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Israel's Strategic Relations – Is there Room for New Partnerships?

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Executive Summary

Israel's foreign policy has traditionally stemmed – an apparently will for the near future – from Israel's unique defense concerns and the Israeli-Arab conflict; the overriding consideration being the need for political, economic and military support in the conflict. The cold war era dictated exclusivity in strategic relations. Consequently, the relations with the United States became the primary focus of Israel's foreign policy and an overriding consideration in formulating Israeli positions.

The end of the cold war opened new venues for Israeli foreign relations. This resulted from: the emergence of new alignments and Powers (Europe, Russia, China, India, Japan); greater willingness to develop relations with Israel; and a reduction in the ability of the Arab and Muslim world to coerce other countries to refrain from close relations with Israel. Nevertheless, no other relationship or set of alliances could replace the relationship with the United States. Though one may draw scenarios in which the US support of Israel may weaken, it is difficult to envisage a situation in which the US will abandon Israel. Therefore, this relationship must remain the linchpin of Israeli foreign policy.

This study examines the pros and cons of diversification of Israel's foreign relations vis-à-vis four case studies, which exemplify various foreign policy dilemmas: **Russia**, **India**, **Taiwan**, and **Turkey**. These cases are examined in the light of a set of criteria: sustainable political, economic, military and cultural communities of interests, grounds for strategic interaction, moral criteria, the "life expectancy" of the partner regime, ramifications for other foreign relations of Israel, above all – the United States, and economic complementarities (volume of trade, manufacturing possibilities, raw material, R&D).

Israel's defense doctrine is not geared to accommodate alliances in which Israel would have to share sensitive expertise with foreign allies (except for the US). The perennial conundrum for Israeli defense exports of any type is the high degree of American technology integrated into even the most "Israeli" products. Any collaboration must also take into account the risk of leakage of technology to hostile Middle Eastern countries. A policy of diversification calls for an in-depth analysis of areas and technologies, which are "exportable" without undue fear of compromising Israel's own, defense standing. These areas may include export of manufactured defense products, joint R&D, intelligence cooperation etc.

India has undergone a number of changes in the last decade, which have enhanced Israel's image as a potential ally and paved the way to cooperation in various areas. These include an economic metamorphosis; shift from reliance on the now defunct Soviet Union to improved relations with the United States; the rise to power of the Hindi nationalist BJP; the "outing" of Pakistan's nuclear and SSM capabilities and the increased threat of Islamic terrorism. Defense collaboration between the two countries may include the fields of R&D for military technology, testing of systems in India, naval cooperation, and intelligence on areas of WMD (Iran, Pakistan and North Korea), radical Islam and counter-terrorism. For Israel, such collaboration may also pay strategic dividends in preventing military cooperation between India and Israel's enemies in the Middle East. The common threat of Islamic terrorism may also be developed into cooperation in a variety of areas of "public diplomacy".

Turkey has also undergone processes, which may provide a new impetus to Israeli-Turkish relations. For Turkey, the image of intimate strategic cooperation with Israel has enhanced its deterrent image vis-à-vis its Middle Eastern (Iraq, Syria, and Iran) adversaries. Furthermore, Israel and Turkey have a wide range of common interests: deterring Syria and Iran, disruption of proliferation of WMD to other Middle Eastern countries, and a common enemy in the ideology of radical Islam. Turkey's special relationship with the US and membership in NATO facilitates such a relationship.

However, Israel's rapport with Turkey is intimately linked to Turkey's military establishment and to its secular Atta-Turk heritage. The almost total authority of this

establishment vis-à-vis national security is behind the fact that even Islamist led governments have not acted to diminish the relationship. Were the domestic influence of the Turkish Military's domestic to wane, the Israeli-Turkish relationship may suffer the fate of the relationship with South Africa.

Russia is the most complicated of the cases examined in this study. On one hand, the presence in Israel of approximately one million ex-Soviet Jews has re-created an affinity with Russian culture, which existed in early pre-state Israel. There also seems to be a wide range of technological areas, including defense technologies for mutual R&D (e.g. integration of Israeli high-end technology with Russian platforms for sale to third countries, missile defense, etc.) On the other hand, more than in any other case presented here, the Israel-Russian relationship is actually a "ménage á trois" of Israel, Russia and the United States. The political animosity that the Soviet Union demonstrated towards Israel, its support of Israel's enemies since the mid-fifties, the anti-Semitism of the Soviet regime and its treatments of the Soviet Jews have remained in the Israeli public consciousness. As a former "Super Power" with a strong domestic lobby in favor of reviving Russia's former global status and with traditional geopolitical interests in the Arab world and in Iran, Russian and Israeli interests will always diverge in important areas. Russia has close relations and interests in Iran. As long as the Russian-Iranian nuclear and SSM cooperation continues, the Israeli-Russian axis will suffer from concerns of knowledge leaks to one of Israel's most committed enemies.

Taiwan is a unique case with both American and Chinese complexities. On one hand, the defense of Taiwan is a goal enshrined in US legislation. Therefore, an Israeli-Taiwanese relationship would not contradict the goals of the US in East Asia. Taiwan's military needs and technological level are similar to Israel's (TMD, C⁴ISR systems, etc.). Israeli-Taiwanese defense cooperation may encompass (in coordination with the US), inter alia: direct sales of Israeli hardware to Taiwan; joint R&D in Taiwan; training of Taiwan's military in areas of civil defense and counter-terrorism. On the other hand, such collaboration would certainly encounter a harsh Chinese reaction and be perceived in Beijing as Israel acting as a US proxy.

The above analysis seems to indicate a certain potential for diversification of Israel's strategic relationships. Of the four cases discussed, it seems that Russia is the most problematic. The potential for a convergence of strategic interests with Turkey seems to be promising: both Turkey and Israel may use the image of a strategic alliance to their advantage vis-à-vis Syria and Iran. The Indian case also seems to hold promise in compatibility of technology and defense needs and long-range potential for the relations. Last, a closer relationship with Taiwan should also be explored, based on an analysis of the Chinese and US aspects.

Preface

Israeli foreign policy has traditionally stemmed from Israel's unique defense concerns; the overriding consideration has been the need for political, economic and military support in the conflict with her regional neighbors. Israel's short-term "honeymoon" with Czechoslovakia during the War of Independence, with France in the mid 1950's, the strategic relationship with Iran and the close ties with (Apartheid period) South Africa and with (Haile Selassie's) Ethiopia and Turkey during the period of military rule are prime examples of this priority. Some of these cases were prime examples to the extent to which Israel was willing to turn a blind eye to public disavowing of the relations and even anti-Israeli positions of countries, with which clandestine cooperation existed. In all these cases, the motivation of countries to tie close strategic relations with Israel, including in sensitive defense and intelligence areas, was Israel's unique position or know-how.

Along with the need for military support, Israel's built her foreign relations around the political facets of the Israeli-Arab conflict. It may be assumed that as long as the Israeli-Arab conflict endures, this will be a major factor in Israeli foreign policy. In the context of her struggle against international de-legitimization, Israel has invested as much diplomatic effort in achieving publicity of relations as in developing the relations themselves. As a result, for many years, Israel developed a wide range of relations with a variety of countries in sub-Saharan Africa and Oceania, investing in economic aid, visits of high ranking delegations, defense and security training and weapons sales. Many of these efforts have seemed to be disproportional.

