

# Turkey and Iran: The Politics of Strange Bedfellows

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In recent years, and especially since Operation Cast Lead and the Gaza flotilla incident, Israel and other Western states have followed the apparent reversal in Turkey's foreign policy and its distancing from the West with some trepidation. One of the manifestations of this about-face is the growing closeness between Turkey and Iran, along with other members of the radical axis. Turkey is not a party to the extensive criticism of the radicals in the Middle East that is voiced in the West and the moderate Arab states. At times it departs sharply from the positions of other NATO members, for example, in its "mediation" proposal on the Iranian nuclear issue together with Brazil, its opposition to intensifying the sanctions against Iran, and its resistance to the deployment of anti-missile defense systems on its soil.

The closeness of recent years between Iran and Turkey is a pronounced change from the mutual suspicions that long characterized the bilateral relations, particularly following the Islamic Revolution in Iran. Neither state has any territorial claim against the other, and in public statements the Turks and Iranians often stress the longstanding (over 400 years) peaceful nature of their shared border.<sup>1</sup> Trade relations have been greatly expanded and exceed the \$10 billion mark. On several occasions representatives of both states have declared their goal of tripling bilateral trade over the next five years,<sup>2</sup> and the two states are considering the possibility of signing a free trade agreement.<sup>3</sup> They are also, more than in the past, cooperating in their fight against Kurdish dissidents.

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This growing closeness should be seen in light of several factors. In recent years, the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ahmet Davutoğlu, has promoted Turkey's zero-problems policy vis-à-vis its neighboring states, whereby it must labor to resolve problems with adjacent states and encourage stability in neighboring regions. A second factor concerns America's intervention in Iraq in 2003. Neither Iran nor Turkey has any interest in seeing the Iraqi state dismantled, and America's operations in Iraq have stirred up vehement anti-American sentiments within Turkey, reminiscent of the anti-American views rampant in Iran. Furthermore, the fact that an Islamic-oriented political party currently rules Turkey means that Turkey is less hesitant than in the past about developing ties with the Shiite regime in Iran. In addition, there is the economic dimension. Turkey is the world's fifteenth largest economy; the imperative to expand its export markets and its energy needs have encouraged Turkey to develop relations with states with which it previously had few dealings.<sup>4</sup> From Tehran's perspective, the growing closeness with Turkey somewhat offsets the international isolation of Iran and the rounds of sanctions that have resulted from its nuclear program.<sup>5</sup>

The current role of Turkey in the Middle East, including in its opposition to Israel, represents a counterweight to Iranian involvement and regional ambitions, and in this sense – indirectly – is likely in the long term to serve Israel's interests.

Yet notwithstanding internal developments in Turkey and Ankara's foreign affairs policies, there are fundamental differences between Turkey and Iran.<sup>6</sup> Despite profound Islamization processes, Turkey has a Sunni majority and its regime maintains liberal characteristics; revolutionary Iran, however, is a fundamentalist Shiite religious state. Second, both Turkey and Iran, each for various historical, geographical, and material reasons, see themselves as a regional – if not global – power, which may over time result in heightened competition and even overt rivalry between the two. Iran and Turkey also disagree on the nature of the desired regime in Iraq, the situation in Lebanon, and the Arab-Israeli peace process. Especially if Iran acquires nuclear capabilities, Ankara is likely in the long

run to scale back its closeness with Iran, primarily because the two states have different long term goals and the already apparent disagreements will intensify.

Furthermore, Turkey is closely tied to the West and the United States, primarily because of its NATO membership since 1952 and its being a founding member of the G-20, and also because it is a signatory to a long list of multilateral and bilateral agreements and treaties with Western states on several issues. Because of its significant role in resolving various issues, Turkey is still the West's primary partner on a number of essential fronts, such as Iraq, where Turkey is involved in resolving the Kurdish problem; Afghanistan, where the Americans want Turkey, as a NATO member, to step up its presence; and in Iran over the nuclear issue, as Turkey's fundamental interest is to prevent a nuclear Iran. Even during the uprisings in Egypt and Libya, there has been an open channel of communication between President Obama and Prime Minister Erdoğan in order to coordinate positions. In this sense, even if Turkey seems like a much more independent player than it was in the past, it retains significant ties to the West, and the West, headed by the United States, is still interested in maintaining them.

