

India's Counterterrorism Cooperation with Israel

by Ely Karmon

Abstract

This Research Note focuses on the cooperation between India and Israel in the field of counterterrorism since the establishment of the full diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1992. Fresh out of the trauma of Partition, India decided to recognize the State of Israel, but only allowed consular relations on a nonreciprocal basis. India opened full diplomatic relations with Israel in May 1992 following the start of the Madrid Peace Process.[1] It analyzes the international context and the internal political constraints for the implementation of the cooperation process and refers also to the intricate challenges faced by India in dealing with Iranian terrorism on its soil.

Keywords: India; Israel; Iran; terrorism; CT cooperation; intelligence

Secret Cooperation

It should be noticed that since its early days, India's external intelligence agency, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), had a secret liaison relationship with the Mossad, Israel's external intelligence agency. "The main purpose was to benefit from Israel's knowledge of West Asia and North Africa, and to learn from its counterterrorism techniques." [2] Initial contacts were established through the Israeli consulate in Mumbai. Over the years, the bonds between the two agencies have strengthened with a common threat of Islamist terrorism and fundamentalism. [3]

After the assassination of Indira Gandhi on 31 October 1984 and the formation of the Indian National Security Guard, there were reports that Israeli training was availed of. [4] During the early 1980s, some Indian military officers indeed underwent counterterrorism training in Israel. [5]

Since the 1980s India was a popular tourist destination for Israelis. In June 1991, young Israeli tourists visiting the scenic Kashmir Valley were attacked by a dozen armed Kashmiri Muslim terrorists in Srinagar. Fearing that the men were about to be executed, one of the Israelis untied his hands, attacked one of the gunmen, grabbed his assault rifle, and opened fire. In the ensuing gun battle, one Israeli was killed, three others were wounded, and one kidnapped. A Kashmiri organization calling itself Defenders of the Islamic Revolution claimed responsibility for the kidnapping. [6]

Pakistan suspected the Israelis were Israeli Army officers masquerading as tourists to train Indian security forces in counterterrorism operations. The Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) propaganda inspired the terrorist attacks on the Israelis. Soon afterward, under pressure, the terrorists released the kidnapped Israeli tourist. During the negotiations for his release, Israeli government officials, including senior intelligence operatives, arrived in New Delhi. Their interaction with Indian officials gave a boost to the larger considerations behind the formalization of diplomatic relations between the two states. [7]

The International Context for the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations

India and Israel normalized their relations with the change in the international balance of power after the 1991 Gulf War. Various factors played a significant role in this regard: the beginning of the era of coalition politics in India; the beginning of a Pakistan-sponsored insurgency in Kashmir; the breakup of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. In the early 1990s, the growing insurgent activity in Kashmir worsened the domestic and the regional security environment of India. The OIC (Organisation of Islamic Conference) resolutions on Kashmir consistently criticized India at the request of Pakistan and the Muslim community in India—in stark contrast to Israel's support of India on the Kashmir issue. [8]

While the Soviet Union showed positive indications that it would recognize Israel, the US started talking to the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). China opened diplomatic relations with Israel in January 1991. Eventually, the PLO itself in its Conference in Algiers in 1988 recognized Israel's right to exist and the possibility of a peaceful solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. For India, after the Madrid negotiation process began, the argument of "annoying friendly Arab States, and Muslims at home", lost relevance.[9]

As the Soviet Union, India's strongest strategic ally and defense supplier, had waned in power and influence and transformed into the Russian Federation, New Delhi wanted to engage more with the sole remaining superpower, the United States. Indian Prime Minister Rao was convinced that normalization with Israel was necessary to improve India's standing vis-a-vis the American Jewish community and the US political establishment. Therefore, India decided to change its earlier posture toward Israel and on 29 January 1992 accorded full diplomatic recognition to Israel and both nations established embassies in each other's countries.[10]

In justifying the opening of relations India offered several reasons: Israel's cruciality to what happens in West Asia and the Gulf; defense equipment, technologies and systems from Israel, given the drying up and unreliability of ex-Soviet sources; potential of cooperation in defense modernization and production; and Israel's knowledge and experience in countering terrorism techniques, border management methods which could help India in getting over its major weaknesses in internal security management.[11]

