

# Strategic Diplomacy in the West: A Comparative Examination of India's 'Look West' Policy through Bilateral and Multilateral Channels, with Emphasis on West Asian Quad

---

## Table of contents

<b>1. Abstract.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. Introduction.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3. India -West Asia Relations.....</b>	<b>2</b>
3.1 Bilateral Engagement - Brief Historical Background.....	3
3.1.1 India-Saudi Arabia Relations.....	3
3.1.2 India-Iran Relations.....	4
3.1.3 India-UAE Relations.....	5
<b>4. Post-Cold War Changes.....</b>	<b>5</b>
4.1 Foreign Policy Readjustment.....	5
<b>5. 'Look West' Policy.....</b>	<b>6</b>
5.1 'Link and Act West' Policy.....	7
5.2 Economic Relations, Trade and Diaspora.....	9
<b>6. I2U2 International Forum For Economic Cooperation.....</b>	<b>10</b>
6.1 Current Projects Under I2U2.....	10
6.2 Future Prospects for I2U2.....	11
<b>7. India-Middle East Europe-Economic Corridor (IMEC).....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>8. Middle East Crisis.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>9. Recommendations.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>10. Conclusion.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>11. References.....</b>	<b>14</b>

## **1. Abstract**

This paper aims to cover India's relationship with West Asian Countries, since the Cold War era. There has been a remarkable shift in India's Foreign policy, i.e. a shift from nonalignment to multi-alignment. With this shift, West Asia was given a prominent place in India's foreign policy through an "Extended neighbourhood" framework. The main focus of this paper is to examine India's 'Look West' policy, analyze its bilateral engagement with its strategic partners in West Asia, and discuss prospects of the multilateral 'I2U2', referred to as 'West Asian Quad'. In recent years, when India has been more willing to look beyond dogma and enter the real world of convergence in West Asia, the recent Israel-Hamas conflict which has had a spillover effect on the region, created an obstacle in this approach. This paper aims to analyze all these issues and offer a possible way forward.

**Keywords:** West Asian Quad, Bilateral engagement, Strategic partnership, Diaspora, I2U2.

## **2. Introduction**

India has historic and Civilisational ties with West Asia as there are traces of a trade link between the Indus Valley Civilization and the Mesopotamia civilization. During the Cold War period, India's foreign policy was guided by geopolitical realities internationally and in the West Asia region. Most Countries in West Asia chose to be part of the American-led block during the Cold War, but India adopted a unique approach by not aligning with any of the blocks. The Non-aligned movement gave newly independent countries a new choice but it became a point of difference between India and West Asia. It was only after the end of the Cold War, that bilateral ties with West Asian neighbours improved. Later, India made some necessary readjustments in its foreign policy, and in 2005, India adopted the 'Look West' policy to increase its engagement in the region. The 'Look West' policy has been converted to the 'Link and Act West' policy. With this new version of the 'Look West' policy, India has tried to strategically engage with most nations in West Asia and diversified its area of cooperation by collaborating on issues such as counter-terrorism and piracy. The I2U2 grouping, which is very unique in nature and connectivity projects like IMEC, gives India a new opportunity to increase its bilateral and multilateral engagement in the region.

## **3. India -West Asia Relations**

India and West Asia Relations can be categorized into 3 E's namely Energy, Economy, and Expatriates. The majority of India's energy requirements are met through Arab nations, and a large part of its foreign

direct investment comes from Countries like Saudi Arabia and the UAE. A large section of Indian people work in Gulf countries and constitute one of the largest Indian diaspora. This vibrant expansion of the Indian community has played a crucial role in defining India's economic, social, and political relations with the Gulf countries. India receives a large amount of remittances from West Asia which increases the forex reserves. The fourth pillar that has emerged recently, in West Asia Relations is Security and Defense Cooperation. India is trying to increase its engagement in the region by collaborating with other countries on counter-terrorism. These relations have evolved gradually, especially with policies like 'Look West'.



