

Turkey in the Israeli Information Space (March-May 2025): Threat or Strategic Player?

Executive Summary

This analysis examines how Turkish-Israeli relations are perceived through Israeli media discourse from March to May 2025, revealing a fundamental shift in Israeli strategic thinking regarding Turkey under President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Based on comprehensive review of Israeli media sources, government reports, and expert analysis, this study identifies five critical dimensions of Turkish-Israeli tensions: military competition in Syria, ideological confrontation over Hamas support, economic warfare through trade embargos, diplomatic maneuvering, and emerging alliance formations. The findings suggest that Israel increasingly views Turkey not merely as a difficult neighbor, but as a potential strategic adversary capable of challenging Israeli interests across multiple domains.

Turkish Military Presence in Syria

The Israeli press has expressed mounting alarm over Turkey's military expansion in Syria. *The Jerusalem Post*¹ notes that the penetration of Turkish drones into Israeli airspace no longer looks like fantasy—"by 2025, this has become a realistic threat." Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has openly called on Allah to "*bring destruction upon Zionist Israel*," which, according to the author, means the inevitability of direct military confrontation. Turkey has already established itself near Israel's borders and is unlikely to leave voluntarily. After the Turkey-supported **coup in Damascus in December 2024**, Ankara became the main power player in Syria, controlling directly or indirectly about 8,000 square kilometers—from Idlib to Ras al-Ain—dangerously close to the Israeli border. The new Islamist Syrian regime, openly allied with Ankara, is negotiating the permanent deployment of Turkish troops and modern air defense systems in Syria, which would radically change the strategic balance. According to the Nagel Commission report published in Israel in January 2025, Turkey's strengthening military consolidation in Syria is recognized as potentially **"even more dangerous than the Iranian threat."**

Israeli sources report that Washington has notified Jerusalem about the planned withdrawal of a significant portion of U.S. troops from northern Syria in the coming months. This has raised concerns in Jerusalem that Turkey will try to expand its influence in the region². Israel warns: "*any permanent Turkish presence at bases like Tadmor (Palmyra) and T-4 would be crossing a red line and threatening IDF operational freedom in the north*"³. During negotiations between Israeli and Turkish representatives in Baku, the Israeli side *made it unambiguously clear* that any change in the deployment of foreign forces in Syria—*especially the creation of Turkish bases in the Palmyra area*—is considered unacceptable⁴. The meeting

¹ [jpost.com](https://www.jpost.com)

² [allisrael.com](https://www.allisrael.com)

³ [ynetnews.com](https://www.ynetnews.com)

⁴ [vesty.co.il](https://www.vesty.co.il)

took place with Azerbaijani mediation: the parties agreed on a conflict prevention mechanism in Syria, similar to the previous Israel-Russia coordination⁵. Israel clearly stated that **the placement of Turkish bases in Palmyra is a red line** (quote: *"will be considered a violation of agreements"*), and *"any action threatening Israel will endanger the regime of [Syrian President] al-Sharaa"*⁶. According to Israeli media, the IDF carried out preemptive strikes on the Syrian T-4 airbase and other facilities that, as reported, **Turkey intended to take under its control**⁷.

In the Israeli defense establishment, these strikes are called a *"race against time"*—an effort to prevent Turkish consolidation before the U.S. finally leaves Syria⁸. Israeli analysts emphasize that the appearance of Turkish troops in central Syria (far from Turkey's own borders) seriously threatens the freedom of action of Israeli aviation and **could directly threaten the Israeli border in the Golan Heights**. According to military experts, *"Turkey's intention to deploy air defense systems and radars at Syrian airfields in the central part of the country represents a direct threat to Israel's freedom of action in Syria"*⁹. No wonder the IDF airstrikes on April 5 completely destroyed the T-4 base, sending Ankara an unambiguous signal about the unacceptability of such steps. In the corridors of Israeli leadership, assessments are heard that Turkey seeks to fill the vacuum created after Iran's displacement from Syria, and its military foothold near Israel's borders is prospectively *"even more dangerous than the Iranian front in Syria."*

