

P. R. Kumaraswamy

**Beyond the Veil:
Israel-Pakistan Relations**



Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies (JCSS)

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To
Jasjit Singh

with affection and gratitude

P. R. Kumaraswamy

Beyond the Veil: Israel-Pakistan Relations

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Contents

| | |
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| Introduction | 9 |
| I Similarities | 13 |
| II Interests and Rationale | 15 |
| III Pakistan and the Arab-Israeli Conflict | 20 |
| IV Contacts and Controversies | 30 |
| V The Nuclear Dimension | 43 |
| VI Domestic Debates in Pakistan | 51 |
| VII Impediments | 64 |
| VII Prospects for Normalization | 66 |
| Notes | 67 |

Introduction

When I first made the comparison between Israel and Pakistan in the first sentence of *Pakistan: Military Rule or People's Power?* in 1970, right-wing Pakistanis as well as many leftists were shocked. The contrast was supposedly outrageous.

-Tariq Ali, 1983¹

*

One of the accidental and unintended results of the May 1998 nuclear tests in the Indian subcontinent was a noticeable desire and willingness in Israel to discuss its relations with the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. With two notable exceptions, Pakistan has rarely figured in the Israeli discourse. In the first place, for a long time Pakistan was held primarily responsible for the prolonged Indian refusal to establish diplomatic relations with the Jewish state. In the 1950s, veteran Israeli diplomat Walter Eytan observed that Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru “may have feared at one time that if he established relations with Israel, he would throw the Arab states into the arms of Pakistan, their sister in Islam.”² Secondly, Pakistan is often accused of being the only country apart from the United Kingdom to have recognized Jordan’s annexation of the West Bank in 1950. Even though there is no historical evidence to support this assertion, a number of Israeli scholars and commentators have repeatedly accused Pakistan of endorsing Jordan’s former claims to the West Bank.³ Otherwise, Pakistan has drawn public attention primarily during internal political violence or natural calamities.

This indifference was facilitated by Pakistan’s prolonged public criticism of Israel and its policies. Since the early part of the twentieth century, Pakistan vociferously opposed the demand for a Jewish national home in Palestine. In 1947 it became the most boisterous and articulate opponent of the partition plan for Palestine. As a state conceived as the homeland for the Muslims of the Indian sub-continent, Islamic solidarity has been the primary vehicle of Pakistan’s foreign and Middle East policies. This, coupled with the desire to ingratiate itself with the Islamic world, compelled Pakistan to unconditionally support the Arab countries in their conflict with Israel. Like many Third World countries, Pakistan

often played the “Israel card” to discredit neighboring India. On occasion, Pakistani leaders have painted their domestic critics and opponents as “conspirators” with Israel or Zionism. And suggestions for a re-evaluation of Pakistan’s policy toward Israel have been routinely denied, or viewed as Indian, Israeli or Zionist conspiracies.

For its part, Israel has been reluctant to discuss its relations with countries with whom it does not have formal diplomatic ties. Prolonged diplomatic isolation compelled Israel to master the art of clandestine or back-channel diplomacy.⁴ Its relations with a number of countries were preceded by protracted political interactions, diplomatic contacts or military contracts. The absence of formal relations has often caused Israel to seek unconventional approaches to promote and safeguard its vital interests.

Even within the context of Israel’s clandestine diplomacy, Pakistan is unique. In a number of cases, the absence of diplomatic relations did not inhibit Israel from selectively or partially disclosing the nature and extent of its diplomatic contacts. For instance, its “secret contacts” with Jordan became public long before formal ties were established in 1994, and strict censorship regulations did not inhibit Israel from discussing Morocco’s role in its peace agreement with Egypt. Until the nuclear tests, however, contacts with Pakistan rarely figured in academic or media discussions in Israel.

It suited both countries to keep their contacts and exchanges under wraps. For Pakistan, this secrecy enabled its rulers to maintain regular contacts with Israel, even while maintaining public opposition to the Jewish state. Because of Pakistan’s failure to engage in public diplomacy and its reluctance to normalize relations, Israel had to approach the subject cautiously. Any leaks or premature disclosures were detrimental to the existing channels of communication. As a result, in contrast to the case of India, the Pakistani refusal to establish diplomatic relations never figured prominently in Israel’s diplomatic offensive.

Contrary to popular belief in both countries, contacts between the two date back to the late 1940s, when the Pakistani leadership was officially hostile to the idea of a Jewish state. These contacts were not an aberration, nor were they confined to a particular leader or period. A careful perusal of available archival and other materials indicates that

from the beginning, both countries have been quietly pursuing one another.⁵ Their contacts were more than diplomatic niceties or polite conversations; they have often involved a degree of convergence of Israeli and Pakistani interests.

At one time or another, important Pakistani leaders, such as the articulate Foreign Minister Sir Zafrulla Khan (1947-54), military dictators Ayub Khan (1958-69), Yayha Khan (1969-71) and Zia ul-Haq (1977-88) and Prime Ministers Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (1972-77), Benazir Bhutto (1988-90 and 1994-96) and Nawaz Sharif (1990-93 and 1997-99) were sympathetic toward Israel or facilitated interactions with Israeli leaders, diplomats or officials. They were not alone. A host of Pakistani officials and diplomats have met, discussed and at times dined with their Israeli counterparts. Such contacts were held primarily in Washington, London or at the United Nations headquarters in New York. At the same time, a number of other locations, such as Rangoon, Kathmandu and Tokyo in Asia, Lagos in Africa, Ankara and Tehran in the Middle East, Caracas and Ottawa in the Americas and Brussels and Rome in Europe also functioned as meeting points for Israeli and Pakistani diplomats.

Some of these meetings were private and bilateral, while others took place at functions organized by the host countries, or by foreign missions accredited to the host countries. Israeli diplomats regularly monitored and reported the movements of their Pakistani counterparts. Media reports on the biographical details of Pakistani envoys were regularly sent to Jerusalem for further contacts or future reference. Pakistani missions have regularly sent various informative and publicity materials to Israeli missions in the host countries. Some of these have been sent on official Pakistani stationery and include Pakistani claims vis-à-vis India and its request for Israel's understanding and support. A number of semi-official and unofficial organizations, as well as prominent, not-so-prominent and ordinary Pakistani citizens have been in contact with Israeli missions abroad for information or technical assistance. Because of the absence of direct postal connections between the two countries, such requests have been sent to third countries, including Israeli missions in New York or London.⁶ Influential Jewish leaders like Edmund de Rothschild have privately operated, and at times funded, efforts to further Israeli-Pakistani normalization.

This paper, which will describe and analyze the relationship between Israel and Pakistan, is divided into eight parts. The first two sections deal with the similarities and commonality of interests between the two countries. The third and fourth sections discuss Pakistan's position on the Arab-Israel conflict and its contacts with Israel since independence. The fifth section deals with the nuclear dimension and the need for both countries to accommodate each other's security concerns. Domestic Pakistani debates concerning normalization are discussed in the sixth part, while the following section looks at the obstacles to Israeli-Pakistani normalization. The last section considers the prospects for diplomatic relations and examines the options confronting Pakistan.

Israel has been more interested in normalization than Pakistan. Even though Pakistan is not a "vital" area for Israel, one cannot underestimate its importance in the Islamic world. Since 1948, Israel has been eager to intensify and upgrade contacts and dialogues, but the nature, depth and content of such contacts were determined by the reluctant other: Pakistan. The latter has been reacting and responding to Israeli overtures. While Israel might take the initiative, the outcomes rest on Pakistan; hence this monograph approaches the issue from the Pakistani perspective.

I

Similarities

Before uncovering and examining this fascinating, undisclosed and undisturbed mosaic, it is essential to ask: Are Israel and Pakistan important to one another? Are there similarities between the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Jewish State of Israel? Do their interests converge? The fact that Israel and Pakistan have much more in common than is popularly recognized is often overlooked. The differences in their political structures are seen as too great to make any comparison viable. While Israel is a modern pluralistic society, Pakistan hovers between military autocracy, feudalism and democracy. The socio-economic disparities between the two are also significant. Notwithstanding these differences, however, both states share a certain common historical legacy and the contours of state-building. They both suffer from internal strife and divisions. As states created with the explicit purpose of safeguarding the political rights of religious minorities, the Zionist and Pakistani struggles for independence reflect some similar political traits and approaches. Some of the problems they faced in nation-building were also similar.

In both cases, the question of nationhood was strongly influenced by religion; yet those who led the struggle were anything but religious. Neither Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the architect of Pakistan, nor David Ben-Gurion visualized the creation of theocratic entities. Describing the complex personality of Jinnah, one Indian journalist observed:

General Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq (Pakistan's dictator from 1977-88) must be a very relieved man that Mr. Jinnah, the "father" of Pakistan, is not alive today -- or he would have to be flogged publicly for his personal habits. Mr. Jinnah not only chain-smoked Craven-A cigarettes but also liked his whisky and was not averse to pork. His was the life of an upper-class liberal -- which indeed Jinnah was for most of his life, both private and public.⁷

The same is true of Ben-Gurion's "observant" life-style. Though heavily loaded with religiosity, both leaders and their colleagues desired a modern state that would address and satisfy the particular needs of the

Muslims in an undivided India and the Jews in an undivided Palestine. At the same time, in both cases the secular leadership that led the nationalist struggle gradually gave way to religious elements that were ideologically opposed to the very idea of religiously-defined states.⁸

II

Interests and Rationale

These are not the only similarities between Israel and Pakistan. Since their establishment, both countries have been haunted by an existential threat and have struggled for acceptance by their regional neighbor/s. It is no coincidence that the security establishment plays a pivotal role in both countries; in one case as an effective vehicle for national unity and cohesion and in another as the ultimate arbitrator in the national power struggle. While the degree of external threat differs, both countries had genuine fears about their acceptance by the majority from which they broke away. Pakistan did not face an existential threat of the magnitude and intensity that Israel had to endure, and yet its apprehensions over India's intentions and capabilities have significantly shaped its domestic and foreign policies. The inclination of some Indian leaders to write the political obituary of Pakistan did not help the situation. In the same way, Israel's acceptance and accommodation in the Middle East have been painful and slow, and are still far from complete. In short, if Pakistan is worried about a qualitatively superior India, Israel is apprehensive of the quantitative superiority of the Arab countries.

This security dilemma influenced both Israel and Pakistan to follow two distinct yet identical solutions, namely, extra-regional linkages and the nuclear option. The onset of the Cold War and the American drive for anti-communist military alliances around the former Soviet Union suited their calculations. Geographical proximity (for Pakistan) and demographic considerations (Soviet Jews in Israel's case) prevented both countries from overtly alienating Moscow, but they tactfully capitalized on the Western alliance system to address their respective regional security concerns. While Pakistan formally became a member of military alliances, Israel gradually emerged as Washington's "strategic partner" in the region. As will be discussed, their conventional as well as quantitative inferiority drove them both to follow the West European Cold War model and develop a nuclear-based deterrent.

This security perception has influenced the foreign policy of both

countries. Unlike their rivals (India and the Arab countries respectively) they pursued a realistic foreign policy devoid of idealism and rhetoric. At the time of their independence, both tried to pursue a non-aligned foreign policy that sought friendly relations with the rival blocs of the Cold War. A host of regional developments curtailed their options, however. Very soon, both were firmly entrenched in the Western camp and emerged as principal allies, and at times proxies, of Washington in the region.

The absence of formal relations does not diminish Pakistan's importance for Israel, and vice-versa. The dearth of serious discussion, however, presents a misleading picture of the nature of relations and contacts between the two countries. As was the case during the pre-state era, Islam continues to play an important role in influencing Israel's interests in Pakistan. In spite of political instability, economic difficulties and decades of military dictatorship, Pakistan is an important Islamic country. The nuclear tests in May 1998 further enhanced its importance; some of the Israeli media even perceives Pakistan as an "Islamic superpower."⁹

The Middle East has occupied an important position in Pakistan's foreign policy, and its involvement in the region has extended beyond political support or commercial interactions. Pakistan has forcefully supported, occasionally through active military involvement, crucial political developments in the area. Although it has been primarily concerned with South Asia and its rivalry with India, since 1947 Pakistan has actively pursued the formation of an Islamic political bloc. It has played a critical role in the formation of the Organization of the Islamic Countries (OIC) and emerged as one of its prime functionaries.¹⁰

The lack of formal relations, together with Pakistan's pronounced anti-Israeli stands, ironically provided a camouflage for quiet diplomacy and limited understandings. This policy operated under certain constraints. Pakistan's emphasis on its Islamic identity has been vital both for domestic reasons and for its rivalry with India. Since the partition of India in 1947, Pakistani leaders have presented themselves as the protectors of the Muslims of the entire subcontinent, including those Muslims who declined to migrate to the Muslim homeland. This, coupled with the need to forge close ties with the Islamic world, compelled Pakistan to pursue a foreign policy oriented toward Islam. At the same

time, geopolitical realities and the need for close ties with the United States have presented a different challenge. At the height of the Cold War era, it became essential for the leadership to demonstrate that Pakistan was a dependable Western ally in the turbulent region. Since the end of the Cold War and the onset of democracy, Pakistan has been presented as an Islamic democracy and a model for others. In both cases, it was apparent that the image of Pakistan as a stable, responsible and reliable partner of the West was the one that would best serve its interests. This image has required a moderate, less hostile private posture toward Israel.

On a number of regional issues, Pakistan's positions were not dissimilar to those of Israel. Domestic pressures have not inhibited its rulers from adopting an overtly pro-Western and pro-American position on sensitive issues concerning the Middle East. Occasionally, such positions furthered the regional interests of Israel, a country that Pakistan officially has refused to recognize.¹¹ One cannot ignore the influence Pakistan enjoys in important Middle Eastern countries like Iran and Saudi Arabia, and it is very often perceived as having a moderating influence in the region. In the early 1970s, Pakistani military forces were deployed in a number of Arab countries with the aim of protecting pro-Western monarchies.¹² From the very beginning, Pakistan has sought close ties with moderate and conservative monarchies in the region. Partly because of his close ties with India and its leader Nehru, Gamal Abdul Nasser's brand of Arab nationalism did not have the support of the Pakistani rulers. Even when the Egyptian leader enjoyed mass appeal in Pakistan, the official position was different.

What is real, the public rhetoric against Israel or the private understandings? Dichotomy has been the hallmark of Pakistan's foreign policy. On a number of occasions, to further Pakistani interests (some might suggest the reason was to ensure and further the regime's stability and survival), the government adopted pro-Western positions that rarely enjoyed popular support. What was perceived as rational policies remained unpopular, and sometimes the opposite was true. Behind the rhetoric, Pakistani leaders were often able to quietly pursue policies that contradicted their public stance. From its decision to enter US-sponsored military alliances in the early 1950s to the missile attack on suspected terrorist bases in Afghanistan in 1998, many key foreign policy decisions

lacked popular endorsement. Pakistan's leaders pursued these policies despite domestic opposition, and the policy toward Israel reflects the dual face of Pakistan's foreign policy as a whole.

In short, Pakistan's political rhetoric and Israel's conspicuous silence present a misleading picture of the relations between the two religiously defined states in the post-World War era. The two countries have maintained regular political and diplomatic contacts with one another for a long time, but the Islamic factor and its relations with the Middle East compelled Pakistan to keep these contacts under wraps. For its part, Israel was not willing to jeopardize its links with an important Islamic country through undue attention or disclosures. The relationship discussed here underscores a certain rationale behind their actions. Although not vital, Pakistan is important to Israel for several reasons:

- Pakistan is an important Islamic country with considerable influence in Islamic forums, such as the OIC.
- Since independence, Pakistan shunned radical states in the Middle East but sought and maintained close ties with conservative and pro-Western monarchies.
- Its membership in Western-sponsored military alliances such as CENTO enhanced the Pakistani position as an important Western ally.
- On a number of issues, such as the Jordanian crackdown on Palestinians in September 1970 or Egypt's re-entry into the Arab League, the Pakistani position and actions coincided with or enhanced Israeli interests in the region.
- Pakistan offers Israel access to important countries like Iran and Saudi Arabia.
- Relations with Pakistan would help dilute Islam-based opposition toward Israel.
- Until 1992, India's refusal to establish diplomatic relations presented an additional incentive for Israel to court Pakistan.
- Renewed concerns over the "Islamic bomb" offer new incentives for Israel to pursue Pakistan.

