A comperative study of the Turkey-Israel partnership and the Greece-Cyprus-Israel axis

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May 21, 2014

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Introduction

The South-East Mediterranean is one of the most volatile regions on the planet. Currently, there are several hotspots in the Middle East and many unresolved issues waiting to break out. This study that compares the relations and most importantly the prospects of relation between:

1. Israel and Turkey, and

2. Israel and Greece and Cyprus,

is very ambitious. The complexity of the problems and the plethora of actors in that small region further impedes the effort.

Nevertheless, the main objective of this study is to understand which relation is more valued by Israel and consequently which one will eventually be chosen. Furthermore, what are the conditions on which that decision depends. The secondary objective is to understand the nature of Hellenic-Israeli alignment and to examine its solidity, consistency and permanence. We have to note that in this study the term Hellenic refers to both Greece and Cyprus because of their common origin.

This study is constructed in three parts, each one examining different elements of the problem.

In the first part, we examine Israel and the relations with its neighbours and the world. The objective of the first part is the establishment of Israel's strategic imperatives. To that effect we assess the threats presented by its neighbours and we try to unmask the factors closely related with both the threats and the strategic imperatives.

In the second part, we examine Turkey in relation with Israel. We show the history of their relation and we establish Turkey's foreign policy imperatives. Finally, we discuss the prospect of them being partners anew.

Finally, in the third part, we examine Greece and Cyprus and their relation to Israel. The pivot of Israel's foreign policy towards Greece and Cyprus has raised many questions,

mostly due to the concurrent decline of Turkish-Israeli relation. The objective of our examination is to determine the prospects and the factors affecting that relation.

We analyse the findings of the tree parts and present our thesis on the objectives of the study in the Conclusions. For that effect, we use the "Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Treats" (SWOT) methodology, applying it twice on Israel's case, each time taking account of a different alignment. We comment on the results, state our conclusions and the factors that those are depended on.

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1   Israel's Geopolitic Profile

Throughout history Israel has manifested itself as an independent or a protectorate state multiple times, always covering the same core region and sometimes occupying neighbouring territory. Israel's last manifestation started in 1948, after several waves of Jews immigrating, from all around the world, to Levant, a region mostly populated by Muslim Arabs. From the beginning Israeli leaders realised that they had to fill the power gap

Country	Population	GDP (billion)	GDP(pc)	Military Spending(%)
Israel	**8,051,200**	**288.176**	**35,824**	**7.3**
Syria	22,530,746	59.957	2,802	5.9
Egypt	84,550,000	275.748	3,213	3.4
Lebanon	4,822,000	39.039	9,862	3.1
Jordan	6,508,887	29.233	4,674	8.6

Table 1: Population, wealth and military expenditures (% of GDP) of some Middle East states.

left behind by the declining British Empire that until then stabilized the whole region, especially concerning the Muslim population. During the cold war era, Israel played an important role in the confrontation of the two great powers, having its foreign policy hostage to their will. Even though the Cold War ended, Israel is still struggling with a sometimes suffocating United States patronage.

In the first part of this study we will describe Israel's geopolitic profile, mainly the threats faced, how its geography contribute to the threats, how domestic policy alters the threat assessment, and the role of the great powers. Finally, we'll try to assess whether the discoveries of natural gas off of its coasts alter its strategic imperatives.

1.1   Geography and a threat assessment

In order to enable us to assess the dangers and difficulties Israel is facing, it is important to establish those threats Israel faces from its neighbouring countries and categorize them. The type of threats extracted from its contemporary history are: war on several fronts, strategic surprise, terrorism and threats against population centers, war of attrition,

existential threats (i.e. nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction). Moreover we will describe some secondary threats, mainly those of internal instability and domestic terrorism, but, since they both contribute as temporal factors on the threats mentioned in this subsection, we will study them later on.

Israel's core territory[1] is bound in the north by the Litani river, north-east by the Golan Heights, east by the Jordan River and the desert east of it, south-east by the Eilat-Aqaba desert and south-west by the Sinai desert. These geographical boundaries play a key role in understanding not only the severity of threats toward Israel, but also its consequent strategic advantages.

Figure 1: Israel

The above mentioned deserts, the Sinai desert in the south-west, the Eilat-Aqaba desert in the south-east and the desert east of Jordan River, constitute three buffer zones[2] that protect Israel from attacks from Egypt, Arab tribes, mainly Saudi Arabia, and the Kingdom of Jordan.

The advance on the Sinai desert poses for Egypt difficult logistical problems. The extended supply lines make a military campaign very vulnerable to rear attacks. This weakness has been exploited by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) in the 1st Arab-Israeli war of 1948, when, while the Egyptian forces rapidly moved through Sinai Desert into the coastal plain, the IDF attacked them and their supply lines from the rear in the Negev Desert. And again in the Yom Kippur war in 1973, when the whole Egyptian 3rd Army Corps was trapped in the Sinai Peninsula, the IDF passed

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[1]By core territory we mean the natural boundaries and not the current civil borders.

[2]Stratfor: The Geopolitics of Israel: Biblical and Modern, May 2011, URL: http://www.stratfor.com/analysis/geopolitics-israel-biblical-and-modern.

them by and occupied the Suez Canal[3].

Saudi Arabia, in the south-eastern front, lacks the power to attack through the Eilat-Aqaba Desert and its forces are more likely to contribute to a war against Israel from other fronts. We must note that even though Saudi Arabia contributed with troops to several wars against Israel, lately they have shown a preference in acting through Muslim fundamentalist, probably due to internal tensions caused by the Shiite minority.

Jordan also lacks the power to attack Israel and had for years silently accepted the fact of Israel's existence. From a military and economic stand point, Israel dominates the whole region east of Jordan River.

Israel's vulnerabilities lie in the northern borders. The Litani River is not an insurmountable obstacle for a military expedition, but this vulnerability is resolved because of the economical and political reality of Lebanon. Lebanon always had been a nation of traders having a higher, than region average, economy. Economic development requires stability, thus the Lebanese lacked incentives to wage war against Israel. Since late 1960's Lebanon is in a political turmoil that is plummeting the economy and dividing its people. Lebanon cannot maintain a standing army capable to confront the IDF, so the actual threat from the Lebanese front comes from guerilla forces capable of launching rockets and mounting attacks to Israel's population centers, thereby disturbing the political scene and creating internal tensions. This was possible in late 1960's because of the Palestinian refugees in the south Lebanon and, later, because of a Shiite organization controlled by Iran, called Hezbollah, conceived to fight the Israeli occupation of south Lebanon after the 1st Lebanon War in 1982. In 1978, Israel invaded Lebanon (Operation Litani), in order to clear out Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) bases occupying the south, up to Litani River. Israel occupation ended with the transfer of control to its ally, the

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[3]General Yigael Yadin discusses the importance and the impact of an attack on enemy's rear (especially concerning his moral) in his paper "Strategic analysis of the 1st Arab-Israeli War". We have found this analysis as Appendix on the Greek edition of: Basil Liddell-Hart: *The decisive wars of history*, trans. by Michael Mouzourakis, Europe, N/A, p. 395

South Lebanon Army (SLA). Later, in the 1st Lebanon War in 1982, Israel occupied the capital city of Lebanon, Beirut. Israel returned south Lebanon in 2000, more than 20 years after the UN Resolution 425, calling the withdraw of Israeli Forces to the international accepted border known as the "Blue Line". In the recent years, the Hezbollah was able to infiltrate governmental agencies and the government of Lebanon itself. Rocket attacks to bordering population centers from south Lebanon and the following attack on a military patrol by Hezbollah guerillas was the reason of the 2nd Lebanon war in 2006.

The most severe threat to Israel lies in its north-east borders. Syria is a highly populated region, economically poor and demographically divided between Sunni Muslims and Shiite Muslims, Orthodox Christians and other minorities. Because of its geography, Syria can only project power in the south, since the mountains in the north are almost insurmountable and in the east lies a desert that reaches the Euphrates River. Syria in its turn is vulnerable in the north by Turkey, as we have seen in recent events, having border disputes and disputes over the control of rivers. When there is no pressure from the north, Syria's looking to the south. Once more, geography counterpoises means and intentions. In order to attack Israel, the Syrian armies must pass the twenty five miles wide strait between Mount Hermon and the Sea of Galilee, that obliges them to descend the Golan Heights and then to fight in Galilee before reaching the coastal plain. Galilee is an area easily defendable due to its hilly landscape that favors the deployment of guerilla forces. So, the Syrian armies should control Galilee and protect their extended supply lines against guerilla fighters before the real battle begins. The IDF, fighting close to their supply lines and being able to project their full force to an enemy dispersed on extended supply lines, have the strategic advantage.

Israel lacks strategic depth, but on a closer look we can establish that the threats are limited in southern and eastern borders while in the north, Syria, operating alone, attacking through a gap between Mount Hermon and the Sea of Galilee and having extended supply lines, can easily be countered.