The 1999 Kargil crisis with Pakistan, when Israel responded positively to Indian requests for military equipment and ammunition, in the face of US pressure to implement an arms embargo on India, opened a new chapter in the arms trade between the two countries. India is today Israel's largest arms market while Israel is India's biggest arms supplier.[12]

The Evolution of the Counterterrorism Cooperation

According to Samuel Rajiv, researcher at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), India's foreign policy interactions with Israel are "marked by a political discreetness which is in contrast to its prominent political engagement with the Palestinians and countries of the Arab world." Indian government spokespersons and ministers acknowledge the importance of the "mutually beneficial cooperation" which "in no way dilutes India's principled support for the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people." India's "delicate balance" is evident in its censure of Israeli policies regarding the Palestinians.[13]

Other analysts have claimed that India has elevated the Israeli bilateral ties to that of a "pivotal relationship"—at the cost of India's relations with countries like Iran.[14] Israeli analysts have acknowledged that the India-Israel bilateral relationship is a "limited partnership" which "while mutually vital, is delicate." [15]

Fighting terrorism is a major issue and challenge for both India and Israel. The two countries set up in 2001 a Joint Working Group as part of their Strategic Dialogue. This Joint Working Group has served as a platform to exchange practical experiences on border security, suicide terrorism, aviation security, financing of terror, information security, as well as digital and cyber warfare. There is, however, a difference between India and Israel when it comes to the philosophy behind counterterrorism and respective threat perceptions. While Israel believes in giving no quarter to terror as an instrument of political negotiation, India has always believed in keeping a door open for dialogue. Israel sees circles of threat which include Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, and Hamas, while India sees its threats emanating from radical Islamist groups sponsored by Pakistan, especially the Taliban, Lashkar-e-Toiba and Jaish-i-Mohammad.[16]

India has sought to obtain Israeli assistance to train four battalions of nearly 3,000 soldiers in specialized counter-insurgency operations in desert, mountainous and jungle terrains, besides counter-hijack and hostage crisis situations. The *Jerusalem Post* of February 3, 2003, asserts that India sought security expertise from Israel due to its inability to control infiltration into Jammu and Kashmir, as well as some other stretches of the India-Pakistan border that resulted in a high-profile attack on its Parliament on 13 December 2001. [17]

The convergence of Indo-Israeli interests and their strategic significance was outlined by the Indian National Security Adviser Brijesh Mishra in his address to the American Jewish Committee. Therein he argued that democratic countries that are the prime targets of international terrorism should form a “viable alliance” and develop multilateral mechanisms to counter the menace. He identified India, the US and Israel as countries fitting that description. During the June 22, 2003 Joint Working Group meeting, the Deputy Director General of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Zvi Gabey, said: “We find ourselves in the same camp that fights terrorism, and we have to develop our relationship according to that.” Indian Foreign Ministry officials said during the same meeting, “India finds it increasingly beneficial to learn from Israel’s experience in dealing with terrorism since Israel, too, has long suffered from cross-border terrorism.”[18]

The BJP’s Contribution to Enhanced Cooperation

India’s ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has always been an ardent supporter of stronger ties between India and Israel. Its leaders, whether in opposition or in government, have continuously expressed admiration for Israel’s counterterrorism expertise and national security policies.[19]

The BJP, a Hindu National right-of-center party, came to power in 1996, first for 13 months and then, in 1998, for a full term. The prominent leaders of the BJP, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Bajpayee and Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister L.K. Advani, had expressed admiration for Israel’s survival in a hostile neighborhood, and their assessment of the threat of global Islamist terrorism coincided with that of Israel. The visits in 2000 of two high-profile ministers of the BJP-led government, Home Minister Advani and Jaswant Singh, the first Indian foreign minister to visit Israel, underlined the importance that Israel had come to occupy in Indian strategic and security circles.[20]

The delegation which accompanied the visit of the Indian Home Minister L.K. Advani included the heads of India’s intelligence agencies Research Analysis Wing (RAW), the Intelligence Bureau (IB), and the Central Police organization. In meetings with the Mossad chief and Israeli ministers responsible for security, Indian counterparts discussed collaboration in internal security management and intelligence sharing and cooperation. As a consequence, Israeli intelligence agencies agreed to open offices in New Delhi.

