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Turkey's Double Standard Policy Towards Israel During the Presidency of Recep Tayyip Erdogan from 2019 to 2021

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ABSTRACT

This research is entitled Turkey's Double Standard Politics Against Israel in the Era of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's Government in 2019-2021. This study was conducted to find out the efforts made by the Turkish government in responding to its foreign relations with Israel based on its country's national interests.

This study uses descriptive qualitative methods and the primary data in this study is Ms. Dina Sulaeman, she is a lecturer in International Relations at Padjadjaran University and is an expert or expert on matters relating to political and policy coverage in the Middle East region. While the secondary data in this study are books, international journals, archives or reports of someone who is related to the research. The data analysis technique used qualitative analysis techniques, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions/verification.

The results of this thesis research indicate that the double standard politics carried out by the Turkish government against Israel is a representation of Turkey's national interests. Every Turkish foreign policy towards Israel, both positive and negative policies always refers to Turkey's national interests where foreign policy always prioritizes the principle of balance between security and democracy, zero problem policy toward Turkey's neighbors, developing relations with neighboring countries, implementing multidimensional foreign policy, and rhythmic diplomacy.

Keywords: Foreign Policy, National Interest, Middle East

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini berjudul Politik Standar Ganda Turki Terhadap Israel Pada Era Pemerintahan Presiden Recep Tayyip Erdogan Tahun 2019-2021. Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mengetahui upaya yang dilakukan pemerintah Turki dalam menyikapi hubungan luar negerinya pada Israel berdasarkan kepentingan nasional negaranya.

Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif dan data primer dalam penelitian ini ialah Ibu Dina Sulaeman, beliau adalah dosen Hubungan Internasional Universitas Padjajaran dan merupakan ahli atau pakar mengenai hal yang berhubungan dengan cakupan politik maupun kebijakan di kawasan Timur Tengah. Sedangkan data sekunder pada penelitian ini adalah buku, jurnal internasional, arsip ataupun laporan seseorang yang memiliki keterkaitan dengan penelitian. Teknik analisis data menggunakan teknik analisis kualitatif yaitu reduksi data, penyajian data, dan menarik kesimpulan/verifikasi.

Hasil penelitian skripsi ini menunjukkan bahwa politik standar ganda yang dilakukan pemerintah Turki terhadap Israel merupakan representasi dari kepentingan nasional Turki. Setiap kebijakan luar negeri Turki pada Israel baik kebijakan positif maupun negatif selalu mengacu pada kepentingan nasional Turki dimana kebijakan luar negeri selalu mengedepankan prinsip keseimbangan antara keamanan dan demokrasi, *zero problem policy toward Turkey's neighbors*, pengembangan hubungan dengan negara tetangga, pelaksanaan politik luar negeri multidimensional, serta *rhythmic diplomacy*.

Keywords: Politik Luar Negeri, Kepentingan Nasional, Timur Tengah

INTRODUCTION

Every country and government in the world undoubtedly have national goals and interests, as well as foreign policies and politics when it comes to cooperating with other nations. Therefore, every country and government in the world have the right to determine attitudes and policies to ensure the sustainability of cooperation and reach agreements in conducting international relations. Turkey, which was formerly part of the Ottoman Empire, certainly still has strong influence and its own policies in responding to the situation and conditions of international politics. Geographically, Turkey is one of the few countries located between two continents, Asia and Europe. Its vital and strategic location as a link between two continents makes Turkey a superior and advantageous country in its geopolitical scope. This situation makes Turkey a country with significant influence on both European countries and Asian countries, especially the Middle East region, as it will be involved in various regional and international issues.

