ABSTRACT

A nation cannot afford to live in isolation in this era of interdependence and mutual help. Every independent nation has to adopt its own foreign policy based on some principles and objectives, to deal with the emerging developments.

After independence in 1947 India found herself in a difficult situation as it needed assistance from abroad to provide social security and to maintain economic stability in the country, which led it to adopt non-alignment and the pursuit of peace as the cardinal features of her foreign policy. Other objectives were the removal of the root causes of war by championing the liberation of the subject people, elimination of racial discrimination and illiteracy. In order to fulfill these objectives India felt it must give support to the United Nations and adopt an independent foreign policy.

The principles to achieve these goals and objectives, which form the basis of India’s foreign policy today were laid down by Pandit Nehru. These principles are non-alignment or avoiding entanglement in military alliances, promotion of world peace and maintaining friendly relations with all countries or peaceful co-existence, abolition of imperialism, colonialism and racial inequality and faith in the United Nations.

As far as Nehru’s contribution to the Foreign policy is concerned, one can see the impact of Nehru’s personality in various aspects of India’s foreign policy during its formative phase like, in the policy of non-alignment, panchsheel and the India’s connection with the Commonwealth of Nations. Indeed the credit of formulating the foreign policy of free India, goes to him. As Michael Brecher rightly remarked that Nehru was “the philosopher, the architect, the engineer and the voice of his country’s policy towards the outside world.”
It is needless to add, Nehru’s policies were not unopposed. As is well known his policies were subjected to scathing criticism especially on two issues namely, on India’s approach to the Hungarian Crisis of 1956 and the Chinese attack on India in 1962. After India’s defeat in the Sino-Indian war of 1962, it was Nehru personally rather than the govt. of India, who was targeted for attack “for the first time in his life” wrote Kuldip Nayer “Nehru heard his countrymen say that he had betrayed them.”

Since the collapse of Soviet Union, the smaller countries are facing the challenges of globalization on one hand and an increase in unilateral political and economic action by the US, on the other hand. This growing trend has not only impinged upon the sovereignty of the smaller countries but also has increased the gap between the rich and poor nations. It has also created an urge to build a strong movement to fight against an unjust global order and to build a new international system based on equality and rule of law.

The first chapter describes Nehru’s pre-independence involvement in India’s concerns over the international affairs and provides a description of Jawaharlal Nehru’s international outlook. It is true, also, that there is far more to it than some enumeration of ideas or words can convey. It is in the historical perspective of a developing national movement. And such an examination would reveal, as we shall see, that it has served, India well, since Independence. India was recognized as one of the leaders of the non-aligned movement, which consistently gathered strength, vitality and ever larger following and constituted an independent major force in the world.

Indian foreign policy occupied a leading place among the foreign policies of the new states which emerged from the western colonial empires. India being a first non-western nation to become a member of the British Commonwealth, also occupied a symbol and catalyst of self-determination for several nationalist movement. Under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, India proceeded on an “Independent” path in world
politics and had numerous emulators in the world. India’s role in the state making revolution had met with considerable approval and her policy of non-alignment received appreciation from both the block and rest of the world. There was also debate on its strategy of non-alignment in the West, and even in India, since the open appearance in 1959 of the Sino-Indian dispute.

Among the major sources of India's external policy, the ideas and power of Jawaharlal Nehru have no real competitor. Permitted by congress leaders to specialize in foreign affairs, he prepared for policy-making two decades before freedom. Since independence, Nehru had created much of free India’s foreign policy and had not simply restated or managed it. Five main factors produced this result: his pre-eminent leadership in domestic politics; his full use of formal and informal authority; his dual role as prime minister and foreign minister; his function as a bridge from the past; and his skill in discussing international relations in terms of widely valued notions, for example, nonviolence. Nehru’s eminence towers over his congress associates, the Indian diplomatic organization, the cabinet, and the nation’s major interest groups.

