



Second Trilateral Indo-Israeli-US Strategic Dialogue

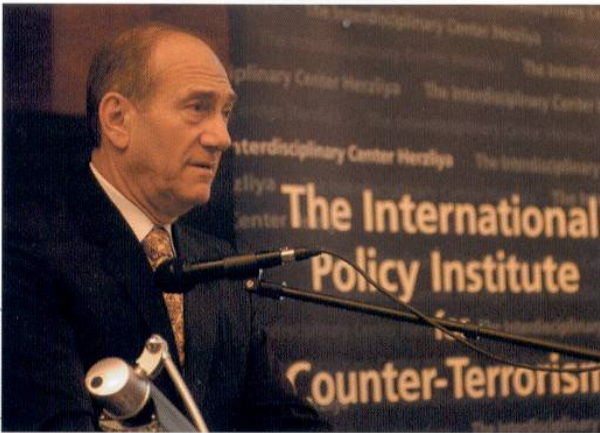
Dr. Martin Sherman

The second in the annual series of trilateral Indo-Israeli-US strategic dialogues took place on February 16-17, 2004, at the imposing Airforce Conference Center in Herzliya. The series, initiated by the Washington-based think-tank the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA), began last year in New Delhi in collaboration with the Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE). This year's conference was held in Israel under the joint auspices of the International Policy Institute for Counter Terrorism (ICT) at Herzliya's Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) and the Harold Hartog School of Government and Policy of Tel Aviv University.

The Indian side fielded a distinguished delegation headed by Prof. M.D. Nalapat, director of the School of Geopolitics at the MAHE (last year's conference host) and included V. Adm. K.K. Nayyar, former vice chief of the Indian Navy, B. Raman, counter-terrorism expert, Lt. Gen. R.K. Sawhney, former head of Military Intelligence, and Dr. Jagdish Shettigar, head of the Economic section of the Indian Bharatiya Janata Party and a member of the Prime Minister's economic advisory board. Indian Ambassador to Israel, Raminder S. Jassal, also took an active part, both as a key-note speaker and a participant in the discussion sessions.

The US delegation included Stephen Solarz, former New York Congressman; Harvey Feldman, former alternate U.S. Ambassador to the UN, Dr. Steven Blank, Professor of Strategic Studies at the U.S. Army War College and Dr. Rachel Ehrenfeld, a well-known expert on the funding of terrorism.

On the Israeli side, the event received considerable official government endorsement, being addressed by Vice Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert; Uzi Landau, Minister in Prime Minister's Office, and Deputy Minister of Defense, Ze'ev Boim. Among those who took part in the deliberations were Mr. Shabtai Shavit, former Head of the Mossad; Gen. Eitan Ben Eliyahu, former Commander of the Air Force; Adm. Yeddiya Yaari, serving Commander of Navy; Prof. Gen. Yitzhak Ben Israel, former Head of Defense Research and Development



Vice Prime Minister Ehud Olmert addressing the conference

Directorate at the Israel Ministry of Defense; Prof. Yossi Shain, Head of the Hartog School of Government, Tel Aviv University; Dr. Boaz Ganor, Director of International Policy Institute for Counterterrorism; Brig. Doron Tamir, former Chief Intelligence Officer of IDF and Dr. Moshe Yegar, former Deputy Director-General of Israel's Foreign Ministry, who played a central role in the establishment of diplomatic relations between New Delhi and Jerusalem. Although much emphasis was given to the

issue of global terror and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the conference agenda included a broad range of other topics including the possibility of coordinating joint diplomatic initiatives, trilateral collaboration between Indian, Israeli and American NGOs, the role of expatriate Indian and Jewish communities as strategic assets for their respective homelands and the possibility of setting up trilateral funds to advance joint commercial enterprises.

The spirit of conference was perhaps best summed up in the words of Shabtai Shavit, who called for cooperation between democracies in the global battle against the scourge of international terrorism fueled by fundamentalist fanaticism. On a broader level, he stressed that the Indian-Israeli-American relationship "is strong because what stands as its basis are our shared values."

The next conference in the series is expected to be held in Washington, D.C. in early 2005.

The idea of the trilateral strategic dialogue between India, Israel and US can be traced back to a policy paper published in the late 1990s by the Ariel Center for Policy Research, co-authored by Dr. Martin Sherman of Tel Aviv University and by the late Prof. M.L. Sondhi of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi. Their essay titled "Indo-Israeli Strategic Cooperation as a US National Interest", predicted many of the later developments in the ties between the three

countries including the burgeoning economic links as well as the potential for cooperation between the highly successful Indian and Jewish expatriate communities in America.

Seizing on the notion of trilateral cooperation, proposed by Sondhi and Sherman, based on shared values and interests, JINSA launched the on-going series of conferences to give concrete shape to this triangular interaction.



Delegates with Ambassador Jassal and Counsellor Mehta

(Picture: On Portal)

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