

The Impact of Islamist Ideology on Turkish Foreign Policy and Its Casualty

• • • *Turkish-Israeli Relations*

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ABSTRACT: Ideational change in the self-characterization of a state is bound to have repercussions on its domestic and foreign policy behavior. Consequently, the gradual but radical change that has been ongoing in Turkey in the past two decades has had a wide-ranging impact on the way Turkish foreign policy has been conducted. Whereas survival and protection of territorial integrity as well as a Western orientation were traditionally the main concerns of Turkish policy-makers, under the rule of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) (since 2002), there has been a partial Islamization of Turkish foreign policy especially with regard to liaisons with Israel and Palestine. This shift can be explained by the replacement of the Western Turkish state identity with an Islamic conservative outlook.

KEYWORDS: Benjamin Netanyahu, Israeli-Turkish relations, identity, Justice and Development Party, Likud, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan

This article argues that changes in the way a nation-state defines itself have direct repercussions on its foreign policy. In the cases of Israel and Turkey, national identities have been internally contested and changed over time. Israel has been moving toward a more ethnic form of national identity under Likud governments since the party's first victory in 1977 and particularly during the second Netanyahu government from 2009. Turkey, meanwhile, under the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP) governments since 2002, has been shifting from a modern, secular, and Turkish identity to a religious, Islamic-based state identity.



In this context, this article asks whether the once quite close but more recently strained Turkish-Israeli relations have been based on common interests or common values. It argues that they were initially rooted in the commonality of state interests and threat perceptions as well as expectations from Turkey that Israel would be an intermediary for it with the United States. Therefore, the previous development of bilateral relations was based on realist variables. The recent deterioration in relations, on the other hand, can be explained by ideational, constructivist variables, including identity and ideology. Consequently, the impact of changing state identities on bilateral relations has played a critical role in the recent collapse of Israeli-Turkish relations.

The Origins of Bilateral Relations between Israel and Turkey

Strategic considerations were decisive in the relationship between Israel and Turkey during the first five decades following Turkey's March 1949 recognition of Israel. This changed in the late 2000s when the AKP returned to its Islamist roots, affecting its approach to Israel and the Palestinian question.

It should be noted, however, that Turkey did not embrace Israel warmly when it was first founded. In 1947, Turkey voted at the United Nations against the partition of Palestine into an Arab and a Jewish state. Its vote was in step with thirteen other predominantly Muslim countries, including Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Pakistan, as well as India and Greece. Of course, the Turkish government's decision did not stem from Muslim solidarity; Turkish decision-making had been thoroughly secularized and nationalized since the 1920s. Rather, it was related to its concerns about a Jewish state that might become open to Soviet influence and hence a source of instability in the region. Therefore, although its vote was not in step with Western powers, Turkey was also acting in parallel with the broader geopolitical interests of the United States and Europe in the developing Cold War context.

Reflecting the official state position in Turkey, the *Ulus* (The Nation) newspaper adopted a pro-Arab stance until late 1948 regarding Palestine as it perceived the Palestinians to be the "historical owners of Palestine, whereas the Jews were intruders" (Ünlü Bilgiç and Bilgiç 2020: 427). *Ulus* columnist Ahmet Şükrü Esmer demanded support for self-determination for the Arabs of Palestine rather than giving any form of help to the Zionists. He was also critical of the United States' recognition of Israel because the Jewish state lacked basic criteria for statehood according to international law, including territory and stability. Even Falih Rıfkı Atay, an

important Kemalist figure, called Palestine “a completely Arab land” until Jews had started migrating there (Ünlü Bilgiç and Bilgiç: 429–430, 432).

Turkey’s relatively early recognition of Israel in March 1949 (less than a year after its declaration of independence) is perhaps surprising in light of this type of opposition at home. But Ankara, under the leadership of İsmet İnönü, successor to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, had decided to follow a pro-American foreign policy aiming to contain Soviet territorial demands and eventually become a member of NATO. Consequently, recognition of Israel was a pragmatic strategic policy decision taken in line with the West. Shortly before recognizing Israel, Turkey’s Foreign Minister Necmettin Sadak stated that Israel was already a reality, having been recognized by more than thirty countries, and Arabs were conducting armistice negotiations in Rhodes with Israel (Bishku 2006). Consequently, in January 1950, the Turkish diplomat Seyfullah Esin presented himself to the new Israeli president, Chaim Weizmann as *chargé d’affaires*. Due to the vagaries of Israeli-Arab relations, Turkey’s diplomatic mission in Tel Aviv has never been closed since, despite being downgraded and upgraded on a number of occasions over the years (in 1956 and 1980 as well as in 2011 and 2018).¹

A short time after the initial establishment of diplomatic relations, in March 1950, the Republic of Turkey’s formal representation in the State of Israel was elevated to a minister plenipotentiary. That same year a bilateral Trade and Payments Agreement was signed between the two countries. The result was Turkey’s export and import of agricultural products and manufactured goods, respectively, to and from Israel. In 1951, flights between the two countries’ national carriers had begun, and Israeli companies started construction on apartment buildings in Turkey. A separate development was the signing of a cultural agreement in 1953 (Athanassopoulou 2017: 899).

Although Turkey also established closer relations with members of the Baghdad Pact, which caused consternation in Israel, its main objective remained focused on receiving American aid. In 1957, however, Iraq and Lebanon supported a pro-Greek UN resolution on the Cyprus issue. Coupled with Iraq’s support for Syria in its disagreements with Turkey, the latter embraced the secret Periphery Pact of Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, aimed at cultivating regional support for the embattled state, namely Israel. When the Iraqi monarchy, one of the main pillars of the Baghdad Pact, was overthrown, Turkey’s hand was freed to establish mutually beneficial relations with Israel. Ben-Gurion’s covert August 1958 visit to Ankara thus signified the deepening of military and intelligence cooperation between the two countries.

For Israel, the opening up to non-Arab countries around the Middle East enacted through the Periphery Pact—involving Iran, Turkey, Iraqi

Kurds, and also Ethiopia—signified an alternative to a search for détente with the Arab countries (Alpher 2015; Nachmani 1985). Such compromise seemed unrealistic to Israeli leadership. For Turkey, it involved a typical balance-of-power mechanism. The Republic attempted to counterbalance Egypt's increasing power in Syria and, to a lesser extent Iraq, even though pro-Nasser elements in Iraq were eventually purged, resulting in the depletion of Egyptian influence there. Overall, Turkey undertook a “double-faced policy” toward Israel in the 1950s (Athanassopoulou 2017: 905–910), maintaining its relations with Arab countries and intensifying and reducing them with Israel as it deemed fit.

