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Why is Israel still not a member of NATO?

Diplomová práce

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Abstrakt

Diplomová práce se zabývá otázkou potenciálního členství Izraele v Severoatlantické Alianci. Pracuje s hypotézou, že Izrael má spíše zájem na prohloubení vzájemné spolupráce na formální úrovni, než na formálním členství v Alianci. Hlavním cílem této práce je odpovědět na výzkumnou otázku: Proč Izrael stále není členem Severoatlantické Aliance. Odpověď na otázku kombinuje empirickou analýzu společně s teoretickým konceptem národního zájmu. Empirická část zkoumá potenciální národní zájem Izraele na členství v Alianci, a to přes realistický a liberální teoretický přístup. Kombinace empirického a teoretického výzkumu umožňuje nahlédnout zkoumanou otázku ze širší perspektivy. V práci vycházím z teze, že členství Izraele v Alianci čelí překážkám jak na úrovni jednotlivých členských států NATO, tak na úrovni Izraelských politických představitelů. Kromě toho, obě entity vnímají bezpečnost samotnou naprosto rozdílným způsobem, Izrael vnímá svou bezpečnost spíše z realistického teoretického pohledu, protože stále čelí základním bezpečnostním hrozbám ve svém nejbližším okolí, zatímco členské státy NATO už tyto základní hrozby překonaly, a tudíž si mohou dovolit více liberální přístup ke své bezpečnosti.

Klíčová slova

Izrael, NATO, členství, zájmy, Irán, Palestina

Abstract

This diploma thesis deals with the question of potential membership of Israel in NATO. It elaborates on the hypothesis that Israel is not interested in formal NATO membership, but rather in the broadening of mutual cooperation on a formal basis. The main goal of the thesis is to answer the research question: Why is Israel still not a member of NATO? The answer combines empirical analysis together with theoretical concept of national interest. Empirical sections examine broader context of mutual relations, investigates their interests in further cooperation and defines problems connected with official Israeli application for NATO membership. Theoretical sections examine Israeli national interest in NATO membership through realist and liberal perspective. Combination of empirical and theoretical research provides a wider context of the research question, why is Israel still not a member of NATO. My proposition is that Israeli membership in NATO face challenges on levels of NATO member states as well as on the level of Israeli political representatives. Furthermore, both entities perceive security through different lenses. Israel perceive its security rather through the realist lenses because it still faces basic security threats in its immediate neighborhood, whereas NATO member states already overcame these threats which allows them to employ more liberal approach to their security.

Keywords

Israel, NATO, membership, interests, Iran, Palestine

Rozsah práce: 108 357 znaků

Prohlášení

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Poděkování

Na tomto místě bych rád poděkovala vedoucímu práce, JUDr. PhDr. Tomáši Karáskovi. Ph.D., za odborné rady a cenné návrhy k výzkumu.

Why is Israel still not a member of NATO?

In recent years, NATO and Israel have significantly extended their cooperation on several projects and Israel several times mentioned its interest in a full membership. However, behind the official application there are several problems. Israel would not be a typical candidate state as countries in Eastern Europe seeking protection in NATO. Israel is a unique player in the international arena which seeks not only security, but also keeping of national sovereignty by limiting number of alliances. On the other hand Israel feels its exclusion from international decision-making and would like to be more involved. Therefore Israel is balancing its interests and problems connected with NATO membership and it is also my primary task to assess it.

Research question

Why is Israel still not a member of NATO? That is the main research question of my proposed thesis. My hypothesis is that Israel is only interested in a broadening the cooperation with NATO even though is sometimes emphasizing its interest in a membership. Also NATO has interest in broadening mutual cooperation. However, both sides are aware of problems connected with the official position that Israel intends to apply for a full membership. The aim of this thesis is to explore particular interests of Israel and NATO in extending their cooperation as well as to define problems behind the official Israel's application for membership.

Theoretical anchoring

This thesis will examine the research question from realist and liberalist theoretical perspectives to determine which approach provides an appropriate explanation for Israeli position, with the concept of national interests serving as a point of departure in both theoretical approaches. Both these points will be elaborated upon during the research. The basic point of reference for identifying the concepts of national interest will be the work of Scott Burchill - *The National Interest in International Relations Theory*.

Methodology

The aim of this work is to explore interests of Israel's based on qualitative research - discursive analysis and content analysis. Discourse and content analysis will be based on statements of Israeli politicians and NATO's high representatives from open sources information as well as conducting of interviews with appropriate Israeli and NATO representatives. These interviews will be conducted personally or through e-mail communication. This thesis will use primary sources such as legal documents of Israel, NATO and their member countries and secondary sources such as academic articles and newspaper articles. Based on qualitative research I will be created a table of interests of Israel as well as NATO in further cooperation. These interests will be further categorized and grouped to better understand the issue. Consequently, I will collect data to create another table of problems that are associated with official membership of Israel in NATO. Thereafter, according to these tables will be possible to compare and analyze interests versus problems and to respond the question, why Israel is still not a member of NATO.

Outline of the thesis

Outline of the thesis is based on previous research in the field and is subject to the further analysis, therefore further modification of concepts and their categories are expected. At the beginning I will shortly introduce historical evolution of the NATO-Israel relations starting with Israel's membership in the Mediterranean Dialogue to the signing of the Individual Cooperation Programme (ICP). The outset of the thesis will also clarify the current situation, including Israel's nonparticipation at the NATO summit in Chicago or the advancement of bilateral Israel's relations with the USA.

First part of the thesis would deal with Israel's interest in NATO. Preliminary I have identified three areas of Israel's interest: common values, strengthening of national security and strengthening of international legitimacy. In terms of common values, Israel stresses that it is culturally, politically and economically an advanced Western democratic nation and distinguishes itself from its neighbors in the Middle East. Strengthening of national security is a perennial issue for Israel, given by its geographical location and historical context. That is connected with the third area, strengthening of Israel's international legitimacy. Involvement in multilateral politics is a confirmation of Israel's very existence, but its advantages are much broader. By becoming a NATO member, Israel would benefit from the access to information, negotiation, clubbing and networking. It is true that Israel's politics is based much more on

bilateral relations today, but Israel's representatives are aware of the potential shortcomings of this practice and have an interest to participate more in multilateral forums (NATO included).

Second part of the thesis would deal with NATO's interest in Israel. I identified four areas of NATO potential interests in this respect – common threats, burden-sharing, experience-sharing and strategic partnership of Israel. NATO and Israel are facing common threats such as global terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction or Islamist radicalism and therefore there is an interest for the advancement of their cooperation. In terms of burden-sharing, Israel has a potential to invest and share its military, human, technical and financial resources. In terms of experience-sharing, NATO would profit from Israel's intelligence, surveillance, unique military experience, counter-insurgency skills, counter-terrorism know-how and unique training mechanisms. Israel is also a strategic partner for the NATO in the Middle East, because of its position and potential to have a military base there.

Third part of the thesis would deal with the problems of Israel's potential membership in NATO. This section will focus on three sets of problems – legal, political and geopolitical. Within the legal problems there is a question of official accession criteria for the new NATO members and whether Israel is able to fulfill these criteria. Also significant is the issue of Article 5 which states that an armed attack against one member is perceived as an attack against all members. Because of the fact that Israel has still unresolved relations with neighbor countries, NATO is not willing to give protection to Israel and therefore favor Israel over other countries in the region. Another issue is Israel's counter-terrorism strategy which is controversial under international law. Under this strategy is permitted targeted killing of terrorists and house demolition of terrorist and their families. Finally there is an issue of assigned residence and transfer of families from the West Bank to the Gaza Strip. Second area deals with political problems and Israel's relations with particular countries, such as Palestine and some NATO member states, such as Turkey. Israel has still not resolved territorial disputes with Palestine, and this issue will probably not be solved in a short time period. Israel's relations with Turkey became a significant issue after the assault of humanitarian aid ship sailing under the Turkish flag to the Palestinian territory on May 2010. At the same year Turkey revised its national security strategy called "Red Book" where Israel was marked as a threat to national security. On the other hand this revised national strategy excluded Russia, Greece, Iran and Iraq from the list of main external threats. This issue point out to the particular problem with one of the NATO member state, nevertheless the most serious one for

Israel. NATO is composed of twenty-eight member states and each of them deals the political issues with Israel bilaterally rather than on multilateral forum of NATO.

There are also the geopolitical problems of Israel's membership. Firstly, is not clear where the geographical boundaries of NATO lie or whether these boundaries even exists. Secondly, Israel is in geopolitical isolation from the NATO member states and therefore is not clear how would NATO solve this issue.

Based on qualitative research will be created two tables of interests and problems. Thereafter will be identified whether these interest correspond rather with realistic or liberal theoretical tradition and which Israeli interest prevail. This is subject to the further research.

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Content

INTRODUCTION	1
1. THEORETICAL ANCHORING	6
1.1. <i>Realism</i>	6
1.2. <i>National Interest in Realism</i>	7
1.3. <i>Liberalism</i>	8
1.4. <i>National Interest in Liberalism</i>	8
2. NATO AND THE MIDDLE EAST	10
2.1. <i>Formalizing of Mutual Relations</i>	11
3. EVOLUTION OF NATO-ISRAELI RELATIONS	13
3.1. <i>Israel in Mediterranean Dialogue</i>	13
3.2. <i>Israel and the Individual Cooperation Program</i>	15
3.3. <i>Israel and Formal Partnership</i>	15
4. DISTINCTION OF AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN ATTITUDES	17
4.1. <i>The United States and Israel</i>	17
4.1.1. Political Cooperation.....	18
4.1.2. Security Cooperation.....	19
4.1.3. Economic Cooperation.....	20
4.2. <i>European Countries and Israel</i>	21
4.2.1. Ambiguity in Mutual Relations.....	21
4.2.2. Formalizing of Mutual Relations.....	22
4.2.3. Contemporary Relations.....	23
4.2.4. Europeans and Arab-Israeli Conflict.....	23
5. ISRAEL'S INTERESTS IN NATO	25

5.1. <i>Common Values</i>	25
5.2. <i>Political Benefits</i>	26
5.3. <i>NATO as Security Provider</i>	26
6. NATO’S INTERESTS IN ISREAL	28
6.1. <i>Israeli Military Strength</i>	28
6.2. <i>Experience Sharing</i>	29
6.3. <i>Advancement of Relations with Arab Countries</i>	29
6.4. <i>Common Threat of Terrorism</i>	29
6.5. <i>Common Threat of Nuclear Proliferation</i>	30
7. SPECIAL CASE OF IRAN	32
7.1. <i>Iran as a Threat for Israel</i>	33
7.2. <i>Iran as a Threat for NATO</i>	34
8. PROBLEMS OF ISREALI MEMBERSHIP IN NATO	36
8.1. <i>Legal Accession Criteria</i>	36
8.2. <i>Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty</i>	38
8.3. <i>Palestine</i>	39
8.4. <i>Turkey</i>	41
8.5. <i>International Law</i>	44
8.5.1. <i>Targeted Killing</i>	44
8.5.2. <i>Separation Wall</i>	44
8.5.3. <i>House Demolition</i>	45
8.6. <i>Problems on Israeli Side</i>	45
9. MEMBERSHIP IN NATO AS A NATIONAL INTEREST OF ISREAL	47
CONCLUSION	49
REFERENCES	50

Abbreviations

CTTSO	Combating Terrorism Technical Support Office
EEAS	European External Action Service
EU	European Union
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICI	Individual Cooperation Program
MD	Mediterranean Dialogue
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NATO HQ	North Atlantic Treaty Organization Headquarter
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NPT	Non-Proliferation Treaty
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe
PA	Palestinian Authority
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
UN	United Nations
US	the United States

Introduction

Mutual relations between North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Israel has significantly developed over past ten years with NATO and Israel sharing interests to further extend their cooperation and potentially formalize their relations. These interests aside, an official application for membership would face several political and legal constraints. The effects of Israeli membership in NATO have been discussed extensively, especially after the NATO Istanbul Summit 2004. Discussions peaked during the government formed by Tzipi Livni in 2008 and has gradually eased out of the agenda with the current right wing government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu which formed in 2009. Despite the fact that the current government does not have NATO membership or further formalization of its relations on the agenda, a change in government or the security environment, such as the creation of an independent Palestinian state or nuclear Iran could see the debate prioritized.