[Source](#)

### 3.1 Bilateral Engagement - Brief Historical Background

#### 3.1.1 India-Saudi Arabia Relations

After Independence, relations between the two countries started with official visits from both sides. In 1955, King Saud made a state-level visit to India and later In 1956, Nehru visited Saudi Arabia. Both countries had positive relations until Saudi Arabia decided to abandon its support for Non-Alignment and shifted towards the Cold War Binary, becoming an ally of the USA and Pakistan. Saudi-Pakistan friendship became a point of contention between India-Saudi relations and Saudi Arabia's strong support to Pakistan in the 1965 and 1971 Indo-Pakistan wars further created distance between the two countries. For a long time, Pakistan has played a third-factor role between India and

Saudi Arabia, which should not be the case in the bilateral relations between the two countries. In Jan 2006, King Abdullah visited India and this visit was seen as the beginning of a “New Era” in the bilateral relationship with the signing of the historic Delhi Declaration. This declaration was instrumental in the development of increased Understanding and cooperation between the two countries and the creation of a mutually beneficial partnership. The Delhi Declaration was followed by the Riyadh Declaration which started a ‘new era of strategic partnership’. Joint declaration to combat terrorism and other transnational crimes like money laundering, drugs, and arms smuggling, epitomized a new dawn in India-Saudi ties. Cooperation on areas of mutual interest showcases both countries took important steps to look beyond the Saudi-Pakistan spectrum and focus on real issues.

### **3.1.2 India-Iran Relations**

For much of the Cold War, both countries had diverging views, India’s policy of non-alignment and Iran’s policy of alignment with the West determined the Indo-Iranian relations in the Cold War period to a great extent. It was sort of an up-and-down relationship. For example, Iran came out strongly and openly on India’s side and condemned China during the 1962 Indo-China war but the same response was not seen during the 1965 Indo-Pakistan War. One possible argument could be that it was to prevent a China-Pakistan alliance because it could have posed serious security threats to Iran. Pakistan became a point of misunderstanding in Indo-Iran relations and the reason behind strong Iran-Pakistan ties was common political and strategic interests. Post the Cold War, Indo-Iran relations improved. Common concerns about the Taliban in Afghanistan and extremist groups in Pakistan pulled the countries together. Both countries signed the Tehran declaration, during Prime Minister Vajpayee’s visit in 2001. This declaration was crucial in establishing a strategic partnership. This strategic cooperation between the two was further boosted during Mohammad Khatmi’s visit in Jan 2003 culminating in the signing of the “New Delhi Declaration”.<sup>1</sup> Gradually Iran emerged as an important oil and energy security partner for India, but India had to significantly reduce its Crude oil imports from Iran because of US sanctions. This has hampered the potential of India-Iran Bilateral ties.

---

<sup>1</sup> [MPIDS](#)

### **3.1.3 India-UAE Relations**

During the Cold War, India and UAE had minimal relations, primarily for two reasons first, passive alignment with Egypt and silent support for the Soviet Union, which automatically set it at odds with the United States' Gulf security partners. Second, UAE had strong strategic and military partnerships with Pakistan, thus UAE sided with Pakistan on the Kashmir Issue. Pakistan was also the first country to officially recognize the newly independent UAE in 1972. Post-Cold War changes created an environment more conducive to the development of India-UAE relations. By the mid-2000s, India-UAE economic relations flowered, and eventually, both countries signed multiple trade agreements. Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) in 2022 and Bilateral Investment Treaty in 2024 make UAE, the only country that has both a trade and an investment agreement with India.<sup>2</sup> As part of the CEPA, the existing UAE-India Bilateral Investment agreement signed in December 2013 would be replaced with a new council called the UAE-India Technical Council on Investment and Trade Promotion. The main objectives of the Council are to enhance bilateral trade, facilitate investment, and remove trade barriers between the two countries. Economic and Commercial interests have been the traditional hallmark of the long-standing cooperation between India and UAE; however, there is now an emphasis on growing military-security and defense cooperation. Both sides are putting efforts in this area of cooperation by scaling up engagements in the defense sector, including joint military exercises and counter-terrorism.

