DOKUZ EYLÜL UNİVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS PROGRAM
MASTER'S THESIS

AN ANALYSIS OF TURKISH-ISRAELI RELATIONS FROM A ROLE THEORY PERSPECTIVE

Oğuz BUDAK

Supervisor
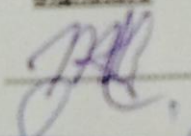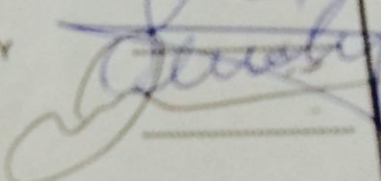**Assist. Prof. Dr. Müge AKNUR**

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APPROVAL PAGE

University   : Dokuz Eylül University
Graduate School   : Graduate School of Social Sciences
Name and Surname   : OĞUZ BUDAK
Title of Thesis   : Rol Teori Perspektifinden Türk-İsrail İlişkilerinin Analizi

Defence Date   : 22/09/2014
Supervisor   : Assist Prof Dr Müge AKNUR

EXAMINING COMMITTE MEMBERS

Title, Name and Surname	University	Signature
Assist Prof Dr Müge AKNUR	DOKUZ EYLUL UNIVERSITY	
Assist Prof Dr Sevilay AKSOY	DOKUZ EYLUL UNIVERSITY	
Prof Dr Nazif MANDACI	YASAR UNIVERSITY	

Unanimity   (√)

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The thesis titled as "Rol Teori Perspektifinden Türk-İsrail İlişkilerinin Analizi" prepared and presented by OĞUZ BUDAK is accepted and approved.

Prof.Dr. Utku UTKULU
Director

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this master's thesis / project titled as "An Analysis of Turkish Israeli Relations from a Role Theory Perspective" has been written by myself in accordance with the academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that all materials benefited in this thesis consist of the mentioned resources in the reference list. I verify all these with my honor.

<div align="right">

Date

.../.../.......

Oğuz BUDAK

Signature

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ABSTRACT

Master's Thesis
An Analysis of Turkish-Israeli Relations from a Role Theory Perspective
Oğuz Budak

Dokuz Eylül University
Graduate School of Social Sciences
Department of International Relations
International Relations Program

This thesis aims at analyzing the significant deterioration of the Turkish-Israeli relations that had taken place in the last decade. Throughout the history of Republic of Turkey, Turkish-Israeli relations have been a roller coaster ride, full of ups and downs. While Turkey was the first Muslim country to recognize the newly established state of Israel in 1949, it sided with the Arabs in the Arab-Israeli Wars throughout the 1960s, 70s and 80s. Despite the close economic and security relations that were established between the two sides following the Peace Process in the 1990s, starting in mid-2000s on, with the consolidation of Justice and Development Party's (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*—AKP) power, these relations have started to decline tremendously. Israeli attacks to Gaza throughout the 2000s and 2010s, Prime Minister Erdoğan's clash with Israeli President Shimon Peres in Davos Economic Forum in 2009 and the Mavi Marmara attacks in 2010 among others brought these relations to the lowest level in their history. This study in an attempt to analyze these deteriorating relations will refer to the role model theory as a conceptual tool of analysis. It will analyze the worsening Turkish-Israeli relations through the tenets of role theory including national role conceptions, role prescriptions, and role performance. In this context, it will mainly concentrate on Turkey's role as a regional leader, regional protector, mediator and defender of peace as well as the role prescribed to Turkey by external actors in addition to the policy line Turkish foreign policy makers followed towards to Israel.

Keywords: Turkish-Israeli Relations, Turkish foreign policy, Role Theory

ÖZET

Yüksek Lisans Tezi
Rol Teori Perspektifinden Türk-İsrail İlişkileri
Oğuz Budak

Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi
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Uluslararası İlişkiler Anabilim Dalı
İngilizce Uluslararası İlişkiler Programı

Bu tez Türk-İsrail ilişkilerinin son on yılda önemli ölçüde kötüleşmesini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Türk-İsrail ilişkileri Türkiye Cumhuriyeti tarihi boyunca inişli ve çıkışlı bir yol izlemiştir. Türkiye 1949'ta yeni kurulan İsrail devletini tanıyan ilk Müslüman ülke olmasına rağmen, 1960, 1970 ve 1980'ler boyunca devam eden Arap-İsrail Savaşlarında Arapların yanında yer almıştır. 1990'larda Barış Sürecini izleyen yıllarda iki ülke arasında yakın ekonomik ve güvenlik ilişkileri kurulmasına rağmen, 2000'li yılların ortalarından itibaren Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi'nin (AKP) siyasette gücünü sağlamlaştırması ile birlikte iki ülke arasındaki ilişkiler olağanüstü düzeyde gerilemeye başlamıştır. İsrail'in Gazze'ye 2000'ler ve 2010'lar boyunca yaptığı saldırılar, Erdoğan'ın 2009'da Davos Zirvesi'nde İsrail Başkanı Shimon Peres ile çatışması ve 2010'daki Mavi Marmara saldırıları iki ülke arasındaki ilişkileri tarihteki en düşük seviyelerinden birine getirmiştir. Bu çalışma bu bozulan ilişkileri incelemek için rol modeli teorisinden yararlanacaktır. İki ülke arasında kötüleşen ilişkiler rol model teorisinin yaklaşımlarından milli rol görüşleri, rol reçeteleri, ve rol performansı aracılığı ile incelenecektir. Bu bağlamda çalışma Türkiye'nin bölgesel liderliği, bölgesel koruyuculuğu, uzlaştırıcı ve barışı koruma misyonu üzerinde duracaktır. Ayrıca Türkiye için başka ülkelerin biçtiği roller ve kendine çizdiği dış politika yolu da incelenecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türk İsrail İlişkileri, Türk dış politikası, Rol Teori

AN ANALYSIS OF TURKISH-ISRAELI RELATIONS FROM A ROLE THEORY PERSPECTIVE

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ABBREVIATIONS

PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party (Kürdistan İşçi Partisi)
AKP	Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi)
NRC	National Role Conception
USA	United States of America
WTO	World Trade Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
UN	United Nations
CHP	Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi)
DP	Democratic Party (Demokrat Parti)
UAR	United Arab Republic
OAPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
OIC	Organization of Islamic Conference
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
EEC	European Economic Community
MSP	National Salvation Party (Milli Selamet Partisi)
ANAP	Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi)
DYP	True Path Party (Doğru Yol Partisi)
SHP	Social Democratic Populist Party (Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti)
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
GAP	Southeastern Anatolian Project (Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi)
RP	Welfare Party (Refah Partisi)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSC	National Security Council (Milli Güvenlik Konseyi)
EU	European Union
IDF	Israeli Defense Forces
PA	Palestinian Authority
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
IHH	Humanitarian Relief Foundation (İnsani Yardım Vakfı)
POI	Panel of Inquiry
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria

INTRODUCTION

Turkish-Israeli relations have always been full of ups and downs. Although Turkey was the first country and for decades the only Islamic country to recognize the Jewish state and kept its neutrality in the 1948 Arab Israeli War, Turkish governments supported the Arabs in the 1956, 1967, 1973 and 1982 Arab Israeli Wars. Meanwhile during the Cold War both countries served as a western ally to counter Soviet alliances in the Arab world. Despite the pressure from the Arabs, Turkey never cut off its relations with Israel during the Cold War era. With the end of Cold War in the early 1990s and the beginning of the Peace Process between Israel and the Arab states following the first Gulf War of 1991, Turkish Israeli relations improved dramatically by upgrading the diplomatic relations, expanding joint military exercises and intelligence sharing, and increasing trade. Israeli intelligence helped its Turkish counterpart particularly in its fight against PKK. In fact throughout the 1990s both countries were taking actions against the same enemy, Syria.

Once conservative Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* – AKP) started consolidating its power in 2007 after coming to power for the first time in 2002, the relations with Israel started deteriorating. This deterioration first started with Turkey's recognition of HAMAS following their victory in 2006 Palestinian elections, Israel's attacks to Gaza in 2006 and continued with a series of events including more Israeli attacks to Gaza in 2008-2009, Erdoğan's Davos speech in 2009 and Mavi Marmara crisis in 2010. Although Turkey and Israel followed a roller coaster relationship, these relations never deteriorated as much as they did in the last decade starting from mid 2000s until mid 2010s. This thesis aims at finding an answer to why Turkish Israeli relations deteriorated so much in the last decade by referring to the role model theory.

The role model theory that studies role conceptions and their impact on state's behavior in the international arena argues that the states follow foreign policies in accordance with specific roles in which they associate themselves. This thesis aims at analyzing the deterioration of Turkish-Israeli relations through the tenets of role theory such as national role conceptions, role prescriptions, and role performance. In this analysis, the national role conceptions designed by Kalevi

Holsti in his study titled *National Role Conceptions in the study of Foreign Policy* such as regional leadership, regional protectorship (of Palestinians), mediator, and defender of peace will be referred as conceptual tools.[1] Moreover, the study will focus on the role prescriptions followed by Turkey by looking at what the Arab states and the United States have expected from Turkey as well as Turkey's role performance by looking at the kind of policy line Turkish foreign policy makers followed towards Israel.

The national role conceptions (NRCs) include the leaders' in other words, policymakers' own definitions of the general kind of decisions, commitments, rules, and actions suitable to their state, and of the functions, if any, their state should perform on a continuing basis in the international system or subordinate regional systems. It is about how the leaders imagine the appropriate orientations or functions of their state toward the external environment. The other tenet of role theory called the role prescriptions are the natural norms and expectations that particular cultures, societies, groups or institutions attach to varied positions. The role theory also proposes the role performance concept that is concerned with the attitudes, decisions, and actions that governments take to implement.[2] So, the implementation process of their own policies is named as the governments' role performance.

Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu designated a road map to increase Turkey's effectiveness in the whole Middle Eastern region. With this purpose in his mind, he introduced the policy of zero-problem with neighbours. This policy set down the new foreign policy orientation of Turkey as maximum contact with the Muslim and Arab powers. Such close relations with the Arab world as expected worked at the expense of enhancing relations with Israel. AKP policy-makers as part of their attempts to improve the relations with the neighbors, rather than resorting to hard power instruments that was often referred by the previous governments, preferred to follow strong soft-power mechanisms including good trade relations with the neighboring countries. Common religion as well as historical attachments with the Arab world also contributed to the AKP's close relations with the Middle East. Moreover, AKP government with its Islamist roots was naturally sympathetic

[1] Kalevi J. Holsti, "National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy", **International Studies Quarterly,** Vol: 14, No: 3, 1970, pp. 233-309.
[2] Holsti, pp. 239-240.

to the suffering of the Palestinians in the hands of Israelis. However, as already stated AKP's closer relations with the Middle Eastern countries and its staunch support for the Palestinian cause in turn deteriorated its relations with Israel.

The deterioration of the relations between Turkey and Israel can be analyzed with the help of various international theories including realism, liberalism and social constructivism. However, none of these theories can actually bring a fully satisfactory explanation for the weakening of the relations between the two countries. In this respect, realism is obsessed with the concepts of power and survival. It leads to several expectations about foreign policy based on the power capabilities of a state and the potential threats to it.[3] Nonetheless, the realist theory is not alone sufficient to analyze the deteriorated relationship between Turkey and Israel because it is not able to explain the question of why Turkey abandoned a good relationship with Israel while it was still taking the advantage of the Israeli help in its struggle against the PKK terror. In other words, realism cannot fully answer to the question of why the Turkish side envisaged a declining relationship with the powerful Israeli state instead of ameliorating and enhancing its relationship with this state in order to become a powerful actor in its region.

Liberalism focuses on the distribution of economic wealth as a primary characteristic that affects states' foreign policies concentrates on economy.[4] Liberalism also does not have a strong explanatory power in explaining the weakening relations since both states had been enjoying high economic interests since the early 1990s. For example, in 2013 the volume of trade between the two states reached around 5 billon US dollars from around 3 billion US dollars when it was compared to late 2000s.[5] Social constructivism sees the international system as composed of the social interactions of states and shared understandings in a global society. In the realm of foreign policy, its leading scholars view norms of appropriate behavior as socially constructed international structures that constrain states' foreign

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[3] Juliet Kaarbo et. al, "The Analysis of Foreign Policy in Comparative Perspective", **Foreign Policy in Comparative Perspective: Domestic and International Influences on State Behavior,** (Eds., Ryan Beasley et al), CQ Press, Washington D.C., 2012, p. 8.
[4] Kaarbo et al, p. 10.
[5] Arif Bayraktar, "AKP döneminde İsraille ticaret rekora koşuyor", **Zaman**, 19.07.2014, http://www.zaman.com.tr/ekonomi_akp-doneminde-israil-ile-ticaret-rekora-kosuyor_2232344.html (23.08.2014).

policies.[6] In this regard, to make an analysis about the deteriorated relationship between Turkey and Israel by using the social constructivist theory as a conceptual tool may provide some benefits because it is partly able to answer to the question of why the Turkish foreign policy makers set a Middle Easternized foreign policy orientation rather than conducting better relations with Israel. In other words, the social constructivist theory by referring to the common history, religion, and cultural attachments with the Arab and Muslim neighbors can bring an explanation to the rapprochement between Turkey and the Arab countries, which in turn can clarify the declining relations with Israel. Still social constructivism alone does not have a strong explanatory power since with its obsession with the identity and norm concepts; it has the tendency to ignore the strategic causes.

Resorting to the role theory model as a conceptual tool in the analysis of deteriorating Turkish Israeli relationship may help us to fill the gaps other international theories cannot cover. Similar to the social constructivism, role theory has some assumptions that are concerned with the non-material forces affecting foreign policies of a given country. This thesis also attempts to analyze these weakening relations through the role theory.

Literature Review:

There are quite a number of articles and books written on Turkish Israeli relations. One of the earlier books published on the relations of the two countries as well as Greece was written by Amikam Nachmani in 1985 and it was titled *Israel, Turkey and Greece, Uneasy Relations in the East Mediterranean.*[7] The book was about the Turkish-Israeli relations between 1949 and 1958. George Gruen also wrote a number of articles on Turkish Israeli relations throughout 1980s and 1990s.[8] Mahmut Bali Aykan wrote one of the well-known articles on the subject in 1993 titled "The Palestinian Question in Turkish Foreign Policy from the 1950s to the

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[6] Kaarbo et al, p. 12.
[7] Amikam Nachmani, **Israel, Turkey and Greece, Uneasy Relations in the East Mediterranean**, Frank&Co.Ltd, London: 1987.
[8] George E. Gruen, "Turkey's Relations with Israel and Its Arab Neighbors: The Impact of Basic Interests and Changing Circumstances," **Middle East Review,** Vol: 17, 1985; George Gruen, "Turkey's Potential Contribution to Arab-Israel Peace," **Turkish Review of Middle East Studies,** Annual 7, Foundation for Middle East and Balkan Studies, Istanbul, 1993, p. 186.

1990s".[9] This article while summarizing Turkish Arab relations, particularly Turkish Palestinian relations, also analyzes the Turkish Israeli relations between 1950 and 1990. Another comprehensive article named "Turkish-Israeli Relations through the Lens of the Turkish Identity Debate" written in 1997 by Hakan Yavuz explores Turkish-Israeli relations within the context of the deepening polarization between Turkey's secular elite and the religiously oriented segments of the society.[10]

During 1990s and early 2000s many articles examining the booming relations between the two nations were written. Süha Bölükbaşı in his article on Turkish-Israeli Alliance points out how during the 1990s the reduction of trade between Turkey and the Arabs, lack of Arab support in the key issues, and bilateral disputes with Iraq and Syria led Turkey to look for closer relations with Israel.[11] George Gruen in his article written in 2002 examines the strategic relations between Turkey and Israel in depth.[12] Efraim İnbar in his article in 2005 examines the growing Turkish-Israeli relations in the areas of trade, tourism and military. He argues that the remarkable upgrading of relations with Israel was the result of the emergence of an evolving international constellation following the breakdown of the Soviet Union, and the subsequent adoption of a new Turkish approach to a newly defined Greater Middle East.[13]

Even before AKP came to power there were articles that examined the limit of the alliance. For example, Gökhan Bacık in his article written in 2001 by following social constructivist approach points the limits within the Turkish-Israeli Alliance.[14] Since AKP coming to power many articles were written about the how the even-tempered relations in the early years of AKP started to lose its temper in mid-2000s. In this context, Tarık Oğuzlu's article titled "The Changing Dynamics of

[9] Mahmut Bali Aykan, "The Palestinian Question in Turkish Foreign Policy from the 1950s to the 1990s", **International Journal of Middle East Studies**, Vol: 25, No: 1, 1993, pp. 91-110.

[10] Hakan Yavuz, "Turkish-Israeli Relations through the Lens of the Identity Debate**", Journal of Palestinian Studies,** Vol: 27, No: 1, 1997, pp. 22-37.

[11] Süha Bölükbaşı, "Behind the Turkish-Israeli Alliance: A Turkish View", **Journal of Palestine Studies,** Vol: 29, No: 1, 1999, pp. 21-35.

[12] George E. Gruen, "Recent Developments in Turkish-Israeli Relations", **American Foreign Policy Interests: The Journal of the National Committee on American Foreign Polic**y", Vol: 24, No: 4, 2002, pp. 301-321.

[13] Efraim Inbar, "The Resilience of Israeli–Turkish Relations", **Israel Affairs,** Vol: 11, No: 4, 2005, pp. 591–607.

[14] Gökhan Bacık, "The Limits of an Alliance, Turkish-Israeli Relations Revisited", **Arab Studies Quarterly**, Vol: 23, No: 3, 2002, pp. 49-63.

Turkey-Israel Relations: A Structural Realist Account", examines the changing dynamics of Turkey's relations with Israel in recent years from a structural realist point of view. In this regard, Oğuzlu argues that both the establishment of strong strategic relations during the 1990s and the growing tension in recent years could be convincingly analyzed through a structural realist perspective that mainly values systemic and exogenous factors in explanation of states' foreign policy preferences and behaviors.[15] Ali Balcı and Tuncay Kardaş in an attempt to analyze how the harmonious relations between Turkey and Israel turned into hostile and toxic nature refer to the Copenhagen School's theory of securitization and desecuritization.[16] To that extend, Balcı and Kardaş use the Copenhagen School approach that not only helps to illustrate the characteristics of different periods in Turkish-Israeli relations, it also helps to highlight the specificity of the politics of civil-military relations in foreign policy making.

Another article by Hasan Kösebalaban titled "Turkey and the New Middle East: Between Liberalism and Realism" analyzes Turkey's new foreign policies through the Middle East and Israel by considering both the realist and liberal theories into consideration.[17] İlker Aytürk also analyses the causes of change in the Turkish perception of Israel by focusing on the ideology and actors of AKP, power vacuum in the Middle East, and Turkish foreign policy discourse of grandeur.[18]

Actually, this thesis does not deny the substance of all other studies about the Turkish Israeli relationship but attempts to fill the gap in the studies on Turkish Israeli relations by resorting to role theory model. Indeed, the role theory provides a strong base to analyze the relationship between the two states because its main tenets like national role conceptions, role prescriptions and role performance can easily be adapted to the study of Turkish-Israeli relations in order to understand the both communities' policy orientations. The role theory model brings a new dimension and perspective to the changing dynamics of the relationship between Turkey and Israel

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[15] Tarık Oğuzlu, "The Changing Dynamics of Turkey–Israel Relations: A Structural Realist Account", **Mediterranean Politics**, Vol: 15, No: 2, 2010, pp. 273-288.
[16] Ali Balcı and Tuncay Kardaş, "The Changing Dynamics of Turkey's Relations with Israel: An Analysis of 'Securitization', **Insight Turkey**, Vol: 14, No: 2, 2012, pp. 99-120.
[17] Hasan Kösebalaban, "Turkey and the New Middle East: Between Liberalism and Realism", **Perceptions**, Vol: 16, No: 3, 2011, pp. 93-114.
[18] İlker Aytürk, "The Coming of an Ice Age? Turkish–Israeli Relations Since 2002", **Turkish Studies,** Vol: 12, No: 4, 2011, pp. 675–687.

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by considering the views of all actors besides Turkey and Israel. Analyzing the weakening Turkish-Israeli relations from a role theory perspective will be the contribution of this thesis to the Turkish-Israeli relations literature. Closest article to this study is Şevket Ovalı and Yücel Bozdağlıoğlu's article that argues that the role theory could be incorporated into the theory of securitization and could be used as a conceptual tool for decoding Turkey's strained relations with Israel.[19]

There are also other articles that analyze Turkish foreign policy from role theory model perspective. Among these, Bülent Aras and Aylin Görener's article examines the ideational bases of AKP's foreign policy activism in the Middle East by taking national role conceptions into consideration.[20] Another article by Şevket Ovalı also analyzes Turkish foreign policy towards Middle East from a role theory perspective.[21]

Methodology:

In the analysis of deterioration of Turkish-Israeli relations in the last decade, this research shows the significance of the role model theory and its tenets such as national role conception, role prescription and role performance. The data in the thesis shows how national role conceptions such as regional leadership, regional protector, mediator and defender of peace will examine the declining relationships between two countries through an analysis of secondary sources that include books, journal articles and current newspaper articles. Current newspaper and journal articles were used to explore the discourses of leaders.

Structure of the Thesis:

This thesis is consisted of four chapters. Following the introduction section, the first chapter on theoretical framework examines the internal and external factors that have an impact on foreign policy decision-making. Among the external factors

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[19] Şevket Ovalı and Yücel Bozdağlıoğlu, "Role Theory and Securitization: An Agency Based Framework for Decoding Turkey's Diplomatic Offensive against Israel", **The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations**, Vol: 43, 2012, pp. 1-28.
[20] Bülent Aras and Aylin Görener, "National role conceptions and foreign policy orientation: the ideational bases of the Justice and Development Party's foreign policy activism in the Middle East", **Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies**, Vol: 12, No: 1, 2010, pp. 73-92.
[21] Şevket Ovalı, "Decoding Turkey's Lust for Regional Clout in the Middle East: A Role Theory Perspective", **Journal of International and Area Studies**, Vol: 20, No: 1, 2013, pp. 1-21.

the chapter analyzes realism, liberalism and Marxism and among the internal factors in focuses on social constructivism and particularly on the role model theory. The chapter will mainly focus on the role model theory by taking Holsti's national role conceptions, role prescriptions, and role performance into consideration. The chapter will also examine Holsti's numerous role conceptions that include the bastion of revolution-liberator, regional leader, regional protector, active independent, liberation supporter, anti-imperialist agent, defender of the faith, mediator-integrator, regional subsystem-collaborator, developer, bridge, faithful ally, independent, example, internal development, isolate, and protectee.

The second chapter of the thesis will cover the historical background of Turkish-Israeli relations. The chapter will examine these relations starting from the Ottoman days, continuing during the Republic of Turkey by concentrating on the establishment of Israel, Turkish foreign policy concerning Arab-Israeli wars and the alliances of the two countries during the Cold War. This chapter will then continue with an examination of warming up of the relations in the post-Cold War era, starting with the Peace Process.

The third chapter will mainly concentrate on Turkish-Israeli relations during the AKP era by primarily examining the events that caused the deterioration of the relations including Operation Cast Lead, Davos episode and the Mavi Marmara attacks. The chapter will start by analyzing the harmonious relations between the two states during the early years of the AKP and then will focus on the problematic relationship between the two states. Indeed, this chapter will seek an answer to the questions of what caused the tension between the two states in the mid-2000s? What kinds of attitudes were taken by the Turkish side in the wake of the Hamas victory in 2006 Palestinian elections? How the relationships between the two states were shaped during the Operation Cast Lead of Israel against the Palestinians? And, how the Chair Crisis contributed to deterioration of the diplomatic relations between the two states? More importantly, this chapter will also investigate the famous Davos Crisis and the Mavi Marmara: Flotilla raid of Israel.

The fourth and the main analysis chapter of the thesis will discuss how the role theory and its main tenets (national role conceptions, role prescriptions and role performance) contribute to an analysis of the deteriorating Turkish-Israeli relations.

These relations will be analyzed from national role conception point of view by taking Turkey's role as a regional leader, regional protector (of Palestinians), mediator, and defender of peace into consideration. First part of the chapter will look at Turkey's role as a regional leader and regional protector for the Palestinians. It will then concentrate on the mediator role of the Turkish Republic attempting to resolve the tension between the Israelis and the Palestinians as well as Turkey's role as a defender of peace in the Palestinian issue. This analysis will be made mainly by examining the speeches made by the significant policy-makers. The second part of this chapter will explore the role prescriptions that were tailored for Turkey by the USA and the Arab states. Finally, the last part will point out Turkey's role performance during its foreign policy implementation.

Finally, the conclusion section summarizes the role conceptions that led to the deterioration of the Turkish-Israeli relations. It also points out the weaknesses of the thesis and the future research that should be elaborated on this subject.

