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## TURKEY, ISRAEL, AND THE PEACE PROCESS

George E. Gruen

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### **A Partner of the U.S. and Western Europe**

Turkey used to be important to NATO as a frontline state with the largest standing army bordering on the Soviet Union. We should recall that at the end of World War II, one of the early points of tension in the Cold War was Stalin's demands to control shipping through the Turkish Straits and to annex the eastern provinces of Kars and Ardahan. Turkey's fierce determination to resist and preserve its territorial integrity was supported by the United States (the Truman Doctrine). Now with the collapse of the Soviet empire, many Europeans and Americans say, we no longer need Turkey to serve as our guardian of the Straits to block Soviet domination of the Eastern Mediterranean.

Yet while the nature of the dangers facing the United States in the region may have changed, Turkey's role today is more crucial than ever as a force for stability in the turbulent Middle East. It is obviously in the interest of the West to have the Muslim republics of the former Soviet Union turn to Westernized secularist Turkey rather than to fundamentalist Iran as their model and mentor.

Not only in Central Asia but in many other countries of the Middle East and North Africa, we are witnessing a renewed struggle between established single-party dictatorships and efforts to create multi-party democracies, between fanaticism and religious tolerance, between rulers pursuing expansionist foreign policies and advocates of peaceful coexistence with their neighbors. Algeria, the Sudan, Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait are all examples. The Middle East would have been a far safer place if Saddam Hussein had followed Mustafa Kemal Ataturk's policy of "peace at home, peace in the world."

The world might not be witnessing a long and brutal civil war in the Sudan if the fundamentalist Muslim Arab rulers of the north had stopped trying forcefully to impose medieval Islamic laws (the Shari'a) on the Christian and animist population of the south, and instead followed the example of the Muslim Ottoman Turkish rulers who, under their *millet* system, permitted Christian and Jewish minorities freedom of worship and gave them a large measure of communal autonomy.

Daniel J. Elazar, Editor and Publisher; Zvi R. Marom, Associate Editor; Mark Ami-El, Managing Editor.  
13 Tel-Hai St., Jerusalem, 92107, Israel; Tel. 02-619281, Fax 972-2-619112. © Copyright. All rights reserved.  
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The modern Turkish Republic continues to provide a constructive example to other countries with large Muslim populations in the Middle East. While respectful of the religious sentiments of its people, and allowing them full religious freedom in their private lives, the Turkish Republic established by Ataturk continues to formally separate religion and state. In this the Turkish Republic shares the fundamental principle of religious pluralism and separation of church and state which are enshrined in the United States Constitution. Thus Turkey is a natural ally both for the U.S. and for those in the Middle East who are being challenged by militant theocratic movements that seek to seize and expand their power throughout the region from Morocco to Egypt, and from Algeria to Jordan and the sheikdoms of the Persian Gulf.

This judgment on the importance of Turkey is shared by the *Economist* of London. In a special 18-page "Survey of Turkey: Star of Islam" (December 14, 1991), this influential publication calls on the United States and the Western European democracies to realize that "Turkey is no longer in the least peripheral. It sits at the centre of the possible next cold war." The *Economist* concludes that Turkey provides a rectangle of stability in the one remaining "large stretch of the world notably liable to produce turmoil and mayhem on a large scale in the coming 15-20 years: the appropriately crescent-shaped piece of territory that starts in the steppes of Kazakhstan and curves south and west through the Gulf of Suez to the north coast of Africa."

#### A Bridge from Europe to the Middle East

Turkish President Turgut Ozal, Prime Minister Suleiman Demirel, and other officials have also advanced the view that as the only NATO member that is also a member of the Islamic Conference Organization (ICO), Turkey can play a useful role as a bridge between Europe and the Middle East. (The bridge across the Bosphorus in Istanbul is literally an intercontinental highway, linking Europe to Asia.)

Turkey's approach to disputes among its Middle East neighbors is also a good example for the United States. The principle since Ataturk's day has been: stay out of disputes in which Turkey is not directly a party. For example, during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war Turkey prevented travel to the area of conflict by some young Turkish Muslims who wanted to help the Arabs and by a few young Turkish Jews who volunteered to help the Israelis.

At the end of 1948, the UN General Assembly appointed Turkey to serve on the Palestine Conciliation

Commission, together with the United States and France. Although the PCC failed in its efforts to bring about peace between the Arab states and Israel at the time, Turkey has continued to work with the Western allies for a negotiated solution.

