

**INDIA'S ISRAEL POLICY: FROM 'DIPLOMATIC  
NORMALISATION' TOWARDS 'STRATEGIC COOPERATION'  
(1992-2019)**

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UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF **DR KAKOLI SENGUPTA**

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**INDIA'S ISRAEL POLICY : FROM 'DIPLOMATIC NORMALISATION' TOWARDS 'STRATEGIC COOPERATION' (1992 – 2019)** submitted by me for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Arts at Jadavpur University is based upon my work carried out under the supervision of **DR KAKOLI SENGUPTA** and that neither this thesis nor any part of it has been submitted before for any degree or diploma anywhere/elsewhere.

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## PREFACE

India and Israel—two old civilisations of the world, had trade and cultural linkages from prehistorical times. India was a safe place for Jews, where they never experienced any instance of anti-Semitism. The modern State of India was reluctant to recognise the Jewish nation after its formation in 1948. Even after the recognition in 1950, New Delhi deferred the standard diplomatic practice of exchanging missions with Israel. This so-called ‘non-relationship’ has been explained by scholars and politicians alike with an intention to justify the same. In 1992, when India decided to exchange permanent missions with Israel, the decision was argued as a consequence of the establishment of US hegemony, thanks to the disintegration of Soviet Russia. India’s relations with Israel gradually elevated to the level of ‘Strategic Partnership’ between the two countries. Having Defence cooperation as the basis, the relationship flourished to the level of cooperation in counter-terrorism, cooperation in Agro-tech, Water management, cyber security and high-tech.

India’s policy towards Israel is not a product of a simple calculation of convergence of interests perceived by the governments. This policy is a product of interactions between the politico-psychological orientation of leaders, the political configuration of the coalition and their collective ideological orientation, India’s national interest as perceived by the government and different agencies and most interestingly, domestic politics. So many factors determine India’s policy towards Israel that it is only comparable to India’s policy towards the US and not even with Pakistan or China. A major lacuna of the existing literature on the field has been its limitation to the ‘non-relationship’ phase and obsession with drawing a causal relation with US influence in India’s foreign policy. The focus on structural factors behind India’s foreign policy

decision-making ignores New Delhi's autonomy in the sphere. Thus, the study focuses on India's Israel policy from a decision makers' perspective. The study is focusing how the Decision-Makers of India's Foreign policy balanced National Interest, Rhetoric and Ideological Differences or Convergence while formulating Israel policy since Independence by following contrasting policies at different times. India officially calls 'West Asia' instead of the 'Middle East' as an attempt to break away from colonialist nomenclature. The standard academic practice is to call this region ' the Middle East. In this thesis, both the words, Middle east and west Asia have been used interchangeably.

## **INTRODUCTION**

## Background of the Research:

Jews, in ancient times, were not 'one people' in the modern sense of the term. They were divided among multiple tribes, and Hebrew was not the only or even the common language of all. Even the centrality of Jerusalem emerged much later, at the time of Solomon. While in exile, the cohesiveness of Jewish identity developed that seemed not to have existed before the first exodus.<sup>1</sup> The centrality of Jerusalem in the Jewish religious-political thought emerged in a similar period.<sup>2</sup> In ancient times, Jews were not politically centralised; the Northern Kingdom comprised ten distinct tribes, with its Capital in Samaria becoming 'Eretz Yisrael' and the Southern Kingdom of twelve different tribes with Jerusalem as its capital, which was known as Judah. *Jew*<sup>3</sup> was one large and significant tribe from Judah among many others like Benjamin, Naphtali and others. After some 400 years of bondage and oppression in Egypt, the Israelites revolted, escaped, and were led to freedom by Moses. According to the 'Book of Exodus'<sup>4</sup>, God chose Moses to take 'his people' (the Jews) to the 'promised land' of the Bible.<sup>5</sup> The political centrality in Jewish collective life did not emerge even after the return from Egypt—the Passover continued even after dismantling the rule of the '*Patriarchs*'<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Reich, B. (2008). *A Brief History of Israel* (Second Edition ed.). New York: Facts On File, Inc, p.3

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p.6

<sup>3</sup> The term *Jew* derives from the Hebrew word *Yehudi*, meaning “a man of Judah.”

<sup>4</sup> The Book of Exodus is the second book of the Bible. It narrates the story of the Exodus of the Jews or 'Israelites' (as described in the Bible) leave slavery in Egypt.

<sup>5</sup> Reich, B. (2008). *A Brief History of Israel* (Second Edition ed.). New York: Facts On File, Inc, p.2

<sup>6</sup> In Judaism, like in Christianity and Islam, *Patriarchs* are Messiahs starting from Adam, Abraham, David, Moses etc, although the conflict is on the question of status of Prophet Mohammed, who is the last and most important among all of his predecessors according to Islam, whereas Judaism does not consider Jesus or Mohammed as messiah at all, they believe the last messiah is yet to arrive.

With the Assyrian conquest in 720 BCE, the Northern Kingdom was pulverised. A century later, Judah was conquered by the Babylonian conquests (598 BCE and 587 BCE), and the Temple was destroyed.<sup>7</sup> The 'ten tribes' were 'lost' and went into oblivion. Since then, Jews endured a millennium of relentless organised strikes in or outside the 'holy land'. Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Crusaders, Mamluks and the Ottomans attempted to conquer Judah and Samaria.<sup>8</sup> When the brutality of the Roman empire reached its peak, a group of Jews, known as the 'Zealots', launched the Bar Kochva revolt in 66 c.e., in the last days of the Roman emperor Nero. The 'holy land' of Jews was ploughed up with a yoke of oxen by Romans to blot out all ties with the land of the formers.<sup>9</sup> Following the Roman practice, Judah was renamed 'Syria Palaestina' and Jerusalem' Aelia Capitolina'.<sup>10</sup> The most sacred place for a Jew, Temple Mount in Jerusalem, devoted to *Yahweh*—their one and universal deity, was demolished twice by Romans in 586 BC and AD 70. While many Jews dispersed from 'Eretz Israel', a small and penurious Jewish community remained mainly in Safed and Galilee.

In 638, Muslim-Arab rule was established in Jerusalem that lasted more than four centuries, with Caliphs ruling primarily from Damascus, Baghdad, and Egypt. The second Caliph, Umar, designated Jerusalem the third holiest place in Islam after Mecca and Medina.<sup>11</sup> It was the time when Jewish settlement in Jerusalem resumed, and the

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<sup>7</sup> Schama, S. (2013). *The Story of the Jews : Finding the Words 1000 BC - 1492 AD*. London: Harper Collins Publishers Ltd., pp.10-12

<sup>8</sup> Lapierre, D., & Collins, L. (1978). *O Jerusalem*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, pp.22-23

<sup>9</sup> Harms, G., & Ferry, T. M. (2005). *The Palestine-Israel Conflict*. London: Pluto Press, p.19

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p.19

<sup>11</sup> The Dome of the Rock was constructed in 691CE on the Jewish site of the Temple of Solomon to mark the place from where the prophet Muhammad was believed to have ascended to heaven. The al-Aqsa Mosque was constructed on a nearby site.

Jewish community was allowed to live under "protection".<sup>12</sup> In 1099, the Knights conquered Jerusalem after the First Crusade and later transformed it into the Latin Capital of Jerusalem; Jews were massacred, barricaded in their synagogues, burnt to death, or sold into slavery.<sup>13</sup> The reign ended when the Mamluks<sup>14</sup> finally defeated the Knights and ruled the 'holy land' till 1516. With the establishment of the Ottoman Caliphate in 1517, the area of Palestine started to be administered from Constantinople. The administration of the region of Palestine was adjoined to the administration of the province of Damascus.<sup>15</sup> At the beginning of the Ottoman era, an estimated 2,000 Jewish families lived in the region, mainly in Jerusalem, Nablus, Safed, Gaza, Hebron, and the villages of Galilee. The community comprised descendants of Jews who had never dispersed from the 'Holy Land' and immigrants, mainly from North Africa and Europe.<sup>16</sup> However, many Jews dispersed to different parts of the world in various phases of history. The Diaspora<sup>17</sup> enriched and prospered numerous cities of Europe and the Orient alike, yet they tried to maintain their cultural heritage with or without religious 'purity'.

The misery of the Jews was not confined to the colonisation of '*Eretz Yisrael*' for centuries, primarily because most of the Jews had dispersed from their 'promised land' after repeated attacks on them, known as 'Exodus'. Outside the holy land, they were

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<sup>12</sup> Reich, B. (2008). *A Brief History of Israel* (Second Edition ed.). New York: Facts On File, Inc, p.10

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p.11

<sup>14</sup> Mamluks were Muslim mercenaries originally from Turkey that had come to power in Egypt and Syria.

<sup>15</sup> Reich, B. (2008). *A Brief History of Israel* (Second Edition ed.). New York: Facts On File, Inc, p.12

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p.12

<sup>17</sup> With the dispersion of a race to the different parts of the world, historically inhabited to one place, the word 'Diaspora' emerged, originally referring to the Jews outside their 'original land'.

also the victims of hatred of man against man. The hatred towards Jews for their identity became known as 'anti-Semitism'<sup>18</sup>. The Bible's 'chosen people' are one of the most tortured, expelled and massacred people who not just survived as a race but retained and revived their cultural originality; finally prospered as a nation. From the First Exodus to Hitler's Gas Chambers, 'bloody milestones against Jews' are numerous.<sup>19</sup> Exclusivism against Jews often overlapped between politics and religion. The roots of Jewish suffering grew out of the rise of Christianity's spiritual apartheid against Jews.<sup>20</sup> Emperor Theodosius II condemned Judaism and legally branded Jews 'a people apart'. The Byzantine Emperor Heraclius forbade Jewish worship. Dagobert, King of Frank, drove them from Gaul, and Spain's Visigoths seized and converted Jewish children.<sup>21</sup> With the Crusade, spiritual apartheid became a systematic slaughter. Most countries barred Jews from owning land. The Church forbade Christians to employ and live among them.<sup>22</sup> Edward I of England and Philip the Fair of France exterminated Jews from their country and seized their property before eviction. Jews were accused of poisoning 'Christian wells' with a powder made of spiders and frogs' legs, and more than two hundred Jewish communities were expelled with such a charge.<sup>23</sup> The only example of normal Jewish existence in the West, in those centuries of darkness, was in

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<sup>18</sup> The term 'Semitic' is derived from the biblical table of nations where Noah's son *Shem* is said to be the father of Arabs, Babylonians, Assyrians, Armenians and Hebrew. Historically it has been applied in both linguistic and cultural terms. In modern sense, 'Semitic' is not referred in an all-encompassing sense in order to include different and often conflicting groups, rather it exclusively targets Jews or Hebrew in a derogatory manner. In short, anti-Semitism is a cultural apathy against Jews in different forms. In a sense, it is a misnomer.

<sup>19</sup> Lapiere, D., & Collins, L. (1978). *O Jerusalem*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, p.6

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p.6

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p.6

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p.6

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p.7

Spain. Under the Caliphate, the Jewish people flourished as they were never again in the Diaspora. The *Christian Reconquista*<sup>24</sup> in 1492 ended Caliphate rule, and ethnic cleansing of Jews resumed.<sup>25</sup>

The Jewish question was not resolved with the advent of modernity or scientific progress. It was not even solved by attaining the highest virtues of civilisation.<sup>26</sup> Anti-Semitism, in modern times, should not be confused as simple religious persecution of the Jews, like in medieval times.<sup>27</sup> The Republic of Venice coined a new word—*ghetto*, from the quarter *Ghetto Nuovo*, meaning 'New Foundry'—within which the republic confined its Jews. In Germany, Jews were barred from riding carriages and were made to pay an extraordinary toll as they entered a city. The Cossack Revolt in Poland caused the massacre of one lakh Jews in less than a decade. Jewish women were barred from living in the big city university centres without the yellow ticket of a prostitute. After the assassination of Alexander II in 1880, the mobs, aided by the Czar's soldiers, burnt and slaughtered their way through one Jewish community after another, adding a new expression of anti-Semitism: *pogrom*.<sup>28</sup> The public humiliation of Captain Alfred Dreyfus<sup>29</sup>, driven by deep-rooted anti-Semitism in western cities, escalated the urge for a Jewish homeland. Sooner it became a public issue that revealed the anti-Semitism that

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<sup>24</sup> *Christian Reconquista*, Spanish, literally meaning Christian reconquest of Spain defeating the Islamic Regime in 781.

<sup>25</sup> Lapiere, D., & Collins, L. (1978). *O Jerusalem*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, p.7

<sup>26</sup> Herzl, T. (2010). *The Jewish State* [originally *Der Judenstaat* (1896)]. New York: Penguin Books, p.23

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, p.23

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, p.24

<sup>29</sup> Captain Alfred Dreyfus was an officer in the French Army by the false accusations of “traitor” and a spy selling secret information to Germans in 1894. He was charged, allegedly, because of his religious identity.

accompanied the trial and the disgrace of Dreyfus. "It was a military ceremony, a ritual whose killing was spiritual."<sup>30</sup> The resounding of the western cities with outcries against the Jews awakened the 'slumbering idea' for the *Judenstaat* or the Jewish State.<sup>31</sup>

As minorities in different cities of the world, especially in Europe (excluding some places like India), the misery faced by the Jews gave birth to a shared realisation that the Jews are vulnerable everywhere unless they have a homeland, a sovereign state for themselves. As introspected by Zionists, the Jewish question is not just an act of intolerance on religious or social grounds. It was a national question, "which can only be solved by making it a political world-question to be discussed and settled by the civilised nations of the world in Council. We (Jews) are a people—one people."<sup>32</sup> The idea of a 'homeland for Jews' was not new. The struggle of the Jews for the retreat to Mount Zion, Jerusalem—the most sacred place for Jews on Earth, for the restoration of the Jewish State, is known as Zionism. Political Zionism was a nationalist response of the European Jews to the pervasiveness of anti-Semitism. The objective was the establishment of a Jewish homeland in an available territory—not necessarily in Palestine—through cooperation with the Great Powers.<sup>33</sup> Political Zionism was essentially a secular and socialist movement that deprioritised Judaic messianism, the importance of devotion, observance of rituals and put forward the political solution to the menace of anti-Semitism in Europe. Zionists debated the nature and character of the future Jewish State, and that debate is still relevant in contemporary Israeli politics.

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<sup>30</sup> Lapierre, D., & Collins, L. (1978). *O Jerusalem*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, p.8

<sup>31</sup> Herzl, T. (2010). *The Jewish State* [originally *Der Judenstaat* (1896)]. New York: Penguin Books, p.1

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, p.8

<sup>33</sup> Reich, B. (2008). *A Brief History of Israel* (Second Edition ed.). New York: Facts On File, Inc, p.15

The call for 'restoration of the Jewish state' did not mean any growing tendency or affinity toward a theocratic state by Herzl.<sup>34</sup> He committed to keeping priests 'within the confines of their temples'. Herzl did not imagine the idea of Jewish nationality on its theocratic values but in civic nationalist terms, e.g. on shared victimhood of Anti-Semitism. Thus, he admitted, "Every man will be as free and undisturbed in his faith or his disbelief as he is in his nationality. And if it should occur that men of other creeds and different nationalities come to live amongst us, we should accord them honourable protection and equality before the law." In the same way, he pledged to keep the professional Army within the confines of their barracks as a quintessential part of Herzl's inclination toward an aristocratic republic.<sup>35</sup> "Army and priesthood shall receive honors high as their valuable functions deserve. But they must not interfere in the administration of the State which confers distinction upon them, else they will conjure up difficulties without and within."<sup>36</sup>

'Next year in Jerusalem' became an absolute cliché among the Diaspora, with no real chances for it. Jews assimilated the 'local language' of the country where they resided. Any hope for the revival of Hebrew as a common language was so gloomy that even Herzl admitted, "We cannot converse with one another in Hebrew. Who amongst us has a sufficient acquaintance with Hebrew to ask for a railway ticket in that language? Such a thing cannot be done...Switzerland affords conclusive proof of the possibility of a federation of tongues... Our community of race is peculiar and unique, for we are

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<sup>34</sup> Herzl, T. (2010). *The Jewish State* [originally *Der Judenstaat* (1896)]. New York: Penguin Books, p.87

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, p.86

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, p.87

bound together only by the faith of our fathers."<sup>37</sup> Finally, the modern State of Israel ended up with a vibrant multi-party democracy for Jews, with Hebrew as its compulsory national language and a strong Army that never attempted to transform Israel into a garrison state.

Theodor Herzl convened the World Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland, in 1897, which led to the foundation of the World Zionist Organization (WZO)—a Jewish national movement to establish a homeland for Jews in Palestine.<sup>38</sup> Primarily, two territories were considered for the 'people without land'<sup>39</sup>—Palestine and Argentina<sup>40</sup>. Palestine is the 'ever-memorable historic home' for the Jews. "The very name of Palestine would attract our people with a force of marvellous potency."<sup>41</sup> Herzl understood that the people is the subjective, land the objective foundation of a State, and the subjective basis is the more important of the two.<sup>42</sup> Though he realised that the State is not formed by pieces of land but by the people united under the sovereign rule, the importance of territory cannot be undermined.<sup>43</sup> When the lofty nationhood of modern Israel was territorialised in Palestine, already someone's homeland, it faced stiff resistance. It opened a new chapter in the struggle toward the actualisation of the Jewish

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<sup>37</sup> Herzl, T. (2010). *The Jewish State* [originally *Der Judenstaat* (1896)]. New York: Penguin Books, p.86

<sup>38</sup> Harms, G., & Ferry, T. M. (2005). *The Palestine-Israel Conflict*. London: Pluto Press, p.55

<sup>39</sup> Jews were referred as 'people without land' before the formation of the modern state of Israel. By the end of the World War-I, they were consolidated enough to be called 'a people' or 'Nation', yet they had no integrated 'homeland' for them.

<sup>40</sup> Herzl, T. (2010). *The Jewish State* [originally *Der Judenstaat* (1896)]. New York: Penguin Books, p.29

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, p.30

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, p.77

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, p.77

State. The Zionist claim 'the land without people for the people without land' was only partially correct. Although some parts were largely barren deserts, like Tel Aviv, all parts were not, particularly Jerusalem—the holiest place for Jews and the third holiest place for Muslims, was a living city cohabited by Jews and Muslims. The biblical 'promised land' was already the homeland of Arabs. Arabs possessed more considerable land in the claimed Jewish land than the Jews, though it was always Jewish supremacy in Jerusalem. In this situation, Zionists largely depended on western powers and publicly announced the same.

During World War-I, Palestine was a strategically important area for both the Zionists and the Arabs, under the leadership of Sheriff Hussein ibn Ali, the Emir of Mecca. As part of wartime manoeuvring, the British and French developed schemes for dividing the territories of the defeated Ottoman Empire and signed the Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916).<sup>44</sup> In their war with the Ottomans, the British sought assistance from different regional groups.<sup>45</sup> Arabs, who denounced the credibility of the Ottoman Caliphate to rule over the Arabs on absolutely religious grounds, accepted the British proposal and joined hands.<sup>46</sup> In exchange, the British promised to extend support to Sheriff Hussein ibn Ali and his plans for an Arab kingdom.

World War-I also opened avenues for the Zionists to make progress toward their objectives. Dr Chaim Weizmann<sup>47</sup>, with the help of Lord Walter Rothschild, head of

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<sup>44</sup> The Sykes-Picot Agreement was signed between Britain and France in 1916, Britain kept Palestine and Iraq, while the French gained the northern territories that became Syria and Lebanon.

<sup>45</sup> Harms, G., & Ferry, T. M. (2005). *The Palestine-Israel Conflict*. London: Pluto Press, p.68

<sup>46</sup> Heptulla, N. (1991). *Indo-West Asian Relations*. New Delhi: Allied Publishers Limited, p.49

<sup>47</sup> Chaim Weizmann was a prominent leader of World Zionist Organization after Theodor Herzl. Weizmann became the first President of the modern State of Israel.

the British branch of the great Jewish Banking family, gained access to the highest levels of the British Government. They secured the issuance by the Foreign Secretary, Arthur Balfour, in favour of the British Government in 1917, confirming that "His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people . . ."48 Even being an ambiguous document, the Balfour Declaration (1917) clearly noted that developing a Jewish national home did not prejudice the 'civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine.49 The President of the United States of America (USA), Woodrow Wilson, endorsed the declaration and took the initiative for its approval in the US Congress.50 At the San Remo Conference of the League of Nations in April 1920, the details of the mandate system were structured. The League of Nations approved the British Mandate for Palestine on July 24, 1922, and it became official on September 29, 1923. The British mandate recognised the "historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine". It secured the establishment of the Jewish national home that paved the way for Jewish immigration to be facilitated.51 From an administrative and bureaucratic perspective, the modern Jewish State's History begins with the mandate's creation. The mandate for Palestine provided the legal and administrative foundation and a political framework for the proposed Jewish State.52 In the Churchill Memorandum of 192253,

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48 Lapiere, D., & Collins, L. (1978). *O Jerusalem*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, p.11

49 Ibid, p.11

50 Reich, B. (2008). *A Brief History of Israel* (Second Edition ed.). New York: Facts On File, Inc, p.19

51 Cohn-Sherbok, D., & El-Alami, D. (2011). *The Palestine-Israeli Conflict* . London: One World Publications, p.35

52 Reich, B. (2008). *A Brief History of Israel* (Second Edition ed.). New York: Facts On File, Inc, p.21

53 Churchill Memorandum of 1922 clarified the Balfour Declaration of 1917. It allowed Jewish migration to Palestine as well as it made it clear that the British Government will ensure cultural, political and linguistic rights of Arabs in Palestine.

the British Government clarified that the assurance excluded the area west of the Jordan River, which later became Israel, the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank.<sup>54</sup>

Although, the land of Palestine or Jerusalem was never completely 'Jew-free'. Even before the beginning of modern Zionism, *Aliyah*<sup>55</sup> used to take place mainly with a religious motive or to escape European atrocities against Jews. The total number of Jews in (undivided) Palestine was around 25,000 in 1880.<sup>56</sup> The first large-scale *Aliyah* of modern times took place in early 1880, and the second took place from 1904 to the beginning of World War I, when Jews from Russia and Eastern Europe came to this land who faced *pogrom* or attempted to escape growing poverty in eastern Europe. By 1914, the Jewish population was approximately 85000, which was twelve per cent of the population.<sup>57</sup> The Jewish population was mostly centred around Jerusalem, particularly those who came for religious reasons. Between 1924 and 1932, some 60,000 immigrants, primarily from Poland, were instrumental in developing and elevating urban life.<sup>58</sup> They settled mainly in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Haifa, where they established small businesses and construction firms. The last significant wave of *Aliya* before World War II occurred in the 1930s, after Adolf Hitler's rise to power, consisting of some 165,000 people, mainly from Germany.<sup>59</sup> During the mandate

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<sup>54</sup> Cohn-Sherbok, D., & El-Alami, D. (2011). *The Palestine-Israeli Conflict*. London: One World Publications, p.30

<sup>55</sup> *Aliyah* refers to retreat of Jews to undivided Palestine or modern state of Israel.

<sup>56</sup> Reich, B. (2008). *A Brief History of Israel* (Second Edition ed.). New York: Facts On File, Inc, p.13

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, p.13

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid*, p.28

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, p.28

period, *Yishuv*<sup>60</sup> established institutions for self-government and procedures for implementing the decisions. The mandatory Government entrusted the National Council, Vaad Leumi, with responsibility for Jewish communal affairs and granted it considerable autonomy.

Along with the legal departments and agencies of the Government, a clandestine force, the *Haganah*<sup>61</sup>, was formed in 1920 that finally became the cornerstone of the Israeli Defence Force or IDF.<sup>62</sup> Another vital agency was *Histadrut*, the General Federation of Labour, which coordinated labour-related matters and engaged in various social welfare and economic endeavours.<sup>63</sup> With the growth of the World Zionist Congress, the ideological rift led to a political division of the organisation. Revisionists, under the leadership of Vladimir Ze'ev Jabotinsky and Menachem Begin, championed a hard-line military approach. They advocated a strong *Haganah* for intense military actions against Arab revolts and British forces aiming toward unilateral secession of Transjordan. On the other, Socialists like David Ben-Gurion were convinced that militant stance was endangering the rive toward eventual statehood. Instead, he focused on developing capacity building towards a socialist economy through institutions like *Histadrut* and *Kibbutzim*<sup>64</sup>.

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<sup>60</sup> The Jewish community in Palestine.

<sup>61</sup> It was responsible for defending Jewish life and property in Palestine following a series of serious Arab actions in Jerusalem and elsewhere in Palestine and securing passage for Jewish migrants coming to Palestine from other parts of the world.

<sup>62</sup> Reich, B. (2008). *A Brief History of Israel* (Second Edition ed.). New York: Facts On File, Inc, p.23

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, p.23

<sup>64</sup> Kibbutz (Kibbutzim is plural form) comes from the *hebrew* word, meaning “group.” The kibbutz is a socialist experiment: a voluntary grouping of individuals who hold property in common and have their needs satisfied by the commune. The kibbutz, a social and economic framework that grew out of the pioneering society of the early 20th century, became a permanent rural way of life based on egalitarian and communal principles. It set up a prosperous economy and distinguished itself through the contribution of its members in the establishment, and building, of the state.

Under the British mandate, the land of Palestine witnessed a rise in tripartite tension among Arabs, Yishuv and the British. Each party believed they possessed an exclusive right over the entire territory and had been promised by the British Government as its World War-I allies.<sup>65</sup> The effort by Zionist Organisations to build a country for themselves primarily through purchasing land and Jewish immigration was opposed by the Arabs. The Shaw Commission (1930) suggested that the disturbances resulted from Arab fears of Jewish domination of Palestine through Jewish immigration and land purchases.<sup>66</sup> In April 1936, the Arab Higher Committee, comprised of representatives from the major Arab factions in Palestine, called for a general strike. The 'Arab Revolt' soon became violent as marauding bands of Arabs attacked Jewish settlements, and Jewish paramilitary groups responded.<sup>67</sup> In order to assess the situation, the British Government formed a commission under Lord Robert Peel. The Peel Report, published in July 1937, maintained that the unrest in Palestine resulted from conflicting promises by the British authorities.<sup>68</sup> The Peel commission suggested the Partition of Palestine into three zones: a Jewish zone, an Arab section, and a corridor that adjoins Tel Aviv–Jaffa with Jerusalem and Bethlehem, which was to remain under a continued British mandate.<sup>69</sup> It argued that the Partition, having its drawbacks, would secure peace and security. It reversed British policy on the mandate and the Balfour Declaration.<sup>70</sup> The Arabs were in no mood to negotiate with Yishuv on the question of sharing territory,

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<sup>65</sup> Reich, B. (2008). *A Brief History of Israel* (Second Edition ed.). New York: Facts On File, Inc, p.30

<sup>66</sup> Cohn-Sherbok, D., & El-Alami, D. (2011). *The Palestine-Israeli Conflict* . London: One World Publications, p.170

<sup>67</sup> Reich, B. (2008). *A Brief History of Israel* (Second Edition ed.). New York: Facts On File, Inc, p.30

<sup>68</sup> Harms, G., & Ferry, T. M. (2005). *The Palestine-Israel Conflict*. London: Pluto Press, p.79

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, p.79

<sup>70</sup> Reich, B. (2008). *A Brief History of Israel* (Second Edition ed.). New York: Facts On File, Inc, p.31

and the Zionists felt betrayed in their struggle towards the restoration of an integration of a national home by integrating the ancient kingdoms of Judah and Samaria in modern times.<sup>71</sup> The Jewish Agency accepted the plan, although it was not happy about excluding Jerusalem—the most sacred place for Jews on earth and the amount of territory allotted for the Jewish State.<sup>72</sup> The Arab Higher Committee rejected the plan on the question of the division of Palestine and proceeded towards a more violent phase of the Arab revolt. On May 17, 1939, the British Government published a White Paper that asserted stringent restrictions on *Aliya*. It categorically said, "His Majesty's Government believe that the framers of the Mandate in which the Balfour Declaration was embodied could not have intended that Palestine should be converted into a Jewish State against the will of the Arab population of the country."<sup>73</sup> The Arabs immediately demanded an effective termination of Jewish immigration and the review of all immigrants who had entered Palestine since 1918. The Zionists argued that the British withdrawal from its commitment to a Jewish homeland in Palestine was a breach of faith.<sup>74</sup>

The rise of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi regime launched its deadliest attack on humanity, called Holocaust. It took anti-Semitism to an all-time low, resulting in oppression, humiliation, persecution camps, mass shooting and gas chambers for the Jews.<sup>75</sup> During World War II, Germany systematically carried out a plan to liquidate the European Jewish community, almost six million Jews were killed within six years. The appalling

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<sup>71</sup> Reich, B. (2008). *A Brief History of Israel* (Second Edition ed.). New York: Facts On File, Inc, p.31

<sup>72</sup> Harms, G., & Ferry, T. M. (2005). *The Palestine-Israel Conflict*. London: Pluto Press, p.79

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, p.80

<sup>74</sup> Reich, B. (2008). *A Brief History of Israel* (Second Edition ed.). New York: Facts On File, Inc, p.31

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, p.34

carnage against Jews during the Holocaust earned global support in favour of the Jews, particularly the support of American Jewry for their demand for the homeland.<sup>76</sup> At this crossroads of history, the US was emerging as the next superpower. Dr Chaim Weizmann successfully secured US support for establishing a Jewish state in Palestine in the Biltmore Conference.<sup>77</sup> It was also when the British rule started to be weakened to control over global issues even after their victory in World War II. British-Jewish relations were conflictual and complicated like never before. Different Jewish Groups initiated an armed rebellion against anti-Zionist British rule.<sup>78</sup> In 1945, The Labour Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (UK) refused to accept the American proposal to allow displaced and persecuted Jews to take refuge in Palestine. The British Government refused to increase the limits on Jewish immigration to Palestine, as the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry recommended. More than 70,000 Jews reached Palestine on more than 100 ships between the end of World War II and the establishment of the modern State of Israel in May 1948 via *Aliya bet*<sup>79</sup> because of the hostile British policy against the migration of Jews into Palestine.

The British actions in Palestine became increasingly untenable, leading to the British withdrawal. On February 15, 1947, the UK decided to turn the issue of the Palestine

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<sup>76</sup> Harms, G., & Ferry, T. M. (2005). *The Palestine-Israel Conflict*. London: Pluto Press, p.82

<sup>77</sup> The Biltmore Conference of 1942 marked the public manifestation of the move in Zionist focus to the United States. [Source: Reich, B. (2008). *A Brief History of Israel* (Second Edition ed.). New York: Facts On File, Inc, p.35]

<sup>78</sup> The 'Irgun' or 'Etzel' was one such group that was formed in 1929 as a response to anti-Jewish riots and their primary target was Arab rioters and British institutions in the mandate area. They were of the opinion that Haganah was sufficiently responsive to British atrocities and Arab rioters. Between 1939 to 1943, the Irgun decided to cooperate with the Britishers against the common enemy Nazis. Since January 1944, they formally renewed the state of War with the Britishers.

<sup>79</sup> Confronted by the hostile British policy of not allowing persecuted Jews to migrate to Palestine, *Yishuv* decided to attempt 'illegal' Jewish immigration to Palestine. This alternative immigration is known as Aliya Bet (Immigration B).

mandate over to the United Nations. The United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) was formed in 1947 to investigate the matter and propose solutions to the problem. UNSCOP proposed a plan to partition mandatory British Palestine into one Arab State comprising 4500 square miles with 800,000 Arabs and 10,000 Jewish population. A Jewish state was about to consist of 5500 square miles with 498,000 Jews and 468,000 Arabs. The city of Jerusalem was considered too holy to be accorded to either of the conflicting parties, thus proposing to set up an international regime (*corpus separatum*) for the city of Jerusalem.<sup>80</sup> The Jewish State on the coastal plain and the Arab State on the west of the Jordan river was proposed, adjoining Jerusalem and all linked to an economic union. On November 29, 1947, United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted Resolution 181 (II) to partition Palestine by a vote of thirty-three to thirteen, with ten abstentions and one member absent, the plan of Partition for Palestine.<sup>81</sup>

Jews in the *Diaspora* and the *yishuv* were unhappy with the plan, primarily because they felt they had been offered too little of their demands. They could not accept the establishment of the modern Jewish State without Jerusalem—the holiest place for Jews on earth or their 'eternal capital'.<sup>82</sup> The left-of-centre Labour Zionist leaders like David Ben-Gurion accepted the offer as the most logical and appropriate option. Palestinian Arabs and the League of Arab States unconditionally rejected the UN partition plan, arguing that entire Palestine should belong to Palestinian Arabs only. The Arab rejection was based on the logic that the UN has no right to make Palestinians pay for

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<sup>80</sup> United Nations. *The Question of Palestine*. Retrieved from the United Nations' official website: <https://www.un.org/unispal/history/>, accessed on June 10, 2018.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Lapiere, D., & Collins, L. (1978). *O Jerusalem*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, p.4

the miseries faced by Jews in Europe.<sup>83</sup> The Secretary-General of the Arab League formally informed the UN Secretary-General that the Armies of the Arab countries would enter Palestine to 'restore' the rights of the Arabs in the territories of the Palestine mandate.<sup>84</sup> Based on UNGA Resolution 181 (II), the leader of the World Zionist Congress, David Ben-Gurion, declared Israel's Independence on May 15, 1948, the day after the termination of the British mandate in Palestine. With the declaration of War, Civil War erupted in Israel after the Arabs attacked the passenger bus.<sup>85</sup> The history of bloodshed continued for Jews even after the establishment of Israel. Jews called this episode 'the War of Independence, and Arabs called it '*Al Nakba*<sup>86</sup>.

### **Introducing the Research Problem:**

India and Israel—two old civilisations, had maintained trade and cultural linkages since ancient times. India was a safe place for Jews, where they never experienced any instance of anti-Semitism.<sup>87</sup> The trajectory of the freedom struggle in India and Zionism had some similarities as well as contradictions. The Indian nationalist struggle under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru criticised Zionism. However, many prominent leaders like B.R. Ambedkar, Sardar Patel, G.B. Pant and Sarojini Naidu supported the Jewish struggle in Palestine.<sup>88</sup> The modern State of India, under the Prime Ministership of Pandit Nehru, was reluctant to recognise the Jewish nation

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<sup>83</sup> Lapierre, D., & Collins, L. (1978). *O Jerusalem*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, p.12

<sup>84</sup> Reich, B. (2008). *A Brief History of Israel* (Second Edition ed.). New York: Facts On File, Inc, p.44

<sup>85</sup> Karsh, E. (2002). *The Arab-Israeli Conflict : The Palestine War 1948*. Botley, Oxford: Osprey Publishing, p.29

<sup>86</sup> *Al Nakba*, arabic word, meaning catastrophe.

<sup>87</sup> Kumaraswamy, P. R. (2010). *India's Israel Policy*. New York: Columbia University Press, p.3

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid*, p.62

after its formation in 1948. Even after New Delhi recognised Israel in 1950, the Government of India deferred the standard diplomatic practice of exchanging missions with the Jewish State.<sup>89</sup> The relationship reached its nadir when New Delhi voted in favour of UN resolution 3379 in 1975, claiming Zionism is Racism.<sup>90</sup> In 1992, when India decided to exchange permanent missions with Israel, the decision was argued to have an 'immediate correspondence' with the establishment of US hegemony, thanks to the disintegration of Soviet Russia. India's relations with Israel gradually elevated to the 'Strategic Partnership' level under the Prime Ministership of Dr Manmohan Singh. Having Defence cooperation as the foundation, the relationship flourished to the level of cooperation in counter-terrorism, agro-tech, water management, cyber security, high-tech and many more.

India's policy towards Israel is so unique that it has been confused as an 'exception'. Even competing Foreign Policy Making theories agree that policy-making on foreign affairs has a deep root in a country's domestic politics. Historically, India's domestic politics has never been outspoken on any other foreign issue, as it has been vocal on Israel. The domestic politics in India have also, for a long time, been vocal about the United States, but that is mild in intensity compared to the Jewish State. However, India's relations with Gulf countries refer to an indirect connection between domestic politics and diplomatic relations. The question of the ideological inclination of decision makers has also been a major issue of debate in the academic domain of the study of Foreign Policy. The question of ideology becomes relevant in analysing India's foreign policy towards the United States of America, Pakistan and Israel. Notably, Israel was

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<sup>89</sup> File No. 46(15)-AWT/48- Vol III, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *Question of the Recognition of the State of Israel. General Policy towards Palestine*. New Delhi: Government of India, p.42

<sup>90</sup> Kumaraswamy, P. R. (2010). *India's Israel Policy*. New York: Columbia University Press, p.216

never a threat to India; instead, the Jewish nation repeatedly offered solutions during the multiple military crises, unlike Pakistan and US. Israel has, arguably, always been viewed through the prism of ideology by the policymakers in New Delhi. South Block's policy towards Israel is not a product of a simple calculation of convergence of interests perceived by the Government. Israel policy is a product of interactions between the politico-psychological orientation of leaders, the political configuration of the coalition and their collective ideological orientation, along with the Government's perception of national interest and different agencies' input in this regard. Interestingly, domestic party politics and New Delhi's calculations about middle eastern power politics played a vital role in this policy-making. Israel policy is unique in the making of India's foreign policy, mainly because there is no country other than Israel, with which so many factors work together towards shaping New Delhi's policy. Nevertheless, that country is strategically significant to New Delhi in the positive sense of the term. Thus, it is important and interesting to understand how the policymakers in New Delhi have accommodated Israel and the opportunities it offers while managing politics against the Jewish State in global and national fora.

### **Objective of the Study:**

India's Israel policy is better considered a 'unique' and a classic example than a mere 'exception' or 'anomaly' of foreign policy making, mainly because South Block cautiously maintained and managed the differences attached to the relationship between rhetoric and diplomacy, public gesture and national interest. New Delhi maintained secret bilateral coordination with Israel as and when needed and joined the global chorus against the Jewish State to maintain political correctness. A primary objective of this study is to understand how the different variables shape policies; decision-

makers set priorities, and choices are made in foreign policy decision-making in India, with a particular reference to the decision of Change. The study also focuses on how New Delhi accommodates conflicting parties while formulating foreign policy. In other words, this is an attempt to grasp how India maintained its relationship with Gulf Countries, particularly with Iran, in recent times, given New Delhi's strategic collaboration with Israel. The study is an effort at a comprehensive analysis and understanding of India's Israel policy in the context of larger policy-making, e.g. India's US policy or Iran policy or Security policy. However, it is not an attempt to offer any fit-into-all theory by which India's different policies can be explained. The study maintains the uniqueness of India's Israel policy, the findings of which cannot be asserted upon the academic understanding of any other bilateral relations of India. Thus, the study consciously refrains from offering any formula or 'golden rule' that claims to explain all nuances of India's foreign policy.

### **Literature Review:**

Contrary to its age-old legacy of hosting Jews with dignity and co-existing with harmony, the modern, secular State of India, particularly its academia, made Jewish and Hebrew Studies an outcast for half a century.<sup>91</sup> The academic apathy toward India's Israel policy can also be connected to this trend. Substantially ignored by the Indian policymakers, Israel policy, as a theme of serious academic research, is mostly denied its due share in the discourse of India's foreign policy. Exclusive academic work on India's Israel policy is a tiny part of the reservoir of the literature on India's foreign policy. For a long time, the standard practice in this field of study was to deal with Israel

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<sup>91</sup> Aafreedi, N. J. (2012). The Impact of Domestic Politics on India's Attitudes towards Israel & Jews, In P. Singh, & S. Bhattacharya, *Perspectives on West Asia: The Evolving Geopolitical Discourses*. Delhi: Shipra Publications, p.171

as a passing reference in contrast to India's commitment to the Palestinian cause if any particular work looked beyond South Asia and focused on West Asia.<sup>92</sup> The scenario changed in the literature of the studies of India's West Asia policy after New Delhi decided to normalise ties with Israel. Both authored<sup>93</sup> and edited volumes<sup>94</sup> started to focus inconsistently on Israel in an exclusive chapter. The scenario is very different today when even any standard volume on India's External Affairs reserves a chapter to focus on India's engagement with the Jewish nation.<sup>95</sup>

Only ten books exclusively focus on this particular theme, three of which are edited volumes, all published in this century. Among seven authored works, *India and Israel against Islamic Terror: Old Nations, New Leaders* (2004) by Brig. B. N. Sharma and *India-Israel Nexus: New Strategic Equations* (2016) by Dr B. D. Singh focused on the history of nation-making in India and Israel separately and concluded with a chapter on how the relationship between the two countries developed and evolved in the last decades without drawing any causal connection or theoretical explanation to the historical development.<sup>96</sup> The book titled *India, Israel and the Jewish People: Looking Ahead, Looking Back 25 Years after Normalisation* by S. S. Wald & A. Kandel, focused from an anthropological perspective, is substantial research on the Jews in India,

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<sup>92</sup> Heptulla, N. (1991). *Indo-West Asian Relations*. New Delhi: Allied Publishers Limited, pp.169-194

<sup>93</sup> Mudiam, P. R. (1994). *India and the Middle East*. London: British Academic Press, pp.143-176

<sup>94</sup> Grover, V. (1992). *West Asia and India's Foreign Policy*. New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications, pp.132-139

<sup>95</sup> i) Malone, D. M., Mohan, C. R., & Raghavan, S. (2015). *The Oxford Handbook of India's Foreign Policy*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp.539-551 ii) Ganguly, S. (2005). *India as an Emerging Power*. London: Taylor & Francis, pp.185-199 iii) Scott, D. (2011). *Handbook of India's International Relations*. London: Routledge, pp.179-188

<sup>96</sup> i) Sharma, B. N. (2004). *India and Israel against Islamic Terror : Old Nations , New Leaders*. New Delhi: Manas Publications, pp.299-337 ii) Singh, B. D. (2016). *India-Israel Nexus : New Strategic Equations*. New Delhi: Sumit Enterprises, pp.205-228

particularly Bene Israeli and other Jewish communities migrated from India to Israel, after the establishment of the modern State of Israel in 1948. The work focussed on how the Diaspora has been instrumental in bridging the gulf between India and Israel.<sup>97</sup>

Dr Krishnan Gopal and Dr Sarbjit Sharma authored *India and Israel: Towards Strategic Partnership* (2007), and Dr R. Sreekanthan Nair authored *Dynamics of Diplomacy Delayed: India and Israel* (2004), are two pioneering works focusing on the first track diplomacy between India and Israel.<sup>98</sup>

P. R. Kumaraswamy authored *India's Israel Policy* (2010), and Nicholas Blarel's *The Evolution of India's Israel Policy: Continuity, Change, and Compromise since 1922* (2015) are two finest works on the theme. Kumaraswamy's contribution to this theme with the book and numerous research articles is unparalleled. The key argument of his work is that India's Israel policy is an anomaly in India's overall foreign policy mainly because of domestic political pressure and minority politics.<sup>99</sup> Blare's *The Evolution of India's Israel Policy: Continuity, Change, and Compromise since 1922* (2015) is the most theoretically sound and methodologically prompt work yet on this sensitive and controversial policy of South Block towards the Jewish State. However, the book does not uphold the established academic claim that India's Israel policy is an 'anomaly' or 'aberration'. The work further connects this empirical paradox to a broader theoretical debate on foreign policy change in the international relations literature that other accounts of Indo-Israel relations mostly left unanswered. Blarel (2015) focused on the

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<sup>97</sup> Wald, S. S., & Kandel, A. (2017). *India, Israel and the Jewish People : Looking Ahead, Looking Back 25 Years after Normalization*. Jerusalem: The Jewish People Policy Institute, pp.153-210

<sup>98</sup> i) Gopal, K., & Sharma, S. (2007). *India and Israel: Towards Strategic Partnership*. New Delhi: Authors Press., ii) Nair, R. S. (2004). *Dynamics of Diplomacy Delayed: India and Israel*. New Delhi: Kalpaz Publications.

<sup>99</sup> Kumaraswamy, P. R. (2010). *India's Israel Policy*. New York: Columbia University Press, pp.138-162

conditions under which decision-makers are most likely to modify a foreign policy.<sup>100</sup> The book focuses on developing a cohesive theory that builds the causal mechanisms explaining the formation, emergence and consolidation of India's Israel policy. Sunil K. Choudhary's *The Changing Face of Parties and Party Systems: A Study of Israel and India* is a comparative analysis of the party system in two countries. Another contribution to the theme is *Typology of Counter-Terrorism Strategies: A Comparative Study of India and Israel* (2010) by Vinita Priyedarshi. The work has approached the question of counterterror strategies in India and Israel as a case study towards building up a theoretical typology, not exclusively about the strategic partnership between India and Israel.<sup>101</sup> A significant number of research papers have pursued different research questions under the broad theme in different times ranging from non-relation to strategic importance of the defence partnership.

A large section of scholars argued that the contradictory trajectory between India's freedom movement and Zionism is instrumental behind the non-relationship between the modern State of India and Israel.<sup>102</sup> Mahatma Gandhi was critical of the Zionist ambition of a Jewish state in Palestine.<sup>103</sup> The Indian National Congress or the Congress Party was fighting British Imperialism in the subcontinent. Therefore, it could not

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<sup>100</sup> Blarel, N. (2015). *The Evolution of India's Israel Policy: Continuity, Change and Compromise since 1922*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, p.24

<sup>101</sup> Priyedarshi, V. (2010). *Typology of Counter-Terrorism Strategies : A Comparative Study of India and Israel*. New Delhi: KW Publishers Pvt Ltd, pp.133-138

<sup>102</sup> i) Gordon, L. A. (1975, Autumn). Indian Nationalist Ideas about Palestine and Israel. *Jewish Social Studies*, 37(3/4), p.233 ii) Rubinoff, A. G. (1995, May). Normalization of India-Israel Relations: Stillborn for Forty Years. *Asian Survey*, 35(5), pp.488-489

<sup>103</sup> Hasan, S. (2008, Jan.-Feb.). The Evolution of India's Palestine Policy: A Fall from the Heights? *Social Scientist*, 36(1/2), p.79

collaborate with a Jewish National movement cooperating with the Britishers.<sup>104</sup> Nehru also considered that the real issue in Palestine was not Religion<sup>105</sup> but Imperialism.<sup>106</sup> Also, Nehru approached the question of Palestine in connection to the larger issue of international unity in the struggle against Colonialism.<sup>107</sup> He inferred that the British were pitting Jewish "religio-nationalism" against Arab nationalism<sup>108</sup>, which further befriended India towards the Arab world and made it hostile to Israel even after Independence. Furthermore, the formation of the State of Pakistan was similar to that of Israel, where 'chosen people' built a theocratic state, i.e., holy land (literally meaning *pak-e-sthan* or Pakistan) at the price of the Partition of territory, on the religious ground, causing communal blood bath.<sup>109</sup> Thus, the idea of identity-motivated nationalism juxtaposed with Gandhi/Nehru's territorial nationalism. The idea of Pakistan was the manifestation of 'Muslim Zion', which the Congress party could not accept in the subcontinent or the Middle East.<sup>110</sup>

On the contrary, there are significant research, though lesser in number, that looks at the 'human approach' of Indian nationalists like Nehru and Gandhi to the Jewish cause,

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<sup>104</sup> Blarel, N. (2015). *The Evolution of India's Israel Policy: Continuity, Change and Compromise since 1922*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, p.47

<sup>105</sup> Gharekhan, C. R. (2017). India–Israel: Retrospective and Prospective. *Strategic Analysis*, 41(4), p.315

<sup>106</sup> Mudiam, P. R. (1994). *India and the Middle East*. London: British Academic Press, p.10

<sup>107</sup> Nair, R. S. (2004). *Dynamics of Diplomacy Delayed: India and Israel*. New Delhi: Kalpaz Publications, pp.68-69

<sup>108</sup> Ibid, p.68

<sup>109</sup> Devji, F. (2013). *Muslim Zion : Pakistan as a Political Idea*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p.3

<sup>110</sup> Pant, H. V. (2004, December). India-Israel Partnership : Convergence and Constraints. *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 8(4), p.61

rather than simply tagging it ignorance, indifference or 'conflicting nationalism'.<sup>111</sup> The logic of 'conflicting nationalism' is discarded by contemporary scholars as a causal explanation<sup>112</sup> behind India's non-relation with the Jewish State.<sup>113</sup> Right after the establishment of the Jewish State, both countries engaged through second-track diplomacy toward cooperation and recognition.<sup>114</sup> India, under Nehru, steadily moved towards recognising Israel in 1950.<sup>115</sup> Neither Gandhi nor Nehru maintained any static opposition to Zionism; instead, they were sympathetic to the Jewish cause but could not ignore their own political compulsions.

Moreover, the Indian freedom struggle is not a monolithic construct limited to Gandhi and Nehru. People like Ambedkar, Tagore, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee and Kripalani had very different views towards the Jewish question than Gandhi and Nehru, which varied between sympathy and support.<sup>116</sup> P. R. Kumaraswamy argued that Mahatma's views were carefully overlooked by his disciples and scholars, be it in the making of industrial policy or foreign policy.<sup>117</sup> Arguably, even if his thoughts provided a moral guideline, he was not setting the agenda for post-independent India. Gandhi's idea, from the rural and cottage-industry-based economy to a friendlier approach to Pakistan, were quickly, quietly and forcefully buried by his colleagues and political successors because

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<sup>111</sup> Hadass, J. (2002, Monsoon). Indo-Israeli Relations. *India International Centre Quarterly*, 29(2), p.97

<sup>112</sup> Kumaraswamy, P. R. (1995, Jan). India's Recognition of Israel, September 1950. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 31(1), p.124

<sup>113</sup> Blarel, N. (2015). *The Evolution of India's Israel Policy: Continuity, Change and Compromise since 1922*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp.112-115

<sup>114</sup> Gordon, M. (1974). Indian-Israeli Relations: Perspective and Promise. *Midstream*, 20(9), p.14

<sup>115</sup> Kumaraswamy, P. R. (1995, Jan). India's Recognition of Israel, September 1950. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 31(1), p.127

<sup>116</sup> Kumaraswamy, P. R. (2010). *India's Israel Policy*. New York: Columbia University Press, p.62

<sup>117</sup> Ibid, p.26

they were considered impractical, utopian, unscientific, and sometimes antimodern.<sup>118</sup> Thus, Kumaraswamy raised the question of why Gandhi's approach to Pakistan was irrelevant to his disciples, but his comment about Palestine, made in 1938, was still sacrosanct even after Independence.<sup>119</sup> The literature on India's Israel policy that interprets Gandhi and Nehru's statements as having guided New Delhi's policy in the post-independence era has less merit.<sup>120</sup> Their quotes have been used broadly as rhetorical references to rationalise India's policies toward the region in the post-independence period.<sup>121</sup>

A handful of research papers represented the commonality between the two struggles for statehood by underlining that both States are the continuation of old civilisations originating in the pre-Christian era.<sup>122</sup> Multiple works argued that the formation of the modern State of India and Israel also followed the same path, raising identical political questions.<sup>123</sup> Since Independence from British rule at the price of a partition of the land, based on communal lines causing bloodbath, both faced retaliation from the immediate neighbourhood and refugee influx.<sup>124</sup> As sovereign nation-states, India and Israel primarily approached the Cold War as essentially Eurocentric. They consciously

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<sup>118</sup> Kumaraswamy, P. R. (2010). *India's Israel Policy*. New York: Columbia University Press, p.26

<sup>119</sup> Ibid, p.26

<sup>120</sup> Blarel, N. (2015). *The Evolution of India's Israel Policy: Continuity, Change and Compromise since 1922*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, p.44

<sup>121</sup> Ibid, p.44

<sup>122</sup> Hadass, J. (2002, Monsoon). Indo-Israeli Relations. *India International Centre Quarterly*, 29(2), p.102

<sup>123</sup> Sherman, M., & Sondhi, M. L. (1999). *Indo-Israeli Strategic Cooperation as a US National Interest*. Shaarei Tikva: Policy Paper No. 89, Ariel Center for Policy Research (ACPR), p.3

<sup>124</sup> Kumaraswamy, P. R. (2010). *India's Israel Policy*. New York: Columbia University Press, pp.9-10

pursued a policy of non-alignment (or non-identification, as it was known in Israel).<sup>125</sup> A parallel between commonality in a parliamentary democracy, common law structures, liberal educational systems, commitment to values of liberty, pluralism and tolerance in domestic political environments is drawn in relatively recent studies.<sup>126</sup> Both India and Israel had to cope with external threats to national security, political assassination, ethnoreligious rivalries, and periods of economic hardship but have never compromised their belief in and commitment to pluralist democratic societies.<sup>127</sup> The common threat to survival from radicalism operated from and supported by neighbouring states faced by both countries.<sup>128</sup> The shared interests are a binding factor<sup>129</sup> of the strategic partnership<sup>130</sup> between two civilisational states.<sup>131</sup> At the same time, they are heavens of stability in the chaotic region.<sup>132</sup> Stretching from a vast swath of countries from North Africa through the Himalayas, in which India and Israel are the most throbbing democracies,<sup>133</sup> together who can build and withstand consensus and

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<sup>125</sup> Kumaraswamy, P. R. (2010). *India's Israel Policy*. New York: Columbia University Press, p.9

<sup>126</sup> Abhyankar, R. (2012). *The Evolution and Future of India-Israel Relations*. Tel Aviv: The S. Daniel Abraham Center for International and Regional Studies, p.5

<sup>127</sup> Sherman, M. (2009, March). India's rural development agenda and the opportunity for Israel. *Pragati*, 24, p.8

<sup>128</sup> Abhyankar, R. (2012). *The Evolution and Future of India-Israel Relations*. Tel Aviv: The S. Daniel Abraham Center for International and Regional Studies, p.5

<sup>129</sup> Kumar, S. (2017, Fall). Indo-Israeli Relations A Quest for Great-Power Status Since 1991. *Jewish Political Studies Review*, 28(3/4), p.39

<sup>130</sup> Kumar, M. (2017, January ). India-Israel Relations : Perceptions and Prospects. *Strategic Assessment*, 19(4), pp.97-99

<sup>131</sup> Sharma, B. N. (2004). *India and Israel against Islamic Terror : Old Nations , New Leaders*. New Delhi: Manas Publications, p.304

<sup>132</sup> Abhyankar, R. (2012). *The Evolution and Future of India-Israel Relations*. Tel Aviv: The S. Daniel Abraham Center for International and Regional Studies, p.5

<sup>133</sup> Sherman, M. (2008, July). Indo-Judeo commonalities: the symbolic and the substantive. *Pragati*(16), pp.11-12

commitment to democratic ideas and values.<sup>134</sup> Given the common threat from Pakistan and its 'Islamic Bomb', Radicalisation, Anarchy and statelessness in the entire region of Middle East, South Asia, as well as Central Asia, restoration of order and establishment of democracy are of perennial importance to Israel's existential interests and India's economic interests.<sup>135</sup> Nevertheless, in light of the absence of anti-Semitism in India for the decades of co-existence, the absence of diplomatic relations until 1992 was an aberration in India's overall policy toward Jews.<sup>136</sup>

Beyond the debate on 'conflicting nationalism', there have been scholarly enquiries into the nature of the bilateral relations between India and Israel, which is unambiguously termed as 'non-relation' by Scholars. New Delhi's decision to recognise the Jewish State in 1950 without exchanging diplomatic missions sparked intellectual debate on the nature of the recognition. Policy analysts, contemporary to the Nehruvian phase, claimed that New Delhi approached the issue of Israel as a '*fait-accompli*'<sup>137</sup> and adopted the policy of 'recognition without relation' to abide by the International standard of legality and morality.<sup>138</sup> As far as the delay in the recognition is concerned, it was caused by New Delhi's consideration about the time of announcement of such a decision to comply with a peaceful settlement between Arabs and Israel.<sup>139</sup> It also

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<sup>134</sup> Sherman, M., & Sondhi, M. L. (1999). *Indo-Israeli Strategic Cooperation as a US National Interest*. Shaarei Tikva: Policy Paper No. 89, Ariel Center for Policy Research (ACPR), p.1

<sup>135</sup> Menon, R., & Pandey, S. (2005, Summer). An Axis of Democracy? The Uncertain Future of Israeli-Indian Relations. *The National Interest*, 80, pp.30-33

<sup>136</sup> Kumaraswamy, P. R. (2010). *India's Israel Policy*. New York: Columbia University Press, p.2

<sup>137</sup> Srivastava, R. (1970, July—September). India-Israel Relations. *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, 31(3), p.242

<sup>138</sup> Misra, K. P. (1961, Apr.). India's Policy of Recognition of States and Governments. *The American Journal of International Law*, 55(2), p.409

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid*, p.408

confirms India's commitment to the principle of '*de factoism*'. While countries like the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America (USA) first extended de facto recognition and later made it de jure to Israel.<sup>140</sup> The Government of India, like the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), did not make any such distinction.<sup>141</sup> While the act of recognising Israel by New Delhi has been claimed as a legal act and a mere de facto recognition since it was not followed by 'diplomatic normalisation'.<sup>142</sup> Contemporary works approached this debate beyond legal complications. It is claimed that India's recognition of Israel was both *de jure* and *de facto* in nature.<sup>143</sup> The act of recognition is essentially a political act with or without legal consequences.<sup>144</sup>

This prolonged 'non-relation phase (1948-92) is academically investigated, mostly centring on why New Delhi pursued such an unusual policy towards the Jewish State. India's Israel policy in this phase is described as an 'anomaly', 'unrequited love' or hypocrisy in India's foreign policy.<sup>145</sup> Although, it is not judicious to conclude that India's policy was somewhat similar to that of Arab countries.<sup>146</sup> India was also the only country that suggested, opposing the Arabs' stand on the Suez Canal conflict, that the issue of the Right of passage to the Israeli ships through the Suez Canal be subjected to

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<sup>140</sup> Misra, K. P. (1961, Apr.). India's Policy of Recognition of States and Governments. *The American Journal of International Law*, 55(2), p.409

<sup>141</sup> Ibid, p.409

<sup>142</sup> Ibid, p.409

<sup>143</sup> Abhyankar, R. (2012). *The Evolution and Future of India-Israel Relations*. Tel Aviv: The S. Daniel Abraham Center for International and Regional Studies, p.8

<sup>144</sup> Kumaraswamy, P. R. (1995, Jan). India's Recognition of Israel, September 1950. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 31(1), p.132

<sup>145</sup> Kumaraswamy, P. R. (2010). *India's Israel Policy*. New York: Columbia University Press, p.2

<sup>146</sup> Misra, K. P. (1961, Apr.). India's Policy of Recognition of States and Governments. *The American Journal of International Law*, 55(2), p.404

the jurisdiction of the World Court.<sup>147</sup> In the same spirit, India's 'minority plan' in UNSCOP differs from Arab unilateralism.<sup>148</sup> Though Suez Crisis (1956) is no watershed in India's unconditional commitment to the Palestinian cause, it is just a reiteration on India's part of its autonomy in the sphere of policy formulation that New Delhi has been following since its Independence.<sup>149</sup> Consequently, India's attitude to Israel was hardened, bold, and negative, which clubbed with a feeling of moral righteousness.<sup>150</sup> The rationale behind this policy was to neutralise the Arab support to Pakistan on Kashmir and other issues at multiple global and regional fora.

The policymakers feared in South Block that Pakistan, which was trying to project itself as a staunch supporter of the Arabs on the question of Israel, might exploit the situation and eventually succeed in weaning away some of the Arab countries from the fold of non-alignment.<sup>151</sup> India's relationship with the Arab world was a corollary to historical, cultural and political affinity; thus, her Palestine policy was an outcome of her overall natural and moral outcome.<sup>152</sup> Nehru was more inclined to Nasser's Egypt to ensure navigation on Suez Canal and counter the Baghdad Pact or Central Treaty Organisation

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<sup>147</sup> Srivastava, R. (1970, July—September). India-Israel Relations. *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, 31(3), p.247

<sup>148</sup> Blarel, N. (2015). *The Evolution of India's Israel Policy: Continuity, Change and Compromise since 1922*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp.91-97

<sup>149</sup> Nair, R. S. (2004). *Dynamics of Diplomacy Delayed: India and Israel*. New Delhi: Kalpaz Publications, pp.68-71

<sup>150</sup> Ibid, pp.68-71

<sup>151</sup> Srivastava, R. (1970, July—September). India-Israel Relations. *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, 31(3), p.246

<sup>152</sup> i) Hasan, S. (2008, Jan.-Feb.). The Evolution of India's Palestine Policy: A Fall from the Heights? *Social Scientist*, 36(1/2), p.81 ii) Dasgupta, P. (1992, April 11-18). Betrayal of India's Israel Policy. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 27(15-16), p.768

(CENTO) established in 1955 with US backing and Pakistan's membership.<sup>153</sup> Nasser resented the participation of Iraq— Egypt's rival for supremacy in the Middle East, which drove India to encourage Nasser's promotion as the leader of the Arab world, as opposed to Islamic unity as had been advanced by Pakistan.<sup>154</sup> Energy dependency pushed India to stand by the energy-rich Islamic world. Consequently, India had to retain its support to Arabs on the Palestinian issue, even without reciprocity in the Kashmir conflict.

Similarly, India stood by the Arab world in conflicts with western countries.<sup>155</sup> The Yom Kippur war (1973)<sup>156</sup> created political turbulence in the entire Middle East that shot up the oil price globally; thus, it favoured India's interest to retain the status quo in the Palestine conflict.<sup>157</sup> Adding to this, the remittances from Non-Residential Indians (NRI)s working in the Gulf nations were also a significant reason for India to stand with the status quo in her policy.<sup>158</sup> New Delhi's prolonged non-relation with the Jewish State has been claimed to be a continuation of Nehruvian policy that failed to garner any support from any Muslim country<sup>159</sup> at the time of any war with Pakistan or China.<sup>160</sup> It is counter-argued that Nehruvian policy vis a vis Israel was a combination of Morality

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<sup>153</sup> Hadass, J. (2002). Evolution of the Relations between India and Israel. *India Quarterly*, 58(2), p.25

<sup>154</sup> Mudiam, P. R. (1994). *India and the Middle East*. London: British Academic Press, pp.104-108

<sup>155</sup> Ibid, p.191

<sup>156</sup> The fourth Arab-Israeli War took place on 1973 when united armed forces Arab countries led by Egypt initiated a surprise attack on Israel on the holiest day of Jewish Calendar, *Yom Kippur*.

