CHAPTER 5

ENHANCED RELATIONSHIP: ENGAGEMENT IN MULTIPLE SECTORS

In January 1992, India had the highest level meeting with Israel in Washington which was followed by the announcement to establish full diplomatic ties with Israel. “All normal communication between the two countries would be open”,\(^1\) India announced its decision in less than 24 hours before Narsimha Rao left for New York for the UN Security Council Summit however, Foreign Secretary J.N. Dixit denied any link between the two events.

There had been several considerations for the normalization of relations with Israel. Firstly, it was presumed by Indian leadership that there was an urgent need for better relations with America which had emerged as the sole superpower after the collapse of the Soviet Union. India under its the then political leadership, became vulnerable to the US pressure and its clout in the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and World Bank. Developing relations with Israel was thought as an important diplomatic move that could clear the way for closer economic cooperation with Washington.

Secondly, the main opposition parties who maintained a pro-Israeli stand, kept a constant pressure on the government to establish diplomatic relations with Israel. From the BJP side, Pramod Mahajan spearheaded this demand. He was supported by Yashwant Sinha (Samajwadi Party) while

\(^1\) The Times of India , January 30, 1992
Subramanyam Swamy (Janta Party) and R.K. Karanja (nominated) wanted a more humane approach towards Israel. It is pathetic to note here that these people simply ignored years of continued inhuman treatment of Palestinians at the hands of Israel. Pramod Mahajan pointed out that both China and Pakistan had occupied large parts of Indian Territory yet there were full diplomatic links with them. Yashwant Sinha maintained that India’s foreign policy should be based on national Interest. They argued by being Pro-Arab all these years, India was not able to get the support of the Arab countries during critical times and that these countries had been consistently pro-Pakistan. Thirdly, India wanted to involve in the West Asia peace talks and the US and Israel had made it clear that it required full diplomatic relations with the latter.

Lastly, notwithstanding India’s long standing for the Palestinian cause, it was believed that there were big advantages in developing closer ties with Israel, which include cooperation in the spheres of agriculture industry trade, science and technology and defense.

5.1 Areas of Cooperation

5.1.1 Agricultural Cooperation: There is a great potential for cooperation in the agricultural field since there is considerable interest in India in technologies developed in Israel in sprinkler and drip irrigation systems, greenhouses, hybrid seeds, tissue culture, dry land farming, etc. It is also reported that in 60s Rajasthan had shown great interest in Israel’s arid zone farming technology

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India had much to gain from the Israeli expertise in the field of agricultural innovation. India and Israel were also to coordinate in a number of Agricultural areas, including greenhouse and energy saving technologies and development of marketing infrastructure for fruits and vegetables.

Israel is in the forefront in developing technologically advanced irrigation techniques. Moreover, Israeli companies were not merely content with selling such equipments off the shelf but rather ensure that irrigation systems were fitted according to the needs of the buyers. Yaacov Tsur, the then Minister for Agriculture of Israel called on Foreign Minister Dinesh Singh and discussed bilateral relations. Yaacov Tsur laid the foundation stone of a factory complex a joint venture between an Indian and an Israeli Company. Alongwith this they held that there would be training centre for high tech agricultural development in Jalgaon, Maharashtra. He also laid the foundation stone for an Indo-Israel Agro-Training and Education Centre - a joint venture between the Jain Group of Industries and Israel.³

Since the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1992, more than 50 joint venture agricultural projects were initiated in India in the field of irrigation and water management, fertilizers, greenhouses, tissue culture horticulture, use of solar energy, animal husbandry and dairy development. In June 1993, Maharashtra Chief Minister Sharad Pawar led a six number delegation to the Agritech Exhibition in Israel. The delegation included Union Agriculture Secretary M.S.Gill, and Punjab Minister for cooperation, Sajjan Kumar Jakhar,

who also visited Israel in later of 1993. About 600 farmers from Maharashtra and about 300 more from Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Punjab and Haryana were also there. What they saw clearly impressed them. Israel had utilized its marginal water resources to make the desert bloom. Its strides in horticulture, aqua-culture and floriculture and arid zone farming hold applications for India.

Agriculture Minister Balram Jakhar and Israel’s Agriculture Minister Yaacov Tsur signed an agreement for cooperation in agricultural research training development projects and joint ventures between institutions of the two countries and companies. Major areas of cooperation were water and soil management, for optimal use of water through strip irrigation system, development of ground water resources and salinity and erosion control. Particular emphasis were given on collaborative activities, exchanges to promote farm production in arid and semi-arid areas, increasing availability of biomass and a forestation with special emphasis on commercial species. Balram Jakhar visited Israel in July, 1993, recalled that tomatoes irrigated with saline water fetch high premium sales for Israeli exports in world markets.

Mr. Yaakov Tsur observed that Israel has established a cross country water supply system with 400 km. Pipeline connection Reservoir Lake to farm areas commenting the pioneering research in India in farm Sciences, Mr. Yaakov Tsur said that Israel and India could collaborate in plant protection, veterinary science, farm mechanization and technology development.

