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CONTENTS

HERMINE HOVHANNISYAN RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN SAUDI ARABIA AND ISRAEL IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE BALANCE OF POWER THEORY
AVETIK HARUTYUNYAN FOREIGN POLICY DECISION-MAKING ACTORS IN THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY: A LEGAL ANALYSIS.....
ELYA AGHAJANYAN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT VS. CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH PEACE PROCESS: UNDERSTANDING THE AZERBAIJANI APPROACH.....
TATUL MANASERYAN CONTEMPORARY ISSUES RELATED TO ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY IN THE EURASIAN ECONOMIC UNION.....
AUTHORS LIST.....
ANNEX

HERMINE HOVHANNISYAN

**RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN SAUDI ARABIA AND ISRAEL
IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE BALANCE OF POWER
THEORY**

Abstract: Over the past two decades, there has been a noticeable shift in the relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel. Although they are attempting to keep their relationship secret, there is substantial evidence of their cooperation and behind-the-scenes diplomacy. How can formerly hostile countries get closer? According to the balance of power theory, states can forge alliances against one potential stronger power. In this case, both countries have shared concerns in the region, Turkey and Iran particularly. Hence, their newly emerged cooperation is meant to neutralize common threats, and the theory of the balance of power could explain Saudi Arabia's and Israel's recent rapprochement.

Keywords: *balance of power, Saudi Arabia, Israel, rapprochement, Iran, Turkey.*

Introduction

There are many cases when states refuse to recognize other states or establish diplomatic relations with them conditioned by various reasons. Among these, Saudi Arabia's and Israel's case stands out with its uniqueness. Being in different ideological, political, and religious milieus, they have begun to cooperate in interesting ways in recent years. On the one side is Saudi Arabia - the birthplace of Islam, where the holiest sites for Muslims, Mecca and Medina, are located. On the other side is Israel, with its newly proclaimed capital city Jerusalem, which is considered holy not only for Jews and Christians but also for Muslims. Additionally, there is a vast chasm between them concerning the Palestinian issue and Jerusalem, and the absence of diplomatic relations rounds out all these disagreements. However, despite having a plethora of religious and political issues, the last few years have been marked by clandestine and behind-the-scenes cooperation between these two countries against regional enemies.

Relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel have always stood out with their hostility and distrust since the emergence of the State of Israel. The position that Saudi Arabia occupied at the very beginning was conditioned by the Hashemite family's threat and its possible alliance with the founders of the State of Israel. Furthermore, Arab-Israeli affairs and the later Palestinian conflict also played a role in these complicated

relations. However, despite the vividly expressed animosity, it is noteworthy that Saudi Arabia's involvement in the wars was rather limited, unlike other Arab countries.

Nevertheless, starting in the 1980s, things have gradually changed, and the Kingdom's policy has shifted to the peace processes proposed by the kings of Saudi Arabia. Particularly, starting from the 1980s, Saudi Arabia adopted a relatively moderate policy towards Israel, taking into consideration the imperatives of national security. Though these peace processes were a harbinger of drastic changes, the turning point of the relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia occurred in 2006, when Iran's role in the region drastically increased. Notably, Saudi Arabia had serious concerns about Iran's nuclear project. Iran's expanded influence was perceived as a threat by Israel as well.

Consequently, Iran's expansion and aggressive politics were perceived as a threat by both Saudi Arabia and Israel, which brought together these two countries in terms of trying to contain Iran's influence in the region. After identifying the common regional challenger, these two countries came up with pragmatic approaches and regarded each other as potential allies. This rapprochement started in 2006 and manifested in frequent meetings, mutual visits, and agreements, despite the absence of diplomatic relations.

Furthermore, this article has identified another regional challenger pushing the two countries together: Turkey. Turkey's political aspirations appeared after the Arab Spring. Aiming to fill the political and leadership vacuum resulting from the Arab Spring, Turkey tried to fulfill its regional hegemonic ambitions. Henceforth, this was another impetus for the rapprochement between Israel and Saudi Arabia.

Thus, the paramount goal of these cordial relations was to counter Iran and Turkey and eradicate their hegemonic aspirations in the Arab World and the Middle East in general. In order to depict this picture theoretically, the balance of power theory was applied. Notably, this article seeks to understand whether the theory put forth applies to this case. To this end, the crux of the theory mentioned above is comprehensively examined and discussed. However, before the theoretical section, the historical background is provided in order to better understand the dynamics of relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel. To understand the rapprochement process per se, this study reveals the main reasons that pushed the two countries closer. To have a profound understanding of the case and its connection to the theory at hand and to

have a more robust analysis and holistic picture, the bilateral relations are analyzed one by one.

Historical Background Saudi Arabia-Israel relations

In 1902, the young Emir Abd Al-Aziz (Ibn Saud) seized Riyadh and took control over the neighboring territories. He is the founder of the modern Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), which bears his kin name, Ibn Saud.¹ On September 18, 1932, Ibn Saud issued a decree according to which the parts of the Arabian Kingdom were merged, and the name of the new state was proclaimed as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.² Saudi Arabia entered a new era after discovering oil in the late 1930s. Its impact and might were particularly felt in the 1940s. Henceforth, oil became the most powerful factor in strengthening the Kingdom's international position, improving its financial condition, and developing its society.³

Al-Zirikli, an official in the Foreign Ministry of Saudi Arabia, has published a secret document that sheds light on the Kingdom's foreign policy in the late 1940s and early 1950s. This document came from King Ibn Saud, which contains instructions on the matters of foreign affairs addressed to Crown Prince Saud before his important visit to the United States in 1947.⁴ According to the document, the Crown Prince had been instructed to persuade US President Harry S. Truman that "Saudi Arabia's been satisfied with the fact that the US has given up the isolationist policies it adhered to earlier and the kingdom's great hopes caused by active US involvement in Middle East politics."⁵ He should demonstrate the importance of Saudi-American relations and emphasize the existing divergence between the Kingdom and Great Britain. The document contains a clause dedicated to the country's attitude towards Zionism. It demonstrated the deep roots of Saudi-Israeli hostile relations. The clause started with the sentence, "We, the Arabs, are Muslims first of all. The Jews have been the enemies of our religion since the birth of Islam... We do not oppose the Jews just because they are Jews. We

¹ Gertrude Bell, *Arab War: Reports Reprinted from the Secret "Arab Bulletin"* (Selwa Press, 2012).

² Iosif Levin, *The Constitutions of the States of the Near and Middle East* (Moscow, 1956), 436-437.

³ Tyler Priest, "The Dilemmas of Oil Empire," *Journal of American History* 99, no. 1, (2012): 236-251.

⁴ Laurent Murawiec and George Holoch, *Princes of darkness: The Saudi assault on the West* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005).

⁵ Alexei Vassiliev, *The History of Saudi Arabia* (New York: NYU Press, 2000), 699.

oppose the tyrannical policy and principles preached by some Zionist Jews. Zionism claims that it is based on the liberation of oppressed Jews. How can one get rid of oppression by oppressing others, or eliminate injustice by committing a greater injustice?"⁶ Thus, the Saudis believed that Zionism posed a serious threat from both strategic and military viewpoints.

Tensions between Jews and Arab Muslims have always existed and date back to ancient times. New hostilities emerged between these two in the wake of the official proclamation of the State of Israel by the executive of the Jewish Agency David Ben-Gurion on May 14, 1948.⁷ "After being forcibly exiled from their land, the people never ceased to pray and hope for their return to it and the restoration in it of their political freedom... Jews strove in every successive generation to re-establish themselves in their ancient homeland... In the year 5657 (1897), Theodore Herzl, the First Zionist Congress, proclaimed the right of the Jewish people to national rebirth in its own country and to rebuild its National Home. This right was recognized in the Balfour Declaration of November 2, 1917, and re-affirmed in the Mandate of the League of Nations which"⁸.

However, like the other Arab countries (Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon), Saudi Arabia also did not recognize the newly created state in the heart of the Arab World. Saudi Arabia's anti-Zionist campaign had deep roots and went back to King ibn Saud's struggle with the Hashemite family led by Sharif Hussein of Mecca. The Saudi king thought that the Zionists, who had migrated and settled in Palestine, could ally with the Hashemites and help them unite Palestine in their large state, even further strengthening their power. Additionally, the Saudis were strictly opposed to creating the Jewish state in the territories of Palestine and the fact that they could be mixed with Arabs.⁹

Nevertheless, in spite of the harsh condemnation of the Jewish presence in Palestine, Saudi involvement in the Arab-Israel long-lasting conflict was quite slow, and their willingness to directly confront Israel

⁶Murawiec and Holoch, *Princes of darkness: The Saudi assault on the West*, 186.

⁷Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Declaration of Establishment of State of Israel*, May 14, 1948, <https://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Peace/Guide/Pages/Declaration%20of%20Establishment%20of%20State%20of%20Israel.aspx>.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Jacob Abadi, "Saudi Arabia's rapprochement with Israel: the national security imperatives," *Middle Eastern Studies* 55, no. 3 (2019): 1–17.

was rather limited.¹⁰ In May 1948, Riyadh sent a modest number of weapons, soldiers, aircraft, and no more than a handful of untrained tribesmen riding camels to the battlefield.¹¹¹²

However, the Six-Day War in 1967 was a turning point in Saudi Arabia's active involvement in the conflict. Since then, Saudi Arabia has actively formulated the Arab strategy towards Israel and became a regional conflict mediator.¹³ Several major developments conditioned this. First, Israel occupied the eastern part of Jerusalem, which meant that the Al-Aqsa Mosque (the third holiest site in Islam) was no longer under Muslim control. Second, the war caused the end of the era of President Nasser of Egypt. Third, the emergence of oil as a new factor in shifting the balance of power in the region. The last point in particular assured Saudi's ability to have a decisive impact on the conflict. It was realized in the form of an oil embargo on the United States and other countries in 1973 as a response to their support and financial aid to Israel during the war.¹⁴ The hostility between Israel and Saudi Arabia continued in the 1970s as well. The ice melted, and a real thaw in relations occurred in the early 1980s when Crown Prince Fahd proposed a peace initiative in 1981, which outlined a framework for a comprehensive peace between the conflicting sides.

The Fahd Initiative became an Arab program for peace through the Arab League¹⁵: "This new phase of expanded Israeli-Saudi engagement continued throughout the 1990s. In 1991, Saudi Arabia proved responsive to Washington's demands at the Madrid Conference and agreed to join Arab-Israeli working groups on water, environmental protection, economic cooperation, refugees, and arms control. By the time the Oslo I Accords were concluded in 1993, Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf monarchies opted to moderate their traditional policy of boycotting Israel".¹⁶ In the 2000s, conditioned by 9/11, in which fifteen citizens of

¹⁰ Marta Furlan, "Israeli-Saudi Relations in a Changed and Changing Middle East: Growing Cooperation?" *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 13, no. 2, (2019): 1-15.

¹¹ Alexander Bligh, "Toward Israeli-Saudi Coexistence," *Jerusalem Quarterly*, no. 35, (1985): 24-47.

¹² Simha Flapan, *The Birth of Israel: Myths and Realities*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1987).

¹³ Jonathan Adelman, *The rise of Israel: A history of a revolutionary state* (London: Routledge, 2008), 73-91.

¹⁴ Abadi, *Saudi Arabia's rapprochement with Israel: the national security imperatives*, 1-17.

¹⁵ Joseph Kostiner, "Saudi Arabia and the Arab-Israeli Peace Process: The Fluctuation of Regional Coordination," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 36, no. 3, (2009): 417-429.

¹⁶ Furlan, *Israeli-Saudi Relations in a Changed and Changing Middle East: Growing Cooperation?* 2.

Saudi Arabia were involved, Saudi Arabia's image was severely tarnished in the international arena, which, in its turn, caused a deterioration of the Kingdom's relations with the United States. In order to defuse the tension and improve the situation, Crown Prince Abdullah came up with another comprehensive peace plan between the two sides in 2002, as a friendly gesture toward Israel. Particularly, "it did not mention the refugee problem and did not mandate Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 borders".¹⁷ However, this one was also doomed to failure as Israel again rejected it. Inconsistent relations continued till 2006 when they both were confronted by the Iranian nuclear threat.

Contextualizing the balance of power theory

The balance of power theory has played a crucial role in the thinking of IR, as it is considered one of the oldest, most fundamental and enduring theories of IR.¹⁸ The role of the balance of power in IR was extensively applied by the prominent international relations theorist Henry Kissinger. He believed that this theory is the best guarantee for peace among states.²⁰ Some political scientists and scholars of IR claim that the theory of balance of power has different, sometimes vague, sometimes contradictory meanings. Most notably, Hans Morgenthau, a prominent exponent of the balance of power theory, in his famous book, "Politics among Nations", suggested four different definitions of the balance of power: "i. an approximately equal distribution of power internationally, ii. a policy aimed at bringing about certain power distribution, iii. a term describing any distribution of political power in international relations, iv. a description of any actual state of affairs in international politics."²¹ Philipp W. Schroeder also found several diverse meanings for a balance of power: "i. an even or balanced distribution of power, ii. any existing distribution of power, iii. any existing general situation or status quo, with no particular regard to power relations, iv. stability, peace, and repose, v. the rule of law and guaranteed rights, vi. Hegemony."²² These two approaches allow us to suggest that they both

¹⁷ Elie Podeh, "Israel and the Arab Peace Initiative, 2002-2014: A Plausible Missed Opportunity," *Middle East Journal* 68, no. 4, (2014): 590.

¹⁸ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Boston: Addison-Wesley, 1979).

¹⁹ John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton, 2001).

²⁰ Henry Kissinger, *World Order*, (New York: Penguin Press, 2014).

²¹ Hans Morgenthau, *Politics among nations: the struggle for power and peace*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948), 125.

²² Paul W. Schroeder, "The nineteenth century system: balance of power or political equilibrium?" *Review of International Studies* 15, no. 2, (1989): 137.

believe that balance of power, on the whole, is to prevent any state to gain or achieve universal hegemony.

Morgenthau identifies four methods of implementing the balancing process. The first one is ‘divide and rule.’ The crux of it is to divide states, the power into several parts in order to maintain their weakness. As separate units, they would have less power than they would if united.²³ Victoria Tin-bor Hui, one of the contributors to the theory, believes that the essence of this method is to maintain a hierarchy, rather than create it.²⁴

The second method is ‘compensation.’ Morgenthau explains that in the eighteen and nineteen centuries, territorial compensation for preserving the balance of power, which was disturbed because of another country’s territorial aspirations, was a common thing.

The third method is about ‘armaments,’ in particular arms races between nations when one state increases its armaments and the other one tries to not only keep up with it but also exceed the latter. Albert Pollard believes that undoubtedly the balance of power stimulates the demand for arms, which primarily benefits arms dealers.²⁵ Morgenthau calls this continuous arms race and increase of military preparations “unstable, the dynamic balance of power.”²⁶

The fourth method of carrying on the balancing process is through alliances. Morgenthau defines this as the most important manifestation of the balance of power. In turn, Randall Schweller defines balancing as “...the forging of alliances to prevent or deter the territorial occupation or the political and military domination of the state by a foreign power or coalition.”²⁷ Morgenthau singles out two possible ways to forge an alliance: i. alliance vs. world domination (an alliance against one potential stronger power, which strives to achieve universal dominance), ii. alliance vs. counter alliance (where one or both have imperialistic aspirations).²⁸ The classic example of this is the rival alliances of the twentieth century, most particularly the Entente and Triple Alliance.

In this context, Stephen Walt mentions that when states enter an alliance, they have two options: to balance or bandwagon. According to

²³Morgenthau, *Politics among nations: the struggle for power and peace*.

²⁴ Victoria T. Hui, *War and State Formation in Ancient China and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

²⁵ Albert F. Pollard, “The Balance of Power,” *Journal of the British Institute of International Affairs* 2, no. 2, (1923): 21-64.

²⁶Morgenthau, *Politics among nations: the struggle for power and peace*, 136.

²⁷ Randall L. Schweller, *Unanswered Threats: Political Constraints on the Balance of Power*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 9.

²⁸Morgenthau, *Politics among nations: the struggle for power and peace*.

Walt, balancing is about allying in opposition to the potential conqueror. Meanwhile, bandwagoning means to ally with the state that poses the principal source of danger.²⁹ Similarly, Schweller notes that “the aim of balancing is self-preservation and the protection of values already possessed, while the goal of bandwagoning is usually self-extension.”³⁰ Walt then claims that states join alliances for two reasons. First, states strive to refrain from domination by much stronger countries. Second, states prefer to join the vulnerable rather than the stronger side, aiming at preserving their influence instead of reducing it by joining the stronger side.³¹ In addition to Walt’s arguments, Kenneth Waltz says, “Secondary states, if they are free to choose, flock to the weaker side. On the weaker side, they are both more appreciated and safer, provided, of course, that the coalition they join achieves enough defensive or deterrent strength to dissuade adversaries from attacking.”³²

Rapprochement process: Coping with the Iranian ascendancy

The Second Lebanon War in 2006 was a turning point in the relations of Israel and Saudi Arabia. The war was a clear manifestation of the increased influence of Iran in the region. Moreover, Iran’s support of Hamas and its indirect involvement in the conflict made Saudi Arabia consider Iran a real threat to its hegemony in the Middle East. As for Israel, it was mostly concerned about Iran’s nuclear project. Furthermore, this last point was concerning for both countries. Thus, these two saw each other as potential allies, regarding Iran as a common threat.

Frederic Wehrey et al. claim that the surprising cooperation between Israel and Saudi Arabia has been marked by a positive development, which is the increased and noticeable pragmatism in Arab diplomacy.³³ Notably, in support of his observation he has cited an Egyptian scholar’s statement “The old Pan-Arab discourse of ‘rejection’ and ‘confrontation’ has shifted toward the vocabulary of ‘engagement’: engagement with Israel in order to contain Iran”.³⁴

²⁹ Stephan M. Walt, “Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power. *International Security*,” 9, no. 4, (1985).

³⁰ Randall L. Schweller, “Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In,” *International Security* 19, no. 1, (1994): 74.

³¹ Walt, *Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power. International Security*.

³² Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 127.

³³ Frederic Wehrey et al. “Contention on the Periphery: Saudi-Iranian Relations and the Conflicts in Lebanon and Palestine” in *Saudi-Iranian Relations Since the Fall of Saddam: Rivalry, Cooperation, and Implications for U.S. Policy* (Santa Monica, CA; Arlington, VA; Pittsburgh, PA: RAND Corporation, 2009), 77-91.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 86.

Moreover, Gawdat Bahgat notes that even Israel, which was always concerned about the close relationship between Saudi Arabia and the United States in regard to the latter's supply of armaments to the Kingdom, did not consider Saudi Arabia as its number one enemy. Meanwhile, Iran ranked higher on the Israeli list of enemies in the 2000s.³⁵ In addition to Bahgat, David Houska notes that Israelis were convinced that their number one enemy at that time was Iran rather than Saudi Arabia, and they were much less concerned about the U.S. supply of weapons to the Saudis in 2007.³⁶ Furthermore, Houska also mentions Likud Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's position. Notably, he told the Israeli Cabinet, "We understand the need of the United States to support the Arab moderate states, and there is a need for a united front between the U.S. and us regarding Iran."³⁷

Similarly, Michael Sugrue indicates that the Israelis understand the need of the U.S. to support Saudi Arabia as long as it does not harm Israel's security interests.³⁸ Moreover, the U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton mentioned in her book another manifestation of Israel's pragmatic approach towards Saudi Arabia, taking into consideration the real threat to their political interests in the Middle East coming from Iran. Notably, she noted that in May 2009, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu expressed his willingness to revive the peace process with King Abdallah.³⁹

Discussing two schools of thought in Israel that have varying interpretations of the Iranian nuclear threat, Reuven Pedatzur has cited Shimon Peres's statement, "We ought to put constant and determined efforts to settle our affairs ... because Iran is a greater danger for the Arabs and the Israelis".⁴⁰ Notably, Pedatzur reasons that if Iran continues developing its nuclear program, it is highly possible that a Middle Eastern model of MAD (mutually assured destruction) will be implemented in the region, meaning more cooperation between Israel and Middle Eastern

³⁵Gawdat Bahgat, "Nuclear Proliferation: The Case of Saudi Arabia," *Middle East Journal* 60, no. 3, (2006): 421-443.

³⁶David Houska, "U.S. Plans Major Middle East Arms Sales," *Arms Control Today* 37, no. 7, (September 2007).

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 38.

³⁸ Michael Sugrue, "Saudi Deal Moves Forward," *Arms Control Today* 40, no. 10, (2010).

³⁹ Hillary R. Clinton, *Hard Choices*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014).

⁴⁰Reuven Pedatzur, "The Iranian Nuclear Threat and the Israeli Options," *Contemporary Security Policy* 28, no. 3 (2007): 516.

countries. However, it needs to be highlighted that he did not single out Saudi Arabia among the Middle Eastern countries.⁴¹

Though most scholars think that cooperation between Israel and Saudi Arabia will lead to rapprochement, Abadi claims otherwise. Particularly, he argues that although both sides realize the necessity of forming an alliance against the Iranian nuclear threat, the Palestinian issue is a central obstacle in the normalization process.⁴² Ivanov also emphasizes the fact that the Palestinian issue will continue to be a major stumbling block for the Kingdom and Israel to normalize their relations. However, due to the common concern, there are sentiments of rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Israel, aimed at countering Iran in the region.⁴³ He mentions that according to unofficial sources, Riyadh was ready to provide Israel with “an air corridor, air bases for rescue helicopters, drones, and other armaments” if Israel decided to attack Iran’s nuclear facilities.⁴⁴ Though this information was not confirmed officially, moreover it was formally denied, there is still enough evidence that shows that even in the absence of diplomatic relations, representatives of both sides unofficially contacted each other. However, he argues that it is unlikely that Saudi Arabia will normalize its relations with Israel until the issue between the latter and Palestine is resolved.⁴⁵

Nevertheless, the common thread in these scholars’ works is that Iran poses a real threat to both Saudi Arabia and Israel and that the threat is so crucial for them that it makes them put aside all existing issues and cooperate to eliminate the common threat.

Turkey’s geopolitical ascendancy

Turkey’s cordial relations with Israel go back to 1949 when Turkey was among the first Muslim countries that recognized the State of Israel.⁴⁶ Umut Uzer has analyzed Turkish-Israeli relations’ dynamics since the establishment of the State of Israel. He claims that overall they have had cordial relations. Moreover, the 1990s were considered a golden

⁴¹ Ibid., 513-541.

⁴² Abadi, *Saudi Arabia’s rapprochement with Israel: the national security imperatives*.

