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## **The Gaza Betrayal? Understanding Muslim Rulers' Passivity in the Gaza Crisis: What Has Caused the Passivity of Muslim States in Taking Proactive Measures Concerning the Gaza Crisis?**

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# The Gaza Betrayal? Understanding Muslim Rulers' Passivity in the Gaza Crisis

What Has Caused the Passivity of Muslim States in Taking Proactive Measures Concerning the Gaza Crisis?

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## **Disclaimer**

*It is crucial to emphasize that this research is not normative. It does not evaluate whether the actions of these states are morally right or wrong. Instead, the aim is to provide an objective exploration and explanation of why Muslim states have responded to the Gaza crisis in the manner observed, ensuring the integrity and impartiality of the study.*

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# Abstract

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The Gaza crisis, which started on 7th October 2023 after Hamas attacks on Israel, killing 1139 Israelis, the conflict has resulted in tragic numbers, as of May 2024, with at least 34,622 Palestinian deaths, including over 9,500 women and 14,500 children, and 77.867 injuries, 1.7 Million internally displaced persons, and 1.1 million people projected to face catastrophic levels of food insecurity. The significant number of casualties has prompted widespread reference to the conflict as Israel's war on Gaza, describing it as an Israeli massacre and genocide against Palestinians. The observed passivity of Islamic/Muslim-majority countries in actively addressing the Gaza crisis presents a puzzling scenario. It significantly raises questions about the dynamics of Muslim states' behavior within international relations. This research has aimed to provide insights into the reasons behind this passive stance of the Muslim states, in particular, Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, and Iran. By using qualitative and quantitative methods on these three separate cases within the scope of the Realism theory of International Relations, the research has found that the three major regional Muslim states have not taken proactive measures concerning the Gaza crisis due to their self-interests, reckoning with political and economic repercussions.

# Introduction

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“One minute, one minute, one minute!” the then Prime Minister Erdoğan of Türkiye stated as he got interrupted by the moderator at the 2009 World Economic Forum in response to Israeli President S. Peres’ justification of Operation Cast Lead. Afterward, he lambasted Peres with words like: “You know very well how to kill. I know very well how you kill children on the beaches,” and left the stage abruptly. Erdoğan’s stance made him an instant symbol of pro-Palestinian sentiment across the Arab states and domestically. President Erdoğan has also been confronting the international community regularly at the yearly United Nations General Assemblies concerning the Israel occupation of Palestine (Karan, 2023).

Throughout the century-long Israel-Palestine conflict, Arab countries have shown various forms of support for Palestine. For example, After Israel declared independence in line with the U.N. partition plan that would split Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states, the Arab world started the Arab-Israeli War of 1948. Other occasions that demonstrated Arab support were mutual defense pacts by some Arab states in anticipation of a mobilization of Israeli troops and The Six-Day War in 1967. The active participation of Arab nations politically and militarily highlighted their dedication to supporting Palestine and their united stance against the expansion of Israel (U.N, n.d.; CFR, 2024).

Coming to the Gaza crisis, which started on 7th October 2023 after Hamas attacks on Israel killing 1139 Israelis, the conflict has resulted in tragic numbers, as of May 2024 with at least 34,622 Palestinian deaths, including over 9,500 women and 14,500 children, and 77.867 injuries, 1.7 Million internally displaced persons, and 1.1 million people projected to face catastrophic levels of food insecurity (IPC Phase 5) as reported by different sources exhibited by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA, 2024).

The significant number of casualties has prompted widespread reference to the conflict as Israel’s war on Gaza, describing it as an Israeli massacre and genocide against Palestinians. South Africa notably supported this view and filed an application instituting proceedings against Israel on 29th December 2023. The charges were based on alleged breaches of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (“Genocide Convention”) concerning the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip (Berg, 2024).

### ***Relevance Research Question***

Muslim states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) held a summit on 11 November 2023 to address the situation in Gaza. The summit resolutions were mainly based on humanitarian and political measures, such as providing aid to Gaza, initiating demands from the international order and the UNSC, and rhetorically condemning Israel (Organization of Islamic Cooperation, 2023). This summit is a typical illustration of how the Muslim states have reacted to the Gaza crisis so far.

Considering the number of casualties, the regional prominence of the Muslim states, and the proximity of the crisis, it is remarkable that they have not engaged in measures to stop the current crisis in Gaza and how they have ‘turned a blind eye’ to the current Gaza crisis. The Crisis and the reluctance of Muslim states have prompted worldwide condemnations, including massive boycotts and protests, and have presented a puzzling scenario. This research aims to provide insights into the reasons behind this passive stance of the Muslim states. Hence, this study's research question (R.Q.) is: “What has caused the passivity of Muslim states in taking proactive measures concerning the Gaza crisis?”

# Literature Review

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The Palestinian issue has a complex history that spans nearly a century. In this section, I will explore the literature focused on the relationship between the Muslim states (Türkiye, Saudi-Arabia, and Iran) and Israel and what factors have contributed to it.

## *Türkiye*

The literature on Türkiye's approach to the Palestinian issue has addressed the matter mainly along two lines. First, some scholars have focused on Türkiye's policy within the broader context of its relations with the Middle East, like Bishku (2006), Uzer (2016) and Kınacıoğlu (2022). A second line of studies considers Türkiye's policy towards Israel concerning its ideological shifts and domestic politics, such as those of Kanat and Hannon (2017), Aviv (2021), and Şafak (2024).

Aviv (2021), in the *Middle Eastern Studies Journal*, mentions the shift in policy of the Turks, stating: "Yet, as Operation Cast Lead took place right after Turkey attempted to mediate between Israel and Syria, President Erdoğan was outraged and blamed Israel for ruining Turkey's peace efforts" (p.4) and adding that "Erdoğan said that Israel was worse than the Nazis" (p. 12) due to Operation Cast lead on Gaza. He also points to domestic politics significantly influencing Türkiye's foreign policy (Aviv, 2021, p. 6). Uzer (2016) outlines the historical progression of Türkiye's policy from the initial recognition of Israel in 1949 to demoting relations with Israel after the 1956 Suez War, joining the Rabat Summit of Muslim countries in 1969, closing down its consulate in Jerusalem and downgrading its embassy representation in 1980 after Israel declared Jerusalem as its capital (Uzer, 2016, pp. 2-3).

A. Şafak (2024) touches upon the shift in Turkish policy concerning Israel, stating that: "The crisis in bilateral relations erupted when Israel launched Operation Cast Lead" (p. 116). Şafak also argues that the AKP's Islamist discourse and admiration for the Ottoman legacy have further influenced Türkiye's foreign policy, akin to Kınacıoğlu (2022), making its relationship with Israel subordinate to the Palestinian cause. However, Şafak emphasizes that in 2022, President Erdoğan changed his regional strategy by reaching out to Israel to boost Türkiye's security and economic interests because the country struggled with an economic crisis and security concerns like instability in its southern borders (Şafak, 2024, p. 120). In further underscoring Türkiye's impartiality and pragmatism regarding the Palestinian case, Bishku (2006) highlights that those policies are essential to Türkiye to maintain its mediator role and



preserve security relations with Israel. He emphasizes that Türkiye's influence in the Middle East relies on balanced relations with all conflicting parties (Bishku, 2006, p. 187). Kanat and Hannon (2017) further elaborate on the factors sustaining this moderate stance, including political motivations for better access to western capitals, shared security threats, and the growth of bilateral trade. Additionally, shared concerns over Iran's regional influence and sectarian conflicts align with Turkish and Israeli interests.