## **4. Post-Cold War Changes**

### **4.1 Foreign Policy Readjustment**

In the early 1990s, when the world was going through structural changes. India decided to reorient its Middle East policy. One of the main factors for that was the disintegration of the USSR. The domestic situation in India was equally challenging which pushed India to readjust its foreign policy. Apart from that, both the Gulf War and the Oslo peace revealed the divisions that existed within the Arab World and this provided India the opportunity to increase its engagement in the region without any fear of diplomatic repercussions. India adopted a more balanced approach, under the leadership of former

---

<sup>2</sup> [PIB](#)

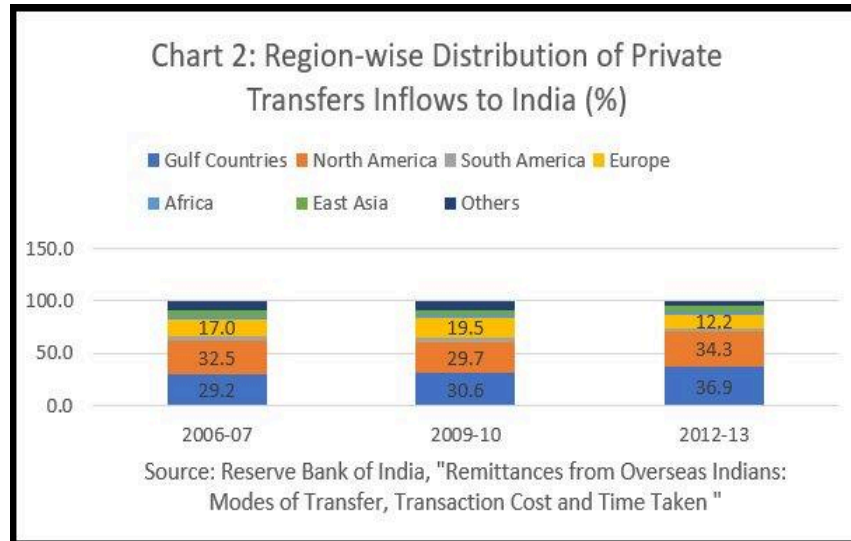
Prime Minister Narsimha Rao, in 1991. During this phase, India established diplomatic ties with Israel as it was considered a necessary step by Rao to improve ties with the US, a close Israeli ally, in the post-Cold War era. Regional negotiations and peace initiatives like the Madrid Conference of Oct 1991, created a new opportunity for India to develop strategic relations with Israel while maintaining good relations with other Arab nations. Normalization of ties with Israel helped India to look beyond dogma. Eventually, India emerged as a major export and investment destination for most Arab nations. West Asia has always been of strategic importance to India. Thus, with the 'Look West' Policy India tried to develop economic relations with West Asia. Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's approach toward the Middle East was more or less based on trade, investment, energy security, etc. Later, building on the foundation laid by previous governments and their initiatives. Prime Minister Modi and his government changed the 'Look West' Policy into the 'Link and Act West' Policy. Through this policy, they tried to widen the area of Cooperation in the West Asian region. In recent years, a more active diplomatic engagement has been pursued from New Delhi towards the broader Middle East than the previous Indian government.

## 5. 'Look West' Policy

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, chairing a meeting of the Trade and Economic Relations Committee said "The Gulf Region, like South East Asia and South Asia, is part of our natural economic hinterland. We must pursue closer economic relations with all our neighbors in our Wider Asian neighborhood. India has successfully pursued a 'Look East' Policy to come closer to our Western neighbors in the Gulf".<sup>3</sup> In 2005, India's then-Prime Minister Manmohan Singh defined West Asia as India's extended neighborhood. With the 'Look West' Policy his main objective was to increase economic relations with West Asian Nations. This was a smart move because Geostrategic relations start with economic relations, economic relations act as a foundation for future relations. Eventually, India increased its bilateral ties with West Asian Countries. The Policy started with the launch of negotiations for an India-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) free trade agreement and a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement with individual member Countries of the GCC, that is Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE.

---

<sup>3</sup> [statement](#)



[Source](#)

Large Indian Diaspora and the remittances sent by them have been an important factor in India-West Asia Relations. The 2006 visit paid by King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz of Saudi Arabia as a chief guest in the Republic Day celebration proved to be a landmark in India-West Asia Relations because from that point onwards other Arab Nations also increased ties with India. Later, the Indian Navy launched its own 'Look West' Policy to increase its engagement with Arab nations and established strong defense relations between India, Oman, and Saudi Arabia in 2012.