<sup>157</sup> Mudiam, P. R. (1994). *India and the Middle East*. London: British Academic Press, pp.169-170

<sup>158</sup> Pant, H. V. (2004, December). India-Israel Partnership : Convergence and Constraints. *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 8(4), p.61

<sup>159</sup> Rubinoff, A. G. (1995, May). Normalization of India-Israel Relations: Stillborn for Forty Years. *Asian Survey*, 35(5), p.488

<sup>160</sup> Mudiam, P. R. (1994). *India and the Middle East*. London: British Academic Press, pp.172-175

and Real politick.<sup>161</sup> Nehru realised that the demands of the Arabs and the Israelis were so irreconcilable that there was hardly any scope for mediation.<sup>162</sup>

India's domestic politics have been claimed to be a key determinant of India's Israel policy.<sup>163</sup> While a handful of work pointed out New Delhi's self-appointed role as an anti-Israel and pro-Palestine messiah was adopted to appease the domestic Muslim minority.<sup>164</sup> Similarly, it is also argued that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has always advocated more robust ties between India and Israel. Party leaders have time and again (especially while in the opposition) expressed appreciation for the Israeli way of dealing with terrorism.<sup>165</sup> This bilateral relationship reached an altogether new dynamic and came under full public scrutiny with the visit of Ariel Sharon to India in September 2003, at the time of BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) rule.<sup>166</sup> The excitement surrounding this visit and the prospects of the Indo-Israeli relationship

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<sup>161</sup> Falk, J. (2009, Spring). India's Israel Policy : The Merits of a Pragmatic Approach. *Stanford Journal of International Relations*, 10(2), p.2

<sup>162</sup> Dasgupta, P. (1992, April 11-18). Betrayal of India's Israel Policy. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 27(15-16), p.768

<sup>163</sup> Kumaraswamy, P. R. (2010). Israel–India relations: seeking balance and realism. *Israel Affairs*, pp.260-263

<sup>164</sup> i) Kumaraswamy, P. R. (2010). *India's Israel Policy*. New York: Columbia University Press, p.16; ii) Nair, R. S. (2004). *Dynamics of Diplomacy Delayed: India and Israel*. New Delhi: Kalpaz Publications, pp.51-52; iii) Gharekhan, C. R. (2017). India–Israel: Retrospective and Prospective. *Strategic Analysis*, 41(4), p.316; iv) Aafreedi, N. J. (2012). The Impact of Domestic Politics on India's Attitudes towards Israel & Jews. In P. Singh, & S. Bhattacharya, *Perspectives on West Asia: The Evolving Geopolitical Discourses*. Delhi: Shipra Publications, p.176; v) Hadass, J. (2002, Monsoon). Indo-Israeli Relations. *India International Centre Quarterly*, 29(2), p.102; vi) Sengupta, R. (2010). *India walks a tightrope in its relations with Israel, Arab nations*. Doha: Al Jazeera Centre for Studies, p.2; vii) Sarma, H. C. (2014). Political Engagement and Defense Diplomacy between India and Israel : Post-9/11 and beyond. *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 18(3), p.78

<sup>165</sup> Rajiv, S. S. (2016). *Indian Responses to Israel's Gaza Operations*. Ramat Gan: The Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, p.36

<sup>166</sup> Inbar, E. (2017). Israel and India: Looking Back and Ahead. *Strategic Analysis*, 41(4), pp.372-373

signalled the sea change in relations between the two states.<sup>167</sup> Since 1999, the Indo-Israel relationship further strengthened with Atal Bihari Vajpayee's policy to strengthen ties with the US by keeping the Jewish lobby in the loop.<sup>168</sup> The UPA government continued to pursue its predecessor's track in strengthening its relations with Israel.<sup>169</sup> Despite the Left parties, part of the ruling coalition, making explicit reservations about India-Israeli ties, the institutional underpinnings of this bilateral relationship remained unaffected, as exemplified by the annual bilateral consultations since 1999.<sup>170</sup> It is apposite to note that the most vociferous opposition to the India-Israel defence relationship is from the Indian communist parties and those parties like the Samajwadi Party, who profess to draw a substantial chunk of their vote bank from the minorities.<sup>171</sup>

Indo-Israeli defence cooperation and arms trade is claimed to be the key factor behind the institutionalisation of Indo-Israel strategic cooperation.<sup>172</sup> Israel responded to India's Defence requirement at the time of war with China in 1962<sup>173</sup> and with Pakistan in 1965.<sup>174</sup> Significant number of research articles focus on post-Normalisation defence

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<sup>167</sup> Pant, H. V. (2004, December). India-Israel Partnership : Convergence and Constraints. *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 8(4), p.60

<sup>168</sup> Inbar, E. (2004, Winter). The Indian-Israeli Entente. *Orbis*, p.102

<sup>169</sup> Pant, H. V. (2008). *Contemporary Debates in Indian Foreign and Security Policy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p.133

<sup>170</sup> Rajiv, S. S. (2012, January). The Delicate Balance: Israel and India's Foreign Policy Practice. *Strategic Analysis*, 36(1), p.130

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid*, p.131

<sup>172</sup> Blank, S. (2005). Arms Sales and Technology Transfer in Indo-Israeli Relations. *The Journal of East Asian Affairs*, 19(1), p.201

<sup>173</sup> Kumaraswamy, P. R. (1996). The Limitations of Indo-Israeli Military Cooperation. *Contemporary South Asia*, 5(1), p.75

<sup>174</sup> Chengappa, B. M. (2010, Summer). India-Israel Relations: Politico-Military Dimensions. *Claws Journal*, p.245

cooperation. The military transfers are mutually beneficial<sup>175</sup>; while New Delhi looks forward to modernising its armed forces<sup>176</sup> to the cutting-edge technology where Israel already excelled, Israel considers the lucrative market of India's defence industry worth upwards of \$2 billion.<sup>177</sup> A handful of research articles connected the strengthening of Indo-Israel defence ties with the disintegration of the USSR.<sup>178</sup> New Delhi appreciated Israel's proficiency in upgrading outdated Soviet weapons systems, constituting India's most defence stockpile then.<sup>179</sup> Moreover, Israel could fit nicely into New Delhi's policy to diversify its defence purchasing.<sup>180</sup> The defence trade claimed to be transformed into defence cooperation since Israel's cooperation with India at the time of the Kargil War (1999) and Jerusalem's decision not to join the international chorus to criticise New Delhi after Pokhran II in 1998.<sup>181</sup> Indian Army's respect for the valour and military

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<sup>175</sup> Bitzinger, R. A. (2013). *Israeli Arms Transfers to India: Ad Hoc Defence Cooperation or the Beginnings of a Strategic Partnership?* Singapore: S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, p.2

<sup>176</sup> Blank, S. (2005). Arms Sales and Technology Transfer in Indo-Israeli Relations. *The Journal of East Asian Affairs*, 19(1), p.217

<sup>177</sup> Withington, T. (2001, January/February ). Israel and India partner up. *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, p.18

<sup>178</sup> Kumaraswamy, P. R. (1996). The Limitations of Indo-Israeli Military Cooperation. *Contemporary South Asia*, 5(1), p.76 ; ii) Gopal, P. (2017). India–Israel Defence Engagement: A Naval Perspective. *Strategic Analysis*, 41(4), p.344 ; iii) Fatih Kilic, & Sheikh, A. M. (2018). India and Israel : Defense Relationship in the Context of Offensive Realism. *Journal of South Asian Studies*, 6(2), p.95

<sup>179</sup> Inbar, E., & Ningthoujam, A. S. (2012). *Indo-Israeli Defense Cooperation in the Twenty-First Century*. Ramat Gan: The Begin-Sadat Center For Strategic Studiues, p.5

<sup>180</sup> Pant, H. V. (2008). *Contemporary Debates in Indian Foreign and Security Policy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p.136

<sup>181</sup> i) Rajiv, S. S. (2016). *Indian Responses to Israel's Gaza Operations*. Ramat Gan: The Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, p.12 ; ii) Deb, A. (2017). India–Israel Defence Engagement: Land Forces' Cooperation. *Strategic Analysis*, 41(4), p.346 ; iii) Browne, N. A. (2017). A Perspective on India–Israel Defence and Security Ties. *Strategic Analysis*, 41(4), p.329 ; iv) Cowshish, A. (2017). India–Israel Defence Trade: Issues and Challenges. *Strategic Analysis*, 41(4), p.402 ; v) Inbar, E., & Ningthoujam, A. S. (2012). *Indo-Israeli Defense Cooperation in the Twenty-First Century*. Ramat Gan: The Begin-Sadat Center For Strategic Studiues, p.5

tactics of the Israeli Army is argued to have contributed to the strengthening of this partnership and collaboration.<sup>182</sup>

A significant focus has been on the limitations of this defence cooperation. Most of the research papers unequivocally pointed out that India's domestic politics, Muslim public opinion<sup>183</sup>, and New Delhi's strategic partnership with Iran<sup>184</sup> are chief constraints of this defence cooperation.<sup>185</sup> It is also argued that Israel does not fit into India's defence modernisation plan.<sup>186</sup> The complexity of India's defence procurement procedure and over-bureaucratisation is a significant hindrance to this potential strategic partnership.<sup>187</sup> New Delhi's attempts for self-reliance in the defence sector with programmes like 'Make-In India' has also been perceived as an unnecessary hindrance.<sup>188</sup> As Israeli weapons sales involve the transfer of technology<sup>189</sup>, New Delhi

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<sup>182</sup> i) Kaura, V. (2017). *Indo-Israeli Security Cooperation: Onward and Upward*. Bar-Ilan: BESA Center, p.4 ; ii) Deb, A. (2017). India-Israel Defence Engagement: Land Forces' Cooperation. *Strategic Analysis*, 41(4), pp.336–340 ; iii) Gopal, P. (2017). India-Israel Defence Engagement: A Naval Perspective. *Strategic Analysis*, 41(4), pp.341–347

<sup>183</sup> Kumaraswamy, P. R. (1996). The Limitations of Indo-Israeli Military Cooperation. *Contemporary South Asia*, 5(1), p.77

<sup>184</sup> Pant, H. V. *An India-Israel Entente*. Retrieved from The Diplomat: <https://thediplomat.com/2016/11/an-india-israel-entente/>, accessed on November 26, 2016.

<sup>185</sup> Inbar, E., & Ningthoujam, A. S. (2012). *Indo-Israeli Defense Cooperation in the Twenty-First Century*. Ramat Gan: The Begin-Sadat Center For Strategic Studies, p.15

<sup>186</sup> Kumaraswamy, P. R. (1996). The Limitations of Indo-Israeli Military Cooperation. *Contemporary South Asia*, 5(1), p.20

<sup>187</sup> Cowshish, A. (2017). India-Israel Defence Trade: Issues and Challenges. *Strategic Analysis*, 41(4), p.410

<sup>188</sup> Shapir, Y. S. (2013, April). Walking a Fine Line : Israel, India, and Iran. *Strategic Assessment*, 16(1), pp.75-85

<sup>189</sup> Cowshish, A. (2017). India-Israel Defence Trade: Issues and Challenges. *Strategic Analysis*, 41(4), p.405-406

would develop its capabilities based on the technologies procured from Israel and will be able to forego the partnership.<sup>190</sup>

US role in Indo-Israel Defence relations is highly debated and discussed. The US has been argued to have played an indirect role.<sup>191</sup> It is also claimed that Israel began cooperating with India in different spheres of defence activities, considering India as a strategic partner of the US.<sup>192</sup> Washington exercises a decisive say in Israeli military sales to other countries, which is exercised according to US global view and strategic interests. The Indo-Israel defence cooperation is not mainly against US strategic interests.<sup>193</sup> Similarly, it is claimed that the US strategic and economic interests often constrain weapons and technology transfer between India and Israel.<sup>194</sup> US security concerns are arguably against India's strategic empowerment and self-reliance in defence. The conflict of interest between India and the US was evident on multiple issues, such as India's non-conventional missile, nuclear and satellite programmes.<sup>195</sup> The United States had promoted but often directly opposed Israeli arms sales to India

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<sup>190</sup> Bitzinger, R. A. (2013). *Israeli Arms Transfers to India: Ad Hoc Defence Cooperation or the Beginnings of a Strategic Partnership?* Singapore: S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, p.3

<sup>191</sup> Browne, N. A. (2017). A Perspective on India-Israel Defence and Security Ties. *Strategic Analysis*, 41(4), p.328

<sup>192</sup> Sarma, H. C. (2014). Political Engagement and Defense Diplomacy between India and Israel : Post-9/11 and beyond. *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 18(3), p.81

<sup>193</sup> Ramana, S. (2008, May). *Where Phalcons Dare India-Israel Defence Relations*. New Delhi: Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, p.2

<sup>194</sup> i) Pant, H. V. (2004, December). India-Israel Partnership : Convergence and Constraints. *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 8(4), p.62 ; ii) Shapir, Y. S. (2009, November). Israel's Arms Sales to India. *Strategic Assessment*, 12(3), pp.29-38 ; iii) Ningthoujam, A. S. (2014). *India-Israel Defense Cooperation*. Ramat-Gan: BESA Center, p.3 , iv) Inbar, E., & Ningthoujam, A. S. (2012). *Indo-Israeli Defense Cooperation in the Twenty-First Century*. Ramat Gan: The Begin-Sadat Center For Strategic Studies, pp.16-18

<sup>195</sup> Kumaraswamy, P. R. (1996). The Limitations of Indo-Israeli Military Cooperation. *Contemporary South Asia*, 5(1), pp.77-78

because of concerns of technology transfer and increasing competition concerns.<sup>196</sup> India and Israel had severe disagreements with the US attempt to establish international arms control regimes like the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).<sup>197</sup> On the other hand, New Delhi often lobbied US-based Jewish organisations<sup>198</sup>, crucial in American policy-making, to defuse US opposition to transferring defence equipment and technologies to India.<sup>199</sup>

In the normalisation and maturation of Indo-Israeli bilateral relations, its champions and critics critically debated the US factor. Strong Indo-Israeli strategic collaboration is not just to be compatible with, but conducive to, long-term US interests and in compliance with the idea of 'democratic peace'<sup>200</sup>. Indo-Israeli cooperation would assure a formidable force for stability against the potential epicentres of radical fundamentalism, liberal political values and other US threats in Central Asia and the Middle East.<sup>201</sup> The strategic triangle between India, Israel and the US is mutually beneficial; thus sustainable defence relationship will play a key role in bolstering such

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<sup>196</sup> Kumaraswamy, P. R. (1996). The Limitations of Indo-Israeli Military Cooperation. *Contemporary South Asia*, 5(1), pp.77-78

<sup>197</sup> Inbar, E. (2004, Winter). The Indian-Israeli Entente. *Orbis*, p.103

<sup>198</sup> Blarel, N. (2017). Assessing US Influence over India–Israel Relations : A Difficult Equation to Balance? *Strategic Analysis*, 41(4), p.385

<sup>199</sup> Inbar, E. (2004, Winter). The Indian-Israeli Entente. *Orbis*, p.91

<sup>200</sup> Sherman, M., & Sondhi, M. L. (1999). *Indo-Israeli Strategic Cooperation as a US National Interest*. Shaarei Tikva: Policy Paper No. 89, Ariel Center for Policy Research (ACPR), p.3

<sup>201</sup> Desai, R. D., & Dormandy, X. (2008, July 10). Indo-Israeli Relations: Key Security Implications. *Policy Brief*. Retrieved from <https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/indo-israeli-relations-key-security-implications>, accessed November 14, 2018.

strategic relations.<sup>202</sup> India's reluctance to emerge as US' ally' and the party in power in New Delhi is the primary variable of India's strategic bonhomie with Israel.<sup>203</sup>

The deepening defence and strategic ties with Israel are viewed in connection with the rise of terrorism in Kashmir<sup>204</sup> and different parts of India<sup>205</sup> in the 1990s<sup>206</sup>. The distinct structural similarities in the kind of threat India and Israel face from terrorism are argued to be the bedrock of counter-terrorism cooperation.<sup>207</sup> Both India and Israel are democratic, pluralistic states with large domestic Muslim minorities. Both face the scourge of terrorism, having its genesis in religious fundamentalism, which aims to "liberate" all of mandatory Palestine and Kashmir and annihilate the United States. This fundamentalism is sponsored and supported mainly by their neighbouring states and non-state actors in equal intensity.<sup>208</sup> The threat perceptions of India and Israel clearly converged over the issue of religious fundamentalism that leads to terrorism.<sup>209</sup> New Delhi regarded parts of the Arab world as hubs of Sunni extremism.<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> Blank, S. (2005). Arms Sales and Technology Transfer in Indo-Israeli Relations. *The Journal of East Asian Affairs*, 19(1), p.204

<sup>203</sup> Saha, A. (2019). The India-Israeli Security Relationship: Nature, Scope. *Strategic Analysis*, p.7

<sup>204</sup> Browne, N. A. (2017). A Perspective on India–Israel Defence and Security Ties. *Strategic Analysis*, 41(4), p.326

<sup>205</sup> Inbar, E., & Ningthoujam, A. S. (2012). *Indo-Israeli Defense Cooperation in the Twenty-First Century*. Ramat Gan: The Begin-Sadat Center For Strategic Studies, pp.12-14

<sup>206</sup> Deb, A. (2017). India–Israel Defence Engagement: Land Forces' Cooperation. *Strategic Analysis*, 41(4), p.338

<sup>207</sup> i) Pant, H. V. (2008). *Contemporary Debates in Indian Foreign and Security Policy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p.135 ; ii) Inbar, E. (2004, Winter). The Indian-Israeli Entente. *Orbis*, p.92

<sup>208</sup> Inbar, E. (2004, Winter). The Indian-Israeli Entente. *Orbis*, p.93

<sup>209</sup> Sherman, M., & Sondhi, M. L. (1999). *Indo-Israeli Strategic Cooperation as a US National Interest*. Shaarei Tikva: Policy Paper No. 89, Ariel Center for Policy Research (ACPR), p.3 ; ii) Pant, H. V. (2008). *Contemporary Debates in Indian Foreign and Security Policy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p.162

<sup>210</sup> Inbar, E. (2017). Israel and India: Looking Back and Ahead. *Strategic Analysis*, 41(4), p.374

An interesting debate has revolved around whether Indo-Israel bilateral relations can be termed 'Strategic partnership'. Convergence of strategic interests is argued to be two crucial pillars of Strategic cooperation.<sup>211</sup> The transformation from a 'buyer-seller' relationship to the level of joint production and research marks its success<sup>212</sup> and is argued to be the foundation of a 'strategic' partnership.<sup>213</sup> Israel's assistance in the Kargil War (1999) with Pakistan made them a *de facto* strategic partner of India.<sup>214</sup> On the other hand, the mere development of weapons, intelligence sharing and training have been argued to be insufficient to construct a 'strategic' relationship.<sup>215</sup> The Indo-Israeli relationship does not form a strategic partnership because India and Israel do not share a common worldview or have overall goals. Even on the question of combating global terror—one of the key strategic interests shared by the two states, India and Israel have different views.<sup>216</sup> While Israel views Iran as the prime source of global Terrorism, India confers this status on Pakistan.<sup>217</sup> Given India's relations with Iran, the inclination to Palestine issue and track-record of practising anti-Israeli stand in multiple global fora limits India to the level of a Defence partner and makes it difficult to become a 'strategic'

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<sup>211</sup> Sherman, M., & Sondhi, M. L. (1999). *Indo-Israeli Strategic Cooperation as a US National Interest*. Shaarei Tikva: Policy Paper No. 89, Ariel Center for Policy Research (ACPR), p.3

<sup>212</sup> Ramana, S. (2008, May). *Where Phalcons Dare India-Israel Defence Relations*. New Delhi: Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, p.3

<sup>213</sup> Kumar, S. (2017, Fall). Indo-Israeli Relations A Quest for Great-Power Status Since 1991. *Jewish Political Studies Review*, 28(3/4), p.43

<sup>214</sup> Singh, S. (2017). India–Israel: The View from West Asia. *Strategic Analysis*, 41(4), p.353

<sup>215</sup> Shapir, Y. S. (2009, November). Israel's Arms Sales to India. *Strategic Assessment*, 12(3), p.37

<sup>216</sup> Kandel, A. (2009). The Significant Warming of Indo-Israeli Relations in the Post-Cold War Period. *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 13(4), pp.74-75

<sup>217</sup> Pant, H. V. (2004, December). India-Israel Partnership : Convergence and Constraints. *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 8(4), p.71

partner.<sup>218</sup> India-Israel defence relations are argued to be a primarily tactical and ad-hoc adjustment based on a buyer-supplier relationship centred on arms transfers.<sup>219</sup> This relationship is sustained based on pragmatism, and both the nations have agreed to remain disagreed without letting differences hold the partnership hostage.<sup>220</sup> At the same time, prolonged hostilities and regional isolation, declining interests and influence of the US in the Middle East and the weakening of its traditional ties with the West restrict Israel from seeking an alternative partner, if not an ally. This is where India comes into the picture. Israel pursues this approach to India by redefining the traditional notion of 'strategic'.<sup>221</sup>

There has been significant scholarly research on how the strategic cooperation between India and Israel has a domino effect in global politics. One such central area of interest is the security implications of this bilateral relation upon Pakistan.<sup>222</sup> The standard argument by Pakistan-based scholars is that the bilateral relation between India and Israel is the teaming up of two 'occupiers', resulting in arms race in the region, especially against Pakistan, in the name of countering terror.<sup>223</sup> Most Pakistan-based observers have been critical of any development in India-Israel bilateral relations or Indo-Israel-

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<sup>218</sup> Pant, H. V. (2008). *Contemporary Debates in Indian Foreign and Security Policy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p.144

<sup>219</sup> Bitzinger, R. A. (2013). *Israeli Arms Transfers to India: Ad Hoc Defence Cooperation or the Beginnings of a Strategic Partnership?* Singapore: S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, p.2

<sup>220</sup> Kumar, T. (2014). *India and Israel : Reinforcing the Partnership*. New Delhi: Observer Research Foundation, p.1

<sup>221</sup> Kumaraswamy, P. R. (2017). Redefining 'Strategic' Cooperation. *Strategic Analysis*, 41(4), p.363

<sup>222</sup> Mustafa, G., Bhatti, M. N., & Hussain, L. (2019). Indo-Israel Relations: Implications for Pakistan. *Pakistan Social Sciences Review*, 3(1), pp.195-201

<sup>223</sup> Noor, S. (2004, July). Indo-Israel Relations: Repercussions for Pakistan. *Pakistan Horizon*, 57(3), pp.93-97

US trilateral relations, sighting it as a nexus against Islam.<sup>224</sup> An interesting claim made in more recent works that demanded such perceptions is an outcome of collective paranoia.<sup>225</sup> Although significant public rhetoric is<sup>226</sup> against Israel and India-Israel relations in Pakistan, political leadership has often seriously considered the issue of diplomatic normalisation with the Jewish State.<sup>227</sup> A handful of academic articles have focused on how India's strategic cooperation with Tehran<sup>228</sup> and Israel's 'marriage made in heaven' with Beijing<sup>229</sup> impacted Indo-Israel strategic cooperation. While Tehran offers energy security to India, Tel-Aviv provides military–security capability towards ensuring greater Indian influence in the Middle East. Conscious of their relative advantages and challenges, New Delhi successfully maintained a delicate balance in its relations with Iran and Israel.<sup>230</sup> The rise in US-Iran hostility in contemporary times has further complicated the relations among China-Israel-India-Iran. Though Israel alone could not shape India's Iran policy,<sup>231</sup> the US has recently been a crucial factor that shapes India's Iran policy to the advantage of Israel.<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> Niazi, M. Z. (2006). Indo-Israel-US Nexus : Security Implications for Pakistan. *The Dialogue*, 2(3), p.51

<sup>225</sup> Malhotra, D. (2019). *Pakistan-Israel Relations : Decoding the Strategic Silence*. New Delhi: Centre for Landwarfare Studies, p.13

<sup>226</sup> Kumaraswamy, P. R. (2006). Israel and Pakistan: Public Rhetoric versus Political Pragmatism. *Israel Affairs*, 12(1), pp.123-135

<sup>227</sup> Kumaraswamy, P. R. (2000). *Beyond the Veil : Israel-Pakistan Relations*. Tel Aviv University. Tel Aviv: Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, p.17

<sup>228</sup> Shapir, Y. S. (2013, April). Walking a Fine Line : Israel, India, and Iran. *Strategic Assessment*, 16(1), pp.75-85

<sup>229</sup> Kumaraswamy, P. R. (2006). The Sino-Israeli Marriage : Washington, the Third 'Other'. *China Report*, 42(4), pp.393-403

<sup>230</sup> Kumaraswamy, P. R. (2012). Israel : The Non-Parallel Player. *Strategic Analysis*, 36(6), p.976

<sup>231</sup> Sajedi, A. (2014). Indo-Israel Relations and the Iranian Factor. *Iranian Review of Foreign Affairs*, 5(1), p.181

<sup>232</sup> Kumaraswamy, P. R. (2012). Israel : The Non-Parallel Player. *Strategic Analysis*, 36(6), pp.983-985

### **Research Gap:**

A general lacuna of most accounts on India's Israel policy or India-Israel relations lies in their methodological drawback to theoretically address the issue of policy-making. Primarily descriptive and static narratives have overdetermined the structural importance of selective international and domestic political events upon India's policy-making. Variables like India's domestic Muslim minority, the end of the Cold War, and the US's emergence as a global hegemon have been identified as the major factors behind India's policy towards the Jewish State. Such theoretical argumentation completely denies New Delhi's autonomy in the sphere of policy-making. The over-dependence upon one-dimensional interpretations of deterministic structural factors that leads to direct causal relations between static determinants and specific policy outcomes overlooked the dynamic interaction among international, domestic and individual/small group-level factors in shaping India's Israel policy at different times. The existing literature neglected other long-term and less visible factors that had equally influenced and shaped this bilateral relationship before and after 1992, which made the problem methodologically complicated to be identified. Blarel (2015) is undoubtedly an outstanding and methodologically sound work on the theme. However, it is committed to developing a cohesive theory that builds the causal mechanisms explaining the formation, emergence and consolidation of India's Israel policy claimed to be applicable to other similar cases of dynamic and gradual foreign policy change. Blarel's (2015) attempt to develop the causal mechanism made it a case study, putting the unique character of India's Israel policy on the back burner.

Most publications on this theme have brought interesting factual evidence but lacked a strong theoretical argument to explain the question of how and why. The existing

literature approached the problem from different binary perspectives. While India's foreign policymakers were determined to retain its autonomy in the domain of policy formulation and adapted the policies like non-Alignment. Refuting the idea of a 'tight bipolar system' under the Cold War, New Delhi found non-Alignment would serve the country's national interest and kept doors open for both superpowers. Academic attempts to understand the policy looked through the prism of the Cold War, which was loaded in favour of Soviet Russia. This approach assumed Israel was a puppet of the US, but Israel often cooperated with India, going against US directions and interests. The literature concerning India's Israel policy remained confined to the question of 'should' rather than what 'is'. The objective aspect of the study was so oppressed that it almost ignored the question of national interest, assessed by South Block while adapting any policy, and the question of morality and imperialism was on top priority for the scholars. Although India committed itself to NAM, Indian academia did not read its Foreign Policy or Israel policy from an Indo-centric understanding or non-Aligned approach that will hold an Indo-Centric focus, keeping the country's national interests at the core. This binary outlook of the research works on the theme has approached India's relation with Israel in the pre-'normalisation' period as 'non-Relations' and placed India's Israel policy in juxtaposition to India's Palestine policy is no more capable of explaining the contemporary reality. The question of continuity and change in India's Israel policy deserves a suitable theoretical assessment. Blarel (2015) addressed the issue of policy change by looking at contrasting power lobbies in the governmental process. However, Blarel (2015) assumes the Change is sudden, whereas India's Israel policy is a classic example of gradual policy change.

India's Israel policy, or any policy of any country for that matter, is not adapted in isolation. It is often a byproduct of many other 'policies'. Existing literature has

conveniently undermined the making of India's Israel policy in the larger context of India's overall foreign policy. At the most, some factors have been discussed as 'variables' selectively, but the absence of an eagle's view approach made the study myopic. The existing literature has approached India's 'diplomatic normalisation' with Israel as an incident instead of a gradual development process that has been argued to be an 'American Dream' that has been possible only after the disintegration of the USSR. The incremental changes, on India's part, from Normalisation to Strategic Cooperation, have also been largely ignored as a sudden policy change.

The strategic perspective of India's policy-making towards Israel has been ignored in the existing study that has a preponderance of a multilateral-diplomatic perspective. The critical role national interest plays in a country's policy-making is primarily undermined in the existing literature. Scholars have even advocated that National Interest should not run New Delhi; instead, they should go by 'merit of the case', so far as its Israel policy is concerned.<sup>233</sup> The autonomy of Decision-makers in India and Israel is the least focused variable in the existing literature. Their projection as a passive recipient does not confirm with primary data. Along with the rhetorical importance of India's ideological commitment to anti-Imperialism, the Palestine question, the strategic importance of India's bilateral relations with Israel in the era of global terrorism and hybrid warfare is also essential but finds less attention by scholars. Far from approaching the problem from a sovereign nation's unilateral policy-making on a bilateral relationship, the existing literature portrayed the problem as an offshoot of international alliance politics.

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<sup>233</sup> Hasan, S. (2008, Jan.-Feb.). The Evolution of India's Palestine Policy: A Fall from the Heights? *Social Scientist*, 36(1/2), p.91

Like the Middle East itself, India's Middle-East policy in general and the Israel policy, in particular, is also a hotbed of political activism. Technically these are academic research papers or research projects by all standard parameters. However, for all practical purposes, these are motivated writings with a preoccupied mind by suppressing and twisting facts and distorting primary data. Surprisingly, all those works demanding India to scrap the relationship stem their validity by quoting Gandhi and Nehru in a way that suits their purposes.<sup>234</sup> It is important to note that both Gandhi and Nehru held empathy for the Jews, possessed an extraordinarily dynamic view, and considered that 'Jews have a prior claim in Palestine'.<sup>235</sup>

Religion is an important aspect of India's Israel policy, which the academia has ignored mainly to be 'politically correct' except Kumaraswamy (2010), Afreedi (2012) and Gharekhan (2017). There is no possible study of India's Israel policy without adequately understanding the religious aspect of the problem worked as an undercurrent. It is important not to undermine the importance of religion in the problem and not communalising the study but underlining the role of religion in the already communalised issue.

### **Research Question:**

The study's central research question is, why and how did India shift from her 'Recognition without Relation' policy towards 'Strategic Partnership' through 'Diplomatic Normalisation'?

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<sup>234</sup> Hasan, S. (2014). India's Palestine Policy : A Historical Review. In F. Mahmood, & R. Azmi, *Foreign Policy of India and West Asia : Change and Continuity*. New Delhi: New Century Publications, pp.89-91

<sup>235</sup> Mahatma Gandhi's letter to Louis Fischer in June, 1946 [Source: Fischer, L. (1947). *Gandhi and Stalin: Two Signs at the World's Crossroads*. Delhi: Rajkamal Publications p.42]

Any attempt to examine the main question will pose certain specific but interrelated questions:

- 1) Why did India normalise its relations with Israel in 1992?
- 2) What is the strategic importance of Israel to India?
- 3) How does India accommodate conflicting parties like Israel and Palestine/Arabs/Iran in its foreign policy making?
- 4) What are the strategic implications of Indo-Israel relations for the region and the world?
- 5) Has US influence/interest been instrumental behind India's Israel policy?

**Methodology:**

This research is conducted within the broad theoretical framework of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA). With its prime focus on human decision-making, FPA is clearly an agent-centric methodology that maintains diplomacy, intelligence, security perception, trade negotiations and cultural exchanges; all form part of the substance of a state's foreign policy. At the core of the field is an investigation into decision-making, the individual decision-makers, processes and conditions that influence the making of foreign policy and its significance.<sup>236</sup> FPA advocates that foreign policy is designed not only by the state's formal decision-making machinery, but the various sub-national sources also shape a state's foreign policy, including the boundaries between the State's domestic and external environment.<sup>237</sup> Thus, the explanation of foreign policy decision-making should be multifactorial, with the desideratum of examining variables at

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<sup>236</sup> Alden, C., & Aran, A. (2017). *Foreign Policy Analysis: New Approaches* (Second ed.). London: Taylor & Francis Group, p.3

<sup>237</sup> Ibid, p.3

multiple levels of analysis. From all levels of analysis—the most micro to the most macro is vital to point out explanatory variables.<sup>238</sup> Decision-makers are considered to function in a dual-aspect setting so that seemingly detached internal and external factors become connected in the actions of the decision-makers.<sup>239</sup>

The paradigm of FPA is established upon the combination of three epistemological sources, namely:

- a) Decision-Making Approach to International Relations as developed by Richard C. Snyder, H. W. Bruck, and Burton Sapin ;
- b) James N. Rosenau's concept of 'Pre-Theories'; and
- c) Man-Milieu relationship hypotheses in the framework of International Relations, as constructed by Harold and Margaret Sprout (1956; further explained and revised in article form in 1957 and their 1965 book: '*The Ecological Perspective on Human Affairs*').

Snyder and his colleagues' significant contribution to FPA was to concentrate on foreign policy 'decision-making' as opposed to foreign policy outcomes. Decision-making was best viewed as 'organisational behaviour'.<sup>240</sup> James Rosenau's notion of 'pre-theorising' encouraged scholars to 'systematically' and 'scientifically' construct generalisations about state's behaviour, applicable cross-nationally. Rosenau preferred general, testable theory, and the intent of the 'Pre-theories' article was to point in the

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<sup>238</sup> Hudson, V. M. (2014). *Foreign Policy Analysis : Classic and Contemporary Theory* (Second ed.). New York: Rowman & Littlefield, p.7

<sup>239</sup> Snyder, R. C., Bruck, H., & Sapin, B. (1962). *Foreign Policy Decision-Making (Revisited)*. New York: Free Press of Glencoe, p.85

<sup>240</sup> Hudson, V. M., & Vore, C. (1995, Oct). *Foreign Policy Analysis : Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow*. *Mershon International Studies Review*, 39(2), 209-238, p.213

direction it lay.<sup>241</sup> Sprout and Sprout recommended that understanding foreign policy outcomes, which they equated with the analysis of power capabilities within the interstate system, without any reference to foreign policy undertakings, which they linked with strategies, decisions, and intentions, was misguided. In order to explain undertakings, it is essential to look at the psycho-milieu of the individuals and groups making the foreign policy decision.<sup>242</sup>

Many structure-centric theories, such as Marxism, approach the academic discipline of International Relations as the 'summum bonum'. Thus, the peculiarity of Foreign Policy is denied in these approaches. It leads to the assumption that the methodologies of International Relations are applicable in the sub-discipline of Foreign Policy studies. Although Kenneth Waltz carefully and categorically reiterated that theories of International Politics are not theories of Foreign Policy, thus the former cannot explain the latter.<sup>243</sup> Nevertheless, Classical and Neo-Classical Realists, being grand narratives of International Relations, developed foreign policy-specific methodologies; but that presume decision-makers as essentially 'rational' and machine-like individuals without any 'personal' preferences whatsoever. The key assumption of Rational Choice theory is that nations are led by rational and forward-looking leaders who attempt to maximise the expected gains of policy choices in a holistic and compensatory fashion.<sup>244</sup> It may be an excellent guide to policymakers on how to pursue 'National Interest' while dealing

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<sup>241</sup> Hudson, V. M. (2005). Foreign Policy Analysis: Actor-Specific Theory and the Ground of International Relations. *Foreign Policy Analysis* (2005)(1), p.6

<sup>242</sup> Ibid, p.6

<sup>243</sup> Waltz, K. N. (1979). *Theory of International Politics*. Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, p.121

<sup>244</sup> De Mesquita, B. B., & Lalman, D. (1992). *War and Reason: Domestic and International Imperatives*. Yale University Press, p.71

with foreign policy. It does not essentially offer an appropriate research design to scholars attempting to declutter the foreign policies of statesmen. The reading of 'National Interests' largely depends on the policymakers' cognitive inclination. In this sense, Realism works as an idealist guiding principle, stereotyping rationality in equal intensity among statesmen, stressing the acceptance of 'prudence' as the supreme virtue of political action that causes a machine-like formulation of foreign policies.<sup>245</sup> Thus, Realism or Rational Choice Theory stresses the question of 'should' for policymakers. Methodologies conforming to the Realist paradigm will eventually fail to analyse foreign policy for its ignorance of human aspects of leaders' policy-making. On the contrary, FPA, with its methodological flexibility and acknowledgement of heterogeneous political-psychological inclinations of leaders, can analyse any leader's foreign policy, including the Realists.

Any methodologically sound qualitative research, be it in Foreign Policy or Anthropological studies, begins with judicious identification of variables through meticulous utilisation of research tools for collecting primary data and attempts to explain research problems by employing appropriate research methods. A major focus of the research design is on the question of appropriating the unit of analysis within the wider environment of the interplay between 'explanandum' and 'explanans'. Methodologies are a product of more prominent philosophical inclinations within the academic domain of International Relations. They often originate in any grand narratives of International Relations that similarly approach the fundamental questions and offer an ideologically coherent set of integrated methods accommodative to each

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<sup>245</sup> Morgenthau, H. J. (1948). *Politics Among Nations : The Struggle for Power and Peace*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc, pp.141-142

other. It does not mean that there cannot be any agreement on any question between two contesting methodologies, e.g., Neo-Realist and Marxists agree on the preponderance of 'Structure' as the key determinant of global politics, does not confirm their ideational convergence on larger theoretical questions. On the contrary, there are debates within the same school of thought, but agreement on essential theoretical foundations ties them together.

a) *Unit of Analysis:*

A vital fault line within the academic discipline of International Relations is determining the 'Unit of Analysis' in foreign policy. David J. Singer is credited for being the pioneer in pointing out three different levels of analysis in Kenneth Waltz's seminal work '*Man, the State and War*'<sup>246</sup>, namely the individual level (first image), the national level (second image) and the international system (third image). The first and second images are agent-centred research fields, placing the policy-making process at the centre of research. In contrast, the third image is structure-oriented, mainly focussing on the outcome of policy-making.<sup>247</sup> The theoretical encounter between Kenneth Waltz and Alexander Wendt touches upon the agent-structure problematic in the academic domain of Foreign Policy, i.e. whether structures, defined objectively, are primary shapers of system behaviour (Waltz), or whether state-actors help shapes the structures and resultant behaviour through their intersubjective understanding.<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>246</sup> Singer, D. J. (1961). The level-of-analysis problem in International Relations. In K. K. Verba, *The International System: Theoretical Essays*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, p.78-80

<sup>247</sup> Morin, J.-F., & Paquin, J. (2018). *Foreign Policy Analysis: A Toolbox*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, p.8

<sup>248</sup> Hudson, V. M. (2014). *Foreign Policy Analysis : Classic and Contemporary Theory* (Second ed.). New York: Rowman & Littlefield, p.11

The theoretical discussion of the Structure-Agency debate began with the scholarly rebuttal of Kenneth Waltz's Structural Realism by Alexander Wendt.<sup>249</sup> In the Structural Realist conceptualisation, Preferences of states are determined primarily by the distribution of power in terms of capabilities within states' anarchic system'.<sup>250</sup> Waltz is interested in the causal impact on system behaviour patterns. Realism is a 'theoretical hedgehog' that revolves around the notion of 'systemic forces', which drives the theory to conclude that relative material power shapes states' behaviour.<sup>251</sup> On the other hand, constructivists contend that idea constructs preferences and interests; in other words, the material world is what the ideal world makes of it.<sup>252</sup> Alexander Wendt's 'meta-theoretical' stance is that of Anthony Giddens' structuration theory underpinned by scientific realist philosophy of Science. The logic of Wendt's approach is twofold: first, system change is possible based on ideational change and without a material change; and second, arguably materially different states can act similarly, and arguably materially similar states can act dissimilarly, depending on their ideationally constructed identities within the state system.<sup>253</sup>

Thinkers like Margaret Archer and Roy Bhaskar have attempted multiple scholarly works to integrate Structure and 'Agency'. Archer rejected Giddens' conception of 'duality' that precluded the possibility of analysing the empirical interplay between

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<sup>249</sup> Wendt, A. E. (1987). The agent–structure problem in International Relations. *International Organization*, 41(3), pp.335–370

<sup>250</sup> Waltz, K. N. (1979). *Theory of International Politics*. Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, p.202

<sup>251</sup> Rose, G. (1998). Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy. *World Politics*, 51(1), p.165

<sup>252</sup> Wendt, A. (1999). *Social Theory of International Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.115

<sup>253</sup> Hudson, V. M. (2014). *Foreign Policy Analysis : Classic and Contemporary Theory* (Second ed.). New York: Rowman & Littlefield, p.11

'agents' and 'structure' over time. Archer argued a process of 'morphogenesis' that denotes 'both the inner and outer form of a 'thing' or structure and also a process or developmental aspect of that same 'thing' or structure'. She claimed that the process of morphogenesis refers to the 'complex interchanges that produce a change in a System's given form, structure or state'. Archer rejected Giddens' conception of 'duality' that precluded the possibility of analysing the empirical interplay between 'agents' and 'structure' over time. Archer argued a process of 'morphogenesis' that denotes 'both the inner and outer form of a 'thing' or structure and also a process or developmental aspect of that same 'thing' or structure'. She claimed that the process of morphogenesis refers to the 'complex interchanges that produce a change in a system's given form, state or structure'. These two rival schools offer a theoretical model for Foreign Policy research.<sup>254</sup> Roy Bhaskar argued that Social structures are concept-and action-dependent, and society is both the ever-present condition and the continually reproduced outcome of human Agency.<sup>255</sup> These attempts were later applied in the academic sub-discipline of Foreign Policy in the pioneering work of Walter Carlsnaes. He attempted to combine these two poles by exploring Margaret Archer's morphogenetic framework. He suggested that the explanations of foreign policy should advance based on 'morphogenetic cycles', which can be analytically broken down into intervals to penetrate the dynamic interplay, or relations, between structure and action over time.

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<sup>254</sup> Archer, M. (1995). *Realist social theory: the morphogenetic approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.5-9

<sup>255</sup> Bhaskar, R. (1979). *The possibility of naturalism: A philosophical critique of contemporary human sciences*. Brighton: Harvester Press, p.43

In this perspective, actions are not only causally affected by structures but subsequently affect them, indicating a mutually dynamic relationship between the two over time.<sup>256</sup> This approach is to move beyond this impasse and provide a methodological framework that can account for the 'dynamic synthesis of structural and agential factors in the explanation of change'.<sup>257</sup> Alexander Wendt also offered a 'mutually constitutive' theoretical model as a solution to the problem of the Structure-Agency debate.<sup>258</sup> Colin Wight pointed out that Wendt's model has changed from 'mutual-constitution' to 'supervenience'.<sup>259</sup> However, the difference between a 'mutually-constitutive' relationship and a 'supervenient' one is unclear. Both imply that a change in one element must necessitate a change in the other. He further assessed that it is not clear how such a relationship can be specified and unpacked in empirical research and, more importantly, how the 'mutual' aspect of 'mutually constitutive' is assessed. Agents and structures play an equal role in all outcomes, or the complex interplay of both varies over time and space.<sup>260</sup>

A significant problem with synergetic models is that these are theoretically sound but not very researcher friendly for being silent on the question of meticulous and categorical research designs and methods to be employed in foreign policy research. With its excessive allegiance to Neo-Realism, the structural approach has denied due role to Individuals in making foreign policy. Marxist theories, mainly loyal to Structural

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<sup>256</sup> Carlsnaes, W. (1992, September). The Agency-Structure Problem in Foreign Policy Analysis. *International Studies Quarterly*, 36(3), p.259

<sup>257</sup> Ibid, p.247

<sup>258</sup> Wendt, A. (1999). *Social Theory of International Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>259</sup> Wight, C. (2013). Agency, Structure, International Relations and Foreign Policy. In F. Bynander, & S. Guzzini, *Rethinking Foreign Policy*. New York: Routledge, p.31

<sup>260</sup> Ibid, p.31

logic, mostly denied the Individual its due role. The paradigm has seldom appreciated the role of individuals in history. Moreover, it does not offer any categorical and specific method for analysing foreign policy; at best, it offers a methodological guideline for the analysis of International Politics.

Since the Structure-Agency conundrum is endless, there is no all-inclusive formula to cater each side's logic. A Researcher has to be decisive and cannot afford any policy dilemma about the unit of analysis of the research. An alternative to both Waltz and Wendt is found in the FPA tradition. FPA rejects Waltz and Wendt for not adequately addressing the importance of human Agency in foreign policy decision-making. In Neo-Realism, the focus is exclusively on the structure's causal effects on patterns of behaviour in the system. Waltz never wanted agents; it conceptualised States as a black box, ignoring its human agents. On the other hand, FPA criticises Wendt simply,

"...only human beings have ideas. Only human beings can create identities, only human beings can change identities, only human beings can act on the basis of identity. Only humans can be socialised or socialise others. Only humans are agents in international relations. It isn't 'ideas all the way down'; it is *human agents* all the way down, standing on the material bedrock noted above, sprouting ideas, persuading each other of the value of those ideas and attempting to transmit them forward in time through processes such as institutionalisation. When you drop those humans out, as arguably both Waltz and Wendt have done, you are left with a machine".<sup>261</sup>

FPA discards Waltz for dropping both humans and their ideas out of the mix, leaving it with a deterministic machine that cannot change without material change and Wendt for dropping humans from ideas out of his mix: that made his mix a machine.<sup>262</sup>

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<sup>261</sup> Hudson, V. M. (2014). *Foreign Policy Analysis : Classic and Contemporary Theory* (Second ed.). New York: Rowman & Littlefield, p.12

<sup>262</sup> Ibid, p.12

Richard Snyder and his colleagues rejected the systemic orientation and initiated to 'open the black box' of foreign policy decision-making. Far from attempting any normative critique of Realism (unlike contemporary thinkers), Snyder, Rosenau, and their followers were primarily concerned with finding an improved methodological approach to assessing interactions between states. While articulating the field of FPA, these scholars accepted some fundamental assumptions of classical and Neo-classical Realism, such as the centrality of the State in international relations.<sup>263</sup> FPA unambiguously discards the metaphysical abstraction of the State as the unit of analysis and contends that the activity of the State is always the activity of particular individuals acting within particular social forms.<sup>264</sup> It rejects the billiard ball approach of states' interactions and advocates that it is not the State but the Individual decision-makers who are actual agents. This, of course, does not contend that individual decision-makers work according to their whims and fancy that has no connection with rationality.

FPA's focus on the role of decision-makers, the process of foreign policy formulation and the nature of foreign policy choice has tended to produce a stronger emphasis on the Agency. The key argument of FPA is that it is finally and ultimately the Actor that frames policy from multiple policy choices or alternatives available within the 'Structure'. Instead of evaluating the 'outcomes' of foreign policy decisions, behaviourists sought to understand the foreign policy decision-making process. Scholars like Robert Jervis, Harold Sprout and Margaret Sprout investigated the significance of the individual decision-maker and the associated influences on foreign

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<sup>263</sup> Alden, C., & Aran, A. (2017). *Foreign Policy Analysis: New Approaches* (Second ed.). London: Taylor & Francis Group, p.6

<sup>264</sup> Wight, C. (1999). They Shoot Dead Horses Don't They? Locating Agency in the Agent-Structure Problematique. *European Journal of International Relations*, 5(1), p.128

policy choices. They argued that to understand the key variables, the studies of human agencies that influence foreign policy decision-making, the key is to focus on the individual decision-maker. There have been debates among scholars on the question of analysing individual decision-makers.<sup>265</sup>

Theorists like Graham Allison, Morton Halperin and others argued that an analysis of foreign policy decision-making must begin with the assumption that foreign policy is nothing but a public policy that is primarily determined by the bureaucracy. Their approach emphasised the interplay between leaders, bureaucratic actors, organisational culture and, to an extent, political factors outside the formal apparatus of the State. On the other hand, C. Wight contended that Agential actions should be analysed concerning the influence of the structural contexts and settings that provide the broader social context and vice versa, along with the unfolding structural dynamics. Thus, agential and structural contexts are inseparably bound together through the medium of social interactions.<sup>266</sup> A more comprehensive approach is found in Poliheuristic theory, largely popularised by Alex Mintz.<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>265</sup> Alden, C., & Aran, A. (2017). *Foreign Policy Analysis: New Approaches* (Second ed.). London: Taylor & Francis Group, p.6

<sup>266</sup> Wight, C. (2013). Agency, Structure, International Relations and Foreign Policy. In F. Bynander, & S. Guzzini, *Rethinking Foreign Policy*. New York: Routledge, p.42

<sup>267</sup> Poliheuristic Theory attempts to bridge the gap between cognitive and rational theories of decision-making. It postulates a two-stage decision process; during the first stage, the set of possible options is reduced by applying a non-compensatory principle to eliminate any alternative with an unacceptable outcome on a purely political decision dimension. Once the choice set has been minimised to alternatives acceptable to the decision-maker, the process transfers to the second stage, during which the decision-maker uses more analytic processing to minimise risks and maximize benefits. Poliheuristic theory sees domestic politics as "the essence of decision." Policymakers are political actors whose self-interest in political survival is paramount. Consequently, policymakers are likely to reject any alternative that poses potentially very high political costs, even if that alternative also yields potentially high benefits on other dimensions.

There can be no disagreement that an individual decision-maker, in our case, the Prime Minister of India, does not formulate foreign policy in a vacuum or in isolation from other policies. Policies are often products or byproducts of any other significant decisions, e.g. New Delhi's position on Palestine is often determined, by default, based on its policy on Kashmir. Thus, along with the Prime Minister's cognitive or psychopolitical inclinations, coordination with the Cabinet, his/her leverage over the party and coalition partners, relations with top bureaucrats, and political strength in Lok Sabha also impact the foreign policy-making and the making of Israel policy in particular. These all take place within the real-political arena where political context, so the appropriation of a policy is valued based on political terms. It has also been observed that the political bosses, i.e. the Prime Minister or the other concerned Ministers, appoint those bureaucrats who are in line with the former's vision and mission. Thus, the preponderance of the individual leaders in taking the final call makes them more important in the level of analysis over group, process and bureaucracy. However, foreign policy is not an 'immediate correspondent' of the structural interplays of international politics.

Nevertheless, the agents learn from global events over time, which largely influences their actions. Individuals are not passive filters that absorb or reject certain information depending on their belief system.<sup>268</sup> They are actors continually testing hypotheses and

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<sup>268</sup> It is important at this point to turn to 'Schema Theory' as developed by Jerel A. Rosati that argues cognitive consistency are too rigid. It rejects the Cognitive theorists' assumption that individual decision makers are fixated on maintaining a well-integrated belief system and that this is resistant to change as well as serving as a singular source for foreign policy choice. On contrary, Schema theory maintains that beliefs are fragmented and relatively independent of each other, which are said to be understood better as isolated repositories of knowledge. The role of learning in foreign policy, including the urge to use history as a variable in decision-making, is an argument of this dynamic process.

adapting to the feedback they receive from the environment.<sup>269</sup> The cognitive capacities of adaptation vary from one leader to another. Finally, the Individual decision-maker, i.e. the Prime Minister of India, in his real context, is the unit of analysis for this research because "information is selectively perceived and evaluated in terms of the decision maker's frame of reference. Choices are made on the basis of preferences which are in part situationally and in part biographically determined".<sup>270</sup>

*Identification of Variables:*

FPA is not merely multi-level and multi-disciplinary; it is resolutely multi-causal. A confusing first impression can be transformed into a creative impulse by freeing from the pursuit of a single explanatory variable.<sup>271</sup> James Rosenau rejected the practice of linear analysis in foreign policy research. Analysis cast in a conventional linear framework seems bound to fall short in capturing the interactive, high-speed nature of the phenomena of interest.<sup>272</sup> In his famous 'pre-theories' article, originally published in 1966, Rosenau criticised 'single-cause deterministic explanations' in the study of foreign policy analysis and called for employing 'multiple-variable' in the analysis of a problem.<sup>273</sup> Having rejected single cause explanations, Rosenau offered five sets of variables that are translatable into five sets. These five sets are: a) Individual, b) Role,

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<sup>269</sup> Morin, J.-F., & Paquin, J. (2018). *Foreign Policy Analysis: A Toolbox*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, p.85

<sup>270</sup> Snyder, R. C., Bruck, H., & Sapin, B. (1962). *Foreign Policy Decision-Making (Revisited)*. New York: Free Press of Glencoe, p.144

<sup>271</sup> Schafer, M. (2003). Science, Empiricism and Tolerance in the Study of Foreign Policy Making. *International Studies Review*, 5(2), p.171–177.

<sup>272</sup> Rosenau, J. N. (2006). *The Study of World Politics* (Vol. 1: theoretical and methodological challenges). New York: Taylor and Francis Group, p.43

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid*, p.172

c) Governmental, d) Societal, and e) Systemic Variables.<sup>274</sup> Rosenau further clarifies that few generalisations can be observed in the interplay of these variables, e.g. the individual-level variables have less significance in developed/open states and plays a major role in underdeveloped states. Role variables are most vital for developed countries. Systemic factors are much more relevant for small states than for large states. Governmental variables are never higher than the third rank for any type of nation and are least important for underdeveloped/open nations. Societal-level variables are the least significant for closed societies.<sup>275</sup>

In this research, the broad framework of five variables is followed as prescribed by Rosenau, with moderation. The interplay of five sets of variables without any generalisations, such as the individual-level variables, has a significant focus of this research. According to Rosenau, role and Governmental variables are the least important in underdeveloped states.<sup>276</sup> India cannot be equated with any other developing country, primarily because of its plural society and adaption of western-style bureaucracy after its Independence in 1947. Thus, the focus will be on five sets of variables where Individual decision-makers enjoy a preponderance, not meaning India ever had any sort of dictatorial regime like many third-world countries, as argued by Rosenau. It is simply because "information is selectively perceived and evaluated in terms of the decision maker's frame of reference. Choices are made on the basis of preferences which are in part situationally and in part biographically determined".<sup>277</sup>

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<sup>274</sup> Rosenau, J. N. (2006). *The Study of World Politics* (Vol. 1: theoretical and methodological challenges). New York: Taylor and Francis Group, p.172

<sup>275</sup> Ibid, p.175

<sup>276</sup> Ibid, p.176

<sup>277</sup> Snyder, R. C., Bruck, H., & Sapin, B. (1962). *Foreign Policy Decision-Making (Revisited)*. New York: Free Press of Glencoe, p.144

Thus, in applying Rosenau's five-set variables, Snyder and his colleagues principle advocated that the individual decision maker's preponderance is followed. So the key explanatory or causal independent variable in this research is the Prime Minister of India, i.e. the individual decision-maker, and other independent variables are the global image or projection of India by the then Government, i.e. role variable. Governmental variables refer to the inputs from Parliament, Council of Ministers, Ministry of External Affairs or MEA, Prime Minister's Office or PMO, Indian Military, National Security Agency or NSA, and Security and Intelligence Agencies like Intelligence Bureau or IB and Research and Analytical Wing or R&AW; opposition enhances or limits the foreign policy choices made by decision-makers. The fourth set of variables consists of those non-governmental aspects of Indian society that influenced the behaviour of the Indian State towards Israel, and that makes this policy unique in the cartography of India's foreign policy. The dominant Muslim minority's religious hostility toward the Jews twisted by a land dispute in the post-World War II scenario further complicated the problem to be handled by the policymaker of a secular state with a Hindu majority that had never had any case of anti-Semitism in the history of co-existence.

Interestingly, major political ideologies in India approached the Jewish/Palestine question from a different perspective, often hostile to each other but stemming its origin and validity from their political agenda, beliefs and reality. As for Systemic variables, these include any actions concerning India's National Interest occurring globally or in West Asia and North Africa (WANA) region or South Asian region or in any other part directly or indirectly concerning India's involvement or hostility with Israel. It includes how India's policy towards Israel is affected by Supra-national fora like United Nations (UN), Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) or phenomena like the Cold War, Globalisation and the rise of terrorism. This research

attempts to explore how these independent variables shape the dependent variable, i.e. India's Israel policy itself and how 'Change' occurred in the policy over time.

*Data Collection:*

The research primarily focused on Primary Data reflected in different government reports, available in Archives, memoirs and books by policymakers who witnessed various stages of this relationship and, most importantly, Interviews of Bureaucrats, Ambassadors who witnessed this relationship grow. In this regard, the government documents are sifted from the National Archives, New Delhi and IDSA Library, New Delhi, Israel State Archives, Jerusalem and National Library of Israel, Jerusalem and personal correspondence of various statesmen from Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (Teen Murti Library), New Delhi.

**Chapter Design:**

Since the major focus of the study is to evaluate India's policy shift chronologically, the Chapters are designed accordingly.

*Chapter 1. Historical Background (1947 - 1984)*

The chapter focuses on the covert and overt linkage between India and Israel from 1950 to 1984. It primarily tests two major claims of existing literature. One, This was a phase of 'non-relation' and two, New Delhi delayed the issue of 'normalisation' with Israel, mainly because the two countries represent two conflicting ideas of nationalism. Various primary data show that India and Israel maintained communication and even exchanged official visits, though not through Diplomatic missions. Nevertheless, this exchange was crucial to India. Thus, the theory of 'conflicting nationalism' as the factor that explains India's 'non-relationship' is factually incorrect. Israel responded to India's

need during the Chinese aggression in 1962, War with Pakistan in 1965, Bangladesh War (1971). Israel's spy agency Mossad was also instrumental in the formation of R&AW. This is a phase better termed 'Relations without Representation' rather than 'non-relations'.

***Chapter 2. The Policy of Normalisation: The Era of Rajiv Gandhi and P. V. Narasimha Rao (1984 - 1998)***

New Delhi decided to exchange diplomatic missions with Israel in 1992. The existing literature associates the 'event' exclusively with the collapse of Soviet Russia and the 'victory' of the US in the Cold War'. Based on available primary data, the chapter argues that the decision of 'Normalisation' was twofold. One is the decision to normalise in principle and the timing of 'normalisation'. Rajiv Gandhi took the decision in principle in 1985-86, purely from a national interest perspective. The policy was to normalise gradually, solely for domestic political reasons. For various reasons, it was delayed. P. V. Narasimha Rao implemented the decision at the 'right time'. It is further proved by post-normalisation engagement between India and Israel that the decision for full diplomatic relations was primarily for India's national interest. Within two months of the declaration of exchanging missions, even before the arrival of the first Ambassador of Israel to New Delhi, the Ministry of Defence, India, hosted a team of Israeli defence experts.

***Chapter 3. The Policy of Strategic Engagement: The Era of Atal Bihari Vajpayee (1998-2004)***

Pakistan's Kargil War (1999) underlined New Delhi's lacuna in Defence. India started military modernisation. Both at the time of the war and the post-war defence modernisation, Israel was engaged in pursuing a strategic edge. This engagement was

purely technical. Israel was crucial for its cutting-edge technology in surveillance. The rise in the menace of terrorism further deepened the relationship between the two countries. This was the era when Likud in Israel and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in India ruled the country. Thus, the opposition in India claimed this relationship was the product of 'ideological convergence'. The Government of India was blamed for alleged 'Ethnocracy' in Israel. The politics of India's Israel policy became more prominent than the actual strategic engagement between the two countries.

*Chapter 4. The Policy of Strategic Cooperation: The Era of Dr Manmohan Singh (2004 - 2014):*

Dr Manmohan Singh attempted to balance domestic political outrage against Israel and the country's importance in Strategic affairs. The foreign policy rhetoric and National interest were tactfully balanced. India criticised Israel in all global fora, including the UN, yet took the Defence and counter-terrorism cooperation to a new height. Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) took care of India's relations with the Arab world. In contrast, India's relations with Israel were taken care of by the Ministry of Defence, Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and the States (Provinces) concerned where Israel was cooperating on Agricultural innovation, Water Technology. By the end of 2008-09, two significant changes took place in India and the Middle East—Mumbai Terror Attack (2008) or 26/11 and the Arab Spring. While 26/11 cultivated public opinion in favour of Israel and its way of counter-terrorism in India, Arab Spring minimised the importance of the Palestinian question in the Middle East. With the swearing-in by Dr Manmohan Singh for the second time in 2009, the Left parties, a staunch opponent of Israel, were out of power. It became easy for the Manmohan Singh Government to declare the relationship as a 'Strategic Partnership' in 2012.

*Chapter 5. The Policy of Dehyphenation: The Era of Narendra Modi (2014 - 2019)*

Narendra Modi's rise to the highest office in India sparked enthusiasm for India-Israel bonhomie's supporters in India and Israel. Modi having a personal inclination towards Israel, categorically declared 'dehyphenation' between India's engagement with Israel and commitment to the Palestinian cause. It was the era of public appraisal of the Israeli Defence Forces and their style of counter-terrorism by the Indian Government. India was no more hesitant in acknowledging the strategic importance of Israel in its Security policy. BJP's preponderance in India's domestic politics and the decline of the Palestinian cause in Middle eastern politics paved the way for this. In Middle-Eastern politics, Israel is started to be approached as a potential source of opportunity and not a threat. Major Arab countries like the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain signed Abraham Accord (2019) with Israel, while Saudi Arabia is working towards such 'normalisation'. The primary threat in the Middle East, as perceived by the Arab states, is Iran and not Israel. Though India changed its foreign policy rhetoric toward Israel, it continues to criticise Israel in the UN with a lesser intensity. The Government of India's support of Israel does not indicate any national consensus; the anti-Israel public rallies are more than ever at the time of state visits by Israeli statesmen.

**CHAPTER - I**  
**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (1947-1984)**

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (1947-1984):**

*"I am proud to tell you that we have gathered in our bosom the purest remnant of the Israelites, who came to Southern India and took refuge with us in the very year in which their holy temple was shattered to pieces by Roman tyranny."<sup>1</sup>*

—Swami Vivekananda

### **Introduction:**

After much debate, discussion, and delay, the Republic of India recognised the State of Israel on September 17, 1950.<sup>2</sup> Soon after the recognition, the State of Israel established a consul in Bombay (presently Mumbai) to look after economic activities and manage the *aliya* through India, not only for the Jews of Indian origin but also for Jews from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran.<sup>3</sup> Though New Delhi did not set up any embassy or consulate in Israel, the Embassy in Ankara<sup>4</sup> and the permanent mission to the United Nations or UN were officially involved in the liaison between the two states.<sup>5</sup> New Delhi declared the Israeli consul the *persona non-grata* in the 1980s but did not

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<sup>1</sup> Swami Vivekananda. (1893, September). *Swami Vivekananda's Speeches at the World's Parliament of Religions, Chicago, 1893*. Retrieved from Belur Math, Ramkrishna Math and Ramkrishna Mission Official Website: <https://belurmath.org/swami-vivekananda-speeches-at-the-parliament-of-religions-chicago-1893/>, accessed on January 28, 2020

<sup>2</sup> Embassy of India, Tel Aviv, Israel. *Embassy of India in Israel*. Retrieved from the Official Website: <https://www.indembassyisrael.gov.in/pages?id=mbk5e&subid=lejRe>, accessed on June 18, 2017

<sup>3</sup> File No. 33-A(1)60-WANA, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *Visit for India Mr. Shmuel Stav— an Israeli National and representative of Jewish Agency*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India.

<sup>4</sup> Kumaraswamy, P. R. (1995, Jan). India's Recognition of Israel, September 1950. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 31(1), 124-138. p.133

<sup>5</sup> File No. 46(15)-AWT/48- Vol I, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *The Question of Recognising Israel*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India.

terminate the recognition of Israel the way Iran did at the same time.<sup>6</sup> Soon after, New Delhi resumed the Israeli consul in Bombay in 1985. Top officials of the Israeli foreign ministry paid covert and overt visits to India in their official capacity in this so-called 'non-relation' period. Apart from these formal diplomatic vicissitudes, India and Israel developed and maintained significant strategic collaboration during this absence of diplomatic missions. The standard academic argument in any work on India's foreign policy in general, or India's Israel policy in particular, is that New Delhi did not have diplomatic relations with Israel between 1948 and 1992. The critics of India's policy shift in 1992 decry the event as India's 'fall from high' on its commitment to the Palestine question<sup>7</sup>, and the champions of this policy change celebrate the event as 'course correction'<sup>8</sup>. While the Government of India considered the 'diplomatic normalisation' with Israel was 'natural concomitant' to the evolution of the political moves for restoration of peace in West Asia.<sup>9</sup> Given these differences in approach, the liaison between India and Israel is not considered diplomatic relations, thanks to the so-called theory of 'Conflicting Nationalism'. It is important to test such a hypothesis of 'non-relations' along with the impact of the argument of 'conflicting nationalism' on the backdrop of newly declassified primary documents of the Ministry of External Affairs, hereafter MEA, and memoirs of statesmen who dealt with this sensitive bilateral engagement in different stages.

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<sup>6</sup> Interview with Ambassador Yosef Hasseen (Former Israeli Consul to Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay, between 1979 to 1982) in Jerusalem, Israel on February 23, 2019.

<sup>7</sup> Hasan, S. (2008, Jan.-Feb.). The Evolution of India's Palestine Policy: A Fall from the Heights? *Social Scientist*, 36(1/2), p.79

<sup>8</sup> Gopal, K., & Sharma, S. (2007). *India and Israel: Towards Strategic Partnership*. New Delhi: Authors Press, 265

<sup>9</sup> Ministry of External Affairs. (1992). *Annual Report*. New Delhi: Government of India.

The documents underline that both governments maintained a significant yet often secret relationship that did not conform to the standard diplomatic practice of exchanging missions. Although, that cannot outrightly reject the validity of this liaison as a relationship per se. Israel responded to New Delhi's defence requirements in 1962 and 1971. India and Israel's newly established modern states exchanged ideas, tools and techniques on issues of mutual interests like Refugee management and Agrarian advancement. The key argument of this Chapter is that India's Israel policy in the post-Independence period is better described as the 'Relations without Representation' rather than the policy of 'Recognition without Relations'.

### **I. The Ancient Historical Connection between India and the Jews of Israel:**

It is broadly accepted that India was one such exceptional land where there were no instances of anti-Semitism from the days of the arrival of Jews in India till their departure to the modern State of Israel. However, some researchers refute the sacrosanctity of such a claim.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, the collective memory of Indian Jews<sup>11</sup> is full of personalities like the Maharaja of Jamnagar<sup>12</sup>, who treated Jews with amity and admiration. There is no room to discard that Jews were not merely 'tolerated', but

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<sup>10</sup> Aafreedi, N. (2020). The Delusion of the Absence of Antisemitism in India. In T. Naamat, *Antisemitism Worldwide 2019 and the Beginning of 2020*. Tel Aviv: Kantor Centre, Tel Aviv University, pp.180-191

<sup>11</sup> Unlike Islam or Christianity, Judaism is non-proselytising religion. Jews who came to India (in different stages of exodus in the *holy land*), like in other countries, after generations started mixing with the greater population with keeping some originality. Jews who went to Europe, known as European Jews, in the same way the Jews of India became Indian Jews. Though they were few in numbers and most of them returned to Israel after the establishment of the modern state, yet the community produced some great children who served the country.

<sup>12</sup> Digvijaysinhji Ranjitsinhji Jadeja or Jam Saheb was the Maharaja of Nawanagar. Nearly thousands of Jewish and christian children of Polish nationality faced exodus at the time of World War-II, were looking for refuge after fleeing Poland. As the ship reached Nawanagar, Jam Saheb welcomed the Children saying, "Donot consider yourself orphan, I am the father of all the people of Nawanagar, so also yours." The children of Polish origin gave him the sobriquet, 'Bapu'. The post world war II Poland and the Jewish Diaspora remembers Jam Saheb with respect and indebtedness. (Source : July 17, 2017 : The Times of Israel)

they were accepted, respected and assimilated into larger Indian society with humility, along with the acceptance of their autonomy of identity, cultural originality and spiritual differences. Jews had maritime commercial connections to the 'port of Ophir'<sup>13</sup>, mainly for trade in gold, silver, apes, peacocks and precious stones.<sup>14</sup> Six Hebrew words used to define these mercantile products are believed to have Indian origins has been interpreted as evidence of the existence of ancient commercial linkages.<sup>15</sup> One lost tribe of Jews settled on the Malabar Coast, considered the oldest Jewish community in India, and arrived after the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the second temple in 70 AD by Romans. The Baghdadi Jewish community migrated through Iraq and Aleppo to Surat and Mumbai (erstwhile Bombay) on the Western Coast and Kolkata (erstwhile Calcutta) in the East.<sup>16</sup> This community from all over the Ottoman Empire contributed to the development of Bombay's commercial and manufacturing houses.