In 1949 Turkey recognized the Jewish State of Israel and the following year established diplomatic relations with it. (When the Arab states complained that Turkey had broken Islamic solidarity, Ankara responded that it should not be considered the first Muslim state but rather the last European state to recognize Israel. Moreover, the Arab states had preceded Turkey by negotiating armistice agreements. (As for so-called Islamic solidarity, the Muslim Arabs stood on shaky ground since it was they who had stabbed Turkey in the back during World War I.)

Ankara also stayed neutral during the 8-year-long Iran-Iraq War. It received billions of dollars in transit business with both. Turkish construction firms are also involved in the reconstruction of Kuwait. They are using their experience gained during the oil boom period of the early 1980s, when Turkish firms had as much as \$14 billion in contracts in the various Persian Gulf countries and Libya.

Turkish governments have also resisted pan-Turanian ultra-nationalists (such as Alparslan Turkes) which would have embroiled Ankara in conflict with Moscow. Even today, while naturally sympathetic to the plight of Muslim and ethnically Turkic groups in Azerbaijan or the former states of Yugoslavia, Ankara has been careful not to become militarily involved.

The active role played by Turkey as a partner of the United States in the anti-Saddam Hussein coalition may thus seem uncharacteristic. Under President Turgut Ozal, Ankara took an active part in support of the economic sanctions (closing the oil pipeline) and military measures undertaken by the American-led international coalition that liberated Kuwait from Iraqi occupation. This marked a departure from Turkey's traditional policy of not becoming embroiled in the disputes among its Middle East neighbors and therefore aroused questions within Turkey's military and political elites. While there was widespread support in Turkey for the UN-mandated economic sanctions, there was considerable opposition to steps that might involve Turkey in open hostilities with Iraq.

At the moment the hottest issue in Turkey's relations with its Middle East neighbors is their support of the guerrilla war being waged by the PKK, the Kurdish Workers Party. Some observers fear this may lead to open conflict with Iraq or Syria. The renewed PKK

Kurdish rebellion in northern Iraq at the end of the Gulf War and the flow of Kurdish refugees from Iraq into Turkey has complicated Turkey's internal Kurdish problems. Turkey's Kurdish citizens, variously estimated at 10 to 25 percent of Turkey's 56 million population, have been increasingly assertive in demanding cultural recognition, a greater share of economic resources, and even regional autonomy within Turkey. The active political and logistical support long given by Syria and more recently also by Iraq to the Marxist PKK, which has been fighting to carve out an independent Kurdish state from Turkey's southeastern provinces, is an illustration of an explosive issue in which Ankara's domestic concerns and its relations with its Middle East neighbors are intertwined.

The Kurdish issue also ties into the long-simmering dispute between Turkey and Syria and Iraq over the waters of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Syrian and Iraqi officials have complained about the decline in the flow of the Euphrates and Tigris as a result of dams and irrigation schemes Turkey is undertaking as part of its Southeast Anatolia Project (GAP). One of the stated objectives of GAP is to dramatically raise the living standards in this predominantly Kurdish area and thereby reduce the attraction of militant separatist elements such as the PKK. Turks suspect that Syrian support of the PKK is designed to disrupt completion of GAP, and possibly even to sabotage the Ataturk Dam. In 1992 the Turkish Minister of Interior went to Damascus and reportedly received a pledge from President Hafez al-Assad to ban the PKK and to use his influence with the Lebanese authorities to stop the PKK from attacking Turkey from bases in the Bakaa Valley. PKK leader Abdallah "Apo" Ocalan, who had been residing in Damascus, reportedly then moved to the Greek-held part of Cyprus.

#### **Turkey's Position on the Arab-Israel Conflict**

Prime Minister Suleiman Demirel has formed a coalition government with the left-of-center Social Democratic Populist Party (SDDP) headed by Erdal Inonu, whose father, the late President Ismet Inonu, first recognized Israel in 1949 and established diplomatic relations the following year. With regard to the Middle East, the government program declares that "Turkey is prepared to contribute to peace in the Middle East; supports the rights of the Palestinians, including their right to their own state; and for Israel, to live behind safe borders."

Immediately after the end of the Gulf War, President Ozal offered to host Arab-Israeli talks in Istanbul.

