Chapter-5

BJP-Israel and US Axis
The tragic partition of Palestine under the auspices of the United Nations had catapulted the Zionists as leaders of the newly created state of Israel. Soon they were busy in mustering support among those nations and leaders who had opposed the partition. India was a major State, needless to reamphasise, which had stood by the principles of liberty of the peoples all over the world. It had stood for the majority of Arabs in Palestine as against Zionist occupation of their land. Nevertheless, importance of India as a leader of the newly Afro-Asian nations was not lost to the Zionists. Earlier they had tried to win over Gandhi as well as Nehru for their own ends and they had failed miserably in this venture. With the establishment of Israel, they again renewed their efforts. However, Nehru- the architect of India’s Foreign policy brushed their pleas aside. Nehru was emphatic when he was approached by Moshe shertok in 1948, ‘His government had decided to defer consideration of this question’. He further stated, ‘The obvious reasons were that a new state was formed and we had to wait. Normally we should have to be satisfied and know exactly that the international position before taking any step’.

India had friendly relations with the Arabs. She had no wish to do any thing, which might hurt the Arab feeling. However India’s
recognition of Israel was announced on 17th of September 1950. The statement made by the Indian government at that time:

'IIndia will always value the friendship of Egypt and other Arab states' said the press communiqué of the ministry of external affairs. A spokesman of the ministry of external affairs disclosed that 'a memorandum has been received from the Egyptian government, urging the postponement of the recognition of Israel until, her attitude towards the Arab refugees question has been clarified. In response to this memorandum (from the government of Egypt) the Indian government iterated that:

\[
\text{the recognition of Israel does not mean that there is no difference between India's attitude and that of Israel over the questions like the status of Jerusalem and Israeli frontiers. These questions would be judged by India on merits and due regard would be given to the Arab claims.}
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India after its independence in 1947 was charting out its own course of action along with African and Arab Nation States who had recently thrown the yoke of imperialism. Non-alignment was the new mantra, which had brought leaders from diverse backgrounds like Marshall Tito, Gamal Abdul Nasser, Sukarno and Nehru together to pursue independent policies as against ruthless interests of the West. At this juncture, the pursuasion of the Zionists for India’s support was
nothing but an anathema since Zionism and its aims were diametrically opposite to what Afro-Asian Nationalism and non-alignment stood for.

Nevertheless, there were in India, a section of people who thought otherwise. For them friendship with Arabs was merely a ploy to appease the Indian Muslims. For them the Palestinian cause was of no value. The massive trade with the Arab World and remittances India was receiving on account of millions of Indian working in the Gulf was of no consequence to them. Their heart felt desire was friendship with Israel. This had a background.

The Bharatiya Karya Samiti - a wing of Janasangh of 1948 would see the state of Israel in different light. They passed a resolution on Israel in January 1965:

*Israel is the only really democratic country in West Asia. It is a highly developed country and has been playing an increasing important role in the economic development of newly emerging African countries with which she has developed very good relations. By developing closer relations with Israel, India would not only contribute to stability in the region but will also improve her position in a number of African states. It is therefore imperative that India must have full diplomatic relations with Israel.*
The Jana Sangh demands the establishment of full diplomatic relations with Israel. The party argues that when the USA and Russia, the UK and Yugoslavia and the countries such as Ethiopia and Ghana, Kenya can have diplomatic relations with Israel and Arab countries, it does not make any sense why India must alone insult Israel and the world Jews in a stupid bid to appease the Arabs. The party believes that India can partly checkmate Pakistani influence in the Middle East by normalizing the relations with the state of Israel. The Jana Sangh argued that Why India should side with the Arabs against Israel. ‘When they (Arab countries) do not side with us against Pakistan’

The Sangh leadership was of the opinion that Jordon and Saudi Arabia have been all the time helping Pakistan who is India’s enemy. India should also treat them as enemies. According to the party when the UAR, which is partially neutral, can have friendly relations with India, Pakistan and China, Why cannot India be friendly with both the UAR and Israel? And party feels that there is no reason why India should not have the closet relations with Israel. The party wants India to adopt a policy of strict reciprocity regarding Israel and Arab countries. If UAR claims to be neutral in the conflicts between India and Pakistan and India and china, then India should also become neutral in the UAR’s conflict with Israel or any other country. According to the party the India should look beyond Cairo and
understand the variegated pattern of countries surrounding the Mediterranean.

Jana Sangh merged into Janata party, which came into power after the defeat of Mrs. Indira Gandhi’s Congress party in the parliamentary elections of 1977. It was the first time in independent India that the congress was out of power and a coalition of opposition parties had entered the office. Although the Janata government did not complete its full term, it stuck to India’s age-old foreign policy postulates. With regard to the Palestinian question, it maintained a consistent stand.

Nevertheless B.J.P, which was one of the constituents, of the Janata party through its leader Vajpayee, who happened to be the foreign Minister, wanted to give a twist as far as India’s relations with Israel were concerned. Speaking to India Today, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, India’s external affairs minister in Desai’s government, said:

* Differences are not that important in the field of foreign policy because it is always based on elements of continuity and change. There is bound to be some change. But we adhere strictly to the basic postulates and to national concerns because foreign policy should serve national interest.*
This statement of Vajpayee can be construed as prelude to change in India’s policy, which Vajpayee had always nursed, an alliance with Israel.

