Chapter-2

Establishment of Diplomatic Relations
India and Arab-Israeli wars (1948-1982):

India had vehemently opposed the partition of Palestine however, accorded the recognition to the state of Israel in September 1950. But with the recognition of Israel, India did not exchange the diplomatic representatives between the two states. Though, Israel was later on permitted to open a consulate in Bombay (now Mumbai). Nehru the then prime minister of India explained his decision of extending recognition to Israel:

"It's not a matter of high principle but is based on how it could best serve and be helpful in that area. We should like the problem between Israel and the Arab countries to be settled peacefully. After careful thought, we felt that recognizing Israel as an entity will need not at this stage exchange diplomatic personnel---and we think it is correct decision."

Moreover, India by giving recognition to Israel showed its respect to the decision making body of United Nations.

India was looking at the conflict between Arabs and Israelis from ideological and principled perspective. So it was quite obvious that India could not go along with Israelis. Before the termination of British Mandate over Palestine, Zionist forces moved to occupy the cities and areas in territories allotted for the Palestinian state. By 14
May 1948 over half of the Palestinian population was forced into exodus, as over two-thirds of the Palestinian land became occupied by the Zionists. Ben Gurion admitted before the Mandate ended that “.... No Jewish settlement however remote, was entered or seized by the Arabs, while the Haganah....captured many Arab positions. So, on the day of destiny that part of Palestine where the Haganah could operate was almost clear of Arabs.”

On the eve of 15 May 1948, while Britain had completed the withdrawal of administration and army, David Ben Gurion proclaimed the creation of Israel. At this point the Arab League sent a telegram to the UN. The telegram stated that in consequence of Zionist aggression, the Arab States “were compelled to intervene for the sole purpose of restoring peace and security and of establishing law and order in Palestine”. to prevent as well “the spread of disorder and lawlessness into the neighbouring Arab lands, and to fill the vacuum created by termination of the Mandate”.

However, the intentions of Ben Gurion and his terrorist companions were quite different under the garb of filling up the vacuum on account of British withdrawal, they unleashed unprecedented act of terror. The annals of Zionist history are full of leaders outdoing other leaders in insisting on the importance of military power and the role of force and terror in the building and
safeguarding of the Zionist state: Joseph Trumpeldor, Vladimir Jabotinsky, Ben Gurion, and all the Israeli generals. They asserted that the violence and terror are the backbone of the plan to enforce the Zionist programme. This was necessarily so because the Zionists have... simply invaded a country, evicted the majority of the population, followed this up with further use of force and terrorism⁴.

“I would suggest to you to come round in time to the” Greater Palestine” programmed before it is too late...The Basle programme must contain the words” Greater Palestine” or Palestine and its neighbouring lands...otherwise it is nonsense. You do not get the ten million Jews into a land of 25,000 square kilometers”⁵ were the words which David Trietch sent to Theodore Herzl on 29 October 1899, expresses with perfect clarity the inner logic of Zionist policies:⁶

Deir Yassin” massacre has clearly exposed the Zionist policies and also put before the World a shocking example of what the Begin’s movement stood for. Deir Yassin an Arab village on the main road to Jerusalem and surrounded by Jewish lands had taken no part in the war...On April 9 terrorist bands (Irgun, Lehi, Hagana) attacked this peaceful village...and killed most of its inhabitants. “It is imperative that the truth
about Mr. Begin and his movement be made known in this country....The undersigned therefore take this means of publicly presenting a few salient facts concerning Begin, and of urging all concerned not to support this latest manifestation of Fascism.

Begin, Shamir and Sharon were nothing but a triumvirate of war criminals. Even Ben Gurion described Begin, as ‘a thoroughly Hitlerite type’.

On May 1948 the Israeli state was duly proclaimed and Begin came out of the underground to make his first radio speech he said:

The Hebrew revolt of 1947-48 has been blessed with success...O God of Israel, keep thy soldiers and bless their sword, which gives a new birth to the covenant that thou had sealed with thy beloved people and thy chosen land forward to the ground! Forward to victory! The terrorists had triumphed.

In what the Zionists claim to be a “war of Independence” five Arab armies, i.e., Egypt, Jordon, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq crossed the borders of Palestine on 15 May 1948. Though the Arab armies were less equipped, in the face of a decisive Israel military superiority and despite the fact that its unified command was held by British military personnel, whose final target was to secure the new-born Israeli state, the Arab armies made limited military successes: while the Egyptian
army had reached an advanced line near Tel Aviv, the Jordanian and Iraqi armies controlled wide areas including Lydda and Ramlah. As its military position war deteriorating, Israel turned to the UN for intervention, charging that the Arab had started the war. On 22 May 1948, the Security Council convened to discuss the situation and adopted, alter, a resolution calling upon “all governments and authorities, without prejudice to the rights, claim or positions of the parties concerned, to abstain from any hostile military action in Palestine, and to that end to issue a cease-fire order to their military and paramilitary forces”. The tragedy became imminent when the UN through its Secretary General, Trygve Lie, upheld Israel’s accusation against the Arabs for starting an aggression. Supported by the members of the Security Council, the Security General threatened the Arab States and warned of action, including sanctions.

This endorsement by the World body opened a history of injustices against the Palestinians as U.N. had remained silent in the face of Zionist aggression and occupation offering a deaf ear to their complaints ignoring its own resolutions and charter.

The war which ended in the favour of Israel brought more Arab territories which were allotted to Palestinians by the UN, under the occupation of Israel. It resulted the forced migration of thousands of Palestinian Arabs to the other neighbouring Arab States. After this
war the Israel was again provided benefits by the UN when her application for the membership of the UN was approved in May 1949 by the UN. Israel’s admission to the UN was granted almost after one year of its creation. India voted against Israel’s admission stating that “India could not recognize Israel which has been achieved through the force of arms and not through negotiations”\textsuperscript{10}.

India is linked with Arabs states by historical, political and economic cords. Arab solidarity with India in her campaign against imperialism and colonialism made India’s foreign policy tinged with an Arab blend. In this kind of circumstances it was quite obvious that Arabs would like India to be along with them. Arab influence on India in later years loomed larger and made the latter appear to be more pro-Arab and anti-Zionist.

Taking recognition as a welcome gesture, the Israeli government made a move for establishing normal diplomatic relations. Dr. Walter Eytan director general of Israeli foreign ministry paid an official visit to India in March 1952. According to him, it seemed that the Indian prime minister had approved the idea of establishing diplomatic ties with Israel. Yet formal decision had to be taken later, after the general election. The following year when Eytan met Nehru at Berne, the government of India had already jibbed what was accomplished was the permission of Indian government to
establish an Israeli consul general in Bombay, which is termed as ‘India’s diplomatic Siberia’.

Nehru was the main architect of India’s foreign policy. He took a great caution in dealing with Israel and later refused to normalize relations with Israel. The Jana Sangh, Swatantra party and the Praja Socialist were against the government policy. The Jana Sang argued that India should adopt more pragmatic foreign policy because foreign policy, according to them, was a policy and not an immutable principle. They said that Israel was the only democratic country in West Asia and it was therefore imperative that India must have full diplomatic relations with Israel.

The Jan Sangh thinking was oblivious of the fact that the so-called democratic state of Israel was established at the expense of the majority of Palestinians, an act quite contrary to the basic principles of democracy.

The main reason for the non-development of normal relations with Israel was due to the earlier principled stand so valiantly taken up by the Indian Leadership of the Indian Liberation Movement. The Congress party after independence dominated the Indian political system and its foreign policy. Its overwhelming majority in the parliament enabled it to overrule agendas set by Jan Sangh to benefit Israel at the expense of Palestinians. So, the non-establishment of
diplomatic relation with Israel could be ascribed to the continuation of the policy perused by the Congress in the preceding years.