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4 Ibid.
5 Indo-Israel Farm Accord, The Hindustan Times, New Delhi, December 24, 1993
6 Ibid.
An Israeli national Frankel attended the Indian sponsored conference on “use of plastics in agriculture” in Delhi. He also personally presented a paper on “significance of drip irrigation and spoke extensively on the Israeli experience on the subject. This four day conference was inaugurated by union petroleum and chemical Minister Mr. Gurupadswamy on February 26, 1990.\(^7\)

Israel had agreed to set up some demonstration centers of its water management technology in Rajasthan. Two separate Memoranda of Understandings (MOU) were signed at the conclusion of five day trip of Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhairon Singh Shekhawat. He said that the modalities and other details of the programme would be finalized after consultations with the Central Government. He said that Israeli Government had agreed to train our people and we will soon send some agriculturists for this training, the cost of which would be borne by the Israeli Government, he said Mr. Shekhawat during his stay in Israel visited some reservoirs to observe the use of waste water and flood waters.\(^8\) The delegation was also shown the agricultural experiment station at Nagev and run off agriculture farm at Wadi Mashuk. The team had an opportunity to study the Israeli cooperative structure at Kibbutz Ginegar, Kibbute Shlubot and Moshav Navatim. Mr. Shekhawat held two rounds of discussions with Israeli Agriculture Minister Youself Wali. He also met Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and a large number of Indian diamond merchants, who were doing excellent business in Israel. As many of them, were from Rajasthan. He invited them to the state to contribute their

\(^7\) The Patriot, New Delhi, March 4, 1994

\(^8\) Israel Know How for Rajasthan, The Hindustan Times, New Delhi, May 4, 1994
skills and resources for the growth of the precious and semi-precious stone industry in Rajasthan.\(^9\)

Talking to the Hindu on the eve of his departure, Mr. Shekhawat said, “The main aim of the visit was to study the water management and moisture conservation techniques evolved there”. A high-level delegation from Israel visited Rajasthan in January 1994 and, conducted a survey in areas irrigated by the Indira Gandhi canal. Mr. Shekhawat said that as a prelude to his tour, officials have made a three point suggestion. While they soon set up a model farm each at Bajju and Lunkaransar in Bikaner district, emphasis had been laid on providing extensive training to agriculture extension officers and lastly evolving techniques of agriculture marketing, he pointed out. Transfer of technology nitrogen fixation and using of liquid fertilizers in drip irrigation channels were the three grey areas on which Mr. Shekhawat had to pay special attention, an expert on the Israeli irrigation agriculture techniques said. The drip irrigation technology was offered to India about three decades back, but not accepted due to snapping of diplomatic ties.\(^10\)

In 1993 an agreement was signed between the two governments for cooperation in the fields of agriculture during the official visit of the Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres, the Agreement offered state of the art technology to stimulate agricultural growth at competitive prices.\(^11\)

During the Israeli president Ezerman’s official visit in 1996, the Indo-Israel Research and Development farm was inaugurated in Indian Agriculture

\(^9\) Ibid.
\(^10\) Shekhawat Team Leaves for Israel, The Hindu, New Delhi, April 22, 1994
\(^11\) The Times of India, March 5, 1993
Research Institute at Pusa in New Delhi. The proposed project was to transfer Israeli Technology in high-tech agriculture, including soil water and crop management.\textsuperscript{12} The farm would demonstrate the Israeli know-how in high-tech agriculture and would endeavour to find different techniques and methods of cultivation suitable for the diverse agro-climate zones of India.\textsuperscript{13} The demonstration farm in Pusa Institute is a joint venture undertaken by the government of Israel and India. The farm is operating since November 1999 and within this farm, through training programs local farmers are given instructions on various effective measures of crop growing as well as after conservation to increase the growth yield. The purpose of the farm is to demonstrate the cultivation of different kind of crop protection, two fields in which Israel has special expertise. The farm serves as a centre for training in various aspects related to the farm technologies, management and so on. The farm grows some kinds of crops, vegetables and flowers.\textsuperscript{14}

During the same visit, a cotton demonstration farm in Alkla in Maharashtra was established in collaboration with the State government and agriculture development Company AGRIDEV, in Israel. Further, a series of projects with many state governments in India have been initiated. This included the projects between the Punjab Agro-Industries Cooperation and Ozcot Company of Israel and the Indo-Israel demonstration farm in the field of dairy development in Karnal. Besides, the proposal for setting up a hundred

\textsuperscript{12} Indo-Israeli Cooperation in the Field of Agriculture, \textit{Israel Today}, Vol.3, op. cit.,
\textsuperscript{13} Farah, Naaz, Indo-Israeli Cooperation: Agriculture, Trade and Culture, \textit{Strategic Analysis}, op. cit., p. 897
\textsuperscript{14} Indo-Israeli R and D demonstration farm, \textit{Embassy of Israel}, New Delhi, 1999, p.2
cows’ dairy farm by Israeli design, the Israeli Dairy Board and Punjab government signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish the Modern Satellite dairy farm in Punjab.\footnote{Israel Today, Vol. 3.No.5, September-October, 1997, op. cit., p.13}