Naturally, in the bi-polar world of the cold war era, Israel's relations with the United States and the absence of direct relations with the USSR overshadowed all other issues of foreign policy. The United States became the focus of the lion's share of Israel's foreign policy activities; the American standpoint on international issues holds a predominant place in Israel's formulation of her stance on those issues. In many cases, a US "volte-face" in foreign policy (PRC-Taiwan for example) was followed suit by Israel, with very little weight given to Israel's own particular interests in those regions.

The cold war ethos which both superpowers set examples of also allowed Israel – among other countries – to develop relations on a purely "Realpolitik" basis with little consideration for the "democratic" nature of the regimes with which relations were developed¹; the enemies of one's enemies were friends. Some of these special relations backfired later on when alternative regimes took power (South Africa, Iran) and Israel was identified as a major supporter of the "ancien regime".

Along with cold war bipolarity, the predominance of United Nations politics in the past also had a strong influence on Israeli foreign policy. Israel's isolation in the United Nations imposed a foreign policy goal of cultivating relationships to the end of gaining support in UN votes (either in the Security Council or the general assembly). Unable to crack the Soviet Bloc discipline, and finding herself increasingly estranged from the core nations of the European Union, Israel focused on infiltrating the "non-aligned" bloc and counted small blessings in the form of an occasional vote in the General Assembly.

The end of the cold war signaled a change in international atmosphere and practices. Harbingers of the end of exclusivity could be noticed even before the final collapse of the Soviet Bloc; the Soviet Union began to renew relations with Israel in 1986 and full diplomatic relations were renewed in 1991 on the eve of the Madrid Conference. The full impact of this change was felt in the willingness of a number of Arab states

¹ The "friendly despot" paradigm, which ruled US foreign policy for most of the heyday of the cold war.

to tie diplomatic (and other) relations with Israel despite the absence of a final settlement with the Palestinians. Bloc solidarity had lost much of its hold even in the unity-obsessed Arab world.

Not only has the international alignment changed dramatically in the last decade, but also new threats and opportunities have emerged. To the extent that foreign policy is driven by a country's perception of its vital interests, the new international environment should warrant, at least, an updating of those interests - tangible and intangible, short term and long term -, which should drive Israel's foreign policy.

The study of international strategic relations focuses, generally, on alliances, which are by nature exclusive. It is common to measure balances of power as the net weight of the strategic power of a country with the "added value" of its strategic alliances. Therefore, a country would do well to tie a number of strategic relations. In the bipolar Cold War world, however, there was little room for nations to attempt to diversify their strategic relations. To the extent that they did, the weight of the new relationships remained marginal and served, in fact to enhance their standing in the eyes of their main strategic partners.² This study will examine the pros and cons of diversification of Israel's foreign relations vis-à-vis a number of case studies: **Russia**, **India**, **Taiwan**, and **Turkey**. These cases have been chosen as exemplifications of a number of foreign policy dilemmas which must balance the underlying ethical principles of Israel's foreign policy with Realpolitik exigencies

The Case for Diversification

The main considerations, which drive Israel's strategic relations, are access to weaponry; access to sources of energy; transport routes and export markets. To this, one should add the goal of strengthening the legitimacy, acceptability and understanding of Israel's situation in the world.

Israel's political situation is unique among the nations, as:

² The prominent examples are Mexico, some African countries, Canada, New Zealand, Kazakhstan, Vietnam and South Korea. The case of the latter is probably the most relevant to the Israeli situation.

1. A State assailed by its neighbors as illegitimate; whose very raison d'être as a National Home land for its (Jewish) People and even the very legitimacy of the existence of its People as a Nation is in dispute, not only among its neighbors but in political and intellectual circles in the Western World;
2. A Nation without religious (Jewish) or linguistic (Hebrew) affinities in the international community;
3. Perceived as an illegitimate "occupier" of an entire "nation" (Palestine);
4. The primary target of the "lion's share" of condemnation, censure and ostracization by the organized international community and therefore unable to expect fair treatment at the hands of international bodies;
5. Widely perceived in many quarters in the West as the "root cause" of the scourge of (Islamic) terrorism which the World is suffering;
6. A democratic society, with all the weaknesses of such a society, dealing with non-democratic adversaries.

Over the years, Israel has recruited varying levels of support from different countries, which have expressed empathy for Israel's predicament. However, no relationship has been as enduring and significant for Israel's national security than the link with the US. The position of the US as the sole Superpower and the extent of US support for Israel are such, that no other relationship or set of alliances could replace it. The special relationship with the United States must, therefore, remain the linchpin of Israeli foreign policy. Ostensibly, the most compelling argument for diversification of Israel's foreign relations is the scenario, in which a future U.S. administration becomes "tired" of supporting Israel, financially and politically. In such a scenario, Israel would be, at best, left to fend for herself in a hostile middle East, and, at worst abandoned with the U.S. gradually supporting her rivals. This scenario is of course supported by two major historic precedents of U.S behavior towards erstwhile allies: the complete abandoning of South Vietnam; and the retraction of diplomatic recognition of the Republic of China (ROC – Taiwan) in favor of the Peoples Republic of China (PRC). Other historic precedents, closer to home, which are cited,

include Kissinger's policies towards Israel, when the possibility of an Egyptian rapprochement arose. The trauma of the rupturing of the alliance with France in the wake of the 1967 "Six Days War", which forced Israel to "steal" patrol boats and Jet fighter blueprints, also serves to emphasize the inconsistency of foreign relations.

It is difficult to envisage a situation which may induce a total abandonment of Israel by the US, such as in the Vietnam case, or a partial one as in the case of Taiwan. At the same time, circumstances may arise which might bring about a reduction – in relative or absolute terms – in US support for Israel. Some of these may be³:

1. **A shift towards "isolationism"** and US withdrawal from its present sense of mission in the international arena.
2. **A reduction of the influence of the pro-Israel lobby** or the rise of an administration with little or no links to the Jewish community.
3. **An overhaul of U.S. international priorities**, as a result of conflicts or crisis in East Asia, cross-straits tension (between PRC and Taiwan), escalation of the conflict between India and Pakistan, which may bring the administration to want to disengage from other "high maintenance" relationships (such as Israel).
4. **A reordering of U.S. energy priorities** with a shift from the Middle East to Russia and Central Asia.
5. **A need to coordinate more closely with the European Union**, which, for its part, may develop a growing domestic need for appeasement of the Muslim world.
6. **"Pay-off" to the Arabs** for acquiescence to a sustained US occupation of Iraq and the War on Terrorism.

Even unchanging US support in "nominal" terms may not suffice for Israel's future defense needs as a result of the growing price of advanced weapons systems which are currently in use or in the pipeline, and dynamic changes in defense requirements

³ The analysis is based on an unpublished draft paper prepared by Dr. Martin Sherman, "Diversifying Strategic Reliance: Broadening the Base of Israel's of Strategic Partnership" (June 2003).

to contend with emerging threats, (both in the area of non-conventional and missile threats and low-intensity warfare and terrorism).

