

CHAPTER IV

THE REASONS OF TURKEY – ISRAEL NORMALIZATION ON FULL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS ON JUNE 27TH, 2016

A long wait to the deal of the agreement between Turkey and Israel relations was finally answered. The dynamics of normalization process became the ingredient which cannot be separated from the restoration attempts. The fluctuation between Turkey and Israel relations added curiosity whether both states took or left the normalization. Turkish and Israeli announcement of the downgrading on diplomatic ties aggravated the tension. Through this cutting off their full diplomatic ties, both states had never contacted each other. The relations between both states were totally broken off in all aspects including the adjournment of their joint military exercise.

To analyze the case study of the reasons of Turkey – Israel agreement on full diplomatic relations, constructivism theory is a proper theory which can clearly explain the phenomenon. The main idea of constructivism theory is that the action and behavior of state can be explained by social construction through its concepts such as idea, norms, identity, and interest. These tools function to build the social change each time, then they produce social environment. From the social environment, the social construction is shaped slowly and it resulted the divisions of constructivism into some parts.

According to Christian Reus-Smit, he stated in a book under the title *Theories of International Relations*, there are three types of constructivism. Those are:

Systemic Constructivism, Unit - Level Constructivism, and Holistic Constructivism. Each kind of constructivism has its specialty on explaining of a phenomenon. Systemic Constructivism is a branch of constructivism theory which focuses on the international political field. The other branch of constructivism theory, Unit – Level Constructivism centralizes its attention toward domestic politics of a state. The last but not least, the branch of constructivism, Holistic Constructivism is a combination between Systemic and Unit – Level constructivism which analyzes the foreign policy of a state if it is affected by international and domestic politics.

Christian Reus-Smit added that there are three ways in constructing identity and interest of a state, those are imagination, communication, and constraint. In the first way of these mechanisms, imagination does not recognize the material base as the tool to influence the actor's action. The non - material structure such as norms and ideas are the important tools to do so. Communication is the next mechanism to build the actors' identity and interest. By using social interaction, sharing of ideas can be reached which functions to shape the identity and interest. The last mechanism is the constraint. This mechanism is used when the mechanism of imagination and communication do not link each other. Constraint mechanism can be implemented if ideas, institutional norms, and interaction among people do not influence the behavior of a state because it has moral force in the social environment.

Considering the explanation above, constructivism theory can be implemented in analyzing the case study of Turkey – Israel normalization on their

full diplomatic relations. Constructivism is a relevant theory to explain this phenomenon due to Turkey and Israel restoration which is also caused mainly by the domestic and international norms. Therefore, the writer would like to explain about the correlation between the norms and the factors of the restoration. Furthermore, the unstable condition of Turkish domestic and international security significantly played a big role to reach the normalization.

A. Turkish Domestic Norm

1. The Pressure of Turkish Military

Social construction is shaped by sharing ideas. For constructivism, international relations exists since human interacts one another. From the interaction, people would share their knowledge to others. This idea is the most essential value which makes people live, rather than the material. From the idea, the norm is shaped to determine the state's behavior.

Norm means supra-structure which rules the political system. According to Miriam Budiarmo, politics is an effort to create a better life (2008). It can be said that a norm is a tool to rule the way how people live. Norms will build the identity and interest of a state. Talking about the norms in Turkey, it cannot be separated from Turkish basic ideology, secularism. The separation between religion and politics becomes the basic idea of secularism. In the secularist state, people are prohibited to show their faith in public (Görmez, 2012). The first time of the emerging state of Republic of Turkey, Turkish women were banned to wear hijab in public places. The Turkish founding father; Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was

willing to construct secularism in establishing Turkey caused by his dissatisfaction toward the government and political system of Ottoman emperor at that time. At first, Atatürk conducted the principle of peace at home, peace in the world as Turkish foreign policy. He really understood that strong security would control Turkish challenges as being located at the strategic area. There are two factors which make Turkey mainly focus on its security, those are: the geography and the relations between Turkey and its neighbor countries. The two factors above make Turkey become a key security player in Europe, the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Middle East, the Mediterranean, and the Black Sea regions all at once (Hanbay, 2009).