Though the public pronouncements did not suggest change in the Indian foreign policy. Vajpayee, a leader of the erstwhile Jan Sangh—a right wing party that was a constituent of Janata party, was particularly critical of Indian policy with regard to West Asia. He was against the unqualified support given by India to the Arab states especially during the Arab–Israeli conflicts. He spoke for a policy based on reciprocity. He thought that the attitude of the most of the Arab states during the wars with China and Pakistan had given a severe jolt to the Indians in the 1960’s. Vajpayee’s attempts in arranging the visit of Moshe Dayan is a case in point. While Vajpayee wanted to upgrade the relations with Israel, Prime Minister Mr. Desai categorically refused it by saying that his government would fall if Deyan’s visit became publicly known.

Therefore, when, Janata party took charge of Indian affairs, many in India and outside were quite apprehensive as to India’s policy towards West Asia in general and about the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict, in particular. There was an essential continuity of the earlier foreign policy of India. India maintained its policy of backing the just stand of the Arab nations on Palestine and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to form their own nation state.
about Israel it was made clear that it should withdraw to pre-June 67 borders vacating the Arab territories. Although the right of Israel to exist was recognized, diplomatic status was not given and the statuesque was maintained, as the government did not want to compromise on its earlier foreign policy principles.

Internationally, the friendship of oil producing countries was very valuable owing to India’s economic concerns and requirements of oil. The need to check the allegations of Pakistan against India by labeling India as anti-Muslim continued. Thus the need for promoting India’s secular image still existed. Besides, the need for support in various international forums for India’s various interests could not be ignored. On the Palestinian issue the new prime minister of India Mr. Desai, expressed similar sentiments as his predecessors in office. He felt that the Arab refugees had to be settled and Israel had to withdraw from the occupied territories, which would then, be proclaimed a Palestinian state. He recognized the Israelis right to exist and its security concerns. Referring to his talks with Sadat, he said, ‘I told Sadat that 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’.

After a couple of years of rule of Janata party, the Congress came back to rule India in 1980 and continued its old policies
regarding the West Asia and showed full support to the demand of Palestinians for the vacation of areas occupied by Israel. In 1980, the Israeli consul in Bombay Yousef Hassen, in an interview to a newspaper, stated, ‘there was a strong Muslim-Arab lobby in New Delhi and the Arab ambassador was making use of Indian Muslims to bring pressure to bear on the government’\(^\text{10}\). He also opined that Israel was getting a bad press in India because the press was following the official line, and that India as competing with Pakistan to impress Arabs. All this was considered objectionable by the Indian government and the Israeli consul was expelled. The expulsion was severely criticized by B.J.P, who maintained a pro-Israeli stand. The then BJP vice president Ram Jethmalani called it an uncivilized act and suggested that the better option was to request the appointing state to recall the diplomat\(^\text{11}\). Later, Subramanyam swamy, an ardent advocate of Indo-Israeli friendship deputy leader of the Janata party, pleaded with the government to establish diplomatic relations with Israel and to take the initiative in bringing about a settlement between the Israelis and Palestinians\(^\text{12}\). His plea was turned down by the then external affairs minister, P.V.Narshima Rao.

**Rao’s Compulsions:**

Narsimha Rao’s decision of full diplomatic relations with Israel was hailed by BJP. The then BJP spokesman applauded Rao’s decision
for achieving a stated aim they had failed to realize when the party in its Jan Sangh incarnation shared power in the late 1970's\textsuperscript{13}. It was in fact the doctrine of Hindutva that paved the way for India’s closer relations with Israel in the beginning of the 1990s. The Bharatiya Janata party leader, Mr. L.K. Advani, supported erstwhile cherished goal of B.J.P for having full diplomatic relations with Israel. He said that the government of India had taken a step in the right direction in supporting the UN General Assembly rescinding the 1975 resolution equating Zionism with racism\textsuperscript{14}.

The Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) leader A.B. Vajpayee was more than happy with the decision of establishing the diplomatic relations with the Zionist State\textsuperscript{15}. The then party president, Murali Manohar Joshi also welcomed the decision and observed that there was no reason for withholding the decision given the fact that even Egypt had accepted and accorded full diplomatic recognition to Israel 15 years back and argued that the real reason for the delay was, “the apprehensions of Muslim votes in India”\textsuperscript{16}. Like wise, Shiv Sareen, the president of All India Hindu Mahasabha hailed the decision and said that it was necessary to counter the influence of Islamic bloc on India\textsuperscript{17}. The statement fully expresses the mindset of the R.S.S thinking and their leader.
The BJP, and more broadly, the Sangh Parivar, has an acute and long-standing obsession with Israel. Establishing full relations with Israel was always a distinctive part of the Jana Sangh-BJP’s agenda. Indeed, when RSS chief Balasaheb Deoras was asked in late 1991-after India’s turn towards economic neoliberalism—what’s the one thing he wanted from the soft-on-the-BJP Narsimha Rao government, he unhesitatingly answered: Full-scale diplomatic relations with Israel. While the Communist Party of India condemned the Rao Government’s move and decision and commented that, it was a step in haste.