There has been a fascinating yet profound claim that the Chitpavan Brahmins are Jewish descendants. Alongside DNA Mapping, the philosophy and practice of Chitpavans too are different from all other Brahmins of Hinduism. Chitpavans practice arms, unlike any other Brahmins.<sup>17</sup> Bnei Menashe in India's Northeastern states of Manipur and Mizoram are of Jewish origin, many of whom have migrated to Israel and settled

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<sup>13</sup> In the Bible, the 'Port of Ophir' is referred as a port with immense wealth, particularly gold. The 'port' was claimed to have commercial linkages, mentioned in the Bible. Though it is highly debated where exactly the port is referred. There are claims like it is in Malayasia or Sri Lanka or in Kerala, India.

<sup>14</sup> Blarel, N. (2015). *The Evolution of India's Israel Policy : Continuity, Change and Compromise since 1922*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp.39-41

<sup>15</sup> Basham, A. L. (2005). *The Wonder that was India: A Survey of the History and Culture of the Indian Sub-continent Before the Coming of the Muslims*. London: Sidgwick & Jackson, p.7

<sup>16</sup> American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise. *Jewish Virtual Library, A Project of AICE*. Retrieved from <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/india-virtual-jewish-history-tour>, accessed on 2019, May 12

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Mr. Nissim Moses, Historian, Geneologist, Anthropologist and Author of the book ' *The Heritage of Bene Israel in India* ' in Peta Tikwa, Israel on February 19, 2019.

there.<sup>18</sup> Interestingly, this ancient people-to-people contact could not pave the way for bonhomie between the modern State of India and Israel. Alongside, India and Israel gained Independence from the British colonial bondage following a similar path of communal bloodbath towards bifurcation of land. On the contrary, the relationship between the two modern democracies for the first four decades gradually shifted from indifference to hostility, at least publicly. The origin of post-independence hostility between India and Israel can be traced back to their struggle for statehood. India's mainstream freedom struggle, mainly led by Gandhi and Nehru and the Congress Party, was critical of Zionism.

## **II. The Palestine Question and the Discourse of India's Freedom Struggle: (1922-1947)**

### *a) The Congress Party:*

There was a parallel between the two countries, India and Palestine, in rivalry and clash of religions, cultures and political parties. Even though India was not a neighbour, Indian Muslims were as vocal as the Arab Muslims in defending their Islamic heritage of Palestine. Domestic Muslims' collective interest demanded attention from national-level leaders. India's struggle for Independence neither represents an uncontested understanding of 'Nation' nor does it represent a unanimous acknowledgement of Xenophobia. Palestine was the most discussed international political issue in the pre-Independence public sphere of India. Even the Constituent Assembly of Independent India addressed this issue repeatedly. Indian nationalist leadership, mainly the Congress

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<sup>18</sup> In 2003-04, DNA sampling of several hundred men could not provide conclusive evidence of their Jewish ancestry. In 2005, a smaller number of women shown middle eastern ancestry. The government of Israel accepted it a substantial evidence of their Jewish origin.

party, came across the Palestine question as a domestic political issue since the fall of the Ottoman Empire in Turkey at the end of World War-I, which coincided with the Balfour Declaration (1917) as it gained immense political appeal among Indian Muslims. The President of the Congress Party in 1922, Mohamed Ali, declared, "effective guardianship of Islam and the *Jazirat-al-Arab* (be) free (d) from all non-Muslim control... (it would be) a sad day indeed for us when any part of it goes out of the hands of the Muslims...Muslims will never acquiesce in any arrangements that permitted any form of control being exercised by non-Muslim power over any part of *Jazirat-al-Arab*."<sup>19</sup>

In the Wardha session in 1936 of the Congress Working Committee, hereafter CWC, the leadership extended support and sympathy at the time of the Arab Revolt (1936-39) to the Arabs, claiming it to be the "struggle for independence against British Imperialism."<sup>20</sup> The President of the Congress Party in 1938, Subhas Chandra Bose, criticised contradictory British Imperial policy to appease the Muslims in India and exploit them by appeasing Jews in Palestine. He strongly condemned the British plan to partition Palestine. He appealed to the Jews not to avail the tactical advantage of the British Mandate in Palestine and not allow themselves to be 'exploited' in the interest of British Imperialism. The Congress Party evoked the right of self-determination for Palestine. On the question of the Jews, CWC declared, "While sympathising with the plight of Jews in Europe and elsewhere, the committee deplore(s) that in Palestine the Jews have relied on British armed forces to advance their special claims and thus aligned themselves on the side of British Imperialism".<sup>21</sup> However, Kumaraswamy

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<sup>19</sup> Resolution adopted at the Gaya Congress of 1922 [Source: Kumaraswamy, P. R. (2010). *India's Israel Policy*. New York: Columbia University Press, p.30]

<sup>20</sup> CWC resolution adopted in Wardha in December 1938 [[Source: Kumaraswamy, P. R. (2010). *India's Israel Policy*. New York: Columbia University Press, p.45]

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

points out that the Congress Party neither took any formal position on the Jewish question nor proposed any possible solution. Unlike the Muslim League, the Congress Party did not refer to the Balfour Declaration in any of its resolutions; nor demanded the abrogation of the British promise for a Jewish homeland.<sup>22</sup>

*b) Mahatma Gandhi:*

To accommodate Indian Muslims into the acclaimed inclusive Indian political space, Mahatma Gandhi had to oppose Zionism. It was also not possible for Gandhi to support a movement that led toward the Partition of a country, even if with little ambiguity. Gandhi declined the idea of Partition, both in India and Palestine. Therefore, Palestine to the Arabs and no vivisection was permissible. He primarily considered the Jewish question a minority problem; consequently, he provided the exact solution to the Muslims in India—No separate electorate or a separate state but a political union.<sup>23</sup> In the aftermath of the Balfour declaration and at the time of the Khilafat Movement, Gandhi was extremely Pro-Palestine and critical of Jewish demands. His statement to the *Bombay Chronicle* reveals why he took this stance. "I would like my Jewish friends to impartially consider the position of the seventy million Muslims in India. As a free nation, can they tolerate what they must regard as treacherous disposal of their sacred possession?"<sup>24</sup> Mahatma Gandhi called for the 'Khilafat Movement' in support of the Caliphate that shaped India's Israel policy for decades to come. His call for Khilafat

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<sup>22</sup> Kumaraswamy, P. R. (2010). *India's Israel Policy*. New York: Columbia University Press. p.47

<sup>23</sup> Gandhi, M. K. (1939, May 27). The Jewish Question. *Harijan* in Mahatma Gandhi Collected Works, Vol. 75, pp,415-416

<sup>24</sup> Gandhi, M. K. (1921, March). (Bombay Chronicle, Interviewer) Mahtma Gandhi personal papers, Nehru Museum and Memorial Library, New Delhi.

Movement was to preserve the Ottoman Caliph's jurisdiction over territories, including Palestine. He further clarified to the Bombay Chronicle newspaper,

"The existence of Islam demands the total abrogation of mandates taken by Britain and France. No influence...over the Holy Places of Islam will ever be tolerated by Indian Muslims. Palestine must be under Muslim control ... No Canon, however, of ethics or War can possibly justify the gift by the Allies of Palestine to Jews...The Muslims claim Palestine as an integral part of Jazirat-al-Arab. They are bound to retain its custody, as an injunction of the Prophet."<sup>25</sup>

Later in 1931, in an interview with the Jewish Chronicle newspaper, Mahatma reiterated,

"Zionism in its spiritual sense is a lofty aspiration. By spiritual sense I mean they should want to realise the Jerusalem that is within. Zionism meaning the re-occupation of Palestine has no attraction for me. I can understand the longing of a Jew to return to Palestine, and he can do so if he can without the help of bayonets, whether his own or those of Britain. In that event, he would go to Palestine peacefully and in perfect friendliness with the Arabs. The real Zionism of which I have given you my meaning is the thing to strive for, long for and die for. Zion lies in one's heart. It is the abode of God. The real Jerusalem is the spiritual Jerusalem. Thus, he can realise this Zionism in any part of the world."<sup>26</sup>

In the same spirit, Gandhi claimed in *Harijan* in 1938, "Palestine belongs to the Arabs in the same sense as England belongs to the English and France to the French. It is wrong and inhuman to impose the Jews on the Arabs."<sup>27</sup> Gandhi's views on world

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<sup>25</sup> Gandhi, M. K. (1921, March). (Bombay Chronicle, Interviewer) Mahatma Gandhi personal papers, Nehru Museum and Memorial Library, New Delhi.

<sup>26</sup> Gandhi, M. K. (1931, October). (Jewish Chronicle, Interviewer) Mahatma Gandhi personal papers, Nehru Museum and Memorial Library, New Delhi.

<sup>27</sup> Gandhi, M. K. (November 26, 1938). The Jews. *Harijan* in Mahatma Gandhi Collected Works Vol. 74, pp.239-242

politics, particularly the Palestine conflict, are usually summarised by this often-quoted remark in Harijan.

Gandhi's response to the Palestine question had to be politically correct in the complex religious-political setting of the undivided sub-continent. Gandhi had to deal with similar problems in India that were taking place in Palestine simultaneously. The biggest challenge before him was consolidating a 'Nation' in India by engaging Muslims in the 'mainstream' Indian struggle. In the aftermath of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the Caliphate, Gandhi decided to engage in a 'mainstream' freedom struggle with the Muslim interest. He made the Caliphate cause India's cause and called for Khilafat Movement in India against the British Raj; to bridge Hindu-Muslim unity.<sup>28</sup> This non-violent movement demanded to preserve the Ottoman Caliph's former territorial jurisdiction over lands, including Palestine. Most importantly, Gandhi supported Ottoman rule over Palestine and Jerusalem as part of *Jazirat-al-Arab*.<sup>29</sup> Arabs of Palestine vehemently opposed Turks on religious grounds and the question of Secularism and Democracy.<sup>30</sup> Gandhi prescribed that the Jews and the Christians could freely go to Palestine or even reside and own property there. Mahatma demanded, "What Non-Muslims cannot do is to acquire sovereign jurisdiction. The Jews cannot receive sovereign rights in a place which has been held for centuries by Muslim powers

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<sup>28</sup> Bandyopadhyay, S. (2015). *From Plassey to Partition and After : A History of Modern India*. New Delhi: Orient Black Swan Pvt Ltd, p.298

<sup>29</sup> It is highly debated whether Jerusalem is part of *Jazirat-al-Arab* or not, cause geographically Jerusalem had not been a part of Arab Peninsula.

<sup>30</sup> Arabs were opposing the Ottoman Caliphate and organising resistance against it to the extent of collaboration with imperial forces primarily because they rejected the very legitimacy of the Ottomans, as they were not representing the clan of prophet Mohammed.

by rights of religious conquest."<sup>31</sup> The obliteration of the Ottoman Caliphate by the Turks put an end to any political relevance of the Khilafat Movement in India. However, it had primarily set a pattern for political discourse in India that impacted and decided the course of India's Israel policy for the next decade.

These statements often overshadow Gandhi's stand on the Jews and the proposed State of Israel. Gandhi had long associations and acquaintances with Jews since his days in South Africa.<sup>32</sup> He did not wholly reject the Jewish claims to Jerusalem. His anti-Zionism is not to be confused with anti-Semitism that Gandhi unequivocally pointed out as 'a remnant of Barbarism'.<sup>33</sup> He expressed his affinity and sympathy for Jewish suffering in ghettos. The World Zionist Congress assumed this old camaraderie as a potential icebreaker between Gandhi and Zionism. In 1936, The World Zionist Organisation sent Hermann Kallenbach and Henry S.L. Polak—two old comrades of Gandhi in South Africa to preach Zionism to Mahatma in Sabarmati. Though it did not result in any drastic change in his action or public statements, a meaningful change occurred in Gandhi's mind. He promised to study Zionist literature.<sup>34</sup> He kept quiet but kept his promise.<sup>35</sup> Gandhi started to link the problem of the Jews with that of Harijan. The Jews and the Harijans were suffering from persecution, scorn and outrage. Both

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<sup>31</sup> Gandhi, M. K. (1931, October). (Jewish Chronicle, Interviewer) Mahtma Gandhi personal papers, Nehru Museum and Memorial Library, New Delhi.

<sup>32</sup> Gandhi, M. K. (November 26, 1938). The Jews. *Harijan* in Mahatma Gandhi Collected Works Vol. 74, pp.239-242

<sup>33</sup> Gandhi, M. K. (1931, October). (Jewish Chronicle, Interviewer) Mahtma Gandhi personal papers, Nehru Museum and Memorial Library, New Delhi.

<sup>34</sup> Kumaraswamy, P. R. (2010). *India's Israel Policy*. New York: Columbia University Press, pp.36-37

<sup>35</sup> Kumaraswamy, P. R. (2018). *Squaring the Circle*. New Delhi: K W Publishers Pvt Ltd.

were victims of apartheid. Gandhi began to approach the Jews as the 'Untouchables of Christianity'.<sup>36</sup>

Mahatma's passionate feeling for the Harijans made him sympathetic to the Jews. This compassion gave birth to a new trend in Gandhi's approach to the conflict between Jews and Arabs over the 'Holy Land'. Gandhi never did it in the fashion that Moshe Shertock<sup>37</sup> and other leaders of Zionism wanted. However, Gandhi deviated from his earlier "Palestine belongs to the Arabs" approach. Gandhi never used any religious acronym to justify Arab claims or negate Jewish demand over the 'Holy Land' post-Khilafat period. It would have been both politically and morally incorrect for the Mahatma. He attempted to correspond with Adolf Hitler, protesting the Holocaust. However, there was no response from the Dictator. Gandhi advised the Jews to practice *Ahimsa* against the Nazis.<sup>38</sup> In June 1946, Gandhi reportedly expressed to American journalist Louis Fischer, "...the Jews have a good case in Palestine. If the Arabs have a claim in Palestine, the Jews have a prior claim."<sup>39</sup> Even after he acknowledged the Jewish claim for a 'home' in Palestine by partitioning the land, Mahatma demanded a complete withdrawal of the British role from the conflict and insisted that the Jewish

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<sup>36</sup> Gandhi, M. K. (November 26, 1938). The Jews. *Harijan* in Mahatma Gandhi Collected Works Vol. 74, pp. 239-242

<sup>37</sup> Moshe Shertock was Israel's first Foreign Minister and second Prime Minister. He was in charge of diplomatic contacts with global leaders on behalf of the World Zionist Congress before the establishment of the State of Israel.

<sup>38</sup> Gandhi, M. K. (1939, May 27). The Jewish Question. *Harijan*, in Mahatma Gandhi Collected Works, Vol. 75, pp. 415-416

<sup>39</sup> On March 8, 1946 Honick—the President of World Jewish Congress and Sydney Silverman, a labour member of British Parliament visited Mahatma Gandhi to gain his support for Zionist cause. Mahatma's reply went unrecorded to their question whether he sympathised with the aspiration of a Jewish state. Louis Fischer, a noted American journalist and biographer reported after three months about the referred statement by Mahatma. Fischer further clarified that Gandhi's reference to "prior claim" of Jews only meant chronological priority. [Source: Panter-Brick, S. (2008). *Gandhi and the Middle East : Jews, Arabs and Imperial Interests*. London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd.]

national home should be realised only with the 'consent' of the Arabs of Palestine.<sup>40</sup> He underlined the need for Arab-Jewish cohabitation. Gandhi accepted the natural desire of the Jews to establish a home in Palestine but advised that the 'Jews must wait for its fulfilment till Arab opinion is ripe for it'. He advised Jews to follow *satyagraha* to convert the Arab heart. Jewish aspirations must be realised in consonance and not in conflict with the Arabs. Mahatma Gandhi—a man with a unique moral character, did not believe in the 'zero-sum' nature of the conflict. For him, supporting Arab Nationalism does not essentially mean hostility toward any Jewish cause.

*c) Jawaharlal Nehru:*

The central point in Nehru's approach to Jewish political aspiration, like Gandhi, was not anti-Semitism but anti-Zionism. Sympathy for the collective misery of Jews in different parts of the world could not ensure public endorsement by Pt. Nehru for the political objective of the Jews. Like Mahatma, Nehru's approach to the proposed State of Israel was shaped by political correctness in the Indian subcontinent.<sup>41</sup> Nehru approached the Palestine issue as part of the larger question of colonialism. He inferred that the British were pitting "Jewish religious nationalism against Arab nationalism, and it appears that (their) presence is necessary to act as an arbiter and to keep the peace between the two."<sup>42</sup> Nehru accused, "British Imperialism had played its hand so cleverly that the conflict became the conflict between Arabs and Jews".<sup>43</sup> He drew a

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<sup>40</sup> Gandhi, M. K. (1939, May 27). The Jewish Question. *Harijan*, in Mahatma Gandhi Collected Works, Vol. 75, pp.415-416

<sup>41</sup> Kumaraswamy, P. R. (2010). *India's Israel Policy*. New York: Columbia University Press. p.83

<sup>42</sup> Nehru, J. (1942). *Glimpses of World History*. New York: The John Day Company. p.762

<sup>43</sup> Nehru, J. (June 1938 - July 1939). Peace and Empire. In S. Gopal (Ed.), *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* (Series I | Vol. 9). New Delhi: Orient Longman, p.66

parallel between Hindu-Muslim communal tensions in India and Arab-Jews tension in Palestine and accused British Imperialism for 'playing off one community against another'.<sup>44</sup> For Nehru, the problem was complicated by contradictory promises made by Britishers to the Arabs and the Jews.<sup>45</sup> He condemned Britain's betrayal of Arab interests after soliciting their support in World War I. Jawaharlal Nehru severely criticised the Balfour declaration of 1917 and the Peel Commission of 1937 report for the British Imperialist plan of partition solution.<sup>46</sup> With the League against Imperialism formation in Brussels in 1927, the bonhomie between Jawaharlal Nehru and Arab leaders was strengthened.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, he chose Arabs over Jews in their struggle because he drew some commonality between India and Arabs in Palestine. "In both cases, as elsewhere, nationalism comes into contact with new social forces and is affected thereby, and gradually takes shape as an aspect of the world problem...we (Indians and Arabs) must therefore understand each other and sympathise with each other."<sup>48</sup>

Nehru had sympathy and admiration for the Jews. He held that Jews "have a right to look to Jerusalem and their Holy Land and to have free access to them."<sup>49</sup> In 1938, Nehru witnessed the growing persecution of the Jews in Europe. Following his visit,

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<sup>44</sup> Nehru, J. (June 1938 - July 1939). Peace and Empire. In S. Gopal (Ed.), *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*. Series 1 | Vol. 9. New Delhi: Orient Longman. p 66.

<sup>45</sup> Nehru, J. (September 1935 - December 1936). The Arabs and Jews in Palestine. In S. Gopal (Ed.), *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*. Series 1 | Vol. 7. New Delhi: Orient Longman, pp. 572-574

<sup>46</sup> Nehru, J. (1942). *Glimpses of World History*. New York: The John Day Company. p.764

<sup>47</sup> Rubinoff, A. G. (1995, May). Normalization of India-Israel Relations: Stillborn for Forty Years. *Asian Survey*, 35(5), pp.490-491

<sup>48</sup> Nehru, J. (September 1935 - December 1936). The Arabs and Jews in Palestine. In S. Gopal (Ed.), *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*. Series 1 | Vol. 7. New Delhi: Orient Longman., pp. 572-574

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*, pp.572-574

Nehru advocated for India to become an asylum for persecuted European Jews.<sup>50</sup> He offered to facilitate the entry of Jewish refugees into India despite the opposition from the British Government of India. Nehru, in 1938, acknowledged that Jewish immigrants had helped improve Palestine by introducing new industries and raising the standard of living. He was admired among Zionist leaders for being modern, progressive and socialist. He shared ideological affinities and socialist leanings with eminent Jewish leaders like Chaim Weizmann and David Ben-Gurion. Nehru notably commented that the 'greatest socialists and communists had been Jews'.<sup>51</sup> In his famous book on World History, Nehru wrote:

"They (the Jews) had no home or nation, and everywhere they went, they were treated as unwelcome and undesirable strangers...They were humiliated, reviled, tortured and massacred; the very word "Jew" became a word of abuse...And yet, these amazing people not only survived all this but managed to keep their racial and cultural characteristics and prospered and produced a host of great men...from time to time, (they) suffer "pogroms" or massacres. These people without home or country...have never ceased to dream of old Jerusalem".<sup>52</sup>

Nehru supported Arab Nationalism but was not hostile to Jewish religious interest in Palestine. He had tried his utmost to practice secularism in any political forum. Thus, Nehru opposed the call for the Khilafat movement. Nehru criticised the pan-Islamic nature of Gandhi's Khilafat Movement; he blamed it for upholding the 'Islamic cause' and 'had nothing to do with India's struggle for Independence'. He rejected any role of

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<sup>50</sup> Nehru, J. (June 1938 - July 1939). Letter to Subhash Chandra Bose, dated April 3, 1939. In S. Gopal (Ed.), *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*. Series 1 | Vol. 9. New Delhi: Orient Longman, p.537

<sup>51</sup> Nehru, J. (1942). *Glimpses of World History*. New York: The John Day Company. p. 263

<sup>52</sup> Ibid. p 263

religion in the conflict and championed Kemal Pasha's commitment and leadership toward a Secular, Democratic and Westernised Turkey.<sup>53</sup> Nehru wrote,

"This was a purely religious question affecting Muslims only, and non-Muslims had nothing to do with it. Gandhi, however, adopted it, and encouraged others to do so because he felt it his duty to help a brother in distress...The general Muslim outlook was thus one of Muslim Nationalism or Muslim internationalism, and not of true Nationalism."<sup>54</sup>

Nehru's admiration and sympathy for the Jews; could not make him a champion of the Jewish homeland in Palestine. He was severely opposed to forming a Jewish state in Palestine, primarily because religion was the cornerstone of the proposed State. Nehru held that religion could not be the basis of a nation. Palestine could not be the 'homeland' for the Jews because it was 'already someone else's home'.<sup>55</sup> In a letter to the editor of a Bombay-based daily, *The Jewish Advocate*, he argued that Palestine was a predominantly Arab country, but Jews were an integral part of Palestine; thus, Jewish religious rights must be respected.<sup>56</sup> He unambiguously accused British Imperialist interest in the divisions. Nehru held that the withdrawal of British Imperialism was the precondition to resolving the conflict. Arabs and Jews should coexist in a secular and undivided Palestine with an autonomous Jewish area.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Nehru, J. (1942). *Glimpses of World History*. New York: The John Day Company, p.705

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, pp.735-736

<sup>55</sup> Nehru, J. (September 1935 - December 1936). The Arabs and Jews in Palestine. In S. Gopal (Ed.), *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* (Series 1 | Vol. 7). New Delhi: Orient Longman, pp. 572-574

<sup>56</sup> Nehru, J. (January 1937 - June 1938). Letter to A.E. Shohet (Editor, *The Jewish Advocate*), dated August 26, 1937. In S. Gopal (Ed.), *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* (Series 1 | Vol. 8 ). New Delhi: Orient Longman, p.713

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, p.713

*Voices beyond Congress:*

Gandhi and Nehru's obscure rejection of Zionism did not represent pre-Independent India's unanimous support to Arabs in the conflict. This difference of opinion, within and outside the Congress party, did not lead to any major political division or rift; yet it is significant to understand in this context. Vigilant scrutiny reveals the sensitivity and sympathy towards the Jewish cause by the makers of the Indian Nation. The leaders of the World Zionist Movement, namely Chaim Weizmann and Oslvanger, tried to gain the support of the Indian nationalist leaders. They successfully established and maintained ties with leaders like Sarojini Naidu, B.R. Ambedkar, Sardar Patel, and G.B. Pant. They assured their support for the Zionist cause. B.R. Ambedkar and Sarojini Naidu came out with formal pro-Zionist pronouncements.<sup>58</sup> The personalities like K.M. Panikkar and Vijayalakshmi Pandit were amongst them who publicly championed the establishment of a Jewish 'home land'.<sup>59</sup> Zionists were successful in acquiring support from Hindu Mahasabha. Madan Mohan Malavya welcomed Jewish students to the Benares Hindu University. Vinayak Damodar Savarkar was sympathetic to the Jewish cause but unwilling to allow them to migrate to India, a possibility Nehru offered. It is often argued that the Muslim League's struggle for Pakistan and the Zionists' fight for Israel follows the same trajectory of Nationalism.<sup>60</sup> Nevertheless, Muslim League vehemently opposed Zionism on religious grounds.

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<sup>58</sup> Kumaraswamy, P. R. (2010). *India's Israel Policy*. New York: Columbia University Press. p.62

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, p.62

<sup>60</sup> Devji, F. (2013). *Muslim Zion : Pakistan as a Political Idea*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p.3

a) *B.R. Ambedkar:*

Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar had drawn a parallel between the depressed classes of India and the Jews in their captivity in Egypt.<sup>61</sup> Babasaheb had found a leader whose 'infinite love for his people provided 'undaunted courage' to face hardship and bear calumny.<sup>62</sup> The original masterpiece "Moses and His Significance" was published in the Bombay Sentinel in 1941. He expressed, "if anything sustains me in my efforts to emancipate the Depressed Classes, it is the story of Moses undertaking the thankless but noble task of leading Jews out of their captivity."<sup>63</sup> For Bababsahaeb, "Moses was not merely a great leader of the Jews. He is a leader whose birth, any downtrodden community may pray for...whatever interest others may have felt in the story of the Exodus and the leadership of Moses, they have been to me a source of perennial inspiration and hope."<sup>64</sup>

Ambedkar was also compassionate to Jews for their agony in different cities of Europe.<sup>65</sup> He championed the Jewish struggle for a national state yet refrained from debating whether Arabs should pay the price for it. In other words, He did not comment on the zero-sum nature of the conflict. Though he categorically distinguished between 'National Home' and 'National State',<sup>66</sup> he approached the Jewish struggle for Israel is

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<sup>61</sup> Ambedkar, B. R. (1941). Dr. Ambedkar and the Jewish People. In H. Narake, N. Kamble, M. Kasare, & A. Godghate (2020), *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches*. Vol.17, Part-1. New Delhi: Dr. Ambedkar Foundation, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Govt of India, pp. 342-344

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, pp.342-344

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, pp.342-344

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, pp.342-344

<sup>65</sup> Ambedkar, B. (1935). Untouchables or the Children of India's Ghetto. In D. P. Borale, B. Phadke, S. Rege, & D. Pawar (Eds.) (2020), *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings And Speeches*. Vol. 5. New Delhi: Dr. Ambedkar Foundation, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment , Govt of India., p.77

<sup>66</sup> Ambedkar, B. R. (1945). *Pakistan or the Partition of India*. Bombay: Thackers Publishers. p 121

for 'National Home'.<sup>67</sup> He believed that as there was a land of promise for the Jews, the Depressed Classes must be destined to have their own.<sup>68</sup>

*b) Hindu Nationalism:*

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh or RSS and their affiliated political bodies like Hindu Mahasabha, Jana Sangh and finally Bharatiya Janata Party or BJP, popularly referred to as *Sangh Parivar*, or in other words, Hindu Nationalists are often labelled for practising anti-Semitism as well as being pro-Zionists. Though being used as pejoratives by their ideological opponents with political incentives, these two tags have some significant historical connections. Indian and Jewish Nationalist questions were being transformed into one body polity simultaneously in the first half of the last century. Ideologues of Hindu Nationalism, like the ideologues of Congress, e.g. Gandhi and Nehru, made a thorough evaluation of Zionism, mainly intending to justify their own struggle. The trajectory of Zionism was appealing to RSS because of the former's commitment to the formation of a State based on culture or ancient civilisational identity that the latter found similar in their context. The span between the two World Wars gave birth to various political ideologies, often conflicting and overlapping, to grow in a single state system. Sangh or its associates referred Nazis and Zionists at different times for their celebrated 'Cultural Nationalism', which led to a contradictory picture of RSS's stand in the conflict. It underlines that RSS, at least then, could not emerge as an ideology because of its incoherence and inconsistencies.

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<sup>67</sup> Ambedkar, B. R. (1945). *Pakistan or the Partition of India*. Bombay: Thackers Publishers. p 121

<sup>68</sup> Ambedkar, B. R. (1941). Dr. Ambedkar and the Jewish People. In H. Narake, N. Kamble, M. Kasare, & A. Godghate (Eds.) (2020), *Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches*. Vol.17, Part-1. New Delhi: Dr. Ambedkar Foundation, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Government of India, pp.342-344

i) *V. D. Savarkar:*

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, the most influential ideologue of Hindu Nationalism (though he was one of the harshest critics of RSS), had drawn the analogy of shared victimhood by Arab aggression. Savarkar was critical of the Jewish attitude they allegedly shared with Muslims, prioritising their respective 'holy land' compared to the 'homeland'. He pointed out that the Jews, even after centuries of prosperity, pay no homage to the shelter they found in Europe and America. He predicted that if the Zionists could successfully establish the Jewish dream, the Jewry in America or Europe would "naturally set the interests of their Holyland above those of their Motherland in America and Europe".<sup>69</sup> On the same note, he wished for the establishment of the Jewish State in Palestine that would "gladden us almost as much as our Jewish friends."<sup>70</sup> At the height of anti-Semitism in Europe, Congress, under the leadership of Nehru, adopted a proposal to welcome European Jews to India. Hindu Mahasabha opposed the Congress plan, calling it 'absurd', 'ridiculous' and 'suicidal generosity'.<sup>71</sup> He differentiated between Jews in India and abroad. Savarkar was not sceptical about Jews in India mainly because they were most amicably disposed to Hindus, particularly because the Jews are not proselytising people. Thus, political assimilation of Jews (along with Parsis and Christians) with Hindus in a 'common Indian State' is possible.<sup>72</sup> But, he was absolutely against any migration to India by whoever, even if the persecuted Jews. He stated clearly,

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<sup>69</sup> Savarkar, V. D. (1923). *Essentials of Hindutva*. Mumbai: Samarak Trust, p.51

<sup>70</sup> Savarkar, V. D. (19/12/1947). Glad to note that Independent Jewish State is Established. In S. S. Savarkar, *Historic Statements by Savarkar*. Bombay: Karnatak Printing Press, pp. 148-149

<sup>71</sup> Savarkar, V. D. (1925). *Hindu Rashtra Darshan*. Shirgaon: Prabhat Prakashan, p.37

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid*, p.37

"With every sympathy with the Jews outside India, the Hindus must, therefore, oppose the present Congressite proposal of inviting or allowing any new Jewish colony to settle in India. India must be a Hindu land reserved for the Hindus. While our own Hindu overpopulation in some parts of India is hard-pressed to find land for extension, how absurd it is to invite non-Hindu colonies to settle in our thinly populated parts... We must exhort our esteemed Divan of Cochin, in particular, to take a leaf out of the history of Travancore and set his face sternly against any proposal or outside pressure to allow the alien Jews to colonise the lands in Cochin."<sup>73</sup>

Savarkar praised Indian Jews as they were few in numbers and not antagonistic to India's 'national aspiration'.<sup>74</sup> Savarkar drew a parallel between the Exodus of Jews caused by Arab invasion resulting in the subjugation of their 'holy land' and Arab invasions in different parts of India like Sindh.<sup>75</sup> Since Jews, like Parsees and Christians, have been most cordial to Hindus for centuries and never advanced any unreasonable claims or had never indulged in political hooliganism or fanatical riots as a political means, they should resist being bracketed with the Muslims under the 'misleading and mischievous' common terms 'minorities'.<sup>76</sup> He regarded that Jews, like Parsees and Christians, would be comfortable with the broad framework of a constitution based on the principles that protect the political-civil rights of minority individuals.<sup>77</sup> The cultural and religious rights of the minority communities since these communities are too allied to Hindus in culture and patriotic too.<sup>78</sup> After the UN declaration about the establishment of Israel in Palestine, Savarkar expressed his

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<sup>73</sup> Savarkar, V. D. (1925). *Hindu Rashtra Darshan*. Shirgaon: Prabhat Prakashan, p.37

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, p.15

<sup>75</sup> Savarkar, V. D. (19/12/1947). Glad to note that Independent Jewish State is Established. In S. S. Savarkar, *Historic Statements by Savarkar*. Bombay: Karnatak Printing Press, pp.148-149

<sup>76</sup> Savarkar, V. D. (1925). *Hindu Rashtra Darshan*. Shirgaon: Prabhat Prakashan, p.63

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, p.63

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, p.63

gladness and shared Jabotinsky's view that the entire 'Palestine', from the West bank of the Jordan river to the Mediterranean sea, should have been the homeland for Jews.<sup>79</sup> He also criticised the Government of India's decision to vote against the creation of Israel in the UN, pointing it out as hypocrisy for the Indian State that had stabbed the unity and integrity of their own nation.<sup>80</sup> The rationale of his support for an independent Jewish state was intended to 'checkmate the aggressive tendencies of Political Islam globally and in India'.<sup>81</sup>

ii) *M. S. Golwalkar:*

Madhav Sadashivrao Golwalkar was the long-standing *Sarsanghchalak*<sup>82</sup> of RSS. Golwalkar's attitude to Jews has been more controversial and contradictory as well. Golwalkar was impressed by the ideas and writings of Ahad Ha'am, the ideologue of cultural Zionism.<sup>83</sup> Golwalkar expressed sympathy for the atrocities Jews faced because Christians tagged them 'Killers of Christ'. According to him, Hitler was no exception but a culmination of the 2000-year-long oppression of the Jews, first by the Christians and then by Muslims.<sup>84</sup> Golwalkar was a man of organisation dealing with the issues of real politics, not a fence-sitting intellectual like Savarkar, who was critical to everything, including RSS itself.

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<sup>79</sup> Savarkar, V. D. (19/12/1947). Glad to note that Independent Jewish State is Established. In S. S. Savarkar, *Historic Statements by Savarkar*. Bombay: Karnatak Printing Press, pp.148-149

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, pp.148-149

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, pp.148-149

<sup>82</sup> The highest position in the hierarchy of the Organisation, similar to the post of President in any organisation.

<sup>83</sup> Golwalkar, M. S. (1939). *We, or Our Nationhood Defined*. Nagpur: Bharat Publications. p.19

<sup>84</sup> Golwalkar, M. S. (1966). *Bunch of Thoughts*. Nagpur: Vikrama Prakashan, p.133

While discussing the integral connection between land and nation, Golwalkar expressed his sympathy to the Jews for the subjugation of their homeland and the establishment of tyrannous Roman rule followed by Arab Muslims and Ottomans that caused the Exodus.<sup>85</sup> Golwalkar also praised the Jews as exceptional, rich and advanced people for retaining their original religion and purity in their culture.<sup>86</sup> His claim that the Jews maintained their original language is factually incorrect.<sup>87</sup> Zionism, or the rehabilitation of Palestine with its ancient inhabitants—the Jews, was "an effort to reconstruct the broken edifice and revitalise the practically dead Hebrew national life."<sup>88</sup> He also believed that it has less or partial historical validity that Britishers (with the help of the League of Nations) began to rehabilitate Palestine with Jews.<sup>89</sup> The foundation of the modern State of Israel in Palestine, according to Golwalkar, was an affirmation of the argument that Country, Race, Religion, Culture and Language must coexist unavoidably to form a whole Nation idea.<sup>90</sup> The manifestation of the concept of a homogenous state that RSS itself propagated about India as '*Hindu, Hindi, Hindustan*' may be the reason behind this affinity. While explaining the same argument, he presented the case Nazi Germany and wrote: "To keep up the purity of the Race and its culture, Germany shocked the world by her purging the country of the Semitic Races—

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<sup>85</sup> Golwalkar, M. S. (1939). *We, or Our Nationhood Defined*. Nagpur: Bharat Publications, p.62

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, p.63

<sup>87</sup> Apart from Jews losing cultural connect with Eretz Israel, Diaspora in every country accepted language of the residential country over Hebrew. Hebrew as the lingua franca was replaced by local languages. Thus, when modern state of Israel was established and Jews made aliya to Israel, the biggest problem was the literal condition of 'tower of babble'. Later, David Ben Gurion took the initiative to revive Hebrew language.

<sup>88</sup> Golwalkar, M. S. (1939). *We, or Our Nationhood Defined*. Nagpur: Bharat Publications, p.64

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, p.79

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, p.79

the Jews."<sup>91</sup> The political opponents of Hindu Nationalists often project this statement as an act of support for fascism and, eventually, a show of support for ethnic cleansing and anti-Semitism. It is interesting to note that RSS disowned this book by Golwalkar on the ground that it does not represent the organisation's philosophy or Golwalkar's ideas since Golwalkar wrote it at the age of thirty-two, thus not a product of his political maturity.<sup>92</sup>

*c) Rabindranath Tagore*

In 1930, Tagore expressed to the *Jewish Standard*, "I respect the Zionist ideal and admire the selflessness of those who work for it."<sup>93</sup> Tagore was sympathetic to Jews for the torture and persecution they had faced. He expressed his respect for the Jewish culture and religion and admired the 'old race' for retaining and maintaining their originality even after decades in exile. Tagore regarded "Jewish Nationalism as an effort to preserve and enrich Jewish culture and tradition. In today's world, this programme requires a national home. It also implies appropriate physical surroundings as well as favourable political and economic conditions."<sup>94</sup> Interestingly, Tagore acknowledged the need for a Jewish state with exclusive political and economic rights, unlike Gandhi. But, Tagore criticised Jews for their hobnobbing with British Imperials. He held, "The Palestine problem cannot be solved in London by any negotiations between the British Government and the Zionist leaders...they (should) free themselves

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<sup>91</sup> Golwalkar, M. S. (1939). *We, or Our Nationhood Defined*. Nagpur: Bharat Publications, p.87

<sup>92</sup> Mukul, A. (2006, March 9). *RSS officially disowns Golwalkar's book*. Retrieved from The Times of India official website: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/rss-officially-disowns-golwalkarsbook/articleshow/1443606.cms>, accessed on September 26, 2020.

<sup>93</sup> Tagore, R. (1930). (Jewish Standard, Interviewer) Talk with Tagore / Ein Gespräch mit Tagore. ARC. Ms. Var.350 02 98 Martin Buber Archive, National Library of Israel, Jerusalem.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

of the Western concept of Nationalism."<sup>95</sup> Tagore held that the conflict was between the 'family'—thus 'adjustable'. The poet proposed a solution to the conflict, essentially an outcome of his understanding of Hindu-Muslim relations in India. He advocated 'A Palestine Commonwealth of Jews and Arabs'.

The idea was not to dilute any party's cultural autonomy and religious difference. Tagore regarded that both the conflicting races were stubborn enough to be subjugated. Thus, no one should try to subdue others. Both Arabs and Jews should preach and practice their own culture without any confrontation with the other.<sup>96</sup> The success of Zionism depends heavily upon Arab-Jewish Cooperation that can be obtained only through a direct understanding between the conflicting parties. Tagore advised Jews to be 'Palestinian' besides being a Jew.<sup>97</sup> The poet had substantial contact with Jewish intellectuals, including Einstein. He hoped Jewish scholars would come to Shanti Niketan to teach and energise local villagers. In 1936, Olsvanger requested a public declaration from the poet about Zionism and Tagore's astonishing reply was: "(my views) purely personal one and not meant for newspaper publication."<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Tagore, R. (1930). (Jewish Standard, Interviewer) Talk with Tagore / Ein Gespräch mit Tagore. ARC. Ms. Var.350 02 98 Martin Buber Archive, National Library of Israel, Jerusalem.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Olsvanger to Tagore (October 7, 1936) and A. K. Chanda, secretary to Tagore, to Olsvanger (October 23, 1936), Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem- CZA, S25/3583.

### III. The beginning of Independent India's Israel Policy: From Rejection to Recognition of the State of Israel (1947-1962)

#### *a) India's opposition to the Question of Partition of Palestine:*

The Government of India's approach toward the question of Partition of Palestine was amplified on several occasions by her representatives in the United Nations and its subsidiary bodies. It was defined at length by Justice Mr Rahman in United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP),<sup>99</sup> Mrs Vijayalakshmi Pandit at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 1947, and G.S. Bajpai at the second special session on Palestine<sup>100</sup>. New Delhi had consistently advocated that Palestine should be independent of the control of any foreign power and urged that no solution which is imposed and maintained by force could be sustainable.<sup>101</sup> India firmly held that Palestine should be independent and free from any single power's control; no solution can be lasting unless it is based on the consent of both Arabs and Jews.<sup>102</sup> India earnestly trusted that the good office of the United Nation's Mediator would enable a permanent solution to be arrived at, which would satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the Arabs in Palestine.<sup>103</sup> Foreign Secretary K.P.S. Menon expressed to the Consul in Charge of the Consulate General for Egypt in Bombay on July 31, 1948,

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<sup>99</sup> The United Nations Special Committee on Palestine was established on 15 May 1947 to ascertain the issues relevant to the problems of Palestine and submit its report to the Secretary-General by 1st September 1947.

<sup>100</sup> India was Secretary General of the said session.

<sup>101</sup> File No. 46(15)-AWT/48- Vol II, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *The Question of Recognising Israel*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India, p.101

<sup>102</sup> File No. 46(15)-AWT/48- Vol I, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *The Question of Recognising Israel*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India, p.13

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

"The Government of India have consistently felt that Palestine should be independent of the control of any foreign power and urged that no solution can be lasting which is imposed and maintained by force. India has viewed with sympathy the Arab point of view and opposed any solution which sought to divide Palestine into two completely separate states."<sup>104</sup>

J.S. Mehta, then an Undersecretary in the Ministry of External Affairs or MEA, possessed a significant yet moderate view,

"New Delhi never subscribed to the Arab claim for a Unitary state administered solely by the Arabs. India claimed to be neutral to the conflict that raged in the holy land. New Delhi extended its commitment to restore peace and support a scheme which would be just and likely to receive substantial approval from both sides."<sup>105</sup>

As a member of the UNSCOP, India supported the minority plan. It advocated the 'federal solution' with autonomous areas, a federated state with the most extensive possible autonomy to respective regions where the Jews and Arabs are in the majority, as the solution to the conflict.<sup>106</sup> In the Constituent Assembly, Honourable Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru argued that India's approach is:

"opposed to both the other attitudes which were before the United Nations. One was Partition which has now been adopted; the other was a unitary state. We suggested a federal state with naturally an Arab majority in charge of it but with autonomy for the other regions, i.e., Jewish regions. After a great deal of thought, we decided that this was not only a fair and equitable solution of the problem but the only real solution of the problem. Any other would mean just fight and conflict."<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> File No. 46(15)-AWT/48- Vol I, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *The Question of Recognising Israel*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India, p.101

<sup>105</sup> Ibid, p.13

<sup>106</sup> Ibid, p.13

<sup>107</sup> *Constituent Assembly of India (Legislative) Debates, Official Report. Vol. II.* (4th December 1947).

b) *Partition of Palestine and Reaffirmation of the State of Israel in 1948:*

After considerable deliberation, the UNSCOP accepted the proposal for the Partition of the British mandate of Palestine between Arabs and Jews, with an international control (corpus separatum) for the city of Jerusalem. The partition plan proposed the creation of two separate states for Arabs and Jews. The proposed Jewish State was allotted 5,500 square miles of area for some 498,000 Jews and 468,000 Arabs, whereas the proposed Arab State was allotted a 4,500-square-mile area home to about 800,000 Arabs and 10,000 Jews. All would be linked through an economic union.<sup>108</sup> On November 29, 1947, the UNGA adopted the Resolution by a vote of 33 to 13, with ten abstentions and one member absent.<sup>109</sup> Arabs outrightly refused to pay the price for the crime committed by Westerners in Europe and demanded that all of Palestine should be awarded to a Palestinian Arab state.<sup>110</sup> Whereas Jews could not accept Jerusalem, the centre of Jewish existence was not taken in the UN resolution as a part of Jewish territory.<sup>111</sup>

However, the left-of-centre Labour Zionists, led by David Ben-Gurion, adopted a pragmatic approach and believed that accepting the Partition would be the most logical and appropriate step.<sup>112</sup> Arabs of Palestine declared the situation '*Al Nakaba*'<sup>113</sup> and initiated riots against *Yashov* with the warcry to 'drive the Jews into the sea'.<sup>114</sup> Arabs

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<sup>108</sup> UNGA Resolution 181(II). (1947). *Future government of Palestine*. United Nations. (Discussed in detail in Introduction, pp 15-16)

<sup>109</sup> Reich, B. (2008). *A Brief History of Israel* (Second Edition ed.). New York: Facts On File, Inc, p.41

<sup>110</sup> Lapierre, D., & Collins, L. (1978). *O Jerusalem*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, p.12

<sup>111</sup> Ibid, p.5

<sup>112</sup> Reich, B. (2008). *A Brief History of Israel* (Second Edition ed.). New York: Facts On File, Inc, p.42

<sup>113</sup> Arabic, meaning Catastrophe or Disaster.

<sup>114</sup> Lapierre, D., & Collins, L. (1978). *O Jerusalem*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, p.84

adhered to their original position that Palestine being an integral part of the Arab World, is beyond any debate for the creation of any Jewish national home, and the UN has no right to supervise the same.<sup>115</sup> The forces of the *Yishuv*, particularly the *Haganah*, led the combat. The civil war condition in Palestine between the Arabs and the Jews was the prelude to full-scale conflicts after the end of the British mandate.<sup>116</sup>

With David Ben-Gurion's loud reading of the 'Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel' on May 14, 1948 (corresponding to 5 Iyar 5708 in the Jewish calendar), the new Jewish State declared its Independence in Tel Aviv. The declaration restated the Jewish people's religious, spiritual and historical connection to *Eretz Yisrael*, thereby validating the Jewish State in the biblical promised land.<sup>117</sup> The declaration did not mention any boundary for the Jewish State. It specified that it would ensure freedom of religion, conscience, language, education, and culture. The declaration set the framework for governing concepts and encouraged peace with its neighbours. World Jewry soon recognised Israel's Declaration as the homeland for all Jews, and renewed enthusiasm began among them for *Aliyah*.<sup>118</sup> For some, it was poetic justice against the historical injustices against Jews. For some others, it was the fulfilment of biblical prophecy, though orthodox Jews opposed the historic event as blasphemous for going against messianism.

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<sup>115</sup> Tessler, M. (2009). *A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, p.259

<sup>116</sup> Reich, B. (2008). *A Brief History of Israel* (Second Edition ed.). New York: Facts On File, Inc, p.42

<sup>117</sup> Provisional Government of Israel. (1948). *Declaration of Independence*. The Knesset. Tel Aviv,: Official Gazette: Number 1; . Retrieved from <https://m.knesset.gov.il/en/about/pages/declaration.aspx>, accessed on August 18, 2019

<sup>118</sup> Reich, B. (2008). *A Brief History of Israel* (Second Edition ed.). New York: Facts On File, Inc, p.43

Right after the Declaration, the Secretary-General of the Arab League intimated to the UN Secretary-General that Arab armies would infiltrate 'Palestine' to restore 'the rights of the Palestinian Arabs in the territories of Palestine'.<sup>119</sup> The Arab world refused to accept Israel's lawful presence. It took the pledge to demolish and eliminate the Jewish State and form a Palestinian Arab state in all of Palestine.<sup>120</sup> United forces of Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon attacked the State of Israel with the pledge to annihilate the Jewish State but faced a humiliating defeat.<sup>121</sup> Soon the defeated Arab nations signed bilateral Armistice agreements<sup>122</sup> with Israel, and the Superpowers initiated another commission to evaluate the situation in the Middle East, led by Count Bernadotte.

*c) India's Policy Shift to 'Strict Neutrality':*

With the establishment of the modern State of Israel by partitioning Palestine in 1948, a slow and subtle yet significant and sustained change took place in India's approach. Moshe Shartok, the first Foreign Minister of the Provisional Government of Israel, formally requested the Government of India for recognition on May 17, 1948.<sup>123</sup> India's immediate response to the Partition of Palestine was 'wait and see' and not formulate

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<sup>119</sup> Reich, B. (2008). *A Brief History of Israel* (Second Edition ed.). New York: Facts On File, Inc, p.44

<sup>120</sup> Lapierre, D., & Collins, L. (1978). *O Jerusalem*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, p.12

<sup>121</sup> Harms, G., & Ferry, T. M. (2005). *The Palestine-Israel Conflict*. London: Pluto Press, p.96

<sup>122</sup> Egypt on February 24, 1949, Lebanon on March 23, 1949, Jordan on April 3, 1949, and Syria on July 20, 1949 signed armistice agreements with Israel. The truce established lines that incorporated thousands of square miles that had been allocated to the Arab state of Palestine by the partition plan. Territories that were now, for the first time, called the Gaza Strip and the West Bank came under Egyptian and Jordanian control.

<sup>123</sup> File No. 11(8)-UNO IV/48, Ministry of External Affairs & Commonwealth Relations. (1948). *Question of Recognition of the Jewish State of Israel*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India.

any policy in a hurry.<sup>124</sup> MEA decided not to disclose their policy on the issue unless disinterested powers like the UK, China, and France declared their position.<sup>125</sup> Accordingly, MEA sent an 'important' message to all foreign missions on May 22, 1948, "Government of India have no (repeat no) intention at present of according recognition to the new State of Israel or any other new State that may be set up immediately in Palestine. In accordance with accepted international law and usage, the Government of India proposes to watch developments and see whether any stable Government is set up before going into the question of recognition."<sup>126</sup> It was also a question to the Government of India whom to recognise in Israel; Government, State or Territory. On May 24, 1948, the Cabinet Meeting resolution proposed not to take any action in this matter, and further developments were to be awaited. On May 28, 1948, Foreign Secretary K.P.S. Menon informed the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations (UK), "We shall not take a decision on this matter until the situation becomes much clear."<sup>127</sup>

Initially, New Delhi deferred the question of recognition to the State of Israel on the ground of legality. Indian policymakers had a legal-institutional bias, so they rigorously considered the legal perspective of recognition. Finally, New Delhi recognised Israel as a member of the UN, where the legal question was a concern. Immediately after the Partition of Palestine and the reaffirmation of the State of Israel, New Delhi had expressed that it observed a policy of non-recognition from a legal perspective. After Oppenheim, MEA firmly followed that recognition is impliedly and indirectly given

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<sup>124</sup> File No. 46(15)-AWT/48- Vol II, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *The Question of Recognising Israel*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India, p.2

<sup>125</sup> Ibid, p.2

<sup>126</sup> Ibid, p.8

<sup>127</sup> Ibid, p.6

when an old state enters officially into intercourse with a new, be it by sending or receiving a diplomatic envoy or by any other act through which it becomes clear that there is an intention to treat the new State as an international person."<sup>128</sup> MEA did not even reply to Moshe Shartok's request to recognise the State of Israel, primarily because, in that case, Mr Shartok would have to be addressed as the Foreign Minister of the Provincial Government of 'Israel'. MEA was cautious that the salutation could be interpreted by both the Jews and Arabs as a *de facto* acknowledgement of the sovereignty of Israel.<sup>129</sup>

Once the Government of India realised Israel was a *fait accompli*, MEA did not allow any missions to speak on the Middle East's political turmoil publicly.<sup>130</sup> Finally, New Delhi recognised the State of Israel within two years. The policy shift to Neutrality is evident in MEA's handling of a much-debated statement by India's envoy to Egypt, Mr Syed Hussain. On the occasion of the credential presentation to King Abdullah, he stated, "Indian sympathies are predominantly pro-Arab."<sup>131</sup> It sparked fury in domestic politics and could damage New Delhi's long-term interests. MEA received that there had been several adverse comments both in the Press (Hindustan Times on June 2, 1948, and 'Free Press Radio Journal' on May 25, 1948) and from private citizens against this alleged comment.<sup>132</sup> The statement was repeated several times on Pakistan's radio.

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<sup>128</sup> File No. 46(15)-AWT/48- Vol I, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *The Question of Recognising Israel*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India, p.11

<sup>129</sup> Ibid, p.11

<sup>130</sup> File No. 46(15)-AWT/48- Vol II, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *The Question of Recognising Israel*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India, p.77

<sup>131</sup> Ibid. p.21

<sup>132</sup> File No. 46(15)-AWT/48- Vol I, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *The Question of Recognising Israel*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India.

MEA had to disapprove of the statement by releasing a Press Note formally. These all happened because by the time MEA realised it must adhere to the policy of 'strict neutrality' in this conflict.<sup>133</sup> MEA reaffirmed that India's policy regarding Palestine remains one of Neutrality and strict observance of our obligations under the charter. MEA denounced Syed Hussain's statement as it did not conform to India's 'Strict Neutrality' policy, which might annoy the Jews. Hussain, when showcaused for such comments, argued in self-defence by quoting Mrs Vijayalakshmi Pandit in her speech in UN on October 11, 1947, clarified the Government of India's official stand on the conflict, earlier was,

"Palestine should be an Arab State in which Jews would be allowed wide powers of autonomy. Palestine should be given Independence. Palestine is predominantly an Arab country, and any solution that we may find this position of predominance should not be altered to the disadvantage of Arabs."<sup>134</sup>

This extended episode of miscommunication between MEA and Missions underlines that the Government of India had moved on from its pre-1948 commitment to non-Partition of Palestine from a politically correct perspective to pragmatic recognition of Israel as a *fait accompli*. Eventually, MEA indicated policy changes to the envoy after such loose comment in categorical terms when Archi K.P.S. Menon wrote to Hussain on June 11, 1948, "As for Palestine, we stand, as we have always stood, for its Independence under a federal form of Government. We realise, however, that recent developments have created a new situation which we are watching with much concern."<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> File No. 46(15)-AWT/48- Vol II, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *The Question of Recognising Israel*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India, p.21

<sup>134</sup> Ibid, p.34

<sup>135</sup> Ibid, p.27

*d) Towards Recognition:*

The Government of India had never rejected Israel's validity as a State but instead delayed to the point when it finally takes a political decision on the question of recognition because recognition is ultimately a political decision and not a legal question. In reply to a question in Lok Sabha on August 20, 1948, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru replied to Member of Parliament Mr H. V. Kamath that the Government decided to defer consideration of this question, instead rejecting the Israeli proposal to recognise.<sup>136</sup> Israel's admission to the United Nations on May 11, 1949, made their case stronger to be recognised by the Government of India. Prime Minister Nehru conveyed through Prime Minister's Secretariat on May 12, 1949:

"Now that Israel has been formally admitted to the United Nations, I think we should reconsider our attitude towards it. There is no immediate hurry, but no great delay either. Egypt's attitude in regard to Hyderabad has been irritating, and I think it is about time that we made some of these Arab countries feel that we are not going to follow them in everything in spite of what they do... We should at least wait till the United Nations Assembly is over and a little after. But it might be desirable to prepare the ground gradually in the minds of some middle East Ambassadors, etc., here."<sup>137</sup>

B Shiva Rao, India's permanent mission to the UN, wrote to Archi K.P.S. Menon on June 3, 1949,

"Now that it (Israel) has come in as a member in spite of our opposition, I hope we shall not maintain our attitude of hostility towards Israel. She is going to be a powerful member in the UN, and we must recognise her importance. I have not concealed from you my view that Arabs are sleeper customers, and so-far concessions have been one-

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<sup>136</sup> File No. 5(5)-AWT/48-Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *Question by Shri hari Vishnu Kamath in the Constituent Assembly of India (Legislative) regarding recognition of the State of Israel*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India, p.3

<sup>137</sup> File No. 46(15)-AWT/48- Vol III, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *The Question of Recognising Israel*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India, p.6

sided from us... first, Syria and now Egypt has supported Pakistan in its frivolous complaint before the Security Council about Hyderabad. I fail to see why we should continue to appease these feudal administrations of the Middle East... what we cannot ignore is that, apart from the effect that recognition may have our relations with the Muslim countries of the Middle East, Muslim opinion in this country has its importance."<sup>138</sup>

Interestingly, on February 27, 1949, much before the formal declaration of the recognition of Israel, Prime Minister Nehru, in response to a supplementary question raised by Mr Tyagi, Member of Parliament, clarified, "if 'recognition' involves a formal recognition with an exchange of diplomatic missions, we have not that. Of course, the fact of Israel being there as a State is recognised by us."<sup>139</sup>

The attitude of the Indian Bureaucracy changed in favour of Israel, not just because it gained the legal authorisation of the UN. However, MEA instead chose Israel over Arabs after witnessing the military triumph of the tiny State of Israel in their War of Independence in 1948. MEA pointed out,

"Israel has come to stay in the Levant. A small, progressive state on the Mediterranean littoral, surrounded on all sides by feudal and archaic survivals...our attitude towards Israel has also very necessarily been conditioned by our special relations to Middle Eastern Islamic neighbours and with the State of Afghanistan, which has evinced towards our motives and actions so much friendliness and respect...The creation of the new State of Israel is not without advantages to us. With Pakistan attempting to create and to lead a Muslim bloc in the Middle East, mainly directed against India. Our friendship with the small but potentially powerful new State will make the Middle East countries value our friendship instead of taking it for granted as they have tended to do so far. It will also enable us to curb their instinctive support to Pakistan in all Indo-

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<sup>138</sup> File No. 46(15)-AWT/48- Vol III, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *The Question of Recognising Israel*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India.

<sup>139</sup> File No. 5(5)-AWT/48-Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *Question by Shri hari Vishnu Kamath in the Constituent Assembly of India (Legislative) regarding recognition of the State of Israel*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India.

Pakistan questions...its (Palestine's) Partition now is, however, a settled fact. We should gradually thaw towards Israel—which will be too glad to have our friendship."<sup>140</sup>

Accordingly, MEA discussed opening avenues for communication channels for accepting Israeli proposals through all Indian missions, formal or informal, to establish diplomatic relations.<sup>141</sup> On May 28, 1949, Archi K.P.S. Menon wrote to all Indian foreign offices abroad,

"...the recent admission of Israel to the UN has altered the situation and the question of our recognising the new State of Israel is now being reconsidered. If any approaches are made to you by representatives of Israel for the establishment of diplomatic relations with India, we may be informed without any assurance being conveyed to them."<sup>142</sup>

*e) Domestic Factors, International Actors and India's Delay in Recognition:*

Indian public opinion was clearly polarised on this issue. Sikhs and Hindus had sympathy and support for the Jews, while Muslims supported their brethren.<sup>143</sup> On August 2, 1949, G.S. Bajpai wrote to the Ambassador of India in Prague, N. Raghavan that the major difficulty in considering the question of recognition to Israel is that the Government of India "cannot ignore the sentiments of the thirty million Muslims in India...we are however under no illusion regarding the fact that Israel has come to stay, nor we are unaware of its potentialities and sentiments towards India."<sup>144</sup> In the same

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<sup>140</sup> File No. 46(15)-AWT/48- Vol III, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *The Question of Recognising Israel*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India. p.7

<sup>141</sup> Ibid, p.8

<sup>142</sup> Ibid, p.103

<sup>143</sup> File No. 46(15)-AWT/48- Vol I, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *The Question of Recognising Israel*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India, p.2

<sup>144</sup> File No. 46(15)-AWT/48- Vol III, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *The Question of Recognising Israel*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India, p.41

fashion, Vijayalakshmi Pandit, India's Ambassador to the US, conveyed to her Israeli counterpart that her Government cannot ignore thirty million people's sentiments.<sup>145</sup>

On September 11, 1949, the Working Committee of the All India Hindu Mahasabha passed a resolution deploring 'the discriminatory policy of the Nehru Government in refusing recognition to the new State of Israel.'<sup>146</sup> Mahasabha praised their 'courageous struggle against powerful international forces' that 'recovered their freedom and have established a progressive state on modern democratic lines.' It called India's decision of non-recognition was hampering India's position in the Middle East since Israel is a member of the UN and most countries, even those who worked against the Independence of Israel, have recognised the Jewish State. Hindu Mahasabha approached the emergence of Israel as a sovereign state as a blow to British Imperialism and Pan-Islamism that served India's purpose over Pakistan. The Sabha called Nehru's policy an act of appeasement and finally appealed to the Government to reconsider the decision. The President of Shiromani Akali dal, Master Tara Singh, also extended his support to the Jewish State calling "the Jewish case is Just".<sup>147</sup> Socialist like HV Kamath was one of the harshest critics of Nehru's Israel policy in Parliament.<sup>148</sup> Educationist Taraknath Das accused Nehru's policy of not recognising the State of Israel as an act of "appeasement of Pan-Islamites in India and outside of India towards the Arab

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<sup>145</sup> File No. 46(15)-AWT/48- Vol III, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *The Question of Recognising Israel*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India, p.25

<sup>146</sup> Ibid, p.207

<sup>147</sup> Singh, Tara (1948, June 26). Letter to F.W. Pollack, *India and Israel*, (July, 1948, No.1) Bombay, Sanj Vartaman Press, p.6

<sup>148</sup> File No. 5(5)-AWT/48-Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *Question by Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath in the Constituent Assembly of India (Legislative) regarding recognition of the State of Israel*. New Delhi: Government of India.

league...Their policy of appeasement is nothing but wishful thinking...but appeasement never succeeds."<sup>149</sup>

By June 1949, New Delhi decided to recognise Israel but could not determine what would be the right time to declare such a move. Prime Minister's Secretariat notified, "That time (of recognition) cannot be later than the beginning of the next General Assembly of UN, that is in September. Preferably, it should be some time before that, say in August."<sup>150</sup> On October 25, 1949, Archi telegraphed the Indian embassy in Washington to vote in favour of Israel's admission into the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations or FAO and Universal Postal Union.<sup>151</sup> Though, even by January 1950, New Delhi could not decide what would be the 'right time' to recognise the Jewish State. On February 12, 1950, Prime Minister's Secretariat informed that, for the present, India need not raise the issue of recognising Israel so long as the Security Council deals with the Kashmir issue. However, New Delhi should not wait indefinitely.<sup>152</sup> Prime Minister Nehru admitted that Arab countries consistently threatened and warned about the undesirability of India's Recognition of Israel.<sup>153</sup>

On January 5, 1950, the Grand Mufti of Palestine, Al-Haj Amin Al Husseini, called upon the Indian Ambassador to Cairo. He urged the ambassador that the smaller countries of the Middle East were being ground down, and they were looking forward with hope to this Asiatic Block, which was being organised by the efforts of Pt. Nehru.

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<sup>149</sup> Das, Taraknath. (1948, October). I am against Appeasement... *India and Israel*, p.19.

