

**THE CHANGING NATURE OF ISRAELI-INDIAN
RELATIONS:1948 - 2005**

by

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Summary of research

The focus of this research is on the analysis of relations between Israel and India from 1948 to 2005. The State of Israel was established in 1948 but only on 18 September 1950 did India recognise Israel. Eventually, the two countries finally established full diplomatic relations on 29 January 1992.

The research covers three specific timeframes and aims to clarify the factors that have affected and effected the relations between the two countries in terms of levels of analysis.

The first timeframe (from 1948 to 1991) pertains to bilateral relations between the two countries before the establishment of diplomatic relations, including pre-independence relations. India's foreign policy towards Israel reflected its self-interest in the Middle East as well as its traditional sympathy with the Arabs and had been influenced by India's commitment to the Non-aligned Movement and the sentiments of the Indian Muslims. Eventually it was transformed into an anti-Israeli foreign policy.

In the second timeframe, the change in bilateral relations between Israel and India in 1992 and the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries are analysed by the Aggregative Model of Bilateral Foreign Relations Strategic Change. This analysis deals with the operational environment within which the Indian systemic foreign policy changed towards Israel.

In the third timeframe, the evolving bilateral relations between India and Israel from 1992 to 2005 are analysed in terms of the Oscillated Diplomacy Model. Consecutive Indian governments in power had an influence on the volume of Indian diplomacy towards Israel as well as the direction of the relations between the two countries. Furthermore, three types of mutual national strategic interests, namely, joint strategic interests, common strategic interests and discrepant strategic interests, influenced the operational diplomacy of both countries.

In essence, Israeli-Indian relations from 1948 to 1991 were characterised by partial and consistent pro-Arab and anti-Israeli foreign policy. In 1992, a significant diplomatic change occurred when India and Israel established full diplomatic relations. Since then bilateral relations have evolved continually in a positive manner concentrating on the convergence of strategic interests of the two countries.

Key terms

Israeli - Indian relations, Transformation of foreign policy, Aggregative Model of Bilateral Foreign Relations Strategic Change, Oscillated Diplomacy Model, Contextual change determinants, Evolving bilateral relations, Convergence of strategic interests, Joint strategic interest, Common strategic interest, Discrepant strategic interest.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background of the research

In 1948, the newly born State of Israel gave full recognition to the Republic of India and since then has considered India a key player in the international system. India recognised Israel two years later, on 18 September 1950 and allowed the Government of Israel to open a consulate (that is, the lowest level of bilateral foreign relations) in Bombay (now Mumbai). Full diplomatic relations between the two countries were not established until 29 January 1992.

In the period between 1948 and 1992, international circumstances and events, domestic political constraints and diplomatic explanations were presented by various Indian governments to justify the absence of diplomatic relations between India and Israel, while consistently demonstrating distinct anti-Israeli as well as pro-Arab sentiments. Israel, on the other hand, made considerable efforts to improve its relationship with India throughout those years, but to no avail.

After the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1992, bilateral relations, concentrating on mutual national interests, gradually evolved and reached its peak in the year 2003 when the prime minister of Israel paid an official visit to India and a joint statement of friendship and cooperation between the two countries was issued. However, relations between Israel and India have deteriorated since 2004 after the Indian National Congress Party (INCP) returned to power in India.

The absence of diplomatic relations prior to 1992 can partly explain why no books on Israeli–Indian relations in the discipline of international relations, were ever published by Israeli researchers. The most significant the information on the relations between the two countries is found in autobiographies, such as *'Burmese Diary'* (1953-1955), (1963) by David Hacoheh, *'The First Ten Years'* (1958) by Walter Eytan and *'Destination Peace: Three Decades of Israeli Foreign Policy'* (1981) by Gideon Rafael, which include chapters referring to their personal diplomatic experiences with India. There were a few exceptions of papers and essays published in academic publications as well as chapters in books dealing with Israeli foreign affairs in general, which include references to Israeli-Indian relations in particular. Official archives such as the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Zionist Archives, the Archives of the Israeli Labour Movement, the Archives of the Israeli Labour Party and Ben-Gurion Archives, are important sources of primary information. Official government publications as well as newspapers articles are another important source of information.

Gideon Shimoni gives a detailed description of the visit of emissaries sent to India before independence to make contact with Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (the Mahatma) and Jawaharlal Nehru. He also describes the frustration experienced by the Jewish leadership in Palestine because of India's determination to avoid antagonising the Indian Muslim community as well as their consistent support of the Arab cause (Shimoni, 1977).

Meron Medzini (1971, 1976), an expert on Israel's foreign affairs, explains the Indian restrictive foreign policy towards Israel in terms of the constraints of the Indian political alignment with the Indian Muslim community and the Arab World. Israel on the other hand, according to him, did not regard relations with Asian countries in general and with India in particular, as a central component of its foreign policy.

Michael Brecher whose principal area of focus was international politics, pays attention in most of his books to Indian foreign policy with particular reference to the role of Prime Minister Nehru in general and India's foreign policy towards Israel in particular (Brecher, 1957, 1959, 1960, 1963, 1968, 1972, 1974). Brecher refers to the crucial aspects of Israeli-Indian relations pointing out that India's foreign policy in general and towards Israel in particular, until the mid 1960s, was the product of Prime Minister Nehru who enjoyed the overwhelming support of the Indian public. His pro-Arab foreign policy was followed by his successors for many years up to the 1990s.

Yaacov Shimoni, a veteran Israeli diplomat published, amongst other political dictionaries that include references to Israeli-Indian relations, an essay about the historical events that shaped the relations between Israel and India. According to him, the pro-Arab Indian foreign policy contributed to Israel's failure to improve relations prior to 1992 and he refers to it as a sad tale of alienation that reveals a lack of empathy on India's part. He also mentions the bitter disappointment experienced by Israel (Shimoni, 1991).

Ran Kochan (1976), an expert on third world issues, David Kimche (1973), former Director General of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Moshe Yegar, a veteran Israeli diplomat and an expert on Asia, all considered the Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung as a turning point in Israeli-Indian relations in particular and Israeli-Asian relations in general. Yegar attached a great deal of importance to India in the diplomatic history of Israel and dedicates a significant part of his book 'The Long Journey to Asia' (Yegar, 2001) to the history of relations between Israel and India from an Israeli angle with emphasis on the traditional Indian hostility towards Israel.

Stephen Cohen, an American expert on South Asia, in his assessment of Indian strategic and political power, points out that India regarded Israel as a religious state. Therefore, it was seen to be analogous to Pakistan and importantly, India did not want to offend Indian Muslims who were part of a

pro-Congress bloc and were troubled by the Arab-Israeli conflict (Cohen, 2001). According to him, Indian foreign policy towards Israel was reversed in 1992 because Prime Minister Rao realised that the threat posed by Islamic extremism was growing and calculated that it was worth risking domestic Muslim opposition to achieve cooperation regarding high technology defence and economic projects.

Indian researchers, unlike their Israeli counterparts, made significant contributions to the body of research pertaining to Israeli-Indian relations. Official government publications as well as newspaper articles are also important sources of information despite the fact that the relevant documents on the bilateral relations between Israel and India housed in the official archives of India as well as the archives of the Ministry of External Affairs, are still not available for the public.

In his book, *'The Arab Israeli Conflict: The Indian View,'* dedicated to India's relations with Israel and published in India, Sudha V. Rao blamed India for not being consistent in its pronouncements (Rao, 1972). He motivated his viewpoint by alluding to India's deep-rooted commitment to Egypt and the complications resulting from the extension of the Cold War to the Middle East along with Pakistan's role in the region.

Kumaraswamy, one of the first Indian scholars to study Israeli-Indian relations, wrote several articles and essays on this topic (Kumaraswamy, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2002, 2004). He describes the relations between India and Israel as humble beginnings with a bright future. At the same time, he stresses that the military cooperation between the two countries is the most significant element in the evolving strategic relations between two countries that both strive for technological independence and excellence. In addition, Kumaraswamy refers to the absence of diplomatic relations prior to 1992 as an anomaly and points out that India should have established diplomatic relations in the 1950s. According to him, the end of the Cold War contributed

to the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Israel and influenced its attitude towards Israel, without renouncing its pro-Arab attitude. Following the establishment of diplomatic relations, both countries consolidated their cooperation in a wide array of military, political, economic and cultural fields; while taking care not to give the impression that the emerging relationship with Israel meant that they harboured anti-Islamic sentiments. The issue of diplomatic relations with Israel was no longer a contentious issue in domestic Indian politics and both countries diversified their military-security relations, which became a critical component of their bilateral relations.

The books and memoirs of J.N. Dixit, India's former Secretary of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), who played a significant role in the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel, contributed a great deal to understanding the relations between the two countries (Dixit, 1996, 1998, 2004). He referred specifically to the host of factors that influenced their relations as well as the process that led to the Indian decision to establish diplomatic relations with Israel in 1992. In this regard, he referred to the establishment of relations with Israel as one of the two most significant developments in Indian foreign policy that had occurred during his tenure as Foreign Secretary.

Papers, including historical descriptions of the relations between India and Israel were published by Subhash Kapila (2000, 2001, 2003, 2004), under the auspices of the South Asia Analysis Group (SAAG). In these publications, he indicates that India's national interests are paramount and he stresses the crucial importance of the Israeli strategic cooperation with India, with special emphasis on defence, intelligence and internal security.

In New Delhi, Farah Naaz (1999, 2000), associate fellow of the Indian Institute for Defence Study and Analysis (IDSA), concentrated on the evolving relations between the two countries after the establishment of diplomatic

relations with each other, with special emphasis on military cooperation and agriculture as well as on trade and economy.

Dinesh Kumar (2001, 2003) asserts that the new world order of the 1990s tempered the Indian perception that closer diplomatic relations with Israel would constitute a conflict of interests. Their policies were no longer influenced to the same extent by the sentiments of the Indian Muslims and delicate aspects such as Arab sensitivities and non-alignment. The main reasons for the change in Indian foreign policy towards Israel, according to him, were the disintegration of the Soviet bloc, India's economic situation, its defence needs and the beginning of the Middle East peace process, which made India realise that the continuation of the traditional negative policy towards Israel would undermine India's national interests.

According to Mohan (2003), strategic affairs editor of the 'Hindu' newspaper, the non-aligned positions of India limited its strategic options and as a result, India had pressed for the isolation of Israel in the international sphere. However, by the beginning of the 1990s, India was compelled to look for a solution to the political *impasse* imposed on its foreign policy by its radicals as many felt that India's national interests, including relations with Israel, had been sacrificed for the sake of meeting domestic political objectives.

According to Harsh V. Pant (2005), India's strategic interests converged with Israeli interests on a range of issues such as combating terrorism, defence collaboration, increasing trade and cooperation mainly in the field of agriculture while attempting to keep it out of public view. On the other hand, there are also factors that hamper these relations such as the Palestinian question on the one hand and India's relations with Iran, a country that campaigns for the destruction of the State of Israel on the other hand.

The study contributes towards the literature on the Israeli-Indian relations by providing content validity and a detailed overview of the two countries' bilateral relations based on the discipline of International Relations.

1.2 Focus of research

The focus of this research is on the analysis of the relations between Israel and India from 1948 up to 2005 from an Israeli perspective. Prior to 1992, India's strained foreign policy regarding Israel, was seen by the State of Israel as a negative dogmatic foreign policy, which in the end proved to be detrimental to India's own national interests, taking into consideration the traditional importance attached to India by Israel.¹ Consequently, Israel experienced a wide spectrum of feelings ranging from high expectations, hope, great disappointment, dismay and anger to indifference regarding their relations with India.

In January 1992, the transformation of Indian foreign policy towards Israel culminated in the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. After the establishment of diplomatic relations, Israel, with the growing convergence of strategic interests between the two countries, experienced an increase in its expectations of the evolving bilateral relations with India. Bilateral relations concentrating on mutual national interests evolved gradually and reached its peak in 2003. One year later in 2004, after the INCP had returned to power in India, relations between the countries became less cordial and Israel's expectations in terms of strategic relations with India declined concomitantly.

The research problem therefore, focusses on the factors that have affected Israeli-Indian bilateral relations.

¹ National interest is defined as a basic determinant that guides the state's foreign policy of a sovereign state and presents the entire rationale of the exercise of state power in international relations in terms of national security (Evans and Newnham, 1998).

1.3 Purpose of research

The purpose of this research is to provide a descriptive analysis of the various factors that have affected and influenced Israeli - Indian relations and in particular:

- Bilateral relations between Israel and India from 1948 to 1991.
- Transformation of Indian foreign policy towards Israel that culminated in the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in January 1992.²
- The potential for cooperation between Israel and India, as well as the evolving nature of their relations between 1992 and 2005.

This research will contribute to the knowledge of relations between Israel and India in particular as well as to the study of International Relations and diplomacy in general.³ A contribution is also made to international political theory by introducing the following two new models developed by the researcher for the analysis of international relations in general and Israeli-Indian relations in particular, namely the Aggregative Model of Bilateral Foreign Relations Strategic Change⁴ as well as the Oscillated Diplomacy Model.⁵ In addition, the study contributes to the theoretical field of diplomacy as an instrument of foreign policy in general and diplomatic practice in particular.

Based on the purpose of the research, the research questions can be defined as follows:

² Since the second timeframe of the diplomatic relations establishment relates to February 1992, the few weeks prior to this event form part of the discussion.

³ Diplomacy is the management of relations between countries, is usually concerned with dialogues and negotiations and is an institution of the state system in itself making it an essential part of international relations (Evans and Newnham, 1998).

⁴ For details about the Aggregative Model of Bilateral Foreign Relations Strategic Change, see section 2.4.

⁵ For details about the Model of Oscillated Diplomacy, see section 2.5

1.4 Research questions

- With reference to a pattern of direct interaction between states as actors in international politics which factors influenced the relations between Israel and India prior to the establishment of diplomatic relations that is between 1948 and 1991 and what effect did they have on the bilateral relations between the two countries up to 1991?
- Which factors brought about the transformation of Indian foreign policy regarding Israel through a pattern of action, i.e. relationships where two actors are stimulated to respond to what the other is doing in a reactive way and in what way did they influence the establishment of full diplomatic relations between the two countries in January 1992?
- Which factors contributed to the bilateral relations between the two countries between 1992 and 2005, how have they influenced the evolving relations between Israel and India since 1992 and what is the potential of prospective cooperation between the two countries?

1.5 Methodology

The focus of this research is on the relations between the State of Israel and the Republic of India.⁶ In terms of macro-level international politics⁷ with regard to structural realism,⁸ the change of Indian foreign policy towards Israel was motivated by Indian national interests. However, the challenge of this research is to analyse the complex bilateral relations between the two

⁶ India, although not considered a nation-state, is a legal entity with a population, a defined territory and a democratically elected government, which maintains effective control over its territory and population while conducting independent international relations.

⁷ 'Macro level international politics' is a term used for the study of international politics, which focuses on the international environment and looks at world politics as a system with global patterns of interaction among its various parts.

⁸ 'Structural realism' is a term that views the structure of the international system as a principle determinant of the behaviour of the states as actors in international politics.

countries and the strategic change in their relations in terms of micro-level international politics⁹ with regard to agent-structure relationships¹⁰ with an emphasis on contextual factors.

This is a qualitative study in which both primary and secondary sources from Israel and India are used.¹¹ In all the chapters of the research, possible variables affecting the bilateral relations are identified, examined and analysed, taking into consideration the complex web and the comparative weight of these variables, the diversity of their characteristics and the linkages among them. Both external variables (such as India's need to move closer to the West after the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet bloc) and internal variables (such as the role played by Indian Muslims and their sentiments towards Israel in the context of India's domestic politics) are considered.

The study is based on a diachronic analysis of Israeli - Indian relations and the following three timeframes spanning the years 1948 to 2005 are used for this purpose:

- The period 1948 – 1991 - the focus is on bilateral foreign relations from 1948 to 1991. Reference is also made to pre-independence relations between both countries as an integral part of their mutual foreign relations because it would be difficult to understand the complex nature of Israeli-Indian relations without taking the historical context into account.

⁹ 'Micro level international politics' is a term used for the study of international politics, which concentrates on individuals and/or several parts of international politics while dwelling on particular events.

¹⁰ The agent-structure issue in international relations refers to interrelations between human beings and their organisations (as agents) and the structure of the international system.

¹¹ Primary sources include original documents, official reports, statements, addresses, interviews and personal knowledge as a participant observer. Secondary sources include: academic publications, research papers, seminars and conferences' reports, books, memoirs, newspapers, and other publications (yearbooks, official publications, web-sites, etc).

- January 1992 (change of bilateral relations) - the focus is on the transformation of bilateral relations and the establishment of diplomatic relations.
- The period 1992 – 2005 - the focus is on the evolving bilateral foreign relations from 1992 to 2005.

In order to identify and analyse the factors that played a role in these phases of Israeli-Indian relations, it is important to pay attention to the various decision units and entities involved, as a unit of action, in both Israel and India with regard to the bilateral relations between the two countries, in terms of key ultimate decision units.¹²

A Levels of Analysis Model, using three levels, is applied in the analysis throughout the research in order to explain and analyse the bilateral relations between Israel and India, namely the international system level of analysis, the state and society level of analysis and the individual level of analysis.¹³

The international system level is subdivided into two types of international foreign relations, namely bilateral relations and multilateral relations,¹⁴ in terms of international politics.

The following two new models used in this research contribute to a better analysis of the research as well as the theoretical field of international relations and diplomacy:

¹² For details about the Ultimate Decision Unit Model (including an answer to the question why it was found suitable for the purpose of this study) see section 2.1.

¹³ For details about the Levels of Analysis Model, see section 2.2.

¹⁴ For details of the definition of bilateral and multilateral relations see section 2.2.

- **The Aggregative Model of Bilateral Foreign Relations Strategic Change**

This model deals with the operational environment of the systemic foreign policy change process and is used as an analytical and explanatory tool in order to analyse the transformation of India's foreign policy towards Israel in 1992 and is applied to international relations as a theoretical model that helps to explore and guide research concerning changes in bilateral relations.¹⁵

- **The Model of Oscillated Diplomacy**

This model deals with diplomacy oscillating between delimited opposite lines, illustrated by a 'diplomatic vector'.¹⁶ The delimited lines function as guiding parameters of foreign policy, influenced by units of analysis in terms of levels of analysis while the 'diplomatic vector' is influenced by three types of national strategic interests.¹⁷ The model is used as an analytical and explanatory tool concerning the evolving bilateral relations between Israel and India from 1992 to 2005. It is applied as a theoretical model of international relations, which helps to explain operational diplomacy with the help of three types of national strategic interests and to direct research pertaining to bilateral foreign relations and diplomacy.¹⁸

¹⁵ For details about the Aggregative Model of Bilateral Foreign Relations Strategic Change, see section 2.4.

¹⁶ 'Diplomatic vector' refers to the operational management of bilateral relations in terms of volume and direction.

¹⁷ For details about the types of national strategic interest, see section 2.5.

¹⁸ For details about the Model of Oscillated Diplomacy, see section 2.5.

A Model of Foreign Policy Change Decision-Making¹⁹ is utilised as a second model dealing with the analysis of the change of foreign relations in order to provide external validity²⁰ to the Aggregative Model of Bilateral Foreign Relations Strategic Change. The former model that is the key model pertaining to the analysis of the transfer of the bilateral relations between Israel and India in 1992 is used to provide a better generalisability and to utilise the model as an analytical tool applied to the analysis of bilateral foreign policy change. The external validity of the Aggregative Model of Bilateral Foreign Relations Strategic Change is based on the theoretical perception that external validity of a new model can be achieved by comparing points of similarity and points of variance with other models in the same field (Fielding, 1993:166).

Furthermore, the examination of the change in bilateral relations between Israel and India strengthens the internal validity²¹ of the analysis of the change in bilateral foreign relations between the two countries. This is achieved with the help of the above mentioned models of foreign policy change and the additional reviews made by various Israeli and Indian scholars regarding the Indian foreign policy change towards Israel in 1992.

In order to obtain a more comprehensive analysis of each segment of this diachronic research between 1948 and 2005, the pertinent theories and models used in this research are organised into a coherent theoretical framework. An eclectic approach is used which helps to both simplify and

¹⁹ For details about the Model of Foreign Policy Change Decision-Making, see section 2.3.

²⁰ External validity of a model refers to the degree to which the resolution can be generalised beyond the research setting and sample, namely, when the results of the research hold across different experimental setting procedures and participants.

²¹ Internal validity refers to the ability to test the research hypothesis adequately by showing that variation in the dependent variable is caused only by variation in the independent variable. Internal validity means that changes in the value of the criterion variable are solely related to changes in the value of the predictor variable.

represent the complex relations between Israel and India within a changing international environment, as will become evident in the research.²²

1.6 Contents of study

Following the introductory chapter, the theoretical framework of this research is specified and discussed in the second chapter.²³

The focus of the third chapter is on the description, narration and analysis of India's relations with Israel before the establishment of diplomatic relations from 1948 to 1991 from an Israeli perspective. This includes pre-independence relations from a historical perspective.²⁴ The Ultimate Decision Unit and the Levels of Analysis Models are applied as analytical tools in the analysis throughout the chapter.²⁵

In chapter four, a description, an account and the analysis of Israel's bilateral relations with India during this same period, that is prior to the establishment of diplomatic relations, are provided, including references to the pre-independence relations between the two countries. Similar to the previous chapter, this chapter includes pre-independence relations from a historical perspective in conjunction with the use of the Ultimate Decision Unit and Levels of Analysis Models respectively in the analysis throughout the chapter.

The focus in chapter five is on the analysis of the transformation of India's foreign policy regarding Israel in January 1992 and the establishment of full diplomatic relations between the two countries. The key analysis in this

²² For details about the theoretical framework, see section 2.7

²³ For details about the theoretical framework, including elaborations on pertinent theories and models, see chapter two.

²⁴ For details about the relationship between historical analysis in accordance with International Relations theories and models, see section 2.1.

²⁵ For details of the Ultimate Decision Unit Model, see section 2.1 and for details about the Levels of Analysis Model, see section 2.2.

chapter is based on the original model of the Aggregative Model of Bilateral Foreign Relations Strategic Change.²⁶

Chapter six presents an analysis of the evolving relations between Israel and India in terms of oscillated operational diplomacy with an emphasis on the mutual national strategic interests of the two countries, including references to their prospective cooperation. The analysis is based on the original Oscillated Diplomacy Model.²⁷

Chapter seven, with the help of a theoretical framework, concludes this research with an overview, an analysis and a summary of the complex bilateral relations between Israel and India. In addition, it contributes to the analysis and understanding of the relations between Israel and India.²⁸

1.7 Summary of introduction

The Republic of India recognised the State of Israel on 18 September 1950, but the two countries established full diplomatic relations only on 29 January 1992. The focus of this research is on the analysis of the bilateral relations between the two countries from 1948, when the State of Israel was born, up to 2005, in terms of an Israeli perspective.

In order to gain a better understanding of the relations between Israel and India, the research provides a descriptive analysis of Israeli–Indian relations. It aims to clarify the factors (in terms of external and internal variables) that have affected and effected Israeli-Indian relations, in accordance with the research questions. These factors are the bilateral relations between the two countries prior to the establishment of diplomatic relations (1948-1991) including pre-independence relations, the bilateral strategic change that

²⁶ For details of the Aggregative Model of Bilateral Foreign Relations Strategic Change, see section 2.4.

²⁷ For details about the Oscillated Diplomacy Model, see section 2.5.

²⁸ For details about the theoretical framework, see section 2.6.

paved the way for full diplomatic relations in 1992 and the evolving bilateral relations between Israel and India that followed (1992-2005).

The analysis itself, following the introductory chapter and the theoretical framework in chapter two, which introduces the pertinent theories and models used in the study, including two original models (developed by the researcher), is a diachronic type of research divided into three timeframes that are commensurate with the research questions.

Chapters three and four concentrate on the analysis of the Israeli-Indian relations before the establishment of diplomatic relations while chapter five deals with the analysis of the transformation of India's foreign relations towards Israel and the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Chapter six presents the analysis of their evolving relations with reference to their prospective cooperation.

Chapter seven concludes the research with an overview as well as a comprehensive analysis and a summary of the bilateral relations between Israel and India with reference to the contribution of this study, in the form of a generalisation, to the theoretical field of international politics and diplomacy. Recommendations are also included for future study regarding Israeli-Indian foreign relations in general and the systemic process involved in their bilateral relations with special reference to various informal dimensions of multi-faceted bilateral relations in particular, as well as the structural relationship between foreign policy and diplomacy.²⁹

²⁹ For details about the contribution to the study of international politics and diplomacy, see chapters two and seven.

Chapter 2

Theoretical framework

2.1 Introduction

Various theories deal with the conducting of bilateral relations in general and foreign policy in particular. Therefore, the objective of this chapter is to provide a theoretical framework for the analysis of this research on the bilateral relations between Israel and India. For the analysis of Israeli-Indian bilateral foreign relations, it is necessary to make use of various International Relations' theories in line with historical description and narration in order to understand the various dimensions and phases of their relations. For this reason, attention will be paid to the following theoretical frameworks:

- The Ultimate Decision Unit Model
- Levels of Analysis Model
- Model of Foreign Policy Change Decision-Making
- Aggregative Model of Bilateral Foreign Relations Strategic Change
- Oscillated Diplomacy Model

The Ultimate Decision Unit Model was chosen as the basic analytic and explanatory tool in this research.¹ The reason for this choice is that foreign policy and bilateral foreign relations are decided and implemented respectively by different entities and are therefore not attributable to a single political source.

The making of foreign policy, as well as international behaviour in which different entities engage, often changes over time depending on given issues in terms of the ultimate decision units. Thus, they are influenced by different interests and as such, are traced and examined throughout this research by making use of the Levels of Analysis Model as an analytic tool.²

¹ For further information on the Ultimate Decision Unit Model, see section 2.2.

² See section 2.3, for more information on the Levels of Analysis Model.

As mentioned in chapter 1, the research is divided into three timeframes. The analysis in the first timeframe (1948-1991) is based on a historical description that explains the development and gives a narrative of the Israeli-Indian relations grounded in the Levels of Analysis Model. The historical analysis within the area of international politics is carried out in accordance with theories and models pertaining to international relations in order to improve the significance of the analysis.³

In the second timeframe (February 1992), the analysis is based on a new model, namely the Aggregative Model of Bilateral Relations Strategic Change, in an attempt to overcome the shortcomings of some of the other theories and models applicable to a topic of this nature, combined with a new methodological approach to the contextual determinants and It is used as an analytic and explanatory tool to clarify the process of change in bilateral foreign relations.⁴ In addition, the Foreign Policy Change Decision Making Model⁵ is used in the research to provide external validity to the Aggregative Model of Bilateral Relations Strategic Change. It is also utilised as an additional analytic tool regarding bilateral foreign policy change.

The analysis of bilateral foreign relations in the third timeframe (1992-2005) is based on another new model, developed by the researcher, namely the Oscillated Diplomacy Model. It is applied as an analytic tool of bilateral foreign policy focussing on operational diplomacy as a key element in foreign policy in an attempt to realise the relationship as well as the structural tension between them.⁶

³ The term "history" is used to describe a systemic discipline intended for providing cumulative increments to increase the knowledge of the past by narration and description. The historical analyst should be aware of the ways in which chosen theories and models represent realities (Sills, 1968:378).

⁴ For further information on the Aggregative Model of Bilateral Relations Strategic Change, see section 2.5.

⁵ For further information on the Foreign Policy Change Decision Making Model, see section 2.4.

⁶ For further information on the Oscillated Diplomacy Model, see section 2.6.

The theories and models applied in this research are incorporated into a holistic framework composed of an eclectic, but coherent and mutually supportive set of theories and models, which contributes to a comprehensive understanding of Israeli-Indian bilateral relations.

2.2 Ultimate Decision Unit Model

The Ultimate Decision Unit Model deals with the decision-makers in foreign policy. Foreign policy making and behaviour is carried out and engaged in respectively by different entities and within any government; the pertinent decision units often change over time as well as with regard to foreign policy on a particular issue. According to this model, the ultimate decision units shape the government's foreign policy and are defined as sets of authorities (entities such as individuals, group of individuals or multiple actors) within a political structure of a government (or a non-state actor policy decision making unit). These sets of authorities identify, decide, influence and carry out foreign policy at a particular time or have the ability to commit or withhold the resources of the government pertaining to foreign affairs. Alternatively, the ultimate decision units have the power and authority to prevent other entities within the government from overtly reversing their position about foreign policy, which could lead to significant costs and negative consequences.

With reference to this theory, Hermann and Hermann (1989) point out that it is unlikely that there is only one recurrent set of policy makers handling all problems in the same manner and in this regard, they identify three types of ultimate decision units, namely predominant leaders, single groups and multi-autonomous actors. According to the Ultimate Decision Unit Model, the predominant leader type is a single individual that has the power to make choices on behalf of the government and is a key actor as far as foreign policy change is concerned. The leader's traits shape his initial inclinations and determine whether and how he will regard advice from others, react to information from the international environment and assess the political risks associated with various political activities. Of particular relevance is

knowledge about the leader's orientation in terms of foreign relations, his composite set of views about how his government should act in the foreign policy arena and his sensitivity to information emanating from the political environment with specific emphasis on the operational level.

In this research, the ultimate decision units, as analytical and explanatory tools, are identified and analysed in terms of pertinent entities and authorities, including leaders, within the Israeli and Indian governments, that were important actors with regard to the shaping of bilateral relations between Israel and India between the years 1948 and 2005. The Ultimate Decision Units Model was found to be more suitable than the Decision Making theory for the purpose of this analysis. The reason is that the former model refers not only to the decision making process underlying and driving the practice of foreign policy, such as the implementation of a new foreign policy by different entities as a set of authorities, but it also refers to operational diplomacy.

2.3 Levels of Analysis Model

The Levels of Analysis Model underscores the need to trace changes in world politics back to different groups of actors, their attributes, activities as well as their interaction. Simultaneously, emphasis is placed on political power brokers and their input regarding foreign relations, which includes both bilateral relations and their influence on individuals (political leaders in particular) who play a role in the foreign policy decision-making process, as well as international behaviour. Waltz (1959) identifies three levels of analysis employed in the field of international relations, namely the *international system level*, the *state and society level* and the *individual level*. These three levels of analysis, as discussed in Waltz's model, are incorporated throughout the research as pertinent and analytical tools and are used to describe and analyse the bilateral relations between Israel and India with emphasis on both the operational environment and diplomacy.

- **International system level of analysis**

The international system level of analysis refers to the global environment and the behaviour of states in the international system. It is utilised in relation to the conditions that result from the interaction of states and non-state actors with one another. This level functions as a unit of analysis, provides an analytical explanation of the relevant international factors that have influenced the relations between Israel and India and which includes the transformation of the Indian foreign policy towards Israel in 1991. The international system level is sub-divided into two types of foreign relations, namely bilateral and multilateral relations.⁷

The variation between these two types of foreign relations can explain how it happened that bilateral relations between Israel and India were at a low level from that time up to the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1991 and even up to 1992. This was the case notwithstanding India's recognition of Israel in 1950 and the existence of an Israeli Consulate in Bombay. However, on the other hand, India played a significant role in international affairs pertaining to Israel. as a prominent leader of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), at the multilateral level.

- **State and society level of analysis**

The state and society level of analysis (also known as the national level) is utilised as a unit of analysis in relation to authoritative state decision-making units that influence and shape as well as constrain foreign policy. Domestic factors, such as national politics, economy, bureaucracy and organisational behaviour all have an influence on foreign policy and as such are analysed accordingly.

The state and society level of analysis as a unit of analysis is utilised as an analytic tool applied to the domestic factors that have influenced the

⁷ Bilateral relations are defined as a pattern of interaction between two states, while multilateral relations are defined as a web of relations among players within the international system (Brecher, 1972).

bilateral relations between Israel and India in general and the establishment of diplomatic relations between them in particular.

- **Individual level of analysis.**

The individual level of analysis refers to the characteristics of individuals as well as to the role of leaders who influence world politics on behalf of their states. In this research, the individual level of analysis, as a unit of analysis, contributes to the identification and analytical explanations of the personal factors that influenced the bilateral relations between Israel and India.

As international actors (as well as variables) relate to one another across levels of analysis and over time, it is important to assess the direct and indirect interaction among the different levels of analysis.

It should be pointed out that there is a methodological variation between leaders in terms of the Ultimate Decision Units Model and leadership at the individual level of analysis. The individual level of analysis refers to individual characteristics that influence the foreign policy process in terms of analytical values; while the individual level unit influences foreign policy in terms of guiding parameters.

The ultimate decision unit refers to predominant leaders, other pertinent entities such as political parties and state level groups that influence the diachronic operational process of foreign policy as well as diplomacy in terms of volume and direction actively. The differentiation of the various levels of analysis implies that foreign policy cannot be attributed to a single source only. In fact, foreign policy making and international behaviour are influenced by different interests with regard to particular issues and such implications are commensurate with the Ultimate Decision Unit Model.

2.4 Model of Foreign Policy Change Decision Making

The Model of Foreign Policy Change Decision Making (Hermann, 1990) is utilised as an additional model in order to achieve external validity⁸ for the key model used for the analysis of the transformation of bilateral relations between Israel and India in 1992. In addition to the external validity provided to the Aggregative Model of Bilateral Foreign Relations Strategic Change,⁹ the Model of Foreign Policy Change Decision Making is utilised as a tool that has explanatory and analytical values with regard to the bilateral foreign relations between Israel and India. The latter model provides an additional perspective on the transformation of India's foreign policy regarding Israel.

Foreign policy change in Hermann's model includes four types of change in terms of means, ends and overall orientation, namely *adjustment changes*, *programme changes*, *problem or goal changes* and *international orientation changes*. The first type of change refers to adjustment changes, which include the level of effort and/or the scope of recipients, such as the level of refinement in the class of targets and answers the question what and how they are done while the purposes for which they are done, remain unchanged. The second type refers to programme changes, which are made to the methods or means through which the goal is addressed.

Programme changes are qualitative and involve new statecraft. Instruments. The third type refers to problem or goal changes, which means that purposes themselves are replaced. The fourth type refers to international orientation changes and is the most extreme form of foreign policy change. These changes occur when a redirection or a basic shift of the actor's entire orientation towards world politics takes place (Hermann, 1990).

⁸ According to Jane Fielding, external validity of a model can be achieved by comparing points of similarity and points of variance with other models (Fielding, 1993:166).

⁹ For further information regarding the Aggregative Model of Bilateral Foreign Relations Strategic Change, see section 2.4.

Hermann (1990) suggests that there are four different sources of foreign policy change:

- Leader driven change, resulting from the determined efforts of authoritarian policy makers.
- Bureaucratic advocacy as an agent of change.
- Domestic restructuring that refers to the pertinent segment of society whose political support is needed as a change agent.
- External shock as a source of foreign policy change derived from particular international events.

The Model of Foreign Policy Change Decision Making presents the conditions and possibilities in foreign affairs that can promote a major change in foreign policy, through a decision making process, in seven stages:

- **Initial policy expectations**

Expectations concerning the effects of foreign policy have to be produced by the existing policy; while creating standards for subsequent judgments of success or failure. The potential new policy should solve the problem or reduce its effects.

- **External actor responses and environmental stimuli**

The international environment produces an external stimulus for examining or affecting an existing foreign policy.

- **Recognition of discrepant information**

When an external development generates external information that is inconsistent with the existing policy expectations or offers new evidence about the nature of the problem in the foreign policy or no longer accommodates information received from the international environment, it becomes a signal to the policymakers about the need to change foreign policy.

- **Postulation of a connection between problem and policy.**

The connection between an existing foreign policy and a problem has to be identified while the policymakers must conclude that their government's foreign policy is either ineffective, exacerbates the problem, generates new problems of substantial concern or costs much more than anticipated.
- **Development of alternatives**

Alternative solutions for foreign policy change can be generated after redefinition of the programme by examining already existing options or developing new options.
- **Achieving authoritative consensus for new options**

Consensus is needed in order to produce new options in foreign policy (in fact, such a policy cannot proceed or be implemented until authoritative consensus is reached).
- **Implementation of new measures**

The foreign policy change process does not end with a selection of some new policy and it is important to attain the wholehearted commitment of all those charged with carrying out the selected new policy. A clear definition of the objective of the new foreign policy and a clarification of the expectations regarding the foreign policy change are needed in order to ensure that the measures concerning the new foreign policy are implemented as effectively as possible.

According to Rosati, Hagan and Sampson (1994:12), Hermann's model places too much emphasis on the role of the decision-making process for foreign policy change, includes more minor shifts in means and instruments in the conducting of day-to-day foreign policy and he limits his analysis to self-corrective change by existing governments. Nonetheless, the above-mentioned criticism of the model does not prevent it from being

utilised in a unique way for the purpose of this research as discussed in this sub-section.

2.5 Aggregative Model of Bilateral Foreign Relations Strategic Change

The first of the two newly devised models that is applied for the purpose of this research is the Aggregative Model of Bilateral Foreign Relations Strategic Change. This model refers to the process of change in the bilateral relations between Israel and India, including its operational environment, with emphasis on the convergence of relevant fundamental factors, in terms of strategic and national interests with pertinent contextual determinants.

The Aggregative Model of Bilateral Foreign Relations Strategic Change is used as a key model of the research to achieve a better analytical and explanatory tool. It will enable an improved analysis of the aggregative multiple factors that influence the complex process of change of the Indian foreign policy regarding Israel. The aim is to provide an answer to the research question regarding the transformation of Indian foreign policy in connection with Israel in 1992.

This model also contributes to an improved understanding of the dynamics of change in bilateral comprehensive foreign relations and bilateral diplomacy. In fact, relatively little attention was given to the foreign policy change theory in micro-level terms and traditionally, the issue was considered to be part of the decision-making and negotiation theories respectively.¹⁰

The aggregative multiple factors are divided into two groups, namely causative factors and contextual determinants. In an operational environment, the causative factors, which are the relevant fundamental and strategic national interest-oriented factors, converge with pertinent contextual determinants, in a systemic and diachronic process of foreign policy change. They are described as follows,

¹⁰ With the exception of Hermann's model of foreign policy change decision making. For details about Hermann's model and an explanation why the new model is more applicable for the purpose of this research, see section 2.4.

- **Pre-feasibility stage**

An early stage of the bilateral foreign policy change process is the pre-feasibility stage. In fact, it is the incubating stage of foreign policy change, which is brought about and influenced by pertinent particular circumstantial formative change determinants, particularly when the *status quo* in bilateral relations appears to have a negative effect.

- **Framing stage**

During the framing stage, change determinants are generated in terms of the pertinent circumstances that initiate and determine the bilateral foreign policy.

- **Cost-benefit analysis stage**

The cost-benefit analysis stage entails not only the review and evaluation of relevant fundamental and national security oriented factors, but also includes the revision of alternatives and new options. This is carried out in conjunction with contextual and situational change determinants, as part of the selective process, thereby setting the stage for the development of optimal conditions within the operational environment for a change in bilateral foreign relations.

- **Ripeness stage**

A pre-requisite for the ripeness stage, a preliminary stage in foreign policy change, is when two actors in the international system are ripe for a bilateral foreign policy change. This change is accelerated by particular events and circumstances, in the form of accelerating change determinants that set off the foreign policy change in terms of the international operational environment.

- **Reaching a focal point in the foreign policy change stage**

A feasible stage in terms of the international operational environment is the reaching of a focal point in foreign policy change. Strategic and national interest-oriented factors adjusted to suit the specific conditions

and situation in line with the contextual adjustment determinants and synchronised with certain components, set the bilateral foreign policy change in motion.

- **Consolidation stage**

In order to achieve political consensus and/or tackle international as well as domestic political impediments to the systemic process of change, in reaction to shifts in foreign policy, a consolidation stage becomes essential so that changes in bilateral foreign policy can be effected. This stage can be achieved with the help of the particular consolidating determinants in terms of coordination and control, especially in the case of an extensive and far-reaching foreign policy transformation and/or when the previous bilateral foreign policy had strong support in the domestic political system.

- **Assimilation and implementation**

Stabilising change determinants, in terms of the consolidation of bilateral foreign policy change, affecting both the international and domestic political sectors, set the systemic foreign policy change process in motion and redefine foreign policy. These change determinants create new patterns of interdependence and direct diplomacy, with the aim of substantiating the far-reaching change in bilateral relations.

The use of the Aggregative Model of Bilateral Foreign Relations Strategic Change as an analytical and explanatory tool provides a better understanding of the transformation of the Indian foreign policy regarding Israel. It also enables an analysis of the multiple factors that influence the systemic process of this foreign policy change either directly or indirectly together with certain contextual determinants. In addition, the model also provides a methodological answer to the question of how to refer to the weight and importance of both circumstantial events and causal connections in the

international operational environment by using a multilevel contextual determinant.

2.6 Oscillated Diplomacy Model

The second of the two new models is the Oscillated Diplomacy Model, which is used as an analytical and explanatory tool to analyse the evolving bilateral relations between Israel and India from 1992 up to 2005 and provides an answer to the relevant research question regarding this particular topic.

'Foreign policy,' 'foreign relations' and 'diplomacy' are often used as synonyms in international politics, however, 'foreign policy' refers to the goals and attitudes of a state's affairs within the international system, while 'foreign relations' refers to the substance of international politics. 'Diplomacy,' on the other hand, is an operational and practical instrument employed in a systemic and diachronic process, in order to put international aims into effect.¹¹ By using diplomacy as an instrument in international politics while influencing the international environment, states pursue mutually exclusive or incompatible strategic goals and national interests (Evans & Newnham, 1998:129, 181).¹²

Strategic national interests are generally used in two senses in International Politics. In the first place, it is used as an analytical tool identifying the goals of foreign policy and secondly, it is used in political discourse specifically to justify particular international foreign policy. However, attempts, which have been made to develop models of the varying levels of intensity that national interest may be expected to generate, have floundered because of subjectivism. (Evans & Newnham, 1998: 344, 346).

Furthermore, the term 'national interest' refers to matters of importance to a state and has mostly been related to realism. Realists take the national interest for granted, but do not explain how states come to define this term or

¹¹ Diplomacy is the management of relations between countries and is usually concerned with dialogues and negotiations and is also an institution of the state system. It is regarded as an essential part of international relations (Evans and Newnham, 1998).

¹² For further information regarding diplomacy and diplomatic relations between Israel and India as joint strategic interests, see section 6.3.1 (pp.375-381).

the processes by means of which those interests are redefined (Viotti & Kauppi, 1998:86, 482).

The Oscillated Diplomacy Model, in terms of bilateral diplomacy between two countries, is characterised as operational vectorial diplomacy. The term 'diplomatic vector' refers to the operational management of bilateral relations in terms of volume and direction, which oscillates in a systemic and diachronic process, between two opposite delimited lines of foreign policy as guiding parameters.¹³ The oscillated diplomacy, in terms of the convergent strategic interest is influenced both directly and indirectly by three types of mutual national strategic interests, namely, joint strategic interests, common strategic interests and discrepant strategic interests.

- **Joint strategic interests.**

The goals that two states pursue in order to maximise the overlapping inter-related strategic interests shared by the collaborating countries are known as joint strategic interests. The degree of overlapping of the joint strategic interests in terms of strength and intensity, directly affects their bilateral relations.¹⁴

- **Common strategic interests.**

The goals that two states pursue in order to achieve complementary strategic interests by bilateral cooperation are called common strategic interests. The range of compatibility of the complementary strategic interests influences their bilateral relations in terms of their scope, both directly and indirectly.¹⁵

¹³ For information about the state and society level of analysis and the individual level of analysis as guiding parameters of the Israeli-Indian relations and India's oscillated diplomacy towards Israel, see section 6.4 (pp.435-447).

¹⁴ For information about bilateral joint strategic interests between Israel and India, see - sections 6.3.1 (diplomatic relations, pp.375-381), 6.3.2 (defence relations, pp.381-399), 6.3.3 (space cooperation, pp.399-400), 6.3.4 (nuclear power policy coordination, pp.400-402) and 6.3.5 (economic relations, pp.402-406).

¹⁵ For information about bilateral common strategic interests between Israel and India, see sections 6.3.6 (science and technology cooperation, pp.406-407), 6.3.7 (cultural relations, pp.407-409), 6.3.9 (the superpowers, pp.411-417), 6.3.10 (geo-strategy, pp.417-418), 6.3.13 (Asia, pp.422), 6.3.15 (Central Asia, pp.424-425) and 6.3.16 (Pakistan, pp.425-427).

- **Discrepant strategic interests.**

Discrepant strategic interests are opposite strategic interests of two countries due to incompatible goals and have a contradictory impact on their bilateral relations. The level of contradictions, in terms of counter power, negatively affects the mutual interests of the two countries.¹⁶ A high level of contradictions in their environment can cause a strategic conflict between the two countries.¹⁷

Table 2.1: A framework for the analysis of bilateral relations

| | | Type of national interests | Characteristics | Effects |
|--------------------------|----------------|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Foreign relations | System | Joint national interest | Degree of overlapping | Strength and intensity |
| | | Common national interest | Range of complement | Scope |
| | | Discrepant national interest | Level of contradiction | Counter power |
| Diplomacy | Process | Convergence of national interests | National interests matrix | Volume and direction |

The Oscillated Diplomacy Model is used as a key model in this research with analytical and explanatory values for the analysis of the evolving bilateral relations between Israel and India during the period stretching from 1992 to 2005. This model enables a better analysis of a web of pertinent strategic interests with a high degree of variance. It also provides a methodological

¹⁶ For further information about the bilateral joint strategic interests between Israel and India, see sections 6.3.8 (the United Nations, pp.409-411), 6.3.11 (energy, pp.418-420), 6.3.12 (non aligned movement, pp.420-421), 6.3.14 (People's Republic of China, pp.422-424), 6.3.17 (Iran, pp.427-428), 6.3.18 (The Islamic World, pp.428-429), 6.3.19 (The Arab World, pp.430-431) and 6.3.20 (The Palestinian Authority, pp.431-435).

¹⁷ Strategic conflict is a condition that arises when two actors pursue mutually exclusive or mutually incompatible strategic goals (Evans & Newnham, 1998).

answer to the question regarding the subjectivism of national strategic interests and contributes to a better understanding of the operational level of diplomacy in bilateral foreign relations as well as international politics.

2.7 Theoretical framework and summation

In the absence of a grand theory, which can contribute to the analysis of the complex set of Israeli-Indian relations in a valid and effective manner, the main theories and models, as well as the historical description and narrative accounts used in this research, are incorporated into an eclectic theoretical framework.

The aim is to construct a coherent framework that ensures better comprehension of the composite bilateral foreign relations between Israel and India. Importantly, the framework helps to simplify and analyse the complexity of Israeli-Indian relations, which are influenced by a web of diverse causal factors in terms of both external and internal variables in conjunction with contextual determinants.

However, the inherent complexity resulting from such a theoretical framework is not detrimental to the efficiency, reliability and validity of this research as the framework provides a comprehensive and coherent picture of the research. At the same time, the use of various theories and models contributes to a thorough and precise understanding of the relationship among the large number of research variables within the different timeframes. A representation of this framework is provided in table 2.1 on the following page.

Table 2.2: Israel and India – A framework for the analysis of bilateral relations

| Time Frames | 1948-1991 | Feb. 1992 | 1992-2005 |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Type of relations | Historical relations | Change of relations | Evolving relations |
| Unit | Ultimate Decision Unit | | |
| Levels of analysis | International system level | | <i>Bilateral relations</i> |
| | | | <i>Multilateral relations</i> |
| | State and society level | | |
| | Individual level | | |
| Models | In-depth description and narration | Aggregative Model of Bilateral Relations Strategic Change – Model of Foreign Policy Change Decision Making | Oscillated Diplomacy Model |

As illustrated in the above table, this research refers to the bilateral foreign relations of Israel and India within the specified three timeframes, while using pertinent and applicable theories and models of international relations.

Bilateral foreign relations between the two countries, with special reference to pre-independence relations during the first timeframe, namely in the period stretching from 1948 to 1992, are analysed with the help of the Ultimate Decision Unit Model and the Model of Levels of Analysis, as part of an implicit historical description as well as an in-depth explanation and a narrative account of Israeli-Indian bilateral relations. The reference to the pre-

independence relations of the two countries is an integral part of their bilateral relations situated within the broader historical context of their complex bilateral relations.

The changes in bilateral relations between Israel and India in 1992 and the establishment of diplomatic relations between them during the second timeframe are analysed in terms of the systemic change of the foreign policy process. For this purpose, the Aggregative Model of Bilateral Foreign Relations Strategic Change is used as a key model of analysis of the transformation of the Indian foreign policy regarding Israel as well as the Ultimate Decision Unit Model and the Levels of Analysis Model. In addition, for better validity of the analysis, the Model of Foreign Policy Change Decision Making is utilised in this timeframe as well.

Regarding the third timeframe (1992-2005), the evolving bilateral relations between Israel and India are analysed in the light of the Ultimate Decision Unit Model and the Model of Levels of Analysis; while using the Model of Oscillated Diplomacy as the key model of analysis of the evolving relations between the two countries.

The two newly devised models applied in this research are used in conjunction with other complementary pertinent theories and models as demonstrated in the theoretical framework. These models are utilised as analytical tools with explanatory values, which help to provide a broader picture and a comprehensive understanding of the bilateral foreign relations between Israel and India. In addition, they contribute to the theoretical field of international relations and diplomacy as well as to diplomatic practice. As indicated by James Dougherty and Robert Pfaltzgraff Jr. (2001:625), no single theory can explain the full range of phenomena that constitute bilateral relations between two countries adequately. The greater the complexity and quantity of issues that have an international or global dimension, the greater will be the need for a multiplicity of theories and models in order to produce answers based on the integration of approaches, findings and insights. Therefore, the inherent complexity resulting from the theoretical framework is

not detrimental to the efficiency of the research; as the framework provides a comprehensive and coherent picture of the research. At the same time, the separate models contribute to a thorough and precise understanding of the relationship among the variables of the research within the different timeframes.

Chapter 3

India's relations with Israel prior to January

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the focus is on India's relations with Israel, particularly, India's foreign policy towards Israel before the establishment of full diplomatic relations between the two states. The main objective is therefore to describe, examine and analyse India's foreign policy towards Israel before the establishment of full diplomatic relations between the two states on 29 January 1992.¹ This analysis also gives a comprehensive background, which lays the foundation for the analysis of the transformation of India's foreign policy towards Israel.²

The objective of this chapter is realised by an analysis of the factors that influenced India's relations with Israel and India's foreign policy towards Israel prior to the establishment of full diplomatic relations. From an Israeli perspective, this analysis takes the comparative weight and complexity of the pertinent factors into consideration, while applying the theories discussed in chapter 2 as a means for analysing the comprehensive bilateral relations between the two states.

India as an international actor is the unit of analysis in this chapter. The historical and international political context of this chapter is India's attainment of independence on 15 August 1947 and the birth of Israel as an independent state nine months later, on 14 May 1948. However, the analysis of Indian foreign policy towards Israel is divided from a historical

¹ Israel's bilateral relations with India and its foreign policy towards India are analysed in the next chapter (chapter four).

² The transformation of India's foreign policy towards Israel in 1992 and the establishment of fully-fledged diplomatic relations are analysed in chapter five.

and political perspective, into two stages, namely pre-independent India (1922-1947) and post-independent India (1947-1991).³ The pre-independence stage is relevant to this research because India's foreign policy towards Israel and the Middle East has its roots in the formative years of pre-independent India. Pre-independence events had a direct influence on post independence bilateral relations between the two states. Thus, the pre-independence phase is an important starting point in this diachronic study of Israeli-Indian relations.

The external and the internal variables that influenced Indian foreign policy towards Israel are identified and explained with reference to their international as well as contextual determinants. This includes their influence on the process of India's foreign policy decision-making. The pertinent ultimate decision units, as dominant players in India's foreign policy towards Israel before and after the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, are identified and analysed.⁴ The Indian National Congress Movement (INCM) is identified and examined as a pre-independence ultimate decision unit that influenced India's thinking and frame of mind on bilateral relations with Israel.⁵ Furthermore, the Indian ultimate decision unit in the post-independence stage, namely the post-independence prime ministers of India that determined India's foreign policy towards Israel until the establishment of full diplomatic relations, are identified and analysed.⁶

³ The State of Israel was born on 15 May 1948 nine months after India's independence and therefore, the Indian pre-independence stage regarding Israel in this research, refers to the period between 1922 and 1948.

⁴ For a definition of an ultimate decision unit as well as the Ultimate Decision Model, see section 2.1.

⁵ Post-independence ultimate decision units were already in the making during the pre-independent stage on both sides as described in this chapter as well as the following chapter, Gandhi and Nehru's roles are discussed separately in sections 3.6.1 and 3.6.2 in terms of the individual level of analysis.

⁶ The role of the Indian National Congress Party (INCP) is discussed separately in terms of the individual level of analysis and in terms of the state and society level of analysis in section 3.10.2.1

The three levels of analysis identified in chapter 2 are used in this chapter to analyse the bilateral relations between India and Israel.⁷

International system level of analysis

This entails an analysis of the international factors that influenced the foreign policy of the Republic of India regarding the State of Israel after its independence. The analysis is made with India as a unitary actor with national self-interest in the international system. Indian foreign relations with Israel are divided into two types, namely bilateral and multilateral relations. Important, in particular, in this regard are India's multilateral relations with the United Nations Organisation (UNO).

State and society level of analysis

At this level, an analysis is made of the domestic factors in general and the political factors in particular, which influenced the Indian foreign policy towards Israel. Attention will be paid to ruling parties such as the INCP as well as government coalitions.

Individual level of analysis

An analysis is made of the individual factors that influenced the Indian leadership as an ultimate decision unit as well as other individuals who played a role in the decision-making process of the Indian foreign policy towards Israel such as Prime Minister Rao.

In the analysis in this chapter, the historical and international political context of the independence of these two states and their recognition of each other are important as has already been implied. The State of Israel

⁷ For details on the theory of level of analysis, see section 2.3.

gave immediate and formal *de-jure* recognition⁸ to the Republic of India, while India postponed its recognition of Israel until 17 September 1950. The Indian recognition was made known by a short and cryptic statement: “The Government of India has decided to accord recognition to the government of Israel” (Padmanbahan, 1975:11). This was cryptic recognition in the sense that it did not specify the type of recognition granted, neither did it refer to the possibility of establishing diplomatic relations, nor the possible exchange of diplomatic missions. However, recognition was accorded to the Government of Israel following pressure from American Jewry.⁹

On 1 September 1951, India allowed Israel to appoint a Trade Commissioner and Honorary Consular Agent in Bombay and F.W. Pollack was nominated. On 30 December 1952 he was nominated Honorary Consul of Israel. In August 1953 three years after India's recognition of the State of Israel, Israel was permitted to open a consulate in Bombay, which was marked by an exchange of diplomatic notes between the embassies of the two countries in the United States (US).¹⁰

However, at a press conference in New Delhi on 7 August 1958, Nehru the Indian Prime Minister, stated:

After careful thought, we felt that while recognising Israel as an entity, we need not at this stage exchange diplomatic personnel (India's Foreign Policy/Selected Speeches, 1961:415).¹¹

⁸ There are two types of basic international recognition in international law and diplomacy: *De-jure* and *de-facto*. *De-jure* recognition implies complete diplomatic acceptance of a new state or government while *de-facto* recognition normally refers to provisional recognition of a particular government indicates factual sovereignty (Evans & Newnham, 1998).

⁹ For details about India's recognition of the State of Israel, see section 3.8.1 and for the Israeli response see section 4.8.1.

¹⁰ For details about the opening of the Israeli Consulate in Bombay, see sections 3.9.1.2 and 4.1.

¹¹ Diplomacy is one of the essential instruments employed in international relations. Among other functions, diplomacy is concerned with establishing and renewing rules and

The official Indian reason given for taking this political step was:

Continuing non-recognition of the State of Israel was not only inconsistent with the overall relationship (of India) but limited the effectiveness of the Government of India's role as a possible intermediary between Israel and the Arab states (Rao, 1972:40).

India continued with its consistent, but distinctly pro-Arab and anti-Israeli foreign policy. This became the blueprint for the Indian Middle-East policy until 1992, despite constant efforts made by Israel to improve relations. Israel, which considered India an important key player in the international system and wished to promote bilateral relations between the two countries tried to exert considerable effort to change the Indian foreign policy towards Israel, but a substantial change in Indian foreign policy pertaining to Israel had to wait up to 29 January 1992, when fully-fledged diplomatic relations between the two countries were established.

3.2 Pre-independence India: Historical and political context of foreign policy towards Palestine and Zionism

Pre-independence Indian foreign policy had its roots in the history of India, Palestine and Zionism.¹² Palestine is the historical name of a geographical area along the Mediterranean in the Middle East. The growth of national consciousness within the intellectual elite of the Arabs in Palestine took place as part of the Arab national awakening in the Fertile Crescent districts of the Ottoman Empire toward the end of the 19th century and the

procedures, which regulate the international system including reference to the exchange of diplomatic personnel (Evans & Newnham, 1998).

¹² Zionism was the movement for national revival and independence of the Jewish people in the Holy Land (Palestine). The name was derived from the word "Zion," one of the biblical names for Jerusalem (Shimoni, 1987). For additional details about Zionism, including details about the Jewish Agency, see section 4.3.

beginning of the 20th century. At the same time, new Jewish immigration, as part of the Zionist practice of national movement, moved to Palestine.¹³

During World War I (1917-1918), the British forces conquered Palestine, which had been part of the Ottoman Empire since 1516.¹⁴ From 1922, Palestine had been a territory under the British Mandate, which was ratified by the League of Nations¹⁵ and contained two national movements seeking statehood (Rolef 1993:235).¹⁶ The British government in Palestine based its policy on the Balfour Declaration, which was committed to a Jewish national homeland in Palestine.¹⁷ The Palestinian Arabs, on the other hand, were not willing to accept the declaration and expressed their anger and frustration in this regard.¹⁸

In 1937, the British Peel Commission (1936-1937), formally known as the Palestine Royal Commission, recommended that Palestine should be partitioned between the Jews and the Arabs but the Palestinian Arabs rejected their recommendation. Two years later, in 1939, following the deadlock of the St. James Conference, the British published a White Paper, announcing that Palestine would become an independent state with an Arab majority after a transition period of 10 years, but the paper was rejected by the Arabs. After the end of World War II, there was pressure by the US and Europe on Britain to allow the entrance of Jews to Palestine, in particular the remnants of the European Jewry that had survived the Holocaust.

¹³ For details about the theory of Zionism and Jewish immigration to Palestine as well as the Jewish Agency, see section 4.3.

¹⁴ The name *Palestina* was first used by the Roman replacing the name Judea after the suppression of the Jewish rebellion of 132 - 135 BC. There has never been an independent state by the name of *Palestine*.

¹⁵ For details about the League of Nation's ratification of the British Mandate, see section 3.4.2.

¹⁶ For details about the British policy as the mandatory power in India and Palestine, see section 3.4.1.

¹⁷ For details about the Balfour declaration, see sections 3.4.1, 4.3.

¹⁸ For details about the Arabs Jewish conflict until 1948, see section 3.4.2.

In the summer of 1947, the United Nations (UN) Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) recommended the partition of Palestine into two states. Although the Arabs rejected it, the UN accepted the Partition Plan and on 15 May 1948, the State of Israel was established after the unofficial Arab war effort to prevent it had failed.¹⁹

Before August 1947, India did not have an independent foreign policy and the British, who ruled the country, linked India to their global strategy. Britain was a colonial and mandatory power in India and Palestine and as non-sovereign "states" neither of them could conduct independent foreign policies.²⁰ Nevertheless, international events as well as the concept of the future role of an independent India in the international system,²¹ laid the foundation for the general foreign policy attitude of the leaders of the INCM and towards Palestine in particular. The INCM, which constituted the ruling party as well as the government of India after independence, was rooted deeply in pre-independence Indian politics.²² It had followed a distinct pro-Arab line since 1922, when the ratification of the British Mandate (based on the Sykes-Picot Agreement)²³ by the League of Nations took place engendered a legacy of Indian hostility towards the Zionist Movement in Palestine.

¹⁹ For details about post-independence India's foreign policy towards Israel, see sub-section 3.7 and about the Indian representative to the committee as well his attitude, see section 3.9.2.2.

²⁰ For details about Britain as a mandatory power in India and Palestine, see section 3.4.1.

²¹ After World War II.

²² After independence, the INCM was transformed into a political party: The Indian National Congress Party (popularly known as Congress). The Indian National Congress Party (INCP) was a dominant force in the Indian politics and formed governments between 1947 and 1977, 1980 to 1989 and 1991 to 1996. For additional details about the INCM, see next section 3.3 and for details about the INCM's attitude towards Zionism, see section 3.4.

²³ For details about the Sykes-Picot Agreement, see section 3.4.2.

3.3 Pre-independence India: Ultimate decision unit

The INCM has been identified as the pertinent ultimate decision unit of the Indian pre-independence foreign policy towards Palestine. The understanding of the relevant decision-making processes of this policy provides a better tool for understanding the Indian historical relations with Palestine (as analysed at the state and society level of analysis), as well as its operational orientation. At the same time, the emphasis will be on the INCM leadership and its ability to mobilise the Indian masses, including the Muslims in India in their struggle for independence.²⁴

From a historical viewpoint, India's foreign policy towards the Middle East had its roots in the formative years of India's pre-independence. This was the time when the INCM shaped its pro-Arab policy in the region at the state and society level as well as the individual level of analysis.²⁵ The INCM was founded in 1885 in Bombay and was originally conceptualised as a lobbying group. After 1900, it became the leading organisation within the broad-based freedom struggle against Britain. It was Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (Mahatma), after his return from South Africa in 1914, which changed the Congress structure from an elite political club into a mass organisation in which his influence rested on the power of popular appeal. Eventually, the INCM established its control over the Indian masses while trying to mobilise the Indian population against British rule.²⁶ The INCM, headed by Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru,²⁷ was undoubtedly the ultimate decision unit of the Indian pre-independence foreign policy towards Palestine. Nevertheless, despite the INCM's supportive attitude towards the Arabs in Palestine, it was confined in terms

²⁴ For details about pre independence India in terms of state and society level of analysis, see section 3.5.

²⁵ For details about the INCM's attitude towards Palestine, see section 3.4.

²⁶ For details about Mahatma Gandhi, see section 3.6.1.

²⁷ For details about Gandhi and Nehru, see section 3.6.1 and 3.6.2.

of its external pre-independence policy, as Britain was the Mandatory power in India.²⁸ Naaz (1999:241) describes the attitudes of the INCM's leaders as follows: "While sympathetic to the plight of Jews in Europe, were unresponsive to the idea of Israel." In fact, the INCM tried to mobilise the Muslims in India to participate in the struggle for independence and the ongoing rivalry between the INCM and the Muslim League²⁹ forced the INCM to look at the Arab-Jewish controversy in Palestine through an Islamic prism. Kumaraswamy describes this situation as follows:

Vehemently articulating a pro-Arab stand, the nationalists argued that the consent of the Arab inhabitants was a prerequisite for the realization of a Jewish national home in Palestine...National Congress leaders were unable to divorce themselves from resorting to Islamic interpretations of Jewish history and claims (Kumaraswamy, 1999:134).

3.4 Pre-independence India: The international system level of analysis

India's pre-independence policy towards Palestine as well as India's historical relations with Palestine is key factors that laid the foundation for the relations between India and Israel after India's independence and is analysed in terms of the international level of analysis.

Since the early 1920s the Indian nationalists had been vociferous supporters of the Arab national positions in the Middle East. The historical context of this supportive attitude was the support of the INCM (and Mahatma Gandhi in particular) of the Khilafat Movement³⁰ in order to

²⁸ For details about Britain as a mandatory power in India and Palestine, see section 3.4.1.

²⁹ For details about the Indian Muslim League, see sections 3.4.1 and 3.4.2.

³⁰ The conclusion of First World War led to dismemberment of the Turkish empire placing the Arab territories under allied mandates. The Khilafat Movement was created in India in

appease the Indian Muslims who were offended by Britain's Turkish policy after World War I and as a common bond between the Hindus and Muslims in India that would lead the two communities to join forces to work for self-government.³¹ The INCM started following a distinctly pro-Arab approach after the Balfour Declaration and the ratification of the Sykes-Picot Agreement by the League of Nations.³² In 1922 and 1923 the movement called for the removal of all alien control from Arab lands and passed resolutions in sympathy with the aspirations for independence of the Arabs in Palestine, Iraq, Syria and Egypt (Rao, 1972:6).

The INCM, as an ultimate decision unit, was influenced by the substantial minority of Muslims in India, whose sentiments were with their fellow Muslims in the Middle East.³³ Under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, the INCM attempted to secure the allegiance of the Muslims of India by aligning the movement with causes that were of importance to the Indian Muslim masses, such as the Arab-Palestinian question.³⁴ The INCM made an ongoing effort to involve the Muslims in India in the struggle against the British and the political weight of the Muslim minority was considered as an important factor in the struggle for independence. This should be understood in the context of the 1930s and 1940s when active Muslim cooperation and participation were essential in the struggle against the British and the loss of cooperation of the Muslim community could cause a great deal of damage to the Indian liberation struggle.

1919 by the Indian Muslim League of India and demanded that Muslim holy places situated within Arab areas would remain under the direct sovereignty of the Caliph as the head of the Muslim community,. The abolition of the Caliph, however, came from Turkey's nationalists in March 1924 and in fact since then calls for the re-establishment of the Caliph diminished (Shimoni, 1987:133).

³¹ About the visit of Shaukat Ali, one of the founders of the Khilafat Movement, in Jerusalem, see section 3.4.2.

³² For details about the Balfour Declaration and the Sykes-Picot Agreement, see section 3.2.

³³ For more details about the Arab Jewish conflict, see section 3.4.2.

³⁴ There were 95 million Muslims in pre-independence India (before partition) out of a total population of about 450 million.

The INCM was afraid that grievances of the Muslim minority could lead to the development of a separatist movement. They could base their claim on the fact that the Muslims of India constituted a separate nation and were therefore entitled to a separate state, contrary to the INCM ideology of one secular Indian state based on the territorial integrity of India. By resisting a partition in Palestine and a separate independent Jewish state, the INCM was promoting India's resistance to a partition indirectly as a political option on the Indian subcontinent. The INCM persisted with its political belief that questions of minorities, including the Muslim question in India and the Jewish question in Palestine, had to be settled within the framework of a pluralistic order and not by partition.

An All India Conference on Palestine Affairs was held in Bombay on 19 April 1930 and was followed by Palestine Day demonstrations. Similar rallies took place in other parts of India as well. 27 September 1936 was observed by the INCM as Palestine Day and the movement expressed its sympathy for the Arab struggle for freedom. In fact, the INCM's pro-Arab foreign policy in the Arab-Israeli conflict in Palestine was the outcome of a strong feeling of solidarity of the Indian Muslims with the Palestinian Arabs. This feeling of solidarity was driven by the political need to gain the Indian Muslim support in the Indian struggle for national freedom and was intensified by the rivalry with the Muslim League

In 1928, the INCM joined the International League against Imperialism and established a foreign department that intensified calls for support for the Arabs of Palestine (Swamy, 1982:19). In October 1937, the INCM adopted a resolution protesting against the partition proposal related to Palestine, recommended by the Peel Commission,³⁵ while assuring the

³⁵ The British Peel Commission was nominated in 1936 and its report, which was published one year later, recommended the partition of Palestine between the Arabs and

Arabs of the solidarity of the Indian people (Shimoni, 1977:31). In February 1938, the INCM once again condemned the decision of Britain (as a mandatory power) to bring about the partition of Palestine (Rao, 1972:21).

The Indian opposition to any partition plan in Palestine (Peel's Commission Partition Plan in 1937 as well as the Partition Plan adopted by the UNSCOP in 1947) was maintained up to the creation of the State of Israel in 1948.³⁶ On 22 September 1948, an All-Palestine Government was proclaimed unilaterally and sought India's recognition, but because of legal implications, India refrained from formal granting of the Palestinian request (Kumaraswamy, 2004:259).

The INCM, under leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, made a special political effort to involve the Muslims in India in the struggle for independence. It attempted to secure the allegiances of the Muslims of India by identifying itself (and Gandhi in person) with causes that moved the Muslim masses. In addition, since the Palestine question was considered to be amongst the more important issues for the Muslims in India (whose sympathies were with their fellow Muslims in the Middle East), the INCM supported the Arabs completely in general and the Palestinian-Arabs in particular: "Palestine is an Arab country and Arab interest must prevail there since the Arab claim is incontestable" (Padmanbhan, 1975:13).

According to Subramaniam Swamy (1982:19), the tendency of the INCM to empathise with the Arabs of the Middle East and the Arabs in Palestine was based on the feeling of solidarity that existed during the first part of

the Jews. This recommendation was rejected by the Palestinian Arabs, but was accepted by the Zionist Congress in 1937.

³⁶ For more details about the attitude of the Indian representative to UNSCOP and India's stance on the Partition Plan, see sections 3.9.2.2 and 4.3.

the twentieth century between the various Arab national liberation movements in the Middle East.

On the other hand, the Jewish National Movement (the Zionist Movement), with its struggle for a separate independent state in Palestine, was never regarded by the INCM as a national liberation movement but was equated with European colonialism. The fact that the Zionist Movement for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine drew its support from European and Western sources, did not engender Indian sympathy and the leaders of the INCM viewed Zionism as a movement that was under the protection of British power (Rao, 1972:16).

In India, Jewish and Christian communities were considered to be part of the Indian nation, but according to Shimoni, the Indian leaders in the INCM, in the Pre-independence era, knew very little about Judaism as a religion. They knew even less about Zionism as a Jewish National Movement; neither did they understand the Jewish efforts and aspirations in Palestine. Importantly, they lacked familiarity with the Bible (Old Testament) that provided the Christian nations with background knowledge about the Jewish heritage and its relationship with the Land of Israel (Shimoni, 1991:E4).

The INCM pro-Arab approach towards the Arab-Israeli conflict stemmed from their strong ties with the national liberation movements in the Arab countries of the Middle East. A feeling of solidarity existed in India and in the INCM in particular, during the first half of the 20th century, for the Arab liberation movements. Zionism, on the other hand, was identified with European colonialism and was not seen as a national liberation movement. The fact that Western powers, such as Europe and the US, supported Zionism was another reason for the Indian pro-Arab approach.

The INCM's political endorsement of the Arab National Movements and Palestinian in particular, started a legacy of Indian hostility towards the

Zionist Movement. Since then, not only the Muslim community and the Muslim League of India,³⁷ but also the predominantly Hindu community, and in particular the INCM and its political elite had sided with the Arabs against the Jewish claims in Palestine. As Ephraim Broida (1949:7) points out, the INCM had never discussed the Jewish question as such or the question of Palestine.

3.4.1 Britain as mandatory power in India and Palestine

Britain as a mandatory power in India and Palestine, played an important role in the pre-independence era regarding future relations between India and Israel and the INCM ability to conduct pre-independence policy, was in fact confined by the British mandate in terms of the international system level of analysis.

In November 1939, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the leader of the Muslim League of India, addressed the British government requesting their reassurance that: “His Majesty's Government would try to meet all reasonable national demands of the Arabs in Palestine“(Menon, 1957:70).

The Viceroy in India, in turn, sent him a conciliatory reply on 23 December 1939, in which he stated:

His Majesty's Government was alive to the importance of the position of the Muslim community in India and full weight would be given to their views. In framing its policy for Palestine His Majesty's Government had endeavoured to meet all reasonable Arab demands (Menon, 1957:70).

Jinnah did not accept the reply and in February 1940 he informed the Viceroy that the working committee of the Muslim League, while appreciating the sentiments expressed in his response, insisted that a

³⁷ For details about the Muslim League of India, see sections 3.4.1 and 3.4.2.

solution with regard to Palestine should be found to the satisfaction of the Arabs.

The British Cabinet Committee on Palestine kept vacillating as far as its policy on Palestine was concerned by stating that:

We have, in fact, to choose between the possibility of localized trouble with the Jews in Palestine and the virtual certainty of widespread disturbances among the Arabs throughout the Middle East and possibly among the Muslims in India...the latter represents a military commitment twice or three times as great as does the former (Cohen, 1982:23).

Although the Indian opinion during the British decision-making process regarding the Palestine question was not regarded as a decisive factor, it undoubtedly did carry some weight with them. The British were concerned that if the Muslim countries and the Muslim community in India in particular, rejected their policy on Palestine they might become alienated, if not actively hostile, with consequent grave dangers for British security in India (Bethell, 1979; Yegar, 2004:31).

Based on Viceroy Wavell's reports from India in the 1940s, the British Foreign Office insisted that only adherence to a restricted policy of Jewish immigration to Palestine would prevent criticism and agitation in India. The British Foreign Office also used the potentially adverse effect on Muslim opinion in India regarding the Palestine question as a useful tactic in the Cabinet, especially during World War II (Cohen, 1982:23).

In a joint memorandum released in London on 19 November 1940, by the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the Secretary of State for the Colonies, concern was expressed about the influence of local disturbances in the Middle East on the British control over the Muslims in India (Sofer, 1998:521).

3.4.2 The Arab-Jewish conflict up to 1948

The Arabs in Palestine together with the Arab countries and the Muslim world saw the Arab-Zionist conflict as a struggle for national liberation. In fact, the Arab national struggle became a unifying feature as well as a consensual factor regarding inter-Arab and inter-Muslim political matters. The combination of Arab nationalism, Islam and the identification of Zionism with British colonialism were all factors in the Pan-Arab collective consciousness, which intensified opposition to the Jewish National Movement in Palestine. In this context, the Palestinian Arabs' national struggle inspired religious sentiments and won the sympathy of the Indian Muslims with their fellow Muslims in Palestine (Rolef, 1993:24)³⁸.

In the summer of 1888, an increasing number of Jews began settling in Palestine, but up to 1908, the issue of the Jewish newcomers had been viewed by the Arab inhabitants in Palestine as an immigration issue, and did not see it as a national movement. From 1909 onwards, the Arabs started to regard Zionism as a movement that had the aim of establishing its national home in Palestine and as such, posed a direct threat to them. In 1912, two additional aspects added to the negative Arab approach towards Zionism: Muslim unity and Arab nationalism. After World War I, in fact, Arab antagonism towards Zionism became a central factor in building up a separate Palestinian collective identity. After the occupation of Palestine by the British forces in 1917-18 and the Balfour Declaration, which was published on 2 November 1917, the conflict between the Arabs and the Jews became institutionalised. The struggle of the Palestinian Arabs against Zionism was sporadic and ineffective, but Arab opposition to Zionism continued on the political declaratory level (Shimoni, 1987:42).

³⁸ For details about the Indian Muslims attitude towards Palestine, see section 3.5.

In April 1920 and May 1921, local disturbances occurred as a result of the incitement of the Mufti of Jerusalem who instigated Arab riots against the Jews because of the Palestinian opposition to Jewish immigration. In 1922, the Sykes-Picot Agreement was ratified by 52 countries belonging to the League of Nations which placed Palestine (and Iraq), under British Mandate after World War I.³⁹ The Arabs in Palestine felt betrayed by the Sykes-Picot Agreement; especially because the Balfour Declaration and the Sykes-Picot Agreement resulted in a third wave of Jewish immigration to Palestine, which doubled the Jewish population (Price, 2003:31).

The intensification of the Arab-Jewish conflict in Palestine led to efforts by the Palestinian Arab leaders to mobilise the support of the Arabs and Muslim world for its national struggle against Zionism, including the Indian Muslims.⁴⁰ In 1929, a wave of violence instigated by the Arabs broke out against the Jews in Palestine. Growing Arab extremism that marked the second half of the 1930s, was also seen in the struggle against both Zionism and British rule,

In April 1936, the Arabs revolted against the British and the Zionists. The subsequent general unrest and revolting lasted six months. In 1937, the Peel Commission, headed by Lord Peel, recommended that the country should be partitioned between the Jews and the Arabs. The Palestinian Arabs leaders, headed by the Husseini family, rejected the recommendation and forced Britain to abandon it (Shimoni, 1987:14-15).

In 1939, the St. James Conference was convened in London in an effort to find a solution agreeable to all parties in the Arab-Jewish conflict in Palestine, but it ended in a deadlock. Following the conference, the British published a White Paper, which declared that Palestine would become an

³⁹ The Sykes-Picot Agreement was a secret agreement, which was originally made by the British with the Russians and French in 1916.

⁴⁰ For details about the Indian Muslims reference to Palestine, see section 3.5.

independent state with an Arab majority after a transition period of 10 years, but the paper was rejected by the higher Arab committee in exile, as well as by the Arabs of Palestine (Bethell, 1979:64).

After the end of World War II there was pressure on Britain by the US and Europe to allow the entry of Jews into Palestine, particularly the remnants of European Jewry that had survived the Holocaust. Meanwhile, the Jewish armed struggle and terror campaign aimed at Britain in Palestine, intensified. When Britain's efforts to reach an agreeable solution to the Palestinian problem failed, it appealed to the UN Organisation to make a decision. UNSCOP recommended the partition of Palestine into two states,⁴¹ which the Arab countries rejected subsequently. On 29 November 1947, the UN accepted the decision regarding the Partition Plan. The unofficial Arab war effort failed and Palestinian refugees escaped to neighbouring Arab countries.⁴² Later, on 15 May 1948, the State of Israel was established (Yakobson & Rubinstein, 2003:20, 43).

3.5 Pre-Independence India: The state and society level of analysis

The state and society (national) level of analysis explains the pre-independence Indian foreign policy towards Palestine, with emphasis on the INCM, as the ultimate decision unit⁴³ and the Muslim League of India. The INCM was faced with the political challenge of the linkage between the issue of the Arab Jewish conflict in Palestine and the sentiments of the Muslims in India continuously.⁴⁴ In support of the Arab stand on Palestine,

⁴¹ For more details about the attitude of the Indian representative to UNSCOP and India's stance on the Partition Plan, see sections 3.9.2.2 and 4.3.

⁴² The Arab-Jewish war in Palestine in 1947-1948 led to the departure of close to 600 000 Palestinian Arabs from their homes (Rolef, 1993).

⁴³ For details about the INCM as an ultimate decision unit, see section 3.3.

⁴⁴ For details about the Arab Jewish conflict, see section 3.4.2.

the INCM wanted to enlist Indian Muslim involvement and support for the Indian national struggle.⁴⁵

By 1914 the INCM had established itself as a permanent and significant element in Indian political life despite the fact that it had no power to force the government to bow to its wishes. On the other hand, there was no strong Muslim political presence that claimed to speak for India (Brown, 1994:190). However, the Muslims in India became aware of the threat to their local position and elite provincial culture, which had been moulded by them over centuries and consequently generated new Muslim movements as well as demands for special representation in provincial elected bodies. The All-Muslim League of India was founded in Dacca in December 1906, following Hindu revivalism, as a new all-Indian body and provided a focal point for Muslim political aspirations (Manorama, 1993:467).

The Muslims in India (although a sizeable minority) could look back to the period in which their forebears were the rulers of India. At the beginning of the eleventh century, Muslim raiders from Afghanistan invaded India with a series of incursions that culminated in Muslim control of most of the subcontinent. In 1526, Baber established the Mughal Empire. Even with the decline of the Mughal Empire after the death of Aurangzeb (1659 – 1707) and the arrival of the Europeans at various coastal points, Muslims continued to dominate much of the interior of India.

In 1757, the British initiated an expansionist policy (Pilasi Battle), which resulted in British control of virtually the entire subcontinent. In 1857 the British East India Company, was faced with a major revolt (the Sepoy Mutiny) in Northern India. The British carried out the administration of Northern India on behalf of Bahadur II, the symbolic Mughal ruler. After

⁴⁵ For details about the INCM relations with the community of the Indian Muslims, see section 3.4.

the mutiny had been quelled, he was exiled to Burma. Subsequently, the Mughal Empire was formally terminated and power was transferred to the British Crown. For local assistance in administering their new dominions, the British used Hindus at the expense of the Muslims (Stein, 1998:167-200).

In 1910 when the first elections were held (under the Morley-Minto Reforms), the Muslim League failed to act as an organisation and did not have an all-India appeal or platform. In 1916, the INCM and the Muslim League formed an alliance at Lucknow, which proposed a constitutional reform scheme. The INCM gained token Muslim backing while the Muslim League gained the acceptance of their claims to separate political status, which was safeguarded by separate electorates for the provincial and all-India legislators.

The violent upsurge of hostilities that ensued between the Hindus and Muslims in the early 1920s resulted in the leaders of both communities making an appeal for peace. Mahatma Gandhi, in particular, adopted the Khilafat (Caliphate) issue as a common theme, which could unite the Hindus and Muslims in a joint peaceful alliance and would encourage the two communities to work together for self-government (Kulke & Rothermund, 1998:267).⁴⁶ Pan-Islamism had been propagated in India since World War I by the Ali brothers and Gandhi made a special effort to ally himself with them, hoping to further Hindu-Muslim unity in India. In July 1931, Shaukat Ali, one of the two Ali brothers who founded the Khilafat Movement, visited Jerusalem and met with the Mufti of Jerusalem and the President of the Supreme Muslim Council Amin al Husseini (Yegar, 2004:23).

⁴⁶ For details about the Khilafat movement, see section 3.4.

The outcome of the second Round Table Conference in London was the Act of 1931 and elections were held in the winter of 1936 under this new act. Subsequently, the INCM swept to a large victory in most provinces.⁴⁷ The Muslim League, on the other hand, won Muslim reserved seats in Muslim minority provinces but performed poorly in Muslim majority provinces where other Muslim Parties did better. Possible coalition talks between the INCM and the Muslim League failed after the INCM demanded that the League's legislature members should resign from the League and subject themselves unreservedly to INCM discipline.

The INCM proceeded to form ministries of its own, occasionally filling Muslim Cabinet seats with deserters from the League. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the leader of the Muslim League, used the INCM rejection to rebuild the Muslim League as a national organisation while resorting to mass tactics, claiming to be a leader of the Muslims of India. In addition, the Muslim League initiated a programme of political expansion and Jinnah turned to the two-nation theory on a geographic basis (although at this stage only as a bargaining chip). In November 1936, an All-Muslim Conference devoted to Palestine, took place in New Delhi and passed a resolution threatening to boycott British goods combined with a non-cooperation campaign against the British, if Britain did not satisfy Arab demands in Palestine (Shimoni, 1977:31).

In a resolution adopted at the Muslim League session in Lucknow in October 1937, the Muslim League warned that out of solidarity with the rest of the Islamic world, the Indian Muslims would treat the British as an

⁴⁷ Viceroy Lord Irwin signed a pact with Gandhi on 5 March 1931 and Gandhi was persuaded to represent the Indian National Congress Movement at the second Round Table Conference in London. He returned empty-handed and the Civil Disobedience Movement was resumed in January 1932. The British government, in turn, declared the Indian National Congress Movement unlawful and sent its leaders to jail. For details about the meeting between representatives of the Jewish Agency and Gandhi in London during the second Round Table Conference, see section 3.6.1.

enemy of Islam if the latter failed to alter its pro-Jewish policy in Palestine.⁴⁸ In 1937 the rivalry between the two organisations reached a head (Manorama, 1993:467). At the Lahore session of the Muslim League in March 1940, Jinnah introduced a resolution, which included the demand for Pakistan (Kulke & Rothermund, 1998:285).

The Muslim League designated 16 August 1945 as *Direct Action Day* and on that day and over the next two days general rioting broke out in Calcutta. After World War II and the victory of the Labour Party in Britain, elections took place in India (in December 1945 and January 1946) and the INCM swept to victory in all the Hindu majority provinces, while the Muslim League won in only two provinces with a Muslim majority. However the Muslim League was unable to establish provisional ministries anywhere except in the Sind province, because the INCM negotiated coalition ministries to exclude the Muslim League in several other provinces (Stein, 1998:361).

A Cabinet mission from Britain arrived in India in March 1946 and tried to negotiate a political plan that would be acceptable to both the INCM and the Muslim League. The plan was based on a three-tiered system for a new government of the Indian Union. On 6 June 1946, the Muslim League accepted the plan and so did the INCM, but after Nehru's statement, on 7 July 1946, that the INCM was not bound by this plan, Jinnah called this statement a complete repudiation of the basic form upon which the long-term scheme rested and negotiations between the two parties were terminated. Shortly after this, the Muslim League withdrew its acceptance of the Cabinet mission plan. In 1946, communal rioting spread in Bengal and from there to the neighbouring provinces. In December 1946, the Constituent Assembly met in New Delhi but the Muslim League members refused to attend it (Stein, 1998:362).

⁴⁸ For details about the British policy in Palestine, see section 3.4.1.

On 20 February 1947, Prime Minister Attlee announced in the House of Commons that Britain intended to transfer power and to leave India not later than June 1948. The new Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, convinced the INCM leadership (except Mahatma Gandhi) that partition was the only solution. The British Government and the Viceroy made statements, on 3 June 1947, which announced the plan to partition India. Violence increased in India, particularly against Muslims who were intending to depart for the new Muslim homeland, and refugees, both Muslims and Hindus, were streaming across the new border. On 15 August 1947, India and Pakistan became independent new dominions. It should be noted that after the partitioning as many as 45 million Muslims remained in India and acquired significant political power, which was mostly channelled, after independence, to the INCP that succeeded the INCM (Manorama, 1993:467)⁴⁹.

The Muslim community in India attached a great deal of importance to the Palestinian issue and there was a high degree of solidarity with the Palestinian Arabs amongst them as well as concern about the holy places placed under non-Muslim rule. The Muslim League criticised the struggle for a Jewish homeland as well as the Partition Plan in Palestine sharply and according to the Muslim League, Palestine could not be placed under non-Muslim rule, let alone, handed over to non-Muslims. For this reason, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the leader of the Muslim League, opposed the Balfour Declaration and called for its annulment.⁵⁰

In addition, he called for the end of the British Mandate over Palestine and used Islamism to nationalise the League's opposition to the Jewish

⁴⁹ For details about the relations between the Indian Muslims in India and the INCP after independence, see section 3.10.5.2.

⁵⁰ In 1947 Mohammed Ali Jinnah founded the State of Pakistan.

national movement in Palestine and as a political tool against the INCM.⁵¹ Jinnah's telegram to Prime Minister Attlee in November 1945 makes his feelings clear in this regard: "It is my duty to inform you that any surrender to appease Jewry at the sacrifice of Arabs would be deeply resented and vehemently resisted by Moslem (sic) world and Moslem India" (Bethell, 1979:220).

3.6. Pre-independence India: The individual level of analysis

The individual level of analysis is a key factor in the research of the Indian historical relations with Palestine. Two predominant political leaders of the INCM, Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru were mostly responsible for initiating and carrying out the pre-independence Indian foreign policy towards Palestine. In addition, reference is made in this chapter to Sardar K.M. Panikkar, an Indian diplomat who played an important role in India's pre-independence foreign policy towards the Zionist Movement.⁵²

3.6.1 Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (the Mahatma)

Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) was a renowned Hindu with unique moral authority and was the distinguished and undisputed leader of the INCM and the Indian masses.⁵³ In July 1914, Gandhi returned to India from South Africa. Between 1915 and 1917, he participated in peasant movements and in February 1918 he started his first three-day fast, which led to the strike of milk-workers at Ahmedabad that ended in arbitration.

When Gandhi was approached for advice on addressing the resentment of the Indian Muslims over the breaking out of the Khilafat (Caliphate) after

⁵¹ The Jewish National Movement in Palestine was also called the Zionist Movement. For details about the movement, see section 4.3.

⁵² For details about Panikkar, see section 3.6.3.

⁵³ Mahatma means "The great soul."

World War I, he worked out a strategy to combine the anger of the Muslims with the national outrage over the atrocities committed by the British (Silveira, 1992:116). The support of the Khilafat movement gave Gandhi the opportunity to demonstrate his principle of unity between the Hindus and Muslims by declaring it the touchstone of true Hindu Muslim goodwill and subsequently, in November 1919 he presided over the All-India Khilafat Conference in India.⁵⁴

This was also the time when Gandhi started engaging in his erratic political cooperation with the Pan-Islamic Ali brothers, which was significant for Gandhi and for the course of INCM politics. Judith M. Brown comments as follows:

It gave Gandhi the personal sense of leading and championing Muslims, as he had done in Africa: This was to be a persistent pattern throughout his Indian career - seeking for Muslims who could to some extent represent and interpret Muslim aspirations and fears to him, and enable him to be a leader across religious boundaries, enacting that unity he considered essential for 'swaraj' (self-rule). The alliance also gave Gandhi leverage in Congress politics because he appeared to be a lynchpin between Hindu politicians and those Muslims who because of their Pan-Islamic concerns would be most likely to join across communal barriers in an anti-government alliance. It also gave this small group of Muslims a hold over Gandhi, as he sought occasions and issues to unite Muslims and Hindus (Brown 1994:218).

In 1920, Gandhi initiated the Non-Cooperation Movement, which established Gandhi in turn, as the leader of the Freedom Movement.⁵⁵ Gandhi's first public statement on the Zionist National Movement took place in March 1921 in his newspaper *Young India* where he pointed out that the Zionist Movement must revise its ideal about Palestine since the Muslim opinion in India would not tolerate any non-Muslim influence direct or indirect one over the holy places of Islam (Young India, 23/3/1921). In a follow-up article (one month later) Gandhi referred to Palestine as a

⁵⁴ For details about the Khilafat Movement in India, see section 3.4.

⁵⁵ The movement called for the boycott of governmental institutions and British textiles.

country bound to be retained by Muslim custody because the country had been ruled for centuries by Muslims and by right of their religious and military conquests. However, according to him: "That does not mean that the Jews and Christians cannot freely go to Palestine, or even reside there and own property. What non-Muslims cannot do is to acquire sovereign jurisdiction" (Young India, 6/4/1921).

In 1924 Gandhi was elected the INCM's president. His fame also began to spread throughout the world as he became known as a person with unique moral standards and as the epitome of moral political conduct. Gandhi was widely regarded as a unique moral authority and the leader of Indian masses and therefore the Jewish Agency made a special effort to engage him in dialogue in order to change his attitude towards the Jewish National Movement (Zionism) and the Arab-Jewish conflict in Palestine.⁵⁶ His Jewish associates from South Africa were involved in this effort, as well as the Jewish intellectuals who were trying to explain the special relationship between the Jews as a nation and their relationship with the land of Israel to him.

During the 21 years that Gandhi stayed in South Africa (1893–1914) two Jews were described by Gandhi himself as his intimate friends. They were Hermann Kallenbach, who was a dedicated follower of his and Harry S.L. Polak, who became his right hand man (both considered to be Gandhi's most intimate non-Indian helpers in South Africa).⁵⁷ Gideon Shimoni (1977:20) indicates that Gandhi did not accept the explanation of the unique inextricable relationship between the Jewish religion and the Jewish people; therefore, he regarded Judaism as nothing more than a

⁵⁶ For details about the Arabs-Jewish conflict, see chapter 3.4.2.

⁵⁷ For details about Gandhi's Jewish associates as well as other Jewish intellectuals (with an affinity for his ideals) that tried to engage him in the Jewish-Arab conflict, see section 4.3.

religion and did not see the Jews as a nation, in spite of the efforts made by his Jewish associates and other Jewish intellectuals.

In December 1929, the INCM declared independence to be its goal and launched the Civil Disobedience Movement (Satyagraha) with Gandhi at the helm.⁵⁸ In March 1930, Gandhi chose to break the unpopular Salt Law imposed by the British, with his long march to the sea in Tamil Nadu, which grew into a nationwide movement against the British Government.

On 15 October 1931, Gandhi, who came to London to participate in the second Round Table Conference on India, met Nachum Sokolow (the newly-elected President of the World Jewish Congress) and Zelig Brodetsky at a meeting organised by Kallenbach.⁵⁹ In an interview with the *Jewish Chronicle* during his visit to London, he asserted that in his opinion, Zionism was associated with the reoccupation of Palestine, and held no attraction for him and that: "Zion lies in the hearts and thus Zionism can be realized in any part of the world" (*Jewish Chronicle*, 2/10/1931).

Kallenbach himself arrived in India in May 1937, upon the request of Moshe Shertok (Sharett) the Head of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency. He made a personal effort to gain Gandhi's understanding and sympathy for the Zionist Movement, but with little success, except for the fact that Gandhi stopped referring to the issue in his writing.⁶⁰ In fact, in his articles between 1931 and 1938, Gandhi there is no mention of the Palestinian issue.

⁵⁸ Satyagraha means, literally, "truth grasping" or "holding on to truth." Gandhi himself translated it as "truth firmness" and connected it to the ideal of active and non-violent resistance for a just cause (Shimoni, 1977).

⁵⁹ For details about the meeting between Gandhi and Sokolow and Brodetsky, see chapter 4.3.

⁶⁰ For details about the meeting between Gandhi and Kallenbach see section 4.3. It should be pointed out that Gandhi gave his blessing to Kallenbach's intention of settling down in Palestine at the same meeting.

Based on Kallenbach's report to Shertok (Sharett), Gandhi revised his position and accepted Jewish aspirations to find a home in Palestine. However, he insisted that the realisation of this goal was wholly dependent upon Arab and Islamic approval and not on British power because of ethical and moral considerations (Shimoni, 1977:33, Sarid & Bartolf, 1997:75). Afterwards, Kallenbach returned to Israel with a statement made by Gandhi, but the statement was never published by Gandhi himself. In the note Gandhi indicated the following:

Assuming that Zionism is not a material movement but represents the spiritual aspirations of the Jewry, the introduction of Jews in Palestine under the protection of British or other arms is wholly inconsistent with spirituality. Neither the mandate nor the Balfour Declaration can therefore be used in support of sustaining Jewish immigration into Palestine in the teeth of Arab opposition. In my opinion the Jews should disclaim any intention of realising their aspiration under the protection of arms and should rely wholly on the goodwill of Arabs. No exception can possibly be taken to the natural desire of the Jews to found a home in Palestine. But they must wait for its fulfilment till Arab opinion is ripe for it. And the best way to enlist that opinion is to rely wholly upon the moral justice of the desire and therefore the moral sense of the Arabs and the Islamic world (CZA S25/3587, July 1937).

On 26 November 1938, Gandhi published an article in the "*Harijan*" newspaper in which he called the Jews "the untouchables of Christianity." However, he continued to reject Jewish claims for a national homeland as well as their need for national self-fulfilment. He suggested they advocate the use of Satyagraha (Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence) and encourage the Arabs in Palestine to adopt this philosophy.⁶¹

My sympathies are with the Jews, I have known them intimately in South Africa, but my sympathy does not blind me to the requirements of Justice. The cry for a national home for the Jews does not make much of an appeal to me. The sanction for it is sought in the Bible and the tenacity with which the Jews have hankered after Palestine Why should they not,

⁶¹ The article was also reprinted in the *Christian Science Monitor* in Boston on 3 March 1939.

like other people of the earth, make that country their home where they are born and where they have made their livelihood? Palestine belongs to the Arabs in the same sense that England belongs to the English, or France to the French. It is wrong and inhuman to impose the Jews on the Arabs. What is going on in Palestine today cannot be justified by any moral code of conduct. Surely it would be a crime against humanity to reduce the proud Arabs so that Palestine can be restored to the Jews, partly or wholly, as their national home. The nobler cause would be to insist on just treatment of the Jews wherever they are born and bred.... And now a word to the Jews in Palestine. I have no doubt that they are going about it in the wrong way. The Palestine in the Biblical conception is not a geographical tract. It is in their hearts. But if they must look to the Palestine of geography as their national home, it is wrong to enter it under the shadow of the British gun. A religious act cannot be performed with the aid of the bayonet or the bomb. They can settle in Palestine only by the goodness of the Arabs. They should seek to convert the Arab heart. The same God rules the Arab's heart who rules the Jewish heart. I am not defending the Arab excesses. I wish they had chosen the way of non-violence in resisting what they rightly regard as an unwarrantable encroachment upon their country. But according to the accepted canons of right and wrong nothing can be said against the Arab resistance in the face of overwhelming odds. Let the Jews who claim to be the chosen race prove their title by choosing the way of non-violence for vindicating their position on earth (*Harijen*, 26/11/1938).

Gandhi met Kallenbach once again in March 1939 and he was urged by him to declare his views on the Arab-Jewish question in Palestine and the persecution of the Jews in Germany publicly, but Gandhi was reluctant to do so.⁶² On 22 March 1939, Gandhi met with Joseph Nedivi the representative of the political department of the Jewish Agency in Palestine. Although Gandhi was cordial, the meeting did not change his views and he rejected Nedivi's suggestion about making a public statement on the Jewish-Arab conflict in Palestine. He said that he did not see what he could do or how he could help the Jews in Palestine. According to Gideon Shimoni (1977:51), Nedivi asserted that the Muslims in India were fomenting hostility towards the Jews, but that he could influence Indian public opinion to be more positive towards the Jews. In his reply, Gandhi contended that the negative attitudes of the Muslims in India

⁶² For details about the meeting, see section 4.3.

towards the Jews had been developed artificially and said the Jews had nothing to fear in this regard. He added that in any case, any condemnation uttered by him regarding anti-Jewish propaganda in India, would not serve any useful purpose for the Jews. The report regarding the meeting was subsequently sent to the Jewish Agency. One of the interesting points it contained indicated that Gandhi had intimated that he considered the real object of the Muslim League propaganda to be the INCM.⁶³

The outbreak of World War II and the Holocaust did not change Gandhi's opinion of the Jewish-Arab controversy. In 1942, although he condemned the persecution of the Jews in Europe in strong terms, he insisted that restoring Palestine to the Jews, partly or wholly as their national home would be a crime against humanity, as well as against the Muslims (Shimoni, 1977:51).

