

**17.50 hrs.**

**Title:** Discussion on India-Israel ties.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now, we will take up item number 22, Half-an-Hour Discussion. Shrimati Shyama Singh.

SHRIMATI SHYAMA SINGH (AURANGABAD, BIHAR): Mr. Chairman, Sir, today we are talking on the Indo-Israel talks, talks which were held between our hon. Minister of External Affairs and the hon. Minister of Home Affairs, a month or two back.

Sir, during a Starred Question a few weeks ago, I had asked the hon. Minister of External Affairs certain questions pertaining to the purchase of our defence equipment which could be used in war times and which has been our requirement for quite some time now. David Bin Gurian, Father and founder of Israel, was an admirer of Gandhiji's policies of non-violence and truth and attributed India's success in winning Independence to that line of philosophy.

Another thing he admired about India was its treatment of the small indigenous Jewish community that has settled down in our country. And to that level, I must compliment the hon. Minister of External Affairs for having taken a major step in the direction for making the relations between India and Israel more cordial than ever.

Sir, in the same context, I would like to inform the hon. Minister of External Affairs that he must be aware that India has recognised the State of Israel in September, 1950. Ever since that time, India has maintained a Trade and Consular Office in Mumbai. Full bilateral relations at the Embassy level were, therefore, established in 1992 during the Congress regime. It is not a question as to who went first and how good was our relationship with Israel a couple of years back. But one thing is quite clear that during the time of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and our Independence, it was a very deliberate decision that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had taken that he was taking a neutral position or a posture not to alienate any of the two countries, the Arab world or the Israel. Therefore, the first recognition at the level of Israel came to us only in 1992 also during the Congress regime.

The question I had asked the hon. Minister of External Affairs in my Starred Question, which was unfinished, was that we are told that Israel is to supply an unmanned aircraft which will be used in combating leftwing extremism. It is a good thing that a modern and scientific method is being thought of to deal with challenges to our internal security. But I do wish to caution the Government that modernisation for the sake of modernisation may not be a very good thing. Before going in for such an aircraft, has the Government assured itself of its effectiveness, specially since it is likely to be an extremely expensive proposition? Will it not be easy for the extremists to conceal themselves so as to evade the aircraft's surveillance and even to down the aircraft? That was question number one.

The second question I had asked the hon. Minister of External Affairs was that we are happy that the hon. Minister of Home Affairs and the hon. Minister of External Affairs had visited Israel. Like us, Israel had to face great terrorist threat and which it has successfully countered. It has foreign terrorists back into their countries and made them realise the futility of resorting to this highly expensive tactics. Since our hon. Minister of Home Affairs has just returned from Israel, we would like to know if there were any discussions or stock taking about the success of the policy of hot pursuit. I recall that our hon. Minister of Home Affairs had some time back declared that the Government would follow a proactive policy in Jammu and Kashmir. Will, therefore, the Government adopt the policy of hot pursuit in Jammu and Kashmir and elsewhere in dealing with cross-border terrorism which, we see, has been advocated by the RSS also?

Sir, the other question, which I had asked the hon. Minister of Home Affairs, was about the sophisticated defence technology including our surveillance technology. Israel is selling India its version of the Airborne Warning and Controlling System, which is known as 'AWACS'.

This was in the Paper, so I just wanted to have a clarification. I want to know whether it is equipped with the total intelligence equipment, code named PHALCON. It is committed to selling the same system, I am told, to China, and Washington has objected to the sale of this advanced Israel equipment to both China and India. I want to know whether it is a fact.

I was going through a small article in the *Jerusalem Times* which said that Israel is trying to use India as a base for trying out its advanced equipment because of lack of space which they feel they have in Israel and because of the fact that the apartheid regime has ended in South Africa. I want to know whether it is a fact that because South Africa is not giving them that kind of importance that they want to now use India as a base or use the space for trying out their latest technology in defence and other surveillance.

Right in the Fifties or Sixties, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, during his regime, had sent Shri A.P. Jain, the then Food Minister, and Shri S.N. De, the then Community Development Minister, to study the drip irrigation system in Israel.

