



**ISRAEL AND TURKEY
A NEW BALANCE OF POWER IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

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ABSTRACT

Turkey and Israel are two of the major non-Arab states in the Middle East that in past used to enjoy promising bilateral relations based on economic, military, and strategic grounds. Since international relations are not static but dynamic, therefore, these two friendly nations also turned into each other's enemies. In the current scenario of the Middle East rapprochement between them seems a distant reality, however, various grounds are available for them to cooperate. These two power states have the potential to make a powerful alliance that could balance the power of Iran in the region and the eastern Mediterranean. The research is based on qualitative work that revolves around the questions of 'what and how' for the deep understanding of Turkish- Israeli relationship, which makes it evaluative research. This qualitative research is based on secondary and primary data collection methods. The major finding of this paper trace out the probability of an alliance between the two. The regional rivalries in the Middle East, especially in the eastern Mediterranean and most importantly their domestic policies are giving Turkey and Israel a tough time to reconcile. Even the regional powers will not welcome such an alliance that could undermine their influence in the region.

Keywords: Turkey, Israel alliance, Treaty of Lausanne, normalization, Gulf States, Balance of Power.

INTRODUCTION

Since World War II, the Middle East region has endured several transformations. This region more than any other region is defined by hard power and military quest rather than economic affairs, diplomatic relations, and regional organization. The scenario of this region will remain the same in the time to come (Perry, 2013). The small state, Israel on the eastern coasts of the Mediterranean Sea is the only Jewish state in the world. On the other hand, there is Turkey, which was

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leading the world empire, the Ottoman Empire, before World War-I. With the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, Turkey lost almost all its territories and now a small transcontinental country is located in western Asia, and a small territory falls into southern Europe.

In the Muslim world, Turkey was the only state to give recognition to the newly born Jewish state of Israel in 1949. Turkey holds a mighty place in the region due to its location, size, and political history. Where Israel, which was in a clash with the Arab world, it was in need to have good relations with Turkey to break its regional isolation. Jerusalem since its inception always extended good bi-lateral relations with Ankara. However, Turkey being a rationale always kept Israel away from its limelight (Inbar, 2011). The end of the Cold War brought many changes in world politics. Turkey was deserted as the NATO alliance; it seemed trivial and looked for a new friend in the Middle East that could help them against the increasingly growing regional security challenges. Turkey's choice of 'Israel' as its partner was beneficial for both, as Israel might provide advanced military technology to Ankara. In 1992, Israeli-Turkish relations were formally reached up to the ambassadorial level. During the period of 1990s both the countries signed many bilateral agreements and by the mid-1990s economically, diplomatically, and military relations gave an upper notch to their relations. Things began to upset between the two after the Gaza Flotilla incident in 2010, in which ten Turkish natives were killed by Israeli troops. Turkey termed this action as "state terrorism" (Kosebalban, 2010).

International relations are dynamic and not static, the circumstances change, and domestic inclinations reshaped national interests. Similarly, Turkey changed its foreign policy objectives after the rise of the Justice and Development party into power in 2002 to keep itself at an arm-length from the West and ameliorate its relations with the Muslim world (Inbar, 2011). Reconciliation was started in 2013 with the support of the United States but the pro-Islamic approach of Turkey and regional rivalry are not giving them an open space to normalize their relations (Kaya, 2011).

DISCUSSIONS AND FINDINGS

This paper will discuss the area of cooperation that is allowing these states to cooperate and make a strong unit. However, with time their relationship is measured by the intensity of the Israeli-Palestinian

conflict. The paper highlights the possibility of an alliance between them whether they can normalize their relations or not. Along with it, this paper is going to explore the challenges to this alliance and its implications on the region.