Though the intelligence dimension of the Israeli-Turkish relationship is the least known, it is probably one of its most important aspects. Based on the documents from the Israeli legation in Ankara, Amikam Nachmani (1985) analyzed the activities of Eliyahu Sasson, Minister to Turkey, between 1949 and 1952. The fact that there was an Israeli military attaché at the legation made it clear that military relations with the Republic were accorded significance. Israel had only four embassies with military attachés, and the representation in Turkey was not even a full-fledged embassy (the legation status was upgraded to that of an embassy in the 1990s). It is worth noting that Turkish politicians held suspicions about Israel's possibly favorable inclinations toward the Soviet Union, as expressed for instance to Sasson by Foreign Minister Fuat Köprülü in 1951. In actuality, Israel was conducting a relatively balanced approach toward the Soviet Union because of the large Jewish community behind the Iron Curtain (Nachmani 1985). Thus, relations between Turkey and Israel remained multifaceted by the end of the decade. In 1959, for example, Israel was buying chemical, electrical, and medical products as well as tires from Turkey. By 1969, the two countries signed a new trade agreement. (Kasapsaraçoğlu 2015). This can be assessed as very much complementing the strategic cooperation between the respective governments.

In terms of economic, cultural, athletic, and even military relations, the early years (1949–55) of liaisons between Turkey and Israel were described by the experienced Israeli diplomat Alon Liel (2010) as “the honeymoon years.” The 1960s and the 1970s, on the other hand, were two decades of Turkey's opening to the “Third World,” including Arab states, so as to gather support for its Cyprus policy. For instance, during the 1967 Six-Day and 1973 Yom Kippur Wars, Turkey did not allow Americans to use NATO bases to resupply Israel, and Foreign Minister İhsan Sabri Çağlayangil opposed Israeli acquisition of land by force. Moreover, Turkey voted for the UN resolution equating Zionism with racism in 1975 and, in 1979, allowed the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to open an office in Ankara (Bishku 2006). Later, from 1981, during his tenure as Second Secretary in

Ankara, Liel faced numerous difficulties. Doors were to a large extent closed to him, and he could only meet with junior diplomats (and academics and journalists) due to Turkey downgrading its embassy in Tel Aviv in protest of the Jerusalem Law passed by the Knesset in 1980. Relations gradually improved after Turgut Özal became prime minister in 1983 (Liel 2017). By the 1990s, relations between Turkey and Israel had reached levels of strategic significance. The main reason for this improvement was Özal's desire to establish closer relations with the United States. He assumed that Israel could play an influential role as an intermediary, as well as open up avenues for strategic and economic cooperation.

Historically, Jews have been part and parcel of conspiracy theories from the Ottoman era through the Republic, often featuring as the main villains and enemies of Turks and Muslims alongside missionaries and Freemasons. Therefore, the Islamists did have a cultural history of anti-semitism to draw from when they "turned it into a cardinal part of their ideology" with mass propagation (Landau 1988: 292). A well-respected professor of theology at Ankara University's Faculty of Theology had a book published in 1976, replete with factual mistakes and antisemitic canards, arguing that Jews were intent on dominating the world and co-operating with communism and the Freemasons to that end. Necmettin Erbakan, leader of the Islamic movement in Turkey, popularized these unfounded allegations, also incorporating the European Economic Community (EEC) into his speeches and books from the early 1970s.²

In contrast, secular politicians have pointed to the good relations between Turks and Jews. The arrival of Jews in the Ottoman Empire in 1492 after their expulsion from Spain is one oft-cited example of propinquity. The employment of academics from Germany and Austria in Turkish universities before and after World War II, which helped to build higher education in the Republic, is another. Nevertheless, the current trope, holding that Jews are the enemy of the masses and all Muslims and threaten the integrity of the country as a dark force operating within, has gained strength in recent years. Therein, we can see the popular base for the current deterioration of bilateral liaisons: namely, a worldview preaching hatred and resulting in fear and animosity toward Jews in general and Israel in particular. Before discussing the deterioration, however, one needs to analyze the deepening of Israel-Turkey relations and its serious strategic elements.

The Zenith of the Liaisons: The “Golden Period” of the 1990s

The speed with which Turkish-Israeli relations deepened and extended in the 1990s should not be seen as exceptional given the existence of formal relations in the 1950s and strategic cooperation in the 1960s. What was exceptional was the way relations came out in the open, without denials or secret meetings. However, these relations did develop more from the inducements and encouragements of the civilian and military bureaucracies. In other words, the bilateral links lacked a base or grassroots support, which made the relationship easier to jettison once an Islamically oriented government came to power (the AKP, in 2002). Having said that, the strategic relationship of the 1990s was complemented by economic, cultural, and educational elements, and it did seem as if the two countries would remain on good terms for a long time to come. Thus, with the AKP needing several years to overcome secular Kemalist opposition and establish its primacy, the remarkable events of the “long decade” of the 1990s did not end abruptly with the AKP coming to power but survived until at least 2006–2008.

Based on decades of behind-the-scenes cooperation, Turkey made a rational assessment in the aftermath of the end of the Cold War that improved relations with Israel would be in its overall national interest. Therefore, after the Madrid Peace Conference in 1991 aimed at ending the Arab-Israeli conflict, Turkey upgraded its representation in Tel Aviv to that of an embassy, allowing Israel to do the same for its mission in Ankara. Palestine’s office was also upgraded to embassy level, thus maintaining the delicate balance between Israelis and Palestinians (Bengio 2004). This was the harbinger of multiple state visits including Foreign Ministers Hikmet Çetin of Turkey and Shimon Peres of Israel in 1993. Presidents Ezer Weizman and Süleyman Demirel followed suit in 1994 and 1996, respectively. Furthermore, Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Çiller visited both Israel and the newly established Palestinian National Authority in 1994 (Uzer 2011), keeping the above-mentioned balance between the two sides of the conflict. For Arab countries, the most disturbing development was the Turkish Chief of Staff’s official visit to Israel. The meeting saw General İsmail Hakkı Karadayı, sign a military cooperation agreement that included the modernization of Turkish F-4 fighter jets. It has also been argued that Israeli intelligence cooperated on numerous occasions in intelligence-gathering, including during the capture of Abdullah Öcalan, leader of the PKK organization in Kenya in 1999 (Dursunoğlu, 2000). Because the PKK under Öcalan had fought an asymmetric war (insurgency) against the Turkish state for Kurdish independence, costing

tens of thousands of lives since the mid-1980s, this support was crucial for the Republic. Support was further cemented when Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu recognized the PKK as a terrorist organization to the satisfaction of Turkey. As a result of all these developments, Turkey-Israel relations have assumed a strategic dimension.

