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Triangular Ties: Exploring India-Israel Strategic Cooperation Amidst India-Pakistan Relations

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Abstract

The article assesses how the dynamics of India-Pakistan conflicts facilitate the advancement of India-Israel strategic alliances in defense and counter-terrorism efforts. By analyzing pivotal events (Kargil Crisis, Mumbai Attacks, Pathankot Attack), the article clarifies the significance of shared security apprehensions and political environments in enhancing bilateral relations. The analysis indicates that the discord with Pakistan has led India to strategically engage with Israel pragmatically, thereby cultivating a strong partnership in the face of regional volatility.

Keywords: Diplomacy, India-Pakistan, India-Israel, Strategic Cooperation, Defense Collaboration, Terrorism, South Asia, Non-State Actors

1. Introduction

For years, Israel and India have been shaped by distinctive geostrategic challenges, which in turn have influenced their foreign policies. Both countries are confronted with conflicts in their surrounding regions and face security threats from neighboring countries. China's presence in the region and its tensions with Pakistan have prompted India to develop military capabilities and adopt an assertive foreign policy. Strategic alliances and partnerships are vital for dealing with geopolitical challenges. India's relationship with Muslim nations shifted as a result of the rise of Pakistan as an Islamic state, causing tension over the issue of Kashmir. India and Israel exhibit a closer level of strategic cooperation due to factors such as bilateral relations and internal political developments. The paper intends to comprehend the global division between Islamic and non-Islamic countries by conducting a case study on the relationship between India and Pakistan. It employs a selection of case studies to perform a comparative analysis. Among the case studies used are the Kargil Crisis in 1999, the Mumbai Terror Attacks on 26/11, and the Pathankot Airbase Attack in 2016.

The fundamental proposition put forth in the paper posits that the enduring conflicts between India and Pakistan have served to fortify the relations between India and Israel. This contention is made manifest through an examination of the internal political and military dynamics of both nations and their consequential impact on the

bilateral relations between India and Israel. The case studies mentioned above, which are being examined, aim to investigate how the strategic cooperation between India and Israel was strengthened or affected during these events.

2. India-Pakistan Relations- An Overview

Since their attainment of independence, the relations between India and Pakistan have consistently been intertwined with obstacles. According to Wojczewski (2014), this association is considered to be one of the most enduring and precarious rivalries in contemporary politics, characterized by mutual skepticism and animosity. Pattnaik (2019) supports this perspective by asserting that no other bond has experienced as many turbulent phases as the one between India and Pakistan. The ensued Pakistan-India rivalry acquiring the mode of permanent bitterness drew its strength from the partition-time communal violence. India and the Hindu religion have become interchangeable for many individuals from Pakistan, thus leading to the emergence of an 'adversarial' portrayal that has fostered a sense of doubt and skepticism among individuals who have coexisted for a prolonged period of time. This perception remains highly influential even to the present day.

Pakistan's religious affiliation has contributed to its aspiration to assume a protective role for the Muslim population in India, while simultaneously grappling with feelings of territorial insufficiency. This fear of establishing Pakistan's Islamic identity has led to the rise of radical Islam, which has been exploited by the power structure in Islamabad (Pasricha, 2018). Conversely, India advocates for a political settlement to the Kashmir dispute, while militant groups located in Pakistan firmly believe that their 'Jihad' will prevail over India and resolve the problem. Furthermore, successive Pakistani governments have also relied on covert military operations and international pressure/intervention to achieve their goals by escalating tensions in the region, especially in light of the nuclear capabilities possessed by both countries.

The current state of the relationship between India and Pakistan can be characterized as a lack of formal communication through diplomatic channels. This absence of communication indicates a remarkable deviation from the relationship between India and China, in which economic connections play a pivotal role (Abbas, 2022). Unlike the past, wherein the emphasis was on creating enough goodwill to enable conversations on the Kashmir issue, Prime Ministers Narendra Modi and Nawaz Sharif following a meeting held on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Ufa in July 2015, agreed to address 'all unresolved matters' without explicitly mentioning Kashmir.