Tahal, the Israeli water management Company is engaged in Rajasthan, Gujrat and Tamil Nadu for waste land development, irrigation and water and modern agricultural pilot projects. Israeli company in the field of agriculture has provided turn-key projects for the establishment of tissue culture laboratories in India. Way back in 1997, an executive agreement was signed between the two nations for future programme of action in this sector. This also included the programmes for establishment of green houses, open field facilities, infrastructure and technical assistance, training and management for specific periods.\footnote{Ibid} A steering Committee was also constituted comprising experts from both the countries to monitor the entire programmes. It was also decided to provide twenty five training scholarships for participants from India, particularly in the fields of irrigation, protected agriculture and horticulture production. Thus, the collaboration in agriculture has turned out to be one of the most attractive and explored one by both the states since the commencement of the diplomatic relations.

So far, there are some 150 joint ventures between Indian and Israeli companies, most of them are in the sphere of agriculture. Israel’s famous drip irrigation systems are jointly manufactured in three different locations in India, there ventures enjoy participation by Israel’s leading agricultural companies.
Agriculture is still the field for which Israel is best known in India, as can be witnessed in Indian participation in Agritech, Israel’s Triannual Agricultural Exposition (held in 1996 and 1999).  

### 5.1.2 Cultural and Tourism Cooperation

Culture and Tourism are becoming popular exchanges for the two countries. Till the establishment of their diplomatic ties; only about 3,000-4000 visas had been issued to the Indian travelers to visit Israel, which included pilgrims, businessmen, tourists and those visiting their relatives. This number increased to 50,000 in 1993 and 22,000 by the year 1995.

The Israel-India cultural Association was established in 1992 with Zubin Mehta, Bombay born Chief Conductor of the Israeli philharmonic Orchestra, as its honorary President. Israeli publishers regularly participated in book fairs in India and Israeli anthologies have been a success in India and were make available in 13 local Indian languages as well as in English. Furthermore, there were an increasing number of Indian students at Israeli Universities as well as at art academies. A cultural agreement was signed by Israel and India in May, 1993 during the visit of Israel’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Shemon Peres, and within the Frame work of this agreement, two cultural exchange programmes were implemented. In 1994, the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra visited India.

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and several concerts were conducted by Zubin Mehta in Bombay and New Delhi.

During the visit of President Weizmann to India in December 1996, the second cultural exchange programme was signed, Israel participated in the Delhi International Book Fair for the first time and the Israel cultural centre was inaugurated in New Delhi with the Shalom India Festival, a month long of India’s 50th anniversary. The well known Indian poet, Vikram Seth, participated in the Jerusalem poets festival in 1997, and his book ‘A Suitable boy’ was translated into Hebrew.\(^{19}\)

In 1999, a festival to celebrate Israel’s 50th anniversary was celebrated in eight cities around India and the exhibition of the City of David was featured in Bombay and an ethnic pop musical concert by Israel’s prominent singers was performed in Delhi and Mumbai. Israel participates annually in Film festivals in India and a weeklong festival of Israeli films is featured regularly. Books by Israeli writers are being published by private publishers in India and a meeting of Indian and Israeli intellectuals takes place annually the Israeli Minister of Education and Culture, Limor Livnat, signed an Action Plan in New Delhi in September 2003 as part of a programme for cultural and educational cooperation and an exchange programme on cooperation in the field of education.

\(^{19}\) Ibid., p. 900
In the context of bilateral relations, there is a mutual understanding that cultural ties should be tightened in order to reach both the civil society as well as the elite in both countries. There is a general consensus that this should not be confined mainly to institutional relations and that socio-cultural affinities are a key element to improving ties between the two countries.

5.1.3 Cooperation in Trade and Commerce

Though there were limited points of contacts between India and Israel prior to diplomatic relations. But after developing diplomatic ties, trade relations between these countries have grown. The two governments have assisted in creating a highly deal-friendly environment for the development of business. Considerable progress has been achieved in trade relations since 1992, with an average of 50 percent growth. Prior to 1992 there was little direct Trade between India and Israel. However, Trade in diamonds was carried through Indian Merchants in Israel.

Diamond used to be the predominant item in Indo-Israel trade, accounting for 96% of Israel’s import. Israel’s import of Diamond from India reached $ million in 1987. In 1993, India exported $ 3445 million worth of diamonds to Israel, the highest so far. This represented a rise of 33% over 1992.

