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Israel in the Context of the “New Bipolarity”

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Abstract. The study is dedicated to the main guidelines of the foreign policy of the State of Israel in the context of the current transformation of the world order. Before the start of the special military operation, despite a fairly strong strategic alliance with the United States, Israel pursued a pragmatic foreign policy and maintained mutually beneficial bilateral relations with the leading powers of the non-Western world — especially Russia, China and India. However, the sharp escalation of the situation in the Palestinian territories in October 2023 put Israel in front of an existential choice under the conditions of the emerging new bipolarity, and this choice was made in favor of the United States and its NATO allies. Now the official rhetoric in Israel has become consonant with the one that prevailed during the period of the severed relations between Russia and Israel. Nevertheless, in formulating policies where Russian and Israeli positions do not coincide, both sides continue to coordinate all actions within the framework of a joint dialogue. The article focuses on the main issues on which Russia and Israel differ: Ukrainian, Iranian, and Palestinian factors. China and India occupy a special place among Israel’s foreign policy priorities. The importance of these countries for the Jewish state will be increasing due to the inevitable isolationist tendencies in the region, which are growing against the backdrop of the worsening Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The article examines the main trends in Israel’s relations with some Arab countries, China and India.

Key words: Middle East, Russia, Ukraine, USA, Iran, China, India, Israeli foreign policy, Palestinian problem, bipolarity, conflicts

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Authors’ contribution. A.V. Krylov — Introduction; Russian-Ukrainian Factor; Palestinian Factor; Iranian Factor; A.A. Mikaelian — Chinese Factor; Indian Factor.

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Израиль в контексте «новой биполярности»

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Аннотация. Анализируются основные направления внешней политики Государства Израиль в условиях нынешней трансформации мирового порядка и формирующейся «новой биполярности». До начала специальной военной операции (СВО), несмотря на достаточно прочный стратегический союз с США,

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Израиль проводил прагматичный внешнеполитический курс и поддерживал взаимовыгодные двусторонние отношения с ведущими державами незападного мира, неаффилированными с евроатлантическим альянсом, — Россией, КНР и Индией. Однако резкое обострение ситуации на палестинских территориях в октябре 2023 г. поставило Израиль перед экзистенциальным выбором в условиях зарождающейся новой биполярности, и этот выбор был сделан в пользу США и их союзников по НАТО. Сейчас официальная риторика в Израиле стала созвучной с той, которая получила распространение в период разрыва отношений между Россией и Израилем. Тем не менее при формировании конкретной политики, когда российская и израильская точки зрения не совпадают, обе стороны по-прежнему координируют все действия в рамках диалога. Авторы фокусируют внимание на основных проблемах, по которым у России и Израиля существуют расхождения: украинский, иранский и палестинский факторы. Среди приоритетов внешней политики Израиля особое место занимают Китай и Индия. Значение этих стран для еврейского государства будет возрастать из-за неизбежных изоляционистских тенденций в регионе, которые усиливаются на фоне обострения палестино-израильского конфликта. Рассмотрены основные тренды в отношениях Израиля с некоторыми арабскими странами, а также КНР и Индией.

Ключевые слова: Ближний Восток, Россия, Украина, США, Иран, Китай, Индия, внешняя политика Израиля, палестинская проблема, биполярность, конфликты

Заявление о конфликте интересов. Авторы заявляют об отсутствии конфликта интересов.

Вклад авторов. А.В. Крылов — Введение; Российско-украинский фактор; Фактор Палестины; Иранский фактор; А.А. Микаелян — Китайский фактор; Индийский фактор.

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Introduction

The last decade, characterized by the accelerating pace of world globalization, showed that Israel had noticeably stepped up its efforts towards economic and political integration at the regional level, which, together with the mediation of the United States, culminated in the signing of the so-called “Abraham Accords” with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain in August 2020, and the subsequent normalization of relations with Morocco and Sudan. It was also expected that Saudi Arabia would soon join this new regional alliance (Egel, Efron & Robinson, 2021, p. 7).

The emerging new configuration in the Middle East was based not only on the desire of its participants for close economic cooperation: Israel’s new Arab partners shared its concerns about the development of Iran’s nuclear program, the spread of Iranian proxies throughout the Middle East region, and the possibility of weakening or lifting anti-Iranian sanctions.

However, as Israel strengthened its position in the regional balance of power, it inevitably

had to take into account the interests of its Arab partners, who, on the one hand, were moving towards rapprochement with Russia and China, and, on the other, were distancing themselves from the initiators of the unification project under the name of the Old Testament Abraham.

Despite the strongest pressure from Washington, Israel’s new regional partners persistently strengthened cooperation with powers disliked by the collective West. This rapprochement was manifested, among other things, in the evasion to participate in the US sanctions policy directed against Russia and China, as well as in the refusal to abide by the externally imposed terms of the production and export of energy resources, and in the growing purchases of Russian arms.¹ The whole world paid attention to the growing influence of Russia in the Middle East noting the discrepancy in the level of reception of the

¹ Israel’s Ukraine Policy: Between a Rock and a Hard Place // Berlin: European Leadership Network (ELNET). 2022. P. 2. URL: <https://elnetwork.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/ELNET-Germany-Briefing-Israel-Ukraine-Policy—Between-a-Rock-and-a-Hard-Place.pdf> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

Russian President Vladimir Putin and the US President Joseph Biden in Riyadh.² China is also playing the role of an active counterweight to the United States in the Middle East. “Already today, China is benefiting from a change in thinking in the region. Otherwise, why is Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman introducing Chinese into the curriculum of school subjects in Saudi Arabia?” asks Sebastian Sons, a Gulf expert at the Bonn-based think tank CARPO.³ At the same time, the influential monarchs of the Arabian Peninsula often allow themselves not to answer telephone calls from top officials in Washington and the European Union.

Israel’s dilemma is that it simultaneously seeks to establish good neighborly and mutually beneficial relations with influential states in the region, but at the same time continues to position itself as part of the Western world and the main strategic and military ally of the United States in the Middle East (Karasova, 2019, p. 10).

It appears that in the near future three factors will primarily influence regional politics and Israel’s foreign policy orientation: the unresolved issue of Palestine and the long-standing Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the armed conflict in Ukraine, and growing tensions with Iran. Israel will be building its foreign policy doctrine towards its main strategic partners, both in the Middle East region and beyond, depending on how the situation develops in the areas outlined above.

