TRANSFORMATION OF SYRIAN CONFLICTS WITH TURKEY AND ISRAEL IN THE 1990s: A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE ON RIPENESS

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_____

Prof. Dr. Meliha Benli Altunışık
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

_____

Prof. Dr. Hüseyin Bağcı
Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

_____

Prof. Dr. Meliha Benli Altunışık
Supervisor

Examining Committee Members

Prof. Dr. Ayşegül Kibaroğlu (Okan University, IR) _____

Prof. Dr. Meliha Benli Altunışık (METU, IR) _____

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Özlem Tür (METU, IR) _____

Assist. Prof. Dr. Işık Kuşçu (METU, IR) _____

Assist. Prof. Dr. Özgür Özdamar (Bilkent University, IR) _____

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name, Last name : Berna Süer

Signature :

ABSTRACT

TRANSFORMATION OF SYRIAN CONFLICTS
WITH
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A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE ON RIPENESS

Süer, Berna
PH. D., Department of International Relations
Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Meliha Benli Altunışık

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This thesis looks at the conflict transformation processes, which took place in the Syrian conflicts with Turkey and Israel during the 1990s. The aim is to understand the reasons behind the different outcomes of these conflict transformation processes of Syria with Turkey and Israel. This thesis argues that the high-level of ripeness conditions in the Syrian-Turkish conflict, compared to the conditions in the Syrian-Israeli conflict, was the determinant of effectiveness, that is, for the signing of an agreement that symbolized the transformation in relations. More theoretically, the interaction between objective and subjective conditions of ripeness is more evident in the Syrian-Turkish case than in the Syrian-Israeli conflict, and this is the explanatory factor for the differing outcomes in these transformation processes.

Key Words: Ripeness Theory, the Turkish-Syrian Conflict and Transformation, the Syrian-Israeli Conflict and Transformation

ÖZ

SURİYE'NİN 1990'LARDAKİ TÜRKİYE VE İSRAİL İLE OLAN UYUŞMAZLIKLARININ DÖNÜŞÜMÜ: OLGUNLAŞMA TEORİSİNE KARŞILAŞTIRMALI BİR BAKIŞ

Süer, Berna
Doktora, Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü
Tez Danışmanı: Prof. Dr. Meliha Benli Altunışık

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Bu tez, Suriye'nin 1990'lar boyunca Türkiye ve İsrail ile olan sorunlarında yaşadığı dönüşüm süreçlerini irdelemektedir. Burada amaç iki sorunun dönüşümünün neden farklı sonuçlandığının ardındaki nedenleri anlamaktır. Bu çalışma farklı sonuçların nedeni olarak Türkiye-Suriye sorununun Suriye-İsrail sorunu ile karşılaştırıldığında daha yüksek bir olgunlaşma seviyesine ulaşmış olmasını ileri sürmektedir. Diğer bir ifade ile olgunlaşmanın şartları olan objektif ve subjektif faktörlerin – sorunun çıkmazlık noktasında oluşu, tarafların bir çıkış yolu algılaması ve süreci yönetecek yetkin kişilerin varlığı – etkileşiminin Türkiye-Suriye sorununda net olarak varlığı bu sorunun iyi komşuluk ilişkilerine dönüşümünü olumlu yönde etkilerken, Suriye-İsrail sorununda bu etkileşimin zayıf oluşu bu sorunun dönüşümünün istenildiği şekilde olmamasının ardındaki nedenlerdendir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Olgunlaşma Teorisi, Türkiye-Suriye Sorunu ve Dönüşümü, Suriye-İsrail Sorunu ve Dönüşümü

To My Dear Mother and Father,

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AKP – Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi – Justice and Development Party

ASALA – Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia

CBM – Confidence Building Measures

CGS – Chief of General Staff

CINC – Composite Index of National Capabilities

COW – Correlates of War

CSCE – Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe

DLP – Democratic Left Party

DMZ – Demilitarized Zone

DTP – Democratic Turkey Party

EU – European Union

GAP – Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi – Southeast Anatolian Project

GCC – Gulf Cooperation Council

IDF – Israel Defense Forces

MAC – Mixed Armistice Commission

MFA – Ministry of Foreign Affairs

MoD – Ministry of Defense

MP – Motherland Party

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NSC – National Security Council

OIC – Organization of the Islamic Conference

PKK – Partia Kakaren Kurdistan – Kurdistan Workers' Party

PLO – Palestinian Liberation Organization

PM – Prime Minister

PR – Public Relations

SANA – Syrian Arab News Agency

UAR – United Arab Republic

UN – United Nations

UNSCR – United Nations Security Council Resolution

UNTSO – United Nations Truce Supervision Organization

US – United States of America

USSR – Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

TGNA – Turkish Grand National Assembly

TPP – True Path Party

WP – Welfare Party

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Various efforts had been made during the 1990s to transform Syria's conflicts with Turkey and Israel. On the one hand, Syria and Israel participated in peace negotiations between 1991 and 2000. In October 1991, the Middle East Peace Conference opened in Madrid under the co-sponsorship of the United States and the Soviet Union. Following the conference, at which principles and goals toward solving the Arab-Israeli conflict had been established, bilateral negotiations between Syria and Israel mediated by the US began in Washington on November 3, 1991. Despite some breaks, the peace process continued until March 2000, when it concluded without agreement.

On the other hand, during more or less the same time period, various efforts had been made to solve the dispute between Syria and Turkey. There was no formalized process for resolving the Syrian-Turkish conflict, as in the Syrian-Israeli case, which had been initiated at a peace conference, but there had been continuing efforts to transform the conflict. During this "de facto process", Syria and Turkey signed protocols and agreements in 1987, 1992 and 1993. However these agreements did not prevent Syria and Turkey from coming to the brink of war in 1998. As the conflict reached its climax, an agreement signed in Adana in October 1998 brought the crisis to a conclusion. This became a turning point in relations between Syria and Turkey, though unresolved issues remained.

This depiction of the 1990s regarding Syrian conflicts with Turkey and Israel led me to the following questions:

1) In spite of bilateral negotiations process with US mediation between 1991 and 2000, why did Syria and Israel not reach an agreement? What are the potential explanations for this failure?

2) Despite efforts that had been taking place since the late 1980s, why did the agreement between Syria and Turkey in 1998 take hold? What conditions made 1998 special in the transformation of the conflict between Syria and Turkey?

3) While the Syrian-Turkish conflict became transformed into good neighborly relations, the unresolved issues notwithstanding, what was different about the US-mediated Syrian-Israeli process that made a similar transformation untenable?

There are various debates over the first two questions. There is an important literature on the peace process between Syria and Israel that focuses on the first question. This body of literature can be further divided in two: the descriptive body and another that focuses on the reasons for failure, i.e. an explanatory body. The first subgroup of literature exclusively focuses on the negotiations. These look at the negotiation process, on the one hand[1], and the negotiations within the broader framework of regional politics[2] or domestic politics[3] on the other. We also see several accounts by people involved in the negotiation delegations.[4] These studies reflect the views of the Syrian and Israeli participants as well as of the US mediators on various aspects of the negotiations. The second subgroup, which is

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[1] Helena Cobban, *The Israeli-Syrian Peace Talks 1991-1996 and Beyond*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1999)

[2] Robert Rabil, *Embattled Neighbours Syria, Israel, and Lebanon* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003); Alasdair Drysdale and Raymond Hinnebusch, *Syria and Middle East Peace Process,* (New York: Council of Foreign Relations Press, 1991); Moshe Ma'oz, *Syria and Israel from War to Peace Making,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995)

[3] Erik L. Knudsen, "The Syrian-Israeli Political Impasse: A Study in Conflict, War and Mistrust", *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, Vol. 12, No. 1, March 2001; Jeremy Pressman, "Mediation, Domestic Politics, and the Israeli-Syrian Negotiations, 1991-2000", *Security Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 3, July-September 2007

[4] Lieutenant General Mustafa Tlass, "Syria and the Future of the Peace Process", Jane's Intelligence Review 6, no. 9, September 1994; Wallid Muallem, "Fresh Light on the Syrian-Israeli Peace Negotiations", *Journal of Palestine Studies,* Vol. 26, No. 2, 1997; Itamar Rabinovich, *The Brink of Peace The Israeli-Syrian Negotiations*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998); Itamar Rabinovich, *Waging Peace Israel and the Arabs: 1948-2003*, (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton Uni. Press, 2004); Itamar Rabinovich, *The View from Damascus, State, Political Community and Foreign Relations in Twentieth-Century Syria*, (London, Portland: Valentine Mitchell, 2008); Warren Christopher, *In the Stream of History,* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1998); Dennis Ross, *The Missing Peace, The Inside Story of the Fighting for Middle East Peace,* (New York: Farra, Straus and Giroux, 2004); Martin Indyk, *Innocent Abroad An Intimate Account of American Peace Diplomacy in the Middle East*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009)

more explanatory, concentrates on the missed opportunities[5] during the process and the mediatory role of the US[6].

This literature is centered around the many factors behind the failure of the peace process between Syria and Israel. Some studies focus on the parties involved in the conflict, while others examine the ineffectiveness of the US in their role as explanations for the failure of the process. Regarding Syria, it seems that while its tactical flexibility made the peace process initially seem possible, its strategic consistency, together with the lack of public diplomacy, hindered the process. The Syrian side was relentless in its insistence that it recover the occupied territories on the basis of the June 4, 1967 borders. However, during the process, Israelis expected Syria to be represented at the negotiation table at least at the political level rather than bureaucratic level. It continuously demanded that Syria conduct a campaign of public diplomacy to convince Israel's suspicious public of the value of the peace process. This expectation was based on a 1977 experience, when Anwar Sadat visited Jerusalem. This was taken as a determining factor behind the Camp David Accords. In the 1990s, a similar move was expected from President Asad, but the Syrian side found this unacceptable.

Regarding Israel, it is argued that the hesitancy of its politicians, in combination with the cynical attitude of its public played an important role in the failure of negotiations. The process witnessed five Israeli prime ministers, each of whom had a distinctive view about peace with Syria, even those from the same party. Notably, between two leaders of the Labor party, Yitzhak Rabin, who was the PM from 1992 to 1995, and Shimon Peres, who succeeded Rabin after his assassination, there were distinctions. Peres evaluated peace with Syria within a broader framework of regional development. The point all Israeli PMs had in common was a focus on the security issues that had long burdened them.

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[5] Marwa Daoudy, "A Missed Chance for Peace: Israel and Syria's Negotiations over the Golan Heights", *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 61, No. 2, 2008; Helena Cobban, *Syria and the Peace: A Good Chance Missed,* (Strategic Studies Institute, 1997); Brian S. Mandell, "Getting to Peacekeeping in Principle Rivalries Anticipating an Israel-Syria Peace Treaty", *Journal of Conflict Resolution,* Vol. 40, No. 2, June 1996; Jerome Slater, "Lost Opportunities for Peace in the Arab-Israeli Conflict Israel and Syria, 1948-2001", *International Security,* Vol. 27, No. 1, 2002

[6] Robert Rabil, "The Ineffective Role of the US in the US-Israeli-Syrian Relationship", *Middle East Journal,* Vol. 55, No. 3, 2001; Jeremy Pressman, "Mediation, Domestic Politics, and the Israeli-Syrian Negotiations, 1991-2000" *Security Studies,* Vol. 16, No. 3, July-September 2007

And regarding the ineffective role of the US as a mediator in the process, it is commonly acknowledged that the US did not use its leverage as expected. Initially, there were high expectations from the US. Even Syria, which had lost its main ally of the Cold War years, the Soviet Union, was aware that a new regional order was taking hold, and according to Asad, there was no viable alternative to American backing. Most importantly, Syrians considered American pressure on Israel to be the most effective instrument of restraint. By the end of the process, Syria's disappointment in the US turned into accusations of US bias in favor of Israel. There emerged a perception among Syrians that the US would not ask anything of Israelis that it did not want to do. US actions were perceived only as dragging the process on, which eventually led to a decline in expectations of the US.

As will be seen, there are various but particular explanations for the failure of peace negotiations between Syria and Israel. There is need for a more comprehensive explanation.

The second question, why the 1998 Adana Agreement was effective, even though agreements of previous years had failed, is a widely asked question by researchers studying on Syria and Turkey. This question has been approached in different manners. The first subgroup deals directly with the crisis of 1998.[7] Along with these direct accounts of the crisis, we see some scholarly studies that examine the changing relations between Syria and Turkey using the 1998 crisis as a turning point.[8] The third subgrouping consists of several works evaluating relations between Syria and Turkey from the standpoint of disputed issues.[9]

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[7] Ö. Zeynep Oktav Alantar, "The October 1998 Crisis A Change of Heart of Turkish Foreign Policy Towards Syria" *Les Chaiers d'études sur la Méditerranée orientale et le monde Turco-Iranien (CEMOTI)*, No. 31, Jan.-Jun. 2001; Mahmut Bali Aykan, "The Turkish-Syrian Crisis of October 1998: A Turkish View" *Middle East Policy* Vol. VI, No. 4, une 1999; Damla Aras, "The Role of Motivation in the Success of Coercive Diplomacy: The 1998 Turkish-Syrian Crisis as a Case Study" *Defense Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 2, June 2009; Emma Jørum, "The October 1998 Turkish-Syrian Crisis in Arab Media" in Ingra Brandell (ed.), *State Frontiers, Borders and Boundaries in the Middle East*, (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2006); Yüksel Sezgin, "The October 1998 Crisis in Turkish-Syrian Relations: A Prospect Theory Approach" *Turkish Studies* Vol. 3, No. 2, 2002

[8] Meliha Altunışık and Özlem Tür, "From Distant Neighbors to Partners? Changing Syrian-Turkish Relations." *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 37, No. 2, 2006; David Kushner, "Turkish-Syrian Relations: An Update" in Joseph Ginat and Onn Winckler, Moshe Ma'oz (eds.), *Modern Syria, From Ottoman Rule to Pivoral Role in the Middle East*, (Brighton and Portlans: Sussex Academic Press, 1999); Özden Z.

When we look at the literature on relations between Syria and Turkey, the positive outcome of the 1998 crisis is commonly studied from the perspective of the structural realist school, focusing on regional and international developments and the balance of power between Syria and Turkey. Within this framework, major focal points include a discussion of the end of the Cold War, the demise of the Soviet Union, the Arab-Israeli peace process, Turkey's increasing economic and military power and the emergence of the Turkish-Israeli partnership affected the balance of power in favor of Turkey. During the crisis, Ankara seemed to conduct a more assertive policy, including threats of force against Damascus. In particular, the threat of force is taken as a determining factor for the transformation of relations between Syria and Turkey.

On the other hand, this literature is not immune from criticism. Within this critical understanding, it is asserted that this classical approach ignores the realms of domestic politics, merely looking at the state's behavior in the international arena, and also it hardly attempts to explore the perceptions of decision-makers, domestic policy issues and the constraints on the framing and assessment of the October crisis. According to this literature, Hafiz Asad's concerns about regime survival due to his deteriorating health should be taken as a reason behind Syrian

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Oktav Alantar, "Turkish-Syrian Relations at the Crossroads", *Turkish Review of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 11, 2000/01; Robert Olson, *Turkey's Relations with Iran, Syria, Israel and Russia, 1991-2000, The Kurdish and Islamist Questions*, (Mazda Publishers, 2001); Robert Olson, "Turkish and Syrian Relations since the Gulf War: The Kurdish Question and the Water Problem" in F. Ibrahim and G. Gurbey (eds.), *The Kurdish Conflict in Turkey: Obstacles and Chances for Peace and Democracy*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000)

[9] Serdar Güner, "The Turkish-Syrian War of Attrition: The Water Dispute" *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 20 (1997); Murhaf Jouejati, "Water Politics as High Politics: The Case of Turkey and Syria" in Henri J. Barkey (ed.), *Reluctant Neighbour: Turkey's Role in the Middle East*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996); Emma Jørum, "Right-sizing the State Territory: Syrian Policies towards Territory Lost, Lebanon and Iskandarunah 1946-2004" *Paper to be Presented at the Fifth Pan-European International Relations Conference*, the Hague, 2004; Emma Jørum, "The Role of the Origin of the State: Understanding Current Syrian Policy towards Hatay" in Annika Rabo and Bo Utas (eds.), *The Role of the State in the West Asia*, (İstanbul: I.B. Tauris/Swedish Research, 2006); Ayşegül Kibaroğlu, "The Role of Epistemic Communities in Offering New Cooepration Frameworks in the Euphrates-Tigris Rivers System", *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 61, No. 2, 2008; Özlem Tür, "Türkiye-Suriye İlişkileri: Su Sorunu." in Meliha Benli Altunışık (ed.), *Türkiye ve Ortadoğu Tarih, Kimlik, Güvenlik*, (İstanbul: Boyut Kitapları, 1999); Keith D. Watenpaugh, "Creating Phantoms": Zaki Al-Arsuzi, the Alexandretta Crisis and the Formation of Modern Arab Nationalism in Syria", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 28, 1996

compliance with the agreement. This literature points out that it was not the fear of Turkey's military threats that led Asad to capitulation, but rather it was based on vital domestic policy constraints and his concern over his son Bashar's succession. These concerns became a pillar of Asad's adjusted reference point that resulted in his reframing of the situation.[10]

However, the transformation of the Syrian-Turkish conflict has not been studied from the perspective of conflict resolution. The conceptual frameworks of studies on Syria and Turkey are generally either foreign policy analyses of Turkey and Syria discussing regional and international aspects of the relationship, or are analyses of the disputed issues. One study was also written from the standpoint of prospect theory, looking at Asad's risk-taking style in decision-making.[11] Some works additionally look at the changing relations between Syria and Turkey from the perspective of constructivism, mainly identity.[12] As a result, there is need for a more inclusive framework.

It is a fact that each perspective on the conflict between Syria and Turkey gives us valuable insight toward an understanding of the transformation of the conflict. On the one hand, the classical approach clarifies objective conditions, the impact of systemic changes and the influence of the changing balance of power between the parties as well. Without this understanding, the whole picture cannot be revealed. On the other hand, a critical approach, which clarifies the domestic and subjective aspects of the conflict, contributes enormously to an understanding of its transformation over time. However, there is need for a framework that gives weight to both explanations at the same time, without ignoring one for the sake of the other.

More importantly, however, there is no comprehensive answer to the third question in the literature, even in light of the first two discussions. Indeed, this question recalls other puzzles as well. First, if Asad's concern for regime survival

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[10] Sezgin, "The October 1998 Crisis in Turkish-Syrian Relations"

[11] Ibid.

[12] Bülent Aras and Hasan Köni, "Turkish-Syrian Relations Revisited", *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 4, 2002; Bülent Aras and Rabia Karakaya Polat, "From Conflict to Cooperation: Desecuritization of Turkey's Relations with Syria and Iran", *Security Dialogue* , Vol. 39, 2008

was effective in transforming the Syrian-Turkish conflict, why did this have no impact in the Syrian-Israeli case? We know that Asad would not have wanted his successor to struggle with the same difficult Israeli issues. Second, if Turkey's power was a determining factor behind the transformation process in the Syrian-Turkish case, why did Israel's power vis-à-vis Syria not open the way for a positive outcome in the process between Syria and Israel?

In response to these puzzles, this study explores the potential explanatory power of the ripeness theory, which basically argues that conflicts begin to resolve when conditions are ripe for moving beyond stalemate as an objective condition, and a perceived way out and a valid spokesman appear as subjective conditions.

Within this context, this dissertation reviews the literature on ripeness, asks questions about the notion of conflict transformation, and discusses the empirical findings of ripeness. It is a comparative case study on the transformation of Syrian conflicts with Turkey and Israel. In each case, conflict transformation efforts in general, and the conflict's ripeness process in particular are explored. These cases are examined with reference to the ripeness of the conflicts and the effectiveness of the negotiations.

The issue of ripeness lies at the theoretical heart of this thesis. Many scholars have pointed out that ripeness is a necessary but insufficient condition for successful negotiations. Three conditions – a hurting stalemate, a perceived way out and a valid spokesman – are widely accepted indicators of ripeness in conflict. However, while theorizing how likely ripeness is to occur, the explanations have remained one-sided and have focused on either objective conditions, i.e. hurting stalemate, or subjective conditions, i.e. a perceived way out, and hence have ignored the dialectic between objective and subjective conditions. This constitutes an important gap in the ripeness literature.

With this gap in mind, this study enriches the framework established by ripeness theory by the addition of variables related to negotiation processes. Without looking at the negotiation process, we cannot evaluate the factors affecting the outcome of conflict transformation process in a concrete way.

To track the identified gaps in particular and the comprehensive framework in general, this thesis aims to explore the effects of the ripeness process on the

effectiveness of conflict transformation efforts. This will be accomplished by examining the Syrian conflicts with Turkey and Israel comparatively, emphasizing the importance of interaction between objective and subjective conditions.

The Syrian-Turkish and Syrian-Israeli conflicts provide the foundation for a comparative study of ripeness. There are noticeable similarities between the two cases. Both are conflicts between an Arab country and its non-Arab neighbors. Both are between states established after the First World War from the remnants of the Ottoman Empire, not between ethnic groups or non-state actors. Together with the policies of the great powers, Syria perceived both Turkey and Israel as "colonial powers" in the region. For this reason, these states and their publics have tended to perceive each other through different historical understandings. One of the commonalities has been a mutual mistrust between the parties.

The overlapping historical roots of all parties notwithstanding, the two conflicts were in part cultivated on the basis of Cold War rivalry, since Syria was a client of the Soviet Union in the region, Turkey and Israel were associated with the Western bloc; Syria perceived both to be "tools" of Western superpowers in the region.

With the end of the Cold War, Syria, Turkey and Israel were freed from this framework. As a result, each conflict began to focus on disputant issues in a more direct way. The post-Cold War environment provided mixed novelties for each party, the most outstanding of which were the efforts to transform them.

The two conflicts also centered around comparable issues. We can identify these issues within the same typology, as issues of territory, security and water. Regarding territory, Syria claimed territorial rights from both Turkey and Israel. While the Golan Heights is considered to be an occupied territory approved by UN Security Council Resolution, Hatay is considered to be a "stolen territory"[13] by Syrians, though it is not recognized as such according to international law. In response to these analogous territorial issues, Syria has lent support to some organizations that had been labeled terrorist groups by Turkey and Israel. Syria has frequent concerns about the quantity and quality of its water resources at the hands

[13] Interview with Michel Kilo, intellectual and civil society activist, Damascus, October 11, 2004 cited in Altunışık and Tür, "From Distant Neighbors to Partners?", p. 219

of Turkey and Israel, which are upstream from the Euphrates and Jordan Rivers, respectively.

However, Syrian efforts to transform conflicts with its non-Arab neighbors have had different outcomes. The Syrian-Turkish dispute was mitigated with the Adana Accord in October 1998, which had opened the way for a broad transformation in relations, from strained coexistence to high-level strategic cooperation. However, despite various transformative efforts throughout the 1990s, the Syrian-Israeli conflict resulted in no sustainable change.

Based on this comparison, the critical empirical research question asks why Syria and Turkey were able to transform their conflict into good-neighborly relations, albeit with some unresolved, while the same was not possible between Syria and Israel despite the peace negotiations between 1991 and 2000. And to what extent can ripeness explain the reasons behind these different outcomes?

Within this context, following hypotheses will be tested in this study:

1) The high-level of ripeness conditions in the Syrian-Turkish conflict, compared to the conditions in the Syrian-Israeli conflict, was the determinant of effectiveness, that is, for the signing of an agreement that symbolized the transformation in relations. More theoretically, the interaction between objective and subjective conditions of ripeness is more evident in the Syrian-Turkish case than in the Syrian-Israeli conflict, and this is the explanatory factor for the differing outcomes in these transformation processes.

For ripeness, understanding how the status quo is perceived by each party is imperative; if the status quo is sustainable for at least one party, the conflict transformation process will suffer. Conversely, when the status quo becomes untenable, the ripeness process gains momentum. In addition, examination of the political will to solve the problems should be complemented by that of the public will. If a high-level of willingness exists at both the public and political levels, the conflict transformation process will be freed of a vital deterrent.

2) Ripeness process takes place in a context, which is a framework not to be ignored in analysis of these processes. International and regional contexts and power relations between the parties in a conflict are vital factors to take into

account. Nevertheless, their direct influence as systemic factors in each conflict should be complemented by other factors related to domestic structure.

Conflicts and conflict transformation efforts between states are not immune to the influence of domestic structures, particularly the domestic policies and decision-making procedures of each party. Domestic structures are not just transmitters or passive channels, but are dynamic and active parts of the transformation processes, with the potential to shape outcomes.

3) Concerns of the parties about specific issues in conflicts should be made sense of through identity-based issues; interest-based issues require different approaches for the analysis of these transformations. While interest-based issues can be examined through conflict management techniques, identity-based issues need more: reconciliation, for instance. Furthermore, as it is not possible to make clear-cut delineations between interest-based and identity-based issues, complementary approaches are more useful to the analysis of conflict transformation.

4) In order to evaluate the factors behind the effective conflict transformation, negotiation environment, mainly negotiation goals and stragtegies, should be taken into account. Devious goals in negotiations have the potential to obstruct the conflict transformation process. Complementary negotiation strategies between positional bargaining and problem-solving are more effective than any single strategy.

This research is expected to contribute to the literature with respect to ripeness, and to fill gaps in the literature regarding neglected aspects of theory. On the other hand, the cases I have selected from the Middle East for my research have not as yet been studied within the framework of ripeness theory. Thus a comparative study of the transformation of Syrian conflicts with Israel and Turkey will also contribute to the literature empirically. This opens the way for further research; results may be compared, for example, with analysis of the Israeli-Palestinian case or other cases.

The thesis is structured in two main parts. The first section, including chapters 2 and 3, deals with theoretical and conceptual issues of the research; the second section empirically applies the designed conceptual framework to the cases.

The theoretical background of the research is provided in chapter 2. This covers ripeness theory in general, and investigates its components, its criticized points and its gaps in particular. The discussion takes an exploratory approach to ripeness theory. First, this chapter defines the basic components of ripeness, namely hurting stalemate, a perceived way out and a valid spokesman. The criticized points of ripeness theory are then given focus. These points are identified as rationality assumption, the possible roles of costs and benefits in hurting stalemate, the question of whether or not ripeness can be created, the need for overcoming the neglect of internal conditions, neglect of the issue differentiation and the need to take ripeness as a variable. Filling these gaps will make ripeness theory more potent for explaining the effectiveness of the conflict transformation process.

In chapter 3, the conceptual framework and methodology of research are clarified. The research objective and strategy are explained. In particular, variables and themes that are considered effective for successful conflict transformation are identified. Each variable is operationalized. First, the dependent variable to the effective/successful outcome of the conflict transformation process is discussed. Then, the potential explanatory variables are grouped into two: contextual and process variables. With contextual variables, the external context, power relations between the parties and disputed issues in conflict are explored in terms of their influence on conflict transformation and ripeness. The process variables of actors, pre-negotiation and negotiation variables are then outlined. As actors, third parties and the domestic structure of parties are given focus. At the pre-negotiation level, the variables of hurting stalemate and a perceived way out are intensively studied. Lastly, the negotiation variables of strategy and goals are examined. At the end of the chapter, the research methodology, the comparative case methodology, particularly the most similar case approach with the method of difference, is identified, as it is the most convenient method for explaining the different outcomes in the cases compared.

In the second part of the thesis, chapters 4 and 5 apply the designed conceptual framework to the cases of Syrian conflicts with Turkey and Israel, respectively. In chapter 4, a background and literature review on relations between Syria and Turkey are first provided. The outcome and effectiveness of Syrian-

Turkish conflict transformation is then determined. On the basis of the research design as delineated in chapter 3, each variable is controlled for its effectiveness in the transformation process. Similarly, chapter 5 begins with an analysis of the background of the Syrian-Israeli conflict, followed again by a determination of the outcome and effectiveness of the transformation process. A central focus of the chapter is an analysis of the variables leading to the failure of this peace process.

Chapter 6 contains a comparative analysis of the two cases, comparing and contrasting the findings of the Syrian-Turkish and Syrian-Israeli cases with each other. For each variable, the theoretical assumptions are briefly remarked upon, and the question of how empirical findings may be compatible with these assumptions is debated. In this way, the potential impact of each variable may be estimated. Chapter 7 consists of concluding remarks about the research.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2. 1. Introduction

In this research, conflict transformation rather than conflict resolution is taken as a focus, because conflict transformation goes beyond conflict resolution and is a comprehensive attempt to promote social and cultural change together with political change, and to transform relations in order to achieve lasting peace. In fact, the idea of lasting peace is untenable, and conflict transformation is an ongoing process, in which some moments are identifiable as thresholds for de-escalation and negotiation. Collected together, these moments help us outline ripeness process. When parties in conflict become aware of such processes, they may be more effective in transforming such conflicts through de-escalation.

Conflicts are transformed over time through de-escalation into peaceful relations or through escalation into more detrimental relations. In the literature, it is argued that there are "right" times for conflict resolution, and ideally that early, preventive action is desirable in order to avoid the occurrence of conflict altogether. In reality, however conflicts are unavoidable, so the best alternative becomes to initiate peace processes at appropriate/right/ripe times.

The ripeness theory, which was put forward by I. William Zartman, has been developed by many scholars, including Richard Haass, Stephen Stedman, Dean Pruitt, and Peter Coleman. In essence, the components of ripeness consist of "hurting stalemate", "a perceived way out" and "a valid spokesman". In the literature, either the hurting stalemate component of ripeness, the external/objective condition, or the perceived way out component, the internal/subjective condition, have been systematically explored; the aim of this research is to go beyond this and

assess the impacts of the dialectic between the external/objective and internal/subjective conditions on the ripeness process.

According to I. William Zartman, the pioneer of ripeness theory, the key to successful conflict resolution lies in the timing of efforts for resolution, along with the substance of the proposals for a solution. Timing is not claimed to be the sole answer, but efforts to reach a solution are fruitless until the moment is ripe.[1] To capitalize on the opportune moment is critical in the sense that "once a moment or period of ripeness has been let pass, a conflict must go back to its process of ripening all over again before another moment of opportunity can later appear."[2] Thus ripeness is a critical condition, necessary but insufficient for the initiation of negotiations. However, the question of to what extent is it necessary and which conditions enhance its effectiveness should be answered.

Zartman identifies the components of ripeness as follows: first, a mutually hurting stalemate (deadlock) or an imminent mutual catastrophe (deadline), wherein both parties realize they can no longer escalate their way to victory; second, the emergence of a perceived way out; and third, valid spokesmen on both sides.[3]

In such a scenario, adversaries will consider a negotiated solution, rather than face a long period of costly action with a low perceived probability of unilaterally achieving their goals when a coming disaster that threatens to increase the costs of continuing coercive strategies.[4] Hence, critical changes in the intensity

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[1] I. William Zartman, "Ripeness: The Hurting Stalemate and Beyond", in Paul Stern and Daniel Druckman (eds.), *International Conflict Resolution after the Cold War*, (National Academies Press, 2000), p. 225

[2] I. William Zartman, *Cowardly Lions Missed Opportunities to Prevent Deadly Conflict and State Collapse*, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005, p. 237

[3] Dean G. Pruitt, "Ripeness Theory and the Oslo Talks", *International Negotiation*, Vol. 2, 1997, pp. 237-38

[4] Christopher Mitchell, "The Right Moment: Notes on Four Models of 'Ripeness", *Paradigms*, Vol. 9, No. 2 reprinted in Daniel Druckman and Paul F. Diehl (ed.) *Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 2, (Sage Publications: 2006), p. 86; Christopher Mitchell, "The Right Moment: Notes on Four Models of 'Ripeness", *Global Society*, Vol. 9, Issue 2, Winter 1995

of a conflict and in the military situation between parties can help ripeness.[5] Those objective conditions are necessary for the ripeness process.

However, objective conditions are not sufficient, and it is argued that subjective conditions are inevitable. For instance, Peter Coleman asserts that the "state of ripeness is at the individual-psychological level as a high level of commitment by a party to change the direction of the normative escalatory processes of the relations toward de-escalation."[6]

These two different formulations come from two opposite directions, which are dialectically interacting and completing with each other. This research is based on such a dialectical understanding. The aim is not only to answer the question of when conflicts are ripe, but also how: especially how ripeness influences the success of these processes. In this chapter, the basic components of ripeness theory are analyzed, then its criticized and ignored points are identified.

2.2. Basic Concepts and Definitions

2.2.1. Hurting Stalemate

Hurting stalemate is an unpleasant terrain stretching into the future, providing no possibilities for decisive escalation or for graceful escape.[7] In this situation, the concerns of the parties involved relate to continuing cost, and so loss avoidance,[8] or to the absence of the possibility of gain.[9] It is argued that the

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[5] I. William Zartman, "The Timing of Peace Initiatives: Hurting Stalemates and Ripe Moments", in John Darby and Roger MacGinty (eds.), *Contemporary Peacemaking, Conflict, Violence and Peace Processes*, (Palgrave, 2003)

[6] Peter T. Coleman, "Redefining Ripeness: A Social-Psychological Perspective", *Peace and Conflict*, Vol. 3, 1997

[7] Christopher Mitchell, "Cutting Losses: Reflections on Appropriate Timing", *ICAR Working Paper*, 9 January 1996

[8] Karen Aggestam, "Enhancing Ripeness: Transition from Conflict to Negotiation", in I. William Zartman and Guy Olivier Faure, *Escalation and Negotiation in International Conflicts*, (Cambridge University Press, 2005)

[9] Mitchell, "The Right Moment: Notes on Four Models of 'Ripeness", p. 87

percentage of disputes ending in stalemates increases the likelihood of resolution success.[10]

There are different types of stalemate: the stalemate of desperation, wherein both parties are exhausted and no victory is in sight; the stalemate of attrition, wherein neither success nor failure are possible ends; the stalemate of frustration, wherein the parties cannot achieve victory on their own terms;[11] and the stalemate of catastrophe, wherein a disaster threatens the parties. Zartman points out that catastrophe is a useful extension of a mutually hurting stalemate, but is not necessary to either its definition or to its existence.[12] In some instances, there is the possibility of a soft stalemate that is stable and self-serving with a painful but bearable effect.[13] In this situation, the two sides maintain a de facto partition, punctuated by flashes of violence, yet learn to live with it and even enjoy it.[14]

2.2.2. Perceived Way Out

According to theory, the mutually hurting stalemate must be perceived by the parties.[15] Zartman points out that "if two parties perceive themselves in a hurting stalemate and perceive a way out, the conflict is ripe for resolution."[16] It is the perception of the objective condition, not the condition itself, which makes for a mutually hurting stalemate. Perception is very important in that without a sense of a way out, the push associated with a mutually hurting stalemate leave the parties

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[10] Michael Greig, "Moments of Opportunity, Recognising Conditions of Ripeness for International Mediation Between Enduring Rivals", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 45, No. 6, Dec. 2001

[11] Mitchell, "The Right Moment: Notes on Four Models of 'Ripeness", p. 87

[12] Zartman, "The Timing of Peace Initiatives: Hurting Stalemates and Ripe Moments", p. 19

[13] Zartman, *Cowardly Lions*, p. 11

[14] I. William Zartman, "Negotiating Internal, Ethnic and Identity Conflicts in a Globalized World", *International Negotiation*, Vol. 11, 2006, p. 255

[15] Zartman, "Ripeness: The Hurting Stalemate and Beyond"

[16] Ibid., p. 102

with nowhere to go.[17] Thus ripeness contains objective and subjective elements, among which only the latter are necessary and sufficient to its existence. We can then say that "if parties' subjective expressions of pain related to objective evidence of stalemate can be found, along with expressions of a sense of a way out, ripeness exists."[18]

Further, the perception of a way out is critical in that unless parties believe that a solution is feasible, it is not possible to convince them to come together and work to resolve their differences.[19] Thus in the event of a hurting stalemate without a perceived way out, we cannot identify ripeness. Alan Dowty empirically revealed that although the hurting stalemate continued in the second (Al-Aqsa) intifada from the first intifada of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the outbreak of violence did not have the same impact; the most critical difference in the second intifada was that neither side could see a way out.[20]

However, perception of a way out is not simple and straightforward. Construing the criteria for a perceived way out in terms of the need for a mutually agreeable formula can be misleading, since the perception that possibilities may be negotiable emerged from more dynamic processes.[21]

In protracted conflicts especially, there is the possibility of psychological, historical and political burdens on perceiving a hurting stalemate or an opportunity to begin de-escalation. In such conflicts, usually past damages are sustained, commitments are made, sacrifices are endured and hostilities are engendered.[22] Paradoxically, sometimes a hurting stalemate necessitates the perception of existence by the actors, and this may in turn necessitate force. Actors in intense

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[17] Zartman, "The Timing of Peace Initiatives", p. 20

[18] Zartman, "Ripeness: The Hurting Stalemate and Beyond", pp. 104-105

[19] Jacob Bercovitch and S. Ayşe Kadayıfçı, "Conflict Management and Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: the Importance of Capturing the "Right Moment"", *Asia-Pasific Review*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 2002, p. 118

[20] Alan Dowty, "Despair is not Enough Violence, Attitudinal Change, and 'Ripeness' in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict", *Cooperation and Conflict: Journal of the Nordic International Studies Association*, Vol. 41, No. 1, 2006, p. 26

[21] Daniel Lieberfeld, *Talking with the Enemy, Negotiation and Threat Perception in South Africa and Israel/Palestine*, (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1999), p. 123

[22] Mitchell, "The Right Moment: Notes on Four Models of 'Ripeness", p. 92

strife typically feel the only language the other side understands is force. It is posited that threats are useful in tightening the jaws of deadlock, making the stalemate more painful and future alternatives more attractive.[23] Thus, perceiving a way out with means other than force seems impractical. As has been seen, objective and subjective conditions of theory are both necessary and complementary. We cannot ignore one in the favor of the other.

Another debate in relation to perceiving a way out concerns whether or not this action should be taken jointly or separately. Zartman argues that perception is a joint action by involved parties, and so simultaneously affects both. This is a criticized point. Stedman argues that not all participants in a conflict need to perceive a mutually hurting stalemate. In his study, in which he was determined to articulate the relationship between mutually hurting stalemate and ripeness, he demonstrated that two of the major parties within the conflict he examined in Zimbabwe, did not perceive the situation to be a mutually hurting stalemate.[24] Pruitt argued that a more flexible theory would analyze the perceptions of each party separately.[25] Each side needs to perceive independently that it is approaching some unavoidable catastrophe or hurting stalemate.

2.2.3. Valid Spokesman

As not only the existence of objective conditions, but of course the perception of these conditions is necessary to ripeness theory, the question of whose perception is relevant emerges. However, this important component of the theory is not thoroughly researched. There is an emphasis on and acknowledgement of the importance of valid spokespersons and leadership, but it cannot go beyond this in ripeness theory.

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[23] Dowty, "Despair is not Enough", pp. 5-6

[24] Stephen John Stedman, *Peacemaking in Civil War, International Mediation in Zimbabwe, 1974-1980*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1991), p. 236

[25] Pruitt, "Ripeness Theory and the Oslo Talks", p. 238

Valid spokesmen are people with the ability to commit enough segments of the political spectrum on the other side so that a negotiated agreement will be possible. As a structural element, it is of a different order than the other two defining elements. Nonetheless, it retains some importance. The belief of one side that it is dealing with valid representatives of the other side imbues the process with legitimacy, and is indeed a prerequisite for productive or successful negotiations. It has even been argued that without a valid representative, there is no point in entering negotiations.[26]

For instance, Mitchell argues that key elements to ripeness are leaders' perceptions of structural conditions and the decision-making process that determine whether a structurally ripe moment will be seized.[27] For Pruitt, bridge persons are important. Motivational ripeness followed by optimism is not an inevitable progression. If bridge people do not exist, the motivationally ripe moment may be squandered.[28]

Although the criterion of perception is an essential condition of ripeness theory, there is no fruitful debate over how this occurs. One of the reasons for the lack of debate is that this relates to the subjective part of the theory.

2.3. Focus of Research: Explanatory Power of Ripeness Theory

Throughout the research, one of the central purposes is to evaluate the explanatory power of ripeness theory. In order to do this, the criticized points of ripeness theory will be pointed out and gaps in the theory will be clarified. These points are identified as rationality assumption, the possible roles of costs and benefits in the hurting stalemate, the question of whether or not ripeness can be created, the need to overcome the neglect of the decision-making unit and internal conditions, and neglect of the issue differentiation.

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[26] Dean G. Pruitt, Sung Hee Kim, *Social Conflict Escalation, Stalemate, and Settlement*, Third Edition, (New York: Mc Graw Hill, 2004), p. 179

[27] Mitchell, "Cutting Losses"

[28] Pruitt, "Ripeness Theory and the Oslo Talks", p. 247

2.3.1. Rationality Assumption

The hurting stalemate is grounded in cost-benefit analysis, fully consistent with public choice notions of rationality.[29] Ripeness propositions incorporate core assumptions from the realist and rational choice perspectives: that unitary actors rationally calculate the costs and benefits of policy choices, based primarily on considerations of power.[30] One of the core assumptions in ripeness theory is that of the rational actor who rationally works toward de-escalation as costs increase.

However, leaders of such conflicts may be subject to irrational processes, and can become trapped in the continued pursuit of victory, even after costs would seem to have begun to outweigh benefits. Instead, the more costs that have been incurred, the more reasons there are to carry on in order to justify both the psychological and political sacrifices already made. This model, which was termed as "entrapment" by Christopher Mitchell, ironically bears some rationality, in that the anticipated costs of continuing might not be enough to turn leaders' minds toward conciliation so long as their vision remained fixed on the potential benefits, which alone would be perceived to justify the costs already incurred.[31] There is also the possibility of positive entrapment, which occurs when parties in conflict become committed to a pattern of de-escalation they cannot escape. Momentum had been established in prior phases, and the parties have come to feel they have too much invested in the de-escalation sequence to give it up.[32]

This pattern has been identified by others as well. Daniel Lieberfeld asserts that coercive strategies and impending threats may favor escalation rather than de-

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[29] Zartman, "The Timing of Peace Initiatives", p. 20

[30] Lieberfeld, *Talking with the Enemy*, p. 11

[31] Mitchell, "Cutting Losses"

[32] Pruitt and Kim, *Social Conflict Escalation, Stalemate, and Settlement*, pp. 187-188

escalation. This then makes the central indicators of ripeness, the high-cost stalemate and a recent or impending crisis, inherently ambivalent.[33]

Zartman accepts this scenario, but as a problem or complication, and allows that there are times when a mutually hurting stalemate not only does not initiate negotiation, but actually makes it more difficult. According to him, it is normal for conditions that are designed to produce a ripe moment to produce its opposite. Justified struggles may call for greater sacrifices, which absorb increased pain and strengthen determination. In entrapment, true believers may be unlikely to be led to compromise in the event of increased pain, with the pain instead being used to justify a renewal of the struggle. In this case, under certain conditions, Zartman agrees in acknowledgement that the mechanism of hurting stalemate may be its own undoing.[34]

Scholars who acknowledge "irrationality" point out that under certain circumstances escalation of conflicts rather than the "rational" de-escalation results. It is necessary to find out under which circumstances and conditions hurting stalemate leads to one or the other result. For instance, Alan Dowty asks, "Who is correct? Can violence provoke either counter-violence or moderation, depending on the circumstances? What conditions are necessary for de-escalation to occur and what conditions do seem to harden attitudes instead?" For Dowty, it is reasonable to hypothesize that these conditions have something to do with whether violence has an escalating or de-escalating impact on attitudes toward conflict.[35]

2.3.2. Costs vs. Opportunities as Incurring the Parties to De-escalate

Related to rationality assumption, in the cost-benefit analysis, it is argued that costs rather than benefits are initiators of the de-escalation process. Is this always the case? What are the chances that benefits entice parties toward de-

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[33] Lieberfeld, "Conflict "Ripeness" Revisited", p. 64

[34] Zartman, "The Timing of Peace Initiatives", p. 24, Zartman, "Ripeness: The Hurting Stalemate and Beyond", pp. 111-12

[35] Dowty, "Despair is not Enough", p. 7

escalation? It is possible that new benefits rather than existing or anticipated costs, and those new rewards for adopting alternatives rather than sacrifices may entice parties to de-escalate the conflict? Possible "enticing opportunities", as they described by Christopher Mitchell, would include the emergence of new leadership, a change in goals or level of commitment, the availability of new resources, and a change in priorities among elites. This argument assumes, for example, that in relation to alternatives to coercion, leaders may change their minds and think creatively in the midst of a conflict.[36]

Dean Pruitt, in readiness theory, emphasizes more the proximal antecedents of motivation in achieving mutual cooperation, and also on optimism with respect to the fact that the other party will reciprocate. According to him, there is a distinction between an enticing opportunity and a perceived way out, which are equated in ripeness theory. While a perceived way out is a means to de-escalation, an enticing opportunity is the positive outcome of de-escalation.

Peter Coleman goes beyond these assumptions and empirically compares the roles of the costs and benefits. According to him, both negative and positive incentives create ripeness. Parties may either diminish opposing forces or accumulate forces in the direction of change. Coleman hypothesized that interventions aimed at removing resistance-forces (negative incentive) toward de-escalation result in greater disputant ripeness than those employing driving-forces (positive incentive). He then identified that resistance-removing interventions had more impact on subjects' emotional experiences.[37]

Alan Dowty, who did not draw a distinction between positive and negative forces, pointed out that dramatic news seemed to push parties toward moderation, regardless of whether it portended escalation or de-escalation. "Wars forced consideration of alternatives to the status quo, while diplomatic breakthroughs made such alternatives appear more feasible. On the other hand, during periods of relative quiet, opposition to withdrawal tended to grow; when the status quo looked more

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[36] Mitchell, "Cutting Losses"

[37] Coleman, "Redefining Ripeness", p. 313

tenable, there was less inclination to question it."[38] For example, the Oslo peace process took place just when changes in political circumstances made the perception of gains, losses, and risks appear different from they had in preceding years.[39] This process put as an alternative to the status quo.

2.3.3. Ripe Moments Need to be Created?

The ripeness process does not always occur automatically. Ripe moments may not naturally fall into one's hands. It is possible that ripe moments are buried in the rubble of events and sometimes need to be dug out. They need to be taken or created with skill.[40] Hence, an active mediator role is commonly advocated by scholars with respect to the creation of ripe moments. Peter Coleman asserts that ripeness can be the result of intentional action by the conflicting parties or third parties. He notes that it can also be developed in an unplanned manner as a result of the time and circumstances associated with a conflict.[41]

Zartman notes that convincing disputant parties is necessary. Mediators have the ability to draw the attention of parties to the difficulty of a mutually hurting stalemate and to turn that into negotiations. He proposes that if only objective elements exist, once ripeness has been established, tactics deployed by mediators can seize on ripe moments and turn them into negotiations.[42]

One of the most important functions for a third party is to withhold each side's changed perception until it is shared by the other side. The importance of the third party is in recognizing the onset of ripeness and taking action in that moment

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[38] Dowty, "Despair is not Enough", p. 12

[39] Bercovitch and Kadayıfçı, "Conflict Management and Israeli-Palestinian Conflict", p. 118

[40] Marieke Kleiboer, "Ripeness of Conflict: A Fruitful Notion?", *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 31, No. 1, 1994, p. 111

[41] Coleman, "Redefining Ripeness", p. 304

[42] Zartman, "Ripeness: The Hurting Stalemate and Beyond", p. 108

in order to encourage both parties to enter into negotiations and to sustain this process.[43]

What are the possible tools of initiating the ripeness process? According to Haass, creating a sense of ripeness is possible through military assistance, intelligence support, security guarantees and commitments of an alliance and economic commitments.[44]

2.3.4. Neglect of Internal Conditions

In ripeness theory, internal conditions are acknowledged. However, this does not reach beyond acknowledgement. It is assumed that a hurting stalemate is directly and unequivocally perceived by the parties. These approaches emphasize the metaphor of domestic politics as an imperfect transmission belt that introduces deviations from rational response to external imperatives. Is this really the case? Zartman recognizes that further research needs to be completed in relation to the discussion of leadership conditions for ripeness.[45] This neglect in ripeness theory became one of its most criticized points in the sense that propositions of ripeness share political realism's tendency to view actors as unitary, and to disregard influences on foreign policy from national-level or domestic politics.[46]

In fact, as Kleiboer and Hart assert, "one cannot treat time as an independent variable in international conflict." Any mid-range theory about international negotiation in general and temporal factors and timing in particular rests on a more comprehensive and fundamental philosophical basis.[47] While, from a very basic perspective, the situation on the battlefield determines to a large extent whether or

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[43] Landon E. Hancock, "To Act or Wait: A Two-Stage View of Ripeness", *International Studies Perspective*, Vol. 2, 2001, p. 196

[44] Kleiboer, "Ripeness of Conflict"

[45] Zartman, "Ripeness: The Hurting Stalemate and Beyond", pp. 108-9

[46] Lieberfeld, "Conflict "Ripeness" Revisited", p. 64

[47] Marieke Kleiboer and Paul't Hart, "Time to Talk?", *Cooperation & Conflict*, Vol. XXX, No.4, 1995, p. 309

not negotiation can be initiated; from humanist and political psychological perspectives, timing becomes much less dependent on physical exchanges and the distribution of resources between the parties in conflict.

Instead, the essence of good timing is about influencing parties' beliefs about the conflict and desirability of settlement. From these perspectives, the range of possible ripe moments is broadened. Negotiation is no longer considered feasible as just a mechanism of crisis management. It is also deemed useful as a tool of preventive diplomacy, as well as during post-crisis periods in an ongoing conflict.[48]

To overcome these criticisms, ripeness theory should be strengthened through the inclusion of parties' internal variables. Thus domestic political explanations, decision-making structures and processes should be included in the analysis. This has been done by many scholars, including Stephen Stedman, Richard Haass, and Daniel Liberfeld, and even by Zartman himself. Later, Zartman identifies internal conditions in an effort to explain raised resistance through increased pain. He acknowledges the blackened opponent image, the ideologized opponents' (true believers) justification of greater sacrifices without regard to costs, and thus to nurturing non-negotiatory mindsets.[49]

What are the other efforts? Might they rescue the theory from this neglect and weakness? Stephen Stedman, one of the first challengers of Zartman's view of disputants as unitary actors, calls into question Zartman's implicit conception of antagonists as unitary actors that perceive or calculate the gains and losses of combat, negotiation, and surrender in terms of the government as a whole. He argues that ripeness can be the function of internal political changes.[50] Taking the concept beyond single perception into the complexities of internal dynamics, Stedman recommends refining the ripeness concept through the development of more contextually dependent generalizations. In his analysis of international mediation in the Zimbabwean civil war, ripeness was determined to come about in part from the politics within groups in conflict and their willingness to negotiate.

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[48] Ibid., pp. 337-341

[49] Zartman, "Ripeness: The Hurting Stalemate and Beyond", pp. 208-9

[50] Stedman, *Peacemaking in Civil War*, p. 26

Internal politics are often important to the success or failure of negotiations.[51] He argues that leaders must negotiate with one face looking outward to the opponent and one face looking inward to political competition from within their own parties. Leaders must calculate their actions in terms of their ability to maintain their own positions. Often such individual political considerations work against possible conciliatory moves toward one's adversaries.[52]

Secondly, Richard Haass, in his opinion, looks at ripeness as a natural condition for the resolution of conflicts and as a political issue. Two of his four prerequisites for ripeness are related to the intra-party level: one is the ability of leaders to come to an agreement and to sell the notion to their constituents; the other is that there be enough room in negotiations for parties to claim they have to protect their national interests. According to him, away from the negotiation table other crucial functions must also be attended to, including public diplomacy, to prepare leaders and the public for the costs of the negotiating process itself. This reduces the likelihood that diplomacy will be undermined by unfolding events. [53]

Lieberfeld also argues that an alternative conception of ripeness might account for these factors, highlighting perceptions of the possibility for negotiation and the national sources of political injury. The hurting stalemate at the center of ripeness should explicitly consider threats and opportunities stemming from internal, as well as external politics. In conflicts that are perceived to be non-existential, the threat of losing office may be at least as salient for decision-makers as the potential loss of bargaining position relative to an external adversary.[54]

Christopher Mitchell is also aware of the neglect of internal factors. According to him, the potential costs of abandoning a chosen strategy may arise internally and constitute a major deterrent to any abandonment of this strategy.[55] He offers the criticism that although all ripeness models take into consideration the

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[51] Ibid., pp. 235-38

[52] Ibid., p. 16

[53] Richard Haass, *Conflicts Unending, The United States and Regional Disputes*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 6, 27-29, 146, Hancock, "To Act or Wait", p. 197

[54] Lieberfeld, *Talking with the Enemy*, pp. 121-122

[55] Mitchell, "Cutting Losses"

intra-party level, they cannot reach beyond such emphasis, and this neglect of internal factors is a major weakness of such models. He notes:

> there is a tendency among all four models of ripeness to concentrate upon ripeness as an inter-party phenomenon and willingness as a leadership phenomenon, while neglecting the implication that there are also intra-party dimensions to ripeness and that these need to be included in any comprehensive view about 'the right moment'... Even in those aspects of the models which concentrate upon leaders' changing perceptions or evaluations that help produce a 'conciliatory mentality' emphasis in each tends to be first on those structural factors connected with the relationship between the adversaries...[56]

However, some arguments may also overemphasize the internal conditions. For example, it is argued that "unless conflicts at the intra-actor level are dealt with first, then conflicts at the inter-actor level – good intentions to the contrary – may only worsen. To deal effectively with conflicts at the second-order of manifestation, we may have to deal with them first at their first-order of manifestation."[57] I do not advocate such an approach because this understanding can lead to neglect from the opposite side. The important thing to be aware of is the interaction between external and internal conditions. In this sense, Robert Putnam's emphasis on the correlation between the inter-party and intra-party levels is crucial to such an understanding. He argues that for ripeness to be perceived at the inter-party level, it would have to be perceived by enough elements at the intra-party level to successfully enter negotiations without the possibility that any sizable groups within each party would act as spoilers, derailing negotiations.[58]

Putnam, upon finding out answers to the questions of when and how domestic politics determine international relations, argues that at the Bonn deal[59],

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[56] Mitchell, "The Right Moment: Notes on Four Models of 'Ripeness", pp. 95-96

[57] Dennis J. D. Sandole, "Virulent Ethnocentrism: A Major Challenge for Transformational Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding in the Post-Cold War Era", *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics*, Vol. 1, No. 4, 2002, p. 5

[58] Robert Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games", *International Organizations*, Vol. 42, Summer 1988, p. 436

[59] At the Bonn summit conference of 1978, a comprehensive package deal was approved in order to rescue the world economy, which was in serious trouble. Germany agreed to additional fiscal

international pressure was a necessary condition making it possible to demand policy shifts. On the other hand, without domestic resonance, international forces would not have been sufficient to produce the accord. According to Putnam, that agreement was possible only because a powerful minority within each government actually favored the policy being demanded internationally.[60] There is thus a need for a two-level diplomatic approach constrained simultaneously by what other states will accept and what domestic constituencies will ratify. To successfully conclude a negotiation, the statesman must bargain on two platforms: both reaching an international agreement and securing its domestic ratification. Within this understanding domestic and international politics are integrated in. It is an interactive approach in the sense that statesmen's strategies reflect a simultaneous double-edged calculation of constraints and opportunities on both the domestic and international boards.[61] It is named "double-edged diplomacy" for its ability to reshape domestic interests as well as respond to them.

Another model, called "the situational imperative"[62], also provides insights about internal conditions. In this model, it is asserted that systemic constraints and opportunities can best be understood from the perspective of the actors. A foreign policy analysis can be completed when domestic variables and decision-making units are incorporated to provide a comprehensive framework. In this way, the researcher can not only avoid giving priority to any one level of analysis in foreign policymaking, but he or she is also more capable of evaluating how domestic politics and decision-making units have the ability to enhance or diminish the behavior of a government.[63]

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stimulus, the US committed to decontrol domestic oil prices by the end of 1980 and Japan pledged new efforts to reach a 7 percent growth rate. See Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics", pp. 428-430

[60] Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics", p. 428

[61] Andrew Moravcsik, "Introduction: Integrating International and Domestic Theories of International Bargaining", in Peter B. Evans, Harold F. Jacobson and Robert D. Putnam (eds.), *Double-Edged Diplomacy: International Bargaining and Domestic Politics*, (University of California Press, 1993), pp. 16-17

[62] See V. M. Hudson, C. F. Hermann, E. Singer, "The Situational Imperative: A Predictive Model of Foreign Policy Behavior", *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. XXIV, 1989

With this interaction in mind, we can focus on the internal conditions more deeply. From this perspective, we can look at individual-psychological approaches, which are important parts of the internal conditions, and which constitutes the basis for social-psychological approaches to ripeness. Peter Coleman defines ripeness as a more subjective, "state of mind" approach. In his model, ripeness exists at the individual-psychological level as a high level of commitment by a party to change the direction of the normative escalatory processes of relations toward de-escalation.[64] He gives emphasis to the individual level, since there is a general sense that one of the first and most critical challenges faced by parties in helping disputants cross their own social-psychological barriers to make peace with their enemies.[65] Furthermore, for him, ripeness in a conflict can be understood as both a process and a state. Both an unripe state and a ripe state are dynamic and changing within certain limits. Coleman says:

> [I]t is transitional process from an intractable state to a ripe state that is of primary importance to the resolution of intractable conflicts. This process is complex and multiply determined. It can operate at an individual-psychological level within one party, at a social level in the context of a relationship, or more broadly effect group, institutional, or national expectations and preferences for peace. In this sense one party may be ripe for resolution and the others not, all parties may be ripe, or within a group the leaders may become ready for peacemaking but not its members (or vice versa).[66]

According to him, in essence, full ripeness is more than a feeling, a decision, an event, or a general sense of readiness; it is a high level of commitment to change.[67] Regarding how this change occurs, Coleman explains ripeness from a motivational standpoint that transformation of conflicts toward de-escalation

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[63] Binnur Özkeçeci-Taner, "How to Study Foreign Politics: Systemic Constraints vs. Domestic Politics and Decision-Making Structure", *Perceptions, Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. VI, no. 4, Dec. 2001-Feb. 2002

[64] Coleman, "Redefining Ripeness", p. 300

[65] Ibid., p. 301-2

[66] Ibid., p. 303

[67] Ibid., p. 303

constitutes a significant change in the individual, and that change in action must be preceded by change in the individual's motivation and view of the conflict.[68] Coleman concludes that there are two complementary notions of ripeness. One is the transitional process of ripeness as a long-term normative change, and the second is the state of ripeness as a high level of commitment to that change.[69]

According to Coleman, the greatest challenge is helping to cross social-psychological barriers. He recommends a synergistic process including a MACBE[70] framework, which is a useful tool for understanding how a change in attitude toward one's enemy may be insufficient to affect lasting peace unless it can impact other modes or be combined with more comprehensive strategies for change.[71] Thus, transitions intended to bring negotiation strategies back into alignment should be supported by transformations that change individual understandings of the negotiations.[72]

As a result, to make ripeness theory more powerful, we need to look at the internal conditions of the parties as a variable, rather than taking ripeness as a given state. If we accept that internal conditions are variables interacting with external conditions, we must also recognize that they can be stronger or weaker. Dean Pruitt criticized Zartman's model as being one of necessary causation, and instead proposed a multiple causal factor model. His model draws a distinction between the proximal antecedents of decision-making and the distal antecedents of environmental variables. Pruitt tries to reinforce his analysis by differentiating between these two antecedents. He argues that readiness theory exists at a different level of analysis than environmental variables. He puts forward that "if we can develop a truly valid set of propositions at the proximal level of analysis, they

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[68] Ibid

[69] Ibid., p. 314

[70] **M**otivation, **A**ffect, **C**ognitive, **B**ehavior, **E**nvironment

[71] Coleman, "Redefining Ripeness", p. 314

[72] Olekalns and Smith, "Moments in Time", p. 1698

should serve as a powerful heuristic for discovering useful generalizations at the distal level..."[73]

At the proximal level of analysis, we first need to take into account leadership. There are different arguments about the impact of the strength of leadership on negotiations. It is believed that leaders must either be sufficiently strong as to permit compromise, or sufficiently weak so that compromise is unavoidable.[74] On the one hand, it is argued that leadership facing a threat from local political rivals may be more motivated to negotiate an end to protracted conflicts than those without such domestic challenges. On the other hand, it is pointed out that leaders who are confident in their support, and who consolidate their hold over movements make compromise more readily.[75] Putnam asserts that "the greater the autonomy of central decision-makers from their Level II constituents, the larger their win-set and thus the greater the likelihood of achieving international agreement."[76]

However, it is not specified to what extent, either stemming from domestic or external pressures, weakness can promote compromise. Thus, the question of how leaders' internal strengths or weaknesses affect their willingness to undertake negotiation initiatives remains unanswered.[77]

Another internal variable that should be taken into account is the military. Stedman identifies the military element in each party as the crucial element in perceiving stalemate.[78] The military therefore has a crucial role in both the peacemaking and war-making processes. For instance, existing military expenditures are reasons unto themselves for the continuation of escalation. We thus need to examine to what degree the military has the power to shape policies.

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[73] Pruitt, "Ripeness Theory and the Oslo Talks", p. 240

[74] Haass, *Conflicts Unending*, p. 27

[75] Pruitt, "Ripeness Theory and the Oslo Talks", pp. 241-42

[76] Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics", p. 449

[77] Lieberfeld, "Conflict "Ripeness" Revisited", p. 76

[78] Stedman, *Peacemaking in Civil War*, pp. 237-238

Particularly in the conflict-abundant Middle East, the military is an apparently unavoidable institution.

There is a heavy emphasis on the role of executive branches, like leadership and the military, in perceiving ripeness. However, although the final decisions are taken by the leaders, they are not immune to their constituencies. They are entrenched in their societies, in the histories of their countries, and most importantly they are dependent on their commitments. Furthermore they must consider their legitimacy. According to Putnam, "a more adequate account of the domestic determinants of foreign policy and international relations must stress political parties, social classes, interest groups, legislators, and even public opinion and elections, not simply executive officials and institutional arrangements."[79] For instance, Shamir and Shikaki's research on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict stresses the importance of public opinion in this process, especially the role of prospective information.[80] There is thus a need for the analysis of internal political processes by examining the readiness for the negotiation of the various factions, including the doves, moderates and hawks that make up a polity, rather than looking only at the readiness of leaders.[81] "A conflict is ripe for resolution to the extent that there is a broad central coalition of people who are ready for negotiation across the political spectrum."[82]

Moreover, even the parties involved in a conflict might be expected to convince the other side's public, as well as their own, that success is imminent.[83] It is argued that ignorance of domestic politics would be a major blunder, possibly an important reason for the failure to achieve agreements. This style of diplomacy necessitates attention to the domestic politics of others.[84]

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[79] Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics", p. 435

[80] Jacob Shamir and Khalil Shikaki, "Determinants of Reconciliation and Compromise Among Israelis and Palestinians", *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 39, No. 2, 2002, p. 198

[81] Dean G. Pruitt, "Whither Ripeness Theory?" *Working Paper No. 25*, (Institute for Conflict Resolution and Analysis, George Mason University, 2005), p. 22

[82] Ibid., p. 25

[83] Shamir and Shikaki, "Determinants of Reconciliation and Compromise", p. 199

As we have seen, we can identify two groups – the objectivists and subjectivists – in the understanding of ripeness. The former asserts that objective conditions may change the perceptions of the parties in conflict, and the latter argues that a change in perception constitutes ripeness rather than the inducements of changing objective conditions.[85] The first group takes for granted that change in objective conditions will precipitate change in perceptions without explaining how it will take place. The second group focuses on change in perceptions, ignoring the necessity of change in objective conditions in precipitating it. According to Shamir and Shikaki, the perception of an objective condition is, perhaps ironically, a subjective issue. If a party feels it can sustain the hurt indefinitely it will feel less compelled to compromise. Thus, the sense that a negotiated solution is possible is highly subjective.[86] This subjective aspect of ripeness is thought to be one of the main weaknesses of the theory.[87]

As a solution to the dilemma of subjective objectivity, a dialectical understanding of what happens and what it means is necessary. Hancock, who discusses this dilemma, proclaims a need for dialectic between subjective and objective conditions, yet how this occurs still open to question.[88]

In conclusion, we need to take into account the internal conditions of the research. This does not necessitate ignoring external conditions or giving priority to internal ones. There is a need for an understanding of the interaction/correlation between external and internal conditions. Furthermore, we should take them as variables, not as a state; this lends power to the theory in the sense that we are aware of the possibility that they may be contextually weaker or stronger. Even when we do take into account the internal conditions, we should continue to be cautious that although executives of parties, political leadership and the military are

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[84] Peter B. Evans, "Conclusion: Building on Integrative Approach to International Domestic Politics Reflections and Projections", in *Double-Edged Diplomacy*, 1993, p. 408

[85] Hancock, "To Act or Wait", p. 200

[86] Dowty, "Despair is not Enough", p. 8

[87] Eamonn O'kane, "When can Conflicts be Resolved? A Critique of Ripeness", *Civil Wars*, Vol. 8, No:3-4 September-December 2006, pp. 273-74

[88] Hancock, "To Act or Wait", p. 200

heavily emphasized in these processes, they operate on a top-down basis, in which changes in societal goals and beliefs are first initiated by elite groups and external organizations, then gradually filtered down to the general public. For this reason, we need to examine not only top-down processes but also bottom-up processes.

2.3.5. Condition for Initiation or Success?

In conflict resolution literature, ripeness is implied to be a condition of successful negotiations.[89] This implication does not go beyond this point, and the literature explains this as a condition for the initiation of negotiations. It is obvious that "the process of bringing about negotiations presents one set of variables, conditions, and strategies, whereas the successful conclusion of the negotiations themselves presents a different type of endeavor."[90] Similarly, Coleman makes it clear that "a change in velocity of an unripe conflict would equal an escalation or de-escalation in tensions. A change in direction would equal ripeness."[91] A change in direction does not directly determine a change in the velocity of the conflict. It is a commitment to change, but we should elaborate on some other conditions. Coleman claims that "the exploration of the transitional process from intractability to ripeness and the nature of its relationship to constructive conflict processes in general presents another level of challenge to this area of research."[92] I would like to find answers to this challenge. I am aware of the distinction between conditions prompting the initiation of negotiations and conditions for successful and effective negotiations. I argue that we can evaluate the impact of ripeness, which is a condition for the initiation of negotiations, on the success of conflict transformation, together with some other variables. In particular, we have to take into account

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[89] For instance see Greig, "Moments of Opportunity"

[90] Susan French and Louis Kriesberg, "Strategies for De-escalation", in Louis Kriesberg & Stuart J. Thorson (eds.), *Timing the De-Escalation of International Conflicts*, (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1991)

[91] Peter T. Coleman, "Fostering Ripeness in Seemingly Intractable Conflict: An Experimental Study", *International Journal of Conflict Management*, Vol. 11, No. 4, 2000, p. 303

[92] Ibid., p. 314

variables of negotiation variables, such as goal and strategy, which might be impacted by the degree of ripeness.

2.3.6. Ignoring Issue Differentiation

Ripeness theory does not differentiate between conflicts based on different issues. However, without such consideration, there may be inherent limits to our ability to explain and predict conflict and conflict transformation behavior of the parties.[93] It is a case for international relations (IR) scholars in general. Diehl points out that the IR scholars have generally ignored the issues in a situation when seeking to explain and predict national behavior. For him, there are several reasons for this problem. The primary rationale for ignoring the characteristics of a given issue can be traced to the theoretical orientation of the realpolitik, which was pervasive in the study of international conflict and in international relations in general. For instance, according to Morgenthau, it is not useful to consider the motivations behind the actions of decision-makers. Regardless of the issues, the main concern in any conflict is the maintenance and enhancement of power.[94]

In fact, variables like the scope of issues, their salience, the nature of the stakes that constitute them, and the manner in which stakes are linked, will provide important clues to the researcher.[95]

For instance, when parties characterize their disputes in terms of interests, processes or relationships, they are more likely to find mutually beneficial solutions, whereas when they focus on the substantive aspects of the dispute or attribute negative intentions to another party, they are less likely to find these solutions.[96] Conventional conflict analysis tends to view changes in structure and

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[93] Paul F. Diehl, "What Are They Fighting For? The Importance of Issues in International Conflict Research", *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 29, No. 3, 1992, p. 333

[94] Ibid., p. 334

[95] Ibid., p. 337

[96] Olekalns, Smith, "Moments in Time", p. 1700

relationship as givens within which a solution is sought and found.[97] However, social-psychological and identity-based escalatory dynamics, such as hostile attributions, dehumanization of the enemy, and identity-based concerns over dignity and security, might lead to a hurting stalemate very different from interest-based escalatory dynamics. It was found that territorial issues are among the most frequent sources of war between states, and competing governments are less likely to resolve disagreements over territory than any other issue.[98]

Alan Dowty draws a distinction between expressive issues and primary issues. He notes that "opinions on basic substantive issues of the conflict, which I have identified as primary issues, followed a different pattern". The expressive issues are mostly tactical, operational, short-term issues, which include the question of military response, use of force, general mood, views of the enemy, political preferences and self-perception on the dovish-hawkish scale. The primary issues are basic, intrinsic, substantive issues, dividing the two parties and involving the search for alternatives to the existing impasse that may provide a way out. Empirically, Dowty proves that violence during the first Palestinian intifada led to a hardening of attitudes on expressive issues, while at the same time bringing about a gradual moderation of attitudes on the primary issues of the conflict. Consistent with ripeness theory, when a wave of violence seemed to strengthen perceptions of a mutually hurting stalemate with no other exit or perception of an alternative way out, some mitigation of opinion regarding acceptable concessions occurred in the effort to reach a solution.[99]

2.3.7. Ripeness as Variable

Despite efforts, it is very common for scholars studying ripeness to agree on the lack of precise definition and satisfactorily operationalization of ripeness. Itamar

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[97] Cecilia Albin, "Explaining Conflict Transformation: How Jerusalem became Negotiable", *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 18, No. 3, October 2005, p. 340

[98] Barbara F. Walter, "Explaining the Intractability of Territorial Conflict", *International Studies Review*, Vol. 5, No. 4, 2003, p. 137

[99] Dowty, "Despair is not Enough", p. 16, 25

Rabinovich describes the concept as very useful as an analytical tool but less valuable as an operational tool. He nevertheless expects that ripeness will account for the success of negotiations rather than simply providing a necessary but insufficient condition for their initiation.[100] Daniel Lieberfeld asserts that "operationalizing ripeness propositions is difficult since the requisite hurting stalemate is essentially a matter of perception and may be apparent only in retrospect."[101]

Some also criticize ripeness theory for being tautological. Schrodt, Yılmaz and Gerner assert that "the way ripeness has typically been used reduces the concept to a mere tautology, and theories that relate to it end up being unfalsifiable claims. It is hard to differentiate the concept from parties' consent to mediation and successful mediated outcomes."[102] Marieke Kleiboer argues that "the way in which the notion of ripeness is presently considered tends to be tautological and that it might be more useful for researchers in conflict management to focus on willingness of parties rather than ripeness."[103] Against this critique, Zartman responds that "ripeness is a necessary but insufficient condition for the initiation of negotiations. It is not self-fulfilling. As ripeness is not identical to its results, which are not part of its definition, it is not tautological."[104]

It is commonly accepted that the concept of ripeness needs to be operationalized. Thus ripeness should be disaggregated into its components. It is imperative that the components of ripeness be identified, operationalized and examined to find out how they affect the initiation and outcome of negotiations.[105]

Ripeness is not just a moment and cannot be indicated by its presence or absence. It is a process containing degrees. Thus it is dynamic and curvilinear, not

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[100] Zartman, "The Timing of Peace Initiatives", p. 23

[101] Lieberfeld, "Conflict "Ripeness" Revisited", p. 64

[102] Philip A. Schrodt, Ömür Yılmaz, and Deborah J. Gerner, "Evaluating 'Ripeness' and 'Hurting Stalemate' in Mediated International Conflicts", Paper prepared for delivery at *the Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association*, Portland, Oregon, USA, February 2003

[103] Kleiboer, "Ripeness of Conflict", p. 109

[104] Zartman, "The Timing of Peace Initiatives"

[105] Schrodt, Yılmaz, and Gerner, "Evaluating 'Ripeness' and 'Hurting Stalemate'", p. 2

static and linear. Rubin defined ripeness in terms of time, but redefined it from "the right moment" to "multiple ripe moments" in the life-cycle of a conflict, and professed that there is no such thing as a "wrong time" to attempt de-escalation.[106]

For Haass, ripeness, which is dynamic and able to emerge as easily as it can disappear, is neither totally present nor totally absent. Furthermore, only some components of a problem may be ripe for negotiation; it would be an error in most cases not to address part of a problem in an attempt to solve the entire problem.[107]

Coleman uses the framework of the "region of ripeness". "This commitment," he says, "can lead to a different course of action and is where I locate and redefine the region of ripeness: at the time or times of a commitment to change."[108] Michael Greig points out that although ripeness is typically treated as a discrete variable, indeed, ripeness is better thought of as a part of a continuum. Less ripe periods are less likely to result in successful mediation; more ripe periods are more likely to result in successful mediation.[109]

In order to redress this criticized point, we should take ripeness as a variable. If we accept ripeness as a state rather than as a variable, situations are considered either ripe or unripe, and this leads to a rigid and unexplanatory theory. If we take it as a variable, it will be flexible and gain more explanatory value. In that sense, we can determine that as ripeness strengthens, negotiation is more likely to commence or vice versa.

2.4. Conclusion

In this research, I advocate a dialectical understanding of the ripeness between what occurs at the external level and what it means at the internal level. When the literature focuses on internal meaning, it still emphasizes what external

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[106] Jeffrey Z. Rubin, "The Timing of Ripeness and the Ripeness of Timing", in Louis Kriesberg & Stuart J. Thorson (eds.), *Timing the De-Escalation of International Conflicts*, (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1991), p. 238

107 Haass, Conflicts Unending, p. 144-45

[108] Coleman, "Redefining Ripeness", p. 92

[109] Greig, "Moments of Opportunity"

changes mean at the internal level; it is about outward perception. To make ripeness theory more powerful, there should also be a focus on what the internal changes mean. There is need for an inward perception together with outward perception. By internal changes I do not refer only to leadership changes – remembering not only the top-down approach but the bottom-up approach as well. I call for a focus on the nature of constituencies along with representation at the domestic level. The historical relationship between parties is also emphasized as a natural social transformation. How the enemy and the past are referred to in discourse has an impact on transformation. The parties to the conflict may produce and reproduce their collective identities in either persistent antagonism or mutual acceptance.[110]

It will be argued that ripeness is not only a condition for content- and agreement-making but is rather a relationship- and change-oriented process.[111] Related to this, conflicts do not follow a linear path; instead there is dynamism within the conflicts. The conflict transformation process should not place positive value on the objective of a negotiated settlement.[112] In addition, context is critical for sustaining a change process, and such a process requires a relationship-centric orientation. With respect to this, ripeness becomes an "ongoing presence motivated by an interest in supporting a sustainable change process built on making opportunity available for genuine change motivated from within but not under obligation or external time frames."[113] This understanding is also similar to Galtung's argument that conflict transformation requires a deep-seated pragmatism, informed by an equally deep level of historical/contextual understanding, in which formulaic responses are to be avoided.[114]

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[110] Susanne Buckley-Zistel, "In-Between War and Peace: Identities, Boundaries and Change after Violent Conflict", *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 1, 2006

[111] John Paul Lederach, "Cultivating Peace: a Practitioner's View of Deadly Conflict and Negotiation", in John Darby and Roger MacGinty (eds.), *Contemporary Peacemaking Conflict, Violence and Peace Processes*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003)

[112] Adrian Guelke, "Negotiations and Peace Processes", in John Darby and Roger MacGinty (eds.), *Contemporary Peacemaking Conflict, Violence and Peace Processes*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003)

[113] *Ibid.*

[114] Kimberly Hutchings, "Making Constructive Conflict", *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 2005, p. 224

CHAPTER 3

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the conceptual framework and methodology of this research will be explained. The research objective and strategy will first be formed, and then the variables of interest will be sorted, identified and delineated. Among variables, the dependent variable will be addressed first: when is a ripeness process considered successful/effective in conflict transformation? Second, the key explanatory variables, which have been grouped into contextual and process variables, will be explored.

3.2. Research Objective

The research question of this project asks how ripeness theory can explain the effectiveness of conflict transformation efforts in both the initiation and success of the process. The research objective is to elaborate ripeness theories and to assess the validity of these theories' assumptions in the effectiveness of conflict transformation efforts. In other words, the objective is to discover the role of ripeness in the effectiveness of the conflict transformation process. The aim is to refine the theory around ripeness, which primarily focuses on explaining the initiation of the process rather than its success for the disputant parties.

The theoretical framework of the research is ripeness theory. It is commonly argued that when conflicts are ripe, they are set for resolution. However, ripeness is not the only explanation for effectiveness in conflict transformation efforts. There are other latent explanations for this question. For instance, recognition of turning

points is central to a dynamic conception of conflict transformation and negotiation in particular. The idea of turning points indicates that transformation processes are not linear, but cyclical, pivoting around turning points.

Turning points are usually defined as events or processes that mark the passage from one stage to another, signaling progress. They can, however, also refer to setbacks wherein despite ripeness; progress may be slowed or even reach an impasse. Whether positive or negative, turning points are useful benchmarks for depicting the way negotiation processes unfold.

Daniel Druckman argues that the concept of turning points is similar in some ways to that of ripeness, but differs in others.[1] The commonalities between ripeness and turning points are that both refer to changes in the course of a relationship; both occur as a result of an impasse, referred to as a hurting stalemate, and both are understood better in retrospect through analysis than while the process is ongoing. However, some important differences exist between them. Turning points are part of negotiation processes rather than conditions for negotiation; turning points are indicated by changes that occur during these processes rather than by the conditions leading to change; turning points are less dependent on perceiving or seizing opportunities when they are presented, and are indicative not only of de-escalation but of escalation in processes as well.

Thus the research objective is to understand the effective transformation of conflicts and de-escalation of conflicts in particular; ripeness theory rather than turning points is the more viable tool of analysis. The aim is also to understand not only negotiation processes, but conditions for negotiation. This aim necessitates a more comprehensive approach than the framework of turning points offers.

3.3. Research Strategy

The focus of this research is to discover conditions and variables that account for differences in the effectiveness of conflict transformation efforts, and in

[1] Daniel Druckman, "Turning Points in International Negotiation", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 45, Issue 4, 2001

particular, the importance of ripeness in shaping this transformation. In this section I begin to pursue the question of which of these factors needs to be taken into account to assess the effectiveness of the conflict transformation efforts, and how much ripeness can contribute to this process.

It is argued that ripeness is a necessary but insufficient condition for conflict transformation efforts. Thus such an essential condition requires that other elements explain the effectiveness of transformation efforts. Ripeness is related to the parties' perceptions in the process but is also contextually dependent. The claim of this research is that understanding the dialectical relationship between subjective and objective conditions, and between context and process, is crucial for realizing the explanatory power of ripeness in conflict transformation.

This research strategy requires an early formulation of hypotheses and the consideration of conditions and variables to be employed in the analysis of cases. Within this chapter, the dependent variables that need to be explained and the independent variables that comprise a theoretical framework will be explored.

3.3.1. The Elusive Notion of Effectiveness / Success

This project seeks not only to investigate knowledge in relation to the effect of ripeness on the timing of negotiations, and hence predictive component of ripeness, but also to explore the conditions for success or failure of negotiations. The other purpose is to identify the specific impact of ripeness on this success or failure, and hence to position ripeness as a scientific theory. This will lead to the transformation of ripeness from a passive situation into an active process for de-escalation and negotiation.[2]

However, little more than a collection of descriptive and largely idiosyncratic analyses for conceptualizing the success of conflict transformation exists as of now. Among studies of negotiation, the achievement of agreement is often used as an indicator of success. Within this understanding, which is linked to a

[2] Karen Aggestam, "Enhancing Ripeness: Transition from Conflict to Negotiation", in I. William Zartman and Guy Olivier Faure, *Escalation and Negotiation in International Conflicts*, (Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 273

structuralist paradigm and rational choice theory, the typical objective criteria consider ceasefires, peace treaties or other political settlements, and dialogue openings or reduction in hostilities to be indicators of success.[3] Little consideration is given to the scope or ultimate impact of the agreement on the behavior of the signatories. Evaluation criteria are often criticized for being taken for granted.[4]

It is possible to identify various dimensions in the success of conflict transformation. The first dimension lies between conflict management success and conflict resolution and transformation.

> Conflict resolution signifies that fundamental issues in dispute between parties are settled such that violent confrontations, crises, and wars no longer occur. Conflict management, on the other hand, may mean continued militarized conflict even if hostility levels are reduced. Conflict management may set the stage for conflict resolution to occur, but it is not necessarily a prerequisite. [5]

Furthermore, conflict transformation mainly emphasizes the transformation of relations between parties. With this in mind, a key consideration should be understanding both the intersecting and distinct processes involved in conflict management, resolution and transformation respectively. In other words, we can draw a distinction between cold and warm outcomes.