For over a decade, successive Israeli governments were trying to initiate and develop deeper and wide-ranging cooperation and collaboration with India in economic and defense fields to serve their geo-economic and geo-political interests. From the Indian side, L.K. Advani has always been a strong advocate of such relations with Israel; for; in any event, Advani’s own political party and other like-minded radical Hindu parties saw in Israel a valuable strategic partner on the grounds of the mutually common anti-Muslim agenda. But now that L.K. Advani and his BJP is fully in command of Indian decision-making for the first time after independence, the Vajpayee government has shifted its foreign policy focus from Arab nations to Israel. Once its embassy was established in New Delhi. Israel began to cultivate Indian politicians of all hues in order to give greater content to its
relations with India. However, the various parties rebuffed these overtures, except the BJP, which shared Israel’s anti-Arab and anti-Muslim perceptions.

BJP Government and its Moves:

The ‘turning point’ of Indo-Israeli relations came in 1998 when elections led to a political change in the country (India). The long rule of congress party, with its socialist outlook, lost to the BJP, the extremist Hindu party and Atal Behari Vajpayee became the prime minister of India. Home minister and the deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani, the strong man in the party is a great admirer of Israel. Ever since Indo-Israeli relations progressed rapidly from agricultural sector to defense\(^2\). Vajpayee after becoming Indian prime minister met his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu in New York when both were there on the eve of United Nations session. Both agreed to exchange the visits in order to develop the bilateral relations further\(^2\). After Atal Behari Vajpayee Indian national security advisor Brajesh Mishra visited Israel in September 1999. He had meetings with Israeli officials, leaders on various aspects of bilateral cooperation in multiple fields. This visit provided a major boost to the Indo-Israeli relationship\(^2\). This relationship has assumed much significance after the Kargil crisis-1999 with avenues of cooperation in security, defense and technology sectors opening up. During the Kargil conflict, Israel
was one of the countries to extend a lot of backstage help to the BJP’s coalition government of India, on various aspects from information sharing to strategic consultations\textsuperscript{24}. It was only when the BJP came to power in 1998 that India took some steps towards the normalizing the relations with Israel by sending ministers of high rank such as L.K.Advani, Jaswant Singh and other military officials to strengthen the relations from Agricultural sector to Defense\textsuperscript{25}.

The BJP government in India has made a paradigm shift from cultivating the Arab world towards a strategic partnership with Israel. This shift became evident from a series of high level visits by senior Indian governments officials like Advani, who visited Israel in 2000 during a high profile tour that took him also to UK and France. His mission was to develop international cooperation in controlling the terrorism\textsuperscript{26}. L. K. Advani, a hard liner closely associated with the BJP’s past campaign against the ‘appeasement’ of India’s 200 million Muslims, visited Israel in June 2000. Advani became the first senior member of Indian government to visit Israel since the normalization of the ties in 1992. Foreign policy watchers in India have been talking about the NDA government’s tilt. After Advani’s visit to Israel, Jaswant Singh became the first Indian foreign minister who visited Israel in July 2000. During his visit to Israel, both the countries decided to setup a Joint Commission to steer their relationship in the economic,
scientific, energy and cultural spheres. Jaswant Singh and his Israeli counterpart David Levy both agreed to establish a Joint Forum for combating terrorism. During the visit, Jaswant Singh proclaimed:

*Israel is the only country helping India to combat the Pakistani aided terrorism along its northern border. Neither the United States nor the European Union is prepared to condemn Pakistan or assist India to combat the threat. Israel is the only country willing to transfer high technology to India.*

He further argued 'we were thrown out of the loop of West Asia, particularly in the post Gulf War scenario. We have been now drawn in to the process of peace here. It is a beginning.'

Until 1992 when New Delhi established diplomatic relations with Israel, at the time, prime minister of Israel Yitzhak Rabin and the foreign minister Shimon Peres had played well to Hindu extremist sentiments and stressed on the need for India and Israel to cooperate to combat the 'Islamic fundamentalism' and 'terrorism'. The Israeli foreign minister Shimon Peres also visited India in January 2002. He had some discussions with his Indian counterpart, Indian prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, and Home minister L.K.Advani and defense minister during his visit. He disclosed that Indo-Israeli relations are witnessing the highest level of friendship since a couple of years of BJP’s rule. Equating the struggle in Palestine with the
trouble in Kashmir, he stated that India and Israel were joint victims of the global scourge of terrorism. He said that India could look up on Israel as a friend in the war against terrorism. This analysis of equating trouble in Kashmir with the struggle in Palestine is appalling. Israel being occupiers of Palestinian lands had to face the wrath of Palestinian people since they had lost all hope of peaceful negotiations.

BJP after coming to rule India provided the major boost to the relations between New Delhi and Jerusalem. Along with its sister Hindu militant organization, the BJP had been critical of the pro-Arab foreign policy of Congress governments and have always been pro-Israeli. Israel was and is regarded a potential ally against the threat of Islamic militants. Pro-Israeli Indians proclaim 'Yehudi-Hindu bhai bhai (Jews Hindu brothers). Israel and America are allies for many a reasons. As for India, being a key ally along with them seems to be a ludicrous proposition. Recently, Colin Powell the US secretary of state ignoring India announced, 'Pakistan to be the “major non-NATO” ally. The B.J.P. led Indian government cut a sorry figure since its Prime Minister's oft-repeated dictum that India, “a natural ally of America” had fallen flat on its face.