In the study, the authors were guided by the principle of political realism. Scholars disagree on the consequences that bipolarity/multipolarity or unipolarity may lead to. Thus,

² Alamuddin B. Biden and Putin: A Tale of Two Visits // Arab News. July 18, 2022. URL: <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2124181> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

³ Böhmer D. D. Wie der Westen den Nahen Osten an Putin verliert // Die Welt. 12.07.2022. URL: <https://www.welt.de/politik/ausland/plus239811217/Ukraine-Krieg-Wie-der-Westen-den-Nahen-Osten-an-Putin-verliert.html> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

generally recognized experts in the field of international relations (Waltz, 1979, pp. 170–171; Mearsheimer, 2001, pp. 44–45; Primakov, 2011, pp. 159–160) conclude in their studies that the bipolarity tends to stabilize the international system, while others (Modelski & Thompson, 1988; Wohlforth, 1999, pp. 5–41; Ikenberry, 2001, pp. 43–78; Brooks & Wohlforth, 2023, pp. 76–91) argue that only a world hegemon is capable of ensuring the universal world order. Some analysts have argued that states use a rational decision-making model to ensure security and welfare, barring the emergence of a long-term hegemonic state (Deutsch & Singer, 1964).

The ongoing military conflict in Ukraine since February 2022 and the sharp deterioration of the situation in the Palestinian territories after the attack by Hamas militants on the border areas of Israel on October 7, 2023 have convincingly confirmed the correctness of those experts who insist that the world is moving towards a new bipolarity (Tunsjø, 2018; Degtrev, 2019; Kupchan, 2021). The authors of this article also share this view.

The Russian-Ukrainian Factor

Israel’s policy towards the Russian Federation after the start of the special military operation (SMO) on February 24, 2022, did not fit into Washington’s tough and openly Russophobic course, which was unanimously supported by NATO countries and the coalition of their allies. Israel responded to numerous requests from the Ukrainian authorities with an unequivocal refusal to supply lethal military equipment, and also did not join the policy of constant sanctions pressure on Russia.

Despite the protracted political crisis in the country (Krylov, 2022, pp. 393–394), which, among other things, showed sharp confrontation between Moscow’s opponents and supporters, the Israeli government did not disconcert the positive and dynamic cooperation that had developed in the years after the restoration of

full-fledged relations with the Russian Federation and continued to be driven exclusively by its own strategic interests concerning the Russian side. N. Bennett, who was the Prime Minister of Israel (June 13, 2021 — July 1, 2022) when the special military operation started, made an attempt to act as a candidate for the position of the mediator of the negotiations between Moscow and Kiev on resolving the conflict and maintained close ties with both parties. Many people remember the official statement of N. Bennet: “Russia is a reliable supporter of Israel, and V. Putin is a true friend of the Jewish people”.⁴

Critical statements against Russia made by the next Prime Minister Y. Lapid (July 1 — December 29, 2022)⁵ could in no way correspond with the reluctance of his weak cabinet to take any serious actions in support of Ukraine. Another victory of the Israeli power structures’ veteran B. Netanyahu in the last elections to the Knesset in November 2022, according to experts, meant that there would be no changes in Israel’s political course regarding Ukraine to expect. B. Netanyahu met with V. Putin 17 times during the years of his premiership, and none of the foreign leaders of the states beyond the post-Soviet space were seen in the Kremlin more often than the current head of the Israeli government.⁶ “We have found a compromise with Russian President Vladimir Putin that is acceptable to Israel and does not violate the interests of Moscow,”⁷ —

said B. Netanyahu in an interview with the French TV channel LCI in February 2023. The Israeli Prime Minister also confirmed his readiness to consider the possibility of his participation as a mediator in negotiations between Russia and Ukraine.

Israel’s rather cautious position on the Ukrainian crisis is determined by several aspects. Firstly, Israel is home to a Ukrainian community of half a million, including tens of thousands of ethnic Ukrainians (5.5% of the total population).⁸ The vast majority of immigrants from Ukraine arrived in Israel in the 1990s. In turn, according to Israeli estimates, the Jewish population of Ukraine is about 50,000 people, and another 150,000 are eligible to receive Israeli citizenship under the Law of Return.⁹ The largest Jewish communities are located in Kiev, Dnieper, Odessa and Kharkov. According to the Israeli Ministry of Absorption, approximately 6,000 Ukrainian Jews immigrated to the country under the Law of Return after the start of the special military operation.¹⁰ However, many more Jews chose to leave Ukraine for Europe as refugees. At least 30,000 Ukrainian Jews settled in Germany alone.¹¹

2023. URL: <https://tass.com/world/1571473> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

⁸ Bilateral Relations between Ukraine and the State of Israel // Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. June 20, 2023. URL: <https://mfa.gov.ua/en/about-ukraine/bilateral-cooperation/middle-east-and-africa> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

⁹ Aim esh be-Ukraina million yegudim she-zkaim laalot le-Israel? [Are There a Quarter of a Million Jews in Ukraine Who Have the Right to Immigrate to Israel?] // Globes. February 15, 2022. (In Hebrew). URL: <https://www.globes.co.il/news/article.aspx?did=1001402226> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

¹⁰ Mivtsa “Olim a-bayta” le-klitat herum shel zakay hok a-shvut mi-Ukraina ve-svivot [Operation “Return Home” Is Carried out for the Emergency Reception of Persons Eligible to Return from Ukraine and Its Environs] // Ministry of Aliyah and Integration. March 21, 2022. (In Hebrew). URL: <https://www.gov.il/he/departments/news/homecoming-operation-regular-updates> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

¹¹ Klein Z. Why Are Most Ukrainian Jewish Refugees Going to Europe, not Israel? — Analysis // The Jerusalem

⁴ Russia’s Putin Hosts Israeli PM Bennett // The Associated Press. October 22, 2021. URL: <https://apnews.com/article/europe-middle-east-russia-israel-vladimir-putin-3b708ca8c898ac032639bfffede7a48f> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

⁵ Lapid Condemns Russia for First Time as Prime Minister // The Jerusalem Post. October 10, 2022. URL: <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-719344> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

⁶ Bilateral Relations with the State of Israel // Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. June 14, 2022. (In Russian). URL: <https://mid.ru/ru/detail-material-page/1103436/> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

⁷ Israel Does Not Want Flight Incidents with Military Aircraft in Syrian Airspace — PM // TASS. February 5,

The Israeli authorities have always objected to the naturalization of Ukrainians who do not have Jewish roots, and after the conflict in Ukraine had escalated, they canceled the agreement on a visa-free regime between the two countries. Since the establishment of independent Ukraine, Israel has seen a lot of problems that have not allowed the two states to build relations on the basis of complete mutual understanding. The undisguised revival of militant nationalism in Ukraine and the glorification of S. Bandera, R. Shukhevych, Y. Stetsko and other accomplices of the fascist occupiers who were directly involved in the massacre of almost half a million Ukrainian Jews during the World War II were unacceptable to Israel. The recurrence of the revival of outright fascism in Ukraine, of course, influenced the formation of public consciousness in Israel. The conducted polls clearly showed that a significant part of Israelis did not support the participation of the Jewish state in the campaign launched by the West to pump Ukraine with weapons.¹² There were many other reasons that negatively influenced the nature of Israeli-Ukrainian cooperation (Krylov & Fedorchenko, 2023, pp. 89–92).