Despite this apparent progress, the alleged continued support from Pakistan to insurgents in the Kashmir region and significant acts of terrorism in Uri, Pathankot, and Pulwama have hindered progress in improving the bilateral relationship. However, in 2019, both nations came to an agreement to establish a passage for Sikh pilgrims from India to visit a sacred sanctuary in Pakistan but the prevailing tensions overshadowed such endeavors.

After the removal of Imran Khan's government and the persistent economic upheaval, the Shehbaz Sharif-led government expressed its inclination to recommence bilateral relations with India. The policy outlined a trajectory for Pakistan to give priority to trade and interconnectedness in its intergovernmental relationships. It indicated a shift in Pakistan's approach towards India aimed at effectively managing changes in personnel within both the civilian and security sectors, following the implementation of Pakistan's inaugural National Security Policy (2022-2026) (Khokhar, 2022). Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic might have influenced this determination, as both nations faced economic and health crises and potentially recognized the benefits of collaboration in addressing shared challenges (Reshi, 2021).

In order to decrease tensions and prevent any cross-border firing along the Line of Control (LoC), Pakistan and India reintroduced the ceasefire agreement in February 2021, which was initially established in 2003. A report by Reuters stated that Pakistan granted India permission to transport wheat and necessary pharmaceutical supplies to Afghanistan based on humanitarian assistance (Shahzad, 2021). Importantly, this event followed the abrogation of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution by Prime Minister Modi in August 2019. Article 370 had granted the

state of Jammu and Kashmir with distinct autonomy. Pakistan's constrained reaction to it effectively prevented the escalation of tensions between the two nations (Grossman, 2022).

Nonetheless, it must be acknowledged that neither country has significantly altered its perception of the other as a threat, despite the enhancements in their relationship. It is evident that Islamabad's initial National Security Policy primarily focuses on India's 'hegemonic' aspirations and the oppression of Kashmiris by India. Moreover, India has also demonstrated a hesitancy to assume the lead and pursue peace.

The annual report for 2022 published by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) of India has recently suggested that the possibility of a thaw in relations between India and Pakistan is minimal. This is mainly attributed to the failure of Islamabad to establish a conducive environment for the improvement of bilateral relations. In light of this, the report underscores the importance of Pakistan taking action to address the concerns raised by India in order to facilitate the resumption of dialogue between the two countries (Brajesh, 2023).

3. India-Israel Relations: An Overview

The relationship between Israel and India has been characterized by a protracted period of ambiguity, which is currently transitioning to a more positive trend distinguished by a sense of warmth and mutual cooperation. Despite the fact that they share numerous resemblances, such as their struggle for independence from British colonial rule in the late 1940s and a firmly established democratic system, it took more than four decades for the two nations to establish formal diplomatic relations. Significantly, both Israel and India are geographically located in regions where democracy is either feeble or lacking. In the case of India, it is surrounded by several autocratic nations, such as China and Pakistan, while Israel is situated in the volatile Middle East, where democratic values are frequently imperiled by regional conflicts and geopolitical tensions. Hence, both nations have a mutual interest in promoting democratic principles and combating terrorism in their respective regions. In spite of these similarities, it is only in recent years that the bilateral connections between the two countries have begun to flourish, enabling closer cooperation in the areas of defense, trade, and technology.

India's foreign policy towards Israel since independence in 1947 has been shaped by a multitude of factors. India's emergence as the leader of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and a proponent of anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism played a pivotal role in shaping its stance on the Palestine issue. India's consistent reluctance to establish diplomatic relations with Israel was primarily driven by the belief of the senior leadership, including Nehru, that such an action would provoke the Arab states to support Pakistan's efforts to transfer the Kashmir conflict from the United Nations Security Council to the General Assembly.

Significantly, in the absence of official diplomatic relations, a covert level of cooperation existed between India and Israel. In the aftermath of the Sino-Indian War of 1962 and the India-Pakistan conflicts of 1965 and 1971, India procured weaponry and munitions from Israel (Abhyankar, 2012). Israel exhibited its willingness to provide the necessary weaponry, which was otherwise unattainable due to the embargoes imposed by the United Kingdom, United States, and France. Moreover, a connection between India's Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) and Israel's Mossad has been in existence since the 1960s, indicating a certain level of collaboration in the fields of defense and security. In the wake of the assassination of Indira Gandhi in 1984 by Sikh extremists who received funding from Pakistan, Indian authorities sought the assistance of Israeli security services to revamp their security infrastructure. Furthermore, the R&AW also derived advantages from Israel's provision of advanced electronic surveillance capabilities (Kumaraswamy, 1998).

