Chapter – IV

The Palestine Issue: India at the U.N.
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Prior to 1914, Palestine was under Turkish occupation as a part of the Ottoman empire. In World War I, the Palestinians helped the British in the overthrow of the Turkish hegemony, and in return got British promise of complete national independence for the Arabs. As the war came to a close the British government went back on its solemn assurances to the Arabs and resumed its role of divide and rule. The result was the Balfour Declaration of 1917. Following the Balfour Declaration a bulk of Jewish immigrants began to pour in Palestine. In 1922, with British efforts and American designs Palestine was declared a British mandatory, now the British were free to do any thing in that piece of land. There started a great Jewish inflow, demand for Jewish National Home in Palestine and many clashes between Jews and Arabs over this. By the end of World War I 1939-45, the Palestinians found themselves facing a powerful front composed of vested interests of Britain, America and the Zionists international, all aiming at transforming Palestine into the Jewish state. The British authorities also permitted the formation of Zionist military squads which took the name of sporting clubs and scout groups, on the other hand the Arabs were totally disarmed, they were forbidden from owning or carrying firearms. By 1947, the British troops had killed a total of 10,000 Palestinian Arabs and hanged 167 Arab militants. The Zionist military organisation went on destroying Arab villages, capturing Arab towns and looting Arab properties. Conditions so deteriorated that the British felt their complete failure in Palestine. On 2nd April 1947, Great Britain requested the United Nations to place the question of Palestine on the agenda of General Assembly. Taking into consideration the urgency of the situation Britain requested the U.N. for an early settlement. This way the U.N. stepped into the sphere of Palestine question. After being considered the issue, the United Nations established
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a Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP). Meanwhile the Zionists declared the formation of Israel further precipitating the situation. The subsequent reports of UNSCOP contained two partition proposals, one majority and the other minority. The majority proposal was represented by Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, the Netherlands, Peru, Sweden and Uruguay proposed that Palestine should be divided into an Arab state, a Jewish state and the city of Jerusalem. The minority proposal represented by India, Iran and Yugoslavia, proposed that an independent federal state should be created, this state would comprise of an Arab state, a Jewish state and Jerusalem under international control. There would be thus a single Palestinian nationality and citizenship. As India in its opposition to partition plan favoured the minority plan. But on November 29, 1947, the General Assembly adopted the Partition Resolution 181(II) on majority plan.

The resolution established a United Nations Palestine Committee of Five member states- Bolivia, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Panama and Philippines, to supervise the implementation of the plan. As violence and disorder was increasing in the country a Truce Commission, composed of representatives of those members of the Security Council which had consular offices in Jerusalem, was established on February 24, 1948. Thus, Belgium, France and U.S. formed the Truce Commission.

On May 14, 1948, British withdrew all its forces from Palestine and the same day Israel was declared independent. This action complicated the situation and the armed forces of Egypt, Iraq, Transjordan, Syria and Lebanon crossed the frontiers and violent fighting broke out. This was the first Arab Israeli war, which resulted in the Israeli occupation of Arab territories and nearly 80,000 Palestinians became refugees in the neighbouring countries. In an effort to achieve a political solution acceptable to Arabs and Jews the General Assembly on May 27, 1948, appointed a U.N. mediator Count Folke Bernadotte of Sweden in Palestine to use his good offices with the local and community authorities in Palestine for a
political settlement of this difficulty. Whereas the Arab Higher Committee rejected any solution on partition and insisted that the only acceptable solution was the formation of one independent state for the whole of Palestine. As the situation went violent, the need for military intervention grew more, this was the birth of United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO).

According to Nehru, the Palestinian question had become more complicated than ever due to the new Arab-Israeli conflict. He strongly felt that neither side would be able to achieve any settlement through military means. He said that:

"In military sense, at present, probably the Arabs are stronger. But the fact is that American and Russian prestige are involved in maintaining a new state of Israel, and it will not be easy for the Arabs to win through. What the final end of all this will be, therefore it is very difficult to say. Both sides feel passionately about their position and are hard fighters. In the past, India has generally sympathised with the Arab cause in Palestine, though with some reservations. The position we took up in the United Nations represented this attitude which I still think was the correct one. However, neither party approved of it. In the present struggle there, India does not want to be involved. We have enough trouble of our own."

On May 23, 1948, the Indian government had received a request from the president of Israel to recognise the Jewish state, majority of nations in the world accepted the fact of existence of Israel, but the Indian government had withheld its recognition.

The Israelis, however, exploited the situation and strengthened their own position, they were helped by the United States and Britain. The U.N. mediator Count Bernadotte in his report submitted to General Assembly on September 16, 1948, stated that, it is however, undeniable that no settlement can be just and complete if recognition is not accorded to the rights of the Arabs to return to the
homes from which they have been dislodged by the hazards and strategy of the armed conflict between the Arabs and Jews in Palestine grew. It would be an offence against the principle of element justice if these innocent victims of the conflict were denied the right to return their homes, while Jewish immigrants flow into Palestine, and indeed offer the threat of permanent replacement of the Arab refugees who have been rooted in the land for centuries. He had warned that unrestricted immigration would bring economic and political disturbances, he also made some proposals to Security Council for the solution of the problem. But the Israelis found these proposals unfavourable and the very next day Bernadotte was assassinated by a Zionist terrorist in the broad day light. So horrible was this act that the security council had to pass a resolution which among other things condemned the Israeli authorities for not being able to protect the life of Bernadotte, and for not apprehending the culprits.

On December 11, 1948, the General Assembly discussed Bernadotte's report and resolved that refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be admitted to do so at the earliest practicable date. But Israel continued to defy the U.N. and prevented the return of the Arabs to their homes. Not only did the Israelis refused to allow the return of the Arabs to their homes, but they consummated the tragedy by seizing all their property in one of the greatest acts of plunder in modern history.

On May 4, 1949, the United Nations Security Council accepted Israel's application for admission to the U.N. A week later, the General Assembly also passed a resolution granting Israel the membership of the United Nations. On the question of Israel's admission to the United Nations India's first reaction was to abstain. Later as a part of the policy of cooperation with the Arab states, Nehru ordered the Indian delegation to vote against, since "India could recognise an Israel which had been achieved through the force of arms and not through negotiations." India stood against it and criticised every move of it, Nehru
maintained that India’s suggestion of a federal state was not only fair and equitable solution of the problem but the only real solution. Referring to the question of recognition. Nehru in Constituent Assembly on December 6, 1949, said that:

"Israel is now a member of the United Nations and its recognition by other states can not obviously be differed. The government of India would like to act in this matter, which has been the subject of controversy among the nations with whom we have friendly relations that would avoid this understanding and ill feeling...."  