<sup>150</sup> File No. 46(15)-AWT/48- Vol III, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *The Question of Recognising Israel*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India, p.13

<sup>151</sup> Ibid, p.29

<sup>152</sup> Ibid, p.42

<sup>153</sup> Ibid, p.42

With the recognition of Israel, the Arab countries would not remain very friendly with India and would come in the way of forming an Asiatic group of friendly nations.<sup>154</sup> MEA maintained regular diplomatic contacts with Diplomats from Egypt, Iraq and Iran before Recognition. Indian missions in those countries were also tasked with coordinating the foreign offices of their countries. All missions from these countries warned MEA of adverse public opinion and political reaction.<sup>155</sup> Even Iran, which recognised the State of Israel, was also critical of New Delhi's probable move toward recognition.<sup>156</sup> India's Ambassador to Cairo, Mr Syed Hussain, wrote to Archi K.P.S. Menon on December 17, 1949, on being called by the Lebanese Minister, "Lebanon would consider the Recognition of Israel (by India) as a distinctly unfriendly act and would request India to reconsider the decision and refrain from taking such step...we are not asking that you should do anything positive for us, but only that you will refrain from taking the step of recognising the State of Israel. You have so far not done so, and we see no reason why you should change your policy...in the present circumstances, it would not be desirable to precipitate to any action which will alienate Arab states from India. The Recognition of Israel will be considered an unfriendly act, and Pakistan will make the fullest use of it. It may also have repercussions on Kashmir issue."<sup>157</sup>

Earlier in April 1948, the first Foreign Minister of Israel stated in Knesset that Israel would prefer the establishment of an independent Arab state, taking in the Gaza strip and Arab-occupied territory of the Jordan river occupied respectively by Egyptian and

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<sup>154</sup> File No. 46(15)-AWT/48- Vol III, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *The Question of Recognising Israel*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India, p.74

<sup>155</sup> File No. T/52/9961/23, Ministry of External Affairs. (1952). *Extracts relating to Israel from reports of various Indian mission abroad*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> File No. 46(15)-AWT/48- Vol III, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *The Question of Recognising Israel*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India, p.119

Trans-Jordan forces. The Foreign Minister of Israel outrightly rejected any room for Arab expectation for recovering the territory through negotiations that they had lost in War.<sup>158</sup> Thanks to the Arab invasion of Israel, the Government of Israel revised its original position of accepting the Arab minority of 45 per cent under peaceful conditions.<sup>159</sup> Though, they agreed to pay compensation for property abandoned by the refugees. Secretary General of MEA, G.S. Bajpai, realised, "this is going to make recognition of Israel by us difficult."<sup>160</sup>

India, being committed to the UN as a foreign policy principle, could not ignore recognising a member state. To a large extent, Israel's membership in the UN had been a factor behind India's decision to recognise the Jewish State, and even it did not vote in favour of the Partition of Palestine. Nehru wrote Foreign Secretary on February 12, 1950,

"With regard to the question of Recognition to Israel, we have so far been following HMG (Her Majesty's Government) in that we have not yet recognised it although many other countries including USA, USSR, Czechoslovakia...El Salvador had recognised it. We have also been following recommendations of the UN in that we have not supplied arms to either the Arabs or the Jews., although the former (Egypt) asked for them...we have deliberately refrained from recognising Israel. But the fact remains that Israel is a member of UN and we have to deal with it from day to day there as such member...how can we refuse to recognise a country which is a member of the United Nations. A recognition does not mean accepting any policy of Israel."<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> File No. 46(15)-AWT/48- Vol III, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *The Question of Recognising Israel*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India, p.35A

<sup>159</sup> Ibid, p.35A

<sup>160</sup> Ibid, p.35A

<sup>161</sup> Ibid, p.42

*f) Recognition without Exchange of Diplomatic Missions:*

Finally, India recognised the State of Israel on September 17, 1950. New Delhi wanted to broadcast the message that there should not be any confusion about the status of the recognition, whether *de jure* or *de facto*.<sup>162</sup> The Prime Minister, however, in his note of August 29, qualified the recognition as 'formal' to avoid confusion about whether the recognition is *de jure* or *de facto*.<sup>163</sup> Prime Minister had previously made it clear, on several occasions, that his Government did not deny Israel's factual existence. Therefore he inferred that by 'formal Recognition', by which he meant no more than an official acknowledgement of the fact that the State of Israel existed.<sup>164</sup>

New Delhi was neither a global player nor a irrelevant power at that time; it could be described as a fence sitter who kept a vigilant eye on global power dynamics. While making the policy vis a vis the State of Israel, particularly whether or not to recognise the State of Israel, the Ministry of External Affairs considered the action of other global players. On one side, MEA carefully observed the diplomatic conduct by the United States of America, *de jure* and *de facto* recognition by Soviet Russia<sup>165</sup>, almost immediately after the establishment of the Jewish State. On the other hand, New Delhi noted how Pakistan and Arab countries responded to the question of recognising Israel. Interestingly, India most carefully followed the approach of the UK and most

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<sup>162</sup> File No. 46(15)-AWT/48- Vol V, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *The Question of Recognising Israel*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India, p.21

<sup>163</sup> Ibid, p.25

<sup>164</sup> Ibid, p.25

<sup>165</sup> In fact, there was no strings attached in the Soviet recognition to Israel, it was both *de jure* and *de facto*. US recognition to the State of Israel was subject to establishment of competent authority along with General Elections in the newly formed State. In this sense, it was USSR who first gave *de facto* recognition to Israel and USA was first to give *de jure* recognition.

respectfully mentioned as 'HMG' or Her Majesty's Government, that for a long time influenced New Delhi's action even after the Independence, at least in this crucial conflict.<sup>166</sup> On January 28, 1949, G.S. Bajpai wrote to Archi Menon that the UK had "asked us to consider de facto recognition."<sup>167</sup> India was not represented in Palestine in 1948, and her "interests" were looked after by 'HMG'. Thus, MEA prescribed that "it would be appropriate for us to leave the decision and the timing to that Government (UK Government)."<sup>168</sup> Even after formal requests from the Provincial Government of Israel, MEA looked forward to the "firm views from HMG".<sup>169</sup> New Delhi followed the UK in Israel question until London accepted Count Bernadotte Plan and recognised the Jewish State within five months of their *de jure* recognition of the Jewish State.<sup>170</sup>

S.V. Kesjkar, Deputy Minister in MEA, advocated India's recognition of Israel so that the Jewish lobby in Global (US-based) media houses could be, to some extent, appeased and cooled down in their criticism of the Government of India.<sup>171</sup> When India finally decided to recognise Israel, New Delhi decided to forward the argument to the opponents of India's upcoming move that Turkey being a Muslim state, had already recognised the Jewish State and India was not doing anything pathbreaking. India was also extremely calculative of Pakistan, so they could not further exploit any situation in

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<sup>166</sup> File No. 46(15)-AWT/48- Vol I, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *The Question of Recognising Israel*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India.

<sup>167</sup> File No. 11(8)-UNO V/48- Vol II, Ministry of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations (1948). *The Question of Recognition of the Jewish state of Israel*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India, p.6

<sup>168</sup> File No. 46(15)-AWT/48- Vol I, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *The Question of Recognising Israel*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India, p.2

<sup>169</sup> Ibid, p.4

<sup>170</sup> U.K. recognised Israel de facto on May 13, 1949 and de jure on April 28, 1950.

<sup>171</sup> File No. 46(15)-AWT/48- Vol V, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *The Question of Recognising Israel*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India, p.7

India to instigate any communal bloodbath or Balkanisation. New Delhi had always maintained that diplomatic engagement in this conflict was essential to gain global diplomatic relevance and leverage but never took any revolutionary steps.

At the time of Recognition, Nehru decided not to establish diplomatic missions in each other's Capital which in a way meant a conscious decision in favour of the staggering of this Relationship. Nehru held, "it is not a matter of high principles, but it is based on how we could best serve and be helpful in the area...After careful thought, we felt that while recognising Israel as an entity, we need not at this stage exchange diplomatic personnel."<sup>172</sup> Nehru and the President of Burma, U Nu, attempted to welcome Israel to Bandung Conference in 1955.<sup>173</sup> The principle of Neutrality did not just drive it; the move was also committed to providing a space for dialogue between the conflicting parties. The Arabs and Pakistan rejected the proposal. In the same period, Nehru had correspondence with Albert Einstein, who influenced the Prime Minister of India to a large extent to recognise the Jewish State.<sup>174</sup> On June 13, 1947, Albert Einstein wrote to Nehru, "The Jewish survivors demand the right to dwell amid brothers, on the ancient soil of their fathers".<sup>175</sup> He appealed to the Prime Minister of India to brush aside 'the rivalries of power politics' and to support 'the glorious renaissance which has begun in Palestine'.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> File No. 46(15)-AWT/48- Vol V, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *The Question of Recognising Israel*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India, p.17

<sup>173</sup> Brecher, M. (1968). *India and World Politics : Krishna Menon's View of the World*. London: Oxford University Press, p. 52

<sup>174</sup> Interview with Ambassador Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty (Deputy Chief of India's mission in Tel Aviv, 1995-1999) in New Delhi, India on September 8, 2016.

<sup>175</sup> Einstein, A. (1947, June 13). Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru, Jerusalem: The Central Zionist Archive.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

Even after the Recognition, the relationship did not 'fully grow' or did not grow as per the standard practice of exchange of missions in each other's Capital. The first Director General of the Foreign Ministry of Israel, Dr Walter Eytan, visited India as the State Guest, following all the protocols, on March 9, 1952.<sup>177</sup> On meeting Nehru, he insisted on the establishment of diplomatic missions in each other's Capital.<sup>178</sup> Nehru assured, but it did not materialise (or materialised only after forty years). Instead, a Consul of Israel in Bombay was set-up to take care of the commercial interests of the Jewish State and arrange the migration of Jews to Israel from South and South Eastern Asia.<sup>179</sup> At the time of the Suez Canal Crisis, India and the United States of America tried to mediate the crisis.<sup>180</sup> Nehru did not outrightly reject Israel's right to navigate in Suez, as the Arab states argued. This was the first time, after Israel's Independence, the Jewish State came into terms of Cooperation with the UK. The Britishers were extremely hostile toward any Jewish cause at the time of the Partition of Palestine. Although this was when the arguments popularised by Arabs that Israel is a Western installation in Asia, the Israel-Palestine struggle is the question of Asian integrity started to be popular in India.<sup>181</sup>

Nehru was impressed with Israeli excellence in managing the refugee crisis and agriculture. There were significant exchanges of technocrats for broadening

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<sup>177</sup> File No. T/52/1741/23-AWT, Ministry of External Affairs. (1952). *Correspondence in connection with the visit to New Delhi of Dr. Walter Eytan, Director Genral, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel* . National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> File No. 33-A(1)60-WANA, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *Visit for India Mr. Shmuel Stavv— an israeli National and representative of Jewish Agency*. New Delhi: Government of India.

<sup>180</sup> Brecher, M. (1968). *India and World Politics : Krishna Menon's View of the World*. London: Oxford University Press, p.77

<sup>181</sup> File No. 46(15)-AWT/48- Vol III, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *The Question of Recognising Israel*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India. p.119

Cooperation in the field of Agro-tech.<sup>182</sup> He sent Mrs Sucheta Kriplani to Israel to learn Refugee management, the Dawn newspaper of Pakistan projected as an act of setting up a mission in Israel.<sup>183</sup> In response to an invitation from Israel to study their cooperative system of Agriculture and Marketing in March 1953, The Government of India sent four officers of the different Provincial Governments, including one from the Government of Jammu and Kashmir, for training for four months.<sup>184</sup> In the mid-1960s, Gen. David Shaltiel, chief of the Israeli Army, had come to India on a secret visit. In the wake of the Indo-China war in 1962, Israel had dispatched the desperately needed 81 mm and 120 mm mortars and some pack howitzer artillery guns with ammunition.<sup>185</sup> But, Nehru did not convert this bilateral engagement into an exchange of mission. A major reason was, of course, financial. Due to budgetary constrain, New Delhi could not establish diplomatic missions in many countries that it recognised without hesitation and engaged in bilateral terms. Israel was no anomaly.<sup>186</sup> Secondly, Pakistan in the UN and other international fora started drawing parallels between Palestine and Kashmir with the insertion of religious similarities.<sup>187</sup> It could have been very easy for New Delhi to ally with Israel, mainly because both had no clash of interests and had

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<sup>182</sup> File No. 7.22 (20)-AWT/50, Ministry of External Affairs. (1950). *Admission of a scholar from Israel into the Agricultural Methodology Sector in Poona*. National Archives of India, New Delhi: Government of India.

<sup>183</sup> File No. F-22(1)-AWT/50, Ministry of External Affairs (1950). *A Copy of report by Mrs. S. Kriplani about refugee problems in Israel*. National Archives of India, New Delhi: Government of India.

<sup>184</sup> File No. 19(5)-K/54, Ministry of States Kashmir Section (1954). *Deputation of Shri GK Beg of J&K State for studying methods of co-operative farming*. National Archives of India, New Delhi: Government of India.

<sup>185</sup> Malik, G. V. (2013). *India's Military Conflicts and Diplomacy : An Inside view of Decision Making*. New Delhi: Harper Collins Publishers India, p.194

<sup>186</sup> File No. 7.23(7)-AWT/50, Ministry of External Affairs (1950). *Routine papers relating to Qno. 807 asked by Shri HV Kamath in Narliament*. National Archives of India, New Delhi: Government of India.

<sup>187</sup> File No. 46(15)-AWT/48- Vol II, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *The Question of Recognising Israel*. National Archives of India, New Delhi: Government of India, p.2

structural and ideological affinity since Socialism was the cardinal political value in both countries. But New Delhi could not allow Pakistan to draw an analogy between Kashmir and Israel. That would simply put Kashmir as a 'disputed territory' and symbolise a struggle for global political Islam. Thus, India decided to ally with Egypt's Nasser, a staunch opponent of Israel and a relatively Secular Muslim, so that the Arab world's rising support for Pakistan on Kashmir issues could be checked.<sup>188</sup> As far as Israel was concerned, New Delhi usually maintained second-track diplomacy routed through the West European countries. Thus, exchanging a mission was not a key concern for India. However, Krishna Menon held that New Delhi should have exchanged missions with Israel at the time of recognition.<sup>189</sup> By this policy of recognition without Diplomatic Mission, Nehru, on the one hand, successfully conducted bilateral exchanges with Israel and, on the other, tackled Arab support towards Pakistan on Kashmir. Yet, by recognising the Jewish State, he signalled to the Islamic world that he would not compromise on the question of autonomy in the domain of policy formulation.

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<sup>188</sup> Brecher, M. (1968). *India and World Politics : Krishna Menon's View of the World*. London: Oxford University Press. P.80

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

#### **IV. The Emergence of Secret Diplomacy: Between Public Hostility and Covert Cooperation (1964-1984)**

With the demise of Jawaharlal Nehru, an era of Indian politics, India's foreign policy, for that matter, had come to an end. The shocking memory of China's War (1962) questioned the very foundation of India's foreign policy's inclination towards NAM and other lofty policies. The change in India's foreign policy took place without much uproar of changes in foreign policy rhetoric.<sup>190</sup> In the post-Nehruvian era, India's approach to Israel had two clear-cut parallel worlds of relationship. The open, public and accessible world was characterised by India's self-appointed role of denouncing Israel in any possible way, from the floor of global fora to the grounds of the domestic electoral campaign. This stance was politically correct and convenient for New Delhi. On the other hand, New Delhi had intense, real and pragmatic yet covert avenues for Israel to pursue its national interest. In the post-Nehruvian phase, the Indo-Israel relationship went to its all-time low regarding diplomatic exchange. Yet, a new chapter began in terms of defence and intelligence collaboration. Israel collaborated with India in setting up the later's foreign intelligence wing R&AW and responded to India's defence needs in multiple wars and internal crises. All these were not just a buyer-seller relationship; Israel stood by India, going against the US interest.

##### *a) Public Hostility:*

In his speech at the Non-Aligned Nations conference in Cairo on October 7, 1964, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri, the then Prime Minister of India, reiterated the Nehruvian

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<sup>190</sup> Mansingh, S. (2015). Indira Gandhi's Foreign Policy : 'Hard Realism?'. In D. M. Malone, C. R. Mohan, & R. Srinath, *The Oxford Handbook of Indian Foreign Policy*. New York: Oxford University press, pp. 104-115

principle of commitment to 'freedom and peace, non-Alignment, peaceful co-existence and to the eradication of racialism and colonialism'.<sup>191</sup> In his speech, he expressed his commitment to settling all disputes through peaceful means and the abolition of War.<sup>192</sup> Shastri turned more pragmatic and 'Realist' within less than a year. Armed infiltration from Pakistan and Pak-occupied Kashmir, and violation of the ceasefire line, pushed Shastri to adopt a more pragmatic, 'Realist' approach than his predecessor. His declaration of 'Force will be met with Force' and call 'to reckon with the situation in a realistic manner' underlines India's reorientation of managing Peace and Security.<sup>193</sup> However, this reorientation of India's foreign policy did not correspondingly impact India's Israel policy. New Delhi continued to adhere to Non-Aligned countries' official stand on the Palestine question of endorsing "the full restoration of all the rights of the Arab people of Palestine to their homeland, and their inalienable right to self-determination, and full support to the Arab people of Palestine in their struggle for liberation from colonialism and racism".<sup>194</sup> The Palestine question had been a significant focus for Indian statesmen during bilateral dialogue with any heads of West Asian countries or in any multilateral fora. However, New Delhi maintained its leap service to the cause without actively engaging with the problem.

Shastri's Prime Ministership is marked with a 'diplomatic discourtesy' to the Jewish State. The President of Israel, Mr Zalman Shazar, on his official visit to Nepal in

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<sup>191</sup> Shastri, L. B. (1989). *Saga of Bahadur Shastri*. New Delhi: Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri Sewaniketan (Fatehpur Baranch) Publication, p.330

<sup>192</sup> Ibid, p.330

<sup>193</sup> Shastri, L. B. (1989). *Saga of Bahadur Shastri*. New Delhi: Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri Sewaniketan (Fatehpur Baranch) Publication.

<sup>194</sup> Declaration of Conference of Non-Aligned Countries Programme for Peace And International Co-Operation, Oct 05, 1964 [Source: Ministry of External Affairs. (1964-65). *Annual Report*. New Delhi: Government of India, p.251]

February 1966, had a stop-over in Calcutta (now Kolkata), India.<sup>195</sup> The diplomatic discourtesy by the Government of India was unprecedented. The President of Israel was 'allowed' to transit "entirely in a private capacity". The Asian Division of the Israeli Foreign Office was informed in advance not to expect 'to be treated as a State Guest or to receive any special attention.' Primarily, the Government of India had committed to a 'functional arrangement' of a stop-over in New Delhi but later changed the plan and decided to 'allow' the President to have the stop-over in Calcutta.<sup>196</sup> The intention of the Government of India behind such a move was not to allow the President of Israel to make any courtesy or diplomatic visits with any of the opposition leaders in the Capital.<sup>197</sup> In his forty minutes halt at Palam Airport, no representative of MEA (not even a protocol officer) visited the Israeli President for courtesy. In Calcutta, he faced a protest by a group of Arab students.<sup>198</sup> The opposition leaders like Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee criticised the 'discourtesy' by the Government. They argued that since India recognises Israel as a 'friendly state', they deserve much better treatment even if the mission is not exchanged with the Jewish State as New Delhi does with the German Democratic Republic.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> The President of Israel was on his way to Nepal to celebrate five years of diplomatic relationship. New Delhi kept an eye, but was not sceptical about the relationship nor objected on the establishment of the relationship.

<sup>196</sup> Shri Dinesh Singh, Minister of External Affairs, intimated the Parliament on 25<sup>th</sup> March 1966. [Source: Lok Sabha Secretariat. (1966). *Lok Sabha Debates, Fourteenth Session, Third Series, Vol. LII, No.28*. New Delhi: Government of India.]

<sup>197</sup> Interview with Meren Medzini (Former Brigadire in IDF who accompanied the President in the trip) in Jerusalem, Israel on February 23, 2019.

<sup>198</sup> Shri Dinesh Singh, MEA intimated the Parliament on 25<sup>th</sup> March 1966. [Source: Lok Sabha Secretariat. (1966). *Lok Sabha Debates, Fourteenth Session, Third Series, Vol. LII, No.28*. New Delhi: Government of India]

<sup>199</sup> Atal Bihari Vajpayee, questioned the MEA in the Parliament on 25<sup>th</sup> March 1966. [Source: Lok Sabha Secretariat. (1966). *Lok Sabha Debates, Fourteenth Session, Third Series, Vol. LII, No.28*. New Delhi: Government of India]

Mrs Gandhi, like her immediate predecessor Shastri, deviated from Nehruvian idealism to a Realistic, pragmatic and responsive to New Delhi's structural necessity.<sup>200</sup> Changes in India's foreign policy that took place under Mrs Gandhi's leadership were changes in assumptions, actions and operational changes. However, there were hardly any changes in rhetoric in general and in particular to the Israel-Palestine conflict. The transformation of the Non-alignment Movement into a more rigid organisation than a mere free space of practising free thinking was over. The Cold War was at its peak, NAM aligned with the Soviets, and New Delhi was discussing nuclear energy cooperation for peaceful purposes with the United Arab Republic or UAR.<sup>201</sup> Mrs Gandhi acknowledged that "foreign policy cannot be divorced from a country's internal policy".<sup>202</sup> The pressure of domestic politics pushed her towards adopting the policy of denouncing Israel for appeasing Arab nations—India's strategic partners at that time. In a surprising shift, Mrs Gandhi dragged Israel into the domestic electoral politics of India. Addressing a public meeting at Ambikapur of Madhya Pradesh in June 1967, the Honourable Prime Minister reiterated her support for the Arab World. She referred to the emergence of Israel and Pakistan as sowing the seeds of conflict in their respective region. Both Pakistan and Israel are armed heavily by western powers.<sup>203</sup> The analogy

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<sup>200</sup> Mansingh, S. (2015). Indira Gandhi's Foreign Policy : 'Hard Realism?'. In D. M. Malone, C. R. Mohan, & R. Srinath, *The Oxford Handbook of Indian Foreign Policy*, New York: Oxford University press, pp. 104-115

<sup>201</sup> PM Indira Gandhi informed Parliament on December 7, 1970. [Source: Lok Sabha Secretariat. (1970). *Lok Sabha Debates, Fourth Session, Fourth Series, Vol. XLVI, No.19*. New Delhi: Government of India.]

<sup>202</sup> Address at a seminar on "Some Aspects of Our Foreign Policy" organised by the Congress Party in Parliament and the A.I.C.C. at Mavalankar Hall, August 31, 1970. [Source: *Selected Speeches of Indira Gandhi (August 1969 to August 1972)*. (1975). Publication Division, Ministry of Information, Government of India]

<sup>203</sup> File No. PI/125/159/67, Ministry of External Affairs. (1967). *Rajya sabha starred Q No. 402 for 1.8.69 by Sitaram Jaipuria reg. P.M's statement on Israel and Pakistan*. National Archives of India, New Delhi: Government of India, p.3

between Pakistan and Israel occurred in this fashion for the first time since Independence.

Mrs Gandhi's tenure is marked by three major wars in the history of Israel; the Six-Day War (June 1967), the War of Attrition (1967-1970) and the Yom Kippur War (1973). From 1966 to 1972, the Indira Government blamed 'Israeli aggrandisement' along with 'foreign troops' (including UN troops) for the unrest in West Asia.<sup>204</sup> In the UNGA, Prime Minister Gandhi claimed, "West Asian crisis—(also) needs to be resolved by political means...Essential for a peaceful settlement is the withdrawal of foreign forces from all Arab territories occupied in June last year."<sup>205</sup> The Indira Government, in this phase, categorically upheld the UNSC resolution of November 1967<sup>206</sup> and the Soviet Plan<sup>207</sup> as a solution to the West Asian crisis. On the contrary, the Soviet plan was summarily rejected by Israel. New Delhi was convinced that the Israeli attack on Beirut Airport deteriorated the situation.<sup>208</sup> Alongside, New Delhi co-sponsored the

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<sup>204</sup> Shri Surendra Pal Singh, Deputy Minister of External Affairs, answered to a question in Lok Sabha on November 23, 1970. [Source: Lok Sabha Secretariat. (1970). *Lok Sabha Debates, Twelfth Session, Fourth Series, Vol. XLV, No.1-10*. New Delhi: Government of India.]

<sup>205</sup> Address delivered at the General Assembly of the United Nations, October 14, 1968. [Source: *Selected Speeches of Indira Gandhi (August 1969 to August 1972)*. (1975). Publication Division, Ministry of Information, Government of India, p.358]

<sup>206</sup> Resolution 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 emphasised the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war and the need to work for a just and lasting peace in the middle east in which every State in the region can live in security, that necessitates the withdrawal of Israel armed forces from territories occupied in the conflict of June 1967, termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force along with freedom of navigation through international waterways in the area and just settlement of the refugee problem.

<sup>207</sup> The proposal envisaged that the precondition of establishment of the state of peace is the withdrawal of Israeli troops from territories occupied in June, 1967. There can be no lasting settlement without the liquidation of the Israeli occupation of captured Arab lands. The proposal provided for the establishment of de-militarised zones on both sides of the border, for the introduction of United Nations troops into a number of points and for direct guarantees by Four Powers, the Permanent Members of the Security Council, or by the United Nations Security Council.

<sup>208</sup> MEA, Shri Dinesh Singh on February, 26, 1969 said on Parliament. [Source: Lok Sabha Secretariat. (1969). *Lok Sabha Debates*. New Delhi: Government of India, p.38]

Resolution in UN, which the UNGA adopted on November 4, 1970, recommending an extension of the ceasefire in West Asia for three months.<sup>209</sup>

Meanwhile, India had no trade agreement with Israel, though private individuals had no restrictions on trade with Israel.<sup>210</sup> Trade was 27 lakhs only in 1966-67, which developed to 44 lakhs in 1968-69.<sup>211</sup> From the Israeli side, there had always been an attempt at diplomatic normalisation with India marked by the exchange of diplomatic missions between the two Capitals. However, New Delhi rejected any such proposal, at least publicly. A statement supporting India's rights in Kashmir by the Consulate of Israel was not even appreciated by the Indian authority. Ministry of Agriculture declined the Israeli proposal to collaborate in Agricultural development in Thar Desert, Rajasthan. The Minister said the proposal was not made through a proper channel, only in Press. The condition of Rajasthan varies largely with Israel, thus most likely to fail in India. No wonder any possibility of normalisation with Israel was summarily rejected.<sup>212</sup> The Israeli victory in the June war, the death of Gamal Abdel Nasser, and the beginning of the direct talks between Syria-Israel and Jordan-Israel marked the Middle-eastern power politics. Shri Surendra Pal Singh clarified to a question by Shri Balraj Madhok<sup>213</sup> that the situation in West Asia did not meet the fundamental

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<sup>209</sup> Shri Surendra Pal Singh, Deputy Minister of External Affairs, answered to a question in Lok Sabha on November 23, 1970. [Source: Lok Sabha Secretariat. (1970). *Lok Sabha Debates, Twelfth Session, Fourth Series, Vol. XLV, No. 1-10*. New Delhi: Government of India.]

<sup>210</sup> Shri Chowdhary Ram Sewak, the Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Foreign Trade And Supply, informed Lok Sabha on April 2, 1969. [Source: Lok Sabha Secretariat. (1969, April 2). *Lok Sabha Debates*. New Delhi: Govt of India. p.118]

<sup>211</sup> MEA, Shri Dinesh Singh on July 30, 1969 said on Lok Sabha. [Source: Lok Sabha Secretariat. (1969, July 30). *Lok Sabha Debates*. New Delhi: Govt of India.]

<sup>212</sup> MEA, Shri Dinesh Singh on November 23, 1970 said on Lok Sabha. [Source: Lok Sabha Secretariat. (1970, November 23). *Lok Sabha Debates*. New Delhi: Govt of India.]

<sup>213</sup> Jan Sangh MP and a staunch sympathiser of Israel.

prerequisite to peace in the region which is the withdrawal of the Israeli forces from the occupied Arab territories as required in the Security Council Resolution 242 of November 22, 1967.<sup>214</sup>

The Israeli victory in the Yom-Kippur war (1973) had put an end to the military commitment of the Arab countries to the Palestine cause. The establishment of Israeli military supremacy and valour made ways smoother for its diplomats in the long run. However, the organised diplomatic denouncement against Israel was very loud, and India joined the orchestra. India voted in favour of UNGA resolution No. 3379, which accepted that "Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination", at the 2400th Plenary meeting on November 10, 1975. The attitude of the Arab countries towards Israel started changing in the 1970s. After the Camp David Accord in 1978, Egypt normalised its relations with Israel. Without Egypt, the Arab military option against Israel turned non-existent. Saudi Arabia, like Israel, had been part of the American strategic consensus against Soviet Russia. With the Arab countries' slow and subtle withdrawal from military adventurism against Israel, the independent Palestinian struggle against Israel reached a new level under Yasser Arafat. Whereas Israel considered Yasser Arafat a terrorist, New Delhi celebrated him as a hero and a freedom fighter and hosted him as a very special state guest multiple times.<sup>215</sup> India was one of the first non-Arab countries to recognise the Palestine Liberation Organisation or PLO and allot a foreign office in New Delhi.<sup>216</sup> There rise in terrorist attacks in Israeli cities

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<sup>214</sup> Deputy MEA, Shri Surendra Pal Singh on November 23, 1970 said on Lok Sabha. [Source: Lok Sabha Secretariat. (1970, November 23). *Lok Sabha Debates*. New Delhi: Govt of India.]

<sup>215</sup> Interview with Ambassador Ronen Sen (Retd IFS) in New Delhi, India on May 4, 2017.

<sup>216</sup> Ministry of External Affairs, India. *Ministry of External Affairs*. Retrieved from the Official Website Ministry of External Affairs, India. [https://mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Updated\\_Note\\_on\\_India-Palestine\\_Relations\\_for\\_MEA\\_Website.pdf](https://mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Updated_Note_on_India-Palestine_Relations_for_MEA_Website.pdf), accessed on February 26, 2020

started shooting up, and Israel developed tools and technologies to combat the menace. The chilling terror attack against the Israeli athletes in Munich Olympics was the worst. On the backdrop of the Munich Massacre (1972), the permanent representative of India stated in the Security Council:

"We condemn terrorism, but one has to recognise also the frustration and desperation that lie behind such terrorism and has to take action to remove their causes. Besides, the Arab terrorists do not perhaps forget the terrorism that has bedevilled the history of the Holy Land, particularly in the second quarter of the twentieth century...Lastly, we must draw a distinction between the acts of terrorism by private groups and the acts of military vendetta by organised governments. Surely, we have the right to expect a better standard of behaviour from governments than from fanatics, however devoted they may be to their causes.<sup>217</sup>

Coming back to power in 1980, Mrs Indira Gandhi reiterated her previous line of public support for Arabs. In all possible international fora, India denounced Israeli aggrandisement, called for unconditional Israeli withdrawal from all occupied land, including Jerusalem and Golan Heights, and pointed out Israel as the violator of human rights, peace and sovereignty of all neighbouring countries.<sup>218</sup> With the establishment of diplomatic relations between Egypt and Israel and the subsequent boycott of Egypt by other Arab countries. Mrs Gandhi's third term is marked by a frequent visit by Mr Yaser Arafat to India. In 1981, the Government of India declared the Israeli consul Mr Yosef Hasseen as '*persona non grata*' for criticising the Government of India's Arab policy and calling it an act of appeasement. Eventually, the Government expelled Mr Yosef Hasseen from India with a massive political protest by the opposition.<sup>219</sup> The

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<sup>217</sup> Ministry of External Affairs (1972). *Foreign Affairs Record*. New Delhi. Government of India.

<sup>218</sup> Ministry of External Affairs. (1982). *Foreign Affairs Record*. New Delhi: Government of India.

<sup>219</sup> Interview with Ambassador Yosef Hasseen (Former Israeli Consul to Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay, between 1979 to 1982) in Jerusalem, Israel on February 23, 2019.

post of Israeli consul remained vacant for four years, but the Consulate in Bombay was not technically closed. India even retained its policy of rejecting any Israeli proposal to collaborate on humanitarian issues like the polio vaccine.<sup>220</sup>

*b) Covert Cooperation:*

Mrs Indira Gandhi's rise to power in 1966 began a new chapter in India's covert Relationship with Israel. New Delhi found Israel inevitable in the hours of crisis. Although, it does not mean any departure from New Delhi's policy of denouncing Israel in any multilateral fora. Thus, South Block followed the policy of public denouncement of Israel and developed a covert relationship with the Jewish State. On a parallel channel, India developed its deep secret defence and intelligence relationship with Israel under the premiership of Indira Gandhi. India provided spares for Israeli Mystere and Ouragon aircraft and AMX-13 tanks in the 1967 war.<sup>221</sup> It is interesting to remember that New Delhi had been critical of supposed Israeli aggrandisement in the 1967 War in multiple fora. Beyond the buyer-Supplier Relationship, Israel had been instrumental in establishing the Research and Analytic Wing or R&AW, India's foreign intelligence wing that India developed after the debacle of China's War of 1962 and had been a key factor behind the victory of the Bangladesh war of 1971. B. Raman, one of India's most celebrated spies, disclosed the Cooperation between India's external agency R&AW and Mossad in the 1970s. Shortly after the formation of the R&AW in September 1968, R. N. Kao, with the approval of Mrs Gandhi, had set up a covert

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<sup>220</sup> Interview with Ambassador Oded Benhur (Former Israeli Consul to Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay, between 1985 to 1987) in Jerusalem, Israel on February 13, 2019.

<sup>221</sup> Malik, V.P. (2013). *India's Military Conflicts and Diplomacy : An Inside view of Decision Making*. New Delhi: Harper Collins Publishers India. p.194

liaison relationship with Mossad, Israel's external intelligence agency.<sup>222</sup> This relationship used to be handled through R&AW officers posted in West Europe, especially from Geneva. Senior officers of the two services, including the chiefs, periodically used to exchange visits. The primary purpose of this liaison relationship was to benefit from Israel's knowledge of the Middle East and to learn from its counter-terrorism techniques.<sup>223</sup> The post in Geneva served as the contact point with Mossad for about ten years after its creation. After that, the need for this post diminished since Mossad posted one of its officers in New Delhi undercover of a businessperson from one of the South American countries. For nearly twelve years, successive Mossad officers were stationed undercover as businesspersons in New Delhi and worked as the contact point between the R&AW and Mossad.<sup>224</sup>

The Jewish State's most important Cooperation was supplying India's much-needed ammunition in August 1971. A letter and the consignment reached Prime Minister's Office in New Delhi, duly signed by the Prime Minister of Israel, Ms Golda Meir. The letter, although was addressed to an officer of Mossad, S. Zabludowicz, contained a line for Mrs Gandhi that "we (Israel) believe she (Mrs Gandhi) will know how to appreciate our help at a time when they were in difficulties in the past and our complying with their approach now.", clearly indicating the diplomatic exchange between India and Israel.<sup>225</sup> During the 1971 Indo-Pak war, Israel delayed sending back

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<sup>222</sup> Raman, B. (2013). *The Kaoboy of R&AW - Down Memory Lane*. New Delhi: Lancer Publishers and Distributors, pp.131-132

<sup>223</sup> Ibid, pp.131-132

<sup>224</sup> Ibid, p.175

<sup>225</sup> Haksar, P. N. (1971, December 18). Letter to Indira Gandhi,. *Subject File 174, P. N. Haksar Papers, (III Installment)*. New Delhi: Nehru Museum and Memorial Library.

the Pakistani F-86 Sabre aircraft that had been sent there for maintenance.<sup>226</sup> Israel's victory in the Six Day War (1967) and the Yom Kippur War (1973) by the Israel Defense Force alongside the triumphant role of Sayeret Matkal and Mossad in various missions like 'Wrath of God' (1972) and 'Operation Entebbe' (1976) established Israel extremely popular in India's military circuit.

In 1977, a change took place in India's domestic politics. The first non-Congress Government (a coalition of rebel Congressmen, Jan Sangh and Socialists) was established in New Delhi. Veteran leader Morarji Desai headed the Government with Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, a Jan Sangh MP, as the Minister of External Affairs and Shri Ram Jethmalani, a noted sympathiser of Israel as the Law minister. It sparked a possibility of revision in India's policy towards Israel, precisely the installation of missions in each other's Capital. The war hero of Israel turned Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan visited India in his official capacity in a secret meeting. He flew to New Delhi on August 14, 1977. Importantly, this meeting was not any reflection of the so-called inclination of the Janata Government towards the United States, nor under US influence, nor even due to Jan Sangh's sympathy towards Israel. Shri Vajpayee, the then Minister of External Affairs, was unaware before the meeting.<sup>227</sup> The meeting was fixed under the influence, and the bonhomie between the two business people stayed far from international politics.<sup>228</sup> Eventually, the talk between Moshe Dayan and Morarji Desai failed. While Prime Minister Desai insisted Mr Dayan make peace with Arabs at the

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<sup>226</sup> Malik, G. V. (2013). *India's Military Conflicts and Diplomacy : An Inside view of Decision Making*. New Delhi: Harper Collins Publishers India, p.196

<sup>227</sup> Gujral, I. K. (2011). *Matters of Discretion--An Autobiography*. New Delhi: Hay House Publishers (India) Pvt. Ltd.

<sup>228</sup> Dayan, M. (1981). *Breakthrough: A Personal Account of the Egypt-Israel Peace Negotiations*. New Delhi: Vikash Publishing House, p.27

cost of the West Bank and Gaza, which was not acceptable to Foreign Minister Dayan.

Prime Minister Desai reportedly said,

"One could not turn the clock back, that Israel was now an established fact, and that you, the Arabs, must guarantee her existence; but Israel must make possible the rise of a Palestinian State. Yasser Arafat, head of the PLO, wanted to return to Israel, but this should not be done, for it would mean the liquidation of the State of Israel. Incidentally, how many are you? Two million Jews? Therefore, the solution is to establish a Palestinian State in the Arab territories which you will evacuate."<sup>229</sup>

The Prime Minister also admitted that he could not establish full diplomatic relations with Israel unless Israel reached a peace agreement with the Arabs.<sup>230</sup> India had seventy million Moslems, and even the non-Moslems were not sympathetic to Israel.<sup>231</sup> The Israeli Foreign Minister, on the contrary, argued,

"if he (Prime Minister Desai) was so anxious to help in the achievement of Arab-Israel peace, he should ensure equality of relations with both parties. Otherwise, there was no point in discussing the matter with him, for his words would have no influence upon us. Now, when his help was needed on behalf of peace, he could do nothing since he had no diplomatic relations with Israel; and once peace was attained, and India were to establish such relations, its help would no longer be necessary."<sup>232</sup>

The visiting Foreign Minister made the establishment of full diplomatic relations the precondition for India's engagement with the peace process.<sup>233</sup> The meeting ended with an only promise for further talks between foreign ministers in a neutral country. However, the fear of the veteran leader proved correct when a passenger recognised

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<sup>229</sup> Dayan, M. (1981). *Breakthrough: A Personal Account of the Egypt-Israel Peace Negotiations*. New Delhi: Vikash Publishing House, p.28

<sup>230</sup> Ibid. p 28

<sup>231</sup> Ibid. p.29

<sup>232</sup> Ibid. p.29

<sup>233</sup> Ibid, p.30

Moshe Dayan at Bombay Airport, and his secret visit came under the public scanner. The opposition Congress and media started a political fume against the Government.

On the contrary, the successful Israeli air strike in 1981 to destroy Iraq's Osirak nuclear reactor before it could be commissioned, popularly known as Operation Babylon, added to the Pakistani and American fears of a similar attack on Kahuta by India and Israel jointly.<sup>234</sup> Raman also disclosed how a possible joint Indo-Israeli operation to destroy Pakistan's uranium enrichment plant in Kahuta worried the military dictatorship in Pakistan.<sup>235</sup> Slightly, on a different tone, a London-based journalist David Horowitz claimed in the *Jerusalem Post*, an Israeli daily, on February 22, 1987, that it was primarily an Israeli plan to attack the Pakistani reactor in Kahuta since the distance was too long from Israel. They requested India to refuel in any part of western India, but the Indian Government disagreed. After the assassination of Mrs Indira Gandhi, Israel was also instrumental in the combat operation against the Khalistani terrorists, operation Blue Star 1982. Para commandos neutralised the furious Khalistan militants whom Israel reportedly trained.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> Director of Central Intelligence. (1981). *India's recations to Nuclear Deelopments to Pakistan*. not disclosed: CIA, Government of US.

<sup>235</sup> Raman, B. (2013). *The Kaoboy of R&AW - Down Memory Lane*. New Delhi: Lancer Publishers and Distributers, pp.131-132

<sup>236</sup> Dutta, P. K. (2018, June 6). *Israel's invisible hand behind Operation Blue Star of 1984*. Retrieved from India Today, official website: <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/operation-blue-star-special-group-commandos-mossad-training-israel-1251738-2018-06-06#:~:text=This%20was%20Operation%20Blue%20Star.&text=The%20commandos%20who%20entered%20the,Company%20of%20the%20Indian%20Army.&text=T>, accessed on June 12, 2019

**CHAPTER - II**

**THE POLICY OF NORMALISATION**

**The Era of Rajiv Gandhi and P. V. Narasimha Rao (1984 -1998)**

## THE POLICY OF NORMALISATION

### The Era of Rajiv Gandhi and P. V. Narasimha Rao (1984 -1998)

*"The orientation of foreign policy had begun to change earlier and that the events of the early 1990s served more as catalysts than as triggers of transformation."<sup>1</sup>*

—Srinath Raghavan

#### **Introduction:**

New Delhi's decision to exchange diplomatic missions with Israel on January 29, 1992, completed the full circle forty years later that began with Nehru's decision of recognising the Jewish State. A handful of studies had supported the 'diplomatic normalisation' between India and Israel.<sup>2</sup> Left-leaning scholarly articles pointed out the event as the departure from New Delhi's commitment to the Gandhian-Nehruvian legacy of commitment to non-Alignment, the Palestinian issue and anti-Imperialism.<sup>3</sup> The announcement of 'normalisation' right before Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's official visit to the United States of America (USA) had built the perception that the decision was a hasty move to appease the newly established global hegemon, thanks to its 'victory' in the Cold War.<sup>4</sup> The disintegration of Soviet Russia undoubtedly forced New Delhi to reorient its foreign policy to accommodate the changing international

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<sup>1</sup> Raghavan, S. (2015). At the Cusp of Transformation : The Rajiv Gandhi Years, 1984-1989. In D. Malone, R. C. Mohan, & S. Raghavan, *The Oxford Handbook of Indian Foreign Policy*. New York: Oxford University Press, p.117

<sup>2</sup> Mudiam, P. R. (1994). *India and the Middle East*. London: British Academic Press, p.175

<sup>3</sup> i) Hasan, S. (2008, Jan.-Feb.). The Evolution of India's Palestine Policy: A Fall from the Heights? *Social Scientist*, 36(1/2), p.79 ; ii) Dasgupta, P. (1992, April 11-18). Betrayal of India's Israel Policy. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 27(15-16), p.767

<sup>4</sup> Inbar, E. (2017). Israel and India: Looking Back and Ahead. *Strategic Analysis*, 41(4), p.372

milieu.<sup>5</sup> The decision of 'diplomatic normalisation' was, arguably, taken as a measure in the series of pro-US steps to show symbolic gestures to Washington.<sup>6</sup> Some hardline critics condemned the policy shift as Narsimha Rao's 'succumb' to the US pressure.<sup>7</sup>

This broadly accepted convenient picture is challenged in subsequent writings of Nicholas Blarel. He claimed that the US Government had never consistently or directly attempted to pressure India to change its policy towards Israel.<sup>8</sup> Only the supra-state Jewish organisations operating from the US and several politicians and members of Congress, in their personal capacity, arranged negotiations and meetings between Indian and Israeli authorities. Furthermore, India, Israel, and US interests seem to have converged at some junctures in history. Their policies, interests and strategies are rarely aligned. India and the US stood together against Israeli actions during the Suez Crisis in 1956. Interestingly, the 'diplomatic normalisation' did not only follow the breakdown of Soviet Russia; New Delhi's declaration of exchanging missions in each other's countries occurred within a week of Beijing announcing the exchange of diplomatic envoys with the Jewish State.

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<sup>5</sup> Pant, H. V. (2004, December). India-Israel Partnership : Convergence and Constraints. *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 8(4), p.61

<sup>6</sup> i) Rubinoff, A. G. (1995, May). Normalization of India-Israel Relations: Stillborn for Forty Years. *Asian Survey*, 35(5), p.503 ; ii) Menon, R., & Pandey, S. (2005, Summer). An Axis of Democracy? The Uncertain Future of Israeli-Indian Relations. *The National Interest*, 80, p.29 ; iii) Singh, S. R. (2001). India and Israel : towards Greater Cooperation. *India Quarterly*, p.127; iv) Nair, R. S. (2004). *Dynamics of Diplomacy Delayed: India and Israel*. New Delhi: Kalpaz Publications., p.128 ; v) Kumar, S. (2017, Fall). Indo-Israeli Relations A Quest for Great-Power Status Since 1991. *Jewish Political Studies Review*, 28(3/4), p.41

<sup>7</sup> Hasan, S. (2014). India's Palestine Policy : A Historical Review. In F. Mahmood, & R. Azmi, *Foreign Policy of India and West Asia : Change and Continuity*. New Delhi: New Century Publications, p.93

<sup>8</sup> Blarel, N. (2017). Assessing US Influence over India–Israel Relations: A Difficult Equation to Balance? *Strategic Analysis*, 41(4), p.93-94

Far from the logic of the superpower politics behind the normalisation, Yasser Arafat's decision to support Saddam Hussain's Iraq in the Kuwait Invasion in 1989 is argued to be instrumental in the Indo-Israel normalisation.<sup>9</sup> With the restoration of the Al-Sabah rule, Arafat found himself on the losing side of the crisis. The Palestinian cause lost its regional primacy and influence in Arab politics.<sup>10</sup> In the wake of the Kuwait Crisis, it was no longer possible for India to further its interests in the Middle East through the traditional flagging of the Palestinian cause, which it had maintained for decades.<sup>11</sup> This forced India to re-examine its traditional approach and seek other options to promote its interests. India went for 'normalisation' with Israel to supplement the centrality of Palestinian support by economic engagement in the region.<sup>12</sup>

This approach to connect India's decision with a 'larger' global event assumes New Delhi as a passive recipient in the making of foreign policy in general and 'normalisation' with Israel, in particular. It undermines South Block's autonomy in decision-making and policy formulation. In other words, theorising an 'immediate correspondence' between the emergence of the US as the only Superpower with South Block's decision of 'diplomatic normalisation' undermines India's strategic autonomy in reading and pursuing its 'National Interest'. The decision to exchange diplomatic missions with Israel was a policy question that involved meticulous evaluation of 'national interest' by the policymakers in South Block. The invasion of Kuwait and significant decline in Arab support for the Palestinian cause only refers to the question

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<sup>9</sup> Quamar, M. M., & Kumaraswamy, P. R. (2019). The Kuwait Crisis of 1990–1991: The Turning Point in India's Middle East Policy. *Contemporary Review of the Middle East*, 6(1), p.75

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p.76

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p.83

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p.85

of the 'right time' for implementing any 'policy shift'. Interestingly, this logic fails to explain why the Cold war-partners of the US, like Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Pakistan and many other countries, did not normalise with Israel, but India did. The central focus of this chapter is to understand what pushed the Government of India to take such a path-breaking decision in 1992, beyond the logic of supposed American pressure. It is vital to approach India's autonomy in foreign policy decisions within a particular national and international setting to declutter South Block's decision of normalisation, Re-examining available primary data and interviewing former diplomats in India and Israel, an altogether different understanding of the policy of normalisation emerged. The existing literature, unfortunately, points out the normalisation as an event of 1992 but misses the prelude to it that began much earlier. Rajiv Gandhi adopted the policy of normalisation and planned to implement the same gradually. For Rao, the issue was how to implement it. The decision of normalisation was two-fold. In the first stage, in 1985, the Government of India decided to 'normalise' with the Jewish State. In the second stage, in 1992, the timing of the implementation of the original decision was determined. As policy implementation is inseparable from policy formulation, the South Block's decision to 'Normalisation' and establish missions in each other's territory should be approached as one, yet prolonged, process. This chapter's fundamental focus is to understand the reasons that pushed New Delhi to initiate the 'diplomatic normalisation' with Israel and how different actors worked at various levels towards the completion of the process.

A significant change occurred in Rajiv Gandhi's approach towards Israel after Yasser Arafat visited India in November 1985. This led to the policy of exchanging diplomatic envoys with Israel gradually and slowly instead of a sudden declaration of engagement.

The policy of gradual normalisation faced hindrances because of the pan-India drought in 1987. The decision was adjourned *sine die* but not terminated. Later, Narasimha Rao implemented the decision in 1992. In the post-Soviet world, India realised the necessity of defence equipment and Israel's importance. The policy of 'Normalisation' is not to be confused with the decision about the timing to implement the same. Thus, contextualising the decision to normalisation with Israel essentially on the backdrop of post-cold war power politics will summarily mislead the research, simply because the decision of 'normalisation' was taken in late 1985 without sensing any abrupt end to Cold War. It is an altogether different yet fundamental question why India implemented the decision in 1992.

### **The Policy of Normalisation by Rajiv Gandhi:**

#### *Politico-Psychological Orientation of Rajiv Gandhi:*

As the harbinger of generational change in the country, the youngest Prime Minister of India, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, attempted to bring fresh air into the country's politics, administration and collective psyche. With a record 401 out of 514 seats in the Lok Sabha, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi pledged to build India of the twenty-first century. Before joining the school in Dehra Doon, Rajiv spent his childhood in the corridors of Teen Murti House, which was the official residence of the then Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru. Being raised in an aristocratic and affluent family, which was the epicentre of India's politics, Rajiv was a man of modesty, courtesy and mannerism. In his Cambridge and Trinity College days, it was clear that Politics did not interest him as a career. According to his classmates, his bookshelves were lined with volumes on science and engineering, not works on philosophy, politics or history. Music, however,

had pride of place in his interests.<sup>13</sup> His greatest passion, however, was flying. On returning to India, he started his career as a commercial pilot. On his brother Sanjay Gandhi's death, Rajiv Gandhi joined politics and began his political career as a Member of Parliament from Amethi, Uttar Pradesh. This was when Mr Gandhi took charge of the Congress Party's Foreign Affairs cell and assisted and accompanied Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on many of her foreign trips. After a comparatively short attachment to the party's organisational work, Rajiv became the Prime Minister after the landslide victory in the 1984 general election, which took place because of the brutal assassination of Mrs Indira Gandhi.

Rajiv Gandhi was a charismatic leader with a pan-Indian support base who dreamed for India of the twenty-first century and worked hard to accomplish the same.<sup>14</sup> A modernist at heart and respectful of Indian ethos, Rajiv appeared on the centre stage without any ideological baggage from his predecessor.<sup>15</sup> He was a quick decision-maker.<sup>16</sup> Rajiv had strong convictions and a passionate desire for Change. He had a clear idea about where India should be in the twenty-first century.<sup>17</sup> Rajiv was not ready to wait for the consensus to emerge, instead was in a rush to shape the same.<sup>18</sup> K. Natwar Singh, Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs in Rajiv Gandhi's cabinet

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<sup>13</sup> Prime Minister's Office, India. *Former Prime Ministers*. Retrieved from Official Website of Prime Ministers Office, India: [https://www.pmindia.gov.in/en/former\\_pm/%E0%A4%B6%E0%A5%8D%E0%A4%B0%E0%A5%80-%E0%A4%B0%E0%A4%BE%E0%A4%9C%E0%A5%80%E0%A4%B5-%E0%A4%97%E0%A4%BE%E0%A4%82%E0%A4%A7%E0%A5%80/](https://www.pmindia.gov.in/en/former_pm/%E0%A4%B6%E0%A5%8D%E0%A4%B0%E0%A5%80-%E0%A4%B0%E0%A4%BE%E0%A4%9C%E0%A5%80%E0%A4%B5-%E0%A4%97%E0%A4%BE%E0%A4%82%E0%A4%A7%E0%A5%80/), accessed on June 27, 2020.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Ambassador Ronen Sen (Retd IFS) in New Delhi, India on May 4, 2017.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Mukherjee, P. (2016). *The Turbulent Years 1980-1996*. New Delhi: Rupa Publications India Pvt. Ltd, p.136

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p.136

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Ambassador Ronen Sen (Retd IFS) in New Delhi, India on May 4, 2017.

and a close aid of Mr Gandhi and witness of his political decisions and diplomatic visits, expressed, "...the first thing I noticed about him (Rajiv Gandhi) was his implementation of the democracy of manners."<sup>19</sup>

Rajiv Gandhi recognised the importance of foreign policy in furthering his domestic objectives.<sup>20</sup> Prime Minister Gandhi was the first Prime Minister to practise the idea of 'economic diplomacy' in India. Some significant policy shifts were visible at his time, which later became permanent during the economic reforms of 1991.<sup>21</sup> Rajiv Gandhi tried to loosen the diplomatic straitjacket that was choking India's external options. By reaching out to the West and trying to change the internal economic orientation, he prepared the ground for a fundamental re-evaluation of foreign policy. By the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the old economic order in India, the traditional methods of engaging the world were no longer tenable. India had to find new ways to do business with the world.<sup>22</sup> His fresh introspection of the question of liberal democracy, the open market economy, economic reforms, and technological advancement reframed his approach toward the US. As a younger leader, Rajiv Gandhi was less burdened with the anti-Western paranoia of his predecessors and reached out

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<sup>19</sup> Singh, K. N. (2013). *Walking with Lions : Tales from a Diplomatic Past*. New Delhi: Harper Collins Publishers India, p.83

<sup>20</sup> Raghavan, S. (2015). At the Cusp of Transformation : The Rajiv Gandhi Years, 1984-1989. In D. Malone, R. C. Mohan, & S. Raghavan, *The Oxford Handbook of Indian Foreign Policy*. New York: Oxford University Press, p.118

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Ambassador Ronen Sen (Retd IFS) in New Delhi, India on May 4, 2017.

<sup>22</sup> Mohan, C. R. (2003). *Crossing The Rubicon : The Shaping of India's New Foreign Policy*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, p.261

with greater vigour to the West, particularly to the United States.<sup>23</sup> Rajiv offered military assistance to the US during the Gulf war but later withdrew.<sup>24</sup>

J.N Dixit, who served as Foreign Secretary of India (1991-94) and National Security Advisor (2004-2005), worked in close proximity with Prime Minister Mrs Indira Gandhi and Mr Rajiv Gandhi, argued that although Mr Gandhi had no discernible or direct experience or knowledge of politics when he was sworn in, he 'could legitimately claim absorption of general information and experience' from his grandfather and mother.<sup>25</sup> The same argument is echoed by Kathleen Healy, a noted commentator on Rajiv Gandhi. According to her, Mr Gandhi 'lived with and learned from Nehru, his father, Feroze Gandhi, and his mother, Indira Gandhi, all of whom lived and suffered for India. Rajiv's personal knowledge of history has been and is a lived experience.'<sup>26</sup> In his speech soon after Mrs Gandhi's assassination, Mr Rajiv Gandhi laid out the fundamental foreign policy principles that reiterated Nehruvianism by emphasising non-alignment, anti-colonialism, and commitment to multinational institutions like the United Nations with the desire for good relations with all countries. "Jawaharlal Nehru bequeathed to us a foreign policy," he declared, adding, "I shall carry it forward. I reaffirm our adherence to the United Nations, to the Nonaligned Movement and to our opposition to colonialism, old or new...We have always been friends with East and West as they are called, and we want better relations with them."<sup>27</sup> Mr Gandhi replied

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<sup>23</sup> Mohan, C. R. (2003). *Crossing The Rubicon : The Shaping of India's New Foreign Policy*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, p.50

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p.112

<sup>25</sup> Dixit, J. N. (2004). *Makers of India's Foreign Policy: Raja Ram Mohun Roy to Yashwant Sinha*. New Delhi: Harper Collins Publishers, p.187-89

<sup>26</sup> Healy, K. (1989). *Rajiv Gandhi : The Years of Power*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishiung House, p.58

<sup>27</sup> Rajiv Gandhi's broadcast to Nation, 12 November 1984. Seen in Healy, p.60

in an interview that the basic principles of his foreign policy were 'a logical outcome of our own experiences, needs and aspirations'.<sup>28</sup>

It is largely debated whether Rajiv Gandhi followed the broader framework of Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi's foreign policy or deviated from the question of foreign policy action of his predecessors. C. Raja Mohan claimed that Rajiv Gandhi was aware that the NAM was running out of steam in the mid-1980s and looked for ways to rejuvenate alternative mechanisms to project India's views on the global stage.<sup>29</sup> While in office (1984-89), he sought new ideas on foreign policy and constantly looked for ways to get India out of its diplomatic rut.<sup>30</sup> Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi approached diplomacy is about conciliation, consultation and cooperation.<sup>31</sup> Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's style of diplomacy had a personal touch, and he maintained personal liaison with the foreign head of the state by calling them by their first name. With US President Ronald Regan, the 'sophisticated informality' broke down many barriers without short-circuiting well-established diplomatic norms.<sup>32</sup> Prime Minister Rajiv was a man of humour, candid and personal while dealing with a foreign Head of State. He was equally straight from the heart while his trip to the US and meeting with

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<sup>28</sup> Healy, K. (1989). *Rajiv Gandhi : The Years of Power*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, p.60

<sup>29</sup> Mohan, C. R. (2003). *Crossing The Rubicon : The Shaping of India's New Foreign Policy*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, p.32

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p.32

<sup>31</sup> Singh, K. N. (2011). Rajiv Gandhi's diplomacy saves a summit. *India Today*, Retrieved from Official Website of India Today magazine. <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/north/story/rajiv-gandhi-charmed-yasser-arafat-ayatollah-ali-khamenei-146324-2011-11-20>, accessed on November 23, 2020

<sup>32</sup> Singh, K. N. (2013). *Walking with Lions : Tales from a Diplomatic Past*. New Delhi: Harper Collins Publishers India, p.66

Ronald Regan in 1987 or meeting with Mr Castro in Havana in 1988. The bonhomie between Gorbachev and Rajiv Gandhi lent new vigour to bilateral ties.<sup>33</sup>

He took the initiative to give peace a chance with Pakistan. Rajiv Gandhi tried to break the mould with Pakistan in the late 1980s when he engaged General Mohammad Zia ul-Haq and later reached out to Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.<sup>34</sup> As the Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi officially visited Beijing after 1954. He attempted to warm up the cold relationship between India and US. Mr Gandhi took the relationship with Soviet Russia to the next level with his liaison with Gorbachev. He was the first Prime Minister of India to take the initiative on icebreaking with ASEAN countries.<sup>35</sup> Prime Minister Rajiv attempted to assure strategic leverage of India in any bilateral relations without any conflict; thus, he worked towards the continuation of the Indo-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950 under an amicable relationship with King Birendra of Nepal.<sup>36</sup> He even tried the same with Myanmar (then Burma) with an official visit and offer for student exchange programmes and promotion in tourism that didn't work, mainly because of the non-cooperation by General Ne Win. Even after his initial commitment to nuclear disarmament, his decision to go for nuclear weaponisation was taken as a last measure in favour of national security that he would not compromise. He went for nuclearisation only after being wholly confirmed about Islamabad's successful

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<sup>33</sup> Mohan, C. R. (2003). *Crossing The Rubicon : The Shaping of India's New Foreign Policy*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, p.117

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, p.181

<sup>35</sup> Singh, K. N. (2013). *Walking with Lions : Tales from a Diplomatic Past*. New Delhi: Harper Collins Publishers India, p.81

<sup>36</sup> Singh, K. N. (2011). Rajiv Gandhi's diplomacy saves a summit. *India Today*, Retrieved from Official Website of India Today magazine. <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/north/story/rajiv-gandhi-charmed-yasser-arafat-ayatollah-ali-khamenei-146324-2011-11-20>, accessed on November 23, 2020

nuclear weaponisation programme and the failure of the mutual no-first attack agreement.<sup>37</sup>

*Domestic Political Situation:*

At the beginning of his tenure, in domestic politics, Rajiv Gandhi symbolised transparency and a clean image, though it did not stay long. He was forward-looking, tech-savvy, welcomed foreign investment in India, and an ardent supporter of the market economy.<sup>38</sup> In one of his first speeches in office, Rajiv Gandhi stated his will to build an India of the twenty-first century.<sup>39</sup> At the core of his notion of modernisation was the need to embrace high technology, more critical information technology, to metamorphose the Indian economy and society.<sup>40</sup> Mr Gandhi stressed that Exports must become a prime focus of Indian Industry. A rapidly growing, modernising economy will need a growing volume of imports and an expanding flow of technology. His focus on telecom, computer, Information technology, biotechnology, application of remote sensing, nano-technology, and space technologies in distance education, disaster management and telemedicine angered the old guards of his own party, for which he started to be called, informally, 'the computer man', essentially as pejorative.<sup>41</sup> Rajiv was an uncompromising crusader for change in the country, in the administration and

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<sup>37</sup> Subrahmanyam, K. (1998). Indian Nuclear Policy—1964–98 (A Personal Recollection). In J. Singh, *Nuclear India*. New Delhi: IDSA and Knowledge World, p.42

<sup>38</sup> Mukherjee, P. (2016). *The Turbulent Years 1980-1996*. New Delhi: Rupa Publications India Pvt. Ltd, p.110

<sup>39</sup> Raghavan, S. (2015). At the Cusp of Transformation : The Rajiv Gandhi Years, 1984-1989. In D. Malone, R. C. Mohan, & S. Raghavan, *The Oxford Handbook of Indian Foreign Policy*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp.117-118

<sup>40</sup> Sharma, D. (2009). *The Long Revolution: The Birth and Growth of India's IT Industry*. New Delhi: Harpercollins, p.123

<sup>41</sup> Interview with Ambassador Ronen Sen (Retd IFS) in New Delhi, India on May 4, 2017.

in his party, which was stuck on the brink of the vested interests of the 'power brokers' within the party.<sup>42</sup> He wanted rapid change and saw the old guards in Congress as an obstacle to his vision.<sup>43</sup> These initiated stiff opposition against Rajiv's proposals within his party.

The National Security of India was going through a tough time. Disintegrating forces in Jammu and Kashmir, Nagaland, Assam and Punjab was in a difficult time. With the Tamil population's sympathy for the Tamils in Sri Lanka, the situation in Tamil Nadu also got complicated. Rajiv Gandhi's significant involvement in *Ramjanmabhoomi Andolan* and Shah Bano's case proved his attempt to redefine the idea of 'Secularism'. He had replaced the practice of equal distance from all religions with similar affinity with all faiths. With the rise of *Raamjanmabhoomi Andolan*, and Congress's initial involvement in it, the grand old party started losing its monopoly over the Muslim vote, and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) emerged as the new 'messiah' for the Hindus.<sup>44</sup> Also, The Congress party lost the hegemony over Muslim votes since the 1977 elections and was not in a position to revive it. Later, V. P. Singh's control over Muslim votes shows Congress' loss over the same. Muslim votes started showing their loyalty to regional parties in the general election of 1989, which is rooted in Rajiv's policies as Prime Minister and the Party President.<sup>45</sup> Corruption and the drought in 1987 were significant blows that shook India then.

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<sup>42</sup> Presidential Speech at the Centenary Session of the Congress Party on December 27-29, 1985.

<sup>43</sup> Mukherjee, P. (2016). *The Turbulent Years 1980-1996*. New Delhi: Rupa Publications India Pvt. Ltd, p.110

<sup>44</sup> Baru, S. (2016). *1991: How P. V. Narasimha Rao Made History*. New Delhi: Aleph Book Company, p.58

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p.57

*The Global Political Situation:*

In the mid-1970s, Israel faced terrible diplomatic blows by different countries of Europe and Africa, e.g. Austria, Congo, Uganda and Russia, that went to the level of global isolation mainly because Israel openly refused to vacate the occupied territories under whatever circumstances. The victory and valour of the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) in the Six Day War (1967) and the Yom-Kippur War (1975) not just established Israel as a legitimate and permanent entity but engagement and dialogue by major regional powers like Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt with subsequent diplomatic normalisation transformed the Palestinian question virtually limited to West Bank and the refugee question inside Israel. The rise of Yasser Arafat as the voice of Palestinians compelled him to retain the 'Jews to the Ocean' approach inside the region, but his global acceptance forced him to uphold the approach of 'political solution' that pushed him to accept negotiation as the only way towards a political solution.

With the victory of the IDF in the War of 1967, the Government of Israel declared and celebrated the 'liberation' of Jerusalem and its 'reunification' as the 'eternal capital' of the Jewish people. The question of Jerusalem further complicated the Middle Eastern conflict for decades. The Israeli election of 1981 was polarised by the Likud Government's decision to build more Jewish settlements on West Bank. The Labour coalition proposed negotiation with Jordan on the status of the West Bank. On the other hand, under Prime Minister Menachem Began, the Likud government argued that the proposal was synonymous with establishing a Palestinian state in the West Bank. They claimed the proposal breaches the security concern of Israel since handing over the West Bank to Jordan will lead to handing over the territory to Palestinians.<sup>46</sup> Under the

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<sup>46</sup> Reich, B. (2008). *A Brief History of Israel* (Second Edition ed.). New York: Facts On File, Inc, p.135

leadership of Mr Shimon Peres, Labour raised the urgency of a Jewish state under defensible territory that ensured democracy and internal security. The permanent absorption of 1.25 million Palestinian Arabs, argued by Peres, will turn Israel into a second Lebanon.<sup>47</sup> Peres was unhesitant and unambiguous about his stand on the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Yasser Arafat that it was a terrorist organisation committed to Israel's annihilation.

In July 1984, a coalition of Labor and Likud formed a government in Israel that stayed in power till July 1992, with Shimon Peres as its Prime Minister from September 1984 to October 1986. In his first term as the Prime Minister of Israel, Yitzhak Shamir had a patchy relationship with the US. The Lebanon War (1982) led to tensions and verbal clashes between US and Israel. The US initiative to secure evacuation for PLO was soon supplemented by the decision to return US forces to Beirut, particularly after the massacres at the Shatila and Sabra camps<sup>48</sup> in 1982. The war also led to the Reagan administration's 'fresh-start initiative', which sought to reinstate the Arab-Israeli peace process. Israel considered the US proposals detrimental to its policies and thus rejected them.<sup>49</sup> By 1986, Israel had developed a single-engine, fourth-generation, multi-role jet fighter, Lavi, built by Israel Aircraft Industries. It was specially designed to meet Israel's military needs, and there had been some hope that it would make the country less dependent on foreign military supplies. Under pressure from the United States, Israel had to terminate the project at the end of August 1987. Washington, of course,

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<sup>47</sup> Lebanon was facing Civil war between Muslims and Christians, later Lebanon became a Islamic country with 97% Muslim population.

<sup>48</sup> President Bachir Gemayel's assassination led to crack down by Lebanese forces and militia of the right-wing party Maronite Christian Lebanese, on Lebanese Shiites Militia in the Shabra neighbourhood of Shatila refugee camp in Beirut, Lebanon.

<sup>49</sup> Reich, B. (2008). *A Brief History of Israel* (Second Edition ed.). New York: Facts On File, Inc, p.145

wanted to retain Israeli dependence on the US for military platforms and other technologies.

