Chapter - V

Conclusion

(Present Explosive Situation in the Region Linking
with the Nehru’s Concern on the Issue)
Chapter-V

Conclusion

[Present Explosive Situation in the Region linking with the Nehru's Concern on the Issue]

Foreign policy is a dynamic process by which states try to adjust themselves to the changing pace of international realities and domestic demands. All the countries in the world try to adopt successful foreign policies. But it is noted that all foreign policies can never be successful at all times, nor could they be a failure throughout. This makes international politics a complex phenomenon and foreign policy decision making a complex task.

Jawaharlal Nehru the first Prime Minister of India also known as the architect of India's foreign policy, first thought India as a world power and tried to establish foreign contacts. After World War I he had joined the Indian National Congress. The situation in India and the British policies convinced him that the only way of looking at Indian problems was to see them in world setting. in 1927, he became the interpreter and formulator of Indian world outlook, he was considered the Indian representative for the Brussels Conference of Oppressed Nationalities which had held in Brussels in 1927, there he was determined to fight the foreign domination of India and other countries too. He placed the case of India before the world and tried to mobilise international public opinion to this end. Nehru through the Indian National Congress fought for the independence of India and other countries too. He compared the Palestinian colonialism with the Indian British colonialism. Nehru was undoubtedly the builder of modern India. While eager to bring about changes in the life of the Indians and concentrating mostly on domestic problems that the other countries were facing. When India got independence on August 15, 1947, Nehru became the first Prime Minister of
India. At the time of Indian independence the world situation was becoming very fragile, with the end of the Second World War in 1945, the world was torn into two parts, and there were two super powers standing on each part of the world, making countries aligned with either of them. India was entirely devastated by the British colonialism, its economy was totally damaged and nothing was left. With this situation the burden of forming a foreign policy for the newly independent India fell on the shoulders of Nehru. The very first thing Nehru did, he chose not to align with either of the power blocs, because in such a state of international affairs India had neither friends nor foes. India had to be extra careful in formulating her foreign policy, which would have to meet both domestic and international requirements. Nehru declared a policy of socialism at home for securing economic stability and industrial progress and of non-alignment, of friendship with all, malice towards none, of unintended support to a colonial country's freedom fight against racial discrimination to secure world cooperation abroad. The core of India's foreign policy since independence has been the non-alignment with major power blocs. The policy of non-alignment therefore, arose out of India's traditions and experience as well as practical considerations.

Nehru opposed the blocs because in fact the blocs invited confrontations between the countries of the world. Nehru wanted India to retain her freedom of action so that she could deal with each new issue on its own merits. He believed that this was the best way to help maintain world peace and to protect India's own interests. It was this robust faith in the validity of non-alignment that Nehru dominated the Belgrade Conference and succeeded in injecting truly non-align elements into the Conference, which would otherwise have been merely an anti-colonialist Afro-Asian meet.

In the Cold War times when both the blocs were forming the military pacts like NATO, SEATO, CENTO, and Warsaw pact and attracting the countries
to become members of these military pacts, India decided to get out of this military pact drama and joined neither of the military pacts. Nehru advocated the cause of disarmament and believed that it would create an atmosphere of mutual confidence and cooperation. There have been negotiations, deliberations and discussions on disarmament but little progress has been achieved. India put forward that disarmament was only a step towards a peaceful world. It has argued that the purpose of armament was fourfold: security of the country; expansion for the acquisition of colonies; the question of markets through economic penetration; and to assert themselves into ideological conflict.

India as being a peace loving country has age old relations with the Arab world. Nehru once said that:

"India's relations with the West Asian region went back to the dawn of history and were in fact more ancient than her ties with other parts of Asia. These relations were largely of cultural, commercial and religious character. Common European domination had snapped these relations and ties of friendship, and therefore he urged that India should renew these ancient relations and old bonds of friendship."1

Much before its independence and being involved with her own problems of freedom movement India bitterly opposed the Balfour Declaration of 1917, as the betrayal of Arabs by the British. Though India had sympathy with the Jews but not at the cost of Arabs. When Britain got mandate over Palestine India criticised it heavily. Nehru believed Palestine essentially an Arab country and regarded the Arab struggle as a national struggle. Despite his European education and experience Nehru was not willing to endorse Zionist aspirations in Palestine.