The main research question aims to respond why Israel is still not a member of NATO and the hypothesis is that Israel is not interested in the formal NATO membership, but in broadening of mutual cooperation on formal basis. Strong claims of interests in formal partnership only enhance the intensification of their mutual relations. NATO is an important security provider with a significant deterrent effect against potential adversaries and it is in the interest of Israel to gain additional security options against its adversaries in the Middle East region. Formalization of NATO-Israeli relations would show Israeli adversaries that they have a strong and influential partner behind its back. Also, NATO is a negotiation platform where security policies of West are formed and Israel would benefit from gaining access to its decision-making bodies affecting also their security environment.

Full membership is not in the strategic interest of Israel. A loss of freedom of action in dealing with security threats and the accountability Israel would have towards other NATO member states are but two reasons membership will be second thought. The objective of this study is to investigate the interests of both NATO and Israel in deepening mutual cooperation as well as the problems connected with formal Israeli application for membership. Based on this empirical research of interests and challenges would be possible to derive strategic positions of both sides in further pursuing of mutual relations.

It is commonly suggested that security alliances boost the deterrence against potential adversaries and promote peace (Johnson and Leeds, 2011, p. 55). With the end of the Cold War, newly independent Eastern European states were interested to become NATO members in order to gain some security guarantees against future potential aggression, as they had experienced from the former Soviet Union.

The interests in this case are different, as Israel does not seek complete security protection, largely based on its modern and superior military force and continual investment and upgrade in this. Following the break-up of the Soviet Union, Eastern European countries found themselves weakened in both economic and militarily, therefore vulnerable to future attacks and more motivated to pursue NATO membership. Since the establishment of State of Israel in 1948, its neighbors have continuously challenged the military might of Israel. The comparable interests – economic and military positions – of Israel to Central and Eastern Europe differ significantly.

This thesis can be interpreted as an alternative approach towards NATO membership, from the perspective of a strong, non-European state interested in closer security cooperation, which can be further apply on other countries in similar situations.

From a methodological point of view, the thesis is based on qualitative research. Methodology combines empirical evidence with theoretical approach of national interest. The Empirical section provides a wider context of the examined question and focuses on identification of interests and challenges, both of NATO and Israel, in mutual cooperation. Theoretical approach of national interest is based on the realistic and liberal paradigms and is outlined in the first part of the work. Then empirical evidence is provided, and final part number nine combines theory with empiricism. In conclusion is responded the main research question “Why is Israel still not a member of NATO” which combines both theoretical and empirical findings.

The question of Israeli membership in NATO has been approached from several angles. Sources include theoretical writings, thorough analysis of this question, official documents, statements of NATO and Israeli officials, as well as newspaper articles. The aim of this diversification is to provide a complex perspective and empirical evidence of the

researched question, outlining broader context of contemporary political, security, legal and even economic conditions going beyond particular analyses.

The point of departure of the theoretical part is the book of Scott Burchill, *The National Interest in International Relations Theory* (2005) and focus on the realistic and liberal theoretical traditions. Realist theoretical tradition further provides writings of classics, such as Thomas Hobbes, or Hans Morgenthau. Liberal theoretical tradition derives further data from the book of Edwin van de Haar, *Classical Liberalism and the International Relations Theory*. The aim of theoretical section is to provide different lenses how to perceive national interest and apply it on the case of Israel in the final part of this thesis.

Question of Israeli membership in NATO have been thoroughly researched especially in Israel, but NATO however has not conducted particular research analyzing potential benefits of NATO-Israeli membership. Israeli policy-makers and researches published several analysis, especially during the years 2004 and 2008, before the Netanyahu government came to the power. Thorough analyses has been published especially by the trio of Uzi Arad, former national security advisor, Tommy Steiner, senior research fellow at the Interdisciplinary Center in Herzliya, and Oded Eran, former Israeli ambassador to the European Union. They lead the official negotiations with NATO that resulted in signing of the Individual Cooperation Program in 2006 and additional deepening of mutual relations, including the option of formal membership, was supported by the former Prime Minister Tzipi Livni. Additional analyses of advantages and disadvantages of Israeli membership in NATO can be found in articles of Zaki Shalom (2005), senior research fellow at the Institute for National Security Studies in Tel Aviv, Richard Rupp (2006), associate professor of political science at Purdue University, or Josef Joffe (2009), senior fellow of Stanford and publisher in German newspaper Die Zeit.

Considerable research has been devoted to strategic advantages and disadvantages of Israeli membership in NATO by authors mentioned above, less attention had been paid to political and security environment which influences the conditions for membership that has changed considerably over the past five years. At the time when analyses were present, Israel was governed by left wing parties and the Iranian nuclear program and Middle East Peace Process were not represented the top of the national agenda. As a result, a significant part of

the thesis follows the contemporary development through particular studies and newspaper articles that capture new political and security developments affecting NATO-Israeli relations.

The structure of the thesis can be divided into four presumed parts: 1) Theoretical concept of national interest; 2) Development of relations between Israel and Western world; 3) Analysis of mutual interests, and 4) Focus on the challenges of formal NATO membership application.

Theoretical anchoring of national interest is provided and in order to show distinctive features of how to perceive national interest, two classical theories of realism and liberalism are provided. This theoretical designation is further used for the final analysis of NATO and Israeli interests in advanced cooperation. The second section gives insight to the activities and interests of NATO in the Middle East region, providing a broader understanding how NATO-Israeli relations fit within the NATO agenda in the Middle East region in general. Then, the third section provides a concrete insight into the evolution of NATO-Israeli relations.

The fourth section provides an overview of Israeli relations with the United States and European countries in order to show the distinctive approaches towards Israeli politics. Whereas the United States has had a stable policy towards Israel for many years, European attitudes differ significantly due to the high number of independent nation states. Nevertheless, the indication of the European position towards Israel can be derived from the common foreign policy of the European Union, which currently encompasses 28 European states and shares 22 members with North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Both the US and Europe have a diverse attitude towards Israel and these attitudes shape the future path of Israel in NATO.

Sections five to seven analyze interests of both Israel and NATO in mutual cooperation with the special focus on the threat of a nuclear-armed Iran. These interests provides an empirical evidence and possible point of departure for any future upgrade of mutual relations. Then, section eight is devoted to the wide array of problems that would represent the official Israeli application for the NATO membership. These problems include legal accession criteria for the new NATO members, challenge of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty providing a security guarantees to its members, non-resolved conflict with the

Palestinians, diplomatic blockade of Turkey, and problems of international law, such as Israeli policy of targeted killing, building of Separation Wall, or policy of house demolition.

Section number nine combines the empirical findings with theoretical concept of the national interest provided at the beginning of the thesis. Analysis suggests that Israel perceives its security environment through the realistic lenses whereas NATO member states rather employ more liberal security policies. This theoretical finding is further used in the final analysis in the concluding part of the thesis.

1. Theoretical Anchoring

Theoretical paradigms of Realism and Liberalism provide two different lenses on how to perceive the national interests of Israel. Despite the common interests of NATO and Israel in certain policies, both entities can perceive their security and interests through different paradigms. In order to determine whether membership in NATO would serve Israeli national interests, the theoretical section will establish a foundation for further analyses.

1.1. Realism

Realism seeks to describe the world, as is it, rather than, as it should be. Therefore, the “principles of universal relevance can be deduced from historical experience rather than abstract moral or ethical codes” (Burchill, 2005, p. 34). Realism is based on two distinctive assumptions. “The first is that the international system is anarchic, that there is no final arbiter of disputes in international politics. The second assumption is that states desire self-preservation that they want to survive and maintain their sovereignty and independence” (Thayer, 1995, p. 482-483). In this way, the international system is perceived as an insecure place prone to conflicts. Already Thomas Hobbes described the natural condition of mankind as an insecure place as follows:

“Nature hath made men so equal, in the faculties of body and mind; as that though there bee found one man sometimes manifestly stronger in body, or of quicker mind then another; yet when all is reckoned together, the difference between man, and man is not so considerable, as that one man can thereupon claim to himselfe any benefit, to which another may not pretend, as well as he. For as to the strength of body, the weakest has the strength enough to kill the strongest, either by secret machination, or by confederacy with others, that are in the same danger as himselfe” (Hobbes, 2003, p. 86-87).

This description of natural condition of mankind corresponds with the description of international relations without a sovereign power. Realists consider the division of the world

into nation states as a way to mitigate this natural state of anarchy. “Realists give high priority to the nation-state in their considerations, acknowledging it as the supreme political authority in the world” (Burchill, 2005, p. 31). Only nation-states have a potential to mitigate conflict because of their desire for self-preservation. They, therefore, build up military power in order to guarantee their own survival. “Realism argues that it is better for a state to rely on its own arms to defend itself because it does not have to rely on other states as allies” (Thayer, 1995, p. 484). Realists are pessimistic about the existence of the just and peaceful world and their desire for self-preservation is self-conflicting.

1.2. National Interest in Realism

National interest in terms of realism is the possession of power in order to preserve territorial integrity, political institutions, and cultural identity. “Over a century ago, British Prime Minister Lord Palmerton famously stated that, ‘Nations have no permanent friends or allies, they only have permanent interests,’ and ever since the expression has become one of the guiding dictums of a Realist approach to foreign affairs” (Waxman, 2012, p. 74). Hans Morgenthau, representative of realism after the Second World War argues that interest is defined in terms of national power that can be expressed in term of economic, military and cultural strength (Morgenthau, 1948, p. 38-42). According Morgenthau, national interests, such as territorial integrity, political institutions and cultural mores, are established objectives that do not change over time. “National interests are permanent conditions which provide policy makers with a rational guide to their tasks: they are fixed, politically bipartisan and always transcend changes in government. The national interest is not defined by the whim of a man or the partisanship of party but imposes itself as an objective datum upon all men applying their rational faculties to the conduct of foreign policy” (Burchill, 2005, p. 36). However, he admits the existence of variable component transcending over time. “This component includes personalities, sectional interests and public opinion” (Ibid, p. 37). Preservation of these permanent and transcendent national interests of territorial integrity, political institutions and cultural mores is the main pursuit of national security. The state preserves these interests “by accumulating military power, either by acquiring sufficient means to successfully wage war or entering into co-operative defence arrangements with greater strategic powers” (Ibid, p. 47). This identification of national interest “in terms of power, rules out the identification of interest with ethical priorities such as justice, religious

beliefs, human rights, altruism, the welfare and prosperity of its citizens and any obligations to humanity beyond the narrow concerns of the state” (Ibid, p. 41).

1.3. Liberalism

Liberalism “has advocated political freedom, democracy, human and constitutionally guaranteed rights, and privileged the liberty of the individual and equality before the law” (Burchill, 2005, p. 104). Liberalists argue that human nature does not always act rationally and seek to maximize utility. Human nature also seeks “the development of morality, customs, traditions, and the maintenance of the general rule of law” (Van de Haar, 2009, p. 127). Liberals argue that peace is the normal state of affairs that provides a condition for the development of market capitalism and human welfare. On the contrary however, war brings human suffering and therefore is irrational. “Most wars arise out of calculations and miscalculations of interest, misunderstandings, and mutual suspicions, such as those that characterized the origins of World War I” (Doyle, 1986, p. 1157). “The disease of war could be successfully treated with the twin medicines of democracy and free trade” (Burchill, 2005, p. 112-113). Democracy brings to power elite for a limited period of time that is accountable to its electorate and therefore tries to avoid war in order to be reelected. Free trade creates interdependence beyond artificial boundaries and therefore unites people in their common interest of prosperity and development. Liberals argue that “the only path to development is through the restoration of global free trade, combined with national free market economic policies and social and political individual freedom” (Van de Haar, 2009, p. 139).