India’s opposition to the state of Israel was also based on ethical, moral and political grounds, India thought it not fair and wise to have a sudden shift in its position on Israel unless it was demanded by international situation and domestic compulsions.

On the other hand America and Britain did not stop encouraging the ceasefire violations by Israel, ultimately truce agreements were signed in Rhodes in the winter and spring of 1949 between the Arab governments of Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan on one hand and Israel on the other. The armistice agreements went beyond the truces and ceasefires and represented the first formal agreements between the parties themselves. They provided for an end of military actions and, except in the Egyptian-Israeli case, for the termination of ‘acts of hostility’ as well. Demarcation lines were established, but these were not to be ‘construed in any sense as apolitical or territorial boundary and (were) delineated without prejudice to the rights, claims and positions of (the Parties) as regards ultimate settlement of the Palestine question.’ The agreements were meant to "facilitate the transition from the present truce to permanent peace." However, the Israeli incursions in the Arab territories did not stop. Israel also occupied those areas reserved for the Arabs, turning millions of Palestinians into refugees. On December 7, 1949, the Israelis moved their capital and Parliament (Knesset) to
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Jerusalem, which was declared by U.N. under international control. Reacting sharply to it the U.N. Trusteeship Council adopted the following resolution on December 20, 1949, it said, (the Council):

- concerned at the removal to Jerusalem of certain ministries and central departments of the Government of Israel;
- considers that such action ignores and is incompatible with the provisions of paragraph II of General Assembly Resolution 303(IV) of December 9, 1949.

In response to the Trusteeship Council resolution Israel had stubbornly refused to implement that part of the resolution.

The injustices to which the Arabs in Israel were subjected went far beyond the expropriation of their farms and property, and included flagrant infringement upon their basic human rights and civil liberties. For meeting this situation of refugees the United Nations formed the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestinian refugees which began operation in 1950.

From 1948-50, India withheld recognition for Israel, India’s reservation in according recognition was conspicuous, it was based on moral and ethical grounds. But such grounds may not find applicability in the behaviour of modern states whose foreign policies are mainly shaped and influenced by long term and short term objectives of national interests. Whatever the reasons for delaying the process of recognition, India took more than two years to comply with the Israeli question. Finally on September 17, 1950, the Government of India issued a communiqué which read: the Government of India have decided to accord recognition to the Government of Israel, through the Israeli embassy in Washington. 8

The Government of India recognised Israel in September 1950 but it so de facto and not de jure because: (a) Israel had followed a wrong policy against the
Arabs, particularly against the Palestinians; (b) the criterion that religion could become the basis for nationality was unacceptable; (c) Zionism was considered a product of Western imperialism not a part of general Asian liberation movement and under present political circumstances Israel has had to maintain close relations with certain European states.9

The point that Israel had already become a member of the United Nations made Nehru to press this point more convincingly, he said "our policy (is) to recognise any country that was an independent functionary country represented in the United Nations."10 In fact it was Krishna Menon who persuaded Nehru to recognise Israel. Menon held the view that "whatever country is recognised by the U.N. should be recognised by us."11

The recognition of Israel was important if India were to play an intermediary role between Israel and other states. The road to a settlement in West Asia could only be found through reconciliation between Israel and Palestine. It would be India's role to find out the ways and means by which this reconciliation could be achieved. Subsequently after having recognised the state of Israel Nehru formally recognised the Arab factor in delaying the process of recognition. In October 1950, Nehru wrote, "we would have done this (recognition of Israel) long ago because Israel is a fact, we refrained because of our desire not to offend the sentiments of our friends in Arab countries."12

Soon after granting recognition, Nehru ruled out diplomatic exchange due to the financial and other reasons and added that that the government was anxious to avoid additional commitments abroad at present.13 Right from the beginning of 1950s, there were hectic efforts on the part of Israel to make diplomatic relations with India, in March 1952, Mr. Walter Eytan, the director general of Israeli foreign ministry, visited India and tried to have an Israeli Consul General in Bombay, but he could not be able to evoke a firm response from Nehru on the issue of establishing diplomatic relations with India, as Nehru was very critical of
his attitude on this issue. During the same period there was a constant pressure from the Arab world against making any diplomatic ties with Israel. India was reluctant to revive its Israeli policy, for she doubted that any inclination to have relationship with Israel would be exploited to her disadvantage. On the other the Indian government was suspicious of the evil designs of Pakistan who was trying to project herself as a staunch supporter of Arabs on the question of Israel. Pakistan's designs and initiatives to forge a Pan-Islamic alliance of the Arab countries in order to guard her own interests were of concern to India.

Israelis seemed to have achieved a breakthrough when, in 1953, Nehru allowed an Israeli consul to function in Bombay. But further Israeli hopes were shattered when despite repeated requests and unofficial delegations to India, Nehru refused to establish diplomatic ties with Israel. According to Nehru:

"this attitude was adopted after a careful consideration of the balance of factors. It is not a matter of high principle, but it is based on how we could best serve and be helpful in the area. We would like the problem between Israel and the Arab countries to be settled peacefully. After careful thought, we felt that while recognising Israel as an entity, we need not at this stage exchange diplomatic personnel. As I said, it is not a matter of principle, and it is not a matter on which two opinions can not be held. That, in the balance, is the decision we arrived at, and we think it is a correct decision."

On the other hand a fundamental change had taken place in the Arab political world with the success of the Egyptian revolution in 1952 and emergence of President Nasser to power. From 1952 onwards Nasser was gathering the forces of Arab nationalism around himself and Egypt and this process attempted to throw traditional regimes in other Arab countries too. The most important of them was that he employed himself up as the leader of Arab struggle against Israel. Subsequently, the situation further complicated by Soviet diplomatic
activities in the region in opposition to Western interests. Pakistan was trying to project itself into the West Asian region with the help of Western powers.

