

India israel relations responsibilities and realities politics essay



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1. All successful foreign policies are aimed at maintaining good relations with other nations. Foreign policies should be adaptive and dynamic in nature, capable of achieving both short - term and long - term national aims and interests. The domestic political systems as well as nature of changes which take place in global scenario time and again demand radical changes in the policies and the perceptions of Nation States. In order to meet them, both the nation and its government are required to necessitate formulation of new theories, policies, approaches, and partnerships. As such, a given foreign policy neither can be a success throughout the history nor could be a failure throughout. A foreign policy is presumed to be sound & successful, if the policy framed is capable of meeting the short - term and long - term national objectives and interests[2].

2. The very nature of domestic socio political system, deciding the making of foreign policy is inescapably dependent on international scenario. There is always a demand of drastic changes in the policies based on the changes taking place in the international environment. In view to meet these challenges, the government of the nation has to continuously work towards reassessing its foreign policy and making suitable changes in it to suit the existing global/world order. In other words it would be correct to say that the foreign policies of a nation are necessitated to be changed and amended.

3. India, by tradition has shared close cultural and historical relations as well as political and ideological understanding with the Arab World. From its inception, India's foreign policy approach towards the West Asia has remained fairly steady to politically support the Arab cause. Independent India felt emotionally and morally committed to the national aspirations of <https://assignbuster.com/india-israel-relations-responsibilities-and-realities-politics-essay/>

the Arabs to regain their rightful place in the comity of nations[3]. The traditional pro - Arab position and opposition to partition plan inhibited India from initially recognising Israel as Nation State. If the recognition took two years, the diplomatic relations had to wait over four decades until 1990's.

4. The other aspects which affected the relations with Israel were that, India was supporter of Palestine cause, exceedingly depended on Arab oil, security of Indian citizens in the gulf was in mind, and containment of Pakistan added to complexities. These factors were always in the mind of India as nation while standardising its foreign policies towards West Asia including Israel. As a nation, it was very difficult for India to have an alignment, since of already established fact that India was the nation who propagated NAM (Non Aligned Movement).

5. The gulf war of 1990 and the end of Cold War with collapse of erstwhile USSR brought new developments in global politics. Due to sudden change in the global scenario, there was a need to adopt a new approach. The sweeping winds of liberalisation and globalisation coupled with a weak economy forced India to undertake a major change in its foreign policy. Like any other country, India was now forced to have a relook at its policies towards a world order purely dominated by the US. With non alignment as its main policy till now, India had a massive task in front of herself of readjusting its policies to emerge as a growing nation. The situation became further challenging of the fact that the Kashmir issue started playing on her mind. Tel Aviv also tried to endear itself to New Delhi by constantly supporting India's stand on Kashmir issue that can only be settled on the basis of 1972 Shimla Agreement between both India and Pakistan.
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6. Apropos 1992 onwards, India decided to engage herself into full deliberate, diplomatic, and strategic relations with the state of Israel. In spite of varied commonalities and contradictions, the relations with Israel have progressed steadily and firmly towards attaining new heights and dimensions in last decade. The incident of 9/11 aided towards the strengthening of the partnership as both nations perceived Pakistan as their common enemy and main impediment in realisation of their ambitions. There are also a number of challenges which are being faced by both the nations towards this end. Some of these are India's ties with Tehran ties, Israel's military cooperation with China, normalisation with Pakistan, differences on terrorism and US perception. In spite of them, both the nations are making all the endeavors, without any pre-conditions to be a strong & reliable ally. Though the Cold War world order proved unfavourable to their relations, however the present regional and global imperatives necessitate a strong & strategic alliance between them. This is the suitable time to nurture them and set the stage for moving towards a strong and stable strategic relation.

METHODOLOGY

Statement of Problem

7. To study the challenges faced by the India - Israel strategic relations presently and recommendations for better prospects in the future.