In the early years of independence, Indian economic position was not sound. India was launching her first plan and could not afford to loose her Arab friends, which were of vital importance for her basic economic needs. Pragmatically, trade relations between India and Arab states were more significant and bigger in volume than Israel. They still are. Moreover, remittances which India gets from Indian community working in these Arab countries are exceptionally high. On the other hand, Indo-Israeli trade was limited and had lesser scope for expansion. The commodity pattern also made Arab countries advantageous for India. India imported from Arab states items like oil, cotton, phosphate and so on, which have less substitutes, unlike Israeli diamond and citrus fruits and its products. Moreover, since 1973, Indo-Arab trade relations became increasingly important. The question of India's relations with the region was and is closely linked with the oil economy. On the other side, India's consultancy, if applied sufficiently could help Gulf countries in technology. India's west Asian policy had to be directed to counter Pakistani propaganda. This is necessary because of two main reasons: - to win the Arabs to her side especially at United Nations and to look into the popular sentiments of the liberal minded overwhelming
population in India. India’s non-establishment of normal relations with Israel also had something to do with Pakistani factor-to give no chance to Pakistan’s propaganda against India among the Islamic nations.

India’s West Asian policy was greatly influenced by her relations with the Arabs and the Arab Nationalist Movements. The Egyptian revolution in 1952 created a new dimension in Indo-Arab relations, which had a chain reaction to her attitude towards Israel. After the revolution (1952) Nasser’s Egypt assumed the leadership of the Arabs more than ever before. Egypt, which had taken an uncompromising attitude against any form of imperialism and colonialism, represented a form of non-alignment. The very structure of her policy, which is governed by revolutionary idea made her not to align themselves with any other bloc. This ideological commitment made Egypt support all countries committed to the same objectives.

Egyptian government’s opposition to imperialism, qualified by non-alignment, found a place with Indian foreign policy makers. India’s and Egypt’s consistent opposition to all forms of imperialism intrigues and maneuvers led to their attacks on the Baghdad pact. This common policy brought India and Egypt closer. This friendship was
further cemented during the Belgrade Summit of non-aligned countries. 

India's relation with Egypt had a major role in her policy towards Israel. Since India was standing very close to Egypt in her foreign policy, it would be almost impossible to move closer towards Israel, which was seen as the outpost of the west and a belligerent state by Egypt. So, India did not take step towards the normalization of her relations with Israel. India was very much against the colonialism and imperialism. After adopting the socialist pattern of society it strengthened her friendship with the former Soviet Union. Nehru visited Moscow in 1955, which became able to get the Soviet Union's support in many ways. Since 1953, India had continuously rejected Israel's proposals for developing diplomatic ties. Regarding the clashes, which took place between Arabs and Israelis since the creation of Israel India came more open and vocal in expressing her condemnation of Israel. Her attitudes towards these conflicts (1948, 1956) have been influenced by her national interest. India condemned Israeli alliance with imperial powers because of the large scale aggression. One more thing which India found contradictory with Israel was the creation of Israel on religious basis, which was totally against the secular ideology of India.
The year 1956 was a landmark in the history of West Asia. It marked the emergence of a new regional order. This was precipitated by the Suez crisis. On 26 July 1956, Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal Company in response to the withdrawal of Aswan Dam loans by contributing powers, which was done in reaction to the Czech arms deal of May 1955 and thus disturbed the regional status quo.\(^2\)

A conference was convened at London. Nehru assured Nasser that the purpose of India in attending the conference was not to weaken Egypt's position but to prevent any unilateral action to be taken in the conference. In the conference India ardently prevented the western move to aggrandize their economic interest and upheld Egyptian right to nationalize the canal.\(^3\) In spite of a number of diplomatic efforts to solve the problems, Israel, in collaboration with Britain and France, launched a sudden and pre-meditated attack on Egypt on October 29, 1956.\(^4\) India did not expect such a sudden attack and expressed her hope that the United Nations would be able to take steps to prevent extension of hostilities. Nehru publicly condemned Israeli action and branded it as a case of clear naked aggression.\(^5\) He even asked the former Yugoslavia and the Bandung countries to join him in public condemnation of the aggressor.\(^6\) India held that Israel had no right to invade the Suez. By invading Egypt and also by joining hands with imperial forces, Israel lost the
sympathy of Afro-Asian nations including India. On the question of Egypt's denial of passage through the Suez to Israel, India had the opinion that it would be quite natural and obvious that an Arab country, which was at war with Israel, would show lethargy to the latter's flag passing the canal. But this could be solved through peaceful means.\(^{(27)}\)

Nehru declared in the Lok Saba on 16\(^{th}\) of November 1956 when he spoke at length regarding the attack on Egypt that the aggression had come as a shock; it was a scandalous "case of aggression by two strong powers against weaker country."\(^{(28)}\)

India played a very constructive role in the crisis through the Afro-Asian meeting and in United Nations India was a co-sponsor of the 19-nations Asian-African resolution on the question of the withdrawal of Israeli –Anglo-French forces from the Egyptian soil.\(^{(29)}\) Even opposition parties had joined the government in condemning the aggressor. It was seen as a new phase of colonialism and imperialism. Various political parties urged the government to cut all liaisons with Britain and denounced India's membership of the common wealth.\(^{(30)}\)

India's approach to the Suez crisis was an outcome of her national interest and her desire to solve the problem in a peaceful manner. As India was one of the principal users of the canal, her economic activity was affected due to its closure. Egypt and India held the
British responsible for the crisis. Throughout the crisis India was busy coordinating the major event with other non-aligned nations. In the initial period India was mostly acting alone but once the tripartite attacks were launched on Egypt, India supported Egypt fully and unequivocally condemned the aggressors.

India also showed strong reactions against Israel in June war of 1967. Indian government blamed Israel for escalating the situation into an armed conflict. Referring to the Indian soldiers in the United Nations emergency force who were killed by Israeli forces, Indira Gandhi condemned the killings as deliberate, unprovoked. The Indian government as always took a very pro-Arab stand and even went to the extent of sponsoring the UAR draft. The war also crystallized India's west Asian policy into supporting the Palestinians cause. She identified herself closer with the Palestinians and openly supported them in their struggle against the Israeli government.

India being a non-aligned country was reluctant towards the hostile policy of Israel and condemned the American policy towards the Arabs. Due to Israeli aggression of 1967 against the Arab. India decided to break off relations even at the consulate level with Israel as an immediate measure and she extended moral support to the deprived Arabs who were the victims of Israeli aggression.
The Indian government in conformity with its pro-Arab policy condemned the Israeli aggression. Looking at the crisis from global perspective, India's the then prime minister, Mrs. Indra Gandhi observed in the lok sabha on 6 June 1967:

*The world today witnesses a disastrous war in West Asia and the situation becomes grave by hour. If not stopped, this war is likely to expand into wider one drawing into its vortex other countries and developing perhaps in to a world war---. It is our solemn duty as a government to help in restoration of peace in the present perilous situation.*

Expressing the same concern for West Asia, she said in the Rajya sabha on the next day, i.e., 7th of June, 1967 as

"The world is in grave peril. Our own national interests are bound up with peace and stability in West Asia".

In the United Nations, India stressed the need for lasting peace and wanted Israel to withdraw its armed forces to the positions held before the commencement of the hostilities. Speaking at the emergency session of the U.N. General Assembly on 21st June, 1967 Mr. Chagla remarked, "The foundation of a lasting peace in the region can be based only on a total, immediate and unconditional withdrawal".