CHAPTER ONE
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:
ANALYZING FOREIGN POLICY THROUGH THE ROLE THEORY

Foreign policy is the totality of a country's policies toward other countries and its interactions with the environment beyond its borders as defined by Marijke Breuning.[22] What factors shape the foreign policy decision-making is the main question of foreign policy analysis. How can we account for the foreign policies of the states in the international system and why do the states behave the way they do are other questions of foreign policy analysis. In their attempt to analyze foreign policies of countries scholars try to figure out where to look for explanations. Some scholars concentrate on levels of analysis such as individual level of analysis, state level of analysis and system level of analysis. While in individual level of analysis scholars focus on leaders and decision-makers, in state level analysis they concentrate on institutional framework of the state and in system level analysis power capability of states are taken into concentration.[23]

Juliet Kaarbo et al in their attempt to analyze foreign policies concentrate on external and internal factors that affect foreign policies. As external factors, they concentrate on theories of international such as realism that points anarchy and power in the international system. In addition, they focus on liberalism to analyze interdependence in international system.[24] Another external factor that have an impact on foreign policy analysis, but not included by Kaarbo et al is Marxism. Actually, Marxism differing from liberalism's interdependence concentrates on dependency in foreign policy. It mainly focuses on how weak states find themselves in a position of aligning their foreign policies with strong states due to their economic and political dependency.

Although Kaarbo et al consider another international relations approach social constructivism that includes public opinion, identity and culture as an external factor, the explanations concerning this approach usually refers to its as an internal

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[22] Marijke Breuning, **Foreign Policy Analysis: A Comparative Introduction,** Palgrave, Macmillan, New York, 2007, p. 5.
[23] Breuning, p. 13.
[24] Kaarbo et. al, p. 7.

factor. Among the internal factors Kaarbo et al. include the impact of societal groups such as the military and the civil society organizations on foreign policy. In addition they also look at the effect of governmental organizations on foreign policy by concentrating on the type of governmental system and its bureaucratic politics. One last and significant internal factor they take into consideration is the personality, beliefs and psychology of the leaders.[25]

Actually, before the emergence of constructivism, another theory that was influential in international relations and foreign policy analysis has been the role theory that studied role conceptions and their impact on state's behavior in the international arena. Role theory argues that after the actors identify their nation with certain roles, they act according to these roles or in other words, with the expectations and demands these roles produce. Therefore, the state follows foreign policies in accordance with specific roles in which they associate themselves.[26]

Social constructivist approach that accepts the international system as composed of the social interactions of states and shared understandings in a global society by time somehow took over the function of the role theory. Constructivists by adopting a structural approach to roles made use of roles and aspects of role theory.[27] In this study, deteriorating Turkish Israeli relations will be analyzed through the role theory. In other words, the thesis will examine the deteriorating Turkish Israeli relations through the analysis of how the state leaders made foreign policy decision with the help of their national role conceptions. In other words, it will analyze how national role conceptions shape the leaders' ideas in Turkey's foreign policy decision-making towards Israel.

This chapter following a brief examination of significant international relations theories such as realism, liberalism and Marxism that bring an explanation to foreign policy analysis will analyze the role theory in addition to social constructivism.

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[25] Kaarbo et. al, p. 18
[26] Holsti, p. 234; Richard Adigbuo, "Beyond IR Theories: The Case for National Role Conceptions", **Politikon: South African Journal of Political Studies,** Vol: 34, No: 1, 2007, p. 88.
[27] For details see Cameron Thies and Marijke Breuning, "Integrating Foreign Policy Analysis and International Relations through Role Theory", **Foreign Policy Analysis**, Vol: 8, No: 1,2012, p. 2.

I. EXTERNAL FACTORS AFFECTING FOREIGN POLICY: REALISM, LIBERALISM AND MARXISM

Three important theories of international relations realism, liberalism and Marxism bring different explanations to foreign policy analysis. While realism sees the continuous need to acquire and protect one's security and power as the driving force behind foreign policies, liberalism looks how the foreign policies of states are shaped by the interdependence among countries that have taken place as a result of the increase in global trade, financial relationships and the technological advances. Marxism analyzes foreign policies of the countries by looking at the dependency of developing states to great powers.

A. Realism

The main and the mostly referred theory of international relations, realism that explains relations between states with power and anarchy also brings explanation to foreign policy analysis. The realist theory, that concentrates on power politics and realpolitik deals with the acquisition, maintenance and exercise of power (that can be hard and soft) by states. Realists argue that the international political system is anarchic in the sense that there is no central or dominant power that regulates and controls the actions taken by the individual states. Differing from domestic political systems where a central government exists, conflicts are more likely to occur in an anarchical international environment. According to realists, international anarchy triggers competition and conflict among the individual states and prevents their willingness to cooperate with each other even they have some similar interests. The realist theory argues that international institutions are also useless to mitigate anarchy's constraining effects on the notion of cooperation. So, to cooperate with each other is also not a possible option for individual states to avoid from conflict in anarchical international environment.[28]

According to the realists, the main goal of an individual state is to maximize its overall power within the anarchical international system. It is believed by the

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[28] Joseph M. Grieco, "Anarchy and Limits of Cooperation: A Realist Critique of the Newest Liberal Institutionalism", **International Organization**, Vol: 42, No: 3, 1988, p. 485; Helen Milner, "The Assumption of Anarchy in International Relations Theory: A Critique", **Review of International Studies**, Vol: 17, No: 1, 1991, p. 75; Kelly-Kate S. Pease, **International Organizations**, Pearson Education, Fifth Edition, USA, 2012, p. 48-54.

realists that the only way for a state to survive within international system could be realized with power maximization. Otherwise, states cannot maintain their independence and territorial integrity in this anarchical international system. [29] Realists also pay attention to the *national interest* concept. They believe that within international system states seek to defend and enhance their national interests by interacting with other states. In other words, as Morgenthau stated, every political action is made for keeping, increasing and demonstrating power. According to Morgenthau, the animus dominandi, the desire to dominate, is a social force that determines political activities. [30] Thus, any state on earth tends to become more powerful and more stable within the international political system by seeking and defending its national interests. Realists also concentrate on *balance of power* that argues that in the face of hegemony of a great power other states should make alignments with each other to balance the power mechanism within the international system. [31]

Concerning foreign policy, as argued Kaarbo et al, realists again point out to the international anarchy and power concepts as the main determinative factors shaping foreign policies. Indeed, the driving force behind the foreign policies of individual states is composed of their need to acquire and safeguard their security and power. [32] Moreover, the anarchical structure of the international system triggers the emergence of hegemonic powers. Existence of hegemonic powers forces smaller states to align its foreign policies with relatively powerful states. [33]

B. Liberalism

Liberalism unlike realism challenges the pessimistic worldview and sees the relations between societies in a more optimistic way mainly as a mixture of cooperation and conflict. According to the proponents of liberalism the fundamental way for the states to interact with each other in the international system is to

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[29] Sean Molloy, "Truth, Power, Theory: Hans Morgenthau's Formulation of Realism", **Diplomacy & Statecraft**, Vol: 15, No: 1, 2010, p. 1.
[30] J. Peter Pham, "What Is in the National Interest? Hans Morgenthau's Realist Vision and American Foreign Policy", **American Foreign Policy Interests**, Vol: 30, 2008, p. 257.
[31] Partha Chatterjee, "The Classical Balance of Power Theory", **Journal of Peace Research**, Vol: 9, No: 1, 1972, p. 51
[32] Kaarbo et al, p. 8
[33] Kaarbo et al, p. 9.

cooperate. Liberalism argues that societies are not isolated from each other as they used to be. Currently, global markets and global production connect them to each other. Mass communication, rapid transportation and Internet bring the societies together and make them see themselves as part of a greater whole. Unlike realists that concentrate on nation states, liberals focus on individuals, households, firms, interest groups, governments and international organizations.[34]

According to liberals societies that are organized around democratic principles, share similar norms and values and do not resort to violence when they face conflicts. They do not usually go to war with each other as the democratic peace theory argues. Democratic peace theory argues that liberal democracies have democratic institutions that adopt their foreign policy orientation in order to provide peace and freedom in every society. According to Macmillan, liberalism is a political-philosophical project centrally concerned with the way in which individuals in political communities are able to maximize their freedom without violating the rights of other individuals (and communities) to do the same.[35]

Liberal scholars claim that the driving force behind the cooperation between individual states is their expected mutual gains from each other. Therefore, states become more prone to construct new international regimes that help the states to cooperate with each other. Liberalists argue that economic wealth of states determines their existence in the international political system

Liberalism has a significant impact on foreign policy since they argue that states cooperate for their own interests. That is why they make arm agreements, trade agreements and cultural exchanges. States cooperate to maximize their economic interests. These economic interests usually shape their foreign policies. In this respect, division of labor is significant since the states realize that they are not good enough to produce all goods and look for partner states that would produce alternative goods. Therefore, a state becomes more willing to experience

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[34] Pease, pp. 76-85.
[35] John Macmillan, "Liberalism and the Democratic Peace", **Review of International Studies**, Vol: 30, No: 2, 2004, p. 180.

interdependence with other states. In fact, interdependence creates mutual vulnerability among states.[36]

In this context, international organizations also play a crucial role as a regulator in the international system. For example, the World Trade Organization (WTO) or the International Monetary Fund (IMF) triggers cooperation and interdependence among the individual states by introducing new monetary regimes or putting some rules on the global trade. In this respect, states are more willing to give their authority on their sovereignty to an upper institution. Nonetheless, all of these arguments show that interdependence among states decreases the possibility of the emergence of international conflict.[37] In this regard, one may expect that if individual states in the international system engage in each other through economic, political or military interdependence, the conflict between these states will dramatically decrease. In sum, liberalism argues that interdependence shape foreign policies of the states. When the states are dependent to each other, first they avoid escalating conflicts among themselves; second they align their foreign policies with each other.

C. Marxism

Marxism in general challenges the realist argument of putting politics over economics. Moreover, it disagrees with liberal point of view that argues that the expansion of global markets is good for international peace and stability. Meanwhile, Marxism criticizes capitalism as a mode of production and argues that capitalism in fact creates the conflict between the states. Marxism also sees the international organizations as tools of capitalists that exploit the subordinated classes and states. Therefore, Marxist ideology brings explanation to many social and political movements in the developing world.[38]

In the foreign policy analysis context Marxism is mainly concerned with dependency. Marxism argues that most developing states that have experienced colonialism and have been formally independent only for the last couple of decades

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[36] John A. Kroll, "The Complexity of Interdependence", **International Studies Quarterly**, Vol: 37, No: 3, 1993, p. 322-323.
[37] Susan M. McMillan, "Interdependence and Conflict" **Mershon International Studies Review**, Vol: 41, No: 1, 1997, p. 35.
[38] Pease, pp. 76-85.

are weak compared to the great powers that have exploited them for centuries. The colonial history led these countries to distrust capitalism and great powers since their experience with colonialism meant poverty, malnutrition, disease and death with violence. Even when they get their independence they still found themselves being economically and politically dependent on these great powers. The relative weakness and economically disadvantaged position of the developing states compared to the great powers lead to the intervention of great powers to their economy. Therefore, in their foreign policies, they find themselves being forced to follow parallel foreign policies with the great powers. They usually do that in order either to avoid punishment from the great power or to be awarded by the same power.[39]

In sum, Marxism shapes foreign policy through dependency and argues that the weak countries that are dependent on great powers find themselves in a position of aligning their foreign policies with the great power. In other words, they find themselves forced to follow similar foreign policies with the great powers not to be punished economically or politically.

II. INTERNAL FACTORS AFFECTING FOREIGN POLICY: SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM AND ROLE THEORY

In foreign policy making besides the external factors such as survival, balance of power, the country's position in international relations, and its interdependence to the global system or its dependence politically (security) and economically to other countries, there are also internal factors that have an impact on foreign policy. Among these, constructivist approach concentrates on interest, identity, ideology, culture, norm, and historical background. In other words, the constructivists look how these socially constructed issues such as identity, culture and norms shape foreign policy-making. The role theory focuses on the reasoning of national political elites and the perceived role of their own states within the larger system.

A. Constructivism

Social constructivism as an approach within the international relations discipline emerged at the beginning of the 1990s as a reaction to the rational theories

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[39] Pease, pp. 76-85.

of international relations such as realism, liberalism, Marxism and their variants. According to the constructivist theory, the international system is composed of interactions of the individual states and the concepts of interest, identity, ideology, culture, norm, and history play a very crucial role in the interaction of the states with each other. The constructivist theory also argues that anarchy and interests are the results of states' interactions with each other and are actually defined by the constructivists. Therefore, anarchy can only be considered as anarchy when it is perceived as the absence of a central government by people. In other words, it is the perception and definition of the people that considers it as anarchy.[40]

Constructivism argues that identities and interests are not exogenously created but socially constructed and they may change within the context of time. Some concepts of the social constructivism such as the self-help and collective security, in addition to this the states' identities and norms determine their interests in the international system. Therefore, constructivists argue that non-material forces are influential in determining a state's foreign policy behavior.[41] So, in order to make a good analysis of foreign policy through the social constructivist theory by explaining all these non-material forces it is necessary to have a general perspective that is called role theory.

The role theory following the same arguments with the social constructivist theory in an attempt to analyze the foreign policies of the countries concentrate on national role concept that is actually created by interest, identity, ideology, culture, norm, and history. This study in an attempt to analyze Turkey's relations with Israel will resort to Role theory. In other words, the deteriorating Turkish Israeli relations will be analyzed through the role theory.

B. Role Theory

Role theory that was developed throughout the 1920s and 1930s in the sociological, social psychological and anthropological studies focuses on expectations, identities, social positions, social structure and individual responses. Concerning foreign policy analysis it looks at the role of national role conception

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[40] Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics", **International Organization**, Vol: 46, No: 2, 1992, pp. 391-392.
[41] Wendt, p. 393.

(NRC), role performance and role prescriptions and their impact on foreign policy making.[42]

Kalevi Holsti, the pioneer scholar utilizing role theory in political science started using it as a conceptual tool in foreign policy analysis. He argued that national role conceptions, role performance and role prescriptions are all necessary conceptions to establish the framework of role theory in foreign policy.[43] Role theory accepts states and the leaders as the main foreign policy-makers. Therefore, they consider both states and their leaders as actors who behave consistently with specific roles within which they identify themselves.[44] In this regard, the specific roles played by the states determine these states' position in the international political system. The state leaders are also considered as significant actors that can sometimes function beyond states. These leaders according to role theory determine the role conceptions in other words, their states' position in the international system.

1. National Role Conceptions

The national role conceptions include the leaders' in other words, policymakers' own definitions of the general kind of decisions, commitments, rules, and actions suitable to their state, and of the functions, if any, their state should perform on a continuing basis in the international system or subordinate regional systems. It is about how the imagination of the leaders of the appropriate orientations or functions of their state toward the external environment.[45] Therefore, in order to understand how some NRCs shape state leaders' views on the foreign policy issues, there should be a deep analysis on what these main NRCs are. Indeed, Holsti mentions about 17 role conceptions in his study named the National Role Conceptions in the study of Foreign Policy. These conceptions include, the bastion of revolution-liberator, regional leader, regional protector, active independent, liberation supporter, anti-imperialist agent, defender of the faith, mediator-integrator, regional subsystem-collaborator, developer, bridge, faithful ally, independent, example, internal development, isolate, and protectee. In addition to these NRCs

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[42] Adigbuo, p. 88.
[43] Holsti, p. 240.
[44] Adigbuo, p. 88.
[45] Ovalı and Bozdağlıoğlu, p. 10.

defined by Holsti, he also focuses on a number of NRCs that are shortly mentioned in his study.[46] The following sections will concentrate on these NRCs by defining and explaining them.

a. Bastion of revolution-liberator

Holsti defines some states as the bastion of revolution-liberator. He considers them as states that generally behave in a way of inspiring liberation abroad. Holsti argues that one of the tasks of these states is to liberate others or to act as the stronghold of revolutionary movements; these states directly or indirectly support the revolutionary movements of other states.[47]

b. Regional Leader

Some states can be considered as more powerful both economically and politically when they are compared to their neighbors and counterparts. Both economic and political effectiveness of an individual state in its regional environment may easily affect other states in the same region and may cause them to comply with the stronger leader state's policies. Indeed, Holsti's definition of regional leader includes the duties or special responsibilities that a government perceives for itself in its relation to states in a particular region with which it identifies, or to cross-cutting subsystems such as international communist movements.[48] In many aspects, the regional leadership of a particular state causes it to have some responsibilities since their foreign policy making process clearly affects the developments in the region.

c. Regional Protector

Holsti also points out that some countries that are sensitive to the issues in its immediate surrounding can assume the role of a regional leader. Indeed, this role conception implies special leadership responsibilities on a regional or issue-area basis. Moreover, it places emphasis on the function of providing protection and

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[46] Holsti, p. 260.
[47] Holsti, p, 261.
[48] Holsti, p. 261.

security for its region. A regional protector is supposed to know what is happening in its environment and produce some policies that are related to the developments in its region.[49]

d. Active Independent

The term of independence provides sovereignty for a country and enables it to have a free political mechanism in its domestic affairs. Nonetheless, Holsti makes a clear distinction between the terms of active independent and independent. For active independent, Holsti defines the role conception of active independent as a national role conception that emphasizes at once independence, self-determination, possible mediation functions, and active programs to extend diplomatic and commercial relations to diverse areas of the world. In addition to this, Holsti clearly argues that most government statements supporting the concept of non-alignment are little more than affirmation of an independent foreign policy, free of military commitments to any of the major powers. According to Holsti, foreign policy of an active independent state should serve to the interests of the country, not interests of the others.[50] As a result, an active independent country must concentrate on the terms of independence and self-determination.

e. Liberation supporter

Besides the concept of revolution-liberator, Holsti also defines another concept called liberation supporter. In Holsti's words, the main difference between the concepts of bastion of revolution-liberator and liberation supporter is that unlike the bastion of revolution-liberator national role conception, the liberation supporter concept does not indicate formal responsibilities for organizing, leading or physically supporting liberation and revolution movements abroad.[51] In other words, the foreign policy makers that assume the liberation supporter role conception spend effort only to overcome a liberation movement in their own countries.

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[49] Holsti, pp. 261-262.
[50] Holsti, p. 262.
[51] Holsti, p. 263.

f. Anti-Imperialist Agent

Holsti argues that where imperialism is perceived as a serious threat, many governments see themselves as agents of struggle against this evil.[52] When an individual state fights against the imperialist aims of other states, it automatically becomes an anti-imperialist agent. Imperialism can be defined as a kind of exploitation of weaker states by stronger states. It is the strict dominance of a powerful state on the authority of relatively weaker states. From this point of view, if an individual state is fighting against the imperialist aims of other states, it automatically becomes an anti-imperialist agent.

g. Defender of the faith

Holsti points out the states that assume to have special responsibilities to protect a particular faith. Today, many states assume a role of protecting their values and do not hesitate to take any action to protect these values. In addition to this, a group of states may come together to establish a common entity that has some values and then they start protecting this entity. To that extend, Holsti proposes a national role conception named the defender of faith. According to Holsti, some governments view their foreign policy objectives and commitments in terms of defending value systems (rather than specified territories) from attack. Those who assume the defender of faith national role conception must undertake special responsibilities to guarantee ideological purity for a group of other states.[53]

h. Mediator-Integrator

There are many states that have conflict with each other. Sometimes they can resolve their conflicts on their own and sometimes they need an outside help. Holsti also draws attention to the states that assume the role of mediator-integrator undertaking special tasks to reconcile conflicts among other states or group of states. In an attempt to provide peace between conflicting parties, these mediator-integrator states help adversaries in their reconciliation of their differences.[54]

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[52] Holsti, p. 264.
[53] Holsti, p. 264.
[54] Holsti, p. 265.

i. Regional Subsystem-Collaborator

According to Holsti, an individual state that assumes the role of a regional subsystem-collaborator is often willing to pursue foreign policies that would help to the development of the neighboring countries. Holsti indicates that such states do more than the mediator-integrator states, they commit themselves to far-reaching promises to establish cooperation with other states and to build wider communities, or to crosscut subsystems like the communist movement.[55] These states usually have a mission to influence other states in their regions by using the political power they possess.

j. Developer

Countries that have different economic levels sometimes need the help of other states to enhance their development. A developer country is the one that helps the other in their development in economy, military and politics. According to Holsti, "the themes in this national role conception indicate a special duty or obligation to assist underdeveloped countries".[56] Holsti thinks that references to special skills or advantages for undertaking such continuing tasks also appear frequently.[57]

k. Bridge

As already analyzed in the role conception of mediator-integrator, people of different cultures may have disagreements among themselves. In such conflicts sometimes a third state can help as a bridge, a kind of translator between the two groups. Holsti takes the bridge concept as a national role conception in the context of the role theory. He argues that unlike the mediator-integrator role conception, the bridge concept does not only propose a kind of diplomatic interposition into the areas of conflict or disagreement but the role concept of bridge also brings more ephemeral solutions. It is actually a kind of communication function, that is, acting as a

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[55] Holsti, p. 265.
[56] Holsti, p. 266.
[57] Holsti, p. 266.

translator or conveyor of messages and information between the peoples of different cultures.[58]

l. Faithful Ally

In the international political system, the individual states in order to pursue their aims or to have better conditions in the regional and international system tend to conduct alliances or look for suitable partner states. Holsti notes that the simple treaties or agreements between the states can make them just partners but they are not alone sufficient to make them faithful allies for each other. According to Holsti, in order to become a faithful ally of a state, a country should completely support the policies and programs of its partner states. However today, it seems to be hard to integrate states for the constructions of a faithful alliance between each other.

m. Independent

Holsti represents a different definition for the national role conception of independent. In Holsti's words, in order to have an independent role conception the individual states should involve in the policy of non-alignment indicating that their governments will make policy decisions according to their own interests rather than in supporting the objectives of other states. Moreover, in the role conception of independent all themes must emphasize the policy of self-determination. In a nutshell, self-determination of a country rises as a primary condition for a state if it assumes the role of independent in its domestic and foreign policy orientations.

n. Example

Today, most of the states make foreign policy decisions by taking their domestic political situation into consideration. Following effective domestic policies is as important as pursuing influential foreign policies. Holsti argues that the national role conceptions emphasize the significance of promoting prestige and gaining influence in the international system by following certain domestic policies. Holsti

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[58] Holsti, pp. 266-267.

adds that the role conception does not require formal diplomatic programs or special tasks outside the boundaries of the state.[59]

o. Internal Development

This national role conception emphasizes that the governments should direct their efforts toward problems of internal development rather than international political matters. However, these states can still get involved in various forms of international cooperation, particularly in economic and technical matters.[60]

p. Isolate

Contrasting internal development, the national role of the isolate demands a minimum of external contacts of whatever variety. As Holsti states the states in the national role conception of isolate reveal fears of external involvements of any kind and emphasize self-reliance.[61]

r. Protectee and the other National Role Conceptions

Some statements made by the foreign policy makers of particular states show that a country may have some vulnerability especially when it intends to conduct a foreign policy orientation towards the external environment. Such weaknesses in these states lead their leaders to call for help from some other states. Therefore, Holsti's own definition is exactly about the inefficient capacities of these states. According to Holsti, some governments allude to the responsibility of other states to defend them, but otherwise do not indicate any particular orientation, tasks or functions towards the external environment. So, the comments refer more to the position of state rather than a role.[62] In short, the national role conception of isolate demonstrates that such states explicitly needs help and support of the other states in order to make a communication with the external world.

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[59] Holsti, pp. 268-269.
[60] Holsti, p. 269.
[61] Holsti, p. 270.
[62] Holsti, pp. 270-271.

Besides the list of 17 national role conceptions, Holsti argues that there might more role conceptions that he did not cover. Among the ones he includes are: balancer, anti-revisionist agents and the defender of peace.[63] As a result, all the listed 17 national role conceptions argued by Holsti show that different states in the world to pursue their foreign policies according to the role conceptions they tailor for themselves.

2. Role Performance

For a state leader, to have a NRC could result with the improvement of many foreign policies. However, these role conceptions must be realized through a performance. Role performance refers to behavior (decisions and actions). Holsti defines the concept of role performance as the attitudes, decisions, and actions that governments make in order to implement.[64] Indeed, there is a little difference between the concepts of role conception and role performance. While the role conception determines a leader's attitudes, characteristics and belief system, the role performance refers his implementation of all these variables. The kind of path a leader will follow when he is making a foreign policy decision is only known by looking at the concept of role performance. The role performance is actually about a foreign policy decision maker's own vision when he makes a decision about the foreign policy issues. Therefore, the implementation process of a state leader's decisions, beliefs and attitudes and transformation of these into the foreign policy making process define the concept of role performance in a clear way.

3. Role Prescriptions

According to Holsti, the role prescriptions are the natural norms and expectations that particular cultures, societies, groups or institutions attach to varied positions.[65] So, the role prescriptions defined by Holsti keeps a broad meaning for foreign policy decision makers because without these prescriptions it is impossible for a state leader to understand the patterns of international political system. In fact,

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[63] Holsti, pp. 272-273.
[64] Holsti, p. 240.
[65] Holsti, p. 239.

the role theory concentrates on the interaction between the role prescription of alter and the role performance of the occupant of a position, ego. In this regard, Holsti notes that role prescriptions of alter may become parameters while attention is shifted to the ego's position and functions, and behavior appropriated to them – what we shall a role conception.[66] In a nutshell, if a state leader as the main foreign policy maker of a given country considers these parameters (role prescriptions) while making a foreign policy decision on a foreign policy issue, then all these parameters become this leader's own conceptions. Consequently, national role conceptions actually emerge as a result of these kinds of interactions.

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This after giving a brief analysis of the external factors that have an impact on foreign policy decision-making such as realism, liberalism and Marxism, concentrated on internal issues that really have a significant impact on foreign policy analysis. Among these internal factors social constructivism that includes the interactions and perceptions. Main emphasis of the chapter was to analyze the role theory as part of social constructivism, since it is the main conceptual tool that has helped this study to analyze the deteriorating relations between Turkey and Israel in the last couple of years.