Thus far we have shown that Arab states operating alone meet grave challenges,

mostly due to the advantageous geography of Israel. That doesn't mean Israel is unassailable. We will study more complex threats and later the factors on which are depended.

Israel from the first days of its existence understood the danger of a simultaneous attack from multiple directions. In the 1st Arab-Israeli War of 1948, the newly founded state of Israel was attacked by all of its neighbouring Arab nations. The balance of power seemed to be in favor of the Arabs, but the low degree of coordination between them, the extended supply lines of Egypt and Syria (main opponents of Israel), the importation of heavy military hardware and air planes (against a UN resolution) to match that of the Arabs, the benefit of fighting in interior lines and consequently the ability to project power sequentially in all fronts, turned the tide of war.

In the coming years the balance of power changed even more in favor of Israel, due to its rapid expansion in population and wealth, and the realization of a new military

	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Population	1,370.1	2,150.4	3,022.1	3,921.7	4,821.7	6,369.3	7,695.1
GDP(pc)		1,366	1,806	5,617	11,264	19,859	28,522

Table 2: Development of Israel by decade

doctrine able to counter every coalition of Arab nations against Israel. Because Israel cannot support both a rapid development of its economy and a standing army big enough to withstand an omnidirectional war, it relies heavily on reserves. Needing time to gather and mobilize the reserves, Israel changed its military doctrine to pre-empt an expected enemy attack. The doctrine of pre-emptive attack consists in targeting the most fearful enemy striking both its forces and its moral, giving the necessary time to gather the reserves and to deploy them to the secondary war fronts. In the Six Days War in 1967, Israel pre-emptively attacked, with its air force, the Egyptian forces and, after immobilizing them, turned to attack the rest of the Arab nations. In order for this doctrine to succeed, knowledge of war preparations by the neighbouring Arab nations is necessary.

Lack of knowledge of an impending attack can lead to strategic surprise, thus increasing the effort and cost that is necessary to counter it. In the Yom Kippur War in 1973,

Israel's military and political leaders were strategically surprised by the Syrian and Egyptian armed forces. In the first two days of war, Egyptian forces were able to cross the Suez Canal, border of the two countries at the time, into the Sinai Peninsula reaching the Israeli troops. At the same time Syrian armed forces advanced into the Golan Heights. However, by the third day of war, the IDF bolstered by the called-in reserves checked the advance of the Egyptian forces on Sinai and counter attacked in the Golan Heights. Then they turned to counter attack in the Sinai Peninsula. They did so with such success that they were able to trap the Egyptian 3rd Army Corps in the Sinai Peninsula and to advance towards Cairo. Equal success was met in the north, pushing back the Syrian forces and advancing towards Damascus. This war not only proved how effective the Israeli military machine and leadership was[4], but also the importance of intelligence. The strategic surprise was a failure not only of the Israeli intelligence community but the intelligence agencies of western countries as well, especially of the United States', that, despite the sophisticated structures, highly technological instruments and the political back-channels with the Soviet Union[5], failed to predict the war. The case of the Yom Kipur War was studied thoroughly since then and has been the basis for the reform of the intelligence cycle. The cycle of information is the cornerstone of Israel's military doctrine and to that effect Israel implemented a series of projects from infiltration to enemy governmental structures (HUMINT) to satellite surveillance (SATINT)[6].

As we mentioned above, Israel has an economy that requires stability and peace in order to grow further. There are two factors that inhibit the process of economic development. Terrorist attacks from the Palestinian minority and from the paramilitary

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[4]CIA: The 1973 Arab-Israeli War: Overview and Analysis of the Conflict, in: *Intelligence Report* 1975.

[5]Harold P. Ford: William E. Colby as Director of Central Intelligence 1973-1976, in: *Presidential Series: President Nixon and the role of itelligence in the 1973 Arab-Israeli War* 2013, pp. 15–25.

[6]HUMINT, SATINT and SIGINT are terms used in the intelligence community to describe information acquired from human sources (HUMan INTelligence), from satellites (SATellite INTelligence) and from intercepted radio signals (SIGnals INTelligence).

organization of Hezbollah is the first factor. These attacks destabilize Israel's economy. Another effect is the creation of internal tension and the further segmentation of political system. Steps taken to limit the effects of terrorism have led, in the past, to severe international outcry that isolated Israel from the international community and eventually led to the breaking of Israel's partnership with Turkey. War of attrition is the second factor. Unable to sustain both the economy and an army capable to wage war that would last for years, Israel's economy and political system would take a serious toll. The fear of prolonged war makes the knowledge of an impending one and the role of a decisive victory in the first days of it even more important.

Israel's neighbours are not the only ones that pose a threat to Israel. 1500 kilometers to the east lies Iran, an Islamic Republic that, since the Islamic Revolution of 1979, withdrew Israel's state recognition and made severe threats against it. In recent years, information came to light about the development of Iran's nuclear capabilities. Since then, Israel has pre-emptively attacked Iran's nuclear infrastructure several times, not with its armed forces but with its newly developed industrial sabotage capabilities (i.e. Stuxnet virus) and the assassinations of Iranian nuclear scientists, staying true to the "Begin Doctrine"[7]. However, Iran continues the enrichment process of uranium. International debates, UN resolutions and even measures taken from the international community to force Iran to alter its nuclear resolution have failed. There are those who believe that a nuclear Iran will become moderate in its rhetoric toward Israel and that Iran's nuclear capabilities will act as a deterrent factor to an Iranian-Israeli confrontation[8], but Israel's leaders and most American and European analysts do not share this opinion[9]. They fear that a nuclear Iran

would trigger nuclear proliferation throughout Middle East

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[7]Menachem Begin: "On no account shall we permit an enemy to develop weapons of mass destruction against the people of Israel", 1981.

[8]Kenneth N. Waltz: Why Iran Should Get the Bomb, in: *Foreign Affairs*, July 2012.

[9]Eric S. Edelman et al.: The Dangers of a Nuclear Iran, in: *Foreign Affairs*, Jan. 2011.

and

> *would make the specter of nuclear terrorism a clear and present danger*[10].

1.2   Internal politics and the role of the great powers

The present threat assessment is not complete without reference to the threat posed by political instability that resolve or complicate the issues mentioned above.

Israel is a powerful nation that can withstand the enmity of a coalition of its neighbours, but under two conditions:

1. that there will be internal unity and political stability and

2. that the great powers at the time will remain, at least, neutral.

Like every other nation, Israel is vulnerable when it is divided no matter how many strategic advantages it holds. An internal political conflict can be exploited by some or all of Israel's neighbours. Even lesser powers can become formidable under the right circumstances, such as political conflict and civil unrest. A power struggle severely diminishes a nation's defensive capabilities. Political tension is created mostly by issues that polarize public opinion.

Currently the Israeli political system is comprised by: a legislative assembly called Knesset, elected by nationwide election with proportional representation, and the executive branch, president and prime minister, elected by the Knesset. In Israel's contemporary history a party never had the majority of 61 seats in the Knesset, thus requiring the formation of broader coalitions to elect the executive branch. Israel's political system is highly fragmented and political parties of the minority hold disproportional power over the central political scene. Having to negotiate with smaller parties, the political discussion is exhausted on secondary issues. In March 2014, the Knesset voted for changing

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[10]Benjamin Netanyahu: UN assembly speech, 2013, URL: http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/1.550012.

Party	Votes	%	Seats	+/-
Likud Yisrael Beiteinu	885,054	23.34	31	–11
Yesh Atid	543,458	14.33	19	New
Labor Party	432,118	11.39	15	+7
The Jewish Home	345,985	9.12	12	+9
Shas	331,868	8.75	11	+1
United Torah Judaism	195,892	5.16	7	+2
Hatnuah	189,167	4.99	6	New
Meretz	172,403	4.55	6	+3
United Arab List	138,450	3.65	4	0
Hadash	113,439	2.99	4	0
Balad	97,030	2.56	3	0
Kadima	79,081	2.09	2	–26

Table 3: Parties of the 19th Knesset (elections of 2013).

the entry percentage from 2% to 3.25% in an effort to diminish the influence of Arab, Zionist (nationalist) and Ultra Orthodox parties.

We, already, mentioned that Israel is a developing economy and from Table 1 we can see that it is the most robust economy in the whole region. Israel is called "Startup Nation" because of the great number of high-tech startups. The research, especially, for military projects is well known. Israel's developing economy has been even in the past an attraction of foreign Muslim workers (especially from Africa) that immigrated there. This phenomenon, taking effect in a hostile area that implies the great prestige that surrounds Israeli economy, is an asset. This issue is discussed constantly in Israel and so far resulted in a policy stating that Israel is a "Jewish State", excluding the Arab and Muslim population.