Support for Hamas and Other Palestinian Groups

Israel Hayom published revelatory data about close ties between Ankara and the Islamist Hamas movement. According to a report by the Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, documents captured in Gaza contain unique evidence of how **Hamas used Turkey for terrorist activities against Israel**¹⁰. One document outlines a plan to create a *"secret Hamas security branch in Turkey"* to coordinate terrorist attacks abroad—including the elimination of Israeli military personnel and attacks on Israeli vessels. The report's authors indicate that Hamas intends to expand ties with Ankara. The conclusion is quoted: *"Expelling terrorists (especially leaders) beyond Israel's borders—and particularly to Turkey—could strengthen Hamas's base on Turkish soil, help restore its military wing, and facilitate the return of freed prisoners to terrorism. This process will strengthen the positions of Hamas's foreign leadership under Turkey's aegis and lead to an increase in Hamas terrorist attacks outside Israel."* Moreover, *"due to Turkey's geographical position and its tense relations with Israel, it will be difficult for Israeli intelligence services to effectively act against Hamas infrastructure and activities on Turkish territory"*—the report states. Although Ankara officially denies

⁵ ynetnews.com

⁶ ynet.co.il

⁷ allisrael.com

⁸ ynetnews.com

⁹ blogs.timesofisrael.com

¹⁰ israelhayom.co.il

supporting Hamas terrorism, *in practice it facilitates it in economic, military, political, and ideological spheres.*

The documents include a protocol of a meeting between Hamas leaders and Erdoğan. In November 2019, Khaled Mashal, Saleh al-Aroui, and other members of the movement's leadership met in Istanbul with the Turkish president and Turkish intelligence chief Hakan Fidan. At that meeting, Hamas representatives called Turkey's military operation in Syria "*a model of competent leadership*" and emphasized that among Arab actors, they were almost the only ones who supported Turkey. Erdoğan complained that Arab countries don't appreciate him, although he has sheltered 3.5 million Syrian refugees. During the conversation, Mashal asked Ankara for help in freeing four Hamas militants arrested in Libya in 2016 for arms smuggling to Gaza—subsequently, thanks to Turkish influence, these people were indeed released in 2023. Additionally, Mashal complained about Hamas's financial difficulties: Iran, according to him, was experiencing difficulties with money transfers at that time (due to sanctions and its own economy), and Saudi Arabia had reduced aid to Palestinians and arrested more than 60 Hamas activists. Against this background, Mashal **praised Turkey's support**, but urgently asked Erdoğan to allocate a monthly budget to Hamas and even appoint a permanent Turkish representative in Gaza (similar to Qatari envoy Muhammad al-Emadi). "*I know your burden is heavy, but any amount you give us won't kill Turkey, but will revive Hamas,*" Mashal urged the Turkish leader. This quote, presented in Israeli media, vividly demonstrates Ankara's role as one of Hamas's main sponsors over recent years.

As noted by *Ynet*¹¹, Ankara's ideological ties with the "*Muslim Brotherhood*" movement, of which Hamas is a part, largely predetermined the deterioration of Turkey-Israel relations after October 7, 2023. During the Gaza war, Ankara took a sharply pro-Hamas position: Erdoğan not only severed the normalization process with Jerusalem but also provided a platform for Hamas leaders who had taken refuge in Turkey. The Israeli press emphasizes that **Turkey openly provides sanctuary to Hamas operatives**—particularly members of the West Bank (Judea and Samaria) network of the organization. Despite Ankara's commitments under previous reconciliation agreements, Hamas leadership continues to coordinate¹² terrorist activities in the West Bank from Istanbul¹³. Moreover, President Erdoğan publicly glorifies Hamas militants: during prayers on the occasion of Eid al-Fitr (end of Ramadan) on March 30, 2025, he wished "*mercy for martyrs and speedy recovery for veterans,*" referring to killed and wounded **Hamas and "Islamic Jihad" terrorists** who acted against Israel¹⁴. Such an elevated status of Palestinian militants in Ankara's rhetoric confirms Israel's perception of Turkey's **open support** for Palestinian armed groups.

¹¹ ynetnews.com

¹² jpost.com

¹³ jiss.org.il

¹⁴ jpost.com

Ideological Rhetoric of Ankara (Anti-Zionism, Islamism, Erdoğan's Image)

Anti-Zionist Statements.

Israeli media discourse pays much attention to the harsh rhetoric of Turkish leadership. Particularly resonant was President Erdoğan's speech on March 30, 2025, at Istanbul's Çamlıca Mosque. Citing the Turkish Anadolu agency, *The Jerusalem Post* reported that Erdoğan addressed the Almighty with a prayer: *"May Allah destroy Zionist Israel."* These words, spoken in the presence of thousands of believers during the Eid al-Fitr holiday, caused a wave of condemnation in Israel. Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar immediately reacted, calling Erdoğan an *"anti-Semitic dictator"* who finally *"showed his true face"*¹⁵. Sa'ar emphasized that *"Israel doesn't need absurd moral lectures from Erdoğan"* and added: *"Erdoğan is dangerous for the region and for his own people, which has been proven again by recent events. We hope NATO countries will understand how dangerous he is—and the sooner, the better."* These words from the Foreign Minister, quoted in the Israeli press, reflect the sharply negative assessment of Erdoğan in the Israeli establishment.

