A Research on the Causes of Turkey-Israel Discord

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Abstract: *Turkey and Israel used to be the closest alliance in the Middle East region. But in recent years, the relation between the two nations has totally reversed. The reasons that lead to the deterioration of the two nations' relation including: the influence of the personal ideology orientation and characteristic of the political leaders, the factors of the social tidal current changing and the political situation developing inside the related nations, and the internationalization and the complication trend of the Kurds problem caused by the regional and international political change after the Iraq War. Especially, the crisis in the relation between Turkey and Israel not only has resulted in the reset of the security alliance among the nations in the region, but will also bring more uncertainties to the future of the Middle East peace process and the development trend of the multinational Kurds problem in this region.*

Key Words: *Turkey; Israel; Middle East Security*

In the field of international relations, although the changes of the relationship among states are sometimes unpredictable, it still has its roots to follow. In recent years, the Turkey-Israel relationship

deteriorated sharply, which reflected just such a situation. In December 1997, Turkey was faced with intense criticism by the majority of member states of the Organization (OIC) of the Islamic Conference in its eighth summit held in Tehran, for Turkey's overly close relationship with Israel and its suppress of PKK in northern Iraq which was written into the resolution of the conference. Main leaders of the Islamic world, such as Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, condemned strongly in their speeches that Turkey's actions had damaged the Arab and Muslim interests (Bolukbasi, 1999: 101-105). At that time, Turkey not only established a regional alliance relationship with Israel, but also almost at the brink of war with Syria. But ten years later, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan was praised by some leaders of Islamic world, such as al-Assad, Ahmadinejad and Hosni Mubarak, for its positive support to the Palestinians. Especially in 2009 Davos Summit, Erdogan debated intensely with Israeli Prime Minister Peres and left angrily, Then his personal portraits were even posted in Palestinian West Bank. At present, Turkish-Israeli diplomatic conflicts are still escalating; both sides accused each other almost every day. Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan said that Israel was the main security threats in the Middle East, while Israeli Foreign Minister Lieberman claimed that Erdogan was another Chavez. Turkey not only canceled all of the joint military training with Israel, but also established economic and military partnership with Syria, and for the first time Turkish-Syrian joint military exercises had come into being. Meanwhile, Turkey refused to impose economic sanctions on Iran with Western countries, and drew international attention to Israel's possession of nuclear weapons. As a protest, Israel no longer afforded Turkey with advanced weapon systems, including the Navy missile interceptor. Particularly, after the Israeli attacks on the rescue boat which trying to break through the blockade of the Gaza Strip, and caused the death of 15 rescue

volunteers in June 2010, Turkey then not only accused Israel's "pirate" activities, but also saw it as "State Murdering" and "State Terrorism". As the two Middle East countries with special status, a sharp reversal of the relationship between Turkey and Israel will inevitably exert a serious impact on the Middle Eastern political configuration. This article will explore the root causes and effects of the significant reversal of the Turkish-Israeli relationship in depth from three aspects: personal characteristics of political leaders, internal political development of state, and the changes of international environ.

I. The Crisis Formation Process of Turkish-Israeli Relations

The history of the relations between Turkey and Israel can be traced back to the beginning of the founding of the State of Israel. Turkey was the first Islamic country to recognize Israel's legitimacy in 1949. During the Cold War period, when most Arab countries maintained close ties with the Soviet Union so as to fight against the United States and its ally-Israel, Israel and the Arab world, Turkey had always maintained a balanced policy between Israel and the Arab world. There are mainly two aspects of reasons. On one hand, Turkey had common strategic interests with Israel; on the other hand, it had a common cultural background with the Arab world. In order to avoid highlighting its ally's relationship with Israel, Turkey was usually detached from the Middle East politics during the Cold War. Only in 1980, Turkey closed its consulate in Jerusalem for a time after Israel declared this city as its capital. Since then, Turkish Prime Minister Turgut Ozal proposed to strengthen the relationship with the Arab world during 1983 to 1989. After the Gulf War in 1991, Turkey re-strengthened its ties with Israel from its security interest consideration. This is mainly because that: Iraqi central government's weak leadership causes the growing Kurdish rebellion in Northern Iraq, and Iraqi Kurdish got logistics support from Syria and Iran, this

made Turkey feel the pressure of Turkish Kurdish problem once again. At the same time, Turkey's military intervention level in its domestic politics strengthened, and this provide beneficial condition for the establishment of Turkish-Israeli security alliances.