The relationship between Turkey and Israel began when Turkey recognized the sovereignty of the Israeli government in Palestine in 1949. In its foreign policy, Turkey maintains stability in its relations with Israel and Muslim countries, considering its relations with the Israeli government as an interest with Western nations and Muslim countries due to social and cultural similarities. During the 1997 OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation) Summit in Tehran, Turkey faced harsh criticism for its relationship with the Israeli government. Turkey was seen as not appreciating the efforts of the Palestinian people in their struggle against the Zionist government of Israel. The

relationship between Turkey and Israel is not a harmonious one; the relationship between the two countries often fluctuates, leading to instability in relations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous studies that serve as references for the author include Mevy Eka Nurhalizah's research, titled "Turkish Foreign Policy towards Israel during President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's Leadership from 2014 to 2018." This research elaborates on Turkey's foreign policy and its bilateral relations with Israel. It delineates Turkey's national interests in four points: serving as a bridge country, economic prosperity, becoming an influential global actor, and ensuring regional security. The study employs the rational actor model approach in rational choice theory. It also discusses the benefits and drawbacks of supporting or condemning Israel, as well as addressing issues and conflicts between Israel and Palestine, such as illegal settlements, restrictions on worship at the Al-Aqsa Mosque, proposed legislation banning the call to prayer, and the killing of Palestinian demonstrators that garnered sympathy and attention from the Turkish people. What sets this research apart from the author's study is the timing of Turkish government policies, focusing on President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's policies during the 2014-2018 period (Nurhalizah, 2019).

Another study by Dini Hermawati, titled "Drivers of Turkish Foreign Policy in Normalizing Bilateral Relations with Israel in 2016," explores the reasons behind Turkey's foreign policy decision to normalize bilateral relations with Israel in 2016. It examines Turkey's foreign policy transformation aimed at enhancing its presence in the region. This research adopts James Rosenau's concept of foreign policy and employs neorealism education and several supporting concepts. The distinguishing features of this study from the author's research are the timing of events and the conceptual approach used (Hermawati, 2019).

Lastly, Sayugo Harun Harhara's research, titled "Analysis of Israeli Policy regarding the Normalization of Diplomatic Relations with Turkey (2016)," analyzes Israel's policy regarding the normalization of diplomatic relations with the Turkish government in 2016. The method used in this study is qualitative and descriptive. Data collection techniques involve literature review. What sets this study apart from the author's research is the perspective of the state as a policy maker (Harhara, 2018).

METHOD

The method employed is descriptive qualitative research. Qualitative research involves analyzing behaviors and political attitudes that cannot be quantified (Blaxter, 2001). Descriptive qualitative research is conducted by explaining various international phenomena in accordance with their dynamic and ever-changing nature (Nurhalizah, 2019).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In foreign policy, there are formulations that serve as references for Turkey's foreign policy towards Israel, namely values, timing elements, and types of demands. The concept of foreign policy has five basic principles, namely balancing between security and democracy, the zero problem policy toward Turkey's neighbors, developing relations with neighboring countries, implementing multidimensional foreign policies, and rhythmic diplomacy (Davutoglu, 2014). Consistent with this, Turkey has four basic elements of national interest as described by Morgenthau, namely the interest in homeland defense, economic welfare, world order, and the promotion of values (Nuechterlein, 2001).

The first concept, balancing between security and democracy, is a manifestation of homeland defense interests. A country must create security domestically and regionally to ensure global security. In the basic principles of foreign policy, Turkey strives for a balance between democracy and security domestically (Davutoglu, 2014). After establishing security within its borders, Turkey formulates foreign policies that represent global regional security. This is done to ensure the interests of the country, namely security for its people. When applied to the relationship between Turkey and Israel, Turkey employs this principle when Israel is perceived to violate human rights in Palestine, such as illegal settlements and the killing of Palestinian demonstrators, prompting Turkey to withdraw its ambassador from Israel. This aims to maintain regional security and multidimensional foreign policies to safeguard global security (Nurhalizah, 2015). This also exemplifies Turkey's role as a bridge country and a significant and influential player in regional politics.

