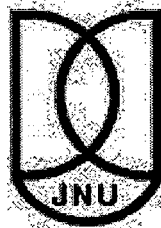


**ARMS SALES AS AN INSTRUMENT OF ISRAELI
FOREIGN POLICY: A CASE STUDY OF CHINA**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for award of the degree of*

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

ALVITE SINGH NINGTHOUJAM



**CENTRE FOR WEST ASIAN STUDIES
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY**

NEW DELHI-110067

2010



Centre for West Asian Studies
School of International Studies
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
New Delhi - 110067

Phone : +91-11-2670 4379
Mobile : +91 98 18 77 83 15
Email : cwas.jnu@gmail.com

Date: 14 May 2010

DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled "Arms Sales as an Instrument of Israeli Foreign Policy: A Case Study of China" submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the Degree of **Master of Philosophy** has not been previously submitted for the award of any degree of this university or any other university. This is my original work.

Alvite Singh Ningthoujam

CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for the evaluation.

Prof. P.R. Kumaraswamy
(Supervisor)

Prof. P.R. Kumaraswamy
(Chairperson)



CHAIRPERSON
Centre for West Asian Studies
School of International Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi - 110 067, INDIA

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Since its establishment in May 1948, Israel has been an important player in the international arms trade, both as a recipient and as a supplier. Its major arms suppliers were Czechoslovakia (in the late 1940s and early 1950s), France (in the 1950s and until 1967), and the United States since the late 1960s. At the same time, Israel has been using arms sale and other forms of military-security assistance to pursue its wider foreign policy objectives. At one level, arms sales contribute to the development and improvements in weapon design which in turn enables Israel attain qualitative military edge over its adversaries. This has been the rationale for much of the international arms trade.

Interestingly, Israel's arms sale policy has a strong politico-diplomatic component. Its limited political, economic and diplomatic leverages have resulted in Israel using arms sales and other forms of military assistance such as training and military upgrading to further its foreign policy objectives. While training in agriculture, labour, social welfare and rescue have been successfully used by Israel, their impact upon the foreign policy promotion have been limited. Closer ties that Israel has forged with a number of countries have often accompanied or facilitated by military relations. Arms sales and other forms of security relations occupied a prominent position in Israel's relations with Iran under the Shah, South Africa (during the apartheid regime), Taiwan, Latin America, and Turkey and India (since normalisation of relations in 1992). Furthermore, absence of formal ties did not inhibit Israel from offering military help to countries which are officially at war with the Jewish State. For example, as highlighted by the Iran-Contra affair during the 1980s even the Islamic Republic of Iran was not averse to seeking military help from the Jewish State. As Melman and Sinai (1987) argued, politics bring strange bedfellows.

Since the late 1970s, China emerged as an important player in Israel's arms diplomacy. Israel recognised the People's Republic of China (PRC) as early as in January 1950 but this was not accompanied by reciprocal moves from China. The prolonged absence of

relations compelled Israel in the late 1970s to explore unconventional means to explore political ties with the major power and a permanent member of the UN Security Council. Around the same time, China was witnessing far-reaching domestic political changes following the demise of Mao Tse Tung and the emergence of Deng Xiaoping.

Israel exploited the opportunity presented by China and adapted military sales to further its foreign policy interests vis-à-vis China. Both countries worked in tandem to overcome their deficiencies without making significant political concessions to one another. For example, while the Israeli military sale begun in the late 1970s, the Sino-Israeli political normalization happened only in January 1992 or more than a decade after the forging of Sino-Israeli military ties. At least in the public domain both countries sought to highlight mutual political differences while pursuing military relations. China's closer political, ideological and military ties with some of the key Arab and Islamic countries resulted in the PRC adopting a dual policy towards Israel. Its domestic situation especially the presence of sizeable Muslim population also contributed to China adopting pronouncedly pro-Arab and pro-Palestinian positions.

As happened with other clients of Israel, China benefited from technology transfer and other forms of military assistance such as upgrading. The policy of the United States towards Israel and China during their pre-normalization period facilitated the latter two countries to pursue military-related ties. The prevalence of the Cold War and the American pre-occupation with the containment of the USSR facilitated Sino-Israeli relations. Thus, when a number of Western countries imposed trade and economic sanctions against China following the Tiananmen incident of 1989, Israel emerged as a major supplier of military equipments to China.

As with other similar examples, the Sino-Israeli military relations have been shrouded in secrecy and persuaded clandestinely. A number of factors contributed to both sides settling for clandestine military ties. For Israel, undue publicity would harm its political calculations vis-à-vis China. For China, open military relations could not be persuaded when it had serious political differences with Israel over the peace process and the political rights of the Palestinians. Furthermore, China was simultaneously seeking full

normalisation with the Arab and Islamic countries and the Sino-Saudi normalization for example took place only in 1990. Above all, during this period, especially in 1980s, China emerged as the principal arms supplier to warring sides in the Iran-Iraq war. The ideological rift with the USSR also compelled China to keep its military ties with Israel under wrap.

The Sino-Israeli military relations fall into two distinct phases; from the late 1970s until relations were established in 1992 and the post-1992 normalization phase. The primary focus of this research would be the former period when military sales were pursued in the absence of diplomatic relations. Thus the Israel's military sale to China acquired a diplomatic dimension and was not merely a commercial transaction.

The proposed research seeks to examine the role of arms sales as an instrument of Israeli foreign policy, especially with regard to China, its rationale and scope. How did the Sino-Israeli military ties form part of Israel's overall foreign policy? How did it contribute to the eventual normalisation of relations between the two countries? What were the factors which facilitated both countries to forge military ties even when both had serious political differences over key problems facing the West Asian region? How did the establishment of full diplomatic ties in January 1992 affect the military ties? Has normalization enhanced or hindered the Sino-Israeli military relations? If so, what were the factors?

Review of the Literature

The review of literature is divided into four broad themes. The first section presents a background to Israeli arms diplomacy and its arms industry. The second theme is the Israeli arms diplomacy with few important countries from different continents and how arms sales influenced Israel's foreign policy. The third theme is the Israeli arms sales to China and how it helped in establishing a normalised relationship in 1992. And the last theme is the factors that shaped the military relationship between Israel and China

Israel's Arms Diplomacy

Arms diplomacy has been an important component of Israel's overtures towards the outside world. Klieman (1985) offers a comprehensive account regarding strands of the

diplomatic mechanism used by Israel to establish military relations with various countries even before any formal diplomatic relations were established. He analyses the phases Israel had undergone in pursuing its foreign policy objectives through this military approach. He emphasises the importance of Israel's arms diplomacy and how it has served the national interest and mentions military incentives, diplomatic incentives and the subsequent factors behind the emergence of such diplomacy. He also discusses how arms policies are made in Israel and its various strands such as arms sales, technical assistance, training and other forms of military help offered by Israel.

Since the research is on the arms sales as an instrument of Israeli foreign policy, it is necessary to understand how the policy is made. There are different institutions that influence and drive the arms diplomacy of Israel. Steinberg (1998) discusses the role and importance of various actors such as Israeli Defence Forces (IDF), and to a lesser degree, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) in promoting arms sales. In this endeavour one cannot ignore the role played by various interest groups and the linkages between the defence industry and MOD. The powerful Knesset Committee on Foreign Security Affairs occupies an important role in facilitating as well as regulating Israel's arms sales. He also recounts the role of the United States of America and how Israel's threat perceptions vis-à-vis Arab countries shaped its arms sale policy.

If one traces the history of Israel's arms diplomacy, it has not started with any country after having diplomatic relationship but all these had happened in closed-door, or say "quiet diplomacy", according to Klieman (1988). One of the best examples for such a 'quiet diplomacy' is the Iran-Contra Affair whereby Israel pursued 'diplomatic back channels' to reach to the Islamic Republic which was still professing public hostility. While the Tower Commission (1987) provides the background account, Segev (1988) explains the political calculations that compelled Israel to explicit the security situation faced by Iran in the wake of the Iraqi aggression. Parsi (2007) describes the secret friendship the Shah had with Israel and gives a holistic picture of the triangular relations involving Iran, Israel and the U.S during the Iran-Contra affair.

Patterns in arms diplomacy

Israel's military-security relations have been widespread and often transcend public political differences. Klieman (1988) offers examples whereby Arab countries such as Jordan benefited from military-intelligence help from Israel despite their public hostility. Beit-Hallahmi (1987) traces Israeli arms diplomacy in the Americas. Exploiting the opportunities provided by various dictatorial regimes in Latin, South and Central Americas, Israel forged closer ties with countries such as Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Argentina, and Chile through its military diplomacy. Jamail (1986) and Gutierrez (1986) give an account of the Israeli experience in the Central Americas. Beit-Hallahmi's work explains the Israel-South African alliance that was based more or less on military strategy and planning. Though marginal to the proposed research, Kreinin (1976) and Avriel (1976) and Jacob (1971) offer detailed accounts on Israel's military aid to Africa during the 1960s. They also explain the politics behind such activities and the military assistance provided by Israel to Africa. The wider canvas of Israel-South Africa relationship can be found in Frank (1988) where he talks about military assistance between the two including a nuclear cooperation. A detailed account of the nuclear cooperation between the two can be found in Hunter (1986b).

Israeli-Chinese Military Relations

With regard to Israeli's military diplomacy vis-à-vis China, the literature is considerable though not substantial. Israel's China odyssey has been long, painful and protracted. In January 1949 Israel became the first country to recognise the People's Republic of China but had to wait for over four decades for a reciprocal gesture from China. Shichor (1979) and Kumaraswamy (1994a) offer detailed account of this diplomatic process that eventually led to both countries establishing full diplomatic relations. A richer account of the historic relations can be found in the edited volume by Jonathan Goldstein (1999a). In his introductory chapter Goldstein (1999b), explains the relation and non-relations between the Republic of China (ROC). Suffot (2000), Israel's first ambassador to China describes the evolution in the relationships and highlights initial obstacles in establishing

a formalised relation. China's interest in West Asia is explained in brief by Rynhold (1996) who examines whether China's relationship with the region was guided by a strategic imperative to meet its domestic modernisation programme.

The historical background of Israel's military relations with China can be found in Kumaraswamy (1994b) who examines the origin and development of this relationship. He highlights the initial hiccups between the two countries, especially over China's support for the Arabs and Palestinian and discusses the factors that contributed to the framing up of the military relationships; these include Chinese drive for military modernization, need to upgrade aging Soviet weapons and the Western boycotts following the Tiananmen Square incident. Shichor (2000) however argues that the military component of the relations has often been exaggerated.

As the topic of the research is on Israeli arms sales, it will also highlight some of the important arms supplied by Israel to China. Kumaraswamy (1995) and Shichor (1998 and 2000) identified the major weapons supplied by Israel to China. These include laser-guided armour piercing warheads, artillery ammunition, electronic fire control systems and cannons for Soviet-made Tanks, night vision equipment, naval equipment, Kfir bombers, TOW anti-tank missiles and rare metals. Since most of the major Israeli arms sales to China were carried out before the normalisation in 1992, the exact figures could not be procured from any sources. However, Shichor (2000) offers some tentative estimates. In the early 1980s, the Sino-Israeli military transactions stood at US\$3 billion, in the 1990s it rose to US\$5-6 billion. According to U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) the estimated value of Israel's total arms export from 1994 to 1997 was US\$7.78 billion, or an annual average of US\$556 million. In early 1990s RAND Corporation estimated Israel's military transfers to China at US\$1-3 billion.

Factors shaping Israel-China military ties

Yegar (1999) and Kumaraswamy (1999) deal with the diplomatic fallout of the Sino-Israeli normalization upon South East Asia and South Asia respectively. Shichor (1999) examines the place of China in Israel's security concerns vis-à-vis the West Asian region.

He examines the role and importance of Chinese arms supply to the Israel's neighbours and their impact upon Israel's security concerns. His work offers an insight into China's arms sales policy and how Israel seeks to minimise the negative fallouts of Chinese arms flowing into the West Asian region.

Since the normalization of relations in 1992 the American factor has assumed greater importance in the Sino-Israeli relations. A number of scholars have highlighted, examined and criticised the growing American interference in Israel's relations with China and argued that the constant American pressures have limited, curbed and in some cases terminated lucrative military deals with China. Over the years as Kumaraswamy (2006a) argues the US has acquired a veto over the Sino-Israeli military ties and under intense American pressures in 2000 Israel was forced to cancel the Phalcon advanced airborne early warning system to China (Kumaraswamy, 2005a). Shichor (2005) explains the inevitable U.S. factor in Israel' military relations with China and examines the controversies surrounding Harpy anti-radar drone. Blumenthal (2005) explains the Chinese policy in West Asia which has grown over the period of time.

Kogan (2004) discusses controversies surrounding Israel's technology transfers to China. Clarke (1995) discusses the unauthorised arms transfers of Israel. Clarke and Johnston (1999) accused Israel of illegally transferring sensitive American military technology to China. Likewise Kumaraswamy (1996) examines the controversy surrounding Israel's suspected transfer of Patriot anti-missile technology to China. Stakelbeck Jr. (2004) gives an insight into the Israel-US bilateral relationship and argues that in the eyes of the U.S., the Israeli sale of American technology to various countries, particularly China, was an attempt by Israel to carve its own niche and autonomous relations with those countries.

Rationale and Scope of the Study

Israel's bilateral relations and arms exports have been studied but the linkage between military sales and foreign policy interests have not received adequate attention. Arms sales have become an important political instrument for the furtherance of foreign policy interests. In the case of China, arms sale has not only preceded formal relations but even

facilitated politico-diplomatic relations. The intensification of military-related ties eventually enabled both countries, especially China to normalise relations with Israel. Hence the study seeks to examine the role and contribution of the military sales and other forms of security assistance in promoting Israel's interests vis-à-vis China. The military component which played a crucial role before normalization was conspicuous by its absence after 1992. This would be examined within the context of third party interference, namely, the US.

Research Questions

1. How did military ties contribute to the normalisation of relations between Israel and China in 1992?
2. What were the types of military assistance provided by Israel to People's Republic of China?
3. How does Israel seek to promote its foreign policy interests through military relations?
4. What are the factors that influence Israel's military relations with China both before and after 1992?

Hypotheses:

1. Israel pursued arms sales and other forms of military assistance to further its foreign policy interests.
2. Military relations facilitated the normalization of relations between Israel and China.

Research Methodologies:

This research will be analytical in its approach. Due to certain limitations of getting primary sources, a major volume of information will be obtained from the secondary sources available. This problem in getting the primary sources is attributed to the non-availability of the well informed data on arms trade, especially the kind provided by Israel. However, Tower Commission Report in case of Israel's role during Iran-Contra

Affairs and reports by the US government regarding Israeli impropriety concerning military sales to China are the only primary sources.

The second chapter, **Israeli Arms Diplomacy and the Third World**, focuses on the Israeli arms diplomacy with some of the most prominent recipients. Using the examples of South Africa (Africa), Argentina, Ecuador, El Salvador, Chile, Nicaragua (South America), monarchical Iran and Turkey (West Asia), the chapter examines various factors that had led to the establishment of arms diplomacy. The chapter has not only surveyed the nature and extent of military sales but also highlighted the diplomatic component of such relationships.

The third chapter, **Israel - China Arms Diplomacy**, examines the historical background of the Sino-Israeli normalization and the role of the arms diplomacy in facilitating Israel to open a channel of communication with China. It traces the various phases underwent by Israel and China before they established a diplomatic relations in 1992. This also highlights the problems faced by both the countries, in normalising their relations, since Israel recognised People's Republic of China in 1950. It also examines the kind of military-security relations that prevailed before and after 1992. This chapter offers a comprehensive understanding of the state of affairs between the two countries and the role of the military relations.

The fourth chapter, **Implications of the Israeli -Chinese Arms Trade**, examines the implications of the arms diplomacy between Israel and China and its role in the furtherance of Israeli foreign policy. This is examined from the point of third party interference, the US. It also discusses the factors that influenced the military relations between Israel and China after the normalization. The chapter highlights the controversies that erupted involving Israel, China and the United States, due to suspected Israeli re-transfers of US-originating defence or missile technology to China

The final chapter, **Conclusion**, summarises the main findings of the research and verifies the hypothesis outlined at the beginning.

CHAPTER 2

Israeli Arms Diplomacy and the Third World

The main focus of this chapter is on the Israeli arms diplomacy with some of the most important recipients. Using the examples of South Africa in Africa, Argentina, El Salvador, Chile, Nicaragua, Ecuador in South America, monarchical Iran and Turkey in West Asia, the chapter examines various factors that had led to the establishment of arms diplomacy. Using the nature and extent of military sales it highlights the diplomatic component of such a relationship. In short, Israel valued its relations with the Third World with the objective of bolstering its security and guarantees its existence (Neuberger, 2009: 11). The relations also largely stemmed from political motives. Most of the governments in Latin America, during the 1970s, were military regimes and that gave an opportunity to Israel to collaborate on security matters and such relations were predicated on Israeli weapons exports.

Factors behind Arms Diplomacy

Before going into the details of the Israeli arms diplomacy, it is imperative to understand the underlying factors. One has to examine under what conditions were the arms sold and who were the recipients? What kinds of equipments are available for exports, and why did they become so competitive? (Klieman, 1984: 1). Some of the most important factors behind such arms sales can be categorized as follows: (a) political incentives (b) security motives, and (c) commercial and trade benefits. According to Aharon Klieman, “these interlocking perspectives constitute a powerful argument for employing arms exports and expertise on behalf of the national interests” (Klieman, 1984: 1). He was of the view that the existence of a powerful pro-arms coalition, comprising of large military establishment and defence industries, also contribute to the drive for arms sales. For Israel, arms diplomacy is an extension of its overall approach to foreign relations. No matter which coalition rules the country, the foreign policy goals of Israel remain relatively constant,

namely, the security of the state and the ingathering of the Jewish people into their ancient homeland. The hostile neighbourhood and Jewish concern have been the pivotal force behind arms diplomacy.

Regarding the Israeli arms sales, Latin America loomed quite large. Interestingly, Israel enjoyed certain distinct advantages in this region, especially during the late-1970s and the 1980s. It was only the region in the Third World that maintained the maximum diplomatic and trade relations with Israel (Klieman, 1985: 132). It was also the only region in the world that continuously had a friendly relationship with Israel. These characteristics provided a regional context that were lacking in other major buyers of Israeli arms (Bahbah, 1986: 16). Furthermore, arms sales were most concentrated in this region and arms diplomacy proved quite successful in promoting Israel's foreign policy interests with countries such as Argentina, El Salvador and Nicaragua. One advantage of arms sales was that Israel was not a newcomer to the region but had been supplying military assistance to South American countries since the 1950s. This was attributed to the fact that these countries provided an open market and encourage a great diversity of suppliers than other regions. Also their rush to arm was traceable to a relatively low state of military preparedness; profusion of military and authoritarian regimes; and the prevalence of intraregional conflicts, whether due to subversive movements, border disputes, or traditional territorial claims (Klieman, 1985: 132).

As a political incentive, Israel satisfied the needs of the Latin American governments to modernize their armed forces. Israel had no vital strategic interest in Latin America but it was concerned about the East-West regional balance and most importantly the PLO-Arab penetration. As a result, the need to preserve the ties with the Jewish community in Latin American countries was acknowledged. Some of the Latin American countries that had received Israeli arms had substantial Jewish populations. For example, in the late 1970s and 1980s, there were about 140,000 Jews in Brazil; 30,000 in Chile; 50,000 in Uruguay; 12,000 in Columbia and Venezuela; 5,000 in Peru and 300,000 in Argentina (Klieman, 1985:132). It became very obvious for Israel to extend and consolidate its ties with these countries keeping in mind the well-being of the Jewish people. Israel's priority was to

cultivate ties with the large Jewish communities in the Diaspora, in order to encourage *aliya* (Jewish immigration) to Israel and attract donations, investments, know-how and political support (Neuberger, 2009: 13). Thus arms diplomacy proved to be a major foreign policy instrument. Israel's success in its arms diplomacy was centred not only in Latin America but was also thriving in the Central America.