SYRIA- A MUTUAL THREAT

Since the end of the Cold War, Syria has played a crucial role in shaping Turkish- Israeli relations because of its geographical location as it is situated between these two countries. Its ties with Iran and, the repercussions of its civil war have affected the whole region. Syria after the disintegration of its patron Soviet Union further strengthened its ties with Iran. Since the 1980s Syria has been a bigger supporter of the Iranian-backed Shia-Lebanese organization known as Hezbollah³. Hezbollah from the Syrian soil triggered conflicts with Israel in 1993 and 1996. On the other hand, with Turkey, its water dispute has converted into a direct conflict. Syria to exert pressure on Turkey sheltered the Kurdish Worker Party (PKK) to launch attacks on Turkey. Subsequently, to deter Syria became a mutual interest for Israel and Turkey. In 1996, the two countries signed the strategic pact namely, the Military Cooperation and Training Agreement. The main purpose of this alliance is to keep a check on the religious extremism and martial dictatorship in Syria. Israel cogitates the trafficking of these weapons a “redline” that required preventive response. For Turkey, the disintegration of Syria gave another nightmare with the Syrian Kurdish self-rule on its border that is governed by the Kurdish Democratic Union Party. Turkey and Israel both share mutual concerns regarding the deep Iranian involvement in Syria. Iran is providing massive support to the Assad Regime through its al-Quds⁴ force and Hezbollah. Whatever Syria will become a unified country, a group of various large independent bodies, it will keep affecting the Turkish-Israeli relations, and both of these countries prefer Syria to evolve as a unified, firm, and democratic state (Moran Stern, 2013).

Here the question arises whether Israel and Turkey will find ways to use these mutual interests to re-establish talks between them. The United States can play a pivotal role in bringing the two countries closer to mediate stability in Syria especially when the Iranian

³ Hezbollah is the Shia Islamist and militant group of Lebanon

⁴ al- Quds is an Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps

influence is rapidly increasing. In short, security remains the main concern for Turkey, Israel, and, the United States. Despite deviating interests and bitter experiences, both Israel and Turkey shared mutual concerns about future stability in Syria. The major shared goal is the breakdown of the Syrian traditional and non-traditional weapons and the menace of falling these weapons into the hands of these terrorist groups, Iranian protégés can drag Syria and its neighbors into long and lethal warfare. Averting the trafficking of these weapons is in mutual interest for both Ankara and Jerusalem. Israeli President Benjamin Netanyahu on a Facebook post in March 2013 explained one of the reasons behind its apology from Turkey over the Mavi Marmara incident was the condition in Syria: 'Syria is disintegrating, and the huge advanced weapons stockpiles are beginning to fall into the hands of different forces... it is important that Turkey and Israel can communicate with each other' (Ozcelik, 2019).

Moreover, Israel and Turkey can advance their economic cooperation for broader regional prosperity as both are economically export-oriented states. Even a low-scale Turkish- Israeli initiative to export goods from Syria to the Western markets can help its crashing economy. Furthermore, with the end of the civil war in Syria and the start of reconstruction, Israeli software firms, the agriculture sector, and pharmaceutical firms may play a significant role in post-conflict Syria. Turkey's popular civil engineering companies will find a new market in Syria. Israel and Turkey's joint ventures in the sectors of telecommunication and, construction can prove beneficial for all sides (Moran Stern, 2013).

The unfortunate reality in Syria creates an opportunity to advance Turkish- Israeli relations that have undergone in the last few decades. American facilitation is necessary for fostering the relations between Israel and Turkey. Normalization is beneficial in the strategic interests of all three states and in regional stability. It is clear that despite severe back lashing from both the countries on each other, normalization, and cooperation between these two regional powers at political, economic and security levels will be the need of the future (Ozcelik, 2019).

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

The area of the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean has endured substantial geopolitical transformation throughout the last few

decades. The advances occurring in these regions are correlated and have gone far beyond their border. In particular, the current scenario of the Eastern Mediterranean is defined by political rivalries at the expense of energy resources. The rapid discoveries of hydrocarbons in the region are the major driving forces of the transforming geopolitical and security dynamics in the region. Energy has become the major bone of contention among the regional rivals particularly between Turkey and states such as Greece, Cyprus, Egypt, and Israel (Tziarras, 2019).

