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[Article 1.](#)

Foreign Policy

Why Israel won't ask America before Bombing Iran

Uri Sadot

October 21, 2013 -- As American and Iranian diplomats attempt to reach a rapprochement that would end the historical enmity between their two

governments, Israel is weary of being sidelined by its most important ally. While the U.S. incentive for diplomacy is great, it could place Washington in a short-term conflict of interests with Israel, which views Iran as an existential threat. With the renewed negotiations in place, will Israel dare strike a Middle Eastern nation in defiance of its closest allies? It seems unlikely, but 32 years ago, the answer was yes.

On June 7, 1981, Israel launched Operation Opera. A squadron of fighter planes flew almost 1,000 miles over Saudi and Iraqi territory to bomb a French-built plutonium reactor on the outskirts of Baghdad, which Israeli leaders feared would be used by Saddam Hussein to build atomic bombs. The operation was successful, but the international reaction was severe. On the morning following the attack, the United States condemned Israel, suggesting it had violated U.S. law by using American-made military equipment in its assault. State Department spokesman Dean Fischer [reiterated](#) the American position that the reactor did not pose a potential security threat, and White House press secretary Larry Speakes [added](#) that President Ronald Reagan had personally approved the condemnation. Israel didn't hesitate back then to bomb what it viewed as a threatening nuclear program, even at the risk of provoking a conflict with the United States -- and it will likely not hesitate today. As the strike against Iraq shows, Israeli policymakers see the acquisition of nuclear weapons by a hostile regime as an existential threat, and they will risk a breach with Israel's closest allies to prevent it.

Twelve days after the Israeli strike on Iraq, the [REDACTED]. Security Council "strongly condemn[ed]" Israel's attack as a violation of the [REDACTED]. Charter and the norms of international conduct. The wording of the [resolution](#) was carefully drafted by Jeane Kirkpatrick, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, and was unanimously approved by the council.

The Reagan administration, which had entered office less than five months prior, had been caught off guard by Israel's surprise attack. Diplomatic cables from the Israeli Embassy in Washington that week [reported](#) a very difficult first few days in defending Israel's actions. Israeli government spokesman Avi Pazner noted that the "fierce [critiques] of Israel were unlike previous reactions to Israeli operations in the past ... and were fueled by the negative briefings given by the administration to Washington reporters."

As Pazner suggested, the media response was scathing. The New York Times [editorialized](#) on June 9 that Israel's attack "was an act of inexcusable and short-sighted aggression. Even assuming that Iraq was hellbent to divert enriched uranium for the manufacture of nuclear weapons." The Washington Post [stated](#), "the Israelis have made a grievous error ... contrary to their own long-term interests and in a way contrary to American interests as well."

The American public was also largely antagonistic to Israel's attack. Some two weeks after the bombing, a June 19 [Gallup poll](#) showed that a plurality of Americans, 45 percent, did not think Israel's strike was justified. In another Gallup survey, conducted one month after the attack, only 35 percent of Americans said they were "more sympathetic to Israel" than to Arab nations. While 57 percent of Americans believed Iraq was planning to make nuclear bombs, only 24 percent thought bombing its reactor was the right thing to do.

The Arab reaction to the raid was vociferous and universal. Iraq's rivals, such as Kuwait, Iran, and Syria, denounced the attack, and Saudi Arabia even offered to finance the construction of a new Iraqi reactor. In Washington, recently declassified [CIA estimates](#) predicted that the aggravated Arabs would turn away from the United States and toward the Soviet Union. "Washington's ability to promote Arab cooperation against a Soviet threat or to bring the Arabs and Israelis to the bargaining table has been struck a hard blow," the report warned.

Within Reagan's cabinet, opinions were split. Six years after a major break in U.S.-Israel relations, triggered by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's refusal in 1975 to withdraw from strategic areas in the Sinai, strong voices lobbied the president to teach Israel a lesson. These figures -- including Vice President George H.W. Bush, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, and Chief of Staff James Baker -- were greatly concerned about Israel's offensive use of American fighter jets, in violation of the 1952 military assistance treaty.

On the other side of the table sat Secretary of State Alexander Haig and National Security Advisor Richard Allen, who argued for only a symbolic punishment to placate world opinion.

After several days of discussions, Reagan eventually adjudicated in favor of Israel. He would later [write in his memoirs](#) that he was sympathetic to

Israel's position and "believed we should give [it] the benefit of the doubt." He directed Kirkpatrick not to condemn Israel itself, but only its "action." The actual punishment was also light -- a delay on the delivery of fighter jets that only lasted a few months.

It was a close call for Israel, which in those years was even more reliant on America than it is today. The Jewish state was also grappling with a host of other issues: It was in the fragile final stages of establishing its peace treaty with Egypt, was dealing with tensions on its border with Syria that would erupt into war in Lebanon the following year, and was suffering from triple-digit inflation. But despite the myriad risks, the Israeli cabinet decided to attack.

Why? Above all, because its leaders truly believed that the nuclear program was an imminent existential threat. Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin would continue saying, until his last days, that in those years he experienced nightmares of Jewish children dying in a second nuclear holocaust -- one that it was his duty to prevent. And the "Begin doctrine" that he created -- that Israel will not tolerate weapons of mass destruction in the hands of an enemy state -- is alive and well today.

