

## ISRAELI-TURKISH RELATIONS: A NEW EPOCH

October 15, 2009 at 5:53 pm ([Associate Post](#), [Gaza](#), [Israel](#), [Palestine](#), [Turkey](#))

### **Breaking the Old Pattern**

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The political-military establishment in Israel has been extraordinarily furious following Turkey's decision this week to exclude Israel from a multi-national aerial military exercise over Turkish territory.

The drill, dubbed the Anatolian Eagle Air-Defense Exercise, was to take place over the Turkish city of Konya on October 12 with the participation of warplanes from several NATO countries including the United States and Italy, as well as Israel and the host country, Turkey.

The drill has been held regularly since 2001 with international participation.

However, the recent publication of the UN-sponsored Goldstone Commission Report, which accused the apartheid regime in Tel Aviv of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity during the December-January blitz in Gaza, seems to have affected the decision of the government of Erdogan.

He was convinced that hosting the very same warplanes that only nine months ago rained death on the heads of helpless Palestinian children in the Gaza Strip would be scandalously unconscionable and utterly immoral.

New Turkey

Erdogan personally has been at the forefront of international opposition to Israeli war crimes against the Palestinian people.

In January, during the world economic forum in Davos, Erdogan openly sparred with Israeli President Shimon Peres, confronting the certified war criminal with the Nazi-like crimes the Israeli army had just committed against unprotected Palestinian civilians.

Using the words of one Turkish newspaper, Erdogan's brave outburst was an "Ottoman slap in the face of Israel".

Moreover, the hero-welcome which Erdogan subsequently received at the Ankara airport following his angry withdrawal from Davos underscored the fact that today's Turkey was not the same Turkey that Israel had been accustomed to taking for granted.

Israel had erroneously thought that whatever it did to the Palestinians would not seriously affect its relations with Turkey.



Turkish and Armenian foreign ministers resolved last minute differences ahead of a signing ceremony to establish diplomatic relations, (Reuters Photo)

However, the repeated and strong Turkish protests against Israel's genocidal onslaught in Gaza, and also the Ghetto-Warsaw like siege on the Gaza Strip, demonstrated to the Israeli leadership the utter miscalculation of ignoring Turkish sensibilities vis-à-vis their Palestinian brethren.

Indeed, Israeli leaders, inebriated with arrogance and insolence, probably never imagined that the leader of Turkey would insist that Israeli soldiers and officers involved in the genocidal blitz in Gaza be tried as war criminals.

Similarly, Israel thought, also erroneously, that Turkey would eventually succumb to "Jewish power" should Israel decide to use the "Armenian card", namely vowing to support voices in the West demanding the recognition of the anti-Armenian campaign of 1015-1917 in Turkey as "genocide".

The Zionist state had also threatened to use the "American card", using Jewish influence over American government, congress, and media against Turkish interests.

However, all these threats and attempts to blackmail Turkey into keeping quiet in the face of Israel's pornographic crimes against the Palestinians utterly failed to silence Turkey.

In fact, an opposite effect seems to have happened as Turkish leaders as well as ordinary citizens came to view Israel's blackmailing tactic as an insult to the dignity and honor of the Turkish state and people.

Turkey still has extensive military and especially economic relations with Israel. Moreover, there are still important "power centers" in Turkey that constantly "advise" the AKP government against undermining relations with Israel.

At the top of these centers of power is the secular military establishment, the guardian of the republican order.

### The Military Establishment

Israeli analysts are now "baffled" by the fact that the Turkish military has "acquiesced" to Erdogan's instructions to exclude Israel from the military exercise.

What is clear though is that the Turkish leadership seems adamant about opposing Israel's Nazi-like approach to the Palestinian people, irrespective of the damage that might inflict the erstwhile huge network of relations with Israel.

In fact, it is increasingly clear that the AKP government has successfully put up a strong resistance to Israeli arrogance and hegemony while gradually overcoming possible objections from the Turkish military.

A few years ago, Israel and other Zionist circles could easily hold secret contacts with the Turkish military establishment, even sign agreements amounting to hundreds of millions of dollars, while completely circumventing the Turkish government.

In fact, it is widely understood that Israel and its supporters played a pivotal role in toppling the quasi-Muslim government of Necmettin Erbakan in 1997.

However, the Israeli ability to manipulate the internal Turkish political arena seems to have become outdated, given the apparent success of the Turkish government in harmonizing relations with the military establishment.

Indeed, the cancellation of the aerial exercise over Konya seems to have the full consent of the Turkish army, which suggests that Israel's ultimate friends in Turkey were changing as well.

### Reconsidering Relations

To be sure, Israel continues, although less enthusiastically than before, to invoke the “strategic relations” with Turkey.

However, Israeli officials are now coming to the conclusion that the term “strategic ties” is a unilateral Israeli description and that the Turkish government is not really interested in having strategic links with a criminal state that murders children en masse and then claims it did it for self-defense.

The Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* on October 12 quoted an unnamed defense official as suggesting that Israel should re-examine its entire relations with Turkey.

“It may be that the reality has changed and the strategic ties that we thought existed have simply ended. Maybe we need to be the ones who initiate renewed thinking regarding our ties and must adopt response measures.”

It is unlikely that Turkish-Israeli relations will experience a speedy revival in the foreseeable future.

A few weeks ago, Israel refused to allow Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu to access the Gaza Strip using the Beit Hanoun border crossing. The Israeli refusal prompted Davutoglu to cancel the planned visit.

Davutoglu said in an interview with the *CNN* on October 11 that the Turkish decision to bar Israel from the military exercise did indeed have to do with the situation in Gaza.

Some Israeli leaders, like Defense Minister Ehud Barak, a certified war criminal for his leading role in the genocidal blitz on Gaza, have cautioned against further deterioration in relations with Turkey.

Moreover, both the foreign ministry and defense ministry reportedly instructed their officials not to comment on the “affair”, apparently lest they cause further damage to bilateral relations.

Notwithstanding, it seems that powerful right-wing circles in the Israeli government and parliament are quietly advocating initiating “secret and active liaisoning” with specific elements in the Turkish military establishment for the purpose of inciting it to corrode or even topple the AKP government.

Israel could also resort to using its secret Masonic arm to destabilize the Turkish government as a punishment for its pro-Palestinian stance.

Prior to the First World War, the Zionist movement utilized the Freemason movement to topple the Ottoman Caliphate after Sultan Abdul Hamid II refused to cede Palestine to Zionists for the creation of a Jewish state.

The Sultan was quoted as telling Zionist leader Theodor Herzl the following : “If one day the Muslim State falls apart then you can have Palestine for free, but as long as I am alive I would rather have my flesh be cut up than cut out Palestine from the Muslim land.”

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