India's restraint in openly acknowledging Israel's military and political support during its confrontations with China and Pakistan can largely be attributed to the significant influence exerted by the Pakistani factor in India's strategic calculations. Moreover, India intermittently rejected Israel's diplomatic overtures (Kumaraswamy, 2020). A publication originating from London reports that in February 1987, India refused Israel's substantial aid to dismantle Pakistan's nuclear reactor.

Against the backdrop of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the upsurge of Islamic fundamentalist terrorism in the region played a pivotal role in fostering a closer relationship between India and Israel. During the early 1990s, India experienced a tumultuous separatist uprising in Kashmir, while Israel grappled with the onset of the first Intifada in its occupied territories (Bhatt, 2020). Israel on its part displayed unwavering support for India in light of the plight faced by the Kashmiri Pandits, who were compelled to leave their homes due to the persecution and deaths caused by the militants.

The early 1990s brought about a momentous phase in the international system paradigm, leading to consequential changes at regional and domestic levels. Both countries recognized the importance of cooperation in counter-terrorism and intelligence exchange. On January 29, 1992, the Indian government formalized complete diplomatic ties with Israel, and a few months later, the Israeli embassy was established in New Delhi (Ryabinin et al., n.d.). In the current global context, the bilateral relationship between India and Israel has been characterized by the prevalence of defense, economic, and developmental issues. An important event in the history of India-Israel relations, was when Israel provided India with advanced weaponry, including laser-guided bombs, during the Kargil conflict with Pakistan in 1999 (Pandya, 2021). The establishment of the government of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in 2014 led by Narendra Modi has proven to be a significant development in the relations between India and Israel.

The shared ideology and national interests coupled with favorable changes in geopolitical dynamics facilitated the alliance between the two nations. Since 2014, the bilateral relations between India and Israel have undergone a considerable augmentation. Over the last seven years, India has obtained weaponry worth \$2.3 billion from Israel, which includes drones, missiles, sensors, and air defense systems (Singh and Thakkar, 2022). Notably, both heads of government participated in reciprocal visits during the period of 2017-18, thereby raising the relationship to the status of a strategic partnership.

India's evolving stance towards Israel is a departure from its traditional standpoint in the Global South. Despite its enduring support for the cause of Palestine, India has adopted a more nuanced approach in recent times. India has been consistently avoiding participation in the international community's condemnation of Israel, indicating a shift towards a more equitable and pragmatic foreign policy. In June 2019, India voted in favor of Israel for the first time at the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), thereby denying observer status to the Palestinian human rights organization called 'Shahed' (Jeelani, 2021). India's strategic engagement with Israel has further facilitated the development of deeper relationships with other countries in the Middle East, such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. As a result, India has successfully expanded its range of foreign policy options and strengthened its strategic influence in the region.

4. Role of Ideology & Domestic Politics in Pakistan on India-Israel Relations

The governance and daily existence of Pakistan since its establishment in 1947 have been deeply affected by religion and ideology. Religion has been used to legitimize the ruling class and establish a single Islamic identity in Pakistan. A juxtaposition is made between the original vision of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, who envisioned a progressive and democratic state built on the fundamental principles of Islam, and the present reality of Pakistan, where religion has been manipulated and used for political gain (Pattnaik, 1998).

The India-Pakistan conflict is rooted in differing ideologies and political paths. Nehru embraced secularism, rejecting religious nationalism and granting privileges to specific religious groups. In contrast, Jinnah saw Pakistan as a haven for marginalized Muslims after British rule. Pakistan's Islamic ideology, which sanctioned the use of religion for political aims to foster a national imagination centered on 'unity as uniformity,' starkly contrasts India's ideological framework of 'Unity in Diversity' (Motwani, 2017). This narrative of politics and ideology turned out to be advantageous for Pakistan's political establishment and, consequently, its armed forces.