In this regard, to assess Nehru’s contribution to India’s Foreign Policy before the independence of India becomes imminent, as Nehru’s thinking and understanding is imprinted on the many resolutions on international affairs adopted by the Congress twenty years preceding national independence, i.e., 1927 to 1947. Infact he was the conscience keeper of the congress on world affairs and on foreign policy matters. In 1942 Gandhi said that in the international affairs “Pandit Nehru is my Guru”. Nehru’s objections to imperialism mounted rapidly after the Amritsar massacre in 1919 when Britishers killed unarmed Indian demonstrators in the Punjab.

Now it was due to Nehru’s understanding of the world situation that the Indian National Congress, even before the independence, started taking
interests in international relations more actively than that was previous to him. His efforts took almost a take-off dimension when in 1926; the Gauhati session of the congress deputed him to be its representative to the international congress against imperialism which was held in the subsequent year of 1927. At the Brussels congress of oppressed nationalities Nehru represented the congress. His presence in this international gathering enabled him to get acquainted with the leaders of the freedom movements in many parts of the world. He played an active and dynamic role in the conference and came to be recognized as a leading figure in the fight against the forces of colonialism and imperialism. Since then there was no looking back for him. In later years, under his leadership, the congress articulated its views on foreign policy and international relations in a manner which drew applause and appreciations from all freedom loving peoples of the world.

The period from 1927 onwards was the most creative phase, during which Jawaharlal Nehru's views were articulated, expressed and manifested in his speeches and writings, so as to become the basis of Congress Party's outlook. From that time onward he increasingly tended to view Indian Freedom Struggle as part of a global struggle to end foreign subjugation, and for general human emancipation from poverty, degradation, misery, disease and ignorance.

The second chapter attempts to re-look over the factors which were more important in determining and shaping India's foreign policy. The foreign policy of a country is based on certain fundamental considerations of geography, national security, economic interests, culture and traditions. The ideology, the political pattern of a country, and the personal propensities of its leadership also play some role in foreign policy formulation. Since, in a way, foreign policy is formulated to serve the best interests of a country, an objective and realistic assessment of the world situation and intentions and strength of the neighbouring countries also
play a part in the formulation of policy. The position a country occupies in the historical context of world affairs, also, influences its foreign policy. The foreign policy of a nation acts as a mirror of the desires and aspirations of its people. It is conditioned by many complex internal and external forces. The touchstone in the evaluation of foreign policy is whether it can serve the national interests in the best way?

In this age of inter-dependence and inter-connection, the fulfilment of national interests is dependent on the prevailing world situation. The foreign policy of a country has also to take a broader view of the issues and forces at work in the world. In the context of Power Blocs and Cold War entanglements, the foreign policy of an under-developed country has also to consider the important question of what attitude should be adopted in relation to the two Big Powers and Power Blocs. A foreign policy, which is the result of the interplay of internal and external factors, has to be dynamic and adaptable to new situations and challenges. Situations which call for a change and revision in foreign policy can develop. In this context, a dogmatic approach is ill-suited for the formulation and execution of the foreign policy of a country.

Chapter three describes Nehru's contribution to India's foreign policy. In this chapter, all the three major dimensions of India's foreign policy, non-alignment, panchsheel and India's connection with the commonwealth have been given special attention to assess the Nehru's contribution to the foreign policy of India. Infact, after independence one of the key tasks in building the new Indian nation was to give India an international identity and standing, which meant fashioning both a coherent foreign policy and a foreign service to conduct the nation state's relations with the outside world. This task was carried on by Jawaharlal Nehru. He was the most cosmopolitan and well-traveled of his congress colleagues in 1947. As a result of his visits to Europe in 1927 and 1935-6, and his wide reading on world history and politics, he had developed a profound interest
in foreign affairs and a sense of India’s place in worldwide historical developments. Consequently, he become effectively the major congress authority on future foreign policy, given to the comparative inexperience of his colleagues in his field, and the ideological vacuum left because Gandhi took little interest in foreign policy issues, preferring to concentrate on moral revolution within India. It was thus understandable that he decided to retain for himself the external affairs ministry as well as being prime minister, even though this was to prove unwise, given the immense work load the two offices generated.