In 1947, when India got independence, it therefore, felt emotionally and morally committed to the national aspirations of Arab people to gain their rightful place in the comity of nations. India’s political economic and above all security
interests, all these began to shape the broad outline of India's policy towards the West Asian region. History and contemporary international life served to bring into sharp focus the relevance of Arab world to India. Closely connected with India's security, was the question of international communication lines which lie across the Arab world. In ancient and medieval times Indian goods were carried to Europe by sea and land routes passing through the Suez Canal. In 1869, when Suez Canal was reopened for international traffic, the West Asian route was resumed. The expansion of the Indo-Arab trade was of course a two way affair and was immensely beneficial to the developing economies on both sides. After the Second World War West Asia became more important for the super powers too, due to its immense strategic, economic and political values. The entire region soon became the attraction of super power rivalry. Britain had played the most important role, for the sake of her interests it placed Jews in Palestine and got mandate over it from the League of Nations. The Arabs who were living in Palestine for centuries could not tolerate the Jewish inflow in their native land they saw their land being slipped from their grasp. Fighting broke out between Jews and Arabs. The British as being opportunist decided to divide Palestine in two states and composed a partition plan. They tried very hard to implement the partition plan but the Arabs never cooperated them and the matter went out of their hands.

Then the matter of Palestine was referred to the United Nations, the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) contained two partition proposals, one majority and the other minority. The majority proposal proposed that Palestine should be divided into an Arab state, a Jewish state and the city of Jerusalem, while the minority proposal contained an independent federal state of Palestine. India favoured the minority proposal of forming a federal state of Palestine, with Jewish and Palestinian units. India pleaded that the partition of Palestine would not lead to any lasting solution, it considered partition as impracticable, unworkable and anti-Arab. India along with the Afro-Asian states
voted against the adoption of the partition resolution in the General Assembly. India’s support with the Arab cause was based on the moral and practical considerations. With the bitter experience of partition India could not support the idea of imposition of outsiders on Arab land leading to the division of Palestine. But India’s vote could not find favour and Palestine was divided according to the majority proposal. The creation of Israel on May 14, 1948 led to the first Arab Israeli war, as a result of which Israel with U.S. backing captured larger area than was proposed by the U.N. resolution. The eviction of Palestinians from their home land created huge refugee problem. India again denounced the U.N. partition move and believed that U.N. is responsible for the Palestinian refugee problem. India having deep sympathy with the Palestinian refugees, consistently supported Arab demand for their rehabilitation. Despite the strong adherence to Palestinian cause, India could not abrogate the fact of Israel’s existence as a state, accordingly India had to gave her recognition on September 17, 1950, though it prolonged the process of recognition. But no diplomatic relations were established with her.

In the 1950s India’s foreign policy became oriented to practical considerations due to her awareness of security requirements. In a world torn by Cold War between the two power blocs and formation of military pacts, India encountered a two fold challenge to its interests in the West Asian region. The U.S. drive to bring about a military grouping of the West Asian countries to safeguard its oil interests and Pakistan’s designs to forge a Pan-Islamic alliance of Arab and other West Asian countries to isolate India from a region so vital for its security and economic well being. India endeavoured to counteract this ominous development by projecting the concept of non-alignment in the region. In the early years the non-alignment did not make much of an impact on the Arab states, even so, Nehru clearly saw the relevance of non-alignment not only for India but for other newly independent states as well. Speaking before the Constituent Assembly in December 1947, he observed:
"I have no doubt that fairly soon, in the course of two or three years, the world will find this attitude justified and that India will not only be respected by the major protagonists in the struggle for power, but a large number of smaller nations which today are rather helpless will probably took to India more than to other countries for a lead in such matters."\(^2\)

And after some time the principle of non-alignment made considerable headway in the Arab world. India promoted cooperation with the Arab states through the treaties of friendship as well as trade and cultural agreements.

