TURKEY'S CONTRIBUTION TO MIDDLE EAST PEACE AND SECURITY

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In examining whether there are ways in which Turkey can contribute to Arab-Israel peace there are three related questions that need to be addressed: 1. Does Ankara now actively seek to play such a role? After Mustafa Kemâl Atatürk founded the modern Turkish Republic, he sought to distance himself from the Arab provinces of the former Ottoman Empire and his Kemâlist successors warned of the dangers of becoming embroiled in disputes among Turkey's volatile and unstable neighbors, in cases where Turkey's vital interests are not directly involved. 2. Does Turkey have diplomatic skills and tangible benefits to offer its Arab and Israeli neighbors? 3. Are the Israelis, the Arab states and the Palestinians receptive to Turkish offers of mediation and mutual cooperation?

1. Ankara Raises Ties with Israel and Palestine:

On December 19, 1991 the Turkish Government announced that it had decided to raise the level of the representation in Ankara of both "Palestine and Israel to embassy status," and would also upgrade its legation in Tel Aviv to an embassy. Subsequently it was clarified that the Turkish ambassador to Tunisia would also be accredited to the "State of Palestine," since Tunis was the headquarters of Yasir Arafat, the Palestinian president and chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Turkey established diplomatic relations with Israel in 1950, while the PLO had a low level representative in Ankara since 1979.[1] On November 15, 1988, when the

[1] For the circumstances leading to the Turkish decision to permit the opening of the PLC in 1979 -fifteen years after the creation of the PLO- see George E. Gruen, "Ambivalence in Ankara," **Jerusalem Post**, July 27, 1979, pp.

Palestine National Council meeting in Algiers proclaimed the independence of a Palestinian state in the occupied territories, with its capital in Jerusalem, Turkey was one of the first thirteen states immediately to recognize the new PLO-led entity.[2]

Since Ankara already had diplomatic relations with Syria, Jordan and Lebanon, the raising of Turkey's ties with Israel and the Palestinians to ambassadorial level meant that Ankara now maintained full diplomatic relations with all parties directly involved in the Arab-Israel dispute. The question has been raised whether Turkey, which is increasing its political, cultural and economic influence in the newly independent Muslim Turkic republics of Central Asia, might also play a greater role in fostering peaceful cooperation within the Middle East region as traditionally defined. More specifically, are there ways in which Turkey could play a constructive role in helping to resolve the Arab-Israel conflict?

While Turkey's importance to NATO as a frontline state bordering on the Soviet Union has obviously decreased since the end of the Cold War, officials in Ankara contend that Turkey is a crucial force for stability in the turbulent Middle East. They point out, for example, that it is in the interest of the West to have the Muslim republics of the former Soviet Union turn to Westernized "secularist" Turkey rather than to "fundamentalist" Iran as their model and mentor. This judgment is shared by some Western observers as well. In a special 18-page "Survey of Turkey: Star of Islam," **The Economist** called on the United States and the Western European democracies to realize that "Turkey is no longer in the least peripheral. It sits

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6-7. The PLO representative has had full diplomatic immunity, although his status as "resident representative" was the equivalent of a chargé d'affaires. James W. Spain, **American Diplomacy in Turkey**, New York, Praeger Special Studies, 1984, pp. 63-66 and 181-82. This was the same rank as the Israeli head of mission, after Turkey reduced the level of representation in 1956. (See below.) The Ministerial Council's resolution of December 20, 1991 to upgrade relations was published in the **Resmi Gazete** (official gazette) on December 31, 1991. Anatolian News Agency dispatch from Ankara, **Milliyet**, January 1, 1992. Fuad Yassin, the PLO resident representative, presented his letters of credence as ambassador to President Özal on March 3, 1992 and Dr. Uri Gordon, the Israeli representative, did so two days later.

[2]The unilateral Turkish step was criticized by the U.S., Britain and Norway, among others as "premature" since the PLO "state" did not yet control any territory, while the Israeli Foreign Ministry expressed its "disappointment, regret and dissatisfaction" to the Turkish chargé in Israel. George E. Gruen, "Turkey Between the Middle East and the West," in **The Middle East from the Iran-Contra Affair to the Intifada**, edited by Robert O. Freedman, Syracuse University Press, 1991, pp. 390-422. See especially pp. 412-416.

at the centre of the possible next cold war." The survey concludes that Turkey provides a rectangle of stability in the one remaining "large stretch of the world notably liable to produce turmoil and mayhem on a large scale in the coming 15-20 years: the appropriately crescent-shaped piece of territory that starts in the steppes of Kazakhstan and curves south and west through the Gulf of Suez to the north coast of Africa."[3]

The late President Turgut Özal and other leading officials also frequently advanced the view that as the only NATO member that is also a member of the Islamic Conference Organization (ICO), Turkey could play a useful role as a bridge between Europe and the Middle East.[4] Ankara has reportedly also championed the idea within the ICO of establishing an institutional framework and dispute-resolving process among the states of the Middle East for confidence building measures and arms control modelled on the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).[5] Implementation of this idea would require a significant transformation from the current climate of hostility and mistrust that is prevalent within the region. It will depend on such variables as whether or not Saddam Hussein remains in power in Baghdad, what the nature of the successor régime will be, how current Turkish-Syrian and Turkish-Iranian tensions are resolved, and the degree to which there is progress in the bilateral Arab-Israeli peace talks.

2. Evolution of Turkey's Position on the Arab-Israel Conflict:

Ankara has had some limited direct experience in trying to mediate the Arab-Israel conflict, since Turkey served with the United States and France on the Palestine Conciliation Commission (PCC) set up by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1948 to help the Arab states and Israel negotiate a final settlement of all questions outstanding between them. The Turkish representative was generally regarded as skillful and fair, but the

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[3]*The Economist*, December 14, 1991.

[4]For elaboration of this point, see Gruen, "Turkey Between the Middle East and the West," in **The Middle East from Iran-Contra Affair to the Intifada**, pp. 390-422. This theme was emphasized by Turkish diplomats even before the breakup of the Soviet Union and the current concern with Islamic fundamentalism. For example, in a speech to the Council on Foreign Relations on September 26, 1984, Foreign Minister Vahit Halefoğlu emphasized Turkey's "potential for promoting stability and projecting Western values in the Middle East." **Turkey Today**, [Turkish Embassy, Washington], September 1984, p. 1.

[5]Semih İdiz, "Middle East Security and Conference Expectations," dispatch from Madrid, recalled that Turkey had for several years proposed an ongoing Middle East Security and Cooperation Conference to the ICO. **Cumhuriyet**, October 30, 1991.

While the Jerusalem law had been sharply criticized by many states, including the United States, and declared invalid by the United Nations, Ankara's move was considered excersive by Washington. It prompted 69 U.S. Senators -more than a two-thirds majority- to express their "strong concern" to President Kenan Evren that this action would only benefit "extremist countries" in the region and "undermine the Camp David Accords" and harm "Israel and Egypt, two countries which are our great friends."[11] If the Turkish junta, which was dedicated to upholding Atatürk's secularist principles, went along with this anti-Israel move, it was less for reasons of Islamic solidarity than out of economic necessity. The sharp rise in oil prices following the Iranian Islamic revolution had created a desperate shortage of foreign exchange in Turkey. While Turgut Özal, the financial planner who had in January 1980 introduced economic reforms under the government of Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel, had been retained by the military junta, his liberalization measures and emphasis on exports had not yet had time to take effect. Turkey was becoming increasingly dependent on oil imports from its Arab neighbors. The downgrading of relations with Israel was reportedly the price demanded by Saudi Arabia for a loan of $250 million long-term Saudi loan to Turkey and the prospects of expanded economic ties between Turkey and the Islamic world.

This period also marked the beginning of Turkey's increasingly active involvement in international Islamic politics. When he attended the Islamic Conference Organization (IOC) Summit in Casablanca in January 1984, President Evren became the first Turkish head of state to participate in an Islamic Conference. He was elected President of the Islamic Standing Committee on Economic and Commercial Cooperation and he reported on his return to Ankara his "great satisfaction that our weight and prestige at the Islamic Conference Organization increased with each day." In his speech to the Conference, he said, "I reiterated that underlying the Middle East problem, there is the denial of the Palestinian people's legitimate and inalienable rights. I also pointed out that to be able to cope with the continuing Israeli *faits-accomplis* there should be a united and realistic counter-strategy." While offering continued Turkish support to "her Arab brothers in their just cause," he stressed that they "must act consistently in unity and solidarity." He called upon the ICO members to readmit Egypt to membership. Iraq had led the move to suspend Egypt from the ICO and from the Arab League. By this appeal Evren was in effect aligning Turkey with the more moderate elements in the Arab world and thus indirectly responded to the American concern that by improving its Islamic relations Turkey was undermining the Camp David

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Middle East Review, Vol. 17, Spring 1985, 33-43. The Foreign Ministry announcement and the Senators' letter are cited on p. 38.

[11] **Ibid.**, pp. 38-39.

process and encouraging Arab extremism. He also reiterated Turkey's eagerness to see an end to the Iran-Iraq War and the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.[12]

During his successful campaign in 1983 for prime minister under the new Motherland Party, Özal, who had been the architect of the policy of expanding Turkey's ties with the Arab and Islamic countries, appealed not only to conservative religious elements in Turkey, but also did well even within the Turkish Jewish business community, because of his sound economic policies. Indeed, Özal had contended that by enhancing its Middle East role Turkey would gain "the advantage of a better bargain" with the West, particularly with the European Economic Community.