However, even if the present level of American support for Israel remains unchanged, there are reasons for Israel to explore a policy of foreign policy diversification. The global strategic landscape has changed over the last decade and will continue to change. The emergence of the United States, by default, as the sole world Superpower reinforces the existing policy of reliance on the US; however, other powers and coalitions, which must be taken into account, have begun to take form in a multi-polar world. These include:

1. **Europe** – the EU under the leadership of a Franco-German coalition is attempting to disengage itself from the American leadership and to define its own strategic policy guidelines. For the next few years, though, Europe will not coalesce as a strategic entity in its own right.
2. **Russia** – while still closely coordinating its policies with the US (particularly since 9/11 in the context of the "War on Terrorism") is chafing to return to its old "Superpower" status.
3. **China** – is flexing its muscles in East Asia and challenging the Cold War paradigm of American presence in East Asia.
4. **India** – demands today an enhanced international status – including a permanent seat on the UN Security Council - by virtue of its size, the democratic nature of its regime and its nuclear capability.
5. **Japan** – after over half a century of constitutionally imposed pacifism, is now poised to play a more active role in its own defense, in international peace-keeping, and in regional defense in Asia. Based on its economic predominance, Japan is also demanding a permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

Not only the global strategic picture has changed but the regional picture has undergone a metamorphosis in the last year. The radical Middle East and even the Muslim world, in general, are on the defensive and their ability to coerce other countries to refrain from close relations with Israel has diminished. The fall of the

Iraqi regime and the pressure on Iran (in the area of its nuclear program) and on Saudi Arabia and Syria (in the area of support of terror) leaves Egypt the main political "nemesis" of Israel in the region. While this picture is counterbalanced to a great extent by the international disapproval of Israel in the Palestinian context, this regional weakness may grant Israel a "window of opportunity" for developing close relations with other countries.

Choosing Strategic Alliances

An examination of potential "investments" in strategic alliances could be likened, to a certain extent, to a financial investment portfolio analysis: a mixture of companies, in which each component provides the beneficiary with exposure to certain asset advantages and their associate risk exposure. Since strategic assets are, by nature, long-term, a professional "investor" government would refrain from a speculative asset mix; a country's "strategic relation investments" cannot be sold on the spur of the moment and while some "alliances" may, ostensibly, have short-term value, they may be counter-productive in the extreme in the medium and long run (e.g. the "alliance" with the Maronites in Lebanon).

The long-term strategic value of a potential relationship should be measured in terms of sustainable political, economic, military and "civilizational" communities of interests and affinities, moral criteria, the "life expectancy" of the partner regime (e.g. the South African case) or of the interests of the partner which coincide with those of Israel, and ramifications for Israel's relations with States which are at loggerheads with those partners.

The Political Basis

As noted above, Israel has no ethnic, religious or linguistic "relatives" in the family of nations. Hence, strategic alliances must be based on other, less apparent, criteria. The above analysis leads to the conclusion that strong, enduring alliances should be based first and foremost on a high level of community – or at least compatibility – of political and ethical mores. Some obvious criteria for identifying possible candidates for expanding the range of Israel's strategic relations should be:

1. **Common values and principles** – liberal democratic governments which eschew radicalism and violence. The more core values the partner has in common with Israel, the less it is expected that the vicissitudes of international politics will affect the relationship. From this point of view, Israel has more in common with India, Taiwan, and Japan than with other potential allies, with non-democratic regimes.
2. **Similar challenges** (threats such as terrorism, radical Islam, missile defense etc.). Israel may find such common ground with India which suffers from incessant Islamic terrorism promoted by elements in its neighbor – Pakistan, and Russia which is confronted with terrorism from Chechnya.
3. **Compatible advantages** – (economic compatibility, technological cooperation). In this area, Israel has much in common with Japan and with the Asian "tigers", particularly Taiwan.
4. **The sense of a common injustice** can serve as a potent ingredient for developing relations. A common complaint towards the attitude of the international community, or a similar threat. For example, the legitimacy of Taiwan as the Republic of China, or even as an independent Republic of Taiwan is recognized by a handful of (mainly) Latin American States and is blackballed by the United Nations. On the other hand, being in the international "dock" as an alleged "occupier" or violator of other peoples' national rights (China vis-à-vis Tibet, India in Kashmir, Turkey towards Cyprus and the Kurds) is not a basis for cooperation.
5. **Absence of basic conflicts** which may arise. Large Muslim populations in a country may be a potential obstacle in development of close strategic relations.
6. **The sustainability of the communities of interests** between that country and Israel. This is based on the viability of the regime in that country, and basic agreement between the ruling

government and any potential alternative regarding the relations with Israel,

7. **Compatibility of the relations with the strategic relationship with the US.** The benefits of any strategic relationship which would be perceived by the US as detrimental to its interests would be grossly outweighed by its damage.

Another important ingredient for a community of interests is **Israel's "civilizational" identification with the West.** This image has been both an asset and a liability since the founding of the State:

1. For those in the West who tended to support Israel, it has been a form of moral justification for support of a democratic regime in an open, liberal and technologically advanced society, which is threatened by violent dictatorial regimes. This equation has become even more salient since the War on (Islamic) Terrorism became one of the most important issues on the agenda of the West.
2. At the same time, for Israel's detractors in the West, her identification with Western mores has justified demands from her for a higher moral standard than that expected of her regional rivals⁴. For the Arab and Muslim world, it has served the anti-Peace and Normalization camp by accentuating Israel's nature as a Western "colonialist" implants and even as the source of the animosity towards Arabs and Islam prevalent in the West since 9/11.

Israeli efforts to emphasize the "Western" orientation naturally strengthen both the pro-Israeli tendencies in the West (especially in the United States) and anti-Peace tendencies in the Muslim world. This has given rise to two main schools of thought:

1. One school of thought suggests that Israeli foreign policy must strike a balance between these two interests, especially in the post 9/11 atmosphere of an impending "Clash of Civilizations", not to estrange herself from her geographical neighborhood of the Muslim Middle East.
2. A second makes the point that in the absence of a viable Peace process, any efforts on the part of Israel to detach herself from

⁴ The Ambassador for the UK in Tel Aviv, John Barnes mentioned this dilemma in 1971 in a confidential report to the British Foreign Secretary: "However infuriating we may find the Israelis, we must not expect too much of them. Just because they seem more rational, more European than the Arabs, we tend to set them higher standards. There is no harm in this and they would not object on the philosophical level. But we cannot carry it too far..."

the "Western" and "colonialist" image are doomed to failure. Therefore, in the absence of an "ethnic" community of interests with any other nation, Israel should maximize her advantages from this image of a common denominator of democracy and liberalism by aligning herself with such countries.

Development of special strategic relations with other countries should, *a priori*, to be **compatible with the relations with the United States**. The lessons of the July 2000 rescinding of the Phalcon deal with the PRC and other less dramatic cases of conflict between Israeli and US interests have shown such attempts to be counter-productive. The short-lived gains vis-à-vis PRC were more than counterbalanced not only by the damage incurred by the unnecessary conflict with the US, but also by the damage to the relations with PRC when the deal was annulled. An Israeli drive for expanding strategic relations should be built in a way that it will be perceived in Washington as an asset for US foreign policy as well, providing the US with an Israeli ally with greater international assets.

