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## April 8, 2003 in Information, Analysis and News : India : India-Israel Relations

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### India-Israel Military Ties Continue to Grow *Troop Training to Supplement Arms Sales*

Israel is expected to train four battalions of nearly 3,000 Indian soldiers for specialized anti-insurgency strikes, adding to their training in desert, mountain, jungle, and counter-hijacking and hostage crisis situations. New Delhi's turn to Jerusalem for combat soldier expertise is due, in part, to disappointing results in border clashes with Pakistani forces and to last year's suicide attack by Muslim terrorist infiltrators on Indian Parliament members. Among the many tasks expected of them, the newly trained Indian troops are expected to stop infiltration by Pakistani terrorists into India via the contested Kashmir region, according to the *Jerusalem Post*, Feb. 3, 2003.

Presumably to equip these soldiers, India recently concluded a \$30 million agreement with Israel Military Industries (IMI) for 3,400 Tavor assault rifles, 200 Galil sniper rifles, as well as night vision and laser range finding and targeting equipment. The purchase seems to demonstrate a broadening of the defense trade relationship beyond Indian purchase of Israeli high-tech electronic systems. For decades, New Delhi has bought most of its Air Force and Army hardware from Russia. To pay for all of this, the Indian defense budget has grown considerably and is expected to reach \$100 billion in the next decade.

Indo-Israeli trade is on the rise climbing from about \$250 million annually to more than \$1.15 billion in the most recent years and the defense sector has seen the most rapid growth.

Israel Aircraft Industries (IAI) services several large contracts with the Indian Air Force (IAF) including the upgrading of the IAF's Russian-made MiG-21 ground attack aircraft, sales of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) and laser-guided bombs. Negotiations reportedly are in advanced stages for Israel to provide state-of-the-art fire control systems and thermal imagers for the Indian Army's Russian-made T-72 tank fleet.

Indian defense officials acknowledged the acquisition of two Israeli Elta Green Pine long-range radar systems, a component of the Arrow Ballistic Missile Defense System, according to the *International Herald Tribune*, Feb.10, 2003. The same paper reports that India is negotiating the purchase the sophisticated airborne early-warning and control Phalcon system in a bid to bolster the country's defenses against missiles. A deal that requires approval from the U.S. due to sanctions imposed on India in 1998 as a result of the country's Pokhran nuclear tests.

Israeli-Indian-U.S. strategic talks have also begun on the sale of the complete Arrow missile defense system to New Delhi. A 2001 Pentagon review concluded that the defensive nature of the Arrow system exempts it from sales restrictions imposed by the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), an international agreement designed to stop the spread of offensive missile technology.

Along with its military needs however, the burgeoning Indian economy has led to keen competition for India's growing civilian aircraft market as well, where demand is expected to soar in the coming years. Europe's Airbus consortium recently won out



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joint marketing of the HAL-built Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH).

During February's Aero India 2003, the international aerospace exposition in Bangalore, HAL officials announced an agreement to integrate IAI's avionics into the ALH platform and to market the ALH globally. Also at the expo, IMI exhibited its anti-tank anti-personnel (ATAP) cluster bomb, designed to strike infantry and armored vehicles. Its sub-munitions include a self-destruct mechanism to minimize the risk to friendly forces and civilians entering the area after an attack, resulting in a significant upgrade for both Indian defensive and commercial operations.

By JINSA Editorial Assistant Amrith K. Mago

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