

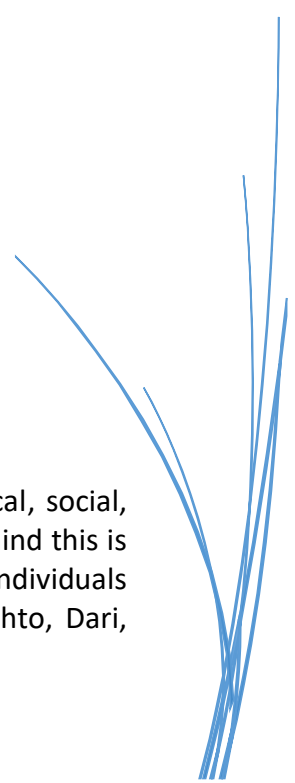
WEEKLY ANALYSIS

Issue Number – 477
(May 28-01 June, 2025)

ASSESSING THE POSSIBILITY OF WAR BETWEEN ISRAEL AND TURKEY



Weekly Analysis is one of the CSRS publications analyzing significant weekly political, social, economic, and security events in Afghanistan and the region. The prime motive behind this is to provide strategic insights and policy solutions to decision-making institutions and individuals in order to help them design better policies. Weekly Analysis is published in Pashto, Dari, English and Arabic languages.



In this issue:

- Assessing the Possibility of War between Israel and Turkey 3
- What Does Israel Want?..... 3
- Turkey's Response and the Role of the United States 5
- Is Israel Truly in a Position of Strength?..... 6
- Europe Distances Itself from Israel 7
- Netanyahu Fails to Get What He Expected from Trump 7
- Turkey Reconsiders Its Military Doctrine 8
- Conclusion 8
- Recommendations 8
- References:..... 9



ASSESSING THE POSSIBILITY OF WAR BETWEEN ISRAEL AND TURKEY

Introduction

Since the mid-20th century, Israel and Turkey have maintained political, military, and economic relations. However, in recent years, these relations have been significantly strained. The Syrian crisis, the Palestinian issue, and shifting regional geopolitical dynamics have all contributed to deepening rifts between the two nations. Following the outbreak of the Gaza war on October 7, 2023, Israel declared that it had reoriented its policies based on a new politico-religious framework known as *Theo-politics*. This approach seeks to pursue geopolitical objectives through the lens of religious ideology. In practice, however, Israel appears to be employing Theo-Politics primarily to provide religious justification for its actions in Gaza, including occupation and mass violence, to garner both domestic and international support.

On the other hand, Turkey is simultaneously concerned about regional instability and protecting its national interests. Consequently, it has sought to prevent the continuation of the war through diplomatic initiatives and international pressure. This article explores the potential for a military confrontation between the two countries, analyzing its underlying causes, possible consequences, and the expected international responses.

An examination of Israeli officials' statements, media reports, and military operations conducted within Syrian territory suggests that Israel may also view Turkey as a potential adversary. Israel considers any potential defense cooperation agreements between Turkey and Syria as a direct threat. In this context, the possibility of Israeli strikes on Turkish military positions in Syria would be regarded as a hostile act. This has raised serious concerns within Turkish political and military circles and prompted critical questions: How would Turkey respond to such a provocation? What measures might it take to deter further escalation?

This article aims to comprehensively analyze these evolving tensions, grounded in political developments, strategic calculations, and broader implications for regional and international security.

WHAT DOES ISRAEL WANT?

Since the beginning of the war in Gaza, Israel has tried to show the world that it no longer operates solely based on "political realities," but rather follows a framework



rooted in *Theo-politics*. Theo-politics is a concept, method of analysis, or ideology in which political decisions, governance systems, and even wars are interpreted through religious beliefs, divine principles, or theological commitments. This approach raises important questions such as:

- How should God's will be reflected in politics?
- Should a nation's policies be guided by divine direction?
- How do religious beliefs shape decisions about governance, law, and international relations?

In simple terms, Israel appears to be pursuing the long-held dream of a "Greater Israel" by trying to realize the concept of the "Promised Land," a territory that, according to Zionist belief, extends beyond Israel's current borders. In this effort, Israel has also found common ground with certain U.S.-based political and religious groups.

Guided by this religious-political outlook, Israel seeks to expand its borders and occupy neighboring lands. It has already occupied Gaza, the West Bank, and parts of southern Lebanon. Since the start of the Syrian civil war, Israel has also increased its military presence in Syria, a trend that seems likely to continue. However, it is important to highlight that Israel uses Theo-Politics mainly as a religious justification for its occupation of Gaza and its broader acts of aggression. This narrative also helps the state maintain control over its population and gain support from Jewish communities globally, particularly within Israel.