Indeed, the role theory will bring a new dimension and perspective to the study of Turkish-Israeli relationship. This study will be able to analyze the decline in Turkish-Israeli relations through the help of the role theory. In this analysis, the national role conceptions designed by Kalevi Holsti in his study titled *National Role Conceptions in the study of Foreign Policy* such as regional leadership, regional protectorship, mediator, and defender of peace will be referred as conceptual tools. In short, the role theory and its assumptions will construct the base of this thesis. Nonetheless, before analyzing the Turkish-Israeli problems through the role theory, the thesis will first analyze the historical background of Turkish-Israeli relations and then the recent period of deterioration of the relationship between Turkey and Israel during the AKP government.

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[66] Holsti, p. 239.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF TURKISH-ISRAELI RELATIONSHIP

Turkish Jewish relations go back to the Ottoman Empire period. Since the early years of the Ottoman Empire and particularly after the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, there were always Jewish communities living in the Ottoman Empire. However, the number of Jews living under the rule of the Ottoman Empire tremendously increased with the acceptance of Sultan Beyazid of 250,000 exiled Jews from Italy, Spain and Portugal during the years 1490 to 1497. The harmonious relations that started between Jews and Turks during the Ottoman Empire continued during the period of the young Republic of Turkey that was established in 1923. In 1949 Turkey became the first Muslim country to recognize the State of Israel. However, due to Turkey's need to keep good relations with the Arabs, the Turkish-Israeli relations starting from 1950s until the 2000s had been on a roller coaster ride full of ups and downs.

The first section of this chapter will examine Turkish-Israeli relations during the early Republican era by first concentrating on the Turkish-Jewish relations during the Ottoman Empire period and then will focus on the early Republican period in which relations were in good terms. In the second section, the chapter will examine the change in Turkish foreign policy that was pro-USA in the aftermath of the Second World War throughout the 1950s and 1960s and turned into a multi-dimensional foreign policy throughout the 1970s and 1980s. The transition to a multi-faceted foreign policy throughout the 1970s and 1980s, which will be the subject of the second section, was mainly the result of the worsening of Turkish-American relations and oil crisis that led Turkey to close cooperation with its Arab neighbours. During this period, close relations with the Arab world interrupted the smooth foreign policy Turkey followed towards Israel. The second section will also examine Turkish foreign policy towards Arab-Israeli Wars. Third and final section of the chapter will focus on Turkish-Israeli relations throughout 1980s, 1990s and 2000s by examining the Özal era and the 1990s when the relations between two countries warmed up and dramatically increased as a result of the peace process.

I. TURKISH-ISRAELI RELATIONS DURING THE EARLY REPUBLICAN ERA

The harmonious Turkish Jewish relations that had started during the Ottoman era continued during the Republic of Turkey. During the early years of the Republic when Turkey followed a neutral foreign policy and did not get involved in the Middle Eastern politics between the two world wars, Turkish-Israeli relations were on a smooth track. These smooth relations continued in the aftermath of the Second World War when Turkey allied with the United States against the Soviet Union and followed a pro-western foreign policy particularly concerning the Arab countries. The Bagdad Pact, Suez Crisis and the Peripheral Alliance that will all be examined in this section shaped the relations between two countries.

A. Turkish-Jewish Relations during the Ottoman Empire Period

The Turkish-Jewish relations that started during the reign of Orhan Gazi in the 14th century improved throughout the reign of the Ottoman Empire. Upon his conquest of Bursa in 1326, Orhan Bey built a synagogue to provide a place to worship to the Jewish community. During Ottoman rule the Jews that lived in the territories of the empire were permitted to practice their own religion. Under the rules of the subsequent sultans Murad I and Yıldırım Beyazid, the Jews who were oppressed in Balkans fled to Edirne, the new capital of the Kingdom and were protected there. When Constantinople (İstanbul) was conquered by Sultan Mehmet II in 1453, the city had been a shelter for the Jewish people who suffered under the rule of the European kings.[67]

In 1492, the Jewish people fled from the pressure and despotism of the Spanish inquisition and took refuge in the Ottoman lands. When they were refused by many European Kingdoms, Sultan Beyazıd II invited hundreds of thousands Jews to the Ottoman Empire. Then, this Jewish migration to the Ottoman lands marked an important breakthrough in the formation and evolution of the relationship between the Turkish and Jewish people. This mass immigration of Sephardic Jews to the

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[67] "Ottoman Sultans and their Jewish subjects", Foundation for the Advancement of Sephardic Studies and Culture, 1999, http://www.sephardicstudies.org/sultans1.html, (10.01.2013).

Ottoman Empire led the Jewish people to take place in the communal life and affected the societal structure of the Ottoman Empire. Nevertheless, the Jewish people living under the rule of Ottoman Empire were tributary to the rules and laws of the Sultan like other minority groups. As a matter of fact, with the weakening of the Ottoman Empire in the late 1800s until the beginning of the 1900s caused the emergence of some developments in Turkish-Jewish relations. Especially during the 1890s, the head of the World Zionist Organization, Theodore Herzl tried to persuade the Ottoman Sultan Abdulhamid II to establish a state in the Palestinian lands. Sultan Abdulhamid II's famous refusal to allow Theodore Herzl to settle Palestine with Jewish colonists is a case in point. Herzl probably thought that he was offering the Sultan a bargain, knowing that the Sultan's dearest wish was to rescue the empire from the indebtedness it had fallen into as a result of easy European loans. Nevertheless, the Ottoman Sultan Abdulhamid's objection to this offer prevented the establishment of a free Jewish state in these years.[68]

However, the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 and the consequent dissolution of the Ottoman Empire at the end of this war created a new situation where many minority groups within the former Empire began to seek their own destiny. Although the Jews were spread all over the empire, there was a bigger accumulation in Palestine, Istanbul, Izmir and Thessaloniki.[69]

Palestine has always been an issue of competition between the Arab and Jewish people. During the First World War, British gave hope to the Arabs for the establishment of an Arab Kingdom through the letters sent from the British ambassador McMahon to the ruler of Hejaz Sheriff Hussein between July 1915 and January 1916. At the same time, the British signed the secret Sykes-Picot agreement with the French in May 1916. The agreement took its name from the French diplomat François Georges-Picot and the British Sir Mark Sykes. According to this agreement, Britain and France planned to share the lands of the Ottoman state at the end of the First World War. While the British signed the secret agreement with France to share the land of Palestine, at the same time, British Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour wrote a letter to the head of the World Zionist Organization

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[68] Mim Kemal Öke, "The Ottoman Empire, Zionism, and the Question of Palestine (1880-1908)", **International Journal of Middle East Studies**, Vol: 14, No: 3, 1982, p. 333.
[69] Melek Çolak, "Milas Yahudileri ve Türk-Yahudi İlişkileri", **TSA**, Vol: 7, No: 2, 2003, p. 157.

Lord Rothschild that is called Balfour Declaration in November 1917. This declaration approved by British kingdom gave the permission to the Jews to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine. In the San Remo conference signed in April 1920 in which destiny of the former Ottoman lands at the end of the First World War Palestine was given under the UK mandate. Under the British control, the Jewish migration to Palestine continued for many years. In parallel to these migrations, the conflicts between the Arab and Jewish people in Palestine had continued increasingly.[70]

Ottoman Empire in its last stages going through a dramatic fall at the end of the First World War could not interfere into these ongoing Arab-Jewish conflicts in Palestine. Turks under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal were busy with their war of liberation trying to gain their independence from the Russians, French, Italians, Greeks and British.

B. Turkish-Israeli Relations during the early years of the Republic of Turkey

In the aftermath of the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, in its early years, Turkish governments preferred to follow a neutral foreign which was identified with Atatürk's slogan as "Peace at Home and Peace in the World". As a result during this period, Turkey did not ally with any great power and followed a neutral foreign policy.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, Turkish Republic was involved in the Palestinian issue when the British government transmitted the issue into the United Nations (UN) on the 2nd of April 1947. With the establishment of a committee named "the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine" on 15th of May 1947 and failure of this committee to find a solution on the problem, a plan named "the Partition Plan" has been initiated by the United Nations. Interestingly enough Turkey, with other Arab states, rejected this plan and opposed the partition of the lands between the Jews and Arabs. However, despite its negative reaction to the

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[70] Howard Grief, **The Legal Foundation and Borders of Israel under International Law**, Mazo Publishers, Jerusalem, 2008, p. 113.

partition plan, Turkish government in 1949 recognized the State of Israel that was established in 1948.

Nonetheless, it was unclear why the Turkish government had recognized the Jewish state while it has rejected the partition of the land by the Jewish and Arab people. According to George Gruen, the officials in Ankara privately acknowledged that they had hoped that by recognizing Israel they could counteract the remnants of anti-Turkish and anti-Muslim sentiment in the Christian West. By doing so they could demonstrate that Turkey had become a modern, secular state that deserved American and European economic and political support.[71] It looks as Turkey's basic interests played a crucial role in its recognition of the Israeli state. Moreover, as an additional argument, it is stated that Turkey as being the first Muslim country to recognize Israel wanted to avoid antagonizing the influential Jewish community in the United States that could have jeopardized American aid to Turkey.[72]

Moreover, during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War that was started by the Arabs as a reaction to the establishment of Israel, Turkey kept a neutral policy. This policy followed by the Turkish foreign policymakers could be seen as a product of the ongoing Westernization process of Turkey. In fact, by not involving in the war between the Arab states and Israel, Turkey was in a way proving its pro-western inclination in foreign policy.

1. Impact of Baghdad Pact and 1956 Suez Crisis on Turkish-Israeli Relations

The defeat of the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*—CHP) in the general elections of 1950 by the Democratic Party (*Demokrat Parti*—DP) of Adnan Menderes brought some changes to the Turkish foreign policy. In the aftermath of the Second World War, as a result of the threats Turkey received from the Soviet Union concerning the Straits and Kars and Ardahan, Turkey allied with the Western Bloc and became a member of NATO in 1952. Consequently, during this period, Turkey left its neutral policy of "peace at home and peace in the world"

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[71] Gruen, p. 34.
[72] Aptülahat Akşin, **Atatürk'ün Dış Politika İlkeleri ve Diplomasisi**, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Istanbul, 1966, pp. 93-94.

and allied with the Western bloc, particularly the United States of America. During the Cold War period, DP (1950-1960) saw the Soviet Union as the greatest threat to Turkey's security and territorial integrity and aligned its foreign policies with the USA. As a result of this tendency in Turkish foreign policy, DP governments tried to enhance its good relations with Israel. In the early years of DP rule Turkish-Israeli relations improved by the establishment of commercial ties, regular air and sea links by both Turkish and Israeli lines, and the initiation of a variety of sports and cultural events.[73]

Nonetheless, the Menderes government in mid 1950s did not fully ignore Turkey's social, cultural and commercial ties with the Arab states and particularly with the pro-western or in other words Arab states under the West domination. It was for the first time an Arab state Iraq joined Turkey to form an alliance against the Soviet threat. The Baghdad Pact, officially *the Central Treaty Organization*, was established in 1955 between Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, and the United Kingdom to prevent any Soviet intention in the region and to strengthen the Western influence in the regional politics. By joining such an alliance, the Turkish government believed that the Arab states would also show their opposition to the communist threat. The formation of such a pact of course caused some reaction among other Arab states that were against the Western domination in the region. Particularly, the nationalist Arab states that supported pan-Arabism such as Egypt and Syria were suspicious of the imperialistic aims of the West. They saw Turkey as an instrument in the hands of the West that were trying to reach their goals in the Middle East by establishing an anti-Soviet alliance. They did not only refuse to cooperate with Turkey to form an anti-Communist defense pact in the region, but also declared Turkey unfit as an ally in by taking its relations with Israel into consideration.[74] Consequently, some of the Arab states' opposition to this pact and their continuous struggle against Israel led Turkey to follow a fragile and somewhat hostile foreign policy towards these Arab countries.

The Menderes government decided to follow a more neutral foreign policy towards the 1956 Suez Crisis. Actually, the Suez crisis had taken place as a result of a disagreement between the Egyptian government and the British, French and Israeli

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[73] Gruen, p. 34.
[74] Aykan, p. 93.

states due to the nationalization of the Suez channel by Egypt. Once the crisis had started between Israel, Britain and France on the one side and Egypt on the other side, the Iraqi government, as a member of the Baghdad Pact, exerted pressure on the Turkish government to stop all its relationship with Israel. This was mainly the result of the Egyptian President Nasser's accusation of Iraq for cooperating with Israel through Bagdad Pact. While the Iraqi government rejected these accusations, Turkey felt the pressure from the Arab world to severe its relations with Israel.[75] As a result of this pressure, Turkey during the attack of Israel, France and Britain to Egypt denounced Israel's policy at the Bagdad Pact meetings. Moreover, Turkish government withdrew its ambassador from Israel in November 1956 to show its good will to the Arab countries. As a result, the diplomatic relationship between Turkey and Israel has continued in the level of *charge d'affaires* with the outbreak of the Suez Crisis of 1956.[76]

2. Turkish-Israeli relationships in the framework of the so-called Peripheral Alliance

Even though the Turkish governments decided to reduce diplomatic relations with Israel to a level of *charge d'affaires* as a reaction to Israel's aggressive policies during the 1956 Suez Crisis and pressures from the Iraqi government, a bilateral relationship between Turkey and Israel had continued to develop in the fields of economy, military and politics in the second half of the 1950s. The main reasons of the continuing relationship between the Turkish and Israeli governments were results of couple of developments. One of these developments was the dissolution of the Baghdad Pact due to the withdrawal of Iraq from the pact in 1958. The Iraqi departure from the pact caused some concerns for the Menderes government that was scared of the possibility of the establishment of an alliance between Iraq and the Soviet Union.[77]

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[75] Hakan M. Yavuz & Mujeeb R. Khan, "Turkish Foreign Policy toward the Arab-Israeli conflict: Duality and the Development (1950-1991)", **Arab Studies Quarterly**, Vol: 14, No: 4, 1992, pp. 69-93.
[76] Aykan, p. 93.
[77] Aykan, p. 93.

Furthermore, the dissolution of the British-dominated monarchy of Iraq in 1958 has been another development contributing to the rapprochement between Turkey and Israel since the new regime of the Iraqi state could have contributed to the emergence of the communist aspirations or pan-Arab ideologies. As a result, due to the emergence of an ambiguous ruling mechanism in Iraq in the late 1950s, both the Turkish and Israeli states believed in the need to enhance cooperation among each other and that could help them to guarantee their security and welfare in the region.[78]

Another development that also contributed to the Turkish-Israeli rapprochement was the formation of the United Arab Republic (UAR) in 1958 by the two hostile states of the region: Egypt and Syria. From the Israeli point of view, the meaning of this union was to invoke pan-Arabism among the Arab peoples of the Middle East. According to the Israelis, both Egypt and Syria were taking advantage of the notion of Arab nationalism in order to keep other Arab states under their control and to eradicate the Israeli state. To that extent, the basic Israeli aim in the late 1950s was to fight against the UAR by forging an alliance against the Arab nationalism led by Egyptian and Syrian establishments.[79]

Because of these factors both the Israeli and Turkish governments began to view the region as occupied by the pan-Arab and communist aspirations. So, they decided to enhance their partnership in the fields of intelligence, military, economy and politics. It was the Israeli side for the first time that took a step toward the improvement of the relations with Turkey. The so-called periphery pact had been initiated by the Israelis to make the region more secure, peaceful, and pro-Western too. As a matter of fact, the periphery doctrine in the 1950s was a step taken by the Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion in order to protect the Israeli state from the threats of the hostile Arab states in the region. Therefore, to make cooperation with a non-Arab state in the region was an important aim for the Israeli state. One of the most important fields that Israel made cooperation with the non-Arab states in the region was in the area of intelligence. In this regard, the Mossad, Israel's famous

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[78] Aykan, p. 93.
[79] Adeed Dawisha, **Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth Century: From Triumph to Despair**, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 2003, p. 187.

intelligence service, established a trilateral intelligence alliance including Israel, Turkey and Iran. So, these three states began to share intelligence in 1958. In addition to this, Israel, Turkey and Iran also signed military and economic agreements in late 1950s.[80]

From the Turkish perspective, to cooperate with Israel in all these fields would bring some benefits to the national interests of the country. According to the Menderes government, the Turkish state would avoid from any Soviet threat by conducting a better relationship with Israel. Nevertheless, to make a full cooperation with Israel could provoke some anti-Turkish sentiments in the Arab world. So, in order to prevent any Arab criticism, the Turkish state continued to keep diplomatic relations with Israel under the ambassadorial level. Moreover, to keep the Arab world silent against Turkey, the Menderes government strictly avoided signing any legal document concerning the so-called Peripheral Pact.[81]

The warming up in the relations between Turkey and Israel during the 1950s took a different turn during the period of 1960s and 1980s. This was mainly related to the deteriorating relations between Turkey and the USA. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s mainly because of the Cyprus issue, Turkish-American relations deteriorated rapidly as a result of the Cuban Missile Crisis, Johnson Letter, Opium Embargo by the USA to Turkey, Turkish Peace Operation to Cyprus, and Arms Embargo by the US government to Turkey. This deterioration and the economic crisis in Turkey that was mainly caused by the oil crises led Turkey to look for new alliances, particularly within the Arab world. Consequently, improving relations with the Arab countries led to the weakening of the relations with Israel.

II. TURKISH ISRAELI RELATIONS THROUGHOUT THE 1960s AND 1980s

During 1960s and 1980s, Turkish rapprochement to the Arab world led to the deterioration of its relations with Israel. This section will analyze Turkish-Israeli relations in three periods including the period in the post-1960 coup, Turkish foreign policies towards 1967 and 1973 Arab Israeli Wars, and the Turkish Israeli relations in the aftermath of the 1980 Coup.

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[80] Dalia Dassa Kaye, Alireza Nader and Parisa Roshan, **Israel and Iran: A Dangerous Rivalry**, National Defence Research Industry, Pittsburgh, 2011, pp. 10-11.
[81] Kaye, Nader and Roshan, pp. 10-11.

A. The Turkish foreign policy in the post-1960 military coup

Deterioration of the political and economic situation and the authoritarian policies followed by the DP leadership by the end of the 1950s caused the Turkish military officers to overthrow the Menderes government in May 1960. Following the military coup, the DP was banned and new political parties were established. In the aftermath of the 1960 military coup the Turkish foreign policy behavior towards the Western countries, including Israel, began to change. The early 1960s has been an era where some internal and external dramatic changes regarding the Turkish foreign policy occurred. As an internal problem, Turkey was suffering from domestic economic problems and the lack of the US economic aid. In addition to this internal problem, there were two important events that caused Turkey to experience a trouble externally. One of these events was the United States' unilateral decision to remove Jupiter missiles from Turkey in 1963 in the aftermath of the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. Another external problem was more important than the first one. In the early years of the 1960s, Turkey was going through a struggle over Cyprus in order to secure lives and protect rights of the Cypriot Turks. In this attempt to protect its citizens, Turkey was hoping to receive support from the United States. However, the US was not planning to side with Turkey concerning the Cyprus crisis. In his letter in June 1964, the US President Lyndon B. Johnson expressed the US reluctance about Turkey's battle over Cyprus in an arrogant way. Moreover, in the letter Johnson threatened Turkey by leaving Turkey alone in the case of a Soviet attack.[82]

The letter proved Turkey's total dependence on the Western alliance, which had a negative impact on Turkey's support for Cyprus. In his letter to Inonu, the President Johnson stated that if Turkey's intervention into Cyprus provokes a Soviet intervention, the NATO forces would not come to help for Turkey. These harsh words stated by Johnson increased the doubts of the Turkish policy makers about their alliance with the United States. This letter was one of the factors that led Turkey to handle a multi-dimensional foreign policy approach that continued a long time period.[83]

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[82] Aykan, p. 94.
[83] Süha Bölükbaşı, "Behind the Turkish Alliance: A Turkish View", **Journal of Palestine Studies**, Vol: 29, No: 1, 1999, p. 25.

The newly emerging multi-dimensional Turkish foreign policy unsurprisingly affected the relationship between Turkey and the Arab states. The Turkish governments established friendly relations with the Arab states to seek for support for its Cyprus cause. In addition to this, it is also important here to mention about the Arab oil embargo over the Western states and its effects on the general Turkish foreign policy behavior. Following the 1973 War between Israel and Arab states, the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) started an embargo campaign against the Western states. To that extent, the Turkish foreign policy makers of that time believed that to adopt a more multidimensional foreign policy towards the Arab states would help Turkey to avoid high petroleum prices. On the other hand, the Turkish governments of the period also sought ways to improve their relations with the Soviet Union. So, the new Turkish foreign policy re-arranged the Turkish-Israeli relationship in a different way. In fact, Turkish foreign policy towards Israel was dependent on its relations with the West, particularly, the United States. So, when the Turkish-American relations weakened tremendously as a result of the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Cyprus dispute, Turkey's relations with Israel has also weakened in parallel to these developments. In conclusion, the Turkish foreign policy makers have adopted a broader and complicated foreign policy behavior during the first half of the 1960s, which improved Turkey's relations with the Arab countries.

B. Turkish foreign policy towards the 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli Wars

After the Turkish foreign policy makers started to follow a multidimensional foreign policy towards the Muslim countries in the Middle East, the relationship between Turkey and the Arab countries started to improve. During the 1960s, Turkey suffered from the hostile foreign policies followed by the United States. The US decision to remove the Jupiter Missiles from Turkey following the 1963 Cuban Missile Crisis and the US' and European powers' unwillingness to support Turkey on the Cyprus issue led Turkish governments to see the West as an unreliable ally. As a result, Turkey's rapprochement towards the Arab countries and the Soviet Union started, leading it to follow a multidimensional foreign policy, which in turn changed the direction of the relationship between Turkey and Israel.

As part of these policies, during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war when six Arab states and entities attacked Israel to get the land the of the Palestinians back Turkey did not hesitate to condemn Israel. When Israel managed to expand its land at the end of the war, Turkish government supported the United Nations Resolution 242 that called for the Israeli state to withdraw from lands it occupied during the war. Two years later following the 1967 war, in the Rabat conference, Turkey showed its dissatisfaction with the Israeli policies by supporting the UN resolutions. Even though the Turkish delegation to the conference did not fully support the Palestinian cause, it was clear during the conference that Turkey sided with the Arab states against the Israeli violation of the UN Resolutions.[84]

Similarly, in the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, Turkish governments continued following their anti-Israeli stance in foreign policy by siding with the Arab states and by continuing supporting the UN resolution 242. Turkey's anti-Israeli stance during these wars was mainly the result of some economic and foreign policy issues. First of all, during this period, the Turkish economy was suffering from a budget deficit and the general economic outlook of the country was not in a satisfactory level. There were some reasons for the decline in the Turkish economy. The increase in oil prices in the wake of the Arab oil embargo during the Arab-Israeli war affected Turkish economy negatively. So, the Turkish governments were forced to ally with the Arab states to avoid higher petroleum prices. Another reason for the alliance with the Arab states during the 1973 Arab-Israeli war was of the result of Turkey's aim to receive broader support from the Arab states in the wake of its planned intervention into Cyprus. The Turkish foreign policy makers believed that by allying with the Arab states, Turkey could move more freely in its Cyprus cause and could get a broader support in the international arena.[85]

The two main reasons stated above also brought some other developments in Turkish foreign policies. The sharp increase in oil prices during the 1973 and the Cyprus Crisis in 1974 caused Turkey to follow a multidimensional foreign policy approach in its relations not only with the Arab world but also with the other states including the Soviet Union. Indeed, these two developments led Turkey to make

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[84] Aykan, p. 96.
[85] Yücel Bozdağlıoğlu, **Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach**, Routledge, New York & London, 2003, p. 126.

three major policy modifications in its foreign policies. First of all, Turkey began to play a bigger role within the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). Secondly, the economic ties between Turkey and the Arab states began to increase. For example during this period, Turkey contributed to the early construction attempts of Libya. The third one was directly related to the 1973 war. During this war, in October 1973 Turkey refused to allow US forces to use its airbase for resupplying Israel. Interestingly, Turkey allowed the Soviet forces to use the Turkish air space in order to assist the Arab states during the 1973 war.[86] As a result, all of these three policy modifications in Turkey's general foreign policy approach show that during the 1973 war, Turkey has sided with the Arab states and refused to take a pro-Western foreign policy attitude. Close relations with the Arab countries automatically led to negative relations with Israel.

The dynamics in the Turkish-Arab relations continued the same way in the aftermath of the Turkish military coup of 1980 that was initiated as a result of the extreme leftist-rightist violence. In the aftermath of the coup, the coup leaders continued their close relations with the Arab world, criticizing Israel for its anti-Arab policies.