The presence of radical national narratives in Pakistan depicts the India-Pakistan relationship as a continuation of a long-standing conflict between Muslims and Hindus, with Pakistan as the successor to Muslim conquerors in South Asia. This perpetuates historical conflicts and portrays Hindus as internal threats, leading to mistrust and

disloyalty (Ispahani, 2015). Extremist groups like Jamaat-e-Islami take advantage of this narrative to enforce a literal interpretation of Pakistan as a 'Land of the Pure', resulting in the eradication of its diverse cultural and religious heritage.

The Israel-Palestine conflict, like the India-Pakistan conflict, is a long-standing issue in the Middle East. This conflict involves religion and territory, with religion being significant. Various aspects of Islam and Judaism influence the role of religion in the conflict, including harmful apocalyptic stories. Longstanding rumors have been circulating for decades about a purported 'Jewish Plan' aimed at the destruction of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, in addition to rumors surrounding the core beliefs of Muslims which allegedly involve the annihilation of Jews (Mostafa, 2018).

The partnership between India and Israel is often analyzed as anti-Islamic. Some scholars argue that the collaboration between Hindu and Zionist ideologies has had severe repercussions for Pakistan. The relationship between India, Pakistan, and Israel is complex due to religious and ideological factors. India and Israel both face a common danger from radical Islam in the Middle East. India is concerned about the Saudi Arabia-Pakistan relationship, while Israel faces security challenges from Islamic extremists in the Arab world and Iran. The nuclear capabilities and hostility of Pakistan and Iran towards India and Israel pose a similar threat to both countries. Additionally, both nations are cautious of the growing appeal of radicalism among Muslims in India and Arabs in Israel. The intricate internal political and military dynamics of India and Pakistan have also exerted a substantial influence on the formation of India-Israel relations. Various domestic factors, including regime type, public opinion, interest groups, bureaucratic politics, and leadership preferences, have shaped the policies and actions of both India and Pakistan in their interactions with each other and with Israel.

India, a multi-party democracy, has been primarily governed by BJP and Indian National Congress (INC). BJP follows Hindutva, a right-wing ideology of Hindu nationalism. BJP has a closer relationship with Israel, unlike Congress. This alignment is based on nationalism, religion, and security. Israel shares the approach of preserving Jewish identity and homeland. Furthermore, both the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Israel have forged robust connections with the United States, acknowledging it as an essential strategic partner that offers support and credibility (Pant, 2004).

Additionally, because of its exclusive interpretation of nationhood based on the Hindutva ideology and the Hindu Rashtra (Hindu state), the BJP did not have the same concerns as the Congress about the Muslim minority. BJP saw India as dealing with similar geopolitical dangers as Israel, primarily stemming from militant Islam and its global terrorist network, while, the secular nationalism of the Congress did not find any common ground with Zionism.

The significant influence of the military of Pakistan in shaping its foreign policy and the innate dynamics of Pakistan have also stimulated the strengthening of collaboration between India and Israel. Within the Pakistani military establishment, Israel is regarded as an ally of India and a threat to the regional interests of Pakistan. The Pakistan army, in collaboration with the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), has garnered notoriety for its support of various terrorist and militant organizations, such as Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed, and Hamas, which have targeted both India and Israel (Siddiq, 2011).

The rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Pakistan affects the India-Israel alliance. Religious factions oppose dialogue with Israel and other non-Muslim nations. These factions are associated with violence, persecution of minorities, and demonstrations against the Western world. Political parties, including Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI), Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan (JUP), Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP), Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA), Milli Muslim League (MML), and Islami Tehreek Pakistan (ITP) promote an uncompromising interpretation of Islam and oppose normalization or dialogue with Israel and other non-Muslim nations. These parties have also been associated with the funding of terrorist activities in Kashmir and advocating for the boycott of Israeli goods and the cutting of diplomatic ties with Israel.

Pakistan, distinguished by a 'deep state' comprised of the military, intelligence agencies, and religious entities, and with limited civilian oversight over foreign policy, maintained an adversarial stance towards Israel, perceiving it as a potential regional adversary. Significantly it simultaneously tries to engage covertly with Israel through back-channel communications.

