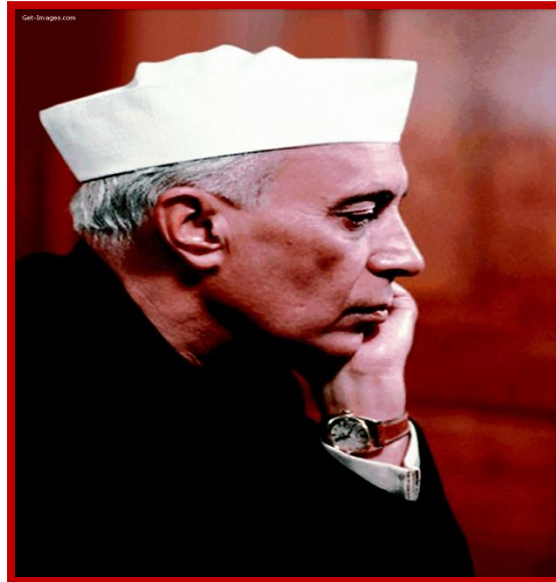


CONTRIBUTION OF PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU TO INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY



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I.INTRODUCTION:

The foundations of India's foreign policy were firmly laid by him. Like any other foreign policy maker, Nehru underlined India's national interest as the basic guiding principle. But even before he did that, Nehru, as head of the interim Government, had declared as on September 7, 1946, principle objectives of India's foreign policy. In a broadcast to the nation he had said. "We shall take full part in international conferences as a free nation with our own policy and not merely as a satellite of another nation. We hope to develop close and direct contacts with other nations and to co-operate with them in the furtherance of world peace and freedom. We are particularly interested in the emancipation of colonial and dependent countries and peoples and in the recognition in theory and practice of equal opportunities for all races".¹India's national interest was indeed the most important governing principle of India's foreign policy during Nehru's period. He said in the constituent Assembly on December 4, 1947. "We may talk about peace and freedom and earnestly mean what we say. But in the ultimate analysis, a government

functions for the good of the country it governs and no government dare to anything which in the short or long run is manifestly to the disadvantage of the country".²

II. CONTRIBUTION OF PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU TO INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY:

1. NEHRU'S CONCEPT OF WORLD PEACE:

Nehru was a strong believer of international relations and co-operation. His belief was based on peaceful co-existence. His role for world peace is remarkable, India under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, not only refused to align with the US's Sponsored Military alliances, but also strongly opposed them. By doing so, as already stated, she made a valuable contribution towards world peace. It would not be out of context here to discuss briefly such alliances and India's opposition to them. In March 1947 the Foreign Ministers of the Western countries met in Moscow to discuss the drafting of peace treaties for Germany and Austria. They were not able to arrive at any decision in regard to Germany's fate and left Moscow without accomplishing their purpose at the end of April. The Moscow conference marked the end of the co-operation between the Western countries and the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union had also given appreciable aid to the Chinese Communists in Manchuria. It was also seeking to extend its influence in other parts of the world. When the United States took an active role in the establishment of the NATO, India thought that the United States had decided to enter into a close Military alliance with the colonial powers of Europe, which had for a long time held many Asian and African States under their arbitrary rule. The NATO began as a defence against aggression so; however, it became an arrangement for the "defence of the colonial possessions"³ of the Member nations. This caused serious concern to India. Nehru thus spoke about the NATO in the Lok Sabha on September 29, 1954. "It (NATO) developed geographically supposed to be the North Atlantic Community, but it spread to the Mediterranean, to the coasts of Africa, Eastern Africa and to distant countries which have nothing to do with the Atlantic Community. When the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was first envisaged, it was for defence but gradually we find that it is supposed to cover the colonial possessions and all those powers also'.⁴ Nehru told the Lok Sabha on March 29, 1956 that the Baghdad pact had created tension in West Asia. He further said "and also, as the house knows, certainly the Baghdad pact has in fact created in Western Asia a greater tension and conflict than ever before. It has certainly put one country against another country, the countries that were friendly to each other".⁵ Nehru by virtue of being Prime Minister of India, the largest democracy in the world, for seventeen years, was able to make a significant contribution to the theory and practice of international relations. His sincerity for the establishment of universal peace is quite evident from India's moral and material support to the United Nations in its role in regard to international peace and security.