C. Turkish-Israeli relations during the 1980 military coup

As already examined throughout the 1970s, as a result of Turkey's loss of trust towards the Western states and the United States concerning the Cyprus issue and the economic difficulties Turkey was going through, potential Turkish-Israeli relations remained in the shadow of the close Turkish-Arab relations. Turkey's negative attitude towards the Israeli state for its aggressiveness in the region and its continuing violation of the UN resolutions led the Turkish policymakers to conduct closer relations with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). After the Camp David accords in 1978 and the signing of an Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty in 1979, Turkey allowed PLO to open an office in Ankara in October 1979. However, Turkey

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[86] Ali Karaosmanoğlu, "Turkey's Security and the Middle East", **Foreign Affairs**, Vol: 62, No: 1, 1983, p. 163.

gave PLO the rank of charge d'affaires rather than ambassador. By doing so actually Turkey balanced the diplomatic relations with Israel and Palestine.[87]

The military coup d'état of 1980 obviously changed the direction of political, economic, and social spectrum of the Republic of Turkey. The direct intervention of the Turkish army into the political and economic structure of the country prepared a ground for a new system of governance. It has become real with the military coup that the Turkish society began to experience a new system especially in the field of economy. Indeed, the change in economic situation experienced by the Turkish state in the early 1980s cannot only be explained through the military intervention into the politics. The transition from a state economy to market economy was initiated with the 24 January decisions. These decisions aimed at curbing inflation, to attain a more outward-oriented and market-based economic system.[88] Despite the market-oriented decisions, the suspension of democracy led to deteriorating relations of Turkey with the European Economic Community (EEC).

During this period, while the relations with the Arab countries were improving the relations with Israel were problematic due to Israel's declaration of Jerusalem as its capital in August 1980. Meanwhile, the Arab countries were continuously pressuring Demirel government to cut off its all diplomatic ties with the Israeli state. Moreover, the main opposition party in Turkey, Islamist National Salvation Party (*Milli Selamet Partisi* – MSP) was demanding from Demirel government to end Turkey's diplomatic relations with Israel. As a result of this pressure coming from Muslim world and the MSP, the Turkish government was forced to close its consulate in Jerusalem in August 1980.

The Turkish decision in August 1980 regarding the closure of the consulate in Jerusalem was consolidated by another decision taken by the military officers who were dominating the political structure in Turkey in December 1980. The December 1980 Resolution of Turkey, a decision regarding the reduction of diplomatic relations with Israel from the level of charge d'affaires to the second secretary level, brought a major change in the relationship between Turkey and Israel. The Turkish side advocated that the Israeli state was provoking the already complicated social and

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[87] Aykan, p. 100.
[88] "The impact of Globalization on the Turkish Economy", **Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey**, 2002, (20.01.2013) http://www.tcmb.gov.tr/yeni/evds/yayin/kitaplar/global.pdf

political order by announcing Jerusalem as its capital city. As a matter of fact, these sequential decisions taken by the Turkish state regarding the status of Jerusalem were welcomed by the Muslim world. Western world was even concerned that Turkey by following anti-Israeli policies was conducting good relations with the Arab states at the expense of its relations with the West. Some western states even considered this as changing foreign policy orientation of Turkey from the west to the east. Indeed, by making such decisions regarding Jerusalem, the Turkish state tried to show that the Israeli announcement regarding Jerusalem was a wrong act because this city was taking a place in the middle of the Palestinian problem. Therefore, without solving the Palestinian issue, the Turkish side would never confirm such an act intended by the Israeli state.[89]

III. AN ANALYSIS OF THE TURKISH-ISRAELI RELATIONSHIP THROUGHOUT THE 1990S UNTIL 2002

The problematic relationship between Turkey and Israel had continued during the 1990s. The end of the Cold War and bipolarity in the international political system obviously affected the relationship between the countries. This section will analyze the restoration of democracy and multi-party elections and coming of a new political party, Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi*— ANAP) under Turgut Özal to power. During this period, Prime Minister (later President) Özal conducted a balanced politics between the East and the West. Furthermore, this section will also examine Turkey's role during the Arab-Israeli Peace Process in the 1990s. The ever-growing relationship between Turkey and Israel during the 1990s will also be analyzed in depth and the section will be concluded with Prime Minister Erbakan's efforts in mid 1990s to late 1990s to weaken the Turkish-Israeli relationships and the role of the military in this relation.

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[89] Aykan, p. 100.

A. The Özal Government: A Balanced Politics between the East and West

Restoration of multi-party politics took place with the November 1983 elections when ANAP under the leadership of Özal came to power. The Özal government in fact started a new era in Turkish foreign policy towards both the Western and the Eastern world. Prime Minister Özal aiming to make Turkey a powerful country initiated the market economy, which in turn led to him to follow close cooperation with the capitalist economies.

Besides Prime Minister Özal, President Kenan Evren, former coup leader and the Chief of General Staff in order to establish relations both with the West and the East paid significant attention to Turkish foreign policy towards the Middle East. Consequently, in January 1984, he attended an Islamic summit in Casablanca. Following his election as the chairman of the Permanent Economic and Commercial Cooperation Committee, the Turkish state followed close relations with the Middle East. However this was not done at the expense of its relations with the Western world. Moreover, President Evren in this conference called the Arab states to make cooperation against the aggressive policies followed by Israel. Turkish foreign policy during Özal governments depended on two important assumptions. First of all, thanks to its growing economy, strengthening military and large population, Turkey planned to increase its involvement in the regional politics and play the role of peacemaker in the region. Secondly, Turkey attempted to follow a balanced policy by getting involved in Middle Eastern affairs but at the same time by not putting its relations with the Western world at a risk,[90] Indeed, during the mid-1980s Turkey's commercial ties with the European states and the United States had continued. Moreover, during the Özal rule, Turkey was still enthusiastic to participate to the European Union.

During this period as part of its rapprochement with the Arab world, Özal government recognized the new Palestinian state that was established by the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) on the 15th of November 1988. Moreover, the Turkish government tried to persuade other countries to recognize the Palestinian state. It was really a pro-Arab position taken by Turkey and the recognition could

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[90] Aykan, p. 103.

harm Turkey's already deteriorated relationship with Israel. Nonetheless, despite the pro-Arab steps taken by Turkey, the relationship between Turkey and the PLO was not trouble-free since Turkey was still reluctant to upgrade the diplomatic relationship with the PLO from the level of charge d'affaires to an ambassadorial level. According to the Turkish authorities, before upgrading the diplomatic level, a government in Palestine was supposed to be established. Another reason for the Turkish unwillingness to upgrade the diplomatic status of the PLO in Ankara was the existence of the powerful Jewish lobby in the United States. The Turkish state was afraid of the influence of this lobby that could lead Turkey's loss of credibility in the USA. Moreover, PLO was known for supporting the PKK terrorists in Lebanon that was a serious threat for Turkish security and territorial integrity.[91]

While the Turkish-Palestinian relations were not in an improved stage, Turkish-Israeli relations were moving to a positive direction. Turkish-Israeli economic relations continued during this period. There were also attempts to upgrade their diplomatic relations in the second half of the 1980s. In the field of diplomacy, both states were ready to improve their relationship. The Israeli side took the first step when Yehuda Millo was appointed as a new Israeli representative, with the rank of charge d'affaires, to Ankara in 1985. The Turkish side welcomed this step and in 1986 Turkey appointed a senior diplomat Ekrem Güvendiren to Tel Aviv with the rank of charge d'affaires.[92] As a result, both sides restored their diplomatic relationship once again. Furthermore, the Jewish lobby in the United States was also striving to restore the relationship with Turkey at the expense of the PLO. This time, in August 1987, the Jewish lobby in the US House of Representatives refused a resolution to invalidate the April 24 as a day of commemoration for the victims of the so-called Armenian genocide. By making such a move, the Jewish lobby has intended to improve Turkey's relationship with Israel.[93]

With Özal coming to power as president, Turkey's relationship with Israel had rapidly continued to improve. In 1990, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait led Turkey to take a pro-American and pro-Israeli position. During the crisis, Turkey allowed the US forces to use its bases and conducted a better relationship with Israel as an

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[91] Aykan, p. 104.
[92] Aykan, p. 104.
[93] Aykan, p. 104.

ally. The position taken against Iraq's invasion of Kuwait contributed to the development of Turkish-Israeli relationship in many aspects. Turkey's most significant problem during the war was the PKK terror reaching to Turkey from the Northern side of Iraq. The Kurdish rebels in Northern Iraq supported these terrorists. In addition to this, the Turkish side was also suspicious of Syria for its support for the PKK in order to get more concessions from Turkey concerning the water issue. Similar to these Turkish concerns, in these years, Israel was also anxious because of the terrorist activities organized in the southern Lebanon. In sum, similar problems both Turkey and Israel suffered from brought the two countries to get closer to each other to establish a strategic cooperation in the fields of military and intelligence as well as economic and politics. [94]

B. Turkey's Foreign Policy towards the Arab-Israeli Peace Process

The general elections of 1991 in Turkey obviously contributed to Turkey's changing foreign policy orientation towards the Western world in the early 1990s. In these elections ANAP was replaced by the coalition of True Path Party (*Doğru Yol Partisi*—DYP) led by Süleyman Demirel and Social Democratic Populist Party (*Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti*—SHP) led by Erdal İnönü. This new government did not at the beginning brought dramatic changes to Turkey's foreign policies towards the Western and Muslim states since Özal with his pro-American foreign policy was serving as the president of the country. Particularly, in the first Gulf War in 1990 when Iraq invaded Kuwait Özal pushed the government to join the American alliance. PLO's support for the Iraqi forces during this war led the Turkish authorities to exclude the PLO as a partner in its relations with the Middle East. Finally, the reluctance of Turkey to upgrade the diplomatic level of PLO in Ankara persuaded the PLO officers to cut their ties off with the Turkish state. In contrast to this development, the relationship between Turkey and Israel was improving in a positive way due to the reciprocal diplomatic acts made by the two sides. In short,

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[94] Sabri Sayarı, "Turkey and the Middle East in the 1990s", **Journal of Palestine Studies,** Vol: 26, No: 3, 1997, pp. 48-49.

the Turkish officers have adopted a pro-Western foreign policy orientation at the beginning of the 1990s.

The early 1990s as a result of the peace process also witnessed some dramatic changes in Turkey's relationship both with the PLO and Israel. In 1991, the Madrid Conference that has prepared a ground for a peace process between the Arabs and Israelis caused the Turkish government to follow a new approach in its relations with both sides. According to the Turkish authorities, the Middle East Peace Conference that started with the Madrid Conference in 1991 and continued with the Oslo Process during the 1990s was the suitable way of a solution on the Palestinian problem. After the peace conference was convened in Madrid, the Turkish state decided to upgrade its diplomatic ties both with the PLO and Israel. Consequently, in December 1991, the Republic of Turkey upgraded its diplomatic relations both with the PLO and Israel to an ambassadorial level. Indeed, by making such a decision in diplomatic manner, the Turkish state demonstrated its good will towards both sides to find an international solution on the Palestinian problem since Turkey was strictly against to the change of Jerusalem's status by Israel.

C. The Ever-Growing relationship between Turkey and Israel

In the early 1990s, the President Turgut Özal's policies to establish a balance between the East and the West have shifted towards pro-western foreign policies. The Turkish state had soon realized that the notion of economy was not playing a very important role in Turkey's relationship with the Muslim countries. In other words, Turkey's commercial relations with the Eastern or Islamic countries in numbers were relatively less than its relations with the European states and the United States. To that extent, according to Süha Bölükbaşı, as a result of Özal's export-oriented policies during the 1980s, more than two-thirds of Turkey's trade had taken place with the industrialized OECD countries. In addition to this, only 20 percent of Turkey's exports went to the Islamic countries, especially to non-Arab states like Indonesia, Iran and Pakistan.[95] Moreover, during these years, Turkey's relationship with Israel that was the only pro-Western, market-oriented and

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[95] Bölükbaşı, p. 31.

democratic country in the region has been developing at the expense of the Muslim states.

There was also another reason behind the Turkish-Israeli rapprochement at the beginning of the 1990s. The continuing peace process between the Arab states and Israel allowed Turkey to take more free decisions in its relationship with Israel. The most significant restraint in Turkey's relations with Israel was mainly the hostility between Israel and the Arab countries. Once some of the Arab countries started to recognize Israel, Turkey felt freer to pursue good relations with this country. With the starting of the peace process between the Arabs and Israelis in December 1991, there were no serious criticism from any Arab country on the ever-growing relationship between Turkey and Israel. More importantly, the peace process that coincided with the end of the Cold War and the outbreak of the invasion of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein led Turkey to play a more important role in the politics of the region. In this regard, particularly concerning its relations with Israel, Turkey did not hesitate to take a pro-Western position in its foreign policies. So, this era has been marked by the Turkish foreign policy makers as the starting of more activist foreign policy behavior towards the Middle East. However, such an activist Turkish foreign policy in the Middle East increased the concerns of the Arab governments regarding the reemergence of the Turkish dominance in the region similar to the Ottoman Empire. Nonetheless, the more activist foreign policy towards the Middle East followed by Turkey caused some unforeseen consequences for the country since most of the Arab states in the region were concerned about the reemergence of the Turkish dominance in the region.[96]

The new more activist Turkish foreign policy towards the Middle East was mainly included a good relationship with Israel too. During this period, Turkish governments were very enthusiastic to sign new agreements with the Israeli governments. In this context, one of the first agreements was signed was related to cooperation in tourism. As a result of the Tourism Cooperation Agreement signed in June 1992, an average of 300,000 Israeli tourists started to visit Turkey every year. Foreign Minister Hikmet Çetin also signed various economic cooperation and

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[96] Sayarı, p. 46.

cultural exchange agreements in his visit to Israel in November 1993.[97] Moreover, the ever-growing relationship between Turkey and Israel was not only limited to the commercial or tourism agreements. Both states planned to sign agreements in the field of military cooperation since both suffered from terrorist attacks throughout the 1990s.

Throughout the 1990s, the Kurdish Workers Party, the PKK (*Partiya Karkaran Kurdistan*) terrorism in the South-Eastern Anatolia in Turkey was continuing in full speed and causing a serious number of deaths and injuries. Therefore, in order to overcome this problem, Turkey was becoming more willing to cooperate with the Western states and particularly, Israel. The Kurdish problem in Turkey got even more complicated with Saddam's attempt to invade Kuwait in 1990. The allied coalition under the leadership of the USA managed to get Saddam out of Kuwait but failed to oust him from power. When Saddam attacked the Kurds of Iraq who rebelled against him during the war, these Kurdish groups fled to Turkey. Among the innocent Iraqi Kurds many PKK members also managed to infiltrate into Turkey. In order to prevent further influx of Kurds to Turkey, Turkish government agreed to establish Operation Provide Comfort, an allied force that would protect Kurds from Saddam's attacks above the 36th parallel.[98]

Nevertheless, prevention of the establishment of an independent Kurdish state in the Northern Iraq was one of the main foreign policies of Turkey in the 1990s. The Turkish officials believed that if an independent Kurdish country is established in the Northern part of Iraq, it could provoke the Kurdish groups in the Eastern part of Turkey to establish their own states or unite with the Kurdish state in the Northern Iraq. So, in order to prevent any ethnic disorder, the Turkish state needed to re-arrange its foreign policy orientation to cope with the PKK problem and establish new military alliances with countries such as Israel. By allying with Israel, Turkey could easily fight with the PKK terror.[99]

Turkey's PKK problem was not only connected to Iraq but also to Syria. Both countries were supporting the PKK terror by protecting the terrorists in their countries and sending them to attack Turkey over the borders. Particularly, when

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[97] Bölükbaşı, p. 31.
[98] Sayarı, p. 46.
[99] Sayarı, p. 46.

Turkey established the big dam project on the ancient river Euphrates, Southeastern Anatolian Project (*Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi*-GAP) in 1979, Syria with the fear that it will get less water from Turkey, supported the PKK terror. In fact, Turkey's ultimate control over the Euphrates River was a problem for the Syria government and by supporting PKK; the Syrian government was trying to get more concession from Turkey. So, using the PKK as a tool against Turkey was an ideal option for the Syrian side.[100]

As a result, under these circumstances, Turkey was looking for a partner in the region to support it in its fight with the PKK. Nevertheless, before looking for any partner, the Turkish side took some considerable steps in return of Syria's support for the PKK. The Great Anatolian Project was one of these steps taken by the Turkish side. By using the GAP as a tool the Turkish side would easily threaten Syria at the expense of its support for the PKK. The answer given by the Syrian side was quick. According to Sayarı, Syria criticized Turkey for using the water of Euphrates and denied the Turkish charges for supporting PKK. Moreover, Syria tried to mobilize other Arab states against Turkey concerning the water issue. Both Syria and Iraq opposed Turkey's plans to divert water from the Euphrates for its massive irrigation development scheme called the Great Anatolian Project, or GAP. "[101]

The GAP was not the only measure taken by the Turkish state against Syria's negative policies towards Turkey. Israel with a strong intelligence service had the potential to become a good partner for Turkey in its war against the PKK and its supporters. The prime minister of the time Tansu Çiller in her visit to Israel in November 1994 showed Turkish willingness to conduct closer relationship with Israel in order to overcome the PKK problem. In her visit, Çiller showed her willingness to strengthen Turkey's relationship with Israel by stating that Turkey and Israel were the strategic partners. Consequently, two countries signed an anti-terrorism agreement that included some important measures against the PKK terrorism.[102]

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[100] Sayarı, p. 48.
[101] Sayarı, p. 48.
[102] Michel Chossudovsky, "The US, Turkey, Israel "Triple Alliance"", **Global Resource**, 06.08.2006, http://www.globalresearch.ca/triple-alliance-the-us-turkey-israel-and-the-war-on-lebanon/2906 (01.09.2014)

The so-called strategic partnership between Turkey and Israel had continued in the second half of the 1990s. The main indicator of the growing partnership between the two states was the so-called military training agreement signed on 23 February 1996. This agreement included a series of actions like joint training of the two states' air forces. In addition, the Israeli air forces were permitted to use the Turkish air space for the purpose of training. Moreover, reciprocal naval visits and military personnel exchanges between the two states were planned.[103] According to Sayarı, this new military training and education agreement signed in February 1996 between Turkey and Israel had a significant impact on the worsening of Turkey's relationship with Syria.[104]

There is actually more than one dimension behind the growing tie between the Turkish and Israeli states. One of them was about Turkey's offer to supply water to Israel from the rivers of Ceyhan, Manavgat and Seyhan. In addition to this, President Demirel's visit to Israel in March 1996 led to the signing of a new agreement that were mainly concerned with economic cooperation and included free trade, the promotion and protection of bilateral investments and prevention of double taxation.[105]

The main cooperation between the two countries was in the area of military. Two countries even decided about the visit of Israeli and Turkish aircraft to each other's country four times a year, for a period of one week per visit. However, Israeli planes were supposed to be armed or equipped with electronic intelligence devices during these visits. A separate agreement signed in December 1996 called for Israel's aid in upgrading Turkey's fleet of F-4 Phantom jets. [106]

Consequently, Peace Process in the Arab world and the increasing PKK terror in Turkey led to a strong cooperation between Turkey and Israel. Peace Process gave the space to maneuver to Turkey to improve its relations with Israel without angering the Arab countries. The PKK terror that was supported by Turkey's Arab neighbors brought the need for Turkey to ally with Israel particularly in the areas of intelligence sharing and military. However, the relations between the two countries took a

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[103] Bölükbaşı, p. 32.
[104] Sayarı, p. 49.
[105] Bölükbaşı, p. 32.
[106] Sayarı, p. 49.

different turn when a pro-Islamist government Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*—RP) came to power as the senior partner of a coalition government in Turkey in 1995.

D. The conflict between Prime Minister Erbakan and the Military concerning Turkish-Israeli Relations

Even though there were high number of agreements between Turkey and Israel, the mutual relationship between the two states did not go trouble-free. The rise of the fundamentalist Islamic movements in Turkey consequently showed its effect with the December 1995 parliamentary elections. An Islamic-based political party, RP, led by Necmeddin Erbakan won the majority of seats and embarked upon forming a coalition government with the True Path Party (*Doğru Yol Partisi*—DYP). In fact, formation of such a coalition government under the Prime Minister Erbakan led to the emergence of some debates concerning the secularity principle of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. The military that was not happy with the coming of power of an Islamist government did not agree with the majority of the foreign policy decisions made by Erbakan government. One of the first debates between the two groups was about the new Prime Minister's trips abroad. Erbakan rather than visiting Western capitals and the USA upon coming to power visited Iran and Libya. In Iran, he signed a $23-billion natural gas agreement.[107] In his visit to Libya he was actually humiliated by the Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi for the way Turkey was treating its Kurdish population.

In addition to these foreign policies, the Prime Minister Erbakan often rejected Turkey's ties with the Western world. He often condemned Israel for its aggressive policies against the Muslim states and the Palestinian community. Erbakan was also strictly opposing Turkey's attempts to become a full member of the EU, its membership to NATO and alliance with the USA. In his speeches, he continuously repeated that there should be an Islamic union between the Muslim states and this union should be regarded as an alternative to the Western-based international organizations. Despite Erbakan's harsh criticisms towards the Western states and Israel, the military continued to pursue its good relations with the Western states and particularly with Israel. Although Erbakan gave hostile speeches

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[107] Sayarı, p. 52.

concerning Israel, the agreements signed between Turkey and Israel remained in effect. Consequently, Erbakan's government was not able to deteriorate the Turkish-Israeli relations.[108]

As a result of the military's warnings through the 28 February Military Coup, RP-DYP coalition government was forced to resign. Under the new governments established by the watchful eyes of the military Turkish-Israeli relations went back to its old track of cooperation. The 28 February process initiated by the National Security Council (NSC) enforced the establishment of a new government that would follow parallel foreign policies with the military. During this period, Turkish politics, the relationship with Israel continued in a positive way. There were already two military agreements between Turkey and Israel that were signed in February and June 1996. Nevertheless, these agreements did not provide a fully-fledged cooperation among the parties. But, in post-coup period, the two states agreed to enhance their cooperation in different fields such as economy and tourism. Only in 1997, while Turkish exports to Israel increased 54 percent, imports increased 19 percent compared to 1996. The number of Israeli tourists visiting Turkey was around 300,000 to 400,000. Powerful business groups were quite satisfied from this cooperation.[109]

In parallel to the enhancing relationship between Turkey and Israel regarding economy and tourism, there were some other indicators for the developing Turkish-Israeli relationship. One of these indicators is given by Efraim İnbar. According to Inbar:

> *From the mid-1990s, relations with Israel bloomed economically, diplomatically and militarily. In the past decade, defense contracts alone worth hundreds of millions of dollars have been signed. Major programs included a $700-million deal to modernize Turkey's aging fleet of F-4 Phantoms, and a $688-million deal to upgrade M-60 tanks and an array of other sophisticated weapon systems. The Israeli Air Force was allowed to use Turkish air space to practice complex air operations, and there were synergies in the area of counter-terrorism and intelligence. For Jerusalem, the intimacy between the*

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[108] Bölükbaşı, p. 33.
[109] Dov Waxman, "Turkey and Israel: A New Balance of Power in the Middle East", **The Washington Quarterly**, Vol: 22, No: 1, 1999, p. 29.

two governments was second only to its relations with Washington. A strategic partnership between Ankara and Jerusalem emerged, buttressed by a common strategic agenda and a similar outlook on global affairs. The Israeli–Turkish entente became an important feature of post-Cold War politics in the Middle East.[110]

As a result, the cooperation between the two states rapidly increased with the reciprocal positive policies followed by both states. The United States also played a positive role in the development of relationship between Turkey and Israel. In January 1999, for example, a naval maneuver named t*he Reliant Mermaid* was started by the participation of the United States, Turkey and Israel on the coasts of the Mediterranean Sea and a four-hour exercise that included five Turkish, Israeli, and American warships in addition to naval reconnaissance aircraft and helicopters. Such operations showed the deepening strategic alignment between the two countries.[111]

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This chapter analyzed the long historical background of Turkish Israeli relations. The relationship between the two societies actually started in the early years of the Ottoman Empire and continued until now. Turkey has actually been the first Muslim country to recognize Israel. Since then Turkish-Israeli relations have been full of ups and downs. While throughout the 1950s and 60s, Turkey kept good relations with Israel as a result of its pro-western foreign policies, once Turkey started to follow multi-dimensional foreign policy moving closer to the Arab countries during the 1970s, its relations deteriorated. During this period, Turkey often sided with the Arab states rather than Israel. Particularly, concerning the Arab-Israeli wars, Turkish governments supported the Arab causes. Turkey's Muslim identity and historical ties with the countries in the region have been effective to determine the country's relationship both with Israel and the other states in the

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[110] Efraim Inbar, "Israeli-Turkish Tensions and Beyond", **Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs**, Vol: 4, No: 1, 2010, p. 28.
[111] Waxman, p. 26.

region. Nevertheless, Turkey did not hesitate to take rational steps when forging its foreign policies regarding the dynamic structure of the region. In the aftermath of 1980 coup during the Özal era when Özal followed a balanced foreign policy between the West and the East, Turkish-Israeli relations took a new turn. Particularly, in the aftermath of 1990 Gulf War and the Peace Process Turkish-Israeli relations in the early 1990s reached to its peak point. Changing threats in the forms of increase in PKK terror mainly supported by Iraq and Syria also brought Turkey and Israel together. During this period numerous military cooperation agreements were signed. These agreements were followed by cooperation in the areas of economy and tourism. Although religiously conservative Prime Minister wanted to give an end to Turkish Israeli relations, the military did not initiate such a foreign policy at a time when PKK terror was at full speed.

In a nutshell, this chapter represented a historical background of the relationship between Turkey and Israel. This historical background of the relationship of the two states will obviously help us to analyze their relations at the beginnings of the 21st century. Next chapter will analyze the Turkish-Israeli relations during the period of Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* – AKP) that came to power in 2002.

