

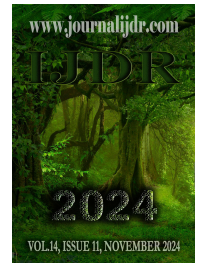


ISSN: 2230-9926

Available online at <http://www.journalijdr.com>

IJDR

International Journal of Development Research
Vol. 14, Issue, 11, pp. 67040-67045, November, 2024
<https://doi.org/10.37118/ijdr.28911.11.2024>



RESEARCH ARTICLE

OPEN ACCESS

SHARED INTERESTS, SHARED CHALLENGES: ANALYZING INDO-ISRAELI RELATIONS AND THE IRANIAN FACTOR

*Tehseena Nazir and Shazia Nazir

Department of Political Science, Kashmir University

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 20th August, 2024
Received in revised form
19th September, 2024
Accepted 03rd October, 2024
Published online 30th November, 2024

Key Words:

Indo-Israeli relations, Significant challenges, Hezbollah, Navigating, Emphasizing

*Corresponding Author: Tehseena Nazir,

ABSTRACT

The recent enhancement of Indo-Israeli relations reflects a dynamic partnership characterized by shared strategic interests and collaborative initiatives. This evolving alliance underscores the importance of democratic values and economic aspirations that both nations cherish. Engaging across various sectors, including defense, technology, agriculture, and culture, India and Israel are poised to reshape their roles on regional and global stages. However, this partnership faces significant challenges, particularly from Iran and its military ally, Hezbollah, which threaten the strategic goals of both countries. A thorough examination of the interactions within this triangular relationship is crucial for developing effective strategies that fortify collaboration. By navigating these complexities, both nations can unlock substantial strategic advantages and opportunities, paving the way for enhanced cooperation in addressing common security concerns and fostering a hopeful vision for the future. This paper examines the growing engagement between India and Israel, emphasizing their shared interests and the challenges posed by Iran and Hezbollah. It highlights the potential for a stronger partnership to enhance strategic advantages for both nations.

Copyright©2024, Tehseena Nazir and Shazia Nazir. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Citation: Tehseena Nazir and Shazia Nazir, 2024. "Shared Interests, Shared Challenges: Analyzing Indo-Israeli Relations and the Iranian Factor". International Journal of Development Research, 14, (11), 67040-67045.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the relationship between India and Israel has blossomed into a dynamic partnership marked by a convergence of strategic interests and cooperative initiatives. This burgeoning alliance, rooted in shared democratic values and economic aspirations, has garnered significant attention on the global stage. The mutual engagement between these two nations spans various sectors, including defense, technology, agriculture, and culture, highlighting an evolving synergy that promises to reshape their respective regional and global roles. As both countries navigate an increasingly complex geopolitical landscape, the exploration of this partnership becomes essential to understanding the implications for regional stability and international relations. However, the Indo-Israeli partnership is not without its challenges, particularly the influence of Iran and its military ally, Hezbollah, which pose considerable threats to the strategic aspirations of both nations. Iran's assertive posture in the region, coupled with its support for proxy groups, complicates the security dynamics that India and Israel must contend with. By delving into the intricate relationship between these three entities, it becomes evident that a nuanced understanding of their interactions is crucial for crafting effective strategies that bolster collaboration between India and Israel. This paper aims to illuminate these complexities while offering valuable insights that can strengthen their partnership and pave the way for enhanced cooperation in addressing shared security concerns.

FINDING AND ANALYSIS

Background and Significance of India-Israel Relations: During the seven decades that followed up to 2020, persisting non-strategic relationships did not change and become formidable as they should have. The situation may be expressed through the following statements: India and Israel had good political, economic, and other relations, "but not to the level that should have been established". In one case, Israel had significantly improved its relations with its long-standing rival, Pakistan, while in another area, the Sino-Soviet rivalry that was at an all-time high initiated the creation of China-Pakistan relations, and then reinforced through the Alliance. In the context of these relations, Israel and India did not come together and satisfy each other's expectations. The rapidly growing commercial and military, unlike but strictly strategic relations, did not develop. Nonetheless, the weak fight and diplomatic conflict represented the diminished quality of official relations and shows that the strategic interests were not anchored to the historical and cultural values premised. This lack of robust and comprehensive cooperation between India and Israel in various spheres of engagement hindered the full realization of their untapped potentials. With missed opportunities and unrealized synergies, their partnership remained partially unexplored and suboptimal. Therefore, it is crucial for both nations to evaluate and recalibrate their approach, deepening their bilateral ties through sustained efforts and strategic collaboration. By leveraging their

