



# Topic: West Asia's significance for The West: Analysing the Foreign policy implications of USA and Israel

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• **Aim:** - This Research aims to provide an in-depth analysis of Foreign policy implications of USA and Israel in the context of West Asia. For the West, especially the United States and Israel, West Asia is strategically and geopolitically crucial. Large energy resources, geopolitical hotspots, historical conflicts, and cultural variety define the region. Israel's foreign policy relies heavily on its close alliance with the United States. Through this cooperation, Israel gains access to advanced technologies, political support, and military assistance. In contrast, Israel is an important ally of the United States in West Asia.

• **Key Objectives:** -

1. Historical Context – Analyse historical context of USA and Israel relationship
2. Geopolitical factors – Creation of Ben Gurion canal, USA's involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian dispute
3. Global and regional influences – Importance of red sea, interventionist approach, AIPAC
4. Profound resources and Oil reserves

• **Methodology:** - To undertake exploratory research designs, the research is gathered from secondary data sources on numerous government websites. Newspapers, blogs, legal reports, books, and the internet have all been suppressed with the assistance of these data sources. This methodology makes use of already-existing data sources to create a thorough knowledge of the importance of West Asia for the United States and

Israel. It places a strong emphasis on ethical issues, thorough analysis, and combining data from many secondary data sources.

• **Literature Review:** -

1. The foreign policies of major players, especially the United States and Israel, have had a considerable impact on the geopolitical environment of West Asia. It is highlighted in the literature that energy security concerns are the main reason for the US's strategic interest in West Asia. According to Yergin (2006) (*The Price: Epic Quest for Oil, Money, Power*), West Asia, with its large oil reserves, plays a vital role in global energy markets. The preservation of U.S. access to these resources is critical to the country's ability to continue growing economically and exerting influence globally.

2. The literature places a great deal of emphasis on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and how it affects regional dynamics. Smith (2016) (*Palestine and Arab- Israeli Conflict: History with Documents*) draws attention to the difficulties the United States has had in mediating the dispute, considering its past backing of Israel and current attempts to strike a balance in its relations with Arab governments. The literature emphasises how difficult it is to meet the hopes of both Israelis and Palestinians, and how important it is for U.S. foreign policy to maintain the two-state solution.

3. The importance of the energy resources in West Asia, especially oil, has been a major influence on US foreign policy there. "The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money, and Power" by Daniel Yergin provides a historical overview of how oil has shaped international geopolitics. The book "Power, Faith, and Fantasy: America in the Middle East, 1776 to the Present" by Michael B. Oren examines how foreign policy goals and economic interests are interwoven. The United States of America's dependence on oil deposits in West Asia has affected regional stability and alliances in addition to its diplomatic dealings. Israel is a vital ally in defending these interests, which is further enhanced by its strategic placement in the area.

4. The geopolitics of the area have taken on a new significance due to worries about Iran's nuclear programme. The book "The Iran Wars: Spy Games, Bank Battles, and the Secret Deals That Reshaped the Middle East" by Jay Solomon examines the complex network of clandestine and diplomatic activities pertaining to Iran's nuclear development. "Going to Tehran: Why the United States Must Come to Terms with the Islamic Republic of Iran" by Flynt and Hillary Mann Leverett offers an alternative viewpoint that challenges popular narratives. Because of their common worries regarding Iran's nuclear programme and regional influence, the United States and Israel have joined forces and developed cooperative plans. The changing dynamics with Iran highlight even more how intertwined Western foreign policy priorities and West Asian geopolitics are.

5. "Doomed to Succeed: The U.S.-Israel Relationship from Truman to Obama" by Dennis Ross offers a thorough analysis of diplomatic attempts made by the United States and

Israel. The clandestine aspects of US participation in the region are examined in Hugh Wilford's book "America's Great Game: The CIA's Secret Arabists and the Shaping of the Modern Middle East". Negotiations, peace procedures, and diplomatic endeavours highlight how complex West Asian foreign policy is. The Arab Spring and changing alliances are two examples of the regional factors that influence US and Israeli tactics and agendas.

• **Research questions:-**

1. How has the historical relationship between the USA and Israel influenced the foreign policy dynamics in West Asia, and what are the current implications?
2. How do the strategic alliances and military partnerships between the USA and Israel impact the balance of power in West Asia?
3. How is proposition of Ben Gurion Canal related to Gaza?
4. How far does the US foreign policy in West Asia get influenced by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?
5. What are the implications of the USA's stance on Iran for its relationship with Israel and the broader West Asian region?