The weakening of the US positions in the Middle East, together with the withdrawal of the US military personnel and specialists from a number of areas in the region, left a vacuum that could not remain unfilled. The defeat of the “terrorist international” led by the Islamic State (IS, ISIS, ISIL)¹³ by the Syrian armed forces supported by the Russian Aerospace Forces contributed to the expansion of the Russian

presence and influence in Syria. Moscow has deployed the most advanced air defense system in this Arab country and has become the dominant actor on the Syrian-Israeli track, which Israel simply cannot ignore.

Since 2015 an effective mechanism for coordinating actions between the command of the Russian group in Syria and the leadership of the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) has been created on a bilateral basis, which makes it possible to prevent dangerous incidents for Israel’s security. According to a military analyst of the Israeli TV channel “Kheshet” N. Dvori, Moscow and Tel-Aviv reached a secret agreement that Moscow would not supply Iran with fighter jets, air defense and electronic warfare systems in exchange for guarantees not to send advanced models of Israeli military equipment to Ukraine.¹⁴ The significance of this agreement is well understood in Israel. In its absence, the threat of an expanding Iranian presence in Syria and the deployment of missiles near the Israeli-controlled area of the Golan Heights capable of hitting targets anywhere in the Israeli territories increases. In this situation, Israel will no longer be concerned about Ukraine.

The Palestinian Factor

Until recently, Israel was more than satisfied with its status as an outside observer of the events surrounding Ukraine. It seemed that the problems of the Palestinian-Israeli confrontation and the Israeli occupation of Palestinian and Syrian territories had receded into the background against the backdrop of events in Ukraine, and criticism of the policy of expanding the Israeli presence in Palestinian lands has rarely been heard recently at high-level international platforms.

Post. November 8, 2022. URL: <https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/article-721635> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

¹² Sokol S. 41 Percent of Israelis Oppose Arming Ukraine in War against Russia // Haaretz. October 19, 2022. URL: <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2022-10-19/ty-article/.premium/41-percent-of-israelis-oppose-arming-ukraine-in-war-against-russia/00000183-efe9-dddc-a1eb-ffe927360000> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

¹³ Hereinafter, an organization included in the list of terrorist organizations in the Russian Federation is mentioned.

¹⁴ A-mishvaa she-Israel banta mul Moscvva vea-tlut a-Rusit be-Iran // N12 a-hadashot shel Israel [Israel’s Terms to Moscow and Russia’s Dependence on Iran // Keshet]. June 19, 2023. (In Hebrew). URL: https://www.mako.co.il/news-military/2023_q2/Article-15e76ca5aafc881026.htm (accessed: 12.11.2023).

The situation changed radically when, on October 7, 2023, Hamas unexpectedly announced the start of a new, third intifada, called the “Storm of Al-Aqsa,” during which, about 5 thousand rockets were fired from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory. Militants from Gaza also managed to break through the so-called “separation fence” and kill 1,200 Israelis in the border kibbutzim and the city of Sderot; another 270 participants in a music festival held near Kibbutz Reim became victims of the massacre.¹⁵ Some 200 soldiers and civilians, including 30 children, were taken hostage.¹⁶

This was the heaviest blow inflicted by Hamas on Israel in the entire history of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. For the first time, the Israeli military and political leadership announced that it would not carry out another retaliatory operation similar to 2009 (Operation *Cast Lead*), 2012 (Operation *Pillar of Cloud*) and 2014 (Operation *Impenetrable Rock*), but that it was preparing a combined land, sea and air operation, aimed at destroying the entire Hamas infrastructure, including its military wing and military-political leadership. However, even the bombing of cities and Palestinian refugee camps carried out by the Israeli Air Force in the first weeks of the escalating conflict had a horrific impact — 6,734 people were killed, including 2,812 children;¹⁷ 600,000 became internally displaced persons.¹⁸

¹⁵ Borschel-Dan A. Thousands Flee Rocket and Gunfire at All-Night Desert ‘Nature Party’; Dozens Missing // *The Times of Israel*. October 7, 2023. URL: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/thousands-flee-rocket-and-gunfire-at-all-night-desert-nature-party-dozens-missing/> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

¹⁶ Bob Y. J. IDF Working on Rescue Ops for Over 200 Israeli Hostages in Gaza // *The Jerusalem Post*. October 19, 2023. URL: <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-769274> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

¹⁷ Euro-Med: Gaza Death Toll Nears that of Srebrenica Genocide // *Middle East Monitor*. October 26, 2023. URL: <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20231026-euro-med-gaza-death-toll-nears-that-of-srebrenica-genocide/> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

¹⁸ 70% of Gaza Population Displaced by Israeli Bombardment: Government // *Middle East Monitor*.

The humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza has literally split the world into supporters of Israel and opponents of its asymmetrical bombings, which, at the very beginning of the total blockade of the Strip, wiped hundreds of civilian objects off the map, including hospitals, schools, mosques and even the oldest on the Palestinian lands Greek Orthodox Church of St. Porphyrius. Most countries in the world strongly condemned both the Hamas terrorist attack and Israel’s excessively harsh actions to collectively punish all residents of Gaza. However, the UN Security Council, under the US pressure, once again demonstrated its inability to promptly take measures to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli confrontation. Russia and China vetoed a draft resolution¹⁹ proposed by the United States that condemned the attack by the radical Islamist movement Hamas (Krylov & Morozov, 2018, pp. 84–99) on civilian targets and the civilians in Israel, demanded the immediate release of hostages and respect for international humanitarian law, but did not call for a ceasefire, thus giving Israel a license to escalate the conflict. The Russian draft resolution, which condemned the violent actions of Hamas but called for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, was also rejected through the efforts of the United States and Great Britain.