### ***Saudi Arabia***

The literature on Saudi Arabia's approach to the Palestinian issue similarly identifies two primary perspectives. The first perspective focuses on Saudi Arabia's historical anti-Israel stance, which was driven by religious and territorial concerns, as highlighted by Penkovstev, Gafurov, and Shibanova (2019) and Rabi and Mueller (2017). However, they also mention its adherence to initiatives like the 2002 Saudi initiative and the 1981 Fahd Plan, which proposed normalization with Israel under specific conditions tied to the Palestinian issue.

The second perspective highlights a more recent shift under Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman (MBS). Furlan (2019) and Rynhold and Yaari (2019, 2020) discuss Saudi Arabia's semi-official moves towards normalization with Israel and a more flexible stance under MBS, which has expressed interest in establishing relations irrespective of progress on the Palestinian conflict (Rynhold & Yaari, 2019, p. 3). According to them, the shared threat posed by Iran drives this, which also represents Mueller's (2022, p.118) views. This and economic ties are also underscored by Abadi (2019, p. 446) and Zisser (2023), stating: "The Abraham Accords represented the willingness and even the desire of the Arab signatories to establish warm peace and normalization with Israel [...] in contrast to the past" (pp. 459-460).

### ***Iran***

The literature on Iran's approach to the Palestinian issue presents a more consistent picture of hostility towards Israel characterized by profound hostility deeply rooted in ideological, religious, and geopolitical factors.

Furlan (2022) and Menashri (2006) both emphasize Iran's perception of Israel as an illegitimate occupier of Islamic lands and an oppressor of Muslims, which has been deeply embedded in Iran's political rhetoric since the Islamic Revolution. Furlan mentions that in Iran's view, the U.S. is the 'Great Satan,' and Israel the 'Little Satan' as an oppressor of the Muslims of Palestine (Furlan, 2022, p. 172).

Samuel and Rajiv (2016) and Bahgat (2006) discuss Iran's actions in more concrete terms, highlighting its support for Palestinian armed groups and its broader role in regional resistance against Israeli actions. Samuel and Rajiv point out that Israel views Iran's activities as direct threats to its security, including accusations of supporting international terrorist campaigns (Samuel & Rajiv, 2016, pp. 48–49). Bahgat also adds that Iran's involvement is not only ideological but also includes substantial material support to groups like Hezbollah, aimed at deterring Israeli actions that threaten Iranian interests (Bahgat, 2006, p. 363). Inbar contributes a geopolitical perspective, discussing how Iran's regional ambitions and revolutionary zeal fuel its support for proxies like Hezbollah and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (Inbar, 2020, p. 2).

### *Discussion*

The literature is rich and provides many insights into the current Gaza crisis. Scholars illustrate how Türkiye's policies towards Israel and Palestine have varied from active opposition and mediation efforts to maintaining strategic alliances and balancing regional interests. Coming to Saudi Arabia, while it historically maintained a hardline stance supporting the Palestinians, after recognizing Israel had become a key actor in the region, the Arab state started seeking stable relations. The literature about Iran reveals that Iran's foreign policy has consistent hostility towards Israel, supported by both ideological convictions and strategic considerations.

Despite the valuable input of the literature, it is insufficient to provide definitive answers to our inquiry. The main reason is that our case is very recent, and factors contributing to non-intervention and passivity are versatile, as international relations between states are very elastic and fluid. Consequently, the importance of our Research Question becomes even more evident.

# Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis

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In this research, I will adopt the Realist theory of international relations, a theory of profound significance in understanding global politics. Discussing realism in international relations requires highlighting several foundational concepts as it is a diverse theory. These are power, statism, anarchy, survival, egoistic human nature, and self-help. Firstly, the notion of power is critical. Realists measure power by a country's economic size, wealth, military strength, and population. These factors determine the political influence of a state. Statism emphasizes the role of nations as primary players in global affairs. Hence, individuals, institutions, and international organizations are not pivotal in international relations. The principle of anarchy underscores the absence of a global governing authority. It necessitates that nations prioritize their interests above others to ensure their existence. For states, the foremost priority is their security and continuance. However, some realist theorists, like Mearsheimer, suggest that nations often seek to improve their power and capabilities beyond mere survival needs and think that safety for a state lies in expanding as much as it can (Baylis, Smith & Owens, 2020, pp. 134-135). Human nature and self-help are particularly critical in elucidating the topic of research:

Realists often view human nature as inherently self-centered, meaning the domain of politics is shaped by the selfish desires inherent in human nature (Baylis et al., 2020, pp. 133, 136). In traditional realist thinking, self-help is the core principle guiding state behavior in the global arena. This notion stems from the belief in inherently egotistic human nature. Given the concept of anarchy, each nation is solely responsible for its safety and wealth. Realists argue that international institutions fall short of providing adequate security for states.

Consequently, in an anarchical order marked by unpredictability, nations are left to depend solely on themselves. They are compelled to establish their own strategic goals and must enhance their military strength or form alliances to shield against external dangers (Waltz, 2000, pp. 33, 36; Reus-Smit, 2004, pp. 15-16; Jervis, 1999). Thus, after presenting the relevant literature and explaining what theory this research will be based on, I have formed the following hypothesis, which is of utmost importance in our current global context.

*Hypothesis:* The major regional Muslim states have not taken proactive measures concerning the Gaza crisis due to their self-interests, reckoning with political and economic repercussions.

### ***Conceptualization***

For a comprehensive understanding of the concepts of “proactive measures” and “political and economic repercussions” in the context of genocide prevention, I will draw upon James Waller’s (2016) work “Confronting Evil: Engaging Our Responsibility to Prevent Genocide”. Waller's book provides a detailed analysis of measures that could act as deterrents or coercive tools. The same measures may also discourage another state actor from interfering in the affairs of a state that is or is about to commit genocide. Thus, the measures discussed serve dual purposes: they represent both “proactive measures” and “political and economic repercussions”. The proactive measures can be divided into political, economic, and military measures.

Political or diplomatic penalties can involve severing formal diplomatic relations with a nation or significantly reducing the usual level of diplomatic interactions. Actions can include recalling or expelling diplomats, withdrawing a political mission or embassy, imposing limits on diplomatic representation, and reducing the strength of diplomatic ties (Waller, 2016, p. 231). Economic sanctions like trade embargoes have the potential to economically isolate an offensive regime to the degree that could significantly weaken it. These embargoes may entail actions like suspending or terminating trade agreements and imposing restrictions on a country or regime's income-generating activities (Waller, 2016, p. 240). Other economic coercive measures include threatening or depriving states and freezing monetary assets (Waller, 2016, p. 241). Examples of military measures are limiting access to weapons, restricting movements, and controlling communications, which can disrupt perpetrators’ capabilities to carry out destructive actions (Waller, 2016, p. 255). Second, a heightened military presence in the area can serve as a potent deterrent against a perpetrator regime (Waller, 2016, p. 256). The most expensive approach in a military preventive response arsenal is deploying armed forces in a forceful intervention directly or through third parties (Waller, 2016, p. 259).