Israel's entry into the arms market began in the 1950s when it supplied small arms to the Somoza regime in Nicaragua. Costa Rica and Dominican Republic were other two countries that benefited from Israeli arms sales. Israel's role as an arms suppliers became dominant when the United States of America vacated the arms market. It was also the time when Israel's periphery diplomacy took centrality, and its research and development was at its peak. With such a consistency in its support to the ruling regimes in the region, Israel found itself a place amongst the largest secondary suppliers to Central America. The obvious factor behind such a successful journey was the longstanding military relationships and an expanded Israeli conception of its security interests (Klieman, 1985: 134). It could have been due to some symbolic reasons as to why Israel chose to sell arms to Honduras. It was known that though most of the Honduran military needs were met by the US, its leaders were very concerned at the inability of the former to contain revolutionary forces backed by Nicaragua and Cuba (Klieman, 1985:134). In the case of Costa Rica, lack of a strong military unit triggered a relationship with Israel. Another interesting reason for the Israeli arms transfers to the Southern American countries was to serve the American goal of containing perceived Communist subversion in the southern hemisphere and especially in late 1970s when the US started to lose out its influence in the Latin American arms markets.

A Historical Background

Historically, Latin American's help towards the establishment of the Jewish state of Israel was a strong point that cemented the relationship between the two. The strong diplomatic relations between these two regions was also due to the Latin American's sympathy for the Zionist aspirations. It was Guatemala and Uruguay that had made significant contribution for the advancement of the Zionist cause during the run up to the

partition of Palestine. Latin America also supported the Partition Plan due to which Israel had come into existence in 1948. Most of the Latin American countries voted in favour of Israel's admission to the United Nations. The relations between Israel and Latin America remained strong even after the October war when the opinion in the Third World countries shifted decisively against Israel. With the notable exception of Cuba and Nicaragua, the Latin America became Israel's largest supporter among the Third World groups. Hence, Israel's foreign policy did not loom large in the region but was focused more on sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and the Latin America.

Furthermore, the most important aspect of Israeli-Latin American relations was the arms sales which started in the early-1980s. By 1984 at least 18 countries from the region were purchasing military equipments from Israel. Some of the military items included sophisticated electronic gadgetry, fighter bombers, missile systems, patrol boats, small arms and ammunitions and the weapons that were captured from Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Through its weapons sales Israel provided a qualitative edge to the recipients as it included, in its sales, aircraft and large armaments and other communications and electronic equipment. Worth mentioning here are missile systems, patrol boats and jet aircraft.

Israeli arms sales become an important foreign policy tool and arms sales become very prominent in countries like Guatemala in 1977, Chile in 1979, Mexico in 1982, Ecuador in 1981, Argentina and Costa Rica in December 1982 and in Honduras in 1982, etc (Bahbah, 1986: 71,85).

Occasionally the Israeli arms sales to Latin America also produced certain diplomatic rifts between the countries of these two regions. Arms sales to this part of the Third World coincided with a remarkable erosion of support for Israel in this part of America. It is to be noted that by the end of 1979 many prominent countries in Latin America became members of the Non-Aligned Movement that was traditionally critical of Israel and its policy towards the Arabs. These include countries such as Argentina, Bolivia, Cuba, Grenada, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago (Bahbah, 1986: 85). It was the time when many of these countries began siding with the PLO (recognised as the sole and legitimate

representative of the Palestinian people). To the utter dismay of Israel, five important countries, including Brazil and Mexico, supported the 1975 United Nations General Assembly resolution that equated Zionism with racism (Bahbah, 1986: 86).

It is also imperative to highlight the important factors that led to the emergence of such an arms sales diplomacy. As already pointed out earlier the dominating one seemed to be commercial in nature. It is known that both the regions did not have any strategic interests, or say presence of hostile neighbourhood. It would also be an interesting to point out why Latin America had emerged as a major Israeli arms market and how such tools cemented the relationships. The demand for arms supplies in Latin America was growing and could only be met through arms procurements from abroad. Israel, on the other hand, was willing to sell weapons to any regimes and did not have any political strings. In short, its main motive was to breakaway from its regional isolation and to gain as much political support as it could and also to facilitate Jewish *Aliya* to the newly established state.

One of the main reasons why Latin America needed weapons was the territorial disputes and internal strife (Bahbah, 1986: 87). A suitable example could be the unresolved territorial disputes between Great Britain and Argentina over the Malvinas/Falklands, Argentina with Uruguay over territorial waters and Chile over the Beagle Channel Islands etc (Bahbah, 1986: 87). Consequently, a number of these quarrels had erupted into open conflicts later on. As a result, such disturbances or conflicts had led to the strengthening of military relations between Israel and Latin American countries. Thus this diplomatic component was quite militaristic in nature too.

Bishara Bahbah explained that such instrument of using arms sales to promote diplomacy between the two regions was also attributed largely to the role of the military in both the regions. He was of the view that governments dominated by the military were inevitably more attentive to the needs of their defence establishments and inclined to acquire arms that are perceived to add to the military's institutional powers and positions (Bahbah, 1986: 89, 90). It was this presence of strong military establishments that made Israeli

arms sales successful. The critical role of the military in the region had worked in favour of the intensification of Israel's relations with Latin American governments.

In the words of Bishara Bahabh,

aside from professional admiration for Israel's military exploits and an affinity of world view, or at least common understanding shared by professional military men, Latin American military is fervently anticommunist and tends to perceive Israel as the guardian of Western civilization in the face of leftist terrorists and Soviet-backed Arab regimes. Some Israeli authors have called attention to the Latin American military establishment's tendency to see an analogy between Latin American revolutionaries on the one hand, and the leftist elements of the Middle East that Israel is dedicated to eradicate on the others (Bahbah, 1986: 90).

Another factor that sustained such diplomacy between them was the competitive nature of the Israeli arms industry. Though Israel had entered the Latin American arms market which was heavily saturated by other major arms suppliers, the quality of Israeli products, their suitability to Latin American needs, Israel's wholistic approach with different support services and more importantly its reliability as a supplier regardless of the circumstances, increased the importance of Israel as the major arms supplier to the region.

These arms sales that promoted military relations with Israel can be explained keeping in mind the successes that were witnessed in the case of Ecuador, Argentina, El-Salvador, Chile, Guatemala, etc.

Ecuador

The relationship between Israel and Ecuador dated back as early as 1960s. In a way, Ecuador was one of Israel's oldest friends in this South American continent. It was the military ties that brought the two closer. Israel's Nahal type military-agricultural programmes were introduced in Ecuador and also in Bolivia. Here, they had used the armed forces for agricultural tasks and hence the relationship was quite unique.

The military visits between the two began in the mid-1960s when high level military officials travelled to the other, mostly for training purpose. One could note that, Ecuador was one of the countries that did not face serious guerrilla activities, and a general lack of political extremism marked the difference from its neighbours.

Israel started its military relations with Ecuador since the 1970s. Some of the official reports quoted that the country had purchased Israeli arms including rockets, explosives, ammunitions, and Uzi sub-machinegun, and the approximate amount was estimated to be US\$200 million, a substantial amount when compared to Israel's arms exports to other countries at the time (Bahbah, 1986: 114). Other items included Israeli-built Arava planes and Gabriel MK-3 missiles. The refusal by the United States to sell its F-5Ss made Israel supply Kfir jet fighters to the country. Soon Kfir was replaced by Israeli-made Nesher. Simultaneously, Israel's stated aim in producing the Kfir was to avoid overdependence on the United States for front line fighters. Even at this time, the American influence played heavily upon Israeli arms exports policy, which to some extent created rifts in their arms diplomacy. However, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin once stated: "it is not that we seek to become a merchant of arms, we need military exports for our own defence capability" (Bahbah, 1986: 115).

However, the relationship between Israel and Ecuador began to take a different course as the latter returned to the constitutional rule in 1979, with Jaime Roldos as the democratically elected President. Moreover Roldo also supported the Palestinian cause and this estranged the relationship between the two, and it was during his time that the possibility of opening up a PLO office in Quito came up. Interestingly, the Israeli-Ecuadorian relations moved back to normal in January 1982 following the outbreak of an armed hostility between Ecuador and Peru. Israel being a neutral country supplied weapons to both the warring sides. It shipped arms and ammunitions to Ecuador, and on the other hand, supplied Peru with sophisticated radar systems. Ultimately, Israel could supply Ecuador with Kfir jet fighter though the transaction was kept secret at the request of the Israeli government.

Israel not only sold weapons or arms to Ecuador but the cooperation extended much beyond. Israel was believed to have a technical assistance agreement to service the Israel-made weapons in Ecuador's arms inventory (Bahbah, 1986: 119). This assistance was mostly in the airline sector. Israel supplied the nucleus of the airline in 1974 with three Boeing jets reconditioned by the Israel Aircraft Industry (IAI). This agreement sparked the heights of the Israel-Ecuador arms transactions and other military related cooperation. Simultaneously, Israel was reported to help one of the leading Ecuadorian arms industries in its arms production. This was where Israel's expertise in military affairs came into use.

The military relations between Israel and Ecuador had also extended to other areas and this was mainly in the field of technical assistance. It was also believed that Israel agreed to service the Israeli-made weapons in the Ecuador's arms industry. The items that needed service included the Arava, Nesher and Kfir planes. Israel's first major deal with the Ecuadorian Defence industry happened in the late 1970s when the Jewish state had the contract to service the aircraft of Ecuador's national airlines company, Ecuatoriana. It was also perceived that one of the reasons behind this relationship was the arms-for-oil swap policy adopted by Israel. The military relations got enhanced in the late 1970s when a group of Israelis acting in a private capacity had approached with an offer to supply ultra modern military equipment to Ecuador and to serve as advisors on counter terrorism.

Ecuador had undergone a huge financial crisis and its foreign debt in 1985 stood at about US\$7.1 billion. Therefore, it began to look increasingly to its Arab neighbours for assistance. But it was not surprising how Ecuador balanced its long standing friendship with Israel with other needs. Despite its improved relations with the Arab world, the military relations between Israel and Ecuador remained strong. This had happened with the death of the President Roldo in a plane crash in 1981 and the subsequent emergence of a new leader, Leon Febres Cordeiro in August 1984. Their relationship in the defence sector was given a boost by the visit of Ecuador's defence minister to Israel in the same year. Israel supplied Ecuador with Barak antimissile missiles and such sales strengthened Israel's more traditional role in the country.

Argentina

Israel's promotion of diplomacy with its arms sales would be incomplete without explaining its relations with Argentina which had a Jewish population of about 300,000 (Klieman, 1985:132). Scholars like Bishara Bahbah are of the view that while Israel's arms to sales to Ecuador were built on relations based on their cooperation related to military establishments, arms sales to Argentina were principally the result of the vicissitudes of international politics. It was also largely because of the U.S. arms policies and the boycott of weapons transfers by the Western powers following the Falklands/Malvinas War that Israel was able to penetrate the Argentine market (Bahbah, 1986: 123).

Historically speaking, Argentina established diplomatic ties with Israel almost immediately after the creation of the Jewish state in 1948, and it was the first Latin American country to open a legation in Israel. Since then, Israel had been using its arms sales as an important instrument of foreign policy, and as explained by Klieman the Jewish concern played a pivotal role. According to Aharon Klieman, "Jerusalem is equally sensitive to the diplomatic dimension, employing this valuable military relationship to wage a campaign against possible anti-Jewish and anti-Israel influences" (Klieman, 1985).

The overthrowing of Argentinean President Isabel Peron by the Argentine military in 1976 brought Israel and Argentina closer. Many important military and civilian visits had taken place. Argentina had become one of Israel's most important arms customers after the United States suspended its military aid in 1977 under President Jimmy Carter's administration. It was the ability of Israel to meet the demands of Argentina that made these arms diplomacy successful. The time had been very favourable to Israel because President Jimmy Carter imposed a ban on military credits to Argentina. Until then, the arms transactions between the two revolved around the 1976 sale of Gabriel MK-2 ship-to-ship missiles. After the ban, Israel sold Argentina 25 Mirage-5 Dassault fighters and 26 Mirage-3C Daggers. Other defence items included tank gun and Dabur patrol boats (Bahbah, 1986: 125) along with A-4 Skyhawks, Shafir missiles, patrol-boats, Gabriel missiles, small arms, ammunitions, etc (Beit-Hallahmi, 1987: 102). A move taken by

Israel in 1978 also bolstered the relationship between the two. Chief of staff of the Israeli Defence Forces General Mordechai Gur travelled to both Argentina and Chile with the aim of selling arms and this was followed by the visit of the former Chief-of-staff (1964-1968) and former Prime Minister (1974-1977) Yitzhak Rabin to Argentina in August 1980 (Beit- Hallahmi, 1987: 102). Then the relation between the two was strengthened when Israel supplied arms to Argentina during the Falklands-Malvinas War of 1982 and helped Argentine's armed forces to replace armaments and aircrafts lost during the war. Their arms sales went smoothly for almost a decade but it took a turn when the military regime was replaced by a civilian government headed by President Raul Alfonsin. The association between the two started to drift though the relation was maintained at a much reduced level. The period between 1976 and 1983 marked the good old days of the Israeli- Argentine ties.

Israel's arms supply to Argentina came at the right time when the latter needed a major arms build-up in the aftermath of the crisis in 1982 regarding the Falklands/Malvinas. However, Israel's military ties with Argentina extended through each of three phases- before, during and since the Falkland War (Klieman, 1985: 156). Israel's arms sales as a means of its foreign policy tools was supported well by the fact that it became the first small Third World arms manufacturers to act as a primary supplier of major and sophisticated weapons to a belligerent party during a military engagement, taking over a role henceforth played by major arms producers (Klieman, 1985: 156). Like the military cooperation with Ecuador, Israel also helped Argentinean air force to acquire a credible strike capability. These arms transfer action involved considerable risk as it pertained to challenging the Western embargo against Argentina. It was also market opportunities that made Israel take such risks and opted for such diplomacy with this country. It should also be noted that Israel's arms sales to Argentina has benefited from international politics. According to Bishara Bahbah, "nowhere else in Latin America-perhaps nowhere in the world is there a clearer example of Israeli realpolitik in arms sales, of the primacy of commercial interest over principles" (Bahbah, 1986:131).

Argentina's defeat in the 1982 War strengthened its move for military build-up. It had faced heavy losses especially in the air force. It was at this time when Israel was sought by the Argentinian government for assistance in its arms buying campaign. Thus Israel got another opportunity to supply arms and it enhanced its relationship with Argentina. Towards the end of the same year Israel was believed to have sold Argentina U.S. made A-4 Skyhawks.

However, despite this success in Israeli-Argentine arms diplomacy, the return to constitutional rule in 1983 lessened the arms transfers. Though the military cooperation reduced drastically, Argentina and Israel committed themselves to increased economic, commercial, technological and scientific cooperation. In short, the diplomatic component of the arms sales between the two achieved heights mostly during the military regime of Argentina that lasted between 1976 and 1983.

Central America

Israeli military connection was not only extended towards South America but its significance was felt in Central America as well. Israel had been a major weapons supplier to those countries where United States did not foray into. El- Salvador, Chile, Guatemala and Nicaragua were some of the countries that benefited most from the Israeli arms sales. Israeli-Central American military ties were fraught with a political significance which by and large had been lacking elsewhere in Latin America. Interestingly, Guatemala in the mid-1980s and Nicaragua in the late 1970s under Somoza did not support a single UN Resolution against Israel (Bahbah, 1986: 143) and El-Salvador and Costa Rica voted in the anti-Israeli resolutions in the 1980s but it was negligible in its effect. These few Central American countries were not reticent in expressing explicitly an administration for Israel.

Unlike the Southern American countries, Central America had many characteristics that seemed to be quite in consonance with that of Israeli arms clients; some of them were longstanding, entrenched traditions of military rule, right-wing orientation, high

incidence of territorial disputes, internal strife and a tendency towards human rights violations which made procurement of arms difficult (Bahbah, 1986: 144).

Nicaragua

Israel's role in the region not only concentrated with the provision of weapons and military communications but included military assistance such as training, counter insurgency, military-agricultural development similar to Nahal-type projects. Israel started supplying weapons to Somoza's Nicaragua in the mid-1950s. It was suspected that in February 1957 Nicaraguan delegation to Israel negotiated a US\$1.2 million arms deals with Shimon Peres, when he was the Director General of the Israel Defence Ministry (Jamail and Gutierrez, 1986: 27). Some of the weapons sold were tanks, light aircraft, armoured cars, automatic rifles and ammunition. At one time, Israel accounted for 98 percent of Nicaragua's arms imports. Israel's arms sales to Nicaragua had been a smooth one until the emergence of the Sandinista opposition in 1978. The Israeli-Nicaraguan arms relationship should not only be explained from Somoza's perspective but also with the Sandinista regime. It was a quagmire that while Israel supplied arms to Somoza's Nicaragua there Sandinistas patched up with the PLO. Israel's arms sales to the Somoza regime received boost from the Jimmy Carter administration. The interesting fact is that even before the United States cut off economic and military aid to Nicaragua, the weapons sold by Israel had already become critical to the regime's survival.

The military relationship between Israel and Nicaragua remained uncontroversial until the intensification of the Sandinista opposition in 1978. Reports began to surface about Israel's supply of arms and ammunitions to the country at the time when the United States of America decided to cut off arms supply to the National Guard (Jamail and Gutierrez, 1986: 27). However, Israel managed to continue with the relationship considering the importance it placed on its historical ties with Nicaragua. One has to bear in mind how Anastasio Somoza Garcia provided agents for Hagana, the forerunner of the Israeli Defence Forces, with diplomatic covers for purchasing arms in Europe.

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El-Salvador

Israel's relation with El-Salvador intensified at the time when popular opposition movement and the armed guerrilla organization gained momentum. This happened during the 1970s. Israel's support for the Salvadoran regime was signified in several forms and most importantly in military and economic. The first major breakthrough in their military relations came in 1973 when Israel signed an agreement with El-Salvador when it agreed to assist the El Salvador's air force (Beit-Halahmi, 1987: 85) According to Stockholm International Peace and Research Institute (SIPRI), between 1975 and 1979, 83 percent of El-Salvador's defence imports were from Israel (Jamail and Gutierrez, 1986: 29). Items sold included Arava aircraft, Fouga Majister trainer planes, Dassault Ouragan jet fighters, 80mm rocket launchers, spare parts and Uzi sub-machine gun. These arms sales had laid a good foundation for both to such an extent that Salvadoran Embassy in Israel was relocated to Jerusalem from Tel Aviv in 1984. Both sides discussed further military aid to El-Salvador. In short, this yielded some diplomatic fortunes. Besides arms sales, Israel assisted El-Salvador with military and security related capacities and its support of the military government in some way served the American interest in Central America.

It was not only weapons transferred by Israel but also other computer-related military assistance. Such components would enable El-Salvadorian government to seek out government opponents more systematically and overt supply of arms to El-Salvador enticed unnecessary criticism. Apparently, El-Salvador was the largest consumer of Israeli arms in Central America. The bi-lateral military relationship in the mid-1970s had become increasingly so, again due to regional developments stemming from the Sandinista seizure of power in July 1979 which not only changed Nicaragua internally but upset the regional balance and threatens the regimes of countries like El-Salvador in immediate or close proximity to Nicaragua (Klieman, 1985: 134).

Amidst this success in the relationship, the resumption of the U.S involvement in El-Salvador somewhat decreased Israel's role though weapon supply continued. Israel's status of being the primary weapons supplier of El-Salvador plunged to the second place. This was also the time when the Reagan administration certified the improvement of

human rights in El-Salvador. Israel was known for training Salvadoran military in its tactics against guerrillas. The early 1980s witnessed frequent Salvadoran official visits to Israel, and discussed economic aid. In 1981, Israel sold El-Salvador Mystere B-2 bombers and Arava STOLS in 1982 (Bahbah, 1986: 151). Following a request from the United States, Israel transferred US\$21 million in arms credits to El-Salvador (Jamail and Gutierrez, 1986: 30).