In the 21st century, the relationship between Turkey and Israel began to reverse. In April 2002, Israeli attacks on Jenin refugee camps in West Bank caused a large number of civilian casualties, thus causing dissatisfaction of Turkish public and media. Then in November 2002, the Justice and Development Party led by Recep Tayyip Erdogan with Islamic background won the Parliamentary election and formed cabinet independently, which lead to a halt of the development of Turkish-Israeli relations. However, the key element in the deterioration of bilateral relations is mainly the Iraqi War in 2003. On one hand, this war caused Turkish public opinion's strong resentment feeling to the United States and its ally Israel; on the other hand, made many Turks note that Israel not only kept close relation with Iraqi Kurds, but also indirect link with the terrorists in PKK. In 2004, Israel assassinated Hamas leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and its successor Abdulaziz al-Rantisi, this triggered massive protests within Turkey, and Prime Minister Erdogan called Israel ''terrorist state''(Alpay, 2009: January 5).

From the end of 2008 to early 2009, Israel's three-week military strikes in Gaza eventually made the remaining security cooperation relationship between Turkey and Israel completely broken while Gaza was each side's bargaining chip. What especially indignant for Turkey was that only five days ago, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert committed to using peaceful means to tackle the Palestinian issue in his visit to Turkey. In turn, Turkey government who felt betrayed not only made extraordinary strong reaction to Israeli military actions in Gaza, but also immediately stopped its mediation diplomacy helping the negotiation process between Israel and Syria. Meanwhile, Turkish people also had strong reactions, and there were large-scale public

protests in almost every city. Shortly thereafter, Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan quarreled with Israeli President Shimon Peres in 2009 Davos Summit that lead to the deterioration of mutual relations.

In January 2010, the Turkish Radio and Television (TRT) broadcast television series *Separation*, which mainly describes how Israeli soldiers had saluted Palestinian civilians and children. In response, Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon humiliated Turkish Ambassador to Israel in a television program. Then, Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan accused Israel as a major threat in this region at the Arabic channel launch ceremony of the Turkish television, and declared that if Israel attacks Gaza again, Turkey will not stand idly by (Kosebalaban, 2010). Israeli Foreign Minister Lieberman, compared Erdogan with Libyan leader Qaddafi and Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez (Kosebalaban, 2010). In April 2010, before the nuclear security summit to be held by President Barack Obama, Turkish government highlighted that Israel was the sole nuclear country in the Middle East. This eventually increased the tension of the summit and led to Israeli Prime Minister's absence. With growing contradictions, Israeli attacked international rescue fleet on May 31, 2010, the crisis in relations between the two sides reached a peak. In this incident, Israeli commandos attacked Turkish rescue fleet Marmara by helicopter in international waters, and more than a dozen people on board were killed, most of whom are Turkish citizens. Turkish government accused Israeli attacks of a piracy attack. Turkish Foreign Minister Erdogan immediately sent his Foreign Minister to New York to request the convening of the Security Council emergency meeting, and declared that Israel's behavior had risen to the level of state terrorism. He also warned Israel that: "Turkey's hostility is as strong as its friendship is valuable" (*Todays Zaman*, 2010: June 1).

II. The Individual Effects of Politicians in the Reverse of Turkish-Israeli Relationship

In his book *Man, the State and War*, Kenneth Waltz provides an analytical framework consisting of three levels in order to study the changing relationship between states. The first level, mainly understand the personality of national leaders; the second level, domestic political development trends; the third level, the changing of international environment (Singer, 1960). From the overall structure, the deterioration in relations between Turkey and Israel's case can also be used in this analytical framework (Singer, 1960). If we only attributed the deterioration of relations between Turkey and Israel to the changes of the international situation, it is apparently ignore the ideological preferences of Turkish political leaders and the rise of Islamic thought within Turkish society and the political tendencies to re-focus to the Middle East. Therefore, in order to make more comprehensive explanations, all levels should be combined.

From personal level, the personalities of Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan and Israeli leaders have a certain effect on the deterioration of bilateral relations. According to the classical realism, Waltz explains the individual factors' effect on international conflicts, ''Wars result from selfishness, from misdirected aggressive impulses, from stupidity.'' (Waltz, 2001: 16). Niebuhr and Morgenthau, also regards the cause of the war, to a certain extent, to be attributed to human factors. For the concern on personal factors, state leadership's psychological and ideological preferences should be the focus of attention. Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan, as one leader of Justice and Development Party (AKP) with Islamic background, he is inevitably sensitive to Palestinian issue like other leaders of AKP. As an Israeli scholar put it, "Just as the Kemalists were gearing up for accession to the European Union, Erdogan came along and emphasized the very elements they had tried to suppress for the past century." (Lapidot-Firilla, 2009: February 20). In addition, Erdogan was born in Kastmpasa, a poor and backward area of Istanbul, he is

known for their rude personality. In dealing with ordinary domestic affairs, Erdogan often exhibits this kind of characteristic (Yavuz, 2009). This seems to explain why Erdogan in dealing with international crisis, Prime Minister is always lack of patience.