In these circumstances India had to take no action but had to resolve the problem of identifying the Indian government with one or the other of the two forces in conflict in West Asia. But with the passage of time, the policy of non-alignment made considerable headway in the Arab region’s politics, and the problem of identifying the Indian government’s move to align with one of the power blocs in the region. The Nehru-Nasser friendship further cemented the Arab and dedication for an independent and non-aligned approach in their foreign policies. Therefore, India cultivated friendship with Egypt and other like-minded countries of West Asia to offset the Pan-Islamic maneuverings of Pakistan.

Nasser was able to tie the two most emotionally changed issues together—the urge to eliminate Western economic domination and the question of Israel. Nasser represented the forces of the Arab social revolution struggling against economic colonialism saving the Suez waterway from the Western domination which was of enormous strategic and economic value to the Western powers, and most of them were supporters of Israel. At Cairo, on his way back from London in 1953, Nehru advised Nasser not to use harsh language against Britain. Nehru’s involvement with Nasser did not end his involvement with Palestinian question but it became more effective after his friendship with Nasser and emergence of other issues linked with Palestinian refugees and Arab nationalism.

On April 2, 1954, Pakistan-Turkish agreement was signed, and the Baghdad pact of 1955 projected Pakistan in West Asia in an entirely different role. The pact was the outcome of (1) an Anglo-American drive to forge a military alliance among the Muslim countries of West Asia to counter the Soviet influence in the region and (2) Pakistan’s derive to bring about an Islamic grouping in the region as a counterpoise to India. India heavily criticised the move, and Nehru called it
as the most unfortunate and deplorable action on the parts of the countries who joined these pacts.

In time, the relations between India and Egypt were gradually getting stronger and the leaders of the two countries were discovering greater and greater areas of common concern. In 1955, Nasser stopped at New Delhi on his way back to Bandung to meet Pt. Nehru, Nasser admitted that this short stay with Nehru proved a turning point in his political understanding. At Bandung, Nehru urged the Arabs not to rule out negotiations as a means of settling the Palestine issue and joined other Asian African states in calling for implementation of the United Nations Resolution on Palestine.

On July 26, 1956, Nasser nationalised the Suez Canal Company. This nationalisation was mainly due to the decision of America to withdraw the Aswan Dam aid. The rumours were high that Nasser consulted Nehru on the nationalisation question because Nehru had been the guest of Colonel Nasser only a few days before the nationalisation of Suez Canal Company. India refuted these rumours and Nehru gave a lengthy statement on August 8, 1956, in Lok Sabha:

"the Government of India had to take a decision in the situation as it confronted them. India is not a disinterested party, she is a principle user of this waterway and her economic life and development is not unaffected by the disputes, not to speak of worse developments, in regard to it."\(^{16}\) Nehru then pointed out, "the suddenness of nationalisation decision and the manner in which it has been implemented have contributed to the violent reaction. But the terms of nationalisation itself under the laws of Egypt are within the province of that government."\(^{17}\) Nehru again clarified, "as I informed the house some days ago, that the Suez Canal issue was not discussed between President Nasser and myself when we met recently. The considerations of it and the concerned decision must have been made later."\(^{18}\)
India felt that any adverse development in West Asia would affect Indian interests badly. Moreover, India's association with Egypt, Palestine and other West Asian countries brought her closer to every crisis. With President Nasser's nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company, the French and the United Kingdom governments reacted sharply to the Egyptian announcement, France, Britain and Israel secretly agreed to a joint but phased military attack on Egypt. France and Britain hoped to overthrow Nasser and seize the Suez Canal, while Israel welcomed the opportunity to destroy the Arab Commando bases and Egyptian military power, to force open the Canal and Gulf of Aqaba to its ships, and to compel Egypt to stop depending on the U.N. as an intermediary and to enter into direct peace negotiations. They proposed a Suez Canal Users Association. The first London Conference on Suez issue was held during August 16-23, 1956, and India was one of the participants in it. India's diplomacy was practiced by Krishna Menon with the support of Nehru. Menon pointed out, "therefore, since our interest in this canal is not a political one, it is a user interest and that user interest can best be served by negotiations, by trying to make the interest a mutual one, by persuasion, by making Egypt a party to a solemn agreement which comes under the obligations of International Law and of the Charter of the U.N."  

Nehru, however, told the Lok Sabha on September 13, 1956, that the Western proposal to set up a Suez Canal Users Association was full of dangerous potentialities for it was unacceptable to the United Arab Republic, he further said that "the action proposed is not the result of an agreement but is in the nature of an imposed action."  

On October 16, 1956, Prime Minister Eden decided finally to use force against Egypt, in the company of France and Israel, who had already prepared
their plans for attack on Egypt. Finally from October 29, 1956, the three forces attacked United Arab Republic.

India's reaction to this development was sharp and forthright. India denounced the Israeli aggression as a flagrant violation of U.N. Charter and in opposition to all principles laid down in the Bandung Conference. Nehru believed that the Israeli aggression was a clear 'naked aggression' and he was critical of the British and French backing it received. Not only India but also the United States, Soviet Union, Commonwealth countries and a large part of Afro-Asia demanded an immediate ceasefire and withdrawal of forces from Egypt. United States took the lead in demanding a ceasefire and withdrawal of Israeli forces through a draft resolution introduced on October 29, 1956, which was vetoed by England and France. Then Yugoslavia prompted by India from outside, took the initiative by introducing a motion under the Uniting for Peace Resolution of 1950, calling for a special emergency session of the General Assembly which was accepted by the Security Council on October 31, 1956, thus the Anglo-French attempt to paralyse the United Nations was defeated.

The Israeli attack on Egypt created much anger and concern in India. This development dissipated whatever sympathy and understanding the Indian political leadership and intelligentsia had for Israel. However, soon, India and Israel found themselves in the opposite camps, while India had found more friends in the Arab countries. India supported Canada’s proposal for the creation of an United Nations Emergency Force: Resolution 999 (ES-1), “authorised the Secretary General immediately to arrange with the parties concerned for the implementation of the military forces and arms into the area.....”