In addition to military and economic relations, which included tourism and trade, there was also a certain sympathy between the two countries. For instance, soccer player Haim Revivo played for the highly popular Turkish soccer team Fenerbahçe, which would be a topic of discussion when Turks met Israelis (Liel 2010). There was also a significant academic exchange between Turkey and Israel, including both scholars and students. These ‘sharing through human links’ also reflected the common national discourses of the two countries as modernizing states under threat, surrounded by enemies, rooted in the historical parallels of a violent establishment and contemporary realities of multiple, problematic neighbors.

In sum, the protection of national interests was paramount in determining the relationship between Turkey and Israel as well as the “shared attitudes” to “state identity (such as Westernization, secularism, modernism, and stable regional policy)” (Sever and Almog 2019b: 99). Over the last dozen years or so however, Turkey has turned away from these strategic concerns and adopted a more religiously informed policy vis-à-vis Israel (Almog and Sever 2019: 235).

Islamic State Identity and Its Impact on Bilateral Liaisons

It would not be incorrect to say that at present Turkey and Israel have lost trust in each other. In Turkey, the consolidation of Muslim identity with the rise of the AKP since 2002 has been labeled “a quiet revolution” (Bengio 2010:15) and has damaged bilateral relations (Murinson 2010: 2–3). As noted by Israeli and Turkish scholars Ayşegül Sever and Orna Almog (2019b: 61–62), it is not only the case that the “heyday of Turkish-Israeli relations is over” but also that the relationship has transformed into one of “mutual hostility.” Similarly, in January 2020, the Annual Military Intelligence Report of the Israel Defense Forces characterized Turkey’s policies in the Eastern Mediterranean, especially its maritime agreement with Libya, as a “challenge” to Israeli national interests.³

In the early years of AKP rule, the government in Ankara assumed a pro-European foreign policy, making EU membership one of the paramount objectives of the country. Similarly, warm relations with Israel continued—to such an extent that Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan paid an official visit to Israel in May 2005, meeting with President Moshe Katsav

and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. During a visit to Yad Vashem, a leading global institution for research and commemoration of the Holocaust, Erdoğan called antisemitism a crime against humanity.⁴

The military relationship continued unabated. Turkey agreed to buy Heron drones from Israel and was granted the right to modernize its M-60 tanks (Murinson 2010: 56). Years later, the former Chief of Staff General Hulusi Akar, later turned Defense Minister, claimed that the unmanned aerial vehicles were the cause of a serious security threat for Turkey as Israel had refused to maintain them in the aftermath of the *Mavi Marmara* incident, discussed shortly.⁵

While military and political aspects of their relationship were maintained for a few more years, the Turkish leadership was highly sensitive to Israel's operations against Hamas leadership in Gaza, with which it shared an ideological affinity. Therefore, the targeted

state. Following Erdoğan's berating of Peres while sitting beside him on a World Economic Forum panel in 2009, leading to a short but heated public exchange,⁶ and the *Mavi Marmara* incident, Davutoğlu developed a more assertive foreign policy dubbed "neo-Ottomanism." This involved Turkey conducting a multiregional approach purporting to play a leadership role in numerous areas, especially in northern Syria. This ambition, however, has proved to be somewhat beyond the material and ideational capabilities of Turkey.

Erdoğan's fury with Israel is based on both ideology and emotion, and therefore, is real and does not primarily aim at currying favor with the domestic constituency or the Islamic world at large. Indeed, without a well-thought plan intended to make Turkey the leader of the Islamic world, anti-Israeli rhetoric and policies cannot very well be characterized as based on national interests but rather on an Islamic *Weltanschauung* (Uzer 2020). In this sense, Turkey's positive relations with Israel in the early years of the AKP should be perceived within the framework of its pro-EU phase, when the government was securing Turkey's candidacy status, as well as its leverage of popular antipathy to Israel on the domestic front as a tool to tame the military on the domestic front. Consequently, the AKP managed to wrestle control of the state bureaucracy away from the old guard. After the election of Abdullah Gül as president in 2007 in particular, Turkey felt more confident both domestically and internationally. Since anti-Israel emotions were already running deep in the worldview of Turkish leaders, their policy of Islamization was able to gain the upper hand, which had a negative impact on its relations with Israel. Thus, while the discourse coming from Ankara on Israel in the 1990s from Prime Ministers Süleyman Demirel, Tansu Çiller, and Mesut Yılmaz had shown a "real affection" toward Israel, by the 2010s, it would be "appropriate for an enemy country" (Liel 2017). The accuracy of the latter characterization may be open for debate, but the warmth of Turkish politicians in the period before the AKP's ascendancy is not.

A key landmark in the relationship's deterioration occurred with Israel's military operations into Gaza, initiated just three days after a visit by Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert to Ankara in 2008. Turkish leadership found the timing and lack of forewarning unacceptable and insulting (Liel 2017). While the operation would have been opposed by Turkish leadership even if they had been informed beforehand, the fact that they were left in the dark during such a high-level visit and so shortly before the operation, which was patently thus already planned and ratified from the top, was unpalatable.

At this point, it would be instructive to consider mutual disagreements between the two countries. While "self-reliance" was a central component

of national security thinking in Israel (Ersoy 2019), national independence and territorial integrity were sacrosanct principles for Turkey. Therefore, whereas the 1990s can be explicated by the realist school of thought in international relations theory, the 2000s can be better grasped in terms of constructivism. Put briefly, strategic considerations were paramount in the former era, whereas in the latter, particularly for Turkey, affinities with Muslim co-religionists and ideologically sympathetic parties and organizations determined the approach and overrode rational considerations. In other words, Turkey's early approach to Israel can be explained by a set of national interests at work, whereas deterioration was the result of Islamic ideological decisions to pursue a leadership role in the Islamic world by being the champion of the Palestinians.