On 17 December 2010, Israel and the Greek Cypriot Administration (GCA) of Southern Cyprus signed a Maritime Delimitation agreement. This agreement further becomes the basis of the 2012 East Med Pipeline project, centered on the maritime agreements between Israel, GCA and, Greece. The pipeline at the start was welcomed with excitement but its likelihood faded over time. Excluding Turkey from the East Med project dramatically increased the length and expenses of the pipeline. For Israel, the problem is much bigger than its feasibility, East Med or the arrangement of Aphrodite gas costs Israel a great loss of maritime areas on which it has legal rights. Israel and Turkey both shared a maritime border; a possible delimitation agreement between them would be profitable for both parties. The delimitation line would be drawn in such a manner that it would not touch Cyprus' islands and not affect the present maritime jurisdiction area of Egypt (Cihat Yayci, 2020).

One of the close associates of the Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan wrote the above-mentioned proposal of a maritime delimitation agreement between Israel and Turkey. This article discusses the proposal of a new maritime delimitation agreement between Israel and Turkey. The article even before it was published created much anticipation in Israeli media and was perceived as a positive sign. Cohen Yanarocak in his interview with i24 an Israeli news channel said that it is important to take this article in a serious manner as this proposal is giving a new picture to the eastern Mediterranean. While asking him about the possibility of the East Med pipeline he said it is mission impossible because of the expenses it is nearly difficult, in this regard Turkey appeared to be the most feasible and economical choice for all the nations in the region. He further added that Turkey should launch its new foreign policy not only with Israel but also with all the nations. Turkey must avoid its gambling

policies. That would not be an easy task and Israel will never agree to betray its alliance with Greece (Bassist, 2020).

Other than regional dynamics, the Jerusalem- Ankara reconciliation cannot be fully possible without counting on the energy factors. Energy politics are not independent of political and strategic disputes; cooperation is likely to take place between the two powers for several reasons. Israel is looking for a route to export its gas; meanwhile, turkey is looking for someone who could satisfy its gas demand. Negotiations are expected to commence regarding the export of natural gas from Jerusalem to Ankara and the construction of a pipeline that would carry gas from Turkey to Europe. If Jerusalem and Ankara will sign the deal then it seems to be a win-win position for both powers (Görgülü, 2016).

TRADE RELATIONS

The exciting feature of their relationship that continues to be flourishing was the trade between the two powers despite the political disturbances. Undoubtedly, both the countries have mutual interests to keep the political sphere and economic sphere insulate from each other. Robust trade among the two states fulfils the economic interests and the midst of the unsteady relations keeps the relationship alive (Arbell, 2015). Since Israel has a free trade agreement with the USA therefore, Turkish businessmen consider Israel as a 'backdoor' into the American market and also thanks to the United States- Mexico-Canada Agreement. Turkish companies can get Israel's participation in their products and can also avail the opportunity to do tax-exempted export to the USA. On the other hand, Israel hopes to initiate Turkish-Israeli joint endeavours in the Transcaucasian and Central Asian Republics, taking out benefits from the Turkish cultural and historical ties with them. However, since the Gaza flotilla incident till today Turkey and Israel are unable to reconcile but their economic relations remain unaffected (Ilhan Güllü, 2016). For several decades, Turkish export to Israel is on a growing track. In just 10 months of 2020 Turkish export to Israel has raised to another 14%. Hence, for Turkey, it is amongst the 10 most important export markets (Heinrich, 2017).

Economic interdependence is significant to establish transitional ties that foster cooperation instead of conflict. Therefore, if economies between the two countries make up a significant share of the national revenue of anyone or both, important economic interests will have a

political palisade in maintaining good relations. Ankara and Jerusalem's economic relations have been independent of politics have exposed the consistency of the institutional factors that supports the relations (Osman Eroglu & Altun, 2016).