Israel and El-Salvador military relations remained strongest between 1977 and 1979, under the regime of General Carlos Humberto Romero, but thereafter Israeli involvement became unnecessary when Regan administration started to give military aid to El-Salvador from 1981.

Chile

The military regime of Augusto Pinochet Ugarte (1973) could not be left out while explaining the Israeli arms sales to Latin America. Israel and Chile became a close ally only after the Carter administration suspended U.S military aid to Pinochet regime in 1979. It was Israel that filled up the vacuum left by U.S. and thus strengthened its diplomacy amidst the burgeoning isolation. Simultaneously Chile had to face the British arms embargo. It was during this time when Israel supplied with Shafir air-to-air missiles in 1977 and this strengthened the relationship between the two. In 1979 the Israeli Defence Minister Mordechai Zippori visited Chile and concluded arms deals in which he agreed to supply Reshef patrol boats. (Beit-Hallahmi, 1987:99). This gesture had shown the intensity of Israel's arms sales and how they used it to promote their foreign policy from a military perspective. The military hardware sold by Israel to Chile included spare parts, light arms, ammunitions, uniforms, helmets etc. Israel was reported to have supplied the Chilean army with anti-tank weapons and other military training. An Israeli cooperation also supplied to Pinochet government a special crowd-control vehicle that had water cannons attached to it.

As in the case of Ecuador and Argentina, it was the assistance Israel provided to the Chilean air force that brought the countries close than never before. There were regular

visits between the officials and the ones that took place in 1982 and 1985 were of great significance in bridging the relationship between them. It was with the help of Israel that Chile developed its own aircraft industry, beginning with the manufacture of light jet fighter-trainer. As military assistance, Israel provided Chile inputs on intelligence, counterintelligence and secret police. The common characteristics that brought both the countries closer were the threat faced from the Arab countries and the Soviet-backed communist threat (Beit-Hallahmi, 1987: 100).

As Knesset played an important role in Israel's arms diplomacy or arms export, the Likud government in the 1970s supported exchanges on communication and agreed to work upon the military relation. Not only relation was based on military cooperation but on cultural contact too. Commercial aviation and tourism were some tools that cemented the relationship between Israel and Chile.

West Asia

According to Neuberger, "The golden era of Israel's relations with the Third World took place during a period in which the country was stewarded by the pioneer leaders of socialist Zionism, as these individuals deeply identified with the awakening of the nations of Asia and Africa" (Neuberger, 2009: 11). Israeli arms export and its diplomacy was successful not only in Latin America but also in West Asia. Its arms sales to Iran and Turkey are the best examples and as Melman and Sinai argued, "politics bring strange bed fellows together" (Melman and Sinai, 1987: 396). One part of Israel's interest in Iran had been an extension of its drive to export arms (Tessler, 1989: 112). Iran provided the Jewish state with its most important market with an annual sale of military supplies reaching US\$5 billion towards the end of Shah's regime. Between 1949 and 1956, the centre of the gravity of Israel's Third World policy shifted to Asia. During this period, ties were formed with states on the periphery of West Asia, and most importantly with Iran and Turkey (Neuberger, 2009: 16).

Iran

Since 1948 Israel regarded the establishment of formal political ties with Iran as a strategic goal. Arms diplomacy fitted well to accomplish this goal. As one of the factors identified by Aaron Klieman, the Jewish concern was one important factor that established such a relationship with the Shah (Klieman, 1985: 158). The Israeli government valued the Iranian government as this non-Arab country was willing to pave way for the Jewish immigration to Israel. Iran remained pro-Arab during the 1948 War and criticised Israel for evicting the Palestinian Arabs from their homeland. The Iran's opposition to Israel's entry into the United Nations did not result in any conflict between the two (Farhang, 1989: 86). Historical event such as the emergence of Gamal Nasser of Egypt as the dominant leader of the Arab world forged closer military ties between Israel and Iran in the 1950s and early 1960s.

The relations between Israel and Iran during the reign of Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi were characterised by discretion and it was a low-profile one. Israel's main aim was to overcome its isolation in a hostile region and that was the time when it found in Iran a capable ally to serve the said purpose. Simultaneously, the rise of Egypt under the leadership of Gamal Abdal Nasser concerned Iran which sought Israeli help to prevent Egypt from dominating West Asia. But the forging of the relationship between the two was a hard task and Iran was the great hope of the periphery strategy. Israeli contacts with Iran started in 1948 but did not reach a level of real closeness until the late 1960s (Beit-Hallahmi, 1987: 9). The relationship lasted until the Islamic Revolution of 1979 and both sides benefited from this connection.

One of the most important factors why Israel wanted to establish a tacit relationship with Iran was because of its need for oil. At the same time, Iran facilitated Israel's approach to the Third World countries. According to Jacob Abadi, "Tehran regarded the contact with Israel as useful in providing it with the necessary access to the United States and the countries of Western Europe" (Abadi, 2004: 35). The enhancement of relationship between the two remained limited due to the geographical distance but the geopolitical advantages for both of them were enormous. The Iranian government of the time was

highly impressed by Israel's expertise in agriculture and industry and particularly in the military field. This further bridged the ties between the two countries.

The imperial Iran was particularly valued by Israel because it was willing to facilitate the flight of Iraqi Jews to Israel. According to scholars like Uri Bialer, "it was the problem of *Aliyah* from Iraq that turned political relations with Iran into an important goal of Israeli foreign policy" (Bialer, 1985: 295). The rise of the pan-Arabism in the 1950s and 1960s further increased Israel's value to Iran. The low profile connection between the two survived the vicissitudes of the Arab-Israeli conflict and although it was highly criticised throughout the Arab world for its ties with the Jewish state.

However, there was problem in recognition of the Jewish state as in June 1948 and March 1949 the Iranian ulama opposed the move made by Iran (Farhang, 1989, 85). Eventually however, on 6 March 1950 the Iranian government extended de facto recognition to Israel, and Iran's representative in the United Nations was instructed to convey the decision to his Israeli counterpart in the world organisation. As expected, there were oppositions from various Arab states and hence the de facto recognition was not followed by a formal exchange of diplomats. The resistance continued and there were even reports that said the Iranians were paid by Israel for the recognition. One of the reports from the Iraqi Military Attaché said that the Director of the Israeli Foreign Ministry Shmuel Divon arrived in Tehran in September 1950 and offered the Iranian government a sum of £3 million in return for full recognition of the Jewish state (Abadi, 2004: 38). But this gesture did not result in any rapprochements between the two. In fact the entire matter ended differently, at least for that period of time. The Israeli Foreign Ministry of the time was well aware that propaganda within Iran advocating cancellation of recognition had increased. The demand for recognition of Israel was raised in the Majlis and had been suppressed with the support of the National Front Party, which was in power at the time and which was closely allied to the religious sectors of the Iranian polity (Bialer, 1985: 314). With such pressure from the domestic front, the likelihood of annulment of de facto recognition of Israel increased.

Bilateral relations between Israel and Iran began to deteriorate in 1951. Such an unexpected turn in their relationship occurred in light of Iran's isolation in the oil conflict with England (Bialer, 1985:314). Also the pressure exerted by the Arabs on Iran to annul recognition of Israel further estranged the relationship. The Iranians developed second thoughts over recognising of Israel as they did not want to slip the opportunity offered by the Arabs with their promise to support in its oil dispute with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (Abadi, 2004:39). In the words of Uri Bialer,

it was no shock to Jerusalem when, on July 7, 1951, in his reply to a parliamentary question, the Iranian Foreign Minister announced in the Majlis that the Iranian Consulate-General in Jerusalem had been closed and that "for the time being" Iran would not receive an Israeli envoy (Bialer,1985: 314).

Despite such fall-out in the relationship, the Iranian government did not wish to sever its relations with Israel and decided not to withdraw its decision of recognising Israel. In fact, leaders of both the countries sought to increase their commercial ties.

It was at the time of Iranian Prime Minister Muhammad Mossadeq when Israel attempted to normalise relations. Once again, Israelis continued to pressure Iran to grant de jure recognition but the resentments from nationalist and militant religious groups hindered the possibility of normalising relations between them. However, with the fall of Mossadeq in August 1953, one could see a slight improvement in Israel-Iran bilateral relations (Abadi, 2004: 39) and Shah Reza Pahlavi moved to forge an alignment with Israel which lasted till until the 1979 Revolution. The commercial ties between the two improved as well. But the ties of his regime were wrapped in great secrecy to thwart any adverse reactions. The Arab oppositions were so strong that they decided to coordinate their efforts do dissuade Iran from selling oil to Israel. Iran did not get succumb to such pressure tactics but instead agreed to act as a mediator in the Arab-Israeli conflict. With this, Iran postponed its announcement of renewing its diplomatic ties with Israel.

The surrounding external factors largely influenced the normalisation of tensions between Israel and Iran. The mid-1950s did not favour the bilateral relations due to the eruption of

the Suez Crisis and if Iran moved closer to Israel, which would be interpreted as an anti-Arab move. Surprisingly, the Israeli diplomats intensified their efforts to ease the tension with Iran. As a result, Iran and Israel agreed to promote, once again, their commercial and cultural ties. With the continuation of anti-Israeli sentiment due to the Suez Crisis, the time was not ripe for upgrading the relations between them. Amidst these ups and downs in their relationship, military cooperation between Iran and Israel throughout the period was extensive and these were mainly in the field of arms sales and training of Iranian officers in ground warfare, intelligence, counterintelligence and air warfare (Beit-Hallahmi, 1987: 11).

The dream of having a successful peripheral alliance floated by Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion was beginning to take a shape. It was known that from 1954 onwards, SAVAK (Iranian Secret Police) got guidance from Israel and in 1955 the representative of the Israeli Defence Force who was sent to Tehran later on became a military attaché in Iran. This further enhanced the military cooperation between the two countries. By the onset of 1962, there were reports about closer secret military deals between Israel and Iran. Visits between the countries began to increase. In January 1963 there was an official and public visit to Tehran by Israel's Chief of Staff Zvi Tzur. This signified the growing importance of the alliance and the military cooperation. Israel also assisted Iranian army in controlling tribesmen in southern Iran in 1963. Arms such as Uzi sub-machinegun were supplied by Israel to Iran in 1964 (Beit-Hallahmi, 1987: 11).

Relationship between the two began to take another turn after the 1967 Arab-Israeli conflict. Iran joined those countries that condemned the Israeli occupation of the Arab lands and it supported the UN Resolution 242 that called for the Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories and also the restoration of the Palestinian rights. These conditions further shadowed the prospects of improving the relations openly though there were still contacts underneath. Relations continued and the growing significance of the Iran-Israel alliance was indicated by the visits that had taken place in the 1970s. Between 1974 and 1979, there were a number of important visits including one by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, two by Foreign Minister Yigal Allon, three visits by Foreign Minister Moshe

Dayan, one by Defence Minister Shimon Peres and one by Prime Minister Menachem Begin. It was an indication of an increasing military cooperation between them as these officials were received by Iranian Deputy Prime Minister and the head of SAVAK, Nematollah Nasiri. (Beit-Hallahmi, 1987:10). The visit of Shimon Peres in 1977, as the Israeli Defence Minister, led to the signing of a secret military agreement for the development of advanced missile. The agreement for such a joint venture was that Iran had to finance the programme through the delivery of US\$1 billion worth of oil to Israel, a special airport, an assembly plant and the site for long-range test. However, the project ended abruptly with the end of Shah's reign. By 1978, the annual Israeli exports including military equipment amounted to US\$225 million.

The late 1970s marked the downfall of Shah as his opponents were able to utilize his connections to Israel with great effect. The emergence of Camp David Accord between Israel and Egypt left a huge impact on the Israel-Iran relations. It was the time when some Iranians insisted that the West Bank belonged to Jordan (Abadi, 2004: 46). The Iranian leaders felt the need to form a mutual understanding with Egypt and try to break the hostility with the Arab nations. Taking the peace process as an opportunity, by January 1978 Iran had started to think of an oil embargo against Israel. The Shah had said that such a move had to be taken as a part of overall international sanctions aimed at persuading Israel to show more flexibility in the negotiations to bring a peace in the region.

Unrest in Iran in 1979 was accompanied by anti-Israel and anti-Jewish campaign and estranged the Israeli-Iranian relations to an irreconcilable extent. As a result, Israel suspended all exports to Iran and on other hand, Iranian Prime Minister of the time said that his government would cut the oils supplies to Israel. On 18 February 1979, the revolutionary government severed its diplomatic ties with Israel. This brought to an end the 25 years of Israeli cooperation with the Iranian monarch. Scholars are of the view that Israel's unique situation gave rise to different models of public and clandestine relations and the most interesting aspect is the case of official recognition concealing the true nature of relations (Neuberger, 2009: 28).

Turkey

Turkey was an ideal component of Ben-Gurion's periphery strategy, being non-Arab (though predominantly Moslem, like Iran) and pro-Western, as well as having a significant military potential (Beit-Hallahmi, 1987: 16). Israel-Turkey relation was formalized in March 1949 and Turkey became the first Muslim majority country to recognize the State of Israel (Abadi, 2004: 6). Since then, Israel has been a major supplier of arms to Turkey. Military, strategic, and diplomatic cooperation between Turkey and Israel were accorded high priority by both governments.

The ties between the two dated back to early days of the Jewish state's existence. However, the diplomacy between the two was a very low-profile one until both the countries established full diplomatic relations in December 1991. Turkey's condemnation of Israel in the United Nations barely had any effect on their diplomacy though it was maintained at a much lower level. For a very long time both sides were interested in maintaining this low-level diplomacy and decided not to reveal the true nature of the relationship. It was only in the late 1980s when the international politics underwent a major change that the ties between them became overt and official. Despite all odds, both of them maintained political, commercial, cultural and military relations (Abadi, 2004: 3).

The reason why Israel and Turkey found difficulty in maintaining their relationship was because of the fact that Turkey was compelled to demonstrate solidarity with the Arabs. This happened particularly since Turkey is a Moslem country. As it is seen in most of the cases, the intensification of the conflict between the Arabs and Israelis resulted in both countries drifting apart. Their bilateral relations did not improve until the conflict subsided and negotiations between them began. According to Jacob Abadi, "the imperatives of the Cold War had a major impact on the bilateral relations because Turkey's foreign policy was affected by its political alignment with the United States and NATO" (Abadi, 2004: 4). This association pulled it away from the Soviet orbit and thereby allowed its relations with Israel to remain friendly.

Another reason that created problem for their open-relationship was Turkey's aversion to communism. It was such that Israel's socialist orientation was regarded with suspicion. Turkey found the rapprochement difficult because it was liable to alienate the Arabs whose political and economic cooperation had increased considerably by the early 1960s. It was the time when Turkey became involved in a conflict with Greece over Cyprus. Establishment of ties with the countries of the Third World was important for Israel as it is located in the heart of the hostile region dominated by the Arabs. Such move was an attempt to escape isolation by establishing ties with countries which were uneasy about the pan- Arab resentment which engulfed the region due to the emergence of Egyptian President Gamal Abdal Nasser.

Turkey's treatment of the Jews also encouraged rapprochement between the two countries. It was often seen that the Jews in the Arab countries were victims of persecution and were used as hostage, but they enjoyed political and economic freedom in Turkey. In the words of Aaron S Klieman:

... a central tenet of Israeli foreign policy has always been a sense of commitment toward world Jewry and the use of diplomatic contact with hosts governments in over eighty countries outside Israel live. This extraordinary sensitivity for the safety, welfare, right of Jewish communities in distress and, in addition, for ensuring the right of Jews to emigrate, preferably to Israel in keeping with the essence of Zionist leading, is indeed the true hallmark of Israeli statecraft. Yes this Jewish connection provides a significant moral balance to these most commonly cited pressures in the total arms calculus (Klieman, 1985: 40).

Turkey voted against the UN Resolution for Partition Plan for Palestine. Though it remained neutral during the 1948 War Turkey dispatched to Syria small training team and some supplies were shipped to Palestinians (Abadi, 2004:4). In order to avoid any unnecessary Arab criticism, Turkey did not grant official recognition to the newly established Jewish state. Turkey abstained when Israel applied for the membership in the United Nations. However, in the early 1950, relationship between them improved to some extent. It happened at the time when Turkey's recognition was formalised with the

appointment of a Minister of Plenipotentiary to Tel Aviv by 1952 (Robins, 2001: 3). The cooperation between the two had expanded. Commercial and military deals were struck and Israel began to provide Turkey with training and intelligence. The Mossad had a station in Turkey since the 1950s and, following the Trident agreement of 1958, the Israeli intelligence services had provided training for the Turkish secret services. During the initial period following Turkey's recognition of Israel, the two countries took various steps to improve their relations. As mentioned above, commercial transactions flourished, regular air and sea links were established, and sports and events and cultural contacts increased (Bolukbasi, 1999: 23).

Turkey's role as an honest broker in the Arab-Israeli conflict was denounced by many, especially by Nasser. This resentment came up after the Turkish Prime Minister Adnan Menderes, who visited Washington in 1954 called upon the Arabs to recognise Israel (Abadi, 2004: 9). Interestingly, such rhetoric did not falter the relationship between the two and continued to remain cordial. Therefore, Turkey was caught between the need to maintain normal relations with Israel and its desire to avoid any Arab criticism forced them to adopt a rather low-policy toward the Jewish state. Meanwhile, Israel and Turkey enhanced their bilateral relations and the significance was felt in the field of trade. Israel imported large quantities of cotton, wheat, oils and various agricultural products. Military collaboration also continued at the same time. According to Jacob Abadi, "Israeli-Turkish relations were determined more by pragmatic considerations than ideology. Israel's desire to escape isolation prompted it to seek the friendship of countries surrounding its hostile Arab neighbours" (Abadi, 2004: 16).

The 1950s did not seem favourable to both Israel and Turkey. During the late 1950s and 1960s, Turkey pursued more pro-Western but did not necessarily mean pro-Israeli policy. Considering the changing political scenario in the region in the late 1950s, officials of both the countries decided to meet in June 1958 that resulted in what was known as "Peripheral Alliance". The sole purpose of this doctrine was to prove an argument long held by many Israeli politicians that West Asia was not comprised exclusively of Arabs or Islamic. This had started because according to Ben Gurion, the Turks, the Persians and

the Jews were more numerous than the Arabs in West Asia. The rise of Nasser was not welcomed by anyone in the region.

Following such move, a high level meeting took place in August 1958- represented by Israel's Ben Gurion, Golda Meir, Shiloah and the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) Chief of Staff Chiam Laskov. Though it was suspected to be a discussion to collaborate against Soviet aggression and radicalism in West Asia, the leaders announced the meeting saying it was a move to establish cultural ties between Israel and Turkey. Another development was the increase of the Mossad activities in training the Turkish agents in counterintelligence technique, and the use of electronic devices burgeoned by the late 1950s. These negotiations led to a significant improvement in bilateral relations. The cooperation between the two countries continued until the Turkish military coup of May 1960.

The Israeli-Turkish relations began to deteriorate in the early 1960s. It was the anti-Turkish attitude of the United States during the Cyprus crisis of 1964 that left Turkish government disillusioned. Turkey no longer felt obligatory to maintain good relations with Israel and began to adopt policies in favour of the Arabs. However, despite the fact that the relations were cold on the political level, Turkey still managed to appreciate the technical skills of the Israelis. This kept the relation going. The Six Day War of 1967 between the Arabs and Israelis furthered the difficulties for the Turkish government to identify with Israel. Israel's occupation of the Arab lands was deplored by Turkey. Like other countries, Turkey called for Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied by Israel during the War and also called for the restoration of the Palestinian rights and completely supported the UN Resolution 242. Another event that estranged the relationship between the two was the capture of the Israeli Consul General Ephraim Elron in May 1971 by the Turkish People's Liberation Front (Abadi, 2004: 14). This ill-fated incident culminated in the establishment of military regime in Turkey and dissuaded from normalisation with Israel. Therefore, the period between the mid-1960s and 1970s did not go in favour of Israel-Turkey relationship. The bilateral relations remained cool and intensified the misunderstanding between the two when Turkey continued to support Arab sponsored

UN Resolution in 1975. This was the year when Turkey also recognised Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) as the representative of the Palestinian people.