We have come a long way now. I would just like to know from the Government whether the specialised and very minute details of the technologies pertaining to hybrid seeds, agricultural farming and all that are being taken care of and, if so, what is the progress we are making in these various sectors?

**प्रो. रासासिंह रावत (अजमेर) :** सभापति जी, जैसा अभी बताया गया कि प्रश्न संख्या 44 भारत-इजराइल संबंधों के बारे में है। विदेश मंत्री जी और गृह मंत्री जी की इजराइल यात्रा हुई थी, उस संदर्भ में यह प्रश्न श्यामा सिंह जी द्वारा पूछा गया था। इस संदर्भ में विदेश मंत्री जी ने जो उत्तर दिया है, उसमें बताया गया कि भारत और इजराइल के बीच में आपसी सहयोग बढ़ाने के लिए तथा व्यापार, इकोनोमी, इन्वेस्टमेंट, एग्रीकलचर, टूरिज्म, कल्चर, साइंस एंड टेक्नोलॉजी के बारे में चर्चा हुई, यह मंत्री जी ने अपने उत्तर में बताया था। यह भी बताया था कि द्विपक्षीय संबंधों में बात होते-होते आतंकवाद की समस्या के बारे में भी चर्चा हुई, ऐसी भी जानकारी प्राप्त हुई। मैं आपके माध्यम से मंत्री जी से पूछना चाहूंगा, जैसे तो यह अत्यंत प्रसन्नता का विय है कि लम्बे समय तक उपेक्षित रहे इजराइल की ओर राष्ट्रीय लोकतांत्रिक गठबंधन के नेतृत्व में गठित सरकार का ध्यान गया। उसके साथ सुदृढ़ संबंध स्थापित करने के प्रयास किए जा रहे हैं, इसके लिए मैं एनडीए सरकार को बधाई देना चाहूंगा।

महोदय, भारत और इजराइल में कई समानताएं हैं। दोनों को आतंकवाद की समस्या का सामना करना पड़ रहा है। दोनों देशों में रेगिस्तान है और कम वर्षा होती है। दोनों देश प्राचीनतम संस्कृति और प्राचीन धर्म वाले हैं। दोनों देशों को परेशानियों का सामना करना पड़ा। क्रुसेडर्स धर्म युद्ध के नाम पर आतंकवाद फैलाने वालों का सामना करना पड़ रहा है। मैं मंत्री जी से जानना चाहूंगा कि इनकी यात्रा के दौरान क्या इजराइल के अधिकारियों, मंत्रियों और इजराइल सरकार से रक्षा के बारे में भी कोई बात हुई। जैसे कल समाचार-पत्रों में आया कि गृह मंत्री जी गृह मंत्रालय और कई राज्यों के बड़े-बड़े पुलिस के अधिकारियों को अपने साथ लेकर गए और गुप्तचर विभाग के अधिकारियों को भी वहां लेकर गए थे। इजराइल के मोस्साड के बारे में सारे संसार में चर्चा होती है कि उनका कोई सानि नहीं और यह जो हॉट-पर्सूट वाली बात है, (व्यवधान) यह आतंकवाद युगांडा और दूसरे देशों में जाकर, जहां आतंकवादी थे, जो इजराइलियों को नुकसान पहुंचा रहे थे, उनका खात्मा करने के लिए उन्हें सात समुद्र पार भी जाना पड़ा तो वे गए।

### **18.00 hrs.**

सभापति जी, मैं आपके माध्यम से सरकार से जानना चाहता हूँ कि भारत का अभिन्न अंग कश्मीर जो भाड़े के विदेशी आतंकवादियों से ग्रसित है, उनके खिलाफ सर्वोत्तम तकनीक, राडार तकनीक और खतरे को पहले से बता देने वाली युद्ध की तकनीक के बारे में भी इजराइल सरकार से बात हुई। साथ ही पुलिस को सुदृढ़ करने के लिए और आतंकवादियों का मुकाबला करने के लिए भी बात हुई। अगर हां, तो उसका ब्यौरा बताएं।

