

Indo-Israel Relations under Hindutva and Zionism Ideational Factors for Pakistan

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Abstract

The Indo-Israel relations are growing rapidly, especially under the Modi administration. These growing ties are based on ideological affinities, perception of common enemy and regional ambitions to attain strategic supremacy. The prevailing ideology of Hindutva in India and Zionism in Israel shapes the relations between these two countries and define the nature of consequences faced by Pakistan, especially in the context of its stance on Kashmir issue. The relations between India and Israel are manifold. The repercussions on Pakistan are not only because of Indo-Israel relations rather India's rapidly growing relations with the Arab States, especially with the GCC. Since Pakistan could not openly support Arabs in their regional conflicts, the Arab States have changed their favors from Pakistan to India. Although, Saudi Arabia and UAE are still providing economic assistance to Pakistan but have withdrawn their support for Pakistan's case on Kashmir. This paper primarily discusses the nature of Indo-Israel relations and how it is affecting Pakistan. The paper also considers the role of Arab States in the decline of Pakistan's importance and impact on Kashmir after some prominent Arab States have signed the Abraham Accords.

Keywords: Indo-Israel relations, Kashmir issue, Abraham Accords, GCC countries

Introduction

The relations between any two countries can have negative connotation for a third country especially if they are in confrontation with one another. Similar is the case of growing Indo-Israel relations which is posing a sense of insecurity in Pakistan. Israel is technologically and militarily advanced. If such a country would cooperate in the defense section with India, then definitely Pakistan will be insecure. India and Israel have vowed to cooperate not only in defense sector but also in economics, technological advancement, counterterrorism efforts and intelligence sharing. Pakistan's nuclear program is one of the major sources of

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insecurity for India and Israel. Pakistan is the only Muslim country that has the nuclear capability. On one hand, Pakistan's nuclear weapons have deterred India while on the other hand Israel always perceived it to be Islamic nuclear weapons that can be used against it (Mustafa, 2019). Moreover, both the countries have developed a perception that they are facing security threat from a common enemy that is the Muslim resistance groups. The Muslim resistance in Kashmir is considered as threat for India just like Israel considers the Palestinian Muslim movement as threat to its survival. The freedom fighters in Kashmir and the Palestine are critical threats to India and Israel and Pakistan is morally and politically supporting these freedom fighters. In this way, both India and Israel are considering Pakistan as their common enemy.

To secure its survival, Israel made illegal settlements on the land of Palestinians and then began to commit atrocities against them. India has adopted similar policies in Kashmir by revoking Article 370 and 35A. Article 370 gave a special status to Kashmir allowing them to have their own constitution, flag, and the authority for internal administration in the state of Jammu. Article 35A gave exclusive rights over property in Kashmir to the Kashmiri people. Now the non-Kashmiri Indians can also get residential permits in Kashmir. It has been viewed as a policy to dilute the Kashmiri population so that their movement could become weak. The Indian forces began to commit violence against the Kashmiri people and imposed a curfew as well. In this way in Kashmir, India is following the policies that Israel adopted towards Palestine. In addition to this, India established close relations with former allies of Pakistan especially in the Muslim world. Due to Arab-India ties, Pakistan began to lose the support on Kashmir issue. As a result, it tried to gather the support of non-Arab Muslim states but due to its dependency on Saudi Arabia and UAE in terms of economy, it could not do so. Now even the Muslim Arab countries are not opposing the policies of India and raising the issue of Kashmir on multilateral forums like OIC. The cooperation between Arab states and Israel is also increasing especially after the signing of Abraham Accords. Pakistan always supported the Arabs against Israel but now as the Arabs themselves are shifting their policy then the question arises regarding the future of Pakistan's policy towards Israel and why it is important for Pakistan to retain its support for Palestine cause. This paper addresses the primary question that how the Indo-Israel relations are posing negative implications for Pakistan.