What many international observers dismiss as alarmism was a very real factor in the mind of Begin, a Holocaust survivor who lost both his parents to the war. The same echoing trauma and sense of historical duty is ubiquitous among Israel's top leadership. And it is apparently the prism through which Benjamin Netanyahu sees the world: "It's 1938, and Iran is Germany," the current Israeli prime minister [told](#) a conference in 2006. "[Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad] is preparing another Holocaust for the Jewish state."

Nor was the attack on the Iraqi nuclear facility an isolated event. In 2007, Israel again decided to strike a nuclear reactor in defiance of its strongest ally. In the preceding year, U.S. and Israeli intelligence assets had discovered a covert Syrian plutonium reactor being built with North Korean assistance. For long months after its detection, Israel and the United States had intimately cooperated on how to handle its removal. [It was only when](#) President George W. Bush told Prime Minister Ehud Olmert that the United States had decided to take the matter to the United Nations, rather than strike itself -- or agree to let Israel strike -- that Jerusalem decided to act, even against an explicit American objection.

In both the Syrian and Iraqi cases, the Israeli government exhausted all other options before resorting to a military strike. Begin launched a sabotage campaign against Iraq's nuclear program in 1979 after his cabinet decided that diplomacy had run its course. Iraqi scientists were assassinated, French technicians were threatened, and containers holding key parts of the reactor were blown up on their way to Iraq. But in January 1981, an internal intelligence committee [ruled](#) that sabotage was no longer "sufficient in delaying the program," which led to the ultimate decision to strike. In 2007, Olmert negotiated with the Americans in the hope that they would do the dirty work for him, and he only directed his military to strike after Bush turned him down.

Nothing indicates that Netanyahu's thinking is any more dovish than that of Begin or Olmert. The Israeli premier is keenly aware of history and knows how small and short-lived the costs to Israel were in the past. He also knows that Israel was later greatly appreciated for the decisive actions it took, that the Israeli Jewish population takes the perceived threat from Iran seriously, and that the "Begin doctrine" is lauded domestically to this day.

In an Oct. 15 [Knesset speech](#) marking the 40th anniversary of the 1973 war, [he said](#), "There are cases when the thought about the international reaction to a preemptive strike is not equal to taking a strategic hit."

The current talks between Iran and the international powers over Tehran's nuclear program present Israel with an added challenge. It would look exceptionally bad for Israel to strike while its closest allies are invested in what is widely seen as historic negotiations. But the risk of isolation in 1981 may have been even greater than today: America was supporting Saddam in his war against Iran back then, while European countries were supplying Iraq with weaponry and were directly involved in the construction of the plutonium reactor. Some 150 Europeans were present in the Iraqi compound, leading Israel to schedule its attack for a Sunday. Despite that, a 25-year-old French technician died in the attack.

While a diplomatic opening did not exist in the Iraqi case, from Israel's point of view the Iranian diplomatic *démarche* could go either way. A good deal -- one that included sufficient verification of Iran's nuclear program -- would successfully delay the threat while averting unwanted military conflict. A bad deal, however, would provide Iran with diplomatic cover as it continues to grow as an existential threat to Israel -- a situation that

cannot be tolerated. The devil will likely be in the technical details, but if push comes to shove, it is unlikely that the American position will be a determining factor in Israel's decision-making process.

The stakes for Israel today are just as high as they were in 1981, and the worldview of its top policymakers remains largely the same as it was then. It is unlikely that the negotiations with Iran will stop Netanyahu from ordering a strike if he concludes diplomacy has failed in providing security. To the contrary, if there is one likely scenario that would push Israel to act, it would be the prospect of an imminent deal with Iran that would isolate Israel while not addressing the threat it sees emanating from Tehran.

Uri Sadot is a research associate in the Middle East program at the Council on Foreign Relations.

[Article 2.](#)

The Washington Post

Why the Modest Harvest of the Arab Spring?

Jason Brownlee, Tarek Masoud and Andrew Reynolds

October 21 - For all of its surprises, perhaps nothing about the Arab Spring has been as surprising as its remarkably modest harvest. The drama, excitement, and sense of possibility created by Bin Ali's night escape to Saudi Arabia or Mubarak's resignation have given way to a mournful reality. Of the 21 member states of the Arab League, only six have experienced concerted challenges to their regimes, and in only four were dictators overthrown. The Arab Spring's disappointing record — far less inspiring than the East European revolutions of 1989 (to which they were often compared) or sub-Saharan Africa's political transitions in the early 1990s — cries out for explanation. Why did only Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, and Libya manage to overthrow their dictators, while elsewhere, uprisings subsided, were beaten into submission, or failed to materialize in the first place?

Our essay in the current issue of the Journal of Democracy offers, what we believe to be, the first regional explanation of regime outcomes from the Arab uprisings of 2010 to 2012. We seek to account for the full range of

variance: from the resilience of authoritarianism in places such as Algeria and Saudi Arabia at one end, to Tunisia's rocky but still hopeful transition at the other. Previous accounts have focused on factors that were closely tied to events, such as the diffusion of social-networking tools and the posture of the army. We broaden the time frame, to examine the historical and structural factors that determined the balance of power between incumbents and oppositions.