As expected, Israel, in times of hardship, did not hesitate to abandon the tactics of balancing between powers and joined the camp of the US satellites. B. Netanyahu, who has been perceived in Washington since the presidency of B. Obama as an opponent of the Democrats and the closest supporter of D. Trump, immediately put aside all recent

October 25, 2023. URL: <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20231025-70-of-gaza-population-displaced-by-israeli-bombardment-government/> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

¹⁹ Gaza Crisis: Deadlock Deepens as Security Council Rejects Competing Resolutions by US and Russia // *UN News*. October 25, 2023. URL: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/10/1142817#:~:text=China%20and%20Russia%20on%20Wednesday,crisis%20in%20Gaza%20and%20Israel> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

disagreements with the current American administration and assured J. Biden that he would coordinate the Hamas liquidation operation in Gaza with the U.S.²⁰ Israeli Defense Minister Y. Gallant, in a joint statement with his American counterpart L.J. Austin stated the following: “Defense cooperation and U.S. support in the Pentagon, in the White House, in the Congress ensure freedom of operation and enforce our capabilities... U.S. deployment of assets on land, in air and at sea sends a strong message to both partners and enemies in the region. On behalf of Israel’s defense establishment and on behalf of our citizens, Mr. Secretary, thank you very much.”²¹

The U.S. President J. Biden assured B. Netanyahu in a telephone conversation that his team will give Israel everything it needs to fight Hamas.²² For the first time during the conflict, Washington sent two transport aircrafts with ammunition for air defense systems and the most expensive The Gerald R. Ford aircraft carrier, accompanied by a cruiser and four destroyers equipped with missiles.²³

²⁰ Holland S., Spetalnick M. Israel — Hamas War Forces Biden and Netanyahu into Uneasy Partnership // Reuters. October 9, 2023. URL: <https://www.reuters.com/world/israel-hamas-war-forces-biden-netanyahu-into-uneasy-partnership-2023-10-09/> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

²¹ Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III Joint Press Conference with Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant in Tel Aviv, Israel // U.S. Department of Defense. October 13, 2023. URL: <https://www.defense.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/3556642/secretary-of-defense-lloyd-j-austin-iii-joint-press-conference-with-israeli-def/> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

²² U.S. Flowing Military Supplies to Israel, as Country Battles Hamas Terrorists // U.S. Department of Defense. October 10, 2023. URL: <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3553040/us-flowing-military-supplies-to-israel-as-country-battles-hamas-terrorists/> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

²³ See: USS Gerald R. Ford, Escorts Moving Closer to Israel in Response to Hamas Attack // U.S. Naval Institute. October 8, 2023. URL: <https://news.usni.org/2023/10/08/gerald-r-ford-carrier-strike-group-moving-to-eastern-mediterranean-in-response-to-attacks-in-israel> (accessed: 12.11.2023); Copp T. Here’s What Military Assistance the

Meanwhile, Israel’s determination to finally put an end to the existence of Hamas, with the support of the United States, was shaken by the strong disagreement of a large part of the world community with Israel’s indiscriminate, disproportionate response to acts of violence by radical Islamists. The vote on October 26, 2023 at the emergency session of the UN General Assembly on the resolution “Protection of Civilians and Fulfillment of Legal and Humanitarian Obligations” proposed by 40 member states of the organization, demonstrated the bipolarity of the modern world: 121 countries voted in favor of the document, 45 states abstained and 14 votes against.²⁴ Canada’s amendment condemning Hamas was rejected.²⁵

The resolution condemned “all acts of violence aimed at Palestinian and Israeli civilians,” and demanded “to enable and facilitate humanitarian access for essential supplies and services to reach all civilians in need in the Gaza Strip.” The resolution called for the “rescinding of the order by Israel, the occupying Power, for Palestinian civilians and United Nations staff, as well as humanitarian and medical workers, to evacuate all areas in the Gaza Strip north of the Wadi Gaza and relocate to southern Gaza,” and strongly condemned “any attempts at the forced transfer of the Palestinian civilian population.” The document emphasized that “a just and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can only be

US Is Providing Israel since Hamas Assault // The Times of Israel. October 13, 2023. URL: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/heres-what-military-assistance-the-us-is-providing-israel-since-hamas-assault/> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

²⁴ Protection of Civilians and Upholding Legal and Humanitarian Obligations : Resolution A/RES/ES-10/21 / Adopted by the General Assembly // UN Digital Library. October 27, 2023. URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4025240?ln=en> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

²⁵ General Assembly Adopts Resolution Calling for Immediate, Sustained Humanitarian Truce Leading to Cessation of Hostilities between Israel, Hamas // The United Nations. October 27, 2023. URL: <https://press.un.org/en/2023/ga12548.doc.htm> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

achieved by peaceful means, based on the relevant United Nations resolutions and in accordance with international law, and on the basis of the two-State solution.”²⁶

It is noteworthy that the resolution was supported by all Arab countries, as well as by some EU countries — France, Belgium, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Slovenia, and Luxembourg. Israel’s Permanent Representative to the UN G. Erdan, who had previously called for the resignation of the UN Secretary-General A. Guterres after the General Assembly adopted the Middle East resolution, stated that this organization has lost its legitimacy.²⁷

If the Israeli political and military leadership decides to carry out an operation to completely eliminate Hamas (such an operation would inevitably lead to even greater casualties among the two million people of the Gaza Strip), West Jerusalem risks finding itself in the grip of regional isolation, which it is well familiar with from the recent history of the Arab-Israeli wars. There is also the possibility that in response to another violent invasion of the Palestinian enclave, the oil-producing Arab countries and Iran reserve the right to impose an embargo on the supply of oil and gas to countries supporting Israel, as happened in October 1973. Taking into account the fact that these countries mainly include those that previously refused energy supplies from Russia, a new energy crisis could become even more painful and be accompanied by unpredictable and critical consequences for the collective West.

The intensification of anti-Israeli attacks from “Hamastan” in Israel itself is mainly

²⁶ General Assembly Resolution A/RES/ES-10/21 “Protection of Civilians and Upholding Legal and Humanitarian Obligations” // UN Digital Library. October 26, 2023. URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4025113?ln=en> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

²⁷ Israeli Envoy: A Dark Day for the UN and for Mankind, Will Go Down as Infamy // The Times of Israel. October 27, 2023. URL: https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/israeli-envoy-a-dark-day-for-the-un-and-for-mankind-will-go-down-as-infamy/ (accessed: 12.11.2023).

associated with the Iranian leadership, which is guided by a religious anti-Israeli ideology in its regional policy, creating a direct threat to the existence of the Jewish state, and the main threat to Israel comes from the Iranian nuclear program. Although Hamas leaders have consistently claimed that they are waging an independent resistance against the Israeli occupation and that neither Iran nor Lebanese Hezbollah are their allies;²⁸ there is a consensus in Israel that “directly Iran is responsible for planning the brutal attack.”²⁹

In fact, with the overthrow of the regimes in Iraq and Libya and the exhaustion of Syria after many years of war with radical Islamists, Israel today has no other regional hostile forces left except Iran, Hezbollah and Hamas. However, Hezbollah no longer poses a serious threat to Israel, since it is firmly integrated into the Lebanese political structure, which is now experiencing a serious systemic crisis that does not allow the Shi’a resistance to be drawn into another conflict with Israel. In addition, the United States and France, through their secret channels, notified Hezbollah of the risks associated with military support for Hamas in the conflict with Israel.³⁰ The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in the West Bank is also not interested in unity with Hamas and thus in escalating tensions with Israel, preferring to distance itself from the radicals in Gaza.