The collaboration of India and Egypt on various international forums drew them closer. The withdrawal of joint American British aid for the Aswan Dam provoked Nasser for the nationalisation of Suez Canal. The nationalisation of Suez Canal by Nasser and then the tripartite aggression of Egypt in 1956, badly shocked Nehru, he rather greeted Nasser’s move as a signal of the weakening of the European powers’ domination over West Asia. In accordance with her policy of peaceful co-existence, India made concerted efforts to counsel moderation on all sides and to help resolve the dispute to the satisfaction of Egypt and Canal users. At the London Conference the Indian representative sought to evolve a peaceful solution which would safeguard the legitimate interests of the Canal users without detracting from the sovereign rights of Egypt. But the Anglo-French-Israeli invasion evoked a sharp reaction in India. India played a conciliatory and constructive role at the U.N. and participated in the formation of UNEF. The Suez crisis ended with the vacationing of invading forces and stationing of UNEF on the Egyptian territory in Gaza. The Suez crisis had brought in a major impact on India’s policy perspectives in West Asia. Though it did not make any direct implication on India’s Palestine policy, it had really hardened India’s attitude towards Israel. After this crisis Indian attitude towards Israel became bold, negative and hard.
Though the 1956 war had ended but there were still some border skirmishes on both Arab and Israeli sides. In late 1966 and early 1967 incidents involving the Syrian-Israeli demilitarised zone, stepped up Palestine Arab commando activities, and Israeli military retaliations increased Arab-Israeli tensions. Israel’s occupation of large parts of Egypt, Syria and Jordan containing more than a million Arabs created problem for Arabs. Israeli feelings of superiority and the Arabs' sense of humiliation were stimulated, and Israel developed an interest in retaining portions of the occupied territories, while Egypt, Syria and Jordan now held irredentist claims to those same lands. On June 6, 1967, the third time Israel invaded Arab lands and captured a large part of it in the course of a short six day war. This war aggravated the refugee problem by causing more than 200,000 Palestinians to flee the West Bank of Jordan, more than 100,000 Syrians and Palestinians to leave the Golan Heights, and over 300,000 Egyptians to evacuate Sinai and the Suez Canal West Bank areas. The U.N. seemed too dazed to respond immediately to this new war situation, the Security Council adopted unanimously Resolution 233 (1967) in the evening of June 6, 1967, and called upon the governments concerned to take step for an immediate ceasefire and cessation of all military activities in the area. The Indian delegation welcomed the decision of the Council and preferred a resolution that linked the ceasefire with a withdrawal of armed forces to the positions held prior to the out break of hostilities. The Indian suggestion was welcomed by the U.N. and the Security Council passed Resolution 242 of November 22, 1967, this resolution called for the Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied during the conflict. India’s response to these developments was in tune with the positions she had taken earlier. In the post 1967 war, two crucial issues dominated the political scene of West Asia: 1) the resolution of legitimate rights of the Palestinians that have provoked four rounds of Arab Israeli wars hitherto; 2) withdrawal of the Israeli armed forces from the occupied territories. India tirelessly supported Arabs at the diplomatic, political and public
levels on both these issues. India stressed the need for lasting peace and withdrawal of Israeli armed forces to the position held before the commencement of hostilities in June 1967. India made it clear that it was not against the people of Israel, but India always opposed the concept of waging war. Mrs. Gandhi when spoke in the General Assembly stressed the need for solving the problem by ‘political means’ based on the principle of security, sovereignty and territorial integrity of all the states in the West Asian region.

While most Arab states accepted the Security Council Resolution 242, Israel was unhappy with the resolution, it refused to withdraw from the occupied areas. In the wake of this on October 6, 1973 Egypt and Syria very first time attacked Israel to get back the territories they have lost in June 1967. In this war the U.N. was very active in effecting a ceasefire. The Security Council passed Resolution 338 (1973), which called for the immediate implementation of Resolution 242 (1967). For a just and permanent peace in West Asia. In this war India supported the Arab cause as she felt that their action could not be termed as aggression as Israel had provoked the war by not adopting more flexible attitude in negotiating peace settlement. It declared that the cause of tension in the area is Israeli aggression and its refusal to vacate the territories occupied by armed forces. Justifying the Arab cause in the U.N. The Indian representative asserted that Egypt and Syria were securing their right of self defense and territorial integrity. Commenting on the Security Council draft resolution on West Asia on October 21, 1973, he demanded that first the Arab territories must be vacated, second Israel had no right to exist as a sovereign state, and third a proper settlement of the rights of the Palestinian people.