For its part, Pakistan pursued Israel because:

- Since the Camp David Accords, the Arab world has been interacting with Israel on the diplomatic front and has begun seeking a negotiated

settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Pakistan does not wish to be left out of this process.

- Contacts and relations with Israel offer Pakistan an opportunity to play an active role in the Middle East peace process.
- Israel is a key factor in Pakistan's relations with the US.
- On issues such as US economic aid and arms supplies, Pakistan has benefited from an understanding with Israel.
- Misgivings over Israeli concerns about its nuclear program offer an additional incentive for Pakistan to reach an understanding with Israel.

III

Pakistan and the Arab-Israeli Conflict

Pakistan's interests and involvement in Israel predate the partition of Palestine and can be traced to the days of the Balfour Declaration of 1917. Within weeks after Lord Balfour announced British support for a Jewish national home in Palestine and the capture of Jerusalem by General Allenby, the Muslim League, which was leading the struggle for Pakistan, expressed its concern for the "safety and sanctity of Holy Places."¹³ Although the Indian nationalists, including Mahatma Gandhi, had adopted a pro-Arab stand on the issue, there was one significant difference: the League's vociferous criticisms of the struggle for a Jewish homeland were strongly rooted in Islam. Palestine was part of the *Jazirat al-Arab* and hence could not be placed under non-Muslim rule, let alone handed over to non-Muslims. This opposition to non-Muslim rule over Islamic territories remained the most vocal position of the Muslim League leaders.

Even otherwise secular leaders like Mohammed Ali Jinnah (1876?-1948), the founder and architect of Pakistan, used Islam to rationalize their opposition to the Jewish homeland. Speaking in the name of Muslims not only in India but everywhere, Jinnah fervently opposed the "infamous Balfour Declaration."¹⁴ The Muslim League called for the annulment of the Declaration as well as the British Mandate over Palestine, and warned that in "consonance with the rest of the Islamic world" the Indian Muslims would treat the British as an enemy of Islam if the latter "fails to alter its present pro-Jewish policy in Palestine."¹⁵ Anti-Semitic stereotypes and expressions were frequently aired during the deliberations of the Muslim League.

Interestingly, this Islamization of the Palestinian conflict kindled the pre-state Israeli interest in the Indian subcontinent. The limited yet belated contacts that the Jewish leadership sought with the Indian nationalists were primarily influenced by the efforts of the Mufti of Jerusalem, Hajj Amin al-Hussaini, to consolidate his political struggle and support base. He presented the Palestinian opposition to Jewish immigration as a broader Islamic struggle, and British India became one

of his primary targets. A number of British officials, especially those dealing with India, were opposed to Lord Balfour's endorsement of the Jewish demands in Palestine because they feared that such an overtly pro-Jewish position would antagonize the Indian Muslims.¹⁶ As the largest Muslim population outside the *dar al-Islam* (Land of Islam), the Indian Muslims were keenly interested in Palestinian affairs. Furthermore, the Palestinian question gradually became part of the domestic Indian agenda, and the fervently anti-Jewish position of the Muslim League was a factor in influencing the Congress party to adopt a more sympathetic position toward the Arabs.

Active Indian involvement in the Palestine question was seen as detrimental to Zionist aspirations; it would hamper and dilute even the limited British commitment to the realization of the Balfour Declaration. Denial of Indian support would curtail, if not eliminate, the Mufti's power base and his ability to "Islamize" the Palestinian cause. With this objective in view, the pre-state Israeli leadership began initiating contacts with India in the early 1930s. The limited but unsuccessful Zionist contacts with Mahatma Gandhi were also motivated by Islamic considerations.¹⁷ Likewise, by establishing contacts with such leading Muslim figures in India as Shaukat Ali, the pre-state Israeli leadership, including Chaim Weizmann, sought to isolate the Palestine problem from domestic Indian policies. This meeting between Ali and Weizmann in January 1931 was the first known direct political contact between the pre-state leadership and an Indian leader.¹⁸ Even though it had only modest success, the whole approach underscored the importance of moderating the position of the Indian Muslims toward the problems in Palestine.

a. The partition plan for Palestine:

The UN debate over the future of Palestine in early 1947 provided the first major opportunity for Pakistan to enunciate and articulate its foreign policy as a newly created state. The General Assembly debate came shortly after the partition of the Indian subcontinent and the establishment of Pakistan. Having entered the United Nations, it was attending its first UN session as a sovereign entity. If the membership of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) enabled India to articulate its position on Palestine, the UN debate over the

recommendations of UNSCOP gave Pakistan an opportunity to outline its positions vis-à-vis the future of Palestine.

In spite of prolonged deliberations, UNSCOP was unable to reach a unanimous agreement on a plan for the future of Palestine. While a seven-member majority advocated partition of Palestine into Arab and Jewish states, a three-member minority led by India called for the establishment of a federal Palestine, with adequate local autonomy for the Jewish regions. Confronted with this situation, the Political Committee of the UN General Assembly appointed two sub-committees to study various proposals concerning Palestine.¹⁹ Pakistan was elected a member and then chairman of the sub-committee dealing with the unitary scheme supported by the Arabs.

Pakistan was represented by its able and articulate Foreign Minister, Sir Zafrulla Khan (1893-1985). Capitalizing on his legal background, he vehemently argued that the UN had no legal or juridical authority to partition Palestine. He led the group of Islamic countries that opposed the partitioning of Palestine, and when this attempt failed, he sought to limit the size of the proposed Jewish state. On the eve of the General Assembly vote, he suggested, “the Arab state should be almost entirely Arab-owned and the Jewish state should be almost entirely Jewish-owned.” Had this amendment been accepted, he argued:

... the area of the Jewish state would have been reduced practically to the lands which the Jews owned. That is to say, it would have given the Jews only 40 per cent of what is now being included within the Jewish state and it would have been made the constitution of an independent Jewish State practically impossible.²⁰

Zafrulla Khan thus became the most articulate opponent of the partition plan. In the words of one Israeli official, he “was undoubtedly one of the ablest and most impressive delegates present from any country.”²¹

He was unable to avoid confronting the comparisons between the subcontinent and Palestine. In India, the Muslim League argued that as followers of a different religion, the Muslims were a separate nation, distinct from the majority Hindu population, and hence were entitled to sovereignty and statehood. As a representative of a state that had emerged from a religion-based territorial division, was he willing to concede similar rights to the Jews in Palestine? Zafrulla Khan felt that

the analogy between the Muslims in the subcontinent and the Jews in Palestine was false because:

- The population of Pakistan was 80 million, that is, more than 100 times that of the Jewish population of Palestine. The disproportion between the two territories involved was even more striking.
- Even though the majority party was not eager to do so, both parties eventually agreed to the partition of India. Similarly, if both Jews and Arabs agreed that partition was the only solution, Pakistan would be the first country to vote for such a course.
- In India, the Muslim minority was an integral part of the population, while in Palestine a minority was created artificially by settling Jews against the express will of the people.
- Muslims in India had claimed only those regions where they were a majority. In Palestine, the Jews were in a minority everywhere except in Jaffa, one out of 14 sub-districts.²²

Elsewhere he argued:

The United Nations cannot subscribe to the principle that a racial or religious minority, whether arising from national development or created as a result of immigration, can insist upon the breaking up of a homeland or shatter the political, geographical and economic unity of a country *without the consent and against the wishes of the majority.*²³

Important as they were, Zafrulla Khan conveniently ignored certain uncomfortable parallels. There was a vast territorial incongruity between East and West Pakistan, which were separated by over a thousand kilometers of Indian territory. A large proportion of the Muslim population opted to remain outside their “homeland” in the subcontinent. Furthermore, instead of criticizing the Arab majority for its refusal to recognize the rights of the Jewish minority, he argued that partition was acceptable in India because the non-Muslim majority had accepted it, and was unacceptable in Palestine because the Muslim majority had rejected it. One analyst aptly summed up the dilemma facing Pakistan: “While the device of dividing the country provided the only means of real freedom to the Indian Muslims, the very word partition was anathema to Muslims elsewhere.”²⁴

Pakistani leaders did not find any contradiction in supporting the rights of the Muslim minorities in India and opposing similar rights for

the Jews in Palestine. Along with other Arab and Islamic countries, Pakistan voted against the UN partition plan that formed the legal basis for the establishment of the Jewish state. Pakistan also voted against Israel's admission into the UN.²⁵ Within days after its formation, Israel formally requested Pakistan's recognition; the request went unanswered.²⁶

At least in public, Pakistan remained opposed to Israel and repeatedly reiterated its commitment to the Palestinian struggle and its refusal to recognize the Jewish state. Since then, Pakistan has adopted a complicated and at times lukewarm position toward Israel's conflicts with the Arabs.

b. The Arab-Israeli Conflict:

At regular intervals, Pakistan has reiterated its unconditional and unwavering commitment to the Palestinian cause, and unlike India, it has not recognized the Jewish state and this worked in its favor. It uses various occasions that commemorate the Palestinian cause to underline its support. These include the 29 November (marking the 1947 UN adoption of the partition resolution), Palestinian Revolution Day (marking the first *Fatah* military action against Israel in January 1965) and *Intifada Day* (honoring the commencement of the Palestinian uprising in 1987). The Palestinian question figures prominently in Pakistan's foreign policy pronouncements, and its leaders regularly express their support for "the just and noble cause of our Palestinian brethren to secure their national right to self-determination and an independent state of their own under the leadership of their sole and legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization." Unlike India, which refers to the Palestinian problem only in the Middle Eastern context, the issue figures in Pakistani debates concerning its policy toward the Middle East, the Islamic world, or American foreign policy and Washington's "double standards."

Pakistan has a mixed and complex track record concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict. At times there are subtle but significant differences between official positions and public opinion. Even while proclaiming officially anti-Israeli policies, various Pakistani leaders have pursued a pragmatic approach toward Israel and its conflict with the Arabs. In

addition to prolonged direct contacts, both countries have adopted similar or identical positions over some of crucial issues concerning the Middle East.

Since Pakistan is conceived as the homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent, Islam occupies an important position in its foreign policy. Beginning with Jinnah, various leaders have underscored the importance of solidarity with the Islamic world and the need for political unification of the *ummah*. As a result, the Middle East has been the Pakistan's prime foreign policy concern, and it sought to use Islam to promote its interests in Arab and Islamic countries. This posture became more pronounced after 1971, when East Pakistan seceded and became Bangladesh, thereby resolving Pakistan's geographical identity. The division not only enabled Pakistan to overcome its territorial incongruity, but also provided a focus to its external agenda, and the Islamic countries of the Middle East became its prime foreign policy targets. Support for the Arabs in their conflict with Israel thus became natural and inevitable for Pakistan, and its vehement opposition to the partition plan for Palestine reflected this compulsion.

At the same time, India, not Israel, has been Pakistan's primary concern and it has been trying to limit, if not eliminate, New Delhi's influence in the Middle East. Pakistan's desire for an Islamic bloc thus was not an anti-Israeli but an anti-Indian maneuver. If India was trying to use secular nationalism as a means of enlisting Arab support, Pakistan was seeking the same objective through Islam. Although they were not enthusiastic supporters of India during critical periods, the Arab countries nonetheless were not eager to displease India for Pakistan's sake. Some Arab leaders reprimanded Pakistan for exploiting Islam to promote its interests in the region. For instance, annoyed by its aspiration for leadership of the Islamic world, King Farouq of Saudi Arabia reportedly told his aides: "Don't you know that Islam was born on 14 August 1947?"²⁷

Furthermore, Egyptian President Nasser's personal friendship with Indian Prime Minister Nehru was not to Pakistan's liking. Pakistan's lukewarm responses to the Suez crisis of 1956 and the June 1967 Arab-Israeli war were primarily motivated by that friendship. Until Nasser's defeat in 1967, Arab nationalism based on socialism and not Islam,

dominated the Arab political agenda. The opposition of some of the key Arab countries to the US-sponsored military alliances and blocs were genuine and potent. Pakistan's endorsement of and membership in such alliances was at variance with the prevailing trend in the Middle East. As a result, one finds a wavering Pakistani attitude that was at odds with domestic public opinion.

In its quest for Arab support, Pakistan played an important role in Israel's exclusion from the Bandung Conference of 1955 and Israel's subsequent isolation from the Third World bloc. The idea of an Afro-Asian gathering originally came from Indonesia, and in December 1954, Burma (now Myanmar), Ceylon (later Sri Lanka), India, Indonesia and Pakistan met in Bogor, Ceylon to work out the agenda and decide on invitees. In principle, the participants agreed to invite "all countries in Asia and Africa, which have independent government."²⁸ At that time a number of countries had not recognized the People's Republic of China, and hence it was decided that invitation of any state "would in no way involve and *even imply*, any change in its view of the status of any other country" (italics added). Israel, however, was excluded from the Bandung Conference, which was aimed at becoming acquainted "with one another's point of view."

The Arab threat of boycott played an important role in Israel's exclusion from the Bandung conference, but there was also a Pakistani dimension.²⁹ According to V.K. Krishna Menon, a close confidant of Indian Prime Minister Nehru and later India's Defense Minister, while Burma, India and Sri Lanka supported inviting Israel, Indonesia and Pakistan were opposed. "Even Indonesia might have been persuaded at that time," he told Michael Brecher, "but Pakistan made use of our attitude to Israel's presence at Bandung in propaganda with the Arabs."³⁰

A year later, the Suez crisis presented a serious dilemma for Pakistan. Following Nasser's decision to nationalize the canal, 22 countries, including Pakistan, met in London to discuss the implications of the Egyptian move for freedom of passage. While other Third World countries such as Ceylon, India and Indonesia refused to attend the second meeting, which dictated peace terms to Egypt, Pakistan sided with the Western powers. Furthermore, during this meeting, Foreign Minister Firoz Khan declared that "Israel had come to stay."³¹ Islamic

and Third World solidarity drew the Pakistani population closer to Egypt, but the government was not prepared to overlook its newly acquired alliance with the UK and the US. As a result, the public resolutely supported Nasser while the government was guardedly supportive of the West. In short, the Islamic republic found itself supporting the West against another Muslim country.³²

If the government adopted a pro-Western policy over the issue, Pakistani diplomats went a step further. In private conversations, they were strongly supportive of Israel and its actions against Nasser. One such conversation took place in Ottawa on December 23, 1956, just weeks after the cease-fire, but before Israel withdrew from Sinai. The Indian embassy in Canada hosted a reception in honor of Prime Minister Nehru, and among others, the Israeli and Pakistani ambassadors were invited. Reporting on his conversation with his Pakistani counterpart, Israeli Ambassador M.S. Comay recorded:

..... the Pakistan High Commissioner Mirza Osman Ali Baig publicly came up to me, shook me by the hand, and warmly congratulated me on the 'wonderful show your splendid little army put up in beating the Egyptians.' His only regret was that the British and the French had intervened, otherwise we might have gone right through to Cairo.

