreements (Aid, 2015).

Saudi heads the Sunni Arab front to stand against Shias in the region, especially in Yemen. In 2015, Saudi signed 6 agreements with Russia, the most obvious was related to Atomic cooperation with weapon agreement worth 10 Billion dollar, and they bought 400 defense planes from Russia. This is when Russia has an alliance with Iran and Syria (Xazir, 2015). This is nothing but withdrawing money by super powers. Saudi, similar to Israel and Turkey, is concerned with the relationship between Iran and the US. Therefore, a strong possibility has been lately forming an alliance among Saudi, Israel, Egypt, Turkey, Qatar and other Arab countries.

### **3.3.1.4. Israel's Concerns about 5+1 Agreement with Iran**

The countries in the Persian Gulf, Iran's neighbors such as Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Turkey and Russia, believe that Iran will be a dominant power in the future. Especially when Iran is an industrialized country, it has industries such as car factories, petrochemical and plane production companies. Some others believe that Iran is a burnt card because when two football teams play; there will be one winner and one loser.

Israel is a huge enemy of Iran and a huge alliance of the US and the West. According to 2012 statistics, its population is around 7.5 million people. The number of its military is more than 1 million, whereas 22 Arab countries and Iran are in trouble with 80 million of populations by Israel, which is a director of the international politics (Munahi, 2015). Despite the embargo on Arabs and Palestine, many countries such as Jordan, Egypt, Qatar, Morocco and Saudi have agreements which would be clear as the recent accidents such as forming ISIS is a Turkish-Palestinian plan against Iran and restricting Shia polices in the region.

In the past 10 years, the US officials have not denied that Israel was a headache for them in the Middle East. Obama, as a response to the Israeli concerns at the time of 5+1 agreement, stated ‘we cannot ignore diplomatic and peaceful agreements with Iran’. Britain told Israel that they must respect the agreement between the international community and Iran, Israel quickly sent its security council to Washington. If Israel believed that it controls the economy and politics in the US in the past, in fact, this agreement would have opposite results (Al-Jazeera, 2015). Israel is under a huge pressure now. The US cannot totally ignore Israel’s concern which is why they thought of sending extremist groups to the region.

This will put us in front of the conclusion that if weapons are used against weapons, Israel, Saudi and UAE who are more concerned will be given more weapons.

### **3.3.2. Turkish Position and Conflicts over Oil and Natural Gas**

#### **3.3.2.1. The Natural Gas Exploration Activities in the Mediterranean**

Searching and finding natural gas in the Mediterranean, specifically in the South of Cyprus and Israel led to the biggest controversy among Turkey, Cyprus, Israel, Egypt, Greece. This is the evidence that the world is hungry for energy in the 21 century, which might lead to the discovery of many other gas fields. In 2009, the **Timar** field was discovered on the coast, which contains 10 million cubic meters. Later, in 2010, **Leviathan** field was discovered which contains 19 cubic meters (Hindrson, 2014, p. 1). This happened after a long search and test for the natural gas deep down in 2000 meters from the river; they obtained gas.

Moreover, natural gas was found only in Afrodit field in Cyprus in 2011 which contains 5.2. Million cubic meters, this is a little amount in comparison with the world reserve. Iran’s reserve of the natural gas is 1187 Trillion cubic meters. Qatar’s reserve is 885 Trillion cubic meters, and Egypt’s reserve is 72 Trillion cubic meters. Along with this the discovery of the natural gas in south Cyprus and Israel, will greatly affect the development of the economy and keeping the security of energy in the region (Al-Jazeera Center for Studies, 2015).

According to the US Directorate for geology in March, 2010, the amount of the natural gas in the Mediterranean area might increase to the amount of 122 Trillion cubic meters (or 3416 Billion cubic meters". This area starts from the west of Cyprus including Syria, Lebanon, Israel, to the Gaza strip coasts (Hindrson, 2014, p. 2).

In June, 2013, in relation with the export of the natural gas, Israeli government stated that they have formed a ministerial committee headed by the Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu. The members were the Minister of Finance, Yair Libid, Minister of Energy, Silvan Shalom, the Central Bank Chairman, Styli Fisher, who decided to export 40% of the production of the natural gas. The committee decided to use the amount of 60% for the country to sell the natural gas step by step to Jordon, the Palestinian authority and the West strip (Hindrson, 2014, p. 2).