In 1942, the INCM adopted the Quit India Resolution that launched the Quit India Movement and called for a struggle for freedom and as a result, Congress leaders went to jail. Gandhi himself was released from prison in 1944.

In March 1946, Gandhi met with the British Member of Parliament, Sidney Silverman, a Jew and veteran advocate of the cause of Indian independence. In the conversation between them, he condemned the violent methods, which were used in Palestine by the Jews, while asking Silverman if there were not enough uninhabited places in the world to receive the Jewish people (Shimoni. 1977:58).

The last time Gandhi discussed the Jewish-Arab conflict in Palestine was in June 1946, with his Jewish American biographer, Louis Fischer, but

⁶³ For details about Gandhi's meeting with Nedivi, see section 4.3.

Gandhi's attitude towards the issue of Palestine remained unchanged.

According to Gideon Shimoni:

Gandhi was functioning within a field of political forces which constrained him in respect of the Jewish Question. His overriding concern for Hindu-Muslim amity precluded any expression of support for Zionism. Indicative of this bias is the discrepancy between his intimation in private and his statements in public (Shimoni, 1977:60).

In July 1946, he made his last statement on this issue, which is indicative that he did not change his old attitude, but he did add a new reason for his reservations regarding Zionism. This time he referred to the violent methods used by the Jewish underground movement in Palestine, which in his opinion, were in complete contradiction with his non-violence philosophy (*Harijen*, 21/7/46).

In March 1947, a delegation headed by Prof. Hugo Bergman from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem participated in the first Inter-Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi, where he met Mahatma Gandhi.⁶⁴ David Hacohen, a member of the delegation, appealed to him to raise his voice in favour of the persecuted Jewish people, but Gandhi responded by expressing his wish to remain neutral and uninvolved in the Arab-Jewish conflict. It was a short meeting and Gandhi pointed out that if they insisted that he say something about the Palestinian question, his words would be directed mainly against terrorism in Palestine.

In June 1947, the Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, proposed a partition plan for India, which Gandhi opposed. Gandhi encouraged the civil disobedience movement to be launched against the partition, but the other leaders of the INCM did not share his views and ultimately it was accepted by mutual consent.

⁶⁴ For details about the New Delhi conference, see section 4.2.

Subsequently, a Hindu fanatic, Vinayak N. Godse, who was opposed to his efforts to bring about Hindu-Muslim amity, assassinated Gandhi on 30 January 1948, at a prayer meeting in New Delhi.

According to Sudha Rao (1972:42), the four factors that influenced Gandhi's attitude towards Jewish nationalism in pre-independent Israel, can be summed up as follows:

- First, he was sensitive to the sentiments of the Indian Muslims who were anti-Zionist.
- Second, he objected to any Zionist methods, which were inconsistent with his principle of non-violence.
- Third, he found Zionism contrary to his pluralistic nationalism, which excludes the establishment of any state, based on one religion.
- Lastly, he believed it was politically imprudent for him to compromise his relations with the British, who held the mandate in Palestine, by supporting the Zionist Movement that sought independence from the British.

Gandhi's pro-Arab attitude was shaped by his concept of India's major aim, namely, the independence of a unified India and his moral philosophy.⁶⁵ Gandhi attached a great deal of importance to the Indian Muslims and his overriding sense of political interdependence with the Muslims of India conditioned his attitude towards the Arab-Israeli conflict. He insisted on Arab goodwill as a prerequisite to any solution in Palestine.

⁶⁵ Gandhi shaped the *non-violence philosophy* of Satyagraha into the *non-violence technique of action* aimed at reforming the world by melting the heart of the adversary and converting it to good.

Gandhi was consistent throughout, in condemning Jewish reliance on British imperialism in Palestine and the Jews resorting to violence. Gandhi's view on Jewish nationalism was commensurate with the importance he attached to the Islamic world, political interdependence with the Indian Muslims and his philosophy of non-violence. In fact, the Jewish National Movement and the Jewish Agency, despite all their efforts, failed to change Mahatma Gandhi's attitude towards Zionism, as well as the Jewish claim for an independent homeland in Palestine.

3.6.2 Jawaharlal Nehru

From the mid-1930s onwards, Nehru (1889-1964) was the prominent leader and the acknowledged spokesperson regarding the foreign policy of the INCM. In 1936, Nehru was elected the president of the INCM and caught the attention of the Jewish Agency that decided to try and establish direct contact with him. Nehru's autobiography, which was translated into Hebrew in 1936 was widely read and was admired by many Jews in Palestine (Shimoni, 1991:E3).

According to Michael Brecher (1974:11), Nehru sided with the Arabs against the Jewish claims in Palestine and viewed the Arabs of Palestine as a national movement. On the other hand, he viewed Zionism as an idea that had been conceived by British imperialists in the same way that the idea of Muslim nationalism in India, in his mind, had been fabricated under influence of British encouragement in order to promote their policy of divide and rule. Clearly, Nehru was driven by strong anti-British imperialist feelings, also shared by the political elite of the INCM.

In Nehru's view, events in Palestine, after the issuing of the Balfour Declaration (on a Jewish national homeland in Palestine) represented

British betrayal of the Arabs, in that they did not take the fact into account that the area was also sacred to Muslims and Christians.⁶⁶

Nehru's comment on the Balfour Declaration was that the declaration overlooked the fact that Palestine was not a wilderness or an empty uninhabited place, but was already somebody else's home, namely that of the Palestinian Arabs.

On the other hand, Nehru believed that the British were also guilty of exploiting the Jews in the interest of British Imperialism and that the proposal for a federal state in Palestine was not only a fair and equitable solution of the problem, but the only real resolution. In his view, the Arabs and the Jews, should, cooperate for the advancement of the country within the framework of one pluralistic Arab state (Rao, 1972:17-19).

In May 1933 Nehru wrote to his daughter Indira:

They (the Jews) had no home or nation, and everywhere they went they were treated as unwelcome and undesirable strangers...and yet these amazing people did not only survive all this but manage to keep their racial and cultural characteristics and prospered and produced a host of great men...These people without home or country...have never ceased to dream of old Jerusalem, which appears to their imaginations greater and more magnificent than it ever was, in fact (Nehru, 1987:762).

In 1936, Moshe Shertok (Sharett) head of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency decided to send Immanuel Olsvanger to meet Nehru in India. Olsvanger, who was a Doctor of Philology with some knowledge of Sanskrit and an official of the South African Zionist Federation, was an acquaintance of Hermann Kallenbach, Gandhi's close friend from South Africa.⁶⁷ In August 1936, Immanuel Olsvanger met with Nehru twice, as well as with other Indian political leaders, including Mahatma Gandhi.

⁶⁶ For details about the Balfour Declaration, see section 3.4.

⁶⁷ For more information regarding Dr. Kallenbach, the meeting with Nehru as well as the exchange of letters between them, see section 4.3.

Olsvanger found Nehru to be ill informed and biased against Zionism in the interest of good relations with Indian Muslims (Shimoni, 1977:30).

After his visit, he exchanged a number of letters with Nehru concerning the Zionist Movement in Palestine. After receiving the first letter of protest from Olsvanger, in which he blamed him for not distinguishing between morality and politics, Nehru replied harshly on 25 September 1936, by pointing out that as far as he was concerned, he had tried to act publicly regarding the issue of Palestine with his conception of morality.⁶⁸

We approach the question from different viewpoints.... Politics and morals have seldom drifted far apart and I have tried to act publicly in the Congress with my conception of morality...It is impossible to understand any problem, whether that of India or Palestine without reference to that larger situation and I hold that the Arab Movement is essentially a nationalist movement (CZA S25/3585, 25/9/1936).

On 27 September 1936, Nehru, in an INCM conference, dedicated to Palestine (Palestine Day), referred to Zionism as an artificial phenomenon (Rao, 1972:19). Nehru linked the situation in Palestine to India by saying:

We are trying at present to explain to the Muslims here that the fight in Palestine is not between Jews and Arabs but between both and British imperialism and they should not protest against the Jews but against the British Government who hinders the development of peaceful resolution (Shimoni, 1977:30).⁶⁹

On 26 August 1937, Nehru rejected the offer to write about the Palestinian problem in a Jewish newspaper in Bombay, the *Jewish Advocate*, however, he openly expressed his view about it in his reply to the editor of the newspaper, A.E. Shohet:⁷⁰

⁶⁸ For details about Olsvanger's meeting with Gandhi, see section 3.6.1.

⁶⁹ At about this time, Nehru had made his views known in a number of statements where he sketched an overall world situation, in which national movements were engaged in a struggle against imperialism.

⁷⁰ For more details about Shohet and his interviews with Gandhi, see section 4.5.

It seems to me clear that the proposed partition is utterly bad and is bound to create more trouble in the future. It is certainly not a solution of the problem. A real solution must be based on the following factors: 1) Independence of Palestine 2) Recognition of the fact that Palestine is an Arab country and therefore Arabs must have a predominant voice in it. 3) Recognition of the fact that the Jews in Palestine are an integral factor and their rights should be protected. I feel sure that there is no inherent conflict between the Arabs and the Jews and that if the matter is approached in a spirit of cooperation a mutually satisfactory solution can be found. That solution cannot be based on the interests of British imperialism (CZA S25/6312, 26/8/1937).

On 20 July 1938, Nehru met with Prof. Chaim Weizmann, the President of the World Zionist Organisation, in London, after Weizmann, who had an interest in India, initiated the meeting with him for an exchange of views.⁷¹ Nehru considered Arab activities directed against British imperialism in general and Palestinian Arab activities in particular, as national movements and maintained a line of personal communications with Arab nationalists, particularly with the Egyptian ones. In 1939, Nehru stopped at Alexandria, at the invitation of the Wafd Party,⁷² where he addressed a meeting of young Wafdists and met with the Egyptian leader, Mustafa Nahas Pasha, with whom he held discussions on coordinating their efforts in the international arena. In the same year, a Wafd Party delegation visited India and participated in the INCM annual session in Tripuri.

On 20 March 1939, Nehru met Joseph Nedivi, a town clerk of the city of Tel-Aviv, who was sent by the Political Department of the Jewish Agency to meet him and Gandhi. The meeting was cordial, but Nehru did not change his pro-Arab attitude (Shimoni, 1977:50).⁷³

⁷¹ For details about Prof. Chaim Weizmann and his meeting with Nehru see sections 4.6.1 and 4.3

⁷² The Wafd Party was formed in Egypt in 1919, espousing independence from the British (the Wafdists also called for social and economic reforms in Egypt).

⁷³ For details about the meeting between Nehru and Nedivi, see section 4.3.

The persecution of Jews in Europe during World War II did not change Nehru's mind, he was still of the opinion that just treatment of the displaced Jews should take place in the countries where they were born and not necessarily in Palestine. On the other hand, he, together with Gandhi, supported the possibility of admitting entry to Jewish refugees from Germany in India (Rao, 1972:4; Yegar, 2004:33).⁷⁴

In March 1947, a Jewish delegation from Palestine arrived in India to participate in the first Inter-Asian Conference in New Delhi convened by Nehru, on the eve of Indian independence. The delegation also met with Nehru, but although he was cordial he was consistent in his pro-Palestinian attitude. In the closing speech of the conference, Nehru expressed the sympathy of the Indian people with the suffering of the Jewish people in Europe, as well as other places. However, he went on to point out that India had always held that Palestine was mainly an Arab country and that no decision in Palestine should be taken without the Arabs' consent (The New Delhi Conference Report, 1947).⁷⁵

Despite all the efforts made by the Jewish Agency to associate itself with Nehru, he remained a staunch supporter of the Palestinian Arabs and his emotional allegiance lay with their cause.⁷⁶

3.6.3 Sardar Kayala M. Panikkar

Dr. Sardar Kayala M. Panikkar was an Indian diplomat and an intellectual who was a staunch supporter of the Zionist cause.⁷⁷ In fact, he was the

⁷⁴ That initiative did not materialise eventually because of Germany's demand that each refugee would get a lifetime individual working permit in India.

⁷⁵ For details about the conference as well as the Jewish delegation's meetings in New Delhi, see section 4.4.2.

⁷⁶ For details about Nehru's attitude towards the Arab-Israeli conflict, see section 3.8.1.

⁷⁷ Dr. S.K.M. Panikkar served as a foreign representative of Indian Maharajas in London in the 1930s and the 1940s. Between the years 1950 -1953 he was sent by P.M. Nehru as the first Indian Ambassador to China, where he played an important role as a liaison in the Korean War. In 1953, he was appointed as an

only member of Nehru's inner circle who was a supporter of a Jewish national home in Israel

In 1926, he had already met Prof. Chaim Weizmann in London, where he served as an Indian Maharaja's Representative, who introduced him to the Zionist cause. In London, on 1 July 1937, Panikkar met David Ben-Gurion, the Chairman of the Jewish Agency and the Zionist Executive in Palestine.⁷⁸ In 1943 he met Weizmann again in New York.⁷⁹

In April 1947, Panikkar participated in the New Delhi Conference of the Asian Relations Organisation (as an Indian delegate) and after the conference wrote "*A memorandum of Hindu-Zionist relations*" outlining his perception regarding future relations between the two countries. Panikkar pointed out that there was widespread sympathy in India for the Jews of Palestine, which would come to the surface after the establishment of a Muslim state in India, namely Pakistan.

According to Panikkar, the Zionists had failed to create understanding for their claims in India and they had to accept the importance of India's future role in Asia. Panikkar suggested the following guidelines: establishment of a Hebrew chair at a Hindu University and similarly, the establishment of a chair for Sanskrit and Indology at the Hebrew University. The aim was to bring Hindus and Zionists closer, by supplying India with technical and scientific expertise and by opening an unofficial Jewish Agency liaison office in New Delhi (CZA S25/7486, 8/4/1947).⁸⁰

In September 1947, Nehru sent Panikkar to join the Indian Delegation to the UN during the UN General Assembly. In New York, Panikkar met

Indian Ambassador to Egypt and later on he completed his diplomatic career as the Indian Ambassador in France.

⁷⁸ For details about the meeting, see section 4.2.

⁷⁹ For details about the meeting, see section 4.5.1.

⁸⁰ For details about Panikkar and his meetings with the Jewish delegation in the conference in New Delhi as well as the delegation's other meetings, see section 4.4.2.

Weizmann several times (the last meeting took place on 24 November 1947 to discuss the Partition Plan of Palestine). During the UN General Assembly Panikkar met Moshe Shertok (Sharett) and Eliyahu Epstein (Eilat) and maintained friendly relations with the other members of the Zionist delegation, assisting them whenever possible (Yegar, 1991:31).⁸¹

Panikkar was an Indian friend of the Jewish National Movement and made zealous efforts to improve the relations of, what he called, Hindu-Zionist relations, but with marginal success.

Other efforts to enlist Indian dignitaries as agents of change for the Zionist cause prior to the independence of India by the Jewish National Movement and the Jewish Agency, were to no avail and except in the case of Panikkar, these efforts were fruitless.

3.7 Post independence India: Historical and political context of foreign policy towards Israel

In 1949, India opposed Israel's UN membership application and only on 17 September 1950 did it recognise the State of Israel.⁸² Five years later, in April 1955, at the Afro-Asian Conference in Indonesia, Nehru expressed India's sympathy with the Arab refugees in Palestine.⁸³ In July 1956, India accepted the nationalisation of the Suez Canal by Egypt and in October 1957, after the Suez Canal military operations, India condemned Israel for launching and conducting a premeditated attack on Egypt.⁸⁴ In 1962, after

⁸¹ Panikkar continued to meet with Israeli officials after independence (he maintained his friendly relations with Eliyahu Epstein (Eilat)), but according to Brecher, after 1953 his role in Indian policy-making declined sharply (Brecher, 1958).

⁸² For details about India's recognition of Israel, see section 3.9.1.1.

⁸³ For details about the India's stance at the Afro Asian Conference at Bandung see section 3.9.2.3. For details about the Palestinians and Israeli-Arab conflict see section 3.9.2.1. For details about Nehru's speech at the Afro Asian Conference see section 3.8.1.

⁸⁴ For details about the Indian condemnation of Israel after the Suez Canal military operation, see section 3.8.1.

the Indo-Chinese war, military equipment was sold to India by Israel; however this collaboration was terminated and denied by the Indian government following a leak to the Indian press.⁸⁵ Officially, India became more restrictive and negative towards Israel after Nehru's death in 1964. Nonetheless, during the Indo-Pakistani war in 1965, India acquired military equipment from Israel.⁸⁶ India's attitude towards Israel hardened after the Six-Day War in June 1967,⁸⁷ but during the second Indo-Pakistani war in 1971, India procured artillery weapons from Israel.⁸⁸ After the Arab-Israeli war in 1973 and the oil crisis that followed, India expressed its support for Egypt and Syria and intensified its anti-Israeli rhetoric in the UN and at other international forums.⁸⁹

In 1974, India endorsed the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO's) bid for observer status at the UN. In January 1975, India recognised the PLO.⁹⁰ In January 1979, the Janata Government in India invited the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Israel, Moshe Dayan, to a secret meeting in New Delhi but the meeting did not yield any political benefits.⁹¹ India was the first non-Arab state to grant full diplomatic status to the PLO in March 1980. In June 1981, India denounced the Israeli air force attack on the nuclear reactor in Iraq and one year later, in the summer of 1982, the

⁸⁵ For details about the Israeli-Indian cooperation in 1962, see section 3.9.1.3.

⁸⁶ For details about the acquisition of the Israeli military equipment see section 3.9.1.3.

⁸⁷ For details about India's attitude towards Israel between 1967 and 1992, see sections 3.9.1.4 and 3.9.2.2.

⁸⁸ For details about the Indian procurement of military equipment from Israel in 1971, see section 3.9.1.4.

⁸⁹ For details about India's foreign policy towards Israel after the Six Day war and the Arab Israeli war in 1973, see sections 3.9.1.4 and 3.9.2.2.

⁹⁰ For details about the Palestinians and Israeli-Arab conflict, see section 3.9.2.1. For details about the accreditation of diplomatic status to the PLO mission in New Delhi, see section 3.8.3.

⁹¹ For details about the secret visit of the Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs to New Delhi, see section 3.9.1.4.

Israeli Consul in Bombay was expelled from India after criticising the government's approach towards Israel in the Indian press.⁹²

During the tenure of Rajiv Gandhi as the Prime Minister of India (1984-1989), there was a shift in Indian foreign policy towards Israel;⁹³ however, India was one of the first countries to recognise the State of Palestine, which had been proclaimed by the Palestine National Council (PNC) in Algiers in November 1988.⁹⁴ Following the Madrid Conference that took place in October 1991, India supported the repeal of the UN General Assembly resolution of 1975 that equated Zionism with racism (from December 1991)⁹⁵ and on 29 January 1992 fully-fledged diplomatic relations were established between India and Israel.⁹⁶

3.8 Post independence India: Ultimate decision unit

After independence, India became an important actor in the international system. The identification of the pertinent ultimate decision unit of India's foreign policy towards the State of Israel after independence, namely the prime ministers of India between the years 1947 and 1991 and the understanding of the relevant decision-making process regarding this policy, provide a methodological means for the analysis of Indian bilateral relations with Israel.⁹⁷ After independence, Prime Minister Nehru shaped India's foreign policy until 1964 and established a political tradition that

⁹² For details about the expulsion of the Israeli diplomat from India, see sections 3.8.3 and 3.9.1.4.

⁹³ For details about India's new approach towards Israel during Rajiv Gandhi's tenure, see sections 3.8.6 and 3.9.1.4.

⁹⁴ This was mostly a political and symbolic gesture as the PNC was not qualified to be considered as an independent state according to the Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States (1933), which is widely regarded as the classic legal definition.

⁹⁵ For details about the Indian vote, see section 3.9.2.2.

⁹⁶ For details about the transformation of India's foreign relations towards Israel and the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, see chapter five.

⁹⁷ For the list of governments between the years 1948-1991, see appendix 1.

prime ministers of India are the ultimate decision units in the field of foreign relations.

3.8.1 Predominant leaders: Jawaharlal Nehru

Nehru was elected as the first Prime Minister of India after independence (15.8.47-27.5.64). He was the main architect of India's foreign policy and during most of his tenure as the Prime Minister of India, Nehru was his own minister of external affairs and practically all decisions concerning foreign affairs were taken by him personally, although he was assisted by the infrastructure support of the Ministry of External Affairs (Kapur, 1994:180; Cohen, 2001:38-39).

According to Subhash Kapila (2000), the official line regarding India's foreign policy in the Middle East taken by Nehru after independence was directed by the political situation in India that held the INCP⁹⁸ captive to the domestic compulsion to appease the Muslim minorities and the quest for Indian Muslim votes. It led to the support of the Arab causes in the Middle East and the Palestinian cause in particular.⁹⁹

In October 1949, Eliyahu Eilat, then serving as the Israeli Ambassador in Washington, accompanied by Emanuel Celler, met with Prime Minister Nehru, who paid a visit to the US and brought up the subject of the non-recognition of the State of Israel by India.¹⁰⁰ In his response, Nehru started by pointing out that Israel was an important factor in the Middle East and although it was a small country it was bound to develop. In addition, he indicated that India could learn much from Israel's achievements in

⁹⁸ The INCP was the successor, after independence, of the INCM. .

⁹⁹ For details about the political influence of the Muslim community in India, see section 3.10.5.2.

¹⁰⁰ For information about Congressman Emanuel Celler, see section 4.6.2

science and agriculture. Nehru went on to explain the non-recognition of Israel as an Indian national interest in terms of the Muslim community in India that had to be treated carefully. However, he did concede that recognition of Israel could not be postponed indefinitely (Avimor, 1991:172). In Ambassador Eilat's report about the meeting, he pointed out that Nehru had mentioned that people in India had never been anti-Semitic and many Indians admired the Zionist's work in Palestine and had considerable sympathy for Israel. However, according to Nehru:

Indian partition was [the] most painful operation to prevent bloodshed. Pakistan became theocratic state preventing national assimilation (of) Muslims of India. Hence Indian Government must treat its thirty million Muslims most carefully. Palestine was (a) source (of) constant agitation and made deep impression (on) Muslims everywhere. He had to choose slow, long, way toward recognition (in) order (to) justify it objectively and minimize internal opposition (ISA 93.01/2181/7, 14/10/1949).

India's recognition of Israel was delayed until 17 September 1950. One day later, Prime Minister Nehru sent a cable to Sharett stating:

In conveying to Your Excellency the decision of the Government of India to accord recognition to the Government of Israel as of September 18 of this year, I send the greetings of the Government and the people of India to the Government and the people of Israel (Jerusalem Post, 18/9/1950).

In fact, Nehru had contemplated the idea of *de-facto* recognition of Israel but because of pressure from the American Jewry a last minute adjustment was made and the Indian recognition was eventually granted in a cryptic version without specifying the type of recognition.¹⁰¹

On the same day, Sharett replied in an official note expressing his satisfaction with the state of affairs.¹⁰² The Israeli newspapers published

¹⁰¹ For details about India's recognition of the State of Israel, see also section 3.1.

¹⁰² For details about Sharett's reply, see section 4.8.1.

the news that the Indian Ambassador to the US had informed the Israeli Ambassador that the Indian Government was prepared to exchange diplomatic representatives with Israel, however, nothing tangible happened (Jerusalem Post, 18/9/1950).

Subsequently, Maulana Azad rebuked Nehru for the recognition of Israel and intimated that dire consequences could be expected from the Arabs and from Indian Muslim reaction¹⁰³ (Swamy, 1982:20). A similar viewpoint was expressed by Michael Brecher (1963:130) who pointed out that Nehru was convinced by Azad that diplomatic relations with Israel would have a negative impact on the loyalty of the Muslim minority in India and would be used by Pakistan against India. In January 1951 Nehru met the Israeli Ambassador in London Eliyahu Eilat and told him that it was wise for Israel to wait patiently for India's delayed recognition; however there were some procedures that would have to be followed prior to establishing full diplomatic relations (ISA 30.09/2318/8, 16/01/1951). In fact, the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries would have to wait until January 1992.¹⁰⁴

In reply to a question at a press conference, Nehru in New Delhi why diplomatic representatives with Israel had not been exchanged, his answer was:

This attitude was adopted after a careful consideration of the balance of factors. It is not a matter of high principle, but it is based on how we could best serve and be helpful in the area. We should like the problem between Israel and the Arab countries to be settled peacefully. After careful thought we felt that while recognising Israel as an entity, we need not, at this stage, exchange diplomatic personal. As I said, it is not a matter of principle and it is not a matter on which two opinions cannot be held. That, in the balance,

¹⁰³ Maulana Azad was one of Nehru's inner circle and his intimate and political friend. He was the leader of the Nationalist Muslims in the Indian National Congress Party and a member of Nehru's Cabinet (Minister of Education). For details and quotations about Azad and the way he exerted great influence on Nehru in order to preclude India's recognition of Israel, see sections 3.10.3.1, 3.9.1.2 and 4.9.1.1.

¹⁰⁴ For details about the establishment of diplomatic relations, see section 5.2

is the decision we arrived at, and we think it is a correct decision (India's Foreign Policy Selected Speeches, 1961:415-416).

According to Yaacov Shimoni (1991:E7), a few years after the recognition of Israel, Nehru regretted that he had not established full diplomatic relations with Israel immediately after the act of recognition. On 2 June 1953, at a press conference during his visit to Cairo in Egypt, Nehru declared that Israel was an undeniable fact (Ben Asher, 1955:218).

At the conference of African and Asian states (the Bandung Conference) in Indonesia from 8 to 24 April 1955,¹⁰⁵ Nehru made a pro-Arab speech and expressed sympathy for the Arab refugees in Palestine.¹⁰⁶ On the other hand, he did insist in his speech that a solution to the problem could only be achieved through peace talks between the parties in contrast to the Arab approach (*Haaretz*, 21/4/1955).

Nehru agreed with the nationalisation of the Suez Canal by Egypt on 26 July 1956. In a statement Nehru made in the Lower House of the parliament (Lok Sabha)¹⁰⁷ on 8 August 1956, he stated that the Egyptian nationalisation decision complied with the terms of laws of Egypt (India's Foreign Policy/Selected Speeches, 1961:530,534-537). After the Suez Canal military operation and upon Nehru's instructions, India co-sponsored UN resolutions urging the withdrawal of French, British and Israeli troops from Egypt.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ For details about the Afro-Asian Conference, see sections 3.9.2.3 and 4.9.1.2.

¹⁰⁶ Nehru supported the implementation of the UN Resolution 194/III from December 1948, which offered Arab refugees from Palestine, rehabilitation through repatriation or compensation, while the Israeli attitude was that there could be no repatriation before peace negotiations and the idea of compensation, was accepted under certain conditions, assuming the refugees were integrated into the Arab world.

¹⁰⁷ Lok Sabha – House of the People.

¹⁰⁸ For details about India's stance in the UN regarding the Suez crisis, see section 3.9.2.2.

The opening of the Suez Canal military operation surprised the former - Foreign Minister of Israel, Moshe Sharett, in New Delhi, on the eve of his scheduled meeting with Prime Minister Nehru. The meeting took place on 29 October 1957 and Nehru felt free to express his criticism of Israel's policy in general and the military action in particular. As Rafael (1981:88) points out in his book, Sharett explained the Israeli defence orientation to him, but it did not change Nehru's mind on the issue.¹⁰⁹ Nehru, in response, emphasised that sentiments in India regarding Israel were positive and many people were kindly disposed towards Israel because of its achievements. Nevertheless, India had had historic ties with the Arabs and the trouble was that there could have been a strong Arab reaction to the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. It was also mutually agreed that India and Israel should increase their cooperation in the field of technology and science (Nehru commended the success of Israeli experts in the development of water resources in the Rajasthan desert). In Rafael's opinion, Nehru's compliments regarding Israel were no more than mere courtesies and his expression of interest in cooperating with Israel was like a worthless cheque that bounced when presented for payment.¹¹⁰

Nehru condemned the Suez Canal military operation while accusing Israel of launching a sudden and premeditated attack on Egypt and referred to it in his speech in the parliament on 16 November 1956:

The Prime Minister of Israel has continued to insist that he will not evacuate Gaza. If the foreign forces are not wholly removed from Egyptian territory, this will amount to a clear violation of the UN resolution... If there is any attempt not to withdraw, there is likely to be a resumption of hostilities which, I think will be on a bigger scale than earlier. I should like the House to look below the surface of this conflict and into the deeper issues involved. First of all, we see this brutal exercise of violence and

¹⁰⁹ For details about Suez operation, see sections 3.9.1.3, 3.9.2.2 and 4.9.1.3.

¹¹⁰ For details about Nehru's meeting with Rafael, see section 4.9.1.3.

armed might against weaker countries. Every country in Asia and Africa must particularly feel this danger (India's Foreign Policy / Selected Speeches, 1961:536, 538).

Michael Brecher explains that despite calls from the press and leading politicians in India, it seemed highly unlikely that Nehru would change India's foreign policy towards Israel:

Firstly, domestic pressures and assumed national interests, i.e., disquiet about the possible effects on India's 40 million Muslims and rivalry with Pakistan for Arab support on the Kashmir problem; secondly, an unconscious or sub-conscious feeling that Israel is a part of the 'colonialist' world, a legacy of the assumed attachment between Zionism and British imperialism; and thirdly, an oft-stated belief that he can play a beneficial role in the Arab-Israel conflict by not having full relations with Israel (Brecher, 1963:137-138).

Nehru met Nachum Goldman, the President of the Jewish World Congress, on 27 June 1957.¹¹¹ According to Goldman, Nehru told him that:

He had tried before it, together with U Nu to get Israel invited (to the Afro-Asian Conference) but had to face the threat of the Arab States to boycott the conference and had, therefore, to give up (CZA Z6/1452, 27/6/1957).

Despite the friendly meeting, Goldman did not succeed in getting his point across to Nehru regarding diplomatic relations with Israel.

In February 1958, Egypt and Syria merged to form the United Arab Republic (UAR)¹¹² and Nehru, in a speech in the Indian Parliament (Lok Sabha), referred to the UAR as the legitimate will of two Arab nations. In contrast, he referred to the Israeli criticism of the UAR as ominous and could signify the precipitation of action by Israel (Asian Recorder, 7-

¹¹¹ About Nachum Goldman, see also section 4.9.1.4.

¹¹² The UAR lasted only three years and dissolved in September 1961.

13/7/1958). In his two speeches in the Lok Sabha, on 14 and 19 August 1958, Nehru made a direct reference to Israel and the Arab countries:

Ever since Israel came into existence, it has been a source of constant irritation to the Arab countries. The invasion of Egypt by Israel two years ago is fresh in our memory. Apart from this, there is the big problem of the old Palestine refugees. The Arab countries have looked upon Israel as an outpost from which their freedom might, at any time, be threatened. Israel, on the other hand, fears the Arab countries which surround it... Inevitably our sympathies are with the Arab countries and with Arab nationalism, which represent today the urge of the people...The growth of Arab nationalism is a very powerful, resurgent way. Egypt took the lead in this matter and under the wise leadership of President Nasser has played a very important part. Nasser in fact, became the most prominent symbol of Arab nationalism (India's Foreign Policy / Selected Speeches, 1961:281,283).

On 11 February, 1959, Nehru met with Yigal Allon, a member of the Knesset (Representative of the Achdut Haavoda Party), following a recommendation received by him from Aneurin Bevan, who was one of the leaders of the Labour Party in England.¹¹³ Ever since his meeting with Nehru, Allon had been under the impression that Nehru had changed his previous opinion about Israel in view of the tragic persecution and genocide of the Jews in Europe and the subsequent successful establishment of the State of Israel. According to Allon, Nehru realised that the State of Israel was a reality; therefore it was a political fact that could not be ignored. Furthermore, Israel was a member of the UN and Nehru recognised that the Jews had a right to their own country. He also reported that Nehru acceded that India should have established ties with Israel in 1950 and admitted that the question of diplomatic relations had caused difficulties for both countries. Nehru also pointed out that his advisors had misled him and that Pakistan had taken advantage of the problems between India and Pakistan with the aim of inciting aggressive behaviour by the Indian Muslims (Yegar, 2004:149).

¹¹³ For details about Nehru's meeting with Allon, see section 4.8.1.

On 10 April 1960, Egypt's President Nasser visited India and the following joint statement was published in New Delhi:

The Egyptian President and the Indian Prime Minister reiterated their view that the question of Palestine should be solved in conformity with the provision of the UN charter, the resolutions of the UN and the principles unanimously adopted at the Bandung Conference of 1955 for the peaceful settlement of the Palestinian question (Middle East Records, 1960:182-183).

On 19 May 1960, an Israeli jet fighter nearly intercepted a UN plane, one mile inside Israel's territory, with Nehru onboard *en route* to Gaza to visit Indian soldiers posted with the UN's emergency forces. This created a diplomatic incident between the two countries.¹¹⁴

Nehru was well aware of the power of the Jewish lobby in the US and therefore, during his visit to New York in 1960, he agreed to meet Abba Eban, the Israeli Ambassador to the UN, but all he did was offer vague promises (Swamy, 1982:20).¹¹⁵ In August 1960, Nehru rejected an invitation sent to him by Prime Minister Ben-Gurion to visit Israel.¹¹⁶

On 22 December 1960, during question time in the Upper House of the Parliament (Rajya Sabha) Nehru asserted the following:

As regards Israel, we have not built up diplomatic missions there as the whole position is very much entangled in important and rather dangerous international issues (ISA 93.42/309/11, 20/12/1960).

In fact, Nehru was under constant heavy pressure from all the Arab countries that considered India a key player in the international arena, to downgrade India's relations with Israel. His answer insinuated that he had

¹¹⁴ For details about the event in Gaza, see section 4.9.1.3.

¹¹⁵ For details about the meeting with Eban, see section 4.8.1.

¹¹⁶ For details about the invitation to visit Israel sent by Prime Minister Ben-Gurion to Nehru, see section 4.9.1.3.

assessed that establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel would have had a negative influence on the international stability in the Middle East.

On 15 February 1961, Gideon Rafael, the Director General of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, participated in an annual conference of the World Health Organisation (WHO) assembled in Delhi. He met with Nehru on the day that he informed the Indian Parliament of the incursion of Chinese forces into Indian territory in the Himalayan region.¹¹⁷ After he had listened to Rafael's presentation about the international arena from an Israeli perspective Nehru stated:

India had recognized Israel in 1950 and indeed should have at that time established diplomatic relations. The sentiments in India towards Israel were good. Many people were keenly interested in its achievement. Of course, India had historic ties with the Arabs and in recent years they had become closer. The trouble was that there was strong Arab reaction to the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries (Rafael, 1981:89).

Nehru agreed that the two countries should intensify their cooperation in the field of technology and science and he commended the success of Israeli experts in the development of water resources in the Rajasthan desert.¹¹⁸ He added that:

He had probed again and again in his talks with Arab leaders and especially with Nasser, into whether there was an opening for reconciliation with Israel, but he had always come up against a wall of steel. The Arabs had repeatedly said to him that the time was not ripe for a settlement (Rafael, 1981:88).

At a press conference in London, on 12 March 1961, Prime Minister Nehru reportedly said that: "India recognized Israel in 1950 but had no mission in Israel, it was not logical but it was practical" (Times, 18/3/1961).

¹¹⁷ For details about the meeting with Rafael, see section 4.9.1.3.

¹¹⁸ For details about the Israeli International Cooperation Programme, see section 4.8.2.

During the Belgrade Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement (1-6 September 1961), Nehru declared at a press conference that it was extremely difficult for India to establish diplomatic relations with Israel and that: "After Suez I personally felt terribly frustrated by the event and it is utterly difficult to lend any recognition whatsoever now" (Jerusalem Post, 5/9/1961).

During the closing session of the Belgrade Conference, on 5 September 1961, Nehru agreed with Egyptian President Nasser that Israel was a threat to the Arabs in the Middle East and that there was an awareness of Israel's imperialist role in Africa (Maariv, 6/9/1961). On the other hand, during the conference Nehru insisted that in his view, the conference in Belgrade should not deal with local quarrels and he refused to support any documents that included the condemnation of Israel and the condemnation of other countries. Nehru added that beside Israel, other countries were also involved in imperialistic behaviour; however, they were not condemned. His advice to the Belgrade Conference was to be practical and to call upon Israel to implement the UN resolution regarding the Arab refugees (Author, 6/9/1961).¹¹⁹

On 22 December 1961, Prime Minister Nehru told the Indian Lower House of the Parliament¹²⁰ (Lok Sabha) that India had decided against establishing diplomatic relations with Israel: "Obviously it is very much entangled in important and rather dangerous international issues" (Jerusalem Post, 23/12/1961).

In 1962, after the Indo-Chinese war, Nehru sent written communications to a large number of leaders including the Israeli Prime Minister David

¹¹⁹ For details about the conference as well as the Belgrade Conference Resolution, see section 3.9.2.4.

¹²⁰ In fact, the statement was made one day after Nehru attended the premiere of the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra, which was visiting New Delhi. (Jerusalem Post 22/12/1961).

Ben-Gurion, explaining the Indian position. Israel, in response, dispatched a shipload of arms to India. This load of arms was a starting point for intelligence and military cooperation between the two countries, but after it was leaked to the Indian press it was played down, denied and called off by the Indian government. Nehru did not show any sign of gratitude towards Israel and India continued with its anti-Israeli and pro-Arab approach (Shimoni, 1991:E9; Swamy, 1982:20).¹²¹

Before independence, Nehru regarded the return of the Jewish people to Palestine as a colonialist and imperialist enterprise and disregarded the national aspirations of the Jews in Israel.¹²² After the independence of Israel, Nehru came to terms with the State of Israel as an international political fact but he continued supporting the close relations of India with the Arab countries. On a personal level, he appreciated Israel's achievements in general and in science and agriculture in particular, but his emotional sympathy was with the Arab leadership in the Middle East as well as with the Palestinian cause.¹²³

3.8.2 Predominant leaders: Lal Bahadur Shastri

Prime Minister Shastri hardly had any grounding in India's foreign affairs and most of the foreign affairs declarations that he made were a repetition of what Nehru had said before and his whole political career centred on domestic politics (Silveira, 1992:124). Dixit, on the other hand pointed out that Prime Minister Shastri "brought the important principles of realism and practicality in foreign policy and defence planning" (Dixit, 2004:115).

Unlike Nehru, Shastri's first major decision was to appoint a full time Foreign Minister (Sardar Swaran Singh) and during his tenure (9/6/1964 –

¹²¹ For details about Israeli-Indian cooperation in 1962, see section 4.8.2.

¹²² For details, see section 3.6.2.

¹²³ For more details about India's foreign policy towards Israel during Nehru's tenure, see section 3.9.1.2 and 3.9.1.3.

11/1/1966) the emergence of international realism in Indian foreign policy became noticeable; although India's foreign policy towards Israel remained unchanged.¹²⁴ In 1965, during the Indian-Pakistani war, the Indian Army, with Shastri's approval, acquired heavy mortar and ammunitions from Israel. Although he continued with the pro-Arab foreign policy introduced by Nehru, he personally approved of the visit of R.S. Panjhzari to Israel in July 1965, in order to learn about Israel's security, prison service and agriculture. He was the former Secretary General of the INCP, Member of Parliament on behalf of the ruling party and a member of the Foreign Affairs and Security Committee (Archives of Labour Party, A219 IV, 21/7 - 1/8/1965).

In an interview with an Israeli journalist, which took place in 1965, but was published in Israel only one year later, Prime Minister Shastri reportedly spoke highly about Israel's achievements and he did not rule out the possibility of Israeli technical cooperation with India in agricultural development (Jerusalem Post, 14/1/1966).

Despite the emergence of international realism in India's foreign policy during Shastri's tenure, India's foreign policy towards Israel was unchanged. Shastri did not have the will, political power or the time, to bring about a change in India's foreign policy with Israel.¹²⁵

3.8.3 Predominant leaders: Indira Gandhi

Indira Gandhi served two terms as a Prime Minister (24/1/1966–23/3/1977 and 14/1/1980–31/10/1984) (Silveira, 1992:125).¹²⁶ During her

¹²⁴ The trauma of the 1962 loss to China was supplanted by tougher attitude concerning the use of force and foreign policy (Cohen, 2001:41).

¹²⁵ For more details about India's foreign policy towards Israel during Shastri's tenure, see section 3.9.1.3.

¹²⁶ Prime Minister Gandhi was assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards in October 1984, after she had sent Indian army troops into the Sikh sacred Golden Temple in Amritsar.

first tenure, India's foreign policy dealt mostly with Bangladesh (East Pakistan) and the acquisition of nuclear weapons capability. During her second tenure, her major concerns were the Afghanistan crisis, Pakistan's involvement in Jammu and Kashmir and the superpowers.¹²⁷

Mrs. Gandhi pursued a hostile anti-Israeli foreign policy and was a staunch supporter of the Arab world. At the beginning of her tenure she stated:

Our support is not only due to our traditional friendship toward the Arab people but also to our belief in and commitment to socialism and the principle that states should not be carved out or created on the basis of religion (Jansen, 1971:302).

Her attitude towards Israel became more negative after the Six-Day War in 1967.¹²⁸ After the Six-Day War, Indira Gandhi visited Cairo from 19 to 21 October 1967 and a joint *communiqué* was issued in which the two sides reaffirmed their adherence to the principle that the use of force to achieve territorial or political gains was impermissible:

The Egyptian President and the Indian Prime Minister expressed their particular concern over the grave situation in the Middle East pointing out the urgent importance of finding a just solution...particularly concerning the withdrawal of the Israeli forces from the territories they have occupied since 5 July 1967 (BBC, 23/10/1967).

Despite Mrs. Gandhi's negative attitude towards Israel, during the 1971 war with Pakistan in the critical hour of need, she reluctantly agreed to purchase artillery weapons (160mm mortars and ammunition) manufactured exclusively by Israel. Mrs. Gandhi, who had divided the Indian intelligence service into two parts and had entrusted external

¹²⁷ For details about India's foreign relations with the superpowers, see sections 3.9.2.5 and 3.9.2.6.

¹²⁸ For details about India's foreign policy towards Israel after the Six-Day War, see section 3.9.1.3.

intelligence to the newly formed agency: the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW). During her first tenure she had already allowed the RAW to cooperate with its Israeli intelligence counterpart.¹²⁹ After the Arab-Israeli war in 1973, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi continued her traditionally negative foreign policy towards Israel.¹³⁰ However, in 1974 Mrs. Gandhi rejected the demands by Saudi Arabia for the closure of the Israeli Consulate in Bombay (The Pioneer, 21/6/2004).

It was also Mrs. Gandhi who decided to grant full diplomatic status to the PLO Mission in New Delhi in January 1975, (the first non-Arab state to extend such accreditation to the PLO) and in March 1980, she granted full diplomatic recognition to the PLO. On 7 June 1981, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi denounced the Israel Air Force attack on the nearly completed nuclear reactor Osiraq, near Baghdad in Iraq.

In the summer of 1982, the Israeli Consul in Bombay was indeed expelled from India after criticising Gandhi's Government's approach towards Israel in the Indian press. Officially, the expulsion of the Israeli Consul took place as a result of his criticism of Gandhi's Government. Undoubtedly, the atmosphere in the Middle East in the 1980, which eventually led to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon that began at the beginning of June 1982, played a significant role in the Indian decision to expel the Israeli Consul from India.¹³¹ According to Subramaniam Swamy, Member of the Indian Parliament (Swamy, 1982:21), Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was infuriated by the Israeli Military Operation in Lebanon and labelled Israel an "international brigand."

¹²⁹ About intelligence cooperation between India and Israel, see sections 3.8.4.2 and 4.8.3.

¹³⁰ For details about India's foreign policy towards Israel after the Arab-Israeli war in 1973, see section 3.9.1.4.

¹³¹ For details about India's foreign policy towards Israel after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, see section 3.9.1.4.

In 1980, after Prime Minister Indira Gandhi returned to power (following a dramatic victory in the election) her control over the foreign policy of India became total and she continued with an Indian anti-Israeli foreign policy. In 1984, however, she allowed the Indian Intelligence service¹³² to seek the advice of Israel on security and intelligence systems (Swamy, 1982:22; Kumaraswamy, 1998:5).

Mrs. Gandhi was considered to be the most anti-Israeli and pro-Arab Indian Prime Minister ever and she constantly displayed strong identification with the Arabs and rejected Israel's occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan Heights in no uncertain terms. During her tenure, bilateral relations between India and Israel reached their lowest point ever.¹³³

3.8.4 Predominant leaders: Morarji Desai

Prime Minister Morarji Desai (24/3/1977 – 26/7/1979) did not have a profound impact on Indian foreign policy, however he took the initiative to establish covert foreign relations with China and expressed the need for a balanced and open policy towards the US as well as a willingness to normalise relations with Pakistan (Dixit, 2004). After Desai had defeated Indira Gandhi in the general elections in March 1977, many observers both in India and abroad believed that he would revitalise India's non-alignment policies. During the pre-election debate, Desai unequivocally declared that if elected, his administration would return India to "true non-alignment" and referred to Mrs. Gandhi's non-alignment policies as anti-Western and spurious and hinted at forthcoming changes. His new Minister of External Affairs Atal B. Vajpayee, also reaffirmed the country's need for a revitalised non-aligned foreign policy (Larus, 1981:51).

¹³² For details about the cooperation between the RAW and Israel, see section 3.10.3.3.

¹³³ For more details about India's foreign policy towards Israel during Indira Gandhi's tenures, see sections 3.9.1.3, 3.9.1.4 and 3.9.2.4.

It was the first coalition government during the Post-independence era. It was difficult heading such a new government and consequently it left Desai with little leverage for a change in foreign policy. The framework of India's foreign policy continued along the same traditional Nehruvian lines. Internal political battles between his government and Indira Gandhi left him with hardly any scope for designing a visible foreign policy (Silveira, 1992:127; Kapur, 1994:187). Despite the international openness of the Janata Party led by Desai and the pro-Israeli Jana Sangh Party in the Janata Coalition Government (1977-1979), no significant change was made by India regarding Israel.

Desai was prudent in his policy towards Israel and his meeting with the Israeli Foreign Minister, Moshe Dayan, in August 1977, who arrived at New Delhi as an incognito visitor; however, it did not lead to any new mutual political understanding. Desai told Dayan that diplomatic relations between the two countries could not be established unless Israel withdrew from the captured Arab lands, a demand with which Dayan could not comply (Swamy, 1982:21).

Following the Camp David Accord, signed in September 1978 between Israel and Egypt, India's attitude towards Israel improved and Prime Minister Desai met in London with Israeli Defence Minister, Ezer Weizmann, who offered India Israeli technology. In order to explore that possibility further, Desai's principal private secretary V. Shankar visited Israel in early 1979, but before an understanding could be reached, the Janata government collapsed in July 1979. Nevertheless, a very limited number of arms and ammunition were bought from Israel as a result of Shankar's visit, through a third country (Cyprus), during the term of office of the successor government (Swamy, 1982).

India's foreign policy towards Israel during the tenure of Prime Minister Desai was more open than before and there was a short period characterised by realism in the two countries' bilateral relations. Desai's assumption was that an improvement in relations with Israel needed greater political consensus in general and within the INCP in particular. However, there was no change of relations with Israel in the end¹³⁴ for a number of reasons such as Desai's short tenure, and the fact that he concentrated on domestic issues and was less interested in foreign affairs. Consequently, the traditional Nehruvian pro-Arab foreign policy position in the Ministry of External Affairs was strengthened during Desai's tenure.

3.8.5 Predominant leaders: Charan Singh

Charan Singh was Prime Minister of India for a short period of time, namely between 28 July 1979 and 14 January 1980. During this time, he headed an interim coalition government pending the election. However, he was less interested in foreign policy than his predecessor and did not have any specific viewpoints about international politics except for his critical approach to Soviet intervention in Afghanistan (Kapur, 1994:189).

There was no real indication of his foreign policy attitude towards Israel and during his short tenure there was no sign of change in the Indian anti-Israeli and pro-Arab foreign policy, which was carried out mainly by pro-Arab foreign policy bureaucrats.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ For more details about India's foreign policy towards Israel during Desai's tenure, see section 3.9.1.4.

¹³⁵ About the role of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs in Indo-Israeli relations see section 3.10.3.2 and for more details about India's foreign policy towards Israel during Singh's tenure, see section 3.9.1.4.

3.8.6 Predominant leaders: Rajiv Gandhi

Rajiv Gandhi was introduced to politics after the death of his brother Sanjay Gandhi in 1980.¹³⁶ In fact, his mother Indira Gandhi pressed Rajiv Gandhi to step into his brother's political shoes¹³⁷ and later on, after his mother's assassination in October 1984, he was pushed into the role of prime minister of India

As Prime Minister from 24 December 1984 to sixteen October 1985, he left his mark on Indian foreign policy (compared with domestic affairs where he was constricted).¹³⁸ While conducting India's foreign policy, Gandhi mostly made personal decisions (assisted by the Indian Intelligence Service,¹³⁹ his own secretariat and close personal political advisors).¹⁴⁰ The reason was that he had little confidence in bureaucracy in general and the Indian Ministry of External Affairs in particular, which he perceived as an institution that was slow and laborious regarding the making of changes (Kapur, 1994:193; Cohen, 2001:89)¹⁴¹.

Gandhi, open-minded and educated at Cambridge University, signalled a fresh Indian approach towards Israel and though unable to reverse the traditional Indian pro-Arab foreign policy completely, initiated a number of moves in favour of Israel. On the other hand, during his tenure, on 16 November 1988, India accorded full recognition to the virtual State of Palestine. Nevertheless, unlike his predecessors, he met openly with

¹³⁶ Sanjay Gandhi was a Member of Parliament representing the INCP and was considered the heir apparent. He died in an aeroplane crash on 23 June 1980.

¹³⁷ In 1981 he was elected to the Indian Parliament and served as his mother's advisor.

¹³⁸ During his tenure he made 48 trips abroad.

¹³⁹ The RAW. For details about the cooperation between the RAW and Israel, see section 3.10.3.3.

¹⁴⁰ For details about the role of the Cabinet and the prime minister's secretariat and inner circle in Israeli-Indian relations, see section 3.10.3.1.

¹⁴¹ Gandhi did not hesitate to dismiss the Foreign Secretary, A.P. Venkateswaram at that time during a press conference in New Delhi.

Israeli high-level officials as well as pro-Israeli political leaders in the US. The issue regarding the normalisation of relations with Israel was prominent in his discussions with American officials and US Jewish organisations.

Despite American pressure and the fact that he took a number of significant steps *vis-à-vis* Israel and appeared to have good intentions in this regard, Rajiv Gandhi was unable to bring about a complete reversal of India's foreign policy towards Israel. The reason was that he was hampered by domestic political constraints, including pressure from his own party, the INCP, and the Palestinian Intifada of 1987 (the Palestinian uprising in the West Bank and Gaza). All this contributed to Israel's international isolation and curtailed Rajiv's freedom of action regarding the possible normalisation of relations between the two countries. In addition, Israeli involvement in the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict also generated suspicion and anger in India.¹⁴²

Notwithstanding his domestic political constraints, certain steps were also taken regarding Israel by Rajiv Gandhi's government (Kumaraswamy, 2002:6 and Yegar, 2001:162). In addition, Rajiv Gandhi met with his Israeli counterpart, Prime Minister Shimon Peres, during the 40th Annual Session of the UN in 1985. It was the first time that the prime ministers of the two countries had met. Following that meeting, India allowed an Israeli diplomat to be stationed in Bombay as Vice-Consul.¹⁴³ In July 1987, following pressure from the US Congress and the American Jewish protest, India allowed an Israeli tennis team to participate in the Davis Cup Tennis Tournament in New Delhi. On 8 June 1988, Rajiv Gandhi had a high profile meeting with US based pro-Israeli groups in New York upon

¹⁴² The INCP was concerned with Israel's military support of the government of Sri Lanka against the Tamil Tigers rebels.

¹⁴³ For details about the expulsion of the Israeli Consul from India in 1982, see section 3.8.3.

the request of Congressman Stephen J. Solarz, who was then the head of the Asian and Pacific Sub-Committee in the US Congress. This eventually led to the appointment of an Israeli Consul in Bombay in August 1988.¹⁴⁴

Following these meetings, the Government of India confirmed the formal extension of Israeli consular jurisdiction to the southern Indian state of Kerala, which had a relatively significant Jewish population. Subsequently, the State of Maharashtra (in which Bombay is located) was instructed by the Government of India to invite the Israeli Consul to all state functions.¹⁴⁵ Relaxation of visa procedures for Israelis of Indian origin and the gradual liberalisation of visa procedures for individuals and tourist groups from Israel followed as well.¹⁴⁶

It is significant that Rajiv Gandhi referred publicly to the Pakistani nuclear programme as an “Islamic bomb,” bringing the threat that this programme posed to other countries in the entire region into the open.

Despite Gandhi's new approach towards Israel and the fact that during his tenure the Indian Ministry of External Affairs lost its importance and ability to design and influence India's foreign policy in general and towards Israel in particular, he was limited politically as far as any significant improvement in India's bilateral relations with Israel was concerned. One of the limitations emanated from international events such as the Israeli entrance into Lebanon by force in 1982. Another limiting factor was the UN resolution in December 1988, which declared that Israel was not a peace-loving country and called upon all members to sever diplomatic, trade and cultural ties with Israel. In addition, his own party's anti-Israeli

¹⁴⁴ For additional details about the meeting with the American pro-Israeli groups, see section 4.9.1.4.

¹⁴⁵ For details about the Jewish community in India, see section 3.10.5.1.

¹⁴⁶ For details about Israel-India relations, see section 4.9.1.3.

approach and the rapid decline of his personal popularity limited his political ability to carry out any diplomatic improvement with Israel.¹⁴⁷

3.8.7 Predominant leaders: Vishvan Pratap Singh

Prime Minister V. P. Singh who was in power from 2 December 1989 to 7 November 1990, was the leader of the Janata Dal Party, a party that had some historical political connections with the Israeli Labour Party. Likewise, the Foreign Minister of his coalition government was A. B. Vajpayee, the leader of the right-wing Baharatya Janata Party, traditionally a pro-Israeli party. A high level of expectation was therefore generated in Israel during V. P. Singh's tenure as Prime Minister of India and it was hoped that a possible change in India's foreign policy towards Israel could ensue.

V. P. Singh, who was the leader of the new Janata Dal Party that had its roots in the INCP and Congress school of political thought. He served under Indira Gandhi as Commerce Minister (1983-1984) and Finance Minister (1985 – 1987) and was Defence Minister for one year in Rajiv Gandhi's Cabinet in 1987 before being removed by him (Silveira, 1992:132; Kapur, 1994:198-199).

Prime Minister Singh was busy leading a coalition government with different political perceptions of the parties and individuals who had joined his government in order to forestall the return of Rajiv Gandhi to power. He was reluctant to deal with foreign policy in general and with any possible change of the Indian policy towards Israel in particular, thereby continuing India's traditional pro-Arab foreign policy.

¹⁴⁷ For more details about the Indian National Congress Party's role in Israel India relations, see section 3.10.2.1 and for details about India's foreign policy towards Israel during Rajiv Gandhi's tenure, see section 3.9.1.4.

During his tenure, the anti-Israeli Indian Ministry of External Affairs¹⁴⁸ was a dominant power and actually conducted the foreign policy of India. It is important to note that Singh had no interest in foreign affairs (although during the Gulf crisis did take place during his tenure and he had to deal with it). In addition, certain factors such as his political roots in the INCP, the strong support of his party, Janata Dal from the Muslim community in the elections and the dominance of the Ministry of External Affairs, rendered a change in India's foreign policy towards Israel during his tenure impossible. Accordingly, the Israeli expectations regarding his government were not fulfilled and India continued with its pro-Arab foreign policy.¹⁴⁹

3.8.8 Predominant leaders: Chandra Shekhar

Prime Minister Shekhar ran a caretaker minority government from 10 November 1990 to 13 March 1991; while Rajiv Gandhi was waiting for the right moment before announcing a general election (Silveira, 1992:135). Shekhar was mostly concerned with Indian domestic politics and as prime minister of a caretaker government; he was very much at the mercy of political circumstances and uncertainty; while fighting for his political survival. Under such political circumstances and considering the fact that his interest in foreign policy was marginal, it was hardly possible for Shekhar to take an interest or become actively involved in the field of foreign policy and the Ministry of External Affairs played a key role in Indian policy-making (Kapur, 1994:201).

Shekhar did not institute any active changes in foreign policy in general and towards Israel in particular, with the exception of his condemnation of

¹⁴⁸ About the role of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs in Indo-Israeli relations, see section 3.10.3.2

¹⁴⁹ For more details about India's foreign policy towards Israel during V.P. Singh's tenure, see section 3.9.1.4. In 1992, V.P. Singh as a Minister of Human Resource Development in Prime Minister Rao's Cabinet did not support the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel.

Iraq regarding Kuwait and his public expression that there was no connection whatsoever between the Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait and the Palestinian problem. The Minister of State in the Ministries of Commerce and Law, Subramaniam Swamy, tried to convince Shekhar of the need to establish diplomatic relations with Israel or to transfer the Israeli Consulate from Bombay to New Delhi at least, but to no avail. It is noteworthy that Swamy met openly with the Israeli Minister of Trade and Commerce Moshe Nissim, during an international economic conference in Brussels (Yegar, Govrin & Oded: 2002:545). Swamy, an experienced Indian politician and an old friend of Israel in India, went ahead with the meeting despite objections from the Ministry of External Affairs of India, but because of objections to the meeting, it was declared an unofficial meeting. Swamy also suggested that the Indian government should transfer the Israeli Consulate to New Delhi, but Prime Minister Shekhar was reluctant to deal with the Israeli issue. Shekhar's public remark that there was no connection between the Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait and the solution of the Palestinian problem was criticised severely by politicians from all spectrums of Indian political parties in general and the INCP in particular as well as Arab diplomats in New Delhi (Becher, 2002:546; Kapur, 1994:201).

However, there were two conciliatory gestures that Prime Minister Shekhar made towards Israel during his tenure. He allowed the Young Israeli National Tennis team to participate in a tennis tournament in India in April 1991. (The Israeli-Indian tennis match was even broadcast by the Indian National Television 'Doorsarshan') and he conducted a meeting with the Israeli Consul in July 1991, which did not result in any positive political developments. Therefore, despite the two diplomatic gestures that Prime Minister Shekhar made towards Israel, no significant changes regarding the bilateral relations between the two countries were made during his tenure, as he was not particularly interested in foreign policy

and let the Ministry of External Affairs play a key role in the foreign policy-making process while continuing India's pro-Arab foreign policy.¹⁵⁰

3.8.9 Predominant leaders: Narasimha Rao

Narasimha Rao was sworn in as the Prime Minister of India on 21 June 1991 and served as Prime Minister between the years 1991 and 1996. He also served as Minister of External Affairs under Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi (Kapur, 1994:201).

On 21 November 1991, Isi J. Leibler, the Australian co-chairman of the governing board of the World Jewish Congress (WJC), headed a mission of the WJC to New Delhi to meet Rao. The question of establishing diplomatic relations between Israel and India was brought up in the meeting, in addition to other bilateral issues concerning Israel and Rao promised a change in India's foreign policy regarding Israel, but without any time commitment. Rao also was also sympathetic about the lack of reciprocity by the Indians regarding consular ties with Israel and also about the absence of direct international calls between the two countries (Leibler, 1991).¹⁵¹

During the third week of January 1992, Rao invited Yasser Arafat, the chairman of the PLO, to New Delhi in order to gauge his reaction regarding the possibility of establishing diplomatic relations with Israel.¹⁵² Eventually it was Prime Minister Rao who made the decision to establish fully-fledged diplomatic relations with Israel about two months later.¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ For details about India's foreign policy towards Israel during Shekhar's tenure, see section 3.9.1.4

¹⁵¹ For details about Leibler's meeting with Rao, see section 4.9.1.4.

¹⁵² For details about Arafat's meeting with Rao, see sections 5.3 and 5.4.2

¹⁵³ For details about the establishment of diplomatic relations and the change of the Indian foreign policy towards Israel in 1992, see chapter five..

3.9 Post independence India: The international system level of analysis

The international level of analysis is an essential factor in the understanding and analysis of foreign policy and is utilised in order to explain India's foreign relations with Israel between the years 1947 and 1991.

India's post-independence foreign policy towards Israel was a continuation of pre-independence policy, but gradually certain international developments based on external factors combined with contextual determinants emerged and influenced India's relations with Israel in terms of bilateral and multilateral relations. These developments, factors and determinants are discussed below.

3.9.1 India and bilateral relations with Israel

Bilateral relations between India and Israel between 1947 and 1991, namely the relations which were defined by the pattern of interaction between the two countries, were passive in nature during which period, India maintained a consistent pro-Arab foreign policy towards Israel as described and analysed in this chapter.

India considered Israel to be a country that was born with the backing of imperialist powers and was supported by them. India's attitude gained political momentum after the Suez crisis in 1956, when the Israeli invasion of Sinai was denounced by India as a flagrant violation of the UN charter. It continued in 1967 when India denounced Israel after the Six-Day War and the war of 1973. India also saw the newly-born State of Israel as a theocratic state (and thus an analogue to Pakistan) (Naaz, 1999:241). India, on the other hand, was a secular state ratified by a constitution

amendment and the INCP, in particular, was opposed to the idea of religion being the basis for nationality (Shimoni, 1991:E4).

India viewed its relations with Israel as well as its relations with the Arab countries and the Arab-Israeli dispute in particular, in terms of a zero-sum game. India's foreign policy towards Israel was one-sided, restrictive and anti-Israeli. Economic factors played no role in influencing Indian foreign policy towards Israel as reflected in the low volume of trade between the two countries at the time. On the other hand, India's economic relations with the Arab world in general and Indian dependency on the Arab region for oil in particular, played a significant role in India's attitude towards Israel.¹⁵⁴

3.9.1.1. Extension of recognition of Israel

On 23 May 1948, the Government of India received a request from the President of Israel to recognise the State of Israel, but the Indian Government, under heavy pressure from the Arab countries, withheld its recognition. As declared by Prime Minister Nehru:

The Government of India has received a request from this State of Israel for recognition. We propose to take no action in this matter at present. India can play no effective part in this conflict at the present stage either diplomatically or otherwise (Parthasarthy, 1985:126).

However Prime Minister Nehru did not rule out the possibility of such recognition in future pending changed circumstances (Naaz, 1999:241).¹⁵⁵ Although India opposed UN membership for the State of Israel in 1949, eventually on 17 September 1950, India accorded *de-jure* recognition to

¹⁵⁴ For more details about Indian-Arab economic relations as a factor on India's foreign policy towards Israel, see section 3.9.2.

¹⁵⁵ For details about Nehru as an Indian predominant leader and about India's recognition of Israel, see section 3.8.1.

Israel after it had assured the Arab countries that such an act would not affect its friendship with them. Part of the official reason given by the Government of India for this step was that non-recognition of Israel limited its effectiveness as a possible intermediary between Israel and the Arab states. It was also emphasised in the Indian press that recognition of Israel did not change the Indian attitude towards the question of the Arab refugees, the status of Jerusalem and the question of the frontiers of Israel. Contrary to common diplomatic practice, recognition of Israel did not lead to the establishment of full diplomatic relations between the two countries (Padmanbhan, 1975:12 and Rao, 1972:5).

3.9.1.2 India's foreign policy towards Israel (The period from 1947 to 1956)

India's foreign policy towards Israel following the establishment of the State of Israel as well as after India's recognition of Israel was influenced by Indian political need to respect the feelings of Indian Muslims, to improve relations with the Arab world and to counter Pakistan diplomatic activity in the Middle East as well as South Asia. India, which was established as a secular state, did not subscribe to the notion that the loyalty of Indian Muslims was to the Indian State. Israel, the newly born state with a Jewish religious orientation, served as a negative political example for India, especially considering the fact that the partition of India had left India with considerable communal tensions. The negative attitude towards Israel was also a political way of demonstrating to the Indian Muslims that the Government of India was not anti-Muslim or anti-Arab.¹⁵⁶ Following the recognition of the State of Israel by India on 7 June 1951, F. W. Pollack was appointed Honorary Consular Agent of Israel in Bombay,

¹⁵⁶ For details about the INCP attitude towards the Indian Muslims, see section 3.10.2.1 and for details about the power of the Muslim community in India, see section 3.10.5.2.

as well as the Trade Commissioner of Israel for India (Avimor, 1991:382)¹⁵⁷.

Between 27 February and 9 March 1952, bilateral negotiations concerning formal diplomatic relations were conducted by the Director General of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Walter Eytan, who was sent to New Delhi on the instructions of the Israeli Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion.¹⁵⁸ Eytan received a firm pledge from Prime Minister Nehru himself that full diplomatic relations would be established, but the pledge was not honoured with no official explanation given to Israel (Eytan, 1958:169). In his memoirs, Eytan points out that Prime Minister Nehru agreed that the question of diplomatic relations with Israel should be reconsidered and had no doubts about it:

India had recognized Israel over a year before, and it was not logical to balk at diplomatic relations. He was not, at that time, greatly affected by Arab opposition to Israel...Diplomatic relations with Israel had been held up, though the government's consideration for India's Muslim minority. The problem was presented as one of domestic politics, at least in the main. Indian Muslims had suffered a profound shock by partition. Most of their leaders had left them and gone to Pakistan. Individual Muslims occupied influential positions in India, but the community, as a whole was depressed and fearful of the future. The Government had always shown understanding for their situation and had not wanted to heap shock upon shock if it were not absolutely necessary (Eytan, 1958:169).

Eytan stated that nothing came of his talks in New Delhi in general and with Nehru in particular; however, the Indian party offered no convincing explanation:

So many explanations have been made that it is impossible to tell which, if any is correct. But there seems little doubt that Muslim hostility to Israel is still the stumbling block with a shift of emphasis from India's own Muslim minority, which had shown no sign of shock when Nehru recognized Israel in 1950, to Pakistan and the Arab states. Throughout these years Kashmir

¹⁵⁷ For details about the recognition of Israel by India, see section 3.9.1.1.

¹⁵⁸ For more details about the initiative, see section 4.9.1.1.

has affected Indian policy in every field. Mr. Nehru may have feared at one time that if he established relations with Israel, he would throw the Arab states into the arms of Pakistan, their sister in Islam. They might be kept neutral if they believed that their support of Pakistan on Kashmir would lead to India's establishing diplomatic relations with Israel. Such a development would give Israel the entree to the society of Asian nations, and this they were determined at all costs to prevent. If this was, indeed, Mr. Nehru's calculation, he may feel that events have proved him right. The Arab states, more concerned with power than with religious affinities, have in fact never lent Pakistan their full support. Neutralism or Non-Alignment held a powerful appeal for the whole Arab world and Egypt in particular, was happy to be drawn into India's orbit. Mr. Nehru, for his part, was prepared to appease Arab susceptibilities by keeping away from Israel (Eytan, 1958:170-171).

Only in February 1953, was an official reply sent from the Ministry of External Affairs of India to the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs informing it that a decision regarding the exchange of diplomatic missions had not yet been made and that they would be informed in due course when such a decision was made (ISA 130.02/2414/1, 19/2/1952). According to Michael Brecher (1963:10) and Yaacov Shimoni, (1991:E7), Nehru who had hoped to get the unanimous endorsement of his Cabinet (as he did in 1950 for the recognition of Israel) met the opposition of his Muslim ministers, in particular, Maulana Azad and was not prepared to overrule them by a majority decision.¹⁵⁹ Following pressure applied by the American Jewry¹⁶⁰ as well as American Congressmen, Israel was permitted to open a Consulate in Bombay on 3 August 1953 and Gavriel Doron was nominated as the first Israeli Consul (Yegar, 2004:141 and Avimor, 1991:18).¹⁶¹

It was also during this time that relations between India and Egypt gradually grew stronger and the two countries found similarities in their attitudes towards the international politics of the Cold War, the role of the Western powers in the less developed areas of the world and the common

¹⁵⁹ For details about Azad's influence, see sections 3.10.3.1, 3.8.1 and 4.9.1.1.

¹⁶⁰ For details about the opening of the Israeli Consulate in Bombay, see section 4.9.1.1.

¹⁶¹ For details about India, Israel and the US, see section 3.9.2.6.

rejections of international blocs. India, which had committed itself to friendship and support of Egypt, found itself conducting an anti-Israeli foreign policy and Nehru developed friendly personal relations with Egypt's President Nasser. He was the embodiment of the Egyptian social revolution (following the success of the Egyptian revolution in 1952) and set himself up as a leader of the Arab struggle against Israel and by association, against anti-colonialism. Nasser had become a trusted ally of India; he was considered secular, interested in espousing the doctrine of Non-Alignment and keeping Asia and Africa free of superpower alliances (Naaz, 1999:242). Nehru made Cairo a constant stopover on his trips abroad. In April 1955, Nasser stopped at New Delhi on his way to the Afro-Asian Conference and was honoured by being asked to make a speech to the Indian Parliament.¹⁶² During his visit, a friendship agreement was signed between India and Egypt. At that time, Indian foreign policy towards Israel was neutral in nature as most of the Indian criticism about the political situation in the Middle East was directed more at the Western powers than against Israel (Rao, 1972:44-45).

3.9.1.3 India's foreign policy towards Israel (The period 1956 to 1967)

After Israel's participation in the invasion of Egypt during the Suez crisis in 1956, India viewed Israel, even more than before as the outpost of Western interests and Indian hostility towards Israel continued (although some of the Indian opposition press openly called for an exchange of diplomatic envoys with Israel).¹⁶³ On 16 November 1956, Prime Minister Nehru accused Israel directly of launching an attack on Egypt (Avimor, 1991:15)¹⁶⁴. Later India denounced Israel's attack on the Suez Canal zone

¹⁶² For details about India's stance at the Afro-Asian Conference, see section 3.9.2.3.

¹⁶³ For more details about India's stance on the Suez crisis, see section 3.9.2.2.

¹⁶⁴ For details about Nehru's accusation, see section 3.8.1.

as a flagrant violation of the UN Charter and Israeli-Indian relations reached an extremely low point (Naaz, 1999:242). According to Brecher, at this stage and despite the fact that Israel had broadened its diplomatic relations with Asian states, following the opening of the eastern sea route after the Suez crisis, improvement of bilateral relations between India and Israel seemed unlikely as long as Nehru remained in power (Brecher, 1963:137).

Nehru's negative approach towards Israel was endorsed and supported by the INCP leadership and the Indian intelligentsia. On various occasions when the issue of diplomatic relations with Israel was raised, the Indian explanation given for not embarking on diplomatic relations with Israel was that the time was not ripe, unlike in the 1950s, when budget restrictions was the reason given.

During the Indo-China War in 1962, Prime Minister Nehru circulated a letter to leaders around the world soliciting urgent support and included Ben-Gurion, the Prime Minister of Israel among the recipients of his letter. The tone of Ben-Gurion's reply was polite but non-committal.¹⁶⁵ Nonetheless, it did not stop India from seeking military help from Israel during its war with China and subsequently, Israel supplied India with artillery weapons. The following stage involved military and intelligence cooperation between the two countries, which included high-ranking officers' visits on both sides. However, when the information about military cooperation was leaked to the Indian press, it was played down and later denied by the Government of India and was eventually called off (Shimoni, 1991:E9; Yodphat, 1983:45).¹⁶⁶ In 1998, the weekly *"India Today"* acknowledged Israel's military arms supply to India in the Indo-China war and revealed that as a token of gratitude for Israeli assistance in the Indo-

¹⁶⁵ For details about Ben-Gurion's response, see section 4.9.1.3.

¹⁶⁶ For details about the military cooperation after the Indo-China war, see section 4.9.1.3.

China war, India had secretly sent spare parts for Oragan aircraft and AMX13 tanks to Israel, before the Six-Day War in 1967,(India Today, 6/4/1998). In 1962, the Arab countries endorsed Pakistan's stance on Kashmir at the UN and even Egypt's President Nasser did not voice his support for India's standpoint in the UN debate about the Indo–Chinese war, as his role was rather to serve as an intermediary and as such, he advocated an immediate ceasefire.

During the Indo-Pakistani war in 1965, India approached Israel and was supplied with heavy mortars and ammunition (The Statesman, 17-23/12 1970)¹⁶⁷. The Arab countries continued to endorse the Pakistani stance on Kashmir, in 1965, at the Arab Conference of Islamic leaders in Casablanca. Despite the Israeli arms support in the Indo-Pakistani war and although frustrated by the Arab approach, India's pro-Arab foreign policy did not change.

From the mid-1960s there was a steady deterioration in the bilateral relations between India and Israel and during that period, India even refused to issue visas to Israeli delegations to attend various international conferences and sport events (Yegar, 2004:152).

In March 1966, the Government of India ignored a stopover of the President of the State of Israel at that time, Zalman Shazar, in Calcutta, on his way to a state visit in Nepal. India refused to let him stay in New Delhi overnight, while allowing pro-Arab demonstrators to demonstrate against Israel in front of his hotel in Calcutta.

India supported the Arab position wholeheartedly during the Six-Day War in June 1967, during which time the Israelis occupied the West Bank of Jordan, the Sinai Peninsula, Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights and India's

¹⁶⁷For details about the military cooperation during Indo-Pakistani war, see section 4.9.1.3.

attitude towards Israel became more negative and censorious.¹⁶⁸ Under the leadership of Nehru's daughter, Indira Gandhi, India adopted a hostile anti-Israeli foreign policy.¹⁶⁹ However, some of the opposition parties and particularly the right-wing parties, Jana Sangh Party¹⁷⁰ and Swatantra Party,¹⁷¹ with the exception of the communist parties and the Muslim League,¹⁷² supported the Israeli position. The growing disillusionment in the Indian Parliament had two sources: a feeling that India was backing the wrong horse and fear of the growth of a strong and hostile Muslim block, which would join forces with Pakistan (*Times*, 19/7/1967).

On 21 June 1967, sixteen days after the Six-Day War broke out, Indian Minister of External Affairs, M. C. Chagla, in his speech in the Fifth Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly at the UN, pointed out that India had voiced its sincere and wholehearted sympathy as well as its solidarity with the Arab peoples in their hour of trial and tribulation and put the blame squarely on Israel's shoulders (Naaz, 1999:242).¹⁷³ In a stormy parliamentary debate, on 17 and 18 July 1967, Chagla defended India's policy:

As corresponding to the justice of the Arab cause and India's interest...India needed friendly relations with the Middle East because the area was important to her trade and because it was a supplier of oil and because it contained the strategic Suez Canal (Dishon, 1967:70).

¹⁶⁸ For details about the Israeli-Arab conflict, see section 3.9.2.1 and for details about India's stance towards the Six-Day War, see section 3.9.2.2.

¹⁶⁹ For details about Indira Gandhi's foreign policy towards Israel, see section 3.8.3.

¹⁷⁰ For details about the Jana Sangh Party, which was later transformed into the Baharatya Janata Party, see section 3.10.2.2.

¹⁷¹ For details about the Swatantra Party, see section 3.10.2.5.

¹⁷² For details about the Muslim community in India and the Muslim League, see section 3.10.5.2.

¹⁷³ For details about Chagla's speech at the UN, see section 3.9.2.2.

After the Six-Day War, India stressed, as it had done since the Bandung conference, that the principle of positive neutralism bound India closely to the Arab states.

3.9.1.4 India's foreign policy towards Israel (The period extending from 1968 to 1991)

On 23 September 1969, an Indian delegation that attended the Arab conference of Islamic leaders in Rabat, which was convened in order to condemn Israel, was prevented from official participation because of Pakistani pressure. The embarrassment caused to India (as well as criticism by members of the Indian Parliament) did not stop the Indian Government from following its pro-Arab policy; while Arab indifference towards India continued in particular during the Bangladesh crisis. In May 1969, Dinesh Singh, the Minister of External Affairs reaffirmed India's continuation of its pro-Arab policy and pointed out that India had not established diplomatic relations with Israel because Israel had followed injudicious policies against the Arabs, particularly the Palestinians. Consequently, until there was a revision of that Israel policy it would be difficult for India to revise its foreign policy towards Israel (Naaz, 1999:242). On the other hand, Singh met the Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs Abba Eban five months later, in October 1969, during the General Assembly at the UN and tried to convince him that India was not hostile to Israel (Yegar, 2004:73).

During the Indo-Pakistani war (known as the Bangladesh War) in 1971, ammunition and weaponry suitable for the Indian Army were imported from Israel through a third party, with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's

approval (Swamy, 1982:22).¹⁷⁴ On the other hand, the Arab countries were indifferent towards India during the Bangladesh War and many members of the Indian Parliament criticised this indifferent Arab attitude. After the Arab-Israeli war in 1973 and in continuation of its traditional anti-Israeli foreign policy, India expressed its support for Egypt and Syria (despite the fact that these two countries had launched a coordinated military attack against Israel). Instead, they asserted that Israel was to blame for the attacks as the Arab attacks had been precipitated by Israel's refusal to vacate the territories occupied in the Six-Day War.¹⁷⁵ In his speech in the Lower House of the Parliament (Rajya Sabha) on 6 December 1973, the Minister of External Affairs, Swaran Singh, revealed that India had also offered some material support to the Arab countries and that medicine and doctors were sent to both Egypt and Syria (Naaz, 1999:242).

In 1974, India strongly supported participation of the PLO in the international arena and endorsed its bid for observer status at the UN.¹⁷⁶ In January 1975, India became the first non-Arab government to extend formal accreditation to the PLO representative in New Delhi and recognised the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. In November 1975, India co-sponsored the General Assembly Resolution 3379 that equated Zionism with racism and sought sanctions against Israel (which did not materialise).

The Janata Government, with its pro-Israel Jana Sangh Party component that ruled from 1977 to 1980, tried to explore the option of improving foreign relations with Israel in particular. After the Camp David Accord between Israel and Egypt in September 1978 and the current Prime

¹⁷⁴ For details about the import of weaponry from Israel, see sections 4.9.1.3 and 4.10.3.2.

¹⁷⁵ For details about the Arab-Israeli conflict, see section 3.9.2.1.

¹⁷⁶ For details about India's stance in the UN, see section 3.9.2.2.

Minister Morarji Desai¹⁷⁷ together with his Minister of External Affairs Vajpayee¹⁷⁸ invited the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Israel, Moshe Dayan, secretly to New Delhi, in January 1979, to avoid antagonising the Arab countries. The negotiations were unsuccessful because of political disagreement between the two parties.¹⁷⁹

When Congress returned to power in 1980 with Indira Gandhi as Prime Minister, it once again reverted to its anti-Israeli policy and renewed its staunch support for the Arabs. In March 1980, India became the first country in the world to grant full diplomatic status to the PLO mission in New Delhi (Manorama, 1993:479).

In July 1982, the Israeli Consul in Bombay was declared a "*persona non grata*" and was expelled from India after criticising the policy of the Government of India towards Israel. In a newspaper interview he criticised the Government of India and hinted that India was under the influence of the Arabs. The Government's fear of the Muslim lobby in New Delhi and India's concern regarding its economic interests in the Middle East and oil in particular was the reasons for India's negative attitude towards Israel (Naaz, 1999:243).

The deputy leader of the opposition party Janata at that time, Subramaniam Swamy, not only opposed the expulsion, a harsh diplomatic move, but also pleaded with the Government of India to establish diplomatic relations with Israel, but to no avail. His plea was turned down by the Minister of External Affairs at that time, Narasimha Rao, and the Indian anti-Israeli and pro-Arab policy continued through the 1980s (Swamy, 1982:21).

¹⁷⁷ For details about Morarji Desai, see section 3.8.4.

¹⁷⁸ Vajpayee became Prime Minister of India between 19 March 1998 and 23 April 2004.

¹⁷⁹ For details about Dayan's meeting, see sections 3.8.4 and 4.8.1.

The first shift in Indian foreign policy towards Israel took place in 1985, when the request that was made for a new nominee to the post of the Vice-Consul of Israel in Bombay (after being vacant for political reasons for some time) was accepted by India. This followed a meeting between Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Israel's Prime Minister Shimon Peres during a UN session in New York and pressure by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) Jewish organisation (Kumaraswamy, 2002:6).¹⁸⁰

In July 1987, India allowed Israeli tennis players to participate in the Davis Cup Tennis Tournament that took place in New Delhi. Following a meeting between Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and US based pro-Israeli Jewish groups in New York and Congressman Stephen Solarz, who was particularly instrumental in efforts to upgrade the relations between India and Israel, on 8 June 1988, the position of Vice-Consul of Israel in Bombay was upgraded to the level of Consul (Yegar, 2004:162).¹⁸¹

In September 1988, Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the PLO, was nominated in New Delhi for the 1988 Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding (Manorama, 1993:478). In December 1988, during a special session of the General Assembly of the UN convened in Geneva, India's Minister of State for External Affairs K.K. Tiwari, refrained from denouncing Israel while recognising Israel's right to live in peace and security within internationally recognised borders, side-by-side with the Palestinian state, as well as other Arab neighbouring countries (Naaz, 1999:242). This was despite the Palestinian Intifada and the fact that the US refused to grant an entry visa to the PLO Chairman, Yasser Arafat. The Deputy Director General for Asia in the Israeli Foreign Affairs Ministry, Joseph Hadas, was invited to visit India In December 1988.

¹⁸⁰ For details about the meetings between Rajiv Gandhi and the American Jewish organisations see sections 3.8.6 and 4.9.1.3.

¹⁸¹ For more details about the activities of Congressman Solarz, see sections 3.8.6 and 4.9.1.4.

During his visit, he met with the Minister of External Affairs Narasimha Rao,¹⁸² but his visit was described by the Indian government as a tourist visit (Yegar, Govrin & Oded, 2002:543).¹⁸³

In January 1989, a delegation from the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and Congressman Solarz visited New Delhi and met with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Indian senior officials, including the Minister of External Affairs Narasimha Rao. Following the meeting, a formal extension of the Israeli Consulate jurisdiction was granted by the Government of India to the southern State of Kerala (a state with a small Jewish population).¹⁸⁴ This same extension was granted to the State of Maharashtra in which the Consulate in Bombay was located. The State of Maharashtra was also instructed by New Delhi to invite the Israeli Consul to all state functions. The gradual liberalisation of visa procedures for tourist groups and individuals from Israel started taking place (Yegar, 2004:162).¹⁸⁵

In September 1990, before the Gulf War in Iraq, some news was published by the Indian media about the possibility that Indian workers in Jordan would be airlifted home through an Israeli Airport. Although this did not happen (the Indian workers were eventually flown directly to India), the Israeli willingness to assist, received positive coverage in the Indian press (Yegar, Govrin & Oded, 2002:544).

In 1991, the Indian Minister of Trade and Justice, Subramaniam Swamy, met the Israeli Minister of Trade and Commerce, Moshe Nissim, unofficially during an international economic conference in Brussels.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸² Rao became prime minister of India between 21 June 1991 and 15 May 1996.

¹⁸³ For details about Hadas's visit, see 4.9.1.3.

¹⁸⁴ For more details about the extension of the Consulate jurisdiction, see section 4.9.1.3.

¹⁸⁵ About the American Jewish lobby activities *vis-à-vis* India, see section 4.9.1.3.

¹⁸⁶ For details about the meeting between Swamy and Nissim, see section 3.8.8.

During the kidnapping of a group of Israeli tourists in the State of Jammu and Kashmir in June 1991, the Government of India facilitated the visit of Deputy Director General for Asia of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Moshe Yegar, to New Delhi. Subsequently, he conducted indirect negotiations and coordinated the release efforts of the remaining hostage (Yegar, 2004:164).¹⁸⁷

On 21 November 1991, a World Jewish Congress (WJC) delegation met Prime Minister Narasimha Rao in New Delhi and raised the issue of diplomatic relations with Israel. However, it did not bring any immediate results, although Rao promised Isi Leibler, the co-chairman of the Jewish Organisation, direct dialling from India to Israel and that a Jewish colloquium would be held in India.¹⁸⁸

On 29 January 1992, after diplomatic consultations took place in Washington DC, fully-fledged diplomatic relations between India and Israel were established.¹⁸⁹ Other factors that brought this about included a meeting by the Indian Deputy Chief of Mission with Joseph Hadas, the Director General of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as pressure from various Jewish organisations in the US.

3.9.2 India, Israel and multilateral relations

Multilateral relations, as part of international relations between India and Israel, have played a significant role in India's foreign policy towards Israel. After the achievement of independence, India's relations with Israel, in terms of multilateral relations, were first and foremost aimed at neutralising Pakistan's efforts in seeking a balance of power with India. A further aim was to secure international support with regard to the

¹⁸⁷ For more details about Yegar's visit, see section 4.9.1.3.

¹⁸⁸ For more details about Rao's meeting with Leibler, see sections 3.8.9 and 4.9.1.4.

¹⁸⁹ For details about Hadas's meeting, see section 4.9.1.3.

dispute between the two countries over Kashmir in the international arena, in general and in the Arab world, in particular. Regarding the dispute, Pakistan tried to depict the Kashmir conflict as a pan-Islamic issue and the numerical asymmetry between the Arab states and Israel in the UN played a role in India's in foreign policy calculations on the Kashmiri issue.

India was a consistent supporter of the Arabs and the Palestinian cause in particular on every available international forum. On the other hand, the one-sided pro-Arab and anti-Israeli approach prevented India from playing an active political role in the Middle East (up to October 1991 India maintained its policy of non-normalisation of bilateral relations between India and Israel).

The main external factors that influenced India's foreign policy in the Middle East after independence were the following:

The political concept that taking sides with the Arabs could be used as a spanner between the Arabs and Pakistan and the political assumption that supporting the Arabs could prevent them from actively taking sides with Pakistan, since Pakistan was trying to project India as an anti-Islamic country and was trying to forge a pan-Islamic alliance (Padmanbhan, 1975:12).

Following the creation of Pakistan, India had a powerful Islamic rival competing for the same access, influence and resources. India considered the need for winning friends in the Arab world to be of national interest in the context of the international arena and tried to elicit Arab sympathy by giving political support to the Arab countries, in general and in the Arab-Israeli dispute, in particular.

Dixit published an article in the leading Indian newspaper *Indian Express* (11/12/1997) in which he discussed the following factors that influenced India's foreign policy towards Israel:

- The geographical proximity and the fact that the Arabs and other Muslim countries in the Middle East and in the Maghreb¹⁹⁰ could pose a geo-strategic threat to India or could adopt a hostile attitude, in terms of the national security of India, was a geo-strategic factor to be considered. India had been a link between the Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea, Atlantic Ocean and the Indian Ocean. Arab sea-lanes and air space was of vital economic and strategic interest to India.
- The economic factor also had a great influence on India's foreign policy, since the Arab world was a growing market for India and a large number of Indians were working in the Gulf, as well as other Muslim countries, contributing directly to the Indian economy and Indian foreign exchange reserves.
- Historical and cultural affinities with the Arab world added another dimension to the relations.

One year later, Dixit (1998:93) emphasises that in addition to the Indian support of the Palestinians and the Arabs: friendship with the Islamic countries was cultivated by India for the following reasons:

To counter Pakistani hostility, to be responsive to the religious, emotional and psychological feelings of the large Muslim citizenry of India. India's economic interests (as well as trade routes) were dependent on friendship with the Arab countries, which included India's dependence on the energy resources of the West Asian and Gulf regions.

Dixit did not consider the Cold War to be a factor in India's relations with Israel. However, during the Cold War, New Delhi had established close

¹⁹⁰ The Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) includes Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria and Libya.

ties with Arab countries, which were considered enemies of Israel (notably Iraq and Egypt, which were more secular than other Arab states). In fact, India supplied Iraq and Iran with technical military assistance. Iraq was a major source of oil for India and the Indian Air Force provided training to the Iraqi Air Force. India's relations with Iran were cordial as Iran was a market for Indian finished products and India supplied Iran with a small research reactor. The Indian-Egypt relations were close and cordial and the two countries cooperated in the joint venture of assembling a jet fighter. The Non-Aligned Movement was another factor that brought about close relations between Prime Minister Nehru and Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, with the Egyptian President Gamal Abdul Nasser becoming India's trusted ally.¹⁹¹

In contrast with Dixit, Cohen (2001:247) stresses that the bipolar world was an important factor that influenced India's foreign policy. During the Cold War, Moscow and Washington competed with each other and while the US, which was also an ally of Pakistan supported Israel; India, developed close relations with the Soviet Union. Following the Arab-Israeli war in 1967 the US emerged as the dominant power in the Middle East; consequently, American and Indian interests frequently clashed. Washington was critical of India's attempts at building a relationship with the revolutionary Iranian regime and also of its military relations with Iraq; while Israel supported the US foreign policy against India.¹⁹² In turn, India was critical of the Middle East peace process sponsored by the US; while remaining a staunch supporter of the Palestinians.

Baljit Singh (1976:17) points out that the ideological and political framework of India's foreign policy was underpinned by Nehru's strong convictions in this regard and firm intentions, driven by his strong

¹⁹¹ On bilateral relations between India and Egypt, see sections 3.8.1 and 3.8.3 and for details about the Indian stance on the Non-Aligned Movement, see section 3.9.2.3.

¹⁹² The Iranian Revolution under leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini took place in 1979.

principles. These principles, involved taking a stand against anti-colonialism, exploitation and racism, and later on, Non-Alignment and the importance that India attached to the UN.

Nehru's government proved to be extremely sympathetic towards the Palestinian Arabs and to their right to self-determination. Nehru incorporated this sympathy into his ideology of anti-colonialism, which was adopted later and pursued by the Non-Aligned Movement as well as its pro-Arab foreign policy. The growing importance of the Arab world in the international arena and in particular in the Non-Aligned Movement and the UN made the Arab countries an important international actor from the Indian point of view and influenced the Indian foreign policy towards Israel.

Ali Khan (1992:214-215) notes that the following international factors influenced India's foreign policy in the Middle East: India was not self-sufficient as far as energy resources were concerned and was dependent on the Arab region for oil. India was concerned with the possible politically adverse reaction from the Islamic world and/or Arab countries in the event of a change in foreign policy towards Israel. India did not want to take any political steps that would antagonise the Arab world. India's close relations with the former Soviet Union throughout the Cold War restricted its freedom in the sphere of international operations.¹⁹³

As clearly demonstrated in this sub-section, it is quite obvious that the web of external factors, in terms of multilateral relations, played a significant role in India's foreign policy towards Israel.

¹⁹³ For more details about India, Israel and the Soviet Union, see section 3.9.2.5.

3.9.2.1 The Palestinians and the Arab- Israeli conflict

As the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians was a key factor in India's relations with Israel and had a direct influence on India's foreign policy towards Israel between 1947 and 1991, it is essential to review them.

The State of Israel was established after the War of Independence, on 15 May 1948. Subsequently, the newly-born state was invaded by neighbouring Arab armies and Israeli forces stopped the invasion and struck back at each of the Arab fronts, followed by armistice agreements. A UN conciliation committee was convened in Lausanne (Switzerland) in May 1949 but to no avail and Jordan subsequently annexed the West Bank officially, while Egypt was left in control of the Gaza Strip. Eventually the Arab States adopted a comprehensive struggle strategy against Israel, including undermining Israel's legitimacy in the international arena and conducting economic warfare against them, as well as the closure of the Suez Canal by Egypt to Israeli vessels. Later on, Egypt also imposed a blockade on shipping to the Israeli port of Eilat and on 29 October 1956, Israel embarked on a military operation with Britain and France, known as the Suez Canal Military Operation (Shaham, 1998:30)¹⁹⁴.

In May 1964, the PLO was established and in June 1967, The Six-Day War broke out between Israel and Egypt, Jordan and Syria. The Arab armies were defeated and the return of the territories, which Israel had occupied during the Six-Day War, became the highest priority for the Arab countries, while the old question of Palestine was relegated to second place in the international arena (Price, 2003:95).¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁴ For details about the Suez Canal operation and India's stance on this operation, see sections 3.9.1.3 and 3.9.2.2.

¹⁹⁵ For details about the Six-Day war, see sections 3.9.1.3 and 3.9.2.2.

From mid-1968 up to August 1970, the neighbouring Arab countries engaged in static fighting against Israel's post Six-Day War lines. Since the 1970s, Lebanon had become the main basis from which PLO attacks were launched against Israel along its northern border. On 6 October 1973, the war that broke out between Israel, Egypt and Syria ended on 24 October 1973. Israel managed to stop the coordinated Egyptian-Syrian attack, but the war ushered in a new era in the history of the Israeli-Arab conflict.¹⁹⁶ On 21 December 1973, a regional peace conference together with the UN Security General was convened in Geneva. Although Israel, Egypt, Jordan, the Soviet Union and the US all participated, Syria refused to participate in the conference. Despite the conference breaking up after the opening session, it served as a basis for reaching disengagement agreements between Israel, Egypt and Syria (Shimoni, 1987:358).

In October 1974, the Rabat Arab summit decided that the PLO was the only legal representative of the Palestinian people and King Hussein of Jordan lost his status on the West Bank. In November 1974, Yasser Arafat, the chairperson of the PLO, was invited to address the UN General Assembly and his organisation was granted observer status. In 1975, the General Assembly adopted a resolution in which Zionism was equated with racism and in the same year, an interim agreement was signed between Egypt and Israel (Rolef, 1993:256).

In November 1977, the Egyptian President, Anwar Sadat, arrived in Jerusalem for an official visit; a political move that constituted a historic breakthrough in the relations between Israel and the neighbouring Arab countries. Only sixteen months later, a peace treaty was signed between Israel and Egypt (the Camp David Accords); personally aided by US President Carter (Raviv, 2001:222-235).

¹⁹⁶ For details about October war, see section 3.9.1.3.

In March 1978, Israel responded to the PLO attacks on Israeli settlements with a military operation in the course of which the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) occupied the area up to the Litani River in Northern Lebanon. In August 1980, the Autonomy Plan talks between Egypt and Israel regarding the Palestinians were suspended.¹⁹⁷ In July 1981, a military confrontation broke out between Israel and the PLO in South Lebanon and was followed, one year later in June 1982, by an Israeli large-scale military operation known as the Lebanese War in order to eliminate the armed Palestinian presence in south Lebanon. At the end of the war, the PLO was eventually forced out of Beirut to Tunis (Shimoni, 1987:63).

In March 1986, King Hussein announced the end of the collaboration between Jordan and the PLO. In November 1987, after the Amman Arab Summit Conference, all the Arab states, except Syria, renewed their diplomatic relations with Egypt. On 9 December 1987, the Palestinian uprising, known as the Palestinian Intifada, broke out. Civil disobedience on the West Bank and Gaza Strip was organised by active supporters of the PLO and continued until 1992.

In July 1988, King Hussein declared that his country no longer claimed the West Bank, that he was cutting Jordanian ties with the West Bank and that he accepted the claims of the PLO to secede from Jordan as an independent state. On 15 December 1988, the Palestinian National Council (PNC) adopted a resolution that announced the establishment of a Palestinian independent state, furthermore that the PLO was willing to accept the UN resolution regarding the Israeli-Arab conflict, to recognise the State of Israel and to desist from its terrorist activities. On 14 May

¹⁹⁷ The Camp David Accords signed in 1978 between Israel and Egypt included two agreements: a framework for the conclusion of a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel and a framework for peace in the Middle East, which was supposed to also deal with the Palestinian question and the future of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

1989, the National Unity Government in Israel adopted an Israeli peace initiative, but the government was dissolved in March 1990. During the first Gulf War, in August 1990, the PLO, unlike South Arabia, Egypt and Syria, supported the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Israel was attacked by about 40 Iraqi Scud missiles, but in order not to endanger the American coalition with the Arab countries it remained neutral and did not participate in the military attack against Iraq (Raviv, 2001:264-265).

In March 1991, after seven months of shuttle diplomacy in the Middle East, the Secretary of State, James Baker, obtained an agreement from all the parties directly involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict, to participate in an international conference in Madrid. The PLO was excluded from the Madrid Conference and the Palestinians were included in a Jordan-Palestinian delegation composed of Palestinian local leaders.¹⁹⁸

The Madrid Conference was followed by bilateral talks, which commenced in Washington on 10 December 1991 and the Palestinians were represented by individuals from the West Bank and Gaza who were not associated with the PLO.¹⁹⁹ Multilateral talks on regional issues opened in Moscow on 28 January 1992.²⁰⁰ The Palestinians did not participate in the Moscow meeting because they insisted that the PLO should participate formally; a demand that was rejected by Israel (Shaham, 1998:513-514).

The Israeli-Arab conflict and the Palestinian issue are essential factors that need to be considered in the analysis of India's relations with Israel between the years 1948 and 1991. This is clearly demonstrated by the fact that Prime Minister Rao of India found it necessary to consult with the

¹⁹⁸ In fact, the PLO pervaded the ranks of the Palestinian delegation's advisors and spokespersons.

¹⁹⁹ For more details about the Madrid Conference, see section 4.8.1.

²⁰⁰ The issues on the agenda in the multilateral talks were water, environment, and economic cooperation, arms control and refugees.

Chairman of the PLO, Yasser Arafat regarding the establishment of diplomatic relations with the State of Israel.²⁰¹

3.9.2.2 India's stance in the United Nations

Since independence, India had attached considerable importance to the UN as an international forum. Nehru was a staunch supporter of the UN and Indian cooperation with international organisations is mandated in the Indian constitution. India's record in the UN is extensive, including the traditional anti-Israeli sponsoring of UN resolutions, as well as pro-Arab voting. As described by Sudha Rao (1972), the Indian conduct and voting in the UN demonstrate India's pro-Arab stance on issues related to Israel. This will be discussed below:

The Partition Plan and the establishment of the State of Israel - On 28 April 1947, the UN General Assembly was convened to handle the question of Palestine and as a result, an *ad hoc* investigating board known as UNSCOP was established. India was one of the members of the committee, which was given broad powers to investigate the question of Palestine. Earlier, a joint Russian–Indian proposal requesting a democratic independent state in the whole of Palestine without delay, had been defeated. Instead, the majority of the committee recommended that Palestine should be partitioned, whereas the minority report proposed that an independent federal state of Palestine should be created, which India supported.

