

India-Israel Strategic Cooperation: Implications for Pakistan

Syeda Tabeer Zahra^{1*} and Saher Liaqat²

Abstract

India and Israel have engaged themselves in advanced military and strategic partnerships which are modernizing and improving from time to time. Both partner states have initiated cooperation in many areas such as space, cyberspace, and many other areas of defense. The Indian space program in partnership with Israel is acquiring modern means and it will give the Indian military, a dominant position in the conflict-prone region of South Asia where the Indian hegemony is challenged by Pakistan. The intelligence sharing and modernizing of the Indian military will help India to acquire advanced technology for the contemporary combat environment. This paper argues that India already enjoys that superiority in South Asia and Indo-Israel strategic partnership will create a strategic imbalance. Moreover, this strategic imbalance will compel Pakistan to look for countermeasures.

Keywords: Indo-Israel Strategic Partnership; Network-centric; Electronic Warfare; Cyberspace; Strategic Imbalance.

1. Introduction

India-Israel developing relations had caught international attention due to their cooperation in strategic areas. The bilateral relations were not always the same since Israel was created in 1948, it had a long course of developing relations. India showed extremely threatening behavior towards the formation of Israel pronouncing it a piece of British colonialist inheritance. In 1950, however, India realized that it was a reality and therefore recognized it. For Israel, the most important foreign policy goal was to accept its legitimacy. Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben Gurion came up with the policy of the "Periphery Doctrine" which aims to improve relations with Arabs states as well as key Asian states which included India, China, South Korea, and Japan (Fatah, 2019).

¹ School of Politics and International Relations, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

² School of Politics and International Relations, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

*)Corresponding Author.
Email: zahrajaffery51@gmail.com

In the post-Cold War time frame, USSR disintegrated, perhaps the main vital accomplice of India. India needed to search for different choices as it was important to guarantee its endurance in a threatening climate made by its foes, Pakistan, and China. Following the realist perspective, India chose to look towards Israel and extended its full diplomatic relations realizing that cooperation with Israel is essential now. Israel proved to be a good strategic partner for India and Israel found India a good market to sell its items. Since Narendra Modi came to power in India, bilateral relations improved, and the two countries started cooperating in several different areas.

India-Israel strategic cooperation poses threats and implications for Pakistan. India and Pakistan are not only the most influential countries in the South-Asian region but also rival states are engaging in never-ending competition with each other. The Strategic balance between these two nations is extremely sensitive. Israel's help to India will upset the strategic equilibrium and will uplift India to a position higher than that of its opponent state, Pakistan. Eventually, Pakistan will never want India to dominate the region with both conventional and non-conventional superiority.

The paper will investigate the developing India-Israel strategic collaboration and how this participation is adjusting India's regional status and consequently its implications for Pakistan.

2. Nature and Modes of India-Israel Strategic Cooperation

The post-Cold War era brought drastic changes to the international world, politics, and international security. USSR collapsed in 1991, which was India's biggest arms supplier and a close ally. The world moved from bipolarity to unipolarity, and "hegemony" became a dominant feature of the emerging order of the world. Cooperation between the states moved away from an ideological basis to a strategic basis. Cooperation among states now is more relied on in terms of alliances and collective security. Also, India was looking for a new partner that could replace the USSR and could provide it with new weapons, technology, and strategic interactions. It could have considered building such cooperation itself with the United States, but a partnership with the USA carried its cost. Cost in terms of fulfilling the condition as the US was willing to help on certain conditions. Such a partnership would have been expensive, sophisticated, and with political strings attached to it. So, India chooses Israel to enhance its strategic cooperation.

India, throughout the Cold War period, supported the Arab states and stand with the Palestinian cause. But after the end of the Cold War events occurred that made India revisit its policy towards Israel. The two vital events that led to the question of India's non-relations with Israel were Gulf War and the Madrid Peace Process (Kaura, 2019). After the Gulf War, many Gulf states turned hostile to the PLO for assisting Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait. So, India's stance of standing up for the Palestinian cause was no longer in between establishing Indo-Israel relations. Also, the Iraq-Kuwait

War led to an increase in oil prices as the Saudi oil fields were within the striking area, and as a result, the reason India feared establishing relations with Israel and antagonizing its oil-rich Arab states was no longer there. India was already going through economic turmoil with borrowing from the IMF earlier in the year (Kaura, 2019). India anticipated that due to its relations with Arab countries, they will continue delivering the oil, but the Arabs state supply oil to India at market price. The other event was the Madrid Peace Process that brought Israel and the Arab states onto the negotiation table and hence ending the boycott posted by the Arab states towards Israel and initiating trade relations with Israel. After all these reasons, India was not without a reason not to establish relations with Israel.