CHAPTER THREE
THE DETERIORATION OF THE TURKISH-ISRAELI RELATIONS
DURING THE AKP RULE

Starting in the mid 2000s on Turkish Israeli relations have started to show signs of tension. The close relations between Turkey and Israel continued in the early 2000s upon AKP's coming to power, due to AKP's lack of experience and strong base in politics as well as its subordination to the military concerning security issues particularly the PKK terror. Once AKP consolidated its power in politics in mid-2000s, it felt free to pursue the foreign policies it desired. Israel's attacks to Palestinians in late 2000s contributed to the deterioration of the relations between the two countries.

In general, Turkey as a democratic and Muslim country has been a significant partner and an indispensable ally for the economic, political and military interests of Israel. However, once AKP solidified its power in politics and gained 47 and 49.8 percent of the votes in 2007 and 2011 elections respectively, its political elite felt free to follow the foreign policies it wished concerning Israel. AKP government with Islamist roots was sympathetic to the suffering of the Palestinians in the hands of Israelis. Therefore, it openly supported the Palestinians and criticized Israel for its attacks to Gaza.

Moreover, by attempting to desecuritize some of the policies that used to be security issue in the past, the AKP governments tried to reduce the power of the military in the security issues. Due to the Ergenekon and Balyoz trials in which hundreds of military officers were accused of planning coups to overthrow AKP government, the military also lost its credibility, prestige and eventually its subordinate position in foreign policy decision-making. Consequently, AKP without military's pressure to force it to ally with Israel freely followed its pro-Arab, pro-Islamist and pro-Palestinian foreign policies. Such policies from time to time caused serious conflicts between Turkey and Israel as can be observed in the Davos Crisis and the Mavi Marmara incident.

In order to analyze the Turkish-Israeli relations during AKP era, this chapter will start with an analysis of the ideological background of the AKP and then

examine the general foreign policy behavior of Turkey that was transformed during the ongoing AKP rule. It will also concentrate on the tensions that emerged between the two states and the measures taken to reduce these tensions. The chapter will comprehensively analyze the deterioration of the relationship between the two states by focusing on some diplomatic ruptures and newly emerging events including the Davos crisis and the flotilla raid (Mavi Marmara) of the Israeli state.

I. HARMONIOUS TURKISH-ISRAELI RELATIONS DURING THE FIRST PERIOD OF AKP

During the AKP governments starting from 2002 on until currently, there have been significant changes in Turkish foreign policy. While the AKP governments continued their pro-western, pro-USA foreign policy as the ongoing tradition since the 1950s, it focused on establishing harmonious relations with the Muslim Middle Eastern countries and particularly with the neighboring countries. This section of the chapter will examine Turkish foreign policy during the first period of AKP between 2002 and 2007 by first concentrating on the ideological background of AKP and then the transformation of Turkish foreign policy during the second and third terms of AKP.

A. The AKP era in Turkish Politics and its reflections on the Turkish-Israeli Relations

With the forced resignation of Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi* –RP) government through the indirect military coup of 28 February, the newly established coalition governments went back to the track of pro-Western Turkish foreign policy. The supporters of the military coup of 28 February were hoping to overthrow the Islamists from power for good. However, some reformists within the Refah Party did not give up their struggle for power and reformed themselves as the new conservative democrats under the roof of their newly established AKP. While AKP shared some similarities with the RP, it also kept away from the majority of RP's domestic and foreign policies particularly from its National Outlook Movement (*Milli Görüş*) tradition. Moreover, AKP did not repeat the mistakes of its

predecessor. Contradicting RP, rather than opposing the pro-western foreign policies, AKP promoted Turkey's full membership to the EU. As part of its attempt to make Turkey a full member of the EU, the AKP governments through constitutional amendments and harmonization packages encouraged democracy and human rights in Turkey.[112] In this respect, Prime Minister Erdoğan often stated that Turkey was ready to become a full member of the EU and the last decision belonged to the Union whether to accept Turkey or not.[113]

AKP in its early years by avoiding to follow religious conservative policies, worked hard to integrate itself with the Kemalist establishment and particularly with the military. Consequently, such cautious policies to keep up with the military's policies led AKP to follow harmonious relations with Israel. Although the AKP policy-makers in their first three years in power condemned the Israeli government for the aggressive policies it was exerting on Palestinians, being cautious with the military's reactions, AKP elite still continued to obey the ongoing military agreements.[114] The AKP political elite, knowing that following a pro-Western and secular political line would consolidate its place within the secular political system and alleviate the reactionary voices within the military establishment, avoided pursuing pro-Islamist policies that their predecessor RP pursued. Consequently, the party announced that it would support the full integration of Turkey into the EU, maintain its ties with other Western states and international organizations as well as Israel.[115] Prime Minister Erdoğan's and Foreign Minister Gül's visits to Israel in 2005 were the signs of these plans of cooperation particularly in the strategic arenas.[116]

The AKP's party program that formulated the foreign policy on multiple axes and mutual interests to establish flexible relations with power centers had represented an understanding of globalization and post-Cold War international

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[112] Sencer Ayata, "Changes in domestic politics and foreign policy orientation of the AK Party", **The Future of Turkish Foreign Policy**, (Ed. L. G. Martin & D. Keridis), MA: MIT Press, Cambridge, 2004, p. 26.

[113] "Erdoğan: Sınav sırası Avrupa'da", **Radikal,** 26.10.2004, http://www.radikal.com.tr/politika/erdogan_sinav_sirasi_avrupada-726785, (23.12.2013).

[114] Ali Balcı, "Türkiye'nin Dış Politikası ve İsrail: 1990'lar ve 2000'lere İlişkin Bir Karşılaştırma", **Ortadoğu Etütleri**, Vol: 2, No: 4, 2011, p. 127.

[115] Inbar, p. 29.

[116] Greg Myre, "Turkish Leader Visits Israel, Restoring Friendly Ties", **NY Times**, 02.05.2005, http://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/02/international/ middleeast/02mideast.html?_r=0, (20.10.2014).

conjuncture. The party underlined the significance of the relations with the EU and aimed at improving relations with the USA, Russian Federation, Central Asian and Caucasian countries.[117] Therefore, the Kemalist elites welcomed AKP's pro-western policies that led to the normalization of relations between the two groups. The EU's official recognition of Turkey as a candidate country moreover, accelerated this normalization process, decreasing the concerns of the Kemalist elites towards AKP's fundamentalism. During this period, the military officials began to think that the threat of fundamentalism lost its validity and the new government was more secular and pro-Western than its previous counterpart. A relaxation on the military side intrinsically promoted the AKP elite to follow the policies it desired both in domestic and international sphere.

B. Transformation of Turkish Foreign Policy: AKP's pro-Middle Eastern Foreign Policies

The AKP's existence in Turkey's political system undisputedly changed the general direction of Turkey's foreign policy both towards the East and the West. The pro-Western foreign policies of the AKP in its early years were not followed at the expense of the Muslim world. AKP showed its willingness to establish better relations with the Western European states; the United States and some Western based international organizations. However, its attempts to democratize Turkey through constitutional amendments and harmonization packages had not completely met the requirements of the EU. In addition, Cyprus issue and Armenian question caused stagnation in Turkey's EU membership process. During that period, the political elites and the society lost their enthusiasm for Turkey's full membership to the EU since the resolution of these problems was not that simple. Moreover, prominent members of the EU such as Germany and France were against the full membership of Turkey. Consequently, the foreign policy-makers slowed down their reforms. The beginning of the alienation from the EU membership coincided with the AKP foreign policy makers attempts to establish harmonious relations with its the neighbors and other Muslim Middle Eastern countries.

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[117] Hasret D. Bilgin, "Foreign Policy Orientation of Turkey's Pro-Islamist Parties: A Comparative Study of the AKP and Refah", **Turkish Studies**, Vol: 9, No: 3, 2008, p. 412.

During this period AKP leadership adopted a number of neo-liberal economic policies to increase the welfare level within the country and to make the country one of the strongest economies in the world. Turkey began to experience an economic growth as a result of an increasing export-import volume and through the adoption of a free market economy and privatization. These positive developments in the economic sphere led the AKP policy-makers to believe that they could continue pursuing this economic development without becoming a member of the EU. They were even hoping to improve this developing economy through the growing relations with the neighbors. Moreover, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ahmet Davutoğlu's "zero-problem with the neighbors" policy contributed to the respective economic successes of the AKP, aiming to make the country a regional power. AKP policy-makers in their attempt to improve relations with the neighbors, rather than resorting to hard power instruments that had been used by the previous governments, planned to follow strong soft-power mechanisms including economic transaction with the neighboring countries.[118]

The so-called Middle Easternization of Turkish foreign policy in fact aimed at promoting closer relations with the Middle East without breaking ties with the West.[119] Common religion as well as historical ties with the Arab world also contributed to the AKP's close relations with the Middle East. As a continuation of the glorious Ottoman historical past the policy of zero-problem with neighbors could be the first step to re-activate the Turkish influence in the region.[120] AKP elite were hoping to make Turkey a regional power. By increasing its influence in the region Turkey could become a strong soft power that could promote the resolution of numerous conflicts in the region, including the Israeli-Palestinian dispute.

AKP's this new foreign policy orientation towards the Middle East led the military elites and the Western powers to believe that AKP was turning away from its traditional foreign policy line by abandoning the pro-Western foreign policy. In other words, AKP was accused of changing axis in its foreign policy. However, AKP while improving its relations with the Middle East was not planning to make changes

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[118] Bilgin, p. 413.
[119] Tarık Oğuzlu, "Middle Easternization of Turkey's Foreign Policy: Does Turkey Dissociate from the West?", **Turkish Studies**, Vol: 9, No: 1, 2008, p. 3.
[120] Ziya Meral and Jonathan Paris, "Decoding Turkish Foreign Policy Hyperactivity," **The Washington Quarterly**, Vol: 33, No: 4, 2010, pp. 79-80.

on its pro-western foreign policy. In fact, AKP could use its political spectrum and economic successes as a tool to influence the Middle Eastern states and societies. AKP coming from the fifty-year tradition of free and fair elections in a parliamentary system could have been a role model for the democratizing Middle East societies. Its newly emerging role as a mediator for the conflicting parties in the region was appreciated by most of the Middle Eastern societies.

In this context, AKP also became one of the most ardent supporters of the Palestinian community, often condemning the Israeli state for its asymmetrical use of force on the Palestinian society and settlements policies in the Palestinian lands.[121] As a result of changing security concerns, the AKP foreign policy makers could easily criticize the Israeli government for their policies towards the Palestinian community in the late 2003 and 2004. The decrease in PKK terror during this period gave the AKP government the needed space to maneuver its foreign policy-making. So, this era can be marked as a clear recession on the Turkish-Israeli relationship.[122]

II. PROBLEMATIC TURKISH ISRAELI RELATIONS DURING SECOND PERIOD OF AKP

The second election of the AKP in the 2007 general elections in which the party won 47 percent of the votes brought some fundamental changes in Turkey's foreign policy towards Israel. The following section will concentrate on the deterioration of Turkish Israeli relations in details by concentrating on certain events including Turkish recognition of Hamas, Operation Cast Lead, chair crisis, Davos accusations and Mavi Marmara attacks.

A. The Tensions of mid 2000s: The AKP Government versus the Israeli State

After the general elections of 2007 that resulted with the overwhelming victory of the AKP, the policy-makers of the party began to increase their influence on Turkish foreign policy. Once AKP gained power and the military's dominant role

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[121] Oğuzlu, p. 14.
[122] Serhat Erkmen, "1990'lardan Günümüze Türkiye-İsrail Stratejik İşbirliği", **Uluslararası İlişkiler**, Vol: 2, No: 7, 2005, p. 179.

in foreign policy decreased, the AKP leadership felt free to follow the foreign policies it desired. As already stated, the diminishing enthusiasm to become a full member of the EU led AKP political elite to plan a leadership role in the Middle East. Consequently, the AKP policymakers began to discuss the possibility of becoming a regional power at the expense of qualifying a full member of the EU.[123]

The new foreign policy approach followed by the AKP in its second term was not only limited to the alienation from being a full member of the EU, but it also aimed at assuming the role of a significant power in the region between the east and the west. Turkey by putting the Palestinian question in a central place in its foreign policy shared the negative attitudes of the Arab world concerning Israel in almost every international forum. Turkish foreign policy-makers decision to follow a more active and constructive role in the Middle East had a significant impact on its critics towards Israel.[124] In this context, Prime Minister Erdoğan argued that the continuing Israeli settlement projects in the West Bank and Gaza were negatively affecting the peace process. He called the Egyptian government to open its borders for the Palestinians.[125] Consequently, the AKP government under the leadership of Erdoğan continuously criticized Israeli government for the aggressive policies it pursued vis-à-vis the Palestinian community located in West Bank and Gaza. Turkey's new self-assigned role as the protectors of Palestinians led to the deterioration of Turkish Israeli relations.

Consequently, the new phase of the relationship between Turkey and Israel was full of serious political crises, often coming into a breaking point. The issues that made the relations even worse were Turkey's recognition of Hamas in the 2006 elections, initiation of Operation Cast Lead by IDF through air attacks to Gaza, chair crisis, Davos episode and Mavi Marmara attacks.

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[123] Dimitar Bechev, "Turkey's Rise as a Regional Power", **European View**, Vol: 10, No: 2, 2011, p. 174.

[124] Bülent Aras and Rabia K. Polat, "Turkey and the Middle East: Frontiers of the new geographic imagination", **Australian Journal of International Affairs**, Vol: 61, No: 4, 2007, p. 487.

[125] "Erdoğan'dan Filistin, İsrail ve Mısır'a çağrı", **İhlas Haber Ajansı**, 15.02.2008, http://www.iha.com.tr/erdogandan-filistin-israil-ve-misira-cagri-gundem-12966, (23.12.2013).

B. Turkish Foreign Policy concerning Hamas victory in the 2006 Palestinian Elections

Until the Palestinian elections in 2006 the Fatah movement controlled the institutions of both the Palestinian Authority (PA) and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). It actually controlled the presidency, the government and the security forces. Hamas, which was originally established in 1987 for the purpose of destroying Israel and has frequently, resorted to violence with the help of its armed groups joined the 2006 Palestine elections. Hamas, which has never recognized Israel, has always supported the independence of a free Palestinian state. In the 2006 elections while Hamas won 76 seats out of 132, Fatah managed to gain 43 seats.[126] Consequently, Hamas's victory in these elections made both the Western states and Israel uncomfortable.[127]

The victory of Hamas in 2006 elections led to serious problems between Turkey and Israel. In contrast to Israel and many Western states, Turkey has not considered Hamas as a terrorist organization and recognized its victory in the elections by establishing a special relation with the organization's leadership. Since Hamas was elected in a free and fair elections held by Palestinians, AKP policy-makers considered its victory democratic. They argued that ignoring Hamas as a legitimate organization in the 2006 general elections meant ignoring democratic values. The Israeli government was not happy about Turkey's recognition of Hamas. Following the bloody takeover of Gaza by the Israelis in June 2007, diverging from the policies of the western world, Turkey had decided to initiate a dialogue with Hamas.[128] Interestingly enough AKP's policy of recognizing Hamas even caused divergence of opinion in Turkish policy-makers. Chief of the Army General Yaşar Büyükanıt regarded Hamas as a terrorist organization.[129] Despite this reaction AKP government by not taking the military's views into consideration, called all states to recognize the victory of Hamas and to accept its rule over the Palestinian society.

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[126] Mahjoob Zweiri, "The Hamas Victory: Shifting Sands or Major Earthquake?", **Third World Quarterly**, Vol: 27, No: 4, 2006, p. 675.
[127] Shaul Mishal, "Hamas: The Agony of Victory", **Strategic Assessment,** Vol: 9, No: 1, 2006, p. 4; Zweiri, 2006, p. 675.
[128] Inbar, p. 30.
[129] "Hamas Terör Örgütüdür", **Sabah**, 04.03.2006 http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/2006/03/04/siy107.html, (23.12.2013).

C. Turkish-Israeli relations during the Operation Cast Lead

Another significant reason that caused tensions between the two countries was the continuing Israeli blockade that prevented the transfer of humanitarian aid to Gaza. Both Israel and Palestine stopped attacking each other as a result of the Egyptian-sponsored ceasefire in 2007. However, the Israeli insistence to maintain a blockade on the Gaza strip overshadowed the ceasefire agreement between the two parties. Hamas in its attempt to force Israel to end the blockade fired rockets to Israel. To give an end to these random rocket attacks by Hamas, Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) initiated a 22-day offensive bombardment campaign, named the Operation Cast Lead on the Gaza strip between December 27, 2008 and January 18, 2009.[130]

Israeli Air Force launched Operation Cast Lead, as airstrikes on December 27 against Hamas security installations, personnel, and other facilities in the Gaza Strip, followed on January 3 by ground operations. These offensives led to the death of 1,400 Palestinians among which the overwhelming majority were innocent civilians. Besides the Arab states, Turkey also condemned these attacks and asked Israel to end these attacks as soon as possible.[131] In his speech, the Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan stated, "the attack launched by the Israeli state is a kind of disrespect shown to the Turkish State. Turkey has always been a country to provide peace between the two communities. So, this attack of Israel damaged to a potential peace agreement in the region on a large degree"[132]

In fact, just prior to initiation of the Operation Cast Lead, Turkey was serving as a mediator in negotiations between Israel and Syria. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert visited Turkey just before the operation and held meetings with Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan. During the talks between the two Prime Ministers, the negotiations between Syria and Israel were conducted and Israel's plan regarding the attack to Palestinians was not mentioned by the Israeli authorities.

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[130] Asa Kasher, "A Moral Evaluation of the Gaza: Operation Cast Lead", **Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs**, Vol: 9, No: 18, 2010, p. 2.

[131] Raji Sourani, "Operation Cast Lead Five Years on: 'We are still demanding justice'" **Aljazeera,** 19.01.2014, http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/01/operation-cast-lead-five-years-are-still-demanding-justice-2014188116566380.html, (23.07.2014); Kasher, 2010, p. 2

[132] "Hamas'a büyük operasyon", **Şalom**, 20.12.2008, http://arsiv.salom.com.tr/news/ print/10418-Israilden-Hamasa-buyuk-operasyon.aspx, (23.12.2013).

This attack following the visit of Israeli Prime Minister to Turkey was shocking for the Turkish side since the AKP government was in the middle of a mediation process between the two sides.[133] Israel's insistence on continuing the military operation further increased the tensions between Turkey and Israel.

According to the report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict under the leadership of Justice Richard Goldstone, members of the IDF were responsible for deliberate targeting of civilians, for the destruction of critical infrastructure in Gaza, and for using weapons such as white phosphorous in highly populated areas, all of which it deemed to be violations of international humanitarian law.[134]

D. The Chair Crisis as a Diplomatic Crisis

Another development that contributed to the deterioration of the relations between Turkey and Israel was a diplomatic crisis during a meeting between Israeli deputy foreign minister Danny Ayalon and Oğuz Çelikkol, the Turkish ambassador to Israel, in January 2010. From the Turkish perspective, the continuing aggressiveness of Israel towards the Palestinian side was an unacceptable issue and Turkish policy makers were always ready to show their reaction against such Israeli attacks. The tensions between the two states continued and demonstrated themselves in different forms. This time the resentment between the two countries showed itself in a meeting.

In January 2010, Israel's Deputy Foreign Minister, Danny Ayalon summoned Turkey's Ambassador Ahmet Oguz Celikkol to an urgent meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to criticize a Turkish television drama portraying Israeli security forces brutal, kidnapping children and shooting old men. At the meeting, Ayalon was caught on camera instructing the Israeli TV news crew covering the event to make sure that its footage captured Celikkol sitting on a sofa lower than his own.

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[133] Harel Chorev and Mira Tzoreff, "Israel's Apology to Turkey: A Chronically Unpredictable Relationship", **The Middle East Crossroads,** Vol: 3, No: 4, 2013, p. 2

[134] "Operation Cast Lead", **Global Security**, 20.07.2013, http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/operation-cast-lead.htm, (23.07.2014).

Moreover, although the diplomatic norm required the existence of two flags in the meeting, Turkish flag was missing on the table.[135]

Actually this symbolic humiliation of the Turkish ambassador was a well-planned expression of the new policy of Ayalon and the new hard-line Foreign Minister of Israel Avigdor Lieberman. The national pride and revenge feeling of the Israeli government showed itself in this meeting. This event created another diplomatic crisis between the Turkish and the Israeli governments. Israeli President Peres called Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Foreign Minister Lieberman and urged them to resolve the crisis. Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that the attitude taken by the Israeli representative was destitute of the rules of good manners. As a result of such behavior the Turkish side demanded an apology from the Israeli side.[136]

In consequence of Turkey's ultimatum, Ayalon wrote formal apology that satisfied the Turkish Foreign Ministry stating that he had no intention to humiliate the ambassador personally and apologized for the way the meeting was handled and perceived. He also wanted this message to be conveyed to the Turkish people.[137] Due to this apology from the Israeli side, the Turkish government did not withdraw ambassador Çelikkol from his post in Israel.

III. THE DIPLOMATIC RUPTURES: THE DAVOS CRISIS AND FLOTILLA RAID OF ISRAEL

The main crisis between the two countries showed itself with the emergence of two significant events. One of them took place in a panel in the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland on 30 January 2009 when Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan accused the Israeli President Shimon Peres for killing Palestinians. The other was on 31 May 2010 when the Israeli forces attacked a flotilla called Mavi Marmara that carried civilians who were bringing humanitarian aid to Palestinians of

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[135] Aaaron J. Klein, "Israel and Turkey: Anatomy of a Dissing War", Times, 14.01.2010, http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1953746,00.html, (14.07.2014); Oğuzlu, p. 275.
[136] "Deputy FM Ayalon apologizes to Turkish Ambassador", **Haaretz**, 13.01.2010, http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/deputy-fm-ayalon-apologizes-to-turkish-ambassador-1.261346, (10.04.2014).
[137] Klein, 2010.

Gaza. These two events led to a dramatic deterioration of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

A. Impact of Davos Crisis on Turkish-Israeli Relations

The events that paved the way for the Davos crisis can be traced back to 2007. Turkish government in its attempt to pursue soft power policies in the region worked on playing a mediator role between the Palestinian community and the Israeli state. Turkish government was hoping to reach a peaceful resolution between the two communities. However, Israel's attacks to Palestinians in 2009 that caused the death of thousands Palestinians led to a serious reaction from the Turkish side and deterioration of the relations of the two countries.

The World Economic Forum that is also known as Davos Economic Summit is an independent international organization that conveys every year politicians, businessmen and academicians, to discuss the significant political, economic and social issues of the year.[138] On 30 January 2009 in one of the panels of the meeting in which United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the Israeli President Shimon Peres, and the Chief of Arab League Amr Moussa participated, the leaders started discussing the Gaza attacks.

Once the leaders started to talk about the Palestinian question Israeli President Peres tried to justify the Israeli attacks in the region by stating that Israel had the right to bomb the Palestinian territories as a reaction to the Palestinian attacks to Israel. Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan's reaction to this explanation was harsh. He openly accused Peres and the Israelis for knowing how to kill people and children. Erdoğan claimed Peres was simply trying to legitimize the use of force by the Israeli forces against the Palestinian children by pointing the Hamas' activities.[139]

The panel discussions at Davos are restricted to one hour. When Prime Minister Erdoğan insisted on responding to Israeli President Peres, the moderator the columnist David Ignatius of The Washington Post did not give him enough time. As a result Erdoğan turned to President Peres and stated that his voice came out in a very loud tone which was the sign of his guilty conscience. Consequently, Prime

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[138] The World Economic Forum, Our Mission, 11.06.2010, http://www.weforum.org/our-mission, (13. 12. 2013).
[139] Oğuzlu, p. 275.

Minister Erdoğan walked off the stage telling that he will never attend Davos meetings again.[140]

A few days after the Davos crisis, Prime Minister Erdoğan stated that he found it very sad that people had applauded what the President Peres said since many people were killed. He stated that he did not find this attitude humanitarian.[141] The Davos crisis, popularly known as *One Minute crisis*, has a significant place in the weakening of Turkish-Israeli relations. The reaction of the Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan was actually the result of Turkish state's dissatisfaction with the Israeli policies against the Palestinians. Indeed, the diplomatic relations between Turkey and Israel were already in the deterioration stage even before the Davos crisis.

Nonetheless, this crisis negatively contributed to already fragile relationship between the two states on a large degree, particularly concerning the military matters. On 11 October 2009, exclusion of the Israeli state from the Anatolian Eagles military training activity has been a clear indicator of the deterioration of the strategic partnership of Turkey and Israel. Turkey's decision to cancel the mutual military training activity caused the Israeli side to worry about a potential rapprochement between Turkey and Iran.[142] Although the volume of trade between the two countries has never been at a satisfactory level, with the Davos crisis it got worse.[143]

Another significant impact of the Davos crisis on Turkish-Israeli relations has been on the societal level. Both the Turkish and Israeli communities were deeply affected by the conflict in Davos summit. Prime Minister Erdoğan's outburst in Davos attracted many supporters from within the Arab societies as well as among the conservatives and nationalists in Turkey. The public polls showed that Erdoğan's prestige and credibility increased tremendously in the Arab world as a result of his speech in Davos Summit. Israel's reaction to the increase in Turkey's prestige in the

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[140] Katrin Bennhold, "Leaders of Turkey and Israel Clash at Davos Panel", **New York Times**, 29.01.2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/30/world/europe/30clash.html?_r=0, (14.07.2014); "Turkish PM storms off in Gaza row", **BBC**, 20.01.2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/davos/7859417.stm, (20.05.2014).
[141] "Erdoğan hailed after Davos walkout", **Aljazeera**, 31.01.2009, http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2009/01/20091303153967187.html, (18.12.2013).
[142] Özlem Tür, "Türkiye-İsrail ilişkilerinde kriz - Davos ve sonrası", **Ortadoğu Analiz**, Vol: 1, No: 11, 2009, p. 38.
[143] Gökhan Bacık, "Turkish-Israeli Relations after Davos: A View from Turkey", **Insight Turkey**, Vol: 11, No: 2, 2009, p. 33.