respective strengths and harnessing the power of mutual understanding, India and Israel have the potential to transcend their current limitations and forge a truly formidable alliance. Such an alliance, built on trust, shared values, and a shared vision for the future, can lay a solid foundation for mutually beneficial outcomes across diverse sectors, including but not limited to politics, technology, trade, and security. As they navigate the complexities of the global landscape, it is imperative for India and Israel to recognize the immense potential residing within their relationship and seize the opportunities that lie ahead. By fostering closer cooperation, they can transcend the limitations of the past and embark on a new era of robust collaboration, underpinning their strategic interests with a firm foundation of historical and cultural values. As the world evolves at an unprecedented pace, the significance of deepening India-Israel ties cannot be overstated. It is a crucial endeavor that promises to unlock a multitude of possibilities for both nations, propelling them towards a brighter and more prosperous future. By taking decisive steps towards closer alignment and fostering a shared sense of purpose, India and Israel can embark on a transformative journey, characterized by strength, resilience, and a shared commitment to progress. Together, they can navigate the challenges of the 21st century and emerge as key players in shaping the global agenda, with their strategic partnership serving as a beacon of hope and progress for like-minded nations around the world. Emboldened by a renewed spirit of collaboration, India and Israel can overcome the historical setbacks and leverage their unique strengths to create a mutually beneficial relationship that stands the test of time. In doing so, they can build a solid foundation for enduring peace, stability, and prosperity, not only for themselves but for the wider international community. As they forge ahead into a future marked by uncertainty and complexity, the unity between India and Israel will be a source of strength and resilience, enabling them to confront challenges head-on and emerge victorious. With steadfast determination and a shared commitment to excellence, they can harness the boundless opportunities that lie before them and reshape the course of history. Through unwavering dedication and an unwavering belief in their shared values, India and Israel can establish a partnership that transcends borders and stands as a testament to the power of friendship, collaboration, and shared aspirations. Together, they can create a world where peace, progress, and prosperity reign supreme, leaving an indelible legacy for generations to come.

The Islamic Revolution's impact on India was immediate and highly fruitful in its ability to overturn the politicizing influence of the Wahhabis, who were culpable for the cultural degradation and impoverishment faced by the Muslim community in India during the turbulent years that ensued after the consequential fragmentation of the Mughal Empire. The revolution served as a profound inspiration for Muslims to emancipate their culture from the clutches of suppression and, furthermore, infused a renewed vigor into their religious inclinations. This gradual yet steadfast fortification of the Muslim community in India not only solidified their enduring alliance with the Hindus but also conferred upon them the power to triumphantly expel two foreign entities that had lorded over the nation. As a result, India underwent a transformative period wherein its unity and strength propelled it towards an unparalleled destiny steeped in sovereignty and freedom. Iran, on the other hand, is India's neighboring nation and strategic ally whose population, much like that of India, predominantly follows the Shia sect. This substantial population has been thoughtfully characterized by the esteemed spiritual leader, His Eminence Baqir al-Sadr, who holds the revered position of being the grandson-in-law of the Imam, the esteemed successor of Imam Ali (AS), and the closest disciple of Imam Khomeini (RA). He has beautifully described this population as 'the gateway to genuine Islam for both Muslims and non-Muslims alike'. The influence and teachings of this population serve as a beacon of hope and a catalyst for resurgence, significantly impacting approximately 85% of the global Shia population, which stands at around 1.2 billion individuals out of the total 1.4 billion Shias worldwide. As the world becomes an increasingly interconnected global village, where distance is no longer a barrier and communication is seamless, the dynamics of friendships among