In thanking him, I expressed regret that his Government apparently did not share his view, and continued to display great hostility towards us. He assured me that not all Pakistanis were pro-Arab or anti-Israel and that some of them, like himself, realized quite well what a menace Nasser was. He hoped that a way could be found some time of procuring a modus vivendi between Pakistan and Israel, and thought that Turkey was in the best position to bring it about because of its association with both countries. When I suggested this was a matter he and I might explore further sometime, he welcomed the idea....³³

The following March, Ambassador Baig exhibited similar sentiments when he met Comay during a reception hosted by the French embassy.³⁴ For his part, infuriated by Islamabad's negative position, Nasser excluded Pakistan from the United Nations Emergency Force that operated in the Sinai following the Israeli withdrawal. The subtle tension continued, and during the 1967 war Pakistan confined itself to verbal support for the Arabs.

The defeat of Nasser and his brand of Arab nationalism and the emergence of Islam as a political phenomenon rekindled Pakistan's involvement in the Arab-Israeli conflict. The formation of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) greatly enhanced its position. Discarding the traditional policy of political support to the Arabs, Pakistan became actively involved in the conflict. In the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Dayan charged that Pakistani pilots were flying Jordanian aircraft that took part in the war.³⁵ According to one Pakistani account, during the war "Pakistan pilots defended Syrian skies and even shot down an Israeli plane." Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto promised President Hafiz al-Assad that "should Damascus be in danger from the Zionists, a Pakistan brigade would be ready to fly over and fight shoulder-to-shoulder with the Syrians."³⁶ At its second summit conference at Lahore in February 1974, the OIC recognized the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and proclaimed it as the 'sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian nation in its just struggle.'³⁷

On occasion, Israel has also benefited from active Pakistani involvement in the region. Pakistani soldiers have served in a number of Islamic countries and took part in the national defense of the host countries. In some cases they actively suppressed internal rebellions against the conservative ruling monarchy, and in doing so, indirectly consolidated Israel's long-term interests in the region. One personality, Zia ul-Haq, often presented himself as a champion of the Palestinian cause. Among his numerous accomplishments he was decorated by King Hussein. What were his "services" to the Hashemite Kingdom?³⁸ As Brigadier, he headed a Pakistan contingent that was actively involved in the military suppression of the Palestinian rebellion in September 1970.

Pakistan also played an important role in the readmission of Egypt into the Arab fold following its peace with Israel. A number of Arab states were vehemently opposed to the Camp David agreement and many broke off ties with Cairo. Not content with the diplomatic isolation, they suspended Egypt, the founding member and a major player, from the Arab League. This move greatly undermined American peace efforts in the region. The political and diplomatic isolation of Egypt provided an important opportunity for Pakistan and its leader Gen. Zia ul-Haq. During the fourth OIC summit at Casablanca in 1984, he skillfully

managed Egypt's re-entry into the Islamic fold. Pleading that suspension of Egypt did not serve the Islamic or the Palestinian cause, he persuaded the principle players to reinstate Egypt. In seeking Egypt's return to the Islamic forum, he stated that "Pakistan was neither taking a partisan position nor was it espousing any particular point of view."³⁹ Egyptian re-entry into the OIC gradually led to its readmission to the Arab League and the resumption of its leadership role.⁴⁰

In areas such as American foreign aid, there has been limited cooperation and understanding between Israel and Pakistan, dating back to the 1950s. The entry of a non-Arab Islamic nation seeking to ingratiate itself with the US presented an opportunity for Israel to dilute American commitments to the Arab countries. When the US administration debated the question of military assistance to the Middle East, Israel was keen to include itself as well as Pakistan so that the share of the Arab countries would be limited. For its part, the US Administration suggested that arms supplies to Pakistan would not pose a threat to Israel.⁴¹ As one Israeli official in Washington informed Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett, if the Administration "now intends to spread military butter over the bread of Arabs it will have to be spread very thin. You will remember that 30 million (dollars) includes Pakistan and Israel."⁴²

Likewise, in the early 1950s, the US was hoping that by providing modest military assistance to countries such as Pakistan, Iraq, Syria and Israel, an anti-communist regional military organization could be established. There were strong suggestions that Israel would be included in such a military bloc. Even Pakistani Foreign Minister Zafrulla Khan felt that a Middle East defense organization was "inconceivable" without the participation of Israel.⁴³ The opposition of the Arab nationalists led by Nasser precluded Israel's participation in the Baghdad Pact, the forerunner of CENTO. Because of the American involvement and Pakistan's preoccupation with South Asia, Israel did not feel threatened by Pakistan's participation in such military alliances.

IV

Contacts and Controversies

Commenting on Pakistan's policy toward the Middle East, one analyst remarked: "By Western standards, Pakistani leaders have ... maintained a calm, statesmanlike demeanor in times of highly emotional international crisis such as the 1956 Suez War and the conflict between Israel and the Arab countries in June 1967."⁴⁴ This pragmatic attitude toward Israel has been more clearly exhibited by some of the principle players in Pakistan's foreign policy. As will be discussed below, behind a public, formal position that is pro-Arab, Pakistani leaders have been adopting a less rigid, more pragmatic policy vis-à-vis Israel.

a. Zafrulla Khan(1893-1985):

Pakistani pragmatism ironically began with Sir Zafrulla Khan, who spearheaded the opposition of the Islamic countries to the UN partition plan. In September 1945, a couple of years before Britain handed over the Palestinian question to the newly formed United Nations, Zafrulla Khan visited Palestine. Before this six-day visit, he met Chaim Weizmann in London and discussed the future of Palestine. Following the meeting, Weizmann asked a Jewish Agency official in Jerusalem "to see to it that (Zafrulla Khan's) stay in Palestine, and his contacts with our work, are made as interesting and as agreeable as possible."⁴⁵ Upon his return, Zafrulla Khan wrote to the Jewish leader that the problem of Palestine "is much more complicated than I had imagined, but let us hope that a just and equitable solution may soon be discovered."⁴⁶

Weeks after the UN endorsement of the partition of Palestine, Orientalist Uriel Heyd (then working for *yishuv* intelligence in London), remarked that there were noticeable changes in the position of Zafrulla Khan, who had since become the first Foreign Minister of Pakistan. During his talks in Damascus, Zafrulla Khan indicated that partition, which he vehemently opposed, was the only solution for Palestine. He even counseled the Arabs to allow the establishment of the Jewish state. Encouraged by this assessment, in January 1948 Chaim Weizmann wrote to the Foreign Minister drawing parallels between Pakistan and

our small state in Palestine, (that) shall soon have to follow you. Many problems will be common to both of us, and it is my earnest hope that it may be possible for us to deal with them together, and in cooperation, for the good of both of our peoples.⁴⁷

Subsequently, just over a month before the establishment of the Jewish state, both leaders met in New York on 12 April 1948, but the meeting did not modify Pakistani opposition to partition.⁴⁸

In February 1952, while on an official visit to Egypt, the Pakistani Foreign Minister declared that Israel must be regarded as “a limb in the body of the Middle East” and urged a peaceful settlement. He later made similar statements in Baghdad and Karachi.⁴⁹ Coming from the Foreign Minister of an important Islamic country that vehemently opposed and even sought to scuttle the partition plan, these declarations made Israel eager to pursue the matter. Even if the Arab and Islamic countries were not willing to endorse his position, it encouraged Israel to pursue the bilateral relations with Pakistan. India’s hesitation in following up its recognition of Israel with normalization became an additional incentive for Israel.

Some Israeli officials believed that Pakistan would preempt India and establish ties with Israel. In late 1949, Abba Eban reported, “the Pakistani representative at the UN was scheming to embarrass India by bringing his government to recognize Israel before India did.”⁵⁰ One Australian diplomat expressed similar optimism, and some of his colleagues even offered to help obtain Pakistani recognition.⁵¹ On 7 April 1952, accompanied by Political Counselor Gideon Rafael, Eban (who was Israel’s Permanent Representative at the UN and also functioned as its ambassador in Washington) met his Pakistani counterpart A.S. Bokhari and discussed the Foreign Minister’s statements. The discussion as summarized by Eban dealt only with the Arab dimension and was conspicuously silent on bilateral relations.⁵²

Continuing this dialogue on January 14, 1953, Ambassador Eban and Rafael met Zafrulla Khan in New York and discussed the issue of Pakistani recognition of Israel.⁵³ The Pakistani Foreign Minister disclosed that his government had retreated from the favorable approach adopted by its predecessor. While the previous government of Liaquat Ali Khan(1948-51) could have normalized relations with Israel, the present government of Khwaja Nazimuddin(1951-53) was weaker and more

susceptible to public pressure from Muslim extremists. He reminded the Israeli interlocutors that he himself was attacked for his moderation.⁵⁴ Even though there was no enmity between the two states, Zafrulla Khan felt that rapprochement was unlikely. At the same time, he emphasized that Pakistan's position should not be construed as anti-Jewish. He reminded the Israeli diplomats that the small Jewish community in Karachi was not harmed during periods of anti-Israeli incitement. While his country could serve as an "agent of rapprochement between Israel and Arab states, it ought not to prejudice this status by recognizing Israel." He expressed his support for further contacts between Pakistani and Israeli experts and students, as well as between the diplomats of both countries.

Pakistan's increasing identification with the Arab states, coupled with mounting domestic opposition facing Zafrulla Khan, raised doubts in Israel about pursuing the Pakistani Foreign Minister. For example, in a confidential note to Eban, Foreign Ministry Director-General Walter Eytan remarked: "Whether you think there is any point in another talk with the Ahmedist, I leave entirely to your judgment. *It is time Pakistan asserted herself and stopped dancing to the Arab tune.*"⁵⁵ Before long, Zafrulla Khan left the ministry to join the International Court of Justice in the Hague.

b. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (1928-79):

The second most charismatic leader after Jinnah was Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who played a dominant role in Pakistan's politics. Even his political execution in 1979 did not diminish his popularity. Known for his oratory, as Foreign Minister, President and finally as Prime Minister he dominated Pakistani politics for over two decades and became its best-known popular leader in the outside world. It is generally argued that like Zafrulla Khan, Bhutto was also vehemently opposed to the Jewish state. His biographer, Stanley Wolpert, observed that as Foreign Minister, in early October 1965, he warned his subordinates,

he had been told that India was moving 'closer to Israel' because the Arab states, who had met in Casablanca in September, firmly supported Pakistan's cause (in the Indo-Pakistan war of 1965). 'India is seeking to enlist Jewish influence in USA,' Zulfi wired the ministry, and 'Israel is actively working on behalf of India and Washington.' ...⁵⁶

Another friend of Bhutto observed: “There were two issues he was strong on: the destiny of Pakistan and *a fanatical hatred of Israel which had recently been established.*”⁵⁷ His behavior as host of the second Islamic Summit Conference in Lahore in February 1974 was often seen as the hallmark of his diplomacy in befriending the Islamic countries. Reiterating the familiar position at that gathering, he remarked: “... any agreement, any protocol, any understanding that postulates the continuance of Israeli occupation of the Holy City or the transfer of the City to any non-Muslim or non-Arab sovereignty will not be worth the paper it is written on.”⁵⁸

A careful perusal of available archival material presents a different picture of Bhutto, at least in his early days. His first exposure to foreign policy came in September 1957, when he was included in the Pakistani delegation to the UN led by Foreign Minister Sir Feroz Khan Noon (1893-1970). The following March, he was made chairman of the Pakistani delegation to the UN Conference on the Law of Sea in Geneva, where he met and dined with his Israeli counterpart Shabtai Rosenne. This was not their first encounter; they had met the previous year during the UN session. Bhutto apparently knew Sir Godfrey Davis, a cousin of Rosenne’s late mother, who served as Chief Judge in Sindh before the partition of India.

Describing their dinner meeting, Rosenne recorded:

... Bhutto does not conceal his dislike for the Arabs or how he despises the way they conduct their political affairs. His attitude towards us seems to be that, while the 1947 decision of the General Assembly was bad, and was correctly opposed by Pakistan then, Israel is a political reality and it would be in Pakistan’s interest to recognize this fact and to draw all the appropriate conclusions. On the more general level he seems to admire us both militarily and socially, and I think he was sincere in his expression of regret at his inability to visit Israel.

He expressed the view that a State like Pakistan could have a part in the mediating between us and the Arabs. On the other hand *he felt that Sir Zafrulla Khan may well have prejudiced the Pakistan ability to do this by his outspoken advocacy of the Arab case in earlier meetings of the General Assembly.* He expressed concurrence with my point of view that if Pakistan really thought along these lines, she would be better not to work publicly and to concentrate all her efforts in inducing the Arabs themselves to a more reasonable frame of mind. He said that anyhow there would be no

initiative from Pakistan for the time being. This is because of the Kashmir question When he said that he himself was very likely going on a tour to South America in order to win support of his case (that is, Kashmir), *I gently hinted that under certain circumstances we might be able to offer something.*

Impressed by Bhutto's "openness," Rosenne added that both "are in 'old boy terms (in the English sense) even in the company of other diplomats and representatives."⁵⁹ Even though it is still not possible to reconstruct his "private views" in later years, it is essential to remember that Bhutto was Field Marshal Ayub Khan's Foreign Minister during the Arab-Israeli war of 1967. The Pakistani government reciprocated Arab support "with its own verbal offering when the Arabs confronted the Israelis in May 1967."⁶⁰ Nasser's popularity among the Arab masses until the war and his strong friendship with India offered little incentive to Pakistan to go beyond verbal support to the Arabs. It was during his tenure as Prime Minister that Pakistan showed an active involvement in the Arab-Israeli conflict and had symbolic participation in the 1973 war. Likewise, Pakistani soldiers were sent to a number of Arab countries as mercenaries during his period.

c. Gen. Zia ul-Haq (1924-88):

The most promising comparison between the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Jewish State of Israel came from Gen. Zia ul-Haq. Lacking a political constituency, he skillfully exploited Islam to legitimize and consolidate his military dictatorship. Presenting himself as a simple, pious and devoted Muslim, he institutionalized religious radicalism in Pakistan. In so doing, he found Israel to be his strange ally. Toward the end of 1981, he remarked: "Pakistan is like Israel, an ideological state. Take out the Judaism from Israel and it will fall like a house of cards. Take Islam out of Pakistan and make it a secular state; it would collapse."⁶¹ He likewise surprised many observers in March 1986, when he called on the PLO to recognize the Jewish state.⁶²

As discussed elsewhere, he was actively involved both in the 1970 Black September massacre of the Palestinians in Jordan as well as in Egypt's re-entry into the Islamic fold more than a decade later. Not everyone was happy at the turn of events. Even a decade later, some Pakistani commentators have not forgiven Gen. Zia for his cardinal sin

of securing Arab recognition for “an illegitimate usurper state like Israel.” During the Islamabad summit of the OIC in March 1997, an editorial in the mass-circulation *The Muslim* lamented: “Pakistan allowed itself to be used as a cat’s paw when Gen. Zia ul-Haq brought back an unrepentant Egypt into the fold of OIC at the carnival in Casablanca in 1984 and his political heirs are continuing with his legitimacy to the illegal immoral Zionist entity.”⁶³

d. Ms. Benazir Bhutto and Mian Nawaz Sharif:

The late 1980s, especially since the end of the Cold War and the reintroduction of democracy in Pakistan, ushered in a new trend with regard to Israel. Even though this did not signal immediate reversal of Pakistan’s policy, normalization has come out of the closet and been seriously debated in public. While in office, both Ms. Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif have indicated their willingness to deal with Israel.

Prime Minister Ms. Bhutto’s desire to visit the Gaza Strip in August 1994 marked an important development in Pakistani policy toward the Jewish state. While seeking to express a visible support for the Palestinians, she also aspired to be the first foreign leader to visit the incipient Palestinian entity. The honor of being the first foreign leader to greet Chairman Yasser Arafat in Gaza however, went to another woman Prime Minister, Tancu Ciller of Turkey.