Thus, the impact of the establishment of diplomatic relations had been most immediately noticeable in Economic Affairs. With the Economic liberalization policies and new relationship between the two countries, the trade

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21 *India Today*, New Delhi, March 15, 1994
relations were showing upward moves. There were tremendous interests in the circles of India and Israel. The interests were not restricted to mere import and export of products, but of maintaining a continuous relationship by way of joint ventures. Such joint ventures between India and Israeli corporate sector had so far materialized in the field of drip irrigation, phosphoric acid, Textiles, Agriculture, Electronics and High tech, Health care, software, solar Energy, Turism and Joint projects in Industrial Research and Development.²²

India had very close relations with the Arab world from the ancient times. India with exportable surplus of resources like coffee, tea, spices and other consumer goods had been a centre of big competitive market to the West and the Arab World. India’s trade relations are not only confined to the consumer and commodity products but also entered potential fields like engineering goods, gems, jewellery, chemicals and so on, which widened the scope for trade. Further, India depended much on the Arab world for its oil consumption. This indicates that Indo-Arab trade relation is a complementary and not competitive one.²³ This emerging trade relationship and mutual economic dependency led to the increasing economic and technological cooperation between India and the Arab World in the subsequent periods. During the later years, it turned out to be a fact that India’s main imports from the Arab states consisted of oil, cotton, phosphate and dates, where the Arab states have alternative and easy source of supply of tea textile, jute and light

²² Indo-Israel Business Opportunities, Mr. Gershon Kedar.(Second Secretary), Embassy of Israel, Joint Ventures.

engineering goods, India’s alternative of oil, cotton, phosphate are too far away to be commercially advantageous to her.\textsuperscript{24}

The oil factor and the manpower in the Gulf region influenced the economic relationship. It is also believed that these strategic and economic factors have largely conditioned India’s West Asia policy in a bigger way.\textsuperscript{25} Because of the tremendous trade relationship between India and the Arab States, the state of Israel remained off from the policy priorities of India in the region for a long run. But by 1990’s some events changed the very character of global politics. It also brought technological progress and shifted traditional approaches to economic policies. Further, the end of the cold war, has unleashed a wave of global political integration and the Marakash Agreement of 1994 changed the rules of the global trade.\textsuperscript{26} This changed scenario probably brought India and Israel closer to each other which resulted in the establishment of diplomatic relations between these two states in 1992. The low level diplomatic relations was a deterrent for the development in trade. But by the early 1990 all this started changing. Around the time that India and Israel established the diplomatic relations, India globalized its economy and opened its doors to economic cooperation with the West and the rest of the world. Subsequently, there was a government to government interaction between India and Israel which led in forging of a framework for the trade and economic cooperation. In May 1993, the two states signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), and this was followed by the signing of an agreement

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid
\textsuperscript{26} Human Development Report-1999, p. 28
on such cooperation in December. This agreement came into action from August 28, 1995. This agreement grants the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status to both the countries and allowed for import of Indian goods to Israel without import permits, except where such permits are required from all countries under Israeli custom regulations.\textsuperscript{27}

In January 1996, the agreement on customs cooperation was signed. Under the standards of cooperation M.O.U., the Standard Institution of Israel (SII) and the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) had agreed to cooperate in testing of quality of goods in both the countries. The Industrial Research and Development Cooperation MOU envisaged the setting up of a fund to finance Research and Development projects in the private sector, which cover the developments of products and applications of commercial use.\textsuperscript{28} The final draft of the agreement was initiated in January 1996, besides this, the agreements on double taxation and bilateral investments were also signed in January 1996. These agreements have smoothened the frame work for trade and economic cooperation between the two states. The double taxation treaty signed by both the countries widened the business relationship between the two markets.\textsuperscript{29} Despite of imposing new Taxes, this treaty ensured that an entity conducting business in the other country will not be exposed to double taxation on the same income both in the country of origin and in the country of residence.

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid
\textsuperscript{29} Zeev Weiss, “Double Taxation Treaty” No.8, p.10
As a result of this facilitation, the trade volume between the two countries has risen by an average of 50% every year from 1992 to 1996. Steadily from $186 million to $386 million in 1995 and from $456 million in 1996 it reached to $1004 million in 1999.\textsuperscript{30} This was five times the level of trade in 1992. Amiram Halevy, the Israeli counselor for Economic Affairs remarked that, “It was something unexpected”. He further said, “A level of one billion $ bilateral trade was targeted only for the year 2000, but in reality it turned out to be better then expectation”.\textsuperscript{31} But in 2000 the bilateral trade reached to $1009 million. However it declined to $857 million in 2001.\textsuperscript{32} Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between these two states, many delegates from both the countries visited each other for exploring the market opportunities. The delegates from Israel included Ministers of External-Affairs, Finance, Industry, Trade, Telecom, Agriculture and various other dignitaries from different firms and associations.\textsuperscript{33} But the visit by Israeli premier Ariel Sharon to India in September 2003 was considered very important as he was the first Israeli Prime Minister who visited India since the establishment of the diplomatic relations between the two countries. Six bilateral agreements in different fields were signed during his visit.\textsuperscript{34} From the Indian side, the high level delegation included Ministers of Finance, Commerce, Agriculture and Chief Ministers of various states. These visits have led to the signing of a series

\textsuperscript{30} \textit{Indo-Israel Tarade-1999: Reaching $ 1 Billion Earlier than Expected’ Economic Department of Embassy of Israel, January 2000, p.1}
\textsuperscript{31} \textit{Ibid}
\textsuperscript{32} UNI, Backgrounder, New Delhi, \textit{India-Israel Relations}, Vol. XXII, No.6, February 6, 1997, p. 2
\textsuperscript{33} \textit{Israel Today}, Vol.3.No.5, September-October, 1997, p. 13
\textsuperscript{34} \textit{Hindustan Times and The Times of India, September 8 &13, 2003}
of bilateral agreements between the two governments.\textsuperscript{35} The outcome of these exchanges of visits by the delegations of both the countries was increased cooperation in Industries and trade.\textsuperscript{36}