Israel was facing its most challenging time in its conflict with Palestinians since December 1987, after Intifada<sup>50</sup>. Intifada erupted against Israeli forces by Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza in late 1987. The systematic withdrawal of Arab countries and PLO's failure to make serious headway regarding Palestinian sovereignty and statehood caused cumulative and collective frustration, anger and hatred among Palestinians.<sup>51</sup> The Arab states and the PLO started losing control and credibility over the Palestinians. With the rise of Menachem Began and his Likud party, Israel adopted the policy of multiplying Jewish settlements on the West Bank and Gaza. The number of Israeli settlers in 1982 was 20000, which rose to 60000 in 1986. The rise in settlement led to the installation of checkpoints, abrupt curfews, searches and school closures. In response, Palestinians opted for strikes, demonstrations, boycotts and clashes.

Levels of resistance multiplied IDF's control and vice versa. The mass Palestinian participation in a steadfast manner is known as *sumud*. At the same time, the Jewish State also successfully transferred the conflict with Arab countries from Battlefields to the Table of Dialogue which led to the first Oslo Accords in 1993. Israel started negotiating with Arab countries like Syria, Egypt, and Jordan. Israel was no more an outcast. By the time Saddam Hussain had attacked Kuwait and Yasser Arafat's support, going against the Pan-Arab support caused damage to the primacy of the Palestinian cause in the region. By 1989, the State of Israel had absorbed the immediate shock of

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<sup>50</sup> Arabic, meaning “shaking off”

<sup>51</sup> Harms, G., & Ferry, T. M. (2005). *The Palestine-Israel Conflict*. London: Pluto Press, p.142

economic strain caused by the War of Independence and the need for financial and housing aid to be given to substantial immigrant Jews from different parts of the world.

*The decision of Normalisation with Israel:*

Rajiv Gandhi's approach to building India for the twenty-first century forced him to rethink different aspects of state policies, particularly foreign policy, with an openness to change. This policy of Rajiv Gandhi, as Prime Minister, was reflected in his Israel policy though he began with a slow and cautious campaign toward the Jewish nation.<sup>52</sup>

The decision-makers of Rajiv Gandhi's Cabinet and its top bureaucrats were juvenile primarily at the time of India's freedom. Thus they were free from ideological baggage that was often argued to be a significant reason behind India's decision of 'recognition without relations approach' vis. a vis. Israel. Decision-makers in South Block, in the mid-1980s, started pointing out that there is much in common between India and Israel, such as the two countries' natural affinity and historical connection. India and Israel are two vibrant democracies with significant diversities in the long stretch between the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean. This acknowledgement was in absolute contrast to New Delhi's stand immediately after Independence, when it perceived the creation of the State of Israel as a solution to a European problem, for which Palestinians had to pay the price, even though Indian leaders had always been sympathetic to the victims of Holocaust.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Becher, G. (2013). *India — Political Diary : The story of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between India and Israel from a personal perspective (1989-1992)*. Jerusalem, Israel: Reuveni Tzameret Books Ltd, p.15

<sup>53</sup> Interview with Ambassador Ronen Sen (Retd IFS) in New Delhi, India on May 4, 2017.

South Block lately but finally realised that Israel is a land of potential and has a lot to offer.<sup>54</sup> These were enough for the policymakers to consider that there was no reason not to have direct diplomatic contact.<sup>55</sup> Though it never meant New Delhi had to agree with the Jewish State on all issues, but channels for agreement to disagreement should have been open. On this consideration, An Israeli Diplomat was allowed to resume charges at the Bombay Consulate in 1985. It is important to note that technically Israeli Consulate was never severed, but the Consul, Mr Yoseph Haseen, was declared *persona non-grata* and returned to his country in 1982.<sup>56</sup> A security officer from Israel remained in Bombay to conduct routine work for the Consul. New Delhi delayed further appointment of any Consul, and Mr Oded Ben-Hur took charge as the Consul in 1985.<sup>57</sup>

The background of introspection was there, yet a final jerk to change the policy towards establishing direct contact was still not there. On the other hand, Indian and Israeli deep states maintained usual information exchange and intelligence sharing, though not under any legal-rational institutional structures.<sup>58</sup> The back-channel dialogue also focused on cooperation in Defence and Agriculture. Suspecting a probable attack on Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi by ISI-trained Khalistani militants, the Mossad responded to a request from the R&AW for the supply of jammers to neutralise remotely-controlled improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and also train the SPG staff in the use

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<sup>54</sup> Interview with Ambassador Ronen Sen (Retd IFS) in New Delhi, India on May 4, 2017.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Interview with Ambassador Yosef Haseen (Former Israeli Consul to Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay, between 1979 to 1982) in Jerusalem, Israel on February 23, 2019.

<sup>57</sup> Interview with Ambassador Oded Benhur (Former Israeli Consul to Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay, between 1985 to 1987) in Tel Aviv, Israel on February 13, 2019.

<sup>58</sup> Interview with Ambassador Ronen Sen (Retd IFS) in New Delhi, India on May 4, 2017.

of the technology, while former Prime Minister's visit to Canada in 1987.<sup>59</sup> In 1988, when the Consulate of Bombay's jurisdiction was limited to the State of Maharashtra and Kerala, An Agro-tech expert visited the State of Punjab under the MASHAV<sup>60</sup> programme 1600 km away from Bombay. It shows that the roads to Indo-Israel cooperation were not essentially routed through Bombay. There had been a bilateral relationship with or without consular level exchange.

The process of back-channel communication that started before the Oslo Agreement between the Palestinian Authority and Israel, was confirmed by multiple reliable sources to the Prime Minister of India, Mr Rajiv Gandhi.<sup>61</sup> Prime Minister Gandhi enquired about the validity of the claimed communication channel between Israel and Palestinians indirectly from Yasser Arafat at the time of his visit to New Delhi in 1985. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi sent his Special Secretary Mr Ronen Sen<sup>62</sup>. Sen placed before Arafat that New Delhi's concern was, far from consulting, India was not even duly informed about any such back-track communication between Palestinians and Israel that was about to be institutionalised soon. Arafat replied to Ronen Sen, with "stone-cold eyes", "Why should we inform you? You don't have even relations with Israel".<sup>63</sup> On Diplomat Sen's humble reminder of India's 'consistent support to Palestinian cause', Arafat replied that this 'consistent support' was India's "domestic

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<sup>59</sup> Raman, B. (2013). *The Kaoboy of R&AW - Down Memory Lane*. New Delhi: Lancer Publishers and Distributers, p.115

<sup>60</sup> MASHAV is the Hebrew acronym for the Agency for International Development Cooperation. It is an initiative by the State of Israel that aims at coordination and implementation of Israeli solutions to the developing countries problems in the field of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Medicine etc.

<sup>61</sup> Interview with Ambassador Ronen Sen (Retd IFS) in New Delhi, India on May 4, 2017.

<sup>62</sup> Mr Ronen Sen was in-charge of Defence, Atomic, Science and Technology and Foreign Affairs and used to report to the Prime Minister directly.

<sup>63</sup> Interview with Ambassador Ronen Sen (Retd IFS) in New Delhi, India on May 4, 2017.

compulsion".<sup>64</sup> The conversation was soon reported to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Minister of External Affairs P. V. Narasimha Rao. According to Sen, the decision-makers realised that Palestinian Authority took New Delhi for granted. India's relations with Palestinians were no more mutually beneficial. It was not in favour of India's national interest not to establish diplomatic relations with Israel. Clearly, India had started losing its leverage and could not allow itself to lose any further.<sup>65</sup>

*The Policy of Gradual Normalisation:*

The choice before the decision-makers in South Block was between establishing diplomatic contacts overnight or gradually. They opted for the latter. South Block had realised that delaying further the decision of 'diplomatic normalisation' with Israel may prove detrimental to India. A plan or blueprint for gradual normalisation was prepared, and the Ministry of External Affairs or MEA consciously yet silently initiated working on it. When Diplomat Oded Ben-Hur applied for Visa to the Indian authority in MEA, after declaring Yoseph Hasseen as '*persona non grata*', the former's Visa was put on hold for nearly three years<sup>66</sup>. Finally, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or MFA, Israel pursued their case through Zubin Mehta, the noted Indian-Jewish Musician and Greville Janner, a Jewish British Labour MP.<sup>67</sup> Later, when Diplomat Amos Radian joined as

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<sup>64</sup> Interview with Ambassador Ronen Sen (Retd IFS) in New Delhi, India on May 4, 2017.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Interview with Ambassador Oded Benhur (Former Israeli Consul to Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay, between 1985 to 1987) in Tel Aviv, Israel on February 13, 2019.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

Consul of Bombay in 1987,<sup>68</sup> he faced a minimal delay in getting Visa. Finally, Diplomat Giora Becher was granted Visa with a prompt response.<sup>69</sup>

On the other hand, Israel, unaware of any such Indian move, was in a hurry to institutionalise the diplomatic exchange. All possible cooperation was attempted aiming at normalisation since the regular operation of the Consulate in 1985.<sup>70</sup> Thus, when Mr Amos Radian joined as Consul of Bombay in 1987, he was actually a senior diplomat in the MFA, Israel, to join in a comparatively lower rank. It happened because "India was super important to Israel".<sup>71</sup> On the re-initiation of Consular level engagement, it was limited to cultural and economic ties as modest as they might have been, confined to the State of Maharashtra only.<sup>72</sup> They could not make any contact with anyone in MEA in New Delhi except the Protocol Officer.<sup>73</sup> The signal was that this relationship is confined to the economic and cultural domain.<sup>74</sup> The Government

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<sup>68</sup> Interview with Ambassador Amos Radian (Former Israeli Consulate General to Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay, between 1987 to 1989) in Tel Aviv, Israel on February 12, 2019

<sup>69</sup> Interview with Ambassador Giora Becher (Former Israeli Consul General to Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay, between 1985 to 1987) in Netanya, Israel on February 13, 2019.

<sup>70</sup> Interview with Ambassador Oded Benhur (Former Israeli Consul to Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay, between 1985 to 1987) in Tel Aviv, Israel on February 13, 2019.

<sup>71</sup> Interview with Ambassador Amos Radian (Former Israeli Consulate General to Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay, between 1987 to 1989) in Tel Aviv, Israel on February 12, 2019

<sup>72</sup> Interview with Ambassador Oded Benhur (Former Israeli Consul to Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay, between 1985 to 1987) in Tel Aviv, Israel on February 13, 2019.

<sup>73</sup> i) Interview with Ambassador Oded Benhur (Former Israeli Consul to Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay, between 1985 to 1987) in Tel Aviv, Israel on February 13, 2019. ii) Interview with Ambassador Amos Radian (Former Israeli Consulate-General to Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay, between 1987 to 1989) in Tel Aviv, Israel on February 12, 2019

<sup>74</sup> Interview with Ambassador Amos Radian (Former Israeli Consulate-General to Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay, between 1987 to 1989) in Tel Aviv, Israel on February 12, 2019.

of India allowed the Consulate in Bombay to issue visas even in 1988, only when it was upgraded to Consul-General status.<sup>75</sup>

Rather than implementing 'Normalisation' with a sudden declaration, the feasible target for the Israeli Consul was to create a better social environment in favour of Israel that could create the 'right image' of the country among the Indian masses so that the first-track diplomacy could take place.<sup>76</sup> Thus the Consul focused on social and cultural exchange, cooperation in agriculture, and initiating economic exchange that could pave the way for diplomatic dialogue.<sup>77</sup> There were consulate-level attempts to travel around, lectures about Israel, presenting the Israeli side of the conflict in the Middle East, and broadening personal rapport with social influencers.<sup>78</sup> It was later taken to the more grassroots level when the Consulate-General approached High Schools to celebrate Israel Day, where they arranged Israeli food, Israeli movie that represents the Israeli perspective, exhibition, and Dance.<sup>79</sup> Consulate also arranged Reception almost every evening, which proved to be excellent grounds for social exchanges. It was the time of Intifada, and Consulate-General got the opportunity to justify Israel's position to Indian elites, including people from Media.<sup>80</sup> Israeli Consulate tried to catch the decision makers and influencers who were the power multiplier, through whom they could get

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<sup>75</sup> Interview with Ambassador Amos Radian (Former Israeli Consulate-General to Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay, between 1987 to 1989) in Tel Aviv, Israel on February 12, 2019.

<sup>76</sup> Interview with Ambassador Oded Benhur (Former Israeli Consul to Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay, between 1985 to 1987) in Tel Aviv, Israel on February 13, 2019.

<sup>77</sup> Interview with Ambassador Amos Radian (Former Israeli Consulate-General to Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay, between 1987 to 1989) in Tel Aviv, Israel on February 12, 2019

<sup>78</sup> Interview with Ambassador Oded Benhur (Former Israeli Consul to Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay, between 1985 to 1987) in Tel Aviv, Israel on February 13, 2019.

<sup>79</sup> Interview with Ambassador Amos Radian (Former Israeli Consulate-General to Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay, between 1987 to 1989) in Tel Aviv, Israel on February 12, 2019

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

through others. Thus, they started with well-to-do people to attract media attention to any probable trade and commercial relations.

Most likely, the decision of gradual normalisation taken in PMO was confined within the South Block. No positive change took place among the bureaucrats at the operational level vis a vis the State of Israel in the late 1980s. However, the ministers and bureaucrats in Maharashtra were cordial on a personal level but very sceptical and calculative while accepting any Israeli offer of cooperation.<sup>81</sup> No commercial exchange could be institutionalised, excluding tiny collaboration on Agro-tech, which was there for a long time. Cooperation on Defence was separate and was not operationalised through the Consul.<sup>82</sup> Local health authorities outrightly rejected even the Israeli offer for collaboration of medical help for colic in Bombay.<sup>83</sup> Interestingly, there was acceptance of Israel by the masses and among Elites. Journalists like Behram Contractor, Pritish Nandy, novelist Pratap Sharma, dancer Mallika Sarabhai, Musicians like Ravi Shankar, business families like Tata, Somaya, Diamond Merchants like Kirtilal Mehta, Cultural organisations like Rotary Club of India came in close contacts to Israeli Consuls with sympathy and support.<sup>84</sup>

Most of the political parties in India maintained a safe distance from Israel in the post-Nehruvian period. The Jewish nation and its Consulate were almost an outcast. Even the Socialists, who used to criticise Pt Nehru on his policy of non-recognition of Israel

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<sup>81</sup> Interview with Ambassador Amos Radian (Former Israeli Consulate-General to Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay, between 1987 to 1989) in Tel Aviv, Israel on February 12, 2019

<sup>82</sup> Interview with Ambassador Oded Benhur (Former Israeli Consul to Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay, between 1985 to 1987) in Tel Aviv, Israel on February 13, 2019.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Interview with Ambassador Amos Radian (Former Israeli Consulate-General to Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay, between 1987 to 1989) in Tel Aviv, Israel on February 12, 2019

between 1948 to 1950, were silent in the post-Nehruvian period. BJP, under the leadership of Vajpayee, did not show much enthusiasm rather than leap service.<sup>85</sup> Mr Subramanian Swamy and Ram Jethmalani were rare among the political elites in India who publicly advocated India's diplomatic normalisation with Israel and were 'friends indeed' to the Consuls of Israel.<sup>86</sup> From the beginning of resuming their Consulate in 1985, they had built up. They maintained regular contact with the who's and who of Maharashtra politics, starting from the Chief Minister of Maharashtra to the Opposition leader.<sup>87</sup> But these contacts could not break the ice in New Delhi.

By late 1985, Diplomat Amos Radian started broadening their political and diplomatic contacts with influential politicians, especially in New Delhi.<sup>88</sup> He had set a secret meeting, in 1988, between Deputy Director General of MFA, Israel, Mr Yoseph Hadass and Minister of External Affairs (MoS), Mr Edurado Falerio.<sup>89</sup> Since the Israeli Media cracked the news about this meeting, it was immediately cancelled. The meetings took place at the end of 1989 and 1990s in London and New York, which later paved the way for 'Normalisation'.<sup>90</sup> The meetings were 'proceeded' with Consul-General Amos Radian's visit to New Delhi after an 'indication' from the Indian Government who

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<sup>85</sup> Interview with Ambassador Giora Becher (Former Israeli Consul General to Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay, between 1985 to 1987) in Netanya, Israel on February 13, 2019.

<sup>86</sup> Interview with Ambassador Oded Benhur (Former Israeli Consul to Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay, between 1985 to 1987) in Tel Aviv, Israel on February 13, 2019.

<sup>87</sup> Interview with Ambassador Amos Radian (Former Israeli Consulate-General to Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay, between 1987 to 1989) in Tel Aviv, Israel on February 12, 2019

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Interview with Ambassador Yosef Hadass (Former Deputy Director General of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel, in 1990) in Jerusalem, Israel on February 21, 2019.

wanted to take it one step higher.<sup>91</sup> The meetings took place after the active involvement of the Consulate with Ashok Hinduja, who was close to the Congress party and Rajiv Gandhi personally.<sup>92</sup> A significant outcome of this meeting was that the jurisdiction of the Consulate of Bombay was extended to the State of Kerala.<sup>93</sup> The Jewish history of the Cochin community in Kerala gave the Government of India the excuse for expanding jurisdiction.<sup>94</sup> The location of the meeting indicates no special involvement of the UK and USA whatsoever; the venue was chosen based on mutual consent and convenience to the parties involved, i.e. India and Israel.<sup>95</sup> Interestingly, by the end of 1989, the Ministry of Agriculture started coordinating with the Israeli Consulate-general, though MEA was still not ready to welcome the Israeli diplomats, at least formally.<sup>96</sup>

In August'1989, when Diplomat Giora Becher joined as the Consulate General in Bombay, the then Director General of the MFA, Israel, Reuven Merhav, categorically explained to Diplomat Becher about the latter's specific task and job role in India.<sup>97</sup> It was precisely "Presenting our (Israeli) positions to the political echelon or to various

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<sup>91</sup> Interview with Ambassador Amos Radian (Former Israeli Consulate-General to Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay, between 1987 to 1989) in Tel Aviv, Israel on February 12, 2019.

<sup>92</sup> Becher, G. (2013). *India — Political Diary : The story of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between India and Israel from a personal perspective (1989-1992)*. Jerusalem, Israel: Reuveni Tzameret Books Ltd, p.17

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Interview with Ambassador Yosef Hadass (Former Deputy Director General of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel, in 1990) in Jerusalem, Israel on February 21, 2019.

<sup>96</sup> Interview with Ambassador Amos Radian (Former Israeli Consulate-General to Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay, between 1987 to 1989) in Tel Aviv, Israel on February 12, 2019

<sup>97</sup> Interview with Ambassador Giora Becher (Former Israeli Consul General to Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay, between 1985 to 1987) in Netanya, Israel on February 13, 2019.

echelons in the Foreign Ministry and meetings with officials to promote reciprocal relations between the two countries."<sup>98</sup> He was also advised to institutionalise formal visits to New Delhi for the purpose of diplomatic contacts. According to Becher, "Out of diplomatic caution, the Director General refrained from stating the phrase 'diplomatic relations' as an explicit goal, but to me, the ultimate goal was more than clear."<sup>99</sup> Becher was introduced by Radian to Subramanian Swamy and M. L. Sondhi, Professor of International Relations at Jawaharlal Nehru University and Hinduja Brothers.<sup>100</sup> These contacts later proved to be instrumental for Israel. At this juncture, the General Election took place in 1989, and the State of Israel (From MFA to Consulate General in Bombay) vouched on Rajiv Gandhi and his Congress party mainly because of their common friend Ashok Hinduja. The opposition's victory meant eliminating the family's influence in the Government, and the Hinduja brothers hoped that Rajiv Gandhi, a man of their faith, would remain in power.<sup>101</sup>

### **Relative Stagnation (1989 - 1991):**

With Rajiv Gandhi's defeat in the Lok Sabha election of 1989 and the inception of Coalition Politics in India that began with the fractured mandate, chances for Indo-

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<sup>98</sup> Becher, G. (2013). *India — Political Diary : The story of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between India and Israel from a personal perspective (1989-1992)*. Jerusalem, Israel: Reuveni Tzameret Books Ltd, p.15

<sup>99</sup> Interview with Ambassador Giora Becher (Former Israeli Consul General to Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay, between 1985 to 1987) in Netanya, Israel on February 13, 2019.

<sup>100</sup> i) Interview with Ambassador Amos Radian (Former Israeli Consulate General to Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay, between 1987 to 1989) in Tel Aviv, Israel on February 12, 2019, ii) Interview with Ambassador Giora Becher (Former Israeli Consul General to Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay, between 1985 to 1987) in Netanya, Israel on February 13, 2019.

<sup>101</sup> Becher, G. (2013). *India — Political Diary : The story of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between India and Israel from a personal perspective (1989-1992)*. Jerusalem, Israel: Reuveni Tzameret Books Ltd, p.19

Israel diplomatic exchange became thinner. Though, the Jain Commission Report<sup>102</sup> had a different argument. Time-tested friend of Israel, Sri Ram Jethmalani, was sworn in as the minister in the cabinet of V. P. Singh. Jethmalani conveyed to the Israeli Consulate General that the new Government depended on the support of the Communists, who would disapprove of an Indian rapprochement with Israel.<sup>103</sup> In addition, he claimed that V.P. Singh built his election campaign on the support of the Muslim minority in India, and their massive vote in his favour bound him and his future Government.<sup>104</sup> Jethmalani first advised the Consulate General to build up liaison with Bhartiya Janata Party or BJP, which was known for its affinity with Israel, and the party may prove to be an ally of Israel in their struggle to improve relations with New Delhi.<sup>105</sup> Israeli Consulate-General approached senior Janata Dal leader Rajmohan Gandhi<sup>106</sup> who signalled that there would not be any far-reaching changes in India's foreign policy by the New Government.<sup>107</sup> Later, Jethmalani represented the issue to Prime Minister V. P. Singh, as conveyed to Israeli Consulate General Becher. However, the

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<sup>102</sup> The Jain Commission report related to the assassination of Mr Rajiv Gandhi accused cleric Chandraswami for funding the plan along with pointing finger at P. Chidambaram, M Karunanidhi and many other politicians. Finally it pointed at CIA-LTTE-Mossad link behind the assassination. This report was not legally accepted, on the ground of lack of evidence. Interestingly, Victor Ostrovsky, author of espionage stories based on his experience as a Mossad agent, claimed in his book, 'By way of Deception' (1990) that Mossad had trained all three competing parties in the conflict, namely LTTE, the Sri Lankan Army and Indian forces. Though, Israeli authority rubbishes all his claims and books.

<sup>103</sup> Becher, G. (2013). *India — Political Diary : The story of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between India and Israel from a personal perspective (1989-1992)*. Jerusalem, Israel: Reuveni Tzameret Books Ltd, p.21

<sup>104</sup> Ibid, p.21

<sup>105</sup> Ibid, p.21

<sup>106</sup> Grandson of MK Gandhi who joined Janata Dal and contested against Rajiv Gandhi from Amethi (1989), though faced a humiliating defeat.

<sup>107</sup> Becher, G. (2013). *India — Political Diary : The story of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between India and Israel from a personal perspective (1989-1992)*. Jerusalem, Israel: Reuveni Tzameret Books Ltd, p.23

Honourable Prime Minister declined the case under the impression that the main obstacle was Singh's desire to maintain Muslim support for his Government.<sup>108</sup>

The debate on normalising relations with Israel was renewed with the eruption of another round of violence in Jammu and Kashmir that caused the sixth exodus and genocide of the Kashmiri Pandits in early 1990. While Israel had drawn similarities between the violence of Kashmir with violence in their territories, Arab states were convinced by Pakistani mobilisation of the issue. It was when MEA Inder Kumar Gujral reminded the Arab Ambassadors that India had always stood by them during their conflict with Israel. Israel-sympathisers in India, like M. L. Sondhi, claimed that the exodus of the Pandits was only increasing sympathy for Israel in Indian public opinion.<sup>109</sup>

On February 1990, Consulate General Giora Becher paid an official visit to the State of Kerala, ruled by the Communists at that point of time, but received a warm welcome along with administrative cordiality, and the local daily editorial fostered Becher's idea of establishing a mission-level exchange between India and Israel.<sup>110</sup> Becher's attempt to convince Maneka Gandhi went unproductive.<sup>111</sup> In April 1990, they started building contacts with BJP with a trip to New Delhi. He first met Maharani Scindia. She wanted cooperation with Israel and Madhya Pradesh on Water Management, Agricultural

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<sup>108</sup> Becher, G. (2013). *India — Political Diary : The story of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between India and Israel from a personal perspective (1989-1992)*. Jerusalem, Israel: Reuveni Tzameret Books Ltd., p.24

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, p.25

<sup>110</sup> Ibid, p.26

<sup>111</sup> Ibid, p.27

collaboration, but that was impossible without Central Government's formal permission.<sup>112</sup>

Mohan Guruswami, an adviser to Prime Minister V.P. Singh, conveyed to the Consulate-General of Israel, Mr Giora Becher, the former's proposal for improving relations with Israel. However, he did not receive any response and interpreted this as providing a "green light" for his continued activity on the issue.<sup>113</sup> According to Guruswami, Israel could be a strategic ally of India in the face of the Pakistani threat. At the same time, the Arab world was just a broken reed, and India must develop technological cooperation with Israel, including in the industrial-security area. Mohan mentioned the non-advanced Indian tank development project while Israel was creating the "chariot" tank. Guruswami stressed broadening cooperation in every field without a "diplomatic normalisation".<sup>114</sup>

V. P. Singh's Government faced a split in May 1990 with the withdrawal of support from Devi Lal and Chandrasekhar. Meanwhile, the Government of India continued the hardened stance toward any contact with Israel and had refused, among other things, to allow official Israeli participation in the Bombay Film Festival. With Chandra Sekhar's swearing-in as Prime Minister, India had to be calculative and cautious about its West Asia policy as Indians in huge numbers were returning from Kuwait after Saddam Hussain's capture of the tiny oil-rich nation. New Delhi maintained very low-key criticism against Saddam Hussains' act of capturing Kuwait. At the time of the Kuwait

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<sup>112</sup> Becher, G. (2013). *India — Political Diary : The story of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between India and Israel from a personal perspective (1989-1992)*. Jerusalem, Israel: Reuveni Tzameret Books Ltd, p.28

<sup>113</sup> Ibid, p.29

<sup>114</sup> Interview with Ambassador Giora Becher (Former Israeli Consul General to Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay, between 1985 to 1987) in Netanya, Israel on February 13, 2019.

crisis in 1990, the Consulate of Israel had capitalised on the crisis as an opportunity by floating news in Indian media that Israel was ready to allow Indians stuck in Kuwait to be deported through Israel. It would have been logistically impractical for India to follow that for transit. But the Israeli attitude was appreciated in the Indian public opinion for an effort that was never submitted.<sup>115</sup> Subramanian Swami, another time-tested friend of the Jewish State, was sworn in as Minister of Trade and Justice in Chandra Shekhar's Government. On March 1991, in a personal meeting with Mr Giora Becher, Prime Minister Chandra Shekar conveyed that he could not afford a political crisis in his relations with several parties, including the Congress Party and India's large Muslim minority population.<sup>116</sup> Right a few days after the meeting, Chandra Shekhar had to resign.

### **The Policy of Implementing the Decision of Normalisation by P. V. Narasimha Rao**

#### *Politico-Psychological Orientation of P. V. Narasimha Rao:*

Far from the sophistication of the Lutyens Delhi, P. V. Narasimha Rao was born in June 1921 in the village of Vangara in the Telangana region of the State of Hyderabad of Nizam. In the words of K. Natwar Singh, "(Rao's) roots were deep in the spiritual and religious soil of India. He did not need to discover India."<sup>117</sup> His active participation in

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<sup>115</sup> Interview with Ambassador Giora Becher (Former Israeli Consul General to Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay, between 1985 to 1987) in Netanya, Israel on February 13, 2019.

<sup>116</sup> Becher, G. (2013). *India — Political Diary : The story of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between India and Israel from a personal perspective (1989-1992)*. Jerusalem, Israel: Reuveni Tzameret Books Ltd, p.29

<sup>117</sup> Singh, K. N. (2012, JULY 6). How PV became PM. *The Hindu*. Retrieved from <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/how-pv-became-pm/article3592050.ece>, accessed on June 6, 2020

the armed struggle against Nizam for integrating Hyderabad into India marks a departure from Gandhian *ahimsa* and a similarity to the Zionist struggle. Rao's indoctrination into politics by Swami Ramananda Tirtha<sup>118</sup> underlines the former's deviation from Nehruvian secularism. His childhood traumas—adoption, having to leave home, and early marriage—had made him solitary.<sup>119</sup> Rao's education and natural curiosity had also distanced him from rustic family and friends. In his political career, this isolation had translated into never choosing one party faction or personality cult over the other. This restrained disposition made Rao a 'circumspect policymaker'—with neither strict principles nor stringent concerns.<sup>120</sup> The shift of a committed socialist toward the pioneer of India's liberalisation points out the capability of Rao to accommodate Change.

Narasimha was a precocious student since childhood, graduated in Astronomy and primarily chose Law as a profession. Rao never wanted to be a politician. He wanted to go to the UK to settle as an academic in Oxford or Cambridge.<sup>121</sup> His oratory skill, literary excellence and mastery over languages, especially Sanskrit, Telugu and Hindi, allowed him an alternative career in literature, particularly in Telegu. Rao read extensively, from V. D. Savarkar to P. C. Joshi, from Gopal Krishna Gokhale to Bal Gangadhar Tilak. Yet, Rao had internalised Nehruvian socialism as the only route a

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<sup>118</sup> Ramanand Tirtha was a monk-politician, bald and clean-shaven with a saffron garb, speaking all languages used to be spoken in Telangana region. He was the President of the Hyderabad State Congress and had attempted to convert it into a mass movement. Tirtha argued that land ownership should vest not just in the hands of the village agents (who were from the dominant castes)—land should pass on to the actual tiller (many of whom were low-caste Hindus). These radical views were resisted by party 'moderates' such as Mohandas Gandhi in Delhi and Burgula Ramakrishna Rao in Hyderabad.

<sup>119</sup> Sitapati, V. (2016). *Half Lion : How P.V. Narasimha Rao Transformed India*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, p.25

<sup>120</sup> Ibid, p.25

<sup>121</sup> Ibid, p.15

traditional society could take to modernity. He was suspicious of private enterprise and faithful to the modern state as the sole instrument for social change. Rao believed that only the visible hand of the state could pull India into the twentieth century.<sup>122</sup>

He grew up in a political environment in Hyderabad state, which the Nizam then ruled. In 1937, when Narasimha was sixteen, the political unrest in the Hyderabad state reached a new high.<sup>123</sup> The authoritarian rule of Nizam converted Hyderabad into a place where "no political expression was permitted, cultural preoccupation became dominant, of necessity."<sup>124</sup> The conservative Hindu Mahasabha, the reformist Arya Samaj, and linguistic groups representing Marathi, Kannad, and Telugu groups struggled together for the common goal of ending Nizam's rule. The Hyderabad State Congress, formed that year, was fighting the common cause separately. Nizam's uncommon ferocity created a sense of camaraderie among them. In 1938, the seventeen-year-old Rao was expelled from College for singing 'Vande Mataram'<sup>125</sup>. In the Haripura Congress of 1938, Nehru's call for 'surging like a river in flood' sparked the fighter inside Rao.<sup>126</sup> Nehru's advocacy of militant action in the princely states resonated with young Narasimha.<sup>127</sup> In the struggle against the Nizam between August

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<sup>122</sup> Sitapati, V. (2016). *Half Lion : How P.V. Narasimha Rao Transformed India*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, p.21

<sup>123</sup> After the elections in British India in 1937 and Congress's victory in the Bombay and Madras presidencies, both shared boundaries with Hyderabad and Gandhi's call for non-Cooperation and attempt to transform Congress into a mass movement panicked Nizam of Hyderabad.

<sup>124</sup> Rao, P. V. (1998). *The Insider*. New Delhi: Viking, p.13

<sup>125</sup> Written in 1882 by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, the song used Hindu imagery of a mother goddess as an allegory for India. Religious Muslims refused to worship another god, while Congress Party adopted it as a secular creed. Singing the song was banned in the state of Hyderabad by Nizam.

<sup>126</sup> Rao, P. V. (1998). *The Insider*. New Delhi: Viking. p. 426

<sup>127</sup> Sitapati, V. (2016). *Half Lion : How P.V. Narasimha Rao Transformed India*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, p.15

1947 and September 1948, Narasimha Rao worked under Swami Ramananda Tirtha—a Hindu sadhu and a politician. Tirtha's apprehension, infused with spirituality and Socialism, proved irresistible to the twenty-six-year-old Narasimha. Rao was sent to a Congress camp in Chanda, Maharashtra, where he was a gunrunner, transporting arms to groups plotting the downfall of the Nizam.<sup>128</sup> This military-action-oriented nationalist struggle against Islamic rule had similarities to the Zionist call for the reconstruction of Israel.

In his personal life, Narasimha was the devotee of the monastic order, the Siddheswari *peetham*.<sup>129</sup> For decades, Narasimha Rao had been a devotee, making regular trips to Courtallam, paying obeisance to the head of the *peetham*, and taking part in its charitable activities—from medical care for the poor to free food. His religious devotion was not limited to private life; instead, he did not practice the western Secular model of strict division between Religion and Politics. In public life, his first mentor in days of struggle against Nizam's rule or in favour of Socialist Land reform in the post-Independence period was Swami Ramananda Tirtha. In later life, Rao shared political relationships with religious gurus like Chandraswamis and N. K. Sharma. Ramananda Tirtha's influence over his young protégé is central to understanding Chief Minister Rao's zeal for land reforms in the 1970s. It is also crucial to appreciate Prime Minister Rao's attitude to the BJP and Hindu nationalists in the 1990s.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Sitapati, V. (2016). *Half Lion : How P.V. Narasimha Rao Transformed India*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, p.17

<sup>129</sup> The Hindu monastic order was founded in 1936 in Kutralam in Tamil Nadu. Mouna Swamy, the founder, wanted to establish a centre for religious knowledge in the tradition of the eighth-century Hindu theologian, Adi Shankara.

<sup>130</sup> Sitapati, V. (2016). *Half Lion : How P.V. Narasimha Rao Transformed India*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, p.17

As state minister in the 1960s, Rao wanted to modernise Indian society with the brand of Socialism of Jawaharlal Nehru and Swami Ramanand Tirtha. Narasimha supported Indira Gandhi's leftward turn on the ideological ground and radically implemented land reforms aimed at Socialism in the 1970s. In May 1972, Rao swore to implement land reforms and was ready to accept 'whatever consequences'.<sup>131</sup> He was nominated and expelled as Chief Minister by Mrs Gandhi. He was sent to New Delhi to work as the party's General-Secretary. It was the time when he had a trip to the United States in his private capacity and saw American technological advancement that changed a socialist's heart in a sustained manner. He witnessed America being transformed. With Republican Richard Nixon's reach to the White House, significant changes came in American policies. Nixon opened up relations with Beijing. He signed an arms reduction treaty with the Soviet Union and peace accords with Vietnam in 1973, ending a decade of misadventure. The "Nehruvian alignments that had guided foreign policy in the early years of the Indian Republic were being subtly redrawn."<sup>132</sup>

In 1980, P. V. Narasimha Rao became the Minister of External Affairs in Indira Gandhi's cabinet. By then, Indira had revised her Soviet inclination toward how the USSR treated her in the Janata period. That is why in her second term as Prime Minister, Mrs Gandhi first paid her official visit to Washington DC and later to Moscow.<sup>133</sup> As the Minister of External Affairs, Rao witnessed how Deng Xiaoping opened the economy to domestic and foreign enterprises in late 1978. P. V. watched with

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<sup>131</sup> Reddy, N. (1993). *P. V. Narasimha Rao: Years of Power*. New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications. p. 64

<sup>132</sup> Sitapati, V. (2016). *Half Lion : How P.V. Narasimha Rao Transformed India*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, p.36

<sup>133</sup> Interview with Ambassador Ronen Sen (Retd IFS, Ambassador Ambassador to Russia between 1992 - 1995) in New Delhi, India on May 4, 2017.

admiration how Deng's ability to wrap Change in the garb of continuity that abandoned Maoism for the market while paying lip service to the glories of the Chairman.<sup>134</sup> As the Minister of Home Affairs in 1984 and Defence Minister, he became a statesman. According to the former President of India, Mr Pranab Mukherjee, Rao's indispensability was clearly demonstrated when Mr Rajiv Gandhi formed his Government and wanted to have a new team. Rajiv Gandhi realised that without P. V. Narasimha Rao, there cannot be a team. Therefore, he not only continued as a minister in various ministries with which he dealt, but also he proved to be indispensable in the Congress ministry.<sup>135</sup> As the senior cabinet minister in Rajiv Gandhi's cabinet, Narasimha Rao communicated with Israel to gather information on Pakistan's purchase of F-16 planes and other technologies from the USA.<sup>136</sup>

Narasimha Rao had almost taken retirement from active politics on the eve of the 1991 Lok Sabha election after he was denied a ticket. It is Rajiv Gandhi's assassination that brought Rao back to relevance. After the efforts by Chandraswami, recommendation by P. N. Haksar and approval by Mrs Sonia Gandhi, P. V. became the Prime Minister in the most turbulent juncture in the history of modern India.<sup>137</sup> He was in charge of the Ministry of External Affairs till 1994, later succeeded by Mr Dinesh Singh. He led the cabinet composed of his political competitors like Arjun Singh and Sharad Pawar. Apart

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<sup>134</sup> Sitapati, V. (2016). *Half Lion : How P.V. Narasimha Rao Transformed India*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, p.45

<sup>135</sup> Mukherjee, P. (2016). *The Turbulent Years 1980-1996*. New Delhi: Rupa Publications India Pvt. Ltd, p.137

<sup>136</sup> Dr V. S. Arunachalam's interview by Vinay Sitapati in 2015. Dr Arunachalam led number of India's nuclear and covert technological programmes. He was the head of DRDO in 1980's and served as the Defence Scientific Advisor to the Defence Minister between 1982 to 1992.

<sup>137</sup> Singh, K. N. (2012, July 6). How PV became PM. *The Hindu*. Retrieved from <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/how-pv-became-pm/article3592050.ece>, accessed on November 21, 2019.

from Economic Liberalisation, Rao's biggest effort was to run the minority government for the complete term.

*Domestic Political Situation:*

India was going through its most challenging time since Independence. The menace of terrorism shook the territorial integrity of the country. Economically, India was on the brink<sup>138</sup>, and the demolition of the Babri mosque shattered the country's political stability. Surprisingly, the renewed radicalism in Kashmir gained its motivation from the Intifada by the Palestinians. Kashmir played an essential role in the Normalisation between India and Israel. Apart from Israel's non-opposition or support to India on the Kashmir issue, the greater Indian population beyond the Kashmir valley felt an affinity with the 'Holy Land' when 'Lashker-e-Islam' threatened Kashmiri Pundits with the slogan "who want another Israel in Kashmir to kill Kashmiri Muslims"<sup>139</sup>, 'to leave Kashmir or Die', that caused 'Ethnic Cleansing' of Pundits in Kashmir valley in the 1990s.

Since the 1990s, most of the Jihadi movements in South Asia have grown out of the Islamist revivalist movement. The fragile Pakistani State has used the Jihad to bolster its national identity against India. The victory of Afghan tribes over Soviet forces and Palestinian Intifada's success at the end of the Cold War instigated the long-cherished dream of terrorists in Kashmir.<sup>140</sup> Terrorist groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed, and Hizbul Mujahidin were trained and supported with logistics and

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<sup>138</sup> Ramesh, J. (2015). *To The Brink and Back: India's 1991 Story*. New Delhi: Rupa Publications, p.18

<sup>139</sup> Open letter to Kashmiri Pundits by the Commander of Lashker-e-Islam

<sup>140</sup> Ganguly, Sumit. (1997) . *The crisis in Kashmir: potents of war, hopes of peace*. New York: Camebridge University Press and Woodrow Wilson Center Press, p.42

funding along with Pakistan's support to carry out a shadow war against India which Pakistan Army could not formally perform.<sup>141</sup> Thus, Terrorism in India is Pakistan's 'war in another way'. From ISI (Inter-Service Intelligence) to ISIS, India faced threats from different Islamist-Jihadist groups, from deep states to non-state actors. Many Jihadi groups emerged in the 1990s in Pakistan and Kashmir, occasionally spreading operations into parts of India. Both Israel and India started considering terrorism as 'war by other means' or a 'hybrid war' as a part of fourth-generation warfare by Pakistan.

The economic situation was so vulnerable that New Delhi had to mortgage its gold in a foreign bank<sup>142</sup>, and the old Permit-Licence raj system was pointed to as the cause of the catastrophe. A complete economic reform was the need of the hour. Narasimha Rao realised that if the market economy is to be implemented, India has to look beyond uttering ideological rhetorics and do business. The rise of Hindu Nationalist forces recalibrated the political system in India. Nehruvian ethos was challenged, and old electoral calculations were restructured. The polling pattern (before the brutal assassination of Rajiv Gandhi) marks a shift in the voting behaviour of the predominantly Muslim populated constituencies. The loyalty was shifted from Congress to regional parties.<sup>143</sup> Narasimha Rao was less pressured to consider this factor while dealing with Israel.

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<sup>141</sup> Musharraf, P. (2015, October 25). Mahaaz. (D. News, Interviewer) Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/nCyIC4Npxnk> , accessed on February 26, 2020

<sup>142</sup> Baru, S. (2016). *1991: How P. V. Narasimha Rao Made History*. New Delhi: Aleph Book Company, p.43

<sup>143</sup> Ibid, p.57

*The Global Political Situation:*

With the eruption of the Intifada and the Palestinian mass resistance against the IDF, the "Children of the stones"<sup>144</sup> carried on protests in the streets and Palestinian society followed suit. Roads were barricaded, tires set on fire, and stones and iron bars were hurled. The resistance was organised but anonymous in character. The leadership was mostly youth, backed by organisations like Muslim Brotherhood and Islamic Jihad.<sup>145</sup> Against this backdrop, Hamas was founded in Gaza in 1987 to capitalise on the public mood against PLO and Arab countries. Unlike PLO's demand of a secular state in the West Bank and Gaza, the newly emerged Islamist groups called for an Islamic state in entire 'former' Palestine, at the cost of absolute annihilation of Israel, to be achieved by Jihad. On the other hand, IDF's stated method of 'might, power and beating', popularly known as the "Iron fist" policy, was a severe procedural response to the threat posed by organised rebellion. The 'Iron Fist' policy attracted international criticism, including from the UN.<sup>146</sup> By 1991, the Intifada began to lose momentum, yet minor skirmishes continued till 1993. PLO turned to the international arena with the policy of securing a political solution through diplomacy. Alongside, Militant Religious fundamentalism had a stiff hike and brought in the practice ranging from armed terrorism to stone pelting.

In December 1988, Yasser Arafat announced the PLO's acceptance of the UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and Israel's right to exist and denounced terrorism.

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<sup>144</sup> PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat used this phrase in praising the youth carrying out Intifada.

<sup>145</sup> Harms, G., & Ferry, T. M. (2005). *The Palestine-Israel Conflict*. London: Pluto Press, p.142

<sup>146</sup> In late 1988 the UNGA resolution (43/21) condemned Israel's killing, wounding, deportation, restrictive economic measures of defenceless Palestinians.

PLO declared Palestinian statehood. India was quick to recognise the Palestinian State. The US was less enthusiastic and claimed the Palestinian leadership was involved in terrorism. The US denied a visa to the PLO chairman to speak at the forthcoming UNGA. Later UN shifted the venue to Geneva, where Arafat spoke the following December, where he clarified his peace proposal. Any negotiations on the question of the Palestinian State on the territories of the West Bank and Gaza is a national security issue that Israel could not compromise. So far as Jerusalem was concern, the city is the most sacred place on earth for a Jew. Israel considers it the eternal capital. Thus, Prime Minister of Israel Yitzhak Shamir proposed in May 1989 elections to be held in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, rejecting the peace plan by PLO and any room for discussion between them. PLO also rejected this plan bringing the phase of diplomacy to a standstill.

On August 2, 1990, with the beginning Iraqi invasion of Kuwait<sup>147</sup>, the politics in the Middle East took a new turn. In the fight between two former allies, Iraq launched 39 Scud missiles (ground to ground) into Tel Aviv, the finance capital and the largest city in Israel. On the formal request from the White House, Israel chose not to counter-strike. At this critical juncture, Yasser Arafat extended support to Saddam Hussain while the Arab world, especially Saudi Arabia—a primary source of financial assistance to the Palestinians, stood with Kuwait. It adopted a resolution calling the

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<sup>147</sup> Iraq was in debt to Kuwait for financial support during the war, all the while accusing the tiny oil-rich monarchy of depressing oil prices by exceeding production quotas and stealing from an oil field that straddled the border between two countries. Kuwait outrightly rejected Saddam Hussain's demands for compensation and debt relief. The infuriated Iraqi dictator sent 100000 troops overnight and captured the Kuwait City. Within a week, Iraqi parliament declared Kuwait as an integral of Iraq. The UNSC passed Resolution 678, giving Hussain evacuation deadline January 15, 1991 and authorising "all means necessary" in the event of failure to comply. USA commenced 'operation Desert Strom' on January 16, 1991. In five weeks, Iraq was expelled from Kuwait and Baghdad lay in ruins.

Iraqi action a violation of Kuwaiti sovereignty and Arab fraternity and demanded immediate and unconditional withdrawal.

The disintegration of Soviet Russia forced India to rethink and redesign its foreign and defence policy. Soviet was not just a vital supplier of the military; it was a dependable diplomatic partner in global fora. The disintegration forced India to reconsider its approach to global power calculus. NAM, ideally, went irrelevant with the emergence of one global hegemon. It was time for India to look after its national interest beyond the collective security mechanism.

The disintegration of the USSR posed a challenge for India's defence procurement.<sup>148</sup> Production units of various ancillaries were located in different parts of the unified USSR. Following the disintegration, the locations became different independent countries. Procuring complete deliveries became a clumsy affair.<sup>149</sup> New Delhi started looking for an alternative, and Prime Minister Rao favoured American defence cooperation. The transfer of defence equipment in the US was under the strict vigilance of the legislature and a time-consuming procedure.<sup>150</sup> India was searching for an easy way out. Mr Sharad Pawar, the Defence Minister in Rao's cabinet, pointed out that, in order to tackle the per unit cost of defence equipment, the economy of scale is to be extended. Thus, India was also looking for marketing defence equipment.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Pawar, S. (2016). *On My Terms : From the Grassroots to the Corridors of Power*. New Delhi: Speaking Tiger, p.105

<sup>149</sup> Ibid, p.105

<sup>150</sup> Ibid, p.105

<sup>151</sup> Ibid, p.106

*Implementation of the Decision of Normalisation:*

On June 2, 1991, the Official Spokesperson of MEA confirmed that Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) had abducted a group of foreign tourists, most of them were Israelis and a few Dutch, from a houseboat on Dahl Lake.<sup>152</sup> The Israelis grappled with their assailants. One Israeli tourist and one JKLF terrorist were killed in a scuffle.<sup>153</sup> Three other Israelis were wounded and later rescued by the Indian army.<sup>154</sup> Yair Yitzhaki, the fifth tourist who managed to escape, was found and again abducted by the JKLF. The kidnapers' intention was apparently to execute the man. All Israeli bag packers graduated from combat units in the IDF. Immediately upon receiving the first news of the incident, the Consular-General contacted MEA and MHA in New Delhi and local administration in Srinagar and requested immediate access for a special officer on duty, Menashe Zipori, from the Israeli Consulate of Bombay, to Srinagar and Deputy Director General of MFA, Israel Moshe Yager's immediate Visa to India on 'humanitarian grounds'<sup>155</sup>. After initial hesitation, MEA realised that, given the severity of the incident and accepted all Israeli requests.<sup>156</sup> Most importantly, MEA released a Press note that condemned the attack on Israeli tourists in Srinagar and considered the attack on India itself.

The Deputy Director General of MFA, Israel, Mr Moshe Yager, came to India to look after the situation. Only after 1952 did a senior Foreign Ministry official from Jerusalem

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<sup>152</sup> Ministry of External Affairs. (1991). *Foreign Affairs Record*. New Delhi: Govt. of India, p.99

<sup>153</sup> Ibid, p.99

<sup>154</sup> Yegar, M. (2016). *Israel in Asia : Selected Essays*. Jerusalem: Yuvalim Press, p.151

<sup>155</sup> Interview with Ambassador Giora Becher (Former Israeli Consul General to Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay, between 1985 to 1987) in Netanya, Israel on February 13, 2019.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

arrive in the Indian capital officially and openly. The then Director General of MFA, Israel Reuven Merhav, instructed Diplomat Yegar to knock on all doors possible that could open avenues for the upgradation of relations between the two countries.<sup>157</sup> The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Israel, contacted the US to pressurise Pakistan to influence the terrorists to free the abductees.<sup>158</sup> The situation became complicated when the Pakistani Foreign Ministry spokesman claimed that the abductees were not innocent travellers but trained IDF soldiers who came for joint military operations.<sup>159</sup> Some senior Congress MPs echoed the same argument in the Parliament and accused the Government that these are trained IDF soldiers, hundred in numbers gathered in Kashmir to conduct military operations. Both Indian and Israeli authorities rubbished the claim.<sup>160</sup> Finally, according to Moshe Yager, the abductee was handed over to the UN representative,<sup>161</sup> like the JKLF terrorists handed over the Swedish citizen

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<sup>157</sup> Interview with Ambassador Reuven Merhav (Former Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, from 1988 to 1991) in Jerusalem, Israel on February 18, 2019.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Becher, G. (2013). *India — Political Diary : The story of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between India and Israel from a personal perspective (1989-1992)*. Jerusalem, Israel: Reuveni Tzameret Books Ltd, p.77

<sup>160</sup> i) Interview with Ambassador Moshe Yegar (Former Deputy Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel, in-charge of Asia, Africa and Oceania, from 1990 to 1993) in Jerusalem, Israel on February 17, 2019. , ii) Interview with Ambassador Ronen Sen (Retd IFS) in New Delhi, India on May 4, 2017.

<sup>161</sup> Interview with Ambassador Moshe Yegar (Former Deputy Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel, in-charge of Asia, Africa and Oceania, from 1990 to 1993) in Jerusalem, Israel on February 17, 2019.

kidnapped a month before.<sup>162</sup> Although New Delhi officially did not accept the role of the UN<sup>163</sup> but chose to 'close eyes' on the humanitarian crisis.<sup>164</sup>

The Indian press covered the affair extensively, including photos from the farewell ceremony we held for Erez Kahana's coffin before he left for Israel.<sup>165</sup> Though, the officer on special duty, Mr Birdy, found himself 'imprisoned in a hotel' and without any cooperation from the local administration. It is important to understand that South Block allowed an Israeli special officer to work in Jammu and Kashmir, at least on principle. Mr Moshe Yager cracked ample opportunities and new communication vistas that further led to the upgradation of bilateral relations. The MEA and Indian Security agencies' coordination with Israel underlined a Change in India's approach. Deputy Director General of MFA, Israel Moshe Yager, with the help of Prof. M. L. Sondhi, had some informal meetings with important Indian personalities, including R. N. Kao, founder director of R&AW.<sup>166</sup> Before Moshe Yager's visit, MEA released a press brief that this visit was of "consular" nature and would not include any diplomatic discussions whatsoever. And there would be no change in India's policy towards Israel.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> Becher, G. (2013). *India — Political Diary : The story of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between India and Israel from a personal perspective (1989-1992)*. Jerusalem, Israel: Reuveni Tzameret Books Ltd, p.78

<sup>163</sup> Ministry of External Affairs. (1991). *Foreign Affairs Record*. New Delhi: Govt. of India, p.99

<sup>164</sup> Interview with Ambassador Giora Becher (Former Israeli Consul General to Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay, between 1985 to 1987) in Netanya, Israel on February 13, 2019.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> Interview with Ambassador Moshe Yegar (Former Deputy Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel, in-charge of Asia, Africa and Oceania, from 1990 to 1993) in Jerusalem, Israel on February 17, 2019.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

Prof Sondhi conveyed to Mr Yegar that major political changes in the world and in India, like in Kashmir, stimulated a wave of support for Israel in India that is favourable to upgrading the relationship. Professor added that he had been working locally towards the establishment of regular diplomatic relations. He did so, believing that this would best serve India's national interest.<sup>168</sup> Mr Yeger met the Director of Consular Branch, MEA, Mr A.P. Gupta, in South Block, who categorically cleared that this liason means no Change in India's policy towards Israel. Meanwhile, MEA had rejected multiple times that there could be no change in India's relationship with Israel and that the tourists were neither Israeli commandos nor Mossad agents.<sup>169</sup>

Moshe Yegar's meeting with R. N. Kao, the founder Director of R&AW and Special Security Advisor to the Prime Minister, who also enjoyed immense influence and respect in the diplomatic clout of New Delhi, played an important role in the normalisation of the two countries. Kao was convinced with the argument that upgradation is in the mutual interest of both India and Israel. It is not a favour to the tiny Jewish State by the largest democracy. Both Mr Yegar and Mr Kao agreed that diplomatic 'normalisation' must have occurred much earlier.<sup>170</sup> With Professor Sondhi's help and Kao's advice, Mr Yegar later met Naresh Chandra, the Cabinet Secretary. He later attempted to convince all senior Cabinet Ministers, including the Prime Minister, that normalisation of diplomatic relations with Israel was in favour of India.<sup>171</sup> All of

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<sup>168</sup> Interview with Ambassador Moshe Yegar (Former Deputy Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel, in-charge of Asia, Africa and Oceania, from 1990 to 1993) in Jerusalem, Israel on February 17, 2019.

<sup>169</sup> Yegar, M. (2016). *Israel in Asia : Selected Essays*. Jerusalem: Yuvalim Press, p.155

<sup>170</sup> Interview with Ambassador Moshe Yegar (Former Deputy Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel, in-charge of Asia, Africa and Oceania, from 1990 to 1993) in Jerusalem, Israel on February 17, 2019.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

them agreed on the question of upgradation but were not sure about the question of timing. It was actually Mr Naresh Chandra who was interested in Israeli electronic fences in India, and they discussed that in the meeting. Although Yegar did not promise that formally because he was not representing his country's defence ministry, he promised to make contact with some conditions. It was eight months after this meeting that the normalisation took place.

Mr J. N. Dixit, the Foreign Secretary of India from 1991 to 1994, was impressed with Israel's advancement in cutting-edge defence technology, particularly in surveillance and counter-terror.<sup>172</sup> Mr Dixit had witnessed the same while he was posted as the High Commissioner in Sri Lanka from 1985 to 1989.<sup>173</sup> Since India was going for economic liberalisation and a grave economic crisis, New Delhi could not afford to lose the market in the Middle East and the remittances it received from the Indians working in various Middle Eastern countries. It was J. N. Dixit who convinced Prime Minister Rao to take the risk of normalisation because Dixit held that relations with Israel would be more productive for India.<sup>174</sup>

At that time, Israel held an accelerated diplomatic activity at the UN, whose goal was to repeal the decision comparing Zionism to racism. The question of the expected position of the Indian delegation was on the table. Israel attempted to convince decision-makers in South Block to vote in favour of the motion in the UN to repeal the blame on Zionism and Israel. Finally, India decided to vote with most countries in the

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<sup>172</sup> Interview with Ambassador Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty (Deputy Chief of India's mission in Tel Aviv, 1995-1999) in New Delhi, India on September 8, 2016.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

world in favour of a decision that rejects the comparison of Zionism to racism.<sup>175</sup> The reactions were, as expected, mixed. Some of the wall guards in the Congress party attacked the decision, which they saw as a deviation from India's traditional position as it was determined back in the days of Gandhi and Nehru. The majority in the party preferred not to comment publicly. In an interview with Isi Leibler on December 24, 1992, Prime Minister Rao confirmed, "Okay, we have supported the "Zionism=racism" resolution in the UN, but I do not remember India ever making a statement that Zionism equals racism. We sometimes have to go along with things that we may not be hundred per cent in agreement with."<sup>176</sup> Enthusiastic responses were heard from the circles of the BJP, including the call for the immediate establishment of full diplomatic relations with Israel, by General Jacob.<sup>177</sup>

Prime Minister Rao started considering the upgradation of relations in the second half of 1991.<sup>178</sup> The foreign secretary considered the option for many 'intermediate upgradation' such as expanding the consulate's jurisdiction or even transferring it from Bombay to New Delhi.<sup>179</sup> Israel was firm in its conviction that it would object to the proposed Indian involvement in the Madrid peace process and multilateral talks unless

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<sup>175</sup> Interview with Ambassador Moshe Yegar (Former Deputy Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel, in-charge of Asia, Africa and Oceania, from 1990 to 1993) in Jerusalem, Israel on February 17, 2019.

<sup>176</sup> Leibler, I. (Fall 2007). A 1991 Meeting with Prime Minister Narasimha Rao. *Jewish Political Studies Review*, 19 (3/4), p.149

<sup>177</sup> Interview with Ambassador Giora Becher (Former Israeli Consul General to Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay, between 1985 to 1987) in Netanya, Israel on February 13, 2019.

<sup>178</sup> Interview with Ambassador Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty (Deputy Chief of India's mission in Tel Aviv, 1995-1999) in New Delhi, India on September 8, 2016.

<sup>179</sup> Becher, G. (2013). *India — Political Diary : The story of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between India and Israel from a personal perspective (1989-1992)*. Jerusalem, Israel: Reuveni Tzameret Books Ltd, p.106

'full diplomatic' relations were established between the two countries.<sup>180</sup> Though they would have appreciated any upgradation in good spirit, the 'only' condition for 'entry' to peace talks was the establishment of full diplomatic relations.<sup>181</sup>

On January 17, 1992, there was an official visit by Yasser Arafat. He formally declared in a press meeting that Palestinians do not object to the establishment of bilateral relations between India and Israel.<sup>182</sup> Prime Minister Rao reiterated India's consistent and unequivocal support for the Palestinian people and the restoration of their inalienable rights, including their right to self-determination.<sup>183</sup> Finally, on January 29, 1992, Prime Minister formally declared the decision of diplomatic normalisation between India and Israel by exchanging embassies in New Delhi and Tel Aviv.

Proving a decade-old perception of Islamist reaction wrong, the decision was accepted by the people in India and the Arab countries almost without much resistance. There were no violent reactions from the section of minorities against this particular decision. Diplomats of Arab nations were furious, and the reactions were not in conformity with standard diplomatic behaviour.<sup>184</sup> Oman was one country where India's policy shift was 'understood'. The Sultan of Oman expressed that India should have normalised with Israel much earlier and had played an effective role in the conflict resolution between

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<sup>180</sup> Becher, G. (2013). *India — Political Diary : The story of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between India and Israel from a personal perspective (1989-1992)*. Jerusalem, Israel: Reuveni Tzameret Books Ltd, p.106

<sup>181</sup> Interview with Ambassador Yosef Hadass (Former Deputy Director General of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel, in 1990) in Jerusalem, Israel on February 21, 2019.

<sup>182</sup> Ministry of External Affairs. (1992). *Foreign Affairs Record*. New Delhi: Govt. of India, p.18

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid*, p.18

<sup>184</sup> Dixit, J. N. (1996). *My South Block Years*. New Delhi.

Israel and Palestinians.<sup>185</sup> Although there were leftist reactions in the Parliament and Academia, blaming the Government, succumbed to the American pressure, deviating from Gandhian policy. Prime Minister Rao replied,

"It is not that we are recognising Israel for the first time. Israel stands recognised already; for many decades, it has been so. We have had only consular relations with Israel. What we have done now is to start diplomatic relations. The dividends of this decision, the benefits of this decision, are not merely to India but to the entire Middle-East process where we have always been playing the role of a champion of rights and also as a country."<sup>186</sup>

Prime Minister Rao had a renewed approach towards the USA for gaining defence technologies and foreign direct investments for the newly liberalised Indian market. His official trip on January, 1992 aimed at availing defence technologies and loans from IMF and Import-Export Bank. Israel, on the other hand, was 'preparing to make his trip difficult' by tapping multiple sources and lobbies in America.<sup>187</sup> The normalisation between India and Israel became effective for gaining defence technologies and capital from the US.<sup>188</sup>

#### *Post Normalisation Engagement:*

India and Israel began critical diplomatic and defence engagements within months after the normalisation. The robust defence exchanges between the two countries indicate

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<sup>185</sup> Gupta, R. (2018). India and Israel. *Contemporary Review of the Middle East*, 5(1), p.72

<sup>186</sup> Reply to the debate on the President's Address in Rajya Sabha, 10 March 1992

<sup>187</sup> Interview with Ambassador Moshe Yegar (Former Deputy Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel, in-charge of Asia, Africa and Oceania, from 1990 to 1993) in Jerusalem, Israel on February 17, 2019.

<sup>188</sup> Interview with Ambassador Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty (Deputy Chief of India's mission in Tel Aviv, 1995-1999) in New Delhi, India on September 8, 2016.

how and why New Delhi upgraded the relationship in January 1992.<sup>189</sup> Immediately after the disintegration of Soviet Russia, the Indian Air Force was concerned about the maintenance of the soviet-made air fighters. In May 1992, a six-member defence delegation met senior officials in the defence ministry to find out areas of cooperation in Defence Production and supplies. Israel attempted the tender of maintenance of Russian-made Indian air fighters. In that regard, defence cooperation was initiated, and an officer of the Israeli Air Force, Mr Nisim Moses, was stationed in India in 1992.<sup>190</sup> Defence establishments in India and Israel worked on this particular area of cooperation after the normalisation.<sup>191</sup> The Israeli attempt to grab the Indian defence market could not be materialised. The Russian arms lobbies (post-Soviet) enjoyed very effective clout in New Delhi's bureaucratic circles, and they outran the Israeli endeavour.<sup>192</sup>

Both India and Israel kept secrecy about defence collaboration. The Ministry of External Affairs only accepted that there were wide-ranging discussions on possible areas of cooperation in Defence.<sup>193</sup> The public aspect of this relationship was all about diplomatic promises for cultural exchange, tourism, and cooperation in agriculture, education, science and technology.<sup>194</sup> In 1993, India and Israel materialised treaties on

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<sup>189</sup> Interview with Ambassador Ephraim Duwek (Ambassador of Israel to India, from 1990 to 1993) in Jerusalem, Israel on February 18, 2019.

<sup>190</sup> Interview with Mr Nissim Moses (Retd IDF Officer, served on special duty in India between 1992-1996) in Peta Tikwa, Israel on February 20, 2019.

<sup>191</sup> Interview with Mr Nissim Moses (Retd IAF Officer, served on special duty in India between 1992-1996) in Peta Tikwa, Israel on February 20, 2019.

<sup>192</sup> Interview with Mr Nissim Moses (Retd IAF Officer) in Peta Tikwa, Israel on February 20, 2019.

<sup>193</sup> Official Spokesman's Statement on March 20, 1992 [Source: Ministry of External Affairs. (1992). *Foreign Affairs Record 1992*. New Delhi: Govt. of India, p.131]

<sup>194</sup> Official Spokesman's Statement on March 20, 1992 [Source: Ministry of External Affairs. (1992). *Foreign Affairs Record 1992*. New Delhi: Govt. of India, p.131]

Agricultural cooperation and Tourism.<sup>195</sup> This cooperation was materialised when Deputy Prime Minister of Israel, Mr Shimon Peres, visited India.<sup>196</sup> From 1993-1994, technological advances in water management, cooperation and confidence-building measures in financial management, trade and economic cooperation, science and technology and rural development were pointed out for collaboration. In 1994, India and Israel operationalised an MoU for direct flights between the two countries. On December 30, 1996, the President of Israel, Ezer Weizman, arrived in India for an eight-day visit. Bilateral cooperation agreements were signed: for technical cooperation, scientific and industrial research, an exchange programme in culture and education, and an agriculture demonstration cooperation project. South Block balanced the visit of the President of Israel with an official visit by PLO President Yasser Arafat on November 15, 1997. India reiterated its age-old commitment to the Palestinian cause in the Joint statement.<sup>197</sup>

India and Israel had discussed various possibilities that might enable India to participate in the peace process. MEA stated that India's objective was to assist the negotiations.<sup>198</sup> In due course of time, India was not that effective nor interested in the peace process, instead focused on areas of cooperation with Israel and rhetorical support to the Palestinian cause. New Delhi moved beyond the fundamental question of Israel's right

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<sup>195</sup> Ministry of External Affairs. (1993, December 27). *Ministry of External Affairs, India*. Retrieved from Official Website of MEA, [www.mea.gov.in](http://www.mea.gov.in): <https://www.mea.gov.in/TreatyList.htm?l>, accessed on January 18, 2015

<sup>196</sup> Ministry of External Affairs. (1993). *Foreign Affairs Record 1993*. New Delhi: Govt. of India, p.132-135

<sup>197</sup> Press release issued by the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi on November 15, 1997 regarding visit of President Arafat to India, [Source: : Ministry of External Affairs. (1997). *Foreign Affairs Record 1997*. New Delhi: Govt. of India, p.130]

<sup>198</sup> Official Spokesman's Statement on March 24, 1992 [Source: Ministry of External Affairs. (1992). *Foreign Affairs Record 1992*. New Delhi: Govt. of India, p.130]

to exist and accepted the status quo. In 1995, MEA reiterated the status quo for Jerusalem and the need for a negotiated settlement.<sup>199</sup> When Jordan and Israel signed a peace treaty in 1994, New Delhi welcomed it, but India was not an instrumental factor.<sup>200</sup> When, on September 1995, Israel-PLO interim autonomy agreement was signed in Washington, India welcomed it without raising any objection to a 'third party' involvement. At the time Israel-Lebanon war, New Delhi sided with Lebanon and called for Israeli withdrawal. New Delhi shared Arab concerns about the Israeli policy of setting up Jewish settlements in 'disputed territories' in 1997.