The drama began on August 24, 1994, when the Pakistani Foreign Ministry announced that on her way to Cairo to attend the World Population and Development Conference, Ms. Bhutto would visit the Palestinian Authority in the Gaza Strip on September 4. An unnamed Israeli diplomat told *Kol Israel* that a few days before the official announcement in Islamabad, Pakistan had directly informed Israel of its plans “via diplomatic channels.”⁶⁴ The radio report also carried an interview with a Pakistan Foreign Ministry official, who observed that since Pakistan does not recognize Israel, the logistics of the visit “may be sorted out between the Palestinians and Israelis.” He ruled out the possibility that Ms. Bhutto would arrive directly at Ben-Gurion Airport near Tel Aviv and then proceed to the Gaza Strip by road. He maintained that the intended visit to Gaza “would not amount to in any way a recognition of Israel.”

Israel neither objected to the visit nor insisted that Ms. Bhutto visit Israel as well.⁶⁵ At the same time, it wanted all foreign visits to the areas under Palestinian control to be coordinated, lest border crossings such as Rafah become pockets of Palestinian sovereignty. For their part, the Palestinian officials claimed that they “have the right to receive whomever they want” without seeking prior permission from Israel.⁶⁶ According to the agreements signed by Israel and the Palestinians, during the interim period Israel enjoys security control over the whole of the occupied territories and the Palestinian Authority cannot invite foreign leaders and personnel without prior consultation or coordination. Thus, Israel wanted Ms. Bhutto to obtain its agreement to the visit. Underscoring the importance of this issue, Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin remarked: “Israel is the one who will decide whether Benazir Bhutto will arrive or not.”⁶⁷

The situation took a turn for the worse on August 28, when the Pakistani ambassador in Tunis, T.K. Khan (also accredited as Pakistani representative to the Palestinian Authority), arrived at the Rafah border crossing without any notice. After having waiting for nearly nine hours, he was denied entry and returned to Cairo. While not insisting on Pakistani recognition, Israel accused the Pakistani diplomat of acting “as if Israel does not exist.”⁶⁸ With the backing and knowledge of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, Rabin’s military secretary, Maj. Gen. Danny Yatom, issued the orders preventing Khan’s entry into Gaza. From the beginning, Pakistani officials indicated that they would not deal directly with Israel. Amid Israeli insistence on prior consultation, a Pakistani diplomat remarked that Islamabad would not seek permission from Israel, which it does not recognize, and added if the Palestinians “wish to seek permission from *others*, it is up to them.”⁶⁹ Infuriated by this behavior, Prime Minister Rabin admonished Ms. Bhutto, saying, “the lady from Pakistan should be taught some manners.”⁷⁰

For Pakistan, “coordination” meant an implicit and visible recognition of the Jewish state, and its leaders were not ready for such a public display. Ms. Bhutto gave up the visit, “when I heard I needed a permit from the Israeli authority.”⁷¹ Supporting her stand, an editorial in *The Frontier Post* remarked that Pakistan’s policy “precluded any contact with Israelis” and hence, “the Palestinians should have been allowed to work

out the sticky details with the Israeli authorities prior to the announcement by Pakistan confirming the visit.” It admonished Israel for blackmailing “those intending to visit the newly autonomous territories into according it recognition, albeit indirectly, by forcing them to formally apply to it for permission.”⁷²

The uncompromising position that prevented Ms. Bhutto’s visit underscored the basic dilemma facing both countries. Accepting Pakistan’s position of “no contacts” would have had serious repercussions for Israel, because it would have established a precedent whereby the Palestinian Authority could invite foreign leaders and elements hostile to Israel. Such visits need not be confined only to political or diplomatic missions. As a result of the controversy, prior Palestinian consultation with Israel has been institutionalized. Likewise, seeking Israeli “permission” would have implied a new Pakistani attitude toward Israel and hence would have been domestically unpopular for Ms. Bhutto. The bitterness over the controversy did not last long. Weeks later, on October 26, 1994, a Pakistani representative was present at the ceremony marking the signing of the Israeli-Jordanian peace treaty in the Arava.⁷³

The visit that never was, is not the only occasion in which both countries interacted in recent years. While Israel rarely discusses its policy in public, the Pakistani media have often reported Israeli overtures and suggested that diplomats from both countries posted abroad have been meeting, discussing and sharing views during social and diplomatic gatherings.⁷⁴ On the eve of India’s decision in January 1992 to normalize relations with Israel, an unnamed Israeli diplomat was quoted as saying to his Pakistani counterpart: “We have no geostrategic conflict of interest with Pakistan; when Palestinians are talking to us, why cannot we sit together at a dinner table and talk.”⁷⁵ Though Pakistan officially denied any secret contacts to discuss normalization, the Pakistani ambassador in Washington, Ms. Abida Hussain, spoke in favor of a dialogue with Israel.⁷⁶

Likewise, the controversies surrounding Ms. Bhutto’s planned visit to Gaza did not prevent Pakistan from attending the first Middle East and North Africa Economic Summit in Casablanca in 1994. Did the participation of the Minister of Commerce and Tourism mean economic cooperation between Israel and Pakistan? Ms. Bhutto was evasive: “We

have to deal with and study this issue cautiously and in cooperation with the Islamic countries,” and added that a just peace takes precedence over cooperation in vital areas such as water, electricity and oil projects.⁷⁷

A few months later, Pakistan’s ambassador at the UN, Ahmad Kamal, attended a reception hosted by his Israeli counterpart, Gad Ya’acobi, and thereby earned the wrath of a section of the Pakistani media. In a harsh editorial, the Islamabad-based Urdu daily *Khabrain* remarked:

We feel that no Pakistani should make any contact with an Israeli national in any third country because Pakistan cannot forget the sanctity of Jerusalem. How then can he meet with an Israeli? ... Any Muslim or patriot Pakistan will consider making contact, developing relations, or attending the receptions of Israeli leaders as a conspiracy against the country and the community until the independence of Jerusalem is secured and a sovereign Palestinian state is established.⁷⁸

This was not the first time that a diplomat from one of the countries had attended a party hosted by the other. Such diplomatic encounters have been happening for a long time. For instance, as early as in November 1958, Israeli ambassador in Holland Hanan Cidor attended a farewell reception hosted by Pakistani ambassador Begum Liaquat Ali Khan, the widow of Pakistan’s first President.⁷⁹ These past rendezvous do not diminish the importance of Kamal’s presence at Ya’acobi’s reception.

The assassination of Prime Minister Rabin in November 1995 signaled a small opening in the Pakistani position. The murder enabled many Arab countries to recognize the internal schism facing Israel over the peace process and gave them an opportunity to personally convey their condolences at the funeral at Mt. Herzl. At least at the official level, Pakistan shared similar sentiments, and in an unprecedented development a government spokesman denounced the assassination, saying, “Pakistan deploras all acts of terrorism without exception.”⁸⁰

Besides these political and diplomatic developments, the Pakistani media have become more open about security-related contacts between the two countries. For instance, citing intelligence sources in September 1995, *The News* reported that “during the Afghan war highly skilled Israelis provided guerrilla training to some Afghan groups and in the later stage of the Afghan war the chief of Pakistan’s most respected intelligence service had held a top secret meeting with a senior *Mossad* official in Vienna.”⁸¹ Though difficult to prove, the publication of such

reports in the Pakistani media suggests that cooperation with Israel is beneficial to Pakistan and is no longer an anathema. Likewise, in May 1996, another report suggested that Pakistani law enforcement officials met with top brass of Israeli intelligence during a conference on counter-terrorism in the Philippines. It disclosed that in February that year,

in several one-to-one sessions during the conference two senior major generals and three brigadiers of the Israeli intelligence met the senior Pakistani officials to listen and explain their (representatives) methods and strategies to deal with the worse wave of terrorism facing the two nations.

In contrast to the past, this report, based on interviews with Pakistani participants, presents a positive picture of the contacts and their usefulness.⁸²

e. Economic contact:

The absence of normal diplomatic relations has not inhibited direct or indirect economic relations between Israel and Pakistan. Until the mid-1960s Israel had direct air links with India, and British Overseas Airways Corporation, the forerunner of British Airways, maintained two weekly flights from Lod to India that stopped in or flew over Pakistan. Yielding to Arab pressure for an economic boycott of Israel, in May 1967 Pakistan prohibited over flight rights to aircraft flying from Israel.⁸³ The establishment of the Damascus-based Islamic Office for the Boycott of Israel in January 1981 presented legal hurdles to Israeli-Pakistani trade. In September 1994, Pakistan joined countries such as Syria and Saudi Arabia in signing a declaration banning postal contacts with Israel.⁸⁴

At the same time, media reports have suggested various commercial transactions between the two countries. Since the Oslo Accords, it has been suggested that Israel is conducting a huge trade with Arab and Islamic countries with which it does not have diplomatic ties.⁸⁵ In March 1987 *Kol Israel* reported that a plant in Kibbutz Deganya A exported, through India, \$100,000 worth of marble-cutting equipment to Pakistan.⁸⁶ Months after the signing of the Oslo Accords, a kibbutz official disclosed that Israel has been exporting to a number of Muslim countries including Pakistan.⁸⁷

In September 1995, the widely read Pakistani daily *The News* reported

that the official carrier, Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), “successfully negotiated and bought a consignment of aircraft parts from the state-owned Israel Aircraft Industries.” Estimated at \$1 million, this was seen as the first official contract between two government organizations. The shipment, delivered through the French national carrier, the report added, was “the first step towards establishing normal relations with Israel.”⁸⁸ Following a public outcry, the PIA declared that it had placed an order with the Boeing company for fire detection and protection kits for its Boeing aircraft, but when it noticed that the consignment was sent from Israel, the PIA had refused to accept the cargo.⁸⁹

Recently, a number of private individuals have been trying to bring Islamic tourists to Jerusalem; one such enterprise involves Israeli businessman Ya’acov Nimrodi and Saudi billionaire Adnan Khashoggi. They have joined forces to launch a travel firm called *Ziara International*, with the aim of encouraging Islamic pilgrimage.⁹⁰ Likewise, weeks after the nuclear tests, Israel signed an agreement with the Royal Jordanian airline to fly Israeli cargoes to countries such as Pakistan with which it does not have diplomatic relations.⁹¹ The Israeli media has regularly suggested that tourists from a number of Muslim countries that do not have diplomatic ties with Israel have been visiting Islamic sites in Jerusalem. One such highly publicized visit in May 1993 by 200 Muslim pilgrims from Libya turned out to be a controversial public relations disaster.⁹² In late 1992, long before the Oslo Accords, a group of Pakistani businessmen reportedly visited Israel to discuss business opportunities. In an unusual development in 1994, an official Israeli publication disclosed that over 300 Pakistanis visited Israel during the previous year.⁹³

f. Forums:

The United Nations has functioned as the prime meeting point for Israeli and Pakistani diplomats; such contacts date back to the early 1950s. Even while not participating in official meetings with Israeli representatives, Pakistani diplomats often met them in private and apologized for their inability to attend such meetings. On issues such as Tunisian independence and the question of Arab refugees, there were exchanges of views from diplomats of both countries. For example, in late 1952, the Pakistani ambassador at the UN, A.S. Bokhari, privately lauded Abba Eban’s statement concerning the refugee problem in the

Middle East, “although he would probably have to say opposite in political debate.”⁹⁴ Bilateral contacts were maintained in numerous other venues, ranging from Tokyo in the East to Ottawa in the West; some of these contacts and discussions took place at parties hosted by the Indian embassies.

Pakistani missions in Washington and London have also functioned as venues for diplomatic contacts with Israel. Because of the sensitivity of the issue, American leaders and officials have refrained until recently from publicly seeking Pakistani recognition of Israel.⁹⁵ Pro-Israeli groups and organizations in the US have been seeking of late to modify Pakistan’s policy. For example, in August 1992, the powerful Anti-Defamation League (ADL) of *B’nai Brith* expressed its astonishment at Pakistan’s suggestion that there were no changes in its policy toward Israel. In a personal letter addressed to Foreign Secretary (permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs) Shahryar Khan, the ADL leaders noted that “a new era of political, economic, cultural and social relations would surely prove mutually beneficial to Israel and Pakistan.”⁹⁶ Likewise, influential Jewish philanthropists, including the Rothschilds, have actively pursued Israeli-Pakistani normalization, at times with financial contributions. To this end, in the 1960s, Edmund de Rothschild patronized Karachi-based businessman M.A. Ahmed, who had visited Israel in the 1950s.⁹⁷

As part of a strategy to enlist the support of the US and its pro-Israeli elements, Pakistani leaders sought to distinguish between Israel and the Jewish people. In so doing, they attempted to explain their policies as anti-Israeli and not anti-Jewish. Hosting the Second OIC Summit Conference in 1974, Prime Minister Bhutto remarked: “To Jews as Jews we can only be friendly; to Jews as Zionists, intoxicated with their militarism and reeking with technological arrogance, we refuse to be hospitable.”⁹⁸

Western countries such as Australia had also offered to aid Israel in securing Pakistani recognition, and of late a number of smaller countries have also entered the arena. One such player is Nepal, the first South Asian country to establish diplomatic relations with the Jewish state.⁹⁹ During his official visit to Israel in November 1993, Nepalese Agricultural Minister Ram Chandra Poudel disclosed that Nepal indirectly brokered the tenuous relations between Israel and Pakistan.¹⁰⁰ Available archival

materials indicate that Israeli and Pakistani ambassadors in Kathmandu have been meeting regularly.¹⁰¹ The end of Israel's political isolation and the opening of diplomatic missions in various parts of the world have provided new avenues for such contacts. Pakistani media suggests that missions in Amman, Ankara and Beijing are closely following relations between the host countries and Israel.¹⁰² During his official visit in August 1992, Arab League secretary-general Esmat Abdul-Meguid reportedly informed Pakistani leaders that most of the Arab states were preparing to recognize Israel, and that Pakistan could help make this process smooth and unanimous if it established relations with the Jewish state at the earliest opportunity.¹⁰³

As for Israel, possible contact with Pakistan was an important consideration in its decision in late 1950 to open a legation in Tehran.¹⁰⁴ At times, Israel directly or indirectly supported Pakistani candidacy to various UN bodies. It abstained from voting when Pakistan was elected to the Security Council in December 1951, and when Zafrulla Khan was elected to the International Court of Justice a few years later.

The Nuclear Dimension

Pakistan's nuclear program and its nuclear tests in May 1998, following a similar move by India, brought a new dimension to relations between Pakistan and Israel. Mutual security concerns enabled them to establish direct and indirect contacts with one another, and Israeli leaders emphasized the fact that Pakistan was not an enemy of Israel. It has long been widely accepted that together with India, both countries had crossed the nuclear threshold and could easily assemble deliverable nuclear devices. Unlike Pakistan, Israel had developed a sophisticated and well-argued security doctrine based on nuclear deterrence. Both countries regard the nuclear option as a guarantee against the numerical and conventional superiority of their adversaries. In many ways, both countries benefited from the same patrons -- the United States and France. Their willingness to seek and secure a regional, as opposed to global, arms control arrangement is part of their security policy; hence, their position enjoys greater appreciation and understanding in non-proliferation circles. Unlike India, their prolonged refusal to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is not based on ideological considerations, nor do they aspire to seize the moral high ground. Thus, they are not unduly worried about the discriminatory nature of the non-proliferation regime. Their fundamental approach to nuclear deterrence, regional arms control and non-proliferation is rooted in realistic security considerations.