According to reports from Al Jazeera, Israel has issued warnings to Jordan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, and is allegedly pressuring Palestinians to relocate to these countries. The broader logic behind this strategy is rooted in the idea of creating a region of "unstable neighbors." Israel does not want strong, stable, or economically resilient countries around its borders. It aims to weaken surrounding nations to maintain regional dominance.

In pursuit of this goal, Israel has repeatedly bombed military bases in Syria and is actively preventing the emergence of any viable alternative forces there. It views any Turkish military base, aid, or training support to Syrian groups as a direct threat to its national security. As a result, Israel now appears willing to take any action necessary to block Turkish military involvement in Syria.



This growing hostility underscores a dangerous shift in regional dynamics, one where theological justifications are being used to support geopolitical ambitions, with serious consequences for neighboring countries.

TURKEY'S RESPONSE AND THE ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES

Turkey sees Israel's hostile rhetoric and actions as a direct threat. Although Ankara expected some degree of tension with Israel, it did not anticipate that matters would escalate so severely, particularly to the point where its "T4" military base in Syria would be bombed or Israeli statements would take such an aggressive tone. This escalation triggered strong reactions among the Turkish public and within its policymaking circles.

Turkey's first official response came from Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, who told Reuters:

"Israel's behavior is not just an attack on Syria, it threatens the stability of the entire region."

While visiting the United States, Fidan raised this issue directly with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, clearly expressing Turkey's concerns about Israel's aggressive stance in Syria. These remarks were part of Turkey's broader effort to prevent the situation from spiraling into open conflict. Ankara is fully aware that any direct military confrontation with Israel, especially while Syria remains fragile, would only lead to further destruction in the region.

For now, a military option remains highly risky. There is also the possibility that the United States, even if only indirectly, could be drawn into the conflict by supporting Israel. This could turn a localized confrontation into a much larger war, something Turkey is trying hard to avoid under the current circumstances. That is why Ankara continues to push for a diplomatic resolution to the crisis.

Although Turkey's relationship with the U.S. under the Biden administration is relatively stable, the ongoing global economic challenges make it difficult to predict how Washington might respond if the crisis deepens. Turkey, therefore, is proceeding with caution, trying to manage the tensions through dialogue rather than escalation.



IS ISRAEL TRULY IN A POSITION OF STRENGTH?

From a historical point of view, Israel has long been seen as one of the most powerful actors in the Middle East. Over the decades, it has fought and won multiple wars against several Arab nations, securing its place as a dominant force in the region. However, despite strong and consistent support from the United States, Israel's position has been weakened, particularly in light of the recent war in Gaza. Compared to Turkey, Israel now faces notable vulnerabilities.

In terms of military strength, Turkey holds the upper hand. It has a larger and better-equipped military force in almost every category, from manpower to modern weaponry. On the other hand, Israel's aggressive foreign policy, marked by wars, occupations, and continuous military operations, has severely strained its economy.

According to recent estimates, Israel's economy has shrunk by 25% in just one year due to the ongoing war. The financial burden of the current conflicts could reach up to \$400 billion. While the exact amount of U.S. financial and military assistance remains undisclosed, much of it classified, it is known that in 2024 alone, Israel received around \$20 billion in weaponry from the U.S.

In a time of global economic instability, it will be increasingly difficult for Israel to sustain such an expensive war effort indefinitely. Sooner or later, the United States is likely to put pressure on Israel to de-escalate or end the conflict. In addition, Israel is facing a serious shortage of military personnel and cannot fight effectively on multiple fronts. This weakens its ability to maintain the same level of discipline and operational readiness in its armed forces.

Internally, tensions are also growing. Although not fully exposed to the public, there are reports of deepening disagreements between Israel's internal security agency (Shin Bet) and Prime Minister Netanyahu. As the economy continues to deteriorate and public dissatisfaction grows, the wave of protests, already ongoing, is expected to intensify. Eventually, these mounting pressures may lead to Netanyahu's political downfall.

In summary, while Israel may still appear strong on the surface, its position is increasingly fragile. The combination of economic strain, political unrest, and military limitations suggests that its power in the region is not as secure as it once was.



EUROPE DISTANCES ITSELF FROM ISRAEL

Europe is currently facing a tense trade dispute with the United States, and recent statements from European officials suggest that in the context of Syria, European countries are leaning more toward supporting Turkey rather than Israel. As frustration with the U.S. continues to grow among European leaders, there are signs this dissatisfaction could soon evolve into a tougher stance against Israel as well.

The European Union, seeking to push back against Washington for its economic policies, may begin to openly criticize Israel's aggressive actions and even take practical steps in response. A potential new phase of cooperation in Syria between France and Turkey could be on the horizon, with similar signals possibly coming from countries like Spain, Italy, and the United Kingdom. The combination of economic hardship and worsening transatlantic relations seems to be pushing Europe toward pursuing a more independent foreign policy—one that does not automatically align with either the U.S. or Israel.