**Chapter 1:- The Historical Nexus: A Study of U.S.-Israeli Relations and Their Effect on the Dynamics of West Asian Foreign Policy**

- The roots of the U.S.-Israel relationship predate 1948. The United States believed that Israel's strategic importance justified the unique relationship during the Cold War. Following World War II, the US backed the establishment of a Jewish state. In 1962, President John F. Kennedy emphasised it more, referring to it as a "special relationship" based on a common commitment to Israel's right to exist in peace. However, the relationship didn't fully take off until after the 1967 war. Israel defeated a coalition of Arab governments in that war, occupying large areas of newly acquired territory, including Gaza and the West Bank, while suffering relatively few deaths and minimal assistance from other forces. The US had been worried about Soviet sway in the area and that, had the fighting intensified more, it might have turned into a Cold War proxy war. However, Israel quickly put a stop to it and established itself as a desirable ally at a time when the US was too busy fighting in Vietnam to engage in military action in the Middle East.

The United States of America supplied the Israelis with armaments and granted them access to below-market bank loans to finance their development initiatives. The US and Israel started working together on weapon development and manufacture in the 1980s and 1990s. Additionally, the US signed the first of three 10-year memorandums agreeing

to contribute billions in military aid annually in 1999, as former President Bill Clinton set out to nurture sustainable peace between Israel and its Arab neighbours. That funding aided Israel's improvements in signal intelligence and surveillance technology following the 9/11 attacks. Israel installed the Iron Dome short- range air missile defence system in 2011; it employs radar technology to neutralise rockets fired by Hamas and other extremist organisations. The system is partially funded by the US and has components built in the US. Israel is the greatest beneficiary of US military aid in history, having received \$158 billion since its creation in 1948.

Military aid to Israel increased dramatically after its victory against neighbouring Arab armies in 1967 and its subsequent annexation of Gaza, East Jerusalem, and the West Bank. The US contributed to the development of Iron Dome, which went into action in 2011. The US is in charge of delivering parts for the system, including more than \$1.5 billion for missile defence for Israel in 2022. US military aid to Israel topped \$3.8 billion in 2023 as part of a record

\$38 billion deal struck over ten years under former US President Barack Obama in 2016. The US and Israel have close historical and economic relations. With yearly bilateral trade of around \$50 billion in products and services, the US is Israel's largest commercial partner and has backed the creation of a Jewish state since World War II. In addition, US officials have long argued that the US's alliance with Israel is strategically important because it stabilises West Asia and prevents instability that could jeopardise the US's continued reliance on the region's oil supply.

Israel was first seen as a counterbalance to Soviet power, but this viewpoint persisted even after the end of the Cold War. And it spread even further after 9/11, when it was revealed that several of the attackers were Saudi Arabian nationals, another important friend of the US in the area. The US began to place more emphasis on Israel because it believed that the two countries shared more ideals and interests, doubting its ability to continue relying on the Saudis. In 2013, Vice President Biden stated, "It's not only a long-standing moral commitment; it's a strategic commitment. "An independent Israel, secure in its own borders, recognized by the world is in the practical strategic interest of the United States of America. I used to say ... if there were no Israel, we'd have to invent one." The US has made Israel a central tenet of its

declared objective to establish an "integrated, prosperous, and secure West Asia" as it shifts its attention to other regions of the globe, such as China and Russia.

Agreements to restore relations between Israel and a number of its neighbours with a majority of Muslims, including the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Morocco, were made possible by the Trump administration. There is conjecture that the goal of Hamas's strike was to derail negotiations, mediated by the Biden administration, to restore relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia, its principal adversary in the area, in order for them to unify against Iran, a shared enemy that provides financial assistance to Hamas.



Israel's ability to serve as a platform for US peacekeeping efforts in the region, however, would be jeopardised by the Gaza War.

American public support for Israel has historically been high, though it's starting to shift. A well-funded pro-Israel lobby (AIPAC) in Washington has helped to make supporting Israel historically quite popular politically in the US. But in recent years, there has been a noticeable decline in public support.