Subsequently, on 29 November 1947, following the UNSCOP report, the General Assembly adopted an amended Partition Plan in Palestine. India was one of thirteen delegations that voted against the Partition Plan and after the resolution had been passed, India, Pakistan and the Arab

²⁰¹ For details about Arafat's meeting with Rao, see section 3.8.9.

delegates declared that they did not feel bound by the decision and reserved the right to take whatever decision they thought fit (Rao, 1972:27).²⁰²

The head of the Indian delegation to the UN was Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, Nehru's sister, who had the following to say on the Palestinian question in her speech in the committee:

Palestine is a predominantly Arab country and in any solution we may find this position of predominance should not be altered to the disadvantage of the Arabs. Secondly, we should recognize the existence of Palestine of a vigorous active and politically conscious Jewish community, which within the framework of the state should not only be entitled to citizenship rights but to lead a life of its own. Clearly therefore a solution of the Palestine question can only be on the basis of an Arab state, in which the Jewish in the areas where they are in a majority will enjoy wide powers of authority. Such a solution also satisfies the claim of the people of Palestine to independence, which in the view of the Indian delegation is a matter of urgency (CZA S25/5469, 11/10/1947).

The admission of Israel to the UN – on 14 May 1948, the new State of Israel was born formally as an independent state and one year later, in May 1949, the UN General Assembly admitted Israel to the organisation as the 59th member (with a vote of thirty seven in favour of admitting Israel to twelve against the move and with nine abstentions). India voted against Israel's application to become a member of the UN. The Indian representative explained India's negative vote by arguing that this stand was completely consistent with India's past political views on that matter. He also added that the Indian government could not recognise Israel as it had achieved its objectives through armed force (Rao, 1972:68).

The Suez Canal operation (Suez crisis) - India supported Egypt throughout the deterioration of relations between Egypt and the Western

²⁰² For more details about the attitude of the Indian representative to UNSCOP and India's stance on the Partition Plan, see also sections 3.9.2.2 and 4.3.

powers during the Suez crisis (after the Suez Canal had been nationalised by Egypt). India's main concern regarding the Suez Canal was influenced by its economic importance and therefore the Indian government strongly emphasised the need for a solution achieved by means of negotiations and avoidance of any actions that might affect the flow of shipping through the canal.²⁰³ India even tried to solve the crisis by offering Egypt sovereignty over the Suez Canal, while making it accessible to all other countries. The issue, however, continued to be deadlocked until 29 October 1956, when Israel, launched a military attack on Egypt jointly with Britain and France. On 31 October 1956, Prime Minister Nehru issued an official Indian statement denouncing the Israeli aggression and in which he also condemned the military operation.²⁰⁴

At the Special Emergency Session at the UN, India continued to condemn the invasion of Egypt by the armed forces of Great Britain, France and Israel and on 2 November 1956, the General Assembly adopted a resolution that urged an immediate cease-fire by all parties and the withdrawal of troops behind the armistice line. In addition, on 4 November 1956, the General Assembly passed a UN resolution, sponsored by India, which indicated that all the parties had not complied with the previous resolution and urged the assembly to take effective measures to ensure the implementation of the resolution. On the same day, India supported a Canadian sponsored resolution requesting the Secretary General to submit a plea for setting up a UN emergency force for supervising peace and a cease-fire. On 5 November 1956, after a cease-fire had been accepted the General Assembly established a UN Command for a UN emergency force. Subsequently, India became a member of the Advisory

²⁰³At this point in time, in the year 1957, as indicated by Minister of Defence Krishna Menon in the Indian Parliament, 70% of India's export and import passed through the Suez Canal.

²⁰⁴For details about Nehru's statement on the Suez crisis including his speech in the Indian Parliament, see sections 3.8.1.

Committee, which was established to advise the UN Secretary General regarding the establishment and supervision of the force. On 7 November 1956, India co-sponsored the resolution of nineteen Afro-Asian countries, pressing for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Egypt and co-sponsored a similar resolution, again, on 24 November 1956 (Rao, 1972:55).

On 16 November 1956, at the Lok Sabha, India aggressively condemned Israel and accused the Government of Israel of launching a sudden and premeditated attack on Egypt. They indicated that the aggression against Egypt should be stopped and the foreign troops withdrawn (India's Foreign Policy/Selected Speeches, 1961:534-538).

The Anglo-French troops completed their withdrawal on 22 December 1956 and Israel followed with the same military move and withdrew its forces behind the armistice line in March 1957. The time lag gave India an opportunity to co-sponsor two further anti-Israeli resolutions on 19 January 1957 and on 2 February 1957, deploring the Israeli non-compliance with the UN withdrawal resolution. Nevertheless, India's anti-Israeli attitude in the UN continued after the full Israeli withdrawal to the armistice line.

Six-Day War - the Six-Day War between Israel and Egypt, Syria and Jordan broke out on 5 June 1967 and left Israel in occupation of the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights and the West Bank of Jordan. India's support of the Arab position during the Six-Day War was demonstrated by the Minister of External Affairs of India, M. C. Chagla, in his speech in the fifth Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly on 21 June 1967:

Israel struck a lightning blow against its Arab neighbours it is also a matter of record and deep regret to us that Israel has through violations of general armistice agreements strengthened its positions, added territory to its areas, and used its modern powerful military machine to expel Arabs from their lands and homes (Naaz, 1999:242).

After the adoption of the UN Security Council Resolution 242, which called for Israel's withdrawal from the occupied territories on 22 November 1967, the Indian representative to the UN, G. Parthasarathi, pointed out that his country understood the resolution to mean that Israeli forces were to withdraw from all the territories occupied by Israel during the war in 1967 (Dishon, 1967:70).²⁰⁵

Repeal of UN Resolution that equated Zionism with racism - on 16 December 1991, India voted with the majority, to repeal the General Assembly Resolution of 1975 that equated Zionism with racism. India had been one of the sponsors of that resolution in 1975 and India's vote signalled a change in India's foreign policy towards Israel in terms of multilateral relations (Ali Khan, 1992:215).

The importance attached by India to the UN as an international forum, combined with its ideology of Non-Alignment and the special traditionally friendly relations of India with the Arab world were the main reasons for a conduct of Indian anti-Israeli foreign policy in the UN arena, including the sponsoring of anti Israeli resolutions during the years from 1948 to 1991. Not least of all, was the factor of the growing Arab political weight in the UN.

3.9.2.3 India's stance at the Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung (18 – 24 April 1955) with regard to Israel

Israel was excluded from the Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung, Indonesia from 18 to 24 April 1955, even though the State of Israel was recognised by three of the five conference sponsors. According to Ran Kochan (1976:250-254), Nehru and U Nu of Burma, favoured the inclusion of Israel and the five sponsors of the Afro-Asian Conference had declared

²⁰⁵ The response of Israeli Foreign Minister, Abba Eban, was "Resolution 242 says what it says and not what it specifically and consciously avoided saying" (Dishon, 1967).

that all independent states in the region would be invited, but Pakistan and Indonesia opposed it, while Ceylon (Sri Lanka) chose to remain neutral on the issue.

The preparatory meeting of the Afro-Asian Conference took place in Colombo, Ceylon, in April 1954. This was also the first Third World Governmental forum to express a collective opinion on the Middle East. In that forum, the Pakistani Prime Minister proposed an anti-Israeli resolution. However, the Indian Prime Minister Nehru and the Burmese Premier U Nu made it obvious that they would not support the resolution. The resolution was modified but was still unacceptable to both, Nehru and U Nu. Eventually, the final statement was very different from the original Pakistani proposal. It expressed concern for the sufferings of Arab refugees in Palestine and called for their rehabilitation in their original homes. Nonetheless, it contained no direct condemnation of Israel, nor did it specifically refer to it by name.

When the five heads of states, who were the sponsors of the Afro-Asian Conference (India, Burma, Ceylon, Indonesia and Pakistan) met at Bogor in Indonesia, in December 1954, as a preparatory meeting. The aim was to work out an agenda and to determine the list of countries to be invited for the proposed Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung. The Middle East question was raised and it was evident that the question of Israel's invitation would raise difficulties.

The Arab countries and the Arab League council threatened to boycott the conference if Israel were invited.²⁰⁶ Consequently, both Nehru and U Nu yielded to Arab pressure. Nehru explained his stance as follows:

²⁰⁶ For details about the Arab League council's pressure, see section 4.9.1.2.

We felt that logically Israel should be invited but when we saw that the consequences of that invitation would be that many others would not be able to come then we agreed (to exclude Israel) (Brecher, 1961:133).

On another occasion Nehru explained his attitude in writing to his four conference's colleagues: "In the final analysis it is better not to include Israel if that is likely to lead to the Arab countries keeping away (Kochan, 1976:251)."

At the Afro-Asian Conference itself, it appeared from the outset that the Israeli-Arab conflict would top the agenda. Despite the Israeli absence from the Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung, it took the participants three days to agree on the Middle East resolution. The Arabs were determined to ignore Nehru's advice that they could not end the controversy without engaging in talks or negotiations and it was only after realising that the voting procedure required a unanimous agreement that they agreed on a compromised resolution.

The Joint Statement of the Afro-Asian Conference endorsed the following principles: respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations, abstention from acts or threats of aggression or the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any country and a settlement of all international disputes by peaceful means.

The Joint Statement also contained a section referring to the Middle East:

In view of the existing tension in the Middle East caused by the situation in Palestine and of the danger of that tension to world peace, the Asian-African Conference declared its support of the rights of the Arab people of Palestine and called for the implementation of the United Nations' resolutions on Palestine and the achievement of a peaceful settlement of the Palestine question (Eytan, 1958:174).

Most seriously for Israel, when the Afro-Asian Conference convened, Nehru accepted Hajj Amin al Husseini, the former grand Mufti of Jerusalem and Palestinian leader in the 1948 war as a member of the Yemeni delegation. During the conference, no statesmen dared to contradict him and his numerous Arab supporters (Goldstein, 2004:240).²⁰⁷ The relevant part of the Joint Statement of the Afro-Asian Conference concerning the Israeli-Arab conflict was in favour of the Arabs and viewed the tension in the Middle East as a danger to world peace. It also declared its support for the rights of the Arab people of Palestine, called for implementation of the UN resolutions on Palestine and called for a peaceful settlement of the Palestinian question. On the other hand, nowhere in the joint statement of the Afro-Asian Conference was Israel mentioned by name (Rao, 1972).²⁰⁸

3.9.2.4 India's stance in the Non-Aligned Movement with regard to Israel

A group of twenty-five heads of states met in Belgrade in September 1961 and established the NAM. Six years had elapsed between the Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung and the next grand meeting of the Belgrade Conference. The fact that President Nasser of Egypt was one of the conveners of the conference in Belgrade explained why Israel was excluded. It also meant the inclusion of the Middle East conflict on the agenda, despite India's suggestion that local and bilateral conflicts should be eliminated from the conference agenda. Nehru even supported U Nu, the Burmese Prime Minister, who opposed the notion and threatened to disassociate himself from the conference should a strong anti-Israeli resolution suggested by Egypt be passed, on behalf of the other Arab

²⁰⁷ For details about the Arabs Israeli conflict, see section 3.9.2.1.

²⁰⁸ For details about the Middle East resolution of the Afro-Asian Conference as well as the conference, see sections 3.9.2.3 and 4.9.1.2.

participants. Because of Burma's stand and the support of Nehru as well as other leaders, the original draft, which condemned the creation of the State of Israel strongly, failed to receive wide support and a milder Burmese-Yugoslav (the host country) draft was proposed and eventually passed (Kochan, 1976:256-257).²⁰⁹ Part II section 10 of the final resolution of the Belgrade conference declared:

The participants in the conference condemned the imperialist policies pursued in the Middle East and declare their support for the full restoration of all the rights of the Arab people of Palestine in conformity with the charter and resolutions of the United Nations (Oron, 1961:191-192).

In October 1964, the second NAM summit took place in Cairo, Egypt. In spite of persistent efforts by the Arabs, the conference adopted a resolution similar to the one in Belgrade, with an additional reference to the inalienable right of the Palestinians to self-determination. They also referred to support for the Arab people of Palestine in their struggle for liberation from colonialism and racism, but without mentioning Israel's name. In September 1970, the NAM was convened in Lusaka, Zambia and it adopted a tougher and more censorious stance in its resolution on the Middle East conflict. It stated that the continued Israeli presence in the occupied territories (territories occupied during the Six-Day War in 1967) constituted a violation of UN principles, a challenge to the aims of non-alignment and a grave threat to peace. The Middle East issue became a frequently discussed item on the NAM agenda, while the only change was reflected in the growing harshness and severity with which Israel was treated. The fourth conference of the heads of states of the NAM met in Algiers in September 1973. Subsequently, a nine-point resolution on the Middle East situation and the Palestinian issue went far beyond any text previously presented against Israel. The explicit anti-Israeli tone since

²⁰⁹ For details about Nehru's attitude, see section 3.8.1

then had become the normal procedure in the ongoing NAM conferences (Kochan, 1976:256-258).

India as a prominent leader and a founder of the NAM became an active anti-Israeli force in the movement, especially under leadership of Indira Gandhi.²¹⁰ She blamed Israel for adopting a policy of force against the Arabs, with the support of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs. She demanded immediate withdrawal from the occupied territories, pledged support for the Palestinians in their struggle for a homeland and recommended adequate international measures, including sanctions, against Israel.

3.9.2.5 India, Israel and the Soviet Union

The relations between India and the Soviet Union were based on mutual national self-interest. The Cold War resulted in India forming closer ties with the Soviet Union based on the convergence of Indian and Soviet interests (Hewitt, 1997:100). Although India could rely on the Soviet Union for diplomatic and military aid, its non-alignment policy enabled it to accept Soviet support without subscribing to Soviet global policies. The Soviet leaders endorsed the entire range of Indian foreign policy and offered India new avenues for trade and economic assistance. It needs to be pointed out that Indian acquisition of Soviet military equipment was especially important because purchases were made against Indian rupee payments and provisions were made for the licensed manufacture and modification of arms in India.

In August 1971, a twenty-year Treaty of Peace and Cooperation was signed between the two countries. After the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, in the 1980s, India did not censure the Soviet actions openly

²¹⁰ For details about Indira Gandhi's attitude towards Israel, see section 3.8.3.

and labelled UN resolutions as useless Cold War exercises. However, in private meetings India did pressurise the Soviets to withdraw from Afghanistan (Heitzman & Worden, 1996:544-505).

India had cooperated with the Soviet Union against Israel in the international organisations as well as in the NAM and both countries pursued an anti-Israeli and pro-Arab foreign policy as their long-term strategic interest.²¹¹ In contrast, Israel had sided with the US that supported Pakistan and China, India's rivals in that part of South Asia. In the two decades preceding the establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and India and before the end of the Cold War, India's foreign policy became complementary to the Soviet Union's foreign policy. At the same time, Israel's foreign policy became complementary to the foreign policy of the US.²¹² In 1988, the Soviet Union informed New Delhi through its Deputy Foreign Minister, Vladimir Petrovsky, that Moscow would initiate the process of normalising relations with Israel as well as diplomatic relations as soon as the international peace conference was convened (*National Herald*, 18/12/1988).

3.9.2.6 India, Israel and the US

After independence, India declined joining any of the American sponsored regional alliances pursuing a non-aligned foreign policy influenced by Nehru's vision of India as a peace promoting Asian state. India saw the US and its foreign policy in South Asia as the factor that drew the Soviet Union into the region. India devoted its foreign policy to the reduction of the American presence in Asia, while maintaining its ties with both superpowers using its good relations with Moscow to balance American power in South Asia.

²¹¹ For details about India's stance in NAM, see section 3.9.2.4.

²¹² For details about India, Israel and the US, see section 3.9.2.6.

During the Cold War, India gradually found itself on the Soviet side despite its non-aligned foreign policy.²¹³ In addition, the absence of economic and cultural ties with US, the hostility of many Indian leaders, the American aid to Pakistan and the Cold War prevented the US from playing a constructive role in the region and developing close bilateral relations. In the eyes of India, the Pakistan alliance with the US was another consequence of the Cold War and India's mistrust of the US, as a military power, remained up to the 1990s (Hewitt, 1997:91). India suspected that the US was India's strategic opponent and strongly objected to the growing military relations between America and Pakistan. The greatest concern of the US, on the other hand, was not to be dragged into a regional crisis between India and Pakistan, as long as no American strategic interests were at stake. America left the role of regional conflict manager to the Soviet Union, while concentrating on non-proliferation as a centrepiece of its regional foreign policy, a policy that was considered a threat to vital Indian interests (Cohen, 2001:271).²¹⁴

The Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989 had led the US to re-assess its bilateral relations with Pakistan and Washington followed a more even-handed approach, urging India and Pakistan to settle their disputes peacefully. On the other hand, in the late 1980s, India and the US had differences over the issue of the legal protection of intellectual property rights. Until 1991, India and the US had divergent views on a wide range of international issues including the Middle East in general and the Israeli-Arab conflict in particular.

²¹³ For details about India, Israel and the Soviet Union, see section 3.9.2.5.

²¹⁴ America urged India to sign the Treaty of Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and called on India to refrain from developing a ballistic missile capability. These demands were rejected by India.

Considering the unstable and frustrating relations between India and the US, in particular during the Cold War when India had relied on the Soviet Union, the US political ability to promote full diplomatic relations between Israel and India was limited. Since independence, India regarded Israel as a state that had been set up with the support of imperialist powers in general and the US in particular. Prime Minister Nehru pointed out that in his view, the US government had handled the Palestine question extremely ineptly and opportunistically (Parthasarthy, 1985:126).²¹⁵ In 1987 the Minister of Finance at that time, N. D. Tiwari, stated that India was not going to change its policy towards Israel despite threats of a cut in US assistance (Patriot, 28/8/1987). After the Gulf War, the US pursued its regional interests and used its Cold War alliances to entrench itself as the Gulf police force without showing any sign that it would withdraw from India's periphery.

Over the years, the US ability to exert a positive influence on India's relations with Israel remained limited. During this time there was no real effort by America in this regard, with the exception of the American Jewish Organisations and Congressman Solarz.²¹⁶ The US influence regarding India had increased after the first Gulf War when India realised that it was in its interest to come to terms with the American power. The fact that India became more vulnerable to US pressure due to the American influence in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank could clear the way for closer economic cooperation of India with the US (Naaz, 1999:244).²¹⁷

²¹⁵ For details about Nehru as Indian predominant leader, see section 3.8.1.

²¹⁶ For details about the American Jewish Organisation and Congressman Solarz's efforts, see sections 3.8.6, 3.9.1.4 and 4.9.1.4.

²¹⁷ For details about the Indian economic liberalisation as a contextual determinant in Indian foreign policy change regarding Israel, see section 5.4.4.

3.9.2.7 India, Israel and the People's Republic of China (PRC)

From 1949, when the Communists seized power in China, up to 1992, Israel was isolated from China. Israel had been the first Middle Eastern country to recognise the People's Republic of China (PRC) in the 1950s. It was followed later by only a handful of Arab states (Egypt, Iraq, Syria and Yemen). The hostility of the PRC towards Israel at that time was an expression of the Afro-Asian solidarity following the Afro-Asian conference at Bandung in 1955.²¹⁸ The Bandung Conference improved Indo-China relations, but at the same time, it froze any embryonic Israel-PRC relations. This was the case despite the fact that the Indo-Chinese war in 1962 contributed to the temporary improvement of bilateral relations between India and Israel. The decades after the Afro-Asian conference saw India and China moving closer to the Arab world and both used anti-Israeli rhetoric on international forums.²¹⁹ From the 1970s up to 1991, there was unofficial military contact and cooperation between Israel and the PRC and Offices of Interest were opened in Beijing and Tel-Aviv (Goldstein, 2004:239). Israel's policy towards China posed some problems regarding India and Israel's military cooperation with China was watched closely and monitored by India in order to make sure it did not threaten India's strategic interests.

3.10 Post Independence India: The state and society level of analysis

The state and society level of analysis underscores the influence of national factors on foreign policy, concentrating on the foreign policy

²¹⁸ For details about India's stance at the Afro-Asian conference at Bandung, see section 3.9.2.3.

²¹⁹ For details about the improvement of relations, see sections 3.8.1 and 3.9.1.3

processes carried out by ultimate decision units.²²⁰ As part of India's foreign policy planning and foreign policy-making regarding Israel, the following national factors are analysed: The political factors, namely the Indian parliament, the Indian party system, the cabinet, the Prime Minister secretariat as well as his inner circle, the Ministry of External Affairs as a representative of the Indian bureaucracy, the Indian Intelligence service, media and public opinion, are analysed as key units in the state and society level of analysis. The Jewish and Muslim communities in India, the business community and India's Shalom Alumni Club, are analysed as pertinent pressure groups.

India had embraced democracy since its independence, but although it was a parliamentary democracy, it was a democracy with a paternal face on the one hand and with Third World characteristics combined with socialism on the other, orchestrated by Prime Minister Nehru.²²¹ India's foreign policy after independence was based on policy also shaped directly by Nehru. The long duration of the INCP's rule created generations of Indian politicians as well as bureaucrats, particularly in the Ministry of External Affairs, committed to Nehruvian internationalism. The political map in India after Nehru – the Gandhi dynasty's domination until 1991, was unstable. As a result, political attention was focussed on domestic politics mainly and erosion of the Nehruvian framework of the international role played by India, gradually took place (Heitzman & Worden, 1996:463). Indian diplomacy started to concentrate on South Asia but tried to maintain some degree of formal continuation of Nehruvian internationalism including its pro-Arab and anti-Israeli foreign policy.

²²⁰ For details about the theories, see sections 2.2 and 2.3

²²¹ For more details about Nehru, see section 3.8.1.

3.10.1. The Indian Parliament

The Indian Parliament was expected to be an important factor in foreign policy-making, based on article no. 246 of the Indian Constitution, which empowered it to legislate on all matters concerning India's relations with any foreign country. In reality, the Parliament had limited input in the conduct of foreign policy and the guiding principle was that the Prime Minister of India, who was also the leader of the majority party had the most power to make decisions and therefore traditionally, parliamentary votes on foreign policy subjects were redundant. The executive dominance of the Parliament was almost total during Nehru's time (namely from 1947 to 1964) even though he encouraged debates on foreign policy issues (about half a dozen debates on foreign relations a year, apart from calls to attention, motions and weekly Question Hours) (Cohen, 2001:69).²²² In the light of political reality, the Parliament played a very limited role in shaping Indian's foreign policy during Nehru's tenure, as is explained by Harish Kapur:

Even in the Parliament Consultative Committee especially established for foreign affairs, the Members of Parliament listened to Nehru with a mixture of awe and admiration and hardly contributed anything by way of an input to foreign policy (Kapur, 1994:168).

Under the leadership of Indira and Rajiv Gandhi, the Parliament lost whatever role in foreign relations Nehru allowed it, although the two leaders kept insisting that national consensus on foreign policy based on Nehruvian principles was attained, in fact it was fully controlled by them (Cohen, 2001:70; Schaffer & Saigal-Arora, 1999:144). With the emergence of coalition and minority governments (Desai in 1977, Singh in 1989 and

²²² For details about Nehru, see section 3.8.1.

Shekhar in 1992)²²³ the parliament began to occupy a more important role in India's foreign relations; however it did not affect India's foreign policy towards Israel (Kapur, 1994:164). Through debates between the government and opposition or through consensus regarding what was politically feasible, the Parliament acquired an increasing role in foreign policy. However, there was a strong anti-Israeli attitude within the INCP; consequently, it was easy to raise support for the Government's anti-Israeli and pro-Arab policy in the Parliament during the INCP's term of office.

Nevertheless, there was some criticism of that policy by the opposition bench, particularly by the Jana Sangh Party and later on by the BJP members.²²⁴ In addition, objections to India's foreign policy towards Israel were also made by other opposition parties such as the Janata Party,²²⁵ the Paraja Socialist Party²²⁶ and the Swatantra Party²²⁷ before it. Furthermore, there were some exceptional Members of Parliament and politicians, such as Subramaniam Swamy of the Janata Party, who took their objections to the Indian policy towards Israel one step further, but it did not help to change India's policy. Swamy (1982:20) makes the following cynical remark:

Recently I had asked the Minister of state of external affairs, Mr. A.A. Rahim, during Question Hour in the Lok Sabha a straight question: does India recognize De Jure the State of Israel? The Minister fumbled, looked pathetically towards the official gallery for guidance, then mumbled "I don't know" and sat down.

Following that event, Swamy published a statement (under rule 377) that India should honour its commitment towards Israel made 32 years earlier, namely on 18 September 1950. He also added that India should dispatch

²²³ For details about them, see sections 3.8.4, 3.8.7 and 3.8.8.

²²⁴ For details about the Jana Sangh and BJP, see section 3.10.2.2.

²²⁵ For details about the Janata Party see, section 3.10.2.3.

²²⁶ For details about the Paraja Socialist Party, see section 3.10.2.4

²²⁷ For details about the Swatantra Party, see section 3.10.2.5.

an ambassador to Israel; however, no official response from the Indian Government was forthcoming.

The anti-Israeli consensus group within the Indian Parliament was weakened following its criticism of the Arab countries that had failed to support India in its hour of need in the wars against China and Pakistan. In 1967, the Minister of External Affairs, M.C. Chagla was singled out by members of the Parliament and was accused of being more pro-Arab (as a Muslim) than the Arabs themselves (Singh, 1976:57).²²⁸ Consequently, the anti-Israeli consensus in the Parliament was weakened (although not amongst INCP members), but it did not have any political impact. Only in November 1991, did the first real political debate take place in the Upper House of the Parliament (Rajya Sabha). On this occasion, various opposition members, led by Parmod Mahajan and Ram Jethmalani from the BJP, Subramaniam Swamy from the Janata Party and Yashwant Sinha from the Samajwadi Janata Party attacked the official Indian foreign policy towards Israel, calling for the establishment of fully-fledged diplomatic relations between the two countries (Yegar, Govrin & Oded, 2002:545).

3.10.2. The Indian party system

Since independence, India had developed a multi-party system. The attention of all the political parties in India as well as India's elite, particularly during the time of unstable coalitions, was focussed on domestic politics. The political system in India was a key factor as far as India's foreign relations with Israel prior to 1991 were concerned. Importantly, diplomatic relations with Israel were unacceptable to the INCP in Nehru's time as well as during Indira's two tenures in power. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the Janata Party, the Swatantra Party and

²²⁸ Following the accusations, Chagla subsequently resigned from his post.

the Paraja Socialist Party, as well as the Jana Sangh and Paraja Parties before it were considered to be adherents of the idea of having full diplomatic relations with Israel, but lacked the political power to implement it. Several politicians, mostly from the opposition (but also a few low-rank politicians from the INCP) also supported the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel, but to no political avail (Park, 1962:295; Shimoni, 1991:E10). The following political parties are studied with regard to India's foreign policy towards Israel:

3.10.2.1 Indian National Congress Party (INCP)

The foreign policy and the strategic political perspective of the INCP were dominated after independence by Nehru's view of the world (Cohen, 2001:37-40).²²⁹ Even when the INCP departed from Nehruvian principles, the party insisted on a national consensus on foreign policy, based on Nehruvian principles. In fact, it was India's Nehruvian foreign policy and politics that kept India and Israel politically apart (Kapila, 2000).

During his tenure as Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs (1947-1964), Nehru kept the members of the INCP well informed, since he regarded it an essential part of the democratic process. He was rarely challenged on foreign policy matters and year after year the INCP passed resolutions in the Parliament, almost invariably framed by Nehru himself, which gave full support to the government's foreign policy; namely Nehru's politics (Brecher, 1957:11). The open-minded approach of Nehru about the political need to update the members of the INCP on Indian foreign issues was not applied in the case of Israel. Relations with Israel were rarely brought up by him in the INCP's meetings, contrary to his practice regarding other international matters. David Hacoheh, who was an Israeli

²²⁹ For details about Nehru's policy towards Israel, see section 3.8.1.

diplomat in Burma and a veteran Labour Party leader, met his Indian friends in Bombay during a visit to India in 1956. They informed him that the question of relations with Israel had never been brought up by Nehru at party meetings (Hacohen, 1974: 266).

Indian foreign policy matters were supported by the INCP members by consensus, which was easy to achieve in the case of Israel, considering the traditional pro-Arab approach and the anti-Israeli atmosphere in the INCP in general and among the elite of the party in particular. The INCP had opposed the creation of the State of Israel as a separate independent Jewish homeland.²³⁰ In fact, Israel was considered a product of Western powers and was seen to align itself with them (the Western powers); while the INCP traditionally supported national movements in the Arab world. After independence, the INCP did not want to offend the Muslim bloc within the party or the Muslim population in India by improving bilateral relations with Israel.²³¹ Close relations with the Arab world were considered to be in the national interest of India and were strongly encouraged by the INCP. The predominantly passive anti-Israeli attitude and climate in the INCP, which prevailed in the party, were particularly strong among the elite of the party.

In September 1950, following recognition of the State of Israel by India, the Foreign Affairs Department of the INCP sent a diplomatic circular to Israel. The circular welcomed the recognition of the State of Israel and declared that it would be followed by the exchange of diplomatic representatives between the two countries (Swamy, 1982:22). During the following years, there were some pro-Israeli supporters within the INCP, such as Mrs Saro Naidu and K.M. Panikkar²³² and middle ranking

²³⁰ For details about the historical reasons, see sections 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5.

²³¹ For details about the political power of the Indian Muslim community, see section 3.10.5.2.

²³² For details about Panikkar, see section 3.6.3.

politicians, such as S. Bux Singh and Ragunath Singh, but this was the exception that proved the rule of the anti-Israel consensus in Congress (Shimoni, 1991:E5).

Under Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi, the INCP became an extension of their personal rule and India's foreign policy was controlled directly by them (Schaffer & Saigal-Arora, 1999:144). Mrs. Gandhi, and later her son, Rajiv Gandhi, sharply curtailed political as well as international dissent within the party, but there was no disagreement about Israel in the INCP as far as the anti-Israeli and pro-Arab policy was concerned.²³³ During his tenure, Rajiv Gandhi tried to introduce steps to improve India's relations with Israel, but he had limited opportunities to do much, given the domestic political constraints, in particular, in his own party.²³⁴

The pro-Arab INCP foreign policy continued until 1991 and the party was even critical (in favour of the Arab parties) of the Middle East peace process, since it was sponsored by the US (Cohen, 2001:247). In December 1991, India voted with the majority at the UN to repeal the General Assembly Resolution of 1975 that equated Zionism with racism.²³⁵ The Indian voting provoked some INCP members, who saw it as a betrayal of Indian traditional policy towards the Arabs. Furthermore, they saw it as an unprincipled move against the Nehruvian tradition and principles, but the leaders of the party stood firm on the decision (Yegar, Govrin & Oded, 2002:547; Kumaraswamy, 2002:10).

²³³ For details about Indira Gandhi's policy towards Israel, see section 3.8.3.

²³⁴ For details about Rajiv Gandhi's policy towards Israel, see section 3.8.6.

²³⁵ For details about the Indian voting, see section 3.9.2.2.

3.10.2.2 Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)

The BJP was a right-wing party that started its political path with secular values (compared with the INCP that strove for communal policies).²³⁶ Many of the BJP founding members were originally members of and activists within the Jana Sangh Party, a party that operated within the parameters of the majority of Hindu principles and maintained that most Arab states did not deserve special treatment by India at the expense of Israel. They questioned the decision by India to maintain diplomatic relations with hostile states such as China and Pakistan, but not with Israel (Naaz, 1999:242). Leaders, such as L.K. Advani and A.B. Vajpayee, of the Jana Sangh Party, which was later transformed into the BJP while in opposition, frequently called for full diplomatic relations with Israel openly. They criticised the Government of India on that point but with little effect on India's foreign policy (Warzverger, 1977:22). In the Lok Sabha (Lower House) elections in 1977, the Jana Sangh Party won 87 seats and was part of the new government headed by the political Janata coalition (Seshia, 1998; Shimoni, 1959:166).

After being in power between 1977 and 1979, with Vajpayee as Minister of External Affairs, the Janata government, as stated by Vajpayee himself, continued with the pro-Arab foreign policy of their predecessors²³⁷ (Vajpayee, 1979:64). Nevertheless, two meetings by the Prime Minister of India at the time, Morarji Desai with Israeli high ranking officials took place in 1977. The first meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Israel, Moshe Dayan, was an extremely disappointing encounter yielded no political results. The second meeting with the Israeli Minister of Defence,

²³⁶ The meaning of the party's name is India's People Party

²³⁷ For more details about Vajpayee including his speech at the Parliament about the Janata's policy in the Middle East, see section 3.10.2.4.

Ezer Weizmann in London in June 1978, led to negotiations regarding a military arms deal through Cyprus (Swamy, 1982:22).²³⁸

The leaders of the Jana Sangh Party concentrated on the domestic political battle with Indira Gandhi and this left them with very little scope for any active foreign policy. In fact, most of the foreign policy issues were passed on to the Ministry of External Affairs, which traditionally held an anti-Israeli attitude. As a result, until the end of the Janata tenure no change was made in the Indian foreign policy towards Israel.²³⁹

In April 1980, the constitution of the newly born BJP, which consisted of the Jana Sangh Party and other right-wing groups, was drafted, but it contained very few Hindu ideological principles that could reach a larger Indian electorate. In 1984, the BJP won only two of the 545 seats in the Lower House in the ninth Lok Sabha elections and was forced for purposes of survival to seek its roots in the communal principles of Indian politics. Gradually the BJP increased its political power, which was situated in the Hindu middle classes and the urban areas. By 1992, after a series of ethnic religious secessionist uprisings (which had started in the 1980s), the Indian electorate that had lost faith in Congress secularism, looked to the BJP for a response to internal disturbances. The BJP, which mobilised the masses on religious grounds and economic issues, won 119 seats in the 1992 election and claimed to be the national alternative party (Seshia, 1998; Misra, 1999:48-50).

The BJP, like the Jana Sangh Party, was traditionally considered to be a political supporter of Israel in Indian politics. However, when it was part of V.P. Singh's coalition government, (headed by the Janata Dal Party from 2 December 1989 up to 7 November 1990), the BJP did not try to play an

²³⁸ For more details about the meeting between Dayan and Desai, see section 4.8.1.

²³⁹ For details about the Janata Government, see section 3.10.2.4.

active role in changing India's foreign policy towards Israel. Both parties joined hands, principally to forestall the return of Rajiv Gandhi to power (Kapur, 1994:198-200). The coalition of forces made it vulnerable to political and foreign policy criticism. Under such political circumstances, the Ministry of External Affairs re-emerged, after more than a decade of centralised and personalised foreign policy during the tenures of Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi. It operated as a leading element in India's foreign policy-making, while continuing with its pro-Arab foreign policy. The Indian pro-Arab approach became more prominent during the Gulf War in 1991 when India tried unsuccessfully to mediate the crisis while concluding that the major second-tier state (such as India) could become the object of American aggression (Cohen, 2001:295).²⁴⁰

When the decision to establish fully-fledged diplomatic relations with Israel was formulated by Rao's government he was strongly supported by the BJP. Three months earlier, in October 1991, the BJP All India National Conference officially endorsed the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel and made it part of the BJP's platform (Yegar, Govrin & Oded, 2002:547). Traditionally, the BJP was considered a staunch political supporter of Israel in the Indian political arena and it consistently demanded the establishment of full diplomatic relations with Israel. In addition, its support of Israel included visits of the party's leaders to Israel, debates in Parliament (particularly questions on the issue), political protests and criticism of India's foreign policy towards Israel.

3.10.2.3 Paraja Socialist Party

The Paraja Socialist Party had a long history of relations with Israel in general and friendly relations with the Mapai Party (the Israeli Labour

²⁴⁰ For details about India, Israel and the US, see section 3.9.2.6.

Party), in particular.²⁴¹ Already in 1950, the Indian United Socialist Organisation (USO) passed a resolution, which deplored the fact that the Government of India had not recognised the State of Israel:

The USO notes with deepest regret that Government of India has not seen her way yet to recognize the State of Israel. Israel is being considered by US a democratic force in Asia. It is a secular state based on progressive socialist principles and our cooperation with Israel appears to be long overdue (Archives of Labour Party, 101-50, 2/3/1950).

The Secretary General of the Paraja Socialist Party, Ashok Mehta, visited Israel in April 1953 and friendly relations developed between the Paraja Socialist Party and the Mapai Party, the ruling party in Israel, at the Asian Socialist International Conference, which took place in Bombay in 1956 (Hacohen, 1974:263-265).²⁴² Jaya Prakash Narayan, the party leader, visited Israel in September 1958 and due to his interest in the Israeli experience in nation building, cooperation and the national aid system, another visit followed. A delegation of five members of the Budhan Movement (a movement for a voluntary grass-roots land reform connected with the party, which was established by Narayan after his retirement from politics), visited Israel between 16 December 1959 and 20 January 1960 for a study tour. Another special seminar between 29 February 1960 and 1 June 1960 was organised by Israel for a delegation of 28 members of the Budhan Movement, including high ranking officials of the Paraja Socialist Party. Party members also participated in training courses in

²⁴¹ For details about Mapai Party, see section 4.10.2

²⁴² In March 1948, the socialists who formed a wing within the INCP (and before it, since 1934, within the INCM) called the Congress Socialist Party parted ways (Nasik Session) with the Congress Party. In 1952, the new party together with the Paraja Party and the Janata Front incorporated with other socialist groups and formed a new party: Paraja Socialist Party (without the Communist Party of India, which was considered by them to be a party with little regard to the stability and integrity of India and subservient to the Soviet Union). In March 1953, talks were held between Nehru and Jaya Prakash Narayan, the Paraja Socialist Party leader, in order to bring them into the government but the talks failed. Nehru himself, in a statement issued on the talks, which was published in the *India News*, (21/3/1953), said that after the INCP, the Paraja Socialist Party was the most important party in India (Shimoni, 1959:159-160).

Israel, particularly at the Afro-Asia Institute for Trade Unions and Cooperation Activities. Their aim was to study various Israeli development settlement cooperations (such as the “Kibbutz” and the “Moshav”)²⁴³ as well as advanced agriculture (Aynor & Avimor, 1990:308-309). During Narayan’s visit, in 1958, the Political Department of the Israel Trade Union Histadruth (affiliated to the Mapai Party), explored the option with the Paraja Socialist Party of opening an Israeli liaison office in New Delhi. This was supposed to take place with the support of the Labour Movement of Asia, in collaboration with the Indian National Trade Union Congress, but in the end it did not materialise. In April 1960, a delegation headed by Ashok Mahath represented the Paraja Socialist Party at the International Socialist Conference in Haifa (Aynor, Avimor & Kaminer, 1989:42-43).

The Paraja Socialist Party won only sixteen seats in the Lok Sabha in the parliamentary elections in 1967 following the resignation of its leadership. Ten years later, it held only two seats, having lost most of its political power and was eventually superseded in 1977 by the Janata coalition.²⁴⁴ Throughout the years up to 1977 the Paraja Socialist Party maintained contact with the Labour Party in Israel but made no significant contribution to the bilateral relations between India and Israel. This contact did not help to change India’s foreign policy towards Israel; instead it was a source of controversy within the Paraja Socialist Party itself, which had a large number of Muslim members (Shimoni, 1959:168).

3.10.2.4 Janata Party

In January 1977, the newly established Janata Party consisted of the Congress (O) Party, the Jana Sangh Party, the Paraja Socialist Party and other opposition parties based on ideological as well as on programmatic

²⁴³ Kibbutz is a collective settlement in Israel and Moshav is a cooperative settlement.

²⁴⁴ For details about the Janata coalition, see 3.10.2.4.

consensus.²⁴⁵ Together with some regional parties, the Janata Party formed a government in March 1977, but its inability to consolidate political rivalries among the leadership led to the demise of the Janata Government in 1979 that allowed the INCP to return to power in 1980.

Pro-Arab traditional policy was demonstrated during the tenure of the Janata Coalition Government in the years 1977 – 1979, headed by Morarji Desai with Vajpayee as Minister of External Affairs. Despite a secret meeting with the Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs in New Delhi and a meeting with the Israeli Defence Minister in London (that included talks on an arms deal and technology sales to India),²⁴⁶ no progress was made. It was made clear that the Janata Government would not establish diplomatic relations with Israel, unless it withdrew from the captured Arab land (Swamy, 1982:21). The Janata Government foreign policy was demonstrated clearly by the Minister of External Affairs Vajpayee's speech:

The Janata government has continued the country's traditional policy on West Asia and our policy remains a principled one. Israel's aggressive acquisitions and claims, arising from the mists of biblical history are untenable there can be no durable peace, less so for Israel itself, without the complete withdrawal by it from all occupied Arab territories and without recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to form their own national state (Vajpayee, 1979:64).²⁴⁷

V.P. Singh's defection from the INCP in 1987 enabled opposition factions from the Janata Party and Bharatiya Lok Dal Party to form the Janata Dal Party. The Janata Dal Party together with some regional parties formed the National Front Government, which defeated the INCP in the

²⁴⁵ For details about the INCP, see section 3.10.2.1, about the Janata. Sangh Party see sub-section 3.10.2.2 and about the Paraja Socialist Party, see section 3.10.2.3.

²⁴⁶ For details about the meeting with the Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs, see section 3.8.4.

²⁴⁷ West Asia in terms of Indian terminology relates to the Middle East. For details about Vajpayee, see section 3.9.1.4 and for more details about the BJP, see section 3.10.2.2.

parliamentary elections in 1989. Following the BJP's withdrawal of support from the National Front Government, the government lost a parliamentary vote of confidence on 7 November 1990. Significantly, two days prior to the vote, Chandra Shekhar, the former Janata Party president, formed a minority government with the backing of the INCP that lasted four months (Heitzman & Worden, 1996:476-478).

The Janata Government headed by V.P. Singh did not change the Indian traditional pro-Arab foreign policy towards Israel either.²⁴⁸ Chandra Shekhar's minority government that had succeeded Singh's government was not interested in international politics in general and in Israel in particular. Furthermore, the government was busy trying to survive politically (the party had only 68 supporters in the Lok Sabha, which consisted of 473 members). However, two conciliatory gestures were actually made towards Israel, namely the meeting of Prime Minister Shekhar with the Israeli Consul and permitting the National Young Tennis Team of Israel to participate in an international tennis tournament in India. A year earlier, a similar request by an Israeli tennis team was refused by India (Yegar, Govrin & Oded, 2002:545).²⁴⁹

The Janata Party was considered a pro-Israeli party, but political instability together with local political circumstances and a lack of political strength, prevented the party from effecting any significant change to foreign policy towards Israel. Political issues, including foreign policy and particularly sensitive issues, such as establishing diplomatic relations with Israel, which could topple the short-lived governments, were sidestepped. Consequently, the anti-Israeli climate of alienation, including administrative and bureaucratic restrictions, continued as before with no change, to the disappointment of the Israeli Government.

²⁴⁸ For details about Singh, see section 3.8.7.

²⁴⁹ For details about Shekhar, see section 3.8.8.

3.10.2.5 Swatantra Party

The Swatantra Party was a right-wing party that stressed the need for privatisation and opening up of the Indian market as well as the need for bilateral diplomatic relations and economic ties with Israel and one of the party leaders, Rajah Hutheesing, visited Israel in 1960 (ISA 93.42/309/12, 25/10/1960). This contradicted the official policy propagated by Nehru regarding socialism in general and his negative attitude towards Israel in particular. The party's political power was limited (it only had eight seats in the Lok Sabha in 1971) and it was eventually superseded by the Janata Coalition in 1977 (Shimoni, 1959:165; Reuveni, 1977:10).²⁵⁰

3.10.3 The Indian executive

Constitutionally, the Cabinet has been the real executive power centre in the Indian parliamentary democracy. Because of the closed door nature of India's bureaucracy (which discouraged foreign debates on foreign policy issues), India had developed unofficial centres that were increasingly influential. An example was the kitchen Cabinet in the Nehru-Indira-Rajiv's years, as well as personal advisors such as retired military officers and diplomats (Cohen, 2001:81-83). It is therefore, essential to study the pertinent decision-making executive centres and their roles in establishing India's foreign policy towards Israel until 1992.

The following executive centres are studied with regard to India's foreign policy towards Israel:

²⁵⁰ For details about the Janata coalition, see section 3.10.2.4.

3.10.3.1 The Cabinet, the Prime Minister, the Secretariat and the Prime Minister's inner circle

The Cabinet (formally called the Council of Ministers) which had been the real executive power centre in India, traditionally showed minimal interest in foreign affairs and concentrated mostly on domestic affairs.²⁵¹ A special committee of the Cabinet for Foreign Affairs had been in existence since independence and foreign policy matters were addressed by the committee and reported to the entire Cabinet at a later stage. However, increasingly, external affairs decisions were taken by the Prime Minister and announced to the public without the committee and the Cabinet being informed of them (Kapur, 1994:89).

The subject of establishing diplomatic relations with Israel was not raised in the Indian Cabinet until 1991. The only exception was in 1961 when Nehru expressed his readiness to establish diplomatic relations with Israel as well as the exchange of diplomatic missions pending the consensus of the Indian Cabinet.²⁵² This event was reported by Gideon Rafael, the Israeli Director General of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, after he had met Nehru in New Delhi. As it happened, Nehru did not obtain the conditional consensus and in fact, the issue was not even raised in the Cabinet after the objection of Maulana Azad and other Muslim ministers (Rafael, 1981; Swamy, 1982; Brecher, 1957 & 1982; Shimoni, 1957 & 1991).

²⁵¹ It was especially evident during Nehru's tenure as Prime Minister (1947-1964). Although Nehru kept his Cabinet well-informed, the interest of most of the Cabinet members was minimal and in fact, his word on foreign policy was final in all Cabinet discussions.

²⁵² For details about Nehru's policy, see section 3.6.1 and for details about the Israeli disappointment, see section 4.9.1.3.

In addition to the Cabinet, in particular during Nehru's tenure, the inner circle described by Michael Brecher (1957:12; 1963:50) played a significant role as ultimate decision makers through its influence on Indian Prime Ministers. A number of personal advisors who played a key role with regard to India's foreign policy towards Israel in the 1950s will be discussed next.

Maulana Azad - Michael Brecher (1957:13), points out that a selected group of seven people formed Nehru's inner circle. One of the important members of this circle was Maulana Azad. He was the Dean of the INCM before independence and later a Minister of Education in Nehru's Cabinet from 1947 to 1958. Moreover, he was a close friend and a political colleague of Nehru for more than three decades:

If there was one man whose position approximated to Gandhi's as the recipient of Nehru's complete confidence it was Azad. For thirty-five years they were intimately associated in the Congress. Others could match that record. But Nehru and Azad were intellectually akin, even though one was a Western-type agnostic and the other a Muslim divine. At the basis of their relationship was genuine affection and mutual respect which ripened into a mature friendship. Of all the Congress leaders, Azad was the most detached after Independence, free of the struggle for power and prestige, both of which he had by virtue of his earlier contributions and as dean of the nationalist Muslims. As a result Nehru used to consult him frequently about all manner of decisions. With Azad he could open his heart to an old comrade. While it is difficult to estimate Azad's influence on any particular decision, his overall effect on Indian politics was very great during the first decade of independence. Nor was it confined to domestic politics. The Maulana had the unique distinction of being a member of all but one of the Prime Minister's elite groups: his was a powerful voice in the party's High Command; on internal Indian politics; his views were sought by Nehru, so too in foreign affairs, where he played a key role in shaping India's policies towards Pakistan and the Middle East (Brecher, 1959:610).

Although Azad opposed diplomatic relations with Israel, from a report received from Eliyahu Sasson, it appears an Israeli diplomat in Ankara, who was introduced to Azad by an Indian friend on 1 July 1951 that he was not against India's recognition of Israel. Azad told Sasson that he

would like to see the resolution of Israel's conflict with its Arab neighbours and the establishment of cooperation between all countries in the Orient region. During their meetings, Azad pointed out that he had tried to explain to Arab leaders that Israel was a factual reality and it was in the interest of their countries that Israel should be recognised by them. According to Sasson, it was Azad's support of Nehru's suggestion to the Indian Government to recognise Israel that enabled him to enforce the Indian Government's decision to recognise Israel without any hostile reaction from Indian Muslims (Avimor, 1991:207).²⁵³

According to Brecher (1957:14), Maulana Azad exerted great influence on India's Middle East foreign policy and the fact that India did not establish diplomatic relations with Israel can be attributed directly to him. Brecher claimed that senior officials and cabinet ministers in New Delhi had informed him personally of the role played by Maulana in this particular case:

The sudden change of mind (of Nehru) in the spring of 1952 was due to the forceful intervention of Maulana Azad, intimate friend of Nehru, respected leader of India's forty million Muslims, and Minister of Education in the Indian Government... He firmly argued against diplomatic relations with Israel and was fearful of the consequences of such relations on India's position in the Arab world. He was concerned about the possible impact of such diplomatic action on Indian Muslim minority and their loyalty to India, in particular, following the partition riots. He also raised the option that Pakistan would probably use it as a political tool against India and would fan the flames of communal hatred in India. Nehru, convinced by the terms of India's national interests, particularly considering the fact that bitter rivalry with Pakistan for Arab support on the Kashmir dispute was then at its height and that India's policy on Kashmir was under attack in the UN, yielded to Azad's advice...Until his death in 1958, the Maulana exerted great influence on India's Middle East policy, as well as on domestic and party affairs. As a Muslim, Azad was naturally pro-Arab. He was also fearful of the consequences of diplomatic relations with Israel on India's position in the Arab world. An unstated (sic.) but bitter rivalry with Pakistan for Arab support on the Kashmir dispute was then at its height, for India's policy on that issue was under severe attack in the United Nations and elsewhere. Azad (and Nehru) was also

²⁵³ For details about India's recognition of Israel, see section 3.9.1.1.

concerned about the possible impact of a welcoming gesture to Israel on India's large and insecure Muslim minority, Pakistan would probably have fanned the flames of communal hatred in India by reference to Israel. This might have affected the loyalty of India's Muslims and would, in any event, have been a shock to their already bewildered state of mind following the partition riots and mass migration with the aftermath of distrust among many Hindus. Was an exchange of diplomatic missions with Israel worth all these risks? Azad firmly argued against the proposal. Nehru may have been convinced, for the case was strong in terms of India's national interests. At any rate, he yielded to Azad's advice (Brecher, 1963:130).

Yaacov Shimoni (1991:E7) gave a similar explanation when he asserted that Nehru was not prepared to overrule Azad and other Muslim Ministers in his Cabinet's objection to the idea of establishing diplomatic relations with Israel.²⁵⁴ Subramaniam Swamy argued along the same lines:

Nehru was scared of Maulana Azad and this prevented him from implementing what he kept promising the Israelis in private. By the time Maulana departed, Nehru had been sufficiently committed to a public rejection of Israel from which he could later never extricate himself (Swamy, 1982:20).²⁵⁵

V.K. Krishna Menon - Menon was Prime Minister Nehru's chief foreign policy advisor as well as a key member of his inner circle (Brecher, 1957:15). In 1952, Menon, while serving as the Indian Ambassador in Moscow, wrote a letter to Walter Eytan, the Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel, in which he expressed his regret that no exchange of diplomatic delegates had been made to date between India and Israel (ISA 130.02/2413/29, 03/12/1952). In 1953 he started establishing his international reputation as India's Representative at the UN and Nehru's personal Ambassador to International Conferences and subsequently, he was nominated as a Minister without portfolio. While serving at the UN, in New York, Menon met the Israeli Ministers of Foreign

²⁵⁴ For more details about India's foreign policy towards Israel after independence, see section 3.9.1.2.

²⁵⁵ For more details about Azad, see also sections 3.8.1, 3.9.1.2 and 4.9.1.1.

Affairs, Golda Meir and Abba Eban respectively, as well as other senior Israeli diplomats. However, these meetings did not have any effect on his anti-Israeli attitude, nor did it change his hostility towards Israel and his support of India's friendly relations with the Arab countries. Menon's strident speeches in the UN consistently reflected his anti-Israeli opinions. In 1957 he became the Minister of Defence of India. Unsurprisingly, he exhibited his undisguised hostility towards Israel in an interview with Michael Brecher:

Israel's title is made to rest on occupation as a result of war...I think the Israelis lost by joining the French and British. The invasion (of the Suez Canal) angered Asia and Africa, it placed them in the role of allied and abettors of imperialism...We are in a difficult position because of Pakistan and our own anti imperialist views...The Israelis, if I may say so, are maladroit. Despite opposition, I was not against their Consulate in Bombay, but should a Consul come to make political speeches here as the Israeli Consul did in Delhi in November 1964? They are propagandists temperamentally, the same as the Arabs...There will be no "normal" relations between Israel and India until the world situation changes (Brecher, 1968:78, 80-81).

3.10.3.2 Indian bureaucracy (Ministry of External Affairs)

Since India's independence, bureaucracy, namely the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) had been the key element in Indian foreign policy-making. In this respect, the MEA had the task of providing the executive with the required input to define foreign policy and to implement the policy after it had been defined. However, the Ministry's power in actual foreign policy-making had declined throughout the years (Kapur, 1994:154-158). Inherently, the MEA was conservative and had difficulty in adjusting to rapid changes in the international system because of strong memories of the past, when the civilian bureaucracy dominated foreign policy processes (Cohen, 2001:72-75). The conservative approach of the MEA regarding its relations with Israel in the years prior to 1992 was imperceptible.

Significantly, the gradual adjustment of the MEA started during the visit of the Deputy Director General for Asia of the Foreign Affairs of Israel, Moshe Yegar, to New Delhi in June 1991. Yegar had gone to India to coordinate the release efforts of an Israeli hostage after a group of Israeli tourists had been kidnapped in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. He received permission to coordinate his activities with the Consular Department of the MEA only. However, he managed to meet unofficially²⁵⁶ with Indian high officials, including the Secretary of the Cabinet through the assistance of Professor M. L. Sondhi. In September 1991, the Minister of External Affairs, M. Solanki, acknowledged the possibility of establishing bilateral diplomatic relations with Israel by referring to the fact that India had recognised the State of Israel in 1950. However, he added that as far as the exchange of diplomatic missions was concerned, this issue would be discussed in due time (Yegar, Govrin & Oded, 2002:547).

In October 1991, the MEA still maintained that Indian foreign policy towards Israel would be contingent on substantial progress in the settlement of the West Asian problem (Ali Khan, 1992:215). Nevertheless, a few weeks later, on 16 December 1991, the MEA had to comply with Prime Minister Rao's instruction to vote in favour of the resolution that repealed the UN General Assembly resolution of 1975 that equated Zionism with racism.²⁵⁷ In December 1991, the Israeli Consul in Bombay was allowed to meet the Head of the Consular Department of the MEA officially in New Delhi. In addition, two weeks later he was informed that henceforth, he would be allowed to meet the Head of the West Asian Department of the MEA (the Political Department in the MEA in charge of the Middle East). As it turned out, even after the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, normalisation with Israel was seen by many officials in the MEA as premature and in conflict with

²⁵⁶ For details about Yegar's visit to New Delhi, see also section 4.9.1.3.

²⁵⁷ For details about the Indian voting, see section 3.9.2.2.

the traditional Indian pro-Arab foreign policy. Eventually, however, the MEA officials had to come to terms with the political fact that the two states had established fully-fledged diplomatic relations with diplomatic missions.²⁵⁸

In addition to the Indian Ministers of External Affairs whose attitudes and statements reflected the official foreign policy towards Israel,²⁵⁹ several permanent foreign secretaries of MEA played an instrumental role in the foreign policy-making of India regarding Israel in particular. For example, G.S. Bajapai, who was Nehru's valued counsellor, exerted a major influence on the conduct of foreign policy, not least of all on the policy towards Israel (Brecher, 1957:12). Although appointed by Indira Gandhi to lead the secretariat during her term in office, P.N. Haksar was described as a *de facto* Minister of External Affairs, and was considered the architect of Indian pro-Arab and anti-Israeli policy (Korany, 1986:176 and Kapur, 1994:185-187). On the other hand, J.N. Dixit was the architect of the bilateral relations between the two countries and was instrumental in establishing diplomatic relations between India and Israel (Dixit, 1996).²⁶⁰

Traditionally, the MEA approach was consistently pro-Arab and anti-Israeli. The inflexible and conservative approach of the MEA towards Israel can be explained partly by the fact that contemporary senior Indian officials of the MEA received their training and international experience under the INCP. Nehruvian internationalism was the dominating factor and major formative influence on their international perceptions and indoctrinated them against Israel.²⁶¹

²⁵⁸ For more details about the MEA and how it came to terms with Israel, see section 5.4.3.2.

²⁵⁹ For details about the Ministers of External Affairs and their statements towards Israel, see sections 3.9.1.2, 3.9.1.3 and 3.9.1.4.

²⁶⁰ For details about Dixit's contribution to the process, see section 5.2.

²⁶¹ For more details about the MEA with regard to Israel, see section 5.4.3.2.

3.10.3.3. India's intelligence service

The Indian intelligence service, namely the RAW was established on 1 October 1968 and was assigned to monitor all aspects of foreign intelligence. The RAW has been under the control of the Prime Minister's Secretariat and the directors of the RAW have had an input in the decision-making process of India in the international arena as well as easy access to the Indian Prime Ministers. However, there were exceptions such as Prime Minister Desai who curtailed the RAW's powers during his tenure since the agency had interfered in India's domestic affairs during the state of emergency imposed by Mrs. Gandhi from 1975 to 1977. Throughout the years, the RAW had been recognised and accepted as a legitimate national agency indispensable for India's continued existence by the mainstream political parties in India (Kapur, 1994:171-172).

Accordingly, India embarked on covert relations with its Israeli counterpart, Mossad (The Agency for Intelligence and Special Foreign Operations) in the early 1970s and cooperation between the RAW and its Israeli counterpart existed even during the premiership of Indira Gandhi, between the years 1996 and 1997, as well as 1980 and 1984 (Kapila, 2000; Naaz, 2000:969).

Since then, the RAW had maintained its links with Israel and in 1977 it engineered the visit of the Israeli Foreign Minister, Moshe Dayan, to India.²⁶² The RAW also played an important role in trying to gain a foothold in India for the Israeli Defence Industry. In the 1980s, RAW sent its personnel to Israel for special training and sought Israeli expertise on security systems as well as on electronic equipment (Kumaraswamy, 1998:5). In this regard, Kumaraswamy points out that with reference to military and intelligence matters, cooperation played a significant role in

²⁶² For details about Dayan's visit, see sections 4.8.1 and 4.9.1.3.

Prime Minister Rao's decision to diverge from India's traditional policy. Moreover, the Indian military establishment: had been: "harping on establishing a closer and more cooperative relationship with its Israeli counterpart" (Kumaraswamy, 1999:144).

According to Kumar (2001:10), after Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's assassination in October, 1987 India sought Israel's assistance with improving the protection of its VIPs through the RAW. In addition, Israeli security specialists had been responsible for devising Rajiv Gandhi's personal security measures when he was Prime Minister and subsequently, India purchased Israeli intelligence equipment. Furthermore, India and Israel were also engaged in a secret dialogue over the Pakistani nuclear facility in Kahuta. Despite the RAW's direct access to the Prime Ministers of India and its assignment to monitor foreign intelligence and its constructive links with its Israeli counterpart, the RAW did not play any significant role in terms of changing the official foreign policy towards Israel. This state of affairs can be attributed to a certain extent to the RAW's reluctance to become involved in India's internal political conflicts and the fact that the anti-Israeli foreign policy had a political consensus.

3.10.4. Media and public opinion in India

India, as a democracy with a pluralistic political system permitted the open expression of opinions. In the past, public opinion in India regarding domestic issues had been formed mostly by Indian intellectuals and a small group of journalists in the written media that were controlled by political leaders. In addition, the extremely large size of its territory and the specific geographical characteristics of India resulted in technical difficulties in reaching the vast Indian population. In addition, India was confronted by the cultural challenge of how to spark the interest of the diversified Indian population in complex foreign affairs issues. This

remained the state of affairs up to the global information revolution, which has since changed the face of the Indian media with greater access to the media and pertinent information (Kapur, 1994:166-170).

Between the years 1948 and 1991, some leading intellectuals supported the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel, such as the poet and nationalist leader Saro Naidu, the journalists and writers Khushwant Singh, Frank Moraes and his son Dom Moraes, Shanta Ram Rao and Nirad Chaudhuri as well as the historians Romila Thapar, Sarvepalli Gopal and M.L. Sondhi (Shimoni, 1991:E9). Although the support of the Indian intellectuals was appreciated in Israel, they did not have any influence on the shaping of India's foreign policy towards Israel.

All-India Radio, the most important mass medium in India until the end of the 1980s, was nationalised and did not have much editorial influence on Indian foreign policy. The electronic media were state controlled and fell under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Satellite television with international channels (including world news networks) was only launched in 1991. Most of the press in India was privately owned, but there was a legal demand for registration with the Registrar of Newspapers and most of the newspapers agreed with India's official foreign policy.²⁶³

During Nehru's tenure his world affairs initiatives received widespread approval from the Indian media, with the exception of the opposition party's journals and a few independent national dailies, such as the *Times of India* and *The Statesman*. Even though they did not criticise the principles of India's foreign policy and concentrated mostly on Nehru's criticism of the West, the media mostly supported Nehru and his foreign policy, including the policy regarding Israel (Brecher, 1957:30). However,

²⁶³ The total number of newspapers and periodicals in f December 1996 was 39,000.

there were exceptions regarding the Indian media's attitudes towards Israel. In 1960, following the participation of more than one hundred Indians in courses presented as part of Israel's international cooperation programme, leading Indian newspapers openly called for the exchange of diplomatic envoys with Israel (*The Indian Express*, 9/4/1960, *The Times of India*, 10/5/1960, 22/4/1962; *The Hindustan Standard*, 23/4/1961).²⁶⁴

On the whole, after Nehru, the media continued to support official Indian pro-Arab foreign policy. This remarkable consistency in public expression regarding Indian foreign policy can be traced to Nehru's leadership and the long reign of the INCP. These aspects led to increased public support for the Government of India's stance on world affairs, particularly since this stance resulted in the growth of India's prestige in the eyes of the world (Park, 1962:302).²⁶⁵

The Indian media (with some exceptions) supported traditional Indian pro-Arab and anti-Israeli policy. The Indian media as well as the anti-Israeli public opinion were particularly negative during Indira Gandhi's first tenure. However, after the Arab-Israeli war in 1973, public opinion towards Israel appeared to change despite the fact that India, including the media clearly sided with the Arabs.²⁶⁶ This change of public opinion regarding Israel, which started in 1973, can partly be attributed to the Arab response to the Indian wars in 1962, 1965 and 1971. This was when India fought against China and Pakistan and the Arab countries did not provide a satisfactory return on the heavy political investment made by India in the Arab world (Singh, 1976:57).

²⁶⁴ For details about The Shalom Alumni Club, see section 3.10.5.4.

²⁶⁵ For details about Nehru as a predominant leader, see section 3.8.1.

²⁶⁶ For details Indian foreign policy, see sections 3.9.1.3 and 3.9.1.4

During Indira Gandhi's second tenure, the Indian press became almost uniformly unfriendly and even hostile towards the State of Israel.²⁶⁷ The Gulf War and the fact that surface-to-surface missiles were launched against Israel, brought about frenzied Indian coverage of Israel. However, this coverage was mostly sympathetic unlike the negative media coverage received by the US as a superpower that had harmed Iraqi citizens. After the Gulf War, Israel was continually in the news in the Indian media, particularly in the printed media, especially after the release of the Israeli hostages in Jammu and Kashmir in the summer of 1991. This was also the case after the Deputy Director General for Asia in the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs visited New Delhi openly and coordinated the release efforts.²⁶⁸ Importantly, the Indian printed media, which covered the event, started supporting full diplomatic relations with Israel (Yegar, Govrin & Oded, 2002:545).

In November 1991, the Indian Television Network "*Doordarshan*" (which reached 87% of the Indian population) devoted the entire programme to the peace process in the Middle East and Israeli- Indian relations. Most of the participants in the programme (mainly from the opposition to the INCP) supported the establishment of full diplomatic relations with Israel. From a historical perspective, this programme can be considered the first meaningful public opinion pressure on the Government of India regarding bilateral relations with Israel. Nevertheless, most public opinion regarding Israel and in particular the opinion of a large section of India's urban intelligentsia as well as a large number of INCP members continued to be anti-Israeli until 1991. It was only after the establishment of diplomatic relations and the normalisation that followed, that the Indian media moved away from its erstwhile anti-Israeli rhetoric to a more balanced approach (Kumaraswamy, 2002:10).

²⁶⁷ For details about Indira Gandhi as a prominent leader, see section 3.8.3.

²⁶⁸ For details about the event in Jammu and Kashmir, see section 4.9.1.3.

3.10.5 Indian pressure groups

Pressure groups did not play a definitive role in shaping India's foreign policy (the law in India bars them from exerting direct pressure on the government). However, their interest could be passed on more effectively through recognised political channels (Park, 1962:302). As far as relations between India and Israel were concerned, there was no effective pressure group that promoted the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. The only political pressure on the Indian government in that regard came from the opposition benches in the Parliament.²⁶⁹

3.10.5.1 Indian Jewish community

The Jewish community in India, which included the Bene Israel community in Bombay, the Cochin Jews of Kerela and the Baghdadi Jews in Bombay and Calcutta, had little interest in Indian politics and Indian foreign policy (Sampemane, 1994:20-23).

The Bene Israel community was the largest of the three Jewish communities in India and for generations they lived in rural villages throughout the Kolaba district of the Maharashtra State. After 1948, many of the Jews from this community emigrated to Israel (the estimated total number of Jews remaining in the Bene Israel community in India is around 4,500). The Cochini Jews lived for two millennia on the Malabar Coast of the State of Kerela in Southwest India. From the early 1950s up to the 1980s, the majority of them emigrated to Israel (scarcely more than 60 Cochini Jews remained in India).

²⁶⁹ For details about the Indian Parliament and the BJP, see sections 3.10.1 and 3.10.2.2.

The Baghdadi Jewish community in Bombay dates back to about the 16th century, when they arrived from Iraq and settled in Bombay. Later on, Jews from all over the Ottoman Empire joined that community. The Baghdadi Jews confined themselves to trade, finance and industry, but the majority of them remained aloof from Zionism and many of them emigrated to the US after 1947 and Britain; consequently, only about 200 Baghdadi Jews remained in India (Naaz, 1999:901).

In the past, the Indian Jews had shown little interest in Indian politics, although some of the Baghdadi and Bene Israel Jews were active in public affairs in Bombay. In fact, certain Baghdadi Jews were appointed members of the Legislative Council of Maharashtra, members of the Municipal Corporation of Bombay and Sheriffs as well as others who served in the police service and Indian army. In addition, the most prominent figure in the Jewish community in India was Nissim Ezekiel, a poet, who was considered to be one of the leading poets in India.

In Bombay, there were two Jewish organisations: the Israeli-Indian Friendship League and the Bombay Zionist Association. In the late 1980s, the latter split into two Jewish organisations, namely the All- India Jewish Federation and the Council of Indian Jewry. In New Delhi, there was only one Jewish organisation in addition to the Indo-Israeli Cultural Society. In 1969 Prime Minister Indira Gandhi celebrated the quarter centenary of the Jewish Paradesi Synagogue in Cochin and honoured the Jewish community by issuing a commemorative stamp on the occasion (Weil, 2002:62). In 1985 Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, sent a message during the centenary celebrations of Keneset Eliyahu Synagogue in Bombay in which he stated that the Jewish community in India had made a special contribution to Indian national life throughout the centuries (Malekar, 2002:64). However, the Jewish community and Jewish organisations in India were not active in national politics and in effect, the Jewish

community in India did not constitute an influential pressure group that could have an affect India's foreign policy towards Israel and neither did it become involved in direct lobbying in favour of Israel.

3.10.5.2 Indian Muslim community

The political power of the Muslim community in India emanated from the assumption of the ruling parties and their leaders, from independence to 1991 and the INCP in particular, that the Muslims of India should be appeased by siding with the Arabs in the Arab-Israeli conflict. In effect, the Muslim community in India was an effective pressure group against any improvement in bilateral relations with the State of Israel. The majority of the Muslims in India traditionally voted for the INCP as the ruling party, which in turn made a constant effort to attract the Muslim electorate. Moreover, many Indian Muslims were active politicians in the INCP and they formed a strong pressure group in Parliament and *vis-à-vis* the Government of India, while combining forces with the elite and the old guard of the INCP, in order to shape Indian foreign policy against Israel. In addition to the INCP, Muslim politicians were active in other political parties such as the Paraja Socialist Party²⁷⁰ as well as the Muslim League²⁷¹ and influenced their parties' attitudes towards the State of Israel (Shimoni, 1959:168).

Various Muslim groups and organisations in India, such as the Jamiat-ul-Ulema, clearly identified strongly with the Arab world and their anti-Israeli attitudes were reinforced by the Palestinian *Intifada* in particular.²⁷² Those

²⁷⁰ For details about the Paraja Socialist Party, see section 3.10.2.3.

²⁷¹ For background about the Muslim League, see section 3.4.1.

²⁷² A Muslim organisation that was established in the 1920s. During the 1940s it was the only Muslim body that opposed the partition. Later, the organisation was particularly close to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. It is a member of the All India Muslim Personal

pro-Arab feelings permeated the Indian political system and were instrumental in influencing and shaping India's foreign policy towards Israel in general. They lobbied for cultural and trade restrictions on Israel specifically, in collaboration with Arab embassies in New Delhi.

3.10.5.3 Indian business community

Israel had comparative advantages in certain fields of interest to India such as agriculture, telecommunications, electronics, machinery and medical equipment. Despite this fact, the business community and the private sector in India did not exert any political pressure on the Indian Government to change its foreign policy towards Israel in general and its foreign trade policy in particular. Prior to the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1992, the monetary value of the trade between India and Israel was US \$111 million. The trade concentrated on the diamond and chemical industries, based on the private sector and businesspersons such as the Hinduja brothers who maintained business relations with Israeli companies through third countries (Gerberg, 1996:36).

Israel was a small market for the Indian industry and the Government of India officially prohibited the government sector in India from having direct trade relations with Israel. During the tenure of Subramaniam Swamy as Minister of Commerce and Law (from November 1990 to March 1991), he met his Israeli counterpart at an international economic conference in Belgium. However, that meeting took place because of his longstanding supportive attitude towards Israel (which included a private visit to Israel in October 1982) and not as a result of any pressure from the Indian industrial private sector. The meeting did not bring about any change in

Board and has been engaged in welfare activities mostly. For more details about the Arab- Jewish conflict, see section 3.4.2.

India's trade policy towards Israel.²⁷³ In October 1991, India allowed the Israeli Trade Attaché in Singapore, Samuel Offri, to visit India, for the first time, in his official capacity and with a working visa, in order to promote trade relations between the two countries (Yegar, Govrin & Oded, 2002:372).

3.10.5.4. Shalom Alumni Club

At the end of 1957, a special unit was set up in the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs to coordinate the activities of international aid and cooperation. The State of Israel saw its assistance programme as an outcome of the social ethics of the Biblical Prophets and the socialist ideas of the Zionist pioneers. However, it also related to this programme as a helpful instrument that could support one of Israel's foreign policy goals, namely, to end its political isolation in general and in Asia in particular (Aynor & Avimor, 1990:E17-E20; Neuberger, 1992:506).

Between the years 1958 and 1971, four special courses were presented by Israeli experts in several Asian countries and 631 participants from Asia took part in international courses and seminars in Israel, including 101 participants from India, mostly in courses in the field of trade unions and corporations at the Afro-Asian Institute (Mashav's 40th Anniversary, 1997).²⁷⁴

All the Indian participants in Israel's International Cooperation Programme had become members of the Alumni club of the programme, the Shalom Club, and could function as a pro-Israeli pressure group in principle. However, the Indian Shalom Club never functioned as a pressure group except in the 1960s, when it helped to put the issue of bilateral relations

²⁷³ For details about the meeting, see sections 3.8.8 and 3.9.1.4.

²⁷⁴ For details about Israel's International Cooperation Programme, see section 4.8.2.

with Israel on the political agenda in India. That particular political pressure led to criticism of the Indian Government in Parliament and was supported by some journalists who held the opinion that India was cutting itself off from a useful source of technical systems and cooperation (Laufer, 1967:205).²⁷⁵ In fact, this was an exception as it was evident that the Shalom Alumni Club in particular and other pressure groups in general, did not have any political influence on the Indian Government as far as India's foreign relations with Israel were concerned.

3.11 Summation

The focus of this chapter was on the analysis of the historical relations between the Republic of India and the State of Israel from 1948 to 1991. The development of India's foreign policy towards Israel as a political process was described in terms of a historical analysis that was carried out with the help of pertinent international relations theories based on historical perceptions. The aim was to determine which factors had influenced bilateral relations between the two countries before diplomatic relations were established and to determine the effect they had on bilateral relations between the two countries until 1991.

The historical description of relations between India and Israel and the Indian pro-Arab narrative accounted for its traditional foreign policy towards Israel until the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Both the description and narrative provide the foundation, in terms of the historical database accumulation and depth of knowledge, throughout the period up to 1991, for a dynamic analysis of the bilateral relations between India and Israel.

²⁷⁵ For details about the Israeli cooperation programme, see section 4.8.2.

Because of the importance and relevance of the pre-independence relations to India's foreign policy towards the State of Israel, Indian pre-independence policy towards Palestine prior to Israel's independence was discussed in detail. The dominant actors in India's historical relations with Israel were identified and analysed in terms of the ultimate decision unit, which enabled the analysis of entities and authorities, including leaders within the Indian governments that were important to the shaping of Indian foreign policy towards Israel. In turn, India's foreign policy towards Israel was analysed in terms of three levels of analysis: the international level, the state and society (national) level and the individual level. The international level was divided into two types of relations: bilateral and multilateral relations. The three levels of analysis, in terms of the units of analysis of India as a unitary actor in the international system, enabled the identification, examination and analysis of the external and internal factors regarding India's historical relations with Israel until 1991. At the same time, the complexity level of the web of variables, the political process and the contextual determinants were taken into consideration as well.

The main objective of the INCM, as an ultimate decision unit before 1947, was to achieve independence. The major objectives of the Government of India after independence, led by its prime ministers as an Ultimate Decision Unit, were the political consolidation of independence, the promotion of economic development and the pursuit of foreign policy goals that enhanced Indian national interests.

In terms of the international level of analysis, although India officially had no foreign policy, prior to its achievement of independence, it was essential to examine the factors that shaped the attitudes of the leadership of the INCM regarding events in Palestine. The Indian pro-Arab approach towards the Arab-Israeli conflict stemmed from the strong ties between the INCM and the national liberation movements in the Arab countries of the

Middle East. A feeling of solidarity existed in India and in the INCM in particular, during the first half of the twentieth century with the Arab's liberation movements. Zionism, on the other hand, was identified with European colonialism and was not regarded as a national liberation movement. The fact that Zionism was supported by Western powers, such as European and Western governments later, particularly the USA, was another reason for the INCM's pro-Arab approach before the independence of Israel and the pro-Arab and anti-Israeli approach following it.

In terms of the state and society level of analysis, Mahatma Gandhi, as the leader of the INCM, made a clear distinction between the historical problem of the Jewish people as a persecuted nation and their search for a home and the way in which that problem could be resolved. According to him, the Jewish claim for an independent state as well as the Partition Plan was in direct opposition to the INCM's political perception, which was that a demand for a separate state, in India or in Palestine, should be prevented. Accordingly, Gandhi and the INCM leaders were consistent in their support of the idea of a secular state in India, as well as a Palestine based upon territorial integrity. India, therefore, supported the establishment of one single state in Palestine based on federal principles. The presence of a very substantial minority of Muslims (whose sentiments were with their fellow Muslims in the Middle East) was taken into political consideration by the INCM, which needed their active cooperation in the national struggle for independence.

The factors that shaped the attitude of the Indian leadership towards the State of Israel after independence, as an ultimate decision unit, namely the prime ministers of India, subject to the requirements of India's national interests, were examined and analysed. In terms of the international level of analysis, in the bilateral arena, India recognised the State of Israel and

the political reality of Israel after 1948, but its foreign policy towards Israel reflected its self-interest in the Middle East as well as its traditional sympathy with the Arabs. The ability of the State of Israel to play a constructive role in achieving the major national objectives of India was practically marginal. As a matter of fact, the non-existing diplomatic relations were considered by India to be a strategic advantage within the international arena, *vis-à-vis* the Arab world in particular. This tactical policy revolved around Pakistan and the Kashmir conflict in particular, which had become a major item on India's major foreign policy agenda, as India was serious about enlisting the neutrality if not support of Arab countries.

India regarded Israel as a colonial state that was identified with colonial forces, against which national movements in Asia, including the INCP, had struggled in the past. The collaboration between Israel, England and France (two previous major colonial powers) in 1956, during the Suez Canal crisis and the military operation against Egypt, only tended to confirm its attitude that Israel was an outpost of Europe in the Middle East. In addition, India, as a secular state according to its constitution, saw Israel as a theocratic state with a resemblance to Pakistan. The Israeli military assistance to India during its wars with China and Pakistan did not have an effect on bilateral relations between the two countries.

The Six-Day War in 1967 added an entirely new dimension to the Indian anti-Israeli approach, namely strong condemnation combined with moral righteousness (headed by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi). The following factors strengthened the Indian pro-Arab policy:

- The emergence of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in 1969.
- India's strong economic interests in the Arab world, in particular the :

- Growing dependence of India on Middle East energy.
- Economic potential of the Arab market.
- Importance of the trade routes in the Middle East to the West.
- Indian overseas workers in the Gulf countries.

Israel. on the other hand, was considered to be a small and negligible market as far as India was concerned in economic terms. After the Arab-Israeli war in 1973 and the oil crisis that followed, India expressed its support for Egypt and Syria and intensified its anti-Israeli rhetoric in the UN as well as other international forums. Two years later in 1975 India officially recognised the PLO and was the sponsor of the UN General Assembly resolution that equated Zionism with racism. In March 1980 India granted full diplomatic recognition to the PLO.

In June 1981, India denounced the Israeli air force attack on the nuclear reactor in Iraq and one year later, in the summer of 1982, it strongly condemned the Israeli Military Operation in Lebanon and also expelled the Israeli Consul in Bombay from India after he had criticised the government's approach towards Israel in the Indian press. In November 1988, India was one of the first countries to recognise the State of Palestine. In December 1991, following the Madrid Conference, India supported the repeal of the UN General Assembly resolution that equated Zionism with racism and on 29 January 1992, fully-fledged diplomatic relations were established between the two countries.

In the multilateral arena, India's hostile relations with Pakistan, the emergence of the Arab group in the international system and the UN in particular and the Arab states' numerical asymmetry with Israel in terms of voting power, were important formative factors in India's foreign policy. India expected political support from the Arab countries in the Indo-Pakistani conflict over Kashmir in return for its anti-Israeli policy.

However, India's efforts, which included an anti-Israeli foreign policy in order to keep the Islamic and Arab states from supporting Pakistan in the international arena, proved to be ineffective, while Pakistan continued to present the Kashmir conflict as a pan-Islamic issue. The close relations between India and Egypt, as well as India's relations with the Arab world, including economic relations, ensured a mild Arab approach in the international arena. This also applied to conferences of the Arab heads of states. Nevertheless, it did not change the fact that the Arab nations continued their support of Pakistan, which was a disappointment to India, yet it did not change its pro-Arab foreign policy.

The rivalries between superpowers during the Cold War affected both South Asia and the Middle East adversely. Israel was associated with the Western powers, while India gradually aligned itself with the Soviet side. In fact, Indian opposition to military blocs, its active membership of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) as well as its concurrence with the Afro-Asian countries' criticism of both the Western powers and the US, brought India closer to the Eastern bloc, in general and the Soviet Union, in particular, with its antagonistic approach towards Israel. New Delhi's view was that the State of Israel was acting in collaboration with the Western powers and the US, in particular. On the other hand, India had regarded the Soviet Union as an ally, in particular since 1971 when an Indo-Soviet treaty of peace, friendship and cooperation was signed between the two countries. India had sided with the Soviet Union against Israel in the international arena, in general and international organisations, as well as the NAM, in particular. Furthermore, both countries pursued an anti-Israeli and pro-Arab foreign policy as part of their long-term strategic plans. The absence of economic and cultural ties with the US, the hostility of many Indian leaders towards it, American aid to Pakistan and the Cold War, prevented the US from playing a significant role in the South-Asian region,

or playing a constructive role in promoting bilateral relations between India and Israel.

The decades after the Afro-Asian conference at Bandung found India and China closer to the Arab world and both used anti-Israeli rhetoric in international forums. India was a founder and prominent leader of the NAM and as such, had a direct influence on its pro-Arab and anti-Israeli foreign policy. Friendly relations were growing between India and Egypt especially, which included personal friendships between Prime Minister Nehru and President Nasser of Egypt. Consequently, India became more and more politically committed to Egypt in the international arena. Traditionally, India had attached a great deal of importance to the UN as an international forum and its history with the organisation was extensive and included the sponsoring of anti-Israeli resolutions that demonstrated India's consistent pro-Arab stance ..

In terms of the state and society level of analysis, a number of factors caused Indian opposition parties, academics, journalists and the Indian public opinion, to call for a revision of India's foreign policy towards Israel, claiming it could be more rewarding for India's national interest, but to no avail. The factors included Israel's military assistance to India during its wars with China and Pakistan, an awareness of the Israeli victories in the Arab-Israeli wars and the advanced Israeli technology, which could be of interest to India.

It should be noted that India's foreign policy towards Israel in terms of bilateral relations between 1948 and 1991, although negative, was passive in nature (more reactive than activating), while a consistently pro-Arab foreign policy was followed. Many Indians had felt a great deal of admiration and respect for Israel and its military, social, scientific and agricultural achievements and began to question India's foreign policy

towards Israel. That anti-Israel and pro-Arab stance was also criticised by various opposition parties, which pleaded with the government to establish diplomatic relations with Israel, but to no avail. The only exceptions were the relatively low-level intelligence collaboration and some quiet behind-the-scenes diplomacy, as well as a low degree of trade between the private sectors of both countries.

In terms of the individual level of analysis, Nehru's pre-independence support of the Arabs was transformed into an anti-Israeli doctrine based on his view of Israel as a product of Western imperialism. India's foreign policy towards Israel became more restrictive after Nehru's death and the Indian leaders that followed him, in particular his daughter, Indira Gandhi who was a staunch supporter of the Arab cause, went on with his pro-Arab and anti-Israeli policy (considered by them as part of Nehru's heritage). Even opposition leaders called for full diplomatic relations and closer relations with Israel, while heading coalition governments (without the INCP) the Indian anti-Israeli attitudes of their predecessors. A gradual diplomatic change in bilateral relations between India and Israel began when Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, more open-minded regarding the West than his predecessors, came to power in 1984. The Gulf War in 1991, in which Israel did not retaliate to attacks by Iraqi Scud missiles and the Madrid conference that followed, significantly improved Israel's position and status in the international system and was one of the important factors that paved the way for the breakthrough in Israeli-Indian relations. Prior to 1991, India had not redefined its national interest in the Middle East in a selective way, in general and *vis-à-vis* the State of Israel, in particular. The redefinition of its foreign policy was eventually made in 1992. The first significant indication of that redefinition was in 1991 when India voted in favour of repealing the General Assembly Resolution that equated Zionism with racism.

A historical analysis reveals that up to 1991, India had failed to adjust its dogmatic foreign policy towards Israel. It is important to point out that India's foreign policy towards Israel was actually a type of an *idée fixe*, which included a reluctance to deviate from Nehru's foreign relations legacy and Mahatma Gandhi's idealism. Added to this were aspects such as the conservatism regarding foreign affairs, dogmatic diplomacy and an anti-Israeli traditional approach. Throughout the years preceding 1991, the governments of India overestimated the possible political response of the Indian Muslims to a change in Indian foreign policy towards Israel. India also miscalculated the Arab world's response to such a step, while choosing to ignore the fact that most of the Arab countries had full diplomatic relations with countries that maintained diplomatic relations with Israel. India persisted with its dogmatic foreign policy regarding Israel, even after peace agreements had been signed between Israel and Egypt in 1978 and Israel and Jordan in 1994.

In addition, India read the Arab world map correctly with regard to their relations with Pakistan, as the Arab countries continued their support of Pakistan, despite the Indian pro-Arab and anti-Israeli foreign policy. Moreover, India failed to realise that establishing diplomatic relations with Israel could be a useful counteractive measure in response to the Arab world's support of Pakistan in general and the conflict over Kashmir in particular. India clung to the erroneous belief that diplomatic relations with Israel would harm its international status in the Middle East and its relations with the Arab countries and persisted in singling out the State of Israel in international forums in terms of moral and political grounds.

India not only failed to adjust its dogmatic foreign policy towards Israel but also failed to recognise the common national interests between India and Israel. Neither did they realise the potential value of mutual cooperation between the two countries, particularly in agriculture, high technology

transfer and arm sales. In addition, India did not fully realise the potential common interests of the two countries in the multilateral arena and also failed to see the potential of trilateral cooperation between India, Israel and other countries in general and with the US as a superpower in particular. India's pro-Arab foreign policy did not deliver the expected political dividends in the international arena or the Arab world and had prevented it from taking an active part in the Middle East. Regional events and wars in the Middle East alienated India from Israel even further and the possibility that an alternative foreign policy towards Israel that could be more rewarding in terms of India's national interest was not really examined until 1991. As a matter of fact, since gaining its independence, India had not redefined its strategic interests in the Middle East and failed to adjust its foreign policy towards Israel. The advantage of such a redefinition and adjustment of India's foreign policy towards Israel, which was eventually made in 1991 and the advantages of having diplomatic relations with Israel are analysed and discussed in the following chapters.

Chapter 4

Israel's relations with India prior to January 1992

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the focus is on Israel's relations with India and Israel's foreign policy towards India before the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two states. The main objective is to describe, examine and analyse Israel's foreign policy towards India before the establishment of full diplomatic relations between the two states, which took place on 29 January 1992.¹ In due course, the objective of this chapter is realised by an analysis of the factors that influenced Israel's relations with India and Israel's foreign policy towards India and the effect these factors had on the relations between the two countries prior to the establishment of full diplomatic relations.

From an Israeli perspective, this analysis takes into consideration the comparative weight and complexity of the pertinent factors and concentrates on the historical relations between Israel and India in the first timeframe of the research that deals with the period from 1948 to 1991 and includes a reference to pre-independence relations. The emphasis in this chapter is on the ultimate decision units that shaped Israeli foreign policy regarding India as well as the conduct of diplomacy as a unit of action. The three Levels of Analysis Model provides a conceptual basis in terms of international relations for a historical in-depth description in this particular phase, as well as an analysis of the Israeli foreign policy towards India. In addition, it helps to broaden the database and the informative background from which the analysis in the following chapter is made, as a theory can be understood better in social science when it is linked to and built upon the enduring insights of the past (Dougherty & Pfaltzgraff, 2001: xiii).

Israel as an international actor is the unit of analysis in this chapter and the historical and international political context of this chapter is Israel's attainment of

¹ India's bilateral relations with Israel and its foreign policy towards Israel were analysed in the previous chapter (chapter three).

independence on 14 May 1948. After independence, Israel gave *de jure* recognition to India, while India postponed its recognition of Israel to 17 September 1950.² On 7 June 1951 a local resident of German Jewish origin named F.W. Pollack was designated by Israel designated as an Honorary Consular Agent and a Trade Commissioner for Bombay. On 20 October 1952, he was subsequently nominated as an Honorary Consul of Israel. On 3 August 1953, Gavriel Doron was nominated as the first Consul of Israel in Bombay. In the absence of an Israeli Embassy, the Consulate in Bombay was mainly engaged in information and public relations efforts as well as political contacts (Shimoni, 1991:E6 and 382).

The analysis of Israel's foreign policy towards India is divided, into two stages from a historical and political perspective, namely pre-independent Israel (1929-1948) and post-independent Israel (1948-1991). The pre-independence stage analysis in particular, is relevant to this research, because Israel's foreign policy towards India had its roots in the formative years of pre-independent Israel.

Pre-independence events had a direct influence on post- independence bilateral relations between the two states. Thus, the pre-independence phase is an important starting point in this diachronic study of Israeli-Indian relations. The external and internal variables that influenced Israel's foreign policy towards India are identified and explained in terms of their international as well as their contextual determinants. This includes their influence on Israel's foreign policy decision-making process.

The pertinent ultimate decision units are identified and analysed as dominant players of the Israeli foreign policy towards India before and after the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.³ The Israeli pre-independence ultimate decision unit that influenced Israel's relations, as well as Israel's thinking and frame of mind on bilateral relations with India, namely the Jewish Agency, is identified and examined.⁴ Furthermore, the Israeli ultimate

² For details about India's recognition of the State of Israel, see section 3.8.1.

³ For definition of an ultimate decision unit as well as the Ultimate Decision Model, see section 2.1.

⁴ For details about the Jewish Agency, see section 4.3.

decision unit in the post-independence stage that determined the Israeli foreign policy towards India until the establishment of full diplomatic relations in 1991, is identified and analysed, namely the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Israel, . In addition, the three levels of analysis identified in chapter 2 are used in this chapter to analyse the bilateral relations between Israel and India.⁵

International system level of analysis – This type of analysis refers to an analysis of the international factors that influenced the foreign policy of the State of Israel towards the Republic of India after its independence. The analysis is carried out with Israel as a unitary actor with self-national interests in the international system. In this regard, the Israeli foreign relations with India are divided into two types, namely, bilateral and multilateral relations.

State and society level of analysis – At this level an analysis is done of the national factors in Israel in general and the political factors in particular, which influenced the Israeli foreign policy towards India. Attention will be paid to ruling parties such as the Labour Party as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel.

Individual level of analysis – An analysis is done of the individual factors, which influenced the Israeli leadership as an ultimate decision unit as well as other individuals who played a role in the decision-making process of the Israeli foreign policy towards India such as Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion. In the analysis in this chapter, the historical and international political context of the independence of these two states is important. It is important to note that Israel's main aim was the establishment of full diplomatic relations with India; especially in Israel's first years when India aspired to lead the non-aligned nations.

4.2 Pre-independence Israel: Historical and political context of the foreign policy towards India

Pre-independence Israeli foreign policy had its roots in the history of Israel, India and the INCM. During the British colonial period, India was a large political entity.

⁵ For details on the Level of Analysis Model, see section 2.3.

The withdrawal of the British and partition in 1947, which created India and Pakistan, resulted in geographical boundaries that cut across regional religious, social, ethnic and linguistic groups, while challenging the leaders of India to attempt to build a secular state with a national identity. In due course, internal security and domestic political considerations such as anti-Muslim communal violence and the Kashmir policy influenced the perceived goals of building national identity and preserving national unity and permeated India's relations with its neighbours in general, while maintaining a pro-Arab policy regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Before 1948, as part of the British Mandate in Palestine, Israel was linked to its global strategy; therefore, it did not have an independent foreign policy. Nonetheless, international events as well as the concept of the future role of independent Israel as a Jewish state surrounded by hostile Arab countries, laid the foundation of the Israeli foreign policy in general and towards India in particular. Even prior to independence, the Jewish Agency realised that India was a key player among the newly independent countries and aspired to lead them as was demonstrated in the first Inter-Asian Conference at New Delhi in March 1947.⁶ It is noteworthy that there was a great deal of sympathy towards India, its national struggle and its quest for independence.

4.3 Pre-independence Israel: Ultimate decision unit

The identification of the Jewish Agency as a pertinent ultimate decision unit of the Israeli pre-independence foreign policy towards India and the understanding of the relevant decision-making process of this policy are important. The ultimate decision unit provides a better tool in terms of its operational orientation for the understanding of the Israeli historical relations with India (as analysed by the state and society level of analysis) while concentrating on the Jewish Agency leadership in Palestine until 1948. The Jewish Agency, which was established in 1929, represented the Jewish community of Palestine and the Zionist

⁶ For details about the first Inter-Asian Conference at New Delhi see section 4.3.

Organisation in Palestine⁷ *vis-à-vis* the British Government,⁸ the Palestine administration and the League of Nations.⁹ The political department of the Jewish Agency therefore handled matters pertaining to foreign relations. From a historical viewpoint, Israel's foreign policy towards India had its roots in the formative years of Israel's pre-independence.

The Khilafat Movement in India,¹⁰ which was founded during World War I, left a legacy of hostility regarding Zionism and from that point onwards, not only the Muslim League¹¹ but also the predominantly Hindu INCM, followed a pro-Arab line.¹²

The wave of violence and disturbances in Palestine between Arabs and Jews in August 1929 resulted in an intensified rallying of Indian support for the Arabs of Palestine and in April 1930, an All India Conference on Palestine Affairs was held in Bombay. This was followed by a Palestine Day demonstration as well as protests against the Balfour Declaration¹³ in other cities all around India.¹⁴

The Jewish Agency in Palestine was informed about the Indian pro-Arab demonstrations and according to Gideon Shimoni at this stage, the leadership of the Jewish Agency began to show an awareness of the importance of India and in April 1930, Gershon Agronsky (Agron), a journalist, was sent to Bombay on

⁷ The Zionist Organisation, namely Zionism was the movement for national revival and independence of the Jewish people in the Holy Land (Palestine). The name was derived from the word *Zion*, one of the biblical names for Jerusalem. Until 1929, the Jewish Agency was a part of the World Zionist Organisation (WZO). The latter was established in 1897 with the goal of translating the theory of Zionism into political practice (Political Dictionary of the State of Israel, 1987). For more details about the conflict between the Zionist movement and the Arab Palestinian national movement, see section 3.3.2.

⁸ For details about Britain as mandatory power, see section 3.4.1.

⁹ Article 4 of the mandate of Palestine, granted to Britain by the League of Nations in 1922, provided for the establishment of an appropriate Jewish Agency to be recognised as a public body for the purpose of advising and cooperating with the administration of Palestine in such matters as may affect the establishment of the Jewish national home and the interests of the Jewish population in Palestine.

¹⁰ For details about the Khilafat Movement, see sections 3.4.

¹¹ For details about the Muslim League, see sections 3.4.1, 3.4.2 and 3.5.

¹² For details about the INCM and its pro-Arab line, see sections 3.4 and 3.5.

¹³ Balfour Declaration was a statement of British policy conveyed by Foreign Secretary Arthur J. Balfour on 2 November 1917 to Lord Rothschild. The statement promised to facilitate the foundation of a Jewish national home for the Jewish people in Palestine: "His Majesty's government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people." The declaration was recognised by all allies after World War I and was incorporated into the text of the mandate for Palestine granted to Britain in 1922.

¹⁴ For details about pre-independence India, see section 3.5.

behalf of the Jewish Agency (Shimoni, 1977:27).¹⁵ In his report on the visit, Agronsky urged the Jewish Agency to introduce the Zionist cause to India:

The relation of the Muslims of India to the Arabs of Palestine must not be omitted from any consideration of the Islamic problem confronting the Zionist Movement...The time has come for the Zionist Organization to consider without delay what measures can be taken that Zionism may turn its face, so to speak, to the East (CZA Z4/4129, 1930).

In July 1931, Shaukat Ali, one of the founders of the Khilafat movement visited Jerusalem and the Mufti of Jerusalem (Yegar, 2004:23).¹⁶ The first political contact between the Jewish Agency and an Indian leader took place in London, where Nahum Sokolow and Zelig Brodetsky, representatives of the Jewish Agency, met Mahatma Gandhi on 15 October 1931 (Avimor, 1977:24-26). The meeting with Gandhi was organised with the help of Henry S. L. Polak¹⁷ and took place following Gandhi's interview with the *Jewish Chronicle* on 2 October 1931 in London during his visit to Britain for the Round Table Conference on India, in which he referred directly to the question of Zionism.¹⁸ The two representatives of the Jewish Agency gave him a brief account of the Zionist cause in which they underlined the idea of a Jewish national homeland and emphasised the economic, political and social goals achieved by the Jews in Palestine. In his reply, Gandhi referred to similar problems experienced in both India and Palestine although on a different scale.

Sokolow and Brodetsky seized the opportunity to request that Palestine should be kept out of the Indian communal problems and the Round Table discussions. They explained to Gandhi that the leaders of the Muslim community in India, particularly Shaukat Ali, which had met with the Mufti of Jerusalem three months

¹⁵ In August 1929, a wave of violent disturbances by Arab against Jews broke out in Palestine and constituted a turning point in the development of the Palestinian problem from a local issue to a Pan Muslim one.

¹⁶ For more details about the visit and the Khilafat movement, see section 3.5.

¹⁷ A Jewish journalist, Gandhi's right-hand man in South Africa together his close friend, Polak's sister, was one of the Mahatma's secretaries in Britain.

¹⁸ In the interview with the *Jewish Chronicle*, Gandhi referred to the idea of Zionism in its spiritual sense saying that Zion lies in the heart and could thus be realised in any part of the world (*The Jewish Chronicle*, 1931). For more details about Gandhi, see section 3.6.1.

earlier,¹⁹ were trying to draw Palestine into the Indian communal problem and they requested that the subject of Palestine should not be brought into the Round Table Conference discussions.

