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Gencer ÖZCAN

Prof. Dr., Department of International Relations, İstanbul Bilgi University

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The JDP's Changing Discursive Strategies towards Israel: Rhetoric vs. Reality

Gencer ÖZCAN

Prof. Dr., Department of International Relations, İstanbul Bilgi University, İstanbul. E-mail: gencer.ozcan@bilgi.edu.tr

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ABSTRACT

Justice and Development Party [JDP] governments' policies towards Israel were informed by the priorities that the party's power strategies entailed. In a stark contrast to the friendly policies in its first term in power, the JDP began to employ different discursive strategies based on an anti-Israeli rhetoric since 2009. Geared to bolster the party's prestige at home and abroad, the new rhetoric seemed to have addressed to the changing priorities of the party leadership. However, the new strategies led to the emergence of a widening gap between the anti-Israeli rhetoric and subtle efforts that the JDP paid to maintain its relations with Israel. Revisiting the last 15 years, the article tries to answer the question as to how Turkey's relations with Israel were adjusted to meet necessities of miscellaneous power strategies that the JDP leadership pursued.

Keywords: Justice and Development Party, Turkey and Israel, Davos, One Minute, Mavi Marmara, Arab Uprisings.

AK Parti'nin Değişen Söylem Stratejileri: Retorik Karşısında Gerçeklik

ÖZET

AK Parti'nin İsrail'e yönelik politikaları parti yöneticilerinin benimsedikleri iktidar stratejileri uyarınca saptanarak uygulamaya konulmuştur. İlk iktidar dönemi boyunca izlenen yakınlık politikalarının tersine, AK Parti 2009'dan başlayarak İsrail karşıtlığına dayanan yeni söylemsel stratejilere yönelmiştir. Partinin içeride ve dışarıda saygınlığını artırmak için tasarlanan bu stratejiler parti yönetiminin değişen öncelikleriyle uyumludur. Buna karşılık, yeni stratejiler söz konusu söylemler ile partinin İsrail ile ilişkileri sürdürmeye dönük çabaları arasında gitgide genişleyen bir farklılığın ortaya çıkmasına neden olmuştur. Makale, son 15 yılın gelişmeleri ışığında, AK Parti yöneticilerinin izlediği değişken iktidar stratejilerinin İsrail ile ilişkileri nasıl etkilediği sorusuna yanıt aramaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, Türkiye ve İsrail, Davos, One Minute, Mavi Marmara, Arap İsyanları.

When the first Justice and Development Party [JDP] government came to power in November 2002, future of Turkey's relations with Israel was a matter of curiosity. Some anticipated that the JDP would remain loyal to anti-Semitic tenets that it inherited from the Islamist National Outlook Movement, from which the party split in 2000. In spite of the anticipations, the early JDP governments, let alone veering away from the established course of policy towards Israel that previous governments cultivated, they displayed willingness to improve the relations with the "Zionist State". Continuity was to a large extent a manifestation of two factors. On the one hand, formerly being identified with the anti Semitic National Outlook Movement, the party's leadership strove to revamp its image abroad through maintaining good relations with Israel. On the other hand, to counter the strident opposition from the military in its first term in power, the JDP stayed away from a number of security sensitive areas including relations with Israel, which was monopolized by the military. Therefore, the alignment between the two countries forged in the 1990's remained intact during the JDP's first term in power.

With consolidating its position in 2007, the JDP's leadership diversified its power strategies and began to pursue more active regional policies. Soon Israel became one of the pivotal elements in intriguing regional strategies that the JDP's leadership devised to promote its power position at home. In the wake of several disappointments occurred in late 2008, the JDP abandoned Israel as a partner to work in its regional initiatives, and began instead to bring relations with parties affiliated with the *Muslim Brotherhood* [MB] to the fore. With the "Arab Spring" spreading across the region in 2011, JDP's policy of support for MB became the hallmark of the party's regional policy. Moreover, discursive strategy of internalization of the Palestinian question and of demonization of Israel became an instrument to support party's mundane policies to hold on to power. However, close examination of discursive practices scapegoating Israel reveals that there has been a widening gap between the rhetoric and practicalities of the bilateral relations. Contrary to semblance of hostility implied by the despising discourse, the party leadership subtly controlled the damage occurred during the crises so that crucial avenues of dialogue remained open. The article aims to make an analysis of dynamics which led to the formulation of the Janus faced policy towards Israel that the JDP leadership formulated. In order to highlight the discrepancy between the rhetoric and reality, the article will first contextualize the change of discursive strategies in the light of power strategies that the JDP leadership put in effect after 2009. Within this context, the article will first take a closer look into a number of events which paved way to mini crises, and uncover discrepancies between the rhetoric employed and the way the JDP leadership considered the actual relations. The article will argue that as a manifestation of the party's changing power strategies, the hostile rhetoric towards Israel was instrumentalized by the party's leadership to bolster its position both at home and abroad, and that the hostility that the rhetoric implied was rarely consistent with the way the party leadership dealt with Israel in reality.

Throughout the 1990's, alignment with Israel had addressed to the strategic priorities of those in power.[1] From procurement of military supplies to intelligence sharing, and cooperation on other security-related issues, Israel seemed to be a suitable partner in Ankara. With the military at the helm of the foreign and security making process, the power configuration prevailing in Turkey created favorable political circumstances to forge the alignment. Concomitant Israeli readiness to cooperate with Turkey led some to name the 1990's as the golden age of the bilateral relations. However, in the 2000s, given the decreasing level of threat from the armed Kurdish resistance and changing regional power distribution after the US occupation of Iraq, Turkey reprioritized its strategic requirements and

1 Gencer Özcan, "Turkish Israeli Relations in Crisis: Living with the Gordion Knot", *Hellenic Studies*, Vol.20, No.1, Spring 2012, p.69-84.

to some degree desecuritized its relations with its Middle Eastern neighbors. Adaptation of Turkey's regional policies was manifest in Foreign Minister İsmail Cem's Good Neighborhood Policy in very early 2000s and JDP's approach dubbed as "Zero Problems with the Neighbors" Policy.[2] It is to be noted that the first JDP governments took advantage of positive externalities provided by the US occupation of Iraq in 2003. Iran and Syria, under duress of the overwhelming US military presence in Iraq, appeared to have shelved troublesome issues to reduce the likelihood of any friction with Turkey. As a testimony to the reduced level of threat from its neighbors, Turkey's National Security Policy Document was edited in 2010 to the effect that all clauses of animosity towards neighbors were removed.[3] Therefore, while the regional landscape became conducive for cooperation with former regional rivals, military cooperation with Israel lost at least some of its relevance. Furthermore, the military, the main prop of the alignment in the 'golden age', lost its prerogatives in foreign policy making process and was no longer in a position to call the tune in conducting Ankara's relations with Tel Aviv.[4]