1.4. National Interest in Liberalism

National interest in terms of liberalism are open markets where the state have a potential to expand its power and influence. Ideals of classical liberals went beyond the borders of the national state and emphasized the well-being of individuals. Therefore, speaking about national interest, liberalists acknowledge national security provided by state as a necessary condition for economic development. National interest defined by Adam Smith, father of liberalism, is “simply the accumulation of each individual’s self-interest – a natural state produced without conscious thought or planning” (Burchill, 2005, p. 107). Logic behind

this claim is that through the pursuit of self-interests, “the individual pursues that of the community, and in promoting the interest of the community he promotes his own. This is the famous doctrine of the harmony of interests” (Ibid, p. 107). According Adam Smith, national interests should not be defined in national terms, thus national economic borders should be abolished (Ibid, p. 119). Adam Smith believed that the abolishment of borders should not extend beyond those of commerce, leaving national borders intact. He recognized that commerce requires national security that remains privileged over the market, claiming that “security must come before prosperity” (Ibid, p. 108). However, the state as such creates barriers to trade with “its capacity to break the nexus between self-interest and individual commercial actions” (Ibid, p. 106). Liberals believe that peace rather than war creates conditions for the development of free trade and therefore it is in the national interest of the state to develop peaceful relations. John Stuart Mill additionally claimed that free trade brings about the end of war. “It is commerce which is rapidly rendering war obsolete, by strengthening and multiplying the personal interests which act in natural opposition to it” (Ibid, p. 119).

2. NATO and the Middle East

The Middle East region is of NATO's strategic interest for several reasons. Nuclear proliferation together with terrorism represent major threats to global security whose source lies mainly in the Middle East (Shalom, 2005). NATO considers "preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery as key priority" (NATO, 2005, p. 8) and the Iranian nuclear program is highly on agenda of Western leaders. If Iran crosses the nuclear threshold, another countries such as Saudi Arabia would be interested in gaining nuclear capability and therefore boost the proliferation in the Middle East. The region is also strategically important for securing the European energy supply. "Approximately 65 per cent of Europe's oil and natural gas imports pass through the Mediterranean and the resources of southern Mediterranean countries could provide approximately 40% of the oil and natural gas needs of Europe" (Cayan, 2003, p. 13). Diversification of energy resources is an important part of the energy security to which NATO members devote significant attention. The disturbing factor of regional stability is the on-going Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and NATO member states have a shared interest finding a final resolution. According Ariel Levite from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, NATO should take a peacekeeping role in the conflict to facilitate a favorable transformation of the regional scene (Levite, 2009).

NATO understands and acknowledges the strategic importance of a peaceful Middle East to its own security and seeks to establish closer ties with countries in the region. Political stability in the region would diminish the dangers of nuclear proliferation, terrorism and secure energy supply from the region. Closer cooperation and communication would build the trust between the partners which have a potential to diminish escalation of conflicts. Also, through cooperation, NATO would gain access to regional information and knowledge affecting its own security. NATO has many stakes and interests in the region, as well as possessing the capabilities to influence further evolution, such as contributing to the Middle

East Peace Process. NATO's commitment to the region should be based on confident evolution of relations with countries in the region.

2.1. Formalizing of Mutual Relations

Cooperation between NATO and the broader Middle East was formalized for the first time in 1995 with the establishment of the Mediterranean Dialogue (MD); Jordan and Algeria later joined initial members Egypt, Israel, Morocco, Tunis and Mauritania. According to Ronald Asmus, this initiative can be considered as “a complement and balance to NATO's opening to the East” and “a kind of weaker sister to enlargement and partnership - with less strategic drive from the Alliance and less enthusiastic partners on the other side” (Asmus, 2008). Events of 9/11 only enhanced the interest of NATO in greater cooperation with the Middle East countries and became “the highest priorities for the Alliance” (Bin, 2010, p. 117).

At the Prague Summit in November 2002, Heads of State and Government decided to upgrade the Mediterranean Dialogue based on principles of non-discrimination (same basis for cooperation), self-differentiation (allowing a tailored approach), inclusiveness (partners as share-holders of cooperative effort), two-way engagement (practical cooperation favorable both for NATO and its partners), non-imposition (every partner chose its own pace of cooperation), complementarity and mutual reinforcement (taking into account initiatives of EU and OSCE in the Middle East) and these principles should reinforce new areas of practical cooperation (Santis, 2010, p. 141). NATO Heads of State and Government decided that:

“We reaffirm that security in Europe is closely linked to security and stability in the Mediterranean. We therefore decide to upgrade substantially the political and practical dimensions of our Mediterranean Dialogue as an integral part of the Alliance's cooperative approach to security. In this respect, we encourage intensified practical cooperation and effective interaction on security matters of common concern, including terrorism-related issues, as appropriate, where NATO can provide added value. We reiterate that the Mediterranean Dialogue and other international efforts, including the EU Barcelona process, are complementary and mutually reinforcing” (Prague Summit Declaration, 2002).

The June 2004 NATO Istanbul Summit launched the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) that aimed to reach countries of the Persian Gulf and expanded framework for the Mediterranean Dialogue. “The Istanbul Cooperation Initiative aims to enhance security and stability by fostering mutually beneficial bilateral relationships with interested countries in the broader Middle East region. The Initiative is open to all countries in the region which subscribe to its aims, particularly the fight against terrorism and countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction” (NATO, 2005, p. 10). Today, four countries of Persian Gulf – Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, and United Arab Emirates – are members of the initiative and Oman and Saudi Arabia declared their interest in membership. The Istanbul Summit also expanded framework of the Mediterranean Dialogue. In the final Communiqué, the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council invited members of the Mediterranean Dialogue “to establish a more ambitious and expanded partnership, guided by the principle of joint ownership and taking into consideration their particular interests and needs.

The overall aim of this partnership will be to contribute to regional security and stability through stronger practical cooperation, including the enhancement of existing political dialogue, achieving interoperability, developing defence reform and contributing to the fight against terrorism (NATO Istanbul Summit Communiqué, 2004). Both Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative are manifestation of NATO’s interest in the Middle East region with the aim to enhance and broaden further cooperation. Stephan Frühling and Benjamin Schreer, strategic experts from Australian National University, argue that Mediterranean Dialogue should comprise of: political dialogue, confidence-building measures and security sector reform and the ICI should focus on capacity building and training. (Frühling and Schreer, 2010, p. 58). Both platforms provide a different type of engagement and participating countries can decide by themselves which way of cooperation is the most suitable for their needs.

3. Evolution of NATO-Israeli Relations

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization had been established when Israel celebrated nearly one year of its existence. Over time, relations became latent, as NATO focused on its main task in sustaining security in the bipolar world of the Cold War era, while the primary interest of Israel had been to establish its newly created state within the adversarial Arab world. First official mutual rapprochement arrived only with the end of the Cold War when NATO started to open its doors for cooperation to states in the close neighborhood. In 1995, Israel established its first official ties with NATO as a member of the Mediterranean Dialogue. Over a decade of slow development, Israel sought to establish closer ties that lead to the signature of Individual Cooperation Program with NATO. This success only enhanced the appetite for further cooperation and Israeli representatives even expressed their interest in formal membership.

3.1. Israel in the Mediterranean Dialogue

As stated previously, Israel is member of the multilateral Mediterranean Dialogue together with Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia, Mauritania, and Algeria. Because of the multilateral nature of the program, Israel was restricted to further develop its relations with NATO by the joint agenda of the whole Mediterranean Dialogue. Even “NATO was unwilling to move ahead with interested countries, such as Israel, not wanting to leave behind other Mediterranean participants” (Arad and Steiner, 2004, p. 7). Significant turnaround and opportunity for Israel came with the NATO Istanbul Summit in June 2004. The final Communiqué of the summit calls for the establishment of expanded partnership with interested countries. Israel took concrete steps shortly after the Istanbul Summit.

In September 2004, the delegations of the Atlantic Forum for Israel and the German Marshall Fund visited NATO Headquarter for meeting of the NATO’s Secretary General to

discussed details of submitting formal proposal of individual NATO-Israeli cooperation program (Arad et. all, 2007, p. 7). The driving forces behind this NATO-Israeli rapprochement was an unofficial network of the Atlantic Forum for Israel headed by the intelligence veteran Uzi Arad, also called the “intellectual godfather of closer NATO-Israeli links” (Kempe, 2006) and the German Marshall Fund represented by Ronald Asmus, senior State Department official during the Clinton administration. This network closely supported the negotiation process and was “instrumental in increasing policy awareness of NATO-Israel relations, and in enhancing Israel’s relations with the Euro-Atlantic community” (Arad et. all, 2007, p. 12). The annual Herzliya Conference in December 2004 engaged officials from Euro-Atlantic community and raised the policy and media attention in Israel about the opportunity of enhancing relations with NATO (Arad et. all, 2008, p. 8). The official proposal for establishing Individual Cooperation Program was submitted in January 2005. Negotiations proceeded quickly over the next several months, and in February 2005 with the first official visit of NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer stated in Israel that:

“Last June, at NATO’s Istanbul Summit, we agreed, in close consultation with Israel and other partners in this process, to try to move our relationship to another level – in short, to move from dialogue to partnership. We want to further intensify our political dialogue; to promote greater interoperability between our military forces; and to encourage greater cooperation on defence reform, as well as in the critical fight against terrorism. These are all areas where we have a lot to offer to each other, and where working together is beneficial to us all” (Scheffer, 2005).

Main negotiators of the NATO-Israeli rapprochement, such as Ronald Asmus, Uzi Arad and the Oded Eran (Israeli Ambassador to the European Union) did not have any clear framework where to converge these negotiations. Ronald Asmus rather preferred to use words “like upgrading Israel’s relations with the Euro-Atlantic community or anchoring Israel to the West. These words include a spectrum of relationships ranging from closer ties up to and including possible membership” (Asmus and Jackson, 2004, p. 3). Uzi Arad was even more careful with the use of the word *membership*, making especially clear that: “No one is yet talking about membership. Membership is reserved for future circumstances” (Dempsey, 2005) and rather prefer to negotiate the compatibility of forces and consultations with NATO. “Membership could come later, if at all” (Erlanger, 2004) Uzi Arad said. Former Israeli Ambassador to the EU Oded Eran was even more explicit noting that: “I am not against, but I

think NATO isn't ready yet for Israeli membership...I prefer to take the gradual path” (Kempe, 2006).

It is clear that even the main negotiator of the Israeli rapprochement with NATO did not have clear objectives, and were very careful in choosing the appropriate language when communicating to the public. These post-Istanbul summit negotiations lead towards the signature of the Individual Cooperation Program and though Israel was the first state to sign such a cooperation agreement, negotiators had complications naming it correctly. In the context of post-Istanbul summit negotiations, first speculations about the Israeli membership in NATO had developed.