Amidst the burgeoning condemnation of Israel and its policies towards the Palestinians, Turkey, nevertheless, appreciated Israel's technical expertise and Israel started supplying arms to Turkey. In 1975 Israel sold Turkey its Safrir air-to-air missile, Hetz anti-tank shells, Uzi Sub-machinegun and ammunitions (Beit-Hallahmi, 1987: 16). Nevertheless, Turkey still continued to adopt strong anti-Israel stand towards the end of the 1970s, especially when Israel took the decision to annex East Jerusalem. On 28 August 1980, responding to the Knesset's adoption of a Basic Law declaring that "Jerusalem united in its entirety is the capital of Israel", Ankara announced the closure of its consulate in Jerusalem (Bolukbasi, 1999: 27). Turkey became more supportive of the Arabs and as it desperately needed a source to upgrade its deteriorating economy and the option available to it was the dependence on the Arab oil. Thereafter, the onset of 1980s witnessed successful trade relations with the Arab countries. Saudi Arabia and Libya mostly catered to the needs of Turkey to procure oil. There remained the Israeli-Turkish relationship apart, as a result. One could see that it was also the international events that influence the relationship between them, apart from ideological differences pertaining to the Palestinian cause.

The 1982 Israel-Lebanon conflict once again bridged the intelligence ties between Israel and Turkey. Besides this factor, the rapprochement between them was made easier because of Yaseer Arafat's visit to Cairo in 1983. Two years later, Israel's ambassador, Meir Rossane met Turkish Foreign Minister Vahit Halefoglu in Washington. Impressed by the close chemistry shared between USA and Israel, Turkey took this opportunity in order to obtain US aid. This very episode improved Israel-Turkey relationship. However, the on-and-off relationship was again disturbed by the 1987 Intifada. The low-key nature of relations was least partially vindicated with the outbreak of the Palestinian Uprising (Robins, 2001: 7).

On the other hand, deteriorating relationship between Turkey and Syria also enhanced Israel-Turkey relationship (Altunisik, 2000: 179). It was the fear of Turkey to lose

Iskanderum that had made it improve its relationship with Israel. The end of the 1980s witnessed intensified contacts between the two. Early 1990s was the year of Israel's victory of its diplomatic establishment with various Asian countries including China and India. Then on, Turkey started to discuss openly its desire to normalise ties with Israel. It was towards the end of 1991 (December), when the political climate changed and seemed appropriate, both the countries decided to establish diplomatic relationship. Such a timely move was made so that Turkey could play an active role in the peace process to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict. Israel had made normalization a mandatory for anyone wishing to join the peace process of that period.

Further cooperation had taken place after the normalisation of the ties beginning with an agreement that was signed in June 1992 the Tourism Cooperation Agreement (Bolukbasi, 1999: 31). Frequent visits of officials from both the countries had taken place. In 1993 Turkish Foreign Minister Hikmet Cetin, in 1993 signed a strategic agreement (Abadi, 2004: 26). Another event that furthered the enhancement of their relationship was the visit of Ezer Weizman and Shimon Peres to Turkey in 1994. By the late 1990s, Israel and Turkey reached agreements on cooperation and military relationship was one of the most important on the agenda.

The first Israeli-Turkish agreement on military cooperation was signed on 23 February 1996 in Tel Aviv. It was kept a secret affair and was done under the presence of Turkish's Deputy Chief of the General Staff, Cevik Bir and the leading staff of the Israeli Ministry of Defence led by David Ivry (Minasian, 2003: 311). This landmark agreement had given an opportunity to Israel to further expand its relationship with Turkey. For Israel, arms sales had always played an important role in the furtherance of its foreign policy pursuits and also its national interests. In addition, the agreement provided for joint training of the two countries' air forces, Israeli air force access to Turkish air space for training purposes, reciprocal naval visits and the training of small groups of military personnel in each other's military academies (Bolukbasi, 1999: 32). Though there were intervening hiccups in their relationship, Turkey had proven that its defence needs were high on the national agenda and thus continued to cooperate with Israel. However, the

military agreement made in 1996 was made public only after two months from the day of signing, after it generated criticisms both in Turkey and the entire West Asia. The secretive nature of the agreement drew criticisms from different circles as well.

The second agreement on military cooperation was signed on 26 August 1996 (Altunisik, 2000: 187). The agreement was made for technology transfer and training of technicians and researchers. Another aspect of the cooperation between them was in the field of joint naval operation including the U.S. Such exercise was a proof of the deepening strategic cooperation between Israel and Turkey. Both the countries also agreed whereby they had decided to cooperate on the supply of US hardware and technical knowledge via Israel. The arms transactions between Israel and Turkey had soared at a rapid pace. Some of the figures of their arms transactions would indicate the level of their military relations and the kinds of weapons supplied by Israel to Turkey. On 28 August 1996 General David Ivry of the Israeli Ministry of Defence visited Ankara to endorse the contract totalling over US\$600 million to upgrade 54-Turkish Phantom jets (Minasian, 2003:312). The visit established the structure of military cooperation between the two state-owned aviation facilities. Turkey also agreed to buy Israeli Popeye 1 and Popeye 2 air-to-surface missiles and also to produce the Popeye 2 under license in Turkey (Bolukbasi, 1999: 32). Israel in February 1997, won a US\$75 million contract for upgrading 48 F5 fighter jets. The visit by Israeli Chief of Staff General Amnon Lipkin Shahek to Turkey in October 1997 was another important event related to the procurement of arms. During the visit Israel improved its positioning of the Merkava-3- tank as the solution to Turkey's aim to acquire 800 main battle tanks at an expected cost of US\$ 4.5 billion approximately (Robins, 2001: 23). There were also considerations to manufacture in Turkey, the Israeli surface-to-surface Delilah missile with a range of 500 kms (Bolukbasi, 1999: 32).

Israel-Turkey military relationship achieved its heights in 1998 when naval manoeuvres were held off Israel's Mediterranean coast with the participation of Israeli, Turkish and American naval vessels. This joint operation was called Reliant Mermaid (Altunisik, 2000: 187). In 1998 both the countries went ahead with a joint manufacture programme in Turkey of drones. The project was expected to cost about US\$ 750 million. Another

agreement was endorsed in June 1999 by Israeli company RAPHAEL and the Turkish firms NIKES and ROKETSAN. The deal was to produce hundred 150 km air-to-surface long range guided missiles POPEYE 2 for the F-16 and F-14 jets. In March-June 2000, Israeli Military Industry and Turkish Defence Ministry agreed to upgrade 160 M-60 tanks with the budget of US\$170 million and decided to extend the agreement for the upgradation of more 600 similar tanks by 2003. However, it was known that the latter part of the decision was changed due to the intense pressure from the United States in 2001 (Minasian, 2003: 315).

There were many arms transactions between the two in the period between early and mid-2000. Some of these items included Ka-50/52 helicopter in July 2001 with a cost of US\$4.5 million. Turkey also procured reconnaissance satellites Ofeq-3 from Israel for US\$274 million in August 2001 which was followed by a programme in 2002 to modernise the Turkish tanks M-60A1 involving US\$688 million. Israel also presented Turkey with an airborne early warning and control aircraft. The nature and extent of their military relations which was supported by Israel's arms sales signified the importance of such instrument in promoting Israel's global reach out for diplomacy.

Through out the entire episode, the bilateral relations between the two remained firm and cooperation never receded. But the diplomacy was a real low-profile one. A genuine force that sustained the relationship was the commonality Turkey had with Israel than with the other Arab states. It was also the opening of the dialogue between the Israeli and Palestinian that moved both the countries closer. As years passed by, Turkish's defence needs were high on national agenda and continued to cooperate with Israel. The diplomacy began on a low-key affair with all the odds, particularly Turkey being a Muslim dominated country. A major credit went to Israel's superiority in its military-related technological edge and its readiness to supply weapons to any regime without any political strings attached. Eventually, the Israeli-Turkish relationship took a significant turn with abundant strategic connotations. In short, it was the maturity level reached by both the countries in understanding the priorities of their foreign policy goals that sustained their relationship despite all the hurdles. Their military-security dimension

enhanced after their normalisation. Therefore, Israeli arms sales played an instrumental role for the continuation of their bilateral relations.

South Africa

South Africa's military strategy has been developed with the help of Israeli officers, her armed forces are equipped by Israel, and their counterinsurgency tactics have evolved almost entirely as a result of the lessons learned by the Israelis in their fight against the Palestine Liberation organisation (Joseph, 1988: 43).

Israel's arms diplomacy had also seen success with its alliance with South Africa. The relationship between the two was a meaningful yet a guarded one. South Africa was amongst the many that recognized the establishment of the Jewish state of Israel in 1948. De jure recognition took place on 14 May 1948. Historically, South Africa supported the Zionist movement in Palestine both before 1948 and after 1948; the relations became more formal and tangible. Israel established a Consulate-General in Pretoria in 1949 and the first publicly recorded visit by an Israeli leader to South Africa was that of Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett in 1950. However, the relationship between the two did not undergo a smooth pace when Israel voted against South Africa in the UN on 6 November 1962 over apartheid (Beit-Hallahmi, 1987: 110).

Israel mounted an active campaign of aid to Africa during the late 1950s and early 1960s, mainly in agriculture, joint commercial ventures, and military assistance. Of the three, military and quasi-military programmes made the most of considerable mark in Africa. They were also an important part of Israel's overall foreign policy to gain political influence through military aid, and thus help to overcome her isolation in West Asia (Jacob, 1971: 165). A genuine motive for this military aid by Israel to Africa is to obtain internal political influence through a continuous and close involvement and military aid was one where Israel could exhibit its excellence. Abel Jacob identified two major reasons for this. One is to gain political influence within the recipient countries;

and the other is concerned with international rivalries between the donor powers (Jacob, 1971: 169).

Another reason why Israel provided military assistance to Africa was to curtail the relationship between the African states and Egypt as the latter began to rise under the leadership of Gamal Abdal Nasser. Israel wanted to export arms to South Africa and other countries with defence-oriented right wing government as its immediate objectives were to earn needed foreign exchange and to recover part of the substantial investment in research and development that modern weapons required (Joseph, 1988: 50). Trade during 1969 showed a rapid increase in their relationship. Israeli exports to South Africa rose from US\$5.7 million to US\$8.2 million (Journal of Palestine Studies, 1973: 177).

The relationship between the two was very symbolic. By early 1971, the relationship started to grow and became stronger. A South African consulate-general was opened in Israel in 1972. Finally, diplomatic missions were officially elevated to ambassadorial level in 1974, when Israel opened an embassy in Pretoria which was followed by the opening of South African embassy in Israel in 1975. Cooperation began to grow between the two. This was more in many areas of military endeavour and Israel was more of vital element. Reporting on military cooperation between Israel and South Africa was strictly forbidden by the military censors. The history of military alliance had been long and rich in joint projects and collaborations and intimate military contacts between the two began when Uzi sub-machineguns were manufactured under license in South Africa and were delivered as early as 1955. Such activities proved the longevity of this arms diplomacy. Gradually, Israel had become South Africa's closest military ally and its source of inspiration and technology (Beit-Hallahmi, 1987: 165).

Most African states broke ties after the October 1973 war and the Israeli government of the time began to take a more benign view of the isolated regime in Pretoria. The relationship changed to such an extent that, in 1976 Israel invited the South African Prime Minister, John Vorster, to make a state visit. This visit laid the ground for a better collaboration which had transformed the Israel-South Africa relations into a leading weapons developer and a force in the international arms trade.

Israel-South Africa trade grew and was largely governed by military ties. According to a report by SIPRI, South Africa accounted for 35 percent of Israeli defence sales before 1980 (Klieman, 1985: 152). Another factor that strengthened Israel-South Africa relations was the arms embargo against South Africa by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 181 of 1963 that called for a halt to all shipment of military equipment to South Africa. Thereafter Israel did not take part in maintaining the 1977 arms embargo against this African country. The Israeli authorities had played their cards very well and this could be substantiated by the following statement. "The Israelis for their part believe that should the United Nations Security Council impose a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa, Israel itself could be next in line; that if the West can be pushed into endorsing one against South Africa, it can equally be pushed into one against Israel. Israel, therefore, would not adhere to an arms embargo against South Africa" (Beit-Hallahmi, 1987: 118).

Initially, France, Britain, the United States and West Germany remained as the major supplier of conventional arms to South Africa and later on, Israel managed to find itself a place in the list of South Africa's secondary arms suppliers. Some of the defence items purchased from Israel included missile boats, Gabriel missiles and small arms. It was also the changes in the Republic's strategic doctrine in the early 1980s that proved to be of an immense opportunity for Israel to supply its arms to this country. Israel's help in the navy and electronic warfare were received by South Africa with great appreciation. Other important reasons that triggered these arms sales were the cancellation of the Simonstown agreement between the Republic and Britain, and the untimely France's termination of a contract to supply combat vessels (Klieman, 1985: 153). This was the time when Israel took no time in assisting the Republic with its military needs. Amidst this relationship, both the officials of South Africa and Israel denied the existence of a military relationship between them.

A couple of reasons also triggered an improved relationship between the two. First was the strong sense of nationhood preserved by both of them which was threatened within a hostile environment. Israel is one country which is geographically small with scant

material assets but possessed a high degree of sophistication in arms technology. This trait of Israel gave an opportunity to enhance its arms supply to South Africa which had vast interior natural resources yet lacked in its defence needs. Secondly, it was the staying power of outcaste states in the face of adversity (Klieman, 1985: 153). It was also the simultaneous arms embargoes faced by both Israel and South Africa that encouraged the development of indigenous arms making capabilities. In short, it was the convergence of capabilities exhibited by both, say contribution of funding and materials by Pretoria and that of scientific know-how and practical experience by Israel that made the relationship based on arms diplomacy an immense success.

Some of the arms sold by Israel to South Africa in the early 1980s included missile boats, Kfir jets, hundreds of Gabriel missiles, howitzers, communications equipments, radar systems and intelligence technology, airplane parts, and ammunitions for tanks, jets and artillery. There were also reports that M-113AI armoured personnel carriers and 106 mm recoilless rifles, both made in the United States were delivered to South Africa via Israel. The technological military exchange provided by Israel enabled South Africa to produce Galil rifle as R-4 under license, and later on became the standard weapon of South African ground forces in the early 1980s. Like any other countries, the military relationship was also extended towards air forces of both the countries.

Amidst these commonalities and success of their arms diplomacy, there was a basic difference in the military needs of Israel and South Africa. It was not just the defence needs but most importantly the question of survival. This difference lied in the fact that South Africa's outside enemies did not pose a threat in any conventional military sense. For them, the clear-and-present danger was that of internal insurrection. But in the case of Israel, their Arab neighbours possessed modern, formidable military machines. It was the technology provided by Israel due to which South Africa started to produce missile boats and naval missiles like Scorpion, yet they were all licensed. The Armaments Corporation of South Africa, a.k.a. Armscor, which provided most of the military needs of South Africa, was established with Israel's inspiration and advice. In 1972 Israel and South

Africa signed an agreement on cooperation in the development of conventional weapons and led to the production of the Merkava main battle tank.

It was not only the supply of military hardware that bridged the relationship between them. One of the most significant parts of the alliance involved training. Several hundreds of South Africans graduated from Israeli military schools. This was made possible by the presence of many Israeli military experts in South Africa who were stationed there to serve as instructors and models for the ground forces. It was also believed that the assistance of Israeli instructors helped South Africa create the elite South African Reconnaissance Commandos. It can be said that the relationship was largely governed by few important elements. They are survival, inspiration and practical guidance in every aspect of their military endeavour.

In naval warfare, the highest state of cooperation was seen when both the countries took up the project to develop nuclear submarines. During the mid-1970s there were frequent visits between the countries. In 1976 South African navy personnel visited Israel for training. Israel came to South African rescue when the country's navy was hard-hit by the French embargo. It was with the help of Israel that light, swift, missile boats were developed in South Africa. Israel's military assistance to South Africa was also seen in the field of air force. This had come more in the form of joint flying exercises, Israeli advice on matters related to air combat, instructions on planning airbases and the maintenance of aircraft. Israel helped the South Africa air force industry by assisting them in providing maintenance and the parts for the helicopters. In 1986 Israel Aircraft Industries delivered two military refuelling planes to South African air force (Beit-Halahmi, 1987, 124).

The biggest secret of the military cooperation between Israel and South Africa was the nuclear weapons. Both the countries refused to sign the 1968 Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, and their nuclear facilities had not been monitored by anyone. This development had come up due to the concerns both the countries had with their own national survival. They shared similar motivations of surviving in a hostile environment. Israel provided expertise and technology for the development of South Africa's nuclear bombs. Here,

Israel was embarrassed enough about its close association with a political movement rooted in racial ideology to keep the military collaboration (McGreal, 2006). Israel and South Africa realized on time that the possession of nuclear weapons would guarantee their existence. It is to be noted that in 1962, Israel received tons of uranium from South Africa to be used in its Dimona nuclear reactor. Cooperation between Israel and South Africa on nuclear weapons was well established. Both the countries called off a test of the weapon in 1977, which was to be carried out in South Africa's Kalahari desert, due to the mounted pressures from the United States, the USSR, France and Britain (Hunter, 1986b: 13). This programme had achieved several technological breakthroughs, particularly in response to the specific challenges posed by the two countries' special problems in using nuclear weapons (Beit-Hallahmi, 1987: 136). Israel delivered Jericho missiles to carry the nuclear warheads. Such cooperation between the two had proved the level of trust and intimacy in their relationship. Nevertheless, officials on both sides denied their existence of a deeper military relationship. Among the most important products of the Israeli electronics industry delivered to South Africa, in 1982, was the Scout Remotely Piloted Vehicles (RPV), a pilotless aircraft crammed with advanced electronic equipment (Joseph, 1988: 49).

In the words of a scholar,

While the government continues to make statements at the United Nations criticising apartheid and South African government, from time to time makes gestures such as the offer to the Organisation of the Africa Union, it has become evident over the past several years, especially since the June 1967 War that the two countries are engaged in a major process of strengthening their links. The role of the South African Jewish community in giving support to Israel is both widely known and not surprisingly, but the links have now passed beyond that stage to direct commercial, diplomatic and probably military collaboration between the two governments (*Journal of Palestine Studies*, 1973: 184).

The success and the depth of their military relations and their arms transactions could be substantiated by the estimated figures. By the mid-1980s, Israel was reported to have

annually earned between US\$400 and US\$500 million from the military equipment and know-how it exported to South Africa.

Indeed the relationship between Israel and South Africa was the marriage of their needs. According to Benjamin M. Joseph, “if the relationship is between governments whose ideologies are or appear to be dissimilar, it is said that politics makes strange bedfellows, unnatural alliances” (Joseph, 1988: 89).

To sum up, the years from pre-statehood to 1956 can be viewed as the period of nascent Israeli- Third World contacts or a period of honeymoon primarily between Israel and Africa. Between 1967 and 1973, relations with the Third World dampened down and ultimately led to divorce between Israel and Africa that was to last from 1973 to the 1980s. Thereafter, their relations were based on practical considerations (Neuberger, 2009: 26).

Within this broad context of arms sales and arms diplomacy, the following chapter examines the historical background to Israel-China relations. It also highlights the factors that hindered the diplomatic establishment between them following the Israeli recognition of the PRC. It also discusses the role of Israel’s arms sales in facilitating diplomatic establishment between the two. However, the main emphasis of the chapter is on the non-relation period that existed between Israel and China before 1992. The relationship during this unofficial period seemed to have been largely governed by military- security dimension.

CHAPTER 3

Israel-China Arms Diplomacy

This chapter examines the historical background of the Israel-China normalisation and the role of the arms diplomacy in facilitating Israel to open a channel of communication with People's Republic of China (PRC). It also highlights the various phases of the relations since the Jewish state recognised the PRC in 1950. The military-security relations that prevailed both before and after normalization are also examined. This chapter begins with a brief introduction describing the emergence of the arms sales as a new form of diplomacy which became an important dimension of world politics. This is followed by an analysis of the earliest phase of Israel-China relations from 1948.