In spite of these dynamics, the JDP maintained good relations with Israel. As they came to power, the JDP leaders made it clear that they would cultivate good relations with Israel.[5] As a token of importance attached to its relations, the JDP governments appointed the best diplomats, such as Ahmet Üzümcü, Feridun Sinirlioğlu, to Tel Aviv. Turkey continued to purchase the military equipment from Israel.[6] Israel was one of the countries which took part in joint exercises, the Anatolian Eagle, carried out in Konya. The relations remained on a cooperative basis and became successful in surmounting several challenges. After the bombing of two İstanbul synagogues on 23 November 2003 which killed scores of Muslims and Jews, the Foreign Ministers of Turkey and Israel vowed to fight terrorism. The size of Turkey-Israel Inter-Parliamentary Friendship Group reached to 307 MPs during the JDP's first term in power. Of its members, 247 were the JDP members, overwhelming majority of the party's group in the parliament.[7] On 13 November 2007, when Israeli President Shimon Peres delivered a speech before Turkey's National Assembly, bilateral relations reached its peak.

On 22 March 2004, the stability in bilateral relations was distorted after the assassination of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, founder and spiritual leader of HAMAS. The assassination prompted critical statements from Prime Minister Erdoğan calling the Israeli action as "intolerable" and an evidence of "state terror".[8] After few weeks, the tension recurred when Abdel Aziz al-Rantissi, Sheikh Yassin's successor was assassinated on 17 April 2004. This led to the postponement of Prime Minister Erdoğan's visit to Israel. In the wake of Israeli operations in a refugee camp in Gaza in May caused civilian casualties, the JDP top brass condemned Israel. Prime Minister Erdoğan "I invite all those in a position of responsibility –prime ministers, heads of state- to take a joint stance against these steps which have escalated almost to a level of state terror" and asked about "the difference between a terrorist who kills civilians and Israel, who kills civilians." Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül warned Israel

2 Ahmet Davutoğlu, "Turkey's Foreign Policy Vision: An Assessment of 2007", *Insight Turkey*, Vol.10, No.1, 2008 p.80.

3 Aslı Aydıntaşbaş, "Kırmızı Kitapta Tehdit Temizliği," *Milliyet*, 23 August 2010.

4 Gencer Özcan, "Facing Its Waterloo in Diplomacy: Turkey's Military in Foreign Policy-making Process," *New Perspectives on Turkey*", Vol.40, 2009, p.83–102.

5 "Turkish Leader Stresses Strong Ties with Israel in Meeting with U.S. Jews: Erdogan Pledged to Fight Anti-Semitism in the Arab World," *The Turkish Times*, 1–4 January 2003.

6 Arieh O'Sullivan and Avi Krawitz, "Turkey Plans to Purchase $200 Million of Israeli UAVs", *The Jerusalem Post*, 19 April 2005; Utku Çakırözer, "Bombalı Kuşları İsrail'den Alıyoruz", *Milliyet*, 3 May 2005.

7 Kemal Özer, "TBMM'deki İsrail Dostluk Grubu Üyeleri", *TIMETURK*, 27 January 2009, http://www.timeturk.com/tr/makale/kemal-ozer/tbmm-deki-israil-dostluk-grubu-uyeleri.html, (Accessed on 25 August 2015).

8 Turan Yılmaz, "Erdoğan: İsrail'inki de Terör", *Hürriyet*, 25 March 2004.

of the ramifications of such policies that they would harm Turkey's relations with Israel.[9] However, in spite of these rebukes, the JDP government's effort to keep the crisis at bay was palpable. When the assassination led to street demonstrations, Erdoğan was careful not to let protests got blown out of proportion: "We do not want what has happened to ruin our relations with Israel."[10] The following year the bilateral relations were looking as good as ever. Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Gül on 4-5 January 2005 and Prime Minister Erdoğan on 1-2 May 2005 visited Israel.[11] Erdoğan's visit was full of symbolism with pictures depicting Erdoğan visiting *Yad Vashem* and shaking hands with Ariel Sharon. In June 2005, Erdoğan received "Courage to Care Award" from the Anti-Defamation League on behalf of diplomats who saved Jews during the Holocaust. In his speech he defined anti-Semitism as "a manifestation of a criminal disease of mind."[12]

The following crisis broke out in February 2006 when Khaled Meshaal, the leader of HAMAS visited Turkey after HAMAS won the Palestinian elections. The first official statements on the visit were carefully worded to downplay the event that it was merely a contact between two parties.[13] Although he was among those who decided to receive Meshaal, Prime Minister Erdoğan declined to meet with him.[14] Reports based on sources of Foreign Ministry maintained that the visit was meant to give HAMAS a conciliatory message that it should take the right direction under the new political circumstances. Several reports underlined that Gül suggested Meshaal that HAMAS should change its rejectionist policy and recognize Israel. Gül was also quoted to have told his guest that:

> What should be done is what realpolitik requires. Even when passing from Gaza to the West Bank, one should get permission from Israel. When there are such circumstances, it is meaningless to say that "we do not recognize Israel". If you say that "you want peace", whom you will have peace with? From now on, what comes first on top of your responsibilities is to solve mundane problems of Palestinian people.[15]

One of the phenomenon that characterized the first six years of the JDP's foreign policy was the willingness that the party leadership has to play role of mediation on regional issues. In this period through taking benefit of its intimate relations with Israel, Turkey offered its good offices to the parties having problems with Israel. During his first visit to Israel in May 2005, Prime Minister Erdoğan expressed his readiness to assume such a role saying that "we are born to mediate". [16] Starting from 2008, the JDP top brass assertively aspired to the role of mediator between Israel and Syria. Indirect talks between the two began in May 2008 under the supervision of Turkish diplomats in Ankara and continued in five rounds until 27 December 2008 when Israel launched the *Operation Cast Lead* in Gaza. Although Erdoğan used a stronger terminology to lambast the offensive, such as "savagery" and

9 Quoted in Özlem Tür, "Turkey and Israel in the 2000s-From Cooperation to Conflict", *Israel Studies*, Vol. 17, No.3, Fall 2012, p.53-54.

10 Quoted in Tür, "Turkey and Israel in the 2000s, p.45.

11 Mesut Özcan, "2000'li Yıllarda Türkiye-İsrail İlişkileri: Yeni Bir Denge Arayışı", Özden Zeynep Oktav and Helin Sarı Ertem (eds.), *2000'li Yıllarda Türk Dış Politikası: Fırsatlar, Riskler ve Krizler*, Ankara, Nobel, 2015, p.243-244.