When Madrid was chosen instead and Turkey was not even invited to send an observer, many Turkish politicians and editorial writers expressed anger and disappointment. Prime Minister Demirel expressed "strong regret" at Turkey's exclusion, noting that as "the strongest country" in the region, "Turkey was closely involved in anything that happens in the Middle East." The new prime minister pledged to do whatever he could to "contribute to peace in the Middle East." Turkey expressed its interest in participating in the third stage that would take up regional issues such as arms control, the environment, and water resources. Turkey did attend the multinational regional talks in Moscow at the end of January 1992 and the special working group on water issues in mid-May in Vienna. Future sessions may be held in Istanbul or Ankara.

#### **Turkey's Potential Help on Water Problems**

Many observers believe that Turkey could make the most direct contribution to Arab-Israeli peace in discussions on the issue of equitably allocating the increasingly scarce water resources in the area by offering to supplement them with exports of surplus water from Turkish rivers. In fact, President Ozal had been scheduled to host a week-long Middle East Water Summit in Istanbul this year, but the conference, which was sponsored by the Washington-based Global Water Summit Initiative, was indefinitely postponed after Syria informed Ankara that it and other Arab countries would boycott the conference if Israel was invited to participate. The United States responded that it would not participate if Israel was excluded.

Ozal had hoped to use the conference to solicit support for his "Peace (water) Pipeline," an impressive project (\$21 billion plus) that would supply surplus Turkish water from the Ceyhan and Seyhan rivers to Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and other Arab Gulf states. While Turkish officials said it was logical to convey water also to the Palestinians in the West Bank and eventually to Israel itself, Arab opposition had "temporarily" removed Israel from the list of beneficiaries.

Professor John Kolars of the University of Michigan has suggested that a more modest Turkish "mini-pipeline" to Syria and Jordan, with an extension to the West Bank, would be of great benefit to Syrians, Jordanians and Palestinians. Such a pipeline would provide the Syrian cities of Aleppo, Homs and Damascus with an assured, steady, pure supply of water. The cities' supply has been threatened by years of drought and the effect of major Turkish development projects in eastern Anatolia, such as the Ataturk Dam, which have substan-

tially cut the flow of the Euphrates. Preliminary estimates of the cost of the mini-pipeline are in the range of \$4 to \$5 billion. It remains to be seen whether it will be possible to persuade outside countries, such as Saudi Arabia, Japan, the members of the European Community and the United States, or international agencies such as the World Bank, to fund such a project as a contribution to regional peace and stability.

The Turkish pipeline would also help to alleviate the crisis in Jordan, which is even more severe than in Syria. The water supply from the Yarmuk river to Jordan's capital of Amman and other cities has been diminished by several years of drought, excessive utilization by Syria upstream, and the failure of Jordan, Syria and Israel to reach agreement on water allocations. Such an agreement is a prerequisite to World Bank funding of the Unity Dam, a proposed storage dam on the Yarmuk. In addition to pressures caused by Jordan's high rate of natural increase (3.5 percent annually or double the world average), demand for the country's limited water supply has been suddenly escalated by the 300,000 Jordanian citizens (mostly Palestinians) who were expelled or fled from Kuwait in the aftermath of the war.

Even if water from the Turkish "mini-pipeline" were not initially made available to Israel itself, by extending it to the West Bank and/or Gaza District, it could make a tangible contribution to increasing the quantity and restoring the quality of the water available to the Palestinian Arab population. Water quality has deteriorated because of extensive overpumping from the existing aquifers. Israel has imposed severe restrictions on the drilling of new wells to lessen the danger of increasing salinity and pollution destroying remaining water supplies. By providing an additional source of water to Israel's meager and fully utilized water resources, Turkish water could also improve the political climate for discussions between Israel and the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation on this contentious issue.

Since any Turkish pipeline would have to pass through Syrian territory, none of this water could reach the Palestinians without approval from Damascus. Syrian officials have declared that Damascus will not participate in discussions of regional issues, such as water, before Israel gives a firm commitment to withdraw from the Golan Heights and other occupied territories.

Still another idea whose economic, technical, and political feasibility is being explored is to transport Turkish water from the Manavgat river directly to Israel in giant plastic balloons or refitted oil tankers.

Arab-Israeli disagreement is not the only reason that has prevented the implementation of the full-scale "Peace Pipeline," which was first proposed by Ozal in the mid-1980s. At the time the Saudis and other Gulf states were cool to the idea, both because of the cost — some Saudis claimed they could desalinate water more economically — and because of political factors, including residual resentment over four centuries of Ottoman rule and unwillingness to be dependent on a foreign-controlled source. Some Turkish officials have recently expressed the hope that the experience of the Gulf War, when the Saudi desalination plants along the Gulf coast narrowly escaped damage from the massive Iraqi oil spills in Kuwait, will lead the Saudis to be more favorably disposed to importing Turkish water. Syrian and Iraqi officials have opposed buying Turkish water from the "Peace Pipeline," arguing that Turkey owed them free water to compensate for the decline in the flow of the Euphrates and Tigris as a result of the Southeast Anatolia Project (GAP). The Turkish response has been: "Allah gave the Arabs abundant oil, he gave us abundant water. When the Arabs give us their oil for free, we will give them our water."