In the 1973 war the action taken by the Arab oil producing states was very strong, the Arab states decided to generate production cutbacks and selective embargoes on exports to those states which were hostile to the Arabs and supporting Israel on Arab cause, it decided to increase oil prices several fold. The
Conclusion

Arab states agreed to end the embargo on the ground that the countries hostile to the Arabs would shift their policies towards Arabs. The oil embargo created a dynamic change in the international political system. OPEC countries emerged as a key supplier. The price hike imposed several pressures on India's foreign exchange too. Because the OPEC countries were the biggest supplier of oil to India, but India managed this crisis and fully supported the OPEC demands.

India became the first non-Arab country to give full recognition to the Palestinian Liberation Organisation in 1974. India took bold steps in getting PLO observer status in the United Nations and permitted them to open their office in New Delhi to the status of an embassy. India declared that Israel was an aggressor and that it would have to vacate every inch of the occupied land and PLO should not be kept out of any negotiation. In relation to the Camp David Accord of 1978 between Egypt and Israel under the U.S. auspices India observed that U.S. had felt short off a comprehensive solution of the West Asian crisis. It called upon the super powers to defuse the existing situation by pressurising Israel in accordance with the U.N. resolutions, because without the creation of Palestine state no lasting peace can be secured in the region.

The emergence of PLO further alienated India from Israel, India recognised the PLO as the 'sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people'. Even the Janata government in 1977-79 found it prudent to continue Nehru's West Asia policy. Mrs. Gandhi granted full diplomatic relations to the PLO mission in New Delhi, while Israeli consulate in Bombay languished. In 1980, when Iraq struck Iran and brought another disturbance to the region. India stressed the need for a NAM initiative to find a solution to the West Asian problem, because there was a danger that the problem might sweep across the other parts of the world. With the death of Mrs. Gandhi in October 1984, Rajiv Gandhi became the Prime Minister of India. He signaled a fresh Indian approach towards Israel. But the Arab countries strongly reacted over the Indian move. Despite his best intentions
and efforts, Rajiv Gandhi was unable to effect a complete reversal in his policy. The 1987, Intifada further curtailed his freedom of action. The Government of India expressed sorrow for suppression and inhumane crimes against unarmed Arab civilians by Israelis. Rajiv Gandhi condemned the Israeli atrocities inflicted on innocent and unarmed population of the occupied territories. 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 the organisations like SAARC, ASEAN and EEC to bring pressure upon Israel to settle the Palestinian issue. The Harm-al-Sharif killings of 22 Palestinians by Israeli military in October 1990 created an international outrage. The Palestinian cause got world wide support. India alongwith other non-aligned countries compelled the U.N. to pass resolutions to protect the Palestinians living under the Israeli military occupation.

The conflict between Israel and the Arab states over the Palestinian question went uninterrupted throughout the Cold War period. The strategic position of the West Asian region compelled the super powers to enter the scene with peculiar political positions and objective interests. The sudden collapse of the Soviet Union put an end to decades old Cold War and bloc politics. This guaranteed the emergence of U.S. as the only surviving and unchallenged super power in world politics. India’s decision making structure came under intense U.S. influence, it became evident from India’s policy shift in the PLO-Israel sector.

In the emerging world order the United States did not perceive its freedom to pursue its own policy goals restricted in any way. This became sure during the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait and then American action to free Kuwait from the grip of Iraq in 1990-91. In this war the United States succeeded in getting the endorsement of the United Nations’ Security Council and the support of more than thirty countries that included several Arab countries too. With the end of Cold
War there were many changes in the West Asian region, as a result the perceptions and the postures of the states of the region also changed. It was said that the Gulf War has created circumstances which created an unprecedented window of opportunity to pursue the possibilities of peace between Israel and her neighbours. It was this new environment which led to the convening of the Madrid Conference of October 1991, with the consent and participation of Israel, Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine. This Conference got concrete shape and direction which led towards the Oslo Accord signed on September 13, 1993. The United States concedes that it is not possible to intervene in all crises in the world, but it also proudly declared that no problem could be solved without its assistance and the countries wanting to assist in international intervention on humanitarian concerns could not do things on their own. This attitude of U.S. was reflected during the Gulf crisis of 1990-91 and the subsequent military operations in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Iraq etc.