Israel expects that until 2025, the natural gas would be 50% of the electricity. The Cyprus electricity board is capable of producing 1410 Megawatt electricity. 830 Megawatt from that amount is generated by the **Vasilos** station for electricity production (Hindrson, 2014, p. 4).

In comparison with the international standards, Israel's capability to export is very little. According to the measurement committee in 2012, it is stated that Israel's gas is 680 Billion cubic meters or 24, 3 Trillion cubic yards, which is less than 0.04% of the world reserve for the natural gas. The rate is incomparable with the reserve of other countries such as Iran, which has 18% of the world reserve or Russia which has 17.6% and Qatar has 13.4%. (Xazir, M, 2015).

Cyprus is an Island in the Mediterranean, which covers only 9250 square Kilometers. Basically, the residents are original local people, they never consider themselves as Turks or Greeks. British colonization has had its impacts on them.

Nowadays, when the world is hungry for energy, in contrary to Iraq, it is expected to produce 7.6 million barrels per day, Turkey, Greece, Cyprus and the surrounding countries live in an expensive world of energy, they do not have oil and gas. The price of one liter of petrol in Cyprus and Istanbul is around 3-4 dollars. This price does not reach 1 dollar in the whole of Iraq.

Greece is even hungrier for energy resources. They faced financial crisis during the last 3 years with the problem of overdue payment of loans to the people (Chagapaty& Fedan, 2015).

### **3.3.2.2. The Oil and Natural Gas in Iraqi Kurdistan “KRG”**

First and foremost, due to its geopolitical place, it has become an international terminal as many valuable goods including oil and gas go through Turkey as a gate for the Southern Kurdistan to the world.

Until 2007, Turkey was looking at KRG in Iraq as an enemy due to having PKK fighters in Kurdistan. Later on, this relationship has changed into political and economic relationships. Turkey sent man power, companies, airlines and goods to Erbil and Kurdistan sent its oil and gas through Turkey to the Global market. This relationship frustrated Iran, Syria and the central government in Iraq (Alaalem, 2015). In 2007, Kurdistan Region was the 19<sup>th</sup> in markets to which Turkey sent its goods. The size of the import from Turkey to Kurdistan region was worth 1.7 Billion dollars. In 2011, Kurdistan region has become number six of the markets used by Turkey and the size of imports increased to 5.1 Billion dollars. In 2013, Kurdistan region has become the third market and the size of import rocketed to 8 Billion dollars. In return, the size of the export of oil from Kurdistan to Turkey was very little in a way that from 2007 to 2014, it was worth 87 to 153 billion dollars. The numbers of the Turkish companies in Kurdistan region were much more than the number of all the other companies belonging to other countries. In 2009, there were 450 Turkish companies in Kurdistan region, and this number has increased to 1500 in 2013 (Chagaptay & Fedan, 2015).

On 10 March 2014, the oil export from Kirkuk field to Jian harbor was suspended due to the amendments in the pipes. Later on, part of it was taken by ISIS, and the Iraqi central government intentionally neglects the North Company for oil every now and then. In March, 2015, exporting Kirkuk oil to Turkey resumed with the amount of 75000 barrels per day (Munahi, 2015).

These are all working by using energy resources, and that is why the world is more eager for energy than ever before, Oil and gas compose 66% of the whole energy produced in the entire world. The oil reserve in the Middle East composes 89% of the world reserve. These countries use very little of their oil internally, it is very cheap to produce oil; that is why the whole world depends on the oil of the Middle East. According to the Iraqi oil fields map, most of the fields are located in Kurdistan Region, and 80% of the Iraqi natural gas are located in Kurdistan Region (Siwaily, 2011, p. 15).

In fact, the amount of the oil and the year in which it will vanish is known. According to the European statistics, it will happen after 43 years “this is based on the International Energy Agency’s report in 2006, in which the amount and the year of disappearing is specified”. This means that, if the amount of the available oil is varnished in 2035, the Europeans will have oil for the next 10 years, North America for the next 9 years, and the Middle East for the next 88 years. This is when the oil will remain in the Kurdistan Region for the next 132 years. While 5% of oil ready for production is located in Kurdistan Region “including Kirkuk”(Siwaily, 2011, p. 44).