Erdogan's personal characteristic is particularly prominent in the formation of the Turkish-Israeli crisis. First, as a charismatic but arrogant leader, Erdogan surely cannot tolerate deception and shame. His such violent character has been demonstrated on several occasions. In particular, as a politician, Erdogan does not know how to hide his true feelings. Therefore, Israel launched military operations in Gaza and cheated Turkey two days before, and this was bound to touch his anger. More importantly, as a Muslim, what Erdogan cannot be overlooked is the Palestinian issue which is concerned about by the Islamic world. Therefore, the humanitarian disaster in Gaza Strip would have a strong influence of religious feelings on himself and his family.

However, in dealing with the Israeli issue, sometimes Erdogan shows a rational character. Especially in relation to specific national interests, he will focus on the performance of reality, not ideology. For example, Erdogan supported Israeli company's involvement in developing the 877 km Turkish-Syrian border regions. At that time, there were strong opposition voices within AKP. Because of this project, Israeli company can not only get 44-year develop right in this area, but also constitutes a security barrier for Israel. In order to pass this plan, Erdogan accused the opponents of fascist mentality in Parliament (Cetinsaya, 2003). Devlet Bahceli, the leader of the opposition Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) said, "Erdogan blinks his eye to Hamas but does not abandon Israel either" (Sariibrahimoglu, 2009: January 21). Moreover, Erdogan's response to Bahceli's suggests that Turkey should cut off economic ties with Israel: ''we are not running a grocery store'', he also stressed that deal with economic relations with Israel, ''the AKP appears to have adopted an

ideology-free approach towards Turkey's economic policies at home and abroad'' (Oguzlu, 2010: 277-278). Thus, it is indeed necessary to notice Erdogan's personality to some extent for the formation of the current crisis. But if view Erdogan as the whole reasons of this crisis, it is a distortion of facts. In fact, Erdogan has his own ideological tendencies and personality traits, but he is still primarily in the context of domestic political trends to determine his own actions like other politicians.

III. The Domestic Political Factors in the Crisis of Turkish-Israeli Relationship

At its domestic political level, Turkey's domestic political process and public opinion since Iraqi War should be paid attention to, which is of adverse effects to Turkish-Israeli relationship. In the same time, we should also notice that the contradictions and conflicts between military forces in favor of secularization and more conservative civilian government. However, as a single and complete entity of international system, Turkey's foreign policy options are still based on its security and economic interests. The ideas and material factors play different impact roles in Turkish-Israeli crisis.

After the end of Cold War, what's popular in Western countries was the democratic peace theory. In other words, there are necessary connection between the democratic nature of domestic political structure and foreign policy behavior. As the liberal democratic countries establish institutions, structures and norms in the political process, they can resolve mutual dispute through non-violent approach. This is not only because democratic countries can limit belligerent behaviors by electoral process, public opinion, separation institutions and legal systems, but also because they can be more mutually attracted based on similar norms, preference and culture (Maoz & Russen, 1993: 624-638). However, the Turkish-Israeli crisis

does not coincide with democratic peace theory, although it is a kind of normative interpretation. In fact, for Turkey and Israel relationship, there are more negative effects from the democratic norms. This is mainly because public opinion must be allowed to play an important role in democratic politics, and the competition between domestic political forces must also be consistent with the public interests.

The most extremist example of the deterioration of bilateral relations is Israeli attacks on Gaza in 2008 to 2009. From Israeli side, this action is a way to show its tough stance by Kadima before the February 2009 Parliament election. In that time, Kadima government had not been able to stop Hamas rocket attacks from Gaza, and to guarantee the release of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit captured by Hamas in 2006. For Kadima, these are major issues bound to be faced in the coming election. Therefore, Kadima government had chosen to take strong actions to improve its political situation. But in Turkey, Israeli attacks on Gaza greatly reduced Turkish public's favor to Israel, and strengthened their sympathy for the Palestinians. Because of the coming elections in March 2009, Turkish AKP government was bound to focus on domestic public anger and thus was alienated from Israel.