Internally India was going through some radical changes as well that led to the normalization of relations between the two states. Rajiv Gandhi became the sixth Prime Minister of India after the assassination of Indira Gandhi. Rajiv Gandhi wanted a different policy to be constructed toward Israel, he wanted to end the non-alignment movement and turn India into Western democracy (Abadi, 2004). When the Hindu nationalist party, Bhartiya Janata Party, came to power, they wanted to extend full diplomatic relations with Israel to counter Pakistan. India took the first step by deciding to revoke a vote in the United Nation Resolution that called Zionism racism. When such action met with no resistance, India went to extend its full diplomatic relation with Israel in 1992.

In the years that followed afterward India and Israel exchanged views and cooperated in many areas especially related to defense and security. In the post-9/11 era, the global situation changed once more, and this brought India and Israel much closer to cooperating in fighting their common threat which was Islamic terrorism. In November 2001, the Israeli parliament invited the Indian parliament for the very first time. The two states started to conduct high-profile visits to indicate to the world their growing closeness. In 2001, from the Ministry of Israeli Defense, Director General Amos Aron visited India, and then later in December three official delegations of Israeli conducted a “bilateral semiannual dialogue (Sharma & Bing, 2015). The 2003 visit by Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon’s India made headlines all around the world. He was personally received by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

In the contemporary era, during Narendra Modi serves as the Prime Minister of India, we see a major shift in Indian policy toward Israel. Both the prime ministers of the two states share the same views and perspectives on many issues. The Prime Minister of Israel Netanyahu indicated his joy after Modi was elected as the prime minister by making a statement that said, “Some of the transformations around the world are extremely positive for us. One of these transformations is the election results in India. In general, it seems to us that dealing with Asia is better than dealing with Europe.” Some analysts equate the actions conducted by Israel in Palestine with the Indian

government's actions in Kashmir. Both countries equally show hostile attitudes towards Muslim countries.

Under all these circumstances, the closeness and similar perspectives on issues made an ideal environment to enhance their strategic engagements.

3. Areas of Strategic Cooperation between India and Israel

India and Israel went through various levels of cooperation since India recognized Israel. From starting in 1992 when India extended diplomatic relations with Israel, the nature of cooperation was only diplomatic. India and Israel, after establishing cooperation at the diplomatic level, increased their economic engagements. It was in 1994 that the cooperation between the two states entered into the strategic zone when the first defense agreement was signed between India and Israel.

In strategic engagements, both states cooperated in different areas such as nuclear capabilities, intelligence information, or whether it was Israel's arms sale to India. We will further discuss the important strategic cooperation between the two states.

3.1 Cooperation in Arms sale and Defense

Israel turns out to be the "second largest defense supplier" to India after the US, Russia, France, and the United Kingdom (Pant & Sahu, 2019). Israeli defense equipment turned out to be good for India to acquire advanced military technology. At the same time, Israeli defense industries had the urgent need to sell their arms and they found this chance in the Indian market. Israel was a reliable source in terms of the export of arms for India especially in times of crisis as it can be traced back to the wars of 1962, 1965, 1971, and the Kargil Conflict, when Israel provided India with arms and equipment.

The P5 states have placed an embargo against the transfer of technology of radar, anti-missile systems, night equipment, etc. Israel bypassed this ban and supplied India with these advanced technologies. In 1998, "six ultra-modern airplanes and modern rockets arrived on Indian territory of Kashmir by the Israeli pilots. Israel additionally assisted India with building up "Electronic Counter Measure" to counteract the Pakistani electronic organization at its atomic plant (Naha, 2020). Indeed, even the US attempted to prevent Israel from trading arms particularly after it directed its atomic test, yet it could not do as such.

