

Analyzing Foreign Policy Crises in Turkey

Analyzing Foreign Policy Crises in Turkey:

*Conceptual, Theoretical
and Practical Discussions*

Edited by

Fuat Aksu and Helin Sarı Ertem

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This book is dedicated to:

NURETTİN AKSU,

missing you, your curious questions and encouraging comments...

and

MELİH MURAT ERTEM,

thank you for your inspiring ideas and generous support...

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In alphabetical order.

PREFACE

This book resulted from a three-year long TÜBİTAK (The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey) Project, examining the Turkish foreign policy crises and crisis management strategies in the Republican Era. The project, which received remarkable interest in Turkish academia, allowed us to examine 34 foreign policy crises in the last 92 years since the foundation of the Republic of Turkey. It is worth underlining here that the brainstorming in our “Coercive Diplomacy and Crisis Management in Turkish Foreign Policy” course made a valuable contribution to the embodiment of this project. Colleagues and students, who encouraged us for a much comprehensive study of this critical issue, believed in the necessity of making it a book and gave their kind support by writing the chapters of it.

This book requires us to thank not only these esteemed contributors, but many other names and institutions. Among them, TÜBİTAK and Yıldız Technical University, Scientific Research Projects Coordinatorship (YTU - BAPK), deserve our special thanks for the academic and financial assistance they gave to this project. We would also like to thank the participants/staff officers of the Turkish War Colleges, The Armed Forces Higher Command and Management College, which made eye-opening contributions during our discussions there especially on the military decision making processes of the Turkish crisis management.

Prof. Dr. Klaus Brummer, our Section Chair in the 2014 ECPR General Conference in Glasgow, where the first findings of this project were shared with the academia, and a leading name in crisis studies, Prof. Dr. Charles F. Hermann also deserve our thanks due to their comments and questions that improved our researches. We also have to thank the Deans of the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences at Yıldız Technical University, Prof. Dr. Güler Aras and Prof. Dr. Kenan Aydın, and Cambridge Scholars Publishing for their kind support during the research and publishing processes of this book.

Finally, our special thanks goes to our family members, especially our spouses and children, without whose love and patience this book would not be finished. We would also like to commemorate dear Nurettin Aksu,

whom we lost during the preparation of this book. His loving-kindness and support for his children and grandchildren will never be forgotten.

We hope this book can inspire further academic studies in the area of foreign policy crises.

Fuat Aksu and Helin Sarı Ertem
Istanbul, November 2016

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DP	Democrat Party (<i>Demokrat Parti</i>)
FP	Felicity Party (<i>Saadet Partisi</i>)
FIR	Flight Information Region
EOKA	Ethniki Organosis Kyrion Agoniston or National Organization of Greek Cypriot Fighters
FSA	Free Syrian Army
GCA	Greek Cypriot Administration
GUP	Great Union Party
ICBP	International Crisis Behavior Project
IHH	The Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief
ISIS	Al-Dawla al-Islamiya al-Iraq al-Sham or Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
JDP	Justice and Development Party (<i>Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi</i>)
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government
MB	Muslim Brotherhood
MIT	Turkish National Intelligence (<i>Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı</i>)
MP	Motherland Party (<i>Anavatan Partisi</i>)
NMP	Nationalist Movement Party (<i>Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi</i>)
PKK	Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan or Kurdistan Workers' Party
PYD	Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat or Democratic Union Party
RPP	Republican People's Party (<i>Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi</i>)
SNC	Syrian National Council
TFPC	Turkish Foreign Policy Crises
THY	Turkish Airlines
TMT	Turkish Resistance Organization (<i>Türk Mukavemet Teşkilatı</i>)
TPAO	Turkish Petroleum Corporation (<i>Türkiye Petrolleri Anonim Ortaklığı</i>)
TRNC	Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
TUBITAK	Technological Research Council of Turkey
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
YPG	Yekitina Parastine Gel or People's Protection Units

CHAPTER NINE

NON-STATE ACTORS IN TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY CRISES*

AYŞE KÜÇÜK

Introduction

In international relations there are a few cases where the actions of non-state actors resulted in a foreign policy crisis.¹ Therefore, we have a limited number of crises where non-state actors became involved. However, the current bid of non-state actors to increase their impact and strength does not only result in a foreign policy crisis in which they become involved, but also sets the stage for them to become direct interlocutors in these foreign policy crises. The Turkish Foreign Policy Crises (TFPC) Project fixed nine foreign policy crises in the history of Turkish foreign policy, where non-state actors had a particular impact.²

* This chapter is supported by the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey - TÜBİTAK 1001 Project (Project No: 112K172).

¹ International Crisis Behavior Project (ICB) claims that only 65 of the 572 crises in the post-World War II era were triggered by non-state actors. See: David Ray Andersen, “Foreign Policy Decision Making and Violent Non-State Actors”, (Unpublished PHD Thesis, Graduate School of University of Maryland, 2004):140.

² Turkish Foreign Policy Crises (TFPC) Project found out that in 9 of the 34 foreign policy crises that Turkey experienced, non-state actors played a role. The TFPC Project concluded that in the crises of Bozkurt-Lotus (1926), Little Ararat (1929-30), Struma (1942), September 6-7 (1955), (Minority of) Western Thrace (1989-1990), Assimilation and Exodus of Bulgarian Turks (1989), Iraqi Refugees (1991), Mavi Marmara (2010) and ISIS Hostage (2014), the non-state actors played a role as a triggering actor or a crisis interlocutor or the subject of crisis or they impacted the crisis in a way that it resulted in the lack of interlocutor. Furthermore, even though in certain foreign policy crises there are some non-state actors that either triggered the crisis or were somehow influenced by it, the crisis interlocutor may be another state. As a matter of fact, while the crisis interlocutor

According to the findings of the project, the foreign policy crises in which non-state actors got involved are as follows (chronologically ordered):

- Bozkurt-Lotus Crisis of 1926
- Little Ararat (Küçük Ağrı) Crisis of 1929-1930
- MV Struma Crisis of 1942
- September 6-7 Crisis of 1955
- (Minority of) Western Thrace Crisis of 1989-1990
- Assimilation and Exodus of Bulgarian Turks of 1989
- Iraqi Refugees Crisis of 1991
- Mavi Marmara Crisis of 2010
- ISIS Hostage Crisis of 2014

In some of these crises, though they are ‘foreign policy crises’ in the sense that they directly concern intergovernmental relations, we observe the involvement of non-state actors playing a triggering role. For instance, the Bozkurt-Lotus Crisis of 1926 arose as a result of an accident of two merchant ships in the Aegean Sea. There was not any state responsibility in the accident and thus this crisis should technically be called an ‘accidental crisis’. Nevertheless, the process that followed the accident enforced the states to deal with this crisis. The casualties and the trial of the French Captain by Turkey led Turkey and France to be parties of a judicial conflict. The fact that France did not recognize its jurisdiction caused Turkey, which was sensitive about judicial capitulations, to consider the incident as a crisis. In this particular case, a marine accident which a non-state actor became involved in caused an intergovernmental conflict that later turned into a crisis.

In the second example, some Kurdish separatist-rebellion groups escaped to Iran after they had provoked unrest within Turkish borders. The difficulties that Turkey had between 1929-1930 in struggling these border violations and rebellions led Turkey to carry out a new decision in its relations with Iran. As per this decision, Turkey was to create a new *de facto* situation with the particular intention of forcing Iran to sign a new agreement on borders, which Turkey believed was the only way to cope with border violations. So, following a hot pursuit, Turkey did not leave

was France in the Bozkurt-Lotus Crisis of 1926, it was Greece in September 6-7 Crisis of 1955. In some crisis examples that the TFPC Project dealt with, the incident that causes the crisis and the counter-party might be different from one another.

Iranian territories and suggested Iran a revision of borders. To sum up, the actions of rebellion groups against Turkey brought about a crisis related to border security.