In Turkish domestic politics, the close relationship with Israel was a manifestation of secularist political tendencies at one time, and its purpose was to resist the rising Islamist challenges (*Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations*, 2002). In addition, Turkish government maintained close ties with Israel so as to satisfy those business enterprises who support the development of economic relations with Israel and intelligentsia who hoped bilateral friendship. In particular, in the face of the PKK insurgency threats, it is of great value of security strategy to maintain close relations with Israel, because Syria had been supporting Turkish Kurdish rebellion for years. Turkish military forces who hope to solve the Kurdish problem through military means paid special attention to the strategic relations with Israel.

However, the benefit elements for Israel began to face with challenges since Islamic Welfare Party won the election in 1996. For the new generation of political leaders who were accustomed to the conflicts among secularism, Islamism and Kurdish nationalism, is bound to modify the relationship with Israel. In 1996, Erbakan government attempted to change the Turkish foreign policy dominated by secularist, and strengthen its ties with the Muslim world. Just because of the Turkish military forces' overall political intervention, Erbakan government failed to change this situation and signed a number of significant military agreements under military pressure. Shortly, Erbakan government was attempting to strengthen ties with the Islamic world and signed gas contracts with Iran, but the government was eventually dissolved by the military no-confidence vote in parliament launched on February 28, 1996. Turkish Military stressed that the relationship with Iran was detrimental to Turkey's security. According to General Cevik Bir, who served as Deputy Chief of Staff of the Turkish Army at that time, the objectives why military forces forced Erbakan government signed military agreements with Israel are: first, made the Islamists-Erbakan embarrassed in front of the voters; second, it cannot bear Turkish Islamic turn and damage to the relationship between Israel and the Turkish army (Bir & Sherman, 2002).

However, the challenges of Islamist to the secularism-led Turkish foreign policy did not stop there. In 2002, AKP won the election whose predecessor is Welfare Party and the established new government, the military pro-Israel policy had started to accept the adjustments of civilian government. This is mainly from the Iraqi War, the Turkish people's anti-American and anti-Israel sentiment appeared, and pro-Israel public opinion decreased significantly. The relationship with Israel is no longer the main content involved in the struggle between secularism and Islamism. Turkish military forces expressed deep concern on Israeli active support to Iraqi Kurdish political forces

after Iraqi War. In particular, Turkish military forces were dissatisfied with the failure of fulfilling the military cooperation commitments. According to the Turkish defense industrialist, "It is not the first time that Israel has failed to meet its commitments, at least in Turkish projects"; "in many projects involving Israeli companies - including the modernization of Turkey's US General Dynamics made 170 M60 A1 tanks and the joint production of counter-measure dispenser systems - Israel failed to honor its offset and technology transfer commitments." (Sariibrahimoglu, 2009: May 22).

It is worth noting that, we cannot enhance that AKP provoked a campaign against Israel or Jews. In fact, Turkish public opinion toward Israel is even tougher than the government's attitude. This is mainly because the strong anti-American sentiment in Turkey caused by the Iraqi War, naturally, Israel is included. All political parties and interest groups must also shows hard-line stance on the issue in response to public demand. We can clearly see the intense anti-Israel sentiment in Turkish Partisan debate. In the debate on the border Development issues, Democratic Action Party (MHP) parliamentary Kadir Ural asked: ''did our people elect you to give these lands to Israel?''(Turkish Grand National Assembly, May 27, 2009: May 27). CHP parliamentary Tekin Bingöl was even more poignant: ''My audience is the members who acted sensitively [to reject] the March 1 motion [asking the parliament to permit US troops to access Iraq using Turkish soil in 2003]. On that day, we did not fear America, but only God. Now I am saying, don't be scared of America or Israel, but be fearful of God; listen to your conscience.'' (Turkish Grand National Assembly, 2009: June 2).

Israeli attacks on the Turkish rescue fleet incident, not only led to Turkish government's most violent criticism on Israel, but also makes those who did not agree with the this rescue action also felt national disgrace too. The National Action Party (MHP) leader Devlet Bahçeli even said that this incident was Israeli public attack on the Turkish

nation (*Today's Zaman*, 2010: June 2). Under the pressure of domestic political atmosphere, AKP government required UN Security Council, NATO and the Organization of Islamic Conference to condemn Israel strongly, recalled its ambassador to Israel, and canceled three joint military exercises and a football game scheduled to be held in 2010. On July 1, 2010, Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu met Israeli Minister of Trade Benjamin Ben-Eliezer secretly in Brussels, and clearly asked Turkey's independent investigation of this incident, Israeli lift of the blockade in Gaza, public apology, and compensation to the victims' families.