Not only should a strategic relationship with another country not pose an impediment for US–Israeli relations, but it should be engineered in such a manner that it will be perceived by the US as "added value" to Israel's status as a strategic asset for the US. This should be implemented by close coordination with the US.

The Economic Aspect

Israel's relations with "third world" countries have traditionally been based on economic, technological or agricultural aid in return for political support. Few of these relationships, though have endured and none have developed into true strategic assets for Israel. From the economic point of view, a policy of diversification should, be based on economic complementarities with the proposed country. This can be based on one or more of the following:

1. The existence – or potential – of a volume of trade large – either in a local market or as a "window" to other markets. The scope of trade should be large enough to protect the relationship from the vicissitudes of political circumstances.
2. Manufacturing possibilities in the proposed country.

3. Supply of raw material from the proposed country.
4. Complementary areas of R&D with added value for both sides from R&D collaboration. The Israeli "added value" may derive of Israeli "individualism" – especially in parts of the world (Asia) where R&D tend to be more of a "collective" effort.
5. Other compatible and complementary economic advantages.

These economic advantages have to be weighed against both strategic interests of the economic relations with the US and "technical" considerations related to Israel's prior contractual obligations. These considerations are both bilateral and multilateral. The former are concerned with countries, which may see Israel's exploitation of specific advantages in a third country as a sophisticated violation of trade agreements. The latter is related to Israel's status in a variety of regional trade agreements.

The Defense/Security Aspect

Israel's defense doctrine is not geared to accommodate alliances in which Israel would have to share sensitive know-how with foreign allies (except for the US). This is true both in the area of intelligence and defense technology. On the other hand, the Israeli defense and intelligence community has built long-term relations with a variety of countries on the basis of Israeli training and tactical know-how in return for intelligence or operational support. A prime example of such a relationship has been Kenya, which despite the severing of formal diplomatic relations, continued to maintain a close military and intelligence relationship with Israel and repaid by allowing Israeli Air Force aircraft to land in its territory in the 1976 Entebbe operation and supporting the 1991 airlift of the Ethiopian Jews.

A policy of diversification calls for an in-depth analysis of areas and technologies which are "exportable" without undue fear of compromising Israel's own defense standing. These areas may include:

1. Export of manufactured defense products
2. Joint R&D – such joint projects can be based on the work force of the other country or even on the existence of discrete testing conditions in those countries, far from the prying eyes of Israel's neighbors.

3. Intelligence cooperation
4. Training in Special Forces tactics and areas of Israeli proficiency.

The perennial conundrum for Israeli defense exports of any type (ready made products, partial or full knowledge sharing, training etc.) is the high degree of American technology integrated into even the most “Israeli” products. The more “high-tech” the product is, the greater the possibility is that it has a degree of American technology which may obstruct or even preclude export. The lesson of the Phalcon sale to PRC is a case in point; Israel tried to sell a product to a country which was not perceived as endangering Israeli interests, but did not take into account the danger the sale posed to American interests. Even in those cases where there is no contract protected American know-how integrated into the product, Israel cannot take the risk of being perceived as supporting adversaries of the United States.

However, the American aspect is not the only one Israel must take into account. Israel has little or no influence over the classification procedures of foreign partners. A number of the potential partners have a history of close relations with the Arab countries and Iran and Israeli technology can conceivably leak to these countries. Any collaboration must take this risk into account.

Case Studies

India

Background

Israel and India established full diplomatic relations on January 29, 1992. Israeli-Indian relations were overshadowed for decades by the alignment of both countries on opposite sides of the cold war divide: Israel firmly on the side of the United States, and India, supported by the Soviet Union against American-supported Pakistan. India's "non-aligned" aspirations, which focused, inter alia, on the Muslim world, India's dependence on Middle Eastern oil and its large (200 million) Muslim minority also made it politically imprudent for successive Indian governments to develop relations with Israel. India's state-controlled economy did not leave much room for

international entrepreneurship, and its Soviet based military left little room for military cooperation.

All these factors have changed dramatically since the last decade of the 20th century. India has undergone an economic metamorphosis and a shift from its reliance on the now defunct Soviet Union to improving relations with the United States. The discord between India and the Muslim world over the Kashmir issue highlighted the basic divergence of interests. Moreover, the rise to power of the Hindi nationalist BJP near the end of the decade changed India's basic attitude towards the Muslim world and enhanced Israel's image as a potential ally. The emergence of the threat of radical Islamic terrorism since the early 1990's also serves as a potent common denominator for the two countries.⁵

The above developments opened the way to cooperation in various areas. The areas of defense collaboration between the two countries include the fields of military technology, naval cooperation, and intelligence on areas of WMD (Iran, Pakistan and North Korea), radical Islam and counter-terrorism. In the political field, the two countries can cooperate in public diplomacy and diplomatic initiatives. In civil economic areas, there are wide areas of compatibility for mutual trade.

The Basis for Cooperation

India and Israel have a strong affinity in Common values and principles: both are democratic countries with a tradition of cultural pluralism and rule of law. Furthermore, both see themselves as representing ancient civilizations (older than both the Christian and Muslim counterparts).⁶ Indian bureaucratic thinking also has much in common with its Israeli counterpart – both being relics of British colonial rule.

⁵ While India has been enduring Pakistan organized Kashmiri terrorism for decades, there was no perception of a common threat with Israel, as up to the late 1980's, terrorism against Israel was essentially Palestinian-nationalistic in nature and not linked to the general radical Islamic movements outside of the West Bank and Gaza. This has changed over the last ten years.

⁶ The joint statement published during PM Ariel Sharon's visit (September 2003) in India emphasizes this aspect: "As ancient cultures and societies, India and Israel have left their mark on human civilization and history. As democratic countries since their inception, both nations share faith in the values of freedom and democracy."

In the area of **similar challenges**, both countries suffer from radical Islamic terrorism. However, India sees Pakistan as an enemy in any scenario, whereas Israel's interests in Pakistan are more limited (WMD transfers to the Middle East and support of Islamic terrorism). Israel has no interest in becoming a declared enemy of Pakistan, especially as long as it is considered in Washington as an ally in the war against terrorism. From the economic standpoint, both countries suffer from a brain drain and have an interest in developing local hi-tech sectors to keep the intellectual human resource in the country. Insofar as **similar advantages** are concerned, the two countries have a clear interest in a gamut of areas of defense and civilian R&D which will be listed below. The two countries have no **basic conflicts** in terms of territorial or historic grievances.

The sustainability of the communities of interests is also a crucial question. India is ruled today by the Hindi-nationalist BJP. This government is significantly more sympathetic to Israel than its Congress party predecessor. For the short and medium term, it seems that the Hindi nationalist "Weltanschauung" will continue to set the tone in Indian politics, auguring well for the relations with Israel. Were the opposition Congress Party to return to power in a coalition with Muslim and leftist parties, it may opt for a cooling of relations with Israel.