Despite the bonds between Iran and Turkey, therefore, the potential for discord and competition for regional dominance also exists. In general, Turkey does not share Iran's ideology or interests, and in its conduct, it still seeks to maintain a balance between East and West to help it preserve its regional status. Thus in the long term, strengthening Iran's status at the expense of other elements in the region would be problematic from Turkey's perspective. Conversely, the current role of Turkey in the Middle East, including in its opposition to Israel, represents a counterweight to Iranian involvement and regional ambitions, and in this sense – indirectly – is likely in the long term to serve Israel's interests.

The purpose of this essay is to identify the points already in dispute between Turkey and Iran that may lead to more intense disagreements. This analysis can also shed light on the question of whether an Iranian-Turkish axis capable of seriously threatening Israel is likely to arise, and if so, what the weaknesses of such an axis may be.

### Potential Points of Conflict

Progress in Iran's nuclear program has several negative implications for Turkey-Iran relations. First, the Turks have on numerous occasions stated that they oppose nuclear proliferation in the Middle East.<sup>7</sup> While this pronouncement primarily targets Israel's nuclear policy, Turkey

is in principle still opposed to Iran acquiring nuclear weapons.<sup>8</sup> In late December 2010, Minister Davutoğlu explicitly stated that should Iran renege on its commitment to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, Turkey, even before the United States, would condemn Iran.<sup>9</sup> This vehemence is understandable given the effect of Iran's acquiring nuclear capabilities on the military balance between them, which today favors Ankara. Second, the West's response to Iranian nuclear development has already posed several dilemmas for Turkey, which favors dialogue with Iran over sanctions; still, Turkey wants to be seen as a state operating on the basis of international law. A manifestation of this tension was apparent in the UN Security Council vote on expanding the sanctions against Iran (Resolution 1929, which Turkey voted against) and the anti-missile defense program NATO is promoting (which Turkey endorsed but qualified as follows: that it be publicly declared that the stationing of the missiles is not meant to deal with threats from any particular country, i.e., Iran). Third, progress on the Iranian nuclear program also means the failure of Turkish mediation efforts on the issue. While the Turks could blame the West, especially the United States, or even Iran for the failure, it would still damage Ankara's prestige.

The future of Iraq following the withdrawal of American troops may also generate problems for Turkey-Iran relations. While both states, out of respective security implications, fear a dismantling of Iraq, they have different notions of what the Iraqi state should look like. Turkey would like Iraq to be ruled by as broad-based a coalition as possible that also includes appropriate representation for the Sunni minority,<sup>10</sup> while Iran prefers a weak state that is isolated as much as possible from Western and Arab influences and enjoys Shiite political dominance. In general, Iranian involvement in Iraq is motivated by what is, from the Iranian perspective, its natural sphere of influence. It is fed by both the fear of what a future Iraqi state might look like and the desire for regional hegemony, with the understanding that Iraq is an important component in its hegemonic ambitions.

Still, Iran, like Turkey, would not like to see Iraq's internal situation deteriorate, because instability there is liable to spill over into its own territory. However, should the central government in Baghdad be weakened, Iran, to the great displeasure of Ankara, could tighten its grip on the Shiite south. At the same time, Turkey already has significant

influence and economic interests in northern Iraq. In the post-US era, it may increase its influence in this part of Iraq in order to prevent the Kurds in these areas from declaring independence. Indeed, the Kurdish question in Iraq has for many years been the basis for cooperation but also for conflicts between Turkey and Iran: Turkey has accused Iran of sheltering PKK members while Iran has accused Turkey of attacking Kurdish targets in its areas of control.