POSSIBILITY OF AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN TURKEY AND ISRAEL

For the past several decade's Turkish-Israeli relations are moving in a recurring pattern. These two countries are similar in their characteristics such as the essence of westernization in their institutes, policy approaches, complex relations with the Arab states, Multiracial and secular societies, and Iran (particularly in Syria). In the meantime, the difference in their characteristics is diverse state structure, their historical background, their alliances and, their relations with big powers. At several moments, Ankara and Jerusalem restored their relations when they confronted a mutual threat or an ally that could bring them on the same page. As in the case of Iran, their relations were at their peak during 1999s. Relations between Jerusalem and Ankara deteriorated when Israeli Defence Forces commandos attacked the Gaza Flotilla and killed ten Turkish citizens in 2010. Ankara right after this incident downgraded its relations with Jerusalem (Aras, 2019).

The reconciliation that started with the US facilitation and seemed to be a turning point in their relations did not last long and come under the shadow of mistrust. The problem on both sides is the absence of political will to put an end to this journey of suspicion and distrust. Tensions between Turkey and Israel have been escalated due to the populist leaders on both sides strengthening their domestic support. Meanwhile, the policymakers from both the states are able to keep their economic relations steady and unpretentious from the tensions created because of political disturbances (Aras, 2019).

Many scholars and journalists thought that once the Israeli apology to Turkey was done, the relations between Jerusalem and Ankara would normalize. Conversely, the scene was more complicated than the apology itself, as reconciliation is proved to be linked with not only local but also regional conditions mainly Israeli- Palestinian conflict. According to Boaz Atzili (Assistant Professor, School of International Service, and American University), "Turkey, and Israel always have good relations because there are diplomatic relations between the two states that are, the Turkish embassy in Tel Aviv and

the Israeli embassy in Ankara. Therefore, too much extent Israeli-Turkish relationship is normal. Their relationship is not about Turkish-Israeli relations but more of an Israeli- Palestinian relation. Until and unless Israel is not making any progress in its relationship with Palestinians, their relation is not going to make any progress” (Boaz Atzili, Online Indebted Interview, 23 December 2020).

Since the end of 2002, when the Justice and Development Party came into power in Turkey, its foreign policy has borne several transformations, increasing cooperation with the other Middle Eastern countries and shifting more focus on the Palestinians cause. Turkey’s aim to be a regional power, the new foreign policy was multifaceted and placing Ankara as a regional mediator. Turkey under AKP⁵ publicized its support for the Palestinians. On the other hand, Israel following this series of disturbances began to search for a substitute for its relationship with Turkey and established new ties in the form of Cyprus and Greece. In addition to it, Israel was not ready to make any deal at the expense of Gaza. Jerusalem decided to adopt a new policy vis-à-vis Turkey, based on the amalgamation of external and internal containment. On contrary to its previous policies with Israel, Turkey is now ready to sacrifice its relations with Israel (Alsaftawi, 2016).

In the past weeks, there have been reports of rapprochements to defrost the relationship on certain issues such as the water demarcation of the economic exclusive zones in the Eastern Mediterranean. In any case, the probability of proceeding with such dialogues is low (Tzogopoulos, 2020). According to Shlomo Brom (Senior Research Associate at INSS), “The conflict between Israel and Turkey is not about the borders of economic zones in the Eastern Mediterranean. It raises the conflict between Ankara and other states who are allies of Jerusalem such as Cairo. Israel is directly involved in it and this will not have any significant influence on Turkish-Israeli relations. Therefore, the possibility of such an alliance is quite low because their relationship from the past couple of years has deteriorated” (Shlomo Brom, Online Indebted Interview, 21-December-2020).