The oil in Kurdistan is one of the best types of oil due to the little amount of sulfur it contains. It is easy to change it with petrol, and it does not need much effort, That is why there have been major changes in the energy map of the world in the recent years, which includes the amount of production, marketing and consumption. The most important parts of those changes can be classified in the following way:

First, the development of the instruments for oil production and abandoning conventional tools, especially in the USA, there have been many modern instruments for digging the rocky places for the oil and gas production (Jonathan, 2010, p. 10).

Second, after 2009-2010, Iraq and Kurdistan region opened their doors to the foreign investment. The most important historical opportunity was the time when half of the Iraqi oil reserve has been put in an auction which was about 70 Billion barrels. In an open auction, more

than 50 contracts have been signed at the same time by the Kurdistan Region (Financial Times, 8 Aug 2015).

Third, the development in oil and gas sector continued in a way that makes production quicker than before. With the arrival of a lot of international and regional organizations in Kurdistan Region, the political, economic and intelligence issues became a hot issue. Iraq, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia manifested themselves with oil and gas, Jordan and Syria had problems in energy resources, and Turkey found the energy security in water. Despite having oil, Iran was afraid of its future (Sky NEWS, 2014).

Despite not facing ISIS and the costs of war as well as having people displaced, Kurdistan Regional Government's budget for 2013 was about 17 Trillion Iraqi dinars. In 2014, the Iraqi central government has not sent its federal budget share to the Kurdistan region. KRG faced a costly war "against ISIS "further details will be provided later", according to the constitution, Iraq is a federal government; they have to pay the regions.

Therefore, can the Kurdistan region sell its oil independently from Iraq? According to the most recent contract between KRG and General Energy Company, which disappointed Iran, the company produces and transfers gas from Bina Bawi and Miran fields in a way that the world waits for this project which is due on 2018. 11.4 Trillion Cubic meters of gas from these fields will be transferred to Turkey, which is worth 2.6 Billion dollars (Xazir, M, 2014).

According to the financial Times website, only in March 2015, Israel imported 19 Million barrels of oil from Kurdistan. It explains that Kurdistan oil can provide 75% of the Israeli needs. In 2014, Reuters News Agency stated that 'Israel has received the first oil ship from Kurdistan'. Reciting Israeli officials, Reuters wrote that Israel pays a lot of attention to Kurdistan as part of its diplomatic Middle East relationships and a source for importing energy. In the summer of 2014, Israeli Prime Minister, Netanyahu, formally supported the establishment of the Kurdistan state from the autonomy that they have in Iraq (Financial Times, 8 Aug 2015).

Probably the relationship that the KRG established with Israel, which sells oil to Israel at a cheap price, would be for intelligence and military cooperation with Kurdistan who is the only force to fight the terrorists of ISIS in Iraq and Syria “which we will talk about in the coming sections”. Moreover, it is not obvious whether Kurdistan can legally export oil or not. At the end of 2015, the ability of Kurdistan to export oil will reach 1 Million barrels, but there will be two unclear issues between the region with Baghdad and Turkey:

First, nothing is obvious about the 50 year contract signed between Ankara and the Kurdistan region. There have been many efforts by political observers and opposition parties, but nothing has come to light.

Second, the money KRG earned from the exported oil is not obvious and transparent. Sometimes the officials say that the money is kept in Turkish banks, and Turkey says that the KRG has kept all the money (Alaalem, 2015).

### **3.4. The Regional Development between 2013 and 2015**

#### **3.4.1. ISIS Crisis**

##### **3.4.1.1. The Creation of Al Nusra Front**

One of the outcomes of the Arab spring and the uprising against the regime of Assad in Syria was the appearance of Al Nusra front. According to the CIA reports, they have relationships with Al Qaida. In its first declaration in January 2012, the announced Jihad with the Assad regime, they are generally formed Syria, Iraq, Chechen, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Turkey and a few are from Europe, At the beginning of 2014, the UK government announced that if anyone joins ISIS or Al Nusra front, s/he cannot return home (Gulmohamad, 2014, p. 3).

Al Nusra front anonymously released its announcements and propaganda videos through ‘White Organization for Media Production’ as well as the social media such as Facebook and Twitter accounts. The most famous account was ‘Katayb Ahrar Al Sham’ which is part of Al Nusra Front.