When it comes to the MV Struma Crisis of 1942, we can say that this crisis was a unilateral foreign policy crisis from the perspective of the foreign policy decision-makers of the day. This is also counted as a humanitarian crisis, for it was about the UK-controlled Jewish migrants/refugees that departed from Constanta, Romania and were trying to reach Palestine. The Turkish foreign policy decision-makers of the day could not be successful before the warring states in their diplomatic attempts to enable the passengers in the MV Struma to safely reach Palestine. The UK, because it had not yet decided whether the refugees could safely settle in Palestine, did not accept the passengers' request and proclaimed that it could not guarantee the security of the refugees. As a neutral state, Turkey was not eager to accept the refugees with regional security concerns and took the ship out of its territorial waters in the Black Sea to lead it back to the port of departure in Romania. After a short while, the ship was torpedoed and run down by an unidentified submarine. Many concerns were influential in Turkey's reluctance to meet the demands of the refugees in the MV Struma. Not only would it cause a much bigger flow of Jewish refugees to accept the demands of those in the MV Struma with humanitarian concerns but it could also create security-related problems in the Balkans, where Turkey was sharing borders with Germany. Herein it is clear that Turkey developed its policies depending on the attitude of the UK. Had the UK proclaimed it could accept the refugees, Turkey would have helped them to safely reach the Aegean Sea. During MV Struma's stay at the Marmara Sea, Turkey strove to meet the humanitarian needs of the refugees and repaired the withered power engines of the ship. However, the passengers were never allowed to disembark.³

The fourth foreign policy crisis was triggered by an event that took place in 1955 within Turkey's borders. During the negotiations between Turkey, Greece and the UK in London on the future of Cyprus, the pro-government demonstrations in Istanbul got out of control and turned into attacks against minorities. In the course of these attacks, houses,

³ For a more detailed investigation on this issue see Cagri Erhan, "İkinci Dünya Savası Yıllarında Yahudilerin Türkiye'ye Kabulü Meselesi", *Prof. Dr. Haluk Ulman'a Armagan*, (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi, 2013): 125-148; Tahir Kodallı, "Türk Arşiv Belgelerine Göre II. Dünya Savası Yıllarında (1939-1945) Türkiye Üzerinden Filistin'e Yahudi Göçü", *Atatürk Üniversitesi Atatürk Dergisi*, C:5, No:3, (2007): 133-163

workplaces, temples, and cemeteries that belonged to minorities were heavily damaged; casualties and injuries occurred. Even though these attacks against the minorities, commonly known as “September 6-7 Incidents”, were considered as a national issue, they brought Turkey and Greece against one another with regard to the liabilities of the state on minorities’ status. The fact that the government of the day could not prevent the attacks created a big pressure on it about how to compensate the trauma caused by the incidents. The demonstrations organized by the Democrat Party to show the popular support for its Cyprus policy deviated from its aim and put the government in a tight spot both at home and abroad.

The fifth and sixth crises are the ones in which the status of the Muslim/Turkish minorities, who lived in Greece and Bulgaria and gained this status through mutual agreements, were openly violated. In both crises, minority members have been the direct target of the triggering behaviour (such as assimilation, violation of basic rights and freedoms and forced migration) and when the crisis gained an inter-state character, they became the subject of the crisis.

In the seventh crisis too, it is possible to observe a humanitarian dimension. In 1991, the crisis with Iraq was basically about Turkey’s expectations to ensure the safety of refugees. The crisis was escalated when Iraqi Kurds, who felt anxious about a probable recurrence of Halabja Massacre, crossed the border and entered Turkey and Iraq demanded Turkey to send them back to Iraq. Turkey’s rejection of Iraq’s demand and support for the idea of secured zones within Iraqi borders for refugees determined the fate of the crisis. With the creation of secured non-flight zones within Iraqi borders, the refugees could gradually go back to Iraq and the crisis was resolved. Later on the Iraqi refugees, who triggered an intergovernmental crisis between Turkey and Iraq, became the subject of this foreign policy crisis.

In the MV Mavi Marmara Crisis of 2010, we observe the impact of the initiative taken by an NGO in Turkey (İHH). The international aid campaign with the purpose of breaking the Israeli blockade in Gaza got Israeli reaction and Turkey was asked to help stop this aid campaign. The fact that Turkey recognized and considered İHH activity as legitimate and did not block it caused evidently a conflict in Turkish-Israeli bilateral relations. Israel considered Mavi Marmara’s departure to the Mediterranean as the triggering action of the crisis and undertook a military operation to prevent the ship from breaking the blockade in Gaza. The killing of 10 activists and the injury of many more during this Israeli military operation

led Turkey to react harshly and a big foreign policy crisis arose between Israel and Turkey.

The ISIS Hostage Crisis in 2014 is a different case of foreign policy crises. In this crisis, ISIS militants took hostage Turkey's Consul General to Mosul and the Consulate Staff. Even though ISIS took this action against Turkish diplomats in Mosul as a non-state actor, this enforced Turkey to initiate a crisis management process. However, the situation was not publicly presented as a "crisis" in the beginning. In this case, a non-state actor is a direct interlocutor of the crisis. Therefore, the lack of official recognition and diplomatic relations brought about a big problem in terms of what means and methods are to be used in the crisis' resolution.

We have so far listed the summaries of Turkey's nine foreign policy crises in which non-state actors got involved. However the aim of this chapter is to particularly deal with MV Struma Crisis of 1942, MV Mavi Marmara Crisis of 2010 and ISIS Hostage Crisis of 2014. The first chosen case is about a ship full of predominantly Jewish refugees, which started off from Romanian Constanta Port to reach Mediterranean through the Turkish Straits on December 12, 1941. However, the asylum request of the passengers who had already arrived at the Marmara Sea was not accepted by the UK. The ship was sent back to the Black Sea and then sunk by a Russian submarine. In this case, Turkey attempted to resolve this crisis but could not find any interlocutor. Therefore, for Turkey the MV Struma Crisis is an example of unilateral foreign policy crisis. In the second case, known as MV Mavi Marmara Crisis, Israeli military forces launched an operation against an aid convoy organized by a number of NGOs. Following this operation, the action of the NGOs was appropriated by Turkish decision-makers. Therefore, the initial crisis between the NGOs and the State of Israel became a bilateral foreign policy crisis between Israel and Turkey. MV Mavi Marmara Crisis is a unique example in the history of Turkish foreign policy in that an NGO initiated action turned into a foreign policy crisis. Finally, the ISIS Hostage Crisis took place after Mosul had been occupied by ISIS militants on July 10, 2014. Turkish General Consulate in Mosul was captured by armed ISIS militants and diplomats and their families were taken hostage. In this case, Turkey was confronted by a crisis in which as a state it had to deal directly with an armed and violent non-state actor.

In this chapter, the main purpose is to analyze foreign policy crises with influential non-state actors focusing on three examples and with an actor-centered approach. Furthermore, the peculiar characteristics of each crisis that we deal with bring about the need to differentiate between the

non-state actors. As a matter of fact, it is relatively easy to fix or describe the direct interlocutor of the crises, which is the state itself. But it is not always that easy to fix the other party of the crisis, if it is a non-state actor. Another structural difficulty regarding the crises with influential non-state actors is to distinguish between a direct interlocutor and a triggering actor. In our cases, indeed, while in one case a non-state actor is the one which triggers the crisis, in another case it might be a direct interlocutor of the crisis. In what follows, we will deal with what kind of a crisis management strategy is carried out in the crises, in which non-state actors with peculiar characteristics got involved, namely in the MV Struma Crisis as a unilateral foreign policy crisis, the MV Mavi Marmara Crisis as a crisis triggered by the NGOs and, finally, the ISIS Hostage Crisis as a crisis with a violent and armed non-state actor. Moreover, the article also aims at discussing whether and to what extent Turkey diversified its crisis management strategy to cope with the crises that took place in different time periods, vis-à-vis different non-state actors etc. It is also worth noting that in the crisis cases that we address in this chapter while one party is always Turkey, it is not always clear who the counter party is. This makes it even more interesting to investigate how the crisis management process is shaped in those crises, where non-state actors are either direct interlocutors or triggering actors. Our basic hypothesis is that as the main conditions and decision-makers are different in each exemplary case, the crisis management strategy also differs.