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of Israel from the areas now under its occupation... He also argued that disputes can not be settled through the armed conflict.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi, while addressing the General Assembly on 14th October 1967, also stressed the need for solving the problem by “political means” based on the principles of security, sovereignty and territorial integrity of all the states in the area.

In December 1967, Mr.D.P.Dhar, a member of the Indian delegation to the U.N.Special Committee reiterated the Indian position, which recognized the Palestinians as a people and not merely as refugees. It was also emphasized that the lasting solutions of many problems existing could be worked out only when the key issue of the refugee problem was dealt with and steps were taken to ensure the just rights of the Arab people of Palestine on the basis of paragraph II of resolution 194(III).

During the Arab Israeli conflicts through 1967-69 India took side with the Arabs and denounced Israel for attacks on Beirut international airport in December 1969. India was also unhappy with Israel over her occupation of Al-Aqsa mosque in eastern Jerusalem. At United Nations, India urged for the immediate implementation of the Security Council resolution on Jerusalem.

India’s stand on June war was not shared by all political parties and public at large. India Israel relation, though had touched a very
low ebb, was viewed by them in the context of Arab’s stands vis-à-vis Indian crisis in the preceding years. Opposition leaders from Jan Sangh, the Swatantra party, the Praja Socialist party and the Samyukta socialist party criticized the government’s stand. They advocated that by supporting the Arab unreservedly India unnecessary would encourage the Arabs to adopt more hostile attitudes towards Israel, which would create more tension in the region. They also pointed out that India was going out of her way and should stop acting like the fourteenth Arab state. And some people did not endorse government policy of supporting the Arabs blindly.

Opposition members (excluding the Communists) who did not share government’s view on the issue were conditioned by Arab stand on India’s crisis in 1961, 1962, and 1965. When the Indian army took over Goa in December 1961, Israeli press accused India maintaining a double standard. On the contrary, Egypt closed Suez Canal and did not allow Portuguese arms and ammunitions to flow towards India. A shining example of Indo-Arab fraternity, non-aligned principles and third world solidarity in contrast to Israel’s leanings towards West.

This unfriendly tone of the Israeli press however changed in 1962, when China invaded India. India sought military assistance from all over the world. Israeli response was favorable. Israeli is less
concerned with India’s predicament have always tried to sell arms to friends and foes alike. Presently China is also on the buyers list.

The US support to India also helped in that context. So, after 1962 Chinese aggression, a powerful lobby was active in India, which canvassed, for various reasons, in favour of immediate establishment of diplomatic relation with Israel. It is also argued that India should adopt pro-American policy which would bring India and Israel together and that it was imprudent on the part of India to thrust all her weight behind the Arab cause when she got only lukewarm attitudes from the Arabs in 1962 and 1965. Opposition members- Jan Sangh, the Swatantra Party, Praja Socialist, Samyukta Socialist Party, were astonished by India’s indifference towards Israel. It was argued that while some countries like USA, UK, Yugoslavia, Kenya and so on maintained good relations with both Arabs and Israel, why could India also not do the same? It was said that leadership in India should not succumb to Arab pressure in a bid to appease them. They also argued that majority of the Arabs were with Pakistan and even UAR remained partially neutral. When UAR could remain friendly with Pakistan, India, China, why could India not be friendly with both Israel and UAR. Jan Sangh even asked whether India’s policy was to be conducted in her interests or in Arab interests. They viewed Israel as a force in the region and as the symbol of stability. While they
think so they conveniently forget that Israel is the greatest destabilizing factor in the region.

In 1973, war broke out again in west Asia. During the war, India supported the Arabs as she felt that their action could not be termed as aggression as Israel had provoked the war by not adopting a more flexible attitude in negotiating a proper settlement. It declared that “the cause of tension in the area is Israeli aggression and the refusal to vacate the territories occupied by armed forces”. Declaring India’s sympathies with the Arabs, it further said that Arabs cause was based on justice and demanded immediate implementation by Israel of United Nations resolution 242(1967) for peaceful solution of the problem

On 6\textsuperscript{th} December, 1973 the then Indian foreign minister Sardar Swaran Singh stated that, “our sympathies for the Arabs are for two reasons. First, they are our centuries old friends and second, their territories have been occupied following the Israeli aggression….\textsuperscript{51}.

Mrs. Indra Gandhi also gave two reasons for India’s sympathy towards the Arabs. First India’s old and solid relations with Arabs required India to “stand by its friends in the time of their travail” and the secondly Israel’s refusal to Arab lands occupied in 1967 war and its refusal to honour UN resolutions\textsuperscript{52}.}
India’s policy towards the Arab Israel conflict was based on the principled opposition to acquisition of land by force and it wanted Israel to withdraw to pre-June 1967 frontiers so that progress would be made to resolve the crisis.

During the Israeli attack the Ministry of External affairs in its statement condemned Israel and held the view that the intransigence on the part of Israel was the basic cause leading to the outbreak of hostilities.

After 1973 Mr. Arafat was called by the UN General Assembly to address the World body on 13 November 1974. Arafat in his historic address stressed the PLO’s willingness and priority for a peaceful solution to the issue. He further stated as, "Today I have come bearing on olive branch and a freedom fighter’s gun. Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand". Responding to Mr. Arafat’s address the then Indian Foreign Secretary, Mr. Kewal Singh made a statement at the UN General Assembly on 19th November 1974, in which he endorsed the views expressed by Arafat at the UN. India introduced a draft resolution on 21st November 1974 in favour of Palestine cause. The resolution reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination. It also stood for the Palestinian national independence and sovereignty.
Israel after singing the Camp David accord and its subsequent peace treaty with Egypt turned towards Lebanon. In their bid to crush the PLO, Israeli moves were an attempt to bait the Palestinians into provoking a confrontation in southern Lebanon, the Israeli provocation may be an effort to justify an attack that Israel otherwise could not afford to make because of unprecedented international pressure. The atrocities committed by Israeli military during the Lebanese crisis were very horrific and condemnable.

South block expressed her shock over the Israeli aggression on Lebanon. She condemned Israel’s infamous history of misdeeds stressed the recognition of the rights of the Palestinians for establishing durable peace in the region. India also put efforts to solve the problems, though her efforts had Arab tinge. In India the Israeli consul, Yosef Hassen, commented on India’s official stand on the crisis, which is highly objectionable. In a newspaper interview, he bluntly said that Indian politicians were afraid of the Arabs and thereby succumbed to their pressure. This was seen by the government of India as an unacceptable interference in the domestic affairs of India and in retaliation, the Israeli consul was asked to leave the country within forty-eight hours.

When the extent and gravity of political and diplomatic support of India to PLO was popularly recognized, by yet another significant
diplomatic move, on 10th January 1975. India accorded diplomatic recognition to PLO. India was the first non-Arab country to make such a move. Yassar Arafat endorsed the move and hoped that this would strengthen the struggle of Palestinian people "a very big push forward". India kept on arguing for the welfare of Palestinian people and the legitimate demands of the PLO at the UN and related bodies. Referring to the exhortion of Arafat in the UN General Assembly, India's representative Mr. R. Jaipal stated at the UN that the Palestinians had come to the UN for peace and the World body should take a decision that would give hope to the Palestinian Arabs. On 4th October 1975, he again made statements on the situation in the Middle East. He also referred to the plight of the stateless Palestinians being at disadvantage to pursue their interests in effective way and the need for the UN to come to their rescue.

