



BEN-GURION UNIVERSITY OF THE NEGEV

The Ben-Gurion Research Institute for the Study of Israel and Zionism

The Woodman-Scheller Israel Studies International Program

The Impact of Ben-Gurion's 1958 Visit to Türkiye on Bilateral Relations
(1948 - 1966)

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Art in Israel
Studies

Kıvanç Köseoğlu

Under the supervision of Dr. Aviad Moreno and Dr. Natan Aridan

Signature of Student:

K. Köseoğlu

Date: 31.08.2022

Signature of Supervisors:

Natan Aridan

Aviad Moreno

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Abstract

The aim of this dissertation is to determine the extent of the impact of Ben-Gurion's visit in 1958 on Türkiye-Israel relations. The research question is "To what extent did Ben-Gurion's visit to Türkiye in 1958 to discuss a "Peripheral Pact" and subsequent high-ranking Turkish-Israel contacts, impact bilateral relations and regional cooperation?" The dissertation compares bilateral relations before and after Ben-Gurion's visit, which provides a comprehensive perspective on the era before Ben-Gurion's visit, under what conditions historical meeting took place, and to how, and to what extent changes in relations were manifested after the meeting.

KEY WORDS: Türkiye, Israel, Ben-Gurion's visit, Periphery Doctrine

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 The Importance of the study

Ever since Türkiye recognized Israel as a sovereign state in 1949, Türkiye-Israel relations have been in a delicate flux. In the first years of the Cold War, the rivalry between the U.S. and the Soviets in the Middle East, which emerged as superpowers in the Second World War, as well as the conflicts between the Arab states and Israel, are the most important factors in the fragility of Türkiye-Israel relations.

Considering the periods when Turkish-Israeli relations were characterized as a strategic relationship, the first thing to note is the rapprochement between the two countries in the 1990s and the series of agreements during these years including military, diplomatic, and economic fields. On this point, Ben-Gurion's visit to Türkiye in 1958 to discuss the “Periphery Doctrine” is highly ignored. This meeting is a turning point that played a significant role in the improvement of Turkish-Israeli relations, which had been fragile until then, and that can even be seen as the first step of the emergence of a Turkish-Israeli alignment in the 1990s.

The peripheral alliance was first emerged by Israeli politician Baruch ‘Uziel, before the establishment of the State of Israel, as a concept that, for Israel to survive against the Arab States, it must have developed long-term alliances with states and ethnic groups that had the same threat perceptions and lived under the same political conditions.¹ The idea turned into a doctrine in the mid-1950s in the minds of David Ben-Gurion and his close advisers—particularly Reuven Shiloah, who founded the Mossad, and Isser Harel, who headed both the Mossad and the Shabak (Internal Security Agency) from the early 1950s.² Shiloah thought that Israel’s Arab neighbors were surrounded by non-Arab nations, which

¹ Ofra Bengio, “*The Turkish–Israeli Relationship Changing Ties of Middle Eastern Outsiders.*” New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, P.33

² Yossi Alpher, “*Periphery Israel's Search For Middle East Allies.*” London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015, P.3

he called “the periphery”); and the Arab states themselves had religious and ethnic minorities. Friendships could be formed with the peripheral nations and with the minority groups.³ The primary purpose of this friendship was to end Israel’s isolated position in the region with a series of alliances with the non-Arab periphery countries. At the state level⁴, Israel aimed to develop relations with Iran and Türkiye in the north and Ethiopia and Sudan in the south. By developing cooperation in intelligence, military, and other fields with these countries, which perceived threats against Arab states for their own reasons, Israel also hoped to become a greater regional power, and strengthen its deterrence.⁵

Although Ben-Gurion's visit to Türkiye in 1958 is one of the most important stepping stones in Türkiye-Israel relations, there is hardly any study scrutinizing the impact of the visit. This dissertation aims to shed light on the change in bilateral relations following Ben-Gurion's visit to Türkiye by comparing the period before and after Ben-Gurion’s visit and determining the extent of the impact of the visit. This study benefits from Turkish, Israeli, and American archives, newspapers, and other official sources. In addition, both English, Hebrew, and Turkish secondary sources provide indispensable contributions. Therefore, this study is significant as it allows to fill the gap within the existing literature with comprehensive research.

1.2 Literature review

In general, few studies in English and Hebrew have dealt with the subject as a chapter. Turkish sources are largely missing in those studies. Turkish studies, on the other hand, make use of very few primary sources and rely heavily on secondary sources. They summarize the subject in a very general way. To understand the impact of the visit, the

³ Dan Raviv & Yossi Melman, *Spies Against Armageddon Inside Israel's Secret Wars*. New York: Levant Books, 2012, P.74.

⁴ Israel developed relations with minorities such as the Kurds of Northern Iraq and Druzes in Syria

⁵ Charles D. Freilich, “*Israeli National Security A New Strategy for an Era of Change.*” New York: Oxford University Press, 2018, P.275.

literature can be reviewed under two lines of argument: (1) Turkish-Israel relations before the visit, and (2) The impacts of the visit on bilateral relations.

1.2.1 Turkish-Israel relations before the visit

Some scholars give a historical account of Turkish-Israeli relations. To exemplify, Jacob Abadi's article "Israel and Turkey: From Covert to Overt Relations" provides an overview of the cooperation, domestic and external constraints experienced by the two countries since 1948.⁶ In his article "Turkish Israeli Relations during the Cold War: The Myth of a Long Special Relationship", Kılıç Buğra Kanat emphasized the impact of Türkiye and Israel's different concerns and priorities during the Cold War on bilateral relations.⁷ Joshua Walker's article "Turkey and Israel's Relationship in the Middle East" can also be evaluated in this regard. He compares the Türkiye and Israel's common interests and threat perceptions before and after the Cold War.⁸ These studies contribute to the examination of the overlapping and divergent security concerns, foreign policies, and priorities of Türkiye and Israel. In his book "*Batı Faktörünün Etkisinde Türkiye İsrail İlişkilerinin Politikası (The Policy of Türkiye Israel Relations under the Influence of the West)*", Recep Ozturk mainly examines the western influence in Türkiye-Israel relations and concludes that Turkish-Israeli relations should not be evaluated only by the influence of the West.⁹ On this point, this dissertation, in addition to the impact of the third countries, examines the important factors affecting Turkish-Israeli relations such as regional developments and security concerns of both countries. A different approach is taken by Turkish diplomat Derviş Fikret Unal, who analyzes Turkish-Israeli relations in terms of changing state

⁶ Jacob Abadi, "Israel and Turkey: From Covert to Overt Relations." *Journal of Conflict Studies* Vol.15, No.2 (1995): 104-128.

⁷ Kılıç Buğra Kanat, "Turkish-Israeli Relations during the Cold War The Myth of a Long 'Special Relationship.'" *Israel Studies Review*, Vol.31, Issue 2 (2016): 130–149.

⁸ Joshua Walker, "Turkey and Israel's Relationship in the Middle East." *Mediterranean Quarterly* 17:4 (2006): 60-90. Duke University Press.

⁹ Recep Ozturk, "*Batı Faktörünün Etkisinde Türkiye İsrail İlişkilerinin Politikası (The Policy of Türkiye Israel Relations under the Influence of the West)*" Istanbul, Odak Yayınları, 2004.

identity in his book “*Turkey’s Relations With Israel in The 2000s: A Constructivist Perspective.*”¹⁰ Adding to that, Arash Soleimani Jouneghani examines the historical course of bilateral relations with a neo-realism approach in his article “Review of Turkish-Israeli Relations Based on Neo-Realism.”¹¹ Andrew James Emmert analyzes Turkish–Israeli relations by Neoclassical Realist theory in his study “Turkish Foreign Policy toward Israel through the lens of Neoclassical Realism, 1949-2010.”¹² More recently, Elie Podeh relates to Turkish-Israeli relations with particular emphasis on the secrecy of bilateral relations in his book “*From Mistress to Known Partner Israel’s Secret Relations with States and Minorities in the Middle East, 1948-2020.*”¹³ These works provide an excellent overview of the history of Türkiye-Israel relations, but this dissertation takes a comprehensive approach to the certain major events and regional developments that affected bilateral relations, and the fields in which bilateral relations developed after Ben-Gurion’s visit.

There are also studies that take up bilateral relations by focusing on specific cases or times. For instance, Orna Almog & Ayşegül Sever’s article “Hide and Seek? Israeli-Turkish Relations and the Baghdad Pact”¹⁴ in which they explore the bilateral relations through the Northern Tier concept and Baghdad Pact, and Noa Schonmann’s study “Back Door Diplomacy: The Mistress Syndrome in Israel’s Relations with Türkiye, 1957-60”¹⁵ with which he emphasizes the diplomacy policies of countries, are two important

¹⁰ Unal, Derviş Fikret. “*Turkey’s Relations With Israel in The 2000s: A Constructivist Perspective.*” Ankara: Astana, 2017.

¹¹ Arash Soleimani Jouneghani, "Review of Turkish-Israeli Relations Based on Neo-Realism." *Journal of History Culture and Art Research* Vol:7, No:5 (2018): 254-264.

¹² Andrew James Emmert, “Turkish Foreign Policy toward Israel through the Lens of Neoclassical Realism, 1949-2010,” M.S. - Master of Science, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, 2020.

¹³ Elie Podeh, “*From Mistress to Known Partner Israel’s Secret Relations with States and Minorities in the Middle East, 1948-2020.* [Hebrew].” Tel Aviv: Am Oved Publishers Ltd., (2022): 301-356.

¹⁴ Orna Almog & Ayşegül Sever. "Hide and Seek? Israeli–Turkish Relations and the Baghdad Pact" *Middle Eastern Studies* 53:4 (2017): 609-623.

¹⁵ Noa Schonmann. "Back-Door Diplomacy The Mistress Syndrome in Israel's Relations with Türkiye, 1957–60." Petersen, Clive Jones, and Tore T., *Israel's Clandestine Diplomacies.* 2013. 85-101.

examples. These studies are great sources to understand the Turkish and Israeli governmental views in certain periods or cases.

Moreover, much literature examining or attempting to describe the first years of the Turkish-Israeli relationship through Turkish or Israeli foreign policy exists; for instance, in his article “How has Turkey Viewed Israel” examining the impacts of domestic factors in Türkiye on Türkiye-Israel relations, Michael B. Bishku considers the Turkish-Israeli relations in 1947-1965 through the developments in Türkiye.¹⁶ Ekavi Athanassopoulou, in her article “Turkey's Approach Towards Israel in the 1950s: Not Merely Following U.S. Policy” explores the Menderes government’s approach toward Israel¹⁷, Suha Bolukbaşı, in his article “Behind the Turkish-Israeli Alliance: A Turkish View” examines the shifts in Turkish policies toward Israel on issues such as Suez Crisis and the water dispute between Türkiye and Syria.¹⁸ These articles contribute to the dissertation on understanding the Turkish perspective in Türkiye-Israel relations. M. Hakan Yavuz and Mujeeb R. Khan’s article “Turkish Foreign Policy Toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict: Duality and the development (1950-1991)”, which examines Türkiye’s efforts to improve relations with both Israel and Arab states, is important in terms of understanding Türkiye’s sensitivity to the Arab States.¹⁹ Karel Valansi, in her book “*The Crescent Moon and the Magen David: Turkish-Israeli Relations Through the Lens of the Turkish Public*”²⁰, evaluates the relations before 1958 through Türkiye’s Jewish citizens. This study includes the Turkish public reaction to the Türkiye’s recognition of Israel and Turkish-Israel relations, therefore it

¹⁶ Michael Bishku, "How Has Turkey Viewed Israel?" *Israel Affairs*, Vol.12, No.1, (2006): 177-194.

¹⁷ Ekavi Athanassopoulou "Türkiye's Approach Towards Israel in the 1950s: Not Merely Following U.S. Policy." *Middle Eastern Studies*, 53.6 (2017): 899-914.

¹⁸ Suha Bolukbasi, "Behind the Turkish-Israeli Alliance: A Turkish View." *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 29, No.1 (1999): 21-35.

¹⁹ M. Hakan Yavuz and Mujeeb R. Khan. "Turkish Foreign Policy Toward The Arab-Israeli Conflict: Duality And The Development (1950-1991)" Vol.14, No. 4." *Pluto Journals* (1992): 69-94.

²⁰ Karel Valansi, “*The Crescent Moon and the Magen David: Turkish-Israeli Relations through the Lens of the Turkish Public.*” New York: Hamilton Books, 2018.

helps to compare the Turkish public view towards Turkish-Israeli relations before and after Ben-Gurion's visit. In his book *“Israel, Turkey, and Greece: Uneasy Relations in the East Mediterranean”*, Amikam Nachmani provides a thorough erudition of Israeli foreign policy. This book contributes to the dissertation on two issues, the unique role of Israeli politician Eliyahu Sasson in Turkish-Israel relations, and Israel's interest in relations with Türkiye.²¹ In short; the most important point that distinguishes this dissertation from these studies is that while it benefits from such studies which touch upon the factors affecting bilateral relations, it is not limited to the Turkish or Israeli perspective.

1.2.2 The impacts of the visit on bilateral relations

Examining the Turkish Israeli relations in the 1990s in her book *“The Turkish-Israeli Relationship: Changing Ties of Middle Eastern Outsiders”*, Ofra Bengio elucidates the implementation of the Peripheral Alliance in the 1950s and 1960s as she considers the Periphery Doctrine as the precursor of the strategic alignment of two countries in 1990.²² Likewise, in his book *“Israel and the Cold War: Diplomacy, Strategy and the Policy of the Periphery at the United Nations”*, Howard A. Patten emphasized that the Periphery Doctrine reached its apogee in 1996-1999 when Türkiye and Israel signed a series of military, political and economic agreements. He explained some impacts of the doctrine on Turkish-Israeli relations in the 1950s and 1960s.²³ They both establish a link between Periphery Doctrine and bilateral relations in the 1990s, but do not analyze the change in bilateral relations after the implementation of the doctrine that started with the visit of Ben-Gurion.

²¹ Amikam Nachmani, *“Israel, Turkey, and Greece: Uneasy Relations in the East Mediterranean.”* London: Frank Cass & Co, 1987.

²² Ofra Bengio, *“The Turkish-Israeli Relationship Changing Ties of Middle Eastern Outsiders.”* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

²³ Howard A. Patten, *“Israel and the Cold War: Diplomacy, Strategy and the Policy of the Periphery at the United Nations”* New York: I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd, 2013.

Yossi Alpher examines the evolution of the Periphery Doctrine in his book “*Periphery: Israel’s Search for Middle East Allies.*”²⁴ Apart from briefly evaluating the Periphery Doctrine in the context of Jewish immigration to Israel and Israel-U.S. relations, Alpher does not deal with foreign affairs. He merely presents the security aspects of the doctrine. The rare Turkish studies that examine the Periphery Doctrine’s Türkiye-Israel segment are Arda Baş’s article “1958 Türkiye-İsrail Periferik Anlaşması (Türkiye-Israel Peripheral Pact of 1958)”²⁵, Mehmet Erkan Kılıoğlu’s article “Türkiye-İsrail İkili İlişkileri ve 1958 Antlaşması (Turkish Israeli Bilateral Relations and the Agreement of 1958)”²⁶, and Yusuf Suha Sonuc’s article “Periferi Doktrini Bağlamında Türkiye-İsrail İstihbarat İşbirliği (Türkiye and Israel Intelligence Cooperation in the Context of Periphery Doctrine.)”²⁷ These studies highly depend on secondary sources. They lack primary sources, especially from Israeli, Turkish, and American Archives, so they do not comprehensively examine the periods before and after the doctrine.

1.3 Explanation regarding available sources

This study refrains from focusing on Turkish, Israeli, or American views. In order to be comprehensive, this dissertation tries to benefit from the sources of all these three views. While examining primary and secondary sources, various difficulties were encountered in archives, secondary sources, and newspapers.