An equally pivotal issue is **compatibility of the relations with other foreign relations and with the strategic relationship with the US**. In this regard:

1. **The United States** – The administration's authorization of the Phalcon to India seems to point at willingness on the part of Washington to accept a developing defense relationship between Israel and India. This, however, should not be construed as a potential American "carte blanche" for defense cooperation with India. India may see cooperation with Israel as a "backdoor" to US technology, which the US itself will not supply and Israel may find itself in a "replay" of the Chinese Phalcon affair – but with India as the client.
2. **Pakistan and the Muslim world** – Any rapprochement between Israel and India, however, will create the

impression of an anti-Muslim alliance and is bound to raise consternation in Islamabad and may diminish the readiness of the pro-American secular regime under Musharraf to reach out to Israel. On the other hand, General Musharraf floated the idea of recognition of Israel on the eve of PM Ariel Sharon's visit to India and this may lead to the possibility that an Israeli-Indian rapprochement may encourage Pakistan to tie relations with Israel to pre-empt an Indian-Israeli axis.

3. **China** – Israeli sale of sophisticated weaponry to China is a source of varying concern for India. Therefore, an enhanced Indian–Israeli strategic relationship may entail demands, on the part of New Delhi, to curtail certain aspects of the Sino–Israeli military cooperation. By the same token, Beijing may perceive such a relationship as detrimental to its own security interests.

Areas of Cooperation

The main area of **defense cooperation** to date has been in upgrading of Indian military hardware⁷, supply of Israeli-made hardware to India,⁸ and agreements on joint marketing of Indian developed hardware.⁹ According to some sources, Israel has already become India's second largest arms supplier (after Russia). Further defense areas which may be developed in the future include:

1. Funding of R&D initiatives both within the framework of US aid and outside of it. Pooling of resources for essential R&D would dramatically reduce the expense of such projects for both countries.
2. Testing of joint and Israeli developed systems in India.

⁷ Avionics for Indian MIG 27 fighter aircraft.

⁸ The most prominent deal lately has been the Phalcon reconnaissance aircraft, which was authorized by the American administration after it blocked its sale to China. However, Israel has also sold to India security fences, surveillance equipment, RPV and notably the "Green Pine" radar which is part of the ABM Arrow System, anti-tank ammunition and communications systems.

⁹ India's Hindustan Aeronautic Limited (HAL) agreement with Israel Aircraft Industry on marketing of HAL built Advanced Light helicopter.

3. Naval Cooperation in the Indian Ocean, which would provide the Israeli navy a training and testing area far from the prying intelligence of Arab countries. The quid pro quo for India would be development of India's naval defense capabilities for India's 8000 km coastline through tapping on Israeli technological expertise in areas of electronic support systems and counter measures, radar surveillance and sea-to-sea missiles. India may also have an interest in technology which would support its naval "second strike" capability.
4. Intelligence and counter-proliferation cooperation on the threat of WMD – particularly those deriving from Asia – Pakistan and North Korea, but also from Iran.
5. Cooperation against the threat of radical Islamic terrorism - Israel could make use of India's natural intelligence human resource – local Muslims – for cover of this threat. In return, India would benefit from Israel's (unfortunate) expertise in counter-terrorism tactics and technology, border surveillance, sensor technology and electronic detection, active surveillance techniques, physical security of buildings etc.

Enhancement of Israel's importance for the Indian military would also serve as a lever to prevent any military cooperation between India and Israel's enemies in the Middle East. Such leverage with India would be important for precluding any nuclear or other WMD collaboration between India and Iran.

India and Israel face a common threat of uncompromising radical Islamic terrorism. Israel can develop this affinity into **collaboration in a variety of areas of "public diplomacy"**. Such cooperation, aimed at supporting the current US administration perception of the threat would be welcomed by the US. India may expect, in return, Israeli support in promoting its interests in Washington.

Israel and India also have a wide range of **civilian economic cooperation**, which can be developed. These include:

1. R&D on civilian and dual-use technologies, particularly in hi-tech areas which can be shared despite the geographical distances.
2. Manufacturing of Israeli hi-tech components in India.

Turkey

Background

Israel has maintained close relations with Turkey since the 1950's. The Israeli motivation for these relations was based, in the early years of the State, on the political paradigm of alliances with countries on the "periphery" of the Middle East and the Arab world. For Turkey, the relations were a statement towards the Arab countries which had pressured her over the years on this issue.¹⁰ From Israel's point of view, these relations were designed to provide Israel with actual intelligence support (e.g. regarding Iraq and Syria in the case of Turkey), and added value to Israel's deterrent image. Turkey, however, kept the relations at arm's length; its status as a member of NATO and the key component in the "Northern Tier" of NATO defense against the Soviet Union and its perception of its primary threat as coming from the North did not create a wide community of strategic interests.

However, the strategic changes of the last decade of the 20th century gave new impetus to Israeli-Turkish relations. Turkey's difficulties with the European Union over Cyprus and human rights, the failure of its bid to join the EU, and the fear of erosion of Turkey's importance for NATO brought Ankara to its own search for strategic diversification. As a result, since the early 1990's, the relations between the two countries developed in leaps and bounds, both in civilian terms and in defense relations. As the relations developed, Turkey learned that while the image of collaboration with Israel may engender some discomfort in the relations with the Arabs, it also serves Turkey's deterrent image vis-à-vis its Middle Eastern (Iraq, Syria, and Iran) adversaries. During the mid 1990's, Turkey took advantage of its defense

¹⁰ The Turkish COS in the 1990's told the following anecdote: the Syrian Defense Minister Mustafa Tlas visited Ankara and in the course of the railed against Turkey's relations with Israel, which were, in his view, "an expression of hostility" towards the Arabs". The Turkish General interrupted him (according to his account) and said: "What right do you have to tell Turkey how to run its foreign relations. Until less than a century ago, Syria was no more than a province of Turkey..." Whether the anecdote is true or not, it certainly reflects the Turkish sense of superiority towards the Arabs.

relations with Israel to flex its muscles towards Damascus and Iran – both of whom expressed (much to the relish of Ankara) their objections to the relationship.¹¹

Israel and Turkey have, today, a wide range of common interests: a common interest in deterring Syria and Iran, an interest in disruption of proliferation of WMD to other Middle Eastern countries, and a common enemy in the ideology of radical Islam. Both countries also share a complaint against European policies towards each of them. These common interests provide a basis for future further practical cooperation. On a higher level, Israel and Turkey share a common interest as non-Arab, democratic, Western oriented and secular (or, at least "non-Islamic oriented") regimes in preventing Arab and Islamist dominance in the region and in preserving the region's orientation towards Western values.

However, Israel's rapport with Turkey has always been intimately linked to Turkey's military establishment and to its secular Atta-Turk heritage. It has never been clear to what degree this rapport has extended to wider sectors of the Turkish body politic. True, even the rise to power, twice in the last decade, of Islamic oriented parties has not diminished the relationship, however, during the whole period, the military and not public opinion continued to wield decisive authority in areas of national security.

The Basis for Cooperation

Ostensible Turkey shares many Common values and principles with Israel. Turkey is a Muslim, but not an Islamic country. It is democratic, but with a constitutional mandate accorded to the Armed Forces to intervene in the democratic process, when the secular democracy is at risk. It is a country with a formally independent legal system, but its record in human rights towards the Kurdish minority has received much criticism in the West. This mixed set of values – some compatible with those of Israel and others not – should be addressed in judging the Israeli-Turkish alliance.

