

**Limited Intervention: Israel Foreign Policy Approach to the
Syrian Civil War**



This dissertation is submitted as part of a MA degree in Conflict
Resolution in Divided Societies at

King's College London

Dissertation Cover Sheet and Student Declaration

Please complete all sections of this form and attach it to the front of your dissertation that you are submitting for assessment.

Failure to attach this form as required may result in your work not being accepted for assessment.

Student's name:	FURKAN KAYA					
Student's candidate number:	Z	1	5	3	4	5
Supervisor:	Dr Hicham Safieddine					
Programme:	Please tick as appropriate: <input type="checkbox"/> 7AAJM004 Dissertation: MA Middle Eastern Studies <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7AAJCR01 Dissertation: MA Conflict Resolution in Divided Societies <input type="checkbox"/> 7AAJPE01 Dissertation: MA Political Economy of the Middle East					
Dissertation title:	Limited Intervention: Israel Foreign Policy Approach to the Syrian Civil War					
Dissertation word count*:	10343					

First marker's comments:

Second marker's comments:

***The word count, which should preferably be calculated electronically, must be stated accurately above.** Please refer to the Dissertation Handbook for word limit regulations.

DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I, **FURKAN KAYA** hereby declare (a) that this Dissertation is my own original work and that all source material used is acknowledged therein; (b) that it has been specially prepared for a degree of King's College London; and (c) that it does not contain any material that has been or will be submitted to the Examiners of this or any other university, or any material that has been or will be submitted for any other examination. I understand what is meant by plagiarism and that plagiarism is a serious examinations offence that may result in disciplinary action being taken.

Signed: *KAYA*

Date: 02.09.2019

To My Beloved Family and My Friends



ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine Israel's approach to the Syrian civil war. Israel, which has preferred to follow developments carefully since the beginning of the process, has made limited interventions to Syria from time to time after the involvement of external actors. National security, the priority of Israeli foreign policymakers, is the most important reason for Israel's participation in the Syrian civil war. The most important practical reason for Israel's active intervention in the Syrian civil war is the increase in Iran's influence in Syria. The second reason is Iran's ammunition transfer to Hezbollah. The third one is the strategic significance of Golan Height and Israeli desire to establish the defence line away from that region. The subject of national security shapes Israel's involvement in the Syrian civil war.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1	6
1.1 Introduction	6
1.2 Theoretical Framework	8
1.3 Scope	13
1.4 Methodology	13
1.5 Literature Review	14
Chapter 2	16
2.1 The Priorities of Israel's Foreign Policy	16
2.1 The Structure of Israel's Foreign Policy Decision-Making Process	17
2.2 The Significance of Syria in Israel Foreign Policy	19
Chapter 3	20
3.1 The History of Israel-Syrian Relations	20
3.2 Arab Spring and the Syrian Civil War	22
3.3 Israel's Approach to the Syrian Civil War	23
3.4 Iran and Hezbollah's Involvement in the Syrian Civil War	25
3.5 Russia's Involvement in the Syrian Civil War	27
Conclusion	29
Reference List	32

CHAPTER 1

1.1 Introduction

With the beginning of the Syrian crisis, the Israeli administration has been very cautious at the level of action and discourse against the developments. In this context, Israel's policy towards the Syrian crisis has emerged as the continuation of its non-intrusive attitude towards other countries in the Arab Spring. Within the framework of this approach, Israeli decision-makers were trying to keep themselves away from the chaotic developments in the region. In this context, the Israeli administration did not prefer an active position against the developments and preferred a policy of indifference and 'wait-and-see' against the developments (Malmvig, 2016). It is possible to state that, unless events are affecting Syria intensely by Israel, decision-makers have developed an approach that puts the action in the background. During this period, decision-makers kept Israel's involvement in Syria to a minimum and tried to protect Israel's national security interests with minimal interference with developments. The decision-makers who did not make any explanation about their approach to the crisis, in the beginning, showed their first approach with the evolving of the crisis towards a deep-rooted process that has the potential to last longer and gain strength.

Israel has always felt threatened since its inception, and this has played a role in justifying security practices as an integral part of national survival. The source of these threats has been perceived as Arab states in the region for a long time, and security measures have been shaped in this manner. Today, however, Iran's nuclear program and regional policies of influence, the activities of Hezbollah, Hamas, Islamic jihad and non-state actors have become the priorities of Israeli foreign policy and security elites. These threats are crucial to understanding Israel's foreign policy.

Israel has not been at the centre of the Syrian debate since the outbreak of war. Israel closely followed the developments in Syria, did not hesitate to intervene when he needed it and tried to

shape the country's Israeli borderline according to his priorities. As the war in Syria broke out in 2011 and 2012, Israel found itself facing two threats: the Assad regime had two options, winning or losing. If Assad wins, especially with the support of Iran, will strengthen the regime in the orbit of Tehran. If Assad loses, it will harm to what Iran calls the axis of endurance. If the radical Islamist groups take control of Syria, Israel's victory may be twinkle. However, this is an unknown process. Even Israeli decision-makers did not ensure which situation may be advantageous for Israeli national interests. In the first period of the Syrian civil war, for instance, an Israeli intelligence officer claimed that Israel demands Assad's withdrawal from the power by considering that that serves better Israeli interests. Nevertheless, an Israeli ambassador to the United States claims that Assad is a preferable actor in comparison with rebellion groups (Staff, 2013). Saying that Israeli policymakers had a clear view in the first phase of the civil war is not a fulfilling explanation. They endeavoured to seem neutral until Iran's increasing actions and the change of balance in favour of Iran and Hezbollah.

This study aims to analyze the attitude of Israeli foreign policy towards the Syrian civil war. It will be examined how tense relations have transformed with the start of the civil war. It will be seeking to answer the question of how Israel's foreign policy reacts to the phenomenon of national security, which it calls vital, after the start of the civil war in Syria. In addition, it will be tried to understand the reflections of the increasing influence of Iran, one of the most important actors in the region, which Israel considers to be a national security threat, in the civil war. Hezbollah, another actor that Israel has identified as a security threat, will be examined how Israel's foreign policymakers try to reduce its influence. Furthermore, one of the critical issues in the region is Syria' having chemical weapons. It will be analyzed how Israel policymakers reacted when the Syrian administration used chemicals against its citizens and also what kind of measures have taken by to stop Syria's chemical usage.

Moreover, this study was prepared from the perspective of offensive realist theory, which we think better fits in the Israeli foreign policy with its arguments. In the following section, we will try to understand realism and its successors and analyze why offensive realism fits better in our thesis.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

Although the emergence of realism in the discipline of international relations is based on the debates in the political environment of the 1940s, the Peloponnesian War, written by Thucydides, is accepted as the primary text of this theory. Thucydides' predictions about the causalities of wars on the conflicts between the Greek city-states form the basis of this theory. According to Thucydides, the over-strengthening of Athens is the main cause of the conflict (Thucydides, no date).

In the historical process, thinkers such as Machiavelli, Hobbes and Spinoza are at the forefront of the idea that states act in fear of survival. Especially Hobbes' thesis that human nature is evil and the idea that everyone is at war with everyone has become an element identified with the states. Although all these studies have been a reference to realism, the first studies on realism in the field of international relations coincide with the period between the First World War and the Second World War (Tugtan, 2014). Especially E. H. Carr's criticism on the idealism that they ignore the reality in which they live and that they are utopian contributed to the intellectual aspect of realism (Carr, 1978). Carr emphasized that the idealists should focus on what should be, instead of focusing on what happens while the analysis is being conducted, and that attention should be paid to the actions of states in international relations. Another notable study has written by J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, made significant contributions to the realization of political realism in the world of international relations (Tugtan, 2014). Accepting states as the most important actor of the international system, Morgenthau argues that there is a sharp line between domestic politics and international relations. In this framework it shows that states pursue power and act with interest. His focus on how the state increased its power, showing that the interests of states could change over time, and his focus on rational utility, have been guiding for subsequent realist-centered studies (Morgenthau, 1948).