nations undergo constant fluctuations. Trade traverses borders effortlessly, fueling economic growth and fostering collaboration between countries with diverse cultures and ideologies. Even leaders of nations trapped in political black holes, where progress seems stagnant, strive to find a way to navigate the mired waters, seeking opportunities for meaningful engagement and productive dialogue. Amidst these shifting landscapes, it is intriguing to observe the gradual expansion of the list of countries that are forging closer ties with Israel. Recent events have acted as a catalyst, leading to a significant surge in the number of nations embracing diplomatic, cultural, and economic relationships with Israel. This extraordinary growth of friendships and connections serves as a testament to the enduring spirit of cooperation and mutual respect that transcends geographical boundaries. As the world witnesses this remarkable trend, it becomes evident that the notion of international relations is evolving. The traditional barriers and preconceived notions that once hindered collaboration between nations are gradually dissipating, giving way to a new era of understanding and collaboration. Regardless of historical complexities or political differences, countries are recognizing the inherent value in establishing meaningful connections with Israel. The expanding list of nations turning towards Israel paints a picture of unity amidst diversity - a testament to the power of dialogue, compromise, and shared aspirations. These alliances not only bolster the global economy but also pave the way for cultural exchange, thereby enriching societies and fostering a spirit of inclusivity. In conclusion, as we witness the ever-increasing list of countries that are deepening their bonds with Israel, it becomes clear that the world is moving towards a future of strengthened global relations. Through the power of friendship, trade, and diplomatic efforts, barriers are slowly eroding, and leaders are finding common ground to overcome the obstacles that once seemed insurmountable. The possibilities unlocked by these expanding connections are limitless, offering hope for a world united by shared values, progress, and understanding.

FINDING AND ANALYSIS

India's Balancing Act: Navigating Between Iran and Israel: In light of recent events, specifically pertaining to the prevailing circumstances and occurrences that have transpired, it becomes indisputably apparent that certain elements within the governmental infrastructure of the Islamic Republic of Iran impose a substantially grave threat to the nation of India. This notable menace emanating from Iran stands in stark contrast to the neighboring nation of Pakistan, which, to a certain degree, has exhibited a measure of willingness to engage in cooperative endeavors and has refrained from actively propagating radical Sunni terrorism within the confines of the Indian subcontinent. In stark contrast, Iran, being the distinctive opposite, has undertaken a series of actions that directly infringe upon the interests of the Republic of India, such as the unwarranted and forceful confiscation of Indian maritime vessels, thereby potentially causing harm or even perpetrating the untimely demise of Indian citizens. Although certain European countries may harbor varying opinions concerning India's actions in the region of Jammu and Kashmir, it is of crucial significance to underline that the repercussions resulting from such viewpoints are considerably less substantial when compared to the consequences stemming from Iran's unwarranted actions. Hence, it is entirely justified and utterly legitimate for the nation of India to emphatically accentuate the contrasting dissimilarities and meticulously safeguard its national interests against the aforementioned perilous elements within Iran's government.

Iran's ever-expanding and increasingly influential presence in India's vast and strategically significant maritime neighborhood, which encompasses not only vital energy sources but also crucial trade routes and geopolitical interests, is an immensely complex and multifaceted matter that demands utmost scrutiny, caution, and deliberation from New Delhi as it endeavors to carefully assess and reevaluate its multifarious relations with Tel Aviv. Iran, from the perspective of the Indian government and its discerning policymakers,

cannot be absolved of blame or responsibility as it has consistently and actively lent support to various Indian opposition groups, including but not limited to Pakistan and certain factions within the sensitive region of Jammu and Kashmir. Moreover, Iran has indisputably played an undeniable role in fostering and propagating the dissemination of extremist strains of Islam within the territorial boundaries of India, thereby posing a significant and pressing challenge to not only its internal stability and harmony but also its broader national security interests. It is abundantly clear that unless and until the abhorrent acts of terrorism that continue to emanate from Pakistan, a neighboring state known for its persistent destabilizing activities and harboring of militant groups, come to a resolute halt—a seemingly herculean task that cannot be accomplished by India alone without sincere and genuine international collaboration and concerted efforts—the unintended and potentially catastrophic consequence could be the unintended formation of a closer and unlikely alliance between Iran and Israel, both of which share common concerns and growing apprehensions regarding Pakistan's nefarious and alarming actions. Such an alliance, conceived as a necessary countermeasure against the perpetual scourge of instability and terrorism emanating from Pakistan, could result in a stunning and far-reaching realignment of regional dynamics, power balances, and geopolitical equations—an outcome that demands proactive and astute attention from New Delhi, as it seeks to safeguard its vital interests, ensure regional stability, and chart a sustainable and secure course in the turbulent waters of the Indian Ocean.