Even at the height of Turkey's efforts to enhance its economic ties with the Arab world, Ankara made it clear that it would not sever its relations with Israel. Significantly, just before President Evren's state visit to Saudi Arabia in February 1984, Prime Minister Özal emphasized that the Arabs should not object to Turkey's relations with Israel. In an interview with the Kuwaiti newspaper **Al-Anba**, Özal said:[13] "Turkey's relations with Israel will be maintained. They will neither improve nor deteriorate... As I told our Arab friends, we are members of NATO and have close ties with the United States. The strength of the Israeli lobby in U.S. is well known... Furthermore, it is a good thing for the Islamic world that an Islamic country should have an open window [to the West]."

Although on the formal level nothing changed, in fact, Turkish-Israeli relations began to improve significantly in the Fall of 1986, when Turkey assigned Ekrem Güvendiren, a career diplomat who had the personal rank of ambassador, and the following year when the foreign ministers of the two countries met at the United Nations. While commercial ties and tourism expanded rapidly, cultural ties were again put on hold after the outbreak of the *intifada*, the Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories and the harsh measures adopted by Israel to quell the riots. In a meeting with Arab ambassadors on December 26, 1987 Özal "declared our strong condemnation of these incidents," and on March 18, 1988 the Turkish Grand National Assembly unanimously adopted a communiqué stating: "We denounce the violent actions of the Israelis against the Palestinians living in the occupied territories and the inhuman violation of Palestinians' human rights." The parliamentarians concluded with an expression of hope that the Turkish government would continue its efforts to convince Israel to change its policy. The Turkish indignation was similar to that expressed in Western European

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[12] **Ibid.**, pp. 38-40.

[13] Quoted by Sam Cohen, dispatch from Istanbul **Jewish Chronicle** (London), March 2, 1984.

capitals and essentially the Turkish approach to the Arab-Israel conflict and the Palestinian issue was in accord with the line adopted by the European Community in its Venice Declaration of June 1980. However, the only Turkish party that called for a break of all ties with Israel was the small pro-Islamic, anti-Western and anti-Semitic *Refah* (translated as Welfare or Prosperity) Party of Necmettin Erbakan.[14]

4. The Timing of the Upgrading of Relations:

As the level of violence in the territories subsided and particularly after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 when the PLO and the Palestinians in the territories were viewed as openly backing Saddam Hussein, support in Ankara for the Palestinians noticeably diminished. The open split in the Arab world, with Egypt and Syria supporting the American-led allied coalition against Saddam, and with the Saudis and Kuwaitis cutting off their financial support for the PLO, meant that Ankara did not have to worry about retaliation from the oil-rich Arab states if it chose to improve its ties with Israel, especially if it did so in an even-handed fashion. As noted below, another consideration was that the relative economic importance of the Islamic countries to Turkey had declined.

Turkey's decision to raise diplomatic relations with Israel to the ambassadorial level followed intense discussions in Turkey's prime ministry and foreign ministry and among the political élites about formally upgrading the ties. The move had long been urged by the United States. As far back as February 13, 1989, in a meeting in Ankara with a delegation of American Jewish Committee leaders, in which U.S. Ambassador Robert Strauss-Hupé joined, Turkish Foreign Minister Mesut Yılmaz said that Turkey was actively considering upgrading relations with Israel and would do so at the appropriate time. In the meantime, he told the group that Ankara had already agreed upon several practical measures to improve bilateral ties in the fields of transportation, tourism and trade.[15]

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[14] Gruen, "Turkey Between the Middle East and the West," pp. 416-417. Erbakan, who had earlier leaded the National Salvation Party, which was closed down by the military in 1980, had been notoriously anti-Israel and anti-Semitic long before the outbreak of the intifada.

[15] While the Israeli chargé, Yehuda Millo, welcomed the practical improvements, he indicated that Jerusalem was ambivalent about the formal upgrade if it was tied, as they expected, to raising of the PLO delegation's level to ambassadorial rank. As noted above, U.S. and Israeli officials had criticized the "hasty" Turkish recognition of the state of Palestine the previous year as not helpful to the peace process. Members of the AJC did so also in interviews with the Turkish press. Summary of the Ankara meetings in AJC files, New York. Press reports by Nilay Karman, **Cumhuriyet** and by Lale Tayfa in **Milliyet**, February 13, 1989.

When the new Demirel government took office in November 1991, both the U.S. and Israeli diplomats reminded Foreign Minister Hikmet Çetin of his predecessor's promise. According to Yalçın Doğan, he reportedly found Demirel and Deputy Prime Minister İnönü, the leader of the Social Democratic Populist Party, receptive to the idea, with the latter recommending that relations with the Palestinians be upgraded at the same time. It was felt that taking these actions now would enhance the chances for Turkey to be invited to play a role in the regional peace talks (See below).[16]

Among the other arguments advanced by advocates of the move were: 1) The Soviet Union and the Eastern Europeans had all restored full relations with Israel (broken off after the 1967 Arab-Israel war). 2) Muslim Azerbaijan had already concluded aviation and technical cooperation agreements with Israel, Uzbekistan established relations shortly thereafter (The other Muslim Turkic republics were also on the way to opening ties with Israel). 3) Even China was reportedly planning to establish relations with the Jewish state. (China as well as India did so shortly thereafter). 4) Israel had shown its readiness for peace by entering into talks with the neighboring Arab states on the basis on UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 (Israel had thus essentially fulfilled the condition Ankara had set back in November 1956 for upgrading of relations). A "senior diplomatic source" in Ankara, noting that even the Soviet Union upgraded its ties with Israel," expressed the view at the end of November 1991 that "we do not think full recognition [*sic*] of Israel would create a reaction in the Arab world, which has, after all, shaken hands with Israel in Madrid". The Minister of Tourism Abdülkadir Ateş was among those who urged action now in the hope that full relations with Israel would stimulate travel to Turkey by Jewish tourists from the United States, Western Europe and Israel, especially since major events would be held in İstanbul and elsewhere during 1992 by the Turkish Government and the Quincentennial Foundation to mark the welcome given by Sultan Beyazıt II to the Jewish refugees expelled by Spain in 1492.[17] (In June 1992 Ateş went to Israel and concluded a Tourism Cooperation Agreement. This was reportedly the first official visit to Israel by a Turkish cabinet minister in

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[16] Doğan column, "First Assault in Foreign Policy: Israel...," **Milliyet**, November 30, 1991.

[17] Former Foreign Minister Vahit Halefoğlu publicly advocated the immediate upgrading of relations with Israel to ambassadorial level, adding that there had been no negative Arab reaction when he undertook practical steps in 1987 to expand and improve relations with Israel. Interview with German Radio quoted in **Tercüman**, November 4, 1991. In an interview with the semi-official Anatolian News Agency, Israeli Ambassador Gordon reported that about 160,000 Israel tourists had visited Turkey during 1992 and had spent $250 million. Text in **Sabah**, March 15, 1993. In addition, a disproportionate percentage of American tourists to Turkey were Jewish.

more than twenty years. Israeli President Haim Herzog as well as President Özal and Prime Minister Demirel were among those who attended the Quincentennial international gala held at the Dolmabahçe Palace in July 1992.[18]

5. President Özal's Activist Role and the Gulf War:

Under President Özal, Ankara took an active part in support of the economic and military measures undertaken by the American-led international coalition that liberated Kuwait from Iraqi occupation. This marked a departure from Turkey's traditional policy of not becoming embroiled in the disputes among its Middle East neighbors and therefore aroused questions within Turkey's military and political élites. While there was widespread support in Turkey for the UN-mandated economic sanctions, and for maintaining the no-fly zone to protect the Kurds in northern Iraq, there was considerable opposition to steps that might involve Turkey in hostilities. A poll of the members of Turkey's Grand National Assembly, found a large majority favoring the government's decision to reopen the Turkish Embassy in Baghdad on March 4, 1993, even though only a tiny minority thought that real improvement in relations could occur as long as Saddam Hussein remained in power. Foreign Minister Hikmet Çetin stated that Ankara would do whatever it could to help Baghdad resume normal relations if it complied with all UN sanctions.[19]

6. Decline in Importance of Turkish-Arab Economic Ties:

There is a general consensus in Ankara that as a major power in the region, Turkey is naturally concerned about what happens in "the tough neighborhood" in which Turkey finds itself. However, what the nature and extent of its active involvement remains to be defined and clarified. Turkish-Arab economic relations, which had developed rapidly during the oil boom years of the early 1980's, when Turkish counstruction firms received billions of dollars of contracts from the Gulf contries and Libya, and during the Iran-Iraq war when Turkish exporters made large profits selling to both countries, have shrunken in relative importance as a result of the oil-bust and the

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[18] The text of the tourism agreement was published in the **Resmi Gazete** (official gazette) on September 11, 1992.