These political tensions have led, in the past, to political conflict and even to power struggles that, in their turn, led to an augmentation of terrorism creating a vicious circle that only the instincts of survival could resolve. The Camp David Accords in 1978 and the consequent peace treaty between Israel and Egypt led Israel to undertake greater political and security risks in order to achieve peace[11]. The "Framework for Peace in

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[11]Shmuel Limone: The Arab Threat: The Israeli Perspective, in: *Research Papers* 37 (Sept. 1995), pp. 9–14.

Middle East", accepted by Egypt and Israel, was never implemented but the accord itself led to an unexpected turn of events. President Anwar Sadat was assassinated by radical Islamic elements in 1981, signaling the beginning of a new type of threat for Israel, that of the subversion of regimes and organizations seeking an accommodation with it. On the other hand, the newly created Jewish terrorist groups mounted successful bombing attacks against Palestinians and even tried, but failed, to bomb the Mount Temple, one of the holy places of Islam. Later, after the Oslo Accord in 1993, the polarized atmosphere over the peace process led to the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin by a radical right wing Ultra Orthodox Jew. Political conflict over the peace process led to terrorism by Jews against Palestinians and the political establishment wishing for peace. However the peace process in not the only political issue that augments terrorism. The occupation of Gaza, the failure of the peace process, the deportation of Palestinians and other reasons led to the 1st Intifada[12] in 1987. A visit to the Mount Temple by a Likud prime minister candidate led to the 2nd Intifada in 2000.

Religious issues impede the formation of governmental coalitions, create tensions with the Palestinian minority and contribute to public dissatisfaction. Israel was able to diminish the effect of Palestinian terrorism, but failed to stop the terrorism south of Litani River by the Hezbollah, with the 2nd Lebanon war ending in a stalemate. The political impact and the way threats contribute to political tensions can be seen in the volatile change of influence of the center-right Likud party in different elections. The status of Palestinians and the status of peace process are of the outmost importance since they have far reaching effects on the perception of Israel by the international community. This perception led to Israel's diplomatic isolation several times in its contemporary history.

So far we studied Israel's geopolitics in its close neighbourhood, but its position is of great strategic value to the great powers as well. In the conflict of the land power against the sea power, hold over Israel, physical or political, is paramount. In order to control the Mediterranean Sea a sea power must hold several strategic positions forming

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[12]Intifada is an Arabic word that is translated into English as "uprising".

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a geostrategic axis. From west to east: Gibraltar, Malta, Crete, Cyprus and Israel are the positions needed to completely control the Mediterranean Sea. A land power, on the other hand, needs Israel for a way out to the Mediterranean Sea and to protect itself from the domination of the sea power. The Mediterranean Sea, with Israel in its eastern border, stands on the western wing of the Rimland, thus augmenting its importance for a sea power wishing to dominate the Heartland.

During the Cold War, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) needed a way out to "warm" waters, meaning either the Mediterranean Sea or the Indian Ocean. There are three ways out to the Mediterranean Sea:

1. the straits of Bosporus through the Aegean Sea,

2. hold of Asia Minor and the plethora of ports in its south,

3. hold of Israel giving a way out to the Mediterranean Sea and possibly to the Indian Ocean through the gulf of Aqaba and the Red Sea.

For the first option to succeed it is required hold over both the straits of Bosporus and the island of Crete that controls the way out of the Aegean. For the second option it is necessary the control of Cyprus. All three were controlled by the West. After the 1971 Syria's alignment with the USSR, USSR constructed a naval base in Tartus, but the proximity of the base to both Cyprus and Israel countered any strategic advantage. The USSR needed to hold Israel, but by that time Israel was bound to the Western world.

Throughout its contemporary history, Israel was rarely able to pursue its own foreign policy, often having the patronage of a great power. The political and ideological proximity with the USSR led to a short lived patronage, lasting until the USSR changed its policy against the Russian Jews in 1953 and its re-alignment with the Arab nations in the mid 1950s[13]. Through Czechoslovakia, USSR supplied Israel, against a UN reso-

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[13]Soli Ozel: Reshuffling the Cards: Turkey, Israel, and the United States in the Middle East, in: William B. Quandt (ed.): Troubled Triangle: The United States, Turkey, and Israel in the New Middle East, Center of International Studies, University of Virginia, Just World Books, 2011, pp. 37–55, p. 26.

lution, with the much needed heavy equipment and air planes that balanced the Arab superiority in the 1st Arab-Israeli War of 1948. From roughly 1953 to 1967, Israel acquired the patronage of France that held the additional advantage that couldn't threaten Israel's autonomy in foreign policy. After the withdrawal of France from Algeria and the re-alignment of its policy concerning the Arabs, Israel and the United States came closer. The gradual approach of Syria and Iraq with the USSR changed the geopolitical reality in the region. Turkey was flanked by Syria and Iraq, so the United States "responded" with Israel and Iran flanking Syria and Iraq, and thus changing again the balance of power in the Middle East. Since then, Israel and the United States project a united front in, almost, every issue in the region.

1.3 Current events and new developments

In today's geopolitical environment there are changes that remove or postpone threats and changes that become more serious over time and need to be tackled as soon as possible. We also witness a, possibly, fundamental change to Israel's strategy.

Syria is in the midst of a civil war, a very complicated matter. Even though it is outside the scope of this study, it is however necessary to understand its geopolitical consequences as best as we can. The Assad regime, mainly the Alawite minority, although hostile towards Israel and pro-Russian, was a stable source of power with which Israel could negotiate and ultimately come to an understanding. But a Sunni revolution became rapidly a power struggle between the Muslim countries. Iran helps Assad regime against a coalition of Sunni rebels supported by the countries of the Arab Peninsula, Turkey and Jordan. The fragmented demographics of Syria became a significant asset into Assad's strategic quiver. He used the Kurdish minority in the north, promising them independence, to counter Turkey's involvement. At the same time, the Syrian army with the Iranian paramilitary organization Hezbollah, and the support of other minorities has been able to defend against the rebels several population centers and to mount a counter attack regaining most of them. Syrian rebels are comprised by several groups that include

rebels of Syrian origin and a majority of Muslim fundamentalist that converged to Syria from several Muslim countries and have close ties to terrorist organizations. From the beginning of the conflict Israel tried to remain neutral, however it has intervened every time that intelligence suggested weapon transfers from the Syrian army to Hezbollah. A new regime controlled by Al-Nusra[14] is a scary possibility for Israel. Israel is equally scared of the possibility of an Iranian puppet governing Syria and of a new terrorist wave from south Lebanon using this time the military arsenal of Syria. Of course an all out war with Syria is highly unlikely, yet this became a lose-lose scenario for Israel, in terms of stability and diplomatic relations with its neighbours.

Egypt, also, has its own political problems. After the overthrow of Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak by the Muslim Brotherhood and the consequent free elections, Mohamed Morsi, a Muslim Brotherhood stooge, came to power with an, as Huntington predicted, anti-western agenda[15]. During Morsi's rule, terrorist attacks began in the Sinai Peninsula and Egypt turned towards Muslim conservatism and fundamentalism. In his turn, Morsi was overthrow by a military coup, led by General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi who became the deputy prime minister, after many Egyptians demonstrated their objection to the Muslim Brotherhood's agenda. Muslim protesters marching inside the Israeli embassy and Morsi's anti-Israeli rhetoric gave Israel a headache, however an Egyptian president coming from the military isn't necessarily a better option if we consider Nasser's pro-Soviet and anti-Israeli stance. Egypt's power struggle is not yet resolved and once more elections have been set.

Lastly, the discovery of natural gas off of the coast of Israel constitutes a new factor that the Israeli decision makers should consider. In this study we didn't mention Israel naval capabilities. We must note that the Israeli navy is very capable and has protected Israel's shores efficiently against its enemies, however the lack of great naval capabilities

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[14]Al-Nusra is an Islamic group that is suspected of having close ties with the Al-Qaeda terrorist organization.

[15]Samuel P. Huntington: The West: Unique not universal, in: *Foreign Affairs* 75 (6 1996), pp. 28–46.

by the Arab states made the need for a navy limited. Israel has been developed as a land power because the most severe threats has come from the land. This is why the offshore discovery of natural gas can alter Israel's threat perception. We won't try to establish the way this discovery might change the threat perception, since that development can lead to either the development of naval capabilities or it can lead to a sincere dialogue with its neighbours diminishing the threats that stem from them. The possibility of energy independence becomes a reality for Israel, that is very important for the further development of its economy and for its energy security. There are of course several issues that need to be addressed. However the possibility of the natural gas being the catalyst for achieving stability and peace in the region is very important to ignore.