3.2. Israel and the Individual Cooperation Program

In October 2006, Israel officially concluded Individual Cooperation Program (ICP) with NATO, the first country to sign beyond the Euro-Atlantic arena, and the first among Mediterranean Dialogue countries. In the following years, Egypt and Jordan also concluded individual cooperation programs. Israeli ICP on one hand institutionalized already existing cooperation such as Israeli participation in NATO naval maneuvers in the Black Sea, the counter-terrorism contribution to the Operation Active Endeavor in the Mediterranean Sea, or Israel joining the NATO cataloguing system designated to create a uniform inventory framework and equipment for NATO allies (Arad et. all, 2007, p. 8). On the other hand, the ICP enhanced further cooperation detailed twenty-seven areas of cooperation, including “response to terrorism, intelligence sharing, armament cooperation and management, nuclear, biological and chemical defense, military doctrine and exercises, civilian emergency plans and disaster preparedness” (Arad et. all, 2007, p. 8). Israel is especially interested to participate in the maritime Operation Active Endeavor (Bisogniero, 2007) patrolling Eastern Mediterranean, which also significantly contributes to Israeli national security. In 2006, NATO and Israeli officials agreed on posting an Israeli liaison officer to Naples from where this particular operation is directed. However, “the officer was only posted in early 2008 after protracted negotiations” (Steiner, 2011, p. 6). Despite some procedural difficulties, the ICP significantly contributed to the deepening of mutual cooperation in various fields. Nevertheless, this kind of partnership rather focuses on practical cooperation rather than political objectives, which means that there is still room for further rapprochement.

3.3. Israel and Formal Partnership

While the Individual Cooperation Program formalized and enhanced further cooperation, it did not establish a formal partnership status within NATO for Israel. The second NATO-Israeli Symposium in 2007 sent a clear message to NATO from Israeli political leaders who called upon formal upgrade of mutual relations. “Vice Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Tzipi Livni, announced that Israel seeks to be included in NATO’s official partnership framework, the Partnership for Peace” (Arad et. al, 2007, p. 9) and Uzi Arad argued that “Israel should aspire to a partnership de jure” (Ibid, p. 9). However, at this time, NATO was still governed by the Strategic Concept of 1999 limiting the formal scope of partnership only for the Eastern European countries.

New Strategic Concept of 2010 offered all third countries, including countries of the Mediterranean Dialogue, the possibility of formal partnership within the framework of the Partnership for Peace. Despite this, Israeli representatives were very active and sought the status of formal partnership within this framework; they have not become members until today.

Benjamin Netanyahu has governed Israeli politics since 2009 and has remained a proponent of any further deepening of NATO relations; a policy, which dates back to 2007 while Netanyahu, was a member of the opposition. He proposed, “to take a mid-position: to aim for Israel to be a formal strategic partner by 2010, but not necessarily a member” (Netanyahu, 2007). However, since his tenure of the Prime Minister post from 2009, policy of any upgrade of relations of NATO has been frozen. Over past five years of right wing government, this question has never been raised, however the policy of NATO-Israeli rapprochement continues have a potential to be reopened under new Israeli leadership or with the changing security environment, such as creation of independent Palestinian state or a scenario in which Iran reaches obtains nuclear capabilities. Both countries still have a significant potential to further cooperate in numerous areas which are the subject of further exploration in following parts.

4. Distinction of American and European Attitudes

The attitudes towards Israel as a partner and potential member of NATO differ significantly on both sides of the Atlantic. The United States and Canada maintain rather pro-Israeli policy, whereas the position of European members varies from state to state. The United States maintains a long-term position of the Israel's closest ally, and Canada maintain similar pro-Israeli policy which is apparent from the 2011 voting about the recognition of the State of Palestine in the United Nation (UN) when Canada together with the United States, the Czech Republic and several Micronesian states voted against the recognition. Furthermore, current Canadian Prime Minister Harper made it quite clear his country's support for Israel when he stated, "an attack on Israel would be considered an attack on Canada" (Chase, 2010). European position towards Israel is examined through the common foreign policy of the European Union. NATO and European Union share 22 members out of 28 and therefore the position of EU is quite predicative speaking about the European position towards Israel in general.

Whereas NATO act as unitary actor, position on Israel differs in individual member states. For the demonstration of this difference, following sections focus on the US-Israeli relations putting into contrast with EU-Israeli relations. First part is devoted to the relations of Israel with the United States, also referred to as a "special relationship", with the aim to present the extent of cooperation in fields of politics, security, and economy. The second section introduces Israeli relations with European countries in a broader perspective focusing on the ambiguity of relations, gradual formalization of relations within the European Union, and presents the contemporary relations that are significantly affected by the unsuccessful Middle East Peace Process. Europeans have a decisive voice in determining the future of NATO-Israeli relations and the following sections will demonstrate that any future NATO-Israeli rapprochement would rather face the problem of disunity on European continent.

4.1. The United States and Israel

The United States and Israel have what is typically described as a “special relationship” defined in terms of “the unique characteristics of the political, security and economic connections between Israel and the US” (Reut Institute, 2008, p. 1) a relationship that dates back to the second Eisenhower administration. Due to its strategic position in the Middle East and growing anti-Western atmosphere in the Arab countries, “Israel showed itself to be the sole staunchly pro-Western power in the region” (Lieber, 1998, p. 14) and therefore the strategic asset for the United States, the strongest and leading power of the Western world. The US also significantly contributed to the Israeli establishment in the Middle East region, standing behind the Israeli peace treaties with Egypt in 1979 and with Jordan in 1994. Until today, the US continues to serve as Israel’s greatest power patron, paying billions for Israeli security and help to promote Israel’s acceptance around the world (Bard and Pipes, 1997).

4.1.1. Political Cooperation

Political cooperation between the United States and Israel has several dimensions. “To be sure, the United States and Israel continue to share many common interests in the Middle East. They both oppose Iran’s nuclear program and want to weaken Tehran’s regional influence; they both want to counter the proliferation of ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction in the region; they both want to stop Islamist-inspired terrorism (whether by al-Qaeda, Hamas, Hezbollah, or other Islamist and jihadist groups); and they both want to support pro-Western regimes, such as Jordan’s, and maintain some kind of stability in the region” (Waxman, 2012, p. 74). The United States is traditionally involved in Israeli peace process with the Palestinians and their political representatives are considered to be the only ones capable of influencing Israeli decision-making. In the United Nations, Israelis have a strongest political support from the US that always vetoes resolutions of the Security Council against Israel.

American support thus significantly endorses Israeli position vis-à-vis its adversaries, especially in the Middle East region, as well as around the world. Continuation of this policy, one could argue, would result in a deterioration of the United State’s relations with the broader Middle East region. Nevertheless “no Arab ally of the United States has ever, as a result of its pro-Israel posture, refused to cooperate with Washington on counterterrorism or

denied its request for access, basing, or overflight rights” (Eisenstadt and Pollock, 2012a). On the contrary, US-Israeli alliance even helped to enhance the US-Arab relations based on the logic that Arab countries seek to influence Israeli policies through the United States (Eisenstadt and Pollock, 2012b, p. 3). Nevertheless, there are several disagreements between allies as well; US officials complain that Israel is not enough attentive to its regional interests and Israelis criticize American naivety in Middle East diplomacy and its damaging consequences for Israel (Waxman, 2012, p. 75). Nevertheless, both countries publicly recognize that they stand side by side, despite occasional problems.

4.1.2. Security Cooperation

Both countries have developed a significant record of security cooperation that is only enhanced by the indispensable nature of their relationship. Intelligence sharing cooperation dates back to the Cold War when “Israeli intelligence provided invaluable information regarding Soviet intentions and capabilities, weapons and tactics, Eastern bloc intelligence operations, and the activities of radical Arab terrorist groups that targeted both U.S. and Israeli interests” (Eisenstadt and Pollock, 2012b, p. 10). “Since the end of the Cold War, Israeli intelligence has also made important contributions in the field of nonproliferation. It reportedly alerted U.S. intelligence of Iraqi efforts to reconstitute its nuclear program in 1989, of Russian support in 1997 for Iran’s efforts to increase the range and accuracy of its missile arsenal, and of Syrian efforts in 2007 to build, with North Korean help, a plutonium-production” (Ibid, p. 11).

Both countries have an interest to disrupt the Iranian nuclear program and the recent introduction of Stuxnet malware to Iranian nuclear system has been accredited to US and Israeli intelligence agencies, developers of the most high-tech technologies able to penetrate foreign computer networks. Currently “the United States and Israel regularly share intelligence regarding terrorist organizations and cooperate in the apprehension of terrorist suspects” (Ibid, p. 10) with Israeli potential to collect intelligence on regional actors which are also in the interests of the United States. As a result of this counterterrorism cooperation, Israel also joined “the U.S. government’s Combating Terrorism Technical Support Office (CTTSO), which seeks to develop rapid technical solutions to terrorism challenges” (Ibid, p. 14).

The United States and Israel also cooperate on development of missile defense and advanced weapons systems. The US provided significant funding for development and production of Israel's Iron Dome anti-rocket system, and for joint missile defense systems David's Sling, and the Arrow systems (Sharp, 2014, p. 12). Mutual weapons purchase is crucial for both countries and is on the cutting edge of development. In 2007, the Bush Administration approved \$30 billion military aid package for the 10-year period (2009-2018) under which Israel is permitted to spend 26% on Israeli-made products and 74% on American-made equipment (Ibid, p. 4). Likewise the United States is also a significant purchaser of Israeli advanced weapons systems amounting about \$1.5 billion a year including unmanned vehicles, cyber-weapons, robotics, sensors and electronic warfare systems (Eisenstadt and Pollock, 2013b). "Israel continues to serve as a testing ground for advanced weapons and war fighting concepts, some of which are adopted or employed by the U.S. military" (Eisenstadt and Pollock, 2012b, p. 3). Their mutual cooperation and even interconnectedness in such a crucial area as hard security only enhance the relation of strategic partnership.

4.1.3. Economic Cooperation

On the economic level, Israel can benefit from significant US foreign aid together with the Free Trade Agreement. Since 1949, Israel has received about \$115 billion in the US foreign aid primarily for military, economic, and immigration purposes, of which a significant part has been spent in the United States (Sharp, 2012, p. 30). The Free Trade Agreement between Israel and US signed in 1985 significantly boosted mutual trade and in 2013 amount to \$40 billion every year (The Telegraph, 2013).

Mutual cooperation in the soft-security area is first and foremost in the high-tech and sustainable development which reinforce economic competitiveness of both actors on global market. During the March 2013 visit to Israel, President Obama said that "innovation is just as important to the relationship between the United States and Israel as our security cooperation...it's pushing new frontiers of science and exploration" (The Telegraph, 2013)

Israeli high-tech community is the second largest, only after the Silicon Valley and serves as a hub for the national cyber-security. Israel military perhaps had been first country to have integrated cyber into combat operations and Israeli critical infrastructure is considered among the best protected in the world (Eisenstadt and Pollock, 2012b, p. 35-36). Today, the

US private sector significantly benefits from the Israeli systems securing financial transactions, computer-operations, telecommunications, aviation, surface transport, and Internet connections.

4.2. European Countries and Israel

European states represent a diversity of position towards Israeli politics which they try to coordinate through the initiatives of the European Union. These rather focus on trade, technology, science, and development that have a significant potential to shape Israeli politics. EU is a member of the Quartet that has a voice in negotiation of the Middle East Peace Process. However, the European Union did not take full advantage of this influence and the progress in negotiations rather depends on the United States. “For Israel, Europe is a cultural reference point, the seat of a rich past, the repository of the memories of much of its population and, geographically, its closest ally” (Ottolenghi, 2010, p. 8). However, mutual relations are rather troubled due to the Israeli perception of Europeans as “traditionally pro-Arab and historically anti-Semitic” (Kempe, 2006). More likely, the United States is the main international protector and key player able to shape Israeli politics. In Israeli perspective, “Brussels has nothing to offer that compares with what Washington can provide” (Miller, 2011). Nevertheless, European invisible hand of economic incentives should not be underestimated.