Since 1992, internal developments in Pakistan have strengthened India and Israel's partnership and weakened Pakistan's potential role in resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian issue. This has also created a divide between Pakistan and some of its traditional allies in the Muslim world, like Turkey and the UAE, who have been more pragmatic and flexible in their relations with Israel. Pakistan's growing religious extremism is influencing its diplomatic decisions, making normalization with Israel less likely. To counteract the increasing extremism in Pakistani society and concerns about Pakistan aligning with Iran and anti-Israel activities, Israel has been deepening its cooperation with India, particularly in security matters.

6. Key Events in India-Pakistan Hostility and their role in forging India-Israel Relations

A meticulous analysis reveals that during times of intense hostility between India and Pakistan, the strengthening of India-Israel strategic cooperation is greatly influenced as also evident, amongst others, during- the Kargil Conflict (1999), the Mumbai Terror Attacks (26/11 in 2008), and the Pathankot Airbase Attack (2016). While the cooperation between India and Israel during the Kargil crisis is widely recognized, in the latter two cases, the strengthening of cooperation occurred via indirect means i.e. bilateral visits, increase in defense trade, intelligence cooperation, and cooperation at international forums, etc.

The first episode focuses on the Kargil Conflict in 1999. Infiltrators supported by Pakistan gained control over strategic positions in the Kargil region, leading to increased military hostilities with India. Israel played a key role by providing intelligence support to India, contributing to India's victory. This event strengthened the partnership between India and Israel. In the 1998-99 winter season, the surreptitious plan of infiltration, codenamed 'Operation Badr', by the Pakistan Armed Forces, was intricately crafted and covertly executed. It aimed to sever the connection between Kashmir and Ladakh; compel the Indian Armed Forces to withdraw from the 'Siachen Glacier'; strengthen the morale of their militants operating in J&K; and resolve the Kashmir Issue according to their own terms and conditions (Nagial, 2022). The ensuing 'Operation Vijay' by India coupled with the seamless integration of vigorous military, diplomatic, and political strategies, successfully transformed an unfavorable situation into a triumph.

India faced challenges with its intellectual and surveillance capabilities during the Kargil crisis. The Indian military was surprised by Pakistani forces entering Indian-controlled territory, exposing India's limitations in gathering intelligence and conducting surveillance. India lacked modern surveillance technologies and struggled to identify the Pakistani intrusion promptly. India was ill-prepared and vulnerable to Pakistani encroachments, especially in terms of armament, equipment, and intellectual resources. Israel proved to be a valuable ally, offering support in weaponry, ammunition, equipment, and intellectual resources. The Israeli military possessed the knowledge and technology to handle border control, counter-terrorism, and limited warfare. Israel provided important ammunition and missiles for its fighter jets. In order to enhance the visual acuity and precision of operating Mirage 2000H fighters, Israel supplied laser-guided missiles. Despite confronting international pressures, Israel promptly delivered the previously ordered weapons, which included Israeli Heron and searcher UAVs (Blarel, 2015). UAVs were a cost-effective solution, which provided precise images. Israel's response also enhanced its reputation as a reliable arms supplier, especially during India's export sanctions on technological equipment.

After Kargil, the Indian government formed the Kargil Review Committee (KRC), which had implications for India-Israel defense cooperation. Israel became an important partner for India due to shared security threats and interests. Israel had already helped India during the Kargil crisis. India then recognized Israel's capabilities in areas such as UAVs, surveillance systems, and anti-missile systems. This led to increased collaboration in defense.

In 2001, the Indian Ministry of Defence negotiated with Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) and secured a fixed price agreement for UAVs at a rate of US\$ 7.2 million per unit. Subsequently, in 2003, India contracted with IAI for

US\$130 million to procure 18 Heron UAVs with an additional order for 16 units (Blarel, 2015). IAI also collaborated with India's HAL for maintenance issues. Given the absence of Airborne warning and control systems (AWACS) technology, India initiated discussions with Israel for the acquisition of a Phalcon platform. Additionally, India acquired advanced sensors from Israel to enhance its capabilities in monitoring and detecting cross-border infiltration.