The second dimension is related to a timeframe within which to judge a successful outcome. The focus may be on short-term outcomes, such as the achievement of ceasefire, or on long-term concerns, such as a peace agreement and the cessation of hostilities. Although long-term success indicators have the advantage of capturing ongoing processes more effectively, tracing the causal effect of long-term success is more difficult because of the occurrence of intervening factors between the efforts and the measured outcome.[6]

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[3] Asaf Siniver, "Power, Impartiality and Timing: Three Hypotheses on Third Party Mediation in the Middle East", *Political Studies*, Vol. 54, 2006, p. 808

[4] Gary Goertz, Paul F. Diehl and Frank Harvey, "Conceptualizing and Measuring Conflict Management Success: An Overview", *International Negotiation*, Vol. 7, 2002, p. 292

[5] Ibid., p. 293

[6] Ibid., p. 294

The final dimension is related to the vantage point from which success is evaluated. This approach equates success with effectiveness, taking the parties' objectives as a starting point, because the conclusion of a political settlement does not necessarily translate into effective results. In this dimension, the parties' perceptions are taken into account by focusing on the process of communication as a means of changing attitudes. This is linked to the social-psychological paradigm.[7]

When the subjective perceptions of disputants are taken into account, the question becomes from whose perspective is conflict transformation considered a success or a failure? Multiple possibilities exist at different levels of analysis. From a global perspective, whether or not a given management effort results in the betterment of the international community can be determined. Success might also be evaluated by the parties; this is typically the perspective in studies of negotiation and mediation. Finally, there is the perspective of the citizenry of the conflict areas.[8]

In the context of this project, while success is evaluated, emphasis will not only be given to the decline of hostility between parties; instead, emphasis will be given to conflict transformation, wherein fundamental issues are resolved and relations between the parties begin to improve. As Siniver points out, a more synthesized approach that takes into account tangible consequences of efforts as well as perceptions of the parties involved has more merit.[9] However, a pragmatic parameter of success can be found in the short-term results of the process without ignoring their long-term success. The basic question is whether or not there has been a negotiated agreement. Yet we must remember that this is considered one of the steps standing in the way of conflict transformation. The parties' satisfaction will be taken into account in this analysis. There are considered to be different possibilities, of either mutually satisfying agreements or lopsided agreements, with the ideal success being a gratifying outcome for both parties. Lopsided agreements will also be taken as a starting point in an analysis of satisfaction, as long as recognized by both disputant parties.

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[7] Siniver, "Power, Impartiality and Timing", p. 808

[8] Goertz, Diehl and Harvey, "Conceptualizing and Measuring Conflict Management Success", p. 295

[9] Siniver, "Power, Impartiality and Timing", p. 808

3.3.2. Variables Comprising the Theoretical Framework

Variables within the research are grouped into contextual and process variables.[10] The effectiveness of conflict transformation efforts cannot be evaluated independently from either context or process, but we should look at both context and process together. Contextual variables, the external context, parties' interrelations, and the conflict itself are first identified then explained. Among the process variables, actors, the perception of the status quo and challenges to it will also be explored. Variables in pre-negotiation, motivation to talk and, as well as variables in negotiation itself, negotiation goals and strategies will be studied.

3.3.2.1. Contextual Variables

3.3.2.1.1. External Context

The external context of any conflict affects the process and outcome of conflict transformation. In particular, the structure of the international system and the impact of other parties, including other conflicts taking place simultaneously, should be relevant.[11] This is also true of the systemic characteristics of polarity and regionalism, as non-state international actors might be influential.

The system encompassing the antagonists impacts the conflict itself, including efforts to transform it. Thus theories on wars, revolutions, and even marital disputes often stress the importance of the social system within which the potential antagonists function. Among the many features of the described system, emphasis might be on the consistency and stability of the system, the power

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[10] This framework is common, accepted and used by many scholars. See Marieke Kleiboer, "Understanding Success and Failure of International Mediation", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 40, No. 2, June 1996, P. Terrence Hopmann, "Bargaining and Problem Solving Two Perspectives on International Negotiation", in Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall (eds.) *Turbulent Peace, The Challenges of Managing International Conflict*, (Washington, D. C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2001), p. 449

[11] Kleiboer, "Understanding Success and Failure", p. 373

distribution among system members, the significance of its culture and institutions, and the degree to which the system is characterized by scarcity of resources.[12] In this research, emphasis will be places largely on power distribution among the system members, in other words, the existence of great powers in the system, as well as their types of regional involvement (competition, rivalry or hegemony).

In international conflict transformation, world system characteristics influence the particular state policies, and thus their efforts to transform conflicts. In particular, the structure of the world system (uni-polar, bipolar, and multi-polar) may impact both the parties involved in a conflict and the conflict itself.[13] In other words, the type of great-power involvement (in competitive or cooperative ways) in a regional conflict may shape it. The system may impose limitations on or promote particular actions among each party. In this sense, the end of the Cold War and the end of bipolarity brought with it a major systemic transformation and consequent regional changes, which necessitates specifying the effects of the global system on war and peace.[14]

There are two aspects of the world system's influence on conflict and its transformation. These aspects are not substitutive. They can simultaneously exist. On the one hand, the great powers of the system have the capacity and sometimes the motivation to influence conflicts and their transformations. On the other hand, involved parties may manipulate the interests of the systemic powers to their own benefit.

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[12] Louis Kriesberg, *Constructive Conflicts From Escalation to Resolution*, (Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2007), pp. 29, 35

[13] Benjamin Miller asserts that "the number of the great powers in the international system (polarity) is not important in affecting regional involvement by the great powers, because polarity does not determine the balance of great-power interests in a region. Different balances of interests may form under the same international system, while a similar balance might hold even if the polarity of the system changes. It is thus not polarity, but the balance of great-power interests, combined with their relative capabilities, that determines the pattern of their regional involvement." See Benjamin Miller, "Between War and Peace: Systemic Effects and Regional Transformations from the Cold War to the Post-Cold War", *Security Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 1, (Autumn 2001), p. 7. This meaningful differentiation will be overlooked in this dissertation because an overall systemic explanation is sufficient for our purposes.

[14] Miller, "Between War and Peace", p. 2

However, we should be aware that systemic and external powers may affect the capabilities of regional states by supplying or withholding arms and economic aid, but changing the basic motivations or objectives of local states is beyond their power. Miller claims that the influence of great powers is limited to those outcomes that do not attempt to manipulate the motivations of local actors. Resorting to arms in a hot war or terminating a conflict in a warm peace are options at two extremes of the war-peace continuum that reflect the parties' own objectives and attributes. In contrast, cold outcomes are less drastic and may be brought about without change – or with limited change – in the basic motivations and mutual perceptions of the parties. We can thus say that cold outcomes are more readily ascribable to the influence of great powers. Because the great powers are superior to regional states in overall resources; however, local actors have greater stakes in a conflict in which they are direct participants and in which their key interests are involved.[15]

From another point of view, the international system's influence on conflict is limited such that the role of the great powers in affecting a transition from cold war to cold peace is necessary only to the extent that local problems remain unresolved. If resolved, states may achieve warm peace on their own and the role of the great powers becomes further limited. However, we know that such problems, especially among neighboring countries with long histories of hostility, are not easily resolved. These difficulties create an opportunity for great powers to intervene in transformations toward cold peace, which is possible even without a comprehensive resolution of local problems during conflict.[16]

For instance, the Middle East has been one of the most affected regions in the world by the structure of the world system; this was especially true under the Cold War international configuration. The region had previously seen competitive great power involvement that had sustained a regional cold war. This involvement blocked the transformation to cold peace and beyond. Thus the superpowers helped to sustain the Arab-Israeli conflict through the supply of arms and with diplomatic and economic support to their respective clients. Competition among superpowers

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[15] Ibid., p. 9

[16] Ibid., p. 11

also gave local states the opportunity to manipulate their patrons. This competition increased the maneuvering room of key regional actors and facilitated their manipulation of the superpowers.[17]

Furthermore, superpower competition provided disincentives for diplomatic compromises. Due to competitive pressures, the superpowers tried to weaken each other's positions in the region by obstructing the other's attempts at diplomacy. The fear of losing a client state to a rival superpower reduced their will and capacity to moderate the stances of their small allies. For example, despite joint sponsorship by the superpowers of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 242, which laid the foundations for a comprehensive resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, both superpowers were unwilling and unable to exert the necessary moderating pressures on their clients to carry it out.[18]

As the Cold War system sustained the Arab-Israeli conflict, with its end came an expectation of change in the systemic factors of the conflict: the first was the end of the superpower rivalry, and the second was the rise of US hegemony.[19] It has been argued that the end of this rivalry led to processes that reduced the level of the conflict. The rise of US hegemony further facilitated a transition to cold peace.[20]

The post-Cold War environment provided a foundation for the ripeness process, both through creating opportunities and increasing costs of the parties. On the one hand, the end of the superpower rivalry first freed regional states from the inflexible setting of the Cold War both at the cognitive and behavioral levels. This led parties in regional conflict, i.e. the Middle East, to face disputes more directly. In addition, it meant the end of clients maneuvering and manipulating their patrons. Some superpower clients, particularly those of the Soviet Union, were faced with

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[17] Ibid., p. 26

[18] Ibid., p. 27

[19] According to Benjamin Miller, rise of US hegemony had already begun in the post-1973 era of the Cold War. Within this period, the US gradually managed to exclude the Soviet Union from involvement in the Arab-Israeli conflict and to establish a partial hegemony over the region, becoming the common great power patron of Israel, Egypt, Jordan and the Gulf States. US hegemony became more complete with the end of the Cold War and Soviet disintegration. See Miller, "Between War and Peace", p. 29

[20] Miller, "Between War and Peace", p. 5

the end of their psychological and material sponsor. This led to reevaluations in their foreign and domestic policies. For instance, for Syria, a client state of the Soviet Union, its decline led to economic hardship and discontinuation of its policy of strategic balance with respect to Israel.

On the other hand, the ascendancy of US power provided opportunities leading to optimism about regional peace. US hegemony encouraged powerful realpolitik logic in favor of regional peace, even if only a cold peace. The US deployed the various strategies available to a hegemonic power to promote transformation. These strategies have included restraining Israel, reassuring its allies through arms supplies and security cooperation, coercing revisionist regional powers, playing both a mediatory and a guarantor role, and granting financial rewards to participants in the peace process.[21]

As an example of the impact of regional developments on conflict transformation, the Gulf War dramatically demonstrated the security dependence of both Israel and most Arab states on US military power. The massive US intervention, including a willingness to absorb considerable casualties, demonstrated a very powerful American commitment to supporting Middle East stability and to fighting revisionist forces. The US victory over Iraq in 1991 neutralized radicals, led by Iraq, from sabotaging the peace process. This cleared the way to initiating a peace process.

In conclusion, although we should be cautious that changing the basic motivations of parties – and thus transforming conflict – is beyond the capability of the system, it can be asserted, however, that the structure of the world system has both positive or negative impacts on the parties' preferences, including about the conflict itself, and thus on efforts to transform the conflict. This structure might therefore be considered a facilitator or an obstructer. Finally if there is any possibility of a positive effect upon the world system, it is more applicable to cold peace conditions with the possibility that parties can manipulate the system in their favor.

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[21] Ibid., pp. 33-36

3.3.2.1.2. Contending Parties' Interrelationship: Power Relations

One part of the context, which has the capacity to influence conflict transformation, is the relationship between the parties in the conflict. In relation to conflict transformation, power relations between the parties are more heavily emphasized.

Regarding the question "Why de-escalate?", one answer focuses on these power relations. It is argued that power can limit escalation in the sense that counter efforts and counter inducements applied by the other side may limit a party's ability or willingness to escalate.[22] The concept of power is not in fact the royal road to conflict theory as was believed in the heyday of realist theory, but it still offers some useful insights, particularly when we look at the impact of different kinds of distributions of power.[23]

Two questions are relevant regarding power relations between parties. The first is whether positive or negative inducements are more effective uses of power in relation to de-escalation. The second is whether power parity or power preponderance is more favorable for effective negotiations and achievement of peace.

Before going into detail, what power is and how we can identify parity and preponderance should be clarified. First, all manifestations of power may be examined. The degree to which one state threatens another has been described as the product of its aggregate power, its geographic proximity, its offensive capability, and the aggressiveness of its intentions.[24] Of the objective components of the definition, aggregate power and offensive capabilities, though not geographic

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[22] I. William Zartman and Johannes Aurik, "Power Strategies in De-escalation", in Louis Kriesberg and Stuart J. Thorson (eds.), *Timing the De-escalation of International Conflicts*, (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1991), p. 152

[23] Dean G. Pruitt, "Escalation and de-escalation in asymmetric conflict", *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict*, Vol. 2, No. 1, March 2009, p. 23

[24] Daniel Lieberfeld, *Talking with the Enemy, Negotiation and Threat Perception in South Africa and Israel/Palestine*, (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1999), p. 14

proximity, may be derived from the Correlates of War (COW) database.[25] The COW National Capability data set incorporates six measures covering three dimensions of national attributes. Two measures involve military capabilities (military expenditures and military personnel), two measures look at energy capabilities (energy consumption and iron/steel production), and two measures involve demographic variables (total population and urban population). To measure relative capabilities within each dyad, a Composite Index of National Capability (CINC) has been developed for each nation.[26]

When the focus is on capabilities, preponderance of power can be identified when relative capabilities differ by 20 percent or more. When there is power parity, the relative capabilities differ by less than 20 percent. These are standard thresholds specified by A.F.K. Organski and Jacek Kugler.[27] Some analysts draw an additional distinction between highly unequal power and moderately unequal power, and assert that the condition of moderately unequal power produces few agreements compared to highly unequal and equal power.[28]

In addition to capabilities controlled by a given party, other dimensions of power are taken into consideration. Along with capabilities, power can be determined through relationships between the involved parties, with third parties, and also through one party's perception of itself and of the other side. As interactions occur between social beings, relations cannot be a simple matter of force and counterforce, but include will and intention as well. Objective elements are seemingly measurable, although this is far less true in the case of aggressive intentions, and it is this factor that may contribute most to the initiation of war. According to Lieberfeld, the interpretation of objective dimensions of threat and

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[25] See http://www.correlatesofwar.org

[26] For the details, see Daniel S. Geller, "Power Differentials and War in Rival Dyads", *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 37, 1993, p. 182

[27] Geller, "Power Differentials", p. 182. A.F.K. Organski and Jacek Kugler propose power transition theory. This theory describes international politics as a hierarchy, with 4 degrees of power between states. The objective of the theory is to investigate the cyclical condition of wars, and how transition of power affects the occurrence of these wars.

[28] Pruitt, "Escalation and de-escalation", p. 24

how such interpretations are deployed in policy debates determine the effect of threat assessment on conflict behavior.[29]

Thus, Zartman and Rubin construct a definition of power. They describe it as an action by one party intended to produce movement by another. Hence, power is defined neither as a source nor as a result, but something between the two – a purposeful action.[30] According to them, quantity of power alone does not connote capability. The perceived symmetry or asymmetry of a relationship is related to the reputation of a party or its prospects to produce the past and future movement of its targets or of elements such as force and resources.[31] This is why the interpretation of economic and military capabilities by leaders is of such importance to any foreign policy analysis.[32]

In this research, power is defined as a combination of these two approaches. Power will thus be measured both through the core fact of each party's capabilities and through the perceptions of the power of the self and the other. Here it is understood that power itself is a complex reflection of ideas, loyalties, and motivations, as well as of more conventional measures of wealth, weapons and resources.[33]

In the literature, there is a continuous debate over the probable effects of power on the success of conflict transformation. We can identify two basic arguments within the debate: power parity and power preponderance. One argument says that rough equality in power is conducive to peace. The realist advocates of the balance of power argument claim that such parity deters countries from initiating conflict because victory is not guaranteed. Conversely, according to Waltz, in the

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[29] Lieberfeld, *Talking with the Enemy*, p. 14

[30] I. William Zartman and Jeffry Z. Rubin, "The Study of Power and the Practice of Negotiation", in I. William Zartman and Jeffry Z. Rubin (eds.), *Power and Negotiation*, (The University of Michigan Press, 2000), p. 8

[31] Ibid., pp. 10, 13

[32] Binnur Özkeçeci-Taner, "How to Study Foreign Politics: Systemic Constraints vs. Domestic Politics and Decision-Making Structure", *Perceptions, Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. VI, no. 4, Dec. 2001-Feb. 2002

[33] Lieberfeld, *Talking with the Enemy*, p. XII

case of preponderance of power, wars occur because there is nothing to prevent them. In classical deterrence theory, peace through mutual deterrence only occurs through a balance of power.[34] R. Haass, on the other hand, argues that a lack of power parity keeps sides from negotiation and compromise because the more anything short of victory, or at a least stalemate to guarantee the continuation of asymmetry in the future, is unsatisfactory for the more powerful party.[35] Zartman and Rubin argue that parties with equal power reach agreement more often, require fewer attempts to do so, and make larger concessions than those with unequal power.[36] Mitchell similarly argues that "equals make peace more readily and more easily than unequals".[37]

On the other hand, advocates of power preponderance argue that parity is a necessary condition for conflict, especially for war. By this argument, uncertainty is important in the sense that war is more likely to occur when the outcome of conflict between two equally powerfully contenders is uncertain. In contrast, when the power balance clearly favors one state, the lack of uncertainty on the part of the party holding the preponderance of power generally encourages a more peaceful resolution.[38]

Based on the results of his study, Geller indicates that conditions of approximate parity and shifts toward parity are most strongly associated with war. According to him, these conditions create a situation in which both sides can perceive the potential of successful use of force.[39] While Hegre points out that his findings support the idea that the power capability ratio is negatively associated with conflict, he also warns that the analysis of power asymmetry and the risk of

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[34] Havard Hegre, "Gravitating toward War, Preponderance May Pacify, but Power Kills", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 52, No. 4, August 2008, p. 571

[35] Richard Haas, "Ripeness, De-escalation and Arms Control: The case of the INF", in L. Kriesberg and S. Thorson, (eds.), *Timing the De-escalation of International Conflicts*, (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1991)

[36] Zartman and Rubin, "The Study of Power", pp. 15-16

[37] Pruitt, "Escalation and De-escalation", p. 23

[38] Hegre, "Gravitating toward War", p. 571

[39] Geller, "Power Differentials and War", p. 189

militarized disputes show that this relationship is far from straightforward. He asserts that the risk-increasing effect of power itself complicates the interpretation of the negative association between power and disputes.[40]

When we accept that preponderance of power is more applicable, we are faced with the assumption that the stronger party always prevails and obtains from the weaker side an acceptance of the stronger side's terms. For example, it is argued that during negotiations, negotiators with high relative power tend to behave manipulatively and exploitatively, while those perceived to have lower levels of power tend to behave submissively.[41] However, this might not mean that the stronger party will necessarily have all its demands met, with the weaker party taking nothing. Even under the most advantageous circumstances, the stronger party may prefer to yield on some issues, rather than bear the costs of imposing its will to the fullest extent.[42] It is also claimed that power asymmetry might be negated by the amount of attention each side can give to the dispute. Minor powers have the ability to concentrate their political and diplomatic resources in a dispute, while a major power might have to divide its attention between other issues within which it is involved. This may be even more likely if the dispute has particular salience to the minor power and is of little consequence to the major power. In such a context, the opportunity for a negotiated settlement in an asymmetric dispute may be as high as a comparable situation among equally capable disputants.[43]

On the whole, regarding the effects of capability differentials, arguments about power parity and power preponderance present plausible, logically derived, but contrary expectations.[44] Despite contrary expectations, we cannot ignore the

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[40] Hegre, "Gravitating toward War", p. 586

[41] Zartman and Rubin, "The Study of Power", pp. 15-16

[42] Saaida Touval, "The Impact of Multiple Asymmetries on Arab-Israeli Negotiations", in I. William Zartman and Jeffry Z. Rubin (eds.), *Power and Negotiation*, (The University of Michigan Press, 2000), pp. 157-8

[43] Derrick Frazier and Gary Goertz, " Patterns of Negotiation in Non-War Disputes", *International Negotiation*, Vol. 7, 2002, p. 353

[44] Geller, "Power Differentials and War", p. 189

importance of power relations between the parties. It is important to take into account its impact on the parties and their efforts to transform the conflict.

3.3.2.1.3. Conflict

3.3.2.1.3.1. Issues

The issues in a conflict refer to the underlying causes of dispute. These are the things over which parties make various claims. Their nature and salience has an impact on the process and outcomes of conflict transformation efforts. However, there is a problem of identification in that the conflict may involve more than one issue, and each issue may be perceived differently by participants.

In order to identify the issues and their salience, we should look at how issues are defined, what values they are supposed to represent, proposals made for their resolution, and the issue of the position each actor takes on various proposals.[45]

When we look at issue identification, there is a typology problem. Issues are generally distinguished by type: *sovereignty* issues involving adversaries with incompatible claims to a specific piece of territory; issues of *ideology* focusing on the nature of a political system, basic values or beliefs; *security* issues concerning frontiers, borders, and territories together with lives; issues of *self-determination* and national selfhood in conflicts of independence; *resource* issues involving concerns of access to and control over vital resources; and lastly *ethnic* issues including extreme forms of ethno-nationalism and usually ethnic hatred.[46]

However, many conflicts involve more than one set of issues, making it difficult to separate security/territorial issues from ideological/independence issues. The conflict in the Middle East is a good example of this situation.

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[45] Paul F. Diehl, "What Are They Fighting For? The Importance of Issues in International Conflict Research", *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 29, No. 3, 1992, p. 337

[46] See Richard Jackson, "Successful Negotiation in International Violent Conflict", *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 37, No. 3, 2000, Kleiboer, "Understanding Success and Failure"

In addition to the problem of issue identification, there is also the difficulty of measuring salience of issues. The same issue within a conflict may prompt asymmetrical responses from each party for this reason, perhaps threatening the vital interests of one state while having fewer and less serious consequences for its opponent. Geographical proximity and strategic implications are among the factors that may be used to measure salience.[47]

To overcome problems of typology and measurements of salience, analysts frequently move to a higher level of abstraction.[48] In this research, such abstraction is preferable so that we can draw distinctions between tangible, expressive, interest-based issues and intangible, substantive, identity-based issues from different situations.

Interest-based disputes are usually concrete and clearly defined, and outcomes on each side are bound by the resources at stake: more or less territory, quantity of water, or military and economic power. However, many conflicts are relatively intangible, being rooted in the more abstract and interpretive dynamics of history, psychology, culture, values, and beliefs of identity groups.

Nonetheless, we should be cautious that theoretical distinctions between conflicts of identity and interest may be valid, but the differences are not so clear-cut in practice. This can be seen in many resource-based conflicts. This will be shown in the example below.

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[47] Diehl, "What Are They Fighting For?", p. 341

[48] Kleiboer, "Understanding Success and Failure", p. 364

Table 1: Interest-Based Versus Identity-Based Conflicts

Interest-Based Conflicts	*Identity-Based Conflicts*
• Issues are concrete and clearly defined. • Desired outcomes are defined in terms of tangible interests and resources. • Issues involve relatively agreed-upon interpretations of the sources of conflict and conditions for settlement.	• Issues are abstract, complex, and difficult to define. • Desired outcomes are intangible and difficult to identify. • Issues involve the interpretive dynamics of history, psychology, values, and beliefs of groups that are often, at least initially, framed in ways that are mutually exclusive.

Source: Jay Rothman and Marie L. Olson, "From Interests to Identities: Towards a New Emphasis in Interactive Conflict Resolution", *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 38, No. 3, 2001, p. 297

3.3.2.1.3.1.1 Interest-based Issues vs. Identity-based Issues

Interest-based conflicts primarily center around concrete, identifiable issues. Tangible interests are recognized within this category. A conflict of interest usually arises between two actors from a situation of scarcity, wherein both parties want the same thing, but there is not enough to go around.[49] Interests are perceived as the prime motive, as people struggle over resources or position.

Interests are treated as paramount, and so parties are not led to question the goals, values, and motivations upon which their interests are based. Interest-based conflicts look at outcomes and stable states. This is likely to be inadequate for redefining processes and relationships, since even when they appear successful, the framing of interest may lead to blindness and the illusion of cooperation.[50]

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[49] Vilhelm Aubert, "Competition and Dissensus: Two Types of Conflict and of Conflict Resolution", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. VII, No. 1, 1963, reprinted in Daniel Druckman and Paul F. Diehl (eds.), *Conflict Resolution, Vol. I*, Sage Publications, 2006, p. 131

[50] Jay Rothman and Marie L. Olson, "From Interests to Identities: Towards a New Emphasis in Interactive Conflict Resolution", *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 38, No. 3, 2001, p. 294

Interest-based bargaining portrays conflict and conflict intervention as process of shifting from conflict over mutually exclusive positions to collaborative focus on shared and underlying interests.[51] Conventional methods of conflict management are often adequate. As conflicting claims inspired by demands on soil, water, or oil are naturally divisible, the chances of bringing about the settlement of material conflict by political, military, and economic means becomes easy to reconcile.

However, in some conflicts over intangible issues, such an approach may merely exacerbate problems.[52] Such conflicts are not open for bargaining.[53] It is argued that such conflicts instead require a long, deep process of attitude change, namely reconciliation.[54] We call these identity-based conflicts, in which the essential concerns are safety, dignity, control over destiny, and ultimately identity.

What is identity? It is a complex construct with a variety of important conceptual dimensions. It can be defined as a place in the social world or a fairly stable and comprehensive sense of self.[55] Within this discussion, some argue that identity is relatively permanent and unchanging. Others claim that it is a social construct wherein people choose a history and common ancestry and create, as much as they discover, differences with others.[56]

To understand how conflicts in this context de-escalate and become resolved, we must recognize that identities change in content and shift in salience. The choice of one or another identity depends on group members' characteristics, their larger context, and relations with their antagonists.[57]

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[51] Ibid.

[52] Jay Rothman, *Resolving Identity-Based Conflict*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997), p. 5

[53] Rothman, *Resolving Identity-Based Conflict,* p. 9

[54] Yehudith Auerbach, "The Reconciliation Pyramid – A Narrative-Based Framework for Analyzing Identity Conflicts", *Political Psychology*, Vol. 30, No. 2, 2009

[55] Peter T. Coleman and J. Krister Lowe, "Conflict, Identity, and Resilience: Negotiating Collective Identities within the Israeli and Palestinian Diasporas", *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 4, Summer 2007, 380

[56] Kriesberg, *Constructive Conflicts*, p. 55

Collective identities serve many important symbolic, practical, affective, and normative functions. They can also serve practical concerns, serving, for example, as justifications of claims to land and resources, or as the apparatus for maintaining a distinctive culture or lifestyle.[58] In defining themselves, groups also define others, and in defining their opponents, they also define themselves. Each self-conscious collectivity defines its non-members. Indeed, identity is by definition established in contrast to others, and unfortunately, parties are generally inclined to evaluate their in-group as superior to those outside it. This universal tendency toward ethnocentrism contributes to the framing of relations as "us" against "them".[59] Antagonists explain their and their adversary's behavior by way of an attribution causal model that strengthens their moral position in the case of conflict.

Identity construction is a dynamic process of dialogue; it is ongoing and perpetually incomplete. Such identity shifts often significantly affect a conflict process and its resolution. For example, as a conflict escalates, opposing groups may become increasingly polarized through in-group discourses and out-group hostilities, resulting in the development of polarized collective identities constructed around a negation of the out-group. Additional polarization may even occur within groups within an already polarized setting, as with political sub-divisions within Palestinian and Israeli groups.[60]

Some theorists even suggest that identity groups are the key level of analysis for understanding and intervening in protracted social conflicts.[61] Identity-based conflicts involve concerns for group dignity, recognition, security, integrity, purpose, efficacy and justice. It is argued that the longer a conflict goes unresolved, the more likely identity-based concerns emerge, as the conflict becomes more integral to an understanding of self and others in the situation. When parties

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[57] Ibid., p. 55

[58] Coleman and Lowe, "Conflict, Identity, and Resilience", p. 380

[59] Kriesberg, *Constructive Conflicts,* p. 61

[60] Coleman and Lowe, "Conflict, Identity, and Resilience", p. 381

[61] See Rothman, *Resolving Identity-Based Conflict,*

perceive these aspects of collective identity to be denied, threatened, or frustrated, conflict intensifies.

In conclusion, the stakes in identity conflicts consist of needs and values, with conflict threatening identity needs such as dignity, safety and control. The characteristics of identity conflicts are intangible, in contrast to resource-based conflicts, and are rooted in history, psychology, culture, and belief systems, rather than in the material world. As they are rooted in complex and multidimensional psychological, historical, and cultural factors, identity conflicts are marked by difficulty in determining parameters and boundaries. Abstract and complex conflicts necessitate abstract and complex solutions.

Regarding impact of the nature of such issues on conflict transformation efforts, it is commonly argued that tangible issues are more amenable to success than intangible issues. In other words, deep-rooted values are zero-sum propositions, leaving no room for negotiation. In contrast, interest-related issues are positive-sum and are thus more open to transformation.

Although theoretical distinctions between identity and interest conflicts may be valid, the differences are not so clear-cut in practice. It is very possible for a conflict to simultaneously involve resources, interests, and identity; they are not mutually exclusive. A territorial issue will be explored to illustrate this ambiguity.

3.3.2.1.3.1.2. Territory as an Example

The basic questions regarding territory are what it is about territory that makes states willing to fight over it, and why it is that one territory may be considered more valuable than another.[62] As mentioned above, we can identify two dimensions: first, intrinsic, concrete and tangible reasons, and second, symbolic and intangible reasons.

Tangible and concrete reasons are mainly about what is physically contained in the territory. One territory may contain resources such as water or oil, a

[62] Paul Diehl (ed.), *A Road Map to War: Territorial Dimension of International Conflict*, (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press: 1999), p. x

population, or geographical features that give it strategic importance. Territory in this tangible sense contributes to a state's power and security, which are important elements in a realist worldview.[63] It is argued that conflict over land is not only about sovereignty but also the ownership and control of tangible dimensions of territory.

In its second dimension, territory is also perceived to be important to states for less tangible reasons. It is argued to lie at the heart of national identity and cohesion, with the very existence and autonomy of a state being rooted in its territory.

Territories have a psychological importance for nations that is quite out of proportion with its intrinsic value, and territorial disputes seem to arouse sentiments of pride and honor more rapidly and intensely than any other type of issue.[64] It is thus argued that within the emerging literature on post-Cold War border-related issues, borders are perceived as both institutions and processes that demarcate and negotiate the state itself, as well as its territory, populations and identity.[65]

Drawing state borders fosters a dynamic of internal homogenization in state projects; a sense of national unity is often crystallized in colonial territories through the struggle for independence, and as recently established states acquire longer histories they begin to identify these histories with carefully defined territories.[66]

There are two possible tools of symbolic attachment: ethnic populace and historical and religious value. Territorial disputes involving issues of ethnic irredentism or national unification are thought to be the most likely to develop into enduring rivalries.[67] Historical and religious values might be used by a group as an

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[63] Paul R. Hensel, "Charting a Course to Conflict: Territorial Issues and Interstate Conflict, 1816-1992", *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 15, 1 (Spring 1996), p. 117

[64] Hensel, "Charting a Course to Conflict", p. 118

[65] Emma Jørum, "The October 1998 Turkish-Syrian Crisis in Arab Media" in Ingra Brandell, *State Frontiers, Borders and Boundaries in the Middle East*, (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2006), p. 159

[66] Jørum, "The October 1998 Turkish-Syrian Crisis in Arab Media", p. 160

[67] Paul K. Huth, "Enduring Rivalries and Territorial Disputes, 1950-1990", *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, Vol. 15, No. 1, Spring 1996, p. 53

evidence for its proprietary claims over a territory, i.e. that it has had a longer uninterrupted civilizational presence on the disputed territory.

David Newman argues that as territory becomes the focal point of competing claims, participants imbue specific sites with historic and religious importance.[68] According to him, simply being present is often insufficient to make such a claim, and uses the concept of "territorial socialization" to emphasize the importance of territory as a key element in personal and group identity formation. Territorial indoctrination goes hand-in-hand with a nationalist socialization process, occurring through the use of maps, flags, icons, and territorial semantics, all of which might enable people to elevate it in importance over other territories. The use of religious experience as a means of cementing the bond between a group and its territory is another powerful element in the socialization process.[69]

Symbolic and metaphysical attachments to territory are often the most critical forms of attachment in determining policy decisions with respect to territorial claims. While divisible aspects are considered to form the basis for compromise and territorial division, symbolic and religious attachments are thought not to possess the same flexibility, in which case the conflict becomes more protracted and violent.[70] It has also been pointed out that disputes over strategically-located territories are equally likely to evolve into enduring rivalries, but their substantive effects would be slightly less than in the case of disputes over ethnic irredentism and national unification.[71] One empirical study further claimed that while a traditional realist model predicted disputes involving security issues to be the most conflictual and likely to become enduring rivalries, the results of the study indicated that territorial disputes defined in terms of domestic politics were even more contentious in this way.[72]

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[68] David Newman, "Real Space, Symbolic Space: Interrelated Notions of Territory in the Arab–Israeli Conflict" in P.F. Diehl, (ed.), *A Road Map to War—Territorial Dimensions of International Conflict*, (Vanderbilt University Press, Nashville and London: 1999), p. 12

[69] Ibid., pp. 13-14

[70] Ibid., p. 16

[71] Huth, "Enduring Rivalries and Territorial Disputes", p. 53

[72] Ibid., p. 54

Territory may also be important as an exclusive entity; the formation of national identity around a specific piece of territory reflects an exclusive attachment to, and control of, these spaces. By constructing a "self" nationality that is contained within territorial boundaries, the "other" will by definition would become territorially excluded.[73] By reputation, there becomes a fear that if a leader gives in to an adversary over territorial issues despite the tangible and intangible importance of territory, other adversaries may be encouraged to press their own demands on other issues.[74]

3.3.2.2. Process Variables

3.3.2.2.1. Actors

In the process of conflict transformation, ripeness exists when it is perceived. The answer to the question of "who perceives the ripeness process and acts according to this perception?" becomes one that provides us with essential ideas about the conflict's transformation. It is usually possible for many different actors to be identified in this process. Kriesberg notes that "processes fostering de-escalation occur within each adversary, in the relations between the adversaries, and also among other parties in the social environment."[75] We should therefore focus on the parties themselves, as well as other parties with interests in the conflict transformation. In other words, these actors may be from inside or outside the conflict.

In this section, these outsiders, or third parties, who have the potential to take an effective role in the conflict transformation process, will be the first point of focus. The parties themselves and their decision-making structures will then be evaluated.

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[73] Newman, "Real Space, Symbolic Space", pp. 14-15

[74] Hensel, "Charting a Course to Conflict", p. 119

[75] Kriesberg, *Constructive Conflicts*, p. 188

3.3.2.2.1.1. Third Parties

In intractable conflicts, there is generally a need for the participation of a third party. Each third party possesses different characteristics and may make differing contributions to conflict transformation efforts.[76] It is important to answer the questions of who the third party is, what its role is, what its activities are, and how effective it is in the transformation of the conflict.

Third parties, depending on their roles and the stage of the conflict, may take intermediary actions, which vary through many dimensions. Such activities may include providing information and opportunities for communication, helping adversaries enter into negotiations, penetrating their emotional barriers to slow the deterioration of relations and reveal new options, saving face, changing procedures, constructing deals, contributing resources, generating pressure toward an agreement and rallying support for it.

Which activity has the greater likelihood of being effective is revealed during the conflict.[77] The basic argument is that each stage of the conflict (discussion, polarization, segregation and destruction[78] or emergence, escalation, stalemate and de-escalation[79]) necessitates a distinct type of third party technique. As a conflict emerges, third party activities may include transmitting information between the adversaries about the risks of escalation and possible options for preventing destructive escalation. Maintaining lines of communication as conflicts

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[76] Esra Çuhadar Gürkaynak and Oya Memişoğlu, "Varieties of Mediating Activities and their Complementarity in the Cyprus Conflict", *Regional Development Dialogue*, Vol. 26, no. 1, Spring 2005, p. 3

[77] See Ronald J. Fisher, "Assessing the Contingency Model of Third Party Intervention in Successful Cases of Prenegotiation", *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 44, No. 3, 2007; Louis Kriesberg, "Varieties of Mediating Activities and Mediators in International Relations" and Loraleigh Keashley and Ronald Fisher, "A Contingency Perspective on Conflict Interventions: Theoretical and Practical Considerations", in Jacob Bercovitch (ed.), *Resolving International Conflicts: The Theory and Practice of Mediation*, (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996)

[78] See Fisher, "Assessing the Contingency Model"

[79] See Kriesberg, "Varieties of Mediating Activities and Mediators"

emerge and intensify is an important activity. In order to help parties move toward de-escalation, third party activities primarily focus on helping the parties come together and making a deal seem feasible. Such activities thus vary greatly in their degree of intrusiveness. At one extreme, they involve facilitative activities, and at the other extreme, they include deal-making or even the near-imposition of settlements.[80]

It is possible to identify a six-item role of the third party: conciliation, consultation, pure mediation, power mediation, arbitration and peacekeeping. In *conciliation*, a trusted third party provides an informal communication link between the antagonists for the purposes of identifying issues, reducing tension and encouraging direct interaction, usually negotiation. In *consultation*, the third party works to facilitate creative problem-solving through communication and analysis using human relations skills and a social-scientific understanding of conflict etiology and dynamics. In *pure mediation*, the third party attempts to facilitate a negotiated settlement on substantive issues through the use of reasoning, persuasion, control of information, and suggestion of alternatives. *Power mediation* includes pure mediation but goes beyond it to include the use of leverage or coercion in the form of promised rewards or threatened punishments; it may involve the third party taking on the role of monitor and guarantor of an agreement. In *arbitration*, the third party provides a binding judgment arrived at after consideration of the merits of the opposing positions, then imposes a settlement deemed to be fair and just. Mediation differs from arbitration, as the third party formulates the terms of a conflict's settlement, and often holds the disputants to a commitment to the arbitrator's decision. In *peacekeeping*, the third party supplies military personnel to monitor a ceasefire or agreement between antagonists, and may engage in humanitarian activities to restore normalcy in concert with civilian personnel who may also assist in political decision-making processes such as elections.[81]

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[80] Kriesberg, *Constructive Conflicts*, p. 243

[81] Fisher, "Assessing the Contingency Model", pp. 314

Several other categorizations follow the same logic. For instance, Zartman and Touval place third party roles in three general categories: facilitator and manipulator, in which the mediator takes on respectively the roles of communications facilitator, then as the formulator of acceptable terms, and finally as a power broker, pushing and pulling parties toward an agreement.[82]

In its role, the attitude of third party toward the disputing parties acquires importance. There is some debate over third parties' impartiality. Conceptually, some confusion exists, because neutrality may refer to intention, consequence or appearance. These are sometimes equated with mediator attitudes toward, while at other times with its stake in the disputed issues. It is generally agreed that impartiality is essentially a matter of the perceptions of the parties in conflict.[83]

The heart of the debate on impartiality lies not with conceptual issues, but with the effects of impartiality on the role of the third party. There is an expectation that third parties should remain neutral in performing their roles. In such a case, it is assumed that impartiality is crucial for parties' confidence in the negotiation process, which, in turn, is a necessary condition of legitimacy and thus effectiveness in this role.[84] Some, however, argue that neutrality is not possible, that impartiality is not a prerequisite for successful mediation, and that in some cases can even get in the way.[85] In this case, trustworthiness and honesty toward the disputants is sufficient for effectiveness. Pure neutrality, on the other hand, comes with disinterest in the conflict and its involved parties, which is an impossible condition. This is why Çuhadar proposed awareness of the distinction between impartiality in manner and impartiality in conduct. For instance, while a third party may have a

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[82] I. William Zartman and Saadia Touval, "International Mediation in the Post-Cold War Era", in Chester Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall, (eds.), *Managing Global Chaos: Sources of and Responses to International Conflict*, (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996)

[83] Klieboer, "Understanding Success and Failure", p. 369

[84] Ibid., p. 369

[85] Siniver, "Power, Impartiality and Timing", p. 812

bias in favor of one of the disputant parties it should still be able to conduct its role impartially.[86]

Altunışık and Çuhadar's framework is useful for evaluating types of mediators within the dimensions of impartiality and power; they employ the categories of the neutral and principle mediators. While a principal mediator does not refrain from bargaining, striking a side deal, or forming a coalition with one of the disputants in order to leverage the other side, neutral mediators focus on communication and interaction between the disputants to ensure the process and agreement are fair, durable and efficient. For neutral mediators, impartiality is an expected characteristic, while for principle mediators the priority is with their ability to use power and leverage.[87]

Within this framework, Carnevale's identification of strategic and tactical strength has some merit. He notes that third parties use strength, but depending on their power, this strength might be strategic or tactical. Strategic strength refers to social power, which is related to the resources and relationships that the mediator brings to the conflict. Tactical strength is related to what the mediator does at the negotiating table, and is about technique and procedure.[88] Tactical strength is more often used by less powerful mediators simply because it may be all they can offer the parties.[89]

In many circumstances, particularly among potential mediators with great resources, disputants do not expect or desire disinterested neutrality. One or more sides may prefer a mediator who can enlarge the pie to be divided, who can leverage the other side, or who can ensure compliance with any agreement reached.

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[86] Esra Çuhadar Gürkaynak, "Çatışma Ortamlarında Üçüncü Tarafların Uzlaştırma Amaçlı Müdahaleleri: Paralel Diplomasiye Eleştirel Bir Bakış", in Nimet Beriker (der.), *Çatışmadan Uzlaşmaya Kuramlar, Süreçler ve Uygulamalar*, (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, Aralık 2009), p. 134

[87] Meliha Altunışık & Esra Çuhadar, "Turkey's Search for a Third Party Role in Arab-Israeli Conflicts: A Neutral Facilitator or a Principal Power Mediator?", *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol. 15, No. 3, November 2010, p. 378

[88] P.J. Carnevale, "Mediating from Strength", in J. Bercovitch (ed.), *Studies in International Mediation*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2002) cited in Siniver, "Power, Impartiality and Timing", p. 812

[89] Siniver, "Power, Impartiality and Timing", p. 812

In this sense, biased mediators may be an advantage because their ties provide them with a basis for leverage.

Kriesberg says that "whatever the intentions or perceived conduct of mediators, the consequences of their efforts are not likely to be neutral."[90] However, in playing their role, mediators lend legitimacy to all parties, which in turn afford them a degree of equality in their rights during negotiations.[91] As it has been established that power, not impartiality, is the relevant characteristic of principle mediators, their mandate rests upon the assumption that their interests are altruistic, and center around negotiating a settlement. What matters here is the mediator's ability to deliver.[92] However, this requires the third parties to have the legitimacy to draw a clear line between facilitation and principle-power mediation, and to be able to enforce that line during the transformation process.[93]

In conclusion, the effectiveness of third parties in conflict transformation can be assessed through their roles and activities. The compatibility of the mediation activity with the stage of conflict and the legitimacy the mediator is able to lend to the process are important parameters for making this evaluation. Although third parties can be helpful, their services must be accepted. The first prerequisite for the initiation, let alone success, of any third party, is this acceptance by both of the disputant parties.[94] The implication of this is that when parties want to de-escalate conflict, they will do so, and the contributions of third party mediators become only complementary.[95]

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[90] Kriesberg, *Constructive Conflicts*, p. 253

[91] Ibid., p. 253

[92] Siniver, "Power, Impartiality and Timing", p. 813

[93] Altunışık & Çuhadar, "Turkey's Search for a Third Party Role", p. 384

[94] Siniver, "Power, Impartiality and Timing", p. 811

[95] Kriesberg, *Constructive Conflicts*, p. 246

3.3.2.2.1.2 Parties of the Conflict and Their Domestic Structure

In this research, it is assumed that domestic political processes influence the behaviors of states in conflicts and conflict transformation processes.[96] This follows the proposition that analyses of policymaking concerning war and peace should account for how in-group political costs and benefits may influence policy choices.[97] When we look at parties in conflict, we can identify two groups: constituencies and their representatives.

Representatives are those who can authoritatively negotiate and secure the implementation of agreements. They are a vital factor in conflict transformation since numerous domestic and international influences are necessarily channeled through the political apparatuses of a government that identifies, decides upon, and implements foreign policy. Margaret Hermann identifies this as an "authoritative decision unit", which is an individual or a set of individuals in a government with the jurisdiction to commit resources, and when faced with a problem, to make decisions that cannot be readily reversed. Furthermore, this unit develops contingency models for foreign policy, and cautions against the assumption that certain decision-making processes are direct functions of basic national attributes or structures of a political system. The nature of the decision unit is just as likely to vary within a single country as between various nations.[98]

In conflict transformation process, among parties able to commit governmental resources and how they go about making decisions should be determined. Briefly, the question of who the authoritative decision unit is should be answered. This unit has both the power to commit resources in a foreign affairs context and to prevent other governmental entities from reversing their decisions.

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[96] See, for instance, Christopher Sprecher and Karl DeRouen Jr., "The Domestic Determinants of Foreign Policy Behavior in Middle Eastern Enduring Rivals, 1948-1998", *Foreign Policy Analysis*, Vol. 1, 2005

[97] Lieberfeld, *Talking with the Enemy*, p. 19

[98] Margaret G. Hermann, "How Decision Units Shape Foreign Policy: A Theoretical Framework", *International Studies Review*, Vol. 3, Issue 2, Summer 2001, pp. 47-48

The party that constitutes this unit may vary with the nature of the problem. The more vital the issues at stake, the higher the level of political authority constitute the unit. As decision-making literature indicates, there are three possible types of authoritative decision units: a predominant leader, a single group and a coalition of autonomous actors. In the case of a *predominant leader*, a single individual has the ability to repress all opposition and dissent, and the power to make a decision autonomous. A *Single group* is a set of individuals, all members of a single body, who collectively select a course of action. And a *coalition of autonomous actors* consists of a collection of necessary actors – separate individuals, groups, or institutional representatives – who, if some or all concur, can act on behalf of the government, but none has the ability to autonomously make a decision on force others to comply; moreover, no overarching authoritative body exists in which all these actors are members. These categorizations are considered both mutually exclusive and exhaustive.[99]

What are the conditions favoring a predominant leader? The decision unit for any occasion is likely to be a *predominant leader* if the regime has one individual within its leadership who is vested with the authority – either in constitution, law, or general practice – to commit government resources to foreign policy issues (e.g. a monarchy); alternatively, if the foreign policy machinery of the government is organized hierarchically with one ultimately accountable party, or if a single individual has control over various available forms of coercion (e.g. authoritarian regimes).[100]

If the government is not structured around a single individual, there may be a designated group responsible for the occasion for decision. This type of key group can take one of several forms depending on its placement in the government, and on the nature of the problem (e.g. the Politburo in the former Soviet Union). To be considered a *single group*, two or more people who interact directly with each other and collectively reach a decision are needed. All persons necessary for committing

[99] Ibid., pp. 56-57

[100] Ibid., pp. 58-60

government resources on the occasion for decision must be members of the group.[101]

If two or more entities are involved, each of which with the power to commit or withhold government resources but without the power to allocate such resources unilaterally, we can describe the authoritative decision unit as a *coalition*. A coalition is made up of separate and independent actors who must collaboratively make a decision. The participants may be from inside or outside the government. These actors may even include foreign governments or their representatives, multinational corporations or other international organizations.[102]

In this research, it is assumed that pressure not only from representatives, but from domestic constituencies as well, impact the outcome of the negotiation process. The number and natures of these groups in each party indicate cohesiveness, which is an important factor for success of conflict transformation efforts.

This type of in-group cohesiveness has usually been associated with the presence of only one constituency. If cohesiveness is low, it may be hard to identify parties in the first place. It is assumed that the presence of numerous constituencies in such a scenario makes it harder for potential representatives to engage in meaningful forms of conflict transformation, since they will find it difficult to make concessions without losing face vis-à-vis the constituencies. This creates circumstances of negotiation not only between the parties but also among factions within the parties themselves.[103]

It is also assumed that the leaders of internally non-cohesive parties tend to be more aggressive and willing to provoke or escalate conflict with out-groups. From another standpoint, the existence of numerous constituencies may also provide for negotiators who are unwilling to compromise with convenient excuses for resisting conflict transformation efforts. The greater the number of such

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[101] Ibid., pp. 60-61

[102] Ibid., pp. 61-63

[103] Kleiboer, "Understanding Success and Failure", p. 365

constituencies, the easier it is for negotiators to invoke them to justify intransigence.[104]

On the whole, to find out about the nature of constituencies and representatives in a given party will provide us with important clues regarding conflict transformation efforts, as they are the central actors of these processes.

3.3.2.2.2. Pre-Negotiation Variables

3.3.2.2.2.1. Hurting Stalemate and Enticing Opportunity: Perception of the Status Quo and Challenges to the Status Quo

Parties' perceptions of the status quo are an important indicator of their conduct in conflict transformation processes. If the status quo is sustainable, i.e. both parties are satisfied with the state of equilibrium, it is not necessary to take transformative action. When the status quo appears tenable, there is little inclination to question it.[105] If even one party finds the status quo sustainable, the process of conflict transformation will slow.

However, in many conflicts, status quo is not sustainable and hence needs to change. When policymakers recognize a perceived discrepancy between the present conditions and what is desired, a ripeness process is triggered. In short, they recognize a problem. A problem, which is subjective, is recognized when policymakers declare something to be wrong, in need of attention, or to present an opportunity for gain. The articulation of incapacitating difficulty or potential opportunity is thus recognition of a problem.[106]

Some difficulties, threats or costs, and some potential opportunities and benefits may lead parties to consider conflict transformation. Positive, enticing opportunities or negative, hurting stalemates are challenges to the status quo, rendering them untenable.

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[104] Ibid., p. 365

[105] Dowty, "Despair is not Enough", p. 12

[106] Hermann, "How Decision Units Shape Foreign Policy", p. 55

Difficulties, threats or costs incurred by a party, may be physical and/or political. An increase in physical damages contributes to an untenable status quo. For instance, increases in fatalities or economic burdens resulting from conflict constitute such factors. On the other hand, a strained political milieu due to conflict might be a reason the status quo became untenable. There is also the possibility of a deterioration of the public sentiment, resulting in pressure on the decision-makers to find out a solution to the problem.

In particular, hurting stalemates are focused on as a trigger event in conflict transformation. The higher the percentage of disputes ending in stalemate, it is said, the higher the likelihood of resolution success.[107] In a hurting stalemate situation, concerns of parties may be related to continuing costs, and so loss avoidance,[108] or to the absence of the possibility for gain.[109] Stalemate is an unpleasant terrain stretching into the future, with the potential for neither decisive escalation nor graceful escape.[110]

There are several types of stalemate: a *stalemate of desperation*, wherein both parties are exhausted yet no victory is in sight; a *stalemate of attrition*, wherein although there has been no injury, no successful end is possible; a *stalemate of frustration*, wherein parties cannot achieve a victory on their own terms;[111] and a *stalemate of catastrophe*, wherein a disaster threatens the parties. Zartman points out that catastrophe is a useful extension of mutually hurting stalemate but is not necessary either to its definition or its existence.[112] In some instances, there is the

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[107] J. Michael Greig, "Moments of Opportunity: Recognizing Conditions of Ripeness for International Mediation between Enduring Rivals", Journal of Conflict Resolution, Vol. 45, No. 6, December 2001

[108] Aggestam, "Enhancing Ripeness"

[109] Christopher Mitchell, "The Right Moment: Notes on Four Models of 'Ripeness", *Global Society*, Vol. 9, Issue 2, Winter 1995", p. 87

[110] Christopher Mitchell, "Cutting Losses: Reflections on Appropriate Timing", *ICAR Working Paper*, 9 January 1996

[111] Mitchell, "The Right Moment", p. 87

[112] I. William Zartman, "The Timing of Peace Initiatives: Hurting Stalemates and Ripe Moments", John Darby and Roger MacGinty (eds.), *Contemporary Peacemaking, Conflict, Violence and Peace Processes*, (Palgrave, 2003), p. 19

possibility of a soft stalemate, which is stable and self-serving, with a painful but bearable effect.[113] In this case, the parties continue on either side of a de facto partition, punctuated by flashes of violence; they learn to live with and even enjoy it.[114]

In the literature, there is some debate over whether opportunities other than hurting stalemates have the capacity to impact conflict transformation. It is possible that new benefits, as opposed to existing or anticipated costs, and new rewards for adopting alternatives, as opposed to sacrifices, may entice parties to de-escalate the conflict. "Enticing opportunities", as they are called by Christopher Mitchell, would become the advent of a new leadership, a change in goals or level of commitment, the availability of new resources, and a change of priorities among elites. This argument assumes that leaders may change their minds and can think creatively about alternatives to coercion in the midst of conflict.[115] Dean Pruitt, in discussing readiness theory, emphasizes the proximal antecedents of motivation to achieving reciprocal cooperation and optimism with the other party.

Peter Coleman empirically compares the roles of costs and benefits. According to him, there are both negative and positive incentives for creating ripeness situations. Parties may either deplete opposing forces or add forces in the direction of change. Coleman, who hypothesized that interventions aimed at removing resistance-forces (negative incentive) toward de-escalation result in greater disputant ripeness than those employing driving-forces (positive incentive), found out that resistance-removing interventions have greater impact on subjects' emotional experiences.[116] Coleman asserts that it would be wise to initially consider alternative methods of removing opposing resistance forces, thereby facilitating constructive movement toward ripeness while relieving relative tension. According to him, adding driving forces into the conflict system induces a state of increased

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[113] I. William Zartman, *Cowardly Lions Missed Opportunities to Prevent Deadly Conflict and State Collapse*, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005, p. 11

[114] I. William Zartman, "Negotiating Internal, Ethnic and Identity Conflicts in a Globalized World", *International Negotiation*, Vol. 11, 2006

[115] Mitchell, "Cutting Losses"

[116] Peter T. Coleman, "Redefining Ripeness: A Social-Psychological Perspective", *Peace and Conflict*, Vol. 3, 1997, p. 313

tension accompanied by "greater fatigue, higher aggressiveness, higher emotionality, and lower constructiveness". And this is risky in the already high-tension state of an escalated conflict process.[117]

However, we should be aware of the possibility that the anticipated marginal costs of sustaining conflict might not be enough to turn leaders' minds toward conciliation so long as their vision remains fixed on achieving the benefits that justify their costs.[118] In other words, parties might be trapped in conflict, as they are locked into a kind of victory as a result of conflict.

In conclusion, we can propose that as the status quo between parties becomes untenable, the process of ripeness gains momentum. And it is not only the costs, but also the benefits/opportunities that may lead parties to think about alternatives to the status quo. The possibility that an untenable status quo may either lead to de-escalation, consistent with rationality assumption, or irrationally lead to escalation consistent with "entrapment model" then appears.

3.3.2.2.2.2. Perceived Way Out: Motivations to Talk

After the recognition of challenges to the status quo, costs or benefits, parties have an occasion for decision, in which they formulate questions about this new foreign policy situation, and arrange for someone to respond to it. There is thus need for perception among parties that neither is likely to unilaterally alter the rivalry in their favor. This observation encourages them to pursue more cooperative strategies in transforming the status quo.[119] To do this, there should be a willingness within the party to talk to the other side, and furthermore, to observe such willingness on the other side. Thus before being prepared to sign an agreement, parties need to be convinced not only that such an agreement is necessary, but also that it is possible. That is, they must be persuaded that there is a genuine readiness by the other side to make the necessary concessions – that there is a reasonable

[117] Ibid., p. 304

[118] Mitchell, "Cutting Losses"

[119] Greig, "Moments of Opportunity", p. 693

probability that negotiations will result in an acceptable agreement that will not jeopardize their own national existence.[120]

Broadly, willingness can be assessed as the degree to which a lack of constraints on parties makes them hesitant to negotiate. Constraints may include extreme distrust between parties, opposition to agreements by factions within the parties.[121] We can thus assess both as political and public will. When even minimal trust between parties exists, we can say there is political will among them. And when there is no factional opposition, we can identify some level of public will, which supports political will.

There should be further insight into the connection between motivation and real action. Many factors may influence an individual's motivation to change, but this does not necessarily translate into tangible change. A significant change may be brought about through a decision. It is pointed out that a high degree of personal involvement in this decision is essential for real commitment and follow-through. Until this point, one may have willingness, readiness or motivation, but intention without action will not result in change. A concrete commitment may lead to action.[122] Thus, willing parties ask questions first about whether the problem requires, second, what possible solutions may be and third, whether one or more proposals for dealing with it should be adopted.[123]

It is apparent that there is a need for the reorientation of perceptions regarding the conflict itself, as well as the other party. There is also need for mutual concern regarding a given conflict and its resolution for both parties. It is asserted that this mutual concern is one a key factors for sustainable cooperation. This is precisely what is missing from the Arab-Israeli peace negotiation, for instance. Also in the case of Northern Ireland conflict, the lack of mutual concern, especially at the

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[120] Herbert C. Kelman, "Some Determinants of Oslo Breakthrough", *International Negotiation*, Vol. 2, Issue 2, 1997, p. 188

[121] J.D. Hagan, Philip P. Everts, Haruhiro Fukui, and John D. Stempel, "Foreign Policy by Coalition: Deadlock, Compromise, and Anarchy", *International Studies Review*, Vol. 3, Issue 2, Summer 2001, p. 177

[122] Coleman, "Redefining Ripeness", p. 92

[123] Hermann, "How Decision Units Shape Foreign Policy", p. 55

grassroots level, is the reason the peace processes have halted whenever agreements or their implementation are about to be achieved.[124]

3.3.2.2.3. Negotiation Variables

In order to properly evaluate the impact of ripeness on the success of conflict transformation, we should include some other variables in the framework of the research. In particular, we have to take into account negotiation variables[125], such as goal and strategy, which might be impacted by the degree of ripeness.

3.3.2.2.3.1. Negotiation Goals

Parties identify goals before entering into negotiations. Basic goals include resolving problems with the others, preserving demanded positions and maintaining interests. Parties' goals in the negotiations are very important in the sense that timing may be conducive for one goal but not another. Kriesberg argues that the time is never straightforwardly right or wrong for de-escalation. Rather the failure to move effectively into de-escalation negotiations is not necessarily an issue of timing; it may mean the right goals and strategies were not pursued.[126]

We must be aware of which kinds of goals are put to negotiation, since parties sometimes enter negotiations for purposes other than reaching a settlement. For instance, they may desire to maintain contact, obtain information, disseminate propaganda, buy time or anticipate the impacts of third parties.[127] In other words, it is possible that not all negotiations are serious attempts to resolve conflict. Leaders of one party may sometimes enter negotiations simply to demonstrate to their

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[124] Frederic Pearson, "Operationalizing" in Dennis J. D. Sandole (ed.), *Handbook of Conflict Analysis and Resolution*, (London, New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 72

[125] See Daniel Druckman, "Dimensions of International Negotiations: Structures, Processes, and Outcomes", *Group Decision and Negotiation*, Vol. 6, 199

[126] Kriesberg and Thorson (eds.), *Timing the De-escalation of International Conflicts*, pp. 18-19

[127] Jackson, "Successful Negotiation", p. 338

constituents – to a wider audience, or even to elements in the opposing side – that they are devoted to peace; they may actually seek only to reveal the intransigence of their opponents.[128] Example of such "devious objectives" may be for a party to afford itself "breathing room" wherein it has a chance to regroup its resources, or to internationalize the dispute in hopes of improving its bargaining position, or even to prolong the dispute in order to avoid making concessions.[129]

3.3.2.2.3.2. Negotiation Strategies

Negotiation strategies of the parties are important in the sense that they reflect their understanding of the conflict and its possible resolution. By strategy is meant authoritative decision units' actions or tactics that are observable in principle and associated with a plan to achieve some objective through negotiation. It is not assumed that a strategy necessarily takes into account all contingencies, or that only one strategy is compatible with a given set of interests. The negotiator's menu is conceived as a continuum varying from strictly distributive to purely integrative strategy.[130] In the literature, there is a division between approaches that emphasize the competitive nature of the negotiation process and those that highlight more cooperative efforts to simultaneously enlarge the joint interests of both parties.

Pruitt delineates four negotiation strategies: contending, problem-solving, yielding and avoidance.[131] The last strategy is simply the absence of activity. In contending, goals are pursued through trying to persuade the other party to concede. In problem-solving, parties search for mutually satisfactory options. Yielding involves diminishing one's goals. This is not the same as concession-making, since it is an internal psychological event, though it can lead to concession-making.[132]

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[128] Kriesberg, *Constructive Conflicts*, p. 279

[129] Greig, "Moments of Opportunity", p. 699

[130] John S. Odell, "Breaking Deadlocks in International Institutional Negotiations: The WTO, Seattle, and Doha", *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 53, 2009, p. 277

[131] See Dean G. Pruitt, "Strategy in Negotiation", in Victor A. Kremenyuk (ed.), *International Negotiation, Analysis, Approaches, Issues*, (Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2002)

The two basic negotiation styles, positional bargaining and problem-solving, can be sub-categorized into distributive and integrative bargaining or value claiming and creating. At one extreme, negotiations are treated as ways of waging contest, and prescriptions are about victory for oneself or one's side. At the other extreme, negotiations are considered ways of reaching mutually acceptable and even beneficial agreements, and the prescriptions aim to efficiently achieve such outcomes for all parties.[133]

Advocates of the conventional approach of positional bargaining argue that by firmly staking out a desired position and holding to it, negotiators will be able to maximize their benefits. Tough bargaining strategies thus become valuable. Some tactics bear the function of claiming value from others and defending against their claims. The opposing side is expected to agree to a series of concessions. However, parties are frequently left with little room for maneuver by such negotiation tactics. For example, leaders may make their positions public, and even announce them prior to negotiations, which have the result of locking them into their positions because their constituencies would not support concession.

This style supports the possibility of using force to convince adversaries that alternatives will be more costly than the terms being offered. In many cases negotiations are conducted while a mutually coercive struggle is waged.

Positional bargaining is criticized in that states do not always have incompatible goals, but they often find themselves in situations where real or perceived conflicts of interest arise.[134] In problem-solving, people are separated from the problem, interests rather than positions are focused on, and options for mutual gain are manufactured based on objective criteria. By this strategy, every conflict can be converted into a problem then solved to the satisfaction of all those with a stake in the solution. It is thus a problem-oriented approach to a negotiation

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[132] Ibid., p. 78

[133] See Daniel Druckman, "Negotiation", in Sandra Cheldelin, Daniel Druckman and Larissa Fast (eds.), *Conflict, From Analysis to Intervention*, (London and New York: Continuum, 2003)

[134] Hopmann, "Bargaining and Problem Solving", p. 447

that is not best defined as a conflict in need of resolution, but as a common problem that must be solved.[135]

Advocates of this approach contend that in traditional negotiation, bargaining positions are often set forth without adequate reflection on the underlying interests that are supposed to be satisfied, such that gaining position becomes the goal, as opposed to satisfying underlying interests. If both sides examine their interests and explore strategic options, it is often possible to discover options that meet the underlying interests of all negotiating partners.

A variety of tactics can facilitate this problem-solving style. These include efforts to reduce subjective barriers to agreement, offers to exchange material concessions, and moves to change the game by adding or subtracting parties, issues, or a mediator in order to benefit each actor.[136] Negotiators may then ask questions, seek to empathize with the other side's interests, and try to communicate their understanding of how they are perceived by the other side.

We can argue that conditions in a hurting stalemate encourage greater adoption of problem-solving strategies. Pruitt claims problem-solving strategy is in part a default option chosen when it is difficult to yield, when contentious tactics do not seem feasible and delays are costly. Furthermore, when a party has faith in its own problem-solving ability, a recent negotiation success, a mediator, and when they perceive the other party to be ready – when conditions are ripe – the chances that integrative strategies will succeed increase.

However, we should be aware that these are ideal types. They represent pure forms at opposite ends of a continuum, while most reality falls somewhere between pure versions. According to Kriesberg, the two are often complementary, with one or the other being more appropriate or effective depending on circumstances. In practice, negotiators tend to synthesize approaches, and their prescriptions derive from both.[137] Neither cooperation nor competition is as effective in producing optimal agreements as strategies that alternate between cooperation and

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[135] Ibid., p. 456

[136] Odell, "Breaking Deadlocks", p. 277

[137] Kriesberg, *Constructive Conflicts*, pp. 272-277

competition.[138] In negotiations, interruptions occur when negotiators initiate a change in strategy, that is, when they end the continuous sequence of one strategy by introducing a new strategy.[139]

3.4. Research Methodology

The research objective of this study is to explore the role of ripeness in the effectiveness of conflict transformation efforts. To understand this, I have chosen to take a comparative approach to the research. In particular, the methodology pursued for this project is structured and controlled comparison, which will be employed in examination of similar cases, in order to isolate the specific conditions for divergent outcomes in the conflict transformation efforts. As John Stuart Mill discussed in "A System of Logic", a pioneering work of the comparative method, through the most similar cases, the method of identifying independent variables resulting in divergent outcomes can best be applied. The logic of using the most similar case comparisons is that if the values of all independent variables are comparable, specific independent variables may be controlled for: if the values of the dependent variables in the two cases differ, the different values of the independent variables must be responsible for this difference.[140]

This method is structured in the sense that the general questions that reflect the research objective are asked of each case in order to guide and standardize data collection, thereby making case comparisons and the accumulation of findings systematic. The method is focused in the sense that it deals with selected aspects of the cases examined. Thus, a historical episode must be selectively focused on in accordance with the type of theory being developed.[141]

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[138] Druckman, "Negotiation", p. 202

[139] Mara Olekalns, Philip L. Smith, "Moments in Time: Metacognition, Trust, and Outcomes in Dyadic Negotiations", *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, Vol. 31, No. 12, Dec. 2005, p. 1697

[140] Daniel Druckman, *Doing Research Methods of Inquiry for Conflict Analysis*, (Sage Publications, 2005)

Within this research, Syrian conflicts with Turkey and Israel are compared, since while the Syrian-Turkish conflict was successfully transformed into good relations despite some unresolved issues, while the result of the Syrian-Israeli conflict did not achieve the expected level of transformation in spite of efforts during the 1990s. This comparison between two conflicts involving Syria and its non-Arab neighbors, which are similar in many respects, can provide us with important insight on conditions for effective conflict transformation, and the potential role of ripeness in the success of such efforts.

When we examine several aspects of the Syrian conflicts with Turkey and Israel, first looking at the stage of conflict, both conflicts were in stalemate before negotiation processes began. Syria and Israel had already fought each other in 1948, 1967, and 1973. And some events had been lived through Lebanon, where Syria and Israel continued their proxy wars, even during peace negotiations. In the Syrian-Turkish conflict, Syria was the main supporter of PKK terrorist activities against Turkey between 1984 and 1998, until the expulsion of Abdullah Öcalan from Syria.

In terms of contending issues between the countries, Syrian support for terrorism and normalization of relations were common issues to both situations. Concerns about Syria are the same in both conflicts in the sense that for Syria, sovereignty took priority over other issues, while Israel and Turkey put more emphasis on security. Both Turkey and Israel have accused Syria of fostering insecurity in the region through support of terrorism. Furthermore, in both conflicts, Syrian concerns were not only related to interests, but also values, since these issues have plagued it since its independence. These contentious issues are thus perceived as being related to Syria's existence and sovereignty. For example, the water issue between Syria and Turkey was perceived by Syria as an issue of sovereignty rather than a technical issue.[142] Most importantly, Syria has defined its identity through these conflicts. On the one hand, while Israel is perceived as a project of Western imperialism, Turkey was viewed through the lens of Ottoman imperialism. The

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[141] Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2005)

[142] Meliha Altunışık and Özlem Tür, "From Distant Neighbors to Partners? Changing Syrian-Turkish Relations", *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 37, No. 2, 2006, p. 242

Golan Heights as land occupied by Israel and Hatay alleged as a territory stolen by Turkey fostered the Syrian feeling of victimization. These lands were part of the fortification of the Syrian self against its others, and self-other conceptions still dominate Syrian self-identification.

Both conflicts share similar external contexts, including the same regional environment. The most distinguishing characteristic is the Cold War, during which Syria was supported by the Soviet Union while Turkey and Israel were members of the American-led West. The end of the Cold War brought an end to Soviet support for Syria, while Turkey and Israel benefitted from continued support from the US. Notably, during the 1991 Gulf War, Syria, Turkey and Israel participated together in the American-led coalition against Iraq, in stark contrast to Arab countries like Jordan and Palestine.

After controlling for the above variables we have demonstrated the parallels between the Syrian conflicts with Turkey and Israel. The next step is to isolate the reasons behind the different outcomes, for which we need to trace the processes of each conflict. In the following two chapters, I will look at the transformation processes of each conflict, in particular ripeness and negotiation processes, through the prism of the contextual and process variables delineated in this chapter.

3.5. Data

Apart from articles, books and policy analyses on Syrian conflicts with Turkey and Israel for process analysis, we must scrutinize the content of the speeches and statements of opinion-makers within each party, as perceptions of the status quo and perceived ways out are among the vital explanatory factors to explore.

For this research, several interviews with decision-makers and opinion-makers were conducted in Turkey, Syria and Israel.[143] Some previously conducted journalistic interviews with critical figures were also included.

[143] See Appendix A

In order to evaluate power relations between the parties, data from the Composite Index on National Capabilities (CINC) derived from the Correlates of War project was used. The Correlates of War Project was founded in 1963 by J. David Singer, a political scientist at the University of Michigan. The goal of the project has been the systematic accumulation of scientific knowledge about war. As of January 2005, the project continues under Director Paul Diehl and Associate Director D. Scott Bennett.[144]

The Composite Index of National Capability (CINC) is a statistical measure of national power created by J. David Singer for the Correlates of War project. It compiles world totals representing demographic, economic, and military strength. More recent studies tend to use the (CINC) score, which "focuses on measures that are more salient to the perception of true state power" beyond GDP. It is "among the best-known and most accepted methods for measuring national capabilities." The CINC only measures hard power and may not be representative of total national power.

To understand the Israeli public's attitude toward a peace agreement with Syria, the Peace Index was used. The War and Peace Index is an ongoing public opinion survey project aimed at systematically tracking prevailing trends in Israeli public opinion on the regional conflict and its effects on Israeli society. The War and Peace Project, which began in 1994, is based at the Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research and the Evens Program in Mediation and Conflict Resolution of Tel Aviv University.[145]

3.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, the objective of the research has been explained. Additionally, in order to isolate conditions for effectiveness of conflict transformation and especially the role of ripeness in effectiveness, a research strategy and methodology have been delineated. As ripeness is taken as a process,

[144] See http://www.correlatesofwar.org/

[145] See http://www.tau.ac.il/peace/

and is influenced by momentum, areas of focus have included both pre-negotiation and negotiation variables along with the actors, who are the bearers of the process. However, it is recognized that processes are contextually dependent, and so the relevant contextual variables have also been delineated.

In addition to identification of contextual and process variables, these variables are explained insofar as they can impact conflict transformation efforts, and what their possible limits may be. This chapter is a conceptual window through which empirical cases will be analyzed in the next chapters.

CHAPTER 4

RIPENESS PROCESS AND TRANSFORMATION OF THE TURKISH-SYRIAN CONFLICT

4.1. Introduction

The Turkish-Syrian conflict was an antagonism between two neighbors distinct in state administration and nationality, but with similarities in religion and geography. This conflict had been on Syria's agenda since its establishment in 1946. Even before this, the seeds of the conflict were sown during the French Mandate of Syria (April 25, 1920-April 17, 1946). It began with differing claims over the Sanjak of Alexandretta/Hatay, and escalated following a dispute over water in the 1960s. After the mid-1980s, Syrian support of PKK terrorism, which had created domestic and external predicaments for Turkey, pushed the parties to the brink of war. It is claimed that "the Turkish-Syrian conflict emerged as one of the major long-term challenges to the modern Syrian state."[1]

From the brink of war in 1998, Turkish-Syrian relations were transformed into today's high-level strategic cooperation. The 1998 crisis thus necessitates discussion in order to illuminate the motives behind this transformation. The radical improvements experienced in Turkish-Syrian relations have resulted in land mines along the border being cleared and border restrictions being eased in February 2002. While bilateral trade has increased significantly, security contacts have gained momentum since 1998.[2]

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[1] Eyal Zisser, "Who's Afraid of Syrian Nationalism? National and State Identity in Syria", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 2, March 2006, p. 188

In this chapter, why and how the conflict between Turkey and Syria was transformed will be explored. In particular, the question of how much ripeness theory can explain this transformation will be investigated within the framework outlined in the previous chapter. The transformation process took place over the late 1990s and early 2000s. The primary focus of this analysis will be the 1990s.

4.2. Background

Syrian-Turkish conflict and relations are the subjects of various debates. One of these rests the discussion on historical relations; in this debate, the impacts of perceptions regarding the past on the relations in the present are discussed.[3] It is argued that Syrian-Turkish relations are affected by memories of past relations between Turks and Arabs. Turkish-Syrian relations go back to the Ottoman era, and so a comprehensive study is required to integrate the historical legacy and the impact of historical imagination into the analysis of relations in the contemporary era. Along with material factors, ideational factors should be considered.[4] Thus, these relations cannot be analyzed without reference to history.[5] This includes the deliberate establishment of stereotypes of the other on each side, which have been reinforced over the course of the political history of the twentieth century.[6]

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[2] Nasuh Uslu, *Turkish Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War Period*, (New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 2003), p. 93

[3] See Dietrich Jung and Wolfango Piccoli, *Turkey At the Crossroads, Ottoman Legacies and a Greater Middle East*, (London and New York: Zed Books, 2001); Dietrich Jung, "Turkey and the Arab World: Historical Narratives and New Political Realities", *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol. 10, No. 1, March 2005; Bülent Aras and Hasan Köni, "Turkish-Syrian Relations Revisited", *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 4, Fall 2002; Emma Jørum, "The October 1998 Turkish-Syrian Crisis in Arab Media" in Ingra Brandell (ed.) *State Frontiers, Borders and Boundaries in the Middle East*, (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2006); Bülent Aras and Rabia Karakaya Polat, "From Conflict to Cooperation: Desecuritization of Turkey's Relations with Syria and Iran", *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 39

[4] Aras and Köni, "Turkish-Syrian Relations Revisited", p. 47

[5] Meliha Altunışık and Özlem Tür, "From Distant Neighbors to Partners? Changing Syrian-Turkish Relations", *Security Dialogue* Vol. 37, No. 2, 2006, p. 231

[6] See C. L. Brown, *Imperial Legacy: The Ottoman Imprint on the Balkans and the Middle East*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996)

The first period in question is the World War I period, during which Arab nationalists rose up to overthrow Ottoman rule, which had lasted four centuries. While Arabs saw their revolt as a legitimate step toward acquiring national independence, Turks regarded it as a "stab in the back" that undermined their wartime efforts against the entente powers.[7]

In the Turkish mental map, the Arab world has been considered problematic with the early positivist explanation that the source of backwardness in Turkey was Islam, which came through the teachings of Arabs.[8] During the republic's formative years, the Middle East was conceptualized through Western Orientalist stereotypes as a region of inefficiency, the antithesis of the rational project of Kemalist modernity.[9] According to Jung, the increasing isolation of Turkish Muslims in the last decades of Ottoman rule, the evolution of Turkish nationalism, and the formation of the modern Turkish state became interlinked, and these three processes have largely determined the Turkish attitude toward the Arab Middle East.[10] Indeed, according to Aras and Köni, there was no serious enmity toward Arabs in the Turkish mental map until the mid-1910s. One clear example is the absence of negative Arab images in Ottoman literature until this time. This positive sentiment changed quickly and found its expression in literature.[11]

In the perceptions of Arabs, "turkification" carried out in the final years of the Empire is looked upon as a sign of Turkish disdain and racism toward Arabs; Ottoman/Turkish rule is often pointed to as the source of what is described as the backwardness of the area.[12] They identify the Ottoman period as an occupation. In the Syrian political mind, the Ottoman Empire was demonized. This was the

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[7] David Kushner, "Turkish-Syrian Relations: An Update", in Moshe Ma'oz, Joseph Ginat and Onn Winckler (eds.), *Modern Syria, From Ottoman Rule to Pivotal Role in the Middle East*, (Brighton and Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 1999), p. 228

[8] Aras and Köni, "Turkish-Syrian Relations Revisited", p. 50

[9] Jung, "Turkey and the Arab World", p. 7

[10] Ibid., p. 5

[11] As an example see Falih Rıfkı Atay, *Zeytindağı*, (İstanbul: 2004). The first publication was in 1932.

[12] Jørum, "The October 1998 Turkish-Syrian Crisis in Arab Media", p. 160

deliberate policy of the early pan-Arabists, who were mainly Orthodox Christians, and generated this idea to help establish an identity independent from pan-Islamism.[13]

As a result, rather than seeing themselves as constitutive parts and thus heirs of the Ottoman Empire, the rise of nationalism and the consequent process of establishing separate states led to a history of resentment among Arabs against Turkey.[14] There is a distinction between the perception and interpretation of the Ottoman legacy in Turkey and Arab countries. While the Turkish establishment considered itself the main successor state with negative memories of Arabs, the Arab states interpreted the demise of the Ottoman Empire as their emancipation.

One explanation for these different perceptions refers to identity construction. Social engineering went hand-in-hand with the identity construction in both regions, with Turks referencing Hittite and Sumerian ancestry and Arabs referencing the golden age of Arab history.

Contemporary Arab political consciousness began to be shaped as the late Ottoman rulers' gradual shift from Ottomanism-Islamism to Turkism alienated Arabs from the Ottoman Empire. Arab identity emerged as a politico-cultural alternative in the face of the oppressive policies of the Committee of Union and Progress. Arab nationalism in the Syrian province, which developed as an opposition movement, gained momentum as the nationalist Young Turks enforced measures to replace Arabs with Turks, and enforced administrative centralization.[15] It is asserted that it was not the experience of centuries of Ottoman rule, but the shortsighted and chauvinistic policies of turkification by the Young Turks that destroyed the bonds between Arabs and Turks and thus endangered the independence movement among Arab nationalists.[16]

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[13] Interview with Samir al-Taqi, Head of Orient Center for International Studies, Damascus, June 3, 2008

[14] Meliha Altunışık and Özlem Tür, *Turkey Challenges of Continuity and Change*, (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005), p. 91

[15] Aras and Köni, "Turkish-Syrian Relations Revisited", p. 52

[16] Jung, "Turkey and the Arab World", p. 4

According to the conventional historical understanding of this era, the harsh policies of Cemal Pasha, then ruler of Syria, against Arabs constituted a turning point in understanding of events. The cognitive map of Syrian Arab nationalism was shaped as anti-Turkish, and this feeling intensified over the question of the Sanjak of Alexandretta, over which the Syrian side has continued to claim rights of sovereignty, despite the fact that it remains in Turkish territory.[17]

Harsh policies aside, the Ottoman era was considered an era of decay in Arab historiography, and has been blamed for attempting to set barriers to the spread of enlightened Western ideas in the Arab regions.[18] In other words, Arab underdevelopment is linked to the centuries-long 'Ottoman imperialism'.[19] There is a tendency to present the Ottoman rule as the first part of an era of double imperialism comprised of Ottoman and later European colonial supremacy.[20]

Even though many decades have passed since its demise, the Ottoman Empire continues to function as the major point of departure in Arab-Turkish perceptions of each other.[21] For instance, during the 1998 crisis, the Ottoman Empire was recalled and an article in *al-Safir*, a Lebanon-based pro-Syria newspaper, claimed Turkey had a hidden agenda to restore the Ottoman Empire. The author also noted that October 1998 was the anniversary not only of the 1973 October War but the 75th anniversary of the foundation of the Republic of Turkey, and expressed hope that the anniversary would not turn into an excavation of old Ottoman anti-Arab politics.[22]

These perceptions affirm that the Syrian regime aimed not only to destroy the empire's image as historically acceptable to a majority of the Arab population in

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[17] See Keith D. Watenpaugh, ""Creating Phantoms": Zaki Al-Arsuzi, the Alexandretta Crisis and the Formation of Modern Arab Nationalism in Syria", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 28, 1996

[18] Aras and Köni, "Turkish-Syrian Relations Revisited", pp. 50-51

[19] Meliha Altunışık, "Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Dönemde Suriye'nin Dış Politikası: Değişime Uyum Çabası", in Mustafa Türkeş and İlhan Uzgel (der.), *Türkiye'nin Komşuları*, (İmge Yayınevi, Şubat 2002), p. 277; Altunışık and Tür, "From Distant Neighbors to Partners?", p. 231

[20] Jung, "Turkey and the Arab World", p. 4

[21] Jørum, "The October 1998 Turkish-Syrian Crisis in Arab Media", p. 160

[22] Ibid., p. 171

the Syrian lands, but to create a link between the previous Arab-Ottoman struggle and the later struggle between modern Syria and Turkey.[23] In short, a historical mutual mistrust nurtured through stereotypes has shaped modern Turkey and Syria's rather uneasy attitudes toward each other.[24] Although the historical baggage from the Ottoman Empire, especially its final years, played a major role in forming negative mutual perceptions, the relationship has been further marred by a legacy of territorial grievances, historic resentments, political tensions and mutual suspicions that neither Turkey nor its Arab neighbors have so far overcome.[25]

During the 1950s, in the midst of Cold War tensions, Turkey's role as the defender of Western interests in the Middle East, along with its developing relations with Israel formed one regional pole, while Syria's movement into the radical revolutionary and pro-Soviet camp in the Arab world, was associated with the other. This caused the two countries to view each other with intense suspicion and hostility. Relations further deteriorated, and on more than one occasion appeared to be drifting toward war.[26] In one instance, although Turkey had voted against the partition of Palestine at the UN General Assembly in 1947, it was also the first Muslim country to recognize the new state of Israel in 1949, to establish diplomatic relations with it, and to allow its Jewish citizens to emigrate there. Turkish membership into NATO in 1952 contributed to its anti-Arab reputation. Some Arab governments have been accused of exploiting religion and of willfully supporting hostile elements in order to threaten Turkey's national security, stability and territorial integrity. Arab failure to support Turkey over the Cyprus question has further added to a Turkish feeling of Arab hostility.[27]

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[23] Zisser, "Who's Afraid of Syrian Nationalism?", p. 188

[24] Carolyn C. James, Özgür Özdamar, "Modeling Foreign Policy and Ethnic Conflict: Turkey's Policies towards Syria", *Foreign Policy Analysis*, Vol. 5, 2009, p. 30

[25] Jung, "Turkey and the Arab World", p. 2

[26] See Philip Anderson, "'Summer Madness': The Crisis in Syria, August-October 1957", *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 1-2, 1995, Kushner, "Turkish-Syrian Relations", p. 229

[27] Jørum, "The October 1998 Turkish-Syrian Crisis in Arab Media", p. 162

It is argued that after the dissolution of the UAR (United Arab Republic) between Syria and Egypt in 1961, there was a turn toward accommodation in relations between Turkey and Syria. Hafiz Asad's coming to power in 1970 and his adoption of realistic and pragmatic policies was effective in this turn. According to Kushner, by this time, Syria and Turkey had put aside their confrontational attitudes and shown willingness to solve outstanding problems and establish good neighborly relations.[28]

However, although this confrontational era in the Middle East in general and between Syria and Turkey in particular had passed, some annoyances continued to plague relations. Since the 1960s, with the development projects based on water, there has emerged deep disagreement between the two over the appropriate usage of river waters. Then, since the 1970s, Syria began supporting terrorist organizations (ASALA and PKK) that were responsible for growing unrest in Turkey.