In archives, the most important obstacle is the inaccessibility of secret documents. Ben-Gurion’s visit was top secret and both countries classified the documents for this

²⁴ Yossi Alpher, “*Periphery Israel's Search For Middle East Allies.*” London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015.

²⁵ Arda Bas, "1958 Türkiye-İsrail Periferik Anlaşması (Türkiye-Israel Peripheral Pact of 1958)." *Tarihin Pesinde (The Pursuit of History)*, International peer-reviewed journal published electronically on the internet, Issue 20, (2018): 17-39.

²⁶ Mehmet Erkan Kılıoğlu, "Türkiye-İsrail İkili İlişkileri ve 1958 Antlaşması (Turkish Israeli Bilateral Relations and the Agreement of 1958)." *Akademik Tarih ve Düşünce Dergisi* 8-4 (2021): 1323-1350.

²⁷ Sonuc, Yusuf Suha. "Periferi Doktrini Bağlamında Türkiye- İsrail İstihbarat İşbirliği (Türkiye And Israel Intelligence Cooperation in The Context of Periphery Doctrine)." *İsrailiyat: İsrail ve Yahudi Çalışmaları Dergisi*, No. 3 (2018): 12-60.

meeting as military information. Therefore; there is very little documented evidence regarding the meeting due to the efforts of both sides to keep the details secret. For that reason, to understand the extent of the changes in bilateral relations following the visit of Ben-Gurion in 1958, the documents are examined in two separate categories, the years 1948-1958 and the years 1958-1966. In that concept, this dissertation benefits from the Israel State Archives, the Ben-Gurion Archives, Turkish State Archives (Both Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye Directorate of State Archives, and The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Turkish Diplomatic Archives), and the United States Archives (Foreign Relations of the United States) to analyze the view of the U.S, which has an indispensable role in Turkish-Israel relations.

In addition to the sources about Ben-Gurion's visit, this study includes a wide range of books and articles which deals with significant events that took place before and after the visit and affected directly or indirectly Turkish-Israeli relations such as Rıfat N. Bali's book *Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri Aliya: Bir Toplu Göçün Öyküsü (1945-1949)* (*Aliyah, the Jews of Türkiye in the Republican Years: The Story of a Mass Exodus (1945-1949)*)²⁸, and Selwyn Ilan Troen & Moshe Shemesh's *The Sinai Campaign as a 'War of No Alternative' : Ben-Gurion's View of the Israel-Egyptian Conflict. The Suez-Sinai Crisis, 1956: Retrospective and Reappraisal*.²⁹ Hebrew is the only setback for secondary sources (also documents in the Israel State Archives, the Ben-Gurion Archives and the newspaper *Haaretz*). I translated and read the Hebrew documents and papers with the help of a certified translator.

²⁸ Rıfat N. Bali, "*Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri Aliya: Bir Toplu Göçün Öyküsü (1945-1949)* (*Aliyah, the Jews of Türkiye in the Republican Years: The Story of a Mass Exodus (1945-1949)*).“ Istanbul: İletisim, 2003.

²⁹ Selwyn Ilan Troen "The Sinai Campaign as a 'War of No Alternative' : Ben-Gurion's View of the Israel-Egyptian Conflict." In Troen, Selwyn and Shemesh, Moshe, *The Suez-Sinai Crisis, 1956: Retrospective and Reappraisal*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1990. 180-193.

This study also used newspapers and journals. The most important difficulty was the lack of some volumes for significant dates. In addition, many of the newspapers were not available online. While I examined certain volumes of different newspapers, I mainly used *Cumhuriyet*, *New York Times*, and *Haaretz* as I had full access to their archives. In addition, this dissertation also benefits from the T.C. *Resmi Gazete* (*Official Gazette of the Republic of Türkiye*), which has been the only official journal of Türkiye including details of all agreements, laws, and regulations.

1.4 Research question and Methodology

The research question of the dissertation is: To what extent did Ben-Gurion's visit to Türkiye in 1958 to discuss a "Peripheral Pact" and subsequent high-ranking Turkish-Israel contacts impact bilateral relations and regional cooperation?

This study consists of four chapters. Chapter 1 begins by explaining the importance of the dissertation. Then, a review of the literature is studied in detail. Finally, this chapter includes the difficulties encountered during the research and methods applied to make the study comprehensive.

Chapter 2 examines the Türkiye-Israel relationship from 1948 to 1958.³⁰ To begin with the first years of the bilateral relations, this chapter deals with the significant issues affecting Türkiye's or/and Israel's foreign policy, ultimately Turkish-Israeli relations, and the role of third parties (with particular focus on the United States) on bilateral relations.

Chapter 3 starts with the Periphery Doctrine and the visit of Ben-Gurion. Particular importance is paid to the outcome of the visit as the purpose of the dissertation is to determine the extent of the change in relations. This chapter also examines the regional and international context of the visit in order to develop an understanding of the importance of the visit.

³⁰ The position of Türkiye in U.N. Partition resolution 181 on November 29, 1947, is briefly explained as it is vital on the way of Türkiye's recognizing Israel.

In the concluding chapter, the dissertation presents the primary conclusions in light of the information in the preceding chapters. It compares and contrasts the relations before and after Ben-Gurion's visit to reach the final result.

Chapter 2: The Road to the Ben-Gurion's Visit to Türkiye in 1958

2.1 The first years of Turkish-Israeli relations

In Israel's early years, the major security threat it faced was attacks from Arab states. Israel was in a disadvantageous position than Arab countries in terms of a balance of power, economic sources, territorial size, strategic depth, and population size.³¹ To counter this imbalance, on the military level, Israel attached great importance to training, early warning systems, air superiority, and developing strategies such as transferring the battle to the other side of the border. On the other hand, it had to break its regional isolation on the political level. From this point of view, developing relations with Türkiye, a Muslim majority state, was significant for Israel.

On the other hand, Türkiye's primary security concern was Soviet pressure since World War II. When the Soviet Union, with its increasing power after the war, made explicit demands for territorial concessions,³² the problem became inextricable for Türkiye, and tilted toward the Western camp.³³ In addition, because of the economic impacts of the Second World War, Türkiye sought immediate financial assistance, and the

³¹ Freilich, *Israeli National Security A New Strategy for an Era of Change.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2018, P.19.

³² Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov met with Turkish Ambassador Selim Sarper in his office on March 19, 1945. He declared Soviets note that they wished to terminate the "Nonaggression and Neutrality Treaty" signed on December 17, 1925, as it did not comply with the new conditions due to the profound changes during World War II. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Turkish Diplomatic Archives (hereafter TDA), World War II Years (1939-1946), 50 Years in Turkish Foreign Policy, P.250.

Soviets gave a second note on June 7, 1945, in which it demanded change in Türkiye's eastern border (leaving the cities of Kars and Ardahan to the Soviets) and a change in the status of the Montreux Convention, which gave Türkiye complete control over the straits and the right to regulate the passage of warships. Mehtap Başarır, "Sovyet Rusya'nın 1925 Dostluk ve Tarafsızlık Antlaşması'nın Feshine Yönelik Türkiye'ye Verdiği Notaların Türk Basımına Yansıması. (The Reflections of the Notes Given to Türkiye by Soviet Russia, for Dissolution of "1925 Nonaggression and Neutrality Treaty" in Turkish Press)" *Belgi*, No: 18 (2019), P.1427.

³³ Ioannis N. Grigoriadis, "Friends No More? The Rise of Anti-American Nationalism in Turkey." *The Middle East Journal* 64(1):51-66 DOI:10.3751/64.1.13 (2010), P.2.

U.S. agreed to give this aid under what is known as the Marshall Plan.³⁴ Therefore, these developments brought Türkiye closer to the U.S. For example, Turkish Ambassador Feridun Cemal Erkin explained the direction of Turkish foreign policy in September 1948 stating "Türkiye's foreign policy is firmly based on friendship, cooperation, and solidarity with the United States."³⁵ Türkiye's recognition of Israel and the development of Turkish-Israeli relations are closely related to Türkiye's attempt to align with the U.S. The words of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Türkiye Mehmet Fuat Köprülü about Türkiye-Israel relations demonstrate the American influence on Türkiye-Israel relations. "Türkiye's initiative aims at getting America's appreciation and support, a goal which would certainly not be attained if Türkiye would jeopardize the interests of a country such as Israel, which enjoys the friendship and sympathy of the U.S."³⁶

It is important to note that Türkiye voted against the U.N. Partition resolution 181 on November 29, 1947. This policy can be explained for two reasons. Firstly, the Soviets supported the establishment of Israel. This new state could be a location where the Soviet Union spread its ideology and operations.³⁷ Türkiye took the prospects of Soviet control of a new Jewish state into consideration. Secondly, while Türkiye was trying to develop its relations with Western states, it did not want to be hostile to the Arab States, especially its border neighbors. In that context, for example, Türkiye signed the Treaty of Friendship with Jordan on January 11, 1947.³⁸ Türkiye was aware that supporting a Jewish state in Palestine would create hostility between itself and the Arab countries, so Türkiye avoided

³⁴ National Archives Harry S. Truman Public Law 80-75 – Assistance to Greece and Turkey, President's Secretary's Files, May 22, 1947.

³⁵ Foreign Relations of the United States (hereafter FRUS), 1948, Eastern Europe; The Soviet Union, Vol.4, P.148, September 9, 1948.

³⁶ Israel State Archive (hereafter ISA), Legation of Israel Türkiye 1950, 74/1-צח, April 13, 1951

³⁷ Valansi, "*The Crescent Moon and the Magen David: Turkish-Israeli Relations through the Lens of the Turkish Public.*" P.138.

³⁸ T.C. Resmi Gazete (Official Gazette of the Republic of Türkiye) (hereafter Official Gazette of Türkiye), 5003, February 19, 1947.

the risk of being alienated by the Arab States and acted with its neighbors for U.N. Partition resolution 181. Türkiye's policy found a positive response in the eyes of the Arab States. Syrian President Shukri al-Quwatli, for example, sent a telegram to Turkish President Ismet Inonu conveying his thanks for Türkiye's stance on the Palestinian issue.³⁹

Türkiye remained neutral in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. However, together with the U.S. and France, it was elected as a member of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine (UNCCP), established by U.N. General Assembly No.194 (III) of December 11, 1948.⁴⁰ Türkiye was specially selected for the Commission as it was the most moderate of all friends of Arabs.⁴¹ Türkiye saw this Commission as an opportunity to improve its relations with the West. The Minister of Foreign Affairs Necmettin Sadak, for example, emphasized the collaboration of Türkiye, the U.S., and France in the Grand National Assembly while explaining the duties of the Commission.⁴² On the other hand, the statement of Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, the Turkish representative of UNCCP, on March 5, 1949, is significant for understanding the Turkish stance about recognizing Israel. He stated that "Türkiye's Israel recognition is an issue for our government to know, but this will surely accrue because all the states started to recognize Israel."⁴³ The Commission failed, but by participating in the peace process Türkiye laid the foundation of its political and economic relations with Israel. For example, Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett and Turkish Trade Minister Cemil Sait Barlas met for the first time in Ankara on March

³⁹ Cumhuriyet, Daily Newspaper (hereafter Cumhuriyet), 8867, December 02, 1947.

⁴⁰ In resolution 194 (III), "the General Assembly singled out two questions on which it formulated principles and gave specific instructions to the Conciliation Commission. The first of these was the internationalization of the Jerusalem area. The second question on which the Commission received a definite mandate from the Assembly was that of the refugees" (United Nations General Progress Report And Supplementary Report Of The United Nations Conciliation Commission For Palestine) P.1, Cl.4.

⁴¹ FRUS, 1948, The Near East, South Asia, and Africa, Vol.5, Part 2, P. 1664, December 12, 1948.

⁴² Cumhuriyet, 8749, December 21, 1948.

⁴³ Cumhuriyet, 8823, March 5, 1949.

19, 1949, to discuss the need to have close economic and cultural relations between the two countries.⁴⁴

Türkiye recognized Israel in 1949⁴⁵, and became the first Muslim majority state to do so officially. Türkiye paid attention to using a conciliatory tone for Arab states in its official statement. "Nearly all Arab governments implicitly or explicitly recognized Israel by making truces or deciding to do so. Our government's delay in recognizing Israel is a favor to the feelings of the Arab world. We hope that our Arab friends and neighbors will appreciate our recognition. We desire that the State of Israel will not be an element of aggression in the Middle East, but an agent of peace."⁴⁶ The recognition of Israel was welcomed in the Turkish press and public opinion. For example; *Hürriyet*, one of the most important Turkish newspapers of the period, stated that three ministers in the new Israel cabinet, including the prime minister and the foreign minister, studied a law degree in Türkiye and because they knew the structure of the Turkish Nation, Türkiye hoped that the relations would progress sincerely.⁴⁷ Turkish Jews also welcomed this decision. The Israeli consulate in Istanbul was inaugurated on October 16, 1949, with a large crowd of nearly 20,000 Turkish Jews.⁴⁸

Türkiye closely followed Israel's relations with the U.S. and the Soviets. For example, in the report on Israel's foreign policy sent by the Turkish Embassy in Tel Aviv to the Foreign Minister of Türkiye on July 4, 1950, it was emphasized, referring to the Israeli Foreign Minister Sharrett's speech at the Knesset, that Israel intends not to join either of the two blocs.⁴⁹ As a matter of fact, in the first years of statehood, Israel avoided

⁴⁴ Şaban Gülbahar, "Türkiye, İsrail'i Nasıl ve Neden Tanıdı? (How and Why Did Türkiye Recognize Israel?), 2.8.2013.

⁴⁵ Official Gazette of Türkiye, 8942, April 1, 1949.

⁴⁶ Cumhuriyet, 8847, March 29, 1949.

⁴⁷ Hürriyet, 332, March 31, 1949.

⁴⁸ Bali, "Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri Aliya: Bir Toplu Göçün Öyküsü (1945-1949) (Aliyah, the Jews of Türkiye in the Republican Years: The Story of a Mass Exodus (1945-1949))", P.273

⁴⁹ TDA, 547/44689-215008-30, August 4, 1950

close identification with the Soviets or the U.S. For Israel, the aid extended by the Eastern bloc in the sphere of military aid and, most importantly, in the field of immigration made an anti-Soviet policy completely irrational. On the other hand, a clear anti-Western line would also have been senseless given the economic and political aid.⁵⁰

During the first three years of Israel, the desire of the Turkish Jews to immigrate to Israel increased considerably. The number of immigrants that came to Israel was 34,547 between 1948 and 1951.⁵¹ During this period, while Türkiye restricted emigration to short periods because of the pressure of its Arab neighbors⁵², it generally followed a supportive attitude towards the immigration of Turkish Jews. Israeli authorities confirmed Türkiye's assistance in migration. For example, Türkiye hosted an officer from the Israeli Ministry of Immigration to coordinate the immigration of Turkish Jews on July 27, 1949: He said in Istanbul: "The number of immigrants that came to Israel was 300,000, and approximately 25,000 of these immigrants were from Türkiye. The population of Israel exceeded 1 million with the new arrival of this new group of immigrants. The Israeli government is grateful to the Turkish government for the convenience it provides to the immigrants."⁵³

Following Türkiye's recognition of Israel, the two countries started to get closer. Israel's participation in the Izmir International Fair, which is Türkiye's most rooted, most well-known, and most comprehensive fair, building a monument in the Kibbutz Haon in memory of the pilots who lost their lives in the plane crashed in the First World War, the

⁵⁰ Uri Bialer, "Facts and Pacts: Ben-Gurion and Israel's International Orientation, 1948-1956." Ronald W Zweig. *David Ben-Gurion: Politics and Leadership in Israel*. New York: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi Press, 2006, P.220.