Gandhi was sympathetic and said he would not approve such a move and that it would neither be in Palestine nor in India's interest to introduce the internal politics of Palestine into the internal politics of India. Gandhi also mentioned his intention to visit Palestine on his way back to India, but requested that his intention of going to Palestine should not be advertised in any way. Accordingly, a hearty welcome was assured to him on behalf of the Jewish people of Palestine (CZA S25/6652, 16/3/1937). However, that intended visit by Gandhi never took place.

In fact, it was not until the Arab riots in Palestine in 1936, that the Jewish Agency took political action directed at India.²⁰ It happened only after some prominent Hindu leaders, including Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi, openly spoke out in favour of the Arabs in Palestine.²¹ Moshe Shertok (Sharett), the head of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency, decided to send an emissary of intellectual calibre to India.

The idea was to establish friendly contacts with some of the Hindu political figures in India in order to present the Zionist cause to them. Shertok's choice fell upon Dr. Immanuel Olsvanger.²² It was suggested that Olsvanger would be asked to go to India accompanied by Kallenbach.²³ Shertok (Sharett) wrote a letter to Kallenbach in South Africa and asked him to accompany Olsvanger and to introduce him to Gandhi so that he could present the Zionist cause to Gandhi. Kallenbach accepted the challenge, however he could not undertake the trip immediately as Shertok's letter arrived on the eve of his departure to London on

¹⁹ One of the two brothers-founders of the Khilafat Movement in India. For details about the movement see sections 3.5 and 3.6.1.

²⁰ For details about India's policy regarding Palestine, see section 3.4.

²¹ For details about the Palestinian Arabs and the Arab Jewish conflict, see section 3.4.2.

²² An official of the South African Zionist Federation, Dr. of philology with knowledge of Sanskrit, who was acquainted with Hermann Kallenbach. Kallenbach was an associate and a dedicated follower of Gandhi in South Africa. Gandhi came to South Africa in 1893 to serve for some years as a legal assistant to an Indian firm. He became involved in activities against the disabilities from which Indians suffered and stayed on in South Africa as the leader of the struggle, until 1914.

²³ About Kallenbach's relations with Mahatma Gandhi, see section 3.6.1.

business matters. He urged Olsvanger not to wait for him; but to go to India on his own.

Olsvanger arrived in Bombay on 12 August 1936 and met with leading Hindu political and cultural figures. He met Sarojini Naidu,²⁴ Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru (he met Nehru twice and later on also exchanged a number of letters regarding Zionism with him). Olsvanger found Nehru biased against Zionism in the interest of good relations with Indian Muslims and tried to convince him that Zionism was the national movement of the Jews, but to no avail.

Nehru was not willing to recognise more than one legitimate nationalist movement in Palestine. He held the view that the Arab movement was a genuine nationalist movement; while the idea of Zionism had been fabricated by British imperialism in Palestine in order to divide and rule the Arabs and Jews and no argument of Olsvanger could make him change his pro-Arab stance (Shimoni, 1977:30).²⁵ Olsvanger sent Nehru a letter of protest, on 25 September 1936, in which he accused him of not distinguishing between morality and politics. Nehru replied harshly and quickly pointed out that he believed in every word he had uttered with regard to Palestine and insisted that the Arab movement was essentially a nationalist movement.²⁶

After meeting Nehru, Olsvanger, met Mahatma Gandhi in his Ashram near Wardha.²⁷ The meeting was very short since the Mahatma was weak after an illness. They exchanged a few remarks about Kallenbach's proposed visit to India, but after Gandhi's short cryptic response to Olsvanger's comment about the fact that Kallenbach was a Zionist, Olsvanger decided not to bring up the subject of Zionism at all but rather to leave it entirely to Kallenbach himself.²⁸

While in New Delhi, Olsvanger met with Sydney Jacobson, a Jewish journalist of the *Statesmen* newspaper in Calcutta. Following their meeting, Jacobson

²⁴Mrs. Sarojini Naidu was a prominent leader of the INCM, a known poetess, a leader of the Indian women's organisation and a friend and a disciple of Gandhi.

²⁵ For details about Nehru's opinion on Zionism, see also section 3.6.2.

²⁶ For details about Nehru's response, see section 3.6.2.

²⁷ Ashram is an Indian term for a place of seclusion and meditation.

²⁸ For details about Gandhi's opinion on Zionism, see section 3.6.1.

informed the Jewish Agency in Palestine of his impressions regarding the Indian attitude about the Palestine situation, namely that his impression was that the general attitude of both India and the Indian press was pro-Arab. This pro-Arab attitude had developed for three main reasons, the first being the disturbances in Palestine, which had received wide publicity in the newspapers in India. In the second place, the INCM had tried to enlist the support of the Indian Muslims by professing sympathy with the Arabs in Palestine. The third fact was that it had been a convenient weapon with which the INCM could attack the British Government. According to Jacobson, the use of the Palestinian situation as a weapon against the British was largely due to Jawaharlal Nehru, the President of the INCM (CZA S25/3239, 23/9/1936).

Following Nehru's pro-Arab statement in September 1936, Golda Meyerson (Meir), of the political department of the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem, sent a letter of protest to the INCM trying to explain that the people of India misunderstood the socialist Zionist work in Palestine, but she did not receive any reply (CZA S25/6312, 30/9/1936).²⁹

Following Olsvanger's visit to India as well as Jacobson's review on India, Eliyahu Epstein (Eilat), the head of the Arab desk in the political department in the Jewish Agency at that time, recommended the introduction of an information campaign in India and to develop contacts with Indian leaders (Shimoni, 1977:28). In March 1937, Shertok (Sharett) met Olsvanger and Kallenbach in London and briefed the latter about Olsvanger's experience in India and with Gandhi in particular. After a short visit in Palestine, Kallenbach arrived in India on 20 May 1937 and was welcomed warmly by Gandhi and his disciples. He handed various pamphlets to Gandhi on the Zionist work in Palestine and made an effort (for two months) to gain Gandhi's understanding and sympathy for the Zionist case. He also stressed the urgent need of the Jews in Europe for a national homeland in Palestine and pointed out that Zionism was not a material movement but represented the spiritual aspirations of the Jewish nation.³⁰

²⁹ Golda Meir became the Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs in the years 1956-1966 and the Prime Minister of Israel in the years 1969-1974.

³⁰ For details about Gandhi's attitude, see section 3.6.1.

Kallenbach's visit did not change Gandhi's negative attitude towards Zionism but he became more sensitive to the Jewish case. Kallenbach reported that Gideon Shimoni asserted that Gandhi was willing, if called upon, to contribute to the practical working out of such a solution personally. He was willing to assist in bringing about direct conversations between the Arabs and Jews without the involvement of the British (Shimoni, 1977:33). However, Gandhi gave Kallenbach a written statement on Zionism and also gave him his blessing on his intention of settling in Palestine.³¹ On his way back from India to South Africa, Kallenbach stopped over in Palestine, handed over Gandhi's statement about Zionism and reported to Shertok about his visit to India. However, Gandhi never published this statement (Sarid & Bartolf, 1997:75). Kallenbach recommended that the Jewish Agency sent him informational material on Zionism, which he would forward to Gandhi.³² Another outcome of Kallenbach's visit in India was a decision made by the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem to give financial assistance to the Zionist office in Bombay.

On 1 June 1937, David Ben-Gurion,³³ the chairman of the Jewish Agency, met with Dr. Kayala M. Panikkar³⁴ in London in order to discuss the Zionist cause. In August 1937, following Kallenbach's recommendations, the political department of the Jewish Agency prepared a comprehensive paper on Zionism and it was sent through him to Gandhi. On 20 July 1938, Prof. Chaim Weizmann, the President of the World Zionist Organisation (WZO) initiated a meeting with Nehru in London for the exchange of views.³⁵

Kallenbach was back in India from February to May 1939 and he met Gandhi as well as A.E. Shohet.³⁶ Shohet was an Indian Jew from the community in the Baghdadi origin, who conducted the affairs of the Zionist office and its fund in Bombay. He used the occasion of Kallenbach's visit to interview Gandhi (he was

³¹ Details of the meeting and Gandhi's written statement are elaborated in section 3.6.1.

³² For details about Gandhi's statement, see section 3.6.1.

³³ Ben-Gurion was the chairman of the Jewish Agency and the Zionist executive in Palestine who became the first Prime Minister of the State of Israel later on.

³⁴ About K. M. Panikkar, see section 3.6.3.

³⁵ For details about the meeting between Prof. Weizmann with Nehru, see sections 4.6.1 and 3.6.2.

³⁶ For details about the meeting between Kallenbach with Gandhi, see section 3.6.1.

also the editor of the Jewish bi-weekly paper, *The Jewish Advocate*, which was published in Bombay). Kallenbach urged Gandhi to declare his views publicly on the Arab-Jewish question in Palestine and the persecution of the Jews in Germany, but Gandhi was reluctant to do so.

Shohet reported the details of the meeting on 7 March 1939 to the new head of the political department of the Jewish Agency, Eliyahu Epstein (Eilat). According to his report, Gandhi viewed the Palestine question as a purely Muslim question; nevertheless Shohet recommended that contact with Gandhi should be maintained (Shimoni, 1977:49-50).³⁷

In turn, the political department of the Jewish Agency proposed that Joseph Nedivi, the town clerk of the city of Tel-Aviv, who was due to visit India, could meet with Gandhi and Nehru. Kallenbach helped to arrange Nedivi's meeting with Gandhi on 22 March 1939 and Shohet joined him. Importantly, Nedivi tried to convince Gandhi by emphasising the feudal character of the Arab leaders in Palestine and the benefit that the Jews had brought to the Arabs. At the same time, they tried to compare this situation to the Gandhian methods that were deployed in Gujarat, where low caste labourers were exploited on their own land by rich Indian farmers (Stein, 1998:322). During his visit to India, Nedivi met the editor of the *Harijan* newspaper (who was also Gandhi's secretary) and Gandhi's son, Devdas Gandhi, who was the managing director of the *Hindustan Times* newspaper, for briefings on the Zionist cause in Palestine.

Gandhi did not change his opinion on the question of Palestine and expressed his doubt about Nedivi's description of the position in Palestine. He added that in any case, the requested statement would not serve any useful purpose for his visitors; but on the other hand, it would help the Indian-Muslim League by attacking the INCM (Shimoni, 1977:49-50).³⁸ During the meeting with Gandhi, Shohet indicated that the Muslims in India were fomenting hostility towards the Jews and that Gandhi could help influence Indian public opinion in favour of the

³⁷ For details about the meeting between Gandhi, Kallenbach and Shohet, see section 3.6.1.

³⁸ For details about the meeting with Gandhi, see section 3.6.1.

Jewish viewpoint, but Gandhi refused to take such a step (CZA S25/6315, 24/3/1939).

Nedivi's meeting with Nehru, on 20 March 1939, which took place two days before his meeting with Gandhi, was cordial but did not have any impact on Nehru's pro- Arab attitude. Nedivi also met Sardar V. Patel, chairperson of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee of the INCM and Gandhi's trusted associate, G.D. Birla, one of the biggest industrialists and supporters of the INCM. Other people he met were Mahadev Dessai, Gandhi's secretary and editor of the *Harijan* paper, as well as other Indian leaders. Following Nedivi's meetings in India, the political department in the Jewish Agency decided to upgrade its financial support to the Zionist office in Bombay.

In the early 1940s, David Ben-Gurion, in his capacity as chairperson of the Jewish Agency, maintained correspondence with Mahatma Gandhi. Ben-Gurion was an admirer of Mahatma Gandhi whom he described as a great pre-eminent Indian leader who was involved in a unique struggle, against the biggest empire in the world, namely Great Britain using his weapon of non-violence.

The main reason for that correspondence, initiated by Ben-Gurion, was to gain Gandhi's support for the Zionist endeavour, as well as his concern that the Indian-Muslim response to the events in Palestine might influence the British position towards the Jews in Palestine in a negative way.

Ben-Gurion made a distinction between the Muslims in Arab world and the Muslims in India. On one hand, he was concerned that the British support of Zionism could unite the Muslim world against Britain ³⁹ in outrage and that the Western countries, including Britain and the US, might use it as an excuse to reduce their support of the Zionist cause. On the other hand, he considered the support of the Arabs in Palestine by the Indian Muslims in India as well as the Indian Muslim League to be lip service to the Arab world, while their leaders used it to their domestic political advantage against the INCM (Yegar, 2004:31).

³⁹ For details about Britain as mandatory power in Palestine and India, see section 3.4.1

On 11 May 1945, Eliyahu Epstein (Eilat), in his capacity as the head of the Jewish Agency's political department in Washington, met with Firoz Khan Noon, a member of the Indian delegation to the conference on the United Nations Organisation Constitution but the meeting was fruitless. On 20 November 1945, F. W. Pollack, the secretary of the central Jewish Board in Bombay, wrote to the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem. He also sent copies to the regional Jewish Agencies offices in Washington, London and New York, offering an action plan in India:

The best would be to delegate a capable personality of our Labour Movement who should work here all year round with the help of well staffed office. He should be assisted by regular visits of influential pro-Zionist English and American politicians (CZA S25/2017, 20/11/1945).

Even though the Jewish Agency recognised the political potential of India, at that stage not much was done about it in practical political terms such as pro-Zionist information campaigns in India. The budget allocated to their local office in Bombay for political and propaganda activities in India were limited. The rationale for this state of affairs was that the local offices of the Zionist federation were not considered useful channels for political contacts because of a lack of necessary experience. However, in January 1947, it was pointed out in the minutes of a meeting of the political department of the Jewish Agency in London that it was important to forge closer ties with Indians in London as well as in India. Moshe Shertok (Sharett) himself stressed that more attention should be paid to India whose importance was growing steadily (CZA S25/4286, 8/1/1947).

In March 1947 on the eve of Indian independence a Jewish delegation from Palestine arrived in India to participate in the first Inter-Asian Conference at New Delhi. This conference was convened as an Asian Relations Conference of National Movements in Asia organised by the Indian Council for World Affairs, a research body in New Delhi headed by Nehru, in order to discuss the common problems of the emerging independent states in Asia.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ For details about the Jewish Palestine delegation to India, see section 4.4.2.

On 16 May 1947, the political department of the Jewish Agency made a decision to open a permanent office of the Jewish Agency in Bombay, which was commensurate with its decision in January 1947 to forge ties with Indians. However, due to technical and budgetary problems, the decision was not implemented. In September 1947, Mrs. Golda Meyerson (Meir), the head of the political department of the Jewish Agency, planned to visit India but cancelled the visit because Mr. Meyerson had to leave for New York before the UN voting on the Partition Plan (CZA S25/9029, 3/3/1948).

Despite India's official negative approach towards the Partition Plan representatives of the Jewish Agency approached the Indian delegation at the UN even before the UNSCOP final report was submitted to the General Assembly as the vote of every delegation was considered crucial. Meetings, in which they concentrated on the rationale of the Zionist Movement and the Partition Plan, took place in New York, between the Jewish Agency's representatives and the Indian Ambassador to the UN and to the special General Assembly, Assaf Ali. He (Assaf Ali) had also served as the Indian Ambassador to the USA and had previously been a chairman of the INCP. On 8 April 1947, Moshe Shertok (Sharett) met with Assaf Ali and so did Eliyahu Epstein (Eilat) a few days later. Both of them returned from their meetings with him under the impression that Assaf Ali was totally committed to the Arab cause. One month later, In May 1947, Ben-Gurion himself met Assaf Ali for a short and futile meeting during which Ben-Gurion categorically refused to consider Assaf Ali's suggestion to stop Jewish immigration to Palestine for five years (Ben-Gurion, 1993:123). Several more meetings between Epstein (Eilat) and Assaf Ali took place during the year of 1947 to discuss the Jewish Arab conflict, but the meetings did not bear any fruit (Yegar, 2004: 203).

An unfriendly encounter between Ben-Gurion and a high level Indian official took place in Jerusalem between 4 and 8 July 1947. During that period, Ben-Gurion testified twice before the UNSCOP and Sir Abdur Rahman, the Indian representative to the UNSCOP, was hostile and rude towards him with an

unmistakably and openly pro-Arab approach (Ben-Gurion, 1993:266 and Yegar, 2004:49).⁴¹

Before the UN voting on the Partition Plan of Palestine, which took place on 29 November 1947, Epstein (Eilat) was in constant contact with Dr. Kayala M. Panikkar and Shiva Rao, members of the Indian delegation to the UN. Although Panikkar maintained his friendly approach towards the Zionist cause, he told Epstein, very clearly, that under no circumstances would the Indian delegation defy Nehru's instructions and vote in support of the Partition Plan. Shertok (Sharett) also met with Panikkar, but despite the latter's friendly attitude, he was not in a position to help change the Indian position.⁴²

On 24 November 1947, a few days before the voting in the General Assembly on the Partition Plan, Shertok (Sharett) met with Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit (Nehru's sister) who headed the Indian delegation to the UN assembly. His aim was to try and convince her to modify the Indian vote in Israel's favour, but to no avail. Mrs. Pandit's instructions on the voting were peremptory and in fact she had already announced on 11 November 1947 that India would vote against the partition.

In a report sent to Ben-Gurion in Jerusalem, it was pointed out that before the voting, there had been important meetings with the Indian representatives in the Indian delegation to the UN Assembly. Undoubtedly, a high degree of understanding had been achieved, but that could not change the Indian politically-oriented position.

The report emphasised the fact that there had been a debate within the Indian delegation about the voting and that Mrs. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit had had a telephone conversation with her brother, Prime Minister Nehru. During that conversation, she asked his permission to abstain from the voting on the Partition Plan in Palestine, but he insisted on her voting against it. The report concluded with a quotation made by Shertok (Sharett) that Nehru's personal doctrine placed

⁴¹ For details about UNSCOP and India's attitude towards the Partition Plan in Palestine, see section 3.9.2.2.

⁴² For details about Panikkar and his approach towards Zionism, see section 3.6.3.

India in the pro-Arab bloc and therefore it would be too much to expect that India would not vote against the Partition Plan (CZA S25/5471, 23.10.1947).

On 1 February 1948, Ben-Gurion sent a cable of condolence to Prime Minister Nehru after the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, on behalf of the Jewish Agency:

Profoundly moved by the tragic news of Mahatma Gandhi's death. Beg to convey to you, your government and entire Indian people expression of deep sorrow and heartfelt sympathy of Jews of Palestine and Jewish people throughout the world. Example of Mahatma's life and teaching will always shine like a beacon to guide men of good will everywhere along the path of goodness and human worth (CZA S25/7494, 1/2/1948).

4.4 Pre-independence Israel: The international system level of analysis

Israel's pre-independence policy towards India, as well as Israel's historical relations with India, including the meetings with Gandhi and Nehru, is a key factor that laid the foundation for the relations between Israel and India after Israel's independence and is analysed in terms of the international level of analysis.⁴³

The pre-independence Zionist foreign policy towards India was self-restricted because of the reasons discussed in the following sub-sections. The British mandate, which was granted to Britain at the pre-independence stage by the League of Nations in 1922, imposed limits on the freedom of international politics and the foreign activities of the Jewish leadership in Palestine. Because of the imposed British limits, the Jewish Agency foreign activities were linked to the British global strategy. However, there was nothing, in practical political terms, except a lack of political interest and general knowledge that the INCM was a supporter of Arab national movements that prevented the Zionist leaders from establishing relations with the INCM.

The basic assumption of the Zionist Movement leaders was that the Muslim community in India (over 95 million before the India-Pakistan partition) was

⁴³ For details about pre-independence meetings with Gandhi, see section 3.6.1 and for details about pre-independence meetings with Nehru, see section 3.6.2.

opposed to the Zionist Movement in Palestine. They made no serious attempt to establish contact with the leadership of the Indian Muslim community. There was a great deal of sympathy for India and its national struggle among the Jewish community in Palestine during the pre-independence era and Gandhi and Nehru were revered by many and there was an intellectual curiosity for India's history, culture and spiritual tradition.

Nonetheless, that sympathy was not translated into a political systematic effort to establish political contact with the INCM. Moreover, only minimal effort was made to explain Zionism and the Jewish cause in Palestine to the Indian nationalists, with the exception of Mahatma Gandhi and Nehru. The reason for this state of affairs was because Gandhi and his teachings, despite his pro-Arab attitude and his opinion of the Zionist cause, carried special moral weight as far as the Zionist leadership in Palestine was concerned. On the other hand, Nehru had a special appeal for the pre-dominantly socialist Jewish leaders, despite his pro-Arab approach (Shimoni, 1991:E3).

4.4.1 Zionism's self-imposed international isolation from India

With historical hindsight, it now appears that the absence of relations between the Jewish Agency and the INCM turned out to be a political mistake and an obstacle to bilateral relations between the two countries after independence. This was directly related to the fact that their legal status as independent states and sovereignty could not erase the colonial heritage. In order to obtain greater clarity regarding this issue in the field of world politics, we need to begin by examining the legacy and the history of the new independent states (Kegley & Wittkopf, 1995).

The Jewish national movement and the Zionist leaders avoided identification with anti-colonial movements in Asia. They did not regard Zionism as an anti-colonialist movement, but rather as a unique national revival movement of the Jewish people in the Holy Land. No Zionist representative was to be found at the various anti-imperialist conferences and the Zionist Organisation did not join the international congress against imperialism (unlike the INCM that had joined it in 1928). The only exception was the New Delhi Conference of the Asian Relations

Organisation (23.3.47-2.4.47),⁴⁴ which took place after the meeting of the political department of the Jewish Agency at which a decision was made to forge closer connections with the Indians in London and India.⁴⁵

There were no public pronouncements aligning the Zionist goals with those of the Asian nationalists, despite the fact that there was a strong affection for Gandhi and Nehru among the Jews in Palestine. A special effort was made to change their opinion regarding the Zionist cause. Nehru in particular, appealed to the predominantly Jewish socialist leadership in Palestine (his autobiography was translated into Hebrew in the thirties and was widely read). Mahatma Gandhi was also admired for his moral stance and carried special moral weight as far as the Zionist leaders in Palestine were concerned. They considered morality a precondition for a Zionist policy as declared specifically by Ben-Gurion (Gal, 2004:17).⁴⁶ Despite the Israeli affection for Gandhi and Nehru, the Indian approach towards Zionism made little difference to the Zionist leaders in Palestine, who concentrated their diplomatic efforts in London, Washington and Geneva.⁴⁷

This type of indifference could be understood in terms of the fact that the Zionist leaders in Palestine and the world Jewry were predominantly Western as well as the fact that potential Jewish funds and Jewish immigrants came from the Western countries. The Jewish claim for national self-determination in Palestine seemed baseless to the Indian leaders. In addition, they did not view the Jewish struggle for statehood and Zionism as a part of the general Asian struggle for national self-determination (that position was reserved by them for the Arabs). This view of the Jewish struggle in Palestine also provided the basis for the linking of Zionism with British imperialism by the INCM.

⁴⁴ For details about the conference, see section 4.4.2

⁴⁵ For details about the decision, see section 4.3.

⁴⁶ In Ben-Gurion's speech, in April 1941 on the Zionist philosophy.

⁴⁷ The headquarters of the League of Nations were situated in Geneva.

Indians, in general, had little knowledge of Judaism and the Bible (Old Testament)⁴⁸ and even a spiritual leader like Mahatma Gandhi, who included the Bible among the great religious books and had Jewish friends, could not accept the Zionist idea of the indissoluble link between the Jewish people, the Bible and Zion as the Holy Land. Organising a possible information campaign about the Zionist cause in India was therefore more complicated than in the Christian Western countries. In practical terms, it was difficult for the Zionist movement in Palestine to carry out any diplomatic campaigns in India where there was little inducement or opportunity to explain the Zionist cause. As Michael Brecher (1962:127) puts it, the lack of knowledge about the Jewish link to Palestine was one of the factors that led Indians to discount the Jewish claim to the Holy Land. Moreover, the lack of anti-Semitism in India led them to discount the need for an independent Jewish state.

On the other hand, the lack of knowledge by the Jewish leaders in Palestine of the Indian heritage and society is revealed by the fact that no attempt was made by the Jewish Agency to approach the Indian-Christian community that was familiar with the Bible and the New Testament, in order to gain their support for the Zionist cause. In the broader context of the cultural and social gap, India seemed a remote, huge and strange country to the Zionist leaders. What made India even more strange and different was its history and culture and the fact that it was a society seriously affected by caste conflicts and poverty. Consequently, India did not feature at all in the Jewish Agency's future international plans.

Despite the Jewish Agency's office in Bombay, the Jewish community in India was not used as a bridge between the two national movements or as a local lobbying platform. The members of the Jewish community lacked lobbying capacity and power and in fact, India's Jews (before Israel's independence) numbered less than thirty thousand and did not have any political status or influence in New Delhi.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ The Old Testament helped the Western world to become aware of the ancient Jewish-Hebrew people, the Jewish faith and the special emotional ties of the Jewish people to the Holy Land.

⁴⁹ For details about the Indian Jewish community, see section 3.10.5.1.

The low-level priority of India on the Jewish Agency's list was the main reason that no serious attempt was made to establish direct contact between the two national movements. The main concern of the Zionist leaders in Palestine regarding the struggle for independence in India had to do with the British concern about the conflict between the Jews and the Arabs in Palestine. This conflict could trigger disturbances amongst the Arabs throughout the Middle East and possibly also amongst the Muslims in India, a concern that could have had a negative influence on the British policy in Palestine.⁵⁰

The Zionist Movement was a Western oriented organisation that drew its support from the West and was identified with the British Government (and the Balfour Declaration), a force that the INCM was struggling against in order to achieve independence.⁵¹ Some of the movement leaders were identified with Britain, in particular Prof. Chaim Weizmann, the president of the World Zionist Organisation (WZO) who was pro-British in his philosophy and his political practice and Ben-Gurion, the Chairman of the Jewish Agency in Palestine, who pursued an American oriented foreign policy (Gal, 2004:19).⁵²

Therefore, the Zionist Movement was regarded by the INCM as an extension of European colonialism and not as a genuine national movement. Zionism was regarded, by many of the Indian leaders and Nehru in particular, as a British interest and a means to carry out their "divide and rule" policy between the Jews and the Arabs in Palestine (according to Indian leaders, similar to what occurred in India with the Hindus and the Muslims).

The Zionist Movement failed completely to respond to the Indian political perception regarding Palestine or to try and modify the information concerning the Zionist cause accordingly. It is important to note that no serious effort was made to change the perceptions regarding the Zionist cause amongst the Indian politicians and leaders as a target audience. In addition, not much effort was made to disseminate relevant information amongst the Indian public. Such a

⁵⁰ For details about the Zionist leader's concern regarding the British role in the conflict prior to independence, see section 4.3 and about Britain as a mandatory power, see section 3.4.1.

⁵¹ For details about Britain as a mandatory power, see section 3.4.1.

⁵² For details about Professor Weizmann, see section 4.6.1 and for details about Ben-Gurion, see sections 4.3 and 4.4.

change in tactics would have had to deal first and foremost with the fact that partition, as a political solution, was counter to the political goals of the INCM that was interested in independence in India, but without partition. The Partition Plan of Palestine could set a negative example by encouraging Muslims in India to demand a separate independent state. In addition, the INCM was committed to the idea of a secular state and to them the idea of religion being the basis of nationality was unacceptable as they regarded Zionism as a Jewish, religion based movement. The only exception was Professor Bergmann who tried to adapt the message of Zionism to his audience, during the New Delhi Conference of the Asian Relations Organisation (The New Delhi Conference Report, 1947).⁵³

Although the Jewish Agency gradually recognised India's importance, India did not head their list of priorities despite attempts to meet with Gandhi and Nehru. Importantly, no political activities or information campaigns, regarding the Zionist cause, were undertaken. The Zionist Movement saw no reason to offend Great Britain, especially during World War II, by publicly aligning its cause with that of the INCM. Contrary to the Jewish national movement, the Arab nationalists and the Arab national movements formed close relations with the INCM, a process that had already started in the late 1920s and used them for propagating the Arab cause regarding Palestine.⁵⁴ The friendly relations between the INCM and the Arab national movements had a negative impact on the Jewish Agency. This was an additional reason why direct contacts with the INCM were not initiated by the Jewish movement (Shimoni, 1977:E4).

4.4.2 The Jewish Palestinian delegation to India

The New Delhi Conference of the Asian Relations Organisation that took place between 23 March 1947 and 2 April 1947, was an international conference during which India's national leaders convened an Asian conference for national movements struggling for independence. An official invitation was extended to the Hebrew University in Jerusalem only after Sarojini Naidu, a prominent INCM

⁵³ For details about the conference, see next section 4.4.2.

⁵⁴ For details about Palestinian Arab leadership and the INCM, see sections 3.4.2 and 3.5.

leader and a national poetess, overcame strong opposition in New Delhi.⁵⁵ Nehru's sister, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, who was India's representative to the UN, assisted her. Mrs. Pandit was also approached, regarding that matter by Congressman Emanuel Celler and according to him, following his appeal, Mrs. Pandit requested her brother, Nehru, to issue an invitation, to the Hebrew University, to attend the conference (GZA S25/7482, 22/1/1947).

In his inauguration speech, Nehru avoided any reference to the Jewish Palestinian delegation (although he welcomed other delegations warmly). Following the strong attack of Zionism by the head of the Egyptian delegation to the conference and the representative of the Arab League, Professor Samuel Hugo Bergmann, the head of the Jewish delegation, requested the right to respond. However, his request was denied by Nehru who chaired the conference. Professor Bergmann and his delegation left the conference hall in protest, but returned after the Indian delegates approached him. Nehru appeased the Jewish Palestine delegation by allowing David Hacoheh to chair the economic committee for two days. He also invited the delegation to a private dinner with his sister, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit and his daughter Indira Gandhi (who later became India's Prime Minister).

In his closing speech, Nehru expressed the sympathy of the Indian people with the suffering of the Jewish people in Europe as well as other places, but he went on to point out that India had always held the opinion that Palestine was mainly an Arab country.⁵⁶

The Jewish delegation met with Indian leaders as well as with high-level officials. During the conference, the delegation met key persons in India and established many contacts in particular with Indian socialist leaders who expressed an interest in Israel's social enterprises such as the Kibbutz⁵⁷ and the Moshav.⁵⁸ The delegation met Socialist leaders such as Jaya Prakash Naryah, Ashok Mehta and Rammanohar Lohia, who expressed a special interest in the Jewish experience

⁵⁵ For more details about Mrs. Naidu, see also section 4.3.

⁵⁶ For details about Nehru's attitude towards Palestine, see also section 3.6.2.

⁵⁷ An Israeli form of agricultural collective settlement.

⁵⁸ An Israeli form of agricultural cooperative settlement.

in agriculture in Palestine. It also met Achary Kripalani, the president of the INCM, Sarojini Naidu, the writer Shinta Shiva Rao and her mother Rama Rao, a leader of the all- India Women's Association.

Gandhi's meeting with the delegation was a short and disappointing encounter. He was reluctant to make any public statement on the Jewish question, adding, that if they insisted, his words would be directed mainly against Jewish terrorism in Palestine as well as for the adoption of the matchless weapon of non-violence. He therefore asked to be left out of the picture (CZA S25/7485, 17/4/1947).⁵⁹

The delegation's meeting with Nehru was cordial and following the delegation's request, he agreed to extend the duration of the stay of a few hundred Jewish refugees from Afghanistan who were stranded in Bombay. Nonetheless, he did not change his opinion about the Palestine question.⁶⁰ During the meeting with Nehru, David Hacohen, one of the members of the Jewish delegation and a member of the political department of the Jewish Agency, brought up the option of partition in Palestine and later on he also reiterated it in writing to Nehru:

Nothing but the establishment of a Jewish commonwealth, within the wider framework of the neighbouring states, can cure the world of the Jewish malaise but erecting a refuge for our people wherever and whenever they are persecuted and creating at the same time a constructive outlet for their energies. We have achieved remarkable results in nation building but we lack the attributes of statehood without which we can make no further progress (CZA S25/7484, 31/3/1947).

Nehru, who did not support the idea of partition in Palestine, did not respond to the letter although he admitted he had read it (CZA S25/7485, 17/4/1947). In addition, although the Indian press was found to be unfriendly towards the Jewish Palestine delegation, following their participation in the New Delhi conference, they strongly recommended the opening of an economic liaison office in Bombay.⁶¹ According to the delegation's report (The New Delhi Conference

⁵⁹ For details about the meeting with Gandhi, see section 3.6.1.

⁶⁰ For details about Nehru's attitude towards the Palestine question, see section 3.6.2.

⁶¹ Recommendations which were based on Dr. K. M. Panikkar's memorandum as described in section 3.6.3.

Report, 1947), the Jewish Palestinian delegation to the conference met some resistance and hostility, and experienced several negative incidents, but at the same time, it also gained some support particularly from the Indian socialist leaders.

Following the New Delhi conference, on 9 July 1947, a Hebrew Palestinian Unit of the New Asian Relations Organisation was established in Jerusalem and the following cable, giving information about the inauguration of the new local unit, was sent to Nehru in New Delhi: "On behalf (of the) Hebrew Palestine Unit of the New Asian relations inaugurated yesterday conveying you sincere greetings." In return, Rao's secretary cabled back: "Your cable to Nehru. Hearty welcome to Hebrew Palestine Unit. Wishing best luck" (The New Delhi Conference Report, 1947).

The next meeting of the Asian Relations Organisation (ARO) was held in January 1949 in New Delhi, in order to discuss Dutch politics in Indonesia, but the Hebrew Palestinian unit was not invited because of Arab pressure and the threat of a boycott (Kochan, 1976:249).

4.5 Pre-independence Israel: The state and society level of analysis

The pre-independence Israeli foreign policy towards India is explained by the state and society (national) level of analysis with an emphasis on the Jewish Agency as an ultimate decision unit and the world Jewry.⁶² The pre-independence Zionist foreign policy was dependent on world Jewry and the Jewish organisations in the world, while special importance was attached to the Jewish media.

The world Jewry was often an asset for the Jewish Agency as Jews around the world supported the Jewish Agency as part of their strong identification with the latter's aims. The backing and support could take any one of several forms, ranging from fund raising and tourism, to volunteering personal services in times of crisis and war. However, the most important show of solidarity was the political

⁶² For details about the Jewish Agency as an Ultimate Decision Unit, see section 4.3.

support the Zionist National Movement received as well as the support of the Jewish media.⁶³

In fact, the Jewish media played a defining role in the pre-independence relations between Israel and India. On 2 October 1931, *The Jewish Chronicle* in London interviewed Mahatma Gandhi, during his visit to Britain for the Round Table Conference on India. In the interview, Gandhi referred to the spiritual basis of Zionism, by saying that Zion lies in the hearts and can therefore be realised in any part of the world.⁶⁴

The *Jewish Chronicle* did not like Gandhi's message and the editorial pointed out the irony in his statement that Jews should not think of their own rehabilitation in national terms; whereas it was known that he was in London to demand national self-determination for India (*The Jewish Chronicle*, 2/10/1931). One month later, Rabbi Stephen Wise criticised Gandhi, in *The Jewish Chronicle*, for his negative attitude regarding the Jewish national homeland, while he himself had demanded similar national self-determination for India.⁶⁵ Importantly, between 1931 and 1938, Gandhi refrained from writing about Palestine.

In September 1936, Sydney Jacobson (CZA S25/3239, 23/9/1936), a Jewish journalist at the *Statesmen* newspaper in Calcutta, sent his impressions to the Jewish Agency in Palestine on the Indian attitude about the Palestine situation and pointed out that:

Palestine has come into some prominence: 1) Because the disturbances (in Palestine) have received wide publicity in the newspapers. 2) Because the Congress (nationalist) Party has tried to enlist the support of the Indian Muslims for its movement by professing sympathy with the Arabs in Palestine. 3) Because Palestine is a convenient weapon for Congress propagandists and newspapers to attack the British Government with.

Jacobson added that there is intrinsically nothing anti-Semitic in this, that Indian Muslims were not deeply interested in Palestine, that the Pan-Islamic movement

⁶³ For details about the Jewish individuals that contributed to relations between the Jewish Agency and pre-independent India, see section 4.6.

⁶⁴ For details about Gandhi's attitude towards Zionism, see section 3.6.1.

⁶⁵ For details about Rabbi Wise, see section 4.6.3.

was almost extinct in India and that the president of the INCM, Jawaharlal Nehru, used the Palestinian situation as a stick with which to beat British Imperialism.

In 1938, Gandhi published a critical article on Zionism (*Harijan*, 38). A. E. Shohet, the editor of the Jewish Advocate in Bombay, was the first to respond to Gandhi's article in which he rejected the claim of the Jews to a national home. Shohet pointed out that Gandhi was judging the Jews according to higher spiritual standards than those applied to the Arabs and blamed Gandhi for being pro-Arab and biased. Accordingly, Shohet felt that Gandhi had applied double standards in his judgment (Shimoni, 1977:49).

A year earlier, Shohet had sent a letter to Nehru in which he declared his willingness to write an article about the Palestinian problem, but Nehru declined the offer with the excuse that he was too busy with other work. However, Nehru used the opportunity to indicate, in his response, that the Jewish leaders in Palestine had relied too much on British support. He added that the resolution of the problem lay in the creation of an independent Arab state with the protected rights of Jews being an integral part of it (CZA S25/6312, 26/8/1937).⁶⁶

Hayim Greenberg, the editor of the Jewish *Frontier* newspaper (a Zionist socialist paper printed in America), was an admirer of Gandhi. He too wrote a letter to Gandhi, in response to his article in the *Harijan* in which he had rejected the claim of the Jews to a national home in Palestine as well as their need for national self-fulfilment. Greenberg accused Gandhi of being biased and unfair towards the Jews and that he had ignored the imperative existential need for a Jewish homeland. Gandhi responded to this accusation in his column in the *Harijan*, and even reproduced an abridgment of Greenberg's letter pointing out that he saw no reason to change the opinion he had expressed in his article (*Harijan*, 1939).⁶⁷

⁶⁶ For details about Nehru's letter to Shohet, see section 3.6.2.

⁶⁷ Gandhi's response can be explained partly by the fact that Greenberg's letter touched a sensitive nerve, blaming Gandhi that his zealousness for Indian Muslim unity in India made him partial to the Arabs. He addressed the charge himself by saying he had often said that he would not sell truce for the sake of India's deliverance and much less would he do so for winning Muslim friendship (Shimoni, 1977:49).

In February 1939, Shohet interviewed Gandhi on the Palestinian question for the Jewish *Advocate* newspaper and although Gandhi referred to it in terms of Indian domestic politics, indicating that he regarded it as a purely Muslim question, the interview was not published as Gandhi did not approve it for publication.⁶⁸ On 22 March 1939, Shohet (who accompanied Nedivi to his meeting with Gandhi) interviewed Gandhi for the second time, but the notes of Gandhi's secretary of that interview, which were sent to Shohet for possible publication, did not include Gandhi's remark that he considered the real object of the Indian Muslim League's propaganda on the Palestine question to be the INCM. Once again, that interview was never published. Shohet attributed that omission to the fact that although Gandhi was receptive he was also shrewd (GZA S25/6315, 24/3/1939).⁶⁹

Reports about India in the Jewish press in general and in Palestine, in particular, exposed the decision-makers in the Jewish Agency and the leaders of the world Jewry to the political potential of India in the international arena. This contributed to the fact that India was eventually put on the political agenda of the Jewish Agency as well as American Jewish organisations.

4.6 Pre-independence Israel: The individual level of analysis

The individual level of analysis is a key factor in the research of the Israeli historical relations with India. The pre-independence Israeli foreign policy towards India was initiated and carried out by Zionist leaders and legislators as well as Jewish intellectuals. The following individuals and their contribution to the efforts to form contacts between the Jewish Agency and the INCM are indicated in this section.

4.6.1 Zionist leader: Professor Chaim Weizman

Professor Chaim Weizmann, President of the World Zionist Organisation (WZO), had considerable influence amongst the world Jewry and was strongly pro-British

⁶⁸ An interview which was arranged by Kallenbach.

⁶⁹ For more details about the interview and the meeting, see also section 4.3.

in his political philosophy and practice (Gal, 2004:24).⁷⁰ In 1926, he met Kayala M. Panikkar in London for the exchange of views.⁷¹ On 20 July 1938, he met Nehru in London where he tried to convince him of the Jewish moral right to the Holy Land and that the Jews had never given up the idea of returning to Zion (Palestine) as a free nation, but to no avail.⁷²

In 1943, Weizmann met Panikkar, in New York this time. In 1947, the two met when Panikkar was a member of the Indian delegation to the UN. The meeting with Panikkar was friendly but did not deliver any results as far as influencing the Indian vote regarding the Partition Plan as far as Palestine was concerned. On 24 November 1947, five days before the voting on the Partition Plan in the UN, Weizmann met with Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, Nehru's sister, the head of the Indian delegation to the UN General Assembly. However, the meeting did not bear any fruit since she was under direct instruction from her brother to vote against it. In his effort to convince the Indian delegation, Weizmann met with the Indian Ambassador to the US, Bengal Rama Rao. Although that was the beginning of a friendship between the two of them, that eventually led to scientific cooperation with India, the meeting itself was fruitless since the Indian delegation could not defy Nehru's instructions (Yegar, 2004:53).

On 25 November 1947, Weizmann sent a note to the President of the US, Harry Truman, asked him to exert an influence on India (including other countries closely associated with the US) in favour of the Partition Plan in order to gain the majority in the voting in the General Assembly (ISA 93.03/2270/8, 25/11/1947).⁷³ In a last minute attempt before the Partition Plan vote, on 27 November 1947 (two days before the voting), Weizmann sent a personal cable to Nehru in New Delhi. In it he urged him to support the Partition Plan because that would mean independence for the Jews as well as the Arabs; consequently, it would lead to a better climate for Jewish-Arab understanding and would bring independent and harmonic development to the whole region:

⁷⁰ Prof. Chaim Weizmann was the President of the World Zionist Organisation from 1920 to 1948 with a short break between 1931 and 1935. In 1948, he was elected as the first President of the State of Israel.

⁷¹ For details about Panikkar, see section 3.6.3.

⁷² For details about Nehru's attitude toward Palestine, see section 3.6.2.

⁷³ The cable was sent following his meeting with President Truman on 18 March 1947.

I solemnly appeal to you at (the) most critical hour of two thousand years of Jewish history... (A) defeat of this proposal means invitation to Palestine Arabs led by Mufti (to) attack Palestine Jewry since it involves abdication of United Nations from control and abandonment (of) Palestine to free conflict (sic). Acceptance of (the) proposed decision involves independence for majority (of) both Arabs and Jews, termination of the mandate and good conditions for immediate Arab-Jewish understanding...(I) cannot understand how India can wish (to) obstruct such (a) settlement. May (a) sense of historic responsibility (of) peace of Asia guide your country's actions (ISA 93.03/92/34, 27/11/1947).

An identical telegram was also sent by him to the UN Indian delegation in New York, but his emotive appeal did not bring about any change in the Indian vote (ISA 93.01/2206/9, 27/11/1947).

In November 1947, Weizmann offered science cooperation to Prime Minister Nehru, who served as a Minister of Science Research in addition to his post as Prime Minister of India. The offer was made through Bengal R. Rao, the Indian constitutional advisor for scientific and technical cooperation. Nehru made use of the opportunity and invited scientists from Palestine to attend the Indian Science Congress, which took place in January 1948, but eventually the scientific cooperation did not materialise because of technical problems related to the Israeli War of Independence (Rao, 1972:40). Unlike the Jewish Agency, Weizmann attached a great deal of importance to India as he wrote in his autobiography:

It was my good fortune during those fateful days of the United Nations sitting to come in close contact with the Indian delegation...These men look upon Palestine as an outpost of opportunity to build a bridge between the East and the West, which is one of the most attractive roles which the Jewish State in Palestine can play (Weizmann, 1949:570).

4.6.2 Jewish legislators

Jewish legislators abroad and in the US and Britain in particular, played a key role in the effort to promote international relations between the Jewish Agency and the INCM:

Sidney Silverman – He was a member of the British Parliament and a veteran advocate of the cause of Indian independence. He paid a visit to Gandhi in India in March 1946 and discussed the Jewish question with him. According to a report on his meeting in the *Statesman* newspaper, Gandhi expressed his sympathy with the Jews after World War II. However, he added his condemnation of the violent methods that the Jews were using in Palestine, stating that because of those methods; he was unable to support the Jewish cause in Palestine.⁷⁴ When asked by Gandhi about the Arabs in Palestine, Silverman pointed out that the country itself had largely been a wasteland when the Jews returned there and only after they had developed it, others wanted to evict them from that area. Nonetheless, Gandhi remained unconvinced, but he did not publish the discussion (Shimoni, 1977:57; Yegar, 2004:36).

Emanuel Celler – US. Congressman Celler who was the chairman of the Judiciary Committee House was well-known and popular in India because of his support of the Indian struggle for independence in the American Congress. Importantly, he was instrumental in ensuring that the Jewish delegation received an invitation to the first Asian Relations Organisation Conference in New Delhi in March 1947 (CZA, S25/7482 22/1/1947). On 6 May 1947, he sent a letter that was later published in the US Congressional records to Nehru accusing him of a pro-Arab bias. Celler accused Nehru of sacrificing his principles for political opportunism. He asserted that Jews had the moral right to a Jewish independent state; in particular after the Holocaust. Such a state could offer security to hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees. Celler also sent a similar letter to public figures and organisations in India (Political Documents of the Jewish Agency, 1998).

After the composition of the UNSCOP committee was made public in New York and after the Jewish Agency executive had expressed its concern regarding the fact that UNSCOP's Muslim members, who represented India and Iran, would support the Arab case, Celler expressed his own concern about it in a cable sent to Nehru. Nehru's brief response to him, as reported by Epstein to Shertok

⁷⁴ For details the Statesmen and his editor's interviews with Gandhi, see section 4.5.

(Sharett), indicated that instructions from Nehru to the Indian representative in the UN committee (UNSCOP) emphasised the quasi-judicial character of the inquiry with special emphasis on complete impartiality (CZA S25/5373, 18/6/1947). However, Nehru's instructions did not dissuade the Indian representative from following his biased approach.⁷⁵ In October 1947, Celler made an effort to influence the Indian voting on the Partition Plan and personally tried to convince Mrs. Pandit, the Indian representative to the UN and Nehru's sister, that the Indian attitude regarding the matter was wrong. However, it was all to no avail, as she could not defy Nehru's instructions from New Delhi (Yegar, 2004:53).⁷⁶ In October 1949, Celler accompanied Ambassador Eilat to his meeting with Prime Minister Nehru, where he stated that the US public was equally interested in India, Israel and close cooperation with the US. He also pointed out to him that Indian appeasement would not impress Arabs.⁷⁷

4.6.3 Jewish intellectuals

The following Jewish intellectuals were another group that tried to influence the Indian attitude towards Zionism:

Stephen Wise – In 1930, Rabbi Wise, from London, tried to secure a favourable reference to Zionism from Gandhi, but with no success (Rao, 1972:42). One year later, in 1931, in an article published in *The Jewish Chronicle*, he criticised Gandhi on his attitude towards the Jewish national homeland, while he himself had demanded similar national self-determination for India (*The Jewish Chronicle*, 1931).⁷⁸

Martin Buber and Judah Magenes - Buber the philosopher and Magenes the president of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem were two leading Jewish intellectuals, both of whom had long been admirers of Mahatma Gandhi. In addition, both were devoted to Jewish-Arab peaceful co-existence and they were

⁷⁵ For details about UNSCOP and the Indian role in that committee, see section 3.9.2.2.

⁷⁶ For details about Mrs. Pandit and her interaction with Prof. Weizmann and the Jewish Agency's representative, see section 4.6.1.

⁷⁷ For details about the meeting with Prime Minister Nehru see section 3.8.1

⁷⁸ In 1936, Rabbi Wise became one of the founders of the World Jewish Congress (together with Nahum Goldman) and served as its first president

also disappointed with Gandhi's one-sided pro-Arab stance and undertook to enter into dialogue with him.

Each of them composed a letter to Gandhi, to explain his respective misinterpretation of Judaism's ideals and also stressed that his assertion that Zion was far from being an ideal in the heart of each individual Jew was erroneous as this ideal was in fact in the heart of the Jewish people as a collective community.⁷⁹ They tried to counteract Gandhi's bias in favour of the Arabs as it appeared in his statement about a Jewish homeland, according to them (*Harijan*, 1938).⁸⁰

The argument that Buber presented to Gandhi, was that Jewish life would always be lacking in an essential way if the Jewish people had no spiritual and intellectual centre in Palestine as a national Homeland. He also went on to explain to Gandhi that the Arabs attained their right of ownership in Palestine by conquest, which is a morally deficient way according to Gandhi's own beliefs. Magenes argued that Jewish life would always lack an essential constituent if Judaism and the Jewish people had no spiritual and intellectual centre in the Holy Land. The two letters were sent in March 1939, but Gandhi probably never read them, considering the fact that absolutely no mention of those letters appeared in Gandhi's writings or in his private letters to Kallenbach. In fact, when asked about the letters by Louis Fischer, Gandhi's American biographer, Gandhi's response was that he had no recollections of those letters (Shimoni, 1977:42).

Henry S. L. Polak – Polak was a Jewish journalist and an old time associate of Gandhi who did not agree with Gandhi's opinion that the Jews should practise true Satyagraha (Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence) during the Holocaust.⁸¹ Polak wrote to Gandhi asking for his reassurance that he had been misreported. Gandhi replied, in the *Harijan*, that his point was that the Jews were not non-violent in the sense meant by him. Polak remonstrated in strong terms and he challenged Gandhi to prove his statement or to withdraw it unequivocally. Gandhi made a public retraction in the *Harijan*:

⁷⁹ Zion is one of the biblical names for Israel, from which the Zionist movement drew its name.

⁸⁰ For more details about Gandhi's statement, see section 3. 6.1.

⁸¹ For more details about Polak, see section 4.3

I did not realize the importance of the rebuke and I only hope that my observation did not harm any single Jew (*Harijan*, 1939).

Felix Frankfurter – The US Supreme Court Justice Frankfurter was a staunch supporter of Zionism who was acquainted with the Indian constitutional advisor, Bengal R. Rao, when the latter was the Indian Ambassador to the US. Frankfurter was the one who introduced Professor Weizmann, the President of the World Zionist Organisation (WZO) to Rao at the end of 1947. Weizmann in collaboration with Rao, tried to promote scientific and technological ties with the newly established Government of India with the blessing of Prime Minister Nehru, but that collaboration did not materialise due to the war of Independence in Israel (Chaim Weizmann Institute Archives, 22/11/1947; Rao, 1972:40).⁸²

Albert Einstein – The world famous scientist and Nobel laureate appealed to Prime Minister Nehru, in 1947, and urged him to support the Partition Plan. Nehru replied to his appeal on 11 July 1947, explaining India's support of the Arabs without changing his attitude towards the issue (ISA 93.03/92/34, 11/7/1947).

Despite all the efforts made by a number of prominent Jewish leaders and individuals, their effect on the pre-independence Indian policy towards Zionism was marginal.

4.7 Post- independence Israel: Historical and political context of foreign policy towards India

The pre-independence time laid the foundation for Israel's foreign policy, which was based on the historical concept of the role of the State of Israel as an independent, Jewish, democratic and modern state. The expansion of diplomatic relations with all countries was the general aim of the State of Israel's foreign policy, but the Israeli–Arab conflict constrained it, because of the need to combine foreign policy with military actions.

After independence, the main goal on the Israeli agenda was to consolidate the political and territorial gains that gave great weight to Israel's security. The

⁸² For details about Weizmann, see section 4.6.1.

prevailing view of Israel was that of an underdog and a courageous small country, while the Arab countries embarked on a systematic campaign to discredit Israel, which was later supported by many new Third World countries in general and India in particular.

The Israeli foreign policy consciously sought opportunities to make closer contact with Western Europe and the US. The collaboration with Britain and France against Egypt in 1956 was considered a compelling necessity in the eyes of the Israeli Government. However, the Suez Crisis as well as the Suez Canal Military Operation that followed played into Arab hands by linking Israel in the eyes of many countries with Western imperialism.⁸³ A convincing victory in the Six-Day War in 1967, on the one hand, changed the impression of Israel's inherent strength. On the other hand, the portrayal shifted to that of an occupying power bent on possessing Arab lands and denying Palestinian rights.

In 1975, seventy-two UN members endorsed a resolution designating Zionism as a form of racism in the General Assembly, but on the other hand, the peace treaty with Egypt in 1979 reduced the decline in Israel's prestige. The destruction of the Iraqi nuclear reactor in June 1981 as well as the application of Israeli law to the Golan Heights in December 1981 caused considerable repercussions for Israel in the international arena. Severe international criticism was heaped on Israel for its armed incursion into Lebanon in 1982. In December 1987, Palestinian disturbances (the Intifada uprising) broke out on the West Bank and the Gaza

⁸³ The Czech arms deal with Egypt in 1955 and the Suez Crisis of the summer of 1956 created growing tension in the Middle East and Israel felt threatened by the Egyptian blockade of Eilat harbour and Gulf of Akaba, imposed since 1954. The continuous raids across the Egyptian Armistice lines and the Egyptians speeches and statements threatening another round of war and Israel's destruction worried the Government of Israel and as a result of it Israel secretly coordinated an operation with Great Britain and France against the Egyptian nationalisation of the Suez Canal. The military operation started on 29 October 1956 and within one hundred hours the Egyptian forces in the Sinai Peninsula were routed (the Israeli forces halted 16 km east of the Suez Canal). Meanwhile, Anglo French forces invaded the Suez Canal Zone. On 8 Nov. 1956, Israel agreed to withdraw upon the conclusion of an agreement with the UN concerning UN emergency force (UNEF) that would replace the withdrawing forces. By 22 Jan. 1957, Israel evacuated all the occupied territories in Sinai except of the Gaza Strip and the Sinai coast, facing the straits of Tiran. In March 1957, Israel withdrew from the rest of the peninsula after the UNEF was stationed along the borders.

Strip, which eventually resulted in getting the two parties to attend the international conference in Madrid in 1991 (Klieman, 1990:28).⁸⁴

Relations with India were considered particularly important, especially in Israel's first years when the newly born state aspired to membership in a gradually forming group of non-aligned nations of which India was the main leader. In fact, since independence, Israel had continued lobbying, directly and indirectly for full diplomatic relations, but those efforts were in vain.

4.8 Post- independence Israel: Ultimate decision units

The first objective of Israel foreign policy after independence was the preservation of Israel security, territorial integrity and its national identity (Neuberger, 1992:496). The expansion of diplomatic relations was a general aim of the State of Israel's foreign policy, but the Israeli–Arab conflict hampered this goal, because of the need to combine foreign policy with military actions. In the Israeli political system, the Prime Minister is a dominant figure with a great deal of influence on foreign policy, but most of the prime ministers of Israel had little interest in India (except for Prime Minister Ben-Gurion) and it was the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), in particular the Asian experts in the ministry, that attended to the matters related to India.

Israel foreign policy and diplomacy was led by the MFA, which was characterised with a cautious and conservative approach, however it had some successes such as engaging in relations with the US, peace with Egypt and Jordan and the Israeli foreign aid and cooperation programme. In fact, the MFA emerged as a natural continuation of the Jewish Agency political department.⁸⁵ The MFA in Israel was the ultimate decision unit as far as foreign relations were concerned and the ministry handled Asian affairs in general and foreign policy towards India between 1948 until 1991 in particular.

⁸⁴ For more details about the Madrid conference, see section 3.9.2.1.

⁸⁵ For details about the Jewish Agency as the ultimate decision unit of the Israeli pre-independence foreign policy towards India, see section 4.3.

After independence, the first goal of Israeli diplomacy was to receive *de jure* recognition from India. The Israeli Ambassador to the US, Eilat accompanied by Congressman Celler met Prime Minister Nehru and the Indian Ambassador to the UN, Mrs. Pandit, to discuss the question of Indian recognition of Israel, which was eventually achieved on 18 September 1950.⁸⁶ Since the 1950s, Israel's aim, which was directed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including direct confidential instructions sent by Walter Eytan, the Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Heads of the Israeli missions abroad in June 1950 and January 1953, had been establishing diplomatic relations with India, especially in the first years after independence when the new State of Israel aspired to membership in a gradually forming group of non-aligned nations of which India was the main leader (ISA 93.10/7/2, 09/06/1950, ISA 93.03/3010/5, 07/01/1953 and Shimoni, 1991:E60).⁸⁷

In 1951 an Asian Department was set up in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel (until then the British Commonwealth Department in the Ministry handled India, Pakistan and Ceylon). On 16 October 1951 the new head of the Asian Department submitted a tentative plan to establish diplomatic ties between Israel and Asian countries including the opening of an Israeli Chancery at New Delhi (ISA, 130.02/2415/31, 16/10/1951). However, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Moshe Sharet, was against such a unilateral diplomatic step (ISA 130.02/2414/1, 19/02/1952). Most of the Israeli Foreign Ministers between 1948 and 1991 lacked a genuine interest in India (and in Asia in general) and the Israeli foreign policy towards India was therefore actually handled by a few bureaucrats in the MFA with knowledge and expertise about Asia, however, some of them criticised the lack of determination in Israel's foreign policy in Asia, a criticism which was rejected by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Sharett (ISA 130.02/2415/31, 03/09/1952; Yegar 2004:387).⁸⁸ The Israeli bureaucrats regarded the Indian Ministry of External Affairs as a highly professional one but a conservative governmental organisation with difficulties in adjusting to international changes.

⁸⁶ For details about India's recognition of Israel, see section 3.9.1.1. For details about Congressman Celler see section 4.6.2. For details about Mrs. Pandit, see sections 3.8.1, 4.3, 4.4.2, 4.6.1, 4.9.1.1 and 4.9.1.3.

⁸⁷ For more details about Israel and its bilateral relations with India, see section 4.9.1.

⁸⁸ David Hacohen, Yaacov Shimoni, Elyashiv Ben-Horin and Daniel Levin.

There was a growing awareness in the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the fact that the Indian Ministry of External Affairs was full of pro-Arab supporters with an anti-Israeli stance based on the Nehruvian heritage. A few unsuccessful efforts made to influence the Indian foreign policy towards Israel enhanced the Israeli perception concerning the Indian anti-Israeli and pro-Arab foreign policy and the image of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs as a staunch supporter of the Arab countries.⁸⁹ In fact, the bureaucracy in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Israel did not believe that it was possible to change India's official foreign policy and its negative attitude towards Israel because of political, Ideological and economic reasons and therefore diplomatic relations seemed improbable.

As a matter of fact, this perception held by the bureaucrats of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not change until 1991. It was one of the main reasons why relatively little politically active effort was directed at transforming the Indian foreign policy towards Israel, as can be seen from the low volume of activities of the following foreign ministers in relation to India.

4.8.1 Ministers of foreign affairs

Traditionally the role of the ministers of foreign affairs in Israel was the implementation of foreign policy. However because of the low priority accorded to relations with India, their volume of activities with a few exceptions, was low and carried out at random.

Moshe Sharett⁹⁰ (1948-1956) - The first Israeli foreign minister had a genuine interest in Asia and in India in particular. He looked at Asia from the point of view of a political leader with a statesman's vision and was concerned about Israel's international standing in the Asian arena. Before independence he made the following statement:

⁸⁹ For details about Israeli efforts to establish diplomatic contacts with India as well as meetings between representatives of the two countries, see section 4.9.1.

⁹⁰ His original name was Moshe Shertok. After independence, like all high ranking civil servants in the Government of Israel who changed their surnames to Hebrew names, he changed his surname to Sharett. From 1954 up to 1955 he also served as Prime Minister of Israel. For details about his tenure, see section 4.11.

The next item and the principal one is Asia...We are facing a wall there; they see us as a sword the West is thrusting into the East. There is a natural emotional tendency to identify with the Arab movement. There will be need of a great effort which may not succeed but which may blaze a path to the hearts of many people. Our starting point is that we exist in Asia; we are part of it, part of the renewed Asia and part of ancient Asia (CZA S25/1621, 18/3/1947).

Sharett attached a great deal of importance to India and he considered India as the rising star of Asia. After independence, based on his strong American orientation, he was rather hesitant about establishing diplomatic relations with China, which was a communist state, and with Japan, which had been an ally of Nazi Germany, but he never had any hesitation about the importance of Israel's relations with India (Brecher, 1976:218).

On 17 May 1948, Sharett sent a cable to Nehru asking him for formal recognition of the newly born State of Israel, but there was no response. The Indian recognition was eventually given on 18 September 1950 and Sharett acknowledged it with an official note to India when he wrote:⁹¹

On behalf of my Government, I wish to express my deep and sincere satisfaction at this decision. I am happy to reciprocate, on behalf of my Government and the people of Israel, the greetings conveyed by Your Excellency, to the Government and the people of India (Jerusalem Post, 18/9/1950).

In the 1950s, there were some indications at that time, that Nehru might have accepted an Israeli embassy in New Delhi, but without reciprocity. Sharett insisted on full reciprocity as a matter of principle and when his successor accepted the original proposal it was too late and India was no longer responsive to the idea (Brecher, 1972:560; Medzini, 1976:203; Shimoni, 1991:E8)⁹².

On 29 October 1957, Sharett, a member of the Knesset and an important leader of the Mapai Party,⁹³ who toured Asia after his resignation from his post as

⁹¹ For details about India's recognition of Israel, see sections 3.8.1 and 3.9.1.1.

⁹² For more details about Israel's Foreign Policy towards India, see section 4.9.1.1.

⁹³ For details about Mapai Party, see section 4.10.2.

Minister of Foreign Affairs, met Nehru in New Delhi. Nehru felt free to criticise Israel's policy in general and to express his anger about the Suez Canal Military Operation in particular.⁹⁴ Sharett, in his reply, explained the Israeli defence orientation to him, while pointing out that the Suez Canal Military Operation (called the Sinai Operation in Israel) was an attempt to eliminate an Egyptian military threat against the State of Israel and to open the Gulf of Akaba for Israeli shipping. However, his explanation did not change Nehru's attitude towards the operation and the perception he had of Israel as an ally of imperialism (Rafael, 1981:87).

Golda Meir (1956-1966) was the second Foreign Minister of Israel.⁹⁵ In 1956, after being elected to the new post as Minister of Foreign Affairs, she observed in a newspaper interview:

It is natural that we view ourselves as an integral part of the Asian continent and it is obvious that we shall endeavour to win our place among the peoples of Asia (Jerusalem Post, 1956).

She felt a personal and ideological commitment to the Asian continent, which emanated from her pioneering socialist past and referred to Asia with respect, although the ancient complex tradition of the Hindu culture was hard for her to fathom (Brecher, 1972:244).

Following the Afro-Asian Conference, Foreign Minister Meir regarded India and Nehru as hypocrites and during her ten year tenure no progress was made as far as Israel-Indian relations were concerned (Medzini, 1990:283).⁹⁶ Foreign Minister Meir visited a number of Asian countries in 1962, but given the relations between Israel and India the option of a visit to India was not even considered.⁹⁷

During the Indo-China War in 1962, based on Prime Minister Ben-Gurion's recommendation, Mrs. Meir approved the selling of heavy mortars and mortar

⁹⁴ For details about the Suez Canal Military Operation, see section 4.9.1.3 and on Nehru's attitude on the operation, see section 3.8.1.

⁹⁵ Mrs. Meir took over after Moshe Sharett and 13 years later, in 1969, she became the fourth Prime Minister of Israel. For details about Prime Minister Meir and attitude towards India, see section 4.11.

⁹⁶ About the Afro-Asian Conference, see section 4.9.1.2.

⁹⁷ Japan, the Philippines, Cambodia, Thailand and Burma

ammunition to India (Medzini, 1971:20).⁹⁸ During the Indo-Pakistan War in 1965, she was opposed to shipping ammunition to India, following the Israeli disappointment at India's ingratitude in 1962, but eventually she was overruled by Prime Minister Levi Eshkol who approved the Indian request and Israeli supplied India with heavy mortars and ammunition (Medzini, 1990:284).

Foreign Minister Meir followed a pragmatic approach to foreign policy approach; in fact, she had no intention of fitting Israel into the political map of Asia and did not have any aspirations of finding a way to influence the Indian policy towards Israel (Yegar, 2004:70).

Abba Eban (1966-1974) was the third Foreign Minister of Israel. Eban had already tried to promote the establishment of relations between the two countries in June 1949, when as a permanent representative of Israel to the UN he met his Indian counterpart, Benegal N. Rao, the permanent representative of India to the UN, in order to discuss the Indian attitude towards Israel. In his *Aide Memoirs* the following aspects are pointed out:

1. There is no conflict of interest between the two countries.
2. Israel like India, seeks conciliatory and unprejudiced position in the conflict between East and West.
3. India and Israel, almost alone amongst the newly liberated states of Asia, lay emphasis on the economic and social factor in national liberation.
4. Both India and Israel are faced with difficult problems arising from exclusive and expansionist movement in the Muslim world.
5. If normal political relations can be envisaged there are good prospects for free and fruitful interchange on the scientific and cultural levels.
6. The Israeli attitude coincided precisely with that of the Indian delegation (regarding items on the agenda covering a wide area in international relations and fundamental human rights).
7. Israel has always attempted to understand the special interests and problems, which have made it difficult for India to take an objective and detached view in the dispute between Israel and the Arab states. The Government of India however might find itself able at this stage to govern its attitude strictly on the merits of the case (CZA 2555/8, 23/6/1949)

⁹⁸ For details about artillery weapon supplied to India by Israel in 1962, see section 3.9.1.4.

In 1952, Eban met Mrs. Pandit in New York where they discussed the establishment of relations between Israel and India. According to Mrs. Pandit the difficulties were budgetary (ISA 130.02/2413/29, 3/12/1952).⁹⁹ Eight years later, in 1960, when he served as the Israeli Ambassador to the UN, Eban met Prime Minister Nehru in the US and had brought up the subject of the absence of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Nehru's answer was vague and only gave only general promises.¹⁰⁰ In January 1967, in a speech given by Eban on the occasion of the establishment of the Israel-Asia Friendship League in Israel, he emphasised that Israel was an Asian country (*Jerusalem Post*, 1967).

In March 1967, Eban paid a visit to Asia, but considering the relations between Israel and India during that period, visiting India was out of the question.¹⁰¹ In fact, Asia was a notable lacuna in Eban's image of global politics as was demonstrated in his report to the Israeli Parliament (Knesset) after his visit to Asia. That report had little substance, apart from an indication that the progress of Israel's relations with the Asian states was intrinsically important and that with a reasonable investment of manpower and resources, it was possible for Israel to improve its standing and increase its positive presence in Asia. He spoke of new plans, but according to Michael Brecher, they remained unfulfilled (Brecher, 1972:335). In October 1969, Eban and the current Indian Minister of External Affairs, Dinesh Singh, met in New York during the General Assembly, where Singh, who held staunch pro-Arab views, tried to convince Eban that India was not hostile to Israel (Yegar, 2004:73).¹⁰²

Yigal Allon¹⁰³ (1974-1977) was the fourth Foreign Minister of Israel; he studied the history of modern India in Britain and visited India in February 1959 as a leading member of the Achdut Haavoda Party and a member of the Knesset (Israeli parliament).¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ For details about Mrs. Pandit, see sections 3.8.1, 4.3, 4.4.2, 4.6.1, 4.9.1.1 and 4.9.1.3.

¹⁰⁰ For details about the meeting with Nehru, see section 3.8.1.

¹⁰¹ Eban visited Thailand, Cambodia, Burma, Singapore, the Philippine Islands and Japan.

¹⁰² For details about the meeting and India's foreign policy towards Israel, see section 3.9.1.4.

¹⁰³ Yigal Allon served as acting Prime Minister, Minister of Immigrant Absorption, Minister of Education and Minister of Foreign Affairs between 1961 and 1977.

¹⁰⁴ For details about Achdut Haavoda Party, see section 4.10.2.

While in New Delhi he met Prime Minister Nehru as well as Defence Minister Krishna Menon.¹⁰⁵ The meeting was organised with the help of Aneurin Bevan, one of the leaders of the British Labour Party (Yegar, 2004:149).¹⁰⁶ The meeting between Allon and Nehru was friendly and based on Allon's description in his book *Curtain of Sand* (Allon, 1981) Nehru had a positive approach towards Israel and he agreed to send a governmental high-level delegation to Israel to study agrarian and social methods. Allon commented:

Despite its support from the Arab world, sooner or later, eventually, India would stop its passive and negative foreign policy towards Israel...because of its status India could, more than any other country in the world, contribute to peace between Israel and the Arabs (Allon, 1981:139).

Following Allon's visit to India and his meetings with Nehru, he recommended that India should not be pressed for full diplomatic ties. Instead, he advocated that they should try to open an Israeli Consulate in New Delhi (in addition to the one in Bombay) as well as consulting with India to ascertain if it was ready to open a similar Indian Consulate in Israel or at least to nominate an Indian Honorary Consul.

In January 1963, Allon, already a Minister of Labour at that time, met with the Indian Minister of State of External Affairs, Dinesh Singh, at an international conference in Kampala in Uganda and one year later, in April 1964, Allon paid a visit to India in his capacity as Minister of Labour. On 25 April 1966, Allon met in Washington DC with the Indian Minister Ashoka Mehta and offered him bilateral cooperation, including courses in research institutions in Israel, as well as technical cooperation and trade relations, which could be implemented without diplomatic relations. Allon's offer was rejected by India with the explanation that the time was not yet ripe for it, especially in the light of the forthcoming elections in India that were due to take place in January 1967 (Yegar, 2004:155).

Allon saw the Third World as a global political force and the focus of his attention in the Third World was on India. For a long time he had entertained the hope that Nehru's socialism and commitment to democracy would overcome the

¹⁰⁵ For details about Krishna Menon, see section 3.10.3.1.

¹⁰⁶ For details about the meeting with Nehru, see section 3.8.1.

misconceived national interest of India which adhered blindly to the Arab cause, but to no avail. However, he remained faithful to the aim of achieving an Israeli-Indian friendship as the focal point of Israel's Asian policy (Brecher, 1972:348).

Despite his proven interest as the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Israel, and the goodwill demonstrated by him towards India, there was nothing he could do to improve bilateral relations between Israel and India. This can be ascribed to the strong anti-Israeli attitude of India after the October war in 1973 in general and the negative attitude towards Israel by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in her second tenure in particular.¹⁰⁷

Moshe Dayan (1977-1979) - Foreign Minister Dayan visited New Delhi in August 1977. His visit was incognito and took place with the aim of exploring the option of establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries. A further aim was to engage in military and scientific cooperation with India, offer the sale of technology as well as possible cooperation in the nuclear field. This secret visit was arranged by a business acquaintance of Dayan and was approved by the Israeli Cabinet only a day before the departure of the delegates to India.¹⁰⁸ Whilst in New Delhi, Dayan met Prime Minister Morarji Desai and the Minister of External Affairs, Atal B. Vajpayee, but due to a disagreement about the Indian demand that Israel withdraw its forces from the captured Arab lands in the Six-Day War, the visit did not bear any fruit (Dayan, 1981:28-32; Klieman, 1990:148; Swamy, 1982:21).

Yitzhak Shamir (1980-1986) - In March 1980, Yitzhak Shamir was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs and in that capacity he oversaw the implementation of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty. Following Menahem Begin's resignation from the premiership, Shamir became Prime Minister of Israel on 10 October 1983, while keeping the post of Foreign Minister as well.¹⁰⁹ In September 1984, Shamir was appointed Deputy Prime Minister and also Foreign Minister in the

¹⁰⁷ For details about Indira Gandhi's anti Israeli attitude, see section 3.8.3 and for Indian foreign policy towards Israel, see section 3.9.1.4.

¹⁰⁸ Dayan was then a new Minister of Foreign Affairs in a new Israel government headed by Menahem Begin.

¹⁰⁹ For details about Shamir as Prime Minister, see section 4.11

government formed by Prime Minister Shimon Peres.¹¹⁰ Shamir had an international reputation as a rigid, right wing politician as well as an obstructionist to any progress in the Middle-East conflict. Two thirds of his tenure as Foreign Minister took place during Indira Gandhi's term as the leader of India and considering her strong anti-Israeli attitude, any progress in the relations between Israel and India was improbable in any case.¹¹¹ Furthermore, Foreign Minister Shamir insisted that India would not participate in the Madrid Conference in October 1991 before formal diplomatic relations had not been established between the two countries (Yegar, 2004:391).

Shimon Peres (1986-1988) –, Peres was persistent in his capacity as Foreign Minister in his efforts to promote the peace process in the Middle East (Rolef, 1993:399). Importantly, he pursued overseas political initiatives concentrating on the peace process, but India, because of the absence of diplomatic relations, was not included as an international player in his peace initiatives. It should be pointed out that in 1985, Peres, as Prime Minister of Israel, met Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, during the General Assembly in New York, in order to try and find ways of improving bilateral relations between the two countries.¹¹²

Moshe Arens (1988-1990) - Arens as the Foreign Minister of Israel was regarded by India as a right wing politician, while his party (the Likud Party) was regarded as an obstruction to any settlement with the Palestinians as well as politically inflexible. On the other hand, Arens regarded India as a biased pro-Arab and hypocritical state (Rolef, 1993:354).¹¹³

David Levi (1990-1992) – As a Foreign Minister Levi supported the Israeli-Arab peace initiative of the US Secretary of State, James Baker, which paved the way for the Madrid Conference that followed the Gulf War state (Rolef, 1993:389). Before the Madrid Conference, Levi opposed India's suggestions to Israel that

¹¹⁰ For details about Peres as Foreign Affairs Minister, see the following paragraph and for details about him as Prime Minister, see section 4.11.

¹¹¹ For details about Shamir's policy towards India as the Prime Minister of Israel, see section 4.11.

¹¹² For details about Peres's meeting with Rajiv Gandhi, see sections 3.8.6 and 3.9.1.4. For details about Peres's foreign policy towards India as the Prime Minister of Israel, see section 4.11.

¹¹³ The Likud Party (the Union Party) was formed in 1973 as a political parliamentary group. The Likud came to power in 1977 headed by Prime Minister Menachem Begin. More details about the party will follow in section 4.10.2.

India would participate in the Middle East peace process in return for India's commitment to the future improvement of bilateral relations with Israel.

In addition, Levi made it clear that countries without diplomatic relations with Israel would be barred from the peace process in the Middle East. He also rejected a similar offer made by India prior to the multilateral talks on regional issues in Moscow in January 1992 and in fact, left the initiative to them.¹¹⁴ Eventually, it was during Levi's tenure as Minister of Foreign Affairs that fully-fledged diplomatic relations with India were established (Yegar, Govrin and Oded, 2002:547).¹¹⁵

4.8.2 Israel's international cooperation programme

Israel's international cooperation programme is an integral part of the activities of the Ministry of External Affairs. The programme was established in 1958 as a section in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that became a division one year later. The goal of the new division was to develop an aid programme for under-developed countries (known by its Hebrew acronym: Mashav). It should be noted that even before the official inauguration of the programme in 1958, Indian individuals, mostly from the sectorial trade unions and the Indian Socialist Party and later on, the Paraja Socialist Party¹¹⁶ were encouraged to undergo professional training in Israel.

In 1953, four high ranking officials from Kashmir, Bombay, Bihar and West Bengal arrived in Israel in order to learn about the Israeli experience in cooperation and a group of social workers from India, sponsored by the UN, came to Israel to learn about Israeli methods of doing social work. In the same year, sponsored by UN fellowships, Indian participants took part in agricultural courses in Israel, while Israeli agricultural experts went to India to share their agricultural experience in various Indian states (Government Yearbook, 1953/54). In 1955, three Israeli

¹¹⁴ For details about the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel, see chapter five..

¹¹⁵ For details about the Madrid Conference and the multilateral talks in Moscow, see section 3.9.2.1.

¹¹⁶ For details about the Paraja Socialist Party, see section 3.10.2.3.

students studied in India as part of a student exchange programme (Government Yearbook, 1955/56).

After 1958, Israel expanded its cooperative activities in the Third World countries in collaboration with other international agencies and it developed a highly efficient agricultural extension service, which was among the most successful Israeli supported projects abroad. The aim was to combine training in Israel with operations and projects abroad, mostly in agriculture. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs believed that contacts at a technical level (in fields such as agriculture and community development) would encourage countries to cooperate with Israel, would demonstrate the value of bilateral relations with Israel and would eventually lead to improved relations with those countries.

More than one hundred Indians received training in various courses that formed part of Israel's international cooperation programme in the 1960s. However, the majority of them participated in courses in the Afro-Asian Institute for Labour Studies and Cooperation in Tel-Aviv which was part of the General Federation of Workers in Israel (the Histadruth).¹¹⁷ Even though the programme did not have any impact on the Indian foreign policy towards Israel, it became a political issue in the Indian Parliament and the Indian press:

The Indian Government's stand has been repeatedly criticized by members of India's Parliament and some Indian newspapers on the ground that India was cutting herself off from a useful source of technical assistance and cooperation. The argument has been supported also by those several hundred Indians who, despite their government's attitude, have visited Israel or gone there for training. Thus, while technical cooperation has not yet led to normal relations with India, it has become an important issue in the continuing Indian debate on the subject (Laufer, 1967:205).

In fact, because of India's participation in the Israeli international cooperation program, leading Indian newspapers *called* openly for the exchange of diplomatic envoys with Israel (*The Indian Express*, 1960; *The Times of India*, 1960; 1962; *The Hindustan Standard*, 1961).¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ For more details about the Histadruth, see section 4.10.4.

¹¹⁸ About the Indian media and its attitude towards Israel, see section 3.10.4.

The Budhan Movement which was a movement for voluntary grass- roots land reform connected with the Paraja Socialist Party was established by Narayan, the leader of the party, who visited Israel between 16 December 1959 and 20 January 1960 for a study tour after his retirement from politics.¹¹⁹ Israel hosted another special seminar for a delegation of 28 members of the Budhan Movement, including five high-ranking official of the Paraja Socialist Party, from 29 February 1960 until 1 June 1960.¹²⁰

In 1963, the Government of the State of Gujarat in India applied for the services of Israeli technical experts but Israel eventually turned the request down because the central Government of India refused to issue an official request for that cooperation. Another request in 1964 for advice by Israeli experts on a large-scale irrigation project by the State of Rajasthan was not granted after the Government of India refused to approve it. A similar situation arose when New Delhi did not approve a contract between the state of Mysore and Israel's water company on a project to supply water to Bangalore City. In the 1970s, Israeli experts served in India under UN auspices and Indian trainees frequently underwent training courses in Israel. Most of the Indian participants were not sent by the Indian Government but were usually sponsored by non-governmental Indian organisations and sectorial trade unions (Shimoni, 1991:E11).

The number of Indian participants in the training programme in Israel in the 1980s was significantly reduced for political reasons connected with India's anti-Israeli foreign policy, in particular during Indira Gandhi's second tenure.¹²¹ Most of the Indian participants who arrived at the Afro-Asian Institute for Labour Studies and Cooperation courses were sponsored by sectorial trade unions of India, but not by the trade unions that were associated with the INCP.

Israel's international cooperation programme in India did not benefit Israel in terms of international dividends, apart from some positive media coverage in India in the 1960s. This included criticism of the Indian Government by some members of the Indian Parliament as well as by some newspapers for not

¹¹⁹ For details about the Paraja Socialist Party, see section 3.10.2.3.

¹²⁰ For more details about the visits of the Budhan Movement's delegation, see section 3.10.2.3.

¹²¹ For details about Indira Gandhi's policy towards Israel, see section 3.8.3.

utilising the Israeli source of technical assistance and cooperation. It also contributed to the random coverage of Israel's technology in the Indian newspapers.

4.9 Post-independence Israel: The international system level of analysis

The international level of analysis is an essential factor in the understanding and analysis of foreign policy and is utilised in order to explain Israel's foreign relations with India between the years 1948 and 1991. The aim of Israel's foreign policy after independence was the expansion of the network of diplomatic relations with states in the international arena including India. However, despite the fact that Israel continued lobbying for diplomatic relations with India throughout those years up to 1991, its efforts were always in vain (Shimoni, 1991:E8).

4.9.1 Israel and bilateral relations with India

After independence, there was a systematic effort to establish diplomatic relations with India, which led to bitter disappointment and ultimately, frustration and alienation in Israel.

One of the objectives of the Israeli Foreign Ministry during the first years after independence, as a newly born state, was to campaign for diplomatic recognition by the Asian states. India was on top of the Israeli list as far as relations with Asian countries were concerned, since Israel had hoped that Indian recognition would open the doors for Israeli political and economic activities in Asia (Eytan, 1958:8). Relations with India were also important because after independence, Israel aspired to obtain membership of a group of non-aligned countries of which India was the main leader. On the other hand, paradoxically, the relations with the Asian countries and India in particular, were not Israel's first priority in international terms (Medzini, 1992:201).

After independence, Israel's basic foreign policy had a number of central objectives and India (and Asia in general) played only a marginal role in their

attainment. The reason was that the prime objectives of Israel were the preservation of Israel's security as well as the preservation of its territorial integrity and national identity (Neuberger, 1992:496). During the years after independence, the purchase of arms was an important component of the Israeli defence policy and for all practical reasons it was obvious that India could not and would not be able to supply arms to Israel. Prime Minister Ben-Gurion said as much in the Knesset:

We must not forget, even for a moment, that we cannot obtain the equipment for the Israeli defence forces from Asia and Africa (Brecher, 1963:52).

On 17 May 1948, Moshe Sharett the Minister of Foreign Affairs sent a cable to Prime Minister Nehru requesting recognition of the newly born State of Israel. On 23 May 1948, the President of the State of Israel, Prof. Chaim Weizmann, requested the Government of India to recognise the Jewish state. The Indian Government did not respond favourably as it was under pressure from the Arab states and in particular, under direct pressure from Egypt to refuse recognition of Israel (Rao, 1972:39).

After the first Israeli Government was formed, on 11 March 1949, five initial principles of Israel's foreign policy were approved by the Knesset (Parliament) but without any reference to Asia.¹²² Only in 1955, with the growing number of independent states in Asia, a new principle, which related to the foreign policy towards Asia, was added to the basic principles of the Government of Israel that promoted friendship with the Asian people. That principle was also included in the basic principles of the approved coalition program in 1959 and 1961 respectively.¹²³

Amongst the basic principles approved in January 1966, the promotion of friendship with Asian people was incorporated into a general principle, which

¹²² At that time there were only eight independent Asian states members of the UN. Out of the eight Asian nations only the Philippines supported the establishment of the State of Israel (Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey, in addition to India, opposed), Nationalist China abstained and Thailand was absent.

¹²³ On the party system in Israel in relation to the Israeli foreign policy towards India, see section 4.10.2.

related to friendship with all peace-loving states. After the Six-Day War in 1967, the Asian countries' hostility towards Israel increased. Of importance is the fact that the Yom Kippur War in 1973 as well as the Lebanon War in 1982 did not help to make the international atmosphere in Asia and in India in particular, any better as far as Israel was concerned and diplomatic relations with India seemed improbable. Israel's feelings towards India (between 1948 and 1992), as described by Michael Brecher, changed from expectation to hope, to disappointment, to dismay, to anger and finally to indifference (Brecher, 1976:218), as is demonstrated in the following sections.

Matters deteriorated in 1956 after the Suez Canal Military Operation when Israel was linked with Western imperialism. There was a brief improvement in bilateral relations in 1962 when Israel used India's conflict with China for back channel diplomacy by sending arms and military equipment to India. This act led to the exchange of several visits of high ranking military and intelligence officers from both armies however, it was just a passing episode.¹²⁴ After the Six-Day War in 1967, India identified even more strongly with the Arab world; this was accompanied by constant Indian criticism of Israel, despite the fact that the convincing Israeli victory established Israel as an important power in the international system.

In 1982, the Israeli Consul in Bombay was expelled from India and for several years India refused to accept a new consul. Israel faced administrative and bureaucratic obstacles to trade and tourism from the Indian side. This was despite Israel's attempt to include India in its international aid and cooperation programme and the unfriendly relations with India were perceived to be beyond Israel's diplomatic capacity to change.¹²⁵ The change in bilateral relations had to wait until 1992, when diplomatic relations between the two countries were established.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ For details about the Israeli arms sales to India, see sections 3.9.1.3, 3.9.1.4 and 4.9.1.3

¹²⁵ For details about Israel's International Cooperation Programme, see section 4.8.2.

¹²⁶ For details about the establishment of diplomatic relations, see chapter five.

4.9.1.1 Expectations and hope in Israel's foreign policy towards India

After independence, Israel considered India to be the rising star of Asia and also the emerging leader of neutral and non-aligned countries, while Israel was then in its non-identification phase. Among the leaders of the State of Israel, Nehru and Gandhi were held in great esteem. Nehru, in particular, appealed to the predominantly socialist leadership and the ruling Socialist Party¹²⁷ of the newly born state. Some Israeli leaders hoped that Nehru, even though he was a non-Muslim but highly respected by the Arabs, would be willing to moderate Arab hostility and build a bridge between the Israelis and the Arabs, but they ceased to entertain this hope by the mid 1950s (Brecher, 1963:129).

Despite the fact that India granted *de jure* recognition to Israel on 18 September 1950, the Indian attitude regarding Israel was negative and clearly evident. This attitude was unlike that of some of the Asian states that established diplomatic relations with Israel irrespective of their UN stance or their relations with Arab countries, which was not the case with India.¹²⁸

In October 1949, Eliyahu Eilat, then serving as the Israeli Ambassador in Washington, met with Prime Minister Nehru who paid a visit to the US.¹²⁹ In Eilat's report to Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett, it was clear that the Muslim community in India was the main reason that forced India to view the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian problem through an Islamic lens. His report was almost similar to his previous report about his meeting with Mrs. Pandit. Five months earlier, Eilat had met her and it was clear that she followed a similar approach to that followed by her brother. She told him that India's recognition of Israel would only come about after the settlement of the Kashmiri dispute between India and Pakistan (Avimor, 1991:172). In fact, the dispute over Kashmir dominated the Indian foreign policy agenda and India was worried that the Arab and Islamic countries would endorse Pakistan's claims (Kumaraswamy, 2002:3). In the early 1950s, India was

¹²⁷ Israel, India and Burma were the only governments in Asia led by socialist parties.

¹²⁸ The following states in Asia recognized the State of Israel after its independence: Burma on 5/12/1949, Nationalist China on 2/3/1949, Ceylon (Sri Lanka) on 24/3/1949, Nepal on 7/9/1950, India on 18/9/1950 and Thailand on 25/9/1950. In 1957 two Israeli diplomatic missions were opened in Tokyo and Rangoon (Curtis & Gitelson, 1976).

¹²⁹ For details about the meeting with Nehru, see section 3.8.1.

convinced that recognition of Israel would alienate the Arab world in general and Egypt in particular and would jeopardise its relations with Pakistan, which was an Islamic state:

Egypt claimed that in the event of recognition being accorded by India, peace in the Middle East would be disturbed and would encourage Jewish aggression (Kumaraswamy, 2002:3).

India was concerned about the attempt made by Pakistan to support and promote the causes and international activities of the Arabs in their campaign against Israel, while trying to forge a Pan-Islamic alliance. India realised that:

In view of the deep emotional involvement of the Arab countries in the Israeli issue... the essential prerequisite for the enlistment of the Arab sympathy was the extension of the support to the Arab countries in their dispute (Rao, 1972:35).

India delayed its diplomatic recognition of Israel until 18 September 1950, thereby giving other Asian countries an excuse to postpone their recognition of Israel as well.¹³⁰ Significantly, four countries in Asia recognised the state of Israel between 1948 and 1950.¹³¹ After India's recognition of the State of Israel, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Sharett sent a cable to Nehru acknowledging and expressing satisfaction at this state of affairs (*Jerusalem Post*, 18/9/1950).¹³²

On 27 February 1952, the Director General of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Walter Eytan, was sent to India following receipt of a cable from Prime Minister Ben-Gurion to Prime Minister Nehru requesting him to receive Eytan in New Delhi in order to meet him and explore the possibilities of strengthening bilateral relations.

Between 27 February 1952 and 9 March 1952, Eytan entered into negotiations with Prime Minister Nehru as well as with senior officials of the Ministry of External Affairs of India in New Delhi.¹³³ During his visit, there were preliminary

¹³⁰ For details about India's recognition of Israel, see section 3.9.1.1.

¹³¹ The countries that recognised Israel between 1948 and 1950 were: National China, Burma, Thailand and the Philippines.

¹³² For details about the exchange of cables, see sections 3.8.1 and 4.8.1.

¹³³ For details about Eytan's meeting with Nehru, see sections 3.8.1 and 3.9.1.2.

talks that fully-fledged diplomatic relations would be established between the two countries. In addition, an Israeli mission would be opened in New Delhi. The Minister of Foreign Affairs Sharett insisted on reciprocity and ultimately, it did not materialise.¹³⁴ In fact, before Eytan left New Delhi he was informed that Prime Minister Nehru had approved the proposal of establishing full diplomatic relations including the opening of an Indian Embassy in Tel-Aviv, though the formal decision remained to be confirmed as soon as a new cabinet was set up following the elections a few weeks later.

In reality, the newly-elected Indian cabinet did not make a formal decision about India's relations with Israel due to Indian domestic politics. Although an official explanation was never delivered to Israel, India's refusal to establish full diplomatic relations with Israel was explained on a number of occasions. In speeches in the Indian Parliament and interviews, some of the reasons given were budgetary restrictions, a scarcity of personnel and a lack of urgent priority, but a political explanation could not be ruled out (Eytan, 1958:170). According to Brecher (1963:130), the fact that India did not establish diplomatic relations with Israel in 1952 can be attributed to Maulana Azad, a Muslim who was the Minister of Education in Nehru's government and his personal friend.¹³⁵

The Israeli Ambassador to Britain, Eliyahu Eilat, reported to the Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Jerusalem, Walter Eytan, on 2 September 1953 on his meeting with the Indian High Commissioner, his old friend Kayala M. Panikkar.¹³⁶ Eilat was told by Panikkar that the exchange of diplomatic missions between the two countries was not a viable proposition at that point in time. Furthermore, Panikkar was doubtful about whether any progress would be made in that regard in the near future because Nehru could do no more than maintain the *status quo*, as long as India needed the support of the Arabs or at least their neutrality on the question of Kashmir (Kumaraswamy, 2002:3-4).¹³⁷

¹³⁴ For details about Sharett, see section 4.8.1.

¹³⁵ For details about Azad and his political influence, see sections 3.10.3.1, 3.9.1.2 and 3.8.1.

¹³⁶ High Commissioner is a diplomatic title used among Commonwealth member states including the Indian Foreign Service and is equivalent to the title of Ambassador.

¹³⁷ By *status quo* Panikkar meant *de jure* recognition of the State of Israel but without fully-fledged diplomatic relations between the two countries.

According to Medzini (1976:202-203) and Neuberger (1992:496-497), after the recognition of the State of Israel by India, the Israeli goal was to establish diplomatic relations with India as part of a general Israeli drive to win universal recognition. In addition, their goal was to win Asian recognition and also to break through the wall of hostility which the Arab states attempted to erect around its borders. Israel believed that its recognition by India and the establishment of diplomatic relations with India would help assume it (Israel) assume its rightful place among other Asian capitals. This would enable Israel to combat the growing political enmity and the economic boycott instituted against it by its neighbouring Arab states. Through the Asian states and India Israel planned to join the Afro-Asian forum as well as the growing bloc of non-aligned nations (most of whom had gained independence in the years 1945-1955).

Israel believed it could join that group because there was a marked preference amongst its leaders for pursuing an independent foreign policy between the years 1948–1950. India espoused similar sentiments in the international arena and because of the socialist nature of the Government of Israel at that time. Israel hoped that with the help of India in conjunction with the prestige of Nehru it could become part of non-aligned states.¹³⁸ By making such a move, Israel also hoped to rid itself of the charges made by Nehru and other Asian leaders, that Zionism was instituted in Palestine under the protection of British bayonets. Israel had even hoped that relations with India would assist in winning the friendship of a number of Muslim Asian states (such as Malaysia, Indonesia and Afghanistan).

From the Israeli economic point of view, although India was a huge potential market, because of its socialist oriented economy it could not be considered a significant export target market for Israel. In fact, Israel regarded India as a country that was more likely to be on the receiving than the giving end when it came to investments. Israel expected only small returns in exchange for the enormous sums of money needed to invest in India, in order to make Israel's presence felt both politically and economically.

¹³⁸ Israel ended its short experience as a non-aligned country when it supported the UN and the US in Korea after the breakout of the Korean War in 25 July 1950.

The complications resulting from the expansion of the Cold War to the Middle East along with Pakistan's role in it added a significant negative dimension to the hostile Israeli-Indian relations.¹³⁹ While India knew how to play one side off against the other, in order to enhance its bargaining position with both camps, until 1950 Israel tried to steer the middle course between Moscow and Washington. However, after the Korean War, Israel declared its allegiance with the West with a pro-American orientation. This Israeli policy led to alienation from the Soviet Union and made it easier for India to voice its anti-Israeli foreign policy (Klieman, 1990:186).

Israel considered itself an Asian state, at least in terms of its geographic location, but its early quest for Asian acceptance met with difficulties, which accounted for its slow and partial acceptance in Asia. Israel concentrated on the West as a source of military equipment, economic aid and international recognition while India's national interest concentrated on Non-Alignment, the Afro-Asian Forum, the Soviet Union and the Arab world. In the years following independence, there was limited mutual interest between the two countries and there was non-compatibility between their national strategic interests. The Afro-Asian Conference in April 1955 was a blow to the Israeli-Indian low-key ties and a severe international setback for Israel in Asia.

4.9.1.2 Afro-Asian Conference

Israel was excluded from the Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung Indonesia (18 – 24 April 1955) despite the fact that Nehru and U Nu (from Burma) favoured the inclusion of Israel in the conference based on the argument that the five sponsors of the Afro-Asian Conference had declared that all independent states in the region would be invited. Pakistan and Indonesia opposed Israel's inclusion, while Ceylon chose to remain silent and took no stand.

The Arab League Council sent an official note to the five heads of states at Bogor indicating that the foreign policy of the Arab states had been not to participate in

¹³⁹ For details about Pakistan role in India's foreign policy towards Israel, see sections: 3.9.1.2, 3.9.1.4, 3.9.2, 3.9.2.3 and 3.9.2.6.

any regional conference where Israel was represented.¹⁴⁰ That demand meant that either Israel or the Arab states could participate in the conference. Following the Arab countries threat to boycott the conference if Israel were invited, Nehru and U Nu yielded to their pressure and eventually Israel was excluded from the Afro-Asian Conference.¹⁴¹

Foreign Minister Sharett delivered the official response to Bogor's decision in Israel:

The Government of Israel regards this resolution as totally lacking in validity from any standpoint of international morality, principles of equality and cooperation between peace-loving nations, especially those who recently achieved their independence. We are determined to persist in the struggle for the recognition of Israel's status and rightful place at the conference (*Jerusalem Post*, 17/3/1955).

Following the decision made at Bogor to exclude Israel from the Afro-Asian Conference and considering the Arab mass presence at the Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung, the final outcome of the conference was regarded as a blow to Israel. It was realised by the Government of Israel that as long as the Arab-Israeli conflict remained unresolved, Israel would be forced to stay outside the newly formed group of Afro-Asian states (Kochan, 1976:254).

The Bandung Joint Statement contained a section referring to the Middle East and the Palestinian question.¹⁴² As a response to the Bandung Joint Statement, Prime Minister Ben-Gurion sent a telegram of protest to the Indonesian chairperson of the conference. In the telegram he expressed surprise at the fact that the conference found it appropriate to discuss the Israeli-Arab problem and to pass a resolution against Israel in its absence (*Haaretz*, 23/4/1955). Ben-Gurion did not receive any response to his telegram.

Although the official response in Israel was relatively reserved, Walter Eytan, the Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at that time, admitted in his

¹⁴⁰ The Arab League is known as the league of the Arab states and was founded in Cairo Egypt in March 1945 inspired by age-old vision of Arab unity. It is however not a federal body and has no power over its member states and decisions of its council are binding only on those member states voting for them (Shimoni, 1987:80).

¹⁴¹ For details about the Afro-Asian Conference, see also section 3.9.2.3.

¹⁴² For the Bandung Joint Statement, see section 3.9.2.3.

memoirs that the Afro-Asian Conference was a blow to Israel's standing in Asia from which it could not recover easily. In fact, the Afro-Asian Conference was a severe international setback for Israel, consequently, it became even further isolated from Asia (Eytan, 1958:175). The Afro-Asian Conference in 1955 and the wave of Asian protests after the Suez Canal Military Operation in 1956 was a blow to Israel's standing in Asia.

On 3 January 1955, David Hacoheh, (while serving as the Israeli Ambassador to Burma) met Nehru and Krishna Menon at the International Airport in Rangoon and complained about the fact that India had complied with the non-invitation of the State of Israel to the Afro-Asian Conference. Menon replied that if they had not accepted it, the conference would have not taken place. In addition, Menon told Hacoheh that Nehru himself had explained that, although the non-invitation of Israel to the conference had bothered him, he was compelled to comply with the decision because the only alternative option was breaking off the conference (Eytan, 1958:172-175; Hacoheh, 1963).

