

Debate of recognition of Israel has once again resurfaced in diplomatic power centres of Pakistan. Discuss multidimensional possible impacts associated with this out-of-the box decision.

## 1-Introduction:

The recognition of Israel has put the Muslim world in a dilemma and in particular Pakistan. Pakistan and Israel are not directly engaged in any hostility or clash with each other. Pakistan did not recognize Israel since its inception because of her consistent support to Palestine issue and its apprehension that India connections are against her security, ultimately shattering sub-continental balance of power.

Every once in a while, a debate breaks out in Pakistan over the issue of recognizing Israel. After a few days of discussing the pros and cons of establishing diplomatic relations with the Jewish state, the issue recedes back into the woodworks until the next time.

The issue of recognizing Israel has once again received domestic attention in Pakistan. At the recently held World Economic Forum in Davos, Israeli President Isaac Herzog's has given his remarks about his pleasant interaction with a group of Pakistani-Americans, brought political uproar in Pakistan. Following his statements, a Pakistani journalist who was a member of the visiting party to Israel, was fired by the government-run television. As a result, on May 30, the Pakistani senate adopted a resolution denouncing Israeli atrocities against the Palestinians and urging the Pakistani government to highlight

The Palestinian situation internationally.

The country's media, civil society, clergy and every other wallie of life has come out in opposition to any rapprochement with Israel.

## 2- Positive impacts Associated with the Decision of Recognition

### 2.1) Strategic Benefits:

Through extending recognition, Pakistan can also benefit from Israel's state-of-the-art military hardware, such as attack helicopters, which Pakistan needs for its counterterrorism operations in Baluchistan and its north-western region bordering Afghanistan. Since the US's reluctance to sell military hardware to Pakistan and the inferior quality of Chinese defense equipment, Islamabad has been looking for a new defense partner to maintain rough conventional parity with India.

Normalization of relations may prove to be advantageous when it comes to Pakistan's major rival state, India. Israel happens to have influence not only on the US but India as well. With the recognition of Israel by Pakistan, Tel Aviv may either be influenced to halt the Indian purchases or Islamabad-Tel Aviv nexus may be developed to break the Indian monopoly.

Pakistan's fear that an Israel-India partnership will work against its interest may be curbed by creating ties with one of them. This will further rebalance the already disturbed strategic balance of South Asia.

## 2.2) Better Say in Diplomatic Area:

Politically, Pakistan may score points in its favour with major Israeli backer that is the US. It's a known fact that Americans are very pro-Israel. It's not that they love Israel. It's perhaps they don't like Arabs.

Moreover, Israel lobby in the US policy-making corridors is very strong. Recognition of Israel will have not only the US support but also the pro-Israel lobby. This will in-turn remove Pakistan-US relations from the roller-coaster mode to strong bilateral relations with an enlightened moderation.

## 2.3) Attracting Economic Interests:

Economically, Pakistan would benefit with an upsurge in economy via establishment of trade relations, importing consumable products. Harvesting on the benefits of the large market that the state of Israel ~~is~~ would provide is another plus.

## 2.4) Technological Assistance:

By engaging with Israel, Pakistan can also learn and adopt Tel Aviv's innovative water technology to overcome its water deficiency and meet the soaring requirements of its ever-growing population. Israel is the world leader in water recycling; it recycles nearly 90 percent of its water, about four times more than any other

country globally.

Pakistan is the nation facing water scarcity and it is among the top ten countries facing water scarcity, and the South Asian nation will require innovative water technologies in the next 10 to 15 years.

Similarly, Israel has among the world's best start-up sectors and will have a lot to offer to Pakistan's budding and promising start-up industry.

## 2.5) Situation after Abraham Accord:

Currently, 167 out of 193 UN member states officially recognize Israel. This also includes six Arab countries. Pakistan do not accept Israel officially. However, with recent surge of recognition in the Arab world, Pakistan is in fix and taxing. Pakistan has very close and intimate economic ties with UAE and Saudi Arabia. Both of them are pressing Pakistan to go for Israeli recognition.

"Go be" would mean economic boons and "Not to be" would mean financial bane. The pressure from countries that Pakistan enjoys friendly relations with, that the former prime minister Imran Khan loosely affirmed in an interview.

## 3- Negative impacts

### 3.1) Weak stance on Kashmir:

Pakistan's support for the Palestine conflict favouring a two-state resolution is identical to its stance on Kashmir, maintaining Kashmiris' right to self-determination according to previous UN resolutions. If Pakistan recognizes Israel, it will compromise its position on Kashmir, which Pakistani leaders have repeatedly emphasized as an analogous situation to the one in Palestine.

Islamabad also fears a backlash from Kashmiri leadership, who have insisted that recognizing Israel constitutes "abandoning" the Kashmiri cause.

### 3.2) Social Reaction and chances of Upsurge of Religious Terrorism:

The eventuality of recognizing Israel might spur the sentiments of public and it may take some time to have popular placement in our society. Widespread unrest would erupt, and religious factions would threaten the legitimacy and sanctity of the government.

Not only the religious leaders in the country would protest but those who uphold human rights would have a major say in such a revolt.

### 3.3) Relation with Iran:

Iran would likely view Pakistan's recognition of Israel as part of the broader Middle Eastern

Geopolitical trend to ally with Gulf Arab to isolate Tehran. Pakistan has a long border with Iran and deep-seated cultural, civilization, and religious linkages.

Due to Pakistan's growing energy requirements Iran's influence on Pakistan's Shia community and the presence of the Baloch insurgent groups on Iranian soil, Islamabad cannot afford to alienate Tehran.

### 3.4) Pakistan: No More a Fortress of Islam:

Pakistan may also lose its aspired position of leader of the Muslim world when it denounces the sanctitude of Jerusalem having the world's third holiest place for Muslims. By rendering recognition, Pakistan will give up its status not only as a leader of the Muslim world but also as one of the protectors of its causes.

Having been created in the name of religion, Pakistan caters to its ideological roots and its ideologues by championing the causes of Muslims anywhere in the world.

Arabs consider Kashmir as an issue of Pakistan, but Pakistan doesn't consider Palestine an Arab issue. Being a Muslim state, Pakistan considers Palestine a problem of the Muslim world.

### 3.5) Pakistan's Additional Diplomatic Considerations w.r.t USA:

It is also possible that recognizing Israel would not pay any visible dividends to Pakistan's relationship with the United States or Saudi Arabia. As Islamabad's salience in Washington has declined following the US withdrawal from Afghanistan, Pakistan's decision to recognize Israel is unlikely to impact its bilateral ties with the United States regardless of which U.S. political party is in power.

### 4- Conclusion:

The existing world scenario has changed the ground realities and placed Pakistan in a difficult situation that now it can move closer to Israel without abandoning historical stand on Palestinian cause. The Kashmir issue being a do or die situation for Pakistan is a case where recognizing Israel may delegitimize its claim in the valley.

Indian atrocities in Kashmir are reflective of and present a mirror image of those carried out in Palestine by Israel. Moreover, an improved diplomatic connection between Israel and Saudi Arabia will also bring the issue of Pakistan's future recognition of Israel into sharp focus because Pakistan is re-establishing ties with the United States and has good relations with Saudi Arabia.

So, the taboo of not discussing this issue more publicly should be broken now and a pragmatic approach should be adopted after discussing with all stakeholders of country's affairs. The confusion and rumors regarding this diplomatic initiative should end now.

The decision of "to be" or "not to be" should be taken in larger national interests without being compromised on ideological, moral, strategic, political and economic agenda.