⁵¹ Kemal Arı, "Jewish Migration From Türkiye to Israel After The Foundation of Israel." *Journal of Atatürk and the History of Turkish Republic II/4* (2019), P.229.

⁵² For example, Turkish Authorities issued only 500 visas to Jews between May and October 1948, and Jewish emigration was clandestine primarily because of the pro-Arab attitudes of Türkiye. However, following the shift in Turkish attitude, the emigration from Türkiye to Israel gained momentum. For example, close to 2000 Turkish Jews received authorization just in three days in October. *New York Times*, October 21, 1948, P.9.

⁵³ *Cumhuriyet*, 8967, July 27, 1949.

opening of Atatürk Forest on Mount Carmel, and Israel's sending relief aid to Türkiye after the earthquake in the city of Kütahya are important events demonstrating the rapprochement of the two states.⁵⁴ Moreover, mutual visits of journalists, musicians, and athletes strengthened the ties between countries and served as a bridge between leaders. For instance, 14 journalists from Israel came to Istanbul, visited the governor of Istanbul, and conveyed the gift to the mayor of Tel Aviv. The governor of Istanbul, Fahrettin Gökay, stated: “Türkiye and Israel have very cordial relations. Journalists are an element that binds nations together, and they facilitate the work on the path of neighborliness and friendship.”⁵⁵

Türkiye-Israel relations improved during 1950 with the mutual appointment of ministers. Türkiye sent charge d’affaires Seyfullah Esin to Tel Aviv in January 1950⁵⁶, Israel appointed seasoned diplomat Eliyahu Sasson as the first head of legation in Ankara. Sasson’s first official interview was with Turkish Prime Minister Şemsettin Günaltay. In this meeting, Günaltay said that Türkiye’s recognition of Israel came after long deliberation. Türkiye was not mistaken in its decision. There was a basis for political cooperation.⁵⁷ Eliyahu Sasson and Seyfullah Esin made an excellent endeavor to develop bilateral relations in the first years of relations. For example, Eliyahu Sasson’s signatures are on the two important agreements of the period, July 4, 1950, the Modus Vivendi and Trade Agreement⁵⁸, and February 1951 Aviation Accords.⁵⁹ Following the Trade

⁵⁴ Valansi, “*The Crescent Moon and the Magen David: Turkish-Israeli Relations through the Lens of the Turkish Public*”, P.160.

⁵⁵ Cumhuriyet, 9309, July 8, 1950.

⁵⁶ The Turkish charge d’affaires in Tel Aviv, Seyfullah Esin, was raised to the rank of Minister Envoy Extraordinary with the decision of the Council of Ministers on 22.06.1950 Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye Directorate of State Archives (hereafter TSA), 123-52-11, June 22, 1950

⁵⁷ ISA, CV, [English Companion], Vol. 5, 1950, 18127/6- , 130.02/2382/1, 26, January 13, 1950, P.15.

⁵⁸ With this agreement, both parties have committed to maximum convenience in granting export and import permits within their general legislation. TSA, 163-142-4, July 12, 1950.

⁵⁹ Official Gazette of Türkiye, 5848, December 15, 1951.

agreement, both countries became each other's important trading partners. Israel imported a wide range of raw materials from Türkiye, from wheat to various grains. Türkiye, in return, received Israel-made products.⁶⁰ The cooperation between the two countries also expanded in security issues. Mossad, for example, operated an intelligence station in Türkiye, which was under diplomatic cover within the Embassy of Israel.⁶¹

Another milestone that paved the way for developing relations between Türkiye and Israel was the Korean War. Türkiye was the first nation, after the United States, to respond to the United Nations' appeal to contribute to the U.N. Forces.⁶² Turkish troops engaged in a war under the command of U.N. Forces.⁶³ Israel, on the other hand, sent medical aid⁶⁴ to U.N. Forces during the Korean War, which was vital at that time. This aid had repercussions on the Turkish community, and Israel won the trust of Türkiye further.

Türkiye saw Israel as the gate to the West. For Instance, Türkiye had no membership in the principal organs or critical bodies in the Councils of United Nations in 1950. It was desirous of being elected to the seat reserved for the Middle East on the Security Council. Türkiye asked Israel for full support at the forthcoming elections, particularly for connecting

⁶⁰ Bishku, "How Has Turkey Viewed Israel?", P.182.

⁶¹ Israel Foreign Intelligence and Security Services, March 1979, *Central Intelligence Agency Directorate of Operations Counterintelligence Staff* <https://www.hsd1.org/?view&did=728060>, P.18.

⁶² George McGhee, "*The U.S.–Turkish–NATO Middle East Connection: How the Truman Doctrine Contained the Soviets in the Middle East.*" New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990, P.77.

⁶³Türkiye sent 4,500 soldiers to Korea under the command of Brigadier General Tahsin Yazıcı (The only brigade-sized unit attached to a U.S. division). The number increased to 5,460 in time. When the war ended, Türkiye suffered the most after the U.S. Dead: 721, injured: 2.150, missing: 167, prisoner: 244. Duman, Doğan. "Kore Savaşı Ve Türkiye'de Savaş Karşısı Bir Örgütlenme: Türk Barışseverler Cemiyeti (Korean War And A Anti-War Organization In Türkiye: Turkish Peace-Loving Association)." *Çağdaş Türkiye Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi (Journal Of Modern Turkish History Studies)* (2019), P.677.

⁶⁴ It contained essential medicines for the war like tons of penicillin, vaccines, and antitoxins. ISA, Korea, 119/11-37, November 2, 1950.

with the American Press and canvassing the Latin American Countries.⁶⁵ Israel's support in this sphere was significant, and Türkiye was elected on October 7, 1950.⁶⁶

On the other hand, Türkiye, in addition to developing bilateral relations, was an important state for Israel in terms of improving its relations with other states. For example; Walter Eytan, Director General of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, visited India to establish diplomatic relations between the two countries. He met with Indian officials, and Prime Minister Nehru. In their meeting in 1952, Nehru said that the only problem bothering him was the reaction of India's Muslim minority. According to him developing relations with Israel could become an excuse for Pakistani provocation. On this point, Eytan stated that Türkiye and Israel conducted normal relations and diplomatic ties for two years.⁶⁷ In short, Israel's development of relations with the Muslim-majority Türkiye was an example for countries that wanted to improve their relations with Israel or considered the reaction of Muslims in their countries.

2.2 The influence of the U.S. and Northern Tier process

Although Israel and Türkiye had taken overt steps toward each other since Türkiye's recognition of Israel, bilateral relations did not gain momentum after 1952. This was partly because, with President David D. Eisenhower's term starting, the United States sought to exert direct influence in the Middle East to prevent Soviet expansion in the region. With the new Northern Tier Project, the U.S. aimed to fill the gap (Northern Tier) between North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), which surrounds the Soviets from the south and across Europe.⁶⁸ In this context,

⁶⁵ ISA, Türkiye 1948, CC 1476/50, Contacts with Turkish Delegation Re-Election of Their Representative to Security Council, December 20, 1950.

⁶⁶ United Nations Article 23. *Office of Legal Affairs*, https://legal.un.org/reperatory/art23/english/rep_orig_vol2_art23.pdf. 10 5 2022, P.7 Cl.9.

⁶⁷ ISA, CV, [English Companion], Vol. 7, 1952, 18128/2- , 130.02/2414/1, 71, March 18, 1952, P.54.

⁶⁸ Gürdal Çetinkaya, "Soğuk Savaş Döneminde Türkiye Ve Eisenhower Doctrini (Türkiye During The Cold War And The Eisenhower Doctrine)." *Uluslararası Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi (International Journal of Historical Studies)* 3:2 (2019), P.7.

The Eisenhower administration was set to see Iraq to participate in a Middle Eastern defense arrangement anchored around Türkiye and Pakistan. The U.S. wishes for Türkiye's cooperation with Iraq, which was one of the security threats to Israel, complicated Türkiye-Israel relations.⁶⁹

Türkiye's role in the Middle East began with Türkiye's participation in the Korean War and then its membership in NATO. Turkish contribution to the Korean War was a more substantial basis for gaining entrance into NATO. The U.S., on the other hand, attached importance to Türkiye's joining NATO for its foreign policy. The statement of Omar Bradley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, on January 15, 1952, is significant to understanding how the U.S. sees Türkiye's position in NATO: "From the military viewpoint, it is impossible to overstate the importance of Türkiye and Greece. These two countries occupy strategic locations along with one of the major east-west axes. Located as they are - and allied with the free nations - they serve as powerful deterrents to any aggression directed toward Southern Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa. The successful defense of these areas - any one or all of them - depends on the Mediterranean Sea's control."⁷⁰

Türkiye also played an important role in U.K.'s regional planning. For instance, in his visit to Ben-Gurion on February 19, 1951, General Brian Robertson, Middle East Land Forces Commander, said that "The proper place to defend the Middle East as a whole is in the mountains of Türkiye, Iraq, and Iran. Our forces must be able to get there before the other men, when trouble starts"⁷¹

U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and Director of the Mutual Security Agency Herold Stessen visited the Middle East and South Asian countries in May 1953.

⁶⁹ Athanassopoulou, "Turkey's Approach Towards Israel in the 1950s: Not Merely Following U.S. Policy." P.2.

⁷⁰ McGhee, "*The U.S.–Turkish–NATO Middle East Connection: How the Truman Doctrine Contained the Soviets in the Middle East.*", P.88.

⁷¹ The Ben-Gurion Archive (hereafter BGA), Minutes of meetings, 235172, February 19, 1951.

The general consideration of the visit was that “Pakistan and Türkiye could be made solid loyal points, Syria and Iraq realized their danger and could probably be induced to join the pact. As for the countries further south, they were too lacking in realizing the international situation to offer any prospect of becoming dependable allies. Iran was the prominent weak spot in a strong defensive arrangement of the northern tier of states: Türkiye, Iraq, Syria, and Pakistan.”⁷²

Türkiye was highly ambitious to have a leading role in the Northern Tier project. During Dulles' visit to Türkiye, The Prime Minister of Türkiye, Adnan Menderes, said that Türkiye must have been a backbone in the defense project of the Middle East. He committed that “Türkiye would continue to exert every effort to accomplish an organization of countries in the area, including Pakistan, for Middle East defense.”⁷³ In fact, there were signs of Türkiye's rapprochement with the Arab states before 1952. Moshe Sharett, in his report about his conversation with Fuat Koprulu in May 1951, wrote that Türkiye adopted a new policy, which could lead to taking the sides of the Arabs in all questions.⁷⁴

As the Northern Tier project initiator, the U.S. took concrete and careful steps toward Pakistan and Türkiye. Firstly, the U.S. encouraged Pakistan and Türkiye to sign a cooperation agreement.⁷⁵ Türkiye-Pakistan Friendship and Cooperation Agreement, signed on April 2, 1954, set out the goal of a defense pact that the U.S. wanted to implement in the region. It was stated in the sixth article of the agreement that it would be possible for

⁷² FRUS, 1952-1954, The Near and Middle East, Vol. 9, Part 1, P.384, June 1, 1953.

⁷³ FRUS, 1952–1954, The Near and Middle East, Volume 9, Part 1, P.140, May 26, 1953.

⁷⁴ BGA, Correspondence, 146056, May 14, 1951.

⁷⁵ U.S. President Eisenhower stated that the U.S. government welcomed the will of Türkiye-Pakistan cooperation and announced military aid to Pakistan. Dwight D. Eisenhower "Statement by the President on Military Aid to Pakistan." February 25, 1954. *The American Presidency Project*.

<https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/statement-the-president-military-aid-pakistan>. May 10, 2022.

The U.S. and Pakistan also signed a Mutual Defence Assistance Agreement on May 19, 1954, FRUS, 1952-1954, Africa and South Asia, Vol.11, Part 2, P.1137, July 29, 1954.

other states sharing common goals to accede to the treaty. This agreement paved the way for the participation of other states.⁷⁶ U.S. Secretary of State considered this agreement an encouraging development. He told the Prime Minister of Türkiye that it was in line with the idea he had developed during his visit to the Middle East. He also said that he hoped Iraq and Iran would join in time.⁷⁷ While a strong defensive arrangement was forming, this also meant Israel's isolation in the region.

Following the Friendship and Cooperation agreement with Pakistan, which was the vital point of the Northern Tier project for the U.S., Türkiye took further steps to get closer to the U.S.⁷⁸ Türkiye increased its interest in the region to show that it was indispensable for the defense policies of the West. In this regard, Türkiye held a 5-day conference under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Menderes with the participation of Ambassadors and Charge d'affaires in the Middle East countries in July 1954⁷⁹ which would constitute a turning point in Türkiye's influence in the region. It was agreed in the meeting that the idea of a pact that would ensure security in the Middle East should be implemented.⁸⁰

Türkiye and Iraq took concrete steps toward establishing a defense organization in the Middle East. Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri Said Pasha and Turkish Prime Minister Adnan Menderes paid mutual official visits. At the end of the visits and meetings, they stated in the joint declaration that both countries agreed on a mutual defense treaty. Menderes considered this decision a significant political development that would pave the way for a

⁷⁶ Official Gazette of Türkiye, 6416, June 16, 1954.

⁷⁷ FRUS, 1952-1954, Eastern Europe; Soviet Union, Eastern Mediterranean, Vol. 8, Part 2, P. 946, June 2, 1954.

⁷⁸ Following his trip to the U.S., The statement of the President of Türkiye demonstrated Türkiye's commitment to the West. He expressed his gratitude to the U.S. for its financial assistance and stated that there is a destined unity between the U.S. and Türkiye. TSA 40-238-15, January 17, 1954.

⁷⁹ Jeddah Ambassador, Libya Ambassador, Baghdad Charge d'Affaires, Cairo Charge d'Affaires, Amman Ambassador, Damascus Charge d'Affaires. Cumhuriyet, 10760, July 13, 1954.

⁸⁰ Cumhuriyet, 10760, July 13, 1954, P. 6.

new political life.⁸¹ The U.S. declared that it was prepared to assist Turkish and Iraqi efforts to achieve a realistic and practical defense agreement.⁸² Initially, Israel was cautious about these steps of Türkiye. The view of Reuven Shiloah is important to understand the Israeli perspective on the collaboration between Türkiye, Pakistan, and Iraq. He stated: “Israel has no opinion in respect of Pakistan, but the arming of Iraq will be considered a threat against Israel”⁸³

After Iraq, Menderes visited Lebanon and Syria in 1955. These visits were not as satisfactory as in Iraq. Following his visit to Lebanon, Menderes stated that Türkiye's relations with Lebanon are close and sincere, but he did not mention the pact issue.⁸⁴ On the other hand, Menderes protested on the streets of Syria. In fact, since the last visit of the Iraqi Prime Minister to Türkiye, the opinion prevailed in Syria that Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri Said had proposed to connect Iraq, Türkiye, Pakistan, and Iran to the United States and the United Kingdom. According to the Syrian press, the United States was working on this offer, and Mr. Dulles would visit these countries within this scope.⁸⁵

On the other hand, Menderes's tour increased concern in Israel. The primary concern of Israel was the possibility of a Turkish policy shift toward Israel and deepening of its isolation in the Middle East as Türkiye got closer to Arab states and Israel was not invited to these diplomatic efforts.⁸⁶ There was another dimension of Türkiye's effort to gather the Arab states under a single roof. Turkish approach contradicted with Israel's Arab policy. For instance, Israeli diplomats Shmuel Divon and Sasson stated that “the Arab States would attack Israel when they felt strong enough and found political circumstances favorable. The process of integration and unification in the Arab States could lead to an

⁸¹ TSA 32-215-1, February 8, 1955.

⁸² FRUS, 1955-1957, The Near East Region, Iran, Iraq, Vol.12, P.3, January 14, 1955.