In multiple global and regional fora, India reiterated that New Delhi's diplomatic normalisation with Israel does not mean any withdrawal from India's principled and historical commitment to the Palestinian cause, including their right to have their Home Land. On December 1992, India supported the UNSC resolution condemning Israel for expelling 400 Palestinians from the occupied territory to Lebanon.<sup>201</sup> In 1995, the Minister of External Affairs, Mr Pranab Mukherjee, at the time of his meeting with members of the American Jewish Committee, utilised the opportunity to discuss Indo-US relations, Indo-Israeli relations and the threat posed by international terrorism. He sought the organisation's support in strengthening relations between the US and India, both open societies and pluralist democracies with much in common. While meeting Syrian counterparts in the same year, the Minister of External Affairs reiterated support for Palestine.

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<sup>199</sup> Official Spokesman's Statement on May 6, 1995 [Source: Ministry of External Affairs. (1995). *Foreign Affairs Record 1995*. New Delhi: Govt. of India, p.123]

<sup>200</sup> Press Release, October 26, 1994 [Source: Ministry of External Affairs. (1995) *Foreign Affairs Record 1994*. New Delhi: Govt. of India, p.130]

<sup>201</sup> Ministry of External Affairs. (1992). *Foreign Affairs Record*. New Delhi: Govt. of India, p.370

**CHAPTER - III**

**THE POLICY OF STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT**

**The Era of Atal Bihari Vajpayee (1998 - 2004)**

## **THE POLICY OF STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT**

### **The Era of Atal Bihari Vajpayee (1998-2004)**

*The Kargil conflict came as a blessing in disguise for the (India and Israel) relationship, as Israel proved the strength of its commitment to India's security both through its diplomatic stance and the supply of defence hardware, during the course of the conflict and at a much larger scale thereafter.<sup>1</sup>*

—Vivek Chadha

#### **Introduction:**

Vajpayee did not come to power with a preconceived notion to build robust relations with Israel. After the exchange of diplomatic missions in 1992 and the Israeli President's official visit to India in 1996, the bilateral relationship was growing steadily. Under the Prime Ministership of Vajpayee, it grew up well his opposition politically targeted that as 'Ideological Convergence'. The criticism mainly came from the leftists who drew an analogy between the BJP's rightist approach to Peace, Security and Nationhood and that of Israel that alleged obsession with a homogenous state. Yet, it is theoretically tempting and analytically fascinating, but primary data indicates that Vajpayee's government did not primarily give importance to Israel as a potentially significant strategic partner. Important to note that Vajpayee, within two months of swearing in, tested a nuclear weapon in Pokhran, ignoring American dictates. It was the time when both India and Israel were resisting the Nuclear regimes, yet in an isolated manner. New Delhi refrained from diplomatic collaboration with Israel in fighting the western hegemony in Nuclear regimes. Only after the Kargil War (1999) did a viable

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<sup>1</sup> Chadha, V. (2019). *Kargil : Past Perfect, future Uncertain?* New Delhi: IDSA, p.32

and deeper strategic engagement develop between India and Israel based on mutual interests.

*Atal Bihari Vajpayee: a psycho-political profile:*

Atal Bihari Vajpayee—with outstanding oratory skill, witty sense of humour, connection with grassroots party organisation and acceptance across political differences made his presence prominent in the great Indian political spectrum, whether in opposition or Government. He had been the harshest critic as opposition leader to any government he faced, but with utmost modesty. It became a slogan at the time National Emergency, "*Atal Bihari bol raha, Indira Sarkar dol raha*" (When Atal Bihari speaks, the Indira Government is shaken). The literary excellence of his speech, clarity of thought and mastery over the language connected him with the people of the country since post-independence days, particularly at the time of emergency. While L.K Advani later took charge of the party organisation, Vajpayee led the party in the Parliament. Vajpayee started his political journey as a student leader in Kanpur. From his adolescent days, he was attracted to nationalist struggle, the ideology of RSS and socialist ideas. This synthesis of politically competing ideas (at least in contemporary India), later proved to be a major characteristic of Atal Bihari Vajpayee. He was moved by Shyama Prasad Mukherjee's struggle, Dindayal Upadhyay's Integrated Humanism and Nehru's Foreign Policy. Vajpayee—the man of integration, thus considered a moderate for his openness to any teaching. He combined '*shakti*' (power) and '*shanti*' (peace). He argued that *shakti* and *shanti* are neither separable nor antagonistic. A major basis of such philosophical stand was Hindi poetry.

Atal Bihari Vajpayee is a poet by training, passion and choice. He was a politician by chance. While describing himself, Vajpayee said that he could be a former politician

but could never be a former poet. He was not an amateur. It was not the highest political office that backed his poetry published. Rather, his speeches, his thoughts and his brand of *hindutva* had always been backed by poetry. However, he repented that his contribution to Hindi poetry is minimal. It can be well guessed that poet Atal had to compromise because of Vajpayee's priority in public life. Vajpayee represented the genre of Ramdhari Singh Dinkar or Shivmangal Singh Suman. This genre glorifies courage, valour, pride, sacrifice and life. It is important to note that both in his inspiration and contribution, he maintained the 'purity' of the Hindi language by shunning Urdu. However, Vajpayee was fairly comfortable with dialects like *Braj-bhasha* or *Khari boli*. Vajpayee combined his solitary approach to life with utmost motivation and courage to fight and fight back in his poetry. Far from celebrating natural beauty or romanticising poverty or utilising literature to knock on the existing socio-political structure, he celebrated life and his country. It is important to note that he combined two different (not essentially extreme or antagonistic) ideas. Vajpayee's famous poem, '*do anuvutiyan*' (two emotions), represents two conflicting emotions where finally, Hope overpowers treachery with courage. Interestingly, a similar synthesis is found in Shivmangal Singh's famous poem '*baardan manggonga nahin*'. Though he was highly inspired by Dinkar's '*Raashmirathi*' and particularly '*Parsuram ki pratjna*'<sup>2</sup>, Atal Bihari's poems were precise and free from representing ideas through mythical characters like Dinkar yet the similarity lies in the celebration of courage and valour or *khatra shakti*. Vajpayee's poems like '*kaadam milkar chalna hoga*' or '*Aao phir se diyan jalaye*' motivates the weakest to wake up and fight. The affinity towards '*khatra shakti*' explains well why he took the decision to declare India as nuclear power

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<sup>2</sup> The famous poem that Dinkar wrote criticising Nehru's China policy that, he claimed, led to the debacle of 1962 and he resigned from Parliament.

or why he never compromised the question of national security or why he upheld Realism as the Minister of External Affairs.

The idea of *Hindutva* and Nationalism are synonymous within Sangh Parivar, though the idea of *Hindutva* is not homogenous. It varies from person to person and changes from time to time. Atal expressed his pride for being a Hindu carrying the lineage of *Shiva* and *Durga* that is the basis of the country. India is not just a piece of land; it is *rastrapurush* (*purush* is not to be confused with 'male'). He upheld the role of a guru, naturally assigned to India because of her wisdom. Vajpayee reminds us that his idea of Hinduism is not based on riot, conversion or expansionism, it is all about wisdom and cosmopolitanism. His call for valour and courage was not aimed at conquering others, it was all about the empowerment of 'Mother India'. Among the first-generation leader of Jan Sangh, there were many who could not accept the partition as the price of freedom but Vajpayee was one rare personality who upheld freedom yet pledged to re-establish an integrated India.

Jan Sangh, being a predecessor of today's BJP had the culture of recruiting promising young, like-minded intellectuals as the secretaries of prominent leaders. It was not always mandatory for the Secretaries to complete the course of RSS. Vajpayee after his formal higher education became the Secretary of Shyama Prasad Mukherjee and accompanied him to Kashmir. Before his arrest that followed to his tragic death, Mukherjee asked his Secretary Vajpayee to leave for Delhi and continue the struggle for '*ek bidhan, ek Nishan aur ek pradhan*' (One Constitution, One Flag and One Prime Minister) for the entire country, including Kashmir. When Vajpayee became the Prime Minister, he prioritised the solution to Kashmir Conundrum. Dindyal Upadhyay was mentor to Atal Bihari. After the mysterious death of Upadhyay, when Atal led the party, he faced many challenges. One such major obstacle was Balraj Madhok, an extremist

and Rightist. Interestingly, this BJP leader from Gilgit-Baltistan, when migrated to Delhi at the time of partition, later formed an India-Israel Friendship Organisation which was absolutely rare at that point of time. It has often been found among Indian Rights have been fond of Israel, but Vajpayee was neither Right nor an ardent supporter to Israel in his early life. Rather, his political rivals sided with Israel. Another political rival who always raised the issue of normalising relations with Israel was Dr. Subramanian Swamy. It is interesting to point out that a few political opponents that Vajpayee had, irrespective of his widespread acceptance, most of them argued the issue of Israel was of national importance. It is not very surprising that Israel's association with these personalities might have impacted in margins, but more important to test whether it impacted in policy-making or not.

Vajpayee enjoyed a personal liaison with Nehru and with, Mrs Gandhi and even Rajiv Gandhi. He was one rare opposition leader who refused to oppose the government for no reason. Vajpayee was often an uncompromising critic of Nehru's foreign policy and later more critical of Indira Gandhi's siding with USSR, but he appraised non-Alignment in principle. He was of the opinion that there had always been a consensus in India on the question of foreign policy that unquestionably pursues National Interest. Non-Alignment was one such tool that pursued national interest in the aftermath of Independence. He maintained that non-Alignment was a natural choice for a nascent state like India in a tight bipolar world. It is not about a personal invention of Nehru, had there been any other personality irrespective of the party line, s/he would have opted for non-Alignment.

As the Minister of External Affairs in 1977, Atal Bihari Vajpayee expressed his commitment to 'Genuine non-alignment'. It is well documented that the Israeli war hero and then Foreign Minister Mr Moshe Dayan paid a secret visit to India when Atal Bihari

Vajpayee was the Minister of External Affairs.<sup>3</sup> It is also true that Vajpayee had no role in fixing that meeting<sup>4</sup>, even though he was not even aware of the meeting before its occurrence.<sup>5</sup> It is factually incorrect, yet tempting, to conclude that Vajpayee, being a cadre of RSS or a committed to Jan Sangh or a founding member of BJP, fostered the relationship with Israel. Hindu Mahasabha or Jan Sangh and BJP indeed expressed sympathy and affinity towards the Jewish state, but Vajpayee was not an ardent supporter of this. As he disagreed with many RSS issues, he disagreed on the question of taking the issue of Israel as a major public debate. Though, there is no doubt that he maintained New Delhi must establish regular diplomatic relations with Israel. He also criticised the Government while violating any standard diplomatic practice when the Israeli President had an overnight stay in India at the time of the latter's trip to Nepal.

Shyama Prasad shaped his political orientation; Dindayal was the political mentor, but Pandit Nehru influenced Vajpayee as a Parliamentarian and, more particularly, a Statesman. Vajpayee had no affinity for the Soviets, nor for the US. When Pakistan had institutionalised their friendship with the US, that sparked criticism from Vajpayee.

*BJP and the Jewish Question:*

The All India Hindu Mahasabha praised Zionism and was critical of Nehru's delay in recognising the State of Israel. The working committee of the Jana Sangha passed a resolution on September 11, 1949, deploring 'the discriminatory policy of the Nehru

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<sup>3</sup> Dayan, M. (1981). *Breakthrough: A Personal Account of the Egypt-Israel Peace Negotiations*. New Delhi: Vikash Publishing House.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Gujral, I. K. (2011). *Matters of Discretion--An Autobiography*. New Delhi: Hay House Publishers (India) Pvt. Ltd.

Government in refusing recognition to the new State of Israel.<sup>6</sup> Mahasabha praised their 'courageous struggle against powerful international forces' that 'recovered their freedom and have established a progressive state on modern democratic lines'.<sup>7</sup> Balraj Madhok<sup>8</sup> took the initiative to pass resolutions advocating the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel in different party sessions. The key argument was that Israel, the only democracy in the region, is a natural ally of India.<sup>9</sup> The Arabs had shown no reciprocity to India's support for them in various crises. In the Arab-Israel conflict, almost everybody in Jana Sangh was pro-Israeli. Deendayal Upadhyay believed that Sangh should not be blindly pro-Israeli just because the Congress party was blindly pro-Arab. Sangh "must judge every issue on its own merit."<sup>10</sup> The party championed Israel's right to exist and rejected Arab's claim to annihilate Israel.<sup>11</sup> The party raised the point that if UAR can be friendly to both India and Pakistan, why can India not be friends with UAR and Israel.<sup>12</sup> It also advocated that diplomatic normalisation with Israel would allow New Delhi to play the role of a mediator in the West Asian conflict, enhancing India's diplomatic edge.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> File No. 46(15)-AWT/48- Vol III, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *The Question of Recognising Israel*. National Archives. New Delhi: Government of India, p.207

<sup>7</sup> File No. 46(15)-AWT/48- Vol III, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *The Question of Recognising Israel*. National Archives. New Delhi: Government of India, p.207

<sup>8</sup> President of Bharatiya Jana Sangh in 1966-67, later expelled from the Party. Madhok was extremist and a staunch opponent of Vanjpayee.

<sup>9</sup> Jana Sangha Working Committee Resolutions, January 1965, [Source: Singh, R. S. (2016). *RSS-BJP : Towards Kashmir, Arab-Israel Conflict and Bangladesh*. New Delhi: Manas Publications, p.122]

<sup>10</sup> Advani, L. K. (2008). *My Country, My Life*. New Delhi: Rupa & Co, p.147

<sup>11</sup> Jana Sangha Working Committee Resolutions, June 1967 [Source: Singh, R. S. (2016). *RSS-BJP : Towards Kashmir, Arab-Israel Conflict and Bangladesh*. New Delhi: Manas Publications, p.121]

<sup>12</sup> Madhok, B. (1966). What Bharatiya Jana Sangh Shares For. Speech at Ahmedabad Junior Chamber of Commerce. [Source: Singh, R. S. (2016). *RSS-BJP : Towards Kashmir, Arab-Israel Conflict and Bangladesh*. New Delhi: Manas Publications, pp.122-123]

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

On Narasimha Rao's decision to exchange full diplomatic relations with Israel, BJP unhesitantly welcomed the move. Former BJP President L. K. Advani held that his party favoured full diplomatic normalisation with Israel. The decision could not be implemented precisely because of the Congress party and the communists.<sup>14</sup> BJP's stand on India's pre-normalisation Israel policy is reflected in L. K. Advani's statement that India's policy towards Israel was trapped in the imaginary apprehension over the reaction of sections of Muslims in India. Many Muslim countries had diplomatic relations with Israel, including Turkey and Egypt. Even Palestinians were initiating peace talks to co-exist with Israel. In any case, our foreign policy should be immune to such false considerations of domestic pressure.<sup>15</sup> On Narasimha Rao's decision to exchange diplomatic missions with Israel, BJP wholeheartedly welcomed the move.

#### *Domestic Political Situation*

After his short-lived experiment that lasted for thirteen days, Atal Bihari Vajpayee formed the government in 1998 and got re-elected with a promise of a stable government in 1999. Though he lost the general Election of 2004, he accomplished his primary task of running for a full term in power. Multiple important events, like victory in the Kargil war, and India's successful nuclearisation, mark his time. The country's economy started gaining from the liberalisation that took place a decade back. Pakistan launched another war in Kashmir, failing which the intensity of terrorist attacks inside

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<sup>14</sup> Advani, L. K. (2008). *My Country, My Life*. New Delhi: Rupa & Co, p.461-462

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p.461

India doubled. This was when the government of India started propagating 'India is Rising'.

### *The Global Political Situation*

The phase 1998 to 2004 was a phase of staggering, so far, the peace process is concern. The bilateral dialogue between Israel and PLO became confined to the issue of implementation of the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip signed on September 1995 at Cairo<sup>16</sup> and the Hebron Protocol of January'1997<sup>17</sup>. The Palestinian issue kept losing its importance as a core issue in Middle Eastern regional politics. This was the era when regional players, including the Arab states and global powers, favoured conflict management through the institutionalisation of supra-state machinery and peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians. Since 1996, the terms of Oslo II were implemented.<sup>18</sup> It was the phase when Israel signed multiple treaties with PLO and other neighbours.<sup>19</sup> Though, in the longer run, Oslo II was criticised both in Israel and Palestine. The Palestinians found their freedom was compromised, and free navigation was replaced with checkpoints turning Area A and Area B cities into islands surrounded by Israeli forces. Israelis complained that it was a severe security breach for the Israeli State and Jewish population.<sup>20</sup> Terrorist attacks in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv

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<sup>16</sup> Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, a. k. (September 28, 1995). *United Nations Peacemaker Website*. Retrieved from the UN Official Website: [https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/IL%20PS\\_950928\\_InterimAgreementWestBankGazaStrip%28OsloII%29.pdf](https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/IL%20PS_950928_InterimAgreementWestBankGazaStrip%28OsloII%29.pdf), accessed on June 5, 2017

<sup>17</sup> Agreement on Temporary International Presence in the City of Hebron (II). (January 21, 1997). *Peacemaker.un.org*. Retrieved from the UN Official Website: <https://peacemaker.un.org/israelopt-cityhebronII97>, accessed on June 5, 2017

<sup>18</sup> Israeli withdrawal from six Area A cities and 400 Area B villages. Palestinian Authority (PA) was established with a legislature in 1996 and Mr Yasser Arafat was elected as President.

<sup>19</sup> Reich, B. (2008). *A Brief History of Israel* (Second Edition ed.). New York: Facts On File, Inc, p.187

<sup>20</sup> Harms, G., & Ferry, T. M. (2005). *The Palestine-Israel Conflict*. London: Pluto Press, p.158

caused life of civilians. Terrorist Organisations like Islamic Jihad and Hamas turned active and critical of Arafat. Peres, who championed the peace process, was defeated in the Election in 1996 by Benjamin Netanyahu.

Excluding the two years of Ehud Barak as Prime Minister (1999-2001), Israel was governed by strong leaders like Benjamin Netanyahu (1996-1999) and Ariel Sharon (2001-2006) and right-wing parties who ideologically opposed Oslo and any other adjustments that compromise the implementation of *Eretz Israel*. On October 23 1998, Israel and PLO had signed the Wye River Memorandum<sup>21</sup>, Sharm el-Sheikh memorandum<sup>22</sup> was signed on September 4, 1999. Both these agreements were about to implement the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza (1995) and Hebron Protocol (1997). Evidently, the peace process was staggering with limited success. Though, a major height was achieved in May 2003 when the conflicting parties agreed upon a 'permanent two-State Solution'.<sup>23</sup>

India welcomed the initiative and encouraged the unconditional implementation of the same.<sup>24</sup> New Delhi conveyed its faith in the memorandum that had the potential to improve the quality of life and pave the way to commence Final Status Negotiations so

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<sup>21</sup> Wye River Memorandum. (1998, October 23). *Peacemaker.un.org*. Retrieved from UN Official Website:  
[https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/IL%20PS\\_981023\\_The%20Wye%20River%20Memorandum.pdf](https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/IL%20PS_981023_The%20Wye%20River%20Memorandum.pdf), accessed June 6, 2017

<sup>22</sup> The Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum on Implementation Timeline of Outstanding Commitments of Agreements Signed and the Resumption of Permanent Status Negotiations. (1999, September 4). *peacemaker.un.org*. Retrieved from the UN Official Website:  
[https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/IL%20PS\\_990904\\_The%20Sharm%20el%20Sheikh%20Memorandum.pdf](https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/IL%20PS_990904_The%20Sharm%20el%20Sheikh%20Memorandum.pdf), accessed on June 5, 2017

<sup>23</sup> A Performance-based Road Map to a Permanent Two-State Solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. (2003, May 7). *peacemaker.un.org*. Retrieved from the UN Official Website:  
[https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/IL%20PS\\_030430\\_PerformanceBasedRoadmapTwo-StateSolution.pdf](https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/IL%20PS_030430_PerformanceBasedRoadmapTwo-StateSolution.pdf), accessed on June 7, 2017

<sup>24</sup> Ministry of External Affairs. (1998). *Foreign Affairs Record*. New Delhi: Govt of India, p.207

that a just, comprehensive and durable peace could be achieved in the region on the basis of the principle of "Land for Peace" and the relevant UN Resolutions.<sup>25</sup> From time to time, New Delhi reiterated its traditional support, at least on rhetoric, to the Palestinian cause. Thus, India's engagement with Israel was always curbed by its regional priorities.

After IDF's withdrawal from Lebanon in March 2000, Camp David II was initiated with the active involvement of Yasser Arafat, Prime Minister of Israel Ehud Barak and American President Clinton in July. The hardliner Ariel Sharon's rise to power in Israel and his visit to Haram al-Sharif, on the fifth anniversary of signing the Oslo II agreement, sparked the second Intifada. Like earlier, the protest was anonymous in character yet driven and controlled by radical and terrorist forces. The second Intifada "came on like an explosion compared to 1987".<sup>26</sup> The second Intifada aimed to derail the peace process. IDF's innovative counter-terror measures sparked political debate in the Middle East and globally.

Interestingly, this was the era of the rise of global terror. The US was shaken after the blistering attack of 9/11. The international community that used to consider terrorism as a law and order problem that needed to be solved politically now witnessed it. With Republican George W. Bush (Jr.)'s rise as the President of America, the US withdrew its economic sanctions on India, after Pokhran II.

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<sup>25</sup> Ministry of External Affairs. (1998). *Foreign Affairs Record*. New Delhi: Govt of India, p.207

<sup>26</sup> Harms, G., & Ferry, T. M. (2005). *The Palestine-Israel Conflict*. London: Pluto Press, p.169

### **The Move to Strategic Engagement:**

When Atal Bihari Vajpayee came to power in 1998, establishing robust relations with Israel was not his priority. Instead, his priority was to build peace with Pakistan.<sup>27</sup> Once his attempt to bring peace with Pakistan, particularly the Lahore declaration, failed and Pakistan waged another war against India in the Kargil sector of Jammu and Kashmir, the following series of incidents took India towards strategic engagement with Israel. Notably, Israel did not join the global community to criticise India's Nuclear programme in 1998. Nevertheless, there was no strategic convergence on common yet not mutual disagreement on Nuclear regimes.<sup>28</sup>

Pakistani infiltration in Kargil in 1999 underlined the gross inadequacies of India's surveillance capability.<sup>29</sup> In a nutshell, the 'surprise' in Kargil was primarily caused by poor surveillance in gathering and assessing intelligence inputs.<sup>30</sup> India lacked local surveillance radars and unattended ground sensors. The Indian Army also lacked visual areal surveillance winter areal surveillance operation (WASO).<sup>31</sup> In 1999, neither the Indian Army nor Air Force had any Unmanned Aerial Vehicles to carry out aerial surveillance.<sup>32</sup> At the time of the Kargil conflict, there was prompt diplomatic support and supply of military hardware from Israel. At the time of the conflict, representatives

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<sup>27</sup> Interview with Late Shakti Sinha (Joint Secretary to the Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, March 1998 to November 1999) on January 17, 2021 via Zoom Meeting

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Ambassador Alon Liel (Advisor to Prime Minister Ehud Barak on Foreign Affairs from 1997 to 1999 and Director-General in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel from 2000 to 2001) in Mevaseret Zion, Jerusalem, Israel India on February 21, 2019

<sup>29</sup> Malik, V. P. (2006). *Kargil: From Surprise to Victory*. Noida: Harper Collins Publishers, p.11

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p.77

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p.88

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p.88

of India's security agency visited the Ambassador of Israel to New Delhi with the earnest need for aerial imaging of the infiltrated area and to expedite the delivery of UAV searcher-1, for which orders were already placed.<sup>33</sup> Ambassador of Israel, Mr Yohada Haim, conveyed the information to the 'appropriate' department.<sup>34</sup> Israel responded to this requirement promptly, which was instrumental in turning the table in India's favour in the conflict. Israel also responded to the request to train its crews in India.<sup>35</sup> The Israeli equipment, satellite pictures and UAV training team arrived while the war was on.<sup>36</sup> This further added the supply of laser-guided missiles for the aircraft and mortar bombs.<sup>37</sup> The hardcore strategic interest in cutting-edge defence technology paved the way for strategic engagement between India and Israel.

At the time of post-War assessment, the Kargil Review Committee recommended that every effort be made to ensure satellite imagery capability of world standard is developed in India. The committee also recommended equipping Indian forces with UAVs and communication interception equipment.<sup>38</sup> With this note for India's military modernisation, combatting terror in Indian cities, India, under the leadership of Vajpayee, started engaging with Israel without any major changes in India's global outlook, commitment, rhetoric or priorities. Israel had provided military requirements

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<sup>33</sup> Interview with Ambassador Yohada Haim (Ambassador of Israel to India from 1996-2000) in Mevaseret Zion, Jerusalem, Israel India on February 14, 2019

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Malik, V.P. (2013). *India's Military Conflicts and Diplomacy : An Inside View of Decision Making*. Noida: Harper Collins Publishers, p.198

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, p.198

<sup>37</sup> Browne, N. A. (2017). A Perspective on India–Israel Defence and Security Ties. *Strategic Analysis*, 41 (4), 325–335.

<sup>38</sup> Kargil Review Committee's Recommendations, [Source: Malik, V. P. (2006). *Kargil: From Surprise to Victory*. Noida: Harper Collins Publishers, Appendix 3, pp.415-418]

to India during wars with Pakistan and China. Yet, Kargil became a turning point for Indo-Israeli relations, given the precision and efficacy of military hardware and the additional impact of sanctions after the nuclear tests of 1998. The impact of critical military hardware received from Israel was timely and mission-critical. Nevertheless, the BJP government in power have played its part by not dumping the relationship into oblivion, as the Government of India did in 1965 and 1971. Interestingly, the National Democratic Alliance made the UAV purchase from the Israel public by declaring it in Lok Sabha.<sup>39</sup>

*Defence Cooperation:*

Under the estranged environment of sanction regimes and technology denial, Israeli state-owned agency MAFAT (Hebrew acronym for the Administration for the Development of Weapons and Technological Infrastructure) provided Research and development (R&D) and technological support to India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).<sup>40</sup> Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, as the Scientific Advisor to the Defence Minister, institutionalised an intergovernmental set-up called the Indo-Israeli Management Committee (I2MC). This effort intended to research common projects relating to sensors and weapons systems with joint funding and a long-term objective of producing these niche technologies by domestic defence industries.<sup>41</sup> This effort produced the Green Pine multi-functional radar and the development of air defence missile systems, including the Indian Navy's Long Range Surface-to-Air

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<sup>39</sup> Reply to Q in Lok Sabha by Defence Minister George Fernandes on April 20, 2000

<sup>40</sup> Browne, N. A. (2017). A Perspective on India-Israel Defence and Security Ties. *Strategic Analysis*, 41 (4), p.328

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, p.328

Missile (LRSAM) and the IAF's Medium Range Surface-to-Air Missile (MRSAM).<sup>42</sup> By this time, Indian Defence Forces joint training with Israel, like with many other countries, became a regular practice.<sup>43</sup>

INS Shakti, INS Gomati and INS Ranvir paid goodwill visits at Port of Eilat in Israel in the last week of March 2000.<sup>44</sup> On December 2002, the Commander of the Israeli Navy (the highest rank in the Israeli Navy), Yedidia Ya'ari visited India and held a bilateral discussion with the head of Indian navy.<sup>45</sup> At 'DEFEXPO INDIA-2002', organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in association with the Department of Defence Production & Supplies of Ministry of Defence; Israel had set up their national pavilion to exhibit their state-of-the-art defence equipment like India's significant defence partners like UK, Russia, France and others.<sup>46</sup> In 2004, the Israeli delegation in DEFEXPO 2004 (February) led by the Deputy Defence Minister, Mr Ze'er Boim.<sup>47</sup>

India-Israel Joint Working Group on Defence Cooperation was formed in September, 2002 in Israel to institutionalise the growing defence cooperation between two countries.<sup>48</sup> The reciprocatory meeting in December 2003 took place in New Delhi.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Browne, N. A. (2017). A Perspective on India-Israel Defence and Security Ties. *Strategic Analysis*, 41 (4), p.328

<sup>43</sup> Reply to Q in Lok Sabha by Defence Minister George Fernandes on December 23, 1999.

<sup>44</sup> Reply to Q in Lok Sabha by Defence Minister George Fernandes on April 20, 2000

<sup>45</sup> Ministry of Defence. (2003). *Annual Report 2002-03*. New Delhi: Government of India, p.27

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, p.55

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, p.193

<sup>48</sup> Ministry of Defence. (2003). *Annual Report 2002-03*. New Delhi: Government of India, p.122

<sup>49</sup> Ministry of Defence. (2004). *Annual Report 2003-04*. New Delhi: Government of India, p.43

With an objective to enhance the combat effectiveness of the Indian Air Force, the Government of India signed MoU with the Government of Israel and the Government of the Russian federation on the AWACS (Airborne early Warning and Control System) project on October 2003.<sup>50</sup> Subsequently, an Inter-Government Agreement was concluded with Israel on March 2004, followed by a contract with IAD Elta System to acquire the AWACS aircraft.<sup>51</sup> The basic platform was the IL-76 aircraft. It gave commonality to the existing fleet of the Air Force.<sup>52</sup> The Chief of Army (Israel) visited India on November 2003, and the Chief of Air Staff (Israel) visited India on February-March 2004. Navy-to-Navy meetings to discuss joint exercises and activities or meetings of an operational nature were held with Israel and the US. In order to give a further boost to exports, an MoU was signed with the Israel Aerospace Industries, for joint marketing of Advanced Light Helicopter fitted with state-of-the-art IAI avionics for the international market.

A rare instance of technological assistance that came into play during the conflict is recounted by Air Chief Marshal NAK Browne, former Indian Chief of the Air Staff. According to him, India had negotiated the purchase of a Litening Pod in 1997 for the Mirage and Jaguar aircraft to designate laser-guided bombs both during day and night. Despite the sanctions as a result of the 1998 nuclear tests by India, the Israelis facilitated both software and hardware modifications on the equipment. This led to its employment at targets between 15,000 and 17,000 feet and undertaken from a flying height of 30,000 feet, given the threat from manportable air defence systems employed by Pakistan in

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<sup>50</sup> Ministry of Defence. (2004). *Annual Report 2003-04*. New Delhi: Government of India, p.53

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, p.53

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, p.53

Kargil. Incidentally, the IAF deployed the system even prior to the Israeli Air Force, which was still in the process of operationalising it.<sup>53</sup>

The secretary of Defence Production & Supplies, visited Israel on July, 2001. Minister of Information Technology, Communication & Parliamentary Affairs Shri Pramod Mahajan visited Israel on January 2002. Shri Mahajan galled on President Moshe Katsav, Deputy Prime Minister & Foreign Minister, Defence Minister, Minister of Communication, Minister of Trade & Industry and Minister of Environment. A Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Industrial Research and Development was signed during his stay in Israel. Representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel Yoav Biran visited India as a Special Emissary of Deputy Prime Minister & Foreign Minister Shimon Peres on August 2001. He delivered a letter to the Minister of External Affairs from Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres. The third round of India-Israel Strategic Dialogue was held in New Delhi on 11 & 12 September 2001. National Security Advisor Shri Brajesh Mishra led the Indian delegation and the Israeli delegation was led by National Security Adviser. During his stay in New Delhi in 2001, Major General Uzi Dayan called on the Prime Minister. Defence Secretary of Israel Maj. Gen. (Retd.) Amos Yaron visited New Delhi on November 2001 as part of six-monthly consultations at the level of Defence Secretaries. A Parliamentary delegation from Israel led by Member of Knesset & Chairman of Israel-India Parliamentary Friendship League Amnon Rubinstein visited India from on December 2001. The sixth round of India-Israel Foreign Office Consultations was held in New Delhi on December 2001.<sup>54</sup>

The Israeli delegation, led by Deputy Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Zvi Gabay reached New Delhi on January 2002. During his stay in Delhi, Mr Gabay galled

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<sup>53</sup> Chaddha, V. (2020). *Kargil: Past Perfect, Future Uncertain*. New Delhi: KW Publishers, p.32

<sup>54</sup> Ministry of Defence. (2002). *Annual Report 2001-02*. New Delhi: Government of India

on Minister of External Affairs and Agriculture Minister. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Israel Shimon Peres visited India from F-10 January 2002 to attend the CII Partnership Summit held in Bangalore. He utilised this opportunity to visit New Delhi to brief the Indian leadership on the situation in West Asia and the status of Middle East Peace Process and to convey Israel's strong condemnation of the terrorist attack against the Indian Parliament on December 13 2001.<sup>55</sup> This was the era when India and Israel had a comprehensive and cordial exchange of views on various issues like counter-terrorism. They jointly admitted Terror is an enemy which threatens common values and shared way of life. Together with the international community and as victims of terrorism, Israel and India are partners in the battle against this enemy. India and Israel aspired to expand the 'friendly' ties in all fields and to bring their great potential to fruition for mutual benefit.

*Diplomatic Cooperation:*

Cooperation with Israel in the areas of trade and agriculture continued to develop satisfactorily. The Deputy Director General in Israel's Foreign Office Mr Yitzhak Shelev visited India for the Fourth round of Foreign Office Consultations held in New Delhi on January 21, 1999.<sup>56</sup> The Second Meeting of the Indo-Israeli Joint Trade & Economic Committee was held in New Delhi on October 27, 1998, and was co-chaired by the Commerce Secretary and Director General in Israel's Ministry of Industry, Dov Mishor. The Joint Trade & Economic Committee Meeting was co-chaired by Commerce Secretary Shri P P Prabhu and Director General, Israel's Ministry of

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<sup>55</sup> Ministry of Defence. (2002). *Annual Report 2001-02*. New Delhi: Government of India

<sup>56</sup> Ministry of External Affairs. (1999). *Foreign Affairs Record 1999*. New Delhi: Govt of India.

Industry Mr Dov Mishor. The Attorney General for India Shri Soli J Sorabjee, visited Israel on December 1998 at the invitation of his counterpart in Israel. Minister of State for Health & Family Welfare Shri Dalit Ezhilmalai went to Israel on a private visit on November, 1998.<sup>57</sup> The Minister of State for Rural Areas & Employment, Shri Babagouda Patil visited Israel on October, 1998 at the invitation of Israel's Minister for Agriculture and Deputy Prime Minister Mr Rafael Eitan. The Minister of Urban Affairs and Employment Shri Ram Jethmalani, visited Israel on September 1998 at the invitation of Israel's Minister of Infrastructure Mr Ariel Sharon. The agreement on Cooperation in the field of Telecommunications and Posts between India and Israel, signed on November 29, 1994, was ratified by India on September 24, 1998.<sup>58</sup> Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister Shri Brajesh Mishra visited Israel from 2-4 September 1999, at the invitation of the Israeli Government. He called on the Prime Minister, Mr Ehud Barak. His visit was part of the diplomatic dialogue between India and Israel. Deputy Speaker of the Knesset Ms Naomi Chazan, visited New Delhi on November 1999.<sup>59</sup>

Minister of Regional cooperation of Israel, Mr Shimon Peres. Home Minister Shri L K Advani also called on President Ezer Weizman and Prime Minister Ehud Barak. During Home Minister's visit, both sides decided to set up a Joint Working Group (JWG) on counter-terrorism. Shri Jaswant Singh, Minister of External Affairs, visited Israel on July, 2000.<sup>60</sup> This was the first visit by the Minister of External Affairs of India since the establishment of Embassies in 1992. Besides exchanging views with Foreign

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<sup>57</sup> Ministry of External Affairs. (1999). *Foreign Affairs Record 1999*. New Delhi: Govt of India.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ministry of External Affairs. (2000). *Foreign Affairs Record 2000*. New Delhi: Govt of India

Minister David Levy, Shri Jaswant Singh called on President Ezer Weizman and Prime Minister Ehud Barak. During his stay, both sides agreed to set up a Ministerial level Joint Commission to develop a long-term framework for cooperation. Minister of External Affairs Shri Jaswant Singh met Foreign Minister Shimo Ben Ami on the sidelines of UNGA in New York.<sup>61</sup> The first ever India exclusive Trade Exhibition was held in Tel Aviv from 3-7 May 2000. The exhibition was inaugurated by Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Dr Raman Singh. The Secretary (East) Shri K V Rajan visited Israel from 1-5 December 2000 for the fifth round of Foreign Office Consultations. Israel's Minister for Regional Cooperation Shimon Peres visited India on 24-25 August to brief the Government of India on the Middle East Peace Process. He called on the President, Prime Minister, Minister of External Affairs, Home Minister and Defence Minister

The Third Round of Indo-Israeli Strategic Dialogue was held in New Delhi on September 11-12, 2001.<sup>62</sup> The Indian and Israeli delegations were led by National Security Adviser and Principal Secretary to Prime Minister Shri Brajesh Mishra and the National Security Adviser of Israel, Major General Uzi Dayan, respectively. During his visit to India, Maj. Gen. Dayan called on Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, External Affairs and Defence Minister Shri Jaswant Singh, and Home Minister Shri L.K. Advani, besides other senior officials of the Ministries of External Affairs, Defence and Home Affairs.<sup>63</sup> The two sides had a wide ranging and in-depth exchange of views and assessments on key regional and international issues, including the situation in South Asia, West Asia and South West Asia, relations with major powers,

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<sup>61</sup> Ministry of External Affairs. (2000). *Foreign Affairs Record 2000*. New Delhi: Govt of India

<sup>62</sup> Ministry of External Affairs. (2001). *Foreign Affairs Record 2001*. New Delhi: Govt of India

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

non-proliferation and disarmament.<sup>64</sup> A focal area of interest was the threat of, and response to, international terrorism. The recent terrible terrorist incidents in Washington D.C. and New York underscore the importance of international cooperation against this scourge.<sup>65</sup> The Indo-Israeli Strategic Dialogue is premised on many shared interests. Both sides believe that this process of consultations enhances mutual understanding. Both sides agree that the objective of peace in all regions is best served by negotiations and not by resort to terrorism and violence. The second meeting of India-Israel Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism was held in New Delhi on 27-28 May 2002.<sup>66</sup> Indian delegation was led by Shri R. M. Abhyankar, Special Secretary (East) in the Ministry of External Affairs. Israeli delegation was led by Mr Zvi Gabay, Deputy Director General in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel and Major General Uzi Dayan, National Security Adviser of Israel.

Prime Minister Mr Ariel Sharon paid the first-ever state visit by an Israeli Prime Minister to India from 8-10 September 2003.<sup>67</sup> He was accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Justice Mr Yosef Lapid, Minister for Education, Culture & Sport Ms. Limor Livni and Minister of Agriculture & Rural Development Mr Yisrael Katz and a large group of Israeli businessmen.<sup>68</sup> Mr Sharon called on President Shri A.P.J. Abdul Kalam and held extensive talks on bilateral, regional and international issues with Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Deputy Prime Minister & Home Minister Shri L.K. Advani, External Affairs Minister, Shri Yashwant Sinha,

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<sup>64</sup> Ministry of External Affairs. (2001). *Foreign Affairs Record 2001*. New Delhi: Govt of India

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ministry of External Affairs. (2002). *Foreign Affairs Record 2002*. New Delhi: Govt of India

<sup>67</sup> Ministry of External Affairs. (2003). *Foreign Affairs Record 2003*. New Delhi: Govt of India

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

Finance Minister Shri Jaswant Singh, Defence Minister Shri George Fernandes and Leader of the Opposition Smt. Sonia Gandhi. Mr Sharon addressed a joint meeting of GII and EIGGI. Agreements relating to Environment Protection, Health and Medicine, Combating Drugs Trafficking and Abuse, Visa Waiver for Diplomatic and Official Passports and Exchange Programme on Education and Culture were signed during the visit. It was also agreed to set up a joint Committee on Agriculture and to explore the possibility of setting up a second Agriculture demonstration farm in India.<sup>69</sup> Five months after Mr Sharon's visit to India, Foreign Minister Mr Silvan Shalom paid an official visit to India from 9-11 February 2004. He called on the President, Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister and held plenary meeting with Minister of External Affairs, Shri Yashwant Sinha. Issues of bilateral and regional interest were discussed during the meetings. Mr Shalom also announced the reopening of the Israeli Consulate in Mumbai. During his Mumbai visit, he addressed the Indian business community and interacted with the Jewish community living there.

*Trade Relations:*

India's major export items to Israel were gems and jewellery, textiles, cashew, coffee, drugs and pharmaceuticals, engineering products etc. India's major non-defence import items were fertilisers, pearls, precious stones, machinery, organic/inorganic chemicals, project goods, electronic goods etc.<sup>70</sup> India's export to Israel grew by 62.9%, and imports (non-defence items) grew up to 26.9% in 1997-98.<sup>71</sup> This growth in trade in should not be confused as a consequence of the BJP's acclaimed affinity towards Israel,

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<sup>69</sup> Ministry of External Affairs. (2003). *Foreign Affairs Record 2003*. New Delhi: Govt of India

<sup>70</sup> Question No 2487, addressed to the Minister of Commerce Shri Ramkrishna Hegde on 12<sup>th</sup> June, 1998 by Shri Ranjib Biswal, Lok Sabha Debates.

<sup>71</sup> *ibid*

particularly because this growth cannot occur overnight. This growth was rather a product of the institutionalisation of the bilateral trade relations that began with the agreement on trade and economic cooperation in December 1994, the establishment of India-Israel Joint Trade and Economic Committee in January 1996 that paved the way for exchange of delegations, formation of India-Israel business alliance etc.<sup>72</sup> Between July 1991 and December 1997, Israeli investment in India was 64.77 Crore Rupees.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Question No 2487, addressed to the Minister of Commerce Shri Ramkrishna Hegde on 12<sup>th</sup> June, 1998 by Shri Ranjib Biswal, Lok Sabha Debates.

<sup>73</sup> *ibid*

**CHAPTER - IV**

**THE POLICY OF STRATEGIC COOPERATION**

**The Era of Dr Manmohan Singh (2004 -2014)**

## POLICY OF STRATEGIC COOPERATION

### The Era of Manmohan Singh (2004 - 2014)

*"Our foreign policy is not defined merely by our interests, but also by the values which are very dear to our people."<sup>1</sup>*

#### **Introduction:**

The United Progressive Alliance or UPA Government, under the Prime Ministership of Dr Manmohan Singh, maintained a delicate balance between national interests and political rhetoric while dealing with Israel. New Delhi upgraded its robust defence and strategic cooperation with the start-up nation, which began under the Vajpayee government. On the other hand, the Government of India utilised all possible opportunities to extend support for the Palestinian cause to the extent of sharing the Arabian narrative in the conflict and criticising Israel globally and within India, the policy that Mrs Indira Gandhi had followed. In this phase, multilateral cooperation with Israel reached an all-time high. From defence to intelligence, agriculture to water management, science and technology to research and development, the fruits of Indo-Israel cooperation soon became effective for the masses and not confined to levels of track two diplomacy. The robust Indo-Israel cooperation was acknowledged as 'Strategic Cooperation' in the second term of the UPA Government.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Highlights of Prime Minister's address at the Annual Conclave of Indian Ambassadors/High Commissioners abroad. New Delhi, November 4, 2013. [Source : Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. (2013). *India's Foreign Relations—2013 Documents*. Government of India, p.232]

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Ms Dana Krush (Deputy Chief of Mission, Israel Embassy from 2015 to 2020) in Israel Embassy in New Delhi, India on September 15, 2016.

Dr Manmohan Singh balanced India's commitment to the Palestinian cause with India's strategic cooperation with Israel. Yet, both his commitment to the Palestinian cause and the viability of strategic cooperation with Israel were under academic scrutiny. In this phase, the bilateral relationship between India and Israel was mainly driven by the menace of terrorism<sup>3</sup> that afflicted both nations<sup>4</sup> and a burgeoning defence relationship.<sup>5</sup> The Indo-Israeli partnership turned multifaceted in the era of Dr Manmohan Singh.<sup>6</sup> The shared dilemma has led to a better understanding of each other's concerns, particularly after 9/11.<sup>7</sup> The particular question of the viability of India's cooperation with Israel in counter-terrorism has often been addressed as a passing reference of those works looking at the diplomatic relations between two countries<sup>8</sup> or that have worked on India's general defence or counter-terrorism policy.<sup>9</sup> It is argued that Indo-Israel relations cannot be called a 'friendship' based on the absence of strategic convergence on Nuclear issues. On the macro level, India's military can learn from Israel's methods for homeland security. However, Israel's experience may not be relevant in terms of augmenting India's security environment when it comes to specific

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<sup>3</sup> Kumar, T. (2014). *India and Israel : Reinforcing the Partnership*. New Delhi: Observer Research Foundation.

<sup>4</sup> Sherman, M. (2009, March). India's rural development agenda and the opportunity for Israel. *Pragati*, 24, 7-10.

<sup>5</sup> Pant, H. V. (2004, December). India-Israel Partnership : Convergence and Constraints. *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 8(4), 60-73.

<sup>6</sup> Feiler, G. (2012). *India's Economic Relations with Israel and the Arabs*. Bar-Ilan University. Ramat Gan: Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies.

<sup>7</sup> Pant, H. V. (2008). *Contemporary Debates in Indian Foreign and Security Policy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>8</sup> i) Gopal, K., & Sharma, S. (2007). *India and Israel: Towards Strategic Partnership*. New Delhi: Authors Press.; ii) Kumaraswamy, P. R. (2010). *India's Israel Policy*. New York: Columbia University Press.

<sup>9</sup> Cohen, S. P., & Dasgupta, S. (2010). *Arming without Aiming: India's Military Modernisation*. Washington DC: The Brookings Institution.

issues.<sup>10</sup> Alongside, India was no longer initiating anti-Israel resolutions at the United Nations or other international fora.<sup>11</sup> New Delhi's stronger linkages with the US and Israel and toning down on the Palestinian question have been argued to impinge on India's role in the region.<sup>12</sup>

The cornerstone of Dr Singh's Israel policy was balancing India's support for the Palestinian cause and Israel's strategic importance in India's security and defence. He did not separate the two, just attempted a balance, whereas Narendra Modi, Dr Singh's successor, separated or dehyphenated the two. Manmohan Singh's era is one of the most important phases for the foundation of a strong India. It was in his time that India reached the highest rise in GDP that, of course, was reflected in India's foreign policy and its global status. However, he continued and broadened the strategic engagement with Israel initiated by his predecessors. He shifted to a harder public posture against Israel in different domestic and global fora. This accommodation of national interest and rhetoric together is the most crucial feature of Dr Singh's foreign policy.

*Politico-Psychological Orientation of Dr Manmohan Singh and other Policy-makers:*

Dr Manmohan Singh—a scholar by training, statesman by orientation and politician by compulsion, became the fourteenth Prime Minister of India. The Cambridge scholar started his professional career at Punjab University's faculty and then moved to the Delhi School of Economics. His book, "India's Export Trends and Prospects for Self-

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<sup>10</sup> Kaura, V. (2017, June). Comparative Assessment of Indian and Israeli Military Strategy in Counter Terrorism. *Cyber, Intelligence, and Security*, 1(2), 107-124.

<sup>11</sup> Pasha, A. (2010). New Directions in India's Role in West Asia and the Gulf. *International Studies*, 47(2-4), 333-346.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

Sustained Growth"<sup>13</sup>, critiqued India's inward-oriented trade policy. In 1971, He was the advisor in the Commerce Ministry, and in 1972 he was appointed as the Chief Economic Advisor in the Ministry of Finance. Between 1987 and 1990, Dr Singh headed the South Commission in Geneva.<sup>14</sup> In 1991, Dr Manmohan Singh was appointed the Finance Minister of the country by P. V. Narasimha to bring in reforms.

Dr Singh was never a politician by training. However, thanks to his attachment to various government agencies and ministries, including the Planning commission, and Reserve Bank of India, he was aware of the different government projects, including defence, science and innovation, research and development.<sup>15</sup> Undoubtedly, he was recruited for the position of Prime Minister under a specific political scenario. UPA Chairperson Mrs Sonia Gandhi enjoyed immense power over the policy decisions.<sup>16</sup> Senior Congressman Mr Pranab Mukherjee, who served the UPA government in different capacities of an External Affairs Minister, Defence Minister and Finance Minister, had an immense role in policy making.<sup>17</sup> Mr Mukherjee was a career politician and a statesman. He was neither sympathetic nor apathetic to Israel.<sup>18</sup> Mr Mani Shankar Aiyar, close to the Gandhi family, had an essential role in formulating India's west Asia

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<sup>13</sup> Singh, M. (1964). *India's Export Trends and Prospects for Self-Sustained Growth*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

<sup>14</sup> Prime Minister's Office, India. *Former Prime Ministers*. Retrieved from Official Website of Prime Ministers Office, India: [https://www.pmindia.gov.in/en/former\\_pm/dr-manmohan-singh-2/](https://www.pmindia.gov.in/en/former_pm/dr-manmohan-singh-2/), accessed on June 27, 2020.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

<sup>16</sup> Mukherjee, P. (2017). *The Coalition Years : 1995 - 2012*. New Delhi: Rupa Publications India Pvt Ltd, p.49

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p.50

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Ambassador Ronen Sen (Retd IFS) in New Delhi, India on May 4, 2017.

policy and was highly sympathetic to the Palestinian cause.<sup>19</sup> Dr Singh was a technocrat, and his recruitment in the cabinet and different ministries were excessively technocratic in nature<sup>20</sup>, with no political or personal bias whatsoever. He preferred Mr Montek Singh Ahluwalia or P Chidambaram as the Finance Minister. Dr Singh appointed Mr J. N. Dixit as the National Security Advisor, and later M K Narayanan. Both of them appreciated Israel's technological advancement in counter-terrorism and defence.<sup>21</sup>

C. Raja Mohan coined the term 'Manmohan Singh doctrine' in a lecture at the *Hindustan Times* Leadership Initiative Conference on November 5, 2004. He repeated the same argument in the *India Today* Conclave on February 25, 2005. Raja Mohan argued that this doctrine is all about the single objective of India's foreign policy to 'create a global environment conducive to her economic development and the well-being of the people of India' with the aim of 'greater integration with the world economy'.<sup>22</sup>

#### *Domestic Political Situation:*

The menace of terrorism shook India between 2004 to 2014. It was further complicated by the politics and electoral agenda on the political question around security, counter-terrorism and individual liberty. The Congress party was a staunch critic of the

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<sup>19</sup> Interview with Ambassador Ronen Sen (Retd IFS) in New Delhi, India on May 4, 2017.

<sup>20</sup> Mukherjee, P. (2017). *The Coalition Years : 1995 - 2012*. New Delhi: Rupa Publications India Pvt Ltd, p.50

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Ambassador Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty (Deputy Chief of India's mission in Tel Aviv, 1995-1999) in New Delhi, India on September 8, 2016.

<sup>22</sup> Mohan, C. R. (2005). Rethinking Indian Grand Strategy. In N. S. Sisodia, & C. U. Bhaskar, *Emerging India: Security and Foreign Policy Perspectives*. New Delhi: Institute of Defence and Strategic Analyses, p.39

Prevention of Terrorism Act. (2002) or POTA<sup>23</sup> and repelled the same, coming to power. Nevertheless, that did not diminish the threat per se. India, between 2004 to 2014, faced multifaceted internal security challenges that included a proxy war in Kashmir. The rise in *Jihadi* terror attacks, supported by Pakistan, became a regular phenomenon in Indian metro cities in this period.<sup>24</sup> Drawing on the lessons of the November 26/11 terrorist attacks in Mumbai, the National Investigation Agency was established.<sup>25</sup>

The continuation of attempts at infiltration into Jammu and Kashmir by terrorists from Pakistan and Pak-occupied Kashmir (POK) was a grave concern for South Block.<sup>26</sup> With several insurgent groups, including the ULFA, interested in abjuring violence and initiating talks with the government in 2011, the situation in North-East developed.<sup>27</sup> Left Wing Extremism caused more than half of all casualties caused by Terrorism in India. Security personnel, private individuals and property are predominantly targeted, with subsequent attacks accounting for over half of all attacks and 88 per cent of deaths between 2005 to 2017. The total number of casualties of civilians and Security forces was 4950.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> The NDA Government passed POTA on 2002 to legally combat terrorism. POTA attempted to strengthen the central agencies power in dealing with terrorism. The major criticism against the act was it violates federal structure and individual freedom and leads to a 'totalitarian state'.

<sup>24</sup> Ministry of Defence, Government of India. (2019). *Annual Defence Report 2009-10*. Government of India, p.9

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p.9

<sup>26</sup> Ministry of Defence, Government of India. (2019). *Annual Defence Report 2010-11*. Government of India, p.8

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p.8

<sup>28</sup> Institute for Economics and Peace. (2018). *Global Terrorism Index 2017 : Measuring the Impact of Terrorism*. National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses, USA.

The preponderance of Maoists or Naxalites (as they are popularly known in India) operated in the country's eastern, central and southern areas, known as the Red Corridor. Police and private citizens were predominantly targeted, with subsequent attacks accounting for over half of all attacks and 88 per cent of deaths.<sup>29</sup> The rise of this indigenous movement underlined the lack of institution building, poverty, and pre-modern lifestyles in rural India. The government needed state-building measures and counter insurgencies to tackle the movement. Thwarting the leftist insurgency is one of the significant successes of the UPA Government.

Apart from the domestic security scenario, the domestic political environment influenced UPA's Israel policy. UPA-I was formed with outside support from the Left Parties. Communist parties were ideologically fighting the very foundation of Israel for a long time.<sup>30</sup> Leftists called Israeli democracy an 'Ethnocracy'.<sup>31</sup> Leftists and Palestinian Rights activists led the global Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions against Israel on university campuses of Europe and the US. The UPA-I was also composed of the Indian Union Muslim League, which denounced India's relations with Israel. Interestingly, the junior minister (MoS) in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Mr E. Ahamed, was in charge of the West Asia and North Africa (WANA) division, under

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<sup>29</sup> Maoist insurgents or LWE refers to the activities of numerous militant organisations, including the Communist Party of India (Maoists), the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist)—People's War, Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) etc. The cadre-based 'movement' aimed at 'withering away' of the Indian state and installing a so-called 'Proletariat/people's Government' However, on many occasions, they simply ran a parallel administration in certain pockets of rural and tribal areas of the country. They stem their support base from widespread poverty, deprivation, exploitation, displacement of people and social injustice.

<sup>30</sup> Though, Communist states dealt with Israel pragmatically. Soviet Russia was first to give *de facto* recognition to Israel in 1948. Later it terminated the relations and resumed in 1984. Peoples Republic China began diplomatic relations with Israel in 1992 and took this 'special' relations into a new high.

<sup>31</sup> Israel's Democracy is criticised for barring Arabs to become 'full' fledged' citizens. The argument of Ethnocracy is, the Israeli democracy is limited to one ethnicity, i.e. Jews.

which Israel was dealt. Later in 2009, Mr Shashi Tharoor, who did not hold such convictions against Israel, joined the same rank, but Mr Ahamed was not replaced.

26/11 Mumbai attack changed public perception in favour of Israel. Nariman House, the Jewish centre and residence of the Rabbi in Mumbai, was attacked. The Indian population sympathised with Baby Moshe, a survivor of the attack who lost his parents. With its cosmopolitan outlook, the city of Mumbai embraced Jews for ages, as it embraced other west Asian minorities and persecuted people. The targets of the 26/11 attack were the symbols of those persecuted people in the city. A Zoroastrian family owns Leopold café; the Tajmahal Hotel is a Parsi enterprise, the Cama Hospital was built by a Parsi philanthropist, and St Xaviers College is a Christian Institute.

*The Global Political Situation:*

In the first half of the UPA Government, that is, UPA-I, India's strategic environment remained almost the same as that of the Vajpayee Government, with change degrees in the intensity of threat from time to time.<sup>32</sup> The menace of Global terrorism remained central to India's security perception and reality.<sup>33</sup> New Delhi also sided with the global concern that perceived WMD as another major threat to global peace.<sup>34</sup> India projected its nuclear power as deterring in nature and peaceful in commitment. It was the era when the US maintained its pre-eminent global power; on the other hand; it was also when the rise of the PRC began that later challenged the unquestioned hegemony of the US in international politics. The Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) continued to

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<sup>32</sup> Ministry of Defence. (2004-05). *Annual Defence Report 2004-05*. New Delhi: Government of India.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid

<sup>34</sup> Ibid

drive military reforms, restructuring and modernisation amongst the major world powers.<sup>35</sup>

India welcomed the Israeli pull-out from the Gaza Strip yet was sceptical about the future of peace in the conflicting region.<sup>36</sup> In West Asia, New Delhi was sceptical about Iran's nuclear intentions and global reactions to it, fearing that it could destabilise the region.<sup>37</sup> With the death of Yaser Arafat, the PLA lost its primacy over the movement. The second Lebanon War erupted in 2006. The victory of Hamas<sup>38</sup> in 2006 and the PLA election escalated violence on the International border, demarcating Gaza and Israel.<sup>39</sup> The rocket attack and terrorist attacks inside the Israeli cities rose significantly. On the situation in West Asia worsened, with tensions increasing sharply as the Israeli Defence Forces launched massive military strikes in the Gaza Strip in 2008. In July 2007, the United States started a diplomatic effort to revive the moribund peace process aiming at the two-state solution to the Palestinian conflict. President Bush, on July 16, 2007 declared \$80 million in aid to the Palestinian government in the West Bank and called for an international conference in the fall to prepare for the creation of a Palestinian state side by side with Israel.<sup>40</sup> There were mixed reactions among people in Israel about the peace talks, and the rocket attacks from Gaza continued during the peace talks.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Ministry of Defence. (2004-05). *Annual Defence Report 2004-05*. New Delhi: Government of India., p.9

<sup>36</sup>Ibid, p.8

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, p.8

<sup>38</sup> Hamas is a terrorist organisation that claims to liberate and islamise the undivided Palestine and criticise PLO for not doing adequate for the freedom of Palestine. Hamas even attempted assassination of Yaser Arafat.

<sup>39</sup> Reich, B. (2008). *A Brief History of Israel* (Second Edition ed.). New York: Facts On File, Inc, p.284

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, p.286

<sup>41</sup> Reich, B. (2008). *A Brief History of Israel* (Second Edition ed.). New York: Facts On File, Inc, p.290

These peace talks did not reach their ultimate goal of establishing the Palestinian state. Yet, they created multiple factions in Palestinian society, and many of the Palestinian institutions worked together with Israel against radicalism.

Arab Spring<sup>42</sup> changed the politics of the Middle East. The wave of 'democratisation' challenged the middle-eastern state system. The legitimate rulers of the states considered the primary threat to their survival is Arab Spring and radicalisation, and not Israel.<sup>43</sup> Major Gulf countries like Saudi Arabia and the UAE started blaming Iran as a radicalising power for their sympathy and support to destabilising forces and ideological opposition to Sunnism. This divide was transformed into a proxy war between Iran and Saudi Arabia in different parts of the Middle East, like Yemen and Syria. In this changing Middle East, major players were busy saving their thrones, and Palestinians' and Hamas's support for Hezbollah in Lebanon, Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt annoyed the monarchs, emirates and sultans in the Middle east. Palestinian issue started turning into an ideological burden and not a question of national interests for most of the middle eastern powers.

*Reiteration of Support to the Palestinian Cause:*

Returning to power in 2004, Congress reinstated its pledge to fully support the Palestinian people's legitimate aspirations. Mr K. Natwar Singh, the Minister of External Affairs, declared in a press conference,

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<sup>42</sup> Arab Spring was primarily a wave o democratisation against the feudal rules in the Middle East. It occurred first in Tunisia against President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali in January 2011, In Libya against Muammar Gaddafi, in Egypt against President Hosni Mubarak, followed by uprisings in Yemen, Bahrain, and Syria. This wave of mass movements toppled the dictators with a domino effect. Yet, it did not give birth to a homogenous western model of democracy. In many cases, e.g. in Egypt, the movement turned anonymous, and the radicals and terror outfits highjacked the leadership.

<sup>43</sup> Danahar, P. (2013). *The New Middle East: The World After The Arab Spring* . New Delhi: Bloomsbury, p.21

"We value our relations with Israel. They have a great deal to offer to us, they have a great deal to offer to the world. But our relations with Israel will not be at the expense of sacrificing the legitimate rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people...all we are saying is...you can find a solution of Palestine without Mr Arafat is, in our judgment, unrealistic." <sup>44</sup>

UPA government also held that the relationship with Israel was based on mutually beneficial cooperation, which does not dilute India's principled support for the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people. While criticising the Israeli action in counter-terrorism, South Block shared the Palestinian narratives against checkpost, 'disproportionate use of force by Israel'

The Government of India always condemned the escalation of violence in Northern Gaza and the Israeli forces' disproportionate and large-scale use of force and expressed deep concern at the tragic and unwarranted loss of innocent civilian lives, including of women and young children. India urged an immediate end to the military operations and a return to the path of negotiations along with resuming the peace process in accordance with the relevant UN Resolutions in order to achieve a just, comprehensive and durable peace in the region". <sup>45</sup>

The vicious cycle of violence on both sides and counter-violence, especially since the beginning of the Intifadah. New Delhi believed that the conflict was essentially political

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<sup>44</sup> Press conference by External Affairs Minister K. Natwar Singh to explain the foreign policy of the United Progressive Alliance Government New Delhi, June 1, 2004. [Source: : Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. (2004). *India's Foreign Relations—2004 Documents*. Government of India, p.157]

<sup>45</sup> Statement by Minister of State E. Ahamed on the escalation of violence in Northern Gaza, New Delhi, October 5, 2004. [Source: Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. (2005). *India's Foreign Relations—2005 Documents*. Government of India,]

and could not be resolved by force.<sup>46</sup> India supported negotiations based on relevant UN Security Council resolutions and the "Land for Peace" principle leading to two states, Palestine and Israel, living side by side within secure and recognised borders, which can lead to a just, comprehensive and durable peace in the region.<sup>47</sup>

In 2006, Lok Sabha unanimously expressed its concern over the escalation of violence in the Middle East that exacerbated an already complex and delicate situation in the region. The Loksabha unequivocally condemned the large-scale and indiscriminate Israeli bombing of Lebanon, which resulted in the killing and suffering of innocent civilians, including women and children. India stood by the people of Lebanon at this difficult time.

*Participating in UN Missions against Israel:*

India continued to contribute an Infantry Battalion Group and several Staff Officers to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)<sup>48</sup> that New Delhi started in 1998.<sup>49</sup> In 2006-07, Sikh Battalion was deployed in Lebanon, contributing to peace-keeping during the thirty-four-day long Israel-Hezbollah War.<sup>50</sup> In recognition of its efforts, the Battalion was awarded a Unit Citation and 73 individual citations by the

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<sup>46</sup> Address by External Affairs Minister K. Natwar Singh on "India and West Asia" at the Indian Association for Central and West Asian Studies, Jamia Milia Islamia. [Source: Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. (2004). *India's Foreign Relations—2004 Documents*. Government of India, p.728]

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> The mission was established in 1978 with an aim to oversee the withdrawal of Israeli forces from South Lebanon and establishment of the Lebanese authority in the region.