The most effective attack in Syria was the explosion of the building of the chief commander of the military in Damascus in 2013 as well as the explosion of the Air Force intelligence building in Harsa. They were in cooperation with the Free Syrian Army in many fights such as the one carried out in Hallab (Gulmohamad, 2014, p. 4).

#### **3.4.1.2. The Creation of ISIS**

Reappearance of Al Qaida organization, and the political changes in Iraq and the surrounding countries are the outcomes of the Syrian war against Bashar Assad.

The reports talk about the Sunnis in Iraq in 2002 who were concerned about their future as after the fall of Saddam, Iran and Shias will cover the whole region. Syria and Israel do not support the Sunnis in Iraq, which is why they need to do something. In 2005, the US administration in Iraq suggested making a Sunni region, but they protested and declined. It is when a minority of Sunnis has governed the majority Shias in Iraq for 1400 years. They were very brutal on Shias; therefore, there was no guarantee that after the fall of Saddam, the Shias would not revenge. Actually, they did it Shias was systematically working on ethnic cleansing of Sunnis, between 2003 and 2014. They raped their wives and stole their property. When Maliki was the Prime Minister, there were hidden jails for Sunnis, Baya quarter in Baghdad was populated with 70% of Sunnis, in 2014, this figure decreased to 15%. Sunnis were obliged to do something in, return to this brutality (Arab League report of the Expert, 2015, p. 2).

ISIS roots back to Al Qaida, which was run by Al Zarqawi in 2006. When Al Zarqawi was killed by the CIA in Iraq, Abu Ayub Misri was recognized as the leader who suggested establishing ISIS (Gulmohamad, 2014, P.1). Abu-Bakr AL Baghdadi, as the new leader after killing the old one in a voice record in 8/4/2013, changed the trading name into ISIS, this includes Al Nusra Front as well. So many readers regarded Al Baghdadi as the new leader; this is when Al Nusra Front was considered as a part of Al Qaida and took orders from Al Zawahiri. They have shortly been attacked by ISIS in Abughrib Jails and 100 of them were killed. ISIS

freed the prisoners, and on December 12, 2013, seven of ISIS fighters attacked the Iraqi Intelligence building in Kirkuk and took over the building in 24 hours. They have made all the police and security forces preoccupied dealing with them (Middle East, 2015).

At the end of 2013 and in the beginning of 2014, ISIS formally declared their existence in Iraq, especially in Anbar Province and Fallujah district, which belongs to Anbar province. They took over the city with tens of cars. So many people thought that these places produced terrorists.

Anbar is one of the biggest provinces in Iraq located in the west of the country covering 138,500 square kilometers. According to a statistic in 2013, its population is about 1.9 million people. It is one of the Sunni provinces (Bedawed, U, 2014). This city has been historically known as 'Liwa Dlem', its significant cities and districts include Ramadi, which is the center of the province, Fallujah, Hit, Qaiym, Hadisa, Ukashat, Habanyah, Sarsar, Nuaayma, Khalidya, Abbasya.

Iraq and Syria are two neighboring countries which have 600 Kilometers of joint borders. ISIS considered taking over two sides of Iraq and Syria as a holy mission. In taking over Fallujah and Anbar province, tens of generals from Iraqi military were killed by ISIS; the most famous one was the commander of the 7<sup>th</sup> division, General Major, Muhammad Al Krawi and his deputy. According to the Iraqi Ministry of Defense spokesman, 55 ISIS fighters were killed in cooperation with members of Anbar tribes (Middle East, 2015). US intention to fight against these terrorists proves their capabilities to attack Al Qaida. ISIS fights with Shia authorities and their interest is the same with Al Qaida, which are the two following points:

1. Ending the western authority in the Arab and Muslim countries.
2. An attempt to establish a new Islamic caliphate.

Generally, the reasons for the advent of ISIS and its strengths are manifested in three points:

The support and directions they receive from the regional countries. The environment and power vacuum in Iraq is prepared for such terrorist organizations to be established. ISIS's tactics,

trainings, attacks, weapons and their members are different from other terrorist organizations as they are stronger than others. Their behavior is considered to be the worst against humanity in the modern history (Arab League report of the Expert, 2015, p. 4).

