



## India's Balancing Act in Israel-Palestine War

**For Prelims:** India's Balancing Act in Israel-Palestine War, [Israel-Palestine conflict](#), [Mahatma Gandhi](#), [Cold War](#), West Bank, [India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor \(IMEC\)](#).

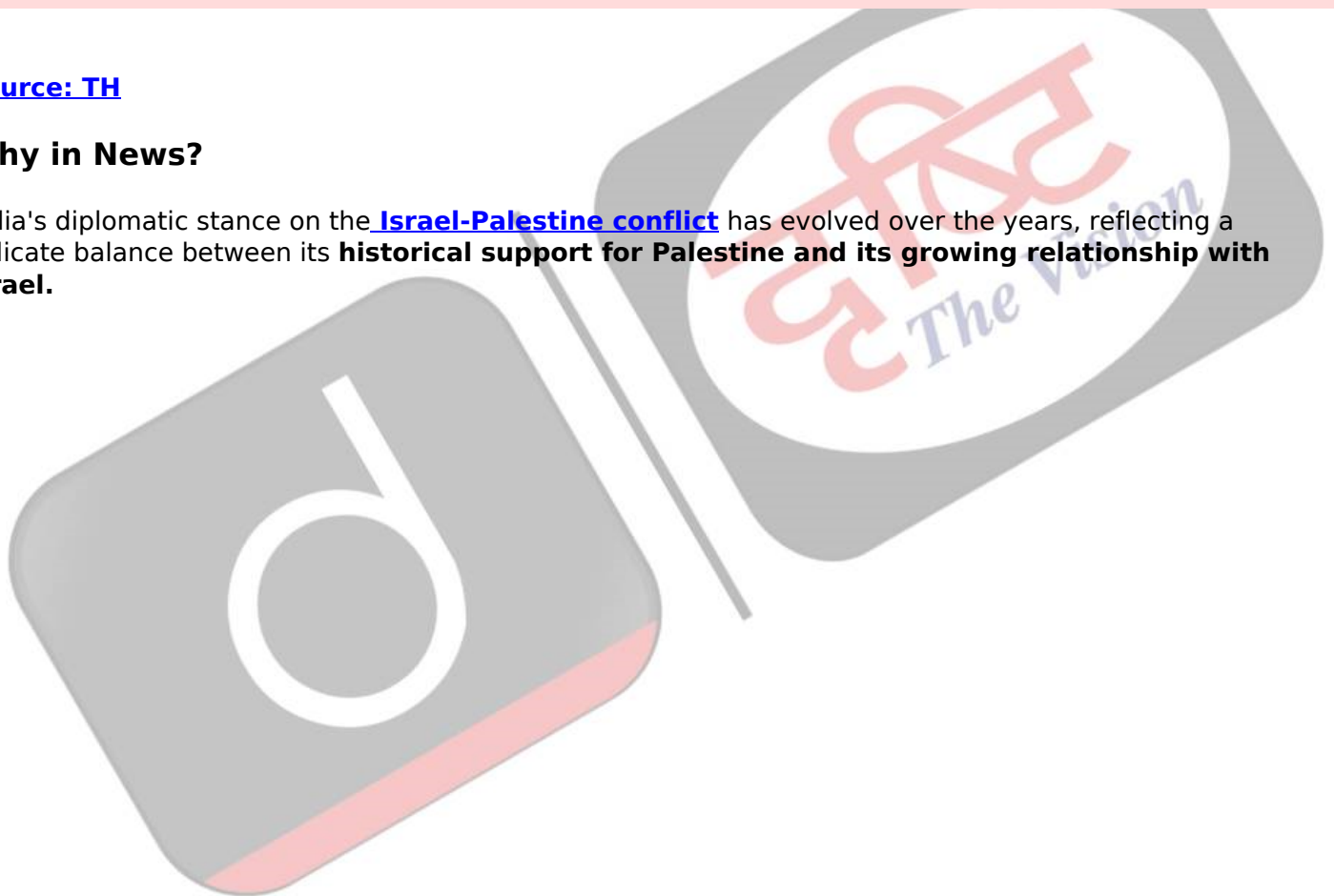
**For Mains:** India's Balancing Act in Israel-Palestine War, Bilateral, Regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

[Source: TH](#)

### Why in News?

India's diplomatic stance on the [Israel-Palestine conflict](#) has evolved over the years, reflecting a delicate balance between its **historical support for Palestine** and its **growing relationship with Israel**.

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## How has been India's Policy over the Israel-Palestine Conflict?