The period of 1980's witnessed a new initiative and intensification of India's move to strengthen the PLO diplomatically and politically. On 26th March 1980 the then Indian Foreign minister Mr. P. V. Narsimha Rao announced in the Parliament that India had decided to accord full diplomatic recognition to the office of PLO in New Delhi. After this move Mr. Arafat paid a three day official visit to India between 28th and 30th March 1980 on the invitation of Mrs. Gandhi. During his visit Mrs. Gandhi stated that sympathy for the
Palestinians “has been a part of independent India’s foreign policy from its very inception”\(^{63}\). Mrs. Gandhi also reiterated that a just peace and comprehensive solution to the Middle East crisis could be found only with the “full participation of the PLO as an equal partner in any settlement”\(^{64}\).

India’s Palestine policy was further strengthened when Arafat again paid second visit to India as Head of the state in exile in May 1982. During his visit he was described as “the symbol of a people afire with the spirit of freedom” by Mrs. Gandhi\(^{65}\).

The Palestinian agenda surged up to the forefront once again. Tel Aviv too suffered more causality in the Lebanon in 1982 war. On account of the role of the Shinbet, the Israeli secret service evoked greater international sympathy for the Palestinians\(^{66}\). The PLO had appealed that the United Nations peacekeeping force should replace the Israeli troops in the areas from where they were pulling out\(^{67}\). Indian solidarity with the Arabs and Palestinians in particular could be seen by the very fact that India permitted the PLO to open an office in New Delhi on 10 January 1975\(^{68}\). This shows that Palestine factor became the guiding principle towards the West Asian crisis. The Palestinians cause was upheld as a high principle of humanity and Israeli government was looked upon as aggressors with imperialistic design.
India’s reaction to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon was sharp and harsh. The then Indian foreign minister, Mr. Rao referred the matter on 19th June 1982 as the “enactment of savage drama involving the butchery of our Palestinian brothers and sisters”69. Mrs. Gandhi on 25th July, made a statement in the Lok Sabha condemning the Israeli attack and maintained that “Israeli attempts to wipeout the Palestinian movement can not succeed in the long run”70. In September 1982 Mrs. Gandhi further sent a message to Mr. Arafat in which she praised the PLO’s spirited resistance to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon71.

**Janta Government and Its Relations with Israel:**

Indo-Israeli relations had shown a negative trend since the beginning of the fifties. The government policy even sank deeper in the 1960’s. But during the latter part of 1960’s, there came up a strong pro-Israeli lobby in India. The Chinese invasion of 1962 was seen by this group of people as an acid test of friendship. Israel’s transfer of weapon like mortar to India during the crisis was seen as an act of friendship72 since then this lobby had been campaigning for Israel in India. But with the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, Indo-Israeli relations touched the lowest ebb. The government of India’s sympathy for the Jewish people for their suffering in the past though had not withered away it was very wary of Zionists actions. The Indian
government along with many nations asked the Israeli government to leave the occupied territories, which were endorsed by the United Nations Security Council resolutions 243 and 338. So, India was standing by the Palestinians cause within and without the United Nations.

The parliamentary election of March 1977 brought to power the Janta Party headed by Morarji Desai, with the former Jan Sangh leader Atal Behari Vajpayee as the minister of external affairs. On west Asia, despite their canvassing for a change when they were in opposition, the Janta Party continued to back the Arabs and the Palestinians. India reaffirmed that for the establishment of the peace in the region, Israel should vacate those territories which they had been occupying since 1967 and allow the Palestinians the right to self-determination or even separate state of their own in which they could live in security and peace. The Indian government also reportedly deplored Israel's activity of aggression and of building Jewish settlements in the Occupied Territories which aggravated tension between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

The Janta party stressed clearly that in the international field, it would pursue a genuinely non-aligned policy. It should not only remain nonaligned but must also appear to be so. The party would follow a policy, which would not show that India was titling towards
a particular bloc. So the non-alignment policy continued to form the cornerstone of India's foreign policy. In view of this, India had to follow the old policy which had been pursued since independence and there was no shift in it. During the Janta's rule it examined the foundation of India's foreign policy and considered nonalignment as one of the cardinal principles of foreign policy. Developing relations with Israel would sound to many Indians and Arabs as a turning away from the policy of nonalignment because of the simple reason that Israel was a very close ally of USA. Indo-Israeli ties remained on the shelf during the Janta period Moshe Dayan, the then foreign minister of Israel visited India but his trip did not produce the expected results.

When Moshe Dayan came to India there was no diplomatic relations between India and Israel even though an Israeli Consulate was established in Bombay. The main reason behind the visit was to muster diplomatic relations with India. During his visit Mr. Dayan met with the then Indian Prime minister and had some discussions with him. Indian premier, Mr. Morarji Desai put his views before Mr. Dayan:

_You must make peace with the Arabs. The Israelis have suffered from the Nazis and from persecution in Europe, but the_
Palestinians should not be made to pay for that. The refugees should be settled and you had to withdraw from the occupied territories, which would be proclaimed a Palestinian state

He further stated:

Israel was now established fact, the Arabs must guarantee her existence, but Israel must make possible the rise of a Palestinian state. The solution is to establish a Palestinian state in the Arab territories, which Israel should evacuate

Thus it is clear from the above discussion that Mr. Desai was firm on Israel’s withdrawal and the emergence of a Palestine state.

The refusal to allow Israelis to establish a second Consulate in New Delhi in addition to the one Israel had in Bombay clearly shows that how much Mr. Desai was firm regarding the Palestine issue. Desai also stated that he could be out of the office if the visit of Mr. Dayan were to be published\textsuperscript{78}. As Dayan himself has recorded that he felt humiliated and was let down by the then Indian Foreign Minister Mr. Vajpayee.
Israel's Move for Establishing Diplomatic Relations with India:

At different stages Indian government was approached by Israeli government for the normalization of relations. The agenda had been pushed forth by various Israeli leaders. Ben Gurion was always interested in India and Buddhism. Ironically, Ben Gurion always did diametrically opposite to which India and Buddhism stood for. He wanted to win Nehru to Israeli side though this did not yield positive results. Golda Meir and Abba Eban were also working hard to win India and the latter in 1967 diplomatically repeated that Israel belongs to Asia in the Israel–Asia Friendship League. Yigal Allan also apparently held a similar view and considered the third world as a global political force. The centre of his interest had been India. His aim was to strengthen India-Israel friendship and wanted this bond to form the anchor of Israel's Asian policy. Though Moshe Sharatt was very much interested in India he could not materialize his dream of Indo-Israeli diplomatic relations. During the various crisis, which India faced, Israel tried to create opportunity for friendship in various avenues. In 1962, Israel not only helped India but also praised it for her self control and patience. In 1965, Israel supported India and accepted Kashmir as an integral part of India. Ironically Israel herself did not ever recognize Palestine as the integral homeland of Palestinians including Israel. In the following years, Israel supported
India's candidature to Security Council. Even during Bangladesh war, Israel sided with India and extended help in various ways. When the state of Bangladesh was declared, Israel along with India soon recognized her on February 4, 1972.  