Economic Interests vs. Strategic Partnerships: India and its foreign policy planners often assert that maintaining close ties with Iran does not detract from their relationship with Israel. They firmly argue that the extensive economic connections established under the guidance and leadership of Dr. Manmohan Singh's government should form the solid foundation for a profoundly sustainable long-term relationship. India's pursuit of amicable diplomatic relations with both Iran and Israel is motivated by a deep-rooted commitment to fostering robust international connections and furthering regional stability. By deliberately nurturing these valued partnerships concurrently, India aims to strengthen its position as an influential mediator and promote a harmonious coexistence among nations, while simultaneously prioritizing its own national interests and development goals. India seeks to leverage the multifaceted advantages of its relationship with Iran, harnessing the immense potential of economic collaboration, cultural exchanges, and strategic cooperation, without compromising its enduring bond with Israel. In this vein, India demonstrates its unwavering determination to successfully navigate the complex dynamics of the Middle East region and sustain cordial partnerships with key global players. India's approach to engaging with Iran and Israel underscores its commitment to global diplomacy. Recognizing the significance of the Middle East in global affairs, India actively cultivates its relationships with both countries, employing a balanced and nuanced strategy. As a rising global power, India understands the need to engage with important regional actors to secure its national interests, ensure regional stability, and contribute positively to the international community. By maintaining close ties with Iran and Israel, India demonstrates its adeptness in navigating the complexities of the geopolitical landscape. The economic dimension of India's partnerships with Iran and Israel is a key driver of their deepening relationships. India recognizes the immense potential for mutually beneficial collaboration in various sectors, including trade, energy, and technology. With Iran, India seeks to tap into its vast oil and gas resources, while also exploring avenues for infrastructure development and investment.

Additionally, India values Iran's strategic location, offering access to important markets and trade routes that can boost India's economic growth and connectivity. Simultaneously, India recognizes the strategic importance of its alliance with Israel, particularly in the fields of defense, agriculture, and technology. Leveraging Israel's expertise in these domains, India aims to enhance its own capabilities and foster knowledge-sharing between the two nations. The close defense cooperation is particularly crucial, given India's security concerns and shared interests in counterterrorism efforts. Moreover,

India looks towards Israel for advancements in agriculture techniques and water management, as well as innovative solutions in areas such as cyber-security and renewable energy. Cultural exchanges and people-to-people interactions are integral components of India's approach to building enduring ties with Iran and Israel. Understanding the significance of cultural understanding and people-to-people connections in diplomacy, India actively promotes cultural exchanges, tourism, and educational collaborations with both nations. These initiatives aim to foster mutual understanding, appreciation, and respect, strengthening the foundation of bilateral relations. By encouraging cultural dialogue and interactions, India seeks to deepen its cultural ties with Iran and Israel, thereby cementing the bonds of friendship and cooperation. In conclusion, India's simultaneous pursuits of robust relations with Iran and Israel exemplify its commitment to global diplomacy, regional stability, and national development goals. By skillfully navigating the complexities of the Middle East region, India strives to strengthen its position as a prominent mediator and a key player in shaping the global order. Through economic collaboration, cultural exchanges, and strategic cooperation, India aims to leverage the advantages of its partnerships with both Iran and Israel, without compromising the integrity of either relationship. India's unwavering determination to preserve its bond with Israel while fostering ties with Iran underscores its ability to successfully manage intricate diplomatic challenges and promote harmonious coexistence among nations.