According to a constructivist analysis of Israeli foreign policy, the Jewishness of the state not only shapes the way Israeli people and policy-makers view the world but also directs the perception of current affairs through the lens of the Holocaust. From this historical perspective, therefore, foreign policy is defined by the primacy of security on the basis of a lack of trust toward the world in general and an assumption that it is up to the Jews to protect themselves as the international community did nothing to prevent the Holocaust (Waxman 2006: 45). The sense that the "whole world is against us" has been explicitly expressed by Israeli politicians at various times, including by Yitzhak Rabin in 1975, as a reaction to the UN resolution claiming that Zionism is a form of racism (Waxman 2006). In other words, the shadow of "the Holocaust reignites the original feeling of fear" as new enemies are perceived as the incarnation of old ones aiming at the destruction of the Jews (Ersoy 2014: 80–81). This is one of the reasons, in addition to the hostile neighborhood in which it is located, why Israel easily overreacts to threats coming from its neighbors, such as in the case of the *Mavi Marmara*.

The *Mavi Marmara* incident of May 2010 involved the Freedom Flotilla, composed of six vessels carrying humanitarian goods, including the *Mavi Marmara*, which was intent on breaking the blockade imposed by Israel on the Gaza Strip. The Flotilla was organized by the Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief (*İnsan Hak ve Hürriyetleri ve İnsani Yardım Vakfı*, IHH), an Islamist NGO partly funded by the AKP-led Istanbul municipality, together with the Free Gaza Movement, an international and Palestinian grouping dedicated to fighting the blockade. On the *Mavi Marmara* itself were 663 pro-Palestinian activists from thirty-seven countries. Still in international waters as it approached Gaza, the Flotilla was intercepted and stormed by Israeli commandoes from helicopters. In the ensuing violence, ten Turkish citizens died resisting the commandos with assorted, mostly makeshift weapons (knives, iron bars,

axes, and fire extinguishers). There were a number of well-known individuals in the Flotilla, such as Member of Knesset Haneen Zoabi, Nobel Peace Prize winner Mairead Corrigan, and Raed Salah, leader of the northern branch of the Islamic movement in Israel (Makowski 2013). Zoabi would later refer to the Israeli commandos as “murderers” and demanded that Israel apologize to Turkey.⁷ Needless to say, for Turkey to have such a controversial figure as an ally could hardly contribute to a thawing in the already problematic relationship.

In the aftermath of the attack on the *Mavi Marmara*, Turkey expelled the Israeli ambassador in Ankara and reduced its own representation in Tel Aviv to the level of a second secretary (Sever and Almog 2019b: 79). Consequently, both countries were represented at the second secretary level in their respective capitals. This downgrading further impeded any close cooperation on the many spheres of mutual interest.

In 2014, as a reaction to the Israeli Operation Protective Edge against Gaza, there were violent demonstrations in Ankara, Istanbul, and in all major cities in Turkey, spearheaded by Islamist groups demanding an elevated activism on the part of the Turkish government. Interestingly, even though their numbers were relatively limited, members of the Turkish Communist Party also protested against Israel. Condemnation of Israel’s actions united political opinion across the country. In Ankara, there was a demonstration in front of the residence of the Israeli ambassador, which risked being breached as windows were broken and a Palestinian flag was hoisted outside the building.⁸

Despite these tensions, however, there were negotiations to resolve the *Mavi Marmara* issue. The result was a public apology to Turkey made by Netanyahu in 2013. It also led to preparation of a 2014 draft agreement on the matter, concerning financial compensation to families of the victims onboard the ship. By 2016, after a six-year antagonism following the incident, it appeared that a reconciliation between the two countries would be possible.⁹ As the former Turkish ambassador to Israel, Namık Tan, would later to point out, Netanyahu would not easily have apologized on behalf of Israel to any other country, which thus demonstrated Turkey’s importance for Israeli decision-makers.¹⁰ Therefore, a deal was struck.

The normalization agreement, signed on 27 June 2016, resulted in Israel and Turkey mutually upgrading their diplomatic representations to ambassador level and increasing their military and strategic cooperation. Turkey agreed to no longer block Israel’s attempts to participate in NATO therefore allowing Israel to open a permanent office at NATO headquarters in Brussels, which materialized later that year.¹¹ Regarding the immediate issue that had sparked the fall-out and stand-off, Turkey was to prepare a law dismissing all court cases against individuals (commandos

and commanders) involved in the *Mavi Marmara* affair; Israel formally apologized and committed to paying 20 million dollars to the families of the victims. Turkey's demand for the lifting of the Gaza blockade was rejected and the status quo accepted, but Turkey would send humanitarian assistance to the Palestinians via the port of Ashdod in Israel.¹²

Contrary to the impassioned tone of his previous rhetoric, President Erdoğan had now justified the agreement in rational terms. Avoiding any reference to religion or morality, he stated simply that "Turkey and Israel need each other."¹³ It is worth mentioning that Turkey had a major incentive to make the deal at the time since it was expecting to reach a natural gas deal with Israel. Former Israeli National Security Adviser and retired General Yaakov Amidror (2016) analyzed the reconciliation as emanating from realpolitik and definitely not entailing "trust" or "sympathy." He also pointed out that relations had started to deteriorate as Turkey became a direct party to the Israeli-Palestinian dispute ever since Erdoğan had become prime minister in 2003.¹⁴

Notwithstanding the triumph of state interests in Israel, there was a strong popular backlash against the deal. Some took comfort in the wording of the apology as it referred to "operational mistakes" and not to the operation in general and that US President Barack Obama's persuasion was evidently critical in securing the apology (Lerman 2016). Certainly, Israeli national security experts did not expect a return to the closeness of the 1990s since there was now a basic lack of trust between the two countries. The agreement was patching up a problem rather than resolving the deeper issue.