So long as Congress governed India, the area of Indo-Israel cooperation remained limited to commercial and cultural exchanges. However, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) after coming to power has
assiduously cultivated Israel as a friend and a military partner. Since 1998, there are constant Indo-Israeli contacts on various levels, especially in the realm of cooperation in the purchasing of Israeli arms\textsuperscript{35}.

When the Hindu Right government came to power in 1998, the issue of terrorism took on a new urgency, since this government was prone to depict any act of violence by a Muslim as terrorism and consequently any act of violence by a Hindu as either self-defense or the resentment of years of tyranny. In 1994, L.K. Advani, the then leader of the opposition in India and a major stake in the Hindu Right, visited Israel and has since developed warm ties with Zionist elements in the Israeli establishment. When he returned in 1995, he met Netanyahu, who presented him with a book on terrorism. Since then Advani has made it a practice to quote from that book when he speaks about terrorism, particularly the following:\textsuperscript{36}

‘When war gives terrorism, free society must know that they are fighting and they must reject absolutely the notion that ‘one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter’. In other words, even as this is a rather opaque quote, the PLO [for Israel] and the various Kashmiri militant groups [for India] are terrorists regardless of any political claims they may have.
Hindutva’s alliance with the Jewish-Zionist state is not so strange after all, because at the ideological level Hindutva is much like Zionism, for both extol the importance of the Race-state, and both cast aspersions at the presence of a Muslim minority. If the activists of Hindutva yell ‘Jao Kabristan ya Pakistan’ (go to the grave yard or Pakistan) to Indian Muslims, those of radical Zionism follow Golda Meir former Israeli Prime minister, in the belief that, ‘there is no such thing as a Palestinian’\textsuperscript{37}.

An Indian born analyst at the Zionist Freeman Centre in Houston [Texas] makes just this connection:\textsuperscript{38}

Islamic fascists see Bharat as a soft spot to propagate their irrational creed and foment violence. India tries to placate them. Israel expels them as it did in 1948 and 1967. This is what Bharat should do. If they hate Hindu Rashtra so much they are free to leave for dar-ul-islam’. India must learn from Israel, to act against Pakistan, for instance, in much the same way as the Israeli defense forces acts against the Palestinian authority.

After the visits of Advani and Jaswant, Mr. Shimon Peres’s visit to India in January 2002 also became an occasion to cement the strategic ties between India and Israel. Both the countries seemed to be convinced they were fighting a common enemy, terrorism. At that time
Zvi Gabey, the deputy director general for Asia in the Israeli government stated that, ‘we find ourselves in the same camp that fights terrorism and we have to develop our relationship according to that’. The visit of Peres was considered as the visible sign of the new phase of the Israel-India relationship. Regarding the December attack on Indian parliament, Peres argued that, "December 13 is not just an Indian date but a world date. Terrorism against the parliament was targeted to hit the largest democracy. Fortunately, it was stopped at the right moment. Otherwise there would have been another September 11. It is the same problem, the same terrorism". The B.J.P leadership taking advantage of being there in the government were hell bent on capitalizing on the volatile situation in India which was a creation of their own purport, and projecting Israel their savior.

According to Rajiv Desai:

Unable to cope with the relentless revelations of underhand dealings, the saffronistas found an escape in the December 2002 terrorist attack on Parliament. They jumped at the opportunity and mobilized troops along the Indo-Pak border, only to disengage them eight saber-rattling months later.

In the meanwhile, it was the best moment for the Israeli arms dealers. They milked the Indian taxpayer while they sold arms worth of millions which could not provide India respite from the ongoing
militancy in many parts of the country. The solution lay somewhere else. A political process with all sincerely had to be started.

Closest to the Shimon Peres’s visit to India the United States cleared the sale of the Israeli Phalcon early warning radar systems to India [a deal worth $ one billion]. United States had earlier stopped the deal with the argument that it might escalate the tensions in the subcontinent. However, when the tensions were at war point, the United States allows the sale. Israel sees India as a vast market for its arms and as an ally against what it calls the Islamic world. The United States too is eager to see a new configuration that includes Israel and India to encircle both Islam and Communism, to dispatch the new bogeymen of the 21st century ⁴¹.

Mishra’s Visit to Washington:

After Shimon Peres’s visit to India, the Indian national security advisor Bajesh Mishra visited Washington in May 2003 where he addressed the American Jewish Committee and also proposed a. United States-Israel-India axis against the Islamic fundamentalism during his address at the 97th annual meeting of the American Jewish Committee in Washington he argued:⁴²

As the main targets of international terrorism, democratic countries should form a viable alliance against terrorism and develop
the multilateral mechanisms to counter it. Such an alliance would have the political will and moral authority to take bold decisions in extreme cases of terrorist provocation. It would not get bogged down in definitional and causal arguments about terrorism. Blocking financial supplies, disrupting networks, sharing intelligence, simplifying extradition procedures—these are preventive measures which can only be effective through international cooperation based on trust and shared values. A core consisting of democratic societies has therefore to gradually emerge from within our existing coalition, which can take on international terrorism in a holistic and focused manner. It would ensure that the global campaign against terrorism is pursued to its logical conclusion and does not run out of steam, because of other preoccupations.