On 8<sup>th</sup> July of 2014, ISIS easily captured Mosul Governorate, which is the second biggest Province in Iraq. It is the most important and strategic city in the region as it is rich in oil and natural gas. It is said that Mosul was an important reason for the Sykes- Picot agreement, which was a state in the Ottoman Empire. The day when ISIS attacked; the commanders of the Iraqi Army fled to Erbil governorate to back themselves with Kurdish leaders. Kurdistan Region President, Masoud Barzani's party was accused of helping the fall of Mosul and protecting the old members of the Baath Party (Gulmohamad, 2014, p. 5). ISIS captured thousands of students and fired them. It was a massacre that the entire world was very scared. It was when the officials and employees of Turkey's Consulate, who were captured by ISIS, but were later released along with Tanker drivers.

The third series is the new Russian strategy in Syria after Arab Spring and opening a new front to hit ISIS as the Russian president, Vladimir Putin, states that 'the US can see water on Mars, but they cannot see ISIS bases in the ground'(Al-Jazeera, 2015). It is a fight against a civilization which is run by the world powers. The most obvious evidence is what is known as Nabucco Pipeline.

Nabucco Pipeline is a project for transferring natural gas from middle of Asia to the middle of Europe. In order for the project to be successful, there has been an agreement between Turkey, Azerbaijan and 4 members of the EU, which are Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, and Austria in July 2009, in the capital of Turkey, Ankara. The agreement was made with the participation of Germany and Obama's advisor for energy issues in Eurasia in order to transfer gas pipes from the Caspian sea to Azerbaijan and then go next to the Black Sea in Erzurum, Turkey, to Bulgaria and then Austria (Jonathan, 2010, p. 2).

This was the biggest economic project in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which costs 10.9 Billion dollars. Its length is 3300 Kilometers with the ability of sending 31 billion cubic meters of gas to

the EU. It is when Russia owns the biggest natural gas reserve in the world which is 24% of the world reserves (Aid, A, 2015). They built a pipe in front of Russia without inviting them

Regardless of this, the project has been named from Nabu Kaznasir, the Emperor of Kildans who ruled Babylon between 605-563 BC. He destroyed the Egyptian military and Quds twice. He tried to ethnically cleanse the Jews. In order to highlight this historical root in the Italian classical music, there has been a piece known as Nabuccoopera, which talks about how Nabi Kaznasir's era and known for religious education (Xazir, 2015).

However, the geopolitical game has been changed into finding gas and the market in which gas replaces oil as its cost and price are reasonable. It has less negative impacts on the environment. There has been a long controversy for Nabucco to continue. However, the project has been suspended in 2014 due to some reasons. One reason is that Iran takes Russia's side which has geopolitical relations with the project as it has the second world reserve, which is 18% and it is located in the Caspian sea area (Aid, 2015). Moreover, Turkmenistan coats, which are the starting point of the pipeline, are controlled by Russia. Azerbaijan and Russia have mutual strategic alliance agreement. This would make the project stop forever. Despite all of this, due to the fight between Russia and Ukraine, Russia would not let the natural gas go through Ukraine to Europe.

Until now, according to the International Energy Agency, 80% of the energy in the world depends on natural gas. Until 2012, the world spent 240 million tonnes of melted gas in cars, planes, factories and ships. It is expected that until 2030, the amount of consumption reaches 550 million tones. It is the same for oil. It means that in the next 15 years, the world's needs will be doubled. In other words, gas means politics and political interests. Oil means money, money means economy and the economy system owned by the US tries to take money in multiple ways. (Chapagaty& Fedan, 2015).

Therefore, Nabucco pipelines must be transferred. The best choice is through the Middle East. Due to this gas, Iraq and Syria must be divided. 2016 marks the 100th anniversary of the division of these countries which was done by applying Sykes-Picot agreement.

### **3.4.1.3. Russia's Settlement in the Mediterranean**

Russia's position in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was always supporting the Arab systems. After 4 years of military and economy support by Russia to prevent the fall of Bashar Assad's regime, on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2015, Russia's foreign minister stated 'his country gave all military equipment to Syria, Which was 50 planes to attack ISIS... On 21<sup>th</sup> of September 2015, he officially announces the entrance of the Russian marines to Syria, as it was very sudden and quick decision.' But there has been a preparation for it. In relation to making a coalition to hit ISIS in Iraq and Syria, even before Russian marines enter Syria, there has been an intelligence sharing room in Baghdad with the participation of Iraq, Iran, Syria supervised by Russians. It was decided that France, Turkey, Jordan and Egypt would join this sharing room to fight against ISIS (Xazir, 2015).