# Research Design

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## *Methodological approach*

To scrutinize what factors have caused Muslim states to not take proactive measures in solving the Gaza crisis, qualitative and quantitative research methods will be adopted in three case studies. A case study in this context is the most appropriate research design; as Halperin & Heath (2012) state, “The great advantage of the case study is that by focusing on a single case, that case can be intensively examined” (p. 234), and “Single-country case studies are often used to uncover causal paths and mechanisms and assess specific mechanisms identified in theories” (p. 167), as is the objective in this study. Case studies are often called process tracing, “a method for identifying the causal relations that connect hypothesized causes and outcomes. However, it “requires identifying both events and mechanisms [...]. The event will be a critical juncture: a point in time ‘where, for some reason, an old path is abandoned and a new path is entered upon’ [...] (pp. 269-270). Hence, that specific method will not be utilized in this research, as the non-action of Muslim states can hardly be defined as a “critical juncture”.

## *Case Selection*

For this analysis, I will investigate why Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, and Iran are passive in taking proactive measures to resolve the Gaza Crisis. A couple of factors make it especially interesting for these three cases to ask why they are passive.

The states’ common religion -including the principles of brotherhood and unity (Ummah) -, proximity, regional power, and historical affairs with Israel make these cases especially interesting to investigate. Under the rule of President Erdoğan, Türkiye has pursued what many describe as a neo-Ottoman path, seeking to expand its influence in the region. This has included various military operations at its southeast border and other interventions to reinforce its geopolitical stance. The “Great Palestine Meeting,” organized by President Erdoğan on October 28th, 2023, drew hundreds of thousands to Istanbul to protest Israel’s ongoing bombardment of the Gaza Strip and to call for a ceasefire. During his speech, President Erdoğan declared: “From now on, we will continue on our path with the motto that we may suddenly knock on your door one night” (Politics Today, 2023, par. 5).

Exploring the passivity of Saudi Arabia in the Gaza crisis is particularly interesting due to its unique position both as a religious leader and a geopolitical heavyweight. As the custodian of Islam’s two holiest sites, Saudi Arabia holds significant religious authority that influences its

actions and policies. Typically, such a position might impel a state to take a more active role in conflicts affecting Muslim communities, especially in the context of the Gaza crisis. Meanwhile, Iran's restraint is particularly puzzling. Iran has been known for its vehement anti-Israel rhetoric and longstanding support for the Palestinian cause. So, Iran's absence of (military) proactive measures in Gaza contrasts sharply with its usual regional activism, raising question marks.

### ***Operationalization***

The analysis will focus on three distinct cases: Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, and Iran. Each state in the analysis will be segmented into three parts. Initially, I will outline the key actions these states have undertaken regarding the Gaza crisis, focusing on the period from October 7, 2023, to May 2024. In the second section, I will exhibit the factors contributing to the observed passivity. I will scrutinize both or one of the following segments, dependent on the preponderant relevancy: First, trade volume and economic interests. This segment will evaluate each state's trade volume and economic relationships with Israel. This examination will highlight the economic interdependencies and the strategic economic interests at play to provide insights into each state's economic motivations and dependencies. Second, political and security issues. This part will delve into each state's political stakes and security concerns with Israel. This will show how these relationships shape each state's geopolitical strategies and foreign policy decisions.

The third section will involve a discussion, which is vital as it is where inferences are drawn from the results. To ensure a smooth inference, I will compare the state's current geopolitical and economic status with historical precedents to identify shifts or continuities in behavior. This I call "Method A." Second, I will exhibit recent statements by the relevant state officials regarding bilateral relations or actions taken in response to the Gaza crisis. This I call "Method B." After using one of the methods, I will conclude the discussion.

This approach enhances the research's internal validity. In this case, external validity is not a concern as the research does not seek to generalize findings to other contexts; instead, it emphasizes the uniqueness of each case studied. At last, I will provide my conclusion.

By systematically analyzing these dimensions, the study aims to uncover underlying factors that may contribute to these nations' observed passivity regarding the Gaza crisis. In the table below, I have provided what specific indicators I will look for and which sources I will utilize.

**Table 1.** Operationalization

Segments	Indicators	Sources
Economic Interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Imports and Exports</li><li>- Trade Agreements and Deals</li><li>- Potential Interstate Projects</li><li>- Official Communications, including Press Releases, Official Statements, and Press Conferences by Relevant State Officials</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- United Nations Commodity Trade Statistics Database (UN Comtrade)</li><li>- International Trade Centre (ITC)</li><li>- Turkish Statistical Institute</li><li>- Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)</li><li>- Relevant State Government Websites</li></ul>
Political and Security Interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Perceived Security Threats</li><li>- Domestic Politics</li><li>- Personal Policy Preferences</li><li>- Official Communications, including Press Releases, Official Statements, and Press Conferences by Relevant State Officials</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Scholarly Journal Articles</li><li>- News Articles from Reputable Papers</li></ul>

# Analysis

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## *Türkiye*

### **Part One: Taken Measures**

As of May 2024, Türkiye has implemented several measures against Israel concerning the Gaza crisis. Firstly, on November 4th, 2023, Türkiye said it was recalling its ambassador to Israel due to Israel's refusal to agree to a ceasefire in Gaza. Second, President Erdoğan said he was breaking off contact with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, stating: "Netanyahu is no longer someone we can talk to. We have written him off" (TOI, 2023, par. 3) Finally, on May 3rd, Türkiye announced that it would not resume its annual \$7 billion trade with Israel until a permanent ceasefire is established and humanitarian aid is secured in Gaza (Caglayan & Hayatsever, 2024). This means that some of the political and economic measures pointed out by J. Waller (2016) have been implemented. However, the last measure has come in very late, 209 days into the human catastrophe, with more than 34.000 deaths on the Palestinian side. Also, four owners of export companies informed Reuters that Turkish exporters, who have firm orders, are exploring options to route their goods to Israel through third countries following Türkiye's suspension of direct bilateral trade (Caglayan, 2024).

In this section, I will examine bilateral trade statistics, relations with the U.S., Eastern Mediterranean politics, and reconciliation processes. Finally, I will discuss the results.

### **Part Two: Economic and Political Interests**

#### *Bilateral Trade*

The strategic economic relationship between Türkiye and Israel is underscored by the significant exports from Türkiye to Israel. In 2023, exports to Israel included \$717,171,000 from "iron and steel," accounting for 13.22% of Türkiye's total exports; \$480,088,000 from "vehicles other than railway or tramway rolling stock, and parts and accessories thereof," which made up 8.85% of the exports; and \$423,279,000 from "plastics and articles thereof," representing 7.8% of the exports (Trademap, 2024). These exports, vital for Türkiye's economy, highlight the economic importance of the trade relationship with Israel. See the table below for the key trade statistics between Israel and Türkiye.