Mishra in his address to the American Jewish Committee identified India, the United States and Israel, the main democratic societies fighting terrorism. He underscored the growing proximity between the three states. "We are all democracies, sharing a common vision of pluralism, tolerance and equal opportunity. Stronger India-US relations and India-Israel relations have a natural logic."
Brajesh Mishra considered the United States, Israel and India as the main democratic societies of the proposed alliance by him. Where is the democracy? Is it in Bush’s America? Where spin doctoring and blatant false hood is flavor of the times, Mishra may not sound very off-key, but the world knows the worth of the United States democracy, where a candidate with less popular votes than his opponent was confirmed as the president by the Supreme Court with a majority of conservatives showing open prejudice against the democrats.

No body can compliment Israel of tolerance when it is openly out to commit genocide against the Palestinians in a systematic manner. More methodical than Hitler’s more brash final solution. And speaking of India, where ultra-nationalist BJP, that is out to obliterate all diversities in India’s teeming millions, through the communal riots, through imposing of its own hindutva brand of a state religion, through writing text books and re-writing history books, all by railroading its agenda on agitating majority, would be the last to own up Mishra’s boast of plurality and tolerance.

During his visit to Washington in May 2003, the Indian security national advisor, Mr. Brajesh Mishra stated that the India “is one of few nations in the world with no history of anti-Semitism”. But he was perhaps ignoring that India was also one among the nations that had
been consistently anti-Zionist since the early days of its national movement under Mahatama Gandhi. It is primarily after the BJP-led alliance came to power that the Indian government has started taking an increasingly pro-Zionist stand. When he proposed for an alliance of three nations including India, Israel and US to combat the so called terrorism during his speech to the American Jewish Committee in Washington, Mr. Mishra considered India, Israel and US as the democracies with common vision of pluralism, tolerance and equal opportunity. Is it not a fact that the bulk of the Palestinian minority population was violently displaced from the area located to Israel under the UN partition plan of 1947? Is it not a fact that the Palestinian people are under the brutal occupation of Israel? Is it not a fact that more than half the 8 million Palestinian population are forced to live as refugees both inside and outside Palestine? Is it not a fact that the UN Committee on the Exercise of the inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has repeatedly raised its grave concern over the horrendous treatment of the Palestinians by the occupying Israeli defense forces? Then how Mr. Mishra claimed that Israel has been promoting Pluralism, Tolerance and Equal opportunity? It is nothing but only the BJP’s fascists approach/ ideology to forge solid chains of friendship with US and Israel.
Most of the Indian political parties have condemned the proposal of Mishra and attacked the ruling coalition for its ‘strange and perverse’ obsession with Israel. The most vocal among these has been the congress. It attacked the BJP-led government. ‘Obsession with Israel on the part of the coalition government is strange and perverse—When Israel is facing international isolation. It shows the intellectual insolvency of the government’ were the words of the party spokesman S.Jaipal Reddy. He further committed that his (Mishra) statement was not inadvertent as deputy prime minister Advani had also put forward a similar formulation after September 11, 2001. Noting that strategic partnership with Israel was qualitatively different from that between India and United States. He further stated that Mishra would not have pleaded for such an alliance without prior clearance from the Prime minister. The Congress warned that a strategic partnership with Israel could upset the consensus built around the India’s ‘time-tested’ foreign policy.

The Smajwadi party committed that Mishra should not have made ‘such blatant statement which go against the proclaimed policy of NAM’.CPM and CPI also have accused the government of having ‘completely sold----out to the United States. It is overturning our foreign policy. It is very dangerous-----’ The Communist party of India [Marxist] strongly opposed the India’s move to ally with Israel.
which, according the party has occupied Arab territories defying the United Nation’s resolutions and grossly violated rights of the Palestinian people. The party considered the speech of the Indian National security Advisor which was addressed by him in Washington regarding the alliance of US, India and Israel for combating the terrorism as the complete shift of Indian foreign policy in the BJP –led government. It remarked the proposal of Mishra for the formulation of the alliance of the three states as the Indian offer to becoming a part of US’s global strategy. The party also remarked that the Sharon government in Israel has been notorious for its brutal repressive policy towards the Palestinians. It also argued that Israel with the support of US, occupies Arab territories while defying the united nation’s resolutions. The party also showed strong opposition of the Indian forces in US-led policing operation in Iraq, because according to the party Washington was attempting to legitimize its aggression by dragging New Delhi into its plans. C.P.M also condemned the US efforts to drag India into its plan for occupying and policing Iraq.

There were some reasons for the BJP’s interest with Israel and Zionism. At first, a desire to toad up to the United States through its most important strategic ally outside Europe and isolate Pakistan, which cannot possibly ally with the Israel as an Islamic state? Secondly, the BJP shares Likud’s Islam-phobia and anti-Arabism.
Thirdly hyper nationalism. The BJP is fascinated by the highly militarized, tough-as-nails nature of Israeli society and by its willingness to use massive force against the Palestinians whom it treats as terrorists and sub-human vermin, pure and simple. This closely parallels what some people in the Parivar would like to do to India's own religious minorities.