Iraq and Iran gave moral support to the Palestinian demand for vacation of Israeli occupied Palestinian areas and creation of an independent state of Palestine. The U.S. applied the policy of divide and rule in the case of Iran and Iraq, but when the policy did not worked the fire had been directed towards Iraq. This brings us to the conclusion that the United States has two phases, one to weaken both Iraq and Iran for oil interests and to save Israel from being a target of Iran, Iraq and Palestine, second phase of ruining Iraq to get the oil wealth of the region to become in charge of the largest oil reserves in the world. With the end of Cold War and 1991 Gulf War, the American military leadership became conscious of its strategic role as the sole super power with self acquired leadership of the world.

The 21st century opened with the 9/11 incident which badly shook the Americans. In the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the New York trade towers, the United States declared war against terrorism with calls to the world
that they must join the international coalition against terrorism and President Bush’s famous “you are with us or against us”\(^1\). The Taliban leaders in Afghanistan were given ultimatums by Washington to hand over Osama bin Laden who had been declared responsible for the terrorist attacks against the United States. Within the two months time the United States launched massive air attacks on Afghanistan. However, during these massive air attacks thousands of innocent Afghans were killed and injured who had no hand in the activities of Taliban and they might as well have been the victims of the Taliban’s repressive regime. It was obvious from the day one that Taliban regime has no match with the super power. The guilt of Osama bin Laden in the terrorist attacks has not been proved and so the killings of so many innocent people was nothing but a brutal massacre. The United States forces have not been able to apprehend either Osama bin Laden nor the Taliban supreme Mulla Omer.

India condemned the attack on trade towers, and pledged support for the U.S. led campaign against terrorism but in that global situation India’s policy was to favour multilateral action through the United Nations for a peaceful solution of disputes. Though India had no sympathy with the Taliban but it could not approve the killings of innocent people. India opposed the unilateral military action by U.S.A. and U.K. and also a regime change imposed from outside by forces not having proven popular legitimacy.

It was in this background that Washington began to turn its attention to Saddam Hussein. A massive propaganda campaign was unleashed against Saddam Hussein, which was also joined by the Prime Minister of Great Britain. The War against terrorism has not been finally won and now President Bush was trying to make the people believe that Saddam regime was also responsible for the terrorism and it was claimed that it had some linkages with the Al-Qaida. The U.S. gave three reasons for removing Saddam Hussein: 1) He had developed weapons of mass destruction and had failed to comply with the conditions of the
cease fire to which it had agreed in 1991. 2) His regime provided shelter to Ansar-al-Islam, a terrorist in Northern Iraq. Saddam was a threat to the peace and security of the region, the United States and the world peace. 3) He was a brutal tyrant who had killed thousands of his opponents and used chemical weapons against his own people. What was not mentioned that the United States want to control the second largest deposit of oil in the world and even more importantly put it in a position to command the entire West Asian region from Iraq. From the start of the 1991 Gulf War the United States had made several attempts to eliminate Saddam Hussein through military coups and uprisings. But he survived. Now the ground was being prepared for a direct invasion. U.S. was in search of an opportunity and the 9/11 incident again made Saddam Hussein an anathema for the U.S.