Next, in the concept of developing relations with neighboring countries, this is applied to the element of economic welfare. One way for a country to achieve economic prosperity is to expand relations and increase cooperation with other countries. This occurred between Turkey and Israel when they normalized their relations in 2016. Both countries agreed to improve relations as before, particularly in the fields of economy and security, with additional cooperation in the energy sector contributing to rapid economic growth in Turkey (Davutoglu, 2014). This policy pursued by Turkey aims to achieve its goals and serves the purpose of maintaining national interests through its issued policies. The principle of zero problem policy toward Turkey's neighbors is aligned with the value of maintaining world order. This principle requires Turkey not to have conflicts or disputes with its neighboring countries. Turkey seeks good relations with neighboring countries and aims to be a pioneer in peace and international cooperation in the regional area.

This principle positions Turkey as a bridge country and a participant in global peace. One example of Turkey's foreign policy implementation towards Israel is the effort to normalize relations and provide compensation to Israeli citizens affected by the Istanbul bombing tragedy. With this policy, it is hoped that the relationship between Turkey and Israel will reach a harmonious point and contribute to the economies of both countries.

The next principle, rhythmic diplomacy, is a manifestation of the interest in spreading values. Rhythmic diplomacy is active participation in international issues and forums to spread the values held by Turkey for its national interests (Davutoglu, 2014). In the dynamic relationship between Turkey and Israel, Turkey once expelled the Israeli ambassador in response to the killing of Palestinian civilians by Israel. Turkey firmly

rejects any colonization of Palestinian lands and recalls its Ambassador. This policy can be seen as Turkey's effort to showcase to the world that Turkey is a country with influence and endeavors to practice its interests by rejecting colonization. The relationship between Turkey and Israel is a dynamic form of different interests from each country. Each country has its own agenda and national interests, thus implementing foreign policies according to their respective needs. In line with this, the timing element is one of the causes of the dynamics of foreign policy and underlies the relationships between countries.

In the concept of national interest according to Morgenthau, national interest is based on rational and flexible nature. Rationality is based on the protection of physical, political, and cultural identities. National interest is flexible, meaning it can adapt to situations and needs. Turkey's national interests, as mentioned earlier, include homeland defense interests, economic welfare interests, world order interests, and the promotion of values.

One example of the representation of national interest concepts used by Turkey is in the application of homeland defense interests. Turkey benefits from its geographical location. Turkey's location between Asia and Europe and its vast territory of 783,562 km² make Turkey geopolitically strong, giving it more bargaining power in its foreign policies, in addition to being a bridge country as advocated by Turkey. Additionally, Turkey's terrain, consisting mainly of highlands, mountains, rivers, and coastlines, provides economic and security advantages. For example, in the economic field, Turkey can market its products to two continents. Meanwhile, in terms of security, the Turkish military can use diverse geographical terrain for efficient military training and suitable areas as military bases.

Consistent with this, Dr. Dina Y Sulaeman, M.Si, stated in an interview: "In terms of welfare, Turkey benefits economically from trade cooperation between Turkey-Israel, as well as Turkey-West, and Turkey-Middle East. In terms of security, Turkey desires good relations with the West (Turkey is also a member of NATO). A frontal policy against Israel will clearly provoke negative responses from the West, threatening the security of Turkey's elites (for example, there is a possibility of a coup).

CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis and discussion, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The dual standard politics of Turkey and Israel during the presidency of Recep Tayyip Erdogan from 2019 to 2021 represent Turkey's national interests, namely homeland defense, economic welfare, world order, and the promotion of values.
2. Turkey's foreign policy and politics are extensions of its national interests, including the balance between security and democracy, the zero problem policy toward Turkey's neighbors, developing relations with neighboring countries, implementing multidimensional foreign policies, and rhythmic diplomacy.
3. Turkey's policies towards Israel are rational and flexible, meaning that both positive and negative policies are adjusted according to the needs and benefits of the Turkish government.

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