Non-State Actors

As per international law, sovereign states with certain population within a defined territory and an independent government have the right to have international relations with one another. These basic elements of a state include, though indirectly, the recognition by other states.⁴ However, recognition is a unilateral and explanatory legal transaction. Therefore, as per the international law, the recognized state no longer has an indefinite status before the state that recognizes it. In other words, the recognized state becomes an international legal person merely for the state that performs the transaction of recognition.⁵ Even these criteria evidently

⁴ Eric A. Heinze and Brent J. Steele, "Introduction: Non-State Actors and The Just War Tradition", in *Ethics, Authority, and War: Non-State Actors and Just War Tradition*, (Eds.) Eric A. Heinze and Brent J. Steele, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009): 9.

⁵ Huseyin Pazarci, *Uluslararası Hukuk*, (Ankara: Turhan Kitabevi, 10. Basım, 2011)

show that states as political entities have many objective and subjective needs. Nevertheless, with the currently increasing importance of non-state actors, these criteria were called into question. It is therefore crucial to first define the non-state actors so that they can properly be explained.

As a concept, “non-state actor” refers to contemporarily prominent political, organized or institutional entities that absolutely do not have the qualities of a state. The concept of “non-state actor” includes either all newly emerged rivals that increase their potentials and challenge the existing authorities or, in a wider sense, a variety of actors that aim at filling the power vacuums within a weak area of authority. Among the rising non-state actors are various institutions with very different characteristics such as legal entities, intergovernmental organizations, international organizations, syndicates, terrorist organizations, multinational corporations, rebellion groups and NGOs. Therefore, organized armed groups like Hezbollah that use violence to shape and influence politics and terrorist organizations like Al-Qaeda are also counted as non-state actors.⁶ As such, it is possible to divide non-state actors into two category: Armed/violent and peaceful.⁷ In this classification, legal entities, intergovernmental organizations and international organizations are considered as peaceful non-state actors.

The non-state actors, whose number and varieties have considerably increased from the 1990s onwards, became an interesting matter for the academic world. In this process, the main discussion on non-state actors in the literature of international relations has evolved from “non-state actors are important” to “why non-state actors are important?”. Nevertheless, the problematic of “non-state actors” is still under discussion.⁸ Generally speaking, the term “non-state actor” is used to underline the “non-governmentality”. In this respect, the term “non-state actor” can widely be used to refer to all kinds of actors that are not states but which have the ability to act in a relatively autonomous way in the international system. Herein, the main question under discussion is what means and methods the

⁶ Heinze and Steele, “Introduction: Non-State”..., 11-12.

⁷ In the literature of international relations, whereas there are many classifications that evaluate violent/armed non-state actors as a whole, peaceful non-state actors have generally been analyzed with their peculiar characteristics. For more information on violent/armed non-state actors see Ulrich Schneckener, “Armed Non-State Actors and Monopoly of Force”, *Re-visiting the State Monopoly on the Legitimate Use of Force*, Policy Paper 24 (2007): 10-19.

⁸ Tim Büthe, “Governance through Private Authority: Non State Actors in World Politics”. *Journal of International Affairs*. Vol. 58 Issue 1, (Fall 2004): 281 http://people.duke.edu/~buthe/downloads/Buthe_JIA_corrected.pdf, [12.05.2015].

non-state actors use while acting in the international system. The fact that some non-state actors use conventional peaceful or violent methods facilitates the classification of these authorities. However, the ambiguity on the limitedness of supranational actors, NGOs and non-state actors still continues.

Non-state actors' power consolidation in world politics has been a fact for 20 years. However, this consolidation of power or impact is not a zero-sum game for the non-state actors. "A gain of power by non-state actors does not necessarily translate into a loss of power of states."⁹ Currently, the states are still main actors of the world politics and preserve their power. State-centered and realist approaches tend to regard and define international relations solely as intergovernmental. According to this approach, the issue of non-state actors is of a secondary importance in the literature of international relations. As Kenneth Waltz underlined, states are not and have never been the only international actors: "States are not and never have been the only international actors. But then the structures are defined not by all the actors that flourish within them but by the major ones."¹⁰

The pluralist approaches, on the contrary, evaluate non-state actors within a wider approach. According to these approaches, all kinds of actors can influence foreign policy outcomes. According to Robert O. Keohane and Joseph Nye, "politics reflects asymmetrical economic, social, and environmental interdependence, not just among states but also among non-state actors and through transgovernmental relations."¹¹ States may also engage with non-state actors that challenge the authority of another state. Relations with such non-state actors include a parallel decision about how to consider the sovereignty of a state. Herein, it is normal and possible that a state develops relations with an armed terrorist organization within the territories of another state.¹²

The increasing impact of both peaceful and violent non-state actors in world politics is evident in many instances. A crisis, defined by Michael Brecher and Jonathan Wilkenfield as "a serious perception of threat

⁹ Anne Marie Slaughter, "The Real New World Order", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol: 75, No: 5, (September-October 1997):188.

¹⁰ Kenneth Waltz, "Political Structures" in *Neorealism and Its Critics*, (Ed.) Robert Keohane, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986): 88.

¹¹ Robert O. Keohane and Joseph Nye, *Power and Interdependence*, Forth Edition, (Boston: Longman, 2012): 242.

¹² David Ray Andersen, *Foreign Policy Decision Making and Violent Non-State Actors*, (Graduate School of University of Maryland, Unpublished PHD Thesis, 2004), 10-11.

against fundamental structures and the norms of the social system and the processes taking place as a result of this perception”¹³ cannot be expected to happen only between states. Non-state actors that cause similar threat perceptions can also be in the center of bilateral foreign policy crises, which are thought to arise only among states. Therefore, states have to reorganize the processes of crisis management and decision-making vis-à-vis non-state actors in foreign policy crises.

MV Mavi Marmara Crisis

According to literature of crisis management, MV Mavi Marmara Crisis is an action initiated by NGOs that resulted in a bilateral foreign policy crisis between Turkey and Israel. Moreover, it is a unique example in the history of Turkish foreign policy in terms of how the crisis was managed. The peculiar aspect of this crisis is that a conflict between a state and an NGO gradually became a foreign policy crisis between two states. This points out to an actor problem, since it is a non-governmental organization that initiated or caused the crisis.

Non-state actors and, particularly, NGOs have currently increased their impact and MV Mavi Marmara Crisis clearly indicates what consequences this increasing impact may have. In order to analyze how the crisis management strategy of Turkey proceeded, we should both address the peculiar features of the crisis and observe the keystones of this strategy.

A Short Summary of the MV Mavi Marmara Crisis

The main conflict behind the crisis arose after a coalition of a number of NGOs had announced on April 3, 2010 that an aid convoy would reach Gaza through a region blockaded by Israel. At that time the conflict was between Israel and the NGOs in the coalition. The first reaction of Israel against this plan was to meet the ambassadors of the countries, where the NGOs in the coalition were active and to inform them that the “activists would be stopped before they reach the coast.”¹⁴ In other words, before the crisis arose, Israel had warned all parties through both diplomatic channels and media.

Main conflict here is the attempt to deliver help to the Gaza Strip, a

¹³ Michael Brecher and Jonathan Wilkenfeld, *A Study of Crisis*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997): 3.