Hypothesis

8. Twenty first Century may be called as century of Asia, but Arab Spring has made an impact on present global scenario. Amid turbulent socio - political and military developments in the region, India and Israel are still finding an

increasing convergence in their strategic relations, though there are a number of challenges being faced by both of them. Thus the question arise that should India continue with policy of strengthening the strategic ties with Israel despite the present turbulence in Arab region.

Justification for the Study

9. India's diplomatic approach towards Israel has always been under scanner of controversy, estrangement, and embarrassment. India's policy towards Israel was initially stipulated by numerous factors like political, social, economic, religious, as well as strategic. The changes in global politics, end of cold war, peace initiatives in West Asia, and the impact of liberalisation and globalisation were the main causes for a policy shift. When the Palestinian leaders and the entire Arab world were ready to negotiate with Israel at Madrid, there was no reason that India should be more catholic than the pope[4]. The logic in doing so was definitely convincing and imperative as the benefits that accrued from the close relations with Israel particularly in the fields of defence was going to be substantial. The enormity of the defence cooperation between both the nations can be determined from the mere fact that in a very short span of two decades, Israel has turned out to be the largest arms supplier to India, outshining the Russians with whom India had defence cooperation since independence.

10. In the world, where national interests has been placed first by the countries and friendships later, the unique concept of looking for permanent friends in Arab World and Israel which are very different from each other will prove to be a major challenge to India's foreign policy in the future. There is also a need to change from an idealistic and wishful policy to a pragmatic, <https://assignbuster.com/india-israel-relations-responsibilities-and-realities-politics-essay/>

dynamic and realistic approach in India's West Asia foreign policy. Thus India's decision to engage with Israel diplomatically merits a detailed critical analysis and study to determine whether India's national interests have been preserved or further compromised and should India continue to strengthen its relations with Israel or otherwise.

Scope

11. Considering the enormity of the subject, the scope of the study and analysis is restricted to the following :-

- (a) Study the relations during Pre and Post recognition Eras.
- (b) Comprehensive relationship between the two nations in various spheres especially in defence sector.
- (c) Concerns of Pakistan & Arab World over the strategic ties.
- (d) Various Challenges faced by both the countries while progressing towards strategic ties.
- (e) Recommendations for further enhancement of India - Israel strategic alliance.

Methods of Data Collection

12. The maximum of the information for the study of the subject has been collected from the books, articles, and information available on internet on the subject. The bibliography of the same is appended at the end for the future reference.

Organisation of the Dissertation

13. It is proposed to study the subject under the following chapters: –

- (a) Chapter II – Pre – Recognition Era.
- (b) Chapter III – Post – Recognition Era.
- (c) Chapter IV – Comprehensive Relationship.
- (d) Chapter V – Concerns of Pakistan & Arab World.
- (e) Chapter VI – Challenges Towards Strategic Ties.
- (f) Chapter VII – Recommendations.
- (g) Chapter VIII – Conclusion.

CHAPTER II

“ No foreign policy – no matter how ingenious has any chance of success if it is born in the minds of few and carried in the hearts of none.”

– Henry Kissinger[5]

PRE – RECOGNITION ERA

14. West Asia and North Africa (WANA) as a region have been significant to mankind throughout the world. It has been occupying an important position in the international relations. This region has also featured prominently in the Indian foreign policy due to its geopolitical location being link between Europe and Asia. The enormous oil reserves have perpetually attracted interest from all developing nations. The west Asia policy of India was

primarily focused on its friendly relations with the Arab countries. Jawaharlal Nehru, the prime minister of independent India, began cooperating with the Arab and Indian National Congress (INC) lent its support for Arab's struggle well before the independence. Thus the roots of India's Israel policy can be traced to the early 1920s, when the Indian nationalist leadership emerged a staunch supporter of the Arabs.