There is a fundamental diversity between Turkish secularism and other states' secularism. Even though the states which implement secularism have basic standards on politics and religion separation, the guardian of the secularism is different. In Turkey, the most loyal guardian on the Turkish basic constitution, secularism, is derived from the Turkish military. Meanwhile, the civil elites become the guardian of secularism in other states like Europe. Turkish secularism which is well maintained by the strong military became the Turkish most glutinous identity which the domestic and international society might know.

The domination of Turkish military in maintaining Turkish secularism influences its stability condition on domestic security. The military cannot be separated from the security. The strong military of a state will influence the stability of the security of the state as well. Since the first Turkey – Israel relations, one of the important sectors that both states' discussed was military

cooperation. In 1996, the signing of Turkey – Israel comprehensive agreement on military was endorsed. Since 1996, the Israeli distribution of sophisticated military equipment has been meaningful for Turkish national defense industry in preventing Turkey from domestic and international threats. The Turkish government was represented by Turkish military on Turkey – Israel military cooperation in 1996 (Volfová, 2014). The additional military equipment strengthens Turkish military power. It can be benefitted for Turkey to maintain its domestic security. When AK party gained their power in Turkish general election in 2002, this party could not immediately cut off Turkey – Israel relations due to the historical background. Even though Erdogan as the AK Party leader often criticizes Israeli foreign policy, it does not affect both states' relations but Mavi Marmara accident in 2010.

The accident of Mavi Marmara cut off the whole agreement between Turkey and Israel relations including the military equipment in which both states had been cooperating since 1994. Before the flotilla accident in 2010, the defense cooperation between Turkey and Israel covered in many aspects defense such as air, sea, land (both infantry and armor), intelligence, and the manufacturing of aircraft, armaments and missiles. Their defense relations had deep relations. Institutionally, the Turkey and Israel military cooperation was closed due to some aspects such as having steering committees, regular meeting, and strategic dialogue. The joint military training between both states military used to conduct over the Mediterranean Sea as well (Nachmani, 1998).

Their military cooperation brought many benefits for Turkish military realm such as the military training, military industry, and sharing of Israeli intelligence. The battle between Turkey and Kurdistan worker party was the example in which Israeli intelligence supported Turkey in 2000s. Before the disaster ruined Turkish – Israel military relations in 2010, Turkey and Israel had some projects in term of their defense industry. Turkey planned to modernize its military equipments such as its M60 tanks with total amount \$650 million and F-4E airstrikes at the cost of \$1 billion, procurement and operation of armed Heron UAVs for around \$200 million, electronic reconnaissance and surveillance systems at \$200 million, and procurement of missiles and smart ammunition for \$150 million. The downing on the both states relations affected the distribution on Israeli military industry to Turkey. Fortunately, both states completed the distribution even if the way to distribute them was difficult (Gurcan, 2016).

The benefits that Turkey got in the defense industrial cooperation with Israel were declined rapidly due to the impact of discontinuance on diplomatic relations between the both states. The military cooperation which was built for long time ago became the victim of flotilla incident as well. The joint military exercises between both states were stopped (Sezer, 2016). There were a lot of military trainings which increased Turkish military capability, especially in term of air-force. The military industrial cooperation was also dismissed. This action made the Turkish military equipment was left behind others. Israel is well-known as the producer of sophisticated military equipments which makes Turkey depend on it. Besides the military equipment, the ceasing of the defense industrial relations

affected the decreasing Turkish national fund for military. This situation affected the unstable condition of internal Turkish military. The intelligent exchange was also erased from their military agenda. The Turkish intelligence was actually trained well by the Israeli intelligence. Therefore, when the relation cut off, the Turkish intelligence power was also in threat.