Islamist Ideology and the Image of the "Sultan."

Israeli analysts regularly point to the ideological underpinnings of Ankara's policy. The newspaper *Makor Rishon* notes that Erdoğan's party and regime are closely connected to the "Muslim Brotherhood" movement, which brings them closer to Hamas and forms long-term hostility to the Zionist project. Ankara's hostile rhetoric sharply intensified after the start of the Gaza war: Turkey effectively brought relations with Israel to the level of harsh confrontation. Erdoğan publicly stated that he doesn't consider Hamas terrorists, calling them *"a liberation movement of mujahideen fighting for their land"*¹⁶. He also accused Israel of *"genocide in Gaza"* and *"barbarism against Muslim brothers,"* trying to lead the pan-Islamic opposition to Israel. In Israeli media, Erdoğan himself is often called a *"sultan,"* pointing to his neo-Ottoman ambitions. *Ynet* emphasizes that Erdoğan's desire to expand military-economic presence throughout the Middle East is part of his **"neo-Ottoman strategy"** of reviving Turkey's influence as a dominant regional power¹⁷. Such a course by Ankara, combining Islamism and imperialism, causes wariness in Jerusalem. Commentators note that Erdoğan *"drags the Turkish people into flames of hatred and violence for the sake of friends from Hamas,"* calling on the entire Islamic world to unite against Israel. This strengthens Erdoğan's image as a leader of an Islamist front hostile to the Jewish state. In Israel itself, such rhetoric is perceived as not only anti-Zionist but also anti-Semitic—as directly stated by Minister Sa'ar, and many Israeli politicians agree with him.

¹⁵ [allisrael.com](https://www.allisrael.com)

¹⁶ [jpost.com](https://www.jpost.com)

¹⁷ [ynetnews.com](https://www.ynetnews.com)

From "Unfreezing" to New Confrontation.

As recently as 2022, Israel-Turkey relations experienced a period of warming (President Isaac Herzog's visit to Ankara, meetings between Erdoğan and Yair Lapid and Benjamin Netanyahu)¹⁸. However, the 2023 war crossed out these achievements. In recent months (early 2025), Israeli media noted that the countries found themselves *"on a collision course."* Accusations against Israel are increasingly heard in Ankara, and Turkey itself is taking steps to block Israeli policy on international platforms. Thus, Turkey's Foreign Ministry condemned Israeli operations in Lebanon and Syria, and Erdoğan called for creating an *"Islamic alliance"* against Israel. In Tel Aviv, this is perceived as Ankara's attempt to lead an anti-Israeli front in the Islamic world. Nevertheless, Israeli officials try to avoid direct escalation. Prime Minister Netanyahu emphasized on April 9 that **Israel is not seeking conflict with Ankara**, although it is ready for decisive steps to protect its security¹⁹. Thus, in Israeli media discourse, the image of Turkey under Erdoğan's leadership is an ideological opponent whose aggressive rhetoric and neo-Ottoman aspirations make him a potentially dangerous "strategic adversary" in the region.

¹⁸ vesty.co.il

¹⁹ vesty.co.il

Turkey's Diplomatic Initiatives and Its Role as Mediator

Baku Negotiations (April 2025).

Faced with the threat of direct confrontation in Syria, Israel and Turkey initiated diplomatic contacts. On April 10, the *first technical meeting* of delegations from both countries took place in Baku (Azerbaijan). According to a statement from Prime Minister Netanyahu's office, the meeting was held under the leadership of National Security Advisor Tzachi Hanegbi on the Israeli side and corresponding high-ranking Turkish representatives²⁰. Israel thanked President Ilham Aliyev for mediation and emphasized that the parties "*presented their interests in the region and agreed to continue dialogue to maintain stability.*" According to Turkish sources, Israel even put forward a *proposal for dividing spheres of influence in Syria*: leaving the north of the country under Turkish control, the south under Israeli (IDF) responsibility, and making central areas a zone of joint coordinated action. Also, as Turkish sources claim, Jerusalem expressed readiness to refrain from operations in northern Syria to avoid direct incidents with Turkish forces. Although Israelis don't confirm details of this proposal, the meeting in Azerbaijan itself became a signal that both sides are trying to "*avoid clashes in Syria and find a deescalation mechanism*"²¹.