[19] "Turkish Embassy in Iraq Reopens," **The Turkish Times**, March 1, 1993, p. 1. In making the announcement on February 17, Demirel stated that the Turkish emissary would initially be only a chargé d'affaires, and that his rank might be raised to ambassador depending on "improvement" in Iraq's compliance with the UN resolutions.

consequences of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the Gulf War and the continuing UN sactions against Iraq.[20]

Last September, when I asked a senior economic adviser to Prime Minister Demirel in Ankara about Turkish-Arab economic relations, he indicated that this was not even an area he had been asked to follow. His priorities were on Turkey's relations with the European Community and with the United States, with exploring the possibilities in Eastern Europe and Central Asia and with the privatization of state enterprises.[21] The growth and increasing sophistication of Turkey's manufacturing and industrial sectors has enabled it to find markets in the developed world. This is reflected in the trade statistics. In 1992 more than two-thirds of Turkey's trade was with the industrialized countries of the OECD, mainly with the members of the European Community. OECD countries took 63 percent of Turkey's exports and provided 69 percent of its imports. Only 20 percent of Turkey's exports went to the "Islamic countries," a category that includes Indonesia, Pakistan and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, as well as the Arab countries of the Middle East and North Africa and Iran. The Islamic countries supplied 14 percent of Turkey's imports, and 80 percent of the total was oil from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Libya.[22]

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[20]See Henri Barkey's article "The Silent Victor: Turkey's Role in the Iran-Iraq War," in Efraim Karsh, ed. **The Iran-Iraq War: Impact and Implications**, London: Macmillan, 1989. On the negative impact on Turkish-Israeli relations of Ankara's 1980 decision to actively expand its economic ties with the oil-rich Islamic countries, see Gruen, "Turkey's Relations with Israel and Its Arab Neighbors: The Impact of Basic Interests and Changing Circumstances," pp. 33-43, and Gruen, "Turkey Between the Middle East and the West," pp. 390-422. At the height of the building boom in 1984 the estimated value of Turkish construction contracts had exceeded $14 billion. The Libyans still owe millions of dollars to Turkish firms.

[21]Interview with Dr. Emre Gönensay, Ankara, September 21, 1992.

[22]Republic of Turkey, Prime Ministry, State Institute of Statistics, **Monthly Economic Indicators**, June 1992, export and import figures for 1990, 1991 and January-April 1990, 1991 and 1992. pp. 27-34. In 1990 Iraq had been the chief supplier of oil to Turkey. Saudi Arabia, Libya and the U.A.E. filled the gap after Turkey closed the pipelines from Iraq in compliance with the UN sanctions. In an opinion column welcoming and "applauding" the Demirel government's decision to improvement in Turkish-Israeli political relations, M. Orhan Tarhan cites the sharp decline in Turkish exports and to the Arab countries and the reduction in construction contracts as one of the key reasons for not being concerned with Arab reaction. He also expresses annoyance that Kuwait did not favor Turkish companies in awarding contracts for post-war reconstruction. **The Turkish Times**, June 15, 1992.

7. Turkey Offers to Host Peace Talks:

In the aftermath of Desert Storm, the Arab members of the anti-Saddam coalition and other states as well were appealing to the United States to launch a new American initiative to resolve the Arab-Israel conflict. In keeping with Özal's more activist foreign policy, immediately after the end of the Gulf War, in March 1991 during an official visit to Moscow, he offered to host Arab-Israeli peace talks in İstanbul. He expressed the view that there could not be peace and stability in the Middle East unless the Palestinian issue was resolved. He also called on the Israeli Government to accept the principle of land for peace.[23] The Turkish president reportedly repeated the offer to host the peace talks when he met with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker in Ankara, noting that Turkey was well suited to serve as host since Ankara had good relations with all the countries involved. According to Aziz Utkan of **Hürriyet**, in his talks with Turkish officials, Baker had asked Ankara for help in support of the American initiative to convince the Arab states to lift economic boycott against American and other foreign firms dealing with Israel.[24]

The Turkish press also gave much prominence to reports that Israel favored a more active Turkish role in regional affairs, and that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir had discussed this with Baker. Adding support to these views was the statement by Eli Shaked, counsellor of the Israeli embassy in Cairo who had previously served in Turkey, that Turkey could make important contributions to the peace process within the framework of its relations with the Arab countries by persuading them to recognize Israel's right to exist and to enter into direct negotiations.[25]

When Madrid was chosen as the venue for the peace talks instead and Turkey was not even invited to send an observer, many Turkish politicians and editorial writers expressed anger and disappointment.[26] Süleyman

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[23] Dispatch from Moscow, **Cumhuriyet**, March 13, 1991.

[24] Utkan reports in **Hürriyet**, March 14 and 17, 1991.

[25] "Turkey Talked About in Israel-Israel Asked Help from the Turkish Government," **Sabah**, March 13, 1991. Shaked's statement to the semi-official Anatolian Agency was reported in the **Turkish Daily News** and several major Turkish language papers March 13, 1991. Shaked had previously served as chargé in Ankara and consul in İstanbul.

[26] Typical was the front-page headline: "Here is the Table, Where Are We?" in the major daily, **Milliyet**, October 30, 1991. See for example the column by Metin Toker, who blamed Özal and his grandiose foreign policy

Demirel, the leader of the opposition True Path Party, who would become prime minister after the elections a few days later, expressed "strong regret" at the "non-participation of Turkey, which is one of the most powerful countries of the Middle East, in this conference even as an observer." Nevertheless, he added, that he wished the conference to be successful.[27] Demirel pledged to do whatever he could to contribute to peace in the Middle East.

Demirel, whose True Path Party had replaced Özal's Motherland Party as the leading party in the October 1991 parliamentary elections, charged that it was "incompetence" by Özal's Motherland Party officials that had led to Turkey's exclusion.[28] The same charge was levelled by Col. Alparslan Türkeş, the leader of the opposition right-wing Nationalist Work Party. However, Türkeş urged that Ankara engage in an initiative to join the conference even if belatedly.[29] Former Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit, who now headed the small socialist Democratic Left Party, also expressed regret that Turkey was neither host nor participant. He attributed the failure of Turkey "to realize its historical function" in the Middle East, to its "following the United States" too slavishly in its foreign policy.[30]

Foreign Minister Safa Giray responded to the critics by pointing out that only "the directly concerned" parties in the Arab-Israel dispute were participating in the first two stages of the conference. (A State Department official explained to me that exceptions had been made for some outside parties, such as the members of the European Community and the Gulf Cooperation Council. They had been invited as observers because the sponsors hoped that they would contribute the necessary funding for peace related projects.) Giray said Ankara had indicated to the American and Russian co-sponsors its interest in participating in the third stage that would take up regional issues such as arms control, economic cooperation, the environment and regional water resources. A Foreign Ministry spokesman confirmed that Turkey would participate in the multilateral phase of the talks and "would be pleased to make a contribution" to their success. He added that Turkey was

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initiatives for unrealistically raising the Turkish public's expectations, **Milliyet**, October 21, 1991.

[27] Report of Demirel's press conference in **Tercüman, Türkiye and Günaydın**, October 25, 1991.

[28] Demirel's press conference, **Turkish Daily News**, October 31, 1991.

[29] Before the 1980 military coup, Türkeş had headed the ultraright Nationalist Action Party and in 1991 he was a parliamentarian elected on the Welfare Party slate.

[30] Ecevit's press conference reported in **Hürriyet**, October 29, 1991.

pleased that the peace conference had finally materialized, stressed its "importance to finding "a just solution to the region's problems."[31]

8. Why Had Turkey's Offer Been Rejected?

No official explanation for the rejection of Turkey's offer to host the opening peace conference has been provided. State Department officials pointed out to me that many countries in addition to Turkey vied for the honor and Madrid was a last minute compromise. Some Turkish observers told me they suspected that despite Ankara's support for Palestinian statehood and its efforts to be even-handed in the Arab-Israel dispute, and there was reportedly some Palestinian support for the idea, there were still significant elements within the Arab world that saw Turkey as a rival for regional leadership and still harbored historical resentments -and possibly an inferiority complex- stemming from the four centuries of Ottoman rule.[32]

While this may have been a factor, in the negotiations to find a mutually acceptable venue, Turkey's close proximity to the Arab countries and Israel was probably a more important consideration from the Arab viewpoint. Israel urged that the conference be held as close to the region as possible, such as İstanbul or Athens or a Mediterranean island like Cyprus, Crete or Rhodes -the latter being the site of the 1949 UN- sponsored Arab-Israeli bilateral armistice negotiations.[33]

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[31] Giray quoted in interview with Nilüfer Yalçın, **Milliyet**, October 26, 1991. Foreign Ministry deputy spokesman Ferhat Ataman's comments at the weekly press briefing, reported in **Turkish Daily News**, October 24, 1991.

[32] Cengiz Çandar and Sedat Sertoğlu in their dispatch from Madrid said that President Özal had told them over the phone that "Istanbul would be an ideal location to host the second stage of the Middle East Conference," and that he would make available an Ottoman Palace to the conferees. They repoted that when told of the Turkish offer, East Jerusalem Palestinian leader Faisal Husseini had reacted favorably to the idea, emphasizing that if Turkey was going to upgrade relations with Israel, it would be helpful if Turkey also raised relations with the Palestinians to ambassadorial level and reopened its consulate general in Jerusalem, which had been closed in 1980 to protest the Israeli Knesset action. The Turkish reporters added that the Israelis were also considering the Turkish offer. **Sabah**, December 2, 1991.

[33] **Hürriyet**, on November 26, 1991 carried an Anatolian Agency report from Cairo saying diplomatic contacts in Cairo stated that the Israelis preferred the next sessions of the peace conference to be held in Turkey or Rhodes, and that Egypt might accept Turkey as the venue "in case no objection came from the other participating countries."

From Israel's standpoint such a nearby site would symbolize Arab recognition of Israel's place as a legitimate part of the Middle East. Even after Madrid, the Israelis suggested that the bilateral talks alternate between cities in Israel and the neighboring Arab countries, as had been the case in the Egyptian-Israeli peace talks. Moreover, Jerusalem argued, from a practical point of view this proximity would facilitate contact by the negotiators with their governments. But for the same symbolic reason, the Arabs said they did not wish to reward Israel with the fruits of recognition, before Israel had withdrawn from the occupied territories and met other Arab demands. Since no agreement could be reached, none of the subsequent talks have taken within the Middle East itself. The nine rounds of bilateral talks have all been held in Washington, while the multilateral working groups have met all over the globe from Moscow and Tokyo, to Toronto, Geneva and Rome.