On Israeli side, attacks on the rescue fleet incident also reflectsdomestic political factors. Kadima government's hard-line attitude towards Gaza constituted a general political background in 2009 election. When Kadima lost the Parliament election, Israeli new coalition government led by Likud leader Netanyahu is bound to insist on a tougher stand on Gaza issue. Both the far-right political party ''Our Home–Israel'' (Yisrael Beitenu) led by Foreign Minister Lieberman and liberal Labor Party (HaAvoda) led by former Prime Minister Ehud Barak are in the new government. Foreign Minister Lieberman, whose diplomatic viewpoints totally opposite to Barak's, dominated Israeli foreign policy. Lieberman's tough talk on the rescue fleet incident and his behavior to Turkish Ambassador contrary to diplomatic etiquette all reflected his Party's domestic political point of view. Accord to Haaretz, Lieberman had tried to stop Barak's visit to Ankara. As a senior Foreign Ministry official said, ''There's a feeling Lieberman wants to heat things up before Barak's visit to Turkey'', ''everything that took place yesterday was part of Lieberman's political agenda.'' (Ravid, 2010: January 12). Israeli foreign policy dominators' hard-line attitudes will further exacerbate the deterioration of the relations between Turkey and Israel.

IV. The International Environmental Changes in the

Middle East and the Crisis of Turkish-Israeli Relationship

Besides politicians' personal characteristics and respective domestic political factors, the relationship between Turkey and Israel is also affected by transnational Kurdish issues. After the Cold War, the main national security issue Turkey concerns about is Kurdish. In the early 1990s, President Ozal hoped to solve the Kurdish problem through democratic means. However, due to the death of Ozal in 1993, there exisits a power vacuum in the leading powers of liberal middle, then the full military intervention in domestic and foreign affairs came. On the Kurdish issue, the military forces advocated the use of military means to solve, so it needed Israeli military technology. Meanwhile, Israel can be used as a balancer for PKK's supporter--Syria. In confronted with the Syria- Greece-PKK alliances, and the Greece-Syria defense cooperation agreement in 1995, Turkish former Ambassador to US Sukru Elekdag raised "2 1/2 War" defense strategy, that was to start full-scale wars with Greece and Syria while a limited war against the PKK armed rebellion (Elekdag, 1996: 33-57). In such circumstances, Israel became Turkey's natural ally. Because of the close relationship between Turkey and Israel, some people even imagine such a relationship may evolve into a strategic alliance or a new axis (Pipes, 1997/1998).

In this international background, Demirel and Inonu coalition government came to power in 1991, and Turkish leaders conducted series of visits to Israel. Turkish Foreign Minister Hikmet Çetin in 1993, Prime Minister Tansu Ciller in 1994, and President Suleyman Demirel in 1996 visited Israel respectively. Since then, both sides began to contact and discussed high-level military agreement. Turkish Chief of Staff General Ismail Hakki Karadayi visited Israel in 1997, and then Defense Minister Turhan Tayan and Deputy Chief of Staff Cevik Bir followed his step. At the same time, Israeli civilian and military counterparties visited Turkey and signed series of important military

agreements.

The close relationship between Turkey and Israel soon came to a turning point due to the improvement of Turkey-Syria relations. In October 1998, Turkey issued an ultimatum to Syria, demanding that Syria expel PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan asylum in Syria, otherwise it would launch a military attack. As a result, Syria expelled Ocalan immediately, and closed the PKK's camps in Syria and Syrian-controlled Bekaa Valley in Lebanon, the relationship between Syria and Turkey changes significantly. In November 1998, 11days after Turkey issued the ultimatum to Syria; the two countries shook hands and signed a historic *Adana Agreement*. According to the agreement, Syria no longer supports PKK. In response, Turkey deleted Syria from its military threat list. In order to show the importance of improving relations with Syria, Turkish President Ahmet Necdet Sezer joint in Syrian former President Hafez al-Asad's funeral in 2000. Since then, Bashar al-Asad, who tend to strengthen the relationship with Turkey, won the power struggle with Syria, and Syria further strengthen the friendly relations with Turkey, this was a negative factor in Turkish-Israeli relations.