¹⁴ Jack Khouri ve Barak Ravid, “Israel to Europe: Stop Your Citizens from Sailing to Gaza with Aid”, *Haaretz*, May 17, 2010.

region blockaded by Israel, and thus to break the blockade. The Foundation for Human Rights, Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief (the IHH), one of the main organizers of the campaign and the owner of the greatest ship in the fleet is a UNECOSOC (United Nations Economic and Social Council) member, Istanbul-centered and internationally active NGO. In the first phase the conflict was between Israel and the IHH. But one can still talk about a bilateral conflict between two states, because Israel requested Turkey not to let the fleet get under way and Turkey rejected it. What is controversial here is who or which actor Israel addressed in to resolve the conflict. Since Israel first shared its concerns through diplomatic channels with Turkish, Greek, Irish ambassadors, it clearly preferred to address the states as main actors. In that phase, the official attitude of Turkey was not in favor of considering this conflict as a bilateral crisis with Israel and becoming a direct party in this crisis. As a matter of fact, even though Israel announced very openly through various channels that it would not let the fleet reach Gaza, the Turkish government and foreign ministry underlined that Turkey is a democratic state¹⁵ and did not make an effort to prevent the fleet from going under way.

The fact that Israel resorted to military methods in order to manage this crisis can be explained by David Ray Andersen's analysis. To Andersen, the crisis situations where states face off against non-state actors support the idea that the stronger will also be the victor. Due to the existing power asymmetry, the states tend to act more violently *vis-à-vis* non-state actors. Therefore, the states generally come up with military reactions particularly against violent/armed non-state actors.¹⁶

It was in the later stages of the crisis that this peculiar conflict between Israel and the IHH became a foreign policy issue between Israel and Turkey. For Israel, the action that initiated the crisis was the departure of the fleet from Antalya to the destination of Gaza on May 28, 2010. For Turkey, on the other hand, the crisis began with the operation of Israeli Defence Forces (the IDF) against the MV Mavi Marmara, one of the ships in the fleet carrying many activists from various countries, resulted in the killing of ten activists (nine from Turkey and one from the US). Turkish decision-makers labeled the military operation of Israel, where it used disproportionate use of power, as an attack to their citizens' right to live

¹⁵ Ayşe Kucuk, "Türkiye-İsrail İlişkilerinde Mavi Marmara Krizi: Kriz Yönetimi Açısından Bir İnceleme", (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, YTÜ Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2015): 163.

¹⁶ David Ray Andersen, "Foreign Policy Decision Making and Violent Non-State Actors", (Unpublished PHD Thesis, Graduate School of University of Maryland, 2004): 25.

and thus considered it as an own issue. This consideration turned this crisis into a “bilateral foreign policy crisis” between Turkey and Israel and the process of crisis management continued between these two states. It further triggered the crisis that Israel took the activists, most of whom were predominantly Turkish citizens, in the MV Mavi Marmara to Israel by force and imprisoned them. With the intervention of the US, the activists imprisoned in Israel were released and brought to Turkey on June 3, 2010.¹⁷ Therefore this date is the start of the softening stage for the crisis.

The military operation against the MV Mavi Marmara launched by Israel took place 72 sea miles away from Gaza and 64 miles away from the region blockaded by Israel.¹⁸ In other words, the fleet did not in fact manage to break Israeli blockade. Therefore, the fact that Israel launched the military operation in the international waters confirms that it was for Israel, the attempt of the NGOs to break the blockade that triggered the crisis. In other words, what triggered the crisis in the eyes of Israel was that the fleet was proceeding to the region it had blockaded. For Turkey, on the other hand, it was the violent attack against the fleet by Israel that triggered the crisis.

Crisis Management Process *vis-à-vis* a State / a Definite Interlocutor

Even though the MV Marmara Crisis was triggered by a conflict between a state and an NGO, disproportionate use of power and the resulting killings led Turkey to consider this crisis as a bilateral foreign policy crisis with Israel. In this way, the crisis management process was conducted between these two states. Because the crisis management process was conducted between two definite actors, namely two states, possible problems that often arise in the foreign policy crises with non-state actors such as those related to power asymmetry, action flexibility and cultural differences were prevented. What enabled this was that the crisis turned into a bilateral foreign policy crisis between two states.

Following the Israeli operation against the MV Mavi Marmara in the

¹⁷ “Ağırlığımızı Koyduk, Taleplerimiz Karşılandı”, *Habertürk*, <http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/520097-agirligimizi-koyduk-taleplerimiz-karsilandi> [31.7.2015]

¹⁸ “Report on the Israeli Attack on the Humanitarian Aid Convoy to Gaza on 31 May 2010”, *Turkish National Commission of Inquiry*, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/data/Turkish%20Report%20Final%20-%20UN%20Copy.pdf>, 17-18, [20.11.2014]

fleet, Turkey first called for a UN Security Council meeting through its UN permanent representative. And on the same day, on May 31, 2010, Security Summit was convened in Ankara with the attendance of the then Deputy PM Bülent Arınç, the then Undersecretary of the PM Efkân Ala, the then Chief of Staff Operations Lieutenant General Mehmet Eröz and the then Chief of Naval Forces Staff Nusret Güner.¹⁹ In this Conference, the crisis was analyzed thoroughly. It was also considered that Israel had the power asymmetry that it had *vis-à-vis* the NGO and also *vis-à-vis* Turkey. The lack of official information on the nuclear capacity of Israel²⁰ and the claims that Israel had been the sixth state to generate nuclear weapons beginning from the 1960s²¹ led Turkey to take Israel's more powerful position *vis-à-vis* itself into consideration. Therefore, despite its policy of engagement in the crisis, Turkey did not prefer to react militarily.

Turkey's crisis management technique aimed at a non-violent resolution of the crisis. In this context, Turkey asked the US, which is a close ally for both Turkey and Israel, for its support as a third actor. On June 1, 2010 the then Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu heavily criticized Israel in the UNSC meeting convened upon Turkey's call. In his speech, Davutoğlu defined Israeli operation against the MV Mavi Marmara as "piracy"²² and requested the council to powerfully react to the incident with a statement that heavily criticizes Israel, asks for quick investigation and punishment of the criminals. On the same day, the UNSC came up with a statement, which did not satisfy Turkey's demands that it accepted with sorrow the killings and injuries of activists in the Israeli military operation against the aid convoy within the international waters and requested Israel to quickly release the civilians and ships that it captured.²³ Furthermore, Turkey tried to take the support of international public opinion convening NATO and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to publish statements that publicly criticize Israel.

In the light of these initiatives we may say that Turkey's way to manage this crisis was to bring it to the agenda of the international public

¹⁹ Toygun Atilla, *Sakıncalı Amiral*, (İstanbul: Kırmızı Kedi Yayınevi, 2014): 118.

²⁰ Former President of the International Atomic Energy Agency El Baradei stated in 2004 that Israel was among the states that have nuclear weapons.

²¹ Erdem Denk, "Bir Kitle İmha Silahı Olarak Nükleer Silahların Yasaklanmasına Yönelik Çabalar", *Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Dergisi*, (Cilt: 66, No: 3, 2011): 106.

²² "Davutoğlu'nun BM Konuşması - Tam Metin", <http://www.haber10.com/haber/204878/#.VJxmZl4AA>, [25.12.14].

²³ "Security Council Condemns Acts Resulting in Civilian Deaths during Israeli Operation against Gaza-Bound Aid Convoy, Calls for Investigation, in Presidential Statement", <http://www.un.org/press/en/2010/sc9940.doc.htm>, [25.12.14].

opinion as of the first day. In other words, in order to manage the crisis Turkey preferred to make this crisis an international issue through the channels of international organizations and particularly through the UN. With the internationalization of the crisis, many steps were taken in the UN Institutions to clarify the incident. In this context, firstly, the Report of the UN Human Rights Commission on the MV Mavi Marmara Crisis was published and then it was decided that the incident be investigated by an independent commission. Israel shared the results of its own investigation with the “Turkel Commission Report” and likewise Turkey also delivered the outcomes of its own investigation conducted by Turkish National Research and Investigation Commission to the UN. Following these reports, Palmer Commission, scrutinizing both states’ reports and arguments, completed its own report revealing the international law dimension of the incident.