4.2.1. Ambiguity in Mutual Relations

The politics and diplomacy of European states towards Israel is rather ambiguous. On the one hand, “Israel’s existence is never questioned because its creation is considered to be some sort of payback to the Jewish people on account of their near-extirmination in Europe” (Ottolenghi, 2010, p. 21). And on the other, individual European countries balance their Israeli support with keeping of good relations with Arab countries that traditionally refuse to accept the legitimate existence of the State of Israel, with the exceptions of Jordan and Egypt. Growing Muslim communities in Europe increasingly drive “domestic debates and national policies on Israeli-Palestinian issues forcing local politicians to take their pro-Palestinian

views into account” and recently Angela Merkel “underscored the importance of Middle East peace to both Germany and Europe” (Miller, 2011). The attitude of individual European states towards Middle East can be diverse, such as the Italian and Spanish support for the NATO’s Mediterranean Dialogue and the reluctance of France towards this project (Steiner, 2011, p. 3). However, the diverse attitude of European states towards the Middle East in general, and Israel in particular, is shaped rather through the EU, rather than NATO, with the interest to provide coherent and united policies.

4.2.2. Formalizing of Mutual Relations

“Israel and the EU have several important agreements and frameworks over the years – the 1975 Cooperation Agreement, the 1995 Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (the Barcelona Process) and the Association Agreement, which came into force in 2000, and the April 2005 Action Plan” (Ottolenghi, 2010, p. 10). In 2004, ten new member states joined the European Union and most of them “expressed a friendly attitude towards Israel and moderated the stance held by the fifteen mostly West European members” (Eran, 2009, p. 60). Same year, Israel joined Galileo Project and became a full member of Europe’s satellite navigation system. Terrorist bombings in Madrid (2004) and London (2005) together with Danish cartoon affair (2005) significantly “aggravated the relations between Europe and several Muslim countries, increasing, at least temporarily, the understanding of the situation in which Israel finds itself” (Ibid, p. 60-61).

The Action Plan of 2005 upgraded relations beyond the Association Agreement of 1995 in the context of new European Neighbor Policy (Ibid, p. 59). “The EU set up a separate institutional framework to forge the closest possible bilateral relationship with Mediterranean countries, short of membership, based on functional and value-based foundations without compromising the multilateral framework” (Steiner and Eran, 2010, p. 9). In 2005, Israel unilaterally withdrew from the Gaza strip and following years marked prosperous bilateral relations both in political dialogue as well as in growing volume of trade. In 2011, bilateral trade mounted to almost €30 billion and EU was Israel’s major source of imports and the second largest market for exports, after the United States (European Commission, 2013). Mutual political relations significantly deteriorate in 2009 after the Israeli operation Cast Lead in Gaza Strip. Whereas Tommy Steiner argues that “relations between Europe and Israel

appear to have reached an unprecedented low, following Israel's Operation Cast Lead in Gaza” (Steiner, 2009), Oded Eran argues that “Operation Cast Lead in itself would have had limited impact on EU-Israel relations” (Eran, 2009, p. 67). Nevertheless, EU-Israeli relations are rather stale over years after the Operation Cast Lead which can be demonstrated by the non-prolongation of the Action plan from 2005, which supposed to be expanded after three years.

4.2.3. Contemporary Relations

Contemporary Israeli relations with Europeans are rather stuck because of the limited progress in the Middle East Peace Process. “The real impediments to a full-fledged political partnership between Israel and the EU derive from the EU’s insistence on making a political upgrade conditional upon progress on the Middle East Peace Process” (Ottolenghi, 2010, p. 12). The Arab-Israeli conflict is considered as central to regional stability and therefore it is a strategic priority of Europe to resolve it. Catherine Ashton, the head of European External Action Service “has frequently emphasized Israeli-Palestinian peace as a key component of regional stability” (Miller, 2011) and “European leaders believe that the ongoing strife threatens their economic interests in the Middle East, where the EU is the top external trading partner and a major energy purchaser” (Ibid, 2011). Europeans however, operate rather on the sidelines within the Quartet that negotiates the Peace Process. The real leader is the United States and Europeans play only a limited role in the ongoing negotiations headed by the Secretary of State John Kerry. In order to have a greater impact on Israeli politics, Europeans should be more engaged through the European Union and use the economic incentives they have. Conditional politics of the EU with the approach ‘no progress on the Peace Process, means no progress on the development of our relations’ demonstrated by the blocked upgrade of the Action Plan only close the door of influence that Europeans can have.

4.2.4. Europeans and Arab-Israeli Conflict

The official position of the EU on the Arab-Israeli conflict is the support of “two-state solution with an independent, democratic, viable Palestinian state living side-by-side with Israel and its other neighbors” based on borders from 1967 (EEAS, 2014). In this regard

“European Commission and EU member states contribute about \$1.5 billion to the Palestinian Authority every year” (Miller, 2011) on building of Palestinian institutions and also significantly funding numerous organizations and NGOs on the left political spectrum challenging “Israel’s self-understanding as a nation-state for the Jewish people” (Ottolenghi, 2010, p. 25). In disputes regarding settlements and building of the Wall, Europeans heavily emphasize the role of international law. Israeli settlements in the West Bank are always the bone of contention. Every decision of Israeli government to boost settlement is heavily criticized in the European structures. Also the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice heavily criticizing the construction of Wall between West Bank and Israel was supported by Europeans. The European standpoint is that “Israel can only defend itself by means of an international law” (Ibid, p. 31). In recent voting on Palestinian recognition in the United Nations in November 2012, Europeans aimed to show a united voice through the European External Action Service (EEAS). However, the final voting show how split the Europeans are on this issue. Even Palestinians have a difficulty to gain a credible political support from EU. “Palestinian Authority officials appreciate the EU’s rhetorical support for Palestinian rights, they recognize that Europe is unable to pressure or persuade Israel to make concessions” (Miller, 2011).

5. Israel's interest in NATO

NATO is an attractive partner for several reasons. Firstly, both entities share common values that create a solid basis for further cooperation. Secondly, Israel is interested in gaining an access to information on multilateral level, which has a potential to influence Israeli security environment. Thirdly, with the ongoing negotiations of a two-state solution, and potential establishment of Palestinian state, NATO has a potential to become the guarantor of Israeli security against Islamist radicals. Thereafter, special case of Iran is discussed, because the potential development of nuclear weapon would represent threat both for Israel, as well as for NATO allies.

5.1. Common Values

Despite its location in the Middle East, Israel consider itself as a Western democratic nation sharing common cultural, political and economic values with the Euro-Atlantic community. At the NATO-Israeli Symposium in 2007, former Minister for Foreign Affairs Tzipi Livni stated, “the Western civilization and the Atlantic Community are Israel’s natural habitat”... “In sharing the same values of democracy and freedom, facing the same threats and in the will to defend our common way of life, NATO and Israel are natural partners and strategic allies” (Livni, 2007). On multilateral level, Israel is member of the United Nations (UN) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). On regional level, Israel is literally excluded from the participation in regional organizations of the Middle East, which are almost exclusively Muslim. Multilateral frameworks such as EU’s Euro-Mediterranean Dialogue, and the OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Cooperation are

targeted to the region as a whole and any further progress of Israeli relations depends on the progress of all involved countries. The Israeli feeling of belonging lies rather within Western democratic world rather than with Arab countries in their close neighborhood and hence looking for partners in the international arena in order to enhance one's own political and security position, NATO is the most suitable partner that Israel could find.

5.2. Political Benefits

Official NATO-Israeli partnership would provide Israel several political benefits, including access to information about NATO's decision-making, which can have significant impact on Israeli politics. "Whereas NATO is a military alliance, it is also a multilateral political institution, where negotiation, clubbing and networking are becoming more and more important" (Arad and Steiner, 2004, p. 8). NATO is "developing strategies that shape the Middle Eastern neighborhood in which Israel lives. Israel should aspire to have the closest possible relations with the actors and institutions setting those policies" (Asmus and Jackson, 2004, p. 4).

Formal partnership would expose Israel to NATO's internal information and decision-making having a potential to affect Israeli domestic security. Official partnership would also mean the right to establish an accredited mission at NATO HQ. "Currently, Israeli officials participating in NATO are accredited to Israel's Mission to the European Union" (Horn, 2009, p.4) – a statement which remains true today. According to Zaki Shalom, Israeli expert on transatlantic relations, official Israeli-NATO partnership would also enhance Israeli bargaining potential. Until now, Israel almost exclusively depended on its sole ally the United States and NATO partnership would provide Israel a diversification of bargaining (Shalom, 2005). "Simply put, formal partnership would normalize Israel's international status in one of the most important structures in the Western world" (Horn, 2009, p. 5).

5.3. NATO as Security Provider

Another security related aspect is NATO's potential to become Israeli security provider after the establishment of independent Palestinian state. In February 2014, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas suggested scenario coming up with two-state solutions as follow:

“Let Israeli troops remain in the West Bank for a five-year transitional period to work with Palestinian and Jordanian security forces and reassure Israeli public that it is not going to get hit with the flurry of rockets it got hit with after Israel quit the Gaza Strip. And then have the Israeli forces replaced indefinitely by an American-led NATO force, with troops throughout the territory, and every crossing and within Arab East Jerusalem – along with, of course, Palestinian police and security forces...Let NATO forces stay, for a long time, and wherever they want, not only on the eastern borders but also on the Western borders, everywhere...For a long time, for the time they wish. NATO can be everywhere, why not” (Friedman, 2014).

However, Palestinians are rather split between supporters of radical Hamas and moderate Fatah. Mr. Abbas is a member of the Fatah party and therefore his legitimacy as a representative of all Palestinians is sometimes disputed. His statement about NATO presence in future Palestinian state greatly outrage Hamas and its supporters. Sammy Abu Zohari, spokesman of Hamas, said that: “Hamas will treat any and all international presence in the Palestinian territories as an occupation force” (Khoury, 2014) and called on Mr. Abbas “to declare negotiations over, claiming he doesn't have a mandate to lead negotiations in the name of the Palestinian people” (Ibid, 2014). Despite the lack of unity of Palestinian representation, NATO has a critical role to play in the Middle East Peace Process, the provider of security for Israel. In this case, NATO-Israeli partnership would serve as an Israeli assurance policy and reward for the progress in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

6. NATO's Interest in Israel

The possibility of a stronger Israel-NATO partnership is largely based on practicalities, than politics. Israel has a strong and advanced military technology that is in the interest of individual NATO member states, as well as in the interest of NATO as whole. Israel also has a significant potential to share its knowledge in various security related fields. Both NATO and Israel share common threats, such as terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and while NATO member states confront these issues either occasionally, Israel is used to facing them almost on daily basis and has developed its security policies accordingly. NATO would strongly benefit from the Israeli security experience sharing and providing their advanced know-how. On political level, contrary to popular view, closer NATO-Israeli ties have a potential to enhance Arab-NATO ties, which would be of the benefit for NATO as well.

6.1. Israeli Military Strength

Despite its small landscape, we can designate Israel as a security provider rather than security consumer (Tertrais, 2010, p. 11). Thus from the security point of view, NATO and especially European countries could benefit from Israeli expertise in particular fields. In terms of military capabilities, Israel clearly surpass most of the European states. "The numbers are striking: Israel has 3,500 MBTs (Main Battle Tanks) compared to France's 637 and Germany's 1,400. Israel boasts 435 combat aircraft, dwarfing France (261) and Germany (298). This

hardware is generated by a population that is less than one-tenth of Germany” (Joffe, 2009). Also, Israel spends about 6.5% of its GDP of defense in comparison to European countries where Great Britain and France each spends about 2.5% (SIPRI, 2011). Israeli military spending is about “three times Egypt’s military spending and larger than the combined defense expenditures of all its neighbors — Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon” (Zakaria, 2012). Israel can provide its advanced weapons which are “far more sophisticated, often a generation ahead of those used by its adversaries” (Ibid, 2012). Israeli advanced anti-ballistic Arrow Missile Defense System and also the development of drones are in the focus of interest of several European as well as non-European countries.