### 5.1 'Link and Act West' Policy

Series of Visits since 2015 by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Israel, Saudi Arabia, Iran, United Arab Emirates(UAE), Jordan, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, and Palestinian territories highlights the fact that India's engagement in the region has become stronger. In Feb 2018, Modi went to Palestine, The UAE, and Oman. In Jan 2019, the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi was invited as chief guest at India's Republic Day celebrations. Later Prime Minister Modi visited the UAE and Bahrain. Recently, he visited UAE and Qatar. This was his 7th visit to the UAE and second to Qatar as the Prime minister over the last 10 years.<sup>4</sup> He is the only Indian Prime Minister who has visited almost all the countries in the Middle East except Kuwait. These regular visits by the Prime Minister to West Asia represent the Unprecedented growth of India-West Asia Relations. The area of collaboration under the present government has been diversified, and a more pragmatic approach has been adopted. In 2015-16, Under Prime Minister

<sup>4</sup> [Wikipedia](#)

Modi's government 'Look West' Policy name was changed to 'Link and Act West'. The Three pillars under this Policy are Arab Nations, Iran, and Israel. Under the 'Link and Act West' Policy, India tried to diversify its area of engagement in West Asia as more focus has been given to connectivity and regional infrastructure projects, defense and security cooperation, counter-terrorism, and investments. In 2018, At London's Central Hall, Mr Modi said "YES, I will go to Israel and I will even go to Palestine. I will Further cooperate with Saudi Arabia, and for the energy needs of India, I will engage with Iran".<sup>5</sup> This statement of the Prime Minister made it very clear that India is going to act in its interest and that relations with a third country are not going to affect its bilateral ties. India stood by these remarks and followed a more balanced and De-Hyphenated approach in West Asia. In 2019, India was invited as a 'Guest of Honour' at the 46th session of OIC by United Arab Emirates (UAE) Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan.<sup>6</sup> Former External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj addressed the inaugural session. This incident becomes historic because exactly 50 years ago at the Summit of Leaders of Islamic Countries at Rabat in 1969, India was forced to withdraw at the very last moment from the grouping's first Conference due to stiff opposition from Pakistan. This shows that Arab Nations are also willing to look beyond old alignments and old ideologies. This statement can be backed by the fact that in recent years, countries like the UAE and Saudi Arabia have adopted a more pragmatic approach towards India. But there are still some areas where India and Gulf nations need to work together, e.g. as there is large labor migration from India to Gulf nations and most of these migrant workers work under the framework of the "Kafala System" which gives undue power and influence to the employer. Workers have no right to protest against unfair practices and bargain for better wages in this system. It is no surprise that the International Labor Organization (ILO) has associated this practice with a "Contemporary form of slavery".<sup>7</sup>

So, the need of the hour is for India to convey this issue to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries and jointly work to resolve this problem. However, there is no doubt in the fact that West Asia has been a very challenging area. It is not easy to navigate a path in the messy politics of West Asia. So far India has done good but there is always a space for improvement.

---

<sup>5</sup> [MEA](#)

<sup>6</sup> [TH](#)

<sup>7</sup> [ILO](#)



## 5.2 Economic Relations, Trade and Diaspora

**i) Saudi Arabia** - India is the second-largest export destination of Saudi Arabia. India's Foreign trade with Saudi Arabia reached an all-time high of \$52.75 billion in FY23.<sup>8</sup> This shows strong economic and trade relations shared by Saudi Arabia and India. Saudi Arabia is the third largest Crude and Petroleum Product supplier to India in FY 2023. Thus, Saudi Arabia is a key energy security partner for India. The two countries are engaged in extensive naval cooperation and bilateral exercises. Saudi Arabia has an Indian diaspora of 2.2 million.