Surveying the region as a whole, we find that there were no structural preconditions for the emergence of uprisings: The fundamentally random manner in which protests spread meant that a wide variety of regimes faced popular challenges. We do find, however, that the success of a domestic campaign to oust the ruler was structurally preconditioned by two variables: oil wealth (which endows the ruler with enough material resources to forestall or contain challenges) and the precedent of hereditary succession (which indicates the heightened loyalty of coercive agents to the executive). Regimes that lacked major oil revenue and had not established hereditary succession succumbed relatively quickly and nonviolently to domestic uprisings. In contrast, where dictators had inherited rule (whether through traditional monarchism or corrupted republicanism) or commanded vast oil rents, their repressive forces remained sufficiently loyal and cohesive to conduct brutal crackdowns. Previous studies have rightly focused on oil as a bulwark against regime change. Nevertheless, if oil exports scotched uprisings, why has the Syrian regime lasted so long against its domestic opponents? Other scholars have pointed to the exceptional durability of Arab monarchs. But if Arab republics were more vulnerable, why has Syria avoided regime change? The answer, we find, lies at the intersection of these variables (see table). We argue that dynasticism (whether in its monarchic or its "republican" permutations) and oil rents operate as complementary variables. Either characteristic is enough to ensure that the regime will retain power, while a regime with neither trait will fall quickly once popular pressure and military defections begin to mount.

By showing how inherited economic and political structures shaped the potential of uprisings we balance a natural emphasis on the courage and pluck of protesters with a sober consideration of the obstacles they faced and continue to face. Patterns of change and repression did not spring de

novo after Mohammed Bouazizi self-immolated on Dec. 17, 2010. Regimes survived or fell based on existing reservoirs of rents and repressive capacity. Many scholars had cited these factors to explain the prevalence of authoritarianism in the region before the uprisings began, and the Arab Spring, far from disproving such scholarship, appears to have produced reams of new data to support it.

Our theory suggests the need for two major revisions to existing scholarship of the Arab Spring and democratization more generally. First, foreign interventions are the *deus ex machina* of opposition forces in the Middle East. According to our structural approach, Libya 2011 did not fall in the regime change cell. Oil rents provided Moammar Gaddafi a demonstrated surfeit of repressive power capable of quashing any domestic uprising. But he did not face just a domestic rebellion, but an international military coalition, spearheaded by NATO. Under those conditions, the Libyan regime fell despite its oil wealth. Foreign intervention razed the local pillars of durable authoritarianism. To the extent that similar foreign interventions are off the table for the other Arab autocracies — which enjoy oil wealth, hereditary regimes or both — regime continuity becomes all the more likely.

Second, and more importantly, our study suggests that certain forms of corruption may help regimes stay in power and, conversely, the fragility of the most personalistic of dictatorships may have been overestimated. Specifically, in Syria and Bahrain, dynasticism has been indicative not of weak, poorly-institutionalized states, but of the total bonding of autocrats and agents of repression.

This casts doubt on the idea that it is only a matter of time before the doleful dynastic stability of Jordan, Morocco, and Saudi Arabia gives way to popular demands for dignity and freedom. Our theory predicts that, if such demands emerge, these regimes will not respond to such challenges by turning in on themselves, packing the autocrat off to exile, and negotiating the dismantling of the old order. Monarchies (and republican dynasties) that have gathered into their hands all the threads of power and privilege may eventually fall, but they will only go down violently.

These sobering predictions are a useful corrective to the sunny optimism that the Arab Spring initially inspired. The breathtaking spectacle of peaceful young crowds triumphing over long-entrenched dictators

suggested—misleadingly—that an inexorable march toward democracy had begun. The Arab Spring’s meager yield, a bitter litany of failed uprisings, halting or reversed “transitions,” and autocratic continuity, suggests that a less teleological process is at work, and that inherited political structures remain critically important. The Arab Spring’s low-hanging fruit have been picked. Further regime change will rest on deeper, structural changes that can be expected to take far longer than 18 days.

The following is a guest post from political scientists Jason Brownlee (University of Texas) Tarek Masoud (Harvard University), and Andrew Reynolds (University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill) on their recent Journal of Democracy article "Why the Modest Harvest?"

[Article 3.](#)

Hurriyet

Turkey in a new Middle East

Murat Yetkin

October 22 - It was thought that the Middle East, in the greater sense, had experienced a major change after Mohammed Buazizi set himself ablaze in protest at the dictatorship in Tunisia in December 2010. It was thought that the winds of the Arab Spring would blow the spirit of freedom all over the region.

Tunisia was followed by riots in Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Bahrain and as a last stop in Syria. The autocratic regimes in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt were toppled. Things started to turn sour in Yemen and Bahrain. In Yemen the alternative was al-Qaeda. In Bahrain the alternative was a pro-Iranian Shiite majority. Saudi Arabia intervened to suppress the Spring there. Libya is a totally different story with its artificial structure, mainly an enforced coalition of tribes and sects.