Following the internationalization of the crisis, all the reports followed one another and were occasionally even responsive to one another’s questions. Varying approaches in each report with a different take on the legal aspect on the incident clearly indicated that the reports considered political balances rather than the background of the incident.

As was underlined above, Turkey’s crisis management strategy was to bring the incident to the diplomatic, political and legal field (namely, to UN’s agenda). Furthermore, Turkey came up with five demands for the normalization of the relations with Israel. These demands are: A formal apology, indemnity payment, and abolition of Gaza blockade, foundation of an international investigation commission and return of captured ships.²⁴ Out of Alexander George’s crisis management strategies, Turkey preferred the strategy of limited triggering with its preconditions. According to George, the main goal of this strategy is to set the fundamental rules upon which the agreement may be based until two parties accept to come to the negotiation table.²⁵ Moreover Turkey applied the horizontal limited triggering, one of the two kinds of this strategy. Horizontal triggering is basically the defending party’s attempt to damage the aggressor party in a variety of dimensions in order to increase its negotiating power.²⁶ In this context, Turkey supported the Palestinian UN application of September 2011 and helped Palestine get the status of ‘non-

²⁴ Nuri Yeşilyurt, “Ortadoğuyla İlişkiler”, *Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumlar (2001-2012)*, Cilt III, (Ed.) Baskın Oran, (İstanbul: İletişim yayınları, 2013): 443.

²⁵ Alexander L. George, “Strategies for Crisis Management”, *Avoiding War*, Ed. Alexander George, (USA: Westview Press, 1991): 388.

²⁶ George, “Strategies for”...

member observer state' in the UN General Assembly voting on November 29, 2012.²⁷

The fact that it was an NGO that triggered the crisis in the case of the MV Mavi Marmara Crisis led to a two-dimensional conduct of the crisis management process. In parallel to the crisis management process that Turkey conducted as a state, the IHH as an NGO used its right to legal remedies. In this context, the lawyers of the IHH appealed to the Public Prosecutor's Office of Istanbul that was carrying out the investigation on the MV Mavi Marmara Attack and declared the names of the Israeli soldiers that were mentioned in the Turkel Report prepared by Israel.²⁸ In the same period, US called both Turkey and Israel to develop solutions to the bilateral problems and normalize the relations.²⁹ On October 12, 2011, Public Prosecutor Mehmet Akif Ekinçi appealed to Turkish Ministry of Justice to issue a red notice for 174 Israeli soldiers (to open criminal proceedings against all the suspects and the ones who ordered the attack).³⁰ Besides, from 2012 onwards certain new developments came about regarding Turkey's request of indemnity from Israel. In an interview with *The Guardian* on May 24, 2012, Ramazan Arıtürk, one of the lawyers of the IHH, declared that Israel had accepted to pay indemnity to the activists in the MV Mavi Marmara and their families adding that the total amount that Israel had planned to pay was £4 million GBP, and that the indemnities would be delivered to the activists through a Jewish foundation in Turkey. He finally told that the Israeli Government would end up making an official statement of regret.³¹

As a result of the legal proceedings opened in Turkey upon IHH's appeal, first trial was held on November 6, 2012.³² Turkey's request of

²⁷ "Türkiye-Filistin Siyasi İlişkileri", <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-filistin-siyasi-iliskileri.tr.mfa>, [25.01.2015].

²⁸ Seyit Erçiçek, "İsrailli Askerlerin İsimleri Savcılıkta", *Hürriyet*, 10 Eylül 2011.

²⁹ "Beyaz Saraydan Obama-Erdoğan Görüşmesi Açıklaması", *Hürriyet*, September 21, 2011.

³⁰ Cem Tursun, "174 İsrailli İçin Kırmızı Bülten Talebi", *Hürriyet*, October 12, 2011.

³¹ "Israel Offers Compensation to Mavi Marmara Flotilla Raid Victims", *The Guardian*, May 24, 2012.

³² In the case number 2012/264, 490 activists from 37 countries took place as either complainant or victim as of 28.05.2012. The prosecutor limited the suspects of the case with Israeli chief commanders including Israeli Chief of General Staff Gabiel Ashkenazi that launched the operation against the MV Mavi Marmara. For more details see. "Mavi Marmara Davası Hakkında", <http://www.ihh.org.tr/tr/main/pages/mavi-marmara-davasi-hakkinda/160>, [25.01.2015].

“apology” came about with the teleconference between Erdoğan and Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu during US President Barack Obama’s visit in Israel on March 22, 2013.³³ In that conversation, Netanyahu declared that the tragic consequences of the MV Mavi Marmara incident had not been intended by Israel and expressed Israel’s “regret” for the killings and injuries. He added that the incident took place as result of ‘*a set of operational errors*’ and that ‘*Israel apologizes Turkish society for the killings and injuries and expects to reach an agreement on the issue of indemnity*’.³⁴ As a response to Turkey’s request of the abolition of Israeli blockade in Gaza, Netanyahu pointed out that ‘*some limitations on Gaza and Palestinian territory have already been abolished and will not be reinstated as long as security is maintained.*’³⁵

Netanyahu’s statements were considered to be the first step for the normalization process of Turkish– Israeli relations and thus welcomed.³⁶ In the trials held in Turkey, the court decided to issue warrant for the arrest with a red notice for Israeli Chief of General Staff Rau Aluf Gabiel Ashknazi, Commander of Israeli Naval Forces Eliezer Alfred Marom, Chief of Intelligence Amos Yadlin, and Commander of Israeli Air Forces Avishay Levi for not attending the trials. The court sent the case file to the Ministry of Justice for the execution of this decision. In the 8th trial, the court decided for further detection in the MV Mavi Marmara with the attendance of the court board, experts and victims of the attack.³⁷

While legal proceedings on MV Mavi Marmara Crisis were continuing in Turkey, IHH’s lawyers appealed to the International Criminal Court (ICC) on May 14, 2013 for a detailed investigation of the incident in the name of the flag state of the ship, the Union of the Comoros.³⁸ On March 6, 2014 the IHH appealed to the ICC to become a party to the legal proceedings as a victim of the attack.³⁹ In November 2014, the ICC completed its preliminary inquiry and decided that Israel’s attack on the

³³ “Türkiye-İsrail İlişkileri”, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-israil-siyasi-iliskileri.tr.mfa>, [25.01.2015]

³⁴ “PM Netanyahu Speaks with Turkish PM Erdogan”, <http://embassies.gov.il/un/NewsAndEvents/Pages/Netanyahu-speaks-with-Erdogan.aspx> , [22.03.2013].

³⁵ Yıldırım Turan, “İsrail 2013”, *Ortadoğu Yıllığı 2013*, (Ed.) Kemal İnat ve İsmail Numan Telcii (İstanbul: Açılım Kitap, 2015):123.

³⁶ “Türkiye-İsrail İlişkileri”...

³⁷ “Mavi Marmara Gemisi'nde Keşif Yapılacak”, <http://mavi-marmara.ihh.org.tr/tr/main/news/0/mavi-marmaragemisinde-kesif-yapilacak/2772> , [12.3.2015].

³⁸ “Mavi Marmara Davası Lahey'e Taşındı”, <http://www.ihh.com.tr/haber-mavi-marmara-davasi-lahey-tasindi-276680/>, [14.05.2013].

³⁹ “İHH'den UCM'ye 'Mavi Marmara' Başvurusu”, *Hürriyet*, March 06, 2014.