¹¹ The most notable case was Damascus' 1998 expulsion of PKK head, Abdullah Ocalan, and Syria's suspension of support for his organization, due, to a great extent to Turkey's application of pressure at the height of Israeli-Syrian tensions over Lebanon, and Syria's fear that it might have to deal with a two-pronged Turco-Israeli threat. Turkey also used its control of the Euphrates waters to signal its displeasure to Damascus, making sure that it was done, often, at times when Syria was occupied with the Israeli threat. Turkey also exploited the "Reliant Mermaid" joint naval search and rescue exercises to enhance the image of a strategic relationship.

On the other side of the balance sheet, Turkey and Israel share a wide range of **similar challenges** for cooperation: perennial tensions with Syria (both countries are, in Syria's eyes occupiers of Syrian land¹²), concern regarding Iran's WMD aspirations and support of Islamic terrorism. On the side of **similar compatible advantages**, the two countries have a wide range of defense areas to develop. Here there is room for a caveat: there are however **basic conflicts** which may potentially overshadow the relationship. Turkey is a Muslim country with a strong Islamist movement, which is critical of the strategic relationship with Israel. The two countries may also not see eye to eye on sensitive areas such as Israel's treatment of the Palestinians, Turkey's Kurdish policies (or occasionally, the historic overtones of the Armenian issue). On the other hand, much of the practical progress in the relations took place under the aegis of Islamist governments. This, of course, has a bearing on the **sustainability of the communities of interests**. The Islamist governments which held power in Turkey were constrained by the structure of Turkish governance, which provides the military with the final say in the area of national security. The Islamist parties were not eager to clash with the military over the Israeli issue and to provide it with a pretext to depose them. This may not always be the case.

The relations with Turkey have received, until now, the blessing of the United States. The US was critical of the EU attitude towards Turkey and seemed pleased with the Jerusalem–Ankara axis. If this basic attitude will persevere, an alliance with Turkey will remain **compatible with the strategic relationship with the US**.

Areas of Cooperation

Since 1996, Turkish-Israeli relations began to develop into areas of **defense cooperation**. This cooperation included: agreement for the use of Turkish airspace for the Israeli Air Force, upgrading of 50 Turkish Phantom fighter jets by the Israel Aircraft Industries, and the institution of a formal strategic dialogue between the two countries at the highest levels. The two countries discussed cooperation on missile

¹² The Hatay-Alexandretta region in Turkey is claimed by Syria. On the ideological plane, the Syrian Ba'ath party also sees the island of Cyprus as part of "Greater Syria"

defense (both face the threat of Iranian SSMS). The cooperation also extended to joint training (use of Turkish air space for training by the IAF and joint naval exercises ("Reliant Mermaid" a tri-lateral US–Turkish–Israeli naval search and rescue exercise, which takes place since 1998). According to various reports, the relationship included burgeoning intelligence cooperation.

In the **diplomatic realm**, the close relations between the two countries have paid off for Israel in Turkey's promotion of Israel's interests in international forums, which are traditionally hostile to Israel (the UN conference in Durban, SA on Racism, the OIC). The **economic relations** between the two countries have also developed immensely over the last decade and play a role in cementing the other aspects of the relationship.

Russia

Background

Israel's relations with Russia are probably the most complex of the case studies in this paper. The political animosity that the Soviet Union demonstrated towards Israel, its support of Israel's enemies since the mid-fifties, the anti-Semitism of the Soviet regime and its treatments of the Soviet Jews have remained in the Israeli public consciousness. As a former "Super Power" with a strong domestic lobby in favor of reviving Russia's former global status and with traditional geopolitical interests in the Arab world and in Iran, Russian and Israeli interests will always diverge in important areas.

Nevertheless, Israeli–Russian relations have improved steadily over the last decade. The emigration to Israel of approximately one million ex–Soviet Jews has re-created an affinity with Russian culture which existed in early pre-state Israel. At the same time, it has affected perceptions of Israel inside Russia with more information on Israel flowing to a society which in the past received such information only from the Soviet propaganda organs.

More than in any other case presented here, the Israel-Russian relationship is actually a "ménage á trois" of Israel, Russia and the United States. Much of the Russian

attitude towards Israel derives of the perception of Israel as a conduit to US policy making; at the same time, Israeli policy towards Russia in almost all bilateral areas is under heavy American constraints.

The Basis for Cooperation

On the other hand, Israel and Russia share a certain level of **common values and principles**; one fifth of Israel's current population hails from the former USSR and still feels a cultural and linguistic affinity with Russia. Israel and Russia also share an important **similar challenge**; the struggle against radical Islamic terrorism. This common interest can be a basis for intelligence and defense cooperation in the area of counter-terrorism and may help balance other Russian interests in the Middle East which normally favor the Arabs. Each side has its own **positive incentives** as well. Russia also has an interest in good relations with Israel: (1) as a necessary condition for Israel's acquiescence in Russian involvement in the ME Peace Process (which, in turn, enhances Russia's standing in the US); (2) for direct public relations in the US; for access to certain technologies. **Israel's positive incentives** include: (1) maximization of the potential of the Russian market for Israeli exports; (2) Russian leverage on Iran and Syria; (3) technological collaboration for sales to third parties (e.g. the Phalcon deal).

However, Israeli-Russian relations must take cognizance of certain **basic conflicts**. The Russian interest in Iran, which manifested itself in Russian support for Iran's nuclear and missile programs (in spite of what might seem as a Russian interest to prevent a radical Islamic neighbor from achieving those capabilities) may well be a source of open conflict with Israel. Russia's record on prevention of technology leaks is not the best, and Israeli technology may find its way to Israel's enemies through the Russian conduit. Furthermore, the question of **compatibility of the relations with the strategic relationship with the US** is especially salient in the Russian case. US–Russian relations are in a state of constant flux and encompass areas (economy, arms control, the Korean peninsula, Central Asia, Chechnya) which do not touch on Israel's direct interests, but in case of tension between the two countries, Israeli–Russian relations would probably be affected.

Areas of Cooperation

Ostensibly, the most feasible potential Israeli-Russian collaboration in the area of **defense technologies** seems to focus on integration of Israeli high-end technology with Russian platforms for sale to third countries. These may include joint ventures for upgrade with Israeli avionics for Soviet aircraft in third countries.¹³ In many of these cases, Israeli-Russian joint ventures may find themselves competing with American companies – a possibility which may incur the displeasure of the administration.

In the field of bilateral defense collaboration, Russia has expressed an interest in cooperation with foreign countries in the area of missile defense. In the field of terminal phase intercept (such as the AWS), Israel is severely restricted by agreements with the United States. However, in theory, the field of boost phase intercept may be explored for potential cooperation.

All the above, notwithstanding, the horizons for true defense industry collaboration between Israel and Russia are severely restricted. Russia has close relations and interests in Iran. As long as the Russian–Iranian nuclear and SSM cooperation continues, the Israeli–Russian axis will suffer from concerns of knowledge leaks to one of Israel's most committed enemies. Even were the Russian–Iranian cooperation to come to an end, Russia's basic interests in the Middle East and the Muslim world will remain predominant. The Russian defense industries will also continue to suffer from leaks, which may compromise Israeli technology, which is shared with Russian counterparts.