⁴³ Stanislav Ivanov, “The Alliance between Israel and Saudi Arabia,” *New Eastern Outlook*, September 15, 2015, <https://journal-neo.org/2015/09/15/the-alliance-between-israel-and-saudi-arabia/>.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Umut Uzer, “Turkish-Israeli Relations: Their Rise and Fall,” *Middle East Policy* 20, no. 1 (2013): 97–110.

age in Turkish-Israeli relations.⁴⁷ Similarly, Ofra Bengio and Gencer Özcan describe the Turkish-Israeli alignment in the 1990s in detail. Notably, they talk about military cooperation that puts bilateral relations on a new level. They claim that this alignment was unique per se, as it brought together a Muslim and a Jewish state: a rare phenomenon in modern history.⁴⁸ Jacob Abadi argues that Turkey's aspiration to maintain cordial relations with Israel was largely conditioned by the latter's alignment with the West. It was not a secret that Turkey was conducting pro-Western policy at that time, aiming at gaining full membership in NATO.⁴⁹ Continuing Abadi's argument about Turkey's inclination towards the West, Yavuz assures us that besides that fact, Atatürk's promotion of secularism also made the alignment between these two states more than possible. Another significant impetus in the deepening of cordial relations was the perception of common threats in Syria and Iran.⁵⁰

Abadi, in turn, analyses Turkish-Israeli relations from Israel's perspective. He says that Israel has always sought to establish strong relations with the so-called 'periphery' states, referring to Turkey, Iran, and Ethiopia, as they were located on the periphery of the Middle East. Through this peripheral diplomacy, Israel tried to avoid isolation, because being situated in the heart of the Arab world, with whom Israel was fiercely fighting over the Palestinian issue as well as others, Israel was surrounded by hostile nations.⁵¹

However, with the rise of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in the 2000s, Turkey's attitude towards Israel has changed, as the former's domestic and foreign policy also has changed.⁵² Mohammed Alsaftawi claims that a number of events that took place in the 2000s, like the offensive against Hamas, Operation Cast Lead in late 2008 and early 2009, and Mavi Marmara in 2010 resulted in the deterioration of Turkish-Israeli relations.⁵³ He states that further deterioration of relations

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ofra Bengio, Özcan Gencer, "Old Grievances, New Fears: Arab Perceptions of Turkey and Its Alignment with Israel," *Middle Eastern Studies* 37, no. 2, (2001): 50-92.

⁴⁹ Jacob Abadi, "Israel and Turkey: From Covert to Overt Relations," *Journal of Conflict Studies* 15, no. 2, (1995): 1-16.

⁵⁰ Hakan M. Yavuz, "Turkish-Israeli Relations Through the Lens of the Turkish Identity Debate," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 27, no. 1, (1997): 22-37.

⁵¹ Jacob Abadi, *Israel's quest for recognition and acceptance in Asia: Garrison state diplomacy*, (London: Frank Cass, 2004), 3-28.

⁵² Uzer, "Turkish-Israeli Relations: Their Rise and Fall."

⁵³ Mohammed Alsaftawi, "Turkish policy towards Israel and Palestine: Continuity and change in the relations of the Turkish-Palestinian-Israeli triangle under the rule of the

was during the Arab Spring, where Turkey, particularly its government headed by the AKP party, had taken a dynamic role. Notably, the latter attempted to enhance relations with the Palestinian Authority based on both its domestic and foreign interests. That increased role in the Palestinian issue vexed Israel, as Turkey began to actively promote Palestinian statehood in the international arena.⁵⁴

Meanwhile, Konstantinos Zarras, analyzing Turkish-Saudi relations during and particularly after the Arab Spring, argues that Saudi Arabia's divergence with Turkey also started during the Arab Spring.⁵⁵ He claims that though they had common interests in the stabilization of the region and both supported the rebel forces of Syria (Syria has had very cordial relations with Iran – the Kingdom's main enemy and has been considered Iran's key ally. Hence, Saudi Arabia thought that regime change in Syria would bring a Sunni-dominated government into power which, in turn, would definitely be in its interests.⁵⁶ However, they had other disagreements. Notably, Zarras mentions that Turkey's ties with the Muslim Brotherhood were unacceptable for Saudi Arabia, as the latter has designated the Brotherhood as a terrorist organization. Moreover, unlike Israel and the West, Turkey had a much more flexible attitude towards Iran and its nuclear program. This fact also strained Turkish-Saudi relations any further.

According to Elizabeth Monier, the crux of the matter was that as a result of the Arab Spring, a political and leadership vacuum emerged in the Middle East after the fall of Libya's, Egypt's, Yemen's and Tunisia's presidents, and Assad facing the outbreak of a full-scale civil war in Syria. Therefore, Turkey attempted to fill that vacuum, seeking regional hegemony and trying to increase its influence in the Arab World.⁵⁷ Moreover, Orna Almog and Ayşegül Sever point out that Turkey's aspirations to obtain a leading regional role were also conditioned by its growing soft power in the Arab world.⁵⁸ In addition to discussing

Justice and Development Party (AKP) (2002-2016) (Doctoral diss., Gent University, 2017), 207-239.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵Konstantinos Zarras, "Assessing the Regional Influence and Relations of Turkey and Saudi Arabia After the Arab Spring," in *Turkey's Relations with the Middle East: Political Encounters After the Arab Spring*, ed.Hüseyin Işıksal, Oğuzhan Göksel (Springer International Publishing AG 2018), 117-133.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Elizabeth Monier, "The Arabness of Middle East regionalism: The Arab Spring and competition for discursive hegemony between Egypt, Iran and Turkey," *Contemporary Politics* 20, no. 4, (2014): 421–434.

⁵⁸Orna Almog and Ayşegül Sever, *The Mavi Marmara: An Embattled Voyage and Its Consequences. Contemporary Israeli– Turkish Relations in Comparative Perspective* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 61-101.

Turkish-Israeli relations after the Mavi Marmara incident, Almog et al., like Zarras, highlights that “Ankara’s previously close relationship with Saudi Arabia became tense as a result of Turkey’s clear support for the Muslim Brotherhood.”⁵⁹ These developments, Philipp Amour reasons, were alarming for Israel, as the latter “was concerned with all these developments as a counter to the status quo.”⁶⁰ Therefore, Israel saw Saudi Arabia as a possible ally after the deterioration of relations with Turkey.

The common trait of the studied literature was that most of the authors show the dynamics of the relations between Israel and Turkey, and Saudi Arabia and Turkey. Also, although they had cordial relations or common interests, their interests eventually diverged and their relationship became strained, which pushed Saudi Arabia and Israel closer.

Shared Concerns and Interests

While Iran has been a nuclear threat to Saudi Arabia and Israel from the beginning of the 2000s, it has become more assertive since 2011, most notably since the Arab Spring.⁶¹ Marta Furlan highlights that the 2011 uprisings resulted in significant changes and challenges in the region, including the fall of several governments, the crumbling of the regional status quo, ongoing brutal internecine wars, etc. Hence, she notes, regional actors like Israel and Saudi Arabia had to adjust their policies and relations corresponding to the new situation. In this process of adjustment, they have found out that they share interests and concerns, which immensely promoted their eventual cooperation.⁶²

Oz Hassan clarifies that Saudi Arabia, being inherently conservative since its political establishment, has adopted a policy that was intended to maintain the status quo in the region, which, in turn, should be the paramount guarantee of the maintenance of its influence in the international arena, and the key safeguard of the country’s domestic stability (particularly the stability of the House of Saud).⁶³ That is why the Kingdom was concerned about the regime changes, civil wars, unrests, and revolts taking place in the Middle East, as they led to the

⁵⁹ Ibid., 87.

⁶⁰ Phillip O. Amour, “Israel, the Arab Spring, and the Unfolding Regional Order in the Middle East: A Strategic Assessment,” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 44, no. 3, (2016): 2.

⁶¹Furlan, *Israeli–Saudi Relations in a Changed and Changing Middle East: Growing Cooperation?*

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Oz Hassan, “Undermining the transatlantic democracy agenda? The Arab Spring and Saudi Arabia’s counteracting democracy strategy,” *Democratization*, 22, no. 3 (2015): 479–495.

deterioration of the regional status quo. The latter, he reasons, in turn, could foster anti-government movements in the country.⁶⁴

Likely, Avner Yaniv, analyzing Israel's viewpoint, mentions that it has been traditionally devoted to preserving the regional status quo, considering the latter as a guarantor of the advancement of its national interests,⁶⁵ stating that "While the fall of longstanding rulers and the rise of new political forces (especially those more inclined toward Islamism) might encourage a revived call to action against Israel and bring into question the status quo in which the Jewish State's existence has been accepted de facto by all regional actors."⁶⁶ Therefore, these developments in the region were observed with concern by Israel.

Sinem Cengiz identifies another thing that has posed a threat to the maintenance of the balance of power in the region and, consequently, has led to concern in Saudi Arabia and Israel. This was the newly emerged alliance between Turkey and Qatar and between them and Iran. At the same time, Iran has been the regional nemesis for both the Kingdom and Israel and is the number one impetus that has pushed these two closer.⁶⁷ Giorgio Cafiero and Daniel Wagner claim that these countries, supported by the Arab Spring revolutions, were eager to fill the regional power vacuum engendered by the Arab Spring.⁶⁸ Hence, the potential change of the geopolitical balance of power in the region was seen by Saudi Arabia and Israel as a serious concern.

Methodology and Research Design

This article seeks to answer the following research question:

– Is the theory of balance of power applicable to the rapprochement process between Saudi Arabia and Israel.

Accordingly, the hypothesis to be tested is the following.

– Taking into consideration and comparing the past and present dynamics of the relations of the two countries, the theory of balance of power explains the rapprochement as a response to the potential threat.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Avner Yaniv, *Deterrence Without the Bomb: The Politics of Israeli Strategy*, (Lanham, 1987), 12–19.

⁶⁶Furlan, *Israeli–Saudi Relations in a Changed and Changing Middle East: Growing Cooperation?* 6.

⁶⁷Sinem Cengiz, "An Assessment of Turkish and Saudi Policy towards the Gulf Crisis: Three Levels of Analysis," *Contemporary Arab Affairs* 12, no. 2 (2019): 151-168.

⁶⁸Giorgio Cafiero and Daniel Wagner, "Turkey and Qatar's Burgeoning Strategic Alliance," *Middle East Institute*, June 8, 2016 <https://www.mei.edu/publications/turkey-and-qatars-burgeoning-strategic-alliance>.

In the literature review, we identified the primary reasons that lead to the rapprochement between the two countries. In order to understand the core characteristics of the theory put forth and how it is relevant here, the analysis heavily focuses on the literature review. To answer the aforementioned question, secondary data has been collected. Besides, the explanatory research design was applied based on qualitative analysis. Available and collected qualitative data, including media articles, was also used to find out further development in the relations of Israel and Saudi Arabia. It should be highlighted that no major academic work known to the author has applied the theory of balance of power to Saudi Arabia's and Israel's rapprochement.

Forty-year-old Rivalry: Saudi Arabia – Iran

Saudi Arabia and Iran have been considered regional powers for several decades and still have their “say” in all regional issues. However, it is not a secret that their relationship has always been marked by enmity. In order to understand the essence of their forty-year-old hostility, a brief analysis of their relations after 1979 is needed.

Saudi Arabia and Iran have always been in a religious competition. However, a decisive change in Saudi-Iranian relations occurred in 1979, when Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini put an end to the Iranian monarchy and founded the Islamic Republic of Iran. As a result, Iran has become a Shia-ruled theocracy and challenged the Sunni Muslim world, especially Saudi Arabia, which sees itself as the leader of the Muslim world.⁶⁹ After the successful revolution in Iran, Saudi Arabia plunged into crisis, as the Eastern Province of the country, heavily populated by the Shia Muslims, started uprisings. Thereby, “Khomeini endangered the territorial integrity of Saudi Arabia by appealing to its disenfranchised Shi'a population in the Eastern Province.”⁷⁰ Consequently, the tension between these two countries was exacerbated. Moreover, Saudi Arabia blamed Iran for spreading revolutionary ideologies.

Since the 1980s, Saudi Arabia has launched proxy wars^{71*} against Iran. The first proxy war was in Iraq from 1980 to 1988. In order to hinder Iran's efforts to propagate revolutionary ideas amongst Iraq's Shia

⁶⁹ Max Fisher, “How the Iranian-Saudi Proxy Struggle Tore Apart the Middle East,” *The New York Times*, November 19, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/20/world/middleeast/iran-saudi-proxy-war.html>.

⁷⁰Frederic Wehrey et al., “Sectarianism and Ideology in the Saudi-Iranian Relationship,” in *Saudi-Iranian Relations Since the Fall of Saddam: Rivalry, Cooperation, and Implications for U.S. Policy* (Santa Monica, CA; Arlington, VA; Pittsburgh, PA: RAND Corporation, 2009), 13.

^{71*}A proxy war is when a third power instigates a war between another two countries, in which the former is not involved directly.

majority, Saudi Arabia, with the support of the United States, helped Iraq throughout the war, which resulted in the weakening of Iran's regional influence.⁷² However, in 2003, when the US toppled Iraqi Sunni-led Baathist Party leader Saddam Hussein, for the first time in history, a Shiite politician became the president of Iraq. Thus, the balance of power turned in favor of Iran. This, in turn, triggered another proxy war in Lebanon in the mid-2000s. As sectarianism was highly expressed in Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Iran easily penetrated and even influenced the country's domestic parties and militias. In order to project and expand its influence, Iran provided significant support to Hezbollah in Lebanon.⁷³ Thereby Saudi Arabia and Iran waged "a new kind of proxy struggle, not on conventional military battlefields, but within the domestic politics of weakened institutional structures."⁷⁴ Keeping in mind their aspirations for regional hegemony, these two rivals continued to entrench and deepen sectarian divides aimed at "mobilizing supporters based on religious identity markers".⁷⁵

Saudi Arabia's and Iran's intervention in the Yemeni and Syrian civil wars is also based on sectarian ideas. Iran has supported the Houthis, a minority group within the Shi'a community, while Saudi Arabia has backed Yemen's Sunni leadership. In the case of Syria, the Kingdom has funded Sunni rebels, while Iran has supported the Syrian government.⁷⁶ However, it should be noted that waging proxy wars, aiming at gaining influence in the region, was a real threat to the regional balance of power and another reason for unending regional hegemonic rivalry because they were becoming more inclined to proxy conflicts just to hinder the other side in order to increase its influence and relative gains.

Furthermore, Saudi Arabia's major concern is the Iranian nuclear project (INP). Though Iran always assures that they are using nuclear technology only for the peaceful production of energy, the Kingdom regards it with suspicion. Iran started to develop nuclear programs in the 1950s, but its secret plans were revealed in the 2000s when it was found out that fuel enrichment was too high to be used for peaceful purposes.⁷⁷

⁷² Fisher, *How the Iranian-Saudi Proxy Struggle Tore Apart the Middle East*.

⁷³Pauline Crepy, "Proxy Warfare's Impact on Sectarianization: The Case of the Saudi-Iranian Rivalry, *Flux: International Relations Review* 9, no.1 (2018): 23-35.

⁷⁴ Fisher, *How the Iranian-Saudi Proxy Struggle Tore Apart the Middle East*.

⁷⁵Crepy, "Proxy Warfare's Impact on Sectarianization: The Case of the Saudi-Iranian Rivalry," 33.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Nina Mast, *The Israel Lobby and US Policy in the Middle East: The Iraq War, The Egyptian Arab Spring, and Iran's Nuclear Program*, (Carnegie Mellon University, 2014).

In 2006, the international community began joint actions in this regard, imposing bans and sanctions on various spheres of Iran.⁷⁸

As the sanctions had severely damaged Iran's economy, it decided to sign the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2015. According to this agreement, Iran was obliged to decrease its nuclear capabilities, while the international community in exchange would lift some sanctions.⁷⁹ Saudi Arabia considered this deal as a "flawed agreement," and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MbS) declared that they would also undoubtedly develop nuclear weapons if Iran continues.⁸⁰ Tensed relations continue to the present. Once in an interview with Fox News, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that the three greatest threats that Israel faces, are "Iran, Iran, and Iran."⁸¹

Overall, Saudi Arabia has been at loggerheads with Iran for forty years. The Sunni Muslim Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Shiite Iran have been vying for regional hegemony from 1979 to the present.

Israel – Iran Relations

Throughout history, Israel and Iran's bilateral relations have depended on their national interests. However, they have been considered inherently hostile countries, although they are not neighboring countries, and consequently do not share common borders, do not ever wage war against each other, and do not have territorial disputes with each other.

During the reign of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi (1941–1979), Israel was considered an ally of Iran, as the latter was striving for socio-economic reforms and seeking to establish close ties with the West, most particularly with the United States. For Israel also, Iran was an ideal ally at that time, taking into account Ben-Gurion's periphery doctrine. Thus, close ties were developed between them.⁸²

⁷⁸Elissa Gootman, "Security Council Approves Sanctions Against Iran Over Nuclear Program," *The New York Times*, December 24, 2006, <https://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/24/world/24nations.html>.

⁷⁹Arms Control Association, *Fact Sheets & Briefs, Implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action at a Glance*, 2018, <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/JCPOA-at-a-glance>.

⁸⁰Yara Bayoumy, "On eve of Trump-Saudi meeting, Riyadh calls Iran nuclear deal flawed," *Reuters*, March 19, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-saudi-us-trip/on-eve-of-trump-saudi-meeting-riyadh-calls-iran-nuclear-deal-flawed-idUSKBN1GV1YT>.

⁸¹"Benjamin Netanyahu opens up about his history with America," *Fox News*, March 11, 2018, <https://www.foxnews.com/transcript/benjamin-netanyahu-opens-up-about-hishistory-with-america>.

⁸²Dilip Hiro, *Cold War in the Islamic World: Saudi Arabia, Iran and the Struggle for Supremacy*, (Oxford University Press, 2018).

The period of close ties was ended abruptly by the Islamic revolution in Iran. “Iran’s involvement in Lebanon and its moral, political, and logistical support for Islamist movements (Hamas, Hezbollah, and Islamic Jihad) made it more directly involved in the Arab– Israeli conflict.”⁸³ Also, Iran’s attempts to obtain weapons of mass destruction and develop its nuclear program were seen by Israel as another serious threat and challenge. Furthermore, revolutionary Iran had a tough stance on the Palestinian issue. It rejected Israel’s claims that Palestine was the historical home of Jews. Revolutionaries considered Zionism to be a racist ideology.⁸⁴ They said that “the Zionist regime is a microbe that has inflicted disease on the region, and there was no solution for this pariah state, but its dismantling”.⁸⁵ Hence, Israel could not have close relations with the country, which opposed its existence and repeatedly called for its destruction.

Bilateral relations witnessed a cooling after the Iran-Iraq war: “With Iraq defeated and sanctioned, Israel sees Iran as the only country left in the region with an offensive capability that can threaten Israel.”⁸⁶ Additionally, in 1993, the President of Israel said that after the defeat of Iraq, Iran had become a strategic superpower which further strengthened Israel’s enmity towards Iran.⁸⁷ In addition to all this, in the 2000s, “Israel depicted Iran and its quest for nuclear technology as a lethal threat to the country.”⁸⁸ Notably, Israel was afraid that Iran’s plans to advance its nuclear potential would deter its nuclear capacity, which is why Israel’s fears and concerns in this regard deepened further.

Things became worse due to the Nuclear Deal or the JCPOA agreement with Iran, signed in mid-July, 2015. Like Saudi Arabia, Israel was also strictly opposed to the deal. The crux of the matter was that the deal would not have prevented Iran from developing its nuclear program and abolishing its nuclear resources. It would only halt the advancement for a while. However, Iran would still be able to increase its nuclear potential. Highly concerned about the agreement, Netanyahu called the deal a “historic mistake for the world.”⁸⁹

⁸³ David Menashri, “Iran, Israel and the Middle East Conflict,” *Israel Affairs* 12, no. 1 (2006): 109.

⁸⁴ Katajun Amirpur, “Iran’s Policy towards Jewish Iranians and the State of Israel. Is the Present Iranian State Islamofascist?” *Die Welt Des Islams* 52 no. 3/4, (2012): 370-399.

⁸⁵ Menashri, “Iran, Israel and the Middle East Conflict,” 111.

⁸⁶ Trita Parsi, “Israel-Iranian Relations Assessed: Strategic Competition from the Power Cycle Perspective,” *Iranian Studies* 38, no. 2 (2005): 249.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 247-269.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 249

⁸⁹ Associated Press, “Netanyahu Calls Iran Deal Historic Mistake,” July 14, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jRF9Uqus-tA>.

Another thing related to the deal that concerned Israel was the relief of the sanctions. Particularly, Israel was afraid that the sanctions' relief would contribute to the improvement of Iran's economy. Consequently, it would continue to support Islamist movements (Hamas, Hezbollah, and Islamic Jihad).⁹⁰ Furthermore, Israel feared the possibility that other Middle Eastern states could also have aspirations to develop nuclear programs. In turn, this could have promoted a nuclear arms race in the region, which would not have been easily prevented.⁹¹

To conclude, Iran, its nuclear program, and its quest for regional hegemony posed a real threat to Saudi Arabia and Israel, thereby making Iran a common enemy for both of them. Hence, this fact hugely contributed to the rapprochement between these two countries regardless of the absence of diplomatic relations.

Saudi-Turkish Relations

Bilateral relations between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Republic of Turkey have always been conditioned by the overall regional situation and have been affected both positively and negatively by events taking place in the Middle East.

Until the mid-1960s, these two countries did not exert any effort to develop bilateral relations due to diverging political systems and goals, foreign policies, attitudes and ideologies.⁹² Starting in the late 1960s and 1970s, when "Islam began to re-emerge as a political force in Turkey in opposition to the country's then military-dominated secular establishment" Saudi Arabia's non-governmental organizations (NGOs) started to fund several Turkish Islamist organizations both in Turkey and abroad.⁹³

The rise of Islamic-based political figures in Turkey also contributed to the development of economic and political ties between Turkey and Saudi Arabia in the 1980s. Cordial relations continued in the mid-1990s when, during the Persia Gulf War, they were on the same side against Iraqi president Saddam Hussein. However, relations took a sharp turn for the worse at the end of the 1990s "as a result of the deterioration

⁹⁰ Raphael Ahren, "Battle to thwart Iran nuke deal not over, Foreign Ministry chief vows," *The Times of Israel*, July 13, 2015, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/battle-to-thwart-the-iran-nuke-deal-is-not-over-foreign-ministry-chief-vows/>.

⁹¹ Moran Azullay, "Negotiators reach historic nuclear agreement with Iran," *Ynetnews*, July 14, 2015, <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4679591,00.html>.

⁹² Suraj Sharma, "Turkey and Saudi Arabia: Are tensions lurking behind the smiles?" *Middle East Eye*, April 15, 2016, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/turkey-and-saudi-arabia-are-tensions-lurking-behind-smiles>.