Theoretical Framework

The Indo-Israel relations and implications for Pakistan will be explained and seen through the lens of constructivist theory of International Relations. The constructivist school of thought as propagated by Alexander Wendt suggests that the behaviors, interests, political outlooks and foreign policy of different actors is shaped through perceptions. The ideational factors are more crucial in determining the behavior of states as compared to the material forces. The identities and interests are not given rather constructed through the social processes. This paradigm is focused on the causal explanations of different phenomenon as well as how different material and non-material factors are constituted (Wendt, 1992). In this sense, the growing Indo-Israel relations are perceived as a threatening situation for Pakistan. This does not mean that it is only the ideational reason that is causing Pakistan to feel cautious. Constructivist themselves don't propagate that the entire discourse of IR is ideational rather they say that ideas and perceptions are important along with the material factors. Similarly, this article has discussed that cooperation between India and Israel in the material form like military and strategic as well as economic and technology sectors is shaping the threat perception and foreign policy outlook of Pakistan. In addition to this, constructivism lays great emphasis on the importance of identities (Wendt, 1992). With the Zionism in Israel and Hindutva in India, both sides have become ideologically closer than ever. The policies of India and Israel is based on their ideology which is aimed at eradicating the other beliefs which in the present case is Islam. India is trying to weaken the Muslim community in the country by introducing policies that are inspired by Hindutva. For example, the policies in Kashmir which has facilitated the infiltration of non-Kashmiri Hindus in Kashmir along with committing the genocide of Muslims under the perpetual curfew like situation. Similarly, Zionist Israel has also ensured its survival by committing atrocities against the Palestinians and driving them out of their own homeland. Pakistan on the other hand retains a distinct identity based on Islam. This sense of identity difference between India-Israel and Pakistan is also shaping the policy of Pakistan towards Israel. The ideational factors are defining the cooperation between India and Israel on one hand and on the other hand explain the insecurities that are emerging in Pakistan. Therefore, the theory of constructivism best explains the issue under discussion.

Historical Background of Indo-Israel Relations

The Indo-Israel relations have evolved through different phases since 1948. Israel was formed based on religion just like Pakistan and this factor initially created distance between India and Israel. India was already aggravated due to division of Indian Subcontinent and independence of Pakistan on basis of Two Nation theory. It refrained from recognizing another state that was also formed on religious grounds. However, many factors contributed to change Indian policy towards Israel. Their relation today has evolved and spread over diverse areas like defense, economy, technology, space, and culture. This section briefly discusses the evolution in Indo-Israel relations.

Era of Differential Relations

India was averse to the idea of creation of an independent Jewish state of Israel. Before the announcement of Israel as an independent state, India was part of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) which was formed to resolve the issue of Israel-Palestine. In September 1947, this committee proposed two plans to resolve the Palestine issue. The first plan was called “the majority plan” and called for the creation of two separate states of Palestine and Israel. The second plan known as “the minority plan” was based on the idea of creation of federal Palestine and an autonomous Jewish area. India opposed the majority plan because it was against the creation of state on the basis religion. India at that time was dominated by nationalist Congress led by Jawaharlal Nehru and the sentiments of Indian nationalism were on the rise. Therefore, India voted for the minority plan in United Nations General Assembly (Tripathy, 2013). Nehru was also opposed to colonialism and supported anti-colonial movements. He considered the creation of Israel as the manifestation of colonialism (as Israel was US ally) and therefore opposed it (Jangid, 2021). Moreover, after the independence in 1947, India leaned towards the Arab countries. Some Muslim Arab countries like Egypt were critical of creation of Pakistan based on “Two Nation Theory”. This was because the contenders for the leadership of the Muslim world eyed Pakistan with suspicion because of the propagation of its creation based on Islam. In this way, India found space to extend its relations with the Muslim world. India wanted to counter the influence of Pakistan in Arab world and also protect its oil interests in the region (Hafeez, 2009). In addition to all this, another contributing factor was the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). India was among the founding members of

NAM with a slight tilt towards Soviet Union. Israel on the other hand has been part of Western bloc since its inception. Therefore, this factor also became a reason hindering India from recognizing Israel.