After the incident of 9/11, India and Israel collaborated to protect their countries from terrorism, Israel gave all important materials in building conventional materials to India in 2002, during "Operation Parakram" against Pakistan (Naha, 2020). In 2004, an arrangement was endorsed between the two nations for the exchange of "Phalcon AEW planes" (Shapir, 2009). This was given to the Indian Airforce to help advance the instrument. India bought "Green Pines Radar" utilized by "ballistic missile destroying rocket batteries" from Israel to propel its guard framework (Naha, 2020). Anyway, Israeli fare of arms endured a sharp decline when the Central Bureau of Investigation in

India charged defilement arguments against Israeli "Aviation Industries and Rafael Advanced Defense System" (Shapir, 2009). The boycott was, nonetheless, lifted when the Narendra Modi government was in power.

The Mumbai attacks in 2008, were an event that made Israel and India work ahead in more to counterterrorism. Just after the Mumbai attacks, India purchased the "aerostat radar system" from Israel to guard its waterfront line (Naha, 2020). Israel additionally helped India with the examination for the attacks by sending high-positioning security men, other than that individual from the Israeli foreign ministry and the "Shin Bet security administration" of previously helped in the examination.

The time frame after 2014, India went out to be the biggest exporter of Israeli arms, perhaps it was because of the sound relations between the two states furthermore Israel tracked down an agreeable situation as the Indian defense area was inclining towards a "Make in India" strategy (Shapir, 2009).

In 2009, India requested a drone named "Heron" from Israel, which was sent between 2012-13. As India shares a long boundary with threatening neighbors, the utilization of drones will be productive. The Indian government additionally wanted to purchase advanced levels of these drones. In 2010, India purchased "Searcher MK-2" from Israel, a multi-mission UAV, that is productive for collecting information.

In 2008, India needed to have "Syder-MR" from Israel and by 2017, India led an effective trial of the Syder-MR system.

Concerning the Missile trade, Israel is not among the main exporters of heavy weapons. In the case of India, it led the most export of rockets over the recent ten years like the aerial rocket; "BVRAAM". Likewise, India got a surface-to-air rocket from Israel; "SAM". In 2008 India requested "Python-5" and "Derby" (both aerial rockets) from Israel which were sent by 2017 and in 2019, it utilized a similar Derby to destroy a Pakistani drone after the Balakot episode. Further, India bought Israeli-delivered "Griffin, Harop, and Crystal Maze" rockets and bought sensors for the greater part of the "EL/M" arrangement of radars (Shapir, 2009).

Narendra Modi settled on huge arrangements for protection between India and Israel. In 2014, an arms accord was endorsed between India and Israel that means to furnish India with "Barak 1 rockets" over the next 25 years. Another important stage in relations was the visit by the Defense Minister of Israel, Moshe Ya'alon (Fatah, 2019). His visit was intended to build collaboration in the military and the field of intelligence. Later Krishna Menon (Defense Minister of India) went to Israel to make more arrangements for military gear (Fatah, 2019).

In 2018, Adani Defense and Elbit system began the joint endeavor of Indo-Israel that expects to create "Hermes 900" (Shapir, 2009). It will be financially effective and profoundly advance innovation. Another understanding was upon the advancement of "medium reach surface-to-air rockets (MRSAM)" with the collaboration of IAI, this was an approach to help the "Make in India strategy. This participation endorsement was given by the

Cabinet Committee on Security headed by Prime Minister Modi. Not only this in 2018 Modi marked an MoU when Netanyahu came to India on a visit, that called for participation in digital protection and space innovation (Shapur, 2009).

The participation in protection and arms exchange had additionally been the establishment of Indo-Israel reciprocal arrangements.

3.2 Cooperation in Geo-Strategic

The Indo-Israel relations have significant effects over the "Indian Ocean". The shores of both countries are washed by the Indian Ocean. Both states have a developing interest in the district. It is considered a center point for worldwide exercises, as most significant shipping lanes go through this locale. For this noticeable explanation, India and Israel's participation will be to keep away from any kind of prevention or to guarantee the security of the area.