6.2. Experience Sharing

The primary potential of Israel contribution to NATO’s military operations will be based on know-how and experience sharing, and less about contributing military forces to international interventions. (Arad and Steiner, 2004, p. 10). Israel can also significantly contribute by its experience in “mining, law-intensity conflicts, training, counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism, maintenance” (Landman, 2010, p. 4) as well as provide know-how regarding energy-security (Arad et. all, 2008, p.2), defense research and technology, airspace management, logistics cooperation (Bisogniero, 2007) and the latest technological development in avionics, biotechnology and software development (Joffe, 2009). “Given the current budget constraints and resulting defense cuts, the Allies need partners to share the costs of providing security” (Zyga, 2012, p. 3). Therefore, it would be understandable when Israel would demand also to sit in the negotiation table while deciding about its contribution.

6.3. Advancement of Relations with Arab Countries

Furthermore, closer ties between NATO and Israel would probably spur certain reaction from Middle Eastern countries, both negative and positive and one can argue that closer NATO-Israeli links in any form could spur negative reactions from its Arab partners. However, previous experience from the upgrade of Israeli-NATO into the Individual Cooperation Program motivated other regional players such as Egypt and Jordan to move forward its relations with NATO as well and therefore bolster further cooperation. “For some,

Israel's membership in NATO would facilitate fulfillment of an array of goals, including the amelioration of Arab-Israeli conflicts, spreading democracy to other states in the Middle East and proving that NATO can be transformed into a global security organization, which would effectively rebut those who argue that the alliance is in decline. For others, the urgency in extending NATO membership to Israel has little to do with grand hopes for regional peace and cooperation, but everything to do with Iran” (Rupp, 2006)

6.4. Common Threat of Terrorism

Both Israel and Euro-Atlantic community share common threats such as terrorism and proliferation of nuclear weapons. The terrorist attacks of September 11, and subsequent attacks in Madrid and London, all originated in the Middle East region and Western liberal-democratic world realized that their security considerably depend on the social and political stability in the Muslim world. Former “NATO’s Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, stated repeatedly that most of the threats currently facing the Alliance originate from the Broader Middle East” (Arad et. al, 2007, p. 7). Revised NATO Strategic Concept 2010 explicitly define terrorism as a direct threat:

“Terrorism poses a direct threat to the security of the citizens of NATO countries, and to international stability and prosperity more broadly. Extremist groups continue to spread to, and in, areas of strategic importance of the alliance, and modern technology increases the threat and potential impact of terrorist attacks, in particular if terrorist were to acquire nuclear, chemical, biological or radiological capabilities” (NATO Strategic Concept, 2010, p. 11).

6.5. Common Threat of Nuclear Proliferation

Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is a great concern for the Euro-Atlantic community. NATO’s Strategic Concept recognizes this threat as dangerous not only for its members, but for the whole international community:

“Proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and their means of delivery, threatens incalculable consequences for global stability and prosperity.

During the next decade, proliferation will be most acute in some of the world's most volatile regions” (NATO Strategic Concept, 2010, p. 10).

The authors of the Concept restrained themselves from naming any regions specifically, but the Middle East is the highest risk region for nuclear proliferation due to the more than decade long development of Iranian nuclear program which regularly bypassed controls of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). A nuclear Iran would pose a great security concern to its neighbors who lack matching capabilities and security guarantees from any nuclear power and would seek the nuclear capabilities to match the Iranian position. A new era of nuclear proliferation would engulf the Middle East and North Africa region. The Far East regions is threatened by the possibility of a nuclear North Korea, but unlike the Middle East, a balance of power is maintained by Russia and China, and security assurances from the United States for Japan and South Korea. Latin America, Africa and Australia-Oceania remain Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone.

Both nuclear proliferation and terrorism are great concerns of Israel and NATO, whereas Israel has an every-day experience in tackling these issues on a domestic level. Uzi Arad and Tommy Steiner interestingly noted that “history, particularly the history of the Euro-Atlantic community, proves that common threats can create closer allies” (Arad and Steiner, 2004, p. 3). In order to better tackle these threats on the global level, NATO would greatly benefit from the regional experience of clearly pro-Western country such as Israel and “Israeli intelligence knows a great deal about them” (Erlanger, 2004).

7. The special case of Iran

Iran is a member of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and has been several times sanctioned by the United Nations Security Council for its uranium-enrichment activities, which outsiders view as a step towards the development of nuclear weapons. There is a significant fear from the international community that a nuclear-armed Iran would create a domino effect in the Middle East region when another regional players would seek to join the nuclear club. “Saudi Arabia, in particular, is widely seen as a country that will not retain its nuclear abstinence if a Shiite-dominated contender for regional hegemony reaches for the bomb. Saudi Arabia’s past contacts with Pakistan, including with the metallurgist-turned-nuclear smuggler A. Q. Khan suggests that Riyadh has thought about this dilemma for quite some time – and may be quick to react once the need arises” (Ruehle, 2007). Amos Yadlin, the head of the Israeli military intelligence also noted that “proliferation is a near certainty: If Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt and other states go nuclear, a multipolar nuclear system will come into being in the Middle East and by definition this will be unstable and very dangerous” (Eiran and Malin, 2013, p. 81).

Nevertheless, Israel is criticized for its alleged nuclear program that has not spur nuclear proliferation in the region as of yet. “Israeli nuclear capability, which coincided with several armed conflicts for decades, did not spark others to seek a matching capability” (Ibid,

p. 83). While Israel did not become a trigger of nuclear proliferation, why Iran would be considered an initiator despite not being the first nuclear power in the region. Nuclear proliferation does not need to be a near certainty, as Amos Yadlin claimed. This theoretical consideration should be balanced by the credibility of information from intelligence communities that another states in the region would seek matching nuclear capabilities. Iran becoming a nuclear-weapon state is a dangerous scenario for Israel as well as for the NATO member states representing the West, because Iran would probably present itself as “the leader of an anti-Western resistance bloc” (Kahl and Waltz, 2012) seeking to expand its influence in the Broader Middle East region together with its Islamist ideology.

7.1. Iran as a Threat for Israel

The Iranian nuclear program represents great threat for Israel because of its geographical proximity and also declared intention of former Iranian President Ahmadinejad to “wipe Israel off the map” which sparked discussion around the world.

“Our dear Imam (Ayatollah Khomeini) said that the occupying regime must be wiped off the map and this was a very wise statement. We cannot compromise over the issue of Palestine. Is it possible to create a new front in the heart of an old front. This would be a defeat and whoever accepts the legitimacy of this regime has in fact, signed the defeat of the Islamic world. Our dear Imam targeted the heart of the world oppressor in his struggle, meaning the occupying regime. I have no doubt that the new wave that has started in Palestine, and we witness it in the Islamic world too, will eliminate this disgraceful stain from the Islamic world” (Ahmadinejad, 2005)

As a consequence, Israel attributes this hate attitude to the Ayatollah Khomeini, Iranian Supreme Leader since 1979, rather than to any ruling Iranian President. Therefore, the election of new Iranian President Hassan Rouhani in 2013 “did not affect Israeli statements about the Iranian threat” (Eiran and Malin, 2013, p. 79). Also Israeli public considers Iran as an existential threat to their own security. Poll of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs in March 2012 revealed that: “77 percent of Israelis believe that the Iranian threat would pose an

existential threat to them and 66 percent of Israelis believe that if Iran will acquire a nuclear weapon it would use it against Israel” (Ibid, p. 78). Iranian threat have a several forms, not only direct use of nuclear weapons against Israel. Today, Iranian regime widely supports its proxies such as Hezbollah and Palestinian militants against Israel. Nuclear armed Iran would provide them “more sophisticated, longer-range, and more accurate conventional weaponry for use against Israel” (Kahl and Waltz, 2012) and militants would benefit from more powerful patron of their terrorist activities. Former Israeli Minister of Defense Ehud Barak said: “if we will need to take action against Hezbollah and a nuclear Iran would declare that an attack on Hezbollah constitutes an attack on Iran, what we shall do then?” (Eiran and Malin, 2013, p. 80). Since Israel interacts with Palestinian militias and Hezbollah almost on daily basis, the empowerment of Iran by nuclear arsenal would means a substantial change of their security environment.

7.2. Iran as a Threat for NATO

Nuclear Iran would also pose a significant problem for NATO member states. Whereas the United States would not be within a striking distance of Iranian nuclear arms, “European cities will fall within Iranian missile range first, extending from Turkey currently, to Italy, France, Germany, and Great Britain before long” (Giles, 2009, p. 116). Current Iranian President Rouhani used to be a chief Iranian nuclear negotiator between 2003 and 2005 and at that time he remarked that “Europe is not our friend and that it does not have a good relationship with Islam...We do not have any trust with them” (Ibid, p. 117). His election of President in 2013 seems to promise moderation and engagement with the West over nuclear program due to his reconcile public speech: “Moderation in foreign policy is neither surrender nor conflict, neither passivity nor confrontation. Moderation is effective and constructive interaction with the world” said President Rouhani (The Guardian, 2013). However, NATO countries should be cautious about his game of moderation and rapprochement with the West and take into account his previous threats to the West.

The implications of potential Iranian nuclear weapons program are far-reaching, primarily regarding NATO’s deterrence policy. Firstly, such a scenario would undermine Western position as a guarantor of global security. “The fact that the international community would be unable to stop Iran from becoming nuclear would have important negative

consequences for the perception of the value of Western security guarantees and for the credibility of NATO deterrence” (Tertrais, 2010, p. 16). Secondly, nuclear Iran would significantly restrict the ability of West to act in the Middle East region and open chances for Iran to exercise its own policies and interest. Until now, Israel is the only nuclear power in the region and close ally of the United States, and Western countries have a considerable ability to intervene in the region according at will and without fear of nuclear retaliation. Nuclear armed Iran would challenge this ability and probably create a new hegemon in the region. Thirdly, “NATO’s Article 5 may be invoked to deter and defend against an Iranian threat or blackmail against Alliance territories. Security partnerships in the Near and Middle East would have to be adapted, if not transformed” (Ibid, p. 5). Even recent negotiations of missile defense system stationed in Poland and Romania are claimed to be against potential Iranian nuclear arsenal and not against Russian capabilities. Anyway, the protection of NATO member states against nuclear Iran “would require an appropriate combination of nuclear weapons, missile defense and conventional precision arms” (Ibid, p. 16).

Nuclear-armed Iran represents a clear threat both for Israel as well as for NATO countries. However, for Israel it is more imminent threat for its geographical proximity and adversary position in the region. Until now Israel poses a military advantage and is able to challenge Iranian security. Nuclear armed Iran would terminate this Israeli upper-position with the threat of nuclear retaliation. Israel as well as NATO member states represent the West which is considered rather as an adversary than ally in the Islamic world. Western historical conquest of the region after the World War together with recent interventions to Iraq and Afghanistan only nourish the anti-Western atmosphere in the Middle East. Therefore, nuclear armed country with the Islamic ideology, not sharing the same values with the West, represent a challenge to the security of NATO member states, as well as to Israel.

8. Problems of Israeli Membership in NATO

Despite the benefits of mutual cooperation, official Israeli application for NATO membership would face several legal and political constraints. On the legal level, Israel does not fulfill the NATO accession criteria, unless NATO modifies its founding document, the North Atlantic Treaty. There would be also significant challenges with the potential application of Article 5 of the Treaty, because most of the NATO member states are not ready for territorial defense of Israel in a case of conflict.

On political level, NATO's 28 members are not united on the position towards Israel. Every member state pursues its own policy which ranges from Israeli political support to complete denial of Israeli policies. Also, Israel does not trust all the NATO members, especially on the European continent. "Israelis have distrusted Europe since French President Charles de Gaulle abandoned his alliance with Israel in favor of alignment with Arab states on the eve of the 1967 Six-Day War. Israelis also remain wary of Europe due to rising anti-Semitism across the continent and a perceived insensitivity to Israel's security challenges" (Miller, 2011). Turkish-Israeli relations reached the lowest point after the Mavi Marmara flotilla incident in 2010 that had an impact on NATO-Israeli relations in general. Another political obstacle is unresolved Peace process with Palestinians. Israel is still an occupying power and its practices of targeted killing of Palestinians, building of separation wall between

them, and the Palestinian house demolition, does not correspond with democratic values of majority of NATO's member states. Finally, the official NATO membership is not really in the strategic interest of Israel itself since they would lose their complete freedom of action they enjoyed until now.