According to Joe Hammoura (Political researcher at Middle East Institute for Research and Strategic Studies), “In a turbulent region like the Middle East, it’s hard to predict any exact sort of changes in alliances. I see a possibility of understandings (not alliance) based on

⁵ AKP is Justice and Development Party in Turkey ruling since 2003.

common interests between Turkey and Israel but depending on each case. One of the cases can be the need of both states to keep the Syrian regime weak; another case can be to limit the influence of Iran in Iraq and Lebanon. Both states' interests seem today and in the near future contradictory and what separates them is much deeper than what unites them. Therefore, the many differences of interests between the two do not indicate any realistic possibility of any alliance between them (Joe Hammoura, Online Indebted Interview, 22 December 2020).

The Turkish population is the most potent threat that Turkey and Israel will face. Many scholars argued that their cooperation is flawed because it did receive less or no support from the mainstream Turkish population. Most of the scholars believed that the Turkish political and military elites who were the believers of secular values guided its policies with Israel. The traditional and religious Turkish society considers this relation as humiliation and against the rest of the Middle East. The Turkish population is more concerned with the Palestinian conflict. In the future, if any such possibility of Turkish-Israeli entente emerges then it will be merely a 'general agreement' integrally unstable and dodgy. The Turkish- Israeli relationship will be relying on shaky and fragile cooperation and stability often pressured or persuaded by insecure political leaders. All that does not aim that Jerusalem and Ankara have no mutual interest. However, if 69 years of their relationship indicates only one lesson is that Israeli- Turkish relations in the future will be based on short-to-medium terms linked to the developments and progress in Israeli- Palestinian relations (Efron).

Gulf States VS Turkish- Israeli Relations: The state of Turkish-Israeli relations has been under the limelight of the regional arena and much discussed over the last five to six years in their respective countries. States like Egypt, Greece, and Cyprus are much concerned about their reconciliation whether these signs are genuine. The interests of these states in the region are much allied to Israeli- Turkish relations. Turkey's quest for gas exploration in the region is much challenged. The agreement between Turkey and Libya already faced much hostility in the region. If the agreement between Turkey and Israel occurs then it might agonize the activities of Greece and Cyprus in the East Med. UAE, France, Egypt and, Greece lately published a condemnation against Turkey's exploration of natural gas off the coast of Cyprus. Surprisingly, Israel was not among the signatories of this

condemnation (Tzogopoulos, 2020). According to Boaz Atzili (Assistant Professor, School of International Service, American University): “Such an alliance could come with coordination with the Gulf States. Turkey and Qatar both are not on good terms with Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Egypt. Any such close relations between Israel and Turkey would be a part of much broader alignment in which the Gulf States will also get closer to Turkey and Qatar, probably with a more hostile policy towards Iran as a group” (Boaz Atzili, Online Indebted Interview, 23 December 2020).

According to Shlomo Brom (Senior Research Associate at INSS), “Qatar will welcome such alliance because it is very close to Turkey and also have good relations with Israel. As far as, the other Gulf States are concerned that is the adversary of Qatar will not welcome it. However, if Turkey changes its policy vis-à-vis Israel may be at the same time it will change its policy towards the Gulf States then it will not create any trouble. Assuming same Turkey with similar policies the Gulf States will not be much happy” (Shlomo Brom, Indebted Online Interview, 21 December 2020).

UAE’s main objective is to create a tangible axis against Turkey and Qatar. Whereas, Israel with its ties locked with Gulf will help in breaking its isolation and a way to counterweigh pressure from Palestinians (Landler, 2020).

CAN THEY NORMALIZE RELATIONS?

For the past few years, Turkey is emphasizing its role more in the Middle East, where it has become an influential player. Jerusalem and Ankara both have some mutual goals and that is to establish peace between Israelis and Palestinians, and Iran except nuclear weapons and, a strong Syria (Cook, 2010). In any reconciliation scenario, one key variable would be Turkey’s aggressive response to the Israelis efforts to extend sovereignty over the territories of the West Bank. Normalization looks like a distant possibility, as a fact, that the Palestinian question has now become an integral part of Turkish-Israeli relations that cannot be separated at any cost. The deep personal hatred that has been established over the last few decades between Erdogan and Netanyahu has become more institutional than a personal aspect (Tzogopoulos, 2020). Shlomo Brom (Senior Research Associate at INSS) said, “There are two sets of conditions that can change their relations is the change of the ruling party either in Turkey