⁸³ ISA, CV, [English Companion], Vol.9, 18128/6- ,ا 130.09/2310/9, 10, January 6, 1954, P.12.

⁸⁴ TSA 15-82-7, June 21, 1955.

⁸⁵ TSA 104-650-3/13, November 13, 1954.

⁸⁶ Kanat, "Turkish-Israeli Relations during the Cold War The Myth of a Long 'Special Relationship'", P.133.

anti-Israeli coalition.”⁸⁷ Although Türkiye’s policy contradicted with Israel’s interest, there was hardly anything to be done for Türkiye’s rapprochement with Iraq. Yohanan Meroz, the first secretary at the Israeli legation in Ankara, summarized the Turkish decision and Israeli position saying that “Israeli propaganda in Türkiye against co-opting of Iraq would not be effective; Türkiye is firm in their decision and irritated by Israeli interference in this issue.”⁸⁸

Türkiye and Iraq signed A Pact of Mutual Co-Operation on February 24, 1955.⁸⁹ Although it was stated in the treaty that other states could join this pact, the possibility of Israel's inclusion in this pact, which Iraq had not yet recognized, was prevented by an article added to the treaty "It is necessary to be a state recognized by the signatories in order to participate in the pact."⁹⁰ The Türkiye-Iraq Pact was voted on in the Turkish Grand National Assembly on November 26, 1955. Before the vote, the Foreign Minister explained the pact's articles in detail, and then the government and opposition representatives took the floor. Opposition party representatives also considered the Türkiye-Iraq pact an occasion for an effective security system for Türkiye and the Middle East countries. They congratulated the government. All 449 deputies voted in favor.⁹¹ The voting of the pact was one of the rare events at that time in which a remarkable consensus was achieved between the government and the opposition party.

For the U.S., the Türkiye-Iraq Agreement was the central point of the Northern Tier project. The Northern Tier would be consolidated with the participation of Pakistan and Iran. As for other countries in the Middle East, the U.S. did not attach importance to Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria from a military viewpoint. Their adherence to the Turco-Iraqi

⁸⁷ ISA, [English Companion], Vol. 9, 1954, 18128/6- ,ş 130.02/2410/10, 69, February 16, 1954, P.63.

⁸⁸ ISA, CV, [English Companion], Vol.9, 1954, 18128/6- ,ş 130.10/2563/12, 102, March 9, 1954, P.93.

⁸⁹ Official Gazette of Türkiye, 8942, February 28, 1955.

⁹⁰ TSA 32-215-3, February 24, 1955.

⁹¹ Grand National Assembly of Türkiye Archive, Parliamentary Minutes, Ankara, 10/5, P.822, November 26, 1955.

Pact could have adverse effects, especially in that it could give the occasion for claiming that the U.S. had put its political and diplomatic weight behind Israel's Arab neighbors and, therefore, against Israel.⁹² Egypt was against the pact, but the U.S. took steps to get its support because of its position in the Middle East. In that context, the U.S. proposed a new peace project, the so-called Alpha, which would allow Nasser to gain new prestige in the Middle East, and prevent him from attacking Türkiye-Iraq Pact.⁹³ On the other hand, Saudi Arabia was also disappointed with the Türkiye-Iraq agreement. Saudi Arabia defined the pact as a bombshell and stated: "Arabs and the U.S. were not enemies. While Arabs were considering means to implement a new policy for Arab-Western cooperation, today's whole atmosphere was inflamed against the U.S."⁹⁴

In fact, since Dulles' visits to the Middle East, Türkiye's economic difficulties⁹⁵ played an important role in the strategy of the U.S. By 1955, Türkiye's economic difficulties became so prominent that articles were published in this issue of the *New York Times*. Moreover, the Turkish government received official requests from financiers who wanted to mediate to obtain money from American banks and financial institutions in the

⁹² FRUS, 1955–1957, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1955, Vol.14, P.118, March 24, 1955.

⁹³ FRUS, 1955–1957, Near East Region; Iran; Iraq, Vol.12, P.46, March 31, 1955.

Alpha, a settlement of the Arab-Israeli and Palestinian-Israeli questions, was worked out jointly by the United States and Britain in the early 1950s. U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles attached a high priority to the Alpha as he saw the policy as an opportunity to say Nasser that the U.S. was eager to cooperate with him. FRUS, 1955–1957, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1955, Vol.14, P.119, March 24, 1955.

The United States and Britain wanted to ease the Arab-Israel tension, and pave the way for the pact. The Alpha plan failed despite the U.S.'s backed shuttle diplomacy with Egypt and Israel.

⁹⁴ FRUS, 1955–1957, Near East Region; Iran; Iraq, Vol.12, P.23, February 27, 1955.

⁹⁵ The Turkish economy entered a phase of foreign exchange stringency and reduced GNP growth from 1953 to 1958. External debt management and domestic policy increasingly became ad hoc, with a growing reliance on short-term foreign borrowing and trade arrears. The central bank financing of public enterprise deficits and agricultural support purchases resulted in high inflation, which led to the reluctant introduction of an IMF-designed stabilization and evaluation program in mid-1958. Merih Celâsun, Dani Rodrik. "Turkish Economic Development: An Overview." Collins, Jeffrey D. Sachs & Susan M. "Developing Country Debt and Economic Performance, Volume 3 Country Studies - Indonesia, Korea, Philippines, Türkiye", London: University of Chicago Press, 1989. P.620.

U.S.⁹⁶ From the beginning, Türkiye attempted to turn the U.S.'s Middle East strategy into an opportunity to increase economic aid. For example, Menderes said that "If Türkiye were to continue to play such a vital role, it would be necessary to increase the nation's economic strength. The unfortunately low level of industrialization and overall living standards must be increased to ensure the survival of Türkiye and the Middle East as a whole."⁹⁷

On the other hand, at the beginning of 1955, it was mentioned in the Meeting of the National Security Council in Washington that "U.S. economic assistance to Türkiye was the best possible way to buttress its security interests in the Near Eastern area. Moreover, it was much better and cheaper to assist the Turks in building their armed forces than to create additional U.S. divisions."⁹⁸ In this context, The U.S. stated: "It would continue a program of substantial military aid and encourage Türkiye to participate in appropriate regional security agreements to bring selected neighboring states into regional defense pacts aimed at resisting communist penetration of the area."⁹⁹

In short, Türkiye was the indispensable country of the newly established Northern Tier arrangement for the U.S. On the other hand, Türkiye's willingness in this project involving Arab states, especially due to its security concerns and economic problems, would cause the deterioration of Türkiye-Israel relations.

⁹⁶ TSA 5-27-14, April 26, 1955.

⁹⁷ McGhee, "*The U.S.–Turkish–NATO Middle East Connection: How the Truman Doctrine Contained the Soviets in the Middle East*", P.106.

⁹⁸ FRUS, 1955–1957, National Security Policy, Vol.19, P.17, January 5, 1955.

⁹⁹ It is also important to note that from the Fiscal Year (F.Y.) 1947 through F.Y. 1954, the U.S. expended \$704.3 million in military aid to Türkiye; from April 1, 1948, through F.Y. 1954, the U.S. expended \$262 million in economic and technical assistance to Türkiye. With this aid, Türkiye has undertaken significant programs to modernize its military establishment and develop its economy. Expenditure estimates for the F.Y. 1955 aid program total about \$348 million (\$258 million military aid; \$90.3 million economic and technical assistance), and during F.Y.s 1950–1954, the U.S. allocated one billion dollars for expenditure in those and following years on a program to build up the Turkish Army, Navy and Air Force. FRUS, 1955–1957, Soviet Union, Eastern Mediterranean, Vol.24, P.623, Feb 28, 1955.

2.3 The Baghdad Pact and its impact on Türkiye-Israel relations

In 1955, the Northern Tier project was completed with the participation of Great Britain, Pakistan, and Iran¹⁰⁰ in the Türkiye-Iraq pact. The five pact members held the first meeting in Baghdad on November 21, 1955, and agreed Turk-Iraqi Pact should henceforth formally be known as Baghdad Pact.¹⁰¹

Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia strongly opposed the Bagdad Pact from the very beginning. They tried to form a new pact under Soviet influence against the Bagdad Pact. In that context, they published a joint declaration on March 7, 1955. They announced that they decided to build a new alliance to improve the Arabian world's military, political, and economic issues. After that, Egypt-Syria and Egypt-Saudi Arabia military agreements were signed on October 20, 1955, and October 27, 1955, respectively.¹⁰²

From the beginning of the Northern Tier project, Israel was anxious. The severity of this feeling intensified with the increasing tension between the two blocs. For example; Ben Gurion said in November 1955 that one of the reasons behind Egypt's arming by the Soviets was the pro-Communist bloc established in the Middle East in opposition to the Northern Tier.¹⁰³ In this process, Israel's concerns appear in two main points, changing balance of power and feeling of isolation.

As a member of the Baghdad Pact, Iraq would receive arms aid from the U.S. and strengthen its army. Moreover, Türkiye–Iraq Mutual Cooperation Pact was accompanied

¹⁰⁰ The last member to join the pact was Iran. The U.S. attached importance to Iran's role in Northern Tier. The U.S. stated that it would not press Iran to participate in the pact, but would take steps such as increasing military aid. Moreover, the U.S. planned to conclude the Northern Tier process. Israeli accession was out of the question in any foreseeable future, and adherence to additional Arab states would not be desirable until Arab-Israeli tensions had lessened. FRUS, 1955–1957, Near East Region; Iran; Iraq, Vol.12, P.140, August 11, 1955.

¹⁰¹ FRUS, 1955–1957, Near East Region; Iran; Iraq, Vol.12, P.199, November 21, 1955.

¹⁰² Özgür Yıldırım, "The Attitude of Egypt Towards Baghdad Pact." *Journal of Atatürk and the History of Turkish Republic* (2008), P.141.

¹⁰³ BGA, Meeting protocol, 235286, November 7, 1955.

by an exchange of letters¹⁰⁴ between Türkiye and Iraq. They affirmed: "To cooperate effectively in resisting any aggression directed against either of them" and "To work in close cooperation for effecting the carrying out of the U.N. resolutions concerning Palestine."¹⁰⁵ These developments would alarm Israeli decision-makers. Prime Minister Moshe Sharett openly expressed Israeli concern about the Iraqi-Turkish pact and Military Aid Agreement between the U.S. and Iraq, "A country avowedly and violently hostile to Israel occupying a pivotal position in the anti-Israel-Arab front."¹⁰⁶ This situation was also criticized in the Israeli media. *Ha'aretz*, for example, warned the U.S. that "Any military aid to an Arab country is not likely to serve the regional defense purpose, but only the war of revenge against Israel."¹⁰⁷ In fact, Israel was uncomfortable with the U.S.'s position on Iraq from the very beginning. For example, after meeting with Dulles, Israel's Ambassador to the U.S. Abba Eban reported that although he expressed Israel's concerns about Iraq, Dulles avoided giving details about U.S- Iraq collaboration and did not elaborate on this issue.¹⁰⁸

On the other hand, the Egypt-Syria-Saudi Arabia negotiations were as threatening to Israel as the armament of Iraq. For example, two articles of the treaty of Syria-Egypt, "Gathering the armies of both states under a single command" and "if one of the parties is attacked, the other is considered to be attacked," meant that Israel had to be ready on two fronts. On the other hand, following the Czech-Egyptian arm deal announced in November

¹⁰⁴ The exchange of letters between Türkiye and Iraq increased Israel's concerns further. Although Türkiye assured Israel that there would be no change in the relations between the two countries, it could not convince Israel. Considering the concerns of Israel, Great Britain, and the U.S., asked Türkiye not to add the article regarding the Palestine issue to the Türkiye-Iraq Agreement. Türkiye said that it did not intend to include the contents of these letters in the Türkiye-Iraq Agreement, and indeed, the issue was not mentioned in the treaty. Serbest, M. Bürkan. "Bağdat Paktı'nın Kuruluş Süreci ve Gelişiminde (Türkiye's Role in The Process of the Establishment and Development of the Baghdad Pact)." *MANAS Journal of Social Studies* (2016), P.418.

¹⁰⁵ FRUS, 1955–1957, Near East Region; Iran; Iraq, Vol.12, P.97, June 21, 1955.

¹⁰⁶ FRUS, 1955–1957, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1955, Vol.14, P. 171, May 5, 1955.

¹⁰⁷ Kanat, "Turkish-Israeli Relations during the Cold War The Myth of a Long 'Special Relationship.'" P.133.

¹⁰⁸ ISA, CV, [English Companion], Vol.9, 1954, 18128/6- , 93.01/2210/10, 208, May 13, 1954, P.191.

1955, the balance of power turned against Israel.¹⁰⁹ Ben-Gurion, the Premier-Designate of Israel, stated that Israel's armament became far below the general standard of that of the Arab armies.¹¹⁰

The feeling of isolation was the other and perhaps the more significant impact of the Baghdad Pact and the grouping formed after the pact on Israel. Israeli decision-makers were concerned that bilateral relations, especially with Türkiye, would be affected. In his assessment regarding the Baghdad Pact, Eban emphasized that "Israel felt anxious as arrangements deliberately excluded Israel and feared that Arabs would influence Türkiye away from friendship with Israel."¹¹¹ The statements of Menderes and Nasser right after the Baghdad Pact are important for understanding Israel's concern. While Menderes called upon Arab countries to join the pact, Nasser invited all Arab countries, except for Iraq, to join a new bloc either a multilateral pact or a series of bilateral ones.¹¹² Moshe Sharett also expressed his concerns about grouping in the Middle East: "The Middle East is beginning

¹⁰⁹ The scale of the Czech-Egyptian arms deal was indeed impressive. Israel was primarily concerned about upgrading Egyptian strength in armor, aircraft, and submarines (which Israel lacked altogether). For armor, the problem lay not with the number of tanks that Egypt would receive but with the number of battle formations (battalions, brigades) that the Egyptians could build with the tanks and how soon they could field them. Egypt would acquire 275 tanks in addition to the 370 it already possessed - Israel, in contrast, had about 125 medium-level Sherman tanks at the beginning of 1956. Moreover, Egypt would acquire a new generation of warplanes, the MiG-15 and perhaps the MiG-17. The quantities mentioned were very significant in the period: 200 warplanes and some 70 Ilyushin-28 bombers. Motti Golani, "The Historical Place of the Czech-Egyptian Arms Deal, Fall 1955." *Middle Eastern Studies*, 31:4, (2006): 803-827, P.818.

¹¹⁰ *Time*, "Middle East: Tiered Up", October 24, 1955.

It is important to note that Nasser's prestige increased in the Arab world following the Czech-Egyptian arm deal. According to the Central Intelligence of the U.S.: His prestige was significant for the increase of pan-Arab populism. FRUS, 1955-1957, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1955, Vol.14, P.679, October 29, 1955.

On the other hand, Ben-Gurion gave an important message about armament in November 1955. He said that Israel was determined to increase its military power and level of preparedness. TDA, 534/88442-321198-144, November 1, 1955.

¹¹¹ FRUS, 1955-1957, Near East Region; Iran; Iraq, Vol.12, P.9, January 19, 1955.

