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India always maintained good relations with the countries of the world. Its relations with the countries of West Asia are age old. The advent of India’s pro-West Asia policy and Indian response to the Palestinian issue can be traced back to the post World War I period, during which the Indian attitude was represented and articulated by the Indian National Congress and its leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, Indian nationalism had always close kinship with Arab nationalism and was never reconciled to the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and its consequences. When the Ottoman empire was dismembered it gave rise to the problem of the formation of new political units based on some acceptable concept of nationality, this problem was substantially resolved with the creation of the mandate system. And in that context Britain got mandate over Palestine, the mandate for Palestine substantially incorporated the major clauses of the Balfour Declaration of 1917. The Arabs were not mentioned by name in any of the articles defining the mandate as in the Balfour Declaration. The mandate system was condemned by the Indian National Congress as a cloak to cover the imperialist greed. To Nehru, the problems faced by the Palestinians were not to be viewed in isolation but were part of an international phenomenon which had been generated by conflicting interests of democracy and Fascism, nationalism and imperialism, socialism and decaying capitalism. Nehru viewed the Arab struggle against British imperialism in the context of India’s struggle for freedom.
It was not that Nehru was insensitive towards the plight and sufferings of the Jews, but he made it clear that no one could sympathise with the Zionist movement aiming at the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine under the protection of the British imperialism. Nehru regarded the Balfour Declaration as a gross betrayal of Arabs by British imperialism. From the very beginning, Nehru condemned the idea of the partition of Palestine, when the matter was reached to the U.N. General Assembly and the UNSCOP was established of which India was a member, India sided with the minority plan for a federal state of Palestine consisting of Arab and Jewish states with its capital at Jerusalem. But the UNSCOP’s majority plan of the partition of Palestine was passed by the General Assembly on November 29, 1947, with an international status for Jerusalem. The termination of the British mandate on May 14, 1948, saw not only the creation of Israel but also the attack on Israel by the Forces of Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon and Transjordan to safeguard the rights of the Palestinian Arabs. The turn of events at the U.N., and on the ground of Palestine had greatly disappointed Nehru, according to him, 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. India formally recognised Israel in 1950 and did not maintained diplomatic relations with it. India always remained to the forefront in the U.N. in defending the Arab cause either it was the Suez crisis of 1956 or the Arab-Israeli wars, India always played an important role in the West Asian politics.
The Palestine problem is getting worse every moment. Millions of innocent people have been slaughtered, the whole population is facing refuge in its own land. Today it is felt that if Nehru’s plan would have been accepted the region might have been in peace.

The present study consists of five chapters revealing Indo-Palestinian relations and the attitude of Jawaharlal Nehru towards the problem of Palestine and how after his death his policies gained momentum.

In the first chapter an attempt has been made to evaluate the foreign policy of India and Nehru’s contribution to it. India’s entire background was consistently anti-imperialist and she necessarily sympathised with the struggle against Western Colonialism. From the 1920s onwards Jawaharlal Nehru utilised the Foreign Department of the Indian National Congress as an agency to oppose British imperialism in India and abroad. In 1927, Nehru participated in the Conference of the Oppressed Nationalities in Brussels, which left a deep impression on him and brought him into personal contact with the leaders of the freedom struggles in various countries. During the course of the independence struggle Nehru through the Indian National Congress had spearheaded a global anti-colonial movement and had acquainted himself with various nationalist organisations. This was the beginning of the India’s policy towards West Asia in general and the Arab-Israeli conflict in particular. India fought a prolonged struggle for freedom and got independence in 1947. At that time the Cold War had started and the world was divided into two power camps, India was too
immature and too big a country to become a camp follower, so Nehru very wisely beckoned towards an independent foreign policy stance and adopted non-alignment as the principle of India’s foreign policy.

The Second chapter discusses the historical perspective of West Asia, its geo-strategic location, political history, Suez Canal crisis and its oil wealth which rendered West Asia as the biggest trouble spot in the world. The oil embargo and its impact on the world. India’s relations with the region and Nehru’s stand in the U.N. and outside in tackling the Suez problem.

The Third chapter explains the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and its consequences on the region, how it violated the rights of the Palestinian Arabs and how far India condemned this declaration.

The Fourth chapter deals with the study of the Palestine question being brought to the U.N. and India’s response to it. The formation of Israel State and the Arab-Israeli wars.

The Final chapter covers the recent major incidents in the West Asian region and their effect on the entire international community. The Jewish withdrawal from the occupied territories and the U.S. politics to safeguard its interests in the whole of West Asia.

The purpose of this study is to throw some light on the attitude of Nehru towards Arabs in particular and in general to see India’s foreign relations and its assistance to the countries in difficult circumstances.