Deescalation Following the Israel-Russia Model.

One of the central themes of the Baku negotiations was an agreement to create a "*red telephone*" between militaries—that is, an **incident prevention mechanism** similar to what existed between Israel and Russia in Syria. According to participants, Israel "*clearly and unambiguously made it clear*" to the Turkish side that it would not tolerate the appearance of Turkish bases in central Syria (Palmyra area). In response, Ankara, according to Israeli officials, expressed readiness to discuss *demarkation of zones of responsibility* and a *coordination mechanism* for actions to avoid direct conflict²². Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan publicly confirmed that *Turkey is not inclined toward conflict with Israel in Syria* and is interested in preventing incidents²³. The Israeli press notes that such a Turkish position²⁴ is the result of a firm signal from Israel. After IDF strikes on Syrian airfields that Turkey had been eyeing for its forces, Ankara agreed to dialogue. "*We don't want a new war, especially with a NATO member,*" Israeli sources quote Turkish officials. Thus, Azerbaijan's *mediating role* and **diplomatic contacts** between Jerusalem and Ankara became an attempt to defuse new tensions: the countries are seeking a compromise that would allow Turkey to save face in Syria while ensuring Israel's security. The Baku negotiations, according to the Russian-language portal *Vesti*, ended without a concrete breakthrough, but *the parties agreed to continue dialogue after the Passover holiday*.

²⁰ blogs.timesofisrael.com

²¹ [ynet.co.il](https://www.ynet.co.il)

²² [ynetnews.com](https://www.ynetnews.com)

²³ ria.ru

²⁴ vesti.co.il

Turkey's Initiatives on the International Arena.

Simultaneously, Ankara is undertaking diplomatic steps to strengthen its status as a regional mediator. On April 11, 2025, the **Antalya Diplomatic Forum** opened in Turkey, to which even the new Syrian president Ahmad al-Sharaa (former rebel leader from HTS) was invited. It was expected that Erdoğan would meet with al-Sharaa to discuss the deployment of Turkish bases in Syria. This step shows Ankara's desire to play the role of moderator in post-war Syrian arrangements, positioning itself *not only as a party to the conflict but also as a mediator*. Additionally, Turkey actively participates in Islamic and international forums on the Palestinian issue. Erdoğan regularly calls for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and delivery of humanitarian aid, offering Turkey's services in negotiations²⁵. Turkey's Foreign Ministry participated in coordinating efforts with Qatar and Egypt for a temporary truce to free hostages from Gaza (as mentioned by Israeli press citing foreign sources)²⁶. However, from the perspective of Israeli discourse, Ankara's true motivation in these initiatives is to improve its own image and strengthen influence among Muslim countries. As *The Jerusalem Post* writes, Turkey tries to maneuver: on one hand, "*fiery speeches*" against Israel are heard, on the other hand, Ankara tries not to completely break with Washington and NATO, adhering to "*cautious realism*" in actions²⁷. Nevertheless, Turkey's mediation efforts have not yet brought noticeable results: Israel still trusts traditional mediators (Qatar, Egypt, USA) more when discussing Gaza issues, and dialogue with Ankara is limited to the topic of Syria and preventing direct conflict.

²⁵ [reuters.com](https://www.reuters.com)

²⁶ [aa.com.tr](https://www.aa.com.tr)

²⁷ [newarab.com](https://www.newarab.com)

Economic Pressure and Trade Relations with Israel

Turkish Trade Embargo and Its Failure.

During the 2023-24 war, Turkey attempted to pressure Israel economically. In November 2023, Ankara recalled its ambassador, and **in April 2024 announced the first phase of a trade embargo**, banning exports to Israel of 54 categories of goods (mainly construction materials and industrial products)²⁸. In May 2024, the ban was expanded to a complete suspension of exports to Israel *"until the establishment of permanent ceasefire in Gaza"*²⁹. However, as Israeli studies show, this boycott had limited effect. According to the Bank of Israel, Turkish goods comprised about 6.3% of Israeli imports (\$5.3 billion in 2023). Turkey was a significant supplier of cement, iron and steel, as well as a popular destination for Israeli tourists (824,000 visits in 2022).