In fact, the Turkish military somehow needs Israeli military support. The explanation above shows how big Turkish military dependence on Israeli military is. Therefore, it cannot be denied that Turkish military elites force Erdogan to restore the diplomatic ties with Israel in order to stabilize the Turkish military (Gurcan, 2016). This situation actually makes Erdogan in dilemma. In one hand, Erdogan has strong relations with groups which reject Turkey – Israel restoration such as IHH and Hamas. On the other hand, the restoration with Israel must be taken to stabilize the Turkish military. Even if it is a difficult choice for Erdogan due to hurting his partners, this decision is the right one.

2. The Experience of the Israeli Military in Combating Terrorism

Terrorism attacks still become the real threats for Turkey. The bombing which often takes place in Turkish important cities such as Ankara and Istanbul make Turkish people and the visitors worried. This situation urges Turkish military to always be ready anytime for the terrorists attacks. The readiness of Turkish military in many aspects is needed because terrorism threatens the state's sovereignty. The Turkish military must be able to annually renew their military equipment. Sophisticated military equipment is needed to militate the terrorist

groups. The discontinuance of Turkey – Israel relations brings a new hope for the terrorist group since the sophisticated military equipments support from Israeli was stopped. This situation can be utilized by Turkish enemies such as The Partiya Karkeren Kurdish or The Kurdistan Worker's party (PKK) and Kurdistan Freedom Falcons or Teyrenbazen Azadiya Kurdistan (TAK) to create the scarcity in Turkey. These two groups are derived from Kurds ethnic which are dissatisfied with the Turkish de facto and de jure government.

Kurds is actually an ethnic where they live in some Middle-East states, but most of them live in Turkey. Meanwhile, the Turkish most population is derived from the Turks which is often called Turkmen. The legal government of Turkey is mostly derived from the Turks. This situation creates conflict between the government and the Kurdish militants which is so called as the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK). Besides their dissatisfaction toward the government of Turkey, they also try to create their homeland in the southeast of Turkey. Those factors make them rebel toward the legal government of Turkey. Since the struggle of Kurd militants rabbled in 1984 until 2011, around 40 thousand people were killed due to the Kurds bombing. Looking at the huge number of its victims, Erdogan as the Turkish Prime Minister initiated Turkey – The Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) ceasefire and tried to negotiate in initiating the peace process in 2013. Unfortunately in 2015, the ceasefire was over and bombed the conflict (Michek, 2016).