Resolution 1000 (ES-1) However;
"established a United Nations Command for an Emergency International Force to secure and supervise the cessation of hostilities in accordance with all the terms of General Assembly Resolution 997 (ES-1) of November 2, 1956." 23

Twenty four member states offered the forces for the formation of United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF), but only ten of them were accepted by the United Nations, they were Sudan, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Indonesia, Columbia, Brazil, Canada, Yugoslavia and India. On November 7, 1956, the General Assembly approved the guiding principles for the organisation and functioning of the UNEF. The Assembly also established an Advisory Committee composed of Brazil, Canada, Ceylon, Colombia, Norway, Pakistan and India and requested this Committee to undertake the developments of those aspects for the planning for the force and its operations not already dealt with by the General Assembly and which did not fall within the area of direct responsibility of the chief of the command. 24

The UNEF stationed on both sides of the armistice demarcation line. The Secretary General in his report of January 24, 1957, to the General Assembly suggested that the force should have units stationed also on the Israeli side of the armistice demarcation line. In April 1957, the Canal was declared clear for navigation. After the Suez confrontation of 1956, the Arab countries looked upon Israel as an out post from which their freedom might be threatened at any time. The emphasis given by India to the common Arab cause out of this crisis was reflected in the unconditional support given by India to the Palestinian refugees. India had deep sympathy for the Palestinian refugees. It believed that the problem had arisen because a majority of United Nations members (India not included) had decided to partition the country against the wishes of large population. In November 1958, Indian delegation at the U.S. Special Political Committee represented by Akbar Ali Khan argued that the responsibility of the United Nations because they have not become homeless people, had it not been for a
political decision taken by United Nations. By this action, the United Nations automatically took the responsibility for the future of those who were affected by the partition and the Palestinian refugees. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency and Arab League held Palestinian refugees in limbo. It operated 27 refugee camps in West Bank and Gaza and another 32 camps in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. It counts nearly four million Palestinians as refugees. India was and still so consistent in its help to Palestinian refugees.

On May 22, 1967, President Nasser closed the Gulf of Aqaba to Israeli shipping and other ships carrying strategic goods to Israel. India supported this move of Egypt, in March 1957, India had already clarified that the Gulf of Aqaba and the strait of Tiran were the territorial waters of Egypt and Saudi Arabia respectively and since the navigable channel in the strait of Tiran is inside the Egyptian territorial waters, Egypt has complete control over the same.

On June 6, 1967, Israel made a pre-emptive strike on Egypt, Jordan and Syria and in the course of a short six day war occupied the entire area from the Suez Canal to the Jordan river and the Syrian Golan Heights. After this attack the situation in West Asia wretched out of perspective by the torrential violence abruptly unleashed by Israel against the Arab countries. Before this war, many Arabs talked about the Israeli menace without really comprehending the full dimensions of the threat. The dramatic experience of June 1967 shocked the Arabs into a realisation of the full implications of the Israeli challenge. India squarely put the blame on Israel for escalating the situation which acquired the proportion of a full scale war and emphasised that our own national interests are bound up with peace and stability in West Asia.

The war ended with Israel occupying all Palestine including the West Bank of Jordan and Gaza Strip, the Sinai peninsula in Egypt and Golan Heights in Syria. After the end of the war the Indian diplomacy exerted its influence to get fruitful resolutions passed by the United Nations, insisted for the Israeli
withdrawal of forces from the Egyptian, Syrian, and Jordanian territories, and gave full support to the Gunnar Jarring U.N. mission to bring about a settlement of the problem.

During the 1967 war Israel also occupied East Jerusalem and came to control the Al-Aqsa Mosque located in it. India showed a sincere concern and sympathy of the Al-Aqsa Mosque issue. On July 3, 1967, India forwarded a resolution cosponsored by other non-aligned countries, calling upon Israel to withdraw its forces immediately behind the armistice line established by the armistice agreement. This resolution was called the most consistent with the principles of U.N. Charter and interests of all parties involved in the dispute. But Israel rejected the resolution and her Foreign Minister Abba Eban said... “this is the prescription for renewed hostilities.” Israel did not favour the resolution until the Arabs recognise their existence and come around a negotiation table to decide the area of demarcation lines anew. But the Arab states did not surrender and proposed that first things must come first. Until the Israelis withdrew from the occupied areas, the Arabs could not sit with a belligerent state.

The Indian government in conformity with its pro Arab policy condemned the Israeli aggression. Looking at the crisis from global perspective, Indian Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi observed in Lok Sabha on June 6, 1967:

“The world today faces a disastrous war in West Asia... and the situation becomes graver by the hour. If not stopped, this war is likely to expand into a much wider one, drawing into its vortex other countries and developing perhaps into a world war.... it is our solemn duty as a government to help in restoration of peace in the present perilous situation.”

Mrs. Gandhi, while addressing the General Assembly on October 14, 1967, stressed the need for solving the problem by political means based on the principles of security, sovereignty and territorial integrity of all the states in the
area. But finally in consonance with Indian proposal, on November 22, 1967 the Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 242 (1967), which laid down the withdrawal of Israeli forces from territories occupied in 1967 war and termination of acts of belligerency.

In December 1967, Mr. D.P. Dhar, a member of the Indian delegation to U.N. Special Committee reiterated the Indian position, which recognised the Palestinians as a people and not merely as refugees. India sided with the Arabs during the protracted Arab-Israeli war through 1968 and 1969 and denounced the Israeli attack on Beirut International Airport in December, 1969.

Speaking in the Lok Sabha, the Minister for External Affairs, Mr. Dinesh Singh, reflected the Indian mood, he said: “the continued occupation of Jerusalem by Israel in defiance of the resolution of the United Nations is a matter of great concern. The shocking incident of Al-Aqsa Mosque makes it imperative that the Security Council’s resolutions on Jerusalem should be implemented without delay. In this context Israel cannot be absolved of responsibility for this outrage.”

These aggressive expansionist designs and policies pursued by Israel created its counter reflections in Palestine that there originated various moves by different factions for the purpose of making a united front to counter the Israeli threat. In this frustrating situation, the Palestinian people responded by evolving various political parties and military organisations, whose sole objective was to fight the illegal existence (what they thought) of Israel. And at the same time to safeguard the Palestinian’s rights especially the right to have their own independent state.