4.9.1.3 Disappointment, anger and indifference in Israeli foreign policy towards India

Despite the Bandung Joint Statement and its anti-Israeli spirit, In January 1956, Professor L. A. Meir from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem was invited to participate in an All-India Universities Conference, which took place in Calcutta (Government Yearbook 1956/57). The Second Asian Socialist Conference held in Bombay in November 1956, had already taken place under the shadow of the Suez Crisis with the participation of Mapai Party's delegation headed by ex-Foreign Minister and the Member of Parliament (Knesset), Moshe Sharett.¹⁴³ The outbreak of the Suez Canal Military Operation surprised Sharett on the eve of his scheduled meeting with Prime Minister Nehru in New Delhi. The meeting took place on 29 October 1956 and Nehru felt free to express his criticism of Israel's policy in general and the military action in particular.¹⁴⁴ Sharett, in return,

¹⁴³ For details about the Suez Crisis and the Suez Canal Military Operation, see sections 4.7 and 3.8.1.

¹⁴⁴ Nehru's opinion on the military operation that followed the Suez Crisis and his speech on that matter in the Indian Parliament can be found in section 3.8.1.

explained the Israeli defence orientation to him, but failed to change Nehru's mind regarding that military operation.¹⁴⁵

As pointed out by Sudha Rao, the main result of Israel's participation in the Suez Canal Military Operation was to destroy whatever sympathy the Indian leadership and the Indian intelligentsia had had for Israel. The growing estrangement between the two countries becomes clear in the following extract:

Until the events of 1956, when Indian attitudes underwent a qualitative change in terms of social and philosophical outlook, no country of people could have been closer to the thinking and ideology of the leadership of the Indian National Congress Party and the Indian intelligentsia than Israel and the Jewish people. Israel was a state that was based on the kind of socialist and egalitarian principles than the Indian National Congress and particularly Nehru held so dear. As a people who have been confronted by twenty centuries of persecutions with courage and humanist philosophy, they epitomised everything that Gandhi stood for. Yet in spite of all these massive reasons arguing in favour of close and friendly ties between these two countries, events remorselessly pushed them further and further apart. It is also entirely possible that if Indian policy had been more flexible and imaginative at certain crucial stages, this might not have occurred and that India might have been instrumental in bridging the gap between the Arabs and the Israelis (Rao, 1972:57).¹⁴⁶

Ironically, Israel's military victory increased Israel's prestige in Asian countries (contrary to the situation in India). As a result of that operation, the maritime blockade over the Tiran Straits and the Gulf of Akaba that linked Israel with Asia was lifted. The Suez Canal remained closed for Israeli shipping even after 1956, in direct defiance of a UN Security Council resolution in September 1951 and the 1888 Constantinople Convention. After the blockade was lifted it ensured Israel's direct communication as well as Israeli trade and economic relations with the Asia.

In October 1958, the Israeli Minister of Finance, Levi Eshkol, visited India for conventions of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and met with

¹⁴⁵ About Sharett's meeting with Nehru, see also section 4.8.1.

¹⁴⁶ For more details about the Indian foreign policy towards Israel, see section 3.9.1.3.

his Indian counterpart, Morarji Desai, but their talks had no practical outcome (Documents of the Foreign Policy of Israel, 2001: xlviii).¹⁴⁷

In June 1959 the Minister of Development, Mordechai Ben-Tov, visited New Delhi as an official guest of the Government of India. However, despite the official visit and although Israel's diplomatic status in Asia improved, India remained one of the major gaps with its hostile foreign policy towards Israel.¹⁴⁸ In May 1960, Prime Minister Nehru, flew to Gaza (with an UN airplane) to visit India's forces on one of his visits to Egypt. They were part of the United Nation's Emergency Force (UNEF) that observed the armistice line between Israel and Egypt. The flight was not coordinated with the Government of Israel and the Israeli air force aircraft were sent up to check on the unidentified flight, which entered one mile inside Israeli territory and caused a diplomatic incident. The diplomatic dispute was settled after the two countries officially announced that the case was closed (Government Yearbook, 1959/1960).

In fact, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Israel came to the conclusion that there was no point in raising the issue of diplomatic relations with India and the director of the Asian and African division gave direct instructions to the Israeli Consul in Bombay in this regard:

There is no benefit in pursuing a controversy in India and it would be best to concentrate on the change of atmosphere in conversations that should be held with moderation and tact...public opinion should be deferred for the day, sooner or later, when the leadership will be changed...issues of ties between the two countries should not be raised. The Indians are aware of Israel's stand on this matter and there is no point in raising this matter time and again (ISA 130.23/3101/5, 30/11/1959).

In a further letter, one month later, he referred to the issue of the transfer of the Israeli Consulate from Bombay to New Delhi and requested that it should not be raised with the Indian government because:

¹⁴⁷ For details about M. Desai, who became India's Prime Minister between 1977 and 1979, see section 3.8.4.

¹⁴⁸ Embassies of Israel in Burma and Thailand, Legations in Japan and the Philippines, Charge d'Affaires in Ceylon and non-resident missions to Nepal, Laos and Cambodia. Technical assistance agreement was signed with Nepal in 1960 and a steady expansion of trade took place with Asia.

This has been proposed by Israel in the past and has not been accepted. If the Indians raise this matter unofficially, the reply should be that Israel will be prepared to request the transfer only if an explicit undertaking is given that its request will be accepted (ISA 130.23/3101/5, 28/12/1959).

Meetings with official representatives of India took place only sporadically in the 1960s, mostly at the UN. Friendly talks were held with Mrs. Vijaya L. Pandit, Nehru's sister, while frustrating meetings took place with Krishna Menon, Nehru's confidante, but no official dialogue of any political consequence took place between the two countries in the intervening years. There was a small Israeli Consulate in Bombay that dealt with affairs of trade, migration and some restricted information work, but the definition of its function denied access to the decisive levels of the Government of India in New Delhi. In addition, a student's delegation from Israel made a goodwill visit to various universities in India in 1961 (Government Yearbook, 1960/61).

Gideon Rafael, the Director General of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was sent to participate in the annual conference of the World Health Organisation (WHO) in New Delhi in February 1961, as a member of an official delegation headed by the Israeli Minister of Health. The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs believed that his meetings in New Delhi would offer an opportunity to present the Israeli cause; likewise, it was thought that the visit was an opportunity to renew official contacts with the Indian Government. Mrs. Lakshmi Menon, the Deputy Minister of External Affairs of India, responded quickly to the request for a meeting with Gideon Rafael. Rafael (1981:87) describes the meeting in his memoirs:

She was well disposed towards Israel, admitted the justice of some of our grievances and the usefulness of our suggestion on how to advance the relations from their state of stagnation, but she also pointed out that only Pandit Nehru himself could do anything positive about it.

On 15 February 1961, Nehru's private secretary unexpectedly invited Rafael to meet the Prime Minister of India. Rafael gave him his survey of the international scene and briefed him about the Middle East while concentrating on the Soviet support granted to the Arabs, which made them believe that Moscow would provide them with the military and political strength to eliminate Israel. Although

Nehru referred to Israel's achievements, he pointed out that India had to take the possibility of a strong Arab reaction to the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Israel into consideration.¹⁴⁹

As Rafael pointed out in his memoirs (1981:87-88), Nehru's compliments regarding Israel were no more than courtesy gestures and his professed willingness to cooperate with Israel remained an uncovered cheque, which bounced on presentation.

During the Indo-China War, in 1962, Ben-Gurion received an official letter from Prime Minister Nehru appealing for urgent support (a similar letter was circulated among other world leaders).¹⁵⁰ In his reply Ben-Gurion expressed the hope that the tension and fighting between India and China would be ended quickly by direct negotiations, thereby enabling both countries to apply their resources to the achievement of progress and the development both really needed. He added that every possible effort to prevent aggression and to settle differences by peaceful means, especially between neighbouring states, would always enjoy Israel's complete cooperation and sympathy.

Ben-Gurion availed himself of the opportunity to bring to Nehru's attention that Israel was making an effort to resolve the differences between itself and its neighbours. Israel felt that general disarmament between Israel and the Arab states was the most effective way of preventing war. He also emphasised that Israel had expressed its readiness to sign a non-aggression treaty with its neighbours based on the view expressed by Nehru himself that it was incumbent to do everything possible to eliminate the use of force in international relations (Ben-Gurion, 1972:667). However, Ben-Gurion's response to Nehru's request was polite but non-committal.

¹⁴⁹ For details about Nehru's response see section 3.8.1 and for details about India's foreign policy towards Israel, see section 3.9.1.3.

¹⁵⁰ For details about Nehru see section 3.8.1 and for details about India's foreign policy towards Israel during the Indo-China war, see section 3.9.1.3.

Nevertheless, a few weeks later, Israel supplied India with heavy mortars and mortar ammunition and three months after the Indian defeat in the Indo-China War, Israel responded favourably to India's request for military and intelligence cooperation (*India Today*, 1968).¹⁵¹ The exchange of visits of high ranking military and intelligence officers, from both sides, took place including visits of the Chief of the military intelligence of the Israeli army as well as the Head of the Operations Branch in the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF).¹⁵² Israel was hoping that this cooperation would pave the way for diplomatic relations between the two countries, but after the news about the secret cooperation leaked to the Indian press it was first played down and later on denied by the Indian Government. To Israel's disappointment, there was no sign of gratitude from India and the relations between the two countries continued to deteriorate (Yodphat, 1983:45).

An Israeli delegation participated in an international trade fair in the State of Gujarat in 1964 (Government Yearbook, 1964/65). During the Indo-Pakistani War in 1965, heavy mortars and ammunition were supplied by Israel to India, but contrary to Israel's expectations it did not have any impact on the relations between the two countries (*The Statesman*, 1970).¹⁵³ In March 1966, the Government of India ignored a stopover of the President of the State of Israel in Calcutta, who was on his way to a state visit in Nepal.¹⁵⁴

After the Six-Day War in 1967, India (with the help of China) was instrumental in influencing Asian countries to take an anti-Israel stance at the UN.¹⁵⁵ In 1968, in spite of the tension between the two countries, Israel participated in the Second UN Conference on Trade and Development in India (Government Yearbook, 1968/69).

¹⁵¹ Heavy mortars and mortar ammunition of 81 mm and 120 mm.

¹⁵² David Shaltiel – Head of the Operations Branch in the Israeli Defence Force.

¹⁵³ For more details about the Israeli arms sale to India during the war with Pakistan, see sections 3.9.1.3 and 3.8.2. In March 1966, the Chief of Staff of the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF), Yitzhak Rabin, visited Asia including Thailand and Burma (Government Yearbook, 1966/67) but due to India's anti -Israeli foreign policy inclusion of India in his visit was not even considered by the Israeli Government.

¹⁵⁴ For details about Shazar's stopover in India, see section 3.9.1.3.

¹⁵⁵ For details about Indian foreign policy towards Israel, see section 3.9.1.3 and for Israeli- Indian multilateral relations, see section 3.9.2.

During the Indo-Pakistani War, in 1971, heavy mortars and ammunitions were supplied by Israel to India (Swamy, 1982:22).¹⁵⁶ In August 1977, two months after the introduction of Prime Minister Begin's new government, the Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs, Moshe Dayan, paid a secret visit to New Delhi.¹⁵⁷ In September 1978, Israeli Defence Minister Ezer Weizmann secretly met Prime Minister Morarji Desai in London.¹⁵⁸

During the second tenure of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi from January 1980 to November 1984, India became more restrictive and negative towards Israel (Shimoni, 1991:E9). The Israeli-Indian relations reached its lowest point in July 1982, when the Israeli Consul in Bombay was declared a *persona non gratae* by the Indian Government, after an interview in a daily newspaper where he criticised the Government of India.¹⁵⁹ Although the official Indian explanation for such a harsh move was the Consul's interview, there was no doubt that the international criticism heaped on Israel for its armed incursion into Lebanon in 1982, the destruction of the nuclear reactor one year earlier, in June 1981, as well as the application of the Israeli law to the Golan Heights in December 1981, encouraged the Indian Government, headed by Indira Gandhi, to downgrade its relations with Israel.¹⁶⁰

For three years, the Government of India refused to agree to accept a new Consul in the Israeli Consulate in Bombay.¹⁶¹ In 1985 a new Vice- Consul was allowed to take over after Prime Minister Shimon Peres met Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in New York and pressure was also applied on the latter from leaders of Jewish organisations such as the Anti- Defamation League (ADL).¹⁶²

¹⁵⁶ For details about the Israeli arms sale to India in 1971, see section 3.9.1.4.

¹⁵⁷ For details about Dayan's visit to India, see sections 3.8.4 and 4.8.1

¹⁵⁸ For more details about the meeting with Weizmann, see section 3.8.4.

¹⁵⁹ For details about the Indian response, see sections 3.8.3 and 3.9.1.4.

¹⁶⁰ See section 4.7 for information about the historical and political context of the bilateral relations.

¹⁶¹ As requested by diplomatic practice and diplomatic protocol.

¹⁶² For details about the ADL activities vis-à-vis India, see next section 4.9.1.4.

It is important to note that Israeli tennis players played against an Indian tennis team in New Delhi in July 1987 as part of the Davis Cup tennis tournament (Rolef, 1993:376).

In August 1988, after the strong pressure exerted by the American Jewry as well as Congressman Stephen Solarz on Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, the Israeli Vice-Consul in Bombay was upgraded to the diplomatic level of Consul.¹⁶³ In December 1988, Israel and India made indirect contact in Washington and New York and as a result, the Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel, Yossef Hadas, was invited to India during the same month, where he met with the Minister of External Affairs, Narasimha Rao. However, the visit was officially defined as a tourist visit by the Indian official spokesmen.¹⁶⁴ The meeting was important, but it ended without any positive diplomatic results (Naaz, 1999:244; Yegar, Govrin & Oded, 2002:202).

In 1989, tourist visas were issued to Israeli tourists and the jurisdiction of the Consulate in Bombay was extended to the State of Kerela, the official explanation given was that there was a Jewish community in the city of Cochin in South West India. Nevertheless, in 1990 Israel was not allowed to take part in a documentary film-festival in Bombay nor was it allowed to participate in a plastic-products trade fair in New Delhi (Yegar, 2004:162).

During an international economic conference in Brussels in 1991, the Israeli Minister of Trade, Moshe Nissim, met the Indian Minister of Trade and Justice, Subramaniam Swamy, unofficially. The unofficial meeting took place despite the objection of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs.¹⁶⁵

In June 1991, a group of Israeli tourists, that was visiting Jammu-Kashmir in India, was kidnapped by Indian-Muslim terrorists (The Jammu-Kashmir Liberation Front). Most of the Israeli tourists managed to escape except for one who was killed during the escape attempt and another one who was recaptured by the

¹⁶³ For details about the upgrade of relations in 1988, see section 3.9.1.4.

¹⁶⁴ Rao became the Prime Minister of India in 1991.

¹⁶⁵ For details about the meeting between Nissim and Swamy, see section 3.9.1.4.

terrorists and was held by them as a hostage. The Deputy Director General for Asia in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel, Moshe Yegar, left for New Delhi where he coordinated the release efforts and conducted indirect negotiations with the terrorist group, which led to the release of the Israeli hostage. This incident and Yegar's visit to India put the Israeli-Indian relations on the agenda of the Indian media. Yegar also took advantage of his visit to New Delhi and had an unofficial meeting with senior Indian officials, in order to try and promote the bilateral relations between the two countries. Yegar met Ram Nath Kao, a retired head of RAW¹⁶⁶ and Professor M.L. Sondhi organised a meeting for him with Narash Chandra, the Secretary of the Government of India (Yegar, 2004:164-165).¹⁶⁷

The WJC mission met Prime Minister Rao on 21 November 1991 in New Delhi, to discuss the issue of diplomatic relations with Israel.¹⁶⁸ In January 1992, the Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Yossef Hadas, met with the Deputy Chief of the Mission of the Indian Embassy, Lalit Mansingh in Washington, and made it clear to him that as far as diplomatic relations with Israel were concerned, it was up to India to take the initiative (Naaz, 1999:245).

A short time later, on 22 January 1992, the Israeli Consul in Bombay was invited to the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of External Affairs of India, J. N. Dixit,¹⁶⁹ late at night,¹⁷⁰ in New Delhi and was informed about India's intention to improve the quality of its relations with the State of Israel in the near future. The Israeli Consul responded by saying that Israel was only interested in fully-fledged diplomatic relations and that such a diplomatic move would allow India to participate in the working groups of the multilateral channel of the peace process in the Middle East.¹⁷¹ Therefore, India, which wanted to be involved in the Middle

¹⁶⁶ For details about RAW, see also section 3.10.3.3.

¹⁶⁷ About Yegar's meetings, see also section 3.10.3.2.

¹⁶⁸ For details about the meeting with Rao, see sections 3.8.9 and 3.9.1.4.

¹⁶⁹ For details about Dixit's activities *vis-à-vis* Israel, see section 5.2.

¹⁷⁰ Permanent Secretary is the highest rank in the Indian Ministry of External Affairs.

¹⁷¹ The multilateral channel took place in parallel to the bilateral channel of the Peace Process in the Middle East that followed the Madrid Conference in October 1991.

East peace process and talks, realised that it would be necessary to establish full diplomatic relations with Israel (Naaz, 1999:246).¹⁷²

On 29 January 1992, an official announcement was published simultaneously in Jerusalem, New Delhi and Moscow, where the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Israel participated in the first round of the multilateral talks on regional issues. The joint official announcement imparted information about the establishment of the fully-fledged diplomatic relations between Israel and India (Yegar, 2004:164-167).

4.9.1.4 Israeli- Indian and World Jewish organisations

Jews worldwide were an asset to Israel, supporting it because they identified strongly with Israel's cause.¹⁷³ Mass Jewish support for Israel was demonstrated by a long list of voluntary and philanthropic groups as well as active organisations all around the world. The US Jewish community was particularly committed and active on behalf of Israel, its people and the Israeli causes. Their main targets were enlisting public opinion, building a wider base of political support and gaining an appreciative ear among politicians, successive presidents and administrations through professional lobbying (Klieman, 1990:171-179).

After the independence of the State of Israel, the US Jewish community, in collaboration with the world Jewry in general and Professor Weizmann in particular, put pressure on the Indian representatives in the US requesting the recognition of Israel.¹⁷⁴ In 1953, the American Jewry was instrumental in convincing the Indian Government to open an Israeli Consulate in Bombay.

According to Subramaniam Swamy (1982:20), Prime Minister Nehru was extremely aware of the political weight of the Jewish lobby in the Western world and in the US in particular. He believed that the Jewish community dominated the Western academic sphere and the media and in order not to turn them against India, he indulged in games; in private, he assured the Israelis of his support and

¹⁷² For details, see next chapter 5.

¹⁷³ For pre-independence support of the world Jewry, see sections 4.5 and 4.6.3.

¹⁷⁴ For details about the political pressure put on India requesting the recognition of Israel, see section 4.9.1.

in public, he denounced them. On 27 June 1957, the President of the Jewish World Congress, Dr. Goldmann, met Prime Minister Nehru, in New Delhi, but he did not succeed in convincing Nehru of the necessity of having diplomatic relations with Israel.¹⁷⁵ In his autobiography, Goldmann (1969:310) describes this meeting organised by the American diplomat Chester Bowles in London with Nehru, in the following way:

Nehru's attitude toward Israel was well known to be ambivalent. To me he acknowledged that if he had been consulted before the UN decision, he would have opposed the creation of a Jewish state in a country the majority of whose people were Arabs, even though he recognized humanity's obligation, after the Nazi tragedy, to provide the Jewish people with a secure centre of existence.

After the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in October 1984, Indian Governments pursued various strategies to change Washington's policy towards India. In particular, they tried to influence the American Congress, the US Executive Branch and the IMF as well as the World Bank (Naaz, 1999:245). The Indian Government realised that the American Jewry could be of assistance to them, or at least efforts should be made to prevent the Jewish lobby from becoming an obstacle to the Indian diplomatic activity in the US. Therefore, the objections of the Israelis regarding the anti-Israeli-Indian foreign policy should be kept in mind.¹⁷⁶

In the mid 1980s, the President of the WJC, Edgar Bronfman, used his international contacts and travelled to India where he raised the subject of the anomalous absence of formal diplomatic relations as well as the absence of official commercial ties between Israel and the Government of India (Klieman, 1990:178). In 1985 leaders of the ADL and Congressman Solarz met with Rajiv Gandhi in New York (in addition to Gandhi's meeting with the Israeli Prime Minister at the time, Shimon Peres) and as a result of the meetings, a new Vice-Consul in Bombay was approved by the Indian Government.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵ For details about the meeting with Nehru, see section 3.8.1.

¹⁷⁶ For details about India, Israel and the US, see section 3.9.2.6.

¹⁷⁷ For details about the meeting between Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and the US Jewish Organisations, see sections 3.8.6 and 3.9.1.4.

Subsequently, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had a high profile meeting with representatives of US Jewish organisations and pro-Israeli groups in New York on 8 June 1988 and the meeting opened the door for the upgrading of the Israeli Vice-Consul in Bombay to the rank of Consul in August 1988. In New Delhi on 8 June 1988, a delegation of the ADL met Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, Minister of External Affairs Narasimha Rao and other senior officials in the Ministry of External Affairs (Naaz, 1999:244).¹⁷⁸

On 21 November 1991, a WJC delegation, headed by Isi J. Leibler, the Australian Co-Chairman of the Governing Board of the WJC, met Prime Minister Narasimha Rao in New Delhi. A number of crucial issues were discussed such as establishing diplomatic relations between Israel and India and a decision was made by the two parties that a Jewish Colloquium would be held in New Delhi (Leibler, 1991).¹⁷⁹

Despite attempts made by US Jewish organisations to establish diplomatic relations between India and Israel, they were not successful in this regard. The most likely reason was the lack of US political influence on India before 1991. The common perception in Israel was that the main reason which prevented the Government of India from closing the Consulate in Bombay in 1982, when the Israeli Consul was expelled from India, was the political importance of the American Jewish organisations as well as the influence attached by the Indian Government to the US Jewish Congressman Stephen Solarz.¹⁸⁰

4.10 Post-independence Israel: The state and society level of analysis

The state and society level of analysis stresses the influence of national factors on foreign policy concentrating on foreign policy process carried out by ultimate decision units.¹⁸¹ Israel's foreign policy decision-making process had elements of centralisation because foreign policy was secondary in the eyes of the Israeli

¹⁷⁸ For details about the Indian Ministry of External Affairs and its attitude towards Israel, see section 3.10.3.2. The meeting took place with the Minister of External Affairs, N. Rao, Secretary Alfred Gonsalves and Joint Secretary P.K. Singh.

¹⁷⁹ For details about the meeting with Rao, see section 3.8.9.

¹⁸⁰ For detail about Solarz, see sections 3.8.6, 3.9.1.4 and 4.9.1.3.

¹⁸¹ For details about the theories, see sections 2.2 and 2.3

electorate and only received serious consideration as part of the election cycle. However, state and society units are an integral part of the Israeli democratic process, are incorporated within the Israeli democracy and influence the course of the Israeli foreign policy. While the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was analysed as an ultimate decision unit, the following national factors are analysed in terms of the state and society level of analysis as part of Israel's foreign policy planning and foreign policy-making regarding India. The political factors that are analysed are the Israeli Parliament (the Knesset), the Israeli party system, the Israeli executive, including the Prime Minister, the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Defence as well as the General Federation of Workers of Israel (the Histadruth), pressure groups and the media (public opinion) are analysed,.

Israel is a Jewish democratic state and it is essential to understand the domestic political and social scenario in Israel with a specific emphasis on national consensus as a political need. There was a political consensus in Israel that India would not change its pro-Arab foreign policy towards Israel as long as there was no significant change in the Arab-Israeli conflict. At the same time there was a general feeling of disappointment in and suspicion towards India amongst the Israelis.

4.10.1 The Israeli Parliament: The Knesset

Traditionally, the Knesset played a marginal role in Israeli foreign policy and even the influence of the Committee for Foreign Affairs and Security had been limited, given the primacy of the parties in the political system. Members of the Committee for Foreign Affairs and Security were elected according to the representation principle of their party and the members of the committee usually followed their party leaders.¹⁸² The Knesset is a house of parties and the members owe their seats to their parties and there is no individual representative of the electorate and the whole state of Israel is one constituency. When the system functioned smoothly according to the rules of parliamentary and coalition politics,

¹⁸² The Mapai Party, a Social Democratic Party and the ruling party, was the pivot of the Knesset, the coalition and the committee of foreign affairs, as were the other leading parties that followed, such as the Israeli Labour Party, the Alignment Party and the Likud Party (Klieman, 1990:121-122).

the result was automatic legislative approval of foreign policy decisions or actions presented to the Knesset by the ruling coalition. Key subjects of the Israeli foreign policy are brought before the Committee for Foreign Affairs and Security. The Committee for Foreign Affairs and Security was traditionally regarded as the most prestigious committee of the Knesset although it has minimal statutory power (Klieman, 1990:119).¹⁸³

Since Asia and India in particular, were never at the centre of Israel's domestic politics, Israel's foreign policy towards India was not an important factor as far as the Knesset was concerned (the Knesset Assembly and the Committee for Foreign Affairs and Security) and it was hardly subjected to any intensive foreign policy discussions at all (Medzini, 1976:209; Klieman, 1990:122). In the absence of such discussions, there was no pressure on the Israeli policy makers concerning relations between Israel and India and the submissive foreign policy towards India, presented by the Government of Israel in conjunction with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was accepted by the Israeli legislative branch without any intensive foreign policy debates.¹⁸⁴

4.10.2 The party system in Israel

The party system in Israel is based on a system of proportional representation in the Parliament (Knesset) and a multi-party system, and voting is for a party-list rather than for individual candidates. All governments in Israel from the time of independence up to 1991, were coalition governments constructed around one of the two national parties in Israel, namely the Labour Party or the Likud Party (in their various political transformations) reinforced by several junior parties.

There was a link between the political system in Israel and the Israeli foreign policy. The foreign policy was influenced by the lobbying of pressure groups and associations, particularly on subjects directly related to the national security of the State of Israel. Nevertheless, traditionally the people of Israel preferred to give

¹⁸³ For information about the Israeli party system, see section 4.10.2.

¹⁸⁴ Submissive foreign policy limits itself to reacting to the initiatives of others while concentrating on cutting losses in order to save national orders (Klieman, 1988 and 1990). See section 4.8 for more information on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as an ultimate decision unit.

the various governments a free hand in handling foreign policy not directly related to the immediate national interests of Israel and to give their political support to the government foreign policy that was announced.¹⁸⁵ In fact, opinions and attitudes held by the public in the field of foreign affairs were actually formed by the foreign policy itself or by how the foreign policy has been presented by the government (Klieman, 1990:118-120).

After independence foreign policy was not a crucial issue in the Israeli domestic politics and only four parties had platform with a foreign policy programme. The ruling party, Mapai Party (Workers of the Land of Israel), was a Socialist Nationalist Party and led the government coalition from independence until 1965.¹⁸⁶ In the first government after independence, the Mapai Party held the three main portfolios including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The coalition government followed Mapai's decisions on foreign policy and the Mapai Party and the Government of Israel were virtually synonymous in terms of foreign affairs and in political practical terms. Consequently, most major decisions in the international arena were taken within the party and not within the coalition government. Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion and Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett conducted the foreign policy programme of the Mapai Party as well as the other coalition parties, which accepted their joint leadership (Brecher, 1972:162).¹⁸⁷

The need for friendship with Asian countries, including the specific need for normal relations with India, was approved by the party through its foreign policy platform in 1959 and was incorporated into a more general form of the foreign policy provision of the coalition programme. In the early 1950s, the Mapai Party had some internal debates about its foreign policy orientation and international priorities in general and Asia in particular. Sharett's asks some probing questions about Israel's orientation and priorities in his speech at the Mapai's Central Committee in April 1952:

¹⁸⁵ For the list of governments between the years 1948-1991, see appendix 2. For pressure groups in Israel regarding India, see section 4.10.5.

¹⁸⁶ The Mapai Party was a member of the Socialist International Organisation of the social-democrat parties, which was re-established in 1952. The Mapai Party became a full member of the International Organisation in the 1950s until the Labour Party took its place in 1968.

¹⁸⁷ For details about Ben-Gurion as well as Sharett, see section 4.11.

Does our belonging to Asia mean everything? Do we throw all we have repeatedly learned into the Mediterranean Sea and then return to the Asiatic origins as they are? Can we compare our link with America to our link with India (Bialer, 1981:29)?¹⁸⁸

In spite of its interest in Asia in general and in India in particular, the Mapai Party had some reservations about connections with the Indian ruling party, INCP, as demonstrated in the letter sent by the director of the Asian and African Division in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Israeli Consul in Bombay:

Contacts with the Congress Party are important and these must be strengthened, but this must be done while taking into consideration Mapai's ties with the Indian Socialist Party. (ISA – File 130.23/310/5, 28/12/1959).

Most of the political parties in Israel, except for the Mapai Party, had relatively little interest in Asia, with the two exceptions of the Mapam Party and the Achdut Haavoda Party. The Mapam (United Workers) Party was a Marxist Nationalist Party, which supported pro-Soviet neutralism that followed the evolution of Communism in Asia and was interested in India as a state controlled by a socialist government. The Mapam Party expected to find common ground with Nehru and was hoping that their common socialist ideology would bring them closer together, an expectation that did not materialise.

The Achdut Haavoda (Unity of Labour) Party was a leftist Nationalist Party and from a global perspective, this party had a socialist tinge with an interest in non-alignment, but held militant views regarding the issue of the Arab- Israeli conflict. In April 1955, an Achdut Haavoda delegation participated in the Conference of the Communist Parties (COMIFORM), which took place in New Delhi, but following the Indian response to the Suez Canal Military Operation, the party avoided further foreign policy initiatives towards India.

Two years later, in 1961, a principle referring to the friendship with Asian countries as well as India was included in the coalition programme. In 1965, the Mapai Party and the Achdut Haavoda Party formed the Maarach (Alignment) Party. The

¹⁸⁸ There was no contradiction between Sharett's image as a Foreign Minister who promoted relations with Asia and the speech that emphasised the importance of America since he believed at that time that Asia would be engulfed by Communism (Bialer, 1981).

basic principles of the Alignment Party that were approved in January 1966 included the principle referring to friendship with the Asian people. The Mapai Party tried to insert the principle regarding friendship with the Asian people into the government's programme, but its alignment partner, the Achdut Haavoda Party, did not support it and ultimately it was not included in the programme (Brecher, 1963:129; Brecher, 1972:162).

After the Six-Day War in 1967 and the extremely pro-Arab and anti- Israeli-Indian foreign policy that ensued, it was obvious that the Alignment Party's policy towards Asia in general and India in particular became irrelevant and outdated. Following the three-way merger between the Mapai Party, the Achdut Haavoda Party and the Rafi (List of Israeli Workers) Party, the Labour Party was born in 1968.¹⁸⁹ One year later, in 1969, the Alignment Party was formed by merging the Labour Party and the Mapam Party.

As a result of the Yom Kippur War, which took place in October 1973, the Alignment Party was defeated by the Likud Party in the May 1977 elections.¹⁹⁰ President Sadat's visit to Jerusalem in November 1977 and the peace agreement between Israel and Egypt that followed the Camp David Accords in September 1978 did not have any political effect on the Indian foreign policy towards Israel.

From 1977 to 1991, the Likud Party dominated the Israeli political scenario.¹⁹¹ The Likud Party called for the implementation of a plan for the Palestinians that would give them complete autonomy on the West Bank and in the Gaza, which had been occupied by Israel since 1967.¹⁹² The Government of India did not accept the Likud's platform and the Likud Party, on the other hand, had little

¹⁸⁹ Rafi Party was founded in 1965 by a group who left the Mapai Party under the leadership of David Ben-Gurion

¹⁹⁰ The meaning of Yom Kippur in the Hebrew language is Atonement Day. The war broke out on that Jewish holiday in October 1973 and is therefore, also known as the October war. The war broke out after Egyptian and Syrian armies attacked Israel simultaneously with their total forces.

¹⁹¹ The Likud Party (the Union Party) was a right wing party, which was formed in 1973 as a political parliamentary group.

¹⁹² A plan officially presented first by Prime Minister Menahem Begin, on 13 December 1977 for the self-administration of the Arab Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The autonomy plan underwent transformation in the Camp David accords signed on 17 September 1978. The agreement regarding the West Bank and Gaza referred to a transitional five-year period after which full autonomy would be granted to the inhabitants of these areas.

interest in India since its leaders considered India to be a hypocritical, biased and pro-Arab country.

The only exception was Moshe Dayan, the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the first Likud government after the 1977 election; he paid a secret visit to India in August 1977 where he met Prime Minister Desai and the Minister of External Affairs, Minister Vajpayee.¹⁹³ This visit should be analysed against the broader domestic political context of Israeli politics, considering the fact that Dayan defected from the Labour Party (although he was one of the founders of the party) after he had lost his popularity because of the Yom Kippur War and joined Begin's first government. In his new capacity, as a Minister of Foreign Affairs, he played a major role in the peace process with Egypt and made some attempts, such as his secret visit to India, to improve Israel's position in the international arena in view of the extremist image of Begin's government.¹⁹⁴

Following the elections in 1981, a government led by the Likud once again was formed. In June 1982, the Israeli intervention in Lebanon began and ended only when Israel withdrew to its international borders in June 1985. The Lebanon War in general and the siege of Beirut City in particular had worsened Israel's standing in the international arena, that included India, which was governed by Indira Gandhi, in her second tenure as Prime Minister. Mrs. Gandhi openly aligned herself with the Lebanese side.¹⁹⁵

Following the political stalemate in Israel resulting from the 1984 elections, the Likud Party joined the Alignment Party in the formation of a National Unity Government in which the premiership rotated. After the withdrawal of the Mapam Party from the Alignment Party in 1988, the Labour Party was re-established and In December 1988 the renewed Labour Party joined the National Unity Government headed by the Likud. The Likud Party emerged from the elections in 1988 with the majority, but the head of the party, Yitzhak Shamir, decided to form another National Unity Government with the Labour Party. The National Unity

¹⁹³ For details about Dayan's visit in India, see sections 3.8.4, 4.8.1 and 4.9.1.3.

¹⁹⁴ Dayan resigned from Begin's government in 1979 after a disagreement with Prime Minister Begin regarding who would be the negotiator in the autonomy talks with Egypt (talks that followed the peace agreement with Egypt). For details about Begin, see section 4.11.

¹⁹⁵ For details about Mrs. Gandhi's attitude towards Israel, see section 3.8.3.

Government was brought down by a vote of no confidence on 15 May 1990 and on 11 June 1990, the Likud Party, headed by Prime Minister Shamir, formed a new government party (Rolef, 1993:369).

Between the years 1987 and 1992 there was a popular Palestinian uprising in the Arab territories held by Israel (commonly known as the Intifada) nevertheless, talks between the Palestinians and the Israelis started in 1991 that later led to the Oslo Accord. During the Gulf War in 1991, Israel did not retaliate after being attacked by Iraq with more than forty Scud missiles launched against its cities.

Israel also gained respect for its self-restraint; however, this restraint had no effect on the Indian foreign policy towards Israel (Khan, 1992:215). There was only one indirect political reference to it when Prime Minister Shekhar made a public statement that there was no connection whatsoever between the Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait and the Palestinian problem (Becher, 2002:545).¹⁹⁶ However, it did elicit considerable sympathy for Israel around the world and even the Indian press gave it favourable coverage.

4.10.3 The Israeli executive

In the area of foreign affairs, the competitive interplay of bureaucratic forces had become an accepted part of the Israeli Government service. In fact, competitiveness was institutionalised in the bureaucratic struggles waged amongst the three organisational actors: the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence (Klieman, 1990:141). With regard to India, between 1948 and 1991, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was the ultimate decision unit. However, the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Defence were the driving forces behind activities directed towards India, while trying to exercise a preponderant influence on Israeli-Indian low key relations.

¹⁹⁶ For details about Prime Minister Shekhar and his statement, see section 3.8.8.

4.10.3.1 The Prime Minister and the Prime Minister's Office

Traditionally, the Prime Ministers of Israel were directly involved with its foreign policy as it was closely linked to Israel's national security.¹⁹⁷ The Prime Minister's Office deals with three overlapping spheres: security, intelligence and statecraft. Substantial portions of these activities are clandestine and are mainly handled by the Agency of Intelligence and Special Operations (Mossad). The Mossad is part of the Prime Minister's Office and is the national arm of Israeli defence and security affairs, specialising in clandestine operations beyond the borders of the country and the director of the Mossad reports directly to the Prime Minister. The Mossad is also in charge of promoting contacts with countries where there is an absence of formal or direct diplomatic links, such as India until 1992 (Klieman, 1988:47; Klieman 1990:141).

The Mossad enjoyed a period of prolonged cooperation and exchange of information with India's Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), the Indian Intelligence Agency, which started in the second half of the 1960s under the supervision of Meir Amit (who headed the Mossad between 1964-1968). That low level cooperation continued during the second tenure of the premiership of Indira Gandhi who persisted with her unwavering anti-Israeli attitude and also during other low points in the relations between the two countries (Kapila, 2000; Kumaraswamy, 1998:6; Naaz, 2000:971).

4.10.3.2 Ministry of Defence

Since independence, the Ministry of Defence had enjoyed an advantage in bureaucratic politics and tended to prevail over the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in its competition for policy influence and policy control, a tendency that was also important for the understanding of Israeli foreign policy (Klieman, 1990:146).

¹⁹⁷ About the Israeli Prime Ministers and their influence on the Israeli foreign policy towards India (in terms of individual level of analysis), see section 4.11.

The Ministry of Defence coordinated international military relations as well as the foreign military assistance of Israel. That type of coordination included direct negotiations with other foreign governments, including covert negotiations with certain governments. The Ministry of Defence was also in charge of arms sales and was committed to creating outlets for Israel's growing arms industry (Brecher, 1972:137). Importantly, military aid gave Israel a leading edge when dealing with Third World countries and in regions where other standard instruments of foreign policy did not work. The Israeli arms export action set out to promote military, commercial and diplomatic contacts and Israel as an arms exporting country often used active arms sales diplomacy, as was the case when Israel sold arms and ammunition to India during its wars with China and Pakistan.¹⁹⁸

4.10.4 The Histadruth (The General Federation of Workers in Israel)

The Histadruth (The General Federation of Workers in Israel) paved the way for Israeli assistance activities at government level in Asia, as well as Israeli aid activities in India. In essence, the Histadruth was the unofficial promoter of Israel and its achievements in India and ceaselessly tried to establish unofficial contact with Indian political leaders, in particular socialist leaders as well as with Indian trade unions.

In 1958, the Histadruth was planning to open a liaison office in New Delhi following some discussions between Reuven Barkatt, the director of the political department of the Histadruth and Prem Bhasin, one of the leaders of the Paraja Socialist Party in India. However, nothing came of these plans since the trade union that had direct links with the INCP was not given did not support the initiative (Aynor, Avimor & Kaminer, 1989:42-43).¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁸ Israel was the only Western country that manufactured Soviet military equipment as well as ammunition suitable for the Indian army, based on expertise acquired by Israel from Soviet weapons, which were confiscated from the Egyptian army during the Suez Canal Operation.

¹⁹⁹ For details about the Paraja Socialist Party, see section 3.10.2.3.

The Histadruth created the Afro – Asian Institute for Labour Studies and Cooperation in Israel in 1960, although its first training programme had already started in 1958 with a seminar on cooperative enterprises that took place between November 1958 and February 1959. That seminar became the prelude to a growing number of similar seminars that followed. The goals of the Institute were articulated as follows:

To train manpower for the labour and Cooperative Movements in Africa and Asia in order to enable each movement to integrate more effectively in the general process of social programs and development of its own country. (Brecher, 1971:492).

The study programme of the Institute combined theory and practice in trade unions, cooperative and management activities and the training in the institute became a key component of the Foreign Ministry's international cooperation programmes in Israel, in particular in the case of India.²⁰⁰ Significantly, between 16 December 1959 and 20 January 1960, an official delegation from India visited the Afro-Asian Institute in order to learn about cooperation.

A special three month course was organised for the leaders of the Budhan Movement of India and the Paraja Socialist Party. The seminar, which concentrated on the Israeli socialist experience, took place between 29 February 1960 and 1 June 1960 and following its success, a second course was organised for the Bhudan Movement (Aynor & Avimor, 1990:308-309; Avimor, 1991:359).²⁰¹

From the opening of the Afro-Asian institute in 1958 up to 1961, more than five hundred participants from India studied at the Afro-Asian institute in Tel-Aviv (Laufer, 1967:277). In the absence of diplomatic relations with Israel and following the low-key relations between the two countries before 1992, most of the participants in the Afro-Asian Institute for Labour Studies and Cooperation came from the sectorial trade unions in India, which were not associated with the INCP.

²⁰⁰ More details about the International Cooperation Program of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs can be found in section 4.8.2.

²⁰¹ For details about the Bhudan Movement and its relations with Israel, see section 3.10.2.3.

4.10.5 Pressure groups in Israel

Interest groups in Israel played little if any role in foreign policy formulation. The Israeli multi-party system is in fact a substitute for such pressure groups (Klieman, 1990:1134). Between the years 1948 and 1991, there were a small number of Indian diamond businessmen (mostly from Bombay), who resided in Israel with their families, but they had neither the ability nor the will to become involved in improving relations between the two countries. Consequently, their political influence in Israel (as well as their influence in New Delhi) was insignificant.

One striking exception was Zubin Mehta, who was an Indian-Parsi from Bombay by birth and a world- renowned conductor. He enjoyed long-standing working relations with the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra and was a personal friend of many Israeli politicians. For many years he was the main promoter of bilateral relations between India and Israel (Naaz, 1999:890).

In June 1977, despite political obstacles in New Delhi, Mehta made use of his acquaintance with Indian politicians and with their assistance, as well as with the cooperation of the “Time and Talent Club” in Bombay, he took the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra to New Delhi and Bombay for a tour of musical concerts. A similar tour of the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra in India was also organised by him in 1993 after the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, but the successful musical tour did not have any impact on the bilateral relations between the two countries.²⁰²

For several years, the Indian Jewish community in Israel had two separate active organisations that later merged to become one organisation, the Central Organisation of Indian Jews in Israel (COIJI), with the goal of promoting the Jewish-Indian heritage in Israel. However, the community did not play any significant role in Israeli politics in general or as a pressure group promoting

²⁰² An Indian-Parsi Women’s Club in Bombay promoting art and music in India.

bilateral relations with India, in particular (*Jerusalem Post-Special Supplement*, 2006).²⁰³

4.10.6 Media and public opinion in Israel

Opinions and attitudes in the field of foreign policy held by the Israeli public are formed by diplomatic activities or by how situations and choices are presented in the media. This means that foreign policy in general was accepted politically by the majority of the public, which gave the Israeli leaders the freedom to carry out the Israeli foreign policy (Klieman, 1990:111).

The media fulfilled a vital function in the Israeli democracy, however, the coverage of foreign affairs had traditionally been low compared with considerable importance attached to domestic politics and it concentrated mostly on foreign affairs topics directly related to the national interests of Israel. Significantly, foreign policy decision-makers in Israel obtained much of their information from the media. The print media and later on the electronic media were key factors in the process of policy making of foreign affairs, but the attention and coverage devoted to Asia and India in particular in the Israeli media, between independence and 1991, was rather low.

The inadequate coverage of India in the Israeli media could be explained in part by the relatively low Israeli interest in Asia and the fact that the Israeli media never had any permanent correspondent on the Asian continent (the information about India was taken mostly from the international news agencies). An additional explanation could be the nature of the bilateral relations between Israel and India and the traditional low-key relations between the two countries until 1991, which did not encourage high coverage of Indian affairs by the Israeli media.

There was consensus in Israel, and not least of all in the media, that India was officially conducting an anti-Israeli foreign policy and was biased towards Israel. Consequently, this type of consensus resulted in a lack of interest that was

²⁰³ For details about the background of the Indian Jewish community, see section 3.10.5.1.

reinforced by the low-level of media coverage regarding India. The low-level media exposure of India to the decision-makers and politicians in Israel was one of the main reasons why bilateral relations with India were rarely on the political agenda in Israel (Klieman, 1990:111).

4.11 Post-independence Israel: The individual level of analysis

The Prime Ministers of Israel were traditionally involved with the foreign policy of Israel as it was directly related to the Israeli national defence system due to the immediacy of foreign affairs and security. The following Israeli Prime Ministers played a role in Israel's foreign policy towards India.

Predominant leaders: David Ben-Gurion

David Ben-Gurion was the first Israeli Prime Minister and had a strong impact on Israeli relations (1948-1953 and 1955-1963).²⁰⁴ On the eve of Israel's independence, Ben-Gurion attached more importance to the Western countries with a Jewish population than to Asia, but gradually he started to attach more importance to Asia (CZA S 5/322, 6/4/1948).

Ben-Gurion had a general interest in Asia because of Buddhism and India in particular as a gateway to Asia to which he referred directly in his essay: *Israel among the Nations*. In the essay, Ben-Gurion repeats his government's duty to promote friendly relations and reciprocity with every peace-loving country. He then singles India and China out as one of the two exceptional portents of our times (the second portent was the struggle for world leadership between the US and the Soviet Union) (Brecher, 1972:163, 264, 383; Aynor & Avimor, 1990:E12). In 1957 he declared:

From the point of view of our existence and security the friendship of one European country is more valuable than the views of all the people of Asia (Medzini, 1976:201).

²⁰⁴ Ben-Gurion was elected for a second tenure in November 1955.

In February 1958, Egypt and Syria merged to form the UAR²⁰⁵ and in his speech in the Indian Parliament, Nehru intimated that he regarded the Israeli criticism of the UAR as ominous, as it could lead to some dangerous action precipitated by Israel (*Asian Recorder*, 7-13/7/1958).²⁰⁶ In his reply in the Knesset on 21 May 1958, Ben-Gurion expressed the wish that India would soon establish diplomatic relations with Israel and added that:

I read with regret and concern the surprising statement of the Indian Premier for which there is no foundation whatsoever. No action, precipitate or deliberate has been or is about to be taken by Israel in connection to the Syrian Egyptian merger (Avimor, 1991:335).

In 1959, Ben-Gurion published an analysis entitled: *Towards a New World*, in which he explained that Israel was morally, ethically and socially bound to assist the weak on the Asian continent whether they were individuals or national entities. In his analysis, he predicted that the Israeli assistance would eventually lead to political links with the Asian states that would find political expression in friendship, political understanding and economic relations (Government Yearbook, 1960/1961).

Ben-Gurion had great personal respect for Gandhi and Nehru and was disappointed with Nehru's attitude towards the State of Israel as revealed in an interview in London in 1959:

I cannot understand how Mr. Nehru fits his behaviour to Israel with Gandhi's philosophy of universal friendship. Mr. Nehru gave definite promises to the Director General of our Foreign Ministry eight years ago that he would soon establish normal diplomatic relations with Israel, but so far he has not kept his word (*The London Times*, 1959 and Brecher, 1976:223).

Subsequently, Ben-Gurion voiced the following complaint:

India under Mr. Nehru refuses to establish normal relations with Israel although he has repeatedly promised our representative to do so. Nehru too claims allegiance to neutrality...He is not even neutral in regard to

²⁰⁵ The UAR lasted only three years and broke up in September 1961.

²⁰⁶ For details about Nehru's speech, see section 3.8.1.

Israel and the Arabs for he has close ties and normal relations with the Arab countries but he has stubbornly refused to establish diplomatic relations with Israel, and on his frequent visits to the Middle East he has, on every occasion, and not by accident, overlooked Israel (Government Yearbook, 1959/1960).²⁰⁷

In fact, Ben-Gurion made repeated efforts to invite Nehru through Indian visitors whom he met and through other heads of states to visit Israel. In July 1960, he sent Nehru a personal letter in which he invited him to Israel. The invitation was sent with Bajhumari Amrit Kaur who was an ex-Minister of Health in Nehru's cabinet, a Member of Parliament in the upper house and the head of the Indian Red Cross Organisation. This was followed up by a letter of invitation from Ben-Gurion to Nehru sent on 28 July 1960:

I am confident that this visit will be highly beneficial in the present disturbed state of international relations. Any expression of goodwill on the part of an illustrious statesman, the leader of a great nation like yourself, would undoubtedly have its effect, directly or indirectly, in improving the situation in the world, and in our area particularly (Ben-Gurion's Archives, 28/7/1960).

Nehru rejected the invitation and in his reply he explained that under the current circumstances it would not be advisable to undertake such a visit, as instead of improving relations, it might have the opposite effect (Yegar, 2004:159). Mrs. Kaur also responded to the exchange of letters and wrote to Ben-Gurion:

I can sense the disappointment that you must have felt at our Prime Minister's reply to your invitation to him to visit Israel. Knowing Mr. Nehru as I do, I can vouch for the fact that he has no animosity in his heart against your Government or your people. He however thinks that the time is not yet for him to make a move in the direction which you desire. And he honestly feels that instead of the helping he might even be making the position worse for you with the Arab world (Ben-Gurion's Archives, 2379, 2/11/1960).

Ben-Gurion, who was fascinated by oriental Asian civilisations, made an effort to study Buddhism and visited Burma in 1961 where he spent a few days in Buddhist meditation and met Prime Minister U Nu. However, he did not stop over in neighbouring India.

²⁰⁷ About India's foreign relations with the Arab world in the Israeli context, see sections 3.9.2 and 3.9.2.1.

After Egypt, Syria and Iraq had decided to form an Arab federation in July 1963, Ben-Gurion sent a personal note to Nehru expressing his concern about the new Arab federation.²⁰⁸ In the note he asked Nehru to exert his considerable international influence on the President of Egypt in order to dissuade the latter from following a dangerous path and to convince him to start peace negotiations with Israel. Ben-Gurion did not receive any official answer from Nehru (Bar Zohar, 1987).

According to Netanel Lorch (1997:233), when he was talking to Ben-Gurion about Nehru, Ben-Gurion told him: "India is Nehru." Lorch's interpretation of that remark was that Ben-Gurion realised that as long as Nehru was the Prime Minister of India, diplomatic relations with Israel were improbable.

Moshe Pearlman published his talks with Ben-Gurion during 1964, in which Ben-Gurion freely expressed his views. Ben-Gurion's reference to Nehru was quite appreciative; nevertheless, he expressed his disappointment about the lack of progress in their mutual relations:

The one country which has succumbed to Arab pressure is not one of the newest States and not one of the smallest or least powerful. It is India, one of the largest, most populated and most progressive of the new States. It was headed by one of the most eminent statesmen in the world, Nehru until his death. He did great things for India, although he also left a number of important things undone, and despite his immense problems, he managed to achieve a large measure of democracy in his vast land. He showed imagination, ability and courage; and his whole background should have led him naturally to a sympathetic appreciation of what Israel had done since her statehood. Yet, he remained aloof and consistently refused to establish diplomatic relations with us. We did not resent his preference for the neighbouring Arab States, even the more backward of them, even the feudal, even the dictatorships. That was his right. But it was strange that a man of his qualities, his progressive ideals and his vision, should have submitted to Arab pressure. Other countries follow normal diplomatic procedures by an exchange of representatives, for example the Soviet Union but not India. Mind you, it is of no great importance for Israel. Her basic interests remain unaffected by not being fully recognized by India. But it was a source of personal disappointment for me (Pearlman, 1965:178).

²⁰⁸ The United Arab Republic (UAR) dissolved in September 1961 and in July 1963 Egypt, Syria and Iraq agreed to form a new Arab federation leaving each member-state its identity and constitution (Shimoni, 1987:89).

Predominant Leaders: Moshe Sharett - Sharett served as the Prime Minister of the State of Israel from December 1953 until November 1955. During his short tenure of premiership, he devoted most of his time to domestic political struggles in general and with his predecessor who later succeeded him, David Ben-Gurion, in particular. Succeeding Ben-Gurion provided him with the opportunity to pursue his own ideas and to influence the Israeli foreign policy, but his tenure was brief and by the end of 1953 it may already have been too late because Ben-Gurion had managed to lay a firm foreign policy foundation (Klieman, 1990:71).²⁰⁹

Predominant Leaders: Levi Eshkol - Prime Minister Eshkol, who succeeded Ben-Gurion, served as Prime Minister of Israel between June 1963 and February 1969, but spent most of his time on domestic politics and on political struggles with his predecessor Ben-Gurion. He was inexperienced in foreign affairs having been chosen mostly for his domestic competence and managerial skills and had to operate in the shadow of Ben-Gurion who frequently criticised the new government's foreign policy (Klieman, 1990:73). In addition to his duty as prime minister, he also served as a minister of defence up to the eve of the Six-Day War. Eshkol had a pragmatic approach to foreign policy as he had little knowledge of the topic other than his concern with foreign economic policy, the Israeli-Arab conflict and Israel's relations with the US, Europe, Soviet Union and the Jewish Diaspora. Asia in general and India in particular, were not at the core of his international interests (Brecher, 1972:396).

In addition, Eshkol did not see any hope for a change of foreign policy towards Israel by Nehru's successor, Lal Bahadur Shastri. In fact, he did not deviate from his predecessor's foreign policy towards Israel.²¹⁰ On 12 January 1966, when Eshkol presented his government to the Knesset, he expressed himself as follows:

I may be permitted to note with satisfaction the positive result of the Tashkent conference in which India and Pakistan through the mediation of the Soviet Union, have issued a joint statement...On this occasion I would

²⁰⁹ For details about Moshe Sharett and his policy towards India as a Minister of Foreign Affairs (1948-1956), see section 4.8.1.

²¹⁰ For details about Shastri's foreign relations towards Israel, see section 3.8.2.

like to express from the rostrum of the Knesset our profound sympathy with the government and people of India on the sudden death of the Indian Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri, in the midst of his efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement with Pakistan by direct talk (Medzini, 1966:680).

The Six-Day War and Indira Gandhi's premiership in India, as well as her anti-Israeli attitude made an improvement of relations between the two countries improbable during Eshkol's tenure as Prime Minister.

Predominant Leaders: Golda Meir - Mrs. Meir became Prime Minister of the State of Israel after Levi Eshkol died in March 1969 and led the Israeli Government up to April 1974, including the Yom Kippur War in 1973. At first, she headed the ongoing National Unity Government, but in July 1970 after the right wing bloc had left the government because of Roger's plan,²¹¹ Prime Minister Meir formed an Alignment-Left government.

She resigned in April 1974 after the Geneva conference in December 1973 and the first Israeli-Egypt separation of forces agreement in January 1974 and following the publication of the commission report that referred to the Yom Kippur War. Although Meir showed a low degree of flexibility in the Middle East, she had a pragmatic approach to foreign policy in the rest of the world and she expressed an interest in the afflictions of the new states in Asia (Aynor and Avimor, 1990:E9).²¹² She came to her post from the Ministry of Labour and responded with warmth to problems that pertained to new states in Asia and Africa although her encounter with Asia was less productive; according to her biographer:

Golda was less successful in establishing personal ties with the statesmen of Asia, while the basic human and political needs of the young African peoples appealed to her innate simplicity, the ancient, complex civilizations of Asia were harder to fathom (Breicher, 1972:305).

Her entire tenure overlapped with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's tenure. Mrs Gandhi was a staunch supporter of the Arab world and was extremely incensed

²¹¹ A plan which was initiated by US Secretary of State, William Rogers, in order to break the dead-lock of the Arab Israeli conflict after the Six-Day War.

²¹² For details about Golda Meir's policy towards India in her capacity as Minister of Foreign Affairs (1956-1966), see section 4.8.1.

with Israel in particular, after the Yom Kippur War (*Sunday, 28/11-4/12/1982*).²¹³ It was therefore taken for granted by Meir that India would not change its foreign policy towards Israel in particular, considering India's anti-Israeli statements and India's support of Egypt and Syria at the UN following that war.²¹⁴

Predominant leaders: Yitzhak Rabin (1974-1977) - Prime Minister Rabin was selected by the ruling Labour Party in June 1974 for his first tenure²¹⁵ following Golda Meir's resignation. It is noteworthy that Rabin assumed power at the most difficult time in Israel's history after the Yom Kippur War.²¹⁶ During his premiership and following the shuttle diplomacy of the US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, disengagement agreements were signed with Egypt and Syria in 1974 and an interim agreement was signed with Egypt in 1975.

However, those agreements did not have any impact on the Indian foreign policy towards Israel, which declared its full support of Egypt and Syria.²¹⁷ While in power Rabin concentrated on the economic problems of Israel after the war. Despite the agreements with Egypt and Syria, the Rabat Arab summit that took place in Morocco on 25 October 1974 adopted a resolution, which confirmed the right of the Palestinian people to return to Palestine and recommended the return of any liberated Palestinian authority to be put under the leadership of the PLO. Rabin summarily rejected the Rabat summit resolution (Shaham, 1998:369-371).

After the Rabat Arab summit, India endorsed the PLO's bid for observer status at the UN and in January 1975 it recognised the PLO.²¹⁸ The Yom Kippur War also resulted in the Middle East being placed at the top of international agenda, as that war was considered to be the flashpoint for Soviet-American confrontation and the Arab oil issue had become a political weapon against Israel. During his tenure, Rabin made several secret visits abroad with the aim of promoting Israeli

²¹³ For details about Mrs. Gandhi's attitude towards Israel, see section 3.8.3.

²¹⁴ For more details about India's foreign policy towards Israel between the years 1968-1991, see sections 3.8.3 and 3.9.1.4.

²¹⁵ Rabin was elected for a second tenure as Prime Minister of Israel in 1992.

²¹⁶ Israel suffered over 2,205 casualties in the war.

²¹⁷ For details about India's foreign policy towards Israel after the Yom Kippur War, see sections 3.8.3 and 3.9.1.4

²¹⁸ For details about the Indian foreign policy after the Yom Kippur war, see section 3.7.

interests, such as his visits to Morocco and Iran. However, but India did not feature in his diplomatic initiatives as a result of the rift between the two countries and the ongoing hostility displayed towards Israel in particular at the UN forum.

Predominant leaders: Menahem Begin (1977-1983) - Begin was sworn in as Prime Minister of Israel in June 1977. Importantly, Begin worked tirelessly at negotiating a peace treaty with Egypt, which was ultimately signed on 29 March 1979, for which he was jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize with the Egyptian President on 10 December 1979. During his tenure, the Iraqi Osirak nuclear reactor was destroyed on 7 June 1981 and in December 1981 Israeli law and order was extended to the Golan Heights. Subsequently, Israel invaded Lebanon in June 1982. The operation came to an end after the withdrawal of the Israeli forces to the international borders in 1985 (Rolef, 1993:57).

Begin was aware of India's importance and referred to it with respect, but he also assumed a pragmatic political approach towards India. He supported Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan's secret visit to India, therefore he was disappointed with the outcome of the visit.²¹⁹ However, after Indira Gandhi's return to power, Begin realised that due to her negative attitude towards Israel, the chances of improving relations with India were very slim.

During a rare interview published in the Indian weekly *Sunday* with Subramaniam Swamy in Jerusalem, in the winter of 1982, Begin referred to India as a hypocritical state, considering the fact that Israel had supported India in its wars against Pakistan. Importantly, in that interview, Begin called for better relations between Israel and India as well as full diplomatic relations. He added that although India and Pakistan had waged war against each other, there were embassies in each other's countries as well as normal diplomatic ties between them (*Sunday*, 28/11-4/12.83).

Predominant leaders: Yitzhak Shamir (1983-1984, 1986-1992) - Following Prime Minister Begin's resignation, Shamir became Prime Minister of Israel on 10

²¹⁹ For details about Dayan's visit and meetings, see sections 4.8.1, 3.8.4, and 4.9.1.3.

October 1983 (Rolef, 1993:272). When Shamir assumed office Indira Gandhi was still in power and the relations between the two countries reached a low point after the expulsion of the Israeli Consul from India in Bombay and the Israeli invasion of Lebanon.²²⁰

After the rotation of the premiership that resulted in the second tenure of Shamir as Prime Minister, which started in 1986, Shamir faced Rajiv Gandhi as the Prime Minister of India. Shamir's international image as a rigid right wing politician, the Palestinian uprising (Intifada) and Shamir's policy on the issue of the continuation of Jewish settlements on the West Bank and Gaza, were impediments that made it difficult for Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to bring about any significant change to the Indian foreign policy towards Israel (Yegar, 2004:162; Kumaraswamy, 2002:7).²²¹ Shamir was angered by the fact that Gandhi upgraded the diplomatic status of the PLO in New Delhi and also that he later recognised the State of Palestine...

During the Gulf War in January 1991 Israel did not retaliate when Iraqi Scud missiles attacked Israeli cities and Shamir complied with the American request to stay out of the war, so that the participation of the Arab states in the war against Iraq would not be endangered. Subsequently, ten months later, on 18 October 1991, Shamir headed the Israeli delegation to the Madrid Conference (Shaham, 1998:513-514).²²² These two events as well as the end of the Cold War and the beginning of globalisation did not go unnoticed in New Delhi.

However, Shamir made it clear that countries interested in participating in the Middle East peace process, including India, would have to establish diplomatic relations with Israel. On 16 December 1991, India gave Israel its first sign of goodwill and voted with the majority in the UN General Assembly, which repealed the 1975 UN General Assembly resolution that equated Zionism with racism.²²³ Consequently, the door opened for more diplomatic consultations between Israel

²²⁰ For details about the expulsion of the Israeli Consul from Bombay, see sections 3.8.3, 3.9.1.4 and 4.9.1.4.

²²¹ For details about Rajiv Gandhi and India's foreign policy, see sections 3.8.6 and 3.9.1.4.

²²² For details about the Madrid Conference, see sections 3.7 and 3.9.2.1

²²³ For details about the Indian voting, see section 4.7, 4.8.1 and 3.9.2.1.

and India, which took place in Washington D.C. and led to fully-fledged diplomatic relations between the two countries (Yegar, 2004:161, 276).

Predominant leaders: Shimon Peres (1984-1986) - The National Unity Government was formed on 13 September 1984 and according to the coalition agreement, Peres became Prime Minister for two years.²²⁴ He was instrumental in bringing about the withdrawal of the Israeli army from Lebanon by June 1985, thereby breathing new life into the peace process. Importantly, he made a major effort to improve Israel's foreign relations such as establishing diplomatic relations with Spain, Poland and some African countries and tried to improve relations with India (Klieman, 1990:96). In the winter of 1985, during the fortieth annual session of the UN, he met Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in New York and following the meeting, a new Vice-Consul was allowed by the Government of India to take up his position in the Israeli Consulate in Bombay (Kumaraswamy, 1998:5; Yegar, 2004:162).²²⁵

4.12 Summation

The focus of this chapter was on Israel's relations with India and Israel's foreign policy towards India before the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two states (from 1948 to 1991). The development of the Israeli foreign policy towards India as a political process was described in terms of a historical analysis. The aim was to determine the factors that influenced the bilateral relations between the two countries before diplomatic relations were established and what affect they had on their mutual relations prior to 1991.

The historical description of the relations between Israel and India from 1948 to 1991 also provided the foundation, in terms of historical database accumulation and depth of knowledge, for a dynamic analysis of the bilateral relations between Israel and India. Because of the importance and relevance of pre-independence relations to Israel's foreign policy towards the Republic of India, an extended

²²⁴ Shamir was the Prime Minister for the remaining two years of the government's term.

²²⁵ For details about Peres's foreign policy towards India as a Minister of Foreign Affairs, see section 4.8.1.

section dealt with the Israeli pre-independence policy towards India before India's independence. In addition, the relevant theoretical models and theories applicable to the first timeframe from 1948 to 1991 are utilised in the analysis of this chapter.

The dominant actors regarding Israel's historical relations with India were identified and analysed in terms of the ultimate decision unit, as a unit of action. This enabled the analysis of entities and authorities, including leaders, within the Israeli governments, which were important in the shaping of Israeli foreign policy as well as the conduct of diplomacy towards India.

Israel's foreign policy towards India was analysed in this chapter in terms of three levels of analysis: the international level, the state and society (national) level and the individual level. The international level was divided into two types of relations: bilateral and multilateral relations. The three levels of analysis, in terms of the units of analysis of Israel as a unitary actor in the international system, provided a conceptual basis for a historical in-depth description. This enabled the identification, examination and analysis of the external and internal factors concerning Israel's foreign policy towards India until 1991, while taking cognisance of the complexity level of the web of variables, the political process in Israel and the contextual determinants.

The main objective of the Jewish Agency before 1948, as the ultimate decision unit, was to achieve a Jewish independent State in Palestine. The major objectives of the Government of Israel as an ultimate decision unit, not only before but also after independence in 1948, were first and foremost, the security of the State of Israel, the preservation of Israel's territorial integrity and its national identity.

From the outset, India was consistently unsympathetic towards Zionism and from the Indian records dating back to 1922; it was obvious to the Jewish leaders in Palestine that pursuing the Zionist cause in India would be a difficult experience. The Jewish Agency before independence as well as the State of Israel after independence accepted that pursuance of diplomatic activities and information

campaigns in India would be extremely complicated; while challenging the opening conditions coupled with a slim chance of success, were given political facts.

Only sporadic and limited efforts were made before independence to influence the INCM and Indian leaders in order to change their strong pro-Arab approach. The unfruitful Israeli attempts after independence, to improve the bilateral relations between the two countries only strengthened the Israeli prejudgment of the Indian partial foreign policy towards Israel. However, the explanation for the lack of inclination to pursue the Zionist cause in India before 1948, as well as the Israeli submissive foreign policy towards India in the period from 1948 to 1991, can include numerous reasons, constraints and circumstances.

In terms of the international level of analysis, the creation of the Jewish national homeland depended on Britain (following the Balfour Declaration and the British Mandate) and other leading Western powers of that period, which meant that the Zionist diplomatic efforts were concentrated in London, Geneva and New York. The world Jewry was predominantly Western and the funds for Jewish resettlement in Palestine mostly came from Western Jews, as did many potential immigrants at that stage after the Holocaust and the Second World War. Knowledge of the Jewish community in Palestine of the Indian heritage, culture, society and Hindu religion was marginal; likewise, the majority of Indian Hindus were not familiar with Judaism and the Bible (Old Testament).

It is important to note that no systematic effort was made by the Zionist Movement to establish contacts with the INCM. India was geographically remote from Palestine and there was a cultural as well as a religious gap between the Jewish and Indian nations. In addition, India was peripheral to the American-European centred worldview of the Jewish leaders in Palestine.

Israel, like India, had been under British rule, but the Zionist Movement failed to convince the Indian nationalists that the Israeli nation was locked in a struggle for independence no different to the one of the Indians or the other nations in Asia. In fact, Zionism did not consider itself a part of the historical process of a freedom

struggle throughout Asia, but rather as a unique case with the revival of the Jewish nation in its ancient homeland. The Zionist leaders avoided identification with the anti-colonial nationalist movements in Asia and the Zionist Movement (unlike the INCM) was not a member of the OICI. Furthermore, no Zionist representative was found at the various anti-imperialist conferences during the 1920s and the 1930s and there was no public pronouncement aligning Zionist goals with Asian nationalism.

The Jewish dependence on Britain for the creation of its national homeland did not encourage Jewish activism against Britain in India. The main concern of the Zionist leaders in Palestine regarding the struggle for independence in India, was the fear that Britain might be apprehensive that the trouble between the Jews and Arabs in Palestine could cause widespread unrest among the Arabs throughout the Middle East and possibly also among the Muslims in India.

The assumption of the Zionist Movement was that the Muslim community in India (over 95 million before the Indo-Pakistani partition) was opposed to the Zionist Movement in Palestine. Consequently, no serious attempt was made by the leaders of the Zionist Movement to establish contacts with the leadership of the Indian Muslim community. This was despite the fact that Maulana Azad had offered to organise conciliation talks for a settlement in Palestine between the Arabs and Jews, but his offer was not taken seriously by the Jewish Agency.

Similarly, no attempt was made by the Jewish Agency to establish contacts with the Indo-Christian community, which was familiar with the Bible and the New Testament. Relations with the Indian Jewish community were also limited and the budget allocation for the Jewish Agency's local office in Bombay was small. This was mainly because of the low importance attached to India by the Jewish leaders and the fact that the local office was not considered an effective channel for political contacts in India.

In terms of the individual level of analysis, the most significant Indian leaders as far as the Jewish leadership before independence was concerned were Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi. However, despite the keen interest of the Jewish leadership in both of them, the sporadic meetings with Gandhi, Nehru and other

Indian leaders were conducted by Jewish supporters of the Zionist cause and low ranking emissaries, in contrast with the close relations that existed between Arab nationalist leaders and Indian leaders. Israeli leaders considered Gandhi to be pro-Arab and saw him as someone lacking a real understanding of Zionism.

In fact, leaders like Gandhi and Nehru, were not aware of the Jewish spiritual connection to the Holy Land and after the independence of Israel, they both considered the newly born state to be a theocratic state and thus analogous to Pakistan. However, Gandhi and Nehru were held in great esteem by the Jews of Palestine and Nehru in particular, appealed to the Jewish Agency predominantly socialist leadership. Consequently, the negative attitudes of Gandhi and Nehru towards Zionism and the failure to change their opinion regarding the Zionist cause were frustrating to the Jewish leadership in Palestine.

After independence, the major priorities of Israel included arms procurement, fund raising, Jewish immigration and political as well as economic support for the newly born Jewish State and India was obviously not in a position to help Israel turn these its major priorities into realities. Because of the negative nature of the Indian foreign policy towards Israel, there was a general assumption in Israel that there was only limited scope for any Israeli diplomatic initiative regarding India. The Israeli assumption was that the leaders of India in general and the leaders of the INCP in particular were committed to the traditional Indian pro-Arab and anti-Israeli foreign policy. Israeli diplomats were even instructed that issues such as the transfer of the Israeli Consulate to New Delhi or diplomatic ties between the two countries should not be raised. Furthermore, the Israeli assumption was strengthened by the limitations imposed on the Israeli Consulate activities in Bombay and the expulsion of the Israeli Consul from India in 1982.

In terms of the individual level of analysis, Nehru's pre-independence support of the Arabs was transformed into an anti-Israeli doctrine based on his view of Israel as a product of Western imperialism. India's foreign policy towards Israel became more restrictive after Nehru's death and the Indian leaders that followed him, particularly his daughter Indira Gandhi, who was a staunch supporter of the

Arab cause, persisted with his pro-Arab and anti-Israeli policy, considered by them as part of Nehru's heritage.

Even opposition leaders that had called for full diplomatic relations and closer ties with Israel continued with the Indian anti-Israeli attitude of their predecessors when they were heading coalition governments. The perception in Israel was that the leaders of India in general and the leaders of the INCP in particular, were committed to the traditional Indian pro-Arab and anti-Israeli foreign policy.

In terms of multilateral relations as part of the international level of analysis and from a historical viewpoint, from July 1950 onwards, following the Korean War, the non-alignment policy of Israel gave way to an active quest for US patronage in the form of American guarantees for Israel.²²⁶ India, on the other hand, was a prominent leader of the NAM and pursued its policy of non-alignment while developing close economic, military and diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, while demonstrating a consistent anti-Israeli foreign policy. During the Cold War, Israel and India found themselves on different sides.

In the context of the Cold War, Israel found the political American hold on India to be limited. The Jewish American Organisations' pressure on India regarding issues related to Israel, which was partly coordinated by Israel, was not strong and not focussed enough. In fact, when the Jewish lobby put pressure on India regarding some issues connected to Israel, the Indian response was favourable.

Issues such as the prevention of the closure of the Israeli Consulate in Bombay, the upgrading of the official rank of the diplomat in charge of the Consulate, the extension of the jurisdiction of the Consulate and pressure to establish fully-fledged diplomatic relations with Israel, which were promoted by Jewish American Organisations, proved the validity of this point.

The Israeli-Arab wars in 1956, 1967, 1973 and 1982 made the multilateral diplomacy of Israel move into a defensive mode with low activity in diplomacy in

²²⁶ The Korean War broke out on 25 July 1950. Israel's Cabinet decided to convey official support for UN resolution and actions taken in response to the outbreak of the Korean War - and thereby abandoned the fundamental policy of non-identification (Brecher, 1974:111).

general and in the multilateral arena in particular. India, on the other hand, was active in the international arena, particularly in the UN and constantly attacked Israel, on political and moral grounds. In addition, India introduced anti-Israel resolutions in international forums and organisations in support of the Arab cause.

The Arab world was a geographical and economic barrier between Israel and India especially up to 1956 when the Tiran Straits, the Gulf of Akaba and the Suez Canal were closed by Egypt for Israeli shipping. Egypt's refusal of the passage of Israeli shipping through the Suez Canal and the closure of the Tiran Straits made Israeli trade with Asia and India extremely difficult. However, this situation was solved partly after the Suez Canal Military Operation that opened the route to Asia for Israel. Nevertheless, the Israeli volume of trade with India remained low even after 1956, since India was not viewed as an important market for Israeli exports, considering its socialist market and the fact that the Indian governmental sector was prohibited from having direct trade relations with Israel. On the other hand, the Indian economy depended on Arab oil supplies and Arab markets for Indian-made goods and a large number of Indians were employed in the Gulf countries. India's pro-Arab foreign policy was based on international and economic interest and led to the Israeli conclusion that India was totally committed to its pro-Arab traditional foreign policy.

The Israeli approach to the Indian Muslim community, including the attitude of the Israeli media and the public opinion in Israel continued to be dogmatic and one-dimensional. Since independence, it had been generally assumed that the Muslim approach towards Israel was negative; in contrast with the special relationship that existed between the Indian Muslim community and the Arab world. These assumptions were reinforced by the fact that the local Muslim community in India had gradually become a significant political factor, particularly important for the INCP, as a potential reservoir of votes. This perception was strengthened by the fact that India was extremely concerned about Pakistan's plan to transform the conflict in Kashmir into a Pan-Islamic issue. To Israel's disadvantage was the fact that diplomatic relations with Israel could be used for Pakistani propaganda against India in the Arab world, as well as the Muslim

Indian population in India in general and the Muslim Indian population in Jammu-Kashmir in particular.

In terms of bilateral relations as part of the international level of analysis, the Israeli military support during the Indian wars with China and Pakistan proved to be futile for Israel. This support did not open any doors in India for Israel or bring about any substantial improvement of ties between the two countries, contrary to Israeli expectations, which was part of Israel's arms diplomacy. Exceptions were some articles expressing appreciation for Israel in the Indian press.

In the Arab context, Israel failed to get the message across that it was maintaining fully-fledged diplomatic relations with Muslim countries and Arab states (such as Egypt, which traditionally maintained close relations with India) on the political agenda between the two governments. From a historical perspective, India overestimated the Indian Muslim community's response regarding diplomatic relations with Israel, but Israel had failed to get this message across. This point was proved by the fact that India's recognition of Israel did not evoke any violent protests from them, as well as the fact that they reacted in a similar way when diplomatic relations between the two countries were established in 1992.

Economic relations with India had little value for Israel as India was an underdeveloped country. On the other hand, the Israeli investments and resources needed to make a political and economic impact on India would have been extremely big and out of proportion to the potential outcome.

In terms of the national and society level of analysis, the left faction of the Israeli political system felt that closer political ties of friendship based on the socialist agenda and common national interest could be fostered, but all the initiatives in this direction were proven futile by Israeli ministers and politicians. Even the change of governments in India (before 1992) and the coalition governments without the participation of the INCP, did not bring about any change in the Indian foreign policy towards Israel in terms of friendlier relations.

Unlike the anti-Israeli and pro-Arab Indian governments, a section of the Indian press was sympathetic towards Israel. There were also some Indian politicians, members of the academy, businessmen as well as members of the alumni of the Israeli International Cooperation Programme who could have been mobilised as a lobbying group in India. This option was not exercised by Israel partly because Israel did not want to justify or defend its conflict with the Arabs in India and partly because of the Israeli conclusion that India was totally committed to its pro-Arab foreign policy in any case. However, the few attempts that were made to set up Israeli-Indian friendship associations in India for the promotion of diplomatic relations with Israel did not bear any political fruit. The Israeli leaders did not believe that it is possible to change India's official foreign policy and its negative attitude towards Israel because of political, Ideological and economic reasons in general and India's relations with the Islamic world in particular.

The Israeli foreign policy towards India since independence up to the establishment of diplomatic relations, showed a lack of foresight and the Israeli diplomatic efforts were found to be futile. From the Israeli point of view, India was an anti-Israeli, pro-Arab and hypocritical state, which remained aloof and non-cooperative until 1992. On the other hand, the Israeli diplomacy towards India failed to create an understanding of the Zionist cause. The prevailing diplomatic perception in Israel was that India remained committed to its pro-Arab and anti-Israeli biased foreign policy. This approach, as part of a centralised foreign policy- making process, was supported by consensus of most of the political parties in Israel, the Knesset, including the Committee for Foreign Affairs and Security, the Prime Minister's office, the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

As part of its foreign policy, Israel had to make a strategic decision about the sort of diplomacy to engage towards India given the international circumstances and India's anti-Israeli foreign policy towards Israel and the decision was taken to conduct a submissive policy.²²⁷ The operational diplomatic conclusion that emanated from this perception was that India would not change its fixed foreign

²²⁷ According to Aaron S. Klieman, the theoretical choice was between evasive diplomacy, submissive policy and policy initiative (Klieman, 1990).

policy towards Israel before a complete and comprehensive peace process in the Middle East was concluded. It was felt that in the interim, India would proceed with its traditional pro-Arab and anti-Israeli foreign policy. That conclusion was supported by the fact that India did not change its foreign policy towards Israel even after the peace agreements were signed between Israel and Egypt and Jordan.

In the final analysis, up to 1992 Israeli diplomacy *vis-à-vis* India was dogmatic and suffered from deficiencies. Certain strategic actions could have brought about earlier positive substantial progress in the bilateral relations between the State of Israel and the Republic of India. Examples of these actions are: a better awareness of the importance of India, a review of India with some vision combined with the allocation of funds, an assertive political approach in the international arena and creative diplomacy, including the efficient usage of American Jewish Organisations as political plus points.

In terms of bilateral relations as part of the international level of analysis, Israel made a crucial diplomatic mistake, in March 1953, by insisting on reciprocity and not opening an Israeli Embassy in New Delhi when it was still accepted by Nehru. However, even if such an embassy had been opened, India would probably have closed it after the Six-Day War, as was done by the Soviet Union, in the light of Indira Gandhi's staunch support of the Arab world and her anti-Israeli attitude. The consequences of such a diplomatic move remained obscure, but it is accepted by international political experts such as Michael Brecher, that Sharett's insistence on the principle of reciprocity was a lack of foresight. The stolid formalism on Israel's part, according to him, made it easier for the obstructionists to such a diplomatic move, to triumph in New Delhi (Brecher, 1972:560). However, that diplomatic mistake was rectified in 1992 when Israel read the international political climate and the Indian political position *vis-à-vis* Israel in the international arena correctly and insisted on nothing less than full diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Chapter 5

Transformation of India's foreign policy towards Israel in January 1992

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the focus is on the Indian diplomatic initiative to establish fully-fledged diplomatic relations with the State of Israel in January 1992, in terms of the strategic change of the Indian foreign policy towards Israel. The main objective is to describe, examine and analyse the transformation of India's strategic foreign policy towards Israel, which took place in spite of India's historical anti-Israeli as well as its traditionally biased pro-Arab foreign policy.¹

India is the unit of analysis of this chapter. The Indian ultimate decision unit regarding the decision to establish diplomatic relations with Israel was Narasimha Rao.² The establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries is analysed according to three levels of analysis³ and is done in accordance with the Aggregative Model of Bilateral Relations Strategic Change that is a new model in the field of foreign policy affairs.⁴ Furthermore, an additional model, based on Hermann's Model of Foreign Policy Change Decision-Making is also used in order to achieve external validity while providing an additional viewpoint regarding the transformation of bilateral relations between Israel and India in 1992.⁵

Postulation of a connection between the Aggregative Model of Bilateral Relations Strategic Change and foreign policy transformation in general

¹ For details about India's foreign policy towards Israel prior to January 1992, see chapter 3.

² For details about Ultimate Decision Unit Model, see section 2.2.

³ For details about Levels of Analysis Model, see -section 2.3.

⁴ For more details about the Aggregative Model of Bilateral Relations, see section 2.5.

⁵ For details about Hermann's Model, see section 2.4.

and the bilateral foreign policy change between Israel and India is demonstrated in a number of stages, which will be discussed below:

5.1.1 Pre-feasibility stage

This was an incubating stage of the bilateral foreign policy change between Israel and India with emphasis on the pertinent circumstantial formative change determinants, which developed and influenced India's foreign policy change towards Israel.

5.1.2 Framing stage

During this stage, change determinants were generated in terms of the pertinent circumstances that initiated and determined the bilateral foreign policy change and India's foreign policy transformation towards Israel in particular.

5.1.3 Cost and benefit stage

Revision of alternatives took place and the pertinent Indian ultimate decision unit adopted new options in conjunction with contextual change determinants. This was done as part of the selective process, setting the stage for the development of the conditions within the operational international environment as well as domestic politics for a change in the bilateral foreign relations review of the relevant fundamental factors, which affected India's change of foreign policy towards Israel.

5.1.4 Ripeness stage

Change was accelerated by particular events and circumstances in the form of accelerating change determinants that set off the bilateral foreign policy change between the two countries in general and India's foreign policy change towards Israel in particular.

5.1.5 Reaching a focal point in foreign policy change

Strategic and national interest-oriented factors, adjusted to suit the specific conditions and situation in line with the contextual as well as circumstantial adjustment determinants, synchronised with certain components, set the bilateral foreign policy change between Israel and India in motion. The timing of the Indian decision to establish diplomatic relations with Israel occurred simultaneously with the introduction of certain change elements aimed at synchronising the change process.

5.1.6 Consolidation stage

The determinants were consolidated in terms of the coordination and control of the bilateral foreign policy transformation between the two countries and impediments to the diplomatic relations between India and Israel by the Indian political system were examined.

5.1.7 Assimilation and implementation stage

Substantiating the change in bilateral relations was achieved by stabilising determinants, which affected both the international and domestic political sectors in India. The aim was to set the systemic foreign policy change process in motion, redefine foreign policy, and create new patterns of interdependence and direct diplomacy between the two countries.

5.2 The eve of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Israel

On 22 January 1992, the Israeli Consul in Bombay was invited to the then Secretary of the Ministry of External Affairs of India, J. N. Dixit, in New Delhi. He was informed about India's intention to improve the quality of its relations with the State of Israel within a short space of time. The Israeli

Consul responded by saying that Israel was only interested in fully-fledged diplomatic relations and that such a diplomatic move would allow India to participate in the peace process in the Middle-East that included the working groups of the multilateral channel. Dixit told the Israeli Consul, Giora Becher, that the final decision, including the modality of the diplomatic relations, would be decided upon by Prime Minister Rao, himself (Yegar, Govrin & Oded, 2002:548).

On 28 January 1992, only one day before the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, a final attempt was made by the Indian Government to upgrade the level of its diplomatic relations with Israel. It was done so that India would not be left out of the Middle East peace process. India promised Israel that it would establish fully-fledged diplomatic relations with Israel three months later if Israel agreed to India joining the Middle East peace process. In the interim, during the ensuing three months, the Government of India would overcome the political resistance within the INCP to the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel. However, the offer was rejected by Israel. Moshe Yegar, Deputy Director General of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs describes this situation as follows:

A last effort was made by senior officers of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs to receive an invitation to Madrid in return for a promise to normalize relations a few months later. Israel's response was flatly negative (Yegar, 1999:130).

On 29 January 1992, the Israeli Consul called the headquarters of the MFA in Jerusalem and informed them of India's intention to publish an official announcement about establishing diplomatic relations with Israel. The Israeli Consul asked Dixit for a postponement of a few hours so that the message could be delivered to the Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs, David Levi, who had attended the third round of the Middle East peace talks in Moscow. Dixit was also asked for the full text of the Indian announcement and a joint official announcement was published, simultaneously, in Jerusalem, New Delhi and Moscow, giving information about the establishment of the full-fledged diplomatic relations between India and Israel (Becher, 2002:548).

5.3 Transformation of the Indian foreign policy towards Israel in terms of Hermann's Model of Foreign Policy Change

For better understanding of the transformation of the Indian foreign policy towards Israel and to provide external validity for the new model applied in this research regarding the analysis of the change process, the following theoretical parsimonious model of Foreign Policy Change (Hermann, 1990:3-21) is used with reference to the multiple variables of the transformation.⁶

Stage one of Hermann's model deals with initial policy expectations. A reference to the Indian expectations of diplomatic relations with Israel was made by Dixit (1996:311) in his memoirs: "We examined the contrasting considerations in the Ministry (of External Affairs) and submitted policy recommendations to the Foreign Minister and the Prime Minister."

Stage two of the model refers to the external actor/environmental stimuli of foreign policy transformation. Ali Khan and Dixit as well as other Indian scholars pointed out that the confidential contacts between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Liberation organisation (PLO) were the external environmental stimuli that influenced India to reconsider its foreign policy towards Israel (Khan, 1992:215; Dixit, 1996:311).

Stage three refers to the possibility of recognition of discrepant information. Dixit (1996:309-310) describes such recognition in terms of the re-examination of information:

In the context of the foregoing developments, a fundamental re-examination of India's relations with Israel became pertinent. A nuance, which is generally over looked, is that India had accorded recognition to Israel soon after it came into existence. We had allowed Israel to open a consulate in Bombay, which had continued to function during the entire period from 1949-50 onwards. India, however, had not established diplomatic relations nor did any meaningful bilateral contacts of cooperation exist with Israel.

⁶ For details about the Aggregative Model of Bilateral Foreign Relations Strategic Change, see section 2.5 and for the analysis of the transformation of the Indian foreign policy towards Israel based on this model, see section 5.4.

Stage four of the model deals with the postulation of the connection between problem and policy and in this regard, Ali Khan (1992:214).states: "India had consistently supported the Palestinian cause and refused to deal with Israel, which robbed it of an opportunity to play a role in the Middle East."

In a similar vein, Kumaraswamy (2004:266) remarks:

By becoming a prisoner of its idealism and rhetoric, India had divorced itself from political realism, with consistency ironically becoming the guiding principle of its policy towards the ever-turbulent Middle East.

Two years before he had viewed this matter from an international perspective: "The lack of the relations with Israel precluded a better understanding with the industrialized countries especially the United States" (Kumaraswamy, 2002:8).

The development of alternatives is stage five of Hermann's model and J.N. Dixit refers to it directly:

Many trends, motivations and assessments contributed to the decision (to establish diplomatic relations with Israel) were made and examined in the Ministry of External Affairs after the Gulf War (Dixit, 1996:310).

In fact, the alternatives, in terms of their respective advantages and disadvantages, were examined and the advised alternative to establish diplomatic relation with Israel was examined carefully by the Indian MEA. The policy recommendation was submitted for a final confirmation to the Minister of External Affairs and the Prime Minister of India.

In terms of diplomatic relations with India, Israel offered only two options: either to adhere to its traditional foreign policy or to establish fully-fledged diplomatic relations. A clear message was delivered to the government of

India, through various indirect diplomatic channels, namely that Israel would not settle for less than fully-fledged diplomatic relations.⁷

Yegar, the Deputy Director General of the Israeli MFA at that time, stressed that Indian participation in the Madrid Conference had become a matter of prestige for them. However, the Government of Israel “made it quite clear that countries that refused to have normal diplomatic relations with her, while having such relations with the Arab countries, would be barred from the Madrid Conference” (Yegar, 1999: 109).

The Indian Government realised that it was a critical moment for them and finally made the decision to establish diplomatic relations with Israel.

Stage six of the model is about building authority consensus of choice and Dixit refers in his memoirs to the way such authoritative consensus was achieved within the Government of India regarding the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel:

The Prime Minister, in a number of internal meetings, highlighted a significant and relevant precondition to our taking this policy decision. He said that he would first take senior members of his own party into confidence about the rationale of establishing relations with Israel. He observed that after ensuring a consensus in domestic and political terms, he would hold discussions with Yasser Arafat to gauge his reaction and only then finalize the decision (Dixit, 1996:311).

The last and seventh stage refers to the implementation of the new foreign policy and according to Naaz (2000:977), in the case of India's relations with Israel:

The normalization of relations left both countries to explore as many areas as possible. While Indo-Israel relations increased rapidly in the field of trade and agriculture, both the countries continued to explore as many areas as possible for mutual cooperation.

⁷ For details about the Israeli official viewpoint on the eve of the establishment of diplomatic relations see section 5.2.

5.4 Aggregative Model of Bilateral Foreign Relations Strategic Change for analysis of the transformation of the Indian foreign policy towards Israel

The comprehensive review and analysis of the change in the bilateral relations between Israel and India as well as the unilateral Indian transformation of foreign policy towards Israel in 1992, is based on the Aggregative Model of Bilateral Foreign Relations Strategic Change.⁸

5.4.1 Pre-feasibility stage

An integral part of the model is the incubating stage of the foreign policy change process. The relevant fundamental national interests and strategic goals as foreign policy factors are taken into consideration in terms of micro international politics and diplomacy, while the foreign policy change process is influenced and directed by formative determinants. Such formative determinants of the Indian foreign policy transformation towards Israel were the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union. It also signified the end of the bipolar world as well as the Cold War that rocked the Indian foreign policy and was a traumatic experience for India.

Kumaraswamy (2002:7-8) considers the momentous change of India's foreign policy towards Israel as one of the benefits of the end of the Cold War. The collapse of the Soviet Union along with the paradigm of a stable new political world also meant that the concept of nonalignment had no validity. In the new era, India could change its foreign policy towards Israel and Prime Minister Rao could rectify the anomalous situation, which had existed for over four decades between the two countries. He explains:

The end of the Cold World and the collapse of the Soviet Union played a significant role in this endeavor. Frequently, India's Israel policy had coincided with Cold War politics, and Israel's identification with the West had provided an ideological basis for India's pro-Arab orientation (Kumaraswamy, 2002:7-8).

⁸ For details about the Aggregative Model of Bilateral Foreign Relations Strategic Change, see section 2.5.

Ali Khan (1992:214-215) adds that the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emerging of the US as the sole superpower, provided momentum for the peace process in the Middle East and operated concomitantly with the factors that caused the shift in India's stance towards Israel.

5.4.2 Framing of foreign policy change

The framing stage is characterised by a redefinition of fundamental foreign policy factors, such as national interests and strategic goals, influenced by generating determinants. Change determinants were generated in terms of the pertinent circumstances that initiated and determined the change of bilateral foreign policy as far as India's relations with Israel were concerned. Dixit describes it as follows:

In the context of the foregoing developments, a fundamental re-examination of India's relations with Israel became pertinent...In the post-Gulf War international situation; India considered it advisable to establish diplomatic relations with Israel and to initiate bilateral cooperation across the board with that country (Dixit 1996:309-310).

Dixit was afraid that India's long-standing friendship and cooperative relations with the Arab countries would suffer if India established diplomatic relations with Israel. Therefore, he attached a great deal of importance to the confidential contacts between Israel and the PLO that had been established in Sweden and Norway with the backing of the US and the Soviet Union as well as the endorsement of important Arab countries. According to him, these were, the reasons for India reconsidering its foreign policy towards Israel (Dixit, 1996:311). One year later, he points out in an article in an Indian leading newspaper:

India had opened diplomatic relations with Israel primarily on the rationale that the PLO was itself negotiating an agreement with Israel...There was an assessment that direct contacts would help it influence Israeli politics, making them more accommodative of Palestinians' legitimate aspirations (*Indian Express*, 11/12/1977).

Kumaraswamy (2002:8) describes a similar approach to the change generating determinants:

The willingness of the Arabs and Palestinians to seek a political settlement with Israel through direct negotiations altered the rules of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Once the Arab states and the PLO embarked upon negotiations with Israel, there was no compelling reason for India to maintain the status quo. Moreover, Palestinian support for Iraqi president Saddam Hussein during the Kuwait crisis significantly undermined the Palestinian position.

In a different reference, he explains that the willingness of the Arab countries to secure a negotiated peace settlement with the Jewish state and the inception of the Madrid peace process were the main factors that enabled Prime Minister Rao to pursue a new policy towards Israel (Kumaraswamy, 2004:266).

Ali Khan (1992:215) attaches a great deal of importance to the visit of the PLO leader to India shortly before the establishment of the diplomatic relations with Israel. He points out that the PLO chairman's visit (in the third week of January 1992) and Arafat's statement that the exchange of ambassadors and the mutual recognition are acts of sovereignty that made India feel that there would not be an adverse reaction in the Arab ranks to this fact.

The end of the Cold War, the first Gulf War, the Madrid Conference, the Israeli Arab Middle East peace negotiations in general and the ongoing war with the Palestinians in particular, were the generating change determinants of the transformation of the Indian foreign policy towards Israel.

5.4.3 Cost and benefit analysis

The fundamental and national interest oriented causative factors of the Indian foreign policy change towards Israel are analysed in conjunction with the pertinent contextual and situational change determinants as part of the bilateral change process in terms of the revision of alternatives and new options.

In reality, the Government of India debated the decision as described in Dixit's (1996:311-312) memoirs:

We examined these contrasting considerations in the ministry and submitted policy recommendations to the Foreign Minister and Prime Minister...The Prime Minister, in a number of internal meetings, while generally agreeing with this assessment, highlighted a significant and relevant precondition to our taking this policy decision...The Prime Minister discussed this crucial issue with senior cabinet colleagues on (or around) 23 January...The Prime Minister then rounded off the discussion.

In addition, it should be pointed out that the final decision was made together with a cross section of opposition leaders (Naaz, 1999:245).⁹ This change of policy had been advocated by the BJP especially (Cohen, 2001:247). One year later, Dixit points out in an article in an Indian newspaper the *Indian Express* (31/12/1996). "The Indian rationale proved largely valid while Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres and their party remained in power."¹⁰

5.4.3.1 Transformation of India's foreign policy towards Israel in terms of the international level of analysis

The following fundamental change factors of India's foreign policy transformation towards Israel, in convergence with contextual change determinants, in terms of cost and benefit, are analysed by means of the international level of analysis, which is divided into two types of foreign relations: bilateral and multilateral relations.¹¹

A. Israeli- Indian bilateral relations:

The analysis of the Israeli-Indian bilateral relations is based on the following review and evaluation made by India pertaining to its national security as well as national interests:

⁹ For details about the opposition leaders' attitudes see section 5.4.3.2 (2) and 5.4.6.

¹⁰ The Labour Party.

¹¹ Multilateral relations refer to a system of coordinating relations between two or more states and/or international organisations with certain principles of international conduct.

1) Military cooperation with Israel

Military cooperation between Israel and India had its roots in the 1960s. During the Sino-Indian war in 1962 and Indo-Pakistani wars in 1965 and 1971, India obtained a limited quantity of arms and ammunitions from Israel.¹²

According to Kumaraswamy (1998:3, 10):

The decision by India's Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao, in January 1992, to establish full and normal diplomatic relations with Israel was partly influenced by an appreciation of the potential security cooperation between the two countries...The disintegration of the Soviet Union and the multiplicity of suppliers meant that India had to negotiate with numerous countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The fragmentation of the supply system made India extremely vulnerable.

According to him, the immense difficulties India experienced with upgrading and modernising its armed forces compelled India to seek military cooperation with Israel. The arms build-up, modernisation of the defence forces and arms exports were of national interest to both countries with the emphasis on high quality weapons and military independence.

In his memoirs, Dixit (1996:10) states that the need for arms was one of the reasons for the transformation of the Indian foreign policy towards Israel: "Israel had developed expertise in improving the weapons systems of Soviet origin which could be utilized by India."¹³

In other words, the unreliability of future arm supplies, in particular spare parts, became a major concern of the Indian army after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The reason was that the Soviet Union had supplied most of the Indian weaponry on easy terms since the mid 1960s and furthermore, India depended on the Soviet Union for supplies of arms and military technology.

¹² For details about military cooperation between Israel and India in 1962 and 1965, see section 4.9.1.3.

¹³ Knowledge and expertise acquired after Russian military equipment and arms had been captured by Israel during the Suez Canal military operations.

It is important to point out that following the Gulf War and even before the disintegration of the Soviet Union; India already had second thoughts about the Soviet weaponry:

One of the major attractions of receiving weapon from the Soviet Union had been its reliability as a defence supplier, particularly when war had broken out. National security policy makers in Delhi will need to assess the implications of Soviet behaviour in the Gulf War for the other major recipients of Soviet weapons (Thakur, 1992:176).

Another military factor to be considered was the fact that the Gulf War had shown that the American weapons were far superior to the Soviet equipment and demonstrated the ineffectiveness of Soviet weapons to India compared with the advanced Western weapons. It also raised the question of the effectiveness of the Indian indigenous production of weapons as well as a concern about India's military ability regarding adversary states that might have access to Western weapons (Thomas, 1993:55, 67).

The Indian military establishment welcomed the possible military cooperation between India and the Israeli military industries, in terms of India's search for military technological independence, as Kumaraswamy points out:

Its subordination to the political authorities and their decisions did not prevent the military from developing a professional appreciation of Israel's military experience and expertise. The absence of political contacts and interactions intensified the interest of the India security establishment, who followed closely Israel's military adventures and successes...With this in view, normalization thus presented a formal structure and opportunity for greater understanding and cooperation in the security arena (Kumaraswamy, 1998:6).

In fact, since 1991, India had tried to diversify its weapons procurement and Israel was willing to supply a specific advanced type of military equipment and technology, which were not freely available from the Western countries that restricted their military sales to India (Hewitt, 1997:25-28).

2) Intelligence cooperation with Israel

There was prolonged historical intelligence cooperation between India's Intelligence Agency, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and its Israeli counterpart, The Agency for Intelligence and Special Operations (The Mossad), but the establishment of diplomatic relations presented a formal structure and opportunities for better intelligence cooperation (Kapila, 2000:3; Kumaraswamy; 1998:6 & Naaz, 2000:971).¹⁴

3) Counter-terrorism cooperation with Israel

Dixit, the secretary of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, attached a great deal of importance to the Israeli experience in counter-terrorism and considered it to be a key reason for the decision to establish diplomatic relations with Israel:

Israel's knowledge and experience in countering terrorism would be of immediate relevance to India and dealing with secessionist movements in different parts of the country (Dixit, 1996:310).