#### Turkish-Israeli Relations

There is another country in the Middle East that shares common interests with Turkey and is a natural partner of both Turkey and the United States in the Middle East. According to Turkish Ambassador Ekrem Guvendiren, who in 1992 returned home after completing six years as the head of Turkey's diplomatic mission in Israel, "When we look at the map of the Middle East, we find that Turkey and Israel are the only two democratically governed states. It is therefore essential that we now enter into full-fledged cooperation to help resolve the problems of the region." He also believes that "Turkey's embarking on a more active, assertive and bold foreign policy from now on will benefit not only Turkey itself, but will help to establish a much more rational order in the Middle East, and indeed, in the world as a whole."

The veteran Turkish diplomat may have been alluding to the fact that in the past, Ankara had often been reluctant to be openly identified as working together with Israel. (For example, in August 1958, in the aftermath of the Iraqi revolution that overthrew the pro-Western monarchy, Washington, Ankara and Jerusalem were all deeply concerned about Soviet-backed Communist and Nasserist subversion of the region. The United States encouraged Turkey and Israel to cooperate more closely. Israeli Prime Minister David

Ben-Gurion secretly flew to Ankara to conclude a strategic cooperation agreement with Prime Minister Adnan Menderes. Senior members of the Turkish Foreign Ministry staff were hurriedly pressed into service as waiters at the official dinner, so that no news of the meeting would leak out to the press!

While the Arab states have been unsuccessful in their attempts to get Turkey to join in the economic boycott of Israel and to break off all ties with the Jewish state, Turkey has been careful not to offend its Muslim neighbors, with whom it conducts about one-fourth of its trade, and shares religious and cultural ties. As noted, this has sometimes limited the public display of Turkish-Israeli friendship. (Ben-Gurion once complained that Israel was treated like a mistress rather than an official wife.)

After being downgraded in 1956 and again in 1980, Turkish-Israeli relations have quietly improved in recent years. Trade and other economic ties have also multiplied, including an influx of 150,000 Jewish (mainly Israeli) tourists to Turkey in 1991, who spent an estimated \$250 million. Turkey and Israel signed a formal tourism agreement during the June 1992 visit to Israel of the Turkish Minister of Tourism, the first Turkish cabinet minister to visit Israel in twenty years, according to the *Jerusalem Post*.

Turkey and Israel have also quietly continued to exchange intelligence information on Syrian and Iraqi-backed terrorist groups such as the Armenian ASALA, the Kurdish PKK, and radical Palestinian and Turkish groups (e.g., Dev-Sol) based in Lebanon and other Arab states. Both also share a natural concern about Hafez al-Assad's ambitions to recreate a "Greater Syria." Syria refuses to recognize Turkey's annexation of Hatay (Alexandretta) (following a plebiscite in the late 1930s when Syria was under French Mandate. *Turkiye* reported on April 9, 1992 that Turkish truck drivers were given maps by Syrian customs authorities on which Hatay is still shown as a part of Syrian territory!)

But Turkey has also been critical of some Israeli policies, especially with regard to the Palestinian issue. All major parties in Turkey have called for Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories as part of Arab-Israeli peace agreements. Turkey has since 1970 had a low-level PLO presence in Ankara and was one of the first countries to immediately recognize the "Palestinian state" when it was proclaimed by the Pal-

estine National Council in November 1988. In 1991, Ankara announced that it had decided to raise the level of the representation of both "Palestine and Israel to embassy status." Now that Turkey has full diplomatic relations with all parties to the Arab-Israel dispute, it may be able to play a helpful role to facilitate Arab-Israeli reconciliation and cooperation.