On the other hand, John Hermann Herz states that people, groups, and leaders at all levels of anarchic society experience a security dilemma, noting that each actor is concerned about being attacked or destroyed. Thus, Herz, who introduced the concept of 'security dilemma' as one of the most essential concepts in classical realist studies, states that states try to provide security for avoiding from such attacks and want to gain more power. This idea also makes other actors more insecure, Herz argues, forcing actors to act with the worst in mind as they can never be sure that

their security is guaranteed (Herz, 1950). However, it was only possible towards the end of the 1940s that realism became the dominant theory in the discipline of international relations. In particular, the devastating consequences of the Second World War have made realists' approach one of the main theories in international relations. The increasing threat of the Soviet Union, on the one hand, the establishment of new independent states on the other hand, as well as economic-technological developments, and the emergence of non-state international organizations such as NATO (Northern Atlantic Treaty Organization), have led to criticism that realism cannot adequately explain the developments in international relations.

The criticism that classical realism could not adequately explain the change in international relations brought a new perspective to realism. The Theory of International Politics, written by Kenneth N. Waltz, highlighted the claim that there was no supreme authority in the international system and that the system was anarchic, within the framework of the principle of sovereign equality of states since Westphalia. Indeed, according to Waltz, the international system can only be explained if the effects of the 'structure' are considered. Waltz accepts some concepts of classical realism and reconsiders in the context of neorealism. According to Waltz, for example, since the international order is anarchic, states act on the axis of power and seek security, even if nothing happens. The absence of supreme authority in the international system forces states to take care of themselves. For instance, the fear of Napoleon's aggression put Britain in a search like Napoleon's quest for power (Waltz, 1980). In Waltz's theory, the three main dimensions of the international system, the anarchic structure, the equally dominant rational actors, and the struggle for survival with different abilities, are the defining characteristics of the system (Tugtan, 2014). On the other hand, when Waltz approaches the origin of wars, he presents three different views as the level of analysis. According to Waltz, the causes of war stem from human nature, the internal structures of states and the anarchic structure of the international system, including states (Waltz, 2001).

According to Waltz (1980), the structure of the system is the primary determinant factor in the ability of a state to balance another actor or to pursue a powerful actor. Waltz states that a state's pursuit of the other actor has become a characteristic behavior over time and that it has been put forward by supporting the actor he believes will win. In the Cold War period, the fact that the European states and the members of the Warsaw Pact were on the same side as the Soviet Union

within the framework of the NATO alliance is a result of this characteristic behavior. The main factor determining the actions of states is related to the distribution of power of actors within the international system. Although the foreign policies of the states seem to be taking shape at the end of the internal processes, the relationship and interaction established with the other actors determine the foreign policy of the state. However, Waltz argues that the anarchic structure of the international system also affects the foreign policy of the states and that the absence of a superior authority or night watchman pushes states to take care of themselves on this axis (Ereker, 2013). Another factor Waltz points out is the role of nuclear weapons in ensuring stability. As a matter of fact, according to Scott Sagan (1996), states try to deter nuclear weapons in order to protect their national security and balance against their rivals.

Gilpin, one of the important representatives of the structural realists, drew attention to the internal processes of the state (elite, pressure groups, economic system), and showed that states have certain functions and functions both inside and outside (Gilpin, 1984). In general, realists also experience some differences between themselves. For example, 'why do states want power?' answers in different ways. While classical realists seek the answer in human nature, they claim that especially the international system is shaped on the axis of a power struggle. The two important names of neorealism, Kenneth Waltz and John Mearsheimer, have similar answers. They both argue that states seek the power to survive and secure the anarchic international system. Nevertheless, 'How much power is enough for states?' is the most fundamental question that distinguishes defensive and offensive realists. Waltz replied to this question that states' over-empowerment is not rational, but Mearsheimer claims that states are seeking hegemony and want to maximize their power (Mearsheimer, 2007). The reason that offensive realism can be used in this framework is that Israel's actions are more suitable with the explanations of Mearsheimer's offensive realism theory.

The basic principles of offensive realism, which stands out as another fraction of structural realism, is a theory laid down by John J. Mearsheimer and fed by classical and structural realism at many points. Stating that actors are trying to determine the best strategy to achieve their future goals, Mearsheimer says that theories are functional in predicting what will happen if one strategy is chosen over another (Mearsheimer and Walt, 2013). Stating that policymakers should rely on theories, Mearsheimer acknowledges, however, that states may not always have a

functioning and resultant strategies. In his work, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, Mearsheimer, like other realists, treats the international system as an anarchic system in which states are the main actors (Ewenstein, 2011). Mearsheimer, just like Waltz, says that the intention of other actors is unpredictable in a climate of uncertainty, as a result of the lack of superior authority, and therefore the pursuit of security is the main objective of states. Mearsheimer states that survival is the most crucial element of human nature, and states, like individuals, can only achieve other goals by surviving (Mearsheimer, 2018). Stating that the problems arising from survival concerns leave no chance of competition, he emphasizes that it is vital for the states to be strong enough to protect themselves.

Furthermore, according to Mearsheimer (2007), as states seek to expand their power in the global arena, they do so at the expense of other states' weakness, and this is linked to a zero-sum world understanding. In the world of Mearsheimer, states always demand more power and look for opportunities to increase their power. The primary motivation of this is to be a hegemon. Being a hegemon is the best way to guarantee survival (ibid.). At this point, the defensive realists' method of balancing against threats rather than maximizing power is often inadequate. Another assertion of the defensive realists is that in a possible war, the initiator of the conflict is more likely to win and is functional to win hegemony. According to Mearsheimer, in the 19th century, the US succeeded in the Western Hemisphere. During World War I, Germany came to the fore as a hegemon in Europe (ibid.).

Fareed Zakaria, one of the other prominent representatives of offensive realism, says that the states whose financial resources grew throughout history soon increased their military expenditures and redefined their political interests and expanded them with the gains they obtained. Stating that Sweden became a more effective power in its region after the 17th-century prosperity, it began to follow an expansionist policy and played an essential role in controlling the Habsburgs by participating in the thirty years' war, Zakaria emphasizes that the economy plays a crucial role in the military and political expansion. Stating that defensive realism cannot sufficiently explain foreign policy actions, Zakaria said that most of the great powers have a tendency to expand and that America has dramatically expanded after defeating a significant European power on its continent and has become the most important actor in the Western Hemisphere (Zakaria, 1999). Also, Zakaria argues that Waltz's theory is inadequate in explaining

foreign policy, whereas offensive realism is also a foreign policy theory and is functional in explaining why different states have different intentions, goals and preferences for the world.

Randall Schweller deals with the question of why states want to expand. Schweller (2010) argues that enlargement stems from both internal pressures and external threat perceptions and risks, and argues that in an area of power gaps, states pursue an expansionist policy to fill this gap. He emphasizes that states tend to expand when they seize possible opportunities and that they have to fill the power vacuum to prevent the threat of regional imbalance from crossing their boundaries. Schweller argues that defensive realists ignore the political, military and geopolitical expansion of states by focusing more on the balance of power (ibid.). According to Schweller (1996), the distribution of systems and capabilities that are anarchic in states' search for security should also be taken into account equally. Referring to inter-state cooperation and alliance relations, Schweller argues that cooperation is possible in the international system but argues that it is based on temporary alliances with interest.

Offensive realists also support Waltz's thesis that nuclear weapons play an essential role in maintaining stability within the system. Stating that the presence of more than one actor in nuclear weapons, like Waltz says, deter states' hostile actions. Referring to this point, offensive realists say that nuclear weapons serve aggressive purposes (Mearsheimer, 2007). If nuclear weapons are involved in both actors, countries are afraid to counter-attack. The reason for this is survival. Both offensive and defensive realists state that a conventional war between nuclear-weapon states is low due to the nuclear level. Mearsheimer (1994), in his study of 'why liberal institutions have failed', described nuclear weapons as a defence weapon but did not prevent states from participating in an intense security race. Moreover, Zakaria (2008) also states that such weapons are more difficult to use, as nuclear attacks can result in massive panic and more significant destruction. According to him, despite China's continued rise against the US, their nuclear ammunition deters both countries from hot clashes (ibid.). Furthermore, Schweller (1993) says that the most severe threat to the global dominance of the US in the recent period is not from economic forces such as Japan and Germany, but from both terrestrial and nuclear powers with significant military and economic potentials, such as China and Russia. In other words, Schweller states that economic and military power, together with nuclear capacity, has a

more severe impact. According to Schweller, both actors have the political will to challenge US hegemony.