The Muslim Brotherhood, or Ikhwan, was the main opposition movement in Egypt, Tunisia and Syria and had been banned in all three countries. Lacking a strict organizational body and generally staying away from terrorism, it was like an ideal recipe for the Western strategist who had been looking for a cure against the growing influence of al-Qaeda. There

was already a conservative government in Turkey with non-violent Islamic roots and holding power through democratic means since 2002 in Turkey, but Turkey was not an Arab country and Turkey had chosen not to rule the state apparatus according to religion, having adopted a secular system long ago.

Yet, the Tunisian and Egyptian examples created hopes in the U.S. and Europe - and in Turkey, too - that there might be a chance to make democracy, human rights and the rule of law a priority in the Islamic world, Arab or non-Arab, through the ballot box. That hope hit the rocks in Syria. Bashar al-Assad did not meet an end like those of Muammar Gadhafi, Zeinel Abidin bin Ali or Hosni Mobarak. He followed a multi-channel strategy: He started to use all military means to crush the Ikhwan-lead opposition, used selective diplomacy by playing his Iran and Russia cards, as Syria provides access for Iran to Hezbollah in Lebanon and also the only military base in the entire region to Russia. At the same time, he used deception methods to divide and disperse Ikhwan by encouraging al-Qaeda groups to cultivate within them. All succeeded, if ██████ like to call the result a success after more than 120,000 were killed and more than 2 million became refugees in the two-year-long civil war.

In the meantime, the Ikhwan-backed new president of Egypt, Mohamed Morsi, was toppled through a military coup on July 3, which was congratulated and supported by Saudi Arabia first. That was a major disappointment for Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan in Turkey, especially when his efforts to convince the U.S. to condemn the coup failed.

Moreover, after the fall of Ikhwan in Egypt, the Syrian opposition was further damaged and extremist Sunni groups linked to al-Qaeda and Kurdish groups linked to the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in Turkey gained support. The new government in Egypt started to play the Suez card against the U.S. and Europe once again, as another indication of a new and Cold War balances second to Syria, where the game boiled down to U.S.-Russia bargaining. Another indication is Israel's complaints concerning the U.S. policy to decrease the level of antagonism with Iran through diplomacy.

It is possible that in American and European eyes, who have their own economic and social problems and less dependence to Middle East energy resources now, the last few years is nothing but a failed experiment of

democracy. If we are back to factory settings, that is Cold War settings in the greater Middle East, that means “stability first” politics, instead of “try democracy.”

Will Erdoğan digest as soon as possible that the Ikhwan experiment has failed and that real-politik started to dominate the regional politics once again? It needs a shift from Turkish government’s current “conscience” or ideology-based politics, but it seems that it is a necessity for a recovery after Egypt and Syria, let alone the plunging relations with Israel.

[Article 4.](#)

The Council on Foreign Relations

Fears of Fraying U.S.-Turkey Ties

Interview with [Steven A. Cook](#)

October 21, 2013 -- *The U.S. refusal to strike militarily against Syrian government forces has exacerbated already strained relations between the United States and Turkey, says CFR's Steven Cook. He cites Prime Minister Erdoğan's reluctance to patch up ties with Israel and his crackdown on protestors earlier this year in Istanbul and Ankara as contributing factors to the cooling ties between the two countries in recent months. And despite President Barack Obama's efforts to improve U.S. standing with Turkey since taking office in 2009, Cook says "there have been significant tests of the relationship," which he does not see abating in coming months.*

Recently, many have started to question the alliance between Turkey and the United States. Is Turkey lost as an ally of the United States?

I wouldn't go so far as to say that Turkey is lost as an ally of the United States but there have been some rather troubling developments recently that have led people to question whether Turkey is still an ally of the United States. Among the recent events has been the Turkish decision to buy a [Chinese](#) missile system that's not compatible with NATO, and the [recent revelations](#) by David Ignatius of the *Washington Post* that Turkey blew a ring of Israeli spies in Iran, of course, has everything to do with Turkey-Israel relations, if it's proven true. But it's also a setback for the American and Western effort to prevent Iran from developing nuclear

technology. If Ignatius' revelation proves to be accurate, it would seem the Turks were putting their pique at the Israelis above a broader Western effort aimed at the Iranians. This is, I think, extremely, extremely troubling.

How would you assess the state of U.S.-Turkey relations in recent years?

President Obama came to office determined to build and develop the relationship with Turkey, which had been badly frayed during the Bush years over the U.S invasion and occupation of Iraq. The Obama administration put a lot of energy into developing those relations, but there were some significant difficulties, even early on. In the spring of 2010 you had Turkey negotiating a nuclear deal with the Iranians and Brazilians that the United States claimed not to have authorized. It was a "No" vote in the UN Security Council on additional sanctions on Iran; there were the difficulties between Turkey and Israel, which complicated relations between the United States and Israel and the United States and Turkey. All kinds of things along those lines. But then the situation seemed to have gotten better from 2010 to 2012. In fact, that was what some Turkish officials regard as a golden age in U.S.-Turkey relations.

My sense is that things have cooled a bit as a result of the protests that happened over this past summer over Gezi Park in Istanbul and the way in which the Turks handled it. There was also the divergence between the United States and Turkey on Syria. The Turks very much have wanted the United States to intervene, albeit not from their own territory, to help bring down the Assad regime. And the United States has been obviously reluctant to do that. So there have been a significant number of differences between the two countries. Despite very good diplomatic relations and good relations between the prime minister and the president, there have been significant tests of the relationship.