NETANYAHU FAILS TO GET WHAT HE EXPECTED FROM TRUMP

In the Middle East, Syria remains a central concern, especially for both Israel and Turkey. But in the U.S., the issue doesn't carry the same weight and hasn't been a priority for the Trump administration. To shift that, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu recently traveled to the United States to personally press President Trump for stronger support against Turkey and to reassert Israel's security concerns. However, the visit did not go as Netanyahu had hoped.

According to reports, Trump was noticeably distant and uninterested. When Netanyahu asked him to make a public statement in support of Israel's security, Trump's response was lukewarm. He reportedly said: "I have a great friend—his name is Erdoğan. I like him, and he likes me. We don't have any problems. We've done a lot together. Netanyahu, if you have an issue with Turkey, I think I can help solve it. I hope there won't be any problems... but you need to be reasonable."

These remarks were difficult for Netanyahu to hear. Trump's comment, "You need to be reasonable," carried a strong message. It suggested that Israel's continuous demands were wearing thin, even with one of its strongest allies. It seems that Trump, known for



his transactional approach to politics, was losing patience with Netanyahu's expectations and was no longer willing to give Israel unconditional support.

TURKEY RECONSIDERS ITS MILITARY DOCTRINE

It has become increasingly clear that economic, diplomatic, and political relations alone are not enough to prevent Israel's aggressive actions, whether in Syria or against Turkey itself. In light of this, Ankara is now seriously considering a revision of its military doctrine to better define its role and response strategy beyond its borders.

Recent events have shown that Turkey responds swiftly when its forces are attacked by non-state actors, such as terrorist groups in Iraq. But what if the threat comes from a recognized state? For example, how would Turkey respond if Israel launched airstrikes on Turkish military positions in Syria? Would NATO intervene? What stance would NATO take in such a case? These complex questions are driving Turkey to reassess the core principles of its military strategy.

Currently, intense discussions are underway among Turkey's military, diplomatic, and political circles. While no final decisions have been made yet, one thing is certain: Turkey is not willing to retreat or offer concessions at this stage.

CONCLUSION

Although a direct war between Turkey and Israel is not yet a reality, rising political, military, and ideological tensions could push both countries closer to open conflict. Israel appears intent on weakening its neighbors through various means, while Turkey remains determined to safeguard its national security and prefers to rely on diplomacy to avoid war.

However, if these tensions are not contained, the consequences could be severe—not only escalating instability in Syria but also dragging regional powers into confrontation and inviting the involvement of global players. Such a scenario would pose a serious threat to both regional peace and the global economy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To better prepare for future risks, Turkey should revise its military policies to enable faster and more effective responses:



1. **Establish a Regional Security Mechanism:** Turkey should lead efforts to create an independent security framework among regional countries to coordinate joint responses to threats like those posed by Israel's aggressive actions.
2. **Strengthen Diplomatic Leverage:** Turkey must engage more deeply in diplomacy to gain the support of Washington and encourage greater flexibility in U.S. foreign policy decisions.
3. **Mobilize Media and Civil Society:** Turkish media and civil society should increase pressure on international institutions to take a firmer stance against Israel's militaristic policies and violations of international norms.

REFERENCES:

1. **Outlook India:** *"How a Dangerous Mix of Theology and Geopolitics Has Led to the Abandonment of Palestinians,"* February 7, 2024. [Link](#)
2. **IRNA:** *"Turkey Emphasizes the Need to Pressure Israel to Stop the War in Gaza,"* August 14, 2024. [Link](#)
3. **Cambridge:** *"Theopolitics vs. Political Theology: Martin Buber's Biblical Critique of Carl Schmitt,"* December 11, 2018. [Link](#)
4. **The New Arab:** *"Greater Israel Is Not Just a Biblical Delusion, It's Zionism's DNA,"* March 7, 2025. [Link](#)
5. **Tasnim News:** *"Why Does Israel Attack the T4 Airbase?"* April 4, 2025. [Link](#)
6. **Independent Persian:** *"U.S. Approves \$20 Billion in Military Sales to Israel,"* August 15, 2024. [Link](#)
7. **Iran International:** *"Trump's Warm Welcome for Netanyahu in Florida,"* July 26, 2025. [Link](#)



The Centre for Strategic and Regional Studies (CSRS) is an independent, non-profit, and non-governmental research organization established in July 2009 in Kabul. CSRS is committed to promoting policy-oriented research through conducting authentic and unbiased research concerning Afghanistan and the region.

Contact Us:Email: info@csrsaf.orgWebsite: www.csrsaf.org

Phone & WhatsApp: +93780618000