or in Israel and that is a distant reality. Turkey and Israel had a great relationship because the previous governments in Turkey were not interested in the Palestinian cause but were more focused on establishing good relations with Jerusalem and the West. Since Erdogan came into power he is much concerned about the happenings of the Middle East mainly the Palestinians because of the ideological backdrop and Islamic roots. On the other hand, the right-wing government in Israel is not making any progress with its relationship with the Palestinians. Normalization is only possible if Erdogan's party is replaced by another political party and that is not going to happen in near future" (Shlomo Brom, Indebted Online Interview, 21 December 2020).

Erdogan's government sacrificed good bilateral relations with Israel at the expense of advancing Turkish power in the Middle East. Many observers consider that Erdogan's harsh political rhetoric and policies vis-à-vis Israel has gained him sympathy in the Muslim world and strengthened its policies in the region. Diplomats in Israel believe that Ankara changing policies and priorities has created an obstacle in repairing ties between them. Turkish and Israeli diplomats believed that collaboration on several grounds is visible and in the better interest of both states. However, domestic policies play a pivotal role in creating hindrances in reconciliation (Simsek, 2012). Necessarily, both states should be prepared for additional crises in their relationship, mainly because of the unresolved dispute of Palestine, and the inevitable clash with Hamas in Gaza. As long as, Erdogan and Netanyahu are in power in Turkey and Israel respectively it is dubious that the situation will get normal between them. The media in both countries will not leave any sole chance to denounce each other's policies. Ankara will highlight any damage caused to the Palestinians, and Jerusalem will highlight Turkish condemnations and warnings (Nir, 2016).

Balance of Power between Israel and Turkey: Is it Possible?:

The center of Israel's foreign policy is Iran and to counterbalance the Iranian influence it needs Turkey's cooperation. Iran is a mutual concern in both states. Israeli's right-wing government perceives Iran as an existential threat and all the possibilities should be kept in mind while dealing with Tehran. Whereas in Turkey, despite Erdogan's protest against the U.S. imposed sanctions on Iran, it has mainly obeyed them (Aras, 2019). This paper already discussed the Iranian

role in Syria and the threats it posed to both Israel and Turkey. Jerusalem and Ankara both of these states did not want an abortive Syria, where terrorists would seek asylum. Israel would prefer to see Turkey as a patron state of Syria instead of Iran (Osion, 2013). According to Joe Hammoura (Political researcher at Middle East Institute for Research and Strategic Studies), “The influence of Iran in the region will decline because Israeli Turkish alliance could constraints Iranian ambitions to expand power in the Middle East” (Joe Hammoura, Online Indebted Interview, 22 December 2020). Boaz Atzili (Assistant Professor, School of International Service, American University) says: “Syria is basically a sandwich between Turkey and Israel and if they coordinate and collaborate on Syrian policies then that would be much more challenging for Asad regime to maintain strong relations with Iran” (Boaz Atzili, Online Indebted Interview, 23 December 2020)”.

Diverging interests on the one hand, and converging interests on the other highlight the intricacy in existing and forthcoming Turkish-Israeli relations. This scenario justifies their relations as *‘frenemies’*, a combination of friend and enemy, that is, a friendship between two political units, which establishes positive strategic ties despite an essential tactical dislike (Eran & Lindenstrauss, 2013). According to Shlomo Brom (Senior Research Associate at INSS), “The relationship among the Middle Eastern states is a strange phenomenon, there is states frenemy to each other in a sense that they cooperate on some issues and fight on some issues. The term *‘frenemy’* accurately describes the relationship between Jerusalem and Ankara. In Palestine the interest of the two states is similar. Hamas rules the Gaza Strip and it is a clear enemy of Israel. However, Israel at the same time wants stability in Gaza. Turkey is an ideal partner for such an enterprise in the Gaza Strip because it has an ideological affinity with Hamas. Security cooperation can usually center on common enemies. If Turkey perceives Syrian as enemy and Israel perceives Iran as an enemy so they can cooperate but the possibility is visibly low” (Shlomo Brom, Online Indebted Interview, 21-December-2020).