All diplomatic efforts toward resolutions proved fruitless, and the issues vital to the security and welfare of both countries served to deepen suspicions and hostilities. These same issues continue to be the source of the most strain between the two, at times dominating the agenda.[29] The territorial question, the Kurdish insurgency and the water problem have complicated an already uneasy relationship. The territorial question of Hatay[30] assumed a rather ideological nature, while the water issue[31] overlapped with the Kurdish problem and developed into a dangerous

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[28] Kushner, "Turkish-Syrian Relations", p. 230

[29] Ibid., pp. 230-233

[30] See Yücel Güçlü, *The Question of the Sanjak of Alexandretta, (A Study in Turkish-French-Syrian Relations)*, (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 2001); Avedis K. Sanjian, "The Sanjak of Alexandretta (Hatay): Its Impact on Turkish-Syrian Relations (1939-1956)", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 4, Fall 1956; Emma Jørum, "Right-sizing the State Territory: Syrian Policies towards Territory Lost, Lebanon and Iskandarunah 1946-2004", *Paper to be presented at the Fifth Pan-European International Relations Conference*, the Hague, September 9-11, 2004; Emma Jørum, "The Role of the Origin of the State: Understanding Current Syrian Policy towards Hatay" in Annika Rabo and Bo Utas (eds.), *The Role of the State in the West Asia*, (İstanbul: I.B. Tauris/Swedish Research, March 2006)

[31] See Ayşegül Kibaroğlu, *Building a Regime for the Waters of the Euphrates–Tigris Basin*, (London, The Hague, New York: Kluwer Law International, 2002); Özlem Tür, "Türkiye-Suriye İlişkileri: Su Sorunu" in Meliha Benli Altunışık (ed.), *Türkiye ve Ortadoğu Tarih, Kimlik, Güvenlik,* (İstanbul: Boyut Kitapları, 1999)

conflict in the 1990s.[32] This literature deals specifically with the historical roots of these issues, their disputed dimensions and efforts to solve them.

With the end of the Cold War, one of the debates within the literature was to understand changing Syrian foreign policy.[33] The changing relationship between Syria and Turkey took place within the context of a rapidly changing world.[34] This period is associated with some key turning points and negotiations. The first period was between 1987 and 1996. Relations zigzagged during this period in the sense that despite some agreements offering incentives to improve relations, these efforts always ended in frustration. Syria was accused of not responding to Turkey's claims after the agreements were signed.

During this period, we see various protocols, agreements and joint communiqués between the two sides. The first negotiation was held in Damascus in 1987, which resulted in the signing of security and economic protocols.[35] In 1992, a cooperation agreement was signed, and then in 1993, a joint communiqué was issued featuring both sides' assurances they would not to allow activity on their territories to cause harm to the other nation. In 1994, in response to the power vacuum in Northern Iraq after the Gulf War, the Turkish, Iranian and Syrian foreign ministers met and declared their unalterable opposition on the fragmentation of Iraq by the creation of an independent Kurdish state. Syria's only move up to this point had been a statement against the fragmentation of Middle Eastern countries. The years 1994-1995 also saw positive development in trade negotiations, but Syria's support for PKK terrorism in Hatay prevented further improvement in relations. In 1996, Turkey suspended all official contact with Syria because, despite Ankara's official request, Syria did not expel PKK leader Öcalan.[36] There was no official contact between them in 1995-1997.[37]

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[32] Jung and Piccoli, *Turkey At the Crossroads*, p. 143

[33] Altunışık, "Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Dönemde Suriye'nin Dış Politikası", Berna Süer, "Syria", in Mustafa Kibaroğlu (ed.), *Turkey's Neighborhood*, (Ankara: Foreign Policy Institute, 2008)

[34] Interview with Ömer Önhon, Ambassador of Turkey to Syria, Damascus, November 9, 2011

[35] See Appendix B

In 1998, relations reached their lowest point. It was a period of "undeclared war"[38], wherein Turkey began a series of campaigns against Syria. The two countries were on the edge of a militarized conflict, with a high possibility of full-scale war.

After the Adana Agreement was signed on October 20, 1998,[39] relations were restored and measures were taken to build confidence between the sides. This period was marked by tests of the extent of improvement. In 2000, Turkish President Ahmet Necdet Sezer's attendance of the funeral of Hafiz Asad was symbolically important, and is considered "a gesture"[40] triggering the process. The AKP's coming to power in Turkey in 2002 was an important turning point, solidifying the mindset of peace.[41] The transformation of relations between Turkey and Syria has been a prominent icon of the AKP's "zero problems with neighbors" policy.

In the literature, there is an ongoing debate about the 1998 crisis. On the one hand, this is discussed within the structural realist school, focusing on regional and international developments, and on the balance of power between Syria and Turkey. The discussion points to the end of the Cold War, the decline of the Soviet Union, the Arab-Israeli peace process, the slowdown of the Syrian economy, the increasing economic and military power of Turkey, and the emergence of the Turkish-Israeli axis have all changed the balance of power in favor of Turkey. In relation to the crisis in October 1998, Ankara seems to have abandoned its previous policy of appeasement and taken on an unprecedented assertiveness toward Damascus. This

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[36] Robert W. Olson, "Turkish and Syrian Relations since the Gulf War: The Kurdish Question and the Water Problem", in F. Ibrahim and G. Gurbey (eds.), *The Kurdish Conflict in Turkey: Obstacles and Chances for Peace and Democracy*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000)

[37] Interview with Uğur Ziyal, who was the ambassador of Turkey between 1995 and 1997 in Damascus, May 28, 2011, Ankara

[38] "Kıvrıkoğlu Sert", *Hürriyet*, October 14, 1998 (http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/1998/10/14/71891.asp)

[39] See Appendix C

[40] Interview with Ömer Önhon, Ambassador of Turkey to Syria, Damascus, November 9, 2011

[41] Although with the AKP government, changes in the Turkish foreign policy towards the Middle East are dramatic, certain changes have already begun during the tenure of Foreign Minister İsmail Cem (1997-2002), who improved Turkey's relations with her Middle Eastern neighbors.

change is to a great extent due to Turkey's changing perceptions and understanding of its security needs. Turkey's Middle Eastern policy, featuring new regional initiatives, provides a framework to help us understand the apparent change of heart of its foreign policy.[42]

On the other hand, some were dissatisfied by such explanations, asking why earlier Turkish threats did not result in Syrian capitulation, as with the 1998 crisis, given that the balance of power had already begun to favor Turkey by the early 1990s. The basic question is why Turkey did not achieve effective results in its 1992 and 1996 attempts.

In response, some focused on actors' perceptions, the cognitive states and preferences influencing the evaluation of options during the crisis. The literature based on realist assumptions barely delves into the perceptions of decision-makers, domestic policy issues and constraints on their framing and assessment of the crisis.[43]

In this research, both explanations have been given merit. The objective and subjective conditions of ripeness, as well as the dialectical relationship between them, have been included in order to explain these transformations.

4.3. Elusive Notion of Effectiveness / Success

The overall transformation process has been effective since the signing of the Adana Agreement on October 20, 1998. The heads of the Turkish and Syrian delegations, Ambassador Uğur Ziyal, Deputy Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Major General Adnan Badr Hassan, Head of Political Security, came together for a two-day negotiation in Seyhan, Adana, Turkey.[44] According to the agreement, Syria would no longer permit PKK activities, both countries would

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[42] See Ö. Zeynep Oktav Alantar, "The October 1998 Crisis A Change of Heart of Turkish Foreign Policy Towards Syria", *Les Chaiers d'études sur la Méditerranée orientale et le monde Turco-Iranien (CEMOTI),* No. 31, Jan.-Jun. 2001

[43] Yüksel Sezgin, "The October 1998 Crisis in Turkish-Syrian Relations: A Prospect Theory Approach", *Turkish Studies* Vol. 3, No. 2, 2002, p. 47

[44] For details see Murat Yetkin, *Kürt Kapanı, Şam'dan İmralı'ya Öcalan*, (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, Ekim 2004), pp. 104-107

cooperate to combat terrorism, and most importantly, Turkey acquired the right to establish a monitoring system to enhance the effectiveness of security measures.[45] According to Süleyman Demirel, this was Turkey's greatest diplomatic success in 25 years.[46]

Initially, Turkish officials reacted cautiously to the agreement, reportedly unhappy with the slow pace of Syrian implementation, particularly of the monitoring provisions. Additionally Lebanese cooperation has not been yet realized, and allegations of penetration by PKK militants into Syrian bureaucracy have been another concern for Ankara.[47] Nevertheless, the Adana Agreement was a diplomatic success on the part of Turkey, since it initiated a drastic change in Turkish-Syrian ties. In contrast to previous efforts, Syria observed the articles of the agreement, if slowly.[48] This is the primary indicator of the success. Even before this, Abdullah Öcalan, the leader of the PKK, had been ousted from Syria.[49] This had been Turkey's the most contended demand since the mid-1980s. Thus, in the short-term, Turkey was largely satisfied.

From the Syrian perspective, Turkey gave nothing in return for Syrian concessions. There was no discussion on the flow of the Euphrates River into Syria, nor did Turkey signal any willingness to engage with the Hatay issue. The crisis ended because of the Syrian government's capitulation.[50] Thus, in the short-term,

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[45] See Appendix C

[46] Interview with Süleyman Demirel, December 30, 2008 cited in Hulusi Turgut, *130 Günlük Kovalamaca, Abdullah Öcalan'ı Yakalamak için Üç Kıtada Sürdürülen Büyük Takibin Belgeseli*, (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, Mart 2009), p. 247

[47] See "Sezgin: Suriye ile Görüşme Olumlu", *Hürriyet*, October 21, 1998, http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=-43899, "Suriye, Denetim Güvencesi Verdi", *Hürriyet*, October 21, 1998, http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=-43897

[48] Özden Z. Oktav Alantar, "Turkish-Syrian Relations at the Crossroads", *Turkish Review of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 11, 2000-01, p. 160

[49] See "Suriye Yola Geliyor", *Hürriyet*, October 14, 1998, http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=-42720, "Suriye'ye Sokulmayacak", *Hürriyet*, October 14, 1998, http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=-42713

[50] Sezgin, "The October 1998 Crisis", p. 45

Syria gained nothing from this agreement. In this sense, the Adana Agreement was not balanced.[51]

In the long-term, for both Turkey and Syria, transformation process has been a real success. Today, there is "high-level strategic cooperation"[52] between the parties. The motto for bilateral relations is to "build the future together".[53]

When we look at observable facts, in September 2002, an annual danger assessment report by Turkey's National Security Council declared Syria was no longer a danger to Turkey. If Turkey had felt during the 1990s that Syria constituted a threat, this was no longer the case.[54] For instance, on April 29, 1997, terrorism was declared a threat at the forefront of Turkey's National Military Strategic Concept, which resulted in a call for applying political and economic sanctions, and even using force against Syria as a supporter of such threats.

For Syria, while the Turkish flag was a sign of enmity in the past, today it is a symbol of friendship.[55] Today's relationship between Turkey and Syria is healthy and based on "our destiny and geography". Good relations are considered to be the natural state, whereas the previous antagonistic relations which were abnormal.[56]

4.4. Contextual Variables

4.4.1. External Context

International and regional configurations are important for conflicts and the parties involved. Analysis of parties' positions within these contexts gives insight

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[51] Interview with Samir Ladkani, Damascus, October 30, 2010

[52] Agreement for High Level Strategic Cooperation Council was signed on September 16, 2009. The first meeting was held on October 13, 2009.

[53] Turkish Foreign Minister, Ahmet Davutoğlu's point in his speech at the First Ministerial Meeting of the Turkey-Syria High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council on October 13, 2009. http://www.turkishny.com/english-news/5-english-news/17125-turkey-syria-high-level-strategic-cooperation-council-convenes- (Accessed on February 10, 2011)

[54] Jørum, "The Role of the Origin of the State", p. 95

[55] Interview with Sami Moubayed, Political Analyst, Damascus, November 2, 2010

[56] Interview with Münir Ali, SANA, Damascus, November 7, 2010

about their conflict transformation efforts. A context like the Cold War in particular was a determinant for conflict perpetuation between Turkey and Syria, and today is understood as a constraint of transformation efforts. Thus, the end of the Cold War and its repercussions in the Middle East deeply affected the relations between Turkey and Syria. In this section, the question of how changes in the international and regional context affected the Turkish-Syrian conflict and its transformation is answered.

When we look at the Cold War years, Cold War politics largely framed relations between Syria and Turkey. The countries were attached to opposing camps and viewed each other through the prism of bipolarity. Owing to Turkey's membership in NATO, Syria perceived it to be looking for ways to reinforce not only its own interests but the interests of the Western Bloc in general at the expense of genuine Arab needs and interests. Turkey was the most important strategic threat to Syrian and Arab interests. In this sense, Turkey was perceived as a Western "tool" against pro-Soviet Syria[57] and a "colonial power" in the region.[58] Muhammad Muslih identifies the Syrian perception of Turkey during the Cold War as a Trojan horse through which Western imperialism infiltrated the Middle East in order to disrupt or weaken the defenses of states that disagreed with its policies. From the standpoint of Syria, Turkey was a gendarme deployed by the Western Bloc to exercise its influence over a turbulent geographic zone.[59]

Similarly, Turkey perceived Syria's Arab nationalism and instability as an opening for Soviet influence in the region.[60] Turkey had concerns about Syrian aspirations with Soviet support.[61] Thus the Syrian-Turkish border functioned as a

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[57] Interview with Thabet Salem, Journalist, Damascus, November 7, 2010

[58] Interview with Ibrahim Hamidi, Journalist, Al-Hayat, Damascus October 31, 2010

[59] Muhammad Muslih, "Syria and Turkey Uneasy Relations" in Henri J. Barkey (ed.), *Reluctant Neighbor Turkey's Role in the Middle East*, (Washington Institute of Peace Press, 1996)

[60] Altunışık and Tür, "From Distant Neighbors to Partners?", p. 232

[61] Interview with Münir Ali, SANA, Damascus, November 7, 2010

NATO-USSR border during this period.[62] This fact created a tension in both camps, and as a result, there was no way to normalize relations within this context.[63]

Turkey generally maintained a non-activist and low-profile posture in its approach to the Arab world during the Cold War years.[64] In other words, the Middle East was not a priority area in Turkish security calculations.[65] Turkey avoided involvement in inter-Arab disputes, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and other regional conflicts such as the Iran-Iraq War.[66] On the other hand, its non-activist policy went unquestioned; it was even accepted as normal since the Arab world was suspicious of Turkey's policies.

As the Cold War restricted relations between Turkey and Syria, its end brought opportunities for transformation, though these were not clear-cut, since they contained contradictory repercussions, which meant very different things to each country.[67] However, the most important opportunity for both was the chance to deal with their disputed issues directly and bilaterally, which was bound to eliminate some of the traditional "sting" in the relations.[68] A Syrian-Turkish conflict no longer carried the threat of escalation into a superpower confrontation.

Looking at each party individually, in Turkey, post-Cold War optimism was short-lived and soon replaced by uncertainty due to internal and external security challenges, as the end of the Cold War had raised fundamental questions about its role in the Western alliance. Furthermore, NATO's refusal to consider protecting Turkey from attack under Article 5 during the Gulf Crisis, and the EU's rejection of Turkish membership in 1997, created intense frustration leading to the questioning

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[62] Jørum, "The October 1998 Turkish-Syrian Crisis in Arab Media", pp. 162-163

[63] Interview with Merwan Kabalan, Dean of Faculty, University of Damascus, November 8, 2010

[64] One exception was Turkey's participation in the Baghdad Pact from 1955 to 1958.

[65] See Kemal Kirişçi, "Post-Cold War Turkish Security and the Middle East", *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 1, No. 2, July 1997

[66] Sabri Sayarı, "Turkey and the Middle East in the 1990s", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. XXVI, No. 3, Spring 1997, pp. 44-45

[67] Altunışık and Tür, "From Distant Neighbors to Partners?", p. 234

[68] Kushner, "Turkish-Syrian Relations", p. 231

of its Western orientation. Turkey was facing loneliness. Having for years been viewed as a valuable strategic asset in NATO's attempt to block Soviet expansionism, and having been assured of substantial Western support, it now experienced a sense of lost worth.[69] Altunışık argued that following the Cold War, uncertainty was the hallmark of international relations in the region, making policy formation difficult for Turkey.[70]

The Cold War's end dramatically altered the political landscape, leaving Turkey in the midst of zones of instability. In contrast to the Cold War era, Turkey became geopolitically unique country bordering several very different regions, each of which posed different kinds of security challenges.[71] The state redefined its strategy, identifying the Middle East as its number one source of threat.[72] It thus began searching for new challenges and roles in order to strengthen its position as an important regional power.[73]

For Syria, the era turned out to be one during which it could project an influence beyond its power, though at first it found itself in a strategically disadvantageous position. The disintegration of the Soviet Union and the end of bipolarity meant not only the end of Soviet aid to Syria, but also the disappearance of its room for maneuver.[74] Hafiz Asad had defined the collapse of the Soviet Union as its most significant event since independence.[75] The decline of a key source of political, military and economic support left it vulnerable to threat. In addition, the

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[69] Ibid., p. 230

[70] Meliha Benli Altunışık, "The Breakdown of the Post-Gulf War Middle East Order?", *Perceptions*, June-August 2001, p. 45

[71] Kirişçi, "Post-Cold War Turkish Security"

[72] Meliha Benli Altunışık, "Turkey's Middle East Challenges: Towards a New Beginning?", in İdris Bal (ed.), *Turkish Foreign Policy in Post-Cold War Era*, (Boca Raton, Florida: Brown Walker Press, 2004), pp. 363-365

[73] Kushner, "Turkish-Syrian Relations", p. 230

[74] Altunışık and Tür, "From Distant Neighbors to Partners?", p. 234

[75] See Special Document, "Interview with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. XXII, No. 4, Summer 1993

Soviet collapse strengthened the US position in the region, which increased the possibility of a direct American assault.[76]

The thrust of Turkey's response to the new situation was to pursue a more activist role in its border regions, like the Middle East. Robert Olson argued that the collapse of bipolarity in the early 1990s increased Turkey's opportunities for penetration of the indigenous states of the Middle East, the Balkans, the Caucasus and the Central Asian regions.[77] Also with the appearance of new Turkic and Muslim countries in the Balkans, Caucasus and Central Asia, Turkey emerged as a self-confident regional power playing increasingly influential roles in each.[78] One of the most important aims of Turkish foreign policy in the post-Cold War era has been to tackle external threats, which were perceived to have shifted from the north to the south and southeast of Turkey.[79] Thus, since the beginning of the 1990s, Turkey has become an actor in Middle East politics and perceived as such by regional actors, even though its initial involvement was almost completely based on security concerns and threat perceptions from the region.[80]

It is argued that Turgut Özal, Prime Minister from 1983 to 1989 and president until his death in 1993, played a central role in the formulation of activism in the Middle East. Özal believed Turkey could continue to be a valued ally to the West only by expanding its regional role and influence.[81] In the early 1980s, Özal enhanced bilateral relations with conservative Gulf Arab countries as well as with radical Middle Eastern states such as Libya, Iraq and Iran. He helped mobilize Turkish business interests in the region while attracting Arab capital to Turkey.

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[76] See Neil Quilliam, *Syria and the New World Order*, (Reading: Ithaca Press, 1999), Eyal Zisser, *Asad's Legacy Syria in Transition*, (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2001)

[77] Robert Olson, *Turkey's Relations with Iran, Syria, Israel and Russia, 1991-2000, The Kurdish and Islamist Questions*, (Mazda Publishers, 2001), p. 9

[78] Alan O. Makovsky, "The New Activism in Turkish Foreign Policy", *SAIS Review*, Winter-Spring 1999, http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/sais_review/v019/19.1makovsky.html (accessed on September 1, 2010)

[79] Mahmut Bali Aykan, "The Turkish-Syrian Crisis of October 1998: A Turkish View", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. VI, No. 4, June 1999, p. 174

[80] Altunışık, "The Breakdown of the Post-Gulf War Middle East Order?", p. 54

[81] Sayarı, "Turkey and the Middle East", p. 45

These economic relations grew quickly.[82] While it had previously pursued its foreign policy goals via the US, in the 1990s, it began to formulate its own, more active foreign policy toward the Middle East.

Syria, meanwhile, sought dialogue with the United States with the aim of finding a place in the new world and regional orders taking shape under US leadership. Asad needed to convince the US to accept Syria as the key to peace and stability in the Middle East.[83] In conjunction with this aim, the regime acted to improve relations with the Arab countries, especially Egypt and the Gulf states.[84] It then participated in the US-sponsored Madrid Peace Conference and the ensuing peace process.

The initial regional repercussion of the changes in the international context was the Gulf Crisis and the War (1990-1991). This crisis paved the way for a more active policy for Turkey and Syria in the region. Ankara and Damascus were allied temporarily in the US-led coalition against Iraq. Both countries benefitted from the alliance, although this did nothing to resolve the differences over the PKK and water issues. Some argue, however, that this development in relations during the Gulf crisis was premature and had the effect of reinforcing, rather than weakening, the trend toward accommodation and cooperation.[85]

Turkey's support for the allied coalition marked a radical departure from its established policy of non-involvement in regional conflicts and wars. By shutting off the twin pipelines that carried Iraq's oil exports and permitting US use of İncirlik airbase for strikes into Northern Iraq, it played a key role in the UN-backed military and economic campaign against Saddam Hussein's regime. The Gulf Crisis offered Turkey an opportunity to attain several important objectives, including expansion of its political role and influence in regional affairs.[86]

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[82] Kirişçi, "Post-Cold War Turkish Security"

[83] Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Raymond A. Hinnebusch (ed.), *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), pp. 157-158

[84] Zisser, *Asad's Legacy*, pp. 49-50

[85] Kushner, "Turkish-Syrian Relations", p. 231

[86] Sayarı, "Turkey and the Middle East", p. 46

For Syria, the Gulf Crisis provided an opportunity to openly support the new world order.[87] The regime, correctly reading the new strategic environment, used the crisis to reposition itself in the regional balance of power, leading to its participation in the US-led coalition against Iraq.[88]

Regarding the conflict between Turkey and Syria, the Gulf Crisis created an opportunity for the two capitals to establish a significant security protocol. In April 1992, top Turkish officials headed by Foreign Minister Hikmet Çetin, Interior Minister İsmet Sezgin and Gendarmerie Commander Eşref Bitlis met with Hafiz Asad, Foreign Minister Farouk Shara and top Syrian military officials.[89] A security protocol was negotiated, and its signing was described by Sezgin as "the most important protocol ever signed with Syria".[90]

Within this framework, bilateral relations were affected by these transformations, as well as by how the two countries envisaged their roles in this context. The shifting balance of power that emerged with the end of bipolarity led to Turkey and Syria's regional redefinitions.[91]

In fact, these redefinitions were not straightforward, and Turkey and Syria could not easily break out of their old framings. Syrian efforts to develop relations with Armenia, Greece, and Iran, for example, were considered by Turkey to be attempts to surround it. The Syrian military cooperation agreement with Greece in

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[87] Eberhard Kienle, "Syria, the Kuwait War, and the New World Order" in Tareq Y. Ismael and Jacqueline S. Ismael (ed.), *The Gulf War and the New World Order, International Relations of the Middle East*, (Uni. Press of Florida, 1994), pp. 384-385

[88] Altunışık and Tür, "From Distant Neighbors to Partners?", p. 232

[89] Robert Olson, "Turkey-Syria Relations Since the Gulf War: Kurds and Water", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. V, No. 2, May 1997, p. 170

[90] According to the security protocol: 1) both countries would cooperate against terrorism, "including its international form", and prevent terrorists from crossing from one country to the other; 2) neither country would give permission to any organization outlawed by the other to organize, train or make propaganda, and any captured member of an outlawed organization would be returned; 3) both would exchange information regarding outlawed organizations; 4) both would undertake measures to prevent infiltration and smuggling; 5) both would take measures to prevent "unnecessary" armed incidents on their borders; 6) in order to ensure this cooperation, security officials would meet every three months; 7) the Syrian declared that the PKK an outlawed organization in Syria and that many members of the PKK apprehended would be delivered to the respective judicial [Syrian] authorities.

[91] Altunışık and Tür, "From Distant Neighbors to Partners?", p. 235

1995, which supposedly allowed Greek aircrafts to land at Syrian air bases in the event of conflict with Turkey, deepened Ankara's concerns.[92]

The perception of threat from Syria contributed to Turkey's decision to sign a military agreement with Israel in April 1996, as each shared a common threat perception in relation to Syrian-sponsored 'terrorist groups'. Perceiving Israel as its archenemy, Syria felt threatened by the agreement, causing uproar in the Arab world at large.[93] Tacit support by the US for the agreement also contributed to Turkey's newly emerging policies in the region.[94]

From another perspective, however, some argue that the role of the Turkish-Israeli alliance was somewhat overestimated in the existing accounts. For instance, on October 1998, the Israeli government declared it had already ordered its troops on the Golan to pull back and canceled some military maneuvers along the Syrian border in order to refrain from sending the wrong signal to Damascus during the Turkish mobilization.[95] In fact, it became clear that Israel had no intention of fighting Syria on behalf of Turkey. Israel's declaration came at the expense of diminishing the credibility of Turkish coercion and thus encouraged Syria to transfer its 36 Scud-C missiles from the south and deploy them near the Turkish border on October 5.[96] Turkish-Israeli cooperation was also not a formal alliance, but a military cooperation agreement with a limited scope, and it did not play such a defusing or vital role in Turkey's escalation policy vis-à-vis Damascus during the 1998 crisis.[97] We can conclude that even though these military agreements did not directly target it, Syria perceived it as such. Additionally, when Turkey and Jordan began to develop their military relationship during the second half of the 1990s, the

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[92] Sezgin, "The October 1998 Crisis", p. 48

[93] See Ofra Bengio and Gencer Özcan, "Old Grievances, New Fears: Arab Perceptions of Turkey and its Alignment with Israel", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 2, April 2002

[94] Oktav Alantar, "The October 1998 Crisis", p. 161

[95] "İsrail Taraf Değiliz", *Hürriyet*, October 5, 1998, http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=-41385

[96] Sezgin, "The October 1998 Crisis", pp. 51-52

[97] Ibid., p. 52

Asad regime's sense of encirclement increased.[98] Although the Turkish government had begun to put enormous strategic and military pressure on Damascus, this hardly solved problems with Syria. In response, Syria and other Arab states typically took a unified stance against Turkey on various foreign policy issues.[99]

In conclusion, although the systemic factors altered radically, and although the parties tried to redefine their positions within it, there was continuity in the conflicting nature of the bilateral relations. Nevertheless, the disappearance of the bipolar rift exposed conflicts between them, elevating the security and water issues. Syria and Turkey were locked in a security dilemma and resorted to alliances to deal with it. However, each alliance decision caused greater insecurity in the other, resulting in a zero-sum game. Relations deteriorated following Turkish accusations of Syrian support to the PKK and Syria's criticism of Turkey's water policies. Locked in this zero-sum game, each country was occupied with efforts to balance threats.[100]

4.4.2. Contending Parties' Interrelationship: Power Relations

When we look at power relations first in terms of capabilities, Turkey appears at least three times more powerful than Syria during the 1990s according to the Composite Index of National Capabilities (CINC)[101]. In the "hierarchy"[102] of power, Turkey had the ascendancy. There was a "huge imbalance"[103] between Turkish and Syrian capabilities. Excluding military personnel, of which Syria had the half the number of Turkey, Turkey's iron and steel production, military

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[98] Altunışık and Tür, "From Distant Neighbors to Partners?", p. 235

[99] James, Özdamar, "Modeling Foreign Policy and Ethnic Conflict", p. 27

[100] Altunışık and Tür, "From Distant Neighbors to Partners?", p. 230, 236

[101] http://correlatesofwar.org/COW2%20Data/Capabilities/NMC_v4_0.csv

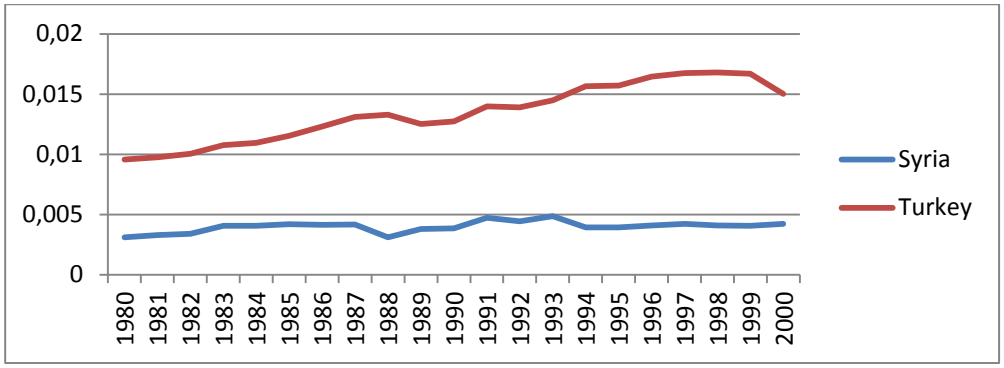
[102] Interview with Imad Fawzi Şuaybi, Damascus, June 11, 2008

[103] Interview with Samir Ladkani, Damascus, October 30, 2010

expenditures, energy consumption, and population were many-folds larger than Syrian rates.

In light of these facts, two questions need to be answered. One is to what degree this hierarchy served as the reason behind the conflict's transformation. The other is if power was a determinant, why did Turkey, being militarily and economically superior, let Syria bully it for so long?

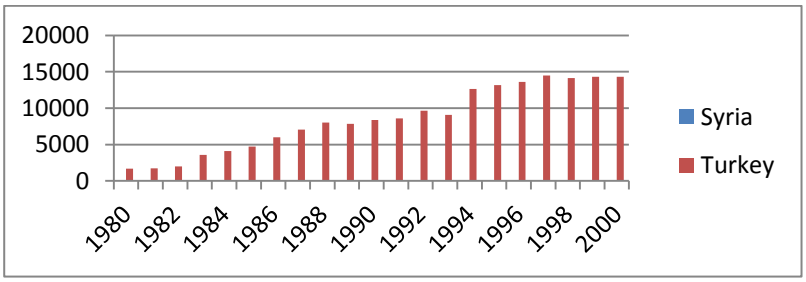
Figure 1: Composite Index of National Capabilities (CINC) Score of Turkey and Syria



Source: This graph was prepared on the basis of Correlates of War Project, *National Material Capabilities Data Documentation*, Version 4.0, Last Update Completed: June 2010 (http://www.correlatesofwar.org/)

Figure 2: Iron and Steel Production of Turkey and Syria

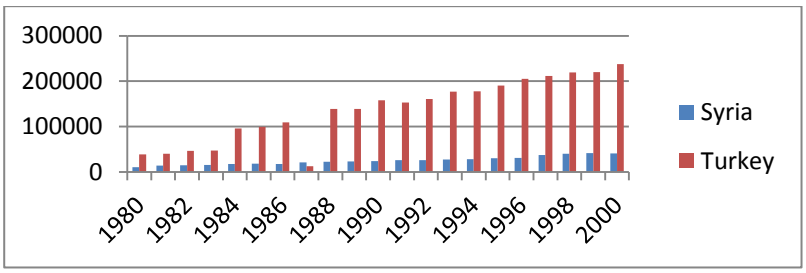
(Thousands of tons)



Source: Correlates of War Project, *National Material Capabilities Data Documentation*, Version 4.0

Figure 3: Primary Energy Consumption of Turkey and Syria

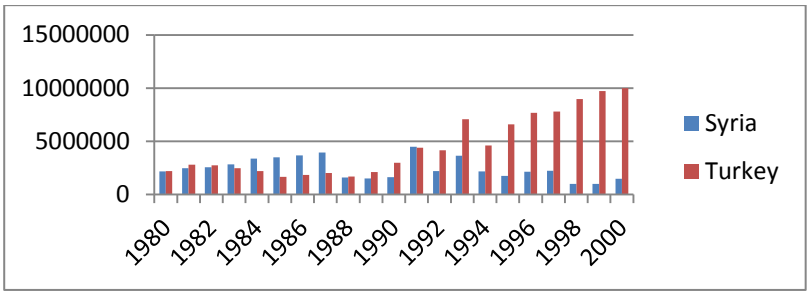
(Thousands of Coal-Ton Equivalents)



Source: Correlates of War Project, *National Material Capabilities Data Documentation*, Version 4.0

Figure 4: Military Expenditure of Turkey and Syria

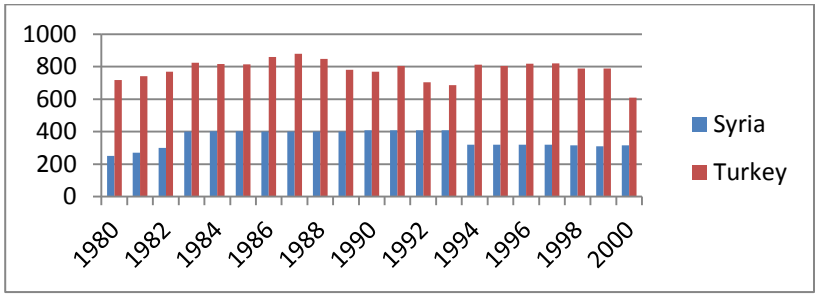
(Thousands of current year $)



Source: Correlates of War Project, *National Material Capabilities Data Documentation*, Version 4.0

Figure 5: Military Personnel of Turkey and Syria

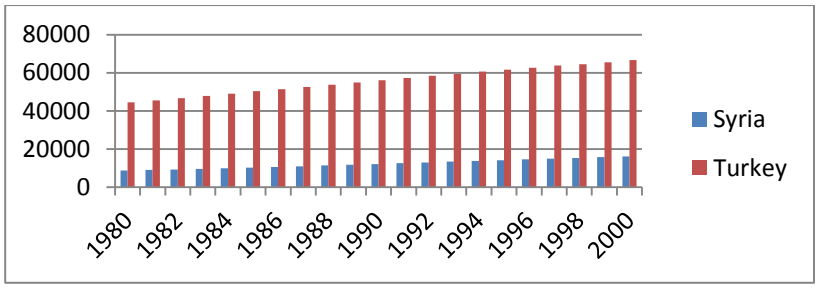
(Thousands)



Source: Correlates of War Project, *National Material Capabilities Data Documentation*, Version 4.0

Figure 6: Total Population of Turkey and Syria

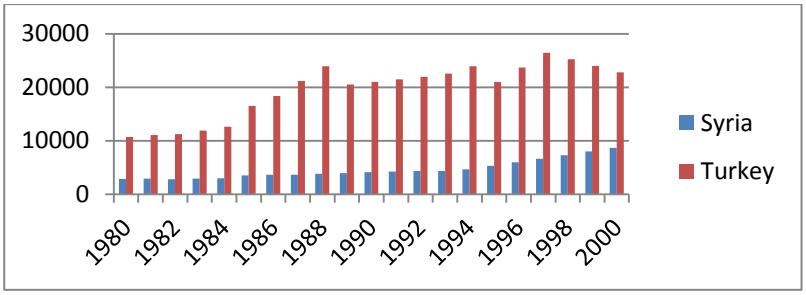
(Thousands)



Source: Correlates of War Project, *National Material Capabilities Data Documentation*, Version 4.0

Figure 7: Urban Population of Turkey and Syria

(Thousands)



Source: Correlates of War Project, *National Material Capabilities Data Documentation*, Version 4.0

It is argued that until the mid-1990s, the Turkish military did not have the capabilities to engage in an all-out war against Syria. An ill-planned attack on the PKK in Syria could yield little in the way of the destruction of PKK facilities; it could produce a persistent diplomatic migraine.[104] For instance, the need to modernize its army was one of Turkey's primary reasons for its enthusiasm to sign the military agreement with Israel in 1996.[105]

After the mid-1990s, the military balance began to favor Turkey more dramatically than ever, while Syria was in serious decline. Just before the crisis, this perception was beginning to take hold. The evidence was impressive: over the

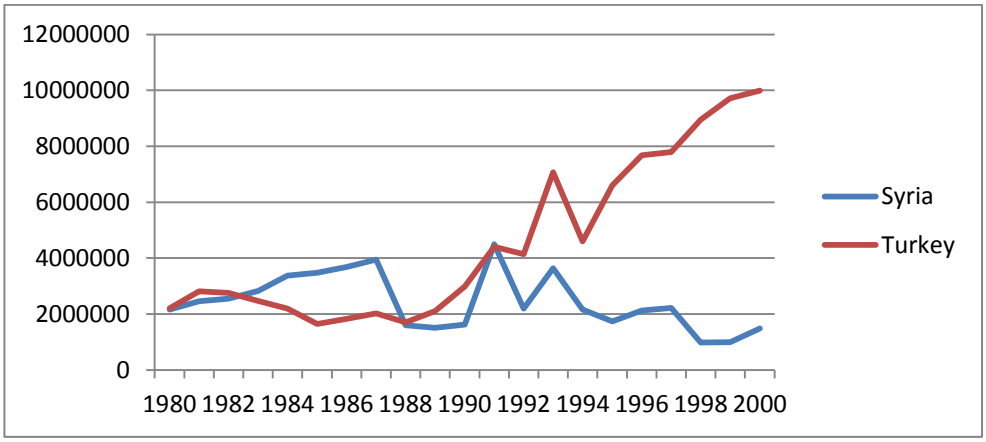
[104] Olson, "Turkey-Syria Relations Since the Gulf War", p. 176

[105] Altunışık and Tür, "From Distant Neighbors to Partners?", p. 236

course of the 1990s, Turkey had acquired the building-blocks to develop a modern armed forces. Its inventory included 200 F-16 fighter jets and nearly 1000 M-60 tanks. Turkish forces had also gained battle experience fighting the PKK both at home and in Northern Iraq. Moreover, its economy had been growing steadily and Ankara was earmarking some of that increasing prosperity toward arms procurement. Turkish expenditures on the military equipment more than doubled after the mid-1990s, as seen on the table below.

Figure 8: Military Expenditure of Turkey and Syria

(Thousands of current year $)



Source: Correlates of War Project, *National Material Capabilities Data Documentation*, Version 4.0

Turkish self-assurance was also a factor.[106] For instance, Turkish parliamentarians were not only convinced that Turkey had the right to self-defense and external intervention in its war against the PKK, but were confident of the success of such interventions. Despite frequent grievances, Turkish elites showed confidence in the country's international military connections: US surveillance planes provided the Turkish military with crucial intelligence support about guerilla movements in the region.[107]

[106] "Öğlen Şam'dayız", *Hürriyet*, October 7, 1998, http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=-41653

By contrast, Syria, hurt by the demise of the Soviet Union, from which it used to receive advanced weaponry on the easiest of terms, had done little to upgrade its inventory in the 1990s. It had only about 40 modern combat aircrafts, its ground forces were only half the size of Turkey's and were pinned down in Lebanon and the Golan Heights, and it had not fought a military engagement since Israel downed 86 of its MIGS in 1982.[108]

When we look at power relations in terms of projections of power, Turkey's military superiority over Syria was reinforced by its relationship with Israel. Ankara had received Israeli satellite intelligence about PKK sites in Syria.[109] Moreover, this cooperation was a strategic asset for Turkey in the eyes of the Syrian regime, and the latter was left feeling vulnerable – a "feeling of encirclement"[110]. Further, developments in the new world order fostered "Arabs' collective weakness"[111] alongside Turkey's increasing influence.

The absence of constraints on Turkish ambition was also relevant.[112] Two traditional constraints – the reaction of the Arab world and the peace-process-driven US reaction – were eased in 1998. First, Ankara had given up on the Arab world as a source of diplomatic support, although the Palestinian issue had retained some domestic and foreign policy resonance. As markets for Turkish exports, the Arab world was in both relative and absolute decline. In 1982, 45 percent of Turkish exports went to the Arab world; in 1997, this figure was only 11 percent. Ankara seemed decreasingly concerned about what Arabs thought.[113] In other words, the economic leverage that some Arab oil countries had had on Turkey lost its

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[107] Neophytos G. Loizides, "Elite Framing and Conflict Transformation", *Parliamentary Affairs*, 2008, p. 8

[108] Alan Makovsky, "Defusing the Turkish-Syrian Crisis: Whose Triumph?", *Middle East Insight*, January-February 1999

[109] Makovsky, "Defusing the Turkish-Syrian Crisis"

[110] Interview with Samir Ladkani, Damascus, October 30, 2010

[111] Bengio and Özcan, "Old Grievances, New Fears", pp. 62-63

[112] Pamphlet, "Turkey's Relations with its Middle Eastern Neighbors (1991-2000)", *Ankara Papers*, March 2003, p. 65

[113] Makovsky, "Defusing the Turkish-Syrian Crisis"

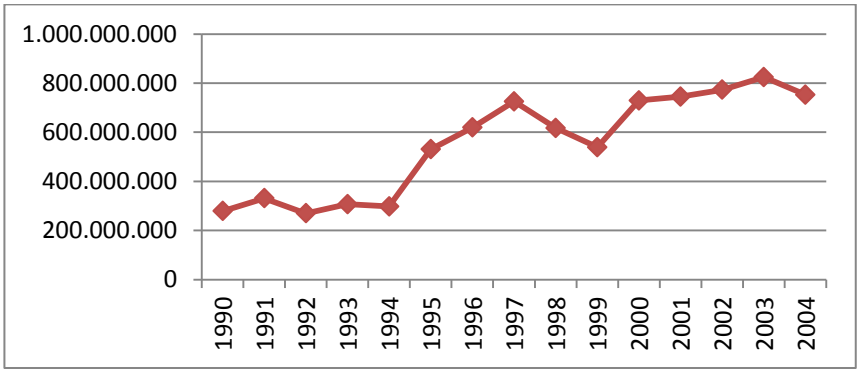
effectiveness.[114] In addition, the Arab Bloc, which Turkey faced at every turn, had dissolved to a great extent after the Gulf War.[115]

Table 2: Turkey's Trade Relations with Syria

Date	Export	Import	Balance	Trade Volume
1990	194.494.052	84.304.583	110.189.469	278.798.635
1991	264.207.178	66.853.816	197.353.362	331.060.994
1992	216.187.467	53.718.135	162469332	269.905.602
1993	238.831.581	68.465.964	170365617	307.297.545
1994	253.887.408	43.866.898	210020510	297.754.306
1995	272.162.345	258.101.304	14061041	530.263.649
1996	307.778.389	311.458.801	-3680412	619.237.190
1997	268.753.364	456.282.359	-187528995	725.035.723
1998	309.043.966	308.002.370	1041596	617.046.336
1999	232.209.821	307.001.311	-74791490	539.211.132
2000	184.266.734	545.239.568	-360972834	729.506.302
2001	281.141.191	463.475.682	-182334491	744.616.873
2002	266.771.540	506.247.231	-239475691	773.018.771
2003	410.754.941	413.349.362	-2594421	824.104.303
2004	394.782.934	357.656.434	37126500	752.439.368

Source: *The Turkish Statistical Institute*

Figure 9: Trade Volume between Turkey and Syria



Source: *The Turkish Statistical Institute*

Second, the lack of an active Syrian-Israeli negotiating track meant that the stakes of the peace process to Turkish-Syrian confrontation were low.[116]

[114] Bengio and Özcan, "Old Grievances, New Fears", p. 84

[115] Oktav Alantar, "The October 1998 Crisis", p. 161

[116] Altunışık, "Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Dönemde Suriye'nin Dış Politikası"

Interestingly, in the midst of the crisis, Syria had called publicly for a renewal of talks with Israel. To some extent, this initiative had its desired effect. US officials let it be known that they were unhappy with the Turkish role in creating, sustaining and escalating the crisis.[117]

The US did not want the October Crisis to escalate due to the risk of grave consequences to the Middle East Peace Process.[118] The US was concerned that the Turkish-Syrian crisis might delay peace-making between Syria and Israel; a front made up of Syria, Iran and Iraq could develop against the alliance of Israel, Jordan and Turkey. Such a delay might pave the way for Europe to interfere in the Middle East and weaken US regional influence. According to the US administration, Damascus would do its best not to lose its PKK card, and in the event of a Turkish military threat, Syria would resist Turkey.[119]

In conclusion, we can argue that power struggles between Turkey and Syria were influential during the time period in question, but were not a direct determinant of the transformation of relations. The effect was mixed, because although Turkey has one of the largest military capacities in the region, the military aspect remained a latent potential, since the use of force against Syria had been threatened but not engaged.[120] Nevertheless, Turkey's superior power was part of these calculations, which contributed to Syrian capitulation.

4.4.3. Issues in the Conflict: Interest-based Issues vs. Identity-based Issues

4.4.3.1. The Issue of Water

Because the Middle East lacks water, sharing water from the Orontes (Asi), Tigris (Dicle) and Euphrates (Fırat) rivers has been a perpetual concern. The

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[117] Makovsky, "Defusing the Turkish-Syrian Crisis"

[118] Oktav Alantar, "Turkish-Syrian Relations at the Crossroads", p. 163

[119] Oktav Alantar, "The October 1998 Crisis", p. 151

[120] James and Özdamar, "Modeling Foreign Policy and Ethnic Conflict", p. 30

problem dates to World War I; only after the demise of the Ottoman Empire did the flow of the rivers become a regional problem. From then, and until the 1960s, the protocols and agreements signed between Turkey and the ex-mandatory powers – France and Britain on behalf of Syria and Iraq – prevented conflict, since use of water was minimal.[121] This is why riparian relations between 1920 and 1960 can be characterized as harmonious.[122] The only exception was a dispute between Turkey and Syria in 1956, when Syria decided to build the Asi Dam. Turkish officials reacted with concern that the Syrian dam might deprive Turkish farmers in Hatay of necessary water resources. In this tense political atmosphere, Syria rejected Turkish initiatives to negotiate the water issue in a more comprehensive way, including the Euphrates.[123]

Technical consultations took place through the early the 1960s.[124] During the 1960s, use of Tigris and Euphrates waters emerged as an issue in bilateral relations. It was at this time that both Turkey and Syria embarked on projects to dam the two rivers for energy and irrigation purposes.[125] Upon the decision by Turkey to construct the Keban Dam on the Euphrates, a new phase in the relations began.[126] During this period, transboundary water issues were dealt with in the middle-range of economic and technical objectives, which were carried out by official technical delegations.[127]

The problem intensified on the Syrian side because of Syria's increasing demand for water, due to some subsequent agriculture-based export development programs. It is argued that the uncoordinated nature of these supply-led

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[121] See Ayşegül Kibaroğlu and I.H. Olcay Ünver, "An Institutional Framework for Facilitating Cooperation in the Euphrates-Tigris River Basin", *International Negotiation*, Vol. 5, 2000, Aras and Köni, "Turkish-Syrian Relations Revisited", p. 53

[122] See Ayşegül Kibaroğlu, "The Role of Epistemic Communities in Offering New Cooperation Frameworks in the Euphrates-Tigris Rivers System", *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 61, No. 2, Spring/Summer 2008, p. 185

[123] Jung and Piccoli, *Turkey At the Crossroads*, p. 144

[124] Kibaroğlu and Ünver, "An Institutional Framework", p. 312

[125] Altunışık and Tür, "From Distant Neighbors to Partners?", p. 232

[126] Kibaroğlu and Ünver, "An Institutional Framework", p. 313

[127] Kibaroğlu, "The Role of Epistemic Communities", pp. 185-187

developments, as well as inefficient and ineffective demand management practices within the framework of national water policy and management were principal causes of water imbalance in the Tigris-Euphrates river basin.

In particular, the nature of water relations has primarily been shaped by major development projects, especially Turkey's Southeastern Anatolia Project (GAP) and Syria's Euphrates Valley Project.[128] Within this framework, a number of riparian crises occurred during the 1980s and 1990s.[129] These revealed that the initiation of major development projects resulted in increasing demands on the waters of the river system, which in turn, exacerbated riparian tensions.[130] Against Syrian grievances about the GAP, Turkey argued that Syria was receiving more than sufficient quantities of water, and that the GAP was a blessing to Syria because it was assured a permanent water supply even when the river flow was low. Turkey conversely criticized the Syrian and Iraqi side for wasting considerable water, necessitating technical studies to determine the precise needs of each country.[131]

Yet the countries involved did not empower the Joint Technical Committee (JTC), which was established in 1980, instead continuing unilateral and uncoordinated water and land development projects.[132] According to Kibaroğlu, from the 1980s to the late 1990s, transboundary water issues moved into the realm of high politics when no-water issues became decisive factors leading to greater tensions and disputes.[133] In this regard, it is argued that the GAP project throughout

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[128] Kibaroğlu and Ünver, "An Institutional Framework", pp. 312-313

[129] One of the major crises occurred during the impounding of the Atatürk Dam in Turkey. On January 13, 1990, Turkey temporarily interrupted the flow of the Euphrates River in order to fill the Atatürk reservoir. Another crisis occurred in 1996 after Turkey began construction on the Birecik, an after-bay dam on the Euphrates River. See Kibaroğlu and Ünver, "An Institutional Framework", p. 319, Murhaf Jouejati, "Water Politics as High Politics: The Case of Turkey and Syria", in Henry J. Barkey (ed.), *Reluctant Neighbour: Turkey's Role in the Middle East*, (Washington, D.C.: US Institute of Peace Press, 1996), pp. 138-139

[130] Kibaroğlu and Ünver, "An Institutional Framework", p. 319

[131] Kushner, "Turkish-Syrian Relations", p. 233

[132] Kibaroğlu, "The Role of Epistemic Communities", p. 187

[133] Ibid., p. 187

the 1990s contributed politically to rising tensions with Turkey's neighbors, contrary to the expected de-escalation of the Kurdish question.[134]

Syrian decision-makers demanded an equal division of water on the grounds of the Tigris and Euphrates being international watercourses; they demanded a water-sharing agreement. Syria and Iraq contended that the amount of water allocated to each state should not be determined by one country alone, dependent on its goodwill. Rather, a framework of multiparty agreements between "partners" should be used to determine amounts based on each country's actual needs.[135] The Turkish side, on the other hand, defined the rivers as a trans-boundary body of water and argued for a riparian allocation system.

Syria and Iraq demand a trilateral agreement on sharing the waters, and indeed, representatives of the three countries have met several times for this purpose. These meetings have failed to extend beyond agreements over some technical problems. Iraq and Syria have an agreement on sharing the water allocated to them, but have failed to convince Turkey to accept their terms. One of the reasons for this was a failure of parties to reach consensus on the basic principles and norms that would sustain the negotiation process. A lack of regularized institutions and incomplete information were also factors.[136]

However, regarding the Orontes, of which Syria is an upstream country, Syria utilizes nearly all the water, releasing only small amount to Turkey. In addition, Damascus strongly criticized the Ankara's request to make an agreement prohibiting Syria from restricting the flow of the Orontes before it entered Hatay.[137]

Turkey has continuously opposed the division formula, pointing out that it releases enough water to Iraq and Syria, even offering them water from its own resources when river flow decreased in certain periods of the year. Ankara considers the Euphrates a cross-boundary waterway, defining international rivers as those that form a border between two or more countries. Therefore, it regards the

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[134] Jung and Piccoli, *Turkey At the Crossroads*, p. 144

[135] Kushner, "Turkish-Syrian Relations", p. 233

[136] Kibaroğlu and Ünver, "An Institutional Framework", pp. 319-320

[137] Oktav Alantar, "Turkish-Syrian Relations at the Crossroads", p. 154

Euphrates as an international waterway only after it joins the Tigris to form the Shattal-Arab, which serves as the border between Iraq and Iran. Kibaroğlu and Ünver argue that simply "sharing" the waters of the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers would by no means result in effective and equitable use among all parties, would not constitute a long-term response to water scarcity, nor would it serve the goals of sustainable use and management of available resources. Poor water use and management policies, a lack of crucial data relating to water and land resources, and inappropriate water supply networks suggest that the waters of the Tigris-Euphrates river basin should be allocated solely according to needs of each party within a comprehensive institutional setting.[138]

Within this framework, protocols signed by Turkey and Syria were unsatisfactory. For instance, through the Economic Cooperation Protocol of July 17, 1987, Turkey committed to release 500 cubic meters of water per second to Syria. This did not satisfy the Syrian side, which demanded 700 cubic meters per second for irrigation purposes. Accordingly, when the flow was reduced – with advanced warning – to 165 cubic meters per second in November 1991, this was interpreted as an act of hostility by the Syrian side.

The water issue touches on two key themes in the bilateral relations. The first issue is very much linked to the security issue between the parties. Secondly, the parties approach the issue as one not only related to their interests but to their sovereignty and identity.

The issues of water and security were linked in 1987 with the signing of the economic cooperation protocol. According to Kibaroğlu, this was a deviation from the official policy of Turkish authorities, particularly the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which had kept these issues separate[139]. The idea of issue linkage emerged because both security and economic protocols were signed during a single visit, and the security protocol's content was kept secret.[140] The 1987 protocol is noteworthy as the first security agreement containing the economic cooperation protocol that

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[138] Kibaroğlu and Ünver, "An Institutional Framework", pp. 327-328

[139] Kibaroğlu, "The Role of Epistemic Communities", p. 187

[140] B. Erdem Denk, "1987 Protokolü", *Mülkiyeliler Birliği Dergisi (Mülkiye Alumni Journal)*, Vol. XXI, No: 1, Feb. 1997, p. 31

was related to the water dispute. However, while the security provisions were general in character and made no mention of the PKK, the protocol openly revealed the relationship between the water question and PKK terrorism.[141]

The security protocol included provisions obliging both sides to prevent security offenses against the other from being planned within their borders, and to enable the extradition of individuals suspected of involvement in insurgent actions. Water and security became connected in this way following in 1987.[142] Water conflicts related to all trans-boundary river basins were known to be linked with other issues, but a linkage between terrorism and water was rare,[143] and strategically backfired, instead becoming an obstacle to conflict transformation as Asad turned the linkage back against Turkey.[144]

Viewed in terms of their sovereignty and identity, we can observe, for instance, how the construction of dams raised concerns about the future of water resources in Syria,[145] since Ankara offered only promises not to harm its neighbor's interests. Turkish leaders had avoided signing binding documents, as they did not want to be burdened with obligations toward its neighbors where water resources were very limited. Turkey claimed "absolute territorial sovereignty" over the waters until they reach the Syrian border.[146] Ankara's evasiveness persuaded Damascus that, especially with the completion of the GAP, Turkey would emerge as a major power in the region, and Ankara would take control not only both countries' water supplies but also their future development.[147]

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[141] Oktav Alantar, "Turkish-Syrian Relations at the Crossroads", p. 151

[142] Altunışık and Tür, "From Distant Neighbors to Partners?", p. 233

[143] Serdar Güner, "The Turkish-Syrian War of Attrition: The Water Dispute", *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism,* Vol. 20, 1997

[144] Denk, "1987 Protokolü", p. 32, See Zeynep Özden Oktav, "Water Dispute and Kurdish Separatism in Turkish-Syrian Relations", *The Turkish Yearbook,* Vol. XXXIV, 2003

[145] Syria always feared a drastic reduction in quality as well as quantity, due to Turkey's development project, the Southeastern Anatolia Project (GAP).

[146] Oktav, "Water Dispute and Kurdish Separatism", p. 97

[147] Damla Aras, "The Role of Motivation in the Success of Coercive Diplomacy: The 1998 Turkish-Syrian Crisis as a Case Study", *Defense Studies,* Vol. 9, No. 2, June 2009, p. 210

Syria therefore began pressuring Turkey to bring the issue into the international sphere, using historical Arab solidarity, international law, and the special position of Syria in the peace process. The Arab League and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) called upon Turkey to be more cooperative toward Syria and Iraq on the water issue.[148] For instance, in 1995, the six GCC countries, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt issued the Damascus Declaration, which strongly criticized Ankara's intention to build the Birecik Dam on the Turkish-Syrian border as part of the GAP Project.[149]

The water issue was clearly never simply a technical conflict. It was closely related to identity and sovereignty issues, such as the ideology of self-sufficiency,[150] full independence, and Arab nationalism. Within nationalist development policy, agriculture already represented an important constituency for the regime, whose influence further increased in the 1970s. For Turkey, the water development project was devised to remedy the unequal distribution of wealth and development in Southeastern Anatolia.[151] Within this framework, the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers became the backbone of water development.[152] As a result, for both parties, water was not only an economic commodity, but also a tool for development and component of power accumulation, that is, identity and sovereignty. Water was not only source of conflict between Syria and Turkey; other important political differences also separated them.[153]

[148] Aykan, "The Turkish-Syrian Crisis of October 1998", p. 175-176

[149] Oktav Alantar, "Turkish-Syrian Relations at the Crossroads", p. 153

[150] Jouejati, "Water Politics As High Politics", p. 132

[151] Altunışık and Tür, "From Distant Neighbors to Partners?", p. 233

[152] Kibaroğlu, "The Role of Epistemic Communities", p. 186

[153] Jouejati, "Water Politics As High Politics", p. 131

4.4.3.2. The Issue of Security

The issue of security between Turkey and Syria was based on the Syrian support for the PKK (Partia Kakaren Kurdistan – Kurdistan Workers' Party)[154]. The PKK, which was established in 1979 and began its armed struggle in 1984, has threatened Turkey's national unity and territorial integrity. The PKK has its roots both inside and outside the country. Inside, it has exploited Turkey's economically underdeveloped southeast region in an effort to carve out an independent Kurdish state. Outside Turkey, it has been working to extract various concessions from the Turkish state, with some support by its regional neighbors.[155] By the 1990s, the Kurdish issue had become increasingly defined through its external dimensions, particularly through the support it received from other countries.[156] According to Demirel, the list of PKK supporters was made up first of Syria, second Greece, then the Soviet Union and at finally Europe.[157]

Turkey believed Syria's policy to be partly based on its long-term interest in weakening Turkey in a way that might lead to break up and redrawing of borders, as well as partly on its wish to retain its trump card on the water issue.[158]

Syria's support for the PKK differed from that provided by other regional states. From the time Abdullah Öcalan first settled there in 1979, Syria provided the organization with financial, military and logistical support, hosting its headquarters and training camps.[159] After the 1980 coup d'état in Turkey, Damascus' relationship

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[154] For details see Pamphlet, "The Case of the PKK: History, Ideology, Methodology, and Structure (1978–99)", *Ankara Papers*, January 2004

[155] Aykan, "The Turkish-Syrian Crisis of October 1998", p. 175

[156] Altunışık and Tür, *Turkey*, p. 90

[157] Fikret Bila, "Süleyman Demirel Anlatıyor", *Komutanlar Cephesi*, (İstanbul: Detay Yayıncılık, Kasım 2007), p. 270

[158] Kushner, "Turkish-Syrian Relations", p. 237

[159] The PKK held its first congress in Syria on July 15-26, 1981. See "Sabrımızı Taşıran Nedenler, Hürriyet Özel Raporu Ele Geçirdi", *Hürriyet*, October, 8, 1998, http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=-41814

with the organization was consolidated. It helped with recruiting personnel and exerted influence on PKK strategy and tactics. According to Turkish intelligence officials, Damascus also provided 80 percent of the basic necessities of PKK camps in Northern Iraq.[160]

While Turkish officials suspected Syrian involvement in their country's domestic political problems since the mid-1970s, they had generally been muted in their criticism until the escalation of PKK activities in the 1990s, at which point Turkey named Syria its number one enemy because of its support for the PKK and its leader. The media began to openly denounce Syria and to urge the government to take more forceful measures against it.[161] However, the Syrians invariably denied Turkish accusations of state sponsorship of a terrorist group or its leader.

There were several reasons for Syrian support of the PKK. Although the primary concerns were interest-based, some were ideological. Syrian support was indirectly related to its special relationship with the Soviet Union. In the 1980s, as the Soviet Union's influence was waning, support of Marxist organizations in the region was a tactical move, and the PKK has a Marxist-Leninist identity. In fact, Syria's support for the PKK was concurrent with its own moves to restrict movement among its own Kurdish population,[162] who did not even have identity cards, and thus no civil rights.

Compared to the strategic gains related to PKK support, the identity-based reasons were weak. No resonant identity basing ties on ideology, religion, ethno-nationalism or kinship was predominant.[163] Syria's support of the PKK was not based on shared aspirations with the PKK, it was a strategic tool, and not the first organization Damascus used against Turkey. Syria had previously backed the ASALA (The Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia), who engaged in frequent assaults on Turkish diplomats and officials abroad during the late 1970s

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[160] Aykan, "The Turkish-Syrian Crisis of October 1998", p. 175

[161] Sayarı, "Turkey and the Middle East", p. 47

[162] "Turkey's Relations with its Middle Eastern Neighbors", p. 58

[163] Aras, "The Role of Motivation"

and early 1980s. The identity of the terrorists might have changed over the years, but the basic features of Syrian support were consistent.[164]

The PKK was thus a political card in the Syrian hand to be played against Turkey[165] motivated by the water issue and the question of the sovereignty over Hatay.[166] Aras and Köni identified the Syrian attitude toward the PKK as a "Trojan horse" strategy in the sense that it could be accessed by global and regional powers in Middle East politics.[167] In the face of a power asymmetry with its two neighbor, Syria took advantage of Turkey's Achilles' heel, the Kurdish problem. Damascus took the upper hand and found a position of strength[168] through "a proxy war" that forced Turkey to sit at the negotiation table and discuss water.[169] In other words, the PKK card granted Syria a kind of diplomatic competence that made up for its comparative militarily weakness.[170]

Despite their earlier reluctance to admit a linkage between Syrian support for Kurdish separatism and the water issue, in the 1990s many Turkish officials began to articulate this observation. Former Foreign Minister Deniz Baykal reflected prevailing Turkish opinion when he said: "Some circles may claim that they need additional water to wash the blood of terrorism from their hands."[171] Such an approach served to further complicate the conflict.[172]

However, when Turkish officials asked Syrian authorities to oust Abdullah Öcalan from Syria, the request was refused. Yet Asad counterattacked, contending

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[164] Kushner, "Turkish-Syrian Relations", p. 235

[165] Interview with Hala Barbara, Law Consultant, Damascus, November 1, 2010

[166] Turgut, *130 Günlük Kovalamaca*, p. 231

[167] Aras and Köni, "Turkish-Syrian Relations Revisited", p. 54

[168] Oktav Alantar, "The October 1998 Crisis", p. 142

[169] Interview with Samir al-Taqi, Head of Orient Center for International Studies, Damascus, June 3, 2008

[170] Yetkin, *Kürt Kapanı*, p. 104

[171] Sayarı, "Turkey and the Middle East", p. 48

[172] Güner, "The Turkish-Syrian War of Attrition"

that Turkey was supporting the Muslim Brotherhood, an outlawed organization in Syria.[173]

As Turkey's threats gradually increased, it became difficult for Syria to fight on behalf of Kurds. The PKK was a Kurdish and Leftist party, and Syria no longer wanted to pay a price for a non-Arab, Kurdish and Leftist party. Compared, for example, to Khalid Mashal, a Hamas leader living in Damascus, there was no real public opposition among Syrians over Öcalan's expulsion.[174] Furthermore, the PKK's agenda was not related to Syria,[175] making it even easier for it to abandon its support for the organization.

We have shown how Syrian support for the PKK was interest-based. It had begun as Leftist ideological support, but was ultimately a "playing card" in Syria's strategy against Turkey.

4.4.3.3. The Issue of Territory

The dispute between Turkey and Syria over the province of Hatay, which was the Sanjak of Alexandretta under the French Mandate and called *liwa al-Iskenderun*, has deep roots. The dispute largely traces its history to the First World War.

A French-Turkish treaty signed on October 20, 1921, the Franklin-Bouillon Agreement, rendered the Sanjak of Alexandretta autonomous,[176] and it remained so from 1921 to 1923. In 1923 the Sanjak was attached to the State of Aleppo[177], and in 1925 it was brought under the French Mandate of Syria with special administrative status.

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[173] Turgut, *130 Günlük Kovalamaca*, p. 221

[174] Interview with Ibrahim Hamidi, Journalist, al-Hayat, Damascus, June 3, 2008

[175] Interview with Samir al-Taqi, Head of Orient Center for International Studies, Damascus, June 3, 2008

[176] France made a generous offer to Turkey in the Ankara Agreement, which not only gave special privileges to the Turkish element in the Sanjak but also established a special regime there.

[177] Sami M. Moubayed, *The Politics of Damascus 1920-1946 Urban Notables and the French Mandate*, (Damascus: Tlass House, 1999)

The dispute over the Sanjak of Alexandretta was occasioned by the signing of the Franco-Syrian Treaty of Alliance of September 9, 1936, which guaranteed the independence and sovereignty of Syria within three years.[178] Before the treaty was ratified, Turkey re-opened the Alexandretta problem.[179] By the conclusion of the Franco-Syrian Treaty, however, the Turkish Government expressed its anxious concern about the security of the Sanjak's Turkish population, which it claimed was to be the preponderant majority. It demanded the Sanjak's independence, mindful of France's political and military weakness, as well as the deteriorating international situation of the moment. Turkey considered Franco-Syrian rule of the Sanjak of Alexandretta "tyranny".[180]

The Turkish authorities raised the problem yet again at the Council of the League of Nations. Direct negotiations between Turkey and France began on October 10, 1936. According to "the statute and Fundamental Law" adopted at the League of Nations on May 29, 1937, the Sanjak was to be autonomous with a legislative assembly representing various elements of the population. This new status was characterized as "a collective protectorate" in the sense that protection against foreign attack was assigned to Turkey and France, foreign relations to Syria, and the mandatory supervision not to a mandatory power but made the direct responsibility of the league through its commissioner.[181] The decision had a wide range of repercussions on the various concerned parties. Arnold Toynbee remarked that it was hailed with jubilation in Turkey, with relief in France and with mortification in Syria.[182]

In 1938 an ethnic census, which had been laid down in the league's previous decision, was initiated by French authorities under international supervision. The constituencies were not divided along geographical lines, but on racial and religious divisions, and the results decided the partition of seats in the Sanjak assembly: out

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[178] For the details see Moubayed, *The Politics of Damascus*, pp. 115-120

[179] Majid Khadduri, "The Alexandretta Dispute", *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 39, No. 3, July 1945, p. 409

[180] Ibid., p. 410

[181] Ibid., p. 419

[182] In footnote 38 of Khadduri, "The Alexandretta Dispute", p. 418

of 40 seats, 22 went to Turks, 9 to Alawi Arabs, 5 to Armenians, 2 to Sunni Arabs, 2 to Greek Orthodox.[183] On September 2, 1938, the Assembly opened, and at the first meeting, the Sanjak's name was changed to Hatay, and the state came to be known as the Republic of Hatay.

Finally, on June 23, 1939, a new agreement was signed with France, who, in prioritizing its own security in Europe, formally gave up its rights over Hatay in exchange for Turkish promises not to seek additional Syrian territory and to respect the Syrian border. On July 29, 1939, the parliament of the new Republic of Hatay declared the union of the Republic of Hatay with the Republic of Turkey.[184]

The Second World War prevented further convening of the organs of the league, and the question of France's right to cede the Sanjak could no longer be pursued by Syria at an international level.[185] However, Syrian bitterness over the French Mandate's dispossession of the Sanjak continued to bolster its determination not to acquiesce to this loss. It is argued by Arabs that while it had been within France's purview, with the approval of the council, to affect a change in the autonomous regime of the Sanjak, a new modification of Syrian boundaries was outside its powers since it directly affected the terms of Article 4 of the Mandate for Syria and Lebanon, which had laid down that "the Mandatory shall be responsible for seeing that no part of the territory of Syria and the Lebanon is ceded or leased or in any way placed under the control of a foreign power." For Arabs, "the cession of the Sanjak of Alexandretta" by agreement between France and Turkey on the sole authority of the Mandatory Power was a violation of the decision of the League of Nations.[186] However, the council had remained silent on the issue, and the French argued that the borders of the traditional Syrian territory were not precisely known.

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[183] Güçlü, *The Question of the Sanjak of Alexandretta*, p. 236

[184] Roberta Micallef, "Hatay Joins the Motherland", in Inga Brandell, *State Frontiers, Borders and Boundaries in the Middle East*, (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2006), pp. 144-145

[185] According to Moubayed, "Syria had paid the price for France's fortification, and as the war in Europe dragged on over the next seven years, she was eventually bound to pay it for France's battle and liberation as well." Moubayed, *The Politics of Damascus*, p. 132

[186] Khadduri, "The Alexandretta Dispute", p. 424

According to Arabs, the final step in the settlement of the Alexandretta dispute had been decided on political rather than on legal grounds.[187]

Shortly thereafter, a Syrian counter-irredentist movement took shape against the unification of Hatay with Turkey. The Syrian press actively campaigned for the restitution of the 'Arab' district of Alexandretta, which they claimed had been "wrested from Syria". It urged the Syrian and other Arab delegation at San Francisco to fight for its recovery during the 1945 United Nations Conference on International Organization.[188] The Committee for Defense of Alexandretta, moreover, appealed to the Arab League to raise the issue in the international sphere as well.

Following negotiations between Turkish Foreign Minister Hasan Saka and his Syrian and Lebanese counterparts, the Syrian and Lebanese Governments issued a joint communiqué on August 8, 1945 explicitly specifically refusing to renounce Syria's rights to Alexandretta as the price of Turkey's recognition of their independence.

After the full independence of Syria in 1946, the Turkish government insisted on formal Syrian recognition of Hatay as part of Turkey but the Syrian government continued to recognize the unification as *ultra vires*. The situation was further aggravated by numerous demands from Syrian organizations for the unequivocal restitution of the territory to Syria over the following few months. This impasse was finally circumscribed when Turkey consented not to insist on formal recognition, and Syria agreed not to present formal demands.[189]

While Syria has neither recognized the loss of Hatay, nor has the issue made it to the top of the national agenda, and since 1939 it has not attempted to recapture the province.[190] Nevertheless, the question of whether or not Syria has made formal

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[187] Ibid., p. 425

[188] See Moubayed, *The Politics of Damascus*, pp. 198-201

[189] Avedis K. Sanjian, "The Sanjak of Alexandretta (Hatay): Its Impact on Turkish-Syrian Relations (1939-1956)", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 4, Fall 1956, p. 383

[190] Emma Jørum, "European Territorial Legacy: Syrian Policies towards Lebanon and Hatay/liwa' Iskandarunah, Lebanon and Iskandarunah 1946-2004", *Conference Paper at the Sixth Nordic Conference on Middle Eastern Studies,* Copenhagen 8-10 October 2004-09-15, p. 3,

attempts to reclaim Hatay is less significant than whether or not it is still considered part of Syria in the national imaginary.[191] With the exception of the government of Commander in Chief Hosni Zaim, who ruled Syria in 1949, no Syrian government has recognized the legitimacy of the present border between Syria and Hatay.

Even though the dispute was largely overshadowed by the impact of First World War II and then the 1948-49 Arab-Israeli War, the Hatay question remained a point of tension in Turkish-Syrian relations. The tension peaked during the reign of Syrian Army Chief of Staff Adib Shishekli (1951-1954), whose maps of an 'Arab Homeland' to be liberated included not only Hatay but also a considerable amount of additional Turkish territory.[192] On November 29, 1954, Syrian students observed the anniversaries of the UN decision to partition Palestine and of the loss of the Sanjak to Turkey together, and Syrian editorials denounced the foreign powers for their role in both affairs.[193]

With Hafiz Asad's coming to power in the early 1970s there was a clear shift in Syrian policy toward Hatay. Although the area remained on Syrian maps, there has been no verbal claim to the area since 1970, and in 1972 the annual 29th of November Occupied Alexandretta demonstrations were also banned.[194]

Why does this territory continue to be a source of dispute between Syria and Turkey? One reason is that the unification of Hatay with Turkey underlined Syrian feelings of victimization over what were perceived as 'Western imperial designs' in the region. It viewed Hatay as "stolen territory, grasped by force by Turkey and then in the whole event Syria was cheated".[195] The Hatay issue was also perceived by Syrian nationalists as a sign of the threat of Turkish expansionism, as "Turkey

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http://www.diis.dk/graphics/Events/2004/Middle_East/EmmaJorum.pdf (accessed on August 31, 2010)

[191] Jørum, "European Territorial Legacy", p. 5

[192] Jørum, "The Role of the Origin of the State", p. 92

[193] Sanjian, "The Sanjak of Alexandretta", p. 388

[194] Jørum, "The Role of the Origin of the State", p. 92

[195] Interview with Michel Kilo, intellectual and civil society activist, Damascus, 11 October 2004, cited in Altunışık and Tür, "From Distant Neighbors to Partners?", p. 219

being the occupier of Arab lands for four centuries was now taking Hatay". Before Palestine came into the picture, Hatay was the main issue through which the regime exhibited nationalism.[196] Although, the Hatay issue was pushed onto the backburner after the establishment of Israel, and especially after the 1973 War, its representation as part of Syria on official maps and in popular culture have continued.[197]

A related issue is about defining national territory. Emma Jørum claims that Syrian policy toward Hatay over time has been an illustration of an ongoing process whereby the Syrian state, which has had its borders drawn by outside powers, establishes and defines its national territory. This process consists of simultaneous internal and external state-making: internal through territorial integration, state- and nation-building, and external through the protection of borders, negotiations and militarized attempts to conquer or liberate territory. Thus, social and political changes are often reflected in perceptions of and attitudes toward borders.[198]

During the 1998 crisis, the question of Hatay resurfaced in the Syrian press. However, this time the claims appeared in the newspapers of other Arab countries, not in Syrian papers. Several of these carried an interview with Syrian Information Minister Muhammad Salman, in which he stated: "Syria will not renounce its rights…the Iskandarunah question is a national cause on which one cannot make concessions".[199] In another incident, in March 2000 at the Berlin International Tourism Fair, the Syrian representatives distributed maps that included Hatay within Syria's borders. While the Turkish-Syrian borderline was drawn as a national border, the area encapsulating Hatay was drawn by a line indicating a temporary border. On smaller maps showing important touristic and historical sites in Syria, Hatay was also placed within Syrian boundaries. The explanation of the Syrian authorities regarding these maps was not based on territorial illegitimacy, but on the

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[196] Watenpaugh, "Creating Phantoms"

[197] Altunışık and Tür, "From Distant Neighbors to Partners?", p. 231, Muslih, "Syria and Turkey Uneasy Relations", p. 115

[198] Jørum, "The Role of the Origin of the State", p. 97

[199] "Suriyeli Bakan: Hatay'dan Asla Vazgeçmeyeceğiz", *Hürriyet*, October, 20, 1998, http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=-43723

fact that people on both sides of the border were related, and the region had strong historical links with the rest of Syria.[200]

In conclusion, although there is a modicum of acceptance of the unification of Hatay with Turkey, for the Syrian authorities and public it is "sad Iskenderun".[201] Under Ba'th ideology, the issue is presented through exclusively identity-based concerns.

On the whole, Syria perceived Turkey to have unjustifiably taken control both of Hatay and the flow of the Euphrates River. Meanwhile, Turkey perceived Syria to be simultaneously grabbing for territory and water rights through mean that included state sponsorship of terrorism. Syria, which perceived the Turkish assessment as groundless, believed the accusations served two purposes: as an excuse to refuse its water demands and to convince it to abandon its territorial ambitions for Hatay.[202]

4.5. Process Variables

4.5.1. Actors

4.5.1.1. Third Parties

In the conflict transformation process, regional third parties played the roles of facilitator and the pure mediator. These were Egypt and Iran. Before looking at their active roles the initial question is how the West in general and the US in particular acted regarding the conflict.