12 Uriel Heilman,"ADL Honors Turkish PM for Turkey's WWII Role", *The Jerusalem Post*, 10 June 2005; "Özgürlük ve Demokrasi Hedeflerimiz Örtüşüyor", *Yeni Şafak*, 11 June 2005.

13 Utku Çakırözer, "Bıçak Sırtı Diplomasi", *Milliyet*, 17 *February* 2006.

14 Serkan Demirtaş *et al.*,"Hamas Bombası", *Radikal*, 17 February 2006; Hasan Tüfekçi, "Esenboğa Yolunda Köşe Kapmaca", *Hürriyet*, 18 February 2006.

15 Fikret Bila, "Hamas Ziyaretinin Perde Arkası", *Milliyet*, 18 February 2006; Nur Batur, "Erdoğan HAMAS Lideri'ne Niçin Yeşil Işık Yaktı", *Hürriyet*, 18 February 2006.

16 "İsrail'le Yeni Sayfa", *Cumhuriyet*, 2 Mayıs 2005.

a "crime against humanity", his criticism noticeably focused on how his counterpart Ehud Olmert deliberately wrecked his mediation scheme for the Israeli-Syrian proximity talks.

Yet the aftershock, which came on 29 January 2009 in *Davos World Economic Forum,* left en even stronger impact. Before he furiously walked out the panel in protest since he was not given the time the moderator allowed to other panelists, he harshly criticized President Shimon Peres accusing Israelis of "knowing well how to kill". However, in the aftermath of the panel, Erdoğan maintained that "he had left the debate not because of his disagreements with Mr. Peres but because he had been given much less time to speak than the Israeli leader". Eyewitness accounts also confirmed that Erdoğan assuaged Peres in the aftermath of the panel telling him that his protest did not aim him, but the moderator. *Davos World Economic Forum* spokesman also confirmed that Peres and Erdoğan had "spoken by mobile telephone and both men now considered the matter closed."[17] On his return, Erdoğan was again quoted several times saying that his reaction was against the moderator.[18] It was interesting that in one of the interviews given in the immediate aftermath of the incident, the way Erdoğan framed Davos was far different than the one he would use in coming weeks. First of all, he underscored that he would not "abuse" Davos and "let history write the rest of it". Furthermore, underlining that the bilateral relations was based on mutual interests and should continue as such, Erdoğan quoted a Turkish proverb suggesting self restraint: "who starts up in anger sits down with a loss." [19]

Nevertheless, when the move prompted remarkable public outcry at home and abroad,[20] the JDP seemed not to have missed the opportunity and swiftly converted the incident into ammunition for party propaganda. A large demonstration was organized by the party to give Erdoğan a hero's welcome on his return from Davos. Demonstrators carried banners reading "Conqueror of Davos", "Delegate of the Oppressed" or "Let the World See a [Proper] Prime Minister."[21] Cengiz Çandar, a seasoned journalist noted that the event let "orphans of the Middle East have found their leader whom they have been longing for since the death of Nasser."[22] The pro-government media published numerous commentaries illustrating Erdoğan as the new leader of the Middle East. In this context, "one minute", the two words Erdoğan repeated to get more time to speak was made a motto to symbolize the rise of Erdoğan as a regional leader. Emre Erdoğan's analysis based on a survey research conducted after the incident highlighted that while the response to the walkout among the JDP supporters were particularly positive, the support among the opposition parties' affiliates was still considerable.[23] Overall tone of commentaries appeared in high circulating mainstream media was also positive.[24]

The party administration marked the first anniversary of the Davos incident with an open air concert in İstanbul. In the 2011 elections, the party's election manifesto devoted a special section titled "Turkey Said 'No!' to the Injustice."

17 "Turkish PM Storms off in Gaza Row", BBC News, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/davos/7859417.stm, 29 January 2009 (Accessed on 30 January 2009).

18 "Erdoğan: Tavrım Moderatöre", *Hürriyet*, 30 January 2009.

19 Erdal Şafak, "Davos Seçim Değil Tarih Malzemesi", *Sabah*, 15 February 2009.

20 Gökhan Bacık, "Turkish-Israeli Relations after Davos: A View from Turkey" *Insight Turkey,* Vol.11, No.2, 2009, p.31.

21 Şebnem Arsu, "Hero's Welcome for Turkish Leader After Davos Walkout", *New York Times*, 30 January 2009.

22 Cengiz Çandar, "Tayyip Erdoğan, Ortadoğu'nun "Kimsesizlerinin Kimi" Artık", *Referans*, 31 January 2009.

23 Emre Erdoğan, Dış Politikada Siyasallaşma: Türk Kamuoyunun "Davos Krizi" ve Etkileri Hakkındaki Değerlendirmeleri", *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, Vol."0, No.37, Spring 2013, p.37-67.

24 Mehmet Ali Birand, "Türkiye, Erdoğan ile Gurur Duyuyor, Ancak …", *Hürriyet*, 31 January 2009; Murat Yetkin, "Erdoğan, Siyaset ve Diplomasi", *Radikal*, 31 January 2009; Fikret Bila, "Başbakan Haklıydı", *Milliyet*, 31 January 2009.

> When our Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan rightfully pronounced the Palestinian question, the bleeding wound for many years, he captivated public attention across the World. [With] "*One Minute!*" our Prime Minister, who already became the voice in the international arena for those who had been silenced and intimidated for years, launched an international social campaign that became the symbol of peace and brotherhood in the East and in the West.[25]

It was noticeable that after the Davos, the JDP's criticism of Israel was increasingly put into a regional perspective. Beyond being the state which torments Palestinians, Israel was represented as the obstacle standing on Turkey's path to become 'pivotal state' in the Middle East. "Another 'One Minute' is Needed", an editorial article appeared in *Yeni Şafak*, JDP's flagship in the print media, claimed that regional interests of Turkey and Israel would no longer converge.[26] Another article titled "Israel is Furious, Who Cares!" argued that the Turkish-Israeli relations should be jettisoned for the sake of the JDP's new imagination for the Middle East.[27]