On the diplomatic front, Israel lacked diplomatic relations with Pakistan. Consequently, akin to Russia, it overtly backed the Indian position in explicit terms. It affirmed the validity of the Line of Control (LOC) in accordance with the Simla Accord and admonished its violation. Israel even abstained from endorsing the third-party intervention requested by Pakistan and opposed by India. Hence, it advocated for the resolution of the specific Kashmir and Kargil issues through bilateral means.

The next groundbreaking episode that raised the hostility between India and Pakistan was the 2008 Mumbai Attacks on 26th November 2008 (26/11 attacks). This event was carried out by terrorists trained and supported by Pakistan-based terror groups. The attack on Mumbai's iconic landmarks, such as the Taj Hotel and the Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, was a major national security challenge for India. Israel provided critical counter-terrorism assistance and expertise to India during this crisis, which was instrumental in resolving the crisis.

The 26/11 attacks were directed towards various establishments, which encompassed high-end hotels, a well-liked café, a railway station, and a Jewish community center. Among the total of 138 Indian citizens and 25 foreigners, nine Jewish individuals from Israel and the United States tragically lost their lives. The terrorists furtively traveled by sea from Karachi without encountering any interception from the Indian Navy and Coast Guard. Upon reaching Mumbai, they separated into four groups and began to inflict devastation and loss of life within the coastal vicinity of the city (Raman, 2009).

The Mumbai attacks by LeT aimed to increase tensions between India and Pakistan. The attacks disrupted the peace process between the two countries, which went against Lashkar's ideology and made the group insignificant. The attacks may have also aimed to strengthen hardline elements in the Pakistani and Indian governments. Lashkar targeted the Nariman House, Taj, and Oberoi Hotels to enhance their reputation among the jihadi community by attacking Jews and Westerners. During the 26/11 attacks, Nariman House, the largest Jewish community center in Mumbai, was targeted. One Rabbi Gavriel Holzberg and his pregnant wife Rivka, along with four others, were held hostage. The attacks in Mumbai showed the intention of Jihadi groups supported by Pakistan to harm Indian and Israel interests.

The Mumbai attacks highlighted India's vulnerability and lack of readiness in dealing with such situations, especially in terms of intelligence, security, and counter-terrorism. Israel proved to be a valuable ally for India during the attacks, offering important support in terms of intelligence, equipment, and hostage management. This assistance is notable due to Israel's experience in counter-terrorism and its history of hostage incidents.

The 26/11 attacks presented fresh prospects for Israeli Homeland Security firms to invest in the Indian market, particularly in the realm of police training. According to Leo Gleser, the founder of International Security and Defense Systems, the attacks provided his firm with the opportunity to work with special units and police forces in Maharashtra and beyond. In 2012, major Israeli Homeland Security (HLS) players collaborated with an Indian firm to establish Veecon Magal Security Systems Ltd. Another Israeli firm, Urban Elements, relocated its production to Gujarat and established an Indian subsidiary. These firms took advantage of lower labor costs and targeted the Indian HLS market. Luxury residential complexes, high-tech campuses, and the hospitality industry have a high demand for Israeli security systems. Since 2008, some Israeli HLS firms have sold their products and services to public agencies in India (Machold, 2015).

Additionally, after the 26/11 attacks, Israel set up a Joint Working Group (JWG) on counter-terrorism and extended its support in the area of Homeland Security (HLS) in 2009. Furthermore, the government of Maharashtra sent a delegation to acquire knowledge from their expertise (Sarin, 2009).

The third event is the Pathankot Airbase attack (2016) carried out by Pakistan-based JeM terrorists, who infiltrated the Indian Air Force base in Pathankot. The Indian security forces faced a major challenge in neutralizing the terrorists and securing the airbase. Once again, Israel provided critical counter-terrorism assistance and expertise to India, which was instrumental in successfully resolving the crisis.

Deciphering the motive behind Pakistan's orchestration of the Pathankot attacks is highly important. Within Pakistan, the attack can be understood as a power struggle among factions and institutions. Some elements in Pakistan's security establishment allegedly supported the attack to weaken civilian leadership or justify the military's role. The attack significantly escalated India-Pakistan hostility. These attacks happened soon after Prime Minister Narendra Modi unexpectedly visited Lahore in December 2015 to meet Nawaz Sharif and attend a wedding. This is similar to what happened when Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee went to Lahore before the Kargil conflict. The connection between these visits and acts of terrorism implies a recurring pattern in Pakistan's behavior.