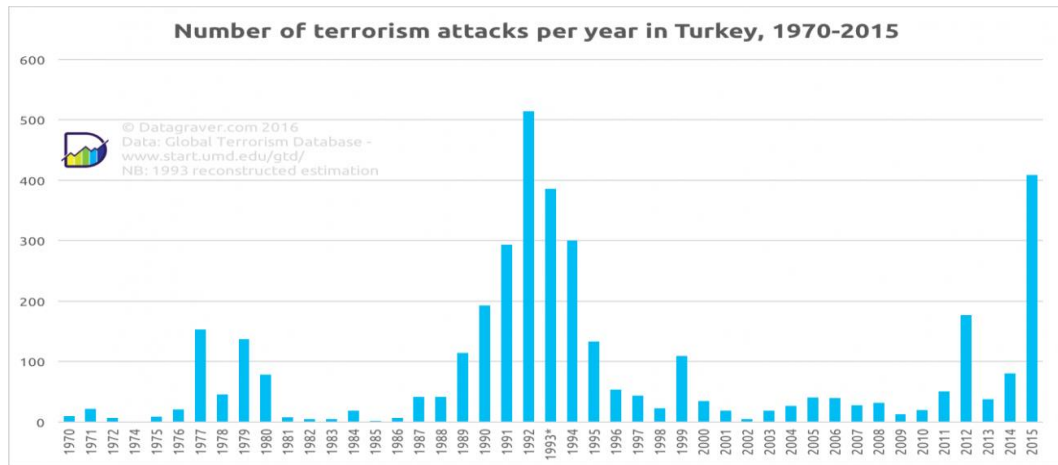


Figure 4.1 - The Fluctuation of Terrorism Attacks in Turkey

Source: <http://www.datagraver.com/case/terrorism-attacks-in-turkey-1970-2016>

The picture above explains about the terror phenomenon in Turkey. Since the downing of Turkey – Israel relations in 2010, the threat of terrorism increased rapidly in Turkey. During the last five years, the most significant terrorism attacks took place in 2015. This data is strengthened by The U.S. State Department’s 2015 Country Reports on Terrorism. On June 2nd, 2016, U.S. Acting Coordinator for Counterterrorism Justin Siberell announced that the world of terrorism attacks decreased 13% in 2015 compared with those in 2014. Unfortunately, this situation was not obtained in Turkey as the Turkish terrorism threats were increased (Hurriyet Daily News, 2016).

Besides the terror which is expedited by The Partiya Karkeren Kurdish or The Kurdistan Worker’s party (PKK), Kurdistan Freedom Falcons or Teyrenbazen Azadiya Kurdistan (TAK) is the other enemy of Turkish government. The Turkish government also informs that this group is one of the Turkish domestic terrorist group. TAK started to terror Turkey in 2005. Some people claim that TAK is the

affiliation of PKK. Unfortunately, this claim was refuted by the release of official website of TAK which could not be opened in Turkey. TAK argues that the movement of PKK was too soft which made them to build TAK. There was a public surprised when terrorist attacks bombed Turkey on February 17th, 2016. There was no group claiming responsibility at that time, until three days after, TAK claimed responsibility toward the incident (Bozarslan, 2016). The public was surprised toward the incident caused by the claiming of TAK. This group is actually a secretive organization which its existence is difficult to be found. Therefore, the public wondered about TAK when it claimed the incident in 2016.

Through the phenomenon of the terrorist attacks above, the Turkish military needs to cooperate with Israeli military which has great experience in solving the problems with terrorism groups such as Hezbollah from Lebanon and Hamas from Palestine. These interest groups are actually counted as the important groups in their states. Hezbollah has its significant role in Lebanon political field, so does Hamas in Palestine. The different view of how people see these groups creates different perception. In the Israeli point of view, these two groups are considered as the terrorist groups which can attack Israel anytime.

Since the occupation of Israel in southern Lebanon in 1982, Hezbollah could force Israel to withdraw its Defense Force in Lebanon in 2000s. Starting at the phenomenon, Hezbollah became the new power in Lebanon. Hezbollah does not only gain its political power but also the military power. This group becomes a dangerous group for Israeli which can threaten Israeli sovereignty. In 2006, Israel attacked Hezbollah in which it was related to the response of Israel on Hezbollah

surprising attacks. Through Hezbollah attack, two Israeli Defense Forces was abducted by Hezbollah as it was claimed by the Israeli authority (Lambeth, 2011). During the attacks, 600 Hezbollah militants were killed and Israel could conquer their military illegal weapons (Hezbollah: History and Overview, 2017). This situation force United Nations (UN) to create a resolution for both parties. In a 34 days war, Israel and Hezbollah agreed to conduct the ceasefire. The end of Israel – Hezbollah war in 2006 increased the military tension between both parties. Hezbollah increased its 100,000 rockets and missiles while in 2006, its military capability was around 13,000 short- and medium-range rockets. Israel increased its intelligence and strike firepower as well (White, 2015).

Beside the experience in combating Hezbollah, Israel also has a mortal enemy, Hamas in Gaza strip. For Israel, Hamas is a terrorist group which never recognizes Israel as a sovereign state and it tends to always have conflict with the Israeli authority. After Hamas took power in Gaza strip since 2005, the relations between Israel and Hamas increased rapidly. The common issue which makes both parties conflict is that Hamas stands on its position for the Palestine independence. For Hamas, there is no discussion with Israel, but Palestinians must get their old home. Meanwhile, the Israeli authority claims that Gaza strip is considered as its territory. This situation makes the Israeli authority blockades the Gaza strip which aims to control the military distribution for Hamas. Since 2008 – 2014, more than 3.500 people became the victims caused by Israel – Hamas conflict. Finally, both parties agreed to conduct the ceasefire on August 26th, 2014 (BBC News, 2015).