Indian national security advisor Brajesh Mishra when visited United States in 2003, not only talked about the terrorism but also argued for an anti-terrorism axis. The same arguments regarding the terrorism were drawn by the Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon during his visit to India in September 2003. “There are no doubt the watershed events of 9/11 and the global campaigns against world terrorism have created a new opportunity to create stronger ties between India, Israel and the United States. We are talking about a trilateral strategic triangle, combining efforts and joining hands to combat terrorism in Asia, where we see a large rise in terror activity, particularly of the radical Islamic brand” were the words of a senior official accompanied Ariel Sharon during his visit to India in September, 2003.

Ariel Sharon’s visit to New Delhi in September 2003 took place at a critical juncture when the entire strategic calculus in the West Asia and South Asia stands totally changed due to the events of September.
Professor Martin Sherman in an article in the Jerusalem Post on February 28, 2003 argued, ‘an alliance between India and Israel openly endorsed by the United states would create a potent stabilizing force in the region and could contribute significantly toward facing down the force of radical extremism so hostile to American interests in Western and Central Asia’. He further pointed out there were major considerations beyond regional stability that made a strong case for a vibrant India-Israel axis. For instance in the emerging balance of geo-strategic power, the growing Chinese challenge to the United States primacy will almost invariably dictate the need for a regional counter weight to Chinese domination. Similar views on meeting the Chinese challenge were expressed by Lloyd Richardson of the Hudson Institute, a think tank very close to the US administration, when he said that India is the most over looked of our potential allies in a strategy to contain China. In Sherman’s opinion it was China, enemy no.1 of India and all efforts according to him should be made to contain China not Pakistan.

India and Israel were among the few countries, which enthusiastically applauded President Bush’s declaration of the war on terror with its famous injunction with us or with the terrorists. It was in the context of the war on terror that the strategic relationship of India with Israel and the United States developed dramatically through
defense and security cooperation. It was just a coincidence natural that both Israel and the United States found a partner in the Indian government because of its ideological commitment to militaristic policy.

Washington gave its special blessings to the Israel-India strategic alliance when it gave the clearance to Israel to sell their powerful Phalcon Airborne Warning and control system to India. The United States calculates that the system will serve also its own interests. It has openly stated that any strengthening of India’s military capability is in America’s interest. Despite the reiteration of India’s unwavering support to the Palestinian cause during the visit of Palestinian foreign minister Nabeel Shaath just a few days ago, the Red carpet welcome to Ariel Sharon sends a clear signal of India’s approval of Sharon’s policies. An Israeli commentator Lev Grinberg wrote in June 2002, anticipating the United States invasion of Iraq, Sharon is deeply satisfied with Bush’s Middle East Plan that practically means a global war managed by the Busharon team in which Bush will play the role of the global sheriff imposing a new order in the Islamic states. Sharon has been nominated as the regional sheriff and allowed to impose a new order in his area of influence.

The high profile welcome by the Indian government to the regional sheriff is another clear illustration of India’s subjugation of its
national interests to the United States strategic designs for Asia. Rolling out the red carpet for Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon during his visit to India the BJP-led government solidarized itself with Sharon’s ever-widening repression of the Palestinian people. In pursuit of closer ties with both the Zionist state and the Bush Administration, India’s BJP government has repeatedly drawn a parallel between the United States, Israel and India, claiming that the three are ‘Frontline’ states in the battle against Islamic and state sponsored terror. Sharon’s visit concluded with the issuing of a joint Indo-Israeli statement that claimed the two countries share common goals of advancing peace, security and stability in Asia and defeating the ‘global terrorist’. As victims of terrorism, declared the statement, ‘Israel and India are partners in the battle against this scourge—call upon the international community to take decisive action against this global menace, and condemn states and individuals who aid and abet terrorism’.

Thousands of people across the country took the streets to protest Sharon’s visit. Many held placards such as Butcher Sharon, Go back, and Go back. The protests extended from Kashmir in the North to Chennai in the south. Most opposition parties had issued joint statement denouncing the visit and urging support for the protests. But the Prime Minister of India described the visit of the Israeli premier as “historic”. The Israeli Deputy Prime Minister,
Yosef Lapid, who was along the Israeli premier during his visit to India remarked regarding the visit as, ‘I think our visit can be described as a breakthrough---- your government out of consideration of your ties with Arab world was very moderate in proclaiming ties with Israel more openly. It seems as if we have reached a critical mass where there is no fence in hiding any more that we are on a friendly path’. In anticipation of Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon’s visit to India, a perceptive scholar on Israel and Zionism wrote:

Blind and short sighted support to Israel and ignoring Sharon’s brutal actions represent an ideological shift for India. Meanwhile the Arab world looks on at India’s indiscreet and hasty dealings with these military entrepreneurs. A basketful of dollars spent on high technology weapons from Israel will bring in truckload of wrath from Arab Muslim world. Learning to fight terrorism from a racist, terrorist state is unethical. Even if it is diplomatically convenient.