दूसरे में राजस्थान का रहने वाला हूँ। राजस्थान में भी रेगिस्तान है और इजराइल में भी रेगिस्तान है जहां वर्षा कम होती है। इजराइल ने अपने रेगिस्तान को हरा-भरा करके हरियाली में बदल दिया है। कम सिंचाई, कम लागत से अधिक उत्पादन बढ़ाने का काम उन्होंने किया है। क्या इस बारे में भी इजराइल सरकार से कोई समझौता हुआ है। अगर हां, तो बताने की कृपा करें।

**SHRI KHARABELA SWAIN (BALASORE):** Sir, like Israel, India is facing a growing threat of the ballistic missiles from across the border and needs powerful radars to locate them early and at a comfortable distance. In 1998, the Indian military decided to buy the Israeli radar, *Green Pine*. My question to the Minister of External Affairs is whether the United States of America is going to prevent Israel from selling that *Green Pine* radar, detection system to India. I would ask a similar question with regard to another system, that is, accurate air-to-ground missile *Pepeye* and also the searcher reconnaissance UAV with which India wants to improve its border patrolling in Kashmir. All these three equipments are to be sold to India, but the sale has not been done. I want to know if the US is preventing Israel.

Even though for the last so many years, both the countries are having similar types of problems, as has been enumerated by Prof. Rasa Singh Rawat, Why is it that the relationship between India and Israel was not good earlier? What was the reason? If we are having a new relationship with Israel now, is it going to harm our relationship with the Middle-East Islamic countries? This is my second question.

My last question is this. Will *Mossad*, the Israeli intelligence agency help India in training the Indian personnel with regard to fighting cross-border terrorism?

**SHRI M.V.V.S. MURTHI (VISAKHAPATNAM):** Mr. Chairman, Sir, Israel survived out of great struggles and the example of development in Israel is worth emulating by all the developing countries. Today, in most of the villages, we talk about development of agriculture through Israeli technology, producing more by using less water.

Also, they have great weaponry with which they have fought against so many struggles emanating out of other countries. There is a cluster of countries, around all are Arab countries. It could come out successfully over the years. Is it a fact that though we recognised Israel far back in 1950, we could not establish full diplomatic ties with it up to 1992, that is, for 42 years because of several strategic reasons? We do not want to displease our neighbours or our Arab friends, Middle-East friends and West Asia friends.

But how, all of a sudden, is Israel supplying arms to us? Is it because of the tacit approval of the "Superpower" America? I do not think that we would have got these arms without a nod from the "Superpower".

The other thing is, how will our External Affairs Minister do a balancing act between Israel and the West Asian countries because tomorrow we have to buy oil and so many other things from them? Just to combat terrorism, are we going to leave the Muslim countries behind, and have friendship only with Israel or will we go for a balancing act? This is what I would like to know from the hon. Minister.

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR (MAYILADUTURAI): Mr. Chairman, Sir, in the long litany of subjects on which the Foreign Minister held conversations with his Israeli counterparts, as reported in his answer to Shrimati Shyama Singh's Starred Question, I find that the subject of Israel-Palestine ties does not figure. There is no reference to our External Affairs Minister having explained our approach to Palestine to his Israeli counterpart. There is no reference to the External Affairs Minister having reiterated our principled stand of over 50 years for an independent State of Palestine in the homeland of the Palestinians. This, Sir, disturbs me, distresses me, and dismays me.

My first question, therefore, to the Minister of External Affairs is, did he or did he not discuss with the Israelis their relationship with the Palestine National Authority, the peace process, particularly the final status of negotiations and, in particular, the question of the establishment of an independent Palestinian State? Did he or did he not do so? If he did, did he or did he not reiterate the traditional Indian position held not only since Independence but since long before, since Mahatma Gandhi's immortal words that Palestine belongs to the Palestinians as much as England to the English or France to the French? Did he reiterate that position or did he change India's policy on the question of the Statehood of Palestine?