⁹³ "The Saudi-Turkish antagonism," *Strategic Comments* 25, no. 5 (2019): iv-vi.

of Turkish-Syrian relations over Syria's support to the Kurdistan Worker Party (PKK).⁹⁴ Furthermore, the problems on the usage of the Euphrates river led to the stagnation of bilateral relations.⁹⁵

The year 2003 was rather challenging for the Kingdom. The US invasion of Iraq, the defeat of Saddam Hussein, the empowerment of the Iraqi Shias (and consequently Iran's hegemonic ambitions), and their active engagement in Iraq, etc. were worrisome for Saudi Arabia. Thereby, it began to build an alliance that shared its concerns. One of those states was Turkey. Thus, bilateral relations improved in 2006 when the Saudi monarch became the first Saudi leader who paid a visit to Turkey. This was followed by a second visit in 2007 and flourishing economic and high-level diplomatic ties. Cordial relations continued throughout the first decade of the 2000s.⁹⁶

Then came the Arab Spring, which resulted in the gradual but systemic deterioration of the relations between them. The crux of the matter was that Turkey, headed by President Erdogan, welcomed the revolutions in the region, while Saudi Arabia was pro-status quo. Particularly, Saudi Arabia feared that these revolts could embolden Shia Muslims and other opposition groups within the country and neighboring countries, resulting in destabilization of the balance of power in the region.⁹⁷⁹⁸ Disagreements heightened in 2012, when Ankara started to support Mohammed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. The latter was considered a terrorist organization by the Kingdom, making Turkey's ties with them unacceptable. In 2013, as a result of a military coup, which was rigorously condemned by Erdogan, Morsi was ousted and offered shelter in Turkey. Tensions came to a peak when these two countries appeared on opposite sides during the Qatar crisis in 2017.⁹⁹

⁹⁴Meliha B. Altunisik, "Bitter Frenemies: The Not-Quite-Alliance Between Saudi Arabia And Turkey", *Foreign Affairs*, May 15, 2012, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/turkey/2012-05-15/bitter-frenemies>.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Nasser Pourebrahim, "Turkish-Saudi Relations: A regional Perspective (2003-2015)", *Iranian Review of Foreign Affairs* 6, no. 2(22), (2015): 69-92.

⁹⁷ Ahmed Al-Burai, "Why is Saudi Arabia and the UAE's antagonism of Turkey on the rise?" *Daily Sabah*, May 4, 2020, <https://www.dailysabah.com/opinion/op-ed/why-is-saudi-arabia-and-the-uaes-antagonism-of-turkey-on-the-rise>.

⁹⁸ Birol Baskan, "A new Turkey-Saudi crisis is brewing," *Middle East Institute*, January 8, 2019, <https://www.mei.edu/publications/new-turkey-saudi-crisis-brewing>.

⁹⁹ Nader Habibi, "How Turkey and Saudi Arabia became frenemies – and why the Khashoggi case could change that," *The Conversation*, October 18, 2018, <https://theconversation.com/how-turkey-and-saudi-arabia-became-frenemies-and-why-the-khashoggi-case-could-change-that-105021>.

Saudi Arabia and its allies were upset over Qatar's support for the Muslim Brotherhood and its ties with Iran.

Furthermore, in 2018, the mystery over the fate of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the country's consulate in Istanbul further deepened. A plethora of opinions, speculations, and accusations have appeared related to this issue from both sides. Therefore, bilateral relations have not recovered yet.¹⁰⁰

Overall, Saudi-Turkish relations stand out with ups and downs, conditioned by the events taking place in the region. However, an improvement in the current soured relations between Saudi Arabia and Turkey remains very unrealistic.

Israel-Turkey Relations

For many years, Israel and Turkey have closely cooperated in the spheres of defense, tourism, intelligence and trade. Turkey's inclinations towards the West have conditioned cordial relations. Moreover, Turkey has even seen Israel as its strategic partner in the region. However, Israeli-Turkish relations have also had ups and downs.

It needs to be highlighted that the revivalism of Islam in Turkey's socio-political life has shifted relations between Israel and Turkey. In 1923, Mustafa Kemal established a secular republic. Nevertheless, contrary to the imaginary dominance of secular ideas, religion as a system of values, as a leading force in society and as a factor regulating family and interpersonal relations, has never retreated (setting aside the claims of the descendants of Atatürk on its downfall and possible defeat). Islam has always regulated Turkey's social value system in the public sphere and has always been an essential component of Turkish society. Thus, the reactivation of Islam should be seen as a rediscovery of the Turkish identity.¹⁰¹ Islamists in Turkey adamantly oppose Israel and the Jews. In this regard, Turkey's Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan once said, "To be with Israel in the same community as two allied states working for common interests is first against our being Muslims, our humanity. To be seen with Israel side by side anywhere and under any

¹⁰⁰ Carlotta Gall, "What Happened to Jamal Khashoggi? Conflicting Reports Deepen a Mystery," *The New York Times*, October 3, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/03/world/middleeast/khashoggi-saudi-journalist-istanbul.html>.

¹⁰¹ Vahram Ter-Matevosyan, *Islam in the Socio-Political Life of Turkey (Between 1970 and 2001)*, (Yerevan: Limush Press, 2008).

circumstances is a humiliation for us."¹⁰² Islamist sentiments resulted in the gradual deterioration of Israeli-Turkish relations. One of the manifestations of this deterioration is the opening of a full diplomatic mission of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in Turkey in 1979. Furthermore, in 1980, Ankara recalled its ambassador (as did Israel) after the military coup in Turkey. Relations on the ambassadorial level were restored only a decade ago.¹⁰³

Nevertheless, the 1990s were a golden age for Israeli-Turkish relations. The milestone of the decade was a series of military agreements signed between them, due to which these two countries became strategic partners.¹⁰⁴ But the heyday of the Israeli-Turkish relations came when the AKP took power in Turkey in 2002. Though the latter defines itself as a "conservative democratic" party, there is speculation that it has a hidden Islamic agenda.¹⁰⁵ A number of events soured and weakened bilateral relations further, particularly Operation Cast Lead, also known as the Gaza War in 2008-2009. The war began with the invasion of Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in the Gaza Strip and the bombardment of the Hamas government office, mostly targeting the urban population and civilian infrastructure.¹⁰⁶ The Turkish position on this issue was extremely critical. Turkey's President Erdogan was deeply embarrassed as two days prior to the operation he hosted Israel's Prime Minister in the framework of the negotiations for a peace treaty with Syria mediated by Turkey. However, Erdogan had not been informed about the pending operation.¹⁰⁷

The culmination of the decline of bilateral relations was the Mavi Marmara incident in 2010 as a result of which cooperation between them broke down in all spheres with the exception of trade.¹⁰⁸ In other words, this was "the worst crisis in the history of Turkish-Israeli relations."¹⁰⁹ In May 2010, the Turkish-owned Mavi Marmara ship was attacked by

¹⁰² Necmettin Erbakan, *The Basic Problems of Turkey*, (Ankara: Rehber Yayincilik, 1991), 89.

¹⁰³ Yavuz, "Turkish-Israeli Relations Through the Lens of the Turkish Identity Debate."

¹⁰⁴ Bengio, Gencer, "*Old Grievances, New Fears: Arab Perceptions of Turkey and Its Alignment with Israel.*"

¹⁰⁵ Angel Rabasa and Stephen F. Larrabee, "The Rise of Political Islam in Turkey" in *The Rise of Political Islam in Turkey*, (Santa Monica, CA; Arlington, VA; Pittsburgh, PA: RAND Corporation, 2008), 31-50.

¹⁰⁶ Sergio Catignani, "Variation on a Theme: Israel's operation cast lead and the Gaza strip missile conundrum," *The RUSI Journal* 154, no. 4, (2009): 66-73.

¹⁰⁷ Bernard Gwertzman, "Gaza and Strains in Israel-Turkish Relations," interview by Steven A. Cook, *CFR*, January 19, 2010, <https://www.cfr.org/interview/gaza-and-strains-israeli-turkish-relations>.

¹⁰⁸ Uzer, "Turkish-Israeli Relations: Their Rise and Fall."

¹⁰⁹ Almog and Sever, *The Mavi Marmara: An Embattled Voyage and Its Consequences*, 62.

Israeli forces. As a result of the shooting, 10 Turkish activists were killed. The purpose of the flotilla was to deliver aid to Gaza.¹¹⁰ The outbreak of the Arab Spring created new challenges for the already soured relations. Turkey tried to fill the power vacuum resulting from the uprisings and fulfill its aspirations to become a leading regional power, which was unacceptable for Israel.¹¹¹

In spite of the decades-long close cooperation, Israeli-Turkish relations notably deteriorated in the 2000s because of Turkey's permanent support of Hamas, its campaigns for the international recognition of Palestine as a sovereign state and its overall commitment to the Palestinian cause. Additionally, Turkey has not recognized Hamas as a terrorist organization, unlike Israel. These events strained bilateral relations further.

“Is the enemy of my enemy my friend?”

The first substantial sign of the developing relationship between Saudi Arabia and Israel can be considered the war between Israel and Hezbollah in 2006. In this regard, the Saudi authorities came up with a critical statement, describing Hezbollah's action towards Israel as "illegitimate resistance involved in miscalculated adventure."¹¹² Moreover, shortly after the war, in 2007, Israel's Prime Minister Ehud Olmert traveled to Jordan on the request of the King, where they met with the foreign ministers of the Arab League, including Saudi Arabia's foreign minister. They discussed the possible ways of considering the Saudi Arab Peace Plan. As a result of the meeting, Olmert said: “The road remains long, and our enemies are many, but there are also first signs of developments that point to the chance that in the coming year we will manage to make progress towards resolving the conflicts with our neighbors, especially with the Palestinians.”¹¹³ It is worth mentioning once again that according to the peace initiative, the members would recognize Israel as a sovereign state. In exchange, Israel should return the territories occupied in 1967.

¹¹⁰ “Mavi Marmara: Why did Israel stop the Gaza flotilla?”, *BBC*, June 27, 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/10203726>.

¹¹¹ Almog and Sever, *The Mavi Marmara: An Embattled Voyage and Its Consequences*, 61-101.

¹¹² Suzan Quitaz, “Saudi-Israeli Relations: The Emergence of a new alliance,” *The New Arab*, August 14, 2019, <https://english.alaraby.co.uk/english/indepth/2019/8/14/saudi-israeli-relations-the-emergence-of-a-new-alliance>.

¹¹³ Ronny Sofer, “Olmert Hopeful of Mideast Peace,” *Ynetnews*, April 18, 2007, <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3389582,00.html>.

Since then, the meetings between Israeli and Saudi high officials have become more frequent as they both recognized that Iran is a top priority threat. Iran's factor was an impetus for the rapprochement and developing relationship between these two countries. Despite the absence of diplomatic relations, since 2014, Israeli and Saudi senior officials have had a series of meetings in the Czech Republic, Italy, Switzerland, and India. For instance, in 2014, in the framework of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Israel's Justice Minister Tzipi Livni met with the former director of Saudi Arabia's intelligence agency, Prince Turki al-Faisal.¹¹⁴ Moreover, in August 2014, the Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia Prince Al Faisal announced during the world assembly of Islamic scholars in Jeddah: "We must reject planting hatred towards Israel, and we should normalize relations with the Jewish state."¹¹⁵ In 2015, Director-General of the Israeli Foreign Ministry Dore Gold and Saudi General Anwar Majed Eshki met in Washington during the conference when the latter was presenting his plan for Middle East Regulation (MER) about the need to establish cooperation between Arab states and Israel and exert efforts to struggle against the Iranian threat.¹¹⁶ In 2016, the historic handshake between Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon and Saudi Prince Turki bin Faisal Al Saud was documented. That same year, the retired Saudi General Dr. Anwar Eshki, heading the delegation of Saudi business people and academics, made a historic visit to Israel.¹¹⁷ In 2018, in an interview given to *The Atlantic Magazine*, MbS stated: "There are a lot of interests we share with Israel, and if there is peace, there would be a lot of interest between Israel and the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council)."¹¹⁸

This was only one part of the covert and overt meetings between these two states' senior officials. Saudi Arabia and Israel find themselves in the same boat. Both of them have had concerns about Turkey's regional aspirations, and both of them share an obsessed determination

¹¹⁴Lahav Harkov, "Saudi Prince praises Livni at Munich Security conference," *Jerusalem Post*, February 2, 2014, <https://www.jpost.com/Diplomacy-and-Politics/Report-Livni-Saudi-prince-talk-peace-process-at-Munich-conference-340080>.

¹¹⁵Ivanov, "The Alliance between Israel and Saudi Arabia."

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷Nadav Shragai, "Israel and Saudi Arabia: It's Complicated," *Israel Hayom*, July 19, 2019, <https://www.israelhayom.com/2019/07/19/israel-and-saudi-arabia-its-complicated/>.

¹¹⁸Jeffrey Goldber, "Saudi Crown Prince: Iran's Supreme Leader 'Makes Hitler Look Good,'" *The Atlantic*, April 2, 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/04/mohammed-bin-salman-iran-israel/557036/>.

when it comes to the threat posed by Iran. Hence, the preservation of the regional balance of power has become the most important driver of Saudi-Israeli relations. Here, it is worth mentioning the fourth method of carrying on the balancing process. This happens via alliances. States forge alliances to prevent political and military domination. Saudi Arabia and Israel's case of close cooperation, unlike the existing odds, can be incorporated in the method mentioned above.

Conclusion

Starting from the mid-2000s, an unprecedented change, the first signs of cooperation, were observed in the bilateral relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel. Needless to say, throughout history, Saudi Arabia and Israel have been at odds regarding different ideological, political and religious issues. That is why their bilateral relations stand out with their hostility and rivalry. However, in recent decades the Kingdom's position towards Israel has been subjected to substantial changes. Its strategic needs conditioned the change. Particularly, it has become more moderate and pragmatic.

Thereby, the impetus for rapprochement was the shared concerns and shared interests identified by both countries, which made cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Israel possible.

Iran and its nuclear ambitions are considered a threat of utmost importance for both countries. Saudi Arabia and Israel are hugely concerned about Iran's expansion in the region. Moreover, the JCPOA signed between Tehran and Washington forced the authorities of Saudi Arabia to look for new allies. It has been revealed that besides the Kingdom, Israel was also strictly opposed to the deal, which was another harbinger for changes in bilateral relations.

This study has also identified another regional rival and common concern: Turkey. It has been revealed that due to Turkey's ties with the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas, which are qualified as terrorist organizations by the Kingdom and Israel, its hegemonic aspirations are unacceptable and worrisome for the latter two countries. This fact has also contributed to the rapprochement and cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Israel.

This cooperation has been expressed by covert and overt visits, frequent meetings between Israeli and Saudi high-ranking representatives, comments and statements made on various occasions on mutual interests, and the establishment of contacts.

The research question posed at the beginning of the study aimed to reveal whether the theory of balance of power could be applicable to the rapprochement process of Israel and Saudi Arabia. Generally, four methods of implementing a balance of power were discussed, and the fourth method – forging alliances to deter or prevent military, political domination of a foreign power –is perfectly suited to Israel’s and Saudi Arabia’s case. Putting aside decades-old grievances and differences, they came together to deter Turkey’s regional ambitions and counter Iran.

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FOREIGN POLICY DECISION-MAKING ACTORS IN THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY: A LEGAL ANALYSIS

Abstract: Based on an investigation of the relevant legal documents, this article analyzes the scope of authority of the following state institutions in foreign policy decision-making in the Republic of Turkey: the president, the Grand National Assembly, the Council of Ministers (together with the Prime Minister and Ministry of Foreign Affairs), the National Security Council (along with the Armed Forces), and the Security and Foreign Policy Council (from 2018). It traces the development of the legal framework concerning the powers and duties of these institutions from the establishment of the Republic to the present and elaborates on its impact on the level of their involvement in foreign policy decision-making in various political circumstances and time periods. The article argues that after the establishment of the Republic, sufficient legal framework was gradually developed to make foreign policy decision-making in Turkey more pluralistic with several state institutions included in the process, while the constitutional changes of 2017, on the contrary, were meant to centralize foreign policy decision-making powers around the President and his office.

Keywords: *Turkish foreign policy; decision-making in Turkey; foreign policy decision-making; decision-making actors*

Introduction

The study of Foreign Policy Analysis as a subfield of the discipline of International Relations began to develop in the 1950s. As defined by Chris Alden and Amnon Aran, “Foreign policy analysis (FPA) is the study of the conduct and practice of relations between different actors, primarily states, in the international system”, and “at the heart of the field is an investigation into decision making, the individual decision-makers, processes and conditions that affect foreign policy and the outcomes of these decisions.”¹ Thus, with its actor-specific approach, Foreign Policy Analysis has contributed to the development of the study of Foreign Policy Decision-Making, which “refers to the choices individuals, groups, and coalitions make that affect a nation’s actions on the international stage.”²

¹Chris Alden and Amnon Aran, *Foreign Policy Analysis: New Approaches*. 2nd ed. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), 3.

² Alex Mintz and Karl DeRouen Jr., *Understanding Foreign Policy Decision Making* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 3.

One of the founders of the subfield of Foreign Policy Analysis is Richard Snyder, with his monograph “Decision-Making as an Approach to the Study of International Politics” presented in 1954. It was later republished with some additional essays in 1962 as “Foreign Policy Decision-Making”, edited by Richard Snyder, Henry Bruck and Burton Sapin. The authors aimed to facilitate discussions on the process of foreign policy decision-making and the role of internal and external factors that influence it. They considered foreign policy decision-making from the organizational perspective, thus emphasizing the relevance of studying actors involved in the process of decision-making, their competencies and motivations, the role of bureaucracy, the personal characteristics and professional qualities of decision-makers, possible issues concerning the flow and perception of information and so on.³ This foundational work was followed by extensive research in Foreign Policy Analysis and Foreign Policy Decision-Making in particular, which contributed to the development of significant scholarship on this topic and the formulation of several models of Foreign Policy Decision-Making.⁴

As already noted, an actor-specific approach is one of the key features for the study of Foreign Policy Analysis. The actors involved in foreign policy decision-making and the scope of their authority can vary depending on the countries being studied, political system or current political situation and other factors. Clear identification of the main actors involved in the process of foreign policy decision-making and the competencies granted to them is crucial when analyzing the actual policy choice made for every specific case. Also, it should be taken into account that the actors involved in the process of foreign policy decision-making can be divided (in very general terms) into two major groups: those that are directly involved in the decision-making process through the existing legal framework of the state and are legally or otherwise authorized to make a decision or participate in decision-making (such as Head of State, Foreign Minister, Parliament, leader of the ruling party, etc.), and various political or social groups, media, think tanks, business circles or other interested groups and the general public, as well as external actors or

³ For more details, see Richard C. Snyder, H. W. Bruck, Burton Sapin, Valerie M. Hudson, Derek H. Chollet, and James M. Goldgeier, *Foreign policy decision-making (revisited)* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 21-152.

⁴ For more on the development of the subfield of Foreign Policy Analysis, see Valerie M. Hudson, “The History and Evolution of Foreign Policy Analysis,” in *Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases*, 2nd ed., ed. Steve Smith, Amelia Hadfield, Tim Dunne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 13-34.

other possible stakeholders that use different tools or mechanisms to influence the decision-makers (and in this manner also have an impact on foreign policy decision-making).

Thus, based on the assumption that clear identification of the scope of authority and competencies of state institutions legally included in foreign policymaking is crucial when analyzing foreign policy decisions and steps taken by a country, this article identifies the institutions that are legally authorized to take part in the foreign policy decision-making process in the Republic of Turkey and specifies the scope of their competencies and its changes since the establishment of the Republic to the present. To this end, the article discusses the authority in foreign policymaking granted to the President, Council of Ministers, Grand National Assembly and other state institutions of the Republic of Turkey based on the study of the Constitutions and other legal acts of Turkey starting from the first years of the establishment of the Republic to the Constitutional amendments made in 2017 and the following period. This includes the Constitutions of 1924, 1961 and 1982, with the relevant amendments made to them, as well as laws, decrees and other legal acts encompassing the authority and competencies of relevant state institutions such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Security Council and the Security and Foreign Policy Council, which was established in 2018.

However, three possible limitations of this article should be taken into account. First, this study is based on an analysis of the existing legal norms defining the authority of different institutions. Hence, it does not include the role of foreign policy advisors or other individuals and entities, whose direct participation in foreign policy decision-making is not envisaged by the existing legal framework. Second, the authority granted to any institution by legal acts can, in practice, vary depending on the political situation in the country or other possible factors (for instance, securitization of particular foreign policy issues⁵), so any further case study aiming to analyze a foreign policy decision made by Turkish authorities regarding any specific foreign policy issue should take into account the general political situation in Turkey and other relevant factors that can in practice limit or enhance the authority of one or several actors for that specific case or time period. Finally, the range of participants in the process of foreign policy decision-making can be not limited to the

⁵ For the concept of securitization, see Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998).

ones discussed below, and depending on the nature of the specific foreign policy issue (military, economic, cultural and so on) other state entities responsible for state policy in that particular area can also be included in the decision-making process.

The GNAT and Foreign Policy

According to the Constitution of Turkey of 1924, the legislative and executive branches of power were represented in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT), which realized its executive power through the President and Council of Ministers.⁶ Hence, by this constitution, the Council of Ministers was obliged to submit its Program to the GNAT and receive a vote of confidence from it (this clause remained unchanged in both the constitutions of 1961 and 1982).⁷ Besides that, the constitution of 1924, as well as the later constitutions of 1961 and 1982, granted the Parliament the authority to supervise the activities of the Council of Ministers and if necessary to unseat it.⁸ In the field of foreign policy, the GNAT was given the mandate of signing international treaties and declaring war.⁹

In practical terms, from 1924-1946, a single-party system existed in Turkey with only the Republican People's Party (RPP) represented in the GNAT. Two successive Chairs of the RPP were Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and İsmet İnönü, the first two Presidents of the Republic, who were the ultimate foreign policy decision-makers in Turkey from 1924-1950.¹⁰ Although the government in this period paid attention to bringing important issues before Parliament,¹¹ the role of the GNAT in foreign policy decision-making was mostly consultative. For instance, as described by E. Weisband, during the presidency of İ. İnönü foreign policy issues were discussed not before the whole Parliament, but in the relevant Parliamentary Group of the RPP, where in some cases political debates

⁶Teşkilâti Esasiye Kanunu 1924, Kanun Numarası: 491, Kabul Tarihi: 20/4/1340 (1924), articles 5 and 7, <https://www.anayasa.gov.tr/tr/mevzuat/onceki-anayasalar/1924-anayasasi/>.

⁷Teşkilâti Esasiye Kanunu 1924, article 44; Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasası 1961, article 103; Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasası 1982, article 110.

⁸Teşkilâti Esasiye Kanunu 1924, article 7; Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasası 1961, articles 88-90; Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasası 1982, articles 98-100. The constitutions of 1961 and 1982 also specified that the GNAT can also unseat any of the ministers.

⁹ Ibid, article 26.

¹⁰ See: İlhan Uzgel, "TDP'nin Oluşturulması," in *Türk Dış Politikası Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar, Cilt 1: 1919-1980*, ed. Baskın Oran (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001), 74-75.