Stephen P. Cohen (2001:249) also holds the opinion that the main reason for the change in Indian foreign policy towards Israel was Israel's counter terrorism experience: "The dangers from Islamic extremism were so great that it was worth risking domestic Muslim opposition."

Ali Khan (1992:215) shares the opinion expressed above: "Both countries shared a strategic perception of threat of fundamentalism." In his analysis of the situation, Martin Sherman (1999:17) points out with reference to the potential cooperation between the two states in the sphere of counter-terrorism that the two states contend with nuclear, chemical and biological threats from non-state actors.

Kumaraswamy (1998:6,18) hints at possible future cooperation between the two countries by pointing out that the violence in Kashmir over the preceding few years and the series of bomb blasts in Bombay following the demolition of the historic mosque at Ayodyha in December 1992

¹⁴ For details about the history of intelligence cooperation between the two countries, see section 4.10.3.1.

indicate that India is not immune to Islamic radicalism. He adds that in 1984 India had already sought the advice of Israeli senior security specialists on security systems. According to him, the Indian National Security Guards (NSG), an elite commando unit responsible for VIP that had been created in 1984 following the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, developed limited cooperation, mostly in the form of training courses, which was never officially confirmed, with the Israeli Security Service (SHABAK).

In the 1990s, India and Israel both feared that their Muslim minorities could be radicalised. India was concerned about radical Islamic fundamentalism at home that could encourage domestic terror and extreme secessionist Muslim movements in Kashmir (the uprising in Kashmir in 1990 was at its peak) and there was the threat of possible terror by proxy initiated by Pakistan. It had to deal with the violence in Kashmir while being aware that the Hindu-Muslim rift could encourage radical Islamic fundamentalism in India.

India also had to take the possibility into consideration that its neighbour Pakistan could be taken over by radical Islam and the security implications such development could have for India's national security. In strategic terms, the rise of Islamic fundamentalism after the Gulf War encouraged similar movements in South Asia and aggravated Hindu-Muslim tensions in India (Thomas, 1993:29-32, 71-74). For that reason, the Israeli experience of counter-terrorism had a great deal of relevance for India.

On 23 February 1992, less than one month after India had announced its decision to establish diplomatic relations with Israel, the Indian Defence Minister at that time, Sharad Pawar, declared openly that normalisation of relations had paved the way for utilising Israel's successful experience at curbing terrorism. His statement was denied, but three months later it was Pawar himself, in his new capacity as the Chief Minister of the State of Maharashtra, who, led an Indian delegation to an agricultural exhibition in Tel Aviv upon direct instructions from Prime Minister Rao. He was accompanied by a high-level military team, which visited Israeli military facilities including the Israeli Anti-Terror Unit (Naaz, 2000:982).

4) The Indian Ocean

Both India and Israel have a strategic interest in the Indian Ocean, which has historically been an area of international competition regarding military, geo-strategic, political and economic supremacy. India, by definition, because of its geographic location, was an important international actor in the Indian Ocean and had a vital national interest in the region, while Israel had gradually developed a growing interest in the Indian Ocean. For Israel, the Indian Ocean is the only transit route to Asia, in terms of sea and air-lanes. In fact, Israeli aircraft were not allowed to fly over Arab countries in the Middle East on their way to Asia. A second reason for Israeli interest in the Indian Ocean was its potential in terms of strategic military depth. The Indian Ocean could provide the Israeli naval strategic force with the strategic depth it lacks as a small country as Subhash Kapila attests:

In Israeli perceptions, the striking strategic imperative that is emerging is the development of sea-borne second-strike capability. This strategically has to be operative from the Indian Ocean and hence strategic cooperation with the Indian Navy is an imperative (Kapila, 2003:4).

5) Nuclear power as a common issue with Israel

The Indian AEC was created shortly after independence and India embarked upon an extensive programme of civilian nuclear research, which also included a military project. (Cohen, 2001:158). Since 1968, India had been requested by the super powers to sign the NPT, but despite the traditional Gandhian non-violence and the Nehruvian international moral precepts, India did not comply with the treaty (Kumar, 2001:10).

The treaty, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1968, sanctioned the use of nuclear technology for civilian purposes under the international supervision of the IAEA. India developed a concept of what Indian diplomacy called *discriminatory international nuclear dread* and decided not to join the NPT. India objected to the treaty because the treaty made

no specific provision for collective security against non-nuclear states threatened by states already in possession of nuclear weapons and in fact, it restricted the sovereign rights of non-nuclear states to defend their national security.¹⁵ A non-weaponised deterrence system, mostly regarding China's nuclear capacity, which was called a recessed deterrence strategy, was adopted by India:

An undeclared nuclear weapon, whether assembled or not, provided a security umbrella in the unlikely case that another power threatened India with nuclear weapons. Weaponization might involve assembling a few last components and mounting a nuclear device on one of India's fighter-bombers. Until that moment, there was no need to declare India a nuclear weapons state (Cohen, 2001:165).

However, the weaponisation of nuclear devices, based on the recessed deterrence strategy of India, was a limited strategy; it also lacked the weapons that could be used safely and reliably. It was an extended option strategy, which did not address the growing nuclear threat from across the Indian borders. In the 1980s, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's action plan suggesting phased global and regional nuclear disarmament received a cool response from the nuclear states. It should be noted that between 1987 and 1990, Pakistan was acquiring nuclear capability clandestinely and in addition, India also faced a Chinese nuclear threat.¹⁶ In the early 1990s, Pakistan was convinced that India was working on a sophisticated process of inertial confinement fusion in order to produce and develop nuclear weapons including the hydrogen bomb.

During the 1980s, India monitored Israeli nuclear strategy carefully and was aware of its nuclear potential, as Kumaraswamy (1998:6) explains:

The Indian security establishment was following closely Israeli military adventure successes such as the bombing of the Osiraq Nuclear Reactor near Baghdad in 1981.

¹⁵ At that time there were speculations in the international arena that India had some ulterior motives in refusing to sign the treaty, namely its desire to become a nuclear power and as a matter of fact, in 1974 India conducted its first nuclear test that reinforced this type of speculation and led to international condemnation.

¹⁶ Pakistan and India did not sign the NPT) or the CTBT.

According to Dinesh Kumar, Israel and India shared concerns over Pakistan's nuclear programme in the 1980s and it was widely believed that their intelligence agencies were in close contact over the issue.¹⁷ On the other hand, it was in Israel's interest that the nuclear issue remained confined to South Asia. Israel was concerned that Pakistan would develop a nuclear device of its own, which could later possibly be deployed in the Middle East as well as by extremist Arab countries (Kumar, 2001:10).¹⁸

Following the establishment of the Indian integrated missile programme in 1983, India started with the development of an indigenous missile system, which could be assisted by Israeli expertise and technology, while Israel was interested in the Indian satellite production with which India had been involved since the 1970s.¹⁹ In the international arena, in the 1990s, India and Israel had adopted a similar position regarding various arms control issues such as the NPT and the CTBT, since both were non-signatories to the treaties.²⁰

In 1991, the international media speculated about Israeli-Indian nuclear cooperation despite the fact that the two countries had not engaged in this type of cooperation previously as Israel was suspicious of India's suspected nuclear cooperation with Iran and was unlikely to abandon its newly established military cooperation with China.²¹ On the other hand, it made sense that there was a need for a particular type of complementary cooperation between India and Israel on nuclear issues. Both countries had nuclear programmes and the two countries regarded their non-conventional ambitions regarding nuclear weapons, missiles and satellites,

¹⁷ For details about intelligence cooperation between Israel and India before 1992, see also section 5.4.3.1. (2), and for more information on the nuclear power policy coordination after 1992, see section 6.3.4.

¹⁸ It should be indicated that at this point of time in 1991 the question of Islamic Bomb build by Pakistan was less crucial than at the end of the 1990's when Pakistan conducted its first nuclear test in May 1998.

¹⁹ The Indian missile system was made up of a mobile short-range missile (Paritvi) and intermediate range missile (Agni).

²⁰ Israel eventually signed the CTBT in 1996. For details about the Nuclear Power Policy Coordination between Israel and India after 1992, see section 6.3.4.

²¹ For further information about Israeli-Chinese military cooperation, see section 3.9.2.7.

as an integral part of their national power and a tool for furthering their national interests as well as technological independence.²²

6) Economic relations with Israel

The opportunity for trade, technology transfer and investments by Israel, played a sufficiently important role in the Indian decision-making process to influence it to change its foreign policy towards Israel in particular, considering the fact that by 1991, India's economy had been on the brink of collapse.²³ On two different occasions, Dixit refers, to the importance of the economic variable in the Indian decision to establish diplomatic relations with Israel. On the first occasion, he writes: "There was, of course, the prospect of beneficial economic and technological equations" (*Indian Express*, 11/12/1977).

He was more specific in his memoirs:

Israelis were interested in establishing economic relations with India and were willing to invest here. They also wanted to initiate scientific and technological cooperation with us. Israel's agricultural experiences in dry farming, desert irrigation, agro-industries and agricultural cooperatives could prove beneficial to India (Dixit, 1996:310).

Ali Khan (1992:218) also writes: "India could set the ball rolling for the transfer of technology for agricultural and other purposes."

Farah Naaz (1999:896) makes the following observation with regard to the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries: "Relations with Israel had their own advantages as far as areas like agriculture, trade, science and technology, are concerned."

²² For details about nuclear power policy coordination between Israel and India after 1992, see section 6.3.4.

²³ For more details about the economic liberalisation as a contextual determinant in Indian foreign policy change towards Israel, see section 5.4.4.

7) Foreign relations with Israel

In terms of international law and diplomatic practice, India officially accorded recognition to the state of Israel through their respective ambassadors at Washington on 18 September 1950.²⁴

Bilateral foreign relations between India and Israel had not been an important priority for India's foreign policy after independence. Kumaraswamy (2002:3) explains that after independence, financial constraints and the scarcity of personnel were determining factors leading to India's decisions to either postpone new missions or to make its missions responsible for a number of neighbouring countries. Israel was one of the countries affected by that policy.

In this context, it should be noted that no direct conflict or points of military or territorial friction have ever existed between India and Israel and there has never been any anti-Semitism in India. Both countries shared a similar historical background, with both having evolved from ancient civilisations and both having struggled for national independence from the British colonial empire, eventually leading to the creation of democratic states headed by their respective 'fathers of their nation' (David Ben-Gurion and Jawaharlal Nehru). Nehru's concept of India as a secular socialistic parliamentary democracy was similar to Ben-Gurion's ideal of Israel as a secular Jewish social democracy and the two countries had shared democratic values and were the only democracies in their regions.

After independence, India, which was preoccupied with the Kashmiri dispute, had exploited the Israeli issue and its bilateral relations with Israel in the international arena by trying to promote and consolidate its interests in the Arab and Islamic countries while trying not to antagonise its local Muslim community.²⁵

²⁴ For details about the recognition of the State of Israel by India, see section 3.9.1.1.

²⁵ For details about India's foreign policy towards Israel, see sections 3.9.1.2, 3.9.1.3 and 3.9.1.4.

In fact, India was the last major non-Muslim country that established diplomatic relations with Israel (in 1992). Over time, a host of regional and international developments as well as political consideration had prevented any meaningful diplomatic interaction and bilateral relations between the two countries.²⁶ After the establishment of diplomatic relations, India benefited directly and indirectly, mostly in the multilateral arena, from its bilateral foreign ties with Israel as described and analysed in the following part of this chapter.

B. Israeli-Indian multilateral relations

The analysis of Indian-Israeli relations in the multilateral arena is based on the following review and evaluation pertaining to its national security as well as national interests:

1) Indian geo-strategic interests

Dixit (1996:310), while reviewing the Indian foreign policy towards Israel, states that the geo-strategic interests of India carried a great deal of weight:

Arab and other Muslim countries in West Asia and Maghreb (sic.) could pose a geostrategic threat to Indian security if they adopted hostile attitudes towards India's initiating full-fledged political connections with Israel... Israel was strategically located on the northern or northwestern flank of a number of Muslim countries, which encouraged Islamic religious fanaticism in the Central Asian and South Asian region...

One year later with reference to the geo-strategic factor, he pointed some strategic key danger points (choke points) out such as the Strait of Hormuz, the Suez Canal and the Strait of Bab El Mandeb (at the entrance to the Red Sea): "The importance to India of the region from the Gulf to Israel and Turkey cannot be ignored...Arab sea lanes and air space are of vital economic and strategic interest" (*Indian Express*, 11/12/1977).

²⁶ For details about Israel India relations pertaining to multilateral foreign affairs and state and society level, see sections 3.9.2 and 3.10.

2) Oil factor

Ali Khan (1992:214) refers to the oil in the Gulf as being one of the main deterrents to India establishing diplomatic relations with Israel: "Being not self sufficient in energy resources (India) was dependent on the region for oil."

Dixit gives a similar explanation in a newspaper article: "The Gulf countries and Iran are vital sources of oil and petroleum products for India" (*Indian Express*, 11/12/1977) On another occasion, Dixit (1996:310) indicates that the oil factor was a vital element that was taken into consideration in the Indian MEA before making policy change recommendations to Prime Minister Rao: "Establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel could have an adverse impact on oil supply from the Gulf to India."

In August 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait and an international embargo was placed upon the Iraqi and Kuwaiti export of oil and the price of oil jumped to \$23 a barrel. After the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) had agreed on an increase in its production, the oil prices, that had reached \$40 a barrel in early October, 1990 fell to \$25 a barrel. In the first quarter of 1991, the oil price was \$19 a barrel and the price fell to \$17.5 a barrel in the second quarter and \$16 a barrel a year later (Rivlin, 2000:23). In 1991 India was importing 448,000 barrels of crude oil and 203,000 refined petroleum products per day (Pattanayak, 2001:15). In terms of international politics, the decline in oil prices after the Gulf War played a positive role in the Indian examination of the impact of a unilateral foreign policy change towards Israel on the Arab oil supply to India and directly contributed as a change factor to the Indian foreign policy change towards Israel.

3) Central Asia

Central Asia is strategically located between Russia, China, Pakistan, Iraq and Iran.²⁷ In geographical terms, Central Asia is the backyard of India,

²⁷ For details about India and Russia, see reference no. 9 in this section. For details about India and China (PRC) see reference no. 10 in this section. For details about India

which has traditionally maintained historical links and economic ties as well as cultural connections with that part of Asia. Most importantly, the area has been rich in oil and gas (Khan, 1992:210).

The emergence of the five Central Asian republics rising from the ruins of the former Soviet Union created a series of opportunities as well as some dangers. In fact, India was amongst the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with the Central Asian republics (Mohan, 2003:222).

By the 1990s, the Central Asian republics were multi-ethnic states with a political link between statehood and religion. Their state leaders tried to set up sanctioned Islamic institutions and referred to Islam as the need arose (Hewitt, 1997:107). Tajikistan and Turkmenistan joined the OIC, while Uzbekistan joined the NAM and New Delhi was apprehensive of the involvement of the Uzbeks and Tajiks within the Kashmir area as well as Islamic fundamentalism. India also feared that Pakistan might move quickly to assert itself with the new independent states using them as Pakistani strategic resources.

India was concerned about extreme Islamic elements emanating from Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and Iran to Central Asia and spreading from there to Kashmir. A similar concern of India's was smuggling of arms to Kashmir. A reduction in the number of Muslim fundamentalist religious militants across the entire region was therefore of crucial importance to India and Israel (Cohen, 2001:251).

India and Israel both feared the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Central Asia and both countries were concerned that the Central Asian republics might fall prey to Islamic fundamentalism after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. India was particularly concerned that possible regional disorder in the region might break out because of widespread violence and warring factions. Furthermore, both countries shared a national common interest to counter the Islamic threat from Central Asia. Moreover, the two

and Pakistan, see reference no. 13 in this -section. For details about India and the Arab world, see reference no. 14 in this sub-section. For details about India Iran relations, see section 6.3.17.

countries could not afford to ignore the possibility that the newly born Central Asian states as well as Pakistan might have the potential of being taken over by radical Islamic rule; this could have serious strategic implications for their national interests.

In his memoirs, Dixit (1996:310) refers to the common interest India and Israel had in Central Asia: "Israel was strategically located on the Northern or North-western flank of a number of Muslim countries, which encouraged Islamic religious fanaticism in the Central Asian and South Asian region."

In fact, the stability of the region was therefore of common national interest to both countries and Islamic extremism in general and in Central Asia in particular, constituted a security challenge to India and Israel. Both countries also found a common complementary economic interest in the new Central Asian republics, which had been exposed to a Western oriented economy, opening the door for Israeli-Indian joint ventures and economic operations.

4) India, the Third World and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)

India was a founding member and a prominent leader of the NAM.²⁸ The NAM provided India with an opportunity for formulating the standpoint of the developing countries in both the UN and the international arena (in particular during the tenures of Nehru and Indira Gandhi). On several occasions, India had used the NAM as an alternative to the UN, as a way of underlining New Delhi's independence as well as a way to reaffirm the importance of Third World solidarity and India's leading role. In addition, the ideas of Non-Alignment and Third World solidarity had been one of the main manifestations of Sino-Indian rivalry.²⁹

India's foreign policy towards Israel had coincided with the era of Cold War politics and Israel's identification with the West had provided an ideological basis for India's pro-Arab orientation. The Arab League and the PLO were

²⁸ The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was established in Belgrade in 1961 (the early ascendancy of the leaders of the organisation and the real foundation of NAM was at the Bandung conference in Indonesia in 1955).

²⁹ For more details, see reference no. 10: India and China in relation to Israel.

observers in the NAM. The end of the Cold War marked a weakening of the movement and since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991; the NAM had been forced to reassess its rationale for its continued existence. Since Israel's exclusion from the Bandung conference,³⁰ the NAM had emerged as the principal forum seeking Israel's international isolation. According to Mohan (2003:47), the NAM's position limited India's strategic options and in the case of Israel, India complied by limiting its interactions with Israel.

Certain factors such as the end of the Cold War, the collapse of the Soviet Union along with the paradigm of a bipolar world, the US emergence as a single superpower and America's enhanced global importance as well as the improvement of bilateral relations between Washington and Beijing, had eroded the very concept of the NAM and made it internationally irrelevant. According to Hewitt (1997:118), the NAM summit of 1989 was already marked by a new sense of realism and the erosion of the international status of the NAM had a direct influence on the change of the Indian attitude towards Israel. Kumaraswamy (2002:8) expresses similar sentiments:

Most of the anti-Israeli resolutions at the UN and other forums were the result of Israel's exclusion and isolation from the Third World. With the relevance of NAM becoming questionable, organized opposition to Israel began to wane, thereby facilitating India's reappraisal of its Israel policy.

5) India as an acceptable international actor in the Middle East conflict

Farah Naaz, a researcher at the IDSA, explains that the Government of India realised that in order to be accepted as an international actor in the Middle East conflict, India ought to establish diplomatic relations with Israel: "India wanted to be involved in the Middle East peace talks and both the US and Israel had made it clear that this would be possible only when India established diplomatic ties with Israel" (Naaz, 1999:896).

³⁰ For details about the conference in Bandung, see sections 3.9.2.3 and 4.9.1.2.

Moshe Yegar, former Deputy Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel confirms this viewpoint as follows:

Participation in that conference became a matter of national prestige for some countries. Israel made it quite clear that countries that refused to have normal diplomatic relations with her while having such relations with the Arab countries would be barred from the Madrid conference. It seemed that the MEA of India did not like the idea of staying out, especially when the People's Republic of China (PRC), Russia, the United States and even Syria would be in (Yegar, 1999:130).

According to Khan (1992:214): "India had consistently supported the Palestinian cause and refused to deal with Israel, which robbed it of an opportunity to play a role in the Middle East."

6) India and the United Nations

India has played a leading role in the UN since independence, by being an active member of various UN forums and was actively involved in certain UN peacekeeping forces throughout the world, including those deployed at the Egyptian-Israeli border before the Six-Day War.³¹ The Indian commitment to the UN was not only ideologically but also politically oriented and characterised by political realism with specific reference to Pakistan and the problem of the Kashmir conflict. Because of the Nehruvian legacy, (Indian foreign policy under Nehru had favoured the concept of international equality and international law), India's political elite as well as the INCP remained sensitive to the UN opinion.³² In the UN, India had traditionally relied upon the use of the Soviet veto to shield itself from international condemnation and in return, its voting in the UN was invariably in favour of the Soviet Union.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, India could no longer rely on the Russian veto; it left India more vulnerable to hostile resolutions at the UN. Consequently, India was afraid that it could face censure in the UN over the handling of the Kashmir crisis (for years Pakistan used to bring up the

³¹ For details about India's participation in the UN peacekeeping force at the Egyptian Israeli border before the Six-Day War, see section 4.9.1.3.

³² For details about Nehru, his legacy and foreign policy see section 3.8.1.

issue of Kashmir in the UN and envisaged a role for the UN in finding a solution to the Kashmir dispute).³³

During the 1990s, the role of the UN was transformed and although the role of the UN seemed set to increase, India's input seemed set to decline (Hewitt, 1997:114). However, in 1991 India was elected as a non-permanent member for a two-year term, to the Security Council (the sixth one since its independence). Importantly, India continued to claim that since it was the second most populous country in the world and also a potentially industrialised country, as such it should be given a permanent seat in the Security Council (Cohen, 2001:57).

India realised that its lack of diplomatic relations with Israel was reducing its chances of playing an active role in the Middle East peace process as well as weakening its demands for a permanent seat in the Security Council. India's willingness to play such a role became evident for the first time when India voted in favour of repealing the 1975 UN resolution equating Zionism with racism. On 17 December 1991, the UN General Assembly revoked a 16-year-old anti-Israeli resolution (Rolef, 1993:410). India supported that revocation stressing that it can remove an obstacle in the path to peace in the Middle East and clear the way for a more active role for the UN in the peace process (Ali Khan, 1992:279).

7) India and the United States (US)

Cohen (2001:247) regards the role played by the US in South Asia during the Cold War as important: "The Cold War brought in the US to South Asia - ultimately as an ally of Pakistan." He states further that the new international scenario after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Gulf War presented an entirely new kind of challenge to India (Cohen, 2001:231). The US, a major power was sitting astride its vital oil supplies and showed very little interest in establishing a new relationship with New Delhi.

³³ For details about the history of the Kashmir conflict, see section 3.5. For details about the wars between India and Pakistan, see section 3.9.1.3. For details about the bilateral relations between India and Pakistan with regards to Israel, see reference no.13 in this section.

For India, the disintegration of the Soviet Union, India's most important former source of defence supplies, left it more vulnerable to hostile resolutions at the UN, introduced new instability, brought additional competitors for foreign aid and above all, made links with the West and the US in particular, more attractive. The Gulf War had shown that when Washington and Moscow found common ground, New Delhi had either to conform or risk being isolated.

The Gulf War also proved that the US could mobilise impressive diplomatic resources, as it was an unchallengeable economic and military super-power. In the new world scenario after the Gulf War, the US was in a better position to assist India in its economic reforms and liberalisation as India needed American capital and technology (Thakur, 1992:165-182).

Prime Minister Rao regarded the US both as one of India's prime partners and as a potential economic supporter and the absence of diplomatic relations with Israel was seen as a crucial impediment to improving relations with the US.³⁴ After the 1991 general elections in India, the Rao government concluded that a major improvement in Indo-American relations was required. In this regard, India realised that Israel could be a common factor that could promote closer ties with the US. Moreover, the assistance and collaboration of the US Jewish organisations as well as the Jewish American lobby were key elements in such an approach, particularly before Prime Minister Rao's visit to the US at the end of January 1992.³⁵

In this regard, Kumaraswamy (2002:8) makes the following observation:

Having opened up the economy he (Rao) looked to the West to become his prime partner for economic development. The lack of relations with Israel, however, precluded a better understanding with industrialized countries, especially with the United States.

³⁴ In terms of the individual level of analysis, see section 5.4.3.3 for details about P.M. Narasimha Rao who influenced the transformation of Indian foreign policy towards Israel.

³⁵ For details about India and the American Jewish organisations, see reference no.8 in this section.

Since 1947, Washington had been nudging India to modify its foreign policy towards Israel.

Farah Naaz considers the Indian need for better relations with the US, which emerged as the sole superpower after the collapse of the Soviet Union, as the most important reason that convinced India to establish diplomatic relations with Israel:

India became vulnerable to the US pressure due to its influence in the IMF and World Bank. Developing relations with Israel would be an important gesture that could clear the way for closer economic cooperation with Washington (Naaz, 1999:245).

Inbar (2004:102) confirms this opinion: “Definitely New Delhi believed that upgrading its relations with Israel would have a positive effect on the United States.”

8) India and the American Jewish organisations

High-level Indian officials, including Prime Minister Narasimha Rao and Rajiv Gandhi before him, realised that the influential American Jewish community and the Jewish lobby in the US could be helpful with building economic relations with the US (as well as having a positive impact on the bilateral relations between India and the US in general).

The power of the American Jewish Lobby received special attention in 1991 from Prime Minister Rao when Rao’s new government applied to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for urgent support.³⁶ Rao realised that the Jewish Lobby in US could be instrumental in such a request, or an obstacle, as it had proved to be four years earlier. In May 1987, following an Anti Defamation league protest, after Israeli tennis players were not allowed to participate in the Davis Cup tournament in New Delhi, the American Congress support was reduced from 60 US million dollars to 35 million US dollars. In fact, India was subsequently forced to allow the Israeli players to take part in the tournament. The government of

³⁶ For details about Prime Minister Rao’s role in the transformation of India’s foreign policy towards Israel in 1992, see section 5.4.3.3.

India and Rao in particular, realised the necessity to mobilise the political weight and power of the American Jewish organisations in favour of India in 1991 when the country was on the verge of economic collapse.

Mohammed Ali Khan (1992:215) describes the potential contribution of the American Jewish organisations to India: "Normal relations with Israel could help turn pro-Israeli lobbies in the US to show at least a modicum of leaning towards India."

9) India and Russia

According to Stephen Cohen (2001:142, 231), India's non-alignment policy was a historical pretext for close bilateral relations with the Soviet Union and India had become highly dependent on Moscow for military supplies as well as international support. Israel, on the other hand, was considered an important part of the American sphere of influence and the containment strategy of the US and its allies. The Soviet Union provided India with vast supplies of modern weapons; consequently, India became the world's largest arms importer. Until the collapse of communism, Indo-Soviet relations prospered mainly because of the need for a balance of power regarding the West, shared security and geopolitical concerns, and the existing anti-Israeli foreign policy adopted by both countries. After the first Gulf War, India took note of the fact that the Soviet Union and Russia did not oppose the war and ended its support for Iraq, which like India, had been supplied with Soviet weapons.

Ali Khan (1992:214) considers the Soviet Union's collapse (together with the emerging of the US as the sole superpower) as an important factor that accelerated the Indian foreign policy change towards Israel. According to him, India's close relations with the former Soviet Union through the Cold War, restricted India's freedom of operation and was one of the reasons that kept India away from Israel. In 1987, the Soviet Union started to change its foreign policy towards Israel and consulates were opened in both countries. India was watching the growing rapprochement between the Soviet Union and later on, the new Russian Federation and Israel closely. That rapprochement reached its peak when full diplomatic

relations between the two countries were entered into on 18 October 1991. Farah Naaz (1999:245), who supports his opinion, indicates that the Soviet Union had already intimated directly to India in 1989 that Moscow would normalise its relations with Israel.

Despite the fact that the Indian military connection with the Soviet Union was a part of a large strategic alignment between the two countries, surprisingly Dixit (1996:309-310), does not attach a great deal of importance in his memoirs to the Soviet collapse as a change determinant that had had an impact on the Indian foreign policy transformation towards Israel. However, he does refer to it indirectly when he mentions the Soviet backing of the negotiations between Israel and the PLO as a reference point in the Indian foreign policy transformation towards Israel. He also points out that: "Israel had developed expertise in improving the weapon system of Soviet origin, which could be utilized by India" (Dixit, 1996:309).

On the other hand, on another occasion, one year later, Dixit indicates that on the macro level, the end of the Cold War was one of the factors that compelled India to establish diplomatic relations with Israel (*Indian Express*, 11/12/1977).³⁷

In fact, India established its diplomatic relations with Israel three months after Russia had taken the initiative for such a diplomatic move.

10) India and the People's Republic of China (PRC)

The NAM was an important factor in understanding India's relations with China. Traditionally, the idea of the NAM was the main reason for the Indian rivalry with China and in fact, many Indian analysts had considered China to be India's primary rival and there was also a clear military asymmetry between the two countries, which was particularly relevant in the field of nuclear capabilities.

³⁷ For details about the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and the Soviet Union as a contextual determinant in the Indian decision to establish diplomatic relation with Israel, see section 5.4.4.2.

Though India's relations with China had gradually improved throughout the 1980s, the fundamental issues of concern and potential for friction remained open and China had continued to be a major security threat to India. The long-term plan of India had been to match China's strategic challenge in the region and develop a military deterrence system against the use of Chinese nuclear and missiles weapon systems. China on the other hand, had been engaged in efforts to create a ring of anti-Indian influence around India through a military and economic assistance program to India's neighbouring countries, combined with diplomacy (Hewitt, 1997:57).

India was particularly concerned about the close military relations between China and Pakistan³⁸ and regarded this issue to be a part of its security dilemma. India, on the other hand, had traditionally supported Tibetan claims for greater autonomy from China despite the fact that the Indian Government had recognised China's take-over of Tibet in 1951³⁹ (Khan, 1992:202). India was afraid that a strong China might attempt to seek a military solution to the long-standing territorial disputes between the two countries and Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit to China in 1988, the first visit of an Indian Prime Minister since Nehru, had not improved the pace of border negotiations between the two countries. However, it did mark the resumption of a political dialogue at the highest level (Swaminathan, 2006:2). China was seeking to enlarge its sphere of influence in Southeast Asia and the Bay of Bengal. China's growing power and influence in Asia was a strategic challenge for India and some of India's experts believed that China would never make concessions regarding the border disputes until India became its nuclear equal.

In 1991, China was building on more than a decade of economic reforms and considered itself to be economically and technologically ahead of India. With its permanent membership of the UN Security Council and its

³⁸ For more details about the Kashmir conflict's implications as well as India-Pakistan relations pertaining to the Muslim and the Arab world see references nos. 12, 13 and 14 in this section .

³⁹ The exiled Dalai Lama lives in Dharamsala in North India. India did not grant him the status of government in exile, but the status of a spiritual leader.

nuclear power status, China played a more significant role in the international arena than India. Furthermore, China had embarked upon the consolidation and development of its military capabilities. According to Indian strategic researchers, China's foreign and defence policy initiatives were designed to marginalise India in the long term and to reduce India to status of a sub-regional power by increasing Chinese influence and leverage in the Southern Asian region. The gap between India and China regarding overall military potential, particularly in terms of strategic weapons, was widening rapidly in China's favour. Both countries competed for foreign investments and markets for their products. Another factor of concern to India was the presence of Chinese nuclear missiles in Tibet as well as the fact that a border conflict between the two countries could not be ruled out. (Cohen, 2001:261).

Since the 1980s, China's relations with Israel had developed gradually with an emphasis on military procurement and technology transfer. India and the Indian military establishment in particular, were aware of the potential of Israel as an arms supplier of sophisticated military equipment.⁴⁰ China's acquisition of Israeli high-technology military equipment was of strategic concern to India and it monitored the Chinese-Israeli improvement of relations closely. Importantly, in India's strategic evaluation regarding China, Israel turned out to be an international player with which the others had to reckon (Kumaraswamy, 1999:145). India was also concerned that Israeli military equipment, procured by China, would find its way to Pakistan considering the close defence ties between the two countries (Pant, 2005:15). Accordingly, India announced its decision to establish diplomatic relations with Israel five days after the Chinese move.

11) India and world globalisation

Globalisation led to new and more cosmopolitan opportunities in foreign policy. This was particularly true in the India of 1991, in terms of its liberalisation and economic reforms. Raja Mohan (2003:266) points out that India realised that the traditional methods of engaging the world were

⁴⁰ For details about Indian military cooperation with Israel, see reference no. 1 in previous section (section A.).

no longer tenable and driven by necessity; India had to find new ways for doing business with the world and to display inventiveness unparalleled in the annals of Indian diplomacy. At first haltingly, then more wholeheartedly during the 1990s, New Delhi, abandoned the philosophical premises that had guided Indian diplomacy for forty years and transformed their country's approach to global affairs.

The economic liberalisation initiated by Prime Minister Rao had opened the Indian economy up to the West and to globalisation and the imperative of the Indian foreign policy had changed accordingly. Consequently, Israel as an advanced modern technologically oriented state had the potential to become an important player in the new Indian global orientation.⁴¹

12) India and the Muslim world

India had been invited to attend the summit of Islamic states at Rabat (Morocco) in 1969, but in the face of Pakistani protests and the threat of their withdrawal from the summit, Saudi Arabia, cancelled India's invitation. The OIC that was founded in 1971 had traditionally been critical of India's international politics in particular with respect to Kashmir. As Stephen Cohen (2001:248) states:

The Organization of Islamic Conferences has been critical of India's policies in Kashmir and a number of West Asian and Gulf States allowed their citizens to fight in Kashmir as part of a pan-Islamic jihadist movement.

In 1991, a conference of the Foreign Ministers of the OIC, which had been convened in Karachi, set up a fact finding mission and proposed that it would be sent to Jammu and Kashmir in order to report on the situation there. Following India's refusal to allow the mission into the country, the OIC summit condemned India for its violation of human rights in Jammu and Kashmir, thereby encouraging Pakistan to pursue an active Islamic anti-Indian foreign policy. The OIC, consistently supported Pakistan

⁴¹ For details about Israel as a potential helper to India following the Indian economic reforms in 1991 and the Indian economic liberalisation as a contextual determinant in the Indian decision to establish diplomatic relations with Israel, see section 5.4.4.1.

against India over the Kashmir issue, despite India's pro-Muslim and pro-Arab foreign policy, but in 1991 India finally realised that diplomatic relations with Israel could generate new rules for the game with the Muslim world: "Close relations with Israel could counter moves by those Muslim countries, which were inclined to act against Indian interests if instigated by Pakistan" (Dixit, 1996: 312).

13) India and Pakistan

After the creation of Pakistan, India had a powerful Islamic rival in South Asia competing for the same markets and resources and consequently, it was involved in a continual struggle to establish itself in the Middle East. In the years following independence, Pakistan pursued an active Islamic foreign policy that brought international and financial dividends. In return, Pakistan expected material and financial help from the OIC as well as diplomatic support in its conflict with India regarding the Kashmir issue.

According to Dixit (1998:93), one of the main reasons for India cultivating friendships with Islamic countries was to counter Pakistani hostility. The Indian foreign policy since independence in general and in the UN in particular, was viewed in its entirety through the prism of the Indo-Pakistani conflict regarding Kashmir. Pakistan was seen by India as an essential element in a shifting alliance against India, composed of the West, Islam, China and other hostile states (Cohen, 2001:202). Significantly, Mohan (2003:187) points out that Pakistan did eventually realise that traditional military conflict with India would not serve its purposes. Subsequently, Pakistan started to engage in a low-intensity conflict with India, particularly in Kashmir, without the fear of conventional retaliation, while using terrorists and militants in its onslaught on India.

In fact, since independence India had been concerned about the Arab support of Pakistan and one of the ways of tackling it was by total support of the Palestinian cause. Another concern of India's was that Israeli military equipment sold to China would find its way to Pakistan.⁴² In this regard, it

⁴² For more details about India and China concerning Israel, see reference no.10 in this section.

should be pointed out that both India and Israel were concerned that the Kashmiri conflict with Pakistan and the Palestinian conflict could destabilise their regions in a way that would attract unwanted external interventions. (Inbar, 2004:93). In addition, India was also worried that arms sales to Arab countries in the Middle East would be diverted to Pakistan (Hewitt, 1992:31).

In 1991, India was concerned that Pakistan had supposedly crossed the nuclear threshold while supporting the insurgency in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. By that time, India already realised that the price it had paid to keep the Muslim world as neutral as possible in its conflict with Pakistan in general and the Kashmir issue in particular, was too high.⁴³ Dixit (1996:310) takes it one political step further by pointing out that: “Close relations with Israel could counter moves by those Muslim countries, which were inclined to act against Indian interest if instigated by Pakistan.”

14) India and the Arab world

India attached a great deal of importance to the Arab countries. The Arab world in general and the Palestinians in particular, were key variables in the Indian decision to establish fully-fledged diplomatic relations with Israel. Traditionally, India considered its foreign relations with the Arab world to be of prime concern for its national interest and was ready to pay for it with its relations with the state of Israel. In fact, India was using the state of Israel as a trump card in the game of international politics in general and with the Arab world in particular, exploiting it in order to promote its interests with the Arab and Islamic countries. According to Kumaraswamy (2002:7-9):

By consistently adopting an anti-Israel stand, India had become a prisoner of its rhetoric but its steady backing of the Arab world, especially on issues regarding Israel, was not met with reciprocal support by the Arab and Islamic world. Moreover, in the past, India had been either unable or unwilling to seek and secure a quid pro quo for its pro-Arab policy. Even when some of the Middle Eastern countries provided political and occasionally military support to Pakistan, India did not react.

⁴³ For details about India and the Muslim world see reference no.12 and about India and the Arab world see reference no.14 in this section.

According to Farah Naaz (1999:895), one of the reasons that India had leaned towards the Arab countries was its historical and cultural affinity with the Arab and Muslim world.

As Dixit also describes it, the Arab countries were key factors in the decision making process of the redirection of the Indian foreign policy towards Israel:

Our missions in the Gulf conveyed the assessment that Israel-PLO contacts had the endorsement of important Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE⁴⁴ and Kuwait...The reverse side of the coin entailed the appreciation that India's long-standing friendship and cooperative relations with the Arab countries would suffer if we established diplomatic relations with Israel (Dixit, 1996:309-310).

New Delhi was particularly concerned that arms sales to the Middle East Arab countries would be diverted to Pakistan (Hewitt, 1997:31).⁴⁵ The Arab world emerged from the Gulf War divided, the price of oil slumped⁴⁶ and the international status of the PLO and its leader, Yasser Arafat, who supported Iraq's dictator, Saddam Hussain, plummeted.

Dixit (1996:310) describes the impact of the Gulf War on the Arab world's status indirectly: "In the post Gulf War international situation, India considered it advisable to establish diplomatic relations with Israel."

Eventually, a final Indian decision was taken in favour of establishing full diplomatic relations with Israel while taking the Arab factor into consideration:

Keeping in view the international power equations and overarching influence of the US with the majority of Arab and Muslim countries the assumption that establishing relations with Israel would result in India's relations with Arab and Muslim countries going into an irretrievable spin was not logical (Dixit, 1996:311).

⁴⁴ United Arab Emirates.

⁴⁵ For details about India and Pakistan concerning Israel, see reference no.13 in this section.

⁴⁶ For details about the oil factor, see reference no. 2 in this section.

India's frustration with the Arab countries was also a factor considered by India as expressed by Dixit when he conducted a briefing for Arab ambassadors in New Delhi:

There was no change in India's politics on the Palestinian question or on the importance that we attached to nurturing close friendship with Arab countries... India had not received any reciprocity on the Kashmir issue despite our long-standing support to several Islamic countries... (Dixit, 1996:310)

A similar message was also delivered by Indian ambassadors in Arab and Islamic countries upon the instructions of Prime Minister Rao.

In 1991, India reached the conclusion that the political price paid to the Arabs was too high. The Arab world's response was also taken into consideration and the Indian assumption was that no adverse reaction from the Arab world would be evoked.⁴⁷

Dixit describes this situation in a newspaper article as follows:

A subconscious factor was the Indian feeling that despite its unqualified commitments to Palestinian aspirations and support of Arab causes there was no Arab reciprocity on Kashmir and Pakistan. Arab countries themselves had close relations with the US despite its closeness to Israel, so their placing a ban on India in this respect was not logical (*Indian Express*, 11/12/1977)

Kumaraswamy (2002: 8).points out that once the Arab states and the PLO had embarked upon negotiations with Israel, there was no compelling reason for India to maintain the *status quo* in its foreign relations towards Israel.

15) Indo-Arab economic relations

Economic relations between India and the Arab world were extremely important for India. In addition to the fact that the Gulf countries (and Iran) were vital sources of oil and petroleum products,⁴⁸ a large number of Indians were employed in the Arab countries, thereby contributing to the

⁴⁷ For details about the Arab countries' response towards the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Israel, see section 5.4.6

⁴⁸ For details about the oil factor see reference no. 2 in this section.

Indian foreign exchange reserve. According to Mohan (2003:228), the lack of adequate sources of energy always made the Persian Gulf crucial in India's economy arithmetic and remittances by Indian labour were taken into consideration. Dixit (1998:93) explains that "India's economic interests (as well as trade routes) were dependent on friendship with the Arab countries which included India's dependence on the energy resources of the West Asian and Gulf regions..." Two years earlier, Dixit described the possible negative economic impact of establishing diplomatic relations with Israel on India:

Such an eventuality (establishing diplomatic relations with Israel) could have an adverse impact on oil supplies from the Gulf to India and might also result in the repatriation of large numbers of Indians working in the Gulf and other Muslim countries who are contributing to India's economic resources as well as foreign exchange reserves (Dixit, 1996:310).

16) India and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO)

In January 1975, India recognised the PLO and allowed it to open an office in New Delhi. In March 1980, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi granted diplomatic recognition to the PLO by upgrading its office in New Delhi to the level of a fully-fledged embassy. In November 1988, India was one of the first non-Arab countries to recognise the State of Palestine proclaimed by the Palestinian Council in Algiers.⁴⁹

In 1991, before initiating any diplomatic move towards Israel Prime Minister Rao insisted on discussions with Yasser Arafat, the PLO leader, in order to gauge his reaction to the Indian idea of establishing diplomatic relations with Israel. Arafat was invited to India for an official visit and visited New Delhi from 20 to 22 January 2001 where he held detailed discussions with Rao.

Dixit (1996:311) recalls that Arafat used that opportunity to brief Rao on the confidential discussions held with the Israeli authorities and states that:

⁴⁹ For details about India's relations with the PLO, see sections 3.7, 3.8.3 and 3.9.2.1.

There was a likelihood of official relations being established between them (the PLO and Israel) in a period of about six to eight months. He agreed with the Government of India's intentions to establish diplomatic relations with Israel and added that, in fact, India having full-fledged relations with Israel would result in the PLO having a trusted friend such as India as an interlocutor between his organization and Israel.

According to Ali Khan (1992:215), the statement made by the PLO chairperson during his visit to India, namely that the exchange of ambassadors and recognition of Israel by India as acts of sovereignty, were particularly significant for the Indian government. This helped to convince the government of India that there would be no adverse reaction in the Arab ranks to establishing diplomatic relations with Israel.

When the issue of relations with Israel was discussed in the Indian Cabinet (on 23 January 2001, only one day after Arafat's visit to New Delhi), Prime Minister Rao rounded off the discussion on the subject of relations with Israel. Dixit (1996:312) points out that he concluded his speech: "...by advancing the clinching argument that Arafat himself was supportive of India's decisions to open up contacts with Israel."

Kumaraswamy (2002:8) presents a similar explanation:

The willingness of the Arabs and Palestinians to seek a political settlement through direct negotiations altered the rules of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Once the Arab states and the PLO embarked upon negotiations with Israel, there was no compelling reason for India to maintain the status quo. Moreover, Palestinian support for Iraqi President Saddam Hussein during the Kuwait crisis significantly undermined the Palestinian position. During his visit to India, shortly before normalization, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat reconciled to India's new approach to the Middle East.

In addition, in order to proceed cautiously in terms of domestic politics in general and *vis-à-vis* the Indian Muslim community in particular, the Government of India frequently pointed out that the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel would not change its support for the fulfilment of the legitimate aspiration of the Palestinian people. Prime Minister Rao stated that: "India would play a constructive, even-handed role in the peace process" (Dixit, 1996:312).

5.4.3.2 State and society (national) level of analysis

The transformation of the Indian foreign policy towards Israel in 1992 and the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries are analysed at the following national levels, with special emphasis on Indian politics concerning Israel: the MEA foreign policy, the INCM's foreign policy, the Nehruvian tradition of the Indian government, the Indian Muslim factor and the Indian media:

A. Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)

According to Mohan (2003:xi-xxii), since the early 1990s, India, driven by necessity, abandoned the philosophical premises upon which Indian diplomacy had been based for forty years and began to pursue a new Indian foreign policy, which was more suitable for meeting the challenges of the coming century. Mohan highlights five profound changes guiding the new Indian foreign policy, which also had a direct influence on the Indian decision to transform its foreign policy towards Israel:

- 1) A shift in the national orientation occurred, namely from the domestic focus on socialism to capitalism.
- 2) A redirection of the Indian economy took place with liberalisation coming to the fore that emphasised trade and foreign investment, replacing the begging bowl as a symbol of Indian diplomacy.
- 3) India's abandonment of its forty years of close relations with the Third World, which had been characterised by its obsession with non-alignment and its leadership role in NAM. India became more interested in becoming a leader in the international system and not just remaining a protesting leader of the Third World trade union. The national self-interest became the driving force behind Indian diplomacy.

- 4) A shift in Indian policy from a rejection of the instinctive anti-Westernism that dominated Indian thinking about the global order for four decades to a new more open view of the West.
- 5) India exchanged its idealistic approach for a new hard-headed, pragmatic approach.

Dixit (1996:312) reports in his memoirs that the contradictory considerations regarding Israel were examined in his ministry and policy recommendations were submitted to Prime Minister Rao who was also the acting Minister of External Affairs.

Kumaraswamy (2002:9) has the following to say regarding India's relations with Israel: "It (the diplomatic relations establishment with Israel) appears to have been a well thought-out move aimed at establishing balance and pragmatism in Indian foreign policy."

However, the MEA had difficulties in changing its attitude towards Israel. From a structural viewpoint, the inflexible and conservative approach of the MEA towards Israel in 1991, can partly be ascribed to the fact that senior Indian ambassadors and officials of the MEA had received their training and international experience under the INCP. This had been the formative political period of India with its emphasis on Nehruvian internationalism, which had formed their international perception and indoctrinated them against Israel. In addition, the US, which was considered hostile towards India, was an ardent supporter of Israel.⁵⁰ In fact, it commensurate with the description made by Stephen Cohen "The Indian Foreign Service (IFS) had difficulty adjusting to change in the international system and the post Cold War realities" (Cohen, 2001:89).

The year 1991 signalled a change in India's diplomatic approach towards Israel, which was reflected in India's vote in the UN to repeal the UN General Assembly resolution of 1975. This resolution equated Zionism

⁵⁰ For more details about the Nehruvian tradition of pro-Arab foreign policy, see subsection B in this section.

with racism,⁵¹ but eventually the MEA's officials had to come to terms with Israel's new status in the international system in general and the Indian government's decision to establish diplomatic relations with Israel, in particular.

B. Nehruvian tradition of Pro-Arab foreign policy as a factor in Indian foreign policy change towards Israel

Nehru, India's first Prime Minister, dominated the Indian strategic foreign policy perspective and nearly forty years after his death his ideas and policies remained influential, even when India had diverged from them. Nehru was sympathetic towards the Arabs as well as the Palestinian cause and made it a central theme of Indian foreign policy (Cohen, 2001:37).⁵²

Yegar's impression of his visit to New Delhi, in July 1991, following the kidnapping of the Israeli tourists in Jammu-Kashmir by Indian-Muslim terrorists, was that the resistance against the improvement of relations with Israel still prevails within the leadership of the INCP (Yegar, 2004:166).

In Dixit's memoirs, he points out that the senior cabinet minister, Arjun Singh, had implied that establishing diplomatic relations with Israel would be a departure from the Nehruvian framework of traditional Indian foreign policy; to which his rebuttal had been: "There would be no departure from the Nehruvian framework, because Panditji⁵³ himself had given formal recognition to Israel" (Dixit, 1996:310).

C. INCP's traditional pro-Arab and anti-Israel foreign policy

The Indian political traditional pro-Arab policy dates back to the beginning of the century and to the two pre-dominant political leaders of the INCM,

⁵¹ For details about the Indian voting in the UN, which repealed the resolution that equated Zionism with racism, see section 3.9.2.2.

⁵² As described in details in section 3.6.2 pertaining to Nehru.

⁵³ Reference to Jawaharlal Pandit Nehru. The suffix *ji* to a name is a traditional Indian form of respect.

Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru.⁵⁴ It is important to point out that the INCP lost the support of many of the minorities including the Muslims in 1989.⁵⁵ Subsequently, Rajiv Gandhi's government vacillated between its fear of offending the Hindus and its fear of losing the Muslim vote. The result was a political impasse during which the Hindu parties took the initiative.

The INCP establishment, which continued to insist on party consensus as well as national consensus regarding Indian foreign policy, went on supporting the Palestinians and continued in their opposition to Israel as part of the progressive orientation of the ruling party. In fact, the pro-Arab foreign policy not only became an INCP consensus, but also an integral part of the party's ethos. The long rule of the INCP created generations of Indian politicians and bureaucrats committed to the Nehruvian tradition in general and pro-Arab foreign policy in particular, which in fact continued until the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel in 1992 and even after that time.⁵⁶ As pointed out by Kumaraswamy (2002:7, 10), the normalisation of diplomatic relations with Israel were seen by the INCP as a betrayal or even as a hasty or unprincipled move. Moreover, it was also portrayed as an anti-Muslim alliance and the betrayal of a traditional position.

D. Indian Muslim community

The political weight of the Muslim community in India has been reduced since the 1980s, as there has been an alteration in the core values of India from a commitment to secularism towards some notion of cultural Hinduism. In that context, since the 1980s, the INCP has attempted to appeal to both Hindus and Muslims to ensure their political loyalty; however, in the process it has lost the support of the Indian Muslim community.

⁵⁴ For details, see sections 3.6.1 (Mahatma Gandhi) and 3.6.2 (Jawaharlal P. Nehru).

⁵⁵ For more details about the Indian Muslims, see sub-section D. in this section.

⁵⁶ About the pro-Arab Nehruvian tradition, see also sub-section B in this section.

In the mid-1980s, the right wing party, the BJP, India's People Party, benefited from several politically expedient concessions made by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to the Indian Muslim clergy, which were seen as blatant examples of minoritism. In fact, the BJP could not afford to have India's 110 million Muslims view their party as their sworn enemy. (Cohen, 2001:122).

In particular, since 1989, the Indian Government had faced a sustained military threat from a series of groups claiming to represent Kashmir sentiment in favour of joining Pakistan or in becoming a separate sovereign state. The Muslim secessionist movement in the Kashmir valley became more threatening and had clear religious links with extreme Muslim organisations outside of India as well as Pakistan.

The BJP turned Jammu and Kashmir into a major political issue, asking if the Indian Muslims could be patriotic Indians while supporting a special status in the only state in which they were in the majority. The Muslim community was increasingly seen as an enemy of the state; funded and supported by external forces and in addition, there was the fear of a spread of militant Islam in India (Gupta, 1995:17).

Since 1989, India had witnessed instances of Hindu-Muslim violence, which had direct repercussions in the Indian political arena (as well as on Indo-Pakistani relations).⁵⁷ The result was a political impasse during which the Hindu parties took the political initiative. Between November 1989 and February 1990, the BJP was successful in winning two state elections exploiting insecurities among the Hindu majority community. The INCPs trust and vital Muslim votes were alienated since the Muslims in India felt insecure and no longer saw the Congress as a dominant party that could provide security and promote a move towards equality. The Hindu/Muslim divide at the centre of the Indian domestic politics reduced the political weight of the Muslim community in India and made it easier for Prime Minister Rao to make the decision to establish diplomatic relation with Israel. As Farah Naaz declares:

⁵⁷ Violence that reached its peak in 1992 with the Ayodyha Mosque demolition.

One of the reasons that made India to reconsider the decision of establishing diplomatic ties with Israel was less consideration for the Muslim vote bank in the calculation of the regime in power (Naaz, 2000:969).

Cohen (2001:247-248) is more specific: "Prime Minister Rao calculated that: the dangers from Islamic extremism were so great that it was worth risking domestic Muslim opposition. In the end, there were no serious objections."

In fact, Prime Minister Rao had taken a calculated political risk, which paid off as the Indian Muslims complied with the decision to establish diplomatic relations with Israel met only by minor protests.⁵⁸

E) India's media

After the Gulf War, India's media demanded a fair attitude towards Israel (Kumar, 2001:2). In addition, the kidnapping of Israeli tourists at Jammu-Kashmir by Indian-Muslim terrorists in July 1991 (the Jammu-Kashmir Liberation Front) resulted in the Indian media viewing Israeli-Indian relations in a more favourable light.⁵⁹ Subsequently, most of them called upon the government of India to establish diplomatic relations with Israel because India could benefit from it (Yegar, 2004:164).⁶⁰

5.4.3.3 Individual level of analysis

The transformation of Indian foreign policy towards Israel in 1992 and the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel are analysed with respect to the individual level of analysis, namely the leaders that initiated and brought it about.

According to Raja Mohan, Indian Prime Ministers Rajiv Gandhi and Narasimha Rao were the leaders who initiated conceptual breakthroughs in

⁵⁸ For details about the Indian Muslim community as a pressure group, see section 3.10.5.2 and for details about Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, see section 5.4.3.3.

⁵⁹ For details about Israel's international image, see section 5.4.3.4.

⁶⁰ For details about the kidnapping of the Israeli tourists and Yegar's meetings in New Delhi, see sections 3.9.2, 3.10.3.2 and 4.9.1.3.

the field of international relations. In fact, it was Rajiv Gandhi who recognised the bankruptcy of Indian foreign policy, which was based on non-alignment and a slavish attachment to the NAM. He was constantly looking for new approaches to India's engagement with the international system including the Western world:

Rajiv Gandhi had less political inhibition in accepting change, and throughout his five-year rule (1984-89) he sought new ideas on foreign policy and constantly looked for ways to get India out of its diplomatic rut (Mohan, 2003:32-33).

In his book, *India's Foreign Policy*, Dixit (1998:172) remarks that:

Rajiv Gandhi initiated a series of changes in India's foreign policy in its political and economic dimensions. He was not tied to the ideological or political socialist orientations of his mother and his maternal grandfather, his predecessors as Prime Ministers of India.

A similar viewpoint was expressed by Kumaraswamy (2002:6) who regards Rajiv Gandhi as the leader who signalled a fresh Indian approach towards Israel:

Though unable to reverse traditional policy completely, he initiated a number of moves that later facilitated normalization. Unlike his predecessors, he openly met Israeli officials and pro-Israel leaders in the United States.⁶¹

In turn, Kumaraswamy (2004:263) explains Gandhi's orientation regarding Israel in the following way:

His lack of ideological orientation together with an improvement in Israel's international image combined to produce the break through. Though unable to completely reverse the traditional course of Indian policy, he initiated a number of moves in this direction.

Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, who succeeded Rajiv Gandhi, capitalised on the changes initiated by Gandhi. Rao, who became Prime Minister in June 1991, demonstrated a diplomatic and pragmatic approach and was the one who succeeded in initiating and implementing a new foreign policy attitude towards Israel.⁶²

⁶¹ For details about Rajiv Gandhi, see section 3.8.6.

⁶² For details about Narasimha Rao, see section 3.8.9.

Prime Minister Rao had been Indira Gandhi's Minister of External Affairs as well as the Minister of External Affairs under Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. In fact, he had more experience in foreign policy affairs than anyone else in his government, in his own party (INCP), any opposition member on the opposition benches or within the Indian MEA's bureaucracy. Mohan (2003:32-33) sums up Prime Minister Rao's role in the policy change as follows:

The Narasimha Rao government understood the demands of the new international order on India, but there was no way the Congress, with its reverence of the Nehru dynasty, could come up with an open criticism of non-alignment and make a credible case for change in foreign policy. That would have invited serious political troubles both inside and outside of the Congress party. Yet in his own low-key manner, it was Narasimha Rao who paved the way for change...Narasimha Rao navigated the difficult diplomatic water adroitly, and in the end, he had changed Indian foreign policy by a large measure.

Rao deserves credit as a political leader and ultimate decision-maker, for making the transformation of India's foreign policy towards Israel an international and political reality and ultimately he was the one to establish fully-fledged diplomatic relations between the two countries.

5.4.3.4 Israel's international image

The image of the State of Israel in the international arena as well as in India had improved and had played a role in India's decision to establish diplomatic relations with Israel after the Gulf War and the inauguration of the Middle East peace process in Madrid in October 1991(Kumaraswamy 2002:8).⁶³ In fact, the opposition had campaigned for the establishment of diplomatic relations several years before the establishment of diplomatic relations actually took place and undoubtedly, this influenced Rajiv Gandhi to change his approach towards Israel (Naaz, 1999:245).⁶⁴

⁶³ For details about the reference to India's media, see sub-section .(E) in section 5.4.3.2.

⁶⁴ For details about Rajiv Gandhi, see section 3.8.6, and about Gandhi's approach towards Israel, see section 5.4.3.3

5.4.4 Growing ripe

There were two change determinants at this stage, which served as accelerating determinants. The first and most important change determinant was the Indian liberalisation campaign and economic reforms that started in 1991. The second one was the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and the Soviet Union.

5.4.4.1 Economic liberalisation

The government of Narasimha Rao, who came to power in May 1991, announced policy changes regarding liberalisation measures, economic reforms and a new industrial policy.⁶⁵ By the end of 1991, the old order in India was on the verge of collapse, the gross domestic product (GDP) growth was sluggish, inflation had reached double digits, the budgetary deficit was surging upwards and the economy was failing. Foreign exchange reserves had fallen to little more than one billion US dollars, a mere two weeks' worth of imports and foreign debt had climbed to more than 70 billion US dollars. Following the liberalisation measures and Indian economic reforms that had started in the winter of 1991, the economic liberalisation initiated by Prime Minister Rao and orchestrated by the Minister of Finance, Manmohan Singh, had opened up the Indian economy to the West and to globalisation.

It was therefore imperative that the Indian government should act; therefore Indian foreign policy was changed accordingly. Indian foreign policy was bound to change from a politically intentioned policy to an economically oriented foreign policy in line with international pragmatism. In that specific period, Israel was one of the Western industrialised countries that could be helpful to India in terms of the inflow of foreign capital and the pursuance of new technology in general and agricultural high technology, in particular.

⁶⁵ For details about India and world globalisation, see sub-section B (No.11) in section 5.4.3.1..

In a newspaper article in the *Indian Express* (11/12/1977), Dixit refers to the importance of globalisation and the Indian economic liberalisation in the context of Indian-Israeli relations. In this regard, he writes that the global orientation towards non-compartmentalised and harmonious relations between countries was a further key factor, at a macro level, that compelled India to establish diplomatic relations with Israel.

Naaz (1999:893) also refers to this particular point: "India's liberalization policies and globalization strategies make Israel well positioned to fulfil the economic and technical demands of India's rapidly developing economy."

5.4.4.2 Re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and the Soviet Union

The re-establishment of the diplomatic relations between Israel and the Soviet Union on 18 October 1991 and the growing rapprochement between Israel and the Soviet Union and later with Russia was watched closely by India and was a contextual determinant in Indian foreign policy change towards Israel. India and the Soviet had shared a security and geopolitical orientation that had determined their anti-Israeli foreign policies up to 1991. By the end of 1991, some of the main reasons that had stood in the way of diplomatic relations between India and Israel in the past, were no longer relevant. particularly after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the active participation of Russia in the Middle East peace process.⁶⁶

5.4.5 Focal point of change

The synchronisation of the change of Indian foreign policy towards Israel at a focal point was achieved by contextual determinants, which were utilised as fine-tuning elements in the change process.

⁶⁶ For details about India and Russia with regards to Israel, see also sub-section B (No. 9) in section 5.4.3.1.

According to Dixit (1996:312), the timing of the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel was discussed with senior cabinet colleagues on (or around) 23 January 1992.⁶⁷

I was authorized to make a formal announcement of India's decision to establish diplomatic relations with Israel and the opening of embassies in each other's capitals. I made this announcement on 24 January.

In fact, the Government of India was trying to postpone the decision on diplomatic relations with Israel, but because of the firm Israeli stance and certain fine-tuning elements to be discussed next, the Indian decision was finally made.⁶⁸

There were three key change determinants, which served as fine-tuning elements during the window of opportunity offered by the change systemic process. These key change determinants were instrumental in influencing the timing of the Indian transformation of foreign policy towards Israel at the focal point of the change process. These three change determinants were:

- 1) The establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Israel on 24 January 1992 were watched closely by the Indian government.⁶⁹
- 2) The opening of the third round of the Middle East peace talks in Moscow, which took place between 28 and 29 January 1992.⁷⁰
- 3) The official visit of Prime Minister Narasimha Rao to the US, to attend the UN Security Council meeting in New York, which took place at the beginning of February 1991. As Kumaraswamy (2002:8) puts it: "Since 1947, Washington had been nudging India to modify its policy toward

⁶⁷ There is a mistake in Dixit's memoirs. The actual date of the cabinet meeting was 28 January 1992 and the announcement was made on the following day.

⁶⁸ For details about the Israeli response, see sections 4.8.1 and 5.2.

⁶⁹ For details about India, Israel and the People's Republic of China, see section 3.9.2.7.

⁷⁰ For details about the Middle East peace talks in Moscow and its relation to India, see sections 4.8.1 and 5.2.

Israel. It was not accidental that normalization was announced on the eve of Rao's visit to New York..."

An official announcement making the establishment of fully-fledged diplomatic relations between India and Israel known, was published simultaneously in Jerusalem, New Delhi and Moscow (where the Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs was on an official visit participating in the third round of the peace talks) on 29 January 1992. On the same day, the Secretary of the Ministry of External Affairs of India sent a letter to the Israeli Consul in Bombay, Giora Becher, informing him of the following Indian announcement:

The governments of India and Israel have decided to establish full diplomatic relations. Embassies will be opened in Tel Aviv and New Delhi. Modalities regarding this arrangement will be worked out through normal diplomatic channels. In pursuance of the above, I have been directed to invite your government to open an embassy in New Delhi (Becher, 2002:548).

In March 1992, the provisional office of the Israeli Embassy in New Delhi was opened (at the Meridian Hotel). In July 1992, a new Consul and a Charge d'Affaires, Itzhak Gerberg, arrived in India. In November 1992, the first Israeli Ambassador, Ephraim Duek, presented his credentials to the President of India as an Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador to India.

5.4.6 Consolidation stage of change

The process of foreign policy change does not end at the focal point of the change, but proceeds to two additional stages respectively: the consolidation stage and the stage of assimilation and implementation. The consolidation stage mostly refers to addressing the impediments to foreign policy change (determinants of impediment). The consolidation stage of the transformation of the Indian foreign policy towards Israel, which was characterised by India's slow and gradual progress in the bilateral relations, concentrated on the impediments to foreign policy change.

The three main change impediments to India's foreign policy change towards Israel were the following: the Arab states, the Indian-Muslim minority and leading conservative INCP members.

5.4.6.1 The Arab states as a change impediment

Some of the Arab states were displeased about India moving closer to Israel but the over-all response was subdued and the situation did not evoke any adverse responses.⁷¹

Contrary to past fears and apprehensions, the newly established relations with Israel did not inhibit India from pursuing productive relations with a number of Middle Eastern countries (Kumaraswamy, 2004:67).

The Arab League and some of its constituent states continued to raise objections to India's ties with Israel. Most of these objections were lodged by either Pakistan or Egypt.

Dixit (1996:312-313), explains in his memoirs that he was instructed by Prime Minister Rao to brief the Muslim countries in detail about the decision to establish diplomatic relations with Israel and also to instruct the Indian Ambassadors in Arab and other Islamic countries to brief the respective governments to which they were accredited:

Some of the Arab Ambassadors were aggressively resentful...when a couple of my ambassadorial colleagues crossed thresholds of political courtesy and mentioned that India would face uncertain consequences, I decided to take the bull by the horns...I declared that India had not received any reciprocity on the Kashmir issue despite our longstanding support to several Islamic countries in international fora (arena). I also underlined the fact that India would not accept any extraneous limitations on its sovereign right of determining its policy decisions within the framework of Indian interests. There was some criticism of India in the Arab media. Some questioned the wisdom of India's decision. But this decision did not affect Indo-Arab relations negatively (Dixit, 1996:312-313).⁷²

⁷¹ For details about the Arab countries response, see sub-section B (no. 14) in section 5.4.3.1.

⁷² For more details about the Arab countries see -section 5.4.3.1.

5.4.6.2 The Indian Muslim community

Dixit refers to the choices facing leaders of the Indian Muslim community and Muslim political groups in his memoirs as follows:

If the choice is between taking decisive steps to safeguard fundamental national interests or being sensitive to regional and sub-regional concerns, the option should be in favour of the former (Dixit, 1996:114).⁷³

In fact, the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel did not evoke any adverse responses, except some payment of lip service to the Palestinian cause by the Indian Muslim community.

5.4.6.3 The INCP's conservative politicians

Raja Mohan points out that there was some vociferous opposition from those within the Congress Party who believed that India should do nothing that could jeopardise Indian support for the Palestinian cause (Mohan, 2003:226). Dixit (1996:114) refers to it by pointing out that Prime Minister Rao was aware of this particular impediment and therefore, after the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Israel, he wanted to proceed slowly. He instructed that contacts should first be made at the official level and then at foreign secretarial level. On 23 March 1993, during his visit to Israel, Dixit indicates there were elements in the INCP that objected to the normalisation of relations with Israel even after the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries (Yegar, 2004:173).⁷⁴

According to Kumaraswamy (2002:10), neither the members of the INCP nor a section of the Indian intelligentsia received the normalisation of diplomatic relations with Israel well initially, as it was seen not only as a betrayal, but also as a hasty and unprincipled move. Some critics suggested that India should have waited until the situation in the Middle East had changed substantially and by some, the move was even perceived as an anti-Muslim alliance, if not a conspiracy.

⁷³ For more details about the Muslim factor in Indian politics, see section 5.4.3.2.

⁷⁴ For more details about the INCP, see section 5.4.3.2.

Indian foreign policy towards Israel was slowly acquiring bipartisan political backing in India; in addition to the BJP, which was enthusiastic in its support for a pro-Israel Middle East, the INCP was slowly reversing its past opposition to Israel. Even the Janata Dal Party, which had opposed the decision to establish diplomatic relations with Israel, had come to terms with reality. Importantly, the question of ties with Israel ceased to be a contentious issue.

The Israeli side was eager to follow the establishment of diplomatic relations through with high-level political and economic contacts, but understood India's political constraints, as Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres explained on his visit to India from 17-19 May 1993:

He (Peres) exhibited sophistication in acknowledging that India-Israel cooperation in these sensitive spheres carried much larger political implications, especially for India. He, therefore, agreed that cooperation in these particular areas should evolve gradually over a period of time (Dixit, 1996:114).

The Indian way of addressing these three change impediments to India's policy change towards Israel was to issue an official statement explaining that the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel did not mean that India would change its support of the Palestinian people's campaign to realise their legitimate aspirations. This statement also emphasised that India's longstanding friendship and cooperative relations with the Arab countries would continue as before.

5.4.7 Assimilation and implementation

The assimilation and implementation stage is set through foreign policy change directed by stabilising determinants (as described and analysed in the next chapter).⁷⁵ Shortly after January 1992, India opened its embassy in Israel and it was followed by a similar Israeli move in New Delhi. The

⁷⁵ See chapter six for information about the evolving relations between India and Israel between 1992 and 2005.

stabilising determinants, as pointed out by Naaz (2002:979), were the following:

The normalization of relations left both countries to explore as many areas as possible. While Indo-Israel relations increased rapidly in the field of trade and agriculture, both the countries continued to explore as many areas as possible for mutual cooperation. Military, is one such area which both the countries are exploring...Such cooperation is based on India's realistic assessment of the global and regional security environment as well as technological requirements.

In a previous article, she writes: "The bilateral ties have evolved rapidly, covering the whole gamut of interstate relations" (Naaz, 1999:896).

As indicated by Dixit (1996:315), relations between India and Israel improved between 1991 and 1994. Dixit himself, as a Secretary of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, played a significant role in the assimilation and implementation stage in the bilateral relations between the two countries with his official visit to Israel, from 22 to 25 March 1993.⁷⁶ According to Dixit, the Israelis were serious about following the establishment of diplomatic relations through with high-level contacts. Dixit has the following to say about his meeting with the Prime Minister of the State of Israel at that time, Yitzhak Rabin: "He (Rabin) stated that Israel would be willing to cooperate with India in every sphere without any reservations". Rabin himself referred positively to the defence ties with India in general and with regard to fundamentalism and terrorism in particular (Dixit, 1996:313).⁷⁷

The Chief Minister of the State of Maharashtra, Sharad Pawar, who had previously been the Defence Minister of India, declared unofficially that the normalisation of diplomatic relations with Israel had made it possible for India to draw on Israel's successful experience regarding the curbing of terrorism. He led an Indian delegation to an Agritech exhibition in Israel in

⁷⁶ For more details about Dixit's contribution to the bilateral relations between India and Israel, see section 6.4.4.1.

⁷⁷ For more details about the meeting between Dixit and Rabin, see section 6.2.2.

May 1993, accompanied by a high-level military team⁷⁸ (Naaz, 2000:982). In turn, during the same month, an Israeli delegation consisting of military equipment manufacturers and experts visited India.⁷⁹

During Dixit's meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Israel, Shimon Peres, after the establishment of diplomatic relations with India, the Israeli minister pledged Israel's absolute support for India regarding the Kashmir issue and also discussed issues related to human rights and expressed Israel's willingness to transfer technology to India. In addition, Peres assured Dixit of the intention of the Israeli private sector to participate actively in the Indian economic endeavours. Furthermore, he instructed the Israeli Ambassador in New Delhi to invite the Indian leaders of various parties and Chief Ministers to visit Israel so that they could get a first hand idea of those areas in which cooperation between the two countries could be developed. Following Dixit's visit to Israel, Peres received an invitation to pay an official visit to India, which he accepted without hesitation and subsequently, his official visit to India took place in May 1993.⁸⁰

Dixit (1996:313-314) refers to the following stabilising determinants regarding international politics:

I was informed during this visit that India had been invited (by Israel) to become a member of the five working groups engaged in the task of normalization of relations with the PLO. These groups dealt with issues such as arms control, regional security, refugees, environment, management of water resources and regional economic development. India's role was endorsed by the U.S and the Russian Federation as well as by the other Arab participants. A part from the operational contributions which we made to the deliberations of these working groups, our presence in all the five working groups provided confirmation of our political status as a factor of influence in West Asian affairs.

As far as Indian relations with the Jewish lobby were concerned, during Rao's official visit to the US, a few days after the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel, he met with representatives of US Jewish

⁷⁸ For more details about Pawar's attitude towards Israel, see section 5.4.3.1 reference no. 3.

⁷⁹ For more details about defence relations between Israel and India, see section 6.3.2.

⁸⁰ For foreign ministries' dialogues, see section 6.3.1.2.

organisations in New York. The meeting, which had originally been scheduled before diplomatic relations had been established between the two countries, turned out to be a friendly gathering and the two parties discussed the modalities regarding future cooperation between India and the American Jewish community.

Isi J. Leibler, co-chairman of the WJC, who had met with Prime Minister Rao on 21 November 1991 with the aim of convincing him to promote bilateral relations between India and Israel, met Rao again in New Delhi in February 1992; this time in order to express the gratitude of the WJC.⁸¹ Leibler expressed the appreciation of the WJC for Rao's brave diplomatic move in particular and for the dramatic improvement of relations between India and Israel and the Jewish people in general (Yegar, 2004:169)⁸².

Following the announcement of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, Congressman Stephen Solarz, chairperson of the sub-committee for Asia and the Pacific, issued a press release and expressed his satisfaction with the new diplomatic development. In turn, he received extensive praise from both parties that expressed their gratitude to him for his personal contribution to the establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and India,

Relations between India and Israel expanded and Israel slowly acquired bipartisan backing from Indian politicians and even such political parties as the Janata Dal and the Communist parties, which had been opposed to the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel, had finally come to terms with the idea that relations with Israel were in India's interest. After the establishment of relations, both countries sought to compensate for past neglect and indifference; subsequently they established and maintained large-scale cooperation in a host of activities and projects in various fields.

Normalisation of diplomatic relations with Israel ceased to be a contentious issue in India and defence cooperation with Israel was primarily seen as a

⁸¹ For details about Rao's meeting with Leibler in January 1992 in New Delhi, see section 4.9.1.4.

⁸² About the cooperation between the US Jewish lobby and India after 1992 see section 6.4.3.5.

professional decision best left to the security establishment. The pace of bilateral economic relations indicated that the two countries were making up for the lost years when there had been no diplomatic relations between the two countries. There was extensive cooperation in the area of defence cooperation, as well as areas such as agriculture, trade and science and technology as the stabilising determinants of bilateral relations between India and Israel.

Despite a succession of various Indian governments, led by parties and coalitions across the entire political spectrum, in the years following the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, it has transpired that bilateral relations between India and Israel have become a matter of consensus on the Indian political scene. This change in outlook has found its expression in the Indian oscillated diplomacy towards Israel.⁸³

5.5 Summation

Transformation of Indian foreign policy towards Israel and the establishment of the diplomatic relations between the two countries (on 29 January 1992) are considered by India as a strategic change and one of the most important steps in Indian diplomatic history. Regarding the large number of dependent variables, including their composite and comparative weight; the use of the Aggregative Causal Model of Bilateral Relations Strategic Change as an analytical and explanatory tool has contributed to a better review and analysis of the systemic change process of the transformation of Indian foreign policy towards Israel. It enables an analysis of the multiple national defence oriented factors that influence the systemic process of this foreign policy change together with contextual determinants. Hermann's Model of Foreign Policy Change is also used in this chapter in order to provide external validity to the analysis of the

⁸³ For details about the evolving relations between India and Israel between 1992 and 2005, see chapter 6 for more information on the Oscillated Diplomacy Model as an analytic tool regarding the evolving bilateral relations between the two countries, see section 6.1.

transformation of the Indian foreign policy towards Israel and to provide an additional perspective on Indian foreign policy change.

Based on the Aggregative Model, the formative determinants of Indian foreign policy change, in terms of the pre-feasibility stage, which incubated the change process, were the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union as well as the emergence of the US as a sole superpower.

Generating determinants in terms of framing and redefining Indian foreign policy change towards Israel were the first Gulf War, the Madrid conference and the Israeli- Arab Middle East negotiations in general and with the Palestinians, in particular.

The fundamental and national security oriented causative factors of Indian foreign policy change that are analysed in conjunction with contextual and situational change determinants are divided into three levels of analysis. The first level of analysis is the international level pertaining to the revision of alternatives and new options and is subdivided into two types of foreign relations. The first type of foreign relations at the international level of analysis is bilateral relations and as far as Israeli-Indian bilateral relations are concerned, a number of change factors were reviewed and evaluated. These factors are India's military cooperation with Israel, India's interest in intelligence-operations with Israel, counter-terrorism cooperation, the Indian Ocean, nuclear power as a common issue between the two countries, economic relations with Israel and foreign relations with Israel.

The second type of foreign relations at the international level of analysis is multilateral relations and in this regard, the analysis of India's change of foreign policy towards Israel is dealt within the Israeli context in the multilateral arena. It is based on reviewing and evaluating the following change factors pertaining to India's national security as well as on national interests: the Indian geo-strategic interests, the oil factor, Central Asia, India and the Third World with emphasis on the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). Further change factors are India as an acceptable international actor in the Middle East conflict, India and the UN, India and the US, India and the American Jewish Organisations, India and Russia, India and the

PRC. . Furthermore, India and world globalisation, India and the Muslim world, India and Pakistan, India and the Arab world, Indian Arab economic relations and India and the PLO were also dealt within the context of the multinational arena.

The second level of analysis is the state and society (national) level of analysis. The transformation of the Indian foreign policy towards Israel and the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in terms of the state and society level of analysis is analysed by change determinants with emphasis on Indian politics pertaining to Israel. They are the MEA, the Nehruvian tradition of Pro-Arab foreign policy as a factor in Indian foreign policy change towards Israel, the INCP's traditional pro-Arab and anti-Israel foreign policy, Indian Muslim community and the Indian media.

The third level of analysis is the individual level and the transformation of the Indian policy towards Israel is analysed accordingly with reference to the leadership of India. The improvement of Israel's international image after the first Gulf War and the inauguration of the Middle East peace process in October 1991 as a contextual determinant are also discussed. The individual level of analysis was examined in terms of leadership concentrating on Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Prime Minister Narasimha Rao as the ultimate decision-makers of the transformation of Indian foreign policy towards Israel.

At the growing ripe stage of the Aggregative Model of Bilateral Relations Strategic Change, there are two contextual change determinants, which served as accelerating determinants of Indian foreign policy towards Israel. They are Indian liberalisation and the economic reforms that began taking place in 1991 and the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and the Soviet Union on 18 October 1991.

At the focal point of change of the Indian foreign policy transformation, the fundamental factors were synchronised by three fine tuning elements. The first one was the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Israel, which took place on 24 January 1992. The second was the opening

of the third round of the Middle East peace talks in Moscow, which took place between 28 and 29 January 1992. The third and last one was the official visit of Prime Minister Narasimha Rao to the US, to attend the UN Security Council in New York, which took place at the beginning of February 1992. All three events occurred at the beginning of 1992 and are discussed in terms of the focal point of change, in this regard.

The consolidation stage of the model was characterised by the slow and gradual advancement of the bilateral relations between Israel and India. This particular stage dealt with three main impediments to the Indian foreign policy change towards Israel: the Arab states, the Indian Muslim community and the INCP's conservative politicians.

The assimilation and implementation stage was examined with the help of stabilising determinants that were in accord with the content and spirit of the newly established bilateral relations between India and Israel. . These stabilising determinants are found in fields such as military collaboration, counter terrorism, agriculture, trade and high technology. In addition to these determinants are the willingness of the Jewish organisations in the US to cooperate with India, Israel's support of India on issues of special importance at the UN (such as the Kashmir issue) and the Israeli invitation to India to take an active part in the Middle East peace process.

Following the Indian transformation of foreign policy towards Israel and the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, the evolving bilateral relations have become a cornerstone of their foreign policies and are of considerable strategic importance for both India and Israel as will be reviewed and analysed in the next chapter.

Chapter 6

Evolving relations between Israel and India between 1992 and 2005

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the focus is on the evolving relations between Israel and India since the establishment of the fully-fledged diplomatic relations between the two countries (1992-2005). The main objective of this chapter is to examine and analyse the ongoing relations between Israel and India with special emphasis on their national interest and the potential for future cooperation between the two states.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and India (in January 1992), the two countries found a growing convergence in their strategic interests and developed close bilateral relations including cooperation in many areas of mutual interest. Among these areas are defence, security, economy, trade and international politics.

The bilateral relations between Israel and India are analysed in terms of three levels of analysis:¹ The international level of analysis, is divided into bilateral and multilateral relations. The domestic factors, which have influenced relations between the two countries with special emphasis on politics and the economy and individuals in both countries, in addition to the ultimate decision units, are analysed in terms of the state and society level of analysis.² The evolving bilateral relations between Israel and India in general and Indian foreign policy towards Israel in particular, are reviewed and analysed with the help of the Oscillated Diplomacy Model.³ The oscillated diplomacy, as part of a systemic and diachronic process, has been influenced by three different types of mutual national strategic

¹ For details about the Levels of Analysis Model, see section 2.3

² For details about the Ultimate Decision Unit Model, see section 2.2.

³ For details about the Oscillated Diplomacy Model, see section 2.6

interests of the two countries, namely, joint strategic interests, common strategic interests and discrepant strategic interests. The term “joint strategic interests” refers to goals that Israel and India have pursued in order to maximise overlapping inter-related strategic interests while the term “common strategic interests” refers to goals that the two states have pursued in order to achieve complementary strategic interests. On the other hand, the term “discrepant strategic interests” refers to a third type of strategic interest, which has a negative impact on their bilateral relations.

The bilateral relations between the two countries have been strongly influenced by the political attitude of the Indian governments in power, which had a direct effect on the volume and direction of the Indian foreign policy towards Israel. The Indian foreign policy towards Israel between 1992 and 2005 was accepted by most of the political spectrum in India after the majority of the political parties in India came to terms with the bilateral relations between India and Israel.

Bilateral relations improved in particular during the tenure of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) led by the BJP.⁴ According to Dinesh Kumar, after four decades of strained relations, warm and special ties including a strategic alliance between the two countries have developed:

Once the ice was broken, a new era of partnership began between India and Israel... helped by fast changing international realities the two countries moved very carefully but rapidly to develop a many-faced friendship (Kumar, 2001:3).

In June 2004, a new UPA government’s foreign policy was expressed, in the following statement, which was delivered by the Indian President in the Parliament:

Traditional ties with the countries of West Asia will be given a fresh thrust; my government will continue to fully support the legitimate

⁴ For details about the ultimate decision units in India between 1992 and 2005, see section 6.2.1.

aspirations of the Palestinian people. Our relations with Israel, which have developed on the basis of mutually beneficial cooperation are important, but this in no way dilutes our principled support for the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people (MEA, 7/6/2004).

6.2 Ultimate decision units

The following ultimate decision units of Israeli-Indian relations (from 1992 until 2005) are also analysed: the ultimate decision units in the Republic of India and the ultimate decision units in the State of Israel.

6.2.1 Ultimate decision units in India

The first ultimate decision unit in the process of the evolving relations between the two countries after the decision to establish fully-fledged diplomatic relations with Israel was Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, who is also considered to be the architect of the diplomatic relations between the two countries.⁵ After the change of government in India in June 1996, Israel believed that the new United Front (UF) coalition would change Indian foreign policy towards Israel. The UF had been led by the Janata Dal party (JDP), which had objected in the past to the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel, headed by Prime Minister Deve Gowda who was succeeded by Prime Minister Inder K. Gujral,. An important factor that could help effect this change was the fact that a new government led by the Likud right wing party had taken over in Israel.

The Government of Israel was concerned that Prime Minister Gowda (1/6/1996-20/4/1997) and later on his successor Prime Minister Indir Kumar Gujral (22/4/1997 to 18/3/1998), as the succeeding ultimate decision units, would be detrimental to the Israeli-Indian evolving bilateral relations.⁶ This concern was less acute in the case of Gowda, who had

⁵ For details about Narasimha Rao as a pre-dominant leader, see section 3.8.9.

⁶ Atal Behari Vajpayee 16/5/96-28/5/96
 H.D. Deve Gowda 1/6/96-20/4/97
 Inder Kumar Gujral 21/4/97-18/3/98
 Atal Behari Vajpayee 19/3/98-23/5/04

previously visited Israel as the Chief Minister of the State of Karnataka and had concentrated more on Prime Minister Gujral. Such a concern was based on the historical fact that Gujral, who was considered to be a classic Nehruvian, had served in the past as India's Ambassador to the Soviet Union and had served twice under Prime Ministers Chandra Sekhar and Deve Gowda, as the Minister of External Affairs. Gujral was also identified with the Gujral Doctrine, which embodied the accommodation of India's asymmetric relationship with its neighbouring countries.

Contrary to general pessimistic assumptions, Israel's concern about the UF governments led by Gujral proved to be unjustified and bilateral cooperation between the two countries during his tenure continued although on a low scale in terms of official diplomatic practice such as high-level official visits. Despite his image, Gujral took note of new global realities and retreated from state-directed economic politics; while advancing the integration of India's economy with the rest of the world and claiming that he wanted to revive the spirit and substance of regional cooperation sponsored by Nehru.

Prime Minister Gujral's assumption of power coincided with the change in government in Israel in June 1996 (the previous INCP government overlapped the tenure of the Labour government in Israel). The new Likud government in Israel was led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu who was considered in India to be a right wing extremist leader that had backed out of Israel's commitments to the Palestinians.⁷ As Dixit points out in a newspaper article:

The Indian rationales proved largely valid till Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres and their party remained in power, with Netanyahu's advent there has been a negative refraction, through substantive cooperation continues ...The point is that these trends (of the Indo-Israel cooperation) were initiated by Israel's previous Labour

Manmohan Singh from 24/5/04

⁷ For details on Israeli Prime Ministers, including Netanyahu, as ultimate decision units, see next section 6.2.2.

government. In spite of the inherent vibrancy and potential for expanding relations, the process is likely to run into difficulties because of the state of the Middle-East peace process, which has stalled primarily due to the paranoid self-centred approach of Netanyahu and Likud extremists (*Indian Express*, 11/12/1997).

The UF governments failed to win a solid majority in the Indian Parliament and Gowda and Gujral were often unable to control their coalition partners. It led to a continuous search for new political allies to replace defectors and produced two consecutive notably weak governments that concentrated on domestic politics. In 1998, the BJP led the NDA coalition to a victory, headed twice by Atal Behari Vajpayee (19/3/1998-23/5/2004). Vajpayee was pragmatic in his foreign policy approach and as an ultimate decision unit; he was responsible for the improvement of relations with a wide variety of states including the State of Israel. Traditionally, he had been a staunch supporter of the state of Israel even before the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel and during his tenures as Prime Minister, India lost its reluctance to deal with Israel on a larger scale.⁸

During Vajpayee's tenures, extensive cooperation developed between the two countries as reflected in India's Home Minister Advani's and the Minister of External Affairs Jaswant Singh's visits in Israel in the summer of 2000. In August 2001, acting on Vajpayee's instructions during the UN sponsored conference against racism in Durban, South Africa, India refused to re-equate Zionism with racism, despite the appeals of the Arab and Islamic countries and the visit of the leader of the Palestinian Authority Yasser Arafat to New Delhi before the opening of the conference.

Prime Minister Vajpayee was the first Indian prime minister to host an official visit of an Israeli prime minister in India, namely the visit of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in September 2003.⁹ In a speech given by Vajpayee at a banquet he hosted for Sharon, he expressed the view that the Israeli leader's visit to India was an important landmark in the bilateral relations

⁸ For details about Vajpayee's approach towards Israel before 1992, see sections 3.9.1.4, 3.10.2.2 and 3.10.2.4.

⁹ For details about Sharon's official visit in India, see section 6.2.2.

between the two countries. He added that in the relatively short history of the formal diplomatic relations between them, India and Israel have established a vibrant partnership. He also referred to trade relations between the two countries and focussed on the Israeli-Indian defence cooperation, counter-terrorism as a key area of cooperation and people-to-people interaction (*The Hindu*, 10/9/2003).

Following the general elections in India on 23 May 2004, a new coalition government, The United Progressive Alliance (UPA), led by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was formed by the INCP, although the president of the INCP was Mrs. Sonia Gandhi, but after conducting the election campaign, she refused the option of premiership.¹⁰

Concern was expressed in Israel that Singh's new government, based on the common characteristics of his coalition government, which was supported by the communist parties, would have a negative effect on the Indian foreign policy towards Israel. One year later, it looked as if the UPA government headed by the pragmatic economy- oriented Prime Minister Singh, as the ultimate decision unit, was determined to continue along the path of strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries, while improving its relations with the Arab countries at the same time.

One should recall that the historical decision to establish fully-fledged diplomatic relations and normalise India's bilateral relations with Israel in 1992 was initiated by Prime Minister Rao, the head of the INCP and the current Prime Minister Singh was finance minister in Rao's government.¹¹ In fact, bilateral relations with Israel have acquired the backing of most of the political spectrum in India, which came to terms with the bilateral relations with Israel realising its value in terms of the national interest and

¹⁰ For details about Sonia Gandhi's influence on India's bilateral relations with Israel, see section 6.4

¹¹ For details about Narasimha Rao, see sections 3.8.9 and 5.4.3.3. Singh as the Finance Minister in Rao's government was considered to be the architect of the Indian liberalisation and economy reforms in 1991.

the strategic advantage of these relations for India in general and regarding the military field in particular.¹²

6.2.2 Ultimate decision units in Israel

Traditionally, since independence, the Israeli government was based on a pivot party, while the strategic foreign policy was handled by the Israeli Prime Minister himself as an ultimate decision unit. It was particularly valid in the years 1996 to 2003 when a new law of direct election of prime minister was implemented in Israel while keeping a parliamentary democracy intact.

On 23 June 1992, four months after the establishment of diplomatic relations with India, general elections took place in Israel and three weeks later, Yitzhak Rabin was sworn in as the Prime Minister of Israel. In March 1993, India's Foreign Secretary, J.N. Dixit paid an official visit to Israel and was received by Prime Minister Rabin. According to Dixit (1996:313), Rabin stressed the following:

The utmost importance he had always attached to Israel having full-fledged relations with India... Israel would be willing to cooperate with India in every sphere without any reservations...In Israel's assessment, a democratic, stable, strong and secular India was (would always be) a major factor in insuring stability and political equilibrium in Asia.¹³

Following Rabin's assassination, on 4 November 1995, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, who was known as a staunch supporter of Israeli relations with India, took over as an acting Prime Minister and the country was subjected to a snap election campaign.

On 18 June 1996, a new Israeli government, led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of the Likud party, was established.¹⁴ Netanyahu was

¹² For details about the State and Society Level of Analysis, see section 6.4 and for details about the Indian political system in particular, see section 6.4.1.

¹³ Regarding the meeting between Rabin and Dixit, see also section 5.4.7.

¹⁴ The first direct election of an Israeli prime minister.

considered by many Indian politicians, particularly in the INCP, to be a right wing extremist leader who had reneged on Israel's commitments to the Palestinians. Despite the Indian sentiments about him, Prime Minister Netanyahu attached a great deal of importance to Israel's relations with India. He regarded the defence cooperation between the two countries to be of strategic importance and of mutual benefit to both countries. In addition, he pointed out that Israel would like its developing ties with India to be as close and prolific as possible (Kapila, 2000:7). However, the slowing down of the peace process with the Palestinians that followed during Netanyahu's tenure as prime minister had an impact on Indian foreign policy towards Israel.¹⁵

Following the snap general election in Israel on 29 May 1999, a new Israeli government, led by the Labour party (under the name of *One Israel*) headed by Prime Minister Ehud Barak, was established on 6 July 1999. Barak met the Indian National Security Advisor, Brajesh Mishra, a few weeks after being elected and reconfirmed the growing improvement of bilateral relations between the two countries. On 10 December 2000, Prime Minister Barak resigned and a new election took place in Israel on 6 February 2001.

A new Israeli government, led by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, from the Likud party, was established on 7 March 2001 and on 28 January 2003, following the change in the laws governing the direct election of Prime Minister Sharon, as the leader of the Likud party, was re-elected as the Prime Minister of Israel. The close and friendly relations between Israel and India continued as long as the NDA remained in power and reached a new peak when Ariel Sharon paid an official visit to India.

Prime Minister Sharon's official visit to India - Prime Minister Sharon visited India from 8 to 10 September 2003 and was hosted by Prime Minister Vajpayee. Sharon was accompanied by the Minister of Justice,

¹⁵ For details about P.M. Gowda and P.M. Gujral and their attitude towards Israeli, see section 6.2.1.

Yossef Lapid; the Minister of Culture, Education and Sport, Limor Livnat and the Minister of Agriculture, Israel Katz. He was also accompanied by a large business delegation. During his visit, Prime Minister Sharon called on the Indian President Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam and held talks with Prime Minister Vajpayee. He held meetings with the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Home Affairs, Lal Kishen Advani; the Minister of Defence, George Fernandes; the Minister of Finance, Jaswant Singh; the Minister of External Affairs, Yashwant Sinha; the National Security Advisor, Brajesh Mishra and the leader of the opposition and president of the INCP, Mrs. Sonia Gandhi.¹⁶

During Sharon's visit, an official joint statement, *the Delhi Statement on Friendship and Cooperation between India and Israel*, was issued and six agreements of cooperation between both countries were signed. The agreements covered fields such as the environment, health matters, combating illicit drug trafficking, education and culture, including an exchange programme and waiving visa requirements for holders of diplomatic, service and official passports. In this regard, the following joint statement was issued in New Delhi at the conclusion of Sharon's official visit to India:

India and Israel share a goal of advancing peace, security and stability in their own regions and respect for democracy in the entire world...As ancient cultures and societies India and Israel have left their mark on human civilization and history. As democratic countries since their inception, both nations share faith in the values of freedom and democracy...Both countries gained independence during the same period and embarked on a course of nation building to advance the well being of their respective peoples and to build modern democratic states able to face difficult challenges...Together with the international community and as victims of terrorism, Israel and India are partners in the battle against this scourge...Shared ideals draw both peoples into a natural amity in pursuit of common goals. Both sides attach great importance to strengthening their long term cooperation in the political, defence, economic, commercial, cultural and science and technology areas (*The Hindu*, 11/9/2003).

¹⁶ For Sharon's meetings with Mrs. Gandhi and Brajesh Mishra, see also sections 6.4.4.1 and 6.4.4.2.

6.3 Analysis of Israeli – Indian relations by the international level of analysis

Factors relating to Israeli-Indian relations are analysed by an international level of analysis, divided into two types of sublevels of international analysis: bilateral and multilateral relations.¹⁷ The analysis of the bilateral relations is based on the Oscillated Diplomacy Model.¹⁸ The oscillated diplomacy between India and Israel included many facets based on strategic interests divided into three sub-groups, namely joint strategic interests and common strategic interests in relation to discrepant strategic interests.¹⁹ As pointed out by Dinesh Kumar (2001), India and Israel have found a growing convergence in their strategic interests.

In terms of bilateral relations, following the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, during the tenure of the INCP, relations were gradually improving. Bilateral relations during the tenure of the two UF governments that followed the INCP government (June 1996 to March 1998), were less cordial in terms of high-level official diplomatic practice. During the period that the NDA governments were in power (March 1998 to May 2004), bilateral relations were at their peak and included bilateral talks about the strategic alliance between the two countries.²⁰

A new coalition government, the UPA, was formed by the INCP in May 2004. In fact, there was some concern in Israel that the change of government might be detrimental for Israeli-Indian ties (Pant, 2005:3). Consequently, its relations with Israel cooled in terms of high-level official visits while maintaining its economic and military cooperation.²¹ The UPA

¹⁷ For details about Levels of Analysis Model, see section 2.3

¹⁸ For details about the Oscillated Diplomacy Model, see section 2.6.

¹⁹ For a definition of the Oscillated Diplomacy Model including the three types of strategic interests, see section 2.6.

²⁰ For more details about the NDA government's policy towards Israel, see sections 6.2.1 and 6.2.2.

²¹ For details about the implementation of the UPA's foreign policy in terms of official statements of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, see section 6.4.2.

government renewed its traditionally friendly foreign policy with the Arab world projecting an image of itself as a supporter of the Palestinians and their quest for an independent state; while maintaining Israeli-Indian cooperation regarding strategic issues.²² In January 2005, the UPA appointed Ambassador Chinmay Gharekhan as a special envoy to the Middle East.²³ The Israeli Consulate General in Mumbai (Bombay) was reopened in the summer of 2005 after it was closed two years earlier due to budget constraints.

In terms of multilateral relations, after the 1990s, India shifted from a policy of non-alignment, striving for the best interests of the Third World and standing up to the western world for the promotion of its own national interests in the international arena. India, which aspired to a seat as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, started a long campaign for the enlargement of the UN Security Council. Israel, on the other hand, because the majority of the Arab world and Third World countries at the UN organisations and agencies in international politics supported the US as the leading superpower in the post cold war arena. Indian consistently voted against Israel in international organisations in general and the UN in particular on issues related to Israel and the Palestinian cause, although substantive bilateral cooperation continued between them.²⁴

6.3.1 Diplomatic relations as a joint strategic interest

India's diplomatic activism since the 1990s has included relations with Israel.²⁵ After the establishment of diplomatic relations, India has moved from an anti-Israeli and pro-Arab stance to a pragmatic and more balanced stance towards Israel while maintaining close relations with the Arab countries, within the limits of the Indian oscillated diplomacy towards Israel

²² For details about the Palestinian Authority's relations with India, see section 6.3.20.

²³ For details about the Indian special envoy to the Middle East, Chinmay Gharekhan, see section 6.3.20

²⁴ For more details about the UF government's policy towards Israel, see section 6.2.1.

²⁵ For details about India's diplomatic activism in general and towards Israel in particular, see section 5.4.3.2

as guiding parameters. The following is a review of mutual high-level official visits, foreign ministries' dialogues and bilateral agreements.

6.3.1.1 High level official visits.

A stream of reciprocal visits by senior officials added a new dimension to Israeli-Indian relations and enabled the development of collaboration between the two countries in various fields of activities:²⁶

- The Chief Minister of the State of Maharashtra, formerly the Minister of Defence, Sharad Pawar, led an Indian delegation to the Agritech exhibition in Tel Aviv In May 1993.²⁷
- Israel's Minister of Agriculture, Yaacov Tzur, visited India, accompanied by a large delegation of agro-businessmen, in December 1993.
- Israel's State Comptroller, Justice Miriam Ben-Porat, visited India in November 1994.
- Israel's Minister of Trade Industry and Tourism, Micha Harish, visited India accompanied by a trade delegation, in December 1994.
- Israel's Minister of Finance, Avraham Shochat, visited India in January 1996.
- Israel's Minister of Education and Culture, Amnon Rubinstein, visited India in January 1996.
- The President of the State of Israel, Ezer Weizman's, state visit to India took place in December 1996 and brought a new perspective on the bilateral relations of the two countries.²⁸
- India's Home Minister, Krishna Advani paid a visit to Israel in May 2000.