First, Ankara was aware that it must acquire the understanding of the international community regarding its posture toward Syria. By the Turkish calculation, if the crisis escalated to use of force, Turkey's attempt to join the EU and its relationship with the US might become vulnerable. Furthermore, a failure of coercive diplomacy could risk a more general loss of prestige in the domestic and

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[200] Micallef, "Hatay Joins the Motherland", p. 141

[201] Interview with Muhammad Habbash, MP in the Parliament, Damascus, May 29, 2008

[202] Güner, "The Turkish-Syrian War of Attrition", p. 109

international arenas. Ankara thus took steps to explain its views before international bodies, such the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Arab League. It also tried to secure the backing of its NATO allies, as well as the support of the UN, which subsequently became a forum for fierce competition between Turkey and Syria to attract international sympathy.[203] Ankara was anxious about Syria's efforts to turn the crisis into an Arab-Turkish issue, which is why it made diplomatic approaches to the representatives of Arab countries in particular. Foreign Minister İsmail Cem sent letters to his Arab counterparts, in which he explained Ankara's stance on the PKK issue and asserted that Syria was disseminating deceptive information regarding Turkey.[204]

Despite its efforts, Turkey received little positive support for its position from these organizations. The statement issued by the members of the Arab League to the UN denouncing Turkish threats and warning Ankara to conduct a dialogue with Damascus proved Ankara's anxieties not to be baseless.[205] In agreement, Mubarak, as part of his mediating efforts, asserted that the Arab public was biased because Arabs believed Turkey's assertive policies were supported by Israel.[206]

Nevertheless, Turkey gained the expected assistance from the US. Washington had long classified the PKK as a terrorist organization and demanded that Syria cease to operate as a safe haven for terrorists.[207] Yet Washington had mixed feelings about Turkey's attempt at coercive diplomacy. It had been hoping for a positive result from the ongoing high-level Middle East peace talks, for which Asad's cooperation would be essential. The Clinton administration did not demand Syrian defeat at Turkey's hands; it sought to defuse the crisis. Clinton's message to President Demirel via American Ambassador to Turkey Mark Parris was: "I have

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[203] Yetkin, *Kürt Kapanı*, p. 78

[204] http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/h.php?news=kharrazi-asks-syria-if-ocalan-is-worth-war-1998-10-10 (Accessed on May 27, 2011)

[205] Oktav Alantar, "The October 1998 Crisis", p. 144

[206] See Ek-4, Minutes of the Meeting with Egyptian President Mubarak in Ankara, in Turgut, *130 Günlük Kovalamaca*, p. 268

[207] See "ABD: Suriye'yi PKK için Çok Uyardık", Hürriyet, October 6, 1998, http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=-41545

great concerns regarding tension between Turkey and Syria".[208] Washington publicly sided with Ankara but sent a letter to Syria urging it to expel Öcalan.[209]

Washington also encouraged Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to take a leadership role, and he enthusiastically took up the challenge with an intense round of shuttle diplomacy between Turkey and Syria. Presidents Demirel and Mubarak[210] deserve much of the credit for their roles in changing the course of the crisis. Demirel succeeded in convincing Mubarak of Turkey's determination to attack Syria.[211] And Mubarak, who visited Damascus and Ankara to mediate, and hosted Asad in Cairo shortly thereafter, helped convince the Syrian president of the Turks' seriousness about taking military action, and that the Arab world would not support it in the case of war with Turkey.[212] Mubarak succeeded only after two mediation visits to Damascus on October 4 and 6 and Asad's crisis-related visit to Cairo a few days later. This mediation greatly helped Asad to reframe the situation and re-evaluate the possibility of a military confrontation, which it had not taken seriously prior to Mubarak's intervention.[213]

Egypt had several motivations, with the most important being a concern for protecting Arab interests. Egypt felt Israel would be the only victor in a war between Turkey and Syria. Mubarak had expressed concern that such a war would become a war between Turkey and the whole Arab world.[214] According İsmail Cem, the idea behind Egyptian and Iranian mediation was to demonstrate their leadership in the Arab world or Islamic world.[215]

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[208] Turgut, *130 Günlük Kovalamaca*, p. 244

[209] Ibid., p. 245, Aras, "The Role of Motivation", p. 218

[210] "Mübarek Devrede", *Hürriyet,* October 4, 1998, http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=-41184

[211] Aras, "The Role of Motivation", p. 218

[212] Interview with Uğur Ziyal, Retd. Ambassador, Ankara, May 28, 2011

[213] Sezgin, "The October 1998 Crisis", p. 56-57

[214] See Ek-4, Minutes of the Meeting with Egyptian President Mubarak in Ankara, in Turgut, *130 Günlük Kovalamaca*, p. 265

[215] See Yetkin, *Kürt Kapanı*, p. 83

Although Turkey did not seem enthusiastic about Mubarak's mediation, Egypt's involvement benefitted Turkey by increasing the impact of its diplomacy. In the end, Turkish officials expressed they had welcomed President Mubarak's mediation efforts because they wanted international attention focused on Syrian support for the PKK. They had also wanted a diplomatic solution to the problem.[216]

Mubarak took pains to explain to the Syrian leadership that the Turks were not bluffing, and that both the Arab world and Syria would be the losers in their struggle with Israel in the event of Turkish military intervention.[217] Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa proposed President Demirel hold a meeting to discuss security issues between Turkey and Syria after he relayed the message that Öcalan had been ousted from Syria on October 12, 1998.[218]

Thereafter, Asad began to take Turkish threats more seriously and sent a message to the Turkish government on October 13 via Iranian Foreign Minister Kharrazi signaling that he would surrender to Turkish demands. Thus, Syria's most important ally, Iran, also acted as a facilitator between the two countries, and it was Tehran that broke the news to Ankara that Damascus was ready to comply with Turkey's demands.[219] Although Kharrazi had participated as a mediator because he held the term presidency of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) at the time, we cannot ignore the fact that Iran has been an important regional ally of Syria, and this had some degree of impact on its effectiveness in the mediator role.

Although Egypt and Iran paved the way for Syria and Turkey to understand each other's claims and to reframe their conflict and thus "reduce the tension"[220] and "diffuse the crisis"[221], "bilateral parties did everything".[222] We should thus

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[216] http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/185992.stm (accessed on May 23, 2011)

[217] Aykan, "The Turkish-Syrian Crisis of October 1998", p. 178

[218] Turgut, *130 Günlük Kovalamaca*, p. 160

[219] Aras, "The Role of Motivation", p. 218

[220] Interview with Ibrahim Hamidi, Journalist, al-Hayat, Damascus, October 31, 2010

[221] Interview with Marwan Kabalan, Dean of Faculty, University of Damascus, Damascus, November 8, 2010

[222] Interview with Sami Moubayed, Political Analyst, Damascus, November 2, 2010

understand their domestic political structure in general and the attitudes of authoritative decision units in particular, as well as their potential roles in the conflict transformation.

4.5.1.2. Parties of the Conflict and Their Domestic Structures

In this research, it is asserted that the course of relations between Turkey and Syria was perhaps mostly influenced by the domestic structures of each party in general and the attitudes and perceptions of the authoritative decision units in particular. We know that both sides' governments and elite institutional leaders had been locked into a vision shaped by historical enmity, mutual negative images, established ideologies, and policymakers' attempts to externalize the sources of major domestic problems. This situation prevented any constructive attempt to discuss problems.[223] Thus any cooperative change in their bargaining positions was inherently related to their domestic, economic and political policies and concerns.[224]

When we look at the Turkish domestic structure, we see institutional settings like government, bureaucracy and the military together with the presidency as authoritative decision units. As in all parliamentary democracies, Turkey's foreign and security policy decisions are made by the prime minister and cabinet members but these bodies are supplemented, advised, and influenced by other forces. The multipolar executive structure in Turkey is a striking characteristic of the country's political system, allowing the military and the presidency to enjoy executive powers along with the government.[225]

When we look at Turkish foreign policymaking in detail, we see that according to the 1982 constitution and other key laws, the power to set the basic principles and goals of Turkish foreign policy is invested in the president and the

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[223] Aras and Köni, "Turkish-Syrian Relations Revisited", p. 57

[224] Ali Çarkoğlu and Mine Eder, "Domestic Concerns and the Water Conflict over the Euphrates-Tigris River Basin", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 1, January 2001, p. 44

[225] Gencer Özcan, "The Military and the Making of Foreign Policy in Turkey", in Barry Rubin and Kemal Kirişçi, *Turkey in World Politics, An Emerging Multiregional Power*, (Boulder, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), p. 14

Council of Ministers. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is permitted only to implement the principles created by these bodies. In addition, the Turkish General Staff is given the job of expressing views only regarding the security provisions of any international agreement. Through the end of the 1990s, this system was expanded to include an important role for the National Security Council as a forum for an active role played by armed forces commanders. The Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA-TBMM) may discuss and investigate foreign policy but cannot determine foreign policy except through its vote to accept or reject a new government's program.[226] According to Altunışık and Tür, compared to the earlier period, Parliament increased its role in foreign policymaking due to the erosion of boundaries between domestic and foreign policy issues and the general democratization of foreign policy.[227]

Turkish policymaking is perceived to have had a great deal of continuity[228], but there have also been shifts in the degrees of involvement and power of these factors and institutions, as in the case of the Syrian crisis.[229] In the event of a crisis, the government has the responsibility of adjusting policy, consulting with the Foreign Ministry, the Ministry of Defense, the armed forces, and other bodies. The president and prime minister also consult with their foreign counterparts.[230]

In the case of dispute with Syria, each institution plays its own role in the conflict transformation process. Though we cannot ignore each actor's role, we can argue that they behave as a coalition of autonomous actors made up of the government (political elite), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (bureaucratic elite) and

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[226] Ertan Efegil, "Foreign Policy-Making in Turkey: A Legal Perspective", *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 1, Spring 2001, pp. 147-148

[227] Altunışık and Tür, *Turkey*, p. 93

[228] See Şaban H. Çalış, "Ulus, Devlet ve Kimlik Labirentinde Türk Dış Politikası", in Şaban H. Çalış, İhsan D. Dağı, Ramazan Gözen (eds.), *Türkiye'nin Dış Politika Gündemi Kimlik, Demokrasi, Güvenlik*, (Ankara: Liberte, 2001)

[229] Özcan, "The Military and the Making of Foreign Policy in Turkey", p. 13

[230] Efegil, "Foreign Policy-making in Turkey", p. 152

the army (military elite), along with the president, that is, Turkish foreign policy is made up of competing elites with different interests.[231]

In the 1990s, the TGNA-TBMM reflected these power dynamics in the Turkish political system.[232] In late 1998, in the midst of crisis, strong verbal warnings from Turkish military Chief of Staff, Hüseyin Kıvrıkoğlu and President Süleyman Demirel indicated that Ankara's newly emerging policy was a collective effort.[233] Demirel pointed out that Turkey's success was the result of coordinated efforts between politicians, military men and diplomats. The presidency, all institutions and bureaucracy, the general staff, and intelligence services acted in harmony.[234]

There are some characteristic attitudes among the actors and their inter-relationships regarding the dispute between Turkey and Syria. These are change from non-interventionist foreign policymaking toward the Middle East, the securitization of some domestic issues, party fragmentation and mistrust between bureaucratic-military and political elites, and the increased role of the military.

Regarding non-interventionist foreign policies, with the exception of the 1950-1960 period of the Democrat Party's rule, the institutionalized elite that controlled the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was reluctant to get involved in Middle Eastern issues. Prompted by changes after the end of the Cold War, Prime Minister (1983-1991) and subsequent President (1991-1993) Turgut Özal spearheaded a change in these non-interventionist policies. After the first Gulf War, Özal increased Turkey's involvement in Middle Eastern affairs considerably, in spite of resistance from the foreign affairs bureaucracy, the military, opposition parties and the public.[235] Thus, Özal's leadership was very important for analysis of the 1987

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[231] Aras and Karakaya Polat, "From Conflict to Cooperation"

[232] See Loizides, "Elite Framing and Conflict Transformation", p. 5

[233] Oktav Alantar, "Turkish-Syrian Relations at the Crossroads", p. 158. There had already been a regularly working mechanism between the general Staff, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Undersecretary of Intelligence since 1992. (See Yetkin, *Kürt Kapanı*, p. 19)

[234] Interview with Süleyman Demirel, December 30, 2008 in Turgut, *130 Günlük Kovalamaca*, pp. 247, 253

[235] See Kemal Kirişçi, "The Future of Turkish Policy Toward the Middle East", in Barry Rubin and Kemal Kirişçi, *Turkey in World Politics, An Emerging Multiregional Power*, (Boulder, London:

protocols. He conducted negotiations with Syria, using water as both a threat (reducing the Euphrates River downstream flow) and an enticement (construction of a water pipeline).[236]

Furthermore, a power game perennially plagued the relationship between the bureaucracy/military and the political elite. Relations have been based on "mistrust". From the 19th century onwards, the bureaucratic and military elites acted on the belief that they were solely responsible for maintaining order and modernizing the country. This mistrust has been part of the fabric of state and political culture in Turkey. Aras and Karakaya Polat argue that mistrust by the political elite of the bureaucratic/military elite has often led the latter to securitize strategic issues in order to maintain power. The presentation of political issues as existential threats has hindered the emergence of healthy public debate.[237]

This securitization of domestic political issues had previously created an ideologically-driven, inflexible, and enemy-oriented regional foreign policy. Domestic politics and foreign policy interacted dynamically, causing external relations to become an extension of local political contentions. In particular, Kurdish nationalism was securitized to such an extent that the issue almost single-handedly determined Turkey's relations with Syria, as foreign policymakers successfully externalized the sources of Kurdish separatism.[238]

Another issue regarding Turkey's domestic political structure was political party fragmentation. During the 1990s, Turkey suffered from such fragmentation and a lack of effective party leadership, in a very turbulent decade of diverse alignments and coalition governments.[239] Within a 10-year period, the formation of 10 different cabinets resulted in political instability, exacerbated successful

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Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), pp. 99-101 and James, Özdamar, "Modeling Foreign Policy and Ethnic Conflict", p. 28

[236] James, Özdamar, "Modeling Foreign Policy and Ethnic Conflict", p. 28

[237] Aras and Karakaya Polat, "From Conflict to Cooperation:", p. 498

[238] Ibid., pp. 496, 503

[239] Binnur Özkeçeci-Taner, "The Impact of Institutionalized Ideas in Coalition Foreign Policy Making: Turkey as an Example, 1991-2002", *Foreign Policy Analysis*, Vol. 1, 2005, p. 260

economic policymaking, and exerted negative influence over some aspects of foreign policy.[240] This detrimental instability due to the changing coalitions rendered fruitless Turkish efforts throughout the 1990s, leading to a crisis of self-confidence.[241]

Arguably the most important change shaping foreign and security policy during the 1990s was the increased role of the Turkish military. This has been called "the golden age of the military's" policy involvement.[242] Özcan asserted that one reason for this development was the way the Cold War's end left Turkey's external and internal security environments much more complex and intertwined. While the threat of a military attack by the Soviet Union seemed to subside, Kurdish separatism and Islamic fundamentalism took on greater importance. The active involvement of some neighboring countries in support of separatist and religious fundamentalist groups threatened Turkey's stability, pushing the military to the forefront of decision-making.[243] In other words, in the post-Cold War era, the armed forces' redefined internal security threats to focus on political Islam and the Kurdish question.[244]

Indeed, the military has had a long history of shaping politics, including foreign policy, in Turkey.[245] It has been an important policymaking actor because of its traditional role as the guardian of *Kemalism* and its stand against "alleged" and real enemies, both internal and external.[246] The military had introduced the concept of national security into Turkish political and legal jargon following the 1960 coup

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[240] Cumhur Mumcu, Yasemin Kahramaner, "Oyun Teorik Yaklaşımla 1998 Türkiye-Suriye Krizinin Analizi", *İstanbul Ticaret Üniversitesi Dergisi*, p. 122

[241] Yetkin, *Kürt Kapanı*, p. 42

[242] İlhan Uzgel, "Between Praetorianism and Democracy: The Role of the Military in Turkish Foreign Policy", *The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations*, Vol. XXXIV, 2003, p. 178

[243] Özcan, "The Military and the Making of Foreign Policy in Turkey", p. 13

[244] See Ümit Cizre Sakallıoğlu, "The Military and Politics: A Turkish Dilemma", in Barry Rubin and Thomas A. Keaney (eds.), *Armed Forces in the Middle East Politics and Strategy*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 189

[245] See Altunışık and Tür, *Turkey*, p. 92

[246] Özkeçeci-Taner, "The Impact of Institutionalized Ideas", p. 261

through its own political body, the National Security Council (NSC), which takes advisory decisions on issues pertaining to the determination, establishment and implementation of state security policy.[247] According to Kamrawa, the NSC was an institutional device that cemented civilian-military interactions.[248] Following the 1980 coup d'état, the military imposed arbitrary laws and so secured the army's omnipotence in foreign policy. Thus, Turkey's series of coups had determined the military's key role as a domestic and foreign policy decision-maker.[249] Then, after 1984, as the PKK began operating more effectively, the military's role in fighting terrorism led its legitimization in the foreign policymaking process. In addition, the regionalization of the Kurdish problem after the 1990 Gulf Crisis led to further consolidation of the military's prime position of power.[250] Also professionalization of the Turkish army due to military agreements in the 1990s enhanced the autonomy of the military, and as it was politically unchecked, its tendency to intervene in state affairs increased. Furthermore, the electorate seldom questioned its influence, since it was one of Turkey's most popular state institutions during this period.[251]

The military has repeatedly exerted its influence over policies toward external actors, including Syria. Particularly since the mid-1990s, we have seen that the institution took a prominent role in foreign policy, especially on the PKK issue. For example, in 1998 when Turkey hardened its attitude toward Syria over its support for PKK militants, the military institutional elite was instrumental in

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[247] http://www.mgk.gov.tr/Ingilizce/Kanun/kanun_en.htm (Accessed on February 4, 2011)
Among the constitutional reforms passed in 2001, the amendment increased the number of civilian members of the council, thus reducing its military members to a minority. It also changed Article 118 of the constitution so that the council's effect on the government was weakened and the council's advisory character underlined. And in August 2004, for the first time in the history of the NSC, it became possible for the government to appoint a civil secretary, Ambassador Yiğit Alpogan.

[248] Mehran Kamrawa, "Military Professionalization and Civil-Military Relations in the Middle East", *Political Science Quarterly,* Vol. 115, No. 1, Spring 2000, p. 71

[249] Uzgel, "Between Praetorianism and Democracy", p. 181

[250] See Gencer Özcan, "Facing Its Waterloo in Diplomacy: Turkey's Military in Foreign Policy Making Process", *New Perspectives on Turkey*, Vol. 40, 2009 and Uzgel, "Between Praetorianism and Democracy", p. 184

[251] Kamrawa, "Military Professionalization", pp. 69, 71

applying pressure on the government.[252] In other words, the way the problems with Syria were settled is evidence of the weight of the military in foreign policy decision-making.[253] The increase in the military's active role had been a result of its disappointment over the perceived failure of the Foreign Ministry to launch an effective international campaign against Syria.[254] The Turkish army had apparently also led the process of intensifying Turkish-Israeli military cooperation, probably without the consent of the foreign ministry.[255]

Yet another catalyst for military activity in foreign policy was the coalition government of the Welfare Party (WP) and True Path Party (TPP), in 1996-1997, under Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan. In fact, this increased domestic and foreign policy influence is considered to be an important outcome of the WP-TPP period.[256] For instance, at that time, Deputy CGS Çevik Bir was known as "the foreign minister of the military".[257]

Under this government, Turkish-Syrian relations took on a different dimension. Erbakan had previously declared that Syria did not support the PKK's attacks on Turkey, and Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Recai Kutan had announced that Turkey was ready to divide, not just allocate the waters of the three rivers. This offer was not an official government position, and Kutan's invitation was met with a cold response by the NSC.[258]

It was during this period that a National Security Council memorandum dated February 28, 1997, warned the Erbakan government that it had failed to take effective measures against separatist and fundamentalist activities domestically.

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[252] James, Özdamar, "Modeling Foreign Policy and Ethnic Conflict", pp. 21-22

[253] Özcan, "Facing Its Waterloo in Diplomacy"

[254] See "Sabrımız Taşıyor", *Hürriyet*, October 2, 1998, http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=-40871

[255] Aykan, "The Turkish-Syrian Crisis of October 1998", p. 181

[256] Özkeçeci-Taner, "The Impact of Institutionalized Ideas", p. 274, Oktav Alantar, "The October 1998 Crisis", p. 149

[257] Özcan, "Facing Its Waterloo in Diplomacy"

[258] Oktav Alantar, "Turkish-Syrian Relations at the Crossroads", p. 154

And on April 29, 1997, the National Military Strategic Concept[259] announced fundamentalist religious activities and terrorism as the foremost threats to Turkey, which brought a possibility for the use of political and economic sanctions, or even force against Iran and Syria, as supporters of such threats.[260] An important characteristic of the Turkish military's security perception was the unification of external and internal threats.[261] This predicament was manufactured through a process of identification of "others" within the domestic context.[262]

At the moment of the crisis in 1998, a coalition government, headed by Mesut Yılmaz and composed of the Motherland Party (MP), the Democratic Left Party (DLP) and the Democratic Turkey Party (DTP), was in power. It is reasonable to speculate that this cabinet, which had been formed under Yılmaz as a result of the so-called post-modern coup of February 1997, would be heavily influenced by the armed forces.[263] President Süleyman Demirel, Minister of Foreign Affairs İsmail Cem, and Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Korkmaz Haktanır were also influential figures at that time. PM Yılmaz had warned the cabinet ministers that in the case of escalation, they had to be ready to present a proposal for the declaration of war against Syria to the parliament.[264]

Although the early elections were scheduled for April 1999, Mesut Yılmaz's minority government was about to lose its support, to be toppled by the parliament even before the elections. The Turkish government was in desperate need of distraction from seemingly endless revelations of corruption throughout government institutions, including the prime ministry. A mounting polarization within Turkish

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[259] The National Security Policy Document (NSPD) is prepared under the coordination of the General Secretariat of the National Security Council with the participation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and National Intelligence Organization**.** While the NSPD defines security threats, there are detailed security documents for each threat and the measures to be taken against them. See Uzgel, "Between Praetorianism and Democracy", p. 193

[260] Mumcu, Kahramaner, "Oyun Teorik Yaklaşımla 1998 Türkiye-Suriye Krizinin Analizi", p. 121

[261] Uzgel, "Between Praetorianism and Democracy", p. 187

[262] Çalış, "Ulus, Devlet ve Kimlik Labirentinde Türk Dış Politikası", p. 29

[263] "Turkey's Relations with its Middle Eastern Neighbors", p. 67

[264] "Karanlık Oyuna Son Vereceğiz", Hürriyet, October 8, 1998, http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNewaspx?id=-41812; Yetkin, *Kürt Kapanı*, p. 76

society on the issue of secularism was also stirring. The Islamist-secular cleavage had deepened in almost every realm of life after the military initiated the downfall of Erbakan's Islamist coalition government and installed the secular Yılmaz-Ecevit government in June 1997. With respect to this, Sezgin asserts that the October crisis presented the Turkish government with a chance to reunite the Turkish people around a national cause.[265]

Despite these cleavages and predicaments in the political arena, a consensus could be maintained on the topic of Syria. All the political parties in the parliament resolutely agreed on the declaration regarding the crisis with Syria.[266] Thus, when individual leadership and the institutionalized elite coordinated, pressure on Syria was increased, and some policy satisfaction was achieved in 1998. As a result, the Turkish leadership's unprecedented language combined with military buildup and exercises near the border led Syria to believe Turkish threats were credible.[267] The words of Kıvrıkoğlu illustrate this consensus:

> We made a proposal at the NSC in 1998 that we needed to make a plan of action to deal with the issue from political, economic and military directions, and out of this synergy, we needed to put pressure on Syria. My speech did not receive any reaction in this meeting. Yet at the next meeting held in June, I raised the issue again. And then Honorable President Demirel took me up on the plan and immediately ordered that preparations should be started. We commenced preparations. What could be done from political perspectives? We decided on a number of measures such as calling Syria a terrorist state on every political platform and asking other states for cooperation against Syria, putting an economic embargo through terminating all sorts of imports from and exports to Syria, and worsening Syria's economy by reducing the price of the very goods that Syria was exporting.[268]

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[265] Sezgin, "The October 1998 Crisis", p. 63, Oktav, "Water Dispute and Kurdish Separatism in Turkish-Syrian Relations", p. 107

[266] See "Meclis'te Özlenen Tablo", Hürriyet, October 8, 1998, http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=-41793

[267] See Altunışık, "Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Dönemde Suriye'nin Dış Politikası", p. 285, James, Özdamar, "Modeling Foreign Policy and Ethnic Conflict", p. 29

[268] Mercan, "Kıvrıkoğlu: Tanklarla Suriye'ye Girecektik"

In spite of the view that at the climax of the crisis with Syria, the military, eclipsing the civilian components of the authoritative decision unit, put its own seal on the crisis, we cannot ignore the roles of the president and other actors. President Demirel[269] immediately moved to cement his position at the forefront of this issue, sending an overt warning to Damascus in his opening speech to the TGNA-TBMM on October 1, 1998.[270] He warned that patience was running out over their alleged support of Kurdish separatists.[271] Demirel acted as a coordinator and performed every necessary duty[272] even though he accepted that the president was supposed to be overseeing political parties rather than being directly involved in politics. Yet his words to the parliament on October 1 captured the feelings of the nation and all political parties.[273] In another interview, he said: "When I was prime minister, I did everything necessary as the head of action on this issue's (terrorism). Then when I was president, I also helped with execution as a head of the NSC. I did some execution work."[274]

In conclusion, this consensus achieved among the authoritative decision units was one of the determinants of the ripening process in Turkey.

Syrian domestic political structure, on the other side of this conflict, is the product of a party that mobilized a constituency around a combination of nationalism and populist reform and an army.[275] It was radicalized by conflict with

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[269] Süleyman Demirel was the PM during the most difficult years of PKK terrorism (1991-1992) until May 1993. Then, in the years between 1993 and 2000, he was the president of the Turkish Republic.

[270] Özcan, "Facing Its Waterloo in Diplomacy"

[271] http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/185992.stm (accessed on May 23, 2011) and "Sabrımız Taşıyor", *Hürriyet*, October 2, 1998, http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=-40871

[272] Interview with Süleyman Demirel, December 30, 2008 in Turgut, *130 Günlük Kovalamaca*, p. 251

[273] See Ek-4, Minutes of the Meeting with Egyptian President Mubarak in Ankara, in Turgut, *130 Günlük Kovalamaca*, p. 270

[274] Bila, "Süleyman Demirel Anlatıyor", p. 270

[275] See Meliha Benli Altunışık, "The Syrian Army: How Much of an Actor in Syrian Politics?", *The Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 1, No. 3, Spring 2002 and Eyal Zisser, "The Syrian Army on the Domestic and External Fronts", in Barry Rubin and Thomas A. Keaney (eds.), *Armed Forces in the Middle East Politics and Strategy*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2002)

Israel, and developed under Asad into a huge authoritarian national security state.[276] Although the state and the regime established a centralized political authority, they did so at the cost of a diminished ability to implement efficient and legitimate political rule. Public agency in Syria was not established on rational-legal principles, but had a neo-patrimonial character, wherein the minority Alawite military rulers established themselves above the Sunni majority. In this sense, it is asserted that the Syrian state possessed a high degree of despotic power but very little infrastructural power.[277]

Although first-hand accounts of foreign policymaking in Syria are virtually non-existent, there is general agreement that Asad holds the ultimate foreign policy authority.[278] There is a closed circle system in Syria, and it is not possible to learn the details of discussions that take place within this inner circle. The final decisions were taken by Asad himself.[279] We can thus identify the president as the authoritative decision unit in Syria, as the predominant leader on foreign policy issues. A man of strong personality, strategic vision, and unique authority within the elite, and possessed of wide powers of office, Asad was the dominant decision-maker.[280]

Although he gave the appearance of being a relatively consensus-driven leader who weighed the views of his subordinates within a relatively stable circle of top foreign policy and military elites, there is certainly no evidence that any elite actor had ever contested Asad's role as final arbiter and survived politically. It is clear that as Asad established his image as a foreign policy wizard and the occasional challenger was purged, foreign policy virtually became the reserved

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[276] Ehteshami and Hinnebusch (ed.), *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States,* p. 60

[277] Soren Schmidt, "The Role of the State in Development in the Middle East: Lessons from Syria", *Forum for Development Studies*, No. 2, December 2007, p. 261

[278] Allison Astorino-Courtois, Brittani Trusty, "Degrees of Difficulty, the Effect of Israeli Policy Shifts on Syrian Peace Decisions", *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 44, No. 3, June 2000, p. 363

[279] Interview with Samir Ladkani, Damascus, October 30, 2010

[280] Moshe Ma'oz, "Hafiz al-Asad: A Political Profile", *Jerusalem Quarterly*, Vol. 8, 1978 cited in Ehteshami and Hinnebusch (ed.), *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States,* p. 62

sphere of the presidency.[281] The Ba'th party was arguably downgraded, de-ideologized and transformed into a machine of patronage with little capacity for independent action. The party no longer influences key political or foreign policy decisions.[282] Regarding military elites, Asad is said to have intervened in the army's affairs, not allowing it to develop autonomously.[283] All other institutions have also been reduced to the capacities of approving and justifying the president's policies. Policy professionals in the Foreign Ministry and the presidency appear as voices of pragmatism. Their only sources of influence are their conduits to the president.[284]

Asad had constructed "an authoritarian-populist Bonapartist" regime in Syria. He concentrated power in a "Presidential Monarchy" or "Monarchical Presidency"[285] resting on three fairly developed institutions, the Ba'th Party, the Army and the governmental bureaucracy, which incorporated a cross-class, cross-sectarian coalition. Perthes calls this a "unification of command", referring to the monopolization of the means of violence by the political leadership. In the Syrian case, this was the unification of state, party and military as demanded in the light of the prospective battle.[286] Asad, sitting at the apex of power, maximized his autonomy by balancing several elements of his coalition. He tried to ensure the loyalty and support of the members of these institutions through a series of checks and balances.[287] He used support from the army to free himself from party ideological constraints; he built up his jama'a (a core of largely Alawi personal

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[281] Ehteshami and Hinnebusch (ed.), *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States,* p. 63

[282] Hazem Kandil, "The Challenge of Restructuring: Syrian Foreign Policy" in Bahgat Korany and Ali E. Hillal Dessouki (eds.), *The Foreign Policies of Arab States, The Challenge of Globalization*, (Cairo, New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2008), p. 431

[283] Altunışık, "The Syrian Army", p. 86

[284] Ehteshami and Hinnebusch (ed.), *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States,* pp. 64-65

[285] See Raymond A. Hinnebusch, "Does Syria Want Peace? Syrian Policy in the Syrian-Israeli Peace Negotiations", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. XXVI, No. 1, Autumn 1996, p. 44

[286] Volker Perthes, "*Si Vis Stabilitatem, Para Bellum* State Building, National Security, and War Preparation in Syria", in Steven Heydemann, *War, Institutions, and Social Change in the Middle East*, (Berkeley, Lon Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2000), p. 153

[287] Margaret G. Hermann, "Syria's Hafez Al-Assad", in Barbara Kellerman and Jeffrey Z. Rubin (eds.), *Leadership and Negotiation in the Middle East*, (New York: Praeger, 1988), p. 75

followers in command of intelligence agencies and Praetorian Guard units) to enhance his autonomy of both the army and the party.[288] As a result of this gradual process of power consolidation, Asad was able to freely adapt his strategies to the external balance of power because he achieved substantial autonomy regarding the domestic constraints on his foreign policy.[289]

Within this context, only indirect domestic constraints curtailed presidential authority. When Asad had to listen to the ideas of the Army and the Ba'th Party, the main pillars of the regime, the Ba'thists typically loathed Turkey, while Syria's Islamist opposition, which was constantly under pressure by the Ba'th regime, had little problem with Turkey and were not an obstacle to the transformation of relations,[290] since Turkey is a Muslim country, in contrast with Israel and the US.[291]

The regime enjoyed substantial autonomy in the making of foreign policy. The authoritarian state concentrated power in Asad's hands and minimized formal accountability to the public.[292] Over an extended period of state formation, the Syrian state accorded its foreign policymakers sufficient autonomy and strength to conduct a rational foreign policy.[293] It is not difficult to find examples of unpopular foreign policy decisions that were nevertheless deemed necessary on strategic grounds: the 1976 intervention against the PLO in Lebanon, the alignment with Iran in the Iran-Iraq war, and the stand against Iraq after its invasion of Kuwait.[294]

It is thus expected that President Asad had total presidential autonomy on all issues. Yet it is argued that it is a misperception of Syrian society, and that public

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[288] See Raymond Hinnebusch, "Modern Syrian Politics", *History Compass*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2008 and Ehteshami and Hinnebusch (ed.), *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States,* p. 61

[289] Hinnebusch, "Does Syria Want Peace?", p. 44

[290] Interview with Ibrahim Hamidi, Journalist, al-Hayat, Damascus, June 3, 2008

[291] Interview with Ghassan Habash, Deputy Minister of Economy, Damascus, June 12, 2008

[292] Hinnebusch, "Does Syria Want Peace?", p. 47, Ehteshami and Hinnebusch (ed.), *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States,* p. 65

[293] Ehteshami and Hinnebusch (ed.), *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States,* p. 60

[294] Hinnebusch, "Does Syria Want Peace?", p. 47

opinion matters, but that its parameters are different.[295] So there is some degree of autonomy from the society, but total disregard of the public is not possible.[296] Thus, decision-makers may be deterred by the price of ignoring the people.[297] In other words, political wisdom dictates that Asad take account of the domestic consequences of his foreign policy decisions.[298] Thus the ruling class had to pay attention to popular sentiments.[299] Zisser points out that the Syrian regime is a representative regime that reflects the social and political forces in Syria, and therefore, the president's decision-making process is the result of a dialogue that he takes care to maintain resulting in a type of consensus.[300] Regarding Turkey, it is argued that if improvement of relations with Turkey did not take place, the Syrian public would not have welcomed the decision.[301]

4.5.2. Pre-Negotiation Variables

4.5.2.1. Hurting Stalemate and Enticing Opportunity: Perception of the Status Quo and Challenges to the Status Quo

For Turkey, relations with Syria became unsustainable in the 1990s. The conditions of a stalemate of desperation and frustration had emerged. In other words, Turkey had become unhappy with the status quo of its relations with Syria. For Syria, however, the status quo was bearable. Despite some unrequited expectations, especially on the water issue, as long as it had its PKK card as leverage, Syria was content with the status quo. Although there had been no

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[295] Interview with Ibrahim Hamidi, Journalist, al-Hayat, Damascus, June 3, 2008

[296] Interview with Merwan Kabalan, Dean of Faculty, University of Damascus, Damascus, June 2, 2008

[297] Ehteshami and Hinnebusch (ed.), *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, p. 65

[298] Hinnebusch, "Does Syria Want Peace?", p. 44

[299] Kandil, "The Challenge of Restructuring", p. 429

[300] Eyal Zisser, "Appearance and Reality: Syria's Decisionmaking Structure", *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 2, No. 2, May 1998 (http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/1998/issue2/jv2n2a5.html)

[301] Interview with Thabet Salem, Journalist, Damascus, November 7, 2010

successful conclusion, there had also been no injury, and thus the situation could be called a stalemate of attrition for Syria.

Turkey experienced different kinds of costs: physical and political costs. The latter was related to both the domestic and international domain of Turkey. Turkey's loss of belief in the possibility of gain due to its previous failed efforts solidified the status of hurting stalemate.

After the mid-1980s, increasing PKK influence resulted in desperation in Turkey. In physical terms, the death toll due to PKK activities was increasing. There had been about 30,000 casualties by the end of the 1990s. The economy was also worsening because of the allocation of resources to the fight.[302] Military expenditures alone cost $6-9 billion annually. These costs led Turkey to a stalemate of desperation, with no foreseeable successful end in spite of great sacrifices.

Political costs of the conflict can be identified at both the domestic and international levels. At the domestic level, Turkish statehood was being tested through the PKK struggle. At the international level, Turkey was concerned with the PKK's alleged growing political strength in Europe.

By late 1995, Öcalan had made contacts with high-ranking German political and intelligence officials in Damascus. Italy hosted the so-called Kurdish parliament-in-exile in September 1998, which prompted Ankara to recall its ambassador in protest. The Fourth Kurdistan National Conference had been held in London on October 11-12.[303] In a unanimous decision, the European Parliament also called upon the European Union to act to find a political solution to the Kurdish problem. And the federal chief prosecutor of Germany declared that the PKK could no longer be considered a terrorist organization.[304] Some argued that growing European recognition of the PKK as a political organization of Kurds in Turkey was an important factor in convincing Turkey of the need to take action against Syria's role in PKK activities.[305]

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[302] Aras, "The Role of Motivation", p. 214

[303] Sezgin, "The October 1998 Crisis", p. 62

[304] Oktav Alantar, "The October 1998 Crisis", p. 150

[305] Ibid., p. 149

In addition to these concerns, this conflict prevented Turkey from playing a more active role in the Middle East, the Balkans, Central Asia and the Caucasus. PKK activities had harmed construction plans for energy routes from the Caspian Sea to Turkey. Turkey was almost completely isolated and operated in domains of loss not only vis-à-vis Syria, but also vis-à-vis virtually all its neighbors and traditional allies. Syria was not the only country Turkey threatened with force: earlier the same year, it had made a series of military threats to destroy Russian made S-300 missiles if deployed by the Greek Cypriots on the island. Sezgin argues that Turkey naturally embraced risk-seeking, aggressive policies in order to minimize the perception of in its uneasy relations, and thus turned to its weakest and most problematic neighbor, namely Syria.[306]

Most importantly, the history of foreign policy toward Syria had featured many failed attempts at diplomacy, which had led to a loss of belief in the possibility of gain and thus the emergence of stalemate. In the face of increasing PKK influence, Ankara had implemented strategies directed at pressuring Damascus and transforming the conflict since the mid-1980s. Turkey constantly deployed both coercive and deterrent policies, along with assurances and rewards.[307] Beginning from peaceful attempts, Turkey pursued coercive diplomacy against Syria, which ended in failures. Always, diplomacy remained the preferable foreign-policy instrument to tackle with Syria, but there were also some tough policies.[308]

The first attempt was led by Turgut Özal, who formulated scheme "peace through dependency".[309] The logic was that Syria's dependence on Turkey for water could be leveraged to stop it from supporting the PKK, which was now headquartered in Damascus, and its activities; the aim was thus to play the water card to make Syria dependent on Turkey and thus achieve lasting peace.[310] Based

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[306] Sezgin, "The October 1998 Crisis", p. 61

[307] Ibid., p. 45

[308] Ibid., p. 50

[309] Aras, "The Role of Motivation", p. 211

[310] Yetkin, *Kürt Kapanı,* pp. 30-31

on these ideas, economic and security cooperation protocols were signed in 1987. These protocols led to the linkage of the issues water and terrorism, but only a temporary mitigation of differences.

The second attempt took place in 1992, this one more coercive than the last. Süleyman Demirel, who had been elected prime minister in 1991, issued a threat against Syria. In March 1992, he declared Turkey's patience was diminishing. Interior Minister İsmet Sezgin followed this with a trip to Damascus. After long talks, an accord was signed in April 1992, according to which Syria purportedly recognized the PKK as an outlawed organization and agreed to close down the Bekaa Valley camp in return for Turkish cooperation on water. It also agreed to control its borders more effectively, extradite Öcalan and stop sheltering PKK militants.

This effort initially appeared successful, as Syria had closed the Helwe camp, though Öcalan remained in Syria. And although Syrian officials characterized the PKK as a terrorist organization when Demirel visited Damascus, in the long run, no substantive policy change took place. In fact, following Turkish Foreign Minister Hikmet Çetin's visit to Israel in October 1993, Syria permitted the PKK to open a training center.[311]

As time passed, Turkey systematically increased pressure on the Syrian government. This harsh rhetoric increased due to the rise in Syrian-backed PKK operations in the security sensitive Southeastern province of Hatay from 1995 onwards. It was understood that Abdullah Öcalan frequently declared that "Hatay would be turned into a bloody lake."[312]

The choice of Hatay was as significant as it was sensitive. The attempt to enlist the economically marginalized minority Alawite – especially the Alawite Arab – population against the dominant Sunni and Turkish population was bound to create more friction. Thus reports during the summer of 1995 of the PKK's attempts to move into Hatay further cooled relations between the two countries.[313]

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[311] Aras, "The Role of Motivation", p. 212

[312] *Hürriyet*, September 17, 1995

[313] Olson, *Turkey's Relations,* p. 106

In response, Turkey dispatched a *note verbale* (admonitory note) to the Syrian embassy in Ankara on January 23, 1996. This note, prepared by the Foreign Ministry, called for Syria to cut its support of terrorism, to close the camps on its territory, and to cooperate with Turkey in combating terrorism. The note referred to Article 51 of the UN Charter, which underscores "the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a member of the UN."[314] Ankara reinforced the army's presence along the Syrian border to show its seriousness.

This third attempt failed again; Asad did not even respond to the *note verbale*. Damascus later sent an irrelevant reply, which the Foreign Ministry did not take seriously. Attention from this issue was diverted when a dispute unexpectedly erupted in January 1996 with Greece over sovereignty rights of an uninhabited islet called Kardak in the Aegean Sea.

Despite Asad's unresponsiveness, Turkey continued its diplomatic efforts to mitigate the tension. In early 1998, Turkey posed a Middle East peace initiative aimed at regional cooperation for stability. The head of the Middle East Department of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Aykut Çetirge, visited Damascus in February 1998 in an attempt to restart the dialogue that had been cut off since 1995. This move was reciprocated by the visit of Syrian Deputy Foreign Minister Adnan Omran to Ankara in July. These efforts came to nothing.[315]

Syria appears to have been in a stalemate of attrition until the 1990s. Due to his ideological sensitivity about the historical loss of the province of Hatay, or to his country's alleged deprivation of Euphrates waters, Asad might have felt himself to be in a domain of losses, but Asad may already been satisfied with the situation prior to the October Crisis. As exemplified by the 1987 security protocol, which guaranteed Syria water in exchange for its anti-terrorist assurances, the PKK proved to be a rewarding instrument for Damascus. Thus, hoping for further concessions from Ankara, the Asad administration continued to host the PKK while officially

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[314] See Yetkin, *Kürt Kapanı*, p. 39. Until that time, Turkey had not sent any notes to Syria regarding Öcalan's extradition.

[315] Aykan, "The Turkish-Syrian Crisis of October 1998", p. 176 and Oktav Alantar, "The October 1998 Crisis", p. 143

denying its presence in Syria. In short, through the PKK, Syria was gradually gaining at Turkey's expense, and was thus happier with the status quo over the previous two decades.[316]

Another indication of this satisfaction with the status quo was Asad's early reactions to Turkish threats in 1998, which he did not consider any different from those of 1992 and 1996, meaning he expected the rhetoric to cool and for Turkey to back down. Under these perceptual conditions, a Turkish military operation against Syria was a real, if remote, possibility. Asad did not see this possibility, however, and did not bother to bolster his forces in the north, even though Turkey was amassing its own troops along the border.[317]

Although Syria was satisfied with the status quo, it was not immune indirect challenges. After the break-up of the Soviet Union and the end of the bipolar system in 1991, for example, Syria, having lost a strategic patron, had become vulnerable to possible attack.

During the Gulf War, Syria joined the US-led coalition in order to improve its relations with the US, but this improvement did not last long. With no achievement in the peace process with Israel, the US congress backed the 20-year-long policy of sanctions against Syria, which curtailed financial assistance and the sale of military and dual-use equipment, as well as a range of oil technologies. In September 1997 came the prospect of further US economic sanctions that specifically targeted the Syrian oil sector.[318]

In the Middle East sub-system, Syria was also pushed into isolation due to its alliance with Iran, and by separate agreements signed between the PLO and Jordan with Israel. Israel used these agreements to challenge Syrian influence in Jordan and Palestine, undermine its legitimacy in these territories, and Syrian aspirations for a comprehensive peace.[319]

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[316] Sezgin, "The October 1998 Crisis", p. 56

[317] Ibid., p. 56

[318] Aras, "The Role of Motivation", p. 215

[319] Interview with Samir Ladkani, Damascus, October 30, 2010

Because of this regional isolation, Syria felt surrounded by enemies rather than friends.[320] This perception was highlighted with the Turkish-Israeli rapprochement in 1996. Although Turkey claimed this alliance was not to the exclusion of third parties, it had a vital psychological effect on Syria. The prospect of territorial disputes on two fronts against the two most advanced military powers in the Middle East was intimidating.[321]

In relation to peace negotiations with Israel, the Syrian perception of stalemate intensified. Benjamin Netanyahu had come to power after the 1996 elections, but by 1998 there was no possibility of reaching an agreement based on the terms from two years prior. Some Syrians argued that "in 1996, conflict was not ripe, but in 1998 due to failed negotiations with Israel," stalemate conditions occurred again in Syria.[322]

Though dealing with these international and regional challenges, Syria was not immune to domestic problems. One was the weak domestic economy. The drop in oil prices harmed a fragile economy that derived two-thirds of its export revenues from oil. Its assistance from the USSR and the Gulf States had declined significantly.[323]

Another consistent domestic challenge was related to regime survival. When Hafiz Asad's health began to decline, the issue of succession became a focal point of Syrian politics. During the 1990s, there had been a clear deterioration in Asad's physical and mental health; during his last few years he seemed barely to function. It has been reported that since the beginning of the 1990s, Asad's daily schedule had been characterized by the absence of real activity.[324]

Thus Asad concentrated on creating a foundation for his son Bashar's future presidency by achieving social and economic stability at home and pursuing as

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[320] Interview with Thabet Salem, Journalist, Damascus, November 7, 2010

[321] Aras, "The Role of Motivation", p. 214, 216

[322] Interview with Ibrahim Hamidi, Journalist, al-Hayat, Damascus, June 3, 2008

[323] Aras, "The Role of Motivation", p. 215

[324] Zisser, *Asad's Legacy,* p. 163

problem-free a foreign policy as possible.[325] At home, a reshuffling process had already been initiated. In February 1998, Rif'at Asad, the president's brother, was dismissed as vice president of security affairs, a position he had held since 1984. Rif'at Asad had been considered the leading candidate in the succession race. In July 1998, one of Rif'at's close associates, Chief of General Staff Hikmat Shihabi, was pensioned and replaced by Ali Aslan. Shihabi had also been named a possible successor to President Asad, and his removal from the arena was another step in Bashar's establishment as heir-apparent. In addition, toward the end of the year, Vice President Abd al-Halim Khaddam was stripped of most of his authority in the sphere of foreign relations. Bashar was then charged with the Lebanese and Iranian portfolios. In his final years, Asad also carried out a large-scale replacement of senior officers in the army and security forces. The intention was to create a generation of new and young commanders who would support Bashar vis-à-vis the old guard of the army and security apparatuses.[326]

Meanwhile, Turkish threats and the issue of the PKK, which had already become a liability, were a sort of secondary concern for Hafiz Asad. The issue of succession became a major component of Asad's framing and evaluation of available options. In other words, he based his political value system on expected gains from the continuation of his rule, thus securing his son's succession became his primary objective, more valuable than playing the PKK card against Turkey. Asad successfully shifted his point of reference in Turkish relations away from the status quo, and in so doing avoided a potential loss.[327]

In conclusion, Hafiz Asad's domestic problems were a change in circumstance that distinguished the October 1998 events between Syria and Turkey from previous tensions between the two countries.

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[325] Aras, "The Role of Motivation", p. 215

[326] Sezgin, "The October 1998 Crisis", p. 59

[327] Ibid., pp. 57, 58, 61

The Last Challenge

Developments in the regional and domestic context also changed Turkey's feelings on the stalemate conditions. One of the triggering events was the Washington Agreement of September 17, 1998. The agreement committed the major Kurdish leaders of Northern Iraq, Mahmud Barzani and Jalal Talabani, to work together to hold elections in the summer of 1999, and to set up the nucleus of a joint territorial administration. Some provisions within this agreement were potentially harmful for Turkish foreign policy toward Northern Iraq, since Turkey had previously opposed any initiative that might lead to the establishment of an independent Kurdish state in Northern Iraq. For instance, the Kurdish leaders expressed in the agreement their determination to prevent outside encroachments into its territory. This suggested that Turkey's anti-PKK military operations in Northern Iraq would no longer be tolerated by the US.[328]

According to Aytaç Yalman, Turkey had maintained full domination in the fight against terrorism between 1996 and 1998. However, this politically and militarily convenient situation ended when the US gained the upper hand in the region with the Washington agreement.[329] Turkey, which had previously considered itself capable of procuring a reconciliation between the two Kurdish leaders with the backing of the US, was uneasy at the prospect of their collaboration within the framework of a Kurdish federal administration working toward the eventual establishment of a federated state in Iraq.[330]

A statement by Deputy Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit confirms the connection between the Washington Agreement and the outbreak of the Syrian crisis. According to Ecevit, Turks feared the agreement constituted the first step toward the establishment of an independent Kurdish state and would provide the

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[328] Aykan, "The Turkish-Syrian Crisis of October 1998", p. 177

[329] Bila, "Org. Aytaç Yalman Anlatıyor", *Komutanlar Cephesi*, (İstanbul: Detay Yayıncılık, Kasım 2007), p. 208

[330] Oktav Alantar, "The October 1998 Crisis", p. 152

PKK with the opportunity to become more active in Northern Iraq, with more opportunities to penetrate into Turkey. This meant that previous Turkish efforts to control the situation in Northern Iraq were now jeopardized by the Washington Agreement. According to a statement by Turkish intelligence officers at the time, forcing Syria to cease support to the PKK had become a perceived necessity, in order to neutralize militants there before the Washington Agreement gave them license to increase activity.[331] The situation was perceived by the Turkish Foreign Ministry as a failure to launch an effective international campaign against Syria.[332] The agreement thus revealed Turkey's hurting stalemate condition.

When the PKK increased its Hatay operations, this situation was discussed at the National Security Council. Here the governor of Hatay presented a report in which he described that Syria treated Hatay as though it were its own, and that Damascus had instigated the PKK's activities against Turkmens in Hatay. He charged that Syria was encouraging ethnic Arabs to buy land, and that this was evidence of a long-range strategic plan.[333]

High-ranking Turkish military and civilian officials responded with a strong verbal warning to the effect that it was running out of patience with Syria's support for the PKK. Turkish Chief of General Staff Hüseyin Kıvrıkoğlu reported that Turkey was engaged in an "undeclared war" with Syria.[334] It is argued that never before had Ankara's threats been made so insistently, repeatedly and explicitly over a short period of time.[335] Demirel told Kharrazi: "It is not bearable anymore…we are not threatening anybody, but we are explaining our pain and suffering to the

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[331] Aykan, "The Turkish-Syrian Crisis of October 1998", pp. 180-181

[332] Oktav Alantar, "The October 1998 Crisis", p. 153

[333] Olson, *Turkey's Relations,* pp. 108-109

[334] See "Sabrımız Taşıyor", *Hürriyet*, October 2, 1998, http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=-40871, "Herkesi Uyardık", *Hürriyet*, October 4, 1998, http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=-41205, "Dünyayı Şam'ın Başına Yıkarız", *Hürriyet*, October 4, 1998, http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=-41184

[335] Oktav Alantar, "Turkish-Syrian Relations at the Crossroads", p. 158

world, to our neighbors."[336] He later identified Turkey's hurting stalemate condition as great impasse[337] since the moral defeat of the state and society were a possible outcome.[338] Demirel's position was that the situation had become unsustainable and unendurable.[339] He also reminded Mubarak of the *verbale note* was given to Syria in 1996 pointing out Turkey's right to self-defense by Article 51 of the UN Charter.[340]

In addition, Turkey began massing troops along the Syrian border. The Syrian embassy in Ankara issued a statement in response, accusing the escalation of being motivated by the establishment of a Turkish-Israeli "military pact" and declared the people of the region refused to become party to it. Blaming the Turkish side for the lack of dialogue between the two states, the statement included a declaration that the Syrian side would not be bowed by intimidation. Not only did Syria reject cooperation to solve the crisis, it also retaliated, amassing troops 30-40km from the Turkish frontier and installing 36 of its 120 Scud-C missiles 55km from the border. Meanwhile, the official Syrian news agency, SANA, announced the Syrian leadership would only be prepared to initiate a serious dialogue with Turkey if the latter was ready to give up its cooperation with Israel.

Although Syria had ousted Öcalan from Syria on October 9, 1998, which was confirmed via Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa, and even Musa himself had also met with President Demirel to convince Turkey to sit at the table, CGS Kıvrıkoğlu declared "necessary measures should be unavoidably taken if the problems are not solved through diplomacy."[341]

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[336] Turgut, *130 Günlük Kovalamaca*, p. 152

[337] Interview with Süleyman Demirel, December 30, 2008 cited in Turgut, *130 Günlük Kovalamaca*, pp. 251, 253, Interview with Süleyman Demirel, July 2004 cited in Yetkin, *Kürt Kapanı*, p. 189

[338] Yetkin, *Kürt Kapanı*, p. 122

[339] "Demirel: Bıçak Kemiğe Dayandı", *Hürriyet*, October 8, 1998, http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=-41797, Bila, "Süleyman Demirel Anlatıyor", p. 276, Interview with Uğur Ziyal, Rt. Amb., Ankara, May 28, 2011

[340] See Ek-4, Minutes of the Meeting with Egyptian President Mubarak in Ankara, in Turgut, *130 Günlük Kovalamaca*, p. 269

[341] Turgut, *130 Günlük Kovalamaca*, p. 161

Regarding the timing of the Turkish move, Turkey was thought to have been frustrated by the failure of its previous efforts at diplomacy. With its greater power, force had appeared as an option if the crisis turned out to be unresolvable through peaceful means. It was also concerned about its expected role in a possible solution to the water problem between Syria and Israel.[342] Turkey wanted to resolve its problems while the Syrian-Israeli negotiations were still at an impasse.[343] According to İsmail Cem, Turkey now, for the first time, had an appropriate atmosphere to manipulate the issue toward a solution.[344]

In conclusion, as Turkish more assertive policies heated up, Syria's rhetoric suddenly cooled down, and for the first time, Damascus agreed to negotiate the security question, despite not having reached a political compromise on the water problem.[345]

4.5.2.2. Perceived Way Out: Motivations to Talk

Due to the aforementioned challenges, a stalemate of frustration and desperation for Turkey, and a stalemate of attrition for Syria, plagued bilateral relations throughout the 1990s. In spite of these conditions of stalemate, why had the parties been ineffective in transforming initially, and what was different about 1998 that opened the door to conflict transformation at last? As argued in the theoretical section, the existence of stalemate conditions alone is not enough, they must also be perceived, along with a way out. In other words, both sides need some motivation to talk. What made the 1998 crisis different was that both parties were motivated, if to varying degrees. The willingness exhibited by both was the real condition for successful transformation.

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[342] Ayşegül Sever, "Turkey and the Syrian-Israeli Peace Talks in the 1990s", *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol.5, No.3, September 200, pp. 87-90

[343] Altunışık, "Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Dönemde Suriye'nin Dış Politikası", p. 285

[344] See Yetkin, *Kürt Kapanı*, p. 83

[345] Oktav Alantar, "Turkish-Syrian Relations at the Crossroads", p. 159

In Turkey, there had been no political will before 1998, which was largely a side effect of the constantly changing coalition governments.[346] Its great instability was the reason for the lack of concrete policy on Syria.[347] For instance, although Ankara had delivered its January 1996 *verbale note* announcing that continued support by Damascus to the PKK would be considered a *casus belli*, given the political instability caused by the December 1995 elections, pressure on Syria had remained an almost solely military affair. The failures of such efforts led to a consensus among Turkish state elites[348] after the mid-1990s to prioritize the issue at all levels of state. Both military authorities and government officials were now making it clear they wanted the issue resolved.

As of mid-1998, all actors revealed their willingness through decisive action. President Süleyman Demirel warned Damascus it was prepared to employ the military option if Turkey's terms were not met. In September, Chief of General Staff Hüseyin Kıvrıkoğlu accused Syria of resorting to terrorism to wage an undeclared war. Prime Minister Mesut Yılmaz requested parliamentary consent for war and received approval from all political parties for a declaration calling on Syria to cut its support for the PKK or be ready to bear the consequences. General Aytaç Yalman, Commander of the Second Army at the time of the crisis, later responded to a question about the situation that all the plans and preparations had been in place for Turkey to invade in the event of Syrian unresponsiveness.[349] This tough stance won support from the military, media and the public at large, and was backed up by the deployment of land and air forces along the border.[350] Ziyal pointed out that by this time, all involved actors had been dealing with the issue for many years and had become specialists on their subjects.[351] This also contributed to their willingness to actively engage the issue.

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[346] Altunışık and Tür, "From Distant Neighbors to Partners?", p. 236

[347] Interview with Uğur Ziyal, Retd. Amb., Ankara, May 28, 2011

[348] Altunışık and Tür, "From Distant Neighbors to Partners?", p. 237

[349] Bila, "Org. Aytaç Yalman Anlatıyor", p. 199

[350] "Turkey's Relations with its Middle Eastern Neighbors", pp. 65-66

[351] Interview with Uğur Ziyal, Retd. Ambassador, Ankara, May 28, 2011

When we look at actors' attitudes toward the conflict, an adversarial framing shaped the Turkish parliament's response.[352] Such framing is thought to take on a life of its own in domestic politics, where the options of policymakers are limited by national institutions and nationalist thinking Adversarial framing can become a self-fulfilling prophecy, instigating actions that transform a country's external environment or manipulating an issue to match the initial interpretations of nationalist framers.[353]

The National Security Council (NSC), which is composed of military commanders and some ministers, had considered implementing coercive diplomacy, including the limited use of force, during its July 1998 meeting. This was followed at the NSC's September meeting by an urgent call for resolution.[354] In the same month, General Atilla Ateş, commander of land forces, threatened Damascus through a speech delivered in Hatay. In October, President Süleyman Demirel contributed to this series of actions with a speech at the inauguration of the TGNA's new legislative session. He emphasized two points: Syria's unresponsiveness to Turkey's efforts and Turkey's right to take action. With these statements Turkey embarked on an irreversible course of action, publicly committing to the use of force if deemed necessary.[355] Syria's unresponsiveness was a sign for Turkey's hurting stalemate condition, while its declaration of the right to take action was an indication of willingness to break the stalemate, even if by force.

One dissenting voice remained: that of Bülent Ecevit, deputy prime minister and leader of the Democratic Left Party. He was against the threats of with military force, but had agreed not to publicly voice his concerns.[356]

Turkey's influential business community also supported this process. Ankara was hopeful that, when signed, a peace agreement would open up greater

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[352] Loizides, "Elite Framing and Conflict Transformation", p. 12

[353] Ibid., p. 15

[354] Turgut, *130 Günlük Kovalamaca*, p. 242

[355] Ibid., pp. 243-244; Aras, "The Role of Motivation", p. 217

[356] See Murat Yetkin, *Kürt Kapanı* pp. 77, 88-89, Altunışık and Tür, "From Distant Neighbors to Partners?", p. 238

opportunities for trade and business ventures, especially for construction companies. Better relations with Syria were a key to Turkey's participation in the "millions" to be spent on reconstruction and development in the region.[357]

The political will was completed by the public will. Although the role of state had been central in determining the political elite's frame of reference, the media and the public, particularly through education and law,[358] also have an important role in framing policies, and we should consider the impacts of the public will. Public opinion contributes to explanations for why Turkish policymakers had waited so long to act. Anti-Syrian attitude in Turkish public opinion had been generated by the highly publicized confessions of Sırrı Sakık in official interrogations, during which he revealed the Syrian connection to PKK terrorism. This negative attitude seems to have had some bearing on the crisis.[359] Demirel cited increasing public anger and pressure to solve the problem during his meeting with Egyptian President Mubarak on October 6, 1998.[360] When asked later about the timing of his October 1 speech to the parliament, he again cited the readiness of the Turkish public,[361] as a great outrage had emerged within Turkey.[362]

Some argue that consensus among elites made it easier for the masses to uncritically adopt the same views in ways that strengthened nationalism, creating a vicious cycle between domestic politics and foreign policy objectives.[363] A public opinion poll taken October 1-11, 1998 showed that the majority favored remaining firm to ensure Syrian cooperation on the PKK issue. While the state had reserved the right to use force, the poll results revealed that the majority believed firmness

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[357] Olson, "Turkey-Syria Relations Since the Gulf War", p. 173

[358] Loizides, "Elite Framing and Conflict Transformation", p. 11

[359] Aykan, "The Turkish-Syrian Crisis of October 1998", p. 179

[360] See Ek-4, Minutes of the Meeting with Egyptian President Mubarak in Ankara, in Turgut, *130 Günlük Kovalamaca*, p. 268

[361] Interview with Süleyman Demirel cited in Yetkin, *Kürt Kapanı*, p. 192

[362] Bila, "Süleyman Demirel Anlatıyor", p. 271, "Artık, Acı Çekmek İstemiyoruz", *Hürriyet*, October 5, 1998, http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=-41366

[363] Loizides, "Elite Framing and Conflict Transformation" p. 8

without recourse to brute force would be sufficient.[364] This is the most explicit expression of the public's desire to peacefully resolve the issue.

In 1998, with public opinion was aroused, the government and military spokesmen were joined by opposition parties and the press in a high-level display of national determination.[365]

Throughout the crisis, Ankara had accompanied its threats with inducements, underscoring its determination to develop relations with Damascus in the event of its compliance. From the beginning of the crisis, in order to provoke a positive response, Turkish leaders had reminded Syria that as soon as it stopped supporting the PKK and Öcalan, Turkey was prepared to open a new chapter of improved ties.[366] Turkish public opinion corroborated this stance.[367] It was important for Syria to know that concessions would not end in futility, and that it could instead be motivated by Turkey's proposals for a new start.[368]

Asad's lack of motivation to continue to protect the PKK can be interpreted as the most significant determinant of its motivation to talk. He arguably intended to leave the country to his heir, Bashar, in as stable a condition as possible, and was prepared to sacrifice its strategic instrument, the PKK, to avoid an armed clash with Turkey.[369]

This shift in political will by Asad was not made without some suspicion among Syrian authorities. Some divisions within the cabinet and among different sectors of the military are identifiable. According to press reports based on Turkish

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[364] "Halktan Hükümete Suriye Desteği", *Hürriyet*, October 15, 1998, http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=-42856, Aykan, "The Turkish-Syrian Crisis of October 1998", p. 181

[365] Kushner, "Turkish-Syrian Relations", p. 240, "Meclis'te Özlenen Tablo", *Hürriyet*, October 8, 1998, http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=-41793, "Baykal: Suriye'ye Her Şey Müstahak", *Hürriyet*, October 7, 1998, http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=-41661, "Vurursak, Destek", *Hürriyet*, October 6, 1998, http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=-41554

[366] Aras, "The Role of Motivation", p. 219

[367] Oktav Alantar, "The October 1998 Crisis", p. 145

[368] http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/185992.stm (accessed on May 23, 2011)

[369] Aras, "The Role of Motivation", p. 220, "Apo için Savaşılmaz", *Hürriyet*, October 13, 1998, http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=-42566

intelligence sources, the Syrian defense minister and chief of staff argued that in the event of war, Turkey would win, due to its superior armed forces, and that a Syrian defeat would likely result in the overthrow of the Asad regime, which would directly benefit Israel. In contrast, the commanders of its air and naval forces argued against expelling Öcalan, recommending instead that Syria delay the problem.[370] Despite these calculations, there was no "will" to go to war against Turkey, rather a belief that the conflict could have been neutralized.[371] Kharrazi responded positively to the question of Syrian will and intention to solve its problems with Turkey.[372]

Together with this unwillingness to go to war, the possibility of long-term benefits, especially through the development of economic relations, further motivated Syria to resolve its dispute with Turkey. Syria took a liberalist approach toward Turkey,[373] perceiving an alliance with a moderate, economically strong country[374] as a potential opportunity. In other words, to solve its economic problems, Syria needed Turkey.[375] Moreover, Syria needed a stable Turkey that would be able to assist with economic, political and touristic endeavors.[376]

Liberalist thinking also led Syria to think about Turkey as a potential gateway to Europe, which was another important motivation to pursue a way out. According to Syrians, Turkey constituted a tunnel to Europe for Syria, while Syria constituted a tunnel to the Arab world for Turkey.[377]

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[370] Aykan, "The Turkish-Syrian Crisis of October 1998", p. 178

[371] Interview with Marwan Kabalan, Professor, University of Damascus, June 2, 2008

[372] Turgut, *130 Günlük Kovalamaca*, p. 151

[373] Interview with Marwan Kabalan, Professor, University of Damascus, June 2, 2008

[374] Interview with Ibrahim al-Hamidi, Journalist, Al-Hayat, Damascus, June 3, 2008

[375] Interview with Samir al-Taqi, Head of Orient Center for International Studies, Damascus, June 3, 2008

[376] Interview with Münir Ali, SANA, Damascus, November 7, 2010

[377] Interview with Muhammad Habash, MP in the Parliament, June 12, 2008

From a more realist perspective, Syria needed an ally in the region other than Iran, and in fact attempted to put aside these relations.[378] In addition, within the framework of an Israeli-Syrian peace treaty, a rapprochement between Syria and Turkey could compensate for the loss of Iran as an ally, since the Islamic Republic would be unable to accept a Syrian recognition of Israel.[379]

Hafiz Asad's willingness as a dominant leader was a vital determinant in Syria's motivation to normalize relations with Turkey; he has been called wise for this change in perspective.[380] He indicated this willingness through his deportation of Öcalan. Turkey attempted to confirm Öcalan's expulsion in a number of ways. One indicator was his lack of participation in a TV program that was broadcast on Med TV every Friday.[381] Then, on October 12, 1998, Turkey received its first official confirmation from Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa that Öcalan had indeed been expelled from Syria, who guaranteed this intelligence.[382] Following the October 9 deportation, Syria declared its readiness to begin unconditional talks with Turkey, which began October 19.

Asad's willingness can also be understood from an anecdote; although some members of the Syrian delegation were disturbed by the Turkish side's harsh attitude and wanted to leave the negotiation table, they were convinced to remain by colleagues who cited orders from President Asad to reach an agreement.[383] The degree of importance Syria had placed on resolving the stalemate exceeded the

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[378] Interview with Sami Moubayed, Political Analyst, Damascus, November 2, 2010 and Interview with Samir al-Taqi, Head of Orient Center for International Studies, Damascus, June 3, 2008

[379] Alain Gresh, "Turkish-Israeli-Syrian Relations and Their Impact on the Middle East", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 25, No. 2, Spring 1998, p. 199

[380] Interview with Ömer Önhon, Ambassador of Turkey to Syria, Damascus, November 9, 2010

[381] "2 Gündür Kayıp", *Hürriyet*, October 11, 1998 (http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=-42238)

[382] Turgut, *130 Günlük Kovalamaca*, pp. 155, 160

[383] Interview with Ibrahim Hamidi, Journalist, Al-Hayat, Damascus, June 3, 2008, October 31, 2010

degree of humiliation its delegates suffered through their treatment by Turkey during negotiations.[384]

Although public will appeared unimportant in Syria, it has been claimed that if relations with Turkey did not improve, the public would not have welcomed the situation.[385] This is evidence of the covert role of the public, which was not ignored during the crisis by the Syrian authorities.

4.5.3. Negotiation Variables

4.5.3.1. Negotiation Goals

As was claimed in the theoretical section, sometimes time may be right for resolution of one goal but not another. In addition to poor timing, pursuit of the "wrong" goals is another reason behind the failure of efforts to transform conflicts. Thus identifying "right" goal might be identified as a cause for the success of conflict transformation processes. Meanwhile, parties' devious objectives might slow down conflict transformation processes.

Within this framework, when we look at the goals of Turkey and Syria during negotiations, we see that neither Turkey nor Syria pursued devious objectives. Syria may not have had specific long-term goals, but it did pursue an end to the crisis. Syria was reacting to a limited crisis.[386] Mubarak shared that Asad wanted to prevent escalation, which was an indicator of imminent war according to Mubarak.[387] Nevertheless, Syria was not merely maneuvering to buy time. Asad's decision was a strategic decision.[388]

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[384] Interview with Sami Moubayed, Political Analyst, Damascus, November 2, 2010

[385] Interview with Thabet Salem, Journalist, Damascus, November 7, 2010

[386] Interview with Samir Ladkani, Damascus, October 30, 2010

[387] Interview with Hosni Mubarak by Mehmet Ali Birand, http://www.turktime.com/haber/TURKIYE-SURIYE-SAVASININ-ESIGINDE/14458, January 16, 2008 (accessed on August 26, 2008)

[388] Interview with Ibrahim Hamidi, Journalist, Al-Hayat, Damascus, October 31, 2010

Turkey became particularly serious about solving this dispute in 1998. In the past, it had taken actions that indicated devious objectives. In 1993, for instance, Syria had interpreted the fruitless meetings over water as an effort by Turkey to buy time for the completion of GAP.[389]

For Syrians, "Turks were taking negotiations very seriously."[390] Moreover, Turkey's attempt to sever the conceptual link between the issues of water and the PKK, and to focus only on the PKK issue, can be examined within this framework. This linkage had been established with the 1987 economic and security protocols, and had become an obstacle to transformation of the conflict. The decoupling of these issues became the sufficient and necessary condition of agreement.[391] When the parties began to consider these issues separately, the transformation process accelerated.[392]

Turkey's decision to focus only on the goal of ending Syrian support to the PKK was motivated in part by the level of stalemate it endured. Turkey experienced a stalemate of desperation and frustration in the 1990s, the most apparent cause of which was the costs it incurred due to PKK terrorism, which was facilitated by Syria. Turkey was driven to end terminate its support of Syria.

4.5.3.2. Negotiation Strategies

Negotiations between Turkey and Syria in 1998 began in a tense atmosphere, as the Turkish side approached the process from a position of power.[393] Yet some have argued that the Turkish decision-makers were careful not to make insurmountable demands, instead focusing on clear, reasonable and limited

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[389] Jouejati, "Water Politics As High Politics", p. 140

[390] Interview with Ibrahim Hamidi, Journalist, Al-Hayat, Damascus, June 3, 2008

[391] Güner, "The Turkish-Syrian War of Attrition", p. 115

[392] See Güner, "The Turkish-Syrian War of Attrition" and Altunışık and Tür, "From Distant Neighbors to Partners?", "Demirel: Suriye Konusunda Beklemedeyiz", *Hürriyet*, October 17, 1998, http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=-43172

[393] Altunışık and Tür, "From Distant Neighbors to Partners?", p. 238

proposals that were acceptable to Syria. Ankara asked Damascus to halt its support for the PKK and stop hosting its leader, as well as to accept the establishment of a monitoring mechanism that would allow it to monitor whether or not the terms of agreement were being implemented. Despite other issues that had strained bilateral relations, Turkey limited its demands to the PKK issue in hopes of creating goodwill between the two sides, and took care to avoid humiliating the Syrian side in its preparation of an agreement.[394]

This issue of non-humiliating behavior had been addressed before negotiations began. This message had traveled with Mubarak as he shuttled between Turkey and Syria. Turkey also needed to be sensitive not to deliberately accuse Syria.[395]

However, as we have noted, the Syrian side *did* feel humiliated at the negotiation table. If not for instructions from Asad not to return without an agreement, negotiations may have been cut short early on.[396] According to Uğur Ziyal, head of the Turkish delegation, this was actually a negotiation tactic of Syrians, wherein the perception of a contradiction in views at the beginning of the process, when they eventually came together in agreement, they began to emphasize that we (Syria and Turkey) constituted a unique and unified genesis (*heyet-i vahide*).[397]

Turkey gave nothing in return for Syrian concessions. Namely, it made no pledge concerning the flow of the Euphrates River into Syria, nor did it signal willingness to discuss the Hatay issue. The crisis ended with the Syrian government's capitulation:[398] "all the language associated with the agreement, and

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[394] Aras, "The Role of Motivation", p. 219

[395] Interview with Uğur Ziyal, Retd. Ambassador, Ankara, May 28, 2011

[396] Interview with Ibrahim Hamidi, Journalist, Al-Hayat, Damascus, June 3, 2008 and October 31, 2010

[397] Interview with Uğur Ziyal, Retd. Ambassador, Ankara, May 28, 2011

[398] Sezgin, "The October 1998 Crisis", p. 45

the Turkish and Syrian statements made about it afterwards smelled of Turkish dictate and Syrian capitulation."[399]

The claim Syria made that Turkey had been tough seems reasonable in the context of Turkey's expectations from Syria, while Turkish troops waited along the border. Turkey had used positional bargaining and contending strategy in particular, in its effort to persuade Syria to accede to its demands regarding the PKK. We see also the strategy of problem-solving in its approach to the negotiations. In contrast to previous efforts, the 1998 negotiations had been successful in converting the conflict into a problem, and then solving the problem in a way that was mutually beneficial to those with a stake in the solution.

This approach proves the assumption that hurting stalemate conditions encourage the adoption of problem-solving strategies. Turkey followed this strategy when it focused its efforts specifically on the PKK problem – a default option when contentious tactics did not appear feasible and delays were costly.

In conclusion, Turkey used positional bargaining and problem-solving strategies in a complementary way. Alternating between two the strategies brought success.

6. Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, the reasons behind the transformation of the Turkish-Syrian conflict into good neighborly relations have been examined. Among the variables analyzed, ripeness appears to have been an important direct determinant of the transformation. It is obvious that conditions of ripeness – hurting stalemate, a perceived way out and a valid spokesman – occurred at high degrees in this conflict. When the parties are compared in terms of ripeness level, Turkey was clearly in more desperate conditions, especially due to the death toll it suffered related to PKK terrorism. While Turkey was the more challenged party by the conflict, it converted its position to that of challenger to the status quo. Within this context, Turkey's power relative to Syria gave it the self-confidence to approach

[399] Ibid., p. 50

Syria and convince it to reframe the status quo. Egypt and Iran also played important mediating roles as third parties.

Changes in the international and regional context, which had important repercussions for both parties, prepared the groundwork that made possible a level of maneuverability that had not previously been possible. Nevertheless, this variable is not a direct determinant of transformation.

Turkey, which was in a stalemate of desperation and frustration, had narrowed the focus of its demands from Syria rather than the whole relations together with a contending approach. This policy was influential in the sense that PKK support had been a strategic asset for Syria as it pursued its own identity-based concerns about territory and water. The decision to end support for the PKK was a strategic decision.

In conclusion, high level of ripeness in the more frustrated party in the conflict, Turkey, is the direct determinant of transformation in the conflict. Stalemate conditions, together with consensus among the coalition actors to solve the dispute, made Turkey a challenger against the status quo, and gave Syria a perceive way out.

CHAPTER 5

RIPENESS PROCESS AND TRANSFORMATION OF THE SYRIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT

5.1. Introduction

The Syrian-Israeli conflict is a classic political-military conflict[1] between two established, sovereign states, unlike, for example, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which focused mainly on issues of national identity.[2] Similar to the Syrian-Turkish conflict, it was not also immune to transformative efforts during the 1990s. In particular, between October 1991 and March 2000, bilateral negotiations between Syria and Israel took place, mediated by the United States.

However, peace was not achieved, as there was no reorientation in the parties' domestic and foreign policies. One reason for the failure was not initiated in reaction to any profound change in the parties' attitudes, and the deep-seated causes of conflict and war between the two parties remained intact.[3] Rather, cataclysmic events in the region and the world brought the two embattled neighbors together, but at a moment when neither was fully prepared for peace.[4]

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[1] See Erik L. Knudsen, "The Syrian-Israeli Political Impasse: A Study in Conflict, War and Mistrust", *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, Vol. 12, No. 1, March 2001

[2] Helena Cobban, *The Israeli-Syrian Peace Talks 1991-1996 and Beyond*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1999), p. 12

[3] Moshe Ma'oz, *Syria and Israel From War to Peace Making*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 259

It is argued that for adversaries like Israel and Syria to make the difficult decisions required to produce an agreement, a combination of pain and hope is required. Pain makes the status quo unbearable, and hope and vision for a better future facilitate decisions. This combination of factors was absent during the peace process between Syria and Israel.[5]

In this chapter, the question of the reasons behind the failure of these transformation efforts will be investigated. How much ripeness theory can help understand this failure will also be asked. In other words, the scope of ripeness theory will be explored.

5.2. Background

The military and political strategy of Syria – the beating heart of Arab nationalism – toward Israel, which it considers an artificial, imperial and expansionist state, resulted in a relationship characterized by "conflict" from the 1948 war to the late 1980s.

The external imposition of state boundaries fragmented historic Syria when Israel's territory was partially superimposed over it. This generated powerful supra-state ideologies like pan-Arabism, pan-Syrianism based on Greater Syria,[6] and post-independence domestic instability. Israel was also perceived as a symbol of the undesired penetration of Western values into the region. The majority of intellectuals in the Arab world have continued to perceive Israel as a threat, not only in the military sense, but on political, economic and cultural levels as well.[7]

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[4] Robert Rabil, *Embattled Neighbors Syria, Israel, and Lebanon* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003), p. 256

[5] Itamar Rabinovich, *The Brink of Peace The Israeli-Syrian Negotiations*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998)

[6] Raymond A. Hinnebusch, *Syria: Revolution from Above,* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 3

[7] Avi Kober, "Arab Perceptions of Post-Cold War Israel: From a Balance –of-Threats to a Balance-of-Power Thinking", *The Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 1, No. 4, Summer 2002, p. 31

Another source of difficulty was the decades-long socio-psychological barrier between Syrian Arabs and Israeli Jews that manifested itself as mutual suspicion, prejudice, demonology, and animosity. Asad himself admitted in 1974, regarding Syrian attitudes, that people who had been nurtured over twenty-six years to hate Israel would not change their ideas overnight just because the state changed its course.[8]

Syrian leaders, including Asad, have themselves nurtured this hatred in speeches and proclamations, as well as in the media and in school textbooks. Since the 1970s, Israel had been depicted as "racist", "colonialist", "aggressive", "neo-Nazi", and "a cancer". During the Madrid Peace Process, Asad moderated his anti-Israeli expressions, restraining himself to terms like "expansionist" and anti-Arab, but he did not prohibit the publication of anti-Israel books and articles.[9]

The Palestinian predicament has been at the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, though Palestinians constituted only a political challenge to Israel, not a military threat,[10] unlike Syria. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is focused on issues of national identity and the search for creative formulas of national coexistence than on military questions.[11] According to Moshe Ma'oz, Syria has manifested a consistent political and ideological hostility to the Jewish entity since the 1920s, and a military threat to Israel's security since 1948. Especially after Egypt made peace with Israel in 1979, the Arab-Israeli conflict became, in many respects, a Syrian-Israeli conflict. Until October 1994, Jordan and Israel had maintained de facto peaceful relations. Iraq had, in practical terms, departed from its conflict with Israel since 1980, when it became involved in two successive wars, thereby leaving Syria alone in the Arab-Israeli conflict.[12]

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[8] Moshe Ma'oz, "Can Israel and Syria reach Peace? Obstacles, Lessons and Prospects", *The James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy, Rice University*, March 2005, p. 22

[9] Ma'oz, "Can Israel and Syria reach Peace?", p. 22

[10] Ma'oz, *Syria and Israel*, p. vii

[11] Cobban, *The Israeli-Syrian Peace Talks*, p. 12

[12] Ma'oz, *Syria and Israel*, p. vii

Even before the first Arab-Israeli War began in 1948, Syria housed fighters infiltrating Palestine.[13] During the mid-1940s, the newly emerging Syrian Republic became the most anti-Zionist Arab state. The failure of the irregular army and the establishment of the Israeli state on May 14, 1948 led five Arab states to declare war on Israel. The results were disastrous for Arabs, while serving as the war of the independence for Israel. An Armistice Agreement was signed between Syria and Israel in 1949. Despite subsequent initiatives by Syria, a peace agreement was never reached, and thus, though ambiguous in many respects, the Armistice Agreement remained the legal basis for relations between Syria and Israel. This ambiguity led to many subsequent grievances along the border, eventually culminating in the 1967 war.

While Israel launched military operations against Syrian positions, Syria responded by using the Golan Heights and jeopardizing Israel's water resources. Between Syria's extremism and Israel's excesses, a cycle of raids and retaliations has pushed the region toward the brink. The 1967 war, which was a total disaster for Arabs, resulted in a zero-sum result between Syria and Israel, wherein Israel became perceived by the Arab world as an invisible power.[14] UN Security Council Resolution 242 (UNSCR 242), which was adopted after the war, was sufficiently ambiguous to allow the Arab states and Israel to interpret it as they saw fit in response to varying conditions. Agreement to the resolution, as a condition for entering negotiations, is the only remaining basis for peace talks today.

Hafiz Asad's coming to power in 1970 marked the beginning of realpolitik with regard to the Israeli-Syrian conflict. Asad affirmed Syria's rejection of UNSCR 242 and began preparing for battle with Israel. Due to overconfidence in its strategic and military superiority over Arab states, the 1973 war took Israel by surprise. Henry Kissinger's shuttle diplomacy resulted in a disengagement agreement in May 1974. Until 1978, with the Camp David Accords between Israel and Egypt that resulted in a 1979 peace treaty, Asad

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[13] Philip Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, (Princeton: Princeton Uni. Press, 1987), pp. 555-6

[14] Kober, "Arab Perceptions of Post-Cold War Israel", p. 25

had suggested for a political settlement in exchange for territories occupied by Israel and Palestinian rights. These offers were rejected by Israel, which formally annexed the Golan Heights in 1981. Meanwhile, Syria and Israel continued to test the each other's intentions in Lebanon.

After the Camp David Accord, Hafiz Asad, with massive Soviet military help, promoted his doctrine of strategic balance, aiming to confront Israel and deter it from attacking Syria. However, the 1980s were economically devastating years for Syria. Moreover, sudden and radical changes in the regional and international balance of power, which resulted in changes in Syrian foreign policy, were more influential than internal changes. These external factors included the Soviet collapse and the end of the Cold War at the international level, and the Gulf Crisis and Gulf War at the regional level.

In the aftermath of the Cold War, in the eyes of Arabs, Israel's regional status improved. From an illegitimate player interloping in the Arab world, Arabs began to think of Israel as a Middle Eastern power seeking hegemony that had to be contained. According to Kober, a balance of power approach has gradually replaced the balance of threats approach that had characterized Arab thinking on their relations with Israel for many years.[15]

Within this changing framework, in the aftermath of the first Gulf War, the US sought to convene a multilateral Arab-Israeli peace conference. Under President George H.W. Bush, the US succeeded in bringing Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria to the table at a conference in Madrid, Spain from October 30 to November 1, 1991. The Palestinians were subsumed under the Jordanian delegation. The conference was largely symbolic, and most speakers, including Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Shara, merely reiterated their standard confrontational positions.[16]

This opening conference was followed by multilateral and bilateral talks. The multilateral talks, which were boycotted by Syria and Lebanon,

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[15] See Kober, "Arab Perceptions of Post-Cold War Israel"

[16] For more on Shamir's belittling of Syria as one of the most oppressive tyrannical regimes in the world, and Shara's identification of Shamir as a terrorist by holding up a 'Wanted' poster featuring his photograph, see Knudsen, "The Syrian-Israeli Political Impasse", p. 227

convened in North Africa and the Persian Gulf.[17] In late 1996, the Arabs suspended the multilateral talks, allegedly due to their disappointment in the pace of progress in the peace process during the Netanyahu government. Multilateral talks were revived in early 2000 in Moscow, after the negotiations between Syria and Israel resumed, and headway was made on the Palestinian track. Although meetings of the multilateral committees were scheduled, in the end they were suspended until substantial progress was made on all tracks of the Arab-Israeli peace process.[18]

Many rounds of bilateral negotiations took place between Syria and Israel in Washington, D.C., Wye River Plantation, Shepherdstown, and Camp David in the US, and in Geneva in Switzerland. At the negotiations that took place just after the Madrid conference, the opening positions of both sides led to an immediate impasse. While Syria initiated a "land for peace" formula, Israel under the Likud government headed by Yitzhak Shamir insisted on a "peace for peace" formula and refused to give up the Golan Heights. Under Israel's two Labor Party Prime ministers, Yitzhak Rabin, who created a window of opportunity for "full peace for full withdrawal formula" and Shimon Peres, who demanded a new vision of the Middle East, the two sides managed to establish a new foundation for a lasting peace. They reached an implicit agreement on the aims and principles of a security arrangement between them, including on the content of a peace agreement in the territorial sphere, in the normalization of relations, on the linkages among these issues, and the phasing in of successive stages of implementation.