Nevertheless, the Israeli economy quickly adapted to the embargo: alternative suppliers were found, and even replacing Turkish cement didn't lead to noticeable price increases (imported construction materials rose by less than 1%). The Bank of Israel emphasized in its March 2025 report: *"The impact of the Turkish embargo on imports and prices was limited."* This case demonstrates that *"functioning market mechanisms and liberal trade policy ensure economic security, and it's difficult for an individual country to use trade restrictions as a political weapon."* **Economic openness and diversification of import sources** allowed Israel to weather the Turkish boycott almost painlessly, instead of going down the path of protectionism. Israeli business press (for example, *Makor Rishon*) directly writes that Erdoğan **failed**: the Turkish boycott had practically **no impact on Israel**.

Ankara's Political Gesture.

Israeli commentary notes that the decision to impose an embargo was largely *symbolic-political in nature*. Turkey sought to demonstrate leadership in defending Palestinians, accusing Israel of war crimes. When in November 2023 Israel refused to allow Turkish planes with humanitarian aid directly into Gaza, Ankara used this as a pretext to declare trade war on Israel³⁰. However, by early 2025, Turkey itself began talking about the possibility of restoring trade—as fighting in Gaza subsided. For example, Turkish officials signaled they would resume exports to Israel if the ceasefire became permanent³¹. This confirms the conclusion that the embargo was a **temporary measure** dependent on domestic political circumstances and Erdoğan's desire to demonstrate solidarity with Gaza. As a result, Israeli experts draw the opposite conclusion: instead of autarky and reducing trade with the world, as some suggested after the Turkish demarche, Israel benefits from maintaining **broad external markets**.

²⁸ makorishon.co.il

²⁹ aljazeera.com

³⁰ moderndiplomacy.eu/2024/04/24/turkey-embargo-israel/

³¹ turkishminute.com/president-erdogan-wants-to-resume-trade-with-israel/

Precisely this, in their opinion, deprived Ankara of the opportunity to cause serious damage—the market quickly replaced the lost Turkish imports³².

State of Trade Relations.

By spring 2025, direct economic ties between the countries remain limited. Israeli importers have reoriented to Greece, Cyprus, India and other markets for construction materials and goods previously coming from Turkey. Turkish business, according to reports, also found loopholes—for example, some supplies went through Palestinian Authority territory, bypassing the direct ban³³. Officially, trade between Jerusalem and Ankara remains paused. Turkish airlines and the tourism sector suffered losses due to a sharp decline in Israeli tourist flow at the end of 2023, although flights were not formally banned. By May 2025, against the backdrop of ceasefire negotiations, Ankara spoke of *"returning Israeli tourists to Turkish resorts"* and unfreezing some contracts, but these are future prospects. Israeli media emphasizes that Israel's economy **proved resilient in the face of Turkish pressure**³⁴, and this fact was recognized even by the Turkish side. Thus, Ankara failed to use trade ties as a lever of influence on Israeli policy—*"realpolitik prevailed over emotional boycott,"* summarizes the business newspaper *The Marker*.

³² makorishon.co.il

³³ middleeasteye.net.

³⁴ newarab.comreuters.com

Ties with Qatar, Iran, "Muslim Brotherhood" and Others

Formation of a "Sunni Axis".

Israeli strategic discourse increasingly voices alarm about the formation of a new regional coalition under Ankara's aegis. If previously the main existential enemy of Israel was considered the Shia "axis of resistance" led by Iran, by 2025, as *Ynet* notes, an equally dangerous **Sunni-Islamist axis** led by Turkey has emerged³⁵. Israeli analysts describe a scenario where Turkey would lead an alliance of ideologically close forces: from proxy formations in new Syria (Sunni Islamists from Hayat Tahrir al-Sham who came to power in Damascus) through "*Muslim Brotherhood*" in Jordan to Hamas and "*Islamic Jihad*" in Gaza. Such a **"Muslim Brotherhood alliance"** supported by Turkey and Qatar, in Jerusalem's opinion, could displace the traditional Shia-Iranian axis and become a new force hostile to Israel. Israeli officials directly point to cooperation between Ankara and Qatar and other countries that patronize Hamas. Thus, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant mentioned "*coordination between Doha and Ankara*" on supporting Gaza, and Israeli intelligence assessments classify Turkey and Qatar as main sponsors and sanctuaries for Hamas leaders³⁶. The Israeli press emphasizes: Ankara and Doha effectively act as a united front, demanding protection of Palestinians and financing Hamas infrastructure (Qatar directly, Turkey indirectly through assistance and shelter for militants).