One day before the Russian military entrance, Israel's Prime Minister, Netanyahu, with his Military Chief of Staff and the Head of the Military Intelligence visited Russia "it is unknown whether this visit was an invitation from Russia or at Netanyahu's request". Generally, there has been cooperation between Russia and Israel in order to avoid conflicts on the Israeli border.

What is interesting is that Russia would have its only military base in Tartus and in Laziqya for its planes. This would be Russia's only military base in the Mediterranean. If Russia backs down from Syria, it would frustrate its coalitions (Aid, 2015).

### **3.4.2. Elections in 2015: the Decline of the Ruling Party**

Kurds Disrupted AK party! The nature of the politics inside Turkey is that it is shaken every now and then. In June, 15, 2015's elections, Turkey shook once again. The price of Turkish Lira dropped, the political crisis was doubled, and the Kurdish issue for the first time reached its peak in a civil and democratic way. Kurds passed the 10% prevention and obtained 80 seats in the Turkish Parliament. For the first time, Kurds participated in a political party and entered the parliament, which affects the role of the ruling party (Masrawy, 2015).

Erdoğan was dreaming of obtaining 400 seats out of 550 parliament seats in order to change the system to the presidency to be an empire. This is when, according to the constitution; Turkish President should be unbiased in the election campaign, In front of the media, the president was visiting all the cities to collect votes for his party (Guardian, 2015). There have been many violations of the rule for the first day of the election campaign, Finally, Erdoğan did not only achieve his emperor's dream, but also could not form the government alone?. They needed an agreement with another list to form a coalition government. The result of the elections has put many questions in front of the observers about the future of the conflicts in Turkey and the whole region. The AKP won 40.87% of the votes, which would be 258 seats. CHP as a secular party obtained 132 seats. MHP as a Turkish National party obtained 80 seats, and for the first time in history, Kurds obtained 80 seats (as illustrated in the following table):

<b>Party</b>	<b>Ideology</b>	<b>Vote percentage</b>	<b>Vote taken</b>	<b>Seat in the Parliament</b>
<b>AKP</b>	Conservative	40.87%	18,863,832	258
<b>CHP</b>	<u>Secular</u>	24.95%	11,518,404	132
<b>MHP</b>	Turkish nationalist	16.29%	7,519,103	80
<b>HDP</b>	Kurdish nationalist	13.12%	6,058,150	80

Source: High Council of Election

The result of the elections has deepened the internal problems in Erdoğan's party. The Prime Minister, Davutoğlu started negotiation with other parties to form a government. They have not reached any agreement with any party (Guardian, 8 June 2015). The peace process with the Kurds has collapsed. The fight with Kurds and PKK resumed. In a Turkish airplane attack in the southern part of Kurdistan, 20 civil people were killed on 1<sup>th</sup> of Aug 2015. It was justified as an attack against PKK. The Kurdish cities were besieged by Turkish Military. There have been many confrontations and many civil and military people were killed (Masrawy, 2015).

## CONCLUSION

Formally the history of Israel and Turkey relations dates back to the time when Israel became an independent state in March 14, 1948 followed by Turkish recognition of the state of Israel in February 28, 1949. One has to remember the root of this relation goes back to the time when Turkey was the central place of the Ottoman Empire and the Zionist Organization that represented the Jewish people and their attempts to establish a Jewish state on the Palestinian land.

Similarly, it is important to notice that political parties with Islamic backgrounds and roots are not strange or have not appeared for no reason in the Turkish society. Furthermore, one must also remember that the Islamic political parties in Turkey have not been inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood organization. But rather they are the heir of the greatest Islamic Caliphate known as the Ottoman Caliphate and therefore one can argue that the AKP is another different form or model of political Islam. The AKP has successfully and moderately saved itself from its Islamic veil. This Party has been influenced if not shaped by Erbakanism. Also, this party has adopted a realistic and pragmatic approach in its policy which has to some extent unsettled other Islamic parties on the one hand and frustrated the secular and military parties on the other hand.