However, in a stark contrast to the way the Davos incident was portrayed in the public eye, the JDP leadership strove to counterbalance its ramifications. The new strategy led to a Janus-faced policy in relations that while at the public level, "*One Minute*" became one of the hallmarks of the JDP's confrontational discourse, diplomatic relations were maintained as they were. Despite the suffocating pressures and mini crises such as the "lower chair crisis", relations at diplomatic level remained almost intact.[28] An interesting development that highlighted the inconsistency between the anti-Israeli discourse and diplomatic relations was the "demining controversy" which became a matter of public debate in the first half of the 2009. Ironically enough, it was after the Davos incident that the JDP government issued a decree to award the bid to an Israeli company for demining the large land strip along the Syrian border.[29] Despite strong opposition against the decree, including the one from within the party, the JDP leadership insisted that demining should be granted to the Israeli company without a public tender. Only after nullification of the decree by the State Counsel, was the demining issue shelved.[30] A similar example to underline the Janus-faced policy was that on the eve of the Freedom Flotilla crisis, as a token of goodwill, Turkey did not veto Israel's admission into the OECD.[31]

Turkey's relations with Israel entered a deep crisis when 10 Turkish activists aboard *Mavi Marmara*, the flagship of the Freedom Flotilla were killed by the Israeli commandos on 31 May 2010. The flotilla was intercepted and stormed by Israeli forces when it was attempting to break the Israeli-Egyptian blockade on the Gaza. In the emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council, Foreign Minister Davutoğlu called Israel's actions "banditry and piracy... murder conducted by a state... and barbarism."[32] Davutoğlu depicted the tragedy as Turkey's 9/11.[33] Turkey withdrew its ambassador,

25 "Dış Politika: Türkiye'nin Dünyada İtibarını Yükselttik," İstanbul: AK Parti İstanbul İl Başkanlığı, 2011, p.10.

26 İbrahim Karagül, "'Bir One Minute Daha Gerekiyor", *Yeni Şafak*, 15 October 2009.

27 İbrahim Karagül, "İsrail'den 'Pes' Dedirten Talep!", *Yeni Şafak*, 24 November 2009.

28 İlker Aytürk, "Between Crisis and Cooperation: The Future of Turkish-Israeli Relations", *Insight Turkey*, Vol.11, No.3, 2009, p.66–71.

29 For a detailed study on the issue see Hikmet Uluğbay, "Mayın Temizleme Yasası Üzerinde Bazı Düşünceler", *Hikmet Uluğbay Blogu*, 6 August 2009, http://www.ulugbay.com/blog_hikmet/?p=106; "Maliye'den Mayınlı Arazi Açıklaması", *Yeni Şafak*, 23 July 2009.

30 "Behemoths Set Sights on Demining Turkish–Syrian Border", 17 May 2009, http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?load=detay&link=175520 (Accessed on 17 April 2011).

31 "İsrail OECD'de", *Hürriyet*, 12 May 2010.

32 Press Release Regarding the Use of Force by the Israeli Defense Forces Against the Humanitarian Aid Fleet to Gaza.

33 "Dışişleri Bakanı Davutoğlu: İsrail'in Saldırısı Bizim 11 Eylülümüz", *Milliyet*, 7 June 2010.

declaring that the ambassador would not return to Tel Aviv unless Israel offered its apologies, paid compensation to the relatives of the victims and lifted the blockade on Gaza.[34] The assault sparked worldwide protests and Israel was condemned by the UN for use of "excessive force." Beyond Turkey, Israeli government's decision to intercept the flotilla in international waters also earned rebuke from international community including some opposition groups in Israel.[35]

However, it is to be noted that at the preliminary stage of the initiative, the JDP leadership was not eager to support the flotilla and therefore reluctant to be identified with it. Bülent Yıldırım, the Chairperson of *IHH*, pointed out that the JDP authorities seemed to be "discontent" to support the flotilla.[36] The JDP administration, on security grounds, asked those MPs who were abroad to disembark *Mavi Marmara*.[37] Retrospective accounts prove that Prime Minister Erdoğan was enraged by the way it was organized. Ertuğrul Günay, accompanying the Prime Minister at the time of incident, remembers how furious Erdoğan became when he was informed of the magnitude of the tragedy and its deadly consequences. It was interesting that rather than Israel, Erdoğan blamed those who organized the flotilla of being "out of control" and "deprived of state responsibility".[38] In 2017, when IHH raised objections to the agreement on *Mavi Marmara* victims that the government reached with Israel, the remark that Erdoğan made of the criticisms testified his disagreement over the flotilla. "Did they ask me when they [decided to] go?"[39]

In the meantime, diplomats of both countries as well as of the US worked hard to contain the crisis. The Obama administration played a crucial role in securing the return of the bodies of the victims as well as safe passage for those who survived the raid.[40] Furthermore, Washington intervened through back channels and probably used its influence on Fethullah Gülen, the leader of an influential Islamic community in Turkey, to make conciliatory remarks.[41] Furthermore, cooperation on security affairs went on behind the screen of secrecy. Turkish Armed Forces kept receiving training for *Heron* UAVs, and used them in Northern Iraq. With the exception of harsh remarks by Erdoğan, party officials deliberately refrained from making provocative statements, thereby cautiously avoiding further escalation. Another important point was that the JDP did not let its supporters demonstrate after the raid. The government's spokesperson Hüseyin Çelik declared that the government's reactions were strong enough so that people need not demonstrate on the streets.[42] Just a week after the raid, the warnings heeded by State Minister Bülent Arınç indicated how the extent of the damage wrought by the tragedy worried the party's top brass:

34 Address by H.E. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Turkey at the United Nations Security Council, 31 May 2010, New York, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/anasayfa-3105-un.en.mfa (Accessed on 28 March 2011).

35 "Turkey to Israel: Lift Blockade of Gaza", *Haaretz*, 25 May 2010; Gideon Levy, "Gaza Flotilla Drives Israel into a Sea of stupidity", *Haaretz*, 3 June 2010; Yehezkel Dror, "Our Primitive Policy-making", *Haaretz*, 3 June 2010.

36 Nursel Tozkoparan, "Fethullah Hoca'nın Kalbi Bizden Yana", *Haber 7*, 23 September 2011, http://www.haber7.com/roportaj/haber/787302-fethullah-hocanin-kalbi-bizden-yana, (Accessed on 14 January 2018).

37 Erdem Gül, "Erdoğan AKP'li Vekilleri de Unuttu", *Cumhuriyet*, 1 July 2016; "Kılıçdaroğlu: Ak Parti Vekilleri *Mavi Marmara*'ya Neden Bindirmedi", *Hürriyet*, 7 June 2010, http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/kilicdaroglu-ak-parti-vekilleri-mavi-marmaraya-neden-bindirmedi-14951467, (Accessed on 14 January 2018).