9. Middle East Policy of the Demirel Government:

Prime Minister Demirel in November 1991 formed a coalition government with the left-of-center Social Democratic Populist Party (SDPP) headed by Erdal İnönü, whose father, the late President İsmet İnönü, first recognized Israel in 1949 and established diplomatic relations the following year. In the foreign policy section of its program, the new coalition government reaffirmed the importance of strengthening Turkey's ties with the United States and the European Community, and expressed concern for Turkish-speaking groups in Western Thrace and the republics in the Caucasus. With regard to the Middle East, the government declared that "Turkey is prepared to contribute to peace in the Middle East; supports the rights of the Palestinians, including their right to their own state; and for Israel, to live behind safe borders."

Turkey attended the multilateral regional peace talks that were inaugurated in Moscow at the end of January 1992 and has also participated in the specialized working groups, including the working groups on water resources that met in Vienna in May 1992, in Washington in September 1992 and in Geneva in May 1993. While the Turks indicated that they would be prepared to host subsequent sessions in Ankara or İstanbul, the offer has still not been accepted by the Arab delegates. Some officials in Ankara were reportedly privately relieved that the Turkish offer had been rejected, since they feared that Arab delegates, led by Syria, might use the occasion to raise their own complaints against Turkey over the vast network of dams and irrigation projects it was constructing in southeastern Anatolia in the Euphrates and Tigris river basins. (See below.)

Turkish-Israeli relations reached a historic new height when President Chaim Herzog came to İstanbul in mid-July. Initially billed only as a "private" visit by the Israeli head of state to participate in the gala dinner of the Quincentennial Foundation to commemorate the decision by Ottoman

Sultan Beyazit to welcome Jews expelled from Spain in 1492, Herzog's trip quickly assumed all the trappings of an official visit. Not only did both President Özal and Prime Minister Demirel join with Herzog in speaking at the dinner at the Dolmabahçe Palace, but Herzog had lengthy separate meetings with Özal and Demirel, and was interviewed on state television. The visit received generally favorable comment in the Turkish media. At a joint press conference following their meeting, Demirel noted that Turkish-Israeli relations were gradually improving and declared that "further development of bilateral relations would be in the interests of the region and the world." He added that participation of all regional countries in the Middle East peace conference might lead to better results. (It was not clear whether this was a veiled criticism of Syria for its failure to attend the multilateral sessions or simply an appeal for a greater role for Turkey. For his part, Herzog underscored that Turkey is an important country in the region and stressed that it could play a role in the Middle East peace conference.[34] (The only reported criticism came from Iranian television and from a demonstration by Turkish fundamentalists at the Beyazit Mosque in İstanbul on Friday July 17. The demonstrators -variously estimated at 700 to 2.000- burned American and Israeli flags, carried placards saying "the *intifada* (the Palestinian revolt) will continue until Israel is destroyed," and shouted "Allah is Great," and the Turkish "dictators of laicism [secularism] are the puppets of the Jews.")

10. The Looming Water Shortage in Jordan, Israel and the Territories:

Many observers believe that Turkey could make the most tangible contribution to Arab-Israeli peace by alleviating the increasingly fierce competition for the limited water resources in the area of Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian territories by offering to supplement them with exports of surplus water from Turkish rivers. Israelis and Palestinians have in recent drought years overpumped their aquifers and even with the good rainfall of the past two years, Jordan and the Palestinian territories, where population is growing at a rate of more than 3 percent per annum, are rapidly approaching a crisis.

While, Israel's rate of natural increase is only 1.6 percent, it has been swelled by the immigration of more than 430.000 Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union in recent years. Some 15.000 others have come from Ethiopia, strife-torn Yugoslavia and other countries. If economic distress and political turmoil increase in Eastern Europe and Central Asia / or peace is established between Israel and its Arab neighbors, the combination of push and pull factors will likely result in additional immigrants being

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[34]Text broadcast on Turkish TV, 1600 GMT, 17 July 1992.

attracted to Israel. The 350.000 Palestinians/Jordanians who fled or were expelled or fled from Kuwait and Iraq in the wake of the Gulf War of 1990-91 have suddenly increased Jordan's population by nearly 10 percent. Some of them, as well as Palestinian refugees from earlier wars, may return to the West Bank if the peace process develops and a Palestinian self-governing authority is established. These demographic trends will exacerbate the competition between Israel and the Palestinians in the West Bank over the shared water resources of the Yarqon-Tanninim aquifer that straddles the pre-1967 "Green Line," and among Jordan, Syria and Israel over the waters of the Jordan and Yarmuk Rivers.[35]

11. Turkish Water Initiatives:

Before the Madrid Conference had been planned, President Özal had offered to host a week-long Middle East Water Summit in İstanbul in November 1991, but the conference, which was organized by the Washington-based non-governmental Global Water Summit Initiative, was indefinitely postponed after Syria informed Ankara that it and other Arab states would boycott the conference if Israel was invited to participate. The Bush Administration responded that if Israel was excluded, the United States would not participate. Secretary of State James A. Baker III had been scheduled as one of the keynote speakers. President Özal and Crown Prince Hassan of Jordan were others.

Yet even before the issue of Israeli participation came up, there was some feeling in governmental circles in Washington that such an ambitious and politically sensitive conference was premature. The **Washington Post** reported that "administration officials fear that trying to deal with a specific issue like water before the framework of a generalized Arab-Israeli peace has been achieved would be what one called 'putting the cart before the horse' in ways which might threaten the peace conference, which is also expected to get underway in the fall."[36] On October 7 the Turkish Foreign Ministry

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[35]For a recent summary of the population pressures and other factors leading to increasing competition for the scarce water resources, as well as a description of the domestic measures to conserve and more efficiently utilize existing water resources, as well as the various schemes to import water, see George E. Gruen "Contribution of Water Imports to Israel-Palestinian-Jordanian Peace," paper presented at the First Israeli-Palestinian International Academic Conference on Water, Zurich Switzerland, December 10-13, 1992, proceedings to be published by Elsevier Science Publishers, 1993.

[36]John. M. Goshko, "Dispute Clouds Mideast Water Meeting," **Washington Post**, August 29, 1991. Dr. Joyce Starr, the founder and chair of the Global Water Summit Initiative, disputed the charge that the conference was premature and contended in a press conference in Washington on October 7,

announced that the İstanbul water conference was being postponed until the outcome of current peace efforts was known and the establishment of "regional conditions which will make it possible for all the parties concerned to participate." [The Madrid Peace Conference convened at the end of October 1991.][37]

12. Syria Refuses to Participate in Multilaterals:

Those conditions have not yet been met. While Syrian representatives have met in nine rounds of bilateral talks with the Israelis, Damascus has adamantly maintained the position that it will not join the multilateral talks until certain conditions are met. Syrian officials have emphasized that they will not discuss any regional issues, such as water resources, with Israel until after the Israelis have withdrawn their forces or at least until they have given a formal commitment to withdraw from the occupied territories.

The Syrian position also has prevented revival of consideration of the various plans for Lebanon to sell surplus water from the Litani and Awali rivers to Israel and the Palestinians. Dr. Selim Maksud, who heads the Litani River Administration and is currently engaged in a three-year World Bank reconstruction program for Lebanon, estimates that "we will have a surplus of water for some 25 years, beyond that based on projected increase in population and the country's development, we will need all our water." Although during the summer months parts of Lebanon are short of water, in winter the surplus flow is as high as 700 MCM in some years, while in others it is only 200 MCM, depending on precipitation. He estimated the average surplus as between 400-500 MCM. Dr. Maksud stated that Israel and the west Bank Palestinians were Lebanon's natural downstream markets, adding that Lebanon could certainly use the additional revenue from water sales.[38]

But unless there is a fundamental change in the Syrian position toward full formal peace and cooperation with Israel, no joint Israeli-Lebanese water project will be politically feasible, even if the Israelis and Palestinians

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1991 that her efforts were complementary to the diplomatic efforts of the State Department and would help defuse the political issues by focussing on "creating a logical and rational discussion around the technical and professional" aspects of the subject, such as identifying alternative and new sources of water and improving efficiency in utilization of existing resources.

[37]For details of the controversy and diplomatic maneuvering surrounding the Istanbul conference, see George E. Gruen, **The Water Crisis: The Next Middle East Conflict?**, Los Angeles, The Simon Wiesenthal Center, 1991, pp. 17-22.

[38]Conversation with the author in New York, November 23, 1992.

manage to reach an agreement with the Lebanese on an international water bank and other issues. Syria has an effective veto over any such development plans under the May 1991 Syrian-Lebanese Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation and Coordination. The 35,000 to 40,000 Syrian troops still stationed in the country further assure that the fragmented Lebanese government will not adopt any policy inimical to Syria. Thus, for example, Beirut has thus far followed Damascus's lead in boycotting the multilateral peace conference's water group discussions.