The America led war against Iraq started on March 20, 2003. It was the invasion of the oil rich but a weak country, Iraq, by a Super power the United States with all the weaponry at its command. It was the bloodiest and most brutal of all armed conflicts since the Second World War. On the one side the British and Americans were happy about the fact that the war has been won at a low cost sacrificing only 128 American and 31 British soldiers. The unjustness of the war was that the innocent civilian Iraqi population was bombed in the name of liberation, democracy, human rights and peace. The cities were razed to dust, food, water supply and the electricity were cut off and medical aid denied. Never in the history of wars in the world has any city suffered such horrendously heavy bombardment as Baghdad during America’s terroristic “operation shock and awe”. Never have so many civilians been slain, so many buildings blown to rubble and the significant Mesopotamian civilisation’s cultural centers destroyed and many hospitals strewn with casualties because of the barbaric cluster bombs and murderous missiles sprayed with killer appetite. It has been also a highly intense conflict in terms of sophisticated arms consumption and use, particularly, of technologically advanced weapon system. The American forces behaved in the
same manner as medieval invaders and colonial conquerors who looted and subdued defeated countries. The world has witnessed hapless Iraqi women and children face an immediate tragedy. The American war against Iraq has been one of the most protracted and most devastating conflicts in terms of social and human casualties and economic damage. While the U.S. forces in Iraq have yet to find a single weapon of mass destruction or mechanism to produce it. There is still no evidence of Iraq having links with Al-Qaida or any other international terrorist organisation. The only thing that U.S. found is oil.

India opposed military action of U.S.A. and U.K. against Iraq, it also opposed a regime change. Two days before the attack on Iraq the Indian Union Cabinet issued a statement on the situation in Iraq, on March 8, 2003, it clearly said that in the UN Security Council on the issue of Iraq, India had consistently counseled against war and in favour of peace, “we have stated that any move or change in regime in Iraq should come from within and not be imposed from outside. We have also been drawing attention to the precarious humanitarian situation of the Iraqi people which war would only aggravate.”

On December 14, 2003, Saddam Hussein was captured from a hide out in Tikrit in mysterious circumstances. This marked the beginning of a new phase in the struggle of the Iraqi people against U.S.-U.K. occupation forces. All this strategy showed that military action in Iraq had economic objectives and the main aim was the control of oil resources, than the discovering of weapons of mass destruction. The situation in Iraq demands that international community, the developing countries and non-aligned movement should assert themselves through the United Nations and allow the Iraqi people to determine their own destiny, and their fate should not be determined by the most powerful nations of the world, the United States and the Great Britain.
Conclusion

India consistently stood for a peaceful solution of the Iraq issue. The peace and prosperity of the Gulf region was of vital interest to India, because of its political, cultural and economic ties with the countries of the region. There were 3.5 million Indians working in the Gulf, whose welfare was of great importance. Over 60% of India's crude oil imports were sourced from this region. India had voiced its concern on various occasions about the difficult humanitarian situation in Iraq. The Indian government had been cautious in its reaction because Saddam Hussein was the only leader in the Arab world who publicly and consistently supported India on Kashmir issue. It is noteworthy that when in the 1990 Gulf war U.N. sanctions were put on Iraq, India asked Iraq to abide by the resolutions of the United Nations and vacate its occupation of and aggression against Kuwait, Iraq in no way obstructed the repatriation of 172,000 Indian nationals from Kuwait and another 9,000 from Iraq itself. At the same time on receiving reports of shortage of food in Kuwait and Iraq, India sent tons of essential food supplies and medicines with the approval of the U.N. Sanctions Committee. This reflects a positive approach on the part of India as far as humanitarian problems in West Asia are concerned. And India continued with this policy.

After Iraq the next U.S. objective is the solution of the Palestinian problem. The intensity of the conflict started after the June 1967 war with the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip; hence peace meant an Israeli withdrawal from these areas. The Camp David Accord and then the Oslo Process, tried to persuade the Palestinian leadership that the best they could expect would be limited sovereignty in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip with neither territorial integrity nor a capital. The Palestinian leader refused to sanction such a deal as a final settlement. Meanwhile, unarmed Palestinians went out to protest against the visit of Ariel Sharon, to Harm-al-Sharif in Jerusalem in September 2000, thirteen Palestinians were shot dead by the Israeli police. After the deaths over Sharon visit the Palestinian resentment took another form, they took up suicide bombing as the sole way of ending the occupation. The Israeli retaliation
Conclusion