1.4   Summary

In this first part we tried to establish Israel's strategic imperatives. We, first, analysed the threats posed by Israel's neighbours and we have found that the geography of Israel counterpoises their means and intentions, but under the condition that those neighbours operate against Israel unassisted by other neighbours or the support of a great power. We, then, moved on to analyse complex threats and showed the way Israel has resolved them in the past. Although only one of those threats was characterized "existential", we can extend this characterization to all type of threats, because of the hostile environment where Israel lies that makes possible its extermination if it ever succumbs[16].

Then, we discussed Israel's internal politics, the role of the great powers, domestic terrorism and the threat of subversion of those that seek an accommodation with it. We also examined all these as factors to our threat assessment, since they are not threats, per se, by themselves.

Lastly, we tried to understand the way the new developments in the south-east

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[16]In this quote "the people of Israel have come home never to be uprooted again" we can see the fear to be "uprooted" and the underlying threat made to those that will try. Netanyahu: UN assembly speech (see n. 10)

Mediterranean alter Israel's strategy. The fluidity in which the state of things is makes it very difficult to predict Israel's course action.

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2 Turkey-Israel relation

Turkey, with a vast territory, large population, a booming economy and the second greatest army of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), became, since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, one of the major players in the Middle East. During the Second World War, Turkey remained neutral and thus was excluded from the conference and the consequent "Paris Peace Treaty", but its important position in the Caucasus, the hold over the Bosporus straits and its influence in the Middle East made Turkey part of the American "Northern Tier" strategy of containing Soviet Union. Turkey was, along with Greece, a recipient of American aid through the "Truman Doctrine" policy and during the 1950s was the largest recipient of American military and civilian aid. Turkey was the cornerstone of the containment strategy during the Cold War, but after the dissolution of the Soviet Union its geopolitical value was questioned. In late 1990s the geopolitical importance of Turkey was re-established, mostly due to its influence in the Middle East and after the 9/11 attacks was perceived as a model democracy in the Muslim world.

Country	Population	GDP (billion)	GDP(pc)	Military Spending(%)
Turkey	76,667,864	820.827	11,277	2.3

Table 4: Turkey's statistics

In this part we'll firstly discuss Turkey's relations with Israel since its foundation, secondly the current foreign policy and geopolitical perception of Turkey and the way this perception altered the relation with Israel and lastly the prospects of that relation.

2.1 Turkey-Israeli relations from 1948 to 2013

Despite the vote against the "partition resolution" at the United Nations in 1947, Turkey became the first Muslim country that recognized Israel's independence in 1949. In 1950, Turkey established an embassy in Tel Aviv, but did not staff it at ambassadorial level until 1992. On the other hand, Israel's embassy in Turkey was staffed completely and was one in four embassies that included a Defense Attaché (the other three were stationed in

London, Paris and Washington). The Ankara embassy played a key role in the intelligence gathering process. The unobstructed and uncontrollable, by counter intelligence officers, presence of Arabs made Turkey the meeting place between Israeli intelligence officers and Arab informants. From the contacts of the Ankara embassy, Israel received specific information on Egypt's military power and technological knowledge on military aspects because of the United States' military aid for Turkey (i.e. the use of underground fuel tanks for airports). The embassy in Ankara played great part in the implementation of Israel's policy of neutrality in the conflict of the West with the Soviet Union. Through the embassy, Israel was having relations with western countries, maintaining the appearance of neutrality[17].

The commencement of the strategic relationship was full of hurdles. The "leftist" Israeli government and its neutrality in the conflict of the West with the Soviet Union made Turkey to consider Israel as the main source of communist influence in the Middle East[18]. In fact, Israel had to work very hard in order to persuade Turkey of its pro-Western sentiments. The stance of the Soviet Union against the Jewish minority, reports from Israel on how its political system was implemented, statistics explaining the actual limited influence of leftist and socialist parties in the Knesset, steps taken by Israeli diplomats to dodge their Soviet colleagues, a loan by the United States and the self redetermination of the Mapai party[19] from socialist to labor, enabled Turkey to accept the sincerity of Israel's pro-Western orientation[20]. In the meantime, Turkey realised the benefits of its relation with Israel. Turkey's wish to enter the NATO became a reality after its involvement in the Korean War and with the help of the Jewish lobby in the United

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[17]At the time Soviet Union supported Israel.

[18]Amikam Nachmani: *Israel, Turkey and Greece: Uneasy relations in the East Mediterranean*, trans. by Sotirios Livas, Papazisis, 2003, p. 151.

[19]The Mapai was the dominant party in Israel since its foundation and until 1968 when it became part of Israeli Labor Part.

[20]Nachmani: Israel, Turkey and Greece: Uneasy relations in the East Mediterranean (see n. 18), pp. 159-160.

States. Israel, also, supported Turkey to become a non-permanent member of United Nations Security Council (UNSC). At the same time, trade between the two countries was booming.

During the 50s, Turkey adopted political, economical, and foreign policy changes. The Democratic Party (DP) of Adnan Menderes came to power, becoming the first non-Kemalic party to govern Turkey. Under the DP government some social liberties were permitted (that were banned since 1923 after Kemal Ataturk's efforts to modernize Turkey), such as the call for prayer in Arabic (ezan), the period of military service was shortened, travel of Turkish citizens abroad was facilitated and even the use of Arabic characters in written Turkish was allowed. At the same time, the DP tried to modernize the economy, supporting the private enterprises and giving emphasis to the mechanization and development of agricultural production. With the United States' economic aid, the DP invested in infrastructure, constructing roads in order to easily deliver the agricultural production to global markets, expanding the power grid and building power stations to support industrialization. In the field of foreign policy, Turkey took the initiative and signed several pacts and treaties. In 1953, Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Greece and Yugoslavia signed the, short-lived, "Balkan Pact", transformed into military pact in 1954. Israel made advances to join the "Balkan Pact" but failed since neither Balkan countries were impressed with Israel's military might nor Israel could be of service to them[21]. The "Balkan Pact" soon failed and Turkey, with the blessing of the United States, negotiated, in 1955, a military agreement with Iraq, called "Baghdad Pact". Britain, Iran and Pakistan joined shortly after. In 1959, after a coup, Iraq withdrew from the pact, which was renamed "Central Treaty Organization" (CENTO). CENTO's objective was the containment of the Soviet Union by creating a front of strong states in Soviet southern borders. The CENTO lasted until 1979, when the new Islamic

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[21]Nachmani: Israel, Turkey and Greece: Uneasy relations in the East Mediterranean (see n. 18), pp. 213-214.

regime withdrew Iran from the organization[22].

This diplomatic mobility of Turkey was generally received by Israel with both delight and scepticism. In particular, the "Balkan Pact" was received with delight by Israel, because of the idea that the "Balkanization" of Turkey, meaning the connection with Europe, would diminish the influence of Arab states and Turkey could help Israel break the diplomatic isolation by helping join the pact. The importance of the "Balkan Pact" for Israel and the reasons to join are apparent:

1. non-Arab states would help Israel to break out of diplomatic isolation,

2. the Balkans are geopolitically close to Israel and

3. the small size of Balkan countries wasn't a threat to Israel's autonomy[23].

The effort made by Israel to join the pact failed as did the pact itself, creating concerns about the future of Turkey. The "Baghdad Pact" came with the realignment of Turkey with eastern countries. Israel argued that Turkey might find itself in the midst of an Indian war or in an "Arab adventure" against Israel[24]. Another point of argument was that the anti-communist sentiments of Iraq and Pakistan were not very strong and, finally, Israel feared that the military aid offered to these countries through the "Baghdad Pact" could be used against it.

The diplomatic mobility wasn't only oriented towards eastern and western states, but towards Israel as well. Until 1958 the relations of the two countries were volatile. The Turkish Legation in Tel Aviv was downgraded to the level of "Charge d' Affaires" after the Suez Canal crisis in 1956, the lowest point of the bilateral relations. The big change came in 1958, after the Soviet subversion in several Middle East countries accompanied by Israel's determination to break its diplomatic isolation. Israel's prime minister David Ben-

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[22]Though, de facto, CENTO was over after the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974.

[23]Nachmani: Israel, Turkey and Greece: Uneasy relations in the East Mediterranean (see n. 18), pp. 211-212.

[24]Ibid., pp. 217-218.

Gurion traveled to Ankara, in secret, and met Turkey's Prime Minister Adnan Menderes. The result of this secret visit was the signing of a treaty involving the sectors of diplomacy, defense, intelligence exchange, trade and scientific know-how. This treaty became known as the "Peripheral Pact" and was part of Israel's policy of the "Periphery Doctrine" that involved relations with non-Arab Muslim counties in the periphery of Israel, mainly Turkey, Iran and Ethiopia. The pact between them remained secret because of Turkey's dependence on Arab states and of Turkish public's sensitivity towards the Palestinian issues. The cooperation of Turkey and Israel lasted until the Six Days War in 1967, when the end of the war found Israel occupying Arab territories, the Golan Heights, the Sinai Peninsula and, most importantly, the East Jerusalem. In fact, Turkey terminated the intelligence cooperation in 1966 and closed the Incirlik Air Base to United States military forces during the 1967's war. Again in the Yom Kippur War, Turkey denied the use of Incirlik base[25].