The Israeli position in the negotiations with Syria under Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has been that the extent of Israeli withdrawal and other security arrangements will depend on the nature of the peace that Syria is prepared to conclude with the Jewish state. Although Syrian President Hafez al-Assad has spoken of a "peace of the brave" and reportedly told President Hosni Mubarak in April 1993 that he was prepared to give "all for all", this vague formulation was dismissed as inadequate by Professor Itamar Rabinovich, the Israeli ambassador in Washington who heads the Israeli team to the Washington talks with the Syrians and is an academic expert on Syria. More recently, Assad told Patrick Seale that he had offered Israel "full peace for full withdrawal," a package that the Syrian leader described as a "great leap forward."[39]

In his opening address to the Madrid Peace Conference, on October 30, 1991, President Bush stressed the link between the bilateral Arab-Israeli talks and the multilateral negotiations that would focus on "issues that cross national boundaries and are common to the region: arms control, water, refugee concerns, economic development." In an apparent attempt to answer the Syrian objections to engaging in regional talks before Israel had met its territorial demands, President Bush declared: "Progress in these fora is not intended as a substitute for what must be decided in the bilateral talks. To the contrary, progress in the multilateral issues can help create an atmosphere in which longstanding bilateral disputes can more easily be settled." President Bush also emphasized that his concept of peace that was the goal of the Madrid talks was not simply non-belligerence but full normalization of Arab-Israeli relations: "By real peace I mean treaties. Security. Diplomatic relations. Economic relations. Trade. Investment. Cultural exchange. Even tourism." This is of course also the definition of peace the Israelis desire.

This is also the vision of peace that Turkey has sought to advance.

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[39] Patrick Seale, "'Full Peace for Full Withdrawal'," op-ed column, The **New York Times**, May 11, 1993.

13. Özal's "Peace Water Pipeline":

This is the most ambitious of the various plans under discussion. According to a feasibility study prepared by Brown and Root for the Turkish government, some 6 million cubic meters per day would be conveyed from the Ceyhan and Seyhan Rivers via two pipelines to eight Arab states including, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states. When the $21-billion project was first proposed in 1986 by then prime minister Turgut Özal, Israel was included. In the face of Arab objections, Ankara announced that extension of the pipeline to Israel would have to await Arab-Israeli peace.[40] In their preliminary study, Brown and Root assumed that the Syrian cities of Aleppo, Hama, Homs and Damascus would receive a combined total of 1,100,000 cubic meters daily and Amman 600,000. The western Saudi cities of Tabuk, Medina, Yanbu, Jeddah and Mecca would receive 1.5 MCM. The eastern, or Gulf pipeline, would provide 2.5 MCM for Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman.

Turkish Ambassador Necati Utkan, who had served as Turkey's ambassador in Baghdad until the outbreak of the Gulf War in 1991, had earlier been director general for economic affairs and closely involved in water negotiations with Syria and Iraq. In an interview in February 1991, Ambassador Utkan said that his efforts since 1983 to work out a new water-sharing agreement with Syria and Iraq on the waters of the Euphrates had accomplished little "in the absence of international law and mutual trust." He stressed the importance of regional cooperation and hoped that the Arab states would now be receptive to President Özal's "Peace Pipeline" proposal, which he planned to promote at the then projected November 1991 İstanbul water summit. He expressed the hope that this project could "set the stage for gas pipelines from the Middle East to Europe, interconnecting oil and rail lines, the kind of regional interdependence that would make war unthinkable."[41]

While Turkey has been adhering to its 1987 commitment to maintain a flow of 500 cubic meters per second at the point where the Euphrates enters Syria, Damascus has recently been demanding that its guaranteed share be increased to 700 cubic meters per second. On the other hand, Turkish

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[40] Özal's special envoy Ambassador Necati Utkan reaffirmed in a Washington briefing sponsored by the Global Water Summit Initiative, that Israel was not included in current distribution plans for the peace water pipeline because of Arab objections. He added that "it is also a success to be able to bring other Arab countries together in this project." He expressed confidence that "these countries will one day want of their own accord for Israel to join." His reply was in response to a question by the author. See **Turkish Daily News**, March 21, 1991.

[41] David Judson, "'Peace Pipeline' Could Bring Stability to Region," **Gannett News Service**, February 20, 1991.

Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Muzaffer Arıcı told a Cabinet meeting on August 23, 1991 that Turkey should gradually reduce the amount of water supplied to Syria "in order for our need to be supplied." Another Cabinet minister reported that Turkey planned to reduce the flow to Syria to 350 cubic meters per second.[42]

14. "Peace Pipeline" Fails to Gain Arab Support:

The "Peace Pipeline" project has been shelved since the Saudis and other Gulf states expected to help finance it have been cold to the idea even though Israel is excluded. Among their objections are that gas-fueled desalination is cheaper, that they do not want to be vulnerable to supply interruptions by Turkey, Syria or others along the line, and finally because there is still a residue of resentment of 400 years of Ottoman rule. Turkish officials thought that the Saudis and Kuwaitis would be more receptive to the idea after the Iraqis destroyed much of Kuwait's desalination installations and the massive deliberate oil spills by Iraq into the Gulf nearly reached the major Saudi desalination plant in Jubail. Turkish officials have insisted that they would never use water as a political weapon. During his visit to the Gulf states in January 1993, Prime Minister Demirel responded to a Kuwaiti reporter's question about regional water issues, saying: "There will be no water problem. We have not and will not harm our neighbors."[43]

However, the Syrians recalled that Özal had in 1987 tied the commitment to supply 500 cusecs of water contingent on Syria's living up to a pledge not to support anti-Turkish terrorist groups, such as the PKK (the Kurdish Worker Party), and other radical groups such as the revolutionary leftist Dev-Sol. Sandra Postel notes that Özal's assurance to Syria and Iraq "rang a bit hollow, however, given his government's veiled threat in late 1989 to cut the Euphrates's flow because of Syria's support of Kurdish insurgents."[44] Moreover, the precedent of Turkey closing the Iraqi pipeline during the Gulf War was also fresh in Arab minds, even though the Turks insisted that they were merely complying with United Nations mandated sanctions, and that they too suffered economic hardship from the interruption in Iraqi oil supplies and the loss of transit and oil storage fees.

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[42] Reports in **Türkiye, Cumhuriyet** and **Tercüman**, August 23, 1991. According to the reports, only the Minister of Public Affairs and Housing expressed opposition to the proposed reduction. Prime Minister Mesut Yılmaz did not voice an opinion.

[43] Quoted in **Newspot** (published by the Turkish Directorate General of Press and Information, Ankara), January 28, 1993, p. 4.

[44] Sandra Postel, **Last Oasis: Facing Water Scarcity**, New York: W.W. Norton, 1992, p. 82 and sources cited on pp. 206-207, note 16.

Syria and Iraq also complain that before Turkey begins selling water to others, Ankara should first increase the supply to them from the Euphrates and Tigris, which they fear will be significantly diminished as the Atatürk Dam and other installations in Turkey's vast South East Anatolia (GAP) project are completed. The first meeting of Turkish, Syrian and Iraqi water officials since the Gulf War, held in Damascus September 28-October 2, 1992 broke up without reaching agreement, after Turkey rejected an Iraqi request to increase the flow at the Turkish-Syrian border from 500 to 700 cubic meters per second.[45]

15. Syria Attacks Turkish Water Policy:

Although there were high level Turkish-Syrian discussions during 1992 between the foreign and interior ministers of the two countries, at the end of December Syria launched a diplomatic offensive to isolate Turkey in the Arab world over the water issue. According to **Al Hayat**, Syria had handed the Arab League Secretariat in Cairo a document lambasting Turkey and asking Arab countries to apply pressure on Turkey on the water issue. The Syrians had asked the Arab countries to refuse to provide any financial or other assistance to the various Turkish projects. The Syrians alleged that the Peace Pipeline was "a plot to give Israel large quantities of water." The Syrian document charged further that while Ankara had concluded agreements on common waters with Russia, Bulgaria and Greece, Turkey refused to sign a "just and reasonable agreement" with Syria and Iraq. The Syrian document claimed that Turkish intransigence was the cause for failure to reach agreement despite negotiations that had gone on since 1962; that Turkey's position was contrary to international law; that Turkey regarded its provision of water to Syria and Iraq as a favor rather than a legal obligation; and finally that Turkey was justifying its limitations on supply by demanding that the Arabs apply new water saving irrigation technology. (The Turkish Ambassador to the United Nations, Mustafa Akşin, confirmed to the author that Turkey had in fact suggested to the Iraqis that they adopt Israeli-pioneered drip irrigation techniques!)[46]

Turkish analysts attributed the timing of the Syrian démarche to the signing by the Turkish Government of an agreement a few days earlier for construction of the Birecik Dam and hydropower plant. Prime Minister Demirel and Deputy Prime Minister İnönü attended the ceremony for the dam, the fourth largest on the Euphrates, which was to be built by a consortium of Turkish, German, Belgian, Austrian and French firms and

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[45] Agence France Presse dispatch from Baghdad, October 9, 1992, quoting Iraqi Deputy Agriculture Minister Abdel Sattar Hussein.

[46] The Al-Hayat story was reported in *Cumhuriyet*, December 25, 1992 and the **Turkish Daily News**, December 26, 1992.

would have a capacity of 672 megawatts. Demirel said that the combined capacity of four dams on the Euphrates would be 26.5 billion kwh, or half the capacity in all of Turkey.[47]

In an effort to improve Turkish-Syrian relations, Prime Minister Demirel met with President Assad in Damascus in mid-January 1993. At the end of the discussions on January 20, a joint communiqué was issued which stated, *inter alia*, that they had "reiterated their determination not to permit any activity on their respective territories detrimental to each other's security." Regarding the water question, they stated:[48] "Pursuant to the protocol signed in 1987 by the Turkish and Syrian governments and in view of the proximity of the filling of the Atatürk Dam reservoir, the two sides agreed to reach, before the end of 1993, a final solution determining the allocation to the parties from the waters of the Euphrates river. The two foreign ministers have been charged to follow up this objective."