2. NEHRU AND PANCHSHEEL:

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who is known as the main architect of the foreign policy of India and an apostle of peace, firmly believed that the nations of the world should accept some code of conduct. As Nehru said " I think that the biggest idea that has gradually evolved in people's minds all over the world is the futility of war that war does not solve any major issues and that therefore all problems, however difficult and intricate should be resolved peacefully and this heralds and entirely new approach all over the world."⁶

The five principles detailed below, were formally enunciated in the Sino-Indian agreement of April 29, 1954 regarding trade and intercourse between the Tibetan Region of China and the Republic of India. The five principles mentioned in the preamble of the agreement were".⁷

- a) Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty.
- b) Mutual no aggression
- c) Mutual noninterference in each other's internal affairs.
- d) Equality and mutual benefit.
- e) Peaceful co-existence.

Speaking in the parliament, Prime Minister Nehru said "I imagine that if these principles were adopted in the relations of various countries with each other a great deal of the trouble of the present day world would probably disappear". Nehru and Chou-En-Lai in a joint statement, said that "If these principles were applied not only by Asian Countries in their bilateral relation, but also in international relations generally they would or a solid foundation for peace and security and the fears and apprehensions that exist missing today would give place to a feeling of confidence"⁸The term panchsheel was formally used by Nehru at a state banquet given in honor of visiting Indonesian President in September 1954. The road to the world is peace and survival of the humanity from the unwarranted dangers of war to save us from the horrors of war. We have to take the right path to shape our destiny and reach our destination, which is possible only through panchsheel.

3. NEHRU AND NON-ALIGNMENT:

India under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru, was the first country to have adopted the policy of non-alignment. India's policy is positive or dynamic neutralism in which a country acts independently and decides its policy on each issue on its merit. Non-alignment is based on positive reasoning. It is not negative, middle of the road reluctance to distinguish between right and wrong. Nehru had declared in the United States Congress in 1948, "Where freedom is menaced, or justice is threatened or where aggression takes place, we cannot be and shall not be neutral, our policy is not neutralist of firm foundations".⁹Commenting on India's foreign policy K.M.Panikar had said "India has been able to build up a position of independence and in association with other states similarly placed has been able to exercise considerable influence in the cause of international good will"¹⁰In a way, this policy promotes Gandhiji's belief in non-violence. The critics in early days had said that India's policy was to remain neutral on the side of democracy. India was largely responsible for launching the non-aligned movement (NAM) in 1961. It was initiated by Nehru, Yugoslav President Tito and Egyptian President Nasser. Twenty five countries attended the first NAM conference held at Bulgaria and presided over by Tito. Invitations were sent to Nehru, Nasser and Tito. After careful scrutiny of foreign policies of proposed participants of the NAM summit. The five criteria for joining NAM were:

1. The country followed independent foreign policy based on non-alignment and peaceful co-existence.
2. The country was opposed to colonialism and imperialism.
3. It should not have been a member of a cold war related military bloc.
4. It should not have had bilateral treaty with any of the super powers, and

5. NAM should not have allowed any foreign military base on its territory. It has grown both quantitatively and qualitatively. There are as many as 114 member Nations of NAM in 1997.

Non alignment, in other words, is a positive assertion of independence and the absence of the negative dependence on others. This was Jawaharlal Nehru's great achievement both in his own country and in the new turbulent world of former colonies, developing nations and the third world states. Nehru's passionate attachment to the peace also served the interest of the country. According to him, the foremost issue in international affairs was peace or war.

4. NEHRU-COLD WAR AND DISARMAMENT:

Pandit Nehru, as the staunch advocate of the policy of non-alignment, knew very well the consequences of cold war after the second world war. The era of cold war marked all age of crisis, which disrupted peace and security of humanity. So Nehru remarked, "Till this crisis of spirit is resolved, it will be difficult to find a solution for other crises that afflict us"¹¹ Pandit Nehru made reference to problems and causes of war and also the need for co-operation among nations to achieve world peace and security. So, the question of cold war according to Nehru, covered every quarter of the world. Every issue whether in the Western bloc or Communist bloc was a part of the cold war. To think in terms of cold war meant constant appeals to huffed violence, fear and suspicion, cold war come in the way of peace creating, problems. So, to get out of such evil consequences of cold war, Nehru switched over his attention, to the problems of peace and disarmament.

5. DISARMAMENT EFFORTS OF NEHRU:

Nehru therefore stressed the need for constructive approach, which was nothing but disarmament through the UN. Nehru was a visitor at a meeting at the League of Nations in Geneva and witnessed Hitler's threats of war. Like that the real problems of peace were;

1. Hitler's threats of war
2. Non representation of Asia and Africa in the UN.
3. Structural difficulties in the UN.
4. Failure in the activities of the UN.
5. Split in the world and diversity of the world etc.