In the second half of the 80's India witnessed a change in political leadership. The death of Indra Gandhi on 31 October 1984 made Rajeev Gandhi the prime minister of India. Indira Gandhi emphasized on enhancing India's security seeking external help in optimal manner, trying to play a dominant role in south Asia and raising India's voice in the third world politics, which made a closer move towards the former USSR. Rajeev Gandhi though keeping the old policy began to drift slowly away from USSR. The west Asia policy under him remained more or less the same as before. He maintained the broad framework of supporting the liberation movements in the region. Nevertheless he wanted to maintain good relations with USA and the Jewish people, Rajeev met Jewish leaders when he visited USA. These meetings of Rajeev Gandhi with the Jewish leaders yielded tangible results, which enhanced relations between the Jews and the Indians. These gave impetus to the future development of relationship. It was the result of the Rajeev's meetings with the Jewish leaders in USA that a delegation of American Jewish Anti-Defamation League visited India. In the
delegation there were Mr. Burton Levison, chairman of ADL. Jess Hordes, national coordinator, Abraham Foxman ADL's Washington Bureau chief. They met senior official in the ministry of external affairs\(^87\). This visit was used by Israel as campaign to have diplomatic relations with India.

The relation between India and Israel was not confined to open official meetings directly or through a third party, but also extended to secret meetings and consultations. After the assassination of Indra Gandhi, the Indian external intelligence agency—the research and analysis wing, RAW—invited Israeli security specialists to advice on the prime minister Security system\(^88\). However, the advices of Israeli security specialists could not withstand the test of time when Ragiv Gandhi was assassinated. It was also reported that Indian and Israeli diplomats met secretly in Paris to discuss Tel Aviv's proposal for a joint action to destroy a Uranium plant at Kahuta in Pakistan. But the discussions did not yield any result. The reason might have been that India thought that her venture with Israel would be counter productive\(^89\). At one point of time in 1988, it was reported that he even went to the extent of making a promise to Mr. Morris Abraham, President of a Jewish organization to upgrade Indo-Israeli ties when he (Rajeev) was in New York. Though all this was denied by him. latter\(^90\). He also took some decisions like lifting of restriction on
Israeli sportsmen coming to India to participate in the Davis Cup\textsuperscript{91} and Indian team was even willing to play with Israeli team \textsuperscript{92} giving the rationale that India played against Israel in table tennis in years 1981 and 1983 in the former Yugoslavia and Japan respectively\textsuperscript{93}. Moreover he lifted the visa restriction on Israeli officials on private visits and created more avenues where there could be more meetings between Israelis and Indians. The consul general’s post in Bombay, which was lying vacant since 1982, was reopened and its jurisdiction was formally extended to Kerala where there was a considerable Jewish population\textsuperscript{94}. India did not have any diplomatic link with Israel at that time but the prime minister took certain steps to create a room of common interest where they could play together certain role for the mutual benefits of both.

\textbf{Gulf War of 1991 and India’s Response:}

The end of cold war had its ramification on international political environment. It brought in a different world order and its affect has spread far and wide. The disintegration of the former USSR and her socialist bloc led to the disbanding of Warsaw Pact, and left USA as the only super power\textsuperscript{95}. The USA policy having a free hand in conducting war against Iraq, by hijacking the United Nations should also be looked from the end of cold war political angle. In west Asia regional power, in the post cold war era, was concentrated at two
extremes; Iran in the Persian Gulf and Israel. The Gulf regimes mainly rely on the USA as their principle source of security and other Arab states suffered from the collapse of the former USSR. It made Israel unmatched military power in the region. This gave Israel to a great extent, a free hand in conducting her foreign affairs.

New Delhi voted for the UN resolution authorizing the use of force to expel Iraqi troops from Kuwait and rejected Iraq's linkage of the Kuwaiti and the Palestinian problems. In January 1991, India also permitted the United States military aircraft to refuel in Bombay. The refueling decision stirred such domestic controversy that the Chandra Shakhar Government withdrew the refueling privileges in February 1991 to deflect the criticism of Congress (I), which argued that India's nominal pro-United States tilt betrayed the country's non-aligned principles. Others argued that India's pro-US policies and its support to the United States during the war was the clear indication of India's shift from the old practiced non-alignment stand.

On the regional level the Gulf war of 1991 witnessed a major realignment of forces in the West Asia. The leading Arab countries including radical Syria joined the hands with the US in waging a devasting war against a fellow Arab country-Iraq. On the International level, the Gulf crisis confirmed the unchallenged
dominance of the US as the principal external influence and power, and signaled the corresponding demise of the Soviet Union as a significant regional actor. The Arab-Israeli conflict is also the area where the US has the greatest potential for being a catalyst for peace in the region (Middle East). The Madrid Conference of 1991 in which the Arabs and the Israelis started talking face to face was the clear proof. It is because of this Madrid Conference that Israel and PLO recognized each other after two years of the conference, which was managed for the first time after the eight visits of James Baker to the region.

Establishment of Diplomatic Relations with Israel under Narsimha Rao:

The decision of having diplomatic relations with Israel came from the Narsima Rao Government in 1992. After the Cold War era, India's decision making structure came under intense pressure and the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel—a close ally of the US is the clear evidence of shifting of Indian policy from PLO to Israel.

Narsima Rao's decision of establishing the diplomatic relations with Israel in 1992 was a hasty step, which was taken under the outside pressure than diplomatic prudence. The first sign of a change in the Indian pro-PLO and anti-Israel policy appeared little in the
meeting which was held between the then Indian Prime Minister, Narsima Rao and a Zionist leader, Isi Joseph Leibler in New Delhi in November 1991. The discussion centred round the possibility of establishing diplomatic ties between India and Israel. The Prime Minister’s response, according to Leibler, was more positive and pragmatic than his predecessors. Further Leibler’s talks with the Indian Prime Minister were facilitated by the US. Leibler openly admitted this in his press conference\textsuperscript{102}.

The Leibler-Rao meet was followed by a more visible gesture of Government of India under Narsima Rao softened stance towards Israel when India voted for the revocation of the UN Resolution 3379 of November 1975 that had equated Zionism with Racism. The fact remained that mere revocation of the Resolution did not change the basic character of the Israeli State policy, which formed the raison d’être of the 1975 Resolution. The State of Israel was founded, and continues to exist, on the basis of a racist ideology, i.e., Zionism. Further, it led one to believe that the earlier motion (and India’s support to it by implication) was a mistake or that Zionism had somehow changed and repented on its past policies. In reality it was neither, as the regime occupying Palestine became more outrageous and belligerent in pursuit of the expansionist dreams. Moreover, this was done without taking Indian public opinion into account, neither a
debate was held in the Parliament nor Opposition was taken into confidence. India’s long cherished principled stand against Racism was thrown to the winds overnight.

In this context it would be interesting to note the observation made by the Indian representative at the UN, Rikhi Jaipal. in his statement of explanation of Indian vote in favour of Resolution 3379.

"Zionism has deprived", noted the statement, "the Arab people of their national rights and of the right to self-determination. It is surely understandable that the victims of Zionism should regard it as a form of racial discrimination and it is, therefore, proper for the General Assembly also to regard it as such. To condone the evil effects of Zionism would be giving green light to various other forms of racism endemic in human societies.

Had this fact changed on 16th of December 1991, i.e., when India voted for repealing of the said Resolution?

The argument that by attending the West Asia Peace Conference in Madrid, Israel had changed itself and shown its desire to work for peaceful solution of the Palestinian problem did not hold good in the face of the then prevailing situation in the occupied
territories. The then Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir continued the policy of building new settlements and expanding the existing ones in the West Bank and Gaza as if there was no peace process. There was no letup in the Israeli policy of brutalization, demolition, detention, and deportation vis-à-vis the Palestinians. Its adamant decision to deport twelve Palestinians from the occupied territories in the midst of the peace process was an example. This was done despite the fact that the UN Security Council passed a resolution strongly condemning it. A statement issued, on 5th of June 1992, by the Council of Arab Ambassadors in New Delhi clearly indicated how much had the State of Israel changed around six months after the revocation of the Resolution 3379. While reminding the world of the 25th year of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, the Council statement said that even as apartheid was being dismantled in South Africa, Israel had adopted a "system of racial discrimination against indigenous Palestinian Arabs who are living on their own land as Second class citizens".