Reporting to the Turkish people on the trip, at a press conference on January 31, 1993, Demirel declared that his visit had "started a new era in our relations" with Syria and that he and President Assad had discussed "the possibilities of cooperation to give a new spirit, new aims and new dimensions" to the improving bilateral relations. The two had agreed on the importance of maintaining the unity and territorial integrity of Iraq. He declared: "There is no need for Syria to be anxious about the water issue. The waters of the Euphrates will flow to that country whether there is an agreement or not." However, since Syria insisted on a new agreement and attached great importance to it, he confirmed that the foreign ministers would work to solve the problem of allocating the waters to other countries by the end of 1993.[49]

However, in a broadcast in Turkish on the Turkish state radio immediately following the Damascus visit, Demirel reiterated the Turkish legal position -which has not been accepted by most international legal authorities- that there is a distinction between "international" rivers which serve as borders between two or more states and "cross-border" rivers like the Euphrates: "There is an international common practice regarding border waters. There is no precedence [sc. precedents?] regarding cross-border waters. There are no rules on these waters. The right belongs to those who use the

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[47]**Turkish Daily News**, December 24, 1992. Demirel said that the Atatürk Dam provided 10 billion kwh and the Keban Dam 8 billion kwh.

[48]Text of communiqué in **Newspot**, January 28, 1993, p. 4.

[49]English text of press conference, **Newspot**, February 11, 1993, p. 2.

waters. Those who own the sources have the right to use these waters. Then the rest flows to the others."[50]

16. Turkey is a Large and Willing Supplier of Water to the Region:

While the Iraqi, the Saudis and other oil-rich Gulf states are unwilling to pay for Turkish water, Jordanians and Palestinians are eager to obtain Turkish water if it can be made available to them. According to the 1992 report of the General Directorate of State Hydraulic Works - *Devlet Su İşleri* (DSİ) in Turkish - the total discharge of Turkey's 26 river drainage basins averages 186.05 billion cubic meters (BCM) of water annually. Dr. Özden Bilen, Deputy Director of DSI, told me that they estimate that of this sum 96 BCM can be effectively utilized. To get a sense of the vastness of this figure in the context of our area of concern, the available water in a good year for all of Israel, the West Bank and Gaza reaches only about 2 BCM. In other words, Turkey has 48 times as much water. Yet Turkey's population is only 8 times as large.[51]

According to Professor John Kolars of the University of Michigan, Jordan's available water per capita is expected to drop from 255 cubic meters to 100, and for the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza it will fall from 153 to 65 by 2020. This is well below what is considered the minimum desirable level. (By way of comparison, Kolars estimates that in 2020 Turkey will still have 1,245 cubic meters available for every man, woman and child.)[52] For the nearer term, Kolars estimates that even after all future needs for irrigation, industrial and domestic use have been deducted, Turkey will have "an available surplus of nearly 43 billion cubic meters sometime after the year 2000."[53]

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[50] Ankara, Türkiye Radyoları Network in Turkish, 2100 GMT, January 20, 1993. Translation in FBIS WEU-93-012 21 Jan 1993, p. 84.

[51] The above statistics on water availability and population are based on discussions with Dr. Bilen in Ankara on September 24, 1992 and on the *1992 Dairy* issued by the Turkish Republic, General Directorate of State Hydraulic Works, and from Tables 5.1 and 5.2 in Özden Bilen and Savaş Uskay, **Comprehensive Water Resources Management Policies and Issues: A Report to the World Bank** (June 1991). I am also indebted to Professor İlter Turan of Istanbul University, with whom I met on September 18, for sharing with me the draft of his forthcoming article on "Turkey and the Middle East: Problems and Solutions."

[52] John Kolars, "Population and Water in Two Middle East Basins," unpublished table provided the author in June 1992. The figures do not comment on agricultural needs or plans.

[53] Kolars, "Water Resources of the Middle East," in **Sustainable Water Resources Management in Arid Countries: Middle East and**

Turkey's main water supply problem is one of distribution. The economically most developed regions, such as the Marmara and the Aegean, which include the major metropolitan centers of İstanbul and İzmir, lack sufficient water for their burgeoning populations, especially during periods of drought and in the summer. Dr. İ. Ergun Göknel, Director General of İstanbul's Metropolitan Municipality Water and Sewerage Administration (ISKI), reported that since 1989 ISKI had to adopt emergency measures since existing pipelines were bringing water to only 80% of the city's population, leaving some 2,000,000 persons without regular water supply. Rationing was eliminated a couple of years ago by cloud seeding and the purchase of water that was shipped in by sea tankers. "The scale of the sea tanker operation was so large at that time that Turkey was able to offer water supplies to U.S. troops in the Gulf War as well," he said.[54]

Future Turkish water development plans include the transporting of surplus water from the rivers flowing into the Mediterranean to the western cities, to growing tourist sites near Antalya and also possibly to the nearby Greek islands and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Depending on economic cost and technical feasibility, retro-fitted oil tankers, giant plastic balloons (the Medusa Bags described below), or pipelines will be utilized.

17. Jordanians Eager for Turkish Water:

Jordanian officials are eager to obtain Turkish water since the Hashemite Kingdom faces a looming crisis. In December 1990 Minister of Irrigation and Water Resources Dawud Khalaf estimated that current Jordanian consumption of 730 million cubic meters (MCM) would rise to 1,120 MCM by the year 2005. This estimate did not include the 350,000 Palestinians and Jordanians who fled or were expelled from Kuwait and have since returned to Jordan. Moreover, according to a paper prepared for the World Bank in June 1991 by Abu Taleb, Deason and Salameh, even if agreement is finally reached by Syria, Jordan and Israel on the long-delayed Al-Wahdah (Unity) Dam at Maqarin on the Yarmuk and other projects are completed, Jordan will only have a total annual water supply of 862 MCM. This means an annual deficit of 258 MCM.[55]

North Africa, ed. Eric. J. Schiller, Special Issue of the **Canadian Journal of Development Studies** published jointly with International Water Resources Association, 1992, p. 117.

[54]Joan D. Tiemey, "Growth Drives Istanbul Waste Expansion/Water Cleanup," **The Turkish Times**, April 5, 1993, p. 4.

[55]Cited in Gruen, **The Water Crisis**, revised edition, pp. 19-20. Many American and Middle Eastern analysts doubt the dam will ever be built, since the Syrians have already methodically and unilaterally reduced the flow

Adnan Abu Odeh, Jordan's ambassador to the United Nations, told me that he believed very deeply that "Turkish supply of water is imperative" to Israel, Palestine and Jordan. Support for importing Turkish water was also indicated to me by Dr. Jawad al Anani, director of the Center for Economic and Technical Studies in Amman.[56] The Jordanian ambassador said the Syrians might modify their present opposition to a pipeline bringing water from Turkey if they realized that if there was no assured water for Israel from Turkey, Israel would not consider withdrawing from the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon.

The Israelis stress out that in addition to its strategic importance, the Golan Heights also controls major water sources of the Jordan-Yarmuk River System, including the Banias River and Wazani and other springs.[57] This point is underscored in a recent study by Israeli defense analyst Ze'ev Schiff. He recalls that "the Syrian attempt to divert water was one of the events that set in motion the Six Day War." He adds that a Syrian-Israeli Agreement must also include a commitment by Lebanon not to divert the nearby Hasbani River from its natural flow into the Jordan River, which was part of the 1964 Arab headwaters diversion scheme. Schiff summarizes:[58] "If the Golan's military significance for Israel is primarily operational, specifically the defense of the Galilee, the need to defend the water sources is absolutely

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of the Yarmuk to Jordan and Israel by construction of some 30 small diversion dams.

[56] Conversation with the author, New York, July 21, 1992. Support for the idea of bringing Turkish water to Jordan was also expressed to me by Dr. Jawad al Anani, director of the Center for Economic and Technical Studies in Amman. (Conversation in New York, June 18, 1992.)

[57] See map "The Golan Heights: Room for Maneuver?" accompanying Eduh Ya'ari's dispatch from Hong Kong, "Lessons from the East," **Jerusalem Report**, November 5, 1992, pp. 25-26. Mr. Boaz Wachtel has proposed solving both the water and the security problems by means of a pipeline from the Atatürk Dam that will feed a broad canal along the Israeli-Syrian Golan front to serve as an anti-tank barrier and provide water and hydropower to Syria, Jordan, Israel and the Palestinians. Aside from the plan's economic feasibility, which has not yet been fully calculated, the project faces many political hurdles since in addition to Syrian-Israeli agreement, it would require Turkish, Syrian and Iraqi approval to divert 1 billion cubic meters of water annually from the Euphrates. Boaz Wachtel, "The Peace Canal on the Golan," **The Turkish Times**, March 1, 1992, p. 11.

[58] Ze'ev Schiff, **Peace with Security: Israel's Minimal Security Requirements in Negotiations with Syria**, The Washington Institute Policy Papers, Number 34, Washington, DC: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1993, pp. xii-xiii.

strategic and indeed existential. As long as a state of war exists between Israel and Syria, and as long as the sources of the Jordan cannot be secured, Israel cannot withdraw from the Golan Heights." Schiff concludes that any peace agreement must include Syrian commitments not to attempt to divert the Banias, to establish a joint Israeli-Syrian committee to determine the distribution of the waters of the Banias, and to regional cooperation in exploiting the flood waters feeding the Jordan and the Sea of Galilee. Moreover, since the Galilee is Israel's only large storage reservoir, Schiff strongly recommends that the current Israeli border with Syria be moved eastward from the edge of the reservoir and that Syrian fishermen and not only Syrian military be barred from the lake, lest it become "a bone of contention and source of trouble and threats."[59]

18. Jordanians Welcome Turkey as a Mideast Role Model:

Ambassador Abu Odeh has been a close advisor to King Hussein and an active advocate of peace with Israel and efforts to open up the political process and liberalize the society in Jordan. These policies of modernization and liberalization are under challenge from Muslim fundamentalists. Ambassador Odeh told me he saw benefits to greater Turkish involvement that transcended even the value of providing additional water supplies. Because Turkey was a Middle Eastern country with a well established political system that was "more on the secular side," he believed Turkey's involvement in the sphere of cooperation in supplying water would indirectly help other countries move closer to secularism. This would help promote peace, because, in his view, militant Islamic rejectionism was the biggest threat to the Mideast peace process.