MV Mavi Marmara “*can be evaluated within the scope of war crimes*” but “*is not intensive enough*” for an investigation to be conducted by the ICC.⁴⁰

After the announcement of the ICC’s decision, IHH’s lawyers held a press conference and underlined that the ICC admitted the war crime committed by Israel in the attack against the MV Mavi Marmara. According to IHH’s lawyers, ICC’s ruling confirmed that a set of crimes such as “intentional killing”, “intentional injury”, “attack on human dignity” were committed both in the MV Mavi Marmara and Israeli prisons. The lawyers underlined that the ICC avoided opening a case due to “inadequate gravity of the offence”⁴¹ and stated that they would appeal to the court for a revision of the ruling.⁴² On July 16, 2015 ICC Justices called prosecutors, who decided not to investigate the attack against MV Mavi Marmara to revise this decision.⁴³

A legal investigation on the attack against the MV Mavi Marmara was also initiated in the UK upon the appeal of the lawyers of British activists, who had been in the ship, to London Police Department and Prosecutor’s Office on January 4, 2015.⁴⁴ British officials were reported to have stated that the investigation was being conducted by ‘Department of Special Operations and War Crimes’ and targets five suspicious Israeli commanders, Israeli Chief of General Staff Lieutenant General Rau Gabriel Ashknazi, Commander of Israeli Naval Forces Vice-Admiral Eliezer Marom, Chief of Intelligence Major General Amos Yadlin, Chief of Intelligence of Israeli Air Forces Avishay Levi and one of the commanders of the operation Tal Russo.⁴⁵

In the MV Mavi Marmara Crisis, as opposed to most of the crises with the involvement of non-state actors, all the possibilities of the international

⁴⁰ “UCM'den Mavi Marmara Davasına Takipsizlik Kararı”, *Yenişafak*, November 6, 2014.

⁴¹ “Mavi Marmara Avukatlarından UCM’ye Tepki”, <http://mavimarmara.ihh.org.tr/tr/main/news/0/mavimarmara-avukatlarindan-ucmye-tepki/2593>, [07.11.2014].

⁴² Fatih Erel, “UCM'nin ‘Mavi Marmara’ Kararı Temyize Götürülecek”, <http://www.aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/416831-ucmnin-quot-mavi-marmara-quot-karari-temyize-goturulecek>, [07.11.2014]

⁴³ “Uluslararası Ceza Mahkemesinden Mavi Marmara Kararı”, *T24*, July 16, 2015, <http://t24.com.tr/haber/uluslararasi-ceza-mahkemesinden-mavi-marmara-karari,303145> [20.11.2015]

⁴⁴ “Mavi Marmara Sanıkları İngiltere’de Yargılanacak”, *Radikal*, January 4, 2015.

⁴⁵ “Mavi Marmara’ya Saldırı Davası”, <http://www.haber7.com/guncel/haber/1263790-mavi-marmaraya-saldiridavasi>, [04.01.2015]

arena were benefited because of the state identity of the interlocutors. Besides that, the NGO maintained its own struggle through legal means on behalf of the victims of the attack. In this regard, it may be concluded that the crisis management process in Turkey proceeded in two different ways, which aggravated the return to the 'status-quo ante'. Moreover, a lack of agreement with the IHH regarding the issue of indemnity further prolonged the crisis.

ISIS Hostage Crisis

ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) established under the leadership of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi is not recognized by the states. It utilized the power vacuum in Iraq and Syria and increased its strength. While some consider ISIS to be a global jihadist movement, others see it a terrorist organization. The ultimate goal of the organization is apparently to establish an Islamic Caliphate with the unification of Iraqi and Syrian territories.⁴⁶ In this regard, ISIS can properly be considered as an armed/violent non-state actor in the process of becoming a state.

After the invasion of Iraq, ISIS emerged with the name 'Al-Qaida of Iraq' and set the stage for a guerrilla war with its resistance against the coalition powers and their local allies.⁴⁷ Therefore, ISIS is alleged to be a resistance movement founded by the Ba'ath Power against the invasion. ISIS started to utilize the power vacuum following the American exit from Iraq and the reflections of the Arab Spring in Syria. In that process, it benefited from the battle between Al-Qaida groups and consolidated its power. While Al-Qaida affiliated Al-Nusra Front focused on overthrowing Bashar al-Assad in Syria, ISIS headed for founding a state in the territories it controlled. On June 29, 2014 Al-Baghdadi declared caliphate, changing the name of his organization from 'Islamic State of Iraq and Syria' into "Islamic State".⁴⁸

ISIS Hostage Crisis is a unique case, where Turkey faced an armed/violent

⁴⁶ Aymenn Jawad al-Tamimi, "The Dawn of the Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham", <http://www.hudson.org/content/researchattachments/attachment/1389/tamimi.pdf>, 8, [01.08.2015].

⁴⁷ Zachary Laub and Jonathan Masters, "The Islamic State", *CFR Backgrounders*, November 16, 2015, <http://www.cfr.org/iraq/islamic-state/p14811> [26.11.2015]

⁴⁸ "Isis announces caliphate in 'declaration of war'", *The Guardian*, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/29/isis-iraqcaliphate-delcaration-war>, [10.08.2015].

non-state actor in a foreign policy crisis.⁴⁹ In this case, as opposed to the common trend in similar crises where states face non-state actors, Turkey refrained from using violence against ISIS.

A Short Summary of the ISIS Hostage Crisis

On the first days of January 2014, ISIS started its consolidation of power in Iraq by capturing Ramadi and Fellujah.⁵⁰ On June 6, 2014, ISIS started to clash with security forces in Mosul and plotted on the same day a suicide attack against the intelligence center in Al-Qahira. Prior to the escalation of clashes with Iraqi security forces on June 8, ISIS cut off the electricity on June 7 and civilians living in the city started to leave their houses. On June 9, ISIS captured the state house of Nineveh and the hospitals in the city and on the next day, despite declaration of mobilization by Nuceyfi, the Governor of Nineveh, ISIS brought the entire city under control with the support of the Naqshbandi Army in Mosul. Iraqi security forces left their arms and escaped from the city.⁵¹

Increasing ISIS threat in the region created a big insecurity for the Turkish Consulate in the city.⁵² In that period, many consulate buildings in the region were evacuated. However, 20 hours before the Consulate staff was taken hostage by ISIS militants, Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu had made the following statement from his twitter account: “...we are in instant communication. All measures were taken for the security of our Consulate in Mosul.”⁵³

After it had got the entire city under control, ISIS first demanded the evacuation of Turkish Consulate in Mosul within 24 hours. According to Al-Jazeera Turkey’s news, the consulate building was not evacuated and ISIS militants got in the building by force of bomb threat and they took hostage the staff and their families. According to some other sources, some 1000 ISIS militants got in the building by breaking the door of it.⁵⁴ Media reported that special operation forces that were in the building

⁴⁹ Hostage-taking actions by the Palestinian Liberation Organization in the late 1970s and actions of ASALA at home and abroad can be counted as other examples with non-state actors.

⁵⁰ “El Kaide’ye bağlı Örgüt Ramadi ve Felluce’yi aldı”, *Milliyet*, January 3, 2015.

⁵¹ “Irak’ta IŞİD İlerleyişi: 8-15 Haziran 2014 Irak Bülteni”, <http://improkul.impr.org.tr/?p=2888>, [27.03.2015].

⁵² On June 10, 2014, 31 Turkish truck drivers were hijacked by ISIS near Mosul. “Dışişleri: Irak’ta 80 Türk Rehin”, *Hürriyet*, June 11, 2014.

⁵³ Ahmet Davutoğlu, @Ahmet_Davutoğlu, twitter hesabı, 10 Haziran 2014.

⁵⁴ “Arınç: Rehinelerle İrtibatımız Var”, *Cumhuriyet*, June 16, 2014.

during the attack by ISIS were ordered not to react.⁵⁵ In conclusion, the ISIS Hostage Crisis is a crisis, whereby 49 consulate staff including Consul Yılmaz Öztürk was taken hostage with their families and the consulate building was captured by ISIS. Thereafter, the hostages were taken out from the building and brought to a headquarters in the region by ISIS militants.