The 9/11 terrorist attacks, the spreading of Islamist terrorism, and the exclusion of India and Israel from the US-led War on Terror in Afghanistan, while making Pakistan an ally in this effort, brought the security, defense, intelligence and counterterrorism issues to the forefront of the growing Indo-Israeli strategic partnership. No wonder, then, that India, like Israel, felt that it had to build its own tools for protecting its citizens and its borders from terrorist groups, some of which are assisted by the neighboring states.[21]

The Effect of the 2008 Mumbai Terrorist Attacks

On November 26, 2008, 10 gunmen associated with the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT—“Army of the Righteous”) organization attacked five locations in Mumbai, India, firing at random, with the intention of killing a maximum number of people. The attackers deliberately targeted areas of the city frequented by foreigners with the intention that this would maximize the global impact of their actions. The gunmen took hostages and withstood the Indian security forces for three days. The final death toll was 165 killed—140 Indian citizens and 25 foreign visitors. Nine of the 10 gunmen were also killed. The 10th was apprehended by the authorities, convicted of murder, and executed four years later.

Among the sites targeted was Nariman House, known also as “Chabad House,” a popular stop for Israeli tourists. Chabad, also known as Lubavitch, is one of the world’s best-known Hasidic movements, particularly for its outreach activities. Chabad operates mainly in the wider world and caters to secularized Jews. Six Israeli citizens, including Rabbi Gavriel Holtzberg and his wife Rivka, who managed the Chabad House, were tortured and murdered at this site.

An Indian investigation confirmed LeT’s responsibility for the attacks. Pressure from the United States and United Nations on Pakistan led to the arrest of a number of LeT members on Pakistani soil. In 2009, Pa-

kistan also confirmed the organization's responsibility for the attacks. Evidence has emerged that a close relationship between the group and the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence organization, or elements within that organization, was maintained before, during and subsequent to the attacks. One of the ISI officers, "Major Iqbal," directed and funded the attacks, and personally selected the targets. Iqbal specifically chose the Nariman Chabad House as a target because he claimed that it was a front for the Mossad.[22]

The strategic relationship and partnership between Israel and India have grown exponentially since the Mumbai attacks of 2008, pointing to a certain consistency which remains at the core of bilateral relations. [23] The Mumbai terror attacks—planned and engineered from Pakistani territory, exposed the difficulty of the Indian state to control its borders, process actionable intelligence in time, and preempt and counter terrorist attacks. As a result, Israel has provided India with satellite photo imagery, unarmed vehicles (UAVs), handheld thermal imagers, night vision devices, long-range reconnaissance and observation systems (LOROS), and detection equipment for counterterrorism purposes. Counterterrorism was also one of the priority areas of discussion during Israeli President Reuven Rivlin's landmark meeting with Modi in New Delhi in November 2016.[24]

The PM Narendra Modi's Strategic Impact

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi can be credited with "elevating the strategic dimension of the Indo-Israeli partnership by bringing the bilateral relationship out from under the carpet" during his historic visit in Israel in July 2017, the first visit by an Indian prime minister to the Jewish state. Defense, the central pillar of the relationship, has increased dramatically under his government. Modi's "epoch-making trip" gave an unprecedented push to efforts to build new bilateral relations and further solidify security ties between the two countries. However, India's growing tilt toward Israel might not have much impact on its own relationships with its traditional Arab partners.[25]

A crucial aim of Modi's foreign policy is to ensure that his domestic "transformational" agenda is not held hostage to diplomatic or military adventures of India's adversaries. Thus, he developed a strategy that uses hard and covert power, including the use of Special Forces operations, most dramatically highlighted by the surgical strikes India carried out across Pakistan-occupied territory in 2016. According to some observers, these dynamics are likely to translate into greater security cooperation with Israel—although the Indian government faces challenges in using the same kind of counterterrorism tactics that Israel has practiced.[26]

According to Shalom Salomon Wald, Indian diplomacy refuses to call Modi's friendship with Israel and the change in bilateral relations since 2014 "a revolution." This caution is justified as it is wise not to antagonize the Arab world unnecessarily. The Indo-Israeli links were growing steadily for twenty years, and Modi was merely the culmination of a long process.[27]