A senior columnist Mr. Praful Bidwai remarked that it was perversion of India’s foreign policy when B.J.P allowed criminal Sharon to visit India. Sharon has been indicted by the Israeli Judicial Commission for his act of genocide in Sabra and Chatilla camps in Lebanon.
In order to combat the terrorism the three states, viz, United States, Israel and India met in a conference which was sponsored by the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs and the Manipal Academy of Higher Education in New Delhi in the month of February 2003. The conference issued a joint statement:

*India, Israel and the United States are united by a shared commitment to democratic values, human rights and fundamental freedoms. Yet all three are confronted by terrorism in its multiple forms———there can be no justification for any form of terrorism, no cause can justify it ——India, Israel and America and other countries have been victims of terrorism for many years. But it took the events of September 11, 2001 to convince many that concerted action to confront this global menace is necessary. So, while we applaud the success in Afghanistan——— the menace of terrorism persists across the world. The ultimate threat to humanity is the combination of terrorism and Weapons of mass destruction.*

The conferees agreed that, the United States, India and Israel as sister democracies and common victims of international terrorism should pool their resources and experiences in dealing with this menace and create a trilateral mechanism to promote cooperation and
concerted action against terrorism. The conferees also stated that all three countries have been victims of terrorism. All three must take appropriate action against those who fund, incite, train or give safe haven to terrorists. Nothing could be more farcical and blatant negation of realities. It was simple obstinacy on the part of the leadership of B.J.P that they were ready to be a party to the imperialist Zionist alliance, which always worked against the democratic aspirations of the third world people.

The B.J.P leadership was incapable of analyzing the political situation and the uncontrolled outrage arising out of the fall of the World Trade Centre. Though, no body would condone this ghastly act. It is unimaginable for the citizens of independent sovereign country like India to heed to the warnings enunciated by Mr. Bush.

India was once called the leader and a major force in NAM and a bulwark against imperialism. Much has changed since then. Imperialism is perhaps stronger than ever, but the world is muddier and more confused and the Indian government under BJP, has clearly abandoned any effort to project itself as anti-imperialist in any way. In the past few years, the NDA government has systematically dismantled the entire edifice of the independent foreign policy based on non-alignment, which was created in the post-independence period.
The long-term strategic purpose of the United States in building up its alliance with India is really to contain and possibly eventually destroy the growing power of China in Asia and in the world. ‘China represents the most significant threat to both countries security in the future as an economic and military competitor’. The United States relations with its traditional allies in Asia-South Korea and Japan have become fragile and India emerged as a vital component of United States strategy. China’s rapid military modernization and its impressive economic growth are seen as threats by both United States and India’ discloses a report from Pentagon and also the Jane’s foreign report.\(^\text{58}\)

India’s decision not to send troops to Iraq but confirmed that this decision of India would not affect its important strategic partnership with New Delhi\(^\text{59}\). Chairman of the United States Joint Chiefs of staff general Richard Myer stated that the refusal of India for sending troops to Iraq does not bother United States. He further stated that the US-India military cooperation would continue to increase. He also praised the India’s cooperation in the global war against terrorism during his visit to India in August, 2003\(^\text{60}\). The creation of United States-India institute for strategic policy in Washington is the outcome of a series of quiet meetings between the United States and Indian governments, which have also pushed all the military cooperation. Inspite of the Indian government’s desire to send troops to Iraq intense pressure was
mounted by the people of India and the Opposition against this move. The government could do nothing but abandon the initiative towards sending the troops to Iraq.

Iraq has been not only friendly to India but also has stood by her on Kashmir issue. The bulk of trade India had with Iraq prior to its invasion is uncomparable with Israel. B.J.P government obsessed with Israel and USA so-called strategic allies did not bother to count this Iraqi factor.

On the first anniversary of the attack on the Indian Parliament the United States ambassador Mr. Blackwill visited the Parliament House on 13 December 2002. To paid floral tributes to the men who died during the attack on Indian parliament on December 12, 2001. He used the occasion to exhort:61

What could be a more appropriate occasion than this to repeat with full voice and strong heart that India and the United states are together in the war against terrorism. That war will not be won until all terrorism against India and America is ended permanently.

But the United States since the September 11 has belied Indian hopes of a strategic United States-Israel- India axis fighting Pakistan. The United States instead made Pakistan a front-line ally in its fight
against the Taliban in Afghanistan. One should not forget that Taliban was American creation. Bush and other United States officials have often praised India's bugbear, Musharaf, as a stalwart ally and helped him to bring Pakistan back on the path of economic prosperity.

Now the so-called war on terror brought forth a strange coalition of three countries, which consider themselves as an axis against the terrorism. Strictly speaking, the coalition of the three countries viz, United States, Israel and India is nothing but curious progeny of a spurious theory—Clash of civilizations (Samuel Huntington). The Hindus, Jews and Christians versus the Moslems of the world today and the Confucians of China tomorrow. This is nothing but an alliance of dangerous consequences. This is an axis that has been in the making for a while now ever since the quasi-fascist Hindu chauvinists came to power in India a few years ago. The events of September 11, 2001 have seen the entry of India as the Bush's favorite vassal in the region. The blooming of Indo-Israel romance has merely helped seal this dubious deal between three very different countries. What is even more horrific about this emerging Axis of the dangerous consequences is that all of them today harbor elements that have classic Nazi-like inventions towards a liberal and saner world.