38 "Günay'dan Çarpıcı *Mavi Marmara* Açıklaması!", *haberler.com*, 28 July 2014, https://www.haberler.com/gunay-basbakan-in-mavi-marmara-nin-gidisinden-6310131-haberi/, (Accessed on 12 January 2018).

39 Erdem Gül, "Erdoğan AKP'li Vekilleri de Unuttu", *Cumhuriyet*, 1 July 2016.

40 "Umut ABD'nin Arabuluculuğunda," *Radikal*, 29 June 2010.

41 "Gülen, İHH'yi Eleştirdi: Yola Çıkmadan İsrail'le Anlaşmalıydı," *Radikal*, 5 June 2010.

42 Devrim Sevimay's interview with Hüseyin Çelik, "Başbakan Bu Tavrı Koymasa Anti-Semitizm Daha Çok Artar," *Milliyet*, 14 June 2010.

> There is a need for a reliable country to contribute to the better orientation of the State of Israel, whose existence, no matter if we like or dislike it, has been recognized by the World. Now, they say: "Abolish everything! Do not leave any agreement! Expel the Ambassador!" Easier said than done! Should you abandon all, you end up in a mess. I do not want to put myself as example, yet it takes a statesman to rule the state in sobriety, rationality and patience. Even in my own milieu, there may be those who prefer to strike, fight and punish them by delivering what they deserve. I, too, emotionally and wholeheartedly support them. But we need to see *realpolitik* in the World, so that we can continue our own way. I want to reach the hearts of those who say, "Let's launch the second, the third, and the fifth ship," and ask: Do you have enough power to stop them if such an event [the raid] occurs again? Do you have enough wisdom to repair the damage caused by such an event? Did you make a calculation of the cost that you have to compensate? You need to bring wisdom to the fore.[43]

However, the *Freedom Flotilla* Raid had a lingering impact of unprecedented magnitude on the relations. First and foremost, having caused civilian casualties, the crisis left deep scars in the minds and hearts of people in both countries. It also shook the very foundations on which the alignment was standing. Despite the fact that relations had always been buttressed by the militaries and foreign ministries of the respective countries, Israeli military became the main actor which instigated the crisis. The heavy irony was that it was the Israeli Minister of Defense, Ehud Barak, who had played a key role in cultivating the alignment throughout the 1990's, eventually took the final decision to use fire arms against those on board. Furthermore, in the aftermath of the crisis, various social and political groups distanced themselves from activities to maintain relations with their Israeli counterparts. For instance Turkey-Israel Inter-Parliamentary Friendship Group, which had been one of the largest in Turkish Grand National Assembly, was dissolved.

On the other hand, the JDP government transformed the bilateral relations into a discursive battleground on which demonization of Israel became a routine practice of politics. Although it was led by the JDP, the other parties, though at varying degrees, joined the battlefield. Concomitantly, the JDP government moved the Palestinian question to the center of mundane political discourse.[44] Prime Minister Erdoğan's speech that he gave in Konya on the eve of the 12 June 2011 elections aptly framed the JDP's new strategy of internalization of the Palestinian question: "Now once again I give utterances from Konya to the entire Turkey and to the entire World; the fate of Jerusalem is not separated from the fate of Istanbul. The fate of Gaza is not separated from the fate of Ankara. The fate of Ramallah, of Nablus, Rafah, Jenin, Bethlehem is never separated from the fate of Konya."[45] The other novelty was that in order to delegitimize opposition, the JDP leadership branded opposition leaders as advocates of Israel. In a speech he gave in Kayseri in January 2011 Erdoğan blamed Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, RPP's leader, of advocacy on behalf of Israel asking if "he had received the attorneyship of Israel".[46] In September 2011, another rhetorical quarrel broke out when the *IHH* announced its preparations to send the second Freedom Flotilla to Gaza. When the Republican People's Party [RPP] leader Kılıçdaroğlu declared that "should there be another flotilla or torpedo boats sent to Gaza, he would congratulate PM Erdoğan by kissing him on the forehead." Prime Minister Erdoğan's response was scathing: "Save your dirty lips for Israel! I won't let your dirty lips touch onto my clean forehead!"[47]

43 "Arınç: "Kalbim 'Vurun' Diyenleri Destekliyor," *Radikal*, 7 June 2010.

44 "İsrail'le İlişiklerde Kırmızı Çizgi Gazze," *Radikal*, 17 October 2009.

45 Tarık Işık, "Erdoğan HAMAS'a Sahip Çıktı," *Radikal*, 4 June 2010.

46 *TGRT TV News*, 17 January 2011, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MZvZyOMQ5ZI, (Accessed on 19 March 2011).

47 "Kirli Dudaklarını İsrail'e Sakla," *Milliyet*, 11 September 2011.

However, in spite of the hostile rhetoric, the JDP government paid every effort to keep the crisis under control. Diplomatic contacts were sustained in case relations deteriorate beyond repair. The first high level meeting took place in Brussels a month after the disaster took place. On 30 June 2010, Israeli Industry and Trade Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer, and Foreign Minister Ahmed Davutoğlu secretly met to discuss prospects to improve the relations.[48] Despite some announcements that a new flotilla would be sent to Gaza, the initiative was not allowed to take place. Of more interest, the JDP representatives did not show up in the welcoming ceremony given on the occasion of the return of the flagship *Mavi Marmara* to İstanbul. When a commission of inquiry named after its chair Geoffrey Palmer, ex Prime Minister of New Zealand, was formed under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General's office, Turkey agreed to take part in it. Furthermore, Joseph Ciechanover and Özdem Sanberk, two members of the committee representing Israel and Turkey decided to meet secretly.[49] Moreover, after the *Mavi Marmara*, Turkey continued to purchase military equipment from Israel.[50] In March 2013, Prime Minister Erdoğan would disclose that intelligence sharing between the parties had never been severed.[51] Furthermore, Turkey played constructive role in releasing Israeli private , Gilat Shalit, who had been kidnapped by HAMAS, in return of Palestinian prisoners. As part of the deal, scores of exchangees were received by Turkey.[52] In November 2012, when Hakan Fidan visited Cairo, he was reported to have met his Israeli counterparts.[53] In the meantime, as a token of good will, Turkey assisted Israel by sending two planes to extinguish the forest fire in *Mount Carmel*. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu telephoned Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan to thank him for extending help. The gesture led to a secret meeting of Ciechanover and Feridun Sinirlioğlu, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[54] Even after the Palmer Report was leaked by Israel, in violation of the initial agreement that the report would not be made public until both parties agree to do so, Ankara preferred downgrading rather than breaking diplomatic relations. Although the diplomatic staff, save second secretaries, was reciprocally withdrawn from respective embassies, the staff working in the consulates in İstanbul and Jerusalem remained as it was. Last but not least, bilateral trade, despite all the negative factors, has increased to unprecedented levels. The trade volume exceeded 5.600 million USD in 2014, 50% higher than the level attained in 2009.[55]