### ▪ Background:

- India's **historical stance on the Israel-Palestine conflict** leaned towards Palestine, driven by factors such as [Mahatma Gandhi's opposition to a Jewish state in Palestine](#), India's large Muslim population, and the **need to maintain good relations with Arab countries**.
  - India's position with regard to Palestine was also guided by the general consensus in the Arab world, the Non-Aligned Movement, and the United Nations.
  - When the partition of Palestine plan was put to vote at the UN, **India voted against, along with the Arab countries**. India also opposed Israel's admission to the UN.
- During the [Cold War](#), India aligned **itself with the Soviet Union**, which supported the Arab states, thus **perpetuating its pro-Palestine position**.

### ▪ Shift in India's Policy:

- **Establishment of Diplomatic Relations:** In 1992, India established full **diplomatic relations with Israel**, marking a significant shift. Despite this, India continued to **voice support for the Palestinian cause**.
  - It was only after the end of the Cold War that Prime Minister Narasimha Rao took the bold step of **establishing diplomatic ties with Israel, irrespective of potential fallout** with the Arab nations.
- **Balance in National Interest:** India's diplomatic decisions are guided by **national interest**, necessitating a balance between maintaining strong relations with Israel, supporting Palestine, and **developing ties with the Arab world**.

## What are the Current Policy and Diplomatic Nuances?

### ▪ Relations with Israel as a National Interest:

- India's relations with Israel have strengthened considerably in recent years, encompassing **various sectors like trade, technology, defense**, and counter-terrorism cooperation.
- India's support for Israel is seen as a response to its **fight against cross-border terrorism**, although the situations in Israel and India differ significantly.

### ▪ Stands With Palestine's Cause:

- Besides growing relations with Israel, India has reiterated its stand for Palestine's cause.
  - Amid the ongoing tensions, USD 29.53 million has been contributed by India to the **UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)** for Palestinian refugees.
- India also sent nearly 6.5 tonnes of medical aid and 32 tonnes of disaster relief material for the **people of Palestine**.

### ▪ India Balancing its Stance:

- In 2017, the Indian Prime Minister for the first time visited Israel and in 2018 he made an official visit to Palestine for the first time.
- In 2017, India voted **against the U.S. and Israel for an attempt to declare unilaterally all of Jerusalem as the Israeli capital**.
- India's policy is clear, they condemn **terrorism but do not support indiscriminate reprisal bombings**.

### ▪ India's Official Stand:

- India's official position on the Israel-Palestine conflict remains unchanged, advocating for a **two-state solution with Israel and Palestine** as good neighbors.
  - It was only after the mediation of the US, in the **1991 Madrid Peace conference** a two-state solution was agreed to **resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict**.
- This is evidenced by the Indian Prime Minister's visit to **Ramallah in the West Bank in 2018**.

## What will be the Likely Implications of Israel Palestine Conflict on India?

- **Defense Deals with Israel:**
  - India has a significant defense relationship with Israel, with defense procurement and technology cooperation. The conflict may **impact this relationship, as Israel may focus more on its security needs** during the conflict.
  - Israel supplies the most military equipment to India, with the military business between the two countries worth around USD 2.1 billion.
- **Energy Security:**
  - India is **dependent on oil imports from the Middle East**, and any escalation in the region could affect energy prices and, subsequently, India's economy.
  - Since all the world economies are interconnected therefore, if countries like Saudi Arabia and Iran get involved in ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict then definitely there will be **direct consequences over India's energy supply**, economy and investment.
- **Impact on India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor:**
  - The conflict has the potential to affect the stability of the Middle East, a region of strategic importance to India.
  - An escalation of hostilities could have implications for India's interests and engagements in the region.
    - India recently signed the [India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor \(IMEC\)](#) as an ambitious infrastructure project aimed at connecting India, the Middle East, and Europe through various transportation modes, including shipping and rail networks.
    - Instability in the region can create security challenges, and affect the smooth operation of the IMEC.

## Way Forward

- Maintaining a status quo in the Israel-Palestine conflict is a challenging endeavor, and India can play a **constructive role by promoting a peaceful resolution** based on a two-nation theory.
- India should continue its diplomatic efforts and use its international influence to encourage both **Israel and Palestine to return to the negotiating table**.
- India must continue to act as a mediator and provide humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people to address the immediate needs and alleviate suffering in conflict-affected areas.
- Encourage dialogues and exchanges between Israeli and Palestinian civil society groups, academics, and youth to promote mutual understanding and trust.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

### Prelims

**Q 1. Which one of the following countries of South-West Asia does not open out to the Mediterranean Sea? (2015)**

- (a) Syria
- (b) Jordan
- (c) Lebanon
- (d) Israel

**Ans: (b)**

### Mains

**Q1.** 'Too little cash, too much politics, leaves UNESCO fighting for life.' Discuss the statement in the light of US' withdrawal and its accusation of the cultural body as being 'anti-Israel bias'. (2019)

**Q2.** "India's relations with Israel have, of late, acquired a depth and diversity, which cannot be rolled back." Discuss. (2018)

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/india-s-balancing-act-in-israel-palestine-war>