5.1.4 Defense Cooperation

Diplomatic relations between Israel and India and the normalization of bilateral ties enabled the two counties to develop their military cooperation as a joint strategic interest. Extensive changes in India, by the beginning of the 1990s, had brought about a significant change in the Indian security perspective and a restructuring of its defense capability (the fourth largest army in the world). During the decade, India underwent a transitional stage in terms of building strategic security as well as in terms of its national defense policy. According to Nancy jetty, the following parameters influenced the Indian Security perspective in the 1990s.\textsuperscript{37}

First, India’s status and power projections remain essentially contingent on its national security in terms of political stability, economic development and military strength. Second, although the asymmetrical power structure in South Asia ensures India’s centrality, its regional power and influence tends to get circumscribed by the neighbouring countries’ sustained pressure to counter its pre-eminence. In particular, Pakistan’s unceasing search for parity with Indian makes for a deep rooted strategic dissonance in the region which

\textsuperscript{35} Israel Today, Vol.3.No.5, September-October, 1997,p.13
\textsuperscript{36} K.P. Bhanumathy, Indo-Israeli Ties Gathering Strength, Mainstream 32, (18), March 19, 1994, p.33. Also Israel: 40 years of Independence, The Times of India, April 14, 1994
\textsuperscript{37} Jetty, Nancy, India’s Security challenges: Perspectives and Prospects, Strategic Analysis, Vol.XXI, No.9, 1997, p.243
effectively reduces its capacity to shape or influence events in its
neighbourhood. Third, continued involvement of external powers in the region
remains an integral part of South Asian geopolitical realities. The end of the
Cold War has weakened the inevitable link between regional conflict and Great
Power rivalry. However, the inability of the states of the region to evolve a
credible bilateral and regional framework for cooperation would continue to
play an important role in reinforcing the pattern of external involvement
primarily in pursuance of their own strategic interests in the region.\(^{38}\)

The normalization of bilateral ties between Israel and India made it
possible for two countries to develop their military connections based on their
security and commercial interests.\(^{39}\) The real opportunity for Israeli Indian
military strategic cooperation can be found in India’s search for technological
independence and Israel’s quest for military qualitative superiority regarding its
Arab neighbours. India’s substantial difficulties with upgrading and
modernizing its armed force compelled India to seek long term collaboration
with Israel. On the other hand, arms exports have been an essential and integral
part of Israel’s security sector since such exports lower the unit cost of
production, offset the cost of research and development, reduce Israel’s balance
deficit and provide employment. The Israel defense industries cannot depend
on Israeli market alone and about quarters of its production has to be exported.
Therefore, Israel’s military relationship with India presents an attractive and
challenging opportunity for Israel and provides a market for its defense

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38 Ibid, p. 247
industry. In other words, India’s search for technology and Israel’s need for making its defense research a viable economical entity are complementary.⁴⁰

The national security factor has evolved as the dominant factor regarding Israeli-Indian relations and is based on the convergence of strategic and national security interests. According to Dinesh Kumar, “The symbolic nature of Indian and Israeli security interests caused the two governments to interest extensively in terms of Israeli-Indian military cooperation. He pointed out that India has developed its military ties with Israel because, after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, crucial supplies of military spare parts were interrupted and India felt the need to diversify its defense suppliers and realized the danger of being too dependent on one source. India’s sort-term defense preparedness depended not only its ability to obtain crucial spare parts, but also on upgrading its existing forces and India’s major defense projects were constrained because of the lack of the advanced technology.⁴¹

India has realized that overcoming the above challenges could be achieved by developing its military ties with Israel. Since Israel’s research oriented industrial military sector is viewed by India as a good option for answering some of its defense and security needs. Israel’s sophisticated expertise in the sphere of manufacturing and upgrading high combat, aircraft, anti-tactical ballistic missiles, electronic warfare and communication equipment, as well as security technology are of particular interest to India. The Indian military force has also shown interest in the Israeli Defense Force

⁴⁰ Klieman, S. Aaron, Israel and the World After 40 Years, (Washington, 1990), p. 3
⁴¹ Projects like Main Battle Tank (Arjun), Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) and Integrated Missiles Development Programme (IMDP).
warfare strategies and concepts. On the other hand, Israel is interested in military cooperation with India. The Israeli need for military superiority in terms of arms over its neighbours is linked to its need for having access to more markets for its military exports and India is a big attraction in this regard. Exchanges of defense delegations have been steadily increasing. Among the Indian officials who visited Israel were Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) Secretary A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, Chief of Air Staff, S.K. Sareen, and the then Defense Minister Sharad Pawar. The Israeli naval Chief and air Chief were among the Israeli officials who visited India.