India holds a noticeable spot in the IO district and for Israel, the chokepoint is "Bab-el-Mandeb", the southern access to the Red Sea (Inbar, 2017). Both states have key frailties and dangers like the danger of Islamic terrorism and ocean protection and so forth. These could harm their essential advantages in the district. India expects to secure the "Elite Economic Zone (EEZ)" that under the law of the ocean gave India full right to investigate 2.3 million square kilometers (Mohammed, 2015). This is the path from India to make their exchange and energy protections not upset. Israel then again is more worried about any psychological oppressor's edifices developing in the area. Additionally, as it cannot utilize the land courses that are hindered by its Arab enemies, the Bab-el-Mandeb is the point from where it can travel to South or East Asia.

Indo-Israel is commonly worried about the worry of Iran and Pakistan in the district. The danger from Iran made Israel build its essential reach via air and ocean. It is expanding its maritime abilities, making submarines to hold long-range rockets and one such rocket was even tried in the Indian Ocean. India does not consider such to be a danger, as they are participating in a maritime framework also, Israeli key development will guarantee Indian interests. The Israelis expect to set up a submarine fit for an atomic base second strike that will keep going as deterrence to Pakistan (Inbar, 2017). Likewise, Israel's key developments will counter China's expanding inclusion in the IO area. India itself is expanding its tactical presence to counter China.

Such factors and common concerns and interests make Indo-Israel collaboration vital concerning the Indian Ocean Region.

The following worry for Indo-Israel relations in a geo-key setting is "Iran". India and Iran have great respective relations. India is reliant upon its energy needs over Iran, after Saudi Arabia, Iran is the second-biggest provider of oil to India (Cheema, 2012). And surprisingly as far as the geo-political field, India thinks that it is important to help Iran for local strength in southwest Asia. India showed its unmistakable position over Iran's atomic program, that it has full right to utilize its atomic capacity yet through IAEA

(International Atomic Energy Agency) (Abhyankar, 2012). For Iran, India is a source that can keep away from its essential separation and give markets to its oil and gas, so it is less subject to the West.

Then again, Indo-Israel relations are truly mounting since the post-cold conflict time frames. Iran was the solitary Middle Eastern country that had a problem with Indo-Israel discretionary relations. In any case, later it never referenced the developing relations when it was managing India. While Israel consistently showed its interest in India-Iran relations. Israel more than once showed anxiety that India may release atomic data to Iran (that Israel considers a major danger to its public safety). It additionally stressed that India may sell military innovation that it bought from Israel to Iran.

Narendra Modi, as the Prime Minister of India, is effectively doing a "balanced approach" between India and Israel. Its collaboration in Chabahar port and Farzad B gas field is proof of his approach achievement (Verma, 2017). Additionally, when he is managing Israel over security organizations, he disregards Iran.

The United States of America is consistently a significant state concerning Indo-Israel relations. From 1950-80 India and the US were on various sides of the coin. In any case, after the end of the Cold War, India required US support because of a homegrown monetary emergency, the vanishing of the Soviet Union, and the US arising as the single hegemon on the planet. Additionally, the US presence in the Indian Ocean makes it a significant entertainer for Israel and India. The condition between the two countries changed and the US even worked with Indo-Israel rapprochement.

The force of Jewish anteroom in America cannot be disregarded as it ends up being powerful to make Israel and Americans raise how significant this prospering Indian people group in the US is.

The Jewish and the Indian campaign in the US collaborate, for example, the "American-Israel Political Affairs Committee (AIPAC) and Jewish Institute on National Security Affairs (JINSA)" work to improve ties with India and the Indian campaign (Inbar, 2017). Additionally, there are Indian campaigns, for example, the "US-India Political Action Committee (USINPAC)" which is attempting to fabricate long-standing ties (Inbar, 2017).

India utilized Israel's impact in the US as commonly to accomplish its objectives. India and Israel effectively got the endorsement of sending the "Phalcon AWACS" to India from the United States (Inbar, 2017). Further in 2003, the two of them effectively made the US add a correction in the bill (offering help to Pakistan) that called for Pakistan to stop aggressors' entrance into India and the spread of weapons of mass destruction (Inbar, 2017). In 2008, it was because of Israel's efforts that the "US-Indo atomic arrangement" was passed by the Americans.