¹¹² *New York Times*, February 27, 1955, P.31 and P.156.

to be a network of pacts from which Israel is excluded as a participant and even as a candidate for participation."¹¹³

Following the Baghdad Pact, the Turkish government had no plans to change its diplomatic or economic ties with Israel.¹¹⁴ However, the Türkiye-Israel relationship was an obstacle in its role in the Baghdad Pact, the final point of the Northern Tier concept. For this reason, Türkiye wanted to conceal and downplay its relations with Israel for the future of the Baghdad Pact. On the other hand, aside from its complicated relationship with Türkiye, Israel could find no significant ally to support Israel under all circumstances, including the U.S.¹¹⁵ Israel believed that Türkiye could sacrifice its relations with Israel to convince more Arab states to join the pact.¹¹⁶

2.4 Türkiye-Israel relations following the Suez-Sinai Crisis in 1956

Another regional development affecting Türkiye-Israel relations is the Suez crisis. The main problem was that Egypt did not allow ships to transport oil to Israeli ports. Inadequate measures caused a problem to remain unsolved for years, eventually, it turned into a significant crisis. The tension between Egypt and Israel increased day by day. Following the Czech-Egyptian arms treaty, the question for Ben-Gurion was not whether a war would break out but when. Moreover, there were many precursors of conflict, such as aerial battles, border incidents, and mobilized men.¹¹⁷

One of the most important milestones on the road to the Suez crisis was the U.S's withdrawal of its offer of financial aid to Egypt for the construction of the Aswan High Dam on July 19, 1956, which was originally made along with Britain on December 16,

¹¹³ FRUS, 1955–1957, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1955, Vol.14, P.149, April 12, 1955.

¹¹⁴ Orna Almog & Ayşegül Sever. "Hide and Seek? Israeli–Turkish Relations and the Baghdad Pact", P.612.

¹¹⁵ Golani, "The Historical Place of the Czech-Egyptian Arms Deal, Fall 1955", P.821.

¹¹⁶ Orna Almog & Ayşegül Sever. "Hide and Seek? Israeli–Turkish Relations and the Baghdad Pact", P.612.

¹¹⁷ Selwyn Ilan Troen "The Sinai Campaign as a 'War of No Alternative' : Ben-Gurion's View of the Israel-Egyptian Conflict." In Troen, Selwyn and Shemesh, Moshe, *The Suez-Sinai Crisis, 1956: Retrospective and Reappraisal*, P.184.

1955.¹¹⁸ A week after U.S.'s announcement, Egypt nationalized the Suez Canal Company on July 26, 1956, and seized complete canal control.¹¹⁹ To regain control of the canal, Israel-France-Great Britain (a member of the Baghdad Pact) carried out cross-border operations. It is important to note that the interests of Great Britain and France were different from those of Israel.¹²⁰ The U.S., despite Israel's great efforts to take its support, did not participate in an action against Egypt.¹²¹ On the other hand, Egypt had the support of the Soviets¹²² and Arab states.¹²³

¹¹⁸ FRUS, 1955–1957, Arab-Israel Dispute, January 1–July 26, 1956, Vol.15, P.862, July 19, 1956.

¹¹⁹ New York Times, July 27, 1956, P.1.

¹²⁰ France wanted to use force against Egypt because of its interest in North Africa; on the other hand, the main focus of Great Britain was on Nasser's influence in the region –especially Jordan- as it threatened British control.

¹²¹ Two documents are crucial to understanding the U.S.'s policy regarding Egypt's decision. The first one is the telephone conversation between the President of the U.S. and the Secretary of State on July 30, 1956. The President said, "We are not indifferent but will not war over it. We are moderate but firm but not going to be hysterical and rush into it" FRUS, 1955–1957, Suez Crisis, July 26–December 31, 1956, Vol.16, P.47, July 30, 1956.

Secondly, in his message to Mollet, The Prime Minister of France, President Eisenhower stated: "While I recognize that events may ultimately make forceful action necessary, I feel that the present situation demands that we act moderately, but firmly, to bring about a dependable administration of the Canal. I feel that the utmost calm is required in charting the course of the Western nations at this time, and it is for this reason that we propose that a meeting of interested states be held promptly." FRUS, 1955–1957, Suez Crisis, July 26–December 31, 1956, Vol.16, P.77, July 31, 1956.

During the crisis, the U.S. blocked many of the steps Israel took to equalize the balance the power because of its moderate policy in the Middle East. For example, Israel requested to buy 24 hot F-86 Sabre jet interceptors from Canada. However, for the sale of F-86 Saber jets, U.S. permission was required as they were built under the U.S. license by Montreal's Canadair Ltd. The U.S. did not approve the sale to avoid the impression that its supply of arms to Israel was connected with Suez events and understood in a position as pro-Israel or anti-Arab. FRUS, 1955–1957, Suez Crisis, July 26–December 31, 1956, Vol.16, P.51, July 30, 1956. The U.S. rejected Israel's second request, stating the same reasons in August 1956. FRUS, 1955–1957, Suez Crisis, July 26–December 31, 1956, Vol.16, August 9, 1956.

¹²² Soviets announced their support to Egypt soon after Egypt's decision and stressed that the Soviet Union regarded this action as correct and legal. New York Times, July 30, 1956, P.2.

¹²³ President Nasser strengthened his position in the region as a symbol of Arab nationalism. Nasser's decision strengthened the anti-Western, and nationalist views in the Middle East. In fact, he had been advocating this view since he started politics. For example, on July 4, 1954, Nasser emphasized "the unity of

The first reaction of Türkiye to Nasser's action on Suez was unfavorable. In his first statement regarding Egypt's Suez decision on August 1, 1956, Menderes said that "The Suez Canal is an extremely important issue. On the one hand, the Suez Canal is nationalized, on the other hand, internationalization is advocated. I believe that the implementation of internationalization is the right decision."¹²⁴ Actually, at that time, Türkiye's canal use could be relinquished easily since Turkish ships rarely traveled its length. The government's unfavorable reaction to Nasser's act of nationalizing the Canal was primarily to do with identifying itself closely with the West in the global context.¹²⁵ Türkiye had already been supporting the West for the Suez Canal issue. For example; in a meeting between the Turkish and American governments on May 26, 1953, the Menderes government stated that the importance the U.S. attached to the canal for its security was highly valuable for Türkiye. In addition, Türkiye saw the U.K as the guardian of the Canal Zone.¹²⁶

Türkiye sided with the U.S. during the Suez crisis and the subsequent outbreak of the conflict. For example, Türkiye accepted the U.S.'s proposal to solve the Suez Crisis at the conference held in London with 22 states on August 16, 1956. Moreover, Türkiye announced that it would be a member of the Suez Canal Users' Association (SCUA), which was established by the proposal of the U.S. In its official statement, Türkiye referred to the Baghdad Pact and stated that it participated in this organization by the principles of

Arab people regardless of living in different states and the unity of fighters of freedom to achieve national independence" in his speech in the broadcast station "The Voice of the Arabs" that he inaugurated a year ago to spread Arab Nationalism. He also declared that "The broadcast linked the nation of the Nile with their brethren in Arabism and Islam to struggle against imperialism and the puppet governments". Hamed, Raouf Abbas. "Suez Crisis and the Emergence of a National Leader, Nasser and Arab Nationalism" 1956-67 <http://www.raoufabbas.org/Download/SuezCrisisTheEmergenceOfNationalLeader.pdf>. 10.5.2022, P.6.

¹²⁴ TSA 15-84-1 / 301 August 1, 1956.

¹²⁵ Ayşegül Sever, "A Reluctant Partner of the U.S. over Suez? Turkey and the Suez Crisis." Simon C. Smith. *Reassessing Suez 1956 – New Perspectives on the Crisis and its Aftermath*. London: Routledge, 2016, P.124.

¹²⁶ FRUS, 1952–1954, The Near and Middle East, Vol.9, Part 1, P.138, May 26, 1953.

its alliances.¹²⁷ Although the proposals discussed at the conferences were not implemented due to the rejection of Egypt, Türkiye's support for the proposals and participation in the association are valuable to understanding Türkiye's commitment to Western policies.

Türkiye, on the other hand, did not want to lose its crucial role in the Baghdad Pact. In his interview with the *Daily Telegraph*, Menderes stated that “Egypt targeted the Baghdad Pact to become the leader of the Arab world, and they had to protect the future of the Baghdad Pact together with the other members of the alliance.”¹²⁸ Actually, the most important impact of the Suez Crisis on Türkiye-Israel relations was related to protecting the future of the Baghdad Pact. Because of the cooperation between Israel and Great Britain, one of the members of the Baghdad Pact, Nasser claimed that Baghdad Pact countries secretly allied with Israel. His statements increased the pressure on the Muslim countries of the Baghdad Pact and put the pact in danger. To overcome the crisis, Türkiye recalled its minister, Sevket Istinyeli, from Israel on November 26, 1956.¹²⁹ Although Türkiye emphasized Israel-Palestine relations while announcing this decision, the main reason was to protect the Baghdad Pact. For example, before this decision was announced, Menderes informed Waldemar Gallman, the U.S. ambassador to Iraq, that “The Turkish Government independently and quite aside from deliberations that have been taking place in Baghdad would as a gesture of solidarity with Iraq withdraw its ambassador in Tel Aviv. This would not constitute a breaking of diplomatic relations.”¹³⁰ Similarly, following Istinyeli was notified of the decision, he held a meeting with Walter Eytan. He stated in this meeting that “Türkiye did not turn its back on Israel; this decision was taken to protect

¹²⁷ TSA 144-80-3, September 27, 1956.

¹²⁸ TSA 15-84-1 / 269, July 03, 1956.

¹²⁹ Bolukbasi, "Behind the Turkish-Israeli Alliance: A Turkish View", P.23.

¹³⁰ FRUS, 1955–1957, Near East Region; Iran; Iraq, Vol.12, P. 354, November 23, 1956.

Representatives of the 4 Muslim states of the Baghdad Pact gathered in Baghdad between 19-21 November. In the joint declaration they published, they emphasized the importance of their continuing cooperation and decided to take all necessary measures to meet the threat rising in the Middle East. TDA, 506/42480-192789-37, November 28, 1956.

the Baghdad pact, commercial relations would continue, and the Turkish Embassy would not be disbanded and managed by a charge d'affaires."¹³¹

Menderes saw the Suez crisis as an opportunity to strengthen Türkiye's regional security position without any consideration of Israel's quest for survival.¹³² His primary purpose was the U.S.'s participation in the Baghdad pact. He explained why the U.S. had to join the pact in the meeting of Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers of the Baghdad Pact stating: "The U.S. was no longer under obligation to guarantee Israeli territorial integrity because Israel attacked Egypt and her pretensions as announced by Ben-Gurion to territorial expansion. Heretofore, U.S. public opinion has not been prepared for U.S. adherence to the Baghdad Pact but now is clear that Baghdad pact is an instrument for peace in the Middle East area."¹³³

The other reason for Türkiye's insistence on the U.S. was the developments on its southern border. The pro-Soviet government in Syria and appointing a communist general as chief of staff raised the prospect of Türkiye's being encircled. On November 10, 1956, the encrypted message stating that Syria was turned into a base by the Soviets alarmed the Turkish government. The message stated that the Soviets used Türkiye's airspace and their arms and technicians poured into Syria.¹³⁴ Following the message, Menderes thought that if this issue were discussed in the NATO Council, they would lose time; discussion would drag on with academic disputes. Türkiye preferred to act together with the U.S. to take immediate action.¹³⁵ In that context, Türkiye informed the U.S. and desired its support in a

¹³¹ ISA, CV, [English Companion], Vol.12, October 1956 - March 1957, 18129/2- ,051 ,4/7732/90.031 ,3 November 26, 1956, P.126.

¹³² Athanassopoulou, "Turkey's Approach Towards Israel in the 1950s: Not Merely Following U.S. Policy." P.904.

¹³³ FRUS, 1955–1957, Near East Region; Iran; Iraq, Vol.12, P.319, November 9, 1956.

¹³⁴ TSA 111-701-7 / 2, Nov 10, 1956.

¹³⁵ TSA 111-701-7 / 3, Nov 10, 1956.

warning to the Soviet Union, determination of appropriate action, coordination of efforts, and exchange of information to meet the Soviet threats.¹³⁶

On the other hand, the developments in Syria caused relief in Türkiye-Israel relations. In 1957, Israel attempted to restore Türkiye-Israel relations, hit by the Baghdad Pact and Suez crisis. The man assigned to the task was Eliyahu Sasson, Israel's ambassador to Italy, who previously served in Ankara, and in that capacity had developed warm personal relations with Menderes.¹³⁷ From 1957 onwards, Türkiye positively approached Israel's sustained efforts to improve bilateral relations. For example, following the Eisenhower Doctrine¹³⁸, announced on January 5, 1957, and many Middle East countries, including Türkiye¹³⁹ and Israel¹⁴⁰ participated, Turkish President Celal Bayar met with Avra Melvin Warren, the United States Ambassador to Türkiye. He shared Türkiye's concern about the possibility of Syria and Egypt benefiting from the economic program and its desire to maintain relations with Israel. His message over Saudi Arabia is significant to see Türkiye's thoughts on Israel. "Bilateral relations between Türkiye and Saudi Arabia may improve, but Saudi Arabia refrained from warm conversations due to

¹³⁶ FRUS, 1955–1957, Soviet Union, Eastern Mediterranean, Vol.24, P.702, November 19, 1956.

¹³⁷ Schonmann. "Back-Door Diplomacy The Mistress Syndrome in Israel's Relations with Türkiye, 1957–60.", P.90.

¹³⁸ President Eisenhower requested legislative approval from Congress for a wide range of authorization including military and economic assistance to countries in the Middle Eastern area and the employment of the Armed Forces of the United States "To secure and protect the territorial integrity and political independence of such nations, requesting such aid, against overt armed aggression from any nation controlled by International Communism." Congress approved the President's request. FRUS, 1955–1957, Soviet Union, Eastern Mediterranean, Vol.24, March 22, 1957.

¹³⁹ Türkiye joined the Doctrine on March 22, 1957. In Menderes's interview to the Associated Press, Menderes touched upon Eisenhower Doctrine. He said that Türkiye would take its share because it is the main element assuring security and stability in the region. The purpose of this doctrine and the Baghdad pact are the same; therefore, the Eisenhower Doctrine would strengthen the Baghdad pact. TSA 35-215-17, 1958 (No month and day in the document)

¹⁴⁰ Knesset approved Eisenhower Doctrine on July 4, 1957. Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Vol.24, No: 106, July 4, 1957.

Türkiye's long-standing normal relations with Israel. They lost plausibility when they heard Israel, and Türkiye could not act like them."¹⁴¹

Although Türkiye responded positively to Israel's efforts¹⁴², it wanted the talks to be conducted in secrecy to prevent pressure from Arab states, especially Iraq, a member of the Baghdad Pact. Israel's sustained efforts to draw closer to Türkiye paid off when Menderes consented to a discreet meeting with Sasson in Paris in December 1957, marking a turning point in Israeli–Turkish relations.¹⁴³ A month after this meeting, Sasson and the Turkish Chief of Staff, İbrahim Feyzi Mengüç, met in Rome. Mengüç promised to support the improvement of Turkish-Israeli relations.¹⁴⁴ Although Turkish-Israel rapprochement weakened Türkiye's influence in the Baghdad Pact and created difficulties in its relations with Arab states, these secret talks laid the foundation of what would be later known as the 'Periphery Treaty.'¹⁴⁵

It took another regional crisis to jolt Türkiye into full-fledged collaboration with Israel. In February 1958, the establishment of the United Arab Republic (UAR), a union between Egypt and Syria, was announced.¹⁴⁶ Both Türkiye's and Israel's security concerns increased with this decision. In fact, from the second half of 1957, Türkiye's security concern over Syria reached a sensitive point due to the escalating tensions between the U.S and the Soviets in this region. Türkiye increased its security measures on the Syrian

¹⁴¹ TSA 40-236-11, March 25, 1957.

¹⁴² It is important to note that one of the reasons Türkiye changed its approach toward Israel was Iraq's vote against Türkiye over Cyprus at U.N. in 1957. While Iraq had promised to vote in line with its Baghdad Pact ally and even to convince other Arab countries to do likewise, it voted against Türkiye. Walker, "Turkey and Israel's Relationship in the Middle East.", P.71.

¹⁴³ Schonmann. "Back-Door Diplomacy The Mistress Syndrome in Israel's Relations with Türkiye, 1957–60.", P.91.