From the President of Israel, Reuven Rivlin, to numerous politicians, such as Yair Lapid and Michael Oren, many prominent Israelis praised the significance of the deal. Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman, on the other hand, criticized Netanyahu for apologizing. Leader of the Jewish Home Party (*Habayit Hayehudi*), Naftali Bennett, and Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked, from the same party, were very much opposed to any reconciliation with Erdoğan's Turkey. And while the Zionist Union, comprising the Labor Party and Tzipi Livni's Tnuah, welcomed the deal, its leader, Isaac Herzog, warned against paying compensation. Herzog's reason was that compensation would both set a precedent as he characterized Turkey as an ally of Hamas and thus an important country that was no longer an ally or a strategic partner of Israel. Netanyahu himself exaggerated the deal. This may have been to make it more palatable to the Israeli public, by calling Israel and Turkey "superpowers" in the Middle East and suggesting that the reconciliation might pave the way for Israel to enter NATO.¹⁵

Columnists writing for the generally pro-Likud newspaper *Israel Hayom*, (Israel Today), such as Haim Shine, supported Netanyahu's decision

toward Turkey. For instance, one writer focused on leadership skills, which “requires making unpopular decisions,”¹⁶ while another emphasized that this might mean a return to Turkey as a tourist destination.¹⁷ On the other hand, former Israeli ambassador to the United States and a Likud member Zalman Shoval argued in the same paper that Erdoğan was trying to find a scapegoat for his political failures and sabotage US-instigated reconciliation attempts between Israel and Turkey.¹⁸ Shoval labeled those on board the *Mavi Marmara* ‘terrorists.’ And yet, despite his hardline stance, Shoval still considered the 2016 deal an accomplishment and was ready to acknowledge the “deficiencies in the planning and execution of the military operation on the *Mavi Marmara*.”¹⁹

The Israeli public, it was reported, did not see major improvement in bilateral relations (Mitvim 2017: 1). The agreement was not a popular move, especially with those who had a personal stake, such as the family of Oron Shaul, an Israeli soldier who was killed in Gaza in 2014 and whose body was never returned.²⁰ The family of Hadar Goldin also demanded that Turkey pressure Hamas to release his body.²¹ Whether Turkey has sufficient influence over Hamas in such matters is of course a different matter.

Regarding specific outcomes per the agreement, in December 2017, Kemal Ökem became the Turkish ambassador to Israel, and Eitan Naeh (Sever and Almog 1991b: 90–91), who had earlier served in Ankara as a junior diplomat in the 1990s, was appointed Israeli ambassador to Turkey.²²

It should also be pointed out that according to a former Israeli diplomat in Turkey, who remained anonymous, intelligence sharing continued throughout the six-year rift. And yet the failure of the agreement to bring about a genuine realignment of interests showed that Turkey’s Hamas ties needed to end in order for Turkey and Israel to move forward with security sharing (Efron 2018). In other words, the two countries generally did not share classified materials anymore as they no longer trusted each other. Meanwhile, the fact that Turkish leaders have continued to criticize Israel on numerous occasions has prevented Jerusalem from wanting to pursue any policy aimed at an improvement of relations with Turkey (Almog and Sever 2019).

In fact, in 2017, the year after the agreement, was another one of crisis for the bilateral relationship. When Israel erected metal detectors to the entrance of the Haram Al-Sharif compound (Temple Mount) in response to the killing of two Israeli border police officers, Erdoğan called on Muslims to go to al-Aqsa mosque on the Mount to buttress the Muslim identity of the place. Once again lamenting the divisions within the Islamic world, the Turkish leader gave the example of Jerusalem as a common rallying point for the unification of Muslims in trying to solve their problems

among themselves.²³ In other words, he wanted to functionalize relations with Israel for the greater good of religious brotherhood.

US President Donald Trump's move to unilaterally recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and move the US embassy there caused a further rift in Turkish-Israeli relations. In typically combative style, Erdoğan summoned an extraordinary summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Istanbul, where on 3 December 2017 he called for Jerusalem to be made capital of the state of Palestine.²⁴ On 5 December, the day before the United States recognized Jerusalem as the capital, he threatened all concerned parties that "this could go as far as cutting our diplomatic relations with Israel."²⁵ That did not come to pass.

It is striking that Turkey should have emerged as the leading champion of the Palestinians at a time when many Arab countries were beginning to give more weight to their relations with Israel. During Trump's administration, a Saudi-Israeli axis was positively promoted as a regional bulwark against Iran, and the Abraham Accords between the UAE, Bahrain and Israel were signed in September 2020, later to be joined by Morocco and Sudan. This is an issue that the Turkish leader is personally committed to as well as one that serves well in domestic politics, as indicated. But the pragmatic shift of Arab countries can be seen as opening a space for Turkey to work in so as to develop its aspirations to international prominence in the Islamic world—to which end, the Turkish-Israeli relationship must, once again, be relegated or sacrificed.

As far as Israeli-Turkish relations during the most recent period are concerned, in May 2018, the ambassadors returned to their respective countries as a result of Turkey's protest against the Israeli shooting of protestors in Gaza in the aftermath of Trump's decision on Jerusalem. At the same time, however, the Turkish president met with Jewish organizations in the United States (Mitvim 2018) and even took leaders of the Turkish Jewish community with him to the United States. This can be interpreted or presented by some of his followers as evidence that he is against specific Israeli policies rather than being politically or personally antisemitic, but it also speaks to his economic pragmatism even while eschewing such considerations in the broader sweep of bilateral strategy. In fact, one reason why Turkey never severed diplomatic relations with Israel might be a belief in the strength of the Jewish lobby in the United States. And the resilience of the relationship is also supported by the increasing bilateral trade, as indicated by the numerous Turkish Airlines and the private Pegasus flights to and from Tel Aviv. As of February 2022, there is increased communication between presidents Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Isaac Herzog, and reports that the latter will visit Turkey. Whether such endeavors will result in normalization remains to be seen.