**Table 2. Türkiye – Israel Trade**

	2020	2021	2022	2023
Volume of Imports From Israel/Share of Imports from Israel of Türkiye's Total Imports	\$1,496,260,181/ 0.68%	\$2,047,078,895/ 0.75%	\$2,451,736,125/ 0.67%	\$1,641,078,226/ 0.45%
Volume of Exports to Israel/Share of Exports to Israel of Türkiye's Total Exports	\$4,704,455,161/ 2.77%	\$6,355,775,033/ 2.82%	\$7,032,339,440/ 2.77%	\$5,425,181,957/ 2.12%
Türkiye's GDP /Share of Exports to Israel of Türkiye's GDP	\$720,338,400, 000/ 0.65%	\$819,865,300, 000/ 0.78%	\$907,118,400, 000/ 0.78%	\$1,118,593,000, 000/ 0.49%

(UN Comtrade, 2024; TurkStat, 2024; OECD, 2024) (See Figure A in the Appendix for calculations)

State visits by businesspersons have proven instrumental in fostering bilateral trade relations. In December 2022, the Turkish Exporters Assembly hosted a sizeable Israeli delegation comprising over one hundred importers from sixty companies in Istanbul. This gathering underscored the potential for future growth in the trade relations. At this gathering, Israel's ambassador, Irit Lillian, remarked, as quoted by Daily Sabah (2022):

This special energy reflects not only the hopes and expectations, even the growing bilateral trade volume and growth potential, but mainly the positive spirit that has kept us alive for more than ten years. I am so grateful to all of you for being so committed to this change achievement (par. 7).

Türkiye also maintains a strategic economic relationship with the U.S. In 2023, Türkiye exported goods worth \$14,826,032,000 to the U.S., accounting for 5.80% of Türkiye's total exports and 1.33% of its GDP. This underscores the significant role the U.S. plays in Türkiye's economy. On the import side, Türkiye imported \$15,777,583,000 worth of goods from the U.S., representing 4.36% of Türkiye's total imports. The top three categories of imports from the U.S. are iron and steel (\$2,015,707,000), nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery, and mechanical

appliances; parts thereof (\$1,898,184,000), and aircraft, spacecraft, and parts thereof (\$1,569,185,000). These critical imports highlight Turkey's dependence on the U.S. for essential industrial and technological goods. Historically, U.S. trade tariffs on Türkiye have had significant economic impacts, demonstrating the vulnerability and interdependence of Türkiye's economy with that of the U.S. See the table below for a more detailed overview of Türkiye – U.S. trade relations.

**Table 3.** Türkiye – U.S. Trade

	2020	2021	2022	2023
Volume of Imports from the U.S./Share of Imports from the U.S. of Türkiye's Total Imports	\$11,525,182,000/ 5.25%	\$13,148,129,000/ 4.84%	\$15,228,578,000/ 4.19%	\$15,777,583,000/ 4.36%
Volume of Exports to the U.S./Share of Exports to the U.S. of Türkiye's Total Exports	\$10,183,213,000/ 6%	\$14,719,306,000/ 6.54%	\$16,882,282,000/ 6.64%	\$14,826,032,000/ 5.80%
Türkiye's GDP/Share of Exports to the U.S. of Türkiye's GDP	\$720,338,400,000/ 1.41%	\$819,865,300,000/ 1.80%	\$907,118,400,000/ 1.86%	\$1,118,593,000,000/ 1.33%

(UN Comtrade, 2024; TurkStat, 2024; OECD, 2024) (See Figure B in the Appendix for calculations)

Türkiye's dependence on the U.S. in various aspects is exemplified by its recent ratification of Sweden's NATO membership, which was closely tied to its need for F-16 fighter jets from the U.S. As detailed in a Reuters article, U.S. Ambassador to Türkiye J. Flake anticipated that President Erdoğan would soon finalize Sweden's NATO membership. This move is expected to trigger rapid steps toward U.S. Congress endorsing a \$20 billion sale of F-16 fighter jets to Türkiye. The Turkish parliament ratified Sweden's NATO membership bid after a 20-month delay. Ambassador Flake indicated that once the formal ratification document is received in Washington, the U.S. State Department will immediately notify Congress of the F-16 sale.

President Erdoğan and U.S. Congress members have linked Türkiye's support for Sweden's NATO bid with congressional approval of the F-16 sale. President Biden has informed vital Capitol Hill committees of his intention to begin the formal notification process for the F-16 sale once Ankara completes Sweden's NATO accession. This situation underscores Türkiye's reliance on the U.S. for advanced military equipment and its strategic and political goals within the NATO framework (Spicer, 2024).

### *Eastern Mediterranean Politics*

Since the early 2000s, the discovery of hydrocarbon reserves has intensified conflicting claims over maritime jurisdiction areas among the coastal states of the Eastern Mediterranean, leading to a jurisdictional crisis. The exploration has revealed about 2.5 billion barrels of oil and seven trillion cubic meters of natural gas within the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of various littoral countries, including Greece, Türkiye, Egypt, and Israel. This led the states to reassess the region's strategic significance (Kırval, 2022, pp. 136-137).

With its abundant energy resources and crucial location, the Eastern Mediterranean region holds immense potential in shaping global trade dynamics. Israel's discovery of natural gas along its coast in 2010 and its aim to export it to Europe underscored the region's strategic importance. Initially, Israel chose to bypass Türkiye and opt for the Eastmed Pipeline route via Crete, Greece, and Italy. This decision led to the formation of the Eastmed Forum, comprising eight countries—France, Italy, Israel, Egypt, Greece, Cyprus, Palestine, and Jordan—with Türkiye not joining. However, the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Pipeline project, initially supported by the EU and the US, was halted when the US withdrew its support. This route was more complex and expensive than the Turkish alternative due to its extensive deep-sea sections. Consequently, after the project's cancellation, the route through Türkiye regained prominence as a more viable channel for transporting Eastern Mediterranean gas to Europe (Kırval, 2022, pp. 138-139), further highlighting the region's potential in the global energy trade.

### *Reconciliation Processes*

In this context, the Turkish government realized it needed to upgrade relations with Israel: A month after Netanyahu's Likud-led government was replaced in June 2021, President Erdoğan reached out to congratulate Israel's newly elected president, Isaac Herzog, emphasizing the critical importance of Türkiye-Israel relations for security and stability in the Middle East. President Erdoğan highlighted the substantial potential for collaboration between the two nations, particularly in energy, tourism, and technology (TCBB, 2021). The shift in President

Erdoğan's stance directly resulted from Washington's decision to withdraw its support from the Israeli Greek-Cypriot EastMed pipeline project. This decision paved the way for a significant diplomatic event: President Herzog's visit to Ankara in March 2022. The first high-level Israeli visit to Türkiye since 2008 marked a significant turning point in the strained bilateral ties of the 2010s (Sarıaslan, 2023, pp. 168-169). During his visit, President Herzog stated (in MFA Israel, 2022a):

President Herzog's visit was not just a symbolic gesture but a clear indication of the potential for collaboration between the two nations. He stated in (MFA Israel, 2022a): Now, I believe that the relationship between our countries will be judged by deeds reflecting a spirit of mutual respect and will enable us to better confront the regional and global challenges that are common to us all." "Israel and Turkey, as you said, can and should collaborate in many fields that have a dramatic impact on this region, which we all call 'home' (par. 7-8).

Two months after Herzog's visit, Turkish Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu made a historic trip to Israel to meet with his counterpart, F. Lapid (MFA Türkiye, 2022). This marked the first visit by a Turkish Foreign Minister to Israel in 15 years. During this landmark visit, Lapid stated (in MFA Israel, 2022):

Following this visit—the first by a Turkish Foreign Minister to Israel in 15 years—the two of us are expecting to see progress not only in our diplomatic and security relations, but in our economic ties as well (par. 5).

