

IS ERDOGAN'S ANGER FOR REAL?

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By Dikran Abrahamian, 2 February 2009

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During earlier studies, I was told, "All politics is local". I do not remember who said it. If we apply that principle to what has transpired lately we may have the following picture.

- Livi is the present leader of Kadima. Israel is facing an election. The major contender is Netanyahu, a hawkish personality who openly has rejected peace negotiations with Palestinians in the past. He was leading in the polls. Kadima too needed to look hawkish and defending Israel. Attacking Gaza provided that opportunity. Now Livi's standing is better than before the attack. Recent polls show that Kadima expects 34 seats in the Knesset as opposed to 37 to Netanyahu's Likud.

- Erdogan too will be facing an election. He has angered the Nationalists and the Kemalists and has not forged any meaningful co-operation with the democrats. His party is all alone. A successful mediation between Israel and Syria would have provided a much-needed boost. That's bust. Now he is a hero in the eyes of Islamists in Turkey; he possibly has carved a slice from the nationalists and thrived on rampant anti-semitism. His standing has improved.

Posturing in politics is the norm. That is another 101 politics. Is Erdogan posturing or is he sincerely repudiating Israel? Is he angry? It seemed so, but one never knows with politicians.

American Jewish groups are hinting to not co-operating with the Turks with respect to recognition of the Genocide of the Armenians. Can't it be another manifestation of posturing?

When celebrities, countries are posturing look at the balance sheet and who needs whom more. I believe it is an exaggerated notion that the only ally of Israel in the Arab-Muslim world is Turkey. Iran was an ally of Israel during the Shah; Pakistan for years has been an ally. Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt (post-Carter) have been de-facto allies of Israel. I would not pass on the possibility of even Lybia being categorized in that camp in not so distant future. And what is Fatah today?

Hence, Turkey's alliance is only one element in a whole array of alliances behind the scene.

Corollary: Turkey's reliance on Israel surpasses Israel's need of Turkey.

Between now and April lots can change. Turkey, as in its long history of being a chameleon, may still find a way to woo the Jewish lobby.