Jerusalem and Palestine as Top Priorities for Turkey

The Turkish government's unwavering support to Palestinians was confirmed by a series of demonstrations by the AKP as well as by rival Islamist politicians. On 18 May 2018, in a demonstration in Yenikapı Square in Istanbul attended by President Erdoğan along with Speaker of the Parliament İsmail Kahraman, Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım, Palestinian Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah, and Devlet Bahçeli, Chairman of the Nationalist Action Party (MHP) as well as delegates attending the OIC summit in Turkey, close to half a million people gathered to protest Israel's policies in Jerusalem.²⁶ Calling for "Support for Jerusalem against Oppression" for the "sake of humanity," the poster for the demonstration gave information indicating that buses would be organized by AKP district branches.²⁷

At the demonstration, Erdoğan equated Gallipoli (Çanakkale), site of the canonical World War I victory of Turks against the British, with Jerusalem, whose importance he extolled: "Jerusalem is not only a city, it is a symbol, an examination, a Qibla. If we cannot protect our first Qibla, we could not possibly protect our last Qibla."²⁸

The Islamic world as well as humanity in general, he argued, has failed this test. Erdoğan also claimed that the Masjid al-Aqsa mosque (*Mescid-i Aksa* in Turkish) was burned by Zionists (see below) and argued that the entire Islamic world should unite against this oppression, while Christians and Jews with a conscience should reject the policies of "Israel, the terror state." As victims of the Holocaust, Jews should not commit crimes against humanity against another people. Thus, Erdoğan employed the language of universal human rights in propagating the unity of the Islamic community around the cause of Jerusalem as a rallying call for all Muslims.

The opposition Felicity Party (*Saadet Partisi*) also organized a number of Jerusalem demonstrations. "The Grand Jerusalem Demonstration" (*Büyük Kudüs mitingi*), also held in Yenikapı Square, on 30 July 2017, was addressed by the party leader, Temel Karamollaoğlu.²⁹ In the official pamphlet for the demonstration "Israel Only Understands Force" (*İsrail Güçten Anlar!*), a picture of the Dome of the Rock was included. In February 2020, the party organized another demonstration under the same name, which the secularist opposition party, Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, CHP) surprisingly also attended, including its leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu and the Mayor of Istanbul Ekrem İmamoğlu ("Yenikapı'da Büyük Kudüs Mitingi," *Cumhuriyet*, 9 May 2020). The fact that all the major parties joined the Jerusalem bandwagon suggests the national importance of the issue in Turkish politics.

In addition to public demonstrations, there were other forms of activities presenting Jerusalem as a national and religious issue for all Turks.

A very active NGO, Our Legacy: Association for the Protection and Preservation of Ottoman Legacy in and around Jerusalem (Mirasımız: Kudüs ve Civarındaki Osmanlı Mirasını Koruma ve Yaşatma Derneği), whose name is self-explanatory regarding its objectives, was established in 2008. This organization takes an Islamic approach to Palestine and Jerusalem, aiming for the liberation of the Masjid al-Aqsa and Dome of the Rock mosques and regarding the cause of Jerusalem to be “as valuable as our children, our spouses, and all our spiritual values.”³⁰ The organization refers to four hundred years of Ottoman rule over Jerusalem and characterizes Masjid al-Aqsa, where the Prophet Muhammad ascended to heaven (the *miraj*), as “our first qibla, second mosque, and third sanctuary.”

Israel is characterized as a “pirate state” that has destroyed countless mosques and buildings and aims at Judaizing Jerusalem both by demographic means and by occupying the Masjid. In a type of inversion of history, the veracity of the Solomon’s Temple is questioned by arguing that Israel “alleges” its existence under the Mosque. Thus, the organization aims to educate the Turkish public on the significance of Jerusalem as well as helping the Palestinians by providing them with food and stationery products in addition to recording and renovating a number of historical buildings. It also tries to buttress the Muslim population around Haram al-Sharif and prevent Israel from taking aggressive measures by busing in Muslims to the mosque.³¹ This NGO’s ideological outlook is supported in certain state *imam-hatip* (religious) schools, where its pamphlets can be seen on their walls. According to Gabriel Mitchell (2018: 3), *Mirasımız* can be described as affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood, with which the AKP is aligned.

In the narrative of *Mirasımız*, the four-hundred-year history ended with the Ottoman defeat by the British in Palestine in 1917, which was when the destruction of Islamic buildings began. It is in order to raise a “Jerusalem consciousness” at home and in the Muslim world generally that the organization is encouraging Turkey to take a political role in the matter. Presenting Israel as an illegal entity, its pan-Islamic outlook has Israel as aiming to create “the biggest synagogue in the world by destroying the mosque.”³²

Turkish state funds have been provided for Muslim organizations to organize visits to holy sites and create faith-based tourism in East Jerusalem. There is concern among some Israelis that Turkish “religious activism” in Haram al-Sharif might result in further escalation and deterioration of bilateral relations as there were cases when Israeli authorities prevented Turks with national flags from entering the religious area (Efron 2018). In one case in 2017, a Palestinian employee of the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (Türk İşbirliği ve Koordinasyon Ajansı Başkanlığı,

TİKA), an official aid organization, was arrested on charges of channeling money to Hamas's armed wing, later receiving a nine-year prison sentence.³³

Turkey's increased involvement in Palestine in general and East Jerusalem in particular is also demonstrated by its provision of thousands of documents from the Ottoman archives to bolster Palestinians' land and property claims against Israel. Relatedly, certain deeds linked to the Western Wall Plaza might help in the propaganda campaign against Israel. Turkey's government and NGOs have also provided funds and established links with Muslim citizens of Israel living in Jaffa, Acre, Lod, and elsewhere.³⁴ Another example of Turkey's support was its co-sponsorship of the UN resolution recognizing the State of Palestine as a non-member observer state in 2012 (Sever and Almog 2019b). Also, elements of the political wing of Hamas are housed in Turkey (rather than its military branch, with which Iran had intimate relations). This was another matter not addressed by the *Mavi Marmara* reconciliation agreement, to some consternation in Israel (Efron 2018).

From these activities, it becomes evident that Turkey's relations with Israel express its state identity as embracing a Muslim affiliation, regardless of the secular nature of its legal system. The gradual shift from a Western Turkish to Muslim approach resulted in exaggerated rhetoric on the liberation of Palestine and deterioration of relations with Israel. Similar policies were followed by Turkey in other parts of the Middle East. For instance, it was directly involved in both the Syrian and Libyan civil wars, taking the side of religious actors, as well as in its support for the Muslim Brotherhood's Mohammed Morsi, elected Egyptian president in 2012. Indeed, there are domestic actors in Turkey that are not supportive of the government's involvement in the domestic affairs of Middle Eastern countries. Specifically, the CHP, the Good Party (İyi Parti, İYİ) and the primarily Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (Halkların Demokratik Partisi, HDP) have all opposed involvement. In contrast, radical Islamists demand an even deeper involvement to shape the region and beyond in a more Islamic way.