As the two countries marked 25 years of ties, Daniel Carmon, Israel's ambassador to India since July 2014, said that "there was a policy in the past and it has changed" [28]: after 25 years of "low key, low volume" bilateral cooperation, he could feel doors were opening at the governmental level, as India has overcome its hesitance to accept its relationship with the Jewish nation openly.[29]

For its part, Israel seems to be consciously focusing on expanding internal security/HLS cooperation. The Israeli Embassy has an official, the Deputy Defense Attaché for HLS Defense Cooperation, who is specifically tasked with these matters. The issue is also on the agenda of meetings Ambassador Daniel Carmon conducted at the time with regional leaders. During his meeting with the chief minister of Andhra Pradesh in December 2014, for instance, Carmon discussed the possibility of internal security cooperation with the state. He also met with the police chiefs of the two Telugu-speaking states during his visit.[30]

During a public lecture at the United Services Institution of India (USI) on April 1, 2015, Ambassador Carmon highlighted the importance of the February 2014 HLST landmark agreement between the two countries which provided the formation of four working groups to advance cooperation in these fields, suggesting that as a consequence the institutional interaction in this area has been seriously enhanced.[31]

In August 2017 it was reported that India is deploying along its border with Pakistan a smart Israel-developed fencing system having a “quick response team” mechanism which strikes when the CCTV-powered control room detects an infiltration attempt. It is an ambitious project called the comprehensive integrated border management system (CIBMS) as part of the Modi government’s plan to completely seal the Indo-Pak and India-Bangladesh borders in the coming years.[32]

During his January 2018 visit to India, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu signed nine agreements, including one in the area of cybersecurity, and laid a wreath for the 11/26 Mumbai terror attack victims. This was the first Prime Ministerial visit from Israel to India in 15 years after that of Ariel Sharon in 2003.[33] In December 2020 India and Israel carried out, during a virtual meeting of India-Israel foreign offices, a comprehensive review of their cooperation, especially in the strategic fields of defense and security, counter-terrorism, and cybersecurity.[34]

The Iranian Factor

India and Israel do not see eye to eye on the former’s relations with Iran; here there is a matter of strategic disagreement between them. Israel has repeatedly expressed its concern to India about a possible nuclear technology leak or transfer of nuclear-related information to Iran. According to Abhyankar, Iran enjoys a rare political consensus in India and since the early 1990s every Indian Government has placed a high priority on strengthening its ties with Tehran. India is unlikely to share Israeli apprehensions over Iranian radicalism.[35] It would appear that the Abhyankar forecast holds true even today.

In 2003 India and Iran signed an agreement to set up a joint working group on terrorism and security, described as an “Axis” in the making, the main purpose of which was to share intelligence on al-Qaeda activities in Afghanistan. Both countries had an interest in a stable Afghanistan ruled by a regime fully representative of the ethnic and cultural diversity of the country and capable of leading to enhanced regional security. However, India had to be careful to make sure that its relationship with Iran did not impinge upon its improving relationship with the United States, as Washington decided to pursue its containment of Iran more aggressively.[36]

In this context, it appears to be difficult for India to maintain strategic partnerships with both Israel and Iran for a long time, since Iran not only supports the Palestine cause and the right of its people to reclaim occupied lands as their homeland, but also strives to the elimination of the Israeli state.[37]

India’s relations with Iran have been shaped significantly by Iran’s solidarity with the Indian Muslim population, the second-largest Shia Muslim population in the world after Iran. For example, India-Iran relations were hurt by the destruction of the Babri mosque at Ayodhya by Hindu fundamentalists in December 1992 and the subsequent Hindu-Muslim riots in various parts of India. Moreover, Iran had been a consistent supporter of Pakistan’s position on Kashmir, both within and outside the United Nations. Therefore, India’s domestic policy and its treatment of its Muslim population play a major role in determining the long-term strength of the Indo-Iranian relationship.[38] India will find it hard to ignore Iran’s active tutelage of terrorist groups such as Hezbollah and Hamas, as it endangers the values and commitments of India in the fight against nuclear proliferation and in the war against terror.[39]

Two examples of Iranian terrorism against Israeli targets on Indian territory illustrate the dichotomy of this challenge in Israel-India cooperation.