Era of Informal Relations

India did not recognize Israel until Jan 29, 1992 (Hafeez, 2009). However, this does not mean that till this time the informal diplomatic ties between the two countries did not exist. The Israeli consulate in Mumbai was actively working to bring the two countries together and develop a level of understanding between them. Different activities like debates at academic and political level, symposiums and exchanges were held to create normalization towards Israel at societal and political level (Hafeez, 2009). An agreement was signed between the two countries in 1962 for nuclear cooperation. Similarly, a secret agreement was signed in 1963 in which Israel agreed to supply arms to India (Kumaraswamy, 2002). The cooperation between two countries was contributing in boosting India's military prowess against Pakistan. It was also agreed between the two countries that they will train each other's military. In the following years, several high-level visits took place between India and Israel, among which the secret visit of nuclear scientists in 1984 was crucial (Noor, 2004). Although India had a tilt towards the Arab countries but due to the resolutions passed by OIC calling for plebiscite in Kashmir, India felt that the support that it was giving to the Arab nations was not reciprocated in the same way and led to the change in Indian stance towards Israel. After the 1967 Arab-Israel war, Israel was able to annex Arab territories. The Indian defense Minister lauded the Israeli tactics and showed interests in learning how it was able to mobilize its entire force in less than 24 hours. The Indo-Israel strategic and defense relations were booming by this time (Hafeez, 2009).

There were several factors at international level that were evolving the nature of relations between India and Israel. Firstly, the collapse of Soviet Union in 1991 compelled India to revise its foreign policy. Rhetorically India was part of non-aligned movement but in practice it was having close ties with USSR. It was the major arms supplier of India and its demise meant that India had lost an important diplomatic partner at international level. India had an ambition of gaining military prowess in the region. With the demise of USSR that dream also died down. Relations with Arab nations, who were lacking behind in term of

military capabilities, did not serve Indian ambitions. Israel was a better choice in this case. It was believed that if India would establish ties with Israel, then this will result in softening of US stance towards India. However, due the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan, the Afghan Jihad was initiated, backed by US, and Pakistan was pivot to that strategy. In this regard, Pakistan was of more importance to US as compared to India. Therefore, India wanted the favor of the emerging sole superpower of that time and Israel was the bridge. In efforts to have good relations with US, India not only established ties with Israel but also adopted liberal economic policies inside the country and opened its market to the other nations of the world. On the other hand, Israel hoped that India would act as a bridge between Israel and Arab countries since India was developing relations with them. Moreover, after the economic liberalization and open market policies in India, it was emerging as a potential market and a regional power. Therefore, Israel also wanted to have good relations with India on the pretext of deep economic cooperation between the two.

Era of Friendship

The informal relations between the two countries continued until India established full diplomatic relations with Israel on January 29, 1992 (Kumaraswamy, 1995). In the following years the level of cooperation increased between Israel and India in all sectors but specifically in defense and security segment. Israel became the major supplier of arms to India which complimented its regional strategic ambitions. During the 1999 Kargil war between India and Pakistan, Israel provided military assistance to the former (Kılıç, 2018). This cooperation has always apprehension on the Pakistan side. Pakistan tried to block India's membership in OIC. This hindered India from having close relations with Arab countries and therefore it moved closer to Israel. Moreover, the Jewish community in United States also promoted the India cause. It is viewed that the Jewish lobby in US is powerful enough to influence the political decisions. In 2004 the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh went to US and met with the top American Jewish leaders and expressed his gratitude for the contributions that the Jewish community made to further the cause of India (Hafeez, 2009). After the recognition of Israel, a number of important official visits took place. In 2000 the Indian Minister L.K Advani visited Israel. He was the first ever minister of India who visited Israel. In the same year the foreign minister of India Jaswant Singh also