1.3 Scope

This study aims to analyze Israel's foreign policy approach in the Syrian civil war, which is always supported the idea of national security and Israel's existence. With the concept of national interests, it will be referred to Israel's priorities, such as national security and survival. In particular, Iran and Hezbollah's presence and effectiveness in the region are the primary security problems for Israel, after Palestine issue which is not the case of this study, and Israel claims that they both intend to Israel's national existence. Moreover, due to the absence of central authority, Syria has become a place in which many actors struggle with each other. Furthermore, the fact that Syria possesses chemical weapons and the possibility of using these weapons against Israel poses an essential threat to Israel. While Israel was acting impartially at the beginning of the process, it has actively attended in the civil war showing the reason of national security. Apart from Israel, the US, Russia, Iran, and Turkey are leading players who have interested in Syria since the beginning. The reasons that those countries have been participating in the Syrian civil war are not only related to global or regional power rivalry but also are related to different reasons each country have such as natural resources. The main goal of this work is to analyze Israel's foreign policy, which is shown to be pragmatic, trying to be a hegemon in the region and also seeking new alliances in the region from the offensive realist perspective. In the meantime, Israel is sometimes directly involved in the Syrian civil war by gaining space and aiming to establish the defense line against a possible security threat as far as possible.

1.4 Methodology

This study aims to evaluate the reasons for the involvement of Israel in the Syrian civil war. Also, it will be examined how Israel foreign policy and policymakers reacted to the events taken place during the civil war. In this way, it will be tried to emphasize Israel's foreign policy based on pragmatism and security. The time frame for this study is limited to the period between 2011 and 2018. Throughout this period, while the wind of the Arab spring was successful in some countries, events evolved in a civil war in Syria. In this analysis, realist theory and its successors are examined, and it is tried to make sense of events in the context of offensive realist theory.

The qualitative methodology was adopted in this analysis by using the case study approach. The data used in this study were provided as a result of the evaluation of primary and secondary sources. Academic books, articles and government documents were used as primary sources. Furthermore, the majority of the data for this study was collected from think tank reports and analyses and media news as well as dozens of books and policy reports.

1.5 Literature Review

When the Israeli foreign policy is examined, it can be seen that there is a process that does not show much variation, and it provides continuity. As a matter of fact, Dentice (2019) emphasizes that Israeli foreign policy is not shaped according to the changing events and continues in a stable direction. In addition, since its establishment, Israel has always placed the principle of maintaining national security at the forefront of its foreign policy (ibid). In order to have a deep understanding of Israeli foreign policy, therefore, these key features facilitate creating a mindset which helps this awareness process.

Although the Palestine issue is at the of the Israeli foreign policy agenda, this is not the subject of this study. The studies have done in this field previously, generally, emphasize Israel's national security concerns when it comes to Israel-Syria relations. Most of these works have focused on the national security aspect of Israel's foreign policy, while some of which have focused on that the priority is to limit Iran's influence. Those who state Iran's threat in Israel foreign policy believe that that is also the part of national security concern. The reason for the increasing of Iran's influence in Israeli decision-makers is the increasing effect of Iran over Syria. Those policymakers see every step Iran takes in Syria is an existential threat for Israel's national security. For instance, the primary concern of Israel's foreign policy is the expansionism of Iran in the Middle East, particularly in Syria. Presence of Iranian troops in Syria and Iran's provision weapons to Hezbollah via Syria are the primary explanations why Israel involves in Syrian civil war to some extent (Hanauer, 2016). Besides, Hezbollah's mobilization its fighters to join Assad forces is another reason for Israel's increased concern. According to Hanauer (2016), Israel carried out many attacks to hit Iranian convoys, which carried weapons to Hezbollah, and Hezbollah fighters. Israel did not hesitate to do it; however, the only hesitation was a possibility of direct conflict with Iran. Therefore, only limited attacks have taken place by Israeli forces.

Israeli policymakers think that if Assad strengthens his position with Iran's support, Israel may face a more significant threat by Iran in a possible deconflicted term in Syria (ibid.).

In the matter of regional security, Syria is the recent issue for Israel, which is on the desk. Israel did not support any fraction in Syria when uprising and then civil war emerged in 2011, appraising that chaos made interference harder and estimating an action could do more damage than good (Byman, 2019). The Syrian regime is an essential ally for Iran, and thus, Iran sent thousands Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) soldiers to support Assad regime, when it seemed nearly collapsing at the beginning of the civil war. Due to the risk of casualties, the IRGC forces have not been at the forefront; instead, they played the leading role (Yaari, 2018). Along with the diplomacy, Israel has utilized military strikes to cease the circulation of heavy weapons from Iranian and Syrian armies to Hezbollah (Sen, 2019). The aim is to keep Iran and Hezbollah powers away from the Israeli border.

Furthermore, Israel also identifies Hezbollah as an existential threat like Iran. That makes conflicts inevitable between these two actors. When looked Israeli officials' or Hezbollah's leader Nasrallah's speeches, it can be seen that they always use the language of the threat to each other. Therefore, Israel aims to limit Hezbollah's capabilities, such as political but mostly military. Ghaddar and Uskowi (2018) claimed that Hezbollah has more than one hundred thousand rockets and missiles. With those weapons, Hezbollah can attack almost every city in Israel (ibid.). This fact makes Israel's concern right, and therefore, Israeli policymakers realize Hezbollah capability and trying to lessen its power with all means. Those ammunitions came through to Hezbollah via Syria. Therefore, Israel tries to prevent this flow with its involvement in Syria.

Another problem that in Israel's foreign policy deems vital is the chemical weapons that Syria has. Although the Assad regime's use of chemical weapons against its people in Syria in 2013 attracted the reaction of the world public opinion, Israel was the most worrying country. Because, considering its historical antagonism with Syria, the Israeli government has made pressure to take precautions against this situation. The Israeli administration has seen the use of chemical weapons as a red line (Rabinovich, 2012). In the following process, Israel did not hesitate to hit the places he claimed to produce chemical weapons (Beaumont, 2017).

CHAPTER 2

2.1 The Structure of Israel Foreign Policy

Israel's political life is controlled by a relatively small number of Jewish elites (Abramov, 1976). These elites also have a very similar worldview. Political elites are civilians, high-level military officials and religious elements.

Israel's national consciousness is ruled by the elites. It includes different concepts, such as genocide, numerous battles, wars, terrorist operations, and antagonism to Arab countries. According to the Israeli officials, being strong in terms of the military capacity is a significant issue in order to survival in the Middle East region. They also believe that being different in comparison with its neighbors as ethnic and religious matters makes Israel more vulnerable. This difference led them to be isolated in the region. This mindset shapes Israel foreign policy (Efegil, 2013). The understanding of key features of Israel foreign policy depends on to comprehend that mentality.

Security concerns predominantly shape Israel's foreign policy. Israeli intellectuals think that Israel should remain alone because of Arab countries' unfriendly approach. Seeking peaceful solutions and improving defense capacities are the main objectives of Israel's foreign (Bengio, 2004). However, findings show that Israel often acts with a military method instead of trying to find friendly resolution when it comes to the matter of national security.

The Israeli administration considers cooperation and peaceful relations with the Palestinians and neighboring Arab countries as vital to Israel's long-term existence and development. Therefore, this understanding is the cornerstone of Israel's foreign policy (Kibaroglu, 2002). However, because of the security and threat-based worldview, the Israeli government spends a significant part of its financial resources on security items. With the support of the US, Israel's military power is more modernized than other countries in the region. However, the military structure is subject to various restrictions by determinants such as small population, economic weakness and international factors (ibid.).

Due to the geographic loneliness of Arab states surrounded by menacing approaches, Israel attaches particular importance to improving relations with non-regional states. In this context, it has developed ties with European Union countries, Australia, Canada, Japan, South Korea, Third World countries and former Soviet Union countries. In this way, Israel is trying to gain political support in the international arena. Such relations are believed to strengthen Israel's hand in the Palestinian issue. With the help of bilateral economic and political advantages, it is foreseen that Israel's deterrence against Arab countries will be secured by gaining international support and strengthening its military structure (Heller, 2000).