After the 1967's war, the relations between Turkey and Israel remained only in the commercial field, in accordance with the annual agreement between them[26]. From 1973 to the end of the Cold War, Turkey strengthened its ties with the Arab world and recognized PLO as the sole representative of Palestinians. The lowest point between Israel and Turkey was in 1980, when Israel announced "united Jerusalem" as its capital. However we have to note that the economic ties and intelligence collaboration were not impeded by the hostile rhetoric and public policies[27]. Until the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Israel-Turkey relations can be characterized as an "alliance of necessity" with several ups

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[25]Soli Ozel: Reshuffling the Cards: Turkey, Israel, and the United States in the Middle East, in: William B. Quandt (ed.): Troubled Triangle: The United States, Turkey, and Israel in the New Middle East, Center of International Studies, University of Virginia, Just World Books, 2011, pp. 37–55, p. 42.

[26]Hagai Tsoref (ed.): Israel-Turkey Relations, 1961–1967, 2012, URL: http://archives.gov.il/archivegov_eng/publications/electronicpirsum/israel-turkey/israel-turkeyintroduction.htm.

[27]Ozel: Reshuffling the Cards: Turkey, Israel, and the United States in the Middle East (see n. 25), p. 42.

and downs related mostly to the Arab-Israeli conflict, but since then to mid 2000s Israel and Turkey collaborated and cooperated closely in every issue of concern.

Since 1991 the influence of the United States on foreign policy diminished and the domestic political scene of the two countries started to play the key role in bilateral relations. On one hand, a rift started in Turkey between the Kemalist military regime and the Islamists that eventually led to democratic reforms. On the other hand, Israel finally broke out of diplomatic isolation, because according to Inbar:

> [...]the Oslo agreement with the Palestinians basically improved much Israel's status into the region and made it easier for many countries to have better relations with Israel too, seeing the Arabs themselves have had good relations with Israel[...][28]

When the Soviet threat on its northern borders disappeared, Turkey turned towards the Middle East. It was at that time that Turkey upgraded its representation on Israel to Ambassadorial level, thus inaugurating what is called the "honeymoon period". Common security concerns on the new hotspots of the Middle East reoriented Turkey's foreign policy and forged close relations with Israel, with joint military exercises, expansion of intelligence cooperation and bilateral economic relations.

Those relations were beneficial for both countries for their distinct strategic needs. Turkey acquired, from Israel, military training and products (such as UAVs, electronic systems e.t.c) and, in return, provided the Israeli Air Force (IAF) with airspace, where its pilots trained in long ranged missions. They, also, stood together into coercing Syria to expel the Kurdistan Workers Party (Partiya Karkerana Kurdistan, or PKK) leader, Abdullah Ocalan, and preventing the deployment of S-300 missile system in Cyprus in 1998. Also, with the aid of the Jewish lobby, Turkey was able to prevent, in the United States Congress, the passage of resolutions recognizing the Armenian Genocide.

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[28]Efraim Inbar: Roundtable: The Evolving Relations of Turkey and Israel, July 2013, URL: http://www.turkishpolicy.com/article/906/the-evolving-relations-of-turkey-and-israel/.

During the 1990s, Turkey was diplomatically isolated by most of its neighbours and the partnership with Israel played a pivotal role to the fight against the PKK[29] and the Greek and Armenian lobby that were hostile to all matters Turkish at the time.

The strategic alignment between Turkey and Israel wasn't impeded by neither the Islamic government of Necmettin Erbakan nor the leftist government of Bulent Ecevit. This alignment was based on the "Oslo Accords" and that was the vehicle for the acceptance, by the pro-Palestinian Turkish public, of Israel. The rapid deterioration of the relation between Israel and the Palestinians in the wake of the Second Intifada, coupled with the failure of "Oslo Accords" dissolved the moral basis of the alignment[30].

The power shift that started in the early 1990s was gradually taking effect so that the Islamic Justice and Development party (AKP) won the elections of 2002. The conflict between the military regime and the leadership of the AKP lasted for almost a year and ended with the defeat of the military regime, the disclosure of several scandals that led to the arrest of the army leaders and the ascension in power of the leader of the AKP, Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Turkey's relation with Israel continued as it was, during the AKP rule on Turkey, despite some oratory excesses and the divergent interests and policies. Turkey started to mediate between Israel and Syria with success and between Israel and the Palestinian authorities. Operation code-named "Cast Lead" in Gaza revealed the divergent perception of reality of the Middle East between Turkey and Israel and initiated a rapid deterioration of the bilateral relations, because it was perceived by Prime Minister Erdogan a betrayal of his mediation efforts. Several incidents showing hostility between the two countries occurred, like the exception of Israel from the "Anatolian Eagle" international military exercise, the outbreak of prime minister Erdogan against president Peres at the World Economic Forum in Davos and most importantly the death

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[29]Israel aided Turkey in the fight against PKK by sharing intelligence, especially satellite photographs of Kurdish positions.

[30]Ozel: Reshuffling the Cards: Turkey, Israel, and the United States in the Middle East (see n. 25), p. 47.

of nine Turkish citizens by Israeli soldiers during the raid on Mavi Marmara, a ship part of the "Gaza Freedom Flotila" bringing humanitarian aid to Palestine. Until today their relations remain limited even though Israel has taken steps to reinstate them.

This shift of Turkey's foreign policy and its alignment with the Arab and Muslim world must be explained further, in order to expose its geostrategic vision on the Middle East.

2.2   Turkey's foreign policy from 2001 to this day

Turkey came out from the 2001 economic crisis with great potential that soon capitalized. In the elections of 2002 the political shift, and the consequent power struggle, transformed the structures of decision making in Turkey. AKP, slowly but steadily, reformed Turkey taking control of the political system from the military. With the 2010 constitutional reform, the AKP diminished further the influence of the military regime by allowing the National Assembly to appoint a number of high court judges. Some of these reforms must be explained not by the beliefs of the AKP for a more democratic Turkey, but as a survival instinct against, a formidable foe at the time, the military regime. The prosecution of the AKP leader, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, was the tipping point. The reforms enabled the involvement of the population in politics augmenting, on the one hand, the power of AKP in its struggle with the military regime, but binding, on the other hand, its policies to the peoples' will.

Since 2002 the domestic influence over the foreign policy augmented and became a contributing factor for Turkish policy makers. The deep, since the 2001 crisis, suspiciousness of Turkish people for westernization, the discouragement of Turkey's European dream, the West's Middle East policies, especially the Iraq War and the support on Israel, and the feeling of solidarity for other, struggling with the west, Muslim countries, became powerful factors on foreign policy dissolving, eventually, its pro-West orientation. The AKP-United States relation started with the wrong foot when the Turkish National Assembly refused the use of the Incerlik base for the needs of the 2nd Gulf War. Since

then, they managed to synchronize their policies, but another change in Turkey's neighbourhood contributed into foreign policy's modification. Turkey's alignment with the West and Israel was based on a common security threat perception, in the face of Iran, Syria and Iraq, and its concern on the support of Kurdish separatist movement. Since the Iraq War both Iran and Syria started cooperating with Turkey against the possibility of an independent Kurdish state.

The AKP capitalized on its Islamic profile by initiating the two pillars of its foreign policy:

1. the role of model for Muslim countries and

2. the arbitrator of conflict between the countries of the Middle East and the international community[31].

Western countries saw in the Islamic AKP a functioning model of governing an Islamic country in moderate way juxtaposed of Iranian Islamic model of governing. Since the West's policies on Middle East provoked the enmity of the Islamic world, Turkey became a very important role model and was supported as such by the West. The role of arbitrator, on the other hand, requires the participation, the consent and willingness of Israel. Turkey intervened diplomatically between Syria and Israel and again between Palestinian authorities and Israel. Talks between the parties were continued and progressed during the 2000s. Israel's operation code named "Cast Lead" in Gaza was perceived in Turkey as a betrayal and suspended the mediation of Turkey between Syria and Israel.

Although the United States and Turkey share the vision of democratizing the Middle East, their proposed ways to achieve that objective differ greatly[32]. The Islamic AKP considers itself ideal for commencing the incorporation of the rogue states, as they are

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[31]Yaprak Gursoy: Turkey's Relations with the United States and Israel under the Justice and Development Party Government, in: William B. Quandt (ed.): Troubled Triangle: The United States, Turkey, and Israel in the New Middle East, Center of International Studies, University of Virginia, Just World Books, 2011, pp. 101–118, p. 106.