Introduction

The arms sales as a form of diplomacy started to gain significance from the late 1960s and become a crucial dimension of world politics than ever before (Pierre, 1981: 266). Importantly, they have become major strands in international affairs. Arms sales are more than mere economic transactions but have emerged as an important component of foreign policy formulation. There are several factors that contributed to burgeoning arms sales promoting diplomacy in one way or the other.

Firstly, it was the sheer increase in the quantity of the weapons being supplied. The international arms sales doubled during the late 1960s and mid-1970s. The estimated value was US\$9.4 billion in 1969 but rose to US\$20 billion in 1979, and the United States has been the largest supplier during this period (Pierre, 1981: 267).

The second factor was the qualitative upgrading of arms. This is where Israel's arms expertise scored over the others competitors and witnessed a grand success in Latin America, Africa and Asia with PRC joining the list in the 1970s. The military component largely facilitated Israel's global reach for acceptance and eventually culminated in diplomatic relationships. Israel's military relation was the most suitable example for arms diplomacy that even superseded other political incentives.

The third aspect was the qualitative improvement that was seen through the spread of sophisticated weaponry through co-production agreements. The fourth factor really suits Israel's usage of arms to promote its diplomatic establishment with various countries globally. It was the establishment of the indigenous armament industry within the Third World. The primary motive for the creation of these industries is political or security concerns rather than commercial ones. It was also the desire of the nations to reduce their dependency upon outside suppliers to bolster their national security. Israel has sought to augment self-sufficiency because of the perceived unreliability of external suppliers. It can be argued that these trends in the transfers of arms mainly stemmed from broader transformation on the international system. The diffusion of power, political and economic, from the industrialized states to the developing nations largely contributed to the emergence of arms sales as a means of promoting foreign policy. It appeared that arms sales had become a key instrument of diplomacy for the weapons suppliers.

Israel's normalisation of relations with PRC using arms sales as a means of promoting its foreign policy is a good case study. The Israeli-Chinese normalisation in 1992 contained a military component diffused with the political calculations of both the countries. The Sino-Israeli relation until 1992 was rather a "hide-and-seeK" affair (Shichor, 1994). Military component, largely assisted by arms supply, facilitated the diplomatic relationship between Israel and China. A major theme of this chapter is that arms transactions between the two during the non-relation period were finally acknowledged publicly in 1992. The military relations between Israel and China started from the late 1970s onwards after the death of Mao Zedong and the emergence of Deng Xiaoping.

Historical background

When the State of Israel was established in 1948, China's Republican Government under the leadership of Guomindang was fighting a civil war against the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) (Shichor, 1994: 189). It was also the time when the new Chinese leaders showed an interest for diplomatic recognitions and normalised relations with Israel. Simultaneously, Israel was also interested in expanding its diplomatic representation in this part of the globe. The decision to normalise the relationship was thus challenged both

at home and abroad. As a result, Israel became very slow in transforming its act of recognition into diplomatic relations. This was something that in early 1950s Beijing not only wanted but anticipated. When contacts were still going on between the two, the entire world situation changed because of the Korean crisis. This further damaged the relationship between the two.

The most tranquil period of the Sino-Israeli relations was between Israel's recognition of the People's Republic of China on 9 January 1950 and Bandung Conference in April 1954, sponsored by Indonesia, Burma, Ceylon, India and Pakistan (Han, 1993: 64). The main reason behind such tranquillity was due to each side's ignorance about the other. According to David Hacoen, the former head of the Israeli diplomatic mission in erstwhile Burma, "there were probably hardly a dozen people in Israel who knew China and its present regime in 1954" (Han, 1993: 64). At this period of time, Chinese ignorance of Israel was probably even greater. Hacoen's Chinese counterpart in Rangoon in the mid-1950s, a very senior Chinese diplomat and principal early interlocutor with Israel, was most unlikely unaware that Israel and Egypt were then technically at war with one another (Han, 1993: 65). The Sino-Israeli relations during this time were characterized by reciprocal goodwill.

But Israel's intention of establishing diplomatic relations was delayed because of the Korean crisis that erupted suddenly. It was under the extreme pressure from the United States of America that Israel had to denounce China's support of the Korean War, a move that strongly went against the Chinese interests. Such a gesture had clearly showed the influence of the United States on the foreign policy of Israel. The crisis in the Korean peninsula hindered the move for diplomatic establishment. The postponement led to two distinct but related developments. One, Israel had formally and forever buried its policy of non-identification; and two, perceived American displeasure over the establishment of diplomatic relations with China sabotaged any moves towards normalization (Kumaraswamy, 1994: 21). Yet, although in the 1950s both the countries had been basically interested in establishing a diplomatic relation, it took more than forty years to consummate this process (Shichor, 1994:189).

The visit of an Israeli trade delegation to China did not alter the situation. Even as late on 28 March 1955, Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett was concerned about a reciprocal visit than with normalisation. The Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung was an important event for Israel as well as for China. Many Asian countries were confronted with the question of Chinese and Israeli participation (Kumaraswamy, 1994a: 22). The Arab states vehemently opposed Israel because of the Palestinian issue and they campaigned for Israel's isolation.

China's attitude towards Israel as a friendly state quickly came to an end with the Bandung Conference. The exclusion of Israel from this conference can be observed from a couple of angles. In one way it was the harsh treatment of a small state fighting for its existence and Asian identity. And on the other, various developments after the Bandung conference only vindicated and justified Israel's exclusion from the Afro-Asian movement (Kumaraswamy, 1994a: 23). This conference proved detrimental to Israel's endeavours towards China as it had lost the opportunity to formally establish diplomatic ties with the latter. China took advantage of its historic presence at Bandung and the Chinese Premier Chou En-Lai outlined the possible areas of cooperation with the Afro-Asian members. He also emphasised on the need for a peaceful co-existence between the states of varied ideologies. The Chinese support for the Arabs had reached such a level that the Premier himself mentioned about the rights of the Palestinian people. It was the time when China declared its support to the Palestinians and also called for the implementation of the UN Resolutions on Palestine.

Beijing's negative reaction to the Israeli request for normalization signalled China's new calculation. This gave an opportunity to the Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser to forge Arab relations with the People's Republic of China. It should also be remembered that the period between 1950 and 1955 was the period of Mao Zedong's "leaning to one side" foreign policy. It was siding unequivocally with the Soviet Union, one of the first states to recognise Israel. The Soviet ties with Israel and Soviet empathy for the Israeli communist party were probably major factors that prevented China from ruling out

Israel's legitimacy (Han, 1993: 65). Thus, Bandung became a watershed in Chinese foreign policy and its attitude towards West Asia.

After the Bandung episode, the Sino-Israeli relation faced another roadblock. The 1956 Suez Crisis hindered the rapprochement between the two and Israel was termed as expansionist and aggressor. China's hostility to Israel was fiercest during the 1960s and in the first half of the 1970s. The ideological and political differences remained dominant and they blocked any movement towards normalization. It was during this period when Beijing accused Israel of serving the imperialist cause. At the same time, Israel began to consider PRC, with its radical domestic and foreign policy and, particularly its support for the Arabs and the Palestinians, as an enemy (Shichor, 1994: 192). The Israel-China relations were frozen for a long time and era of non-relations began. Neither the 1956 Suez Crisis nor the 1967 Six-Day war saw any discernible improvement in the PRC-Israeli relations. The only visible activity during this decade was the growing PRC support for Arab and the Palestinian causes.

The hope for normalization crashed when China opposed any political settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and strongly supported armed-struggle against Israel. It was one of the ironies that just as China turned towards the rising radical forces of the Arab world, the then Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett announced at the end of 1955 that Israel was willing to establish diplomatic ties with Beijing. It was, of course, too late (Melman and Sinai, 1987: 400). China had begun to perceive Arab countries like Egypt, Iraq and Syria as the progressive states and started to view their conflict with this Jewish state as a part of the global struggle against imperialism.

Consequently, China's attitude towards Israel became extremely hostile from the mid-1960s to the early 1970s. The mutual understanding between China and the Arab countries had reached such a level that a delegation of the newly-formed Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) visited Beijing in early 1965 and was given the permission to open a quasi-diplomatic mission- the first of its kind in a non-Arab country (Shichor, 1994: 191). The Chinese supported the Palestinians not only politically but also believed to have provided with weapons. Under these circumstances, diplomatic relations

with Israel were inconceivable. Meanwhile, Israel and the United States became very close to each other and both of them voted against China's admission to the United Nations.

The initial year of the Sino-Israeli relations was largely governed by Mao Zedong's microscopic vision of the world. There was very less scope to accept Israel's attempt towards normalisation. China's foreign policy and its policy towards West Asia in particular were constrained by the internal upheavals of the Cultural Revolution. This did not change until the late 1970s, when Mao Zedong died, and Deng Xiaoping came to the fore as a strong leader. Only then China started participating in the global politics actively. This was the time when Israel's arms sales began to play a very pivotal role in the furtherance of its foreign policy pursuits. The political incentives of Israel and China did not seem to work in favour of establishing diplomatic relations. Since then, arms sales have become an important instrument of Israeli foreign policy. Because of many countries' traditional support for the Palestinian cause, Israel's attempt to bridge the relationships through political route was always in vain. Under these circumstances Israel began to sell weapons without any political strings attached. It should also be noted that most of the Israeli arms transactions were carried out devoid of any official relations with the recipient country and this case study of China is a suitable example.

Meanwhile in the aftermath of the Bandung Conference, there was an unofficial reconciliation between Israel and ROC that blossomed into military contacts (Goldstein, 1999a: 19). The Israeli-ROC arms transactions were focused on missile technology. By 1975, Israel purchased hundreds of 80-mile-range Lance surface-to-surface missiles from the United States and Israel was believed to be transferring some of the technology to ROC.

According to a report by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the state-owned Israel Aircraft Industries sold to ROC, Gabriel sea-to-sea missiles for approximately US\$180,000,000; Tadiran sold know-how and installed facilities for a battery plant and sold sophisticated communications equipment worth in excess of US\$130,000,000; Elbit and Rafael sold command and control electronics equipment

worth some US\$150,000,000 (Goldstein, 1999a: 19, 20). Israel's diplomatic relations evolved rather slowly, gathering momentum only in the 1970s when its peripheral diplomacy got transformed into a centre stage policy. By this time, Israel had gone closer to ROC.

Israel-China Relations from 1970s onwards

Israel-China relations began to take turn for the better from the early 1970s. It was largely due to far-reaching changes in China's domestic and international situation. The most violent and radical phase of the Cultural Revolution was over and the country was free of its intensive preoccupation with internal affairs and began to devote more attention to international affairs. It was the time when the PRC started to view the Soviet Union as a threat due to the Czech crisis and began to consider the United States a lesser threat than the Soviets. This brought Washington close to Mao Zedong. Such reconciliation led to a considerable expansion of China's diplomatic network. On 6 October 1971 the PRC became a permanent member of UN Security Council at the expense of Republic of China. This time around Israel supported China's admission to the UN. The good-will gesture had reached to such an extent that in 1972 Israel opened a Consulate General in Hong Kong, in anticipation of diplomatic relations with Beijing. More positive relations were witnessed by mid-1970s when common interests emerged between Israel and China, namely, the association with Washington and the containment of Moscow (Shichor, 1994:193).

Amidst this progress in the Sino-Israeli relations, the Jewish state nevertheless, maintained its relation with Taiwan, which had never been formally recognized by Israel. China's policy regarding the Arabs and the Palestinians did not seem to affect its endeavours to normalize relations with Israel. However, with all these improved situation and changes, China persisted in its refusal to establish diplomatic relations with Israel. The point of contention was that without a settlement, including a full restoration of Palestinian rights and a complete Israeli withdrawal from all occupied territories, Beijing insisted that there would be no relations with Israel.

However, the Sino-Israel began to pick up from the late 1970s when China's domestic and foreign policy underwent an overall transformation. There came a reformist leadership who was committed to wholesale modernisation and economic development. Mao Zedong's successor Deng Xiaoping believed that China's main problem of economic backwardness could only be solved by modernisation and development. China adopted its open door policy that suited Israel's interest. Since the late 1970s Beijing had advocated and promoted stability at home as well as abroad. These changes improved the prospects for normalisation between Israel and China. It was at this juncture that the Sino-Israeli relations started to gain momentum though unofficially and indirectly, finally culminating in the establishment of full diplomatic relations in 1992.

This success was largely governed by arms sales adopted by Israel as a means of promoting its foreign policy. This tactic was used by Israel when all the formal or political incentives failed to bear fruits. It was rather a convergence of interest that bridged the relationship between the two after four decades of non-relations. Here, it was Israel's arms supply to China that facilitated the normalization. Due to certain apprehensions in the West, both the countries agreed to keep the military relations under wrap. For strong political reasons, military ties of many states were shrouded in secrecy and more so when it involved Israel (Kumaraswamy, 1995: 236). This secrecy led to mutual admiration, understanding and cooperation and eventually paved the way for the establishment of political relations.

Much of the arms transactions between Israel and China remained secret until 1992. The arms sales began at the time when Israel's defence industries needed economic support to survive and continue research and development. Simultaneously, China's modernization drive and technological quest coalesced with Israel's willingness to provide weapons. As, Moshe Dayan eloquently put it, "small nations do not have foreign policy but defence policy" (Kumaraswamy, 1994a: 10). Such statement signified the importance of Israel's arms sales as an instrument of its foreign policy. As a part of an overall transformation of China's domestic and foreign policy, this had been a belated and indirect result of the death of Mao Zedong in September 1976. China's post-Mao leadership had realized that

modernisation could not and would not be achieved by self reliance. Consequently, Beijing adopted an “open-door” policy that expanded China’s international economic relations.

The military relations between Israel and China happened during the unofficial phase that had begun since the late 1970s, particularly in 1979 when the Sino-Israeli cooperation was concentrated on agriculture, science and technology, industry and defence. The origin of the Sino-Israeli military contacts could be traced back to Premier Chou En-Lai’s proposal in 1975 which called for “four modernisations”- agriculture, industry, science and technology, and national defence (Kumaraswamy, 1994a:41). This was the time when Israel’s global reach for acceptance through its arms sales gained heightened significance. Israel had taken this opportunity to assist China with its defence modernisation drive.

The October 1973 War represented a turning point in the transformation of arms sales diplomacy. From peripheral or secondary position it moved to one of greater centrality (Klieman, 1985: 23). Until then Israeli sales were only restricted towards servicing and repairs and reconvertng older generations of small arms, such as the popular Uzi submachine gun. This dramatic increase in the flow of arms from Israel was due to the erosion of Israel’s international standing, the need to counteract Arab pressure and the oil factor. Above all, renewed urgency in achieving a higher degree of selective self-sufficiency in weapons systems stocks and manufacturing capabilities also enhanced the arms export (Klieman, 1985: 23).

Israel’s arms sales as diplomatic tool took a giant leap during the 1970s when the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) underwent an amazing degree of sophistications in its weapons modernization programmes. By mid-1975, Israel was in a better position in manufacturing aircraft engines, warships, armoured fighting vehicles, etc. International opportunities also provided a chance to merchandise arms, and it was very successful with the clients like Shah of Iran, or to new buyers like South Africa. Some of the factors that attracted the Chinese to the Israeli arms sales are- the upgrading of Israeli army which released large surplus stocks; ability to produce sophisticated weapons systems at

competitive prices; and seemingly limitless demand for weapons and for alternative suppliers (Klieman, 1985: 24). China's attempt to modernise its military largely depended upon Western technology as well as additional foreign exchange earnings. The reluctance of the West to transfer sensitive and dual-use technology to China also limited Beijing's option. Israel's willingness to provide cheap and alternative source of military technology intensified its efforts towards China. While this unconventional route took inconsiderable amount of time, the arms relations between the two were gradually strengthened and consolidated. Indeed it was a marriage between Chinese needs and Israeli skills (Kumaraswamy, 1994a:41).

One could never ignore the role of the Israeli governments in this diplomacy. Figures like former chief of staff Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres who was the then Defence Minister in the Labor Government from 1974-1977 were instrumental in formulating or stimulating the defence-related programmes. Irrespective of ideological orientation, Israeli governments shared a set of goals or objectives in confronting the real world and their foreign policy objectives remain constant:

- To repeal hostile attacks and guarantee defence of the state
- Ingathering of the Jews
- To secure Israel's place in a hospitable environment, or to alter that environment from a condition of enmity to one of amity.
- To offset the country's immediate isolation by setting up a worldwide network of mutually beneficial cultural, commercial and diplomatic ties (Klieman, 1985: 35).

The above mentioned factors, to a great extent, triggered the military relations between Israel and China. Israel was extremely reluctant to discuss the military aspect of the relations and even the non-military relations were kept under wraps. As Defence Minister, Yitzhak Rabin once said, "We don't talk about any arms deals with countries that prefer not to agree to that...When it comes to China, well, of course, I deny it" (Kumaraswamy, 1994a:41).

Arms sales have become an important political instrument for the furtherance of foreign policy interests. In the case of China, arms sales had not only preceded formal relations but even facilitated politico-diplomatic relations. Israel's arms diplomacy with China was prominent between late 1970s and 1980s. It was the time when the arms sales was at its peak but no data or concrete reports were available as both sides maintained a high level of secrecy. The secret relationship between China and Israel, especially between 1980 and 1989 was one of the longest China's diplomatic histories.

As mentioned earlier, it was also the period when Israel's arms export to any country willing to accept its weapons found its highest significance. Main reasons for the Chinese interest in Israeli arms were the latter's military technology, slow and restrictive response to its technological needs from the West and because of low cost of cooperation with Israel. The clandestine nature of the arms transactions was also due to Israel's concerns.

However, the secrecy most likely worked to Israel's disadvantage, as Israel was unable to benefit immediately from the relationship politically, its primary main aim in pursuing the relationship in the first place (Han, 1993:72). A possible hint for a forthcoming diplomatic relationship was however sensed by Israel when it gained access to China's military-industrial establishment. But such vague hints could not be verified due to lack of Israel's access to Chinese political leaders during that period. This particular decade remained in China's term quite unofficial and excluded. Both the countries tried to camouflage the exchanges between them, not only the defence-related contacts but also the academic or tourist exchanges as well. As a result, Israeli military sales to China were in utter confusion and remained to be mysterious for almost a decade. In this particular case, it was the political activity substantiated significantly by military incentives.

The unofficial military relationship between Israel and China was unveiled on 16 April 1979 when Ze'ev Schiff, a renowned military correspondent of the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* highlighted the glimpse of the hitherto clandestine relations between the PRC and Israel (Melman and Sinai, 1987: 396). It was his report on the exchange between Israeli and Chinese officials in Beijing that exposed the under-wrapped burgeoning military relations between the two. The chief organizer and middleman between the two countries was

Shaul Eizenberg, an eminent international business personality. It was on the order of the then Israeli Defence Minister Ezer Weizman, that the Israeli newspapers were urged not to follow up any more stories about the whole issue. There were no explicit reactions from the Chinese officials but it was believed that they expressed their displeasures with such leaks that could have damaged the future ties. Since then a wave of rumours and reports had proliferated in the international media regarding the hidden military, trade, agricultural, tourist, scientific and industrial links between Israel and China despite the absence of diplomatic relations.

Despite its rigid ideological posture, the PRC realized the importance of Israel and nurtured its relationship. Few important traits where Israel could be of immense help to the PRC included advanced technological projects, security and defence expertise and products, agricultural assistance, etc. Such a remarkable transformation was made possible because of the change in the leadership in the mid-1970s, especially with the death of Mao Zedong, and the rise to power of Deng Xiaoping. The secrecy was maintained by both to promote their national interests, especially in the absence of any political cooperation or understanding between them.