Although history and the situation in contemporary India provided the environment in which independent India’s foreign policy had to be shaped, it must be noted that it was quite possible to have another type of foreign policy, as is proved by the fact that some other South-East Asian countries and Pakistan choose to adopt different foreign policies. Nehru formulated the present policy out of free choice, though he was circumscribed by his own training, experience and convictions. This is to contend that Indian foreign policy is as much his creation as it is inherent in the history and thinking of India, in spite of the fact that he himself had tried to make out that it was the only inevitable policy in the circumstances.

Nehru was undoubtedly the builder of modern India; he was the first Prime Minister as well as first Foreign Minister of such a great country like India. He was deeply concerned for freeing the third world countries from the exploitation of the imperialist powers. Though imperialism had dissolved in its traditional form in the post-second world war era; it reappeared in many forms. Nehru was always conscious of this possibility and he had a vision of a world in which the common strength of the weaker countries counteracts this onslaught of neo-imperialism.

Nehru was aware enough about the emerging new trend of imperialism, and also he was aware enough of the grave consequences of the cold war between the two superpowers. Nehru enunciated a unique and
an independent foreign policy, to maintain India’s separate identity in a world surcharged with cold war alignments. Thus, Nehru’s foreign policy of non-alignment became the conceptual frame work of India’s foreign policy. In this sense India was the first nation to guide the third world countries on the path of non-alignment and naturally at international forum, India was the chief spokesman of the non-aligned movement, and recognized as one of the leaders of third world forum.

Chapter four tends to highlight Nehru’s stand on the various specific international issues in the light of basic tenets of non-alignment and five principles of co-existence. It aims to study the Nehru’s mediatory roles and his efforts to resolve the international disputes. For him any dispute could be resolved through negotiations. He believed that conflicts among nations arise because of differences of perceptions. All the conflicts whether they are small or big, therefore, the solutions is only negotiation. Thus we see that Nehru struggled for peace with all his strength, not only for India but for the whole of the world. Nehru’s took separate and impartial stand and intervened vigorously in Korea, Indo-China, Hungry, in Suez Canal crisis, and in Congo crisis. Indian delegation on the instance of Nehru proposed an independent solution on the Palestine issue although it was not acceptable to the West but latter the world community realized its usefulness. Partition of Palestine, thus brought permanent trouble in the middle east, which at present is extremely explosive with the possibility of a great deal of trouble in the future. Had Nehru’s plan been accepted the problem perhaps might have been managed in a better way.

Korean Crisis came to an end due to Nehru’s efforts, it was first mediatory role by Nehru which enhanced the India’s image as the neutral and peace lover nation and made non-alignment a factor for peaceful co-existence. India was made the chairman of the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission for Korea. India had also to supply forces and operating personnel for the custody of the prisoners of war and eventually the cease-
fire agreement was arrived at. It was a great contribution of Nehru for peace.

The solution of problem in Vietnam by Nehru had also been praise worthy. The Vietnam War was between French Colonialism and Ho-Chi-Minh’s forces for freedom; which became a conflict between the parties to the cold war by the time Nehru intervened in it, and made certain suggestions for a ceasefire and they were accepted by the parties concerned. Neutral supervisory commission was constituted and India became its chairman. Nehru also inaugurated a conference of the representatives of the three governments- Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia – to establish the commission by which independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of these three states was realized.