During 1950's when Nehru took initiatives regarding disarmament, certainly, he had in his mind, certain vital issues of his foreign policy and India's National interest. Nehru's initiatives were at the UN. Because being a non-nuclear power India could not be admitted into the corridors of nuclear power politics. Nehru's disarmament initiatives came in the years 1953-54, 1957-58 and 1962. It is said that "Nehru's first major disarmament effort came only after the Soviet Union had become a full-fledged thermo nuclear power". Until his death, Nehru made it clear that India never want nuclear tests. This in fact is the greatness of Nehru, as an apostle of peace and world leader to achieve disarmament.

6. NEHRU-COMMONWEALTH AND THE UNITED NATIONS:

It was again Nehru's major decision to establish and continue India's like with Commonwealth in 1949 at the initial stage came as a surprise to people abroad. Because Nehru, since late 1920's was opposed to the idea of Dominion Status and stood for complete independence for India. So in the 1920's and 1930's he considered the idea of Dominion status of India as the most ridiculous. After such a reaction from Nehru and Congress, Lord Attle and

his colleagues started applying their task of translating promises in to reality, the policy of giving independence to India in 1945. Then we notice some changes in the thinking towards maintenance of friendly relations with Britain and Commonwealth, when India achieved its independence on 15th August 1947. In this way, the riddle got revolved, after the transfer of power to India by the Britain. It created a favorable impression on the minds of Nehru and his associates, and reinforced this desire to let India remain in the Commonwealth. Already in late 1946 and early 1947, Nehru's thoughts reflected the direction of maintaining India's relations with Britain and Commonwealth. According to Nehru, though the Commonwealth countries differed still, they met and discussed all the issues in friendly way, always emphasizing the point of unity. It had been a privilege of India to be a member of the Commonwealth to be a bridge between the East and the West. Nehru's main interest was to make Commonwealth machinery for the exchange of information and opinion. The Commonwealth facilitated technical assistance, economic co-operation, trade and education. In this way, Pandit Nehru, played a very important role, to take such a decision, influenced by the conditions of India and problems of that new country faced, to continue as a member of the Commonwealth of Nations. Though initially in the late forties and early fifties, the Commonwealth constituted as a corner stone of India's foreign policy, but however, after fifties the economic value of the Commonwealth went on diminishing but still Nehru's role of decision making remain in the Commonwealth is said to be most important and mark in the history of India's foreign policy.

7. NEHRU AND THE UNITED NATIONS:

The United Nations as the second systematic international organization was established after the Second World War to maintain international peace and security. It succeeded the League of Nations, the first international organization established after the First World War. The UN representing all the independent states of the world provides a unique opportunity for all the newly independent and militarily weak and small states, to play their decisive role in international politics without being directly involved in power politics of the two super powers. The UN perhaps is the only international forum which the states utilize is for defending their territorial integrity. Sovereignty and also securing economic and technical assistance, fighting against imperialism, racialism and controlling international conflict situations and promoting world peace, security and order. So it would be quite logical for the newly independent state like India to attach greater importance to the UN in her foreign policy calculations and to utilize the same to promote her national and international objective. The UN promotes the growth of peaceful world order. It provided an international environment conditioning or determining the foreign policy of India's national interest do mended that every effort must be made to develop an effective system of collective security through the UN. So, Nehru always believed in referring every issue to the forum of the UN. Like that Kashmir issue was also referred to the UN, at the initiative of Nehru. So, while making a statement in the Constituent Assembly (Legislature) on Kashmir on March 5, 1948 Nehru said "Our making a reference on this issue to the Security Council of the UN was an act of faith, because we believed in the progressive realization of a world order and a world government. In spite of many shocks, we have adhered to the ideas represented by the UN and its charter- but those any ideals reach as also certain duties and responsibilities to our own people and to those who put their trust in us"¹² India expected more

from the Security Council to take appropriate action to resolve the issue there by restore international peace and security. Nehru viewed the UN as a symbol of hope for mankind only the UN could represent the idea of one world, one world or no hope was the choice left to the humanity body. It has undertaken a heavy task and has solved some of the difficult problems. Because of the UN, war has been avoided on several occasions in the last few years. If the UN was not there the world would be in a parlous state and we would have had to search for it, and build up some such organization. I have often criticized the UN for some step or the other with which I did not agree but broadly speaking I would like to pay my tribute to the UN, for the work which it has done and also to its secretary General".¹³

III. CONCLUSION:

So, Nehru's contribution to India's foreign policy we may easily be trapped by a desire to reflect on and describe nothing but India's foreign policy itself. In paying tribute to Jawaharlal Nehru, we remember a politician who, through his efforts in many fields, made an important contribution to opening up for his people the road to our present day world.

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