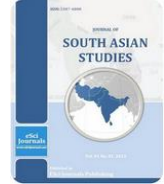




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INDIA AND ISRAEL DEFENSE RELATIONSHIP IN THE CONTEXT OF OFFENSIVE REALISM

^aFatih Kiliç, ^bAabid M. Sheikh*

^{ab}Department of International Relations, Selçuk University, Turkey.

ABSTRACT

India, which sustains its economic upturn in the 21st century, has great security concerns in its region. After the end of the Cold War, India decided to modernize its army equipped with Soviet-made old weapons. In this process, it has initiated both the Indigenous Arms Industry program and developed defense relations with the world's leading countries. India signed huge arms deals with Israel in 2000, which did not establish any diplomatic relations until 1992, taking into account the sensitivities of the Muslim population in its possession. This development, when assessed in the context of offensive realism, indicates that India can follow an aggressive attitude in an attempt to threaten its national security in the coming years.

Keywords: Arm deals, India, Israel, Modernization process, Offensive realism, Security concerns.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the economic growth is considered as one of the most important milestones of the national strategies of countries. However, this economic growth is leading to great energy consumption. Since their energy sources are inadequate to compensate for their energy demands, they import energy from other countries, which in turn makes them energetically dependent on foreign countries. All these developments cause a great rivalry on energy trade routes. The Indian Ocean Region, with its rich energy resources and high volume of trade, is one of the most important regions in which this competition is experienced. For China and India, the two greatest powers of the Asian region, the important trade routes on this region are vital. Because more than 80% of China's imported oil and natural gas is transported through the Indian Ocean and South China Sea (Weimar, 2013), and about 80% of India's crude oil needs are imported by sea using the international shipping lanes across the Indian Ocean (IN, 2015), so that these two powers are heavily dependent on seaborne energy trade. For this reason, securing of the energy resources transferred through this trade is vital, and the key to

energy security is ensured only by obtaining a complete control over the energy trade routes (Brewster, 2015a). Subsequently the two countries favor the rheostat of this imperative seaborne energy trade through external and possibly threatening force as a danger to their national interests, they want to build their premeditated impact and don't need any rivals in the area which can trial their vital influence. (Kaya, Kiliç, 2017, p. 156). China has initiated many facilities in the IOR. These are;

- commercial port facilities in South Asian countries (Chittagong in Bangladesh, Hambantota in Sri Lanka, Kyaukpyu in Myanmar and Gwadar in Pakistan),
- road links between Kunming and Chittagong via Myanmar and air routes connecting Kunming and Dhaka (Katoch, 2009);
- rail link between Lhasa in Tibet with Khasa in Nepal, build and upgrade road and rail network systems that range from the Yunnan province in the South of China;
- gas pipelines for the purpose of forming and alternative energy transit route between the new deep-water port of Kyaukpu in Myanmar and China's southern Yunnan province for transporting gas from Myanmar's offshore gas fields and oil shipped from the Middle East (Brewster, 2014); and,
- road and rail links and a proposed oil pipeline and

* Corresponding Author:

Email ID: aabidamu7@outlook.com

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road and rail link from Gawadar in Pakistan to Kashi in China.

China has guaranteed to ensure the security and sustainability of energy trade in the Indian Ocean and it has led to a deep concern for India after these strategic initiatives that China has launched in these regions. India that considers itself as the transcendent power in the Indian Ocean is not comfortable with China's growing influence over the region and its close partnership with littorals of the Indian Ocean (Kaya, Kılıç, 2017).

According to Indian strategic idea, the Indian Ocean is regarded as the Indian maritime backyard of Indian Ocean and India is the sole leader and pre-dominant country in the Indian Ocean Region (Brewster, 2015b). In this context, India has initiated various policies in order to contain China's increasing power. Many Indian strategic analysts claimed that the expansion of China's strategic depth in India's backyard (Pant, 2012) is a great challenge to India's national interest and predominant position in the Indian Ocean Region. They believe that China's initiatives in the IOR would be used for not purely economic purposes but also military purposes. For this reason, India has established broadened and deepened its cooperation and partnership with the USA, Iran, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, Myanmar and Sri Lanka, and as part of its balancing strategy against China.

India has also increased defense budget to update its obsolete war fighting equipments, and naval units. In this context, India has upgraded its national defense policy and developed its own domestic defense industry. But initially, its technological infrastructure was inadequate. Because of this India had to establish new defense cooperation with USA, Russia and Israel. Various defense agreements were signed Between India and above-mentioned countries in many fields. Among these countries, Israel attracts more attention. During the Cold War period, India didn't establish any diplomatic relation with Israel for fear of the reaction of its own Muslims citizens. But events especially in the IOR led to India to build close ties with technologically rich Israel.