Delhi Terror Attack against Israel in 2012

On 13 February 2012, a vehicle of the Israeli Embassy was the target of a bomb blast in a high-security neighborhood of New Delhi. The wife of an Israeli diplomat, the driver of the vehicle and two other persons, were injured. Israel immediately held Iran responsible for the attack.

The possible Iranian involvement in the attack posed a serious diplomatic challenge for New Delhi. There

was a great deal of circumstantial evidence, including the fact that an identical attack was attempted the same day on another Israeli Embassy vehicle in Tbilisi, Georgia. Moreover, the New Delhi attack came a day after the fourth death anniversary of Hezbollah leader Imad Mughniyah, who had died in a car explosion. The evidence indicated that a covert war between Israel and Iran and Hezbollah “just arrived in India.” This was detrimental to India’s security, and New Delhi needed to do something about it, advised *The Times of India*. The daily stressed that New Delhi doesn’t appreciate the sponsorship of terror activities on Indian soil but condones the murder of Iranian nuclear scientists. India is also firmly opposed to any raid on Iran’s nuclear sites, as the Israelis periodically threaten.[40]

Some Indian journals raised the question of a possible cooperation between Hezbollah and local recruits in India to harm Israeli interests in the country. If this angle has any truth, LeT support for the Hezbollah plan cannot be ruled out, though LeT is composed of extremist Sunnis only.[41]

Indian reaction to the bombing of an Israeli diplomatic car has been lukewarm at best. A foreign ministry spokesman in New Delhi said that India would seek the cooperation of the Iranian authorities in bringing those involved in this dastardly attack to justice.

New Delhi Police arrested Indian journalist Syed Mohammed Ahmad Kazmi, a Shi’ite with long-standing Iranian connections, who was employed part-time by an Iranian broadcaster for allegedly facilitating the February 13 bombing. An Indian court issued arrest warrants for Iranians Housan Afshari, Syed Ali Mehdi Sadr and Mohammed Reza Abolghasemi in connection with the attack. Housan Afshari, who had visited Delhi twice and left for Malaysia shortly after the Delhi attack, was in contact with Masoud Sedaghatzadeh, one of the Iranian suspects in the January 2012 Bangkok bomb plot, who was later named on an Indian arrest warrant for his role in the New Delhi attack.[42]

On 31 July 2012, Kazmi was charged under various provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), Indian Penal Code (IPC) including attempt to murder and the Explosive Substances Act.[43]. However, Kazmi was granted bail in October 2012. To this day, he is active as a freelance journalist, being the founding editor of Media Star News. Recently, he started his own YouTube channel “Media Star World” which is mainly focusing on international affairs “from the Indian perspective.”[44]

In July 2012, the *Times of India* reported that Delhi Police concluded that terrorists belonging to a branch of Iran’s military, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), were responsible for the attack. The investigation report, exclusively accessed by the *Times of India*, stated that the IRGC members had discussed the plan to attack the Israeli diplomats in India with Indian journalist Kazmi in January 2011, after Iranian scientists had been attacked, allegedly by Israelis. Kazmi had been in touch with these people for almost 10 years.[45]. The Indian Police spokesperson denied the report.[46]

Iran denied it would do such a thing in India, especially when New Delhi was making strenuous efforts—despite disapproval by the US and some European countries—to develop new methods to pay for Iranian oil. “It is not in the character of Iranian policy to do this. If it is so, why select India? Iran could have selected some other country.” The attacks in India occurred when it had just replaced China as Iran’s largest crude oil importer. The question of why Iran would do this to its biggest customer arose after the attacks.[47]

Indeed, several weeks later, a large Indian delegation visited Tehran to ask for more oil imports and India invited three Iranian banks to open their branches to conduct direct trade. In April 2012, Tehran informed the Indian Ministry of External Affairs that “both sides are interested in collaboration”. At the same time it said that information about the three suspected Iranians involved in the terrorist attack could not be provided immediately “because Iran had gone into its Navroz (New Year) celebrations!”[48]

It appears that all the diplomatic efforts, as well as the visit of the Indian Police to Tehran to obtain official information about the suspected perpetrators of the February 13 attack, have not achieved any positive results until today.