15. Due to historical reasons, India's stance towards Jewish nationalistic aspiration was unlike that of the West. Viewing it through the Islamic prism, the Indian nationalists stated that the consent of the Arab residents was indispensable while creating a Jewish national home in the Palestine. Though being sympathetic towards the Jews and their sufferings, they were unwilling to endorse the Zionist demands. At the United Nations in 1947, the Indian delegation first argued for federal state of Palestine and, when plan failed, then for recognition of Palestine as an independent state, with wide autonomy for Jews in areas where they were in majority[6]. When the UN General Assembly voted for the majority plan, India joined the Arab and Islamic countries in opposing the partition of Palestine. India also regarded Israel as theocratic state setup with the backing of imperial powers.

16. The Jews however were prepared for decisive action[7]. Israel came into existence in May, 1948 by partitioning Palestine. The Indian government did not recognize Israel in the beginning and also opposed the UN membership in 1949. It was only in September, 1950 that India accorded a de jure recognition to Israel and permitted a Consulate to function in Bombay[8]. If the recognition had to take more than two years to materialize, the

diplomatic relations had to wait over four decades until 1992. Few reasons as <https://assignbuster.com/india-israel-relations-responsibilities-and-realities-politics-essay/>

to why it took India close to two years of indecision are that the sentiments and opinion of the post - partition traumatised Muslim minority residing in India necessitated careful handling. Secondly, India did not desire to offend the Arabs & lose support. Thirdly, India sought to maintain its moral & ethically upright stance. However, the main reason attributed to the same was of India's support and sympathies with the Palestinian cause. India was an initiator of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and thus her support to Palestine was on principle of anti - imperialism and anti - colonialism and not on religious grounds. India also became one of the first non - Arab states to recognise the Palestinian independence and to permit an embassy of the PLO in her capital.

17. India's anti - Israel attitude was also the part of larger diplomatic strategy of countering Pakistan's influence in Arab world and that of safeguarding its oil and gas supplies from the Arab countries. The same also ensured security to the jobs for thousands of Indians in the Gulf and thereby helping India to keep its foreign exchange reserves afloat. The perception of protecting Indian national interests by a negative foreign policy towards Israel was so strong amongst the Indian leadership that despite Arabs failing to reciprocate positively during India's wars with China (1962) and Pakistan (1965 and 1971) as well as growing public dissent could not cut much ice in Delhi. Indian leadership was ready to pay the price of refusing to establish full diplomatic relations with Jerusalem and criticise Israel in various forums, just for making the Arabs happy. Yet all the efforts of the Indian government could neither ensure continued electoral support from the Muslims nor win the goodwill of Arab states.

18. The fact that United States strongly supporting Israel, while India's sympathies were toward the Soviet Union led both the nations end up on the opposite sides during the Cold War. It again proved detrimental to the relations. Four Arab Israel wars and Indian support to Arabs in all of them further contributed towards the deterioration of the India - Israel relations. The Congress Party, dominant force in nation's politics since independence, opposed Israel in large part because it viewed Israel as an analogue of Pakistan, a state based on religion. This fact also hampered growth of India - Israel ties.

19. However, during this era, Israeli consulate in Bombay keenly and religiously worked to influence important personalities. Symposiums, lectures, debates, and exhibitions were organised to reach out to key and significant individuals. In 1962, both the countries signed an agreement for nuclear cooperation. In April 1963, a secret agreement was signed for supply of arms during Israeli General David Shaltiel visit to India for talks with his counterpart. Both the countries also agreed to train each other's officers in military establishments. In 1967, when France imposed embargo on supply of arms to Israel, Brigadier General Ariel Sharon, commander of the Israeli armoured division in Sinai in the 1967 Arab-Israel war, visited India for the purchase of spare parts of Mystere and Ouragan planes and AMX 13 tanks[9]. Israel even acknowledged that several tactics used by the Indian army against Pakistan in the 1965 war were of great benefit for the Israelis in her 1967 war against the Arabs.