**ii) UAE** - Regular High-level visits occur between the two countries, In 2017 India and UAE signed an agreement on a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP). India and UAE bilateral trade has reached \$85 billion in 2022-2023.<sup>9</sup> UAE is India's third-largest trading partner and second-largest Export destination. UAE is the ninth biggest investor in India and a crucial energy security partner in the region, UAE has over 3.3 million Indians thus Indian Culture is well known in UAE. Recently Prime Minister Modi laid the Foundation stone for the BAPS Swaminarayan temple in Abu Dhabi, this shows the strong relations between the two countries.

**iii) Iran** - Iran is of strategic importance to India as Chabahar port offers an alternative route to connect with Afghanistan and beyond, otherwise, India has been largely dependent on Pakistan for connectivity in that region. Iran has one of the largest deposits of Crude Oil and Natural Gas in the World. U.S. sanctions on Iran have severely restricted Indo-Iranian relations. This can be backed by the fact that before the 'maximum pressure' policy of the Trump administration, Iran used to be the second largest oil exporter to India but after 2019, it moved to the status of a non-supplier.<sup>10</sup> A recent two-day visit to Iran by the Foreign minister presents the view that India wants to hold discussions on bilateral, regional, and global issues with Iran. After the two-day visit to Iran, Foreign Minister S Jaishankar in his social media stated "Detailed and Productive discussions on establishing a long-term Cooperation framework for Chabahar Port. Also, exchanged views on the International North-South Transport Corridor".<sup>11</sup>

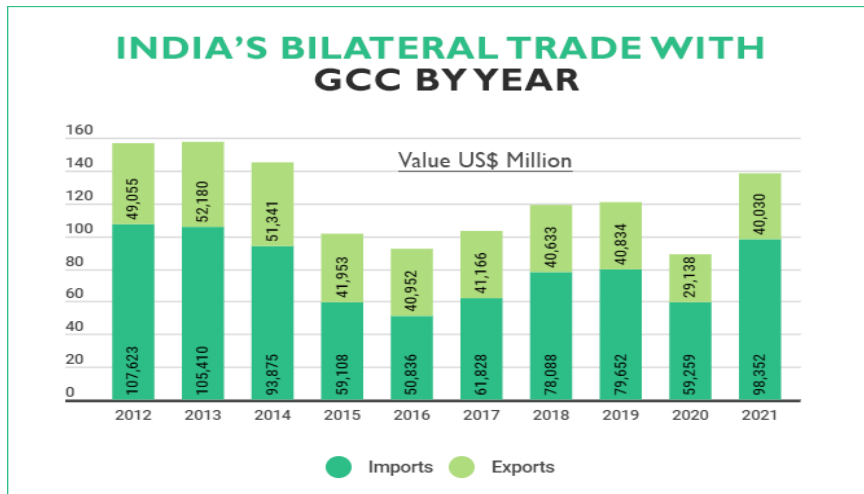
---

<sup>8</sup> [business-standard](#)

<sup>9</sup> [PIB](#)

<sup>10</sup> [Reuters](#)

<sup>11</sup> [ET](#)



[Source](#)

## 6. I2U2 International Forum For Economic Cooperation

I2U2 is an economic grouping comprising India, Israel, the USA, and the UAE. This grouping is also known as the Western Quad. It is a multilateral grouping and was launched at a meeting in Oct 2021. This multilateral aims to work in six factors namely Water, Energy, Health, Food Security, transportation, and space. This grouping has been formulated keeping in mind the strength of all four countries as India offers a large market, Israel comprises high and latest technology, UAE with large Capital, UAE is also looking to diversify its source of revenue, and the USA a superpower thus, it can be said that it is a strategic group primarily formed to facilitate economic relations. This grouping is also called the International Forum For Economic Cooperation.

### 6.1 Current Projects Under I2U2

Under this grouping two projects are initially set up in India: The Food Corridor Project and Wind -Solar Hybrid Project with Battery Storage

**i. The Food Corridor Project-** UAE is willing to invest \$2 billion in the development of Food parks across India, stated a joint statement of the leaders of I2U2.<sup>12</sup> These Food Parks will comprise climate smart technology to reduce food waste and spoilage. India will provide land and help farmers integrate into the food parks. The US and Israel can help by sharing their expertise and knowledge in this project. This project is a good initiative because in the PDS system when the government procures food, in most cases food grains spoil in warehouses thus developing food parks with climate-smart technology instead of warehouses will help in reducing waste.