The Palmer Report concluded that Israel's naval blockade had been "imposed as a legitimate security measure in order to prevent weapons from entering Gaza by sea and its implementation complied with the requirements of international law". Although the report pointed out that "Israeli troops had faced significant, organized and violent resistance from a group of passengers and were therefore required to use force for their own protection", it also conceded that Israel's decision to board the vessels "with such substantial force at a great distance from the blockade zone and with no final warning immediately prior to the boarding was excessive and unreasonable". The report noted "forensic evidence showing that most of the deceased were shot multiple times, including in the back, or at close range".[56] The JDP government denounced and nullified the Palmer Commission's

48 "Israel, Turkey Hold Secret Meeting in Europe, Lays out Conditions for Better Ties", http://www.vosizneias.com/59181/2010/07/01/brussels-belgium-israel-turkey-hold-secret-meeting-in-europe/, (Accessed on 10 July 2010).

49 Kadri Gürsel, "Türkiye-İsrail: Yeniden Düşünmek-2", *Milliyet*, 21 November 2011.

50 Aslı Aydıntaşbaş, "İsrail, Heronları Sessizce Teslim Etti", *Milliyet*, 2 September 2010.

51 Soli Özel "Özür ve Normalleşme", *Habertürk*, 24 March 2013.

52 Soli Özel, "Takas Hesabı", *Habertürk*, 19 October 2011.

53 Özel "Özür ve Normalleşme".

54 Barak Ravid, "Israeli, Turkish Diplomats Meet in Geneva in Effort to Repair Relations", *Haaretz*, 5 December 2010.

55 "İsrail'le Ticaret Hacmi İki Yılda Yüzde 30 Arttı", *Bugün*, 2 May 2015.

56 Jonathan Head, "Gaza Flotilla Row: New Low in Turkish Ties with Israel", *BBC News*, 2 September 2011, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/mobile/world-europe-14769555, (Accessed on 10 September 2011).

report.[57] However, the government's decision overlooked some conclusions of the report, which were in line with Turkey's demands, namely the excessive use of force during the operation by the Israeli military. [58] On the rhetorical level, instead of displaying a more balanced approach to the findings of the report, the leakage led furious declarations from the JDP government that Turkey will start monitoring navigation in the Eastern Mediterranean.

On another level, although not directly related with the crisis, the JDP government displayed positive gestures. In January 2011, the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust was commemorated in İstanbul. The government issued messages and the governor of İstanbul alongside some JDP members attended commemorations. Commemorations were held again in 2012. On 27 January 2012, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs released a statement on the Holocaust Remembrance Day that Turkey "remembered and honored the memory of more than 6 million Jews and members of other minorities, who lost their lives during this human tragedy."[59] While Turkey officially observing the Holocaust Remembrance Day in İstanbul, the Turkish official broadcasting agency TRT aired Claude Lanzmann's 1985 biographical film of the Holocaust era, *Shoah*.[60] A more subtle signal to indicate that the JDP government stands against anti-Semitism was given when the TRT, Turkey's official broadcasting institution, nominated Can Bonomo, a Turkish singer who is Jewish by origin, as the country's representative in the 2012 Eurovision Song Contest.[61] In 2015, it was the first time that instead of İstanbul, the 5th anniversary of the "Holocaust Remembrance Day" was commemorated in Ankara with the participation of Cemil Çiçek, the speaker of the Turkish Parliament. Thus, on the occasion of its 70th anniversary the level of representation was upgraded to the highest level. Furthermore, Turkey donated 150,000 euros this year as its contribution to the restoration of the *Auschwitz-Birkenau* concentration camp.[62]

In order to comprehend political dynamics leading to the normalization of relations, the impact the Arab Spring have had on Turkey needs to be taken into consideration. Generally speaking, Arab uprisings at least twice changed the context in which the JDP administration redefined its policy towards Israel. Setting new dynamics in motion for bilateral relations, "Arab Spring" at its inception put additional stumbling blocks on the road to the normalization. The JDP administration assumed that the regime change in Egypt would lead to the collapse of the *Camp David* order in the Middle East resulting further increase in Israel's isolation. Seen as a window of opportunity to promote Turkey's leadership in the region, the JDP leadership heightened its hostile rhetoric against Israel. In the likelihood of parties affiliated with MB coming to power in other Arab countries, the JDP leadership

57 Kadri Gürsel, "Türkiye-İsrail: Yeniden Düşünmek-1", *Milliyet*, 20 November 2011.

58 Soli Özel, "İsrail Türkiye Krizi", *Habertürk*, 4 September 2011.

59 "Press Release Regarding the International Holocaust Remembrance Day", Doğan Haber Ajansı, 27 January 2012, www.dha.com.tr/holocaust-commemorated-in-mfa-press-release-on-international-day-son-dakika-haberi_263839.html (Accessed on 16 March 2012).

60 "Turkey Marks Holocaust Remembrance Day", *Voice of America News*, 26 January 2012, www.voanews.com/english/news/europe/Turkey-Marks-Holocaust-Remembrance-Day-138193904.html (Accessed on 2 April 2012).

61 Aslı Aydıntaşbaş, "Türkiye ve İsrail Yakınlaşıyor mu?", *Milliyet*, 30 January 2012.

62 Sevil Erkuş, "Turkish FM Attends Holocaust Remembrance Day in Auschwitz Camp", *Hürriyet Daily News*, 28 July 2015. However, after making some commonplace remarks on the Holocaust, Çiçek stopped reading his text and started making remarks on the Palestinian problem and the tragedy of the Freedom Flotilla. He pronounced that the picture would not be complete without the inclusion of the Palestine-Israeli conflict. An attendant, however, would later note that the insertion Cemil Çiçek made was not seen on the screen on which English translation is projected. Karel Valensi, "Bir Daha Tekrarlanmasın, Bir Daha Asla!", http://m.t24.com.tr/yazarlar/karel-valansi/bir-daha-tekrarlanmasin-bir-daha-asla,11156, (Accessed on 29 January 2015).

believed that its hostile rhetoric against Israel accommodated the *zeitgeist* prevailing across the region and would get higher dividends from the Arab street.