Blast Near Israel Embassy on January 31, 2021

A minor blast took place in the evening in a high-security zone of Delhi. No one was injured. An envelope addressed to the Israeli Embassy and containing a note was found at the site of the blast. According to the style of writing and the spelling of the names, it was probably written by an Iranian. The letter swore revenge for the killing of Quds Force commander General Qasem Soleimani in January 2020 by the United States, and for the death of an Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, allegedly by Israel, in November 2020. The explosion took place on the day when India and Israel marked the completion of the 29th anniversary of the establishment of their diplomatic relations.[49]

Investigators were looking into links to Jaish-ul-Hind, an unknown group which claimed responsibility for the blast on Telegram more than an hour before the explosion occurred. Police have recovered a chat on social media wherein the terror outfit could be seen taking pride over the attack. More than a month later, India's central counterterrorism agencies drew up a list of suspects, with their investigations concluding that while the Iranian Quds force was behind the terror plot, the bomb itself was planted by a local Indian Shia team.[50]

The Special Cell of Delhi Police arrested four students from Jammu and Kashmir in connection with the blast. Police had alleged that this was a case of conspiracy hatched by Islamic outfits and the four students were planning to carry out terrorist attacks in Delhi and other parts of India, targeting Western as well as Israeli establishments in India. In July 2020, Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Pankaj Sharma granted bail to Nazir Hussain (aged 25), Zulfikar Ali Wazir (25), Aiaz Hussain (28) and Muzammil Hussain (25). In its order, the court claimed that nothing incriminating has been put forth by the police which suggested that the accused persons had links with any terrorist organization. It further noted that as per the report, Nazir was a supporter of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps of Iran, "and this was not a terrorist organisation." All four were released because of their near-perfect alibi. Delhi Police have opposed the bail plea citing that the investigation was still at a crucial stage.[51]

A year after the blast outside the Israeli Embassy in Delhi, the National Investigation Agency (NIA), which was investigating the case, was nowhere close to cracking the case.[52]

The February 13, 2012 attack, in one of the rising global powers, although relatively minor, was more of an Iranian signal with the potential to reverberate internationally. The timing was, as indicated before, probably connected to the 29th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between India and Israel. Based on experience [2012], it is possible that the Iranian leaders thought they could rely on a lax investigation, under political constraints, by the Indian authorities.

A top comment by Vidyanand Shetty on *The Times of India* of January 30, 2021, resumes the discussion: "Iran can't use India for its dirty games. They escaped punishment in 2012 as they had a friendly gov't. Now things have changed, [with] this act of terrorism against India and not against Israel. [The] Indian government should issue a strong statement: anyone using Indian soil will be punished." Prime Minister Narendra Modi condemned the terror attack near the Israeli Embassy in New Delhi and pledged to punish the perpetrators.

Surprising as it may be, Israel and Iran accept India's relations with the rival as a fact, without criticizing their very existence or the Indian interest in strengthening them. India's relations with each of the two are important enough for the other to try to harm them.[53]

Iran's Ambassador to India since December 2012, Ansari, a seasoned diplomat, asked in an interview what he feels about India's growing ties with Israel answered: "That is your business. It is not our business to advise you. Any country can choose their own friends. That's your right as well as ours. But we should not let our friends choose our enemies. If they (Israel) are your friends, don't let them choose your enemies." [54]

Conclusion

India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar declared during his five-day visit to Israel in October 2021 that India has been facing major threats emanating across the border from Pakistan and that Israel is also surrounded by hostile neighbors. India and Israel have a Joint Working Group on Counterterrorism and the two countries also share real-time intelligence to deal with the terrorist menace. Jaishankar added that the "real thrust, however, is to expand the innovation and trade partnership between our two knowledge economies." As an example, he noted that the two countries collaborate to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic.[55]

In describing the security relations between the countries, including CT, the former Israeli ambassador to New Delhi, Daniel Carmon, has stressed that there is a formal maintenance of discretion, although it is a major component of the relationship. Relations between the two countries are officially viewed as a strategic partnership.[56]

Indeed, one should see the cooperation of the two states on counterterrorism as part of a much larger strategic alliance—an alliance based on democratic values which both countries share and based as well on the similarity of threats posed to both of them by asymmetric warfare.

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