19. The "Mini-pipeline" Project:

Professor John Kolars of Michigan and Professor Hillel Shuval of the Hebrew University have suggested that a more modest Turkish "mini-pipeline" to Syria and Jordan with an extension to the West Bank, would be of great benefit to Syrians, Jordanians and Palestinians. Such a pipeline would provide Aleppo, Homs, Damascus, and Amman with an assured steady, pure supply of water, which has been threatened during years of drought and the loss of water through old leaky municipal water systems. Even if water from the pipeline were not initially made available to Israel itself, by extending it to the West Bank and possibly also to Gaza, it could make a tangible contribution to increasing the quantity and restoring the quality of the water available to the Palestinian Arab population. While technically feasible, this project also depends on overcoming the suspicions and hostilities among the countries involved and finding donors prepared to

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[59] **Ibid.**, pp. 90-91.

contibute to the estimated $5 billion cost.[60] A less costly alternative suggested by Shuval is to extend the pipeline initially only to Syria. Presumably this would enable Syria to release more water from the Yarmuk for Jordanian and Palestinian use, and allow Israel full use of the Banias. Syria is continuing to build a series of small dams on the headwaters of the Yarmuk for flood water storage and irrigation. As a result, Syria will be able to impound some 215 million cubic meters (MCM) or about half of the flow of the headwaters of the Yarmuk before it reaches Jordan. Haifa University geographer Amon Sopher concludes that as a result of the Syrian diversions, evaporation and the downstream use by Israel, only some 120 to 160 MCM are left to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan which relies on the Yarmuk for most of its water supply. This is far less than the 377 MCM which was to be allocated to Jordan under the Johnston Plan of the mid-1950's. Unless alternative sources of water are brought to supplement the Yarmuk's flow or to supply the growing Syrian population dependent on the Yarmuk, it is highly questionable whether there will be sufficient water to make the Unity Dam economically feasible.[61]

20. Augmenting the Flow of Euphrates to Benefit Turkey's Neighbors:

Another suggestion to ease tensions between Turkey, Syria and Iraq and to provide additional water for municipal use in the region is to increase the flow of the Euphrates by diverting other Turkish rivers into it by pipeline and/or canal. Some of the waters of the Seyhan and Ceyhan rivers in southeastern Anatolia which were planned by Özal to feed the peace water pipeline, could be utilized instead for this purpose. According to Professor Kolars, the Göksu River further west is another possibility. Dr. Munther Haddadin, the head of the Jordanian delegation to the Water Group of the Multilateral Peace Talks and a member of the Jordanian delegation in the bilateral talks with Israel, has recently proposed the diversion southward of rivers that flow from Anatolia in Turkey north to the Black Sea. He estimates that their total flow is 36 billion cubic meters (BCM) and that because of adequate rainfall, the irrigation needs in their basins do not exceed

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[60] John F. Kolars and William A. Mitchell, **The Euphrates River and the Southeast Anatolia Development Project**, Carbondale, IL, Southern Illionis University Press, 1991, 324 pp. at p. 90, and Hilel I. Shuval, "Approaches to Resolving the Water Conflicts Between Israel and Her Neighbors - A Regional Water-for-Peace Plan," in **Water International**, Vol. 17, No. 3, September 1992, pp. 133-43.

[61] Arnon Sopher, **Naharot Shel Esh** [Rivers of Fire], Tel Aviv, Am Oved Publishers for the University of Haifa, 1992, ppp. 147-55. After being approved by Arab and Israeli technical experts, the Johnston plan was shelved for political reasons by the Arab League because of Syrian refusal to sign an agreement with Israel.

10 BCM. Since Turkey, Syria and Iraq have already built dams on the Euphrates that can store about 106 BCM, while the average flow of the river is only 32 billion, there would be no difficulty in storing the surplus Turkish water from rivers he proposes to divert.[62]

When I asked Dr. Haddadin whether he had any details on the costs involved and the environmental impact of such a massive project, he said that at the moment this was only an idea, but one which he thought was more worthy of further study than the moribund peace water pipeline, which he did not think was a good idea. He had heard that there were some officials in Turkey who were receptive to the idea.[63] An earlier idea to convey Euphrates water from Iraq to Jordan had been abandoned not only because of the cost but because of the growing Iraqis concern that upstream development projects by Turkey and Syria would greatly diminish the future flow of the river to Iraq. Priit J. Vesilind of the **National Geographic** estimates that full development of Turkey's Southeast Anatolia Project (GAP in Turkish) could "reduce the Euphrates' flow by as much as 60 percent. This could severely jeopardize Syrian and Iraqi agriculture."[64]

While it might technically be possible to divert the flow of the rivers flowing into the Black Sea into the Euphrates, the cost of construction of the pipelines and pumping of the water would be high. Yet another constraint would be the environmental effect. An official at the Turkish Embassy in Washington, a Turkish desk officer at the State Department and a University of Texas graduate student of environmental issues in Turkey, to whom I mentioned Dr. Haddadin's idea all characterized it as "an environmental disaster." They pointed out that the Black Sea already was facing serious degradation because of the pollution flowing into it from Turkey's eastern European riparians. Moreover, Mr. Tacan İlden, councillor at the Turkish embassy, stressed that Turkey is committed under the Black Sea cooperation agreement to work with its neighbors to improve the environmental situation and thus would face strong opposition from the other riparians if it significantly diminished the flow of high quality water that flows into the Black Sea.

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[62]Munther Haddadin, "A View from Jordan," in "Water and the Peace Process: Two Perspectives," **Policy Focus**, Washington, DC, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, September 1992, pp. 1, 14-19.

[63]Telephone interview with Dr. Haddadin in Washington, May 11, 1993.

[64]Pritt J. Vesilind, "The Middle East's Water-Critical Resource," **National Geographic**, vol. 183, no. 5 (May 1993), pp. 38-70, quotation from p. 50.

21. Direct Shipment of Water from Turkey's Manavgat River:

This project is the closest to realization. Work is already underway to construct the necessary facilities in Turkey, with completion expected in 1994.[65] Since the water will be shipped directly from Turkey to Israel in supertankers or in plastic balloons towed by tugs, there is no need to obtain approval from any other countries. According to Dr. Bilen, Deputy Director of DSI, the Manavgat River, which is in the Antalya Basin along the Western portion of Turkey's Mediterranean coastline, has an outflow at the rate of 140 cubic meters per second, or 4.7 BCM per annum.

What about future Turkish domestic demand? Dr. Bilen assured me that since the area was mountainous and covered with forests, the area slated for irrigation was small, currently only 10,500 hectares, with development limited to an additional 5.000 hectares. Thus, total Turkish water usage was projected at only 135 MCM per annum. Since the tourist hotels in the region were all along the Mediterranean shore, they would not degrade the high quality of the water for export, which would be taken by pipe from a reservoir at the Oymapınar Dam 11 kilometers upstream. The initial planned capacity is for 183 MCM per year. This would be conveyed in two pipes, one carrying specially treated water, and the other untreated river water, with a combined capacity of 500,000 cubic meters per day. The pipelines would be extended for about a kilometer into the sea and linked to a single point mooring system for tankers or plastic balloons to be filled. DSI prepared the contracts, arranged the bidding, and supervises the work of the Turkish private contracting firms Aydıner-EMT group who are doing the work within the framework of the Turkish Public Partnership Administration (PPA). The facility is to be transferred to the Public Participation Fund (PPF), which has already provided some construction funding. The PPF was created to supervise the privatization of Turkish state enterprises.

The marketing of the water is to be undertaken by a separate agency to be established, which may have foreign as well as Turkish shareholders. The idea is to create a structure that will insulate the Turkish Government from Arab criticisms that Ankara is officially selling water to Israel, while also reassuring Israeli buyers that the future supply of water will not be subject to interruption by Arab political pressure or possible domestic political changes within Turkey itself. Moreover, Israel will not be the only consumer. There is sufficient surplus water in the Manavgat and the nearby Köprüçay river to expand the export facilities to meet the needs of Turkish cities in the West,

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[65] Lale Sarıibrahimoğlu, "Manavgat Project Underway," **Turkish Daily News**, December 2, 1992.

the tourist areas around Antalya, the nearby Greek islands and possibly Northern Cyprus and the Sinai Coast at El Arish.[66]

The Turkish approach is that their terminals will be like gas filling stations, which serve all customers without any political discrimination. Moreover, like a filling station that provides a choice of regular or premium gasoline, the two Manavgat terminals will offer a choice of regular or specially treated water. There has in the past been considerable interest in Israel in importing water from Turkey. Tahal conducted a pre-feasibility study and a report prepared by engineer Abraham Shemtov in June 1990 estimated that 250 MCM in the first stage and 400 MCM in the second stage could be delivered into Israel's National Water System for 22.3 US cents per cubic meter, utilizing extremely large plastic bags (1.6 MCM capacity) towed by tugboats from the Manavgat or other sources.[67]

Dr. Haddadin, who was formerly President and Chairman of the Jordan Valley Authority, told me that in principle he supported the idea of bringing water from the Manavgat River, but in practice it would all depend on the cost and whether Jordan could afford the water. The project has not yet been implemented, however. One reason has been the concern expressed in the past by Israelis, including former Water Commissioner Dan Zaslavsky, over the dependability of Turkish supply over the 10 to 20 year period necessary to make the cost of constructing the Israeli terminal worthwhile. Ambassador Collette Avital, Israel's consul general in New York, recently expressed the view that Turkey a major constructive force for peace and that Israel had no reason to question Turkey's reliability as a source of water. Among the positive changes as noted above, are that Turkish-Israeli relations have been raised to the ambassadorial level and bilateral cooperation in tourism and other areas is openly developing, the fact that Jordan and the Palestinians are interested in obtaining Turkish water, and Arab objections have been undercut by the fact that Ankara can point to the fact that direct Arab-Israeli peace negotiations are under way.[68]

However, the heavy rains of the past two seasons lave lessened the sense of urgency in Israel. The Labor Government of Yitzhak Rabin and Minister of Agriculture Yaakov Tsur and Water Commissioner Gideon Tsur,

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[66]Mr. Yüksel Erimtan, chairman and CEO of EMT, a Turkish consulting and construction company, has plans for dam construction and power generation projects on the Köprüçay River, which would provide more than 1 billion cubic meters of water for export, in addition to the water available from the Manavgat. (Conversation with the author, Ankara, September 21, 1992.)