Yasser Arafat (Abu Amar) organised General Union of Palestine Students (GUPS) in Egypt just after the creation of Israel. This organisation had objective of arranging ‘return to Palestine’ as reflected by its name i.e., the Palestine National Liberation Movement (Al-Fatah). In the sixties two important events proved a turning point in Palestinian history- breaking off the Egyptian Syrian union and
triumph of the Algerian Revolution which inspired the Palestinians. They restored
the course of do or die, in the liberation struggle.

At the 40th session of the Arab League in Cairo on September 1, 1963, it
was decided to establish a ‘unified Palestine entity’ for the projection of Palestine
problem, by the Palestinians themselves in the international field. The First Arab
Summit Conference (January 1964-Cairo) endorsed this proposal, Palestine
Liberation Organisation (PLO) was formed with full Arab support and Ahmad
Shuqairi was appointed as chairman of this organisation. The PLO held its first
session on May 28, 1964, under the auspices of Arab League. The PLO has been
the embodiment of the Palestinian national movement, It has been a broad
national front, an umbrella organisation. Comprised of numerous organisations of
the resistance movement, political parties, popular organisations and independent
personalities and figures from all sectors of life.

Israel generally represented the Palestinian problem as a problem of
displaced community, a group of refugees in need of resettlement. After the 1967
victory Mrs. Golda Meir (the then Prime Minister of Israel) even went to the
extent of asking “where they are? looked around and remarked, they have been
settled among their own brothers.” India strongly contested this position. Later
on the Indian President V.V. Giri in the Parliament address, stated : “the
Palestinian problem that created tension in West Asia is not dead past, neither
they have lost in history but are a living sore on the international humanity.”
India considered the Israeli attack in anticipation as totally unjustified and
essentially aimed at gaining a new status quo and balance of power in the region.
India considered the Israeli aggression as against International Law, practice and
morality.

India defended that the natives of Palestine were made refugees, scattered in
various Arab countries and now they are waiting for their return and settlement
in their homeland. In 1969, a PLO delegation visited India at the invitation of the Indian Association for Afro-Asian solidarity. During the visit the delegation called on the Indian Foreign Minister, Dinesh Singh and requested permission to open an office in India.

On October 6, 1973, Egypt and Syria for the first time took the initiative of attacking Israel, this was the fourth war between the Arabs and Israel since the inception of Israel in 1948. It was a powerful attack launched by the Egypt across the Suez Canal and equally strong attack came from the North of Israel on Golan Heights. There had been conflicting claims of breaking off the ceasefire lines by both the Arab states and Israel. However, the U.N. truce observers on the Suez Canal and the Golan Heights reported that ceasefire lines in both areas were initially crossed by the Egyptian and Syrian troops who moved into the Israeli occupied areas. On October 22, 1973, guns fell silent on a Security Council Resolution 338 (1973) for ceasefire, both the warring parties accepted the ceasefire resolution, yet respected little of its provisions. On October 24, 1973, the Security Council created UNEF II, the deployment of 7000 men from twelve countries brought the war to an end. The fighting was described as the 'most bloody fighting since the commencement of the Second World War', marked by great tank battles and heavy losses of men and material on both sides.

On October 8, 1973, Mrs. Gandhi, while reiterating India's total sympathy with the Arab world, gave two reasons for Indian attitude. Firstly, India's relations with the Arab countries required India to stand by their side in the time of their travail and secondly, Israel's refusal to vacate the Arab lands occupied in 1967 war and its refusal to honour U.N. resolutions. India supported the Arabs and felt that their action could not be termed as aggression, as Israel had provoked the war by not adopting a more flexible attitude in negotiating peaceful settlement. Indian government's policy was contained in a statement on the eruption of fighting which declared that the cause of tension in the area is Israeli
aggression and refusal to vacate the territories occupied by armed forces. Justifying the Arab initiative in starting the war India's permanent representative in the U.N. Samar Sen remarked: "what Egypt and Syria are doing is nothing more than upholding the provisions of the Charter in asserting their right to self-defense and to territorial integrity." While conceding Israeli right to exist as a sovereign state, he, on October 21, 1973, demanded immediate vacation of Arab territories and a proper settlement of the rights of the Palestinian people. Declaring India's sympathy with the Arabs, the Government of India further stated that Arabs' cause is based on justice, and suggested immediate implementation by Israel of United Nations Resolution 242 (1967) for the peaceful solution of the problem.

Immediately after the war, President Anwar Sadat, renewed diplomatic relations with the United States and close contacts were established with the U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, an Egyptian-Israeli disengagement agreement was signed in January 1974. the same year in 1974 the General Assembly adopted a resolution recognising the rights of the Palestinian Arabs including those in Israel, to nationhood.

However the October war was a turning point in the history of the Arab nations crossing the Canal and capturing Bar-lev line was regarded a miracle. Although the occupied territories had not been captured and the war objective remained unaccomplished, but Arab national pride was restored to some extent. The Arab states, no doubt at the time fanatically, were seeking to achieve by military means what they have failed to achieve by diplomacy and through peaceful means: the recovery of their occupied lands, warranted by the 242 (1967) Resolution.

Meanwhile, there has been a change in European and American attitude, the 1973 war brought a fundamental shift in the Middle East balance of power. Because the 1973, oil embargo was like a blow to the economy of these
countries, OPEC used oil to pressurise the United States not to aid Israel. President Nixon received a warning that a major petroleum supply crisis would occur if the U.S. government should increase military aid to Israel. Subsequent price hike and American, European dependence on Arab oil persuaded these countries for a policy change. It was not until 1974 that a proposal for an Israeli withdrawal from captured Syrian territory gave the oil producers a justification for suspending the oil embargo.

India believed that self defense was the most crucial element for every sovereign state. Therefore, the Arab states acted within their right to self defense to terminate the aggression of the aggressor. Israel’s persistent refusal to vacate the occupied Arab lands and her violation of the rights of inhabitants was the logical cause for tension and conflict in the area. The U.N. Secretary General in his report expressed identical views, he stated that the Palestine problem could escalate the tension and crisis to a larger scale. Therefore, the international community owned its responsibility, as proposed by India, to take resolute measures which could arrest the tragic march of events that threatened the peace of the region and the world at large. With these views in mind India sought to help the PLO to gain regional and international acceptance. Following the Algiers Declaration of March 1974, India co-sponsored a draft resolution in the U.N. General Assembly calling for the PLO’s participation in the deliberations of the General Assembly on the Palestine question. India argued that the resolution sought to invite PLO to participate in our deliberations because that organisation represents the people of Palestine. Thus, the sort of moral boosting given by India in her personal capacity and through the NAM provided considerable political and diplomatic momentum to PLO in the region, which was reflected in the Rabat Arab Summit of October 1974.