Economic interests may indisputably be the primary drivers and underlying motivations that shape the foreign policies of nations in an increasingly interconnected and globalized world. It is, however, a rarity to encounter instances where foreign relations exclusively revolve around economic factors, albeit rare, making strategic, security, and ideological considerations essential components that inevitably permeate into the broader spectrum of foreign policy decisions. In light of this, analyzing and comprehending the oft-repeated claim that India has remained unwaveringly committed to a specific Israeli policy presents an intriguing subject matter, warranting further examination and exploration. This aspect gains even greater significance when we take into account the historical context of Iran, a nation that has persistently stood as one of Israel's most enduring adversaries since its establishment as a Jewish State. Moreover, juxtaposing this with India's long-standing and cordial relations with Tehran over the years adds an additional layer of complexity to the already intricate and evolving dynamics between India, the third-largest economy in Asia, and Israel, a country of comparable size and significance on the same continent.

Israel's Perspective on Iran's Influence in India: The approach that emanates quite clearly is: it is undeniably best for the most imperative and significant India-Iran parameters to come out in the open; this includes, but is not limited to, the intricate matters of Pakistan, Kashmir, and the Muslim world which are, after all, perceptible and observable. India's commendable relations with the United States of America, Afghanistan, and Israel do not provoke many raised eyebrows or apprehension. However, regarding the relations with Iran, it is crucial for India's strategic parameters regarding the nuclear question, the entry into the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and the intricate matter of Baluchistan to be well-known and acknowledged, so as to ensure that the situation does not escalate to menacing proportions. It is a well-known fact that Iran would, and continues to, exert their influence over India, cunningly trying to dilute the Indo-Israeli engagement, impose certain restrictions on India's remarkable nuclear engagement, and persistently sustain low-intensity conflicts within the region of Jammu and Kashmir. In light of this, a purposeful display of holistic understanding and comprehension of Iran's unparalleled ability to influence India should, without a doubt, ultimately direct India's reply and stance more assertively towards Tehran. It truly and unequivocally lies within India's utmost interests that Iran demonstrates a genuine understanding, compassion, and a magnanimous spirit in accommodating Tehran's stance on the pressing Indian question. Furthermore, it is unequivocally and undeniably in India's utmost interests for Iran to tread exceptionally and extremely carefully when administering any blows or

provocations to India through the tumultuous and troublesome zones within the vibrant and diverse South Asia and the vast Indian subcontinent. From the Israeli point of view, the narrative of cross-cutting influence becomes more nuanced and does not come with an undertone of strong dissent. It is effectively argued by an Israeli academic that Israel considers relations between India and Iran as a primary issue of Indian policy and allows its policy to be essentially shaped by its national interests and considers the Iranian factor as no more than secondary in relations between India and Israel. Amidst the gradual belief of lessening concerns, the Indian approach to the Iranian factor in India-Israel equations could be done better by openly or at least softly indicating the nature and significance of the India-Iran equation, pushing the Iranian factor in the range of lesser discomforts. It would be much appropriate for New Delhi to demonstrate its pragmatism.

Contrary to the popular perception of absolute convergence with the Iranian factor among the three capitals, Israel's body language on the questions of Iran, Indian ties with Iran, and their implications for bilateral relations exudes greater confidence and carries minimum traces of concerns. Israel is well aware of the traditional Indian position on Iran and realizes how New Delhi weighs its interests while engaging Tehran. While understanding that the existence of ties between India and Iran is a foregone conclusion given the prevailing geopolitics and energy conditions, the Israelis prefer not to reiterate the proposition that Indian ties with Iran affect the performance of Indo-Israeli relations. A measure of faith in the traditional Indian position on Iran, greater understanding of present Indian compulsions that continue to drive India-Iran ties, and lack of broader ambition and willingness to make an open statement on it seem to be the components of the Israeli approach.