¹¹Çınar Bahçacı, "Parlamentove Dış Politika" (Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara Üniversitesi, 2006), 13.

could occur. However, in practice, foreign policy decisions were made outside the Parliament, and in many cases, the decisions were already made before bringing the issue before the Parliament. Thus, the opportunity of parliamentarians to influence foreign policy decision-making was based on their personal ability to influence the ultimate decision-maker, President I. Inonu.¹²

Although the establishment of a multiparty system in Turkey in 1946 made criticism of the foreign policy pursued by the government by the parliamentary opposition possible, in practice the role of the Parliament in the actual decision-making process did not change much. While holding an absolute majority in the GNAT, the government did not need the approval of the parliament and could even neglect to inform it about its decisions. A good example of the government bypassing the parliament in foreign policy decision-making was the decision to send Turkish troops to Korea in 1950. This decision was made without even informing the parliament about it, although according to Article 26 of the Constitution, a declaration of war was under the mandate of the GNAT. Although the RPP, then the main opposition party, was not principally against this decision, it harshly criticized the government for violating Article 26 of the Constitution. Upon the request of the opposition, the issue was brought before the GNAT. The government was accused of violating Article 26 of the Constitution, and Prime Minister Adnan Menderes was obliged to answer the questions of Parliament regarding this decision. The main argument brought by the prime minister during his speech before the GNAT on December 11, 1950, was that “there was no situation of war in Korean issue”, but “punitive measures with the United Nations members’ forces against an illegal force that violated international order”, so “in legal terms it wouldn’t be right to define it as a war”.¹³In the end, the proposal of the opposition was rejected by a vote of 311 against 39.¹⁴

Probably it was due to this argument about the legality of sending the Turkish Armed Forces to Korea without asking the permission of

¹² For more details, see: Edward Weisband, *Turkish Foreign Policy 1943-1945: Small State Diplomacy and Great Power Politics* (Princeton University Press, 1973), 60-70.

¹³ “11 Aralık 1950 Pazartesi Kırşehir Millet ve kili Osman Bölükbaşıve Mardin Millet ve kili Kemal Türkoğlu’nun, Kore’ye Gönderilen Savaş Birliği Hakkında Başbakandan Gensoru Açılmasına Dair Olan Önergesi Münasebetiyle” in *Başbakanlarımız ve Genel Kurul Konuşmaları, Cilt 4, (Cumhuriyet HükümetleriDönemi) Adnan Menderes* (Ankara: TBMM Basımevi, 2014), 41-42.

¹⁴Çınar Bahçacı, “Parlamentove Dış Politika” (Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara Üniversitesi, 2006), 14-15.

Parliament that both the subsequent constitutions of 1961 and 1982 further specified the role of the GNAT in the procedure of the use of the Armed Forces. In particular, the constitutions of 1961 and 1982 kept the clauses regarding the participation of the GNAT in the process of the ratification of international treaties and declaring war,¹⁵ but also specified that the power of sending the Armed Forces of Turkey to foreign countries and allowing foreign armed forces to be stationed in Turkey was vested in the GNAT, except when required by international treaties to which Turkey is a party or by the rules of international courtesy.¹⁶

As a result of this change, the GNAT was never again bypassed by any government while deciding on the use of the Turkish Armed Forces in foreign countries. Further, during the First Gulf War in 1990, it took about a month for President Özal to convince the Parliament to give the government the authority to send Turkish troops abroad (to Iraq in this case) and receive foreign troops in Turkey¹⁷, while later in 2003, during the American invasion of Iraq, the Parliament of Turkey even rejected the proposal of the government on Turkey's active participation in the US-led coalition.¹⁸

It is notable that both the constitutions of 1961 and 1982 also nominally reduced the authority of the GNAT over the government, since according to them the GNAT only had legislative power, while executive power was held by the President and the Council of Ministers.¹⁹ Hence, the Parliament was no longer representing both the executive and legislative branches of power.

However, due to general changes in the political situation in Turkey after 1960, more active debates on foreign policy issues became possible in Parliament. Before this period, state foreign policy was mostly considered as national policy and thus political discussions in the GNAT

¹⁵Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasası 1961, article 65; Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasası 1982, article 90.

¹⁶Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasası 1961, article 66; Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasası 1982, article 92.

¹⁷ Cameron S. Brown, "Turkey in the Gulf Wars of 1991 and 2003," *Turkish Studies* 8, no. 1 (March 2007): 89, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14683840601162054>.

¹⁸ Özlem Doruk, "AK Parti Döneminde Türkiye'nin Kuzey Irak Politikası: Gerginlikten Uzlaşmaya" (Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi, 2010), 52-62.

¹⁹Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasası 1961, Kanun No: 334, Kabul Tarihi: 9/7/1961, Resmî Gazete: 20.7.1961 Sayı: 10859, articles 5 and 6, <https://www.anayasa.gov.tr/tr/mevzuat/onceli-anayasalar/1961-anayasasi/>; *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasası 1982*, Kanun Numarası: 2709, Kabul Tarihi: 18/10/1982, Resmî Gazete: 9.11.1982 Sayı: 17863, articles 7 and 8, https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/arsiv/17863_1.pdf.

and in Turkey in general mostly avoided foreign relations and revolved around domestic issues. However, both the liberal constitution of 1961, which resulted in bringing foreign policy issues to the public domain and the formation of the leftist movement in the 1960s, which was critical of the Western orientation of Turkey's foreign policy made the discussions on foreign policy part of general political debate in Turkey. As a result, state foreign policy started to be more actively discussed and in some cases even criticized by political parties, including those represented in the GNAT.²⁰ Although since then foreign policy issues have started to be freely discussed in the GNAT and used by political parties in their political activities, the role of Parliament has continued to be mostly consultative and has not directly affected foreign policy decision-making.

The Constitutional amendments of 2017 in general did not change the power of the GNAT in the field of foreign policy. However, it practically eliminated the authority of Parliament over the government. In particular, through the adoption of a presidential system of government, the GNAT lost its power to elect the president,²¹ as well as the authority of giving a vote of confidence to the government's program and, if necessary, the power to unseat the government or any minister.²² Instead, the parliament only received the power to renew presidential and parliamentary elections.²³ In other words, Parliament could still raise questions about state foreign policy, but could no longer, even indirectly, try to affect it.

To summarize, as a legislative body, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey has not been directly included in the process of foreign policy decision-making except for cases dealing with the signing of international treaties or declaring war/using the Armed Forces. In these cases, the parliamentary majority party (if one existed) and other political parties represented in the parliament (especially in cases of coalition or minority governments) could also be included in the process of foreign policy

²⁰ For instance, within the period of 1960s the main topics discussed in the GNAT were the Cyprus issue and US-Turkey relations.

²¹ Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasasında Değişiklik Yapılmasına Dair Kanun, Kanun No: 6771, Kabul Tarihi: 21/01/2017, Resmî Gazete: 11.02.2017 Sayı: 29976, article 7, <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2017/02/20170211-1.htm>. According to the new rules, the President of the Republic of Turkey is to be elected directly by the public through general elections. However, the opportunity of electing the President through general elections was first introduced in 2007 by amendments made to the Constitution.

²² Ibid, article 16, point E. By this point, the relevant articles number 110 and 92 of the Constitution of 1982 were repealed.

²³ Ibid, article 11.

decision-making and have an impact on the final decision. Besides that, especially after 1960, parliamentary parties got an opportunity to draw the attention of the government on foreign policy issues and present their views on them, while the clearly identified supervisory authority of the GNAT over the government with the right of giving a vote of confidence to its program and unseating the Council of Ministers or any of the ministers was forcing the government at least to take those views into account. However, with the constitutional amendments of 2017, this possible role of Parliament was significantly limited, since although it still had the ability to raise foreign policy issues and draw attention to them, the lack of tangible supervisory powers of the GNAT over the President and the government made this role of Parliament even more symbolic.

The Presidency and Foreign Policy making before and after 2017

The constitution of 1924 defined the president of the Republic as the Head of State, who was to be elected by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey.²⁴ Additionally, the constitution granted the president the authority to appoint the prime minister and the ministers suggested by the prime minister and, if necessary, to chair the meetings of the Council of Ministers.²⁵ In the field of foreign policy, the president had the authority to accredit representatives of the Republic of Turkey to foreign states and receive the representatives of foreign states appointed to the Republic of Turkey.²⁶ It was also specified that all presidential decrees (including those related to foreign affairs) should be signed by the prime minister and the relevant minister, and the prime minister and the minister concerned were responsible for those decrees.²⁷

As is apparent, although the constitution of 1924 granted the president some powers to participate in the political life of the country, the actual responsibilities of the president in foreign policy decision-making were very limited. However, as already mentioned, the fact of being chair of the ruling and only political party in Turkey, as well as their personal authority in practice granted the first two presidents of the Republic, M. Kemal Atatürk and I. İnönü, unlimited power in decision-making, including on the issues of foreign policy.

²⁴Teşkilâti Esasiye Kanunu 1924, articles 31 and 32.

²⁵ Ibid, articles 32 and 44.

²⁶ Ibid, article 37.

²⁷ Ibid, article 39.

In order to prevent the possibility of such a considerable role of the president in political life and decision-making in Turkey in the future, the Constitution of 1961 introduced a new clause, which demanded that the elected president cut ties with his political party.²⁸ This provision remained untouched in the following constitution of 1982.²⁹ At the same time, the president received some additional powers, such as the authority to ratify and promulgate international treaties³⁰ and after 1982 to decide on the use of the Armed Forces of Turkey if the country was subjected, while the Turkish Grand National Assembly was adjourned or in recess, to sudden armed aggression and thus it was imperative to decide immediately on the use of armed forces.³¹ However, more important was the authority of the president to chair the meetings of the National Security Council since its establishment in 1961,³² taking into account the rising role of the NSC in foreign policy decision-making (the structure and role of the NSC of Turkey is discussed below). Later, through the adoption of the “Law on the National Security Council and the General Secretariat of the National Security Council” in 1983, the president was also made responsible for the agenda of the National Security Council meetings based on the suggestions of the prime minister and the Head of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Turkey.³³

After these changes, the direct influence of the president over the ruling party and the government was limited, while they did get some extra powers which guaranteed their inclusion in the process of foreign policy decision-making. As a result, in the years that followed, the level of participation of presidents in state foreign policy was mostly based on their interest in it, as well as their personal authority and charisma. Probably the best example of the president’s active and decisive participation in foreign policy decision-making was the crucial role of President Özal concerning Turkey’s stance during the First Gulf War in 1990-91. However, it is notable that with all his active involvement in this issue and significant influence on the Prime Minister and a parliamentary majority, Özal still could not single-handedly decide on

²⁸Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasası 1961, article 95.

²⁹Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasası 1982, article 101.

³⁰Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasası 1961, article 97; Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasası 1982, article 104.

³¹Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasası 1982, article 92.

³²Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasası 1961, article 111.

³³*Millî Güvenlik Kuruluve Millî Güvenlik Kurulu Genel Sekreterliği Kanunu*, Kanun No: 2945 Kabul Tarihi: 09/11/1983, Resmî Gazete: 11.11.1983 Sayı: 18218, article 6, <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/arsiv/18218.pdf>.

Turkish participation in Gulf War because of the strong opposition of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and especially the military, which had an essential role in decision-making. Although this struggle led to the resignation of the Chief of General Staff and later of the Foreign Minister, in the end it resulted in a balanced approach to the Gulf War.³⁴

The authority of the president was somewhat enhanced by the Constitutional amendments of 2007, when the practice of electing the president by the public through general elections was first introduced.³⁵ The fact of being elected directly by people was meant to emphasize the legitimacy of the president. However, the powers of the President of Turkey were later significantly enhanced by the Constitutional amendments of 2017. In particular, all executive power was vested in the president (including the competencies that the Council of Ministers and the prime minister possessed before the amendments). The president was also granted the right to appoint his deputies and the ministers, who were accountable only to him.³⁶ The amendments also kept the practice of direct election of the president by the public through general elections held every 5 years.³⁷ In addition to duties and powers already introduced by the Constitution of 1982 the President was also granted the power to determine national security policies, decide on the use of Turkish Armed Forces,³⁸ as well as regulate the establishment, abolition, duties, powers, and organizational structure of ministries.³⁹ Finally, one of the most important changes made by the amendments was the elimination of the obligation for the president to cut his ties with any political party.⁴⁰

To summarize, until 2017, the competencies of the President in terms of foreign policy were quite limited and the president did not bear any political responsibility. However, the president's authority to appoint the prime minister, as well as chairing the meetings of the Council of

³⁴ For more details, see: Cameron S. Brown, "Turkey in the Gulf Wars of 1991 and 2003," *Turkish Studies* 8, no. 1 (March 2007): 85-97, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14683840601162054>.

³⁵ Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasasının Bazı Maddelerinde Değişiklik Yapılması Hakkında Kanun, No. 5678, Kabul Tarihi: 31/5/2007, Resmî Gazete: 16.07.2007 Sayı: 26554, article 4, <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2007/06/20070616-1.htm>. As a result, in 2014, R. T. Erdogan became the first president in Turkish history to be directly elected by the people's vote through general elections.

³⁶ Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasasında Değişiklik, No. 6771/2017, article 8 and 10.

³⁷ Ibid, article 7. It should be noted that the constitutional amendments of 2007 already included the right to elect the president by popular vote instead of by parliament.

³⁸ Ibid, article 8.

³⁹ Ibid, article 10.

⁴⁰ Ibid, article 7.

Ministers (when necessary) in addition to the meetings of the National Security Council and forming its agenda, could have given the president, in certain political circumstances, the opportunity to actively participate in foreign policy decision-making.

After the constitutional amendments of 2017, practically all the authority and political responsibility for foreign policy decision-making became consolidated in the figure of the president, who gained practically all the power that was previously separated between the Council of Ministers, the prime minister and the president. Additionally, the president no longer had an obligation to end his affiliation with his political party. In practice, this allowed the president to also be the leader of the strongest represented political party in Parliament and thus exert his effective control over it, as is currently the case in terms of President R. T. Erdogan and the Justice and Development Party (JDP).

The Executive Branch and Foreign Policy

According to all three constitutions, the Council of Ministers was partly responsible for the implementation of the government's general policy. The prime minister, as the Chair of the Council of Ministers, was to ensure cooperation between ministers and supervise the implementation of the government's policy, while each minister was accountable to the prime minister and responsible for the conduction of affairs under their jurisdiction, and for the acts and activities of their subordinates.⁴¹

As a result, the political responsibility for foreign policy development and decision-making was also put on the Council of Ministers. Subsequently, as the Head of Council the prime minister was the key person responsible for foreign policy choices, and thus, excluding the period of presidency of M. K. Atatürk and I. İnönü (although even during this period the prime ministers were among the top presidential advisors), until 2017 the prime ministers were generally the crucial actors in foreign policy decision-making. However, it should be noted that in practice the level of their involvement would vary depending on their personal authority and interest in foreign affairs. For instance, in the 1950s, Prime Minister Adnan Menderes had a significant impact on the decision to send Turkish troops to Korea and Turkey's accession to NATO,⁴² and Prime Minister

⁴¹Teşkilâtî Esasiye Kanunu 1924, article 46; Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasası 1961, article 105; Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasası 1982, article 112.

⁴² For instance, see: Sami Kiraz, "Menderes Dönemi Türk Dış Politikasının NATO Üyelikine Bağdat Paketi'nin Kurulması Örnekleri Üzerinden Analizi", *Turkish Studies - Economics, Finance, Politics* 15, no. 1 (2020): 309-321, <http://dx.doi.org/10.29228/TurkishStudies.41483>.

Bulent Ecevit was among the important decision-makers during the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974⁴³(B. Ecevit was even nicknamed “Conqueror of Cyprus”/ “Kıbrıs Fatihî”), Prime Minister Turgut Özal is known for his foreign policy initiatives directed towards improving Turkey’s relations with Greece⁴⁴ and Middle Eastern countries (through the so-called “Peace water”/ “Barış su” project, although never implemented),⁴⁵ and Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan made every effort to enhance Turkey’s relations with Islamic countries during his short term in office in 1996-97.⁴⁶ After the JDP came to power in 2002, its leader and Prime Minister R. T. Erdogan also became a crucially influential actor in foreign policy decision-making in Turkey.

However, by the constitutional amendments of 2017, the post of prime minister was abolished,⁴⁷ and the government was transferred to the president.

The MFA: The first comprehensive legal acts on the establishment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey were enacted in 1927 and 1929 with the adoption of the “Law on the Employee of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs” and the “Regulation on the Central Apparatus of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs”.⁴⁸ In the years that followed, the central apparatus of the Ministry, as well as the laws envisaging duties and powers of the MFA, were regularly changed. In particular, the following legal acts were adopted regarding the duties of the MFA: in 1967, the “Law on the Implementation and Regulation of International Relations”⁴⁹ was enacted (still in power with several amendments), in 1983, the “Law

⁴³ See: “Ecevit anlatıyor: Kıbrıs Barış Harekatının perde arkası,” *Odatv*, July 20, 2019, <https://odatv4.com/kibris-baris-harekatinin-perde-arkasi-20071925.html>.

⁴⁴ See: Melek Fırat, “Yunanistan’la İlişkiler”, in *Türk Dış Politikası Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar, Cilt 2: 1980-2001*, ed. Baskın Oran (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001), 114-116.

⁴⁵ For the “Peace water” project, see: Melek Fırat, Ömer Kürkçüoğlu, “Arap Devletleriyle İlişkiler”, in *Türk Dış Politikası Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar, Cilt 2: 1980-2001*, ed. Baskın Oran (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001), 140-147.

⁴⁶ Melek Fırat, Ömer Kürkçüoğlu, “Refahiyol Dönemi ve Değişmeyen İlişkiler (1996-97)” in *Türk Dış Politikası Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar, Cilt 2: 1980-2001*, ed. Baskın Oran (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001), 560-563.

⁴⁷ Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasasında Değişiklik, No. 6771/2017, article 16, point E. By the indicated point the relevant articles number 109 and 112 of the Constitution of 1982 were abolished.

⁴⁸ Ali Rıza Özcoşkun, *Cumhuriyetin Kuruluşundan Bugüne Dışişleri Bakanlığı Teşkilat Yapısı (1920-2018)* (Türk Diplomatik Arşivi Yayınları, 2018), 9.

⁴⁹ Milletlerarası Münasebetlerin Yürütülmesive Koordinasyonu Hakkında Kanun, Kanun No: 1173 Kabul Tarihi: 05/05/1969, Resmî Gazete: 17.05.1969 Sayı: 13201, <https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.1173.pdf>.

on the Employee of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs” of 1927 was abolished with the adoption of the “Law on the Organization and Responsibilities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs”.⁵⁰ The latter was replaced by similar laws in 1984⁵¹ and 1994⁵², and finally by the law of 2010⁵³. Later, after the constitutional changes of 2017, the articles of the Law of 2010 concerning the responsibilities and organization of the MFA were replaced by the relevant section of the Presidential Decree of 2018 on the “Organization of the Presidency”.⁵⁴

Summarizing the general responsibilities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs envisaged by the abovementioned legal acts, the following can be emphasized: taking preparatory measures and making suggestions for the adoption of foreign policy of the Republic, implementing and regulating the conduct of state foreign affairs based on the aims and principles defined and adopted by the Council of Ministers (by the president after the constitutional amendments of 2017), securing the representation of Turkey to other states and international organizations, enhancing the cooperation and protection of interests of the state, provision of advisory functions and other support to state entities while conducting their foreign activities, providing information to the Council of Ministers (to the president after the constitutional amendments of 2017) about developments outside Turkey and spreading knowledge about Turkey throughout the world, protecting the interests of Turkish citizens abroad, etc. In order to make assessments and suggestions on the course and implementation of Turkish Foreign Policy and report the results to the minister, the Foreign Policy Advisory Council (Dış Politika Danışma Kurulu) was formed inside the MFA after the adoption of the Law of

⁵⁰Dışişleri Bakanlığının Teşkilat ve Görevleri Hakkında Kanun Hükmünde Kararname, Karar Sayısı: KHK/177 Kabul Tarihi: 14/12/1983, Resmî Gazete: 14.12.1983 Sayı: 18251, https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/arsiv/18251_1.pdf.

⁵¹Dışişleri Bakanlığının Teşkilat ve Görevleri Hakkında Kanun Hükmünde Kararname, Karar Sayısı: KHK/206 Kabul Tarihi: 18/06/1984, Resmî Gazete: 18.06.1984 Sayı: 18435, https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/arsiv/18435_1.pdf.

⁵²Dışişleri Bakanlığının Kuruluş ve Görevleri Hakkında Kanun, Kanun No: 4009 Kabul Tarihi: 24/06/1994, ResmîGazete: 06.07.1994 Sayı: 21982, <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/arsiv/21982.pdf>.

⁵³Dışişleri Bakanlığının Kuruluş ve Görevleri Hakkında Kanun, Kanun No: 6004 Kabul Tarihi: 07/07/2010, ResmîGazete: 13.07.2010 Sayı: 27640, <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2010/07/20100713-3.htm>.

⁵⁴Cumhurbaşkanlığı Teşkilatı Hakkında Cumhurbaşkanlığı Kararnamesi, Kararname Numarası: 1, Resmî Gazete: 10.07.2018, Sayı: 30474, section 6 part 4, <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2018/07/20180710-1.pdf>. By the mentioned decree the accountability of the MFA was transferred from the Council of Ministers to the President of the Republic.

1984.⁵⁵ Further, the “Law on the Organization and Responsibilities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs” of 1994 envisaged the formation of the Center for Strategic Research (Stratejik Arařtırmalar Merkezi/SAM) of the MFA of Turkey, which was defined as a consultative body to the Ministry with the goal of studying known issues of international relations in a scholarly and scientific manner, thus facilitating the development of new ideas and approaches on these issues, and providing the results and assessments to the relevant entities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey.⁵⁶

To summarize, while the Council of Ministers was responsible for state general policy, the Minister of Foreign Affairs was accountable to the prime minister for the implementation of the government’s policy in the sphere of foreign affairs. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was the main source of information for the government about international affairs since it was responsible for the generation of information (directly through its diplomatic missions) and its provision to the Council of Minister. Moreover, the MFA participated in the process of formulation of state foreign policy and possessed he necessary expertise. Eventually, this ability was further enhanced by additional academic capacity in 1994 through the establishment of the Center for Strategic Research of the MFA. Finally, the MFA was the major state body responsible for the implementation of foreign policy and regulation of foreign activities conducted by other state entities. So, the influence of the MFA in foreign policy decision-making was based on the following pillars: collection, analysis and flow of information, expertise in foreign affairs, participation in the process of the formulation of Turkish foreign policy and the authority to implement it.

As a result, although the ministry and acting ministers were not the final decision-makers, from the establishment of the Republic they were among the top advisors of decision-makers on foreign policy issues. The foreign ministry and minister’s participation in decision-making can be divided into two periods, when its role was significantly reduced. The first was during T. Ozal’s term as prime minister of Turkey, who was in many cases simply bypassed the MFA when pursuing his foreign policy goals. This was probably caused by the traditionalist views of the MFA on foreign policy based on the principles of Kemalism, which were sometimes incompatible with the approach of the acting prime minister.