Nehru also played an active role in the Congo crisis-perhaps the most complicated one. At the request of United Nations Nehru sent the two hundred fifty persons, mostly civilians to Congo, they were to help the UN efforts not to fight. But India stuck on to prevent intervention by outside cold war powers. A resolution sponsored by others and India asked the UN to implement its mandate to aid the central government, and urged for the release of all political prisoners, the immediate convening of parliament and prevention of armed units from any interference in Congo. Ultimately, this crisis too came to an end with the support of Nehru and leaders of other Asian and African countries.

In Hungarian crisis Nehru’s stand faced more criticism and he was regarded as the supporter of Communist black. Many critics of Nehru have pointed out that he had been a helping hand for the USSR’s invasion in Hungary because USSR had earlier supported India in the Security Council over the Kashmir issue.

Chapter five refers to the Nehru’s initiatives on major trends and issue of the time, related to the India and global politics, and tries to see the effects of these initiatives for India. Nehru supported the United Nations at
a time when its survival was threatened by her creators; this was due to his faith in that international body. Thus India's non-aligned policy and belief in world peace and support to the United Nations charter made India an important nation to play a major role in the world. That also enabled India by the early 1950s to play a significant mediatory role between power blocks which contributed substantially to India's ability to achieve global recognition.

Pandit Nehru used his policy of non-alignment as an instrument to settle the disputes all over the world and United Nations also got Nehru as a leader of Afro-Asian nations with the non-aligned posture, beneficial for the organization. In the early phase of origin of non-alignment both the major powers of the world at the time were suspicious about the India, but slowly they realized their folly. Thus India became a respected country before the world community. This proved to be strength for the United Nation. Nehru due to his undisputed figure in the world initiated several mediating initiatives in several dangerous circumstances.

The period from 1947 to 1962 was marked by a major leadership role for India at the United Nations and on the global scene. During this period India took an active interest in all United Nations activities, and no subject was too small to invoke an Indian speech or comment. There were both tangible and intangible benefits from this ubiquitous presence. Indian leadership and its peace keeping roles in the United Nations brought it global standing and considerable recognition.

United Nations also provided India with a variety of specific benefits. As one of the chief advocates of the principle of geographical posts, many Indians came to occupy high position in that body. India Also secured considerable technical and economic assistance from the United Nations and its various specialized agencies. Under the leadership of Nehru India enjoyed peace and stability at home. Strong domestic popular support of its foreign policy and a rapidly growing domestic economy helped
Nehru enjoy almost complete freedom of action in the formulation of Indian Foreign Policy. Despite the issue of Kashmir India never neglected the world body and gave high priority to the United Nation in its outside relations. India also sent to the United Nation some of its best intellectual talents to cooperate its mission all over the world. Despite its lack of economic and political power, India appeared headed for great power status and enjoyed substantial international prestige and recognition.

Nehru wanted friendly relations with China, six day after the formation of the provisional government, Nehru said in a broadcast from New Delhi on September 7, 1946. “China, that mighty country with a mighty past, our neighbour, has been our friend through the ages and that friendship will endure and grow. We earnestly hope that her present troubles will end soon and a United and Democratic China will emerge, playing a great part in the furtherance of world peace and progress”.

Jawaharlal Nehru based his policy of resurgent Asia on the friendship of China. His policy of friendship with China was to ensure the peace and stability in the region, to him, without China the idea of resurgent Asia was not possible. He advocated strongly an eastern federation of China and India and other eastern nations. To him, stable order or effective cooperation in the world was not possible if India and China were ignored.

The role that Nehru played was precisely to evolve a new thinking on global politics at a specific historical juncture. The starting point for him was the concept of Asian unity, solidarity and security. He spelt it out in his concept of “one world” structure on the principles of ‘Panchsheel’. In this context Asian Relations Conference was a mile-stone, which was held in Delhi in 1947 at the instance of Jawaharlal Nehru, who projected for the first time, the vision of Asian unity and solidarity. Nehru proposed a close union of countries bordering on the Indian Ocean, both for defense and trade purposes. Nehru, in the Asian Relations Conference, while
welcoming the delegates to the conference made a particular reference to
China. He said: “we welcome you, delegates and representatives from
China, that great country to which Asia owes so much and from which so
much is expected”.