After the Iraq War in 2003, the new regional political environment was favorable to Iraqi Kurds, and this affected Turkish-Israeli relations. During the US occupation in Iraq, Iraqi Kurdistan became a semi-independent autonomous region, and it was difficult for Turkey to continue its cross-border attacks against PKK camps in the region. In such favorable conditions, PKK announced the termination of its five-year unilateral ceasefire commitment in 2004 and resumed rebellion. In May 2010, PKK announced all-out war to Turkey. In the case of PKK's threat to Turkey, Israel stepped up its military support to Iraqi Kurds. Turkish government was afraid that Israel's military equipments would be transferred to PKK militants. According to the secret report of US intelligence sectors in Turley, Turkish government was deeply concerned about Israel's growing activities in Iraqi

Kurdistan, especially Israeli possible support for the establishment of an independent Kurdish state. In addition, Turkish government was extremely sensitive to Israeli intelligence agency's cooperative actions with anti-Syrian and anti-Iranian groups in northern Iraq, for these activities were mainly in support of Kurds in Syria and Iran against their countries (Hersh, 2004: June 21).

Faced with such changes in the regional environments, Turkish government relied mainly on the support of Iran and Syria but not US and Israel to fight against Kurdish separatist forces. This is undoubtedly a fundamental change of Turkish security strategy in 1990s. At that time, Turkey and Israel formed a strategic alliance against Iran and Syria who supported PKK. With the current adjustment of military strategy, Turkey has given up ''2 1/2 War'' strategy. Nowadays, the Turkish army's goal is to be ready for the war with PKK rebels. In Turkey's new security strategy, Syria has replaced Israel, and Syria changed from a strategic threat to a strategic alliance.

In addition, the US is a negative factor in the relations between Turkey and Israel. Over years, the Turkish government has been using the American Jewish groups to stop the US Congress passing proposal on Ottoman Empire's genocide of the Armenians. Turkish government has maintained good relationship with American Jewish groups for a long time. But for American Jews, the support of Turkey is based on the friendly relations between Turkey and Israel. Recently, with the crisis in Turkish-Israeli relations, the Jewish Parliamentarians in US Congress lost interest in Turkey (*The Jewish Dally Forward*, 2010: March 19). On March 9, 2010, the Committee of Foreign Affairs in US Congress finally passed the Armenian genocide proposal. Turkish media suspected that the Jewish Parliamentarians in Committee of Foreign Affairs voted in favor of the proposal. Turkish media pointed out that the Jewish Chairman of the Committee Howard Berman had remarked openly that it was time to recognize the Armenian genocide (Bitgiin, 2010: March 05). On the other hand, after the Israeli attacks on

the rescue fleet, American society did not condemn this incident like European countries. US House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer even stated that, ''Israel — rightfully so — invoked its right to self-defense on the *Mavi Marmara*'', this was the strongest support provided Israel by a top American lawmaker (AFP, 2010: June 2). US Vice President Joe Biden said: ''I think Israel has the absolute right to deal with its security interests. Israel is at war with Hamas, and it has the power to know whether there be smuggling of weapons on board.'' (China.com, 2010: June 4). The pro-Israel US media has been criticizing Turkish overly assertive Middle East policy for years, and gives full support for Israel at this time (Pollock, 2010: June 3). These not only make the Turkish government extremely dissatisfied, but also is bound to exacerbate the Israel0-Turkish crisis from the other side.

V. Conclusion

In general, the causes of the deterioration of the Turkish-Israeli relations include: the influence of the personal ideology orientation, the factors of the social tidal current changing and the political situation developing inside the related nations, and the internationalization caused by the regional international political change, and thus is certainly inevitable and unavoidable. It should also be noted that, Turkey's deteriorating relations with Israel will inevitably have serious implications for the political situation in this region. First, for the Middle East peace process, Turkish society's tendency to Islamilization is bound to promote the Turkish government to change its original neutral position in Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and increase the pressure on Israel. Second, Turkish pressure on Israel in the Middle East peace process could prompt Israel to further strengthen the support of the Iraqi Kurds' autonomy and even the pursuit of independence. This will make the PKK's armed forces hidden in the Iraqi Kurdistan region obtain a

more steady base; Turkish government may encounter greater difficulties in the fight against Kurdish separatist. Finally, the deterioration of Turkish-Israeli relations will accomplice with US further support for Israel. From the Israeli attacks on rescue fleet incident in Gaza and US partiality actions to Israel, one can clearly know US attitude. Therefore, the deterioration of relations between Turkey and Israel is bound to bring more variables for the prospects for Middle East peace process and the development of the Middle East situation.

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