Now does Erdoğan want to run for president in next August's elections?

Well this has been one of the big issues in Turkish politics. What will Erdoğan do now that, by dint of his party's bylaws, he can no longer be the prime minister? And he has wanted and continues to want to be the president of Turkey. The presidential powers as they're currently written are not exactly ceremonial. There are some very important functions of the Turkish president, but the Turkish presidency is an apolitical position, one

that's above politics. It would not allow Erdoğan to play the role that he's been playing over the course of the a little more than a decade. The idea has been that a new constitution would be written, empowering the presidency. That is what Erdoğan has wanted.

I would never count Tayyip Erdoğan out. He's an absolutely phenomenal politician, who really does understand the mood of Turks and knows how to motivate his constituency.

But as a result of the Gezi Park protests and the harsh crackdown, many analysts believe that the idea of an executive presidency is no longer an option. As a result, they believe that he will either accept some sort of compromise where he will become the president and continue to lead the Justice and Development Party, or some people expect he will try to change the bylaws of the Justice and Development Party, allowing him to serve yet another term as prime minister. Or, that he's continuing to try changing the constitution in such a way that will change the nature of the powers of the presidency that will allow him to play a day-to-day role, very much like he's been doing right now. All of these options remain open; people speculate what the chances are. My sense is I would never count Tayyip Erdoğan out. He's an absolutely phenomenal politician, who really does understand the mood of Turks and knows how to motivate his constituency. I think any of those options remain open to him.

What do you foresee for President Gül?

There has been a boomlet of speculation about Gül's future since the Gezi Park protests. Some people claim that Gül has a different approach than Erdoğan on a variety of very important issues, whether it's the European Union, press freedom, or his approach to the United States or other Turkish allies. Some people are tired of Erdoğan and would prefer Gül's style. But it's very unclear how wide and deep that sentiment is.

When I was in Turkey in June at the height of these protests, Prime Minister Erdoğan was able to turn out two hundred and fifty thousand people in Ankara in two consecutive days to express their support for him and then, two days later, bring out about three hundred thousand people in Istanbul. Those are very, very significant numbers and certainly dwarf the numbers who are out in Gezi Park and Taksim Square in Istanbul and other places.

In other words, while Gül is seen as popular, he doesn't inspire the same level of support as Erdoğan.

Well, Gül is popular, the question is how popular, and whether he wants to engage in a political battle with Erdoğan, who was his ally in helping to set up the Justice and Development Party. They were two young reformists within the Turkish Islamist movement who broke away from the old ranks to establish the Justice and Development Party. There is, I think, a concern that if Gül were to take Erdoğan on directly it would split the party.

There was a story in the *New York Times* last week about how Erdoğan was unhappy with the number of jihadists who are entering Syria from Turkey. Just how serious are these border issues?

Well, in a way, the Turks have been caught with their hands in the cookie jar on this one. What they have done, while denying it from the very beginning, is they have turned a blind eye to jihadists using Turkish territory to enter the fight in Syria, and coming back across the border either for medical attention or [a respite from the fighting]. This has been something that has been going on for quite some time. People started referring to the Turkish airline flights from Istanbul to Gaziantep, a city close to the Syrian border, as the "jihadi flight." And the Turkish government, as I said, denied that this was happening. But there was a sense that they were clearly turning a blind eye to these people who were using Turkish territory to get to Syria.

The problem is that there was a growing sense that this [permissiveness] was going to come back to haunt them. There was a horrific bombing in the Turkish town of Reyhanli last spring that killed more than fifty people. Nobody's quite sure whether it was the work of some sort of extremist group, or whether it was the work of Syrian intelligence, but the idea that these jihadists were using Turkish territory had the potential to invite retaliation on the part of the Syrians. Yesterday, it seems that the Turkish military took some action against one of these extremist groups. So now they've gone from essentially turning a blind eye to recognizing that this is a significant problem for them that warrants military action.

So the United States, after threatening military action in Syria, has gone along with the Russians to get Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to give up his chemical weapons and is trying to get a Geneva conference to get a political accord. Whether that'll happen or not,

nobody knows. Do the Turks support this political agreement in Geneva?

This is not their preferred route. Their policy on Syria evolved from encouraging Assad to undertake reforms to now advocating an end to the Syrian regime. They are in a very difficult position. They are concerned that the diplomatic process that apparently began the end of Assad's arsenal of chemical weapons has essentially allowed Assad to continue to prosecute the civil war without concern for international [or] American intervention. And the Turks will continue to confront this problem of a very unstable country with refugee flows and massacres right across their border, which is having an effect on their own security, their own economy.

What would the Turks like?

The Turks would like to see something beyond this kind of narrow agreement on chemical weapons. They don't believe there's going to be much in the way of a diplomatic or political solution and that's why they've been so strong in advocating the end of the Assad regime. Now the United States publicly takes that position as well, but the two countries very much differ. The United States has set a limit on its involvement in Syria, whereas the Turks would like the United States to become more involved in helping to bring down the Assad regime.

In other words, the Turks are like the Saudis: they both would like to get rid of Assad and would like the United States to help.