Hence, there were reasons to believe that in this case too it was the US factor, which influenced India's decision. India succumbed to US pressure after the discussions in New York and voted in favour of the pro-Israeli resolution. There was a general agreement, within the UN General Assembly, to proceed with the revocations sometime in
1992. This was obviously to wait and watch till Israel changed itself substantially vis-à-vis the Palestinians so as to justify a reversal of the 1975 Resolution. But the then US President, George Bush, had his own domestic political calculations and compulsions to push through the repealing of “Zionism is Racism” Resolution as early as possible. It may be recalled that the then Bush administration had virtually irked the powerful American Jewish Lobby on the well-Known $10 billion housing loan guarantee to Israel. The US President came down heavily on the Israeli Prime Minister on this issue, and ultimately Shamir had to bow down. Hence the repealing of the 1975 Resolution was said to be a balancing act. Moreover, this gesture was essential, argued the Bush administration, to coax Israel to soften its stand towards the peace process. Ridiculous logic indeed. The fact remained that in the aftermath of the Soviet collapse the US sought to use the UN for its own foreign policy ambitions. In this case too, the American diplomatic machinery at the UN was pressed into service to put pressure on countries, not excluding India, to support the US move in the revocation of the said Resolution by the General Assembly. Yasser Arafat, during his visit to New Delhi in the following weeks, candidly talked about the American pressure tactics. Further, the statement made by the then Indian Prime Minister before the Parliament just two days after India voted in the
UN vindicated this. While declaring that his government would use foreign policy as a dynamic instrument to further national interests, Prime Minister P.V. Narsima Rao listed out the overriding priorities of India's foreign policy in the post-cold war era. They were: preventing any threat to India's unity and territorial integrity, ensuring geopolitical security by creating a durable environment of stability and peace in Indian region, creating a framework conducive to the economic well-being of the people by encouraging a healthy external economic environment, and trying to restore, internationally, the centrality and criticality of the development in the evolution of political and economic policies all over the world. A careful analysis of the last two points clearly suggested the reasons as to why the weakling Prime Minister had to follow the US line. Because otherwise in his opinion the loans from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank would not have flowed steadily resulting in the total collapse of India's "ambitious economic liberalization" programme. The foreign policy postulates as enumerated by the Indian Prime Minister was nothing but an abject surrender in the face of difficulties. India was virtually mortgaging its otherwise independent foreign policy stance to the outside dictates, which could harm the nation in the longer run.
On the same day, 18 December 1991, Yasser Arafat requested an audience with Prime Minister Rao probably to protest against India's volte-face. The President of the State of Palestine, who, in earlier times, visited this country more frequently than any other world leader, was in for a great surprise this time. His visit kept getting postponed on flimsy pretexts- that the Prime Minister was preoccupied with two foreign dignitaries and with the preparations for the Republic Day. It was indeed ironical that Prime Minister P.V.Narsima Rao, who headed the foreign ministry for a long time, spearheaded many important pro-PLO decisions, and, above all, had to establish close personal rapport with the PLO leader, would deny an audience to Arafat under various pretexts. What was more ironical probably was that while Arafat was having a difficult time in meeting the then Indian Prime Minister, hectic efforts were on to facilitate the meeting of Indian and Israeli diplomats in the US. An official level meeting, highest till then, between the Israeli Representative, Joseph Hadass and the Indian Deputy Chief of mission, Lalit Mansingh, took place at the Indian Embassy in Washington during the second week of January 1992. This meeting clearly indicated that the two countries were very close in establishing full diplomatic ties. In addition, this also brought to the open the active US role in facilitating this breakthrough.107
Finally, New Delhi took the initiative and gave a date, which was not so suitable for the PLO leader as he was tied down by the outgoing West Asia Peace negotiations. But still he had to make it in view of the far-reaching developments. The receptions accorded to the visiting Palestinian dignitary were lacklustre at the worst and make believe warm at best. It sought to conceal the subterranean tensions in Indo-PLO relations. During the official level talks with the PLO chief, the Indian Prime Minister reiterated his consistent and unequivocal support for Palestine and the inalienable right of its people to self-determination. The Prime Minister also assured Arafat of extending all support to the Palestinians in whatever way possible to achieve the twin objective of establishing peace in the region and helping the Palestinian friends. While taking an appreciative note of the ongoing West Asia Peace Process and wishing it all success, Rao underlined the fact that India had a vital interest in peace and stability in a region so close to it. The security situation in West Asia, the Prime Minister added, impinged on India’s security environment. On the whole, India tried to convince the Palestinian leader that it had not abandoned the Palestinian cause totally despite New Delhi’s increasingly softened stance towards Tel Aviv. He was given the impression that while “our hearts” were still with the struggling and suffering Palestinian people
and with the martyrs of Sabra and Shatilla and the intifada but “our heads” were adjusting to the dictates of a fast changing world\textsuperscript{108.}

Arafat, on his part, gave a brief assessment of the peace talks. He expressed his strong conviction that India’s participation in the third round of West Asia Peace talks, scheduled to be held in Moscow on 28 and 29 January 1992, was essential, though the modalities were not discussed. However, the most significant announcement from the PLO chairman came during a press conference on the second day of his stay in New Delhi\textsuperscript{109} “exchange of Ambassadors and recognition of Israel are acts of sovereignty, in which I can not interfere”, declared Arafat. “I respect any choice of the Indian government”, he further added hoping that such a change would not affect Indo-Palestinian relationship, which was “so strong”.

Arafat’s above mentioned statement was extensively reported in and interpreted by the media as a clear-cut go-head signal from the PLO to India to establish ties with Israel. In reality this was not so and reflected only a fragmented analysis of the whole thing. A careful reading of Arafat’s subsequent statements in the same press conference, made it evident that the PLO leader’s “clear message” was not so clear. It was a conditional signal. Arafat explicitly emphasized that India’s full diplomatic relations with Israel was not a pre-condition for its association with the peace process\textsuperscript{110}. In other
words, diplomatic relations with Israel were not only the way by which India could be involved in the West Asia peace processes. To substantiate his point Arafat remarked that Jordon, along with many other Arab countries, represented at the peace conference, were without diplomatic relations with Israel. In another context Arafat stated that he would prefer if India established diplomatic ties with Israel “slowly” to enable the PLO to attain its objective at the peace talks.

Thus, an objective interpretation and correct understanding of Arafat’s message required that India should have followed a cautious and go-slow policy in establishing full diplomatic ties with Israel. It should have waited till the ground realities in the West Asian theatre changed substantially so as to remove the very basis of its decade’s old anti-Israeli policy. One failed to understand why Indian policy makers were in such a hurry? After all India had extended formal recognition to the state of Israel long ago, notwithstanding its earlier opposition. From the very beginning, India insisted on a negotiated settlement of the Arab-Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It neither encouraged nor supported the PLO position of dismantling the State of Israel. That was enough to convey that India accepted the fait accompli in West Asia. So what great difference did it make by establishing diplomatic ties with Tel Aviv? Israel’s mere attendance
of the Madrid peace conference in no way reflected a substantial policy change on its part towards the occupied territories and the Palestinians living under military occupation in gross violation of established international law. Further, India did not have a guilt conscience...like the Western power who had shut their doors to the Jews during the Holocaust...to compel us to look for ways to compensate the state of Israel. The architects of independent India’s foreign policy were very clear about the purposes and justification behind an anti-Israeli posture. By then, however, India’s course of action had already been decided. A particular section, within the foreign policy establishment, who claimed themselves to be the realists guided by so called realpolitik considerations had vigorously argued for the immediate establishment of ties with Israel. Finally, within a few days of Arafat’s departure from New Delhi, India decided, on 29 January 1992, to establish full diplomatic relations with Israel. It should not be forgotten that the announcement to this effect was made by the then Indian foreign secretary on the eve of the Prime Minister Rao’s departure for the UN Security Council Summit in New York.