The experience of Israel in facing terrorist groups can be taken as a new knowledge for the Turkish military. The Turkey has not finished with its domestic problem, the terrorist threats which often take place in the core of Turkey. In having the joint military cooperation with Israel, this experience is really needed for the Turkish military. This cooperation can increase the Turkish military in overcoming its problem with the Terrorist groups such as PKK and TAK.

B. The Turkish International Norm

In the scale of the international politics, the constructivism of analysis the foreign policy of a state is influenced by the international norms. The interaction among the state actors in the world constructs the international norms. The international force is the behavior norm in which it is embedded in the international society. The case of Turkey – Israel normalization, the international norms is about the agreement which rules behavior of a state (Jackson & Sorensen, 2006) .

The United States of America (U.S.) involvement in the process of normalization between Turkey and Israel cannot be denied as both states are the most strategic and important states for U.S.. Turkey is a strategic state which is in the heart of Europe and Asia. Israel is one of the important actors in the middle-east. The U.S. role in the restoration process between Turkey and Israel significantly reduced the tension between both conflicting parties.

Erdogan is actually the supporter of anti-Israel at the most. His critics toward Israel in the formal meeting among states sign his disagreement to restore the

diplomatic ties. In the world economic forum 2009 which was attended by the international leaders, Erdogan gave his deep critic to Israeli President Shimon Peres by accusing him on Gaza strip attacks in 2008-2009 in which a lot of Gaza people were killed (Kosereisoglu, 2013). Erdogan's critic showed dissatisfaction since Israel was easy to kill people in that year. This critic directly explains Erdogan's displeasure to Israel. Erdogan would strengthen the muslim brotherhood by giving this remark. His critics in 2013 when it was in UN conference strengthened his position toward Israel. Indirectly, he rejected the normalization between Turkey and Israel. He spoke in his remark that Zionism is a crime against humanity (ravid, 2013). This speech created an upgrading level of the tension. It also made both states' restoration difficult to be reached.

The effort of Erdogan to campaign anti-Israel is useless. The root agreement between Turkey and U.S. indirectly forced Erdogan to build the restoration with Israel. U.S. is like Turkish umbrella which becomes the shield from the Turkish international threat. U.S. is like the Turkish parent which solves Turkish problems, especially in term of security. Erdogan could not reject or cut off the agreement because it is also maintained well by the Turkish military.

Instead, Turkey – U.S. relations was started in the era of the Ottoman Empire. Even if the relations between the Ottoman Empire with U.S. fluctuated, until the modern of the Republic of Turkey, both states have been preventing their relations. The agreement on mutual security between both states in 1957 and followed by the Turkish decision in joining NATO were the main reasons on the strength of Turkey – U.S. relations. By looking at the historical background on

Turkey – U.S. relations, it is impossible for Erdogan to desert from U.S. intention. The dependence of Turkish military equipment to U.S. is the important reason behind the Turkish tight relations with U.S.. In 1990s, the Turkish military equipment was derived and modernized by U.S. supply (Çakir, 2009). Without the U.S. military transfer, the Turkish military would not ever have modern military power. The recent Turkey – Israel military cooperation was stronger since the signing on Turkish welcoming the U.S. military and its ally to use the Turkish military base to attack the ISIS coalition in 2015 (Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, 2016).