20. The Janata Party which formed the first non - Congress government at the centre in 1977 tried to initiate some new trends, which raised hopes for <https://assignbuster.com/india-israel-relations-responsibilities-and-realities-politics-essay/>

better India - Israel relations[10]. The two important and essential developments which took place during Morarji Desai's tenure were incognito visit of Israeli foreign minister Moshe Dayan and Camp David Accord. Whatsoever may have been official and public stand towards Israel, India always maintained a veiled relation with Tel-Aviv. The relations started improving after mid 80's. It was during Rajiv Gandhi's tenure when US congressmen Stephen Solarz assisted a Jewish lobbyist Moris Abraham from New York in reviving and re-establishing cordial relations with India. Many of Indians are not even aware of the fact that India's top nuclear scientists secretly visited Israel in 1984. This fact may be attributed towards India's desire to acquire minimum credible deterrence to protect her sovereignty and independence keeping in view Pakistan's venture in the field with the help of her allies.

21. Agriculture was another field where Israel exploited Indian markets during non recognition period. She had attained expertise in various agricultural techniques and also in the areas of horticulture and floriculture. She had mastered in a system to prevent water logging and salinity, drip irrigation and hybrid farming to name a few. These attracted Indians and they exchanged much for acquiring these for its desert regions of Rajasthan and Maharashtra.

22. The most crucial and controversial development that indicated re-appraisal in India's Israel policy was decision to host the Davis Cup quarter finals tennis match in July 1987[11]. Since the mid 70's, there was mixed sports policy followed by India when it concerned Israel. Though there was no formal ban on individual meets, national engagements were either tried <https://assignbuster.com/india-israel-relations-responsibilities-and-realities-politics-essay/>

to be prevented or not encouraged. The Davis Cup tie generated public debate about India's foreign policy towards Israel[12].

23. Finally, with end of cold war due to disintegration of Soviet Union in 1991 and Gulf war II in which US demonstrated her supremacy there was a need felt by India to adopt a new approach and to review its foreign policy. The collapse of the USSR not only meant an immense loss of a key arms provider but also that the India had lost a dependable and reliable ally on the international diplomatic front. India was also interested in advancing and upgrading its military as well as civilian capabilities in view to fulfill its dream of becoming a regional power. Her relations with the Arab nations, who were technologically far behind Jewish state, were not realising India's dream. Like any other country, India was now forced to have a relook at its policies towards a world order purely dominated by the United States.

CHAPTER III

“ International events should not govern foreign policies, but foreign policies, incidents”

– **Napoleon Bonaparte[13]**

POST – RECOGNITION ERA

24. India on 29 January, 1992, when announced of exchanging ambassadors with Tel Aviv concluded the process of diplomatic normalisation which was left incomplete when New Delhi had recognised Jewish state in 1950. By taking this step India became last major non - Arab and non - Islamic power to progress closer to Israel. While Rajiv Gandhi, in his premiership, had taken certain steps to normalise the relations with Israel, the final acclaim went to

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P. V. Narasimha Rao. By engaging into complete diplomatic relations with Israel, he realised the promise made by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to his Israeli counterpart David Ben - Gurion in early 1952.

25. India was waiting for a force of change to knock at its doorsteps rather than taking a bold foreign policy decision on Israel herself. The multiple and inter related factors brought changes in the foreign policy matters. The significant factors that brought change in India's policy towards Israel are as under :-

(a) Firstly, the Gulf war in 1990 proved the prowess of US. The emerging world order dominated by US and the economic factors forced India to give a new impetus to ties with US. US also became a facilitator for India in reorienting her policy towards Israel. US wanted strong and natural partners like India & Israel to counter new threat of " Islamic Radicalism and Fundamentalism". The strong Jewish lobby in US was also putting in their efforts to normalize of relations with Israel. The effort of them in stopping sale of Airborne Warning and Control Systems (AWACS) to Pakistan and garnering support for India on the issue of Kashmir was not only acknowledged by Delhi, but also apprised Indian policy makers of the Jewish influence in the US. This fact convinced Indian leadership that the American Jewish lobby is a vital link of influence in American policy decision making and that in order to optimally utilise this link, it was crucial to normalise relations with Israel.