Menderes and Minister of Foreign Affairs Fatin Rustu Zorlu were in Paris to attend the NATO meeting.

¹⁴⁴ Bas, "1958 Türkiye-İsrail Periferik Anlaşması (Türkiye-Israel Peripheral Pact of 1958)", P.25.

¹⁴⁵ Orna Almog & Ayşegül Sever. "Hide and Seek? Israeli–Turkish Relations and the Baghdad Pact", P.618.

¹⁴⁶ Schonmann. "Back-Door Diplomacy The Mistress Syndrome in Israel's Relations with Türkiye, 1957–60.", P.92.

border. The Soviets accused Türkiye of escalating tension with its troops on the Syrian border. Türkiye denied that the troops engaged in anything but routine maneuvers.¹⁴⁷ The U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Henderson met with Menderes in Türkiye and stated that the U.S. would support them against possible attacks.¹⁴⁸ On the other hand, the Soviets issued a critical warning to Türkiye. The Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union stated: "Türkiye concentrated so many Turkish forces against Syria that they left their frontiers with us almost bare. It may be too late when cannons start to shoot and rockets fly."¹⁴⁹ Türkiye, which found itself in the middle of the crisis between the U.S. and Soviets, pressed London and Washington for immediate action inside Syria after establishing UAR, but they did not do so. Turkish officials again decided to take the matter up with Israel.¹⁵⁰ Firstly, Zorlu and Sasson met in Paris, and subsequently, Türkiye and Israel conducted the week-long security experts' conference in Rome in June 1958 to develop a permanent framework for security cooperation.¹⁵¹

The other turning point on the road of Ben-Gurion's visit to Türkiye was the coup in Iraq on July 14, 1958. The coup was supported by pro-Nasser civilian elements.¹⁵² During the Baghdad Pact process, the pro-Western policies of the Iraqi government led to the strengthening of an anti-Western military clique in Iraq, and they took power. This coup ultimately jeopardized the Baghdad pact and was therefore alarming for Türkiye. Israel was also worried about the Iraqi coup. Prime Minister Ben-Gurion expressed his concerns to the U.S. Ambassador to Tel-Aviv, Edward B. Lawson, on July 15, 1958, following the coup that "Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi, Libya, Kuwait, and Ethiopia were at stake. If all these

¹⁴⁷ New York Times, September 14, 1957, P.1.

¹⁴⁸ FRUS, 1955–1957, Near East: Jordan-Yemen, Vol.13, P.657, August 26, 1957.

¹⁴⁹ New York Times, October 9, 1957, P.5.

¹⁵⁰ Schonmann. "Back-Door Diplomacy The Mistress Syndrome in Israel's Relations with Türkiye, 1957–60.", P.93.

¹⁵¹ Schonmann. "Back-Door Diplomacy The Mistress Syndrome in Israel's Relations with Türkiye, 1957–60" P.93.

¹⁵² FRUS, 1958–1960, Near East Region; Iraq; Iran; Arabian Peninsula, Vol.12, P.308, July 14, 1958.

countries fell to Nasser, Israel would be surrounded by mortal danger.” He asked the U.S. to support the pro-Western regimes in the region and warned that all of the Middle East would be lost if this was not done.¹⁵³

Baghdad Pact and Türkiye’s policies to save the pact following the Suez Crisis pushed Türkiye and Israel farther apart. However, the developments in Syria, the formation of UAR and the 1958 Iraqi coup set the stage for the improvement of bilateral relations. Taken together, it can be said that these developments convinced Menderes to accept Ben-Gurion’s offer to form a secret "Peripheral Pact" aimed at the containment of Nasser and the forces of Arab nationalism.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ FRUS, 1958–1960, Near East Region; Iraq; Iran; Arabian Peninsula, Vol.12, P.316, July 15, 1958.

¹⁵⁴ A. J. Emmert, “Turkish Foreign Policy toward Israel through the Lens of Neoclassical Realism, 1949-2010,” M.S. - Master of Science, Middle East Technical University, 2020, P.38.

Chapter 3: Ben-Gurion's Visit and its Impact on Bilateral Relations

3.1 The "Periphery Doctrine" and Ben-Gurion's visit to Türkiye

Although Periphery Doctrine was formed in the mid-1950s, the first step for its implementation was taken in 1958. Due to the increasing tension in the Middle East, Israel, which had had the taste of war and struggled with its Arab neighbors before establishing strategic and vital relations with Türkiye, further felt the necessity of creating strategic alliances.¹⁵⁵ After the Iraqi coup, the decline in the influence of the Baghdad Pact, and ultimately the increasing security concerns of Türkiye and Iran was an opportunity for Israel. The Iraqi coup would also mean that Iran, Israel, and Türkiye came in the position of the only props of the West in the Middle East. Therefore, the coup became the catalyst for the establishment of the Periphery Doctrine.¹⁵⁶ Right after the coup, Ben-Gurion wrote a letter to U.S. President Eisenhower on July 24, 1958, regarding the new system they wanted to establish to prevent the Soviet influence in the region, which was also the main target of the Baghdad Pact. Ben-Gurion drew attention to the fact that "Israel had begun to strengthen its links with its neighbors on the outer ring of the Middle East (Iran, Sudan, Ethiopia, and Türkiye) with the object of establishing a solid dam against the Nasserist-Soviet torrent. Our object is the creation of a group of countries, not necessarily in formal and public alliance, which by mutual assistance and joint efforts, in political, economic, and other fields, will be able to stand up steadfastly against Soviet expansion through Nasser, and which might even be able to save the freedom of Lebanon and, perhaps, over time of Syria too."¹⁵⁷ The U.S. found this approach positive as it was compatible with its strategy in the Middle East. Moreover, political developments in the region led the U.S to

¹⁵⁵ Jouneghani, "Review of Turkish-Israeli Relations Based on Neo-Realism." P.256.

¹⁵⁶ Podeh, "*From Mistress to Known Partner Israel's Secret Relations with States and Minorities in the Middle East*", P.312.

¹⁵⁷ BGA, Copy of a letter as delivered from David Ben-Gurion to President Eisenhower discussing the situation in the Middle East, 163968, July 24, 1958.

regard the Türkiye-Israel rapprochement favorably.¹⁵⁸ In his reply to a letter of Ben-Gurion, John Foster Dulles stated: "Like Israel, we are deeply interested in strengthening the security of the nations in the Middle East which are determined to resist the expansionist forces at work in the area."¹⁵⁹

In the beginning, Ben-Gurion considered Türkiye as the "weak link" in developing an alliance as it based its security on NATO and Baghdad Pact membership.¹⁶⁰ In addition, Türkiye still attached importance to the Baghdad Pact (Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) after March 1959). In that context, for example; Türkiye's Foreign Minister Zorlu said at President Eisenhower's official visit to Ankara that "Since the CENTO meeting held in Washington, Middle East nations feel more secure than ever before."¹⁶¹ Similarly, in his visit to the U.S., Menderes emphasized the importance of the association of the U.S. and its participation in every organ of CENTO. They defined the alliance as the efforts of the West against the Soviet bloc: "International Communism emerged when the forces of the Communist bloc realized the impossibility of further expansion without open conflict after the consolidation of the Western Front in Europe through NATO. So they looked for other areas not yet covered by collective defense set-ups through which to outflank and disrupt that united front. The West's answer to this threat was CENTO, with joined in alliance with Türkiye, Iran, and Pakistan, which have a total population of 120 million in the area, and the United Kingdom and with the U.S. as an associate partner."¹⁶² Although Israel had some doubts about the contribution of Türkiye to the Periphery Doctrine due to the organizations that Türkiye was a member of and attached great

¹⁵⁸ Abadi, "Israel and Turkey: From Covert to Overt Relations", P.109

¹⁵⁹ FRUS, 1958–1960, Arab-Israeli Dispute, United Arab Republic; North Africa Vol.13, P.78, August 1, 1958.

¹⁶⁰ Athanassopoulou, "Turkey's Approach Towards Israel in the 1950s: Not Merely Following U.S. Policy." P.11.

¹⁶¹ FRUS, 1958–1960, Eastern Europe, Finland, Greece, Türkiye, Vol.10, Part: 2, P.822, December 6, 1959.

¹⁶² TSA 04-21-8, October 13, 1959.

importance to, Türkiye had a unique aspect for Israel. In addition to the solidarity and unity of purpose to be formed with the countries participating in the Periphery Doctrine, Türkiye had a tremendous rate of natural increase. For example, the birth rate of Türkiye was ‰ 48.4 in 1955. In Israel, this rate was ‰ 30.7 in 1955.¹⁶³ On the other hand, the annual growth rate of the population of Türkiye was ‰ 27.8 in 1955. This figure rose to ‰ 28.5 in 1960, the highest value in the history of the Turkish Republic.¹⁶⁴ Ben-Gurion stated his admiration for this issue saying “850,000 births annually, how meager and impotent we are in this sphere, which overrides all else!” Apart from regional developments, Turkish growth rates can be seen as an implicit reference for Israel to develop relations “The fusion of Turkish massiveness with Israeli know-how and direction.”¹⁶⁵ In line with these developments, the Foreign Ministers of countries, Meir and Zorlu, met secretly in Zurich. It was decided that a high-level meeting between the leaders of both countries should take place.¹⁶⁶ In that concept, Ben-Gurion and Menderes held the meeting that would be a turning point in bilateral relations.

Ben-Gurion visited Türkiye with his delegation¹⁶⁷ on August 29, 1958, to discuss the Peripheral Pact. The timing of the visit is noteworthy as it took place just a few months after the coup in Iraq. The meeting took place in a top-secret so that Ben Gurion could

¹⁶³ Macrotrends. *Israel Birth Rate 1950-2022*. n.d.<https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/ISR/israel/birthrate>. July 28, 2022.

Türkiye Birth Rate 1950-2022. n.d. <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/TUR/Türkiye/birth-rate>. July 28, 2022.

It is important to note that Israel’s birth rates include Jews, Christians, Muslims, and Druze. Sergio DellaPergola, "Jewish Demographic Policies Population Trends and Options in Israel and in the Diaspora." n.d. *The Jewish People Policy Institute*. P. 230 https://jppi.org.il/uploads/Jewish_Demographic_Policies.pdf.

¹⁶⁴ Turkish Statistical Institute, *İstatistik Göstergeler (Statistical Indicators) 1923-2013*, “Population, an annual growth rate of population, number of provinces, districts, towns/villages and population density, 1927-2013”, Information Report, Ankara: Turkish Statistical Institute, 2014. P.5.

¹⁶⁵ Nachmani, “*Israel, Turkey, and Greece: Uneasy Relations in the East Mediterranean*”, P.76.

¹⁶⁶ Meron Medzini, *Golda Meir: A Political Biography*. Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2017, P.347.

¹⁶⁷ Foreign Minister Golda Meir, Chief of Staff Haim Laskov, Chief of the Security Service Yehosafat Harkabi, Reuven Shiloah, and Eliyahu Sasson.

meet his Turkish counterpart. When journalists noticed an El Al plane at the Turkish capital's airport, the explanation given was: "Engine problems that forced an emergency landing."¹⁶⁸ Sezai Orkunt, the head of military intelligence in Türkiye between 1964 and 1966, said the meeting was so secret that only ten military and civilian officials knew about it.¹⁶⁹

Although contents of the talks were kept secret, Golda Meir said that the formal part of the meeting dealt with strengthening cultural relations, but the substantive part dealt with laying the foundations for intelligence exchanges and possible political-military coordination in case of major upheavals in the region that would require urgent consultations.¹⁷⁰ In addition, the fact that Ben-Gurion's delegation mainly included delegates from security sector demonstrates that the main point of the meeting was security. It is also important to note that one of the originators of the Periphery Doctrine and the first head of Mossad, Reuven Shiloah, attended the meeting even though he left the agency in 1952.

This visit resulted in the improvement of Türkiye-Israel relations in the scope of the Periphery Pact. In this agreement, it was decided to develop relations, especially on security, economic, agricultural, and scientific issues, and to hold talks at a technical level. The U.S.'s positive approach facilitated the process. After the visit, for example, Dulles said that the U.S. would support Israel in developing relations with Türkiye.¹⁷¹ Ben-Gurion said in his letter to Dulles that the U.S.'s support gave Israel great encouragement on its periphery policy.¹⁷²

Ben-Gurion's visit was followed by many high-ranking Turkish-Israel contacts. In the military area, for example, the Israeli Chief of Staff and Turkish Chief of Staff made

¹⁶⁸ Dan Raviv & Yossi Melman, *Spies Against Armageddon Inside Israel's Secret Wars*, P.75.

¹⁶⁹ Bengio, "The Turkish-Israeli Relationship Changing Ties of Middle Eastern Outsiders", P.43.

¹⁷⁰ Meron Medzini, *Golda Meir: A Political Biography*. Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2017, P.347.

¹⁷¹ BGA, Correspondence, 278184, September 10, 1958.

¹⁷² BGA, Correspondence, 128443, January 19, 1959.

top-secret mutual visits. Many important figures such as Cevdet Sunay and Cemal Gürsel¹⁷³ who would become the president of Türkiye attended these meetings.¹⁷⁴ In short, with the visit of Ben-Gurion, the general framework in Türkiye-Israel relations was determined, and bilateral relations developed in many fields with the technical talks that followed this meeting.

3.2 The Outcome of visits

Türkiye and Israel saw Soviet expansionism as a dangerous and divisive element.¹⁷⁵ In addition, they had shared interests in preventing Pan-Arabism and fighting terrorism.¹⁷⁶ For that reason, the security and intelligence aspect of the meeting is crucial. The general terms of the original agreement stated that Israel would provide information to Türkiye about the activities of Soviet agents in Türkiye and throughout the Middle East, and in return, Türkiye agreed to furnish information on the Arab states and UAR agents working against Israel. The Israeli service also gave the Turks counterespionage and technical training.¹⁷⁷ Furthermore, Israel Air Forces also conducted flight training in Türkiye.¹⁷⁸ On the other hand, The U.S. supported the intelligence sharing between Türkiye, Israel, and Iran. For instance, the CIA financed the construction of a two-story building intended to serve as Trident headquarters in Israel.¹⁷⁹ Following Ben-Gurion's visit, the intelligence services of these countries established an impressive series of joint intelligence ventures

¹⁷³ Cemal Gürsel was the President of Türkiye in 1961-1966. Cevdet Sunay was in 1966-1973.

¹⁷⁴ Bengio, "The Turkish-Israeli Relationship Changing Ties of Middle Eastern Outsiders", P.53.

¹⁷⁵ Meron Medzini, *Golda Meir: A Political Biography*, 2017, P.347.

¹⁷⁶ Bengio, "The Turkish-Israeli Relationship Changing Ties of Middle Eastern Outsiders" P.46.

¹⁷⁷ Israel Foreign Intelligence and Security Services, March 1979, *Central Intelligence Agency Directorate of Operations Counterintelligence Staff* <https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=728060>, P.24.

¹⁷⁸ Umut Uzer, "Türkiye-İsrail İlişkilerinde Bunalım (Crisis in Turkish-Israeli Relations)." *Ortdagu Etüdleri* 2:2 (2011), P.143.