Very soon Nehru came to realize that the new China was in no
mood to cooperate with India. It was not even prepared to accept India as
an equal. In the Asian Relations Conference, the reaction of China was one
of indignation, China felt that Nehru wants to dominate Asia and she never
liked the leadership of Nehru. Besides this the small nations of South and
South-East Asia were also alarmed. Warmer Levi pointed out this fact,
“The conference marked the apex of Asian solidarity and the beginning of
its decline. The reasons for this were the intense rivalry between India and
China in the conference and the common distrust of the two Asian giants
among the smaller countries of the region”.

While government of India was busy in the fighting over the
Kashmir issue, Chinese threat was realized, when China came into Tibet.
Nehru’s reaction to Mao’s ‘liberation’ of Tibet which he had strongly
criticized and which drew Beijing’s sharp reaction as ‘unwarranted
interference’, led to a long time dispute.

Besides this another important issue before Nehru was the Kashmir
dispute between India and Pakistan. In this regard Nehru’s attempts to
project an image of global peace maker and advocate of the settlement of
International disputes by peaceful means were thwarted by its lingering
disputes with its neighbour Pakistan over the Kashmir issue. While India
considered Kashmir as vital to its interests, however, it was never able to
gain international acceptance of its position. Thus the question of Kashmir
became a constant irritant and a useful club for others to wield in
countering India’s self-declared moral principles of international behavior.
Ultimately, India became dependent upon the Soviet Veto in the Security
Council to prevent action on the Kashmir issue which it found
However, Nehru's disappointment with the United Nation was intense. The reasons for referring the Kashmir dispute to the Security Council was not because he wanted to procrastinate behind the United Nations shield but because he was anxious to get the Pakistani tribesmen and regular forces out of the territory so that the promised plebiscite could be held as soon as possible. There is no reason to doubt Nehru's sincerity. He was concerned that if Pakistan's communal approach was to prevail in Kashmir, it would not only be a tragedy for Kashmir but it would upset the whole scheme of thing in India, and of course in Pakistan.

Nehru was convinced of the rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir to self-determination but could not agree to their incorporation into Pakistan simply on grounds that the majority of the people were Muslims. This would have an adverse impact on over 60 million Muslims who had chosen to remain behind in India, would boost the sectarian forces in the country and make amicable relationship with Pakistan impossible.

After the holocaust of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Nehru devoted greater attention to the nuclear disarmament, as he proposed in the Untied Nations for complete nuclear disarmament in 1954. That was the first such appeal proposed by any world statesman in that international organization. Jawaharlal Nehru considered disarmament the most important question facing mankind. Since the advent of nuclear weapons, nations possessed the power to destroy mankind. Disarmament, therefore, occupied and continues to occupy an important place in India's foreign policy. Nehru laid the utmost stress on nuclear disarmament and the prohibition of the use of atomic weapons. The All India Congress Committee Resolution, adopted as early as September, 1945, at the instance of Nehru, deplored the appearance of the atom bomb.

Thus, Nehru's consistency in his declaratory statements and practices, enhanced India's image among the nations as a peace lover.
Nehru's bold stand against nuclear tests inspired and encouraged people like Burtrand Russel, Linus Fouling and Philip Noel Baker and others. The Pugwash movement of world scientists against nuclear weapons found in Nehru a great and convincing champion of nuclear disarmament, Nehru was filled with a desire and vision to free the world of nuclear weapons which he described as dreadful machines of destruction, but died without realizing his dreams.

The conclusion sums up the findings of this study and looks at the future prospects. It attempts at analyzing Nehru’s legacy of world peace. An attempt has been made to review in retrospect, some specific issues and international subject which were dear to Nehru, to see the effects of his vision on India’s foreign policy in the years after he had gone.