With regard to Lebanon, Turkey has tried to mediate among the different factions in Lebanon and between Lebanon and Syria. However, Iran's ongoing support of Hizbollah is a source of instability within Lebanon and for the Lebanese-Israeli dynamic. In November 2010, Erdoğan visited Lebanon – a visit that earned extensive media coverage – a short time after the Iranian president's visit there; this may be interpreted as an attempt to increase Turkey's influence in Lebanon at the expense of Iran's. During the visit, Erdoğan, in an effort to be seen as Lebanon's champion, criticized Israel harshly and even threatened to respond should Israel have the audacity to attack Lebanon.<sup>11</sup> However, the extent to which Turkey has forged closer relations with Hizbollah is unclear. For example, it was reported that when Erdoğan returned from Lebanon he said that Hizbollah was not linked to the murder of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri.<sup>12</sup> In addition, Turkey proposed postponing publication of the report by the UN commission of inquiry on the murder of al-Hariri so that the Lebanese situation does not again deteriorate into civil war. After the resignation of Hizbollah ministers and the collapse of the Lebanese government in January 2011, Turkey persisted in its effort to mediate between the factions in Lebanon. The Turkish foreign minister and the prime minister of Qatar even met with Hizbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, although Turkey and Qatar subsequently suspended their mediation efforts.<sup>13</sup> This may be viewed as a Turkish failure in weakening Iran's foothold in Lebanon but also as a desire to distance itself somewhat from Hizbollah.

Syria: In addition to establishing Ankara's status as a mediator, the purpose of Turkey's mediation efforts in the Israeli-Syrian channel (four rounds of indirect talks between May and December 2008) was to demonstrate that Syria is not a member of the "axis of evil": it is a secular state and unlike Iran, Hizbollah, or Hamas, does not rule out the possibility of peace with Israel. Moreover, it is not inconceivable that

the growing closeness between Turkey and Syria has Iran worried that Syria is considering exchanging its strategic reliance on Iran for strategic reliance on Turkey. Indeed, in recent years Ankara and Damascus have increased their joint military activities (joint exercises, the first of their kind, started in April 2009) among the air, armored, and infantry forces along the shared border; there were likewise reports of Turkish-Syrian cooperation against the PKK.<sup>14</sup> Also significant were Turkey's efforts at mediating between Syria and Iraq after the latter accused Damascus of closing its eyes to – and even assisting in – acts of terrorism on Iraqi soil in August 2009.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict: Despite the current poor relations between Israel and Turkey, Turkey still supports a settlement, whereas Iran denies the basic legitimacy of the State of Israel. Iran lies outside the Arab-Israeli/Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and it is doing all in its power to undermine any possible settlement by financing, training, and shipping arms to terrorist organizations such as Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Hamas. By contrast, the relationship between Turkey and Hamas (Turkey recognized the Hamas government as early as 2006 and even hosted Khaled Mashal in Ankara that same year) stems not necessarily from a desire to strengthen the organization's control of the Gaza Strip, rather from its stance that to advance negotiations between Israel and

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the Palestinians it is necessary to treat Hamas as a legitimate actor. Beyond this, Turkish public opinion has long empathized with the Palestinian struggle; there is also some sense of responsibility for the fact that the Palestinian problem was created during the end of the Ottoman era. The result, at least for the Palestinian issue, is that Erdoğan is trying to position Turkey somewhere between the Arab/Muslim world and Israel/the West, thereby impeding Iran's attempt to take exclusive control of the issue as a way of increasing its influence on Arab public opinion above the heads of Arab leaders.

Another possible locus of friction between the states is the struggle over image and leadership in the Muslim world. It has been claimed that Turkey's image in the Arab world today is the most favorable that it

as been since World War I.<sup>15</sup> In a public opinion poll taken in a number of Muslim countries shortly after the flotilla to Gaza, Erdoğan, with 20 percent of the respondents' support, was voted the most popular leader.<sup>16</sup> Erdoğan was also CNN Arabic-language website's 2010 Man of the Year, with 74 percent of the vote.<sup>17</sup> In a poll taken among Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, 43 percent of respondents saw Turkey as the state most supportive of their struggle.<sup>18</sup> These polls, as well as T-shirts and posters with Erdoğan's picture sold not just in the West Bank and Gaza Strip but also in some Arab states, are a measure of his tremendous popularity in the Middle East. The editor of the daily *al-Quds al-Arabiya* who, after the flotilla incident criticized the impotence of Arab regimes vis-à-vis Israel, praised the Turkish prime minister saying, he was more Arab than the Arabs.<sup>19</sup> The flotilla to Gaza, preceded by Erdoğan's harsh words about Israel during the Second Lebanon War and even more so during Operation Cast Lead and the incident in Davos involving Israeli President Shimon Peres, established Erdoğan's status in the Arab world as a tenacious opponent of Israel. The fact that the opposition is primarily rhetorical and relies on "soft power" yet nonetheless generates results, raises the question among Israel's opponents if this is not the more appropriate route to take rather than the violent one promoted by Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Hassan Nasrallah.<sup>20</sup>