[32]Ibid., p. 105.

referred by the United States, into the international community through dialogue and diplomatic means in general, in contrast to the United States' policy of establishing pro-American regimes. The AKP saw the "Arab Spring" revolt as an opportunity to bolster Turkey's position as a regional power. The increasing use of populist, anti-Western rhetoric by Prime Minister Erdogan, is perceived in the West and especially in the United States as an alienation from the objective of a pro-Western Islamic democracy, even though there is not an actual anti-Western orientation of the AKP leadership, but just an attempt to augment its popularity[33]. We must note that these constant attacks against Israel and the West by the governing elite train the Turkish public on anti-Semitism and their effort to appear as a protector of Islam fuels their anti-Western sentiments.

Both pillars of foreign policy are part of the "zero problems with neighbours" doctrine. The doctrine, proposed by Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ahmet Davutoglu, worked at first with great success in the Middle East. Despite the nuclear ambitions of Iran, the Syrian claim on waters of Euphrates River, the territorial division of Iraq, the relations with Turkey were improved considerably. The pro-Palestinian rhetoric of Prime Minister Erdogan and his personality contributed to the creation of a milder climate[34]. The same process started in Caucasus with Armenia. When the "Arab Spring" revolts exploded, Turkish analysts concluded that these revolts would lead to democratization in the region without affecting Turkey, so the AKP leadership supported them.

Simultaneously, Turkey started a soft power campaign, using the Turkish TV series and tourist agreements with Arab states. For a long time Turkey was relying heavily on hard power and the military regime was seen by Turkey's neighbours as a threat. Since the ascension of the AKP to power the criticism by its neighbours was diminished and eventually its goodwill was accepted. The "zero problems" coupled with the soft power

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[33]Gursoy: Turkey's Relations with the United States and Israel under the Justice and Development Party Government (see n. 31), p. 110.

[34]Mustafa Kibaroglu: What Went Wrong with the 'Zero Problem with Neighbors' Doctrine?, in: *Turkish Policy Quarterly* 11-3 (2012), pp. 85–93.

campaign gave Turkey political capital to continue its arbitration in the Middle East.

The intensification of the struggle between Syrian president Bassar Al-Assad and the Islamic fundamentalists surprised Turkey. The same thing happened after the 2013 military coup against president Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood leaders' arrests in Egypt. In the Armenian front, bilateral relations were vetoed by Azerbaijan because of the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute. Recently the success of the doctrine and Ahmet Davutoglu himself came into question by members of the AKP.

The antagonists of Turkey as regional powers are Iran and Egypt. Currently, Egypt stands in the middle of a political turmoil and it is unknown when Egypt'll regain its pace. On the other hand, stands Iran. Turkey's economic ties and the cooperation on the Kurdish issue with Iran create a partnership between them, but, as both are the rising non-Arab countries in the Middle East, they are bound to have conflicting interests. Turkey, using soft power, was able to influence the Arab states more than Iran with its anti-Western and anti-Israeli stance[35][36]. Contributing factor to the success of Turkey is the fact that Sunni Muslims are the majority in the Middle East while Shiite are the minority. Until recently the struggle in the Middle East was between the anti-Western states, mainly Iran and Syria, and the pro-Western Israel, Turkey and some Arab states, but since the visit of prime minister Erdogan in Iran things have changed. After the presidential elections in Iran and the ascension to power of the moderate Hassan Rouhani, Iran abandoned the hard line and it is making progress in persuading the international community of the sincerity of its intentions concerning the nuclear program. The West appears willing to attempt a leap of faith and remove the sanctions that plague the Iranian economy and society. Iran's influence over Shiite Syria and the Hezbollah augments its

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[35]Since 2010, Turkey added to its arsenal the same rhetoric used by Iran towards Israel. This can be explained as an effort of Turkey to further diminish Iran's influence.

[36]Shlomo Brom: The Israeli-Turkish Relationship, in: William B. Quandt (ed.): Troubled Triangle: The United States, Turkey, and Israel in the New Middle East, Center of International Studies, University of Virginia, 2011, pp. 57–64, p. 62.

strategic importance, since the West lost the ability to interfere successfully in their policies, and thus Iran might gain the place Turkey wanted for herself. This struggle will influence the power dynamics in the region and it may contribute in Turkey's decision to ameliorate its relation with Israel. Of course, we currently lack any evidence about a regional power struggle, but the readmission of Iran into the international community will definitely change the dynamics of the region.

2.3   Prospects for a new Turkish-Israeli partnership

The establishment of Turkey as a regional power is currently in suspension, but the potential for it remains. The Turkish economy is holding against the pressure of economic crisis (Turkey is in the G20) and its population augments rapidly. Both are elements that refer to the potential of a future domination over the Middle East.

Israel appears to have abandoned the "Peripheral Doctrine", for strategic ties even farther from it (to super-periphery)[37], but not with great success. The problematic relation with Turkey resulted in the alienation from the United States. The continuous bombardment of Palestinian territories, the suspension of dialogue with the Palestinian authorities and its stance on Iranian efforts to remove the sanctions, make the reconciliation with Turkey unattainable for the foreseeable future, thus Israel stands alone in the Middle East.

We must note two important findings. The first is that, even though their bilateral relations are hostile, the economic ties between the two countries remain intact and the supply, as it was stated in their accords, of military equipment has completed. The second thing of notice is the asymmetry of Turkish-Israeli relation[38]. That means that

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[37]Daniel Levy: Israel and Turkey: Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy, in: William B. Quandt (ed.): Troubled Triangle: The United States, Turkey, and Israel in the New Middle East, Center of International Studies, University of Virginia, Just World Books, 2011, pp. 119–126, p. 124.

[38]Efraim Inbar: The Resilience of Israeli-Turkish Relations, in: *Israel Afairs* 11-4 (Oct. 2005), pp. 591–607.

Israel needs Turkey far more than Turkey needs Israel, thus making Israel susceptible to Turkey's foreign policy. This asymmetry was noted by several analysts as a point of concern for Israel's decision makers.

Recent events in Muslim World, and in the Middle East specifically, has demonstrated that any prediction of the future is highly endangered by the unstable environment in these regions. Having that in mind, we will only state that the amelioration of relations between Israel and Turkey are depended on the developments concerning the Palestinians and those concerning Iran and Turkey. Their relation, under the right circumstances, has the potential of regaining its former glory, but, as the title of this subsection states, it must be a partnership and Turkey would have to abandon its hegemonic ambitions.

2.4 Summary

The objective in this, second, part was to understand the nature of Turkish-Israeli relation, from the past to the present and into the future. We showed the difficulty, for Israel, to establish even an informal relation with Turkey and the great lengths it went to persuade Turkey of its sincere intentions. We, also, showed the important role the embassy in Ankara played in the survival of Israel in terms of intelligence gathering and in maintaining, until about 1967, the facade of neutrality. We investigated the factors of Turkey's reluctance on inaugurating formal relations with Israel.

We, then, moved to the examination of Turkish foreign policy and we tried to extract its reasons of breaking the alignment with Israel in the end of 2000s. We found out that the augmented role of the domestic policies over the foreign policy, since the oustment of the military regime from power, the pro-Palestinian and anti-Western, anti-Semetic sentiments of Turkish public and most importantly the effort made to become a regional power played a key role to Turkey's realignment in the Middle East.

Lastly, we tried to establish the prospects of Turkish-Israeli relation, taking in account the asymmetry of their needs for it, as it is showed in the history of the bilateral relation. We, finally, deduced the conditions under which that relation can be reinstated, mainly

Iran's readmission into the international community and its future stance towards Israel.

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3   Greece-Cyprus-Israel axis

In this part we will study Greece, Cyprus and the way they relate to Israel. The discovery of natural gas fields south of Cyprus into Cypriot and Israeli Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and the strategic re-alignment of Israel changed the dynamics in the Eastern Mediterranean. The decision to study together Greece and Cyprus is based on their common Hellenic roots, on the long history of solidarity and brotherhood between them and their alignment on almost every important issue. In fact, there was a period that Greece supported and supplied Cypriots with officers and arms to resist the British occupation of the island. Politicians and the public demanded the union or "Enosis" of Cyprus with Greece until the invasion and occupation of northern Cyprus by Turkey.

Country	Population	GDP	GDP(pc)	Military Spending(%)
Greece	10,815,197	182.054	21,857	2.6
Cyprus	1,117,000	21.827	24,761	2.1

Table 5: Greece's figures are measured in euros while Cyprus' in dollar.

We will study, firstly, the history and the current status of their relations with Israel, secondly the decision making process of Greece and Cyprus and the way that relates to Israel and we will finally try to deduce the prospects of this relationship.