<sup>49</sup> Ministry of Defence. (2004-05). *Annual Defence Report 2004-05*. New Delhi: Government of India, p.37

<sup>50</sup> Ministry of Defence. (2006-07). *Annual Defence Report 2006-07*. New Delhi: Government of India, p.22

International Community.<sup>51</sup> Indian Navy deployed IN Mumbai, IN Brahmaputra, IN Betwa, and IN Shakti in the Mediterranean Sea at the time of the war, with the specific task of evacuating Indian Nationals from Beirut.<sup>52</sup> The operation, known as 'Operation Sukoon', successfully evacuated 2280 Indian, Nepalese and Sri Lankan nationals.<sup>53</sup> From 2006-07, the Indian Army made significant efforts to maintain peace and tranquillity in the UNDOF, Golan Heights, under the aegis of the UN.<sup>54</sup> A Logistic Battalion with 190 personnel was deployed in Golan Heights to look after the logistics of UNDOF in Israel and Syria.<sup>55</sup>

*Opposing Israel in Global Fora:*

India condemned the large-scale demolition of homes in the Rafah Palestinian refugee camp in Gaza and the indiscriminate use of force by the Israeli Defence Force, which caused unwarranted loss of innocent civilian life, particularly of women and young children. New Delhi called for cease of such unilateral action and urged an end to the vicious cycle of violence and counter-violence along with restarting the peace process in accordance with the relevant UN Resolutions and the Quartet Road Map.<sup>56</sup> During the visit, the Foreign Minister of Kuwait, Sheikh Mohammed Sabah Al-Salem Al-

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<sup>51</sup> Ministry of Defence. (2006-07). *Annual Defence Report 2006-07*. New Delhi: Government of India, p.22

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, p.32

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, p.32

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, p.23

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, p.30

<sup>56</sup> Statement by the Official Spokesman on the large scale demolition of homes in the Rafah Palestinian refugee camp in Gaza by the Israeli Defence Force, May 20, 2004 [Source: Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. Retrieved from Official Website of MEA: <https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/7634/Statement>, accessed on October 23, 2018]

Sabah, held wide-ranging discussions with the Minister of External Affairs and called on the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, the Prime Minister, and the President. Both sides underlined the need to revitalise the Middle East Peace Process, based on the relevant UN Resolutions, the Arab Initiative, and the Road Map, in order to achieve a just, lasting, and comprehensive peace in the region and the establishment of two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security.<sup>57</sup> After the Israeli counter strike in Gaza in 2005, E Ahmed, MoS of MEA, on his official capacity, made a comment stating,

"We condemn the recent escalation of violence in Northern Gaza and the disproportionate and large-scale use of force by the Israeli forces. We are deeply concerned at the tragic and unwarranted loss of innocent civilian lives, including of women and young children... We urge an immediate end to the military operations and a return to the path of negotiations. Serious, sincere and urgent efforts must be made to re-start the peace process in accordance with the relevant UN Resolutions and the Quartet Road Map, in order to achieve a just, comprehensive and durable peace in the region".<sup>58</sup>

The multi-party Indian delegation to the funeral of the PLO leader was headed by External Affairs Minister K. Natwar Singh. The External Affairs Minister, on the way back from the funeral, told the accompanying journalists on board the Special aircraft that India's good relations with Israel should not come in the way of India's support for the Palestinian cause.<sup>59</sup> India's relations with Palestinians remain strong, but that does

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<sup>57</sup> Joint statement issued at the end of the visit of Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh (Dr.) Mohammed Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah to India. New Delhi, August 26, 2004. [Source: Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. (2004). *India's Foreign Relations—2004 Documents*. Government of India, p.848]

<sup>58</sup> Statement by Minister of State E. Ahamed on the escalation of violence in Northern Gaza. New Delhi, October 5, 2004. [Source: Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. (2004). *India's Foreign Relations—2004 Documents*. Government of India, p.870]

<sup>59</sup> Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. (2004). *India's Foreign Relations—2004 Documents*. Government of India, p.871

not mean they should affect its ties with Israel.<sup>60</sup> India was hopeful about the peace process forward after the death of Yaser Arafat, reiterated support for the same, yet never got involved in the peace process.

India supported the objective of a lasting, just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, based on relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council. The sides encourage the resumption of peace negotiations as soon as possible in accordance with the Road Map worked out by the Quartet of international intermediaries and approved by the UN Security Council in its resolution 1515. India argued that the Palestinian leadership has shown great courage and fortitude in the period following the demise of President Arafat. Their decision to hold elections on January 9, 2005 has been in the best traditions of a smooth transfer of power in accordance with the Basic Law. Israel's decision to release the approximately \$ 33 million in attached arrears to the Palestinian Authority has also been encouraging. However, the success of elections depends a great deal on the continued actions of the parties involved. Israel, in the critical period before Palestinian elections, has to refrain from actions that could undermine trust, including settlement activity; facilitate the preparations and conduct of elections; take steps to lift curfews and ease restrictions on the movement of persons and goods; and significantly improve the humanitarian situation in the Palestinian territories.

The Palestinian Authority, New Delhi proposed, would have to undertake action on the ground to halt the violence. Israel has to allow residents of East Jerusalem to vote in the forthcoming elections; to ease the closures and blockades on major Palestinian

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<sup>60</sup> Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. (2004). *India's Foreign Relations—2004 Documents*. Government of India, p.871

towns and cities; to provide unhindered access to candidates and voters; and to allow international observers. The international community would need to be fully involved with the Palestinian election process to ensure that it is conducted in the best possible circumstances and is free and fair.

India prescribed both Palestinians and Israelis should make optimal use of the opportunities represented in this 'new' beginning. Most Israelis and Palestinians appear to be in favour of the resumption of the peace process after four years of conflict and loss. Elections in the Palestinian Authority in the wake of an easing of the restrictions on the territories should pave the way for Israel's withdrawal from Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, thereby reviving the peace process. If these requirements were met, withdrawal could be a useful step towards an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 by means of direct negotiations between the parties leading to the goal of two States, Israel and a sovereign, independent, viable, democratic and territorially contiguous Palestine.

New Delhi expressed concern over Israel's opting for a military response against the capture of an Israeli soldier by terror groups rather than affording time and opportunity for diplomatic action to resolve the matter.<sup>61</sup> India criticised the actions of the Israeli Defence Forces, such as the bombing of a power plant and several bridges in Gaza that affected the lives of ordinary citizens. New Delhi maintained that this vigilante justice contributed to the deterioration of the already existing humanitarian crisis there.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Response of Official Spokesperson to a question on the escalating tension in West Asia. New Delhi, July 1, 2006. [Source: Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. (2006). *India's Foreign Relations—2006 Documents*. Government of India, p.1242]

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

India expressed concern about the escalating tension in West Asia as a result of developments on the Israel-Lebanese border which destabilised the region further and widen the conflict. India condemned the abduction of two Israeli soldiers on July 12, 2006 by Lebanese militants and called for their immediate release.<sup>63</sup> India strongly condemned the excessive and disproportionate military retaliation by Israel which has targeted civilian infrastructure, including Beirut airport.<sup>64</sup> India expressed 'particular' 'concern' that the actions of the Israeli Defence Forces that caused in the killing and suffering of innocent civilians, including women and children. India was critical about the Israeli air strikes and the probable 'surgical strike' by IDF into Lebanon.<sup>65</sup> India's interest in the war was primarily about the welfare or evacuation of about 12,000 Indian nationals, mostly unskilled labourers, in Lebanon.<sup>66</sup> South Block also criticised naval blockade of Lebanon by Israel.

India strongly condemned the continued indiscriminate bombing of Lebanon by the Israeli military, ignoring calls for restraint.<sup>67</sup> India condemned the air strikes on UN peace-keeping troops deployed on the Israel-Lebanon border, which caused injury of two Indian soldiers.<sup>68</sup> India demanded that such targeting of UN peacekeepers to be

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<sup>63</sup> Statement by Permanent Representative at the UN Ambassador Nirupam Sen on the Situation in the Middle East at the Security Council. New York, July 21, 2006. [Source: Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. (2006). *India's Foreign Relations—2006 Documents*. Government of India, p. 1965]

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Press Briefing by Secretary (East) in the Ministry of External Affairs Rajiv Sikri on Advisory to Indians in Lebanon. New Delhi, July 17, 2006. [Source: Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. (2006). *India's Foreign Relations—2006 Documents*. Government of India, p.1243]

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Statement by Official Spokesperson on the situation in Lebanon. New Delhi, July 30, 2006. [Source: Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. (2006). *India's Foreign Relations—2006 Documents*. Government of India, p.1261]

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

stopped forthwith. India demanded for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire, to be followed by negotiations leading to a peaceful and comprehensive solution to the problems of this region that would take into account the legitimate interests and grievances of all parties.<sup>69</sup>

India emphasised the urgent need for the international community to promote a comprehensive peace plan for the Middle East / West Asia, with the objective of reaching a comprehensive, just and durable peace and stability in the region.<sup>70</sup> They reaffirmed their support for a negotiated settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on existing agreements, including relevant UNSC Resolutions, the Roadmap, and the Arab League Resolution (Beirut 2002). The leaders discussed the situation in Lebanon and supported the full implementation of UNSC Resolution 1701. They also welcomed the reinforced UNIFIL for which EU Members contribute half the forces, along with countries like India, which have contributed towards UNIFIL since its inception more than two decades ago. They also stressed their determination to bring humanitarian assistance and recovery aid to the people of Lebanon in the rebuilding of their nation. India expressed concern about the escalating tension in West Asia as a result of developments, in the Gaza Strip and on the Israel-Lebanese border, which have the potential to inflame the region further and widen the conflict. India condemned the abduction of two Israeli soldiers on July 12 2006, and has called for their immediate release. We have equally strongly condemned the excessive and disproportionate

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<sup>69</sup> Statement by Official Spokesperson on the situation in Lebanon. New Delhi, July 30, 2006. [Source: Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. (2006). *India's Foreign Relations—2006 Documents*. Government of India, p.1261]

<sup>70</sup> Joint Statement issued at the end of the India-EU Summit. Helsinki, October 13, 2006. [Source: Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. (2006). *India's Foreign Relations—2006 Documents*. Government of India, p.1684]

military retaliation by Israel which has targeted civilian infrastructure, including Beirut airport and resulted in the killing and suffering of innocent civilians, including women and children. The responsibility to protect women and children in armed conflict has to be real and not theoretical.

### **The Policy of Strategic Cooperation with Israel**

#### *Defence Collaboration:*

The approach adopted by India's Defence establishment since Kargil War, particularly after the Kargil Review Committee Report (2000), UPA in its tenure did not deviate from that stand, although with the less public gesture. India's engagement with Israel, particularly military engagement, is bilateral and devoid of regional and global posture. The development of the military relationship between India and Israel had been upward and gradual. India categorically termed Israel (along with four other defence partners, i.e., France, Russia, USA and UK) as a 'friendly country' and a 'defence partner'.<sup>71</sup> New Delhi also mentioned that the 'rapidly expanding' defence cooperation with the Jewish state can enhance the security environment in the region and in the world.<sup>72</sup>

The artillery ammunition ventured jointly by India and Israel, under an MoU between Israel Military Industries (IMI), Israel, and three different Ordnance Factories of India, started to be produced. It was strategically important for India and was tested in Pokhran

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<sup>71</sup> Ministry of Defence. (2004-05). *Annual Defence Report 2004-2005* . New Delhi: Government of India., p.9

<sup>72</sup> Ministry of Defence. (2004-05). *Annual Defence Report 2004-2005* . New Delhi: Government of India, p.9

in June 2004.<sup>73</sup> New Delhi continued the strategically important relationship with Israel. The Chief of Air Staff, Indian Air force paid an official visit to Israel on September 2004<sup>74</sup> and participated in the third meeting of the India-Israel Joint Working Group on Defence, took place at Tel Aviv in December 2004, headed by the Director General of Ministry of Defence, Israel.<sup>75</sup> It is important here note that, although India maintained disagreement with Israel's claim on undivided Jerusalem as the eternal capital of Israel. The meeting between the Defence Establishment of two countries took place in Tel Aviv, primarily because Tel Aviv is the head quarter of Defence Establishment of Israel. Even the Ministry of Defence is situated in Tel Aviv, while all other major and minor ministries are in Jerusalem.

In 2007-08, IAF procured the airborne warning and control system (AWACS) from Israel to meet its long-felt need.<sup>76</sup> Mr. Yecheil Horev, Director of Security of Defence Establishment and Senior Deputy Director General, Israel visited India in June 2007.<sup>77</sup> Maj. Gen. (Retd.) Yosi Ben Hanan, Director SIBAT during July 23-25, 2007 and Chief of Staff of Israel Navy Vice Admiral David Ben Bashat during August 26-29, 2007 visited India. An Israeli delegation led by B.G. Pinchas Buchris, Director General Ministry of Defence, Israel, visited India from December 30, 2007, to January 1, 2008, to participate in the 6th Meeting of the India-Israel Joint Working Group (JWG). The

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<sup>73</sup> Ministry of Defence. (2004-05). *Annual Defence Report 2004-2005*. New Delhi: Government of India, p.75

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, p.200

<sup>75</sup> Ministry of Defence. (2004-05). *Annual Defence Report 2004-2005*. New Delhi: Government of India, p.199

<sup>76</sup> Ministry of Defence. (2007-08). *Annual Defence Report 2007-2008*. New Delhi: Government of India, p.39

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, p.179

fifth round of Navy-to-Navy Staff talks was held in Tel Aviv in October 2007. The second Air Force Staff talks were held in New Delhi on January 15-16, 2007. The third round of Army-to-Army Staff talks were conducted in India from November 26-29, 2007.<sup>78</sup>

Mr Amir Kain, Head of DSDE (MALMAB), led a delegation to India during July 21-23, 2008. Mr Yosi Ben Hanan, Director SIBAT paid a visit to India during 22-23 July, 2008. Maj Gen (Res) Ehud Shani, Head of Defence Export and Cooperation Department (SIBAT), Israel visited India and held meetings with senior officers on December 8, 2008. Secretary (Defence Production) led a delegation to Israel in September, 2008. Both the countries have agreed to set up a Sub Group on Defence Procurement, Production and Development to promote cooperation in this area in a more effective manner. This Sub Group is co-chaired on the Indian side by Director General (Acquisition). The second meeting of this Sub Group was held in New Delhi on February 13-14, 2008, while its 3rd meeting was held in Tel Aviv during September 21-23, 2008. Defence Secretary led a delegation to Israel to attend the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the India-Israel Joint Working Group on November 12, 2008.<sup>79</sup>

Brig Gen (Retd) Pinchas Buchris, Director General, Israeli Ministry of Defence attended the Aero India-2009 held in Bangalore from February 11-15, 2009. The Chief of Army Staff (COAS) visited Israel from November 8-10, 2009. The 4th Air Force-to-Air Force Staff Talks (AAST) were held on November 17, 2009. The 4th India-Israel Sub Working Group on Defence Procurement, production and Development (SWG

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<sup>78</sup> <sup>78</sup> Ministry of Defence. (2007-08). *Annual Defence Report 2007-2008*. New Delhi: Government of India, p.39

<sup>79</sup> Ministry of Defence. (2008-09). *Annual Defence Report 2008-2009*. New Delhi: Government of India.

DPPD) was held in New Delhi on December 21, 2009. The meeting was co-chaired by Shri S.K. Sharma, Director General (Acquisition) from Indian side while Mr Ehud Lhani, Head of SIBAT, Ministry of Defence, Israel co-chaired from the Israeli side. This was followed by the 8th meeting of the India Israel Joint Working Group (JWG) on defence cooperation on December 22, 2009. The Indian delegation was led by the Defence Secretary, Mr. Pradeep Kumar, while the Israeli side was led by Brig Gen (Retd) Pinchas Buchris, the Director General of the Israeli Ministry of Defence.<sup>80</sup>

Vice Adm Eliezer Marom, Commander-in-Chief of the Israeli Navy visited India from January 18-21, 2010. Major General (Retd) Ehud Shani, Director General of the Israeli Ministry of Defence visited India during DEFEXPO-2010 held in New Delhi from February 15-18, 2010. Shri S.K Sharma Director General (Acq) visited Israel to co-chair the 5th India-Israel Sub Working Group on Defence Procurement, Production and Development (SWG-DPPD) on May 2, 2010. The 5th IAF-Israel Air Force Air Staff Talks (AST) were conducted at Tel Aviv, Israel from November 1-3, 2010.<sup>81</sup>

The 6th India-Israel Sub-Working Group on Defence Procurement, Production and Development [SWG-DPPD] was held in New Delhi on January 11, 2011. It was co-chaired by Director General (Acquisition), Shri Vivek Rae from the Indian side and Mr. Shmaya Avieli, Director SIBAT (Defence Cooperation and Defence Export Department), Ministry of Defence, Israel from the Israeli side.<sup>82</sup> The 7<sup>th</sup> Navy Staff Talks with Israel were held during January 31 - February 2, 2011 in Israel. The 9<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Ministry of Defence. (2009-10). *Annual Defence Report 2009-2010*. New Delhi: Government of India.

<sup>81</sup> Ministry of Defence. (2010-11). *Annual Defence Report 2010-2011*. New Delhi: Government of India

<sup>82</sup> Ministry of Defence. (2011-12). *Annual Defence Report 2011-2012*. New Delhi: Government of India, p. 194

meeting of the India-Israel Joint Working Group on Defence Cooperation was held in Tel Aviv on May 15, 2011.<sup>83</sup> The Indian delegation was led by Shri Pradeep Kumar, Defence Secretary. while the Israeli delegation was led by Major Gen (res.) Ehud Shani, Director General of the Israeli Ministry of Defence. The Chief of Israeli Air Force visited India from November 21-24, 2011.<sup>84</sup> The 8th India-Israel Sub-Working Group on Defence Procurement, Production and Development (SWG-DPPD) was held in New Delhi on May 20, 2013. It was co-chaired by DG (Acquisition) from Indian side and Brig Gen Shmaya Avieli, Director, SIBAT, Ministry of Defence, Israel from the Israeli side. Maj Gen Guy Zur, Chief of Ground Forces, Israeli Defence Forces, visited India from November 11-14, 2013.<sup>85</sup>

The Army to Army, Navy to Navy and Air Force to Air Force Staff talks with Israel were held on March 11, 2014 in Israel. The Chief of Army Staff visited Israel from March 18 - 21, 2014. Major General Dan Harel, Director General, Israeli Ministry of Defence visited India in February 2014 for attending DEFEXPO-2014. During the visit he called on Raksha Rajya Mantri and also met Defence Secretary.

*Joint Collaboration in Defence:*

Defence Relations with Israel, in this phase, was 'cordial' and 'mutually beneficial'.<sup>86</sup> Since the beginning of this century, in other words post-Kargil, New Delhi finally realised that the policy of Defence Procurement creating foreign dependence. Thus, it

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<sup>83</sup> Ministry of Defence. (2011-12). *Annual Defence Report 2011-2012*. New Delhi: Government of India, p.194

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, p.194

<sup>85</sup> Ministry of Defence. (2013-14). *Annual Defence Report 2013-2014*. New Delhi: Government of India, p.190

<sup>86</sup> Ministry of Defence. (2007-08). *Annual Defence Report 2007-2008*. New Delhi: Government of India, p.179

was important to shift the policy to defence manufacturing. It was impossible overnight; thus, India chose the path of joint development. DRDO had MOU or Agreements with thirty-three countries for collaboration in the field of defence technologies.<sup>87</sup> The areas of collaboration were: missile technologies, avionics and aircraft technologies, laser systems, nano-materials, hypersonic and naval systems etc.<sup>88</sup> Israel was one of the three major defence partners of India, with which India had a joint managing committee for defence collaboration.

Israel is a world leader in Research & Development (R&D) in general. Since Indian and Israeli threat perception does not absolutely match, there are areas of convergence as well as of divergence. Beyond Surveillance, post-Kargil, India was interested in Israeli excellence in precision-guided missile technology. Thus, DRDO, the Indian Navy and IAI, Israel jointly started developing a highly sophisticated Long-Range Surface to Air Missile system in 2006.<sup>89</sup> It had a range of 70 km using a dual pulse rocket motor and active radar seeker in the terminal phase with an inertial/ mid-course update for guidance.<sup>90</sup>

The Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) produced the indigenous 130mm Cargo ammunition produced by them in technical collaboration with IMI, Israel. BDL<sup>91</sup> had

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<sup>87</sup> Ministry of Defence. (2006-07). *Annual Defence Report 2006-2007*. New Delhi: Government of India, p.85

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, p.85

<sup>89</sup> Ministry of Defence. (2006-07). *Annual Defence Report 2006-2007*. New Delhi: Government of India, p.28

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, p.73

<sup>91</sup> Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) was established in 1970 for manufacture of Guided Missiles. It is one of the few strategic industries in the world that possesses the capability to produce state-of-the-art missiles.

exported the Infrared Radiation Interference Indicators (IRII) worth \$ 1,56,966.50 to ELOP, Israel, during 2007-08.<sup>92</sup>

India and Israel jointly developed Dual Colour technology for indigenously developed Missile Approach Warning System. To improve the accuracy of Pinaka Rocket to 0.4% of range, a Joint Development Programme entitled 'Development of Trajectory Correction System (TCS) for Pinaka (Phase I)' between DRDO & IMI, Israel was undertaken.<sup>93</sup> The demo trials of Pinaka TCS Rocket were successfully completed in July 2008.<sup>94</sup> To achieve maximum serviceability and ensure operational readiness, the Army and Navy signed a five-year joint maintenance contract with M/s IAI, Israel. This will ensure minimum 90% serviceability of UAV assets, doorstep collection and delivery of UAV stores, refresher training for the EME crew and calibration of the UAVs. The Indian Air Force strengthened its Air Defence capability by contracting 15 LLLWR from Israel. Nine of these radars are already inducted and operational, thereby providing gap-free radar coverage at Tier-I of the nation's AD network. In 2009, India and IAI/Israel signed a treaty under which Israel got the maintenance contract for the next five years.<sup>95</sup> DRDO, Indian Navy and IAI, Israel jointly developed a 70 km range Long Range Surface-to-Air Missile (LR-SAM) dual pulse rocket motor and active radar

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<sup>92</sup> Ministry of Defence. (2007-08). *Annual Defence Report 2007-2008*. New Delhi: Government of India, p.70

<sup>93</sup> Ministry of Defence. (2008-09). *Annual Defence Report 2008-2009*. New Delhi: Government of India, p.92

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, p.92

<sup>95</sup> Ministry of Defence. (2009-10). *Annual Defence Report 2009-2010*. New Delhi: Government of India, p.27

seeker.<sup>96</sup> The First Ballistic Control flight test has been successfully conducted at Israel in 2010.<sup>97</sup>

In 2011, DRDO and IAI, Israel jointly developed a Medium Range Surface to Air Missile (MRSAM) weapon system is capable of neutralising a variety of targets, like Fixed Wing Aircraft, Helicopters, Missiles (subsonic, supersonic and tactical ballistic missiles) within a range of 70 km and up to an altitude of 20 km. It is a land-based Air Defence System developed to meet the requirements of the Indian Air Force (IAF).<sup>98</sup> In 2013, DRDO, the Indian Navy and Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI), Israel jointly developed Long Range Surface-to-Air Missile (LRSAM). It has a range of 70 km, backed by a dual-pulse rocket motor and active Radar seeker in the terminal phase, and inertial/ mid-course update for guidance. The weapon system provides a point and area defence for three ships of the Indian Navy against a wide variety of aerial threats.<sup>99</sup>

#### *Cooperation in Counter-Terrorism:*

The fourth meeting of the India – Israel Joint Working Group (JWG) on Counter-terrorism was held in New Delhi on November 30 – December 2, 2004 with the first round of consultations on Disarmament issues. The Indian delegation was led by Ms Meera Shankar, Additional Secretary (UN) in the Ministry of External Affairs. The Israeli delegation was led by Mr Jeremy Issacharoff, Deputy Director General for

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<sup>96</sup> Ministry of Defence. (2009-10). *Annual Defence Report 2009-2010*. New Delhi: Government of India, p.83

<sup>97</sup> Ministry of Defence. (2010-11). *Annual Defence Report 2010-2011*. New Delhi: Government of India, p.85

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, p.97

<sup>99</sup> Ministry of Defence. (2013-14). *Annual Defence Report 2013-2014*. New Delhi: Government of India, p.88

Strategic Affairs, Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>100</sup> Both delegations included representatives of relevant Ministries and agencies. Both sides reaffirmed their unequivocal condemnation of all acts of terrorism. They reviewed the global campaign against terrorism and discussed ways and means by which the fight against terrorism by the international community can be made more effective and how India and Israel can contribute to this. They were of the view that recent resolutions of the UN Security Council, particularly UNSC resolutions 1373, 1540 and 1566, provide a valuable framework for strengthening cooperation against terrorism in the international arena. The sixth round of talks of the Joint Working Group on counter-terrorism and the third round of dialogue on non-proliferation took place in 2007-08 in New Delhi.<sup>101</sup>

The standard discussion pattern in any JWG framework is presenting each other's security scenarios and understanding each other's concerns.<sup>102</sup> As per Moseh Ya'alón, the former Vice Prime Minister of Israel (2009-13, 2015-16), the Indian representatives, in this phase (2004-14) was ignorant about the security scenario and Israeli perception about it.<sup>103</sup> They usually discussed issues such as border security, terror funding, terrorist use of anti-aircraft missiles and WMD terrorism. India and Israel agreed to build on the JWG activities and expand inter-sessional exchanges in specific professional areas. Apart from the absence of strategic convergence, India and Israel, in this period, had disagreements on the very idea of who is a terrorist. The standard

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<sup>100</sup> Ministry of External Affairs (2004-2005). *Annual Report 2004-05*. New Delhi: Government of India, p.47

<sup>101</sup> Ministry of External Affairs (2007-2008). *Annual Report 2007-08*. New Delhi: Government of India, p.50

<sup>102</sup> Interview with Mr Moshe Ya'alón (Vice prime Minister of Israel, 2009-2013 and 2015-2016; Minister of Strategic Affairs, 2009-2013; Former Chief of IDF 2002-2005) in Tel Aviv, Israel on February 14, 2019.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

Indian argument was, "their terrorists are not our terrorists".<sup>104</sup> Clearly, referring to the Palestinians, particularly Yaser Arafat and PLO. Although, India never ceremonially declared Hamas as terrorist, probably because it is irrelevant for India. On the other hand, the Israeli approach was "terror is terror"<sup>105</sup>. 'One man's terrorist is everyone's terrorist'. Nevertheless, India and Israel regularly shared intelligence inputs in this phase.<sup>106</sup>

In the talks on disarmament issues, India and Israel exchanged views on contemporary issues on the global agenda and decided to continue the dialogue in future. The Israeli delegation called on Shri Satish Chandra, Deputy to the National Security Adviser and Shri Rajiv Sikri, Secretary (East) in the Ministry of External Affairs, during their stay in Delhi. India and Israel did not develop any partnership on civil nuclear programmes, particularly because India did not seek Jerusalem's cooperation for fear of losing the support of fifty Muslim nations.<sup>107</sup>

The public support for the Israeli way of dealing with terrorism sparked with the rise of the menace of terrorism in India, particularly after 26/11. South Block genuinely considered the option of a surgical strike or operation hot pursuit into Pakistan.<sup>108</sup> In the aftermath of 9/11, when the option of a Surgical Strike became popular in India and

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<sup>104</sup> Interview with Mr Jaideep Sarkar (Ambassador of India to Israel, 2012-2015) in Thimpu, Bhutan on November 7, 2016.

<sup>105</sup> Interview with Mr Daniel Carmon (Ambassador of Israel to India 2014-2018) in Peta Tikwa, Israel on February 25, 2019

<sup>106</sup> Interview with Mr Moshe Ya'alon (Vice prime Minister of Israel, 2009-2013 and 2015-2016; Minister of Strategic Affairs, 2009-2013; Former Chief of IDF 2002-2005) in Tel Aviv, Israel on February 14, 2019.

<sup>107</sup> Mukherjee, P. (2017). *The Coalition Years : 1995 - 2012*. New Delhi: Rupa Publications India Pvt Ltd, p.81

<sup>108</sup> Menon, S. (2016). *Choices : Inside the making of India's Foreign Policy*. Washington: The Brookings Institution, p.99

was discussed as an option in Parliament, Israel started to become popular. Public opinion was evidently divided. Indian policy-makers did not wish to take this Israel like vigilante justice."<sup>109</sup>

### **Diplomatic Cooperation:**

The 8th round of Foreign Office Consultations between India and Israel was held in New Delhi on November 16, 2004. The Indian delegation was headed by Mr. Rajiv Sikri Secretary (East). Ministry of External Affairs. Ambassador Amos Nadai, Deputy Director General (Asia & Pacific), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, led the Israeli delegation. The two sides had a wide-ranging and constructive exchange of views in the spirit of friendship and mutual understanding. The discussions included a review of bilateral, regional and multilateral issues as well as ways to enhance further bilateral relations in diversified fields such as economy and commerce, agriculture, culture, science and technology and people-to-people contacts. Both sides exchanged views on steps needed to achieve peace in the West Asian region. <sup>110</sup>

Ambassador Amos Nadai, Deputy Director General (Asia & Pacific), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, led the Israeli delegation. The two sides had a wide-ranging and constructive exchange of views in the spirit of friendship and mutual understanding. The discussions included a review of bilateral, regional and multilateral issues as well as ways to further enhance bilateral relations in diversified fields such as economy and commerce, agriculture, culture, science and technology and people to people contacts.

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<sup>109</sup> Menon, S. (2016). *Choices : Inside the making of India's Foreign Policy*. Washington: The Brookings Institution.

<sup>110</sup> Ministry of External Affairs (2005). *Annual Report 2004-05*. New Delhi: Government of India.

Both sides exchanged views on steps needed to achieve peace in the West Asian region. At the India - Israel Business Conference held in New Delhi on December 8, 2004 it was decided to set a target of bilateral trade of US \$ 8 billion in three years. At the Conference Indian Commerce Minister Kamal Nath indicated that during the year 2004 the bilateral trade should comfortably cross the two billion mark. It was also decided to set up a Joint Study Group for a comprehensive economic partnership between the two countries. This was announced by Indian Commerce Minister at the Business Conference. The Israeli delegation at the Conference was led by the Vice Prime Minister of Israel Ehud Olmert who also headed the Ministries of Industry, Trade, Labour and Communication. The Vice Prime Minister described the decision to set up the Joint Study Group as a "major breakthrough" and "an important first step" which would lead to a closer economic partnership between India and Israel, covering a wide range of sectors of interest to both the countries. The Business Conference was held under the auspices of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

**CHAPTER - V**

**THE POLICY OF DEHYPHENATION**

**The Era of Narendra Modi (2014 -2019)**

## **THE POLICY OF DEHYPHENATION**

### **The Era of Narendra Modi (2014 - 2019)**

*"India and Israel live in complex geographies. We are aware of strategic threats to regional peace and stability. India has suffered firsthand violence and hatred spread by terror. So has Israel."*<sup>1</sup>

#### **Introduction:**

Narendra Modi's swiped the general election of 2014 and became the Prime Minister of India. He claimed to provide a bold and unhesitant foreign policy in general and dehyphenation of India's relations with Israel in particular. The Indo-Israeli partnership that turned multifaceted in the era of Dr Manmohan Singh<sup>2</sup> taken up to a new height by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. From trade to tourism, water management to Space cooperation,<sup>3</sup> high-tech to agro-tech and cultural exchange, the collaboration between the two countries entered a new era of comprehensive strategic partnership.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, cooperation in counter-terrorism and burgeoning defence relations are still the cornerstones of this bilateral relationship. By 'Dehyphenation' the government meant that when they deal with Israel, they do not need to balance the same by engaging with the Palestinians. The government claimed credit for such a policy that enjoys a diplomatic edge. The Modi government claimed the same logic of 'dehyphenation' in

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<sup>1</sup> Prime Minister Narendra modi's opening remark on inaugural ceremony of his state visit to Israel on July 05, 2017. [Source: Ministry of External Affairs. (2017). Documents, Speeches & Statements, Press Statement by Prime Minister during his visit to Israel, July 05, 2017]

<sup>2</sup> Feiler, G. (2012). *India's Economic Relations with Israel and the Arabs*. Bar-Ilan University. Ramat Gan: Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies.

<sup>3</sup> Kumaraswamy, P. R. (2017, June 23). Decentralization: The Key to Indo-Israeli Ties. *Perspectives Paper No. 506*, Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies.

<sup>4</sup> Ryabinin, M., Ezuz, R., Nassar, A., & Daniel, Y. (2015). *Israel-India & Public Diplomacy*. Herzliya: IDC Herzliya.

its engagement with Iran and its rival Saudi Arabia. In simple terms, 'Dehyphenation' mean India's Israel policy and not India's policy towards the Israel-Palestine conflict or India's Israel/Palestine policy.

The scholarly enquiry into Narendra Modi's Israel policy can be divided into three broad categories. Firstly, there have been analytical enquiries into hardcore strategic interests between the two countries. In other words, the merit of strategic cooperation is vital to these researches. There is debate among scholars about the viability of India-Israel strategic cooperation. It is widely argued that New Delhi found it increasingly beneficial to learn from Israel's experience in dealing with terrorism, particularly in border management, low-intensity conflict, urban warfare and de-radicalisation, since Israel has also long suffered from cross-border terrorism.<sup>5</sup> The issue has often been addressed as a passing reference of those works looking at the diplomatic relations between two countries<sup>6</sup> or that have worked on India's general Defence or counter-terrorism policy.<sup>7</sup> Scholars have also argued that Indo-Israel relations cannot be called a 'friendship' based on the absence of strategic convergence on Nuclear issues<sup>8</sup>. On the macro level, India's military can learn from Israel's methods for homeland security. However, Israel's experience may not be relevant in terms of augmenting India's

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<sup>5</sup> i) Inbar, E. (2017). Israel and India: Looking Back and Ahead. *Strategic Analysis*, 41(4), 369-383. ii) Pant, H. V. (2016, November 26). *An India-Israel Entente*. Retrieved from The Diplomat: <https://thediplomat.com/2016/11/an-india-israel-entente/>

<sup>6</sup> Blarel, N. (2015). *The Evolution of India's Israel Policy: Continuity, Change and Compromise since 1922*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

<sup>7</sup> Pant, H. V., & Lidarev, I. (2018). Indian counterterrorism policy and the influence on the Global War on Terror. *India Review*, 17(2), 181-209.

<sup>8</sup> Saha, Aniruddha. 2019. "The India-Israeli Security Relationship: Nature, Scope." *Strategic Analysis* 1-12.

security environment when it comes to specific issues.<sup>9</sup> This relationship has limitations due to the absence of common friends and foes and a global outlook, limiting it from emerging as a 'strategic partnership'.<sup>10</sup>

Secondly, the merit and argument for acclaimed Change in India's Israel policy have been examined. With the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) 's rise to Power in India, the intensity of Arab pressures is less significant in Indian policy-making.<sup>11</sup> It is also argued that New Delhi, instead of dropping the Palestinian question, adopted a more delicate balance<sup>12</sup> vis a vis its policy towards the complicated issue.<sup>13</sup> Although New Delhi declared a policy of dehyphenation between Israel and Palestine, it has claimed to be a significant challenge for New Delhi's West Asia policy to balance the two.<sup>14</sup> Narendra Modi's renewed enthusiasm for foreign policy in general, and in Middle Eastern relations, in particular, has been argued to improve its ties with Israel without tampering with any existing bonds with the critical countries of the Persian Gulf.<sup>15</sup> Modi's populist stand on a robust relationship with Israel has not affected India's age-old relations with

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<sup>9</sup> Kaura, V. (2017, June). Comparative Assessment of Indian and Israeli Military Strategy in Counter Terrorism. *Cyber, Intelligence, and Security*, 1(2), 107-124.

<sup>10</sup> Saha, Aniruddha. 2019. "The India-Israeli Security Relationship: Nature, Scope." *Strategic Analysis* 1-12.

<sup>11</sup> Inbar, E. (2015, August 6). Improving Ties between India and Israel. *BESA Center Perspectives Paper No. 304*. Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies.

<sup>12</sup> Sengupta, R. (2010). *India walks a tightrope in its relations with Israel, Arab nations*. Doha: Al Jazeera Centre for Studies.

<sup>13</sup> Rajiv, S. S. (2012, January). The Delicate Balance: Israel and India's Foreign Policy Practice. *Strategic Analysis*, 36(1), 128-144.

<sup>14</sup> Joshi, S. (2015). India and the Middle East. *Asian Affairs*, 46(2), 251-269.

<sup>15</sup> Ganguly, S. (2017). Has Modi Truly Changed India's Foreign Policy? *The Washington Quarterly*; 40:2,, 131-143.

the Muslim states.<sup>16</sup> India is capable, under Modi, having the room to engage key regional players.<sup>17</sup> The argument of deviating from commitment to the Palestinian state is a political debate rather than an academic one. India also began to approach Palestinian suicide bombings as an act of Terrorism against Israel, something that used to be justified earlier.<sup>18</sup> This shift results from multiple domestic and international factors like deep and burgeoning defence ties between New Delhi and Jerusalem and India's rising global stature and consistent, pragmatic foreign policies.<sup>19</sup>

Thirdly, the argument of the 'Israelisation' of the Indian state has grabbed significant space in academia and media. The argument of ideological convergence and affinity towards Zionism for the ruling BJP is the key rationale behind it. In criticising BJP's domestic policies, allegedly towards forming a *Hindu Rastra*, scholars have drawn an analogy between India and Israel. The main argument is that Modi's India idealises Israel as a *de facto* ethnic democracy.<sup>20</sup>

The key research problem of this paper is to evaluate the viability of Israeli cooperation in India's counter-terrorism strategy and how the India-Israel relationship reached the

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<sup>16</sup> Mohan, C. R. (2019). Foreign Policy under Modi : Between Aspiration and Achievement. In A. P. Chatterji, T. B. Hansen, & C. Jaffrelot, *Majoritarian State : How Hindu Nationalism is Changing India* (pp. 299-316). New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

<sup>17</sup> Pant, Harsh A. (February 2018). 'A new reality confronts India in the Middle East', *The Diplomat*, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/02/a-new-reality-confronts-india-in-the-middle-east/>, accessed on March 21, 2019

<sup>18</sup> Pant, H. V. (2016, November 26). *An India-Israel Entente*. Retrieved from The Diplomat: <https://thediplomat.com/2016/11/an-india-israel-entente/>

<sup>19</sup> Inbar, E. (2017). Israel and India: Looking Back and Ahead. *Strategic Analysis*, 41(4), 369-383.

<sup>20</sup> Jaffrelot, C. (2019). A De Facto Ethnic Democracy? Obliterating and Targeting the on Other, Hindu Vigilantes, and the Ethno-State. In A. P. Chatterji, T. B. Hansen, & C. Jaffrelot, *Majoritarian State : How Hindu Nationalism is Changing India* (pp. 41-69). New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

level of strategic collaboration along with keeping a balance with its other regional interests. In doing so, the basic assumption of this paper is to consider that no state can share absolute ideological and strategic convergence with the other.

*Psycho-Political Orientation of Narendra Modi:*

The time when Mr Narendra Modi took over as the Prime Minister of India, globally the era was of strong nationalist leaders. Mr Putin in Russia, Mr Trump in the USA, Mr Sinoza Abe in Japan, Mr Erdogan in Turkey, Mr Benjamin Netanyahu in Israel and Mr Narendra Modi in India. All of them represented alfa-male leaders.<sup>21</sup> Narendra Modi started his political career as an RSS *pracharak*; and took charge of the Bharatiya Janata Party's organisation in different states of North India. He was a man of organisation and had no experience in foreign policy.

Mr Modi's affinity to Israel as the Chief Minister of Gujarat, his party (BJP) 's an ideological commitment to the cause of Israel and the party's overwhelming majority in Lok Sabha made India's strategic partnership possible with Israel to the level of joint cooperation in Counter Terrorism. After the first Surgical Strike against Pakistan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasised and praised the Israeli way of tackling the problem of terrorism in a public rally in Mandi, Himachal Pradesh after the Surgical Strike in the Pak Occupied Kashmir (PoK). He said, 'everyone is praising the Indian Army's prowess and valour these days. We used to hear similar appreciation for the bravery of the Israeli Army. Our Army is now as good as the vaunted IDF.'<sup>22</sup> This unequivocal public praise of the IDF and acknowledgement of the commonality in approaching the

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<sup>21</sup> Karnad, B. (2018). *Staggering Forward : Narendra Modi and India's Global Ambition*. New Delhi: Penguin Books.

<sup>22</sup> Hindustan Times, 'Modi praises Indian army for surgical strikes, compares it to Israel', October 28, 2016.

problem of terrorism by the Prime Minister of India marks Hindu Nationalist BJP's ideological convergence with Israel.

It also underlines a paradigm shift in India's popular psyche and its rising support for the Israeli way while dealing with terrorism. Starting from the arms trade and counter-terrorism, the two countries are now partners in Development and Innovation. Arms supply and technology transfer have also become important components in the bilateral relationship. As result of the successful overtures of its military industries, Israel has become the third-largest arms supplier to India but remained a taboo to the mind space of the Indian civil society. But, neither the diplomatic normalisation nor the military cooperation between two countries paved the way for mass acceptance of the Jewish nation by the people of India across the religious and political divides.

#### *Domestic Political Situation*

According to the Global Terrorism Index 2018, India ranks seventh in the world on terrorism impact, just after Somalia and before Yemen and Egypt.<sup>23</sup> Since the year 2001, the number of casualties in India has been 8123. There is an increase of 16 per cent in several attacks between 2015 and 2016, continuing the four-year trend of increasing attacks. India faced almost all forms of terrorist attacks: the assassination of two of its Prime Ministers, attacks on places of worship, suicide attacks, kidnapping hostages for meeting political demands, hijacking and blowing up of aircraft, sabotaging railway tracks, attacks on security forces and financial hubs, all of which aimed at resulting in communal riots followed by extreme violence. India has been a victim of terrorism for decades before the West encountered its deadly reality on

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<sup>23</sup> Institute for Economics and Peace. (2018). *Global Terrorism Index 2017 : Measuring the Impact of Terrorism*. National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses, USA.

September 11, 2001.<sup>24</sup> Unfortunately, the global community, before 9/11, approached this phenomenon, particularly in the Indian case, as a law and order problem essentially connected to territorial disputes in Kashmir.

The nature of terrorism in India is that the groups involved are united by intent and divided by the varieties of political ideology. These secessionists aim to deconstruct India's integrity with heavy loss of private property and life. India's security is vulnerable to an increasingly complicated and unpredictable interplay of regional and global factors.<sup>25</sup> India has reiterated, at several bilateral and multilateral fora, to resolve and combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.<sup>26</sup> The range of challenges to internal security in India emanating from terrorism can be categorised into four broad theatres, namely (a) Terrorism in the hinterland, (b) Cross border terrorism in Jammu & Kashmir (J&K), (c) Insurgency in North East and (d) Left Wing Extremism (LWE) in certain states.<sup>27</sup> The country faces a series of low-intensity conflicts characterised by religious, tribal, ethnic and left-wing movements and ideologies, as also the proxy war conducted by Pakistan and various Radical Jihadi outfits through terrorism. India is also affected by the trafficking of drugs and the proliferation of small arms.<sup>28</sup> The menace of terrorism in the state of Jammu and Kashmir has its roots in Pakistan and is supported financially and materially by the government and institutions of that country.<sup>29</sup> The menace of terrorism does not comprise only conducting, executing or felicitating

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<sup>24</sup> Ministry of Defence, Govt of India. (2003). *Annual Report 2002-03*. Govt of India. p. 9.

<sup>25</sup> Ministry of Defence, Govt of India. (2019). *Annual Defence Report 2018-19*. Govt. of India.

<sup>26</sup> Ministry of Defence, Govt of India. (2019). *Annual Defence Report 2018-19*. Govt. of India, p.2

<sup>27</sup> Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt of India. (2019). *Annual Report 2018-19*. Govt. of India. p.6

<sup>28</sup> Ministry of Defence, Govt of India. (2003). *Annual Report 2002-03*. Govt of India. p. 2

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p. 9

violent actions or bombings. It also includes spreading and advocating terror literature, radicalising youth and terror funding which has its connections with religious extremism, organised crime and money laundering. Contrary to the classical understanding of terrorism, which stems from non-state actors and a product of political unrest, lack of democracy and mass poverty, India's experience has been very different in this phase. India repeatedly claimed that it is vulnerable to major terrorist threats from the State (or the deep state) of Pakistan and the terror outfits which are nurtured, trained and supported as part of their state policy and strategic utility for being a low cost and long-term warfare. New Delhi considers WMD terrorism a potent threat as long as terrorists seek access to relevant materials and technologies for malicious purposes, which has a possibility for hostile radical fundamentalist elements gaining access, in Pakistan.<sup>30</sup> Given its important commerce and trade linkage, India also perceives the threat of Radicalisation of Indian youth, especially the Muslims, by the ideology of Islamism or Wahhabism from the Middle East, which New Delhi conceptualises as West Asia.<sup>31</sup>

The way Govt. of India banned terror organisations, it is clear that it considers India has been afflicted by a) Islamist-Jihadists active in the State of Jammu and Kashmir and the hinterland, b) Khalistani Militancy, c) Tamil Militancy, d) Leftist Extremism and e) Multiple Ethnic Insurgent Groups in the North-Eastern part of the country.<sup>32</sup> In

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<sup>30</sup> Ministry of Defence, Govt of India. (2003). *Annual Report 2002-03*. Govt of India, p. 2

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p. 5

<sup>32</sup> National Investigation Agency, Govt. of India. (2019, 12 30). <https://www.nia.gov.in/banned-terrorist-organisations.htm>. Retrieved from <https://www.nia.gov.in/index.htm>: <https://www.nia.gov.in/banned-terrorist-organisations.htm>, accessed on February 26, 2020

the past and still perceives its vulnerability. A short analysis of the militancy in the concerned region is as follows for a better insight of India's security environment:

*a) Islamist-Jihadists active in the State of Jammu and Kashmir and the hinterland along with the role of the state of Pakistan:*

There has been a reasonable check on Terrorist attacks on civilians in the hinterland (outside the Jammu and Kashmir), since July 2015's attack in a bus stand at Gurdaspur, Punjab by a group of Terrorists of Lashkar-e-Taiyba, causing ten casualties, including four Policemen. The attack on Pathankot Airbase, Punjab in 2016 was not civilian. So far as Islamist-Jihadist cases in the 'hinterland' are concerned, the overall situation is under control. No major terror attack took place outside Jammu and Kashmir since 2017.<sup>33</sup> State-sponsored terrorism by Pakistan in J&K remains the foremost internal security challenge faced by the country. Since its establishment, Islamist groups have been supported and sponsored by Pakistan state machinery at different times to influence domestic politics and shore up Pakistani national identity which is often threatened by sub-national ethnic challenges<sup>34</sup>. The nexus of Military and Islamists in Pakistan strengthened the position of each other. Islamists have been allies in the Pakistan military's effort to seek "strategic depth in Afghanistan--a euphemism for Pakistan's effort to make Afghanistan a 'client state' and to put pressure on India for negotiations over the future of Kashmir<sup>35</sup>. Pakistan's state institutions, notably, national security institution such as the military and the intelligence service plays a leading role in building Pakistani national identity based on religion since its emergence. This

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<sup>33</sup> Ministry of Defence, Govt of India. (2003). *Annual Report 2002-03*. Govt of India, p.7

<sup>34</sup> Haqqani, H. (2005). *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military*. Washington: The Brookings Institution Press.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid

political commitment to an ideological state gradually evolved into a strategic commitment to the jihadi ideology, especially during and after the Bangladesh war of 1971.<sup>36</sup>

The dawn of December 26, 2018, reaffirmed the presence of ISIS in India when the National Investigation Agency (NIA) conducted search operations in 17 locations and arrested 10 in connection to the module of the Islamic State. The agency recovered 25 kg explosives, arms and ammunition, rocket launcher and 112 alarm clocks and that led to a conclusion that the ISIS outfit Harkat-Ul-Harb-E-Islami was in 'an advanced stage of carrying out a series of blasts' across the country, particularly targeting 'vital installation and important personalities including politicians. This group of 10 men were in touch with a foreign operative (Singh, 2018). The agency also arrested two ISIS sympathisers in August 2018. In October 2016, the NIA arrested Subahani Haja Moideen, an Indian youth born and brought up in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu, who was radicalised and recruited to ISIS by recruiters active over online social media platforms. He underwent a detailed course in Shariya followed by combat training in Mosul, Iraq. On completion of combat training, including training in the automated weapons, he was sent to the war zone in Mosul for security duties in ISIS-held territory.<sup>37</sup> There have been plenty of other incidents which prove the presence of ISIS in India. In the last five years, there has been a rise in the symbolic presence of the notorious organisation in Jammu and Kashmir. The movement in Kashmir, which once upon a time claimed to be the fight for 'Azadi', i.e. freedom, has now transformed into

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<sup>36</sup> Haqqani, H. (2005). *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military*. Washington: The Brookings Institution Press.

<sup>37</sup> Tripathi, R. (2016, October 24). <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-nation>. Retrieved from <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com>: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/islamic-state-suspect-subahani-haja-moideen-claims-stay-in-mosul/articleshow/55038442.cms>

the Global Jihad for the Caliphate. In this transformation from Azadi to Jihad of the Kashmir movement, Pakistan has been instrumental and ISIS, of late, played the role of the ideological mentor. It will not be very wise to trace the physical connection of all self-acclaimed ISIS sympathisers with their counterpart in Iraq or Syria. In many of the cases in India, even if the youth are not formally recruited into ISIS; many of them are ideationally indoctrinated towards the idea of Jihad and Global Caliphate through social media or other networks.<sup>38</sup> Thus, ISIS is also a state of mind, gaining its justification from Radical Islam.

*b) Left-Wing Extremism (LWE):*

LWE caused more than half of all casualties caused by Terrorism in India. Security personnel, private individuals and property are predominantly targeted, with subsequent attacks accounting for over half of all attacks and 88 per cent of deaths between 2005 to 2017. The total number of casualties of civilians and Security forces is 4950.<sup>39</sup> This indigenous movement's progress has effectively declined due to both the effectiveness of the State agencies and the problems among the Maoists, like ideological differences, the splintering of the main party, leadership crisis and inadequate recruitment of new cadres. Thwarting the leftist insurgency is one of the major successes of the Manmohan Singh Government.

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<sup>38</sup> Cohen, K., & Kaati, L. (2018). *Digital Jihad : Propaganda from the Islamic State*. FOI, Swedish Defence Research Agency.

<sup>39</sup> Institute for Economics and Peace. (2018). *Global Terrorism Index 2017 : Measuring the Impact of Terrorism*. National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses, USA.

c) *Ethnic Insurgency in the North East:*

The North-East part of the country, comprising of eight states and eight per cent of the total area of the country, is strategically important for International border sharing with China, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Myanmar. North-East is connected with the 'mainland' through tiny Siliguri Corridor with a width of 21 to 40 km. It comprises of eight states, seven out of which have been inflicted with insurgencies and terrorism in different times in the last five to six decades.<sup>40</sup> North-Eastern states have substantial variety in ethnicity, language, terrain, social systems, customs and traditions which makes it a complex mosaic of diversity. Broadly, violence, terrorism and insurgencies are a result of inter-ethnic rivalries, the fight for identity, poor governance, the displacement of people, a sense of alienation and marginalisation, struggles over natural resources and a fear of demographic inversion due to illegal migrations, both from within and outside India.<sup>41</sup> The Naga insurgency - the mother of all insurgencies - that commenced in 1956 is one of the oldest unresolved insurgencies in the world. Along with this, Mizo and Manipuri insurgencies are also a matter of grave concern for policymakers in New Delhi.<sup>42</sup> Since the creation of Bangladesh in 1971, a first check was on the situation was possible. Earlier, Pakistan's ISI was operative in this area through its occupation of 'East Pakistan'.

The overall security situation in the North-Eastern States has improved substantially since 2013. The year 2018 witnessed the lowest number of insurgency incidents and

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<sup>40</sup> Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, Govt. of India. (2020). *North Eastern Region Vision 2020*. Govt of India.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Thapliyal, M. G. [http://www.indiandefencereview.com/idr\\_category/homeland-security/](http://www.indiandefencereview.com/idr_category/homeland-security/). Retrieved from Indian Defence Review: <http://www.indiandefencereview.com/news/insurgency-in-the-northeast-is-there-light-at-the-end-of-the-tunnel/>, accessed on february 27, 2020

civilian deaths since 1997. Compared to 2017, insurgency incidents registered a decline of 18% in the year 2018. Similarly, there was a 25% reduction in many civilians and security forces personnel deaths in 2018.<sup>43</sup> In the first three months of 2019, the security situation has further improved in the region with the decline in insurgency incidents, civilian casualties, security forces casualties and kidnapping/abduction cases. Compared to the peak of insurgency in the region in the last two decades since 1997, there has been a phenomenal improvement in the security situation in the region. While there is almost no insurgency left in Tripura and Mizoram, there has been a marked improvement in the security situation in other States of the region. Under the policy of talks/negotiations, various insurgent outfits have entered into Suspension of Operation Agreements and some of them have signed Memorandum of Settlements (MoS) and dissolved themselves. As a result, many cadres of insurgent outfits have surrendered after laying down arms and joined the mainstream of society. Sustained counter-insurgency operations are continuing against the insurgent.<sup>44</sup>

*Global Political Situation:*

Since the beginning of the Arab Spring in Dec'2010, India successfully maintained a delicate balance in her approach and refrained from issuing any statements on the instability. The region is also divided into sectarian lines. The Sunni regime led by Saudi Arabia are in loggerhead with Iran as the leader of the Shia world. Qatar, Egypt and Yemen are also the battlegrounds of the ongoing shadow war between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Big Powers like US, Russia and China are also extending their rivalry in these battlefields. The US allied with the Sunni Lobby which is led by Saudis, and confronted

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<sup>43</sup> Ministry of Defence, Govt of India. (2019). *Annual Defence Report 2018-19*. Govt. of India, p.8

<sup>44</sup> Ministry of Defence, Govt of India. (2019). *Annual Defence Report 2018-19*. Govt. of India, p.8

Iran, which is a common enemy of them. Israel as a strategic partner of the US and arch-rival of Iran is towards a diplomatic normalisation with the Sunni world. Russia, on the other hand, is more closed to the Shia countries led by Iran. India, on this context, did not side with any particular group of the states. It maintains a 'strategic partnership' with both Saudis and Iran. It strictly maintains the policy of dealing with the existing establishments for pursuing National Interest and refrains from any role to resolve the conflict whatsoever. The key concern of India's policy was evacuation of Indians from conflict zones.

### **Policy of Dehyphenation**

While UPA maintained an excellent balance of robust strategic cooperation with Israel checked by verbal diplomatic rhetorical opposition against the Jewish nation, India, under the Prime Ministership of Narendra Modi, separated this two along with a tone down against Israel's way of dealing with terrorism. Nevertheless, India maintained rhetorical support for the Palestinian cause and voted against Israel in the UN.

### *Rewriting Historical Connections:*

The victor writes the History. In the Indian case, the Congress Party emerged as the central or mainstream voice in India's freedom struggle against British Colonialism, but it was not the only force. After the Independence of India in 1947, the party projected itself as the only 'legitimate heir' of the anti-colonial struggle. While articulating the 'History of Independence Movement' in post-independence India, under the aegis of the Congress Govt., the 'other' voices against the Raj were discredited. The Congress party established its 'hegemony' for the next thirty years, and even after its hegemony was challenged, it managed to retain state power until 1996 with few interruptions. In the era of its hegemony, the Congress had set the 'norms' of the socio-cultural-political life

for the Indian society. These 'norms' remained the guiding principles of public life for decades. The History of India, including the History concerning the India-Israel relationship, was viewed through the lens of the Congress party. It is often argued that the legacy of the Congress compelled the party to retain an anti-Israeli stand, as it had put the question of Israel into a larger moral framework whether the partition of land based on religious differences is moral. Congress, being a critic of the British plan to the Partition of India, could not ideally support the Balfour Declaration.

Interestingly, the Indian population was broadly divided on this issue.<sup>45</sup> The icons of the Congress also had deep sympathy for the Jews. While BR Ambedkar, Sarojini Niadu, JB Kripalani championed the Zionist cause publicly (See, Chapter 1) Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru refrained from any 'public' endorsement of the Jewish state, but that does not mean their outright rejection of the Jewish cause. The voice of sympathy, support and respect for the Jewish State of Israel by the Hindu Nationalists went inaudible under the loud orchestra of the Congress leaders before and after the independence of India. A similarity can be found in the trajectory of Nationalism both imagined in each other's land. There is a parallel between the two Nations.

Indian freedom struggle represented different approaches to nation-building. Among them, Hindu Nationalism considered that the territory of India, by virtue of being the 'holy land' (*punya bhū*) and ancestral land (*pitri bhū*) belongs to the Hindu nation. The notion of the identity-based territorial state by Hindu Nationalism resembles Zionism. In other words, both the Zionists and Hindu Nationalists approached the trajectory of Nationalism in a similar vein. On the other hand, the Congress and leftist intellectuals

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<sup>45</sup> File No. 46(15)-AWT/48- Vol I, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *Question of the recognition of the State of Israel*. Kolkata: Ministry of External Affairs.

of India propagated that the western form of Nationalism is jingoist. Thus they refrained from claiming an 'identity-based state', instead, they were more interested in forming a 'plural identity' based on the heterogeneity of India. The Congress party, which represented the so-called 'secular' forces in the independence struggle, perceived that a collective people gained identity from the land and not from antiquity or religion. Thus, the establishment of the territorial state should not be based on the primordial identity of the people. The trajectory of Nationalism as perceived by the Congress was in juxtaposition to that of Hindu Nationalism or Zionism. These conflicting perceptions about the trajectory of Nationalism broadened the gap between newly independent countries that led to the discontinuation of civilisational connections between the two societies since the first days of recorded history.

The history of Congress antagonism does not give comfort to present leadership in both the countries and, of course, an irritant towards a bonhomie. The myopic history of India-Israel relations, as depicted by Congress is an obstacle for Hindu Nationalist Bhartiya Janata Party's (BJP) renewed enthusiasm towards the Jewish state. An alternative to mainstream History is important to bridge the historical gaps between two old civilisations in order to overpower the History of hostility. Arriving in India on January 14, 2018, Prime Minister of Israel, Mr Benjamin Netanyahu's first stop was Teen Murti Marg in New Delhi to rename the road as Teen Murti-Haifa Marg. The three stone and bronze statues in the square represent the Hyderabad, Jodhpur and Mysore Lancers, who were part of the 15 Imperial Service Cavalry Brigade who fought for the liberation of Haifa from Ottoman soldiers in September 1918.<sup>46</sup> It officially

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<sup>46</sup> Israel, MFA, Press Room, PM Netanyahu and Indian PM Modi attend ceremony to rename square in New Delhi in honor of Haifa, January 14, 2018. Retrieved January 15, 2018, from <http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/PressRoom/2018/Pages/PM-Netanyahu-and-Indian-PM-Modi-attend-ceremony-to-rename-New-Delhi-Square-in-Honor-of-Haifa>, accessed on May 11, 2019

acknowledges India's pride in British Indian Army's victory in First World War in liberating Haifa. Interestingly, The Congress sided with the British in both the World Wars and acknowledged the sacrifice by the Indians serving in the British Royal Army as a service to the country. Surprisingly, the party never celebrated the supreme sacrifice by the Indian soldiers for the Jewish cause. According to the Ministry of Culture of India, a 'wrong impression' was built about the Teen Murti Chowk that it has something to do with Mahatma Gandhi.<sup>47</sup> The Teen Murti Chowk was named to mark the role of the three cavalry regiments, but no one knows this today. Prime Minister of India, Mr Narendra Modi, wrote in the visitor's book, 'One of these pages was written 100 years ago, in the sacrifice of Indian soldiers at Haifa. The sacrifice commemorated at Teen Murti observes its centenary. Naming this spot Teen Murti-Haifa Chowk marks this historic occasion. In the presence of the Prime Minister of Israel, we pay homage to the brave soldiers.'<sup>48</sup>

India, since its independence, preferred a history, which portrayed itself as the messiah of the Palestinian cause. At that time, it was a zero-sum game for India and it chose the Palestinians and dumped Israel. It viewed Israel through the Islamic prism for domestic and international compulsions. Now, as India de-hyphenated Israel and Palestine, it attempts to reinvent the historical ties with Israel. The present Government is not re-reading History to claim Gandhi's support for the Jewish cause or Nehru's sympathy for the Jews, rather it decided to rewrite History in favour of this relationship which is part

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<sup>47</sup> Hindustan Times, 'Teen Murti Chowk renamed after Israeli city Haifa as Netanyahu visits', January 15, 2018.

<sup>48</sup> Hindustan Times, 'Teen Murti Chowk renamed after Israeli city Haifa as Netanyahu visits', January 15, 2018.

of BJP's wider agenda of rewriting the History of the nation by deconstructing the 'givens' of Congress and the leftists.

*Bilateral Visit by Head of the States:*

A Six-day visit by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to India from January 14 to January 19, 2018, marked a new height in the renewed enthusiasm in the relations between two old civilisations. It was a reciprocal visit to Prime Minister of India, Mr Narendra Modi's visit to Israel in July 2017 to celebrate the Silver Jubilee year of the 'Diplomatic Normalisation' between India and Israel. However, Prime Minister Netanyahu's visit took place not only in the backdrop of this enthusiasm. Just a month after his visit, India had cancelled the \$500 Million Arms deal with Israel and voted against the Jewish state in the UNGA on the Jerusalem question. A major drawback of the India-Israel partnership has been its confinement to first-track diplomacy and secret defence deals. The Israeli Prime Minister, through five public addresses, three media interviews and one road show attempted to break this stereotype by addressing the civil society of India, to convince that they can be the beneficiary of Israel's innovation and technological advancement. The attempt was to project Israel as a potential messiah to the people for the problems concerning their daily life, so that an individual can relate him/herself with the impact of Israel's development and technological advancement. Prime Minister Netanyahu projected the success story of the start-up nation to overpower the anti-Israeli propaganda e.g. cultural boycott etc. Israel should not be viewed through the Islamic prism. Thus, it was important for the Israeli PM to re-contextualise the relevance of Israel to people of India, beyond the Palestine Question. Prime Minister Netanyahu's six-day visit was an attempt to counter this image of his country. It was not simply to sign MoUs and declare joint statements that he had

completed within two days. A major concern was to cover the front pages of Indian newspapers and make Israel a centre of prime debates in Indian electronic media. His strategy was to present his country to the masses and making room for the Jewish nation in the mind space of the Indian middle class. He attempted to deconstruct the theory of 'Conflicting Nationalisms' that used to be a major argument by the critics of the bonhomie between two countries. There have been significant efforts to directly connect Indian agrarian classes to the Israeli innovation. His attempt to connect India and Israel from a cultural perspective through Bollywood seems to be a path-breaking move. The paper attempts to analyse and evaluate the strategy and impact of Prime Minister Netanyahu's visit, particularly to influence the Indian mind space.

*Strategic Cooperation: From Defence Trade to Counter Terrorism*

The people of India started drawing similarity between the structural reality of India and that of Israel with rise of Terrorism in India. Both having similar threat perception of operating within a regional structure where the threat to existence is largely from the within by state or non-state actors, both are involved in protracted conflicts characterised by complex ethnic and religious components not always well understood by outsiders. Both regard Radical Islam as a common threat to existence. India considers N-capable Pakistani arsenal might ultimately fall into the hands of Islamic radicals, while Israel assumes the mix of Islamic zeal in Iran with nuclear ambitions as an existential threat.<sup>49</sup> Although, the experts in India were still reluctant to acknowledge any such similarity. Mr. Shivshankar Menon, the former National Security Advisor of India (2011-2014), argued that considering the Israeli model or the overt military action

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<sup>49</sup> Inbar, E. (2018, January 15). Netanyahu in India. *JISS Policy Papers*.

is not suitable for India. 'The 'Israeli model' is limited in aim and effect. Overt military force is only one weapon, and not the most decisive or even necessarily the most effective weapon, against cross-border terrorism and non-state actors such as those that India faces'.<sup>50</sup> Finally, Modi put an end to this argument in his official trip to Israel in June 2017 by acknowledging,

*"India and Israel live in complex geographies. We are aware of strategic threats to regional peace and stability. India has suffered firsthand violence and hatred spread by terror. So has Israel. Prime Minister Netanyahu and I agreed to do much more together to protect our strategic interests and also cooperate to combat growing radicalisation and terrorism, including in cyber space."*<sup>51</sup>

Israel enjoys huge respect to a large section of Indian masses primarily because the way it deals with security issues and publicly acknowledges that. In his visit, the Israeli Prime Minister, along with his Indian counterpart, recognised the common threat of terrorism to peace and security including from non-state actors. Both the leaders reiterated that there can be no justification for acts of terror on any grounds whatsoever and advocated strong measures against terrorists, terror organisations, those who sponsor, encourage or finance terrorism or provide sanctuary to terrorists and terror groups.<sup>52</sup> The Prime Minister of Israel reiterated the importance of building comprehensive cooperation in counter-terrorism and homeland security. There have been a renewed mutual understanding about how to deal with the terrorists as both the

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<sup>50</sup> Menon, S. (2016). *Choices : Inside the making of India's Foreign Policy*. Washington: The Brookings Institution.

<sup>51</sup> Ministry of External Affairs. (2017). Documents, Speeches & Statements, Press Statement by Prime Minister during his visit to Israel, July 05, 2017

<sup>52</sup> India, MEA. (2018). Joint Statement between the Republic of India and the State of Israel, January 15, 2018. Retrieved January, 15, 2018, from <http://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/29357>

countries have numerous treaties on Counter-Terrorism. The popularity of Israel is evident in increase in number Indian movies idealising the Jewish nation. With the emergence of terrorism as the biggest threat to the Indian life, Bollywood focused on the issue and a large array of the movies projected the Israeli way as the right way and the only way to defend the nation.<sup>53</sup>

However, it is clear now that contemporary India's counter-terrorism policy is far from such a lofty stand. In a public rally in Greater Noida on March 9, 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi reaffirmed the policy of his govt. to respond to terrorists and their sympathisers 'in the language they understand'<sup>54</sup>. India's back to back surgical strikes in the Pak Occupied Kashmir and in Pakistan in the aftermath of Uri massacre (2017) and Pulwama attack (2019), proves an affinity and convergence in India and Israel's techniques in dealing terrorism. In the 1970's, India repeatedly claimed for withdrawal of IDF from the west bank and Jerusalem. Whereas Israel considered Yasser Arafat as a terrorist, India celebrated him as a hero and a freedom fighter. While opposing Israel in all multinational fora, New Delhi began strategic cooperation in the same period, without formally normalising the relations.