Russia has collaborated with India in training Indian seamen on Russian nuclear submarines. It is possible that Israel may have an interest in the future in such arrangements or even in the purchase of Russian made nuclear submarines.

¹³ The Phalcon deal with India is a significant example. Another example is a joint consortium of the Israel Aircraft Industry and Russia's Kamov–A which made a bid for supplying Turkey with hybrid Russian–Israeli strike helicopters. While the sale did not go through, it indicates one possible area of cooperation.

The least problematic area of potential defense cooperation between Israel and Russia is counter-terrorism. Both countries have had wide but substantially different experience in the area of combating Islamic terrorism and they can benefit from each other's knowledge.

Strategic cooperation may also be developed in the **diplomatic field**. Russia has been probably the most vehement international Power in its rebuking of the PA (and of Yasser Arafat personally) over its terrorist policies. Russia has shown an interest in returning to the center stage of the Arab–Israeli peace process.

Russia and Israel will continue to develop economic relations. However, under the conditions detailed above, these relations cannot be a strong enough base for strategic links in other fields.

Taiwan

Background

In 1950 Israel was the first country in the Middle-East to acknowledge the People's Republic of China, but was prevented from tying diplomatic relations by US pressure. Nevertheless, Israel never tied full diplomatic relations with Taiwan, which also preferred not to have official ties with Israel because of its closer relations with the Arab Gulf countries.

Israel is represented in Taipei by the "Israel Economic and Cultural Office in Taipei" (ISECO) headed by a Foreign Ministry Official, described as a "bridge between Israel and Taiwan to increase commerce and investment, as well as cultural contact". Taiwan is represented in Israel by the "Taiwan Economic Cooperation Office" (TECO) in Tel Aviv.

In spite of the absence of diplomatic relations, Israel and Taiwan maintain strong economic and military ties. Unlike the US, however, where the relations with Taiwan were incorporated in legislation,¹⁴ there is no official legal basis for the relations

¹⁴ On March 29, 1979, the U.S. Congress enacted the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA), which has served as the basis of the new relationship between the ROC and the U.S. to this very day. The TRA also

between Taiwan and Israel and Israel has not performed any official review of the relations in view of changing circumstances. Furthermore, other countries had a set of legal relations with Taiwan as a political entity before they downgraded the relations and transferred their recognition to the PRC, and the "status quo" of these legal setups remained in force. Israel, however, did not have such a legal relationship with Taiwan. Therefore any new agreements, which can be construed as political recognition of Taiwan are, in essence an upgrading of the relationship.

In the case of Taiwan, special attention must be given to the **Chinese opposition** In 1992, Israel finally tied full diplomatic relations with PRC. In the joint communiqué on establishment of diplomatic relations with PRC, Israel recognizes that "The Peoples Republic of China is the sole legal government representing the whole of China and that Taiwan is an inalienable part of the territory of the Peoples Republic of China". Accordingly, official contact at a senior level with Taiwan, not through China, by any country which has established diplomatic relations with China is seen, therefore, as "interference in Chinese domestic affairs", and a violation of the conditions of diplomatic relations with Beijing. The conventional wisdom states that any upgrading or precedent in the context of the relationship with Taiwan will raise the ire of Beijing and may even put the relations with Mainland China at risk.

An understanding of potential Chinese reactions to upgrading of Israeli-Taiwan relations may benefit from an analysis of Chinese reactions to steps by other countries. Fore example, the importance accorded to the relationship is indicated, inter alia, by the personal level and background of the representative to Taiwan. Personal

clearly stipulates that the United States will provide Taiwan with sufficient defense articles and defense services. Moreover, the TRA also states that the U.S. will consider "any effort to determine the future of Taiwan by other than peaceful means, including by boycotts or embargoes, a threat to the peace and security of the Western Pacific area and of grave concern to the United States." Furthermore, under the TRA, Taiwan is still treated as a country or a nation-state under U.S. law. The Act stipulates that "whenever the laws of the United States refer or relate to foreign countries, nations, states, governments, or similar entities, such terms shall include and such laws shall apply with respect to Taiwan." The US even "upgraded" the relations in 1994 under the "Taiwan Policy Review", changing the name of the CCNAA ("Coordination Council for North American Affairs – the Taiwanese embassy and consulates) office in Washington, D.C. to "Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office" (TECRO). The Review also relaxed limitations on visits by officials and supported Taiwan's entry into international organizations for which statehood is not a membership requirement and stated that the US will help "Taiwan's voice be heard" in international organizations for which statehood is required. To promote U.S. relations with Taiwan, more than 110 members of Congress established the Congressional Taiwan Caucus in April 2002.

ambassadorial status of the representative does not contradict any accord with Beijing, but enhances the relationship with Taipei.¹⁵ Another frequently noted issue is that of Senior political visits. In this area, the US has taken steps since 2002 for normalization of de-facto relations with Taiwan. These steps included the rescinding of the policy of denying visitor visas to senior Taiwanese officials and the allowing Taiwan's Defense and Foreign Ministers to attend non-governmental conferences in the US and meet with administration officials at the time.¹⁶ Joint economic ventures are also "tolerated" by Beijing. On the other hand, Military sales and cooperation are especially sensitive issues to PRC.

The Basis for Cooperation

Ostensibly, the chasm between Israel and Taiwan is the widest of all the case studies in this paper: Taiwan has had little involvement in the Middle East (even when it was recognized as the legitimate government of China); there has been little cultural interaction between the Jewish People in the past and China in general and the island of Taiwan, in particular (today there is a small Jewish community in Taiwan composed of foreign nationals); Israel-Taiwan relations are complicated by the position of the PRC against any semblance of political relations with the Taipei government; arms sales to Taiwan must be carefully balanced as they are perceived in Beijing as "proxy sales" by the US and, hence, have an effect on interests of Israel's primary strategic ally.

Nevertheless, there are also cogent reasons for considering an upgrade of the strategic relations with Taiwan. These include the frequently overlooked existence of **common values and principles**. Israel and Taiwan have much in common to make them into natural allies. Both states are democracies, with a commitment to the rule of law and a

¹⁵ Examples are the Japanese Representative, who served as Ambassador in Israel, Singapore and Canada before his appointment to Taipei. The appointment drew no Chinese reaction. The head of the US representation (The American Institute in Taiwan), Douglas H. Paal served in the National Security Council as Senior Director for Asian Affairs and Special Assistant to former President Bush.

¹⁶ In March 2002, Defense Minister Tang Yiau-ming visited Florida to attend a "defense summit" conference; becoming the first Taiwanese defense minister in 22 years to receive a visitor's visa. On September 25, 2002, Taiwan's First Lady Chen-Wu Sue-Jen visited Washington and was awarded a medal by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). In June 2003 Taiwan's Foreign Minister, Eugene Chien visited the United States to attend the 22nd World Forum held in Colorado under the sponsorship of the American Enterprise Institute. China made a demarche to the US, claiming that such a visit is a violation of the US commitment to its "one China" policy, and constitutes interference in China's internal affairs. No practical steps ensued. In March 2002, Taiwan's Defense Minister, Tang Yiau-ming visited Florida for an academic conference, where he met with Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz. Beijing protested.