National interests, whether economic, military or strategic, are stronger than ideology (Melman and Sinai, 1987: 396). This applied to both Israel and China where pragmatic considerations are more relevant than one tends to think. The timing seemed very favourable to China as it was seeking to vitalize its economy and also update its army and antiquated arsenal. Israel, on the other hand, was ready to share its technological advancement with China, and military field caught the Chinese attention. Israel had already fought several wars with the Arabs. It was the knowledge acquired by Israel about Soviet weaponry that gave its defence industries an edge over others. China had certain political and ideological rift during this period and sought new alliances. Thereafter China established ties with the US in 1972, and both countries sought to limit the Soviet influence, especially in West Asia. Israel's pro-American and anti-Soviet stand pulled China to its side. This led to the enthusiasm of Israel to establish diplomatic contacts with China.

The seed for a better Israeli-Chinese relation was thus shown in 1974. It was rather an on-and-off relation between the two. This had happened particularly since China had its traditional support policy for the Arabs. Therefore, both the countries settled for the secretive relationship to avoid any public criticism. The spark point that started the military relationship between the two was the June 1975 Paris Air Show where Israeli pavilion impressed the Chinese officials. It was the display of the Kfir jet fighter that had been the cynosure of Chinese attention. Another event that promoted this clandestine military ties was the exhibition that took place in 1978 in Switzerland. It was Shaul Eizenberg who played an international role in bringing these two countries together. An important and very timely incident that bridged the relationship between the two, especially from military perspectives, was the border war between the PRC and Vietnam in 1979. China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) was in an extreme state of crisis due to its inability to defeat the Vietnamese forces effectively. The PRC needed military and technological assistance, preferably from suppliers with experience in Soviet-made arms. Ironically, Israel was one of the few countries which were able to meet the PRC's urgent needs. Well acquainted with Soviet-made arms captured during the wars fought with the Arab states, the Israeli military industry had incorporated and upgraded the outmoded Soviet armaments.

The above incidents were followed by delegation to Beijing in 1979 and military manufacturing was the main priority of the visit. Officials from Israel Aircraft Industries (IAI), Tadiran (electronics and communications manufacturers) and Israel Military Industries (IMI) went to Beijing. Since then military contacts between Israel and China started in full swing. This had given an opportunity to China to examine Israeli weapons first-hand, especially those modified Soviet weapons captured from the Arabs. Some of the defence items sold by Israel to China at this time included electronic fire control systems for Soviet-made T-69 and T-72 tanks, night-sight scopes for tanks and naval equipment, 105-mm cannons for Soviet tanks, and communications and radio systems (Melman and Sinai, 1987: 404). China's military predicament and needs in the late 1970s and early 1980s helped China overcome the traditional obstacle the Chinese Foreign

Ministry had erected in the mid-1950s (Shai, 2009: 24). This had started the beginning of the path towards diplomatic relations.

In many ways, Israel's military transfers, especially to China, helped the Jewish state cope up with the economic crisis affecting Israel's defence industrial complex. These military transfers had promoted both political and strategic relations between Israel and China. The opening of the Chinese arms market seemed to offer compensation for the simultaneous loss of some of Israel's most profitable arms market: Iran, whose new revolutionary leaders cut off all relations with Israel in 1979; NATO's West European members, who drastically cut their military organizations following the collapse of the Soviet bloc in 1991; and South Africa, whose post-apartheid government has chosen to dissociate itself from Israel, primarily in military matters (Shichor, 1998: 68). Besides the efforts taken by Israel and China, it was also the contemporary international events that forged this military relationship.

As a result, an opening of this very potential Chinese defence market embracing Israeli technology could not have come at another favourable moment. Domestically, for Israel, its military industrial complex underwent an unprecedented economic crisis leading not only to large scale unemployment but also to a loss of income for defence research and development.

The difficulty in explaining the diplomatic component of such arms sales was due to the reluctance of governments of both the countries to disclose details of their arms transactions. Israel was very secretive of its military dealings with China because the latter had already become its unofficial client long before official relations were established. The military relations between the two began to gain momentum when China was still a staunch supporter of the Arabs and the Palestinians. Israel at the same time did not want to go public with its arms transactions with China. In order to substantiate the clandestine military relations between Israel and China, one can look at the unconfirmed reports of Israel's arms transfers to China given below (Shichor, 1998: 70).

1. Israel's alleged cooperation with China on improving its 9,000 battle tanks by supplying L7 105 mm smooth-bore guns with thermal fume-extraction sleeves and matching shells, fire-control systems, night vision equipment, range-finders, stabilizers, and reactive armour protective devices.
2. Designing or redesigning missile technologies for China's DF-3 (CSS2) intermediate range ballistic missiles (IRBM), the DF-15 (also known as M-9) short-range ballistic missiles (SRBM), as well as the PL-8H surface-to-air missiles; PL-9 air-to-air missile, and a variety of other missiles including anti-tanks guided missiles based on the Israel's Mapatz.
3. Upgrading China's outdated MiG-derived fighters and designing new ones primarily the J-10, based on the technology developed for the aborted Israeli Lavi project.
4. A variety of other projects such as electronic warfare, intelligence and surveillance measures, airborne-refuelling technology, early warning and control systems and radar technology for China's submarines.

Circumstantial evidences had shown the extent of the military transfers from Israel to China. Such transfers of technology later on brought a fall out on the Sino-Israeli relationship following normalisation, largely because of the American influence on Israel's arms export policy.

Amidst Israel and China military relations, both the countries faced certain advantages and disadvantages. No other country had the knowledge and experience in fighting Soviet weapons, or in upgrading and integrating into its own arsenal. In addition to this edge, Israel had acquired some of the best-advanced weapons systems and also developed its own. This had given some leverage to the Chinese as many countries restricted transferring military technology to communist countries. It was also the willingness of Israel to sell technology rather than any ready-made weapons that enticed China.

For China, there was a main disadvantage with such arms sales diplomacy. If this diplomacy based on arms sales become public, then China's relations with the Arabs and the Palestinians would be hard-hit, and therefore, secrecy was maintained. Towards the

late 1980s, the Israeli arms sales to China got lessened due to the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the emergence of Russia as one of the major arms supplier to China.

Politically speaking, such arms diplomacy became successful for a very short but intense period of time due to the support from both the governments. A number of Israeli ministries and organizations with varied and contradictory interest were involved in Israel's military export policy. At that point of time, expanding economic relation with China was one of the top most priorities. Additionally, the role played by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs substantiated the military relations. For various political and ideological reason mentioned earlier, their contribution to such diplomacy remained at a low profile. Sinologist like Yitzhak Shichor argued that while the Ministry of Defence seemed fully aware of the political and moral implications of arms transactions, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also recognized their contribution to launching, expanding and consolidating diplomatic relations. He was of the view that the Sino-Israeli diplomatic relations was substantially paved by the Ministry of Defence and its military transfers to China. The Ministry had encouraged the Israeli defence-industrial complex to increase exports so as to curb its rising economic burden and to support the funds for research and development (Shichor, 1998: 78).

It was a political card played by Israel by exporting arms to China so that the latter cease its military relations with the potential enemy, the Islamic Republic of Iran. With this, Israel's global reach for acceptance of its existence started to gain significance. Hence the arms sales as an important instrument in the furtherance of its foreign policy pursuits. The national consensus in Israel supported foreign military assistance and defence sales (Klieman, 1985: 27). The Israelis had already realized that the exports of weapons, be it for the present or the future, was going to be a very unique multipurpose instrument in pursuit of fundamental national interests. This was testified by the eventual the Sino-Israeli normalization in 1992.

The military rationale for transferring Israeli weapons in effect served as the intermediate link between political and foreign policy incentives on the one hand, and economic motives, on the other (Klieman, 1985: 30). It became a close interplay between the

necessity for China to upgrade its military arsenal and opportunity for Israel to expand its foreign policy objectives vis-a-vis China.

The importance of Israel's arms supply had been already figured out in its foreign policy when, in 1961, Shimon Peres made the argument for a military aid policy to the countries of Africa and Asia. A similar argument was made by Ariel Sharon, who in the 1980s connected military assistance and arms sales as supporting Israeli foreign policy objectives towards countries like Zaire. It was also the ability of Israel to sell its arms abroad that its military influence goes well beyond its diplomatic influence. With Israel's isolation from the international community since 1948, the sale of arms and technology was one of the few effective methods or tools deployed to further its goals abroad. This was seen successful widely in numerous Latin American countries. On top of the animosity with many countries, the 1967 and 1973 wars crucially affected the Israel's diplomatic influence. Arms sales as a diplomatic tool began to gain significance as other political measures had failed. The 1970s was the period when arms transfers found a pivotal space in Israeli foreign policy. It was also the time when the country's economic strength, political image and diplomacy waned. Indeed, so salient was the weapons transfers programme in the mid-1980s that it had come to constitute one of the principal factors determining Israel's reach abroad (Klieman, 1985: 229).

Defence had become an important aspect of Israeli foreign policy as all the political mechanisms had failed. It was the necessity of surviving in an inhospitable external environment precluding fully formalised relations, and the pressures of essential national policy goals that had forced Israel to become one of the foremost practitioners of quiet diplomacy (Klieman, 1984: 40). This aspect of Israeli foreign policy very well suited the relation with China. It could be also due to the fact that the other had refused to discuss the prospects and issues of any mutual cooperation directly with Israel. Israel's arms diplomacy with China was very evident before the normalisation in 1992. So extensive and diverse were these unofficial exchanges that open formal ties were only the tip of the diplomatic iceberg (Klieman, 1984: 40).

As a result, Israel's 'statecraft in the dark' was indeed the bright side of its foreign relations (Klieman, 1988: 40). It was this, to a large extent, which made possible the establishment of diplomatic relations as it was willing to keep aside pride and diplomatic protocol, and added respectability to backdoor or quiet diplomacy.

Because of this quiet practice, precise information about Israel's arms transfer to China could not be obtained. Both the countries, as mentioned earlier, concealed the true dimension of their military relations. It had become very difficult to quantify the military transfers too. However, there were estimated values of the Sino-Israeli military agreement. As early as 1984, the estimated value stood at US\$3 billion. By the starting of 1990, the approximate figure remained at US\$5-6 billion. A 1992 RAND Corporation reported Israel's military transfers to China at US\$1-3 billion (Shichor, 2000). The approximate value that was estimated between 1984 and 1997 reached up to US\$ 7.8 billion, an exorbitant amount. After going through these figures, one can come to a point that the most important military agreement with China had indeed been signed in the early 1980s. But this graph witnessed a decline in the early 1990, just before the normalisation.

Towards the Normalisation

The relationship between Israel and China reached a new dimension and significance after the ill-fated 1989 Tiananmen Square incident. It was the time when China received international condemnation for the aggressive methods deployed by the Chinese army against a group of unarmed protesting students. The most hard-hit effect of the aftermath was the imposition of arms embargo against the PRC by the Western countries, especially the United States of America. This particular incident gave an opportunity to Israel to cater to China's need for a partner in its arms import. The incident had led to the convergence of interests between the two countries. It had brightened the chances for normalisation. Thus, the Chinese crackdown of 1989 became an important landmark in Israel's China odyssey. The political, economic and military sanctions that were imposed on China created new opportunities for Israel and eliminated much of the competition, particularly in the sphere of arms trade. China wanted to break its isolation, very much

similar to Israel, and further expand its diplomatic network. As a result, the Sino-Israeli relations were thus given a boost (Shichor, 1994: 201).

By the early 1990s, international politics took a new dimension that enhanced the diplomatic manoeuvre of Israel towards China. This had come along with the disintegration of the Soviet Union. It can also be argued that normalisation of relations with Israel can be a great window of opportunity for China or rather an asset to be utilised as a channel to the United States. The influence of the third party, namely, the United States on the Sino-Israeli relations will be discussed in the following chapter. The Sino-Israeli military relation was not perceived in good spirit by the American administration in the early 1990s. This had become a major concern for the United States keeping in mind its strategic considerations in Asia-Pacific region. Such an American influence on Israeli foreign policy was seen since the Korean War when Israel was pressurised not to side with the Chinese against the Koreans. Therefore, due to lack of political affinity and more genuinely because of the American influence, Israel's initial approach to the Sino-Israeli relations was distinguished by indecisiveness. Owing to the changing scenario in world politics, these differences have gradually begun to fade away and gave a way towards the much anticipated diplomatic establishment in 1992.

Amidst all the doubts and uncertainties regarding the unofficial military relations between the two, there were few important events that seemed to promote the process for normalisation. This again pertained to the transformed scenario after 1989. A Chinese trading centre was opened in 1989 in Israel and there were delegates visiting the Jewish state. Consequently, China too allowed visits of Israeli representatives for the establishment of an academic centre. The Chinese were now as close to relations with Israel as ever. This semi-official relation between the two also sowed the seed for normalisation in 1992. Then, the Israeli Academic Centre was officially inaugurated in Beijing in June 1990 (Shichor, 1994: 202). It was the unofficial military-security dimension of the Sino-Israeli relations that helped both the countries reach up to such cooperation and understanding.

China's normalisation with Israel would also give an important role to play in the West Asian peace process. This always had a price tag as Israel had insisted on normalisation as a precondition for any country to enter the peace process (Kumaraswamy, 1994a: 81-82). Such a move can be well substantiated by a meeting between the foreign ministers of Israel and China, David Levy and Qian Qichen respectively. It was obvious that the establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and China could only be possible with the development of the peace process that was taking place in West Asia. China took no chance to miss this opportunity and thus strengthened the relationship further.

Though Israel's arms supply to the PRC had been the predominant factor for normalisation, there are other events that supported the cause. Various regional as well as international happenings largely diverted China's attention towards Israel. This was widely prevalent in the late 1980s. China no longer adhered to its staunch stand for the Palestinian causes or traditional support for the Arabs. One of the many reasons was the burgeoning splits among the Arabs and the Palestinians. The restraint showed by Israel during the Kuwait crisis gained Chinese support for Israel. Had Israel retaliated, the war would have been complicated, expanded and extended, thus leading to disastrous consequences and to further stability thereby undermining China's interest (Shichor, 1994: 203).

In early 1990s Deng Xiaoping said that Israel should be recognised as it had always supported the 'one China policy' and most importantly China's legitimate rights at the UN. The incentive for diplomatic establishment between Israel and China came from a combination of international and regional developments (Shichor, 1994: 203). By establishing this diplomatic relation with Israel, China had ended its forced isolation since the Tiananmen incident and opened itself the way for greater involvement in West Asian affairs.

The preparations made for Madrid Conference in 1991 also had an important impact upon the normalization of ties between Israel and China. Since the 1980s China expressed its willingness to be a part of the peace process. A very important way of getting involved in the West Asian affairs could be by establishing diplomatic relations

with Israel. Finally, on 24 January 1991 David Levy and Qian Qichen signed the joint communiqué in Beijing that led to the establishment of diplomatic relations. Normalisation of diplomatic ties with Israel had given an opportunity to China to reposition itself in the West Asian affairs (Kumaraswamy, 2005b: 3). It is rather an interesting aspect to note that by the time diplomatic ties were established, the two countries had reached a level of mutual understanding. Both the countries had laid the organisational infrastructure, created networks of personal contacts, gathered good deal of information and experience about one another's political systems and norms of behaviour (Shichor, 1994: 204). The unofficial contacts that lasted between late 1970s and 1980s have made these developments possible.

Finally, one can say that Israel's China policy was one of the most successful endeavours. The relationship between the two was characterised by unofficial economic, military and scientific exchanges, and thus helped gradually evolve into political discussions and eventually to official diplomatic relations. It was the period between 1989 and 1991 that saw significant strides forward in the Sino-Israeli relations.

To sum up this, the collapse of the Soviet Union, China's push for modernisation drive and its growing belief in Israel's ability to further this objective, the belief in the myth of the American Jewish lobby, strained relations with the Palestinians and the 1991 Gulf War, when Israel was attacked by Iraqi scud missiles and refrain from retaliation, all combined to serve as a catalyst for the normalisation of ties between the two countries (Shai, 2009: 24).

Israel's arms sales to China and how it became an important instrument in establishing diplomatic relations was one of the most successful dimensions of Israel's foreign policy. Through careful planning and operation, Israel has successfully employed this arms diplomacy tactic to establish new relations, strengthen existing ties, and renew the old ones (Kumaraswamy, 1994b: 37). Right after normalisation, Israel and China had coordinated several high-level visits. For example, Chinese foreign Minister Qian Qechin visited Israel in late 1992 and China saw three visits by Israeli presidents, namely, Chaim Hertzog in 1992, Ezer Weizman in 1999 and Motshe Katsav in 2003. There were Israeli

Prime Ministers like Yitzhak Rabin and Benjamin Netanyahu who visited Beijing in 1993 and 1998 respectively; and Chinese President Jiang Zemin visited Israel in 2000 (Kumaraswamy, 2005b: 4).

During these visits, Israel and China had agreed to build their ties more firmly in various fields such as business, politics, education and culture, agricultural and economic cooperation. However, the normalisation did not curb any criticisms or disappointments from both the sides. Chinese complained that large volume of agreements signed by Israel was left unimplemented. On the other hand, establishment of diplomatic relations did not transform China's stand on traditional support for Israel's enemies. They were still committed to the Arabs and the Palestinians. One of the activities that made Israel uncomfortable was China's continued supply to Arab countries with conventional arms, weapons of mass destruction, delivery systems, etc. The attempts made by Israel to discourage such transfers of arms remained futile because the Chinese need the income from arms sales to boost their defence modernisation programme. In short, Israel's early relations with China were established by the Israel Defence Ministry but developed by the Foreign Ministry (Kumaraswamy, 2005b: 5). In other words of one, " the depth of Israel –China relations attests not only the dynamism of Israeli diplomacy but these ties also offers a better-rounded image of Israel independent of the Arab-Israeli conflict"(Kumaraswamy, 2005b: 6).

Israel's journey towards political establishment with China was a long and protracted one. This was made successful by the dependence of both the countries upon the military sector to promote their political agenda. After both the countries failed to discover the diplomatic ties since 1950, Israel and China based their initial relations on military needs. However, the military component which played a crucial role before normalisation was conspicuous by its absence after 1992. This is examined within the context of third party interference, namely the US.

CHAPTER 4

Implications of the Israeli-Chinese Arms Trade

The normalisation of ties between Israel and China in 1992 through military route was the latest instance of using arms sales to promote its foreign policy. Israel's ability to upgrade and modernise former Soviet weapons had immensely facilitated China's drive for military modernisation (Kumaraswamy, 1994b: 1).

The military-security dimension of the Israel-China relationship that started in the late 1970s largely guided the normalisation of ties in January 1992. Israel exploited the opportunities presented by China and adopted military sales to further its foreign policy interests vis-à-vis China. Both countries worked in tandem to overcome their deficiencies without making significant political concessions to one another. At least in the public domain, both countries sought to highlight mutual political differences while seeking closer military relations. But the Sino-Israeli military relations took altogether a different turn after 1992.

This chapter examines the implications of Israel-China military relations in the wake of the establishment of diplomatic ties which witnessed growing third-party interference in the form of the U.S. It examines the influence of the US on Israeli arms export policy, especially with regard to China. The US who once supported Israel's arms supply to China before the demise of the USSR started to perceive this cooperation as a potential threat to its interest in the Asia-Pacific region, after the Cold War. During the 1980s, when China and the US shared common strategic objectives towards the Soviet Union, it was the U.S. policy to transfer categories of military systems and defence items (both civilian and military applications) to China (Clarke and Johnston, 1999:193).

However, the Tiananmen crackdown in 1989 and the consequent sanctions against the People's Republic of China (PRC) changed the scenario. Most of the controversies regarding Israel's arms supply to China stemmed from allegations pertaining to retransfer of military items containing American technology. For example, controversies over

Phalcon, Patriot and Harpy Drone rocked the hard-earned normalisation of ties between Israel and China. Another important theme is the implication on the strategic balance in Asia-Pacific region due to Israel's arms supply to China and how the US viewed such relationship.