8.1. Legal Accession Criteria

Membership in NATO is legally limited by the geographical location. Any future NATO member should be located on the European continent. Article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty explicitly provides that:

“The Parties may, by unanimous agreement, invite any other European State in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area to accede to this Treaty. Any State so invited may become a Party to the Treaty by depositing its instrument of accession with the Government of the United States of America. The Government of the United States of America will inform each of the Parties of the deposit of each such instrument of accession” (North Atlantic Treaty, 1949).

Terrorist attacks of 9/11 resulted in reconsideration of world security, and opened up the question of further opening of North-Atlantic Alliance to all like-minded countries without geographical restrictions sharing the same values as NATO members. “NATO's next move must be to open its membership to any democratic state in the world that is willing and able to contribute to the fulfillment of NATO's new responsibilities. Only a truly global alliance can address the global challenges of the day” (Daalder and Goldgeier, 2006, p. 106).

Israel's interest in upgrading its relations with NATO began after the Istanbul summit in 2004. At this time, NATO was still governed by the Alliance's Strategic Concept of 1999. Article 39 of the Strategic Concept 1999 confirmed the provision of the Article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty that any further enlargement is open just for European countries:

“The Alliance remains open to new members under Article 10 of the Washington Treaty. It expects to extend further invitations in coming years to nations willing and able to assume the responsibilities and obligations of membership, and as NATO determines that the inclusion of these nations would serve the overall political and strategic interests of the

Alliance, strengthen its effectiveness and cohesion, and enhance overall European security and stability. To this end, NATO has established a programme of activities to assist aspiring countries in their preparations for possible future membership in the context of its wider relationship with them. No European democratic country whose admission would fulfill the objectives of the Treaty will be excluded from consideration” (The Alliance’s Strategic Concept, 1999).

With the changing security environment, NATO member states recognize the need to revise further aiming of the Alliance and as a result a decision was made to reformulate NATO’s Strategic Concept at the 2009 Summit, and for this purpose a working group was established, consisting of experts from think tanks, academia, and civil society networks. Israel had “a considerable interest in participating in this process” (Landman, 2010, p. 2) taking into account its previous steps towards upgrading its relations with Alliance. However, the final document of the New Strategic Concept released in 2010 only confirmed the requirement that membership in NATO is determined by the European geographical location. Article 27 of the NATO Strategic Concept 2010 provides that:

“The door to NATO membership remains fully open to all European democracies which share the values of our Alliance, which are willing and able to assume the responsibilities and obligations of membership, and whose inclusion can contribute to common security and stability” (NATO Strategic Concept, 2010).

The New Strategic Concept also recognized the importance of partnerships around the world. “In other words, NATO is adopting a ‘global approach to partnership,’ which objectively goes in the direction of an overall NATO globalization” (Aliboni, 2011, p. 159). Article 28 provides that:

“The promotion of Euro-Atlantic security is best assured through a wide network of partner relationships with countries and organizations around the globe. These partnerships make a concrete and valued contribution to the success of NATO’s fundamental tasks” (NATO Strategic Concept, 2010).

The new Strategic Concept sent a clear message to all countries interested in any upgrade of relations, including Israel, that this framework will be directed through the

partnerships, as long as the Strategic Concept of 2010 applies. Simply stated, if you are not a European nation, we are interested in further cooperation, but only in the form of partnership, not membership.

8.2. Article 5 of North Atlantic Treaty

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization is based on the principle of collective defense embodied in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty providing that:

“The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area” (North Atlantic Treaty, 1949).

Israeli position in the Middle East would probably represents a great concern for NATO members. Taking into consideration that Israel is practically in war with most of the Middle Eastern countries, having peace treaty only with Egypt and Jordan. Arab countries in the region constantly refuse to recognize the existence of the State of Israel and Israeli territory is almost under constant attacks, especially from the Gaza Strip. “At this stage however, the majority of Alliance members will be reluctant, if not object, to offering membership to a country that is still at war” (Arad et. all, 2007, p. 12).

Any potential conflict with Israel as a NATO member would represent classical dilemma of abandonment and entrapment. “Preventing abandonment in the hour of need calls for maximal entanglement, which makes sure that my partners will fight on my side when I am attacked. Entrapment poses the opposite imperative: I do not want to be drawn into a conflict that are not my own” (Joffe, 2009). Most of the NATO members would fear that Article 5 entrap them to the Israeli regional conflicts and this concern is probably stronger than any advantages of Israeli membership. Especially, with the Israeli historical record of preemptive attack “Israel will not wait for a green light by the NATO Council” (Joffe, 2009). However, the common interpretation of Article 5 as “attack against one member means an

attack against whole Alliance” is slightly more complex than many popular views. “Article 5 is not a ‘security guarantee’: it does not oblige NATO states to immediately defend their allies militarily. Instead, in the case of an attack, each member is required to take ‘such action as it deems necessary’ to restore the security of the transatlantic area, and military action may be one of the measures” (Kamp, 2009, p. 6). However, before accepting any new member into Alliance, it should be counted with the worst-case scenario, which is in case of Israel more likely than with any other European country.

8.3. Palestine

The Peace Process with Palestine is certainly a pre-determined condition to any future NATO-Israeli rapprochement. All NATO members are significantly involved in negotiating a two-state solution. Europeans are financing development of Palestinian territories and Americans are pushing diplomatically the Israeli government to settle their disputes at the negotiation table, whereas Israeli government further expands its settlements into the future Palestinian state. This ambiguous situation only enhances the distrust of NATO members towards the Israeli government. The two-state solution is a priority of the Tzipi Livni’s, former Minister of Foreign Affairs and current Minister of Justice under Netanyahu’s government. A once vocal promoter of two-state solution during her position of Minister of Foreign Affairs, she announced at the NATO-Israeli Symposium in 2007 that: “With the pragmatic leaders in the Palestinian Authority, we share a common vision and common objectives. We share the vision of two states, two homelands, giving an answer to the national aspirations of both sides, living side by side in peace and security” (Livni, 2007).

On contrary, current Prime Minister Netanyahu is rather reserved to give up the West Bank, historical Judea and Samaria. “His Likud party has refused to endorse the creation of any kind of Palestinian state. Most of its Knesset members have joined a ‘Greater Israel Caucus’ that says the West Bank must stay part of Israel forever” (The Economist, 2013a). The only state capable to push Israel to the negotiations with Palestinians is obviously the United States, the only relevant Israeli partner and security guarantor. “In 2009, under American pressure, Israel’s Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, gave a speech at Bar-Ilan University in which he grudgingly endorsed the two-state idea. Since then he has shown barely a flicker of enthusiasm for it. In a speech to the American Congress in May 2011, he

declared triumphantly, and to sustained applause, that Jerusalem would be undivided, evidently under Israeli control” (Ibid).

Since Peace Process did not bring any results over years of negotiations, Palestinian Authority (PA) sought unilateral recognition on the floor of the United Nations on November 2011. PA call for the voting in the UN General Assembly to be recognized as a ‘non-member state with observer status’ of the UN alongside with Vatican City, Taiwan, and Kosovo. Europeans sought the abstention as common position through the European External Action Service asserting that Palestinian state should be created only through direct negotiation with Israel. However, several countries voted alongside with Palestinian demand and the Czech Republic, as the only one European state voted alongside with Israel. Palestinians also gain the support of the Arab League and this act only reinforced the legitimacy of the Palestinian Authority, as a representative of all Palestinians. As a result, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced building of thousands on new settlements in the West Bank. This voting represented a significant momentum in several ways. “For the first time in many years, it is the Palestinians, rather than the Americans or the Israelis, who have set the agenda” (Elgindy, 2011). Also, Israelis experienced that the American support is not enough to secure Israeli interests and therefore they should consider to find a broader spectrum of partners.

Currently, the US Secretary of State John Kerry is trying to bring both sides to the negotiation table again with the deadline of April 29, 2014 to come up with the final agreement on two-state solution. Palestinian side is represented by Mahmoud Abbas, President of the State of Palestine and the Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and leader of Fatah. However, the position of Hamas, another relevant representative of Palestinians, rejects the very idea of two-state solution. Article 11 of the Hamas’ Charter explicitly state that “The Islamic Resistance Movement believes that the land of Palestine has been an Islamic Waqf (meaning ‘sacred’) throughout the generations and until the Day of Resurrection, no one can renounce it or part of it, or abandon it or part of it” (Hamas, 1988). One week before this deadline, Hamas and Fatah signed a unity plan which only complicate further reconciliation with Israel since Hamas does not recognize Israeli right to exist (Rudoren and Gordon, 2014). Another long-term obstacles is the Israeli requirement to recognize Israeli right to exist as a Jewish state. Such condition is not acceptable for Mahmoud Abbas noting that: “This is out of the question. Jordan and Egypt were not asked to do so when they signed peace treaties with Israel” (Rudoren, 2014). This Israeli condition is

not really acceptable even in the NATO member states taking into account that religious determination of states does not correspond with democratic values.

8.4. Turkey

Turkey as a NATO member state also represents an obstacle to any future rapprochement. Over last decade, their mutual relations significantly deteriorated. In 2010, Turkey issues updated so called “Red Book” determining main national security threats for upcoming five years. Traditionally, countries such as Iran, Iraq, Syria, Bulgaria, Georgia, Armenia, Russia and Greece had been on the list of threatening countries. “In contrast, for the first time since 1948, Ankara named ‘Israel's instability-inducing actions in the Middle East’ as a threat to its national security. ‘The region's instability stems from Israeli actions and policy, which could lead to an arms race in the Middle East,’ said the paper” (Yenidunya, 2010).

Turkish-Israeli relations have developed well since the establishment of the State of Israel, recognized by Turkey in 1949 and “were based primarily on common threats: both countries were growing increasingly concerned by the behavior of the Soviet Union, and rising Arab nationalism troubled them as well. The 1958 Iraqi revolution, which overthrew Iraq’s Hashemite monarchy, set off alarm bells in Turkey and Israel, as did the political union between Egypt and Syria” (Alterman and Malka, 2012, p. 112).

During the Cold War, Turkey was considered as an important NATO member having borders with the Soviet Union and controlling its access to the Mediterranean via the Black Sea. With the end of the Cold War, the importance of Turkey’s position as a strategic partner of the US was in decline and Europeans becoming increasingly critical regarding the human rights issues. “Turkey was finding it hard to obtain Western technology and military equipment during the 1990s, including from the US. According to some analysts, the alliance with Israel was a pragmatic approach by which the military-bureaucratic elite could counter the challenges posed by Turkey’s European allies” (Tür, 2012, p. 47).

The turning point in their mutual relations was the military cooperation agreement signed in 1996. The agreement included a number of components such as “joint air force training, naval visits, military personnel exchange and joint training in military academies”

(Ibid, p. 48) as well as “allowed the Israeli Air Force to use Turkish airspace for training. Israel remains a small country, with little space to train soldiers in advanced warfare, and Turkey provided Israel with strategic depth” (Alterman and Malka, 2012, p. 115). The upgrade of Israeli-Turkish relations was beneficial for both sides. Turkey gained access to military technologies otherwise denied from the US and Europe, and Israel gained market for its military products. Furthermore, Israeli ties with Turkey helped to alleviate Israeli relations in the Arab Middle East region. “Turkey served as a model for Israel’s potential relations with Muslim states and gave Israel a valuable degree of legitimacy in the region” (Ibid, p. 115).