⁵⁵Dıřıřleri Bakanlıđının Teřkilat ve Gevleri, KHK 206/1984, article 10.

⁵⁶Dıřıřleri Bakanlıđının Kuruluř ve Gevleri, No. 4009/1994, article 10, point B.

The second case was the period of the coalition governments of 1994-97, when in 3 years 7 persons successively acted as Minister of Foreign Affairs, which accordingly affected the effectiveness of the Ministry's work. However, in the years that followed, the MFA gradually started to regain its role in foreign policy decision-making in Turkey. With A. Davutoğlu as Foreign Minister, it became one of the driving forces of Turkey's foreign policy also due to the inclusion of academic capabilities in its formulation as a result of activities of the MFA's Center of Strategic Research and the Foundation of Political, Economic and Social Research (SETAV).⁵⁷ This active role of the MFA in decision-making started to decrease after M. Cavaşoğlu became Minister of Foreign Affairs in 2014, but the ministry remained the main body implementing state foreign policy.

The NSC and military in the foreign policy making process

The formation of the National Security Council was envisaged by the Constitution of 1961 as a supportive body to the Council of Ministers on issues concerning national security.⁵⁸ The Constitution also guaranteed the inclusion of the Turkish Armed Forces in the NSC. Later, as per the "Law on National Security Council" of 1962, the composition of the NSC was clarified with the Head of Turkish General Staff and the Commanders of the Land, Naval and Air Forces included in it.⁵⁹ The Constitutional amendments of 1971 specified the NCS as a consultative body to the Council of Ministers.⁶⁰

The Constitution of 1982 further enhanced the role of the NSC in the process of defining, adopting and implementing the national security policy of Turkey. According to this constitution, the Council of Ministers was obliged to consider the adoption of decisions regarding the issues defined as important ones by the NSC on a priority basis. Moreover, the Constitution also specified the composition of the NSC as follows: the President (Chair), the Prime Minister, the Head of General Staff,

⁵⁷ Ali Balcı, *Türkiye Dış Politikası: İlkeler, Aktörler ve Uygulamalar*, 3. Baskı (Alfa: 2017), 318-320.

⁵⁸ Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasası 1961, article 111.

⁵⁹ Millî Güvenlik Kurulu Kanunu, Kanun No: 129 Kabul Tarihi: 11.12.1962, Resmî Gazete, 19.12.1962, Sayı: 11286, article 1, <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/arsiv/11286.pdf>.

⁶⁰ Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasasının bazı maddelerinin değiştirilmesi ve geçici maddeler eklenmesi hakkında Anayasa Değişikliği Kanunu, Kanun No: 1488, Kabul Tarihi: 20/09/1971, Resmî Gazete: 22.09.1971, Sayı: 13964, article 1, <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/arsiv/13964.pdf>. See the part concerning changes in Article 111.

Ministers of Defense, Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, Commanders of Land, Naval and Air Forces and the General Commander of Gendarmerie.⁶¹

In 1983, the “Law on the National Security Council and the General Secretariat of the National Security Council” was adopted. The law addressed issues concerning the organization of activities of the NSC, its responsibilities and competencies. In particular, the NSC was designated as a principal body in defining the national security policy of Turkey (supposedly also including Turkish foreign policy inasmuch as it was considered as a part of security policy).⁶² A wide scope of authority was granted to the General Secretariat of the NSC, especially related to making necessary assessments, regulating activities and supervising the implementation of decisions of the NSC.⁶³ It was also specified that the Secretary General of the NSC was to be appointed from a representative of the Armed Forces of Turkey with at least the military rank of General (Orgeneral in Turkish).⁶⁴

Hence, the formation of the National Security Council in 1961 and significant representation of the military in it provided strong legal guarantees for the participation of the Armed Forces of Turkey in decision-making on issues of security, including those related to foreign policy. Hence, the involvement of the NSC and the military in foreign affairs depended on foreign policy issues related to security. As a result, from 1960-1980, the role of the military was not yet decisive, and its participation in foreign affairs was mostly limited by the Cyprus issue and relations with Greece. In the 1980s, although the military already had an absolute majority in the NSC, due to the efforts of Prime Minister Özal and his decisive role in regard to many foreign policy issues, including relations with Greece and other neighboring countries, were mostly transferred to the political dimension, thus limiting how much the military could get involved in these processes. However, in the 1990s, the changing security environment in and around Turkey caused by the end of the Cold War and rising problems with many neighboring countries, as well as the increasing military activities of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party and lack of strong government in Turkey contributed to the significant influence of the NSC and the military in the political life of Turkey,

⁶¹Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasası 1982, article 118. As a result, 6 of 10 members of the National Security Council of Turkey were from the Armed Forces of Turkey.

⁶²*Millî Güvenlik Kurulu*, No. 2945/1983, article 4.

⁶³ *Ibid*, article 13.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, article 15.

including foreign policy decision-making. An example of the extensive role of the military in the formulation of Turkey's foreign policy in the 1990s was its initiative in the development of military and strategic cooperation with Israel as opposed to the Islamic foreign policy of Prime Minister N. Erbakan.⁶⁵

As a result, in order to limit the military's involvement in political processes in-country, a number of legislative changes have been initiated by the political leadership of Turkey since the beginning of the 2000s. The first major changes regarding the composition of the NSC were made in the constitutional amendments of 2001. In particular, deputies of the Prime minister and the Minister of Justice were included in the NSC, and the obligation of the Council of Ministers to consider suggestions of the NSC on a priority basis was abolished.⁶⁶ Although with these changes the Armed Forces lost their majority in the NSC, they still retained their considerable representation in it. In 2003, further changes were made to the "Law on the National Security Council and the General Secretariat of the NSC", which reaffirmed the role of the NSC as an advisory body, limited the scope of the competencies of the General Secretariat of the NSC, reduced the frequency of meetings of the NSC and allowed the appointment of a civilian to be the Secretary General of the NSC.⁶⁷

These legal changes were accompanied by a shifting political situation in and around Turkey. First of all, this refers to the establishment of a strong one-party government under the JDP and the following democratization processes in Turkey, also concerning the Kurdish issue. At the same time, steps towards the desecuritization of foreign policy⁶⁸ were taken with the introduction of the principle of "zero problems with neighbors" in foreign policy, which contributed to the significant improvement of Turkish relations with traditionally hostile

⁶⁵ Levon Hovsepian, "T'urkiayi artak'in ev anvtangayin k'aghak'akanutyanyan pokhakerpumnerë: veragnahatelov Hayastani anvtangut'yan martahravernerë," *Haykakan banak* 4 no. 98 (2018): 35, in Armenian,

("Turkey's foreign and security policy transformations: reassessing challenges to Armenia's security", *Armenian Army* 4, no. 98 (2018).

⁶⁶ Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasasının Bazı Maddelerinin Değiştirilmesi Hakkında Kanun, Kanun No: 4709 Kabul Tarihi: 03/10/2001, Resmî Gazete: 17.10.2001 Sayı: 24556, article 32, <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2001/10/20011017m1.htm>.

⁶⁷ Çeşitli Kanunlarda Değişiklik Yapılmasına İlişkin Kanun, Kanun No: 4963 Kabul Tarihi: 30/07/2003, Resmî Gazete: 07.08.2003 Sayı: 25192, articles 24-27, <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2003/08/20030807.htm>.

⁶⁸ Levon Hovsepian, "T'urk'iayi anvtangayin k'aghaqak'anutyanyan ardi mitumnerë ev anvtangayin ink'nutyanyan pokhakerpumë," *Arevelagitut'yan harts'er*, 14 (2018): 182, in Armenian, ("Current Trends of Turkey's Security Policy and Security Identity Transformation," *Journal of Oriental Studies*, 14 (2018).

neighbors like Greece, Syria, Iraq and others during the 2000s. As a result, since the participation of the military in foreign affairs was based on the security component of foreign policy, changing political environment and security discourse gradually led to the limiting of the role of the military in political life and foreign policy making in Turkey. This process was facilitated by the “Ergenekon” and “Sledgehammer” cases (started respectively in 2007 and 2010), which further contributed to the establishment of civilian control over the military.

The composition of the NSC was further changed by the constitutional amendments of 2017. For example, the General Commander of Gendarmerie was removed from the NSC.⁶⁹ In 2018, the presidential decree “On the organization of the General Secretariat of the National Security Council and its responsibilities” was adopted to secure the transition from a parliamentary system of government to a presidential one. By this decree, the General Secretariat of the NSC was transferred to the Presidential Office, and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Strategic Analysis was formed within the General Secretariat. In line with other duties, the department was responsible for making research and analysis on the topics in the sphere of responsibilities of the General Secretariat and provide suggestions regarding issues of national security to the relevant state entities.⁷⁰ These changes were meant to further emphasize the control of the president over the NSC.

The Security and Foreign Policy Council and the rising role of the Presidency

After the constitutional changes of 2017, a new body, the Security and Foreign Policy Council, was formed within the Presidency by the decree of the President on the “Organization of the Presidency” of 2018. According to this decree, the members of the Council were to be appointed by the President who was the Chair of the Council and could designate one of the members of the Council as his deputy.⁷¹ The main responsibility of the Council was to develop policy suggestions on the following issues and present them to the president: Turkish foreign policy, strengthening state regional policy, resolving regional issues,

⁶⁹*Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasasında Değişiklik*, No. 6771/2017, article 16.

⁷⁰Millî Güvenlik Kurulu Genel Sekreterliğinin Teşkilat ve Görevleri Hakkında Cumhurbaşkanlığı Kararnamesi, Kararname: 6, Resmî Gazete: 15.07.2018, Sayı: 30479, articles 1 and 13, <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2018/07/20180715-3.pdf>.

⁷¹*Cumhurbaşkanlığı Teşkilatı Hakkında*, No. 1/2018, article 21.

addressing external threats, dealing with and solving crises and other problematic situations.⁷²

Further, the Council was granted some regulatory functions such as collecting information from relevant ministries and other state entities, as well as from public and professional or academic communities on the development and implementation of state policy in the sphere of its competency in order to assess it and report to the President. The Council was also made responsible for analyzing activities of the ministries and other state entities and their compliance with the program of the president and reporting the results and findings to the president.⁷³ In organizational terms, it was noted that in order to receive the necessary information, the Council should send a request to the ministries or other state entities concerned. The staff of the Council was not limited, while the secretarial functions of the Council were to be carried out by the Directorate of Presidential Administrative Affairs.⁷⁴

On October 2, 2018, members of the Council were appointed by the relevant presidential decree,⁷⁵ and it is notable that many of the appointees were representatives of academic circles.⁷⁶ On November 2, 2018, during the session of the Council Ibrahim Kalın, the press secretary of the President, was appointed as Deputy Chair of the Council.⁷⁷ Later, on November 8, Ibrahim Kalın was also appointed as a senior advisor to the President.⁷⁸

It can be summarized that the actual responsibility of the Security and Foreign Policy Council is the formulation of the state's security and foreign policy, and presenting its policy suggestions to the President. The Council is composed mostly of scholars and its staff is not limited, which should grant it enough capacity to analyze information and formulate its

⁷² Ibid, article 26.

⁷³ Ibid, article 22.

⁷⁴ Ibid, articles 33 and 34.

⁷⁵ Cumhurbaşkanlığı Politika Kurulları Üyeliklerine Yapılan Atamalar Hakkında Karar, Karar Sayısı: 2018/196, 08 Ekim 2018, Resmî Gazete: 09.10.2018, Sayı: 30560, <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2018/10/20181009-12.pdf>.

⁷⁶ For short information on the members of the Council, see: "Cumhurbaşkanlığı Güvenlik ve Dış Politikalar," *Gidahattı*, October 9, 2018, <https://www.gidahatti.com/cumhurbaskanligi-guvenlik-dis-politikalar-kurulu-uyeleri-belli-oldu-127303/>.

⁷⁷ "Cumhurbaşkanlığı Sözcüsü İbrahim Kalın," *Yeni Akit Gazetesi*, November 2, 2018, <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr/haber/cumhurbaskani-sozcusu-kim-olacak-ibrahim-kalin-guvenlik-ve-dis-politikalar-kurulu-baskanvekili-mi-oldu-539102.html>.

⁷⁸ Cumhurbaşkanlığı Başdanışmanlığına, Doç. Dr. İbrahim KALIN'ın Atanması Hakkında Karar, Karar: 2018/219, 8 Kasım 2018, Resmî Gazete: 09.11.2018, Sayı: 30590. <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2018/11/20181109-24.pdf>.

foreign policy suggestion. Furthermore, the fact that in practice the Security and Foreign Policy Council is headed by the senior advisor of the president guarantees the Council's direct access to the decision-making process and the actual decision-maker.

However, as can be assumed from the duties of the Council, it does not generate new information but receives it from relevant state entities. Moreover, although the Security and Foreign Policy Council is granted access to any required information in order to receive it the Council should send a special request to relevant state institutions (such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Armed Forces, the National Intelligence Organization or others) that actually generate and possess that information. Thus, although with possible limitations, the role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in foreign policy decision-making still remains relevant, since it is the main source of direct information about the developments abroad with its own expertise to analyze and present it to the president, as well as the main state body designated to implement state foreign policy.⁷⁹

Conclusion

The article traced the development of the legal framework encompassing the foreign policy decision-making process in Turkey from the establishment of the Republic to the present. As a result of this study, we can claim that changes made in relevant legal documents over time mostly contributed to the diversification of foreign policy decision-making structures in Turkey and made possible participation of several state institutions in foreign policy making. Although in practice it could not completely exclude the possibility of the dominance of one of these institutions in foreign policy decision-making, it was meant to provide the others with enough authority at least to balance it.

This situation has changed significantly after the Constitutional amendments of 2017. With these changes, almost all the authority in foreign policy decision-making was concentrated in and around the presidency and the president, while the supervisory role of the parliament over the government was almost entirely eliminated. The accountability of all institutions included in the process of the formulation of foreign policy was transferred directly to the president, and a special council was

⁷⁹Siri Neset, Arne Strand, "Turkish foreign policy: structures and decision-making processes," *Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI Report R 2019:3)*, <https://www.cmi.no/publications/6854-turkish-foreign-policy-structures-and-decision-making-processes>.

established inside the presidency with the main responsibility of developing policy suggestions and presenting them to the president. Hence, contrary to the logic of legal changes presented before it, the constitutional amendments of 2017 were eventually transformed the presidency into a dominant institution in the formulation of the foreign policy of Turkey.

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**CONFLICT MANAGEMENT VS. CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN
THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH PEACE PROCESS:
UNDERSTANDING THE AZERBAIJANI APPROACH**

Abstract: The aim of this paper is to explore the dynamics of Azerbaijan's policy towards Armenia in the framework of the NK peace process with a particular emphasis on the concept of 'strategic patience.' The theoretical part of the paper discusses two key terms of peace studies: conflict management and conflict resolution. Also covered are the determinants which shape and distinguish between these two terms and their strategies, putting "strategic patience" within the broader framework of conflict management strategies. Then the manifestations of Azerbaijani policies towards the peace process since its independence to 2019 are analyzed. Primarily, this article discusses the conflict resolution efforts made by the mediators and, in that context, the various means and approaches that Azerbaijan has utilized in between these processes. It analyses the speeches of Azerbaijani leaders in order to understand their position.

Keywords: *Conflict management, conflict resolution, strategic patience, NK peace process, Azerbaijan.*

Introduction

On December 5, 2019, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan Elmar Mammadyarov gave an interview to the Azerbaijani TV channel CBC.¹ This interview did not trigger widespread public discussions. However, this interview unveiled certain aspects of Azerbaijan's current position and policies regarding the Nagorno-Karabakh peace process since the 1990s.

In this interview, Mammadyarov claimed that 'peace for prosperity' is the current formula of the peace process. He also affirmed that for that reason there is a need to have 'strategic patience,' claiming that Armenia is a small state, thereby the conflict with Azerbaijan is not strategically beneficial for various reasons: Armenia cannot participate in major regional and global projects, has limited recourses, and people leave the country due to not having any prospects for a prosperous future.²

This article aims to understand the evolution of Azerbaijani conflict management models from its independence until 2019, develop a

¹ "Elmar Mammadyarov's Interview," CBC, last modified December 16, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7YKquGeQk9Y>.

²Ibid.

framework of Azerbaijani conflict resolution and conflict management strategies, and see how the position of Azerbaijan concerning the peace process has evolved over the years. The paper seeks to understand whether the concept of 'strategic patience' applies to Azerbaijani conflict management strategies regarding the peace process.

To understand the concept and develop theoretically well-grounded explanations, in the literature review, the paper discusses strategies of conflict management, first distinguishing between the central terms, namely conflict management and conflict resolution. It must be noted that many terms of peace studies may appear to overlap. Then it shortly addresses the main trends in existing scholarship and literature from the Azerbaijani side on the NK peace process.

This paper tends to use conflict management as an umbrella term above strategic patience'. Consequently, the question boils down to whether there is some connection between the conflict management strategies that are presented in the literature review and strategic patience. In the analysis section, the paper discusses the concept of strategic patience, which is not an established term in the academic discourse of political science. This is a concept initially coined by the Obama administration to define its policy towards North Korea. The basic idea behind the concept is that it is sometimes necessary to have patience, wait for the appropriate moment, and then achieve the desired goal by undertaking a set of measures.

The first part of the analysis tries to find the connection between strategic patience and conflict management strategies, putting the former into a broader framework. Thus, by conceptualizing conflict management strategies, this study comes up with a suggestion to link conflict management and strategic patience as a mechanism and goal for the peace process. This part of the analysis takes the Israeli-Palestinian case, coupled with US-North Korea, to understand whether these terms apply to the Azerbaijani approach towards the peace process. Additionally, the paper discusses the case of Azerbaijan testing if its stance towards the NK peace process fits in the scope of this paper's discussion or not. It is also worth noting that there is currently limited academic research focusing on the NK conflict from the perspective of conflict management. There is no significant work applying the concept of strategic patience to the Azerbaijani negotiating approaches towards the NK peace process. Consequently, this discussion of this notion may unveil the state's position and help to understand the current peace process.

Literature Review

In addressing international conflict management, several theories and approaches are useful to be considered. The scholars of peace studies and peacebuilding over time tried to apply various methods to conflict management/resolution processes, where multiple means and strategies ranging from the peaceful (i.e., negotiations, mediation) to the coercive (i.e., sanctions, isolation), are observed as appropriate tools to achieve the desired outcome of one or both conflicting parties.

Some scholars use conflict management and resolution interchangeably in the same context. Burton defines them as follows, stating that conflict management “has a wide application, from deterrence strategies to propaganda. Its significant feature is that it is an attempt, usually by the status quo party to the dispute, to avoid escalation of the conflict while maintaining control without giving way”, while conflict resolution “seeks to resolve the problem, even though this requires change.”³

Hence, it is worth understanding what the methods of both conflict management and conflict resolution are. Most of the literature ascribes the same strategies to both. Bercovitch and Regan divide conflict management strategies into two broader categories, taking into account the contextual and actor-specific behavioral factors. The two strategies they offer are different from their means to resolve issues, namely through violent means (i.e. force, coercion) and non-violent or peaceful means (i.e., negotiation, mediation). They claim that the selection of the proper tools to manage a conflict depends on the nature and duration of the conflict. Intractable or enduring conflicts utilize a more varied range of conflict management strategies than other disputes.⁴

There is extensive discussion of conflict management strategies in George, where the author places conflict management strategies into a broader influence theory and claims that the most common strategies used by multiple states to manage conflicts are the possible use of military force, deterrence and coercive diplomacy.⁵ Additionally, economic sanctions,

³John Burton, “The Theory of Conflict Resolution,” *Current Research on Peace and Violence* 9, no. 3 (1986): 125.

⁴Jacob Bercovitch and Patrick Regan, “The Structure of International Conflict Management: An Analysis of the Effects of Intractability and Mediation,” *International Journal of Peace Studies* 4, no. 1(1999): 1-19.

⁵Alexander George, “The Need for Influence Theory and Actor Specific Behavioral Models of Adversaries,” in *Know the Enemy: Profiles of Adversary Leaders and Their Strategic Cultures*, ed. B. Schneider & J. M. Post, (Alabama: Maxwell Air Force Base, 2003), 271-311.

withdrawal of foreign aid and other non-military actions were always present in power politics and are considered traditional strategies to address and manage conflicts.⁶ Mutually harmful stalemates and time are two of the most important factors for conflict management. Some theories address these two factors, for instance, Zartman's Ripeness Theory, where time is considered one of the essential values for the negotiation process.⁷

The literature also fell short when carefully analyzing or explaining what successful or unsuccessful conflict management implies. There is no clear conception of what successful conflict management means. It is worth noting that this is not about the outcome of long-term conflict management, but the management process. That is to say, how the conflicting parties manage to achieve their goals. Consequently, Goertz and Regan are those of few scholars who have tried to examine this question and they believe that it is worth defining success, as in this context it may be interpreted in a few ways namely success of the conflict management may mean reducing the average level of the rivalry, reducing the chances of the more severe military acting, reducing the level of variations in the conflicts.⁸

In regards to the academic discourse by Azerbaijani scholars on the NK peace process in the framework of conflict management/resolution, the dominant views in the studied literature can be grouped into two categories: scholars who discuss the Azerbaijani approach of becoming stronger and having the upper hand over the resolution process^{9,10}, and scholars who address the obstacles for a peaceful resolution and make recommendations.^{11,12} Most of the analyses of the Azerbaijani scholars are dedicated to the peace process, conflict resolution efforts (and in that context the pro-war rhetoric and militarization of the conflicting sides)

⁶Paul Stern & Daniel Druckman, *International conflict resolution after the Cold War* (Washington, D.C: National Academy Press, 2000), 5.

⁷William Zartman, "International Conflict Resolution after the Cold War," ed. P. C. Stern, D. Druckman (Washington, D.C: National Academy Press, 2000).

⁸Gary Goertz & Patrick Regan, "Conflict Management in Enduring Rivalries," *International Interactions* 22, no. 4, (1997): 321-340.

⁹Rashad Shirinov and Zaal Anjaparidze, "Review of Isolation Policies Within and Around South Caucasus," *International Center on Conflict and Negotiation* (2016).

¹⁰Shahin Abbasov, "Karabakh 2014: No War, but a Difficult Journey to Peace", *Conciliation Resources* (2009): 13-21.

¹¹Tabib Huseynov, "A Karabakh Azeri Perspective", *Conciliation Resources*, 17 (2005): 25-28.

¹²Tabib Huseynov, "Karabakh 2014: The Day after Tomorrow- Agreement on the Basic Principles, What Next?" *Conciliation Resources* (2009): 28-34.

and the recommendations of how to change the existing policies and approaches to promote the settlement of the conflict.¹³The ‘no war, no peace’ paradigm is also discussed. Azerbaijani scholars think that this is especially harmful to peacebuilding and conflict transformation efforts.¹⁴ One of the most common traits of the studied analyses was that they primarily address two conflicting sides. A few of them only attempted to present the Azerbaijani approach. Additionally, conflict management as a separate field with its particular strategies is not discussed, which is conspicuous in its absence.