Future developments in the Arab world may also ignite clashes between Iran and Turkey. While officially Tehran was pleased by the shock waves rolling through the Arab world and especially the fall of the Mubarak regime,<sup>21</sup> there were also concerns that the waves of protest would spread to Iran. For its part, Turkey was more cautious in its statements about Egypt but also called on Mubarak to step down. Similar to the tense relations between Iran and Egypt under Mubarak, relations between Ankara and Cairo were strained even before the revolution in Egypt because of the more dominant role in the Middle East that Turkey was trying to appropriate.<sup>22</sup> In this sense, Mubarak's disappearance from the stage could lead to improvements in Egypt's relations with both states. Nonetheless, Egypt's weakening stresses even more the greater process of the weakening of existing Arab regimes; this will, in the long term, increase the chance for a struggle between Turkey and Iran over regional hegemony. The possibility that the Muslim Brotherhood will strengthen its grip on Egypt raises the question whether a Turkish democracy can



indeed serve as a model for Egypt. By contrast, Iran presents a different model, and therefore struggles for influence over the future of Egypt are a real possibility.

Another source of friction between Iran and Turkey may result from Ankara's forging of closer relations with the Arab Gulf states, which fear Iran and seek to prevent its attaining nuclear capabilities. This concern joins their disappointment with America's Middle East policy, and the growing sense that they can no longer rely fully on an American defense umbrella brought about a honeymoon in Turkey-Gulf states political, economic, and security relations (e.g., the goal within the next two years is to expand trade between Turkey and Saudi Arabia to \$10 billion, compared to \$3.5 billion in 2009 and \$5.5 billion in 2008).<sup>23</sup> In the view of the Arab Gulf states, a strategic partnership with Turkey may help balance Iran's power in the Gulf. Therefore, they supported Turkey's candidacy as an observer in the Arab League, Turkey's Israel-Syria mediation attempts, and the strengthening of Gulf state cooperation with NATO. Recognition of Turkey's status in the Gulf was made official with the signing of a security memorandum of understanding: for the first time in the Gulf states foreign policy, a state was recognized as a strategic partner of the Gulf Cooperation Council.<sup>24</sup>

Another issue is energy. In recent years, Turkey has come to the conclusion that control of energy pipelines is no less important than who controls the energy sources. Iran is the second largest supplier of natural gas to Turkey after Russia, and in 2009 several joint agreements were signed to transport natural gas from Iran through Turkey. The realization of some of these agreements is far from certain, however, because of the intensified sanctions against Iran. It is not certain if the other partners in the Nabucco Project, which envisions the building of a pipeline from the Caspian Sea and the Middle East to Europe through Turkey, will agree to Iran's being one of the states providing the natural gas.<sup>25</sup>

The energy issue is also linked to the broader question of a possible struggle between Iran and Turkey over influencing the central Asia states, some of which border the Caspian. While most of those states have Turkmeni majorities, creating the potential for Turkish influence there, Iran views the area as its own backyard and its legitimate sphere of influence.<sup>26</sup> Regarding the Caspian Sea states, especially Azerbaijan and the Nagorno-Karabakh issue, there have been disputes between Turkey



and Iran in the past and these could surface again. Iran has a significant Azeri minority (almost 25 percent of the population) and therefore its relations with Azerbaijan have usually been tense out of the concern that the latter would want to establish a greater Azerbaijan. On the other hand, Azerbaijan is the state closest to Turkey from among the Turkmeni states, even though in recent years there has been a certain cooling-off in Azeri-Turkish relations due to Turkish attempts to engage with Armenia, Azerbaijan's enemy in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

### Ramifications for Israel

From a state with a pro-Western image and a partner in the Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Syrian peace processes, Turkey has become a problematic if not a downright negative element from Israel's perspective. It has extended a hand to Iran, Syria, and Hamas – and even Hizbollah – while establishing itself as a fierce critic of Israel. Indeed, in the short term Ankara's position has brought it closer, if only in mindset, to Tehran. Turkey's moves to distance itself from Israel and its critical expressions on Palestinian issues have been welcomed by Iran's Supreme Leader, who stated that in this way Turkey "is coming closer to the Muslim world."<sup>27</sup>