These dynamics can be understood through Robert Putnam's two-level game, which recognizes decision-makers as having to negotiate with foreign countries and domestic constituents at the same time in which, for example, agreements made with other governments need to be ratified by the home countries' legislatures and gain acceptance from special interest groups and constituents in general (Putnam 1988). In this case, for example, the Freedom Flotilla co-organizer, the IHH, opposed Erdoğan's deal with Israel, emphasizing that lifting of the Gaza blockade, a precondition for normalization of relations, had not been achieved. The IHH also

insisted that court cases against the Israeli “murderers” should continue.³⁵ From a Turkish perspective, therefore, the government has to negotiate not only with the Israeli government but also with the *Mavi Marmara* victims, including the families themselves, some of whom do not want compensation. They also have to negotiate with other Islamist groups, and media outlets such as the *Akit* newspaper, which is adamant in its anti-Zionism and antisemitism.

Similarly, the Israeli NGO Shurat Hadin pressured the Israeli government to convince Turkey to expel Hamas representative Saleh al-Arouri, who was accused of masterminding the kidnapping of three Israeli teenagers in June 2014.³⁶ Indeed, both countries have to take domestic sensitivities into account while pursuing their national interests.

Meanwhile, verbal exchanges between the two leaders continued. In addition to Erdoğan’s labelling of Israel as a terrorist state, he accused Israel of committing genocide against the Palestinians. Netanyahu reproached Turkey for illegally occupying Cyprus, helping terrorists in Gaza, and killing Kurds at home and in Syria (Bishku 2019). Both of these leaders have a tendency to “mix politics and personal sentiments” (Eran 2011: 9–10)—emotionalism being a major quality in Israeli and Turkish cultures—where it might be thought that strategic considerations should have had the upper hand. In fact, the resort to nationalistic rhetoric and populism serves as a means to stay in power, which are their central objectives (Bishku 2019).

In Erdoğan’s case, the nationalism is more tactical than genuine. This is buoyed by his origins in the National Outlook (*Millî Görüş*) wing of Turkey’s Islamist movement and because his core ideology remains despite his expedient tendency to switch allies. The latter, a key to his political longevity, is also particularly important in understanding the recent turbulence in Turkish-Israeli relations. Initially, for example, when fearful of his position, emphasizing democracy and aiming for EU accession, Erdoğan allied with liberal intellectuals wanting to dismantle the Kemalist ideology and state structure. In this unity of purpose, he also collaborated with the followers of the Gülen community, and the AKP even opened up to the PKK, conducting secret negotiations with them in Oslo. These are all now broken dreams and mortal enemies. The AKP’s latest ally is the MHP, its parliamentary partner in a hard nationalist pivot (hence the nationalist slogans and discourse). While these instruments are deployed to remain in power, however, the Islamists’ conservative *Weltanschauung* remains very much intact.

Despite the belligerent statements from both countries’ leaderships, it should also be recognized that from 2009 to 2016, Israel’s reaction to Turkey’s bellicose statements was more reserved and limited since they

still hoped to mend fences with Turkey through a policy of restraint. The continuation of the Turkish leaders' antagonistic statements even after the reconciliation attempt of 2016, however, caused Israeli politicians to give up. Especially after the July 2017 Haram al-Sharif crisis, Netanyahu and other ministers moved to a more aggressive rhetoric, retaliating with sentences such as "the days of the Ottoman Empire are over" and "those who live in glass houses should not throw stones" (Efron 2018: 29–30).

There was also debate on the Armenian genocide in the Knesset and support for Iraqi Kurdish independence in 2017, indicating a belief, perhaps, that a forceful response was more likely to encourage Turkey to change its stance. Thus, former Deputy IDF Chief of Staff General Yair Golan rejected the terrorist label for the PKK, whereas Netanyahu disagreed.³⁷ However, Israel might also be well advised to appreciate that "the Palestinian narrative is not limited to President Erdoğan and the AKP, but rather a large and diverse swathe of Turkish society" (Mitchell 2018: 8). It is advisable that if the intention is to confront the AKP government, Israeli politicians should not irritate the Turkish public with support for Armenian and Kurdish objectives.

Cultural Contacts: Compensating for the Demise of Political Relations?

Political relations between Israel and Turkey are at a low point. However, trade has continued, as have a number of cultural contacts. For instance, the renovated Edirne synagogue on Turkey's border intersection with Greece and Bulgaria has become a center of cultural activities, including concerts and exhibitions. Recently, Israeli singer Yasmin Levy, whose family hails from Manisa in the Aegean region of Turkey, gave a concert in April 2019, attended by seven hundred people, including the provincial governor and city mayor. The governor, Ekrem Canalp, praised the singer saying that "not only her family but her soul is one of us." The singer called Turkey her home and promised to come back with her family.³⁸ It should be noted that Edirne had been home to Sephardi Jews in the Ottoman Empire. During the republican era, the population fell, particularly after the 1934 Thrace incidents, when Jewish shops were attacked; hence, there is no longer a Jewish community to speak of in the city.

Israeli Consul General Yosef Levi-Sfari also emphasized his interest in developing cultural and economic ties. Israel was one of the sponsors of the Istanbul Film Festival in 2018 and tried to reach the Turkish public via social media. Levi-Sfari made it clear that, since there are similar interests, "We never considered Turkey an enemy."³⁹

On the civil society front, there is the Turkish-Israel Civil Society Forum (TICSF), which started out in a negative political atmosphere under the auspices of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation in 2011.⁴⁰ On 27 May 2017, for instance, Israeli Consul General Shai Cohen, who had been appointed in 2014 during the Gaza War, praised the intensity of its cultural interactions. Among the participants were former ambassadors Ünal Çeviköz and Namık Tan, who were strong supporters of an improvement of bilateral relations, as well as other participants who had emphasized the importance of civil society cooperation.⁴¹ However, as the Forum is aware, bilateral relations “never had a strong civilian basis” (Sever and Almog 2019b: 97). With regard to policy recommendations to improve relations between the countries, the Israeli think tank Mitvim (2018: 4) has suggested that channels of communication should be open so that at least at the civil society level and in this regard, the Jewish community in Turkey and the *olim* (immigrants) from Turkey in Israel can be important intermediaries between the two countries.