India bolstered its defense relations with Israel after the Pathankot attacks. The approval of the acquisition of two Israeli Phalcon Airborne Early Warning and Control Systems (AWACS) by the Indian Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) in March 2016 represented a significant outcome of the Pathankot attacks. With an approximate value of \$3 billion, this defense transaction served as a prime illustration of the deepening defense collaboration between India and Israel. The trilateral agreement, which involved India, Israel, and Russia, focused on the installation of Phalcon radars produced by Israel on Russian IL-76 aircraft (TNN, 2003). The collaborative initiative highlighted the synergistic approach taken to strengthen India's defense capabilities, through the provision of advanced surveillance and early warning systems. Furthermore, the agreement entailed the acquisition of other cutting-edge military technologies from Israel.

In April 2017, India and Israel signed agreements worth \$2 billion for advanced missile systems. Israel Aerospace Industries agreed to provide India with Medium-Range Surface-to-Air Missile systems (MRSAM). These systems include advanced radar, command and control systems, launchers, and missiles with advanced RF seekers. The MRSAM system has enhanced India's defense capabilities by intercepting aircraft, missiles, and unmanned aerial vehicles up to 70 km away. It is important to mention that the development of the MRSAM was the result of a successful collaborative effort between India and Israel, showcasing their fruitful partnership in a program valued at Rs 2,606 crore (Singh, 2017).

7. Conclusion

India and Israel have a strategic partnership based on common interests, values, and challenges. They cooperate in defense, security, intelligence, counter-terrorism, and diplomacy, driven by the need to counter terrorism and other threats, the desire to enhance their influence, and the affinity for democracy and innovation. The aforementioned analysis found that India-Pakistan hostility strengthens India-Israel cooperation, as India seeks Israel's support and assistance in dealing with Pakistan's aggression and terrorism, while Israel sees an opportunity to deepen its ties with India and demonstrate its value as a partner.

India and Israel share a common challenge in combating terrorism. They face a similar situation concerning Western nations' inconsistent response to terrorism. The Mumbai attacks exposed a new form of large-scale terrorist warfare, a longstanding struggle for Israel. While India expects international support, concrete action from other countries is unlikely due to potential costs and risks. India seeks international pressure on Pakistan to dismantle terrorist training camps, cease support for terrorists, and share intelligence. However, Western nations depend on Pakistan's cooperation for managing Islamist terrorist threats, preventing nuclear weapons proliferation, and maintaining stability in Afghanistan. Likewise, Israel has faced limited progress in addressing terrorism from countries like Syria, Lebanon, and Iran, despite discussions and sanctions. Both India and Israel predominantly stand alone in defending against terrorism. Additionally, they encounter the challenge of dealing with countries lacking effective governance or driven by radical ideologies that fuel terrorism. These complexities are evident in Pakistan, where different factions within the intelligence apparatus promote terrorism autonomously. Moreover,

public opinion and the Islamic framework in Pakistan and regimes like Iran and Syria pose hindrances to combating terrorism.

With regard to the aforementioned analysis and future cooperation between India and Israel, both countries would benefit from the following recommendations. First, India and Israel should continue to cooperate in defense, security, intelligence, counter-terrorism, and diplomacy to counter common threats from terrorism and other sources, especially from Pakistan and its allies. Second, India and Israel should also expand their cooperation in trade, technology, agriculture, culture, and people-to-people ties to diversify their partnership and enhance their mutual benefits, regardless of the state of India-Pakistan relations. Third, India and Israel should balance their interests and values with respect to other actors and issues in the region and beyond. Both sides should maintain good relations with other countries that are important for their security or development, such as the US, China, Russia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE. They should also be mindful of the impact of their cooperation on India-Pakistan relations and other regional dynamics. Fourth, India and Israel should communicate effectively and transparently with each other and with their respective publics and stakeholders. Further, efforts should be made to explain the rationale and benefits of their cooperation and address any concerns or misconceptions. Their responses to India-Pakistan hostility or dialogue should also be coordinated.

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