As of 2023, political tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean have diminished due to internal regional developments. However, it is uncertain whether this easing of tensions will be short-term due to the need of the littoral states to exploit valuable natural resources in the Eastern Mediterranean to benefit their economies (Boyras, 2024).

## **Part Three: Discussion**

(Method A)

As illustrated, Türkiye has a significant economic interest in its relationship with Israel. In addition, Türkiye refrained from implementing severe measures for nearly seven months during the Gaza crisis, which were eventually implemented due to domestic pressures (BBC News Türkçe, 2024).

Considering this, it is safe to say the current dynamics at play between Türkiye and Israel reflect those of the past, where economic interactions have been stable amid the otherwise fluctuating Turkish-Israeli relations. To illustrate, noteworthy events like the collapse of the Oslo process and the outbreak of the “al-Aqsa Intifada” in September 2000, as well as the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq, led Ankara to reassess its relationships with the US and Israel. The bilateral relations between Türkiye and Israel deteriorated sharply early in 2009 following Israel’s extensive military operation against Hamas. This tension reached a peak in January 2009 when Erdoğan publicly labeled President Peres a war criminal at the Davos World Economic Forum and deepened further after the May 2010 Mavi Marmara incident. However, trade between the two countries flourished despite these political and diplomatic upheavals. In 2011, when Turkish-Israeli diplomatic ties were at their lowest, imports from Israel surged to \$2 billion, marking a 51% increase from the previous year, while exports to Israel amounted to \$2.4 billion (Sariaslan, 2023, pp. 166-167).

Considering all the above, it follows that despite the Gaza crisis, Türkiye’s response to it had been restrained due to its anticipation of future economic benefits, just as with previous political tensions between Israel.

## *Saudi- Arabia*

### **Part One: Taken Measures**

Under the leadership of Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman (MBS), Saudi Arabia's foreign policy has notably shifted to a more lenient stance towards Israel. This shift includes a readiness to engage with Israel despite the Palestinian issue. As an example, MBS expressed to American Jewish leaders in April 2018:

The Palestinian leadership has missed one opportunity after the other and rejected all the peace proposals it was given. It is about time the Palestinians take the proposals and agree to come to the negotiating table or shut up and stop complaining (The Forward & Pink, 2018, par. 2).

Furthermore, in an early 2018 interview with Goldberg (2018), MBS openly recognized Israelis' rights to their own land, remarking, "We don't look at Israel as an enemy, we look to them as a potential ally, with many interests that we can pursue together" (Agence France Presse, 2022).

During the ongoing Gaza Crisis, Saudi Arabia has been cautious in pursuing aggressive political strategies despite holding considerable influence over both Israel and the U.S. Instead, the kingdom has opted for a more cautious approach. In November, it led a coalition of Arab and Muslim nations to visit the capitals of the Security Council's permanent members, advocating for a ceasefire. Nevertheless, these efforts yielded minimal results, including from China, and failed to alter the U.S. stance. At the Arab-Islamic meeting, Saudi Arabia even played a moderating role by ensuring that an oil embargo—suggested by other nations—was not to be implemented (Bianco & Lons, 2024, par. 5).

In this section, I will examine trade with the U.S. and Iran's threat, discuss Vision 2030, and finally, discuss the results.

## Part Two: Economic and Political Interests

### *Bilateral Trade*

Saudi Arabia is a significant oil exporter to the United States. In 2023, Saudi Arabia exported goods worth \$15,751,749,613 to the U.S., of which \$14,125,453,000 (about 90% of Saudi Arabia’s exports to the U.S) consisted of mineral fuels, mineral oils, and products of their distillation, bituminous substances, and mineral waxes. This trend is consistent with previous years, where a similar percentage of exports from Saudi Arabia to the U.S. comprised these products (Trademap, 2024). The steady flow of oil and related products underscores the ongoing importance of Saudi oil in the U.S. energy market and, more importantly, in our case, Saudi Arabia’s source of income. See the table below for a more detailed overview of Saudi–U.S. trade relations. There are no official records of Saudi–Israel trade relations; they will not be presented.

**Table 4.** Saudi Arabia – U.S. Trade

	2020	2021	2022	2023
Volume of Imports from the U.S./Share of Imports From the U.S of Saudi Arabia’s Total Imports	\$14,103,515,000/ 10.74%	\$16,216,576,000/ 10.61%	\$17,401,432,000/ 9.16%	\$13,873,176,000/ X
Volume of Exports to the U.S./Share of Exports to the U.S of Saudi Arabia’s Total Exports	\$9,519,279,000/ 5.13%	\$14,334,181,000/ 5.19%	\$23,238,311,000/ 5.65%	\$15,751,750,000/ 4.82%
Saudi Arabia’s GDP /Share of Exports to the U.S of Saudi Arabia’s GDP	\$734,271,200,000/ 1.30%	\$874,156,100,000/ 1.64%	Only provisional values	X

(UN Comtrade, 2024; Trademap 2024; OECD, 2024) (See Figure C in the Appendix for calculations)

### *The Iranian Threat*

The collaborative relationship between Israel and Saudi Arabia began publicly in June 2015, when former Saudi general Eshki and former Israeli ambassador D. Gold appeared together at the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington. They discussed mutual concerns regarding Iran, particularly considering the then-forthcoming Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), commonly referred to as the “Iran nuclear deal,” which involved Iran and the P5+1 (Mueller, 2022, pp. 118-119).

Tied to concerns about the Iranian threat and the potential economic gains, Saudi Arabia has expressed interest in establishing civil nuclear cooperation with the U.S. Saudi officials argue that such an agreement should encompass the construction of a uranium enrichment facility in Saudi Arabia by the U.S. Saudi authorities emphasize that having domestic enrichment capabilities would utilize the uranium deposits within the kingdom to fuel its projected nuclear reactor program and capitalize on the sale of uranium products globally (Einhorn, 2024, par. 5-6). This underscores Saudi Arabia’s interest in maintaining strong relations with the U.S. for economic advantages. In an exclusive interview, when the crown prince was questioned about the implications of Iran potentially acquiring a nuclear weapon, he declared that if Iran were to do so, Saudi Arabia would “have to get one, for security reasons, for balancing power.” (Aitken, 2023, par. 13). This statement underscores the strategic dimensions associated with Saudi Arabia’s interest in uranium enrichment.

Although neither Saudi Arabia nor Israel shares a border with Iran, both nations face a strategic threat of encirclement—Israel by Lebanon, Syria, Gaza, and the West Bank, and Saudi Arabia by Iraq and Yemen. They are vulnerable to assaults from Iranian proxies (Mens, 2024, p.6). Consequently, the Iranian threat, coupled with Israel’s determination and capability to counteract it with Saudi Arabia’s traditional allies being incapable or reluctant, has prompted the Saudi leadership to prioritize their national security over letting the Gaza crisis shape their policy towards Israel.

Regarding civil nuclear cooperation, the Biden administration held negotiations with the Saudi Kingdom throughout 2023. These discussions reportedly made substantial progress in shaping the main components of an agreement. However, the attack by Hamas on October 7th and the subsequent conflict in Gaza were initially believed to halt any progress towards normalization and a nuclear cooperation agreement. Contrary to those expectations, Washington and Riyadh remain committed to advancing these agreements. This underlines that the strategic interests in



relationships with the U.S. and Israel are prioritized over the Gaza crisis (Einhorn, 2024, par. 10-11).