Arab world was to attack Turkey with, the so-called Armenian genocide argument. Israeli authorities claimed that Turkish government should deal with this problem before starting to accuse Israel for terrorism.[144]

In the post-Davos crisis period, the decline in the relations has shown itself in different areas. Some Turkish and Israeli civil society organizations, NGOs and the media also joined these anti-Israeli and anti-Turkish insults. In short, following the Davos crisis the hostile attitudes and policies by both sides escalated.

B. Mavi Marmara: Israeli Flotilla Raid

Turkish government and the society have always been concerned about the deteriorating social and economic conditions in the Gaza strip in which the Palestinians were living under the Israeli blockade. These people lacked basic humanitarian needs such as food and medicines. The miserable conditions Palestinians were living in pushed Turkish non-governmental organizations to help them. In this regard, Turkish Humanitarian Relief Foundation (*İnsani Yardım Vakfı – IHH*), cooperating with a group called The Free Gaza Movement, an umbrella organization for activists from numerous countries, organized an aid campaign for the people in Gaza.

On 22 May 2010, the ship named *Mavi Marmara* filled with basic humanitarian supplies left Istanbul to meet five other ships in the south of Cyprus. These six ships in the flotilla were boarded in international waters, about 130 km (80 miles) from the Israeli coast. Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) demanded all ships to surrender. While the other five ships accepted to surrender Mavi Marmara resisted doing so. As a result, the IDF commandos landed on Mavi Marmara, by descending on ropes from helicopters. Clashes broke out immediately and the Israeli commandos opened fire wounding dozens of people and killing nine people who were all Turkish except one who had dual Turkish-US nationality.[145] Israel's purpose to prevent goods from reaching Gaza was to put pressure on the Hamas government.

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[144] Oğuzlu, p. 275.
[145] Hasan Kösebalaban, "The Crisis in Turkish-Israeli Relations: What is its Strategic Significance?" **Middle East Policy,** Vol: 17, No: 3, 2010, pp. 36-37; "Q&A: Israeli Deadly Raid on Aid Flotilla", **BBC**, 22.02. 2013, http://www.bbc.com/news/10203726, (14.07.2014).

Turkish government immediately condemned the Israeli state. In his speech following the Israeli raid to the Turkish flotilla Prime Minister Erdoğan stated in the Turkish assembly that the event took place in the international waters that did not comply with any international law.[146] Indeed, the Mavi Marmara incident has been another factor contributing to the already fragile Turkish-Israeli relations. This attack also provided Prime Minister Erdoğan another opportunity to condemn Israel and champion the cause of Hamas.[147]

Besides condemnation, the Turkish state also demanded a formal apology from Israel and a compensation for the relatives of the people who lost their lives during the flotilla raid. In fact, Turkey's demand from Israel to apologize after the flotilla raid was not only related to Turkey's national pride but also related with the consequence of Turkey's growing role in the region. In the aftermath of the flotilla raid, Turkey has clearly demanded from Israel to obey the rules of the international law in order to construct a regional order in the Middle East.[148]

The flotilla raid of the IDF soldiers actually brought the Turkish-Israeli relations into a breaking point. There was a widespread condemnation of the violence all over the world. The UN Security Council issued a statement calling for a prompt, impartial, credible and transparent inquiry into the raid. In August 2010, the United Nations Secretary General Bank Ki Moon appointed a Panel of Inquiry (POI) to examine and identify the facts, circumstances and context of the incident, and to consider and recommend ways of avoiding similar incidents in the future.[149]

Turkey's report, drawn up by government officials, accused Israeli commandos for conducting the operation excessively and brutally. It also pointed out that commandos' boarding the Mavi Marmara was unlawful and violated human rights. Consequently, the Turkish panel also deemed the Gaza blockade unlawful.[150] In September 2011, the UN panel concluded a report which stated that Israel's decision to board the vessels with such substantial force at a great distance from the

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[146] "Erdoğan: Mavi Marmara raid was a cause of war", **Today's Zaman**, 18.12.2013, http://www.todayszaman.com/news-256509-erdogan-mavi-marmara-raid-was-cause-for-war.html, (14.07.2014).

[147] Efraim Inbar, "Israeli-Turkish Tensions and their International Ramifications", **Orbis**, Vol: 55, No: 1, 2011, pp. 132-133.

[148] Oğuzlu, 2011, p. 31

[149] Norman G. Finkelstein, "Torpedoing the Law: How the Palmer Report Justified Israel's Naval Blockade of Gaza", **Insight Turkey**, Vol: 13, No: 4, 2011, p. 11.

[150] "Q&A: Israeli Deadly Raid on Aid Flotilla"

blockade zone and with no final warning immediately prior to the boarding was excessive and unreasonable. But the report accepted that the commandos faced "significant, organized and violent resistance", requiring them to "use force for their own protection". Still the loss of life and injuries resulting from the use of force by Israeli troops was "unacceptable". The report also highlighted that no satisfactory explanation was provided by Israel for any of the deaths. In addition, it pointed out the forensic evidence that showed that most of the deceased were shot multiple times, including in the back, or at close range.[151]

For the Turkish side the result of the report was less important than a formal apology from the Israeli side. The Turkish side was not satisfied with the UN POI report and insisted on receiving an apology from the Israeli government. Turkish government first withdrew its ambassador from Tel Aviv and then expelled the Israeli ambassador in Ankara.[152] The Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu declared a series of sanctions against the Israeli state that included freezing of agreements, cancellation of joint exercises, enabling them to make free the navigation in the Mediterranean, and downgrading of the diplomatic relations.[153] The tension between the two sides continued for a long time and started a new era in the relationship between Turkey and Israel.

IV. SLOW RECONCILIATION OF TURKISH ISRAELI RELATIONS

Following the Mavi Marmara incident of 2010, Turkish-Israeli relations have entered a period of calmness. The Panel of Inquiry report of the United Nations has not been effective to solve the dispute between the two states. For a long time the Israeli policy makers did not welcome the Turkish demands from Israel for an apology and compensation. Moreover. Israel did not respond to AKP government's demand from Israel to end the naval blockade of Gaza. Diplomatic relationship between Turkey and Israel continued at a low level since then.

Serious crises between the two countries actually coincided with Turkish state's attempt to play the role of a regional power. Dramatic developments in the Middle East with the emergence of Arab Spring that brought the attempts for

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[151] "Q&A: Israeli Deadly Raid on Aid Flotilla"
[152] Balcı and Kardaş, p. 99.
[153] Chorev and Tzoreff, p. 3.

freedom and democracy changed the dynamics as well as foreign policies of both Turkey and Israel in the region. Significant Arab states such as Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and Syria were all going through uprisings, replacement of authoritarian regimes with conservative Muslim groups. In this context both Especially Turkey has been the supporter of democratic transformations in its immediate surroundings but it did not directly involved in the political changes in the region.

Turkey with its Muslim and democratic identity and supporter of the rights of Palestinians was seen as a role model for most of the Arab states in the early stages of the Arab Spring. Consequently, during this period, Turkey looked as it could continue playing a very important role in the region without making an alignment with the Israeli state. Turkey enjoyed this role model position in the early stages of the Arab Spring. Prime Minister Erdoğan visited countries like Egypt giving speeches to big crowds who were very happy to see him in their countries.

Once Turkey started to initiate its plans to rise to the level of a regional power, Prime Minister Erdoğan much more confident than before did not refrain from criticizing Israel in a harsh rhetoric. For example in his speech in 2013, Prime Minister Erdoğan blamed Israel about downfall of the Egyptian President Morsi by coup. He showed that his hostile attitude towards Israel was still underway. [154] Despite all these critics in the last three to four years there was not much dialogue between the two countries.

US President Obama's visit to Israel in March 2013 changed the direction of the relationship between Turkey and Israel. Following the visit of the US President, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made a phone call to the Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan to transmit the apology of the Israeli state for the killings during the flotilla raid of Israel in 2010. In addition, the Israeli state also accepted to pay compensation to the relatives of the passengers who lost their lives on board. Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu actually clearly expressed an apology to the Turkish people for any error that may have led to the loss of life. Netanyahu and Erdoğan

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[154] Herb Keinon, "Erdoğan blames Israel for Morsi's downfall, Egypt unrest", **the Jerusalem Post**, 20.08.2013, http://www.jpost.com/Diplomacy-and-Politics/Erdogan-Israel-orchestrated-Morsi-overthrow-Egypt-unrest-323679, (18.12.2013).

agreed to restore the normalization of relations, including returning their ambassadors to their posts.[155]

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In sum, the Turkish Israeli relations since the mid 2000s have been full of ups and downs. This chapter mainly concentrated on the downs rather than ups. It examined the complex relation of the AKP government with Israel. Coming from a Islamist conservative background, AKP foreign policy-makers always sympathized with the agony of Palestinians. In this context AKP ruling elite acted as the protectors of Palestinians vis-à-vis Israel. This policy eventually transformed AKP foreign policy to an anti-Israeli rhetoric.

AKP's recognition of Hamas as a victor in the 2006 Palestinian elections was the first sign of deteriorating relations. Turkish government defended that Hamas was the legitimate winner of the elections. The ongoing blockade of Israel on the Palestine territories had been another issue that pushed the Turkish government to take a negative position against the Israeli state. The Israeli pressure on the Palestinians that resulted with the Operation cast lead caused more reactions from the Turkish side condemning Israel for its aggressive policies towards the Palestinian people.

The two most significant events that brought the relations to a breaking point was the Davos crisis that ended with the Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan's outburst to the Israeli President Shimon Peres and the Mavi Marmara flotilla raid of Israel that resulted with the death of 9 Turkish passengers. These two events brought the diplomatic tension between the two sides to a peak point. Since then following the apology from the Israeli government for Mavi Marmara incident and acceptance of compensation, the relations moved into a quite period particularly when the dynamics in the Middle East changed as a result of Arab Spring and Turkey's attempt to play a role model and leadership role in the region. However, this short

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[155] "Israel apologizes to Turkey for Mavi Marmara raid", **Sabah**, 22.03.2013, http://english.sabah.com.tr/National/2013/03/22/israel-apologizes-to-turkey-for-mavi-marmara-raid, (18.12.2013).

normalization of relations is again going back to fierce criticism from the Turkish side to Israel with the resurrection of Israeli attacks to Gaza in July 2014.

CHAPTER FOUR
AN ANALYSIS OF THE DETERIORATION OF
TURKISH-ISRAELI RELATIONS THROUGH THE ROLE THEORY

Turkey's long-standing relationship with Israel has been on a roller coaster with many ups and downs through its political, economic and security relations. Both states confronted each other through a serious of political crisis. Although Turkey was the first Muslim country to recognize the establishment of Israel, throughout the 1960s and 70s, it sided with the Arabs and supported the Palestinian cause. The peace process that started in the 1990s brought two countries very close in security and economics, particularly in tourism. High level visits between the two countries and signing of many economic agreements among the businessmen and the security cooperation agreements between the militaries were quite common during this period. Starting with the 2000s on, when AKP came to power, while the relations kept their stability in the early years of the party, starting with Israel's attacks to Gaza in 2006, the weakening of the relations had started. This deterioration as already examined in depth in the last chapter particularly showed itself in Operation Cast Lead, Israeli attacks to Gaza in 2008, Erdoğan's Davos speech in 2009 and Mavi Marmara crisis in 2010.

This chapter aims at analyzing the deterioration of Turkish-Israeli relations starting from mid-2000s on by using the role model theory as a conceptual tool of analysis. As analyzed in the theoretical framework the role theory that studies role conceptions and their impact on state's behavior in the international arena argues that after the actors identify their nation with certain roles, they act according to these roles. In other words, it points out that the states follow foreign policies in accordance with specific roles in which they associate themselves. This chapter will analyze the deterioration of Turkish-Israeli relations through the tenets of role theory such as national role conceptions (NRCs), role prescriptions, and role performance. All of these assumptions of the role theory will be applied to the Turkish-Israeli relations to understand Turkey's foreign policy orientation towards Israel during the AKP period.

The first section of the chapter will analyze these deteriorating relations from national role conception point of view by taking Turkey's role as a regional leader, regional protector (of Palestinians), mediator, and defender of peace. The second section of the chapter will concentrate on the role prescriptions followed by Turkey by looking at what the Arab states and the United States expect from Turkey. Third and final section of the chapter will focus on Turkey's role performance by looking at the roles performed by Turkey. In other words, it will examine the kind of policy line Turkish foreign policy makers followed towards Israel.

I. THE NATIONAL ROLE CONCEPTIONS OF TURKEY

Turkish foreign policy that has gone through dramatic changes recently increased its foreign policy activism in the Middle East. In this foreign policy activism while Turkish foreign policy makers started to establish close relations with Arab Muslim countries, Turkey's relations with Israel began to go downhill. This study in an attempt to analyze these worsening relations between Turkey and Israel will refer to the role theory. As already analyzed in the first chapter on theoretical framework role theory argues that actors, who identify their nation with certain roles, act according to the expectations and demands these roles create. Role theory looks at the unique characteristics of each society and concentrates how the elite influence the construction of the self. [156] This study will concentrate on three concepts (national role conception, role prescription, role performance) offered by the role theory to examine the fundamental causes of Turkey's deteriorating relations with Israel.

National role conception as stated by Kalevi Holsti reveals the domestic sources of particular foreign policy choices. It includes foreign policy-makers' own definition of the decisions that are appropriate for their states in the international system. [157] In this context, foreign policy decision-makers' domestic construction of national self is significant. They usually ask the questions such as who we are and what we are. They also pay attention how the others establish our national self.

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[156] Ovalı and Bozdağlıoğlu, p. 7; Ovalı, p. 2.
[157] Holsti, pp. 245-246.

Actually, expectation of the others plays an important role in their decision-making.[158]

In this context, it really matters how Turkish foreign policy-makers during the AKP era identify their nation with certain roles and how they act according to the expectations and demand these roles create. They define their decisions and commitments that are suitable to the Turkish state. How they define the decisions that are appropriate for their state in the international system as well as the functions they should perform in the international system or regional systems are important. It is important to determine the domestic sources of particular foreign policy sources. In sum, how AKP elites domestically construct their national-self and the self-related roles for the Turkish nation to perform also shape the foreign policy-decision-making.

Domestic sources of a particular foreign policy orientation are important to understand how the foreign policy-making elites of a country adopt suitable national role conceptions for themselves. Indeed, the AKP was formed from the previous cadres of the pro-Islamist Welfare Party. Nonetheless, they did not fully adopt the whole ideology of the party because they emerged as the reformists from within this party. Since the party came into power in 2002, it has started to use an assertive foreign policy to enhance Turkey's status as an actor and power on the world stage in ways that have enabled the its leaders to consolidate their power at home. Strong affinities for Muslim causes, evocation of muscular nationalist pride, and active mercantilism have been the dominant foreign policy themes that have benefited AKP's domestic power drive.[159] It is also important to note that the AKP has a religiously conservative constituency to whom the party had to appeal by introducing pro-Islamist policies such as supporting the Palestinians vis-à-vis the Israelis. In this regard, the AKP officials used extremely harsh rhetoric to castigate Israeli actions against the Palestinians and softer comments to criticize Hamas. Therefore, this stance has won the Prime Minister Erdoğan a rock star's fan base among Arabs and Muslims. Moreover, the prime minister also became hero at home among his voters since both religious and secular Turks have great sympathy for the suppressed

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[158] Ovalı, pp. 2-3.
[159] Carol Migdalovitz, "AKP's Domestically-Driven Foreign Policy", **Turkish Policy Quarterly**, Vol: 9, No: 4, 2010, p. 38.

Palestinians.[160] For example, when Prime Minister Erdoğan returned from Davos Summit in January 2009, hundreds of his supporters met him at the airport at 3 am.

On the other hand, how the Turkish foreign policy makers define the functions they should perform in the international or regional systems are important. To that extent, analyze Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu's policies provides a strong ground to understand the nature of the changing Turkish foreign policy orientation. The academic study of Davutoğlu titled "Strategic Depth" sheds a light to the changing Turkish foreign policy in the new era. In this book, a nation's value in the world politics is based on its geo-strategic location and historical depth. The book argues that Turkey is uniquely endowed because of its location in geopolitical areas of influence, particularly its control of the Bosporus, and its historical legacy of the Ottoman Empire.[161] In addition, Davutoğlu points out that Turkey promises to contribute to security, stability and prosperity in a wide range of territories that go beyond Turkey's immediate neighborhood.[162]

During the AKP era Turkish foreign policy orientation that was mainly designed by Foreign Minister Davutoğlu and the Prime Minister Erdoğan entered into the course of shifting from the traditional Westernization and modernization trend to the so-called Middle Easternization. In this regard, the Turkish foreign policy makers became more sensitive to the issues concerning the Middle East. Davutoğlu stated in his book on Strategic Depth that Turkey's new dynamic and multi-dimensional foreign policy was visible on the ground. Therefore, Turkish foreign policy-makers were now spending a significant effort to address the chronic problems in the neighboring regions.[163]

One of the Davutoğlu's aims in foreign policy was to enhance economic relations with the Muslim and Arab countries. He argued that Turkey's domestic reform and growing economic capabilities had enabled the country to emerge as a

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[160] Migdalovitz, p. 38.
[161] Joshua W. Walker, "Learning Strategic Depth: Implications of Turkey's New Foreign Policy Doctrine", **Insight Turkey**, Vol: 9, No:3, 2007, p. 33; Also see Ahmet Davutoğlu, **Stratejik Derinlik, Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu**, Küre Yayınları, İstanbul, 2001.
[162] Bülent Aras, "Davutoğlu Era in Turkish Foreign Policy", **SETA**, 01.02.2009, Brief No: 32, http://arsiv.setav.org/public/HaberDetay.aspx?Dil=tr&hid=7712&q=davutoglu-era-in-turkish-foreign-policy, (17.07.2014).
[163] Aras, pp. 2-3.

peace-promoter in neighboring regions.[164] He believed that such economic relations would also create interdependency among the countries hindering any kind of political conflict. Consequently, this attempt of establishing good relations with the mainly Arab and Persian Muslim neighbors worked at the expense of Turkey's relations with Israel. Actually, new Turkish foreign policy was adopting a soft power approach at the expense of setting the hard power security approach aside. Moreover, by improving its economic relations with countries such as Syria, Iraq, and Iran who are known as the enemies of Israel, the Turkish state was taking an anti-Israeli approach.

Turkey's new positive foreign policy approach towards the Muslim and Arab states in the region was actually supported by the domestic policies implemented by the AKP government. According to Turkish policy-makers, the political development, economic capabilities, dynamic social forces, and ability to reconcile Islam and democracy at home offered Turkey the possibility to develop and implement active and influential policies in the neighboring regions.[165] On the other hand, it is important here to note that the Turkish foreign policy in the neighboring regions did not assume a hegemonic role for Turkey, but targeted an inclusive approach for building peace and security based on the dynamics within these regions. In this regard, the Turkish foreign policy-makers have gained a new self-confidence and political will to pursue peace attempts in the neighboring regions.[166]

Indeed, the kind of roles the AKP officials adopted is closely related to their ideology and identity. In this context, Bülent Aras points out the new foreign policy instruments adopted by the AKP government. These include an integrated foreign policy, a pro-active foreign policy, and presence on the ground, all inclusive equidistance policy, and total performance in foreign policy. Turkey following an integrated policy meant that it collected all foreign policy areas and issues into a single picture of policy formulation. It meant that Turkish government ruled by the AKP elites brought a variety of issues into the same picture, from the Middle East peace process to the Caucasian stability. By doing this, it gave priority to the

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[164] Aras, p. 4.
[165] Kemal Kirişçi, "Turkey's Foreign Policy in Turbulent Times", *Chaillot Paper*, 92, EU-ISS, Paris, 2006, p. 96.
[166] Aras, p. 7.

immediate issues without ignoring the others.[167] From this perspective, the situation in Gaza often attracted the attention of the AKP government.

Moreover, Aras argues that the AKP government had started to follow a pro-active foreign policy that was supported by a rhythmic diplomacy. In this context, Davutoğlu preferred a high level involvement in the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) instead of a low level of involvement.[168] As a matter of fact, a high level of involvement in the OIC could bring a low level of relationship with the Israeli state since the OIC was an Islamic-oriented establishment that generally condemned the policy decisions taken by the Israelis. Another policy instrument of that was entitled as presence on the ground by Aras, pointed out the mediator role Turkey has taken during times of crises. Along this line, during the Gaza crisis between the Israelis and the Palestinians in 2006 the Turkish leadership has followed a shuttle diplomacy. Another foreign policy instruments adopted by the AKP government that Aras brought up was to have an all-inclusive equidistance policy. This policy pointed out the broad coalitions Turkish foreign policy makers had formed to solve problems and develop initiatives. Lastly, Aras argues that to have a total performance in foreign policy the instrument AKP adopted, by including all NGOs, business communities and other civil organizations worked quiet well.[169]

Furthermore, Foreign Minister Davutoğlu also introduced four basic principles to demonstrate Turkey's enhancing interest in the Middle East region. According to Davutoğlu, first of all, Turkey was supposed to provide security for every group in the region without making any discrimination. Secondly, Turkey was supposed to give a priority to dialogue as a means of solving crisis. Thirdly, an economic interdependence was supposed to be built between the countries of the region. And lastly, a cultural co-existence and plurality among the people of the region were supposed to be established. As a result, these four principles determined by Davutoğlu also showed the increasing interest of Turkey in the Middle Easy region.[170]

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[167] Aras, pp. 7-10.
[168] Aras, p. 9.
[169] Aras, pp. 9-10.
[170] Ahmet Davutoğlu, "Turkey's foreign policy vision: an assessment of 2007", **Insight Turkey**, Vol: 10, No: 1, 2008, p. 84.

How the AKP elites domestically construct their national-self and the self-related roles for the Turkish nation to perform also shape the foreign policy decision-making process. Indeed, in the construction of the national-self, the AKP government's policy makers assumed a different role by attempting to reconcile both the democracy and Islam concepts. So, AKP policy-makers' pro-Islamist domestic policies clearly affected the formation of their foreign policies. In this context, the country has become more involved in the issues related to the Islamic world and interest in the regional sphere, particularly the Muslim countries, remained as a constant variable in the changing Turkish foreign policy in the recent years.

Furthermore, the issues related to the changing Turkish foreign policy may be illustrated by taking the expectations of other states about Turkey. In this context, how the Turkish foreign policy makers see the functions of their state towards the external environment play a significant role in the decision-making process. Actually, this issue is closely related to the role performance title of the role theory. Therefore, how the foreign policy makers see the functions of their state and what the other states expect from Turkey will be analyzed under the title of role prescriptions.

This study in an attempt to analyze the deterioration of Turkish-Israeli relations since mid-2000s will refer to the role theory and under role theory, the national role conceptions. Moreover, in order to analyze the national role conceptions of the AKP elites to figure out how they define the functions they should perform in the international system, the study will concentrate on "regional leadership", "regional protectorship", "mediator", and "defender of peace" roles of the political elite designed for themselves. Following the analysis of Turkey's role as a regional leader and regional protector in the first section, the second section will concentrate on Turkey's mediator role between the Palestinians and Israelis. Finally this part will be concluded with an examination of Turkey's national role as defender of peace in the Middle East. In sum, four national role conceptions designed by Holsti will be utilized to analyze the deteriorating Turkish Israeli relations as well as relations with the Arab world and particularly with the Palestinians.

A. Turkey's Role as a Regional Leader

Among the seventeen varieties of national role conceptions that are designed by Holsti, the second one the "regional leadership" refers to the duties or special responsibilities that a government perceives for itself in its relation to the states in a particular region.[171] In this context, recently Turkish regional leadership has been a subject of political debate. This section will analyze the role AKP government tailored for itself as a regional leader by giving examples of its policies and by referring to the speeches given by the Turkish leaders.

An analysis of historical background of Turkish foreign policy until the 1990s shows that since its establishment Turkey has not always been interested in playing the role of a regional leader. In fact, Turkey in its early years politically and economically was not in any shape to play such a role. Turkey tried to remain neutral in its early years throughout the 1930s and 40s and joined the western camp following pro-American foreign policies in the aftermath of Second World War. Only in the 1950s, with the establishment of Bagdad Pact, Turkey somewhat attempted to play such a leadership role. However, since the majority of the Arab nations did not accept this pact, such a role did not work. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s although Turkey followed a more multi-faceted foreign policy, it was still politically and economically dependent on the USA. In sum, Turkey from its establishment until the 1990s did not plan to play the role of a regional leader.