However, in March 1996, Peres suspended Israel's participation in the negotiations and moved up Israeli elections to May of that year. The winner was Benjamin Netanyahu, who refused to resume the talks from the point at which Peres had suspended them. This was a setback from the "land for peace" formula to the "peace for peace" formula. The defeat of Netanyahu in

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[17] Multilateral talks for the working group on refugees were convened in Tunisia in October 1993, on water and arms control in Oman and Qatar in April 1994 and in Bahrain in October 1994, and on terrorism in Egypt in March 1995.

[18] Kober, "Arab Perceptions of Post-Cold War Israel", p. 38

the May 1999 elections by Ehud Barak, whose political mentor had been Rabin, signaled the resumption of talks. When he declared the only way to build a stable, comprehensive Middle East peace was through an agreement with Syria, he swung the door wide open for a comprehensive peace in the Middle East, though it would not stay open for long. A narrow strip of land along the northeastern shore of Lake Tiberias prevented a breakthrough. Barak was ready to fully withdraw from the Golan Heights, but on the condition that this strip of land remains under Israel's sovereignty. However, Syria, pursuing strategic consistency in its objectives, was adamant that it get back every inch of the Golan Heights. This was the final failure of the peace process of the 1990s, taking place in Geneva in March 2000.

Some politicians and many scholars studying Syria, including Moshe Ma'oz, Raymond Hinnebusch, and Alasdair Drysdale regularly repeat Henry Kissinger's observation that "[n]o Arab-Israeli war is possible without Egypt, and no Arab-Israeli peace is possible without Syria." In an interview with Patrick Seale, Ehud Barak, Prime Minister between 1999 and 2001, also observed: "The only way to build a stable comprehensive peace in the Middle East is through an agreement with Syria. That is the keystone of the peace."[19] According to Hinnebusch and Drysdale, as long as the Golan Heights remains in dispute, there will be no peace between Syria and Israel.

From another perspective, Syria is located at the very heart of the Middle East, bordering Israel, Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, and Iraq, and the situated at the crossroads between Mediterranean and Persian Gulf, and between Eurasia and Africa; it enjoys exceptional strategic importance within the region. It therefore cannot be ignored in any effort to bring peace to the Middle East. Hinnebusch and Drysdale assert that while Syria does not have the political stature of Egypt, the [former] military strength of Iraq, or the wealth of Saudi Arabia, it is still a key frontline state, primarily due to the efforts of Asad. Because Syria considers itself to be the beating heart of Arab nationalism, it claims to act for all Arabs, and does not hesitate to intervene on

[19] "Kisses across the Golan Heights", *Middle East Quarterly*, September 1999 (http://www.meforum.org/article/479)

behalf of the Palestinians and Lebanon.[20] Helena Cobban, a reporter on the Middle East, also answers the question of what the Middle East might look like if Syria and Israel could agree on a stable peace. Her answer was that such a transformation would radically improve the strategic situation of both countries, but most importantly the ratification of a peace treaty could have much broader positive ramifications throughout the region. Since Egypt and Jordan have already made their peace with Israel, this step would lead to the completion of the circle of peace in the region, since a Syrian-Israeli peace agreement would likely be followed by a Lebanese-Israeli peace agreement. According to Cobban, Israel's conflict with the Palestinians might continue, but this conflict poses no military threat to Israel. A completed circle of peace would make it easier to find constructive solutions to core conflicts.[21]

5.3. The Elusive Notion of Effectiveness/Success

As mentioned in the research design section, the bottom line for success is the signing of a peace agreement between parties. As there was no signed agreement between Syria and Israel at the conclusion of the peace process in 2000, efforts to transform the conflict were futile. Some argued that there was no process, merely negotiations. A metaphor was made with chewing gum, which requires much of the work of eating, but does not provide sustenance.[22] The Syrians understood themselves to have ended up in "nothing" at the end of negotiations.[23]

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[20] Alasdair Drysdale, Raymond Hinnebusch, *Syria and Middle East Peace Process*, (New York: Council of Foreign Relations Press, 1991), pp. 2-3

[21] Cobban, *The Israeli-Syrian Peace Talks*, p. 3

[22] Interview with Efraim Inbar, Professor, Director of BESA, Bar-Ilan University, Tel Aviv, December 14, 2010

[23] Interview with Marwan Kabalan, Dean of Faculty, University of Damascus, November 8, 2010

Despite this failure, the process was not without some achievements. First was the simple fact of engagement between Syria and Israel throughout the 1990s. The process was a kind of PR (Public Relations) work,[24] because for Syrians it was not easy to sit together with Israelis at the same table.[25] They became acquainted with each other. And in fact, 80 percent of the issues acknowledged to have been agreed upon during the negotiations.[26] Only Syrian insistence on a border based on the June 4 line, and Israeli insistence on security arrangements prevented an agreement from being signed.

During the process, some important documents were also studied. The first was the draft for a declaration of principles in 1993. Second, as a result of talks between the two chiefs of staff between November 1994 and June 1995, a non-paper on the aims and principles of the security arrangements was drafted, and was declared as a procedural breakthrough.[27] Third, both parties reached some understanding regarding Southern Lebanon. These were unwritten agreements intended to keep violent engagement at a minimum until a peace agreement was signed.[28]

In conclusion, while the negotiations did not result in a peace agreement as expected, the efforts constituted the basis for future negotiations.

Just after the failure in Geneva in March 2000, vital changes occurred in the Middle East. Coming to power after his father's death in June 2000, Bashar Asad faced domestic and foreign policy challenges. Bashar had to contend with a stalled peace process, along with his father's legacy, rising pressure from Lebanon for Syrian forces to pull out, and the Palestinian

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[24] Interview with Marwan Kabalan, Dean of Faculty, University of Damascus, November 8, 2010

[25] Interview with Marwan Kabalan, Professor, University of Damascus, Damascus, June 2, 2008

[26] Riad Daoudi, *Workshop on Turkey-Syria Relations*, Centre for Political and Economic Studies, Damascus, November 10-11, 2010. Riad Daoudi was one of Syrian negotiators during the process.

[27] Dennis Ross, *The Missing Peace, The Inside Story of the Fighting for Middle East Peace*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004), p. 158

[28] Interview with Samir al-Taqi, Head of Orient Center for International Studies, Damascus, June 3, 2008

intifada beginning in September 2000, followed by renewed activity by Hezbollah against Israel's northern border, the war on terrorism declared by the US in the wake of the September 11 attacks on New York and Washington, and the subsequent war in Iraq. Alongside all these challenges, Bashar called for a resumption of negotiations, but the Israeli administration headed by Ariel Sharon that came to power in February 2001 following the *intifada* was unwilling to engage in negotiations with Syria.

5.4. Contextual Variables

5.4.1. External Context

During the Cold War years, the Middle East was an important arena of Soviet-American competition. In the early 1950s, the Soviet Union had shifted from an initial support for Israel to a sweeping support for the Arab states, and it exploited the Arab-Israeli conflict in order to weaken the Western position in the Middle East and enhance its own.[29] Slater argues that it was the Cold War that brought the Soviet Union into the Middle East and led to direct Soviet support for Arabs in the conflict, not the active Soviet support of the Arabs introduced the cold war into the Arab-Israeli conflict.[30]

During the Cold War years, Syria was supported by the Soviet Bloc while Israel was supported by the US. Although the Syrian-Israeli conflict was confined for the most part to the region, Hafiz Asad had never lost sight of the global context within which the dispute was embedded. He knew that Syria could neither fight Israel nor make peace with it without superpower involvement. He also exploited Cold War tensions to Syria's advantage, relying on Soviet military, economic and diplomatic assistance to build Syria into a major regional power. This allowed it to pursue its goal of "strategic parity"

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[29] Itamar Rabinovich, *Waging Peace Israel and the Arabs: 1948-2003*, (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004), p. 5

[30] See Jerome Slater, "The Superpowers and an Arab-Israeli Political Settlement: The Cold War Years", *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 105, No. 4, 1990-91

with Israel during the 1980s; so large a military machine and such ambitious regional policies could not otherwise have been sustained.[31]

Despite its support, Soviet efforts to exploit Arab-Israeli tensions, the arming of Israel's opponents, and the backing of the region's most radical actors had not produced major increases in its regional influence. Its allies paradoxically tended to act beyond Moscow's control. Syria, for example, frequently acted against explicit Soviet wishes by invading Lebanon, attacking the PLO, and supporting Iran against Soviet-supplied Iraq in the Iran-Iraq War.[32]

By the mid-1980s, things had begun to change. The seismic shift in Soviet policy toward the Middle East, and especially Syria, actually began with Mikhail Gorbachev's coming to power in 1985, because Soviet global power was in decline and major internal problems were occupying the agenda.[33] Under Gorbachev's *perestroika* (new thinking), the USSR renounced the set of principles that had previously been central to Soviet foreign policy, which resulted in scaling down the role of ideology in its foreign policy. A new set of policy objectives was established.[34] Moscow became principally absorbed in its domestic issues and with protecting its border interests.[35] At a minimum, Gorbachev displayed a more confident style in dealing with Syria. He seemed to be trying to establish the principle that Russian rather than Syrian interests would dictate Soviet actions.[36]

Asad masterfully foresaw the repercussions of Soviet decline:

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[31] Drysdale and Hinnebusch, *Syria and Middle East Peace Process*, p. 149

[32] John Hannah, *At Arm's Length: Soviet-Syrian Relations in the Gorbachev Era*, (The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1989), pp. 6-7

[33] Drysdale and Hinnebusch, *Syria and Middle East Peace Process*, p. 149

[34] Tahir I. Shad and Steven Boucher, "Syrian Foreign Policy in the post-Soviet Era", *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 17, Issue 1-2, Winter/Spring 1995

[35] Uri Sagie, *The Israeli-Syrian Dialogue: A One-Way Ticket to Peace?*, The James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy of Rice University, October 1999, p. 8

[36] Hannah, *At Arm's Length*, p. 47

> I sensed from the beginning where things were heading. This was not prophecy – no one could have predicted the course of events in any detail – but the Soviet Union's decline was apparent to me. I could see that large scale changes were in the offing which we needed to take into consideration, and which would have an impact on the whole world, and not just on us. In fact, the negative impact, both economic and political, has been felt around the globe. It has even harmed the enemies of the Soviet Union. The socialist camp was a great productive and consuming power. Its sudden withdrawal from the world economic system was a major contributing factor to the economic crisis which much of the world has suffered.[37]

Regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict, the new Russian policy meant normalizing relations with Israel and moderate Arab states, and a reduction in political and military support for radical Arab states, particularly Syria, the most intractable party to the conflict, and the one most capable of impeding progress toward peace. Gorbachev described the absence of diplomatic relations with Israel and moderate Arab states as abnormal, and prompted the Soviet Union to retreat to a position of neutrality in the Arab-Israeli conflict, working instead toward a balance of interests between the two sides. This policy was opposite to Asad's view that the Arab-Israeli conflict was not open to diplomatic negotiation and compromise.[38]

Apart from this political shift, the military/strategic shift also had important consequences for Syria. In the period between 1974 and 1985, the USSR had provided Syria with approximately 550 combat aircraft, 2500 tanks, and 1200 armored personnel carriers. In terms of value, the Soviets supplied approximately 90 percent of Syrian arms imports during the period, with the remainder coming from Eastern and Western Europe. After 1985, the value of Soviet arms transfers to Syria dramatically dropped. It is estimated that by late 1989, arms shipments from the USSR to Syria had dropped more than 50 percent from 1985 levels.[39] The Soviets position was that Syria needed to be

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[37] Special Document, "Interview with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. XXII, No. 4 (Summer 1993), p. 120

[38] Hannah, *At Arm's Length,* pp. 7-19

[39] Shad and Boucher, "Syrian Foreign Policy"

content with reasonable defensive sufficiency, arguing that if they supplied Syria with advanced weapons, the US would simply go one better with Israel.[40] This reduction of arms supplies was dramatic next to Moscow's military excesses of the late 1970s and early 1980s. Nevertheless, a significant number of arms, if only for defensive purposes, were still being shipped to Syria.[41] Making do with a cache of arms suitable only for self-defense, it had little alternative but to abandon its aspiration of maintaining strategic parity with Israel.[42]

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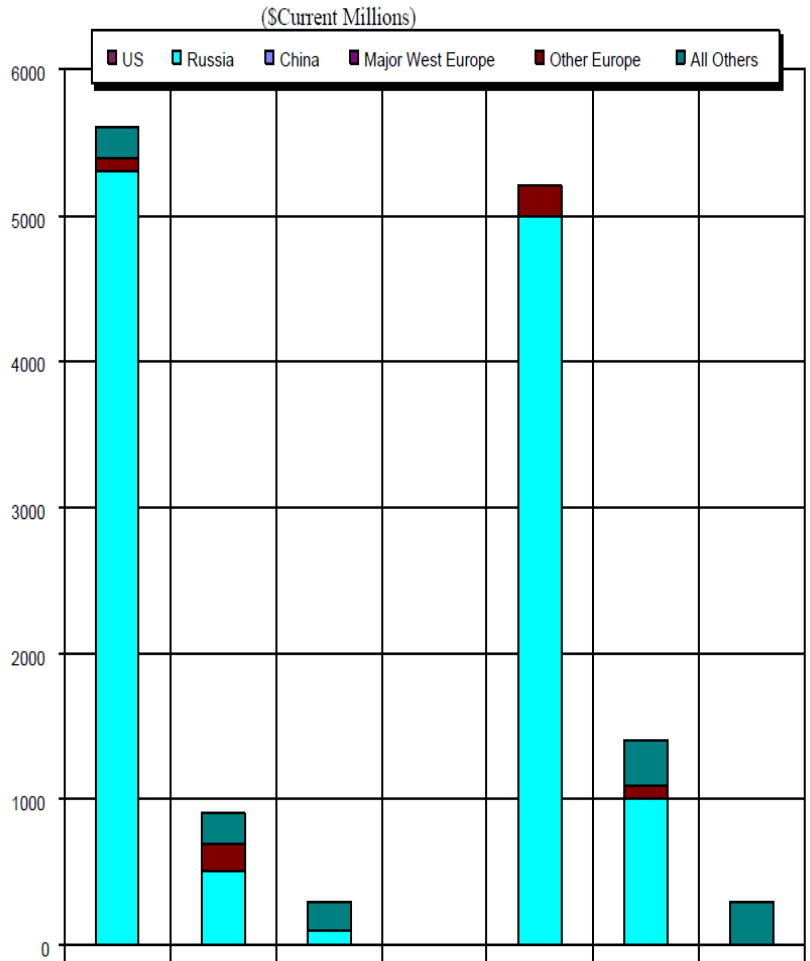
[40] Fred Halliday, "The Middle East, the Great Powers, and the Cold War" in Yezid Sayigh and Avi Shlaim (ed.), *The Cold War and the Middle East*, (New York, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 74

[41] Daniel Pipes, *Damascus Courts the West: Syrian Politics, 1989-1991*, (Washington, D.C.: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1991), p. 16

[42] Eyal Zisser, *Asad's Legacy Syria in Transition*, (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2001), p. 44

Figure 10: Syrian Arms Agreements and Deliveries by Major Supplier (1987-1997)



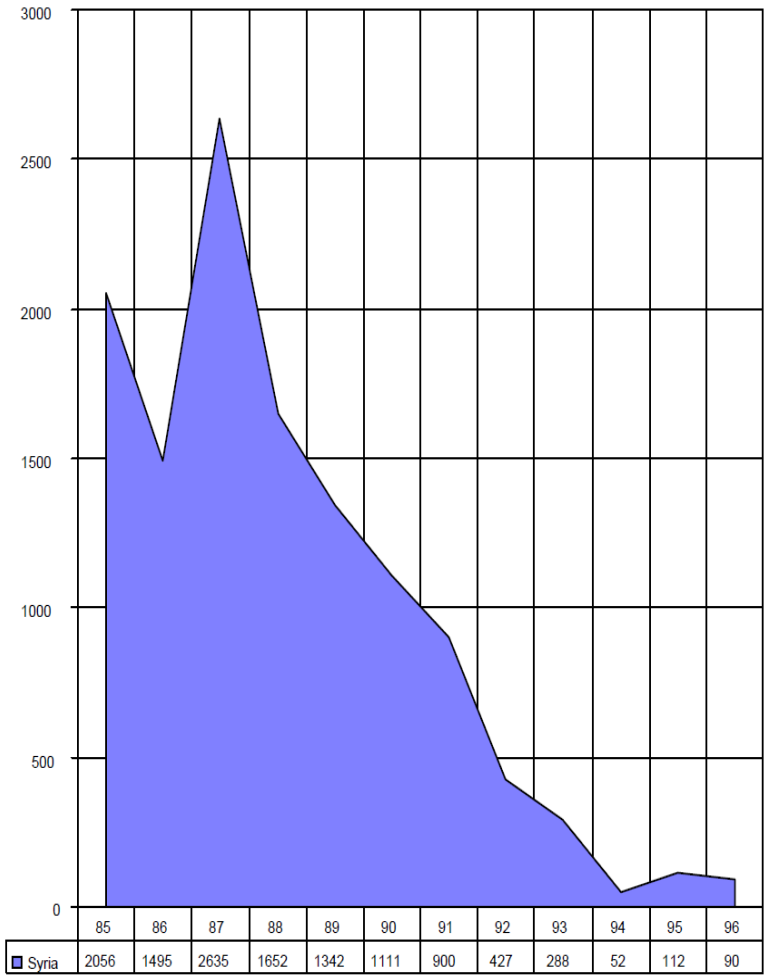
	Agreements: 87-90	Agreements: 91-94	Agreements: 94-97		Deliveries: 87-90	Deliveries: 91-94	Deliveries: 94-97
All Others	200	200	200		0	300	300
Other Europe	100	200	0		200	100	0
Major West Europe	0	0	0		0	0	0
China	0	0	0		0	0	0
Russia	5300	500	100		5000	1000	0
US	0	0	0		0	0	0
Total	5,600	900	300		5,200	1,400	300

Includes Gulf states, Arab-Israeli states, North Africa, and Yemen
0 = less than $50 million or nil, and all data rounded to the nearest $100 million.

Source: Anthony H. Cordesman, "Military Balance in the Middle East VI, Arab-Israeli Balance-Overview, Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers, Major Arms by Country and Zone and Qualitative Trends", *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, February 24, 1999, p. 24

Figure 11: The Syrian Recapitalization Crisis: Arms Deliveries during 1985-1996

($96 Constant Millions)



Source: Cordesman, "Military Balance in the Middle East VI", p. 23

Along with the decline of Soviet support, the ascent of US political power was a related challenge for Syria. The Soviet Union's collapse and the Gulf War created an opportunity for those on the winning side of the Cold War, to create a new Middle East order according to its interests, which was a major benefit for US allies like Israel.[43]

The US became the world's central military, political, technological and economic power in this new era. It had no equal ideological or global

[43] Altunışık, "The Breakdown of the Post-Gulf War Middle East Order?", p. 45

adversary, nor did it face any hostile alliance. This lack of a balancing power increased the US' autonomy and room for maneuver in regional crises. Although it did not guarantee success, there was no doubt for some that this relative freedom of movement eased US decision-making processes.[44] A "new world order" was taking shape under US leadership. Syria was aware of this fact. This new world also impacted the positioning of Israel.[45]

Syria managed to adjust to the new world order.[46] First, the regime moved to improve relations with Egypt and the Arab Gulf states. This allowed it seek closer relations with the West, but met with limits to rapprochement because the Western powers continued to suspect Damascus of sponsoring international terrorism. The Gulf Crisis and War provided an opportunity for Syria to show its support for the new world order.[47] Along with recognition of the need to realign its global position,[48] reasons of regional vulnerability and economic necessity motivated its support for the US-led international coalition against Iraq.[49] Damascus recovered $700 million in credit from the Europeans and Japanese, and over $2 billion in cash from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states.[50] Although some argued that the invasion of Kuwait did not lead to practical results, it did lead to a mental shift regarding Syria.[51] Syria benefited in the new world order, but not without cost.

Syrian participation in the US-led coalition brought about a significant improvement in relations with Washington. Asad was honored by US envoy

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[44] Sagie, *The Israeli-Syrian Dialogue*, pp. 8, 11

[45] Interview with Muhammad Habbash, MP in the Parliament, Damascus, May 29, 2008

[46] Neil Quilliam, *Syria and the New World Order*, (Reading: Ithaca Press, 1999), p. 155

[47] Eberhard Kienle, "Syria, the Kuwait War, and the New World Order" in Tareq Y. Ismael and Jacqueline S. Ismael (ed.), *The Gulf War and the New World Order, International Relations of the Middle East*, (Uni. Press of Florida, 1994), pp. 384-385

[48] Quilliam, *Syria and the New World Order*, p. 159

[49] See Zisser, *Asad's Legacy,* p. 53 and Raymond Hinnebusch, "The Foreign Policy of Syria" in Raymond Hinnebusch and Anoushiravan Ehteshami (ed.), *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), p. 158

[50] Shad and Boucher, "Syrian Foreign Policy"

[51] Interview with Dr. Samir Ladkani, Damascus, October 30, 2010

visits to Damascus, among them, Secretary of State James Baker. These contacts were strengthened by talks between Asad and Bush in Geneva on November 23, 1990, which brought about diplomatic rehabilitation to a regime that had been condemned as an instigator of international terrorism.[52] It is also asserted that the short-term occupation of Kuwait by Iraq resulted in the long-term domination of Lebanon by Syria.[53] On October 13, 1990, the Syrians attacked the forces of Michel Aoun. This act won tacit US approval, which was also an expression of American and Israeli recognition of Syrian hegemony in Lebanon.[54]

Along with these benefits, this experience also made tangible to Syria the limits of its power. Syria became aware of the US position as the world's sole superpower and witnessed the superiority of the Western technology. Despite its deep and enduring hostility with Iraq, Syria had hitherto viewed Iraq as a source of strategic depth and potential support in the event of a future Israeli threat.[55] There was no longer any realistic possibility of Syria and Iraq combining to form an "Eastern Front" against Israel, which had previously been Asad's dream and Israel's nightmare.[56]

In conclusion, with the decline of the Soviet Union and the ascendancy of US power, Syria had no choice but to repair and diversify its international connections. Aware of limitations of his country's power, Asad understood he could not realize his goals in opposition to the sole remaining superpower.[57] Syria's struggle with Israel had to take a diplomatic form. The Soviet decline and the Gulf War had shifted the international balance of power against Arabs,

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[52] Kienle, "Syria, the Kuwait War, and the New World Order", p. 386

[53] Ibid., p. 387

[54] Zisser, *Asad's Legacy,* p. 57

[55] Ibid., pp. 63-64

[56] Halliday, "The Middle East, the Great Powers, and the Cold War", p. 75

[57] "Prime Minister Interviewed on Peace Process", Hamburg Die Welt in German, 22 Feb 93, in *FBIS-NES-93-034*, 23 February 1993, p. 32

and since the US alone had leverage over Israel, Syria's self-interest now relied on acquiescence to US-sponsored diplomacy.[58]

Asad needed the US to accept Syria as the key to peace and stability in the Middle East, and to recognize its interests in an equitable settlement with Israel. Thus, if it could not retrieve its occupied territory by force, the only other option available would be the peace process.[59] Syria understood that the only way to could challenge Israeli interests would be by the rules governing the new world order.[60]

These changes in the international and regional context affected the character of the Israeli-Syrian dialogue, its pace, and the directions in which it developed. The ways in which each country interpreted global processes and assessed how these processes impacted their interests; their regional standings, in turn, influenced their behaviors in the peace process.[61]

5.4.2. Contending Parties' Interrelationship: Power Relations

Regarding power relations between Syria and Israel, the observable facts indicate parity during the 1980s and 1990s. The Composite Index of National Capabilities rates Syria and Israel equally.

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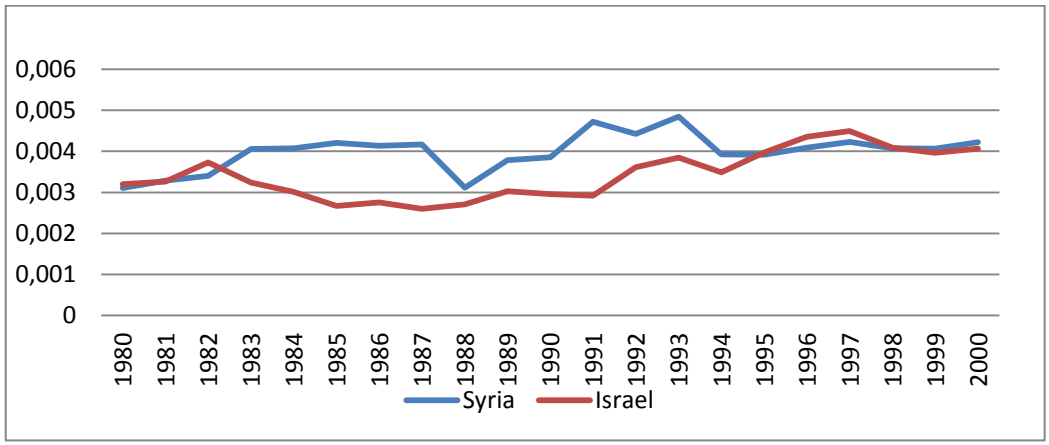
[58] Raymond A. Hinnebusch, "Does Syria Want Peace? Syrian Policy in the Syrian-Israeli Peace Negotiations", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. XXVI, No. 1, Autumn 1996, p. 48

[59] Ibid., Hinnebusch, "The Foreign Policy of Syria", p. 158

[60] Kienle, "Syria, the Kuwait War, and the New World Order", pp. 387-390, Daniel Pipes, "Is Damascus Ready for Peace?" *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 70, No. 4, Fall 1991, p. 41

[61] Sagie, *The Israeli-Syrian Dialogue*, pp. 11-12

Figure 12: Composite Index of National Capabilities (CINC) Score of Syria and Israel



Source: This graph was prepared on the basis of Correlates of War Project, *National Material Capabilities Data Documentation*, Version 4.0, Last Update Completed: June 2010 (http://www.correlatesofwar.org/)

During some years, Syrian ratings were even higher than those of Israel, but from the available data we can judge there to have generally been parity in power during this period. Within such a context, this mutual deterrence, although not eliminating the risk of another war, would have been expected to provide for a political settlement, given suitable circumstances or developments.[62] However, was this really the case?

When we look at each component of the CINC[63] for Syria and Israel comparatively, Syrian superiority is observed in the figures on total population, urban population and military personnel. Indeed, the proportion of urban population to total population in Syria was less than that of Israel. In Syria, the urban population made up one-third of total population until the mid-1990s, after which time this ratio increased to one-half. In Israel this ratio has always been approximately one-half. Syrian military personnel were also twice that of Israel.

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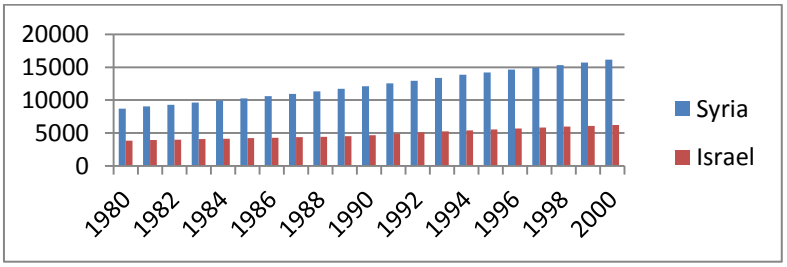
[62] Ma'oz, *Syria and Israel*, pp. 196-197

[63] CINC value is driven from the figures of Iron and Steel Production, Military Expenditure, Military Personnel, Primary Energy Consumption, Total Population, Urban Population of the countries.

Figure 13: Total Population of Syria and Israel

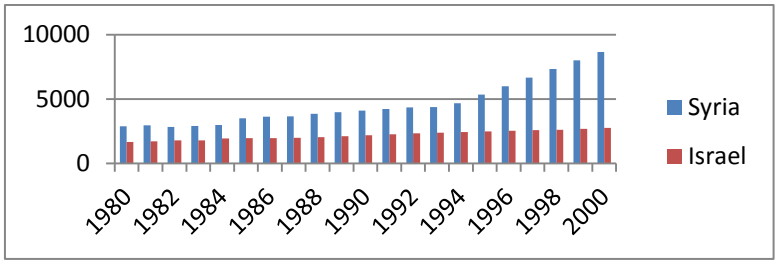
(Thousands)



Source: Correlates of War Project, *National Material Capabilities Data Documentation*, Version 4.0

Figure 14: Urban Population of Syria and Israel

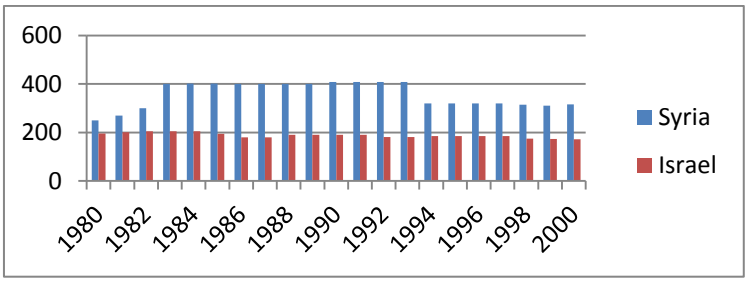
(Thousands)



Source: Correlates of War Project, *National Material Capabilities Data Documentation*, Version 4.0

Figure 15: Military Personnel of Syria and Israel

(Thousands)

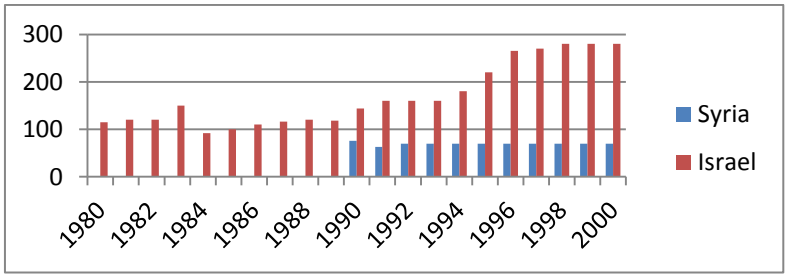


Source: Correlates of War Project, *National Material Capabilities Data Documentation*, Version 4.0

In all other figures, Israeli superiority was apparent. Although the primary energy consumption of the two countries were equal, military expenditure, and iron and steel production in Israel, the basis of the arms industry, were at least double those of Syria. We cannot otherwise explain Syria's efforts to achieve strategic balance with Israel during the 1980s.

Figure 16: Iron and Steel Production of Syria and Israel

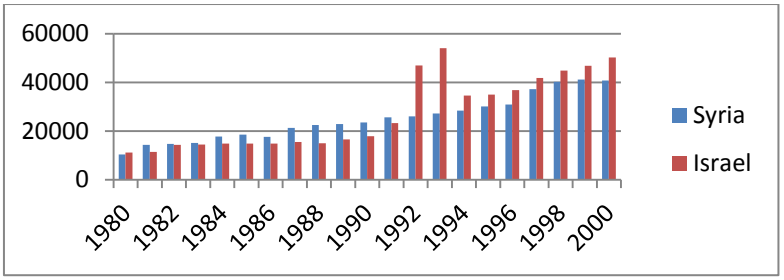
(Thousands of tons)



Source: Correlates of War Project, *National Material Capabilities Data Documentation*, Version 4.0

Figure 17: Primary Energy Consumption of Syria and Israel

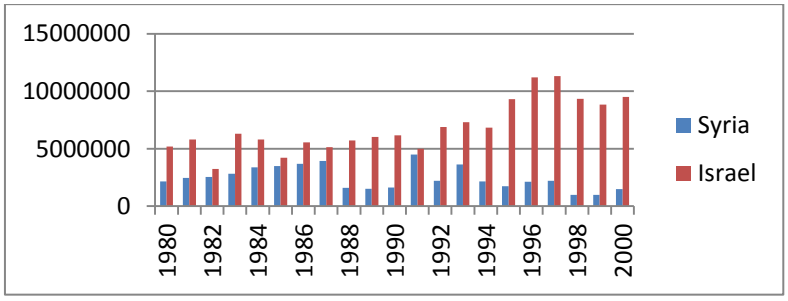
(Thousands of Coal-Ton Equivalents)



Source: Correlates of War Project, *National Material Capabilities Data Documentation*, Version 4.0

Figure 18: Military Expnediture of Syria and Israel

(Thousands of current year $)

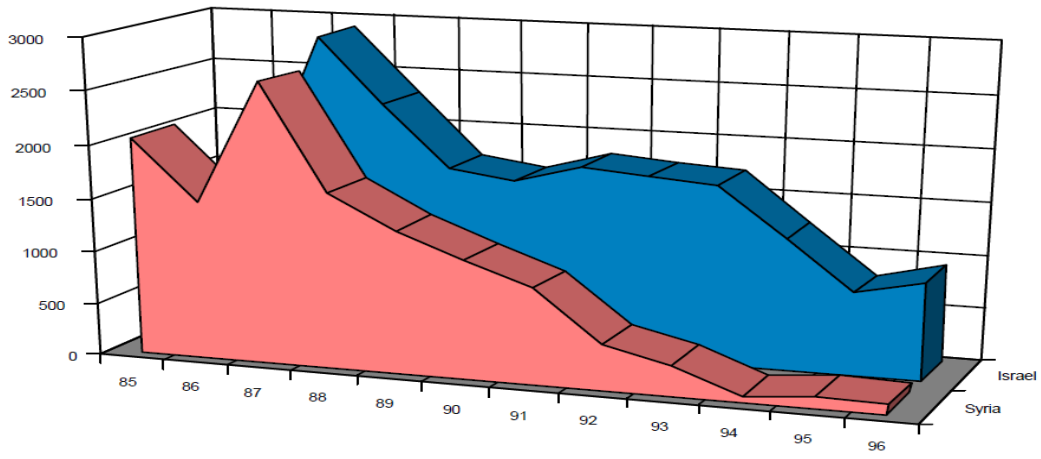


Source: Correlates of War Project, *National Material Capabilities Data Documentation*, Version 4.0

In addition, a comparison between trends in military spending and arms deliveries also confirms the difference between Syria and Israel, and more importantly, the superiority of Israel.

Figure 19: Trends in Syrian-Israeli Military Spending: 1984-1995

(In Constant $ 95 Millions)

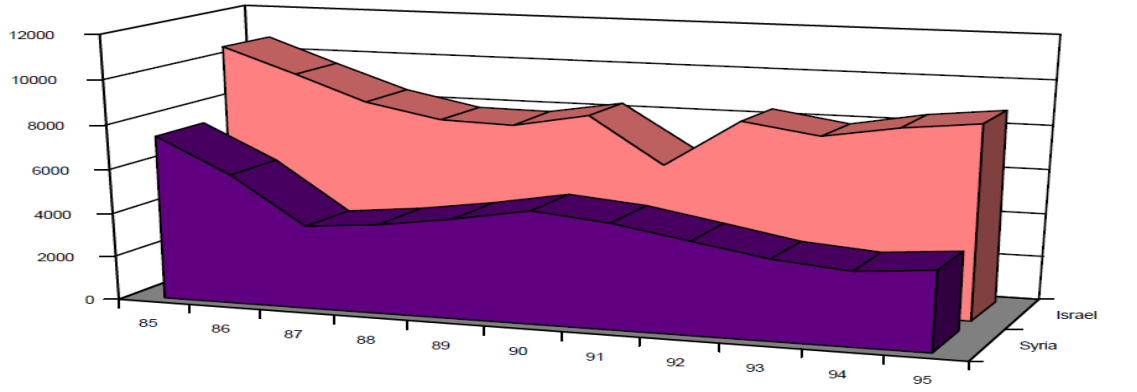


	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96
Syria	2056	1495	2635	1652	1342	1111	900	427	288	52	112	90
Israel	1508	1495	2899	2288	1708	1637	1800	1752	1707	1250	789	925

Source: Cordesman, "Military Balance in the Middle East VI", p. 21

Figure 20: Comparative Trend in Syrian-Israeli Arms Deliveries: 1985-1996

(In Constant $ 96 Millions)



	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95
Syria	7445	5878	3727	4000	4491	5045	4730	4150	3580	3270	3563
Israel	10650	9554	8421	7740	7693	8237	6233	8320	7812	8376	8734

Source: Cordesman, "Military Balance in the Middle East VI", p. 22

As a response to Israel's emphasis on the size of the Syrian army, Muallem questioned whether the numbers or the quality and type of equipment and armaments, and the possession of a nuclear arsenal are more important. According to him, "the Israelis have military superiority over any combination of Arab states. They have nuclear bombs, the most advanced arms and technology… Yet despite all this, they used to tell us they are afraid of Syria."[64] We also find acknowledgements on the Israeli side that Israel was mathematically more powerful than Syria.[65]

From another perspective, during 1970s and 1980s, Syria saw itself as inferior in power to Israel, motivating its policy of strategic balance policy. This notion was formulated when Egypt removed itself from the ranks of the Arab consensus, and was reinforced by the lessons of the Lebanon War.[66] This policy had three objectives: to enable Syria to resist an Israeli attack; to provide Syria with an offensive option to liberate the Golan Heights by force; and, in the case of peace negotiations, to allow Syria to negotiate from a position of strength.[67] During the late 1970s and the first half of the 1980s, military expenditures constituted approximately 20 percent of total GDP. By the mid-1980s, military expenditures were running between 50 and 60 percent of the total Syrian governmental budget – one of the highest rates among non-oil-producing Middle Eastern countries.[68] The Syrian army had achieved balance with the Israeli army in quantity, if not quality. Militarization in Syria has been characterized as "traditional", that is, restricted to quantitative expansion, and

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[64] Wallid Muallem, "Fresh Light on the Syrian-Israeli Peace Negotiations", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 2, Winter 1997, p. 86

[65] Interview with Alon Liel, ex-Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tel Aviv, December 6, 2010

[66] Mark A. Heller, *The Middle East Military Balance 1985*, (The Jerusalem Post and Westview Press, 1986), p. 275

[67] Rabil, *Embattled Neighbors*, p. 175

[68] Onn Winckler, "The Syrian Road to the Middle East Peace Process: The Socioeconomic Perspective", in Moshe Ma'oz, Joseph Ginat, and Onn Winckler (ed.), *Modern Syria From Ottomans Rule to Pivotal Role in the Middle East*, (Brighton, Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 1999), p. 110

to a militaristic value in orientation and behavior. This was in contrast to "technological" or "industrial" expansion, which involves the creation of a military-industrial complex.[69]

As a result, Syrian armament, overwhelmingly of Soviet manufacture, had improved markedly, but IDF armament, most of which came from the US, was still superior.[70] According to Cordesman, Syria's search for parity with Israel was partially successful, but was crippled by several factors. First, as Cordesman emphasized that Syria had to rely largely on active forces and lacked the cadres of trained manpower necessary to cope with the rapid expansion of its forces.[71] Second, Syria lost access to massive transfers of cheap or free Soviet-bloc weapons in the late 1980s. It has had some major weapons transfers since 1990, but has become something of a "military museum" – a problem compounded by poorly organized technical and maintenance support and the failure to modify an update much of its equipment.[72]

In spite of the decrease in governmental revenues and the beginning of the 1983-1984 economic recessions, the Syrian authorities initially did not slow its policy of strategic balance.[73] By the late 1980s, however, they were obliged to recognize they could not carry on with this policy.[74] During the first years of Gorbachev's tenure (1985-89), Moscow had cut its military deliveries to Damascus from $2.4 billion to $1.3 billion per year and refused to supply SS-

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[69] Perthes, "*Si Vis Stabilitatem, Para Bellum*", p. 161

[70] Heller, *The Middle East Military Balance 1985*, p. 278

[71] Anthony H. Cordesman, *After the Storm, The Changing Military Balance in the Middle East*, (Boulder and San Francisco: Westview Press, 1993), p. 185

[72] Anthony H. Cordesman, *Arab-Israeli Military Forces in An Era of Asymmetric Wars*, (Westport, Connecticut and London: Praeger Security International, 2006), p. 12

[73] One major reason for this decision seems to have been based on the Israeli invasion of Lebanon on June 6, 1982 and the direct confrontation between the Syrian and Israeli armies in Lebanon a few days later, which caused severe damage to the Syrian army, including the loss of 145 tanks and 100 aircraft. Winckler, "The Syrian Road to the Middle East Peace Process", p. 115

[74] Winckler, "The Syrian Road to the Middle East Peace Process", pp. 109-115

23 long-range strategic missiles. It also asked Syria to repay its military debt and pay in cash for some of the new deliveries. It further requested that Damascus replace its concept of "strategic balance" with "a balance of interests" with Israel.[75]

From the perspective of power projection, Israel's superiority was also clear. Hinnebusch argues that although Syria had sufficient forces, including chemical weapon missile capabilities that could make an Israeli attack potentially very costly, it never had more than a limited offensive capability. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, even its defensive position eroded. Syria thus accepted Israel's permanent superiority.[76] Even those who accepted a scenario of mutual military deterrence pointed out that Israel maintained a clear strategic advantage. Eventually, with the realization that the doctrine of strategic parity with Israel had failed, Asad recognized that Syria was unlikely to build a credible military option against Israel in the foreseeable future.[77]

Ma'oz argued that after the end of the Cold War, despite its rapprochement with Washington and Cairo and its more flexible approach to the Arab-Israeli conflict, Syria was still in a markedly disadvantageous position vis-à-vis Israel. Israel was argued to enjoy a significant strategic edge due to substantial American military and financial support and to better international backing.[78]

Israel was perceived to be superior for different reasons. First, in the eyes of Syrians, Israel was a state with a population that had increased by almost one million as a result of Jewish immigration from the former Soviet Union alone. Second, in the area of nuclear weapons, Israel remains the regional power par excellence. All Israeli governments since the 1960s have embraced "nuclear ambiguity," declaring that the Jewish state would not be the first to introduce such weapons to the region. That said, Israel is believed to

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[75] Ma'oz, *Syria and Israel*, p. 205

[76] Hinnebusch, "Does Syria Want Peace?", p. 43

[77] Ma'oz, *Syria and Israel*, pp. 196, 208

[78] Ibid., pp. 204-206

possess nuclear weapons. Third, its relations with great powers and regional powers are assets to its own power. On the one hand, it is perceived to have surrounded the Arab world with a network of military alliances stretching from Turkey in the north to Ethiopia in the south. On the other, its strategic ties with Russia, Germany, Britain, China and India contributed to its ascendancy from an Arab perspective. Most importantly, Israel was tied by alliance to the US and served as a regional asset to US interests. The US was perceived to be the main factor in Israel's military power, having armed it with a variety of weapons systems.[79]

As a result, in the logic of a multipolar regional system, the strength derived from the US-Israel alliance and its own economic, technological, and military capabilities have helped Israel maintain its position at the apex of the regional order.[80] According to Syrians, "American arms and supplies and technology are completely open to them. Israel manufactures 60 percent of its needs in military equipment and is the fifth largest arms exporter in the world."[81]

According to the literature as well, the power imbalance between Syria and Israel in the latter's favor is understood as fact. Specifically, Israeli military superiority was emphasized because of Iraq's defeat in the Gulf War and because of the decline and collapse of the Arabs' Soviet patron in the face of Washington's continued pro-Israeli bias.[82]

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[79] Kober, "Arab Perceptions of Post-Cold War Israel", pp. 27-28

[80] Nadia El-Shazly and Raymond Hinnebusch, "The Challenge of Security in the Post-Gulf War Middle East System", in Raymond Hinnebusch and Anoushiravan Ehteshami (eds.), *The Foreign Policies of the Middle East States*, (London; Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), p. 120

[81] Muallem, "Fresh Light on the Syrian-Israeli Peace Negotiations", p. 86

[82] El-Shazly and Hinnebusch, "The Challenge of Security", pp. 75-76

5.4.3. Issues in the Conflict: Interest-based vs. Identity-based

Syrian and Israeli visions about issues in the conflict might be differentiated in an overall assessment. Their visions were not compatible: while Israel was burdened with interest-based concerns – particularly security, Syrian concern was about getting back rights and dignity, in addition to territory. Asad had made the erasure of all consequences of 1967 was a matter of dignity. Thus, Syrian national pride was not a slogan, but was as real as the territory itself.[83]

5.4.3.1. The Issue of Territory

The issue of territory between Syria and Israel began with the 1948 war. Syria had occupied the lands given to Jews according to the UN Partition Plan of 1947, while Israel had occupied Palestinian territories. After the war, the Syria-Israel Armistice Agreement was signed on July 20, 1949. With the agreement, Israel maintained control over the zones it had received in the Partition Plan, along with some additional land taken from the Arab side. Syria agreed to withdraw from 32 square kilometers it occupied on the Israel-allocated share, under the strict condition that a Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) would be established between the two parties. The UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) was charged with supervising the DMZs for the UN Security Council. And the Mixed Armistice Commission (MAC) was established to observe the armistice. The ambiguity of the regime and of property rights are considered to have fertilized the contentious relations between Syria and Israel and in the end led to war in 1967.

This issue was exacerbated by the Israeli occupation of the Golan Heights during the 1967 war. Since then, Syria has not given up defending

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[83] Alon Ben-Meir, "Why Syria Must Regain the Golan to Make Peace", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. V, No. 3, October 1997

Palestinian rights, but its main concern has been to get back the Heights – not only that but to get them back based on the June 4 line[84], since Syria does not recognize the 1923 borders. Britain and France had drawn the 1923 line as an international border. Syria, under French Mandate at the time, was not consulted. The June 4 line, on the other hand, had been drawn by Syria.[85] The difference in territory between these two lines was not significant for an outsider, but for Asad every inch of the territory that he considered Syrian was sacred; and for Israelis, the difference had meaning regarding control of water, specifically its need to preserve the Jordan and Hasbani Rivers on the Israeli side of the 1923 border.[86] Israelis assert that Syrian insistence on the June 4 line rather than the international border is "unique," and that in other cases of Arab-Israeli conflict, the international border and the demanded line were identical.[87]

In the aftermath of the 1967 war, the UN Security Council adopted UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 242,[88] which emphasized the illegitimacy of territorial acquisition through war and the need to work for a just and lasting peace. Syria initially refused to accept the resolution.[89] The positions of both parties changed significantly following the 1973 war, and Syria, for the first time, became willing to accept UNSCR 242 as the basis for peace after the Disengagement Agreement of 1974. This enabled Syria to reclaim a small portion of the Golan, Quneitra. However, on December 14, 1981 a decision to apply Israeli law to the Golan Heights was taken in the Knesset by majority. This decision raised doubts on the Syrian front about Israeli commitment to the application of UNSCR 242.[90] Some indicators

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[84] For the lines between Syria and Israel see Appendices D and E.

[85] Murhaf Jouejati, "A Syrian perspective on the Syrian-Israeli Track", http://www.alhewar.com/DrMurhaf.htm (Accessed on March 23, 2011)

[86] Ross, *The Missing Peace*, p. 114

[87] Interview with Yossi Alpher, co-editor of bitterlemons.org, Tel Aviv, December 15, 2010

[88] http://www.mideastweb.org/242.htm

[89] Syria conditionally accepted the resolution in March 1972. Syria formally accepted the UNSCR 338, which was adopted after the 1973 War and embraced the UNSCR 242.

supported Syrian doubts about the decision of the Knesset to annex the Golan Heights but not the West Bank.[91]

Although both parties accepted UNSCR 242 as the essential reference point and building block for Syrian-Israeli peace negotiations, they did not share a single interpretation of the resolution. Both parties and all interpreters understood that UNSCR 242 dominated the diplomatic scene as the only acceptable basis for establishing a comprehensive peace, since it is a multidimensional resolution with political, legal, territorial, and human dimensions.[92] However, UNSCR 242 bore some ambiguities, specifically on the extent of Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories, the nature of peace, and security in the region. This ambiguity has made possible several different interpretations among the parties.

First, the preamble's reference to the illegitimacy of acquisition of territory by force could be interpreted differently. Israelis argued that the resolution dealt with the acquisition of territory, not military occupation. There was also nothing in any international legal source to make military occupation illegal until a peace treaty was signed. Israel argued its action in 1967 was defensive, and as the danger wore on, occupation was justified until a peace settlement could be reached.[93] However, Arabs refuted the notion of territorial gain on the pretense of security, and made clear their claims with reference to UN jurisprudence, which did not condone a change in the *status juris* resulting from military action, calling for the re-establishment of the *status juris* existing prior to such military action through a withdrawal of troops and through nullification of rights asserted in territories covered by the military action.[94]

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[90] P. R. Kumaraswamy, "The Golan Heights: Israel's Predicaments", *Strategic Analysis: A Monthly Journal of the IDSA*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 7, October 1999

[91] Interview with Ephrahim Yaar, Professor, Head, Program in Mediation and Conflict Resolution, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, December 16, 2010

[92] See *UN Security Council Resolution 242: The Building Block of Peacemaking*, (Washington, D.C.: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1993)

[93] Stephen M. Schwebel, "What Weight to Conquest?", *UN Security Council Resolution 242: The Building Block of Peacemaking*, (Washington, D.C.: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1993), p. 144

Second, the most important differentiation in the interpretation is on the question of withdrawal. Israel has pointed out that the resolution did not explicitly require that it withdraw to the lines it occupied on June 5, 1967. Its argument is that the omissions of the words "all", "the" and "the June 5, 1967 lines" were significant. It emphasized that a declaration requiring it to withdraw from "all" of the territories it occupied is lacking. Furthermore, the presence of the language of secure and recognized boundaries demonstrated the necessity for border adjustments to maintain Israeli security.[95] In short, Israel is of the opinion that the boundaries have yet to be negotiated.

In response, Arabs argue the Israelis are performing "semantical acrobatics."[96] According to them, the French text says "des territories," which referred to "the territories". Arabs thus claimed that the withdrawal clause was clear; it did not refer to new secure and recognized borders, but to the existing secure and recognized borders.[97]

To understand this harsh discussion, we need to look at the importance of the Heights to each party.

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[94] See Nabil Elaraby, "Legal Interpretations of UNSC 242", *UN Security Council Resolution 242: The Building Block of Peacemaking*, (Washington, D.C.: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1993), p. 40 and Adnan Abu Odeh, "The Origins and Relevance of UNSC

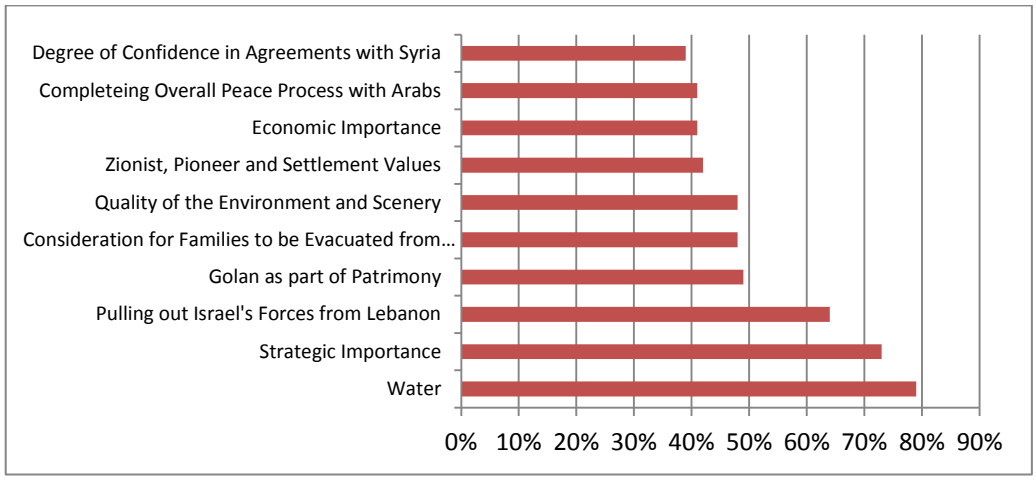
242", *UN Security Council Resolution 242: The Building Block of Peacemaking*, (Washington, D.C.: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1993), p. 49

[95] Arthur J. Goldberg, "United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 and the Prospect for Peace in the Middle East", *UN Security Council Resolution 242: The Building Block of Peacemaking*, (Washington, D.C.: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1993), p. 133

[96] Abu Odeh, "The Origins and Relevance of UNSC 242", p. 49

[97] Elaraby, "Legal Interpretations of UNSC 242", p. 38

Figure 21: The Importance of Elements in Determining a Stand on Withdrawing from the Golan Heights in Israel



Source: This graph was prepared on the basis of research by Prof. Ephraim Yaar and Dr. Tamar Hermann, *Peace Index*, December 1999.

The Golan Heights are perceived to be the "eyes of Israel".[98] Although some argue that Golan is part of Jewish history, it occupies a marginal role in the ideological debate in Israel, unlike the West Bank and Gaza Strip.[99] However, Israelis have political and strategic concerns over it. There are three major categories of opinion on the issue: The first group, comprised of many Likud members and some Labor hardliners, stresses Israel's need to retain the Golan. According to them, security is territory.[100] Despite its small size, the difficulty of access to this commanding topographic region makes it an important buffer zone and provides extra-psychological reassurance.[101] This group denies that today's advanced weapons make it insignificant, citing the 1973 war, which proved that the Golan gave Israelis both the time they needed to mobilize forces and the strategic advantage that permitted them to stop the

[98] Interview with Ephraim Yaar, Professor, Head, Program in Mediation and Conflict Resolution, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, December 16, 2010

[99] Kumaraswamy, "The Golan Heights", p. 10

[100] Muhammad Muslih, "The Golan: Israel, Syria, and Strategic Calculations", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 47, No. 4, Autumn 1993, p. 624

[101] Rabil, *Embattled Neighbours*, p. 170

advancing Syrian army.[102] They assert that even in an age of missiles and unconventional warfare, strategic ground and sufficient depth of territory are still crucial factors.[103] Events before the 1967 war were also nightmares for Israelis in the form of many killings by Syrian snipers in the Golan Heights. It was a bitter memory for them.[104] The Israeli media also focused on events lived in the period between 1948 and 1967. However, according to UN peacekeeping forces stationed along the border during that period, Israel engaged in far more cease-fire violations and inflicted far greater civilian causalities than did Syria.[105]

The second group, mainly Labor party doves, advocates total withdrawal in return for full peace. According to this group, security is not only territory, but the real peace that demilitarization and security guarantees.[106] As they say, that in the age of modern warfare, a missile launched from Damascus will not stop at the Golan to get a visa.[107]

The third group, adopting an ambivalent position, argues that the narrow Golan has a strategic value and cannot be returned to Syria in its entirety. Like the first group, they are averse to the idea of dismantling Jewish settlements in the Golan. Only a few doves regard the evacuation of all the settlers as the inevitable price to reach a peace agreement.

Additionally, the encompassing political and psychological process provoked by Golan settlers makes it difficult for any Israeli government to

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[102] Ben-Meir, "Why Syria Must Regain the Golan to Make Peace", p. 5, Andrew Duncan, "Land For Peace: Israel's Choice", in Efraim Karsh (ed.), *Between War and Peace: Dilemmas of Israeli Security*, (London: Frank Cass, 1996), p. 62

[103] David Eshel, "The Golan Heights: A Vital Strategic Asset for Israel", *Israel Affairs*, Vol. 3, No. 3&4, Spring/Summer 1997, and in Efraim Karsh (ed.), *From Rabin to Netanyahu, Israel's Troubled Agenda*, (London: Frank Cass, 1997), p. 231

[104] Interview with Mordechai Kedar, Professor, Bar-Ilan University, December 9, 2010

[105] Stephen Zunes, "US Policy Hampers Chances for Israeli-Syrian Peace", FPIF Policy Report, December 15, 1999 (http://www.fpif.org/articles/us_policy_hampers_chances_for_israeli-syrian_peace) (accessed on May 25, 2011)

[106] Muslih, "The Golan", pp. 624-625, "Minister Calls For Golan Heights' Return to Syria", Cairo Mena in Arabic, 16 Feb 94, in *FBIS-NES-94-034*, 18 February 1994, p. 20

[107] Duncan, "Land For Peace", p. 63

decide on the withdrawal and removal of settlements.[108] Golan settlers assert that their roots are there, and unlike those of the West Bank, they were encouraged to settle there by the government and through broad national consensus.[109] Israel has also claimed a longer settlement history compared to Syria.[110] In that sense, there is a psychological component of the issue, in that two-thirds of settlers were born into the reality that Golan is part of Israel.[111] Israelis additionally emphasize the Golan's kibbutz-style development, a kind of agricultural development based on production of apples and wine.[112]

For Syrians, the Golan is also a strategically valuable territory. They consider it as critical natural defense against Israel. Syrian planners believe that the Golan in Syrian hands provides indispensable defensive depth, while a Golan controlled by Israel poses a lethal threat to the Syrian heartland.[113]

The strategic value of the Golan for Syrians is accompanied by symbolic and psychological dimensions.[114] Asad had made the erasure of all consequences of the 1967 war a matter of national honor and thereby a prerequisite for peace. Wallid Muallem, chief negotiator for Syria, explained: "No Syrian government could relinquish a single inch of the Golan to Israel, because that would betray the trust of the people."[115] Many Israeli officials believe Asad had a personal stake in making peace with Israel, especially since it was he who lost the Golan when he served as Syria's defense minister.[116]

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[108] Rabil, *Embattled Neighbours*, p. 165

[109] Ilene R. Prusher, *Christian Science Monitor*, 12/26/96, Vol. 89 Issue 22

[110] Interview with Efraim Inbar, Professor, Director of BESA, Bar-Ilan University, Tel Aviv, December 14, 2010

[111] Interview with Ephrahim Yaar, Professor, Head, Program in Mediation and Conflict Resolution, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, December 16, 2010

[112] Interview with Ephrahim Yaar, Professor, Head, Program in Mediation and Conflict Resolution, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, December 16, 2010

[113] Muslih, "The Golan", pp. 626-627

[114] See Hinnebusch, "Does Syria Want Peace?", p. 50

[115] Muallem, "Fresh Light on the Syrian-Israeli Peace Negotiations"

Kedar asserts that Golan was a personal issue with Hafiz Asad. According to Kedar, on June 10 of each year after 1967, Asad did nothing, presumably spending the day pondering his responsibility for the loss of the Golan Heights.[117] Kedar said that he realized this by studying Syrian newspapers. In the June 11 issue of each year there were no reports of Asad participating in any significant events the previous day. His death on June 10 of 2000 was attributed to heartbreak as he thought again about his loss of Golan.[118] Although this analysis is rather extreme, it does provide vital clues about the psychological effect of this loss on Syrians on behalf of Asad.

We can conclude that regarding the issue of territory, there is a problem of compromise in the views of each party. While Syrians look at the territory through the prism of sovereignty, Israelis' minds are occupied with security. In particular, the Syrian emphasis on national honor and dignity makes this issue more difficult to overcome.

5.4.3.2. The Issue of Water

The issue of water between Syria and Israel is over the Jordan River basin and Lake Tiberias. After Israel occupied the surrounding areas during the 1967 War, it began a unilateral and arbitrary utilization of these waters. Through occupation, Israel achieved hydro-strategic dominance ending all question of headwater diversion by Syria.[119] But the water remains in the minds of both parties in relation to the issue of Israeli withdrawal from the occupied

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[116] Ben-Meir, "Why Syria Must Regain the Golan to Make Peace", pp. 2-3

[117] Interview with Mordechai Kedar, Professor, Bar-Ilan University, December 9, 2010. According to Kedar, during the 1967 war, news of the loss of the Golan was broadcast on the radio, yet the fight was ongoing at that time. The Syrian soldiers, who heard it, began to run. The origin of the broadcast was unknown to Syrians, but the Mossad was suspected. This is the reason there was no fight over Quneitra.

[118] Interview with Mordechai Kedar, Professor, Bar-Ilan University, December 9, 2010.

[119] Thomas Naff, "Water in the International Relations of the Middle East: Israel and the Jordan River System", in John Spagnolo (ed.), *Problems of the Modern Middle East in Historical Perspective*, (Oxford, Berkshire: Ithaca Press, 1992), p. 202

territories. We should examine the historical roots of this conflict in the context of this issue, in particular what happened in the years between 1948 and 1967.

Lake Tiberias is also known as the Sea of Galilee and Lake Kinneret. In 1926, the British and French completed a good-neighbor agreement whereby people could access the lake through a pier that was built. Syrians fished and swam in the lake, and inhabited the northeast corner of its shores when the 1967 war erupted. This is the line Syrians claim as their frontier with Israel. They claim not to want to take its waters, but to access to the lake for fishing and swimming.[120]

The other water source in question is the Jordan River, which is the only surface water in Israel. It arises in Lebanon in the north and meets Lake Tiberias in the south. Its tributaries include the Hasbani in Lebanon, the Banias in Syria, and the Dan in Israel. The three watercourses meet about 14 kilometers upstream of the once-drained Huleh Lake – the former border of the demilitarized zone (DMZ) between Syria and Israel – before forming the Jordan River itself. Sixteen kilometers downward, the upper Jordan meets Lake Tiberias.

Two crises between Israel and Syria in 1951 and 1953 coincided with the commencement of Israel's water plans, mainly for the development of irrigated agriculture. The 1951 crisis occurred when Israel embarked on drainage of the Huleh Marshes in order to irrigate the Negev and the Jerusalem corridor. The 1953 crisis resulted when Israel commenced work on a project to re-channel the river to the central DMZ. As these projects channeled out Jordan River's water, Syria complained to the MAC and the Commission ruled the Israeli projects constitute a violation of the Armistice Agreement. In response, Israel asserted for the first time that it held sovereignty over the zone and thus

[120] Patrick Seale, Uri Lubrani, Raghida Dergham, and Daniel Pipes, "The Middle East in 2000: A Year of Critical Decisions: Roundtable Discussion", *Soref Symposium*, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, (May 18-19, 2000), p. 2; Jerome Slater, "Lost Opportunities for Peace in the Arab-Israeli Conflict Israel and Syria, 1948-2001", *International Security*, Vol. 27, No. 1, Summer 2002, p. 102

had a right to proceed.[121] Several border incidents linked to unilateral water projects like those mentioned above paved the way to the 1967 war.[122]

As seen, conflict over the diversion of the Jordan River's water and its use by Israel was a key issue on the Arab political agenda until the 1967 war. The Arab countries perceived the conflict as an essentially political problem and the core of the struggle against Israel.[123] At the time, the Syrian Ba'th characterized Israel's water plan within the context of the Arab struggle against as the most urgent pan-Arab national problem discussed in the Arab League.[124]

The 1967 war completely changed hydro-politics between Syria and Israel because Israel took control of Lake Tiberias and all the tributaries and springs of the Jordan River. The war had a substantial impact on water flow to Syria and altered the available hydrological options. Syria was denied access to upper Jordan waters. One of Israel's major geopolitical gains was a change in its riparian position from partly downstream to upstream.[125] This condition allowed it to increase its use of water above the Johnston Plan's allocation.[126]

Today, this water issue is about what *will* happen when Israel withdraws from the occupied territories, since for Syria, this is inseparable from the border issue. Syria remains adamant about returning to pre-1967 cease-fire lines, which would allow Syria to access Lake Tiberias and to claim a riparian right

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[121] Donald Neff, "Israel-Syria: Conflict at the Jordan River, 1949-1967", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. XXIII, No. 4, Summer 1994, p. 32

[122] Marwa Daoudy, "A Missed Chance for Peace: Israel and Syria's Negotiations over the Golan Heights", *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 61, No. 2, Spring/Summer 2008, pp. 218-220

[123] Moshe Shemesh, "Syria's Struggle over Water with Israel, 1959-1967", in Moshe Ma'oz, Joseph Ginat, and Onn Winckler (ed.), *Modern Syria From Ottomans Rule to Pivotal Role in the Middle East*, (Brighton, Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 1999), p. 245

[124] Shemesh, "Syria's Struggle over Water with Israel", p. 247

[125] Daoudy, "A Missed Chance for Peace:", p. 220

[126] The Jordan Valley Unified Water Plan, known as the Johnston Plan, was one of the most comprehensive schemes developed for the Jordan River. The plan takes its name from Eric Johnston, an American diplomat who developed and negotiated it. Johnston had avoided discussing water rights and succeeded in reaching an agreement on a fixed distribution among the technical committees of the Arab states and Israel regarding the waters of the Jordan River after shuttle diplomacy between 1953 and 1955.

to the Jordan River basin. Shimon Peres, however, asserted that the problem is not over lake access. He notes that the minute the Syrians touch the lake, they would become partners in it. The problem becomes one of international law.[127]

Since its founding, water has been a significant strategic dimension for Israel, which it has needed to develop its water resources in order to accommodate a growing number of immigrants, to build settlements, and to reclaim land for agriculture. Water is ideologically, demographically, politically, and economically significant.[128] If the Golan's military significance to Israel is primarily operational, its need to defend water resources is absolutely strategic and indeed existential.[129] Conflicts between Israel and Syria over water security are so deep and intractable that they alone are enough to constitute a major obstacle to peace.[130]

5.4.3.3. The Issue of Security

Security is one of the most important concerns of each party in the conflict between Syria and Israel, Israel more so than Syria. It has great anxiety about "terrorism" in the form of activities by some Palestinian organizations in Syria and Hezbollah in Lebanon, and resents Syrian support to "terrorist" organizations. Because of his ideological commitment to the Palestinian cause, Asad sought to use the Palestine Liberation Organizations (PLO) and other Palestinian factions as a weapon against Israel. Some argue that Asad turned to terrorism in part because Syria's armies had failed him.[131]

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[127] Rabil, *Embattled Neighbours*, pp. 191-192

[128] Ibid., p. 188

[129] Zeev Schiff, *Peace with Security: Israel's Minimal Security Requirements in Negotiations with Syria*, (Washington, D.C.: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1993), p. 50

[130] H.I. Shuval, "Are the Conflicts Between Israel and Her Neighbours Over the Waters of the Jordan River Basin an Obstacle to Peace? Israel-Syria As a Case Study", *Water, Air, and Soil Pollution*, Vol. 123, 2000, pp. 605-606

Israel argued that terror and violence were being justified as reasonable weapons to balance the Jewish state's strategic superiority. Damascus allegedly used the terror card in Lebanon to pressure Israel on the Golan Heights issue. It was "a cheaper tool" for Israelis.[132] Support for terrorism was one of the few assets the Syrian regime enjoyed in its struggle against Israel.[133] Syria justified its support by distinguishing between opposition to terror and support of the legitimate right of peoples to fight for liberation from occupation,[134] though it claimed these were legitimate, armed resistance groups, not terrorists.[135] Syrians acknowledged "a Jihad Crescent" composed of Hamas, Hezbollah, Syria and Iran, struggling against Israel.[136]

During the 1990s, Israel was critical of Syrian support for Islamic Jihad, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command of Ahmed Jibril, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine of George Habbash, and others like Hezbollah. Hamas was later added to the list. At a minimum, Syria provided a safe haven for these groups. It was host to the headquarters of Islamic Jihad, as well as an office for Hamas. It was ironic for some that the authoritarian, secular Ba'thi state, which fiercely battled the Muslim Brotherhood, had been providing political support to Islamist organizations. Rabil asserted that by supporting Islamists, the Syrian regime was sending a clear message that it not only had political pressure at its disposal, but also had the power to enhance or curb the future of radical Islamic activism.[137]

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[131] Daniel Byman, "Confronting Syrian-backed Terrorism", *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 3, Summer 2005, p. 100

[132] Interview with Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, Professor, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, December 13, 2010

[133] Byman, "Confronting Syrian-backed Terrorism", p. 108

[134] Sagie, *The Israeli-Syrian Dialogue*, p. 19

[135] Byman, "Confronting Syrian-backed Terrorism", p. 103

[136] Interview with Muhammad Habbash, MP in the Parliament, Damascus, May 29, 2008

[137] Rabil, *Embattled Neighbours*, p. 136

In 1991, after the Madrid Peace Conference, Hamas and other militant Palestinian groups, mostly secular and Marxist, established the "Ten Front" in Syria to oppose negotiations.[138] Syrian leaders supported and strengthened these groups, even though they seldom shared the specifics of the groups' agendas. It used its backing of terrorism, however, to extract concessions from Israel during negotiations.[139]

From the Israeli perspective, Hezbollah and Hamas are Syrian assets.[140] Hezbollah was Israel's biggest nightmare, firing rockets at its civilian population while conducting its guerrilla war against the Israeli army. Hezbollah's spiritual leader, Muhammad Husain Fadlallah, delegitimized Israel's existence, whether in the south of Lebanon or in Palestine. At the height of the Israeli-Syrian negotiations in 1996, Fadlallah had emphasized that he organization rejected Israel's legitimacy and believed that a peace based on justice could only be achieved when the Jews, who came from faraway regions of the world, left, and the Palestinians returned to Palestine.[141]

Indeed, the Asad regime viewed Lebanon as both a foreign and a domestic policy concern, combining Syrian geostrategic concerns with internal power considerations. In terms of foreign policy, Lebanon in general and Hezbollah in particular served the Asad regime as mediums of political and military leverage against Israel.[142] Using Hezbollah as a proxy allowed Damascus some degree of deniability, enabling it to strike at Israel or other

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[138] After the start of the Madrid Peace Conference, Asad expelled notorious international terrorist Illych Ramirez Sanchez (Carlos), but refused repeated demands for force, e.g., Ahmed Jibril's departure or dismantling PFLP-GC camps in Syria and Lebanon. See Gary C. Gambill, "Sponsoring Terrorism: Syria and the PFLP-GC", *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin*, Vol. 4, No. 9, September 2002

[139] Byman, "Confronting Syrian-backed Terrorism", p. 102

[140] Interview with Shlomo Brom, Senior Research Fellow, The Institute for National Security Studies, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, December 7, 2010

[141] Rabil, *Embattled Neighbours*, p. 136

[142] Ibid., p. 127

targets without risking the confrontation that direct military action would entail.[143]

Israeli politicians and top military staff agreed that Damascus was responsible for provisioning and sponsoring Hezbollah.[144] Confidence-building measures were required in order to bring two parties together in peace talks, but Syria's support of Hezbollah constituted a "confidence-breaking measure".[145] In order to control this support, Israel had relied on a policy of reaching understandings with Damascus about red lines for the Syrian presence in Lebanon, and its support for Hezbollah activity in Southern Lebanon. Indeed, Israeli governments had seen in Asad the guarantor of a quiet Golan frontier, and so had done little to prevent his aggressive policy in Lebanon or his sabotage of negotiations with the Palestinians.[146] Some negotiations had been conducted under the shadow of terror and military operations in Lebanon, and when these failed, parties resorted to the use of violence.

For instance, after Rabin's declared refusal to give up the entirety of Golan in return for peace, Asad had resorted to exerting military pressure on Israel through Southern Lebanon. During the first two weeks of July 1993, Hezbollah and the Syrian-controlled General Command of Jibril launched several attacks against Israeli targets in Southern Lebanon and Northern Israel. Israel responded with a large-scale bombardment in Southern Lebanon. With American mediation, an understanding had been reached in early August between Syria, Lebanon and Israel, whereby Damascus and Beirut had undertaken to prevent the launch of Katyusha rockets from Lebanon into Israel. And Israelis had undertaken not to attack Lebanese civilians in the course of its military actions against Hezbollah targets. This understanding demonstrated to

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[143] Byman, "Confronting Syrian-backed Terrorism", p. 104

[144] Ely Karmon, "A Solution to Syrian Terrorism", *Middle East Quarterly*, Vol. VI, No. 2, June 1999 (http://www.meforum.org/464/a-solution-to-syrian-terrorism)

[145] Rabil, *Embattled Neighbours*, p. 255

[146] Karmon, "A Solution to Syrian Terrorism"

Israelis that Syria was capable of restraining Hezbollah and held the key to regional stability.[147]

When the Netanyahu government came to power in June 1996, it insisted Syria was behind the violence in Southern Lebanon, and that the Lebanese government was merely its puppet regime. Accordingly, its initiatives had focused on finding a solution to this security problem. Netanyahu put forward the "Lebanon First" idea and offered to exit Lebanon in return for a peace treaty. Some, calling this idea a "policy of *istifrad*", asserted that it was a trick designed to divide Lebanese and Syrian interests, thus weakening the negotiating position of each.[148]

The Lebanon First idea was partially carried out by the Barak government in May 2000. Israel withdrew from Southern Lebanon without a peace agreement in place. Unilateral withdrawal could have unpredictable consequences, including greater authority for Hezbollah in Lebanese politics or renewed attacks on Northern Israel as in the 1970s, which might have foreclosed on Syrian-Israeli peace.[149] This risk can be drawn out from the ambiguous position of Hasan Nasrallah, Hezbollah's secretary-general. He not only said that Syria, Lebanon and Hezbollah would not grant Israel security guarantees after its withdrawal, but hinted that Palestinian cells would infiltrate the border to strike at Israeli targets. He further declared that Hezbollah would continue its fight, until the conquest of Palestine, from the Jordan River to the sea.[150]

As a conclusion, in Syria's negotiations with Israel, terrorism was both a benefit and a curse; it helped bring Israel to the negotiating table. Without the pain inflicted by terrorism, Israel would have had few incentives to surrender territory. On the other hand, it also brought mistrust on Syria. After a series of

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[147] Ma'oz, *Syria and Israel*, p. 235

[148] Sami G. Hajjar, "The Israel-Syria Track", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. VI, No. 3, February 1999, p. 13

[149] Henry Siegman, "Being Hafiz al-Asad: Syria's Chilly but Consistent Peace Strategy", *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2000, p. 4

[150] Karmon, "A Solution to Syrian Terrorism"

suicide bombings in 1996 and Syria's refusal to shut down the headquarters of the groups it hosted, the Israeli public and government became suspicious of Asad's sincerity.[151]

5.5. Process Variables

5.5.1. Actors

In the efforts to transform the Syrian-Israeli conflict into a more stable relationship, the roles of superpowers, mainly the US and Russia, are apparent. Along with the roles of third parties, the domestic contexts of the conflict's parties can be illuminated, providing us with important insights about the process.

5.5.1.1. Third Parties

The peace process between Syria and Israel was initiated by the US and Russia, then pushed primarily by the US alone. The 1992-2000 process always necessitated third party involvement. Various American statesmen, Presidents George H.W. Bush (1989-1993) and Bill Clinton (1993-2001), Secretaries of State James Baker (1989-1992), William Christopher (1993-1997) and Madeleine Albright (1997-2001), and US Peace Coordinator, Dennis Ross (1993-2001), have had important mediating roles. In the pre-negotiation and negotiation phases, the US was the principle third party between Syria and Israel.

As the sole third party during much of the peace process, the US functioned as a mediator, as well as both a pure and power mediator. It created the conditions that brought the parties together, including providing meeting places and setting ground rules for discussion. It also actively worked to advance the process by relaying messages, raising questions and organizing

[151] Byman, "Confronting Syrian-backed Terrorism", p. 107

summits. At meetings, it prepared working agendas and presented documents outlining the differences between parties on the issues. In case of deadlock, it tried to overcome impasses and restart negotiations. Most importantly, as a powerful mediator, it gave assurances to each party regarding the post-peace agreement environment, particularly to Israel in terms of security arrangements. Washington would have been obligated, once it had mediated a [signed] Israel-Syria peace treaty, to complete the peace-making process with a guarantee of compliance with the new treaty's security arrangements. Arguably, no other third party could provide Israel and Syria the political reassurance necessary to manage the risks of accommodation.[152]

The US mediatory role was closely related to its newly developed Middle East strategy following the Gulf Crisis. Four days after the UN Security Council set out terms to oversee the end of hostilities in the Gulf, on March 6, 1991, President George Bush affirmed his commitment to peace in the Middle East. He outlined four main foreign policy goals, including creation of shared security arrangements in the region, control of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the missiles used to deliver them, creation of new opportunities for peace and stability in the Middle East, and fostering of economic development for the sake of peace.[153] These goals ran parallel with American interests in the region. The maintenance of US vital interests has long been a motivating factor in its Middle East participations, in order to avoid disruption of oil supplies and to help defend of Israel's security. The same strategy motivated Bush's announcement in 1991.[154]

Bush initially believed Arabs and Israelis had faced a common enemy during the Gulf War. Under the US's new Middle East strategy, the prospect of an Arab-Israeli peace was at its highest point. But he offered no new ideas on how to achieve peace, reiterating the long-standing US position, instead, that a

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[152] Brain S. Mandell, "Getting to Peacekeeping in Principle Rivalries Anticipating an Israel-Syria Peace Treaty", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 40, No. 2, June 1996, p. 260

[153] Ziva Flamhaft, *Israel on the Road to Peace Accepting the Unacceptable*, (Colorado, Oxford: Westview Press, 1996), p. 77

[154] Warren Christopher, *In the Stream of History*, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press: 1998), p. 74

comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace must be based on UNSCR 242 and 338, and on the principle of territory for peace, the recognition of Israel by Arab states and preservation of its security, and the provision of legitimate political rights to Palestinians.[155]

An Israeli-Syrian peace agreement under the purview of US interests would have been a major achievement and a prelude to an American-Syrian rapprochement. This would detach Syria from Iran's sphere of influence.[156] It could also contribute to the weakening and isolation of the region's radical states, Iraq and Iran, to promote regional stability, to bring silence to the Lebanese theater, and to reduce terror. The American position in the region's periphery, especially in the Gulf, would also be strengthened.[157] In other words, for the US to play a significant role in supporting an agreement, the situation had to advance specific US national interests, could not hinder Israel's ability to act independently against significant military or terrorist threats, and had to strengthen the US-Israel special relationship.[158] The US also asserted its own interests during the process, insisting that Syria actively support US foreign policy goals outside of the peace process as a condition of receiving American foreign aid.[159]

After the Gulf Crisis, the US skillfully made use of the momentum from the formation of a "historic" international coalition. US Secretary of State James Baker advanced the initiative through shuttle diplomacy and systematic negotiations, fighting against doubts and giving guarantees, formulations and formulas. Slowly, the US created conditions for convening a conference designed to help the sides reach a lasting peace through direct negotiations.

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[155] Flamhaft, *Israel on the Road to Peace,* p. 77

[156] Rabinovich, *Waging Peace*, p. 50

[157] Sagie, *The Israeli-Syrian Dialogue*, p. 57

[158] Andrew Bacewich, Michael Eisenstadt and Carl Ford, "Supporting Peace, America's Role in an Israel-Syria Peace Agreement", *Report of a Washington Institute Study Group*, (Washington, D.C.: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1994), pp. 5-6

[159] James Phillips, "Washington's Role in the Syrian-Israeli Peace Talks: Do's and Don'ts", *The Heritage Foundation Backgrounder Executive Summary*, No. 1345, February 4, 2000

The new initiative was not readily accepted. To break the deadlock, President Bush sent letters of assurance to key regional leaders, including Israeli President Yitzhak Shamir and Syrian President Hafiz Asad, suggesting that the US and the Soviet Union would preside over the conference, the UN and the European Community would attend as observers, and the conference format would be dissolved into a series of periodically reconvened bilateral negotiations. The US customized its letters to Syria and Israel, in a classic case of "constructive ambiguity," to fit their separate understandings of how to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict. It capitalized on its opportunity to fill this third party role, recognizing the onset of ripeness and acting decisively to encourage both parties to enter into negotiations.[160] However, this role should be complemented by the ability to sustain the process and to help parties finalize the process. The account of events indicates the US was unable to sustain its role.

On October 18, 1991 Secretary Baker and Soviet Foreign Minister Boris Pankin announced in Jerusalem that their governments had invited Israeli, Egyptian, Syrian, Lebanese, Jordanian and Palestinian representatives to attend a Middle East Peace Conference to be held on October 30 in Madrid.