3.1   History of Israeli-Hellenic relation

For the purposes of this study we will confine our historic references to contemporary manifestations of Greece, Cyprus and Israel starting at 1948. During that time, Greece was in the middle of a bloody civil war between the pro-Western government and remnants of communist insurgents. Cyprus was under British occupation with few voices speaking of independence and union with Greece. On the other hand, Israel, was surrounded by Muslim states sympathizing with the Palestinians and was fighting its independence war.

Greece established a legation in Israel in 1949, thus recognizing it, de facto, mainly because of its interests on the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Jerusalem. Besides that,

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the Greek government wasn't willing to establish stronger ties with Israel denying its de jure recognition. Open issues, such as property problems between the religious minorities and the liberation of Jew prisoners who fought in the Civil War in the communist side, were eventually resolved causing in the meantime friction between the two countries. During the 1st Arab-Israeli war, Greece confiscated two air planes, from Czechoslovakia, en route to Israel that landed in Greece to refuel and posed obstacles for the passage of immigrating Jews en route to Israel. The need for votes in the UN for the Cyprus problem persuaded the Greek government of the necessity for good relations with Arab states, sacrificing the prospect of a relation with Israel.

Greece's foreign policy was, of course, in contrast to the public's sentiments. The best record of the divergent views between public and government comes from the welcoming of the Israeli flotilla at the port of Piraeus, after the earthquake in Zante and Cephalonia, in 1953, where they organized relieving actions. We must note that there were many recorded instances of solidarity between the Greek Christian people and the Jewish minority during the German occupation of Greece, especially in Zante, where all Jews survived, and in Thessaloniki[39].

The diplomatic isolation of Israel created the need of allies in its periphery, but Greece was not willing to oblige. The indifference of Greece, the support on Palestine and the refusal to recognize Israel, despite United States intervention, were perceived as hostile and Israel thought of suspending diplomatic relations[40]. The bad relation had passed on to the United Nations where they voted against the other. Israel, at one point, refused to vote for Greece to become a non-permanent member of the Security Council, but the intervention of the United States, fearing that another country from the Soviet block would take its place, resolved the matter for Greece. The conflict was continued in

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[39]Mark Mazower: *Salonica, City of Ghosts: Christians, Muslims and Jews, 1430-1950*, Alfred A. Knopf, 2004, pp. 408-411.

[40]Amikam Nachmani: *Israel, Turkey and Greece: Uneasy relations in the East Mediterranean*, trans. by Sotirios Livas, Papazisis, 2003, pp. 248-249.

Washington and was held by the Jewish and Hellenic lobbies. The result was the defeat of the Hellenic lobby, however both sides came to the conclusion that a fight between them was counter productive and eventually came to an understanding[41]. The bilateral relations remained persistently "cold" until the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Cyprus, on the other hand, recognized Israel in 1961 right after its own independence. However, their bilateral relation soon devolved on account of Cyprus' problems with Turkey and the need of the Arab state's votes in the UN. Cyprus' support on Palestine and Israel's defense relationship with Turkey created friction until 1993 when their relations began to improve.

In the May of 1990, Greece, finally, recognized Israel. After that, Greece managed to sign the "Security Agreement" in 1992, the "Agreement of Cooperation" in 1994 and the "Additional Agreement in Military and Technical Cooperation" in 1999. Nevertheless, these agreements were not implemented, mostly because of Greece's unwillingness to commit to an alignment with Israel and because of Greece's wish to monopolize that relation on the expense of Turkey. Greece tried to play a "zero sum" game against Turkey asking Israel to align with one of them. That policy eventually backfired since Israel considered Turkey a more reliable and much more useful ally.

The shift of Turkish foreign policy and the ascension of AKP in power, Israel's inability to establish a dialogue for peace with the Palestinians, the escalation of conflict with the Hezbollah and Iran and the change of dynamics in the Middle East after the invasion in Iraq, made Israel anxious to seek supporters outside its close periphery during the 2000s. The first visit by Israeli head of state in Greece took place in 2006 and bilateral relations improved while Turkish-Israeli relation declined. After the Mavi Marmara incident the Greek Prime Minister visited Israel in order to improve bilateral relations. Several visits followed by both Israeli and Greek officials. In September 2011 the "Principal Memorandum of Understanding" was signed in Tel Aviv, between the Defense Ministers of Greece

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[41]Nachmani: Israel, Turkey and Greece: Uneasy relations in the East Mediterranean (see n. 40), pp. 243-244.

and Israel. This memorandum reaffirmed the previously signed agreements that were not implemented and additionally established a "Senior Joint Working Group" in order to "periodically discuss issues of mutual interests"[42]. As it is stated in this document:

> *Recognizing and sharing the common vision of building strong defence, military and strategic capabilities in both countries*[43],

Greek-Israeli cooperation includes sectors other than defense and military, such as technology, telecommunications, agriculture, economy, cultural and energy collaboration. Energy plays key role in bilateral relation since the discovery of natural gas in Cypriot and Israeli EEZ and the plans for the placement of a submerged power cable.

The practical aspect of the alignment is shown in the military cooperation. In October 2010 Greece's and Israel's air forces jointly trained in Greece, thus inaugurating the military cooperation. Greece, wishing to keep good relations with Israel, thwarted the planned departure of the second Gaza flotilla in 2011. In November, both air forces trained in Israel, again in 2012 in Greece and in November 2013 Israel hosted its biggest aerial manoeuvre drill named "Blue Flag" with the participation of Greece, United States, Italy and observers from Cyprus and Bulgaria. Navies held their own training exercise since 2011 with the participation of the United States Navy called "Noble Dina". The most notable aspect of "Noble Dina 2014" was the simulation of offshore natural gas and oil platform defense. The rise of Greece's importance for Israel led to reports on a decision by Israel's Ministry of Defense to close their defense attaché office in Switzerland and open a new one in Greece. The reason for that development is the growing military cooperation between the two countries[44].

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[42]Hellenic Ministry of National Defence et al.: Ratification of the Principal Memorandum of Understanding, 2013, URL: `http://www.hellenicparliament.gr/UserFiles/c8827c35-4399-4fbb-8ea6-aebdc768f4f7/8061742_1.pdf`, p. 4.

[43]Ibid., p. 3.

[44]Amir Rapaport: Closing Military Attaché Office in Switzerland, Opening in Greece, Apr. 1, 2014, URL: `http://www.israeldefense.com/?CategoryID=483&ArticleID=2843`.

Greece's relation with Israel is not limited in the East Mediterranean, but extends over the Atlantic. In Washington, the cooperation between the "American Jewish Committee" and the Hellenic lobby[45] produced the "Congressional Hellenic-Israeli Alliance", a new joint action committee in the United States Congress that has the potential of becoming the most influential pressure group in Congress by 2014.

Cyprus has a different relation with Israel, based more on economic ties and in particular on natural gas mining and distribution. Prime Minister Netanyahu's visit in Cyprus in 2012 for the signing of a "Search and Rescue Agreement" was very notable since it was the first visit in Cyprus by an Israeli head of state. There are open issues between these countries concerning the way of distribution of natural gas including several game changing options as is a pipeline through Turkey or a floating Liquefied Natural Gas operation (fLNG).

3.2 Greece and Cyprus foreign policy

Before we actually establish the strategic imperatives of Greek foreign policy, it would be of value to understand the peculiar nature of the Greek foreign policy system.

During the 1980s the Greek foreign policy was centralized in the face of Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, in essence the foreign policy was conceived by them and carried out by the diplomatic network of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The, sometimes, short lived Ministers and Prime Ministers generated an image of volatile policy making that was perceived by outside observers as "reactionary" and constantly left a feeling of unpredictability and unreliability[46]. The core of foreign policy making was outside of the diplomatic service. Equally excluded was the military in the post 1974 era. Diplomats rarely questioned the established course of foreign policy and even less often

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[45]Some members of the Hellenic community and the "American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA)".

[46]Thanos Dokos: Who Lost Greece? The Geopolitical Consequences of the Greek Crisis, 2012, URL: http://www.eliamep.gr/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/dokos-pdf.pdf, p. 8.

proposed alternative strategic scenarios allowing a personality-centered policy making process[47]. The friction, created by this process, between state officials and politicians led to the foreign policy being used to ensure electoral votes for the governing party. The result was that the domestic issues influenced disproportionally the Greek foreign policy.

The Greek foreign policy has a limited, almost shy, presence even in its close environment, a presence that cannot be accounted for by the influence of the internal political scene alone. During the Cold War Greece's affinity to the Western world (first its participation in NATO and later as part of the European Union (EU)) left little space of implementing a distinct foreign policy. The long history of foreign intervention, even before the Cold War, coupled with its limited resources prevented Greece to develop a distinct and dominant role in the Balkans, the Eastern Mediterranean and even the world. Instead, Greece formulated its foreign policy priorities mostly focusing on military capacity, security and negotiation with foreign leaders, priorities that were characterized as "high politics" further diminishing the role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs[48].