2.1.1 The Structure of Israel's Foreign Policy Decision-Making Process

Zionism is the most significant part of Israel's identity. Zionism, as it is known, historically accepts a particular piece of land as the promised land to the Jews. Thus, the elite aspect of Israel's political culture is Judaism. For Jewish intellectuals, Israel's future, namely security, wealth/welfare and the ability to perform its historical mission, depends on World Judaism. The future of world Judaism is also linked to the survival of Israel. Therefore, the main task of Israel's foreign policy is to preserve the existence of Israel, which is surrounded by the aggressive Arab world (Özmen, 2002). Moreover, the main values that dominate the process of foreign policymaking are to ensure the existence of the Jewish state against external threats and to preserve the majority of Jews in Israel (Efegil, 2013). These values play a guiding role in defining Israel's national interests.

In Israel, national security is another most crucial aspect of Israel's foreign policy, which is also related to existence. It can be easily said that national security is the at the of the Israeli foreign policy officials' agenda. Since the establishment, Israel's national security policy is based on the assumption that the nation faces a real threat to both genocide and political destruction. According to Freilich (2012), countless major conflicts, including six wars, and violence from small degree terrorism to enormous rocket assaults have been the fundamental aspects of Israel's foreign policy. With an unlimited conflict of enmity and intent, an almost humiliating sense of Arab hostility reigns. The external environment, which is exposed to more than one threat at any time, is one of the perpetual tensions perforated by short-term hostility events and the need to meet with constant caution(*ibid.*). Every battle Israel has been in so far was seen as part of survival: Israel must always be ready to fight and win (Jackson, 1965).

It can be seen that in some studies, how national security has importance in the foreign policy-making process. It is also seen in those works how national security attributed to vital subjects. According to Freilich (2012), it is widely thought that Iran poses an existential threat and other actors such as Syria, Hezbollah and Hamas are expected to seek Israel's ability to destroy Israel. Experience has also shown that national security judgments, even after the Six-Day War and the Oslo Accords, have the potential to fundamentally change the course of the country, although it does not threaten its destruction. Therefore, in Israel, decision-making is crucial and fatalist (ibid.).

Elites have been dominant in Israel foreign affairs and policymaking process since the foundation of the state (Brecher, 1972). These elites come from main coalition parties' leadership positions, and they are also in leading positions in terms of establishing foreign policy and making significant decisions for the country's future (ibid.). The prime minister has been the main character in the Israeli administration. The prime minister has the decision-maker role among the member of these elite group. According to Brownstein (1977), the level of the prime minister's strength has relied on such factors as everyone's character, the existence or nonexistence of different people in a situation to dispute this superiority, the level of harmony of the public's elite and the eagerness of politicians, especially leaders, and the general population to concede to the PM on security problems and foreign matters.

According to Efezil (2013), the foreign policy-making process in Israel allows all political elites to express all sorts of opinions and ideas, regardless of their political or ideological agenda. Nevertheless, decision-makers in Israel are socialized within the defense culture. In this way, they are familiar with Israel's military culture. Therefore, foreign policy in Israel plays a complementary, not decisive, role in supporting the view that secures Israel's military superiority. Given this basic view, other political considerations can easily be ignored. Thus, the opinions of the Ministry of Defense and the Prime Ministry are more dominant than those of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Strong personalities can play a decisive role in shaping the role of institutions that plan and implement foreign policy in Israel (ibid.).

Furthermore, Israeli intelligence services can play a significant role in which defining Israel's core foreign policy interests. In Israel, the National Security Council acts as a forum for the balanced determination of foreign policy goals and objectives (Efezil, 2013). The Committees in

the Israeli Parliament Knesset play a slight role in the foreign policy-making process. The committees are a forum where different party representatives come together and discuss mutual views. Nevertheless, the impact of the committees on foreign policymaking is limited. In the process of foreign policymaking, pressure groups play a very active role (ibid). They are particularly sensitive to pressure groups, occupied territories, new settlements and security issues.

2.2 The Significance of Syria in Israel Foreign Policy

With the developments in Syria, the Israeli administration found itself in a complicated situation. It is noteworthy that Israeli decision-makers do not have any explanation for the change of the current administration due to the continuation of the cold peace with Syria. The process includes clues that the Israeli administration considers the Syrian administration to remain in office as more favorable for its interests (Frenkel and Moyes, 2013). According to the Israeli defense official, Israel is reluctant to change the Syrian administration with an unknown actor which may be a more significant threat, because they prefer the enemy whom they know very well. It is also significant that the Israeli administration evaluated the consequences that may arise with the change of Assad administration. The fact that the Syrian administration remained in office meant that the Syrian Iranian alliance was strengthened. Due to the alliance relations with Iran, the change in the Syrian administration was considered positive in terms of causing this alliance to weaken. However, in this case, the threat posed by the actors likely to be influential in Syria in the long term for Israel would be strengthened. With this background, in the first phase where different difficulties arise for Israel, it is seen that the Israeli administration has first reacted to the crisis by determining the position which would cause the least damage. In the policies developed through this approach, Assad administration remains in office or leaves office is not considered as an issue. However, the preservation of this policy has been the most important agenda item of Israeli decision-makers.

After the Israel-Lebanon war in 2006, both the Israeli armed forces and Hezbollah were thought to have reached a stable balance based on mutual deterrence by increasing their capacities (International Crisis Group, 2018). With the onset of the Syrian crisis, Hezbollah has brought its forces in Iran to Lebanon via Syria. The response of the Israeli administration to this situation was to prevent these transfers from time to time. With the direct involvement of Hezbollah in the

Syrian conflict in the coming period, the Israeli administration has made more efforts to prevent the Shiite militias from taking advantage of the current situation and settling more in the field. Secondly, Israel declared that Hezbollah fighters, Iranian-related groups, Al-Qaeda or Daesh-related forces would be opposed to efforts to establish infrastructure in a position adjacent to the ceasefire line created in 1974 east of the Golan Heights (ibid.). Here, the Israeli administration was most concerned that Iran and the related forces would be stationed adjacent to the ceasefire line, thus opening a new front for Israel (ibid.). Thirdly, Israel has declared that it will not tolerate any attack on the territory it controls, whether intentional or unintentional. Israel's administration felt compelled to protect the Druze who lived in the Golan region, as they faced the oppression of the Druze population, which served the Israeli army and also maintained relations with the Druze relatives in Syria. In this context, the Israeli prime minister announced the readiness of the Israeli Armed Forces to take all necessary actions (Lazareva, 2015).

CHAPTER 3

3.1 The Background of Israel-Syria Relations

The confrontation of Israel and Syria many times after the establishment of the state of Israel (1948, 1967, 1973 and 1982) caused the two countries to fail to develop diplomatic relations for a long time. The causes of these confrontations are interrelated and intertwined, but it is possible to categorize them under the headings of land/border, security and water. The Six-Day War¹ between Israel, Egypt, Syria and Jordan in 1967 led to a further deepening of the dispute between the two countries. Israel, which has normalized its relations with Egypt and Jordan on the occasion of the 1978 Camp David negotiations and the 1994 Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty, could not establish this ground with Syria. No international organization has recognized Israel's

¹ 'Six-Day War also called June War or Third Arab-Israeli War, brief war that took place June 5–10, 1967, and was the third of the Arab-Israeli Wars, Israeli's decisive victory included the capture of the Sinai Peninsula, Gaza Strip West Bank, Old City of Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights; the status of these territories subsequently became a significant point of contention in the Arab-Israeli conflict' (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019).

sovereignty in the Golan Heights in connection with Resolution 242² of the United Nations Security Council. The annexation of the Golan Heights by Israel in 1981, which Israel took under control during the Six-Day War, prevented the positive progress of Israeli Syrian relations (Süer, 2002). Israel and Syria held bilateral peace talks between 1995 and 2000 as part of the Middle East Peace process (Salem, 2008), but no results were achieved.