4. India's Quest for Regional Hegemony

Regional influences had arisen throughout the world in the post-Cold War era which changed the direction of world affairs. India, being South Asia's biggest

state, expects to accomplish the situation with a "local hegemon". To accomplish its local desires, India for a long time has been building up its domestic's market and worldwide reach. India indeed had a legacy to establish itself as a regional hegemon but at the same time partnership with Israel is increasing its military buildup which will play a key role in shifting South-Asia bipolarity to uni-polarity.

The Indian political elite from the very beginning wanted India to be a regional or world power. One of the principal architects of current India and the primary head of government Jawaharlal Nehru consistently lectured this expectation and aspiration in his addresses and expressly in his strategies. Somewhat less than a year before freedom, while moving the target goal in the Constituent Assembly on December 13, 1946, Jawaharlal Nehru expressed the goal to make India a significant force on the example of the heavenly past (Khanum, 2020). Many in India wanted to revive the lost legacy of Hindu culture during British rule. The work of two prominent advocates of Hindutva, Vinayak Damodhar Savarkar, and Narendranath Datta is primarily focused on the significance of Hindu civilization and the need for its revival by making Hindu India a major power not only in South Asia but in the world.

India is also building its financial and military force. Since the 1980s India has achieved a marvelous monetary achievement, one that has assisted with changing a tremendously thought little country into another local force to be reckoned with. The unquenchable longing for monetary development driven by its local business visionaries has given an amazing pace of GDP development (8% yearly) because of the broad methodology in boosting up direct unfamiliar interest in districts, which are wealthy in iron metal, coal, bauxite, manganese, and different minerals (B. Khan, 2008).

Aside from the economy, there is a quantum jump in the modernization of its military, one of the biggest in the world. The modernization plan has put an explicit spotlight on reshaping India's air guard framework (S - 300VM), with atomic competent long-range aircraft and innovation, for example, automated observation airplane and air dispatched weapons, provided generally by Russia and even by Israel (as discussed above). Undertaking 'Seabird' comprising the Karwar maritime base, a flying corps station, a maritime deadly implement terminal, and rocket-storehouses. More significantly, maybe is the essential 10-year safeguard arrangement, which India has endorsed with the US (B. Khan, 2008).

5. Implications for Pakistan

Indo-Israel developing collaboration has immediate or roundabout implications for Pakistan. In the absence of strategic relations with Pakistan, Israel is improving its participation with India and India is a significant country for Israel in the South-Asian region. It considers India to be a more autonomous entertainer than Pakistan. India, then again, considers Pakistan as a solid opponent, and the bone of contention between the two is "Kashmir".

Pakistan guard financial plan is mounted accordingly from threatening India. Seeing the developing collaboration in protection and arms between the two nations, Pakistan thinks about some genuine ramifications.

5.1. Threat to National Security

Common arrangements between India-Israel regarding guard and space collaboration had represented a critical danger to Pakistan's safety. Israel can give India innovative and progressed arms and ammunition which they are utilizing against Pakistan ordinarily. The "techSar" of India worked with the assistance of Israeli specialists and represented a significant test for Pakistan, as India can follow Pakistan's essential devices, common military organizations, and so on (Mustafa & Hussain, 2019). Another serious deal was the acquisition of "AWACS" which gave Indian an edge in its flying corps capacities, ringing bells for Pakistan (Mustafa & Hussain, 2019). Indian ownership of "Bolt 2" could kill Ghauri and Shaheen (Khan, 2020). Likewise, ownership of "Phalcon" by India because of the politeness of Israel can identify Pakistan warplanes (Khan, 2020). Such development innovation in India is making Pakistan; India will want to recognize and think about each conceivable move by Pakistan and will want to counter it with its new development innovation.

India exploited LOC commonly by utilizing Israel to give innovation or help. The developing insurrection, after Narendra Modi, came to control, in Kashmir constrained him to utilize Israeli help to stifle it like utilizing white phosphorous bombs on individuals of Kashmir. This may by

implication influence Pakistan as Indian powers are attempting to smother the Muslim voices in Kashmir and assuming responsibility for the space.

Another space of danger to Pakistan's public safety is Israel and India's collaboration in the Indian Ocean. Their maritime development in the space will affect Pakistan's opportunities to check a point in the district and will influence its security and points. Pakistan commonly had freely pushed that India and Israel's collaboration in the space of protection is upsetting the local harmony and overall influence. However, numerous couples had reacted, indeed the US generally embraced Indo-Israel common protection relations. Further cooperation between RAW (Research and Analysis Wing) and Mossad had presented a critical test for Pakistan. As indicated by a knowledge source Indian organization RAW and Israeli partners set up four new offices to keep an eye on Pakistan (Khan, 2020). These two associations participate in Islamic illegal intimidation after 9/11 which additionally represents a huge danger to Pakistan.