TREATY OF LAUSANNE

As the termination of the 100 years of the international peace accord, namely the “Treaty of Lausanne” by 2023 is approaching soon,

discussions regarding what will happen are gaining interest amongst several worldwide geo-strategic and geo-political philosophers. Tayyip Erdogan over the last few decades has emerged as a pulsating, active, and dynamic leader to global eminence in all political domains. His unwavering words and firm determinations merely rest in making Turkey great again. He determined to adopt an assertive and xenophobic foreign policy, which is revealing Turkey's resurrection to the historical glorious Ottoman Empire (Shabbir, 2020).

It is apparent that the international community is giving no significant attention to the termination of the Lausanne Treaty in 2023. In today's world, as per the international laws, the specified treaties automatically came to their end after completing a century. However, if the "Treaty of Lausanne" is expired by 2023, it will influence the Turkish position in the region. Ankara will start drilling for oil on its soil. It will start collecting toll from the ship for using its strait of Bosphorus. The number of chances for Turkey to abandon the strong NATO countries is quite high. In return, it will articulate its policies and laws independently. Turkey will surely prosper economically (Shabbir, 2020). Certainly, this will not happen, returning to a glorious Ottoman Empire and repossession of lost territories look like an aloof and unrealistic move (Denforth, 2014). As Joe Hammoura (Political researcher at MEIRSS), "International Treaties don't have an expiry date. The notion of the termination of the Treaty of Lausanne is a conspiracy theory and a myth initiated by the Turkish far-right groups. There is no secret clause related to the Treaty of Lausanne. Treaties stay in force for as long as the signatories exist. UK, France, Italy, and Japan are not going to suddenly disappear and Turkey has no plans to cease being a country by 2023" (Joe Hammoura, Online Indebted Interview, 22 December 2020).

Shlomo Brom (Senior Research Associate at INSS) says, "Treaty of Lausanne is no more significant because the current scenario in the Middle East has a very slight connection to the Lausanne Agreement. At the time of Arab Spring, scholars rushed to the conclusion that it will be the end of the borders and used the term Sykes-Picot but it was Lausanne, borders determined in the Lausanne and not in Sykes-Picot. Arab Spring will compete 10 years and we can confidently say that there was no change occurred in the borders in the Middle East except for a few places that are not significant. It is unrealistic to think that Turkey after Lausanne will be a major threat to

anyone or it will change the map because the reality is not going to change”.

CONCLUSION

Turkish Israeli relations are unique in their sense but this uniqueness is not giving them an opportunity to makeshift in their bilateral relations. The reconciliation started in 2013 and ended in 2018 did not yield any fruitful results instead relations deteriorated even further. Despite numerous crises in their relationship, trade relations remain unaffected. Ankara and Jerusalem both have some common grounds in Syria and East Med but the contention is much bigger than the mutual goals. As different scholars have mentioned that their relationship is no more Turkish- Israeli relations but more of an Israeli- Palestinian conflict. In addition to it, their leader's personal ideologies and beliefs are contradictory to each other; their ideological clashes are not willing to recognize each other's significance and make peace in their relationships. Once again, rapprochement between Jerusalem and Ankara will not be easy, the old golden day's friendship of the 1990s looks like a utopian dream. However, their alliance would balance Iran's power in the region, and negotiations over the East Med would be beneficial for them but as Joe Hammoura said, what is keep them separated is much bigger than what is keep them united. As there has been news from the past few weeks regarding the possible rapprochement between them but 'never say never' is valid, whether reset is desired by either any of the leaders Erdogan or Netanyahu. Therefore, in near future the possibility to break the ice between Ankara and Jerusalem is low.

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