²⁸ Mroue B., El-Deeb S. Hamas Official Says Iran and Hezbollah had No Role in Israel Incursion, but They’ll Help if Needed // AP News. October 10, 2023. URL: <https://apnews.com/article/lebanon-israel-palestinian-hamas-hezbollah-iran-2ccfaa49139358e6d2add89878a0cfe4> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

²⁹ 500 Hamas, PIJ Terrorists Trained for October 7 Attack in Iran Last Month — Report // The Times of Israel. October 25, 2023. URL: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/500-hamas-pij-terrorists-trained-for-october-7-attack-in-iran-last-month-report/> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

³⁰ Bertrand N., Bo Lillis K., Marquardt A. US and Allies Warn Militant Group Hezbollah against Escalating Hamas — Israel Conflict // CNN. October 11, 2023. URL: <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/10/11/politics/us-allies-warn-hezbollah/index.html> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

The Oslo Accords (1993–1995) actually paralyzed the combat capability of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) led by Fatah. Now that Gaza is trying to resist the Israeli occupation, the de facto demilitarized PNA is unable to provide effective assistance to the rebel sector. This leaves Israel with two principal rivals — Iran with its proxy formations, and Hamas.

It is likely that the prospect of the final destruction of Hamas lies at the heart of the plan to “punish Iran” that has long been nurtured in the depths of the Israeli military-political structures with the support of the United States and the tacit consent or apathy of other regional and international actors. It is no coincidence that in Israel, after the events of October 7, the rhetoric of the Cold War of the last century was again heard in the local media and on high political platforms. The Israeli Foreign Ministry sent a sharp note to Moscow, which said the following: “Israel sees the invitation of senior Hamas officials to Moscow as an obscene step that gives support to terrorism and legitimizes the atrocities of Hamas terrorists.” This was followed by a call to “immediately expel the Hamas leaders” that arrived in Moscow for negotiations on October 26. The Israeli Foreign Ministry expressed “dissatisfaction with the role that Russia plays in the war against Hamas,” as well as the hope that Moscow would take a “more balanced” position.³¹

Knesset member A. Weitman of the ruling Likud party made threats against Russia on the *RT channel*, assuring that it would pay dearly for supporting Iran and hosting the Hamas delegation.³²

³¹ Moscow Hosts Hamas Delegation and Iran’s Deputy FM, Prompting Israeli Outrage // *The Times of Israel*. October 26, 2023. URL: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/moscow-hosts-hamas-delegation-and-irans-deputy-fm-prompting-israeli-outrage/> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

³² Full Video of the RT Presenter’s Debate with Israeli Politician Weitman Is Published // *Russia Today*. October 20, 2023. (In Russian). URL: <https://russian.rt.com/world/news/1219879-izrail-video-efir> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

The Iranian Factor

The scenario in which Israel hopes to overthrow the undesirable Iranian regime in close cooperation with the United States has a significant drawback: any confrontation between Israel and Tehran could result in catastrophic consequences for the Israelis if the strategic allies, led by the United States, are carried away by other international or global crisis issues (financial or political crisis, epidemics, environmental and other natural disasters, etc.). In this situation, the most terrible scenario for Israel may occur — it will find itself facing the Iranian threat, which may not be related to the nuclear program or the deployment and support of pro-Iranian forces in Lebanon and Syria.

Until recently, the Iranian security concept did not provide for the deployment of direct military action against Israel. The main military bases and its most combat-ready forces of Iran are concentrated in the Persian Gulf zone, while on the border which is closest to Israel (almost 2000 km) there is no large accumulation of military equipment and locations for regular army units. It is obvious that in the event of a real threat to national security, Iran will begin military operations precisely on the maritime section of the border in the Persian Gulf. It is no coincidence that the main emphasis in the development of the national military-industrial complex was placed on increasing the production of medium-range missiles, their delivery vehicles and drones, rather than aircraft and tanks. For Tehran, a hypothetical nuclear bomb is undoubtedly an instrument of intimidation and deterrence, but not a weapon aimed at destroying the enemy. Iran is well aware that if the situation in the strategically important area of the Strait of Hormuz³³ is

³³ The Strait of Hormuz Is the World’s Most Important Oil Transit Chokepoint // U.S. Energy Information Administration. November 21, 2023. URL: <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=61002> (accessed: 12.12.2023).

destabilized then many will blame Israel for the inevitable global energy crisis.

Until recently, the “Iran syndrome” was the factor that stimulated the formation of a Middle Eastern alliance consisting of Israel and some Arab monarchies of the Arabian Peninsula under the auspices of the United States. Moreover, Israel, as the most extravagant participant in this political union, emphasized that it was ready to cooperate with the Sunni monarchies in such a rapprochement. Thus, an alliance against the “Shi‘a axis” was created. The Trump administration did not hide the fact that the Abraham Accords were intended precisely “to fight the common enemy — Iran”.³⁴ However, in the context of the widening fault line between the global West and the rest of the world, the United States clearly overestimated its ability to draw Saudi Arabia and other oil-producing countries of the Persian Gulf into its sphere of influence.

The restoration of diplomatic relations between Riyadh and Tehran in March 2023, mediated by Beijing, was a significant change in the strategic balance in the region. At the same time, both former warring parties pledged not to go to war with each other. Negotiations are underway to normalize relations with other Arab countries in the region, particularly the UAE. In addition, on August 24, 2023, following the results of the 15th BRICS summit, it was announced that six states would join the organization, including Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE.³⁵

Iran’s rapprochement with the Arab world does not bode well for Israel. Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, at an emergency meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation on October 18, 2023,

called on the countries of the Islamic world to use oil as a weapon and impose an oil embargo against Israel.³⁶ So far this measure has not been approved by the Organization of the petroleum exporting countries (OPEC), but it is possible that the oil-producing Arab countries have not yet said their last word.

Another important fact is that the vote on the UN General Assembly resolution “Protection of Civilians and Fulfillment of Legal and Humanitarian Obligations” put any further mutually beneficial and extremely important cooperation with many non-Muslim countries, especially China and India, under question for Israel. The development of bilateral relations with Beijing and New Delhi is one of the central tasks of Israeli foreign policy in the Asian region. Both states are important trade and economic partners of Tel Aviv while in the context of Indian-Israeli relations, the countries also closely cooperate in the political and military-technical spheres (Mikaelian & Morozov, 2023). At the same time, it is necessary to examine Israel’s contacts with China and India separately in the context of the changing system of international relations.