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<sup>53</sup> In 2003, a movie named 'Zameen' replicated the famous 'Operation Thunderbolt'. In recent times, movies like 'Baby' and 'Phantom', both in 2015, reiterated the Israeli counter terrorism strategy as the solution for India's problem. Phantom, for example, replicated the operations, which Mossad undertook in the aftermath of Munich Massacre. 'Phantom' was contextualised on Mumbai Massacre. Israel is also mentioned in a very positive sense in a movie called 'Kaun kitne Paani mein' which projected Israel as a messiah in Agro-Tech.

<sup>54</sup> The Economic Times. (2019, March 9). *India now follows new policy of dealing with terrorists: PM Modi*. Retrieved from Economic Times, Official Website: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/india-now-follows-new-policy-of-dealing-with-terrorists-pm-modi/articleshow/68333009.cms>, accessed on February 28, 2020.

Since 2017, IAF's Garud-commando unit regularised training with elite Israeli Air force units, as a part of 'Blue flag drill' initiative of Israeli military for global cooperation.<sup>55</sup> Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team that combated the Gurdaspur terror attack in 2015, was an Israeli trained special combat unit.<sup>56</sup> Israel, being a leader in providing high-technology virtual fencing, advanced thermal imagers, radars, electro-optical-based thermal sensors, autonomous and unmanned aerial, ground and maritime patrol vehicles, is crucial for India's border security to defend cross-border terrorism. Israel has successfully deployed various systems like unmanned fortified towers consisting of remotely controlled machine gun sensors and high definition surveillance video cameras, smartphones tagged with surveillance sensors. It is important to mention that India could learn from the Israeli experience of the use of UAVs and drones, especially at the Gaza border.<sup>57</sup> Towards the implementation of the primary phase of India's Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System Project (CIBMS), the Indian government confirmed the deployment of Israeli developed smart fencing system along its international border with Pakistan in August 2017<sup>58</sup>. The smart fencing monitors in the area with the security cameras and sensors are installed. The smart fencing is capable of detecting infiltration and immediately alarm security officials about it. In the last few years, India and Israel have deepened the level of cooperation in the area of

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<sup>55</sup> Ahronheim, A. (2017, November 10). *Indian special forces in Israel to train with the IDF's most elite units*. Retrieved from Jerusalem Post: <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/india-israel/indian-special-forces-in-israel-to-train-with-the-idfs-most-elite-units-513820>

<sup>56</sup> Vasdev, K. (2015, July 28). *Gurdaspur terror attack: 28 elite commandos trained by Israel team*. Retrieved from The Indian Express: <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/gurdaspur-terror-attack-28-elite-commandos-trained-by-israel-team/>, accessed June 10, 2016

<sup>57</sup> Arora, R. K., & Kumar, M. (2016). *Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System: Implementation Challenges*. New Delhi: Observer Research Foundation.

<sup>58</sup> Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. (2019, March 5). *Union Home Minister launches Smart Fencing on Indo-Bangladesh border, an effective deterrence against illegal infiltration*. Retrieved from Press Information Bureau, Government of India: <https://pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1567516>, accessed May 11, 2019

border management. India is procuring motion detectors and surveillance equipment to counter infiltration in problem areas like Kashmir. In the aftermath of the Uri attack, Israel quickly offered its new sophisticated technology for strengthening Indian border management system.<sup>59</sup>

Indian commandos and the cadres of Indian Police Service are regularly trained in Israel to learn Israeli techniques of counter-terrorism.<sup>60</sup> The Jewish martial art Krav Maga is popular these days among counterterror agencies in India.<sup>61</sup> Israel developed its practice of fighting terror in a wide variety of aspects that together comprise the comprehensive strategy of fighting terror: preventing and thwarting terror attempts, deterrence, reaction, and resilience. Prevention is based on Intelligence, Capability of Military Operations, Public Awareness, Legal Action and Deterrence.<sup>62</sup> India, with its adoption of comprehensive counterterror strategy against fourth-generation warfare, accepted Israeli lessons, techniques and technologies. New Delhi has lately but rightly prioritised 'politics of mortality' over 'politics of morality'.

India's Surgical Strike 2.0 in Balakot, Pakistan to target the Jaish-e-Mohammed training camps in the aftermath of a terrorist attack in Pulwama, Jammu and Kashmir causing casualties of 40 Jawans, reiterated Israel's importance in India's counter-terrorism strategy. The Israeli made SPICE-2000 and Phalcon AWACS systems played a crucial

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<sup>59</sup> Kumar, J. (2018). India-Israel Cooperation in Border Management. *Seema Sanghosh*.

<sup>60</sup> Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India. (2016). *Annual Report 2015-16*. p. 158

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Kuperwasser, B.-G. (. (2017). The National Security Aspect of Fighting Terror–The Israeli Experience. In F. Nirenstein, *Lessons From Israel's Response to Terrorism* (pp. 25-32). Jerusalem: Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs. p. 29

role in the Surgical Strike 2.0.<sup>63</sup> The affinity towards Israel reached a level in India that pushed Prime Minister Narendra Modi to emphasise and praised the Israeli way of tackling the problem of terrorism in a public rally in Mandi, Himachal Pradesh after the Surgical Strike in the Pak Occupied Kashmir (PoK). He said, 'everyone is praising Indian Army's prowess and valour these days. We used to hear similar appreciation for the bravery of the Israeli Army. Our Army is now as good as the vaunted IDF.' This unequivocal public praising and the analogy with IDF marks a conscious strategic shift in India's counterterror strategy. It also underlines the actualisation of a paradigm shift in India's popular psyche and its rising support for the Israeli way while dealing with terrorism, began particularly after 26/11.

By this time India started are of convergence and are of cooperation with Israel. Earlier, Indian policymakers are sensible to Israeli threat perceptions, and a major change took place in the thought process.<sup>64</sup> In the meetings of JWG on counter-terrorism, both parties agree to work together and exchange ideas to the level of sharing of technology, but that does not take place, particularly for US pressure.<sup>65</sup> The party in Power of course, has a role to play in this cooperation. The cooperation between Likud in Israel and BJP in India has contributed to these relations.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Pant, H. V., & Sahu, A. (2019). *Israel's Arms Sales to India: Bedrock of a Strategic Partnership*. New Delhi: Observer Research Foundation (ORF). Retrieved from <https://www.orfonline.org/research/israels-arms-sales-to-india-bedrock-of-a-strategic-partnership-55101/>, accessed January 23, 2020.

<sup>64</sup> Interview with Mr Moshe Ya'alon (Vice prime Minister of Israel, 2009-2013 and 2015-2016; Minister of Strategic Affairs, 2009-2013; Former Chief of IDF 2002-2005) in Tel Aviv, Israel on February 14, 2019.

<sup>65</sup> Interview with Ambassador Alan Baker (Member of JWG on counter terrorism 2015) in Jerusalem, Israel on February, 19, 2019

<sup>66</sup> Interview with Mr Daniel Carmon (Ambassador of Israel to India 2014-2018) in Peta Tikwa, Israel on February 25, 2019

*Rising Soft Power of Israel in India:*

Israel and its defence forces face staunch criticism for being an extra ordinary 'Hard Power' but that is the reason behind increasing popularity of the Jewish nation in India. Soft Power is the ability to attract, and attraction often leads to acquiescence. Simply put, in behavioural terms soft Power is attractive Power. In terms of resources, soft-power resources are the assets that produce such attraction.<sup>67</sup> The usual instruments of soft Power are ideology, civilisational or religious values, cinema, cuisine etc. While there is staunch opposition by Muslims and Left parties, Israel enjoys acquiescence from a large section of Indian masses, for a unique reason. Jews are the significant but very tiny population in India's heterogeneous demography. Neither Israeli music nor its cuisine is very popular to the masses of India. Still, the Jewish nation enjoys huge respect in India largely because of the way it defends itself. The saga of bravery by Mossad, Sayeret Matkal and other elite forces of the Israeli Defence Force, the zeal of its people against any hostility, earns huge respect for the nation in the land of Gandhi, largely after the repeated failure of age-old approach to conflict resolution. To a large extent, the people in contemporary India considers the Israeli way is the only way to deal with the menace of terrorism. In his inaugural speech in Raisina dialogue, Prime Minister Netanyahu narrated the 'success story of Israel'. The success of its defence forces, its economy and the success of its technology. He expressed that the lesson of the journey of Israel teaches, 'the weak do not survive, the strong survive. Peace is made with strong and Peace is maintained by being strong. The minimum strength is required

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<sup>67</sup> Nye, J. S. (2004). *Soft Power : The Means to Success in World Politics*. New York: Public Affairs.

for peace, survival, prosperity.' He further argued, 'Soft Power is good but Hard Power is often better'.<sup>68</sup>

The Prime Minister of Israel stressed the importance of Military Power for any country and especially for his country. In a nutshell, he reiterated the rationales of Realism. Israel, as a nation faced numerous attacks to their very existence and realised the inevitability of militaristic Defence. In the immediate post-Independence period, a similar approach was projected as hawkish and immoral in India, thus remained unacceptable to the people; even after fighting numerous full-scale wars and skirmishes with Pakistan and China.<sup>69</sup> The lack of a culture of strategic policy-making broadened the gap between reality and perception for New Delhi and that remained a hindrance for Israel to be accepted by the Indian masses. It was acknowledged by none other than the former Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru when, on the All India Radio, he announced the fall of a part of Assam during the China war in 1962, 'We were getting out of touch with reality in the modern world and we were living in an artificial atmosphere of our own creation'. It was Atal Bihari Vajpayee who was first to publicly advocated to combine the notion of Power and Peace and claimed that both are not essentially contradictory rather complementary to each other, at least in the Indian context. Even after constant support to India almost in every war, earlier the political leadership in India publicly considered Israel, at worst, as 'occupier' or at best, a country looking for Vigilante Justice that could not be applicable into India.

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<sup>68</sup> Israel, MFA, Press Room, PM Netanyahu addresses Raisina Dialogue, January 16, 2018. Retrieved January 17, 2018, from <http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/PressRoom/2018/Pages/PM-Netanyahu-addresses-Raisina-Dialogue-16-January-2018.aspx>, accessed February 2, 2018.

<sup>69</sup> India fought full-scale wars with Pakistan in 1947, 1965, in 1971 (Bangladesh Liberation War) and in 1999 (Kargil War). India-China war occurred in 1962.

*Partners in Development: From Irrigation to Innovation*

By the word 'Strategic', Indian Diplomatic establishment is usually oriented with the issues of nuclear proliferation, deterrence, geo-politics, and arms race etc. On contrary, Prime Minister Netanyahu illustrated Indo-Israel' strategic partnership' in the most positive sense of the term. Both the Prime Ministers vowed to 'raise bilateral cooperation in diverse sectors to a qualitatively new level in consonance with this Strategic Partnership'.<sup>70</sup> Israel's engagement in India reveals that even being a major arms supplier to the latter; the former is determined to take the relationship beyond arms trade. It has been speculated by both the critics and champions of India-Israel bonhomie that PM Netanyahu's India tour was aimed to ink billion dollars arms deals. Even if that had taken place, for obvious reasons it did not come out of the closet. The Joint Statement mentions defence cooperation much later to Agriculture, Water Management, Innovation and Start Ups, that too as a combined trade opportunity, and in connection to Terrorism and Cyber Security. Both the leaders considered it is important to set the direction for developing more business models and partnerships for the joint ventures and joint manufacturing, including the transfer of technology as well as joint research and development in defence and security fields. Defence Ministers of both the countries to continue discussions with the active involvement of the public and private sectors, in order to create the basis for viable, sustainable and long-term cooperation in the defence industry. The leaders reiterated that the cooperation should not remain restricted to defence collaboration; rather it should address more on the issues related to the daily life of an ordinary individuals in India.

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<sup>70</sup> India-Israel Joint Statement during visit of Prime Minister of Israel to India (January 15, 2018)

Much before India's 'diplomatic normalisation' with the Jewish state in 1992, both the countries initiated cooperation in agriculture. This longstanding area of cooperation has been focused as the corner stone of Israel's' relation with a country whose 60 percent population depends on agriculture, directly or indirectly. The two old civilisations are collaborating in Agro-tech, Water Management (Purification, Conservation and Recycling) Air Purification. With more than 160 million of hectares of arable land in India and close to 500 Israeli companies dedicated to agro technologies, collaboration between the two countries in agriculture is an important and obvious area of cooperation. PM Netanyahu inaugurated a three-year work programme in Agriculture (2018-2020) under the stewardship of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MASHAV) and the Ministry of Agriculture of India aimed at increasing farmers' productivity and optimisation of water use efficiency.<sup>71</sup> Both the leaders were apprised of the state of progress on the twenty-eight Centres of Excellence that has been jointly established in the different states of India where the Israeli experts train thousands of Indian farmers in ground breaking Israeli methods such as drip irrigation, Poly House etc. These methods are having a profound effect on India's agrarian sector, significantly improving crop diversity and crop production across the country and increasing farmers' income by three to four times. Seven more Centres of Excellence have become operational within the six months since the visit of the Prime Minister of India to Israel. PM Netanyahu underlined the necessity of technological advancement in farming and Precision Agriculture. 'Smart fields' are equally important so is 'smart cities'. The Israeli PM visited Centre of Excellence in Vadrad, Gujarat and inaugurated the Centre of Excellence in Bhuj, Gujarat, during this visit. Prime Minister Modi admitted that Israel has shown the way on how to transform a nation with the agriculture sector at the core.

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<sup>71</sup> India-Israel Joint Statement during visit of Prime Minister of Israel to India (January 15, 2018)

The contemporary agrarian sector in India is looking for viable and cost effective technology. In order to accomplish the target of doubling farmers' incomes by 2022, the agrarian sector looking towards Israel for advanced practices and technology of farming and irrigation.<sup>72</sup>

Prime Minister Netanyahu assured Indian farmers in the Centre for Excellence that his country is committed to serve humanity through sharing of scientific technology through their programme of MASHAV, which has its biggest initiative in India. He reaffirmed Israeli commitment to help India towards its self-reliance. Both the Prime Ministers agreed to explore ways to develop joint programmes of assistance for third countries in the areas of training, capacity building, and the Development of small projects in the agriculture, water, health-care and education sectors. The Prime Minister of Israel presented a desalination jeep to Prime Minister Modi to show how Israeli technology can be helpful for India in combatting Drinking water crisis in the interior region and at the time of emergency. The western states of India have similarity with Israel in climate and scarcity in water. Thus, Israeli agro-tech and water-tech is key to Development for those states.

India's experiments with both Socialist model of Development and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) for last seventy years, could not build up the country as a manufacturing hub. It resulted in the failure in poverty eradication programmes and unemployment of the youth. The pattern of Development, India focussing after Modi, relies heavily on Start-ups. Sixty-Five percent population of India are under the age of thirty-five years. The buzzword for Modi's Development is to create Job Creator, not

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<sup>72</sup> Government of India, Press Information Bureau (2018)' PM Modi, Israeli PM Netanyahu visit Centre of Excellence for Vegetables at Vadrad', January 17. Retrieved January 18, 2018, from <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/mbErel.aspx?relid=175695>, accessed May 4, 2019

to create Job seekers. Another flagship programme of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is the 'Make in India', which is committed to transforming India into a global manufacturing hub. In both the plans and programmes of Development by the Modi Govt., Israel has a great role to play. The Start-up nation has a huge opportunity in newly developing Start Up sector of India. This may lead to large Indo-Israeli partnerships at the entrepreneur level.

Prime Minister Netanyahu illustrated the importance for both the countries to be committed to transform itself into an 'Innovation Economy', thus collaborations in the area of innovation research are necessary. The Prime Minister came with a mammoth business delegation from his country and set the target of achieving the US \$20 billion bilateral trade turnover in the next five years. The Prime Ministers jointly hosted the second meeting of India-Israel CEO Forum, organised by Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and Manufacturers Association of Israel (MAI). The Forum is of the considered view that biggest opportunity between India and Israel is in the creation of an innovation economy, with both the countries taking big strides in the innovation and start-ups space. It should be natural for the two countries to align policies to nurture and support the innovation ecosystem to make success of the 'Innovation Bridge' launched in July 2017 and US \$50 million 'National Technology and Endowment Fund' announced.<sup>73</sup> PM Netanyahu encouraged for Israeli firms for entering into joint ventures with the Indian companies in the defence sector as well, under the 'Make in India' initiative. Building further upon the already existing mature collaboration in the sector where India has benefitted from Israeli technology in horticulture mechanisation, cultivation, micro irrigation and post-harvest management

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<sup>73</sup> FICCI, Press Release (2018), 'India-Israel CEOs Forum charts a roadmap for enhancing bilateral trade to US\$ 20 billion by 2022', <http://ficci.in/pressrelease-page.asp?nid=2988>, accessed on January 18,2018.

through several Israel Centre of Excellence in the different States of India, the country is all set to assimilate these technologies for long-term gains.

Prime Minister Netanyahu stressed on deepening cooperation in innovation, business and trade, higher education and research, science and technology, tourism and culture. The two leaders launched the maiden call for joint Research and Development projects under the 'India-Israel Industrial R&D and Technological Innovation Fund (i4F)', which was announced during Prime Minister Modi's visit to Israel in July' 2017. It is a 'welcome opportunity' to combine the talent pool of the two countries in pursuit of path-breaking technological solutions that can be commercially profitable. They strongly encouraged enterprises in both countries to utilise this platform. The Prime Minister of Israel ensured Indo-Israeli joint initiatives in science and technology exchanges through joint R&D projects such as in areas like 'Data Analytics'.<sup>74</sup> A joint initiative named 'iCreate', which has been developed, as an innovation hub for entrepreneurship and technology has been inaugurated. The primary goal of the centre is to create a large number of quality entrepreneurs. The goal of such attempts is to bridge the innovation and to find joint responses to global water, agriculture and health challenges. Two countries decided to create a \$40 million innovation fund to allow enterprises of two countries to develop innovative technologies and products with commercial application.<sup>75</sup> PM Netanyahu assured Indo-Israeli joint venture in Cyber Security and Space Security in years to come along with the transfer of technology. The global leader in Cyber Security will standby India, not only in Modi's flagship programme like

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<sup>74</sup> India-Israel Joint Statement during visit of Prime Minister of Israel to India (January 15, 2018)

<sup>75</sup> Israel, MFA, Press Room, 'Israel and India: 26 years of friendship, innovation, and Prosperity' <http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/PressRoom/2018/Pages/Israel-India-26-years-of-friendship-innovation-prosperity-14-Jan-2018.aspx>, accessed on January 18, 2018.

'Digital India' or Information Technology; but also Banking, Railway and in many other traditional service sectors which are rapidly technologising towards cent percent Information Technology based industry.

The best way to influence the mind space of Indians across class, caste, creed and religion, is through the Bollywood movies. PM Netanyahu tapped that button which has deep impact on Indian civil society. He addressed the who's who of Bollywood in Mumbai and invited the film industry to Israel to make films. He expressed that his government is looking forward to host the Indian film industry for greater partnership with Israel. He announced the allocation of fund of four million shekels for Indian film industries for making films in Israel. Presenting the 'Holy land' as a lucrative location for shooting films, the Prime Minister reiterated the country as the land of 'great ideas'. In October 2017 the Deputy Minister of Israeli PMO, Dr Michael Oren visited India to convince filmmakers to film in Israel. Bollywood, a major instrument of India's Soft Power, if makes films based in Israel that will help the later to counter the boycott against Israel by many international celebrities what they call 'war by other means'. Both the countries signed MoU to open an Indian Cultural Centre in Israel in 2018. Both sides have signed a MoU in Film Co-Production for promoting greater people-to-people contact.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> India, MEA. (2018) 'List of MoUs/Agreements signed during the visit of Prime Minister of Israel to India', [http://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/29356/List\\_of\\_MoUsAgreements\\_signed\\_during\\_the\\_visit\\_of\\_Prime\\_Minister\\_of\\_Israel\\_to\\_India](http://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/29356/List_of_MoUsAgreements_signed_during_the_visit_of_Prime_Minister_of_Israel_to_India), accessed on January 18, 2018.

## **CONCLUSION**

### Summary of the Research:

When Jews faced exodus in their 'promised land', they dispersed largely outside *Eretz Israel* and became further victims of torture, humiliation, outrage and exploitation, even in the epitome of modernity, in western Europe. India (along with ancient China) was the land where anti-semitism was an alien idea. Jews were not just treated with amity, were not merely 'tolerated', but were accepted and accommodated into wider Indian society with dignity, along with accepting their spiritual differences, cultural originality, and the autonomy of identity. Thousands of Jewish and Christian children of Polish nationality faced exodus during World War II, looking for refuge after fleeing Poland. As the ship reached Nawanagar, Jam Saheb welcomed the Children saying, "I am the father of all the people of Nawanagar, so also yours." The children of Polish origin gave him the sobriquet, 'Bapu'. India's tradition of sympathising with Jews for their persecution in undivided Palestine and western Europe could not pave the way for political bonhomie between India and Israel after their Independence.

With Gandhi's call for the Khilafat movement, an eventual opposition to Zionism was constructed. Gandhi denounced the idea of Partition on principle, both in India and Palestine. Mahatma primarily considered the Jewish question as a minority problem; consequently, he provided the exact solution to the Muslims in India—No separate electorate or a separate state but a political union. In the same spirit, Gandhi claimed in *Harijan* in 1938, "Palestine belongs to the Arabs in the same sense as England belongs to the English and France to the French. It is wrong and inhuman to impose the Jews on the Arabs."<sup>1</sup> Gandhi prescribed that the Jews and the Christians could freely go to

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<sup>1</sup> Gandhi, M. K. (November 26, 1938). The Jews. *Harijan*, pp. 239-242 (in Mahatma Gandhi Collected Works Vol. 74).

Palestine or even reside and own property there. Mahatma demanded, "What Non-Muslims cannot do is to acquire sovereign jurisdiction. The Jews cannot receive sovereign rights in a place which has been held for centuries by Muslim powers.

A meaningful change took place in Gandhi since his old comrades in South Africa, Hermann Kallenbach and Henry S. L. Polak, visited him in Sabarmati in 1936, as representatives of the World Zionist Organisation. He promised to study Zionist literature and refrained from any public statement against Zionism. Gandhi started to link the problem of the Jews with that of Harijan. The Jews and the Harijans were suffering from persecution, scorn and outrage. Both were victims of apartheid. Gandhi began to approach the Jews as the 'Untouchables of Christianity'.<sup>2</sup> This compassion gave birth to a new trend in Gandhi's approach to the conflict between Jews and Arabs over the 'Holy Land'. In June 1946, Gandhi reportedly expressed to American journalist Louis Fischer, "...the Jews have a good case in Palestine. If the Arabs have a claim in Palestine, the Jews have a prior claim."<sup>3</sup>

Unlike Gandhi, Nehru did not attempt to synthesise politics and religion; thus, he was not convinced by the principle of the khilafat movement. He supported Arabs' claim to Palestine for two reasons. Firstly, his struggle against British Imperialism and second, he chose Arabs over Jews in their struggle because he drew some commonality between India and Arabs in Palestine. For Nehru, the problem in Palestine was caused by British

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<sup>2</sup> Gandhi, M. K. (November 26, 1938). The Jews. *Harijan*, pp. 239-242 (in Mahatma Gandhi Collected Works Vol. 74).

<sup>3</sup> On March 8, 1946 Honick—the President of World Jewish Congress and Sydney Silverman, a labour member of British Parliament visited Mahatma Gandhi to gain his support for Zionist cause. Mahatma's reply went unrecorded to their question whether he sympathised with the aspiration of a Jewish state. Louis Fischer, a noted American journalist and biographer reported after three months about the referred statement by Mahatma. Fischer further clarified that Gandhi's reference to "prior claim" of Jews only meant chronological priority. [Source: Panter-Brick, S. (2008). *Gandhi and the Middle East : Jews, Arabs and Imperial Interests*. London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd.]

Imperialism, which played the conflict between Arabs and Jews for their colonialist interests.<sup>4</sup> The situation was complicated by contradictory promises made by Britishers to the Arabs and the Jews.<sup>5</sup> Nehru held that the withdrawal of British Imperialism was the precondition to resolving the conflict. Nevertheless, Nehru had private sympathy for Jews, particularly for socialism in Israel. Nehru, too was extremely popular among the Jews for being modern and socialist. Nehru's Autobiography, translated to Hebrew, was extremely popular in undivided Palestine. Nehru supported Arab Nationalism but was not hostile to Jewish religious interest in Palestine. Nehru's stand on the problem can be summarised by his statement, "Palestine was a predominantly Arab country, but Jews were an integral part of Palestine; thus, Jewish religious rights must be respected."<sup>6</sup> Interestingly, Nehru proposed a mass Jewish migration to India, rather forming a divisive political struggle for Israel.

Though, Mahatma Gandhi and Nehru were in a dilemma for their private sympathy for the Jews and public criticism for their political movement. The Indian National Congress was sharp and harsh while criticising the Jewish political struggle. The Congress party was equally critical to Zionism, as the Muslim League. A fairly sympathetic views were expressed beyond the horizon of the Congress party. While Tagore was sympathetic to Jews for the torture and persecution they had faced. He expressed his respect for the Jewish culture and religion and admired the 'old race' for retaining and maintaining their originality even after decades in exile. Yet, he was

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<sup>4</sup> Nehru, J. (June 1938 - July 1939). Peace and Empire. In S. Gopal (Ed.), *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* (Series 1 | Vol. 9). New Delhi: Orient Longman, p.66

<sup>5</sup> Nehru, J. (September 1935 - December 1936). The Arabs and Jews in Palestine. In S. Gopal (Ed.), *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* (Series 1 | Vol. 7 ) (pp. 572-574). New Delhi: Orient Longman.

<sup>6</sup> Nehru, J. (January 1937 - June 1938). Letter to A.E. Shohet (Editor, *The Jewish Advocate*), dated August 26, 1937. In S. Gopal (Ed.), *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* (Series 1 | Vol. 8 ). New Delhi: Orient Longman, p.713

unwilling to make any public statement endorsing their political struggle. For B. R. Ambedkar, Moses was not merely a great leader of the Jews, he was the leader any downtrodden community, a source of perennial inspiration and hope."<sup>7</sup> The World Zionist Congress successfully established and maintained communications with leaders like Sarojini Naidu, Sardar Patel, K. M. Panikkar and G.B. Pant who publicly supported the Zionist cause.<sup>8</sup> The personalities like K. M. Panikkar and Vijayalakshmi Pandit were amongst them who publicly championed the establishment of a Jewish 'home land'.<sup>9</sup> Hindu Mahasabha expressed their sympathy for the Jews and extended support for Zionist struggle. Madan Mohan Malvya welcomed Jewish students to the Benares Hindu University. V. D. Savarkar was sympathetic to the Jewish cause but he strongly refuted the Nehruvian proposal to welcome Jews and settle in India.

The debate regarding Zionism in the discourse of India's freedom struggle never concluded, and the issue was widely debated in the Constituent Assembly. It was the most debated issue related to international relations. After the Independence at the cost of partition in 1947, India's immediate position on the question of the partition on Palestine on three principles. Firstly, New Delhi opposed the idea of partition and consistently advocated that Palestine should be independent of the control of any foreign power and urged that no solution imposed and maintained by force could be sustainable.<sup>10</sup> Secondly, India firmly held that Palestine should be independent and free from any single power's control, neither Arabs nor Jews; no solution can be lasting

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<sup>7</sup> Nehru, J. (January 1937 - June 1938). Letter to A.E. Shohet (Editor, *The Jewish Advocate*), dated August 26, 1937. In S. Gopal (Ed.), *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* (Series 1 | Vol. 8 ). New Delhi: Orient Longman, pp.342-344

<sup>8</sup> Kumaraswamy, P. R. (2010). *India's Israel Policy*. New York: Columbia University Press. p.62

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p.62

<sup>10</sup> File No. 46(15)-AWT/48- Vol II, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *The Question of Recognising Israel*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India, p.101

unless it is based on the consent of both Arabs and Jews within a political union.<sup>11</sup> New Delhi never subscribed to the Arab claim for a Unitary state administered solely by the Arabs. India claimed to be neutral to the conflict that raged in the holy land. New Delhi had extended its commitment to restore peace and support a scheme which would be just and likely to receive substantial approval from both sides."<sup>12</sup> Opposed to both the other attitudes which were before the United Nations. One was Partition, and the other was a Unitary state. New Delhi suggested a federal state with naturally an Arab majority in charge of it but with autonomy for the other regions, i.e., Jewish regions." Thirdly, India earnestly trusted that the good office of the United Nation's Mediator would enable a permanent solution to be arrived at, which would satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the Arabs in Palestine.

With the establishment of the modern State of Israel by partitioning Palestine in 1948 on the UN's approval and the defeated Arab nations' bilateral armistice agreements with the State of Israel, a slow and subtle yet significant and sustained change took place in India's approach. South Block closely accounted the actions of the USSR, USA, Arab States, and most importantly, Pakistan. Soon after the State of Israel formed on May 14, 1948, MEA decided not to disclose their policy on the issue unless disinterested powers like the UK, China, and France declared their position.<sup>13</sup> Policymakers in South Block, including Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru was absolutely convinced that after Israel's admission to the United Nations and Arab Nations' (first Syria and then Egypt) support to Pakistan in its frivolous complaint before the Security Council about

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<sup>11</sup> File No. 46(15)-AWT/48- Vol I, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *The Question of Recognising Israel*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India, p.13

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p.13

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p.2

Hyderabad, demanded a revision of India's stand on the Israel-Palestine conflict.<sup>14</sup> India, being committed to the UN as a foreign policy principle, could not ignore recognising a member state. To a large extent, Israel's membership in the UN had been a factor behind India's decision to recognise the Jewish State, and even it did not vote in favour of the Partition of Palestine. With Pakistan attempting to create and to lead a Muslim bloc in the Middle East, mainly directed against India. New Delhi's friendship with the small but potentially powerful new State would make the Middle East countries value our friendship instead of taking it for granted as they have tended to do so far. It would also enable us to curb their instinctive support to Pakistan in all Indo-Pakistan conflicts.

Once the Government of India realised Israel was a *fait accompli*, MEA shifted its policy of publicly criticising Zionism and instructed all its missions not to publicly comment on the Middle East's political turmoil.<sup>15</sup> The attitude of the Indian bureaucracy changed in favour of Israel, not just because it gained the legal authorisation of the UN. The triumph of 'tiny' Israel over combined forces of Arab nations in the 'War of Independence' in 1948 impressed policymakers in New Delhi. They pointed out that India's approach to Israel was unnecessarily conditioned by the zero-sum nature of the conflict. The formation of Israel was considered an advantage to India.

Finally, India recognised the State of Israel on September 17, 1950. New Delhi wanted to broadcast the message that there should not be any confusion about the status of the

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<sup>14</sup> File No. 46(15)-AWT/48- Vol III, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *The Question of Recognising Israel*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India, p.6

<sup>15</sup> File No. 46(15)-AWT/48- Vol II, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *The Question of Recognising Israel*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India, p.77

recognition, whether *de jure* or *de facto*.<sup>16</sup> The Prime Minister, however, in his note of August 29, qualified the recognition as 'formal' to avoid confusion about whether the recognition is *de jure* or *de facto*.<sup>17</sup> Prime Minister had previously made it clear, on several occasions, that his Government did not deny Israel's factual existence. Therefore he inferred that by 'formal Recognition', by which he meant no more than an official acknowledgement of the fact that the State of Israel existed.<sup>18</sup> On February 12, 1950, Prime Minister's Secretariat informed that, for the present, India need not raise the issue of recognising Israel so long as the Security Council deals with the Kashmir issue. However, New Delhi should not wait indefinitely.<sup>19</sup> Prime Minister Nehru admitted that Arab countries consistently threatened and warned about the undesirability of India's recognition of Israel.<sup>20</sup> It is important to note that the Government of India had never rejected Israel's validity as a State but instead delayed to the point when it finally takes a political decision on the question of recognition because recognition is ultimately a political decision and not a legal question. Nehru held, "it is not a matter of high principles, but it is based on how we could best serve and be helpful in the area...After careful thought, we felt that while recognising Israel as an entity, we need not at this stage exchange diplomatic personnel."<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> File No. 46(15)-AWT/48- Vol V, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *The Question of Recognising Israel*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India. p. 21

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p.25

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p.25

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p.42

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p.42

<sup>21</sup> File No. 46(15)-AWT/48- Vol V, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *The Question of Recognising Israel*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India. p.17

Soon after the recognition, the State of Israel established a consul in Bombay (presently Mumbai) to look after economic activities and manage the *aliya* through India, not only for the Jews of Indian origin but also for Jews from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran.<sup>22</sup> Though New Delhi did not set up any embassy or consulate in Israel, the Embassy in Ankara<sup>23</sup> and the permanent mission to the United Nations or UN were officially involved in the liaison between the two states.<sup>24</sup> The first Director General of the Foreign Ministry of Israel, Dr Walter Eytan, visited India as the State Guest, following all the protocols, on March 9, 1952.<sup>25</sup> On meeting Nehru, he insisted on the establishment of diplomatic missions in each other's Capital.<sup>26</sup> Nehru assured, but it did not materialise (or materialised only after forty years). Instead, a Consul of Israel in Bombay was set-up to take care of the commercial interests of the Jewish State and arrange the migration of Jews to Israel from South and South Eastern Asia.<sup>27</sup>

New Delhi declared the Israeli consul the *persona non-grata* in the 1980s but did not terminate the recognition of Israel the way Iran did at the same time.<sup>28</sup> Soon after, New Delhi resumed the Israeli consul in Bombay in 1985. Top officials of the Israeli foreign

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<sup>22</sup> File No. 33-A(1) 60-WANA, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *Visit for India Mr. Shmuel Stavv— an israeli National and representative of Jewish Agency*. National Archives. New Delhi: Government of India.

<sup>23</sup> Kumaraswamy, P. R. (1995, Jan). India's Recognition of Israel, September 1950. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 31(1), 124-138. p.133

<sup>24</sup> File No. 46(15)-AWT/48- Vol I, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *The Question of Recognising Israel*. National Archives. New Delhi: Government of India.

<sup>25</sup> File No. T/52/1741/23-AWT, Ministry of External Affairs. (1952). *Correspondence in connection with the visit to New Delhi of Dr. Walter Eytan, Director Genral, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel* . National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> File No. 33-A(1)60-WANA, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *Visit for India Mr. Shmuel Stavv— an israeli National and representative of Jewish Agency*. New Delhi: Government of India.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Ambassador Yosef Hasseen (Former Israeli Consul to Mumbai, erstwhile Bombay, between 1979 to 1982) in Jerusalem, Israel on February 23, 2019.

ministry paid covert and overt visits to India in their official capacity in this so-called 'non-relation' period. Apart from these formal diplomatic vicissitudes, India and Israel developed and maintained significant strategic collaboration during this absence of diplomatic missions.

Mrs Gandhi's tenure is marked by three major wars in the history of Israel; the Six-Day War (June 1967), the War of Attrition (1967-1970) and the Yom Kippur War (1973). From 1966 to 1972, the Indira Government blamed 'Israeli aggrandisement' along with 'foreign troops' (including UN troops) for the unrest in West Asia.<sup>29</sup> In the UNGA, Prime Minister Gandhi claimed, "West Asian crisis—(also) needs to be resolved by political means...Essential for a peaceful settlement is the withdrawal of foreign forces from all Arab territories occupied in June last year."<sup>30</sup>The Indira Government, in this phase, categorically upheld the UNSC resolution of November 1967<sup>31</sup> and the Soviet Plan<sup>32</sup> as a solution to the West Asian crisis. On the contrary, the Soviet plan was

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<sup>29</sup> Shri Surendra Pal Singh, Deputy Minister of External Affairs, answered to a question in Lok Sabha on November 23, 1970. [Source: Lok Sabha Secretariat. (1970). *Lok Sabha Debates, Twelfth Session, Fourth Series, Vol. XLV, No.1-10*. New Delhi: Government of India.]

<sup>30</sup> Address delivered at the General Assembly of the United Nations, October 14, 1968. [Source: *Selected Speeches of Indira Gandhi (August 1969 to August 1972)*. (1975). Publication Division, Ministry of Information, Government of India, p.358]

<sup>31</sup> Resolution 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 emphasised the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war and the need to work for a just and lasting peace in the middle east in which every State in the region can live in security, that necessitates the withdrawal of Israel armed forces from territories occupied in the conflict of June 1967, termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force along with freedom of navigation through international waterways in the area and just settlement of the refugee problem.

<sup>32</sup> The proposal envisaged that the precondition of establishment of the state of peace is the withdrawal of Israeli troops from territories occupied in June, 1967. There can be no lasting settlement without the liquidation of the Israeli occupation of captured Arab lands. The proposal provided for the establishment of de-militarised zones on both sides of the border, for the introduction of United Nations troops into a number of points and for direct guarantees by Four Powers, the Permanent Members of the Security Council, or by the United Nations Security Council.

summarily rejected by Israel. New Delhi was convinced that the Israeli attack on Beirut Airport deteriorated the situation.<sup>33</sup>

From the Israeli side, there had always been an attempt at diplomatic normalisation with India marked by the exchange of diplomatic missions between the two Capitals. However, New Delhi rejected any such proposal, at least publicly. A statement supporting India's rights in Kashmir by the Consulate of Israel was not even appreciated by the Indian authority. Ministry of Agriculture declined the Israeli proposal to collaborate in Agricultural development in Thar Dessert, Rajasthan. The Minister said the proposal was not made through a proper channel, only in Press. The condition of Rajasthan varies largely with Israel, thus most likely to fail in India. No wonder any possibility of normalisation with Israel was summarily rejected.<sup>34</sup>

The Israeli victory in the June war, the death of Gamal Abdel Nasser, and the beginning of the direct talks between Syria-Israel and Jordan-Israel marked the Middle-eastern power politics. The Israeli victory in the Yom-Kippur war (1973) had put an end to the military commitment of the Arab countries to the Palestine cause. The establishment of Israeli military supremacy and valour made ways smoother for its diplomats in the long run. The attitude of the Arab countries towards Israel started changing in the 1970s. After the Camp David Accord in 1978, Egypt normalised its relations with Israel. Without Egypt, the Arab military option against Israel turned non-existent. Saudi Arabia, like Israel, had been part of the American strategic consensus against Soviet Russia. With the Arab countries' slow and subtle withdrawal from military adventurism

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<sup>33</sup> MEA, Shri Dinesh Singh on 26<sup>th</sup> February 1969 said on Parliament. [Source: Lok Sabha Secretariat. (1969). *Lok Sabha Debates*. New Delhi: Government of India. p.38]

<sup>34</sup> MEA, Shri Dinesh Singh on November 23, 1970 said on Lok Sabha. [Source: Lok Sabha Secretariat. (1970, November 23). *Lok Sabha Debates*. New Delhi: Govt of India.]

against Israel, the independent Palestinian struggle against Israel reached a new level under Yasser Arafat. Whereas Israel considered Yasser Arafat a terrorist, New Delhi celebrated him as a hero and a freedom fighter and hosted him as a very special state guest multiple times.<sup>35</sup> India was one of the first non-Arab countries to recognise the Palestine Liberation Organisation or PLO and allot a foreign office in New Delhi.<sup>36</sup>

Mrs Gandhi's third term is marked by a frequent visit by Mr Yasser Arafat to India. In 1981, the Government of India declared the Israeli consul Mr Yosef Hasseen as '*persona non grata*' for criticising the Government of India's Arab policy and calling it an act of appeasement. Eventually, the Government expelled Mr Yosef Hasseen. On a parallel channel, India developed its deep secret Defence and intelligence relationship with Israel under the premiership of Indira Gandhi. India provided spares for Israeli Mystere and Ouragon aircraft and AMX-13 tanks in the 1967 war.<sup>37</sup> It is interesting to remember that New Delhi had been critical of supposed Israeli aggrandisement in the 1967 War in multiple fora. Beyond the buyer-Supplier Relationship, Israel had been instrumental in establishing the Research and Analytic Wing or R&AW, India's foreign intelligence wing that India developed after the debacle of China's War of 1962 and had been a key factor behind the victory of the Bangladesh war of 1971. Cooperation between India's external agency R&AW and Mossad in the 1970s. Shortly after the formation of the R&AW in September 1968,

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<sup>35</sup> Interview with Ambassador Ranen Sen (Retd IFS) in New Delhi, India on May 4, 2017.

<sup>36</sup> Ministry of External Affairs, India. *Ministry of External Affairs*. Retrieved from the Official Website Ministry of External Affairs, India. [https://mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Updated\\_Note\\_on\\_India-Palestine\\_Relations\\_for\\_MEA\\_Website.pdf](https://mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Updated_Note_on_India-Palestine_Relations_for_MEA_Website.pdf), accessed on February 26, 2020

<sup>37</sup> Malik, V.P. (2013). *India's Military Conflicts and Diplomacy : An Inside view of Decision Making*. New Delhi: Harper Collins Publishers India. p.194

The announcement of 'normalisation' right before Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's official visit to the United States of America (USA) had built the perception that the decision was a hasty move to appease the newly established global hegemon, thanks to its 'victory' in the Cold War.<sup>38</sup> The disintegration of Soviet Russia undoubtedly forced New Delhi to reorient its foreign policy to accommodate the changing international milieu.<sup>39</sup> The decision of 'diplomatic normalisation' was, arguably, taken as a measure in the series of pro-US steps to show symbolic gestures to Washington.<sup>40</sup> Some hardline critics condemned the policy shift as Narsimha Rao's 'succumb' to the US pressure.<sup>41</sup> Interestingly, the 'diplomatic normalisation' did not only follow the breakdown of Soviet Russia; New Delhi's declaration of exchanging missions in each other's countries occurred within a week of Beijing announcing the exchange of diplomatic envoys with the Jewish State.

Far from the logic of the superpower politics behind the normalisation, Yasser Arafat's decision to support Saddam Hussain's Iraq in the Kuwait Invasion in 1989 is argued to be instrumental in the Indo-Israel normalisation.<sup>42</sup> With the restoration of the Al-Sabah

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<sup>38</sup> Inbar, E. (2017). Israel and India: Looking Back and Ahead. *Strategic Analysis*, 41(4), 369-383.

<sup>39</sup> Pant, H. V. (2004, December). India-Israel Partnership : Convergence and Constraints. *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 8(4), 60-73.

<sup>40</sup> i) Rubinoff, A. G. (1995, May). Normalization of India-Israel Relations: Stillborn for Forty Years. *Asian Survey*, 35(5), 487-505., ii) Menon, R., & Pandey, S. (2005, Summer). An Axis of Democracy? The Uncertain Future of Israeli-Indian Relations. *The National Interest*, 80, 29-36., iii) Singh, S. R. (2001). India and Israel : towards Greater Cooperation. *India Quarterly*, 113-48., iv) Nair, R. S. (2004). *Dynamics of Diplomacy Delayed: India and Israel*. New Delhi: Kalpaz Publications., v) Kumar, S. (2017, Fall). Indo-Israeli Relations A Quest for Great-Power Status Since 1991. *Jewish Political Studies Review*, 28(3/4), 38-45.

<sup>41</sup> Hasan, S. (2014). India's Palestine Policy : A Historical Review. In F. Mahmood, & R. Azmi, *Foreign Policy of India and West Asia : Change and Continuity* (pp. 85-95). New Delhi: New Century Publications

<sup>42</sup> Quamar, M. M., & Kumaraswamy, P. R. (2019). The Kuwait Crisis of 1990–1991: The Turning Point in India's Middle East Policy. *Contemporary Review of the Middle East*, 6(1), 75–87.

rule, Arafat found himself on the losing side of the crisis. The Palestinian cause lost its regional primacy and influence in Arab politics.<sup>43</sup> These forced India to re-examine its traditional approach and seek other options to promote its interests. India went for 'normalisation' with Israel to supplement the centrality of Palestinian support by economic engagement in the region.<sup>44</sup>

The decision to exchange diplomatic missions with Israel was a policy question that involved meticulous evaluation of 'national interest' by the policymakers in South Block. Rajiv Gandhi adopted the policy of normalisation and planned to implement the same gradually. For Rao, the issue was how to implement it. The decision of normalisation was two-fold. In the first stage, in 1985, the Government of India decided to 'normalise' with the Jewish State. In the second stage, in 1992, the timing of the implementation of the original decision was determined. As policy implementation is inseparable from policy formulation, the South Block's decision to 'Normalisation' and establish missions in each other's territory should be approached as one, yet prolonged, process.

A significant change occurred in Rajiv Gandhi's approach towards Israel after Yasser Arafat visited India in November 1985. This led to the policy of exchanging diplomatic envoys with Israel gradually and slowly instead of a sudden declaration of engagement. The policy of gradual normalisation faced hindrances because of the pan-India drought in 1987. The decision was adjourned *sine die* but not terminated. Later, Narasimha Rao implemented the decision in 1992. In the post-Soviet world, India realised the necessity

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<sup>43</sup> Quamar, M. M., & Kumaraswamy, P. R. (2019). The Kuwait Crisis of 1990–1991: The Turning Point in India's Middle East Policy. *Contemporary Review of the Middle East*, 6(1), 75–87.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid..

of defence equipment and Israel's importance. The policy of 'Normalisation' is not to be confused with the decision about the timing to implement the same. Thus, contextualising the decision to Normalisation with Israel essentially on the backdrop of post-cold war power politics will summarily mislead the research, simply because the decision of 'normalisation' was taken in late 1985 without sensing any abrupt end to Cold War. It is an altogether different yet fundamental question why India implemented the decision in 1992.

Rajiv had strong convictions and a passionate desire for Change. He had a clear idea about where India should be in the twenty-first century.<sup>45</sup> Rajiv Gandhi tried to loosen the diplomatic straitjacket that was choking India's external options. By reaching out to the West and trying to change the internal economic orientation, he prepared the ground for a fundamental re-evaluation of foreign policy. By the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the old economic order in India, the traditional methods of engaging the world were no longer tenable. India had to find new ways to do business with the world.<sup>46</sup> His fresh introspection of the question of liberal democracy, the open market economy, economic reforms, and technological advancement reframed his approach toward the US. As a younger leader, Rajiv Gandhi was less burdened with the anti-Western paranoia of his predecessors and reached out with greater vigour to the West, particularly to the United States.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Quamar, M. M., & Kumaraswamy, P. R. (2019). The Kuwait Crisis of 1990–1991: The Turning Point in India's Middle East Policy. *Contemporary Review of the Middle East*, 6(1), p.136

<sup>46</sup> Mohan, C. R. (2003). *Crossing The Rubicon : The Shaping of India's New Foreign Policy*. New Delhi: Penguin Books. p.261

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, p.50

Israel was facing its most challenging time in its conflict with Palestinians since December 1987. Intifada erupted against Israeli forces by Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza in late 1987. The systematic withdrawal of Arab countries and PLO's failure to make serious headway regarding Palestinian sovereignty and statehood caused cumulative and collective frustration, anger and hatred among Palestinians.<sup>48</sup> The Arab states and the PLO started losing control and credibility over the Palestinians. With the rise of Menachem Began and his Likud part. The US was less enthusiastic and claimed the Palestinian leadership was involved in terrorism. The US denied a visa to the PLO chairman to speak at the forthcoming UNGA. Later UN shifted the venue to Geneva, where Arafat spoke the following December, where he clarified his peace proposal.

Deputy Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel Moshe Yegar's meeting with R. N. Kao, the founder Director of R&AW and Special Security Advisor to the Prime Minister, who also enjoyed immense influence and respect in the diplomatic clout of New Delhi, played an important part towards the diplomatic normalisation of two countries. Kao was convinced with the argument that upgradation in diplomatic relations must have taken place by then.<sup>49</sup> With Professor Sondhi's help and Kao's advice, Mr Yegar later met Naresh Chandra, the Cabinet Secretary, who later attempted to convince all senior Cabinet Ministers, including the Prime Minister, that normalisation of diplomatic relations with Israel, is in favour of India.<sup>50</sup> All of them agreed on the question of upgradation but were not confirmed on the question of timing.

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<sup>48</sup> Harms, G., & Ferry, T. M. (2005). *The Palestine-Israel Conflict*. London: Pluto Press. p.142

<sup>49</sup> Interview with Ambassador Moshe Yegar (Former Deputy Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel, in-charge of Asia, Africa and Oceania, from 1990 to 1993) in Jerusalem, Israel on February 17, 2019.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

It was actually Mr Naresh Chandra who was interested in Israeli electronic fences in India, and they discussed that in the meeting. Although Yegar did not promise that formally because he was not representing his country's defence ministry, he promised to make contacts conditionally. It was eight months after this meeting the normalisation took place.

When Atal Bihari Vajpayee came to power in 1998, establishing robust relations with Israel was not his priority. Instead, his priority was to build peace with Pakistan.<sup>51</sup> Once his attempt to bring peace with Pakistan, particularly the Lahore declaration, failed and Pakistan waged another war against India in the Kargil sector of Jammu and Kashmir, the following series of incidents took India towards strategic engagement with Israel. Notably, Israel did not join the global community to criticise India's Nuclear programme in 1998. Nevertheless, there was no strategic convergence on common yet not mutual disagreement on Nuclear regimes.<sup>52</sup> In a nutshell, the 'surprise' in Kargil was primarily caused by poor surveillance in gathering and assessing intelligence inputs.<sup>53</sup> India lacked local surveillance radars and unattended ground sensors. The Indian Army also lacked visual areal surveillance winter areal surveillance operation (WASO).<sup>54</sup> In 1999, neither the Indian Army nor Air Force had any Unmanned Aerial Vehicles to carry out aerial surveillance.<sup>55</sup> At the time of the Kargil conflict, there was prompt diplomatic support and supply of military hardware from Israel. At the time of the

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<sup>51</sup> Interview with Late Shakti Sinha (Joint Secretary to the Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, March 1998 to November 1999) on January 17, 2021 via Zoom Meeting

<sup>52</sup> Interview with Ambassador Alon Liel (Advisor to Prime Minister Ehud Barak on Foreign Affairs from 1997 to 1999 and Director-General in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel from 2000 to 2001) in Mevaseret Zion, Jerusalem, Israel India on February 21, 2019

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, p.77

<sup>54</sup> Malik, V. P. (2006). *Kargil: From Surprise to Victory*. Noida: Harper Collins Publishers, p.88

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, p.88

conflict, representatives of India's security agency visited the Ambassador of Israel to New Delhi with the earnest need for aerial imaging of the infiltrated area and to expedite the delivery of UAV searcher-1, for which orders were already placed.<sup>56</sup> Ambassador of Israel, Mr Yohada Haim, conveyed the information to the 'appropriate' department.<sup>57</sup> Israel responded to this requirement promptly, which was instrumental in turning the table in India's favour in the conflict. Israel also responded to the request to train its crews in India.<sup>58</sup> The Israeli equipment, satellite pictures and UAV training team arrived while the war was on.<sup>59</sup> This further added the supply of laser-guided missiles for the aircraft and mortar bombs.<sup>60</sup> The hardcore strategic interest in cutting-edge defence technology paved the way for strategic engagement between India and Israel.

At the time of post-War assessment, the Kargil Review Committee recommended that every effort be made to ensure satellite imagery capability of world standard is developed in India. The committee also recommended equipping Indian forces with UAVs and communication interception equipment.<sup>61</sup> With this note for India's military modernisation, combatting terror in Indian cities, India, under the leadership of Vajpayee, started engaging with Israel without any major changes in India's global outlook, commitment, rhetoric or priorities. Israel had provided military requirements

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<sup>56</sup> Interview with Ambassador Yohada Haim (Ambassador of Israel to India from 1996-2000) in Mevaseret Zion, Jerusalem, Israel India on February 14, 2019

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Malik, V.P. (2013). *India's Military Conflicts and Diplomacy : An Inside View of Decision Making*. Noida: Harper Collins Publishers, p.198

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, p.198

<sup>60</sup> Browne, N. A. (2017). A Perspective on India–Israel Defence and Security Ties. *Strategic Analysis*, 41 (4), 325–335.

<sup>61</sup> Kargil Review Committee's Recommendations, [Source: Malik, V. P. (2006). *Kargil: From Surprise to Victory*. Noida: Harper Collins Publishers, Appendix 3, pp.415-418]

to India during wars with Pakistan and China. Yet, Kargil became a turning point for Indo-Israeli relations, given the precision and efficacy of military hardware and the additional impact of sanctions after the nuclear tests of 1998. The impact of critical military hardware received from Israel was timely and mission-critical. Nevertheless, the BJP government in power have played its part by not dumping the relationship into oblivion, as the Government of India did in 1965 and 1971. Interestingly, the National Democratic Alliance made the UAV purchase from the Israel public by declaring it in Lok Sabha.

At the time of Dr Manmohan Singh, some significant structural changes occurred globally, in the Middle East and in India's domestic politics. The menace of terrorism both globally and at random in Indian cities, shook the security and politics of the country. India was economically booming, diplomatically acclaimed as a rising global power, and gained the capability to practice autonomy in policy making. Under UPA-I, Defence Relations with Israel, in this phase, were 'cordial' and 'mutually beneficial. Since the beginning of this century, post-Kargil, New Delhi lately but rightly realised that the policy of Defence Procurement creates foreign dependence. Thus, it was essential to shift the policy to defence manufacturing. It was impossible overnight; thus, India chose the path of joint development. DRDO had MOU or Agreements with thirty-three countries for collaboration in defence technologies. The areas of cooperation were: missile technologies, avionics and aircraft technologies, laser systems, nano-materials, hypersonic and naval systems etc. Israel was one of the three major defence partners of Israel, with which India had joint managing committee for defence collaboration. Israel is a world leader in Research & Development (R&D) in general. Since Indian and Israeli threat perception does not absolutely match, there are areas of convergence and divergence. Beyond surveillance, post-Kargil, India was interested in

Israeli excellence in precision-guided missile technology. Thus, DRDO, the Indian Navy and IAI, Israel jointly started developing a highly sophisticated Long-Range Surface to Air Missile system in 2006. It had a range of 70 km using a dual pulse rocket motor and active radar seeker in the terminal phase with an inertial/ mid-course update for guidance. Along with robust Defence and strategic cooperation, UPA, under the direct influence of Communists, could not bring the relations out of the closet. With the withdrawal of leftist support from the government and the beginning of the Arab Spring in the Middle East, it was easy for the UPA-II government to declare Indo-Israel relations as a 'Strategic partnership'.

Under the Prime Ministership of Narendra Modi, India declared to 'dehyphenate' its relations with Israel. In simple terms, 'Dehyphenation' mean India's Israel policy and not India's policy towards the Israel-Palestine conflict or India's Israel/Palestine policy. The strategic aspect of the India-Israel relationship was evident in the Balakot Surgical strike. India's Surgical Strike 2.0 to target the Jaish-e-Mohammed training camps in the aftermath of a terrorist attack in Pulwama, Jammu and Kashmir, causing casualties of 40 Jawans, reiterated Israel's importance in India's counter-terrorism strategy. The Israeli-made SPICE-2000 and Phalcon AWACS systems played a crucial role in the Surgical Strike 2.0.<sup>62</sup> The affinity towards Israel reached a level in India that pushed Prime Minister Narendra Modi to emphasise and praised the Israeli way of tackling the problem of terrorism in a public rally in Mandi, Himachal Pradesh, after the Surgical Strike in the Pak Occupied Kashmir (PoK). He said, 'everyone is praising Indian Army's prowess and valour these days. We used to hear similar appreciation for the bravery of

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<sup>62</sup> Pant, H. V., & Sahu, A. (2019). *Israel's Arms Sales to India: Bedrock of a Strategic Partnership*. New Delhi: Observer Research Foundation (ORF). Retrieved from <https://www.orfonline.org/research/israels-arms-sales-to-india-bedrock-of-a-strategic-partnership-55101/>, accessed January 23, 2020.

the Israeli Army. Our Army is now as good as the vaunted IDF.' This unequivocal public praise and the analogy with IDF marks a conscious strategic shift in India's counterterror strategy. It also underlines the actualisation of a paradigm shift in India's popular psyche and its rising support for the Israeli way while dealing with terrorism, which began particularly after 26/11.

### **Statement of the Research:**

India's Israel policy operates in two spaces. The governing principle of one space is National Interest in terms of security for India. Here, India is interest-oriented, reciprocal and bilateral in nature. It focuses on cooperation in counter-terrorism and collaboration in defence. The other space is political, open, and rhetorical in nature. The governing principle of this space is the morality of public space. It encompasses the reiteration of peace and stability along with a durable and just solution to the Palestinian cause through a verbal commitment to the peace process. Policymakers in the South Block always had to balance the politics of mortality and the politics of morality, hard-core national interest and rhetoric. On the one hand, India depended on Israel for defence procurement, surveillance equipment, and state-of-the-art technology; on the other hand, India had to criticise or at least join the chorus of criticism against Israel to retain its global credibility of a moral actor. India's support for the Palestinian cause is not just about political correctness. It has some implications in real terms.

Apart from perceived domestic Muslim opposition to the India-Israel relationship, a more significant concern for India was to seize any diplomatic advantage by Pakistan in the middle east. Once the middle eastern countries like Jordan and Egypt normalised with Israel, the chance for Pakistan to exploit this issue was over; thus, India could openly deal with Israel. Another vital factor is Kashmir. Even if India and Israel are on

the same board, so far as Kashmir and Jerusalem are concerned, India's policy is not to align publicly with Israel because New Delhi does not wish to be labelled as an 'occupier'. Even though India and Israel both rejected Nuclear regimes, they did not develop any alliance against the hegemony of the Nuclear regimes.

Opposing Israel in multiple global fora like UN is an instrument of diplomatic rhetoric against Israel. India's opposition of Israel in the UN and other international fora goes hand in hand with India's strategic cooperation with the country. Israel, as a nation, is less optimistic about UN as a viable global forum that upholds truth and justice. On the other hand, India started with immense hope for the UN but later realised the importance of a supra-regional international forum promoting business and multilateral cooperation. India's opposition to Israel in the UN impacts the bilateral relationship marginally since the UN has lost its relevance in Israeli politics.

**Secondly**, The Change in India's Israel policy has been gradual yet inconsistent. As discussed, the four phases of India's policy have some continuity, some changes and some inconsistencies. The shift from Narasimha Rao's 'policy of normalisation' to Narendra Modi's 'Strategic dehyphenation' is not planned but eventual. The absence of a Grand Strategy in India is the main reason for this. Since the India-Israel relationship is all about reciprocity and mutual interests. The relationship developed with the changes in the global outlook of India. At the time of Nehru, India was sceptical about the very durability of Israel. The state system that emerged after the second world war was new, and there was a mutual trust deficit. Each State in the Middle East was sceptical about Israel, and India also shared that concern. First-generation leaders of Israel like David Ben-Gurion or Moshe Sharett attempted to build up relations with India with limited success. India and Israel were fighting two very different battles in their respective territory. India was fighting for morality, and Israel was fighting for

survival. Nevertheless, India and Israel developed significant cooperation in refugee management, agricultural technology and later secret intelligence liaison. The phase before diplomatic normalisation is better described as 'relations without representation' rather non-relations.

Till the end of the Coldwar India believed in the nonalignment ideals backed by an alliance of like-minded countries and military assurance from the USSR. With the disintegration of the USSR, India took the policy decision of diversifying its defence procurement. Both countries offer something important to the other. While Israel provides its technology, India offers its market. The basis of any robust relationship is the prominence of mutual interest. In the case of India and Israel, solution compatibility plays a vital role in binding the relationship. They are closed only when they offer each other something. The emergence of the 'Brand Israel' accelerated the relationship.

On the other side, the regional and global players and their importance in India's foreign policy also impacted the openness of India-Israel relations. For example, Pakistan often attempted to pursue military linkages with Israel. At the same time, India's engagement with Iran has been a concern for policymakers in Jerusalem. They are sceptical of the transfer of Israeli technology to Iran via India. For a long time, New Delhi attempted a balance with the Arab world. Finally, with the Arab Spring and Israel's *de facto* normalisation with Arab countries that led to Abraham Accord, it has been easy for India to engage with Israel without considering any reactions in the middle east.

**Thirdly,** The question of 'commonality' with Israel is highly political and debatable in India. Whether India and Israel followed the same trajectory of nation-building, whether their structural reality is the same, and whether their threats are the same or not is largely subjective and depends on one's political orientation. In India, it depends on

how one looks at the question of nationalism and identity. The Israeli attempt to homogeneity in language, religion, culture and the way in dealing with terrorists has some supporters and critics. Naturally, the merit of this relationship is publicly appreciated accordingly. On this question of commonality, the Indo-Israel relationship is affected by its rhetoric. Interestingly, when UPA was in power, it harshly criticised the IDF's dealing with militants in Lebanon and the IDF's crossing of the international border. Whereas, at the time of Narendra Modi, India too followed the policy of crossing the international border. Narendra Modi categorically acknowledged the similarities between the structural reality of Israel and India. Yet, cooperation between two countries is essential and robust under both these governments, irrespective of their ideology. Nevertheless, the political ideology of the party in power controls the rhetoric of the relationship.

**Fourthly**, India approached the establishment of the modern State of Israel through the migration of European Jews to Israel as a colonialist plan. Thus, after Independence, India blamed Israel for siding with the Colonialists. The blame was interchangeably used against a perceived partnership between Israel and UK/USA. It is important to note that the Zionists had a troubled relationship with the Britishers after 1930, and the Britishers were more sympathetic to the Arabs than the Jews. It was only at the time of the Suez Crisis that Israel and the UK collaborated after a long time and the US, like India, tried to mediate. Nevertheless, the US played a crucial role in forming the State of Israel in the UN, but the USSR was the first to give *de facto* recognition. India's labelling of Israel as siding with the coloniser is unclear. Interestingly, India most carefully followed the approach of the UK and most respectfully mentioned as 'HMG' or Her Majesty's Government, that for a long time influenced New Delhi's action even

after the Independence, at least in this crucial conflict.<sup>63</sup> On January 28, 1949, G.S. Bajpai wrote to Archi Menon that the UK had "asked us to consider de facto recognition."<sup>64</sup> India was not represented in Palestine in 1948, and her "interests" were looked after by 'HMG'. Thus, MEA prescribed that "it would be appropriate for us to leave the decision and the timing to that Government (UK Government)."<sup>65</sup> Even after formal requests from the Provincial Government of Israel, MEA looked forward to the "firm views from HMG".<sup>66</sup>

The motivated projection of the US and Israel into the same bracket as an immoral power in India is the primary reason for projecting US as forcing India to normalise Israel in 1992. The US has been crucial in the India-Israel relationship in a very different way than projected. After the disintegration of Soviet Russia, Indian policymakers, particularly Prime Minister Rao, were interested in American defence technology, American direct investment in the newly liberalised market and American loans. Israel was the key to many US decisions. Israel has also been effective against defence embargo against exporting hardware or technology transfer. There is no static US position on opposing Israeli military hardware transfer to India; they consistently objected when the same is transferred to China. India-Israel; the relationship has been mutually fruitful to India. Even Israel stood by India against US interest after the Pokhran II in 1998, and the US has often been a major hindrance of this relationship.

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<sup>63</sup> File No. 46(15)-AWT/48- Vol I, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *The Question of Recognising Israel*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India.

<sup>64</sup> File No. 11(8)-UNO V/48- Vol II, Ministry of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations (1948). *The Question of Recognition of the Jewish state of Israel*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India. p.6

<sup>65</sup> File No. 46(15)-AWT/48- Vol I, Ministry of External Affairs. (1948). *The Question of Recognising Israel*. National Archives of India. New Delhi: Government of India. p.2

<sup>66</sup> Ibid. p.4

**Finally**, scholars evaluated the viability of 'Strategic Cooperation' between India and Israel based on some pre-determined academic parameters. The key argument is since India and Israel do not have the convergence of threat perception, a confluence of diplomatic stand on Nuclear projects, and even they do not share any commitment to mutual collaboration on the battlefield; the Indo-Israel cooperation is not 'strategic' enough. The standardisation of 'strategic cooperation' as a partnership on the battlefield (in a literal sense) has an American bias. In major wars, starting from World War II to the Invasion of Iraq or Afghanistan, the standard American strategy is to collaborate on the battlefield with the soldiers from 'friendly' nations like UK or Canada. The standardisation of this practice can not be applicable in India or Israel, primarily because the Israeli Army can not legally be deployed on any battlefield abroad.

Most importantly, India has moved beyond this strategy of converting its own war into another's war by playing a card of commonality like 'if you are not with me, then you are with them'. In the post soviet world, New Delhi developed the strategy of diversifying defence partnerships. India moved towards self-reliance in defence with the policy of 'Arming without Aiming'. India's strategic programme does not consider fighting together in a literal sense with any other country. India has successfully developed mechanisms, arsenals, and forces for its defence, and Israel is strategically important towards that empowerment. In the Kargil War, Israeli surveillance turned the table in favour of India. In the Balakot Air Strike, The Spice 2000, a 'smart' kit that turned the bomb into a smart bomb, determined the precision and accuracy of the strike. Neither India nor Israel expects each other to fight against any common enemy in an alien land. Yet, in India's battles against its enemies, Israel is crucial in securing a strategic edge with its advanced defence technologies, which makes the India-Israel relationship a 'Strategic Partnership'.

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