The U.S. Factor

The military component that played a crucial role before normalisation of ties was conspicuously absent after 1992. It has been known that the American influence on Israeli foreign policy prevented Israel from supporting China during the Korean War. This was one such event that delayed the diplomatic establishment between China and Israel. The American concerns over Israel-China military relations became very explicit when it pressurised the Jewish state to halt any transfers of military hardware to China as the latter no longer remained a strategic partner for the US after the collapse of the USSR and the end of the Cold War. This leverage enjoyed by the US over Israel did not enhance the military relations between Israel and China. In a way, Israel's helplessness due to the American pressure reduced its credibility as a potential arms exporter, not only to China but also to many other countries. This entire process of US influence on Israel was taking place when China was beginning to rise economically and militarily as a nation. Scholars like Duncan Clarke and Robert Johnston argued, "whether real growth in China's economy and defence budget is modest or substantial- and wholly apart from the 'engagement Vs containment' debate over U.S. China policy, China posed potential security threats to the U.S. interests" (Clarke and Johnston, 1999:194).

The establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and China in January 1992 did not further the military relations to a significant level as many had expected. Israel's alleged re-transfers of American missile technology to the PRC was one of the most serious reasons behind the fallout of relations involving Israel, China and the US. This was a matter of grave concern as Israel's military sales to China had acquired a diplomatic dimension. The military sales were not a mere commercial transaction involving military equipment. It is important to keep in mind that the most serious

constraint in Israel's foreign policy was the fear of antagonising Washington (Abadi, 2004: 87).

Right from the beginning, the US had warned Israel not to establish contact with hostile States. Hostile states chiefly meant those countries which could be a potential threat to the American interests globally. Though China was never a threat, the post-Cold War phenomenon changed the American perception of the former. The evidence of the US wielding its influence on Israel was the cancellation of the talks between Israel and North Korea in 1993. The abrupt end to the negotiations between Israel and Cuba also adds as evidence. The deepening military collaboration between Israel-China that eventually led to the establishment increased US interference on Israel's arms sales policies. The US kept a close watch on every contact between Israeli and Chinese officials, especially with regard to the defence-related dealings.

Simultaneously, the US had constantly voiced its objection to the transfers of US military technology to third parties. It had raised such concerns before the Sino-Israeli normalization but it was only after 1992 that the US explicitly pressurised Israel to stop supplying any military-related technology to China. Both China and Israel denied the arms contacts but by the early 1990 it became very difficult. In an interview with Cable News Network on 14 March 1992, the then Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Arens admitted that it sold military technology to China. This was the first occasion a senior Israeli official had confirmed military dealings with China (Abadi, 2004: 88).

Ironically, despite the Defence Minister admitting the arms sale to China, the Israelis continued to deny the veracity of the report. During the mid-1990s, Director General of the IDF David Ivri admitted Israel's supply of aircraft technology to China. Amidst this, the estimated value of sophisticated technology sold to China between 1992 and 1995 was more than US\$ 1.5 billion. At the same time, the Sino-Israeli relations intensified during this period and cooperation between the two countries increased despite Washington's disapproval.

The worst nightmare of the Sino-Israeli relations came in the late 1990s. The Israeli government found itself in a serious quandary when the Chinese president Jiang Zemin visited Israel in 2000. The Israeli defence authorities signed a contract to sell US\$ 250 million worth of early warning systems. The deal also included radar-equipped planes that could conduct surveillance over Taiwan. Eventually Israel, succumbed to the pressures from the US. First Israeli ambassador to the PRC, Zev Suffot, said, "Israel's priority in international interest is relationship with the US, and not China, so if the pressure is powerful and strong enough, I think we'll have to give up on this" (Abadi, 2004: 90). Such statement signified the space the US had occupied in Israel's foreign policy. Under such pressure, the Israeli authority did not even sell the first surveillance plane that they had agreed. Many Americans considered that the sale of one such item would provide China with a technological superiority that could harm US security. Therefore, the American interference was mainly to oversee its strategic interest in Asia-Pacific region, particularly the presence of a large number of US troops in the region (Shichor, 2000).

As discussed earlier, Israel started its arms sales diplomacy to enhance its national interests and to further its foreign policy objectives. For this purpose, it was ready to supply weapons to any country irrespective of the nature of regime. The military relation between Sino-Israeli was not just a commercial transaction. Besides economic gains, Israel had also hoped that its sales of military technology would secure China's agreement not to sell advanced weapons to Israel's enemies in the region (Shai, 2009: 26). China, on the other hand, having already bound to support the Arabs, could not just halt such transfers of military hardware to those countries. This attitude of China not only angered the US but also displeased Israel.

The relationship between Israel and China placed a strain on American-Israeli relations too. There could be another reason to the American anxiety. The US was concerned that Israel's advanced radar could assist in China's espionage on Taiwan and this could threaten the sovereignty of Taiwan. It was because of such interpretation of the military-security relations between Israel and China that the Phalcon deal had to be cancelled. The

military-security aspect of the Sino-Israeli bilateral relations plumped to a low though relations in other aspects had improved after 1992. The Israeli arms sales that happened to be an important instrument of its foreign policy no longer held any significance after the establishment of diplomatic relations.

With the more powerful role of the US, the relations became a triangular affair. One could see no upsurge in the military affairs between Israel and China. This influence of the US became apparent just weeks after normalisation in 1992. The US government had expressed its concern over the transfer of even native Israeli and derivative American technology to the PRC, a concern publicised with regard to the Patriot Air and Missile Defence system, the Lavi jet fighter, Phalcon and Harpy (Shai, 2009: 26).

The establishment of relations between the China and Israel did not follow the usual pattern or relationships, as was the case with many other countries. In the words of P.R.Kumaraswamy,

... their desire for closer and mutually beneficial relations came into conflict with a growing American desire to impede such a relationship. As a result, while the Israeli overtures towards China were not only long, tedious and at times frustrating, the normalisation of relations as well failed to match up to the expectations (Kumaraswamy, 2006b: 393).

Since then, the allegations over Sino-Israeli military ties had increased and damaged the relations between the two countries.

The Patriot controversy that broke out in the early 1992 widened the crack in the Israel-China relations. It revolved around suspicions over Israel's unauthorised transfers of Patriot missile technology to China. However, Israel denied such allegations. Washington, on the other hand, sent a seventeen-member inspection team to verify the veracity of the allegations. This American move showed the distrust it had on Israel's arms supply to China. Though such allegations were not proved, the episode did damage the understanding between Israel and the US. This period also saw the American

influence on Israel's arms export policy had started to gain momentum. Such a development curtailed Sino-Israeli military relations after their diplomatic establishment.

Simultaneously, the US had taken this opportunity to pressurise Israel to curb its arms sales to China. This was very evident when the US asked Israel to stop all the military dealing with China, after the Phalcon Controversy. It would be interesting to note some of the military hardware allegedly transferred by Israel to China included Israel's Python-3 air-to-air missiles (AAM); the MAPATZ anti-tank missile (allegedly based on the U.S. made-TOW2); US-made Patriot missile or missile technology; and Israel's support in designing and building the Chinese J-10 fighter plane, allegedly based on the discontinued Lavi fighter project that had been partly funded by the US (Shichor, 2000).

The US was calculating its interest at the cost of Israel's relations with China. The Jewish state could not do anything but succumbed to such pressure largely because the US has been Israel's largest aid giver. Since the foundation of Israel in 1948, Washington had supported Israel politically, enhanced its diplomatic backing, offered economic largesse and ensured strategic supplies to the country. This allowed the US to wield its power on Israel according to its own interests. The most successful use of pressure tactics was the Phalcon controversy, where the US throttled Israel's effort to supply an advanced early warning system to China (Kumaraswamy, 2006b: 396). Such a concern cropped up because of the US' strategic interests in the Asia-Pacific region.

However, if one has to compare the size and the might of the American and Chinese military capability, the US should have had no worries over any strategic importance of the region. Rather the US should be cautious of the fact that there would be other arms exporters, who would have been ready to supply China with such sophisticated weapons systems, if not Israel. Therefore, this claim of the lone post-Cold War superpower about the Chinese threat to its interests seemed rather illogical and artificial (Shichor, 2000).

Right from 1980s onwards, Israel had been under the constant US pressure to curb its arms sales to China and the 1989 Tiananmen Crackdown had driven a wedge between US and China, while the collapse of the Soviet Union had deprived China of its strategic

significance (Shichor, 2000). Before the demise of the USSR, both US and China had a common strategy and considered USSR as a common foe.

Prior to the normalisation of relations between Israel and China, the US had no problems regarding Israel's sale of MAPATZ (an anti-tank missile) to China. However, after analysing the concerns of the US over the retransfer of American technology to China by Israel, it had become clear that there were hidden implications. The issue was no longer confined to illegal or unauthorised re-transfers of American technology to China. The US was perturbed by the implications of such dealings upon the balance of power in Asia. In short, the security implication on the Taiwan Straits was another concern for the U.S. Leading Sinologist like Yitzhak Shichor questioned the American presence in the region and argued: "U.S. military presence in East Asia since the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union fuelled the tension in the region and artificially sustains friction between the PRC and ROC, since China fears-whether rightly or wrongly... The US military intervention or that this presence will encourage a unilateral ROC declaration of independence" (Shichor, 2000).

On the other hand, the main security problem in the Asian frontier was not exactly the Israeli-Chinese military relations but the presence of "the rogue superpower (the USA) across the Pacific" (Shichor, 2000). It is often argued that China's acquisition of arms from Israel could by no means destabilise the balance of power in East Asia. In one way, such supply of arms helped them improve any existing regional imbalance of power, particularly considering the overwhelming US military presence. If the military relation was seen as a threat, an interesting aspect to note was how the US itself had ignored the protests over the U.S. sales of Airborne Warning and Control Systems to Saudi Arabia in 1981. Moreover between 1987 and 1996 the US supplied offensive weapons worth over US\$40 million to countries like Egypt, Bahrain and Kuwait (Shichor, 2000). While the U.S. continued with its sales of those defence items, Israel was forced to give up the Phalcon deal with China (Shichor, 2000). This fact clearly showed the influence of the US on Israel's foreign policy and how they pressurised the Jewish state to stop military transactions with the south East Asian country.

In fact, extreme dependence of Israel on the American aid for military purpose had given a greater leverage to the US influence on Israel's foreign relations. It is critical to note that the impact of these arms transfers on the regional military balance and that of West Asia's was very insignificant. This problem had come up due to the obsession of the Americans with the artificially termed 'China threat' (Shichor, 2000).

Ironically, during the long years of Israel's isolation with many countries, such as Latin America, Africa or Asia, the US always made extreme efforts to establish diplomatic relations between these countries and Israel. It even convinced these countries to reconsider their harsh policies towards Israel. Those countries appeared to be the ones which the US shared common interest over something or the other. The Israel-Sino normalisation was no exception to such endeavours of the US. The US supported the policies of Israel and even helped China to establish diplomatic relations with Israel. Before 1992, China had used this Israeli channel to secure Western technology. Pre-occupied with the Soviet Union, the US did not have any negative concern about the military dimension of Israel's overtures towards China.

Surprisingly, the US even supported Israel's arms sales to strengthen its diplomatic ties with different countries. The US was clear of the vision that Israel would not be able to sustain its military-technological advantage over its adversaries without arms exports. As a result, the implications on the Sino-Israeli arms trade became profound, loud, and clear after the US started to consider China as an upcoming threat. This was attributed mainly to the pace at which China's economy was growing after Deng Xiaoping came into power. Simultaneously, the disintegration of the Soviet Union changed the global order with an entirely new political reality. China with its growing economic power became the new adversary that could seriously challenge the American hegemony in future (Kumaraswamy, 2006b: 399). Thus it had become the favourite target of the US.

As the US began to view China as the threat, this superpower was in no way going to allow Israel's military dealing with China to continue. This was one genuine factor for the fall-out in Israel-China relations after 1992. The US seemed to be so obsessed with China's potential to undermine its interests. As a result, it had taken up the controversies

mentioned above in the name of illicit re-transfers of American technology to pressurise Israel to reconsider its military relations with China. Israel did not have any choice but to side with the US — its largest benefactor.

As already discussed, the arms export policy of Israel was one area where US could showcase its high influence. The influences of the US on Israel's military sales to China brew unexpectedly leading to far-reaching implications. The cancellation of the contractual agreement of Phalcon to China proved the extent of seriousness of American influence on Israel. In many ways, the American influence on the Jewish state also affected the relations between Israel and those countries seeking military supplies from Israel.

There could be another dimension to this influence. Israel's ability to carry out any obligations would depend entirely on the political calculations of the US (Kumaraswamy, 2006b: 400). China had finally decided to establish relationship with Israel with the hope that it would gain support from the US but this took a different turn. The implication of this influence was felt upon not only Israel-China relationship but a deep sense of mistrust cropped up in Israel-US relationship too. There were voices of concerns amongst the pro-Israeli circles in the US regarding Israel's supply of weapons to China. These concerns jeopardised the Israeli relations with the US. As Israel had limited economic resources and because of its political isolation, arms sales had been one of the most successful foreign policy instruments. Therefore, the emergence of such controversies or concerns in the US undermined the role of military sales in promoting its foreign policy interests. This in turn affected Israel seriously as it used this diplomatic tool to gain acceptance and recognition.

Besides the above-discussed American-origin technology that was believed to have been sold to China, there were some other cases of Israeli re-exports of similar defence-related technologies to China that evoked particular concern. These included technology transfer disputes involving Israel's Python-3 air-to-air missiles. The US believed that this technology was adapted from the US AIM-9L Sidewinder missile, and contained a high degree of US technology. It also believed that Israel sold these missiles to Thailand and

China. The American's worst nightmare was the apparent sale of China's version of Python-3 to Iraq.

Another military item that lured controversy was the sale of Israel's Popeye- an air-to-ground missile to Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan. The American officials believed that this item contained '99 percent' US technology (Clarke, 1995: 105). STAR cruise missile was another defence items that provoked the American concerns. The US also opposed Israel's US-funded ARROW missile. Sometime in early 1990s, Israel and Delft – a Dutch company, were condemned for selling US thermal imaging tank sights to many countries including China. Reportedly, China installed these sights in their 69 MOD-2 tanks and sold some of the tanks to Iraq.

Other alleged unauthorised Israeli retransfers of US defence technology to China also included technologies for new generation fighter aircraft. The Chinese fighter jet called the F-10 was based partially on Israel's US-funded Lavi fighter programme. It is important to note that the US began to perceive this transfer of Lavi-related technology as a threat and the concern became public only in early 1995. Therefore, the concerns of the US appeared only when China sold these items to outcaste states with which the US refused deal (Clarke, 1995: 89). Another reason why the US considered such activities to be a threat or illegal was because Israel often retransferred these defence products to states that were potentially hostile to the US or were blatantly violating human rights issues. The latter reason was more suitable in the case of China, especially after the 1989 Tiananmen incident. In short, such shadowed activities pertaining to technology transfers undermined the American commercial interests and also led to the upsetting of regional stability, and the straining of diplomatic relations.

Scholars like Duncan L. Clarke and Robert J. Johnston argued that the US should take China's assurance cautiously that it would terminate sensitive technology transfers to buyers like Iran, mainly because of its record of non-compliance on the past. They also doubted such assurance as China's re-exports of such technologies to countries like Iran and Pakistan helped earn hard currency and also strengthened their strategic relationships through this kind of 'arms diplomacy' (Clarke and Johnston, 1999: 204). Such

impressions of China's activities gave another reason to the US to monitor Israel's weapons supply. As much as China had reasons to reduce its exports of technologies, it had carried reasons as to why such activities be continued.

Nevertheless, the re-exports of American systems and components were not the only American worries regarding the Israel-China military relations. The more serious problem was the ability of China to undergo reverse engineering. A suitable example is the Harpy-Drone controversy that surfaced in the mid-2000. Arms sales which had once played a facilitating role in establishing a diplomatic relationship between the two became a major point of contention. The following part of the chapter examines the various important controversies that shook Israel-China relations after 1992.

Major Controversies since 1992

Ever since the Sino-Israeli normalisation in 1992, the relationships between the two countries, especially in the military-security dimension, had become a concern for the US. This in turn had a serious repercussion for the Israel- China relations as well. The interference of the third party — the US—and controversies related to the technology re-transfers by Israel and its consequences stagnated the flow of the relationship between Israel and China. These controversies started right after the normalisation of ties and when both the countries tried all they could to consolidate their newly established diplomatic relationship. America's conflicting commercial, political and technological interests towards China made this Sino-Israeli bilateral relation difficult.

The Patriot Controversy

Patriot controversy happened to be the earliest known controversy that caught the attention of both Israel and China right after the normalisation. This controversy started on 12 March 1992 when the then Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Arens visited Washington to meet the then U.S. Secretary of Defence Dick Cheney. The American Secretary sent out cold attitude towards the visiting Minister and said, "We have information from reliable intelligence sources that you are transferring technology and materials from the Patriot batteries supplied to Israel by the U.S. for its defence to the

Chinese” (Arens, 2005). In fact such statements came as a reminder that the US took serious note of unauthorised transfers of U.S. technology to China which was considered by the U.S. as potentially hostile.

This controversy had come just six weeks after the diplomatic establishment in 1992. It had occurred at a time when Israel was initially accused of transferring Patriot anti-missile technology to Beijing. The entire episode emanated from the allegations that Israel sold technology contained American-origin defence technology. Israel denied any such transfers to China. Before the normalisation of ties, Israel did not talk about any arms sales to China and they kept such dealings a secret. Though there were doubts and uncertainties of such military relations between them, the clandestine arms sales between Israel and China largely governed their diplomatic establishment.

However, it was during this controversy that Israel publicly acknowledged the sales of arms to Beijing. What made the controversy worth looking at was the way the US implicated against Israel of such transfers of technology. The matter became very serious, as it involved not only the sales of the finished defence products but the technology as well. The US could not produce any concrete evidence in support of its allegations until the very last moment. The allegations however, damaged the newly formed Sino-Israeli relationships. Since this incident had occurred towards the end of the Cold War, it had raised more concerns for the US. Regional arms race had developed at a great pace during the Cold War and China was well known for its missile proliferation activities to countries like Egypt, Syria, Iran, Iraq, Libya and Saudi Arabia (Gaffney, Jr, 1997). This had given a reason to the US to keep a check on Israel’s arms supply to China. As the US no longer had any common strategic objective with China after the fall of the USSR, this check happened but came at the cost of Israel’s ties with China.

Israel, at the same time, raised its opposition to China regarding the latter’s supply of non-conventional weapons to these West Asian countries. There were reports of an agreement between the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen over the export of Chinese arms to the region but China denied such claims (Kumaraswamy, 1996:14). Then on, the West Asian region had become the

prime target of China, especially when their commercial motives were superseded by political considerations.

It should also be noted that Israel's export partner in missile proliferation was none other than China. This made the US more vocal about the entire military-security dimension between Israel and China, especially pertaining to transfer of missile technology. There had been arguments that such a controversy cropped up due to an "outright decision to undermine Israel's credibility in the American security community" (Kumaraswamy, 1996: 17). Some attributed the reasons for controversy to Israel's continued dependence on Washington. This issue not only undermined the Israel-China relations but also largely affected Israeli ties with the US as the accusations were dismissed by Israel as 'false', 'fabricated', 'illogical' and 'unsubstantiated' (Kumaraswamy, 1996:17).

Some scholars argued that Israel also alienated the US military intelligence establishment (Kumaraswamy, 1996:18). For many reasons, sections of people in Israel and in the US blamed President George Bush and his Secretary of State James Baker for diverting the policies from the ones deployed during the Reagan administration. President Bush was accused of lacking the traditional and emotional commitment and of challenging Israel and its American supporters.

The most problematic aspect of this controversy was the American inability to produce any concrete evidence supporting the allegations of Israeli re-transfers of technology to China. Initially, there were officials in the U.S. who were confident to document the Patriot charges. One official was found saying, "When we talk in our report about technology, we are talking about hardware. We are not talking about something abstract; we mean something physical that can be looked at" (Kumaraswamy, 1996: 20). The failure to find any evidence angered the Israelis and some Israeli leaders even demanded a formal apology from the American administration for implicating against Israel with such unsubstantiated charges.

The controversy surrounding the Patriot was seen in Israel as an American move to scuttle any potential competition in international arms trade (Kumaraswamy, 1996: 19).