5.2 Implications for Pakistan's Nuclear Deterrence

As far as Pakistan's insight, Indo-Israel relations had prompted the moving of vital harmony in South Asia by providing India with military hardware and just as atomic progressed offices. As India is against Pakistan's atomic

capacity, so is Israel, it sees it as an "Islamic bomb" (Mustafa & Hussain, 2019). The triple coalition US-India-Israel does not consider Pakistan's atomic bomb as its need but rather thinks about it as an approach to building deadly implements. Israel gave India such instruments through which they can keep reconnaissance over the atomic program of Pakistan, for example, "Nationalist Advanced Capability (PAC)" and "Green Pine Radar" (Khan, 2020).

6. Conclusion

South Asia is a region that is dominated by India and Pakistan since their independence in 1947. In 1998, when both states announced the commencement of their nuclear tests, the order of the region was bipolar with India and Pakistan dominating the region. As "Offensive Realism" states that the best way for a state to ensure its survival is to achieve a hegemonic position, India following this pursuit wants to achieve a regional hegemonic position in South Asia undermining Pakistan's status. In this regard, Israel, one of its strongest allies for India, is helping India by providing arms, technology, and the support it requires to achieve the status. This result creating a threat that is perceived by Pakistan and Pakistan as a result wants to balance India. Pakistan has to look out for ways how to mitigate threats after India- Israel strategic partnership and cooperation.

References

- Abadi, J. (2004). Israel's Quest for Recognition and Acceptance in Asia: Garrison State Diplomacy. *Routledge*.
- Abhyankar, R. M. (2012). The evolution and future of India-Israel relations. *S. Daniel Abraham Center for International and Regional Studies, Tel Aviv*
- Cheema, S. A. (2012, March 7). India's Iran-Israel Balancing Act. Retrieved March 8, 2023, *E-International Relations* website: <https://www.e-ir.info/2012/03/07/indias-iran-israel-balancing-act/>
- Inbar, E. (2017). Israel and India: Looking back and ahead. *Strategic Analysis*, 41(4), 369–383.
- Fatah, M. (2019). The Course of Relations and Future Scenario. *Madar, The Palestinian Forum for Israeli Studies*. <https://www.rosalux.ps/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Israel-and-India-The-Course-of-Relations-and-Future-Scenarios.pdf>
- Kaura, V. (2019). Indo-Israeli relations in the Modi era: A transformative shift. *Israel Affairs*, 25(2), 217–233.
- Khan, B. (2008). India and the Making of a Hegemon. *AQ-Australian Quarterly*, 80(1).

- Khan, Z. A. (2020). Development in Indo-Israel Defence Relations Since 9/11: Pakistan's Security Concern and Policy Options. *South Asian Studies*, 26(1).
- Khanum, S. (2020). Legitimacy of India's Hegemonic Claims in South Asia: A Security Perspective. *NDU Journal*, 34, 47–60.
- Mohammed, K. (2015). India and Israel: Strategic Partners on the Indian Ocean Littoral. *Indian Ocean Digest*, 35, 20–41.
- Mustafa, G., & Hussain, M. N. B. L. (2019). Indo-Israel Relations: Implications for Pakistan.
- Naha, A. (2020). India-Israel Relations: Opportunities and Complexities. *Social Inquiry: Journal of Social Science Research*, 2(2), 80–102.
- Pant, H. V., & Sahu, A. (2019). Israel's Arms Sales to India: Bedrock of a Strategic Partnership. *Observer Research Foundation Special Report, New Delhi*.
- Shapir, Y. S. (2009). Israel's Arms Sales to India', *Strategic Assessment*, Vol. 12, No. 3.
- Sharma, A., & Bing, D. (2015). India-Israel relations: The evolving partnership. *Israel Affairs*, 21(4), 620–632.
- Verma, R. (2017). Harsh V. Pant. Indian Foreign Policy: An Overview.