<sup>12</sup> [The White House](#)

**ii. Wind Solar Hybrid Project with Battery Storage-** “The US Trade and Development Agency funded a feasibility study for the \$830 million Project. UAE-based Companies are exploring opportunities to serve as critical knowledge and Investment partners” said the joint statement of the leaders of I2U2.<sup>13</sup>The U.S Trade and Development Agency awarded a grant to India’s Shivman Wind Energy Private Limited (Shivman) for a feasibility study to set up a 300-MV Wind-Solar Hybrid project with a Battery storage facility, in Gujarat. Shivman and US-based company Evergreen Power will jointly work on this project.<sup>14</sup> Gujarat is the leading state for Wind and Solar power generation. The project’s hybrid design will mitigate renewable energy variability to help stabilize Gujarat’s regional electricity grid. This kind of Renewable Energy Project can help India achieve its net Zero target by 2070.

## **6.2 Future Prospects for I2U2**

Currently, I2U2 consists of only 4 countries but in the future, it can expand its membership. Before expanding this multilateral grouping, members want to stabilize the current grouping. This forum comprises countries like India, Israel, UAE, and the USA which have completely different interests and allies in the region so with convergence, divergences are also present. Thus to characterize this grouping of geopolitical significance would be a little difficult and to compare it with “QUAD’ is also not possible for now. No doubt this idea is very novel and there is a slight possibility that I2U2 could diversify its area of work or area of cooperation on counter-terrorism, AI, Biotechnology, Blockchain Technology, etc.

## **7. India-Middle East Europe-Economic Corridor (IMEC)**

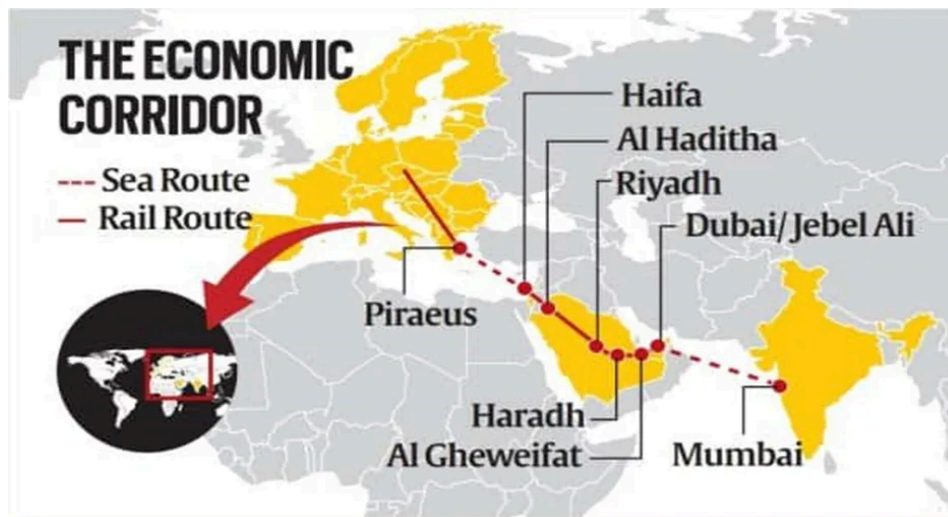
This Project aims to connect India, West Asia, and Europe; there will be two separate Corridors; the East corridor connecting India to the Arabian Gulf and the Northern Corridor connecting the Arabian Gulf to Europe. This Corridor will also include an electricity cable, a clean hydrogen pipeline, and a high-speed speed-data cable. Notably this Corridor will be the most direct Connection to date. This project will make the trade forty percent faster. The transit network will supplement existing maritime and road transport routes to and from and between India, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel, and Europe. The main aim of this project is to stimulate economic development through enhanced connectivity. It will become an effective medium of Economic integration. This project is seen as a

---

<sup>13</sup> [Bloomberg](#)

<sup>14</sup> [USTDA](#)

counter to China's BRI (Belt and Road Initiative) in the region. The main Signatories of this project are India, the US, Saudi Arabia, UAE, the European Union, Italy, France, and Germany.