²⁶ For details about the bilateral fields of activities, see sections 6.3.1.3, 6.3.1.4, 6.3.2.1-6.3.2.3 and 6.3.3-6.3.7. The information concerning the visits was obtained from the official website of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs: <http://www.mfa.gov.il> and the official website of the Ministry of External Affairs of India: <http://www.mea.gov.in>

²⁷ See section 6.3.2.1 for more information about the military aspects of the visit.

²⁸ For more information about the fruit of Weizman's visit to India, see section 6.3.1.3.

- Israel's Minister of Regional Cooperation, Shimon Peres, visited India in January 2001 (Shimon Peres visited India twice as the Minister of Foreign Affairs).²⁹
- India's Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, Communication and Information Technology, Pramod Mahajan, visited Israel in January 2002.
- Israel's Minister of Ecology, Tzhachi Hanegbi, visited India in February 2002.
- Israel's Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, went to India on an official in September 2003.³⁰
- Israel's Minister of Science and Technology, Modi Zandberg, visited India in 2003.
- The Indian Minister of Commerce and Industry and Law and Justice, Arun Jaitley, heading the Indian delegation to the third joint trade and economic committee meeting, visited Israel in January 2004.
- Israel's Chief Justice and President of Israel's Supreme Court, Aharon Barak, visited India in February 2004.
- Israel's Deputy Minister of Trade, Industry and Employment, Michael Ratzon, visited India in February 2004.
- Israel's Deputy Minister of Defence, Ze'ev Boim, visited India in February 2004.
- India's Comptroller and Auditor General, V.N. Kaul, visited Israel in March 2004.
- Israel's State Comptroller, Justice Eliezer Goldberg, visited India in December 2004.
- Israel's Minister of Trade, Industry and Employment, Ehud Olmert, paid a visit to India in December 2004. Following his visit, the Indian Trade Ministry Secretary visited Israel in February 2005 and a

²⁹ For details about Peres's other visits, see the details of the dialogues between foreign ministries in section 6.3.1.2.

³⁰ For details about Sharon's official visit, see section 6.2.2.

Memorandum of understanding (MOU) of Industrial Research and Development was signed between the two ministries.

- India's Minister of Science and Technology, Kapil Sibal, visited Israel in May 2005 (the first official visit of a UPA government minister).
- India's Minister of Commerce, Kamal Nat, visited Israel in November 2005.

6.3.1.2 Dialogues between foreign ministries

Ongoing official dialogues as well as bilateral consultations have taken place between the foreign ministries of India and Israel. The following list shows the official visits of the Foreign Ministers of both countries and their deputies, which enhanced the institutional framework of diplomatic relations and consolidated the bilateral relations:³¹

- Israel's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Shimon Peres, visited India in May 1993.
- Israel's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yossi Beilin, visited India in March 1994.
- India's Minister of State of External Affairs, R. L. Bhatyia, visited Israel in April 1995.
- The Indian Minister of External Affairs, Jaswant Singh, visited Israel in June 2000 (the first Indian Minister of External Affairs visiting Israel).
- Israel's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Shimon Peres, visited India in February 2002.³²
- Israel's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Silvan Shalom, visited India in February 2004.

³¹ Information concerning the visits of the foreign ministers was obtained from the official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel: <http://www.mfa.gov.il> and the Ministry of External Affairs on India: <http://www.mea.gov.in>.

³² His third visit to India and his second visit as Minister of Foreign Affairs. About his visit to India as Minister of Regional Cooperation, see section 6.3.1.1.

It should be noted that in diplomatic practice, a large number of high-level official visits in general and dialogues between foreign ministers in particular are considered the litmus test of bilateral relations between countries. It is therefore important to note that the increased number of Indian high-level official visits particularly during the NDA governments, reflected the strengthening of India's bilateral relations with Israel.

6.3.1.3 Israel's International Development Cooperation Programme (Mashav)

Since the late 1950s, Israel has been sharing its expertise with other countries through Israel's International Development Cooperation Programme. Training courses in Israel, overseas courses, projects, technology transfer, research collaboration and long and short-term assignments by Israeli experts are the essence of the activities of the centre for International Cooperation of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Mashav) (Laufer, 1967:17-36).

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Israel, and even before it, hundreds of Indians participated in training courses in areas such as agriculture, community development, public health and early childhood education as well as management and small and medium enterprises. These were all activities in areas where Israel could share its knowledge and experience with India by applying its expertise and innovative technology aimed at creating the best solutions for rapid and sustainable development (Yegar, 2004:176).

Special emphasis was placed by Mashav on agricultural and farming courses. Consequently, the Israeli - Indian cooperation in agriculture grew significantly after 1993 following the signing of a bilateral agreement in the field of agriculture. A new chapter in Israeli-Indian cooperation began on 31 December 1996 after the president of Israel at that time, Ezer Weizman, laid the foundation for the Israeli - Indian Research and Development Farm

at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) in Pusa near New Delhi (*Indian Express*, 31/12/1996). The aim of the project was to introduce a variety of Israeli technologies that focussed on promoting the intensive and commercially viable cultivation of agricultural crops in India. In this regard, an official visit to the IARI was undertaken by the Indian Agricultural Minister, Ajit Singh, in December 2001. In addition, in February 2001 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent an Israeli army medical team to the state of Gujarat, following a devastating earthquake to help restore the state's medical facilities.

Training courses in Israel, on the spot courses and consultancies are key features in Mashav's activities in India:

Table 6.1. The Israeli-Indian International Development Cooperation Programme (1993-2004).³³

| Years | Indian trainees in Israel | Indian trainees in "On- the-Spot courses" | Long term consultancies in India | Short term consultancies in India |
|--------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| 1993 | 87 | (1) 52 | | 1 |
| 1994 | 102 | (4) 89 | | 8 |
| 1995 | 81 | (8) 241 | | 3 |
| 1996 | 92 | (8) 174 | | 4 |
| 1997 | 85 | (10) 460 | | 1 |
| 1998 | 103 | (9) 336 | 2 | 5 |
| 1999 | 92 | (7) 301 | 2 | 12 |
| 2000 | 93 | (10) 330 | 2 | 7 |
| 2001 | 72 | (7) 190 | 2 | 6 |
| 2002 | 99 | (7) 170 | 2 | 1 |
| 2003 | 61 | (4) 116 | 1 | 4 |
| 2004 | 30 | (1) 28 | | 1 |
| Total | 997 | (76*) 2537 | 11 | 53 |

* Number of on-the-Spot courses.

³³ The above information is based on data available from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs centre for cooperation's annual reports (<http://www.mfa.gov.il>).

The growing number of courses, Indian trainees and consultancies, since the establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and India indicate the importance attached by the Government of Israel to its bilateral relations with India.

6.3.1.4 Israeli - Indian bilateral agreements

After the establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and India, a large number of bilateral agreements were signed and ratified by both countries (see appendix 3).³⁴

6.3.2 Defence relations as joint strategic interests

Diplomatic relations between Israel and India and the normalisation of bilateral ties enabled the two countries to develop their military cooperation as a joint strategic interest. Extensive changes in India, by the beginning of the 1990s had brought about a significant change in the Indian security perspective and a restructuring of its defence capability (the fourth largest army in the world). During that decade, India underwent a transitional stage in terms of building strategic security as well as in terms of its national defence policy.

According to Nancy Jetty, the following parameters influenced the Indian security perspective in the 1990s:

First, India's status and power projections remain essentially contingent on its national security in terms of political stability, economic development and military strength. Second, although the asymmetrical power structure in South Asia ensures India's centrality, its regional power and influence tends to get circumscribed by the neighbouring countries' sustained pressure to counter its pre-eminence. In particular, Pakistan's unceasing search for parity with Indian makes for a deep-rooted strategic dissonance in the region which effectively reduces its capacity to shape or influence events in its neighbourhood. Third, continued involvement of external powers in the region remains an integral part of South Asian geopolitical realities. The end of the Cold War

³⁴ For the list of Israeli-Indian, bilateral agreements, see appendix 3. The list was obtained from the MFA's official website (<http://www.mfa.gov.il>).

has weakened the inevitable link between regional conflict and Great Power rivalry. However, the inability of the states of the region to evolve a credible bilateral and regional framework for cooperation would continue to play an important role in reinforcing the pattern of external involvement – primarily in pursuance of their own strategic interests – in the region (Jetty, 1997:1245).

A framework of India's national security has to take both military and non-military dimensions into consideration, in terms of both external threats and internal challenges to India's international integrity and national unity in the short term as well as in the long term. In addition, issues pertaining to regional peace and stability continue to dominate the Indian national strategy. In addition, the crucial link between external hostile forces and domestic subversive forces continues to pose a severe challenge for Indian national security (the incidence of terrorism in Kashmir has risen since the 1990s, with Pakistan's support).

The strategic Northeast ring consisting of China, Bangladesh and Myanmar (including the Chinese presence in Myanmar) is considered a major security concern for India in terms of Low Intensity Conflict (LIC).³⁵ In recent years, China has presented an indirect military and economic challenge to India (Cohen, 2001:266).

On 11 and 13 May 1998, India claimed to have detonated five nuclear devices, to which Pakistan responded on 28 and 30 May 1998, by claiming that it had detonated six nuclear weapons. India had to decide how to deal with this issue and had to decide how to adapt its nuclear doctrine and what form it should take in relation to Pakistan and China. Making choices regarding the building of missile delivery systems had been another strategic matter of concern to India. The linkages between drug trafficking, organised violence and the magnitude of the proliferation of small arms had also become a source of instability in India (as well as in South Asia). In addition, India had to deal with the trafficking of guns and drugs that

³⁵ LIC – low intensity conflict is a term in international relations when the commitment of the military capabilities is finite and limited.

generated interstate tensions and terrorism, as well as the movement of refugees from neighbouring countries.

Israel, on the other hand, sees itself as an island fortress in the Middle East and considers security as its number one strategic interest (acute “Security Dilemma”) while concentrating on its ability to respond to any military threat and/or violence against its territory or citizens in defensive as well as offensive manners. Israel's security situation is reflected in a high state of military alertness, resource mobilisation (including budget allocations) and indigenous defence industries. At the same time, it maintains its strategic relationship with the US in order to preserve its military strength and regional military superiority as well as its deterrent capabilities (Klieman, 1990:1).

The normalisation of bilateral ties between Israel and India since 1992 made it possible for two countries to develop their military connections based on their security and commercial interests (Pant, 2005:3). Both countries have adopted similar positions on arm control issues and Islamic radicalism, but the real opportunity for Israeli-Indian military strategic cooperation can be found in India's search for technological independence and Israel's quest for military qualitative superiority regarding its Arab neighbours. India's substantial difficulties with upgrading and modernising its armed forces compelled India to seek long-term collaboration with Israel. On the other hand, arms exports have been an essential and integral part of Israel's security sector since such exports lower the unit cost of production, offset the cost of research and development, reduce Israel's balance deficit and provide employment. In fact, the Israel defence industries cannot depend on the Israeli market alone and about three-quarters of its production has to be exported. Therefore, Israel's military relationship with India presents an attractive and challenging opportunity for Israel and provides a market for its defence industry. In other words, India's search for technology and Israel's need for making its defence research a viable economical entity are complementary (Klieman, 1990:3).

The national security factor has evolved as the dominant factor regarding Israeli - Indian relations and is based on the convergence of strategic and national security interests. Significantly, India has gradually emerged as Israel's most important arms market. 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 the key determinants that effected the Indian defence reorientation towards Israel. In fact, according to Dennis Kux the attack on the Indian Parliament was the decisive moment as far as India's war on terrorism was concerned (Kux, 2002:98). Despite the cooling of formal relations between them during the tenure of the UPA government, the working meetings and mutual visits of military officials continued as well as official dialogues between the foreign ministries.

According to Dinesh Kumar (2001:4-8), the symbiotic nature of Indian and Israeli security interests caused the two governments to interact extensively in terms of the development of Israeli-Indian military cooperation. He pointed out that India has developed its military ties with Israel because of the following challenges facing the Indian military establishment:

- After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, crucial supplies of military spare parts were interrupted and India felt the need to diversify its defence suppliers and realised the danger of being too dependent on one source.
- India's short-term defence preparedness depended not only on its ability to obtain crucial spare parts, but also on upgrading its existing forces.
- India's major defence projects were constrained because of the lack of advanced technology.³⁶

³⁶ Projects like the Main Battle Tank (Arjun), Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) and the integrated Missiles Development Programme (IMDP).

- In recent decades, India's internal security situation has deteriorated. The availability of modern arms and weapon systems to terrorists has necessitated the introduction of the latest security technology.

India has realised that overcoming the above challenges can be achieved by developing its military ties with Israel since Israel's research-oriented industrial-military sector is viewed by India as a good option for answering some of its defence and security needs.³⁷ Israel's sophisticated expertise in the sphere of manufacturing and upgrading high-combat aircraft, anti-tactical ballistic missiles, electronic warfare and communication equipment, as well as security technology are of particular interest to India. The Indian military force has also shown interest in the Israeli Defence Forces' successful warfare strategies and concepts. On the other hand, Israel is interested in military cooperation with India.

The Israeli need for military superiority in terms of arms over its neighbours is linked to its need for having access to more markets for its military exports and India is a big attraction in this regard. In addition, unlike some other countries, Israel does not have any objection to selling its arms and technology to India. Southeast Asia has become an important destination for Israeli trade and Israel has a deep interest in Israeli-Indian naval cooperation in particular and in developing close military ties with India in general. Subhash Kapila (2000:4-7) spells out the following imperatives for strategic military cooperation between Israel and India:

- Israel is a valuable autonomous source of sophisticated weapons and military equipment developed indigenously; it therefore rules external pressure out on Israel not to supply military equipment to India.
- Israel's defence industries have earned a global reputation for the upgrading of old weapons systems to the latest technological

³⁷ The issues of counter terrorism and intelligence cooperation are dealt with separately in the following part of this section.

capabilities. This applies specifically to India's large number of Russian combat aircraft and tanks.

- Israel's technological advances in the fields of satellites, satellite imagery, missiles, rockets and nuclear fields are appreciable. As most of them are the result of indigenous development, they can be a source of advanced technology for India. India prefers to purchase electronic warfare equipment from suppliers that do not sell equipment to Muslim countries in general and Pakistan in particular.
- The potential exists for Israeli - Indian joint defence production projects and the marketing of conventional military equipment. In addition, India's underutilised and ageing defence production facilities could be modernised and upgraded for export purposes.
- India offers a potentially vast market for arms sales, as India's weapons and military equipment requirements are going to grow exponentially in the following ten years.
- India needs independent sources of military equipment and technology in the fields of nuclear power generation, space technology and satellite imagery; all of which Israel can supply.
- The high cost-effectiveness of joint Israeli - Indian defence production ventures.
- Israel's hi-technological industries could find India an attractive market for sales, the transfer of specific technologies, joint production and marketing.
- India can offer advanced technological and industrial expertise, in certain fields, for Israeli civil and military uses.

6.3.2.1 Military cooperation

Following the Pakistani nuclear test in 1998 and the Kargil War with Pakistan in 1999, the demand of the Indian defence forces for Israeli-made military equipment has escalated and Israel has become India's second largest weapon supplier (after Russia). As Dinesh Kumar (2001:5) points out:

Israel's developed and research-oriented industrial-military complex is viewed by India as a good option answering some of its defence and security needs. Indian military officials are not only interested in Israeli weapons and technology, but they have also shown interest in the Israeli Defence Forces' successful warfare strategies and concepts. On the other hand, the Israeli quest for qualitative superiority in arms over its neighbours is closely linked to its tapping of more markets, and India is a big attraction in this regard.

The change of government in India in 2004 (as well as in Israel) did not change the Indian military cooperation level with Israel. The Indian Defence Minister in the UPA government, Pranab Mukherjee, made India's policy towards Israel clear by declaring openly: "There will be no change in the existing defence ties between India and Israel." (*Indian Express* 1/7/2004).

Since 1992, as far as military visits and military contacts between Israel and India were concerned, senior officials from the Defence Ministries of both countries have regularly exchanged working visits, many of which were veiled in secrecy. In February 1992, the Director-General of the former Israeli Police Ministry attended an international police convention in New Delhi. In May 1992, an Israeli delegation including manufacturers of military equipment, visited India. In August 1992, a delegation from the Malat Company came to India to offer cruise missile technology for unmanned reconnaissance aircraft and according to some media reports, the offer included the joint development of the Searcher Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) and the supply of an Israeli secure digital data link to India's MiGs combat jets. A follow-up delegation from the Malat Company

finalised the deal in New Delhi in December 1992 (Kumaraswamy, 1998:14).

In April 1993, a delegation of the Manufacturers Association of Israel, which included representatives from the Israeli Defence Industry, visited India. In May 1993, the Chief Minister of the State of Maharashtra, formerly the Minister of Defence, Sharad Pawar, acting on direct instructions from Prime Minister Rao, led an Indian delegation to the Agritech exhibition in Tel Aviv accompanied by a high-level military team that visited Israeli military facilities and establishments such as an anti-terror training facility (*Sunday*, 30/5/1993). In June 1993, the Joint Secretary of the Indian Defence Ministry, G.S. Lyer, led a National Defence College delegation to Israel. In September 1993, a delegation representing Israeli telecommunications and electronics visited India. Visits from other Israeli delegations, such as the Israeli Export Institute delegation in October 1993, included representatives of the Israeli Aircraft Industry (IAI) as well as other military and electronic industrial companies. In December 1993, Israel participated in India's first air show AVIA-93 in Bangalore.

In August 1994, Israeli Defence Ministry's Director-General, David Ivry, visited India (Yegar, 2004:75). In March 1995, Israel's Air Force Commander, Herzl Bodinger, paid an official visit to India and his Indian counterpart reciprocated by visiting Israel in July 1996. According to the Indian media reports, while Bodinger was in India he offered:

A package deal which Airborne Warning and Control Systems (AWACS), Remotely Piloted Vehicles (RPVs), access to an air platform of anti defection and anti jamming manoeuvres, as well as a recently launched Israeli military communication satellite, specialized weapons...and training of Indian air force personal in the fourth generation fly-by-wire systems. In return, Israel, apparently, demanded the use of the Indian Air force bases at Jodhpur or Bhuj as air staging facilities (*Hindustan Times*, 27/1/1995 and Kumaraswamy, 1998:17-18).

In July 1995, the Indian Defence Secretary, K.A. Nambiar visited Israel and in the same month, the Joint Secretary of the Indian Defence Ministry, Kaushal Singh, led a delegation of the Indian National Defence College to Israel. In November 1995, two Indian naval ships, INS Gomati and INS Subhadra, visited Israel as the guests of the Israeli Navy. In December 1995, Air Vice-Marshal V.K. Bhatia, the Assistant Chief of Air Staff Operations, led a delegation to Israel to discuss flight safety measures.

In June 1996, the Chief of the Indian Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the scientific advisor to the Defence Minister, Abdul Kalam, paid a visit to Israel, which was described as a highpoint of Israeli-Indian security cooperation (Kapila, 2000:4).³⁸ In July 1996, Air Chief Marshal S.K. Sareen came to Israel as the guest of the Israeli Air Force Commander and in September 1996, Deputy Chief Marshal M.S. Vasudev visited Israel. Later, in November 1996, the Israeli Naval Chief, Vice Admiral Alex Tal visited India. In addition, in December 1996, Israel participated in the AeroIndia International air show in Bangalore. In December 1996, the head of the IAI, Moshe Keret, visited New Delhi.

In February 1997, the Indian Defence Secretary, T.K. Banerji, reciprocated Ivry's visit and led a high-level delegation to Israel. Subsequently, in April 1997, Wing Commander N. Brown assumed office as India's first Defence Attaché in Israel. Furthermore, in March 1998, the first serving Indian Chief of Army Staff, General Prakash Malik visited Israel (Yegar, 2004:176).

The visit of Home Minister, L.K. Advani, in May 2000, has been another important step in strengthening the Israeli-Indian relations in the field of security cooperation. An ongoing dialogue was conducted between the National Security Councils of the two countries since September 2001. In June 2002, before the Indian limited military strike against Pakistan ("Operation Parakram"), the Director General of the Israeli Ministry of Defence, Amos Yaron, visited India and following his visit, Israel supplied,

³⁸ Abdul Kalam was elected President of the Republic of India in 2002.

the Indian army with the hardware necessary for their operation in the Pakistani border with special aeroplanes (Pant, 2005:8). The Israeli Air Force Commander, Dan Halutz, visited India in February 2003. Yaron paid another visit to India in December 2003. He visited India in September 2004 and his visit was reciprocated later that year by his Indian counterpart in December 2004.

Defence cooperation including high level Israeli and Indian Defence Ministry officials has continued even after the change of government in India in May 2004 and the Vice-Chief of the Indian Army, the Indian Navy Chief and the Chief of the Indian Air Force visited Israel. In May 2004, two Indian naval ships, INS Mysore, a general purpose destroyer and INS Godavari, a missile frigate, visited Israel on a goodwill visit., Yaron paid another visit to India in March 2005 where he participated in the opening ceremony of the Israeli booth at the Aero-India 2005 Exhibition. Subsequently, the Israeli booth in this exhibition was visited by the Indian Defence Minister Mukherjee.

In terms of military equipment procurement and arms sales, India is the third larger importer of Israeli weaponry after China and Turkey (Kumar, 2001:5). Israeli companies are selling military equipment to India and are helping it to upgrade some of its ageing Soviet weaponry. By the end of 1993, the Foreign Defence and Export Department of the Defence Ministry of Israel had appointed over fifty local agents in New Delhi to sell various Israeli defence items to India (Kumaraswamy, 1998:16).

On 7 June 1993, the *Aviation Week and Space Technology Journal* reported that India had purchased an Israeli fire control system and a thermal imager for installation in the Indian Vijayanta tanks. In addition, armour upgrading was also undertaken and artillery equipment as well as ammunition was purchased. In March 1994, *Defence News* disclosed India's purchase of 16 Hunter and Seeker Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) from Israel. In April 1995, *Flight International* disclosed that India had bought Harpy Missiles from Israel.

According to the *Strategic Digest*, India bought Elta Electronics' radar-jamming pads for its air force in spring 1996. That year Israel lost the contract to Russia for the upgrading of MiG 21 jets but managed to secure the avionics sub-contract for the Elta Company and the IAI. The companies also signed several contracts with the IAF for projects that included fitting India's MiG 21 aircraft with laser-guided bombs. In December 1996, it was reported in the Indian media (*Times of India*, 27/12/1996) that the Indian Air force had bought a sophisticated Air Combat Manoeuvring Instrumentation system (ACMI) from Israel for developing air combat tactics and that the Ramata division of IAI was awarded a contract to build two Devora patrol boats in Goa. . In addition, the Indian Navy had bought electronic support measure sensors from Israel and the Tadiran Communication Company provided military communication systems to the Indian Army.

In December 1996, during the state visit of the Israeli President, Ezer Weizman, to India, Elta signed a contract with India to supply it with electronic warfare systems; while the Iscar Company initiated a partnership contract with the Indian Air Force's blade factory (Kumaraswamy, 1998:19). In 2001 Israel responded quickly to India's request for arms during the Kargil War with Pakistan. Unmanned Aerial Vehicles for high altitude surveillance, laser-guided systems and many other items were provided within days of the request (*Asia Times*, 10/6/2003).

After the Kargil border conflict in 1999, the Indian Defence Ministry signed a contract (for five years) for the delivery of 100 tactical Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and 200 UAVs for low and high altitude operations. In February 2003, a contract was signed to supply advanced Israeli Avionics Systems for India's new MiG 27 combat aircraft. In March 2003, a contract for the development of Helicopter's Detachable Systems between Israel's Aviation Industry (IAI) and Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL) was signed. Israel also supplied India with various radar systems including portable

battlefield radars as well as border monitoring equipment, human movement detecting sensors, hand-held thermals and night vision equipment (Inbar, 2004:96).

In 2003, a contract was signed with the IAI for 18 Heron UAVs with an option for an additional 16 UAVs. In the same year, India ordered 20 Israeli Barak Sea- to-Air anti-missile weapons for its Navy (with an option to purchase ten more missiles over the successive five to seven years. (*Defence News*, 24/2/2003). Another contract was signed in the same year with Israel's Sultam Systems Company, which upgraded 133 mm. Artillery, -anti- aircraft guns and sold 155 mm. self-propelled ammunition to the Indian army. Israel also sold the Indian army assault rifles in addition to Galil sniper rifles and laser range finding and targeting equipment. (*Defence News*, 12/5/2003). HAL signed a contract with the IAI concerning the development and supply of advanced avionics for 200 light Indian Helicopters (*Times of India* 14/3/2004). In 2003, India also purchased the rather advanced long-range radar Arrow missile's defence system ("Green Pine"). India has officially expressed its special interest in the Arrow missile defence system (Arrow 2 missile) which was developed by Israel (Inbar, 2004:96).

The transfer of technology, joint weapon development and joint military production were important elements in Israeli-Indian military collaboration. As pointed out by Kumar (2001:5), India needed Israeli technology for its military projects such as battle tanks, light combat aircraft, unmanned aerial vehicles and various types of missiles. In principle, military cooperation and joint ventures work for both countries. India is developing its military manufacturing capability; while it is contributing to Israeli research and the development of new weaponry. India's objective of developing a quick deployment force and a rapid mobility force for special missions is based on the Israeli experience and technology. The Israeli - Indian upgrade of MiG 27 is an example of military cooperation by IAI and HAL. In September 2002, the two companies signed a contract to

manufacture Advanced Light Helicopters (ALH) for the Indian army jointly and the two companies set up a division in Hyderabad for the maintenance and aviation services. IAI also signed another contract in February 2003 with the Nelco Company to develop, manufacture and market a range of electronic products primarily for the Indian Defence Forces. Rafael, Israel's weapon development authority, signed a contract in 2003, for the transfer of technology to produce the Spike anti-armour and the advanced Python-4 air-to-air missiles. Another contract was signed by Israel's Military Industries (IMI) with the state-owned company, Ordnance Factory Board, for a joint venture regarding artillery production that included 130 mm. and 155 mm. cargo projectiles, 122 cargo projectiles, 125 advanced tank ammunition and 122 cargo mortars.

According to publications in India, an Indian delegation from the DRDO held discussions in Israel regarding the option of Israeli-Indian cooperation including the development prototype of a nuclear submarine.. As part of this naval cooperation, Israel and India's sharing of military technology may result in the first completed submarine models produced in the production line for service in the Indian Ocean within the next few years (Singh, 2003:1, *Financial Express*, 3/11/2003). Inbar (2004:100) points out that in order to parallel its air power and its capability to project long distance might:

Israel built an Ocean going Navy. Israeli Saar-5 corvettes, which are able to stay at sea for long periods, have been seen in the Indian Ocean. Three new Israeli submarines are equipped with long-range cruise missile launching capability. One such missile was tested in the Indian Ocean, generating reports about Indian-Israeli naval cooperation. India is not averse to a greater Israeli presence in the Indian Ocean. Indeed, Israel has plans to triple its submarine force and to build additional Saar-5 corvettes. Generally, the Israeli strategic community is increasingly interested in the sea, both to provide depth and for deployment of a submarine-based nuclear second-strike force.

In March 2004, a contract totalling US \$1.1 billion was finalised between Israel and India concerning the delivery of Phalcon Airborne Warning and

Controlling Systems (AWACS) on the platform of a Russian Ilyushin military aircraft.³⁹ In the same month, Tadiran Communication was declared the winner of a bid amounting to US \$113 million to supply military communication systems to the Indian Army (*Haaretz* 11/3/2004). The Vice Chief of the Indian Army, the Indian Navy Chief and the Chief of the Indian Air Force visited Israel in the winter of 2004 (Pant, 2005:9).

In March 2005, the IAI and India's Aeronautic Development Establishment signed a contract to manufacture three types of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles jointly (*Globes*, 2/3/2005)⁴⁰ and the IMI Corporation won a US \$140 million tender to construct chemical factories in the state of Bihar (*Asian Age*, 11/5/2005).

A Joint Defence Ministerial Committee is convened regularly to discuss military cooperation and military topics of mutual concern. Israeli - Indian military cooperation is undoubtedly a key joint strategic interest, in terms of volume and quality, in bilateral defence relations in particular and a cornerstone in the bilateral relations between the two countries in general.

6.3.2.2 Counter-terrorism cooperation

Counter-terrorism is another key area that plays a role in the cooperation between Israel and India. India has shown considerable interest in Israel's internal security technology, equipment and methods to counter cross-border terrorism in Kashmir and the insurgencies in the North-eastern states (Kumar, 2001:7).

Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism have been issues of concern for both Israel and India, particularly after 11 September 2001. In fact, the Israeli head of the National Security Council, Major General Uzi Dayan held high-level discussions regarding counter-terrorism in New Delhi on the same day. Following the aerial attack on the World Trade Centre in New York,

³⁹ A first delivery of five Falcons was scheduled to be delivered in 2007.

⁴⁰ Rustan, Pawan and Gagan.

India has increased its cooperation with other countries regarding international terrorism by forming Joint Counter Terrorism Working Groups. According to Dennis Kux (2002:93), September 11 and India's undivided support of the US war on international terrorism gave India an opportunity to transform its ongoing Indo-Pakistani conflict into part of the global war against terrorism while improving India's relations with the US.⁴¹

In January 1995, a delegation from the Indian Home Ministry travelled to Israel to study the Israeli developed barbed wire system in order to examine it as an option to seal the Indo-Pakistani Line of Control in the Kashmir Valley as well as the borders of the States of Gujarat and Rajasthan (*Jerusalem Post*, 6/5/1995).⁴² In October 1995, the Director General of the National Security Guards visited Israel in order to establish a channel of cooperation, including the training and purchase of weaponry.⁴³ Counter-terrorism cooperation was built up on a working basis, and the visit of the Indian Home Minister, in charge of internal security, L.K. Advani, to Israel in May 2000 marked a major step in the process of strengthening of Israeli-Indian cooperation in the field of security and counter-terrorism. This included an official meeting he had with the heads of Israel's Intelligence Agency (Mossad).⁴⁴ During his visit, Advani emphasised that India shared Israel's views regarding the menacing threat of terrorism, especially when coupled with religious fundamentalism. According to Dinesh Kumar (2001:7), Israel agreed to provide India with modern security equipment as well as anti-terrorism training and was probably the only country that had access to sensitive Indian installations in Kashmir.

The Indian Minister of External Affairs, Jaswant Singh, visited Israel in June 2000 and during his meeting with the Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs, David Levi, the two decided to establish a mechanism to deal with

⁴¹ For details about the United States, concerning foreign relations between Israel and India, see section 6.3.9.1.

⁴² Home Ministry is in charge of Indian domestic security.

⁴³ Elite commando unit responsible for VIP protection.

⁴⁴ For more details about the Mossad cooperation with India, see sections 4.10.3.1 and 6.3.2.3.

the fight against terrorism with the aim of institutionalising these contacts (*Jerusalem Post*, 3/7/2000). The first Israeli-Indian Joint Working Group (JWG) on counter- terrorism was set up in the same month, on 6 January 2000, in order to strengthen the cooperation between the two countries in their fight against terrorism including cooperation on multilateral forums and since then the JWG have been meeting, alternately, on a regular basis. During the visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Shimon Peres, in January 2002, a mutual agreement on counter terrorism was discussed between the two countries (*Yediot Acharonot*, 11/1/2002).

The second Israeli - Indian JWG meeting on counter-terrorism took place in Delhi in May 2002 and the third one was held in Jerusalem on 24 March 2003. On 11 July 2003, the visiting Israeli special envoy, David Ivry, said at a press conference in New Delhi that Israel would help India to fight terrorism (*The Hindu*, 11/7/2003). During the visit of Ariel Sharon in India, counter terrorism was defined by Prime Minister Vajpayee as a key area of cooperation between India and Israel (*The Hindu*, 10/9/2003). Following the fourth meeting of the Israeli - Indian Joint Working Group on counter-terrorism and the first round of consultations on disarmament issues, which took place in New Delhi between 29 November and 2 December 2004, the following joint statement was published in a leading Indian newspaper:

Both sides reaffirmed their unequivocal condemnations of all acts of terrorism. They reviewed the global campaign against terrorism and discussed ways and means by which the fight against terrorism by the international community can be made more effective and how India and Israel can contribute to this (*The Hindu*, 4/12/2004).

The gradual globalisation of Islamic terrorism after September 11, 2001 has brought about improved cooperation between India and Israel in the field of counter-terrorism. After September 11, international collaboration regarding terrorism became an urgent priority and the war on terrorism that followed, appeared to create a better climate for Israeli - Indian cooperation particularly in the counter-terrorism field. Israel and India have diversified

and have widened the scope of subjects discussed at the Joint Working Counter-Terrorism Group including combating international terror. Seminars dealing with subjects such as border security, suicide bombers, aviation security and the financing of terrorism as well as information security including digital and cyber warfare, were held in India by Israeli experts (*Times of India*, 30/5/2005).

The globalisation of Islamic fundamentalism and the growing connection between Kashmiri and Palestinian militant organisations have created mutual concern in Israel and India. Both countries believe that by fighting the menace of terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism, it will enhance peace and security in the Middle East and South Asia. Israel considers the spread of Islamic militancy and terrorism in the Middle East, Central Asia and Southeast Asia as a threat to its national security. From an international viewpoint, both countries were also concerned about maritime terrorism as well as possible outside intervention in Kashmir or the West Bank and Gaza in particular, considering the fact that in terms of maritime terrorism, the Indian Ocean region is highly vulnerable.⁴⁵ At a banquet for Israel's Prime Minister Sharon during his official visit to New Delhi, on 8 September 2003, Prime Minister Vajpayee remarked that:⁴⁶

Together with the international community and as victims of terrorism, Israel and India are partners in the battle against this scourge (*The Hindu*, 10/9/2003).

The common theme of uniting against terrorism was highlighted in the joint statement regarding Sharon's visit:

Terrorism undermines the very foundation of freedom and democracy, endangers the continued existence of open and democratic societies and constitutes a global threat; therefore, there cannot be any compromise in the war against terrorism ((*The Hindu*, 10/9/2003).

⁴⁵ For details about the Indian Ocean, see section 6.3.12.

⁴⁶ For details about Sharon's visit in India, see section 6.2.2.

6.3.2.3 Intelligence cooperation

Intelligence cooperation is commensurate with counter-terrorism cooperation and is one of the key areas of collaboration between the two countries. Radical Islamism, both at home and in its immediate neighbourhoods, has cemented Israeli - Indian intelligence cooperation. According to Subash Kapila (2000:7-8), during the visit of Home Minister Advani, in May 2000, he had a meeting with the heads of the Israeli Intelligence Agency (Mossad).⁴⁷ Advani was accompanied by the heads of India's intelligence agencies the RAW, the Investigation Bureau (IB) and the Central Police organisations fighting terrorism and he formalised intelligence sharing and cooperation agreements with Israel including collecting counter-terrorism intelligence in general and technical intelligence (TECHINT) regarding maritime security in particular.⁴⁸

During May 2000, India's Government appointed a special task force to make recommendations for the overhaul of the Indian intelligence apparatus. The threats covered by the task force encompassed the entire spectrum of likely threats including terrorism and insurgencies in various forms such as religious and ideological terrorism (Raman, 2005:1). The assumed attack by Al-Qaeda on a US Naval ship at Aden in October 2000, added another area of concern to India regarding possible maritime terrorism. The September 11 2001 terrorist strike and the precision with it was planned and executed, were sources of serious concern for both Israel and India and have increased their intelligence cooperation in the ensuing years.. During the visit of the head of the Indian Intelligence Bureau, K.P. Singh to Israel, he met the heads the Israeli Security Service in March 2004. His meetings strengthened the intelligence collaboration between the two countries as part of their counter-terrorism cooperation as

⁴⁷ For information about Advani's visit, see also section 6.3.2.2.

⁴⁸ For more details about Israeli-Indian counter- terrorism cooperation, see section 6.3.2.2.

well as their monitoring of nuclear technology in Pakistan (*Times of India*, 19/3/2004).⁴⁹

6.3.3 Space cooperation as a joint strategic interest

While Israel's space efforts revolved around its high resolution imaging capabilities, India's space programme, which is one of the country's success stories, covers a wide range of activities in launch vehicles, satellites and space applications. India builds a wide variety of remote sensing, meteorological and communications satellites and launches them with its own rockets.⁵⁰ In 2001, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) launched a technology experiment satellite by means of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV).

In October 1994, Prof. U. R. Rao, a member of the Indian Space Commission and former chairperson of the ISRO visited Israel with a four-member delegation where they met with the heads of Israel's Space Agency in order to establish ties between the two countries in this particular field (Kumaraswamy, 1998:17). In November 2002, the space agencies of Israel and India signed an agreement on cooperation with regard to peaceful uses of outer space. While Israel was interested in India's launch vehicles, India was interested in Israel's concept of small satellites and their employment for dual use, including military functions (Inbar, 2004:98).

In August 2003, the chairperson of the ISRO, Krishnaswami Kasturirangan, paid a visit to Israel. According to *The Hindu* newspaper (10/9/2003), during his visit, the two countries signed an umbrella agreement, which included collaboration in the area of small and micro satellites. One month later, during Prime Minister Sharon's visit to India in September 2003,

⁴⁹ For details about intelligence cooperation pertaining to Pakistan, see section 6.3.16.

⁵⁰ Five Ofek satellites have already been launched by Israel as well as an Eros-A1 satellite on a commercial basis and an Amos 1 communication satellite.

Sharon announced the launching of an Israeli space telescope, on top of the Indian Polar Satellite launch Vehicle (Pant, 2005:10).

The Israeli Minister of Science and Technology, Modi Zandberg, together with the Chairman of Israel's Space Agency, visited India in December 2003 and discussed the possibility of joining the Indian planned project of sending an unmanned spaceship to the moon in 2008. The heads of the two countries' space organisations exchanged visits once again in December 2004 in order to finalise the space agreement between the two countries.

6.3.4 Nuclear power policy coordination as a joint strategic interest

Israel and India have not signed the NPT and therefore have common ground for formulating a coordinated diplomatic policy regarding that matter, although, Israel, in contrast with India had signed the CTBT in 1996.. Israel did not sign the NPT because it cannot afford to rely on the treaty and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for its national security, particularly after two signatories of the treaty from Muslim countries, namely Iraq and Iran had developed nuclear capabilities.⁵¹ Israel has adopted a cautious stance that is characterised by deliberate ambiguity regarding the matter of nuclear power policy by declaring: "Israel does not possess nuclear weapons and would not be the first to introduce them into the Middle East" (Rolef, 1993:232).

India saw the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995 as a sort of legitimisation of its possession of nuclear weapons. The Congress government in the 1990s as well as the two United Front governments that followed (from 1996 to 1998) did not support the idea of nuclear tests. However, the BJP government did conduct two nuclear tests on 11 and 13 May 1998 respectively.

⁵¹ On 7 June 1981, Israel raided a nearly completed Iraqi nuclear reactor (OSIRAQ). In 1993 Israel's Prime Minister Netanyahu, regarded the prevention of the nuclear bomb as Israel's most important task (Haaretz, 26/8/1996).

Officially, India and Israel have denied the existence of any nuclear cooperation between them (Kumar, 2001:10). On 3 June 1998, the Israeli Deputy Minister of Defence, Silvan Shalom, in reply to a question in the Knesset, emphasised that: "Israel does not have and did not have any part in the Indian nuclear tests, despite of false foreign publications about it." (Israel's Yearbook of Official Documents, 1998).

However, both countries share concern over Pakistan's nuclear capability and according to Dinesh Kumar: "It is widely believed that since the 1980s their intelligence agencies are in close contact over the issue" (Kumar, 2001:10).⁵²

Pakistan's nuclear capability is one of the key reasons why both countries have a keen strategic interest in anti-ballistic missile defence systems and India had officially expressed its special interest in the Arrow missile defence system (Arrow 2 missile) that was developed by Israel. Israel has a vital interest in preventing the transfer of nuclear capability from Pakistan to the Middle East and it is in Israel's national interest that the Pakistani nuclear capability is confined to South Asia and that no nuclear technology is transferred to the Middle East. Israel could not rule out the possibility of nuclear technology spilling over to the Middle East, in particular after the publication of A. Q. Khan's sales of nuclear technology to Iran, Libya and North Korea (*Dawn*, 25/01/2004). Khan, the founder of the Pakistani nuclear programme, sold nuclear technology on the international black market and was officially deposed from his position as advisor to the President of Pakistan.

Israel has repeatedly expressed its concern to India about a possible nuclear technology leak or the transfer of nuclear related information to Iran, a country that is developing nuclear capabilities and which is regarded by Israel as a strategic threat to its national security, in particular

⁵² For details about the Israeli-Indian dialogue in the late 1980's about the Pakistani nuclear facility, see section 3.10.3.3.

considering the fact that India has close ties with Iran.⁵³ Unlike the US, but similar to other Asian countries, Israel did not react to the Indian nuclear test conducted in May 1998 and did not react when New Delhi tested the Agni, India's intermediate-range ballistic missile in January 2002.

6.3.5 Economic relations as a joint strategic interest

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and India the two countries have witnessed tremendous growth in their bilateral economic relations and have implemented many measures to promote them, including an agreement for agricultural cooperation signed in December 1993. The Indian foreign policy emphasis on international politics shifted its focus to the economy, mindful of how far it had fallen behind the rest of Asia, including China, in economic development. India began to look for foreign investment, joint ventures that build up expertise in general and high technology in particular and new markets, in order to improve its export and foreign trade.

As pointed out by Farah Naaz (1999:247), the establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and India enabled Israel, a modern technology oriented country, to take part in these new Indian developments. Both countries have signed a large number of trade agreements as well as memorandums of understanding including the granting of the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status, the avoidance of double taxation and bilateral investment protection. In addition, the two countries initiated joint and industrial projects and India became an attractive market for Israel's agro-technological industries and its largest trading partner in Asia.⁵⁴ A joint business council between the Federation of Israel Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry was set up after the establishment of diplomatic relations and joint economic committees meetings between them take place on a regular basis.

⁵³ For details about Iran as a discrepant strategic interest, see section 6.3.17.

⁵⁴ For the list of bilateral agreements between Israel and India, see appendix 3.

As described in a paper published by the Export-Import Bank of India (*Israel and India: A study of trade and investment potential*, 2000:38-40), a development farm was introduced at the IARI in New Delhi during the visit of the Israeli President, Ezer Weizman, in December 1996.⁵⁵ Various other projects were also initiated during the visit, including a cotton demonstration farm in the state of Maharashtra and a demonstration dairy farm in the state of Punjab. During 1999, two delegations, namely from the Small Business Authority of Israel and the Federation of Israel Chamber of Commerce respectively, visited India for discussions with their Indian counterparts. The Indian Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO) held a week to showcase India's industrial strength, namely the "India Week" in Tel Aviv in May 2000. In September 2003, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the Israel Export and International Cooperation Institute as well as the Manufacturers Association of Israel, set up a forum consisting of senior businesspersons from both countries to promote trade and economic relations.

During Prime Minister Sharon's visit to India, in September 2003, six agreements were signed between the two countries.⁵⁶ Israel's Finance Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, met his Indian counterpart in Washington in October 2004 in order to discuss monetary guarantees for Indian states for projects carried out by Israeli enterprises. The Israeli Minister of Industry Trade and Employment, Ehud Olmert, visited India from 6-9 December 2004 with representatives from 45 leading Israeli companies. Following his visit, the Director General of the Indian Trade Ministry arrived in Israel to discuss bilateral trade between the two countries in order to prepare the ground for a grand economic agreement between the two countries. The Bank of India (BOI) opened its first branch in Israel in November 2005 (*Maariv*, 23/8/2005).⁵⁷

⁵⁵ For details about the Israeli development farm as well as Israel's International Development Cooperation Program (Mashav), see section 6.3.1.3.

⁵⁶ For details about Sharon's visit, see section 6.2.2.

⁵⁷ The largest bank in India.

Table 6.2 Israeli - Indian bilateral trade (1992-2005)

| Israel's Export (in US\$ million) | India's Export (in US\$ million) | Bilateral Trade (in US\$ million) | Years |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|--------------|
| 127 | 75 | 202 | 1992 |
| 228 | 129 | 357 | 1993 |
| 363 | 151 | 514 | 1994 |
| 313 | 190 | 503 | 1995 |
| 311 | 251 | 562 | 1996 |
| 365 | 293 | 658 | 1997 |
| 332 | 343 | 675 | 1998 |
| 531 | 397 | 928 | 1999 |
| 551 | 453 | 1004 | 2000 |
| 470 | 413 | 883 | 2001 |
| 648 | 608 | 1,256 | 2002 |
| 883 | 703 | 1,586 | 2003 |
| 1,123 | 1,021 | 2,146 | 2004 |
| 1,191 | 1,214 | 2,405 | 2005 |

* Information is compiled from data available from the Industrial, Trade and Labour official web site: <http://www.moital.gov.il>

In 1992, the bilateral trade between Israel and India amounted to US \$202 million but in 2005, it reached US \$2.4 billion, while the unofficial goal agreed upon between the two countries is to boost bilateral trade between them to US \$5 billion. Active participation in trade fairs and exhibitions enhanced the awareness regarding business opportunities and promoted contact between Indian and Israeli firms, in particular the international Agro-exhibitions. Traditionally, the international agricultural exhibitions in Israel have attracted a large number of delegations and high-level officials from India, including state ministers, resulting in increased collaboration in the field of agriculture.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ For details about high-level official visits to Israel, see section 6.3.1.1 and regarding Sharad Pawar's visit to Agritech 93, see section 6.3.2.1.

There are direct air connections between the two countries. El-Al, Israel's national airline operates two commercial flights to Bombay (Mumbai) as well as freighter flights between Israel and India. Zim, Israel's Navigation Company, has a permanent General Agent in India and Israeli ships arrive regularly in Indian ports. The Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) transports goods to and from Israel (*Jerusalem Post-Special Supplement*, 2006). In terms of tourism between India and Israel, since the 1990s, nearly 75,000 Israeli tourists have been visiting India every year and about 25,000 Indians are visiting Israel annually.

Since 2002, bilateral trade and economic relations between the two countries have grown substantially. In addition, there are promising prospects of further improvement in their economic relationship with regard to the complementary potential existing between the various sectors of the two economies. Importantly, the Free Trade Agreements between Israel and the US and the European Union (EU) present opportunities for India to take advantage of Israel's position as a bridge for exporting Indian products to those areas as well as presenting Indian exporters with opportunities to set up joint ventures in Israel. On the other hand, setting up joint ventures in India would give Israeli companies opportunities and access to India's expanding domestic market as well as non-traditional markets in Asia.

6.3.6 Science and technology cooperation as a common strategic interest

Bilateral economic growth between Israel and India included cooperation in science and technology, which commenced in May 1993 with the signing of a bilateral agreement on science and technology. In December 1994, the Industrial Research minutes were signed to set up a Science and Technology Fund (amounting to US \$3 million) in order to facilitate industrial research and development cooperation between the two countries.

Following the Science and Technology agreement, a number of research projects were carried out in fields such as advanced materials, electro-optics and biotechnology, to name only a few. Exchange visits of scientists took place and joint seminars and conferences were held. In addition, an agreement to facilitate bilateral cooperation and exchanges in the field of science and technology was signed by the Indian Science Academy and Israel's National Academy of Science and Humanities and later on an additional protocol of cooperation was signed between India's Department of Science and Technology and the Israeli Ministry of Science.

Between 1995 and 1997, seven Memorandums of Understanding were signed regarding research projects in the field of advanced materials including two research projects, which took place in the field of information technology (IT). In June 1996, the Chief of the Indian DRDO and the scientific advisor to the Defence Minister, Abdul Kalam, paid a visit to Israel, which was described as a high point of Israeli-Indian security cooperation (Kapila, 2000:4).⁵⁹

In November 1999, under the Protocol of Cooperation, both sides agreed on joint research and development between the office of the chief scientist of Israel and the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR) as well as eleven other projects. The agreement also provided a framework for the exchange of researchers and for national conferences on scientific issues. In February 2002, an Israeli delegation consisting of 12 leading Israeli companies in the field of telecommunications and Information technology visited India. In addition, joint committee meetings in the field of science and technology have started to convene on a regular basis. A meeting in the field of biotechnology took place in Israel in February 2004 and a science and technology joint committee meeting followed in July 2004. During the visit of India's Minister of Science and Technology, Kapil Sibal, the two countries signed a memorandum of understanding on Israel-

⁵⁹ Abdul Kalam was elected President of the Republic of India in 2002.

India Industrial, Research and Development Initiative Cooperation (IIRDC) on 30 May 2005 in Israel and agreed upon setting up a joint research and development fund (*Jerusalem Post-Special Supplement*, 26/1/2006).

6.3.7 Cultural relations as a common interest.

Cultural ties between the two countries since 1992 have become considerably more intense than before that period. In 1997, Israel celebrated India's 50th year of independence with the Shalom India Festival, while India reciprocated one year later by organising many cultural events all over Israel as part of the celebration of the fifty years of Israeli independence.

The Israel-India Cultural Association was established in 1992 with Zubin Mehta, the Bombay born chief conductor of the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra, as its honorary president. Israeli publishers regularly participate in book fairs in India and Israeli anthologies have been a success in India and were made available in 13 local Indian languages as well as in English. Furthermore, there are an increasing number of Indian students at Israeli universities as well as at art academies. A cultural agreement was signed by Israel and India in May 1993 during the visit of Israel's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Shimon Peres, and within the framework of this agreement, two cultural exchange programmes were implemented. In 1994, the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra visited India and several concerts were conducted by Zubin Mehta in Bombay and New Delhi.

During the visit of President Weizman to India in December 1996, the second cultural exchange programme was signed, Israel participated in the Delhi International Book Fair for the first time and the Israel cultural centre was inaugurated in New Delhi with the Shalom India Festival, a month long celebration of India's 50th anniversary. The well-known Indian poet, Vikram Seth, participated in the Jerusalem Poet's festival in 1997 and his book '*A suitable boy*' was translated into Hebrew (Naaz, 1999:900).

In 1999, a festival to celebrate Israel 50th anniversary was celebrated in eight cities around India and the exhibition of the City of David was featured in Bombay and an ethnic pop musical concert by Israel's prominent singers was performed in Delhi and Mumbai. Israel participates annually in film festivals in India and a weeklong festival of Israeli films is featured regularly. Books by Israeli writers are being published by private publishers in India and a meeting of Indian and Israeli intellectuals takes place annually (Israel-Indian Bilateral Relations, 2001). The Israeli Minister of Education and Culture, Limor Livnat, signed an Action Plan in New Delhi in September 2003 as part of a programme for cultural and educational cooperation and an exchange programme on cooperation in the field of education.⁶⁰ The Israel Festival that included a film festival, a food and wine week, exhibitions, lectures and musical events took place in March 2005 in India.

In the context of bilateral relations, there is a mutual understanding that cultural ties should be tightened in order to reach both the civil society as well as the elite in both countries. There is general consensus that this should not be confined mainly to institutional relations and that socio-cultural affinities are a key element to improving ties between the two countries.

6.3.8 The United Nations as a discrepant strategic interest

The economic reforms and the Indian economic success story of the early 1990s created renewed hope in India that rapid growth would be the basis for its becoming a major power in the world. This raised the question regarding where India stood *vis-à-vis* the UN in general and its aspirations of becoming a permanent member in the UN Security Council. (Mohan, 2005:xx). The issue pertaining to India's voting in international organisations in general and at the UN in particular, has been a constant item on the agenda between Israel and India since the establishment of

⁶⁰ Livnat accompanied Prime Minister Sharon in his official visit to India. For details about Sharon's visit in India, see section 6.2.2.

diplomatic relations between the two countries. This is important, especially considering the fact that after the 1990s and the Gulf War and the Oslo process, Israel was continually trying to improve its relations with the UN.

In September 2001, despite Arab pressure and the visit of the PLO leader Yasser Arafat in New Delhi, India refused to support the resolution equating Zionism with racism in the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) part of the UN sponsored World Conference against Racism in Durban South Africa.

The issue regarding India's voting at the UN constantly appeared on the agenda of the two countries' meetings and was also raised during the visit of the Israeli Prime Minister Sharon in New Delhi in September 2003. According to Dinesh Kumar:

Indian officials are stressing that Delhi has already begun the process of reviewing its international position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, however they stress that such a review or policy change could only be a gradual process. India has stopped sponsoring anti-Israel resolutions at the United Nations and might well start to abstain from voting on them in the near future (Kumar, 2003:2).

An Indian regiment has been part of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which is posted on the border between Lebanon and Israel.⁶¹ In December 2003, India supported the UN resolution that requested the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to render an advisory opinion on the legality of Israel's security wall (although 74 out of 191 assembly members abstained).

⁶¹ UNIFIL was created in March 1978 to confirm the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon and secure the border areas between the two countries.

Since 1992, India no longer sponsored anti-Israeli UN resolutions; however it went on supporting the Palestinian cause at the UN General Assembly and committees while abstaining on the nuclear issue (Yegar, 2004:177).⁶²

Table 6.3 Indian voting regarding resolutions relating to the UN General Assembly and to the Committees

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | |
|------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|---|
| 2000 | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | * | A | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | * | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | | Y | Y | |
| 2001 | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | * | A | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | * | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | | Y | Y | |
| 2002 | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | * | A | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | * | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | |
| 2003 | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | N | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | A | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | C | C |
| 2004 | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | * | A | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | C | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | C | C |
| 2005 | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | * | A | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | C | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | C | C | C |

Voting key - Y: in favour; N: against; A: abstain; -: absent

*: Resolution that adopted without a vote; C: cancelled

* The information is compiled from the MFA's official web site: <http://www.mfa.gov.il>

- | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1 – Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.</p> <p>2 – Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat.</p> <p>3 – Special information programme on the question of Palestine.</p> <p>4 – Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine.</p> <p>5 – Jerusalem.</p> <p>6 – The Syrian Golan Heights.</p> <p>7 – Assistance to the Palestinian People.</p> <p>8 – The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East.</p> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

⁶² For details about nuclear power policy coordination, as a joint strategic interest between Israel and India, see section 6.3.4.

- 9 – Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian People in the Occupied Palestinian Territories including East Jerusalem and the Occupied Syrian Golan.
- 10- The right of the Palestinians to self-determination.
- 11- Assistance to Palestinian refugees.
- 12- Persons displaced as a result of June 1967 and subsequent hostilities.
- 13- Palestinian refugees in the near east (operation of UNRWA).
- 14- Palestine refugees' properties.
- 15- W. G/Assistance to Palestinian refugees and support for UNRWA.
- 16- Work of the special committee to investigate Israeli practices affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People.
- 17- Geneva Convention applicability to the Occupied Territories.
- 18- Israeli Settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.
- 19- Israeli practices affecting the Human Rights in the Occupied Territories.
- 20- The occupied Syrian Golan Heights.
- 21- Situation of and assistance to Palestinian children.
- 22- Offers of grants and scholarships to Palestinian students by member states.
- 23- University of Jerusalem "Al-Quds."

6.3.9 Superpowers as a common strategic interests

Since the 1990s, the changes in India's foreign policy with regard to the super-powers were accelerated (mostly under the BJP led government) and reconfiguring relations with the superpowers had become a key feature of the new Indian diplomacy. Similarly, Israel maintained its close relations with the US while improving its ties with Russia.

6.3.9.1 The United States

The interest of the Americans in the Indian Ocean had existed since the establishment of a permanent military base on the island of Diego Garcia in the 1970s that was followed by the creation of a Central Command in Florida in 1983 and the building of the Fifth Fleet in the mid-1990s. After the Gulf War, India realised the centrality of the US as a superpower. The end of the Cold War eased US - Indian relations and the Indian economic reforms that followed boosted US business interest in India. In May 1994 the US and India agreed on closer defence cooperation and in January 1995 the first ever agreed minutes on Indo-US defence cooperation was signed between the two countries.

Four months after the Indian nuclear tests in May 1998, the US condemned the tests and responded with sanctions that put great strain on their relationship with India. However, in his speech at the Asia Society in New York on 28 September 1998, Prime Minister Vajpayee declared that India and the US were natural allies. The American decision to lift the sanctions imposed on India following India's nuclear tests while entering into a high-level dialogue removed a serious obstacle between the two countries and indirectly contributed to Israel's relations with India in general and in the military field in particular. In fact, the two Gulf wars, which proved to be to the advantage of the American weapon systems, encouraged India to purchase Israeli-made arms.⁶³

In mid 1999, the Clinton administration forcefully convinced Pakistan to withdraw the forces it had sent across the Line of Control (LOC) in Kashmir (the Kargil War). In March 2000, President Clinton paid a successful official visit to India (the first American president to visit India in more than 22 years) and half a year later, Prime Minister Vajpayee paid a return visit to the US. Both sides agreed to explore the substance of their relationship

⁶³About Israel's military cooperation with India, see section 6.3.2.1.

more systematically and regularly rather than trying to reach some major agreement in disputed areas while searching for a strategy to cope with the emergence of China as a world power (Cohen, 2001:296-297).

After September 11, 2001, the Indian Government led by the BJP party had an opportunity to expand military cooperation with the US that was ready to strengthen this type of cooperation with India as part of its strategic plan to build a regional coalition to contain forces of terror and regional destabilisation. According to Dennis Kux (2002:93-94), India headed by Vajpayee, seized the opportunity to improve its relations with US while trying to transform the long Indo-Pakistani conflict into part of the global war against terrorism by casting Pakistan in the role of al Qaeda and India as the victim. The new convergence of interests in the war against international terrorism helped India to overcome much of the traditional resistance to military cooperation with the US and after the attack on the World Trade Centre, Prime Minister Atal Vajpayee offered to extend the US whatever support it wanted, including a military basis.

There is growing consensus in India that improved ties with the US can attract foreign investments, enable India to assume a greater global role and ensure that US foreign policy does not jeopardise Indian national interests. Five months earlier, India welcomed the American initiative on National Missile Defence (NMD) as a positive move towards the reduction of nuclear arms. The decision to support the American war on terrorism as well as the initiative on missile defence was a product of incremental changes in the Indian foreign policy since the 1990s. According to Raja Mohan (2003: xii), in 2002 the US helped to reduce the tension between India and Pakistan and Washington reacted in a subdued manner when India tested its intermediate-range ballistic missile. In May 2003, at the Washington Foreign Press Centre US National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice stressed that the Indo-American relationship is a broad and a deepening one:

It goes beyond regional issues... this President George W. Bush, is dedicated to strengthening and broadening the Indian relationship to make it in accordance with the fact that India is the world's largest democracy (Singh, 2003:11).

Since September 11, the US has also sought Indian naval escorts for vessels moving through the Malacca Straits trying to increase Indo-US security cooperation in the preservation of sea-lanes and the maintenance of peace and stability in the Indian Ocean.⁶⁴ In June 2005, India's Minister of Defence, Pranab Mukherjee, visited the US and signed an agreement of military cooperation, which has upgraded the military ties between the two countries.

Following the visit of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to Washington on 18 July 2005, the door has opened for achieving new cooperation between the two countries. President Bush told Prime Minister Singh that his administration sees India as a world power and wants to work with it as global partners in a wide range of areas. These areas range from civilian nuclear cooperation to defence and military matters, technology and space, energy, agriculture, economy, combating Aids, forming a joint front against terrorism as well as spreading democracy. The joint statement issued identified civilian nuclear activities, civilian space programmes and high technology trade as a key area of bilateral cooperation. President Bush has committed himself to adjusting the prevailing US laws, policies, regulations and obligations under international relevant regimes. In return, India accepted the same responsibilities and practices as other states with advanced nuclear technology. In the long-term, increased cooperation with the US is likely to emerge as fundamental to the Indian national interest as well as Indian strategy in the region of South Asia.

The war on international terrorism and the improvement of relations with the US have been also connected with Israel in the eyes of the Indian policy makers. After September 11, there was a growing understanding in

⁶⁴ About India's policy towards the Indian Ocean, see section 6.3.13.

India as well as in Israel that trilateral Indo-American-Israeli cooperation is likely to produce considerable benefits for all parties concerned. The Indian leadership, as ultimate decision units, became increasingly convinced that the American Jewish Lobby provides a vital link of influence in US policy making as well as in American finance.⁶⁵ As pointed out by Dennis Kux (2002:96), since December 2001, military cooperation between India and the US has increased rapidly and in addition, the US sanctioned the inclusion of US technology in the radar system sold by Israel to India. In 2003, India's National Security Advisor, Brajesh C. Mishra, visited the US. According to Gajendra K. Singh, he was the driving force behind the Idea of formulating a tripartite axis between the US, Israel and India, He participated as a guest speaker at the annual meeting of the AJC, where, after emphasising the similarities between India and Israel, he commented that

We are all democracies sharing a common vision of pluralism tolerance and equal opportunities. Stronger India US relations and India Israel relation have (therefore) a natural logic (Singh, 2003:12).

6.3.9.2 Russia

After the collapse of the Soviet Union (USSR) in 1991, the relations between India and Russia appeared to have little chance of surviving, following the new economic conditions in Russia and the decline in contact between the civil societies. The bartered agreements between the two countries gave way to hard currency payments and Russia sold advanced military hardware to China.⁶⁶ In January 1993, President Yeltsin visited India and a new agreement, which replaced the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation, was signed between the two countries. In fact, the new agreement confirmed that India-Russia relations had changed; however, the two countries agreed to streamline the supply

⁶⁵ For details about the US Jewish lobby and its relations with India, see section 6.4.3.

⁶⁶ For details India-China relations pertaining to Israel, see section 6.3.14.

of spare parts of Russian military equipment for the Indian army and announced a protocol on nuclear cooperation. In June 1994, a long-term Integrated Military Technical Cooperation Agreement was signed between India and Russia (the agreement was later extended to 2010).

In 1998, Russia condemned the Indian nuclear tests, but on the other hand, at the UN Russia protested against imposing sanctions on India. The condemnation caused tension between the two countries. Subsequently, a rapprochement between India and Russia took place in 2000, with Presiding Vladimir Putin's coming to power, when a declaration of a strategic partnership between India and Russia was signed between them. As a result of military agreements, military cooperation between India and Russia grew significantly.⁶⁷ The two countries have also faced common threats of religious terrorism in particular after the rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan and coordinated efforts to extend support to the Northern Alliance. They have also collaborated in the field of energy and have supported the idea of a multi-polar world order (Mohan, 2003:125; Cohen, 2001:89).

Israel's specialisation in Russian military equipment paved the way for trilateral joint military cooperation as had already been done successfully in the case of the upgrading of avionics of the Indian MIG 21s and the upgrading of T-72 Tanks as well as the planned installation of Israel's Phalcon warning and controlling systems sold to India on Russian Ilyushin military aircrafts. There was common ground for trilateral cooperation in the field of energy as well as counter-terrorism in the international arena in general and in Central Asia in particular. The latter area was considered to be part of its extended neighbourhood by India. In addition, industrial cooperation including cooperation in diamond processing was another area for potential cooperation between Israel, India and Russia (Joshi, 2005:176-178).

⁶⁷ The expected value of Indian military procurements from Russia up to 2015 is US \$30 billion.

6.3.10 Geo-strategy as a common strategic interest

The geo-strategical locations of Israel and India have encouraged strategic cooperation between the two countries, which are both placed on the flank of central Arab countries and an Islamic bloc. Both countries have their own minority Muslim population, which plays a role in their domestic politics.⁶⁸ This strategic cooperation can be based on common political interests in the region, in particular in dealing with the menace of Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism.

The cold war and the Indian socialist economic policy has undoubtedly undermined India's status and primacy in the Indian Ocean littoral. As part of India's new foreign policy, India has every intention of becoming an important element in the Indian Ocean (this is known in India as the vision of the British Viceroy, Lord Curzon) and has a strategic interest to maintain the security of maritime traffic in the Indian Ocean and the sea-lanes to the straits of Malacca. According to Raman (2005:1-2), the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal are highly vulnerable in terms of maritime counter-terrorism for the following reasons:

- The presence of terrorist or insurgent organisations with proved capabilities for maritime terror operations (such as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) of Sri Lanka, the Free Aceh Movement of Indonesia and Abu Sayaf of the Philippines).
- The networking of Al-Qaeda including surrogate Jihadi terrorist organisations that are members or associates of the International Islamic Front (IIF).
- The continuing availability of large quantities of arms and ammunition in the region.

⁶⁸ For details about geo-strategy as a factor that influenced the reviewing of the Indian foreign policy towards Israel in 1991, see section 5.4.3.1B (no.1).

- The reputation of the area as being piracy prone.
- The presence of a large number of uninhabited islands that can serve as sanctuaries and operational bases for unwanted insurgents.

The Indian Ocean has become important for the security of Israel. Israel needs offshore strategic depth to sustain a second strike capability, which can be found in the Indian Ocean.⁶⁹ Furthermore, Asia has been an important destination for Israeli trade and India is one of the key actors, in geo-strategic terms, in safeguarding the commercial shipping routes between the Middle East, Israel and Asia. Martin Sherman explains the situation as follows:

Joint Indo-Israeli naval cooperation may well assume vital importance particularly because possible advantages in satellite surveillance technique...especially in terms of maintaining deterrent retaliatory capabilities... (Sherman, 1999:17).

Ephraim Inbar gives more details:

To parallel its air power, Israel built ocean-going navy, Israeli Saar-5 corvettes, which are able to stay at sea for long periods, have been seen in the Indian Ocean. The three new Israeli submarines are equipped with long-range cruise missile launching capability. One such missile was tested in the Indian Ocean, generating reports about Indian-Israeli naval cooperation (Inbar, 2004:100).

6.3.11 Energy as a discrepant strategic interest

India is the sixth largest energy consumer in the world and India's intention to sustain its high level of economic growth since 1991 has required a high level of oil reserves. India depends on energy from the Middle East and is exploring enduring energy links with the oil supplying countries.⁷⁰ According to Mohan (2003:228), since the

⁶⁹ For more details about the Indian Ocean as a mutual interest, see section 5.4.3.1A (no.4).

⁷⁰ For more details about the oil factor, see sections 5.4.3.1B (no.2) and 5.4.3.1B (no.5).

1990s, India has adopted the concept of energy security in which relationships have been developed with the oil supply countries and the Gulf countries, Iran and Saudi Arabia in particular, that go beyond simple buyers–sellers.⁷¹ In the case of Saudi Arabia, India has even transformed its relations with this country, previously considered by India to be a strong supporter of Pakistan. Subsequently, friendly relations have developed between them reaching a peak with the official visit of the Minister of External Affairs, Jaswant Singh, to Saudi Arabia in January 2001. It was the first official visit by an Indian Minister of External Affairs since the visit of Prime Minister Nehru to the desert kingdom in 1950. The Ministers of Petroleum and Finance of India paid visits to Saudi Arabia as well.

In the case of Iran, following the visit of the Indian Minister of Petroleum in Iran, in June 2004, India purchased natural gas from Iran worth US \$7.5 million and a gas pipeline project (from Iran to India through Pakistan) is currently on their bilateral agenda (Pattanayak, 2001:15-16).⁷² The oil supplying Arab countries have evolved from being merely a source of oil to being economic and political partners.⁷³ Energy cooperation emerged as the dominant feature of Indo-Gulf relations as India is on its way to become one of the most important customers of the oil producing countries of the Gulf as the expansion of Indo-Gulf energy ties have been propelled by changes in the Indian economy.

India's policymakers must ensure access to safe and affordable energy resources in order to sustain its economic growth. Consequently, the energy coordination committee chaired by Prime Minister Singh himself was set up in July 2005 in order to address India's energy security concerns (Dadwal, 2005:312).

⁷¹ India was importing 680,000 crude oil barrels and 440,000 refined barrels per day in 1998 while the demand for oil kept growing (Pattanayak, 2001).

⁷² For details about the relations with Iran, see section 6.3.17.

⁷³ For details about the relations with the Arab world, see section 6.3.19.

J.N. Dixit (1998:93) clearly points out that India's economic interests in the Arab countries include India's dependence on the energy resources of the West Asian and Gulf regions. Therefore, India's stance on the Middle East issue and the Arab–Israel conflicts, which support the Palestinians and the Arabs, was shaped by India's dependence on oil resources.⁷⁴ As far as India was concerned, since the 1990s, the lack of adequate energy resources, Arab oil and the demand for oil based products such as petrochemicals and fertilisers made the relationship between India and the Gulf countries an important factor in Indian foreign policy. India's need to maintain good relations with the Arab countries for its future oil policy makes Arab oil a key factor in the bilateral relations between India and Israel.

6.3.12 The Non- Aligned Movement (NAM) as a discrepant strategic interest

For years, India had complied with the Non- Aligned Movement (NAM) by limiting its diplomatic interaction with Israel, but by the late 1990s, it was compelled to look for ways to ease out of the political limits the NAM had imposed on its foreign relations in general and *vis-à-vis* Israel in particular.⁷⁵ During the 1990s, the altered international system in general, as well as the end of the cold war and the collapse of the Soviet Union in particular, forced India to examine the relevance of the Non-Alignment policy in its foreign relations. Indian foreign policy shifted from a Third World policy to the promotion of its own self-interest (as did most of the developing countries) and the pursuit of its own national interests. As pointed out by Raja Mohan:

The Narasimha Rao government understood the demands of the new international order on India, but there was no way the Congress, with its reverence of the Nehru dynasty, could come up with an open criticism of non-alignment and make a credible

⁷⁴ For details about the oil factor as one of the reasons that kept India from Israel before 1991, see section 5.4.3.1B (no. 2).

⁷⁵ For details about India and the Third World as well as NAM in relation to Israel, see section 5.4.3.1B (no. 4).

case for change in foreign policy. That would have invited serious political trouble both inside and outside of the Congress party. Yet, in his own low-key manner, it was Narasimha Rao who paved the way for change...The imperatives of economic globalization and reconstruction of Indian foreign policy in a world without the Soviet Union compelled India to unveil a new foreign policy agenda without appearing to reject the old commitments and the NAM (Mohan, 2003:32-33).

Since the 1990s, the NAM's influence on Indian diplomacy steadily eroded as India sought to reconstruct its foreign policy to meet the requirements of the post cold war world. The dominance of multilateral diplomacy and the NAM in Indian foreign policy began to be questioned and India started to focus on issues of concern for its national interest. The BJP did not refer to Non-Alignment as a major principle regarding India's foreign policy. In fact, the BJP governments marginalised the concept of Non-Alignment and had fewer illusions about the relevance of past Indian foreign policy and old commitments to Non-Alignment as well as to the NAM. Nevertheless, Prime Minister Vajpayee attended the NAM summit in Durban, South Africa in 1998.

Israel was a direct beneficiary of the changed Indian international orientation towards the NAM. Traditionally, the political dynamics in the organisation was unconditionally in favour of the Arab world in general, while adopting a constant anti-Israeli attitude and participating in solidarity demonstrations with the Palestinian cause in particular. Following the new Indian approach towards the NAM, India made serious attempts to moderate the NAM's resolutions against Israel, even though it remained an active member of the Palestinian committee of the NAM. In August 2004, India sent an official note to Malaysia, as the chair of the NAM, expressing its reservations concerning the anti-Israeli declaration (the Palestinian Declaration), which had been adopted at the organisation's foreign ministers' summit in Durban, South Africa and called for the imposition of sanctions against Israel.

6.3.13 Asia as a common strategic interest

India has gradually emerged as an Asian regional force since 1994 with its "Look East policy" originally initiated by Prime Minister Narasimha Rao. According to Raja Mohan, India's "Look East policy" went through two distinct phases. The first one focussed on renewing political and commercial contacts, whereas the second one was India's search and development of new economic relations with Asian countries driven by globalisation while unveiling of the geopolitical dimension. (Mohan, 2003:212-213). India became an active participant in the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum (ARF) in 1996 and has been a summit player of ASEAN called ASEAN Plus India since 2002 and ASEAN's Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC).⁷⁶ It made India a vital international player in Asia. In 2003, the India-ASEAN framework agreement on comprehensive economic cooperation was signed and laid the basis for the future establishment of an India-ASEAN Regional Trade and Investment Area, which will include a Free Trade Agreement (tentatively scheduled for December 2011). (Naidu, 2005:222). India has been able to utilise Israeli technology and expertise in order to promote its trade and economic relations with Asia. Israel, on the other hand, that is still struggling for full international legitimacy in Asia, has realised that its relations with India could be instrumental in helping it to achieve such a type of legitimacy as well as upgrading its international status in Asia.⁷⁷

6.3.14 People's Republic of China (PRC) as a discrepant strategic interest

India's relations with China are based on its location and history. The border dispute between them is still one of India's leading security

⁷⁶ The ARF is a forum for dialogue that includes all South East Asian states and other significant states such as the US, Australia, the EU, China, Japan and Russia.

⁷⁷ Indonesia, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Afghanistan, North Korea, Maldives, Iran Brunei Sultanate, and Bhutan Kingdom (as well as other Arab countries in Asia) do not have diplomatic relations with Israel.

concerns (nearly 7000 km of their 16,560 km border is disputed). After the Cold War, the Indian focus had shifted from the Soviet Union to the international consequences of rising China as a regional power in Asia. In the 1990s, after the Gulf war, India seemed to have overcome its trauma regarding the 1962 war with China and tried to normalise the bilateral relations between them. India also reassessed its role in the balance of power in Asia, while trying to regain parity with China, which has been considered a global power.⁷⁸ Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's historic visit to China in December 1988 created a new political basis for bilateral relations after an extended period of stasis in their bilateral relations and reduced the prominence of the boundary dispute between the two countries. Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng visited India in 1991 and India's Prime Minister Narasimha Rao reciprocated with a visit to Beijing in 1992 that enhanced the bilateral relations further. At the end of the 1990s, India embarked on a process of normalisation of foreign relations with China, while keeping a watchful eye on China's aspirations of becoming a superpower in the international arena in general and in Asia in particular (Mohan, 2003:143-144).

A new highpoint in the Indo-Chinese bilateral relations was achieved following China's Prime Minister Wen Jiabao's visit to India in May 2005 when the two sides agreed to a road map to settle their border conflict that included eleven guiding principles on the basis of which their border dispute would be demarcated. By moving closer to China, India also saw an opportunity to weaken the Chinese-Pakistani ties, but despite the improvement in their bilateral relations, China still represented an economic as well as a military challenge to India, although not a direct military threat any longer. The reason was that China continued to be the main supplier of military and nuclear technology to Pakistan, including aid to build a naval base in Gwadar, which could control access to the Persian Gulf. China also helped Myanmar and Bangladesh with naval facilities and

⁷⁸ For details about Asia as a strategic interest of India, see section 6.3.13.

the Chinese military build-up was viewed with concern by India (Mansingh, 2005:56).⁷⁹

Chinese-Israeli relations in general and their military cooperation in particular were of concern to India and were watched closely in terms of national security concerns. According to Kumaraswamy, Israel's policies towards China and Pakistan posed certain concern in India and Israel's military cooperation with China was considered a threat to India's strategic interests:

Such cooperation not only enhances the capabilities and modernization programs of China but also improves the quality of its arms exports. As a traditional customer of China, Pakistan would thus indirectly benefit from this military cooperation (Kumaraswamy, 2004:269).

6.3.15 Central Asia as a common strategic interest

India has had historical strategic and cultural relations with Central Asia but has also had to pick up the pieces from its previous shattered Afghan policy in general and its compliance, in the past, with the Soviet Union invasion in Afghanistan. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, India wanted to secure its political and economical presence in the Central Asian countries in order to preserve the moderate religious character of their regimes, gain access to their energy resources and limit Pakistani influence in the region.⁸⁰ In the mid-1990s the Central Asian Republics (CARs) as well as India were alarmed by the rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan and its affect on their stability and India started cooperating with them in a bid to counteract fundamental Muslim terrorism.

After September 11 and the American war on terrorism and following the overthrow of the Taliban in Afghanistan, India has been engaged in extended economic diplomacy, by redefining a new approach towards

⁷⁹ China has the largest army in the world (2.5 million men in uniform) and the third largest defence budget.

⁸⁰ For more details about Central Asia, see section 5.4.3.1B (no.3).

Afghanistan and Central Asia. However, the CARs' need to cross the Pakistani territory to gain access to world markets and the Indian Ocean has predisposed them to favour relations with Pakistan over those with India. According to Mohan (2003:217), India had four objectives in Central Asia, namely to gain political and economic prestige and power, to preserve the moderate religious character of the regimes, to access energy resources and to limit Pakistani influence in the region. A similar viewpoint is expressed by Jyotsna Bakshi (2005:240,246) who declares that India can develop closer ties with the CARs by increased economic and trade cooperation that can promote its stability and interdependence; while multilateral cooperation is enhanced to protect India's core interests.

Both India and Israel have to work hard to be regarded as significant players in the region considering the high level of involvement and competition with Russia (previously the Soviet Union), the US, China, Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. In the case of both countries, the Central Asian region is, in fact, an extended strategic neighbourhood (Inbar, 2004:101). Both countries have sold military equipment to the CARs, have had an economic interest in the region including the field of energy and have been trying to limit the influence of Iran and Saudi Arabia as agents of radical Islamisation. In such a situation and being an area of strategic concern for both countries, mutual cooperation between Israel and India in Central Asia has been a common strategic interest while affecting their bilateral relations positively.

6.3.16 Pakistan as a common strategic interest

In the years 1947, 1965, 1971 and 1999 India and Pakistan had waged war against each other and Pakistan had constantly encouraged the activities of Muslim extremists, in particular when it suited its foreign policy goals in with relation to India and Afghanistan. However, during the Kargil crisis in 1999, Pakistan was eventually forced to withdraw behind LOC, In addition, after the September 11 terrorist attack on New York changed the political environment of the world regarding terrorism and forced the President of

Pakistan to ensure that Pakistan would not allow its territories to be used by terrorists for launching attacks on other countries. After the recognition of Pakistan and India as nuclear states India was concerned that the Kashmiri conflict would attract unwanted international intervention to prevent a nuclear confrontation. This could increase the possibility of Pakistan intervening in the disputed Jammu and Kashmir areas by resorting to cross-border terrorism (Inbar, 2004:93). In September 2004, the encounter between the leaders of India and Pakistan at the UN confirmed that there was an impasse in the Indo-Pakistani dialogues and their joint statement was vague (Bahadur, 2005:269).

The nuclear weaponry brought a new dimension into the bilateral equation between India and Pakistan. Pakistan's nuclear tests in 1998 constituted a threat to both India and Israel and there was concern that if the Pakistani nuclear arsenal fell into the hands of radical Islamic rulers it could pose an existential threat to both countries. The Pakistani nuclear bomb was often called the "Islamic Bomb" and after the Pakistani nuclear tests in 1998, Iran's Foreign Minister issued a statement during his visit to Pakistan that Muslims felt more secure under the Pakistani nuclear umbrella.⁸¹ The Pakistani nuclear ability, which has been of concern to India and Israel, constitutes a mutual security challenge, which includes intelligence cooperation, for both countries because of the gradual radicalisation of Pakistan..⁸²

In this regard, it should also be pointed out that according to Dinesh Kumar (2001:5, 10), India and Israel were engaged in secret dialogue over the possibility of destroying Pakistan's nuclear facility in Kahuta at the beginning of the 1990s. According to Farah Naaz (2000:988), Israel provided India with satellite intelligence on Pakistan as part of their bilateral intelligence cooperation. Harsh Pant (2005:5) adds that India and Israel

⁸¹ For details about Iran as discrepant strategic interest of Israel and India, see section 6.3.17.

⁸² For details about Pakistan as strategic interest of Israel and India in the 1990s, see section 5.4.3.1B (13).

also exchanged intelligence information on Islamic terrorist groups and Israel helped India to fight terrorism in Kashmir by providing logistical support.⁸³

The Kargil crisis between Indian and Pakistan in 1999 has expanded the amount and quality of military cooperation between India and Israel significantly and has increased the volume of arms sales, although the two countries emphasised that their defence ties are not directed against any specific third party. Israel sent laser guided missiles to India, making it possible for the Indian air force to destroy Pakistani bunkers in the mountains of Kargil (Pant, 2005:8). Israel was particularly concerned about the seepage of nuclear technologies, authorised by the Pakistani government and also as part of a rogue operation. It was feared that Pakistan would become a supplier of intermediate range missile to Arab countries in the Middle East and Iran (Inbar, 2004:101).⁸⁴

6.3.17 Iran as a discrepant strategic interest

Since the mid-1990s, India has improved its relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran. The key reasons for the improvement were:

- Security concerns.
- Common opposition to the Taliban.
- Energy needs.
- Shared interests in Central Asia, which included seeking alternate roads into Central Asia (Ansari, 2000:250).⁸⁵

The visits to Iran, by the Indian Minister of External Affairs, Jaswant Singh, in May 2000 and by Prime Minister Vajpayee in April 2001, which was reciprocated by the Iranian President Mohammad Khatami when he visited

⁸³ For details about counter terrorism and intelligence cooperation, see sections 6.3.2.2 and 6.3.2.3.

⁸⁴ For details about Khan's sales of nuclear technology to Iran, Libya and North Korea, see section 6.3.4.

⁸⁵ For details about energy as strategic interest, see section 6.3.11.

India in January 2003, have consolidated their bilateral relations (Mohan, 2003:229).

Iran is considered to be close to having the capacity to build a nuclear bomb and in July 2003, it announced the operational deployment of surface-to-surface Shihab 3 missiles, which put Israel into its striking distance (Inbar, 2004:99).⁸⁶ Iran does not recognise the state of Israel and its antagonism regarding Israel was demonstrated by its support of terror organisations in the Middle East such as the Hizbullah organisation in Lebanon, the Hamas and the Islamic Jihad on the West Bank and Gaza and also by its use of inflammatory anti-Israeli rhetoric. Israel regarded Iran's Islamic governments and its fundamental regimes as a strategic threat and as an existential danger to the state of Israel as well as a serious danger to the stability of the region in particular, considering Iran's nuclear weapon capabilities.

Israel's attitude towards Iran has been in stark contrast with the Indian's relations with Iran. The close India-Iran relations were taken into account by Israel in terms of strategic discrepant interests as far as the promotion of bilateral military relations between Israel and India was concerned. In fact, Israel has regularly expressed its concern about India's close ties with Teheran and the possibility of India selling advanced technology and military equipment to Iran was brought up in official meetings between military representatives of the two countries.

6.3.18 The Islamic world as a discrepant strategic interest

Traditionally, relations with the Islamic world have been pivotal in India's foreign policy in general and India tried to create a mutuality of economic interests with Muslim countries in the Middle East in particular. In the past, India stressed its historic links with the Islamic world while trying to avoid excessive focus on Kashmir and tensions with Pakistan. It also tried to

⁸⁶ A two-stage missile with a 1,300 km range.

neutralise Pakistan and its ability to play the Islamic card against India. Despite India's traditional friendly relations with the Islamic world, the Israeli- Indian military collaboration provided Pakistan with justification for mobilising the OIC against India, so that strictures were passed against it.⁸⁷ The OIC had been critical of India's policies in Kashmir and a number of Gulf States allowed their citizens to fight in Kashmir as part of a pan-Islamic jihadist movement (Cohen, 2001:248). Since the 1990s, India had changed its approach and no longer objected to ties between Pakistan and Islamic countries, but the new approach only resulted in bilateral dividends, however the OIC has continued its traditional support of Pakistan. Nevertheless, according to Kumar (2001:9), India regarded Israeli security and intelligence cooperation as a valuable asset for dealing effectively with the Kashmir problem; therefore it offset the consequent unfriendly attitude of the Muslim countries.

Following the change of governments in India and the return to power of the INCP in May 2004, E. Ahamed, the representative of the Muslim League in the state of Kerala, was appointed Minister of State for External Affairs. His nomination reflected the UPA government's will to improve its relations with the Islamic world, the Arab countries and the Indian Muslim community.⁸⁸ In January 2005, Chinmay Gharekhan was appointed special envoy of the Prime Minister, to the Middle East.⁸⁹ Despite the new UPA government's will to improve its relations with the Muslim world, the OIC has continued to endorse the Pakistani backed militants in Kashmir. In turn, India rejected a resolution passed in July 2005 on Jammu-Kashmir by the foreign ministers of the OIC in Yemen, claiming that the OIC has no stand (*locus standi*) on that issue which is an internal Indian matter. On the other hand, India made an effort to improve its bilateral relations with Saudi Arabia, other Arab Gulf States, Turkey and Iran. In fact, it tried to find

⁸⁷ For details about Israeli- Indian military cooperation see section 6.3.2.1 and for details about Pakistan, see -section 6.3.16.

⁸⁸ For details about E. Ahamed as Indian Minister of State for External Affairs and about the Arab world, see section 6.3.19.

⁸⁹ For details about Ambassador Gharekhan's appointment, see section 6.3.20.

common ground between them regarding support for political moderation and religious extremism, taking advantage of the fact that religious extremism has altered the political discourse in the Islamic world (Mohan, 2003:232).⁹⁰

6.3.19 *The Arab world as a discrepant strategic interest*

India has traditionally pursued a pro-Arab foreign policy in general and a pro-Arab policy regarding the Arab- Israeli conflict in particular, mainly in order to counter Pakistani influence in South Asia and to secure access to the Middle East oil resources (Heitzman & Worden, 1995:537). However, there was a shift in the Indian foreign policy towards the Arab countries after the Gulf War and also as a result of the evolving relations with Israel based on India's perception that it could serve its national interests better by having close relations with both Israel and the Arab world (Kumar, 2001:8).

In July 1999, the Arab League, openly warned against the danger of the growing Israeli-Indian military cooperation for the first time. After September 11, India has found increased common political ground with key Arab countries based on the shared perception of the need for political modernisation and opposition to religious fanaticism and extremism. In fact, this started with the rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan in the mid-1990s and the political convergence between India and a large number of Arab countries that followed.⁹¹ On 22-23 March 2005, the Indian Minister of State for External Affairs E. Ahamed, who represents the Muslim League in the state of Kerela, represented India as an observer at the Arab League summit in Algeria. This was the first official Indian participation at such a summit).

⁹⁰ For details about Iran as strategic interest, see section 6.3.17.

⁹¹ The Taliban ("Students of Islamic Knowledge Movement") ruled Afghanistan from 1996 until 2001. They came to power during Afghanistan's long civil war.

As part of the new forward-looking Indian foreign policy, India's partnership with the Gulf countries and the accompanying energy security was of great consequence as India is the biggest potential consumer of natural gas resources in the Gulf and Central Asia.⁹² The financial value of India's relations with the Arab Gulf countries has grown (in 2002 it was estimated to be around US \$5 billion). The Gulf and the Arab countries were no longer just a source of oil and destination for Indian labour (3.5 million Indians work in the Gulf countries); they have also become economic partners (the financial value of India's relationship with the Gulf countries was estimated in 2001 to be around US \$15 billion) as well as political partners.

India has preferred, to keep a low profile in the Middle East and avoid political involvement in that region since the 1990s and Delhi conveyed to the Arab leaders that in their dispute with Israeli they should not take Indian support for granted (Kumar 2001:9). According to Raja Mohan, after the 1990s there was a shift in India's foreign policy from a one-sided viewpoint in favour of the Arabs regarded their dispute with Israel to a more balanced stance and India recognised that it must be able to do business with all sides in the Middle East, but without ignoring India's economic and political interest in the region:

As India quickly discovered, it did not have to choose between Arabs and Israelis it could do business with both. India's new Middle East policy recognized the shades of grey in the region and acknowledged the pragmatism of the Arabs themselves, who did not really object to India's new relations with Israel...India support could no longer be taken for granted by the Arabs in its disputes with the US and Israel. This new Indian approach was to develop equities on both sides, and New Delhi was loath to project itself as a potential interlocutor between Israel and the Arabs (Mohan, 2003:226-227).

⁹² For details about energy as strategic interest, see section 6.3.11.

6.3.20 The Palestinian Authority as a discrepant strategic interest

The Oslo Accords in 1991 and the second Palestinian uprising in September 2000 (the second Intifada) were the two major events that had an impact on the Indian foreign policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In between, in June 1996, India nominated an official diplomatic representative for the Palestinian Authority (PA), the Chairman of the PA Yasser Arafat paid a State visit to New Delhi in November 1997 and in September 1999, Arafat arrived in India for a working visit. The direct trade volume between India and the Palestinian Authority in 2001 was US \$20 million including the joint ventures and were concentrated on telecommunications and pharmaceuticals.

During the visit of Prime Minister Sharon in India in September 2003, Prime Minister Vajpayee indicated that this visit would boost military and trade ties between India and Israel; but he declared that India's support of the Palestinian cause would not be diluted (*The Hindu*, 11/9/2003).⁹³ In winter 2003, India supported the transfer of the case of Israel's Security Fence to the ICJ in The Hague.⁹⁴

When the new coalition government, the UPA, was formed by the INCP in May 2004, the following proclamation, as part of the common minimum program of the UPA, was made:

The UPA Government reiterated India's decades-old commitment to the cause of the Palestinian people for a homeland of their own (*The Pioneer*, 21/6/2004).

In September 2004, the Indian Minister of State for External Affairs E. Ahamed visited the Palestinian Authority (as well as Saudi Arabia and Jordan) where he met Yasser Arafat and other Palestinian leaders. His visit was described by Pant (2005:12) as a symbolic move by the new

⁹³ About Prime Minister Sharon's visit in India, see section 6.2.2.

⁹⁴ For details about India's votes at the UN, see section 6.3.8.

government of India demonstrating its strong support for Palestinian independence while calling on Israel to lift the siege imposed on the headquarters of the former Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat. An Indian official delegation headed by the Minister of External Affairs, Natwar Singh, participated in the funeral of Yasser Arafat in Cairo on 12 November 2004.

In addition, India supported and sent observers to the general election of the Palestinian Authority (PA) in January 2005 and sent a note of congratulations to Abu Mazen (Mahmoud Abbas) upon his election as the new leader of the Palestinian Authority. In the same month, January 2005, Chinmay Gharekhan was appointed special envoy to the Middle East (West Asia).⁹⁵ His nomination was carried out by the UPA government led by the INCP, which wished to improve its relationship with the Arab world. It also wanted to be portrayed as a true supporter of the Palestinian cause as well as the Palestinian quest for an independent state (in contrast with the previous NDA government that was led by the BJP, which had been perceived as pro-Israeli).

Gharekhan visited Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA) in February 2005. During his visit to Israel (24-26 February 2005), he met Vice-Prime Minister, Shimon Peres, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Silvan Shalom and during his visit to the PA, he met with the newly elected chair Abu-Mazen. In March 2005, he also met the President of Lebanon, Emil Lahud as well as the Secretary General of Hizbullah in Lebanon, Hassan Nasralla. Israel protested officially against Gharekhan's meeting with Nasralla (Gerberg, 2005:6). Later Abu-Mazen visited New Delhi between 19-20 May 2005 where he met with the Indian President Abdul Kalam and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh as well as the President of the INCP, Sonia Gandhi. One month later, Natwar Singh, the Indian Minister of External Affairs was critical of Vajpayee's government's efforts to promote

⁹⁵ Gharekhan is ex-Indian career diplomat who formerly served as UN under secretary and a special U.N. coordinator to the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Israeli-Indian ties at the expense of the Palestinians while in the opposition. He issued the following statement:⁹⁶

We have civilizational links with the Arab world and have always supported the just aspirations of the Palestinian people and the establishment of an independent state of Palestine (MEA, 27/6/2005).

The collapse of the Oslo process in Camp David, the death of the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, the end of the second Intifada (April 2003), the election of Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) as the new leader of the Palestinian Authority (PA) and the introduction of the Road-Map initiative as well as the failure of the implementations of the Road-Map have influenced the Indian foreign policy regarding the Israeli Palestinian conflict.⁹⁷ The UPA government has supported the Road-Map initiative, which called for a set of confidence building measures between Israel and the Palestinian Authority to be followed by the establishment of a Palestinian State with provisional borders leading to the conclusion of a permanent status agreement. Israel accepted the outline of the Road-Map but had reservations about certain aspects. Ultimately, neither the discontinuation of violence between the Palestinians and Israel nor the disintegration of the Palestinian political and security apparatuses were achieved. Neither was the first phase of the Road-Map implemented.⁹⁸

According to Hamid Ansari (2005:252), the Indian position on the Palestinian question has been based on clearly demarcated principles and

⁹⁶ For more details about the Minister and the MEA's foreign policy towards Israel, see section 6.4.2.

⁹⁷ The Road- Map, which is a performance-based plan for a permanent two state solution – Israel and Palestine – to the Israeli Palestinian conflict, was presented by US President George W. Bush and officially published by the US, Russia, EU and the UN ("The Quartet") in April 2003 as an outline to renew the Israeli-Palestinian process.

⁹⁸ The first phase of the Road-Map refers to the end of terror and violence against Israel and the normalisation of affairs on the Palestinian side that will be followed by Israel's withdrawal from the Palestinian territories taken over since the beginning of the second Intifada (September 2000) and freeze all Israeli settlement activities on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Phase two of the Road-Map focusses on efforts to establish a Palestinian state with provisional borders. Phase three includes an international conference to discuss and work out a permanent status agreement between the two countries (Reut, 30/4/2003).

viewpoints since the beginning of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and has been commensurate with the views of the greater majority of the international community. However, Mohan (2003:228) points out that the Palestinians and Israelis would have liked to see India as an interlocutor in the prolonged conflict between them, but India's diplomatic energy has been focussed more on the Gulf than on the Arab- Israeli dispute. However, the UPA government has been ready to demonstrate that its ties with Israel would not affect its support for the Palestinian cause (*Indian Express*, 12/7/2004).

Following the failure of the implementation of the Road-Map, Israel proposed a unilateral Disengagement Plan from the Gaza Strip and part of the North West Bank, which led to a cease-fire supported by the Palestinian Islamic organisations. The UPA government allocated US \$15 million for assistance to the Palestinian Authority (including US \$3 million for educational projects) and took a positive view of the Israeli Disengagement Plan. The condition was that it would only serve as the first stage of a comprehensive peace process that would lead to an independent and viable Palestinian state and has encouraged Israel to take steps that can improve the Palestinian economy and revitalise the Palestinian Authority.

6.4 Israeli - Indian relations analysed by the state and society

level of analysis and individual level of analysis

Based on the International Level of Analysis Model and the Oscillated Diplomacy Model, the guiding parameters of the bilateral relations between Israel and India are also analysed according to the state and society (national) level of analysis, namely the analysis of the Indian political system, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs and pertinent pressure groups. In addition, there are individuals, in India who have played a role in the evolving bilateral relations between the years 1992 and 2005 and their contribution to it is analysed in terms of the individual level of analysis.

6.4.1 Indian political system

Since the 1990s, Indian politics has undergone a period of transformation from a situation in which socialism and local politics were stressed to a situation where the focus falls strongly on the modern economy and new economic approaches.. The Congress Party, which was once the symbol of the architecture of the Non-Aligned Movement and India's state socialism, led India to its economic reforms as well as economic liberalisation.

The two United Front governments that succeeded the Congress government continued with economic reforms while accommodating the new global realities and the BJP governments in particular, were less inhibited by the ideological traditional inheritance of the Indian foreign policy and therefore more open to economic reforms. The INCP that returned to power in 2004 has maintained the processes of liberalisation and globalisation.⁹⁹

The changing orientation in Indian politics and liberalisation of the economy since the 1990s has also found expression in Indian foreign policy in general and in its stance towards Israel in particular. In both cases, India pursued a new foreign policy, which was more suitable for meeting the challenges of the coming century while shifting from idealism to pragmatism (Mohan, 2003: xxi).¹⁰⁰ In addition to the governmental build-up of official relations with Israel, the Indian political system has gradually come to terms with the evolving relations between the two countries.

In May 1993, an Israeli Parliamentary delegation of the Knesset visited New Delhi, where the Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) conference took place. On 13 November 1994, the Speaker of the Lower House of the Indian Parliament (Lok Sabha), Shivraj V. Patil, visited Israel. Later, in

⁹⁹ For more details about the economic reforms and liberalisation, see section 5.4.3.1B (no.11).

¹⁰⁰ For details about the transition in Indian foreign policy towards Israel after the 1990s, see section 5.4.3.2 (no.1).

January 1997, an Indian Parliamentary delegation visited Israel. In turn, an Israeli parliamentary delegation visited India in February 1997, in order to participate in an IPU conference. In the summer of 2000, the chairperson of the India Israel Parliamentary Friendship League, Somnath Chatterjee, a leader of the Communist party in India (CPI), accompanied by the former Chief Minister of West Bengal, Jyoti Basu visited Israel. This visit demonstrated the fact that even the communists were no longer opposed to Indian ties with Israel. Between 25 November and 5 December 2001, members of the Israel-India Parliamentary Friendship League in the Israeli Knesset, headed by M.K. Amnon Rubinstein, visited New Delhi upon an invitation from the Indian Parliament.

During the years between 1992 and 2005, a large number of Chief Ministers visited Israel, including the Chief Ministers of the following states: Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, New Delhi and Kerala as well as West Bengal (Neotia, 2002:23).¹⁰¹. On 17-23 May 2005, an official delegation of young Indian politicians visited Israel. On 9 June 2005, the leader of the opposition in the Upper House of the Indian Parliament (Rajya Sabha) and the Former Minister of External Affairs, Defence and Finance, Jaswant Singh, visited Israel. In addition to his participation in an academic conference regarding Israel-Indian relationship in Tel-Aviv University, he met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Silvan Shalom and Minister of Finance Benjamin Netanyahu, as well as the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Regional Planning Shimon Peres.