This agreement which cannot be lifted by Erdogan makes U.S. easily control the mind and the action of Turkey. This international norm urges Erdogan to have normalization with Israel. As the President of Turkey which is left of Turkey – U.S. tight relations, Erdogan must be ready with the Jews partner label. This is not caused by his support toward the Jews state, but the U.S. relations. The more Erdogan tries to leave the normalization, the more U.S. government forces him to restore with Israel. If he strongly opposes U.S. policy, Turkey must be ready to counter international threats.

The binding agreement between Turkey and the U.S. rules Turkey in deciding the decision making. This situation makes Turkey obey U.S.. In the restoration case between Turkey and Israel, Turkey was forced by the U.S. government to normalize its relations. It is like simply said that the security of Turkey from the international threats is on U.S. umbrella. When Turkey cannot be controlled by

U.S., their security is in threats. It is caused by the Turkish sophisticated military equipment is derived from U.S..

The U.S. Secretary of State, John Kerry's visit in 2013 to Istanbul before arriving to Israel was the open dialogue which tried to restore Turkey – Israel relations (Gordon & Kershner, 2013). U.S. involvement showed its significant result when Obama called Erdogan in February 2014. In this occasion, Obama and Erdogan discussed about Turkish relations with Israel deeply. On April 2014, Erdogan commented to Charlie Rose which indicated the Turkey – Israel normalization. Obama approach toward Erdogan indicated the only President of U.S. who can influence Erdogan (Arbell, 2014). The dialogue between Obama and Erdogan strengthened U.S. position which had a strong control toward Turkey. The dependence of Turkish military toward U.S. could be benefitted to control Turkey.

The other agreement which made Turkey depend on U.S. was The Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement (DECA) 1980. This agreement signed their strong bilateral relations, especially in term of security. In this agreement, U.S. military is welcomed to access to have joint military exercise or to use Turkish military facilities. For Turkey, this agreement is needed due to the Turkish military industrial interest. Recently, U.S. is one of the weaponry producing states. The most sophisticated weaponry systems are derived from U.S.. This occasion can be utilized by the Turkish military in providing Turkish military assistance. The other point of the agreement is discussing about war against

terrorist attacks and strengthening bilateral economy or trade relations (Central Accounting Office of United States, 1982).

The agreement above makes Turkey difficult to go away from the U.S. shade. Furthermore, the significant role of U.S. in preventing Turkey from international threats makes Turkey depends on it. Turkey is curbed by the U.S. interest in Middle-East. It seems like Turkey has to serve the U.S. interest. The strategic position of Turkey which is between two important continents, Europe and Asia, can be utilized well by U.S. to fulfill its interest. There are some U.S. military bases in Turkey which aims to strengthen its position in Middle-East. Sometimes, U.S. uses Turkish military air base to attack its enemy by its airstrike.

It could be seen when U.S. tried to attack Islamic State of Iraq and Syria in 2015. The Foreign Minister of Turkey, Mevlut Cavusoglu states as Turkish representative that Turkey welcomes U.S. in using Incirlik Air Base to attack ISIS. The endorsement from Turkish government gave a new hope for U.S. Actually, the facilities that Turkish government gave to U.S. in the 1980 agreement was all Turkish military facilitation for NATO's needs. The U.S. army can use the facilities considering the Turkish authority approval. U.S. has prepared its Unmanned Aerial Vehicles to ruin ISIS civilization in Middle-East. This was a serious step that U.S. took in combating the terrorist group in 2015. One of the U.S. interest which can be seen from its foreign policy is combating against terrorist groups which can show off its power (Gurcan, 2015).

This phenomenon clearly shows us that the Turkish dependency on U.S. security cannot be relinquished at this moment. The root was not caused by the Erdogan's administration, but his former administration. The agreement between Turkey and U.S. has been rooted which is difficult to be changed. The Turkish military and the U.S. military have close relations which also become the reason why Erdogan needs to always cooperate with the U.S. government. Erdogan's decision toward U.S. will affect his power in Turkish domestic politics. The concessions which Erdogan provides to U.S. indicates Erdogan's willing to maintain his power. This situation also shows us that Turkey is still controlled by the U.S. government.