(b) Secondly, end of cold war and disintegration of Soviet Union led to the change in the balance of power and the world changed from bipolar to

unipolar world with US as only superpower in global politics. With non alignment as its main policy till now, India had a massive task in front of herself of readjusting its policies to emerge as a growing nation. The collapse of the USSR not only meant an immense loss of a dependable and reliable ally on the international diplomatic front but also loss of a key arms provider. Israel's defence industry was seen as a readily available substitute for up gradation and new defence acquisitions.

(c) Thirdly, a very important factor in normalisation of India - Israel ties was the impact of globalization. The insecure condition of Indian economy and severe balance of payment crisis led to the economic reforms. These structural alterations and opening up of economy were supported by world organisations like IMF World Bank operating under US control. The end of cold war also forced pre - eminence of economics over politics. This influenced and forced the Indian government in following the US line and changing its foreign policy.

(d) Fourthly, India's desire to participate and contribute in peace initiatives in West Asia changed India's outlook towards Israel. After Madrid Peace Conference held in October 1991, the dispute over annoying friendly Arab states and Muslims became inappropriate, as the Arabs as well as the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), were themselves settling for peace with Israel. With this new development India was encouraged to break ice with Israel. The Jewish state was no more a " pariah" as before[14].

(e) Fifthly, India's decision was considered as a move to strengthen her position on the issue of Kashmir. Repeated pro - Pakistan resolutions on

issue of Kashmir by the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) further encouraged India to re-evaluate its Middle East policy. Israel on the other hand continuously garnered support for India on the issue of Kashmir. It may be prudent here to notice that when Johanan Bein, the Deputy Director General of the Israeli Foreign Office, visited India in February 1994, the Israeli official declared : " Kashmir is an integral part of India any problem should be solved bilaterally"[15].

(f) Sixthly, in the early 1990s, the increase in Islamic fundamentalism and radicalism worsened the domestic as well as the regional security environment of India. New Delhi saw a common ground with Israel in this regard. Israel's experiences in countering terrorism were considered to be a valuable input while tackling the jihadi terrorism in Kashmir. This fact also brought India closer to Israel.

(g) Seventhly, the dip in oil prices during same time somewhat reduced India's dependence on Arab for oil. The unstable and insecure environment prevalent in the region forced government to look for alternative means and sources of energy to meet the requirement.

26. The establishment of full diplomatic relations with Israel resulted in a new era of partnerships which has grown strength to strength in last two decades. The India - Israel relationship, still born for 40 years, has rapidly made up for lost time[16]. Despite of short duration of establishment of full diplomatic relations, cooperation between the two countries has been impressive. It seems that both sides have discovered each other and that the affinities were not limited to sharing the same cultural, spiritual, and moral

values[17]. The smooth pace with which relations have grown and strengthened has rewarded Israel's patience and made Indians to think as to why they had delayed in normalising the relations for so long. Both countries have worked hard towards reinforcing the institutional mechanism for stronger bilateral relations. There have been visits of various teams to the two countries[18]. There was a great deal of coming and going between the two, more perhaps from the Indian side than the Israeli[19]. Helped by fast changing realities and a much stronger public opinion, the two countries are moving cautiously but rapidly to develop a comprehensive relationship.