[Source](#)

## 8. Middle East Crisis

October 7, 2023 attack in Israel by Hamas and the Consequent attacks by Israel has reignited the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. This Conflict which has engulfed the region and now includes more state and non-state actors, has led to a situation of Uncertainty and chaos. Iran-backed Houthis are attacking vessels in the Red Sea to show solidarity with people in Gaza. In response, the US and its allies have launched Operation Prosperity Guardian against the Houthis to ensure freedom of navigation in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. India is not part of this Operation but the Indian navy has been active in the region fighting piracy and protecting Indian and International shipping.

On 13 April 2024, Iran launched an extensive aerial assault on Israel, which saw the deployment of 300 missiles and drones, this was believed to be the first direct attack on Israel by Iran. Israel's closest Western allies have requested the government not to risk igniting a wider war by responding too strongly to Iran's missile attacks. But Mr. Netanyahu declared before a cabinet meeting that Israel would "do everything necessary to defend itself" and warned the allies that "we will make our own decisions"<sup>15</sup>. As fears of this Israel-Hamas conflict escalating into a wider regional conflict are coming true, it makes the situation difficult for India as a direct conflict between Israel and Iran would lead to disruptions in the Strait of

---

<sup>15</sup> [REUTERS](#)

Hormuz. Two third of the Oil and half the liquified natural gas India imports come through Hormuz,<sup>16</sup> Thus disruptions in Hormuz will have a direct impact on the Indian economy.

## 9. Recommendations

**A. The Diplomatic Outreach-** IMEC project is very significant for India as it offers a plethora of potential economic benefits like faster trade, transport, and infrastructural growth. This corridor involves multiple countries, all with their own legal systems, tariff policies, and transportation protocols but to facilitate trade, investment, and economic cooperation it becomes essential to synchronize the movement of logistics and build a common regulatory framework for IMEC. The regulatory framework for IMEC and standard tariff policies will require Cooperation and trust from member countries. Inspiration can be taken from EU and ASEAN nations in this regard. However, growing economic rivalry between UAE and Saudi Arabia can create problems in the Common tariff regime. Trust-building activities like collaborative discussions and negotiations at round table conferences can greatly help in clearing misunderstandings among member countries but due to the Israel-Hamas conflict, it will be difficult for Arab states and Israel to sit at a table and discuss the project. To ensure the timely execution of this project, India should increase its diplomatic outreach in the region and should try to bring the Arab states and Israel to discussion. Collaboration with Civil Societies can greatly help in achieving sustainable ceasefire and peace. India, supported by like-minded countries, can lead the peacemaking process in the region.

**B. Collaboration And Cooperation-** important regional actors like Turkey and Egypt are not part of the IMEC project. Egypt was one of the special invitees to the G20 Summit, it decided not to sign the IMEC MOU. This was not surprising because if IMEC is implemented, ship transits through the Suez Canal will fall and it would be a great loss for Egypt. Turkey is also excluded from this project, as there are countries already skeptical and not happy about this project, and they might create unnecessary hurdles in its implementation. So, to prevent any kind of misunderstandings and to resolve issues like environmental grievances, land acquisition problems, citizen concerns, etc. Member countries should collaborate and set up a council to look after these particular issues and their solutions. The region traversed by the corridor has been

---

<sup>16</sup> [ET](#)

susceptible to security threats like terrorism, piracy, conflict, insurgency, and political instability. This will require countries to strengthen cooperation on areas like counter-terrorism, anti-piracy, security, defense, intelligence sharing, etc. These are the necessary steps to safeguard the corridor's successful development and operation.

**C. Digital Currency Use To Revive Economic Relations** - Sanctions on Iran by the US have severely restricted Indo-Iranian trade relations but to revive trade relations, both countries can consider the use of Digital Currency, mainly Central Bank digital currencies for cross-border payment which will make payments more transparent, cheaper, and faster. Examples in this regard are the EU and China who have been actively developing their digital currencies and are looking forward to using them in International trade transactions. Apart from that India should negotiate with the US to secure a sanctions waiver, reviving relations with Iran becomes more crucial when Bab-el-Mandeb, a narrow water strip that connects the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden, is already jeopardized by the Iran-backed Houthis and now the direct conflict between Israel and Iran threatens another important sea route for India, the Strait of Hormuz. This choke point connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea. India is heavily dependent on this choke point for its oil and energy needs, any disruption on this strait will heavily impact the Indian Economy leading to price rises and inflation. Thus to prevent such a situation, India should try to maintain at least economic relations with Iran and hold bilateral talks to plead its case.