Israeli military capabilities have increased thanks to US assistance, and human rights organisations have uncovered instances when these weapons were used to carry out illegal operations and war crimes in Gaza prior to the start of the conflict. Human Rights Watch, for example, recorded three bombings in Gaza during a violent outbreak in 2021 that killed 62 Palestinian civilians in areas with "no evident military targets in the vicinity." Only military purposes are permissible under international law; civilians or civilian "objects" are not.

Two of those attacks were carried out with American weapons. Even though Israel today has its own armaments and weapons sector, US military assistance clearly still plays a large role. In fact, we frequently witness the US going above and beyond its significant military assistance contribution and increasing the provision of services during confrontations. The demonstration of US backing could deter Iran and Hezbollah, the Islamist militant organisation based in Lebanon, from becoming involved in the crisis. However, as surrounding nations see the devastation and deaths caused by Israeli forces in Gaza, it may also incite anti-US sentiment in the region

## **Chapter 2:- The US-Israeli Military Partnerships and Strategic Alliance Dynamics: Changing the West Asian Power Balance**

- For ages, rivalry and bloodshed have characterised West Asia. The area benefits from a distinctive geopolitical and geostrategic location at the meeting point of Asia, Africa, and Europe. Furthermore, the world's trade now primarily goes via the Persian and Red Seas, which are important maritime trading routes. Because of the region's abundance of hydrocarbon resources, which make it more volatile and prone to conflict, it is difficult to comprehend and analyse the dominant strategies there, where external actors vie for regional hegemony in addition to regional or non-state actors, political and religious factors, and other factors that influence the political landscape of the region. It is crucial to consider Israel's potential as a military force After World War II, the Persian Gulf region has always been ranked as one of the top priorities in US foreign strategy. Maintaining an uninterrupted flow of oil at a fair price and in sufficient quantities to suit US needs and those of its allies is the major objective of US policy in the Gulf.

Additionally, US policy aims to prevent and counter any hostile foreign or regional force from taking the lead and influencing affairs in the area. The US has developed a number of security partnerships, alliances, and arms transfer agreements with the Gulf States in

order to accomplish these objectives.

Washington has equipped and trained the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) governments with advanced weaponry and political interests defence against Iran and Iraq in the aftermath of the Gulf War. 2. The Gulf is becoming a vitally important part of the globe because of its enormous natural gas and oil deposits. Approximately 60% of the world's proven petroleum reserves are believed to be found in the Gulf region. The importance of this oil is further increased by the region's strategic location, which is crucial to the global economy. A significant waterway for shipping between the East and the West is the Gulf. The US's Gulf security strategy during the Cold War was primarily focused on restricting and opposing the Soviet Union's, extreme nationalists', and left-wing movements' influence in the area. These were seen as the primary dangers to the security of the area and, more importantly, to US interests.

The USA and Israel's military cooperation and strategic alliances have a major influence on the balance of power in West Asia, bolstering the positions of both countries and their allies. The nonpartisan and sacred nature of the connection between the United States and Israel is emphasised in the July 2022 Jerusalem U.S.-Israel Strategic Partnership Joint Declaration, which highlights the USA's strong commitment to Israel's security. The statement underscores the United States of America's steadfast dedication to safeguarding Israel's superior military advantage and tackling mutual security issues, such as the pledge to obstruct Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons. This alliance also includes working together on cutting edge defence technologies and putting up a united front against attempts to boycott or delegitimize Israel. The statement upholds the significance of Israel's normalisation agreements under the Abraham Accords with a number of Arab states, which are thought to be essential to the security, prosperity, and peace of the region.

The USA plays a key role in the regional conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran, which further complicates the geopolitical dynamics in West Asia. The balance of power in the region is altered by Israel's normalisation of relations with other nations, including Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates. Even while the main purpose of these accords is economic, they also have important strategic ramifications, such as the possible reduction of China's influence in the area and the sharing of resources among US allies for shared objectives. This realignment strengthens the view of the USA's capacity to establish strategic alliances and may allow the US to shift its attention and resources towards greatpower competition, notably with China and Russia.