5.1.5 Military Cooperation

India as the advocate of ‘non-alignment’ strongly opposed the creation of military alliances. Many military alliances under the umbrella of Western powers were formed. The Middle Eastern Defense Organization (MEDO), in 1952, the South East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). The Turko-Iraq pact and the Baghdad pact in 1955 came into being. But Nehru as the architect of non-alignment strongly opposed the MEDO and also showed strong reaction to Baghdad pact of 1955. India’s strong opposition to the creation of the military alliance was on several grounds. First, it aggravated political tension in the Arab World. Secondly it unwillingly encouraged and helped the very forces that it intended to restrain or suppress. In other words, it provoked the Soviet Union to enter the region in a
big way with offers of massive arms and economic aid to anti-pact Arab States.\textsuperscript{42}

India, which is now very close to Israel as far as security or military cooperation is concerned though its relations with the Zionist State remained cool for several years, especially before 1990s. But the changes in the international geo-strategic environment, Gulf War 1990-91, disintegration of Soviet Union, traditional friend and partner of India, emergence of United States of America (USA) as sole super power. Moreover, an unimaginative Indian leadership throwing principled strands of foreign policy to wind and hiding itself behind the curtain of ‘pragmatism’ pushed India to move towards West particularly Israel and the USA.\textsuperscript{43} Israel has since then looming large on Indian scene and has then been selling arms under the pretext of helping India in combating terrorism. Building up of close relations with USA and Israel means India’s drift not only from the Arab countries of the region but also from the ‘non-alignment’ which is being adhered by India almost since her independence.

Before the two countries established diplomatic relations, they already had cooperated clandestinely on military and intelligence matters. It was in January 1963, a few months after the Indo-China Conflict, that the government of India consulted the Israeli specialists in military matters. It was the Israeli chief of the Army staff and chief of Military intelligence who visited India for an exchange of views with some of the India’s military top brass, including the

\textsuperscript{42} Najma, Heptulla., India-West Asian Relations: The Nehru Era, (New Delhi, 1991), p.175
\textsuperscript{43} Farah, Naaz, Indo-Israel Military Cooperation, Strategic Analysis, August 2000, Vol. XXIV, No.5, p. 969
chief of the Army staff. In the subsequent years, Israeli dignitaries visited India from time to time, for instance Yigal Alon, a member of the Israeli cabinet visited in 1965 and Moshe Dayan in 1977.44

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1992, as far as military visits and military contacts between Israel and India were concerned, senior officials from Defense Ministries of both countries have regularly exchanged working visits, many of which were veiled in secrecy. In February 1992, the Director General of the Former Israeli Police Ministry attended an International Police convention in New Delhi. In May 1992, an Israeli delegation including manufactures of military equipment, visited India. In August 1992, a delegation from the Malat Company came to India to offer cruise missile technology for unmanned reconnaissance aircraft and according to some media reports, the offer included the joint development of the searcher Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) and the supply of an Israeli secure digital data link to India’s MiGs combat jets.45

By mid 1992, India and Israel had made considerable progress on the possibilities of cooperation in key defense areas. A six member Israeli defense team came to India and had meetings with several defense ministry officials.46 The team had come at the invitation of the ministry of defense. This visit within the five months of establishing of diplomatic relations between the two countries was a significant indicator of the rapid progress in Indo-Israeli

45 Kumarswamy, P.R., India and Israel: Evolving Strategic Partnership, Begin-Sadat Centre for Strategic Studies (BESA). Bar Ilan University, (Israel, 1998), p. 14
46 Telegraph, May 29, 1992
military relations. In an interview, Prime Minister of Israel Yitzhak Rabin talked very positively of defence ties with India. In this regard, he said “I believe there is room for it. We are more than ready to cooperate with India in the field of defence whenever and wherever it suits India”.47 Regarding fundamentalism and Terrorism, he said that Israel has been a victim of this for a long time and emphasized that the same had been the concern of India.48 Raising the bogey of fundamentalism and terrorism has always served Israel’s clandestine purpose. The victimizer was calling herself victim and Indian leadership was ready to be duped. J.N. Dixit’s visit to Tel Aviv in the wake of Bombay blasts added to the speculation that cooperation in combating terrorism was a possible area of common interest.49

In April 1993, a delegation of Manufactures Association of Israel, which included representatives from the Israeli Defense Industry visited India in May 1993. The Chief Minister of the State of Maharashtra, the Minister of Defense, Sharad Pawar, acting on direct instructions from Prime Minister Rao led in an Indian delegation to the Agritech exhibition in Tel Aviv accompanied by a high level military team that visited Israeli facilities and establishments such as an anti-terror training facility.50 Earlier Shimon Peres had emphasized Israel’s support to India on the Kashmir Issue. In this context one must not forget the single contribution of the PLO Chairman, Yasser Arafat bringing closer, through his untiring efforts India and Pakistan which resulted in the signing of

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48 The Times of India, March 2, 1993
49 Pioneer, April 1, 1993
50 Sunday, May 30, 1993
Shimla Agreement.\textsuperscript{51} This agreement till now forms the basis of Indo-Pak negotiations. Arafat who called the Iron lady of India, Mrs. Indira Gandhi sister proved to be a harbinger of peace and goodwill in the region. But in contrast the Zionist leader Shimon Peres had different designs. He suggested the changing of the demographic character of the valley of Kashmir on the pattern of Palestine.\textsuperscript{52} This suggestion by Peres speaks volume of Zionist mindset. It was a colonial solution by a colonialist. Moreover Israeli supply of arms could be seen as catalyst of arms race in the region.