On October 28, 1974, the seventh Arab Summit was held in Rabat. This Summit was very significant because it passed a resolution which formally
recognised the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. PLO had emerged as a significant factor in the region under the leadership of Mr. Yasser Arafat. Arafat expressed "deep gratitude" and appreciation for the solid support of the Indian delegation in the General Assembly discussions on the Palestine issue. The PLO leader Mr. Arafat was invited to address the U.N. General Assembly on November 13, 1974, in his address he stressed the PLO's willingness and priority for a peaceful solution of the Palestine issue. He reminded the world body, "today I have come bearing an olive branch and a freedom fighter's gun, do not let the olive branch fall from my hand." 

India introduced another draft resolution, on November 21, 1974, as a follow up to the success and response to her efforts at the U.N. in favour of the Palestinian cause. This resolution also reaffirmed the inalienable rights of Palestinian people to self-determination without external interference and also stood for Palestinian national independence and sovereignty.

On January 10, 1975, India accorded diplomatic recognition to PLO, and allowed it to open its office in New Delhi. This was really a grand strategic move meant to ensure and consolidate PLO's diplomatic recognition among the comity of nations. India was the first non-Arab country to make such a move. Though diplomatic recognition was accorded to PLO India still continue arguing for the cause of the Palestinian people and the legitimate demands of the PLO at the U.N. and its related bodies.

After acquiring an observer status in the U.N. in 1974, the PLO's diplomatic triumph proceeded uninterrupted, in 1975, it became a member of the NAM, and in 1976, in the Group of 77.

However, in the latter part of 1970's following the defeat of Mrs. Gandhi in 1977, there was wide apprehension that the Government of India would revise India’s traditional policy on Palestine and PLO, mainly because of the presence of
Mr. A.B. Vajpayee, a former Jan Sangh leader in the ministry of Morarji Desai, but soon after assuming charge in the office of the External Affairs, he reaffirmed India’s support to the Arabs in general and with Palestinians in particular. He declared that the new government shall not only continue to seek to maintain old links with entire Arab world, but would further strengthen India’s economic cooperation with them. He assured the Arabs that India would continue to lend her full support for a just settlement of the West Asian problem based on the U.N. Resolutions which require the vacation of occupied territory. Addressing the plenary session of the Conference of Foreign Ministers of the Coordinating Bureau of non-aligned countries at New Delhi on April 7, 1977, he demanded that, “Israel must vacate the occupied Arab territories, and recognise the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.” During this period there emerged the question of the regularisation of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories in August 1977. The Janata government responded very sharply to the issue. The ministry of External Affairs issued an official release in which it said: “India was always against the acquisition of territory by any country by use of force..... India therefore, strongly deplores the action taken to regularise existing Israeli settlements in the occupied areas and to authorise new ones.”

Reacting on Camp David accord, which was signed on September, 17, 1978, between Egypt and Israel with the mediation of President Carter of United States, the Indian Foreign Minister Mr. A.B. Vajpayee said at a press conference that India did not welcome the Camp David accord due to some reasons, firstly, Palestine was the key issue and there could be no lasting peace until the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people were restored. Secondly, the PLO has not been recognised by Egypt and Israel as the representative body of Palestinians. Thirdly, the Camp David accord was silent on the status of Jerusalem.
Detailing India's position on the Camp David accord at the U.N. on November 28, 1979, Indian representative B. C. Mishra said that India did not dispute the sovereign rights of any state to enter into treaties and agreements on bilateral matters. However, such agreements could not presume to settle matters affecting others who are not contracting parties. India could not agree that any argument to which PLO was not a party should seek to impose on the Palestinian people a predetermined settlement.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi with her return to power accelerated the diplomatic status to the PLO by upgrading its office to that of an embassy endorsed with all diplomatic immunities and privileges. She invited the PLO leader Mr. Yasser Arafat to pay an official visit, as a follow up to this Mr. Arafat paid a three day visit to India from March 28-30, 1980.

In June 1982, Israel invaded Lebanon, and destructed PLO's political base in Lebanon, disturbing the political situation in West Asia. India's reaction to this was sharp and harsh. On July 25, 1982, Mrs. Gandhi made a statement in Lok Sabha condemning the Israeli attack on Lebanon and maintained that "Israeli attempts to wipe out the Palestinian movement can not succeed in the long run." Being the President of NAM India played a greater role in the 7th NAM Summit held in New Delhi in March 1983, it put the Palestinian issue at the forefront of the Summit, it condemned the Israeli attempt to quell legitimate opposition by the Palestinians in the occupied territories. The Summit also resolved to set up a NAM Committee on Palestine in order to monitor closely the developments in relation to the Palestine issue and initiated 'some action' in face of rapidly deteriorating situation in the West Asia.

The Committee was formed and the first meeting of the Committee was held at New Delhi in October 1983, it urged that a process of negotiations should be launched as early as possible. The Committee also discussed the question of
securing a separate seat for the Palestinian Arab state in the U.N. to be occupied temporarily by the PLO with the status of an observer.

By this time there emerged a factional crisis within the PLO. The Lebanese Arab Shia Resistance Movement strengthened the cause of those PLO factions who were committed to armed struggle against Israel, called the Palestinian National Salvation Front (PNSF) an option which had lost relevance or priority after the Israeli onslaught on the Palestinian stronghold in Lebanon in June 1982, the substantial set of gains for the Israelis after the Lebanon war was the dispersal of Palestinian guerrillas in the Arab world, the weakening of the Palestinian resistance on the West Bank and the split in the PLO, with Arafat emerging as much more confident and moderate than before committed to negotiated settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. One outcome of these developments was the Mubarak-Hussein-Arafat peace initiative of March 1985 envisaging talks between the Israelis and a composite Jordanian-Palestinian team, with Americans mediating actively. In April 1985, a meeting of NAM Committee was held in New Delhi, the Committee in turn recommended the convening of an international conference under the aegis of the United Nations in order to obtain a comprehensive and durable peace in West Asia.