Turkey's Crisis Management Strategy *vis-à-vis* ISIS, an Armed/Violent Non-State Actor

In the ISIS Hostage Crisis, Turkey faced an armed/violent non-state actor. Although crisis management process was a dynamic one, the institutions that got involved in that process were definite. In fact, conducting such as a process between states is always easier. However, the fact that ISIS is not a recognized state brought about a different conduct of crisis management. In terms of crisis management, therefore, ISIS is remarkably different from states as actors. This difference is not solely about geographical borders and the sovereignty of the non-state actor. Although ISIS has the control in some areas, it lacks the institutional structure, tradition and culture that a state is supposed to have. For this reason, the decision-making process was not as clear as in those confrontations with states, which is because of the perception that ISIS was an 'unpredictable' non-state actor.

Behind the acts of ISIS, there is a strong religious motivation. The rise of violent activities motivated by a religious imperative is one of primary cause of higher number of casualties in modern times.⁵⁶ In this context, ISIS can also be seen to be one of the contemporary religiously-motivated new terrorist organisations.⁵⁷ With an efficient activity in social media, ISIS made a big difference among the groups in Syria.

“However the idea of taking hostages and placing the responsibility for their fate into the hands of the opposing government is highly effective

⁵⁵ “Bülent Arınç'tan İlginç Çıkış”, *Hürriyet*, June 13, 2014.

⁵⁶ Adam Dolnik and Keith M. Fitzgerald, *Negotiating Hostage Crisis With The New Terrorists*, (Westport: Praeger Security International, 2008): 12.

⁵⁷ New Terrorism refers to the changing shell of terrorism with the changing conditions. Herein, the current novelty that creates the difference from the past is that terrorist organizations have access to communication and technological means and even mass media channels. In that respect, technological developments brought about new developments in the way terrorist organizations use violence. Dolnik and Fitzgerald, *New Terrorism and the Dynamics...*, 17.

tool in attracting international sympathy for the terrorist cause.”⁵⁸ It is on the other hand both a challenge and a show of strength. Each hostage-taking operation has a certain goal. In the ISIS Hostage Crisis, ISIS’ objective was to create a de facto situation in order to reach its goal on its own legitimate grounds. Evaluated from the perspective of the identity of the hostages, the ISIS Hostage Crisis was both a political and a humanitarian crisis because both the Consulate building was captured and the staff was taken hostage. Therefore, the crisis brought about a dilemma between a crisis management process and a hostage rescue operation.

Because of the different qualities its interlocutor has, Turkey preferred to take a different tack in the crisis management process. In the hostage crisis, the interlocutor is an armed/violent non-state actor. Therefore, Turkey had to follow its strategy without getting to recognize ISIS. The lack of regular communication channels and the peculiar nature of ISIS that is far from a state tradition made things difficult in the crisis management process. For communicating with a non-state actor that is active within a state, whose territorial integrity and sovereignty are officially recognized, may be perceived as an informal recognition, which brings about the danger of conflict between the sovereign states. In that case, Turkey’s attempts to communicate with ISIS may have been also perceived as an intervention to the territorial integrity of Iraq. This led Turkey to act even more carefully in this process.

According to the news reports as of June 14, 2014, Turkey put in Kirkuk’s leading clan leaders as intermediary for the liberation of Consulate hostages.⁵⁹ The then PM Erdoğan made the first statement about this issue on June 16, 2014:

I unfortunately see those who must have the sense of responsibility act provocatively at the risk of our citizens’ life. They blast away with a provocative language but we will not be deceived by those provocations. We, as the responsible officials, our President in the first place, me, our ministers, intelligence officers, follow our citizens moment to moment. Our priority is to bring our citizens, brothers and sisters safe and sound to our country. For this goal, we will do all that is necessary and have all necessary talks.⁶⁰

Erdoğan also stated that media coverage on that issue damages the critical process. On June 15, 2014 an extraordinary meeting with the

⁵⁸ Dolnik and Fitzgerald, *New Terrorism and the Dynamics...*, 15.

⁵⁹ Ramazan Yavuz ve Felat Bozarıslan, “Türk Rehineler İçin Erbil'den Zırhlı Araçlar Gönderildi”, *Hürriyet*, June 14, 2014.

⁶⁰ Ümit Çetin, “Durum İŞİD Ötesi”, *Hürriyet*, June 16, 2014.

agenda of security was convened, led by Erdoğan with the participation of the then Deputy PM Beşir Atalay, the then Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, the then Chief of General Staff Necdet Özel, the then Chief of Intelligence Hakan Fidan and the then Undersecretary of the FM Feridun Sinirlioğlu. The meeting, where the developments in Iraq were dealt with lasted approximately 2 hours and no decisions were released to the public. On June 16, 2014, the then Government Spokesman Bülent Arınç made the following statement after a cabinet meeting:

We are in contact with both Consulate staff and the drivers. Our goal is to bring them home safe and sound. Regarding that issue we are in close cooperation with the US, the UN and the Iraqi Regional Government. The talks that we conduct are about to bring to a successful conclusion. Our people shall be sure that we will soon see our citizens come back home safe and sound.⁶¹

This discourse shows that Turkish decision-makers thought that the crisis was about to be resolved. On June 17, 2014, 9th Heavy Penal Court of Ankara imposed a broadcast and publication ban on the ISIS Hostage Crisis for the sake of safety of Turkish citizens detained by ISIS.

It is impossible to set an exact date for the beginning of the moderation phase, because two days after the incident, it was stated that Turkish National Intelligence Organization (MIT) agents had made contact with ISIS and received a positive reaction. According to Uriel Rosenthal and Alexander Kouzmin, “Ad hoc synthetic organizations can be highly effective in achieving complex or highly contingent tasks, but they are rarely efficient in resource terms. The overriding reason for this tension between effectiveness and efficiency is that the synthetic organization must simultaneously establish temporary structure and carry out non-routine operations.”⁶² However that ad hoc synthetic organization missions ends by the time end of the crisis. The peculiar characteristics of the interlocutor and the difficulties that official state channels face in the crisis management process caused the prominence of an ad hoc organization made up of MIT agents rather than top decision-makers like President, Prime Minister or Foreign Minister in the crisis management process. That certainly does not mean that this ad hoc organization made up of MIT agents made all the decisions concerning the crisis solely by themselves, however. The function of the ad hoc unit was rather a facilitative one. In

⁶¹ “Arınç: Rehinelerle İrtibatımız Var”...

⁶² Uriel Rosenthal and Alexander Kouzmin, “Crises and Crisis Management: Toward Comprehensive Decision Making”, *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, (Vol: 7, No:2, 1997): 292.

that support, MIT took support also from the Kirkuk based clan leaders.

In hostage crises, 'saving time' is used as an efficient strategy. This strategy generally aims at saving time for collecting information in order to bring the opposite party to the negotiation table, for the emergence of new needs or for the minimization of opponent's expectations. In such processes it is possible to negotiate with terrorists within certain rules. It is in fact a necessity to conduct such negotiations in order to shape opponent's perceptions, opinions and actions. In such processes, whereas expectations like money, food-drink or transformation can be met, demands of arm and sub munition must absolutely not be satisfied. In the negotiation process, decision-makers should not be in the center, but on the contrary the process needs to be conducted by a moderator that gives the impression that they have taken a position of equidistance to both parties. During the negotiations, one should ask terrorists to do something in return for each single demand satisfied. It is always important not to put spotlight on the hostages, since it could increase terrorists' bargaining power.⁶³

Turkey chose the strategy of 'saving time' *vis-à-vis* ISIS. This strategy is generally practiced by the defending party for the particular purpose of paving the way for an agreement acceptable for both parties, when the enemy/opposite party challenges the status quo or is ready to do so. In case the threats can be eliminated through negotiations in the favor of the defending party, saving time strategy may create new chances and possibilities in the conduct of foreign policy.⁶⁴

Turkey, after giving a verbal reaction to ISIS' action, strove to limit organization's threat. Throughout the process of crisis management, Turkish decision makers continuously stated they were in contact with the hostages. However, on the other hand, they refrained from any discourse that would put a spotlight on the hostages at the risk of their life. The decision-makers took a different tack by even not calling the crisis a crisis. This strategy was remarkably reflected in the discourses and symbols of the decision-makers. Therefore, they preferred to call the Consulate staff and their families "guests" and rather than "hostages".