Although JDP's expectations initially came near to be true, in the wake of military intervention which ousted the MB government in Egypt the course of events suddenly took another direction in July 2013. In the latter part of 2013, the "Arab Spring" and its fallouts strained Turkey's position in the Middle East. Ousting the Muhammad Mursi government from power in Egypt, the military coup of the 3 July 2013 led by Abdul Fattah al Sisi came as a blow to the JDP's imagined belt of Muslim Brotherhood countries extending from Syria to Sudan. Turkey's insistence to support MB groups instigated harsh reactions from Egypt and Saudi Arabia. The events thereafter compelled Turkey to end its policy of supporting MB led groups. While its pro HAMAS position in Gaza led to the catastrophic results in Turkish Israeli relations, its pro MB policies in Egypt drove JDP's relations with the military regime into a *cul-de-sac*.

Moreover, to the chagrin of Turkey, the rise of Islamic State [*IS*] in 2014 and its fast expansion in Syria and Iraq changed regional power configuration. Among others, the immediate result of the emergence of *IS* was the regime change policy in Syria lost its pre-eminence, and instead fighting it became a new priority for both the US and EU countries. The US decision to support Kurdish groups in Northern Iraq in their fight against the *IS* brought another variable in the equilibrium. Consequently, diverging from the US policies, Turkey increasingly found itself in solitude. However, in the wake of ill disposed decision to take down the Russian fighter on 24 November 2015, Turkey had no option but to overhaul its regional policy, particularly the one it pursued in Syria. Revealing the extent of the fragility of security establishment in Turkey, the putsch attempt of 15 July 2016 accelerated the process of policy shift in Ankara. The Moscow Declaration of 20 December 2016 together with Iran and Russia, bore testimony to the termination of Ankara's regime change policy in Syria.

After three years of fits and starts in negotiations, President Obama's call on 22 March 2013 ended the stalemate. Israeli side agreed to meet the conditions that Turkey required for the normalization by extending a formal apology. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during a phone conversation apologized to Turkey for "any error that may have led to loss of life." The Israeli side explained its apology as follows: "in light of Israel's investigation into the incident which pointed to a number of operational mistakes, the Prime Minister expressed Israel's apology to the Turkish people for any mistakes that might have led to the loss of life or injury and agreed to conclude an agreement on compensation/non-liability."[63] The apology was hailed as the government's victory against Israel.[64] Whereas the JDP maintained that "we made Israel apologise", opposition underlined President Obama's intervention that it was not thanks to the JDP government's efforts, but to the US.[65] Furthermore, the apology prompted protests from *IHH* and groups associated with the victims' families. Most of the protests were about the judicial exemptions for Israeli military, the deal offered in return of compensation. Some families declared that they would not forsake their rights only for compensation. Relatives of the *Mavi Marmara* victims complained that "the government sorts out its own problems with Israel, but not ours".[66]

63 Salih Bıçakcı, "Hakol Beseder B'Eli Haseder - Israel's Apology and Turkey", *CIES Commentary*, 17 April 2013. p.4.

64 "Özür Zaferi", *Hürriyet*, 23 March 2013; "İsrail'den Üç Şarta da Evet", *Sabah*, 23 March 2013.

65 "Özür Dilettik", *Yeni Şafak*, 23 March 2013; "Obama Barıştırdı" *Cumhuriyet*, 23 March 2013.

66 "Siyoniste Kalkan Olmayın", *Milli Gazete*, 30 April 2013.

After the apology, the hostile rhetoric came to a halt. It was interesting to note that commemorations for the 4th anniversary of *Freedom Flotilla* raid were deliberately overshadowed by demonstrations for conversion of the *Hagia Sophia Museum* to mosque. On the 31 May 2014, instead of *Mavi Marmara* pictures, the front pages of pro-government dailies were covered by pictures of large crowds who gathered around *Hagia Sophia* for morning prayers. Although a stripe depicting *Mavi Marmara* and a call for "The March of Free Jerusalem" to commemorate the tragedy was placed on top of the front pages of each pro government daily, the banner headlines attested to that commemoration of the tragedy was no longer first priority of the JDP government. Moreover, the 5th year commemorations were slated to coincide with the commemorations of İstanbul's conquest, exact date of which is 29 May. The meeting was organized by the JDP on the 30 May as part of the propaganda campaign for 7 June Elections and the march to commemorate *Mavi Marmara* would only be started in the aftermath of the meeting. On 31 May, there was no noticeable reference to the *Mavi Marmara* whereas front pages were covered by headlines calling President Erdoğan and Prime Minister Davutoğlu as the conquerors of new Turkey.[67]

In the latter part of 2013, the JDP leadership had to resort to the same sort of hostile rhetoric when faced serious challenges at home and abroad. The scapegoating reached its peak during the three events: The Gezi Protests, the military coup in Egypt and the graft probes which compelled the JDP government to jettison four ministers. In both cases, the pro government cohort in the media resorted once again almost identical patterns of accusations. The protesters in İstanbul, the military in Cairo and the police chiefs who launched the probes were claimed to have acted on orders from MOSSAD. During the Gezi Protests pro-government dailies strived to identify demonstrators with Israel and Jews. In order to despise the demonstrators, it was claimed they receive support from Israel. During the heydays of demonstrations the daily *Star*'s headlines were as follows: "Israel gets mobilized to pray for [Gezi] protests to continue. Moshe is grinning from ear to ear".[68] However, it was interesting that on the very same days Israel was being targeted by the media controlled by the JDP, chief of MOSSAD was paying an official visit to Ankara.[69] *Medyada Nefret Söylemi ve Ayrımcı Dil,* [Hate Speech in Media and Discriminatory Language] report published by a media watchdog after the Gezi Protests ranked *Yeni Şafak* as top daily in terms of hate speech.[70] In the wake of the coup in Egypt on 3 July 2013, President Erdoğan professed that the coup in Egypt was an Israeli plot.[71] Pro government dailies frequently made banner headlines such as "The Junta's Patron is MOSSAD" or "Bibi will promote blood shedder Sisi".[72] When the struggle between the JDP government and the Fethullah Gülen Community broke out, the community was blamed of acting for and on behalf of Israel *cum* Jews.[73] Recurrent headlines in the JDP's mouthpieces blamed the movement of acting at the behest of Israel.[74] Pro-JDP dailies claimed that 17-25 December graft investigations were conspired to take "the revenge of *Mavi Marmara*"[75]

67 "Yeni Türkiye'nin Fatihleri", *Yeni Şafak*, 31 May 2015.

68 "Moşe'nin Ağzı Kulaklarında", *Star*, 11 June 2013.