Generally speaking, Erdoğan's Turkey seeks to strengthen its position in the Arab and Muslim world, even at the cost of its ties with Israel. This has immediate problematic ramifications from Israel's perspective. At the operational security level, the growing closeness between Ankara and Tehran (and Syria) allows easier transport of arms to Hizbollah and Hamas by means of Turkey.<sup>28</sup> The fact that Turkey has knowledge of advanced warfare methods and armaments due to its cooperation with Israel is liable to serve Israel's enemies. Indeed, it was recently reported that Turkey has agreed to train Syrian forces.<sup>29</sup> In addition, the loss of cooperation between Israel and Turkey's air forces and intelligence branches is liable to damage Israel. Defense Minister Ehud Barak even warned of Israeli information leaking from Turkey to Iran in light of the years-long working relationship between the Mossad and Turkish intelligence.<sup>30</sup>

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To be sure, Turkey, which apparently wants to have its cake and eat it too, is paying a significant price in its ties with Europe and the United States for its growing closeness to Iran and attitude to Israel. The American administration has cast doubts on the ability of the Turkish government to be a reliable partner, has characterized its government as one “infiltrated by extremist Muslims,”<sup>31</sup> and has even hinted that Turkey is violating the sanctions against Iran.<sup>32</sup> US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates expressed concern over the deterioration in Turkish-Israeli relations and its effect on regional stability.<sup>33</sup> These sentiments join the difficulties Turkey is facing in its efforts to be accepted into the EU. Overall, then, Europe’s unwillingness to strengthen its ties with Turkey and some of America’s actions in the Middle East are among the elements affecting Ankara in its eastwards move. Therefore, the deterioration in Turkish-Israeli relations should be viewed in the greater context of Turkey’s changing orientation.

The crisis in Turkish-Israeli relations and Turkey’s possible turning away from the West may connect Turkey with Iran if only because in the past the Israel issue cast a shadow over the states’ relations. Iran, for example, had reservations about security cooperation between Ankara and Jerusalem and for years exerted pressure on Turkey to scale it back. Nonetheless, it may be that a struggle between the two will emerge over leading the struggle against Israel, one that is uncomfortable from Israel’s perspective but that may indirectly also lead to a weakening of Iran’s influence in the region.

The recognition that the level of cooperation that had characterized Turkish-Israeli relations will not return, at least not in the near future, has made Israel, as part of its own process of disenchantment, place greater emphasis on relations with states such as Greece and Bulgaria, which share Israel’s concerns about Turkish policies and identify the potential for security, economic, tourist, and technological cooperation with Jerusalem. The “Balkan alliance” has already produced frequent mutual visits at all diplomatic levels, and at the strategic level joint exercises of the air forces are taking place.<sup>34</sup> Nonetheless, relations between Israel and Turkey have fluctuated before, and both states have sought to maintain open channels of communication to the extent possible. Even under the pall cast by the current crisis, commercial, cultural, scientific and tourist relations continue to be preserved, albeit of smaller scopes than in the past.

## Conclusion

Turkey and Iran have become leading players in the Middle East; in tandem, bilateral relations have grown stronger. Nevertheless, in the long term, a substantive challenge to Turkey's regional ambitions may actually be posed by Iran. Similarly, Ankara's policies are likely to represent a significant constraint for Tehran's regional objectives. While in the short run Tehran is reaping significant dividends because of Turkey's growing opposition to Israel, its championing of the Palestinian cause, and its efforts to mediate on the nuclear issue, in the long term Turkey's attempt to increase its regional influence may come at the expense of Tehran, which is also seeking a hegemonic role in the Middle East, and it too, like Ankara, is using the same means – especially opposition to Israel – to make that happen.

At least on some issues Ankara and Tehran's essential interests are opposed to one another, and this divergence could generate a clash between the two rising non-Arab powers in the Middle East. Nevertheless, it is far from certain the two states could not succeed in resolving these disputes through negotiations. Indeed, the zero-problems policy promoted by Turkey vis-à-vis its neighbors demonstrates how the change in that nation's fundamental perception of Iran is driving the growing closeness between the two states. However, some of the regional issues raised above will require both states to take a clear stand, which may put them at odds with one another and become obstacles to attempts to tighten the ties between them even further.