As Rajiv Gandhi’s coming to power after the assassination of Mrs. Indira Gandhi in 1984, India’s activity on the international scene had been increased by leaps and bounds. There was a change in the foreign policy of India and this change had been applied in West Asia too. India gave permission to the Israeli Davis Cup team to play in Delhi, but the Arabs reacted very strongly over it. Then the Indian government pulled out its decision and the match had been cancelled.

On December 8, 1987, eight Palestinians were wounded and four killed, when their truck was rammed by a vehicle driven by an Israeli. On December
17, the rebellion broke out, and it changed itself into a movement called ‘Intifada.’ Very soon it spread into other areas too. Israel used various methods to crush the movement, killed hundreds of Palestinian youths who were armed only with sticks and stones. But it proved counter productive because Israel came under severe criticism for committing violence and violation of Human rights provided under the provisions of Geneva Convention, 1949. the U.N. political Ad-Hoc Committee for the Palestinian refugees and then the Committee for the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian people, appointed by the General Assembly provided reports about the violence and suppression of the natives of the occupied areas.

Intifada, was a civil resistance movement which represented disobedience to the occupying authority, its rules and regulations. It was represented by the younger generation of the Palestinian people in the territories and areas under the occupation of Israel. It posed a direct challenge to Israel.

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi condemned the Israeli atrocities inflicted on innocent and unarmed population of the occupied territories by Israelis. He reiterated unequivocal support of the government and the people of India. In order to free the Palestinians from the Israeli bondage, the Government of India thought it important to make concerted action and efforts through the forums of Non-alignment, the United Nations, and other organisations like SAARC, ASEAN, and EEC to bring pressure upon the Israeli government to settle the Palestinian issue. As being the President of the party he informed the PLO Ambassador that the Palestinian cause and collective relief assistance for innocent victims, as a token of popular support and solidarity with the popular movement of the Palestinian people. After this various peace initiatives were worked out but the first major step towards peace was the Strasbourg meeting of September 13, 1988, President Yasser Arafat met a socialist group of European Parliament, discussed with them
the Palestinian problem and then moved step-by-step into his policy towards Israel.

In November 1988, the Palestinian Parliament in exile, the Palestinian National Council, adopted a series of unpredictable historic resolutions in Algeria. For the first time Palestine indicated its acceptance of the principle of partition of their homeland- Palestine. They signaled their willingness to settle for less than what was promised to them in the United Nations Partition Plan of 1947- for the mandated Palestine.

The PLO’s acceptance of a two state solution based on the United Nations Resolutions and their willingness to settle for less than what was promised to them. On this background Yasser Arafat in 1988, had a crucial meeting with some Americans. And same year in a special session of the U.N. General Assembly held at Geneva, the chairman accepted Resolution 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) as a basis for a peaceful solution, recognised the existence of Israel as by right in return for Israeli acceptance and recognition of a Palestine state, comprising the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Jerusalem as its capital. He formally disassociated PLO from all acts of terrorism.

India appreciated this move of Palestine and the PLO chairman Yasser Arafat. It accorded recognition to the state of Palestine and Arafat had been conferred with the 1988 Jawaharlal Nehru award for international understanding. Announcing this in September 1989, the Ministry for External Affairs said:

"India has always been sympathetic to the cause of Palestinian people and had been steadfast in its support to Yasser Arafat and the people of Palestine. In honouring Yasser Arafat in the name of Jawaharlal Nehru, we underline our commitment to support the rights of every people to freedom, justice and peace."
In October 1990, 22 Palestinians were gunned down by the Israeli military authorities in Harm-al-Sharif, it created an international outrage, the Palestinian cause got wide support through out the world. The non-aligned members introduced a resolution deploiring the killings and requested the Security Council to sent its own mission in Jerusalem to investigate the shootings, and come up with recommendations on how to protect the Palestinians living under the Israeli military occupation. After long deliberations Resolution 672 (s-1990) was passed, calling for the deputation of a representative from the United Nations Secretary General, to make investigations and report to the Assembly. However, Israel rejected the resolution and made another inhumane act, i.e., deportation of the Palestinians from their homes to Lebanon and to ‘no man’s land.’ This act of Israel compelled the U.N. Security Council to adopt another Resolution 681 (s-90) on December 21, 1990. This resolution criticised Israel’s inhumane crimes against the Palestinians. This resolution was also supported by U.S.A. because U.S.A. was now keen to avoid the rupture in the Arab coalition, it had assembled against Iraq for its invasion over Kuwait. The America’s peace making strategy in West Asia gave birth to a convergence of interests of PLO and Israel. The disintegration of Soviet Union and the emergence of New World Order, generated potential for the three main players- U.S.A., PLO and Israel- to pursue and compensate the peace efforts, to start moving in the same direction.

In the Gulf war the United States achieved a decisive victory, securing in the process its vital interests in the region. Saddam Hussein ensured that the tension throughout West Asia would not even begin to be defused until the issue of Palestinian homeland was at last addressed. But Bush administration and the United Nations refused to link the two, however, the reality was that the Gulf crisis could not end until the Arab-Israeli crisis has resolved. A new phase of negotiations came up after the March 6, 1991, declaration of U.S. President George Bush concerning the revival of peace efforts to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict in West Asia. The PLO cautiously welcomed the call that opened the
road to the Madrid talks of October 30, 1991, once the round of bilateral talks
was resumed between Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon, Egypt, Syria and the Israeli
delégations, it was agreed that the Security Council Resolutions 242 (1967) and
338 (1973) would form the basis for the ongoing negotiations. After the first round
of talks, the venue was shifted to Washington D.C. to hold the rest of Madrid
negotiations. A long spell of negotiations continued in Washington but nothing
tangible was achieved. But after these talks there was a wider talk between Israel
and PLO coming closer and feeling spread that an amenable peace agreement was
imminent. In this context India was also enthusiastic to play her own role in the
West Asian Peace Process, on the other hand Israel was using all its official
sources to woo India for maintaining relations with her. Simultaneously, there
were higher level contacts between Indian and Israeli officials in the U.N. and
elsewhere.