Research Design and Methodology

This article seeks to provide answers to the following research questions:

- Can strategic patience be observed in the framework of the conflict management strategies utilized for resolving the conflict?
- Is the concept of strategic patience applicable to Azerbaijan’s position towards the peace process of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict?

Accordingly, the hypotheses to be tested are the following:

- Strategic patience can be observed in the framework of conflict management strategies and serves as a set of multiple strategies to achieve conflict resolution.
- Azerbaijan’s position towards the peace process of the NK conflict qualifies as strategically patient.

This is a study based on the explanatory design. To answer the above questions, qualitative methods of research are applied based on both primary and secondary data collection.

Strategic Patience as a Combination of Conflict Management Strategies

Most of the analyses of the literature on the concept of strategic patience demonstrate that strategic patience is a set of various strategies and is not a concrete strategy to address conflicts. The concept was coined by the Obama administration when defining their policy towards North Korea. In the literature on the US-North Korea case, the core elements of this policy are identified. They are as follows: restricting the

¹³Lala Jumayeva, “Discourses of War and Peace within the Context of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: The Case of Azerbaijan,” *Journal of Conflict Transformation, Caucasus Edition* 3, no. 2 (2018).

¹⁴Aytan Gahramanova, “Peace Strategies in “Frozen” Ethno-Territorial Conflicts: Integrating Reconciliation into Conflict Management: The Case of Nagorno Karabakh,” *Working Paper*, Universität Mannheim, 2007.

country through economic sanctions and the isolation of the country through diplomatic means playing on time and waiting for a significant change in the country's leadership. This approach was called "strategic patience" by the Obama team as claimed by the White House Coordinator for Arms Control and Weapons of Mass Destruction Gary Samore.¹⁵ Woodward identifies the policy of strategic patience with the following formula: "negotiate, prevaricate, escalate, renegotiate".¹⁶ The main aim of this policy is to make the country have a starker choice: either end the conflict on the terms suggested or "face ever-increasing pressure".¹⁷

The involvement of multiple means is intended to prolong the conflict resolution process, depending on the intentions of one of the conflicting sides. However, many questions arise while dealing with this concept. As the notion implies, its key strategy is patience while trying to utilize various methods until the resolution of the dispute. Nevertheless, one may ask, is it better to wait for some time and prolong the conflict until a proper solution is found or one of the sides agrees to make concessions? And, even if they are common, what was the result of using such strategies? Have they ever been successful? Thus, it is worth understanding whether strategic patience can be observed as a policy or set of strategies intended to manage the conflict for a time. The answer to this question allows one to find the responses to the questions mentioned above as well. Additionally, it will enable understanding the applicability of the concept to the case at hand. To find the answer to that question, this section tries to put strategic patience in a broader framework, which is conflict management, and analyzes strategic patience from that perspective by discussing the case of Israel-Palestine as well.

Notoriously, scholars even claim that these types of strategies may be implemented by one of the parties of enduring rivalries, where various methods have been used to manage the conflict and prevent it from becoming a violent one.¹⁸ Identifying the causal chain between the conflict management strategies and the strategies that the US utilized towards North Korea for decades, it can be concluded that strategic patience can be analyzed in the framework of conflict management and

¹⁵Gary Samore, International Perspectives on the Nuclear Posture Review, *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, last modified April 22, 2010, <https://carnegieendowment.org/files/0422carnegie-samore.pdf>.

¹⁶Bob Woodward, *Obama's Wars* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014), 41.

¹⁷Jaffrey Bader, *Obama and China's rise: An insider's account of America's Asia strategy* (Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution Press, 2013), 39.

¹⁸Paul Diehl & Gary Goertz, *War and Peace in International Rivalry* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2000), 195.

can be a set of altering strategies depending on the conflict and actor specific behavior.

Whether these strategies are effective is another question to address. As the literature shows, conflict management is a long-lasting process that is, most of all, attributable to enduring rivalries. Meanwhile, some findings that attempt to measure the success of conflict management show that depending on the conflict type, the possibility of a successful outcome of the conflict may reduce or increase.¹⁹ To consolidate the arguments above and understand conflict management and strategic patience in its framework, it can be useful to consider other causes of this intractable conflict, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

It seems that Israel's plan is waiting for the right moment by changing its tactics. This strategy is sometimes called "strategic conservatism", meaning that "it can be better to bide one's time and manage conflicts rather than rush to try to solve them before the conditions are ripe."²⁰ This strategy served Israel and continues to serve it. Israel wants to utilize this strategy until Palestine agrees to the so-called "peace to prosperity" formula. Israel's intentions can also be understood from the US peace project of 2019, which bears the name "Peace to Prosperity."²¹ From the name of this project, it can be assumed that all this time, Israel has targeted the well-being of Palestine in general and the West Bank in particular and waited for the appropriate moment utilizing various strategies. However, this strategy makes sense only when the time works in the implementer's favor. Taking into account Israel's current position in the Middle East, its political, military, and economic power, one may notice that time has indeed worked in the latter's favor.

As already identified, conflict management and conflict resolution can be analyzed as distinct peace processes, which help explain the failure to resolve the conflicts. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its peace process are one of those cases that explain that phenomenon. This example demonstrates that the long-lasting conflict management process and its distinct strategies may further escalate the conflict, making the resolution harder to attain. There were multiple failed negotiation

¹⁹Goertz & Regan, Conflict Management in Enduring Rivalries.

²⁰Natan Sachs, "Why Israel Waits: Anti-Solutionism as a Strategy," *Foreign Affairs* 94, no. 6 (2015): 74.

²¹"Peace to Prosperity": A Vision to Improve the Lives of the Palestinian and Israeli People, *whitehouse.gov*, last modified January 25, 2020, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/peacetoprosperity/>.

processes.²² However, neither the violence from the Palestinian side nor Israel's strategies have changed after these processes. Israel has continued enforcing severe methods of isolation on the Palestinians restricting their free movement in the West Bank, facilitating the transfer of Israeli citizens to the West Bank and continuing its settlements in that territory, depriving them of water resources and posing restrictions on the West Bank's economic growth.²³ Ben-Artzi et al. claim that conflict management is meant to remove the violence but is not intended to eliminate the conflict's roots.

Both of the cases noted above show that conflict management protracts the resolution of the dispute. The two processes cannot be conducted together when the objectives of both the conflict management and resolution processes are distinct. As the Israeli-Palestinian conflict demonstrates, the sides are trying to manage the conflict between them for an extended period, preventing the hostilities from escalating. However, long-term conflict management and its various strategies implemented by the Israelis, and can be collectively called strategic patience, and its distinct objectives failed as stepping-stones to a resolution. Thus, if observing conflict management in this context as a process of distinct scope, methods, and objectives, it may be concluded that it can impede the resolution of the conflicts rather than a process that works towards finding solutions.

The NK Peace Process: The Failed Attempts at Conflict Resolution

In almost thirty years, the conflicting sides' efforts in the peace process framework have resulted in a signed cease-fire, three peace plans (the Package Approach, the Phased Approach, and the Hybrid Approach-the Madrid principles) and multiple meetings through the mediation efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs.

The first attempts to find a peaceful solution to the NK conflict began in 1991 with the Russian-Kazakhstani mediation efforts. At first, the Russian and Kazakh leaders traveled to Yerevan, Baku, and Nagorno-Karabakh to meet with Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders. The final meeting between the local leaders and mediators took place in

²²Ruth Ben-Artzi, et al, "Conceptualizing Conflict Management and Conflict Resolution as distinct negotiation processes in the context of the enduring Israeli-Palestinian conflict," *Negotiation and Conflict Management Research* 8, no. 1 (2015): 56-63.

²³Antony Cordesman, *The Israeli-Palestinian War: Escalating to Nowhere* (London: Praeger Security International, 2005).

Zheleznovodsk. As a result of this meeting, a declaration was signed by the four leaders of Russia, Kazakhstan, Armenia, and Azerbaijan.²⁴ However, this first attempt was doomed to failure as events on the ground were not favorable.²⁵

The second attempt came from Iran in early 1992, when the Iranian President Rafsanjani invited the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan, Levon Ter-Petrosyan, Yaqub Mammedov, respectively, to Tehran for negotiations. On May 7, the three states' leaders issued the so-called Tehran Communique, which mandated a ceasefire and the reopening communication links between Armenia and Azerbaijan.²⁶ Nonetheless, the circumstances again were not favorable for the ceasefire as on the day after this communique, Armenian forces liberated Shushi, and the proposed ceasefire did not go into force.

The ceasefire was established on May 12, 1994, and entered into force mostly with Russian pressure.²⁷ Thus, by mid-1994, the active phase of hostilities ended. Soon thereafter, the CSCE adopted a new structure for its mediation efforts. As a result of the Budapest Summit, on December 6, 1994, the CSCE became the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and created the Minsk Group with a dual co-chairmanship system. However, in 1997, the “tri-chair” system was created with US-Russia-France leadership, which has lasted to the present.²⁸

From this starts the endless discussions and search for peace and stability in the region. The first proposal that came by the Minsk Group Co-Chairs was the Package Deal, which came into discussions in May-June, 1997. It presented itself with a comprehensive approach towards resolving the conflict, where both the security and status-related issues would be discussed at once.²⁹ The “step-by-step” or phased approach followed this in September. According to this proposal, firstly, the

²⁴ Zheleznovodsk Declaration, last modified September 23, 1991. https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/Azerbaijan_ZheleznovodskDeclaration1991.pdf.

²⁵ Philip Remler, *Chained to the Caucasus: Peacemaking in Karabakh 1987-2012* (New York: International Peace Institute, 2016), 39.

²⁶ Ali Abasov & Haroutiun Khachatryan, *Karabakh Conflict: Variants of Settlement: Concepts and Reality* (Baku: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 3rd ed., 2006), 90.

²⁷ Vladimir Kazimirov, *Peace to Karabakh: Russia's Mediation in the Settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict* (Moscow: Ves Mir Publishers, 2014).

²⁸ Remler, *Chained to the Caucasus*.

²⁹ Comprehensive agreement on the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group of the OSCE: “Package Deal,” OSCE Minsk Group, July 1997, <https://www.legal-tools.org/doc/4b2ddb/pdf/>

Armenian armed forces should withdraw from the NK surrounding territories. Lachin was an exception as it connects Nagorno Karabakh to Armenia. Then comes peaceful negotiations. The step-by-step approach also provided mechanisms for the demilitarization of the surrounding territories. This approach is also known as the “land for peace” formula³⁰. However, this was rejected by the NK authorities as they considered this plan lacked security guarantees for the NK, which, in turn, sparked the resignation of Levon Ter-Petrosyan. His successor was Robert Kocharyan, the NK leader, who rejected the proposal.

The third proposal that came from the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs, known as Common State, was a return to the package deal. The Common State approach was a slight modification of the 1997 package proposal, where “Nagorno Karabakh is a state territorial formation in the form of a Republic and constitutes a common state with Azerbaijan in the latter’s internationally recognized borders”³¹. This proposal was greeted by the Armenian side, which cannot be claimed about Azerbaijan. They were afraid the Azerbaijani public would not accept this modification, and it might have created an impression that the Azerbaijani authorities violated the country's territorial integrity. Thus, this time it was met positively by the Armenian side under the leadership of Robert Kocharyan. However, Azerbaijan rejected it “since it would impair its sovereignty”³².

In 1999, Robert Kocharyan and Heydar Aliyev started their bilateral meetings, entering into direct dialogue. The result of these meetings became the package solution known as Territorial Swap. The essence of this solution was a land swap between Armenia and Azerbaijan: Azerbaijan should gain the Meghri district to establish a land connection with Nakhichevan in exchange for NK sovereignty being transferred to Armenia. Thus, Lachin and Meghri should have symmetrically changed. Based on this document Robert Kocharyan and Heydar Aliyev met with the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs in Key West, US. Finally, the two leaders made real progress. They should have signed this document in Key West as a result of the mediation efforts of the US

³⁰Levon Zourabian, “The Nagorno-Karabakh Settlement Revised: Is Peace Achievable?” *Demokratizatsiya* 14, no. 2 (2006): 59.

³¹ “On the Principles of a Comprehensive Settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh Armed Conflict,” OSCE Minsk Group, last modified: November 7, 1998, <https://www.legal-tools.org/doc/f2c2f3/pdf/>.

³²Azer Babayev et al, *The Nagorno-Karabakh deadlock: Insights from successful conflict settlements* (Frankfurt: Springer, 2019), 31.

Secretary of State Colin Powell, but, ultimately, the Azerbaijani side refused to sign the land swap again on the grounds of protecting their territorial integrity.³³

The Prague Process began in 2004, with a series of bilateral meetings being held between Armenia and Azerbaijan. As it was already clear Robert Kocharyan was inclined toward the package approach. However, Azerbaijan was not in favor of this deal. Ilham Aliyev pushed ahead with the phased solution.³⁴ The negotiations continued in 2005-2006 in this mutually contradictory environment. Hence, in 2007, the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs presented a refined version of the principles discussed in the phased and package approaches known as the Hybrid approach.³⁵ This led to the six guidelines known as Madrid Principles, which are the basis of the negotiations to the present day. These mostly known principles demand the return of the NK surrounding territories, interim status for the NK with the security guarantees, a corridor linking it with Armenia, future determination of final legal status, the right of IDPs and refugees to return to their former places of residence and peacekeeping operations.³⁶

The document in Madrid was signed as Kocharyan's second presidential term was coming to an end and Serzh Sargsyan succeeded him. Since 2008, there have been many joint statements by the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs urging the sides "to resolve the few differences remaining between them and finalize their agreement" on the Madrid Basic Principles.³⁷ After the lack of results, the Co-Chairs decided to hold a summit in Kazan in June 2011 to persuade Sargsyan and Aliyev to sign the agreement on the Basic Principles and finally resolve the conflict. But the Kazan process also failed. US Co-chair Robert Bradtke described this summit as the most likely that the parties should have reached a final agreement after the Key West summit.³⁸

³³Ibid.

³⁴Zourabian, *The Nagorno-Karabakh Settlement Revised*.

³⁵Laurence Broers, *Armenia and Azerbaijan: Anatomy of a Rivalry* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019).

³⁶"Statement on Nagorno-Karabakh: Madrid," OSCE Minsk Group, last modified November 29, 2007, <https://www.osce.org/mg/49237>.

³⁷"Statement by the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries: L'Aquila," OSCE Minsk Group, last modified July 10, 2009, <https://www.osce.org/mg/51152>.

³⁸"Armenia, Azerbaijan Fail To Finalize Karabakh Agreement," *RFE/RL*, last modified June 24, 2011, https://www.rferl.org/a/armenia_azerbaijan_fail_finalize_karabakh_agreement/24245909.html.

Since the Kazan summit in 2011, the negotiation process was about the Madrid principles until the 2016 April War, which was the most large-scale escalation since the 1994 ceasefire agreement. In the aftermath of the April War, the parties mostly discussed confidence-building measures that should have halted large-scale escalations. A few weeks later, after the April War, the Minsk Group Co-Chairs, Serzh Sargsyan and Ilham Aliyev met in Vienna, where they agreed on “confidence-building measures.”³⁹ They agreed to finalize an OSCE investigative mechanism.⁴⁰ In the wake of this statement, there were some meetings as well. However, they were not noteworthy.

2018 was marked by several transformative events in Armenia. The resignation of Serzh Sargsyan allowed Nikol Pashinyan to rise to power, who became the newly appointed prime minister of Armenia. At first, it seemed there would be a breakthrough in the peace process. However, there were no significant steps made toward completing the peace process. Since his first days in power, Nikol Pashinyan announced that he would not negotiate on behalf of NK. Over the last two years, various meetings have taken place between the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan and between their Foreign Ministers through the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group.

The multiple attempts at conflict resolution all failed. Almost three decades of negotiations through international mediation efforts demonstrate that the parties' contradictory positions over the most critical issues distance them from a resolution to the conflict. There are some common explanations for the unsuccessful attempts at conflict resolution, including that one or both parties do not want to reach an agreement for various reasons, or the time is not ripe for a resolution. In the following sections, this study aims to understand Azerbaijan's position and policies in this regard.

Azerbaijan's Stance towards the Peace Process in 1991-1993

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the newly independent states in the Caucasus experienced hard times coping with socio-economic changes in their countries. Azerbaijan was not an exception. 1991-1993 was a tumultuous period for Azerbaijan. During these two

³⁹“Joint Statement of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Secretary of State of the United States of America and State Secretary for Europe Affairs of France, Vienna”, *OSCE Minsk Group*, last modified May 16, 2016, <https://www.osce.org/mg/240316>.

⁴⁰Ibid.

years, five presidents succeeded one another in Azerbaijan. Two of these presidents kept the office for more than one year, while the others were interim presidents. Additionally, in line with various social, economic, and political problems, the war in Karabakh exacerbated the internal problems further. The most critical developments in Karabakh took place in 1991-1993, becoming the reason for the resignation of Azerbaijani presidents. The first steps toward the peace process by the presidents of Russia and Kazakhstan in Zheleznovodsk in 1991. This part mostly covers the presidency of Ayaz Mutalibov and Abulfaz Elchibey, as two of them kept their power for more than one year. At the same time, Yaqub Mammadov, Isa Gambar, and again Ayaz Mutalibov were interim presidents, lasting from a few days to several months.

On September 8, 1991, Ayaz Mutalibov was elected the president of the Republic of Azerbaijan. It is worth mentioning that Mutalibov came to power due to Operation Ring in order to deport the Armenian population from Karabakh. After this operation, the accusations against Mutalibov for being behind this operation increased his ratings as the Azerbaijani public started to treat Mutalibov as the “savior of their nation.”⁴¹ However, he was famous for his Russia-centric foreign policy, which made the opposition led by the Popular Front of Azerbaijan (APF) voice its concern over this stance, claiming that Mutalibov wanted to get Azerbaijan back into the Russian empire, thus destroying its sovereignty.⁴²

The game of power in Azerbaijan made Karabakh a trump card in the hands of both the authorities and the opposition.⁴³ For this reason, the APF tried to seize every single failure of Mutalibov to make him resign as was in the case of Operation Ring and CIS membership. Besides, the internal situation of the country was not favorable as well. After independence, the state institutions of the country did not properly function. It did not have a standing army even though it was at war. Besides, Mutalibov treated Karabakh as a bargain and exclaimed that “Karabakh was a Soviet, not Azerbaijani problem.”⁴⁴ The short-sightedness of this approach was unveiled when Azerbaijan was confronted by the new Armenian army while not having its own. This demonstrates how shallowly Mutalibov treated Karabakh and the problems surrounding it. All these, coupled with Khojali events of

⁴¹Rasim Agaev & Zardusht Alizade, *Azerbaydzhan. Konets Vtoroy Respubliki* (Moscow: Granitsa, 2006), 570.

⁴²Ibid, 646.

⁴³Ibid, 647.

⁴⁴Broers, *Armenia and Azerbaijan*, 110.

February 1992, entailed the resignation of Mutalibov on March 6, 1992, facing the opposition's ultimatum.⁴⁵

The speaker of the parliament Yaqub Mammadov became the acting head of state. During Mammadov's short-term in power, two significant events occurred concerning the NK. The first was the Iranian mediation efforts, and the second the liberation of Shushi by Armenian forces. As the latter took place while the three leaders of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Iran met to negotiate the peace plan, this mediation failed.⁴⁶ The fall of Shushi created an opportunity for Mutalibov to organize his return to power. On May 14, Mutalibov declared himself the president, nonetheless, he was forced to leave the office for a second time. Isa Gambar was appointed the acting president of the country until the presidential elections scheduled on June 7. On May 18, 1992, Lachin was liberated by Armenian forces, which, coupled with Shushi, deepened political divisions. The power in Azerbaijan gradually transferred to the Azerbaijani Popular Front with the leadership of Abulfaz Elchibey. On June 7, 1992, Elchibey was elected president of Azerbaijan.⁴⁷

In his election platform, Elchibey pledged to solve the Karabakh issue in three months.⁴⁸ In the APF program, the main priorities were Elchibey's pro-Turkish policies, Karabakh and a merger with Iranian Azerbaijan.⁴⁹ Five days after the presidential elections, Azeri forces went on the offensive and recaptured Shaumyan and Martakert. After these military victories, Elchibey turned to stabilize the country's economy and create a standing army. Karabakh was the main factor that brought Elchibey to power and, consequently, recapturing the lost territories and winning the war was one of his priorities.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, Elchibey's nationalism was not enough to maintain public support. Public support started to fall when, in addition to no significant economic changes, the situation in Karabakh also worsened. Elchibey was one of the Azerbaijani leaders who "mainly staked at the solution by force" rather than at negotiations.⁵¹ Later on, during the ceremony of the annual of APF Party Elchibey claims that the can NK issue be solved only "with the help of a

⁴⁵Thomas de Waal, *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan through Peace and War* (New York: New York University Press, 2013), 173.

⁴⁶*Ibid*, 180.

⁴⁷Svante Cornell, *Azerbaijan since Independence* (London: M. E. Sharpe, 2011).

⁴⁸Aghev & Alizade, *Azerbaydzhan, Konets Vtoroy Respubliki*, 704.

⁴⁹Alexei Zverev, Ethnic Conflicts in the Caucasus 1988-1994, in *Contested Borders in the Caucasus*, ed. Bruno Coppeters (Brussels: Vubpress, 1996).

⁵⁰Suha Bulukbasi, *Azerbaijan: A Political History* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011).

⁵¹Vladimir Kazimirov. *Peace to Karabakh*, 378.

gun".⁵² Additionally, during his tenure, the internalization of the conflict with the engagement of CSCE barely started, and no major negotiations were held. Moreover, even though the situation worsened in the country, Elchibey also managed to derail relations with Iran by pledging to lead demonstrations in Tabriz and enter Stepanakert through Tabriz.⁵³ However, he did not manage to realize his promises and was forced to resign because of the fall of Kelbajar in April 1993.

From 1991-1993, Azerbaijani policies towards the NK in general and the peace process, in particular, cannot be described as strategically patient. Neither of the five presidents of Azerbaijan in this period was interested in the Karabakh peace process. Mostly they trumpeted Karabakh to gain public trust and maintain their power. It can be even claimed that during this period, Karabakh was the main decisive factor in Azerbaijani politics. Due to the military victories of Armenia and territorial losses of Azerbaijan, four presidents of Azerbaijan were ousted. Thus, the NK determined the ups and downs of Azerbaijani politicians. The mediation processes started in this period through the efforts of Russia, Kazakhstan, and Iran. However, they did not succeed. Neither of the five presidents came to power with calls for peace and this period can rather be described as preventing hostilities than managing or resolving the issue.