In the United States, there are those who talk of nuking Meca who are dangerously close to the powers-that-be. In Israel, the extreme
right wing would like to ethnically cleanse the West Bank and Gaza of its Palestinian people. In India, the state sponsored pogrom in the state of Gujarat two years ago depicts the characteristic of this regime. At the national level, echoing the practices of the Nazis, the current Indian regime has systematically re-written history text books and cooked up archaeological evidence to suit its Fanciful theories about India’s past, persecuted religious minorities and sent storm troopers to physically intimidate its critics. According to Satya Sagar, the Israel and India delude themselves about being invited to sup with the Super power for the latter they are both a highly dispensable duo. Mere Client states to be disposed off with when their utility is over. Israel as the United State’s best bulldog in the turbulent Arab world, to keep an eye on those precious oil reserves. India the dumb, shortsighted elephant to be suckered in to conflict with the Chinese dragon some day. The axis is a strange menagerie of a bulldog, elephant and man-eating tiger that the United States has currently become. A tiger that has always had permanent interests, never permanent friends.

According to George W Bush administration the attack on Afghanistan followed by the attack on Iraq and the warning of further attacks on Iran and Syria are considered a fight against terrorism. The president’s appeal that they must unite to end the terrorism from the whole cosmos stationed him in the front row of this battle, but a glance
in to the history of America reveals that a good number of terrorist activities are run by America directly or indirectly. The American administration certainly has double standards when applying the label terrorist as the full support extended by the United States to Israel in occupied territories proves the point. The word terrorist can no where be more aptly applied than to America's unwanted presence in Afghanistan, in Iraq and help to Israel's regime of terror on the Palestinians. Was not the horrible atomic bombardment on Hiroshima and Nagasaki an act of terror? Was not the attack on Libya a terrorist act? Was not US interference in Iran and naked aggression on Afghanistan acts of terrorism? The recent subjugation of Iraq by U.S.A has revealed the real face of terrorism and has proved as to who is a terrorist.  

Thus India-Israel-US axis is fundamentally an endorsement of the imperialistic designs of the U.S.A and Israel serves the imperialistic-Zionist interests. The US war on terror is an imperialist war.

The basic logic behind the theme of India, the United States and Israel being prime targets of terrorism having a common enemy and requiring joint action is deeply flawed as the United States and Israel are aggressors and India is an aggrieved party. What is common is the determination not to look at the root cause of terrorism and what joins
them in action is the conviction that military action is the only response irrespective of the causes of terrorism.

The axis is more specifically a blanket support for US policy in the West Asia. An Israeli commentator Lev Grinberg wrote in June 2002 anticipating the US invasion of Iraq: ‘Sharon is deeply satisfied with Bush’s Middle East Plan and practically means a global war managed by the ‘Busharon’ team in which Bush will play the role of the global Sheriff, imposing a new order in the Islamic states. Sharon has been nominated as the regional Sheriff and allowed to impose a new order in his area of influence. It was the regional Sheriff who was given the Red Carpet well comes in New Delhi on September 09, 2003.”

By joining the axis India under BJP, has let down the Palestinian people. There was no reference to India’s support for a Palestinian state in Vajpayee’s speech at the banquet in honor of Sharon. The absence of reference to even the US sponsored road map was conspicuous in the Joint statement. The proforma reiteration of India’s unwavering support to the Palestinian cause during the hastily arranged visit of Palestinian foreign minister Nabeel Shaath sounded even hollower after Sharon’s visit.

To be a friend of Israel apparently means something quite simple. As Tony Smith observes in his authoritative study, ‘The power
of ethnic groups in the making of American foreign policy’ (Harvard),
the meaning is that, ‘Israel alone should decide the terms of its
relations with its Arab neighbors and the US, should endorse those
terms whatever they may be’.

The delusion about a new strategic equation that would dominate
the geographical region between the two countries will only create
tensions and instability in Asia. It will lead to a major shift in the
balance of power not only in the Indian subcontinent but also in the
Middle East and the rest of Asia.

Projecting Israel as a model will be detrimental to the
democratic and secular character of India. References made in the Joint
declaration to India and Israel being democracies and having gained
independence and embarked on nation building are unpardonable
distortions of history. What is the comparison between India and
Israel? Israel is a settler colonialist state having gained independence
by military occupation and which embarked on nation building by more
brutal occupation.

References to ‘civilizational relationship between India and
Israel will invariably be seen as subscribing to the thesis of Samuel P
Huntington’s clash of civilizations and will be treated as the basis for
anti-Islamic alliance. This has serious domestic implications.
Panchajanya, the RSS mouthpiece says, ‘Both India and Israel are
facing Muslim terrorism. Israel has faced the threat from Muslim terrorists boldly and effectively and we should appreciate it". The axis will undermine India’s position in the United Nations where it will be expected to vote for Israel, a state, which has consistently defied the United Nations. Commenting on Sharon’s visit, the Israeli daily Haaretz called upon India ‘to translate its openness towards Israel into changes in its voting patterns of the United Nations. Up to now India has automatically cast its ballot with the pro-Arab majority’. Rather than improving India’s chances of getting permanent membership in the Security Council, the axis may weaken its claim.

It will complicate India’s relations with China as both Israel and US want to project India as a regional counterweight to China’s domination. The alliance will be used by the US in its strategy to contain China. This will not be conducive to peace in the region. India’s strategic objectives and interests will be made subservient to US designs in Asia."
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