Yes. And the Turks' default position will likely be supporting factions within the opposition that are friendly to them, providing refugee relief—which they deserve a lot of credit for, they've done a very good job of that—and continuing to advocate for an international intervention to bring the conflict to an end. But, you know, as we saw from the debate here in late August/early September, there's not a lot of enthusiasm about the United States getting directly involved in Syria. So there is no agreement at all with Turkey on this major issue.

Steven A. Cook, Hasib J. Sabbagh Senior Fellow for Middle Eastern Studies .

[Article 5.](#)

Al-Monitor

Turkish Intelligence Chief Both Iconoclast and Target

Rasim Ozan Kutahyali

October 21 -- The name of [Hakan Fidan](#), Turkey's intelligence chief, is appearing in reputable American newspapers in extremely negative contexts.

Before going into those negative comments in the Western media, it would be best to convey some information and my personal views about the Turkish National Intelligence Organization (MIT) official.

Fidan's impressive intellect is well known. The son of a Turkish family with extremely limited means, Fidan served as a noncommissioned officer in the Turkish armed forces for 15 years. Realizing that what he was doing was not suited to his intellectual capacity, he resigned from the armed forces in 2001.

Fidan completed master's and doctoral studies on intelligence and international relations at Turkey's prestigious Bilkent University. He paid the utmost attention to bringing up his two sons as intellectuals. He is known to enter bookstores and not come out for 10 hours. While completing his doctorate, he worked in a bureaucratic post that enabled him to visit many countries of the world. That experience contributed immensely to the development of his intellectual and organizational abilities.

Since 2009, Fidan has been the leading architect of the process that brought the Turkish state and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) to the negotiating table. He became a leading critic of the futility of the traditional Turkish state policies of assimilation, oppression and intimidation toward the Kurdish issue. He is a persistent defender of the rights and freedoms of Kurds and other oppressed social groups. As such, he is an unprecedentedly democratic-minded official in the history of Turkish intelligence.

Ridan's approach to the West is absolutely positive. He makes every effort to keep Turkey part of the Western alliance and always advocates intimate relations with Washington. He wants Turkey to have an effective role in the Western alliance and participate in developing its projects.

I personally think this is the root of his recent problems. Until now, Washington and other Western capitals were used to dealing with a passive Ankara that simply followed instructions. With Fidan came a new Ankara, fully committed to the Western alliance but active on its own and taking its own initiatives.

Now we turn to recent comments in the Western media. First, The Wall Street Journal wrote about the conflict between Ankara and Washington over Turkey's Syria policy and its alleged support for al-Qaeda terrorists in Syria. The core of the article was the discord over Syria, but for some reason, the report highlighted Fidan. According to a bizarre allegation by the paper, Fidan had [shared US-Israel-sourced intelligence with Iran](#). The report suggested that the CIA thought Fidan might have done this to gain the Iranians' confidence.

David Ignatius, a well-known columnist for the Washington Post, followed up with his own article. In that one, the intelligence-sharing claim was couched in the sensational allegation that after the MIT passed on the US-Israel intelligence to Iran, [10 Iranians working for Israel were arrested](#). The incident, hinted at by The Wall Street Journal but fully revealed by Ignatius, is reportedly two years old.

[Ismet Berkan](#) of the mainstream daily Hurriyet — a paper which keeps its distance from the Turkish government — said in one of his frequent articles on intelligence affairs that impeding Iran's nuclear program and learning more about it is [Israel's most vital national security issue](#). Now, you lose 10 of your valuable agents in such an affair, and your reaction is merely to leak bits and pieces about it to the media after such a long time? Is that possible? For Israel to recruit Iranian agents must be an extremely difficult task. To lose 10 such hard-to-find agents all at one go must have been disastrous. Reactions to such a phenomenal loss could not have been so light and simple. There must be something else behind all this.

Sources close to Fidan I spoke with say there is an effort to fully exclude Turkey from Iran and Syria issues and thus isolate it. Actually, Turkey has not been a part of the Iranian issue since it undertook to mediate in Iran's nuclear negotiations with the West and produced an agreement along with Brazil, and then voted against the US proposal at the United Nations for sanctions against Iran. Negotiations with Iran on its nuclear program have

just resumed, and the Turkish state is following the developments from the media like any outsider.

It is no secret that Turkey-Iran relations have badly deteriorated because of Syria. Before that, there was serious disagreement over Iraq. Turkey's disagreements over Syria are not only with Russia and Iran, but also with the United States. Turkey accuses the United States and the West in general of dragging their feet over Syria and acting too slowly, while they worry about not being able to predict what will follow President Bashar al-Assad. They accuse Turkey of saying, "We [just want Assad to be toppled](#); we don't care by whom."