Security Concerns and Regional Dynamics: Does the qualitative growth in Indo-Israeli bilateral relationship in the last two decades pitch Iran necessarily as the potential pivot of contestation with India and does it extend to an antagonistic strategizing imperatively? If it does, how does the prevailing Indian grand strategy reconcile, balance and parameterize a historically evolved strategic relationship? History tells us and realpolitik agrees—India recentring immediately implicates itself in the Iranian geopolitics. Wielding the confidence of a national power with an ever-increasing quest for the representation of global leaderships, India in its formal statements does indeed proclaim simultaneous harmonization and broadening of linkages with all regional powers in the region. But "we will conduct a relationship with Iran in our own national interest." As far as the less intrusive, though transformational with respect to the 'Iranian institutional DNA,' relationships of India with diverse influential actors in Iran are concerned, are these realignments and widening of options merely panacea that is rhetorically symbolic—a defensive posture taken subconsciously to fall in line rather than a proactive strategizing of India's deeper geostrategic concerns? The questions are apposite and in dire need of an attempt for clarification. Jasjit Singh succinctly concludes that India's perception of security concerns within and emanating from Central Asia and West Asia form the matrix of relationships with broader issues. It is felt that "protecting India's strategic interests in this region remains a challenge." Inter-alia, the regional dynamics—whether it is the situation in Pakistan, the India-Iran relationship and its implications for India's ties with other regional actors, the Israel-Iran relationship and its implications for India's West Asian strategy or the complicated nuclear reconfiguration i.e. the NPAs within the region—hold a particular pertinence in India's West Asian security perceptions and strategic ties operating in a broader framework of India's interdisciplinary strategic culture.

Iran's Role in the Middle East and Its Impact on India-Israel Relations: Over time, significant changes, both internal and external, have contributed to the emergence of profound divisions within the diverse and complex nation of Iran. Throughout its history, Iran has weathered turbulent periods characterized by constitutional turmoil, political strife, and ideological clashes. These transformative events have left an indelible mark on the nation's cultural, social, and

religious fabric. One pivotal era in Iran's recent past was the reign of Shah Reza Pahlavi, whose Western-influenced dictatorship shaped the course of the country. During this period, the Shah's regime imposed stringent cultural practices upon the Iranian populace, transforming the social landscape and engendering tensions between traditional values and modernization efforts. The Shah's dictatorship not only reinforced social divisions but also intensified the yearning for change and the growing discontent among diverse segments of society. The eventual ousting of the Shah marked a dramatic turning point in Iran's trajectory. The rise of Islamists in power heralded a profound shift in the country's governance and ideological underpinnings. The departure of the Shah resulted in the complete eradication of his influence, creating both opportunities for profound societal transformation and challenges in reconciling the diverse perspectives within the nation. The Islamists' ascension to power brought about a different set of cultural and political practices that sought to redefine Iran's identity on their own terms. Throughout its modern history, Iran has also grappled with external conflicts and embargoes that have further shaped its internal dynamics. In particular, the prolonged and devastating war with neighboring Iraq tested the resilience and unity of the Iranian people. This clash served as a catalyst for resilience, fostering a shared sense of national identity despite the deep divisions within the country. In the wake of the Islamic revolution, Iran witnessed a period of transformative upheaval. Sweeping societal purges, fueled by divergent ideologies and worldviews, resulted in profound changes throughout the country. Secular groups, representing different interpretations of progress and modernity, clashed with Islamist factions, leading to considerable resistance and friction. These clashes not only highlighted ideological differences but also illuminated the underlying divisions rooted in various ethnic, cultural, and sectarian groups within Iran. Notably, the Kurdish population of Iran became subject to suppression and marginalization during this period of political unrest. The Kurdish minority, grappling with a complex history and aspirations for self-determination, faced various challenges as they sought to assert their identity and secure their rights. The Kurdish struggle for recognition and autonomy became intricately intertwined with the broader narrative of Iran's sociopolitical landscape. Moreover, the Islamic revolution paved the way for the establishment of Hezbollah networks in the region. These networks, driven by their own geopolitical motivations, sought to leverage Iran's revolutionary fervor and ideology to bolster their influence and agenda. The emergence of Hezbollah had far-reaching implications not only in Iran but also across the wider Middle East, perpetuating regional tensions and reshaping the geopolitical landscape. In conclusion, Iran's journey through the annals of history has been one marked by significant transformations, internal divisions, and external pressures. From the tumultuous reign of Shah Reza Pahlavi to the rise of Islamists and the aftermath of the Islamic revolution, Iran has navigated through a complex web of forces that have both united and divided the nation. Despite these challenges, Iran continues to evolve and adapt, its historical and cultural tapestry weaving together a nuanced narrative that reflects the resilience and aspirations of its diverse population.