¹⁷⁹ The strategic intelligence sharing between Israel, Türkiye, and Iran was called as Trident. It took place with an agreed-on routine: Twice-yearly meetings of the three countries' highest intelligence officials, rotating among the three and breaking down into two discussion forums, one dealing with intelligence and the other with security or counterespionage. Alpher, "Periphery Israel's Search For Middle East Allies", P. 11-12.

directed against Soviet influence in the region, which were resulted in great achievements. The telegram of Moshe Alon, Israel's chargé d'affaires in Ankara between the years 1956 and 1960, to Sasson on December 11, 1959, points to this issue: "Achievements have been attained in two areas especially, in the areas of security and the prevention of unification of the Arab States whether under Nasser or some other leader."¹⁸⁰

The relations developed after Ben-Gurion's visit was not limited to the military field. Before Ben-Gurion's visit, economic relations between Israel and Türkiye were conducted within the framework of a trade agreement signed in 1950.¹⁸¹ When Türkiye and Israel started to get closer due to the developments in the Middle East, Alon and Semih Günver, Deputy Director of the Department of International Economic Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, met to discuss the economic relations. Günver stressed the importance of economic ties between the two countries for the improvement of bilateral relations.¹⁸² Following the historic meeting, Shiloah visited Türkiye and made arrangements with his Turkish counterpart for activities in the economic and scientific areas.¹⁸³ The process progressed quickly and sincerely. In the beginning, Israel purchased cotton and low-grade wheat from Türkiye to reduce the Turkish debt to Israel.¹⁸⁴ Then, Minister of Trade and Industry Pinchas Sapir met with Zorlu in Ankara. Besides the expansion of trade volume, they talked about cooperation on water and irrigation issues, oil drilling and oil pipeline, and industry and tourism development.¹⁸⁵ They signed a new Trade and Payments

¹⁸⁰ ISA, CV, [English Companion], Vol.13, 1958-1959, 18129/4- ,454 ,4/0922/90.031 ,December 11, 1959, P.420.

¹⁸¹ CV, [English Companion], Vol.13, 1958-1959, 18129/4- ,130.15/3750/3, 427, August 29, 1958, P.397.

¹⁸² ISA, CV, [English Companion], Vol.12, October 1956 - March 1957, 18129/2- ,130.23/3125/6, 588, March 31, 1957, P.558.

¹⁸³ ISA, CV, [English Companion], Vol.13, 1958-1959, 18129/4- ,430, September 8, 1958, P.399.

¹⁸⁴ Patten, *Israel and the Cold War: Diplomacy, Strategy and the Policy of the Periphery at the United Nations*, P.67.

¹⁸⁵ Podeh, *From Mistress to Known Partner Israel's Secret Relations with States and Minorities in the Middle East*, P.342.

Agreement on March 18, 1960.¹⁸⁶ Moreover, Türkiye and Israel revised this agreement and expanded trade volume regularly from December 30, 1960, until 1969.¹⁸⁷ As an important indicator, for example, by early 1965, the annual bilateral trade volume between the two countries had reached \$30,000,000.¹⁸⁸ The development in the field of economy is understood in the statements of Ben-Gurion during his meeting with French President Charles de Gaulle on June 14, 1960. Ben-Gurion explained Türkiye-Israel relations briefly and clearly that “Israel had very close relations with Türkiye, including important economic ties.”¹⁸⁹

Agriculture was the other field in which the two countries developed relations. In his letter to President Eisenhower, Ben-Gurion emphasized that in its relation with Türkiye in the scope of the Periphery Doctrine, Israel would attach importance to the scientific institution and experts in the field of agricultural development and popular education as much as intelligence and security to save their independence and economic progress.¹⁹⁰ Türkiye met Israel’s agricultural product needs through the Trade and Payments Agreement. Israel imported hundreds of agricultural products between 1960 and 1969. However, following the termination of the agreement on April 25, 1969¹⁹¹ no progress was made in the agricultural field until the mid-1990s. The cooperation at the technical level peaked between 1962 and 1965. More than 600 Turkish experts went to Israel for training and study tours between 1963 and 1965. However, since the first half of 1965, the Turkish

¹⁸⁶ Official Gazette of Türkiye, 10676, December 9, 1960.

¹⁸⁷ Official Gazette of Türkiye, 1960-1968.

Trade figures for 1960 show that Israel exported to Türkiye \$8.9 million worth of goods and imported \$7.7 million worth of goods from Türkiye, As for 1961, Israel exported to Türkiye \$7.3 million worth of goods and imported \$6 million worth of goods from Türkiye, Yitzhak Oron, “*Middle East Record Vol:2 1961.*” Jerusalem: The Tel Aviv University The Reuven Shiloah Research Center, 1961, P.82-84.

¹⁸⁸ Bengio, “*The Turkish–Israeli Relationship Changing Ties of Middle Eastern Outsiders*”, P.51.

¹⁸⁹ ISA, CV, [English Companion], Vol.14, 1960, 18129/6- , 250, P.216.

¹⁹⁰ BGA, Copy of a letter as delivered from David Ben-Gurion to President Eisenhower discussing the situation in the Middle East, 163968, July 24, 1958.

¹⁹¹ Official Gazette of Türkiye, 13295, September 8, 1969.

government, due to political reasons originating from its desire to maintain and promote closer relations with Arab countries, practically halted all the bilateral technical cooperation programs with Israel.¹⁹²

One of the most critical impacts of the increasing contacts and developing relations after Ben-Gurion's visit was the change in the prejudices of the Turks about the Jews. For example, Naim Tiralı, one of the prominent journalists of the time, stated after he visited to Israel in 1959 that his ideas about Jews changed dramatically: "When I went to Israel, I looked for the exaggerated faces drawn by our caricaturists, but I could not find them. Especially in the new generation, vitality and beauty stood out. We have often referred to the Jew as fearful. However, Israelis are not cowards at all. Moreover, they are fearless. Many interviewed families say that their children are being educated in a completely new way, and they trust them too much."¹⁹³ Israel also made a great effort on that issue. For example, Israel reached out to Turkish villages to train local people and teach Israeli agricultural methods. Thus, Israel bonded with Turkish people in small regions who lived in the traditional Muslim sections and had relatively more prejudice to Israel than city dwellers. In this regard, the Israeli charge d'affaires in Ankara stated that the most important activity in such a Muslim country was to correct the wrong impression of the villagers, who comprised most of the pro-Muslim, for the Israelis. Being pro-Muslim did not prevent them from being pro-Israeli.¹⁹⁴

The bilateral relations progressed rapidly following the visit of Ben-Gurion in many fields, except the diplomatic field. Abba Eban, for example, stated just three months following the visit that "Israel's relations with Türkiye were progressively stronger in all fields and at all levels. Israel anticipated restoration of normal diplomatic relations in

¹⁹² ISA, 4076/21 πΣ, 130.23/5-3250, June 7, 1966.

¹⁹³ Bali, "Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri Aliya: Bir Toplu Göçün Öyküsü (1945-1949) (*Aliyah, the Jews of Türkiye in the Republican Years: The Story of a Mass Exodus (1945-1949)*), P.356.

¹⁹⁴ ISA, 3604/2 πΣ, Turkish Foreign Policy from January 1, 1964 to December 31, 1965, June 30 (No year in the Document.)

January, which was interrupted by the Sinai Campaign. At that time, the Turks had withdrawn their chief of mission and obliged Israel to do the same.”¹⁹⁵ Although Israel made constant attempts to raise the diplomatic level, Türkiye did not upgrade diplomatic relations, both in the Menderes time and in the period after the 1960 coup.¹⁹⁶ General Gürsel, the President of Türkiye, who attended mutual visits since the beginning of Peripheral Alliance, was willing to strengthen relations with Israel. However; like Menderes, he was reluctant to do so openly on the political-diplomatic level as he did not want to sever relations with the Arab states¹⁹⁷ While Menderes had a sensitive attitude about protecting the Baghdad pact even after the fall of the monarchy in Iraq, governments established after the Turkish coup needed Arab support for the new regional developments.

The developments in the domestic policies of both countries didn't affect the bilateral relations. For example, Türkiye-Israel relations didn't deteriorate in the turbulent times in Israel's internal affairs that started with the resignation of Ben-Gurion on July 5, 1959.¹⁹⁸ Similarly, the military coup in Türkiye (1960) did not harm Türkiye-Israel relations. The meeting of Moshe Alon and Director-General of Turkish Prime Minister's Office Alpaslan Türkeş was important as it demonstrates that the coup did not affect Turkish-Israeli relationship. In this meeting, Türkeş criticized the Middle Eastern policy of the Menderes regime and stated that a strong Türkiye was in Israel's interest, just as a strong Israel was in Türkiye's interest. Alon, on the other hand, stated that Israel would always be a faithful ally of Türkiye's and contribute to fruitful and effective

¹⁹⁵ FRUS, 1958–1960, Arab-Israeli Dispute, United Arab Republic; North Africa, Vol.13, P.117, November 26, 1958.

¹⁹⁶ The military coup took place in Türkiye on May 27, 1960. It put end to the ten-year rule of the Menderes government. The military junta undertaking the intervention started to rule the country under the name “National Unity Committee”. This committee was headed by Cemal Gürsel. Israel was the third country to recognize the new regime in Türkiye. ISA, CV, [English Companion], Vol.14, 1960, 18129/6- ,3 130.15/3764/2, 394 May 29, 1960, P.326.

¹⁹⁷ Bengio, “*The Turkish–Israeli Relationship Changing Ties of Middle Eastern Outsiders.*” P.48.

¹⁹⁸ Cumhuriyet, 12521, July 6, 1959.

cooperation.¹⁹⁹ Similarly, in his conversation with the President of the U.S. John F. Kennedy on May 30, 1961, Ben-Gurion said that Israel had good relations with Türkiye.²⁰⁰ In short; in spite of developments in domestic politics, mutual visits between the Turkish government and the Israeli government continued, and the bilateral relations for all the fields kept developing.

Both countries strived to expand their ties until late 1963. For example, Turkish Prime Minister Ismet Inonu and Ben-Gurion stated in their correspondence in March 1963 that they believed there would be closer cooperation between Türkiye and Israel.²⁰¹ However, increasing tension in Cyprus in late 1963 had an impact on bilateral relations. Türkiye-Israel relationship began to show signs of deterioration especially due to the Türkiye's isolation in its Cyprus policy. Moreover, the U.S's harsh warning to Türkiye²⁰²

¹⁹⁹ ISA, CV, [English Companion], Vol.14, 1960, 18129/6- ,ا 130.09/2290/4, 401, July 13, 1960, P.333.

²⁰⁰ FRUS, 1961–1963, Vol.17, Near East, P.145, 1961-1962, May 30, 1961.

²⁰¹ TSA, 07-43-22, May 14, 1963 (This file includes Ben Gurion's letter / March 9, 1963, and Inonu's letter/ March 14, 1963)

²⁰² By December 21, 1963, tension had increased between Greeks and Turks. Upon the attacks on the Turkish neighbourhood, the Turkish government warned Makarios to stop the conflicts, stating that it had the right to intervene otherwise.

Cyprus issue was discussed in United Nations, and Resolution 186 passed on March 4, 1964, which stated that additional measures should be taken to maintain peace and to seek out a durable solution. For this purpose, U.N Peacekeeping Force was established. United Nation, "186 (1964). Resolution of 4 March 1964 The Cyprus Question." March 4, 1964, *United Nation Peacemaker*.
https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/CY_640304_SCR186.pdf.

However, Makarios stated on March 4, 1964, that Türkiye had to withdraw its troops from Cyprus and they didn't accept the alliance agreements that had signed in 1959. TSA 133-865-4, March 8, 1964

The situation continued to deteriorate for the Turks. Greek attacks didn't stop. Türkiye sent nota to England and Greece, but Türkiye didn't get any results. On the contrary, Makarios admitted that they killed Turks. *Milliyet*, May 30, 1964.

Finally, Türkiye prepared to intervene in Cyprus. Lyndon Johnson directly threatened Türkiye with a letter for its intention to intervene in Cyprus. He said that the U.S. would not guarantee Türkiye's security in case of possible Soviet Union attacks. While this letter prevented a Turkish invasion, it caused the anti-America feeling in Türkiye. Savrun, Ergenekon. "Birleşmiş Milletler Güvenlik Konseyi 186 Sayılı Kararından Johnson Mektubuna Türkiye'nin Kıbrıs Politikaları (Türkiye's Cyprus Policy From United Nation General Assembly Resolution On Cyprus "No 186" To Johnson Letter)." P.1127.

affected Türkiye's foreign policy priorities, and ultimately Türkiye-Israel relations. To break out of the international isolation, Türkiye tilted toward the Arab states to take their vote on the Cyprus issue at the United Nations. As Türkiye got closer to Arab states to gain their support, it had to limit its relations with Israel, which caused a deterioration in relations. The final break occurred with Türkiye's decision to freeze relations on April 27, 1966, which put a formal end to the military aspect of the peripheral alliance.²⁰³ In his meeting with Baruch Gilboa on June 9, 1966, the Israeli military attaché from 1964 to 1967, General Cemal Tural, the Turkish Chief of Staff, openly explained the Turkish view as follows: "there was a need for an agreement between the governments for the exchange of military information directly between the armies because of the developments in the Middle East in 1958. However, things have since changed. Today, a political environment is much more important than military relations. Türkiye now wished to develop relations with its Arab neighbors, so Turkey want to the clean the tables in its relations with Israel."²⁰⁴ However, it should be noted that although there were low points, the ties between the intelligence services continued uninterrupted until 1979, when the shah of Iran was overthrown by the Islamic Republic, and ultimately the Trident collapsed.²⁰⁵

3.3 Regional and international context

One of the aims of the Periphery Doctrine, which was based on improving Israel's relations with non-Arab countries, was to prove that the Middle East did not belong exclusively to Arab states. Abba Eban emphasized this point and stated that "There are nearly as many non-Arabs as Arabs in the Middle East (the combined population of Israel, Iran, Ethiopia, Somalia, Türkiye, and Cyprus is 80,000,000); and the dream of a united Arab domain from the Atlantic to the Persian Gulf offends the region's essential

²⁰³ Bengio, "The Turkish-Israeli Relationship Changing Ties of Middle Eastern Outsiders", P.64.

²⁰⁴ ISA, Turkey-Political Relations with Israel, 4075/26-зп, June 10, 1966.

²⁰⁵ Alpher, "*Periphery Israel's Search For Middle East Allies.*" P.16.

diversity.”²⁰⁶ After four years of his visit, Ben-Gurion also emphasized this point. In his letter to President of the U.S. Kennedy, he stated: “We are confronted with a unique security problem. It is not our democratic system or our borders and independence alone which are threatened, but our very physical existence is at stake. I am glad to note with deep satisfaction that two Muslim countries in the Middle East, Türkiye, and Iran, the whose combined population exceeds by far that of our four Arab neighbors (Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon) maintain good-neighborly relations and cooperation with Israel for the benefit of all involved.”²⁰⁷

The policy was also a proactive attempt against Soviet influence spreading in the Middle East and Arab nationalism, which Egypt positioned itself at its center.²⁰⁸ From the Israeli point of view, bilateral relations in the Middle East cannot be limited to Arab nationalism; the states must have taken concrete steps with Periphery Doctrine. In addition, Türkiye-Israel-Iran relations, which developed within the scope of the Periphery Doctrine after Ben Gurion's visit, set an example for the future of Israel's relations with other Arab states. For example, Ben Gurion, in his article in 1964, in which he assessed Israel's 16 years and stated his prospects for the future, said that he expected to end hostilities with the Arab states and to develop economic, cultural, and political relations with them, just as Israel did with Türkiye and Iran.²⁰⁹

On the other hand, the Turkish side also advocated organizing defensive alliances against the Soviets in the Middle East and Africa. The words of Minister of Foreign Affairs of Türkiye Fatin Rustu Zorlu in 1959 are significant to understanding the Turkish view: "Soviet bloc's capability of military aggression and economic warfare is growing

²⁰⁶ Abba Eban, "Reality and Vision in the Middle East: An Israeli View." *Foreign Affairs*, 43:4 (1965), P.634-635.

²⁰⁷ FRUS, 1961–1963, Vol.17, P.754, June 24, 1962.

²⁰⁸ Patten, “*Israel and the Cold War: Diplomacy, Strategy and the Policy of the Periphery at the United Nations*”, P.10.