In August 1994, Israeli Defense Ministry’s Director General David Ivry, visited India. In March 1995, Israel’s Air Force Commander, Herzl Bodinger, paid an official visit to India and Air Indian counterpart reciprocated by visiting Israel in July 1996. According to the Indian media reports, while Bodinger was in India he offered a Package deals which, Airbrne Warning and Control Systems (AWACS), Remotely Piloted Vehicles (RPVs), access to an air platform of anti-defection and anti-Lamming Manoeuvers, as well as Israeli launched military communication Satellite, specialized weapons and training of Indian air Force personal in the Fourth generation fly-by wire systems. In return, Israel apparently demanded the use of the Indian Air force bases at Jodhpur or Bhuj as air stating facilities.\textsuperscript{53}

In June 1996, the Chief of the Indian Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) and the scientific advisor to Defense Minister Abdul Kalam, paid a visit to Israel, which was described as a

\textsuperscript{51} The Hindu, August 3, 2003
\textsuperscript{52} Frontline, June 18, 1993, p.44
\textsuperscript{53} Hindustan Times, January 27, 1995
highpoint of Israeli-Indian security cooperation.\textsuperscript{54} In the same year, Israel participated in the AeroIndia International air show in Bangalore. In February 1997, the Indian Defense Secretary, T.K. Banerji, reciprocated Ivry’s visit and led a high level delegation to Israel. Furthermore, in March 1998, the First Serving Indian Chief of Army Staff, General Prakash Malik visited Israel. According to India’s military attaché, Col. Brown, it was a goodwill visit, ‘we are looking forward to building a long lasting defence relationships’.\textsuperscript{55}

A top ranking delegation from the Israel Arms Industry (IAI) toured India in 1998. The purpose of which was to accelerate the sale of Israeli made pilotless aircraft and anti-ship missiles.\textsuperscript{56} In the same year, the IAI finalized a large-scale deal with India to sell advanced electronic equipment.\textsuperscript{57} The equipment was developed and manufactured in Israel and comprised no American technology. But the US was against the deal because of India’s Nuclear Tests of May 1998 and demanded Israel for halting the deal. US Pressure on Israel came after the India’s nuclear tests which were carried by India in May 1998. US argued that the deal could violate an international arms control treaty.\textsuperscript{58} However, Israel did not agree and resisted the US pressure to cannel the sale of Advanced Electronic Equipment (AEE) to India.

\textsuperscript{54} Kapila, Subash, \textit{India-Israel Relations: The Imperatives for Enhanced Strategic Cooperation}, saag.No.131, www.saag.org, op. cit., p. 4
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid, p. 6
\textsuperscript{56} International Herald Tribune, (Bangkok), June 10, 1998
\textsuperscript{57} SBB/ME/ 0552, August 25, 1998, p.10
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.
After the Kargil border conflict in 1999, the Indian Defense Ministry signed a contract (for five years) for the delivery of 100 Tactical Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and 200 UAVs for low and high operations.

The Transfer of Technology joint weapon development and joint military production were important elements in Israeli-Indian military collaboration. India needed Israeli technology for its military projects such as battle tanks, light combat aircraft, unmanned aerial vehicles and various types of missiles, in principle, military cooperation and joint venture work for both countries. India is developing its military manufacturing capability. While it is contributing to Israeli research and the development of new weaponry, the Israeli-Indian upgrade of MIG 27 is an example of military cooperation by IAI and Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL). An Indian delegation from DRDO held discussion in Israel regarding the option of Israeli-Indian cooperation including the development prototype of a nuclear submarine.\(^\text{59}\)

### 5.1.6 Cooperation on Counter Terrorism

Counter terrorism is another key area that played a role in the cooperation between Israel and India. India has shown considerable interest in Israel’s internal security technology equipment and methods to counter cross-border terrorism and insurgencies in North-eastern states. In 2000 L.K. Advani visited Israel. He was the first senior Indian Minister to visit Israel since the establishment of the diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1992. Besides, Israel Advani’s foreign tour included France and U.K. and he was

\(^{59}\) Financial Express, November 3, 2003
accompanied by a galaxy of security officials including Union Secretary Kamal Pande, intelligence Bureau Chief Shymal Dutta, Director General of Border Security Forces (BSF), E.N. Rammohan and CBI head B.K. Raghavan. The main agenda of the team was to get the counter-insurgency tactics of Mossad and the study of the security systems of France and the UK. The issue of counter terrorism has been widely considered as an area in which both India and Israel used to have identical concern. Israelis are generally understood to have extensive experience and expertise in counter terrorism. India’s defense Minister Sharad Pawar when visited Israel in 1992 said: ‘The new Indian move paved the way for drawing on Israel’s successful experience to curb terrorism’, but this statement on the part of Sharad Pawar must, at best, be construed as his personal view point and many in India disagreed with it. Pawar conveniently forgot that Israel was not curbing terrorism but a people’s movement, which over the years had become militant on account of brutal suppression of the genuine demands of Palestinians. He also said that such an exchange would also like to get acquainted with Israeli experience in developing technology for anti-terrorist operations. Pawar in his capacity as defense Minister miserably failed to see that military technology has no answer to insurgency. Israel uptill now has failed in this regard.