In 2008, the Olmert and Israeli national security agency produced policies in this direction because they considered renewing negotiations as the best option for dealing with Syria and associated threats. This situation was deemed necessary for the weakening of the axis thought to be directed by Iran (Rabinovich, 2012). Israeli Prime Minister Term Olmert had different perspectives on this issue. After talks with US President Bush, he decided to start negotiations with Syria via Turkey, and the Syrian government has accepted the execution of Turkish mediation. Turkey's mediation role after taking over the peace talks between Syria and Israel; bilateral relations have entered a recovery path. However, Operation Cast Lead launched by Israel on Gaza has prevented the development of bilateral relations. In the following process, with the end of Ehud Olmert's term in 2009, Israel's attempts for negotiations ended like previous ones (Hinnebusch, 2009).

After Netanyahu became prime minister in 2009, he opposed Israel's withdrawal from Golan for security reasons openly and decisively (International Crisis Report, 2007). During this period, the US administration supported the Israeli Syrian rapprochement, but the fact that the Arab-Israeli peace process was in the priority. Therefore, the US pointed out that the negotiations between Israel and Syria would not be put on the agenda in the short term. Fred Hof and his team assigned by the administration to deal with Syrian issues focused on the development of bilateral relations between America and Syria. The negotiations initiated by the Obama administration in

² 'United Nations Resolution 242, resolution of the United Nations (UN) Security Council passed in an effort to secure a just and lasting peace in the wake of the Six-Day (June) War of 1967, fought primarily between Israel and Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. The Israelis supported the resolution because it called on the Arab states to accept Israel's right "to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force." Each of the Arab states eventually accepted it (Egypt and Jordan accepted the resolution from the outset) because of its clause calling for Israel to withdraw from the territories conquered in 1967. The Palestine Liberation Organization rejected it until 1988 because it lacked explicit references to Palestinians. Though never fully implemented, it was the basis of diplomatic efforts to end Arab-Israeli conflicts until the Camp David Accords and remains an important touchstone in any negotiated resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict' (Encyclopaedia, 2019)

2010 continued until the protests and demonstrations started in Syria in 2011. At the end of 2011, the Israeli press announced that the negotiations between Israel and Syria were continuing on a severe level, but that the 2011 crisis continued until the outbreak of the Syrian crisis, and that it was a rapprochement effort (Rabinovich, 2012).

3.2 Arab Spring and The Syrian Civil War

The Arab Spring is the name given to events in which many Arab countries in the Middle East are affected. These countries; Tunisia, Libya, Algeria, Bahrain, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Syria (Sagsen, 2011). These events are known by particular names such as Arab rebellion, Arab awakening, Arab reform and Arab transformation widely used in the Arab Spring. Prolonged power and authoritarian regimes in the Arab geography have led to a social explosion as a result of prolonged tensions (Kibaroglu, 2011). As a result of demonstrations in Tunisia in 2010, governments have changed in many Arab countries. These changes have caused thousands of people to die. The Arab Spring has led to governments change in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya; In Algeria, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Jordan, reform movements have begun, although governments have not changed; In Syria, it evolved towards the civil war (Young, 2017). Thousands of people are still dying in the region while the effects of the Arab Spring continue. Hundreds of thousands are also struggling to establish a life away from their country. Great migration movements caused by these conflicts affect almost the whole world. However, the most suffered country is Syria because the country has been facing the civil war over eight years.

In order to understand the civil war in Syria, it is necessary to look at the sources of the accumulation of stress in the country. The ongoing turmoil in the country can be cited as the reason for the lack of unity in the country. Although the Arabs constitute ninety per cent of the country, it is seen that Syria is composed of many different groups, including ethnic and religious sects. As a matter of fact, 90% of the Syrian society consists of Arab, 9% Kurdish and 1% ethnic groups such as Turkmen, Armenian and Circassian. 74% of the population is Sunni, 13% is Nusayri, 10% is Christian, and 3% is Druze (Şen, 2012). Apart from these differences, it is seen that there are divisions in Syria due to the different identities and administrative regions created by France during the mandate administration.

The conflict climate that Syria has experienced in these days is due to the divergences from the mandate management period. The deepening of the divisions between the minorities and minorities in the mandate period, the authoritarian rule of the country's administration, the desire to move to democracy, injustices in income distribution, corruption, bribery and favoritism, human rights violations triggered the Arab Spring in Syria (Öztürkler, 2014). One of the reasons why the groups could not unite on a typical roof is the separation from the mandate management period. Today, this separation has become more complicated with the influence of external forces.

3.3 Israel Involvement to the Syrian Civil War

There are several reasons why Israel is intimately involved in the Syrian civil war. Israel confirms these reasons for the threat of national security. One of these reasons was the chemical weapons that were said to be in the hands of the Syrian regime. Until the Syrian government and Western states agreed on the abolition of chemical weapons, Israel perceived the possibility of Syria using these weapons as a significant threat. Another reason is the involvement of Iran and Hezbollah in the civil war and the increasing influence of Iran in the region. Considering Iran as an existential threat, Israel saw Iran's gain in Syria as a danger to its security as a result of the future balances that might favor Iran. Another important reason is the Golan Heights, which has been a problem between Syria and Israel for years. Israel had previously invaded the Golan Heights, claiming to be their own. However, the international public did not recognize this invasion. With the outbreak of civil war, Israel placed more emphasis on the Golan Heights than ever before. Hezbollah's approach to the border and the possibility of establishing a military base near the Golan Heights of Iran are crucial factors behind this. According to Agha (2018), however, the most important reason is that Israel has a significant amount of water resources coming from this region. Moreover, the fact that the Golan Heights are rich in underground resources is one of the reasons that make it attractive to Israel. Due to the fact that Iran and Hezbollah's increasing sphere of influence and advancing through to southern Syria may cause the possibility of hot conflict with Israel. Therefore, Israel's policy in Syria is being shaped with these developments.

International discourses on the use of large-scale chemical weapons in Syria on 21 August 2013 influenced Israel's policies towards the Syrian crisis. There was a public perception that the US

administration plans to carry out a limited military operation against the Syrian regime after the chemical attack. It has been considered by the Israeli administration as an important international action to control Iran's nuclear objectives, which are closely linked to the Syrian administration. As a result of diplomatic efforts, an agreement on the abolition of Syria's arsenal of chemical weapons prevented any foreign military intervention against Syria. However, the ongoing conflicts have raised the issue of whether or not the Syrian government has an effective monitoring capability for chemical weapons. Strong commitments to the agreement meant that Syria was no longer a threat to Israel on chemical weapons, but continuing conflict and opposition could have led to the failure of the process. According to the Israeli government, the Syrian regime was likely to conceal areas of chemical weapons from international observers (Thorleifsson, 2013). In addition, the Israeli government commented that the Obama administration's failure to respond adequately to the use of chemical weapons declared as a red line after the attack, weakened the possibility of intervening in Syria. (Alpher, 2013). During this period, the withdrawal of the troops of United Nations, which helped stabilize the Israeli Syrian border region, led to the strengthening of the approach of ensuring Israel's own national security and self-confidence itself. Along with military actions, Israel realized the necessity of using diplomacy as a balance tool.

From the Israeli point of view, the diplomatic initiatives are aimed at balancing Iran. It is almost like playing a chess game. The Israeli government believes that the beneficial results that Iran has drawn on its behalf over the conflict-free zones created during the conflict management process will have negative consequences for Israel. Firstly, the zone of non-conflict mechanism does not mean that Iran or Hezbollah is moving away from Syria, but rather allowing Iran to maintain its sphere of influence and military domination over Syrian territory. Secondly, the Iranian-led axis draws on administrative gaps in certain areas to consolidate its recent gains and to move eastward towards the Iraqi side. On the other hand, the non-conflict zones created in the future include the possibility of establishing a governance form based on decentralization in Syria. At the same time, if there is a possibility of transition from non-conflict zones to autonomous areas, the management of these areas by actors with the potential to pose a threat to Israel is likely to limit Iran's ability to maintain its presence or influence in certain regions (Yadlin and Heistein, 2017). Israel's aim at this point is to reduce the influence of its rivals through diplomacy without entering into a hot conflict.