In this situation the Indian problem was simplified further when Yasser
Arafat gave the signals for India’s up gradation of diplomatic ties with Israel.
Arafat made the observation that..... "exchange of ambassadors and recognition are
acts of sovereignty in which I can not interfere." He further commented that,
‘India’s help in the peace process in West Asia is needed as it is the country
with second largest Islamic population after Indonesia and had with the Arabs
relations of neighbourhood and shared traditions.’ By the time, in tune with the
already initiated policy shift, India decided to establish diplomatic ties with Israel.
And a long lasting controversy came to an end. The declaration of the
Government of India, forging diplomatic relations with the state of Israel on
January 29, 1992, was a step sought by Israel for the last four decades.

Thus, the changes in the Arab attitude to the Jewish state could be seen
as a major factor deciding India’s policy reorientation towards Israel. A window
of opportunity to pursue the possibilities of peace in the West Asian region was
opened, and a new era of peace appeared on the West Asian political horizon.
However, after the Madrid talks there was a wider talk of Israel and PLO coming closer, the atmosphere of cordiality and cooperation created between Israel and the Arab world. This process assumed a shape and direction by the Oslo Accord signed on September 13, 1993, between Israel and PLO in the full presence of U.S. Israel and PLO signed agreements that led to the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the Gaza Strip and most cities and towns of West Bank by early 1996. As the Israeli's withdrew, the Palestinians became the governing authorities in these areas. While a third area of West Bank and Gaza Strip remained under total Israeli control. Israel also recognised the PLO as the representative of Palestinian people. In 1994, Jordan and Israel signed a declaration that marked the end of hostilities that had technically existed between them since 1948.

But all these declarations and agreements were a strategy for Israel that from Yitzhak Rabin's point of view the purpose of the accord was to unburden Israel from the role of direct occupation, under its conditions the Palestinian liberation is subject to Israel's mercy. It is still upto Israel to set the limits as to how far the Palestinian liberation may go. Israel could not stop itself for doing injustices and inhumane activities with Palestinians. The atrocities are still going on and as retaliation. There is no peace in West Asia. Every day the Palestinians are killed by Israeli military attacks making the situation worst.

In April 2002, the Israeli troops exchanged fire with the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's guards outside his office in Ramallah, troops have surrounded Arafat's office building, where Arafat was a virtual prisoner. Arafat's envoy arrived in India carrying a personal letter from Arafat for Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee. Arafat had sought India's intervention in diffusing the ongoing West Asian crisis. India reiterated its support to Palestinian leader and warned of 'serious negative consequences' if his movement or he was forcibly removed. In a statement by External Affairs ministry strongly urged Israel that no move for Arafat's forcible removal be even contemplated. Later India has made it clear
that its ties with Palestine were on a stand alone basis, its relations with Israel
do not have a bearing on its age old ties with Palestine or the Arab world. India
has expressed grave concern at the on going violence in the West Asia and has
said that Israel - Palestine conflict is essentially political in nature and can not be
resolved by force.

On the Death of the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat India sent a high
level delegation to attend Arafat's state funeral in Cairo, External Affairs Minister
K. Natwar Singh headed the delegation, with a letter from Congress President Mrs.
Sonia Gandhi to Arafat’s wife Suha. Both the houses of Indian Parliament paid
glowing tribute to the PLO leader.

India's relationship with West Asian countries have been subject to certain
ideological anti-colonial opposition to military blocs and solidarity with Afro-Asian
nations as well as to deep historical, economic and political bonds. Because of
India's cultural, political and economic stakes in the region. West Asia occupies a
position of major importance for India's total foreign policy. Muslim population
have shown deep concern in West Asian developments because of the religious
affinity. Domestic compulsions as well as difficult relations with Pakistan, were
the factors which prompted Nehru to pay special attention to develop friendly
relations with West Asia.

In the U.N., India has consistently voted to condemn Israeli military
actions to suppress Arabs. Following the six day war, India has been a consistent
and vocal supporter of Arab demands for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from
the conquered territories. The same implacable opposition was evidenced in the
Security Council debates, during the Yom Kippur war, when as a member of the
Council, India led the attack of the so called the non-aligned countries against
Israel. Mrs. Gandhi set the Indian line in these debates when shortly after the
Egyptian Syrian attack she laid the cause of the war the 'Israeli intransigence'
and declared that India’s sympathies were with the Arabs. At the various
conferences of the non-aligned countries that were held in different countries and in different times India supported resolutions calling for the restoration of the rights of the Palestinian Arabs. India has also played host to the Palestine Liberation Organisation, which has been allowed to open an office in New Delhi and that was changed to an embassy of the state of Palestine in 1988.

On the question of the Palestinian refugees, India has consistently maintained that the only permanent and just solution was the return of the refugees to their homes in what is now Israel. When the United Nations created U.N. Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) to take care of the immediate and urgent needs of the displaced Palestinians on a temporary basis, India gave its firm support to it. Indian delegates expressed their firm support and appreciation of the work done by the UNRWA. India perceived the Suez war of 1956 as a desperate, last ditch attempt by Western colonialism to resurrect itself, although India was appreciative of American and Russian responses during the war.

Nehru seriously dealt with the Palestine problem and warned that it would give rise to a great deal of tension and trouble in West Asia. Nehru saw the partition of Palestine full of conflict and dissention. He suggested that a federal state with autonomy for the other regions would have been the better and lasting solution. For him it was not only a fair and equitable solution of the problem, but the only real solution, any other solution would have meant fighting and conflict. Though India’s proposal was included in the Palestine Committee, it did not find favour with most people in the United Nations. When partition of Palestine became inevitable, it was realised that the Indian solution was probably the best, but it was too late to realise.

Partition of Palestine thus brought permanent trouble in the West Asia, which at present is extremely explosive with the possibility of a great deal of trouble in the future, as the U.S. attitude is changing there is a possibility of some solution to the problem. If Nehru’s plan would have been accepted, the
problem perhaps might have been resolved much before. He expressed sympathy for the Jews when they were being persecuted and hounded out of various countries of Europe and acknowledged their considerable contribution to the country since they came to Palestine. However, he believed Palestine essentially to be an Arab country and regarded it basically a national struggle for the independence of the Arabs. It was not an Arab-Jew problem or a religious problem but a struggle for independence. It was quite understandable that the Arab people would resist any attempt to deprive them of their country, any people would do so.
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