Advani’s visit was followed by external affairs minister Jaswant Singh’s visit to Israel in June 2000. Jaswant Singh became the first external affairs

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60 Joshi, Manoj, *Mossad, Interpol May Not Have All the Answers*, The Times of India, June 15, 2000

minister who visited Israel after both the countries established the diplomatic relations in 1992. In his dialogue with the Israeli leadership, Singh was able to score an assurance that Tel Aviv would keep New Delhi’s security concern in mind while selling arms to Beijing and would not encourage any deal that jeopardize Indo-Israel relations. The two countries agreed on a structured dialogue to broad base and strengthen relations in the political, economic and security spheres. They decided to set up a joint ministerial commission to have regular dialogue on security and counter terrorism and on substantial cooperation on information technology.

Emphasizing the importance of fighting terrorism, Singh has even told David Levy, the Israeli foreign minister, about the need to set up a global mechanism against terrorism, and asked that there should be intelligence cooperation in between the governments of Israel and India. He suggested that both the countries should take the lead in the fight against terrorism, saying that two countries had much stake in this regard. Besides strengthening bilateral cooperation in various fields and bringing the two countries closer, Singh’s visit to Israel could be considered as significant in political field. Israel has stressed that despite establishment of full-fledged diplomatic relationship between the two countries and bilateral cooperation in various fields, a political gap had existed before Singh’s visit and the ‘gap’ has been bridged because of the Indian external minister’s visit to Israel in June 2000.

63 Ibid
64 The Times of India, July 5, 2000
65 The Assam Tribune, July 6, 2000
There are two aspects of the Israeli counter–terrorist activities that need to be highlighted here. The first is with regard to Palestine. The violation of Palestinian sovereignty and the reversal of political values that the United States and the Israel champion in the region far exceeds the human rights violation that has been perpetrated in the name of counter-terrorism by Israel. The Suicide bombs of the Palestinians pale in comparison to the State counter-terrorism carried out by the Israeli Government. The later are cold and ‘rational’ decisions of the state and a military apparatus of occupation, well equipped, financed and backed by the only superpower in the world.⁶⁶

India’s counter-terrorism policy holds a special significance for India. Ever since the thawing of relations between the two countries, the growth, in partnership between the two countries has been on defense cooperation and counter-terrorism. The two countries agreed on a structured dialogue to broad base and strengthen relations in political, economic and security spheres. They decided to set up a joint ministerial commission to have regular dialogue on security and counter-terrorism and on substantial cooperation on information technology.

India’s location, size, human and economic resources and India’s stature as growing economic, political and military power make it inevitable that India gets drawn into the west Asian quagmire. It makes it inevitable for India to take decisions, and decisions that are not based on emotional or moral quotients. These will have to be decisions based on the empirical and

⁶⁶ See http://www.counterpunch.org/gringberg.html
analytical understanding of the situation in the region.

It is important for India not to be identified with the kind of state that Israel represents: a state where the coercive apparatus has more powers than the civilian authority. Moreover, India has much longer history and geography than Israel and is not a created state. It is for these reasons that India cannot identify with the definitions of terrorism that Israel or the United States would identify with. In the case of counter-terrorism, it will have to be careful, that it does not fall into the league of being a ‘terrorist state’, a term frequently used to define the state of Israel. Terrorism and counter-terrorism are two nebulous and undefined terms that have been used by Israel in the most arbitrary fashion to launch military offensives on other states.\(^67\)

On a practical note, for India to invest in the kind of coercive apparatus and technology that Israel advocates would be bad economics. The techniques used by Israel, whether of fencing, or building walls, or gang wars, or any other technique would not only be expensive, it does not guarantee any permanent or full proof solution. All the techniques employed by the Israeli counter-terrorism agencies, have only limited applicability and limited success rates because the counter-terrorism techniques employed by Israel are reputed for the military effectiveness. The violence that the state apparatus of Israel uses in other states, has only led to further violence and chaos in the region.\(^68\)

Both the US and Israel see India as a potential market for selling counter-terror military equipment. The fact that either copying or collaborating

\(^{67}\) http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr80.html.

\(^{68}\) Siddiqui, Rushda, India and Israel’s Counter Terrorism Policy, in *West Asia and the Region*, by Rajendra M. Abhyankar, (New Delhi, 2008), p. 113
with Israel is an expensive affair, the main issue with Israel’s counter-terrorism policies is whether they could in fact claim strategic successes. But it is argued that while there have been tactical successes; counter terrorism has nowhere been a strategic success. The use of military force is only effective as part of a multifaceted campaign along with social, economic, legal and political elements.