was even more severe than in the past, culminated in the destruction of the Jenin refugee camp, with the deaths of scores of Palestinians in 2002. After this the American administration resumed its peace efforts, in the winter of 2002-2003 they initiated a plan called the ‘road map’ for peace in Palestine. In cooperation with Russia, EU, and the United Nations, the U.S. had prepared the road map for the creation of a Palestinian state that would exist side by side in security and peace with the state of Israel. It rules out handing over any of Jerusalem to the Palestinians, the road map calls for an independent Palestine state alongside Israel. While the Palestinians claim all of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem territories captured by Israel in the 1967 war. It is hard to believe that where the vital interests of Israel are involved, it set out a series of steps for leading to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the occupied territories by 2005 (without defining where its borders would be) in return for a Palestinian promise to end the terrorist attacks against Israel. It should be recalled that the United States had demanded a regime change in the Palestine because it believed that Arafat was either unable or unwilling to control the terrorist attacks against Israel and end corruption in Palestinian authority. The United States succeeded in forcing Arafat to appoint a more cooperative Mahmoud Abbas as the Prime Minister and share power with him. But Mahmoud Abbas couldn’t be Prime Minister for long time and resigned. He admitted that he could not wield authority without Arafat’s support, nor could he control the Palestinian struggle to end the occupation. On U.S. demand of forced regime change to find an amicable solution of the problem, India opposed it, the Minister of State for External Affairs E. Ahemad said that “it is wrong on the part of anyone to impose regime change in any country, it was the sovereign right of the people of any country to elect or change their respective governments, he maintained that any effort contemplated to remove Arafat from the scene would be ‘indefensible’ in International Law and would serve no constructive purposes. He said that Arafat represented the authority of the Palestinian people and to subject him to this
treatment was an affront to the Palestinian people and this must immediately stop. India had made it clear that its relations with Israel would not come at the expense of the Arabs. India can not sacrifice its strong relations with the whole Arab world for the sake of Israel. It maintained that it will continue financial assistance to the Palestinians till the two sides are brought back to the negotiation table to find a solution.

With the death of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat on November 11, 2004, the situation dramatically changed, as U.S. and Israel both prayed for the departure of Arafat from the scene because Arafat was always stick to the demands of his followers and they now love to see Mahmoud Abbas as President. With Abbas as President there was hope for a negotiating process, he has called for a resumption of Peace talks with Israel under a U.S. backed road map, but the Palestinian militants rejected the call for U.S. backed road map, and refused to stop Intifada which started in September 2000, over Sharon's Harm-al-Sharif visit. Now Israel was also willing to pursue the internationally backed withdrawal from occupied Gaza, after Arafat the Western countries hailed the Israelis and planned withdrawal from the land occupied since the 1967 war, it was a possible step towards peace. It was decided that there would be peace on both sides and any report of skirmishes from any side would further halt the peace process. Abbas tried very hard to convince the Hamas leaders and other militant groups and pursued a truce deal with them.

Seeking India's active engagement in the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP), the Palestinian Authority (PA) has said, "New Delhi has an important role to play in pushing ahead with implementation of the road map plan for peace in the region approved by the UN Security Council."7

In the first week of August 2005, the Jewish pull out started from Gaza strip in accordance with the road map plan. Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon warned the Jewish settlers that "he will use all the Government's power against
those who will try to resist his planned withdrawal from Gaza." Sharon is ready to turn over more territory to the Palestinians and accept an independent Palestinian state on the basis of the U.S. backed ‘road map’ but rules out handing over any of Jerusalem to the Palestinians if elected to a third term. It is important to recognise that there is no peace after the Jewish withdrawal, there is no end to Palestinian sufferings and dispossession. As the disengagement plan clearly stated that Israel will maintain military operations in the Gaza Strip, and continue to control its access to the outside world. nothing will come in or out of Gaza without Israeli permission. This basically means that Israel will continue to dominate and strangulate Palestinian life, only now it will do so from a safer and cheap distance, that’s all. Gaza’s future is therefore as bleak as ever. For the majority of Palestinians the disengagement will have little positive impact on their daily lives; their freedom of movement will still be denied, their right to economic development will still be subject to Israeli dictate; and their political institutions will still be fundamentally constrained by robust and life-denying Israeli security considerations. While Abu Mazen (Mahmoud Abbas) and his people dream up high rises and big projects for the evacuated land, ordinary Palestinians continue to feel stifled, denied, and hopeless, their horizons shrunk and their humanity reduced. How can anyone talk of liberation when today Palestinians are living their worst period since their dispossession in 1948, and when there will be little hope for improvement in the future?

