

To recognise or not to recognise Israel



Lt-Col E. Joshua (ret'd)

1. The inevitable question has finally been asked! Should Pakistan recognise Israel? Over the last 50 years, this question never cropped up because the answer was always a forgone conclusion. NO! Absolutely NO! Pakistan has refused to accept Israel as a legal entity because it was illegally imposed upon the Arabs by force. However, within the first few years of its inception, two important Islamic countries, Turkey and Iran accepted the Israeli reality and accorded recognition, although Iran withdrew consent to the Islamic Revolution. Despite this Pakistan continued to enjoy very good relations with both these countries.

2. To come to grips with the question of Israeli recognition one must first analyze the compulsion (?) under which Pakistan has not recognised the state of Israel.

The only reason that comes to mind is to show solidarity with Islamic world especially the Arabs. By the time of the 1967 Arab - Israel war quite a few Islamic countries had recognised Israel, but the three frontline states Egypt, Jordan and Syria had not done so along with other Arab states.

Pakistan being the only non-Arab country that towed the Arab line as regards Israel.

3. Those Islamic countries that did accord recognition were under compulsion; they only had their own interests. Furthermore, it did not in any way affect their relations with the Arab states. Their relations continued as before.

Their stand regarding grant of rights to the Palestinians did not weaken in any manner. They remained steadfast in their support for the Palestinian demand for a separate state. Recognition of Israel in no way influenced their Mid East policy. Their relations with both the Arabs and Israel remain cordial.

4. The current geo-political situation is quite different from what it was in the sixties and the seventies. The three Mid East wars have proved that armed conflict is not the solution to the problem. Israel cannot be "pushed into the sea", nor will the USA permit it. Now even the Arabs have realized that pure antagonism will not solve the problem. There has to be a more pragmatic approach to the issue. It was this realization that made Egypt swallow the bitter pill and recognise the State of Israel. It drew the ire of the rest of Islamic world particularly the Arabs. Anwar Sadat, the then President of Egypt, paid dearly for this with his life.

5. However, when considered rationally and coolly, the

sagacity of this move dawned on the rest of the Arab world and many others have followed and accorded due recognition to Israel followed by full diplomatic relations. Of the 57 members of OIC 30 have accorded recognition with full diplomatic relations. On 10th Sep 1993 the PLO, the main player in the Middle East crisis, recognised the State of Israel.

Assuredly, their own national interests was the predominant consideration, coupled with the realization that past antagonism to Israel had cost them dearly on all fronts. Most of the Arab states still enjoy excellent relations with Pakistan. They have continued to support our principled stand on the Kashmir issue and have always provided economic help. 6. We have to analyze our stand in light of past factors and current geo political trends. We have all along looked upon Israel as our enemy.

The western media, which is controlled by the Jews, has always been hostile towards Pakistan. But then we should ask ourselves, why the enmity? Do we have a common border with Israel? Or is there a territorial dispute with her?

A distance of more than 2500 miles separates our capitals! So why the hostility? Haven't we been taught all our lives that India is our arch-enemy? It is with India that we have a long-standing territorial

dispute, over which we have fought three wars.

It was India not Israel which dismembered our country in 1971! No doubt, Israel may have given a lot of covert support. Surprisingly, we still have diplomatic relations with India, our arch enemy! The former USSR was at forefront with India during 1971 crisis, but our diplomatic relations with them stayed in tact. Even during the era of the anti Soviet pacts (CENTO & SEATO) to which Pakistan was a strong member, we maintained full diplomatic relations with the former Soviet Union. But what is the problem in Israel's case.

7. Undoubtedly, Pakistan has very strong religious ties with all the Arab states. However, on one occasion one of these states directly conspired against the solidarity of Pakistan. During the Baluchistan insurgency 1973, Iraq supplied weapons to the Baluch insurgents.

Let us not forget that Moreover, when any of the Arab states decided to recognise Israel, did they consult Pakistan? No, they did not, because they did not find the need to do so. They had their own national interests in view.

8. The cost of non-recognition must also be taken into consideration, economically it has been tremendous. Investments by western entrepreneurs have been far below what they could have

been. It could be safely assume that a few of are international business deals might even have been torpedoed by covert efforts of the Jewish lobby, merely to insure a weak Pakistan economy. While on the other hand western investors flocked to India in droves. There contribution in strengthening the Indian economy is very substantial to say the least.

9. The western media that is well under the control of Jews is extremely unsympathetic, if on vitriolically hostile towards Pakistan. The manner in which India and all that is Indian is projected on the electronic media speaks for itself. No doubt Indian media has progressed tremendously but with a lot of backing and support from the international media.

On the other hand anything Pakistani or connected to Pakistan is hardly given any attention. Most important of all, Pakistan's nuclear program was projected by western media as an "Islamic Bomb", years before we conducted the nuclear tests. It has been a figment of Jewish imagination, but it helped in maligning Pakistan's commitment to peace. The liberation movement of Kashmir has been termed as a terrorist movement on the international front by the western media.

10. In the field of defence, the co-operation between India and Israel goes on increasing daily.

The latest being the provision of the Phlacon system to India by Israel. Israel ranks number two supplier of weapons after Russia. Apart from military hardware, India is also provided military intelligence and training by the Israelis.

The methods employed by the Indian army in Kashmir to quell the liberation movement bears the stamp of the Israeli methods employed against the Palestinians. Apart from all these, it is a well-known fact that both Israel and India had planned to jointly attack our nuclear facility in 1984.

This is a small list of the gains and advantages, which we have allowed India to reap by not recognising Israel. We have only helped India in cultivating and nurturing another party hostile to Pakistan.

11. Our decision whether to recognise Israel or to maintain the status quo should be based on pragmatism, keeping in view the past and the present. We must not let our decisions be governed by mere emotionalism as has been done so far and cost the nation most dearly.

We must coolly analyze what course is in the best interest of Pakistan, and adopt a policy, which could undo the harm already done to us. We still have a long way to go, both economically and politically, and this is the time to decide a move so that we are in a position to stand with the world community with dignity and honor.