Western model of human rights. Both are pitted against adversaries who do not recognize them as legitimate state entities, are notably less democratic and less constrained by Western-style conventions of the behavior between states. Both have suffered as international pariahs; have been denied international recognition, legitimacy and been subject to interference by the international community in matters of their sovereignty.

The parallel between the two countries also extends to the essence of each one's conflict with its primary foe. Like Israel, Taiwan's very right to exist as a sovereign nation is challenged. Much as the existence of Israel is the core issue for the Palestinian national liberation movement, and recognition of Israel's right to exist touches on the very essence of that movement, Taiwan's bid for independence is perceived in China as an unacceptable affront to Chinese nationalism and the integrity of the homeland. Taiwan and Israel also share a **sense of a common injustice** at the hands of the international community. Taiwan suffers from a "diplomatic blockade", similar to that imposed on Israel with its membership in international organizations constantly blackballed by Beijing. At the same time, policy towards Taiwan must take into account the **basic conflicts** between the two countries: Taiwan's energy needs from the Persian Gulf, which prevented Taiwan from opting for full diplomatic relations with Israel in the past and may affect Taiwan's political positions in the future; China's opposition (see below); and Taiwan's concern regarding Israeli–Chinese military and technological cooperation (e.g. Taiwan's reaction to the Phalcon deal).

Along with the above general potential basis for mutual sympathy, Israel and Taiwan have a number of **common positive incentives** for upgrading their strategic cooperation. Both countries are highly developed technologically and strive for a high level of autonomy in both civilian and defense R&D. Pooling of efforts in basic dual use technologies would be both mutually beneficial to the sides and less prone to generate antagonism from PRC quarters.

It is also safe to assume a high degree of sustainability **of the communities of interests**; the democratic nature of both countries shields them against the capricious fluctuations characteristic of non-democratic regimes. An upgrade of links between

the two countries also seems to be **compatible with both countries' strategic relationships with the US**. Taiwan, like Israel is highly dependent on the US for political and military support.

Areas of Cooperation

The **defense** of Taiwan is a goal enshrined in US legislation. Israeli involvement in enhancing Taiwan's defense (as opposed to offensive capabilities), while it would definitely encounter Chinese opposition, would be in line with the objectives of the US administration. Some of the areas usually listed as Taiwan's main military deficiencies¹⁷ are:

1. Missile Defense – Chinese ballistic missiles and growing cruise missile capabilities pose a serious threat to non-hardened military targets, C2 nodes, and Taiwan's military and civil infrastructure. Taiwan has purchased an improved variant of the PATRIOT; however, this will not meet Taiwan's defensive needs.
2. Navy – Taiwan has four rather obsolete submarines. Acquisition of additional submarines and technology for countering Chinese naval capabilities – especially submarine – remains one of Taiwan's most important priorities.
3. Air Force – Taiwan has a need for long-range reconnaissance (UAV) capabilities and early warning networks.
4. Information and Computer Warfare – Taiwan is concerned by the PRC development of capabilities for satellite born interruption of GPS signals and paralysis of C³I systems. As one of the world's largest producers of computer components, Taiwan has all of the basic capabilities needed to carry out offensive and defensive IW related activities, particularly computer network attacks and the introduction of malicious code. Taiwan is also heavily involved in anti-Virus technology.

¹⁷ See ROC, 2002 national Defense Report.

5. C⁴ISR systems – the Taiwanese military has set a goal of enhancing its information, command and control and joint operations capabilities.
6. Detection and Targeting technology – Taipei seeks a new imaging system capable of exploiting targets at greater distances from the coast, but without exposing its reconnaissance flights to China's increasingly more sophisticated air defenses.
7. Training – Taiwan's large-scale training normally takes place quarterly with the major training centers hosting limited maneuver and live-fire exercises.
8. Civil Defense – Taiwan is not adequately prepared for civil defense in a major Chinese missile attack on the island.

Taiwanese defense oriented R&D is concentrated in the logistic command of the various branches and in the Chung San Institute of Science and Technology (CSIST). The CSIST is responsible for R&D of new defense technologies and has contracted twenty private industries to produce its products. The Taiwanese military industrial cooperation expense stands at more than \$US 800 million. The government engages a policy of encouraging the private sector to be involved in defense R&D. However, Taiwan has a vested interest in procuring foreign know-how through deals based on offset of a substantial proportion (30%) of the total prices.

In the light of the above, Israeli-Taiwanese cooperation in the field of **defense** has multifaceted potential, even under the constraints of US and PRC policies. These may include: direct sales of Israel-made defense material to Taiwan; discrete transfer of Israeli technology for joint R&D in Taiwan; Israeli training of Taiwan in areas of civil defense¹⁸ and counter-terrorism; intelligence cooperation on Middle East countries

¹⁸ According to the Chief of the General Staff, Tang Yao-Ming (November 1999) the top priority of the Taiwan military was to establish a civil defense system similar to that of Israel, as part of its efforts to counter increasing military threats from mainland China. According to Tang, by 2005 the PRC will pose a real threat to Taiwan and civil defense will become of vital importance to the country. The proposed civil defense system would be modeled, according to Tang, on the one in Israel. During a visit to Taipei (August 2003), IPS fellows heard great interest on the part of senior Taiwanese officials in learning Israel's civil defense lessons from the Gulf crisis.

and WMD proliferation; space and satellite cooperation. Some aspects of such cooperation can be implemented under the aegis of US–Taiwanese cooperation.

Over the last decade Taiwan has developed a formidable Hi–Tech industry, focusing on electronic and computer components and semi-conductors. **Economic relations** between Israel and Taiwan are growing (in 2002 the Israeli export to Taiwan grew by 14%). Potential areas of cooperation include: Telecommunication – both fixed and cellular, Semiconductor R&D and production, Biotechnology. Such cooperation may take the form of joint ventures for production of Hi–Tech components, investment of Israeli risk capital in Taiwan, joint R&D, and joint investment in the Mainland Chinese economy, Taiwanese investment in Israeli start–up companies and production and R&D locations for Taiwanese Hi–Tech companies in Israel.

Conclusions

The above analysis is far from exhaustive, however, it seems to indicate a certain potential for diversification of Israel's strategic relationships. Of the four cases discussed, it seems that Russia is the most problematic. This is due to ongoing Russian–Iranian cooperation, Russian interests in the Arab and Muslim world, US concerns over possible Russian aspirations to return to a "Great Power" status, and the endemic leaks of technology from Russia. The potential for a convergence of strategic interests with Turkey seems to be promising: both Turkey and Israel may use the image of a strategic alliance to their advantage vis-à-vis Syria and Iran. Turkey's special relationship with the US and membership in NATO facilitates such a relationship. The stability of the Turkish Western orientation, however, must be closely watched as the cornerstone of the feasibility of this concept. The Indian case also seems to hold promise insofar as the compatibility of defense needs, the state of technology and potential for sustainability of the relations is concerned. Last, a possibility for development of a closer relationship with Taiwan should also be explored, based on an objective analysis of the real reactions of China to certain ties and the possibility for Israel to serve US interests vis-à-vis Taiwan, and thus to enhance her own value in American eyes.