Conflict Resolution vs. Conflict Management in 1993-2003

The Azerbaijani leaders' failure concerning the NK conflict played a significant role and made Azerbaijani leaders carefully reconsider their internal and external policies. During these tumultuous times, Heydar Aliyev succeeded Elchibey. The imperative for consolidating his power in the country and restarting the state-building process made Heydar Aliyev take measures to end the hostilities on the border.

Heydar Aliyev's position towards the peace process can be described as a constant transition from conflict management to conflict resolution. His approach towards NK peace can be divided into two stages, namely establishing a ceasefire and trying to manage the conflict consolidating his power and Azerbaijan's position in the international arena, and trying to find ways to resolve the dispute, ending up with conflict management.

⁵²"Karabahskij Vopros Mozhno Reshit' Tol'ko Voennym Putem, Schitaet Abul'faz Jel'chibej," *Turan*, last modified July 15, 1999, <https://www.turan.az/ext/news/1999/7/subsc/politics/ru/7933.htm>.

⁵³Agaev & Alizade, *Azerbaydzhan. Konets Vtoroy Respubliki*, 821.

One may find the main factors encapsulating Heydar Aliyev's foreign policy in his inauguration speech in 1993. In that speech, he repeatedly emphasizes the phrases "sovereignty, territorial integrity and strengthening independent Azerbaijan," claiming that all impediments to this should be eliminated.⁵⁴ Armenia's military achievements were one of the main obstacles to the country's development and consolidation of power.

The years 1994-1997 can be described as the first stage of Heydar Aliyev's period regarding the NK peace process. This stage is mostly dedicated to ensuring the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan in the international arena. After signing the ceasefire agreement, the central thesis of Heydar Aliyev becomes territorial integrity building presenting it as a "serious barrier" to the state-building process.⁵⁵ This same purpose served the speeches and statements of Heydar Aliyev presenting Azerbaijan as a "victim" attacked by the Armenians.⁵⁶

However, this kind of rhetoric changes slightly since 1996, when Aliyev's oil diplomacy succeeded, and he continued his efforts to integrate as many international partners as possible. Oil was a key factor for Heydar Aliyev's foreign policy fostering close relations with foreign leaders⁵⁷. At this period, multiple meetings were regularly conducted by the OSCE Minsk Group to foster relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Six meetings were held from 1995-1996, and the result of these meetings was summarized in the Lisbon meeting on December 3, 1996.⁵⁸ The Lisbon meeting was important for Aliyev as it was his desire to finally ensure the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. Even though the Armenian side vetoed this, Aliyev, in his return to Baku, claimed that the Lisbon Summit was a "big victory of Azerbaijan" due to the wide public opinion that the country has created over the years.⁵⁹ This was important, as Azerbaijan wanted to frame the NK issue as an Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Nagorno Karabakh.⁶⁰ It was significant to make sure that the

⁵⁴Heydar Aliyev, Inauguration Speech, October 10, 1993, <https://lib.aliyev-heritage.org/en/66679364.html>.

⁵⁵Heydar Aliyev, Speech at the Third Bishkek Summit, August 28, 1995, <https://lib.aliyev-heritage.org/en/2708059.html>.

⁵⁶ For example, Heydar Aliyev's speeches addressed to the General Assembly in 1994 and 1995.

⁵⁷Cornell, *Azerbaijan Since Independence*, 92.

⁵⁸Remler, *Chained to the Caucasus*.

⁵⁹Heydar Aliyev, Interview for the Journalists of the Republic in the Plane while Returning Home from OSCE Lisbon Summit, December 5, 1996, <https://lib.aliyev-heritage.org/en/6466482.html>.

⁶⁰Heydar Aliyev, Speech at the Lisbon Summit, December 2, 1996. <https://lib.aliyev-heritage.org/en/5705438.html>.

representatives of the NK one day would not be a full negotiating party, which would have been the next success for them towards resolving the conflict.

The results of the first stage of Heydar Aliyev's conflict management efforts had their substantial investment in the natural resources of Azerbaijan when the interest of companies increased. Thus, in order to keep long-term interest in Azerbaijan and its natural resources, Aliyev needed stability in the region in order to invite international partners for investments. Besides, the international partners would also be interested in Azerbaijan's stronger position in the international arena, which would have made Azerbaijan stronger in the negotiations as well. This became a milestone of the first stage of his conflict management efforts, ending up in a newly suggested model, which was simply about "territories for the regional integration." Aliyev has put forward this formula, arguing the Armenians are also welcome to participate in these projects more than once. In one of his interviews, Aliyev claimed that: "Undoubtedly, we cannot present it to Armenia as a gift. A country through which territory the big pipeline will cross will always benefit. Thus, to benefit, Armenia must do something" referring to the question on one of the pipelines passing through Armenia if it agrees to free the territory of the NK and restore the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan.⁶¹

This step can be identified as one of Heydar Aliyev's policies towards the peace process. In the 1990s, Heydar Aliyev was the only leader of Azerbaijan who never excluded possible future cooperation between Armenia and Azerbaijan. He mentioned that close cooperation between Armenia and Azerbaijan is possible if the conflict settles.⁶² The step-by-step solution of the conflict to which the Azerbaijani side gave its consent was introduced in this period. However, the events on the ground in Armenia did not make the fulfillment of this solution possible. Hence, one may conclude that the goals of the first stage of managing the conflict turned out to be mostly achieved by consolidating power, strengthening Azerbaijan's position, and making sure of the international community's acceptance of the territorial integrity of the country.

From 1998-2001, the second phase of Heydar Aliyev's conflict management process began. At this period, various meetings were held

⁶¹Heydar Aliyev, Interview to the Turkish NTV Television, May 6, 1997, <https://lib.aliyev-heritage.org/en/9256490.html>.

⁶²Heydar Aliyev, Briefing Prior to Working Visit to the Western European Countries, April 22, 1996, <https://lib.aliyev-heritage.org/en/2118105.html>.

between the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan, and the peak of these meetings came up in 2001. Robert Kocharyan, the former NK leader, was the president of Armenia at this time, and decided that he is fully aware of the issue and can negotiate on behalf of the NK. The representatives of the NK were not considered as a negotiating side. Thus, in this period, Aliyev was resolute towards the conflict resolution process, and the result of it should have been the agreement on the territorial swap between Armenia and Azerbaijan noted above. However, the Key West negotiations were also doomed to failure, and Azerbaijan did not agree with the proposal.

Nevertheless, Robert Kocharyan, in his books, claims that Heydar Aliyev has decided to sign an agreement, but a day before his visit to the US, his family, and particularly his son convinced him not to sign the agreement. His relatives specifically claimed that he is a “national hero” of Azerbaijan, and this step would have affected his and his family’s legitimacy negatively.⁶³ Thus, until 2004, there were no significant developments in the peace process. At that time, one of the important things in Azerbaijan's internal political life was the question of the successful transition of power from father to son.

On the whole, Heydar Aliyev’s stance towards the peace process can be discussed in the framework of both conflict management and conflict resolution mechanisms. During the first stage, he was more inclined towards managing the conflict than resolving it (if the conditions were appropriate). The second stage shows that his position towards the peace process shifted toward conflict resolution. At this time, he intended to wait and keep the conflict unresolved, while trying to isolate Armenia. He never excluded that the resolution of the dispute would have been the first step of two country’s economic cooperation. Nevertheless, his efforts did not result in a resolution of the conflict.

Strategic Patience: Ilham Aliyev’s Presidency (2003-2019)

In 2003, presidential elections were held in Azerbaijan and Ilham Aliyev, Heydar Aliyev’s son, came to power. Thus, Ilham Aliyev’s era began, which can be differentiated from his predecessors’ periods with its completely different rhetoric towards the peace process and Armenia per se. It became a process where he strove to make Azerbaijan stronger and then compel Armenia to submit. Thus, it is interesting to see the main

⁶³Robert Kocharyan, *Life and Freedom: Autobiography of the Ex-President of Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh* (Yerevan: Eastern Armenian Edition, 2019), 387.

tactics and strategies of Azerbaijan when managing this conflict, conditioned by various internal and external factors.

First of all, as already stated, in December 2019, the Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan Elmar Mammadyarov gave an interview where he mentioned “strategic patience”, initially claiming that Armenia is a small state and cannot sustain further economic isolation.⁶⁴ However, a year before this interview, the spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan Hikmet Hajiyev introduced “a forward-looking” plan widely known as “6D Plan” on solving the NK issue, which is in the framework of the phased solution.⁶⁵ The last point of this plan portrays Azerbaijan’s long-pursued position towards the peace process. In line with the de-occupation, demilitarization, de-mining, deployment, and dialogue came this development: “the integration of Armenia into regional processes”⁶⁶. Together with Mammadyarov’s interview, this peace plan displays how Azerbaijan sees the roadmap towards the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, where the suggested “peace for prosperity” for Armenia is at the core. Thus, it is interesting to see where that shift towards the peace process happened and how the position of Ilham Aliyev has changed depending on various factors.

Thus, the successful power transition in Azerbaijan and the loss of the perception that the once unstable Azerbaijan is growing steadily were the main factors that decided Aliyev’s sentiments and policies towards conflict management. First, it is worth noting that by the time Aliyev came to power, his predecessor had managed to make some changes in the negotiating process, fortifying Azerbaijan’s position and ensuring its territorial integrity. Thereby Ilham Aliyev did not return to this issue again. His plans for the peace process were completely different. As a newly elected leader of a country and a somewhat inexperienced person in the peace process, he should have adapted to that environment and strengthened Azerbaijan’s position to put forward his maximalist ideas towards the resolution of the conflict.

Thus, Aliyev started juxtaposing his countless speeches and statements to the idea of power asymmetry with Armenia and attempted to build his policy towards the latter in the framework of the NK issue. In

⁶⁴ “Elmar Mammadyarov’s Interview,” *CBC*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7YKquGeQk9Y>.

⁶⁵ Hikmat Hajiev, “Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict: Between lasting peace and eternal war,” *Euroactiv*, July 5, 2018, <https://www.euroactiv.com/section/azerbaijan/opinion/armenia-azerbaijan-conflict-between-lasting-peace-and-eternal-war/>.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

his inauguration speech, Ilham Aliyev has made it clear that they are going to settle the NK issue “at any cost”⁶⁷. In his opinion, to resolve the issue “at any cost,” Azerbaijan needed to be strong. Aliyev believed that Armenia is a country with profound economic and social problems. All they needed was to make Azerbaijan stronger, which could have isolated Armenia and depleted its material and demographic resources further. Besides, following a year after the elections, Ilham Aliyev declared that Armenia should realize that the NK issue will “certainly aggravate its own serious internal social and economic problems.”⁶⁸ However, one may notice that at this stage, several events like the Prague Peace Process and the Madrid Principles, where the hybrid approach towards the peaceful settlement of the conflict emerged even though Azerbaijan has always been in favor of the phased solution. Was this because of Aliyev being inexperienced or just because of his perception that Azerbaijan was not strong enough to “dictate” its maximalist ideas? Hence, this conditioned the first stage of his conflict management strategies in 2003-2008, which aimed to make Azerbaijan stronger.

The second stage began in the mid-2000s until 2016, when Azerbaijan experienced unprecedented economic growth, becoming one of the fastest-growing economies in the world when its GDP skyrocketed in 2005 and 2006 and gradually declined.⁶⁹ Multiple factors contributed to this economic growth, such as the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTS) pipeline and the deal of the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum (BTE) pipeline in 2007.⁷⁰ Additionally, according to the data of British Petroleum, the oil production of Azerbaijan peaked up in 2010, and since then, it has declined gradually.⁷¹ At this time, Azerbaijan has twice doubled its military expenditures in 2006 (868 US\$ m) and 2011 (20 US\$ b).⁷²

⁶⁷Ilham Aliyev, Speech in the Inauguration Ceremony, October 31, 2003, <https://lib.aliyev-heritage.org/en/2773818.html>.

⁶⁸Ilham Aliyev, General Assembly Speech, September 24, 2004, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/expert/comment/how-ready-are-armenia-and-azerbaijan-peace>.

⁶⁹“GDP Growth of Azerbaijan,” World Bank, 1991-2019, 2019. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?locations=AZ> (accessed September 20, 2020).

⁷⁰Şaban Kardaş, The Turkey-Azerbaijan Energy Partnership in the Context of the Southern Corridor, *Institution of International Affairs*, Working Papers 14, Roma, 2014.

⁷¹“Statistical Review of World Energy,” BP, <https://www.bp.com/en/global/corporate/energy-economics/statistical-review-of-world-energy.html> (accessed September 20, 2020).

⁷²“Military Expenditures by Country,” SIPRI, <https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/Data%20for%20all%20countries%20from%2019>

During this period Aliyev's rhetoric changed since he had become sure that Azerbaijan was already strong enough and had fortified its army and economy.⁷³ From then onward Aliyev started constantly claiming that diplomatic efforts are not enough, and Azerbaijan is already strong enough to resolve it by any means.⁷⁴ He started constantly comparing the economic development and demographic trends in both Azerbaijan and Armenia, arguing that the former is a country of opportunities, which can "defend its frontline."⁷⁵ It is also quite well-known that Aliyev even tried to compare the military expenditures of both countries boasting that Armenia cannot be compared with Azerbaijan as the latter's military spending are 50% more than "the total state budget of Armenia"⁷⁶, thus putting forward the thesis that "strong Azerbaijan can speak any language with powerless Armenia"⁷⁷ and trying to convince its public that Azerbaijan continues isolating Armenia from all regional projects, which is their policy towards the peace process.⁷⁸⁷⁹ At this point, it had become quite noticeable that Aliyev believed that his policy of managing the conflict was successful, and he had gained "the upper hand."

However, the years 2016-2018 demonstrated several important challenges to Aliyev's policy. This phase can be qualified as a transition stage in Azerbaijan's conflict management strategies. It can be noted that Aliyev faced challenges in his policy and had to demonstrate that his decade-long claims about the readiness of their "strong" army and their advanced military capabilities were the ultimate reality. Thus, the April

88–2019%20in%20constant%20%282018%29%20USD.pdf (accessed September 20, 2020).

⁷³ Azerbaijani President calls 'to attack Armenia in all directions', *Panarmenian.net*, June 22, 2007, <http://www.panarmenian.net/eng/world/news/22662/>.

⁷⁴ Armenia/Azerbaijan: Deadly Fighting Erupts In Nagorno-Karabakh, *RFE/RL*, March 4, 2008, <https://www.rferl.org/a/1079580.html>.

⁷⁵ Azerbaijani President Criticizes Armenia On Karabakh Talks, *RFE/RL*, November 19, 2009,

https://www.rferl.org/a/Azerbaijani_President_Criticizes_Armenia_On_Karabakh_Talks/1882645.html.

⁷⁶ Our Military Spending is 50% More than Armenia's Total Budget, Azerbaijani President, *Azertag*, June 26, 2011,

https://azertag.az/en/xeber/Our_military_spending_is_50_more_than_Armenias_total_budget_Azerbaijani_President-608267.

⁷⁷ Ilham Aliyev's Speech on the Anniversary of the Armed Forces of Azerbaijan, *Azertag*, June 27, 2013, <https://www.news.az/articles/official/80740>.

⁷⁸ Speech by Ilham Aliyev at the official reception dedicated to the 28th May – Republic Day, *Official website of the president of Azerbaijan*, May 27, 2011.

<https://nl.hideproxy.me/go.php?u=psejU1QtaA68DOqMcW%2BmAHS28S8SIR%2BDRJ1F7ZrjHg0d&b=5>.

⁷⁹ "We Will Continue to Isolate Armenia from International and Regional Projects"-Ilham Aliyev, *News.az*, September 11, 2012, <https://news.az/articles/official/67984>.

War in 2016 was a manifestation of Azerbaijan's military power and was a "vindication" of its massive expenditures on defense over those thirteen years.⁸⁰ A question arises here. Can it be claimed that this war expressed the failure of his long-pursued policy towards Armenia? Following the events in the aftermath of this war and Aliyev's rhetoric, it may be claimed that until 2018 Aliyev was not sure how to regain his previous position in the peace process. For instance, in 2016, Aliyev declared that there are pressures on Azerbaijan "behind closed doors to recognize Nagorno-Karabakh's independence."⁸¹ What does this mean? It is known that after the April War, a meeting between the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan took place in Vienna, and one of the things that was discussed was the establishment of "confidence-building mechanisms."⁸² However, Azerbaijan has always been opposed to this idea. Does this mean that the April War weakened Aliyev's position, his conflict management strategies failed and that is why he was pressured to agree to concessions? The third stage of his conflict management efforts below may answer this question.

The last stage began in 2018 as it was a year of changes in Armenia due to the widespread protests and Nikol Pashinyan's rise to power. One may observe that during this period of internal instability in Armenia, Azerbaijan closely followed the developments without even trying to take advantage of the opportunity. One of the explanations may be that Baku was waiting for this regime change in Armenia and anticipated that the newly elected authorities would adopt a more compromising stance regarding the NK issue. Aliyev's speech at the beginning of 2019 testifies to this argument where he mentions that the regime change in Armenia brought hope for a breakthrough in the negotiations, calling it a victory for Azerbaijan: "I can also say that our thought-out, focused and principled policy against Armenia has yielded fruit. We have isolated Armenia from all regional and international projects, and our share in the collapse of the Armenian economy is quite large."⁸³ Thus, it can be noted that the power change in Armenia reignited

⁸⁰Laurence Broers, "How Ready Are Armenia and Azerbaijan for Peace?" *Chatham House*, January 24, 2019, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/expert/comment/how-ready-are-armenia-and-azerbaijan-peace>.

⁸¹Aliyev: Azerbaijan is forced to Recognize the Independence of NK, *Aysor.am*, October 3, 2016. <https://www.aysor.am/am/news/2016/10/08/Ալիև-ը-Ղարաբաղի-1149480>.

⁸²"Statement by the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group," Vienna, OSCE Minsk Group, May 12, 2016, <https://www.osce.org/mg/239696>.

⁸³"President Ilham Aliyev: We remain committed to our principled position on the settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict," *Azertag*, January 1, 2019, <https://azertag.az/en/xeber/1229495>.

the hopes of Ilham Aliyev that his previous policies towards Armenia had served their purpose, and this may be considered the third stage of Baku's conflict management strategy, where its long-pursued "strategic patience" yielded results.

Overall, Ilham Aliyev's position towards the peace process was in the framework of conflict management strategies. In his interview, Mammadyarov singled out all the steps that Aliyev has utilized during his tenure. Aliyev's "strategic patience" of strengthening Azerbaijan and depleting Armenia's material and demographic resources through isolation demonstrates that he tried to prevent the conflict from arising. It can even be described by Woodward's formula, "negotiate, prevaricate, escalate, renegotiate."

Conclusion

The theoretical part of this paper is aimed at understanding the difference between the terms conflict management and conflict resolution and their mechanisms regarding the peace processes of various conflicts. As the question posed at the beginning of this paper was to understand "strategic patience" and what kind of strategies it implies. This study put it into a broader framework considering conflict management to be an umbrella term. Thus, the first part of the analysis reveals that "strategic patience" may be observed as a combination of conflict management strategies. The next part of the analysis aims to apply this concept to the Azerbaijani policies regarding the peace process. The scholars were mainly interested in resolving the conflict, trying to suggest various solutions to the issue. However, so far, the scholarship trend on the NK peace process has been limited or quite marginal in discussing Azerbaijani conflict management strategies and policies. Studying the conflicting parties' approaches may reveal the reasons that made this conflict intractable.

Thereby, it was shown that since its independence, Azerbaijan's stance towards the peace process has changed depending on the leaders' approaches and perceptions. For instance, in the first two years of independence, Azerbaijani leaders were most interested in conflict resolution through military means, since the peace process at that time was not an established one. Since Heydar Aliyev, this approach has changed. He changed his policies over the years, first aiming to manage the conflict and then resolving it. Strategic patience began with Ilham Aliyev when he completely changed Azerbaijan's position towards Armenia and the peace process. His warlike rhetoric, constant

comparisons of Armenia's and Azerbaijan's material and human resources, and statements that Armenia is a "dead-end" country reveal his position concerning the peace process. It is difficult to identify the real reasons and intentions behind such a position. Whether he actually wants to have a finalized peace deal or if NK has merely become an internal political tool for legitimizing his power is unclear. However, the theoretical part of this paper has unveiled that conflict management may turn conflicts into enduring rivalries. In addition to measuring whether the conflict management process was successful, one should know the intentions and goals of the implementing party.

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CONTEMPORARY ISSUES RELATED TO ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY IN THE EURASIAN ECONOMIC UNION

Abstract: The first two decades of the third millennium have clearly displayed the need to deal with the burden of historical heritage related to human security and, in fact, to growing insecurity. Moreover, no nation is able to solve this issue unilaterally – isolated from regional, transregional, as well as global trends and developments. Therefore, the emerging trend of regionalization presumes the mounting synergy of nations in an attempt to reveal, reduce and eliminate existing threats to human security. Regional security issues were aggravated by Azerbaijan with its widespread aggression along the entire border against the unrecognized state of Artsakh. This became a real threat to neighboring countries and the entire region due to the active involvement of Turkey's army with the use of NATO weapons and internationally restricted missiles and other armaments. This is considered a terrorist attack against a peaceful population, involving thousands of specially trained mercenary terrorists from Turkey, Pakistan and Syria. Soon after the start of the war, terrorists appeared in Armenia, Iran, Russia, and even in Europe, bombing synagogues, churches, and attacking peaceful citizens. The war, terrorism and their consequences are spreading rapidly. Joint efforts are required not only for the fight against terrorism, but also against other threats during this fragile peace. Issues related to environmental security are among the various threats that face the human race in the era of digitalization and the Fourth Industrial Revolution. While many threats are prioritized globally and formulated in Sustainable development goals, others are justified by national and international experts.¹ Our study concentrates on threats at the regional level, particularly covering the relatively new regional formation called the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU).

Keywords: economic threats, environmental security, Eurasian Economic Union, regional challenges, war in Artsakh.

Introduction

Despite all the existing economic, political, cultural and other particularities in many post-Soviet countries², there are several common

¹Matt McFarland, "The 12 threats to human civilization, ranked," *The Washington Post*, February 20, 2015, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/innovations/wp/2015/02/20/the-12-threats-to-human-civilization-ranked/>.

²Evgeny Vinokurov and Alexander Libman, *Eurasian integration: Challenges of transcontinental regionalism*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

threats to their economies, such as food security, demographic security ("population aging", "brain drain", mass migration, etc.), energy security, intellectual security and investment security, to name a few. COVID19 is another threat to be added to these that needs more careful consideration and comprehensive analysis. However, regional environmental security shall be given special attention here due to the need for cross-border cooperation and efficient steps to be taken by the nation-states.