At the opening of the conference, President Bush set forth principles for advancing the process. First, negotiations were directed toward peace agreements; toward diplomatic, economic, and cultural ties; and toward investments in development and tourism. Second, peace would only be achieved through direct negotiations based on the concepts of "give and take" and territorial compromise. Third, peace could not be externally imposed: it could only come from within the region. Fourth, the process would be two-tracked; the multilateral track would follow the bilateral one. Fifth, the US would refrain from defining the meaning of a stable settlement in the Middle East.[161] The Madrid Peace Conference was the starting point on a long road that

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[160] Landon E. Hancock, "To Act or Wait: A Two-Stage View of Ripeness", *International Studies Perspective*, Vol. 2, 2001, p. 196

would lead to the eventual bridging of polarized positions in order to forge a comprehensive peace. Among these, Israeli-Syrian peace would be among the most important steps.[162]

US involvement in the negotiations was considered vital by Syria and Israel. This was necessary since Asad refused to permit direct high-level negotiations.[163] He did not perceive a viable third party option other than the US, and the Soviet Union had continued to urge him to seek a political settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and to relinquish illusions of a military option against Israel.[164] Most importantly, Syria considered American pressure to be the most effective instrument for restraining Israel then, as it continues to do today.[165] Believing only Washington could wrest concessions from Israel, Syria was enthusiastic about the prospect that the US could help legitimize its claims.[166]

In contrast, Israel sought to use US mediation as a technical resource and buffer against Syrian pressure for immediate concessions.[167] They believed that only an Israel that was certain of its strategic partnership with the United States could take the necessary risks.[168] It hoped to see the US play varying roles on a number of issues: to balance and finance the security risks involved in conceding strategic and territorial assets, to help motivate Syria to be flexible on security arrangements on the Golan, to back Israel's minimum demands on normalization and enforcing implementation before Israeli withdrawal, to put

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[161] Eytan Bentsur, "The Way to Peace Emerged at Madrid: A Decade Since the 1991 Madrid Conference", *The Jerusalem Letter*, (Jerusalem Centre for Public Affairs, February, 2002), pp. 3-4

[162] Ibid., p. 4

[163] Christopher, *In the Stream of History*, p. 192

[164] Ma'oz, *Syria and Israel*, p. 202

[165] C. Ernest Dawn, "The Foreign Policy of Syria", L. Carl Brown (ed.), *Diplomacy in the Middle East*, (New York, London: I. B. Tauris, 2003), p. 176

[166] Mandell, "Getting to Peacekeeping in Principle Rivalries", p. 246

[167] Ibid., p. 246

[168] Christopher, *In the Stream of History*, p. 86

together an extensive international aid package that would promote bilateral and regional projects, to channel discussions on water to practical solutions based on the need to retain existing allocations while promoting projects that would enable Israel to overcome shortages, to help find agreement on a formula to address the parties' deepest differences, to help supervise and verify the agreement, and finally, to insist that Syria sever all connections to "the terror organizations".[169] According to Rabinovich, Israel needed US's help to underwrite the agreement as a guarantor.[170]

However, the US was not immune to challenges to its attempts at mediation. On the one hand, it tried to promote a peace settlement enhancing the long term security of its ally, Israel, and on the other hand, it tried to advance its own interests of containing Iran and Iraq, fighting international terrorism, and promoting a stable and independent Lebanon.[171] Thus the US role as a superpower with strong strategic and economic regional interests often conflicted with its role as mediator in the Syrian-Israeli peace process.[172]

The general consensus is that the US failed to act as enough of a formulator and manipulator during the negotiations. The US was criticized for keeping too low a profile – happy just to see talks continuing, but incapable of crafting proposals that bridged the deep rift between the two parties.[173] The administration was judged to have been ill-prepared for a role in the process beyond that of facilitator, and to have lacked the will to use its coercive power. This was due on the one hand to conflicting political perceptions of the two countries by the US executive and legislative branches of government, and on the other hand to the high domestic political stakes. Thus, both countries felt

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[169] Sagie, *The Israeli-Syrian Dialogue*, pp. 58-61

[170] Interview with Itamar Rabinovich, Professor, Ambassador of Israel to the US (1993-1996), Israel's Chief Negotiator with Syria (1992-1995), Tel Aviv, December 15, 2010

[171] Phillips, "Washington's Role in the Syrian-Israeli Peace Talks", p. 13

[172] Stephen Zunes, "The Peace Process Between Israel and Syria", *Foreign Policy in Focus*, Vol. 7, No. 5, (May 2002)

[173] Sagie, *The Israeli-Syrian Dialogue*, p. 36

receptive to US help, but not to US pressure.[174] Rabil argues that the US's dichotomous attitude – its position was nearer to that of Syria but it was a consistent supporter of Israel – affected its ability to effectively mediate.[175] The attitude of the American public was also a factor, since Israel was widely viewed as a pro-Western democracy while Syria was a dictatorship and former Soviet client state.[176]

Thus, third party efficacy was called into question during the process. Syria had made the mistake of waiting for political pressure to be exerted on Israel, in anticipation of a solution imposed from the outside. However the close US-Israeli security relationship impacted the process such that, with few exceptions, no Americans in power advocated imposing a solution against Israel's will.[177] The general consensus in Syria that the US cannot do what Israel does not want to do.[178] Thus, unless Israel had admitted that peace negotiations would lead to the reinstatement of pre-1967 borders, even the US could do nothing.[179] Syrians also pointed out the influential role of the Jewish Lobby in the US, reinforcing the previous point with reference to the power of public opinion.[180] Syrians repeatedly criticized the perceived American bias toward its imagined "true" regional ally.[181] This criticism reflected the general

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[174] Rabil, *Embattled Neighbours*, p. 258

[175] Robert Rabil, "The Ineffective Role of the US in the US-Israeli-Syrian Relationship", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 55, No. 3, Summer 2001. According to Rabil, the US administration and Congress had been at war over Syria during the peace process. On the one hand, the administration had wanted to improve its relations with Syria by paving the way to remove sanctions, and thereby rewarding it for its participation in the anti-Iraq coalition or incentivizing it to sign the peace agreement. On the other hand, Congress, spearheaded by Israel's supporters, had been wary of Syria's governmental system and the administration's rapprochement.

[176] Zunes, "US Policy Hampers Chances for Israeli-Syrian Peace"

[177] Sagie, *The Israeli-Syrian Dialogue*, p. 17

[178] Interview with Sami Moubayed, Political Analyst, Damascus, November 2, 2010

[179] Interview with Marwan Kabalan, Dean of Faculty, University of Damascus, November 8, 2010

[180] Interview with Samir Ladkani, Damascus, October 30, 2010

[181] Interview with Thabet Salem, Journalist, Damascus, November 7, 2010

Arab perception that the increasing dominance of US domestic politics in shaping its foreign policy meant an Israeli regional hegemony had been carried on the coattails of the post-Cold War American global hegemony.[182]

On the other hand, Israel had perceived the US as having supported the Syrian position in the sense that the onus of the peace negotiations had been placed on Israel's shoulders.[183] Rabil's interpretation was that the US had been sensitive to Syria's concerns and was trying to merge Syria's strategic key role in the region with American interests. He asserts that although the American position can be regarded as unbalanced, it cannot be regarded as blind support for Israel, as Arabs often claim. On the other hand, he also noted the role of the peace process in highlighting the determining factors of US strategic cooperation with Israel.[184] Indeed, prior to negotiations, the US was not a neutral party but rather an ally of Israel. During the negotiations, the US was a biased mediator: American-Israeli ties were well known, and it often either supported the Israeli position or suggested it as a compromise position. Nevertheless, Syria had been expecting the US to use the leverage its ties afforded to influence Israel using a "carrot or stick" approach. Biased mediators are capable of altering the payoff structure for the disputants. In this case, however, where the biased mediator should have delivered its client, it instead let the client set the rules. As a result the talks failed.[185]

In conclusion, for Syrians, it became clear that they could not count on the Americans to do the job for them. Peace negotiations notwithstanding, Damascus had achieved no significant progress in its relations with Washington. The Americans were still deeply suspicious of the Asad regime.[186]

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[182] Shible Telhami, "From Camp David to Wye: Changing Assumptions in Arab-Israeli Negotiations", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 53, No. 3, Summer 1999, p. 382

[183] Rabil, "The Ineffective Role of the US", p. 430

[184] Ibid., p. 431

[185] Jeremy Pressman, "Mediation, Domestic Politics, and the Israeli-Syrian Negotiations, 1991-2000", *Security Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 3, July-September 2007, pp. 353-354

[186] Sagie, *The Israeli-Syrian Dialogue*, p. 62

Israel realized in the meantime that the weight of decisions rested on its shoulders.[187]

With regard to the Bush administration, Damascus had expected that the US, as a superpower directly responsible for international security and peace, should give up what it perceived as its Zionist point of view, force the enemy to withdraw from the occupied territories, and execute international decisions to achieve just, true and comprehensive peace in the region.[188] It had initially been encouraged by the fact that Bush had been elected without the support of the Jewish vote.

Secretary of State of the Bush administration James Baker was tough and resolute. In 1991, the profundity of the idea of dealing simultaneously with the Palestinians and the Arab states became a major factor in his success.[189]

The peace process was started by the Bush administration and continued by the Clinton administration. The Clinton administration, like its predecessor, placed much emphasis on Syria's key role in regional stability.[190] Although Bill Clinton was a skillful diplomat with a talent for reaching across boundaries, he was slow, unfocused and reluctant to take a stand in the peace process. For instance, he was cautious and unsure of how to respond when Rabin exhibited annoyance with Asad's response to his opening gambit in August 1993. William Quandt's interpretation was that Clinton refrained from efforts to convince Asad and Rabin to resume negotiations because of the high momentum at the time.[191] He asserted that the fact that the US Congress was pro-Israel raised the stakes for Clinton on the front of domestic politics, which made him reluctant to interfere more forcefully in the successive Israeli-Syrian

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[187] Ibid., p. 56

[188] Ma'oz, *Syria and Israel*, pp. 202-203

[189] Rabinovich, *Waging Peace*, p. 37

[190] Rabil, "The Ineffective Role of the US", p. 427

[191] Pressman, "Mediation, Domestic Politics, and the Israeli-Syrian Negotiations", p. 353, Rabil, *Embattled Neighbors*, p. 243

stalemates.[192] Another point of criticism was that the US administration and the Clinton administration in particular, saw little difference between the acknowledged international border and the June 4 lines.

Baker also criticized Clinton about the failed Geneva summit, saying Clinton simply presented the Israeli position to Asad and recommended he accepted it because it represented the return of nearly all of the Golan. He thought a better approach would have been for the US to draw up its own proposal recommending the return of all the Golan per Asad's conditions, then agree to firm security and access arrangements on the grounds of Israeli requirements. According to Baker, this compromise should have satisfied both Israeli and Syrian political needs.[193] According to Rabinovich, Clinton did not manage well during the Barak period because of American domestic issues and concerns about Asad's health.[194]

Although dedicated to the peace process, Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright, who had replaced former Secretary Warren Christopher, felt her legacy as secretary of state and as the first woman to hold this position should not depend on the successful conclusion of a comprehensive peace in the region. She described her role as the handmaiden of the peace process in contrast to the previous secretary, who had seemed to be a tireless intermediary.[195]

In conclusion, although in the first years of the negotiations, the US was tougher than during the Clinton era, the US was never tough enough. The US played its role of mediator as well as it knew how, but the situation required it to operate as a manipulator.[196]

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[192] Rabil, *Embattled Neighbors*, p. 243

[193] Ibid., p. 264

[194] Interview with Itamar Rabinovich, Professor, Ambassador of Israel to the US (1993-1996), Israel's Chief Negotiator with Syria (1992-1995), Tel Aviv, December 15, 2010

[195] Rabil, *Embattled Neighbors*, p. 218

[196] Interview with Itamar Rabinovich, Professor, Ambassador of Israel to the US (1993-1996), Israel's Chief Negotiator with Syria (1992-1995), Tel Aviv, December 15, 2010

5.5.1.2. Parties of the Conflict and Their Domestic Structures

As Israel and Syria have different domestic political systems, the possible impacts of these differences in the context of the peace process should be taken into account in order to understand the failure of efforts to transform the conflict. While the Syrians faced the complexities and rules of the game that is the Israeli political system, a slow and manifold process, Israelis had an easier task, having dealt with a centralized, stable system dominated by one person.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the authoritative decision unit in Syria is the predominant leadership, i.e. the president. Asad was the center of a cult of personality, making him "not a president, but a ruler".[197] A man of strong personality, strategic vision, and unique authority from within the elite and possessed of wide powers of office, Hafiz Asad was the dominant decision-maker during peace negotiations with Israel.[198] We know he had achieved substantial autonomy from domestic constraints in his foreign policy through a long process of power consolidation. Furthermore, this foreign policy was not subject to bureaucratic politics, wherein other different factions would have the ability to veto Asad's decisions. Nor could public opinion directly constrain foreign policy.[199] Israelis identify the Syrian regime as a "mafia regime."[200]

Asad concentrated power in a virtually monarchical presidency through a strategy of balancing rival regime pillars and social forces. Hinnebusch argues that Asad tried to achieve an intra-elite consensus on foreign policy and especially on the core issues relating to Israel. And there had been some dissent among this elite over joining the Madrid conference. The Alawi security barons

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[197] Interview with Mordechai Kedar, Professor, Bar-Ilan University, December 9, 2010

[198] Ehteshami and Hinnebusch (ed.), *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, p. 62 from Moshe Ma'oz, "Hafiz al-Asad: A Political Profile", *Jerusalem Quarterly*, Vol. 8, 1978

[199] Hinnebusch, "The Foreign Policy of Syria", p. 44

[200] Interview with Yossi Alpher, co-editor of bitterlemons.org, Tel Aviv, December 15, 2010

feared peace talks could lead to internal political liberalization or a Western realignment at their expense. Several high-ranking generals opposed Syria's signing of a peace agreement with Israel for fear that such an agreement would diminish the army's role in Syrian politics.[201] But the Syrian military was also discouraged by the easy defeat of Iraq and was aware that another war could be the alternative if the peace process failed. This is why Asad's description of the peace process as an honorable struggle was acceptable to the army. The Ba'th party might be expected to reject a peace settlement that threatened it with the loss of its nationalist raison d'etre. But Ba'th had already been effectively downgraded to yes-men by this point. Despite some influential powers among the pillars of the regime, it was unlikely that the elite could have united against Asad had he decided to make peace with Israel.[202]

Regarding public opinion in Syria, the Israeli perception was that the autocratic nature of Arab governments made domestic politics irrelevant to the negotiations. This perception was bolstered by the absence of the kinds of public upheavals in the Arab world that many scholars had predicted following the 1991 Gulf War.[203] And this perception led to the view that Asad's Israeli counterparts had an easier task in dealing with a centralized, stable system dominated by a single person.[204]

Hinnebusch argued that Syrian policy was shaped over the long term by certain constants that have little to do with ups and downs of domestic politics.[205] However, authoritarian leaders are not free from opposition; that

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[201] Zisser, "The Syrian Army", p. 126

[202] Hinnebusch, "Does Syria Want Peace?", p. 45

[203] Telhami, "From Camp David to Wye", p. 389

[204] This view belongs to Itamar Rabinovich. However Shibley Telhami asserted that centralized governments are not as effective in international bargaining as less centralized ones. Telhami demonstrated that Israel's decentralized government enabled its leadership to extract more concessions from Egypt's centralized government on some issues, even if one took into account that Israel had more objective leverage than Egypt held at Camp David. This is because centralized governments lack effective hierarchies to minimize leaders' mistakes and to provide fallback positions when mistakes occur. Telhami, "From Camp David to Wye", pp. 309-391

[205] Hinnebusch, "Does Syria Want Peace?", p. 42

they have to contend with their brand of public opinion and prepare it for changes of lineage and policy, yet all along they have on person on whom to focus their energies. According to Rabinovich, Asad was actually not a bold and visionary decision-maker but a meticulous tactician,[206] a tactician who had completely failed to comprehend Israel's democratic characteristics.[207] There had been a prevailing assumption among Arabs that little difference existed between Israel's two dominant political parties and their foreign policy aims in Israel. They found themselves faced with a state system wherein domestic politics were employed by Israeli governments to justify intransigence.[208]

In contrast to Syria, Israel's decision-making structure is characterized by the extreme politization of the decision-making process stemming from a proportional electoral system, the consequent need to govern through coalition cabinets, and the absence of effective cabinet-level decision-making support capabilities.[209] It is claimed that Israel's democratic political system transformed it into a state constantly embroiled in party politics that cut across the whole political spectrum. As a result, the political system does not functionally separate highly sensitive issues, such as peacemaking, from mundane domestic politics. While this political system does not preclude peacemaking, it imposes extra complications, obstacles, and constraints on peace processes.[210] For instance, Kedar claims that Arabs observe Israel as weak because of their culture of dispute. As there is no dictator in Israel, decisions are taken as a result of discussion processes. In urgent situations, however, these decision-making processes can be expedited.[211]

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[206] Rabinovich, *The Brink of Peace*

[207] Interview with Itamar Rabinovich, Professor, Ambassador of Israel to the US (1993-1996), Israel's Chief Negotiator with Syria (1992-1995), Tel Aviv, December 15, 2010

[208] Telhami, "From Camp David to Wye", p. 389

[209] See Charles D. Freilich, "National Security Decision-Making in Israel: Processes, Pathologies, and Strengths", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 60, No. 4, Autumn 2006

[210] Rabil, *Embattled Neighbors*, p. 149

[211] Interview with Mordechai Kedar, Professor, Bar-Ilan University, December 9, 2010. Kedar gave the statement of "when there are two Jews, there are three opinions" as an example.

Domestic developments in combination with these state characteristics affected Israel's national security policy in general and toward Syria in particular: the Rabin assassination in 1995, rapid cabinet turnovers, and the growing size and strength of the settlement movement, the Golan Lobby regarding Syria, were among these.[212]

It is reasonable to identify the authoritative decision unit in Israel as a *coalition* whose actors are separate and independent but who must work together to make decisions. Within this coalition, the prime minister, the cabinet or government, the Knesset, and bureaucratic organs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), the Ministry of Defense (MoD) and the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), are important actors. The personality and temperament of the PM matter a great deal in Israeli politics and history. Other members of the inner cabinet on foreign policy and security issues usually include the foreign minister and defense minister. This inner circle also includes the director general of the prime ministry. If a decision involves a military operation, the chief of staff of the military and the heads of the foreign intelligence service, the Mossad, and its defense intelligence agency Aman, often also participate as these decisions reach the detailed planning and implementation stages.[213]

The single most important structural determinant of Israel's national security decision-making process is its proportional representation electoral system wherein the whole country is regarded as a single constituency, which results in a consequent need to govern through coalition-cabinets.[214] This political system has failed to generate a single party with a parliamentary majority, thereby making coalition-building the inescapable means of forming a government (minimum 61 out of 120 seats). This system ensures that the Knesset is split between a plethora of parties, each of which represents the ideological beliefs and interests of narrow constituencies. It is a system related

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[212] Freilich, "National Security Decision-Making in Israel", p. 639

[213] Adam Garfinkle, "Foreign Policy: Sources and Substance", *Politics and Society in Modern Israel Myths and Realities*, (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1997), p. 196

[214] See Sprecher and DeRouen Jr., "The Domestic Determinants of Foreign Policy"

to the political development of the *Yishuv* (pre-state Israel).[215] This system makes the Knesset's impact on national security policy negligible. A party split in the Knesset is also expressed in the cabinet, as no party has ever been able to form a government on its own. The role of this style of government in the failure of the negotiations was cited by Syrian interviewees. They were aware of the role of domestic politics in Israel.[216] Some also argued that the preponderance of mini-parties could prevent resolution with Israel.[217]

Within this system, the formal authority of Israeli prime ministers is particularly constrained. The prime minister's ability to lead is primarily a function of his intra- and inter-party political skills and his ability to use the prestige of office to generate support for preferred policies. While some prime ministers have managed to dominate the political system and spearhead major changes, their formal sources of authority are simply too limited, leaving them overly beholden to the considerations of party politics. They have to rely on other coalition partners, or opposition parties, to pass historic legislation for which they are unable to garner their own parties' support.[218] For instance, Shimon Peres, Benjamin Netanyahu and Ehud Barak, the prime ministers during the negotiations with Syria, saw their political support bleed away and lead to the collapse of their governments.

Furthermore for Israeli governments, coalition preservation is an important task. Maintaining coalitions often becomes an end unto itself and full-time occupation. The breakdown in national consensus since 1967 has further exacerbated this problem and become a major impediment to the government's ability to adopt decisive and more far-reaching policies.[219]

Another problem is the lack of effective policy for formulating mechanisms. It is argued that among the MFA, MoD and IDF, only the IDF has

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[215] See Rabil, *Embattled Neighbors*, p. 149

[216] Interview with Thabet Salem, journalist, Damascus, November 7, 2010

[217] Interview with Samir Ladkani, Damascus, October 30, 2010

[218] Freilich, "National Security Decision-Making in Israel", p. 648

[219] Ibid., p. 646

a highly effective policy-formulating mechanism, in the form of its planning branch. Because of weaknesses in civilian bureaucracies, the IDF remains the most influential player in the national decision-making process with its developed policy assessment, formulation and implementation capabilities.

In addition, international geopolitical realities and the tradition of retired Israeli officers becoming politicians has contributed to the increasing role of the military in Israel. The perception that the military has been responsible for Israel's survival has also been an important factor. As the existence of the State of Israel has on several occasions depended on the ability of first the *Haganah* and then the IDF to neutralize adversaries, in Israel the military is at the heart of the nation; for many, it *is* the heart of the nation.[220]

However, it is argued that the IDF can advise, but cannot take decisions.[221] Nevertheless we know that since the 1967 war, the chief of general staff and at times his deputy and other high-ranking military commanders participate in cabinet meetings. Although without a formal vote, military leaders' participation in cabinet deliberations bestows considerable influence in government decision-making upon them.[222]

Over the years, many diplomatic contacts with Arab states have been conducted by the IDF. This has granted it a leading role in foreign policy. Beginning with the Armistice Agreements of 1949, the IDF played a major role in all peace talks, including those with Syria during the 1990s.[223] In particular, after the Oslo Agreements, the IDF wanted to be included in the negotiations. Its aim was to weaken the Palestinian cause.[224] Thus, during negotiations, the IDF was consulted, and it participated in the chief of staffs' talks in 1994 and

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[220] Kamrawa, "Military Professionalization", pp. 71-72

[221] Interview with Eyal Zisser, Professor, Head of Department of the Humanities, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, December 16, 2010

[222] Kamrawa, "Military Professionalization", p. 75

[223] Freilich, "National Security Decision-Making in Israel", pp. 642, 657

[224] Interview with Alon Liel, ex-Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tel Aviv, December 6, 2010

1995. Despite of the futility of the efforts, the IDF still recommends making peace with Syria to the government in order to split off from the Iranian axis.[225]

In addition to these administrative challenges, ideological constraints are relevant in the sense that ideological fervor, Zionism, has continued to pervade Israeli political life. Thus, issues of national security are argued in highly ideological and partisan terms that exceed their objective weight. These considerations permeate the entire decision-making process in Israel, often superseding all calculations of strategic interest.[226] Many decision-makers, having had long careers in the defense establishment, or at least having spent years in military service, have internalized its highly mission-oriented ethos.[227] Going back to Ben Gurion, foreign policy has been a function of security issues in Israel. For instance, during the 1990s, except during Likud-led governments, the PM and defense minister was the same person.[228]

During the 1990s, through a process of awakening, Israeli society became arguably less ideological on questions of foreign affairs and defense, with most major social rifts and political divisions being over domestic issues. Some claimed that there emerged a demand to end debate over national borders and to look inward.[229]

From another perspective, some researchers point to the fundamental contradiction of Israel as a Jewish state on the one hand, and a democratic state on the other. The first is represented by hawkish religious parties, and in some ways also by the main hawkish secular party, Herut/Likud, which stresses the ethno-religious component of Israel as a Jewish state. In contrast, the humanistic-civil component, represented by the main dovish party Labor and

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[225] Interview with Amir Rapoport, Journalist, Tel Aviv, December 7, 2010, Interview with Moshe Ma'oz, Professor Emeritus, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, December 13, 2010

[226] Freilich, "National Security Decision-Making in Israel", p. 645

[227] Ibid., p. 654

[228] Interview with Yossi Alpher, co-editor of bitterlemons.org, Tel Aviv, December 15, 2010

[229] Sagie, *The Israeli-Syrian Dialogue*, p. 20

similar parties, stresses universal principles, democracy, and civil society.[230] Although there was some variation in stated practices in pursuit of the goal of a Jewish state, the goal itself was shared by both parties throughout the period of investigation. On the other hand, although the Likud continues to affirm the narrative of the Jewish historical link and right to the land, both parties have adopted a strategy of giving up the territorial goal in order to preserve a more important goal, namely, maintaining a Jewish and democratic state.[231]

Within the coalition decision-making structure, we see the ascendancy of the prime ministry and the IDF. The majority of Israeli interviewees answered the question of who the authoritative decision unit in Israel was as "the prime minister, not even government."[232] For instance, the Mossad, an Israeli intelligence unit, is under the supervision of the PM rather than the chief of staff.[233] Following this argument, a commonly accepted idea is that Israel needs the spirit of "can do" leaders who can press forward without regard to constraints.[234] But it is also true that legitimacy for peace is a necessity for prime ministers.[235] On the other hand, it is commonly presumed in Israel that the prime minister can ultimately lead the public will, and the latter will eventually follow the former. In light of this, the arguments of some Syrians that Israelis are willing to make peace but do have ability to do so carries some weight.[236]

Within this framework, the bilateral peace negotiations began under the Yitzhak Shamir cabinet, then were carried on by the governments headed by

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[230] Neta Oren, "Israeli Identity Formation and the Arab-Israeli Conflict in Election Platforms, 1969-2006", *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 47, No. 2, 2010, p. 193

[231] Ibid., p. 197

[232] Interview with Alon Liel, ex-Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tel Aviv, December 6, 2010

[233] Interview with Amir Rapaport, Journalist, Tel Aviv, December 7, 2010

[234] Freilich, "National Security Decision-Making in Israel", p. 653

[235] Interview with Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, Professor, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, December 13, 2010

[236] Interview with Samir Ladkani, Damascus, October 30, 2010

Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres, Benjamin Netanyahu and Ehud Barak formed respectively after the election in 1992, Rabin's assassination in 1995, and the elections in 1996 and 1999.

Israeli policy vis-à-vis Syria was not very consistent. Shamir's government showed no sign of either accommodating the Syrian position on the peace process or of attempting to stop the expansion of settlement activity in the territories. Shamir even expressed to representatives of the Golan settlers that "our presence in the Golan is eternal". Yet several Likud ministers and Knesset members apparently felt uncomfortable with Shamir's uncompromising line vis-à-vis a more flexible Syrian position.[237] Consequently, the Syrians lost whatever faith they might have had in that government. General Mustafa Tlass, Syrian defense minister, explained the situation:

> The truth is that Israel, by nature, is antagonistic to peace. When it discovered that Syria and her neighbors were willing to participate in the Madrid Peace initiative and expressed their readiness to co-operate with the peace process, it reluctantly decided to participate. It continues to disrupt at all stages the ongoing efforts towards peace.[238]

Shamir later confessed, after his failure in the 1992 elections, that had he been re-elected he would have delayed the negotiations for at least ten years.[239] We can conclude that the era of Yitzhak Shamir was dominated by ideology.[240] Shamir had no interest in the process; he had merely responded to US pressure.[241]

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[237] Ma'oz, *Syria and Israel*, p. 212

[238] Lieutenant General Mustafa Tlass, "Syria and the Future of the Peace Process", *Jane's Intelligence Review*, Vol. 6, No. 9, (September 1994), p. 412

[239] Rabil, *Embattled Neighbors*, pp. 200-201

[240] Neill Lochery, "The Netanyahu Era: From Crisis to Crisis, 1996-99", *Israel Affairs*, Vol. 6, No. 3&4, Spring/Summer 2000, pp. 228-229

[241] Interview with Itamar Rabinovich, Professor, Ambassador of Israel to the US (1993-1996), Israel's Chief Negotiator with Syria (1992-1995), Tel Aviv, December 15, 2010

After Shamir, Yitzhak Rabin arrived in the prime minister's office in July 1992 as a matured, experienced and authoritative political leader. His nickname became "Mr. National Security". Itamar Rabinovich, Israel's chief negotiator appointed by Rabin, pointed out that the Israeli-Syrian negotiations of 1992-1995 had been shaped by numerous forces, but they were dominated by the personalities of Yitzhak Rabin and Hafiz Asad. The latter was an unquestioned leader, while the former headed a coalition government resting on a small parliamentary majority, and was restricted by significant limitations within his own party, cabinet and government.[242] Some Syrians also argued that a lack of institutionalization could result in personalities becoming more important, and in this sense, Rabin was clever and bankable; after Rabin, the mood changed.[243] Syrians understood that Rabin and his government had been "a golden chance".[244]

Rabin saw the advantage of dealing first with an authoritative head of state. He had thought a deal with Syria was a good beginning to make peace.[245] Furthermore, he himself believed that, while perhaps not an ideological transformation, a strategic change had taken in Damascus toward Israel.[246] Also, Asad was difficult to negotiate with, but Israel's experience showed that once he made an agreement he kept it.[247]

As a result, Rabin made a number of statements that could be interpreted as signals to Syria, as well as to the Golan settlers, that Israel was ready to consider at least a partial withdrawal from the Golan.[248] In addition, he

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[242] Rabinovich, *The Brink of Peace*, pp. 43, 54-58

[243] Interview with Sami Moubayed, Political Analyst, Damascus, November 2, 2010

[244] Interview with Muhammad Habbash, MP in the Parliament, Damascus, May 29, 2008

[245] Interview with Itamar Rabinovich, Professor, Ambassador of Israel to the US (1993-1996), Israel's Chief Negotiator with Syria (1992-1995), Tel Aviv, December 15, 2010

[246] Ma'oz, *Syria and Israel*, pp. 227-230

[247] Rabinovich, *Waging Peace*, p. 44

[248] Special Document, Patrick Seale, "The Syria-Israel Negotiations: Who is Telling the Truth?", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. XXIX, No. 2, Winter 2000, p. 66

declared in the Knesset that if an agreement involving significant territorial concessions were to be reached, the government would submit it to a public referendum. However, for Syrians, referendum was wholly illegitimate. They were surprised at how Israel could hold a referendum about Syrian land: it was not their land to vote on.[249] Rabin's position had been that since the issue was very important to the people of Israel, the opinions of the people had to be taken into account.[250] His agenda was later influenced by growing opposition in Israel – including in his own party – to a full withdrawal from the Golan. He may have been worried that peace with Syria would not be approved in a referendum, and that this would result in the collapse of his government.[251] Tragically, on November 4, 1995, Rabin was assassinated by a fanatic orthodox Jew, Yigal Amir, who believed killing the prime minister would put an end to the peace process. Foreign Minister Shimon Peres replaced Rabin as prime minister.

Peres tried to continue the government's term. However, there were some challenging points. For instance, Peres did not know about "deposit"[252], which is also known as "pocket", "gambit", "commitment" and "conditioned willingness".[253] Rabin's commitment to full withdrawal from the Golan was made to the US, not to Syria. The US could convey Rabin's idea to Syria, but

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[249] Ross, *The Missing Peace*, p. 140

[250] "Rabin Grants Interview on Peace Process", London MBC Television in Arabic, 13 Feb 94, in *FBIS-NES-94-030*, 14 February 1994, p. 38

[251] Ma'oz, *Syria and Israel*, p. 251

[252] Deposit is explained by Wallid Muallem as follows: "When Rabin finally realized that the Syrians would not move a step ahead in discussing any of the other elements of a peace settlement before being convinced of Israel's intention of full withdrawal, he made the opening. That was in August 1993, and we negotiated the details of the withdrawal element for almost a year, until July 1994, when we finalized the agreement on full withdrawal to the June 4, 1967 lines. This opened the way for negotiations on the other elements of a peace agreement… So in September 1994, I began discussing with Mr. Rabinovich the other elements and presented our vision of each." Muallem, "Fresh Light on the Syrian-Israeli Peace Negotiations", pp. 84-85

[253] Itamar Rabinovich, "From Deposit to Commitment: The Evolution of US-Israeli-Syrian Peace Negotiations, 1993-2000", in *The View from Damascus, State, Political Community and Foreign Relations in Twentieth-Century Syria*, (London, Portland: Valentine Mitchell, 2008), p. 259

Rabin was not ready to directly commit to Syria. The US would thus keep Rabin's commitment in its pocket until Syria met Israel's conditions.[254]

Just after a meeting between Clinton and Peres, Asad was informed that Peres had adopted Rabin's commitment. During the Wye Plantation talks (December 1995-February 1996), Syria was presented with a Regional Israeli-Syrian Development Plan. The plan, formulated by the US and Israel, offered Syria an economic temptation worth $10-15 billion in joint economic projects in the fields of energy, telecommunications, tourism, agriculture, winery, and environmental issues.[255]

Peres was focused on a "new Middle East", wherein he foresaw the Golan as an entrepreneurial hub for the two countries, Asad refused these joint projects on the assumption that the Syrian public would look on them as symbols of Israel's hegemony. It soon became apparent that a breakthrough was not feasible in the near future. Lack of progress with the Syrians pushed Peres to move up the elections from November to May.[256]

According to Rabinovich, Rabin and Peres had realized that it was indeed more difficult for leaders relying on a center-left coalition to make peace than it would have been for a right-wing leader. Their efforts to come to terms with Syria generated opposition from the right as well as from segments of the center.[257]

Benjamin Netanyahu, who came to power through the 1996 elections, lacked the personal credibility to make far-reaching concessions that contravened both his party and cabinet. Without support from Yitzhak Mordechai and Ariel Sharon, Netanyahu could not go it alone.[258] Indeed, Netanyahu had more power than any previous PM as a result of electoral

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[254] Pressman, "Mediation, Domestic Politics, and the Israeli-Syrian Negotiations", p. 359

[255] Kober, "Arab Perceptions of Post-Cold War Israel", p. 28

[256] Rabil, *Embattled Neighbors*, pp. 159, 249

[257] Rabinovich, *The Brink of Peace*,

[258] Daniel Pipes, "The Road to Damascus: What Netanyahu almost gave away", *New Republic*, July 5, 1999, p. 1 or http://www.meforum.org/article/pioes/311

reform[259], and he had tried to introduce a presidential style of concentrated decision-making power. However, the Israeli system was still built upon a coalition form of government. The Netanyahu era represented a period of transition in which the full extent of electoral system changes had not yet been transferred to the political system.[260] Therefore, even with the added powers accorded by the reform, Netanyahu was not free of ideological and political constraints by his coalition partners and his electorate, the majority of which were from the settler movements.[261] Thus given the nature of his coalition, Netanyahu would not be under pressure to seek a peace treaty with Syria. Netanyahu was attacked by both the right and the left. The right charged him with abandoning their ideology and political agenda, and the left accused him of trying to kill the spirit and letter of the peace process. This difficult political situation once again prompted early elections on May 17, 1999.[262]

Ehud Barak, Labor Party leader, was elected prime minister in 1999. Barak won an impressive personal majority (56.08 percent) but emerged with a weak parliamentary base in the new two-ballot system. His own party won only 26 out of 120 seats, and the larger center-left bloc, the natural supporter of his peace policy, failed to obtain the requisite number of seats to build a coalition.[263] Thus Barak immediately worked toward building a broad-based coalition government. He tried to unite left and right, secular and religious, dove and hawk by forming a coalition government. He entered office in a much stronger position than had Netanyahu in 1996. Lack of strong inter-party

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[259] In 1996, a new electoral reform law was adopted in Israel that provided the voter with two ballots, one for the direct election of the prime minister and one for a party in the Knesset. The theory behind the law was that by directly selecting a prime minister, much of the bargaining would be taken out of the process. However, the new law produced the opposite of the intended effect: It ended up increasing the number and strength of small parties, as well as moving much of the horse-trading process from after the election to before it.

[260] Lochery, "The Netanyahu Era", p. 236

[261] Galia Golan, "Can the Arab-Israeli Peace Process Continue Under the Likud Government?", *Working Paper #11, Center for International Relations*, (University of California, August 1996), pp. 3-4

[262] Rabil, *Embattled Neighbors*, p. 216

[263] Rabinovich, *Waging Peace*

opposition to his leadership, a cabinet consensus on the peace process and acceptance of his mandate by other leaders would all allow Barak to develop his executive strength.[264] Asad had noticed a movement toward the center, and that there was a strong leader in office.[265] Barak, however, was reluctant to discuss the issue of the June 4 line, since it was a highly emotional matter in Israel. He would have had to contend not only with the opposition but also with a constituency that was highly skeptical of the notion of Syria having a foothold at the edge of Lake Tiberias. Through the end, with an increasingly uncertain majority, he also faced a struggle in parliament.[266] Public opinion polls also convinced him not to move forward. This is why we see the "cold feet" policy of Barak.[267] He was argued to have made a serious tactical error when he decided not to publicize his agreement to withdraw to the June 4 line until he could show skeptical Israelis what they would get from Asad in return. If Barak had announced his intention to withdraw early in his term, while he was still enjoying the momentum of his victory, the Israeli public may merely have observed that he was sticking to his often-declared principles. By insisting he had not yet made a decision on the issue, he painted himself into a corner.[268]

An anecdote clarifies events. When Barak took office, Israeli officials had the incorrect impression via Ronald Lauder[269] that Syria had agreed to a withdrawal to the 1923 border rather than the June 4 line, and to an Israeli military presence at an early warning station on the Golan. When asked about the document, Asad replied that Syria had never accepted it. To Barak this rejection might simply have been taken as a form of Syrian bargaining. Later,

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[264] Lochery, "The Netanyahu Era", p. 236

[265] "Kisses across the Golan Heights"

[266] "After Asad", *Economist*, 17/06/2000, Vol. 355, Issue 8175

[267] Interview with Shlomo Brom, Senior Research Fellow, The Institute for National Security Studies, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, December 7, 2010

[268] Siegman, "Being Hafiz al-Asad", pp. 2-3

[269] Ronald Lauder is an American businessman who conducted the secret negotiations between Syria and Israel during the Netanyahu government of 1996-1999.

Riad Daoudi[270] told Dennis Ross that Lauder had showed Barak and Clinton the draft version, not the final one, in which Syria had insisted on the June 4 line. When Lauder later showed the US the final version, it specified the June 4 line and no Israeli presence at the early warning station. Lauder then clarified that it had been Netanyahu who had accepted the June 4 line.[271]

According to subsequent Israeli reports, Barak had acted unilaterally, without consulting his cabinet and without any internal discussion of Israel's vital interests. According to Ma'oz, Uri Sagie, chief Israeli negotiator under Barak government, described him as "half-baked" because of this failure.[272] There is now evidence that top Israeli military officials were willing to agree to the Syrian position on the border. Later, IDF officers explicitly stated that responsibility for the failure of negotiations with Syria was borne by Barak, not Asad. General Staff officers were willing to assent to Asad's demand that Israel withdraw from the northeast shore of the lake, and they believed Barak's intransigent refusal to comply with the Syrian demand reflected a triumph of passing domestic political considerations over permanent security needs.[273]

It is agreed that Israeli public opinion was the central factor in Barak's decision to buy time at Shepherdstown rather than move for a peace agreement, as had been expected. According to some, Barak was the most poll-conscious Israeli prime minister ever.[274]

From another perspective, the idea that the Golan Heights might be relinquished in exchange for a peace treaty with Syria further polarized Israeli politics. Rabin was so taken aback by the intensity of domestic opposition that he was willing to turn over the decision to the people themselves. The question

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[270] Riad Daoudi is a lawyer who participated in the negotiations with Israel as an adviser and also conducted the secret negotiations with Ronald Lauder.

[271] Ross, *The Missing Peace*, pp. 527-528

[272] Interview with Moshe Ma'oz, Professor Emeritus, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, December 13, 2010

[273] "Syria Under Bashar (I): Foreign Policy Challenges", *ICG Middle East Report No: 23*, (Amman/Brussels, 11 February 2004), p. 1, Slater, "Lost Opportunities for Peace, pp. 99-101

[274] Pressman, "Mediation, Domestic Politics, and the Israeli-Syrian Negotiation", p. 369

of the return of the Golan Heights was potentially explosive for the Labor Party itself. It was Labor that had encouraged the creation and expansion of settlements on the Golan. Although the purpose of the settlements was largely for reasons of security rather than politics, the Golan's relevance to Israel's security in light of the historical mistrust between the two countries has become deeply embedded in the public psyche. In June 1994, an extra-parliamentary group made up primarily of Labor members and sympathizers was founded under the name "Third Way". Golan settlers organized themselves into an effective pressure group with close connections to the Third Way. This Golan lobby formulated a law, the Golan Entrenchment Law, to be passed in the Knesset. The law would require a majority in the Knesset in order to repeal the 1981 Golan annexation law, as well as a majority in the national referendum promised by Rabin. The lobby did not successfully push the resolution through the Knesset.[275]

It is argued that the future of the Jewish settlements on the Golan Heights and the reaction of the Golan settlers to peace negotiations with Syria was and will be important obstacles to an Israeli-Syrian peace treaty. According to Rabil, on the surface, the issue might appear difficult but manageable. On a deeper level, the issue is complicated and has the potential to become an explosive domestic political issue because the settlements had spread there based on the legal opinion that the Golan has become an integral part of Israel. There was also the matter of the settlers, who had arrived on uncontroversial and officially sanctioned terms.[276]

Since Rabin's time, public referendum has been viewed as part of the Israeli decision-making structure. Thus to garner support for a referendum on withdrawal, to which the prime minister is committed, the public has to be convinced that Israel has achieved reconciliation with Syria.[277] Rabil asserts that peacemaking with Syria would exacerbate an already highly polarized

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[275] Rabil, *Embattled Neighbors*, pp. 158-159

[276] Ibid., pp. 161-162

[277] Sagie, *The Israeli-Syrian Dialogue*, p. 22

domestic political system, creating within it centrifugal forces of sorts. The ability of leaders to mobilize support for peacemaking would be put to the test by a hesitant public torn on peace and security concerns. Only the Knesset and a national referendum could decide if the domestic battle for peace with Syria would be won. And this is a tough call for prophecy.[278]

It is not only the fairly small number of Golan settlers but the encompassing political and psychological processes connected to their presence that makes it extremely difficult for any Israeli government to decide on the withdrawal and removal of the settlements from the Golan. These wrenching difficulties reside in the fact that these leaders have to counteract the long-term effects of the indoctrination that they had themselves practiced concerning the paramount importance of Golan security.[279] Though few in number, these 20,000 settlers have been the single most effective political lobby in Israel. This is not a matter of direct political strength; they have only minimal representation in the Knesset and their electoral participation is below the national average. Yet for over a decade they have successfully mobilized public opinion against a withdrawal. Unlike some of their West Bank counterparts, who often are seen as political outsiders and religious extremists, the public largely perceives the typically unarmed Golan settlers as members of the mainstream and the source of much internal tourism, as well as a source of agricultural produce.[280]

In conclusion, Israeli domestic structure has had a vital impact on the peace process. Rabinovich noted that Asad had failed to empathize with his Israeli counterpart's domestic political constraints, and with the complexities and rules of the Israeli political system. Instead, the Syrian stereotypical view, according to Rabinovich, was colored by hostility and lack of interest, with a tendency to view all Zionist parties as being essentially the same, and a suspicion that obstacles in the process were actually negotiation tactics.

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[278] Rabil, *Embattled Neighbors*, p. 161

[279] Ibid., p. 165

[280] "Restarting Israeli-Syrian Negotiations", *International Crisis Group (ICG) Middle East Report*, No. 63, April 10, 2007, p. 9

Damascus adopted a more nuanced view over time. In particular, the 1996 elections resulted in an awakening, and led Asad to begin addressing the Israeli political system, but it was too late.[281] The extent and pace of the development of this understanding were too limited to have a real impact on the process.

5.5.2. Pre-Negotiation Variables

Along with the background mentioned above, parties' perceptions of the status quo, of whether or not stalemate conditions existed, to what degree those stalemates were hurting, and whether or not the parties are motivated to give importance to their transformation, are important for understanding failure in conflict transformation efforts.

5.5.2.1. Hurting Stalemate and Enticing Opportunity: Perception of the Status Quo and Challenges to the Status Quo

It is possible to examine the parties' perceptions of the status quo in the Syrian-Israeli conflict in two stages: the first was setting up the process, and second was the process itself. In the first stage, by 1991, the Arab-Israeli conflict had reached an impasse: with the demise of the Soviet Union and the defeat of Iraq, a military solution was not possible, while a diplomatic solution would have to recognize the US interests in the region, in which a crucial element was the security of Israel. These events provided the US with an unprecedented opportunity to project influence into the region.[282] Zartman argued that if there was a ripe moment in the Middle East Peace Process in the 1990s, it was in the process itself, not in its setup in 1991. The Madrid Process was the result of a well-contrived mutually enticing opportunity that resulted in

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[281] Rabinovich, *The Brink of Peace*

[282] B. A. Roberson, "The Impact of the International System on the Middle East", in Raymond Hinnebusch and Anoushiravan Ehteshami (eds.), *The Foreign Policies of the Middle East States*, (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), p. 60

an escalating engagement by the parties but led to an unusual, process-related stalemate that was painful for both.[283]

From the Israeli point of view the global developments served its interests. The historic American victory in the Cold War brought with it an increased sense of security in Israel. Its close bilateral ties with Washington provided a positive lever in its efforts to advance the peace process with the Arab states.[284] Asad had acknowledged that Israel, more than other nations, drew benefits from the global changes: it had renewed relations with several states, and its influence increased in several other states, including the socialist states. It also became stronger owing to the immigration of Soviet Jews.[285]

Additionally, Israel was enjoying newfound legitimacy in the Gulf Coalition along with most other states in the Middle East. The absence of a hurting stalemate, which may explain why the Madrid process was so slow to start and lame to proceed, made it necessary for the mediator to produce some other incentives. Madrid may have been a rare and interesting example of a mutually enticing opportunity, in which the prospect of a better situation at the end of negotiations pulls parties to the table, rather than being pushed by a bad and worsening situation.[286]

Moreover, the Golan front had been quiet since the 1974 disengagement agreement. The only pressure on Israel was the war in the south of Lebanon. This war came with a very high price in loss of life, and so there was recognition in Israel that the Lebanese problem could not be resolved without Syria, which acted as the real authority in Lebanon.[287] In addition, the intifada was shaking Israel, which pushed it to sign an agreement with the Palestinians. This is why the Israeli government did not feel pressure to reach an accord with

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[283] I. William Zartman, "Explaining Oslo", *International Negotiation*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 1997, p. 198

[284] Sagie, *The Israeli-Syrian Dialogue*, p. 16

[285] Ma'oz, *Syria and Israel*, p. 205

[286] Zartman, "Explaining Oslo", p. 197

[287] Winckler, "The Syrian Road to the Middle East Peace Process", p. 126

Syria compared to the Palestinians.[288] However, indirect effects of the 1987 *intifada* caused some to argue that afterward, a significant body of opinion in Israel was no longer willing to pay the costs of a perpetuated status quo. According to Rabinovich, without understanding the effect of this change, it is impossible to understand Shamir's acceptance of the "Madrid Framework" or the Labor Party's victory in the 1992 elections.[289]

We can conclude that Israel was not hurting at all, except under pressure exerted by the US; the status quo was sustainable. If so, there would have been no hurting stalemate, meaning Israel participated in the Madrid negotiations because of American pressure[290] and inducements.[291]

The arguments that brought Syria to the table were different. On the one hand, Syria is thought to have enjoyed geographically bestowed advantages with respect to Israel in comparison with Jordan and Egypt because the Golan Heights was not as economically valuable as the Sinai and the Suez Canal were to Egypt and the West Bank was to Jordan. Moreover, although Syria was no longer able to shell Israeli territory from heavily fortified positions, it was still relatively secure from Israeli invasion. The Syrian military positions in Lebanon buffered it. Syria therefore had no need to rush toward peace with Israel.[292]

On the other hand, it is argued that whereas Israel maintained its status quo policy regarding Syria and the Golan until mid-1992, from 1988 Syria had revised and expanded its strategy of achieving a political settlement to the conflict, albeit on its own terms. Syria was more heavily constrained, in light of its failure to achieve a strategic balance with Israel, its regional isolation and vulnerability after the Iraq-Iran war, a severe economic crisis, and the dramatic

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[288] Rabil, *Embattled Neighbors*, p. 247

[289] Rabinovich, *Waging Peace*, p. 34

[290] Interview with Alon Liel, ex-Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tel Aviv, December 6, 2010

[291] Interview with Moshe Ma'oz, Professor Emeritus, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, December 13, 2010

[292] Dawn, "The Foreign Policy of Syria", p. 176

change in the post-Cold War global configuration. Within this context, Damascus carefully sought to mend fences first with Washington and Cairo, rather than with Tel Aviv.[293]

Unlike Israel, Syria exhibited stalemate conditions. In strategic terms, Iraq's defeat in the Gulf War eliminated the threat of the "Eastern Front" against Israel. The collapse of the notion of strategic parity, together with Israel's growing strength, led to a change in Syria's position on peace. Asad understood the futility of trying to achieve military, diplomatic, economic and technological parity with Israel.[294] In conclusion, Syria was under enormous pressure at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, and may have been fed up with the conflict.[295]

Syria also faced other challenges during the process in the 1990s. For instance, the lack of Arab consensus was a stalemate condition. An increase in particularistic Arab interests was reflected in inter-Arab conflicts and varying attitudes among players with regard to political processes with Israel. Israel was no longer the focal point of an Arab consensus. The ideology of hostility toward Israel had been balanced by the need for political pragmatism to attain Arab objectives. As Arab-Israeli relations were reduced from an ideological war to a competition over the terms of a settlement, Arab leaders were increasingly confident they could legitimize accommodationist policies, even if they violated nationalist norms.[296]

Furthermore, a race ensued among Arab players around relations with Israel. The notion of comprehensive peace eventually became vague and contingent. Sagie claimed there was no longer any "Grand Design" vis-à-vis Israel. The Arab world was divided and fragmented, making it difficult to maintain coherency vis-à-vis Israel.[297]

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[293] Ma'oz, *Syria and Israel*, pp. 201-202

[294] Sagie, *The Israeli-Syrian Dialogue*, pp. 25, 72

[295] Interview with Sami Moubayed, Political Analyst, Damascus, November 2, 2010

[296] El-Shazly and Hinnebusch, "The Challenge of Security", p. 75

[297] Sagie, *The Israeli-Syrian Dialogue*, pp. 12-17

In spite of this, when the Syrians heard of the Oslo Accords set for August 1993, they were surprised. They saw immediately that the Palestinians had shattered Arab unity, giving Israel a strategic advantage in the negotiations and legitimizing future separate agreements. This had also been what happened when Jordan signed its own peace treaty with Israel in October 1994. Asad had regarded these separate agreements as high-powered pressure tactics engineered by Israel to force Syria into submission. He believed Israel to be playing one Arab party against another to further its interests and agenda, which would be done at Syria's expense.[298] Asad was unhappy with the notion of an indefinite stalemate in which Palestinian progress mattered, but not progress with Syria.[299]

During the peace process, the Syrians were disappointed and frustrated by the level of American involvement, and by what they perceived to be a lack of willingness to apply pressure on Israel. Additionally, Syrian frustration with the US increased as it realized that while American-Israeli relations had remained relatively strong over the years, its own image among the US congress and in the wider American public remained negative and problematic against the background of Syria's inclusion on a list of terror-supporting states, and its being regarded as a non-democratic state undermining US interests in the Middle East.[300]

Moreover Israel's improving relations with Turkey, and what Damascus saw as tripartite Israeli-Turkish-Jordanian strategic cooperation with American backing, deepened its fears of being surrounded by military alliances directed against "Arabic-Moslem solidarity" in general and Syria in particular.[301]

Syria's economic and domestic weaknesses had also been exacerbated over the course of the 1990s. During this period, it was suffering from a severe recession: exports had declined by 20 percent, a drought had hurt agriculture

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[298] Rabil, *Embattled Neighbors*, pp. 228-231

[299] Rabinovich, *Waging Peace*, p. 118

[300] Sagie, *The Israeli-Syrian Dialogue*, pp. 27-28

[301] Ibid., p. 25

and contributed to a water shortage, oil resources were being depleted, and foreign investments, including those from the Gulf, had declined significantly.[302] The lack of investments was blamed on Israel as well,[303] since although development projects were needed, all available money was being directed at military buildup.[304] As a result, the costs associated with continuation of the conflict were much higher for Syria. Thus, the benefits of an agreement that could result in its reintegration into the international community, and in greater investments and legitimacy for the regime, were attractive.[305]

Another pressing domestic concern was the matter of Asad's successor. During this period, with his health in rapid decline, Asad made the smooth transition of power a top priority,[306] since otherwise, a Syria with a stalled political structure could be left at the mercy of the volatile forces of the period.[307] He was unsure, however, of whether his son would be able to recover lost Syrian honor and prominence by regaining the Golan Heights, since his successor would have to devote most of his initial attention to maintaining the regime internally. He therefore felt the need to move quickly toward the strategic objective of getting back the Golan Heights.[308] In other words, Asad hoped to conclude a peace treaty with Israel so that he could pass the reins of government to Bashar free of this burden.[309] But, of course, he did not want to leave Bashar with a bad deal.[310]

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[302] Ibid., p. 26

[303] Interview with Sami Moubayed, Political Analyst, Damascus, June 1, 2008

[304] Interview with Marwan Kabalan, Assoc. Professor, Damascus, June 2, 2008

[305] Interview with Marwan Kabalan, Assoc. Professor, Damascus, June 2, 2008

[306] Sagie, *The Israeli-Syrian Dialogue*, p. 26

[307] Rabil, *Embattled Neighbors*, p. 138

[308] Sagie, *The Israeli-Syrian Dialogue*, pp. 26-27

[309] Rabil, *Embattled Neighbors*, p. 142

[310] Interview with Ibrahim al-Hamidi, Journalist, al-Hayat, Damascus, June 3, 2008

With these challenges facing the process, the bilateral negotiation process immediately and repeatedly fell to stalemate. Neither side showed any willingness to grant full payment (in territory or security) for its demands (of security or territory).[311] For instance, the failure of Shepherdstown talks had resulted in a stalemate that lasted for about two months. Both the Clinton administration and the Barak government were worried by this passage of time. The date of Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon was approaching, and Asad's health continued to deteriorate, intensifying the Israeli debate on a prospective agreement with Syria.[312]

In conclusion, at the beginning of the 1990s, there was no change in the bilateral conditions of a Syrian-Israeli relationship. Indeed, the situation was cold; there was no mutually hurting stalemate.[313] Challenges and opportunities from the regional and international environment were at the front of the parties as well as from the domestic contexts of each party. While Israel was more or less satisfied by the status quo, alternatives to peaceful settlement would either be difficult or disastrous for Syria: a perpetuation of the no-war-no-peace situation would have been difficult to sell in a post-Cold War environment, but a war would be disastrous for Syria given the domestic effects of the collapse of the Soviet Union.[314]

5.5.2.2. Perceived Way Out: Motivations to Talk

Syrian and Israeli motivations to participate in negotiations were both uncertain and conditional. Although parties indicated willingness to conduct negotiations and reach an agreement, they did not hesitate to set conditions on

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[311] Zartman, "Explaining Oslo", p. 201

[312] Rabinovich, *Waging Peace*,

[313] Interview with Ibrahim al-Hamidi, Journalist, al-Hayat, Damascus, June 3, 2008

[314] Perthes, "*Si Vis Stabilitatem, Para Bellum*, p. 163

their participation, declaring their willingness only with the reference to their "but"s.

It is considered to be particularly difficult to turn off perceptions in the peculiar Middle East setting because the parties have become accustomed to the conflict and have come to find it useful and even to enjoy it. It has been integrated into national myths on both sides, justifying otherwise unrelated aspects of policy and attitude.[315]

Although from the Israeli point of view, the Asad regime had shown no sign that it regarded peace with Israel as an urgent matter,[316] we can say he had a bottom line: that the more he looked for ways to attain his strategic objectives, the more he saw a peace agreement with Israel as the most suitable answer to the challenges faced by his country. Some even argued that Syria's interest in a peace treaty with Israel was motivated by the economic fruits of peace, and had predated the problem of permanent Palestinian settlement.[317] Syrian interviewees confirmed the absolute and real demand to negotiate for peace.[318]

For instance, regarding the Madrid conference, despite the less than cordial beginning, Syria appeared to be a willing participant, and it had arguably made a major concession just by coming to Madrid. This attitude of compromise was further in evidence since it had previously taken the position that discussion would be multilateral, and had demanded a UN conference.[319]

Faruq Shara had defined Asad's way as a third way in the Arab world: not surrender (like Sadat, Husain and Arafat), not a refusal to make peace, but

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[315] Zartman, "Explaining Oslo", p. 206

[316] Dawn, "The Foreign Policy of Syria", p. 176

[317] Sagie, *The Israeli-Syrian Dialogue*, pp. 32, 52

[318] Interview with Sami Moubayed, Political Analyst, Damascus, November 2, 2010; Interview with Munir Ali, SANA, Damascus, November 7, 2010

[319] Knudsen, "The Syrian-Israeli Political Impasse", p. 227

a middle of the road way. It was a willingness to make peace, but with dignity, based on Syria's own terms.[320]

In this sense, Asad had a psychological motivation for participation. The loss of the Golan Heights remained an open wound. Recovering Golan would mean restoring not only his prestige but also that of the Ba'th party and the Syrian ruling elite, including the military leadership.[321]

Regarding public will in Syria, Rabinovich argued that although it was not feasible to judge the Syrian public's views on the question of a settlement with Israel, it was clear that Asad's own convictions, the views of his constituency, the image he needed to project, the army's role in his regime, and his majoritarian background all militated against the prospect of a substantial change in the regime's policy.[322]

According to a poll conducted by Hilal Khashan in 1993, two-thirds of respondents, including Syrians, Palestinians and Lebanese, opposed negotiating peace with Israel. Furthermore, an overwhelming majority – even of those who supported peace – seemed not to believe that it could last. For Khashan, it was clear that Arabs were not ready for peace with Israel. He argues that Arabs acknowledged the need to end military belligerency, yet simultaneously preserved all forms of political, cultural and economic segregation. [323]

Khashan also pointed out, however, that in a 1995 update of his research, Syrian approval of peace talks had increased by 17 percent. Asad's preparation of his people for peace was behind this increase. He had accomplished this through media: Israeli political officials and diplomats

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[320] Itamar Rabinovich, "On Public Diplomacy and the Israeli-Syrian Negotiations During the Waning of Hafiz al-Asad's Rule", in *The View from Damascus, State, Political Community and Foreign Relations in Twentieth-Century Syria*, (London, Portland: Valentine Mitchell, 2008), p. 319

[321] Sagie, *The Israeli-Syrian Dialogue*, p. 71

[322] Itamar Rabinovich, "Israel, Syria and Lebanon", in *The View from Damascus, State, Political Community and Foreign Relations in Twentieth-Century Syria*, (London, Portland: Valentine Mitchell, 2008), p. 244

[323] Hilal Khashan, "The Levant: Yes to Treaties, No to Normalization, Polling Arab Views on the Conflict with Israel", *Middle East Quarterly*, June 1995 (http://www.meforum.org/248/the-levant-yes-to-treaties-no-to-normalization (accessed on May 30, 2011)

appeared on Syrian television news, and peace placards were displayed on highways and in main city squares.[324] Despite this increase in approval, Khashan cautions that Arab rulers' championing of peace with Israel has had only a limited impact on public attitudes. He points out that Arab intellectual leaders have created a climate harmful to the cause of peace,[325] and this is bound to affect the views of the general public. As a result, the public accepts peace without normalization, with an eye to possible geostrategic shifts in the future.[326]

On the contrary, Hinnebusch asserts that the vast majority of Syrians, tired of years of conflict and stalemate, had long wanted a peace settlement, and were coerced by no irresistible societal pressures to reject a Golan-for-peace deal, or to make concessions to Israel in order to reach one.[327] The Syrian media had promoted the economic benefits of peace and prepared the public for some degree of normalization. In particular, an important change in Syrian public opinion took place following Oslo because most Syrians saw no reason to reject a settlement that the Palestinians had accepted. As a result, many Syrians were convinced that Syria had to give priority to its own interests in recovering the Golan.[328]

In addition, Sadik Azm's[329] explanation supports Hinnebusch's contention. According to Azm, even after many decades of Ba'th rule, Syria's real public discourse is conducted within Damascene civil society. Since the Madrid conference, intense debates had taken place in Syrian society with regard to Israel, the peace process and the repercussions of a potential

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[324] Ibid.

[325] For instance, the Union of Syrian Writers had frozen the membership of Adonis (Ali Ahmad Said Asbar), a well-known Syrian poet, for supporting normalization with Israel.

[326] Khashan, "The Levant: Yes to Treaties, No to Normalization"

[327] Hinnebusch, "Does Syria Want Peace?", p. 48

[328] Ibid., p. 48

[329] Al-Azm is a Professor Emeritus of Modern European Philosophy at the University of Damascus.

agreement. He made explicit that the issue was not a media debate, but that exchanges were being conducted in the age-old tradition of informal dialogue. It was at one and the same time the Damascus rumor mill and the people's free press. The cumulative effect of such informal talk and debate constituted public opinion, which was taken into consideration by the power centers without admitting as much. The public had questions regarding peace with Israel, but still accepted it, at the end of the day. It was a decisive fact.[330]

There was a general consent in Syria that if their rights, particularly to the Golan Heights, were returned, the people would not mind a peace agreement with Israel. Even extremist Islamists purportedly did not object to such an agreement if Syria reacquired the Golan on just terms.[331]

Some have also argued that Syria's efforts to prepare its public for the idea that peace was a strategic choice. In addition to comments to this effect by Asad himself, Syrian officials had interacted with the Israeli media toward this end. Asad publicly refused to block separate Israeli agreements with Jordan and the PLO, despite the fact he had long preached the need for a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace.[332]

Another indicator of Syrian willingness was Asad's participation in the March 2000 Geneva talks with a huge Syrian delegation. Syrians took this as a sign of his intention to sign an agreement with Israel.[333] Asad reportedly reserved 135 rooms for his officials at the Intercontinental Hotel in Geneva: he had come prepared for a major policy change vis-à-vis Israel; he left Syria even though he was ill. If he had wanted to reject the deal, he could have done so by phone and avoided the difficult journey.[334] Before the event Asad had also sent

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[330] Sadik J. al-Azm, "The View From Damascus", *The New York Review of Books*, June 15, 2000 (http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2000/jun/15/the-view-from damascus/?pagination=false&printpage=true)

[331] Interview with Marwan Kabalan, Assoc. Prof., Damascus, June 2, 2008

[332] Pressman, "Mediation, Domestic Politics, and the Israeli-Syrian Negotiation", p. 380

[333] Interview with Munir Ali, SANA, Damascus, November 7, 2010

[334] Pressman, "Mediation, Domestic Politics, and the Israeli-Syrian Negotiation", p. 376

Foreign Minister Shara to meet with Barak before Barak agreed to the June 4 line. According to Ross, this was another indicator that Asad was ready to conclude an agreement: "I had not seen Asad in such an agreeable mood since his meeting with Baker in July 1991."[335]

Even though we can find some Syrian willingness to sign agreements with Israel and to accept its regional integration, there remained a fear of Israeli hegemony stemming from its close ties with the US, and from its distinctive character within the Middle East.[336] In response to this fear, Syria continued to support Hezbollah, and maintain the headquarters of some Palestinian organizations, which had been identified by Israelis as political cards. Israelis interpreted this as a sign of unwillingness to make peace, arguing that had Syria been truly willing, they would have relinquished their political cards.[337]

In addition, some extraordinary views persisted regarding Israel. According to an Israeli analyst, related to the Arab perception that dispute and division within the Israeli political system was a sign of weakness, they expected that the system would eventually implode. This constitutes one reason for the lack of motivation on the Syrian side. According to this view, Sadat had understood that Israel would render itself relevant, and Syrians today should understand this as well.[338]

During the negotiations, the perception of the Syrian side was that Israel did not exhibit any real motivation to reach an agreement. Israeli leaders took the position that Syria should take steps to convince them to support a treaty and withdrawal from the Golan. By waiting for Syria to take the initiative, Israeli leaders did too little to reshape domestic public opinion on the question of withdrawal.[339] These constant Israeli requests for public diplomacy aroused

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[335] Ross, *The Missing Peace*, p. 537

[336] Sagie, *The Israeli-Syrian Dialogue*, pp. 12-13

[337] Interview with Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, Professor, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, December 13, 2010

[338] Interview with Mordechai Kedar, Professor, Bar-Ilan University, December 9, 2010

[339] Pressman, "Mediation, Domestic Politics, and the Israeli-Syrian Negotiation", p. 379

Syrian suspicions of its commitment and ability to deliver the necessary Knesset votes to enact any agreement.[340] Muallem's articulated this point convincingly:

> We always felt that the Israelis wanted Syria to do their work for them. They wanted us to convince their public that peace was in their interests. We prepared our public for peace with Israel. Many things changed in our media. But they wanted us to speak in the Israeli media to prepare Israeli public opinion. They wanted us to allow Israelis to visit Syria. We considered such insistence a negative sign. When you do not prepare your own public for peace with your neighbor, this means you do not really have the intention to make peace.[341]

For some Syrians, the November 1995 assassination of Yitzhak Rabin during the negotiations was further evidence that Israel was unwilling to reach an agreement.[342] Asad was uneasy after the assassination, because despite of his suspicions, he had perceived Rabin as a pillar of predictability. Suddenly, uncertainty was introduced into the environment. The assassination meant Syrians could not take developments with Israel for granted.[343]

Syrian perceptions aside, Israel exhibited indicators of both motivation and reluctance. Pruitt references a growing sense of optimism regarding the likelihood of reaching agreement as being a driving force behind Israel's behavior during the negotiations. While Pruitt asserts that this optimism developed during the talks, Oren shows that signs of optimism and trust emerged as early as 1992. Furthermore, these shifts appeared not just in the platform of the dovish Labor party that had won the 1992 elections, but also in that of the hawkish Likud party. According to Oren, this may have indicated a change in national consensus toward a greater collective balance and a

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[340] Allison Astorino-Courtois, Brittani Trusty, "Degrees of Difficulty, the Effect of Israeli Policy Shifts on Syrian Peace Decisions", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 44, No. 3, June 2000, p. 367

[341] Muallem, "Fresh Light on the Syrian-Israeli Peace Negotiations", p. 87

[342] Interview with Imad Fawzi Şuaybi, Damascus, June 11, 2008

[343] Ross, *The Missing Peace*, pp. 216, 219

decreased tendency to define Israel as the only side with a genuine interest in settlement. Both parties' platforms demonstrated increased optimism about the chances of finding a solution. For instance, in 1992 Likud declared: "Yesterday it was Egypt. Today it may be Jordan, Syria, or Lebanon." Along with the change in government, Oren also pointed to incremental changes in Israel's national identity that had already begun in the wake of the peace process with Egypt.[344]

Another indicator of willingness to make peace was the "Syria First" policy adhered to by Rabin, Peres, Netanyahu and Barak. There were advantages to following a Syrian track over a Palestinian track. The Syrian-Israeli conflict was perceived to be less complex than the Palestinian-Israeli dispute, since the former was essentially a territorial conflict between two sovereign states, rather than a nationalist and communal conflict over land and rights. States are more credible partners because they have the institutional capability to comply with agreements.[345] Israelis perceived Asad as a trustworthy partner,[346] at least compared to Arafat.[347]

In this context, Israel was motivated by Syria's status as a tough but credible state[348] with the capacity to deliver on deals.[349] For Israelis, "Syria seemed as a bitter enemy, but a reliable partner."[350] This trustworthiness was evidenced by Syria's adherence to the May 1974 disengagement agreement.[351] Although the majority of Israeli interviewees cited this example, some made

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[344] Oren, "Israeli Identity Formation", p. 202

[345] Interview with Shlomo Brom, Senior Research Fellow, The Institute for National Security Studies, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, December 7, 2010

[346] Rabinovich, *Waging Peace*, pp. 126-127

[347] Interview with Amir Rapoport, Journalist, Tel Aviv, December 7, 2010

[348] Interview with Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, Professor, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, December 13, 2010

[349] Interview with Itamar Rabinovich, Professor, Ambassador of Israel to the US (1993-1996), Israel's Chief Negotiator with Syria (1992-1995), Tel Aviv, December 15, 2010

[350] Interview with Itamar Rabinovich, Professor, Ambassador of Israel to the US (1993-1996), Israel's Chief Negotiator with Syria (1992-1995), Tel Aviv, December 15, 2010

[351] Ma'oz, *Syria and Israel*, p. 224

the opposite claim. For instance, Prof. Kedar cited the Ta'if Agreement and the Non-Proliferation Agreement. According to Ta'if Agreement, the armaments of militias had to be dismantled, but Syria's failure to dismantle the arms of Shi'ites was a frustration for Israelis. Also, despite signing the non-proliferation agreement, Syria constructed a reactor in Deir ez-Zor.[352]

Despite this overall willingness to pursue peace, there were indicators of a lack of Israeli motivation to sign a peace agreement with Syria. This unwillingness was related to Golan itself and public diplomacy. While the Israeli public was agreeable to territorial concessions regarding the West Bank and Gaza, there was no such public debate over the Golan Heights in 1990, just before the negotiations began. Reasons were partly related to the question's irrelevance, and partly related to broad support within the Labor Party for continued Israeli control of that territory.[353] This can be seen in the public opinion polls at the time. Israel's chief poll-taker Hanoch Smith shared in March 1991 that public opinion polls since 1967 have periodically shown that some 90 percent of Israeli Jews wished to retain the Golan.[354] In addition, two-thirds of the Israeli public consistently says "no" peace with Syria.[355]

Rates published in the Peace Index support the public opinion poll results, indicating public support at around 30 percent. Since figures have been tracked (April 1996, see chart below), figures have been consistently low, with slight fluctuations. The majority of the public had been consistent in its opposition on a peace agreement with Syria that would entail a complete retreat from the Golan Heights.[356] According to Yaar and Hermann, this large opposition could be attributed to the high percentage of those who believed the status quo could be sustained for many years even without a signed agreement,

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[352] Interview with Mordechai Kedar, Professor, Bar-Ilan University, December 9, 2010

[353] Rabinovich, "Israel, Syria and Lebanon", p. 244

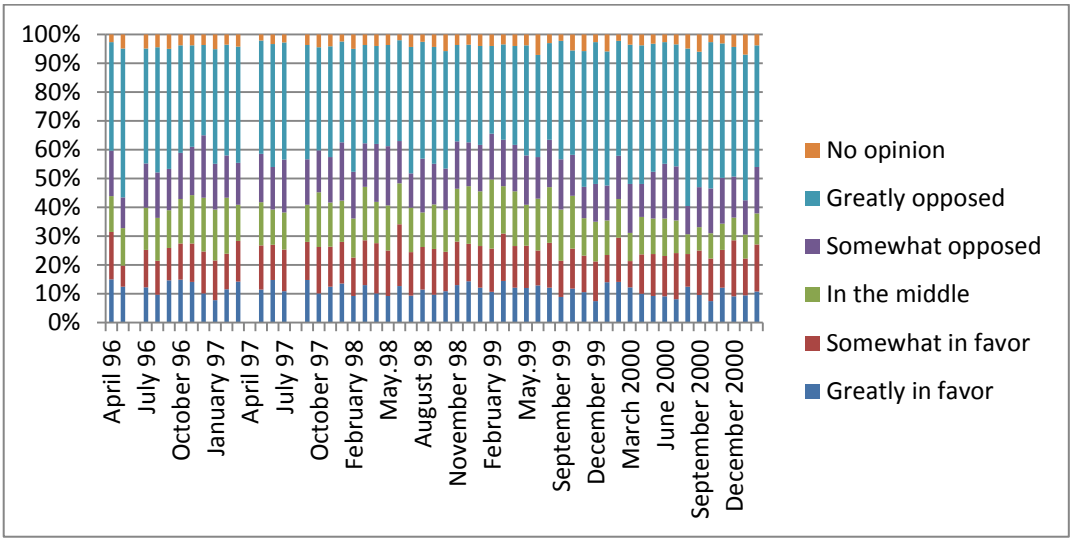
[354] See Ma'oz, *Syria and Israel*, p. 211

[355] Interview with Ehprahim Yaar, Professor, Head, Program in Mediation and Conflict Resolution, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, December 16, 2010

[356] Ephraim Yaar-Yuchtman and Tamar Herman, *The Peace Index*, July 1997. See http://www.tau.ac.il/peace/

and to the fact that a minority believed that such an agreement, if achieved, would actually end the historic conflict between Israel and Syria.[357] Even when levels of general optimism increased significantly, support for an agreement in return for full withdrawal from the Golan could drop. In other words, despite public feeling that the chances of reaching an agreement had improved, public support for such an agreement had deteriorated.[358]

Figure 22: The Israeli Positions Regarding a Full Peace Treaty with Syria in Exchange for Full Withdrawal from the Golan Heights



Source: Prof. Ephraim Yaar and Dr. Tamar Herman, *The Peace Index*, December 1999

We can argue that changes in government did not impact the willingness of the Israeli public. As expected, there is little difference between periods of Labor-led and Likud-led governments. This proves Stedman's suggestion that the public's willingness to settle was a factor in the conflict that was not necessarily within the reach of the political leadership, whether hard-

[357] Prof. Ephraim Yaar and Dr. Tamar Herman, *The Peace Index*, December 1999. See http://www.tau.ac.il/peace/. The War and Peace Index is an ongoing public opinion survey project aimed at systematically tracking prevailing trends in Israeli public opinion on the regional conflict and its effects on Israeli society. The War and Peace Project is conducted at the Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research and the Evens Program in Mediation and Conflict Resolution of Tel Aviv University.

[358] Ibid.

liners or soft-liners were in power. He argues instead that the power exhibited by a new leader is more important than his or her position on issues.[359]

In addition, despite the positive public overtures presented by Asad, by June 1999, there were no real changes in the survey findings. A clear majority opposed full withdrawal in exchange for a full peace agreement. The table also illustrates that the public believed its security interests would be better protected under the Likud in the framework of negotiations with the Arabs, but that Labor would be more successful in advancing the peace process.[360]

Despite its relatively consistent attitude on peace with Syria, it is, of course, possible for the Israeli public to change their minds, and furthermore, attitudes may be contingent.[361] For instance, when the public was asked for its feelings on a peace agreement in the event that it would lead to the weakening of Iran and Hezbollah, 50 percent supported peace. According to Alpher, the Israeli public understands what real peace is.[362] Contrary to the optimism argument discussed above, the case has been made that there was actually no public pressure on the Israeli government to make peace with Syria, and that all public pressure was related to the Palestinian, rather than the Syrian, issue.[363]

As an example, Barak was deeply worried by the numbers from a December 24, 1999 poll on the eve of the Shepherdstown talks. 59 percent of Israelis felt Barak was moving too fast with Syria, and his image as a tough negotiator declined from 45 to 35 percent. Shortly afterward, in a January 5, 2000 poll, Israelis expressed opposition to a withdrawal to the northeast shoreline by a margin of 51 percent to 42 percent, even though the wording of

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[359] Stephen John Stedman, *Peacemaking in Civil War, International Mediation in Zimbabwe, 1974-1980*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1991), p. 241

[360] Prof. Ephraim Yaar and Dr. Tamar Herman, *The Peace Index*, April 1999. See http://www.tau.ac.il/peace/

[361] Interview with Yossi Alpher, co-editor of bitterlemons.org, Tel Aviv, December 15, 2010 and Efraim Inbar, Professor, Director of BESA, Bar-Ilan University, Tel Aviv, December 14, 2010

[362] Interview with Yossi Alpher, co-editor of bitterlemons.org, Tel Aviv, December 15, 2010

[363] Interview with Alon Liel, ex-Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tel Aviv, December 6, 2010

the survey question reminded respondents of the related benefits as well. According to Ma'oz, on the face of the poll results, Barak had almost no chance to win a public referendum or a Knesset majority for a withdrawal to the June 4 line in return for peace with Syria. This was a major factor in the retraction from his early 2000 position, which contributed to the collapse of the Geneva summit in March of that year.[364] The Israeli public was frightened by the prospect of Syrian control of the northeast shore of the Sea of Galilee; this was the central obstacle to support for a peace agreement.[365] More importantly, the Israeli decision-making structure was conscious of public opinion, and was shaping its decisions accordingly.

It was suggested that Barak could have followed the precedent of Menachem Begin, the Israeli president who agreed in 1978 to relinquish the entire Sinai for peace with Egypt. Begin had taken this historic-strategic decision even though some 80 percent of the Israeli Jewish population had previously opposed such a deal, and he succeeded in changing their minds, enlisting overwhelming public support for peace with Anwar Sadat.[366] However, according to Ma'oz, Barak and Asad were both constrained by their publics' mutual fear, mistrust and hatred. The prolonged anti-Israeli indoctrination in the Syrian media had certainly informed Syrian public opinion in much the same way that the periodic unleashing of Hezbollah attacks from Southern Lebanon against Israeli targets had reinforced the image of Syria as a brutal enemy in the eyes of many Israelis.[367]

Other indicators also reveal the government's unwillingness: for instance, on July 21, 1991, in order to underscore its determination not to relinquish the Golan, the Israeli government published a plan to double the Jewish population in the Golan, enhancing economic development and creating jobs there. At that time, 69 Knesset members had signed a document in which

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[364] Ma'oz, "Can Israel and Syria Reach Peace?", p. 25

[365] Pressman, "Mediation, Domestic Politics, and the Israeli-Syrian Negotiation", p. 369

[366] Ma'oz, "Can Israel and Syria Reach Peace?", p. 26

[367] Ibid., p. 26

they promised to maintain Israel's sovereignty over the Golan. The Knesset Golan Lobby was headed by Shlomo Hillel, former speaker and one of Labor's candidates for the presidency.[368]

For Israelis, a perceived lack of confidence-building measures (CBM) taken by Syria for the benefit of Israel was another reason for the dearth of motivation. In truth, Syria had allowed Syrian Jews to emigrate, and the Syrian foreign minister had granted an interview to Israeli television in 1995. Yet such measures had left little impression on Israeli public opinion. The Syrian regime was rarely if ever perceived to be doing enough to prepare its public for a possible peace.[369] The image of Syria as an irresponsible rogue state is thought to have formed in the Israeli public.[370] Neither had there been much of an official Israeli effort (except by some academics) to improve Syria's poor image. Ma'oz notes that in June 1999, Barak described Asad as "the builder of modern Syria," but after the Geneva summit collapsed, he labeled Asad "a Ceausescu-style aging dictator".[371] These images have a tendency to become firmly entrenched. As Syria did not engage in public diplomacy, no change occurred in Israeli public opinion that resulted pressure on the government.[372]

At this point, Israelis demanded that Syria take brave decisions, not only on its strategic readiness to take the road toward peace, but on practical steps to convince the Israeli people of the sincerity of its intentions. According to them, there was need to accelerate the decision-making process in Syria, as well as gestures and confidence-building measures that would make strong impressions on the Israelis. Israelis justified their expectations for the kind of psychological breakthrough affected by Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's visit to Israel in

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[368] See Ma'oz, *Syria and Israel*, pp. 213, 223

[369] Sagie, *The Israeli-Syrian Dialogue*, p. 33

[370] Interview with Shlomo Brom, Senior Research Fellow, The Institute for National Security Studies, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, December 7, 2010

[371] Ma'oz, "Can Israel and Syria reach Peace?", p. 24

[372] Interview with Eyal Zisser, Professor, Head of Department of the Humanities, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, December 16, 2010

1977[373] with the allegation that Syrians did not invest in engagement with Israelis like Egypt did. To the contrary, Syrians had continued putting pressure on its public until the end. And this undermined the goodwill.[374]

Israel was also wary of Syria because of its peculiar relations with Iran, which inspired paranoia among many of its detractors. Some Israelis went so far as to warn they would require international guarantees preventing Iranians from entering Syria, a demand that was quite out of the ordinary in such negotiations.[375]

Another concern was that signing a deal with Asad would not guarantee his successor would observe its terms. If Israel waited, perhaps its chances of extracting an advantageous deal would be improved.[376]

In brief, although some segments of Israel's public were eager for peace, the country as a whole was unprepared for peace.[377] Despite some elements of motivation, related to its relative credibility as a partner, it was clear that the Israeli public's negative view of Syria and its opposition to withdrawal from the Golan weighed more heavily in the decision-making structure's calculations.[378] Any leader in Israel would need to convince the majority of the constituency to support a peace agreement with the "fierce" Syrian enemy.[379]

To conclude, kernels of willingness existed in both parties, but this willingness was followed with many "but"s that converted motivation into

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[373] Sagie, *The Israeli-Syrian Dialogue*, p. 55

[374] Interview with Itamar Rabinovich, Professor, Ambassador of Israel to the US (1993-1996), Israel's Chief Negotiator with Syria (1992-1995), Tel Aviv, December 15, 2010

[375] Interview with Yossi Alpher, co-editor of bitterlemons.org, Tel Aviv December 15, 2010; Interview with Prof. Dr. Mordechai Kedar, December 9, 2010; Interview with Prof. Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, Jerusalem, December 13, 2010

[376] Phillips, "Washington's Role in the Syrian-Israeli Peace Talks" p. 11

[377] Rabil, *Embattled Neighbours*, p. 263

[378] Rabinovich, "On Public Diplomacy", p. 318

[379] Ma'oz, "Can Israel and Syria reach Peace?", p. 22

ambivalence. Every condition put forward during the negotiations was seemingly remolded at the other end to become a barrier on the way to peace.