The only organized Turkish political party totally opposed to relations with Israel is the Welfare Party, successor to the National Salvation Party, a Muslim fundamentalist, vehemently anti-Israeli, and, in fact, anti-Semitic party. During the 1992 Turkish parliamentary election campaign, Welfare Party leader Necmettin Erbakan told audiences that the election was a choice between "Greater Turkey and Greater Israel." His party platform called for Turkey to organize an Islamic military alliance, an Islamic common market, an Islamic currency and to abolish interest. He opposed Turkey's pro-Western stance and Ankara's efforts to become more fully integrated in the European Community. The Welfare Party, which was joined in the elections by former members of two other right-wing ultra-nationalist groups, received some 17 percent of the vote.

In conclusion it is clearly in the interests of the United States that the Turkish people reject the appeals of religious fundamentalists and right-wing extremists. The reactionary forces in Turkey will be strengthened if Turks perceive the West as prejudiced against them, rejecting their efforts to join the European Community, and viewing them with outdated stereotypes.

Continued American and Western European support will strengthen the positive forces in Turkey which are committed to mutual respect and tolerance, to an open and flourishing economy, to a vigorous multiparty democracy, and to maintaining a fruitful partnership with the United States.

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Professor George E. Gruen is currently Adjunct Professor of International Relations in the Political Science Department at Columbia University. His latest book, *The Water Crisis: The Next Middle East Conflict?*, discusses the impact of regional water issues on the prospects for achieving Arab-Israeli peace. He has been awarded a grant from the U.S. Institute of Peace to study Turkey's relations with its neighbors and its potential to contribute to peace in the Middle East.

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**Resisting Reform: A Policy Analysis of the Israeli Health Care Delivery System**  
*Gerald Steinberg and Etta Bick*

On a per-capita basis, Israel has the largest number of physicians in the world, and as a percent of GNP, its spending on health care is comparable to Western Europe. Nevertheless, the system is characterized by chronic overspending; frequent strikes and work stoppages by physicians, nurses and other personnel; and long waiting periods for diagnostic and surgical procedures. The disjuncture between resources and level of services is a clear indication of inefficiency in management and organizational failure.

Over three-quarters of the Israeli population is insured by and receives primary care from the Histadrut's Kupat Holim Clalit (KHC; General Sick Fund), and this organization is examined in detail. Also analyzed are the structure and operations of the other major health service providers, including the government hospitals operated by the Ministry of Health, and the smaller sick funds and private providers. In addition, for the first time, the changing role of Israeli health consumers is considered.

Many commissions have been formed to recommend changes in the health care system, and many reports and recommendations have been issued, but with little impact. This study sought to understand the sources of this resistance to change and recommends measures based on this analysis.

**Contents:** The Structure of Medical Care in Israel; The Ministry of Health; The KHC and the Histadrut; Structural Causes of the Crisis in the KHC; The KHC and the Government; Complexity and Centralization in the KHC; The History of Reform Efforts in the KHC; Reducing Surgical Queues: A Case Study; Alternatives to Public Medicine: The Private Sector; Conclusions and Recommendations.

Co-published with University Press of America 1992, 245 pages, Hardcover \$44.00.

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**A Double Bond: The Constitutional Documents of American Jewry**  
*Edited by Daniel J. Elazar, Jonathan Sarna and Rela Geffen Monson*

While the United States Constitution is justly celebrated, Jewish organizational and synagogue constitutions are usually relegated to the bottom drawer, to be taken out only when fine points of procedure have to be clarified. Nevertheless, looking at these constitutions comparatively and over time reveals a great deal about how Jews have adapted themselves and their institutions to American society, while at the same time trying to maintain their relationship with the Jewish political tradition.

This volume is a joint effort of the Center for the Study of the American Jewish Experience of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and the Center for Jewish Community Studies of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs.

Part I discusses the overall content of the constitutional documents and the values exemplified by them. Part II applies content analysis to specific genres of constitutions in order to illuminate small parts of American Jewish history. Part III includes examples of constitutional documents of synagogues, major Jewish organizations, federations, and immigrant associations, reflecting the several eras in American Jewish history.

**Contents:** Part I — The Constitutional Documents of Contemporary Jewry: An Introduction to the Field — Daniel J. Elazar; What is American about the Constitutional Documents of American Jewry? — Jonathan D. Sarna; What is Jewish about the Constitutional Documents of American Jewry? — Rela Geffen Monson; Part II — "That Will Make You a Good Member": The Rewards of Reading the Constitutions of Jewish Immigrant Associations — Hannah Kliger; Yemenite Jews on American Soil: Community Organization and Constitutional Documents — Nitza Druyan; Part III — Synagogue Constitutions; Constitutions of Major Jewish Organizations; Constitutions of Jewish Federations; Constitutions of Landsmanschaften and Family Associations.

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