Starting in the 1990s, with the collapse of Communism and establishment of newly independent countries in Central Asia and Balkans, Turkey attempted to become a regional leader in both regions. However, it failed in Central Asia because of Russian Federation that still kept its influence on these newly independent republics. Moreover, the Central Asian Republics were not interested in another big brother in the region. Turkey failed in the Balkans since the Balkan countries throughout the 1990s had gone through a violent civil war that prohibited Turkey to act so.[172]

Starting in 2000s on with AKP coming to power and particularly in mid 2000s when the AKP ruling elite and the party consolidated its power in politics,

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[171] Holsti, p. 261.

[172] For more details see Mustafa Aydın, "Foucault's Pendulum: Turkey in Central Asia and the Caucasus", **Turkish Studies,** Vol. 5, No. 2, 2004, pp. 1-22.

Turkish foreign policy-makers attempted to play a regional leadership role with the new pro-active foreign policy of Foreign Minister Davutoğlu. This attempt can be observed in Prime Minister Erdoğan's statement:

...Today, the Middle East, the Caucasus and the Balkans have won as much as Turkey, we will become much more active in regional and global affairs. We will take on a more effective role. We will call, as we have, for rights in our region, for justice, for the rule of law, for freedom and democracy...[173]

Indeed, since the AKP government came to power in November 2002, the Turkish government pursued the realization of the neo-Ottoman doctrine in its foreign policies. The contemporary Turkish leadership attempts to assume a more assertive role of regional player and to mediate regional conflicts. To that extend, Foreign Minister Davutoğlu often repeats that Turkey's geopolitical advantage causes it to assume a set of different roles. In this regard, the Foreign Minister states that:

Turkey is not just any old Mediterranean country. One important characteristic that distinguishes Turkey from say Romania and Greece is that Turkey is at the same time a Middle East and Caucasus country... Indeed, Turkey is as much a Black Sea country as it is a Mediterranean one. This geographical depth places Turkey right at the epicenter of many geopolitical areas of influence.[174]

Moreover, the rapid economic growth Turkey had gone through during the AKP rule, making the country the 17th largest economy in the world, the elimination of the opposition such the military and the opposing parties' impact as a result of constitutional amendments, enabled AKP to strengthen its position domestically. This domestic strength also gave the party and its elites enough room to maneuver in its foreign policy-making. With this strength AKP somehow shifted from the traditional pro-Western foreign policy to pro-Middle Eastern one. As already

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[173] Susanne Gusten, "Mandate for a new Turkish era", **New York Times,** 15.06.2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/16/world/europe/16iht-M16-TURKEY POLICY.html?pagewanted= all, (04.06.2014).

[174] Aras and Görener, p. 82.

analyzed, Davutoğlu initiated his "zero problem with the neighbors" policy, trying to establish a strong economic and cultural ties with the neighbors as well as avoiding conflicts with them. With the policy of zero-problems with neighbors a new understanding of Turkey's historical and cultural roots in its immediate neighborhood, and an end to a forced alienation from its own past began to emerge. Turkey's estrangement from its historical ties in the region is perceived to have led to years of wasted political and economic opportunities. This new regional repositioning has provided Turkey an expanded set of tools for engagement with its neighbors.[175]

Therefore, as part of this policy AKP ruling elite started establishing close relations with the Muslim Arab world. Such close relations with countries such as Syria and Iran and particularly Palestine, led Turkey to keep its distance to Israel. Both Syria and Iran had been enemies of Israel since its establishment. Palestinians who suffered from Israeli violence for decades was happy to see a strong Turkey on its side. For the first time Turkish government challenged Israel for the policies it followed vis-à-vis Palestine. Turkey's first reaction to Israel started with the initiation of Israeli attacks to Gaza in 2006. During this period, the Turkish policy makers did not hesitate to show their reactions against the Israeli government.

Turkish support for Palestine continued in 2009 with the Davos economic forum and in 2010 with Mavi Marmara incidents. Both were strong signs Turkey was showing to support the Palestinians vis-à-vis the Israelis. Turkey's strong support for Palestine through Prime Minister Erdoğan's speeches in Davos and in the United Nations in 2009 put Turkey in a regional leader position in the eyes of the Arab community. Since the majority of the Arab world saw Israel as an enemy and fought in a series of Arab-Israeli wars to get rid of the country, they really enjoyed Erdoğan's speeches and attitude and started seeing Erdoğan and Turkey as a regional leader.

Another issue that showed Turkey as a regional leader for short period of time was the Arab Spring in which many people in the Arab world rebelled against the authoritarian regimes in order to liberalize and democratize their system. Turkey that supported the democratization movements in these countries was also seen as a

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[175] Aras and Görener, p. 82.

role model by some of the Arab communities. Turkey was a Muslim country that had experienced this democratization much earlier than these countries and could perhaps show them how to do it. Erdoğan was welcomed in these countries as a role model. Big crowds joined his meetings in squares of Arab countries. Particularly, in Egypt in 2011 he was met as a savior, as a hero. In his speech in Egypt, the he stated as follows:

> *As we are the people of Arab and Turkish communities we should carry on our togetherness because we are the parts of a big family. Within a family, happiness increases by sharing and sadness decreases by sharing. So, we can look at the future by faith and hope.[176]*

In short, the Turkish leadership in every international platform supported the democratization attempts in the Middle East. Consequently, the regional leadership role conception adopted by Turkey took place in the new foreign policy orientation constructed by the AKP government. Conservative AKP's Islamist tendencies and Turkey's decreasing enthusiasm to become a full member of the EU pushed the country to establish closer relations with the Middle Eastern countries designing itself a regional leadership role. Concerning the Palestinian question, Turkish foreign policy-makers by acting as the guardian angels of the Palestinians and accusing Israelis for these attacks managed to gain the respect of the rest of the Arab world strengthening its attempts to become a leader.

B. Turkey as a Regional Protector for the Palestinians

Holsti as his third variety of national role conception, points out "regional protectorship". He defines the national role conception of regional protector as special leadership responsibilities on a regional or issue-area basis on function of providing protection for adjacent regions.[177] Therefore a regional protector should be responsible for supplying help to its adjacent regions in order to preserve them from

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[176] "Başbakan Erdoğan'ın Tarihi Mısır Konuşması", **Haber 7**, 13.09.2011,
http://www.haber7.com/partiler/haber/784120-basbakan-erdoganin-tarihi-misir-konusmasi,
(20.07.2014).
[177] Holsti, pp. 261-262.

any undesirable event. In this regard, a regional protector should keep itself powerful to provide sufficient protection for the countries in its regional sphere.

Turkey's role as a regional protector actually reflects Turkey's suspects about the peace and security patterns in its immediate surroundings. The Turkish state assumes this role because it desires trouble-free neighborhood relations in its environment. In this context, the Foreign Minister Davutoğlu states that, "…Turkey should make its role of a peripheral country part of its past, and appropriate a new position: one of providing security and stability not only for itself, but also for its neighboring regions…"[178]

In the case of Turkey's role as a regional protectorship particularly for the Palestinians, a historical analysis of Turkish-Israeli and Turkish-Palestinian relations may help to understand the current situation. Although Turkey remained neutral in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War and became the first Muslim country to recognize Israel in 1949, throughout 1960s, 70s and 80s Turkish governments had always supported the Palestinians and Arabs in their fight against Israelis. Turkey continuously supported peace between the two sides. However, once the peace process started in 1990s. Turkey signed economic and military-based agreements with Israel. Although the short-lived Welfare Party and True Path Party (*Refah Partisi* and *Doğru Yol Partisi*) coalition in mid to late 1990s was the ardent supporter of Palestinians seeing Israel as the source of conflict, the military during this period continued its security cooperation with Israel due to increasing PKK terror in Turkey and forced the government to continue its diplomatic relations with Tel Aviv. Consequently, until the AKP's coming to power Turkey's critics towards Israel in the issues of Palestine never went beyond the rhetoric.

In fact, AKP government continued its diplomatic relations with Israel in its early years, in early 2000s. However, once it consolidated its power in politics particularly in the aftermath of the 2007 elections when it received 47 percent of the votes in the general elections, the its leadership started criticizing the policies of Israeli governments and voicing Palestinian demands. In one of his speeches in 2006, Prime Minister Erdoğan stated that, "We were always standing by our Palestinian

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[178] Davutoğlu, p. 79.

brothers and we will continue to stand… The problems of our Palestinian brothers are our problems."[179]

AKP's protector role for the Palestinians actually started with Turkey's support for HAMAS in the Palestinian elections of 2006. During this period AKP governments supported the free and fair elections in Palestine and recognized HAMAS' victory without paying attention to its history of violence. Moreover, the Turkish policy-makers did not welcome the military operations of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) to the Palestinian lands in December 2008. Turkish political elite condemned Israel and called it to end the operations. The Turkish criticisms against the aggressive policies followed by Israel vis-à-vis the Palestinians took a different form when Erdoğan criticized Israeli President Shimon Peres harshly in the World Economic Forum in Davos in January 2009. Erdoğan's famous one-minute crisis showed AKP government's attempt to be a appropriate protector for the rights of the Palestinians. Similarly, during the Mavi Marmara episode in 2010 Turkish government was a staunch supporter of Palestinians by sending aid to Gaza. Foreign Minister Davutoğlu in one his speeches argued that Turkey was the protector of the Palestinian cause and heritage and Turkish people were not planning to stop until they could pray in a free Jerusalem. Moreover, Turkey was ready to support Palestinians in all international forums.[180]

The latest attacks of Israel on the Palestinians in July 2014 also led Erdoğan to make new speeches concerning Israel's brutality. He stated that no country in the world, besides Turkey, could stand against Israel's attacks and urge it to stop. He stated that the ones who commit brutalities would sooner or later pay the price.[181]

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[179] "Erdoğan: Filistin davasını davamız bildik", **Zaman**, 25.04.2006, http://www.zaman.com.tr/gundem_erdogan-filistin-davasini-davamiz-bildik_279629.html, (20.07.2014).
[180] "Turkey is the Protector of the Palestinian Cause", **Middle East Monitor**, 01.07.2013, https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/news/europe/6424-turkey-is-qthe-protectorq-of-the-palestinian-cause, (20.07.2014).
[181] Jack Moore, "Gaza Crisis: Turkey PM Erdogan Compares Israeli Politician Ayelet Shaked to Adolf Hitler", **International Business Time**, 15.07.2014, http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/gaza-crisis-turkey-pm-erdogan-compares-israeli-politician-ayelet-shaked-adolf-hitler-1456748, (20.07.2014).

C. The mediator role of Turkey in the Palestinian-Israeli Dispute

Holsti defines the themes for the role conception of mediator as indicating perceptions of a continuing task to help adversaries to reconcile their differences. Therefore, some countries as mediators should often intervene into the issues related to the regional problems. These countries would accept the role of mediating as a national role conception. Holsti moreover argues that some states in the world take the responsibility for solving and fulfilling the conflicts between other states or groups of states.[182]

Turkey's foreign policy orientation particularly towards certain regions does not indicate a hegemonic role for Turkey but an inclusive approach for building peace and security by taking the dynamics in the region into consideration. Indeed, Turkish foreign policy makers have gained a new self-confidence and political will to pursue peace attempts in the neighboring regions. Turkey has started to host Middle Eastern, Eurasian, and African leaders as well as high-level politicians and officials from the Western countries in order to find solutions to the conflicts in various geographies.[183] In this context, Turkey had got involved in many mediation attempts. For example, in April 2007 it brokered the release of 15 British Royal Navy sailors who had been seized by Iran. Similarly, in May 2007 Turkey also secured the release of Clotilde Reiss, a French teacher being held in Iran on spying charges. Additionally, Turkey found itself dealing with the refugees coming from Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan and Central Asia as their first stop in their desperate escape. As a result, Turkey has played an important role in the resolution of some significant international crises.[184]

Similarly, Turkey has often intervened directly and indirectly into the conflicts concerning Palestinian-Israeli problems. Due to its historical, social and religious ties with the Palestinians, Turkish policy-makers argued that an international solution to the problems between the two sides should be persistent. First, Turkish policy-makers in the early 1990s showed their willingness to settle the Palestinian problem peacefully during the Middle East Peace Conference that started

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[182] Holsti, p. 265.
[183] Aras, p. 7.
[184] "The Great Mediator", **The Economist**, 19.08.2010, http://www.economist.com/node/16847136, (20.08.2014).

with the Madrid conference in 1991 and continued with the Oslo peace process. Additionally, Turkey upgraded its diplomatic ties with the both communities to the ambassadorial level in its attempt to show its enthusiasm to a potential peace agreement between the PLO and Israeli officers.[185]

The peace process between the Palestinians and Israelis did not go smoothly during the 1990s. The reciprocal military attacks of both sides hindered the process. Nonetheless, following the outbreak of the second intifada in 2000, the coalition government under Ecevit's leadership assumed the role of mediator between the Israeli and Palestinian communities. Indeed, the Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit has often called both sides to get back to the negotiation table. He invited the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and the Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to continue the peace talks. During the late 1990s, while the Israeli side often asked Turkey to convince the Palestinians to renounce terrorism and stop resorting violence, the Palestinian side also wanted the Turkish government to convince Israel to get back to the negotiating table or to end military operations.[186]

Turkey's efforts and supports to end the problems between the Palestinian and Israeli sides continued during the AKP government. In this regard, Foreign Minister Davutoğlu following the Hamas victory in the 2006 Palestinian general elections took some steps in the direction of finding a solution for the tensions between the two sides, As already examined, the Hamas victory in 2006 Palestinian elections did not please the Israelis, Americans and the Europeans since Hamas had an armed branch that could resort to violence and did not recognize the existence of Israel. Nonetheless, the Turkish policy makers asked Hamas to work for the political accommodation of different groups within Palestinian politics. For this purpose, Davutoğlu met twice with Khaled Mashal, Hamas' leader-in-exile in Syria. Moreover, Davutoğlu's second visit came as a result of French President Nicolas Sarkozy's request for help from Erdoğan. In this context, Turkey had started a mediation process between Hamas and international actors while maintaining regular contacts with Fatah, the Palestinian Authority and their leader Mahmoud Abbas. Ankara's contribution at this point had been to motivate Hamas to take pragmatic

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[185] Aykan, p. 106.
[186] Esra Çuhadar Gürkaynak, "Turkey as a Third Party in Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Assessment and Reflections", **Perceptions**, 2007, p. 100.

steps to ensure a rapprochement among the Palestinian factions. [187] Besides Davutoğlu, Prime Minister Erdoğan also made every effort to reach a peaceful settlement concerning this issue. For instance, in a speech Erdoğan gave in UN General Assembly in 2011, he stated as follows:

> *Turkey's support of the Palestinian bid is unconditional... We stand ready to work actively for the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the lifting of blockade of Gaza... This is a natural extension of Turkey's commitment to regional stability.*[188]

In another speech Erdoğan gave at Harvard University in 2014 stated:

> *It is obvious that putting the Arab-Israeli dispute on a resolution track would be an important element of overcoming the confidence problem in the region. As the prime minister of a nation that has lived in friendship with its Jewish citizens for centuries and continues to maintain close friendship with both Israelis and Palestinians, I should like to declare this explicitly. What is this? Turkey will not accept any notion that denies Israel's right to exist. Invariably, also, a Palestinian state should live side-by-side with Israel within recognized and secure borders and the security and prosperity of the Palestinian people must be guaranteed.*[189]

Therefore, AKP leadership in every platform supported the peaceful settlement of the problems between the two sides. The Turkish leadership sees the protection of the Palestinian community from Israeli attacks as a responsibility due to religious and historical ties and they seem to be ready to play a significant role in any attempts of peaceful settlement of disputes between the two groups.

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[187] Aras, pp. 10-11.
[188] "Erdoğan: Israeli-Palestinian conflict hinders world peace", **ynet news**, 22.09.2011, http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4126219,00.html, (08.06. 2014).
[189] "Is a two-state solution an acceptable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict" **Harvard Gazette**, 15.04.2014, http://israelipalestinian.procon.org/view.answers.php?questionID=001327, (08.06.2014).

D. Turkey as a defender of peace in the Palestinian Question

Any country can adopt a role conception of defending peace and security in the regional or global system. Being a defender of peace brings some responsibilities to these kinds of countries because they have to find some solutions to conflicting parties' problems in their region. A serious number of disagreements currently exist between many groups and countries in the world. As a result of these conflicting groups, certain states assume the role of defender of peace in literal terms. Indeed, Holsti defines these kinds of states as the countries that seem to indicate a universal commitment to defend against any aggression or threat to peace.[190] To that extent, an individual state may rise as a defender of peace in its immediate surrounding and may propose some rational solutions to the problems of the region. Such steps taken by these states may result with the end of hostilities between the conflicting units. Indeed, in the recent years Turkey's role as a peace maker or defender of peace is undeniable since this country has always felt a responsibility to the sensitive issues in its regional environment.

The last decade in Turkey's political spectrum showed that the country was becoming more involved in defending peace. In fact, the ongoing clashes between the Syrian leadership and the opposition groups, the unstable political system in Iraq, certain aggressive policies followed by Iran especially in terms of nuclear issues, and the other depressing events in the region of the Middle East pushed Turkey to assume a different role. Prime Minister Erdoğan often repeated that Turkey was a country that supported peace and friendship in every platform. For example, in a speech at the ambassadors' conference, he stated:

> (...) We don't keep secrets in our foreign policy. We act with principles, not secret intentions or hidden agendas. All countries with Turkish representations should very well know that we are friends of our friends and no one should doubt our friendship. Turkey is acting on her principles in her current relations with all countries and engagement in all issues across the world. Our steps are within the axis of friendship, brotherhood and peace; and our attitude is based

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[190] Holsti, p. 272.

solely on conscious and justice. We pursue no other intentions, goals or targets.[191]

Turkey's role as a defender of peace can be attributed to the disagreements between the Palestinians and Israelis. The Turkish leadership did not hesitate to give support to the peace negotiations between the two communities and always called the parties to make peace. Here, it should be argued that Turkey's role as a defender of peace and as a mediator for the clashes between the Palestinians and the Israelis may overlap each other. But, the real issue here is the Turkish government always believed that a stable government in Palestine and the subsequent negotiations with Israel would pave a way to the peace in the region. In this regard, the Prime Minister Erdoğan argued as follows:

We welcome the agreement reached on April 23 [2014] between the delegations of Fatah and Hamas in Gaza regarding formation of a national unity government followed by elections in Palestine... We hope that this agreement will pave the way for the formation of a government that will embrace all Palestinians through elections expected to be held at the end of the year, and a just and comprehensive peace in the region. We believe that the unity of the Palestinians is imperative to a lasting and viable peace in the region.[192]

Actually, the Turkish side has always felt uncomfortable with the deteriorating situation between the Palestinians and the Israelis and saw itself responsible for providing peace between these two communities. Nonetheless, the latest events including the July 2014 attacks of Israel to Gaza Strip made the peace between the two communities impossible. Erdoğan frequently criticized Israel for attempting genocide to Palestinians in Gaza as well as the world keeping quiet to

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[191] "PM Erdoğan's speech at the Ambassadors' conference", **Republic of Turkey: Office of the Prime Minister**, 17.06.2014, http://www.byegm.gov.tr/english/agenda/pm-erdogans-speech-at-the-ambassadors-conference/52394, (10.07.2014).

[192] Tülin Daloğlu, "Erdoğan silent on suspension of Israel-Palestine peace talks", **Al-Monitor**, 24.04.2014, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/04/turkey-israel-palestine-negotiations-halt-erdogan-reconciles.html#, (17.06.2014).

Palestinians who lost their lives.[193] Such speeches given by the Turkish leadership can be considered as the role it designed for Turkey as the defender of peace.

II. EXTERNAL ROLE PRESCRIPTIONS FOR TURKEY

Under his analysis of role theory Holsti besides national role conceptions, also point out the role prescription that includes the attitudes' of other countries' to the main actor concerning its potential foreign policy behavior. Role prescriptions concept is not about an individual country's own role description for itself but it is about the attitudes of the rest of the world about a country's potential behavior in the realm of foreign policy.[194] Today, most of the states make some plans on other states and intend to direct them towards achieving a goal.

In this regard, a series of statements of a given state appear as important variables to describe the potential actions of any other state. For instance, a leader of a state may give a speech about the role of another state in the international or regional political arena. If the policy-makers of the other state take the action that was suggested, then the role prescription is actually realized. In other words, the term role prescription refers to the expectations of international actors generating certain types of behavior for the particular state under consideration. The role beholder socializes or learns the expectations of the other in formulating their national identities and identity driven interests.[195] International context influences this process because the ideas, norms, and values generated by international society as well as conjunctural developments and expectations of other actors, should be considered to grasp the external roots of Turkey's national role conceptions and related activism in the Middle East and Palestinian-Israeli relationship.[196]

In this context, Turkey becomes an important state as a result of other states' role prescriptions that are loaded to it. Particularly, the United States and some of the Middle Eastern states prescribe certain roles to Turkey. The roles prescribed to Turkey can be studied from Arab perspective and American point of view.

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[193] Ariel Ben Solomon, "Erdogan accuses Israel of attempting a systematic genocide", **The Jerusalem Post,** 18.07.2014, http://www.jpost.com/International/Erdogan-accuses-Israel-of-attempting-a-systematic-genocide-363347, (20.07.2014).
[194] Holsti, p. 240.
[195] Holsti, p. 240.
[196] Ovalı, p. 11.

A. Arab states' role prescriptions for Turkey

The regional leadership role of Turkey is closely related to its so-called responsibility to protect the Palestinians against the aggressive Israeli policies. In this context, expectations of other states, especially the Arab states from Turkey in terms of becoming a regional leader is quite significant. Turkey's role as a mediator and defender of peace will also be examined from the perspectives of other actors.

In fact, the democratic structure of Turkey with its Muslim identity has attracted the attention of many Arab leaders. In this case, some Arab leaders who desire to adopt democracy in their respective states have taken Turkey as a great example. For example, in one of his speeches, the leader of Libya's National Transitional Council Mustafa Abdul Jalil called Turkey a model for Libya and the other Arab Spring countries. He said, "Turkey's democratic structure is an example to Libya and the other countries that experienced the Arab Spring. Libya will look to Turkey as a model for its own political and democratic structure."[197]

In many aspects, Turkey's regional leadership role and its enthusiasm to become a role model for the Arab states that wish to adopt democracy in their political system encouraged many Arab leaders to give some speeches in favor of Turkey. In this regard, the Egyptian leader Mohammed Morsi did not hesitate to see Turkey as a great example for the new Egyptian government during his rule. In one of his speeches concerning Turkish government, he stated :

> *We need your [Turkey's] help in terms of managing the process after the Arab Spring in the region... Turkey's democratic achievements under the AK Party government are a source of inspiration for the Middle East.[198]*

Turkey's so-called leadership attempt in the Arab world undoubtedly created positive reactions in the Arab world. They welcomed Turkey's this new role by

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[197] "Libya's transitional council calls Turkey model for Arab Spring countries", **Today's Zaman**, 13.02.2012, http://www.todayszaman.com/news-271297-libyas-transitional-council-calls-turkey-model-for-arab-spring-countries.html, (20.08.2014).

[198] "We need Turkey in post-revolution Arab world, Morsi says at congress" **Haber Vaktim**, 30.09.2012, http://www.habervaktim.com//english/16735/we-need-turkey-in-post-revolution-arab-world-morsi-says-at-congress.html, (31.08.2014).

making positive statements. For example, the Tunisian Foreign Minister Refik Abdessalem stated in one of his speeches:

> *The Arab people were looking for an honest and powerful leader. So, the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, under many pressures, became the voice of these people. He has been a new leader in the region. He is so charismatic and the people of the region admire him.*[199]

Moreover, the Tunisian enthusiasm to become a country like Turkey was not only limited to the words of the foreign minister. Tunisian President Moncef Marzouki, who had a two-day visit to Turkey on 28 May 2013, also stated that the Turkish experience of developing its democracy is a good example for his country and added that Tunisia will follow the same path that Turkey did. He said:

> *The Turkish experience will be a reference for us. Turkey is a country that achieved democracy and has a liberal economic system. Turkey managed to stand up against corruption; therefore, today it has a strong economic system. This is a strong country, free of corruption and a good model for Tunisia.*[200]

Therefore, the Turkish leadership's latest attempts to make Turkey a regional leader in the region of the Middle East had some repercussions in the Arab world. It was also obvious that the rising Turkish effectiveness in the regional issues contributed to the Turkish leaders to handle the Palestinian problem. In other words, in parallel to the rising power of Turkey in the region, some Arab leaders demanded Turkey to play a major role in the settlement of the Palestinian problem with Israel. So, in the wake of the Israeli attacks on the Palestinians, the Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas visited Turkey and stated that, "We are seeing Turkey as a base in the Palestinian issue. It is honorable to have a Turkish support in our efforts in the

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[199] Nur Batur, "Türkiye ve Erdoğan, Arap dünyasının yeni lideri oldu", **Sabah**, 30.01.2012, http://www.sabah.com.tr/dunya/2012/01/30/turkiye-ve-erdogan-arap-dunyasinin-yeni-lideri-oldu, (20.07.2014).
[200] "Marzouki says Turkish experience with democracy a good example for Tunisia", **Today's Zaman**, 29.05.2013, http://www.todayszaman.com/news-316877-marzouki-says-turkish-experience-with-democracy-a-good-example-for-tunisia.html, (31.08.2014).

United Nations." [201] In short, it can be easily seen in the speech given by the Palestinian leader that the rising Turkish power in the regional issues during the period under examination was parallel with the Palestinian issue. Until recently, Turkey has been seen as a powerful country and a strong actor by Palestinian officials particularly in the settlement of the Palestinian problem.