Behind the conditional willingness were mutual suspicions that hindered negotiations. Israeli culture has been described as universally mistrustful, a vestige of the trauma suffered in the Holocaust. Unfortunately, this psychology is influential in the design of its foreign policy, and was a major factor in its mistrust of Syria and its reluctance to engage in the peace process. In the end, everything else was peripheral. Fortunately, they accept that these are "stereotypes".[380] Rabinovich's words summarize the point well: the situation was characterized by "big temptation of big fear."[381] This was the case for the both parties.

5.5.3. Negotiation Variables

5.5.3.1. Negotiation Goals

Similar to their ambivalence about engaging in peace negotiations, neither Syria nor Israel were clear about their goals. For this reason, the chief goal of both parties was to engage in the peace process rather than to reach a peace agreement.

Israel engaged in this process half-heartedly. For Israel, early on it was clearly a matter of tending to its relations with the US, since, as mediator, it had the power to manipulate negotiations. It could, for example, withhold loan guarantees in connection with settlements on the occupied territories in order to pressure the Likud government of Shamir to join talks. Israel's intention was never to actively engage or to produce any movement in the process, only to register a presence.[382]

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[380] Interview with Mordechai Kedar, Professor, Bar-Ilan University, December 9, 2010

[381] Interview with Itamar Rabinovich, Professor, Ambassador of Israel to the US (1993-1996), Israel's Chief Negotiator with Syria (1992-1995), Tel Aviv, December 15, 2010

[382] Zartman, "Explaining Oslo", p. 197

Regarding Syria, according to Ross, President Asad wanted an agreement, he wanted a relationship with the US, and he definitely did not want to be lumped in with the pariah states of the region. That he sought an agreement in content and process sets him apart.[383] However, although he had made the strategic decision to pursue peace, he had not taken unilateral initiatives, nor made gestures that would render the peace process irreversible. He saw seen no contradiction in sustaining both the peace process and military competition. Peace would not guarantee the survival of the regime, nor would it necessarily guarantee Syria a legitimate leadership role in the Arab world, and so it was not a goal unto itself. The broader goal was to weaken the adversary's capacity by extracting maximum concessions.[384]

Syria was thus not on the brink of peace. Rather, Asad wanted to appear engaged in the peace process to improve his country's position in the region, that is, to maintain the Cairo-Riyadh-Damascus axis. He also believed engagement would be rewarded with international goodwill.[385] In other words, Syrian interest in the peace process was less about the peace and more about the process.[386]

Pipes further argues that there were strong reasons to doubt Asad's sincerity about achieving a genuine peace with Israel. Such a peace might have deprived his regime of a useful scapegoat, undermine the perceived need for Syria's swollen military budget, and remove a justification for his rule. Pipes points out that Asad also shielded his regime from US and Western pressure to end its support of terrorism, strategic cooperation with Iran, and occupation of much of neighboring Lebanon. From another perspective, Asad might have hoped his flirtation with the peace process might pay dividends by luring the US into acquiring a vested interest in the political future of his son Bashar. [387]

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[383] Ross, *The Missing Peace*, p. 223

[384] Mandell, "Getting to Peacekeeping in Principle Rivalries", p. 242

[385] Abbas Kelidar, "Syria's Regional Relationships: Past and Present", *Policywatch*, No. 19, 1998

[386] Rabil, *Embattled Neighbors*, p. 138

To elaborate on the aforementioned goals of good relations with the US and improve its isolated status;[388] Rabinovich asserted that of the two antagonists, it was Syria that was more interested in Washington's mediation because for Syria, it was also a mechanism for building an American-Syrian dialogue. It was clear to Rabinovich that Damascus was more interested in its dialogue with Washington than bargaining with Tel Aviv.[389] Some Syrians agreed that Asad sat at the table to engage with the US.[390]

Even if the parties had articulated their goals clearly, their expectations were divergent. Syria's only goal was to regain the Golan Heights at the June 4 line, arguing that it accepted Israel's existence in the region and only wanted their land back.[391] Although for ordinary people, the existence of Israel is still disputed,[392] we can argue that it has been politically recognized since 1974. It might be described as an acceptance in minds but not hearts,[393] since while there is little question of existence, there remains a "question of the legitimacy of Israel".[394]

Israelis sensed this ambiguity in the genuineness of the Asad regime about negotiating a genuine peace with Israel. Their feeling was that there had been no sense of reconciliation, only a grudging and dogged insistence on recovering the Golan Heights.[395]

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[387] Notes 8, 9 and 10 in Phillips, "Washington's Role in the Syrian-Israeli Peace Talks"

[388] See Altunışık, "Soğuk Savaş Sonrası Dönemde Suriye'nin Dış Politikası", p. 271

[389] Rabinovich, *The Brink of Peace*

[390] Interview with Hala Barbara, Law Consultant, Damascus, November 1, 2010

[391] Interview with Samir Ladkani, Damascus, October 30, 2010

[392] Interview with Marwan Kabalan, Professor, Dean of Faculty, University of Damascus, November 8, 2010

[393] Interview with Fayez Fawaz, President of Human Rights Association, Damascus, May 29, 2008

[394] Interview with Marwan Kabalan, Assoc. Prof., Damascus, June 2, 2008

[395] Phillips, "Washington's Role in the Syrian-Israeli Peace Talks", p. 12

However, as Rabinovich put it, "the Israeli-Syrian dialogue was a striking example of the ability of two old foes, trying to reach agreement, to speak in the same terms – but to mean something different."[396] According to the Israelis, the Syrian demand was to gain back the Golan through a truce rather than a peace agreement, while for them, even a peace agreement that did not reach beyond a cold peace similar that with Egypt, and that did not normalize relations between the parties, was unacceptable. Without normalization, their undeclared "state of war" would continue.[397] On the other side, Asad demanded a better deal than Egypt had in 1979: he rejected what Anwar Sadat accepted.[398] The Syrians indignantly clarified that they were not like Egyptians in goal or deed, and that they did not want to sign an agreement like Egypt.[399]

5.5.3.2. Negotiation Strategies

Syria and Israel both initially viewed the peace process as a zero-sum game. Mutual concessions brought their positions closer together, and by the mid-1990s, they seemed to acknowledge that both could benefit from a settlement. Nevertheless, a power struggle over the shape of the peace remained.[400]

The talks between Syria and Israel were slow and vigilant. The mood was open and business-like, albeit with an emphasis on form rather than substance.[401] Still, despite their differences, negotiations were said to have

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[396] Raymond Cohen, "Resolving Conflict Across Languages", *Negotiation Journal*, January 2001, p. 30

[397] Interview with Mordechai Kedar, Professor, Bar-Ilan University, December 9, 2010

[398] Interview with Itamar Rabinovich, Professor, Ambassador of Israel to the US (1993-1996), Israel's Chief Negotiator with Syria (1992-1995), Tel Aviv, December 15, 2010

[399] Interview with Hala Barbara, Law Consultant, Damascus, November 1, 2010

[400] Hinnebusch, "Does Syria Want Peace?", p. 51

[401] Sagie, *The Israeli-Syrian Dialogue*, pp. 34, 26

occasionally proceeded in a positive, informal and sometimes even friendly atmosphere.[402] Yet Asad had refused to engage in public diplomacy.[403] As Peres put it, Asad was conducting the peace process just as one conducts a military campaign – slowly, patiently, directed by strategic and tactical considerations.[404] Ross identified Asad as narrow, excessively tactical and extremely cautious. Accordingly, he reportedly never initiated, only responded, and so was capable only of incremental moves.[405]

During the first phases, negative public diplomacy characterized the negotiations. Meetings between the two delegations were held in a very formal setting, in a conference room at the State Department building in Washington. Outside the conference room, Syrians refused any informal, discreet contact with Israeli diplomats. According to Rabinovich, the whole Syrian delegation with Muvaffak Allaf was strict and formal,[406] adhering to the Syrian-Arab policy of boycott – separate entry and departure, and refusal to shake hands or engage in any other form of informal or personal interaction. Both parties spoke clearly into the microphone, recording the sessions to create their own records of the history of the Syrian-Israeli dispute, and documenting their versions of the anticipated failure. While entering and exiting the State's Department building the delegations held separate press briefings consisting mostly of mutual recriminations. A Syrian-Israeli dialogue failed to develop first and foremost due to the absence of a mutually acceptable basis for a negotiation, but the negative atmosphere surrounding the meetings became part of the problem.[407]

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[402] Ibid., p. 53

[403] Rabil, *Embattled Neighbours*, p. 255

[404] See Hinnebusch, "Does Syria Want Peace?", p. 44

[405] Ross, *The Missing Peace,* p. 222

[406] Interview with Itamar Rabinovich, Professor, Ambassador of Israel to the US (1993-1996), Israel's Chief Negotiator with Syria (1992-1995), Tel Aviv, December 15, 2010

[407] Rabinovich, "On Public Diplomacy", p. 313

This state of affairs was transformed through the formation of Rabin's government. Rabin was decisive about moving the peace process forward and was willing to offer significant concessions to Syria. But to do this, he insisted on replicating the Egyptian model of public diplomacy. Asad's negotiators were quite clear in explaining his position in this matter, which was to say that public diplomacy had no value; substance alone was relevant to Syria, and the one substantive issue was Israel's withdrawal from the Golan.[408]

Like Rabin, Peres also demanded a dramatic act of public diplomacy for successful negotiation. Asad declined, and in so doing refused to raise the level of negotiations. He kept his ambassador in Washington (Wallid Muallem) as the chief negotiator, but Peres wanted to raise negotiations to the political level. For Rabinovich, Muallem was more forthcoming.[409] Asad, in turn, would only agree to send a delegation composed of diplomats and army officers to a conference site near Washington to negotiate with a comparable Israeli delegation. Syrian delegates to the Wye Plantation were allowed a new level of personal normalization with their Israeli counterparts, but no change was allowed with regard to public diplomacy.[410] As Ross also points out, the entire delegation met together and ate together, and generally spent all day in one place. This represented a first.[411]

The Israeli demand to raise the negotiations from the bureaucratic level to the political level occurred during the Barak government. Asad had appointed his Foreign Minister, Faruq Shara, to lead the Syrian delegation.[412] Barak in turn chose to ignore the difference in rank and to come in person to the first round of negotiations in Washington on December 15, 1999. The gesture made by Asad to raise the level of the negotiations was offset to a degree by a lower level of authorized normalization: Shara would not shake

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[408] Ibid., pp. 314-315

[409] Interview with Itamar Rabinovich, Professor, Ambassador of Israel to the US (1993-1996), Israel's Chief Negotiator with Syria (1992-1995), Tel Aviv, December 15, 2010

[410] Rabinovich, "On Public Diplomacy", p. 316

[411] Ross, *The Missing Peace*, p. 237

[412] Ibid., p. 537

Barak's hand in public, for example.[413] This was interpreted as a major concession because Asad was willing to send Shara to meet with Barak before Barak agreed to the June 4 line.[414]

As an overall assessment, Asad had approached negotiations like a man who was absolutely not in a hurry – as a way to show he would not pay more than he had to pay. According to Ross, there was an enormous amount of gamesmanship in negotiations, wherein if one side suddenly signaled equivocation, the other rushed to prove it did not care. The more one party exhibited need, the more the other party would capitalize on the opportunity to extract concessions in exchange.[415]

Some criticized Syria's negotiation style from a cultural point of view, by which the discrepancy that existed between the parties was taken as a clash in negotiation culture. Along this line of thinking, Israel is considered a representative of Western culture. The argument was that although Israel employed the basic premises of Western diplomatic discourse by emphasizing its vital interests, Syrian leaders did not frame the issues in terms of vital interest. According to Cohen, for Israel, it was essential that each side explore its interests in an effort to detect possible areas of convergence; however, Syrian discourse was formulated in terms of immutable principles. Cohen, who examined the negotiations through such semantic gaps, explains that the semantic field of "principles" covers premises, basics, fundamental concepts and tenets of an ideology, but not interests.[416]

Cohen fortified his ideas through an analysis of the meanings of the word "negotiation" in Arabic. There are two different forms of the word. The first is *mufawadat*, which implies a political negotiation. The idea of give-and-take is absent, while honor and face-saving are paramount. The second form is *musawama*, implying a bargain over the price of goods. This concept has no

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[413] Rabinovich, "On Public Diplomacy", p. 317

[414] Pressman, "Mediation, Domestic Politics, and the Israeli-Syrian Negotiation", p. 367

[415] Rabil, *Embattled Neighbours*, p. 255

[416] Cohen, "Resolving Conflict Across Languages", p. 29

relation to political negotiation. In Arabic, *adil* (justice) and *haqq* (right or truth) are virtues, while compromise is not. Asad's concept of political negotiation did not include compromise; neither did it seem appropriate to engage in compromise over what he perceived as principles of justice and Arab rights.[417]

Brodsky also described the Syrian and Western views of negotiation as polar opposites that formed a barrier to progress. The Western version of negotiation consists of a delicate game of give-and-take based on prioritized interests and trade-offs designed to produce the best deal possible without making concessions that crossed one's red line. The Syrian leader, on the other hand, did not appreciate such ambiguities. Before entering a negotiation, he wanted to know where he was going and what the end result would be. This would not have been acceptable for Israelis, since it defeated the purpose not to participate in the elaborate dance. To seek all the objectives beforehand was considered not to be a negotiation but a dictate.[418]

According to this argument, this perceived disparity was compounded by challenges of cultural communication. Israel's approach was rooted in core values such as pragmatism and rationality. Negotiations were taken as problem-solving meetings. Meanwhile, Syria's approach was rooted in core values of courage and dignity. The Syrian orientation was more holistic, focusing on the totality of the historical context behind the immediate issues, rather than on Western empirical reasoning; the leader made the final decision and was not subordinated to the evidence.[419]

Yet it seems that both Syria and Israel had emphasized their positions over their interests during the negotiations. Both sides stuck to their basic positions throughout: Syria saw the negotiations as talks about withdrawal, noting that this would in itself foster a dynamic of peace, while Israel saw them

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[417] Ibid., pp. 17-34

[418] Matthew RJ Brodsky, "From Madrid to Geneva: The Rise and Fall of the Syrian-Israeli Peace Process, 1991-2000", *Middle East Opinion* (http://www.middleeastopinion.com/history-&-policy) (Accessed on March 18, 2011)

[419] R. Reuben Miller, "The Israeli-Syrian Negotiations", *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Vol. 11, No. 4, 2000, pp. 117-118

as an opportunity to first discuss in detail the terms of peace and normalization.[420]

Asad was said to have strictly adhered to the idea that there could be no peace without complete withdrawal from the Golan – in other words, unless its terms were met. This was the source of his steadfast stance, which in practice meant waiting for flexibility from the Israeli side. Despite difficulties in the negotiations, as well as its isolation, weakness and disadvantage on regional and domestic fronts, Syria stood its ground. Meanwhile, Israel did not clarify its position on withdrawal from the Golan Heights, insisting on a wide-ranging security approach.[421] Many experts believed that the real reason the two parties failed to come together was that neither wanted to be the first to make a major concession.[422]

Asad's adoption of a "principled position" on the peace process was related an emphasis on dignity. He could not abide the legacy of a dishonorable peace. Before Syria joined the peace process, a popular motto on the banners and placards of Damascus streets was: "What was taken by force could be retrieved only by force," in reference to the capture of the Golan Heights. After it joined, this motto was replaced with: "We fought with honor, we negotiate with honor, and we make peace with honor."[423]

In practical terms, the peace process was largely spent contending with Syria's sense of entitlement to June 4, 1967 as a precondition of negotiation, and Israel's refusal to grant directly what it saw as the possible outcome of negotiations.[424] Ma'oz pointed out that Asad's refusal to engage in full, normal relations was a manifestation not only of Syria's unchanged ideological stance, but of its bargaining position.[425]

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[420] Sagie, *The Israeli-Syrian Dialogue*, p. 36

[421] Ibid., pp. 29, 33

[422] Knudsen, "The Syrian-Israeli Political Impasse", p. 228

[423] Rabil, *Embattled Neighbors*, pp. 142-144

[424] Brodsky, "From Madrid to Geneva"

[425] Ma'oz, *Syria and Israel*, p. 210

Wide gaps in conceptualization of the process, as well as in the parties' positions, were exacerbated by ill-humored verbal clashes between the Israeli and Syrian teams.[426] The process was irregular and marked by excessive caution, and each side came across as a one-eyed man looking at the other with his blind eye.

5.6. Conclusion

After a decade of bilateral peace negotiations with American mediation, by the end of the 1990s, Syria and Israel had not managed to transform their conflict into good diplomatic relations; hostility still characterizes their relationship.

As discussed in this chapter, the context within which the conflict occurred had been ripe for transformation. The end of the Cold War and Syrian willingness to join the new world order were the sources for optimism regarding transformation. Furthermore, with the world's sole superpower acting as third party, expectations for a peace agreement were raised. But the process was initiated neither by Syrian nor Israeli action, but American. Neither party had independently perceived a way out of the stalemate conditions; they were instead pushed into negotiations. The process was not indigenous, but constructed.

In a comparison of ripeness conditions, Syria was in a more ripe circumstance, while Israel did not perceive itself to be in hurting stalemate conditions. The result was that although it did occasionally exhibit willingness to make peace with Syria, Israel was motivated by a desire to maintain the status quo. Syria's difficulty in dictating terms to Israel was another obstacle it faced, even as the stalemate's "challenger".

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[426] Sagie, *The Israeli-Syrian Dialogue*, p. 36

CHAPTER 6

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE COMPARED CASES STUDIES

6.1. Introduction

The focus of this research project is to locate and explore the reasons behind the different outcomes of the Syrian-Turkish and Syrian-Israeli conflict transformation processes. We saw in the case studies that the outcome of the process between Syria and Turkey was "high-level strategic cooperation," after arriving at the brink of war in 1998. The Syrian-Israeli conflict, on the other hand, persists, and no mutually acceptable agreement was reached even though peace efforts and negotiations continued throughout the 1990s.

The central argument of this study is that the different ripeness processes that characterized these two conflicts were a major factor in their differing outcomes. Throughout the case studies, the potential impacts of the international context, bilateral power relations, specific issues of each conflict and the roles of third parties were factors that were controlled for. Aside from minor nuances, the Syrian-Turkish and Syrian-Israeli conflicts share considerable similarities, which mean these variables cannot explain the differences in outcomes. This research demonstrates that domestic structures with variables of perception in the status quo, motivation to talk, and negotiation goals and strategies had divergent manifestations in the two conflicts, and these variables are identified as a primary explanatory factor in answering the research question. In particular, components of ripeness theory, hurting stalemate and a perceived way out unfolded differently in each case.

In this chapter, first, empirical observations with respect to each variable are compared with the theoretical assumptions defined earlier. The second mission in

this chapter is to compare and contrast findings from the two case studies to draw attention to the explanatory value of ripeness theory in illuminating the different outcomes.

6.2. External Context

In the theoretical section, regarding external context, it is assumed that structure of the world system has an impact on conflicts and involved parties – parties in conflict can also manipulate system in their favor. This variable, which may be the source of either limitations or opportunities, is expected to influence conflict transformation processes. The international system and its variation have some potency in facilitating or obstructing transformation efforts. For instance, the Cold War context had sustained the Arab-Israeli conflict and obstructed diplomatic efforts. During this era, the two superpowers were unwilling to participate in conflict transformation efforts. At the end of the Cold War the dam burst, presenting the new US hegemony with a role in an environment full of transformations. The Gulf War, which neutralized radical regional factors, also further clarified the security dependence of parties throughout the Middle East on US power.

When we look at the influence of the external context on the Syrian-Turkish and Syrian-Israeli conflicts, we observe several similarities. Both conflicts were framed in a Cold War context until the 1990s. Although neither conflict was spawned by the Cold War, this context was a major factor in both. In the Syrian-Turkish conflict, the two parties were in opposite camps, and Turkey was perceived as a "Western tool" in the region. The Cold War context restricted relations through the end of the era. A similar course was observed in the Syrian-Israeli conflict. Again, the two parties were in opposite camps, and Israel was identified as a "Western colonizer". While the Soviet Union exploited the Arab-Israeli conflict, Syria manipulated Cold War tensions. This context was a thread throughout the struggle, as when Syria pursued its strategic balance policy at the behest of the Soviet Union.

The end of the Cold War and the Gulf War brought changes in each conflict, specifically, opportunities and challenges to each party. The most obvious challenge for Syria was the collapse of the Soviet Union, which had been its primary supporter, and this also brought the ascendancy of the US, the USSR's old rival.

Syria and Turkey were presented with the opportunity to deal with their disputed issues directly and bilaterally. In the post-Cold War era, we begin to see Turkey adopt a more active policy in the Middle East. Syria also tried to adjust its positioning in the new region and the global context. The Gulf War provided a chance for both Syria and Turkey to be more active in the region.

We also observe that both Syria and Turkey had some reservations about their relations in the post-Cold War era. We know that Syria approached Greece in partnership with Turkey in mind, while Turkey signed military cooperation agreements with Israel. Such acts of balancing demonstrated that the impact of the external context has limitations, and had no direct effect on the transformation of the Syrian-Turkish conflict. In conclusion, parties' own redefinitions of their positions in the international and regional context have important repercussions on conflict transformation efforts.

While in the Syrian-Turkish conflict we see a shift toward direct bilateral relations, in the Syrian-Israeli conflict, a more powerful facilitator took advantage of the change in context and filled the void left by the Cold War framework.

Indeed, the end of the Cold War was in fact the overturning of an obstacle to transformation in the Syrian-Israeli conflict. Yet, compared to the Syrian-Turkish conflict, the Syrian-Israeli conflict was more susceptible to the peculiarities of the emerging framework: the ascendancy of US power and US interest in Arab-Israeli peace. Syria and Israel thus had to deal with their disputed issues under US tutelage rather than bilaterally. The Cold War framework had merely been replaced by the new world order.

Within the new world order, we see a normalization of Israel's relations with Russia, as well as an adjusted policy of Syria. As in the case of the Syrian-Turkish conflict, the military cooperation agreements between Turkey and Israel were sources of threat perception for Syria. The Gulf War granted Syria an opportunity to reposition itself, but also indicated the limits of its power. With Iraq's defeat in the

war, the idea of an Eastern Front against Israel also collapsed. These changes led Syria to recognize the importance of relations with the US. One of the most potent differences between two otherwise similar conflicts was direct US involvement as well as its interest in the Syrian-Israeli conflict transformation process.

As a conclusion, it is shown that the theoretical assumption regarding the possible impacts of the external context and changes within it have some value and must be taken into account. This variable has a background effect, though, and is not necessarily shape the process directly. In a comparison between the two cases discussed here at length, we see that the external context and changes within it were relatively consistent, which means this variable cannot explain the different outcomes. In other words, though structural factors favored an agreement, structure alone did not determine the outcome of peace-making efforts.[1]

6.3. Power Relations between the Parties

Power relations between parties have an impact on the conflicts and efforts to transform them, since while they can sometimes limit escalation, they might also exacerbate it. This is an unresolved puzzle, about which there are two opposing assumptions. Some argue that power parity is more conducive to peace. This argument is based on some assumptions. The first assumption is that in the case of power preponderance, war cannot be prevented, while in the case of power parity, the fact that victory cannot be guaranteed works in favor of making peace. The second assumption is that lack of power parity discourages negotiation between parties because one party has an advantage that makes conditions unfavorable for the other. These advocates of the positive effect of power parity on peace-making assert that parties more often and easily reach agreements when power is equal.[2]

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[1] Jeremy Pressman, "Mediation, Domestic Politics, and the Israeli-Syrian Negotiations, 1991-2000" *Security Studies* 16, no. 3, July-September 2007, p. 378

[2] See I. William Zartman and Jeffry Z. Rubin, "The Study of Power and the Practice of Negotiation", in I. William Zartman and Jeffry Z. Rubin (eds.), *Power and Negotiation*, (The University of Michigan Press, 2000); Richard Haas, "Ripeness, De-escalation and Arms Control: The case of the INF", in L. Kriesberg and S. Thorson, (eds.), *Timing the De-escalation of International Conflicts*,

The opposing argument is that power preponderance is actually more conducive to peace. They also emphasize that uncertainty about the results of a possible conflict in the case of power parity may hinder peacemaking since that uncertainty means the potential for force remains, and may actually increase. However, in the case of power preponderance, the negligibility of situational uncertainty encourages the parties toward peace.[3]

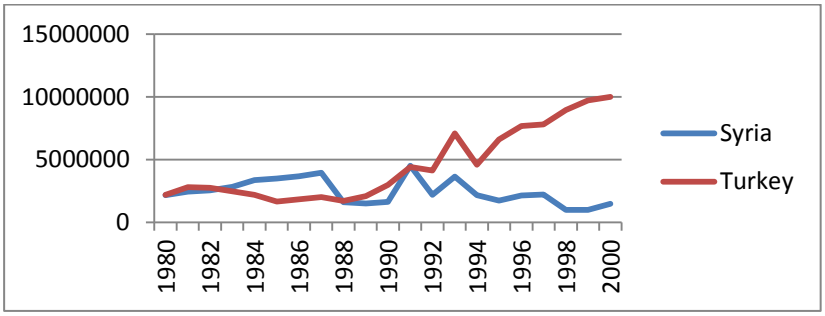
In order to identify the power relations between parties, power is defined for the purposes of this research as both in terms of capabilities and reputation. Power refers to what a state owns, together with how such power reflects onto external parties, which is manifested in the presence or absence of constraints the state experiences in its relations. Regarding capabilities, the CINC values of Syria, Turkey and Israel were compared. This data revealed power preponderance between Syria and Turkey in favor of the latter. It also revealed power parity between Syria and Israel, and this finding was problematized in this research. Breaking the findings into their individual components, we see a Syrian power preponderance derived from its superiority in total and urban population and military personnel. At the same time, Israel's military expenditures and iron and steel production, which are thought to be more indicative of modern power, were at least double those of Syria. For this reason, power relations in this research have been identified as power preponderance, rather than as the power parity told by the CINC's overall values. As a result, power preponderance was taken as the condition in which both conflicts took place.

(Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1991); Dean G. Pruitt, "Escalation and de-escalation in asymmetric conflict", *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict*, Vol. 2, No. 1, March 2009

[3] See Havard Hegre, "Gravitating toward War, Preponderance May Pacify, but Power Kills", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 52, No. 4, August 2008

Figure 23: Military Expenditure of Turkey and Syria

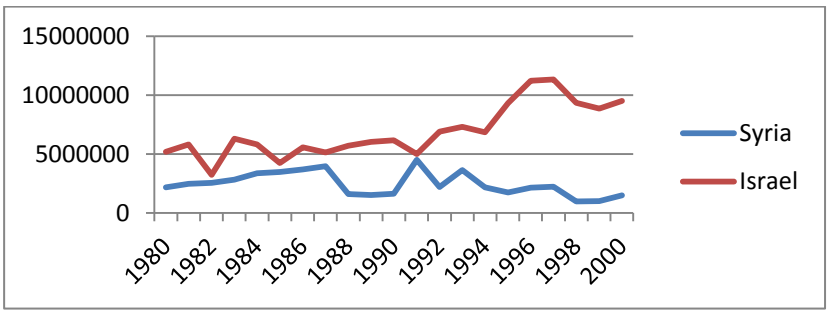
(Thousands of Current Year $)



Source: Correlates of War Project, *National Material Capabilities Data Documentation*, Version 4.0

Figure 24: Military Expenditure of Syria and Israel

(Thousands of Current Year $)



Source: Correlates of War Project, *National Material Capabilities Data Documentation*, Version 4.0

Our contention that the conditions of the Syrian-Israeli conflict were of power preponderance was supported in the measurement of reputation. First of all, Israel's nuclear capability gave it supremacy over Syria. Further, Israel's strategic relations with the US in the context of its post-Cold War ascendancy, compounded by Syria's loss of support from the Soviet Union fortified this power preponderance. Without having taken power balance into consideration, we would have been unable to explain Syria's policy of strategic balance during the 1980s. At that time, it felt its own power to be subordinate to that of Israel, leading it, with the support of the Soviet Union, to pursue this strategy.

As power relations in the both cases are similar to each other, to make reliable assumptions, additional variables need to be identified. In this study, it is

shown that existence of ripeness conditions on the part of the more powerful party in the case of power preponderance facilitates conflict transformation efforts.

6.4. Issues in the Conflicts

The way parties in a conflict identify salient issues is important because their perceptions of issues in dispute can provide us with important indicators about their resolution. In this research, a greater degree of abstraction was used to overcome problems of typology and measurement in issue salience. Issues were analyzed with a focus on relations to their interests, or to other substantive factors, like identity. It is assumed that when interests, which are more tangible and divisible, become the concerns of parties, conflict management tactics might be enough. However when essential or existential concerns like safety, dignity, control over destiny, and ultimately identity, are central to the conflict, attitudinal change is a necessary condition of resolution. Even when ripeness conditions exist, dealing with intangible issues and values is not an easy task. These can play the role of obstructer in the conflict transformation process.

When the concerns of parties are interest-based, we see that there are mainly concrete issues, and some of them might be resource-based. For such issues, interest-based bargaining might be enough and positive-sum solutions are probable as a result of negotiations. On the opposite side, parties might face with more abstract and complex issues. Such issues are generally about the needs and values of the parties – which may even be symbolic – that constitute the issues in a conflict. This is why parties perceive such issues as zero-sum and their solutions require reconciliation. It is assumed that social-psychological and identity-based escalatory dynamics, such as hostile attributions, dehumanization of the enemy, or identity-based concerns over dignity and security, might lead to hurting stalemate. In this case the ripeness process occurs very differently than in case of interest-based escalatory dynamics.

There were also similarities in the typologies of issues in the Syrian conflicts with Turkey and Israel; these were territory, security and water. Also in terms of

parties' concerns, Syria's were related more closely to the identity-based issues of dignity, safety and sovereignty than those of Turkey and Israel.

In the Syrian-Israeli conflict, Syria demanded access to Lake Tiberias in an issue that combined interest with identity, because until the 1967 war, the lake's edge had been Syrian territory. It was historically valuable for Syrians, and they claimed back this value. In the meantime, water itself is an existential issue of Israel, on that is perceived to be related to its destiny. The Jordan River, which passes through Lake Tiberias, is the sole source of surface water in the whole of Israel, and maintaining its upstream positioning is conceptually linked to the perpetuity of the Israeli state[4]. In that sense, Syria's demand for access to Lake Tiberias is unacceptable. Peres argued that the problem was not over lake access per se, but lay in the fact that international law required that if it also lay within Syrian borders, Israel and Syria would become partners in its administration.[5] Naturally, Israel did not want to share this interest, yet the issue is framed as having implications on the existence of the State of Israel.

In the Syrian-Turkish conflict, although at first glance, the water issue seemed to be interest-based, it is not strange to identify substantial concerns from each party that extend to concerns of sovereignty and identity. Turkey was against sharing of waters of the Tigris and Euphrates, and its claim was made on the basis of sovereign rights. Turkey argued that its sovereignty over the rivers extended to its border as they were classified as trans-boundary rivers, not international waterways. Meanwhile, Syria demanded an equal share in, and some of its concerns were also related to identity. Altunışık and Tür also articulated this point:

> The water issue was never just a conflict over a technical matter for Syria. It was closely related to identity issues, such as the ideology of self-sufficiency, full independence, and Arab nationalism. Furthermore, within the nationalist development policy, agriculture already represented an important constituency for the regime, whose influence further increased in the 1970s. For Turkey, the water development project was devised to remedy the unequal distribution of wealth and

[4] Israel's riparian position became upstream in Jordan River Valley after the 1967 war.

[5] Robert Rabil, *Embattled Neighbors Syria, Israel, and Lebanon*, (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003), pp. 191-192

> development in southeastern Anatolia. This became increasingly pressing as the challenge of Kurdish nationalism in the form of the PKK began to gain ground.[6]

As a conclusion, the water issue between Syria and Turkey, which seemed to be interest-based, is loaded with intangible concerns like sovereignty, development and identity. These complicate negotiations, since merely dealing in tangible factors like quantity of water flow are both insufficient and miss the point.

The security issue in both conflicts was related more closely with interest-based concerns, although there were some ideational factors. In the Syrian-Turkish conflict, Turkey's security concerns were derived from Syrian support for the PKK. The reasons behind Syrian support were totally interest-based, and its support of the PKK was strictly strategic, as evidenced by its unceremonious discharge of the organization later in the process. Having said that it is possible to identify some ideological motivations for its support, since it began toward the end of the Cold War, at a time when the Soviet Union was losing its power against the US, they had supported the Marxist organizations in the region to gain an advantage over the US. However this motivation was negligible compared to the strategic advantage of this support with respect to its conflict with Turkey.

Returning to the Syrian-Israeli conflict, it is known that Syria supported Hezbollah in Lebanon, as well as some Palestinian organizations like Hamas, Islamic Jihad, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command of Ahmed Jibril, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine of George Habbash. At the very least, it provided these groups with a safe haven.

Israel considered the activities of the Palestinian organizations and Hezbollah to be issues of "terror" related to its security. It perceived Syria to be supporting such "terrorist" organizations in an effort to balance Israel's strategic superiority. According to Israelis, Damascus played the terror card in Lebanon to pressure Israel on the Golan Heights issue; it was "a cheaper tool".[7] This is also the

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[6] Meliha Altunışık and Özlem Tür, "From Distant Neighbors to Partners? Changing Syrian-Turkish Relations." *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 37, No. 2, 2006

[7] Interview with Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, Professor, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, December 13, 2010

reason Israel demanded confidence-building measures to bring the two parties together in peace talks, as Syria's support of Hezbollah constituted a "confidence-breaking measure".[8]

Syria had two reasons for this support, and both reasons, in contrast with the disputed issue in the Syrian-Turkish conflict, were related to identity-based concerns. One is very much related to Syrian self-identification as a prominent defender of Arab rights in general and Palestinian rights in particular. Syrian support for Palestinian organizations was justified on the grounds of the legitimate right of peoples to fight for liberation from occupation.[9] They considered these groups to be the organizations made up of freedom fighters, in stark contrast to the Israeli perception that they were terrorist groups. By this reasoning, we can expect Syrian support to continue until the Palestinian problem is solved, regardless of developments in the Syrian-Israeli conflict.

Since these were identity-based concerns, it was easy for Syrian authorities to publicly harbor, for instance, Khalid Mashal, chairman of the Hamas political bureau in Damascus, who has been considered its main leader since the assassination of Abdel Aziz al-Rantissi in 2004.[10] There had been no such public support to continue to shelter PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan in Damascus.[11]

From another point of view, some Syrians argue that the state merely provides lip service to the Palestinian issue. Even though it would be easier for Syria to make peace with Israel if it resolved the Palestinian problem, it has never been made a pre-condition for a peace agreement between Syria and Israel.[12] Hinnebusch also points out that Asad had already dropped the liberation of Palestine from its agenda, and opted to pursue a peace settlement with Israel in

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[8] Rabil, *Embattled Neighbours*, p. 255

[9] Uri Sagie, *The Israeli-Syrian Dialogue: A One-Way Ticket to Peace?*, The James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy of Rice University, October 1999, p. 19

[10] Interview with Ibrahim Hamidi, Journalist, al-Hayat, Damascus, Syria, June 3, 2008

[11] Interview with Ibrahim Hamidi, Journalist, al-Hayat, Damascus, Syria, June 3, 2008

[12] Interview with Marwan Kabalan, Assoc. Prof., Damascus, Syria, June 2, 2008

exchange for its evacuation of the territories occupied in the 1967 war. This even goes back to when he overthrew his radical predecessors in 1970.[13]

This argument gives way to the claim that Palestinian organizations, especially Hezbollah, served the Asad regime as mediums of political and military leverage in its foreign policy against Israel.[14] This observation was made during the negotiations in the 1990s, some of which had been conducted in the shadow of terror and military operations in Lebanon. If negotiations failed, the parties resorted to the use of violence. For instance, after Rabin's declared refusal to give up the Golan in return for peace, Asad resorted to exerting military pressure on Israel via Southern Lebanon. The subsequent understanding reached demonstrated that Damascus was capable of restraining or unleashing Hezbollah, and that it held the key to stability in the region.[15]

In a comparison between Syrian support for the PKK and for the Palestinian organizations and Hezbollah, there were the aforementioned distinctions. It is obvious that there are identity-based concerns of Syria by supporting the Palestinian organizations. The Palestinian issue is not possible for Syria to be disregarded, as long as Syria identifies itself as a defender of Arab rights against Israel. Such a concern had an impact on Syrian motivation in the sense that despite some willingness emerges at the political and public level regarding making peace with Israel; the Palestinian issue gives them a kind of hesitancy. Nevertheless, both helped Syria gain strategic advantages in its conflicts with Turkey and Israel, although it was important to be able to maintain plausible deniability.[16] This similarity actually inspired Israel to try to take a lesson from the Turkish situation and to ask whether or not it was possible to accomplish the same feat.[17]

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[13] Raymond A. Hinnebusch, "Does Syria Want Peace? Syrian Policy in the Syrian-Israeli Peace Negotiations", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. XXVI, No. 1, Autumn 1996, p. 43

[14] Rabil, *Embattled Neighbours*, p. 127

[15] Moshe Ma'oz, *Syria and Israel From War to Peace Making*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 235

[16] Özden Zeynep Oktav, *Limits of Relations with the West, Turkey, Syria and Iran*, (İstanbul: Beta Basım, May 2008), p. 83

The most deep-rooted issues in each conflict had been over territory. Sometimes the physical containment of and economic resources within a territory make it important to parties. The parties thus aim to possess the territory and control the resources in it. On the other hand, sometimes territorial socialization occurs, by which the territory becomes a part of a national identity, such that its psychological impact should be incorporated into the transformation process.

In light of this, the Syrian conflicts with Turkey and Israel differ to some degree on the territorial issue. With regard to the issues of Hatay and the Golan Heights, the former is not an internationally recognized dispute. Within the context of the Second World War, the question of France's right to abandon Hatay nearly brought to a halt to further convening of the organs of the League of Nations, but eventually reached a dead end for Syria. As discussed in a previous chapter, for Arabs, the "cession of Hatay" on the sole authority of the Mandatory Power[18] flouted the international opinion of the League of Nations,[19] yet the Council of the League kept largely silent, suggesting only that the boundaries of the traditionally-recognized Syrian territory were not precisely known. Prevailing Arab opinion is that the issue was settled on political rather than on legal grounds.[20] After this came efforts to urge the Arab delegation at San Francisco to fight for its recovery in 1945, and an appeal by the Committee for Defense of Alexandretta to the Arab League to add the issue to its agenda. Despite these efforts, and the fact that it has never officially recognized its loss, Syria has not made any active attempt to regain the territory.

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[17] Dr. Ely Karmon, "Syrian Support to Hizballah: The Turkish Lesson", *International Counter Terrorism (ICT) Website*, November 27, 1998, http://www.ict.org.il/Articles/tabid/66/Articlsid/27/Default.aspx (accessed on May 20, 2011)

[18] According to Arabs, while it was within the competence of the Mandatory Power, with the approval of the League Council, to effect a change in the autonomous regime of the Sanjak, a new modification in the boundaries of Syria was outside its powers since it directly affected the terms of the Mandate because Article 4 of the Mandate for Syria and Lebanon laid down that "the Mandatory shall be responsible for seeing that no part of the territory of Syria and the Lebanon is ceded or leased or in any way placed under the control of a foreign power."

[19] Majid Khadduri, "The Alexandretta Dispute", *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 39, No. 3, July 1945, p. 424

[20] Ibid., p. 425

In contrast, the conflict between Syria and Israel over the Golan Heights does have formal international recognition, including UN Security Council resolutions aimed at resolving the dispute. UNSCR Resolutions 242 and 338, which were taken after the 1967 and 1973 wars respectively, declare the illegitimacy of the acquisition of territory through war and call for the withdrawal of the Israeli armed forces from the occupied territories. These resolutions constituted the basis of negotiations between Arab states and Israel during the 1990s, and still do.

Although Israeli authorities argued there had been no acquisition, only a military occupation of the Heights, the Golan Law of 1981 changed the landscape. From this point on Israel counted the Golan Heights as a part of the State of Israel. With this annexation, Israel slammed the door to peace directly in Asad's face.[21] Meanwhile, Syria has continued to call for Israeli withdrawal citing the UNSCR resolutions.

Even if Israel had accepted a withdrawal from the Golan, however, the secondary controversy of the withdrawal line would have continued to plague the issue. As discussed, Syria never wavered from its claim that the pre-1967 war border should determine the line of withdrawal, while Israel claimed the line still needed to be negotiated.

Another difference from the Hatay issue relates to the notion of tangible interests. For both parties in the Syrian-Israeli conflict, the Golan is vital strategic asset. Its geography and topography gave its possessor strategic advantages. The Golan represents very concrete interests to both parties.

Despite these differences, both are identity-based concerns for Syrians, and as such are viewed in much the same way. First of all, both Hatay and the Golan are part of the Syrian dignity, which needs to be restored. And in both instances, Syria suffered defeat and humiliation in the name of Western imperial design carried out by tools of the expansionist project. Syrians call these territories "sad Iskenderun" and "occupied Golan."[22] The loss of Hatay was part of the ongoing process of

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[21] See Erik L. Knudsen, "The Syrian-Israeli Political Impasse: A Study in Conflict, War and Mistrust", *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, Vol. 12, No. 1, March 2001, p. 224

[22] Interview with Muhammad Habbash, MP in the Parliament, Damascus, May 29, 2008

Syrian state-making. The occupation of Golan, the recovery of which was a matter of trust between the government and the people, had a fortifying effect on this ongoing process.[23] Both issues are important components of Ba'thist ideology.

In an overall comparison between the parties' approaches toward the Syrian-Turkish and Syrian-Israeli conflicts, we can conclude that Syrian concerns are permeated with the intangible issues of dignity, identity and values, when compared against those of their Turkish and Israeli counterparts. This is another important basis for comparison in this research.

Even if conditions of ripeness exist, dealing with intangible issues is not an easy task. Such processes require an attitudinal change, a kind of reconciliation, while more tangible issues may be resolved through interest-based bargaining. In the Syrian-Turkish conflict transformation process, Turkey brought up its security issue early on, and since Syria's interests in it were primarily strategic, this increased the impact of ripeness on the process. Turkey also delinked the security and water issues, which opened the door for conflict transformation processes, since the water issue had been loaded with some Syrian identity concerns, which might have required greater efforts.[24]

6.5. Actors in the Conflicts

6.5.1. Third Party

Ripe moments may not naturally emerge. In such cases, an active mediator can help to create a ripe moment, and can actually be purposefully initiated by the conflicting parties or third parties.[25] Mediators can bring parties to feel the pain of mutually hurting stalemate. Zartman proposed that once ripeness has been

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[23] Muallem, "Fresh Light on the Syrian-Israeli Peace Negotiations"

[24] By 2001, the water issue once again was relegated to the technical level and was handled by intergovernmental networks composed of technocrats. For more details see Ayşegül Kibaroğlu, "The Role of Epistemic Communities in Offering New Cooperation Frameworks in the Euphrates-Tigris Rivers System", *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 61, No. 2, Spring/Summer 2008, pp. 188-195

[25] Peter T. Coleman, "Redefining Ripeness: A Social-Psychological Perspective", *Peace and Conflict*, Vol. 3, 1997, p. 304

established, specific tactics by mediators can seize ripe moments and turn them into negotiation.[26]

Third party tactics and activities may change depending on the dimensions of the stage of the conflict, on the third party's stakes in the substance of the issues, and on its attitudes toward the parties. Third parties act within the range of facilitative activities on the one hand, and the near-imposition of settlements on the other. These activities cover conciliation, consultation, pure mediation, power mediation, arbitration and peacekeeping.

There is a general expectation about third parties' impartiality. However, parties will often prefer a mediator with the power of leverage over the other side. Thus a principle mediator with interests in the disputed issues and can bring necessary resources to the settlement process, can be of more help to the parties. Otherwise, in the absence of interests and resources, neutrality remains the only asset of a mediator on the eyes of the parties. In this case, only by being legitimate, mediators can provide a measure of equality to negotiations.

In a comparison between the third parties of the two conflicts being studied, we see important differences. While regional states, Egypt and Iran, alternated in the mediatory role during the Syrian-Turkish conflict, the US, the sole superpower of the post-Cold War era, took that role during the negotiations between Syria and Israel in the 1990s.

Egypt and Iran had performed the roles of facilitation and pure mediation. In particular, we see the persuasive role of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, president of Egypt. One of his motivations was to preserve Arab interests. His special relationship with Turkish President Süleyman Demirel also had an impact on his role. Later, although Iran's prominent role within the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) was initially referred to, the fact that it was an ally of Syria had an impact on its role as well. As opposed to concrete resources, Egypt and Iran appear to have taken effective advantage of their special ties with the parties as the source of their power.

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[26] I. William Zartman, "Ripeness: The Hurting Stalemate and Beyond", in Paul Stern and Daniel Druckman (eds.), *International Conflict Resolution after the Cold War*, (National Academies Press, 2000), p. 108

In the Syrian-Israeli conflict, the US played the role of power mediation. The US actually initiated the peace process, which had not been the case with the two mediators of the Syrian-Turkish conflict. Early on, the US was a taken as a legitimate mediator for both parties, who were aware of the need for a powerful mediator with many resources at its disposal. For Asad, there was no viable alternative to American backing in the negotiations, and Israel felt it could risk participation only with the US as a guarantor. No other third party could provide Israel and Syria the political reassurance needed to manage the risks of accommodation.[27]

The US had made the strategic decision that the Middle East Peace Process would be a high priority, since it had interests related to settlement of the dispute. An Israeli-Syrian peace could initiate an American-Syrian rapprochement, and this would detach Syria from Iran's sphere of influence.[28] It could also contribute to the weakening and isolation of the region's radical states (Iraq and Iran), promote regional stability, silence Lebanon and reduce terror. It would also strengthen the American position in the regional periphery.[29]

However, no new ideas were presented in settlement of the dispute, only a reiteration of the long-standing US position: a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace based on UNSCRs 242 and 338 and so the principle of land for peace, the preservation of Israel's security and its recognition by the Arab states, the granting of legitimate political rights to the Palestinians.

Indeed, the US had skillfully capitalized on its post-Gulf War momentum, initially sending letters of assurance to Syria and Israel and setting ground rules for communication to be observed during the negotiations, the US created conditions for the parties to sit at the table despite lack of ripeness conditions. As opposed to a hurting stalemate, enticing opportunities brought Syria and Israel into the negotiations. In other words, the US had used its power to create ripe conditions.

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[27] Brian S. Mandell, "Getting to Peacekeeping in Principle Rivalries Anticipating an Israel-Syria Peace Treaty", *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 40, no. 2, June 1996, p. 260

[28] Itamar Rabinovich, *Waging Peace Israel and the Arabs: 1948-2003*, (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004), p. 50

[29] Sagie, *The Israeli-Syrian Dialogue*, p. 57

Yet the US could not sustain this role. Successive US administrations lacked the will to use their coercive power with either party, both because the government itself could not internally agree on its opinion of the two parties, and also due to the high political domestic stakes. Thus, the two countries felt receptive to US help, but not to US pressure.[30] As a result, we see satisfaction only with US facilitation of issues involving manageable and modest domestic political stakes.[31] Cobban points out that there was "aimlessness" to all engagement by the US, and unwillingness to nudge Israel even slightly out of its comfort zone.[32]

The parties were made to doubt their expectations during the process. The tightness of the US-Israeli security relationship overpowered Syria, underscoring the fact that Arab hopes for an imposed American solution were futile. With few exceptions, no Americans in power advocated imposing a solution on Israel against its will,[33] and Syria had made the mistake of waiting for such political pressure to be exerted. It was finally forced to accept that the US could not do what Israel did not want to do,[34] and that "the mediator's partiality toward Israel sometimes meant Israeli preferences trumped American ones."[35]

In conclusion, the US hesitated, and ultimately failed, to use its resources toward settlement of the Syrian-Israeli conflict, and in so doing, it also failed to sustain its legitimacy, particularly among Syrians. Its diminishing neutrality during the process, together with its hesitation to play the role of a powerful mediator, meant US efforts had been in vain. This partially explains the failure of the peace process between Syria and Israel. Regarding the reasons for difference between the two cases, as there had been a big variance in the third party roles of each conflict transformation scenario, the explanatory value of this variable declines.

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[30] Rabil, *Embattled Neighbours*, p. 258

[31] Ibid., p. 243

[32] Helena Cobban, "Syria and the Peace: A Good Chance Missed", *Strategic Studies Institute*, July 7, 1997, p. 38

[33] Sagie, *The Israeli-Syrian Dialogue*, p. 17

[34] Interview with Sami Moubayed, Political Analyst, Damascus, November 2, 2010

[35] Pressman, "Mediation, Domestic Politics, and the Israeli-Syrian Negotiations", p. 372

6.5.2. Domestic Structures of the Parties

One of the fundamental aims of this research has been to contribute to theory by analyzing the potential impacts of internal conditions on ripeness. As shown in the theoretical section, there is a need to strengthen ripeness theory by adding variables related to parties' internal conditions. This gap can be filled with the addition of domestic political explanations and decision-making structures and processes to the analysis, as we have done in this study.

We have revealed that moving beyond single perceptions into the complexities of internal dynamics provides us with vital insights about the ripeness process. The ability of leaders to sell an agreement to their constituencies, the lack of public diplomacy, the costs of abandoning a chosen strategy, the presence of spoiler groups within each party, public opinion, and social-psychological conditions are all significant components of domestic structure that should be taken into account in the analysis of ripeness process.

The role of representatives as a point of analysis should be supplemented with that of constituencies, of which there is usually more than one. Cohesiveness between constituencies is imperative because internally less cohesive parties are more aggressive and more willing to escalate – they find more excuses to resist efforts to make peace. Representatives' roles can also not be ignored, since they identify problems, take decisions and then implement them. In this study, the "authoritative decision unit" (a predominant leader, single group or coalition of groups) is identified from within each party. This unit may change according to the nature of the problems facing a party. In case of more vital issues including national interest, for example, we might see higher-level political authorities. The unit's authority to commit government resources to foreign affairs, and to prevent other entities from reversing their positions, has been put into analysis.

It is assumed that when there is a *predominant leader*, there is a single individual with the ability to repress all opposition, as well as the power to make an autonomous decision, if necessary; a *single group* is a set of individuals, all of whom are members of a single body, who collectively take decisions in consultation

with each other; and a *coalition of autonomous actors* consists of separate and independent actors, none of whom has the authority to decide for, or to force compliance from another.[36]

When we return to the specific cases at issue in this research, we find similar domestic structures in Turkey and Israel vis-à-vis Syria. On the one hand, we see a centralized and stable system in Syria, while on the other hand, we are faced with manifold processes, together with the powerful roles of the Turkish and Israeli publics playing active roles in democratic political systems. Even though they are democratic states, both states allow their militaries to play an important role in domestic politics. For this reason they are called as "military democracies"[37] or "protected democracies".[38] In other words, although Turkey and Israel are not dictatorial as Syria, they exhibit strong nationalist and at times chauvinist attitudes toward their Arab neighbors, which is fueled by popular sentiment.[39]

In the Syrian-Turkish case, a predominant leader, Hafiz Asad, was shaping foreign policy in Syria, while in Turkey, a coalition of government, bureaucracy and military were influential on the matter of conflict with Syria. Although Syria also has institutions of bureaucracy, military and party as pillars of the regime, as well as a relatively stable circle of top foreign policy and military elites, there is no evidence that any elite actor has contested Asad's role as final arbiter. Asad, with his strong personality, strategic vision, unique authority, and possessed of wide powers of office, was Syria's authoritative decision unit.[40]

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[36] Margaret G. Hermann, "How Decision Units Shape Foreign Policy: A Theoretical Framework", *International Studies Review*, Vol. 3, Issue 2, Summer 2001, pp. 56-57

[37] Mehran Kamrawa, "Military Professionalization and Civil-Military Relations in the Middle East", *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 115, No. 1, Spring 2000, p. 68

[38] Ümit Cizre Sakallıoğlu, "The Military and Politics: A Turkish Dilemma", in Barry Rubin and Thomas A. Keaney (eds.), *Armed Forces in the Middle East Politics and Strategy*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 193

[39] Fred Halliday, *The Middle East in International Relations Power, Politics and Ideology*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 186

[40] Moshe Ma'oz, "Hafiz al-Asad: A Political Profile", *Jerusalem Quarterly*, Vol. 8, 1978 cited in Ehteshami and Hinnebusch (ed.), *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, p. 62

Syria had expected its authoritative decision unit would have some autonomy from the public. However, interviews indicated that public opinion did impact decision-making processes to a certain degree. We can identify the Syrian public's role in the transformation of the conflict with Turkey, which made clear it would not welcome any decision that would not result in improvement of relations. Although there were no public opinion polls taken it is not possible to verify this view, it was corroborated in interviews with Syrian opinion-makers and with Turkish diplomats who had previously served in Syria.[41]

This observation confirms Mitchell's argument about the potential costs of abandoning a chosen strategy,[42] as well as Ehteshami and Hinnebusch's ideas on the deterrence effect as a possible price for ignoring the public.[43] It is a fact that public opinion is important; although it may not be able to positively prompt action, it effectively sets limits beyond which rulers cannot go.[44]

In the context of this research, it is evident that in spite of many political predicaments in Turkey in the 1990s, a consensus was achieved regarding Syria, which contributed enormously to the effect of the ripeness process on the successful transformation of the Syrian-Turkish conflict.

Turkey's predicaments during the 1990s were manifold. We see the securitization of domestic issues, particularly Kurdish nationalism, a fragmented party system, mistrust between elites, and most importantly, societal cleavages. The securitization of some domestic political issues had already resulted in an ideologically driven and enemy-oriented foreign policy. In particular, Kurdish nationalism had been securitized to such an extent that they overflowed into Turkey's relations with Syria, since foreign policymakers successfully externalized the sources of Kurdish separatism.[45] As an example, according to the National

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[41] Interview with Thabet Salem, Journalist, Damascus, June 2010

[42] Christopher Mitchell, "Cutting Losses: Reflections on Appropriate Timing", *ICAR Working Paper*, 9 January 1996

[43] Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Raymond A. Hinnebusch (ed.), *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), p. 65

[44] Halliday, *The Middle East in International Relations*, p. 56

Military Strategic Concept of 1997, terrorism was determined to be a major threat facing Turkey, which meant there was an emerging possibility that the state would apply political and economic sanctions, and even use force against Syria, as the host of such threats.[46]

The 1990s was also a decade of diverse alignments and coalition governments in Turkey.[47] Within this environment, the Turkish military was able to take a prominent role in foreign policy, especially on the PKK issue. When Turkey hardened its attitude toward Syria over its support for PKK militants in 1998, the effect of pressure from the military was actually a vital determinant in the successful transformation of the Syrian-Turkish conflict.[48] This supports Stedman's observations that "for changes in leadership to prompt negotiation, the new leader must be backed by the military wing of the movement or government."[49]

Despite the societal cleavages, one side effect of the 1998 Crisis was that it united the public around a national cause. In this sense, securitization and the externalization of the Kurdish issue facilitated the eventual transformation of Syria from target into ally.

When we look at the Syrian-Israeli conflict, we again observe an extreme politicization of the domestic structure in Israel. However, a kind of consensus, like that in Turkey, could not be achieved in Israel. As in the Syrian-Turkish conflict, Israel was faced with the predominant leadership of Syria's Asad, while Syria was faced with the slow and manifold processes of the bureaucratic Israeli system. Again similar to Turkey, in Israel a coalition of autonomous actors was responsible for taking foreign policy decisions about Syria. This coalition was comprised of the

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[45] Bülent Aras and Rabia Karakaya Polat, "From Conflict to Cooperation: Desecuritization of Turkey's Relations with Syria and Iran", *Security Dialogue*,Vol. 39, 2008, pp. 496, 503

[46] Cumhur Mumcu, Yasemin Kahramaner, "Oyun Teorik Yaklaşımla 1998 Türkiye-Suriye Krizinin Analizi", *İstanbul Ticaret Üniversitesi Dergisi*, p. 121

[47] Binnur Özkeçeci-Taner, "The Impact of Institutionalized Ideas in Coalition Foreign Policy Making: Turkey as an Example, 1991-2002", *Foreign Policy Analysis*, Vol. 1, 2005, p. 260

[48] Carolyn C. James, Özgür Özdamar, "Modeling Foreign Policy and Ethnic Conflict: Turkey's Policies towards Syria", *Foreign Policy Analysis*, Vol. 5, 2009, pp. 21-22

[49] Stephen John Stedman, *Peacemaking in Civil War, International Mediation in Zimbabwe, 1974-1980*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1991), p. 242

prime minister (PM) and cabinet (the Knesset), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), the Ministry of Defense (MoD), and the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF).

Israel's proportional electoral system led to a need to govern through coalitions. This is the reason the state becomes embroiled in party politics that cut across the political spectrum, and for the absence of effective cabinet-level decision-making: coalition preservation had become an important task unto itself. While this political system did not preclude peacemaking, it imposed additional complications, obstacles, and constraints on the peace process.[50] Further, the PM's authority is circumscribed by the system, and so he is limited to his intra- and inter-party political skills. In order to pass legislation for which they are unable to garner enough support within their own party, PMs have to rely on other coalition partners, or on opposition parties.[51] This took on importance in the Syrian case because a decision would have been turned over to referendum.

Similar to the securitization of Kurdish nationalism in Turkey, we see the influence of ideological considerations, Zionism, and security-minded policies on the decision-making process in Israel. The influence of such forces was greater here than in the Turkish case. It is asserted that ideological considerations permeate the entire decision-making process in Israel, often superseding all calculations of strategic interest.[52] While in Turkey ideological considerations provided an impetus to solve disputes, in Israel Zionism became a hindrance to peace-making in spite of an absence of ideological importance of the Golan Heights in Zionist ideology. In Turkey, people's sensitivity about Kurdish separatism had led decision-makers to take the issue seriously. In Israel, politics and the public, both of which were preoccupied by security, were the major ideological forces justifying the view that the Golan Heights should be in their control.

We see the IDF as an influential actor in the decision-making process, like the Turkish military. Compared to civilian bureaucratic institutions like MFA and MoD, the IDF has a highly effective policy formulating mechanism, with its

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[50] Rabil, *Embattled Neighbors*, p. 149

[51] Charles D. Freilich, "National Security Decision-Making in Israel: Processes, Pathologies, and Strengths", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 60, No. 4, Autumn 2006, p. 648

[52] Ibid., p. 645

developed policy assessment, formulation and implementation capabilities regarding Syria. Over the years, many of the diplomatic contacts with Arab states have been conducted by the IDF, and it played a major role in the talks with Syria during the 1990s.[53] During the negotiations, the IDF was consulted, and participated in the chief of staffs' talks in 1994 and 1995. Despite the futility of the efforts, the IDF continues to recommend to the government that it make peace with Syria in order to split Syria from the Iranian axis.[54]

Even with the IDF's recommendation, making peace with Syria would not be possible without the PM's decision, as well as decisions from other coalition institutions. There had been an expectation that a positive approach by the PM toward making peace with Syria might have changed the entire context. However, the PMs in office during the negotiations had differing policies toward Syria; hence there was no a consistent policy of Israel towards Syria. Yitzhak Shamir and Benjamin Netanyahu saw Syria very much through an ideological prism. Labor Party leaders Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres and Ehud Barak were more inclined to make peace, but could not overcome domestic political constraints. Rabin had even been assassinated by a radical. This situation in Israel supports Stedman's assertion that

> …the power position of a new leader is more important than his or her position on issues: leaders who are confident of support and consolidated in their hold over their movements make compromise more likely… That is, leadership change that is consolidated at the time of the change can lead to settlement, whereas leadership struggle tends to caution; thus, ripeness occurs when a leadership change culminates a process of leadership consolidation that minimizes the leader's risks of settlement. In those instances where leadership change is not consolidated, leaders are unable to risk peacemaking initiatives.[55]

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[53] Ibid., pp. 642, 657

[54] Interview with Amir Rapoport, Journalist, Tel Aviv, December 7, 2010, Interview with Moshe Ma'oz, Professor Emeritus, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, December 13, 2010

[55] Stedman, *Peacemaking in Civil War*, p. 241

As discussed in Chapter V, Asad had failed to empathize with Israeli counterparts' constraints or with the complexities in the Israeli political system. While Damascus slowly gained a more nuanced understanding of the true impact of Israel's political decision-making system on the progress, or lack thereof, in the process of negotiations the extent and pace of this development were too limited to have a real impact on the process.[56]

It is commonly argued that Asad's concerns about regime survival were a determinant in the transformation of the Syrian-Turkish conflict.[57] This is expected to have been influential in the Syrian-Israeli case as well. In fact it has been asserted that Asad chose to focus on the succession of his son Bashar over making peace with Israel since, according to Pressman, the pursuit, in his last months, of both succession and peace was not possible. However, the succession explanation ignores factors on the Israeli side, including its ambiguity in negotiations. An example of this was Barak's delay at Shepherdstown, which was, according to Ross, a disaster; Syria had been flexible and open to making concessions but got nothing in return.[58] As a result, rather than argue that Asad had prioritized his son's succession over peace with Israel, it might be argued that the lack of progress in the talks signaled to him that continued pursuit of peace would be a waste of his final months. The same goes for the Syrian-Turkish conflict; the survival of Asad's regime was not a cause for the transformation. Without Turkey's assertive policies also at work, Asad's concerns alone would not have been effective.[59]

In conclusion, Syria brought a predominant leadership – and the advantages in negotiation that come with it – to the conflicts with Turkey and Israel, and in so doing, became faced with the complexities of systems led by coalitions of autonomous actors in Turkey and Israel. In Turkey, circumstances encouraged the nation to unify in a single cause, which resulted in an acceleration of peacemaking

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[56] Itamar Rabinovich, *The Brink of Peace The Israeli-Syrian Negotiations*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998)

[57] See Yüksel Sezgin, "The October 1998 Crisis in Turkish-Syrian Relations: A Prospect Theory Approach" *Turkish Studies* Vol. 3, No. 2, 2002

[58] Dennis Ross, *The Missing Peace, The Inside Story of the Fighting for Middle East Peace*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004), p. 563

[59] Pressman, "Mediation, Domestic Politics, and the Israeli-Syrian Negotiations", pp. 375-376

with Syria. In other words, when individual leadership and the institutional elite coordinated, pressure on Syria increased and some policy satisfaction was achieved in 1998. The Turkish leadership's unprecedented language, combined with military buildup and activities near the border, led Syria to take the Turkish threats as credible.[60] Israel did not achieve a similar consensus within its domestic structure in that sense. With this in mind, we need to consider other factors related to conditions and motivations of stalemate.

6.6. Hurting Stalemate and Enticing Opportunity

The recognition of a problem by parties, and their assessments of it, including present conditions and future expectations, might be a triggering point for conflict transformation. This totally depends on the parties' perceptions. In this research, it is assumed that if the status quo is sustainable for at least one party, the process of conflict transformation will slow, while if it is untenable, the process will gain momentum, as a result of this intensification of ripeness. In addition, the percentage of disputes ending in stalemates arguably increases the likelihood of successful resolution.[61]

In the theoretical section, it was acknowledged that the way a problem is recognized by parties in terms of costs or potential benefits becomes an important question, since enticing opportunities, in other words positive incentives, have the potential to induce a state of increased tension rather than de-escalation. As opposed to positive incentives, diminished opposition has been argued to have a greater impact on transformation processes. Even soft stalemate conditions, which are stable and self-serving, with painful but bearable effects, might suppress transformation processes. Such conditions might actually serve to trap the parties, if anticipated costs turn out not to be enough to turn minds toward conciliation.

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[60] James, Özdamar, "Modeling Foreign Policy and Ethnic Conflict", p. 29

[61] Michael Greig, "Moments of Opportunity, Recognising Conditions of Ripeness for International Mediation Between Enduring Rivals", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 45, No. 6, Dec. 2001

For this reason, in this research, it is assumed that as stalemate conditions intensify, the possibility of successful resolution increases. Enticing opportunities are not ruled out as a motivating factor, but they are more important in the later stages of conflict transformation.

In the Syrian-Turkish conflict, we did not see a *mutually* hurting stalemate among the parties: while Turkey was unhappy with the status quo during the 1990s, it was bearable for Syria. We can say that there was a stalemate of desperation and frustration for Turkey, which had had little success in several previous efforts. Meanwhile, Syria was faced with a stalemate of attrition, which had experienced neither success nor defeat. Instead, it had been balancing the insult of its territorial issue and the injury of its water problem with leverage in the form of its PKK card.

During the 1990s, Turkey had had to deal with political and physical costs – its death toll from fighting PKK terrorism being the highest of these costs – that were directly or indirectly related to its conflict with Syria. And as long as Syria continued to host the PKK and harbor its leader, Abdullah Öcalan, the issue of terror would be directly related to Syria in the common Turkish mental map, which was a point of unity as related to national cause, and thus influential in the emergence of stalemate conditions in Turkey.

Moreover, Turkey had been forced to carry a huge economic burden in order to combat the PKK. If the conflict was resolved, the Turkish economy could be freed from this obstacle. As Syrian support for this terrorist activity was as an essential component of its continuation, Turkey's objective became to end this support.

More importantly, after various failed attempts at negotiation, Turkey was desperate and frustrated. Turkey had lost her belief in gain due to various failed attempts.[62] The 1987 security and economic protocols had maintained some kind of order through dependency, but had had the unintended side effect of linking the water and terrorism issues, while also failing to end Syrian support for the PKK. It made two attempts at more coercive diplomacy in the form of threats delivered in 1992 and in 1996, but PKK operations in Southeastern Anatolia only increased, and

[62] "Dışişleri Bakanı İsmail Cem: Suriye Hala Bir Şey Anlamıyor", *Hürriyet*, October 6, 1998, http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=-41541

also spread to Hatay. Even Turkey's *note verbale* to the Syrian embassy had not been taken seriously, and so despite both coercive and deterrent policies, it was unable to relieve its condition of stalemate.

The challenges Syria had been facing during this period, however, were indirect. The most important of these was the decline of the Soviet Union, and by extension problems of domestic economy, along with political isolation. Asad was also concerned about regime survival, as well as a perceived encirclement when Turkey and Israel signed a joint military agreement. The net effect of these challenges was in the domain of losses, which it used the PKK to balance. Consequently, even without an expected end particularly due to water and territory issues, Syria was content to sustain, rather than transform, the status quo.

So what made the 1998 Crisis different between Syria and Turkey? Which conditions prompted Asad to respond the Turkish threats at last? In 1998, we observe that Turkey was facing with a really hurting stalemate, in other words, stalemate conditions for Turkey were very much intensified. Washington agreement in September 1998 had led to increase in the Turkish concerns about the PKK. But also jump in the numbers of the PKK's operations in Hatay had made Turkey more sensitive. At the end, the level of Turkish threats increased. Turkey identified the situation with Syria as an undeclared war between the two countries. After years of intensification, an exhausted Turkey embraced aggressive, risky policies to minimize its perceived losses. Oktav asserts that Turkey needed a crisis that would reflect its emergence as an assertive and self-confident power in the region in order to drive home the acuteness of the situation to Syria.[63]

Syria, which until that time had been able to ignore these threats, had been undergoing a shift in circumstance in the form of Asad's health conditions and the failed peace negotiations with Israel in Netanyahu era. In addition, as Hamidi explained, "Syria was not ripe regarding the conflict with Turkey in 1996, but in 1998 there were ripe conditions because negotiations with Israel stopped. Within this context, Turkey could have been a new door for Syria."[64] This case is an

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[63] Zeynep Özden Oktav, "Water Dispute and Kurdish Separatism in Turkish-Syrian Relations", *The Turkish Yearbook*, Vol. XXXIV, 2003, p. 107

[64] Interview with Ibrahim Hamidi, Journalist, al-Hayat, Damascus, June 3, 2008

example of why intensifying stalemate conditions for parties should be discussed in conjunction with the factors that motivate them, as well as their own perceptions of a way out. This will be discussed below.

Syria faced similar stalemate conditions in its conflict with Israel. As in the conflict with Turkey, although it was in the domain of losses because of the Israeli occupation of the Golan Heights and its upper hand in the water issue, Syria's military position in Lebanon and support of some Palestinian organizations gave it some leverage against Israel.

The same regional and global factors challenged Syria in both crises of the 1990s: the decline of the Soviet Union had handicapped its economy, and its increasing regional isolation had exacerbated already difficult domestic conditions, including Asad's regime survival. In response, as in the case of the conflict with Turkey, it had attempted to compensate with a strategic balance policy, but this strategy failed to achieve the desired effect against Israel. The outcome of the Gulf War then rendered the strategy of forming an Eastern Front against Israel untenable.

In the worsening environment, Syria found itself in a stalemate of frustration against Israel. Despite Syria had some cards against Israel, they did not make easier for Syria to gain back its territory, the Golan Heights. This absence of gain, which was identified by Syria as an essential requirement for transformation of the conflict with Israel, frustrated Syria in a deeper way.

While Syria's stalemate conditions in both conflicts had some similar points, the same cannot be said for Israel's stalemate conditions compared to those of Turkey; not only was Israel unmotivated to transform the conflict, it was actually quite satisfied with the status quo. The American victory in the Cold War had been a boon because it allowed Israel to renew its relations with several states, and it gained legitimacy through its participation in the Gulf coalition. Israel was happy due to its efforts to maintain control of the Golan Heights, which had been quiet since the 1974 Disengagement Agreement. This control had granted it advantageous riparian rights to the Jordan River. Although there is a fact that Israel had to deal with Hezbollah in Lebanon and Palestinian organizations, which supported by Syria, we can conclude that for Israel the status quo was sustainable. The situation,

from the Israeli perspective, was such that external motivations were required for it to enter into negotiations.

Enter the US, which extended mutually enticing opportunities to both Syria and Israel for exactly this reason. After the slow start to the Madrid Peace Process, the need for the participation of a third party mediator was clear, and Zartman described this process as a rare example of parties being pulled into negotiations because of the potential for improvement rather than pushed into them by deteriorating circumstances.[65] In fact, it was these US enticements that also brought Syria to the table, even though its situation had been less favorable than that of Israel.

Syria came to the negotiations expecting to have a chance to engage with the US for the purposes of reintegration into the international community, along with its objective of recovering the Golan Heights. Israel participated because of the American pressure,[66] although Syria was also influenced by American inducements. But the process initiated through these inducements resulted in failure, demonstrating that the addition of a new force influencing processes of conflict transformation are not very effective compared with the removal of resistance forces.

In addition, we observe the entrapment of Syria as long as Asad's vision remained fixed on achieving full withdrawal of Israel from the occupied territories on the basis of the June 4 line. In other words, Syria was embedded into a kind of victory. The Syrian anticipated marginal costs in case of none withdrawal of Israel as they wanted, was not enough to turn Asad's minds towards conciliation because they had already used to live with such costs. The hope of victory was justifying all the sacrifices made by Syria.

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[65] I. William Zartman, "Explaining Oslo", *International Negotiation*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 1997, p. 197

[66] Interview with Alon Liel, ex-Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tel Aviv, December 6, 2010

6.7. Perceived Way Out

Without a sense of a way out, the push associated with mutually hurting stalemate leaves parties with nowhere to go.[67] Perception of a way out is thus critical in the sense that unless parties believe that a solution is feasible, it is not possible to convince them to come together and resolve their differences.[68] That is why willingness to talk to other party is an essential part of ripeness process. Also parties would like to see some willingness on the other side; in other words, they need to be persuaded to see readiness on the other side to make necessary concessions.

As mentioned in the theoretical section, there is some discussion over whether a joint or separate perception of a way out is necessary for conflict transformation. The analysis of separate rather than joint perceptions arguably makes theory more flexible.[69] An important factor here is the interdependency between parties' willingness to transform their conflict, wherein an increasing degree of willingness on one side might encourage or discourage willingness on the other side.

In this research, it is assumed that, along with political will, the will of the public can impact, or at least regulate transformation processes. The level of willingness among the publics was one of the most dramatic distinctions between the Syrian-Turkish and Syrian-Israeli cases, and serves as one explanation for why the latter transformation process failed.

In the Syrian-Turkish case, we observe increasing willingness at both the political and public levels, though this was not so until the second half of the 1990s.

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[67] I. William Zartman, "The Timing of Peace Initiatives: Hurting Stalemates and Ripe Moments", John Darby and Roger MacGinty (Eds.), *Contemporary Peacemaking, Conflict, Violence and Peace Processes*, (Palgrave, 2003), p. 20

[68] Jacob Bercovitch and S. Ayşe Kadayıfçı, "Conflict Management and Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: the Importance of Capturing the "Right Moment"", *Asia-Pasific Review*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 2002, p. 118

[69] Dean G. Pruitt, "Ripeness Theory and the Oslo Talks", *International Negotiation*, Vol. 2, 1997, p. 238

Prior to this, we had observed an adversarial framing of Syria in Parliament; also both the National Security Council and President Süleyman Demirel had approved the use of force if necessary. The state had even deployed to the Syrian border as a part of its "an undeclared war" with Syria. The Turkish public supported the state's threat of force, though not its use. Such threats, as discussed in the theoretical section, had the effect of making the stalemate more painful and its alternatives more attractive.[70]

Moreover, Turkey's assurances to Syria regarding the feasibility of a transformation of relations persuaded Syria that concessions would not be futile. This became a critical motivator for a reluctant Syria, because it had not escaped Asad's notice that improving relations with Turkey might expose his country to economic markets beyond the Middle East. The deportation of Abdullah Öcalan was a sign that it was prepared to make the necessary concessions. The Syrian public also seemed to welcome the opportunity to improve relations with Turkey.[71]

Turkey's high degree of willingness to transform relations with Syria enhanced Syrian willingness. With assurances of good faith from Turkey, Syria perceived a way out.

In the Syrian-Israeli conflict, there existed no such degree of willingness by either side, at best there had been an ambivalent and conditional willingness, which had been pulled toward transformation efforts only through US inducement.

Before the process was initiated, Syria had confronted Israel with its conditions for peace, to which Israel reacted hesitantly. Indeed, Syria did have a bottom line motivating its willingness to make peace. First, a peace agreement with Israel, as with Turkey, could have been an answer to its economic challenges. Second was a psychological motivation: Asad had felt responsible for the loss of the Golan Heights, and their recovery would also recover his personal dignity, as well as that of the regime.

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[70] Alan Dowty, "Despair is not Enough Violence, Attitudinal Change, and 'Ripeness' in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict", *Cooperation and Conflict: Journal of the Nordic International Studies Association*, Vol. 41, No. 1, 2006, pp. 5-6

[71] Interview with Thabet Salem, Journalist, Damascus, November 7, 2010

Syria's low degree of willingness to engage in a peace process was exacerbated by hesitations regarding the future of relations with Israel after the peace. Fear of Israeli hegemony in the region was also a factor. This fear found voice in the Peres years when he explained his ideas about a new Middle East based on economic development. As Muallem described it:

> They wanted open borders, open markets for their goods… This would have an obvious effect on our own economy. Our economic regulations are not against them; we do not open our markets to any country. And how can you integrate two economies when one has a per capita income of $900 per year and the other has a per capita income of $15.000 per year? Such integration is not possible, so we discussed a transitional period during which we could raise our economy to the level where there can be competition without undue hardship on our society.[72]

Other concerns were over the lack of Israeli public support to make peace, as well as the Israeli state's ambiguity, which was taken as a sign of Israeli unwillingness. All Israeli leaders after Rabin only implicitly accepted the July 1994 clarification about the withdrawal line, and this ambiguity, which had been used for years to prolong talks, proved fatal when the moment of truth arrived.[73]

Israel also had a bottom line for its willingness to make peace with Syria. Its "Syria First" policy and perception of Syria as a credible partner were parts of this evaluation. However, Syrian support for some Palestinian organizations and Hezbollah, as well as its relations with Iran, were interpreted as signs of a lack of sincerity about making peace, and both the Israeli political authorities and its public were suspicious.

The ambivalent and conditional willingness on both sides obscured perception of a way out. For the Israeli side, Syrian putting conditions was a reason for hesitation. For the Syrian side, Israeli's referendum reservation was a barrier to see a way out because all the negotiations and even an agreement that will be reached between the delegations could have ended in futile; and this could have

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[72] Muallem, "Fresh Light on the Syrian-Israeli Peace Negotiations", pp. 86-87

[73] Pressman, "Mediation, Domestic Politics, and the Israeli-Syrian Negotiations", p. 373

been a disaster for the efforts to solve the dispute as well as the future of the relations with Israel.

6.8. Negotiation Goals

The process of negotiation includes goals of resolving disputed issues together with preserving positions and maintaining interests. Such interests are comprised of various goals, although it is understood that within a given negotiation the timing may be right for some goals but not others. The parties' strategies in formulating and prioritizing their goals have the potential to facilitate the transformation process. But a party might have "Machiavellian goals," which drive it in a direction other than reaching an agreement. This might include maintaining just contacts, obtaining information, propagandizing, buying time and gaining breathing space, or prolonging the dispute to avoid making concessions. All of these slow negotiations and increase the chance of a negative outcome.

When we look at the Syrian conflicts with Turkey and Israel, we see some differences in terms of negotiation goals. In the Syrian-Turkish negotiations, Turkey was very serious about resolution of the dispute, and very focused on the issue of security – especially ending Syrian support for the PKK. It also attempted to simplify the issues of contention by decoupling the security issue from the water issue. The combination of the motivation to reach a resolution and the simplification of the scope of these goals to suit the context were an influential component in their positive outcome.

Syria had been more or less happy with the status quo, and thus did not have clear objectives for negotiations, but it was urged by Turkey through threats of force to rethink the dispute. We can say that Asad took a strategic decision to end the dispute in the end – a straightforward goal – and had even reportedly instructed his delegation not to return to Damascus without an agreement.[74]

Between Syria and Israel, neither party was resolved to make peace. They joined for the sake of engaging in the process rather than to make peace, which can

[74] Interview with Ibrahim al-Hamidi, Journalist, al-Hayat, Damascus, June 3, 2008.

be identified as sideline objectives. Syria had some additional goals for negotiation, in the form of seizing an opportunity to engage with the US and courting international good will, but these were motivated by self-interest rather that were not directly related to the conflict.

To conclude, the sincerity of the goals Turkey and Syria brought into the negotiations propelled the transformation of the conflict between them, while the Machiavellian objectives that characterized the process between Israel and Syria negatively impacted the outcome of negotiations.

6.9. Negotiation Strategies

In negotiations, parties typically pursue either distributive or integrative strategies – or both of these in a complementary way. With distributive strategies, we tend to observe positional bargaining, that is, a contest between the parties over positioning. Parties practicing this strategy stake a claim and expect concessions from the other side. This strategy offers little room for maneuver, and the potential for the use of force by the parties is present.

With integrative strategies, we see that parties perceive the problem between them as a common issue. They are more able to separate themselves from the problem and pursue their interests rather than their positions. They try to reach a mutually acceptable solution by lowering subjective barriers, changing the field of play. Rather than claiming values, parties try to create new values, thus seeking to satisfy both parties' goals.

In this research, it is assumed that as hurting stalemate conditions, and so ripeness, intensify, parties become more inclined toward integrative strategies, though it is also assumed that alternating between strategies is more effective for reaching objectives than any single strategy.

Turkey had put its focus on a single interest, ending Syrian support for the PKK, as opposed to a comprehensive goal of positioning, which would have included the water issue as well. This integrative strategy supplemented its already advantageous position of power. It also pursued a contending strategy that included the threat of force. We can conclude that Turkish authorities supplemented their

positional bargaining strategy with integrative strategies when the hurting stalemate conditions worsened.

The absence of a mutually acceptable basis for negotiations in the Syrian-Israeli case was a problematic starting point, and during the process, we see interest-based bargaining strategies from Israel encountering a principles-based stance maintained by Syria. Syria participated in the negotiations at the bureaucratic level, but Israel insisted on raising the level to a political one, additionally demanding displays of public diplomacy. Asad's response to this was negative, and he sent only Faruk Shara as his representative, as opposed to a delegation of ambassadors and military personnel. In the final analysis, it is clear that neither party could separate itself from the problem and focus on its interests; each party preserved its self-position against the other, which was a major contributing factor to the negative outcome of the process.