Pakistan's nuclear tests brought a new dimension to the bilateral relationship, and for the first time, ties with Pakistan have been placed on the agenda of Israeli political discourse. Israeli officials began adopting a friendlier posture toward Pakistan, and the closely-guarded contacts of the past began to be made public. For instance, weeks after the Pakistani tests, *Channel 2 Television* disclosed that "the relations with Pakistan were so close, especially in the 1980s, that they almost stood on the verge of diplomatic relations."¹⁰⁵ When Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Shamir headed the national unity government (1984-90), Israel maintained "a permanent representation in Pakistan." It is essential to

remember that while the Shah was in power, Israeli had an unpublicized but permanent mission in Tehran. Though it was never called an embassy or mission, the Israeli officials had direct access to the monarch, a privilege even accredited ambassadors did not enjoy. The television report also indicated that senior officials from both countries visited “each other and even discussed huge deals.” The relationship began to wane in the early 1990s, especially when Israeli leaders, including Peres, became apprehensive about repercussions in the incipient relations with India.¹⁰⁶

On the other hand, the nuclear tests underlined the specific security concerns of Pakistan vis-à-vis Israel, and vice versa. Both before and after the tests, Pakistani leaders and analysts were apprehensive of Israel’s intentions. Past fears of Israel joining hands with India against its nuclear program resurfaced. For its part, Israel is concerned about the possibility that Pakistan might transfer nuclear technology to other Islamic countries in the region. Consequently, both countries adopted positions that accommodate each other’s security concerns and appear to have reached a *modus vivendi* following the nuclear tests in South Asia.

a. Preemptive strike against Kahuta:

India’s concerns over Pakistan’s nuclear program and Israeli apprehensions about an “Islamic bomb” paved the way for repeated speculations that both countries were planning to cooperate against Pakistan. This process was exacerbated by the general conspiracy theories prevailing in Pakistan. It was often suggested that India would follow Israel’s example and conduct an Osirak-type pre-emptive strike against Pakistan’s nuclear facility at Kahuta. Although at regular intervals, Indian leaders have denied that they were seeking military options against Pakistan’s nuclear program, certain developments heightened Pakistan’s concerns.

In an interview in *Le Monde* in June 1986, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi emphatically denied that India was trying to follow the Israeli example, and remarked: “We try not to conduct ourselves as certain other countries do.”¹⁰⁷ However, a month later, armed with satellite photos supplied by convicted American spy Jonathan Pollard, senior Israeli diplomats reportedly met Rajiv Gandhi’s emissary in Paris and discussed the

common threat posed by the Kahuta facility.¹⁰⁸ The Indian prime minister's somewhat controversial statements about Pakistan "making available" its nuclear weapons to countries that finance the nuclear program intensified the media speculation.¹⁰⁹

Analysts differ over the origin of the pre-emptive strike theory. Quoting then head of the Jaffee Center and former director of Israeli Military Intelligence, Aharaon Yariv, Indian journalist Bharat Karnad suggested that "several approaches (were made) over the years ... to New Delhi, *some predating the 1981 Israeli bombing of the Iraqi reactor near Baghdad*, for assistance for hitting Pakistani nuclear installations."¹¹⁰ Victor Ostrovsky, a former low-level Mossad official, disclosed that during Mrs. Gandhi's tenure a team of Indian scientists visited Israel in July 1984 to discuss their apprehensions over the Pakistani program.¹¹¹ According to another account, in 1983, then Defense Minister Ariel Sharon proposed that both countries act jointly to destroy Pakistan's budding nuclear capability.¹¹²

According to this theory, because of operational as well as political considerations Israel sought India's active cooperation in conducting a pre-emptive strike against Kahuta. The Indian air base in Jamnagar near the Indo-Pakistani border was frequently mentioned as the possible refueling site. The need to involve Israel in a military operation against a target not far from India's borders, indicate the operational difficulties faced by the Indian air force in precision targeting.

From the early 1980s and until after the Pakistani nuclear tests in May 1998, the plan largely remained a media speculation. The reasons are not difficult to understand. Yariv charged that the plan fell through because India wanted "us to do the dirty work for you and not get involved even a little bit yourself."¹¹³ Likewise, in July 1988 a Pakistani commentator remarked that the plan fell through "because of the Israeli refusal to go it alone and the Indian unwillingness to join the venture."¹¹⁴

Besides the lack of Indian enthusiasm, logistical constraints inhibited Israel from operating alone. The Indian reluctance to join hands with Israel and actively pursue a common military response against Pakistan appears logical and inevitable. While it might have gained certain tactical benefits, a pre-emptive strike would have been contrary to vital Indian interests. Unlike Osirak, there is no buffer between India and the target.

A vast segment of India's economic and strategic installations, such as oil refineries, nuclear facilities, prime industries and other strategic economic targets are within striking distance of conventional retaliatory strikes by Pakistan. India also lacked the kind of superpower guarantees that Israel managed to secure following the Osirak bombing.

Furthermore, the Kahuta facility is not far from the Indian border. If it was to avoid radiation fallout reaching its border, India should have carried out the attack before 1984, when the facility began producing enriched uranium. Any pre-emptive strike after 1984 would have led to unacceptable radiation as well as political fallout. Closer scrutiny indicates that India's unwillingness was not the only stumbling block for an Israel-initiated pre-emptive strike against Pakistan. Partly because of India's reluctance, Israel was seeking a separate understanding with Pakistan. Sharon's senior aide Avraham Tamir reportedly visited Pakistan in the mid-1980s and sought to dispel Islamabad's fears, and even concluded certain military and conventional arms deals with President Zia ul-Haq.¹¹⁵ Partly to alleviate such fears, in December 1985 Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President Zia ul-Haq reached an understanding not to attack each other's nuclear installations.¹¹⁶

This bilateral agreement was not enough to defuse the issue, however, and the rumored impending pre-emptive strike against Kahuta became a staple diet for the Indian, Israeli and Western media. The Indo-Israeli "conspiracy" figured prominently and regularly in Pakistani media as well. Some even suggested that Palestinian leader Arafat had warned Pakistan of an impending Israeli attack.¹¹⁷ In July 1991, Pakistani Prime Minister Sharif told *Arab News* that there was "certain apprehension" about a possible Israeli attack.¹¹⁸ In March 1994, it was alleged that some American Jewish soldiers participating in the US-Pakistani joint military exercise were conducting secret surveys about Kahuta.¹¹⁹ In December 1997, the former chief of Pakistan's powerful Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), Gen. Hamid Gul, disclosed that in July 1988 his service had discovered a senior US embassy official in Islamabad who was spying for Israel. Among others, he was suspected of collecting information on Kahuta and was quietly expelled.¹²⁰

These fears were rekindled on the eve of Pakistan's nuclear tests in May 1998. Unlike previous occasions, this time the speculation emanated from an unlikely source — Egypt — and was quickly picked up by

Pakistan. On May 18, citing Egyptian sources, *Jang* charged that Israel would attack Pakistan, if the latter “is not stopped from conducting a nuclear test.”¹²¹ Pakistani media charged that two of the five Indian tests were Israeli devices. Joining the chorus, Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan charged that Israel might have helped India’s nuclear tests.¹²² The departing American Ambassador in Islamabad, Thomas Simons, attributed Pakistan’s nuclear tests partly to its apprehensions over an impending Israeli attack on its nuclear installations.¹²³

To release the tension and avoid costly miscalculations, Israel conveyed, through the US, that it had no aggressive designs against Pakistan.¹²⁴ On June 6, a Pakistan foreign ministry spokesman declared: “There was a real threat of attack on our installations on the night of 27th May (that is, on the eve of the Pakistani tests), which was *thwarted through immediate diplomatic activities*.”¹²⁵ Both Indian and Israeli officials had vehemently denied any involvement or cooperation in the Indian nuclear tests. In addition, Israel offered an olive branch to Pakistan, and Deputy Defense Minister Silvan Shalom summed up the official sentiments: “We do not view Pakistan as our enemy. Pakistan has never been Israel’s enemy, Pakistan has never threatened Israel. Consequently, we do not view this development as leading to a situation where the weapons are aimed against Israel.”¹²⁶ This accommodating attitude toward nuclear Pakistan is manifested in the Israeli concerns about an Islamic bomb.

b. The Islamic Bomb:

Since the early 1970s, various Pakistani leaders have repeatedly portrayed their nuclear program as an Islamic venture.¹²⁷ If Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto christened it an Islamic bomb, Gen. Zia declared that Pakistan’s achievements would be available to other Islamic countries of the Middle East.¹²⁸ Pakistani leaders and commentators proudly presented the nuclear program as an Islamic endeavor, and sought political as well as financial support from oil-rich countries of the Middle East. The religious overtones gave positive implications to Pakistan’s pursuit of the nuclear path, and even implied a symbolic endorsement by other Islamic countries. By pledging to share its knowledge and outcome with the *ummah*, Pakistan was also seeking the support of the Muslim masses beyond its borders.

This strategy became problematic as Pakistan acquired nuclear capabilities and began to achieve the status of threshold nuclear power. Increasing international concerns about proliferation and the establishment of various non-proliferation regimes have significantly modified Pakistan's public posture. At the strategic level, Pakistani willingness to "share" the fruits of its endeavors was bound to attract vehement criticisms, pressure and sanctions from the West. These would have undermined, if not blocked, the path Pakistan was pursuing. There were also political calculations. Saddled with poverty, underdevelopment and dependence upon external aid and assistance, nuclear capability alone provides Pakistan with the means of achieving its long cherished leadership role in the Islamic world. By agreeing "to share" nuclear weapons or technology, Pakistan would be abandoning its most valuable strategic asset.

As a result, Pakistan felt it prudent to distance itself from the "Islamic bomb" and began presenting itself as a "responsible" player in the region, one that does not indulge in transfer of sensitive technologies to third parties. Since the Islamic countries of the Middle East are the likely "third parties," this posture was a subtle message to Israel: Pakistan's pursuit of nuclear and missile programs is primarily aimed at South Asia and hence Israel need not worry about them. Even within the context of its newfound relationship with India, Israel should recognize that Pakistan "continues to pursue a strict policy of not transferring its sensitive nuclear technology to other countries."¹²⁹ Shortly after the test firing of the 1,500 km. surface-to-surface missile *Gauri* in April 1998, President Rafiq Tarar reiterated that his country was not exporting sensitive technologies to any nation. Conscious of prevailing Western concerns, he added: "Neither we helping the Iranian nuclear program nor we intend to do so (sic)."¹³⁰ Since it is an "India-specific" missile, it does not pose any threat to any other countries in the region. Some went a step further and argued that to allay Western fears that it would supply missile technology to other Islamic countries, the US should include Pakistan in the MTCR.¹³¹

During the run-up to its nuclear tests, Pakistani leaders held intense consultations with Islamic countries such as Iran and Saudi Arabia. At the same time, both before and after the tests, they had reiterated Pakistan's commitment to non-proliferation. Proudly announcing the nuclear tests, Prime Minister Sharif assured the international community

that Pakistanis “have not and will not transfer sensitive technologies to other *states or entities*. ... I would like to again assure all countries that our nuclear weapon systems are meant only for self-defense and there should be no apprehension or concern in this regard.”¹³² A couple of days later, Foreign Secretary Shamshad Ahmad Khan declared: “We have already stated at the highest level that Pakistan has not and will not transfer sensitive technologies to other states or entities.”¹³³ The repeated usage of the expression “*other entities*” is primarily aimed at placating additional Israeli fears about a future Palestinian entity.

In addition to these somewhat vague assurances, Israeli media reported that Pakistan had given private assurances that it would not provide any nuclear technology or knowledge to Iran or any other country in the Middle East.¹³⁴ Such assurances were reportedly conveyed through Israel’s ambassador in Washington, Eliyahu Ben-Elisar, and its permanent representative at the UN, Dore Gold. When asked about suspected Israeli attempts in the past to attack Pakistani nuclear facilities, Prime Minister Sharif was diplomatic and evasive: “This is not the time to judge the veracity or otherwise of such reports.”¹³⁵

Even the Pakistani media that otherwise spoke of an Indo-Israeli nuclear conspiracy, declared that Pakistan “has termed the Israeli apprehension (over transfer of nuclear technology to third parties) as baseless” and ridiculed suggestions that “the Arab countries will be able to use — the Pakistani nuclear bomb to totally annihilate Israel.”¹³⁶ The nuclear bomb suddenly became “a Pakistani and not an Islamic bomb.” In the words of Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan, Pakistan does “not want to project the bomb into an Islamic or Middle Eastern context.”¹³⁷

If these private and third party assurances were insufficient, Pakistan directly assured the Israelis of its peaceful intentions. In an exclusive interview with *Channel 2 Television*, Mushahid Hussein Syed, the Information Minister and a close confidant of Prime Minister Sharif, declared that “no country should feel threatened by Pakistan’s nuclear tests because Pakistan has never threatened any other country and has no intention or desire to do so in future.” When asked about the “Islamic bomb,” he replied:

Pakistan’s Prime Minister Mr. Mohammed Nawaz Sharif, has made it very clear that it is the view of Pakistan that bombs do not have religions

and it is unfair, unjust and wrong to qualify Pakistan's nuclear program in religious terms, because we have not said that India's bomb is a Hindu bomb, although India has a Hindu fundamentalist ruling party

While refusing to disclose the origin of the fears of an Israeli attack against Pakistan, he declared that "this is not Pakistan's official position."¹³⁸ A few days later, in an interview to *Yedioth Ahronoth*, Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan reiterated similar assurances.¹³⁹

This sentiment is duly reflected in the Israeli assessment of a nuclear Pakistan. In the early 1980s, Pakistan occasionally figured in security debates in Israel, and it has often been argued that any regional arms control arrangements would also have to include Pakistan.¹⁴⁰ Gradually the possibility that Pakistan's bombs would become "Islamic" or that it would transfer nuclear weapons and technologies to other Islamic countries was regarded as less likely. The Pakistani endeavor is seen primarily as a South Asian affair with only limited direct implications for the Middle East. While the Pakistani move might trigger a chain reaction in the region and encourage countries such as Iran and Iraq to tread the nuclear path, many Israeli analysts and commentators discount suggestions that it could become an "Islamic bomb."¹⁴¹ Thus, a nuclear Pakistan is not perceived as a direct threat to Israel.

VI

Domestic Debates in Pakistan

Pakistani leaders and officials have regularly denied reports of contacts with Israel. Due in part to domestic compulsions and in part to the sensitivity of the issue, they have sought to maintain that Pakistan was not moving closer to Israel. In September 1993, welcoming the Oslo Accords and the mutual recognition of Israel and the PLO, caretaker Prime Minister Moin Qureshi reiterated that Pakistan had no plans to recognize Israel.¹⁴² A couple of months later, Pakistan swiftly denied a statement by the Israeli ambassador in New Delhi that diplomats from both countries were in contact over Pakistani recognition of Israel. Pakistani media was skeptical about the official position because “the Foreign Minister himself had disclosed initiation of an urgent inquiry to determine which Pakistani officials made the contacts disclosed by the Israelis.”¹⁴³ In January 1994, Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs N.D. Khan told the legislature that Pakistan does not recognize Israel, and that there was “no question whatsoever of establishing diplomatic relations with that country.”¹⁴⁴

In May 1994, a few months before the Gaza controversy, Pakistan rejected a *Kol Israel* report that Prime Minister Ms. Bhutto had held a meeting with President Ezer Weizman in Johannesburg. According to the report, both leaders met during the inauguration of South African President Nelson Mandela; the meeting was a step toward normalization. Islamabad dismissed it as “part of the disinformation campaign.”¹⁴⁵ In September, Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali assured the National Assembly that his country had no immediate plans to recognize Israel because “it is not in the general interest of Islamic countries to recognize Israel unless there is substantial progress on implementation of the PLO-Israel accord and on the issue of Jerusalem.”¹⁴⁶ Pakistan’s Foreign Ministry vehemently denied suggestions that just weeks before the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Rabin, Prime Minister Ms. Bhutto had met him during the 50th anniversary celebrations of the United Nations.¹⁴⁷

In December 1995, US Assistant Secretary of State Robin Raphel disclosed that Washington had unsuccessfully asked Pakistan to recognize Israel and be among the first few Muslim countries to do so.¹⁴⁸ A few days later, George Clement, Parliamentary Secretary for the Foreign Minister, assured the National Assembly that Pakistan was not moving toward recognizing Israel, “nor is there any involvement of Pakistan in secret negotiations to this effect.”¹⁴⁹ In June 1996, Foreign Minister Asif Ahmed Ali disclosed that Israel had contacted Pakistan for secret talks on important bilateral issues, but that the request was turned down.¹⁵⁰ Several months later, a Foreign Ministry spokesman declared that there had been no change in Pakistan’s position toward Israel.¹⁵¹ In October 1998, Israeli media reported that President Ezer Weizman had met his Pakistani counterpart Rafiq Tarar in Ankara during the 75th anniversary of modern Turkey’s independence. Tarar approached Weizman and shook his hand. “I have heard a great deal about you as a man of peace,” he told Weizman. The two discussed the peace process and the Pakistani President expressed the hope that “one day we will meet again.” ...¹⁵² As on similar occasions in the past, Pakistan vehemently denied the report, although its media remained unconvinced.¹⁵³ Behind such denials, however, a serious debate about Israel is taking place in Pakistan.

a. Support for normalization:

Since the Madrid peace process began, there has been a noticeable shift in Pakistan’s position, and some of its senior leaders have indicated a willingness to recognize Israel if certain preconditions are fulfilled. This strategy resembles the stance adopted by China following the death of Chairman Mao, when it declared its willingness, under certain conditions, to recognize and normalize relations with the Jewish state.¹⁵⁴ The issue of recognition and normalization of relations with Israel are no longer taboo in Pakistan, and senior officials and diplomats have often called for a re-examination of the official policy.