## Notes

- 1 See, e.g., "Erdoğan Emphasizes 400-Years of Friendship with Iran," *trt-world.com*, September 17, 2010, <http://www.trtturkmence.com/trtworld/en/news-Detail.aspx?HaberKodu=7bb760dd-5c8b-4e8f-abfa-a6f6eb88fc07>.
- 2 For comparison, in 2000 the scope of trade between the states was only \$1 billion. Still, the scope of trade between Turkey and Iran in 2010 was only slightly higher than in 2008, while in 2009 trade dropped to \$5.5 billion. In 2009, trade between Israel and Turkey stood at some \$2.5 billion. See, e.g., Doron Peskin, "The Riots in Iran: Turkish President Discusses Expanding Economic Ties in Tehran," *Calcalist*, February 15, 2011, <http://www.calcalist.co.il/world/articles/0,7340,L-3508306,00.html>. Beyond this, Iran recently cancelled a fine Turkey was to have paid for failing in 2010 to buy all the gas it committed itself to purchase in mutual agreements. Zvi Barel, "Rebound

- and Alcohol," *Haaretz*, January 12, 2011, <http://www.haaretz.co.il/hasite/pages/ShArt.jhtml?itemNo=1209185>.
- 3 The several trade barriers on the Iranian side are the central obstacle in increasing Turkish exports to Iran and have caused the current Turkish trade deficit with Iran. Saban Kardas, "Turkish-Iranian Economic Ties Flourish," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, February 18, 2011, [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=37534&cHash=3625135362ac43333ce89a49378aa403](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=37534&cHash=3625135362ac43333ce89a49378aa403).
  - 4 Gallia Lindenstrauss, *Mediation and Engagement: A New Paradigm for Turkish Foreign Policy and its Implications for Israel*, Memorandum No. 104 (Tel Aviv: Institute for National Security Studies, 2010), pp. 20-23.
  - 5 Emrullah Uslu, "Turkey-Iran Relations: A Trade Partnership or a Gateway for Iran to Escape International Sanctions," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, March 3, 2009, [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=34653&tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=27&cHash=55e241d245](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=34653&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=27&cHash=55e241d245).
  - 6 There are those who view the processes occurring in Turkey as similar to the processes experienced by Iran, albeit more gradual. Thus, for example, Bernard Lewis said (February 18, 2011), at the home of the American ambassador to Israel, "Turkey is marching to the place where Iran is coming from."
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  - 8 Ilter Turan, "Turkey's Iran Policy: Moving Away from Tradition," *GMF Brief On Turkey*, June 25, 2010.
  - 9 "Davutoğlu Blames Israel for Failure to Mend Ties," *Today's Zaman*, December 27, 2010, [http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail\\_getNewsById.action?load=detay&newsId=230778&link=230778](http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?load=detay&newsId=230778&link=230778).
  - 10 Mahir Zeynalov, "Turkey's Policy in Iraq Aims for Broad-based Government," *Today's Zaman*, August 8, 2010, <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/news-218446-turkeys-policy-in-iraq-aims-for-broad-based-government.html>.
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  - 12 *Al-Safir*, November 29, 2010, at MEMRI: <http://www.memri.org/cgi-webaxy/sal/sal.pl>.
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  - 14 According to the Turkish daily *Milliyet*, the Turkish parliament has discussed approving a comprehensive agreement of Turkish-Syrian cooperation on fighting terrorism, especially the Kurdish PKK; MEMRI, February 13, 2011, [http://www.memri.org/il/cgi-webaxy/sal/sal.pl?lang=he&ID=107345\\_memri&act=show2&dbid=articles&dataid=2675](http://www.memri.org/il/cgi-webaxy/sal/sal.pl?lang=he&ID=107345_memri&act=show2&dbid=articles&dataid=2675).
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  - 17 "CNN Arabic Website Names PM Erdogan 'Man of the Year,'" *Today's Zaman*, January 3, 2011, <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-231392-cnns-arabic-website-names-pm-erdogan-man-of-the-year.html>.
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