visited India. During this visit both countries devised a framework for cooperation in the field of counter-terrorism (The Indian Express, 2022). One of the landmark visit was that of Ariel Sharon in 2003 who was the first prime minister of Israel to visit India (Inbar & Ningthoujam, 2012). He was welcomed with a lot of enthusiasm in India especially by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Subsequent visits took place in 2006, 2012, 2014 and 2016. The cooperation between these countries reached its peak after Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to power. His party has always been inspired by the Israel especially in the sense of strategy and security. Many scholars believed that BJP is trying to imitate in Kashmir what Israel did in Palestine especially after revoking the special status of Kashmir. India and Israel have such a deep understanding that even though India also has good relations with Iran, but it assured Israel that it will always be on Israeli side. Israel has never expressed its displeasure with India when the later planned to develop Iran's Chahbahar Port and in turn import oil for its energy sources. These growing ties have been seen with caution in Pakistan because in its conflict with its Eastern neighbor, Israel had remained on the side of India. Now with Modi and BJP in power, relations between India and Israel are ever increasing and this has implications for Pakistan especially in context of the Kashmir issue.

Indo-Israel Relation: Implications for Pakistan

The Indo-Israel relations have evolved over time and at this point of time they are closer than ever. Both countries are following the similar pattern in their domestic policies based on religious nationalism. Israel's policies are influenced by Zionism while that of India are influenced by Hindutva. Similarly, the steps that Israel adopted against Palestine is imitated by India in Kashmir especially in the context of bringing demographic changes in the disputed territories. Israel's regional role has become significant especially after more and more countries including its past rivals are recognizing it. Role of India is crucial in this situation. Israel had considered India a bridge between itself and Arab countries. India has oriented its foreign policy in a way that it is able to maintain cordial relations with major regional and international actors regardless of them being enemies of one another. At the same time India is having good relations with Iran, Israel, and Arab monarchies. Such kind of foreign policy orientation adopted by India is weakening Pakistan's stance on Kashmir as due to relations with India, Muslim countries are not supporting Pakistan on Kashmir. In addition, Israel and India are cooperating

in defense section which can be used to counter Pakistan. Therefore, Pakistan is resisting the pressure to recognize Israel. Following are the factors that describes how Indo-Israel relations are concerning for Pakistan.

India's Constitutional Amendments in Kashmir: Following the Israeli Pattern

Some scholars have referred the issue of Kashmir to be like Palestine. There is similarity between the Israeli and Indian policies in Palestine and Kashmir respectively. There are several factors that shape this common political outlook. Both the countries see Muslim resistance in the form of Lashkar-e-Taiba and Hamas as a threat to their existence. Israel doesn't find any difference between the two groups. India and Israel are fighting against the Muslims in their respective regions. Moreover, along with having a common enemy, they have common ideology based on religious nationalism. Israel has always stressed upon the significance of Jewish nationalism in the form of Zionism. An Indian politician Mani Shankar Aiyar once said about Modi and Netanyahu that both are made for each other because they rely on the "sectarian nationalism" which involves demonizing the other group (Tribune, 2019). Similarly, after the Modi administration came to power, the Indian culture and politics became more and more characterized by Hindutva. Therefore, there is affinity between Zionist and Hindutva ideology in terms of policy outlooks in dealing with their common enemy that is Muslim resistance groups. For this they have agreed upon defense cooperation, exchange of weapons and intelligence gathering as part of the joint counter-terrorism plans. Israel had provided drone technology to India that helps it for surveillance over Pakistan. After the Pulwama attack, the Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu expressed his support for Modi and said that Jews will always show their solidarity with India. In addition to this India and Israel have successfully managed to keep the issues of Kashmir and Palestine respectively as their internal matter. They have been successful in warding off any interference from international community including the human rights organizations and other inter-governmental entities. Instead, they managed to amass the support of important international and regional countries. The most significant development that really connects both countries is making demographic changes in Kashmir and Palestine. When the Jews began to settle in the Palestinian territory, they began to push the settled Palestinians Muslims out of that area. Modi regime is

doing same in Kashmir. By revoking the special status given to Kashmir, India is making demographic changes by changing population ratio. Now the non-Kashmiri Indians can also buy properties and move to Kashmir which was not the case before the constitutional amendments. In this way the Kashmiris will be dispersed as their unique status was keeping them united in one place. Now their exclusivity in Kashmir will perish as more non-Kashmiri Indians would settle there. Kashmir is known by Kashmiris. If their ratio will be diluted, India can totally make disputed area of Kashmir as its own. In this sense the Indo-Israel cooperation is a concern for Pakistan especially in terms of its Kashmir cause.