Furthermore, the cooperation between Saudi Arabia, Israel, and the United States, colloquially known as a "coalition of circumstance," is based on mutual assessments of Iran's threat and involves covert intelligence exchanges. The goal of this trilateral relationship is to keep the United States as the leading military force in the region. It also highlights the larger geopolitical struggle, which may result in more competition with China and Russia, both of which have substantial economic and military ties to Iran. In

conclusion, the United States and Israel, along with other regional allies, have formed strategic alliances and military collaborations that not only uphold their security and strategic objectives but also alter the balance of power in West Asia. These relationships negotiate the intricate interaction of great-power and regional dynamics while counterbalancing antagonistic tendencies, particularly those of Iran

### **Chapter 3:- How is proposition of Ben Gurion Canal related to Gaza?**

- The project, named for Israel's founding father, David Ben-Gurion, was established in the late 1960s with the goal of establishing a substitute route to the main maritime route that connects Europe and Asia, the Suez Canal. The Ben Gurion Canal Project's historical background, its planned relevance, and the complex geopolitics surrounding the Suez Canal must all be understood in light of Israel's rejection of pleas for a ceasefire and the country's ongoing military campaign in Gaza.

3.1 - Ben Gurion – who is he? Known as the founding father of Israel, David Ben-Gurion (1886–1973) was a well-known Zionist leader from Poland. He was characterised as a merciless individual who enabled the flow of Jewish immigration into Palestine from all over the world and instructed Zionist militias to witness the enormous exodus of Palestinians from their territories. 1948 saw him serve as Israel's first prime minister.

3.2 - What is the project of the Ben Gurion Canal? Israel proposed the Ben Gurion Canal project in the 1960s as a way to bridge the Gulf of Aqaba's southern end and connect the Red Sea to the Mediterranean Sea. The itinerary called for travelling via the port city of Eilat and the Jordanian border, then travelling via the Arabah Valley for almost 100 kilometres between the Jordanian Highlands and the Negev (Naqab) Mountains. Before reaching the Dead Sea basin, the route turned west and passed through a valley in the Negev Mountain (Naqab) Range. After then, it would turn back north to avoid the Gaza Strip and join the Mediterranean Sea. However, a connection between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea already exists through the Suez Canal - an artificial sea-level waterway in Egypt that offers vessels a direct route between the North Atlantic and the northern Indian oceans, reducing journey distance and time. The Suez Canal provides the shortest sea route between Asia and Europe and currently handles roughly 12 percent of the world's trade.

3.3 - Why was the proposal proposed by Israel? The freedom of passage across the Suez Canal was previously guaranteed to all ships throughout times of war and peace by the Constantinople International Convention, which was signed in 1888 by the major European nations of the day. However, with the founding of Israel in 1948 and the horrific expulsion of Palestinians, widely known as the Nakba, Egypt blocked off access to the Suez Canal on multiple occasions when then-Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalised the canal in 1956. From 1948 to 1950, Egypt barred Israeli ships from using the canal, which hampered their capacity to trade with East Africa and Asia and to obtain



oil from the Gulf. Following the Tripartite Aggression against Egypt in 1956, which featured an alliance between Israel, the UK, and France seeking to regain control of the Suez Canal and overthrow Nasser, all international ships was prohibited from entering the Suez Canal. During the fighting, the canal was effectively closed, and the situation worsened, leading to a crisis with global and economic repercussions.

When the Six-Day War, also known as the Arab-Israeli War, broke out in 1967 between Israel and a coalition of Arab states (namely Egypt, Syria, and Jordan), the Suez Canal was also blocked for an astounding eight years. Israel's ability to trade with East Africa and Asia was severely hindered when Arab powers closed all land trade routes, mostly for the purpose of importing oil from the Persian Gulf. Additionally, the canal's closure caused a huge and unanticipated shock to international trade and economy. The possibility of Egypt using the Suez Canal and the Straits of Tiran as leverage against Israel or its supporters would be eliminated by the establishment of an alternative to the Suez Canal, particularly one that is overseen by Israel, a crucial ally of the West.

3.4 – Economic gains - Egypt's economy has advanced significantly thanks in large part to the Suez Canal. Tolls and transit fees received by ships passing through the canal provide income for it. About 20,649 vessels passed through the Suez Canal in 2021, a 10% increase from 2020. The transit fees generated

\$8 billion in income annually in 2022. With an annual revenue of \$9.4 billion for the fiscal year that concluded on June 30, 2023, the Suez Canal broke previous records. The canal is the focal point of Egypt's economy, drawing foreign capital and fostering the growth of industries and services, but its major utility is still its ability to promote trade between nations, creating an effective worldwide trade route. If built, the Ben Gurion Canal would be a serious financial threat to Egypt and compete with the Suez Canal. If construction proceeds, it will surpass the existing 193.3 km Suez Canal by about one-third, and the person in charge of it would wield immense power over the world's supply channels for grain, commerce, and oil.