The crux of the West Asian turbulence, since the time of Second World War has been the Palestinian problem. The human tragedy imposed upon the people of Palestine by the creation of Israel has been unprecedented in the world history. The Palestinian people were reduced to the status of refugees and driven out of their homes and hearths. They were illegitimately punished for the crimes that Hitler perpetrated on the Jews. The Imperialist-cum-Zionist game had been a treacherous and dastardly act because the entire people of Palestine were hounded out in order to rehabilitate the ‘persecuted’ minority of Europe whose sole claim
was their mythical injunction to return to the 'promised land'. Since that time those helpless people of Palestine have been running from pillar to post in search of their homeland. The neighbouring states of Palestine were equally subjected to the Israeli aggrandisement, when she expanded her frontiers through aggression. The poignant situation and the violation of human rights for decades gave serious turns and developments in the regional politics of West Asia. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad’s remarks of December 8, 2005, “that Israel should be moved to Europe”\textsuperscript{10} are very true and justified, he further said “that some European countries insist on saying that during World War II, Hitler burned millions of Jews and put them in concentration camps, let’s assume that the Europeans say is true........... let’s give some land to the Zionists in Europe or in Germany or Austria”\textsuperscript{11}, he said “they faced injustice in Europe, so why do the repercussions fall on the Palestinians”?\textsuperscript{12} The much derived goal of self determination expressed by the Palestinians through various movements could not be other than the Palestinian nationalism- a nascent nationalism of occupied generation, which had remained unchanged since the decades of confiscation of their home land. India welcomed every step that would lead to the realisation of the legitimate ambitions of the Palestinian people for forging a comprehensive solution for the Arab-Israeli conflict. The intensity and courageous response the innocent masses provided against the brutalities of Israel could not be underestimated. Israeli handling of the situation has been widely condemned and has resulted in an unprecedented wave of appreciation and sympathy for the Palestinians throughout the world, the developments helped to expose Israeli violation of human rights and total disregard for international conventions.

January 25, 2006, was decided as the date for the Palestinian legislative elections, but the future of Palestine entered a new era of uncertainty as the militant Palestinian opposition group Hamas snatched power from the ruling old guard Fatah and made skeptics of many key players in the peace process. Mahmoud Abbas urged Hamas to keep negotiations moving forward, he said to
Hamas that “together, we will work to achieve the dream for which our martyrs have fallen.” But the U.S. seemed doubtful and Israel demanded that the Palestinian Authority should disarm the new ruling party which has a long history of militancy and a call for the destruction of Israel. The acting Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that “Hamas would have to drastically change its philosophy for the success of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process.” President Bush - whose Middle East policy includes support for the emerging democracies - said that “he would not deal with Hamas unless it renounced terrorism.” The United Nations and the European Union seemed more hopeful that the Hamas government could operate productively and peacefully.

Even after fifty six years of the partition of Palestine the problem is the same and it threatens world peace and security. Nehru was conscious of imperialist designs for maintaining colonialism in Arab countries. He considered the Balfour declaration as the betrayal of Arabs by the British. For Nehru the Arab struggle against British imperialism in Palestine was as much a part of this great world conflict as India’s struggle for freedom. Nehru was convinced that the Palestine problem was created by the British and would never be solved by the British. Nehru rightly felt that this problem be solved by ignoring the British and coming to an agreement with each other. Being very vocal on this issue of Palestine he elaborated his points to make it clear-

1. that you can not solve this problem by trying to crush the Arab people.
2. that it will not be settled by the British but by the two main parties coming to an agreement.

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 this 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. But India’s proposal was not included in
the Palestine Committee and did not find favour in the U.N. When partition of Palestine became inevitable it was realised that the Indian solution was probably the best, but it was too late to realise. The problem is becoming worst every moment, millions of innocent people have been slaughtered, the whole population of Palestine became refugee in its own land living in miserable conditions. Today it is thought that if Nehru's plan would have been accepted the problem perhaps might have been solved much earlier and the Arabs could also live in peace.
References

1. The Hindu, October 8, 1954.
4. Ibid. p.228.
5. Strategic Digest, vol.33, No. 4, April, 2003, Delhi, p. 296.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.