### *Vision 2030*

With the Saudi Vision 2030, the Saudi kingdom seeks to shift away from its traditional dependence on oil revenues towards a more varied economic base, of which boosting the tourism sector and foreign investments is a priority. To achieve this, the state is committed to embracing modernity (Alemahu & Mariam, 2023).

In alignment with Vision 2030, Saudi Arabia has actively worked to normalize and enhance its international economic ties, with Israel playing a significant role in this effort. A notable collaborative project is the Trans Europe Asia System (TEAS), a high-tech project involving a fiber-optic submarine cable. This initiative marks the first cable connection traversing the Arabian Peninsula, extending from Ras al Khair on the Gulf to Amman and subsequently to Israel. Both states are integral to this project. The Middle East Eye reports, “a major Israeli investment fund is backing a project ‘gaining traction’ in Saudi Arabia to build a fibre-optic cable that would link the two countries and other Gulf states.” This endeavor aims to “build a cross-border power grid for the region”, signifying the first direct infrastructure link between Israel and Saudi Arabia (Oluwashakin & Aleyomi, 2023, p.192).

Another initiative from Vision 2030, in which Israel plays a role, is the NEOM project. Initiated in 2017, NEOM is an expansive, high-tech development located on Saudi Arabia’s northwestern Red Sea coast. Dubbed the “crown jewel” of Vision 2030, this ambitious desert megaproject spans parts of Jordan and Egypt and represents a significant step towards economic diversification. Given Israel’s proximity to northwestern Saudi Arabia, technological prowess, and dynamic startup ecosystem, it is considered a valuable partner for Vision 2030 and the NEOM project. Israel’s expertise in biotechnology, cybersecurity, and manufacturing suits it for collaboration. Dr. A. Dogan, previously a Research Fellow at the Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient, asserted in March 2021 that “relations with Israel are necessary for Saudi Arabia to complete NEOM.” Likewise, Dr. M. Yaghi from Germany’s Konrad Adenauer Stiftung observed that NEOM “requires peace and coordination with Israel, especially if the city is to become a tourist destination” (Cafiero, 2024, par. 21-22).

Illustrating the significance of Vision 2030 for the Saudi Kingdom, during an internet blackout in Gaza, the Saudi Prince hosted a concert at the Riyadh season. Unlike the UAE, Oman, and Kuwait, which canceled events in solidarity with Gaza, Saudi Arabia proceeded with its plans.

Turki Al-Sheikh, head of the General Entertainment Authority, resisted calls to halt the Riyadh season in support of the Palestinians. He issued a statement affirming that “The Saudi, including himself, is busy with the development of his country and its renaissance and welcomes every visitor and lover.” (Watan News, 2023) This underscores Saudi Arabia’s preferring its embracement of modernity and globalization in light of national development and global engagement over the Gaza catastrophe.

## **Part Three: Discussion**

### Method B

The results show that Saudi Arabia prioritizes national interests, ensuring the Gaza crisis does not obstruct these goals. Notably, there is an openness within the Saudi kingdom towards normalizing relations with Israel. During a campaign event on 28 March 2024, US President Biden mentioned that several Arab states, including Saudi Arabia, are ready for a full normalization of ties with Israel. He articulated:

I’ve been working with the Saudis and with all the other Arab countries, including Egypt and Jordan and Qatar. They’re prepared to fully recognize Israel. There has to be a post-Gaza plan, and there has to be a trade to a two-state solution. It doesn’t have to occur today. It has to be a progression and I think we can do that,” (The Cradle, 2024, par. 3).

This section has shown that Saudi Arabia has economic interests in trade with the U.S., security interests in defending against the Iranian threat, and endeavors to maintain solid relations with Israel and the western world community in light of embracing modernity as a policy of Vision 2030. Consequently, I conclude this section by claiming that Saudi Arabia has deliberately refrained from taking assertive steps to resolve the Gaza crisis, choosing instead to focus on its own political and economic interests above those of Gaza.

## *Iran*

### **Part One: Taken Measures**

Since its founding in 1979, the Islamic Republic of Iran has consistently expressed a commitment to the elimination of the State of Israel. This stance persists during the current Gaza crisis. Iranian-backed proxies are actively engaged in the conflict. Hezbollah, for instance, is conducting operations on Israel's northern border. As of April 24, 2024, over 100,000 Israelis have been displaced due to more than 3,100 projectiles launched into Israeli territory since October 7 in support of Hamas in Gaza (Iran International, 2024). Additionally, Yemen's Houthis have targeted ships in the Red Sea since November, claiming these actions as part of a solidarity campaign with the Palestinians (El Dahan, 2024). Below is a summary of the escalating tensions between Iran and Israel following the Hamas attacks on October 7.

<b>October 17: Iran warns of 'preemptive measure' against Israel</b>
<b>November 19: Yemen's Houthis seize a Red Sea ship</b>
<b>December 25: Israeli strike kills top Iranian general in Syria</b>
<b>January 15: Iran strikes 'Mossad centre' in northern Iraq</b>
<b>January 20: Iran accuses Israel of bombing a Damascus building</b>
<b>February 10: Iran warns against a full-scale Israeli attack on Lebanon</b>
<b>February 21: Iran blames Israel for gas pipeline explosions</b>
<b>March 1: IRGC commander, two others killed in suspected Israeli attack in Syria</b>
<b>April 1: Israel attacks the Iranian consulate in Damascus</b>
<b>April 13: IRGC seizes Israel-linked ship near Strait of Hormuz</b>
<b>April 13: Iran launches hundreds of missiles, drones at Israel in a first</b>

(Al Jazeera, 2024)

Despite Iran's adversarial stance towards Israel, the Republic has not managed to address the Gaza crisis as of May 2024 significantly. As for the Missile attack on April 13, it is essential to note that it was a reaction to the Iranian consulate being bombed in Damascus and not issued to retaliate against Israel concerning the Gaza Crisis. Economic and trade possess no preponderance in this section, as Iran has no official trade with Israel and is close to null with the U.S. (UN Comtrade, 2024). Thus, in this part, I will discuss Iran's careful consideration of regional power dynamics and its calculated approach to international policy and follow up with a discussion.

## **Part Two: Political Interests**

Since the onset of the Gaza conflict, there has been speculation that it could lead to a confrontation between Iran and Israel. Hezbollah has continued to threaten to open a new front in the conflict, and Iranian hard-liners have openly supported direct involvement by their country. Despite these assertions, the probability of an escalated regional conflict remains minimal. The rhetoric from Iranian hard-liners contrasts with the more cautious approach that characterizes Iran's strategic considerations. Several factors suggest that Tehran will refrain from initiating a conflict with Israel.

Firstly, there is a lack of widespread public support in Iran for entering a new conflict, similar to the war with Iraq in the 1980s. Years after that war, public backing for the political regime has significantly diminished. The 2022 protests and the ongoing economic hardships, partly due to U.S.-imposed sanctions, have only intensified dissatisfaction among the youth and the urban middle class (Reisinezhad, 2023, par. 3).