27. During the course of normalisation of relations between India and Israel, a host of bilateral agreements and pacts have been signed and operationalised between the two nations[20]. The list of the same is as under :-

Ser No

Bilateral Agreements

Agreement Date

Establishment of Full Bilateral Diplomatic Relations

29. 01. 1992

Cultural Agreement

18. 05. 1993

Agreement for Cooperation in the Field of Agriculture

24. 12. 1993

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Air Transport Agreement

04. 04. 1994

Agreement concerning Cooperation in the Field of Telecommunication and Posts

20. 11. 1994

Agreement on Trade and Economics Cooperation

21. 12. 1994

Agreement for the Promotion and Protection of Investments

29. 01. 1996

Convention for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and for the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income and on Capital

29. 01. 1996

Bilateral Agreement regarding Mutual Assistance and Cooperation in Custom matters

29. 01. 1996

Memorandum of Intent on a Joint High-tech Agricultural Demonstration Cooperation Project

30. 12. 1996

Umbrella Agreement on the Development of Cooperation in the Field of Industrial & Technological Research & Development

30. 12. 1996

Agreement on Technical Cooperation

30. 12. 1996

Executive Agreement for a Program of Cooperation in the Field of Agriculture

17. 10. 1997

Agreement on Cooperation in the field of Health and Medicine

09. 09. 2003

Ser No

Bilateral Agreements

Agreement Date

Agreement on Cooperation in combating illicit trafficking and abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances

09. 09. 2003

Agreement on Cooperation in the field of Protection of the Environment

09. 09. 2003

Agreement on Exemption of Visa requirement for holders of diplomatic, official and service passports

09. 09. 2003

Indo-Israel Industrial Initiative for R&D

July 2005

Agreement on Economic Cooperation

Nov 2005

Three-year Work Plan for Cooperation in the Field of Agriculture

May 2006

CHAPTER IV

“ We do have a defence relationship with India, which is no secret.

On the other hand, what is a secret is what the defence relationship is.

And with all due respect, the secret part of it will remain secret”.

– **Mark Sofer[21]**

Israeli Ambassador to India

COMPREHENSIVE RELATIONSHIP

Imperatives

28. At the advent of 21st century, South Asia and the Middle East pose major challenge to global peace and security. The emerging Delhi – Jerusalem strategic alliance can become one of the crucial factors maintaining global security. Alliance with Israel would make India more strong and powerful to play a significant and meaningful role in the South Asia, Central Asia, and

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West Asia. India also needs the alliance and cooperation of Israel in achieving qualitative and quantitative superiority in its defence capabilities to fulfill her aim of becoming the regional power. To meet her needs of up gradation and modernisation of defense muscles, India has determined to achieve self - reliance various fields including surveillance capabilities, missiles, and air fleet. Owing to heavy cost incurred in conduct of research and development and being a developing nation, India is partially relying on import of components and collaboration. India's attempts to achieve all this have been actively supported by Israeli weapon system to include missiles, avionics, sensors to monitor cross - border infiltration, remotely piloted drones etc.

29. For Israel, the relations with India will not only provide her huge market for Israel's defense industry but also will also contain Pakistan in helping the Middle Eastern nations against Tel Aviv. India's vast and lucrative defense market is presenting a golden opportunity to Israel to exploit it for her politico - economic gains. Israel has been willing to supply India the state - of - the - art defense equipments and technologies. Israel's provision of these equipments and technology especially in the areas of electronics, avionics, missile technology, and intelligence has been hallmark in their strategic alliance. India is also sees an opportunity to benefit from Israel's expertise in combating insurgency and terrorism. In real sense, India - Israel relations have assumed significance as they are based on very security considerations. Any consequential and constructive relationship between both the nations is more likely to cover joint research and production and the transfer of technologies. Israel also apprehends that Pakistan's nuclear

program can become a source of strength for the Arab world, and Iran, whom she considers to be her bitter and worse adversaries.

Bilateral Visits

30. 2012 marks the twentieth anniversary of establishment of full diplomatic relations between the two nations. Since the establishment of the Embassies, there have been a large number of ministerial visits between the two nations. To commemorate twentieth anniversary, External affairs minister Shri S M Krishna, Minister of Urban Development Shri Kamal Nath, Minister of communication, IT, and HR Development Shri Kapil Sibal and Minister of Tourism shri Subodh Kant Sahai, all four of them visited Israel.

31. This long duration of two decades has been utilised to put in place framework of normal state - to - state relations,