Abraham Accords and Loss of Arab Factor in Kashmir Cause

The Abraham Accords was signed in August 2020 among Israel, US, UAE and Bahrain. It was an agreement to facilitate peace process among Israel and other Arab countries initiated by US. Under this agreement countries like UAE, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco granted recognition to Israel. Saudi Arabia has not officially recognized Israel but there have been meetings. Moreover, as UAE and Bahrain follow the path of Saudi Arabia in their foreign policy outlook; therefore, it is not possible that they signed this agreement with Israel without the “go-ahead” or approval of Saudi Arabia (Ahmed & Abbas, 2021). The pressure on Pakistan to recognize Israel is also mounting. Pakistan is an important Muslim country as it is the only Muslim country to have the nuclear weapons. It has a considerable influence in the Muslim world. Therefore, countries like Saudi Arabia are waiting for other powerful states like Pakistan to first recognize Israel and then they will follow the suit. Pakistan feels the pressure because it is quiet dependent on the GCC countries in terms of economic cooperation, oil and gas, and remittances. The GCC countries are also dependent on Pakistan because of its skilled labor and military prowess. However, Pakistan has always opted to remain neutral in conflicts that involve Arab states and its neighbor Iran. To repay its Arab economic partners, Pakistan cannot damage its relations with Iran. This is because already Pakistan has a hostile neighbor towards its East (India) and an unstable country on the Western border (Afghanistan). Moreover, the domestic situation of Pakistan does not allow it to recognize Israel. The domestic situation is similar in the Arab countries as well. Although the states or the monarchs have recognized Israel, but the larger population does not approve of this. In Arab countries there is gap between the state and the society. The decisions of the state do not truly represent

the will of people. The Arab people still believe in fighting for liberation of Palestine. It can be expected that in future some terrorist activates might be instigated in response to the increasing relations between Israel and Arab monarchies. The same kind of fear exist in Pakistan as well as therefore Pakistan is refraining from prompting such kind of instability in the country.

Pak-Saudi relations are based on economic and military interdependence. Saudi Arabia has always rescued Pakistan in terms of crisis like in 1965 and 1971 war and economic sanctions of 1998-2001 (Abbas, 2016). Even recently, when Pakistan had an economic downfall, Saudi Arabia provided economic assistance to help Pakistan sustain its economy. However, Saudi Arabia does not support Pakistan's interests with regards to the Kashmir issue. After Pakistan refused to support the Saudi-led coalition in war against Houthi rebels and blockade against Qatar, Saudi Arabia revisited its relations with Pakistan (Ahmed & Abbas, 2021). This change of policy resulted in opening of doors for India. Until this time, Pakistan had tried to block India's relations with Arab nations and its membership of the OIC. The softening of Saudi stance towards India led to the loss of its support for Pakistan on Kashmir issue. Saudi Arabia has not officially condemned the brutal policies of India in Kashmir. Soon after the revocation of Articles 370 and 35A in Kashmir, Saudi Arabia was reluctant to hold an OIC emergency meeting to discuss the Kashmir issue (The News, 2020). This frustrated Pakistan. The growing Saudi-Indo relations are becoming a challenge for Pakistan especially with Israeli factor in play. Similar is the case with Pak-Bahrain relations. Around 112,000 Pakistani skilled workers are working in Bahrain (Siddiqa, 2017). In 2008, Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gillani visited Bahraini and it was agreed that the bilateral trade will be increased (Ahmed & Bhatnagar, 2010). In 2011, Pakistani military forces gave assistance to Bahrain government in order to curtail a sectarian uprising in the country (Aljazeera, 2011). Despite all these factors, Bahrain has never voiced open support for Kashmir cause in favor of Pakistan. Similar is the case of UAE. It is one of the biggest providers of financial and humanitarian assistance to Pakistan and it is also the largest GCC trade partner. Almost 1.2 million Pakistani expatriates live in UAE which is the second largest number in the GCC countries after Saudi Arabia (Ahmed & Bhatnagar, 2010). Both countries have also signed several defense cooperation agreements however, as stated earlier, Pakistan cannot provide direct support to UAE against the Houthi rebels. With the same token, UAE has established close