Regional environmental security in the EAEU has certain delineations compared to other components of national security.³ It is part and parcel of global and regional problems and may not be reached individually— that is, through the efforts of national governments. It is the will and ability of the government to cooperate with neighboring and other countries to reduce and eliminate risks associated with the environment and its protection to maintain, utilize, and develop a sufficient amount of resources for the present and for future generations. Water pollution, including shared rivers running from one country to another, lakes and seas are among the numerous examples that require extra attention and treatment. There are two main transboundary rivers in the Caucasus alone: the Kura and the Araks. Their basins spread over three Transcaucasian republics: Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. The Kura is 1,515 km long and drains an area of 188,000 km. Its source is in Turkey and flows eastward, crossing Georgia and Azerbaijan. The Kura and its tributaries have a number of dams and barrages for hydroelectric and irrigation purposes. Part of the river is navigable. The Araks (Aras) is about 1,000 km long. Its source is in Turkey and flows along the borders between Turkey and Armenia, Armenia and Iran and, finally, between Iran and Azerbaijan. It joins the Kura River on the territory of Azerbaijan, 120 km from its mouth on the Caspian Sea, forming the Kura-Araks Delta.⁴ Also worth noting is the Samur River, which

³Elen Akopova, Assiya Nursapa and Ilyas Kuderin, Current environmental problems in member states of the Eurasian Economic Union, *Int Environ Agreements* 18 (2018): 529–539

⁴ The classification of the Caspian is a complicated issue. For example, it is defined as an "inland sea". See 2 NEB, *supra* note 2, at 612. The Food and Agriculture Organization's ("FAO") Systematic Index also qualifies the Caspian Sea as an "inland sea." See FAO, Systematic Index of International Water Resources Treaties, Declarations, Acts and Cases by Basin, in 2 LEGISLATIVE STUDY No. 34, at 287 (1984). However, the Caspian Sea is notably included in the list of "Major Lakes of the World." WATER IN CRISIS 161-65 (P.H. Gleick Ed., 1993) (Table B.10). One expert from the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO has asserted that "from an oceanographic point of view (composition of water, fauna, flora) the Caspian Sea should be considered as a sea. In fact, the Caspian Sea is a relict marine basin." See Minutes of the Meeting on 76

originates in the Caucasus mountains in Russian territory and flows into the Caspian Sea. Its lower course forms a part of the border between Russia and Azerbaijan. Having a network of canals, the Samur is used extensively for irrigation. The major Samur-Absheron canal brings water to the Absheron peninsula in Azerbaijan.⁵ Issues in Central Asia require special attention.⁶

Challenges to local and regional environmental security

Locally environmental security is limited to the identification and detection of major environmental threats, the formation of interest groups and the prevention of the further degradation of nature in various forms by using different methods of protection based on public support. It is also the adoption of corresponding laws concerning environmental protection⁷. However, environmental security in the EAEU deals with the recognition of common threats to nature and the classification of priorities, issues to be solved, as well as the coordination of human, financial, technological and other resources to explore opportunities for joint actions. Institutional foundations for the efficient use of water resources in the EAEU are being formed gradually based on specific cases and are subject to legal regulations in order to develop with the coordinated efforts of legislators of member states. Expert societies present various approaches considering the peculiarities of each case of the common use of water resources, including rivers, seas and lakes.⁸ Administrative borders may separate neither water resources (rivers, seas,

Cooperation of UN Organizations in the Caspian Sea Initiative 5 (January 17, 1995) (on file with the author). For a detailed analysis of the legal issues regarding the Caspian Sea, see Sergei Vinogradov and Patricia Wouters, "The Caspian Sea: Current Legal Problems," *Zeitschrift für ausländisches öffentliches Recht und Völkerrecht* 55 (1995): 604-623; Sergei Vinogradov and Patricia Wouters, "The Caspian Sea: Quest for a New Legal Regime," *Leiden Journal of International Law* 9, no. 1 (March 1996).

⁵ Sergei Vinogradov, "Transboundary Water Resources in the Former Soviet Union: Between Conflict and Cooperation," *Natural Resources Journal* 36, no. 2 (Spring 1996): 395-396.

⁶ Jakob Granit et al., *Regional water intelligence report central Asia, Paper 15* (Stockholm: March 2010); Barbara Janusz-Pawletta, "Current legal challenges to institutional governance of transboundary water resources in Central Asia and joint management arrangements," *Environmental Earth Sciences* 73 no. 2 (2015): 887-896.

⁷ Ualikhan Akhatov, Aidana Bekturova and Dinara Tursynkulova, "Harmonization of environmental legislation," *Journal of Legal, Ethical and Regulatory* 21, no. 1 (2018): 1.

⁸ T. Antiufeeva, O. Baryshnikova, N. Kandrina, "Legal regulation of the cross-border environmental management of the Russian Federation with the member states of the Eurasian Economic Union," *Proceedings of the International Conference on Sustainable Development of Cross-Border Regions: Economic, Social and Security Challenges (ICSDC BR 2019)*, <https://www.atlantis-press.com/proceedings/icsdcbr-19/125922347>.

oceans), the ozone layer, the biosphere, and other components of the global environment. Therefore, major issues related to the environment can be better solved on the regional level.⁹

In order to appreciate the significance of the environment for national and regional security and stability, governments need to cooperate to respond properly to environmental threats. Crossing national borders, environmental threats often jeopardize wealth, health and overall progress. Regional environmental security also deals with environmental tensions that usually become a cause of regional insecurity. On the other hand, common environmental concerns, such as water pollution, acid rain, forests fires and others may facilitate contacts that limit tensions and restore confidence between the states in the region and take care of security interests when serious ethnic, religious, boundary disputes and conflicts are present as was the case with water management agreements between Pakistan and India during a number of armed conflicts. To estimate the real threat related to regional environmental security existing environmental problem need to be identified along with its' extent of contribution to regional insecurity, considering that not always environmental problems may turn into regional issues. In case the circumstances lead to regional environmental disaster neighboring states need to look for joint action plan covering land, air, water pollution, nuclear safety, industrial waste output, unprocessed sewage, power generation issues.

Currently regional environmental security in EAEU is composed of security measures to eliminate risks in the following areas: polluting the lithosphere; polluting the hydrosphere; polluting the atmosphere; radioactive pollution of the biosphere; use of phosphorus munitions¹⁰ mass devastation of flora and fauna; "noise pollution."¹¹

⁹K. Sheryazdanova, "Joint use of cross-border water in Central Asia as element of integration," <https://core.ac.uk/reader/335051910>; United Nations, *Water and adaptation issues to climate change in transboundary basins: Lessons learned Lessons learned and good practice good practice*, 2015, https://www.riob.org/sites/default/files/HB-Climate_Change_RU.pdf.

¹⁰"Azerbaijani forces use white phosphorus over Karabakh," *AMNNews*, October 30, 2020, <https://www.almasdarnews.com/article/azerbaijani-forces-use-white-phosphorus-over-karabakh-video/>.

¹¹Tamara Selishcheva, Alexander Selishchev, "On some aspects of cooperation of EEU countries and China," *Problems of Modern Economics* 3 (2020): 14-19; Scientific discussion on contemporary issues related to EAEU, Research Center «Alternative» (online conference), *Yerevan, November 29, 2020*; "Environmental Cooperation in EAEU," CIS Internet Portal, October 14, 2020, <https://e-cis.info/news/568/88832/>.

Pollution of the lithosphere is a result of emerging millions of hectares of badlands from the construction process, the disposal of industrial and agricultural waste, pesticides, radioactive garbage, etc. This comprises about one percent of the land on Earth.¹²

Polluting the hydrosphere takes place during the disposal of industrial and agricultural waste into rivers, lakes and seas. This, in turn, makes it even more difficult to solve the issue of potable water. Polluting hydrosphere is a serious threat to RES for the rivers of Rhine, Seine, Ohio, Volga, Dnieper, and for such seas as Mediterranean, North, Baltic, Internal Japanese, as well as Mexican and Persian gulfs.

The polluting of the atmosphere is a result of the uncontrolled functioning of different industrial branches of the economy and means of transportation that cause solid elements, carbon fuel and greenhouse gas emissions.

Radioactive pollution of the biosphere is the contamination of the biosphere as a result of testing nuclear weapons or nuclear power plant catastrophes. Compared to other forms the impact of radioactive pollution is almost invisible, spreads over long distances and affects all nature. Radioactive dust blocks the Sun, which in turn may result in the death of all living creatures.

According to Protocol III of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, the use of air-dropped incendiary weapons against military objectives within a concentration of civilians is strictly prohibited. White phosphorus munitions can be used on battlefields to make smoke screens, generate illumination, mark targets or burn bunkers and buildings. When a white phosphorus shell explodes, the chemical inside reacts with the air, creating a thick white cloud.¹³ When it comes in contact with flesh, it can maim and kill by burning to the bone. White phosphorous weapons spread burning phosphorous, which burns at over 800 degrees centigrade (about 1,500 degrees Fahrenheit) over a wide area, up to several hundred square meters. The burning continues until the phosphorous has been completely depleted or until it no longer is exposed to oxygen. According to the International Committee of the Red Cross, the weapon has the potential to cause particularly horrific and painful injuries or slow painful

¹² "Last Call For Tallgrass In North Dakota," *Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center* available at

<http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/plants/tallgras/lastcall.htm>.

¹³ "FACTBOX: Key facts about white phosphorus munitions," *Reuters*, May 8, 2009, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-afghanistan-phosphorus-facts-sb/factbox-key-facts-about-white-phosphorus-munitions-idUSTRE5471T620090508>.

death.¹⁴ While it might be considered as an accident and its impact on the environment in Artsakh and parts of southern Armenia is obviously a serious subject worth researching, 50 Armenian and foreign organizations issued a joint statement to 100 international environmental organizations (International Union for Conservation of Nature, Greta Thunberg, the Brigitte Bardot Foundation, the International Fund for Animal Welfare, the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation) strongly condemning the use of phosphorus munitions by Azerbaijan in the forests of Artsakh, and the environmental public initiative and other authoritative structures reported on it.¹⁵

The mass devastation of flora and fauna is a result of the irresponsible actions of people and causes irreparable harm to plants, animals, birds and fishes. Much biodiversity has already disappeared. Other rare types of flora and fauna are endangered and due to the efforts of experts, they are included in the regional “Red book.”¹⁶

Finally, “noise pollution” is among the serious threats to RES. Infrasound, loud sound vibrations, and heavy noise are not only dangers to human health but also able to surrounding microorganisms that are an essential component of nature and its cycles.

Regional environmental security threats in the EAEU

The current trend toward the reallocation of human capital from a labor-consuming to a knowledge-based economy with the massive use of new technologies and innovations in the EAEU and around the world is almost inconceivable without major environmental disruptions. Growing urbanization and migration frequently result in environmental disasters or the degradation of nature. Mass movements of people from rural to urban areas and across national borders create essential social, economic, and environmental pressures in the region and compel the governments of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia to cooperate in regard to the prevention of deforestation, water resources and waste management. Various environmental problems can put the overall state of security and peace in the regional serious risk. Among them – high population fertility rates and overpopulation, the massive exploitation of natural resources, the accessibility of drinking water and water resource

¹⁴ “Azerbaijani forces firing white phosphorus munitions over major forests in the region”, *Massis post*, November 1, 2020, <https://massispost.com/2020/11/azerbaijan-uses-white-phosphorus-munitions-in-karabakh/>.

¹⁵ “50 organizations issue statements on Azerbaijan's use of phosphorus munitions,” *News.am*, November 2, 2020. <https://news.am/eng/news/611157.html>.

¹⁶ Red book, <http://www.redbookmag.com/>.

management (especially for landlocked or river-scarce countries such as Armenia) and waste dumping/processing, to name a few. More specifically, some nations of the region pollute the environment of others such as in case of greenhouse gas emissions, the impact of acid rain, and the transit of toxic waste across borders. While member states attempt to coordinate their efforts to assess environmental challenges and design common strategies to reduce regional risks, some external threats emerge.¹⁷ It is a disturbing regional security issue when rivers might be polluted not only by local, but also by foreign-owned companies.¹⁸ Also, the utilization of competitive advantages in mining or related fields in one country may engender a poisonous regional environment. The pollution of rivers and seas, such as oil leaks in the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea or chemical spills on the Rhine River is always a regional environmental security challenge with unpredictable consequences. Chemical, biological and nuclear waste management becomes a critical threat considering the collateral outcomes of the Chernobyl Disaster, coastal water pollutions. Water resource management is not limited to water pollution and potable water availability in the region. Management of commercial fishing in territorial waters along with tensions associated with fishing rights such as the ones between the United Kingdom and Iceland, Spain and Portugal, are among the key issues of regional environmental security. Another threat to the shared environment is deforestation, which minimizes the likelihood of the protection of natural resources and leads to the loss of biodiversity. All the aforementioned challenges have another spillover effect in the form of spreading infectious diseases, as well as respiratory diseases from the airborne dust of coal-fired power and heat plants, the metallurgy industry and house heaters. The economic and environmental security issues of the Eurasian Economic Union are continuously discussed by leading national experts investigating the main documents of the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC), a regulating body of the EAEU. As a result, practical recommendations for creating unified strategies for the economic security of the Eurasian Economic Union are developed that can be implemented in the system of risk management that, in turn, is based on the controlling

¹⁷ Golam Mostafa, Monowar Mahmood, "Eurasian Economic Union: Evolution, challenges and possible future directions," *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 9, no. 2 (July 2018): 163-172.

¹⁸"Amulsar Mine Problems Perceived as Pan-National Problem," *EcoLur*, April 9, 2020, <https://www.ecolur.org/en/news/amulsar/amulsar-mine-problems-perceived-as-pannational-problem-human-rights-defender/12278/> .

toolkit.¹⁹ During the research it was determined that the political aspect alone is not enough for the preservation and effective development of the Eurasian Economic Union, as common economic interests and the possible effects of their implementation are the crucial components of viability for any integration union including the EAEU country members.²⁰ In this regard, the formation of the system of economic security of the integration union of Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan is a relevant issue. In order to contribute to the integration of the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union based on geopolitics, it is necessary to ensure economic security that determines both theoretical and practical significance.²¹

Prospects to overcome existing challenges

There are no panaceas or transnational structures for solving the issues described above and establishing harmony between economic growth and environmental protection. In general, all solutions may start from the basic principle of “Think globally, act regionally and locally”. In particular, solving environmental issues in the EAEU requires joint actions by neighboring states despite existing disparities in economic, political and social development. There are peculiarities present in each region that need to be considered in order to find the right way to deal with environmental issues and promote regional cooperation through justified regional environmental projects and learning from success stories in other regions of the world.

For example, there is an agreement between Egypt and Sudan on the use of the water of the Nile River that excludes Ethiopia, which is upstream. This creates problems for Ethiopia. In the Middle East, water coming from Eastern Anatolia is controlled for Egypt, Syria, Israel and Jordan. In another case, business, trade, tourism, health and public life suffer badly from the smoke and haze of forest fires in Indonesia that impacts its neighboring countries as well. El Nino and other hurricanes cause colossal damages to many nations, therefore requiring the collective action for protection and forecasting the possible consequences for all. Cooperative measures have a positive influence on political and economic stability locally and regionally. The Madrid peace process

¹⁹ Valentina Kovaleva et al., “Current Issues of Economic Security of the Eurasian Economic Union,” *International Journal of Engineering & Technology* 7, no. 3 (July 2018): 343.

²⁰ Evgeny Vinokurov, “Eurasian Economic Union: Current state and preliminary results,” *Russian Journal of Economics*, 3, no. 1 (March 2017): 54–70.

²¹ Kovaleva et al., “Current Issues,” 343.

instituted environmental areas among others for multilateral cooperation to lessen the continuing conflicts in the Middle East.²² One of the success stories when environmental problems help to solve interstate problems is the case when following the success of the Jordanian and the Israelis on the Jordan River, and Senegal, Mali, Mauritania, and Guinea managed to set rules to solve the water problem of the Senegal River. These and other cases of successful joint use of water resources might be considered to deal with numerous issues related to the efficient common use of river, lake and sea water resources in the EAEU. These issues include, but are not limited to, the problems related to the Caspian Sea, Aral Sea, Syr Darya and other rivers in Central Asia, as well as other cross border water resources in Armenia, Russia, and Belarus, including the Araks, Irtysh, Dnieper, Western Bug and Pripyat Rivers, the Aral Sea and others.²³

In rural communities, which rely heavily on agriculture, water scarcity and poor water quality has obvious environmental consequences. These are mainly reflected in the following:

health care costs are increasing due to deteriorating water quality; loss of life and injury due to serious emergencies (floods and mudflows); loss of jobs, as well as an increase in poverty due to water scarcity or excess, or the resulting consequences, especially in rural areas; disruption of the functioning of ecosystems, including negative impacts on flora, fauna and biodiversity.

Improved transboundary water cooperation will help reduce these negative consequences by helping to prevent and mitigate water-related emergencies (for example, by establishing or improving transboundary early warning systems, jointly monitoring water quality or joint investment in treatment infrastructure), eliminating or reducing negative social impacts (regional cooperation on the introduction of more drought-resistant agricultural practices and technologies), and ensuring that

²² "Madrid peace process," Jerusalem Media and Communication Center, www.jmcc.org/peace/backgrounder.html.

²³Kamilla Sheryazdanova, "Problems of integrated water resources management in the Central Asian region," *Poisk- Almaty* 2, no. 1, (2007), 107-111; Tulegen Sarsembekov, "The use and protection transboundary rivers in the countries of Central Asia," (Almaty: Atamura, 2004), 272; The climate in Russia lags behind modern needs in terms of the joint use of electric energy, "Problems of transboundary water resources use in the Irtysh basin, Water resources management in the Republic of Belarus, November 7, 2018, International Conference

I. Beglov, A. Galustyan, I. Belikov, *Water management networks, Countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (NWO EECCA)* (Tashkent, 2017) https://www.riob.org/sites/default/files/conference_report_rus.pdf.

factors affecting ecosystems are taken into account (the development of improved legislation to improve water quality and control of its implementation).

Occasionally, regional environmental issues depend not only on governments but also on informal organizations like the mafia in some of the developing or underdeveloped parts of the world that have authoritarian regimes, making regional environmental cooperation and finding solutions more complicated. Moreover, non-democratic governments of weak economies may not give priority to regional environmental security issues and become another cause of spreading environmental poverty. Democratic governments may face difficulties in dealing with such forces, and therefore international and regional organizations need to get involved in issues jeopardizing human lives and the future of the region.²⁴

The efficiency of actions in Eurasia depends on the precise formulation of relevant security issues, prioritizing the risks, clarifying available means, and sharing information among key regional players and their strategic partners. Also, strategic planning is required with the indication of stakeholders (states, regional and international organizations, NGOs) and the bilateral or multilateral nature of negotiations. An excellent example of strategic planning is the World Conservation Strategy²⁵ designed to preserve main environmental principles and ecosystems, as well as genetic variety (the number of all species have to be preserved at an adequate level for survival).

All the aforementioned issues and others that may arise can be solved mainly through cooperation that will strengthen links between collaborators by working together on problems, which will help normalize diplomatic relations and stabilize the region. Information technology, data sharing, and growing digitalization will build operational power and support regional environmental security education programs for all interested parties, including national governments that

²⁴ United Nations Environment Network, Greenpeace Intl Home Page, World Wildlife Fund, World Conservation Union, World Business Council for Sustainable Development, International Institute for Sustainable Development, Green Cross International, Center for International Environmental Law, United Nations Human Settlement Program, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Environmental News Network, Eco World, Earth Easy, World Meteorological Organization, World Health Organization, UN FAO, European Environmental Agency, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, International Maritime Organization.

²⁵ World Conservation Strategy Sustainable Development Strategies: A Resource Book Barry Dalal-Clayton and Stephen Bass 2002.

do not always recognize the importance of cooperation as part and parcel of national security. In addition, regional early warning systems for monitoring and forecasting environmental catastrophes need to be established. All the taken measures have to be based on international environmental law that might be localized with careful consideration of specific conditions, norms, customs and traditions in the region and be backed by local, regional and international organizations. Specifically, the illegal use of water resources, flora and fauna may be stopped by agreed quotas and other terms designed by adequate maritime shipping and other agreements. In case of industrial pollution, regional agreements and standards can be promoted along with non-proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) initiatives. Major challenges to regional environmental security, such as urbanization, can also be managed through erecting proper infrastructure and rapid growth of agricultural technologies with no risk to local and regional security. The Eurasian Economic Commission works close with such influential regional organizations like the OSCE, discussing practical aspects of the dialogue of the EEC with the Permanent Council, the Secretariat of the OSCE Secretary General and other OSCE structures, within the framework of the “second basket”, a package of economic and environmental security topics.²⁶

The aforementioned measures are forms of reaction to negative environmental trends. In other words, they are expressions of reactive policies. Proactive policies, however, are more efficient than the policies based on the reaction to the changes and threatening trends to the environment, which include: combining the efforts of NGOs, private, and government organizations; lobbying environmental issues at various forums and conferences; drafting laws and resolutions and passing them through national parliaments; organizing environmental protests; setting up ecological control over possible areas of industrial and other pollution; utilizing the resources of relevant regional and international structures for ES; use of less polluting productions, saving resources, and filtering equipment; designing environmental limits to technological growth; efficient use of available resources.

We may predict that in the coming years, regional environmental security issues will continue to be of common regional concern. Hence, the growing level of integration and coordination of efforts will be a vital

²⁶ Tigran Sargsyan: “The future of the EAEU as an integration association is first of all the implementation of the strategic development agenda,” *Eurasian Economic Commission website*, October 19, 2017, http://www.eurasiancommission.org/en/nae/news/Pages/19_10_17_3.aspx.

necessity for all. But even if the political will to combat common threats is present in all parties, there are certain barriers to combined efforts. These issues need the establishment of a regional network of relevant data in the EAEU that provides access to information to all states in the region. Additionally, generating sufficient funds for security projects will be an essential precondition for collective actions. However, means have always been found when it comes to overcoming the consequences of natural and techno-gene disasters. It has been calculated that rescuing lives from such catastrophes depends on a few hours or even minutes. Therefore, neighboring countries' emergency, technical, humanitarian and other support is always faster than those expected from long distances.

Conclusion

Growing human insecurity is one of the key priorities in the global agenda. Environmental security has no national boundaries. Therefore, none of the nations in EAEU is in a position to solve this issue unilaterally. In this study, we focus on the synergy of regionalization aimed at eliminating existing environmental threats. On The Other Hand, armed conflicts lead to disasters covering the entire region, like in the case of Azerbaijan's and Turkey's aggression, where they used white phosphorus over Karabakh with the employment of NATO weapons and internationally restricted missiles and armaments.

The obvious need to undertake joint measures is justified in this article to fight against terrorism and related threats, but also against other threats during this delicate peace. We may conclude that combining the efforts of NGOs, private, and government organizations, lobbying environmental issues at various forums and conferences, drafting laws and resolutions, the arrangement of environmental protests, as well as utilizing the resources of Eurasian regional structures for environmental security and the use of cleaner products, saving resources, and filtering equipment are among various means to maintain ecological security in this part of the world.

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ANNEX
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