Secondly, the moderate faction within the Iranian government has cautioned against direct involvement in the Gaza conflict. The war has worsened political divisions within Tehran. While hard-liners see the destruction of Hamas as potentially leading to the downfall of Hezbollah and a subsequent attack on Iran, they advocate for targeting American bases in Iraq and Syria through Iran's proxies (Reisinezhad, 2023, par. 4). This perspective sharply contrasts with that of more moderate officials. Notably, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei informed Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in early November that Iran was not previously notified about the October 7 terror attacks and, therefore, would not participate in the conflict against Israel. Khamenei also urged Haniyeh to "silence those voices" within Hamas that advocate for a full-scale engagement by Iran and its proxy group, Hezbollah (TOI, 2023a). Additionally, on October 29, Iran's Foreign Minister, H. Amirabdollahian, stated on CNN, "We don't want this war to spread out" (Reuters, 2023, par. 3).

The recent exchanges between the adversaries underscore the idea of Iran not wanting to start a regional war: On April 1, an Israeli airstrike targeted the Iranian consulate in Damascus, Syria, resulting in the deaths of seven military advisers, of which two are senior commanders. In response, Iran promised retaliation, raising widespread concerns (Hafezi & Williams, 2024). A Politico article on April 11—two days before Iran's counterstrike—reported that:

Iran is calibrating its plans for a major retaliatory strike against Israel to send a message — but not spark a regional war that compels Washington to respond, the U.S. assesses. [...] Iran doesn't seek to expand the regional crisis further, the Biden administration has long determined, which the officials said may be weighing on Tehran's planning (Seligman et al., 2024, par 1-3).

Their assessment proved accurate; on April 13, Iran's retaliation involved over three hundred drones and several cruise and ballistic missiles. However, it resulted in only "slight damage to infrastructure" at a southern Israeli military base, as most of the missiles were intercepted by the Arrow air defense system, according to IDF Spokesman Rear Adm. D. Hagari (Fabian, 2024).

Thirdly, Iran's strategic partners, Moscow and Beijing, have refrained from openly supporting Hamas. Adhering to its "Look East" policy, Iran seeks to maintain good relations with China and Russia and is cautious not to jeopardize these ties. This approach mirrors the strategy Tehran employed following the Taliban's capture of Kabul, adopting a cautious stance like the Sino-Russian "wait-and-see" policy. Iran's objective is to avoid isolation in significant international crises, mindful of the regional power dynamics, particularly Israel's and its biggest ally, the U.S.'s military capabilities (Reisinezhad, 2023, par. 7).

## **Part Three: Discussion**

### Method A

As in the past, Iran's specific approach to regional disputes is the most significant factor influencing Iran's reluctance to engage in military conflict; Iran's supreme leader has been responding to regional conflicts from a realist standpoint rather than ideologically. Having served as supreme leader during the Iran-Iraq war has made Khamenei particularly sensitive to the consequences of military engagements, particularly those involving the U.S. This sensibility guided Iran's calculated response after the U.S. assassination of Gen. Q. Suleimani. This reflects a consistent element of his strategy in managing regional tensions. Over two decades earlier, after the killing of Iranian diplomats in northern Afghanistan by the first Taliban emirate and amidst public solid pressure in Iran for significant retaliation, Khamenei, alongside Hassan Rouhani, then head of the Supreme National Security Council, played a critical role in preventing further military escalation (Reisinezhad, 2023, par. 9).

These linked factors elucidate why the Islamic Republic has hesitated to engage directly in the Gaza Crisis. Nevertheless, instead of remaining passive, Tehran is expected to keep exerting influence on Israel and the U.S. by leveraging Hezbollah and its Shiite proxies in Iraq and Syria, all while avoiding the provocation of a full-scale regional war (Reisinezhad, 2023).

Building on all the above, I conclude that Iran's lack of proactive measures in the Gaza crisis is due to its careful consideration of regional power dynamics and its calculated approach to international policy.

# Conclusion

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“International politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power. [...] Statesmen and peoples may ultimately seek freedom, security, prosperity, or power itself. They may define their goals in terms of a religious, philosophic, economic, or social ideal”. This statement by H. J. Morgenthau (in Baylis et al., 2020, p. 139) not only summarizes the essence of the realist theory of international relations but also serves as a lens through which the findings of this research are interpreted. The research provides empirical evidence that Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, and Iran, in line with the realist theory, have not taken proactive measures concerning the Gaza crisis due to their self-interests, reckoning with political and economic repercussions.

Türkiye’s engagement with Israel underscores a pattern where economic incentives outweigh political disputes. This strategic balance allows Türkiye to maintain crucial economic ties even during intense political turmoil, as seen during the Gaza crisis. Similarly, Saudi Arabia’s approach reflects a prioritization of national interests and a strategic move toward normalization with Israel. These actions align with the realist assertion that states act primarily in self-interest. Iran’s strategy further confirms this hypothesis. Despite its ideological stance against Israel and the U.S., Iran has, especially before April 2024, opted for a cautious approach concerning the Crisis, leveraging proxy forces rather than engaging directly. This decision points to a calculation of the risks and benefits of direct military engagement, influenced by historical experiences and regional power dynamics.

The study, however, has limitations. One significant weakness is the ongoing nature of the Gaza crisis. The situation’s fluidity means that these states’ actions and strategies could evolve, presenting new data that might influence the current analysis. However, this limitation does not significantly undermine the findings of this thesis. The primary observational period, from 7 October 2023 to May 2024, captures the most critical phases of the crisis, during which the principal political and economic decisions were made. Thus, while future developments could alter the dynamics slightly, the fundamental conclusions drawn from the initial seven months present the primary strategic responses and their impacts, providing a robust basis for the analysis conducted.

Future research could take several directions, each with the potential to significantly contribute to our understanding of international relations. One of those involves explanatory studies examining the stances of major powers such as Europe, China, and Russia regarding the Gaza

crisis, exploring the reasons behind their specific policies. Another potential study is predictive research, analyzing potential outcomes following the crisis, such as the feasibility of a two-state solution. Lastly, prescriptive studies could be valuable. These would focus on identifying specific policies and factors that could effectively resolve or mitigate the crisis, which would offer potential solutions to one of the most pressing issues in international relations today.

In closing, this thesis reaffirms the relevance of realist theory in understanding state behavior. While the desire for power, security, and prosperity might manifest differently across different contexts, the underlying motivation of regional autonomy and strategic advantage remains consistent.