It is essential to emphasize that a section, favouring normal and friendly relationship with Israel, had always been there within the foreign policy establishment, and the opinion-making institutions like
the media and universities. At times, it even permeated into the political circles. This was mostly due to the persistent lobbying of the Zionists in India. And certainly, the Zionists are unbeatable as far as the subtle art of lobbying and creation of pressure groups within a country's decision-making structure is concerned. The establishment of an alien entity, called the state of Israel, on Palestinian land, was largely due to the Zionists success in this field. Hence, India, because of its geo-strategic importance in the world politics, never escaped the attention of the Zionists. So much so that even during the time of Indra Gandhi, who was known for her activist pro-PLO and anti-Zionist policy, the Zionists did not relent on their persistent efforts to effect a change of mind on the part of India in this regard. They did it when Rajiv Gandhi came to power. In both the times it was the same person: one Greville Janner, who happened to be the President of the Common Wealth Jewish Council. Interestingly, Janner was a member of the British Parliament and belonged to the Labour party. He was a Zionist in belief and orientation. Notwithstanding their constant attempts, the Zionist lobby failed to achieve any breakthrough due to two interrelated factors: the then international power balance, and India's foreign policy orientation which maintained a synthesis between ideology (of anti-imperialism, anti-colonialism, anti-racism etc.) and the high ideals of the freedom
struggle. This never meant that the pursuance of national interest was given a go-by under the euphoria of ideology. But national interest was never computed by the calculus of loss and profit alone. After all, India stood as a symbol and source of inspiration for most of the third world countries having similar experiences of colonial rule and post-colonial nation-building processes. As a result, the section championing the cause of the Zionist lobby in India constituted a microscopic minority in the face of a broad anti-Israeli consensus within the country.

With the changing international scenario leading to the emergence of the new world (dis) order, the small section broadened its support base and gained enough, rather decisive, influence and credence within the decision-making setup. Emphasis on pragmatism constituted the fundamental basis of its pro-Israel pronouncements. Not surprisingly, this was the main plank on which the Jewish lobby had been operating in India. The fact remained that the so-called emphasis on pragmatism could not be seen in isolation. In international politics the terms like ideology and pragmatism cannot be always counter-posed. Adherence to any particular ideology cannot be devoid of pragmatic considerations. Similarly, any talk of pragmatism cannot be made in a vacuum free from ideological connotations. In the present space, for instance, the pragmatic
considerations were to adjust to the fast-changing needs of a US-dominated world. Economic liberalization, structural reforms, etc. are all essential characteristics of a capitalist path of development...the ideology which the US follows, champions, and, imposes on the developing world after the discredit of the socialist path of development. What better illustration could there have been for India to prove its adherence to the US line than the immediate and unconditional establishment of diplomatic ties with Israel. However, the protagonists of this line marshaled very sophisticated arguments to create an impression that the US had nothing to do with India’s policy change towards Israel.

There are some main arguments put forward by the realist school, first, by establishing the diplomatic relations with Israel, India would be in a better position to involve herself in the West Asia peace process and thereby influence the Israeli policy in favour of the Palestinians. Those who believed this were probably living in a make-believe world, faraway from the dynamics of Israeli-Palestinian conflict and negotiations. It has already been stated how Arafat disputed this logic by stating that there were other ways and means by which India could have been involved in the peace process. What was more important was the degree of influence India could have exercised on Israel by becoming part of the peace process. By
attending the talks, the Indian prime minister or foreign minister could, at best, have delivered and addressed the theme of which was known to everybody, including Israelis. The crucial question was: would the Israeli have heeded to it? The Israeli position vis-à-vis the peace talks was governed by the domestic compulsions/pressures that the then Shamir government was confronted with and not by our sermons. For instance, the shift from the procedural wranglings to matters of substance and the report that the Israeli negotiators in Washington had offered a plan for Palestinian self-rule in the occupied territories brought the wrath of two right-wing parties. This ultimately brought down the Shamir government for a while. And later the government survived a no-confidence motion in the Knesset due to the renewed support of one-the Tzomet party.

This exposed how precariously balanced was the Shamir government and how the power equation in Israel and a decisive bearing on its policy towards the Palestinians. Any other consideration was no consideration at all. Here, it may not be an exaggeration to say that even the president of the US, which has been a constant source of support - diplomatic, political, military and economic - to the continued existence of Israel from the beginning, at times found it difficult to influence the Israeli government beyond a point. This is for a country from which Israel receives billions of
dollars (approximately $5 billion) in foreign aid annually. In view of this it sounded ridiculous to expect that India could influence Israel’s policy even nominally.

Second, it was argued that in concrete terms there were distinct advantages for India in establishing contacts with Israel in specific areas like military modernization, agricultural innovation and investments of global Jewish establishment. India could also benefit in combating militancy in Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir from the Israeli experience and expertise in this regard.

Both the arguments were nothing new and had been surfacing off and on. There had been a section, which from time to time argued that India’s non-relationship with Israel put her at a disadvantageous position preventing New Delhi from playing a positive and purposeful role in bringing the two adversaries closer to a settlement. To what extent India has been playing a role in this regard ever since its full diplomatic relations with Israel is there for everyone to see. As for the concrete benefits it may be noted that as far back in the 1960s, the government of Rajasthan has shown interest in Israel’s arid-zone forming techniques. On the question of countering militancy, the problems in Jammu & Kashmir and Punjab had cropped up in the 1980s - a period when India took many decisions in support of the PLO. Why did India not establish diplomatic relations with Israel and
benefit from its expertise in combating militancy when the problem was at its peak?\textsuperscript{113}

Apart from the untenability of the above arguments, the main issue, while dealing with Israel was that moral aspects assumed more influence that the so called real politick compulsions which often signified an outright selfish pursuance of national interests without any regard to World peace and human values. Israel was, and perhaps still is a state unlike any other.

The establishment of diplomatic relations then certainly questioned and diluted India’s commitment to the high deals of non-alignment, which had been the guiding force of our foreign policy during all the decades after independence. Israel represented all that was anathema to the NAM. NAM’s struggle against imperialism, neocolonialism, racism and rights of small countries to determine and shape their own future needs no repetition. Of course, there were some who argued that with the discredit of socialism in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, imperialism was dead and similarly with the collapse of the Cold War, NAM became redundant. Such a view smacked of one’s ideological ignorance and lack of knowledge about the dynamics of international politics. The significance of NAM extends beyond a general resistance to bloc division. It signifies a refusal to the mere political and economic appendage of the centre(s)
of military, political and economic power. It is a struggle for the protection of the developing countries from external domination and exploitation. Moreover, bloc politics is fast getting replaced by hegemonistic politics. Hence, the relevance of NAM is more than ever before in view of the emerging unipolar (politically) world and the inherent danger of domination over small and economically weak countries. At such a critical juncture, the establishment of ties with Israel meant that India was distancing itself. From the NAM instead of giving direction to the movement in shaping the emerging international order. For instance, by voting along the US line for the repealing of Resolution 3379, India for the first time moved away from a collective NAM position. In any case the concrete advantages that people talked about were not so lucrative as to compromise with the basic elements of India's foreign policy. Third, it was argued that the emergence of an Islamic bloc in world politics made it essential that India change its Pro-PLO stance and more closer to Israel.