What is the message, then, that Turkey is supposed to get about Fidan? Is this news leaking out of the blue, or is the idea is to send a message to Turkey? As Berkan asked in Hurriyet, is there a wish to isolate Turkey from its eastern and southern neighbors? After already becoming a spectator to the Iran issue, is there a plan to lower Turkey to the same status while reshaping Syria? Turkey has lost most of its influence over Iraq. Is the West that has abandoned some of its roles in the Middle East now trying to prevent or delay Turkey from stepping into the breach? Then there are the internal dimensions of the affair. It must be recognized that there is a team in the Turkish media that constantly targets Fidan. There is a widely accepted perception that these writers are guided by the intelligence units of the Turkish police. Similarly, the approach of the Gulen Movement media to Fidan is also negative. They support the police intelligence. The competition, not always friendly, between the MIT, led by Fidan, and police intelligence is public knowledge in Turkey — so much so that on Feb. 7, 2012, based on files prepared by police intelligence, some prosecutors tried to arrest Fidan for organizing the talks with the PKK. For the Turkish police and public prosecutors even to recognize the PKK as an interlocutor is a crime. Only fighting the PKK is acceptable, and the Turkish government cannot decree otherwise. This bizarre event passed into Turkish political history as an attempt at a "judicial coup" to which Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and President Abdullah Gul reacted with rage. The government quickly enacted a law providing legal protection to Fidan.

In those days, there were many newspaper articles charging Fidan of being pro-Iran. Nowadays, he is also charged with supporting the growth

of [radical groups in Syria](#) such as al-Qaeda, Jabhat al-Nusra and the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham.

[Kurdish writer Kurtulus Taviz](#), who knows the PKK well, wrote, "What is important here is to determine who is the real target. Is it Fidan or Erdogan, who gave authority to Fidan? My answer is both. Fidan is not your usual MIT undersecretary. Fidan is an official under indisputable control of the political authority. This is a vital point. The MIT as an institution has always had a key role in our political system. If it did not play a role in civilians taking over power, it always had a determining role in overthrowing the civilian authority.

"MIT, although supposedly under the orders of the civilian authority, opted to offer its clout to the service of tutelage powers was thus the second most effective power after the army to enfeeble and topple governments. Fidan's unquestionable loyalty to the civilian authority, his rejection of influence of national and international centers of gravity, made him a target of accusations."

I think that Fidan today faces systematic propaganda because of his loyalty to Erdogan. One objective of the denigration efforts is to hit at Erdogan via Fidan, as can be sensed from the incredible claims that Fidan also determines Turkey's Syria policy. It is known by all that Fidan doesn't shape Turkey's foreign policy. It is senseless, even preposterous, to accuse him of this.

It was Erdogan who named him to this post, hence the rationale of hitting at Erdogan by targeting him.

When Fidan was summoned by the prosecutor on Feb. 7, the message to Erdogan was: "You are next." Of course, Erdogan understood that he was the target and said as much.

The answer to why Fidan and Erdogan are targeted is closely linked to the peace process with the Kurds. This process is not just a domestic affair, but a regional move by Turkey. When you look at it from that perspective, you can better understand why Erdogan, as the man who launched the process, and Fidan, as the man moving it forward, are targeted by local and external powers. These attacks will not end as long as the process continues.

[Rasim Ozan Kutahyali](#) has been a columnist for Sabah since 2011, after writing for Taraf from 2008 to 2011. He is a popular political commentator

on various TV programs, having started at CNN Turk and now appearing on Beyaz TV. Kutahyali is known for his anti-militarist and liberal political views.

[Article 6.](#)

The Daily Beast

Inside Israel's Frenemy Diplomacy With Turkey

Eli Lake

October 21 - Last week, the Washington Post's David Ignatius revealed that in early 2012, Turkey gave sensitive information about Israel's spy operations to Iran—specifically, the names of up to ten Iranians who had been meeting with Israeli intelligence officers in Turkey. To many people in the intelligence community, the news was seen as a grave betrayal. “The fact those ten spies were burned by the Turks by purposely informing the Iranians is not only a despicable act, it is an act that brings the Turkish intelligence organization to a position where I assume no one will ever trust it again,” said Danny Yatom, a former chief of Israel's intelligence service, the Mossad, in an interview.

A retired senior CIA officer who spoke to The Daily Beast compared the incident to the betrayal of the Cambridge Five, a network of Soviet moles that provided highly sensitive intelligence to Moscow at the dawn of the Cold War.

All of which makes it especially surprising to some that Israel appeared to move on from the incident so quickly. This is evidenced by the fact that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu authorized a diplomatic outreach to Turkey to restore ties even after he learned about the alleged security breach. (While U.S. officials confirm the details revealed by Ignatius, the Turkish government has denied them.)

Israel believes Iran is determined to build a nuclear weapon, and it has justified its intelligence activities inside the country as crucial to delaying and sabotaging its enemy's nuclear program. In January 2012, before the Turks informed Iran about the Israeli spy network, a magnetic bomb killed Mostafa Ahmadi Rohsan, an Iranian official in charge of procurement for

the Natanz uranium enrichment facility. It was believed to have been carried out by the Mossad. And one U.S. official said Turkey's prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, was furious about the assassination. Yatom, who did not confirm whether the Mossad had anything to do with Rohsan's death, said the agency has traditionally informed its Turkish counterparts about meetings with its spies on Turkish soil. He said if Turkey were to give Iran any details about these meetings, it would compromise Israel's intelligence operations against Iran. There is some evidence to support that view. In March 2012, Time reported that Israel had curtailed much of its covert activities in Iran. The Tehran Times in April of 2012 reported that Iran's intelligence ministry had announced the arrest of 15 agents allegedly working with Mossad.