Since diplomatic relations between Israel and India has been established, two countries have launched a joint study in many areas and developed bilateral relations including cooperation in various areas of reciprocal and strategic interests. In fact, over the years India and Israel have established a large scale of economic, commercial,

scientific and cultural cooperation. Diplomatic relations between the two countries have contributed to the development of military cooperation in line with the common strategic interests of both countries. As regional peace and stability continued to form a significant part of the Indian national strategy, India decided to strengthen its military strength. In this regard, Israel has become an important player in the modernization of Indian military equipments. September 11, the Afghanistan war and the war in Iraq (the second Gulf War) as well as the Kargil War in 1999 with Pakistan and the terror attack on the Indian Parliament in New Delhi in December 2001 were improved this mutual collaboration.

This article mainly focuses on India and Israel defence relationship after the establishment of full diplomatic relation in 1992. Firstly, it will examine main areas of defense and security cooperation India-Israel defense relations. Secondly, it presents Mearsheimer's theory of offensive realism and examines the defense relationship between India and Israel in the context of offensive realism. Finally, it will concluded with a conclusion chapter that includes assessments of the future of relations between the two countries.

DEFENSE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INDIA AND ISRAEL

With extreme power and extraordinary military capacity, India is a powerful state in the South Asia. According to Singh, India's foreign policy is theoretically composed of three concentric circles (Singh, 1976). The first of these is the outermost circle related to superpowers, the middle circle surrounding the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, and the inner circle of India's immediate nearest neighbors in South Asia (Singh, 1976: 19). Indian foreign policy could theoretically be categorized into three concentric circles with the outermost circle related to the superpowers; the middle circle concerns the developing world that comprises Asia, Africa and Latin America and the close circle relates to India's urgent neighbors in South Asia (Singh, 1976). Thanks to this versatile foreign policy, India has improved relations with both developing and developed countries. Relations with Israel, which is in the middle circle of Indian foreign policy, have been started in this context. Let's briefly talk about historical relations between the two countries.

The state of Israel was recognized by India in 1950, two years after its establishment in 1948. Mahatma Gandhi

and Jawaharlal Nehru were vehemently against the partition of Palestine and the creation of a Jewish state which is a state based on religion in this region. Although India officially recognized the Jewish State in September 1950, it did not establish full diplomatic relations until 1992. Gandhi's attempts to build of Hindu-Muslim unity and Nehru's negative evaluation of the Zionist movement, led the Indian National Congress to follow a pro-Arab policy in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Moreover, India's support to and sympathies with the Palestinian cause affected to establish diplomatic relations with Israel. India became one of the first non-Arab states which recognized Palestinian independence and also one of the first to allow an embassy of the PLO in its capital (Pant, 2004).

During the Cold War, due to the anti-imperialist point of view, Israel and India took different sides of the political spectrum. Due to Indian anti-Western and anti-Israeli stance, Indian leaders played a role against Israel and rejected the partition of Palestine. Because, their purposes were not only counter Pakistan's influence in the Arab world and securing the oil trade routes from Arab countries (Pant, 2004). In spite of Israel's military assistance to India in two Indo-Pak wars of 1965 and 1971, India supported the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) against Israel in three Arab-Israeli wars of 1956, 1967, and 1973 (Pant, 2004).

In this period, the priorities of Indian politics were anti-colonial Afro-Asian solidarity, support for allies in Kashmir issue, neutralizing Pakistan influence on the Arab countries, oil dependency from the Gulf of Basra and exporting a huge labor force to the Gulf (Chengappa, 2010). India developed intense diplomatic, economic and military cooperation with the Soviet Union and thus strength end edits military power. During that time Indian army was dominantly bestowed with the Russian arms. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, India lost its largest source of military equipment. These equipments were highly obsolete and technologically weak. Thus, India wanted to update its military technology and military capabilities for the purpose of Indian national goals.

After the Cold War, U.S. was the only superpower left in the world. The then Rao government decided to get in touch with U.S. to improved Indo-American relations. But in the cold war period, India's involvement in the non-aligned movement and establishing close relations with the USSR were major obstacles to the relations that

would be developed between the two countries. In this regard, Israel could play a key role for this relation. The US-Jewish organizations as well as the Jewish American lobby played major role in this approach. Thanks to all of these attempts, India established diplomatic relations with Israel in January 1992. Their relations have expanded in various areas (economic cooperation, agriculture, trade and cultural exchanges) by the successive Indian governments. The visit of Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres to India was a turning point for the Indo-Israel relations in 1993. Two countries signed a series of agreements in the areas of intelligence, security and military equipments.