Iran is geographically positioned in a highly volatile and unpredictable region, making it virtually impossible to shield itself from the repercussions of the events occurring in the Gulf area. By virtue of its strategic location, Iran wields significant influence and exerts substantial power, owing to the fact that it is a large nation encompassing a predominantly youthful and continuously expanding population. Additionally, Iran boasts abundant petroleum resources, conferring upon it a level of control over a critical stretch of the Gulf region. The distinctiveness of Iran lies in its adherence to the Shiite tradition, setting it apart from both Sunni tradition and the Shiite communities present within the Arab realm. Remarkably, Iran's historical lineage traces back many centuries, amalgamating with the predominately Arab, Sunni Islamic world subsequent to its embrace of Islam. Throughout this integration, Iran has perpetually harbored a deep sense of disparity or distinctiveness, convinced that its true purpose lies in guiding and leading the Islamic world forward. The dynamics of Indo-Iranian relations are increasingly influenced by the growing partnership between Iran and China, coupled with Iran's

strained ties with the United States. In contrast, India enjoys a strengthening relationship with the U.S., while its competition with China remains significant. India is actively engaged in several trade corridor initiatives across the Middle East, most notably the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), which connects India with Iran and Russia, and the strategically crucial India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC). Many analysts view IMEC as a U.S.-supported alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Additionally, three of India's largest trade partners—namely the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, and Iraq—are located near the Persian Gulf. The relationships with the UAE and Saudi Arabia are particularly advantageous for India, as they ensure energy security and attract vital investments. India has also cultivated robust ties with Israel, becoming the largest purchaser of Israeli defense equipment, which plays a critical role in enhancing its national security framework.

Given the pivotal nature of trade between the Middle East and India, the latter benefits from involvement in multiple significant trade corridors that traverse the region, including both the INSTC and IMEC. The IMEC project, which aims to forge connections between Europe and India through Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE, is viewed as more promising and lucrative. Despite the ongoing conflict in Gaza, the signing of a pact between India and the UAE in February demonstrates strong momentum for this corridor. India's pre-existing diplomatic and economic relations with the involved nations are likely to bolster its geopolitical influence in favor of Israel and Saudi Arabia, potentially at the expense of its relationship with Iran. While India is still working on the development of the Chabahar port in Iran, anticipated to serve as a key hub for land routes to Central Asia and Afghanistan, the economic advantages of this project may be limited due to the small size of Central Asian markets and the ongoing sanctions against both Afghanistan and Iran. In contrast, the IMEC initiative has the backing of both the U.S. and European powers and is set to connect some of the globe's most vital and rapidly developing economies. These various elements—trade interests, mutual concerns regarding terrorism between India, Israel, and Arab nations, the enhancement of people-to-people connections, and the destabilizing actions of Iran—are likely to contribute to an increasingly pronounced shift in India's stance towards Iran, aligning it more closely with other key players in the region. As global geopolitics evolve, India may need to recalibrate its foreign policy priorities to reflect the changing landscape and its aspirations for greater regional influence.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the evolving relationship between India and Israel represents a strategic alliance that is ripe with potential, particularly in the face of shared challenges such as the influence of Iran and its proxy, Hezbollah. As both nations navigate the complexities of regional security dynamics, a stronger partnership can yield significant advantages in defense, technology, and cultural exchange. By aligning their interests and fostering collaboration, India and Israel can work together to counter common threats while enhancing their respective roles on the global stage. Moreover, it is essential for both nations to capitalize on their rich historical and cultural ties to build a more robust and comprehensive relationship. This endeavor requires sustained diplomatic efforts, mutual understanding, and a commitment to overcoming past limitations. By embracing their shared values and aspirations, India and Israel have the opportunity to elevate their partnership to new heights, ultimately contributing to regional stability and offering a hopeful perspective for the future of bilateral cooperation.