The Chinese Factor

Israel attaches great importance to the development of Sino-Israeli relations. In 2013, during his visit to China, Israel’s Prime Minister B. Netanyahu said: “This is (in China) the future and I have come here to open up the Chinese market for Israel.”³⁷ Following this meeting, the business activities of the Chinese construction companies in Israel intensified, and these companies won several huge tenders for

³⁴ Abi-Habib M. U.S., Middle East Allies Explore Arab Military Coalition // The Wall Street Journal. February 15, 2017. URL: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-middle-east-allies-explore-arab-military-coalition-1487154600> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

³⁵ What Is Known about the New BRICS Members? // TASS. August 24, 2023. (In Russian). URL: <https://tass.ru/info/18579323> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

³⁶ Reed S. Iran’s Call for Oil Embargo on Israel Roils Markets // The New York Times. October 18, 2023. URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/18/business/israel-oil-embargo-markets.html> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

³⁷ PM Netanyahu Talks About His Visit to China (Captioned) // YouTube. May 7, 2013. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4LnptcTBqzc> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

infrastructure construction, such as the modernization and construction of cargo ports in Haifa and Ashdod.³⁸ In 2017, during B. Netanyahu's another visit to China, Beijing and Tel Aviv declared the establishment of an "Innovative Comprehensive Partnership."³⁹

The Chinese leadership and business show great interest in Israel as a nation that has access to cutting edge technologies in the high-tech area which leads to large Chinese investments in Israeli IT (Mikaelian & Morozov, 2023, p. 21). According to Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics, as of 2022, China is one of the largest trade and economic partners of Tel Aviv (turnover is 17.62 billion USD), being the largest importer and the second largest export destination, falling only behind the United States.⁴⁰

The intensification of Sino-Israeli trade and economic cooperation attracted the attention of Washington, which is not surprising given the fact that the Trump administration put special emphasis on the rivalry with Beijing in the 2017 National Security Strategy. Thus, the development of mutually beneficial cooperation between one of the most important US allies in the Middle East and the nation that Americans perceive as its rival once again caused discontent in Washington. In the late 20th century, Israel came under heavy criticism from the United States over its military-technical cooperation (MTC) with China. Under American pressure, two high-cost agreements were canceled in 2000 and 2005, under which Israel was to supply China with Phalcon

AWACS radars and modernize Israeli-made unmanned aerial drones that the Chinese had bought in 1994 (Mikaelian & Morozov, 2021, p. 321). Following this, the MTC between Tel Aviv and Beijing was suspended, with both states not crossing the "red lines" set by Washington and focusing all their attention on economic cooperation. However, the growing rivalry between the United States and China, as well as the anti-Chinese foreign policy, promoted by Trump's administration, led the United States to once again criticize Sino-Israeli relations.

Criticism of Israel's leadership was voiced both in American mass media and in publications of the expert community, as well as by the US officials. For instance, in 2019, the US think-tank RAND Corporation published a report on Sino-Israeli relations that mentioned the US concerns about China's involvement in Israel's economy as well as Israel's support for the Belt and Road Initiative (Efron et al., 2019, p. 197). In January 2019, J. Bolton, then US National Security Advisor, expressed concerns during talks with B. Netanyahu about Israel's use of Chinese-made telecommunication equipment in sensitive areas.⁴¹ In March of the same year, Secretary of State M. Pompeo warned that the U.S. could curb all security ties with Israel because of Tel Aviv's close partnership with China.⁴² At the same time, the U.S. at the highest level, via President Trump, reached out to Israel to limit Chinese investments in the Israeli economy.⁴³

³⁸ Doron E. Regulation of Foreign Investments and Acquisitions: China as a Case Study // INSS Memorandum No. 194. 2019. P 64–65. URL: <https://www.inss.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Doron.pdf> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

³⁹ China — Israel Comprehensive Innovation Partnership // Consulate General of Israel in Chengdu. 2023. URL: <https://embassies.gov.il/chengdu/NewsAndEvents/Pages/compre.aspx> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

⁴⁰ Fadlon T. Trends in Trade between Israel and China Over the Past Decade (2013–2022) // The Institute for National Security Studies. June 18, 2023. URL: <https://www.inss.org.il/publication/israel-china-10-years/> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

⁴¹ U.S., Israel Air Concerns over China Telecom Companies: U.S. Official // Reuters. January 10, 2019. URL: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-israel-china/u-s-israel-air-concerns-over-china-telecom-companies-u-s-official-idUSKCN1P32JQ> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

⁴² Pompeo Warns US Could Curb Security Ties with Israel over China Relations // The Times of Israel. March 21, 2019. URL: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/pompeo-warns-us-could-curb-security-ties-with-israel-over-china-relations/> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

⁴³ Scoop: Israel Scrambles to Avoid Trump Blowback over Chinese Investments // AXIOS. August 5, 2019. URL: <https://www.axios.com/2019/08/05/israel-china->

It should be noted that the construction of infrastructure projects by Chinese companies, in particular the fact that the Chinese company Shanghai International Port Group won not only a tender for the construction of a new cargo port in Haifa, but also a 25-year contract to operate it, caused particular discontent in Washington. The issue of the Haifa port was addressed in two reports of Congressional Research Service published in 2019 and 2022. Both reports urged the Israeli government “to take into consideration the security implications of foreign investment in Israel.”⁴⁴

It should be noted that the US officials were not the only ones to express their discontent. For example, in January 2019, the Director of the Israel Security Agency (SHABAK/Shin Bet), N. Agraman, claimed that the business expansion of Chinese companies in Israel posed a threat to national security.⁴⁵ Moreover, the Bennet/Lapid government, reportedly under American pressure, twice signed statements at the UN Human Rights Council in 2021 and 2022, condemning China’s policy in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.⁴⁶ This caused a backlash in China as Israel’s Ambassador Irit Ben-Abba was summoned for a conversation with the head of Chinese Communist Party’s International Affairs Department, who urged Israel to not

allow American pressure to damage the mutually beneficial and long-term Sino-Israeli relations.⁴⁷

Israel responded to the US concerns and started to take measures aimed at avoiding any possible friction between Israel and Washington. In August 2019, the Israeli government discussed a project to establish a special body to monitor Chinese investments, based on the concept presented by Israel’s National Security Advisor M. Ben-Shabbat. However, the government failed to adopt the above-mentioned project because Israel’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs opposed the creation of this mechanism as it did not meet the demands of the United States. Similarly, Israel’s Ministry of Finance was against the project, claiming that hard regulations on Chinese investments would harm Israeli IT-companies and their cooperation with Chinese counterparts.⁴⁸ The success was achieved in October 2019, when the Israeli government formed a special panel to examine Chinese investments. The panel, led by the Ministry of Finance, also included members of the National Security Council and the Ministry of Defense, as well as observers from the Foreign Affairs and Economy Ministries and the National Economic Council.⁴⁹

Despite the U.S. being actively against the development of Sino-Israeli relations, Israel still perceives China as an important trade and

investments-trump-administration-security (accessed: 12.11.2023).