Military Cooperation

The most important step in the strategic partnership initiated between India and Israel is the initiatives made in the military field. As mentioned earlier, the Afghanistan war, the Iraq war (the second Gulf War), the Kargil crises of 1999, the 9/11 events, the terror attacks in 2001 and 2008 are the main reasons of the India's military cooperation with Israel. India also began to feel uncomfortable due to the growing Sino-Pakistan partnership in the Indian Ocean Region, and India sought ways to establish technological superiority over Pakistan. This cooperation was not only important for India, but also for Israel. Israeli's aspiration to establish military supremacy over its Arab neighbors is the other reason of this collaboration.

Initiatives in this context began with the Israeli Air Force commander's visit to India in March 1994 (Inbar & Ningthoujam, 2012). A sophisticated Air Combat Maneuvering Instrumentation was purchased (Inbar and Ningthoujam, 2012) and a \$ 10 million deal was signed for two Dvora MK-2 patrols to be assigned in the Indian Navy (IN) from Israel in 1996 (Inbar & Ningthoujam, 2012). In 1997, the first military attaché of New Delhi's was assigned to Israel. Israeli firms took an active role in providing pertinent systems, supplying 155 mm self-propelled guns and upgrading the India's MİG-21 fighters avionic systems (Inbar & Ningthoujam, 2012). A significant technological and financial breakthrough in defense cooperation was negotiations for the purchase of Barak-1 missiles, which could be thrown into the air vertically, from Israel in the late 1990s (Inbar & Ningthoujam, 2012).

Increasing Islamist terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir and elsewhere in the country (the Mumbai terror attack in November 2008 is an example) further strengthened

this relationship. Israel's technological competence for the modernization of India's former Soviet weapon systems was the best choice. Since 2000, many high-tech systems have been procured from Israel by India such as, Green Pine early warning radar, Barak-I anti-missile defense systems and Searcher and Heron Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs). On the other side, India has demanded Israel's help in modernizing the MIG fighters' warriors and T-72 Russian tank systems (Pandit, 2007).

Arms Trade

The arms trade in defense cooperation between Israel and India remains substantial and climbing in these days. It is estimated that the total value of arms trade between the two countries in the last decade is about 10 billion dollars (Inbar & Ningthoujam, 2012). With the Phalcon Airborne Warning and Control Systems (AWACS), which was equipped with Russian-made Ilyushin II-76s, launched in May 2009 and delivered in March 2010, Israel consolidated its position as one of India's largest arms exporters (*Times of India*, March 24, 2010.) and with annual arms trades totaling approximately \$1.5 billion, Israel became the second largest arms supplier to India, after Russia by the end of 2006 (Inbar & Ningthoujam, 2012).

In March 2010, a hefty contract was signed between the two countries with an approximate value of 1.4 billion dollars, related to the development and procurement of Barak 8 medium-range air-to-air missiles (Katz, 2010). In mid-2010s, India announced that it was particularly interested in Israel's modern missile defense systems, David's Sling and the Iron Dome (Inbar & Ningthoujam, 2012). Approving the purchase of 15 Israel Heron UAVs by the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) is another important factor in accelerating Indian-Israeli relations (Ningthoujam, 2014). The first long-range surface to air missile (LRSAM) co-developed by the two countries, was delivered to India's National Navy with a ceremony in August 2017.

Transfer of Technology and Cooperation

Israel and India have also established cooperation in nuclear field in India's defense profile. Due to the predominant position in the Indian Ocean, India wanted to improve naval capability and established the naval cooperation with Israel. In this context, the Barak-8 missile has been developed by Israel Aircraft Industry (IAI) for the Indian Air Force (IAF) and IN to protect ground facilities and sea vessels from aircraft and cruise missiles (Khan, 2011). Hence, Israel started to achieve a

geo-strategic position in Indian Ocean. However, there were a number of challenges and threats, which had to be overcome in the Indian Ocean.

In order to pretend similar challenges and threats, India and Israel are ambitious to improve their defense capabilities, because of this; military cooperation and technology transfer between them became compulsory for their defense industries (Inbar & Ningthoujam, 2012). The first step taken in this direction was an agreement signed in September 2002 between ISI and Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) for the joint production of an attack helicopter Dhruv (Inbar & Ningthoujam, 2012). The second step was the agreement on the joint development and production of a long-range Barak missile system, which was signed between IAI and India's Defense and Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL) in 2006 and cost \$ 350 million. A similar agreement was subsequently signed between the parties to build the anti-aircraft jets for the IN and IAF. For the 2011-2012 financial year, the Indian defense budget was raised by \$ 36 billion, and this increasing budget enabled the army, navy and air force to be modernized rapidly (Inbar & Ningthoujam, 2012).