With this background, the Israeli administration stated that the cooperation between the US and Russia on Syria has contradictory effects in terms of Israel's strategic interests. While some circles in Israel expressed their belief that the collaboration between the US and Russia would have beneficial consequences in the context of the developments in Syria, Prime Minister Netanyahu stated that the agreement would reveal the results of the deal. In this period, it can be thought that the Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's repetition of the emphasis that Israel would provide its own security would be the result of this belief. Aware of Israel's uneasiness, the US administration asked Israel to respect the UN's concerns about the use of chemical weapons in order to prevent any unilateral action by the Israeli government (Thorleifsson, 2013).

Prime Minister Netanyahu has repeatedly made statements that they are not opposed to a possible peace agreement in the context of Syria, but that the withdrawal of Israel from these hills will not be the subject of this agreement. Following the annexation of the Golan Heights by Israel, it is possible to consider the Council of Ministers meeting held in the Golan Heights in 2016 as a reflection of this determination. Prime Minister Netanyahu stated that the Golan Heights, which have been part of Israel since ancient times, are an integral part of the country (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016). Because the US attitude in Syria is variable, Israeli decision-makers are sensitive about this issue. Moreover, the increasing activity of Russia in Syria in the post-2015 period justifies this idea of Israeli policymakers. Relations with Russia due to its role in stabilizing Syria in the long term are considered necessary in terms of preserving their presence in the Golan Heights by the Israeli administration and being effective against the actors considered as threats by Israel. Because Israel needs to legitimize its unilateral action against Golan Height, thus, backing by both Russia and the US on this issue would give Israel a steady hand in the international arena.

3.4 Iran and Hezbollah's Involvement in the Syrian Civil War

It has been expressed since the early days of the conflict that emerged in the early stages of the crisis, where Iran helped the Syrian government determine policies against the opposition in various ways. In this context, it was claimed that Iran provided weapons and ammunition to Syria, provided technical support to the Syrian security units, and the Iranian soldiers intervened in suppressing the actions. In the Western press, there have been reports that Iranian revolution

guards have been sent to Syria to provide technical support to the Syrian government to suppress the demonstrations following the intensification of the events in Syria (Crilly, 2011).

On the other hand, the Iranian government claimed that Western countries in the region were involved in the internal affairs of Syria rather than Iran. The Iranian authorities, who stated that not all allegations were true, also frequently expressed their support for the Assad regime. Iranian Revolutionary Guards Commander Muhammad Ali Jafari confirmed on 16 September 2012 that the Revolutionary Guards and the Jerusalem Brigades were in Syria; nevertheless, this did not mean that they had a 'military presence' in Syria (Black, 2012). He added that in case of a military attack against Iran, Iran would provide military support to Syria. Jafari, who stated that Syria does not need any foreign aid in the current situation, indicated that Iran's troops in Syria are only in this country for consultation and transfer of experience (Al Jazeera, 2014). However, this situation became more apparent with Iran's desire to become a proactive and strong regional actor in the coming period. The policies of US and Israeli governments to suppress Iran have been effective in this transformation (Rabinovich, 2012). The weakness of the Syrian government's decision-making capacity and the loss of effective control over its borders has meant that Israel's long-standing deterrence over Syria has weakened. Because of Iran's support to the Syrian administration, the increase in the dependence of the Syrian administration on Iran has also meant sharing the freedom of action on Syria's territory with Iran. Israel has had to take Iran into account more in its strategy over Syria.

Israel had adopted a more defensive attitude since May 2013 after Hezbollah increased its effectiveness in late 2012 when it was deployed in Syria. Hezbollah's entry into the war has widened the framework of Israel's struggle on the Syrian territory. This has led to the Israeli administration struggling with Hezbollah in Lebanon only in the past, with the fact that Hezbollah has gained influence and influence in Syria as well (International Crisis Group, 2018). Evaluations that Hezbollah, which fights for the continuation of the regime in Syria, has expanded its technical capacity, has prompted the Israeli administration to take additional measures on 'game-changing' weapons (ibid.). In this context, the Israeli government has focused on preventing Hezbollah from accessing and using weapons capable of targeting the central regions of Israel, such as Tel Aviv and Ben Gurion Airport (ibid.). The Israeli government is aware of the possible consequences for Israel of a conflict with Hezbollah but has

made clear lines that they will defend their country. In this context, the first attack by the Israeli air force on January 30, 2013, shows that this approach is concretely reflected in the field. Hezbollah's deployment in Syria has, at some point, created the possibility that its forces will move to the southern regions that share borders with Israel. In response to this situation, which was carried out in coordination with the Syrian administration in 2015, the Israeli administration tried to prevent Hezbollah and Iranian forces from increasing their influence around the Israel-Syria ceasefire line. In this context, it was requested to create a no-fly zone between Syria and Israel or to create a buffer zone under the control of the Israeli Armed Forces. However, the fact that the opposition groups moved away from the south of Syria to the northern regions shortly after the determination of this necessity caused the issue to move away from the agenda for a while.

Until 2015, the Israeli government did not confirm the assault on specific targets on Syrian territory. Since the first days of the conflict the government stated that if the shipment of anti-aircraft missiles, land-to-land missiles and chemical weapons took place to Hezbollah, these developments would not remain unanswered. It was seen that not only the Israeli administration but also the other state and non-state actors in Syria tried to prevent the contradictions in Syria from taking place outside Syria until 2015. In this context, Israel attacked Hezbollah convoys only in Syria and did not carry out the same kind of attacks against Hezbollah in the Lebanese territory. However, after 2015, Israeli administration moved away from this attitude and targeted Iran and Hezbollah. As a reason for the operations, the Israeli administration has shown that Russia's presence in Syria has turned into a decisive advantage for the regime. Another reason is the deepening of Hezbollah's involvement in the Syrian crisis.

3.5 Russia's Involvement in the Syrian Civil War

In 2015, the Israeli administration carefully monitored Russia's increasing inclusion in the Syrian crisis. Russia's growing influence in the field has facilitated the Syrian government's rhetoric about the evacuation of chemical weapons in the international arena. This situation also played an essential role in the survival of the Syrian administration. Shortly after the Russian intervention, the power ratio in the field changed in favour of the Syrian administration and the possibility of defeat by the opposition groups weakened. Israel has interpreted the new situation as strengthening the relationship between the Assad administration and its allies. In this context,

the fact that the Assad administration surrendered its chemical weapons was considered as the restriction of the independent decision-making capacity of the Syrian administration on the developments (Alpher, 2013). On the one hand, it was such a development that weakened the deterrence of the administration; on the other hand, it meant strengthening of the relationship with its allies. Since that time, the Israeli administration has faced a neighbour supported by both Russia and Iran.

Russia's support for the Syrian regime has shown effective results in favour of the Assad regime. For Israel, this action has revealed the possibility that the US administration will strengthen its support for the opposition groups in response to this intervention. In this period, it is not clear whether the US administration will make this balancing against Russia or not. In this regard, in September 2015, the Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu requested a mechanism to avoid undesirable clashes between the Israeli armed forces and the Russian army (Keinon, 2015). A few days before the Russian parliament directed the army for military operations in Syria, a communication mechanism was established in the ISK and the Hmeymim airbase in Tel Aviv where Israeli and Russian military authorities had regular and direct connections. This communication mechanism was effective in the latest months of 2015 when Israel decided to intervene in a Russian aircraft flying over Golan. Similarly, Russia has benefited from this communication mechanism to develop a response to Israeli attacks on the Syrian field (International Crisis Group, 2018). A few months later, at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris on November 2015, the leaders underscored the importance of a consensus on the prevention of operational conflicts. Netanyahu stated about the developments after Turkey dropped Russian aircraft (Chance and Martinez, 2015). He claimed that recent events show that having collaboration is crucial to prevent such adverse actions (Pileggi, 2015).

Russia's apparent inclusion of the crisis has led to significant strategic challenges for Israel, as well as significant changes in the course of the conflict in Syria. Both the innovations in the power balance in the region and the pressure and transformations spreading towards the Syrian and Golan Heights can be evaluated in this context. The integration of equipment and systems sent by Russia in support of the Syrian army and thus related actors to the hardware that poses a threat to Israel in the short- and long-term means strengthening the action and conflict capabilities of the actors considered to be a threat to Israel. This situation is interpreted as the

expansion of Iran and Hezbollah's areas of operation and making it easier to move towards the truce line. The Russian government's pursuit of a strategy to reduce the presence of Syrian forces in the southern regions was seen as a development that strengthened the possibility of Hezbollah and Iranian-related forces to reach and attack the Golan Heights in southern Syria. Moreover, Russia's sharing of its military capacity with the Syrian army and related actors, and the establishment of the S-300 and S-400 air defence systems in Syria (Gross, 2015), which could have an impact on the Israeli territory, have resulted in the restriction of Israel's freedom of military manoeuvre in Syria.