⁴⁴ Israel: Background and U.S. Relations in Brief // Congressional Research Service. February 3, 2022. URL: <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R44245/103> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

⁴⁵ Rosh ha-Shabak mazhir: hitrachavutan shel havarot siniyot ba-Aretz mesukanot le-vitahon ha-medina [The Head of the SHABAK Warns That the Expansion of the Activities of Chinese Companies Threatens the Security of Israel] // Maariv. January 9, 2019. (In Hebrew). URL: <https://www.maariv.co.il/news/israel/Article-679518> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

⁴⁶ Israel Signs Statement against China’s Treatment of Uighurs at UNHRC // The Jerusalem Post. June 15, 2022. URL: <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-709426> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

⁴⁷ Sin be-meser harif le-Israel: al teafsheru le-lahatz Amerikani ligrom li-fgiya be-yahasim itanu [China in A Sharp Message to Israel: Do Not Let American Pressure Harm Relations with Us] // Walla! August 17, 2022. (In Hebrew). URL: <https://news.walla.co.il/item/3525008> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

⁴⁸ Scoop: Israel Scrambles to Avoid Trump Blowback over Chinese Investments // AXIOS. August 5, 2019. URL: <https://www.axios.com/2019/08/05/israel-china-investments-trump-administration-security> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

⁴⁹ Under Pressure from US, Israel Forms Panel to Examine Foreign Investments // The Times of Israel. October 30, 2019. URL: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/under-pressure-from-us-israel-forms-panel-to-examine-foreign-investments/> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

economic partner and is aware that cooperation with Beijing fully meets Israeli's national interests.⁵⁰ Thus, it can be argued that there is a clash of interests between the United States and Israel regarding Tel Aviv's ties with Beijing.

Incidentally, the expert community of Israel urges the country's leadership to further pursue Israel's current pragmatic foreign policy strategy referred to as "walking between the raindrops." However, they stress the need to adapt the strategy to the new era of great power rivalry.⁵¹ The essence of the strategy is that Israel, on the one hand, will cooperate with the United States, taking into account America's concerns about Sino-Israeli relations, and will provide Washington with all the necessary details and information about new agreements with China, saying that if the U.S. wishes, Tel Aviv is ready to review contracts with the Chinese companies, while emphasizing that Israel is on America's side.⁵² On the other hand, Israel will continue its partnership with Beijing in the trade and economic fields, trying to achieve the greatest possible benefit for Israel, but in a way that does not compromise American-Israeli relations.

In the political sphere of Sino-Israeli relations, Israel has always viewed China as an important partner with whom it has to be engaged in dialogue on all issues, including foreign policy. However, Israel has never perceived China as a counterweight or replacement for the United States. This view

⁵⁰ Mitnick J. Why the U.S. Can't Get Israel to Break Up with China // *Foreign Policy*. June 16, 2020. URL: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/06/16/us-israel-china-deals/> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

⁵¹ Eran O., Eilam S., Orion A., Shavit E., Mil-Man A., Fadlon T. The International System: The Global Competition and Its Growing Influence on Israel // *The Institute for National Security Studies*. 2023. P. 10–11. URL: <https://www.inss.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/International-System.pdf> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

⁵² Israel Agrees to Update US about China Trade to Avoid Tension // *The Jerusalem Post*. January 3, 2022. URL: <https://www.jpost.com/international/article-691425> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

became more apparent after Beijing's initial reaction to the escalation of Israeli-Palestinian conflict in October 2023. G. Lavi, an expert on Sino-Israeli relations, says in her article that Beijing does not mention Hamas in its Foreign Ministry Spokesperson's remarks calling on both parties to cease fire. The article also notes that in the Chinese segment of the Internet and in China's social network *Weibo* comments against Israel or critical of Israel's attacks on Gaza have not been deleted for quite some time. Hence, the conclusion that fully reflects Tel Aviv's attitude towards Beijing — China is an important and huge trade and economic partner, but China is not a friend of Israel.⁵³

The Indian Factor

As for Indian-Israeli relations, one can easily describe them as strategic cooperation, with bilateral relations reaching this level when Prime Minister N. Modi came to power in India in 2014. Under his premiership the number of intergovernmental agreements between New Delhi and Tel-Aviv increased dramatically and the states intensified their MTC (Morozov & Mikaelian, 2018, pp. 128–129). According to SIPRI, India is the largest importer of Israeli-made armaments in the 2018–2022 period with 37% of Israel arms exports being delivered to New Delhi.⁵⁴ Moreover, some in Israel believe that the special military operation provides a unique opportunity for Israel to further deepen its MTC with India, which is positively affected

⁵³ Lavi G. Sin veva-milkhama be-Israel: be-shaat tzara mitgalim ha-haverim ha-amitiim // *Ha-makhon le-mehkarei bitakhon leumi* [China and the War in Israel: Real Friends Show up in Difficult Times // *The Institute for National Security Studies*]. October 12, 2022. (In Hebrew). URL: https://www.inss.org.il/he/social_media/בישראל-והמלחמה-סין-ההב-מתגלים-צרה-בשעת (accessed: 12.11.2023).

⁵⁴ Wezeman P. D., Gadon J., Wezeman S. T. Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2022 // *SIPRI Fact Sheet*. March 2023. P. 2. URL: https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2023-03/2303_at_fact_sheet_2022_v2.pdf (accessed: 12.11.2023).

by the whole new level of American-Indian bilateral relations.⁵⁵

Looking at Indian-Israeli relations amid the changing world order and growing great power competition, one can notice a convergence of the US and Israel's interests. Washington's great interest in developing relations with India can be noticed in American doctrinal documents, especially in the National Security Strategy of 2017, which welcomes India's emergence as a leading global power and a strong strategic partner of the U.S. in the security area.⁵⁶

The National Security Strategy of 2022 mentions India in the context of groupings such as QUAD (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue of Australia, India, Japan and the United States) as well as I2U2 (grouping of India, Israel, the UAE, and the U.S.).⁵⁷ The implementation of the latter became possible due to the "Abraham Accords," brokered under the Trump administration. It is worth noting that I2U2 and its proposed food corridor from India to Europe via the territories of the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Israel is seen as a response to China's Belt and Road Initiative. Incidentally, the above-mentioned food corridor's success relies heavily on infrastructure, in particular that of the Haifa port. But not the new one — the old port of Haifa, which is to be privatized by the Indian

conglomerate Adani Group in partnership with the Israeli company Gadot.⁵⁸

Another important aspect is cooperation in the security area. Since 2017, the Indian Air Force has been participating in the Blue Flag military aviation exercise held by the Israeli Air Force, in which the US Air Force regularly participates.⁵⁹ Moreover, Indian military experts note that the expansion of the variety of armaments supplied by the United States to India positively affects Indian-Israeli relations as it further facilitates the unification of platforms used by both the Indian Air Force and Israeli Air Forces (Browne, 2017, pp. 325–335).