The talk of the emergence of an aggressive Islamic bloc is basically an American projected new horror in the Post-Cold War international politics. While establishing ties with Israel, the Pakistani factor was also utilized to justify the untimely/hasty decision. It was argued that in the event of the emergence an Islamic bloc, Pakistan would fully exploit it against India. Hence, there was a
need to counter this by forging an anti-Islamic alliance along with
Israel and the US. The formation of an anti-Islamic alliance was, and
still is, in conformity with the US-Israeli designs. But one fails to
understand how it serves India's foreign policy goals and national
interest. No doubt, the tensions between India and Pakistan is since
1947, but India has even then dealing with the West Asian and North
African countries and it has maintained fairly cordial relationship
with the Muslim countries. That the India’s pro-Israeli policy
necessarily meant a dilution of her commitment and support to the
PLO and its cause became clear from subsequent events. By
establishing the diplomatic relations with Israel, India did not became
anti-PLO but certainly she developed apathy towards it. The contacts
between India and PLO since then have been almost insignificant. The
only high-level official contact between the two sides was the Rao-
Arafat meet in Tunis on 20th November 1992. This too was a mere
courtesy call, which the Indian prime minister paid to the PLO leader
during a stopover in Tunis on his way to Dakar for the G-15 summit.
The meeting lasted for about twenty minutes. There was no specific
agenda even though Arafat was reported to have briefed Rao about the
peace talks in general\textsuperscript{115}.

As against this, Indo-Israeli cooperation stepped up to mark the
new found friendship. This was specially so in the political arena. It
appeared that he Indian politicians were indeed suffering from a guilt conscience and wanted to compensate Israel for years of non-relationship. There was almost a scramble among Union Ministers and state chief ministers to pay visits to Israel. In a period of one year from June 1993-July 1994 as many as nine political leaders visited Israel. In addition as many as 18 Indian delegations visited Israel within a period of two years after establishing the diplomatic relations\textsuperscript{116}.

India's move to establish diplomatic relations with Israel came into effect during the weak minority Government headed by P.V.Narsimha Rao in 1992. Before this move the Narsimha Rao government voted the United Nations resolution to repeal the longstanding United Nations resolution equating Zionism with Racism. Not only this India even also abstained from voting on a resolution condemning Israel over fresh settlements in the occupied territories, at an International Habitat Conference in Nairobi\textsuperscript{117}.

When the diplomatic relations were established some claimed that Chandraswami was instrumental in the process, others that it was part of a process of wooing the US, Israel's mentor. The government claimed it was a key element in India's overall West Asian strategy, which had been devasted by its less-than-categorical stand on Iraqi
invasion of Kuwait. It was said the move would get India a seat at the West Asia peace talks.

The then Indian external affairs minister Madhavsinh Solanki argued that India’s diplomatic ties were awaiting, ‘genuine progress’ at the ongoing peace talks. This was a clear dilution of earlier requirements of Israel vacating occupied Arab territories. India was looking for some reason to build formal ties, either at the ambassadorial or the consular level, with Israel. Meanwhile a decision had been taken to increase semi-official and private contacts with Israel. The Israeli consul in Bombay, Giora Becher, was invited to take part in a quasi-official seminar, also attended by high Indian government officials. Oddly, India neither established a consular office in Tel Aviv, nor permitted its diplomats to go to Israel, not even to make contact with Palestinians in the occupied areas. Now India has moved from one extreme to plunge into diplomatic relations.

Relations with Israel are part of a process that began in the early 1980s when Indra Gandhi moved towards the US and began to open up the economy. Under Rajiv Gandhi the idea of a ‘step by step’ approach was given official sanction. However, according to an official, by 1991 ‘events overtook us’. The West Asian peace process got under way aided by the shift in the power balance following the
collapse of the Soviet Union. Iraq was neutralized and Syria, Israel’s remaining great antagonist, sided with the US.

"India would have looked holier than the pope had it insisted on keeping Israel at arm’s length when the Arabs sat across them at the negotiating table" were the remarks of a diplomat, recalling the decision-making that went on in the Ministry of External Affairs at the time. Regarding the establishment of diplomatic relation the former foreign secretary, A.P.Venkiteswaran remarked it as ‘a correct step but premature'\textsuperscript{119}. He was obviously basing his call on the principled and expedient position India had taken so far. There is seldom any single reason for any foreign policy step. So far India had primarily anchored its refusal to set up ties to the Arab-Palestine cum Israel issue.

It was decided that the Palestine-based principle had to be placed on a lower shelf—Whatever Indian spokesmen might say about India’s longstanding commitment—than areas where India’s security was considered more opportune to woo the US and the US Congress. The reshuffle did not mean ignoring other considerations, just a rearrangement of priorities. After all, in bridge the Jack of spades may be a trump in one deal but not in the next. India was playing an altogether new rubber.

If India were to make a decision primarily on the criterion of Israel’s West Asian attitude, there was and there still is no case at all for establishing diplomatic ties. True, all of them have begun talking
but Israel continues to hold out and is in illegal occupation of an entire country and parts of others. It is getting what was denied to it without an inch or an ounce of concession. There are those who say:

Well, if India can have diplomatic relations with China and Pakistan, who are supposed to be in occupation of our own land, what is the problem in having ties and yet opposing the policies of some one who is occupying not our but some body else’s territories?

This argument, used by the BJP, the palkhivalas, the general Jacobs, the Jethmalnis and the Subramaniam Swamys is utterly amateurish. For one thing, India’s ties with China were reopened precisely to talk and iron out problems peacefully just as the Arabs and Israel have now decided to. More important, Israel is in occupation of an entire country whose creation was legitimized by the World’s premier International body, is stealing all its water and is in the process of appropriating occupied lands through illegal settlements being allotted to immigrants welcomed on the basis of religion. A doctrine diametrically opposite to What India professes to stand for.

The one big misgiving in the minds of many Indians has been the fate of the Palestinians. It is recognized that these hapless people have been attacked not just by Israel, but all those who they thought were their friends. At various times they have been attacked by
Jordon, Egypt, Kuwait and Syria. Indian officials in Tel Aviv say Palestinian leaders and even the PLO have welcomed India's participation in the West Asia peace process. Being realists, they realize that India's establishment of diplomatic ties with Israel was inevitable. Another related worry among secular elements in India is the tendency of the Hindu right-wing to see Israel as a fellow 'Muslim-basher'.

The changes in the relationship between India and Israel and between Israel and its Arab neighbours are the profound consequences of the end of the Cold war and the emergence of a multipolar world. Increasingly, as the world's remaining superpower shrinks to normal size, the responsibility of resolving regional conflicts will devolve on the region. Responsibility and accountability will be spread more evenly.

The development of relations between India and Israel or the decision of establishing diplomatic relations which is supposed to be part of the overall transformation in policy must be seen as part of this process.
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85. Tripathi, Deepak; “India’s foreign policy: the Rajeev Factor” World today 44 (7) July 1988, p. 112.


87. The Hindu (Madras) 06 January 1989.


97. www.countrystudies.us.
101. Ibid, Also No.99.
104. Bansidhar Pradhan, No.102.

107. “India’s policy towards the PLO” in No.103, p. 71.


113. Ibid, pp. 75-76.

114. Ibid, p. 77.