3.5 - Why Gaza is important? A proposal had previously been made by the US to help build the canal by using about 520 nuclear bombs on the Negev Desert (Naqab). There have been reports of plans to physically cut corners and save money by rerouting the canal right through the centre of the Palestinian enclave, now that Gaza has been destroyed. But there would still be a barrier because of the Palestinians. Israel has forced Palestinians to relocate southward since beginning its offensive on the besieged territory by bombing northern Gaza nonstop, followed a few weeks later by a ground invasion. According to data from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), at least 400,000 Palestinians have been forced to relocate from the north to the south. 800,000 Palestinians still lived in what was referred to as the "north," which was the region north of Wadi Gaza. At least 11,470 people have died in Gaza as a result of Israel's indiscriminate bombing assault, which has largely targeted the north and mostly killed



civilians, including women and children. Due to Israel's bombing on Al-Shifa, the main hospital in Gaza and a hub for gathering information on fatalities and injured, the death toll has not been updated in days. Though it had demanded the "voluntary migration" of Palestinians from Gaza amid claims that it was "ethnically cleansing" the territory, Israel has denied any plans to annex the Strip.

Although the concept of the Ben Gurion Canal Project has long existed, it was revived in the Abraham Accords between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, Morocco, Sudan, and Bahrain. Israel announced on April 2, 2021, that they would begin work on this project in June 2021.

Naturally, this has not been executed well, and one of the primary causes may be the Gaza Strip's presence. This project crosses the Arabah Valley, which is situated between the Negev Mountains and the Jordanian highlands, and extends from the Gulf of Aqaba near the Israeli-Jordanian border. After that, this route heads north and west, skirting the Gaza Strip before entering the Mediterranean Sea. Several reports claim that Gaza will be the Ben Gurion project's final port. Naturally, a lot of people make assumptions regarding the relationship between this project's development and the IDF's attack on Gaza. The development of this project will save more money and shorten the trip if Gaza is levelled and all Palestinians have been allotted. The refusal of numerous Arab countries is the obstacle preventing this idea from moving forward. To begin this endeavour, the thought of removing the Palestinians from the Gaza Strip—one of the most populous regions—violates all known humanitarian regulations. Because of the numerous flaws in the current Suez Canal, the United States and a number of European nations backed Israel's invasion on Gaza.

A blockade involving the container ship Ever Given occurred in March 2021. Strong wind gusts trapped this container, obstructing and slowing down trade. Although the blockade was short-lived, it managed to delay 360 ships, resulting in losses for numerous parties of over \$9.6 billion. Due to this catastrophe, the US and other powerful countries constructed a substitute for the Suez Canal, allowing trade to continue unhindered between the two continents. It is evident that Western nations back Israel's assaults on Gaza in order to forward The Ben Gurion Project because they wish to lessen their reliance on Egypt, which controls the Suez Canal.

3.6 - BRICS and the China Silk Road – Egypt and Russia have close working ties, with Egypt having complete control over the Suez Canal. Russia received \$590 billion in revenue from Egyptian exports, whereas 4.1 billion dollars were brought in by imports. Egypt plans to officially join BRICS in early 2024, as economic cooperation between the countries continues to expand.

Naturally, this concerns western nations due to the possibility of dedollarization and the possibility of a World Bank rival. Western nations worry that the BRICS will dominate

global trade. Egypt enjoys close ties with China in addition to Russia. Egypt and China inked a "Strategic Partnership Agreement" in 2014, which is thought to enhance their military, trade, and economic ties. This partnership is still going strong, with significant Chinese investment flowing into Egypt and possibly bolstering support for the China Silk Road expansion. Naturally, this is concerning the United States and the European Union more and more. Concerned that the increasingly robust ties between Egypt, Russia, and China could destabilise Western trade and economic



circumstances, they will be forced to sustain Israel's control of the Gaza Strip in order to facilitate the realisation of the Ben Gurion Canal Project's full potential