My next question pertains to a report that has appeared in the newspapers that the Minister of External Affairs, on foreign soil, held that it was in order to appease the Muslim vote-bank that full diplomatic recognition of Israel had been delayed by close on half-a-Century. The enquiries that I have made with my former colleagues in the Ministry of External Affairs indicate that this was not made by the External Affairs Minister in any formal statement. But in the course of a Seminar which he attended in Jerusalem, where there was a Question-Answer Session, when such a question was put to him, he spontaneously answered that the delay in full recognition to Israel was on account of the Government of India, at that time, wishing to cultivate the Muslim vote-bank. The fact that this remark was spontaneous rather than prepared makes it more, not less, disturbing for it reveals the basic mindset of the Minister of External Affairs on an extremely sensitive matter, and for him to have made such a remark and then for there not to have been any kind of clarification or denial of it deeply concerns us.

Sir, the question of Palestine has been one which, as I indicated, has engaged us since our Freedom Movement because the Zionists were clear in their minds that they wished to act as an agent of imperialism in securing imperialistic support for the establishment of the State of Israel. They made no bones about it. From the time of the World Zionist Congress in 1896, this has been the stated position of the World Zionist Organisation

Therefore, when we came to 1947 and was suffering in India the consequences of a 'two nation theory' that was going to rend our country apart on religious lines, it was India, even before it became Independent, in the United Nations took a principled stand that to divide a land and its people on the grounds of religion is, in principle, wrong. If the 'two nation theory' should not apply to India, then it should not apply to Palestine either. Therefore, in the Committee, that was established by the United Nations in 1947, India took the stand that there should be only one country. It may have federated hearts, in one of which the Jews would be dominant; in the other, the Arabs would be dominant, and the federal Government would be run on democratic lines by both the peoples together.

It was a failure of the United Nations not to have accepted that principle. That has given us 50 years of conflict in Palestine, even as the 'two nation theory' has given us 50 years of conflict on our own sub-continent. This is when there are terrorist groups called the 'stern gangs' and the 'Hagana' and when these gangs unleashed terrorism in Palestine -- and the origins of terrorism as a political weapon lie with the Jews in Israel -- under these circumstances India took a principled position. The position was that unless and until the Jews are granted Palestine, there could be no question of a full diplomatic recognition of Israel by India. But since the United Nations had recognised the existence of Israel in 1949, we too extended *de-facto* recognition to Israel and established Consular relations with them.

Sir, to forget all this, to forget the role that Israel played in 1956 in invading Egypt along with Britain and France at the time of nationalisation of the Suez Canal; to forget that India took a stand that Zionism is a form of racism in the United Nations; to forget the insult and injury that had been heaped upon the Israeli Arabs by the Israeli Government continuously through a form of institutionalised discrimination over the last several decades; to forget that nearly a million -- now their numbers are running to several millions -- Palestinians who were driven out of Israel had to find homes everywhere as refugees; to forget the restrictions to which the Palestinian National Authority has been subjected to and to say that in order to appease the Muslim vote bank India did not give full recognition to Palestine is an insult to the Father of the Nation. It is an insult to Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru and the Foreign Policy that India followed strongly under several different Governments until this Government came into existence. It is a revelation of the kind of communalism that is now being brought by this Foreign Minister into the Foreign Policy. I wish to know, therefore, whether the External Affairs Minister will apologise to this House for having defamed Indian Foreign Policy on foreign soil and for having brought in domestic partisan politics into what should be a Foreign Policy conducted on the basis of a national consensus.

SHRI E. AHAMED (MANJERI): Sir, I want to ask a very simple question.

**समापति महोदय :** नियम नहीं कहता है कि चार से ज्यादा माननीय सदस्य बोलें। केवल एक सदस्य के खड़े रहने पर खयाल किया जाता परन्तु बहुत से माननीय सदस्य खड़े हैं। मैं श्री बंदोपाध्याय जी को चूस दूंगा। आप एक सवाल पूछ लीजिये।

SHRI SUDIP BANDYOPADHYAY (CALCUTTA NORTH WEST): Sir, I had given notice. My name should be there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is as a special case.