relations with India. In 2019, UAE invited Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to participate in the OIC meeting. Modi went to attend that meeting while Pakistan boycotted (Mohan, 2019). Similarly, when India adopted the constitutional amendments in Kashmir and revoked the special status granted to the Kashmiri people, UAE also did not oppose the Indian actions. It recently expressed its desired to invest in Jammu Kashmir given the fact that it is disputed territory (Menon, 2022). Such actions are a blow to Pakistan's Kashmir cause.

Indo-Arab-Israel Tripartite Alliance: Implications for Pakistan

As the world is again moving towards the era of alliances and multilateralism, a sort of tripartite alliance which includes India, Arab states and Israel is forming. As analyzed before, India has good relations with both Israel and Arab nations especially the GCC countries. Pakistan's aspirations in terms of its relations with Arabs and its Kashmir cause are disturbed because of Indo-Israel and Indo-Arab relations. This alliance among Israel, India and Arabs is getting materialized in the form of Middle Eastern Quad that is being supported by United States. The Middle Eastern Quad consists of US, Israel, UAE, and India. Although Middle Eastern Quad like the Indo-Pacific Quad is to primarily counter China and also Iran for that matter, it is the proof of how the three sides are getting closer under auspices of US (Cannon, 2020).

Pakistan is losing the support of Muslim countries especially in relation to its conflict with India. India's closeness to Israel is one of the primary reasons, Pakistan feels threatened from Israel and refrains from establishing diplomatic ties. One logic here can be that even if Pakistan establishes relations with Israel, it will always support India as compared to Pakistan. India and Israel have historic relations and they are similar to one another in a number of ways like in terms of religious nationalism, military and technological advancements and perception of common enemy. In the context of relations with Arab countries, although Pakistan has good relations with all of them but still it could not amass their support for Kashmir cause. Pakistan has always supported the Arabs in their conflict with Israel. The Pakistan Air Force participated in 1967 and 1973 wars between Arabs and Israel. Pakistani pilots flew Syrian and Jordanian planes and shot down Israeli planes. After the 1973 war, PLO and Pakistan signed an agreement under which PLO received military training with Pakistan army. Similarly in 1982 battle for

Beirut, fifty Pakistani volunteers were serving in Palestinian Liberation Organization and were taken prisoner by Israel (Kumaraswamy, 2000). Despite all this material and moral support, Arabs did not support openly on the Kashmir issue and retained their relations with India.