## **10. Conclusion**

From the Cold War era to the Present day, India's West Asia relations have significantly improved. Earlier in our relations with Arab Countries, Pakistan played a third-party factor. But now, the world is turning multipolar and new players are emerging. In this crucial period, Arab nations have decided not to consider third-party factors in bilateral relations. The De-Hyphenated approach has played a big role in improving relations with West Asian Nations. Policies like the 'West Asia' Or 'Link and Act West' Policy have been a landmark and the grouping I2U2 promises better prospects for India's engagement in the region. Now, the Middle East crisis acts as an obstacle in India's growing relations with West Asia, and projects like IMEC are getting delayed but that's the nature of war, projects tend to slow down. In Conclusion, India should engage with West Asian countries even in crises and should make decisions that will be beneficial in the long run.

## 11. References

1. Ahmad, T. (n.d.). *West Asia at War: Repression, Resistance and Great Power Games*.
2. Burton, G. (2019, August 6). *India's "Look West" Policy in the Middle East under Modi*. Middle East Institute. Retrieved February 29, 2024, from <https://www.mei.edu/publications/indias-look-west-policy-middle-east-under-modi>
3. *Distinguished Lecture Details*. (2022, August 31). Ministry of External Affairs. Retrieved February 29, 2024, from <https://fsi.mea.gov.in/distinguished-lectures-detail.htm?865>
4. Ghosalkar, A., & Chakraborty, D. (2024, January 2). *UAE sets in motion USD 2-bn investment for food parks in India*. WhatPackaging? Retrieved February 29, 2024, from <https://www.whatpackaging.co.in/news/uae-sets-in-motion-usd-2-bn-investment-for-food-parks-in-india-57677?amp=1>
5. *I2U2: Pathways for a New Minilateral*. (2023, March 4). Observer Research Foundation. Retrieved February 29, 2024, from <https://www.orfonline.org/research/i2u2-pathways-for-a-new-minilateral>
6. *India and the new 'Quad' in West Asia*. (2021, October 19). The Indian Express. Retrieved February 29, 2024, from <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/india-and-the-new-quad-in-west-asia-75788>

7. *India-Saudi Arabia Relations India and Saudi Arabia enjoy cordial and friendly relations reflecting the centuries-old economic a.* (n.d.). Ministry of External Affairs. Retrieved February 29, 2024, from [https://mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Saudi\\_Arabia\\_May\\_2014.pd](https://mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/Saudi_Arabia_May_2014.pd)
8. Langeh, A. (2021, May 18). *Qatar-India Bilateral Relations: An Overview*. Diplomacy & Beyond Plus. Retrieved February 29, 2024, from <https://diplomacybeyond.com/qatar-india-bilateral-relations-an-overview/>
9. pant, H. V. (n.d.). India and the Middle East: a fine balance. In *Indian Foreign Policy: An Overview*.
10. Pant, V. (2024, February 13). *Opinion: Qatar Release Is A Landmark In Modi's Middle East Success Story*. NDTV. Retrieved February 29, 2024, from <https://www.ndtv.com/opinion/qatars-release-of-indian-veterans-is-a-landmark-in-modis-middle-east-success-story-5048423>
11. Taneja, K. (2023, November 23). *The Gaza crisis and challenge to future-proof I2U2*. Observer Research Foundation. Retrieved February 29, 2024, from <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/the-gaza-crisis-and-challenge-to-future-proof-i2u2>
12. Tripathi, S. (2023, October 23). *Hamas attack on Israel: What India must do!* The Probe. Retrieved February 29, 2024, from <https://theprobe.in/columns/hamas-attack-on-israel-what-india-must-do/>