[67]James A. Cran, "The Medusa Bag and Middle East Projects" (mimeographed), 13-pages, contains a detailed description of the technical aspects of the project.

[68]Author's conversation with Ambassador Avital, January 6, 1993.

have not yet determined their water import policy. Professor Sopher suggests in a recent study that Israel might want to wait to commit itself to building an import terminal until after such water exporting projects have been developed in several countries. The competition from multiple sources of supply would significantly lessen the danger of a cutoff in supply because of political or other disruption, and would also increase Israel's bargaining power to obtain the most favorable terms.[69] The problem with this cautious approach is that pipelines and terminals are unlikely to be built in the exporting countries unless the investors have a firm commitment from potential customers of long-term contracts.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres has long been deeply interested in regional cooperation to deal with the region's water issues and has conferred with Turkish officials on the subject. Turkish authorities expressed their gratification that Peres was asked to represent Israel at the funeral for President Özal. (They were upset that only former Secretary of State Baker and not former President Bush or Vice President Al Gore had led the American delegation.)

A decisive factor in the Israeli calculations will be whether Turkish water is in fact cheaper than water from desalination. The cost of the Turkish water depends not only on costs of construction, interest rates and the Turkish royalty, but also on whether large-scale Medusa bags will perform as projected. James A. Cran, President of the Medusa Corparation of Calgary, estimates the first 250 MCM could be conveyed to Ashkelon and pumped into the National Water Carrier at a cost of 17 cents per cubic meter, while additional quantities would be at 9 cents. He contends this compares very favorably "to desalination at $0.75-$1.25, supertanker transport as $0.70-1.10 or the Turkish pipeline to Jordan at $0.60." He estimates that 10 months and $1.5 to $2 million will be needed to complete technical development, construction and testing of a 100,000 ton prototype.[70] Mr.

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[69] Arnon Sopher, **Nahorot Shel Esh** [Rivers of Fire], ppp. 222-23.

[70] As stated in the August 17, 1992 letter Mr. Cran wrote to Allen Kieswetter, Chief Negotiator, Multilateral Working Group on Water Resources, Department of State (Copy given to me by Mr. Cran). The lower cost figures are based on an interest rate of 7.5% rather than the 12% of the Tahal study (Telephone conversation with the author, December 7, 1992). Unitor, a Norwegian maritime supply company, which has patented the "Unitor Oil Bag," for collecting oil spills, has also begun to experiment with polymer coated fabric containers for transporting fresh water. However, the company recently suspended work, because of "major engineering obstacles" that Unitor did not feel able to tackle on its own. The Oslo-based company is seeking to attract support from governmental or major corporate entities to resume the research. Author's conversation on January

Yüksel Erimtan, the Turkish contractor involved in the Manavgat project, estimates that utilizing retro-fitted oil tankers, the total cost of supplying the water to Israel would be between 65 and 70 cents per cubic meter. This is far too high for most agricultural applications although it is reasonable for municipal drinking water. For example, residents in the Boston area currently are charged $1.82 per cubic meter for their water! (This includes the cost of replacing the leaky pipes in the old water distribution system and installing a new sewage system as part of the environmental clean up of Boston harbor.)[71]

22. Turkish Water's Potential Contribution to Peace

Mr. Cran suggested in a recent discussion with the author how Turkish water could tangibly contribute to Jordanian/Palestinian-Israeli peace: Some 250 MCM of Turkish water would be delivered to Israel and connected by short pipeline with the National Water Carrier. For each cubic meter received, Israel would release a cubic meter from the upper Jordan or the Kinneret for Jordanian (or Palestinian) use. This would save the cost of conveying the Turkish water to Jordan's East Ghor Canal and would also save Israel the energy cost of lifting water into the National Water Carrier from the Kinneret. Linking the two projects could help overcome Arab opposition to Turkey's supply of water to Israel: "Since Israel is unlikely to admit Jordan's right to 200 MCM, the compromise is for Israel to give 250 MCM annually to Jordan conditional on an equivalent quantity being brought from Turkey to Israel." Additional projects using the Medusa bags could carry a total of 1880 MCM of Manavgat water to terminals at various other ports along the Mediterranean and Red Sea.

23. Conclusion: Interdependence as Guarantor of Peace

In response to Arab and Israeli fears that political factors may disrupt Turkish water supplies, Turkish officials have repeatedly stressed that they seek to develop a network of mutually beneficial economic relations among Turkey and all its neighbors. For example, pipelines would convey oil and gas to Turkey and in exchange Turkey would provide water and hydroelectric power to its neighbors, as well as cereals, fruits and vegetables that could be grown more economically in Turkey than in Arabia. Agreement has reportedly been concluded to link the electrical grids of Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Turkey. There is also talk of building a super highway from Egypt to Turkey. This growing economic interdependence and the obvious fruits of peaceful cooperation, the Turks say, are the best guarantee against disruption.

18, 1993 with Christopher P. Constantine, U.S. representative of Unitor Ships Service, Inc.

[71] Figures supplied to the author on May 9, 1993, by Jeffrey Kosowsky, who is an officer in a condominium association in Brookline, Massachussets.

Only two months before he died, President Özal spoke before the Middle East and Central Asia Institutes at Columbia University. After his address, on February 4, I asked him whether the "Peace Pipeline" was still under consideration in view of the Saudi and other Arab objections. He replied that despite the current obstacles, he was confident that "eventually the neighboring states will realize the mutual benefits of cooperation with Turkey and the project will some day be achieved."

How actively Turkey will pursue peace initiatives in the Middle East will depend in part on who will be the new prime minister and how Demirel, who was elected President on April 16, will define his role. While he was prime minister he was critical of Özal's stretching the scope of the President's powers beyond what was envisaged in the constitution. Demirel assured the parliament that while he would be non-partisan in matters of domestic politics, he would remain actively engaged in important matters of public policy on both the national and international level.[72] It should be noted that Demirel has long been associated with Turkey's water projects, and claims to be the father of the GAP project, and is committed to its completion.

However, some political observers in Ankara in the past questioned whether Demirel possesses the dynamism and resourcefulness that characterized Özal's bold and sometimes controversial initiatives in foreign affairs. They saw Demirel as more in the line of the traditional politician, who seeks consensus and avoids taking risks.

On the other hand, it should be noted that following his January 1993 trip to Syria, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, Demirel said that he was encouraged by the warm welcome he had received in all the Gulf countries and was pleased that all the officials he met "admired Turkey's contribution to peace and stability in the region and wanted it to continue." He said that he was also glad to observe that they shared with Turkey "similar views on regional and international issues." He had reasurred them that Turkey would continue its efforts to contribute to peace, stability and security in the region. After reviewing Turkey's relations with the Middle East, the Balkans, and with the United States, Demirel summed up as follows:[73]

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[72] Reuters dispatch from Ankara, May 16, **New York Times**, May 17, 1993. Demirel received a majority of 245 votes out of a total of 450 members of parliament on the third ballot.

[73] "Target: World Integration, Demirel's First Press Conference in 1993," **Newspot**, February 11, 1993, p. 2.

> In 1993, Turkey will continue her multilateral and active foreign policy, and integrate with the world. With regional and global cooperation, she will continue to carry on her historical function, leading others on the path to peace, prosperity and happiness. This is the vision of Turkish foreign policy.

He went on to assert that Turkey was well qualified to play the role of a major world power:

> Turkey's experience, human potential, dynamic economy, indisputable commitment to democracy, and geopolitical position, makes Turkey a world state which will give direction and shape to the new international community.

Yet even if the Turkish Republic under the presidency of Süleyman Demirel remains fully committed to an active role in promoting Middle East peace and stability, its success will depend in large measure on the response from the parties concerned. Do the states which were formerly provinces of the Ottoman Empire truly wish Turkey to "carry on her historic role of leadership" or are they uncomfortable with such a role? Clearly major international water projects will not come into being until there is progress in removing the legacy of mistrust and suspicion that have long plagued the region. Much will depend on the results of the current negotiations between Israel and Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and the Palestinians. However, since major projects may take as long as a decade to be built, the financial and technical support of outside industrial nations and of international agencies for testing the technical and economic feasibility of the various proposals for conveying Turkish water to the Arab-Israel area should be undertaken now, so that they can begin to be implemented once the political obstacles have been removed. Moreover, the experience of working together to resolve problems concerning water resources, environmental problems and other economic issues may help build the confidence and trust among Turks, Arabs and Israelis that is a prerequisite to building a stable and lasting peace.