69 Arda Akın, "Sürpriz Konuk": MOSSAD Başkanı Geldi", MİT Müsteşarı ile Görüştü", *Hürriyet*, 12 June 2013.

70 İnan Ketenciler, "Nefret Söylemi Raporu: Yeni Şafak 'Gezi'den Düşman Yaratmada Birinci", *T24*, http://t24.com.tr/haber/nefret-soylemi-raporu-yeni-safak-geziden-dusman-yaratmada-birinci,245440 (Accessed on 12 February 2014).

71 "İsrail Darbeyi 2011'de Planladı", *Akşam*, 21 August 2014.

72 "Cuntanın Patronu Mossad", *Yeni Şafak*, 9 August 2013; "Katliamcı Sisi'yi Bibi Pazarlayacak", *Akşam*, 20 August 2013.

73 "Şehit Ailelerinin Konuşmaları İsrail'e Servis Edilmiş", *Yeni Şafak*, 26 February 2014.

74 "İsrail'in Türkiye'deki İstihbarat Örgütü", *Yeni Şafak*, 21 February 2015; "Mossad Örgütü", *Yeni Şafak*, 24 February 2014; "Örgüt Şemasını MOSSAD mı Yaptı?", *Yeni Şafak*, 26 February 2014.

75 "Mavi Marmara'nın İntikamı", *Star*, 26 December 2013.

The anti-Israeli rhetoric remained to be effective in the JDP's campaign during the presidential elections held on 10 August in 2014. As the elections coincided with the Israeli *Operation Protective Edge* in Gaza, JDP leaders resorted to the usual practices and identified other candidates with Israel.[76] Protesting Israel, Prime Minister Erdoğan went so far as to say that "as long as I remain in this position, I cannot contemplate of anything positive with Israel. There will be no normalization".[77] The JDP's print media took the lead[78] and published countless articles on daily basis indiscriminately despising Jews as, for instance, Frankensteins.[79] A media watchdog reported 130 incidents of the hate speech against Jews in the print media, larger than the total of incidents against other groups such as Armenians, Christians, and Kurds etc.[80]

In a stark contrast to the anti-Israeli rhetoric, diplomatic channels were kept open and functioned. In February 2014, another draft agreement was readied that the Turkish parliament would pass a law cancelling the lawsuits filed against Israeli officers by the families of the victims.[81] Following months of negotiations, Deputy Prime Minister Bülent Arınç declared that the agreement was likely to be signed after local elections on 30 March 2014.[82] These reports prompted reactions from Islamist opposition. *Milli Gazete* professed that "blood of martyrs is on the table of negotiations".[83] IHH authorities explicitly blamed "certain groups of bureaucrats, politicians and diplomats" within the state that they had been delaying necessary legal actions against the Israeli authorities. Bülent Yıldırım, the chairperson of the *IHH* openly held Feridun Sinirlioğlu, the undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, responsible for machinations to undermine efforts to charge Israeli military authorities for war crimes.[84] Despite the reactions, normalization went on through secret meetings between Director General of the Israeli Foreign Ministry Dore Gold and his Turkish counterpart, Feridun Sinirlioğlu.[85] Finally, the crisis formally ended on 16 June 2016 with the conclusion of the agreement, which met the conditions put forward by the both parties. Accordingly, with some exceptions, anti-Israeli discourse disseminated by media that the JDP government controls apparently came to a halt.

It is to be concluded that the JDP's discursive practices towards Israel have always been one of the key manifestations of the party's power strategies. As the JDP leadership began to pursue new strategies after 2009, discursive practices towards Israel have gone through several adjustments to address shifting priorities that these strategies entailed. In the wake of the Davos incident in January 2009, internalization of the Palestinian question and scapegoating Israel became the backbone of the JDP's discourse. Qualifying the plight of the Palestinians as a national problem, the JDP leadership waged an extensive discursive campaign based on scapegoating Israel. It is evident that the anti-Israeli rhetoric was geared to bolster the party's prestige outside Turkey as well. Given the human cost the continual Israeli operations caused in Gaza and anti-Semitic propensities among the peoples of the Middle East including that of Turkey, the JDP apparently reaped rich dividends with the anti-Israeli

76 "İsrail Oradan Vuruyor, Bunlar Buradan Vuruyor", *Yeni Şafak*, 25 July 2014; "Ekmel'den İsrail Ağzı", *Hürriyet*, 25 July 2014.

77 "Barbarlıkta Hitler'i Geçtiler", *Sabah*, 20 July 2014.

78 İdil Engindeniz, "Medyada Nefret Söylemi ve Ayrımcı Dil Mayıs-Ağustos 2014 Raporu", İstanbul Hrant Dink Vakfı Yayını, 1 January 2015, http://www.hrantdink.org/?Detail=1246, (Accessed on 5 September 2015).

79 Yusuf Kaplan, "Frankenstein Ruhlu Adamlar, Tanrı'yı Kıyamete Zorluyorlar", *Yeni Şafak*, 11 July 2014.

80 "Turkish Media Target Jews More Than Any Other Group, Report Finds", *Haaretz*, 29 December 2014.

81 "İsrail'den Yeni Teklif", *Milliyet*, 4 February, 2014.

82 "İsrail'in Tazminat Teklifine Arınç'tan Yanıt", *Hürriyet*, 3 February 2014.

83 "Türkiye'ye Getirilsinler", *Milli Gazete*, 4 January 2014.

84 "Bülent Yıldırım Dışişleri'ndeki Truva Atlarını Anlattı", http://www.ihh.org.tr/tr/main/news/0/bulent-yildirim-disislerindeki-truva-atlarini/2639 , 7 December 2014, (Accessed on 5 September 2015).

85 Barak Ravid, "In Secret Meeting, Israel and Turkey Renew Reconciliation Talks", *Haaretz*, 22 June 2015.

rhetoric both at home and abroad. Therefore only after the Arab uprisings began to follow different trajectories than Ankara had expected beforehand, the JDP have been compelled to abandon such practices.

However, close examination of cases in which the JDP leadership resorted to antagonistic rhetoric suggest a different picture when it comes to mundane realities of bilateral relations. It is interesting to note that even during the crises, the gap between Ankara's hostile rhetoric and the silent cooperation with Tel Aviv was never bridged. The JDP leadership seemed to have adjusted the extent of the gap in light of priorities that various power strategies it employed to win seven consecutive elections and referendums held since 2009. In that framework, one of the fallouts of the discursive strategy based on anti-Israeli rhetoric should be highlighted. Given the rampant anti-Semitic media campaigns, hostile rhetoric had an enormous impact on the public opinion in Turkey. Therefore, it is still to be seen whether future governments in Ankara and Tel Aviv would be able to cultivate a constructive relationship on the residuum of the inimical discourse carelessly used.