Without any delay, the US used this opportunity to strongly condemn the Israel-China military relations. Despite the impact on Sino-Israeli relations, the US officials could not document the Patriot charges. However, the political damage caused by these allegations was significant.

The Phalcon Crisis

Another significant controversy that rocked the relationship between Israel and China was the Phalcon controversy, which erupted in the summer of 2000. It happened when Israel agreed to install the advanced early warning systems aboard a Russian platform. This further extrapolated the tension between Israel and China and with the US too. When Israel was forced to choose between China and the US, it settled for maintaining close ties with Washington. The arms sales which played a pivotal role in normalising the relationship with China became a major irritant between the US and Israel.

One cannot view the Phalcon controversy in isolation but should view that it was a continuation of American displeasure over Sino-Israeli military relations which led to severed Sino-Israeli military ties. The Israeli arms exports to China had strained the relationship with its most important diplomatic, economic and political benefactor — the US. Such a dependency of Israel on the superpower gave the US all the reasons to wield its influence over Israel. As the Phalcon controversy incident demonstrated, Washington's stance could quickly shift from being an observer to a participant when the US considers its interest to be at stake (Kogan, 2004).

The shift in the American policy further deteriorated the relationship between China and Israel. Many experts in the US expressed apprehension over the Sino-Israeli ties, especially the military relationship. A. M. Rosenthal, a famous American columnist and a staunch supporter of Israel said, "Any arms sale to Communist China is contrary to Israel's national interests and its status as a democratic country" (Kumaraswamy, 2005a:94). It was believed that the failure of the then Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak to pay heed to the warnings issued by the US led to the damage of US-Israeli relations.

The cancellation of the Phalcon deal created a huge rift in the Israel-China relations. There were different versions to the controversy. One of them was that Washington was aware of the dealings between Israel and China regarding the Phalcon airborne early warning systems. However, when the Russian plane landed at Ben Gurion Airport in 1999 for modification, the US started to create problem for the supplier and the recipient. This clearly signified the American influence on Israel's foreign policy and thus exhibited displeasure over such military relations. Interestingly, Israel had become a domestic question for the US.

The US raised its concerns keeping in mind the threat that the Phalcon could pose to the American forces stationed in the Pacific region. The Sino-Israeli military relations horrified the Americans. The cancellation of the Phalcon deal contributed to some of the US-Israeli tensions. The fall-out in the relations between Israel and China happened due to this inevitable external factor. One must know that the US stopped the deal during the on-going Camp David negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians. At one time, some in the US even threatened to suspend all the financial aid to Israel (Kumaraswamy, 2005a: 97). This big-brotherly attitude of the lone superpower made Israel call off the sale of the early warning systems to China.

It seemed that the U.S. was regulating the Israeli arms export policy depending upon the recipient. For that matter, the US did not have any hesitation in selling AWACS to Saudi Arabia in the 1980s. This 'double standard' of the US led to the clash of interest between US and China after the end of the Cold War. Another factor for such a fall-out was the new American concern over the rising military might of China. This should be attributed to the end of the Cold War and the American freedom from erstwhile rivalry with the Soviet Union. With the disappearance of the Soviet Union, China not only lost its relevance to American strategic calculation but also emerged as a potential threat to the new American hegemony (Kumaraswamy, 2005a: 99). For obvious reasons, the US began to view Israel-China relations with jaundiced-eyes. The American active involvement in the West Asian peace process offered an opportunity to Israel to 'synchronise its interest with those of the US' (Kumaraswamy, 2005a: 99). It gave Israel

more reasons to succumb to the pressures of its benefactor. The extreme dependence on Washington curtailed Israel's options. Israel could do very little after the deal was scrapped.

China condemned the interfering role played by the US. On the other hand, Israel was aware of the ramifications of its move upon the "painstaking(ly) crafted relationship with China" in the past (Kumaraswamy, 2005a: 100). Shimon Peres visited Beijing couple of times to express Israel's regret over the entire controversy. There were talks regarding the compensation Israel had to pay to China. In 2002, Israel agreed to pay US\$350 million in compensation to China, US\$160 million more than the advance paid by China (Blank, 2004). However, Israel's inability to fulfil its contractual obligation impeded its overall relations with China. The military relations between Israel and China no longer seemed to promote their bilateral relations.

Probably, Israel would have to accept non-military means to further its foreign policy vis-à-vis China. However, certain amount of caution and uncertainties would always loom large in the minds of the Chinese authorities. The way Israel succumbed to the American influences, it appeared to be that Israel had formally recognised the American veto over its arms sales (Kumaraswamy, 2005a: 101). There were doubts and questions on Israel's credibility as an arms exporter.

Considering fewer potential markets for Israel, the deal could have been of utmost importance to the country. China could have provided the much needed jobs for those who were employed in Israel defence industries. It could have been a good way of strengthening their economic relations too but the relationship between them soured after this particular episode. This fall-out had come as a result of the strong opposition raised by the US. Thereafter, China had been increasingly critical of Israel.

Harpy-Drone

The mid-2000 witnessed another dispute involving China, Israel and the US. This time the controversy revolved around Israel's willingness to upgrade the Harpy assault drones that it had sold to China few years after the normalisation of relations. The main concern

of the US was the upgrading programme undertaken by Israel. This further drifted the Sino-Israeli relations and US-Israel relations apart. Strategic concern considering Taiwan Straits was one of the factors why the US disapproved the upgrading of the drones to China. These drones, produced by Israel Aircraft Industries (IAI), were capable of destroying radar stations and anti-aircraft batteries. Harpy is a 500km-range delta-wing lethal unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) with a day and night capability, designed to detect, attack and destroy radar emitters with a very high hit accuracy (Shichor, 2005). It could also be launched from a ground near the battle zone. Harpy is a weather-friendly autonomous weapon system and can suppress effectively the opposition's surface-to-air missiles (SAM) and radar sites for a long duration. Acknowledging the defensive and offensive nature of such a weapon system, the US took this opportunity to prohibit Israel from transferring defence goods, services, technology to China.

This policy of the US effectively damaged the Israeli-Chinese relations since normalisation. It was believed that the US did not object to the deal earlier. However, US accusation against Israel's arms sales to China were immediately recycled and integrated into the 2004 Reports to Congress of the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission (Shichor, 2005). Initially, the US was informed of the desire of China to repair the Harpy Drone with spare parts. However, the alleged upgrading of the drone with more advanced technologies angered the US as the newly upgraded drone could detect radar emitters even after they are switched off. This posed a serious a threat to the American strategic interests in the Taiwan Straits. As a result, the US wanted Israel to confiscate the already-sold drones, as it feared that the drone could threaten US troops in Taiwan. Therefore, the American accusation came against the upgrading of the drone while they were okay with the original sale. From then on, US urged Israel to suspend all the military dealings with China. This further plummeted the military-security dimension of their post-1992 relations. In a way, the tension accompanied this controversy represented an unprecedented low point in Israel's relations with the US.

Scholars like Dan Blumenthal argued that as much as China viewed Iran and other Arab states through the prism of its oil needs, the Chinese government continued to strengthen

relations (especially military) with Israel so as to acquire more Western technology that were required for military modernisation (Blumenthal, 2005). Therefore, considering the threat such a Chinese missile build up could pose to Taiwan, this kind of technology transfer would obviously upset both the United State and Taiwan. Eventually without waiting for any further deterioration of the security stability in the Asia-Pacific region, the U.S. intervened and warned Israel with dire consequences if the Jewish state continued to re-exports missile technology to China.

It was also believed that the overwhelming dependence of Israel on the US made it an easier prey. Scholars like Yitzhak Shichor argued that even six months before the Harpy crisis was exposed in 2002, the U.S. had tried to block the direct participation of Israeli defence firms in security tenders for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. He was of the view that such behaviour fitted well into Washington's policy of containing China (Shichor, 2005).

In a way, the US had achieved its desire to contain China's military expansion drive through Israeli channel. During the entire episode, Israel remained an even more dependent variable to the US than China. Israel had to pay a heavy price due to this interference of the US. Israel's policy no longer remained an independent arms export policy to China but it became subjected to a US veto. The implication was such that the influence of the external factors deprived Israel of a very potential arms market, at least for the foreseeable future. Most importantly, the US security commitment to Taiwan shaped the United State's China policy, particularly after the end of the Cold War and after the Sino-Israeli normalisation of ties. In the eyes of the Americans, the possibility of Chinese attack on Taiwan made the superpower to block any defence-related transfers to China.

The coincidence of Israel-China normalisation and Washington's burgeoning concern about China altered the Israel-China relations. The desire for China and Israel to boost their pre-1992 military ties ended in an unfashionable manner sometime in mid-2000. The impact of these arms transfers reached its heights when a senior Israeli Defence Ministry official Amos Yaron had to resign in mid-2000 over issues concerning Israel's

arms transfers to China (Kumaraswamy, 2006a: 39). Israel remained helpless to the American big-brotherly attitude.

The repercussions of Israel's alleged sales of US-origin advanced technologies to China was that the US imposed sanctions on Israel's defence industry in early 2005 by cutting off financial and technical assistance for a number of weapons systems, including the F-35 aircraft, the ARROW 2 anti-ballistic missiles, and the Tactical High energy laser project (Stakelbeck, 2004). The sanctions had been imposed not only to the military plants that were used to manufacture armaments for its existing deals with China, but on Israel's entire arms industry. The company that had likely faced stiff sanction was Elbit, which had made no deals with China, but was accused of selling equipment for the advanced F-22 Raptor aircraft.

On 13 June 2005, the United Press International carried a news item that said that

the US has imposed tough sanctions against Israel following a crisis over a deal in which Israel sold drones to China and subsequently undertook to maintain them. Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice approved the sanctions about seven months ago, with the knowledge of National Security Adviser, Stephen Hadley (Killgore, 2005: 15).

The involvement of the US officials and their condemnation of Israel's arms sales to China signified the seriousness of the crisis.

The aftermath of this controversy was the agreement in 2005 to sign a Memorandum of Understanding on technology exports between Israel and the US (Kumaraswamy, 2006a: 39). Both the countries would see to it that they consider each other's concerns about any transfer of defence related technologies to the third countries. The steps taken up by the US and Israel showed the value and the importance of their bilateral relationship. Nevertheless, tensions between the two did not recede. Instead, the then Israeli Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz cancelled his trip to Washington- a visit that was expected to reach an agreement on any future arms sales to China and, to bring an end to the on-going controversy related to the technology re-transfers (Press, 2005).

However, in order to exert more pressure on Israel, the US made three important demands to settle the crisis (Killgore, 2005). The first demand was that Israel should provide the U.S. with the details of more than 60 deals made with China and that it would enable Washington to assess the damage that might cause to the American security. The presence of numerous Israeli business and individuals in the arms selling business somehow curtailed the government's role in the system.

In the secondly demand, Israel was asked to closely examine its security equipment supervision system. Washington brought up this demand as it wanted to know how loopholes were created in the system. The US also demanded for a clear-cut Israeli stand over the kind of punishment to be meted out to those who had broken the rules. The main concern for the U.S. was why Israeli government had not involved in the supervision directly. In fact, this raised further doubts on Israel's truthfulness. The third demand of the US was that it wanted Israel to formulate a Memorandum of Understanding to prevent another controversy (Pomper, 2005).

At the same time, there were others who had considered these moves as Bush administration's trial to erode the strategic alliance between U.S. and Israel. Therefore, the US took the Harpy-Drone affair as an opportunity to express its displeasure over Israel-China military relations. Simultaneously, it seemed to be that there was a clash of interest and understanding between Israel and U.S. On one hand, the US did not pay heed to the Israeli request for consideration of arms sales to countries hostile to the Jewish state. On the other hand, Washington viewed the attempted Israeli sales as a challenge to the arms embargo against China that the US had been carrying out diligently.

The interference of the U.S. in the military transactions between Israel and China caused humiliations to both the countries. A comment posted on the internet said: "a small brother is a small brother. He should obey his big brother in everything. One day when Israel needs Chinese help, we shall firm say 'no' (Shichor, 2005). The Chinese were so angry that they even decided to apply sanctions against Israeli companies in both China and Hong Kong, had Israel failed to upgrade the drones as per the Sino-Israeli agreements.

In the words of Carol Giacomo, "Israel began an arms relationship with China in the Cold War with U.S. backing as a means of balancing of the Soviet Union. But the ties have increasingly troubled Washington" (Giacomo, 2002). As a result, military relations between Israel and China are done for a foreseeable future and cooperation between the two from mid-2000 onwards has continued on the civilian aspect.

These controversies that created a rift between Israel, China and the U.S. could have been avoided had there been an understanding among the three. Here, the destination of the defence technologies transferred by Israel had become the origin-point of the entire episode. An important remedy suggested by the former Defence Minister Arens was that such a matter related to transfer of technology was too serious to be left to the bureaucratic echelon in the Defence Ministry. He argued that it should have been discussed at the highest political level between Israel and the U.S. (Arens, 2005). In short, to reach up to that level of understanding both the countries should show respect for each other's concerns. The American strategic concerns needed to be acknowledged fully by Israel and simultaneously the need for Israel's exports of arms to sustain its defence industry should also be considered logically by the U.S. However, the realisation came very late after the damage had already been caused to the triangular relationship.

To sum up, the implications of Israel-China arms trade had erupted due to the absence of a definite arms export policy of Israel. The relationship between them had been severely damaged, and the military security dimension became non-existent from the mid-2000 onward. There were questions about Israel's credibility as a reliable arms exporter and this aspect of foreign policy hindered its endeavours for a global diplomatic reach. The inability of Israel to stand against the pressure of the US demonstrated just how far the Israeli government depended on the goodwill of the U.S. Since 1992, the US' intervention vis-à-vis China had only been negative for Israel. The American concerns had made Israeli ties with China hostage to Washington's demands (Kumaraswamy, 2006a: 40).

Such tensions that brewed up involving Israel, China and the US also cast a shadow over Israel's military exports to achieve its strategic and economic objectives. The aspirations

of other countries to establish ties with Israel, especially in matters relating to defence would mean giving a second thought as such transactions would also need an approval from the US.

The US played on Israel's arms exports policy at the cost of the latter's national interest. As a result, Israel has to formulate a clear policy as to what it would do when faced with such circumstances. Further, Israel's naivety in dealing with the matters related to its military relations with other countries would add to its already dented reputation. To avoid these severe implications, Israel would have to recognise the serious constraints imposed on its arms sales by its close and highly beneficial relationship with the US (Adelman, 2002). Failure to bring any understanding with the US would only result in Israeli confrontations not with China but also with other arms recipients as well.

Therefore, the pressure of the third party interference hindered Israel-China relations after normalisation. As much as the military relations facilitated the normalisation between them, the same foreign policy instrument damaged the relations severely. One could see no Israel's arms sales to China for the foreseeable future. As a result, Israel needs an independent arms export policy since its arms sales facilitated and strengthened its ties with a number of countries.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

Israel has been regarded as one of the most significant arms exporter in the world. It has been using arms sales and other forms of military-security assistance in pursuance of its foreign policy. It adopted such measures to escape isolation from its hostile environment and also to gain wider acceptance and recognition. The important factors behind such arms sales diplomacy are economic and commercial benefits, political incentives, security motives and most importantly the well being of the Jewish communities worldwide. Therefore, arms sales and other forms of security relations occupied a prominent position in Israel's foreign policy. The closer ties Israel forged with a number of countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia were all facilitated by military relations. Its no- strings-attached policy in matters regarding arms sales forged closer ties with some of the countries. Successful examples can be seen in Argentina, Ecuador, pre-revolutionary Iran, Turkey, South Africa and China. Indeed some of these military relations between Israel and other countries happened in the absence of formal ties. However, there were countries whose military relations with Israel got severed after the establishment of diplomatic relations. This was due to the interference of a third party, mainly the US. Israel's earlier arms sales diplomacy was successful with many Latin American countries. The presence of several military regimes in the southern hemisphere made the rapprochement a lot easier. However, the military-security dimension of Israel's relationship with such countries underwent a marked change with the return of constitutional rule in the latter, examples being Argentina, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Chile.

From 1957 to 1973, Africa was the preferred continent of Israel's Third World policy. However, the 1973 Arab-Israeli War engendered a complete reversal in Israel-Africa relations. The relationship between them was closely safeguarded by a tight military cooperation. Though many African nations severed ties with Israel after the October War, relationships began to grow again with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War.

The Israeli-Turkish relationship faced several upheavals until their normalisation in December 1991. Initially, Turkey's open hostility and condemnation of Israel's policy towards the Palestinians slowed down the process of rapprochement which was followed by various international event or regional factors like 1956 Suez Crisis, and the 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli conflicts. It was Israel's supply of arms and other defence or security-related assistance that laid the framework for the eventual normalisation in December 1991. It was the ability of both the countries to handle the Arab criticisms that led to the establishment of diplomatic relations. In fact, it was the relationship that had transformed from an open hostility to that of a mutually-beneficial strategic cooperation.

Israel's relationship with Iran was very successful until the Islamic Revolution of 1979. Iran, under the leadership of Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, maintained low-profile diplomacy. Israel's wish to escape isolation in the hostile environment, to some extent, was fulfilled when it found a capable ally in Iran. Like in most cases of Israel's relations with other countries, its relations with Iran had also faced several hurdles but the military ties never faced a setback. Israel continued to supply Shah's Iran with weapons and other defence-related security advisories to the Iranian army. Their relations were also promoted by Iran's willingness to supply oil to Israel and hence it was also an oil-for-weapons arrangement. With the toppling of Shah's government and the emergence of the Islamic Revolution in 1979 under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini, Iran had cut off its ties with Israel.

Keeping in tune with this overall trend, the Israel-China relations were also largely governed by the military-security component. The Israeli recognition of the People's Republic of China in 1950 was not accompanied by a reciprocal move from China. Both the countries underwent several phases of non-relations until the establishment of diplomatic relations in January 1992. Some important external factors prevented both the countries from normalising their relations. By the mid-1970s, the relationship between Israel and China began to show some signs of improvement. This was due to the death of Mao Zedong and the far-reaching domestic political changes that were initiated following the emergence of Deng Xiaoping.

By the late 1970s, military relationship between Israel and China began to bloom though co-operations were kept secret till the late 1980s. The 1989 Tiananmen incident strengthened the Israel-China military relations further. When a number of Western countries imposed trade and economic sanctions against China after that incident, Israel emerged as a major supplier of military equipment to China. With such assistance from the Israeli side, the process of normalisation became very easy and eventually led to the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1992.

At the same time, the post-normalisation military relations between Israel and China were not as strong as expected. The Sino-Israeli military relations after 1992 were caught up in controversies that undermined their bilateral relations. Hence, the establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and China did not follow the normal patterns that usually enhance bilateral relations. Such controversies also underscored the role of the Israeli arms sales in expansion of its foreign policy.

This was because of the active interference by a third party, namely, the US. Since the early 1990s, changed geo-political calculation forced the US to see China and hence the Sino-Israeli military relations differently. Using their potentially harmful effects upon its interests in the Asia-Pacific region the US had criticised, opposed and even vetoed Israel's military-related ties with China. Hence, according to data on the subject currently available in the public domain, it is safe to conclude that Israel's military supplies to China came to an end by 2000 when the US scuttled the Israeli sale of Phalcon advanced airborne early warning system to China. Any major arms-related ties between them do not seem feasible in the near future.

Israel pursued its arms sales and other forms of military assistance to further its foreign policy interests. Due to its limited political leverage with various countries, arms sales and other forms of security cooperation became its only major option to pursue its foreign policy interests. This has been proved by Israel's military relations with various countries of Latin America and also with China. In the cases identified in this study, there has been a strong military component with Israel supplying large quantity of arms and other military-security assistance. This was equally true for China where the military contacts

that began in the late 1970s largely facilitated the normalisation in 1992. The long and exhaustive journey travelled by both the countries gave them the opportunity to understand each other's needs and foreign policy interests. In fact, it was the convergence of interests that began with Israel's arms sales to China, which made the normalisations of relations successful. At the same time, the excessive involvement of a third party (namely, the US) had significantly harmed the ability of Israel and China to successfully pursue the military path after 1992.

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