India's stance on Gaza is also noteworthy. N. Modi was one of the first foreign leaders to condemn the violent acts carried out by Hamas on October 7 2023. As a result, Israel's ambassador to India, N. Gilon, thanked India's Prime Minister for his 100% support of Israel.⁶⁰ New Delhi also abstained from voting in the UN General Assembly on a resolution condemning Israel. At the same time, India's deputy representative to the UN said that her country calls for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of the two-state solution.⁶¹

India's stance on the escalation in Gaza Strip can be considered as Israel's success, not only because Modi's remarks were similar to

⁵⁵ Rusiya lo omedet be-hazmanot, vele-yadei Israel nafla "hizdamnut bitkhonit" be-Hodu [Russia Does Not Comply with Contracts and Israel Got a Unique Chance in the Field of Military-Technical Cooperation with India] // Haaretz. November 30, 2022. (In Hebrew). URL: <https://www.haaretz.co.il/blogs/anatbersteinreich/2022-11-30/ty-article/00000184-c754-d05a-a3b4-e774d5af0000> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

⁵⁶ National Security Strategy of the United States of America // The White House. December 2017. URL: <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

⁵⁷ National Security Strategy of the United States of America // The White House. October 2022. URL: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Biden-Harris-Administrations-National-Security-Strategy-10.2022.pdf> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

⁵⁸ Adani Ports to Boost Trade Lanes with Joint Haifa Port Acquisition // Reuters. June 15, 2022. URL: <https://www.reuters.com/markets/deals/adani-ports-boost-trade-lanes-with-joint-haifa-port-acquisition-2022-07-15/> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

⁵⁹ IDF's Largest-Ever Aerial Exercise Takes Off, with India on Board // The Times of Israel. November 5, 2017. URL: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-kicks-off-its-largest-ever-international-aerial-exercise/> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

⁶⁰ India Takes Strong pro-Israel Stance under Modi in a Departure from the Past // The Guardian. October 31, 2023. URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/oct/31/india-pro-israel-narendra-modi-bjp-government> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

⁶¹ UN General Assembly Adopts Gaza Resolution Calling for Immediate and Sustained 'Humanitarian Truce' // UN News. October 26, 2023. URL: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/10/1142847> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

those of Western leaders; it showed the evolution that Indian stance on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has undergone from the blunt pro-Palestinian stance of the Cold War era to the current balanced one, which is considered by the Israeli mass media as Israel's great diplomatic success.⁶²

Although the implementation of certain joint projects with India, such as the food corridor within I2U2, seems to be unlikely in the short and medium-term due to the escalation in Gaza, the trend of deepening Indo-Israeli strategic cooperation remains and runs parallel to America's diplomatic efforts to forge all new ties with India amid growing rivalry with China in Asia. If the development of Sino-Israeli relations contradicts the US interests, the bilateral relations between New Delhi and Tel Aviv amid the breakdown of the unipolar world order are fully in line with Washington's strategic interests.

Conclusion

In connection with the reemergence of global polarization due to the Russo-American great power rivalry, Israel seemed to benefit the most from the new state of world affairs, since it had a wide choice of possibilities to promote its bilateral relations with China and India in all spheres. However, the sustainability of such cooperation was always tied to something. Initially, it was tied to Israel's struggle against the Arab world. But later, following the changes that occurred in the late 20th century, the role of the Arab-Israeli conflict diminished and lost its international dimension, with Sino-Israeli and Indian-Israeli relations being tied solely to the Palestinian issue, which remained unresolved for many decades as a result of Israel's unwillingness to recognize the legitimate

aspirations of Palestinians to live in their independent state.

The problem of the Palestine's status has been and still remains the major problem when Israel forges bilateral relations with other states. It may be recalled that after the October War of 1973, the majority of the world, including such states as China and India, either severed diplomatic ties or downgraded the level of mutual trust with Israel. A similar situation is currently unfolding because of the sharp escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the Gaza Strip. Excessive violence demonstrated by the military forces of the occupying power against civilians and civilian infrastructure has basically shattered the so-called "Abraham Accords," which according to its authors, was supposed to ensure the normalization of Israel's ties with some Arab countries.

The conflict in Ukraine and the new war that suddenly broke out in the area of Israeli-Palestinian have distinctively exposed the polarization of the world. Notably, the historically pro-Israeli West, spearheaded by the United States, is in the minority. In this new geopolitical reality Israel has demonstrated a restrained and balanced stance towards both parties of the Ukrainian crisis. The events in Gaza forced the Israeli leadership to make a decision, and as in previous years during Israel's critical wars against its Arab neighbors, the priority was given to its Western partners and the U.S., who not only condemned Hamas's terrorist attacks, but also began justifying disproportionate and inhumane actions of the IDF verging on unconcealed genocide of the Palestinians.

At the same time, the elimination of Hamas is fraught with peril for Israel. It has long been known that the Islamic Resistance Movement was founded in the 1980s with Israeli intelligence's blessing to counter the PLO and its umbrella organization Fatah that was under influence of the secular ideology. Hamas's survivability does not stem from its power — the Israel's military could have put an end to the

⁶² Aharei asorim shel tmiha be-falestinim: Hodu hityatzva le-tzad Israel mul Hamas [After Decades of Supporting the Palestinians: India Supported Israel against Hamas] // *Israel Hayom*. October 14, 2022. (In Hebrew). URL: <https://www.israelhayom.co.il/news/geopolitics/article/14709870> (accessed: 12.11.2023).

armed groups in Gaza already during the full-scale invasions in Gaza in 2002, 2012 and 2014. However, such a scenario inevitably leads to a vacuum in the Palestinian political field being filled by successors of Y. Arafat, namely the PLO and Fatah, which are rightful and commonly recognized by the world, including Israel, as a party to Israeli-Palestinian negotiations on the basis of international law and previous agreements.

The PLO and Fatah advocate for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of the two-state solution — Palestine and Israel living side by side in peace and security. However, this vision contradicts the concept of “Eretz Israel Shlema” (“Greater Israel”), which

forms the basis for policy priorities of right-wing Israeli governments, which have been in power for more than 20 years. This very concept dismisses the possibility of establishing a Palestinian state on the territories of “Eretz Israel.”

Therefore, if Hamas is dismantled, Israel will face an unpleasant dilemma: either recognizes the right of existence of the Palestinian state, which will inevitably lead to the resignation of the Israel’s government and a political crisis; or again face regional isolation coupled with global isolation from the countries of global majority, in other words, turn into rogue state.

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