²⁰⁹ BGA, 16 years after, 85110, September 04, 1964.

steadily greater. It is also a fact that, whereas before the Second World War, there were several states in Europe and even in Asia that could have taken her on singly and with equal chances of success, today there is no possibility of such a struggle against this bloc by any state that has not enlisted the support of the United States. It is only by getting together and establishing a united front that the countries of the free world have vested themselves with the possibility of the meeting both military and economic aggression on the part of the Soviet bloc."²¹⁰ In this context, it can be concluded that Ben-Gurion's visit was significant in the regional context from both a Turkish and Israeli point of view.

It can be said that Arab countries continued to have an impact on Türkiye after Periphery Doctrine. This is why Türkiye requested to keep all meetings unpublicized. The most significant indicator of this pressure is the Turkish government's attitude to Israel's constant demands for upgrading diplomatic relations.²¹¹ General Gursel's response to Israel's demands for increasing the diplomatic level is important to understand Türkiye's sensitivity towards Arab states: "Arabs were divorced from reality and lived in a land of illusions. This attitude will last a long time, but the Arabs will not be able to destroy Israel. Israel can be assured of Türkiye's help when the time comes, but open and public relations with Israel would only irritate the Arabs and bring Israel no benefit."²¹² Türkiye's sensitivity to Arab states was also seen in the international arena. In his speech at U.N. General Assembly, Turkish representative Selim Sarper stressed the importance of the Turkish relationship with the Arab States: "We attached particular importance to the maintenance of brotherly relations and friendly cooperation with all the Arab countries.

²¹⁰ Fatin Rüştü Zorlu. "A Turkish View of World Affairs." *Vital Speeches of the Day*, Vol.25, No. 2 (1959), P.685.

²¹¹ After the coup in Türkiye, while the new government kept developing relations with Israel in many fields, it attached importance to NATO and CENTO for the Soviet threat. In 1963, new Turkish Prime Minister İsmet İnönü stated explaining the government program that NATO and CENTO alliances would be important works in their foreign policy. TSA 54-329-5, December 30, 1963.

²¹² ISA, CV, [English Companion], Vol.14, 1960, 18129/6- ,ş 130.23/3348/24, 405, August 15, 1960, P.336

Even though relations had been broken, the Turkish people will always maintain the most sincere feelings of friendship and goodwill towards the people of the United Arab Republic."²¹³ In fact, Israel knew this sensitivity of Türkiye from the very beginning. For example, in the heyday of bilateral relations, Ben-Gurion noted in his diary that Türkiye had relations with Iraq due to the Kurdish regions in its country and this could affect the relations between Israel and Türkiye.²¹⁴

The U.S.'s attitude, on the other hand, was highly important for the development of Türkiye-Israel relations. In 1958, one of the U.S.'s policy objectives for Türkiye was to improve Turkish relations with Greece²¹⁵, the Arab States²¹⁶, and Israel.²¹⁷ From that point of view, the U.S. gave importance to the development of Türkiye-Israel relations, which made Ben-Gurion's visit significant for the U.S.

In the National Intelligence Estimate published after Ben-Gurion visited Türkiye, the U.S. considered Türkiye as its strongest friend in the Middle East primarily due to its firm anti-Soviet policies.²¹⁸ However, the U.S.'s special relationship with Türkiye and Israel posed a dilemma as they could not agree whether they were America's proxies or partners.²¹⁹ This was evident for Türkiye in 1964. The Periphery Doctrine was welcomed by the U.S., particularly against the Soviet influence in the region. However, the eruption

²¹³ General Assembly, 16th session: 1021st plenary meeting, October 2, 1961.

<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/742348?ln=en#record-files-collapse-header>. P.195.

²¹⁴ BGA, Diaries - Ben-Gurion Diary 1915-1971, 217496, June 10, 1960.

²¹⁵ The status of Cyprus caused tension between Greece and Türkiye, which could weaken the southern flank of NATO.

²¹⁶ The development of the Turkish-Arab cooperation can be evaluated within the scope of strengthening the Baghdad pact (Although Iraq was not a part of the pact since the Iraqi coup).

²¹⁷ FRUS, 1958–1960, Eastern Europe, Finland, Greece, Turkey, Vol.10, Part: 2, P.772, November 19, 1958.

The U.S set the same target in 1960, after the military coup in Türkiye. "Encourage the continuance of Turkey's good relations with Greece, Israel and Iran, and improvement of relations with the Arab states" FRUS, 1958–1960, Eastern Europe, Finland, Greece, Turkey, Vol.10, Part: 2, P.899, October 10, 1960.

²¹⁸ FRUS, 1958–1960, Eastern Europe, Finland, Greece, Türkiye Vol.10, Part: 2, P.785, December 30, 1958.

²¹⁹ Kıvanç Ulusoy, "Turkey and Israel: Changing Patterns of Alliances in the Eastern Mediterranean." *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 22:3 (2020), P.417.

of the Cyprus crisis in 1964 and the strong letter sent by the U.S. president to Türkiye caused the Turkish public to lose confidence in the U.S. Even if the U.S appeared to be on the side of Türkiye at U.N. General Assembly Resolution on Cyprus 2077 (XX)²²⁰ in 1965, it was an attempt to mitigate the reaction to Johnson's letter in the Turkish public.²²¹

Türkiye realized that its interests would not always coincide with the U.S. and attempted to diversify Turkish policy and relationships with Africa, the Soviet Union, and the People's Republic of China.²²² In short, while the regional developments led to the implementation of Periphery Doctrine discussed in Ben-Gurion's historical visit, changes in the external international environment affected Türkiye-Israel relations and brought the many aspects of the doctrine to an end.

²²⁰ Documents, Overview of General Assembly. "2077 Question of Cyprus." December 18, 1965, *securitycouncilreport.org*.

²²¹ Burcin Canar, "SSCB-Türkiye İlişkilerinde Kıbrıs Sorunu 1964-1979 (The Cyprus Question in USSR-Türkiye Relations (1964-1979))." *ViraVerita E-Journal: Interdisciplinary Encounters* / Vol. 8 (2018), P.236

²²² M. Hakan Yavuz and Mujeeb R. Khan. "Turkish Foreign Policy Toward The Arab-Israeli Conflict: Duality And The Development (1950-1991)", P.75.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

4.1 Analytical summary

In the first years of relations, Türkiye and Israel, which had different security threats, were the two important countries for each other's national interests. This situation brought a natural rapprochement between the two countries. It is possible to see the result of this rapprochement in the economic, diplomatic, and cultural fields and many ways such as the Trade and Aviation agreements signed, the Turkish government's attitude towards the return of Turkish Jews to Israel, and the mutual appointment of ministers of the two countries. As a matter of fact; the statements of the authorities of both countries and the newspapers of the time demonstrate that both countries were highly pleased with the development of relations. As a Muslim-majority country, Türkiye's development of relations with Israel was an important issue for Israel to break its isolation in the region. On the other hand, Türkiye wanted to improve its relations with the U.S. against the Soviet threat. Moreover, Türkiye-Israel relations were an important step that demonstrated Türkiye's determination to form an alliance with the U.S.

However, between 1952 and 1957, three major events dealt a major blow to Türkiye-Israel relations, the U.S.'s Northern Tier project, the Baghdad Pact as a result of the project, and the Suez-Sinai Crisis. Türkiye wanted to play an active role in U.S.'s Middle East policy and made a great effort to expand its area of influence among the Arab States in the Middle East. As a result of the Northern Tier concept, the Baghdad Pact was signed. Türkiye regarded the pact as the indispensable core component of its national interest and an opportunity to develop its relationship with the U.S. The importance Türkiye attached to the pact can be seen in the meetings of the Turkish delegations with the American authorities, in the statements of the Turkish authorities, and in the parliamentary minutes. On the other hand, Israel saw the pact as an obstacle in Turkish-Israel relations, as it made way to arming the states hostile to Israel, especially Iraq, and further isolating itself in the region. Israel's increasing concerns regarding this process were expressed by important

politicians of Israel such as Ben-Gurion, Moshe Sharett, and Abba Eban. It can be said that Türkiye's commitment to the Baghdad Pact and Israel's concerns came into existence with the Suez-Sinai Crisis. While Türkiye appeared in a position in which it could sacrifice its relations with Israel to save the Baghdad Pact, it is understood that Israel had to reconsider its position in the region.

In 1957 and 1958, increasing Soviet influence, developments in Syria, the establishment of the United Arab Republic, and finally, the fall of the monarchy in Iraq facilitated the re-rapprochement between Türkiye and Israel and formed the basis of an agreement, in which the two countries would benefit from acting together for their own national interests. Israel took the initiative to restore relations and discuss its strategy, Periphery Doctrine. The increasing concerns of Türkiye following the developments in the Middle East and the change in Turkish Policy towards Israel are seen in the documents in the Turkish, Israeli, and American archives, and the newspapers of the time. It is also important to note that Israel's effort to restore relations received support both at the political and military levels.

Ben-Gurion's historic visit in 1958 is significant in terms of its time, the way, and the content of the agreement. Firstly; it took place a few months after the Iraqi coup in which Türkiye lost a critical ally in Baghdad Pact. This was the perfect time to discuss Israel's grand strategy Periphery Doctrine, which had long been waiting for the right time to be implemented. Israel seized the opportunity to implement its strategy, and improve relations with Türkiye. Secondly, the way the meeting facilitated the process. Eliyahu Sasson, who served as the first head of legation in Ankara and had strong ties with the Turkish government, laid the foundation for the meeting. Ben-Gurion's attention and personally attending to discuss the Periphery Doctrine, and complete secrecy of the meeting were significant for Menderes, who had extreme sensitivity towards the Baghdad Pact and the Arab states. Lastly, although 64 years after the meeting, the exact content of the meeting still is not known due to the sensitivity of both parties to secrecy, the meeting resulted in a

firm agreement that would be a unique example of cooperation between Israel and Türkiye.

So, what made the Ben-Gurion's visit unique? First of all, although both countries took some steps regarding security cooperation in the first years of Türkiye-Israel relations, after Ben-Gurion's visit, for the first time, Türkiye and Israel reached a long-lasting and solid agreement on military cooperation and especially intelligence sharing. It is also precious that in a hostile environment in the Middle East, intelligence sharing focused on the states and groups that threatened the national interests and security of the two countries.

Secondly, the impacts of this meeting in the field of the economy were also significant. Although there were well-intentioned attempts to develop economic relations before the visit, it is observed that the trade volume considerably improved after Ben-Gurion's visit. Especially after 1960 (following Shiloah and Pinchas's visit) Türkiye and Israel signed the Trade and Payments Agreement in 1960, and reviewed it annually with additional protocols. It is possible to see the scope of the economic relations in the *Official Gazette of Türkiye* published between 1960 and 1969.

Thirdly, the other noteworthy development, related to economic relations, took place in agriculture. As seen in Turkish sources, Türkiye increasingly exported agricultural products to Israel to meet its need every year, especially after 1960. Another important issue in agriculture that emerged after Ben-Gurion's visit was that Israeli experts visited Turkish villages to teach Israel's agricultural methods and train local people. Israel's development of such a relationship with Türkiye, an agricultural country, made a tremendous difference compared to both in Türkiye-Israel relations in previous years and Türkiye's relations with other countries.

Lastly, another significant impact of Ben-Gurion's visit was the change in Turkish prejudices towards the Israelis. Mutual increasing visits played a significant role in this change. Both Turkish villagers in peripheral regions and people living in the big cities

began to be free from prejudices. While Israeli experts visited Türkiye for this purpose, Turkish journalists visited Israel and wrote about the change in their perspectives in their newspaper columns. In addition to these fields, bilateral relations developed considerably in different fields such as culture, tourism, and science.

It can be said that the only goal that could not be reached with the Periphery Doctrine following Ben-Gurion's visit was the upgrading of diplomatic relations. Cyprus became the crux of Turkish foreign policy, especially after 1960. Faced with the U.S.'s threat of its Cyprus policy, Türkiye needed the diplomatic support of the Arabs. For that reason; subsequent Turkish governments did not intend to upgrade the diplomatic relations in order to avoid losing Arab support. Israeli efforts on this issue can be seen in the Israel Archives, especially in the archives of 1960. It is not known what the outcome would have been, or what direction Israel-Türkiye diplomatic relations would have evolved if Türkiye had found support from the other countries, especially the U.S., for its Cyprus policy, but it can be said that diplomatic relations, after the Ben-Gurion's visit, is the missing piece of the Türkiye-Israel relations puzzle.

The development of bilateral relations following Ben-Gurion's visit also has regional and international dimensions. First of all, it should be noted that the U.S. had been developing many courses of action in the Middle East against Soviet influence for many years. In addition, one of the foreign policy objectives of the U.S. in 1958 was to improve relations between Türkiye and Israel. In this respect, it can be said that Ben-Gurion's visit was compatible with the interests and policies of the U.S. From a regional context perspective, on the other hand, Ben-Gurion's visit changed the regional balance of power. The visit occurred at a time when the Soviets were increasing its influence in Syria, Iraq was in a more unstable situation after the coup, Egypt aimed to be the center of the Arab, Islamic and African worlds, and the Arab states were united. In that environment, with Ben-Gurion's visit, Türkiye and Israel gave an important message to the regional states by showing the enormous potential in their mutual relations.

4.2 The impact of Ben-Gurion's visit on bilateral relations

The primary purpose of this dissertation is to study the extent to which Ben-Gurion's visit to Türkiye in 1958 and subsequent high-ranking Turkish-Israel contacts had an impact on bilateral relations and regional cooperation. There are very few studies on this subject in the literature for various reasons such as the top-secrecy of the meeting and difficulty accessing Turkish archives. To fill the gap in the literature, this study compares the period before and after Ben-Gurion's visit and provides a comprehensive perspective on these eras as it benefits from the Israel archive, the U.S. archive, which is one of the most critical actors in Turkish-Israeli relations, and the Turkish archives, which have not been referred even in the chapters on this subject, other written documents, newspapers of the time, and secondary sources to support the analysis. This dissertation concludes with three features of Ben-Gurion's visit and subsequent Turkish-Israel contacts.

Firstly, with Ben-Gurion's visit, the tremendous potential of the two countries to develop their relations and cooperation was revealed for the first time. Given the uncertainties and potential for instability in the region, this visit also has the value of a message to the states of the region for the future that the Middle East is not only made up of Arabs, and Türkiye and Israel are not alone in the Middle East.

Another matter that we can conclude from the examination is the uniqueness of intelligence sharing and military cooperation. Although the concept of Israel's peripheral alliance emerged before the establishment of the State of Israel, it turned into a doctrine with Ben-Gurion and the Turkish-Israeli segment of it was put into practice with his secret visit to the Türkiye on August 29, 1958. Considering the developments in the region in 1957 and 1958, the timing of the visit and the intelligence cooperation and military cooperation between Türkiye and Israel was crucial. It is also valuable that even though the security threats and decision-making processes of the two states were different, intelligence sharing continued for a long time without interruption and being affected by the domestic policies of countries.

The other observation in the study is that when comparing the era before and after the visit, Ben-Gurion's visit and other high-level visits resulted in a significant change and progress in bilateral relations. It must be noted that before Ben Gurion's visit in 1958, Türkiye wanted to conceal relations with Israel that had developed between 1950 and 1952, but after the meeting, Türkiye was eager to improve relations, and Türkiye and Israel took overt steps in different fields. At the same time, the change and the improvement in bilateral relations received support from Israeli and Turkish society, from politicians to peasants, journalists, and military elites.

By taking these elements into consideration, the dissertation demonstrates that Ben-Gurion's visit to Türkiye in 1958 and subsequent high-ranking Turkish-Israel contacts had an impact on bilateral relations and regional cooperation to a great extent. In addition, Ben-Gurion's meeting and the cooperation in many fields followed by high-level visits became a reference point for the steps to be taken within the scope of developing bilateral relations and regional cooperation in the coming years.

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