Between 1992 and 2005, all the governing parties as well as most of the political parties in India have realised that the success of the Indian foreign policy depended on the pace of India's globalisation and its ability to strengthen its ties with the West. Israel, as a modern technology-oriented economy, has become an important economic partner of India in trade,

¹⁰¹ Kerala and West Bengal were governed by local governments headed by the communist party of India (CPI).

joint ventures and the transfer of expertise and technology.¹⁰² The diplomatic relations with Israel have acquired the backing of most of the political spectrum in India. Most of the political parties came to terms with the bilateral relations between the two countries realising its benefit for India in general and for the defence and military relations in particular, while continuing their support of the Palestinian cause.¹⁰³ The return to power of the INCP on 23 May 2004 completed a political circle as far as bilateral relations with Israel were concerned. Some concerns were expressed in Israel about possible changes in India's foreign policy towards Israel, however, military, economic and cultural relations have been maintained, while bilateral relations, especially in terms of high-level official visits received less predominance.

6.4.2 Indian Ministry of External Affairs

The MEA has slowly adjusted to the change of the traditional Indian foreign policy towards Israel after the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries and the change of international reality in the Middle East.¹⁰⁴ This adjustment, according to Dinesh Kumar, was made in the following way:

Delhi began to perceive that it would serve its interest better by having close relations with both Israel and the Arab world...This was why Delhi preferred to keep a low profile in the region and avoid active involvement in the Middle East conflict. India expressed concern whenever there were setbacks to the peace process (for example, during the opening of the tunnel beneath the Temple Mount and the disturbances in the Har Homa neighbourhood) but unlike as in the past, it refrained from openly criticising Israel (Kumar. 2001:8).

The BJP governments have been especially enthusiastic about ties with Israel and consequently, since 1999 the Indian MEA and the Israeli

¹⁰² For details about India Israel bilateral economic relations, see section 6.3.5 and for details about science and technology cooperation, see section 6.3.6.

¹⁰³ For details about India's relations with the Palestinian Authority, see section 6.3.20.

¹⁰⁴ For details about the MEA in 1992 and its reference to Israel, see section 5.4.3.2 (no.1).

Ministry of Foreign Affairs have held annual bilateral consultations alternately in Jerusalem and New Delhi. In September 2004, the new government extended a symbolic gesture by sending the Minister of State for External Affairs, E. Ahamed, to the Palestinian Authority (PA), demonstrating India's strong support for the Palestinian cause.¹⁰⁵

Natwar K. Singh, the Secretary General of the Non-Aligned Movement summit in 1983 and Nehruvian in his foreign policy approach, served as the Minister of State for External Affairs in Rajiv Gandhi's government (1986 – 1989), and was nominated as India's Minister of External Affairs by the new UPA government. While in opposition, he was critical of the NDA governments' foreign policy to promote Israeli - Indian relations at the expense of the Palestinians (Pant, 2005:12). However, in his new position, he made it a point to maintain India's traditional ties with the Palestinians as well as improving relations with the Arab world but without undermining the Israeli-Indian relations. The Indian foreign policy was summarised by him in a press interview in New Delhi when he said: "We greatly value our relationship with Israel but this will not and should not affect our relations with Palestine" (*Times of India*, 12/7/2004).

Following the Sharm-El-Sheikh summit in February 2005, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs published the following statement in support of the Israeli- Palestinian peace process:

India has consistently urged an end to violence from all sides. We look forward to further progress in the peace process that would bring about a just and peaceful solution within a reasonable timeframe, leading to a sovereign, independent state of Palestine with well-defined and secured borders, living at peace with the state of Israel (MEA, 13/2/2005).

The Indian Minister of External Affairs, Natwar Singh referred once again to the Israeli Palestinian conflict during his visit to Britain:

¹⁰⁵ For details on India's relations with the Palestinian Authority, see section 6.3.20.

We were happy to see the revival of the peace process and hope it leads to the establishment of a sovereign, independent and viable state of Palestine with safe and secure and well-defined borders. In line with the relevant United Nation Security Council resolutions and the quartet Road map, living side by side with the state of Israel (MEA, 27/6/2005).

The MEA welcomed the Israeli withdrawal from settlements in Gaza and the Northern West Bank as part of the Israeli unilateral Disengagement Plan:¹⁰⁶

...A positive development and the beginning of a process that we hope will culminate in a mutually acceptable, negotiated settlement in accordance with the roadmap and the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. We trust that this window of opportunity will be used by all sides in taking forward the negotiations that will lead, within a reasonable time frame, to the creation of a truly sovereign, independent and viable Palestinian State within well-defined and secure borders, living side by side at peace with Israel (MEA, 13/9/2005).

6.4.3 Pressure groups

Pressure groups in terms of small lobby groups in society that are engaged in promoting a certain foreign policy are common in democracies. Israel and India are both democracies, but pressure groups have traditionally played a minor role in the two countries as far as the formulation of foreign policy is concerned. However, the US Jewish organisations could be considered an exception due to their collective function as an external powerful group exerting pressure on India.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ The Disengagement Plan was adopted by the government of Israel and enacted in August 2005.

¹⁰⁷ For details about the influence of the American Jewish Organisations on India regarding the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel, see section 5.4.3.1B (no.8).

6.4.3.1 Friendship societies in India

More than 50 societies and associations promoting people- to- people friendship between India and Israel can be found in different parts of India including the Shalom Alumni Club of Israel's development cooperation programme (Mashav).¹⁰⁸ In 1995, a friendship delegation consisted of members from the various societies and associations visited Israel (Singh, 2002:67). Mashav's relationship with the alumni members continues through a network of Shalom clubs and long term professional contacts with various academic institutions in Israel (Israeli -Indian Bilateral Relations, 2001). The Shalom club of Bombay (Mumbai) has been particularly active in professional and social activities in the State of Maharashtra and among its many activities have been workshops on topics ranging from AIDS prevention education to the organisation of events such as fund-raising for homeless children. However, the Shalom Club has not been involved in India's politics in general and has not played a role as a pro-Israeli pressure group in India in particular, except for its contribution to the improvement of Israel's image in India, which broadened the base of their bilateral relationship.

6.4.3.2 Jewish community in India

The Jewish community in India is a microscopic minority community in an ocean of 1.3 billion people. In the complete absence of anti-Semitism and persecution of Jews in Indian history, the Jews in India have considered themselves to be Indian first and Jews second and have had little interest in Indian politics and Indian foreign policy (Sampemane, 1994:23).¹⁰⁹ At the end of the 20th century, the Indian Jewry numbers have shrunk to no more than 4500 in the whole country against about 30 thousand at the beginning of the 1950s. It is important to point out that the Jews in India have made a valuable contribution to India in various fields such as

¹⁰⁸ For details about Israel's development cooperation programme, see section 6.3.1 (no.3).

¹⁰⁹ About the Jews in India see section 3.10.5.1.

education, local politics, the armed forces, public health, art, literature¹¹⁰ and the film industry. However, they have not played a significant role as a pressure group in Indian politics with the exception of Lt. Gen. J. F. R. Jacobs, who served as the Governor of Punjab in the 1990s (Malekar, 2002:64).

6.4.3.3 The Indian community in Israel

The Immigration of the Indian Jews to Israel started with the establishment of Israel in 1948, when they joined Israeli settlers in building the country.¹¹¹ The Jews of India in Israel have been organised into communities throughout the country under the central organisation of Indian Jews in Israel. In 1992, the Israel-India Cultural Association was established in order to promote cultural relations between the two countries. The Jews of India have retained pride in their Indian heritage; with gratitude to Mother India for the treatment they received in their native country where they were never exposed to anti-Semitism (Weil, 2002:63). They were active in various sectors of the Israeli industry and agriculture and many of them attained high positions in the army, politics, media, sport and culture.

The Bne-Israel community (which means “Children of Israel”) preserved their local mother tongue, Marathi, in Israel.¹¹² An international conference for Marathi speakers was held in October 1996 in Israel with more than 500 representatives from all over the world, among them, Manohar Joshi, ex-Chief Minister of Maharashtra and Sharad Pawar, former Minister of Defence as well as former Chief Minister of Maharashtra (Massil, 2002:65).¹¹³ The central organisation’s goal is to assist members of the community in fields such as education and culture, but it is not actively involved in Israeli national politics in general or promoting Israeli-Indian bilateral relations in particular.

¹¹⁰ Nissim Ezekiel - a leading Indian poet that writes in the English language.

¹¹¹ About the history of the Indian Jewish community, see section 3.10.5.1.

¹¹² The largest of India’s Jewish communities that emigrated from the State of Maharashtra to Israel, over 50 thousand reside in the State of Israel.

¹¹³ For details about Sharad Pawar's visit in Israel in November 2005, see section 6.3.1.1.

6.4.3.4 Muslim community in India

The overwhelming majority of the Indian Muslim community (about 140 million) have been staunch supporters of the Palestinian cause with a traditional anti- Israeli attitude as expressed by some protesters from Muslim organisations in New Delhi, when they protested against the visit of Prime Minister Sharon in India.¹¹⁴ Indian Muslims have constantly articulated the view that India, regardless of the changes in international politics since the end of the cold war, should sustain its previous pro-Arab and anti-Israeli policy as well as its Nehruvian tradition. The Indian Muslim community has been a political factor to be reckoned with especially after the 1990s, since the Indian political system has been transformed into a type of coalition government. After the new UPA coalition government was formed by the INCP in May 2004, the level of expectation of the Indian Muslim community regarding a change of foreign policy towards Israel was high (it was also supported by the old guard of the INCP as well as left wing parties). However, regardless of the INCP's criticism while in opposition, of the previous NDA governments' efforts to promote Israeli-Indian ties, which they regarded to be at the expense of the Palestinians, the new UPA government sent a clear message to the Muslim community in India, from the Minister of Defence Pranab Mukherjee. That message declared that relations with Israel in general and military cooperation between the two countries in particular, would be retained (Pant, 2005:9).

6.4.3.5 Indian media

Israel's image in the Indian media has undergone a positive change after 1992. In March 2004, *The National Herald*, considered the Congress party's voice, published an editorial referring to the relations between India and Israel as a strategic imperative. The editorial regarded the Indian military procurement from Israel as well as the dialogue on counter-

¹¹⁴ About Sharon's visit, see section 6.2.2.

terrorism as a useful hi-technology deal with Israel, which served the national Indian strategic interest (*National Herald*, 10/3/2004).

6.4.3.6 US Jewish lobby

The Indian leadership as well as Indian prime ministers, as ultimate decision units, became increasingly convinced that the American Jewish lobby provides a vital link of influence to American policy making as well as American finance. When Prime Minister Rao paid a visit to the US at the end of January 1992, a few days after the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel took place, his meeting, in New York, on 1 February 1992, with the representative of the American Jewish organisations, turned out to be cordial. Subsequently, the two parties discussed possible cooperation between India and the Jewish community in the US (Yegar, 2004:169). The pro-Israel and pro-India lobbyists also worked together successfully to gain the approval of the Bush administration for Israel to sell Phalcon AWACS to India and Israel's Arrow ballistic missile defence system.¹¹⁵ With regard to the activity of the US Jewish lobby in stopping AWACS sales to Pakistan, Dinesh Kumar (2001:3) comments that: "The Indian leadership became increasingly convinced that the American Jewish lobby provides a vital link of influence in American policy making and finance."

The coalition of the two lobbying groups included the US – India Political Action Committee (USINPAC), the American-Israel Political Action Committee (AIPAC) and the AJC (Singh, 2003:12).¹¹⁶

Since 1995, the AJC has sent a number of delegations to India and it has brought a group of Indian American leaders to visit Israel as well.¹¹⁷ The AJC conference was held in New Delhi in 1997 to celebrate the fiftieth anniversaries of independence of both India and Israel. Subsequently, a

¹¹⁵ For details about the Indian arms, procurements from Israel, see section 6.3.2.1.

¹¹⁶ India's former Ambassador to Jordan, Romania, Senegal, Turkey and Azerbaijan.

¹¹⁷ The last delegation visited India in January 2004.

delegation of the AJC visited New Delhi in January 2004. India's Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, met the leaders of the AJC in September 2004 when he visited New York and praised their contribution to India – US relations as well as the Israeli-Indian friendship.¹¹⁸ The Jewish Organisations in the US share close relations with the Indian-American community, relations that have also been instrumental in shaping Israeli-Indian ties (Pant, 2005:9).

According to Ephraim Inbar (2004:102), New Delhi believed that upgrading its relations with Jerusalem would have a positive effect on the attitude of the US towards India:

American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the American Jewish Committee, the Jewish Institute on National Security Affairs, and the American Jewish Congress nourish ties with India and with the Indian Lobby in Washington. Many members of the US – India Political Action Committee, which was formed only in September 2002, are blunt about their desire to emulate American Jewish groups and are interested in building a long-term relationship (Inbar, 2004:102).

The Jewish-Indian alliance in the US has combined forces on electoral politics in order to defeat those whom they perceive as antagonistic to both Israel and India. The two countries' lobbies are working together on a number of domestic and foreign affairs issues, such as hatred, crimes, immigration, anti-terrorism legislation and backing pro-Israel and pro-India candidates.

6.4.4 Indian individuals

Several Indian individuals, in addition to the ultimate decision units, played a role in formulating the Indian foreign policy towards Israel following the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

¹¹⁸ For details about the US concerning Israeli-Indian relations, see section 6.3.9.1.

6.4.4.1 National defence advisor

In December 1998, at the recommendation of a special task force, a new National Security Management System was formed. The task force recommended, among other matters, the creation of the post of National Security Advisor (NSA) to the Prime Minister of India. The new post has been proven to be a key factor as far as India's foreign policy towards Israel was concerned, in particular during the tenure of the first two National Security Advisors.

The first National Security Advisor, Brajesh Mishra described by Mohan (2003:264) as a principal foreign policy aide to Prime Minister Vajpayee who left a strong imprint on India's diplomacy, was a staunch supporter of the Indian enhancement of bilateral relations with Israel.¹¹⁹ In 1999, he was sent to Israel personally in the middle of the Indian parliamentary election, to meet Israel's Prime Minister Barak in order to find new ways of strengthening the relations between the two countries (Kumaraswamy, 2002:11). He was also considered the force behind the idea of the tripartite alliance between the US, Israel and India. Accordingly, in a speech to the Jewish American Committee in Washington in May 2003, he outlined a proposal that India, Israel and the US should unite to combat the common threat of Islamic fundamentalism while forming a viable alliance of democratic nations (Pant, 2005:9).¹²⁰ In September 2003, during his official visit to India, Brajesh Mishra met Israel's Prime Minister Sharon to discuss further ways of strengthening the relations between the two countries.¹²¹

Mishra's successor, J. N. Dixit, who was a co-chair of the External Affairs Committee of the INCP before being nominated to the post of National Security Advisor, also attached a great deal of importance to India's bilateral relations with Israel. Notwithstanding the fact that Dixit was a

¹¹⁹ Whose additional charge was Principle Secretary to Prime Minister Vajpayee.

¹²⁰ For more details about the US concerning Indo-Israeli relations, see section 6.3.9.1. and for details about the US Jewish Lobby's relations with India, see section 6.4.3.5

¹²¹ For more details about Sharon's visit in India, see section 6.2.2.

staunch and consistent supporter of the relationship between India and Israel, he was also a staunch supporter of the Palestinian cause and Palestine's right to an independent state. It is important to note that he was the Foreign Secretary in 1991 and was one of the architects of the establishment of diplomatic relations (together with Prime Minister Rao) with Israel.¹²² His perception concerning bilateral relations with Israel is described in his memoirs as follows:

I considered our establishing relations with South Africa and then Israel as the most significant among developments in India's foreign policy, which occurred during my period as Foreign Secretary (Dixit 1996:315).

6.4.4.2 President of the Indian National Congress Party

Traditionally, while in power, the Prime Minister who leads the Congress government is also the President of the INCP. However, Sonia Gandhi has been the President of the INCP since 1998 and has been considered to be the strongest political figure in India despite not holding the premiership post.¹²³ After the successful general election campaign of the INCP in 2004, which was led by her, she was elected as the leader of the party in the Parliament but declined the post of premiership. Mrs. Gandhi, who is considered to be the kingmaker of the ruling party, the INCP and currently one of the most important politicians in India, while in the opposition, met Israel's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Shimon Peres, who visited India in February 2002. She also met the Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, when he visited New Delhi in September 2003. This meeting took place despite the fact that an important section in the INCP was not in favour of the meeting (*The Hindu*, 6/9/2003). On 20 May 2005, as the president of the ruling party of India, she met the head of the Palestinian Authority (PA) Abu Mazen (Mahmoud Abbas) in New Delhi.

¹²² For details about the contribution of Dixit to the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, see sections 5.3 and 5.4.2.

¹²³ Sonia Gandhi is the widow of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi who was assassinated in 1991 by Sri Lanka's Tamil Tiger rebels.

6.5 Summation

The evolving bilateral relations between Israel and India from 1992 to 2005 is analysed by the Oscillated Diplomacy Model as a theoretical model of International Relations that helps to explain the nature of the bilateral relations between the two countries as well as the Indian operational diplomacy towards Israel. The political attitude of the Indian governments in power, as a guiding parameter of foreign policy, has had a strong affect on the volume of the oscillated diplomacy between the two countries. The Israeli-Indian relations have been characterised by diplomatic vicissitudes and were influenced by the convergence of mutual national strategic interests.

Since 1992, and even before that time, the change in governments in India has caused a great deal of concern in Israel and has had a direct impact on bilateral as well as multilateral relations between India and Israel in terms of guiding parameters, which influenced the volume and direction of the relations between the two countries. From a political level of analysis, the various governments in India since the 1990s have been coalition governments and since then, India's ideological approach has been replaced by a pragmatic attitude in its foreign policy.

The Indian foreign policy towards Israel has received the backing of most of the political spectrum in India and most of the political parties have come to terms with India's ties with Israel, realising its value for India in general and the military field in particular. However, there was consensus in Indian politics regarding the continuation of the support of the Palestinian cause and the need for friendly relations with the Arab world. The UPA government has set the Palestinian cause back as a relevant factor regarding Israeli-Indian relations and as part of India's new foreign policy and diplomatic activism, the Arab world in general and the Gulf countries in particular have become political and economic partners of India.

India's diplomatic activism since the 1990s has been demonstrated in its bilateral relations with Israel as India realised that such diplomatic ties are of strategic value to India in general and to the Arab world in particular, after India perceived that it could serve its national strategic interests better by having close relations with both Israel and the Arab world. The Kargil crisis between India and Pakistan in 1999 and the terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament in December 2001 boosted military collaboration between India and Israel and increased the volume of arms sales between the two countries. In addition, September 11 2001 brought a new dimension to international counter-terrorism and has improved the collaboration in that field between the two countries in particular, during the tenure of the NDA governments. Consequently, the volume of arms sales between Israel and India has reached a certain critical mass and the level of sophistication of the arms sales has increased as well.

India has moved from an anti-Israeli and pro-Arab approach to a pragmatic approach, which included a more balanced approach towards Israel while maintaining its close relations with the Arab countries, within the delimited lines of the Indian oscillated diplomacy towards Israel. Israel on the other hand, realised the potential of the ties between the two countries as a joint strategic interest immediately after the establishment of diplomatic relations. High-level official visits, foreign ministries' dialogues and bilateral agreements were the first ingredients of the diplomatic relations as mutual strategic interests between the two countries. The Israeli international cooperation programme, an integral part of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has been highly active in India and has contributed significantly to the improvement of bilateral relations between the two countries as well as Israel's image in India.

The oscillation of the Indian diplomacy towards Israel has been influenced, in terms of operational diplomacy, by three types of mutual national strategic interests, which determined the volume and direction of the diplomatic ties between the two countries. The convergent Israeli-Indian

strategic interests are divided into two types of strategic interests: joint strategic interests and common strategic interests. The joint strategic interests refer to goals that the two states have pursued in order to maximise overlapping inter-related strategic interests in terms of strength and intensity while the common strategic interests, in terms of scope, refer to goals that the two states have pursued in order to achieve complementary strategic interests. On the other hand, discrepant strategic interests are a third type of strategic interest, which has a negative and counteractive impact on bilateral relations.

Joint strategic interests between Israel and India have included military cooperation in particular, which covers arms sales, the transfer of military technology, joint weapon development, joint production and the marketing of military equipment, which has made India the third largest importer of Israeli arms after Turkey and China. Counter-terrorism has been another joint strategic interest and was based on the perception that Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism, particularly after September 11, have been a mutual concern to Israel and India. The joint strategic concern regarding radical Islamism at home and in neighbouring countries has also increased intelligence cooperation between Israel and India.

Space cooperation has been another joint strategic interest between Israel and India. A space cooperation agreement has been signed between the space agencies of the two countries and was followed by the installation of an Israeli set of wide field ultraviolet telescopes in an Indian satellite. India on the other hand, expressed its interest in the Israeli Arrow 2 anti-ballistic missile system. The prevention of nuclear technology leaks and nuclear policy coordination has been of joint strategic interest for both countries, as neither of them signed the NPT (although Israel signed the CTBT). In this regard, it is important to consider the fact that Pakistan's nuclear potential could have constituted a threat to both countries especially if Pakistan had been taken over by Islamic extremist forces.

Since the middle of the 1990s, India has been Israel's largest trading partner in Asia after China and Hong Kong. The economic cooperation between the two countries has been increasing steadily, including joint industrial ventures with an emphasis on science and high technology, which was related to the opening up of the Indian economy to the West and to globalisation. Israel has had free trade agreements with the US and the European Union while India has been a signatory to the ASEAN-India framework agreement on comprehensive economic cooperation and the two countries have had the potential to promote joint economic activities for their mutual benefit. In addition, cultural ties between the two countries have intensified significantly since 1992 and reached a peak in 1997 when Israel celebrated India's 50th year of independence with the Shalom India Festival. India reciprocated one year later by organising many cultural events all over Israel as part of the celebration of the fifty years of Israeli independence.

Relations with the superpowers and the US in particular, have become a common strategic interest for Israel and India. After September 11, there was a growing understanding in India as well as in Israel, that trilateral Indo-American-Israeli cooperation is likely to produce considerable benefits for all concerned. The Indian leaders have become increasingly convinced that the American Jewish Lobby provides a vital link of influence with US policy-making as well as with American finance. It is important to point out that Israel, India and Russia share common threats regarding religious terrorism. Trilateral cooperation in the field of energy as well as counter-terrorism in the international arena in general and in Central Asia, which India considered as part of its extended neighbourhood in particular, as well as industrial cooperation including cooperation regarding diamond processing and trilateral joint military cooperation.

Geo-strategy has been a common strategic interest of both countries in general and maintaining the security of the Indian Ocean has been a common strategic interest in particular. The Indian Ocean has been the

most important geo-strategic location as far as India's strategic interest is concerned, while Asia has been an important destination for Israeli trade. The two countries are located strategically on the flank of number of Muslim countries and have a strategic interest to secure the sea-lanes to the Straits of Mallaca.

The Central Asian region has been an area of common strategic interest for Israel and India as well as an extended strategic neighbourhood. Both countries have sold military equipment to the Central Asian countries; in addition, they have both had an economic interest in the region including the field of energy and have been trying to limit the influence of Iran and Saudi Arabia as agents for radical Islamisation. India and Israel have to work hard in order to be counted as significant players in the region considering the high volume of involvement and competition with Russia (and previously the Soviet Union), US, China, Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

Pakistan was another common strategic interest between Israel and India. The Kargil crisis between Indian and Pakistan in 1999 expanded the military cooperation between India and Israel significantly and elevated the volume of arms sales. India and Israel have also exchanged intelligence information on Islamic terrorist groups and Israel helped India to fight terrorism in Kashmir by providing logistical support. The Pakistani nuclear ability, which has been of concern to the two countries, constitutes a mutual security challenge, which includes intelligence cooperation. Israel was particularly concerned about the seepage of nuclear technologies with the authorisation of the government of Pakistan or as a rogue operation and that Pakistan would become a supplier of intermediate range missile for Arab countries in the Middle East and Iran. Iran has been considered one of the most significant discrepant strategic interests between Israel and India and is in strong contrast with the Indian friendly relations with Iran. Iran's Islamic governments and its nuclear weapon capabilities were considered a strategic threat by Israel as well as a serious danger to the

stability of the Middle East. Israel has expressed its concern regularly about India's close ties with Teheran and the possibility of India's selling advanced technology and military equipment to Iran was brought up in official meetings between military representatives of the two countries.

India's intention of sustaining its high level of economic growth since 1991 has required a high level of oil reserves. The lack of adequate energy resources, Arab oil and the demand for oil based products such as petrochemicals and fertilisers made the relationship between India and the Gulf countries an important factor in Indian foreign policy and energy in general as a discrepant strategic interest between Israel and India.

The UN and NAM are good examples of discrepant strategic interests. Although India had no longer sponsored anti-Israeli UN resolutions after 1992, it went on supporting the Palestinian cause at the UN General Assembly and committees while abstaining on the nuclear issue. Since the 1990s, the NAM's influence on Indian diplomacy has gradually lessened as India sought to reconstruct its foreign policy to meet the requirements of the post Cold War world. India started to focus on issues of concern for its national interests and Israel was a direct beneficiary of the change in India's international orientation towards NAM, as traditionally the political dynamics in the organisation was unconditionally in favour of the Arab world as well as the Palestinian cause. Despite the new Indian approach towards the NAM and the fact that India made serious attempts to moderate NAM's resolutions regarding Israel, India remained an active member of the Palestinian committee of the NAM and the movement has remained a discrepant strategic interest between the two countries.

India has gradually emerged as an Asian regional force since 1994 with its "Look East" policy and has been able to utilise technology and expertise acquired in Israel in order to promote its trade and economic relations with Asia. Israel, on the other hand, which is still struggling for full international legitimacy in Asia, has realised that its relations with India could be instrumental to achieving this type of legitimacy as well as upgrading its

international status in Asia. In contrast with Asia, which is a common strategic interest between Israel and India, the Chinese-Israeli relations in general and their military cooperation in particular, were of concern to India and have been watched closely in terms of national security concerns.

The Islamic and Arab worlds have been traditional discrepant strategic interests between Israel and India. Traditionally, India has stressed its historic links with the Islamic world while trying to avoid excessive focus on Kashmir and its tensions with Pakistan. It has also tried to neutralise Pakistan and its ability to play the Islamic card. Since the middle of the 1990s, India has regarded Israeli security and intelligence cooperation as a more valuable asset for dealing effectively with the Kashmir problem than the unfriendly attitudes of the Muslim countries. Subsequently, there has been a shift in the Indian foreign policy towards the Arab countries after the Gulf War when India perceived that it could serve its national interests better by having close relations with both Israel and the Arab world.

There has been a shift in India's foreign policy from a one-sided position in favour of the Arabs regarding their dispute with Israel, to a more balanced stance. Importantly, India recognised that it had to be able to do business with all sides in the Middle East without ignoring India's economic and political interests in the region. Following the change in governments in India and the return to power of the INCP in May 2004, there was an improvement of its relations with the Islamic and the Arab world.

The new UPA government has been eager to demonstrate that its ties with Israel would not affect its support for the Palestinian cause. The following aspects have influenced the Indian foreign policy regarding the Israeli Palestinian conflict:

- The collapse of the Oslo process at Camp David.
- The death of the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.
- The end of the second Intifada (April 2003).

- The election of Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) as the new leader of the PA.
- Failure to implement the Road-Map.

Following the failure of the implementation of the Road-Map and the Israeli unilateral Disengagement Plan regarding the Gaza Strip and part of the North West Bank, the UPA government has taken a positive view of the Israeli Disengagement Plan. The condition was that it would only be the first stage in a comprehensive peace process that would lead to an independent viable Palestinian state and would encourage Israel to take steps to improve the Palestinian economy and revitalise the PA.

In terms of the state and society level of analysis and the guiding parameters of the Israeli-Indian diplomacy, as far as the Indian political system has been concerned, it has gradually come to terms with the evolving relations between the two countries. Following the development of the official bilateral relations with Israel and the positive change in Israel's image after 1992 in India, most of the political parties in India, while continuing their support of the Palestinian cause, realised the value of defence and military relations with Israel to India. The political powers have also realised that the success of the Indian foreign policy was dependent on the pace of India's globalisation and its ability to strengthen its ties with the West and Israel as a modern technology-oriented economy, has become an important economic partner of India. The return to power of the INCP on 23 May 2004 closed a political circle as far as bilateral relations with Israel were concerned and some concerns were expressed in Israel about a possible change in India's foreign policy towards Israel. However, military, economic and cultural relations have been maintained, although bilateral relations, especially in terms of high-level official visits, have cooled down.

The MEA, as a civil service, has adjusted slowly to the change in the traditional Indian foreign policy towards Israel while expressing concern

whenever there were setbacks to the peace process with the Palestinians. Since 1999, the Indian MEA and the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs have held annual bilateral consultations and the MEA has gradually come to terms with the idea that close relations with both Israel and the Arab world serve India's national interests best. Pressure groups have traditionally played a small role in the two countries as far as the formulation of foreign policy is concerned and have made no significant contribution to the evolving bilateral relations between the two countries with the exception of the Indian Muslim community in India and the US Jewish organisations.

The US Jewish Lobby has played a significant role in the evolving bilateral relations between Israel and India, mainly because the Indian leaders have become increasingly convinced that the American Jewish Lobby provides a vital link of influence in American policy-making as well as in American finances and that it has a positive effect on the US's disposition towards India. The pro-Israel and pro-India lobbyists have also worked together successfully and the Jewish-Indian alliance in the US has combined forces in electoral politics to get the upper hand over those whom they perceive to be antagonistic to both Israel and to India.

On the other hand, the Indian Muslim community and the Indian-Muslim organisations, supported by India's left wing parties and traditionalists in the elite of the INCP, have continued to object to the evolving Israeli-Indian relations. However, all governments have made it clear to them that bilateral relations with Israel in general and military cooperation in particular would continue. The new Indian UPA government has also been determined to maintain India's friendly relations with Israel while continuing to improve its close relations with the Arab countries as well as its support of the Palestinian cause. In addition to the Indian Prime Ministers, as ultimate decision units, since 1998 the Indian National Security Advisors have proved to be key players as far as India's foreign policy towards Israel was concerned.

There has been an ongoing firm basis for a strategic affiliation between India and Israel, which concentrated on the convergence of the strategic interests of the two international players. In future, bilateral relations and cooperation between Israel and India ought to be diversified in terms of additional complementary fields of cooperation with an emphasis on “people to people” activities. Such bilateral cooperation, strengthened by joint and common interrelated strategic interests and supported by a peaceful solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, has the potential to upgrade bilateral relations between Israel and India by influencing the parameters of the Indian oscillated diplomacy towards Israel. Importantly, these aspects can turn their bilateral relationship into a fruitful complex interdependence for the mutual benefit of both countries.¹²⁴

¹²⁴ Complex interdependence is a term used by Keohana and Nye, which assumes multiple channels between societies as well as disutility of military powers (International Relations, 1998).

Chapter 7

Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

The focus of this research is on the analysis of the relations between Israel and India between 1948 and 2005 seen mainly from an Israeli perspective. It is envisaged that this research will contribute to the comprehensive knowledge of Israeli-Indian bilateral relations, the theory of international politics, the understanding of diplomacy as a tool for the implementation of foreign policy in general and to the diplomatic practice of bilateral relations between India and Israel in particular.

7.2 Framework of the research

In order to gain insight into and develop a thorough understanding of the relations between Israel and India, this research, which is diachronic in nature, refers to the bilateral foreign relations between Israel and India within three specified timeframes. It also provides a descriptive analysis of Israeli-Indian relations and aims to clarify, in accordance with the research questions, the factors that have affected and effected Israeli-Indian relations. The timeframes refer to the bilateral relations between the two countries before the establishment of diplomatic relations (from 1948 to 1991) including pre-independence relations, the bilateral strategic change that paved the way for full diplomatic relations in 1992 and the evolving bilateral relations between India and Israel that followed (from 1992 to 2005).

There is no single comprehensive theory that can be applied in the analysis of the complex set of Israeli-Indian relations between 1948 and 2005 and in the analysis of their pre-independence relations. Therefore, pertinent theories regarding international relations, models, relevant historical descriptions and narrative accounts are incorporated into an eclectic and coherent theoretical

framework in order to ensure better comprehension of the composite bilateral foreign relations between Israel and India. The framework helps to simplify and analyse the complexity of the Israeli-Indian relations, which are influenced by a web of diverse causal factors in terms of both external and internal variables in conjunction with contextual determinants. Two newly devised models applied in this research are combined with other complementary pertinent theories and models in the theoretical framework. Both new models are utilised as analytical tools with explanatory values, which help to provide a broader picture and a comprehensive understanding of the bilateral foreign relations between India and Israel and contribute to the theoretical field of international relations and diplomacy as well as to diplomatic practice.

7.2.1 First timeframe (1948-1991)

In the first timeframe, that covers the period from 1948 to 1991, bilateral foreign relations between India and Israel with special reference to the pre-independence relations between the two countries, are analysed with the help of the Ultimate Decision Unit Model and the Levels of Analysis Model. The reference to the pre-independence relations of the two countries is an integral part of their bilateral relations, situated within the broader historical context of their complex relations. In addition, the factors that influenced the bilateral relations between the two countries up to 1991 and the specific effect they had on the bilateral relations between the two countries before diplomatic relations were established, are discussed.

The dominant actors regarding India's historical relations with Israel are identified and analysed in terms of the ultimate decision unit that enabled the researcher to analyse entities and authorities, including leaders, within the Indian governments, which were important to the shaping of the Indian foreign policy towards the State of Israel. India's foreign policy towards Israel from 1948 up to 1991 is analysed in terms of three levels of analysis, namely the international, state and society (national) and individual levels respectively. The international level is further divided into two types of relations, namely bilateral and multilateral relations. The three levels of analysis, in terms of the

units of analysis of India as a unitary actor in the international system, enable the identification, examination and analysis of the external and internal factors of India's historical relations with Israel up to 1991. In addition, they take the complexity level of the web of variables, the international environment, the political process and the contextual determinants into consideration.

India was established in 1947 and the Republic of India recognised the State of Israel on 18 September 1950; however, the two countries only established full diplomatic relations on 29 January 1992. A historical description is provided of the relations between India and Israel and the Indian pro-Arab narrative, which accounted for its traditional foreign policy towards Israel up to the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. This description presents the foundation, in terms of a historical database with extensive and in-depth knowledge pertaining to this period up to 1991, for a dynamic analysis of the bilateral relations between India and Israel. Because of the importance and relevance of pre-independence relations regarding India's foreign policy towards the State of Israel, reference is made to the Indian pre-independence policy towards Palestine prior to Israel's independence. This reference is a part of an implicit historical description used to explain the in-depth development of the Israeli-Indian bilateral relations.

7.2.1.1 India's pre-independence attitude towards Palestine

The main objective of the INCM, before 1947 as an ultimate decision unit, was to achieve independence. However, the major objectives of the Government of India after independence, led by its prime ministers as an ultimate decision unit, were the political consolidation of independence, the promotion of economic development and the pursuit of foreign policy goals that enhanced Indian national interests.

In terms of the international level of analysis, it was essential to examine the factors that shaped the attitudes of the INCM leadership towards events in Palestine before 1947, although officially, India had no foreign policy prior to its achievement of independence. The Indian pro-Arab approach to the Arab-

Israeli conflict stemmed from the strong ties between the INCM and the national liberation movements in the Arab countries of the Middle East. A feeling of solidarity existed in India and in the INCM in particular, during the first half of the twentieth century, regarding the Arabs' liberation movements. Zionism, on the other hand, was identified with European colonialism and was not regarded as a national liberation movement. The fact that Zionism was supported by Western powers, in the first place by European governments such as Britain and later on by Western governments, particularly the US, was another reason for the INCM's pro-Arab approach before the independence of Israel and pro-Arab and anti-Israeli approach after it.

In terms of the state and society level of analysis, Mahatma Gandhi, as the leader of the INCM, made a clear distinction between the historical problem of the Jewish people as a prosecuted group and their search for a home and the way in which that problem could be resolved. According to him, the Jewish claim for an independent state as well as the Partition Plan in Palestine, clashed with the INCM's political perception that a demand for a separate state, in India or in Palestine, should be opposed. Gandhi and the INCM leaders were consistent in their support of the idea of a secular state in India as well as in Palestine based upon territorial integrity and India, therefore, supported the establishment of one single state in Palestine based on federal principles. The presence of a very substantial minority of Muslims, whose sentiments and sympathies lay with their fellow Muslims in the Middle East, was also taken into political consideration by the INCM, which needed their active cooperation in the national struggle for independence.

7.2.1.2 India's post-independence foreign policy towards Israel

After independence, the Indian leadership, namely the prime ministers of India as an ultimate decision unit, shaped the attitude of India towards the State of Israel. In terms of the international level of analysis, India recognised the State of Israel and the political reality of Israel in 1950, but its foreign policy towards Israel reflected its self-interest in the Middle East as well as its traditional sympathy with the Arabs. As a matter of fact, the non-existent diplomatic

relations were considered by India to be an advantage within the international arena, particularly with reference to the Arab world and as far as Pakistan and the Kashmir conflict were concerned as they had become important items on India's major foreign policy agenda. India was eager to enlist the neutrality of Arab countries while the possibility of the State of Israel playing a constructive role in assisting India to achieve its major national objectives was practically inconceivable.

Israel was excluded from the Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung in 1955. At this stage, India considered Israel to be a colonial state that was linked to the colonial forces, against which national movements in Asia, including the INCP, had struggled in the past. The collaboration between Israel, England and France, previously two major colonial powers, during the Suez Canal crisis and the military operation against Egypt in 1956, only served to confirm India's view of Israel as an outpost of Europe in the Middle East. In addition, India, as a secular state by virtue of its constitution, regarded Israel a theocratic state, as was also the case with Pakistan.

The Israeli military assistance to India during its wars with China and Pakistan had no effect on the Indian foreign policy towards Israel or the bilateral relations between the two countries. The Six-Day War in 1967 added an entirely new dimension to the Indian anti-Israeli approach, namely a hardening of attitudes and strong condemnation combined with moral outrage regarding Israel's actions, which was expressed in particularly strong terms by the Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi.

The following factors strengthened the Indian pro-Arab policy:

- The emergence of the OIC in 1969.
- India's strong economic interests in the Arab world, in particular the growing dependence of India on the Middle East energy sources.
- The economic potential of the Arab market.
- The importance of the trade routes in the Middle East to the West.
- The Indian overseas workers in the Gulf countries.

In contrast, Israel was regarded as a small and insignificant country in economic terms as far as India was concerned.

After the Arab-Israeli war in 1973 and the ensuing oil crisis, India expressed its support for Egypt and Syria, while intensifying its anti-Israeli rhetoric in the UN and also on other international forums. Two years later, in 1975, India officially recognised the PLO and was the sponsor of the UN General Assembly resolution that equated Zionism with racism. In March 1980, India granted full diplomatic recognition to the PLO. In June 1981, India denounced the Israeli air force attack on the Iraqi nuclear reactor and one year later, in the summer of 1982, it strongly condemned the Israeli Military Operations in Lebanon. In the same year, India expelled the Israeli Consul in Bombay after criticising the Indian government's approach towards Israel in the Indian press. Subsequently, in November 1988, India was one of the first countries to recognise the State of Palestine. In December 1991, following the Madrid Conference, India supported the repeal of the UN General Assembly resolution that equated Zionism with racism and one month later, on 29 January 1992, fully-fledged diplomatic relations were established between the two countries.

In the multilateral arena, India's hostile relations with Pakistan, the emergence of the Arab group in the International System and the UN in particular and the Arab states' numerical asymmetry with Israel were important formative factors in India's foreign policy. India expected political dividends from the Arab countries in the Indo-Pakistan conflict over Kashmir in return for its anti-Israeli foreign policy. India's efforts, which included its anti-Israeli foreign policy in order to keep the Islamic factor as well as the Arab states from reinforcing Pakistan in the international arena, proved to be futile and Pakistan continued to propagate the Kashmir conflict as a pan-Islamic issue. However, the close relations between India and Egypt as well as India's relations with the Arab world in general and its economic relations with the Gulf countries in particular, ensured a moderate Arab stance regarding India in both the international arena and at conferences of the Arab heads of states. Although India was

disappointed by the Arab world's stance, it did not change its staunch pro-Arab foreign policy.

The rivalries between the superpowers during the Cold War affected South Asia and the Middle East adversely. Israel was identified with the Western powers while India gradually aligned itself with the Soviet side. In fact, Indian opposition to military blocs, its active membership of the NAM as well as its solidarity with the Afro-Asian countries' criticism of the Western powers and the United States (US), brought India closer to the Eastern bloc in general and the Soviet Union in particular, and commensurate with their antagonistic attitude towards Israel at that time. New Delhi's view was that the State of Israel was acting in concert with the Western powers and the US in particular, while India, on the other hand, had had close ties with the Soviet Union in particular since 1971 when an Indo-Soviet treaty of peace, friendship and cooperation was signed between the two countries. India had consistently sided with the Soviet Union against Israel in the international arena in general and international organisations as well as the NAM in particular. Furthermore, both countries pursued an anti-Israeli and pro-Arab foreign policy in terms of their long-term strategic interests. In fact, the absence of Indian economic and cultural ties with the US, the hostility of many Indian leaders towards it, the American aid to Pakistan and the Cold War prevented the US from playing a significant role in the South-Asian region. These factors also prevented the US from playing a constructive role in promoting bilateral relations between India and Israel.

The decades after the Afro-Asian conference at Bandung in 1955, found India and China closer to the Arab world and both countries used anti-Israeli rhetoric on international forums. Significantly, India was a founder and prominent leader of the NAM and that had a direct effect on its pro-Arab and anti-Israeli foreign policy. Friendly relations were growing between India and Egypt; to the extent that personal friendships were forged between Prime Minister Nehru and President Nasser of Egypt and India aligned itself politically more and more with Egypt in the international arena. Traditionally, India attached a great deal of importance to the UN as an international forum and its history with this

organisation was comprehensive. This was reflected in India's sponsoring of anti-Israeli resolutions as well as its consistent pro-Arab voting.

In terms of the state and society level of analysis, regardless of India's anti-Israel foreign policy, Indian opposition parties, academics, journalists and the Indian public opinion, called for the revision of the foreign policy towards Israel, claiming it would be in the interest of India as a nation. Undoubtedly, Israel's military assistance to India during its wars with China and Pakistan as well as the Israeli victories in the Arab-Israeli wars and Israel's advanced technology, were all factors that contributed to creating a more positive attitude towards Israel. In fact, many Indians felt a great deal of admiration for Israel in terms of its military, social, scientific and agricultural achievements and began to question India's foreign policy towards Israel. The persistent anti-Israel and pro-Arab stance was also criticised by some opposition parties that urged the government to establish diplomatic relations with Israel, but to no avail. However, the only exceptions were in the form of relatively low-level intelligence collaboration, some quiet diplomacy via back channels and a low level of trade between the private sectors of both countries.

In terms of the Individual Level of Analysis, Nehru's pre-independence support of the Arabs was transformed, by the Indian leaders, into an anti-Israeli doctrine based on his view of Israel as a product of Western imperialism. India's foreign policy towards Israel became more restrictive after Nehru's death and the Indian leaders that succeeded him, particularly his daughter Indira Gandhi, who was a staunch supporter of the Arab cause, continued with his pro-Arab and anti-Israeli policy, considered by them as part of Nehru's legacy. Even leaders that had called for full diplomatic relations and closer relations with Israel, when they were still part of the opposition, continued the Indian anti-Israeli attitude of their predecessors when they became the heads of coalition governments. An incremental diplomatic change in the bilateral relations between India and Israel began when Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi who was more open-minded to the West than his predecessors had been, came to power in 1984. However, because of his domestic political constraints and the negative international environment

regarding Israel, his efforts to change India's foreign policy towards Israel were limited in scope.

The Gulf War in 1991 during which Israel did not retaliate to attacks by Iraqi Scud missiles, and the Madrid conference that followed, significantly improved Israel's position in the international system and was one of the important factors that paved the way to the breakthrough in Israeli-Indian relations. Until 1991, India had never redefined its national interest in the Middle East in a selective way and this type of redefinition of its foreign policy was eventually done in 1991. The first significant signal indicating the onset of this redefinition was given in 1991, when India voted to repeal the General Assembly Resolution that equated Zionism with racism. India's foreign policy towards Israel was actually a type of a fixed idea (*idée fixe*) based on the unassailable preconceived belief that there could be no diversion from Nehru's foreign relations legacy and Mahatma Gandhi's idealism. This preconceived belief was further reinforced and cemented by the conservative attitude of the Ministry of External Affairs together with their dogmatic diplomatic and traditionally anti-Israeli approach. It should also be noted that although India's foreign policy towards Israel was negative it was passive in nature. In terms of bilateral relations between 1948 and 1991, the nature of any interactions between the two countries was more reactive than initiatory; while India maintained a consistently pro-Arab foreign policy.

Throughout the years up to 1991, the governments of India had overestimated the possible political response of the Indian Muslims regarding a change of Indian foreign policy towards Israel. Ironically, India did not take into consideration that at that time most of the Arab countries had full diplomatic relations with countries that maintained diplomatic relations with Israel. India continued with its dogmatic foreign policy towards Israel even after peace agreements had been signed between Israel and Egypt in 1978 and Israel, and Jordan in 1994.

In addition, India did not read the Arab world correctly with regard to their relations with Pakistan, as the Arab countries continued their support for

Pakistan despite the Indian pro-Arab and anti-Israeli foreign policy. India also failed to realise that establishing diplomatic relations with Israel could be a diplomatic tool that could be used to exert counter pressure against the Arab world in the case of Pakistan in general and the conflict over Kashmir in particular. Because of this misreading of the situation, India miscalculated the potential effect of its foreign policy regarding Israel by assuming that diplomatic relations with Israel would harm its international status in the Middle East as well as its relations with the Arab countries. India took this approach one step further by singling the State of Israel out for censure on moral and political grounds at international forums.

India not only failed to re-assess and adjust its dogmatic foreign policy accordingly regarding Israel until 1991 but also failed to realise the extent of the joint national interests between India and Israel and the potential for mutual cooperation between the two countries, particularly in areas such as agriculture, high technology transfer and arms sales. Moreover, India did not realise the full potential of the common strategic interests of the two countries in the multilateral arena and failed to see the potential of trilateral cooperation between India, Israel and other countries in general and with the US as a superpower in particular.

India's pro-Arab foreign policy did not yield the expected political dividends in the Arab world or the international arena and prevented India from playing an active role in the Middle East. In addition, regional events and wars in the Middle East widened the existing gap between India and Israel even further. Despite the fact that an alternative foreign policy towards Israel could have been more rewarding in terms of India's national and strategic interests, this option was never given serious consideration before 1991. In fact, from the time of independence up to 1991, India never redefined its strategic interests in the Middle East and failed to adjust or reorient its dogmatic foreign policy towards Israel.

7.2.1.3 Israel's pre-Independence attitude towards India

The development of the Israeli foreign policy towards India from 1948 to 1991 is described as a political process in terms of a historical analysis, with the aim of answering the question regarding the specific factors that influenced Israel's foreign policy towards India and the effect they had on the relations between the two countries prior to the establishment of diplomatic relations.. The historical description of the relations between Israel and India provides the foundation for a dynamic analysis of the bilateral relations between Israel and India, in terms of historical database accumulation and depth of knowledge, during the foregoing period up to 1991. Reference is also made to the Israeli pre-independence policy towards India, prior to India's independence, because of the importance and relevance of Israel's pre-independence relations to its foreign policy towards the Republic of India.

The dominant actors involved in Israel's historical relations with India are identified and analysed in terms of the ultimate decision unit. They are the entities and authorities, including leaders, within the Israeli governments that contributed to the shaping of the Israeli foreign policy as well as the conducting of Israeli diplomacy towards India. Israel's foreign policy towards India is analysed in terms of three levels of analysis, namely the international, state and society (national) and Individual levels respectively. The international level is further divided into two types of relations, namely bilateral and multilateral relations. The three levels of analysis, in terms of the units of analysis of Israel as a unitary actor in the international system, provide a conceptual basis for a historical in-depth description. These three levels of analysis enable the identification, examination and analysis of both the external and internal factors of Israel's foreign policy towards India up to 1991 while taking the complexity level of the web of variables, the political process in Israel and the contextual determinants into consideration.

The main objective of the Jewish Agency before 1948 as the ultimate decision unit was to achieve a Jewish independent State in Palestine. The major objectives of the Government of Israel as the ultimate decision unit after

independence in 1948 were primarily the security of the State of Israel, the preservation of Israel's territorial integrity and its national identity. From the outset, India was consistently unsympathetic towards Zionism and according to the Indian record since 1922; it was obvious to the Jewish Agency in Palestine that pursuing the Zionist cause in India would be a daunting task.

Before independence, the Jewish Agency, and after independence the State of Israel, came to terms and accepted that pursuance of diplomatic activities and information campaigns in India in particular, as well as changing India's attitude regarding Zionism would undoubtedly be extremely complicated. They were fully aware of the challenging opening conditions and difficulties that faced them. The sporadic and limited attempts made before independence to influence the INCM and Indian leaders to change their strong pro-Arab approach, were all to no avail.

After independence, the Israeli attempts to improve the bilateral relations between the two countries only served to strengthen the negative Israeli perceptions that predetermined the biased Indian foreign policy towards Israel. The lack of motivation to pursue the Zionist cause in India before 1948 as well as the submissive Israeli foreign policy towards India between 1948 and 1991, can be ascribed to a large number of reasons, constraining factors and circumstances. In terms of the international levels of analysis, the creation of the Jewish national homeland depended on Britain (by means of the Balfour Declaration and the British Mandate) and other leading Western powers of that time, which meant that the Zionist diplomatic efforts were concentrated in London, Geneva and New York. In fact, the world Jewry was predominantly Western and the funds for the Jewish resettlement in Palestine primarily came from Jews in Western countries, as did many potential immigrants at that stage, which was just after the Holocaust and the Second World War.

The Jewish dependence on Britain for the creation of its national homeland dictated that the Jewish Agency could not take sides with India against Britain, as this would jeopardise its relations with Britain. No systematic effort was made by the Zionist Movement to establish contacts within the INCM despite

the fact that Israel, like India, had been under British rule. The Zionist Movement failed to convince the Indian nationalists that the Israeli nation was engaged in a struggle for independence no different to the one that the Indians or the other nations in Asia had undertaken. In fact, Zionism did not consider itself part of the historical process of a freedom struggle throughout Asia. Instead, it felt that its situation was unique, in the sense that its struggle was aimed at the revival of the Jewish nation in its ancient homeland. The Zionist leaders avoided identification with the anti-colonial nationalistic movements in Asia and the Zionist Movement, unlike the INCM, was not a member of the Organisation of International Congress against Imperialism. Consequently, no Zionist representative was ever found at the various anti-imperialist conferences during the 1920s and the 1930s and there was never any public pronouncement aligning Zionist goals with Asian nationalism. A further major concern of the Zionist leadership in Palestine regarding the struggle for independence in India, was the concern that Britain might fear that the troubles between the Jews and Arabs in Palestine could cause widespread disturbances among the Arabs throughout the Middle East and possibly also among the Muslims in India.

The assumption of the Zionist Movement was that the Muslim community in India (consisting of over 95 million people before the Indo-Pakistani partition) was opposed to the Zionist Movement in Palestine and as a result, no serious attempt was made by the leaders of the Zionist Movement to establish contacts with the leadership of the Indian Muslim community. Consequently, the offer made by the Indian Muslim leader, Maulana Azad, to organise conciliation talks for a settlement in Palestine, was not taken seriously. Similarly, no attempt was made by the Jewish Agency to establish contacts with the Indian-Christian community, which unlike the Hindus was familiar with the Bible and the New Testament. Even the relations with the Indian Jewish community were limited and the budget allocation for the Jewish Agency's local office in Bombay was small, mainly because of the low degree of importance attached to India by the Jewish leadership and the fact that the local office was not considered to be an effective channel for political lobbying in India. It is important to note that India was geographically remote in terms

of Palestine and there was a cultural as well as a religious gap between the Jewish and Indian nations. India lay on the periphery to the American-European centred worldview of the Jewish leaders in Palestine and their knowledge of Indian heritage, culture, society and the Hindu religion in the Jewish community in Palestine was marginal. Similarly, the majority of Indian Hindus knew very little about Judaism and the Bible (namely the Old Testament).

In terms of the individual level of analysis, as far as the Jewish leadership before independence was concerned, the most significant Indian leaders were Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi. However, despite the keen interest of the Jewish leaders in both of them, the sporadic meetings with Gandhi and Nehru as well as with other Indian leaders, were conducted by Jewish supporters of the Zionist cause and low ranking emissaries (contrary to the close relations between the Arab nationalist leaders and the Indian leaders).

Gandhi was considered to be pro-Arab by the Israeli leaders and furthermore, as someone who lacked real understanding of Zionism. In fact, leaders such as Gandhi and Nehru were certainly not aware of the Jewish spiritual connection with the Holy Land however after the independence of Israel, they both considered the newly born state to be a theocratic state and as such analogous to Pakistan. Nevertheless, Gandhi and Nehru were held in great esteem by the Jews of Palestine and Nehru in particular, appealed to the predominantly socialist leadership of the Jewish Agency. Undeniably, the negative attitude displayed by these two Indian leaders towards Zionism, together with the failure to change their opinion regarding the Zionist cause, was frustrating for the Jewish leadership in Palestine. The understanding in Israel was that the Indian leaders in general and the leaders of the INCP in particular, were firmly committed to the traditional Indian pro-Arab and anti-Israeli foreign policy.

7.2.1.4 Israel's post-independence foreign policy towards India

After independence, the basic set of Israeli priorities included arms procurement; fundraising, Jewish immigration and political as well as economic support for the newly born Jewish State and India did not feature in this set of priorities. The perception in Israel in any case was that the Indian leaders in general and the leaders of the INCP in particular, were committed to the traditional Indian pro-Arab and anti-Israeli foreign policy.

Based on the negative nature of the Indian foreign policy towards Israel, the prevailing assumption in Israel was that there was only a limited scope for any Israeli diplomatic initiative in India. Israeli diplomats were even instructed that issues such as transferring the Israeli Consulate to New Delhi or the question of diplomatic relations between the two countries should not be raised at all. Moreover, the Israeli assumption was strengthened by the limitations imposed on the Israeli Consulate activities in Bombay and the expulsion of the Israeli Consul from India in 1982.

In terms of the international level of analysis, during the Cold War, Israel and India found themselves on different sides of the political spectrum. Following the Korean War from July 1950 onwards, Israel turned to the US with the aim of obtaining American patronage in the form of guarantees. India, on the other hand, was a prominent leader of the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) and pursued its policy of non-alignment while developing close economic, military and diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and consistently demonstrated an anti-Israeli foreign policy. In the context of the Cold War, Israel soon realised that the Americans had limited political power when it came to exerting pressure on and influencing India. Moreover, the Jewish American Organisations' pressure on India, which was partly coordinated by Israel, regarding issues of importance to Israel, was not strong and was not focussed enough. This can be reinforced by the fact that when the American Jewish lobby exerted firm pressure on India concerning certain issues regarding Israel, the Indian response was favourable. American Jewish Organisations achieved remarkable success with issues such as:

- Prevention of the closure of the Israeli Consulate in Bombay.
- Upgrading of the official rank of the diplomat in charge of the Consulate after the expulsion of Israeli Consul from India.
- Extension of the jurisdiction of the Consulate.
- Pressure applied to establish diplomatic relations with Israel.

These successes offer clear proof that other previous interventions had not been forceful enough.

The Israeli Arab wars in 1956, 1967, 1973 and 1982 caused the multilateral diplomacy of Israel to adopt a defensive mode with a low assessment of the potential influence of diplomacy in general and diplomacy in the multilateral arena in particular. India, on the other hand, was active in the international arena and constantly attacked Israel in the UN as well as the NAM on political and moral grounds, while campaigning for anti-Israel resolutions on international forums and giving its wholehearted support to the Arab cause.

The Arab world represented a geographical and economic barrier between Israel and India specifically up to 1956 when the Tiran Straits and the Gulf of Akaba as well as the Suez Canal were closed by Egypt to Israeli shipping. Egypt's refusal to allow Israeli shipping to pass through the Suez Canal and the closure of the Tiran Straits placed Israeli trade with Asia and India, at severe risk. This problem was partly solved after the Suez Canal Military Operations had opened the route to Asia for Israel. Nevertheless, the Israeli volume of trade with India remained low even after 1956, since India was not viewed as an important market for Israeli exports because of its socialist market and the fact that the Indian governmental sector was prohibited from having direct trade relations with Israel. On the other hand, the Indian economy depended on the Arab oil supply and Arab markets for Indian-made goods and a considerable number of Indians were employed in the Gulf countries. Israel realised that India's pro-Arab foreign policy was based on international, political and economic, interests and that India was totally committed to its pro-Arab traditional foreign policy.

The Israeli approach to the Indian Muslim community, including the attitude of the Israeli media and the public opinion in Israel, continued to be dogmatic and one-dimensional. Since its independence, Israel had experienced a negative attitude on the part of the Muslims in India towards it, whereas a special relationship appeared to exist between the Indian Muslim community and the Arab world. This perception was reinforced by the fact that the local Muslim community in India gradually became a significant political factor, to the INCP in particular, and as such, a potential reservoir of votes. In addition, India was deeply concerned about Pakistan's plan to transform the conflict in Kashmir into a Pan-Islamic issue. Undoubtedly, diplomatic relations with Israel could have been useful for the Pakistani propaganda against India in the Arab world as well as the Muslim Indian population in India in general and the Muslim Indian population in Jammu-Kashmir in particular.

In terms of bilateral relations, as part of the international level of analysis, the Israeli military support of India during the Indian wars with China and Pakistan, which was part of Israel's arms diplomacy, did not yield the expected dividends. Contrary to Israeli expectations, it did not open any political doors to India or bring about any substantial improvement in the ties between the two countries other than some articles in the Indian press expressing their gratitude. Unlike diplomatic relations, economic relations with India had little value for Israel as India was an underdeveloped country and as far as Israel was concerned, the Israeli investments needed to make any political and economic impact on India, would have been enormous and out of all proportion to any potential benefits, it could receive.

Israel failed to highlight the fact that it was maintaining fully-fledged diplomatic relations with Muslim countries and Arab states such as Egypt, which had traditionally maintained close relations with India and this important fact never appeared on the political agenda between the two countries. Israel also failed to convince India that it had overestimated the power of the Indian Muslim community as well as its expected response to diplomatic relations with Israel. This was proved by the fact that India's recognition of Israel had not caused any violent protests in the Muslim community as well as the fact that they

reacted in a similar way when diplomatic relations between the two countries were subsequently established in 1992.

In terms of the national and society level of analysis and the individual level of analysis, the left side of the Israeli political spectrum did feel that closer political friendship ties based on a socialist agenda and common national interests could be advantageous, but all the initiatives in this direction by the Israeli ministers and politicians proved to be futile. Until 1992, the change of governments in India as well as the coalition governments, including governments without the participation of the INCP, did not bring about any change in the Indian foreign policy towards Israel.

There were Indian politicians, members of the academy, businesspersons, as well as members of the alumni of the Israeli International Cooperation Programme who could have been mobilised as a lobby group in India. Nevertheless, this option was never exercised by Israel partly because Israel had believed that pursuing its controversy with the Arabs within India would be a mistake and partly because of the Israeli concept that India was totally committed to its pro-Arab foreign policy. However, the few attempts that were made to mobilise the Israeli-Indian friendship associations in India in support of the promotion of diplomatic relations with Israel, did not bear any political fruit at all. In fact, the Israeli leaders, did not believe that it was possible to change India's foreign policy and its negative attitude towards Israel because of international, political, ideological and economic reasons in general and India's relations with the Islamic world in particular.

The Israeli foreign policy towards India from the time of its independence up to the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1992 was one-dimensional and showed a lack of foresight as well as diplomatic creativity. The Israeli diplomatic efforts were based on the Israeli viewpoint that India was an anti-Israeli, pro-Arab, non-cooperative and hypocritical state. The Israeli diplomacy towards India failed to create understanding of or sympathy for the Zionist cause and the prevailing diplomatic perception in Israel was that India remained committed to its biased pro-Arab and anti-Israeli foreign policy. This approach, as part of a centralised foreign policy making process, was

supported by the consensus among most of the political parties in Israel, the Knesset, including the Committee for Foreign Affairs and Security, the Prime Minister's office, the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

As part of its foreign policy, Israel had to make a strategic decision regarding the sort of foreign policy and diplomacy to engage towards India and the decision was made to conduct a submissive foreign policy. It is important to understand this decision in terms of the prevailing international circumstances in the years between 1948 and 1991 in general and India's anti-Israeli foreign policy towards Israel in particular. Israel realised that India would not change its entrenched negative foreign policy towards Israel prior to a complete and comprehensive peace process in the Middle East and would proceed with its traditional pro-Arab and anti-Israeli foreign policy. This conclusion was supported by the fact that India did not change its foreign policy towards Israel even after the peace agreements had been signed between Israel and Egypt and Jordan.

In terms of bilateral relations as part of the international level of analysis, Israel made a crucial diplomatic mistake in March 1953 by insisting on reciprocity and by not opening an Israeli Embassy in New Delhi when it was still accepted by Nehru. However, even if such an embassy had been opened, India would probably have closed it after the Six-Day War, as was done by the Soviet Union, taking into consideration Indira Gandhi's staunch support of the Arab world and her anti-Israeli attitude. What could have been the consequence of opening an Israeli embassy in New Delhi in the 1950s remains obscure. However, there is no doubt, that the fact that Sharett, the first Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs, insisted on the principle of reciprocity when the option of opening an Israeli embassy in India was introduced, made it easier for the Indian obstructionists to triumph. It is accepted by international political experts such as Michael Brecher, that in this particular case Israel lacked foresight and its conduct was characterised by a stolid formalism.

This diplomatic mistake was corrected in 1992 when Israel having read the international mood correctly, insisted on nothing less than fully-fledged diplomatic relations between the two countries. The Israeli diplomacy *vis-à-vis*

India until 1992 was dogmatic, flawed and ineffective, whereas a different approach could have brought about substantial progress in the bilateral relations between the State of Israel and the Republic of India at a much earlier stage. What was needed at that time was a better awareness of the importance of India to Israel, a review of India with a vision of its role in future, the allocation of sufficient funds and an assertive political approach in the international arena. In addition, a creative type of diplomacy that involved the skilful use of American Jewish Organisations that could sway opinions in the political arenas was also needed.

7.2.2 Second timeframe (February 1992)

In the second timeframe, the change in bilateral relations between Israel and India in February 1992 and the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries are analysed in terms of the systemic change of the foreign policy process. For this purpose, the new Aggregative Model of Bilateral Foreign Relations Strategic Change is used as a key analysis model applied to the transformation of the Indian foreign policy regarding Israel, in addition to the ultimate decision unit and the levels of analysis models respectively. The model deals with the operational environment of the systemic foreign policy change process and is used as an analytical and explanatory tool in order to analyse the transformation of India's foreign policy towards Israel in 1992. It is applied to international relations as a theoretical model that helps to explore and guide research concerning changes in bilateral relations. The Foreign Policy Change Decision Making Model is also utilised in this timeframe in order to achieve greater validity in this research.

The transformation of the Indian foreign policy towards Israel and the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries have been considered by India to be a strategic change and one of the most important steps in the history of Indian diplomacy. By considering the large number of dependent variables, including their composite and comparative weight, the use of the Aggregative Model of Bilateral Relations Strategic Change

contributes to a better review and analysis of the systemic change process of the transformation of the Indian foreign policy towards Israel. The use of the Aggregative Model of Bilateral Foreign Relations Strategic Change as an analytical and explanatory tool enables the analysis of the multiple national defence-oriented factors that influence the systemic process of this foreign policy change together with contextual determinants. An additional model, Herman's Model of Foreign Policy Change is used to ensure external validity in the analysis of the change of the Indian foreign policy towards Israel and to provide an additional angle to the Indian foreign policy change.

7.2.2.1 Aggregative Model of Bilateral Relations Strategic Change

Based on the Aggregative Model, the formative determinants of the Indian foreign policy change, in terms of the pre-feasibility stage, which engendered the change process, were the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union as well as the emergence of the US as a sole superpower. The generating determinants, in terms of the framing and redefining stage, of the Indian foreign policy change towards Israel were the first Gulf War, the Madrid conference and the Israeli-Arab Middle East negotiations in general and the Palestinians in particular.

The fundamental and national security oriented causative factors that influenced the Indian foreign policy change towards Israel are analysed in conjunction with contextual as well as situational change determinants that are divided into three levels of analysis.

The first type is the international level of analysis, in which the following change factors pertaining to India's national security are reviewed and analysed:

- India's military cooperation with Israel.
- India's interest in intelligence operations with Israel.
- Counter-terrorism cooperation.

- The Indian Ocean and nuclear power as a common strategic interest between the two countries.
- The contribution of economic and foreign relations with Israel to India.

In the field of multilateral relations, the analysis of India's change of foreign policy towards Israel is dealt with in the Israeli context in the multilateral arena and is based on the review and evaluation of the following change factors pertaining to India's national interests:

- Indian geo-strategic interest in the Middle East.
- Oil and energy as a key factor in India's foreign policy.
- India and Central Asia.
- India and Third World with emphasis on the NAM.
- India as an acceptable international actor in the Middle East conflict.
- India and the UN.
- India and the US.
- India and the American Jewish Organisations.
- India and Russia.
- India and the PRC.
- India and world globalisation.
- India and the Muslim world.
- India and Pakistan.
- India and the Arab world.
- Indian Arab economic relations.
- India's relations with the PLO.

The transformation of the Indian foreign policy towards Israel and the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in terms of the State and Society Level of Analysis are analysed by change determinants with an emphasis on Indian politics pertaining to Israel:

- The traditional pro-Arab approach of the Indian MEA.
- The Nehruvian tradition of pro-Arab foreign policy.
- The INCP's traditional pro-Arab and anti-Israel foreign policy.

- The pro-Arab attitude of the Indian Muslim community and the Indian media.

The transformation of the Indian policy towards Israel is also analysed by the individual level of analysis with reference to the leadership of India in convergence with the improvement of Israel's international image after the first Gulf War and the inauguration of the Middle East peace process in October 1991 as a contextual determinant. The analysis concentrates on Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Prime Minister Narasimha Rao as the ultimate decision-makers of the transformation of the Indian foreign policy towards Israel.

At the ripening stage of the Aggregative Model of Bilateral Relations Strategic Change there were two contextual change determinants which served as accelerating determinants of the Indian foreign policy towards Israel. They were the Indian liberalisation as well as economic reforms that started in 1991 and the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and the Soviet Union that took place in October 1991. At the focal point of change of the Indian foreign policy transformation, the fundamental factors were synchronised by three tune-up elements as contextual determinants:

- The establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Israel occurred on 24 January 1992.
- The opening of the third round of the Middle East peace talks in Moscow, which took place between 28 and 29 January 1992.
- The official visit of Prime Minister Narasimha Rao to the US, to attend the UN Security Council in New York, which took place at the beginning of February 1992.

The consolidation stage is characterised by the slow and gradual progression of the bilateral relations between India and Israel; during which three main impediments to the Indian foreign policy change towards Israel had to be addressed:

- Arab states.

- The Indian Muslim community.
- The INCP's conservative politicians.

The assimilation and implementation stage was set with the help of stabilising determinants:

- The substantiation of the bilateral relations between India and Israel in particular, in fields such as military collaboration, counter-terrorism, agriculture, trade and high technology.
- The willingness of the American Jewish organisations to cooperate with India.
- Israel's support of India at the UN on issues of special importance to India.
- Israel's invitation to India to take an active part in the Middle East peace process.

7.2.3 Third timeframe (1992-2005)

In the third timeframe, the evolving bilateral relations between Israel and India are analysed in the light of the ultimate decision unit theory and the Levels of Analysis Model while using new the Oscillated Diplomacy Model as a key model of analysis of the evolving bilateral relations between the two countries. The model deals with diplomacy, oscillating between delimited opposite lines, which function as the guiding parameters of foreign policy, influenced by three types of national strategic interests, namely, joint strategic interests, common strategic interests and discrepant strategic interests. This model is used as an analytical and explanatory tool regarding the evolving bilateral relations between India and Israel from 1992 to 2005. It is applied as a theoretical model of international relations, which helps to explain operational diplomacy and to direct research pertaining to both bilateral foreign relations and diplomacy.

Following the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Israel, the bilateral relations between the two countries have become a cornerstone of their foreign policies, imbued with a great deal of strategic importance for

both of them. The evolving bilateral relations between India and Israel from 1992 to 2005 are analysed by the Oscillated Diplomacy Model.

India's foreign policy towards Israel as well as the bilateral relations between India and Israel has been strongly influenced by the political attitude of the Indian governments in power, which has affected the volume and direction of the Indian foreign policy towards Israel and the bilateral relations between the two countries. However, the implementation of India's foreign policy towards Israel has been characterised by diplomatic vicissitudes in terms of convergent mutual national strategic interests.

Since 1992, and even prior to that time, changes of governments in India have caused a great deal of concern in Israel and have had a direct impact on the bilateral relations between India and Israel, in terms of guiding parameters. These parameters have influenced the volume and direction of the Indian foreign policy towards Israel as well as the relations between the two countries. From a political level of analysis, the various governments in India since the 1990s have been characterised as coalition government types and since then, India has also moved from an ideological approach to a pragmatic attitude in its foreign policy.

The Indian foreign policy towards Israel has acquired the backing of most participants in the political spectrum in India and most of the political parties have come to terms with India's ties with Israel, realising its benefits and benefited India in general and the military field in particular. Nevertheless, there was consensus in Indian politics regarding the continuation of the support of the Palestinian cause and the need for friendly relations with the Arab world. The UPA government has re-introduced the Palestinian cause as a relevant factor influencing Israeli-Indian relations and as part of India's new foreign policy and diplomatic activism. In addition, the Arab and the Gulf countries have become India's political and economic partners.

The political and economic importance of the Arab world and the Gulf countries combined with the traditional Indian empathy with the Palestinians and their quest for an Independent state, together with the political weight of

the Indian Muslim electorate, have influenced its foreign policy towards Israel as a guiding parameter. On the other hand, the Kargil crisis between India and Pakistan in 1999 and the terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament in December 2001, expanded military collaboration between India and Israel and boosted the volume of arm sales between the two countries. In addition, it influenced India's foreign policy towards Israel as a guiding parameter of foreign policy. September 11 2001 brought a new dimension to international counter-terrorism and has improved collaboration in that field between the two countries, in particular during the tenure of the NDA governments. In addition, the volume of arms sales between Israel and India has reached a certain critical mass and the level of sophistication of the arms sales has increased as well.

7.2.3.1 Oscillated Diplomacy Model

The oscillation of the induced Indian diplomacy towards Israel as well as the diplomatic ties between India and Israel has been influenced, in terms of operational diplomacy, by convergent strategic interests influenced by three types of mutual national strategic interests. The convergent Israeli-Indian strategic interests are divided into three types of strategic interests, namely, joint strategic interests, common strategic interests and discrepant strategic interests. Joint strategic interests refer to the goals that the two states have pursued in order to maximise overlapping inter-related strategic interests in terms of strength and intensity, while the common strategic interests in terms of scope, refer to the goals that the two states have pursued in order to achieve complementary strategic interests. Discrepant strategic interests, on the other hand, refer to a third type of strategic interest, which has a negative and counteractive impact on bilateral power relations.

India's diplomatic activism since the 1990s has included its bilateral relations with Israel after India realised that such diplomatic ties are of strategic value to India in general and the Arab world in particular. India perceived that it could serve its national interests by having close relations with both Israel and the Arab world. After the establishment of diplomatic relations, India has moved

from an anti-Israeli and pro-Arab approach to a pragmatic one, which has resulted in a more balanced approach towards Israel, while maintaining its close relations with the Arab countries. Immediately after the establishment of diplomatic relations, Israel realised the potential of the ties between the two countries and a number of initial steps were taken by Israel in order to further the mutual convergent strategic interests between Israel and India. These steps were high-level official visits, dialogue with foreign ministries and bilateral agreements in addition to the Israeli international cooperation programme, which has been an integral part of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs and has contributed significantly to the improvement of the Israeli image in India.

7.2.3.2 Joint strategic interests

The joint strategic interests between India and Israel have included military cooperation in particular, which includes arms sales, the transfer of military technology, joint weapon development, the joint production and marketing of military equipment, which have made India the third largest importer of Israeli arms after Turkey and China. Counter-terrorism has been another joint strategic interest and is based on the perception that Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism, particularly after September 11, have become a mutual concern for Israel and India. The joint strategic concern regarding radical Islamism at home and in neighbouring countries has also increased intelligence cooperation between Israel and India.

Space cooperation has been another joint strategic interest between Israel and India and a space cooperation agreement has been signed between the space agencies of the two countries. India on the other hand, has expressed its interest in the Israeli Arrow 2 anti-ballistic missile system. The prevention of nuclear technology leaks and nuclear policy coordination has been a joint strategic interest for both countries, as they did not sign the NPT and considering the fact that Pakistan's nuclear potential can constitute a threat to both countries, especially if Pakistan were taken over by Islamic extremist forces. Since the middle 1990s, India has been Israel's largest trading partner

in Asia after China and Hong Kong. The amount of economic cooperation between the two countries has risen steadily, including joint industrial ventures that concentrate on science and high technology, related to the opening up of the Indian economy to the West and to globalisation. Israel, which has enjoyed free trade agreements with the US and the European Union and India, that was a signatory to the ASEAN-India framework agreement on comprehensive economic cooperation, have both realised that joint economic activities could work for their mutual benefit.

7.2.3.3 Common strategic interests

Cultural ties between Israel and India have become a common strategic interest in order to reach the civil society and the elite in both countries. In fact, cultural ties between the two countries have become markedly stronger since 1992 and reached a peak in 1997 when Israel celebrated India's 50th year of independence with the Shalom India Festival. India reciprocated one year later by organising cultural events throughout Israel as part of the celebration of the 50 years of Israeli independence.

Relations with the superpowers and the US in particular, have become a common strategic interest for both India and Israel. After September 11, there was a growing understanding in India as well as in Israel, that trilateral Indian-American-Israeli cooperation is likely to produce considerable benefits for all parties concerned. In fact, the Indian leadership has become increasingly convinced that the American Jewish Lobby provides a vital link of influence in US policy-making as well as in American finance and they believe that this relationship can have a positive effect on the US's attitude towards India. In fact, the US Jewish Lobby has played a significant role in the development of bilateral relations between Israel and India. The pro-Israel and pro-Indian lobbyists have worked together successfully and the Jewish-Indian alliance in the US has combined forces in electoral politics in order to defeat those whom they perceive to be antagonistic to both Israel and to India.

India has gradually emerged as an Asian regional power since 1994 with its "Look East" policy. India has been able to utilise the technology and expertise

acquired in Israel in order to promote its trade and economic relations with Asia. Israel, on the other hand, that has had a continuous struggle to gain full international legitimacy in Asia, has found that its relations with India can be an important stepping stone to achieving this type of legitimacy as well as upgrading its international status in Asia.

The Central Asian region has been an area of common strategic interest for India and Israel as well as an extended strategic neighbourhood. Both countries have sold military equipment to the Central Asian countries, have had economic interests in the region including the field of energy and have tried to limit the influence of Iran and Saudi Arabia as agents for radical Islamisation. India and Israel have been identified as significant players in the region considering the high level of involvement and competition with Russia, the US, China, Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. However, Israel, India and Russia have shared counter religious terrorism as a common interest in Central Asia.

Pakistan has been another common strategic interest between India and Israel. The Kargil crisis between Indian and Pakistan in 1999 expanded the military cooperation significantly between India and Israel and increased the volume of arms sales between them. India and Israel have also exchanged intelligence information on Islamic terrorist groups and Israel has helped India to fight terrorism in Kashmir by providing logistical support. Certainly, the Pakistani nuclear ability, which has been of concern to the two countries, constitutes a mutual security challenge, including issues such as, intelligence cooperation. Israel has been particularly concerned about the seepage of nuclear technology either with the authorisation of the government of Pakistan or as a rogue operation and that Pakistan would become a supplier of intermediate range missiles to Arab countries in the Middle East and Iran.

The geo-strategic location has been a common strategic interest of India and Israel. The two countries have been located strategically on the flanks of a number of Muslim countries and have a strategic interest in securing the sea-lanes to the Straits of Mallaca. Maintaining the security of the Indian Ocean has been another common strategic interest. The Indian Ocean has been an

important geo-strategic location as far as India's strategic interest is concerned, while the Indian Ocean has been a key sea-lane to Asia for Israel and for its trade to the continent. Further areas of common interest are trilateral cooperation in the field of energy as well as industrial cooperation such as cooperation regarding diamond processing and trilateral joint military cooperation.

7.2.3.4 Discrepant strategic interests

The phenomenon of Israeli and Indian relations with the UN is a good example of the discrepant strategic interest regarding the two countries. Although India has not sponsored any anti-Israeli UN resolutions since 1992, it has continued supporting the Palestinian cause at the UN General Assembly and UN committees, although abstaining on the nuclear issue.

The NAM is another example of a discrepant strategic interest between the two countries. Since the 1990s, the NAM's influence on Indian diplomacy has decreased steadily, as India has sought to reconstruct its foreign policy to meet the requirements of the post Cold War world. India started to focus on issues concerned with its national interests and Israel was a direct beneficiary of the change in the Indian international orientation towards the NAM. Traditionally, the political dynamics in the organisation have been unconditionally in favour of the Arab world as well as the Palestinian cause. Despite the new Indian approach towards the NAM and the fact that India has made serious attempts to moderate the NAM's resolutions against Israel, India has remained an active member of the Palestine committee of the NAM and the movement has remained a discrepant strategic interest between the two countries.

Iran's Islamic governments are often regarded as fanatic and its nuclear capability has been considered a strategic threat by Israel and an existential danger to the state of Israel as well as a serious danger to the stability of the Middle East. Israel's attitude towards Iran has been in stark contrast with India's friendly relations with Iran and Israel has frequently expressed its

concern about India's close ties with Teheran and the possibility of India selling advanced technology and military equipment to Iran. On the other hand, the Chinese-Israeli relations in general and their military cooperation in particular, were of concern to India and have been watched closely as a national security concern representing a discrepant strategic interest between India and Israel.

India's intention of sustaining its high level of economic growth since 1991 has required vast oil and energy reserves. The lack of adequate energy resources, Arab oil and demand for oil-based products such as petrochemicals and fertilisers have made the relationship between India and the Gulf countries an important factor in India's foreign policy and as a result, also a discrepant strategic interest between India and Israel. Traditionally, the Islamic and Arab worlds have been a discrepant strategic interest between India and Israel. In addition, India has traditionally stressed its historic links with the Islamic world while trying to avoid the excessive focus on Kashmir and its tensions with Pakistan, as well as trying to neutralise Pakistan and its ability to play the Islam card.

Since the middle 1990s, India has regarded Israeli military and intelligence cooperation as a more valuable asset for dealing effectively with the Kashmir problem than the unfriendly attitude of the Muslim countries. In particular, there was a shift in the Indian foreign policy after the Gulf War when India perceived that it could serve its national interests better by having close relations with both Israel and the Arab world.

In fact, there has been a shift in India's foreign policy from a one-sided position in favour of the Arabs in their dispute with Israel, to a more balanced stance. India realised that doing business with all the protagonists in the Middle East on the one hand, without ignoring India's economic and political interests in the region on the other hand, has been the most beneficial course of action for its national strategic interests. Following the change of government in India and the return to power of the INCP in May 2004, there was an improvement in its relations with the Islamic and the Arab worlds. The UPA government has been eager to demonstrate that its ties with Israel would not affect its support

of the Palestinian cause. In January 2005, Ambassador Chinmay Gharekhan was appointed as a special envoy of the Indian Prime Minister to the Middle East (West Asia) as an expression of the new Indian government's intention to improve its relationship with the Arab world. It also wanted to be portrayed as a staunch supporter of the Palestinian cause as well as the Palestinian quest for an independent state.

The following factors have influenced the Indian foreign policy regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict:

- The collapse of the Oslo process at Camp David.
- The death of the Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat.
- The end of the second Intifada.
- The election of Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) as the new leader of the Palestinian Authority (PA).
- The failure of the implementation of the Road-Map.

Following the failure of the implementation of the Road-Map and the Israeli unilateral Disengagement Plan from the Gaza Strip and part of the North West Bank, the UPA government regarded the Israeli Disengagement Plan in a positive light. The condition was that it would only be part of the first stage of a comprehensive peace process that would lead to an independent and viable Palestinian state and would encourage Israel to take steps to improve the Palestinian economy and revitalise the Palestinian Authority.

In terms of the state and society level of analysis and as far as the Indian political system has been concerned, the Indian political system has gradually come to terms with the evolving relations between the two countries. This has followed the build-up of official bilateral relations with Israel and the positive change of image that Israel has undergone after 1992 in India. Most of the political parties in India, while continuing their support of the Palestinian cause, realised the benefits and advantages of the defence and military relations of India with Israel. The Indian political system has also realised that the success of the foreign policy and economy were dependent on the pace of India's

globalisation and its ability to strengthen its ties with the West as well as Israel. Significantly, Israel with its modern technologically oriented economy has become an important economic partner of India, with specific emphasis on the transfer of expertise and advanced technology in general and agro-technology in particular. The return to power of the INCP on 23 May 2004 completed a political circle as far as the bilateral relations with Israel were concerned. Some concern was expressed in Israel about the possibility of a negative change in India's foreign policy towards Israel. However, military, economic and cultural relations have been maintained, even though there have been fewer Indian high-level official visits.

The Indian MEA, as a civil service, has adjusted slowly to the change in the traditional foreign policy towards Israel, although it did express concern whenever there were setbacks in the peace process with the Palestinians. Since 1999, the Indian MEA and the Israeli MFA have held annual bilateral consultations and the MEA has gradually come to terms with the idea that close relations with both Israel and the Arab world serve India's national interests. Following the return to power of the INCP, there was a shift in Indian diplomacy, which focussed on India's traditional ties with the Palestinians as well as its will to improve relations with the Arab world but without undermining the Israeli-Indian relations. The new Indian UPA government has been determined to maintain India's friendly relations with Israel, while continuing to improve its close relations with the Arab countries as well as its support of the Palestinian cause.

Pressure groups have traditionally played a minor role in the two countries' politics as far as the formulation of foreign policy is concerned and have made no significant contribution to influencing the evolving bilateral relations between the two countries, with the exception of the American Jewish organisations and the Indian Muslim community. The Indian Muslim community and the Indian-Muslim organisations, supported by India's left wing parties and traditionalists in the elite of the INCP, have continued to object to the growing Israeli-Indian relations. However, all governments as well as their National Security Advisors who have played a key role in promoting the

bilateral relations between the two countries, including the new Indian UPA government, have made it clear that the bilateral relations with Israel in general and the military cooperation in particular, would continue.

7.3 Summation

In essence, the transformation of the Indian foreign policy towards Israel and the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries have been considered by India to be one of the most important steps in Indian history. The importance of those changes and of the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel, were described in an exhaustive manner by the former Foreign Secretary of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, J.N. Dixit (1996:315), points out that he considered the establishment of relations with Israel and South Africa as the most significant among developments in India's foreign policy.

The Israeli foreign policy towards India since gaining independence up to the establishment of diplomatic relations, showed a lack of foresight as well as a lack of creativity. Moreover, the sporadic Israeli diplomatic efforts *vis-à-vis* India, were found to be fruitless. Israel's approach towards India ran the gamut from expectancy to hope, disappointment, dismay, anger and finally indifference, until 1992 when the situation changed. Up to that time, Israel had considered India to be a hypocritical state, which remained aloof and non-cooperative and the prevailing Israeli diplomatic assumption was that India was firmly committed to its pro-Arab and anti-Israeli partial foreign policy.

If Israel had made certain creative diplomatic steps earlier on, it could have led to positive changes in the bilateral relations between the State of Israel and the Republic of India. A greater awareness of the importance of India, coupled with a visionary insight and allocating sufficient funds for the improvement of relations, would all have been beneficial for this purpose. Further changes that would have helped to improve the bilateral relations even sooner would have been adopting an assertive approach in collaboration with a more target-

oriented US Jewish lobby. In other words, Israel did not succeed in making use of creative diplomacy in its dealings with India.

Following the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Israel, the bilateral relations between the two countries have become a cornerstone of their foreign policies, imbued with strategic importance for both of them. India's diplomatic activism since the 1990s has included its bilateral relations with Israel after India realised that such diplomatic ties are of strategic value to India and It has moved from an anti-Israeli and pro-Arab approach to a pragmatic one, which included development of military connections as well as promotion of commercial ties. Israel realised the potential of the ties between the two countries and a number of initial steps were taken by Israel in order to further the mutual convergent strategic interests between Israel and India.

Despite the slowdown in the Israeli-Indian bilateral relations since 2004, Israel considers its bilateral relations with India to be the cornerstone of its foreign policy. The ongoing strong and strategic affiliation between Israel and India is based on the convergence of strategic interests of the two international actors. However, it is felt that the bilateral relations and cooperation between the two countries ought to be diversified by means of additional complementary fields of activities and by emphasising "people to people" activities. Such cooperation, if supported by a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, has the potential to upgrade the bilateral relations between India and Israel and can contribute to the establishment of multi-faceted bilateral relations. In fact, it can turn the Israeli-Indian relationship into a fruitful complex of interdependent relations for the mutual benefit of both countries. Little research has been done on the change process of bilateral relations in terms of a micro level analysis of a complex web of variables that influence such a type of international processes as well as the impact of their comparative weight. Therefore, further research on the advantages of combining international relations theories with diplomatic practice in foreign policy change and additional research on the informal dimensions of transformation of foreign policy are recommended. This research can

contribute to a better understanding of international relations theory, international politics, foreign policy change process and diplomatic practice.

Glossary

| |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| ACMI - Air Combat Maneuvering Instrumentation |
| ACHDUT HAAVODA – The Party of Unity of Labour |
| ADL - Anti Defamation League |
| AEC - Atomic Energy Commission |
| AIPAC - America Israel Political Action Committee |
| AJC - American Jewish Committee |
| ALH - Advanced Light Helicopters |
| ARF - ASEAN Regional Forum |
| ARO-Asian Relations Organisation |
| ASEAN – Association of South East Asian Nations |
| AWACS - Airborne Warning and Control Systems |
| BJP - Bharatiya Janata Party |
| BOI - Bank of India |
| CARs - Central Asian Republics |
| CII - Confederation of Indian Industry |
| COIJI- Central Organisation of Indian Jews in Israel |
| COMIFORM - Conference of the Communist Parties |
| CPI - Communist Party of India |
| CPI-M - Communist Party of India Marxist |
| CTBT - Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty |
| DRDO - Indian Defense Research and Development Organization |
| DSIR - Department of Scientific and Industrial Research |
| EU – European Union |
| FTA - Free Trade Agreement |
| GDP- Gross Domestic Product |
| HAL - Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. |
| HISTADRUTH - General Federation of Workers of Israel |
| IAEA - International Atomic Energy Agency |
| IAF - Indian Air Force |
| IAI - Israeli Aircraft Industry |

| |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| IARI - Indian Agricultural Research Institute |
| IB - Investigation Bureau |
| ICJ - International Court of Justice |
| IDF - Israeli Defense Forces |
| IDSA - Institute for Defense Studies and Analysis |
| IFS - Indian Foreign Service |
| IIF - International Islamic Front |
| IIRDIC -Israel Industrial, Research and Development Initiative Cooperation |
| IMF - International Monetary Fund |
| IMI - Israel's Military Industries |
| IMDP - Integrated Missiles Development Program |
| INCM - Indian National Congress Movement |
| INCP - Indian National Congress Party |
| IPU - Inter Parliamentary Union |
| ISRO - Indian Space Research Organization |
| IT – Information Technology |
| ITPO - Indian Trade Promotion Organization |
| JDP - Janata Dal party |
| JWG - Joint Working Group |
| KNESSET - The Israeli Parliament |
| LCA - Light Combat Aircraft |
| LIC - Low Intensity Conflict |
| LIKUD – The Union Party |
| LOC - Line of Control |
| LTTE - Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam |
| MAARACH - The Alignment Party |
| MASHAV - Israel's International Development Cooperation Program |
| MAPAI – The Party of Workers of the Land of Israel |
| MAPAM– The Party of the United Workers |
| MEA – Ministry of External Affairs |
| MFA - Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| MFN - Most Favoured Nation |

| |
|--------------------------------------------------------|
| MOSSAD- Agency for Intelligence and Special Operations |
| MOU - Memorandum of understanding |
| NAM – Non- Aligned Movement |
| NDA - National Democratic Alliance |
| NGO – Non- Governmental Organisations |
| NMD - National Missile Defense |
| NPT - Non-Proliferation Treaty |
| NSA - National Security Advisor |
| NSG - National Security Guards |
| OIC - Organisation of the Islamic Conference |
| OPEC – Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries |
| PA - Palestinian Authority |
| PLO-Palestine Liberation Organisation |
| PNC - Palestine National Council |
| PRC- People’s Republic of China |
| PSLV - Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle |
| RAFAEL - Israel’s Weapon Development Authority |
| RAFI – The Party of the List of Israeli Workers |
| RAW - Research and Analysis Wing |
| RPV - Remotely Piloted Vehicles |
| SAAG- South Asia Analysis Group |
| SCI - Shipping Corporation of India |
| SHABAK - Israeli Security Service |
| TAC - Treaty of Amity and Cooperation |
| TECHINT - Technical Intelligence |
| UAR –United Arab Republic |
| UAV - Unmanned Aerial Vehicle |
| UF - United Front |
| UN-United Nations |
| UNEF - United Nation's Emergency Force |
| UNIFIL - United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon |
| UNO-United Nations Organisation |

| |
|--------------------------------------------------------|
| UNSCOP - United Nations Special Committee on Palestine |
| UPA - United Progressive Alliance |
| US- United States |
| USINPAC - US – India Political Action Committee |
| USO-United Socialist Organisation |
| WHO - World Health Organisation |
| WJC - World Jewish Congress |
| WZO - World Zionist Organisation |

Appendix 1

List of Prime Ministers of India 1947-1996

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| 1. Jawaharlal Nehru | 15/8/1947-27/5/1964 | - Congress Party |
| 2. Gulzari Lal Nanda | 27/5/1964-9/6/1964 (acting) | - Congress Party |
| 3. Lal Bahadur Shastri | 9/6/1964-11/1/1966 | - Congress Party |
| 4. Gulzari Lal Nanda | 11/1/1966- 24/1/1966(acting) | - Congress Party |
| 5. Indira Gandhi | 24/1/1966-24/3/1977 | - Congress (o) Party |
| 6. Morarji Desai | 24/3/1977-28/7/1979 | - Janata Party |
| 7. Charan Singh | 28/7/1979-14/1/1980 | - Janata Party |
| 8. Indira Gandhi | 14/1/1980-31/10/1984 | - Congress (I) Party |
| 9. Rajiv Gandhi | 31/10/1984-2/12/1989 | - Congress (I) Party |
| 10. Vishwanath Pratap Singh | 2/12/1989-10/11/1990 | - Janata Dal Party (NF-National Front) |
| 11. Chandra Shekhar | 10/11/1990-21/6/1991 | - Samajwadi Janata Dal Party |
| 12. P.V. Narasimha Rao | 21/6/1991-16/5/1996 | - Congress (I) Party |

* Source: Kapur, Harish. (1994) *India's foreign policy 1947-92: Shadows and substance*, Sage publications, New Delhi, India.

Appendix 2

List of Governments of Israel 1948-1992

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. May 13 1948 – March 7 1949 – Provisional Government | |
| Prime Minister – David Ben Gurion , | Foreign Minister – Moshe Sharett |
| 2. March 7 1949 – October 30 1950 – First Government | |
| Prime Minister - David Ben Gurion, | Foreign Minister – Moshe Sharett |
| 3. October 30 1950 – October 8 1951 – Second Government | |
| Prime Minister - David Ben Gurion, | Foreign Minister – Moshe Sharett |
| 4. October 8 1951 - December 23 1952 – Third Government | |
| Prime Minister - David Ben Gurion, | Foreign Minister – Moshe Sharett |
| 5. December 23 1952 – January 26 1954 – Fourth Government | |
| Prime Minister - David Ben Gurion, | Foreign Minister – Moshe Sharett |
| 6. January 26 1954 – June 29 1955 – Fifth Government, | |
| Prime Minister – Moshe Sharett | Foreign Minister – Moshe Sharett |
| 7. June 29 1955 – November 3 1955 – Sixth Government, | |
| Prime Minister – Moshe Sharett | Foreign Minister – Moshe Sharett |
| 8. November 3 1955 – January 7 1958 – Seventh Government | |
| Prime Minister - David Ben Gurion, | Foreign Minister – Golda Meir |
| 9. January 7 1958 – December 17 1959 – Eighth Government | |
| Prime Minister - David Ben Gurion, | Foreign Minister – Golda Meir |
| 10. December 17 1959 – 2 November 1961 – Ninth Government | |
| Prime Minister - David Ben Gurion, | Foreign Minister – Golda Meir |
| 11. November 2 1961 – June 26 1963 - Tenth Government | |
| Prime Minister - David Ben Gurion, | Foreign Minister – Golda Meir |
| 12. June 26 1963 – December 23 1964 – Eleventh Government | |
| Prime Minister – Levi Eshkol, | Foreign Minister – Golda Meir |

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 13. December 23 1964 – January 12 1966 - Twelfth Government | |
| Prime Minister – Levi Eshkol, | Foreign Minister – Golda Meir |
| 14. January 12 1966 – March 17 1969 - Thirteenth Government | |
| Prime Minister – Levi Eshkol | , Foreign Minister – Abba Eban |
| 15. March 17 1969 – December 15 1969 – Fourteenth Government | |
| Prime Minister – Golda Meir, | Foreign Minister – Abba Eban |
| 16. December 15 1969 – March 10 1974 – Fifteenth Government | |
| Prime Minister – Golda Meir, | Foreign Minister – Abba Eban |
| 17. March 10 1974 – June 3 1974 – Sixteenth Government | |
| Prime Minister – Golda Meir, | Foreign Minister – Abba Eban |
| 18. June 3 1974 – June 20 1977 – Seventeenth Government | |
| Prime Minister – Yitzhak Rabin | Foreign Minister – Yigal Allon |
| 19. June 20 1977 - August 5 1981 – Eighteenth Government | |
| Prime Minister – Menahem Begin, | Foreign Minister – Moshe Dayan (until 1979) Yitzhak Shamir (from 1980) |
| 20. August 5 1981 – October 10 1983 – Nineteenth Government | |
| Prime Minister – Menahem Begin, | Foreign Minister – Yitzhak Shamir |
| 21. October 10 1983 – September 13 1984 – Twentieth Government, | |
| Prime Minister – Yitzhak Shamir, | Foreign Minister – Yitzhak Shamir |
| 22. September 13 1984 – October 20 1986 – Twenty First Government | |
| Prime Minister – Shimon Peres, | Foreign Minister – Yitzhak Shamir |
| 23. October 20 1986 – December 22 1988 – Twenty Second Government | |
| Prime Minister – Yitzhak Shamir, | Foreign Minister – Shimon Peres |
| 24. December 22 1988 – June 11 1990– Twenty Third Government | |
| Prime Minister – Yitzhak Shamir | Foreign Minister – Moshe Arens |
| 25. June 11 1990 – July 13 1992 – Twenty Fourth Government | |
| Prime Minister – Yitzhak Shamir, | Foreign Minister – David Levi |

* Source: Rolef, S. Hattis. (1993) *Political dictionary of the State of Israel*, The Jerusalem Publishing House, Jerusalem, Israel.

Appendix 3

Israeli- Indian Bilateral Agreements.

| |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memorandum of understanding on economic cooperation, 17/05/1993. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement on cooperation in the field of tourism, 18/05/1993 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural agreement; 18/05/1993. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement between the government of Israel and the government of India for cooperation in the field of agriculture, 24/12/1993. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air transport agreement, 04/04/1994 (the agreement is amended by a memorandum of understanding of 4/10/1994). |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement between the government of the republic of India and the government of the state of Israel concerning cooperation in the field of telecommunications and posts; 29/11/1994. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement on trade and economic cooperation, 21/12/1994. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement between the government of Israel and the government of India for the promotion and protection of investments, 29/01/1996. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilateral agreement regarding mutual assistance and cooperation in customs matters between Israel and India, 29/01/1996. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convention for the avoidance of double taxation and for the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income and on capital, 29/01/1996. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement on technical cooperation between the government of Israel and the government of India, 30/12/1996 |

- Umbrella agreement between Israel and India on the development of cooperation in the field of industrial and technological research and development research and development, 30/12/1996.
- Agreement between the Israeli space agency and the Indian space research organisation for cooperation on the peaceful use of outer space, 28/10/2002.
- Agreement between the government of the state of Israel and the government of the republic of India on exemption of visa requirements for holders of diplomatic, service and official passports, 09/09/2003.
- Agreement between the government of the state of Israel and the government of the republic of India on cooperation in the field of medicine, 09/09/2003.
- Agreement between the government of the state of Israel and the government of the republic of India on cooperation in the field of protection of the environment, 09/09/2003.
- Programme for cultural and educational cooperation and exchange program on cooperation in the field of education, 09/09/2003.
- Memorandum of understanding on industrial research and development initiative, 30/05/2005.

* The information is compiled from the MFA's official web site: <http://www.mfa.gov.il>

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