In this period, close relations between the two states are not limited to the military and technological field but expanded in many other fields. New field of cooperation have also been established, including science, the agricultural sector, public health, farm research, telecommunications, information technology and cooperation in space. Furthermore, Israel has engaged in collaborations with Indian scientists and the Indian Space Research Organization on human genome research (Pant, 2004).

OFFENSIVE REALISM AND INDIA-ISRAEL DEFENSE RELATIONSHIP

According to the offensive realist approach, the great powers have to pursue power and act aggressively, not because they desire or have various advantages, but because they can survive and maximize their advantages. So that, conflicts and wars between the great powers are naturally inevitable. The architect of the offensive or aggressive realist theory is the US academician John Mearsheimer. Mearsheimer's offensive realism theory consists of five fundamentals hypothesis. The first hypothesis is that the international system is anarchic, that is, there is no hierarchical superiority and a compelling power that states can control behavior between each other and guarantee their boundaries

(Mearsheimer,2001). Second assumption is that all great powers have aggressive military capabilities that they can use against other states (Mearsheimer,2001). Third is that they will never be sure that the states will use their aggressive military capabilities against other states (Mearsheimer,2001). Fourth hypothesis is that the basic goal of the state is to survive. Therefore, the protection of sovereignty is the most fundamental factor that activates states (Mearsheimer,2001). Fifth is that states are rational actors therefore, states should act strategically in order to survive in the international system (Mearsheimer, 2001). Mearsheimer assumes that states are security-seekers (Mearsheimer, 2001). When the Indian and Israeli defense alliance is examined, it is seen that this cooperation is very compatible with the theory of offensive realism.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, India's largest source of military technology weakened due to the obsolete ammunition technology. Pakistan's nuclear weaponry, terrorist organizations in the neighborhood and the possibility that they may capture those weapons have been forcing India to find new partners against those threats. These threats build up the main base for the partnership of India and Israel. The anarchic situation in the international system and the uncertainty about the intentions and capabilities of other states have forced India to become a dominant force in the Indian Ocean Region, and this has led to the search for ways to increase its military power over the surrounding countries.

Mearsheimer assumes that all great powers possess offensive military capabilities, and they are capable of using against other states (Mearsheimer 2001). For this reason, India is very disturbed by its neighboring country Pakistan, which is experiencing various problems. Kashmir issue, between India and Pakistan, is still an important problem, which hasn't been resolved yet. Pakistan has been increasing the military capacity for any confrontation in that area. To control of the border crossing, to observe the neighbor's military activities, India has been setting up a new surveillance system with the help of Israel.

The international system is filled with uncertainty about the intentions of states, naturally, states are striving to increase their military capabilities, and this sometimes makes it inevitable to establish partnerships with other states (Mearsheimer,2001). The best way for great powers to ensure their survival is to increase their power and follow hegemony. To ensure their security,

security-seeking states forced to engage in conflict. India is aware of the Pakistan's nuclear threat. To defeat this threat and to continue to stay safe, India has been researching for new technology weapons, such as air to air missiles and strengthening arm trades with Israel.

CONCLUSION

The present article has underlined India-Israel defense and security relations. In particular, India and Israel shared security challenges Pakistan's nuclear threat and the global terrorism. Bilateral relations between India and Israel have gradually and significantly strengthened since Sharon visit in 2003. Until 1992 there were no diplomatic relationship between India and Israel. After the Cold War, with collapse of Soviet Union, Indian's requirements in defense came out. The coordination of mutual interests in regional and global of issues brought these two countries close to each other. Indo-Israel relations are of enormous importance because these relations are based on security considerations. India then started collaboration with Israel for improving its defense system and modernization of the weapon systems. India attempts to improve its defense system with the aim to counter its nuclear-armed adversary Pakistan. Pakistan perceives any kind of nuclear cooperation between India and Israel as a serious threat to its national security. The growing Indo-Israeli strategic collaboration provides Pakistan new opportunities to gain support from China, the Arab world, and Iran.

When the development of Indian and Israeli relations is examined, it is seen that the two countries have come closer to common interests as a result of the policies they follow. Unless there is a radical change in the policies being close partnership between the two countries is estimated they will continue this closeness.

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