The fact that crisis management process was mainly conducted by the MIT shows that an *ad hoc* unit was created particularly for this crisis. There is no exact information concerning the dates of the negotiations.

⁶³ Michael J. McMains and Wayman C. Mullins, *Crisis Negotiations: Managing Critical Incidents and Hostage Situations in Law Enforcement and Corrections*, (Dayton: Anderson Publishing, 2001): 37.

⁶⁴ Alexander L. George, "Strategies for Crisis Management", *Avoiding War*, Ed. Alexander George, (USA: Westview Press, 1991): 390-391.

According to the news, Turkey started to get in contact with ISIS through local clan leaders in Kirkuk as of June 14. The agreement on the release of the hostages was reached on September 13. According to what we learn from media, Consulate staff were closely followed from the first day on through GPS tracking and telephone conversations were made with Consul Yılmaz Öztürk. In addition to that, by means of “human intelligence”, Turkish intelligence agents could constantly observe the places where the hostages were detained, although they were eight times relocated. As per the agreement (or negotiations), the hostages were to be received by MIT’s special forces at the border gate in Tell Abyad. On September 20, 2014, the 49 hostages including Yılmaz Öztürk, Turkey's Consul General in Mosul, were brought to Turkey after 101 days.

In a news report highlighting the role played by the MIT, it is pointed out that the ISIS militants had first been willing to release the hostages but had been obliged to step back due to an order that came from the “central headquarter”.⁶⁵ According to news report of Deniz Zeyrek from daily *Hurriyet*, ISIS militants were unwilling to leave the hostages in the Kurdish region because they thought it would risk their security. For this reason, we understand that the option of “delivery in a safe zone” came to the forefront. For the aforementioned delivery, one started off by bus on September 8, three local personnel were left in Mosul and two buses that were en route to Turkey from the ISIS dominated area were accompanied by “armed ISIS militants”.⁶⁶ Takva News Portal that is known to be ISIS affiliated released the following news: “*Islamic State’s sources stated that no ransom was levied and agreement was reached through bilateral negotiations between two states.*” According to the same news portal, the negotiations were conducted between the MIT External Operation Officials and “Foreign Ministry of the Islamic State”.⁶⁷ According to Al-Monitor, the operation was planned by Turkey’s National Intelligence Organization (MIT) and closely coordinated with the Prime Minister's Office, the Foreign Ministry and the chief of the Turkish General Staff.⁶⁸

After the hostages had been brought safely to Turkey, the then PM Davutoğlu made the following statement: “... *Shortly after midnight we came into initial contact and at around 5 am they entered into our*

⁶⁵ Deniz Zeyrek, “Dakika Dakika Uydudan İzledi”, *Hürriyet*, September 21, 2014.

⁶⁶ Zeyrek, “Dakika Dakika”...

⁶⁷ “Türk Rehinelere Nasıl Serbest Bırakıldı?” <http://www.takvahaber.net/guncel/turk-rehineler-nasil-serbestbirakildi-h9846.html>, [29.03.2015].

⁶⁸ Metin Gürçan, “How and Why Were 46 Turkish Hostages Freed?”, *Almonitor* <http://www.almonitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/09/turkeyiraqsyriaisturkishconsulatehostagesfreed.html#>, [18.05.2015].

territories. We closely followed the developments during the whole night and I have just informed our President. This good news prepared us all for a nice morning.” Davutoğlu added that the operation was undertaken through the MIT’s own methods.⁶⁹ Following Davutoğlu, the then Deputy PM Bülent Arınç’s statement was as follows: *“Thank God, our National Intelligence agents used all local possibilities and brought our citizens safely and in a whole skin to Turkey. For sure, our 76 million citizens and friends are very happy about this nice development.”*⁷⁰

After the hostages had been safely brought to Turkey, some particularly in foreign media put forward the claims of ‘barter’ in the process of rescue operation. President Erdoğan’s response was as follows: *“Even if we bartered for bringing them back, the life of our 49 citizens is priceless.”* According to news released on September 23, Turkey gave ISIS 50 people from Al-Tevhid Brigade including Hacı Bekir and his family in return for its citizens. The *Times*, however, claimed that Turkey gave 180 ISIS militants to ISIS in return for its citizens.⁷¹ President Erdoğan admitted that Turkey had negotiated with ISIS and stated that no ransom had been levied. BBC Turkish’s news quoted from the *Times* confirms that the hostages were rescued by means of barter. On September 24, Turkey announced that it would provide all kinds of political and military support against ISIS.

Conclusion

The cases scrutinized in this work, namely MV Struma Crisis, MV Mavi Marmara Crisis and ISIS Hostage Crisis showed that in each particular case Turkey came up with a particular assessment for the conduct of crisis management. By “particular assessment”, what we mean is that the cases were evaluated within the context of their peculiar conditions in order to develop and pursue an according strategy. It is an ordinary situation that the decision-makers evaluate available options and means by considering the peculiarities of each single case. In addition, there should obviously be a differentiation from conventional crisis management means and methods in the crisis where non-state actors are directly or indirectly involved. In the crisis management processes, political decision-makers of a democratic government are expected to

⁶⁹ “Davutoğlu MüJdeli Haberi Bakü'De Verdi”, *AA*, September 20, 2014.

⁷⁰ “Arınç: Burunları Bile Kanamadan Getirildiler”, *AA*, September 20, 2014.

⁷¹ John Simpson and Alex Cristie Miller, “UK Jihadists Were Traded by Turkey for Hostages”, *The Times*,
<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/uk/article4227988.ece> [17.05.2015]

choose the most appropriate one among the available options.

In the crises where non-state actors are direct interlocutors, one of the biggest difficulties arises from the lack of conventional communication channels between states and non-state actors. Therefore, the level of communication in the crises with non-state actors gets to be different from in intergovernmental crises. In such cases, the crisis management process is conducted through semi-formal or informal communication channels. In this context, the fact that Turkey came up with a particular assessment in each single crisis with non-state actors means that there is not an accurate and standard crisis management strategy to be pursued in such cases. In the crises where Turkey faced non-state actors, Turkey either managed the process with states, could not find any interlocutor or get in contact with non-state actor through ad hoc units. Moreover, despite the particular assessments made in each single case, not always desired results could be obtained.

The decision-makers that acted in accordance with the conditions of the day made a new and genuine assessment in each single crisis. This assessment process reveals that the crisis management unit has a flexible nature. Furthermore, the common view in the literature of International Relations that the states tend to use more violence in the crises *vis-à-vis* non-state actors does not confirm itself in the case of Turkey. In three closely scrutinized crises with non-state actors, we observe that Turkey avoided using violence as opposed to what is suggested in the literature.⁷² This reveals that Turkey does not see violence as an appropriate means in the crises with non-state actors. As was clearly shown by three cases, it has been scrutinized that it was the civilians that the direct interlocutors of the crisis had to decide about. For this reason, the political decision-makers consider the military option as the last option to resort to while choosing the tactics and strategies in the crisis management processes.

⁷² In none of the 5 foreign policy crises with non-state actors that we scrutinized as the Group of Crisis Analysis in Turkish Foreign Policy (Bozkurt-Lotus of 1926, MV Struma of 1942, September 6-7 of 1955, MV Mavi Marmara of 2010 and ISIS Hostage Crisis of 2014), Turkey as a state did not use violence.