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## Appendix

Figure A. Türkiye – Israel Trade

	2020	2021	2022	2023
Imports	Total imports of Türkiye:	Total imports of Türkiye:	Total imports of Türkiye:	Total import of Türkiye:
	\$219,514,372,881	\$271,425,552,445	\$363,710,572,811	\$361,774,043,043
	Türkiye's imports from Israel:	Türkiye's imports from Israel:	Türkiye's imports from Israel:	Türkiye's imports from Israel:
	\$1,496,260,181	\$2,047,078,895	\$2,451,736,125	\$1,641,078,226
Share of Türkiye's total imports:	Share of Türkiye's total imports:	Share of Türkiye's total imports:	Share of Türkiye's total imports:	
$1,496,260,181 / 219,514,372,881 \times 100 = 0.68\%$	$2,047,078,895 / 271,425,552,445 \times 100 = 0.75\%$	$2,451,736,125 / 363,710,572,811 \times 100 = 0.67\%$	$1,641,078,226 / 361,774,043,043 \times 100 = 0.45\%$	
Exports	Total exports of Türkiye:	Total exports of Türkiye:	Total exports of Türkiye:	Total exports of Türkiye:
	\$169,657,939,777	\$225,214,458,038	\$254,169,747,663	\$255,777,398,089
	Türkiye's Exports to Israel:	Türkiye's Exports to Israel:	Türkiye's Exports to Israel:	Türkiye's Exports to Israel:
	\$4,704,455,161	\$6,355,775,033	\$7,032,339,440	\$5,425,181,957
Share of Türkiye's total Exports:	Share of Türkiye's total Exports:	Share of Türkiye's total Exports:	Share of Türkiye's total Exports:	
$4,704,455,161 / 169,657,939,777 \times 100 = 2.77\%$	$6,355,775,033 / 225,214,458,038 \times 100 = 2.82\%$	$7,032,339,440 / 254,169,747,663 \times 100 = 2.77\%$	$5,425,181,957 / 255,777,398,089 \times 100 = 2.12\%$	



	<p>Türkiye's GDP: \$720,338,400,000</p> <p>Share of Türkiye's exports to Israel of Türkiye's GDP: 4,704,455,161 / 720,338,400,000 x 100 = 0.65%</p>	<p>Türkiye's GDP: \$819,865,300,000</p> <p>Share of Türkiye's exports to Israel of Türkiye's GDP: 6,355,775,033 / 819,865,300,000 x 100 = 0.78%</p>	<p>Türkiye's GDP: \$907,118,400,000</p> <p>Share of Türkiye's exports to Israel of Türkiye's GDP: 7,032,339,440 / 907,118,400,000 x 100 = 0.78%</p>	<p>Türkiye's GDP: \$1,118,593,000,000</p> <p>Share of Türkiye's exports to Israel of Türkiye's GDP: 5,425,181,957 / 1,118,593,000,000 x100= 0.49%</p>
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Figure B. Türkiye – U.S. Trade

	2020	2021	2022	2023
Imports	Total imports of Türkiye:	Total imports of Türkiye:	Total imports of Türkiye:	Total imports of Türkiye:
	\$219,514,372,881	\$271,425,552,445	\$363,710,572,811	\$361,774,043,043
	Türkiye's imports from the U.S:	Türkiye's imports from the U.S:	Türkiye's imports from the U.S:	Türkiye's imports from the U.S:
	\$11,525,182,000	\$13,148,129,000	\$15,228,578,000	\$15,777,583,000
Share of Türkiye's total imports:	Share of Türkiye's total imports:	Share of Türkiye's total imports:	Share of Türkiye's total imports:	Share of Türkiye's total imports:
	11,525,182,000 / 219,514,372,881 x 100 = 5.25%	13,148,129,000 / 271,425,552,445 x 100 = 4.84%	15,228,578,000 / 363,710,572,811 x 100 = 4.19%	15,777,583,000 / 361,774,043,043 x 100 = 4.36%
Exports	Total exports of Türkiye:	Total exports of Türkiye:	Total exports of Türkiye:	Total exports of Türkiye:
	\$169,657,939,777	\$225,214,458,038	\$254,169,747,663	\$255,777,398,089
	Türkiye's Exports to the U.S.:	Türkiye's Exports to the U.S.:	Türkiye's Exports to the U.S.:	Türkiye's Exports to the U.S.:
	\$10,183,213,000	\$14,719,306,000	\$16,882,282,000	\$14,826,032,000
Share of Türkiye's total Exports:	Share of Türkiye's total Exports:	Share of Türkiye's total Exports:	Share of Türkiye's total Exports:	Share of Türkiye's total Exports:
	10,183,213,000 / 169,657,939,777 x 100 = 6%	14,719,306,000 / 225,214,458,038 x 100 = 6.54%	16,882,282,000 / 254,169,747,663 x 100 = 6.64%	14,826,032,000 / 255,777,398,089 x 100 = 5.80%

	Türkiye's GDP: \$720,338,400, 000	Türkiye's GDP: \$819,865, 300,000	Türkiye's GDP: \$907,118, 400,000	Türkiye's GDP: \$1,118,593, 000,000
	Share of Türkiye's exports to the U.S of Türkiye's GDP:	Share of Türkiye's exports to the U.S of Türkiye's GDP:	Share of Türkiye's exports to the U.S of Türkiye's GDP:	Share of Türkiye's exports to the U.S of Türkiye's GDP:
	10,183,213,000 / 720,338,400,000 x 100 = 1.41%	14,719,306,000 / 819,865,300,000 x 100 = 1.80%	16,882,282,000 / 907,118,400,000 x 100 = 1.86%	14,826,032,000 / 1,118,593,000, 000 x 100= 1.33%

Figure C. Saudi Arabia – U.S. Trade

	2020	2021	2022	2023
Imports	Total imports of Saudi Arabia:	Total imports of Saudi Arabia:	Total imports of Saudi Arabia:	Total imports of Saudi Arabia:
	\$131,328,602,00	\$152,849,564,000	189,877,037,000	X
	Saudi Arabia's imports from the U.S:	Saudi Arabia's imports from the U.S:	Saudi Arabia's imports from the U.S:	Saudi Arabia's imports from the U.S:
	\$14,103,515,000	\$16,216,576,000	\$17,401,432,000	\$13,873,176,000 (Reported by the U.S.)
Imports	Share of Saudi Arabia's total imports:	Share of Saudi Arabia's total imports:	Share of Saudi Arabia's total imports:	Share of Saudi Arabia's total imports:
	14,103,515,000 / 131,328,602,000 x 100 = 10.74%	16,216,576,000 / 152,849,564,000 x 100 = 10.61%	17,401,432,000 / 189,877,037,000 x 100 = 9.16%	X
	Total exports of Saudi Arabia:	Total exports of Saudi Arabia:	Total exports of Saudi Arabia:	Total exports of Saudi Arabia:
	\$185,699,412,000	\$276,204,569,000	\$411,184,942,000	\$327,042,885,227
Exports	Saudi Arabia's Exports to the U.S:	Saudi Arabia's Exports to the U.S:	Saudi Arabia's Exports to the U.S:	Saudi Arabia's Exports to the U.S:
	\$9,519,279,000	14,334,181,000	23,238,311,000	\$15 751 749 613

	Share of Saudi Arabia's total Exports: 9,519,279,000 /185,699,412,000 x 100 = 5.13%	Share of Saudi Arabia's total Exports: 14,334,181,000 /276,204,569,000 x 100 = 5.19%	Share of Saudi Arabia's total Exports: 23,238,311,000 / 411,184,942,000 x 100 = 5.65%	Share of Saudi Arabia's total Exports: 15 751 749 613 / 327 042 885 227 x 100 = 4. 82 %
	Saudi Arabia's GDP: \$734,271,200,000	Saudi Arabia's GDP: \$874,156,100,000		
	Share of Türkiye's exports to the U.S of Saudi Arabia's GDP: 1,847,336,000 / 734 271 200 000 x 100 = 0.25%	Share of Türkiye's exports to the U.S of Saudi Arabia's GDP: 14,334,181,000 / 874 156 100 000 x 100 = 1.64%	Saudi Arabia's GDP: X	Saudi Arabia's GDP: X