Turkey's Relations with Iran.

Although Turkey historically competes with Iran for influence, in Israeli perception these two countries converge in anti-Israeli rhetoric and are ready to tactically cooperate against a common opponent. During the 2023 war, Ankara condemned Israel as harshly as Tehran, and Turkish media replicated accusations of Israeli "genocide"—completely in tune with Iranian propaganda³⁷. Moreover, at the Organization of Islamic Cooperation summit at the end of 2023, Turkey and Iran demanded in unison an immediate boycott of Israel and support for Gaza. Israeli experts note that **Turkey balances between the West and Iran**, maintaining NATO membership while simultaneously moving closer to Moscow and Tehran on Syria. A remarkable episode occurred in March 2025: against the backdrop of rumors about certain Israeli strikes on facilities in Iran, Erdoğan met with Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh and stated that Israel "*should not benefit from disagreements between Turkey and Iran,*" calling for refocusing world attention on Gaza³⁸. This was perceived as a signal that Ankara won't allow Israelis to pit it against Tehran and remains in solidarity with Iran's position on the Palestinian issue. Nevertheless, Israeli sources indicate: Turkey remains pragmatic—for example, it doesn't allow Iran to completely dominate in post-war Syria, preferring to promote its own protégés there. In the long term, Iran and Turkey may compete, but the "*axis of hatred toward*

³⁵ [ynetnews.com](https://www.ynetnews.com)

³⁶ fdd.org

³⁷ jpost.com

³⁸ reuters.com

Israel" temporarily brings them together. Israeli media voices calls to the West to "*not close eyes to Turkey*"—Ankara's NATO membership didn't prevent Erdoğan from becoming an influential patron of anti-Western and anti-Israeli forces.

Qatar, "Muslim Brotherhood" and Other Connections.

Qatar is viewed by Israel as Turkey's closest ally in supporting Hamas. Both countries provide sanctuary to the movement's leaders: Hamas's political bureau is divided between Istanbul and Doha. Israeli officials publicly called on Qatar to "*stop playing a double game*," pointing out that Doha harbored Hamas leaders while simultaneously serving as a mediator in negotiations. Similar reproaches equally apply to Turkey. Moreover, Israeli press reported that after certain pressure on Qatar from the USA, **part of Hamas leadership moved from Doha to Istanbul**—meaning Turkey remains the most reliable rear base for the organization. Besides Hamas, Ankara historically supports other movements connected to the "Muslim Brotherhood"—whether Islamist factions in Syria loyal to Turkey or the political wing of the movement in Jordan and the West Bank. This fits into Erdoğan's overall strategy of **strengthening a pan-Islamist bloc**. Israeli publication *Detaly* calls Erdoğan a "*new caliph dreaming of leading the Sunni world*," which manifests in his close relations with the Qatari emir, Hamas leaders, and sympathies for "Muslim Brotherhood" throughout the Middle East³⁹.

³⁹ vesti.azjpost.com

Conclusions for Israel.

In Israeli media discourse, Turkey increasingly appears not just as a regional competitor, but as an **ideological center of an alternative coalition** challenging Israel. This coalition—the Sunni-Islamist linkage Ankara-Doha-Gaza—is considered potentially very dangerous. Israeli strategists warn that **while a Shia threat exists (Iran, "Hezbollah")**, it's being replaced by an **equally formidable Sunni** one led by Turkey.

At the same time, Turkey, being a NATO member and having *significant diplomatic leverage*, is much more difficult to isolate than Iran. Jerusalem emphasizes that there are still channels of communication with Ankara—as one source noted, *"Turkey is a NATO member and U.S. ally, we have the opportunity to convey messages to it and even exert certain influence."*

This explains why Israel doesn't break relations completely: instead, behind-the-scenes negotiations are conducted (in Azerbaijan and elsewhere) and the USA is engaged, trying to keep Turkey from open confrontation with Israel. Nevertheless, the general tone of Israeli media is clear: **Erdoğan's Turkey is perceived as a new strategic challenge** based on a network of allies—from Qatar to Islamist movements—seeking to undermine Israel's position in the region. Such perception explains why voices in Israel are increasingly heard about the need to be ready *"for this scenario too—confrontation with Turkey"*^[40] alongside deterring Iran.

Israeli observers note: in conditions of Turkish expansion in Syria and frankly hostile rhetoric from Ankara, previous hopes for normalizing relations with Turkey have been definitively replaced by recognition of a **new long-term threat** to the security of the Jewish state.