SHRI SUDIP BANDYOPADHYAY : Sir, it seems that Indian leaders are now-a-days delighted to visit Tel Aviv. Shri L.K.Advani visited Tel Aviv, the hon. Minister of External Affairs visited Tel Aviv and most surprisingly, the first Marxist leader of India, Shri Jyoti Basu visited Tel Aviv from the 29<sup>th</sup> of June to 6<sup>th</sup> of July, 2000.

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR (MAYILADUTURAI): What is surprising in it? The Soviet Union supported their cause...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SUDIP BANDYOPADHYAY : I know you are a very good orator. But please allow me to have my say.

Sir, the first Marxist leader of India visited Tel Aviv from the 29<sup>th</sup> of June to the 6<sup>th</sup> of July, 2000.

Is the Government of India now trying to build a national consensus on the issue of Israel? Has the Government of India requested Shri Jyoti Basu to pay a visit to Tel Aviv on its behalf? Has Shri Basu reported the outcome of his visit to the Ministry of External Affairs? These are three questions to which I want to have answers.

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): Mr. Chairman, Sir, thank you very much. I am very grateful to hon. Members for providing me an opportunity to clarify issues.

Hon. Shrimati Shyama Singh had four-five questions. The question of UAVs - if they have caused any vulnerability, whether there are any talks with Israel in this matter - is not really an aspect that was covered by my visit. It is not really an aspect which falls within the purview of the Ministry of External Affairs. It is really a Ministry of Defence matter. In addition acquisition of weapons, either from one country or another, is really not an issue that I can be discussing in the House.

The other clarification that she sought was about the suggestion of hot pursuit. No, Sir, there is no such policy. The Line of Control was not crossed by Indian troops even during the Kargil operation. So, the question of hot pursuit, and the suggestion that Indian forces will, therefore, pursue terrorists in Pak-occupied Kashmir or elsewhere does not arise. As for UAVs, so also for the query relating to acquisition of AWACS.

The suggestion that India is a base for experimentation by Israel or Israeli military establishment for testing either their weapon systems or anything else is completely fallacious. India is a base for nobody and there is nothing of that sort that will be provided by India whether to Israel or to any other country.

So far as agriculture is concerned, we have a bilateral agreement on cooperation in the field of agriculture signed in December, 1993, during a visit to India by the Agriculture Minister of Israel. Since then a large number of experts from both sides have visited each other's institutions to exchange ideas and take specific projects. We have nearabout 170 memorandums of understanding with Israel and at least more than half of them relate to agriculture. There are about 65 joint ventures in areas such as tissue culture, hybrid seeds, sprinkler and drip irrigation, and dry land farming. As the hon. Member knows, there is a demonstration farm that has been set up by the Israeli Agricultural Research Organisation in IARI Delhi and there are, of course, exchange of technical visits.

माननीय रासा सिंह रावत जी ने आतंकवाद के बारे में जानना चाहा था। आतंकवाद के बारे में चर्चा अवश्य हुई, माननीय गृह मंत्री जी से भी हुई, मुझसे भी हुई। जैसा कई अन्य देशों के साथ हो रहा है, इजरायल के साथ भी हुआ। माननीय गृह मंत्री जी ने लौटने के बाद एक वक्तव्य भी जारी किया था। आप इजाजत दें तो मैं संक्षेप में उस वक्तव्य को पढ़ देता हूँ, पूरा नहीं पढ़ूंगा, लेकिन उसमें जो संबंधित प्वाइंट्स हैं, वहीं पढ़ूंगा। चूंकि यह अंग्रेजी में है, श्री रासा सिंह जी मुझे इजाजत देंगे, मैं इसे अंग्रेजी में पढ़ देता हूँ।

This is the Home Minister's Statement. It says:

"This tour was undertaken with the main focus on problems of trans-border terrorism. Israel and India have both grappled with it during the last two decades. Terrorist organisations are now known to establish and have international linkage. This makes it necessary for the countries, which are victims of such terrorism, to learn from the experience of each other. In the interest of promotion of peace and progress and suppression of terrorism, such nations need to work in close co-operation with each other against this menace. "

उसमें कोई जॉइंट ऑपरेशन की बात इस्त्राइल से की जाए टैरिज्म के संदर्भ में, यह नहीं है और अन्य इसके क्या डीटेल्स हैं यह गृह मंत्रालय में विचार होगा। एक निर्णय लिया गया है कि एक जॉइंट वर्किंग ग्रुप टैरिज्म पर होगा और यह कई अन्य देशों के साथ भी किया है और उसी तरह इस्त्राइल के साथ भी यह निर्णय है।

There was a question whether it was an unmanned UAV. I cannot really be shedding any light on the question of radars. Then, there was another question. Is there any joint training programme with Mossad? For this, the answer is - No, Sir,

It was also asked whether our relation with Israel is at the cost of any other Governments? The answer is "No, Sir."

An hon. Member wanted to know whether this requires any kind of the US approval for India to improve its relations with Israel. For that, the answer is "No, Sir". We do not act either with the US approval or even with their inclination in this regard in mind.

Then, there was another question. Is it at the cost of any other country? The answer is "No, it is not, Sir."

Sir, there was a suggestion about balancing act as if bilateral relations between one country and the other are necessarily at the cost of any other country. That is unacceptable, Sir. It is because developments of bilateral relations are not at anyone's cost.

Hon. Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar wanted to know whether the forthcoming peace process can deviate India's position on Palestine. He also wanted to know whether any discussion took place about impending Camp David Peace Talk. The answer to both is "Yes, Sir." In my meetings with President Yasser Arafat as also the leadership of Israel, the forthcoming Camp David Peace Talks featured. President Arafat was good enough to share his views with me, so also the Israeli leadership. Up till that stage, it was not yet certain whether the Summit will take place or not but the respective position of the President of Palestine and also the aspects that Palestine leadership was consistently advocating, was certainly shared by me, so also the Israeli leadership.

So far as India's position is concerned, it was made clear. It is not necessary to make it clear again to President Arafat. But certainly, to the political leadership in my meeting with the Prime Minister and also their Foreign Minister, there was also discussion on the regional cooperation. India's position on Palestinian cause is explicit. It was repeated that India stands for the inalienable rights of the people of Palestine and for the establishment of Palestinian State with the internationally recognised boundaries. He was good enough to discuss this with me at some length.

Hon. Mani Shankar Aiyar suggested that this was missed out in the answer.

Perhaps, the questioner did not ask this. Otherwise, it would have been answered in this House. After a lengthy, historical exposition on the evolution of India's policy in regard to Israel and Palestine, he enquired whether I would apologise. No, I will not apologise.

I was asked a third question about the visit of the hon. the Chief Minister of West Bengal. The visit was undertaken by the hon. the Chief Minister on his own. That there should be a national consensus in this regard is a very desirable objective and we will certainly work on it. The hon. the Chief Minister of West Bengal was very kind and he extended to me the courtesy. As our visits coincided in time, he very kindly enquired of me. He called me on the telephone and enquired whether there was anything that I wished he should do in Israel. I wished him well.

As far as the outcome is concerned, he went there as the Chief Minister of West Bengal. I am sure, he went to see the areas of development of Israel that could possibly be of interest to West Bengal, including the area of agriculture. I am still awaiting the report of the Government of West Bengal. I hope, the Government of West Bengal chooses to share with me what discussions took place. I am awaiting that report yet.

I do believe that I have answered all the questions as explicitly as I can.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The House now stands adjourned to meet on Monday at 11.00 a.m.

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**18.26 बजे**

तत्पश्चात् लोक सभा सोमवार, 21 अगस्त, 2000/ 30 श्रावण, 1922(शक)

के ग्यारह बजे तक के लिए स्थगित हुई।