B. The US' role prescriptions for Turkey

The deteriorating relationship between Turkey and Israel undoubtedly led the United States to worry about the future of the regional issues in the Middle East. It was explicit that while Turkey's relationship with Israel was getting worse, its effectiveness as a powerful actor in the regional issues had increased. To that extent, the US leaders did not hesitate to make comments about the rising Turkish effectiveness in the regional issues of the Middle East. Indeed, the US state officials often repeated that Turkey was becoming a regional leader. For example, the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stated in one of her speeches as follows:

Turkey is becoming a much more global and regional leader. Its economy is growing dramatically. They are able to reach any country in the region. Alone or with us, Turkey is trying to be more effective in the regional issues.[202]

In many aspects, Turkey's rising enthusiasm to solve the problems between the Israelis and the Palestinians led the US leaders to make such statements. With respect to Turkey's foreign policy towards solving the problems between the Palestinian and Israeli communities, the US President Barack Obama argued in his speech in the Turkish Grand National Assembly that,

Like the United States, Turkey has been a friend and partner in Israel's quest for security. And like the United States, you seek a future of opportunity and statehood for the Palestinians.[203]

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[201] "Mahmud Abbas Türkiye'de", **Sabah**, 18.07.2014,
http://www.sabah.com.tr/Gundem/2014/07/18/mahmud-abbas-turkiyede, (20.07.2014).
[202] "Clinton: Türkiye Lider Oluyor", **Haber 365**, 16.10.2010,
http://www.haber365.com/Haber/Clinton_Turkiye_Lider_Oluyor/, (20.07.2014).

Therefore, even if the US officials were concerned with the problematic relationship between Turkey and Israel, they were ready to support the Turkish attempts to end problems between Israel and Palestinian community.

III. TURKEY'S ROLE PERFORMANCES REGARDING PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT AND MIDDLE EASTERN POLITICS

Besides national role conception and role prescriptions, the role theory also takes role performances into consideration.[204] Role performance is related to the internal and external contexts of identity and role conception. As stated by Ovalı, in role performance, behavioral change in terms of foreign policy should be examined.[205] How internal and external contexts encourage change in a state's roles and related policy preferences are the subjects of role performance.[206] Indeed, Ovalı by stating Holsti argues that in terms of domestic context, revolutions, regime changes, military coups or legal governmental changes may all result in a significant observable shift in a state's role conceptions, due to the new group's perceptions about their nation and the roles attached to this new status. On the other hand, in terms of external context, as a result of interaction with the external others, changes in the roles, identities and policy preferences can take place through adaptation that means changes in strategies and instruments in performing roles.[207]

Not surprisingly, the Turkish foreign policy has experienced a change with the AKP government's coming to power. The party members who are the new government officials took a different approach from their previous counterparts to establish a new foreign policy orientation. Therefore, from the domestic perspective there have been changes in Turkish foreign policies. Moreover, besides the domestic perspective, external dynamics also caused changes in Turkish foreign policy during the period under examination. Consequently, changes in Turkish foreign policy will be analyzed by looking some internal and external dynamics.

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[203] "Full text of the US president's speech at Turkish Parliament", **Hürriyet Daily News**, 06.04.2009, http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/english/domestic/11376661.asp, (26.08.2014).

[204] Holsti, p. 240.

[205] Ovalı, p. 3

[206] Ovalı, p. 3

[207] Ovalı, p. 3; Marijke Breuning, "Role Theory Research in International Relations: State of the Art and Blind Spots in **Role Theory in International Relations, Approaches and Analyses**, edited by Sebastian Harnisch, Frank Cornelia and Hans W. Maull, New York: Routledge. 2011, p.30

A. Changes in Turkish foreign policies as a result of the domestic context

Domestic context shows the major change in a state's role conception due to the new groups' perceptions about their nation and the roles attached to their new status.[208] In other words, a new government's own definition about the foreign policies plays an important role in the domestic context. From this point of view, as soon as AKP came to power in 2002, although at the beginning it followed the same line of foreign policy of the previous governments, it still made some changes in the foreign policy, particularly towards 2009, when Ahmet Davutoğlu became the Foreign Minister. Starting with Davutoğlu, a new foreign policy approach was adapted and implemented.

During AKP rule, as already stated Turkey besides its pro-Western foreign policy also started to follow a pro-Middle East foreign policy. AKP leadership became more involved with the Middle Eastern countries. Moreover, the country's new attempts to have zero-problem with the neighboring countries also contributed to the AKP government to set a new foreign policy mechanism towards the region. Foreign Minister Davutoğlu stated that Turkey have promised to contribute to security, stability and prosperity in a wide range of territories that had gone beyond Turkey's immediate neighborhood.[209] Davutoğlu formulated a more comprehensive foreign policy vision and developed policy mechanisms to tackle the challenges of globalization in a post-nation state age.[210] So, the new Turkish foreign policy was set up in order to handle more issues related to the immediate surroundings of Turkey. In this regard, the country became more involved in the issues regarding the Middle East during this period.

Towards the end of 2000s, the Turkish foreign policy orientation has comprehensively changed with the AKP government's policies since a process of Middle Easternization began for Turkey in the light of new foreign policy attitudes. During this period, Turkey has begun to structure its policies on the basis of a new vision, keeping in mind well-defined targets, and looking to benefit from its geographical position and historical assets.[211] As already stated, Turkey from a

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[208] Ovalı, p. 3; Breuning, p. 30.
[209] Aras, p. 5.
[210] Aras, pp. 6-7.
[211] Davutoğlu, p. 79.

security-centered foreign policy switched to a soft-power foreign policy by particularly making use of the economic instruments in its relations with its neighbors and other states. Diplomatic moves replaced the threatening militaristic moves in Turkey's relations with particularly Iran, Iraq and Syria.

Nevertheless, the new activist and peacemaker role of Turkey in the regional issues resulted with some costs. In this regard, Turkey's pro-Arab and pro-Islamist foreign policies seriously harmed its relationship with the state of Israel. The most prominent example of this situation can be observed as the Davos Crisis. In addition to this, some aggressive reciprocal policies followed by the both states marking this era as the period of weakening relationship between Turkey and Israel. This was the result of Turkey's realization of the policy requirements of regional protector, regional leader, mediator, defender of peace roles that were incompatible with its relations with Israel. As a result, Turkey gradually distanced itself from Israel.[212]

Turkey's role as a regional leader was a result of Turkey's zero problem with the neighbors policy and its establishment of soft foreign policy tools, and its increasing economic relations with the Arab states. Today, the economic, political, and especially diplomatic role of Turkey in the regional issues cannot be ignored.

B. Changes in Turkish foreign policies as a result of the external context

External context of a country can be described as the result of its interaction with external actors, changes in the roles, identities and policy preferences that can take place through adaptation. This adaptation means changes in strategies and instruments in performing roles. Such a change can also take place through elite learning of new beliefs and norms.[213] In this regard, as a result of interactions with some external actors, particularly the Arab states, some changes in role conceptions, identity and policy preferences of Turkey emerged. It can be argued that the increasing sensitiveness of Turkey towards the Arab countries and the Palestine issue created a clear change in Turkey's roles, policy preferences and identity.

From a point of the external point, Turkey's foreign policies began to be shaped through some developments that started in 2003 with the US invasion of Iraq.

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[212] Ovalı, p. 15.
[213] Ovalı, p. 3.

Actually, in these years the AKP government began to give its attention to the changes in the regional issues like the invasion of Iraq. In addition to this, the Israeli-Lebanon war also contributed to the AKP foreign policy makers to involve in the regional affairs. So, the Turkish leadership did not hesitate to condemn and criticize the Israelis because of its aggressive policies.

On the other hand, Turkey's policy preferences have changed in the recent years with the Turkish leader Erdoğan's enthusiasm to carry on a good relationship with the Arab world. Erdoğan stated in every platform that the Turkish nation would always side with their Arab brothers. The relationship between Turks and Arabs is based on politics, economics, and culture.[214] Such statements of Erdoğan explicitly show that policy preferences of Turkey have been going through a major change. In addition to this, under the AKP government, Turkey has also taken some bold and politically risky initiatives in foreign policy despite domestic and external criticisms and concerns. For example, in the recent years the AKP government invited the leaders of Hamas, including Halid Meshal, as well as Shia political leaders of Iraq, including Muqtada al-Sadr, to Ankara in order to express Turkey's concerns and demands, as well as to listen to their conditions and priorities.[215] As a result, Turkey's new policy preferences became Middle Eastern-based with the efforts of the Turkish leadership.

On the other hand, as a result of interaction with external actors, the Arab states and the Palestinians, changes in the roles, identities and policy preferences have taken place through adaptation which means changes in strategies and instruments in performing roles. To that extent, The Turkish leadership has never hesitated to conduct better relations with the Arab countries even at the expense of deteriorating relationship with the Israeli state. So, these kinds of attitudes taken by the Turkish leadership caused the both the Turkish and Israeli states to feel distrust against each other. The most prominent example of the deteriorating relationship between the two states has been the reciprocal discourses of the two states' leadership.

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[214] "Erdoğan: Araplar kardeşimiz", **Habervaktim**, 11.01 2011, http://www.habervaktim.com/haber/165306/erdogan-araplar-kardesimiz.html, (20.07.2014).
[215] Kılıç Buğra Kanat, "AK Party's Foreign Policy: Is Turkey Turning Away from the West?", **Insight Turkey**, Vol: 12, No: 1, 2010, p. 212.

Particularly, with the recent events evolving in the region of the Middle East such as the so-called Arab Spring, Turkey's attention on the regional issues began to increase dramatically. Indeed, the outbreak of the Arab democratic revolts in the winter of 2010-2011 caused a dramatic rupture by forcing a revision of Turkish foreign policy, according to which Turkey emerged as the champion of democratic transformations in the region of North Africa.[216] Prime Minister Erdoğan's historic visits to Egypt and Tunisia in 2011 proved Turkey's sensibility in the so-called democratization process in these states. Furthermore, these visits also resurfaced the suspicions that Turkey, as the heir of the Ottoman Empire that ruled over the Arab world for nearly 600 years, may again rise as a dominant power.[217]

In this new era the Turkish foreign policy makers as already stated became more active in resolution of the regional conflicts. The Turkish officials did not hesitate to give their supports to the opposition powers in states that experience the Arab Spring. Moreover, Turkey also emerged as a new mediator between the conflicting parties of the region. In this regard, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict kept an important place in the agenda of the Turkish leadership. Actually, for most of the Palestinians, Turkey's good relations with Israel were seen as an asset that could work in their favor. Therefore, as already analyzed the Turkish diplomats and politicians often engaged in shuttle diplomacy between the two parties in order to convince the Israelis and Palestinians to end the violence and restart a political dialogue.[218]

In sum, it can be observed that Turkey's role as a regional leader in the Middle Eastern issues dramatically increased as a result of the changes concerning the Arab awakenings in the region. With the inception of Arab Spring, Turkey turned into an example of a role model for the Arab countries since Turkish state have gone through the democratization process much earlier than the Arab states.

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[216] Kösebalaban, p. 93.
[217] Gönül Tol, "Erdoğan's Arab Spring Tour", **Middle East Institute**, 29.06.2014, http://www.mei.edu/content/erdogans-arab-spring-tour, (10.07.2014).
[218] Gürkaynak, p. 101.

Turkey's changing foreign policy orientation with the AKP government coming to power in 2002 created certain national role conceptions that were assumed by the Turkish leadership. This chapter in an attempt to analyze the deteriorating Turkish-Israeli relations starting in mid 2000s on, analyzed these national role conceptions of Turkey in depth through an analysis of examples and speeches. In its analysis of Turkey's role as a regional leader, Turkey's status as a role model country for the Arab world was examined. It was found during the period under examination that Turkey was moving towards playing a regional leader by conducting good relations with the Middle Eastern countries. Consequently, such improving relations with the Arab Middle Eastern countries led to weakening of Turkish Israeli relations. Moreover, Turkey's role as a regional protector for the Palestinians and as a mediator between the Palestinian and Israeli tensions was examined. Once Turkey tailored itself the role of acting as the protector in other words savior of Palestinians naturally its relations with Israel got worse and worse since the protection was against the attacks of Israel.

This chapter also concentrated on the role prescriptions of external actors for Turkey by looking at the opinion of the Arab states and the Palestinians as well as the Americans. Both the Arab states and US officials' attitudes toward Turkey showed that Turkey during the period under examination was becoming a regional leader in the region of the Middle East. As the role performance the changes in Turkish foreign policies as a result of the domestic and external contexts were examined. By looking at these titles, it has been concluded that Turkey's relationship with the Arab world was improving at the expense of declining relationship with Israel. Actually, a low level relationship with Israel made Turkey more autonomous in its foreign policy orientation towards the Middle East giving it the space to maneuver in its foreign policy in the region.

CONCLUSION

The irresolute relations between Turkey and Israel had been going on since the 1940s. As the first Muslim country to recognize Israel, Turkey was neutral in the 1948 Arab War but supported the Arabs in the 1956, 1967, 1973 and 1982 Wars. Although Turkish Prime Minister Menderes made the periphery pact of 1958 with the Israeli Prime Minister Gurion, Turkey was always careful about keeping its distance from Israel. Throughout the 1990s, the strategic dimension of bilateral relations was concluded in a multilayered cooperation in economic and political as well as military spheres. During that period, due to the strategic collaboration and common threat perception, the two sides almost established an informal coalition against Syria, Iraq and Iran. However, this golden age of Turkish-Israeli relations was over with the rise of AKP to power. AKP's new foreign policy of establishing harmonious relations with the Middle Eastern countries, its attempt to resolve the conflicts with the neighboring countries through economic and diplomatic means rather than militaristic methods and its strong Islamist background led to the decline of its fragile relations with Israel.

Other developments of mid-2000s also contributed to these deteriorating relations. Among these most important one was the victory of HAMAS in 2006 Palestinian elections. This victory led to the Israeli attacks to Gaza throughout the 2000s and 2010s. AKP leadership harshly criticized Israeli asymmetrical attacks to Palestinians. Moreover, this fight between the countries manifested itself in the most expressive way in the 2009 Davos Economic Forum when Prime Minister Erdoğan accused Prime Minister Peres and the Israeli government for killing the Palestinians. The rift between the two countries even got wider when Mavi Marmara Flotilla that left Turkey to deliver aid to Gaza were stopped by the Israeli soldiers causing the death of several Turkish civilians.

In the history of Turkish Israeli relations, these interactions have always gone to a very low level. For example, following the 1956 Sinai War and after the Israeli government passed the Jerusalem Law in 1980, Turkey downgraded its relations with Israel. Following the 1967 Arab-Israeli war when Israel managed to enlarge its borders at the expense of its Arab neighbors, Turkey condemned Israel and supported UN resolution 242 that called Israel to withdraw from occupied lands.

Although the relations between the two countries very often came to a breaking point, it did not in fact reach to the hostile stage that it has got in the last ten years. This thesis is actually trying to find an answer to this question. Why did Turkish-Israeli relations deteriorate tremendously in the recent years? There are of course some obvious answers to the question as already stated. For example, the conservative AKP's new foreign policy of favoring the Muslim Middle Eastern countries, have a significant impact on the decline of the relations. However, in an attempt to analyze these tremendously weakening relations through an international relations theoretical perspective, the thesis refers to the role theory model.

By referring to the role theory model as a conceptual tool, this study attempted to analyze the dramatically declining relations between the two countries. However, before analyzing the case through role theory, the thesis also in its first chapter examined the theoretical framework for foreign policy analysis by taking external and internal factors into consideration by including realism, liberalism, Marxism, social constructivism and role theory. It analyzed the role model theory in depth in this chapter. In its second chapter the study in order to understand the current Turkish Israeli relations had explored the historical background of the relations by taking the Jewish Turkish relations during the Ottoman period. The chapter mainly concentrated on the period of Republic of Turkey by examining Turkish foreign policy towards the establishment of Israel, Arab-Israeli Wars, Cold War dynamics, and warming up of the relations throughout 1990s. The third chapter mainly focused on the relations between the two countries by taking the recent events such as Operation Cast Lead, Davos Meeting and Mavi Marmara incident into consideration. The fourth and the main chapter of the study largely gave attention to the analysis of these fading relations through national role theory by focusing on national role conceptions (regional leader, regional protector, mediator, and defender of peace), role prescriptions, and role performance.

The study in its attempt to analyze the worsening relations of the two countries refers to the role theory that identifies a country with certain roles. According to role theory model, the country actually acts according to the expectations and demands these roles create. In fact, these roles are designed by the foreign policy-makers' own definition of the decisions that are appropriate for their

states in the international system. Similarly, in Turkey as analyzed in depth in the thesis the foreign policy-makers of AKP designed themselves certain roles as stated in Foreign Minister Davutoğlu's strategic depth doctrine that includes an integrated foreign policy, a pro-active foreign policy, and presence on the ground, all inclusive equidistance policy, and total performance in foreign policy. Particularly, his pro-active foreign policy forced AKP governments to initiate an active role in the Middle East such as protecting the rights of the Palestinians vis-à-vis the Israelis. Moreover, Davutoğlu's four basic principles which he mainly applied in the Middle East that include providing security in the region, giving priority to dialogue as a means of solving crisis, economic interdependence in the region, and establishing a cultural co-existence and plurality among the people of the region all played a significant role in Turkish foreign policy.

As part of national role conceptions, AKP policy-makers assigned themselves playing the role of a regional leader as can be observed in the speeches of the Foreign Minister and the Prime Minister. Other roles Turkish foreign policy-makers tailored themselves include acting as the regional protectors of the Palestinians and acting as a mediator in the conflicts in the region (particularly between the Palestinians and Israelis), and defenders of the peace in the region in an attempt to protect the Palestinians. In addition to these, the external role prescriptions designed for Turkey by external actors such as the USA and the Arab states put Turkey in a position of regional leader and defender of peace and democracy in the region as can be observed in the speeches of the US officials and the Arab leaders. Last but not the least Turkey's role performance that were deliberated by the domestic and external contexts also put Turkey in the position of protecting the rights of the Palestinians in the conflicts that have been experienced.

Such regional, regional protector, mediator and defender of peace roles that were tailored for Turkey while putting Turkey in a leadership position in the region, making it the protector of Palestinians and improving its relations with the neighboring countries of Iraq, Iran and Syria as well as others such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia actually increased the distance between the Turkish-Israeli relations. The more Turkey was involved in the Middle Eastern affairs and the more it customized itself the role of protecting the suffering Palestinians, the more its

relations with Israel deteriorated. Actually, all of Turkey's neighbors Iraq, Iran and Syria that all had hostile relations with Israel since its establishment (which have never recognized Israel) were happy to see this decline in Turkish Israeli relations since Turkey only a decade ago was allying with Israel against them. Putting it differently, Turkey's improving relations with the Arab Middle Eastern countries worked in the expense of Turkish Israeli relations. Such a role model that was designed by AKP policy-makers was met with enthusiasm by the party cadre since the party's main decision-makers and majority of its supporters were consisted of conservative Muslims in which religion played a significant role in their foreign policy orientations.

The main question here is whether it is still important for Turkey or Israel to continue an alliance or not? Indeed, an answer to this question is ambiguous. Even if there were some attempts by the Israeli side to restore the relationship with Turkey, the Turkish state officials, especially the AKP leadership, did not give up their harsh discourses concerning the policies of the Israeli government. Today, the apologizing process of Israeli government concerning the Mavi Marmara incident may be regarded as a starting point of restoration of the bilateral relationship between the two states. However, in the post-apologizing period there were no efforts from the both sides to strengthen the relations once again showing that neither state is interested in improving relations with each other. Particularly, with the recent (July 2014) attacks of Israel to Gaza, the relations are again moving towards a serious deterioration.

In fact, for Turkish policy-makers keeping the relations with Israel in a literally low level provides Turkey some advantages. First and foremost, by doing so Turkish state may pursue its increasing hegemonic role in the Middle East without facing any problem from the Israeli side. By refraining to enter a good relationship with Israel, the Turkish state may easily attract the support of pro-Islamist Arab states in its attempt to become the only regional power in the Middle East. In addition to this, The Turkish state is currently an example or the role model for some of the Arab states in their struggles to become democratic states. In sum, in the short term both the Turkish and Israeli states will probably carry on their relationship in a low level but in the long run, it seems that Turkey will prefer an Arabic and Islamist

alliance rather than an Israeli partnership.

Although Turkey's relations with Israel may not improve in the near future, these declining relations currently cannot be explained through role model theory since Turkey is constantly losing its regional leadership role. First, it is not clear whether Turkey's self-designed regional leadership role is accepted by all the regional powers or not. Second, currently in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, it is not clear whether Turkey can still play this role. Following the Arab Spring, Turkish policy-makers found themselves siding with one of the fractions in these countries of conflict. For example, while Turkey supported the Muslim Brotherhood candidate Mohammed Morsi as the Egyptian President in the aftermath of the revolution, it did not accept the legitimacy of the military government that overthrew the Morsi regime. Currently, the military-dominated government is in power in Egypt and is not following friendly relations with the AKP government. To that extent, the Erdoğan government has strongly condemned the coup in Egypt and insisted that Morsi be reinstated through a democratic process. Contrasting Turkish government's policies most Arab governments, particularly the monarchies in the Gulf, have welcomed the coup because they saw it as a barrier to similar changes in their own countries.[219] Therefore, as a result of the military coup in Egypt, the new Egyptian government does not anymore see Turkey as a regional leader.

Similarly, breaking down of the social order in Syria that emerged as a result of the protests that were started against the Basher Assad government in 2011 put the Turkish Syrian relations into a different track. In many aspects, Turkey's regional leadership position was challenged by continuation of Assad forces' harsh interferences against the protesters via military means. Indeed, the uneasiness in the Syrian political system and social order caused the Turkish authorities to make a choice of supporting one fraction over the other, the Assad government ion one side and the opposition groups on the other side. Turkish leadership in its attempt to support political liberalization in Syria and with the hope that Assad regime will lose the war soon started supporting the opposition groups in Syria. However, the opposition groups were numerous and it was not clear whether all of them supported

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[219] Stephen Larrabee, "The Biggest Loser of Cairo's Coup: Turkey", **U.S News**, 18.07.2013, http://www.usnews.com/opinion/blogs/world-report/2013/07/18/turkeys-erdogan-is-in-a-bad-position-due-to-egypts-coup-against-morsi, (25.08.2014).

a democratic system or not since some of them were consisted of radical Islamists. In addition, the war did not end soon putting Turkey as a neighboring country in a difficult political situation with the splattering attacks over the border and the hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees taking shelter in Turkey. Moreover, some of the Syrian opposition groups have been using Turkish soil as a base to gather resources to aid their fight inside Syria. Such a situation puts Turkish government in a difficult situation vis-à-vis the Assad government. Although Turkish government's original purpose to oppose Assad government was to support political liberalization and democratization in the country, now it found itself in the position of supporting undemocratic opposition groups.[220] Basher Assad is still in power and he is highly suspicious about the Turkish policies regarding Syria. So, currently there is a lack of confidence from the Syrian side regarding Turkey, which is a serious obstacle for becoming a regional power.

With the expulsion of Saddam Hussein from the Iraqi political system by means of the American intervention a highly fragile state system was established in Iraq. The fight among the ethnic groups including Kurds, Shiites and Sunnis in the country led to the establishment of radical groups like the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). ISIS made the chaotic atmosphere in Iraq even worse in the second half of 2014 by killing hundreds of people. This chaotic atmosphere made Turkish-Iraqi and Turkish Syrian relations even more complicated. The rumor that the ISIS meetings have been taking place in İstanbul is also causing the loss of Turkish government's credibility in the eyes of its neighbors. [221] In addition, Turkish government does not give an image of a strong government with its forty plus consulate staff kidnapped by the ISIS terrorists in June 2014. In this context, while Turkey's self-assigned regional leadership role is at stake; its mediator and defender of peace role are not at a strong position either.

Turkey by openly taking sides in the conflicts in many countries during the Arab Spring (supporting Morsi against the military regime in Egypt, supporting anti-

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[220] Erin Banco, "Why Turkey Is Essential for the Syrian Opposition", **The Atlantic**, 30.05.2013, http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2013/05/why-turkey-is-essential-for-the-syrian-opposition/276389/, (25.08.2014).
[221] "Musul saldırısı öncesi, IŞİD İstanbul'da toplandı!", **IRIB**, 25.07.2014, http://turkish.irib.ir/haberler/dis-haberler/item/319153-musul-saldırısı-öncesi,-işid-istanbul-da-toplandı, (25.08.2014).

Assad forces against Assad in Syria etc.) lost its capability of playing the role of a mediator. Moreover, by directly getting involved in some of the conflicts by giving military aid to one of the sides of the conflict, it also lost its defender of peace role.[222] However, despite all these loss of certain roles, there is one role AKP policy-makers still keep, that is its regional protectorship of the Palestinians as can be observed in the latest speeches of Prime Minister Erdoğan.

In sum, while it was feasible to analyze Turkey's foreign policies towards both the Middle East and Israel through the role theory between the years 2006 and 2011, currently it is problematic to make an analysis of Turkish foreign policies through the tenets of role theory model since there have been considerable changes in both political and social structure of the Middle East region and in Turkey's foreign policy orientation.

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[222] Richard Galpin, "Syria crisis: Turkey training rebels, says FSA fighter", **BBC**, 04.08.2012, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-19124810, (25.08.2014).

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