With the support of Russia, the Syrian administration's operations to take back the eastern parts of the country have strengthened the possibility of opening a land corridor from Iran to the Mediterranean. Some circles under Israeli rule point out that the opening of such a corridor will increase the ability of both weapons and Iranian-backed militias to move along the Israeli border. Through this corridor, it is thought that Iran will provide another alternative way of supporting airborne military shipments to the allied actors (International Crisis Group, 2018).

After the Russian intervention, the progress of the conflicts in favour of the Syrian administration and the passing of Aleppo into the hands of the Syrian administration in 2016 indicated that the Syrian administration will gain strength and will remain in the country's management in the short term. Although the results of the Russian intervention have strengthened the Israeli government's belief that the US's weak support for the opposition will be increased, this expectation has not been fully realised in the following period.

CONCLUSION

The fact that Israel and Syria are close to each other geographically and that Syria is considered as a significant threat to the national security, especially after the civil war, has led Israel to be involved in the Syrian crisis. Because national security is the main priority for Israel foreign policy, in this regard, Israel's policies towards the crisis have changed as a result of the degree of the conflicts and the involvement of different actors in the process. Furthermore, it can be said that Israel interfered in the Syrian civil war, but this interference remained limited.

In the early stages of the crisis, the two main issues shaping the public opinion on Syria were the future of the peace agreement between Israel and Syria and the presence of Israel in the Golan Heights. However, over time, the weakening of the possibility of the developments in Syria to reveal important developments regarding the peace agreement has caused these two issues to move away from the agenda of the Israeli administration. During this period, the debate on the future of the Syrian administration came to the forefront, and this had an impact on Israel's crisis agenda. The Syrian administration has become more prominent in terms of what position will be taken against Israel if it continues to govern, or which actors will be effective in Syria if it leaves. However, in this case, it has changed over time, and the current administration in Syria has maintained its continuity. The fact that the Syrian administration will continue to be efficient in the crisis process has been interpreted in the Israeli public opinion as increasing the visibility of Iranian and related forces in the region, concerning the Syrian crisis and the increasing security threats against Israel.

Upon the consequences of the crisis for Israel, the Israeli government had the possibility of responding to these results through an active or passive policy. Taking a passive attitude between these two options indicates that the Israeli decision-makers believe that they will provide the possible advantages to Israel thus and so that they will be protected from their disadvantages in this way. It has been seen that the Israeli administration has not developed a comprehensive approach to how developments should be met. Although the Israeli administration has tried to get closer to the countries with similar security concerns in the region, it has been able to realize this target within the framework of a limited actor.

The possibility that Syrian government's weapons of mass destruction would be given to other actors, Iran's efforts to develop nuclear weapons which claimed by Israel, and Iran's increasing influence in Syria, are considered to be the primary security problems facing the Israeli government in the future. It is possible to reach two conclusions on the policies of Israeli decision-makers in the context of the crisis. First, the Israeli administration focuses primarily on its security rather than contributing to regional security in its policies against the developments and transformations in the region. Second, Israeli decision-makers disagree with the approach that crisis-oriented negotiation, consultation and reconciliation will make effective and rapid contributions to the security of their country. In this context, the Israeli administration presents a

differentiation from the actors involved in the diplomatic efforts made in the context of the solution of the crisis.



REFERENCE LIST

- Abramov, S. Z. (1976) 'Perpetual Dilemma. Jewish Religion in the Jewish State', *Sociological Analysis*. doi: 10.2307/3710450.
- Agha, Z. (2018). *What's Driving Israeli Claims to the Golan Heights?* [online] Foreign Affairs. Available at: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/israel/2018-11-01/whats-driving-israeli-claims-golan-heights> [Accessed 6 Aug. 2019].
- Al Jazeera Turk (2014). '*İstisare amacıyla Suriye'deyiz*' / '*We are in Syria for consultation*'. [online] Available at: <http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/haber/istisare-amaciyla-suriyedeyiz> [Accessed 29 Aug. 2019].
- Alpher, Yossi (2013). The Russian-U.S. solution for Syria's chemical weapons: ramifications for Israel, NOREF Norwegian Peace Building Resource Centre, Expert Analysis, September, [https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/170285/a584087e2f5ec4881eef9524c21ecabc\(1\).pdf](https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/170285/a584087e2f5ec4881eef9524c21ecabc(1).pdf), [Accessed: 27.07.2019].
- Beaumont, P. (2017). *Israel reported to have bombed Syrian chemical weapons facility*. [online] the Guardian. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/07/israel-airstrike-syria-chemical-weapons-facility> [Accessed 30.08 2019].
- Bengio, O. (2004) *The Turkish-Israeli relationship: Changing Ties of Middle Eastern outsiders*, *The Turkish-Israeli Relationship: Changing Ties of Middle Eastern Outsiders*. doi: 10.1057/9781403979452.
- Black, I. (2012). *Iran confirms it has forces in Syria and will take military action if pushed*. [online] the Guardian. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/sep/16/iran-middleeast> [Accessed 29 Aug. 2019].
- Brecher, M. (1972). *Foreign Policy System of Israel Setting: Images Process*. New Haven: Conn.
- Brownstein, L. (1977). Decision Making in Israeli Foreign Policy: An Unplanned Process. *Political Science Quarterly*, 92(2), 259-279.
- Chance, M. and Martinez, M. (2015). *5 things to know about Russian jet shot down by Turkey - CNN*. [online] CNN. Available at: <https://edition.cnn.com/2015/11/24/middleeast/russia-turkey-jet-downed-syria/index.html> [Accessed 18.08.2019].
- Crilly, R. (2011). *Iran snipers in Syria as part of crackdown*. [online] Telegraph.co.uk. Available at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/8702466/Iran-snipers-in-Syria-as-part-of-crackdown.html> [Accessed 29 Aug. 2019].

Dentice, G. (2019). *Israel's Foreign Policy: No Change in Sight*. [online] ISPI. Available at: <https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/israels-foreign-policy-no-change-sight-22773> [Accessed 13 Aug. 2019].

Encyclopaedia Britannica. (2019). *Six-Day War | Causes & Summary*. [online] Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/event/Six-Day-War> [Accessed 21 Aug. 2019].

Encyclopaedia Britannica. (2019). *United Nations Resolution 242 | Six-Day War*. [online] Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/United-Nations-Resolution-242> [Accessed 24 Aug. 2019].

Ereker, F. (2013) 'Analyzing foreign policy: Agent-structure problem in foreign policy analysis', *Uluslararası İlişkiler/International Relations*.

Ewenstein, P. (2011) *Revolution, war, and offensive realism*, *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses*.

Frankel, J. and Waltz, K. N. (1980) 'Theory of International Politics', *International Journal*. doi: 10.2307/40201892.

Freilich, Charles D. (2012). *Zion's dilemmas: how Israel makes national security policy*. Cornell University Press.

Frenkel, S. and Boyes, R. (2013). *Islamist fear drives Israel to support Assad survival*. [online] [TheTimes.co.uk](https://www.thetimes.co.uk). Available at: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/islamist-fear-drives-israel-to-support-assad-survival-5wmd7lpsmjh> [Accessed 28 Aug. 2019].

Ghaddar, Hanin and Uskowi, Nader (2018). 'Iran Will Spare Hizbullah in Its Conflict with Israel, for Now', Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 5 June 2018, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/iran-will-spare-hezbollah-in-its-conflict-with-israel-for-now>.

Gilpin, R. G. (1984). 'The richness of the tradition of political realism', *International Organization*, 2(38), pp. 287–304. doi: 10.1017/s0020818300026710.