As a result of this Pakistan attempted to turn to the non-Arab Muslim allies like Malaysia, Turkey and Iran. A summit was planned to be held in Kuala Lumpur in 2019 and Pakistan supported the idea and initially was part of it. The Arab states saw this summit as a competing bloc to OIC and pressurized Pakistan to not join it (GeoNews, 2019). Pakistan backed out of the summit and missed the opportunity to raise Kashmir issue on an entirely new platform where its voice would have been heard. All the other three countries including Malaysia, Iran and Turkey strongly support Pakistan's stance on Kashmir and in this conference the issue that are faced by the Muslim world were to be discussed. But due to Saudi pressure Pakistan backed out. Astonishingly, the Turkish president Erdogan announced that he understands why Pakistan had to do this and it's not the first time that Saudi Arabia or UAE has pressurized any country not to do what they wanted. He said that it's because of Pakistan's economic conditions as Saudi Arabia threatened it to replace the Pakistani expatriates in its country with the Bangladeshi workers. In addition to this, Pakistan is economically dependent on the financial assistance and bail out plans offered by Saudi Arabia (Dawn, 2019). So, Pakistan is in a way trapped into an unhealthy relationship with Saudi Arabia where neither it can accomplish its interests in Kashmir nor give up its economic dependency on Saudi Arabia. India on the other hand is economically strong and not dependent on other countries rather other countries are dependent on India as it provides a potential market. This gives India a privilege to have relations with Iran, Arab countries, and Israel at the same time. Although they may be rivals but none of them wants to undermine relations with India. Indo-Iran relations are also interesting in this sense. Iran openly supports Pakistan on Kashmir issue and has condemned Indian actions in Kashmir but still this did not become as an issue between the two countries.

The 48th Session of OIC Council of Foreign Ministers was held in Pakistan on 23 March 2022. In this summit the Islamabad Declaration was adopted which called for the resolution of the Kashmir issue and condemned the Indian policies.

However, the irony was that on one hand, OIC was adopting resolution for solving the Kashmir issue and on the other hand some Arab traders were present in India making deals for investments in Kashmir (Aninews, 2022). As Kashmir is a disputed land therefore the investors should refrain from opening their businesses there. This shows that although the Arabs are rhetorically supporting the Kashmir cause but in practice their economic interests aligned with India are paramount. This is how India's increasing relations with major regional and international actors associated with Israel is harming Pakistan's interests in Kashmir.

Issue of Israel's Recognition by Pakistan

As more and more Arab countries are recognizing Israel, pressure is mounting on Pakistan as well due to its significance and influence in the Muslim world. US wants Pakistan to first recognize Israel so that other Muslim states would follow the path. Pakistan has the second largest Muslim population (*Muslim Population by Country 2022*, n.d.). It is the only Muslim country that possess nuclear power. All these factors hold significance for Israel if it wants to gain recognition in the Islamic world. However, there are impediments in Pakistan's cooperative relations with Israel. First factor is the Islamic identity of Pakistan. It was declared an Islamic state in 1956 constitution and has remained the "Islamic Republic of Pakistan" (*National Assembly of Pakistan*, n.d.). It got independence from Indian Subcontinent on the pretext of Muslim identity that separated it from the Hindu identity. The article 40 of the constitution of Pakistan states that it will establish fraternal relations with Muslims based on Islamic identity (*The Constitution of Pakistan 1973*, n.d.). According to the constructivist school of thought, the sense of identity shapes the political outlook and interests of a country. This Islamic factor plays a huge role in the political interests of Pakistan.

In addition to this, the Indo-centric foreign policy approach is also very significant in this regard. Having engaged in enduring rivalry with India, Pakistan's foreign policy is influence by its conflict with India. While Israel has deep strategic and economic relations with India and has supported it against Pakistan. During the wars between India and Pakistan, Israel has always supported India (Pant, 2004). This is true that it was because India extended the hand of friendship towards Israel while Pakistan always refrained due to its connections with Arab allies. Although, the cause for which Pakistan was supporting Arab countries is now

losing its significance due to Abrahamic Accords. A sense of insecurity persists with regards to Israel in the policy circles of Pakistan. The main reason along with good Indo-Israel relations is that Pakistan considers Israel as a threat to its nuclear program due to some incidents in the past. It was speculated that Israel is collaborating with India to destroy the nuclear program of Pakistan. Moreover, Israel used to consider Pakistan's nuclear capabilities as the "Islamic bomb" that in case of conflict with Muslim Arab world, Pakistan's nuclear weapons can be used against it (Mustafa, 2019). However, that fear is slowly defusing due to evolving relations between Israel and Arab Muslim countries