Nonetheless, Netanyahu in 2012 continued to try to mend diplomatic ties between the two countries. For example, Israeli and Turkish envoys continued to participate in a group of Syria's neighbors to plan how to secure that country's chemical weapons if the regime collapsed. Beginning in 2012, Israel also made arrangements with Turkey for trade shipments to Jordan and other countries in the Arabian Peninsula to travel through Israel and not Syria, where the civil war had worsened, according to Israeli diplomats familiar with the situation.

Netanyahu also later in 2012 instructed Joseph Ciechanover, an Israeli diplomat, to continue to probe for areas in which Turkey and Israel could cooperate. Ciechanover represented Israel on the [REDACTED] panel known as the Palmer Commission that examined a 2010 incident when Israeli commandos boarded the Mavi Marmara, a flotilla that was attempting to break the embargo of Gaza. Nine activists on the ship were killed. Erdogan expelled Israel's ambassador from Ankara in September 2011 after the report was released.

But the two countries' relations weren't severed altogether. "There were always contacts between the Turkish and Israeli side as part of the Palmer Report process and after this process. There are diplomats who unofficially interact with other diplomats and business people with close links to both governments. It is not that relations were completely ruptured after September 2011," Kemal Kirisci, a senior fellow at Brookings Institution and an expert on Turkey, said.

One Israeli diplomat familiar with the Israeli and Turkish diplomacy in 2012 said no real high level breakthroughs between the two sides happened until late August of that year. But in the fall of 2012, Ciechanover laid the groundwork in quiet meetings with Turkish envoys in Geneva. Israeli and Turkish security officials also met in November of 2012 in Cairo following a brief skirmish between Hamas and Israel.

The diplomacy in Geneva put in motion Netanyahu's public apology to Erdogan at the end of President Obama's visit to Israel in March 2013, according to Israeli diplomats. At the time, Netanyahu said on his Facebook page that he made the gesture in part because of the deteriorating situation in Syria. Turkey has provided support for the rebels in Syria, while the Assad regime is supported by Iran.

Another factor for Netanyahu in his diplomacy with Turkey has been his desire to stay on good terms with Obama, according to some observers. Elliott Abrams, who served under President George W. Bush as a senior director at the National Security Council for the Near East and North Africa, said, "I cannot believe that Netanyahu thought this effort with Turkey would work. I think like the current negotiations with the Palestinians, his main motivation is to remain very close to President Obama and the U.S. government."

Despite Netanyahu's apology in March, Turkey has not accepted a new Israeli ambassador in Ankara. The Turks have asked Israel for more compensation for the victims of families killed in the Mavi Marmara incident. Meanwhile, U.S. and Israeli officials say the Mossad will never trust their Turkish counterparts again.

Eli Lake is the senior national-security correspondent for The Daily Beast. He previously covered national security and intelligence for The Washington Times.

[Article 7](#)

The Guardian

Jerusalem elections: the ballot and the boycott

Editorial

October 21 - The vast majority of Palestinian residents of Jerusalem are expected to boycott Tuesday's municipal elections. The polling booths of east Jerusalem will be empty. To cast a vote is to acknowledge the legitimacy of the occupation, or so it is argued. "Participating in the process merely gives [the Israelis] political cover," insists Hanan Ashrawi, from the PLO's executive committee. "They want to create a reality where the Palestinians participate in the occupation of their own country." This argument has been the dominant one since Israel annexed the eastern part of the city in 1967. Which is why, in the last municipal elections, in 2008, only 2% of Palestinians voted.

But this year, for the first time ever, there is a Palestinian candidate. Fuad Saliman, a hospital technologist, is running as a part of an Israeli coalition of leftwing parties. Given that Palestinians make up well over a third of the city's population, their participation in the political process could transform a political landscape that has allocated only 10% of the local council's budget to 37% of its people. Were all such voters to make a tactical judgment to vote – bracketing out the larger question of the legitimacy of Israel's occupation – things could be very different. No one is disputing that this is a very big could. And no one is holding their breath that this is going to happen any time soon – not just because there is no political appetite for such a shift but also because there is no political leadership on the Palestinian side capable of achieving it.

As a thought experiment, however, it is fascinating. Extrapolating from the local situation in Jerusalem, what if all Palestinians made a strategic decision to seek full voting rights within the reality that is Israel, rather than demanding a separate Palestinian state? In other words, what if they transformed their struggle from a nationalist one into a civil rights one? It was a former mayor of Jerusalem, and former prime minister of Israel, Ehud Olmert, who warned that if the two-state solution collapsed Israel would "face a South African-style struggle for equal voting rights, and as soon as that happens, the state of Israel is finished."

Of course, Palestinians don't all have the same access to the ballot box. But far from looking to exert their electoral presence on the national stage, those who do have the right to vote have been exercising it less and less. Seventy-five per cent voted in the 1999 elections. Ten years later, it was

54%. The fact that it didn't dip below half earlier this year was put down to a last-minute intervention by the Arab League urging the million or so Palestinians living in Israel to get out and vote. Amid deepening despair as to the viability of a two-state solution, this is an option that is only going to attract more attention.