Mitvim and the Global Political Trends Center (GPoT), a think tank located in Turkey, note that they have been striving to improve bilateral relations since 2012, to which end they have organized several workshops and published reports (Akgün, Ammash et al. 2016). Recognizing a “lack of confidence” on the part of both parties, they suggested various mechanisms to tackle this. Mechanisms included public visits by politicians, direct communication, confidence-building measures, and reestablishing a joint parliamentary friendship committee. They also emphasized the centrality of people-to-people connections, such as think tanks, business sector activities, and media connections (Mitvim-GPoT 2016). While accepting the anger and frustration felt toward Erdoğan in Israel, Mitvim director, Nimrod Goren, is quick to point out that strategic and economic interests make it incumbent to improve the relationship.⁴²

Research by Mitvim (2019: 3, 13) showed that over half of Israelis wanted to improve relations with Turkey, as opposed to a third who are against such an endeavor (53 percent versus 32 percent, respectively); whereas two-thirds of Israeli Arabs desire improvement (68 percent). On the Turkish side, however, studies made by Kadir Has University found that Israel was considered a threat by more than half of respondents and has jumped to over two-thirds in 2019 (54 percent versus 70 percent, respectively) This was still below the United States, but strikingly high and demonstrating a clear lack of public support for any kind of reconciliation with Israel (Aydın, Açıkmeşe, Dizdaroğlu et al. 2018; Aydın, Açıkmeşe, Çelikpala et al. 2019).⁴³

The turbulent state of relations between the two countries has been called “the new normal.” Turkey has conditioned its foreign policy toward

Israel on Palestine. Israel meanwhile has increasingly taken antagonistic policies with respect to its support for the Iraqi Kurdish referendum on independence as well as Turkey's presence in Northern Cyprus and Syria (Mitchell 2018). However, it should be recognized that Turkey's interest in Palestine is not merely rhetorical but buttressed by helping Palestinians in East Jerusalem and Gaza by providing funds to Muslim organizations to visit the holy places and create faith-based tourism in the city (Mitchell 2018) as has been discussed above. Purely economic and cultural relations cannot make up for the loss of coordination at the political level. In fact, economic relations may rather expose political problems and become subject to and an expression of them, as appears to be the developing scenario in fuel resources regarding supply through Turkey from Israel and seabed exploration in the eastern Mediterranean.⁴⁴ In other words, one should be cognizant of the primacy of political considerations as they trump economic variables in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East.

Conclusion: Reconciliation on the Horizon?

As tensions in the Turkish-Israeli relationship were exacerbated over the recent period, Turkey and Israel both suffered in a lose-lose descent of accusations and recriminations. Both countries bear responsibility for this situation, although the crucial *Mavi Marmara* incident was a major blunder on the part of Israel. The crisis could have been better managed by both countries and perhaps avoided. And yet, a collapse was always imminent due to the ideological proclivities of the Turkish government. It should be recognized that unless Turkey refrains from its Islamist ideological orientation in its foreign policy and undertakes a major strategic overhaul, a meaningful reconciliation to anything like the old relationship seems unlikely. We should bear in mind also that it was especially the military and foreign ministry that were cognizant of the strategic importance of Israel for Turkey's national interests during the twentieth century, both of which have now been brought under AKP control.

Interestingly, in the 1990s, MHP leader Alparslan Türkeş also emphasized that strategic facet of the relationship⁴⁵ in conjunction with the "Arab betrayal" during World War I, when nationalist and independence movements had courted Anglo-French support against the Ottomans. Nonetheless, there is also empathetic and political solidarity with Palestinians among social democrats and socialists (Uzer 2021) on the one hand, and conservative Muslims on the other, for a mix of humanitarian, ideological, and religious reasons. In the past, Turkish governments functioned more or less in line with national interests and followed strategies for foreign

relations based on the realities of the international system. The AKP government, on the other hand, after a few years of positive relations with Israel, moved Turkish foreign policy in a more expansionist, unilateralist, and Islamic direction, sacrificing the country's relations with an important ally in the process. Having said all that there are efforts at reconciliation between the two countries as of 2022, however, whether they will bear fruit remains to be seen.

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NOTES

1. Technically, it is a consulate general although former ambassadors are appointed to this post. See "Republic of Türkiye: Turkish Consulate General in Jerusalem." jerusalem.cg.mfa.gov.tr.
2. The academic in question is Hikmet Tanyu whose book *Tarih boyunca Türkler ve Yahudiler* (Turks and Jews through History) and Erbakan's books are quoted by Landau (1988: 296–97, 298); for antisemitism in Turkey, see also Efrat Aviv (2017).
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5. "Akar: Çatışmada Ateş eden terörist sonra komutanım demeye başlıyor." *Sözcü*, 20 October 2019.
6. See "Turkish PM Erdogan Walks off Stage in Clash over Gaza." AP Archive, 21 July 2015. youtu.be/BuI-Q914IXI.

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10. Personal interview with Namık Tan, 11 October 2019.
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13. "Erdoğan: Türkiye ile İsrail'in birbirine ihtiyacı var." *Dünya Bülteni*, 2 January 2016. www.dunyabulteni.net/politika/erdogan-turkiye-ile-israilin-birbirine-ihitiyaci-var-h350668.html.
14. Senior political correspondent Matti Tuchfeld also emphasized the paramountcy of national interests over emotions; "No Room for Emotion in Diplomacy." *Israel Hayom*, 28 June 2016.
15. "Israel-Turkey Reconciliation Deal Serves Israel's National Interests." *Israel Hayom*, 28 June 2016.
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17. Bat Adam, Smadar. "A Partner, Not an Enemy." *Israel Hayom*, 28 June 2016.
18. Shoval, Zalman. "Desperately Seeking Scapegoat." *Israel Hayom*, 25 August 2013.
19. Shoval, Zalman. "The Deal Is an Accomplishment." *Israel Hayom*, 28 June 2016.
20. "Israelis Divided on Normalization of Ties with Turkey." *Israel Hayom*, 28 June 2016.
21. "Cabinet Approves Turkey Reconciliation Deal." *Ynetnews*, 29 June 2016.
22. Interestingly, Eitan Naeh is now the Israeli ambassador to the UAE. "First Israeli Diplomat Set to Take up Post in Abu Dhabi – Report." *Times of Israel*, 5 January 2021. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/first-israeli-diplomat-set-to-take-up-post-in-abu-dhabi-report/>.
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