Another reason for not recognizing Israel is the domestic fabrication of Pakistan. It is home to world's second largest Shia country after Iran. Recognizing Israel will not only create conflict with Israel but also disturb the domestic situation in Pakistan. The other religious groups from Sunni sect are also oppose granting recognition to Pakistan (Ahmed & Abbas, 2021). If Pakistan recognizes Israel, then terrorist activities as predicted in Arab countries might follow. The people of Pakistan in general are averse to the idea of having relations with Israel. Even though here are debates and discussions on the pros and cons of recognizing Israel but the state had time and again reiterated its principal stance on Israel. Pakistan's has often bluntly stated its support for Palestine. It is written clearly written on the passport of Pakistan that it is valid for all countries of the world except Israel (Hafeez, 2009). Pakistan supports the two-state solution in Palestine and recognized the border arrangements that were set in pre 1967 (*Pakistan's Stance on Palestine Lauded*, n.d.). If Pakistan withdraws its supports for Palestine, then it will lose its moral ground in Kashmir as well because the situation in Palestine is quite like that of Kashmir. India Prime Minister's policy in Kashmir is viewed as similar to that of Israel especially in term of making demographic changes to the region.

Although as Arab countries are recognizing their past rival still the stated factors are hindering Pakistan to have relations with Israel. Pakistan's opposition was for the ties with Arab allies but also for the rights of Palestinians. According to some analysts if big Muslim countries like Indonesia, Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia recognize Israel then it will become illogical for Pakistan to not recognize Israel. However, the policy of Pakistan, based on support for freedom movement in Palestine and its stance on Kashmir issue, will remain rational.

Conclusion

The India and Israel relations have evolved over the time. Initially because of partition of Subcontinent on basis of religious identities, India did not support Israel. However, after the fall of Soviet Union and useless attempts to bring Arab world on its side, India reoriented its foreign policy to accommodate Israel. Relations with Israel were important for India's regional hegemonic ambitions as well as for its competition with Pakistan. However, it did not abandon the Arab countries entirely rather maintained relations with not only Israel and Arabs but Iran also. Only a country as economically potent can have cordial relations with countries which are each other's enemies. This impacted Pakistan in a negative way. Pakistan had always tried to block India's reach to its Arab allies, but it could not hold for long. Arabs on the other hand were also more than willing to establish cordial relations with India. In this way Pakistan eventually lost support of Arab world on Kashmir. Instead of criticizing Indian policies, they remained silent, gave highest civilian awards to Modi and also opened doors for India to be part of OIC. Kashmir issue was not brought on the discussion forum of OIC despite Pakistan's repeated desires. The changing dynamics are becoming substantial especially after the signing of Abraham Accords and Middle Eastern Quad. In principle these are US led initiatives to help its ally gain recognition and counter its enemies, with no direct implications or threat for Pakistan, but such steps have further solidified relations of India with Israel and Arabs. The indirect implications are on Pakistan, which is facing increasing pressure to recognize Israel, remain aloof from non-Arab allies (Iran, Turkey and Malaysia) and lose weightage for its Kashmir cause while India is gaining momentum to pursue its ambitions.

The main reason behind negative implications of Indo-Israel nexus for Pakistan has been the extremist ideational factors like Hindutva in India and Zionism in Israel. As Alexander Wendt pointed out in his theory of constructivism, ideas shape perceptions and perceptions shape policies adopted by countries. The ideology of Hindutva and Zionism guide the foreign policy of India and Israel. As India is introducing policies that are dominating the Muslim freedom, Israel has historically committed atrocities against Palestinian Muslims. With the same perceptions, they consider Pakistan as their enemy because of its nuclear weapons. Similarly, both India and Israel cannot forget Pakistan's military operations against

them. India had three major wars with Pakistan while Israel faced opposition from Pakistan air force in 1967 and 1973 Arab Israeli wars. Both India and Israel perceive Pakistan as an enemy because of which they have increased their collaboration with one another. India has not only developed its relations with Israel but also brought the Arabs to its side. All these factors have caused negative consequences for Pakistan.

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