Gross, J. (2015). *Israel's air superiority clouded by new Russian missiles in Syria*. [online] [Timesofisrael.com](https://www.timesofisrael.com). Available at: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israels-air-superiority-in-syria-clouded-by-russian-s-400/> [Accessed 20 Aug. 2019].

Haneuer, Larry (2016). *What Are Israel's Interests and Options in Syria?* [online] [Rand.org](https://www.rand.org). Available at: <https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PE185.html> [Accessed 26 Aug. 2019].

Heller, M. (2013). *Continuity and change in Israeli security policy*. Routledge.

Herz, J. H. (1950). 'Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma', *World Politics*, 2(2). doi: 10.2307/2009187.

Hinnebusch, Raymond (2009). Syrian Foreign Policy under Bashar al-Asad, *Ortadoğu Etütleri/The Middle Eastern Studies* 1(1), p. 7-26.

International Crisis Group (2018). Israel, Hizbollah and Iran: Preventing Another War in Syria Middle East Report, 182 , https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/182-israel-hizbollah-and-iran-preventing-another-war-in-syria_0.pdf, [Accessed: 21.08.2019].

International Crisis Group (2007). Restarting Israeli Syrian Negotiations, *Middle East Report*, no: 63, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/eastern-mediterranean/israelpalestine/restarting-israeli-syrian-negotiations>, [Accessed: 28.08.2018].

Jackson, Henry (1965). *The National Security Council*. New York: Praeger.

Kibaroğlu, Mustafa (2011). Arap Baharı ve Türkiye/ The Arab Spring and Turkey, *Adam Akademi/ ADAM Academia*, 2, p. 25-36.

Kibaroglu, Mustafa (2002). 'Turkey and Israel Strategize', *Middle East Quarterly*, 1(9).

Keinon, H. (2015). PM: Israel, Russia establish 'mechanism' to prevent 'misunderstandings' in Syria. [online] *The Jerusalem Post* | JPost.com. Available at: <https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Politics-And-Diplomacy/PM-Israel-Russia-establish-mechanism-to-prevent-misunderstandings-in-Syria-417801> [Accessed 22.08 2019].

Kunz, J. L. and Morgenthau, H. J. (1948). 'Politics among Nations. The Struggle for Power and Peace', *The Western Political Quarterly*. doi: 10.2307/442951.

Lazareva, I. (2015). *Israel threatens military intervention in Syria's civil war*. [online] *Telegraph.co.uk*. Available at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/israel/11681860/Israel-threatens-military-intervention-in-Syrias-civil-war.html> [Accessed 28 Aug. 2019].

Malmvig, Helle (2016). Geopolitics and non-western intervention in Syria, Israel's Conflicting Interests in the Syrian War, *DIIS Policy Brief*, December, http://pure.diis.dk/ws/files/710686/Israel_s_conflicting_interests_in_Syria_w_ebversion2.pdf, [Accessed: 20.08.2019].

Mearsheimer, J. J. (2018). *Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities*. Yale University Press.

Mearsheimer, J. J. and Walt, S. M. (2013) 'Leaving theory behind: Why simplistic hypothesis testing is bad for International Relations', *European Journal of International Relations*. doi: 10.1177/1354066113494320.

Mearsheimer, J. J. (2007) 'Structural Realism', *International relations theories: Discipline and diversity.*, (83). Available at: https://www.comackschools.org/Downloads/8_mearsheimer-structural_realism.pdf.

Mearsheimer, J. J. (1994) 'The False Promise of International Institutions', *International Security*, 3(19). doi: 10.2307/2539078.

Özmen, S. (2002) *Ortadoğu'da Etnik, Dini Çatışmalar ve İsrail/ Ethnic and Religious Studies in the Middle East and Israel*. Istanbul.

Öztürkler, Harun (2014). Arap Baharı'nın Ekonomik Analizi/ The Economic Analyse of the Arab Spring, *Akademik Orta Doğu/ The Middle East Academic*, 8(2), p.1

Pileggi, T. (2015). *PM: Israel, Russia deepening coordination to avoid Syria 'mishaps'*. [online] Timesofisrael.com. Available at: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/pm-israel-russia-deepening-coordination-to-avoid-syria-mishaps/> [Accessed 18.08.2019].

Rabinovich, Itamar (2012). Israel's View of the Syrian Crisis, Analysis Paper, *The Saban Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings*, no:28, November, <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Rabinovich-web-final.pdf>, [Accessed: 18.08.2019].

Salem, Paul (2008). Syrian Israeli Peace: A Possible Key to Regional Change, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Policy Brief, December, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/syrian_israeli_peace.pdf, [Accessed: 22.08.2018].

Sagan, S. D. (1996) 'Why do states build nuclear weapons? Three models in search of a bomb', *International Security*. doi: 10.2307/2539273.

Sağsen, İlhan, (2011) Arap Baharı, Türk Dış Politikası ve Dış Algılaması/ The Arab Spring, Turkish Foreign Policy and its External Perception, *Ortadoğu Analiz*, 3(31-32), p.57-64.

Schweller, R. L. (1996) 'Neorealism's status-quo bias: What security dilemma?', *Security Studies*. doi: 10.1080/09636419608429277.

Schweller, R. L. (1993) 'Deadly Imbalances: Tripolarity and Hitler's Strategy of World Conquest', *International Studies Quarterly*, 1(37), pp. 73–103. doi: 10.2307/1433210.

Schweller, R. L. (2010) *Unanswered Threats: Political Constraints on the Balance of Power*, *Unanswered Threats: Political Constraints on the Balance of Power*.

Sen, Ashish Kumar. (2018). *Are Israel And Iran Headed to War?* [online] Atlantic Council. Available at: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/are-israel-and-iran-headed-to-war> [Accessed 27.08 2019].

Süer, Berna (2002). Suriye-İsrail Barış Görüşmeleri: Olgunlaşma Teorisi Perspektifinden Bir Analiz/ Syria-Israel Peace Negotiations: An analyse from the Pserspective of Maturation Theory. *Ortadoğu Etütleri / The Middle East Studies*, 3(2), p. 217-254.

Staff, T. (2013). *'Israel prefers Bashar Assad to Islamist rebels'*. [online] Timesofisrael.com. Available at: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-prefers-assad-to-islamist-rebels/> [Accessed 23 Aug. 2019].

Şen, Yağmur (2012). 'Suriye'de Arap Baharı'/ The Arab Spring in Syria. *Yasama Dergisi/ The Journal of Legislation*, 23, p. 54-79.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2016). *Cabinet communique*. Tel Aviv: Prime Minister's Media Advisor, pp. <https://mfa.gov.il/MFA/PressRoom/2016/Pages/Cabinet-communique-17-April-2016.aspx>

Thorleifsson, Cathrine Moe (2013). A fragile cold peace: the impact of the Syrian conflict on Israeli Syrian relations, *NOREF Norwegian Peace Building Resource Centre*, Expert Analysis, December, <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/175240/ea883668809494555f78ac913f12a8ff.pdf>, [Accessed: 29.07.2019].

Waltz, K. N. (2000) 'Structural realism after the Cold War', *International Security*. doi: 10.1162/016228800560372.

Waltz, K. N. (2013) 'Man, the state and war', in *Thinking About Nuclear Weapons: Analyses and Prescriptions*. doi: 10.4324/9781315029672.

Yaari, Ehud (2018). *Bracing for an Israel-Iran Confrontation in Syria - The American Interest*. [online] The American Interest. Available at: <https://www.the-american-interest.com/2018/04/30/bracing-israel-iran-confrontation-syria/> [Accessed 27 Aug. 2019].

Yadlin, Amos ve Ari Heistein (2017). *Ending the War in Syria: An Israeli Perspective*, *Council on Foreign Relation*, https://www.cfr.org/councilofcouncils/global_memos/p39169, [Accessed: 27.07.2019].

Young, M. (2017). *Seven years after the Arab Spring, what has happened to call for positive change?* [online] The National. Available at: <https://www.thenational.ae/opinion/comment/seven-years-after-the-arab-spring-what-has-happened-to-calls-for-positive-change-1.683590> [Accessed 9 Aug. 2019].

Zakaria, F. (1999) 'From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role.', *The Journal of American History*, 82. doi: 10.2307/2567147.

Zakaria, F. (2008) *The Post-American World*. 4th edn. New York.