Those who support recognition of Israel have for long remained anonymous, or less vocal, and were often dismissed as conspirators or Israeli agents. Of late, however, those advocating a conditional recognition are becoming more visible and more assertive. Positive statements in favor of such a move have come from Pakistani Prime

Ministers, their close associates, serving diplomats, retired generals, and above all, religious leaders. There is no longer a consensus for non-recognition of Israel, and more and more personalities are arguing for a subtle policy change.

The Oslo Accords and the growing direct contacts and negotiations between Israel and various Arab countries have raised Pakistani concerns that it will be left out of the process. At the same time, Pakistan is not prepared to move forward quickly and thereby face alienation by some important countries in the region. Pakistani leaders have indirectly admitted that the country's economic and political dependence on the region inhibits them from moving forward. In October 1995, Prime Minister Ms. Bhutto ruled out recognition because "the core issues of the Golan Heights and the status of Jerusalem are yet to be resolved."¹⁵⁵

In an unprecedented development in January 1996, the mass circulation Israeli daily *Yedioth Ahronoth* carried an interview with Prime Minister Ms. Bhutto. Underscoring the political execution of her father in 1978, she strongly condemned the assassination of Prime Minister Rabin. In another unusual development, she conveyed Pakistan's appreciation for Israeli "restraint" with regard to the US-Pakistan controversy over the supply of F-16 fighters to Pakistan and the passing of the Brown Amendment (this move partially lifted the nuclear proliferation related arms embargo imposed on Islamabad). As for bilateral relations, she was cautious and candidly admitted that her country was waiting for "the prime actors" in the region to move closer to Israel and added, "when they will do it, Pakistan will be able to decide."¹⁵⁶ Even after being voted out of office, Ms. Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has not modified its stand. For instance, in September 1997, following suggestions from a close aide to Prime Minister Sharif in favor of recognition, the PPP declared that Pakistan alone could not make a decision on the matter. Instead, in the party's view, this delicate issue must be "decided" by the OIC, whose decision would be final and binding upon the entire Muslim *ummah*.¹⁵⁷

There are indications that during his first term in office (1990-93), Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was keen to re-examine Pakistan's policy toward Israel and even contemplated recognition and normalization. This was apparently motivated by India's decision in January 1992 to establish full diplomatic relations. Sharif was reportedly dissuaded by

Egypt from proceeding.¹⁵⁸ Following his re-election in January 1997, his critics hoped that he would not make “similar mistakes” this time.¹⁵⁹ During the election campaign, he accused his political opponents of being Israeli agents, but once in office, his government has shown an inclination toward normalization. Sharif has the support of a section of the clergy in this endeavor.

A few months after Sharif assumed office, Maulana Ajmal Qadri, chief patron of *Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam* (a party that advocates the adoption of a constitution based on Sunni Islamic teachings), visited Israel. This was more than a pilgrimage to Al-Aqsa mosque, the third holiest place in Islam. Upon returning home, “in the larger interests of Palestine”, he called for Pakistani recognition of Israel. Giving a new twist to the conspiracy theory, he charged that in collaboration with Israel, India was hatching plots against Islamabad only because “Pakistan does not enjoy diplomatic relations with Israel.” Underlining the establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and a number of Islamic countries, he suggested that Pakistan “should not fight other people’s wars.” Even though his outspoken campaign did not go down well among his colleagues or rivals, the statement cannot be easily dismissed. Shortly afterward, the Maulana’s position was supported by Pir Mohammad Ashraf, another religious leader from Punjab.¹⁶⁰

In August 1997, the Israeli media reported that a delegation of religious leaders from Pakistan spent a week in Israel. Besides visiting Islamic holy sites, they also met foreign ministry officials and endorsed the idea of promoting Islamic tourism from Pakistan.¹⁶¹ The following month, the leader of *Awami Qiyadat Party*, Mirza Aslam Beg declared, “Pakistan has no direct differences with Israel, therefore, we are a third party to the dispute ... We have no conflict with Israel, therefore we should not hesitate in recognizing Israel.”¹⁶² Beg is no ordinary politician; he was chief of army staff from 1988-91 and continues to be one of the most powerful and influential figures in Pakistan.¹⁶³

In the same month, Sadiq ul-Farooq, a senior aide to Prime Minister Sharif, declared that there was “no harm” in Pakistan recognizing the Jewish state. Since the statement came shortly after Sharif’s US visit, it would be safe to conclude that such a sensitive pronouncement had the backing and tacit approval of Sharif. Besides being the press secretary to the Prime Minister, Farooq was also the spokesman for the ruling Muslim

League. Naturally, his statement evoked a strong reaction from political and media circles, who viewed it as a trial balloon to gauge the mood of the public. The opposition PPP accused the Prime Minister of expressing his views through “a salaried employee” and thereby shielding himself from public wrath. It described the suggestion as a “conspiracy” against the Pakistani nation as well as the Muslim world.¹⁶⁴

The media was not far behind, and has been reflecting this internal debate. Notwithstanding some criticism of Arafat’s willingness to negotiate with Israel, following the Oslo Accords the question of normalization attracted favorable media coverage in Pakistan. A couple of months after Oslo, the Israeli ambassador in New Delhi disclosed that his country was discussing recognition with Pakistan. Rejecting such suggestions, a spokesman for the Foreign Ministry hinted that under certain conditions, Pakistan would consider such a move. Even a vehement opponent of normalization such as *The Muslim* sees recognition as “a halfway house” between those who support normalization and the masses who support the “right of the Palestinians to their *entire* homeland.”¹⁶⁵

Another daily, *The Pakistan Observer*, used this opportunity to remind the public that the historic handshake on the White House lawn “has substantially changed the Middle East” and hence the prospects “for possible future cooperation (with Israel) should not evoke such strong reaction.” Not eager to antagonize the popular position, it urged prior consultations with the Arab countries, but observed,

If the two warring sides have decided to withhold their fire, who are we to stand in their way? Therefore the (revelations) made by Israeli ambassador to India do not mean that the present government (of Nawaz Sharif) has committed a cardinal sin in contacting the Israeli government and the anger shown by Islamabad over these reports is equally reprehensible and in the present situation even hypocritical. That does not imply we are in favor of unilateral action in this regard and would press for establishing an Embassy in that country ... (However,) we should not forget that the two former enemies (that is, Israel and the PLO) are reconciled now, and have chosen to co-exist despite the legacy of hatred and revenge. In the altered equation of Middle East politics, *one form of contact with Israel is not violation (of) the divine commandment. Our approach to be problem must be rational and balanced.*¹⁶⁶

It urged the political parties to stop using recognition to “score points,” and urged them to pursue “an informed debate” over the issue.

Some even welcomed the Hebron Accord of January 1997 and argued that notwithstanding future obstacles, the Middle East peace process “is irreversible.”¹⁶⁷ A few weeks later, commenting on the controversy of Israel’s decisions to construct new houses in the Har Homa neighborhood of eastern Jerusalem, another editorial hoped that Israel’s “friends in the Islamic world, who have established relations with it, or which have recognized it, should also warn Israel about the consequences of its actions.”¹⁶⁸ In short, the daily recognized the leverage of countries with diplomatic relations with Israel.

The “conditions” for normalization vary, however. The demand for Israel to “vacate Jerusalem” figures prominently, but there are also other suggestions. One scenario visualizes Pakistan withholding recognition until Israel and the Palestinians resolve their differences to the “entire satisfaction of the latter.”¹⁶⁹ Others argue that Pakistan should persuade other Islamic countries to make their recognition conditional upon Israel accepting certain basic demands.¹⁷⁰

These statements and arguments do not imply, however, that everyone, including the intelligentsia and the media, approve of recognition and normalization.

b. Opposition to normalization:

The issue still evokes passionate debate in Pakistan; opponents of the status quo are portrayed as enemies of Pakistan and Islam and agents of Israel or India. Non-recognition is often projected as a moral position, because Pakistan cannot but accept “a principled and honest stand.” Moreover, recognition has been a religious, not a political issue. Since support for the Palestinians is perceived as a zero-sum game, Pakistan cannot support the Palestinians and recognize Israel at the same time. The Palestinian problem is seen neither as an Arab problem nor a territorial issue, but an Islamic question.¹⁷¹ Hence there is a refusal to accept the argument that Pakistan should move closer to Israel because there are no bilateral disputes or conflicts between them.

In May 1992, shortly after India normalized relations with Israel, Pakistan’s ambassador in Washington, Abida Hussain, caused an uproar in Pakistan by her “ingratiating utterances to the Jews.” She was

admonished for suggesting that “if the parties to the (Arab-Israeli) dispute resolve their differences, Pakistan would recognize Israel.” Underscoring the centrality of Palestine to Islam, a Pakistani commentator asked: “Madam Ambassador, Islam’s third holiest city Al-Quds (Jerusalem) has been occupied by force and drawn into the Jewish empire, and you want to bestow the gift of recognition to a racist, unjust and inhuman regime?”¹⁷²

Palestinian recognition of Israel did not go down well with certain influential sections of the Pakistani intelligentsia, and the credibility of Arab regimes that seek accommodation with Israel has come under severe criticism. Instead of imitating them, some argue that Pakistan’s refusal should be model for those Islamic countries seeking peace with Israel. In the words of one commentator,

... to recognize Israel as Palestine under Arafat and Jordan under King Hussein have done and other Arab countries are about to follow suit, would be submitting to the occupation by Israel of Al-Quds al-Sharif. If (God forbid), Israel were to capture Mecca and Medina and the Arab countries recognized it, should the rest of the Islamic world also follow suit and recognize it?¹⁷³

In his view, it is the duty of every Muslim to “do everything within his powers for the armed liberation of Palestine from the occupation of Israel.” He also challenges the right of Arafat or any Arab power to decide the future of Jerusalem.

Another commentator asked: “If the Arab countries agreed to commit mass suicide to appease the United States, then it is necessary for us to follow their lead and jump into the same hell?”¹⁷⁴ Some even questioned Arafat’s position as the undisputed leader of the Palestinian people and acclaimed the militant activities of *Hamas* and *Hizbullah*.¹⁷⁵

The issue is also linked to the Kashmir dispute, the nerve center of Pakistani foreign policy. For instance, in August 1997, there were suggestions that Israeli and Pakistani diplomats were interacting during the sessions of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. Strongly criticizing such contacts, an editorial in *The Muslim* warned that any recognition of the Jewish State had implications for Kashmir. In its view,

if Pakistan recognizes the usurpation of territories by force and aggression, why should it oppose Indian occupation of Kashmir? Or do the decision

makers intend today to give up Kashmir and are therefore preparing the ground for such a decision by contemplating recognition of the Zionist entity inside occupied Palestine?¹⁷⁶

Likewise, India is often accused of relying on Israeli military and intelligence personnel in its battle against the Kashmiri militants.

However, a far greater threat to normalization comes from a different source, namely the conspiracy theories that allege sinister collaboration between India and Israel against Pakistan.

c. Israel-India conspiracies:

It is understandable and even legitimate for Pakistan to perceive the relationship between India and Israel as a threat to its security and stability. Given India's preoccupation with Pakistan, such concerns cannot be dismissed lightly. The media in Pakistan have regularly published speculations about intelligence cooperation between the two countries, and often accuses Israel of sending military personnel and intelligence advisers to the troubled province of Kashmir to support the Indian campaign against the militants. Protracted internal violence, largely an outcome of Shi'i-Sunni disputes, is systematically attributed to cooperation between the *Mossad* and its Indian counterpart in their efforts to destabilize and subjugate Pakistan. The Israeli tourists kidnapped in Kashmir in June 1991 were portrayed as part of a larger Israeli contingent fighting the Kashmir militants. Some even charge that non-Muslim Indian expatriates who hold highly sensitive positions in various Arab countries "do intelligence gathering for Israel."¹⁷⁷ Likewise, the hijacking of a PIA aircraft on a domestic flight days before the Pakistani nuclear tests was attributed to the intelligence agencies of India and Israel.¹⁷⁸

A larger issue is involved in such allegations: conspiracy. Pakistan is no exception to the conspiracy theories that often haunt the Middle East.¹⁷⁹ Such theories, especially those involving "Hindu India" have formed a constant theme in Pakistan's foreign policy discourse. The repeated portrayal of India, with its sizable non-Hindu population and its commitment to secularism, as a Hindu state serves Pakistani interests. Recognizing India as a secular, cosmopolitan country would undermine the *raison d'être* for Pakistan's status as a Muslim homeland in South Asia.¹⁸⁰

As a result, Indo-Israeli relations are perceived primarily as a conspiracy against Pakistan and the Islamic world at large. Conspiracy theories have become an effective means of promoting its relations with countries of the Middle East and elsewhere.¹⁸¹ India's prolonged refusal to establish diplomatic relations with Israel did not stop Pakistan from suspecting India's motives and its professed friendship toward the Arab countries. The Pakistani media speaks at regular intervals of an anti-Islamic conspiracy between the two non-Muslim states in the region. The establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Israel has intensified the conspiracy theories: Through normalization, India, "a bigger, cunning and an ambitious neighbor" has joined hands "with the declared enemy of Islam and Pakistan."¹⁸² Pakistan should preserve and protect its nuclear program because of "the nuclear hegemonic ambitions of the United States, Israel and India and their unholy alliance against the Muslim world."¹⁸³

Discussions in Pakistan about real or perceived cooperation between India and Israel are different from those that occur elsewhere, because they contain a certain degree of venom, hatred, racism and even anti-Semitism.¹⁸⁴ It is essential to keep in mind that this abhorrence and repugnance are not confined to vernacular or marginal elements of the Pakistani media. Well into the 1990s, leading newspapers regularly featured malicious portrayals of India and Israel, and even the English language press is not immune to the virus. Expressions such as "Zionist entity," "Western implant," "illegitimate entity" and "occupied Palestine" are not uncommon in Pakistani parlance, and at times even President Zia decried Israel as a "Zionist entity."