Key Takeaways and Future Prospects: While Israeli weapons sales depend on forging a strategic understanding with Russia and China, Israeli technology sales and broader trade relations with India do not. Israel can take India's current leverage over Iran into account before it forges a regional weapons trade generating security compromise with India. As India's influence and visibility in the Gulf grow and Israel's

reliance on alliances and low partnership interaction to ensure its own leverage over Iran or other actors in the Gulf rises, India will become an actor that Israel will naturally gravitate towards. Indeed, given the underlying national interests of both states and India's leadership in regional political, economic, and military cooperation initiatives among Mecca-majority states, the geopolitical realignment regarding India's influence over Iran in the Persian Gulf may exist despite the normative barriers brought by mutual strong support for creating a substantial Palestinian and senior to reduced-emphasis two-state solution. India and Israel should continue to reduce their significant gaps in aid, trade and investment policies on Iran, and Israel should ensure that its principal partner in the broader region, Russia, feels comfortable with any convergence in Israel's Iran policies. Both the normative and geopolitical barriers to closer India-Israel Iran and greater India-Israel partnership collaboration more generally may lower in key areas diversifying Israeli commercial and military partnerships to develop a broader outreach to ensure that India and Israel do not remain constrained by simply common Iran-related aims. Given India's real interest in constraining Iran's missile and nuclear capabilities and its commitment to energy diversification strategies that enhance options for India Inc., in a structural sense India's policies on Iran need not directly conflict with Israeli policies. In a broader sense, the US and India both share an aim of a qualitatively better Iranian role in the Middle East, looking to prevent Iran from challenging the international status quo in an excessively adversarial fashion. As a result, India is likely to be a friend in binding economic Iran into the regional and global economies in a way that assents to international norms. The economic and arms aid countervailing leanings of China and Russia may strengthen India's importance to Israel as an actor in an Iran time of troubles, despite the presence of other mitigating factors. The Iran factor presents both challenges and opportunities for India-Israel relations. With Iran's history of hostile relations with Israel, and with Iran's growing missile and nuclear capabilities, Israel has every reason to work to enhance Indian policies on Iran - especially since India has a growing capacity to shape outcomes in its neighborhood. Indian policy towards Iran has focused on two aims: 1) preventing Iran from realizing a nuclear weapon; and 2) tapping into the economic potential in Iran to balance Saudi Arabia or China in the Islamic Republic.

REFERENCES

- Adagale, Praful, India And Israel Strategic Partnership: Challenges and Opportunities Analysis <http://www.eurasiareview.com>
- Bansal, R. "Hezbollah's role in the Indo-Israeli strategic framework: Challenges and prospects". *Journal of International Relations*, 29(2), 2021, 89-107.
- Barak, O., "Israel, India, and the quest for a robust partnership amidst regional tensions" *The Washington Quarterly*, 42(1), 53-66.
- Cheema, S. A. "Indo-Iranian Relations: The Israeli Dimension." *Obama, Bush, and Latin American Coups*, 2009, 237, 344.
- Cohen, A. , "India-Israel relations: The challenges and opportunities ahead" *International Journal of Asian Studies*, 17(2), (2020), 123-145.
- Dar, Zahoor Ahmad, and ShanazaJanbaz. "Indo-Israel Relations: The Sky is the Limit for Cooperation", *Prismatic Horizons Journal of Social Science and Humanities*, 2024.
- Donald I. Berlin, *India-Iran Relations: A Deepening Entente*, Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, 2004, 03-06
- Gupta, R, "Navigating Regional Challenges: The Impact of Iran on India-Israel Relations" *Asian Security Studies*, 29(1), 2023, 87-104.
- International Crisis Group., "Iran's influence in South Asia: A challenge for India-Israel relations" *Crisis Group Asia Report No. 321*. 2023, Retrieved from <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-asia/iran-influence-south-asia>
- Jaffrelot, C. "India's foreign policy towards Israel: Strategic partnership in a multipolar world" *Asian Security*, 17(3), (2021), 225-245.
- Kumar, M. "Iran and the Indo-Israeli relationship: Analyzing the impact of geopolitical rivalries". *Journal of Middle Eastern Politics*, 10(1), (2022), 45-62.

P.R Kumaraswamy, "India and Israel: Evolving Strategic Partnership", *Mideast Security and Policy Studies*, 1998
Shapira, A., "The role of defense cooperation in strengthening India-Israel ties" *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 43(4), 2020, 575-600.

V T, S., "India-Israel Relations in Post-Cold War Era; An analytical study" (Doctoral dissertation, Department of Political Science, University of Calicut.), 2024
ZafarAfshin, *Integration and disintegration in Indo-Iran relations*, Tehran: Central Asia and the Caucasus Journal