The Greek foreign policy is divided into two categories. The first concerns issues that do not affect Greece directly such as Arab-Israeli conflict and the war of Iraq, and the second involves issues of national importance, such as Cyprus and Turkey, which dominate the foreign policy agenda. This bipolar understanding of world issues ceased to work after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, when countries were more at liberty to pursue other policies ranging from the clearing of minefields to humanitarian aid in regions at crisis. The realization of the changing nature of the foreign policy agenda occurred in 1990s and resulted in the acceptance of actors outside of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs like Non Governmental Organizations (NGO). Those NGOs, acting under the aegis of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, changed the decision making process. However the arbitrary nature

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[47]Eleni Georgiadou: Re-evaluating the Greek Foreign Policy System in a Transforming World Politics, PhD thesis, Loughborough University, 2011, p. 88.

[48]Using the phrase "high politics" they mean those aspects of foreign policy that are being managed by the Prime Minister without the participation of the diplomatic community.

of choosing the NGOs that would benefit with financial aid from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and revelations of financial mismanagement led recently in the depreciation of NGOs.

In recent years Greece made an effort to pursue different objectives such as environmental issues and economic diplomacy, but keeps returning to the same unresolved issues, mainly the relations with Turkey and the disputes over Aegean, FYROM and Cyprus' problems. The economic crisis that infests Greece created insecurity when dealing with issues of national importance and the public appear suspicious and unsupportive of efforts dealing with them at the present time. The only progress in foreign policy was made with the establishment of the relation with Israel, which was presented as a strategic relation against Turkey, directly linked with a "zero sum" game. Even that issue divided the Greek public into those hopeful of the relation and those suspicious of Israeli incentives.

Since 1999, Greece actively supports Turkey's European perspective strongly believing that the accession process and the respect of international law and human rights that follows would alter Turkey's foreign policy in bilateral issues. Despite the détente between Greece and Turkey in the 2000s, foreign policy in every issue takes in account the status of Turkish-Greek relation and is very careful not to trend on Turkey's strategic interests. Dominant, in bilateral issues, is the opinion that the passing of time works in Greece's favor.

Cyprus, on the other hand, has immediate problems. About forty percent of the island is under Turkish occupation and the United Kingdom holds two bases on the island. Several proposals dealing with the coexistence of Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots failed to pass by the Cypriot parliament or popular vote. Cyprus feels the pressure of Turkey, knowing that there isn't anything she can do. The doctrine of "Common Defense Area" was implemented with Greece and eased some of the pressure but didn't resolve the issues. For years, both governments, pursued the accession of Cyprus into the EU and the realisation of this objective was a great success of Greek and Cypriot foreign policy.

The economic crisis hits Cyprus hard. Eventually the EU's and the IMF's intervention was necessary. Cyprus was the first member of the EU in which the "Bail In" policy was implemented, resulting to cuts from banks deposit accounts and signalling the end of Cyprus' banking paradise. In contrast with the economic crisis stood the discovery of natural gas inside the Cypriot EEZ. Both Cyprus and Israel are concerned on how natural gas will reach the European market. There are several proposals, however none is currently chosen.

3.3   Prospects of the Israel-Cyprus-Greece axis

The developments in eastern Mediterranean leave the future of the Israel-Cyprus-Greece axis free of historical burdens. The lack of the peace process is a minor inconvenience for Greece, mostly because Greece has a long history of relations with the Arab states and does not wish to sacrifice them without a reason. However, Greece does not seem to wish any involvement in the Arab-Israeli conflict, even though several analysts believe that Greece would be able to mediate between them. More pressing issues are those concerning the mining of natural gas and its distribution. Greece favors the more costly, yet strategically superior option of a pipeline connecting Cyprus with Crete and the Peloponnese. Cyprus favors an LNG terminal in Vasilikos. Turkey wishes a pipeline that passes through its territory and Israel evaluates its options, including selling the natural gas to its neighbours and using an fLNG off of its coasts. It is very difficult to predict what the involved countries will eventually consider as the better option.

Until now Greece was able to stay in the "sidelines" of the Transatlantic and Mediterranean chessboard, but it's a choice Greece would have eventually to face and decide if Greece wishes to remain in the "sidelines" or claim a regional role. In the economic field Greece became more extroverted and perhaps the same is true in the field of foreign relations. The scarcity, however, of resources on Greece's foreign policy, especially since the beginning of the economic crisis, makes any attempt to understand the axis of Greece's decision makers thought process a very difficult task. We still find Turkey in the

center of Greece foreign policy, however the regular military exercises with Israel give an essence of resolution in the pursuit of its distinct foreign policy. The diplomatic isolation and the pressure from the United States to resolve the Palestinian issue made Israel, recently, distrustful of western intervention. The good relations of Cyprus and Greece with the the United States and the EU, coupled with the slow but steady improvement of the economy, make them excellent mediators for Israel (and for the other states of the Middle East), if they wish to pursuit such a role. They, also, can mediate between the Arab states and Israel, especially concerning the Palestinian issue[49]. Greece and Cyprus can break the diplomatic isolation of Israel and Israel should be mindful of their wavy relation with Turkey.

3.4   Summary

In this third and final part of the study we tried to get an insight on Greece's and Cyprus' foreign policy structures. We, again, gave an account of the past relations between Greece, Cyprus and Israel, and we extracted that the dominating factor was, and still is, Greece's and Cyprus' relation with Turkey.

Then, we moved on and explained the decision making process of Greece and the factors affecting that process. That is the control of domestic policy over the foreign policy, the administrative nature of Greek foreign policy, the personality-centered policy making process e.t.c.

Lastly, we tried to assess the prospects of a Greece-Cyprus-Israel axis connecting the Middle East with Europe. We unmasked the opportunities and the threats that weigh heavily on this relation, such as the discovery of natural gas and the unresolved issues concerning Cyprus' Turkish occupation and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict respectively.

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[49]Ioannis Mazis: Developments on Geostrategic Environment of Israel and of Middle East: Prospects of stabilization after the election of Barack Obama, URL: `http://old.turkmas.uoa.gr/mazissite/greekpubs/geostratigiki_15_revised_mazis.pdf`, p. 25.

Conclusions

We will analyse our findings using the SWOT methodology. The first SWOT analysis concerns the relation of Israel with Turkey. The second SWOT analysis concerns the Greece-Cyprus-Israel axis. The SWOT analysis can be broken into two parts: the Internal and the External. Strengths and Weaknesses are Internal to Israel while Opportunities and Threats are External.

Table 6: SWOT analysis of Turkish-Israeli relation

	Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Internal	Developing economy. Technologically literate (Startup Nation). Military Superiority in terms of equipment, training, leadership and doctrine. Democratic culture in solving internal problems.	Open issues with the Palestinians. Jewish state between Muslim countries. Fragmented political system. Domestic terrorism.
	Opportunities	**Threats**
External	Natural gas discoveries. *Turkish mediation between Israel and its neighbours.* *Israeli-Palestinian conflict loses the religious character.*	*Submission to Turkey's foreign policy.* The volatile environment and the danger of the Arab Spring revolts.

The first SWOT analysis takes in account an alignment of Israel with Turkey. We can see that that relation provides both opportunities and threats for Israel. This analysis doesn't include the factors required for the realisation of this alignment, but studies only the effect of it.

Again, in the SWOT analysis on Greece-Cyprus-Israel axis, we are not interested on factors that impede the realisation of this policy.

Table 7: SWOT analysis of Greece-Cyprus-Israel axis

	Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Internal	Developing economy. Technologically literate (Startup Nation). Military Superiority in terms of equipment, training, leadership and doctrine. Democratic culture in solving internal problems.	Open issues with the Palestinians. Jewish state between Muslim countries. Fragmented political system. Domestic terrorism.
	Opportunities	**Threats**
External	Natural gas discoveries. *Hellenic mediation between Israel and its neighbours.* *Hellenic mediation in the European Union.* *Jointly lobbing common interest in the United States Congress.* *Break of the diplomatic isolation.*	*Turkish support on Israel's enemies.* *Greece's fear to commit in the problems of the Middle East* The volatile environment and the danger of the Arab Spring revolts.

This SWOT analysis illustrates the great opportunities provided and serious threats. We must mention again that the realisation of this axis is impeded by factors that don't appear in the SWOT analysis.

As we already mentioned a prediction for the future is highly endangered and we will not attempt it. Nevertheless, we can clearly see the prospects and the threats of the Greece-Cyprus-Israel axis and of the Turkey-Israel partnership, so that anyone can assess them on their own.

Concerning Greece's expectations regarding the future of its alignment with Israel, we can deduce three factors affecting it:

1. the integration of Iran into the international community and its consequent stance towards Israel,

2. the peace process between the Palestinians and the Israelis and

3. Greece's will to break away from the "zero sum" game logic, commit in the alignment with Israel and be present in the problems of the Middle East.

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