According to the conspiracy theory, both India and Israel are Frankenstein monsters "let loose against the freedom-struggling, yet defenseless and unarmed, peoples of Palestine and Kashmir." Both countries cooperate, Pakistanis have argued, not because of any shared national interests or ideas, but because both societies are inherently evil, exploitative and ominous. The Jews are "a demented nation with an unfortunate past and perhaps future too" and in certain aspects the Hindus are worse than the Jews, for they have "no fixed code of ethics." Both countries, claims the conspiracy theory, share an aversion for and a sinister design toward the Muslims, and have been occupying and subjugating Muslim-dominated areas — Israel dominating the West Bank

and Gaza, and India, Kashmir. Furthermore, the Hindus and the Jews are intrinsically evil and cannot be trusted; it is natural for both rabid anti-Muslim states to join hands against the *Ummah*. Expressions such as “Hindu-Jewish conspiracy” and “Brahmin-Zionist conspiracy” are common in Pakistani discourse.¹⁸⁵

The conspiracy theory reached its crescendo during President Weizman’s visit to India in late December 1996. For instance, an editorial in *The Muslim* remarked:

The visit signifies the increasingly close relations between India and the Zionist entity and their long-term planning to work together against Islam and the Muslim Third World. For many years the Indians cheated the once-strong Arabs by denying close cooperation with the Jews it becomes abundantly clear that the Indians while feigning friendship with the Arabs were in fact stabbing them in the back.

... the Zionists can do anything and violate all norms and laws since Uncle Sam would always look the other way and since the laws and norms are to be only used against the Muslims and the weak. Therefore, both India and Israel are allowed to violate human rights, commit naked aggressions against their neighbors, expand and even steal US technology. These are acceptable to the Americans as long as the Muslims are the target of such policies. The Indian-Israeli axis is yet another threat to Pakistan and the entire Muslim world. It seeks to further devastate the Muslims and subjugate them.

The editorial further warned that Weizman’s visit was “within the master blueprint for the region and within the framework of the Zionist-Brahmin machinations against Pakistan and Islam.”¹⁸⁶

It is essential to note that such portrayals of the Indo-Israeli relationship are not a recent phenomenon. Even in the pre-partition days, some of the more extreme leaders of the Muslim League perceived a parallel between the Congress Party and the pre-state Israeli leadership. Expressions such as “international Jewry which commands the money-bags” are not uncommon in the League deliberations. For instance, in December 1938, one League delegate declared: “both the British and the Hindus were Jews to Muslims, that is, their enemies. In India, *Mr. Gandhi was the leader of the Hindu Jews.*” Another delegate named Abdul Khaliq crossed even the lenient limits of the League and remarked: “The real Jews of the West were the British and those of the East were the Hindus and *both are sons of Shylock.*”¹⁸⁷

The conspiracy theory cannot be ignored as mere anti-Indian rhetoric. Pakistan has been a fertile ground for conspiracy theories. The people of Pakistan, remarked a Pakistani journalist (later a cabinet minister), “have become avid believers in conspiracy theories because almost all changes of regimes in Pakistan’s chequered history have been through conspiracy hatched by small, power hungry coteries.”¹⁸⁸ In addition to accusing India of collaborating with the Israeli enemy, Pakistani leaders have at regular intervals accused their political rivals of collaborating with Israel or furthering its interests. Even senior leaders have been known to level such charges against their political opponents. In June 1994, Khalid Ahmad Kharal, a senior minister in Ms. Bhutto’s cabinet, charged that opposition leader and former prime minister Nawaz Sharif received substantial assistance from Israel to destabilize Ms. Bhutto’s first term of office (1988-90).¹⁸⁹

Likewise, during the 1997 parliamentary elections, some accused the former cricket star and leader of *Tehrik-i-Insaf*, Imran Khan, of being a “Jewish agent” and claimed that his election campaign was funded by “a club comprising ten prominent Jewish leaders.” The members of “this club,” including his father-in-law, Sir James Goldsmith, were accused of contributing nearly \$2 billion for Imran Khan’s election campaign.¹⁹⁰ During the same campaign, the leader of the Pakistan Muslim League and later Prime Minister Sharif repeatedly charged that his opponents were funded by Israel and France, while he “would bank on the Pakistani people.” He even declared that he and his party did not struggle for three years against Ms. Bhutto, “just to hand over government to Israeli agents.”¹⁹¹ In similar fashion, Bishop John Joseph of Faisalabad, who committed suicide in May 1998 over a controversial blasphemy case against some Christians, was accused of being in league with the Zionist lobby.¹⁹²

Even Sir Zafrulla Khan, who played an important role in the UN while the world body was discussing the partition resolution, was not immune to the conspiracy theories. His role in enlisting Pakistan in CENTO has been controversial and there are suggestions that he overstepped his responsibilities.¹⁹³ Why did the Pakistani Foreign Minister overrule the cabinet and agree with the US? Mushahid Hussain Syed (a close friend of current Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his Information Minister) remarked that the suspicion that Zafrulla Khan

had been assured by the US Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, that as a *quid pro quo* he would be rewarded with the membership of the prestigious International Court of Justice, was reinforced when Sir Zafrulla Khan was later elected to this position, which has a tenure of nine years. He won the election by a margin of one vote, and interestingly, the Israeli delegate, Abba Eban was absent from the vote on that particular day in the United Nations General Assembly.¹⁹⁴

In short, Zafrulla Khan, criticized in Israel for his pro-Arab stand, was indeed collaborating with Israel!

At times, moderate Arab leaders do not escape Pakistani wrath. Even though the government condemned Rabin's murder, the media was less sympathetic and more virulent. In a harsh editorial, *The Muslim* unveiled Rabin's "true colors" as one who systematically oppressed the Palestinian people. "Yitzhak Rabin was as extremist as his killer with only one difference, that whereas the latter's bullet killed him, the former's have a trial of agony and pain for the millions (sic)." As for the Palestinian leader Arafat, who expressed his grief over the murder,

If Yasser Arafat thinks he has lost a friend, it is actually a reflection of his own perception of peace and liberty [rather] than on the contribution of the late Prime Minister. The conversion of Yasser Arafat to the cause of Israeli hegemony in the Middle East explains his regrets over *his master's death* [rather] than any concern for the people who call themselves Palestinians.¹⁹⁵

One finds similarly harsh statements about King Hussain of Jordan for making peace with the enemy of Islam.

Conspiracy theories are prevalent and widespread, and reflect the mind-set of a powerful section of the Pakistani population. They not only indicate Pakistan's preoccupation with Israel, but have often become a major source of opposition to normalization with Israel. The frequency with which Pakistani leaders and commentators resort to conspiracy theories forge and consolidate an ideological resistance toward Israel. How can Pakistan establish normal relations with a country that conspires against the entire Islamic world? If Israel is evil, can a practicing Muslim recognize and cohabit with it? Even some of the intelligentsia find conspiracy theories a convenient tool for criticizing those in power. The close ties between the politicians and the clergy further impede a more rational and dispassionate discussion of normalization. Refuting

the conspiracy theories would thus not be an easy task, either for Israel or for Pakistanis seeking to modify their country's prolonged opposition to the Jewish state.

VII

Impediments

Significant progress in the bilateral relationship is dependent upon a number of factors. Jewish leaders have been pursuing Indian Muslims at least since the early 1930s. Though not entirely unrequited, this courtship continues seven decades later. Even Palestinian willingness to belatedly recognize the two-state solution and seek a negotiated settlement with Israel, did not alter the fundamental Pakistani reluctance to formally recognize and normalize relations with Israel. One can identify certain impediments to or preconditions for Israeli-Pakistani normalization. They include:

- As a state conceived as the homeland of Indian Muslims, Pakistan sees itself as a model Islamic state. Hence, Islamic considerations and interpretations play an important role in shaping Pakistan's policy toward Israel.
- Both before and after partition, the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent adopted a conservative posture vis-à-vis the Middle East. For example, their positions on sensitive Islamic issues such as the restoration of the Caliphate in the 1920s, the Palestinian question or the Rushdie affair were more vocal and extreme than those of their counterparts in the Islamic countries of the Middle East. The prolonged hesitation of non-Muslim India to establish diplomatic relations with Israel is partly attributed to the opposition of its Muslim population. As an Islamic state, Pakistan's problems are compounded.
- Since its independence, Pakistan has been beset with domestic instability, often leading to military intervention in the political process. To legitimize and consolidate their positions, both the politicians and the military have sought accommodation with the clergy by committing Pakistan to remaining an Islamic state.
- Conspiracy theories occupy an important place in Pakistani political discourse. Israel is often portrayed as a state that collaborates with neighboring India and conspires both against Pakistan and the entire Islamic world. The introduction of democracy has injected Israel into Pakistani electoral politics: Every major political party has been

accusing its opponents of being Israeli agents. Portrayals of Israel in negative terms impede a rational approach to it.

- The stalemate in the peace process further limits Pakistan's ability to pursue normalization. It is safe to conclude that a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, or at least significant progress on the Palestinian and Syrian tracks would significantly hasten a Pakistani decision. Any negative developments in the process would only prolong the status quo. The lack of progress in the peace process during the tenure of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (1996-99) has dampened the process of normalization between Israel and the Arab world, and a number of countries have either downgraded or frozen their relations with Israel. Under these circumstances, it would be difficult for Pakistan to move faster than the rest of the Arab world. Such a move would be politically unacceptable to any government in Pakistan and would be vehemently opposed by the religious segment of the population.
- The need for tacit approval from key Middle East countries such as Iran and Saudi Arabia is further heightened by the nuclear dimension. The post-test sanctions have exposed Pakistan's vulnerability to external pressure and its increased economic dependence on the oil-rich countries of the Arab world. Pakistan would thus be unable to override any Arab objections to normalization.
- For its part, Israel would have to consider the repercussions of normalization upon its newfound relationship with India. Israel has long been aware of India's concerns and preoccupations about Pakistan, and India's protracted reluctance to establish diplomatic relations with Israel has been attributed to Pakistan. This awareness partly contributed to Israel's reluctance to disclose its contacts and interactions with Pakistan. Israeli-Pakistani normalization need not be a threat to New Delhi, but any hasty move on Israel's part might endanger its emerging security cooperation with India.¹⁹⁶ Unlike what was true in the past, Israel will not be able to pursue Pakistan without addressing India's sensitivities and concerns.

VIII

Prospects for Normalization

The absence of formal diplomatic relations has not inhibited Israel and Pakistan from maintaining regular contacts, dialogues and meetings. On numerous occasions, they have adopted identical positions on important developments in the Middle East. Furthermore, they have worked out limited understandings on sensitive security issues, including the nuclear question. Although Pakistan has been reluctant to agree to the persistent Israeli suggestions that full and formal relations be established, normalization is no longer a taboo subject and has been widely discussed by the Pakistani media. The question is *when* and not *if*. A comprehensive Middle East settlement, especially with the Palestinians, would significantly modify Pakistan's position. Nevertheless, ideological and Islamic considerations might prevent Pakistan from agreeing to full normalization.

Whenever Pakistan recognizes and establishes relations with Israel, it will not be the first Islamic country to do so. Since it has no direct disputes with Israel, Pakistan is not under any compulsion to seek a "cold peace" with Israel, and therefore has several options to choose from.

- *The Turkish model:* Pakistan can recognize Israel without establishing diplomatic relations immediately.
- *The Iranian model:* It can follow the precedent set by the Shah of Iran and recognize the Jewish state, but maintain its relationship under wraps.
- *The Jordanian model:* It can imitate the Jordanians and maintain close political as well as military relations with the Jewish state without granting any official recognition.
- *The Chinese model:* It can adopt the Chinese example and view military contacts as a means of promoting political relations.

At least in the foreseeable future, the political status of the relationship is likely to be tentative. While maintaining and even intensifying political contacts in private, both Israel and Pakistan will probably be extremely reluctant to discuss the nature and intensity of their contacts and relationship in public.

Notes

The author is grateful to the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies for its support and to the readers for their valuable comments on the earlier draft. The author alone, however, is responsible for any omissions and commissions.

1. Tariq Ali, *Can Pakistan Survive? The Death of a State*, (London: Verso, 1983), pp.223-224n.
2. Walter Eytan, *The First Ten Years: A Diplomatic History of Israel*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1958), p.183. Others were less diplomatic and more vocal. For instance, in June 1982, Israeli Consul in Bombay Yossef Hasseen charged that India was using every international forum to denounce Israel “and prove to the Arabs that you are doing more than Pakistan. That way you think you will impress the Arabs.” *Sunday Observer* (Bombay), June 27, 1982. The controversial remarks, however, led to Hasseen being declared *persona non grata*.
3. A serious and pioneering refutation of this allegation can be found in Sanford R. Silverburg, “Pakistan and the West Bank: A research note”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol.19, no.2, April 1983, pp.261-263. The allegation, however, persists. Among others see, Shmuel Katz, “Sheer distortion”, *The Jerusalem Post*, January 22, 1993; David Bar-Ilan, “A terrorist attack becomes a military clash”, *The Jerusalem Post*, July 9, 1993; and Moshe Kohn, “The name of the game”, *The Jerusalem Post*, August 6, 1993.
4. For a serious and interesting discussion see, Aharon Klieman, *Statecraft in the Dark: Israel's Practice of Quiet Diplomacy*, JCSS Study no. 10, (Jerusalem: The Jerusalem Post, 1988).
5. This research is primarily based on archival and other materials available in Israel. Resource and logistical constraints prevented the perusal of primary and secondary materials available in Pakistan.
6. There were exceptions; for instance, in March 1963, the Multan-based Center of Technology, sponsored by the Pakistani government, wrote to the Israeli Ministry of Tourism, requesting the latter to participate in a tourism promotion exhibition. Director, Center of Technology, Multan, to The Secretary Ministry of Tourism, government of Israel Jerusalem, March 9, 1963, *Israel State Archives* (Jerusalem), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, (hereafter *ISA MFA*), File No. 3432/37.

7. M.J. Akbar, *India: The Siege Within, Challenges to a Nation's Unity*, (New Delhi: UPS, revised edition, 1996), p.19.
8. P.R.Kumaraswamy, "The strangely parallel careers of Israel and Pakistan", *Middle East Quarterly*, vol.4, no.2, June 1997, pp.31-39.
9. *Israel Channel 2 Television*, June 19, 1998, in *FBIS-NES-98-170*, June 19, 1998. (Unless otherwise mentioned all *FBIS-NES* materials are taken from the electronic edition). The author is grateful to Amnon, Avi and Riccardo for their invaluable help in collecting the *FBIS* materials.
10. For discussions on Pakistan's historical role in the formation of an Islamic bloc see, Arif Hussain, *Pakistan: Its Ideology and Foreign Policy*, (London: Frank Cass, 1966), pp.126-152; Salayman S. Nyang, "Pakistan's role in the Organization of Islamic Conference", *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, vol.7, no.3, Spring 1984, pp.14-33; S.S. Pirzada, "Pakistan and OIC", *Pakistan Horizon*, (Karachi), vol.40, no.2, April 1987, pp.14-38; and Michael B. Bishku, "In search of identity and security: Pakistan and the Middle East, 1947-77", *Conflict Quarterly*, (Fredericton, NB), vol.12, no.3, Summer 1992, pp.30-51.
11. Reflecting on Islamabad's relations with the Shah of Iran, a Pakistani commentator observed: ... "while professing friendship for the anti-Zionist cause (Pakistan) continued to develop its military-political contacts with Iran's regime, which was close to Zionism and was despised by the Palestinian guerrillas and even by some of the Middle East governments." Tariq Ali, *Pakistan: Military Rule or People's Power*, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970), p.139.
12. Mehtab Ali Shah, *The Foreign Policy of Pakistan: Ethnic Impacts on Diplomacy, 1971-1994*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 1997), p.27 and 154.
13. Resolution adopted by the tenth session of the Muslim League in Calcutta, December 1917- January 1918, in Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada, ed., *The Foundations of Pakistan: All India Muslim League Documents, 1906-1947*, (Karachi: National Publishing House, 1969), vol.1, p.442.
14. Presidential address of Mohammed Ali Jinnah at the twenty-fifth Muslim League session in Lucknow in October 1937, in Pirzada, *The Foundations of Pakistan*, vol.2, p.272.
15. Political resolution adopted at the twenty-fifth Muslim League session in Lucknow in October 1937, in Pirzada, *The Foundations of Pakistan*, vol.2, pp.277-278.