Beginning in the 2000s, Israeli-Turkish ties began deteriorate. The most common explanation is ideological differences that arrived with Prime Minister’s Erdogan Islamic party Justice and Development Party (AKP) in 2003. Erdogan’s policy is very supportive of Palestinian issues, recognizing Hamas and welcomed its delegation in Ankara in 2006. His government also brought Turkish-Syrian relations closer, resulting in the signature of the free trade agreement in 2004 “which led to a decline in Israeli military transfers to Turkey” (Alterman and Malka, 2012, p. 118). Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Yaalon also attributes deterioration of mutual relations to Prime Minister Erdogan, noting that: “Since 2004, two years after the first elections in which Prime Minister Erdogan won the elections...we started to see the change to associate with our enemies - with Iran, with Syria, with Hamas” (Yaalon, 2013, p. 9).

Their relations were aggravated even more with the Mavi Marmara flotilla incident in May 2010. A ship under Turkish flag attempted to break the Israeli blockade of Gaza and as a result was attacked by Israeli soldiers, killing nine Turkish citizens and wounding several more on the ship. “Turkey has recalled its ambassador, and soon after the Israeli ambassador was asked to leave Turkey” (Tür, 2012, p. 45). Turkey formulated several conditions for normalization of mutual relations on secret meeting in Brussels demanding: “apology, compensation, independent enquiry, lifting of the blockade on Gaza, and release of the three ships” (Ibid, p. 61). Prime Minister Netanyahu formally apologized in 2013 and Israel offered to pay \$20 million in compensation to the families of the nine people killed (Raviv, 2014). Prime Minister Erdogan admitted the apology and negotiations about compensations are still ongoing. “However, Erdogan said the lifting of the siege over the Gaza Strip – which was one of the conditions set by Turkey for normalizing relations – has not yet transpired. ‘Nothing will happen without lifting the siege on Gaza,’ he said” (Ibid). It is interesting to note that

despite deteriorated political relations “military sales continued, as did foreign trade worth \$3 billion a year” (The Economist, 2013b).

Turkish-Israeli relations have an impact on the progress and upgrade of Israeli relations with NATO. In 2012, the international media reported that Turkey attempted to block Israeli participation in the NATO Chicago Summit held in May 2012. “The controversy began with remarks made by several senior Turkish officials which expressed their country's objection to Israel’s participation in the summit” (Mozgovaya, 2012). The US State Department explained that “it was never in the plan to invite Israel to the NATO summit, nor have they attended any previous NATO summits. The only NATO partner format that Israel is a member of is the Mediterranean Dialog, which has never met at summit level, and won’t this time either” (Rubin, 2012). The summit was attended by 25 additional countries and Israel recently expressed its interest in formal partnership with NATO. However, this Turkish impact on Israeli non-invitation is difficult to determine. Israelis are also cautious towards Turkey and their potential upgraded relationship with NATO. “While Turkey could institutionally block the upgrading of Israeli relations with NATO, Israel might also be reluctant to sharing and contributing assets and capabilities offered to all NATO allies, Turkey included” (Steiner, 2011, p. 14).

8.5. International law

In general, Israel is not perceived well by the international community because of the fact that it is still an occupying power with several controversies of international law, such as policies of targeted killing, building of separation fences, and Palestinian house demolitions. These issues may be in accordance with Israeli domestic law, nevertheless provoke controversies on international level.

8.5.1. Targeted Killing

Israeli policy of targeted killing “raised international attention and condemnation, as well as enforcing a hatred of the Israelis throughout the Middle East” (Jansen, 2008, p. 286). Israel pursues targeted killing since second intifada, Palestinian uprising in 2000. Following every Israeli targeted killing operation, “either the Israeli army or government released detailed statements as to the membership of the targeted individual in an armed Palestinian

group, or the targeted individual's involvement in hostilities" (Weiner, 2012, p. 12). Under international law, assassination is forbidden. However, John Norton Moore from the University of Virginia Law School explains: "If one is lawfully engaged in armed hostility, it is not assassination to target individuals who are combatants" (David, 2002, p. 15) implying that targeted individuals have a status of combatants, and therefore are not allowed to benefit from the civilian status under international law. In any case, Israeli policy of targeted killing remains controversial on international level.

8.5.2. Separation Wall

Another controversial issue is the building of the separation Wall between Israelis and Palestinians. The government of Ariel Sharon announced the construction of the Wall in 2002 almost alongside of the negotiated 'Green Line', an anticipated borderline of future Palestinian state, however with significant loss on Palestinian side and in favor of Israeli settlement. In 2004, the International Court of Justice judged the Wall as illegal and considers "that the construction of the wall and its associate regime creates a 'fait accompli' on the ground that could well become permanent, in which case, and notwithstanding the formal characterization by Israel, it would be tantamount to de facto annexation" (ICJ, 2004, p. 52). Indeed, in 2005, former Minister of Justice Tzipi Livni announced that the separation Wall would serve as "the future border of the State of Israel" (Yoaz, 2005). Alongside this fact, former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert announced before upcoming governmental elections in 2006 that "if his Kadima Party wins national elections this month, he would seek to set Israel's permanent borders by 2010, and that the boundary would run along or close to Israel's separation barrier in the West Bank" (Myre, 2006). Despite the refusal of this separation barrier by international law and protests of several states and several non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the Wall will probably serve as a future border of two states.

8.5.3. House Demolition

Another controversial issue is the demolition of Palestinian houses. Firstly, Palestinians have a problem in general to obtain permission for house construction from Israeli authorities and Palestinians are forced build their houses illegally and as a result, they are consequently demolished. Second reason is the house demolition alongside the separation wall. "In areas where the construction of the fence is complete, military orders have created a

buffer zone of 150-200 metres on the Palestinian side in which new construction is prohibited. Passage into Israel is supposed to be only possible through check points” (Jansen, 2008, p. 297). And finally, the houses of family members of alleged terrorists are demolished. These issues are disputed under international law. Israelis claim that this measure serves a deterrent effect because terrorists may not care about their lives, but they care about lives of their relatives. Family members can pressure others to refrain from potential terrorist attacks. However, “the policy of applying sanctions against family members of terrorists is prima facie in breach of Article 33 of Geneva IV, which prohibits collective punishment and underlines the principle of personal responsibility” (Shany, 2002, p. 107). All three reasons for house demolition attracts attention of media and various NGOs which only enhance perception of Israel as an oppressor state on international level.

8.6. Problems on Israeli Side

Since its neighbors in the region dispute the very existence of Israel, national defense policies are on the highest political priority, securing Israeli very existence. “One set of concerns centers on the deeply rooted Israeli belief in the need for political and strategic self-reliance and its reluctance to rely on allies” (Asmus and Jackson, 2004, p. 5). The short history of Israel presents examples that European allies are not credible partners, as Israelis experienced during the Six Day War in 1967 when “Israel’s pleads for assistance to France and to the United States were not met” (Thayer, 1995, p. 491). Furthermore, it would be extremely risky to join alliance with decision-making apparatus containing 28 members. “Working through multilateral institutions is time consuming and results in delays in obtaining consensus and in carrying out joint activities due to inherent political divisions and occasional politicking” (Arad et. all, 2007, p. 4). Israelis prefer to preserve their own freedom of action in tackling their security threats, which encompass in Europe unpopular measures, such as building of separation wall, policy of targeted killing, or house demolitions of Palestinians. The question of Israeli membership in NATO is especially opposed by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) considering it as a potential threat to the national security (Rupp, 2006, p. 52) taking into account that military freedom of maneuver would be limited. “For the time being, Israel’s strategic interests are best served by the implicit alliance with the United States” (Joffe, 2009).

9. Membership in NATO as a National Interest of Israel

This section applies previous empirical research to the theoretical concept of the national interest from the perspectives of realism and liberalism. The outcome of this theoretical analysis serves as an auxiliary result for the final conclusion. Based on the previous empirical research, theoretical hypothesis is that Israel perceives its security through realistic lenses, whereas NATO member states employ a liberal approach to security.

Israel still perceives international relations as an anarchic system where the nation state is the supreme provider of the security for its citizens. This realistic perception corresponds with the reality of the Israeli position in the Middle East where the existence of the Jewish state is continuously challenged by its neighbors. The main interests of Israel correspond with realistic interests such as self-preservation, sovereignty, and independence. In order to preserve these values, Israel needs a strong military with advanced weapons and technology. Its military spending is much higher than the spending of its Arab neighbors, but

also much higher than spending of most of the NATO members, with the exception of the United States. Realist's emphasis on historical experience plays an especially important role in the Israeli perception of security. Historical experience of mistrust have a deep roots in pogroms and holocaust of Jewish people dating before the creation of the State of Israel and this mistrust was only enhanced when allies abandoned Israel during the six-day war in 1967. Such a historical record only fortifies the strong belief of Israelis that they should rely primary on its own arms. However, they recognize the importance of additional security provisions. For the time being, the United States is the main Israeli partner and security provider contributing to Israeli security by political and economic means. European states, on the contrary, are divided and unstable partners.

The primary national interest, thinking in the Realistic paradigm, is to secure territorial integrity, political institutions, and cultural identity. Israel still has to exert considerable effort in order to defend these objectives. Territorial integrity of Israel is not widely recognized, neither by its Arab neighbors, nor by the international community in general. The West Bank and Gaza Strip are still contentious territories aiming to create independent Palestinian state. Recent voting about the Palestinian status in the UN only confirmed that Israel does not have many supporters around the world recognizing Israel with the Palestinian territories.

Israeli political institutions are also challenged; although institutions are considered democratic in securing the rights for its citizens, people in the occupying territories do not enjoy these rights and therefore the Israeli political institutions are disputed as representatives of all people living in Israel.

Securing of cultural identity plays a crucial role as well. Israel was created with the aim to be a Jewish state. This religious determination does not correspond with the democratic values that state ensures the rights for all its citizens, without any form of discrimination. Israel still did not secure the basic national interests, and their securing remains a national priority regardless the political representation.

Unlike Israel, NATO member states does not face these basic security challenges. Territorial integrity, political institutions, and cultural identity are not significantly disputed. In such a security environment, liberal values of democracy, freedom, and human rights can flourish much easier. Despite the common interests of NATO and Israel in further cooperation

and even possible membership, both players have a significantly different point of departure in perceiving their security.

Conclusion

Membership of Israel in NATO depends on several conditions, such as changing NATO official documents enabling membership for non-European countries, and developing a consensus and unanimity of NATO member states that Israel is a reliable partner with settled internal affairs. At the present time, Israel has much stronger ties with the North American member states rather than with European one. Another significant aspect to consider is the consensus of Israeli representatives that membership in NATO would significantly bolster their security. Beside these factual constraints, Israel and NATO are not on the same level of perceiving the security itself. Whereas Israel still faces the basic security threats, NATO member states already overcome the threats to its very existence. In the contemporary security environment, Israel does not need the protective umbrella of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and since Israel is able to ensure its own security with a strong military and sophisticated technology, membership in NATO is not on the agenda.

This situation may change with the reversal of the political developments in the imminent Israeli security environment. The most likely scenario is the creation of independent Palestinian state in the short-term period, and the rise of Iran as a new regional hegemon in the long-term. At the present, Israel should focus on building ties with NATO in order to gain access to decision-making apparatus that would bolster the deterrence effect against Israeli adversaries by having a strong Alliance backing them up. This is a long-term process because the NATO member states are split on the position towards Israel and the building of ties will require the mutual development of trust among NATO member states. According to the revised NATO Strategic Concept 2010, Israel has an option to aim for formal Partnership status and it is this option that is the most-likely next step of the Israeli administration, but it significantly depend on the ruling government, as Benjamin Netanyahu does not have this next step on its agenda and further upgrade or even membership in NATO depends on the Israeli political representation. In other words, Israeli membership is influenced by the wide array of political, security, and legal questions which have a potential to change over time.

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