6.10. Conclusion

This chapter has been a discussion on both the empirical and theoretical implications in comparing the Syrian-Turkish and Syrian-Israeli conflict transformation processes. These conflicts bore similarities in external contextual variables, disputed issues and power relations. Within this context, it is revealed that ripeness conditions, namely hurting stalemate, a perceived way out, and a valid spokesman, have explanatory power in clarifying the different outcomes of each conflict transformation process. Related to this, different settings of international conditions, which are similar in style in Turkey and Israel vis-à-vis Syria during the conflict transformation processes were important factors to be mentioned. This difference also helps us to understand variance between the negotiation processes in each conflict transformation.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

The aim of this dissertation has been to figure out a basis on which to understand the different outcomes of the Syrian-Turkish and Syrian-Israeli conflict transformation processes, using the framework of ripeness. It has been shown that an investigation of the ripeness process provides us with a more thorough understanding of these processes. In particular, an improved framework on ripeness, which fills gaps in the theoretical setting, helps us to comprehend conflict management and what lies beyond it.

The first pursuit to this end was to outline a new framework responding to the criticized points of ripeness theory. This new framework has been developed by taking into consideration the interplay between objective and subjective conditions without ignoring one at the sake of the other. Indeed, there are various successful studies based on either objective or subjective conditions. When these studies focus on one group of conditions, they implicitly acknowledge the role of other group, but do not pursue it. The framework of this research is not based on either/or assumptions, but on dialectic between objective and subjective conditions. In other words, this research occurs within a framework built upon a dialectical understanding between what happens and what it means.

With this in mind, the research has aimed to reach beyond the single perception of the subjective condition toward the complexities of internal dynamics, as well as to develop more contextually dependent generalizations. Both contextual and process variables have been included in the analysis for this purpose. As with the contextual variables, the external context, the power relations between the parties and the issues in the conflict have been examined. Afterward, the process variables of actors, hurting stalemate, perceived way out, and variables of strategies

and goals of negotiation were then taken into consideration as part of the explanation.

The initial conclusion drawn in this thesis is that examining the process variables in the empirical cases, together with the contextual variables, has enhanced our understanding of first, the differing outcomes in the Syrian-Turkish and Syrian-Israeli cases, then more specifically, the reasons behind the failure of the peace process between Syria and Israel, and finally, the reasons rendered Turkey's assertive policy in 1998 successful. The cases under study here have already been widely examined through the examination of contextual variables, that is, by focusing on changes in the external context, power relations between the parties, and the disputed issues in the conflict. By looking at these cases in terms of an interaction of the contextual variables with the process variables, we have gained vital insights that had been neglected by the either/or assumptions of previous scholarship. The most similar case study with the method of difference helped us to problematize factors such as power relations, which have been argued to be particularly influential in the Syrian-Turkish case.

We have several concluding remarks with respect to the Syrian-Turkish case. First, the external context, namely the Cold War, was a limitation for Syria and Turkey, who had been in opposite camps until the 1990s. The possibility of a clash at that time had the potential to turn into a conflict between the superpowers, the US and the Soviet Union. In this sense, the end of the Cold War lifted Syria and Turkey out this restrictive framework, or rather gave them an opportunity to lift themselves out of this framework. However, this reframing did not lead directly and initially to de-escalation, as expected. The parties continued to perceive each other through the prism of conflict, and tended to employ balance tactics against one another. The 1992 and 1993 efforts not only failed to transform relations, they continued to deteriorate until the parties came to the brink of war in 1998. Even though the initial period following the Cold War had been detrimental to the transformation of relations between Syria and Turkey, these forces were at work in the background. This thus calls for supplementary explanations, and in this sense, process analysis has given us the upper hand in understanding the transformation.

Within the framework of ripeness, it has been indicated that Turkey's increasing hurting stalemate conditions, due both to physical and political costs, led to grievance regarding the status quo. This perception facilitated an emerging consensus within Turkey to resolve the conflict. Consensus within the political arena, which had been fortified with the ascendancy of the military in politics after the mid-1990s, had also been effective in the transformation process, together with public will. One of the critical points was Turkey's presenting of a way out in case of an agreement. Turkey continually reminded Syria that if an agreement were signed, good relations between the two neighbors would likely be the result. This act by Turkey persuaded Syria that its efforts would not end in vain. Hafiz Asad's concerns about regime survival were yet another source of motivation in an already multifaceted dynamic toward pursuance of peace.

The impact of threats, as a heavily focused-upon force driving the parties toward signing the Adana Agreement in 1998, cannot be ignored. Yet this research has illustrated that intensifying ripeness conditions in 1998 had also been an important factor, providing a context within which Turkey's threats would be taken seriously. We can conclude that without high level of ripeness, as during the first half of the 1990s, Turkey's threats in 1998 would not have had the impact we now credit for catalyzing the process. As observed, ripening was responsible for the start of negotiations between Syria and Turkey in October 1998, and furthermore enabled Turkey to sustain negotiations. Its complementary strategy between positional and integrative bargaining by focusing on the more interest-based issue of security rather than more identity-based issues of water and territory, in other words focusing on its immediate interests rather than its comprehensive position vis-à-vis Syria, were determining factors behind the transformation of relations.

Meanwhile, peace negotiations between Syria and Israel did not occur as the result of a ripeness process. The end of the Cold War had a more direct effect on this case because of the involvement of the US, which has developed a new Middle East policy, and within this new framework, the Arab-Israeli conflict has been given a prominent place. Nevertheless, this change in the external context was just one element laying the foundation for the process. In this changing context, Syria's domestic and international challenges following the decline of the Soviet Union

contribute to its hurting stalemate conditions. However, Israel was happy with the status quo; the external factors governing its condition had improved after the Gulf War. The lack of internal motivation driven by ripeness conditions between Syria and Israel turned out to be a vital hindrance point in this conflict transformation process. In such a case, the third party role of the US took on more importance, but it failed to effectively use its leverage and by the end of the process had also lost legitimacy in the eyes of Syrians.

Syria had been insistent on getting back the occupied territories, but the low level of willingness to engage, at both the political and public level of Israeli society, resulted in hesitation, foot-dragging, and ambiguity. This was exacerbated by each party's positional bargaining, wherein Syria's focus was its national dignity, while Israel stressed its security position. All this low level ripeness led to both parties pursuing devious objectives, namely engaging with the US. All things considered, Israel had perhaps preferred the status quo, while Syria failed to perceive a way out. Even if reaching an agreement had become feasible, Syria had concerns about Israel's regional hegemony.

Examining the Syrian conflicts with Turkey and Israel and the conflict transformation efforts that took place, both separately and comparatively, also has theoretical implications. I will organize my conclusions into two categories: the first group directly deals with practical implications related to ripeness process; the second group of conclusions is more general and analytical. These conclusions respond to the gaps identified in the theoretical background chapter.

First group of conclusions with pratical implications:

- The percentage of disputes ending in stalemate increases the likelihood of resolution success. As stalemate conditions intensify, the possibility of successful resolution further increases. If the status quo is sustainable for at least one of the parties, the process of conflict transformation will slow down; if the status quo is untenable, the transformation process will gain momentum due to the increase of ripeness. Enticing opportunities are not ruled out, but they are more important in the later stages of transformation rather than as a force pulling parties into negotiation.

More importantly, inherent processes are more effective compared to induced processes.

- Perception of a way out is very critical, in that unless parties believe a solution is feasible, it is not possible to convince them to come together and resolve their differences. That is why willingness to participate in dialogue with the other party is an essential component of ripeness process. Any one party would also like to see some willingness on the other side in order to make the necessary concessions. Analyzing perceptions separately rather than jointly makes theory more flexible, yet we have to be aware of the interdependency between the parties' willingness: increasing levels of willingness on one side might promote willingness in the other side and visa-versa.

- Parties' redefinitions of their positions in the international and regional context have important repercussions for conflict transformation efforts. However, there is a possibility that conflict might continue in a bilateral context. We can conclude that the external context and changes in it has a background effect rather than directly shaping processes. In other words, though structural factors may favor an agreement, structure alone does not determine the outcome of peace-making efforts.

- Looking at ripeness conditions enhances our understanding of power dynamics in conflict and conflict transformation efforts. We can at least say that ripeness conditions facilitate transformation efforts in the case of power preponderance.

- The parties may have various goals, and may be right for one goal but not the others. Parties' strategies in shaping their goals and focusing particular goals might facilitate transformation processes. There should be a further awareness of the possibility of devious objectives among parties, that is, motivations other than those related to reaching an agreement. These "Machiavellian goals" may include

maintaining just contacts, securing information with which to develop propaganda, buying time and gaining breathing space, and prolonging the dispute in order to avoid making concessions. If one or both parties have such objectives in negotiations, the process will slow down and the possibility of a negative outcome of negotiations will increase.

- As ripeness processes intensify, parties' strategies in negotiations are more likely to become integrative ones. Alternating between distributive and integrative strategy styles is more effective for reaching objectives than any single strategy.

Second group of more general conclusions:

- Rationality assumption in ripeness theory basically assumes a positive relationship between costs and de-escalation. In practice this relationship is not as direct and smooth; possibilities for different interconnections exist. First, there is possibility of cases in which costs might incur escalation rather than de-escalation, or at least a continuation of struggle. In other words, impending threats may favor escalation rather than de-escalation.

Second, there are potential roles of opportunities. However, the impact of adding positive incentives is limited in conflict transformation process compared to the impact of diminishing opposing forces, since adding positive incentives result in new complexities. We can conclude that when events, either costs or benefits, lead to reevaluation by the parties, they become critical to the conflict transformation process.

Third, soft stalemate conditions, which are stable and self-serving with painful but bearable effects, suppress transformation processes. They may even result in an entrapment, an irrational conclusion under the assumption of rationality, because anticipated marginal costs might not be enough to turn minds toward conciliation, or parties might be embedded in a kind of victory. In the case of entrapment, it is easy to find tools to justify the continuation of struggle, and there is no reluctance to call for greater sacrifices, which absorb increased pain and strengthen determination. Indeed, entrapment in the continued pursuit of victory has its own rationality.

- Domestic politics is not only imperfect transmission belt accepted as a unitary actor in ripeness theory. Rather, going beyond unitary actors into the complexities of internal dynamics provides us with vital insights about ripeness process. More importantly, ripeness might come from the internal politics of the parties in conflict. In particular, a hurting stalemate emerges not only from external threats or benefits, but internal threats and opportunities as well.

Within a domestic structure, societal peculiarities have an impact on processes. For instance, societal distrust or factional opposition make parties hesitant to change. Again together with political will, the public will might have an impact on the process; they may at least be able to constrain the transformation process.

- The role of a third party in conflict transformation is widely emphasized in ripeness theory. Third parties can seize ripe moments in a conflict and turn them into fuel for negotiation. There is one more critical third party role, which is that it should sustain ripeness process so that both parties of conflict share the changed perception. The third party's role thus must be performed with skill. This skill might refer either to the third party's leverage or neutrality. Although there is a general expectation about third parties' impartiality, mediators with vested interests in the conflict and the capacity to bring the necessary resources into the settlement process, are actually more helpful to the parties. Otherwise, in the absence of the combination of interests and resources, neutrality becomes the only remaining power a mediator carries in the eyes of the parties. In this case, only through their legitimacy can mediators provide a measure of equality.

- Ripeness theory does not differentiate based on the types of issues shaping conflicts. In fact, an analysis taking into account issue differentiation should be included in the framework of ripeness because in the case of intangible issues and values in a conflict, ripeness processes can take place differently than in case of tangible issues. Even if ripeness conditions exist, intangible issues and values can play the role of obstructer in conflict transformation process. To be more specific,

social-psychological and identity-based escalatory dynamics, such as hostile attributions, dehumanization of the enemy, or identity-based concerns over dignity and security, might lead to hurting stalemate, in which case ripeness process occurs very differently than in case of interest-based escalatory dynamics. Even if ripeness conditions exist, dealing with intangible issues is not an easy task. Such a process requires attitudinal change, a kind of reconciliation. However, more tangible issues have a chance to be resolved through interest-based bargaining. In this sense, parties' abilities to delink issues pertaining to conflicts play an important role in enhancing transformation.

- Ripeness theory, which is mainly designed to explain the initiation of negotiations, also implicitly argues for the effectiveness/success of negotiations. However, explorations of transitional process from intractability to ripeness on the one hand, and the nature of its relationship to constructive conflict processes on the other, are all components that shape an explanation for conflict transformation. In order to explain the effectiveness of a process together with its initiation, there is a need to include negotiation variables in the analysis.

- Ripeness is broadly associated with a moment, a right time. However, ripeness is a process, and if we take it as such, this grants it dynamism and rids it of criticisms of tautology. In this case, we do not discuss whether or not there is or is not ripeness, we argue that ripeness waxes or wanes. Even within this dynamism, ripeness is not applicable to all parts of conflict, and there may be exceptions to its effectiveness in a conflict.

In conclusion, ripeness is an inevitable process in conflictual situations. Nevertheless, it detracts from parties' awareness of the context in which a conflict occurs, and then from its ability to manipulate internal and external conditions in order to be more effective in conflict transformation. In this way, exploring the dynamics of ripeness process in a conflict broadens our understanding of both conflicts and their transformations.

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APPENDICES

A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

I. Questions on the Turkish-Syrian Case for the Syrian Side

1) What were the turning points in the Turkish-Syrian conflict?
2) How do you define Adana agreement? Was it a success for Turkey? Was it a lopsided agreement? Could you define it in a short and long term perspectives?
3) What were the impacts of the changes in the international arena and regional context?
4) At that time (1990s), how was Turkey seen in Syria? Was it really powerful compare to Syria? If there was such a perception, how much this affected the transformation of the conflict?
5) How did the historical relations, especially Ottoman era, affect the transformation?
6) Could you please enlist the issues between Turkey and Syria before Adana agreement, according to their importance for you? (Security, territory, water, …)
7) Before Adana agreement, how do you define the Turkish-Syrian conflict? Was it just a discussion, or polarization, or segregation, or destruction?
8) Could you define the third parties between Turkey and Syria during the transformation process? What were their roles? Were they neutral?
9) What were the authoritative decision units in Syria during the crisis between Turkey and Syria? Was it a predominant leader, or a single group, or a coalition?

   "The authoritative decision unit is an individual or a set of individuals within a government with the ability to commit the resources of the society

and when faced with a problem, the authority to make a decision that cannot be readily reversed."

10) Was there any role of Syrian constituency in the decision-making process during the crisis? If yes, what was the role?
11) Just before the Adana agreement, was Syria happy with the status quo? Were there any voices to transform the relations?
12) What were the motivations for Syria to negotiate with Turkey?
13) What was the goal of Syria in the negotiation table? Was there a real demand for settlement or just manage the problems without a real solution?
14) What do you think about Syria strategy during the negotiations? Was it cooperative?

II. Questions on the Turkish-Syrian Case for the Turkish Side

1) What were the turning points in the Turkish-Syrian conflict?
2) How do you define Adana agreement? Was it a success for Turkey? Was it a lopsided agreement? Could you define it in a short and long term perspectives?
3) What were the impacts of the changes in the international arena and regional context?
4) At that time (1990s), how was Syria seen in Turkey in terms of power relations?
5) How did the historical relations, especially Ottoman era, affect the transformation?
6) Could you please enlist the issues between Turkey and Syria before Adana agreement, according to their importance for you? (Security, territory, water, …)
7) Before Adana agreement, how do you define the Turkish-Syrian conflict? Was it just a discussion, or polarization, or segregation, or destruction?
8) Could you define the third parties between Turkey and Syria during the transformation process? What were their roles? Were they neutral?

9) What were the authoritative decision units in Turkey during the crisis between Turkey and Syria? Was it a predominant leader, or a single group, or a coalition?

   "The authoritative decision unit is an individual or a set of individuals within a government with the ability to commit the resources of the society and when faced with a problem, the authority to make a decision that cannot be readily reversed."

10) Was there any role of Turkish constituency in the decision-making process during the crisis? If yes, what was the role?
11) Just before the Adana agreement, was Turkey happy with the status quo? Were there any voices to transform the relations?
12) What were the motivations for Turkey to negotiate with Syria?
13) What was the goal of Turkey in the negotiation table? Was there a real demand for settlement or just manage the problems without a real solution?
14) What do you think about Turkey's strategy during the negotiations? Was it cooperative?

III. Questions on the Syrian-Israeli Case for the Syrian Side

1) How is Israel seen in Syria? Is it really powerful compare to Syria? If there is such a perception, how much this affects the transformation of the conflict?
2) What were the turning points in the Syrian-Israeli conflict?
3) What were the impacts of the changes in the international arena and regional context?
4) Could you please enlist the issues between Syria and Israel according to their importance for you? (Security, territory, water, …)
5) Could you define the third parties between Syria and Israel during the negotiations? What were their roles? Were they neutral?
6) What were the authoritative decision units regarding Israel in Syria? Was it a predominant leader, or a single group, or a coalition?

"The authoritative decision unit is an individual or a set of individuals within a government with the ability to commit the resources of the society and when faced with a problem, the authority to make a decision that cannot be readily reversed."

7) Was there any role of Syrian constituency in the decision-making process about Israel? If yes, what is the role?
8) Just before the Middle East Peace Process, was Syria happy with the status quo? Were there any voices to transform the relations?
9) What were the motivations for Syria to negotiate with Israel in 1990s?
10) What was the goal of Syria in the negotiation table? Was there a real demand for settlement or just manage the problems without a real solution?
11) What do you think about Syria strategy during the negotiations? Was it cooperative?

IV. Questions on the Syrian-Israeli Case for the Israeli Side

1) How is Syria seen in Israel in terms of power relations?
2) What were the turning points in the Syrian-Israeli conflict?
3) What were the impacts of the changes in the international arena and regional context?
4) Could you please enlist the issues between Syria and Israel according to their importance for you? (Security, territory, water, …)
5) Could you define the third parties between Syria and Israel during the negotiations? What were their roles? Were they neutral?
6) What were the authoritative decision units regarding Syria in Israel? Was it a predominant leader, or a single group, or a coalition?

"The authoritative decision unit is an individual or a set of individuals within a government with the ability to commit the resources of the society and when faced with a problem, the authority to make a decision that cannot be readily reversed."

7) Was there any role of Israeli constituency in the decision-making process about Israel? If yes, what is the role?

8) Just before the Middle East Peace Process, was Israel happy with the status quo? Were there any voices to transform the relations?
9) What were the motivations for Israel to negotiate with Syria in the 1990s?
10) What was the goal of Israel in the negotiation table? Was there a real demand for settlement or just manage the problems without a real solution?
11) What do you think about Israel's strategy during the negotiations? Was it cooperative?

B: PROTOCOL ON MATTERS PERTAINING TO ECONOMIC COOPERATION[75]

Signed at Damascus on 17 July 1987
Authentic text: English.
Registered by the Syrian Arab Republic on 1 June 1993.
REPUBLIQUE ARABE SYRIENNE et TURQUIE
Protocole en matière de coopération économique. Signé à
Damas le 17 juillet 1987
Texte authentique : anglais.
Enregistré par la République arabe syrienne le 1er juin 1993.
Vol. 1724, 1-30069

PROTOCOL1 ON MATTERS PERTAINING TO ECONOMIC COOPERATION BETWEEN THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC AND THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
The Syrian Arab Republic and the Republic of Turkey,
Recalling historic and cultural ties existing between the two countries,
Desirous to add new dimensions to already existing good-neighbourly relations,
Bearing in mind numerous complementaries in the economies of their countries,
Agreed to sign the present Protocol.

Petroleum and Gas
1. The two Parties agreed to continue the contacts and visits on the exploration of Petroleum and Gas and exchange information on these matters.
2. The Syrian Side pointed out that it called for bids to develop natural gas fields in central areas of the Syrian Arab territory and informed the Turkish Side that the tender documents could be obtained from the Syrian Petroleum Company.
3. The Turkish Side informed the Syrian Side that it is ready and willing to purchase gas from Syria in sufficient quantity for its present and future requirements. The Syrian Side pointed out that, in case there are exportable surpluses, it will examine and negotiate this proposal.
4. The two Parties confirm that they are ready to cooperate in conformity with the principles of service contracts related to Petroleum and gas exploration outside the exploration areas of the Syrian Petroleum Company. The Syrian Side pointed out that it was ready to provide the Turkish Side with data which will enable it to

[75] http://untreaty.un.org/unts/60001_120000/30/24/00059195.pdf (Accessed on July 8, 2011)

prepare documents in order to formulate the application to carry out exploration in areas selected by the Turkish side.
5. The Turkish Side pointed out that it is ready to lease to the Syrian Side its drilling equipment. The Syrian Side asked the Turkish Side to hand over to it the specifications of the said equipment. The specifications on question were handed over to the Syrian Side. The Syrian Side will examine these specifications and will inform the Turkish if it needs such equipment.

Water
6. During the filling up period of the Ataturk Dam reservoir and until the final allocation of the waters of Euphrates among the three riparian countries, the Turkish Side undertakes to release a yearly average of more than 500 M3/Sec. five hundred cubic meter per second at the Turkish-Syrian borders and in cases where the monthly flow falls below the level of 500 M3/Sec, five hundred cubic meter per second, the Turkish Side agrees to make up the difference during the following month.
7. The two Sides shall work together with the Iraqi Side to allocate the waters of the rivers Euphrates and Tigris in the shortest possible time.
8. The two Sides agreed to expedite the work of the Joint Technical Committee on Regional Waters.
9. The two Parties agreed in principle to construct and operate jointly projects in the lands of both countries on the Euphrates and Tigris rivers for irrigation and power generation provided that the technical and economic feasibility studies of these projects are carried out in cooperation by the experts of the two countries.
10. The Turkish Side explained the details of the "Peace Pipe Line" planned to carry a portion of the waters of the Seyhan and Geyhan rivers in Turkey, through Syria by two pipe-lines, one going to countries of the Gulf and the other to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to supply water for household purposes and limited irrigation for the region. The Syrian Side agreed in principle to the project and showed interest provided that the Turkish Side carries out its technical and economic feasibility study by an international consultancy firm. The Syrian Side undertakes to facilitate the feasibility studies pertaining to the Syrian portion of the project. In case of its positive conclusion, the Syrian Side will enter into negotiations for the final realization of the project.

Electricity
11. The two Sides agreed to continue their cooperation in the field of electrical power exchange at different voltage levels. Both Sides expressed their satisfaction about the steps reached in the project of the connection between Cag-Cag (Nusaybin) and Qamishli at 66 KV. The Turkish Side took note that relevant contract shall be submitted to the competent Syrian authorities for ratification in the shortest possible time. They will continue the studies and negotiations to carry out new connections between the Syrian and Turkish electrical networks at 400-220 KV, 154 KV and 66 KV levels. Both Sides will take further necessary steps to carry out a feasibility study to connect the two networks at 400 KV in the framework of interconnection of electrical networks with other Arab and Islamic countries. Both Sides expressed their willingness to exchange experience in the field of electrical power.

Trade

12. The two Sides reviewed their bilateral trade exchanges, they noticed the development of trade volume between the two countries in the year 1986, compared with the past years, after the signing of the agreed minutes on March 5, 1986, they expressed their mutual desire to develop and expand these exchanges to the best possible level by different suitable ways according to the needs and capabilities of both countries. The two Sides expressed with respect to the application of afore mentioned agreed minutes, their desire to further promote and diversify their bilateral commercial and economic relations.

13. They also noticed that some contracts have been concluded among competent organizations of the two countries. They stressed the necessity of continuing to promote such transactions. Considering the advantages of shorter route for transport, the Turkish Side agreed to encourage its competent authorities to re-examine to import phosphate and petrocock from Syria by all suitable means including barter.

14. The two Sides expressed their satisfaction for exchanging visits between businessmen of the two countries and their readiness to promote and continue encouraging such visits for their mutual benefit and to develop the trade between the two countries.

15. The two Sides agreed to encourage and facilitate the participation of both countries and their competent organizations in the fairs and exhibitions held on the territory of each other.

Banking cooperation

16. Taking into consideration the draft Banking Arrangement prepared by the Central Bank of Turkey and submitted to the Central Bank of Syria, suggested amendments by the Central Bank of Syria and the respond to that by the Central Bank of Turkey, in accordance with the agreed minutes of March 5,1986, both Sides had further discussed the matter in details. They agreed that Central Bank of Turkey will study the views that had been presented in writing by Central Bank of Syria and will forward its decision as soon as possible.

17. The Syrian Side suggested that the Turkish Side studies the possibilities of a governmental credit amounting to 100 Million U.S. Dollars, with moderate terms and conditions for financing the importation of industrial goods from Turkey. The Turkish Side took note of that proposal and stated that it will be considered in a spirit of mutual interest.

Transport and telecommunication

18. The two Sides expressed the importance of cooperation in the fields of transport and telecommunications as well as their desire to increase this cooperation for performing mutual benefit.

19. The following examples about some difficultires encountered in this field were given by the Turkish Side: Financial fees and charges endured by Turkish trucks and the necessity of considering this point to be sure of matching with the effective laws and regulations and the agreements signed between the two countries. The amounts due by the Syrian Railways to the Turkish State Railways administration. The non-transfer of the revenues of Turkish Airlines to Turkey.

20. The Syrian Side stated that: The charges levied on the Turkish vehicles are the same charges levied on the trucks of all other countries. There are amounts due to the Syrian Side concerning the fees of cleaning the wagons. The Turkish Railways administration takes into consideration more exactly the dates of receiving and delivering the wagons to avoid difficulties arising from not abiding with agreed states.
21. It was also agreed to hold, as soon as possible, a meeting between the two Railways Administrations in order to solve the existing difficulties.

Telecommunications field
22. The two Sides discussed the subject of increasing the making use of operating the telephone channels between the two countries and to transit through Turkey to Europe or through Syria to the South; they agreed to cooperate for the realization of this project. The Syrian Side requested to consider the possibility of a connection through operating microwave TV. channels between Syria and Turkey, mainly during the period of Mediterranean Games. The Turkish Side promised to submit this interest to the Turkish competent authorities and, if necessary, a meeting would be held between the TV. Administrations of the two countries.
23. The Syrian Side requested the re-opening of the Qamishli-Siirt airway corridor. The Turkish Side explained difficulties encountered in this field and asked the Syrian Side to extend its application through diplomatic channels.

Busses for the Mediterranean games
24. The Syrian Side expressed its desire to hire 100 busses to be used during the period of the Mediterranean Games, at least for 20 days. The Turkish Side shall examine this request and forward its reply as soon as possible.

Cattle transit transportation
25. Both Parties agreed on cattle (sheep) transit transport through Syria on the following lines:
1) The quantities of the subject transportation will be shared equally by Turkish and Syrian trucks from origin to destination, taking into consideration that the shipment carried on by Syrian trucks will be made from the origins closer to the Syrian border.
2) Turkish relevant entrepreneurs, three days prior to transportation date will notify Ministry of Transport of Syria the quantities to be transported transit through Syria. Syrian authorities within said three days will begin transportation for half of this quantity. However, if Syrian trucks are not available in quantity at the time of shipment then the remained quantity of Syrian part will be transported by Turkish trucks. Taking into consideration the extremely short period of time all relevant authorities of both countries will take every possible measures to facilitate this transportation. It is understood that both Parties will take all necessary measures to facilitate crossing of Syria and Turkish trucks through each other borders, and facilitate Syrian trucks for entering Turkish border.
3) Turkish entrepreneurs, upon notifying the Syrian authorities of the quantity mentioned in the paragraph 2, may start transportation automatically up to half of the said amount.

4) Both Sides agreed on already applicable fixed costs, fees, levies, taxes, prices, etc.
5) The provisions of the present chapter will be valid till the end of "Kurban Bayrami-Eid al Adha", namely 10th of August 1987.
26. The two Sides agreed on holding the Syrian-Turkish Joint Economic Commission in Ankara and the Syrian-Turkish Joint Committee for Road Transport in

Damascus, on October 1987.
DONE AND SIGNED in Damascus on July 17, 1987, in two original copies in English language.
[Signed] [Signed]
Dr. ABDUL RAOUF EL-KASSEM TURGUT OZAL
Prime Minister Prime Minister
of the Syrian Arab Republic of the Republic of Turkey

C: MINUTES OF THE AGREEMENT SIGNED BY TURKEY AND SYRIA[76]

In light of the messages conveyed on behalf of Syria by the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, H.E.Mr. Hosni Mubarak and by the Iranian Foreign Minister H.E.Mr. Kamal Kharrazi on behalf of the Iranian President H.E.Mr. Seyid Mohammed Khatemi and by the Foreign Minister of the Arab Republic of Egypt H.E. Mr. Amr Moussa, the Turkish and Syrian delegations whose names are in the attached list (annex 1) have met in Adana on 19 and 20 October 1998 to discuss the issue of cooperation in combating terrorism.

In the meeting the Turkish side repeated the Turkish demands presented to the Egyptian President (annex 2) to eliminate the current tension in their relations. Furthermore, the Turkish side brought to the attention of the Syrian side the reply that was received from Syria through the Arab Republic of Egypt, which entails the following commitments:

1. As of now, Öcalan is not in Syria and he definitely will not be allowed to enter Syria.

2. PKK elements abroad will not be permitted to enter Syria.

3. As of now PKK camps are not operational and definitely will not be allowed to become active.

4. Many PKK members have been arrested and have been taken to court. Their lists have been prepared Syria presented these lists to the Turkish side.

The Syrian side has confirmed the above mentioned points. Furthermore, the sides also have agreed on the following points:

1. Syria, on the basis of the principle of reciprocity, will not permit any activity which emanates from its territory aimed at jeopardizing the security and stability of Turkey. Syria will not allow the supply of weapons, logistic material, financial support to and propaganda activities of the PKK on its territory.

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[76] http://www.mafhoum.com/press/50P2.htm. It is unofficial translation.

2. Syria has recognized that the PKK is a terrorist organization. Syria has, alongside other terrorist organizations, prohibited all activities of the PKK and its affiliated organizations on its territory.

3. Syria will not allow the PKK to establish camps and other facilities for training and shelter or to have commercial activities on its territory.

4. Syria will not allow PKK members to use its country for transit to third countries.

5. Syria will take all necessary measures to prevent the chieftain of the PKK terrorist organization from entering into Syrian territory and will instruct its authorities at border points to that effect.

Both sides have agreed to establish certain mechanisms for the effective and transparent implementation of the measures mentioned above.

In this context;

a) A direct phone link will immediately be established and operated between the high level security authorities of the two countries.

b) The Sides will appoint two special representatives each to their diplomatic missions and these officials will be presented to the authorities of the host-country by the heads of mission.

c) The Turkish side, within the context of combating terrorism, has proposed to the Syrian side to establish a system that will enable the monitoring of security enhancing measures and their effectiveness. The Syrian side has stated that it will present this proposal to its authorities for approval and will reply as soon as possible.

d) The Turkish and Syrian sides, contingent upon obtaining Lebanon's consent, have agreed to take up the issue of the combat against PKK terrorism in a tripartite framework.

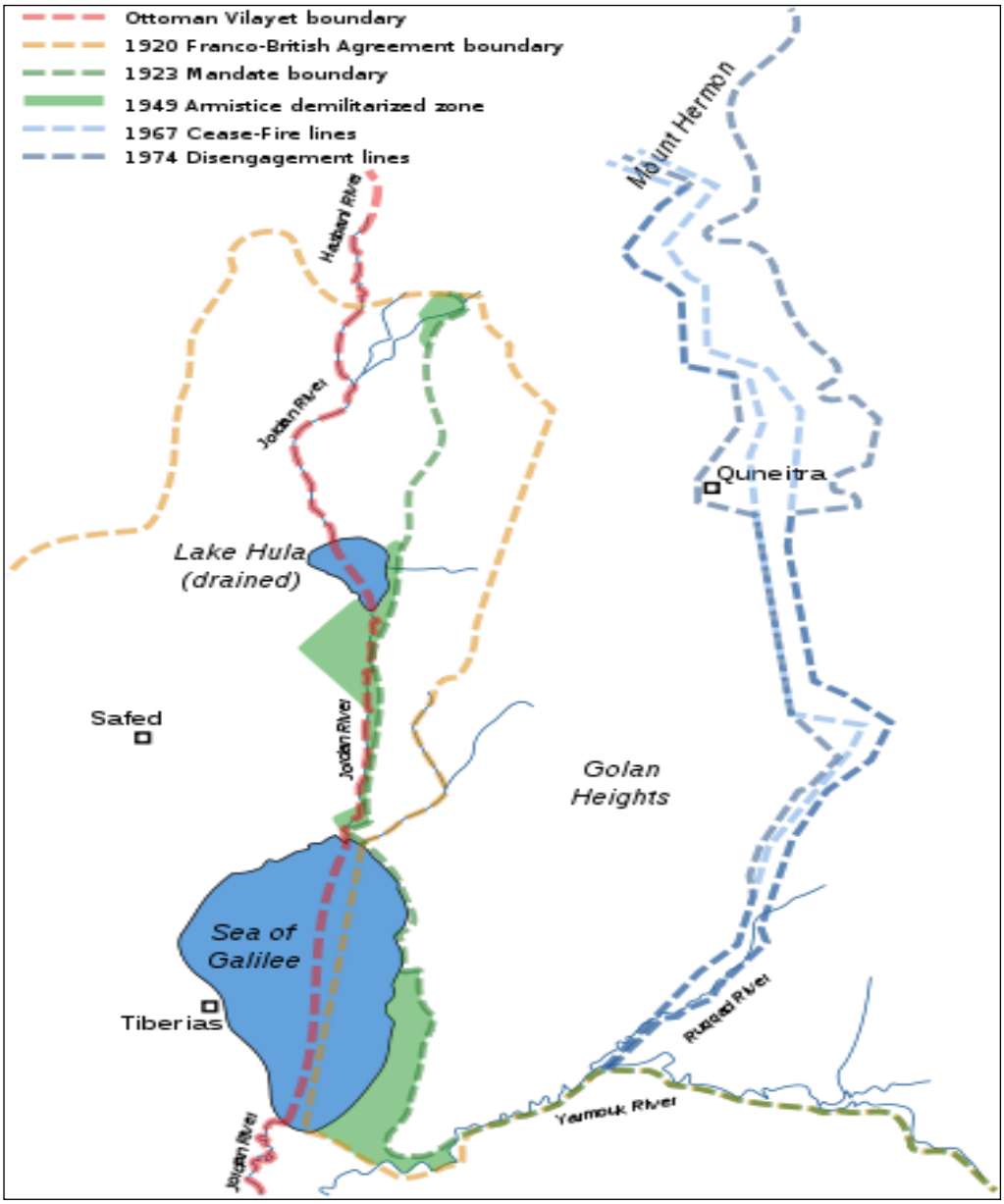
e) The Syrian side commits itself to take the necessary measures for the implementation of the points mentioned in this "Minutes" and for the achievement of concrete results.

Adana, October 20,1998

For the Turkish Delegation
Ambassador
Uğur Ziyal
Deputy Under-Secretary
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

For the Syrian Delegation
Major General
Adnan Badr Al-Hassan
Head of Political Security

D: HISTORICAL BORDERS ON THE GOLAN HEIGHTS

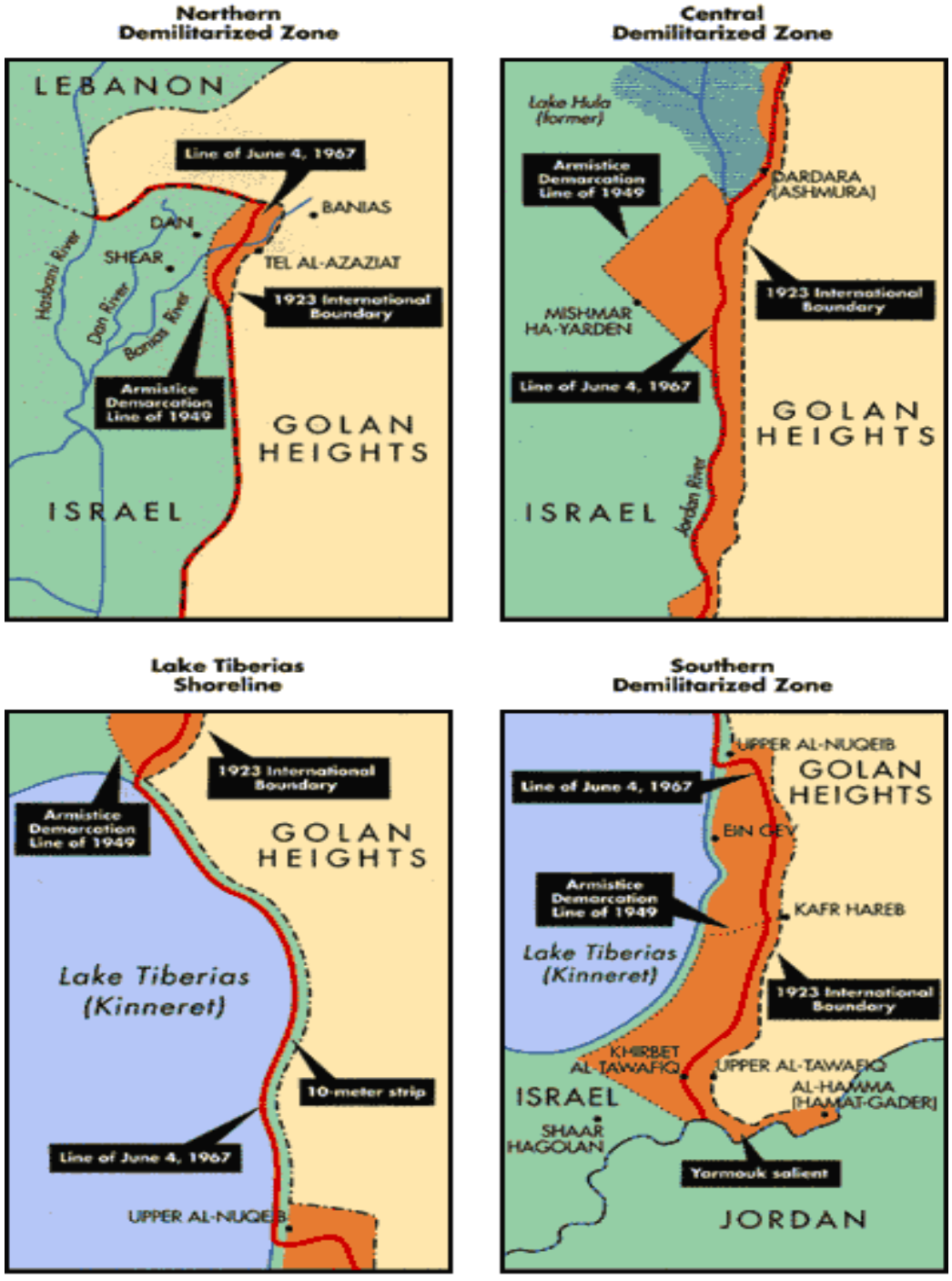


Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:GolanHistoricalBorders.svg (Accessed on June 22, 2011)

E: THE GOLAN HEIGHTS AND THE LINE OF JUNE 4, 1967

Source: Frederic C. Hof, "Line of Battle, Border of Peace - The Line of June 4, 1967", *Middle East Insight Monograph*, 1999

Appendix E (continued)



F: TURKISH SUMMARY

SURİYE'NİN 1990'LARDAKİ TÜRKİYE VE İSRAİL İLE OLAN UYUŞMAZLIKLARININ DÖNÜŞÜMÜ: OLGUNLAŞMA TEORİSİNE KARŞILAŞTIRMALI BİR BAKIŞ

1990'lar boyunca Suriye'nin Türkiye ve İsrail ile olan uyuşmazlıklarının çözümü için çeşitli çabalar harcanmıştır. Bir tarafta Suriye ile İsrail arasında 1991-2000 yılları arasında aralıklarla da olsa barış görüşmeleri gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bu görüşmelerin parçası olduğu Ortadoğu Barış Süreci Ekim 1991'de Amerika Birleşik Devletleri (ABD) ve Sovyetler Birliği'nin ortak öncülüğünde Madrid'de başlatılmıştır. Arap-İsrail uyuşmazlığını çözmek adına prensip ve hedeflerin belirlendiği bu konferansı takiben Suriye-İsrail arasındaki ikili barış görüşmeleri 3 Kasım 1991 tarihinde Vaşington'da ABD arabuluculuğunda başlamış ve bir takım kesintilere rağmen Mart 2000 tarihine kadar devam etmiştir.

Diğer tarafta hemen hemen aynı zaman diliminde, yani 1990'lı yıllar boyunca, Türkiye-Suriye arasındaki uyuşazlıkların çözümü için de değişik çözüm yolları denenmiştir. Suriye-Türkiye arasında, Suriye-İsrail vakasında olduğu gibi resmi bir süreç yoktu ancak süregiden bir çabanın olduğu aşikardı. Bu süreç boyunca sırasıyla 1987, 1992 ve 1993 yıllarında çeşitli anlaşmalar imzalandı. Ancak bu anlaşmalar iki ülkenin Ekim 1998'de savaşın eşiğine gelmesini engelleyemedi. Savaşın eşiğindeki iki ülke 20 Ekim 1998 tarihinde imzladıkları Adana Mutakabatı ile bu krize bir son verdiler. Bir takım halledilmemiş meseleye rağmen bu anlaşma iki ülke arasındaki ilişkilerin iyi komşuluk ilişkilerine dönüşümünde dönüm noktası olmuştur.

1990'lı yıllar boyunca Suriye'nin İsrail ve Türkiye ile olan sorunlarının dönüşümüne dair yaşanan bu süreçler şu soruları akla getirmektedir:

1) ABD'nin arabulucuğunda gerçekleşen barış görüşmelerine rağmen, Suriye ve İsrail neden bir barış anlaşması imzalayamamıştır? Bunun arkasındaki nedenler nelerdir?

2) 1980'lerin sonlarından beri devam edegelen çabalara rağmen, neden Suriye ile Türkiye arasında 1998'de imzalanan Adana Mutakabatı ilişkileri dönüştüren bir anlaşma oldu? Hangi şartlar 1998 yılını ilişkileri dönüştürücü olma bağlamında etkili kılan unsurlar oldu?

3) Halledilemeyen bir takım konulara rağmen Suriye-Türkiye ilişkileri iyi komşuluk ilişkilerine dönüşürken, neden Suriye-İsrail barış görüşmeleri, üstelik ABD'nin arabuluculuğunda gerçekleşen görüşmeler olumlu sonuçlanmadı?

İlk iki soru ile alakalı olarak literatürde halihazırda devam eden tartışmalar zaten mevcuttur. Suriye-İsrail barış görüşmeleri ile ilgili olarak önemli bir literatür vardır. Bu literatürün büyük bir kısmı görüşme sürecininin kendisini ya da sürecin bölgesel ve iç politikalar çerçevesinde gidişatını anlatmaktadır. Aynı zamanda bu literatürde sürece müdahil kişilerin şahsi izlenimlerini de görmek mümkündür. Küçük bir kısım da bu süreçte kaçırılan fırsatları ve ABD'nin arabuluculuk rolünü irdeleyerek literatüre katkıda bulunmaktadır.

Bu çalışmalara bakıldığında sürecin belli nedenlerden dolayı tıkandığını görüyoruz. Bazı çalışmalarda bu nedenler Suriye ya da İsrail tarafına yüklenirken, bazılarında özellikle ABD'nin etkisiz arabuluculuğu üzerinde durulmaktadır. Suriye ile ilgili olarak Suriye'nin hedeflere ulaşma yollarında gösterdiği esnekliğe rağmen hedeflere dair takındığı tavizsiz tavırla beraber istenilen seviyede kamu diplomasisinin olmayışı süreci tıkıyan nedenlerdendir. Süreç boyunca Suriye, İsrail işgali altındaki topraklarını 4 Haziran 1967 sınırına kadar geri almak konusunda çok kararlı davrandı. Buna karşılık İsrail, Suriye'nin görüşmelerde temsilinin bürokratik seviyeden ziyade siyasi seviyede olmasını talep etmekteydi. Bunun da ötesinde İsrail görüşmecileri, Enver Sedat'ın 1977'de yaptığı gibi Esad'ın da İsrail'i ziyaret etmesini kendi kamuoyunu ikna etmek adına istiyorlardı. Fakat bu Suriye tarafı için kabul edilemez bir istekti.

İsrail'in sürecin başarısızlığı konusundaki sorumluluğu ile ilgili olarak İsrailli politikacıların, partisi ne olursa olsun, sorunu çözmede kararlı bir tavır takınamamaları ve böylece zaten Suriye hakkında şüpheleri olan İsrail kamuoyunu

da ikna edememeleri vurgulanan konulardır. 1991-2000 yılları arasında İsrail'e bakıldığında bu süreçte beş başbakanın yer aldığını görmekteyiz. Süreçte yer alan aynı partiden başbakanların bile Suriye konusunda farklı tutumlar takındığını söylemek yanlış olmayacaktır. Mesela 1992-1995 yılları arasında görev yapan İşçi Partisi'nden İshak Rabin ve onun suikast sonucu ölümünden sonra başbakan olan Şimon Peres arasında Suriye'ye yaklaşım olarak farklar vardı. Yine İşçi Partili olan Peres Suriye ile olan meseleye daha çok bölgenin kalkınması açısından bakıyordu. Fakat tüm İsrailli başbakanlarının Suriye konusundaki ortak noktası güvenlik konusunun onlar için başat mevzu oluşuydu.

Yukarıda değinildiği gibi ABD'nin etkisiz arabuluculuk rolü de literatürde yer alan konulardandır. Özellikle ABD'nin kendisinden beklenen düzeyde sürece ağırlığını koyamadığı tespiti literatürde ortak bir kanıdır. Sürece bakıldığında ilk aşamalarda tarafların ABD'den beklentisinin yüksek olduğu görülecektir. Suriye yönetimi bile ABD'nin arabuluculuğuna alternatifin olmadığını görüyordu. Hafız Esad, Suriye'nin Soğuk Savaş dönemindeki müttefiki Sovyetler Birliği'nin çöküşü ile dünyada ve bölgede yeni bir düzenin inşası karşısında ABD'nin artan rolünün çok farkındaydı. Ayrıca Suriye yönetimi, İsrail yönetimi üzerinde ancak ve ancak ABD'nin etkili olabileceğini düşünüyorlardı. Süreç boyunca bu düşünceleri tam anlamıyla karşılık bulmayan Suriye yönetimi sürecin sonuna doğru ABD'nin rolü ile ilgili olarak hayal kırıklığına uğradı ve tarafsız bir arabuluculuk sergileyemediği ve özellikle İsrail yanlısı tutum takındığı gerekçeleri ile ABD'ye suçlamalar yönlendirdi. Suriyeli yetkililerde ABD'nin, İsrail'in isteği dışında hiçbir şey yapamayacağı ve ABD'nin süreci başarı ile sonlandırmaktan ziyade sadece süreci devam ettirme çabası olduğu kanaati oluştu. Ki bu algı Suriye tarafının sürece olan inancını baltalatarak sürecin başarısız olması arkasındaki nedenlerden biri oldu.

Görüldüğü üzere Suriye-İsrail barış görüşmeleri ile ilgili olarak daha kapsamlı açıklamalara ihtiyaç vardır. Bu çalışma bu doğrultuda literatüre katkı yapmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Bu çalışmadaki diğer bir soru, 1990'lar boyunca imzalanan bir takım anlaşmalara rağmen 1998'de imzalanan Adana anlaşmasının neden daha etkin bir şekilde uygulandığı ve ilişkileri dönüştüren bir anlaşma olduğudur. Bu soru da Ortadoğu, ve daha özelde Türkiye ve Suriye çalışan uzmanların cevap aradığı

önemli bir sorudur. Bu konudaki yazına baktığımızda, bazı çalışmaların bu soruyu doğrudan 1998 krizi çerçevesinde irdeleğini, bazı çalışmaların da iki ülke arasındaki ilişkilerin seyrini analiz ederken bu krizi bir dönüm noktası alarak soruya yaklaştıklarını görmekteyiz. Üçüncü bir grup ise bu sorunsala Suriye-Türkiye arasında var olan meseleler mesela su, güvenlik ve toprak meseleleri çerçevesinde yaklaşmaktadır.

Bu çalışmaların farklı yaklaşımlarına rağmen ortak özelliği iki ülke arasındaki ilişkilere daha çok realizm merkezli varsayımlarla bakmalarıdır. Bu yüzden de bu çalışmalar uluslararası ve bölgesel gelişmelerin ve iki ülke arasındaki güç dengesinin ilişkilere nasıl etki ettiğine odaklanmaktadır. Bu çerçevede tartışmalar, Soğuk Savaşın sona ermesi, Sovyetler Birliği'nin yıkılması, Arap-İsrail Barış Sürecinin yaşanması, Türkiye'nin 1990'ların sonuna doğru ekonomik ve askeri açıdan güçlenmeye başlaması ve Türkiye-İsrail arasında 19902Ların ortası itibari ile başlayan işbirliği etrafında şekillenmektedir. Üzerinde en çok durulan konu ise krizin çözülmesinde Türkiye'nin Suriye'ye yönelttiği tehdidin etkin oluşudur. Bir çok çalışma krizin aşılmasında en önemli etkenin Türkiye'nin güç kullanımına yönelik Suriye'ye söylediği tehditlerinin olduğunu belirtmektedir. Bu çalışma, Türkiye'nin tehdidin önemli olduğunu göz ardı etmeden bunu var olan şartlar bağlamında ve bir süreç içerisinde irdelemenin gerektiğini vurgulamaktadır. Bu noktada Türkiye'nin güç kullanım tehdidi ve hatta bir kısım ordusunu Suriye sınırına kaydırması krizin çözümünde önemli bir faktör olabilir, ancak bu aslında o anki konjonktürel bağlamın ve yaşanan sürecin bir parçası olarak anlamlıdır ve böyle değerlendirilmelidir.

Var olan klasik yaklaşım zaten eleştirilerden uzak değildir. Özellikle var olan çalışmalarda ülkeler içi siyasetin göz ardı edilmesi eleştiri konusu olmuştur. Daha özelde karar alıcıların algıları ve daha genelde de iç siyasetin durumu bir kenera koyularak devletin uluslararası arenadaki davranışına odaklanarak analizler yapılmıştır. Halbuki iki ülkenin iç siyasetine bakıldığında özellikle Suriye'de Hafız Esad'ın kötüleşen sağlığı nedeni ile rejimin devamı sorunu çerçevesinde Türkiye ile var olan ve gelecekte var olacak ilişkileri değerlendirğini açıkça görebiliriz. Bu noktada Türkiye'nin tehdidinin doğrudan etkisinden ziyade Esad'ın böyle bir algı çerçevesinde bu tehdidi değerlendirdiğini ve oğlu Beşar Esad'a daha az sorunlu bir

ilişki bırakmak adına Türkiye'nin isteklerine boyun eğdiğini söylemek yanlış olmayacaktır.

Bu eleştirel yaklaşımlara rağmen Suriye-Türkiye sorunu uyuşmazlık analizi ve uyuşmazlıkların çözümü açısından çalışılmamıştır. Yukarıda da değinildiği gibi çalışmaların kavramsal çerçeveleri daha çok dış politika analizi olmuş bununla beraber ilişkilerin bölgesel ve uluslararası değişimlerden nasıl etkilendiğine bakılmış ya da bu yaklaşımlar bir yana tarafların sorunu besleyen meselelere nasıl baktığı üzerinden çalışmalar yapılmıştır. Daha eleştirel bir noktadan da Hafız Esad'ın karar alma süreci odaklı, daha çok Esad'ın risk alarak bu sorunun çözümüne nasıl katkıda bulunduğu anlatılmıştır.

Eksikleri olsa da her bir yaklaşım, sorunu ve sorunun dönüşümünü anlamada bizlere oldukça yardımcıdır. Bir tarafta realist çalışmalar konjonktürel unsurların etkisini açıklamakta, özellikle de uluslararası ve bölgesel değişimlerin ve iki ülke arasındaki güç dengelerinin etkilerini gözler önüne sermektedir. Diğer tarafta da az da olsa yapılan eleştirel yaklaşımlar daha çok tarafların içsel dinamiklerini de analize katarak literatüre katkıda bulunmaktadırlar. Ancak bu farklı yaklaşımları aynı anda içinde barındaran, daha kapsamlı ve birbirini dışlamayan bir analiz çerçevesine ihtiyaç vardır.

Tezin temel ilk iki sorusuna bir takım cevaplar mevcut iken üçüncü soru olan Türkiye-Suriye sorunu dönüşürken neden Suriye-İsrail sorununun dönüşemediği ile ilgili olarak literatürde hiçbir çalışma yoktur. Bu soru başka başka soruları da akla getirmektedir. Mesela Hafız Esad'ın rejim devamlılığı endişesi Türkiye-Suriye sorununu dönüştüren etkenlerden biriyse bu niçin Suriye-İsrail meselesinde etken olmamıştır? Çünkü bildiğimiz bir nokta varki Hafız Esad oğlu Başar Esad'a bir tek Türkiye ile değil İsrail ile de ilgili olarak dış politika sorunu bırakmak istemiyordu. İkinci olarak akla gelen bir başka soru ise Türkiye'nin daha güçlü taraf olarak Suriye ile olan sorununu çözebilirken neden İsrail'in Suriye'ye karşı daha güçlü oluşu etkili olamamıştır?

Bu tez, olgunlaşma teorisinin yukarıdaki sorulari cevaplamada yardımcı olabileceğini savunmaktadır. Temel olarak olgunlaşma teorisi uyuşmazlıkların objektif koşul olarak çıkmazlık noktasına geldiğinde, subjektif koşullar olarak tarafların bir çıkış noktası gördüğü ve süreçte süreci yönetecek kişiler var olduğu

durumlarda çözüm yolunda olgunlaştığı ve bununla beraber çözülmeye başladığını önermektedir.

Bu çerçevede bu tez olgunlaşma teorisi ile ilgili literatürü gözden geçirmiş, uyuşmazlıkların dönüşümü ile ilgili sorular sormuş ve Türkiye-Suriye ve Suriye-İsrail sorunlarına bakarak olgunlaşma ile ilgili ampirik bulguları değerlendirmiştir. Görüldüğü üzere burada yapılan çalışma Türkiye-Suriye ve Suriye-İsrail sorunlarının dönüşümünün karşılaştırmalı bir çalışmasıdır. Her bir vaka, daha genelde sorunun dönüşümü, daha özelde olgunlaşma süreci açısından irdelenmiştir. Burada amaç sorunun olgunlaşmasının dönüşüme ve görüşmelerin olumlu sonuçlanmasına etkisini ortaya koymaktır.

Tezin teorik çerçevesini olgunlaşma teorisi oluşturmaktadır. Birçok çalışma sorunların çözümü için sorunun olgunlaşmasını tek başına yetersiz ancak gerekli bir koşul olarak işaret etmektedir. Üç şart – çıkmazlık durumu, çıkış noktası algısı ve süreci yönetebilecek kişilerin varlığı – herkesçe kabul gören olgunlaşmanın şartlarıdır. Ancak konu ile ilgili yapılan çalışmalara bakıldığında objektif şart olan çıkmazlık konusuna ya da subjektif şart olarak bunun nasıl algılandığı konusuna ağırlık verildiği her iki şart arasındaki etkileşimin yeterince değerlendirilmediği görülmektedir. Bunun da ötesinde süreci yönetebilecek yetkin kişiler ilgili şart konusuna sadece değinilmiş ancak yeterince detaylı çalışma yapılmamıştır.

Bu çalışma eksik noktaları göz önünde bulundurarak hem objektif hem subjektif şartları aynı anda değerlendirerek ve ayrıca olgunlaşma süreci ile beraber görüşme sürecine de bakarak sorunların dönüşümünü irdelemektedir. Bu analizi yaparken de Suriye'nin 1990'lar boyunca karşılaştığı Türkiye ve İsrail ile olan sorunlarının dönüşümü vakaları karşılaştırmalı olarak ele alınmaktadır.

Türkiye-Suriye ve Suriye-İsrail sorunları, olgunlaşma süreçlerini analiz etmek için bize uygun bir zemin sunmaktadır. İki vaka, bir takım farklı noktalarına rağmen önemli benzerlikler taşımaktadır. Öncelikle vakalardaki uyuşmazlıklar bir Arap ülkesi olan Suriye ile onun Arap olmayan iki komşusu arasında yaşanmıştır. Yine uyuşmazlıklar etnik gruplar ya da devlet dışı aktörlerden ziyade devletler arasında cereyan etmektedir. Tarihsel olarak bakıldığında Suriye hem Türkiye'yi hem İsrail'i bölgede Batı yanlısı ve sömürü güçleri olarak algılamaktadır. Bu da her

iki vakada karşılıklı güvensizlik ortamına neden olmaktadır. Bu durum her iki uyuşmazlığın da temelinde yer alan ve çözüme engel teşkil eden bir unsurdur.

Bu ortak tarihsel altyapı ile beraber iki uyuşmazlık da Soğuk Savaş tarafından ortaya konmasa dahi Soğuk Savaş ortamından beslenmiştir. Suriye bölgede Sovyetler Birliği'ne bağlı bir ülke iken Türkiye ve İsrail ise Batı bloğunun parçasıydılar. Bunun da ötesinde Suriye bu ülkeleri Batı'nın bölgedeki uzantıları olarak algılamıştır. Bu nedenle Soğuk Savaş'ın sona ermesi bu uyuşmazlıkları sınırlayıcı bir durumdan kurtarmıştır. Böylece uyuşmazlıklarda ülkeler kendi sorunları ile daha doğrudan yüz yüze gelebilme imkanını elde etmişlerdir. En göze çarpan yeni durum da tarafların bu sorunları çözme iradelerini daha net ortaya koymalarıdır.

Bir diğer ortak nokta, uyuşmazlıkları oluşturan mevzular arasında kurulabilen paralelliklerdir. İki uyuşmazlıktaki sorunları toprak, güvenlik ve su başlığı altında toplamak mümkündür. Toprak meselesi ile ilgili olarak Suriye hem Türkiye'den hem de İsrail'den bir kısım toprağı işgal edildiği için hak talep etmektedir. Her ne kadar uluslararası hukuk bağlamında Suriye'nin Türkiye ile olan Hatay ve İsrail ile olan Golan Tepeleri meseleleri aynı olmasalar da Suriyelilerin algılarında iki toprak meselesi benzerlikler taşımaktadır. Golan Tepeleri'ni tartışmasız işgal altındaki toprakları olarak gören Suriyeliler, Hatay'ı Suriye'den haksız bir şekilde "çalınmış toprak" olarak görmektedirler. Yine Suriye, Türkiye ve İsrail'in bölgeki durumlarını etkilemek ve ikili ilişkilerde elini güçlendirmek adına bu ülkelerin "terörist" olarak tanımladıkları bir takım örgütlere destek sağlamıştır. Diğer yandan her iki uyuşmazlıkta ortak olan su meselesi ile ilgili olarak da Suriye biri Fırat-Dicle havzasında, diğeri Ürdün nehri havzasında yukarı akım ülke konumunda olan Türkiye ve İsrail'in tutumları nedeni ile kendisine ulaşan suyun miktarı ve kalitesi konusunda endişelere sahiptir.

Bu benzerliklerle beraber Suriye, Arap olmayan iki komşusu olan Türkiye ve İsrail ile olan sorunlarının çözümü için 1990'lar boyunca görüşme süreçleri içerisinde yer almıştır. Türkiye-Suriye sorununun çözümü için Ekim 1998 tarihinde imzalanan Adana Mutabakatı ile önemli bir yol açılırken çeşitli çabalara rağmen Suriye-İsrail görüşmeleri sürecinde istenilen sonuçlar edinilememiştir.

Bu karşılaştırmadan yola çıkarak bu çalışmanın temel sorularından biri Türkiye ve Suriye sorunlarını aşıp ilişkilerini iyi komşuluk seviyesine taşıyabilirken 1991-2000 yılları arasındaki barış görüşmelerine rağmen neden Suriye ve İsrail bu dönüşüm sürecinde başarılı olamamıştır?

Bu sorulara cevaben bu çalışma bir takım hipotezler öne sürmektedir:

1) Suriye-İsrail sorunu ile karşılaştırıldığında Türkiye-Suriye sorununun belli şartlar altında olgunlaşması sorunun etkili bir şekilde dönüşmesinin en önemli nedenlerinden biridir. Daha açık bir ifade ile yukarıda bahsi edilen olgunlaşmanın objektif ve subjektif şartlarının etkileşimi sonucu Türkiye-Suriye sorunu, çözüm için oldukça olgunlaşırken, olgunlaşma için gerekli bu etkileşim Suriye-İsrail sorununda düşük kalmış, bu da Suriye-İsrail sorununun dönüşüm sürecini olumsuz etkilemiştir.

Olgunlaşma sürecinde tarafların statükoyu nasıl algıladıkları önem taşımaktadır. En azından bir taraf dahi statükoyu sürdürülebilir görüyorsa bu dönüşüm sürecini yavaşlatacaktır. Diğer taraftan, en azından bir taraf için bile statüko devam ettirilemez ise bu da süreci hızlandıracaktır.

Yine olgunlaşma sürecinde sorunu çözmek adına hem siyasi hem de kamusal irade söz konusuysa bu da dönüşüm sürecini olumlu yönde etkileyecektir.

2) Süreçleri analiz ederken bu süreçlerin gerçekleştiği ortamı göz ardı etmek mümkün değildir. Ortamı şekillendiren güç ilişkilerinin, uluslararası ve bölgesel konjonktürün değerlendirilmesi, dönüşüm süreçlerini anlamlandırmada elzemdir. Bunların yanında tarafların iç dinamikleri de gözden kaçırılmamalıdır. Taraflardaki karar alma süreçleri ve iç politik vaziyetler sorunların dönüşümünü etkileyebilecek önemli dinamiklerdir. Yalnız bunlar pasif olarak değil, gayet dinamik ve aktif olarak dönüşüm süreçlerinin parçası olabilirler.

3) Sorunların dönüşüm süreçlerinde sorunu teşkil eden mevzular, özellikle tarafların bu mevzuları nasıl değerlendirdikleri önem kazanmaktadır. Eğer taraflar bir mevzuyu çıkar odaklıdan ziyade kimlik odaklı değerlendiriyorlarsa bu sorunu çözmek için uyuşmazlık yönetimi metodları yeterli olmayacak daha ötesinde tarafları uzlaştıracak çabalar gerekecektir. Diğer yandan her zaman iki farklı

yaklaşım – çıkar ve kimlik odaklı – arasında kesin ayrımlar zor olacağı için birbirini tamamlayan çözüm metodlarının kullanımı daha etkili olacaktır.

4) Sorunların etkili/başarılı dönüşümünü anlayabilmek için görüşme süreçlerine de bakmak gereklidir. Özellikle tarafların ortaya koydukları görüşme hedefleri ve görüşmelerde uyguladıkları stratejiler süreçlerin etkinliğini etkileyecek potansiyele sahiptirler. Mesela taraflar süreçten sonuç almaktan ziyade sürecin bir parçası olarak sadece oyalanmayı tercih ediyorlarsa bu sürecin olumsuz sonuçlanması için bir neden olacaktır.

Bu hipotezler çerçevesinde bu çalışma olgunlaşma literatürüne katkı yapmayı amaçlamaktadır. Diğer yandan da ele alınan vakalar olgunlaşma teorisi çerçevesinde henüz çalışılmadığı için bu vakaların çalışılması da literatür için bir katkı olacaktır.

Bu tez iki ana kısımdan oluşmaktadır. İkinci ve üçüncü bölümlerin oluşturduğu ilk kısım olgunlaşma teorisi ile ilgili olarak kavramsal konulara değinirken ikinci kısım oluşturulan kavramsal çerçeve ile vakaları analiz etmektedir. Tezin ikinci bölümünde olgunlaşma teorisi ile ilgili temel kavramlar açıklanmış ve ardından teoriye yapılan eleştiriler ve teoride var olan boşluklar sıralanarak irdelenmiştir. Üçüncü bölümde ise bu eleştirilen ve eksik olan kısımlardan yola çıkarak bu çalışmada kullanılacak kavramsal çerçeve oluşturulmuştur. Tezin ikinci kısmı ise sırayla, Türkiye-Suriye ve Suriye-İsrail sorunlarını ve dönüşüm süreçlerini incelemiş ve son bölümde de vakalar karşılaştırılarak ampirik ve kavramsal sonuçlar ortaya konmuştur.

Burada yapılan karşılaştırmalı analiz benzer vaka karşılaştırması olmuştur. Kullanılan fark metodu ile vakaların farklı sonuçları, tüm benzerliklerle beraber vakalarda farklı seyreden etkenler ile açıklanmaktadır. Vakaları daha net analiz edebilmek için Türkiye, Suriye ve İsrail'de konuyla ilgili karar alıcı, karar uygulayıcı, uzman ve gazetecilerle mülakatlar yapılmıştır.

Tezde varılan sonuçlar aşağıda üç grupta anlatılacaktır. İlk iki grup vakalara dair somut tespitlerle ilgilidir. Son grup ise daha çok kavramsal sonuçları içermektedir.

Öncelikli olarak Türkiye-Suriye sorunu ve dönüşümüne bakıldığında 1990 yılına kadar Soğuk Savaş'ın varlığı karşıt kamplarda yer alan iki ülke ilişkileri açısından kısıtlayıcı bir faktör olmuştur. Soğuk Savaş dönemi boyunca Türkiye ve Suriye arasında yaşanabilecek her hangi bir çatışmanın iki süper güç arasında bir çatışmaya dönüşme potansiyeli mevcuttu. Bu çerçevede Soğuk Savaş'ın sona ermesi iki ülke için var olan kısıtlayıcı durumu ortadan kaldırdı, hatta iki ülkeye sorunları ile doğrudan ilgilenme fırstanı ortaya koydu. Ancak bir çokları tarafından iki ülke arasındaki sorunun dönüşümü için bir neden olarak zikredilen Soğuk Savaş'ın sona ermesi doğrudan sorunu dönüştüren bir faktörden çok sorunların tırmanışa geçtiği için bir dönem oldu. Çünkü bu sürece baktığımızda taraflar birbirlerine güvenlik ve çatışma perspektifinden bakmaya devam ettiler ve yine bu sebeple birbirlerini dengelemek adına ellerinden geleni yaptılar. Suriye'nin Yunanistan ve Türkiye'nin İsrail ile yaptığı anlaşmalar bu çerçevede okunabilir. Bu süreçte yapılan çözüm çabaları ise istenildiği gibi sonuçlanmayarak iki ülke 1998 yılında savaşın eşiğine kadar geldiler. Sonuç olarak Soğuk Savaş'ın sona ermesi göz ardı edilebilecek bir faktör değildir. Ancak bu konjonktürel değişimin sorunu doğrudan değil de sorunun içinde bulunduğu ortamı etkileyen dolaylı bir etkisi olduğunu söylemek daha doğru olacaktır.

Olgunlaşma teorileri çerçevesinde bu çalışma, Türkiye'nin politik ve maddi nedenlerden dolayı karşı karşıya kaldığı çıkmazlık durumunun, ona Suriye ile aralarında var olan statükoyu değiştirme isteği verdiğini göstermiştir. Bu çıkmazlık durumu algısı Türkiye'de Suriye ile olan sorunun çözümü için fikir birliğinin oluşmasına da zemin teşkil etmiştir. Siyasi arenadaki sorunun çözümü için var olan istek, ordunun siyasetteki etkinliğinin 1990'ların ortalarından itibaren artması ile pekişmiştir. Türkiye'de oluşan bu çıkmazlık algısı ve çözüm iradesi ile beraber bir anlaşma imzalanması durumunda Türkiye'nin Suriye'ye çıkış noktası göstermesi sorunun çözümünde kritik noktalardan bir diğeridir. Sürece bakıldığında Türkiye, Suriye ile olan sınırına asker göndermenin yanında anlaşma sonrası iyi ilişkiler kurulacağına dair Suriye'ye teminat vermekten kaçınmamıştır. Bu durum rejimin devamlılığı endişesi olan ve aynı zamanda oğlu Beşar Esad'a sorunsuz ilişkiler bırakmak isteyen Hafız Esad için de motive edici bir faktör olmuştur.

Literatürde Türkiye-Suriye arasındaki sorunun çözümünde Türkiye'nin güç kullanımına dair dile getirdiği tehditler en çok üzerinde durulan etkendir. Bu çalışma da bu etkenin göz ardı edilemeyeceğini kabul etmektedir. Ancak bu tez 1998'e doğru olgunlaşma şartlarının netleşmesi ile tehditlerin ciddiye alınacağı bir ortamın oluştuğunu göstermektedir. Burada şu sonuca varılmıştır: 1990'lı yılların başında olduğu gibi 1998'de de olgunlaşma şartları olmasaydı Türkiye'nin tehditlerinin kabul edilen etkisi olamayacaktı. Çünkü 1990'lı yılların ilk kısımlarında da Türkiye Suriye'ye güç kullanımı ile ilgili tehditlerde bulunmuştu ama görüldüğü üzere bu tehditler etkili olamamıştı. Sonuç olarak Türkiye-Suriye sorununun olgunlaşması görüşmeleri başlatan, sürdüren ve olumlu sonuçlanmasına neden olan önemli bir faktördür.

1998'deki Türkiye-Suriye görüşmelerine bakıldığında Türkiye'nin bir yandan Suriye'ye karşı pozisyonunu korumaya dönük diğer yandan bütün çıkarlarından ziyade bir kısım acil çıkarlarına dönük hareket etmesi ve müzakere yapması, yani bir birbirini tamamlayıcı müzakere stratejileri uygulaması da sorunun dönüşümünde etkili olmuştur. Türkiye'nin, Suriye ilgili tüm mevzulardan yani daha çok kimlik ile ilişkilendirilebilecek su ve toprak meselelerini de içine alan tüm çıkarlarından ziyade daha çok bir çıkar meselesi olan güvenlik meselesine odaklanması sorunu dönüştüren önemli bir etken olmuştur.

Çalışmadaki diğer vaka olan Suriye-İsrail sorununa bakıldığında 1991-2000 yılları arasında gerçekleşen barış görüşmeleri Türkiye-Suriye sorununda olduğu gibi sorunun olgunlaşması sonucu başlamamıştır. Daha çok ABD'nin insiyatifi ile taraflar bir araya gelmiştir. Suriye-İsrail sorununda Soğuk Savaş'ın daha doğrudan bir etkisini görmekteyiz. Çünkü Soğuk Savaş'ın sona ermesi ile birlikte ABD yeni bir Orta Doğu politikası şekillendirmiş ve bu politika içerisinde de Arap-İsrail uyuşmazlığının çözümü, öncelikli konulardan birisi olmuştur. Bununla birlikte tarafların olgunlaşma sürecine bakıldığında nispeten Suriye'nin özellikle Sovyetler Birliği'nin çökmesi ile karşı karşıya olduğu zorluklar nedeni ile statükodan çok da memnun olmadığını söylemek yanlış olmayacaktır. Ancak İsrail'in o zamanki statüko algısına baktığımızda statükoya dair olumlu bir algısı olduğunu görmekteyiz. Bunda özellikle Körfez Savaşı sonrası İsrail'in bölgede kabul görmesinin etkili olduğunu söyleyebiliriz. Sonuç olarak Suriye-İsrail sorunu ile

ilgili olarak tarafların çabaları sonucu oluşan bir olgunlaşma sürecinin olmaması sürecin dönüşümünü olumsuz etkileyen bir durum olmuştur. Böyle bir süreçte arabulucu olarak ABD'nin rolü daha çok önem kazanmıştır. Ancak ABD sahip olduğu manivela gücünü etkili bir şekilde kullanmamış ve sonuçta Suriyeliler gözünde meşruiyetini kaybetmiştir.

Ayrıca süreç boyunca, Suriye'nin işgal altındaki topraklarını alma hedefindeki sarsılmaz tutumu ile beraber İsrail'de Suriye'ye karşı var olan siyasi ve toplumsal güvensizlik süreci tıkayan önemli unsurlar olmuştur. Bunlarla beraber tarafların görüşmelerde bir takım çıkarlarından ziyade tüm pozisyonlarını öne çıkaran stratejiler izlemesi de süreci olumsuz etkilemiştir. Görüşmelerde Suriye'nin milli onurunu korumaya çalıştığını, İsrail'in ise güvenlik odaklı bir pozisyon takındığını görmekteyiz. Tam bir olgunlaşma ile başlayamayan süreçte taraflar sorunu çözmekten daha çok ABD ile iyi ilişkiler kurmak gibi bir takım yan hedefler peşinde olmuşlardır. Sonuç olarak İsrail aslında var olan statükonun devamını isterken, Suriye bir değişim istese de sorundan bir çıkış noktası göremediği için süreç olumsuz sonuçlanmıştır.

Yukarıda anlatılan Türkiye-Suriye ve Suriye-İsrail sorunlarının dönüşümü ile ilgili olarak ulaşılan somut sonuçların yanında bu tez çalışması ile bir takım kavramsal sonuçlar da ortaya konmuştur.

1) Çıkmazlık noktasına gelen uyuşmazlıkların başarı ile çözülme olasılığı artacaktır. Ayrıca bir sorunda tarafların çıkmazlık durumu derinleştikçe başarı oranı da artacaktır. Diğer bir deyişle taraflar için var olan statüko devam ettirilemez hale geldikçe sorunu dönüştürme çabaları ivme kazanacaktır. Bu süreçte çıkmazlık gibi olumsuz durumlarla beraber fırsatların (mesela ABD'nin Suriye ve İsrail arasında arabuluculuk yapması) da tarafları var olan statükoyu sorgulamaya itebileceği göz ardı edilmemelidir. Ancak çalışma göstermiştir ki fırsatların etkisi dönüşüm sürecinin ilk aşamalarından çok ilerleyen aşamlarında daha etkili olmaktadır.

2) Dönüşüm sürecinde tarafların sorundan çıkış noktası görebilmesi çok kritik bir unsurdur. Taraflar sorundan çıkış olduğuna inanmadıkları sürece onları bir araya getirmek kolay olmayacak, bir araya getirilseler dahi tarafların çıkış noktası

görememesi süreci baltalayan bir durum olacaktır. Bu nedenle tarafların çözüm iradesi göstermeleri olgunlaşmanın olmazsa olmaz şartıdır. Bunun da ötesinde taraflar karşı tarafta da çözüm iradesi görmek isteyebilirler. Analiz açısından tarafların çözüm iradelerini beraber olarak değil de ayrı ayrı irdelemek analize esneklik verecektir. Ancak bir tarafın istekli oluşunun diğer tarafın isteklilik durumuna etki yapacağını yani tarafların çözüm iradeleri arasında etkileşim olabileceğini de göz önünde bulundurmak gerekmektedir.

3) Olgunlaşma süreçleri belli bir ortamda gerçekleştiği için uluslararası ve bölgesel ortamdaki değişimleri göz önünde bulundurmak süreci anlamlandırmada eksik bir nokta bırakmamak adına önemlidir. Ancak dış ortamdaki değişimler süreçleri etkileseler de bu daha dolaylı olabilmektedir. Diğer bir deyişle yapısal faktörler bir anlaşmanın yapılmasını kolaylaştırabilirler ancak tek başlarına çözüm çabalarının sonucunu etkileyecek kadar süreci şekillendiremezler.

4) Dönüşüm süreçlerinde tarafların ortaya koyduğu hedefler süreçlerin gidişatını etkileyebilirler. Mesela tarafların belli hedeflere odaklanmaları süreci olumlu yönde etkileyebilecekken, sorunun çözümünden başka hedefler belirlemeleri süreci tıkayabilecek bir durum oluşturabilir. Taraflar, mesela sadece zaman kazanmak adına süreçte yer almak, süreci sürüncemede bırakarak taviz vermeyi ertelemek ve karşı taraftan bilgi sızdırmak gibi aldatıcı hedeflerle süreçte yer alabilirler. En azından bir tarafın dahi bu tür hedefleri olduğunda dönüşüm süreci yavaşlayacak ve görüşmelerin olumsuz sonuçlanmasında etkili olacaktır. Ancak olgunlaşmış bir sorunun çözümünde tarafların daha net ve aldatıcı olmayan hedefler belirleme olasılığı artacaktır. Yine hedeflere paralel olarak olgunlaşarak dönüşmeye başlayan bir sorunda tarafların çözüm stratejileri daha bütüncül, birbirini tamamlayan stratejiler olacaktır.

5) Bu çalışma tarafların iç dinamiklerinin olgunlaşma ve dönüşüm süreçlerini anlamada göz ardı edilemeyecek bir unsur olduğunu göstermiştir. Tarafların birbiri ile olan çatışmaları ile beraber tarafların iç siyasetlerinden

kaynaklı olgunlaşma süreçleri de yaşanabilir. Mesela sadece dışsal tehditler değil aynı zamanda içsel tehditler de tarafları çıkmazlık durumuna sokabilir.

6) Olgunlaşma teorisinde üçüncü tarafların sorunların dönüşüm süreçlerindeki rolü oldukça üzerinde durulan bir konudur. Teoride üçüncü tarafların soruna müdahale için doğru zamanları daha kolayca algılayıp taraflar arası görüşmeleri başlatabilecekleri öngörülmektedir. Ancak görüşmelerin başlatılması ile beraber üçüncü taraflara düşen kritik bir sorumluluk daha vardır. Bu da başlatılan sürecin devam ettirilmesidir. Bütün bu üçüncü taraf rolleri belli nitelikler gerektirmektedir. Bu nitelikler ya tarafların manivela güçlerini ortaya koymaları ya da tarafsızlıkları ile meşruiyetlerini sağlamaları sonucunda etkili olabilir. Genellikle üçüncü tarafların soruna ve taraflara tarafsız ve objektif olmaları gerektiği kanısı mevcuttur. Ancak sorunun çözümünde çıkarı olan ve bu konuda yapabilecekleri olan üçüncü tarafların daha çok istenildiğini söylemek yanlış olmayacaktır. Aksi takdirde soruna gerekli ilgisi ve kaynakları olmayan bir üçüncü tarafın elinde sadece tarafsızlık niteliği kalacaktır ki bunu da ortaya koymak oldukça zor olabilmektedir.

7) Olgunlaşma teorisine bakıldığında sorunları şekillendiren konular arası farklılıklar göz önünde bulundurulmamaktadır. Ancak tarafların sorunu oluşturan konulara nasıl baktığını göz önüne alan analizler daha anlamlı olacaktır. Çünkü sorunların daha somut ya da daha soyut ve değer yüklü konulardan oluşması farklı farklı olgunlaşma süreçlerine neden olabilecektir. Ayrıca olgunlaşma süreci olsa dahi somut konulardan ziyade daha çok değer yüklü mevzuların süreçte varlığı dönüşüm süreçlerini zorlaştıran unsurlar olabilir. Çünkü bu tür mevzuların varlığı tavır değişikliği gibi daha derin uzlaşma süreçlerini gerektirecektir. Bunların yanında daha somut olan konuların daha kolay bir şekilde çözülme olasılığı mevcuttur. Bu çerçevede tarafların konular arası farklılıkların farkında oluşu ve farklı düzeylerde olan konuları birbirinden ayırarak soruna yaklaşmaları sorunların dönüşümü açısından etki yaratacak bir unsurdur.

8) Olgunlaşma teorisi daha çok görüşmelerin başlamasını etkileyen bir unsur olarak ortaya konurken üstü kapalı da olsa görüşmelerin başarılı sonuçlanıp sonuçlanmamasını da etkileyen bir faktör olarak dile getirilmektedir. Ancak sorunların çözümsüzlükten olgunlaşma sürecine girmeleri ve olgunlaşma sürecinden çözüm sürecine geçmeleri ayrı süreçler olarak değerlendirilmelidir. Ancak bu süreçler sorunların dönüşüm süreçlerinin önemli parçalarıdır. Ancak ve ancak olgunlaşma sürecinin süreçlerin başlangıcı ile beraber çözüm sürecine etkisini de içine alan analizler anlamlı olacaktır.

9) Olgunlaşma daha çok bir an ya da doğru bir zamanlama ile eşleştirilmektedir. Ancak olgunlaşma bir süreçtir. Bir süreç olarak alınan olgunlaşma kavramsal olarak dinamikleşecek ve totolojik olma eleştirisinden kurtulabilecektir. Bu çerçevede olgunlaşmanın var olup olmadığı değil artıp artmadığı tartışılmalıdır. Bu doğrultuda olgunlaşma süreci bir sorunun tümünde de gerçekleşmeyebilir.

Sonuç olarak olgunlaşma süreci sorunların dönüşüm yolunda yaşayabileceği kaçınılmaz bir süreçtir. Kaçınılmaz bir süreç olsa da bu sürecin taraflar tarafından iyi yönetilmesinin sorunların dönüşümünde fark yaratacak bir unsur olduğu da akıldan çıkarılmamalıdır.

G: CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Süer, Berna

Citizenship: Republic of Turkey

Date and Place of Birth: November 23, 1978, Yenice/Çanakkale

Marital Status: Married

E-mail: bernazen@hotmail.com

EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
M. Sc.	METU International Relations	2004
B. Sc.	METU International Relations	2001
High School	Balıkesir Anadolu Ticaret Lisesi	1996

WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2002-Present	METU Department of International Relations	Research Assistant (ÖYP)

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Advanced English, Basic Arabic.

PUBLICATIONS

Süer, Berna, "Book Review: Militanların, Şehitlerin ve Casusların Anlatılmamış Öyküsü: Hamas by Zaki Chehab", *Ortadoğu Etütleri*, Vol. 1, No. 2, January 2010.

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