16. Leonard Stein, *The Balfour Declaration*, (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 1961), pp.496-501.
17. See Gideon Shimoni, *Gandhi, Satyagraha and the Jews: A Formative Factor in India's Policy towards Israel*, (Jerusalem: Leonard Davis Institute, 1977); Margaret Chatterjee, *Gandhi and his Jewish Friends*, (London: Macmillan, 1992); and P.R.Kumaraswamy, "Mahatma Gandhi and the Jewish National Home: An assessment", *Asian and African Studies* (Haifa), vol.26, nos. 1-2, 1992, pp.1-13.
18. Incidentally, this meeting took back against the background of Mufti's offer to bury the body of Shaukat Ali's elder brother Mohammed, who died in London in *Harem al-Sharif* in Jerusalem's Muslim quarters.
19. The UN General Assembly appointed two sub-committees to examine the proposals of the UNSCOP. While the first Committee examined the partition plan proposed by the majority members of the UNSCOP, the second Committee examined the Arab proposal for a unitary Palestine.
20. Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, "Thanksgiving Day at Lake Success, November 27, 1947", in Walid Khalidi (ed.), *From Haven to Conquest: Readings in Zionism and the Palestine Problem until 1948*, (Beirut: The Institute of Palestine Studies, 1971), p.716.
21. Michael Comay to B. Gering, December 3, 1947, *ISA, MFA*, File no. 2266/15.
22. S.M. Burke, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy: An Historical Analysis*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), p.138.
23. Quoted in T.G. Fraser, *Partition in Ireland, India and Palestine: Theory and Practice*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), p.176. Emphasis added.
24. Burke, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy*, p.66.
25. Even though India initially adopted similar positions, in September it recognized the Jewish state and allowed an Israeli consular mission in Bombay. For a discussion of recognition, see, P.R.Kumaraswamy, "India's recognition of Israel, September 1950", *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol.31, no.1, January 1995, pp.124-138.
26. *ISA, MFA*, File no. 2424/19.
27. Quoted in Prithvi Ram Mudiam, *India and the Middle East*, (London: British Academic Press, 1994), p.39.
28. For the complete text of the Bogor Declaration see, India, *Ministry of External Affairs, Annual Report, 1954-55*, (New Delhi), pp.55-58.
29. S. Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography*, vol.2, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1979), p.232.

30. Michael Brecher, *India and World Politics: Krishna Menon's View of the World*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), p.79. In a similar incident on the eve of India's partition the Muslim League boycotted the Asian Relations Conference organized by Nehru in April 1947. The official explanation was that he had invited a ten-member Jewish delegation from Palestine, led by Prof. Hugo Bergman.
31. Quoted in Sangat Singh, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy: An Appraisal*, (London: Asia Publishing House, 1970), p.91. Prime Minister H S Suhrawardy made a similar statement a few years later. Cited in M. A. Ahmed to Edmund de Rothschild, February 25, 1962, *ISA, MFA* File No.. 3432/37.
32. For detailed discussions see, Farooq Naseem Bajwa, *Pakistan and the West: The First Decade, 1947-1957*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp.162-202; and Burke, *Pakistan's Foreign Policy*, pp.181-188.
33. M.S. Comay to Foreign Ministry, December 31, 1956, *ISA, MFA*, File no. 3110/19. Emphasis added.
34. *Ibid.*, March 27, 1957, *ISA, MFA*, File no. 3110/19.
35. Dayan's confidential briefing to Israeli newspaper editors, October 9, 1973, in *International Documents on Palestine, 1973*, (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1976), p.292.
36. Mushahid Hussain, *Pakistan's Politics: The Zia Years*, (New Delhi: Konark, 1991), p.236.
37. Noor Ahmad Baba, *Organization of Islamic Conference: Theory and Practice of Pan-Islamic Cooperation*, (New Delhi: Sterling, 1994), pp.101-102.
38. Tariq Ali, *Can Pakistan Survive? Death of a State*, (London: Verso, 1983), p.224n; and Shah, *The Foreign Policy of Pakistan*, p.27.
39. President Zia ul-Haq's January 23, 1984 statement, in *Pakistan Horizon* (Karachi), vol. 37, no. 1, 1984, p.195.
40. Among others see, Sabiha Hasan, "The Casablanca Islamic summit", *Pakistan Horizon*, vol.37, no.1., January 1984, pp.78-80; and Baba, *Organization of Islamic Conference*, pp.167-168.
41. Eliashiv Ben-Hornis to Foreign Ministry, June 30, 1953, *Documents on the Foreign Policy of Israel 1953*, (Jerusalem: Israel State Archives, 1980 ff), Companion Volume 8, p.241. Abba Eban even suggested that the US ambassadors in the region were advising that Washington should use military assistance to improve its relations with Pakistan, Iraq, Syria and Egypt, in that order. Eban to the Foreign Ministry, September 21, 1953, *Documents on the Foreign Policy of Israel 1953*, Companion Volume 8, p.318.

42. David Goitein to Moshe Sharett, July 31, 1953, *Documents on the Foreign Policy of Israel* 1953, vol.8, p.553. Likewise two days earlier he observed: "if only thirty [million] goes to whole M[iddle] E[ast] including Pakistan and Israel, *the immediate danger is lessened*. Ibid., p.549. Emphasis added. See also Abba Eban to Moshe Sharett, August 6, 1953, *ibid.*, pp.571-572.
43. Summary of the meeting between Abba Eban and Gideon Rafael with Sir Zafrulla Khan, January 14, 1953, *Documents on the Foreign Policy of Israel*, 1953, vol.8, pp.26-28 and Companion Volume 8, pp.17-18.
44. Lawrence Ziring, *The Ayub Khan Era: Politics in Pakistan, 1958-1969*, (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1971), p.76.
45. Chaim Weizmann to Bernard Joseph, September 13, 1945, in *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann, Series A*, (Jerusalem: Israel Universities Press, 1979) vol.22, p.47.
46. Ibid.,
47. Chaim Weizmann to Sir Zafrulla Khan, January 4, 1948, in *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann, Series A*, (Jerusalem: Israel Universities Press, 1979) vol.23, p.75.
48. Ibid. Interestingly, during the pre-state years none of the leading figures of the Zionist movement met their counterparts in the Indian nationalist movement.
49. *Aide-Memoire by the Ambassador of Israel in Washington*, March 3, 1952, *ISA, MFA*, File 2401/1. Shortly afterward, Arab League secretary-general Azzam Pasha dismissed the suggestion and declared that the Arab countries would never make peace with Israel. Quoted in Gideon Rafael to Moshe Sharett, March 17, 1952, *Documents on the Foreign Policy of Israel*, vol.7, pp.113-115 and Companion Volume 7, p.53.
50. Moshe Sharett to M. Namir, October 25, 1949, *Documents on the Foreign Policy of Israel* 1949, Companion Volume 4, p.224.
51. Ibid. and Summary of Y.H. Levin- H. Evatt meeting in Canberra, September 8, 1949, in *Documents on the Foreign Policy of Israel*, 1949, vol.4, pp.447-448.
52. Abba Eban to A.S. Bokhari, June 3, 1952, *ISA, MFA* File no. 2410/9.
53. Summary of the meeting between Abba Eban and Gideon Rafael with Sir Zafrulla Khan, January 14, 1953, *Documents on the Foreign Policy of Israel*, 1953, vol.8, pp.26-28 and Companion Volume 8, pp.17-18.
54. Zafrulla Khan was probably referring to the anti-Ahmadiyya campaign of the *ulama* who argued that Ahmadiyyas were heretics and hence demanded the removal of the Foreign Minister from the government. Though this

campaign pre-dated the formation of Pakistan, it gathered momentum by 1952 and the series of anti-Ahmadiyya riots culminated in the imposition of martial law in Lahore in February 1953. The military, however, backed Zafrulla Khan because it feared that his “departure would scuttle attempts to steer Pakistan into the US camp.” Yunas Samad, *A Nation in Turmoil: Nationalism and Ethnicity in Pakistan, 1937-1958*, (New Delhi: Sage, 1995), p.142. The *ulama* eventually succeeded and in 1974, through a constitutional amendment, the Ahmadiyyas were declared non-Muslims. Sir Zafrulla Khan, Pakistan’s most articulate representative in the international scene died as *kafir* in his “homeland”.

55. Walter Eytan to Abba Eban, September 20, 1953, *Documents on the Foreign Policy of Israel* 1953, vol.8, p.667. Emphasis added.
56. Stanley Wolpert, *Zulfi Bhutto of Pakistan: His Life and Times*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993), p.97.
57. Salmaan Taseer, *Bhutto: A Political Biography*, (London: Ithaca Press, 1979), p.28. Emphasis added.
58. Wolpert, *Zulfi Bhutto of Pakistan*, p.233.
59. Shabtai Rosenne to the Foreign Office, *ISA, MFA*, File no. 3110/19. Emphasis added. This type of public approval and private criticism of Zafrulla Khan’s stand is not confined to the Palestine question alone. He played an important role in Pakistan joining the US camp during the Cold War, yet many Pakistani commentators and leaders subsequently criticized him for committing Pakistan to CENTO against the expressed wishes of the cabinet.
60. Lawrence Ziring, *The Ayub Khan Era: Politics in Pakistan, 1958-1969*, (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1971), p.62.
61. *The Economist*, December 12, 1981.
62. At that time the Israel government was committed to non-recognition of the PLO and hence Zia’s statement did not elicit any favorable response from Israel. *The Jerusalem Post*, March 16, 1986.
63. “OIC summit: Sacrificial alter of principles”, Editorial, *The Muslim*, March 25, 1997, in *FBIS-NES-97-97-084*, March 25, 1997.
64. *Kol Israel*, August 24, 1994, in *FBIS-NES-94-165*, August 25, 1994, pp.7-8.
65. Since the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, all foreign leaders who visited the Palestinian areas also visited Israel, and vice-versa. Likewise, all Arab countries that have opened missions in the Gaza Strip also maintain offices in Israel.
66. Muhammad Subbayh, Palestinian representative to the Arab League and

- Secretary of the Palestine National Council, quoted in *MENA*, August 29, 1994, in *FBIS-NES-94-168*, August 30, 1994, p.3.
67. *The Jerusalem Post*, August 26, 1994.
 68. *Ibid.*, August 29, 1994.
 69. *Ibid.*, August 25, 1994. Emphasis added.
 70. Rabin went on: "You do not declare in the media, 'I am going to come to Gaza, and I'm not willing to see any Israeli. We have no problem with the lady from Pakistan or her representative visiting, but they have to apply in orderly fashion.'" *The Jerusalem Post*, August 30, 1994.
 71. Ms. Bhutto's interview to *Al-Wasat*, (London), December 19-25, 1994, in *FBIS-NES-94-249*, December 28, 1994, p.68.
 72. "Israel's puerile show of authority", Editorial, *The Frontier Post* (Peshawar), August 31, 1994, in *FBIS-NES-94-170*, September 1, 1994, p.58. See also, Moonis Ahmar, "Pakistan and Israel- Distant adversaries or neighbors?", *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, vol.20, no.1, Fall 1996, pp.31-34.
 73. *The Jerusalem Report*, November 17, 1994.
 74. See *The News*, September 14, 1995, in *FBIS-NES-95-179*, September 15, 1995, p.84.
 75. *The News*, January 22, 1992, in *FBIS-NES-92-015*, January 23, 1992, pp.56-57.
 76. Quoted in F.J. Khergamwala, "India-Israel ties: Who gains what?", *The Hindu*, February 10, 1992. See also, *The Jerusalem Report*, December 31, 1992, p.9.
 77. Ms. Bhutto's interview to *Al-Wasat*, December 19-25, 1994, in *FBIS-NES-94-249*, December 28, 1994, p.68.
 78. "Contacts with Israel?", Editorial, *Khabrain*, February 21, 1995, in *FBIS-NES-95-035*, February 22, 1995, pp.72-73.
 79. Hanan A. Cidor to Foreign Ministry, November 18, 1958, *ISA, MFA*, File no. 3110/19.
 80. *Radio Pakistan*, November 6, 1995, *FBIS-NES-95-215-S*, November 7, 1995, p.13.
 81. *The News*, September 14, 1995, in *FBIS-NES-95-179*, September 15, 1995, pp.84-85.
 82. *The News*, May 4, 1996, *FBIS-NES-96-088*, May 6, 1996, pp.92-93. One participant was quoted as saying that while Pakistan presented an account of its battle against terrorism in Karachi, Israeli participants "explained threats facing their country from the Iran-backed groups such as Hamas and Hizbullah."

83. Aaron J. Sarna, *Boycott and Blacklist: A History of Arab Economic Warfare against Israel*, (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1986), pp.145-146. Interestingly, when Israel's Foreign Ministry Director-General Walter Eytan flew to India in February 1952 for an official visit, he had to stop over in Pakistan. Though he stayed overnight in a hotel, as an Israeli he was not allowed to leave the airport.
84. *The Jerusalem Post*, September 19, 1994.
85. For a skeptical assessment of this claim see, Ephraim Klieman, "Is there a secret Arab-Israeli trade?", *Middle East Quarterly*, vol.5, no.2, June 1998, pp.11-18.
86. *Kol Israel*, March 9, 1987, *JPRS-NEA-87-038*, March 30, 1987. Interestingly at that time neither the destination (Pakistan) nor the conduit (India) had diplomatic relations with Israel.
87. *The Jerusalem Post*, November 8, 1993.
88. *The News*, September 14, 1995, in *FBIS-NES-95-179*, September 15, 1995, p.84. For a critical view see, "Why should there be commercial ties with Israel?", *Khabrain*, September 15, 1995, in *FBIS-NES-95-179*, September 15, 1995, p.85.
89. *The News*, September 18, 1995, in *FBIS-NES-95-181*, September 19, 1995, p.70.
90. *The Jerusalem Report*, October 22, 1992, pp.9-10.
91. *Globes*, July 20, 1998, in *FBIS-NES-98-201*.
92. Leslie Susser, "PR Pilgrimage", *The Jerusalem Report*, July 1, 1993, pp.10-111.
93. *Israel Yearbook and Almanac 1994*, (Jerusalem), p.267. This disclosure appears to be an oversight. In preceding as well as subsequent years, visitors from Pakistan, if any, were never identified separately.
94. Abba Eban to Moshe Sharett, November 3, 1952, *Documents on the Foreign Policy of Israel*, vol.7, pp.603-604. See also, Shmuel Divon to the head of the Israeli delegation to the UN, January 22, 1952, *Documents on the Foreign Policy of Israel*, vol.7 p.42; and Summary of the meeting between Abba Eban and H. Byroade, June 17, 1952, *Documents on the Foreign Policy of Israel*, Companion Volume 7, pp.145-146.
95. This contrasts with the repeated American pressure on India to normalize relations with Israel.
96. Melvin Salberg and Abraham H. Foxman to Shahryar Khan, August 12, 1992. See also, Abraham H. Foxman to Jamsheed K. A. Markar, August 21, 1992. The author is grateful to the ADL office in Jerusalem for the copies of these letters.

97. Among others see, M.A. Ahmed to Edmund de Rothschild, February 25, 1963, *ISA, MFA File No. 3432/37*; and Ahmed to Rothschild, April 21, 1967, *ISA, MFA File No. 4056/29*; and Rothschild, to Israeli ambassador in London Arthur Lourie, 26 June 1962, *ISA, MFA File No. 3432/37*.
98. *International Documents on Palestine, 1974*, (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1977), p.226.
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188. Mushahid Hussain, *Pakistan's Politics*, p.34.
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