Additionally, it is important to notice that all the relations between Turkey and Israel during the era of AKP were not at the level of political and diplomatic efforts only, rather, conversely and even though the relations deteriorated from 2009 to 2015, the commercial and economical relations have improved and that the numbers of tourists have not only continued but rather increased between the two countries. In 2009 the commercial transactions reached two Billion and five hundred and ninety seven million US dollars and also in 2015 this figure has doubled to five Billion and seven hundred million US dollars (Al-Jazeera Center for Studies, 2015).

Another important point to mention is that despite being a member of the NATO, Turkey is geopolitically and geostrategically a strong country and it is like a Frontline for the USA confrontation against the hegemony of Russia in the region. Turkey is also important to prevent the spread of Islamic extremism and radical organizations, and also for fighting the rise of

communist ideology in the Middle East. Therefore the USA has always strived for keeping the alliance between Turkey, Israel and Saudi Arabia and that the USA has always wanted a democratic Turkey. The only problem in Turkey - Israel relations is that Israel has increasingly lost faith in Turkish political systems, especially after the event of Davos and the rhetorical fight between the two countries. Moreover, the Israeli Commando's attacking the Flotilla has also been a factor in their declining relations. It has been demonstrated throughout this thesis that whether AKP exists or not there are a number of motives and pulling factors for both sides to have a positive relation. It can also be concluded from this thesis that any relations formed during the AKP has faced a crisis of trust and it may take some time to restore the former positive bilateral relations that existed between the two countries. And regionally speaking, to a great degree, any closer ties and positive relations and alliance between Turkey and Israel will have a negative impact on Syria, Iraq and Kurdish people in Turkey. In other words, the more Israel and Turkey come closer and form an alliance the closer we are to the collapse of the regime of Bashar Al- Assad in Syria. And this will fulfil the agenda that aims to redraw and divide the region again.

Hence, from these points mentioned and discussed in detail, one can argue that there are two major hypotheses as the following:

The first hypothesis is that due to the regional conflicts and the USA pressures both sides of Turkey and Israel need to turn a new page. What makes this hypothesis stronger and more likely is that President Barak Obama acted as a mediator and made a phone call between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Turkish Prime Minister Rajab Tayb Erdoğan. In which Israel apologized for Turkey and promised to compensate the victims of Flotilla Attacks which was the main reason for the declining relationship between the two countries. (Al-Hayat, January 2016). Also Turkish Prime Minister Ahmed Davud Oglu announced in 2015 that 'his country is ready for easing the tension and normalizing its relations with Israel'. And after the Turkish Parliamentary election of June 15, 2015 the two countries have met twice for the purpose of normalizing relations and was attended by experts from the Turkish Foreign Ministry. In the beginning of 2016 Turkish President Erdoğan said 'We and Israel need each other, this is a reality and the region requires such a relation ' (Haartz, June 22, 2015).

The second hypothesis is that after 2010 Turkish foreign policies and relations have witnessed a decline and its policy of zeroing the problems have succeeded only temporarily. It is not unlikely that Turkey might become destabilized and be dragged to war due to a number of internal and external conflicts such as the consequences of the ISIS war in Iraq and Syria, the Kurdish problem, Russian interventions in Turkey and Syria and the newly accepted political arrangement between Iran and America about nuclear weapons. Actually and after 2015 one cannot find a neighboring country from the Middle East, the Black Sea to the Balkans that have a positive relations with Turkey. The president of the People's Republic Party Kamal Klichdar Oglu believes that 'Erdoğan plays a dangerous game with Turkey's destiny and that due to this person, Turkey will not have a positive future.' (Al-Alaalem, 2015).

Therefore, it is in the light of such studies and further academic researchers that one can determine the future of Turkey and Israeli relations and the role that AKP might play. It is in the context of this study that one clue also determine why understanding the past and the present situations and the lessons learnt in Turkish-Israeli relations that further researches need to be done and carried out to determine what will be the future of Turkey under the AKP rule and how this party approaches its agenda both internally and externally and whether having a positive relations with Israel will help the party to increase the number of its fans and followers. Further academic and advanced studies need to be done to find more about the future of this party and the nature of the relationship of this party with other political parties in Turkey and its neighboring countries.

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